

SCHEDULED TRIBE LEGISLATORS IN ORISSA ASSEMBLY : A SOCIO-POLITICAL STUDY

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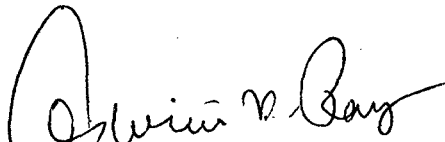
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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled: "SCHEDULED
TRIBE LEGISLATORS IN ORISSA ASSEMBLY : A SOCIO-POLITICAL
STUDY" submitted by Mr. HEMAJI CHARAN NARAI in partial
fulfilment for the award of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY has not
been previously submitted for any other Degree of this or
any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is
a bona-fide work.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Studies of various tribes and their socio-economic conditions by foreign and Indian authors alike are legion. However, there is a woeful lack of studies on the political involvement of different tribes in India. The present study attempts at discussing "SCHEDULED TRIBE LEGISLATORS IN ORISSA ASSEMBLY : A SOCIO-POLITICAL STUDY".

At the outset, I wish to record my deep sense of gratitude for Dr. A.K.Ray, my Supervisor whose valuable suggestions and consistent encouragement have shaped my work at each stage. On each difficult and controversial point he has given his experienced reflections. This help is something I shall never forget.

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I am grateful to the staff of JNU Library, New Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum & Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi, Orissa Legislative Assembly Library, Bhubaneswar and Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar without whose help the work would not have acquired such a concrete shape.

My thanks are due to Thulasidharan, who typed out my dissertation.

However, I owe a responsibility for the limitations that this work still bears.

Nimai Charan Majhi
NIMAI CHARAN MAJHI

ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	* All India Congress Committee
BID	* Bharatiya Lok Dal
CPI	* Communist Party of India
CPI(M)	* Communist Party of India (Marxist)
GP	* Ganatantra Parishad
MLA	* Member of Legislative Assembly
MP	* Member of Parliament
PSP	* Praja Socialist Party
SSP	* Samyukta Socialist Party
ST	* Scheduled Tribes
OLA	* Orissa Legislative Assembly
UPCC	* Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee

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Chapter - I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

A : INTRODUCTION.

Of late, the study of tribes as an unit of social analysis has assumed new dimensions. Despite the fact that India boasts of one of the largest tribal populations in the world, the shift from the 'caste' as a widely used unit of social analysis to 'tribe'¹ as a unit of analysis was very late.

The integration of tribals into India's mainstream is a post-independence phenomenon. The increasing politicisation of Scheduled Tribes in the country is the direct consequence of the introduction of democratic form of government based on the principle of adult franchise and the incorporation of provisions of political safeguards for them in the Indian Constitution. Before the dawn of an independent India, the specific problems of the tribal population had not been given proper attention. The princely rulers left them as they were. Personal gains were given priority over the amelioration of the socio-economic condition of the tribal people.

The situation changed after 1947. The Constitution which came into operation in 1950 declared some basic ideals in order to restructure the traditional Indian society in a more egalitarian fashion.

1. Definition of 'Tribe' and 'Scheduled Tribes' have been dealt with in Chapter II.

The preamble to the Constitution of India resolved to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, Social, Economic and Political;
 LIBERTY, of thought, expression, faith, belief
 and worship;
 EQUALITY, of status and opportunity; and to
 promote among them all;
 FRATERNITY, assuring the dignity of the
 individual and the unity and integrity of the
 nation.²

Prior to that the tribes were leading isolated lives, living in interior hilly regions of the country. Though it is not accurate to say that the tribes were wholly isolated, uneducated and poor, it would be right to opine that they were least affected by the forces of modernization. The mortality rate among them was higher. The literacy rate was lower too. They were less urbanized and only a microscopic minority among them were employed in the modern industrial sector. The Christian missionaries attracted a lot of tribals to their fold. However, very few entered the universities or the bureaucracy.

As in social sphere,⁵⁰ also in the political sphere, the instances of educated tribals taking part in national politics in the late 19th century and the early 20th century are rare.

2. See, the Preamble of Indian Constitution.

Moreover, whatsoever was the political participation it was largely confined to the states or districts in which tribesmen were located. No doubt, the 19th century witnessed some militant actions by the tribesmen against the British in the shape of Koi rebellion, the Santal rebellion, the Birsa movement and the Kacha Nagas rebellion. Though many a time, the activities have been hailed as a part of the nationalist struggle, the issue is more complex to warrant such a categorisation.

On the eve of independence the tribesmen in India manifested three major political tendencies. Some tribals of the hilly areas of the north-east were secessionist. These tribes argued that their very difference from the majority of Indians justified the creation of a separate independent State. Armed insurrections took place among the Mizo and Naga tribes. Many of the Oraon, Munda, Santal and Ho tribes of Orissa, Southern Bihar and neighbouring Madhya Pradesh were separatists who endorsed the Jharisand Party's demand for a separate tribal State. Thirdly, the tribal people of Rajasthan, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh were loyalists in their politics. As Wainor and Field write:

"Some of the Maharajas had created a paternalistic and personalised relationship with the tribesmen that was often reinforced by real or mythical agnatic relationship. In several princely states

nationalist organizations affiliated to the Indian National Congress became politically active in the late 1930s and 1940s, but by and large these did not win the support of tribals or their leaders."³

"From the point of view of India's nationalist leadership, therefore, the country's tribal populations had to be 'integrated' into national politics. Their isolation had to be ended; secessionist, separatist and loyalist politics had to be eliminated. Ways had to be found to persuade tribals to develop an Indian identity even while they retained many of their traditional cultural beliefs and practices."⁴

Measures were thus taken for the allround development of the tribesmen. The strategic North-East was placed under the direct jurisdiction of the Central Government. Some other areas including the portions of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh Orissa, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan were included in the Fifth Schedule. Though the jurisdiction to administer these areas directly lay with the State Governments, the Governors of these States held extra-responsibility to

3. Weiner, Myron and Field, John Osgood (eds.), Studies in Electoral Politics in the Indian States, (Delhi: Manohar, 1975), p.82.

4. Ibid.

modify Central and State laws for the scheduled areas and to frame regulations protecting the rights of tribals over land. The Governors were required to submit to the President of India an annual report on these scheduled areas. Also provided were the provisions for reserved constituencies.

B : REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

There is no dearth of works on Orissa's electoral politics and the State politics in general. Studies have been attempted by many political scientists and sociologists on the electoral politics and the State politics as a whole. Political scientists like S.C. Dash⁵ and B.B. Jena⁶ have contributed a good deal of articles in various journals about the politics in the State at different periods. However, these works do not prove to be much helpful for our study.

5. Dash, S.C., "Emergence of Modern Orissa: A Political Analysis", in Narain, Iqbal (ed.), State Politics in India, (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1967), pp.203-09.

_____, "Government and Politics", "in Orissa", Indian Journal of Political Science, vol.XVI(4), October-December, 1965, pp.83-101.

_____, "Orissa", in Kogekar and Park (eds.), Reports on the Indian General Elections (1951-52), (1956), pp.120-34.

6. Jena, B.B., "Political Parties in Orissa" in Narain, Iqbal (ed.), State Politics in India, (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1967), pp.485-501.

_____, "General Elections in Orissa", in Verma, S.P. and Narain, Iqbal (eds.), Fourth General Elections in India, vol.I, (New Delhi: Orient Longmans, pp.349-370.

_____, "Feudal Grips", Seminar, November, 1966, pp.26-33.

The works of F.G. Bailey⁷, Jaganath Pathy⁸, Sukadev Nanda⁹ and Pushpa Asthana¹⁰ on the State politics and political process of Orissa elicit some information regarding the pattern of tribals participation in Orissa politics. However, M.K. Mahapatra's¹¹ study is a pioneering one on the tribes and the politics of the State. It is a systematic, empirical study first of its kind- about the political elites belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, whom he calls the "Token Elites" as they are the elected representatives from the particular type of constituencies. In his study, Mahapatra has empirically explored the attributes, ascents and role perceptions of these special kind of political elites in comparison to the rest of the political elites of Orissa.

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7. Bailey, F.G., Politics and Social Change : Orissa in 1959, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).
 8. Pathy, Jaganath, Political Elite of Orissa, Ph.D. Thesis (Unpublished), submitted to JNU, 1977.
 9. Nanda, Sukadev, Coalitional Politics in Orissa, (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Pvt.Ltd, 1979).
 10. Asthana, Pushpa, Political Parties and Political Development in Orissa, (Unpublished) Ph.D. Thesis submitted to JNU, (New Delhi, 1980).
 11. Mahapatra, M.K., "The Scheduled Castes and Tribal Political Elites : An Empirical Exploration of Attributes, Ascent and Role Perceptions of "Token Elites" in an Indian State", International Behavioral Scientist, 5(4), December, 1973, p.5.

His study is limited to the period between 1967 to 1974.

C : OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY.

The objective of the present study is to reveal the extent and nature of participation of tribal legislators in Orissa politics. In the present study an attempt has been made to find out the Scheduled Tribe legislators' socio-political background to evaluate their legislative behaviour and political participation and to ascertain role and nature of their politics. A dispassionate study and analysis of this kind will ultimately help us to get an overall picture of effectiveness of the system of reservation policy with regard to political representation of this community in the State Assembly.

The following are the main reasons for the importance of this field of research.

- (i) Orissa is largely inhabited by different groups of tribal people and as a result, a large number of seats are reserved for these people in the State Assembly. Consequently, they have a major role in the society.
- (ii) As yet, little attempt has been made to study this aspect of Orissa politics. To fill up this research gap, this study is a modest attempt to interpret and analyse the materials scattered in different government reports and documents and other published materials.

- (iii) The exercise is being undertaken by a member of the Orissa tribal community, with intimate personal knowledge of the tribal community of Orissa.

D : METHODOLOGY.

As already stated, literature on the subject under study is scarce. However, the study will be mainly based on the secondary sources — books and journals — available for the purpose. Besides, such primary sources like various government documents and reports — 'Who's Who' of Orissa Legislative Assembly, Election Reports, Census Data and Newspapers, etc. — also form the major sources of our present study.

We have derived data regarding the socio-political profile of the tribal legislators from 'Who is Who' of Orissa Legislative Assembly. Regarding the role, participation and nature of their politics, we have heavily depended on the published and unpublished works of various authors on the State politics. Thus our study is basically an analysis of available data in a historical perspective. Hence our methodology of study is mainly analytical, historical and comparative. However, since the study is largely of an exploratory nature, the conclusions are rather tentative.

//

In this study it is also taken into consideration that the tribal people of Orissa do not constitute a homogeneous group. They are divided into different categories on the basis of their languages/dialects, social customs, beliefs and level of socio-economic development. Therefore it is assumed that all these factors have also some influence on the politics of Orissa so far as the tribal legislators' political behaviour is concerned.

E: LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

This study has also its own limitations:

- (i) This study covers generally the period from the first General Elections to 1977, but so far as socio-political profile of tribal legislators is concerned, we like to limit ourselves to the period between 1961 to 1977. The major reason is that data prior to 1961 are not available to us.
- (ii) The data analysed for the period between 1961 to 1977 on the basis of their availability may not provide sufficiently conclusive evidence for generalisations for the whole period.
- (iii) The economic profile of tribal legislators have been omitted. The basic reason for this is the non-availability of data in this regard.

- (iv) Religious beliefs of these legislators are not taken into consideration because of the non-availability of data. To which tribe/sub-tribe one legislator belongs has also become a problem for us. However, proper care has been taken to ascertain the origin of a legislator to a particular tribe or sub-tribe.
- (v) As we have already made it very clear that this study is not based on our own field study but basically based on the available data, hence our understanding of attitude, role perception and ideological orientation of tribal legislators is very limited. A more comprehensive study involves a more detailed empirical study, which is difficult since it involves greater time and resources. It involves interviewing all earlier members who are no longer members of the house; some have retired from politics and some have expired.

F : PLAN OF THE STUDY.

The present study is divided into five chapters. The introductory chapter deals with the problems, the review of literature, objective, methodology and the limitations of the study.

Chapter- II presents the historical survey of tribal politics. The genesis of reserved constituencies and tribal uprisings are dealt with in this chapter.

The review of Orissa politics and the role of different political parties in it are the major thrust of chapter- III.

Chapter- IV discusses the socio-economic conditions of Orissa's tribes. Demography, classification of tribes, tribal economy, literacy and education of tribes constitute the theme.

chapter- V is an exercise on the socio-political profile of tribal legislators.

The role of tribal legislators is being dealt in chapter- VI.

Chapter- VII has a brief summary of the conclusions and recommendations for the nature of possible reforms for more powerful representation of the tribal people in the economic development and social transformation of the State in general, and of the tribal people in particular.

Chapter- II

TRIBAL POLITICS : A HISTORICAL SURVEY

A : GENESIS OF RESERVED CONSTITUENCY

The genesis of reserved Constituency can not be traced unless we consider the three basic inter-related questions. First, what is a tribe? Secondly, who are Scheduled Tribes? and Lastly, what are the factors or rationale behind the creation of reserved constituencies for Scheduled Tribes to get them represented in the Parliament as well as the State Legislatures?

Difficulty arises with regard to the definition of the term 'tribe'. As Myron Weiner and Field have observed:

"The ^{"tribe"} term, however, is not easily defined in the Indian context, where "caste" is the most widely used unit of the social analysis. In India tribes are generally non-Hindus, indigeneous (that is, in historic terms they preceded the Aryan invasions); they ^{speak non-Indo-Aryan} languages, are territorially more cohesive than castes, partake of no all-India reference categories (as Hindu castes do in relation to varnas), are not stratified in contrast with the hierarchical structure of caste Hindu society, and relate to non-tribes or castes in ways substantially different from the ways in which Hindu castes relate to one another (that is, they are not part of a ritual hierarchy). But these are not hard

and first distinctions: some tribes have by now become Hindu (and some have become Christian), some tribes and castes do inter-marry, some speak Indo-Aryan languages, some have hierarchical subdivisions, and some tribes are territorially dispersed."¹

A terminological controversy among the scholars, reformers and administrators to describe these groups is found:

"Risely, Lacey, Elwin, Grigson, Shoobert, Tallents, Sedgwick, Martin, A.V. Thakar and others have described them as 'aborigines' or aboriginals. Hutton called them primitive tribes. Dr. Ghurye described them as 'so-called aborigines' or 'backward Hindus' and now accepts the designation 'Scheduled Tribes' as formulated in the Constitution of the Indian Union. Some scholars and reformers have described them as Adivasis. Dr. Das and others designated them as 'submerged humanity'."²

Upto 1919, the tribes were included under the head of "Depressed Classes"³. But the Government in Independent

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1. Weiner, Myron, and Field, ^{John} Osgood, ~~John~~, "How Tribal Constituencies in India Vote", Weiner, Myron, and Field Osgood, John (eds.), Electoral Politics in the Indian States, vol. II, (Delhi: Manohar, 1975), p.78.
 2. Desai, A.R. "Tribes in Transition", Thaper, Ramesh (ed.), Tribes, Caste and Religion in India, (The Macmillan Company of India Ltd, 1977), p.17.
 3. Meghe, D.R., "Legal Protection to Tribals and Tribal Development -- A New Deal for Tribes through Law", Deogaonkar, S.G. (ed.), Problems of Development of Tribal Areas, (Delhi: Leeladevi Publication, 1980), p.25.

India designated these people as 'Scheduled Tribes'. The term 'Scheduled Tribes' was inserted in the Constitution, vide Article 342(1) to specify the tribes or tribal communities by public notification. The Constitution defined the Scheduled Tribes thus:

"The President may with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a State, after consultation with the Governor thereof, by public notification specify the tribes or tribal communities which shall for the purposes this constitution be deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in relation to that state or Union territory, as the case may be."⁴

The Parliament was also empowered by articles 341(2) and 342(2) to make law for either including or excluding any caste, race, or tribe or groups in the lists of Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes notified by the President.

Thus, provisions provided in the Constitution are also not very clear as to who are these tribes or tribal communities to be termed as Scheduled Tribes. So, the

4. See Article 342(1) of the Constitution of India, (As modified upto the 15th May 1972); (Delhi: The Manager of Publications), pp.204-206.

exact definition of the term 'Scheduled Tribes' is difficult.

To distinguish the tribal from the non-tribal population no single criterion has been adopted.

As A.R. Desai says:

"Different and even contradictory criteria have been employed by anthropologists, social reformers, government officials, census commissioners and others for this purpose, Ghurye, in his work The Scheduled Tribes, has pointed out how factors like religion or occupation or racial features have proved inadequate when attempting to distinguish the tribal people from the non-tribal population in India."⁵

Dr. Elwin classifies the tribes into four classes on the basis of their cultural development. Class I is the purest of the pure tribal groups. To quote Dr. Elwin:

"These Highlanders do not merely exist like so many villagers, they really live. Their religion is characteristic and alive; their tribal organisation is unimpaired, their

5. Desai, A.R., "Tribes in Transition" in Thapar, Ramesh (ed.), Tribes, Caste and Religion in India, (Delhi: The Macmillan Company of India Ltd, 1977), p.18.

artistic and choreographic traditions are unbroken; their mythology still vitalizes the healthy organisation of tribal life. Geographical conditions have largely protected them from the debasing contacts of the plains. It has been said that the hoot of the motor-horn would sound the knell of the aboriginal tribes."⁶

A section of tribes who have undergone some changes under the influence of people from plains form the class II of Elwin's classification. However, they have retained their tribal mode of living. The following are their characteristics in contrast to the first group:

First, instead of a communal life, this group live a village life which has become individualistic. Their communal life and traditions, are only preserved through their village dormitories; secondly, in contrast to the class I tribes, the members of those of class II do not share things with one another; Thirdly, axe cultivation has ceased to be a way of life for them; Fourthly, the members of these tribes are more contaminated by the life outside. They come in contact with the groups living on

6. Elwin, Virrier, The Aboriginal, (OUP, First edition, 1943, 1944), p.8.

the periphery, who live a more complex, viz., civilised life; Finally, the members of these tribes are less simple and less honest than the members of the tribes belonging to class I.⁷

"The tribes belonging to class III constitute the largest section of the total tribal population, about four-fifth of it, i.e., nearly twenty millions. Members of this class of tribal groups are in a peculiar State of transition. According to some investigations, they are tribals in name but have become 'backward Hindus' constituting a sizeable section of the lower rung of Hindu society; one section is described as Christian. These tribes have been appreciably affected by external contacts. They have been exposed to the influences of economic and socio-cultural forces of Hindu society. They have been also subjected missionary influences. But, above all, they have been most adversely affected by the economic and political policies of the British which resulted in their being dragged into the orbit of the colonial-capitalist system in India."⁸

The tribal people belonging to this class were suffering in much the same way as the other lower castes in the non-tribal

7. Ibid., pp.8-10.

8. Desai, A.R., op.cit., p.20.

population, particularly the "bonded" labour and those that were categorised as "criminal" tribes.

The class IV tribals (a very small minority) consist of:

"the old aristocracy of the country, represented today by great Bhil and Naga Chieftains, the Gond Rajas, a few Binshevar and Bhuyia landlords, Korku noblemen, wealthy Santal and Uraon leaders and some highly cultured Mundas. They retain the old tribal names and their clan and totem rules and observe elements of tribal religion though they generally adopt the full Hindu faith and live in modern and even European style."⁹

According to Elwin, tribals of this class have won the battle of culture contacts. It means that they have acquired:

"aristocratic traditions, economic stability affluence, outside encouragement, a certain arrogance and self-confidence characteristic alike of ancient families and modern enterprise".¹⁰

According to Elwin, this class of tribals are much benefited by the civilisation.

9. Elwin, Virrier, op.cit., pp.10-11.

10. Ibid., p.11.

These are the four types of classification of tribal people given by Elwin. Besides, others have also classified these people living in different stages of development into different categories.

Anthropologists and workers who met at the Tribal Welfare Committee, under the auspices of the Indian Conference of Social Welfare Work at Calcutta many years ago, suggested the following classifications of the existing tribes:

- tribal communities or those who are still confined to the original forest habitats and follow the old pattern of life;
- Semi tribal communities or those who have more or less settled down in rural areas and have taken to agriculture and allied occupations;
- acculturated tribal communities or those who have migrated to urban or semi-urban areas and are engaged in modern industries and vocations and have adopted modern cultural traits; and
- totally assimilated tribals in the Indian population¹¹

11. Haxworthy, C.B., Tribal Demography in India, (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal), pp.22-23.

Ghurye has divided the tribes into three classes:

First, such sections of them as the Raj Gonds and others who have successfully fought the battle, and are recognised as members of fairly high status within Hindu society; secondly the large mass that has been partially Hinduised and has come in closer contact with Hindus; and third, the hill sections, which have exhibited the greatest power of resistance to the alien cultures that have pressed upon their border.¹²

So far we have discussed the problem with regard to the definition of the terms 'Tribes' and 'Scheduled Tribes' and also their classification made by different scholars, social reformers and administrators.

Now we switch over to the third and last question. The above discussion made this point clear to us that tribal problems are very complex. It is not purely an economic one but multi-dimensional-sociological, cultural and so on.

It is a well-known fact that the socio-economic transformation not only of the tribes but the Indian society

12. Ghurye, G.S., The Scheduled Tribes, (Bombay: Popular Book Dept., 1959), p.23.

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as a whole is as old as the advent of British Rule in India. Under the British Administration the well-balanced socio-economic system of tribal people got a severe blow and started breaking down. During this period they were subjected to different kinds of exploitation by the mahajans, money-lenders, businessmen and zamindars, etc. The Administration also did not provide them any protection against this oppression and exploitation. This resulted in the emergence of revolts in different tribal areas among the different tribal groups at different times for their rights over land and resources.¹³

"These organized movements on the part of the tribal folk compelled the British Administration to keep these people and their territory partially secluded and undisturbed as far as possible. Thus the tribal folk were kept segregated from the mainstream of Indian life and culture. The administrators thereby were very successful in creating a psychological barrier amongst the different sectors of its population."¹⁴

13. Tribal revolts have been discussed in the next part of this chapter.

14. Das, A.K., Chaudhuri, M.K., and Basu, S., "Anthropology of Development : Socio-Economic Condition of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes of Eastern India", Chaudhuri Budhadab (ed.), Tribal Development in India, (Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1982), p.366.

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Thus, independent India has inherited from the British colonial system "a complex tribal problem". These socio-economic and cultural as well as political factors impelled the framers of the constitution of India to provide certain constitutional and legal safeguards for this weakest and neglected section of the society to bring them at par with the rest of the Indian population.

The origin of the Reservation Policy for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, in so far as political representation is concerned, dates back to the "Poona Pact" of September 25, 1932. It was the negotiated outcome of the controversy between Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi (both are the champions of depressed classes) over the question of introducing separate electorates for the untouchables.¹⁵

Ambedkar refuted strongly by contention of leaders like Gandhiji that depressed classes are not minorities as

15. Gandhiji had the social reform approach. For example, temple-entry by untouchables and inter-dining etc.

On the otherhand, Ambedkar's position was based on moral, scientific and at the sometimes a pragmatic principle i.e., the social discrimination suffered by a group to entitle itself for constitutional safeguards.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were by that time included under the category of depressed classes. Scheduled castes were by that time considered untouchables.

they are part and parcel of the Hindu religion, and hence they can not have separate electorates. In fact Gandhiji told the Round Table Conference emphatically that separate electorates to the untouchables "will create a division in Hinduism..... I do not mind untouchables, if they so desire, being converted to Islam or Christianity...if I was the only person to resist this thing (separate electorate) I would resist it with my life".¹⁶

"On the contrary, in his speech at the Round Table Conference, Ambedkar argued for 'weightage' for a minority because it is 'weak' either in number, or because its social standing is backward as compared with others or because its economic strength is not sufficient to place it on a footing at par with other communities."¹⁷

"The British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, being convinced of the force and rationale behind Ambedkar's demand provided for separate electorates to the Depressed Classes with a right to vote in general constituency in his Communal Award of 1932."¹⁸

16. Cited in Rajasekhariah, A.M., "Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on Reservation Policy", Sharma, B.A.V. and Reddy, K.M. (eds.), Reservation Policy in India, (New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1982), p.26.

17. Rajasekhariah, A.M., op.cit., p.26.

18. Rajasekharich, A.M., Op.cit., p.29.

Here, the author is of the opinion that it was not at all the intention of Ambedkar to take shelter under

"Gandhiji, who had already made it clear that he would oppose such a provision for Harijans and would resist it with his life, undertook, the "epic fast" at Yerwada prison. Ambedkar had to agree to a system of joint electorates with reservation of seats for the Harijans through the 'Poona Pact' in order to save Gandhiji's life. But it was a great triumph for Ambedkar."¹⁹

He was able for the first time to get the principles of special safeguards for the Depressed Classes accepted within Constitutional arrangement.

Thus, the provision of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes was replaced by the system of reserved seats in political representation. The Poona Pact also formed the basis of representation in the Government of India Act 1935. The Act gave full expression to the terms and conditions laid down in the Poona Pact.

Dr. Ambedkar, the main architect of the Indian Constitution was in favour of providing adequate opportunities to enable the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to have

communal principle. In fact he was opposed to it. His approach was secular and humanistic. He was making a class approach, but it is the British who gave it a caste or communal basis as part of their general principle of communal representation.

19. Ibid., p.29.

an effective share in the exercise of political power in the country. He believed once they share political power, they can order other things without much difficulty.

This preferential treatment to these backward communities was provided for a specific period of time was fixed as ten years from the date of promulgation of the Constitution. But it has already been extended thrice (at present to last till 1990). At the end of every successive ten years, it had been discussed in the Parliament and realised by the members of the Parliament that as the purpose of the reservation policy was not served it was necessary to extend it for another ten years.

Article 330 and 332 of the Constitution specifically provide for the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and in the State Legislatures respectively. The Constitution, however, does not lay down the specific number of seats that are to be reserved but only enunciates the principle on the basis of which reservations in favour of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are to be made. According to this principle, the proportion between the total population of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes should as nearly as may be, equal the

proportion between the total number of seats and the number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in a particular state or union territory.

While the Constitution of India specifically provided reserved seats for Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies, there are no such reserved seats in the Rajya Sabha and the upper houses of the Legislatures of the States.

The framers of the Constitution had anticipated that in course of time the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes would be able to secure adequate ^{representation} reservation through general seats and there would be no need for continuing special representations for them. This has, however, not happened. That is why its continuation is still justified.

This political safeguards enabled the tribal people to be involved in the State and national politics of India. But it does not imply that they were totally alien to any kind of political activities in pre-independence period. In spite of their socio-economic backwardness and isolated life they occasionally rose against the oppression and exploitative system of British government. These tribal revolts and the socio-economic conditions of tribal people

had a great impact on the national leadership in the post-independence phase. The tribal people were drawn into the political system of India through reserved constituencies. Hence, in order to understand the tribals' participation in democratic politics, it is also necessary to know their revolts. But, as we are concerned with tribal's participation in Orissa politics the discussion of tribal revolts in Orissa is vital.

B : TRIBAL UPRISINGS

Throughout the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, there were sporadic tribal revolts in different parts of the country. The tribal people have fought for the natural justice, self-respect and honour for their rights on the land. Though everytime subdued and suppressed by the mighty British authority, they had shown excellent courage and valour without bowing down before the exploiters and the British Government. Of course, these revolts are not properly recorded by the historians or chroniclers, but no doubt, their revolts have made a lasting effect in the country. Most of these revolts broke out in the State of Bihar, Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra

Pradesh. Important among these are the Santal insurrection, Kol insurrection, Chuar revolt, Birsa movement, Tana Bhagat movement, Hajang peasant, Naga and Mizo movements etc.

During these centuries, Orissa also witnessed a series of tribal uprisings in different period of times.

"The Koyas of Malkangiri in the erstwhile Madras Presidency rose against the administration in 1879 and 1880. Kandhs of Phulbani rose in revolt in 1850. Being oppressed by the Multa heads saoras rose twice in 1890 and 1940. Bharayan and Jangs of Keonjhar were equally vociferous against the native chiefs. All these events go to show that the tribals resisted the alien rulers who overlooked their own traditions and felt needs. These uprisings were suppressed by force."²⁰

Regarding the revolts of Kandhs in Orissa, Gopinath Mahanty observes:

"And the country can not forget their contribution to the cause of Independence. All the Adivasis, to whichever race they might belong, have a strong urge for freedom and a natural sense of justice and at times, in periodical upheavals under the British rule, they have

20. Das, Nityananda, "The Tribal situation in Orissa", Singh, K.S. (ed.), Tribal situation in India, (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1972), p.188.

amply exhibited it. It is the Kondhs who first took up arms against the British in the Ganjam and Nayagarh "Maliap" in 1817 which then spread all over coastal Orissa and over several other areas and was headed by Bakshi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mahapatra Bhramarbar Ray, the ex-commander of the Raja of Puri. This was followed in the eighteen hundred and thirties by the rebellion of the ~~the~~ Dora Bisoyi, the Kandh^{and} in the eighteen hundred and fifties by the rebellion of the famous Chakra Bisoyi, a Kandh of Bisipara, in Phulbani, who moved like a storm over the land of his conquest, baffled the British, defeated the troops sent against him, in many battles and was never caught. At the time of the first war of National Independence called by the British 'Sepoy Mutiny', Surendra Sai, a Gond chief and a Scion of the royal line of Sambalpur, waged a glorious battle against the British for which he is accepted as national hero."²¹

Raghavaiah describes the armed revolts of Savaras and Koyas as follows:

"In July 1854, Hill-Savaras of Koraput waged an armed revolt at Puttasingi. The Gazetteer compiled by British officers records how "In April 1860, Tammana Dora, the great Koya leader entered the Malkangiri taluk and captured the Bodia police station after fight and set the

21. Cited in Raghavaiah, Y., Tribal Revolts, (Nellore, AP: Andhra Rashtra Adimjeti Sevak Sangh, 1971), p.244. Gopinath Mohanty, observes this in his article to the Souvenir at the Second All India Tribal Welfare Conference at Bhubaneswar.

country in ablaze and in 1922 there was a great uprising among the Koyas and Kondhs in the south led by the famous Alluri Raju, which was not supported until its leader was killed in 1924". Almost in every tribe there had risen leaders who had led their people at different times for the cause of their independence or to throw off their oppressors and a great conflagration spread over them all. During 1942 the name that is remembered with pride is that of Lakshman Naik, a Bhotada of the Koraput district who went happily to the gallows with the name of the motherland on his lips."²²

Lakshmana Naik of Koraput district in Orissa sacrificed his life at the altar of his motherland in his heroic fight against the British Government. He was hanged by the alien rulers on 29 March, 1943 for leading a revolt of Kandhas of Orissa against the tyrannical rulers. His last message to his countrymen as he was being led to the gallows in the Berhampur camp jail was, "I will now die because the British and Jeypore Raja decided so. I will accept the fate, so that millions of my countrymen could secure their dear freedom and Gandhi Raj might be established." According to the trying Magistrate Lakshman Naik showed unique courage and behaved with great dignity.²³

22. Raghavaiah, op. cit., p.244.

23. Ibid., p.111

On the eve of integration of princely States in Orissa, there was a tribal uprising in Nilgiri, a tiny 'B' class princely State. The local prajamandal leaders carried on their fight in such a magnitude that the rulers found it extremely difficult to curb them. With a view to suppressing the movement the rulers instigated the 'Adivasis'. The confrontation between the Adivasis and the non-Adivasis was uncontrollable. As a result many innocent lives were lost and the properties destroyed. On the instruction from the Centre, the Government of Orissa intervened and took the administration of Nilgiri in November 1947. The taking over of the administration of Nilgiri State paved the way for the integration of the other princely States in Orissa.²⁴

Soon after the independence, when the princely States were integrated in the States of Orissa, there was a large-scale agitation by the tribals of different princely States. The rulers of these princely States were the moving spirit behind these movements.

24. Mahanty, Balram, Odisha Rajnitik Itihas, (The Political History of Orissa), (Cuttack: Rashtrabhadra Samabaya Prakashan, 1979), p.78.

There were Adivasi uprisings in 1948 in Bamara,¹ Gangpur, Bonai,² Pal Lahara Keonjhar and Kalahandi. These were put down by the armed police force. Some people were killed, some were detained and collective fines were imposed in villagers.²⁵

On the question of integration, there was a large-scale agitation by the tribals of Mayurbhanj - the largest princely State. "In 1949, under the leadership of Sonaram Soren there was an Adivasi agitation at Gunduria in Mayurbhanj where a demand was raised to separate Mayurbhanj from Orissa. At that time, Amar Singh was the S.D.O. of Rairangpur and he ordered firing on the crowd with a view to suppressing the agitation. As a result, 'thousands' of agitators were shot dead at Gunduria, as is alleged by the leaders of the Jharkhand Party."²⁶ This incident is not recorded in the history of Orissa. The picture of this ruthless and bloody suppression of innocent people by the authority is still alive in the memory of people^{of} that locality

25. For details see, Bailey, F.G., Politics and Social Change in Orissa in 1959, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p.200.

26. Mahapatra, L.K., "The Jharkhand Party in Orissa", Singh, K.S. (ed.), Tribal Movements in India, vol.II, (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), p.79.

who witnessed it. Some of them who are still alive tell the story of this tragic incident. That is why February 6 and 7 are observed as Gunduria memorial days by the tribal people of Mayurbhanj.

Thus, like other parts of country, the tribes of Orissa also in different points of time revolted against the oppressors and alien rulers and sacrificed the life for the cause of human rights dignity and social justice.

Against this background of political activities of ~~the~~ tribal people of Orissa, the involvement of tribal people in the State politics of Orissa after independence can be investigated and discussed. But prior to that general trend of politics in Orissa and party system is necessary to be discussed.

Chapter- III

A REVIEW OF ORISSA FOLKICS

A : NATURE OF POLITICS

Orissa politics, over the years, has surprised political commentators and observers by its marked instability, rampant factionalism and politics of defections. The 1961-67 interlude and the post-1977 elections phase apart, Orissa has been a witness to coalition governments. In most of the cases, a single party has failed to register an absolute majority. In 1961 under the dynamic leadership of Biju Patnaik the Congress Party secured an absolute majority and formed a ministry in the State. It is an interesting point to note that none of the ministries has been able to complete a full term. The collapses of ministries have been either due to a bickerings between the coalition constituents or to intra-party rivalry.¹ This unstable politics of Orissa has been a constraint against the economic development and a healthy political culture.

An analysis of Orissa politics would remain incomplete without a broad survey of the trends in Orissa politics and

1. Ministries those collapsed because of intra-party rivalry are Chaudhury Government, Congress-GP coalition, 1959, Satpathy Ministries and Janata Ministry. Bickerings between coalition constituents led to the downfall of Singh Deo Ministry and Das Ministry. In all other cases chief ministers resigned because of corruption charges levelled against them. For example, Biren Mitra and Sadasib Tripathy.

the party system in particular, since the first General Election in 1952.

The First General Elections in 1952 failed to yield stable results. None of the parties secured an absolute majority. However, the Congress by capturing 67 seats became the largest single party. Naba Krishna Chaudhury formed a government with the help of a few independents. The ministry, however, was short-lived because of the internal dissensions. Chaudhury continued in office till 1956 when H.K. Mahtab was called back from Bombay to take over as the next Chief Minister.²

2. Mahtab was the Governor of Bombay when the crisis for leadership arose. It seemed Mahtab masterminded the ouster of N.K. Chaudhury by fanning factionalism within the party. The reasons for Chaudhury's ouster may be enlisted as:

- i) Administrative lapses and financial irregularities in the working of several government departments;
- ii) Chief Minister's involvement in Bhodan movement and little attention paid to the working of governmental machinery;
- iii) Two important problems which Chaudhury government could not handle effectively were: (a) the devastating flood of 1955 and (b) the movement after the SRC Report was published.

Factional politics seemed to have come to an end, at least temporarily, when Mahtab became ^{The} Chief Minister of Orissa. In 1956, Chaudhury resigned as Chief Minister and sought retirement from politics.

The Mahtab ministry had a smooth sailing term for four months till the Second General Elections which like the previous one denied an absolute majority to any party. The Congress fared worse and captured only 56 seats. Mahtab, however, managed the support of the Jharkhand Party and the Communist Party to form a ministry. But, this government continued to be unstable. "On February 23, early in the Budget sessions 1959, when the Revenue Minister was seeking to introduce a bill, the Congress Ministry was defeated by 8 votes. But this was reckoned as "snag" defeat and the Ministry did not resign. The Government's strength at that time was 70 (excluding the speaker but including 5 Jharkhand members) in a House of 138 members".³ During this time, Congress was kept in power by 5 Jharkhand voters in Orissa Legislative Assembly.

3. Bailey, F.G., Politics and Social Change : Orissa in 1959, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp.5-6.

This precarious position of the Congress Ministry was overcome when Mahtab, the leader of the Congress Party and Singh Deo, the leader of the Ganatantra Parishad issued a joint statement indicating their intention in forming a coalition ministry. The coalition worked well till February 1960. Meanwhile the Congress had been divided on the issue of the continuation of the coalition on the eve of third General Elections.

The rift between the erstwhile young leader Biju Patnaik and Mahtab started. On February 13, 1961 Biju Patnaik was elected President of the UPCC and immediately after his election he demanded that the coalition should be dissolved and a new Congress ministry be formed to last till the General Elections. The coalition government resigned on February 21, 1961 and President's Rule was imposed in the State. Thus, the phase of bitter political confrontation between Dr. Mahtab and Mr. Patnaik began.

The emergence of Biju Patnaik changed the fate of Congress. Under his dynamic leadership the Congress Party got an absolute majority in Orissa Legislative Assembly in the 1961 mid-term elections. Patnaik was able to form a stable ministry.

But the new emerging leadership of Patnaik came into conflict the hitherto unassailable image of Mahtab. Both were locked in a war of downgrading each other. Mahtab, a shrewd politician as he was, started creating dissension within the party to weaken the base of Patnaik. Mahtab's group with other opposition members levelled some charges against Patnaik. This affected the image of Congress greatly. However, Patnaik could not survive in office till long. He resigned in 1963 under the Kamaraj Plan.⁴

The choice of a successor to Patnaik was not easy. Pabitra Mohan Pradhan's faction was opposed to Biren Mitra's elevation. In fact, they had suggested the names of Biswanath Das, H.K. Mahtab, N.K. Chaudhury, Nityananda Kanungo and Radhanath Rath. However, Mitra became the Chief Minister. His ministry did not last long. Corruption charges were levelled against him. The CBI and a central Cabinet team found him guilty of different charges.⁵ He found himself

4. Many senior Congress leaders were asked to give up their offices in order to strength the Party organization. Thus, in 1963 Biju Patnaik who had taken a special interest in the implementation of Kamraj Plan stepped down from office in favour of his successor Biren Mitra.

5. For detail see, Asian Recorder, XI (10), March 5-11, 1965, p.6334.

out of office in 1965.

Sadasih Tripathy, a non-controversial figure took over as Chief Minister. He continued in that capacity till 1967 elections.

In the 1967 elections the Congress was the worst sufferer. The Mahtab group gave a great blow to prospects of the Congress. He along with Pabitra Mohan Pradhan and other prominent Congress members left the Party to form the Jana Congress. This made the Congress weaker organisationally. The Congress under Patnaik was adversely affected in the 1967 General Elections.

The period between the 1961-67 was characterised by political instability in which as many as three Chief Ministers came and went out of office, though the Congress continued to rule. After the 1967 elections, the Swatantra Party formed the government with the Jana Congress. The Swatantra Party leader R.H. Singh Deo became the Chief Minister. The Deputy Chief Ministership went to Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, the leader of the Jana Congress. This coalition, as had come with a minimum programme was relatively more stable than others. Mutual tolerance and

understanding guided the relations between the coalition partners. The Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister constituted as Amal Ray puts it "an excellent duumvirate".⁶ The intrigues came to the fore and the hitherto successful coalition collapsed in January 1971, followed by the mid-term elections in March, 1971.

The mid-term elections could not change the unstable political situation of the State. No party could muster an absolute majority. A coalition headed by Biswanath Das⁷ came to office. The coalition partners of this United Front Government were ^{the} Swatantra Party of R.N. Singh Deo, ^{the} Utkal Congress of Biju Patnaik and ^{the} Jharkhand Party - a tribal party of north-western Orissa. This government

6. Ray, Amal, "Coalition Government in Orissa", Economic and Political Weekly, January 9, 1971, pp.86-87.

7. Biswanath was an independent candidate. He belonged to neither of these coalition parties. Biju Patnaik was defeated in 1971 mid-term elections. He did not want R.N. Singh Deo to be Chief Minister. So, a leadership crisis arose. Ultimately, Biswanath Das, the ex-Chief Minister of the first Congress government in Orissa and also ex-Governor of UP was requested to take over the leadership of the United Front Government. Later on, he was elected from Rourkela constituency in the by-election.

also could not complete its full term. It collapsed for several reasons including Mr. Patnaik's manoeuvres to replace Mr. Biswanath Das and the Congress Party's open encouragement for defections. The Das government formed on April 3, 1971 fell on June 9, 1972 following a resolution of Utkal Congress to merge with Congress (R). The leadership of the latter played a trick in accepting all but seven including Patnaik and his supporters.

On June 9, 1972, Mrs. Satpathy⁸ headed the government supported by Congress, Utkal Congress and some other defectors from Singh Deo's Swatantra Party. Singh Deo became the leader of the opposition in the Orissa Legislative Assembly.

During this period political instability again raised its ugly head because of large-scale defections from ^{the} Congress Party. When the Central Party High Command of the Congress denied admission to Biju Patnaik and his six supporters to the Congress Party, the Utkal Congress was again revived.

8. Mrs. Satpathy prior to accepting the Chief Ministership was the Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, she was sent to lead the dissension-riven Congress in the State.

On December 22, 1972 eleven members of ^{the} Utkal Congress who had earlier joined the Congress (R) returned to ^{the} Utkal Congress. In the meanwhile, the Pragati Party was formed by the three most important leaders of Orissa like H.K. Mahtab, Biju Patnaik and R.N. Singh Doo. On March 1, 1973, when 25 members withdrew their support to the Satpathy Ministry and joined the Pragati Party, its number was increased to 70. The Pragati Party demanded the formation of an alternative government and resignation of the Congress ministry. The same day, Mrs. Satpathy tendered the resignation of her ministry and advised the Governor to dissolve the Assembly. President's Rule was imposed in the State from March 3, 1973.

The elections to the Orissa Legislative Assembly were held in 1974. The Congress Party captured 69 seats. With the support of CPI and Independents, the Congress formed the government for the second time under Mrs. Satpathy. Dr. (Mrs.) Asthana sums up the second term of Mrs Satpathy in these words:

"The ruling party has always encouraged defections. The ~~type~~ of political offices- patronage etc. have encouraged the members of opposition parties to defect to the ruling

party. The post-1974 election period in Orissa saw the defection of several members of the BLD defecting to Congress.⁹ With these defections, the Congress strength in the Assembly went up to 84. Under the leadership of Smt. Satpathy, the Congress provided a stable government for 2 years. But, this stability was once again sacrificed at the cost of factionalism within the Congress. Ministerial reshuffle, Congress-CPI alliance, emergency were some of the factors which led to political instability in the State. Satpathy was accused of confronting the centre and deviating from the "national mainstream". Finally, she was compelled to resign from the position of leadership of the legislature party.⁹

As Mrs. Satpathy had been sent to the State and had, as such no experience in the State politics, she was confronted within the party very often. She had no political base on the State. The ministry lacked cohesion. Mrs. Satpathy was put in an embarrassing situation when seven Congress MLAs voted for the opposition in the Rajya Sabha elections.¹⁰ There was a revolt within the ministry. Banko Bihary Das, Minister for Revenue and Rural Development was asked to resign when he refused to give a statement

9. Asthana, Pushpa, op.cit., p.412.

10. The Hindustan Times, April 21, 1974.

"to dispel the impression of discord within the Government assiduously promoted by certain elements".¹¹

Binayak Acharya also played a crucial role in the campaign against Mrs. Satpathy's ouster. Mrs. Satpathy resigned on December 16, 1976. Then for the fourth time President's Rule was imposed on the State. Acharya succeeded her as the next Chief Minister.

"Under Acharya's leadership Congress had the opportunity to rule the State for the briefest period i.e., 123 days. He had started with a good will which he soon lost by his idealism and procrastination in certain important matters and his inability to brighten up the image of the government through drastic measures, which were called for, in the changed situation. His close party colleagues, who had brought him to power, soon got disillusioned with him, while his opponents who included a number of former ministers and pro-Satpathy Congressmen continued to raise issues against his leadership. The leader of this group was Shri Gangadhar Mahapatra, an ex-minister in Satpathy's government".¹²

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11. The Times of India, May 25, 1975.

12. Asthana, Pushpa, op.cit., pp.412-13.

After the revocation of the Emergency, Mrs. Gandhi called for the national elections in 1977. The alliance among the opposition parties led to the emergence of the Janata Party.¹³ In the Parliamentary election, the Congress lost its dominance for the first time after independence. Mr. Morarji Dasai, the leader of the Janata Party became the Prime Minister in March 24, 1977. After winning the Lok Sabha elections, the Janata Party wanted to extend its base to the State levels. So, it dissolved nine State Legislative Assemblies including the Orissa Assembly where the Congress was the ruling Party, on the pretext that the Congress had lost the mandate of people at the national level.

Elections to the Orissa Assembly took place on June 10, 1977. The Janata Party secured a two-thirds majority and formed the government under the leadership of Mr. Nilamani Routray, a staunch follower of Biju Patnaik. The Janata government continued in office till 1980, when the general elections were held at the national as well as the State level.

13. Janata Party consisted of BLD, Congress (O), Bharatiya Jan Sangh, Socialist Party and Congress For Democracy.

This in brief, has been the broad trend of Orissa politics since 1952 to 1977. This highlights the kind of political culture that prevails in Orissa, in which different political parties have been operating in different periods of time. Scheduled Tribes representatives also become a part and parcel of this political culture. Since the first General Elections with the introduction of Parliamentary democracy on the basis of adult franchise, the Scheduled Tribes of Orissa also participated in the democratic politics of Orissa.

General candidates can not get themselves elected from the reserved constituencies, but on the otherhand, the Scheduled Tribe candidates are not disqualified to contest in the general constituencies. In the reserved constituencies the political competition is intra-ethnic in character.

In Orissa, the Scheduled Tribes are not united under any political banner. They do not have any specific political party, rather they are affiliated to different political parties operating in the State from time to time. That is why, in Orissa Legislative Assembly simultaneously some tribal representatives are in the ruling party and others in the opposition. Now a number of questions come to our mind

regarding the political affiliations of these tribal legislators. What are these political parties on the tickets of which the tribal representatives get elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly? Whether do they get elected in large numbers from any political party or equally from different political parties? If so, what are the reasons? What are the character of these political parties which give them maximum political representation? These are some of the questions that require to be answered. The problem being complex we only hope to answer some of the questions in the process of our discussion.

The following part of this chapter discusses the political parties of Orissa, their nature and support-base.

BI POLITICAL PARTIES

The political analysis will not be complete without a reference to the pattern of party politics in Orissa.

In Orissa, different political parties — national as well as regional, both 'rightist' and 'leftist' —

have contested elections at different times.¹⁴ From the factional politics of the Congress Party in Orissa, new parties were formed by the dissident groups.¹⁵ The character as well as the bases of operation of these major political parties will now be discussed in brief.

(1) Congress Party:

Congress Party is as old as the national movement in Orissa. It is the oldest party in the State. After the first General Elections it reinforced its status as the only fullfledged national party.

Like in other parts of the country, the ministry-making by the Congress Party was first started in the mid-thirties in Orissa. Two kinds of movements were launched by the leaders of the Congress in Orissa: (a) national movement against colonial rule and (b) movement for integration of the princely states in Orissa. This was the expression of Oriya nationalism.

14. There are national parties like Congress, PSP, SSP, Swatantra and the CPI units in Orissa. Except Congress and CPI, others are now no more in political scene of Orissa. The Ganatantra Parishad and Jherkhand were local parties, the former merged with Swatantra Party in 1962 and the latter has no political significance now in Orissa. Other regional parties like Jana Congress Utkal Congress and Pragati Party were also sometimes in Orissa politics. Communists and Socialists are the leftist. The example of rightist organisation in Orissa is Swatantra.

Regarding the character of the party it can be said that "the Congress Party in 1959 was neither a leftist nor a rightist party, it was not even left to the centre, it was rather a centrist party".¹⁶ The Congress Party changed its ideological position slightly left of the centre after 1969 when Congress Party adopted some socialistic principles.

Most of the national leaders were in the Congress and the area of their operation was more or less confined to the coastal districts of Orissa. During the freedom struggle Congress did not have access to the erstwhile feudatory states of Orissa. Even immediately after independence and integration of princely states in Orissa, the Congress Party could not extend its base in Western Orissa consisting largely of former princely states. Only after the sixties the Congress was able to penetrate into these highlands of the state.

(ii) Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra Party:

The Swatantra Party was the second major political

15. Jana Congress and Utkal Congress were formed by the dissident groups of Congress Party in 1966 and 1970 respectively.

16. Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., p.253.

force in the State politics of Orissa.

"But prior to the birth of the Swatantra Party in Orissa in 1962, the main actors of this party belonged to the Ganatantra Parishad, a party formed by the tribals and their ruling chiefs in the districts of Sambalpur, Balangir, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Koraput. This party was born out of reaction to the Congress activities in the pre-independent India. The rulers of the above mentioned districts who lost their States in the year 1947 after the merger of the States in India, opted for participating in the Indian Parliamentary politics and they formed a party known as Ganatantra Parishad in October 1948. The basis of this party was to start with anti-coastal feelings. It is therefore, said to be a product of reaction as it did not have any clear cut party ideologies".¹⁷

"The leaders of the Congress Party were divided into leftist and rightist groups on the issues of abolition of intermediaries, liquidation of agricultural indebtedness etc. While the leftist within the Congress wanted to take the radical measures, the rightists were opposed to such drastic actions, thereby championing the cause of vested interests".¹⁸

17. Ibid., pp.143-44.

18. Asad, Maulana Abul Kalam, India Wins Freedom, (Bombay, 1959), p.22.

In the post-independence era, this conflict between the rightist and the leftist sections of the Congress led to the emergence of the Swantara Party in India. The Nagpur Resolution of the AICC became the immediate background for the creation of the Swatantra Party.

The Orissa unit of ^{the} Swatantra Party came into being after the merger of the Ganatantra Parishad with the All India Swatantra Party. R.N. Singh Deo and P.K. Deo became the leaders of the Orissa unit of the Party. Most of the leaders of the Swatantra Party in Orissa were from the feudal groups of Raja, Maharaja and ex-Zamindars. The Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes from the Western regions formed the rank and file of the party. They had traditional respect for the leaders of the princely States. That is why, ^{the} Ganatantra Parishad was not strictly a democratic political party; however, the discipline among the members of the Parishad was of a very high order. The discipline was not because of commitment to a particular ideology but due to their respect for their rulers and suspicion against the coastal leadership of the Congress Party.

So far as ideology is concerned, the Swatantra Party was a conservative party which believed in the merits of free economy. In 1967, the Swatantra was an extreme rightist party. The traditional slogan of Swatantra Party was the elimination of 'controls, permits, license and quota-raj'. The Swatantra Party supported the continuance of privy purses and compensation to ex-princes and opposed to any type of nationalisation of industries.

The hold of the Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra was very effective in Western Orissa's predominantly ex-feudatory states. Even the top leaders of the Congress Party in Orissa were not able to replace the hold of the Swatantra Party in those areas. Congress was able to extend its electoral bases in Western Orissa only after the late sixties.

(iii) The Praja Socialist Party (PSP):

The role of the Orissa branch of the PSP was vital to Orissa politics. It worked as a solid bloc in the opposition.

The main areas of operation of the PSP were the coastal districts of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore. It had no access

into the hilly areas of Western Orissa except Mayurbhanj district. Most of its members were ex-Congressmen who left the party after the separation of the Congress Socialist Party. Some of these leaders had an all-Orissa reputation of service and dedication to the cause of national independence during the freedom movement. The ideology of the PSP was largely similar to that of the Congress Party. Leaders like Mr. S.N. Dwivedy, Mr. Banka Bihari Das and Mr. Prasanna Kumar Das were very popular in the State.

The PSP was able to attract the attention of the agriculturists of the coastal districts of Orissa. The unity and discipline inside the party were commendable and its leaders were articulate, militant and capable politicians. The party had made a tremendous impact in the Assembly because most of its members took active part in the proceedings of the legislature. The leaders of this party did not miss a chance to expose the government.

The mid-term elections of 1971 was devastating for PSP leaders. It demoralised the rank and file of the PSP and Mrs. Gandhi's socialistic ideals convinced the PSP leaders that they had no future if they chose to stay

outside the Congress. Ultimately, PSP was merged with the Congress on May 27, 1972.

(iv) Communists — CPI and CPI(M):

"If one looks at the role of the Communist parties in Orissa, then Communist movement in Orissa is said to be absent in terms of its role in the States like West Bengal and Kerala. These parties have their base in coastal part of the State like Socialists and the Congress. Some of the eminent Communist leaders in the State are Loknath Chaudhury, Gengadhar Paikray and others."¹⁹

After the Chinese aggression against India in 1962, the party was split into CPI and CPI(M) at the national as well as in the State of Orissa.

Because of the absence of militant proletarians in Orissa the Communist Parties have not made any headway in the State politics of Orissa. The trade union movement is also not so pervasive because of the agrarian conditions of Orissa and the late start of industrialisation in the State.

19. Asthana, Pushpa, op.cit., p.287.

(v) Jharkhand Party:

Jharkhand Party is mainly the Party of tribals in Chhotanagpur belt. The objective of this party is to demand for a separate State within the Indian Union for the people of this region.

The base of this party is restricted only to the north-western Orissa especially in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Sundergarh. In the beginning, the party attracted the tribals of these regions, but gradually the stronghold of the party has been weakened.

Sonaram Soren of Mayurbhanj was the founder of this party in Orissa. He organised the Adivasi Sabha in 1946 which was later on converted into the Jharkhand Party in Orissa. In the first General Elections (1952), six contestants including Sonaram Soren, representing this party were elected to ^{the} Orissa Assembly. But soon after becoming a member of the Assembly, Sonaram Soren joined the Nilhil Utkal Adivasi Congress, an opponent front of Jharkhand and extended his support to the Congress in forming the government under the leadership of N.K. Chaudhury.

He joined the Cabinet as a Minister for Tribal and Rural Welfare, Labour and Commerce.²⁰

"During the period 1951 to 1959, the Jharkhand Party which was leading the Adivasi movements in the northern hill districts of Orissa, faced constant threats from two other organisations — the Ganatantra Parishad and Nikhil Utkal Adivasi Congress."²¹

"Towards the end of the year 1950, Mr. Ranjit Singh Bariah laid the foundation of the Nikhil Utkal Adivasi Congress which in succeeding years was to give the Jharkhand movement of Orissa a go-by."²²

"In 1973, the solidarity of this party in Orissa was weakened as it split into two factions: (a) the All India Jharkhand Party headed by Bagun Sumbrai, and (b) the Jharkhand Party led by N.E. Horo. This division occurred not because of differences in ideology but because of tug-of-war for leadership between these two."²³

20. See, Mahapatra, L.K., "The Jharkhand Party in Orissa", Singh, K.S. (ed.), Tribal Movements in India, vol. II, (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), p.68.

21. Ibid., p.69.

22. Bailey, F.G., op.cit., p.200.

23. Mahapatra, L.K., op.cit., p.70.
N.E.Horo and Bagun Sumbrai (both) belong to Bihar. The split of the party in Bihar had also an echo in Orissa.

(vi) Jana Congress:

Bitter factionalism in Congress led to the emergence of Jana Congress in 1966 on the eve of fourth General Elections in Orissa. Dissident group of Congress under the leadership of Dr. H.K. Mahtab left Congress and formed this regional party. As Mahtab's leadership came in conflict with the emerging leadership of Biju Patnaik within the Congress Party, the former formed this party to take revenge against his political rivals in the 1967 elections. His political rivals in the Congress Party were the worst sufferers in the elections. Jana Congress made alliance with R.N. Singh Deo's Swatantra Party and formed a coalition government. Most important leaders of Jana Congress were Dr. H.K. Mahtab, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, Banamali Patnaik and Surendranath Pattnaik. As all these members were the earlier senior and experienced Congress leaders, their ideological mould was shaped by Congress ideology and its ideals. Democratic socialism prohibition and such other ideals of Gandhiji were deep in their mind.

"Coalition at party level also could not change their ideological conviction of those leaders immediately. The coalition manifest (of Jana Congress-Swatantra Party in 1967) of the allies

contained compromises in principle in so far as the Jana-Congress agreed to the "elimination of controls, permits, license and the quota-raj", the traditional slogan of Swatantra Party and elimination of restrictive procedure and creation of favourable conditions and freedom for expansion of business and industries by private individuals and the Swatantra Party agreed to change the monopoly system of leaves trades."²⁴

The party lost its existence when Dr. Mahtab left the Jana Congress Party and joined the Congress (R) in 1971. In 1974 only one candidate was elected out of 42 candidates fielded in the elections.

Almost all leaders of the Jana Congress were earlier Congress leaders; so, the base of the party was mostly confined to the coastal districts. They had got some seats in Dhankanal, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Phulbani districts.

(vii) Utkal Congress:

Like the Jana Congress, Utkal Congress was born out of factionalism within the Congress Party. Biju Patnaik was expelled from the Congress Party in 1970 after the split of the Congress Party. Almost all his supporters

24. Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., p.254.

walked out of the Congress along with him, and formed the regional party which he named as Utkal Congress. This party was built around his personality and performed well in the mid-term poll in 1971, but it was too weak to form a government. Biju Patnaik the leader of this party was defeated in all constituencies he contested. The Swatantra Party and Patnaik's Utkal Congress along with Jharkhand Party formed the United Front Government headed by Biswanath Das.

The Das government fell on June 9, 1972 when the resolution was passed that the Utkal Congress would be merged in the Congress (R). After few days it was again revived by Biju Patnaik, when all members were not admitted in the Congress (R).

The Utkal Congress later on became the constituent unit of the Pragati Party which became a part of the Bharatiya Lok Dal and was afterwards merged with the Janata Party.

As the Utkal Congress was the splinter group of the Congress Party, it did not have any clear-cut ideology.

Prakash Sarangi writes: "During the brief period of its existence, we cannot identify the Utkal Congress with any particular set of doctrines or beliefs. Its ideas oscillated between the centrist policy of the Congress Party and the conservative outlook of the Swatantra Party".²⁵

This party had bases principally in the coastal areas, though not exclusively confined to this region. It had extended its base to Western Orissa also.

(viii) Pragati Party:

Pragati Party emerged from the alliance between the Utkal Congress, the Swatantra and the Swadhin Congress group of Dr. H.K. Mahtab on the eve of the mid-term elections in 1974. The background to the formation of this federal party is stated below.

25. Sarangi, Prakash, "Internal Challenge to the Congress System : The Case of the Utkal Congress", Indian Journal of Political Science, vol.40, no.3, September 1979, p.441.

In the early phase there was a similarity of views between Utkal Congress and Congress(R). Socialism and democracy were the goals of both the parties. By 1974 on several policy matters Utkal Congress and the Congress appeared to have a divergent views as Utkal Congress did not follow such 'clear-cut centrist policy'. The policies of Utkal Congress in the later phase carried with it a conservative tinge. It was so because it collaborated with the Swatantra Party to spread its network in the hill areas. Thus, Utkal Congress shifted its ideology. For details see, Ibid., pp.441-43.

As discussed earlier the Congress(R) accepted all Utkal Congress member except seven including Biju Patnaik. It was perceived as an insult by them. This time Mahtab also realised that he did not have any future in the Congress Party. So, he left the Congress on January 1973 along with four others and formed the independent Swadhin Bloc or the Swadhin Congress group in the legislature.

On the otherhand, the Svsatantra Party also by that time suffered because of large-scale defection. With the defection of the eleven members in June 19, 1972, the strength of the party was reduced to 25 in the Assembly.

This large-scale defection on the otherhand, increased the strength of the Congress party in the Assembly. This was the political situation on the eve of 1974 mid-term elections. The leaders of the above-mentioned three parties found no alternative but to fight the Congress in the elections. Hence they decided to come together to challenge Congress Party collectively. So, the three veterans of Orissa politics like Mahtab, Patnaik and Singh Deo for the first time came together to create a new party against the Congress Party in Orissa.

On January 28, 1973 the Swachin Congress of Mahtab, the Utkal Congress of Biju Patnaik and Swatantra Party of R.N. Singh Deo formed the United Front with 28 members and named it 'Pragati Legislative Party' in Orissa Legislative Assembly. They drew up a common programme and Mr. Biju Patnaik took the leadership of the Party. The Orissa unit of the BSP also joined the Pragati Party.

Though, the Pragati Party constituted the main opposition to the Congress in 1974 elections, it could not perform well in comparison to the Congress. This Party contested the elections from both regions -- coastal as well as Western Orissa.

The Pragati Party was ideologically disorganised because it was not an united homogeneous party.²⁶

26. The Pragati Party was however, not one party in the sense that the constituent units of it contested the 1974 elections with their different flags and election symbols.

By the time of the 1977 elections the Pragati Party had become a part of the Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD)²⁷ when the Janata Party was formed to find an all India alternative to Congress, the BLD merged with it.

(ix) Janata Party:

Early in 1977, a new political development took place at the national level when Mrs. Gandhi announced the elections to the Lok Sabha for March, 1977. Some opposition parties decided to come together to form a viable alternative to the Congress in the forthcoming elections. On January 20, 1977 the four non-Communist Parties, i.e., the Congress (O), the Jana Sangh, the BLD and the Socialists agreed to work as one party to face the elections. The new party was named as Janata Party. After the elections were over Congress For Democracy of Jagjivan Ram and H.N. Bahuguna also joined the Janata Party. For the first

27. Some of the national leaders of the opposition parties made an effort to form a viable national alternative to the Ruling Congress at the centre. As a result the Bharatiya Lok Dal was formed in October 1974. With the merger of seven opposition parties in Orissa BLD came into existence. These seven parties that formed the Orissa unit of BLD were: Swatantra, Utkal Congress, SSP, Congress (O), Socialist Party, Jana Sangh and Jana Congress.

time at the national level Congress lost its dominance. The Janata Party came to power and Mr. Morarji Dasai became the Prime Minister of India.

Once the Parliamentary elections had assured the Janata Party a solid base in the Parliament, the consolidation of the party at the State level was clearly recognised. Hence, nine State Legislative Assemblies where ^{the} Congress was in power were dissolved on the plea that ^{the} Congress Party had no right to rule the States as it had been rejected at the national level. Orissa was one of these States. When elections took place in Orissa, the Janata Party got a thumping majority in the State and Mr. Nilamani Routray a protege of Biju Patnaik, became the Chief Minister. The Party could not complete its full term because the intra-party rivalry at the national level had its repercussions in Orissa too. The Janata Party was in power till 1980, when ^{the} Congress Party was swept back to power by a landslide victory under the leadership of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She repeated the Janata Party's act by dissolving nine State Assemblies where the Janata Party continued to rule. Fresh elections were ordered and the Congress Party came to

power in those states.

In nutshell, these are the major political parties — national and regional — that have been in the arena of State politics of Orissa. Their role in the political processes of the State and their natures and support bases have been discussed in order to understand the political affiliations of the tribal legislators of Orissa Legislative Assembly. This aspect of the dissertation is discussed in the chapter-V.

To understand the political participation of Scheduled Tribes in Orissa politics, it is necessary to have a look at their socio-economic conditions. This aspect will be discussed in the chapter- IV.

Chapter- IV

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF TRIBES OF ORISSA

// "Perpetually washed by the blue waters of Bay of Bengal, Orissa lies on India's east coast with 480 kms of sea-beach"....

"The State of Orissa is located in the east coast of India between 17° 48' and 22° 34' north latitude and 81° 24' and 87° 29' east longitude. The State is bounded in the north by Bihar in the west by Madhya Pradesh, in the north-east by West Bengal and in the south by Andhra Pradesh."¹

The area of the State is 155,782 sq.kms.

"Physiographically, the State consists of extensive plateau in the interior with a foreground of wide coastal plains."²

Broadly, the territory of the State may be divided into four distinct regions. Each region has a distinctive characteristics of its own: //

- The eastern plateau comprises the district of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh and the Pallalahara subdivision of Dhenkanal district;

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1. Panda, F.C., Pathy, D, and Rath, B.K. (eds.), The Heritage of Orissa, (Cuttack: Produced by Orissa Tourism Development Corporation for the Department of Home, Government of Orissa, and printed at Archana Press, Cuttack).
 2. Ibid., p.1.

- The Central River Basin comprises the districts of Balangir, Sambalpur and Dhenkanal;
- The eastern hilly region lies to the South and south-west of these Central River Basins stretching for about 248 kms in S.W. and N.E. . . This region comprises of districts of Boudh-Phulbani, Ganjam and Koraput; and
- Coastal belt comprises the districts of Balasore,¹ Cuttack,¹ Puri and a portion of Ganjam.³ //

Historically, Orissa has been divided into two regions — the former British administered parts and the former princely States, which correspond to the present broad division of Orissa into coastal and Western hilly areas respectively.⁴ There was a marked difference between these regions in terms of socio-economic and administrative pattern. The former was more developed than the latter one. A good part of the people of Western region belongs to the adivasi

3. Ibid., pp.1-2.

4. British-administered parts comprised six districts of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Sambalpur, Ganjam and Koraput. The princely-ruled States consisted of present district of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Phulbani, Sundargarh, Bolangir and Kalahandi.

Generally, four districts of Orissa, Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam are known as coastal area. Rest districts form the Western Orissa.

community who speak a number of tribal dialects. They live in abject poverty. On the otherhand, because of the fertile soil the people of the coastal area have a higher standard of living.

The coastal region had experienced the British administrative system while the rule by the princes in the Western region was direct, paternal and personal. This is the reason why the people in Western Orissa could not reconcile to the sad and long bureaucratic process. Coupled with this was the uneven economic development (through the hilly areas boasted of rich natural resources) which made the anti-pathy more intense. Apart from the administrative distinctions, lack of communications also resulted in creating mutual suspicion and cleavage between the people of the two regions. It is not too a fine point to put that the people in Western Orissa think they are misgoverned and exploited by those of the coastal region.⁵

A : DEMOGRAPHY

✓ According to the 1971 census the population of Orissa was 2,19,44,615 and this roughly 4 per cent of the total

5. For details see Bailey, F.R., Politics and Social Change : Orissa in 1959, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

Indian population:

"The average density of population in Orissa is 292 persons per square mile against 358 for India. The coastal region, comprising 23.3 per cent of the total area of the State, has 45.6 per cent of the total population whereas the inland region having 76.6 per cent of the total area contains 54 per cent of the total population."⁶

An important demographic feature of Orissa is the large concentration of the tribal people in the State. According to 1971 Census Orissa has 5.07 million tribal people which constitutes 23.11 per cent of the total population. The tribal population of Orissa constitutes 13.34 per cent of the total tribal population in India. The distribution pattern of tribal population in Orissa is very uneven. In the hilly tracts of the Western Orissa, there is heavy concentration of the tribal population, while in the coastal districts they have a low percentage.

In Orissa the percentage of Scheduled Castes population is 15.09. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes taken

6. Panda, P.C., et.al. (eds.), op.cit., p.3.

together constitute 38.20 per cent of the total population of the State. Unlike Scheduled Tribes, the Scheduled Castes population is more or less evenly distributed in all districts of the State. When district-wise distribution of tribal population is analysed, it is revealed that Koraput, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh districts form the core area of the tribal belt where the tribal constitute 58.56, 55.34 and 53.40 per cent of the population respectively. The table-1 shows the distribution pattern of tribal population in Orissa. In the four districts of Koraput, Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Mayurbhanj, sixty per cent of tribal population of the State is concentrated.

The most important tribes of Orissa are the Kandha (869,965); Gond (499,267); Santal (452,953); Saora (342,757); Kolha (309,588); Lodha (240,344); Munda (222,117) and Paroja (206,699) against such small groups as the Chenchu (98), Baiga (92) and Birhor (98) and a quite few other tribes with populations less than a thousand persons.⁷

7. Tripathy, B., A Portrait of Population : Orissa, (Cuttack: Census of India, 1971, Series 16: Government of India, 1971), pp.326-28.

Table- I : DISTRIBUTION PATTERN OF SCHEDULED TRIBES AND
SCHEDULED CASTES POPULATION IN DIFFERENT
DISTRICTS OF ORISSA — 1971

State/District	Population 1971	% of S.T.	% of S.C.	% of total ST and SC
ORISSA	2,19,44,615	23.11	15.09	38.20
1. Balasore	18,30,504	7.06	18.51	25.57
2. Cuttack	38,27,678	2.89	18.06	20.95
3. Puri	23,40,859	3.70	13.53	17.23
4. Ganjam	22,93,808	9.98	15.12	25.90
5. Sambalpur	18,44,898	28.13	15.61	43.74
6. Koraput	20,43,281	56.34	13.42	69.76
7. Kalshandi	11,63,869	29.26	17.11	46.37
8. Keonjhar	9,55,514	46.96	11.28	58.24
9. Sundergarh	10,30,758	53.40	8.02	61.42
10. Mayurbhanj	14,37,200	58.56	7.23	65.79
11. Dhenkanal	12,93,914	12.91	16.76	29.97
12. Boudh kanchamals	6,21,675	40.31	18.98	59.29
13. Bolangir	13,69,657	19.72	16.49	36.21

Source: Census of India, 1971, final population figure.

There are sixty-two tribal communities in Orissa. If it is analysed in numerical terms, it can be seen that Koraput district has got the maximum number of tribes followed by Mayurbhanj, Sambalpur and Sundargarh districts. "Each tribe has a distinct language and culture of its own and their socio-economic pattern of living varies from tribe to tribe and region to region. Their economic life centres round pursuits from hunting and food gathering to shifting and settled cultivation."⁸

"Out of these 62 tribes nearly 25 tribes speak their own languages".⁹ They are broadly divided into two groups: (i) Mundary group of Austric family and (ii) Dravidian family. The tribals do not have the scripts for their language except Santal. Santal tribes have been trying to popularise their script on the plea that it is the most scientific for the purposes of correct phonetic pronunciation of their language. They have been exerting pressure for its official recognition but it is yet to be accepted by the Government of Orissa.

8. Panda, P.C. et.al. (ed.), op.cit., p.3.

9. Das, Nityananda, "The Tribal Situation in Orissa", Singh, K.S.(ed.), Tribal Situation in India, (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1972), p.185.

B : CLASSIFICATION OF TRIBES

On the basis of their cultural development and economic activities the tribes of Orissa can be divided into three categories. They are — (i) The Real Primitive tribal communities; (ii) Tribes in Transition and (iii) Assimilated tribes.¹⁰ ✓

✓ (i) Primitive Tribes:

The life of this category of tribes is very heavily influenced by their natural surroundings. They live an isolated life in remote hill areas and speak a language of their own. The language of other groups do not make sense to them. Even if they sometimes understand, it is very inadequate. These tribal groups have still preserved their traditional religious practices, material culture and social organisation etc. They are not exposed to outside influence.

The following tribes can be placed under this category :

"Dongoria Kondh, Uharla Kondh, Kutia Kondh and Kondh in Raygada subdivision of Koraput district.

10. Panda, P.C., et.al. (eds.), op.cit., p.79.

Lenjia Saora, Kutia Kondh, Saora in Ganupur subdivision, Bonda and Koya in the Malkangiri subdivision, Banjara in the Nowarangpur subdivision and Chen Chu, Paringa, Kondh, Gadaba and Jatapu in the Sadar subdivision of the same districts. Lenjia saora in Ganjam district, Kutia Kondh in Phulbani district. Juang and Pauri Bhuyan in Keonjhar and Dhenkanal districts, Birhor, Mankidi and Pauri Bhuyan in Sundargarh district."¹¹

(ii) Tribes in Transition :

The economic lives of this category of tribes are based partly on their natural surroundings and partly in the economy of settled agriculture. This category of tribes are in a transitional stage. Besides, their own languages, they understand either Oriya or the other language of the "outsiders". Their religious practices, material culture and social organisation are very much exposed to the influence of "outsiders" especially the Hindus.

The following are the important tribal communities who can be placed under this category:

"Bhuyan, Oraon Konda Dora, Santal, Bagata, Bhunjia, Bhumij, Dal, Didayi, Dharua, Bathudi, Oramataya, Paraja, Rahmar, Bhinjhis, Parenga, Ho, Kora, Kharia, Kisan and Mirdha."¹²

10
4
11. Ibid., p.79.

12. Ibid.

(iii) Assimilated Tribes:

"These are the groups of tribes who have lost almost all their tribal characteristics and have been integrated into the Hindu society as specific castes. The following communities can be placed under this category:

Kuli, Sahara, Binjhal, Bhujan (excluding Pavdi Bhujan), Holva, Bhottara, Saunti, Matoya, Gond (excluding the Gonds of Umerkote area of Koraput district)".¹³

The problems of all these tribal groups are not alike. Even after three decades of independence the life pattern of the primitive tribes remain more or less the same. All the facilities provided by the government to the tribal people are beyond the reach of this particular tribal group. The other sections of tribal groups especially Assimilated Tribes are the most benefitted tribal groups. The Tribes in Transition like Mundas, Orans and Santal in Orissa have developed at a much faster pace than the comparatively backward communities like Seoras, Juangs, Dongiria Kondhs and Kutia Kondh, etc.

13. Ibid., p.79.

However, special attempts have been made through various schemes of Tribal and Rural Development of the State to accelerate the socio-economic amelioration of the tribal groups who are the most backward.

C : TRIBAL ECONOMY

Tribal economy is basically a self-sufficient subsistence economy. But, today in the complex world tribal people have undergone a lot of socio-economic transformation. The economy of tribes in Orissa can be mainly grouped under the following heads on the basis of their different stages of social and economic growth.

(1) Collectional and food gathering economy: This kind of economy is seen among the most primitive tribes who are untouched by the forces of modernization. Khorias and Birhors living in the mountain areas practise this kind of economy.

(ii) Shifting Cultivation : Shifting cultivation is a cultivation by rotation on the hill-slopes and hill-tops by slash and burn tillage. The primitive tribal communities of Orissa depend chiefly on shifting cultivation. The

backward groups like Kutia Kondh, Bonda, Hill Juang and Paudi Bhuyan who practise this kind of economy. According to the Survey Report given by the Tribal Research Institute of the Government of Orissa the total land affected by the shifting cultivation was estimated at 18832.5 hectares and the total population engaged in shifting cultivation would not exceed 240,000 lakh. The shifting cultivation is known by different names in different places.¹⁴

(iii) Settled Agriculture : The Santal, the Munda, the Oron, the Kisan or Nagesia have become settled agriculturists. "Occupationally 89.10 per cent of the tribal population is locked up in the agriculture, either as cultivators or agricultural labourers. Though precise figures on tribal land-holding are not available, it can safely be assumed that most tribal land-owners are marginal and small farmers."¹⁵

(iv) Industrial and Urban Workers : The pressure on the land with the growing population, the industrial complexes and minings have attracted a large number of tribal people

14. Patnalk, N., "Shifting Cultivation in Orissa", Singh, K.S. (ed.), Economics of the Tribes and Their Transformation, (New Delhi: Concept, 1982), p.242.

15. Rath, S.N., "Planning for Tribal Development : An Anthropological Approach", in Chaudhuri, Buddhadeb (ed.), Tribal Development in India, (Delhi: Inter-India Publications, 1982), p.348.

as unskilled industrial labourers. In Rourkela, Jamshedpure and in the mining areas of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and other districts of Orissa, it is found that the tribals have become industrial workers. Besides, industrial workers, we find some tribal have migrated to the urban areas like Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Paradeep etc., and they work in these places as daily labourers in different construction sectors.

D : LITERACY AND EDUCATION

Orissa is backward in comparison to other states in the field of education. In Orissa the literacy rate is high in the coastal areas of the State than in the inland districts. This is very clear from the Table-II.

Thus, there are more percentage of literates in the coastal districts of Orissa (like Cuttack, Puri, Belasore etc.) and this corroborates the fact that the modern educational institutions were first established in the coastal districts which were under British rule than the princely areas of the State. Moreover, the inland districts of Orissa are largely inhabited by the tribal people who have not understood the importance of modern education.

Table- II : PERCENTAGE OF LITERACY BY DISTRICT — 1971

District/State	Percentage of Literacy
1. Balasore	33.71
2. Cuttack	36.43
3. Puri	35.34
4. Ganjam	24.72
5. Sambalpur	27.12
6. Koraput	10.58
7. Dhenkanol	27.76
8. Kelehandi	17.85
9. Phulbani	19.79
10. Bolangiri	19.92
11. Keonjhar	21.25
12. Mayurbhanj	18.05
13. Sundergarh	26.47
ORISSA	26.18

Sources: Compiled from B. Tripathy, op.cit., p.202.

The literacy rate among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is far too low as compared to the general population in the State. According to the 1971 Census the literacy rate among the Scheduled Castes is 15.6 per cent as compared to 26.2 per cent for total population of the State. The rate is still lower among the Scheduled Caste females being only 5.2 per cent. Literacy rate among the Scheduled Tribes is 9.5 per cent whereas the literacy rate of the tribal female is only 2.6 per cent.¹⁶

"What is the literacy rate among these communities 10 years ago and how fast is literacy spreading among them? In 1961 the literacy among Scheduled Castes was 11.6%. This has gone up to 15.6% in 1971. The rate of increase is thus 34.5%. Similarly, the literacy among Scheduled Tribes was 7.4% in 1961 which has improved to 9.5% now resulting a growth rate of 28.4%. The growth rate of literacy among both Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is higher than the State growth rate of literacy computed at 20.7% — a happy augury for castes and tribes."¹⁷

Thus, we see that Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes literacy rate is very low in comparison to the State's

16. Tripathy, B., op.cit., pp.317-18.

17. Ibid., p.318.

literacy rate which is 26.2 per cent. If we compare the literacy rate of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the former is in a better position whether it is male or female. Thus, the Scheduled Tribes literacy is very deplorable in Orissa.

The establishment of residential schools known as the Ashram Schools with vocational bias has helped the Scheduled Tribes in gaining education to a great extent. Awards of stipends and scholarship in higher levels and supply of reading and writing materials at the lower level, have enabled them to get education. However, even this type of education has not encouraged much literacy among the backward tribes. At the primary level there is high rate of drop outs. With reference to the pre-matric and post-matric scholarship awarded annually tribe-wise, S.K. Palit observed: "The largest and the most backward tribe in the State, viz., Kondhs have the lowest percentage of literacy and the minimum number of pre-matric and post-matric scholarship are awarded to this group. The Santhals in Mayurbhanj and the tribes of Sundargarh take by far the largest share of the stipends and scholarship."¹⁸

18. Palit, S.K., "An Approach to the Fifth Plan For Tribal Welfare", Adivasi, vol.XIV, 1972-73, no.1, (Orissa: Published by Tribal Research Bureau), p.3.

Thus, a few advanced tribes in the State have taken advantage of these educational facilities. The isolated primitive tribes are still to available of these facilities.

Chapter- V

SOCIO-POLITICAL PROFILE OF TRIBAL LEGISLATORS

As already stated, under the constitutional provision of political safeguards to the Scheduled Tribes, the political representatives of the tribal people get elected to the Parliament as well as various State Assemblies from the constituencies especially reserved for them.

In Orissa Legislative Assembly, under the provision of Article 332 of the Constitution at present out of 147 seats 34 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes, whereas Scheduled Castes are allotted 22 seats. After the first General Elections a lot of changes have been made with regard to the number and nature of constituencies for the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes.

The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Order (Amendment) Act, 1956 made some changes in the list of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of all the States. As a result, the Delimitation Commission redetermined the number of seats to be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

After it had been decided to continue the operation of the reservation provisions in the constitution for a further period of ten years, the demand for doing away with

all two-member constituencies gained in strength and eventually led to the passing of Two-Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act in January, 1961. The task of dividing each one of these constituencies into two compact and convenient single-member constituencies, and deciding in which of them the seats should be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, was given to the Election Commission.¹

Accordingly, the seats were reserved for the Scheduled Castes where the proportion of their population to the total was comparatively large. But, on the other hand for the Scheduled Tribes the seats were reserved in the areas where the proportion of their population to the total population was the largest.

The decision to abolish all two-member constituencies for the House of People as well as State Legislative Assemblies and to have each of them divided into two single-member constituencies, altered the shape of a large number of constituencies and also the pattern of elections for filling the reserved seats in the Legislatures.

1. See, Report on the Third General Elections in India, 1962, vol. I, (General), Election Commission,
p.8.

After the publication of the States' Reorganisation Commission Report, the Delimitation Commission of 1952 increased by one seat from 28 as provided in 1952 to 29 reserved for Scheduled Tribes in Orissa. Again, by 1967 General Elections seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes was increased to 34 whereas for Scheduled Castes it was decreased to 22. After 1967, the number of seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes has not been changed while the total number of seats of Orissa Legislative Assembly, after the census report of 1971, was raised from 140 to 147 in the last part of the year 1973. The Table- III shows the changing nature of the constituencies and the total number of seats allotted to the Scheduled Tribes in ^{the} Orissa Legislative Assembly. Now let us proceed to discuss the socio-political profile of tribal legislators elected from these reserved constituencies to Orissa Assembly.

A : SOCIAL BACKGROUND

A study of the social background of legislators is necessary to understand their political behaviours, role perceptions and attitudes in the Legislative Assembly.

*This is all important because political decisions or

Table No- III : NATURE OF CONSTITUENCIES AND SEATS ALLOTTED TO SCHEDULED TRIBES IN ORISSA
ASSEMBLY

Election year	No. of seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes	% to the total seats of the State	Total number of Orissa Assembly seats	Nature of Constituencies	
				Single member	Double* member
1	2	3	4	5	6
1952	28	20.0	140	16	12
1957	29	20.7	140	15	14
1961	29	20.7	140	29	--
1967	34	24.28	140	34	--
1971	34	24.28	140	34	--
1974	34	23.1	147	34	--
1977	34	23.1	147	34	--

* Double-member constituencies were abolished by the Two-Member Constituencies (Abolition) Act, 1961.

Source: Compiled from (1) Report on the Second General Elections in India, 1957, vol. I (General) Election Commission of India, p. 55.

(2) Report on the Third General Elections in India, 1962 vol. I (General), Election Commission of India, p. 14

(3) Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, 1967, vol. I (General), Election Commission of India, p. 5.

policies of a government are closely related to the interest represented by the political elite and the interests are partly governed by and moulded by the social background of the legislators, though the presence or absence of articulated and organised interests also makes difference. Hence the importance of the role of interest and pressure groups in a democratic society.²

An attempt has been made in this chapter to analyse the composition, nature and the social background of the Scheduled Tribe legislators during the period between 1961 and 1977. Mainly based on the Orissa Legislative Assembly's 'Who is Who', this study will indicate the extent to which the Scheduled Tribe MLAs reflect the social and cultural demands of their communities.

The variables chosen to assess the socio-political base of Scheduled Tribe legislators are age, education, occupation and origin in a tribe. All these characteristics are not only helpful in the formation of attitudes but also influence the behavioural pattern of the members.

2. Puri, Shashilata, Legislative Elite in an Indian State -- A Case Study of Rajasthan, (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1978), p.31.

I. Age Distribution of Tribal Legislators:

The behaviour of a person is greatly determined by the age factor. The younger members are expected to carry a progressive outlook. But their decisions are pregnant with the dangers of immaturity and rashness. The old members, are more cautious and conservative. They are not ready to break with the past and do not change with the changed circumstances.

An analysis of the age distribution of Scheduled Tribe members of thOrissa Assembly has been done in the Table- IV.

In 1961, total 29 tribal legislators were elected to thOrissa Legislative Assembly. The Table- IV shows that 41.3 per cent of them were between 25 to 34 years; 34.4 per cent between 35 to 44 years; 6.8 per cent between 45 to 54 years; and 3.4 per cent in 55 and above age group. Data of rest 13.7 per cent of the tribal members are not given in the 'Who is Who' of thOrissa Legislative Assembly. Hence, their age classification is not made.

Table- IV : AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEDULED TRIBE LEGISLATORS
(1961-1977)

Age group	1961		1967		1971		1974		1977	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Between 25-34	12	(41.3)	16	(47.00)	21	(61.7)	15	(44.1)	15	(44.1)
" 35-44	10	(34.4)	9	(26.4)	11	(32.3)	15	(44.1)	10	(29.4)
" 45-54	2	(6.8)	7	(20.5)	2	(5.8)	1	(2.9)	4	(11.7)
55 and above	1	(3.4)	1	(2.9)	-	- -	2	(6.8)	3	(8.8)
No information	4	(13.7)	1	(2.9)	-	- -	1	(2.9)	2	(5.8)
	29	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)

Source : Compiled from Who is Who, (Orissa Legislative Assembly, Years - 1966, 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977).

The above table clearly indicates that the tribal legislators belonging to the younger generation were largely recruited to the Assembly. Whereas old members had a very poor representation.

The profile of tribal MLAs by age given in the Table- IV shows that in 1967, 47 per cent of members were in the 25 to 34 age-group; 26.4 per cent between 35 to 44 years; 20.5 per cent between 45 to 54 years and 2.9 per cent in 55 and above group. No information regarding the age of 2.9 per cent members is given in the 'Who is Who' of the Assembly.

Thus, in 1967 a maximum number of tribal MLAs (i.e., 47%) were from the younger age-group, i.e., below 35 years.

The minimum number of MLAs (2.9%) were in the age-group of 55 and above. The members belonging to the age-group between 25 to 44 years constituted 73.4 per cent and between 25 to 64 years constituted 93.4 per cent. From the given table it is revealed that during this period the maximum number of members were in the age-group between 25 to 44 years. From the above analysis it logically follows that younger generation dominated the Assembly and conversely older people were poorly represented.

In 1971, 61.7 per cent of members were between 25 to 34 years, 32.3 per cent between 35 to 44 years and 5.8 per cent between 45 to 54 years. No single member was elected to the Assembly in the age-group between 55 and above. The younger people between the age of 25 to 34 years dominated the House. In addition to this category, the members in the age-group between 25 to 44 years constituted 94 per cent of the total elected Scheduled Tribe members to the Assembly. Only 5.8 per cent of the members were in the age-group between 45 to 54 years.

In 1974, this trend was quite changed. The strength of members in the age group 25 to 34 years had considerably declined. It came down from 61.7 per cent to 44.1 per cent. However, the strength of the members in the age group 35 to 44 years had recorded an increase from 32.3 per cent to 44.1 per cent. Nearly 3 per cent of members were between 45 to 54 years and 5.8 per cent in 55 and above age group. The data regarding age of remaining 2.9 per cent members were not available. From the available data it can be deduced that the members between the age group of 35 to 44 years were numerically more in comparison to the previous three Assemblies. However, the younger members of the

age-group between 25 to 34 years had the dominant position in the House of 1974 inspite of the comparatively better numerical strength of the older members.

Like the previous House, in 1977 also 44 per cent of members were in the age-group between 25 to 34 years. The percentage of members in the age-group between 35 to 44 years was reduced to 29.4 per cent. But the percentage of members between the age-group of 45 to 54 years was increased to 11 per cent in 1977. The older generation (55 and above age-group) was represented maximum (8.8%) in the House in comparison to the preceeding three Assemblies. We have not been able to classify the remaining 5.8 per cent members because of missing data.

The foregoing analysis of the age distribution of tribal legislators in Orissa Assembly enables us to conclude that the members of younger generation (25-34 years) dominated the all Assemblies (1961-1977). They were followed by the members belonging to the age-group between 35 to 44 years. The members of the older generations were poorly represented.

II. Level of Education Among Tribal Legislators:

No educational qualifications have been laid down in the Constitution for the members of a legislative assembly.

except that any eligible voter who is above 25 years of an age can contest election both for assembly and Lok Sabha. However, the impact of educational qualifications on the behavioural pattern of members can not be undermined. Adequately educated persons are likely to prove better leaders than semi-literate and illiterate persons. Education not only helps a legislator in understanding the legislative processes but also enables him to perform his political function in an appropriate and responsible manner.

The pattern of educational background of tribal legislators of Orissa Assembly is given in the Table- V.

Table- V indicates that there is a gradual fall in the number of under-matriculate members in the subsequent years. It has fallen from 52.9 per cent in 1967 to 23.5 per cent in 1977. In the Houses of 1971 and 1974 their position was 44.1 per cent 29.4 per cent respectively. In 1961, 51.7 per cent of the total tribal legislators were undermatriculates. ^{In contrast, the number of matriculates} has increased from 10.3 per cent in 1961 to 23.5 per cent in 1977. In 1967 and 1974, the percentage of the matriculate members was the same (17.6%). In 1971, 14.7 per cent of tribal members were matriculates.

Table- V : LEVEL OF EDUCATION AMONG TRIBAL LEGISLATORS
(1961-1977)

Education	1961		1967		1971		1974		1977	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Under Matriculates	15	(51.7)	18	(52.9)	15	(44.1)	10	(29.4)	8	(23.5)
2. Matriculates	3	(10.3)	6	(17.6)	5	(14.7)	6	(17.6)	8	(23.5)
3. Under Graduates	6	(20.6)	5	(14.7)	6	(17.6)	8	(23.5)	7	(20.5)
4. Graduates	1	(3.4)	2	(5.8)	3	(8.8)	5	(14.7)	4	(11.7)
5. Post-Graduates	-	-	-	-	4	(11.7)	2	(5.8)	3	(8.8)
6. Law Graduates	1	(3.4)	3	(8.8)	1	(=2.9)	-	-	2	(5.8)
7. Diploma	1	(3.4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8. No information	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	(8.8)	2	(5.8)
	29	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)


Source: Compiled from Who is Who, (Orissa Legislative Assembly), Year - 1966, 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977.

Notes : Many candidates had the educational qualifications of UP and NE standard. They are included in the category of Under-Matriculates.

The position of undergraduate members has marked fluctuations in every successive Houses. Their strength in 1961, 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977 is respectively 20.6 per cent; 14.7 per cent; 17.6 per cent ; 23.5 per cent and 20.5 per cent. The number of members with graduate qualification has gradually increased upto 1974. In 1977 it was slightly reduced from the preceding House. Their percentage is 3.4 in 1961, 5.8 in 1967, 8.8 ~~in~~ in 1971, 14.7 in 1974, and 11.7 in 1977.

The members who had the post-graduate educational qualifications are not so significant in terms of their number in comparison to the above three groups. In 1961 and 1967 none of the members had post-graduate qualification but in 1971, 1974 and 1977 their strength was 11.7 per cent, 5.8 per cent and 8.8 per cent respectively. A few law graduates were members of Orissa Legislative Assembly. In 1974, not a single member had the qualification of B.A., LL.B., but in 1961, 1967, 1971 and 1977 their strength was 3.4 per cent, 8.8 per cent, 2.5 per cent and 5.8 per cent respectively. One tribal legislator of 1961 Assembly was a diploma holder. Due to the lack of adequate data, the information regarding the educational qualifications

of 8.8 per cent of tribal members in 1974 Assembly and 5.8 per cent in 1977 House could not be obtained. Again because of the same reason the educational qualification of 6.8 per cent of the tribal legislators are not known to us.

When the educational background of the MLAs is viewed against the background of the  literacy rate of the tribal people in the State, they are immensely much more educated than the population they represent.

From the Table- V, it is very clear that the less educated tribal members dominated the each successive House. Members with the educational background of undermatriculation are predominantly represented in every Assembly from 1961 to 1977. Under the undermatriculates category, the members having educational qualifications from class V to class X have been included. However, in subsequent years their number has decreased while the percentage of members of higher education has increased. This is a positive trend.

We now turn to delineate the occupational profile of the tribal MLAs of the Assemblies of 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977.

III. Occupational Background of Tribal Legislators:

The attitudes and perceptions of the members are also to a large extent determined by their occupational background. An analysis of occupational background of tribal members has been made in Table- VI.

The analysis of occupational background indicates that Scheduled Tribe legislators have been drawn from different walks of life. The Table- VI shows that agriculture is the main occupation of the majority of the the legislators. Out of the total tribal legislators 17.6 per cent in 1967, 52.9 per cent in 1971, 50 per cent in 1974 and 50 per cent in 1977 have indicated agriculture as the main source of their income.

Next to the agriculture, teaching has been the profession of some tribal legislators. The number of tribal MLAs, having teaching as their profession has increased in every successive Assembly elections. In 1967, the percentage of this group of MLAs was only 14.7 per cent but was increased to 23.5 per cent in 1971 and a steep rise in 1974 to 35.2 per cent. Again, the

Table- VI : OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF TRIBAL LEGISLATORS (1967-1977)

Occupation	1967		1971		1974		1977	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Agriculture	6	(17.6)	18	(52.9)	17	(50.0)	17	(50.0)
2. Teachership	5	(14.7)	8	(23.5)	12	(35.2)	5	(14.7)
3. Law	2	(5.8)	3	(8.8)	1	(2.9)	3	(8.8)
4. Other government service	2	(5.8)	3	(8.8)	1	(2.9)	3	(8.8)
5. Public service/Politics	16	(47.0)	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)	4	(11.7)
6. No information	3	(8.8)	1	(2.9)	2	(5.8)	2	(5.8)
	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)

Source: Who is Who (Orissa Legislative Assembly), year - 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977.

Notes : In 1966 "Who is Who" their occupation are not mentioned. In "Who is Who", 1967, the occupations of many members are not categorically mentioned. However, the members have furnished the information that before 1967, some of them were either social workers, members of the local Panchayat bodies or members of the earlier Assemblies. All these members are grouped under one category and their occupations are mentioned in the above table as Public Service/Politics. Secondly, some members have stated two or three occupations including cultivation. In that case cultivation is not taken into consideration.

percentage of members with teaching as their prior occupation was decreased to 14.7 per cent in 1977.

Besides, these two sources of income some members have indicated legal profession as the main source of their income. Their number has been very less i.e., 5.8 per cent in 1967; 8.8 per cent in 1971; 2.9 per cent in 1974 and 8.8 per cent in 1977.

Like the legal practitioners, the tribal members with occupational background of government services is very insignificant in every House. Their percentage has remained virtually constant during the entire period. This indicates that persons in the government services, other than teachers, have not participated to a substantial extent in the State politics of Orissa.

Some members have also given social service/politics as their occupations.³ These legislators have been grouped under one category and their occupations have been indicated as public service/politics. Their number in different Assemblies is very less. Members to the strength of only

3. See Who is Who (Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977).

2.9 per cent each in 1971 and 1974 had indicated public service/politics as their prior occupation. In 1977, percentage of this group was 11.7 per cent. But in 1967, a large number of members have not specifically mentioned their prior occupations. They were involved in politics either at the village-level, block-level or the state-level. So, their prior occupation is indicated as public service/politics in the Table- VI. That is why, they constitute 47 per cent of the total elected members (Scheduled Tribe) in 1967.

It is here assumed that the tribal people who have participated in politics must have some landed property to support them in their pursuit of politics. Perhaps, all the tribal legislators have cultivation as their occupational background. But other occupations apart from cultivation have been taken into consideration where the tribal legislators have given more than one occupation. In the 'Who is Who' of Orissa Assembly published in different periods we find that teachers, lawyers and government employees have also given cultivation as one of their occupations.

From the given table it is very clear that the tribal legislators who have indicated cultivation as their

occupation dominated the Houses. The teachers came next. The tribal legislators from these two categories of occupational background are very much interested in the State politics of Orissa.

Government servants have virtually remained excluded from the State politics. It is because, in a competitive society, one can ill-afford the risk of leaving a secure occupation to try his luck for a political career, unless his personal wealth guarantees him economic security or he follows an occupation which enables him to follow his own time-table.

In case of lawyers one can easily combine his occupation on a part-time basis with political activity, and hence their interests and involvement is seen in politics everywhere including Orissa. Moreover, political activity could be an additional advantage to his occupational advancement in the legal profession. In Orissa, literacy rate of tribal population is very low and also the lawyers are very few. That is why, their participation in politics is negligible.

VII. Community-wise Classification of Tribal Legislators :

Like the analysis of political representation on the caste line, we also here try to find out a member's

origin in a particular tribe/subtribe. Though in Orissa there are 52 tribes, the participation of all of them has not be equal in the politics of the State. There are major tribes like Kandh, Orson, Santal, Gond, Ho, Munda, Bathudi and Savaras who largely get elected to the Orissa Assembly. Others are economically and educationally very backward. It is likely that this had affected their willingness to contest elections. The tribe-wise analysis of the legislators (see Table- VII) makes this point very clear.

Having analysed the social background of the tribal legislators, we now turn to delineate their political background.

B : POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Our main thrust in this part of the chapter is to discuss and analyse the political affiliations of Scheduled Tribe legislators, their prior political experiences before they are elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly, pattern of their return to the Assembly and their representation in the different ministries formed in the State.

Table- VII : COMMUNITY-WISE CLASSIFICATION OF TRIBAL LEGISLATOR (1961-1977)

The name of the tribe	1961		1967		1971		1974		1977	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Kandha/Kondh	7	(24.13)	8	(23.5)	8	(23.5)	7	(20.5)	6	(17.6)
2. Sabara	-	-	2	(5.8)	3	(8.8)	2	(5.8)	2	(5.8)
3. Koya	1	(3.4)	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)	-	-
4. Gond	4	(13.7)	4	(11.7)	2	(5.8)	3	(8.8)	2	(5.8)
5. Kisan	-	-	-	-	2	(5.8)	2	(5.8)	3	(8.8)
6. Munda	-	-	-	-	2	(5.8)	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)
7. Oraon	-	-	-	-	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)
8. Santal	3	(10.3)	5	(14.7)	6	(17.6)	5	(14.7)	7	(20.5)
9. Ho	3	(10.3)	2	(5.8)	-	-	2	(5.8)	3	(8.8)
10. Bathudi	-	-	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)	2	(5.8)	-	-
11. Bhuyan	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)
12. Juang	1	(3.4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13. Not known	10	(34.4)	11	(32.3)	8	(23.5)	7	(20.5)	8	(23.5)
	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)

Sources: (i) Personal enquiries

(ii) Who is Who of Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977.

I. Party Affiliations of Tribal Legislators

In order to understand the nature and extent of legislative participation of the tribals in the Orissa politics an indepth analysis of their party affiliations got to be discussed carefully. The role of various political parties, both local and national, their base among the tribal communities in terms of the affiliations of tribal political leaders with these parties can explain the character of tribal politics in a more meaningful manner.

Table- VIII shows the following trend regarding the party affiliations of the tribal legislators. In 1952, 28 seats were reserved for the Scheduled Tribes in the Orissa Assembly in the House of 140 seats. Accordingly 28 tribal candidates were elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly. No single member was elected from the general constituency. Congress and Ganatantra Parishad each captured 42.8 per cent of the total tribal seats. 7.1 per cent and 3.5 per cent of seats were secured by Socialist Party and independents respectively. Rest one seat went to the Communist Party of India.

Table- VIII : PARTY AFFILIATIONS OF THE SCHEDULED TRIBE LEGISLATORS (1952-1977)

Party	1952		1957		1961		1967		1971		1974		1977	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Congress	12	(42.8)	7	(23.3)	13	(44.8)	9	(26.4)	11*	(32.3)	20	(58.8)	9	(26.4)
2. GP/Swatantra	12	(42.8)	17	(56.6)	15	(51.7)	21	(61.7)	12	(35.2)	2	(5.8)	-	-
3. Socialist (PSP)	2	(7.1)	-	-	1	(3.4)	2	(5.8)	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Communist (CPI & CFM)	1	(3.5)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1†	(2.9)	-	-
5. Jharkhand	-	-	5	(16.6)	-	-	-	-	4	(11.7)	3	(8.8)	-	-
6. Jana Congress	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	(5.8)	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Utkal Congress	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	(20.5)	6	(23.5)	-	-
8. Janata	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	(70.5)
9. Independents	1	(3.5)	1	(3.3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	(2.9)
	28	(100.0)	30**	(100.0)	29	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)

Source: Who is Who, (Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1967, 1971, 1974, and 1977).

* In 1971 Congress Party in power was known as (Cong-R)

† In 1974, a candidate was elected from CPI (from Mayurbhanj district)

** In 1957, 29 seats were reserved for ST, but 30 candidates were elected to Assembly. From Padampur two-member constituency no general candidate was elected. Both elected candidates were ST.

In 1957 General Elections 23.3 per cent from Congress, 56.6 per cent from Ganatantra Parishad were returned to the Orissa Legislative Assembly. 16.6 per cent of elected candidates were from the Jharkhand Party. Only one candidate was elected to the Assembly as Independent member. No candidate was elected to the Assembly either from Socialist or Communist Parties. In 1957, Ganatantra Parishad had given a maximum representation to Scheduled Tribes in Orissa Assembly. Even the figure of the tribal seats captured by Ganatantra Parishad was more than double that^{of} the Congress Party.

The results of mid-term elections held in 1961, give the following trend of political affiliations of tribal legislators. The tribal legislators were affiliated to only three parties — Congress, Ganatantra Parishad and Praja Socialist Party (PSP). Congress secured 13 seats (44.82%) and 15 seats (51.7%) went to the Ganatantra Parishad. Only one candidate was elected from the Praja Socialist Party. Like the previous House this time also Ganatantra Parishad gave maximum representation to Scheduled Tribes in the Assembly.

In 1967, out of 34 tribal legislators 9 (26.4%) were affiliated to Congress, 21 (61.7%) to Swatantra and 2 (5.8%) each to PSP and Jana Congress. No Communist or Independent candidates was elected this time. All 34 candidates were elected from the reserved seats. Besides, from the general constituencies two more tribal members⁴ were elected to the Assembly.

In 1971, mid-term elections, 32.3 per cent of total members were elected from the Congress Party. This time the Swatantra Party could not get elected large number of Scheduled Tribe candidates for the Orissa Legislative Assembly. Only 35.2 per cent were elected. 11.7 per cent of seats were captured by the Jharkhand Party. Utkal Congress could secure 20.5 per cent of seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes. Thus, perhaps Utkal Congress had made inroads into the domain of the Swatantra Party. However, the Swatantra Party was dominant, so far as the maximum representation of Scheduled Tribes is concerned. In addition to 34 tribal

4. They were: Birabikramaditya Singh and Ramesh Chandra Singh Bhoi. Former was elected from Padampur (Sambalpur) constituency and latter was from Sainatala (Bolangir) constituency. Birabikramaditya Singh was elected from Jana Congress and Ramesh Chandra Singh Bhoi was from Swatantra Party.

legislators elected from reserved constituencies one tribal⁵ member was elected to Orissa Assembly in 1971.

In 1974, the trend was quite the opposite, because of the decline of the Swatantra Party. The Swatantra Party got elected only 5.3 per cent of tribal candidates from its party. This time Congress Party captured a large number of seats which is 58.8 per cent of total seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes. It is quite observable that by 1974 as the Swatantra Party was on the verge of extinction, the Congress Party could penetrate into the tribal belts of Western Orissa which was earlier the strong political base of the Ganatantra Parishad which had merged with the Swatantra Party. Rest 8.3 per cent of seats went to the Jharkhand Party, 23.5 per cent were captured by Utkal Congress and 2.9 per cent of seats went to Communist Party of India.

The Table- VIII shows that in 1977 General Elections, out of 34 tribal legislators only 9 (26.4%)

5. Ramesh Chandra Singh Ehol was elected from Sainital (unreserved) constituency to Orissa Legislative Assembly. In 1967, also, he was elected from the same constituency.

were elected from the Congress Party. This time a record number of tribal seats (70.5%) were captured by the Janata Party. Independent members secured only 2.9 per cent of the seats. Thus, in 1977, the Janata Party gave the maximum representation to the Scheduled Tribe people in the Orissa Legislative Assembly.

II. Pattern of Election of S.T. Candidates to Orissa Assembly

The Scheduled Tribe candidates' pattern of return toⁱⁿ Orissa Assembly is given in the Table- IX.

The Assembly in 1957 contained both new and old tribal members. The strength of the tribal legislators in the assembly was 30. Only 23.3 per cent of them were reelected from the preceeding House. Rest 76.6 per cent tribal members were freshly recruited to the Assembly. Thus, the table shows that there was a high turnover of new entrants.

This trend was reversed in 1961. 58.6 per cent of the total tribal members were the members of the earlier House or Houses. The percentage of the newly

Table- IX : PATTERN OF ELECTION OF S.T. CANDIDATES TO O.L.A. (1952-1977)

Year of election	No. of members re-elected from Previous House (S)		Freshers		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1952	-	-	28	(100.0)	28	(100)
1957	7	(23.3)	23	(76.6)	30	(100)
1961	17	(58.6)	12	(47.3)	29	(100)
1967	11	(32.3)	23	(67.6)	34	(100)
1981	12	(35.2)	22	(64.7)	34	(100)
1974	15	(44.1)	19	(55.8)	34	(100)
1977	20	(58.8)	14	(41.1)	34	(100)

Sources: Compiled from Who is Who, of Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1966, 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977.

And also from Election Reports of year 1952 and 1957 (Statistical), Election Commission, India.

recruited members was 41.3.

In 1967, 32.3 per cent of MLAs belonging to Scheduled Tribes community were earlier elected to the Assembly. So, they had prior legislative experiences. Rest 67.6 per cent were fresh to the Legislature. Thus, in 1967 the percentage of the new comers were more than double that of the experienced legislators.

Again in 1971, 35.2 per cent were members of the preceding Houses. Rest 64.7 per cent tribal legislators were new to the Assembly. This time also the strength of the new members in the House was more than the old members.

The results of 1974 elections show that 44.1 per cent of the elected tribal candidates were re-elected from the previous Houses. The percentage of the freshly recruited members was 55.8 per cent which was more than the number of old members of the House.

But, in 1977 a large number of elected tribal candidates belonged to the members of the earlier Houses. Their percentage in the Assembly was 58.8 per cent whereas the percentage of the members who had not been in the

Legislative Assembly before was 41.1 per cent.

From the Table- IX it is very clear that the new recruitment of Scheduled Tribe people to the Orissa Assembly was high in every elections except in 1961 and 1977. But their percentage had gradually decreased in every successive Assembly in comparison to the members who had been in the Orissa Assembly before.

III. Prior Political Experiences of Scheduled Tribe Legislators:

Some of the tribal members have participated in politics at different levels in different capacities before they get elected to State Legislature. Their nature of political experience will be analysed in the Table- X.

The Table- X shows the following trend regarding the political experience of tribal legislators.

The total number of elected tribal candidates from reserved constituencies to the Orissa Assembly in 1967 was 34. Out of this 44.1 per cent members did not have

Table- X : PRIOR POLITICAL EXPERIENCES OF S.T. LEGISLATORS (1967-1977)

Experience	1952		1957		1961		1967		1971		1974		1977	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
None							15	(44.1)	17	(50.0)	10	(29.4)	11	(32.3)
Panchayat							1	(2.9)	3	(8.8)	2	(8.8)	2	(5.8)
Block							7	(20.5)	5	(14.7)	6	(17.6)	1	(2.9)
District							-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
State							11	(32.3)	9	(26.4)	14	(41.1)	19	(55.8)
National (MP)							-	-	-	-	1	(2.9)	1	(2.9)
							34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)	34	(100.0)

Source: Compiled from Who is Who of Orissa Legislative Assembly, Year - 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977.

any political experiences either in local, block, State or national level. One candidate had the experience at the Panchayat level, 7 (20.5%) had in block level and 11 (32.3%) at the State level as MLAs. Thus in 1967, we see that politically non-experienced persons were elected to the House in large numbers.

Again in 1971, the number of the tribal legislators who did not have prior political experiences was large. Out of 34 elected candidates, 50 per cent belonged to this category. The percentage of those who had some ^{political experience at} and/or _{Panchayat, block} State-level were 8.8 per cent, 14.7 per cent and 26.4 per cent respectively.

But, the trend was reversed in 1974. The number of non-experienced members was greatly reduced. Their strength equals to only 29.4 per cent. The number of persons who had political experiences as MLAs was highest. They constituted 41.1 per cent of the total strength of the tribal legislators. The percentage of the candidates who had political experiences in Panchayat and block level was 8.8 and 17.6 respectively. In this House one member had political experiences as a member

of the Lok Sabha. Thus, it is observed that the Assembly of 1974 consisted of more politically experienced tribal legislators.

Like the previous House, the House in 1977 consisted more of experienced persons. The number of non-experienced people was only 11 whereas 2 candidates had experience as sarapanch at Panchayat level. One each had political experience at block and national level. On the otherhand, 19 candidates were members of the earlier Houses. Thus, they had more prior legislative experience.

From the analysis of the given table it is very clear that from 1967 to 1971 a large number of tribal legislators were politically inexperienced. From 1974 onwards the trend was reversed. Besides, other tribal members had more or less some political experience either in local block or State level as Sarapanch, Chairmen or MLAs respectively. More candidates had experience in the State level.

IV. Representation of S.T. in the Ministries:

The Scheduled Tribes' participation in decision-making structure of the Government is more important

than their legislative representation. This section attempts to explore the extent of representation in the ministries the allocation of portfolios to Scheduled Tribe members and the actual places they occupy in the power structure of the State.

There is as such no statutory reservation for Scheduled Tribes' membership in the cabinets. However, Article 164(i) of the Constitution of India provides for the appointment of a minister in the State of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa for the welfare of the tribals and incidentally of the Scheduled Castes or backward classes. But it is in practice held that the man so appointed must also belong to any of these very classes, presumably because persons belonging to other classes or castes are less competent to discharge such duties.

That is why in Orissa since 1952 the portfolio of Tribal and Rural Welfare has always been given either to a Scheduled Tribe or Scheduled Caste minister.

Table- XI gives an idea of the number of Scheduled Tribes' representatives in Ministries.

Table- XI : REPRESENTATION OF S.T. IN MINISTRIES : (1952-1977)

Year of formation of Ministry	Scheduled Tribe Members in Ministries				Size of Council of Ministers in Orissa
	Total	No. of Cabinet Ministers	No. of Ministers of State*	No. of Deputy Ministers	
1952	2	1	-	-	13
1956	1	1	-	-	13
1957	1	-	-	1	15
1959	-	-	-	-	11
1961	3	-	-	3	14
1963	3	-	-	3	14
1965	2	1	-	1	19
1967	5	3	-	2	19
1971	8	2	-	6	26
1972	3	1	2	-	15
1974	2	-	2	1	18
1977	4	-	4	-	15
	34	9	8	17	188

* From February 2, 1973, the rank of Ministers of State was created.

Source: Who is Who of O.A. year - 1967, 1967, 1971, 1974 and 1977. Also see, Nanda Sukadev, op.cit., p.276 (Table No.2) and Jena, B.B., "Feudal Grip", Seminar, November, 1966, pp.26-33.

From 1952 to 1977 twelve ministries have been formed in the State. Everytime the ministry was a coalitional except the period between 1961 to 1967 and in 1977 onwards. If we see the caste representation in these ministries it is quite evident that upto 1961 Scheduled Tribes were neglected. Scheduled Tribes assumed great political significance in 1967 and continued as such till 1971 when there was a further increase in their strength, which became the largest so far.

The rank-wise analysis of the tribal ministers shows that in 1967, 3 and in 1971, 2 tribal members were represented in Cabinets. Every other occasion one or none was included in the Cabinet rank. On the otherhand, they were represented in the ministries in large number as deputy ministers. This implies that though the tribals are adequately represented in ministries after 1961, they have not been able to occupy the very important positions in the power structure of the government.

Chapter- VI

THE ROLE OF TRIBAL LEGISLATORS

In the chapter- III it has already been pointed out that since 1952 the entire political history of Orissa has been characterised by instability and factionalism. No ministry has the enviable record of completing the full term of five years. Except in the periods 1961 and 1977, not a single party has been elected to Orissa Legislative Assembly with an absolute majority to form a single party government.¹ Hence, the general pattern of Orissa politics is coalitional — both formal and informal.

A substantial number of seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes in the Orissa Assembly. So, in this respect two important questions are likely to emerge. First, what is the role played by tribal legislators elected from the reserved constituencies in the political process of Orissa? Secondly, what is the nature of their politics? This chapter attempts at discussing it.

1.¹ In 1961, Congress secured an absolute majority by capturing 82 seats in the House of 140 seats and formed government under the leadership of Mr. Biju Pattnaik. In 1977 Janata Party formed the government under the leadership of Mr. Nilamani Routray. In 1977 Janta Party had got 110 seats.

A : A BALANCING FORCE

From the commencement of the Constitution and the inception of democratic form of government, the tribal people, as is the case with other States, have been elected to Orissa Legislative Assembly on the tickets of various political parties both national and regional.² The role played by the tribal legislators has not been in commensurate with the representation they get. However, their role through the parties like, the Jharkhand Party — a party of tribal people of north-western districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Sundergarh; the Ganatantra Parishad and subsequently the Swatantra Party is worth examining so far as the politics of ministry-making is concerned.

I. Chaudhury Ministry (1952-56)

The First General Elections held in 1952 could not ensure any party an absolute majority in Orissa Assembly.³

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2. See chapter- V (Table-VIII, Party Affiliations of Tribal Legislators).
 3. In 1952, the party position in Orissa Assembly was: Congress 67, Socialists 10, Communists 7, Forward Bloc (Marxist) 1, Ganatantra Parishad 31, Independent Peoples Party 3 and Independents 21 — Total 140. This table is taken from Raj Kumar, N.V. (ed.), The Pilgrimage and After (The Story of how the Congress fought and won the General Elections), (New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1952), p.139.

Mr. Naba Krishna Chaudhury, the leader of the Congress Party was invited to form the government, in his capacity as the leader of the largest party in the Assembly. Mr. Chaudhury was assured by six independents of their support and he formed the Ministry.

During this period, the tribals and their representatives had aligned themselves with the Congress Party. In the 1952 elections the Adivasi Congress had secured 13 seats in the Orissa Assembly. Mr. Sonaram Soren was the only minister (cabinet rank) belonging to the tribal community.⁴

The alliance arranged between the Congress and the Adivasi Congress had its special significance.

4. Mr. Sonaram Soren was the founder of the State Jharkhand Party. He organised the Adivasi Sabha in 1946 which was converted into the Jharkhand Party in Orissa. After being elected to the Orissa Assembly in the first General Elections held in 1952, he joined the Nihil Utkal Adivasi Congress, an opponent front of Jharkhand and extended his support to the Congress in forming the Government under the leadership of Mr. N.K. Chaudhury. He joined the Cabinet as Minister for Tribal and Rural Welfare, Labour and Commerce.

"The Adivasis of the State were more closely allied previously with the Jharkhand Party led by Shri Jaipal Singh (Bihar) than with Congress. In order to turn the attention of the tribal people to the Congress Shri Lal Ranjit Singh Bariah, the Adivasi Minister in old Congress formed a separate organisation called the Adivasi Congress, and created a common platform for all categories of Adivasis. This move was inspired by the Congress Party. Although the Adivasi Congress candidates functioned independently, they were sponsored (and to some extent financed) by the Congress. All successful candidates in the Adivasi Congress have joined the Congress Party."⁵

II. Mahtab Ministries (1956-59):

Mr. N.K. Chaudhury was replaced by Dr. H.K. Mahtab as Chief Minister in 1956. Mahtab led this government till the Second General Elections held in 1957. This time also Congress again failed to get a majority.⁶ Dr. Mahtab formed the ministry when five Jharkhand members and nine

5. Das, S.C., "Orissa", Kogekar, S.V., and Park, Richard, L (eds.), Reports on the Indian Elections 1951-52 (Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1956), p.122.

6. The party position in 1957 was: Congress 56, Janatantra Parishad 51, PSP 11, CPI 9, Jharkhand Party 5, Socialist Party 1 and Independents 7. Total 140. Collected from Jena, B.B., "Feudal Grip" Seminar, November 1966, p.29.

Communist members extended their support but this government could not enjoy a stable majority. This period (1957-59) in Orissa politics was a period of great uncertainty because of the minority position of Congress government and also of frequent change of party affiliations by legislators in the Assembly. In this kind of unstable political environment, the Jharkhand Party played an interesting role in maintaining the Congress government till 1959. Though the five Jharkhand voters in Orissa Legislative Assembly kept the Congress in power they did not share any power with Congress.

"since the fate of the Mahtab's minority Congress government depended on the support of the Jharkhand Party, despite its small size, its support was acquired at any price (quantifiable in terms of monetary standards) in order to assure the government a minority support in the Legislature. The Congress Party's desperate need of the Jharkhand support facilitated a steady rise in the latter's price. The Jharkhand allies made exorbitant demands on the Congress Party on every crucial issue facing the government during the sessions of the Legislature. The tone

of State politics became very intense that each decision seemed to be involved the entire future of the Mahtab government."⁷

All the time Dr. Mahtab was dissatisfied with the political behaviour of these legislators and he wanted to end this system. The Congress in order to escape from Jharkhand control encouraged defections from the opposition benches. However, this unstable Mahtab government continued till May 1959, when the Congress formed a coalition government with Ganatantra Parishad.

Thus "Jharkhand was the balance keeper from 1957 to 1959 in so far as it kept the Congress government hanging at its string end."⁸

7. Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., pp.62-63.

Notes:- This unpredictable life of the Congress Ministry continued to swing on the alleged use of the power of the purse and it was noticed that, at times the Jharkhand leader Jaipal Singh, MP, was to fly in haste to Bhubaneswar to save the ministry from an impending defeat.

8. Jena, B.B., "Political Parties in Orissa", Narain, Iqbal (ed.), State, Politics in India, (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1967), p.502.

III. Congress-Ganatantra Parishad Coalition Ministry (1959-61):

In May 1959, when the Congress formed a fresh coalition government with ^{the} Ganatantra Parishad, the Jharkhand Party withdrew its support and joined the opposition. Thus, as the two major parties came together to form a coalition government, the maximum tribal legislators of Orissa Assembly became the members of the ruling coalition.⁹

However, this time not a single tribal member was allowed to become a minister. Even the minister of Tribal and Rural Welfare was a Brahmin belonging to the Ganatantra Parishad.¹⁰

IV. Congress Government (1961-67):

In 1961 mid-term elections,¹¹ when the Congress had gained an absolute majority, the role of the Jharkhand

9. See, Table- VIII (Party affiliations of Tribal Legislators) in chapter- V.

10. As per the provision of article 164(i) of the Constitution. This portfolio should have been held by a tribal member. But, this principle was flouted by the government.

11. In 1961, Party position in Orissa Legislative Assembly: Congress 82, Swatantra 37, PSP 10, CPI 4 and Independent 7 — Total 140. Rao, K.V., "Pattern of Orissa Politics", Narain, Iqbal (ed.), State Politics in India, op.cit., p.215.

and Ganatantra Parishad were negligible. The Ganatantra Parishad merged with Swatantra in 1962 and Jharkhand failed to win a single seat in the Assembly. The Jharkhand Party had contested 9 seats. Six of its candidates had lost their deposits.

During this period both Congress and Swatantra Party more or less equally represented the tribal people in their respective parties. Out of a total of 29 tribal MLAs, 15 were elected from Congress and only one from PSP.

V. Singh Deo Ministry - 1967 :

"The fourth general elections held in February 1967 constituted a watershed in the post-independence political history of India. The monolithic regime of undivided Congress and its haloed leadership had concealed both the many operational weaknesses and the basic inner strength and resilience of the Indian system. While strongly reaffirming the people's deep involvement in the democratic process, the electoral verdict shattered the virtual monopoly of political power by a single party and underlined the strains and contradictions of a hotch-potch party."¹²

12. Kashyap, S.C., The Politics of Power & Defection and State Politics in India, Revised and edited by Kashyap, Savita (Delhi: National, 1974), p.4.

"Of the sixteen States of the Union that went to the polls in February 1967, the Congress lost absolute majority in eight and failed to form its government in seven of them."¹³

Orissa was one of those States where Congress suffered a great blow in the elections and was forced to occupy seats in the opposition benches. Thus, after the elections in 1967, Orissa politics took a new turn when the Swatantra—Jana Congress¹⁴ coalition was ushered in under the leadership of R.N. Singh Deo. This coalition was relatively more stable than any other preceding government and it continued for a longer period of time.

If we look at the Party position of the Legislative Assembly we find that R.N. Singh Deo's government was depended to a large extent on the support of the Adivasi members because almost all the tribal seats were captured by the Swatantra Party.¹⁵ Out of 34 reserved seats for

13. Ibid., p.5.

14. Ja na Congress was formed in May 1966 by the splinter group of Congress Party under the leadership of Dr. H.K. Mahtab.

15. The party position of Orissa Legislative Assembly in 1967 was: Congress 30, Swatantra 49, PSP 21, CPI 7, SSP 2, Jana Congress 26, CPI(M) 1 and Independents 3, — Total 140. Elections for one seat was countermanded. The National Diary, February 15-28, 1967, p.1109.

Scheduled Tribes, Swatantra Party alone had captured 21 seats. Only 9 seats had gone to the Congress Party. Socialists and Jana Congress shared two seats each.

But, the Jharkhand Party again in 1967 failed to win a single seat. The party had fielded 10 candidates in the fourth General Elections. Thus, like 1961, the Jharkhand Party during this period could not get a chance to play its role in Orissa politics.

VI. Biswanath Das Ministry -- 1971:

The second non-Congress government was formed again after the mid-term elections (1971), when the Congress though being the single largest party could not form the ministry.¹⁶ The Swatantra-Jharkhand-Utkal Congress coalition was formed by Biswanath Das -- an independent candidate. This United Front government gave large-scale representation to the tribals, in the Orissa Assembly as the Swatantra and the Jharkhand Parties were

16. The party position in 1971 was : Congress (R) 51, Swatantra 36, Utkal Congress 32, Jana Congress 1, PSP 4, Congress (O) 1, CPI 4, CPI (M) 2, Jharkhand 4, Independents 4, one seat was vacant. Asian Recorder, May 7-13, 1971, p. 10136.

the parties of the tribal representatives. Here, the tribals had played the role of weakening the political system. The defections of 10 MLAs¹⁷ of the Swatantra and Jharkhand Parties under the leadership of Mr. Gangadhar Pradhan in June 1972 to Congress(R) reduced the United Front government to a helpless minority. Of course, the coastal leader under the leadership of Nilmani Routray were responsible for instigating them but the strategy was engineered by the tribal leaders in consultation with the Congress(R) High Command.

Again with the merger, resolution of Utkal Congress with Congress(R), 7 tribal legislators elected from The Utkal Congress tickets also joined the Congress(R). From the Congress Party already eleven tribal members were elected to the Orissa Assembly. Thus, this large scale defections of June 1972 increased the number of tribals in Congress(R) and thereby the Congress Party ultimately formed the ministry.

VII. Nandini Satpathy Ministry - 1972:

Mrs. Satpathy formed the ministry on June 14, 1972 with the support of a large number of defectors, both

17. Out of 10 defectors, 2 defected from Jharkhand Party and 8 from Swatantra Party.

tribals and non-tribals. But, soon she became the victim of the same kind of politics. Besides others some of the tribal members under the leadership of Mr. Gangadhar Pradhan also replayed their role of changing political colour. However, the tribal members were cooperative to Mrs Satpathy in running the government. During this time not only a major chunk of tribal votes went to the Congress, but the position of the Swatantra Party was reduced to 21 as against its old position of 36 in the undissolved House.

VIII. Nandini Satpathy Ministry - 1974:

On the eve of the 1974 elections the Swatantra Party was on the verge of extinction as almost all the tribals had deserted the Swatantra Party. In the 1974 elections only two tribal members were returned from the Swatantra Party to the Orissa Legislative Assembly. On the otherhand, Congress captured 20 seats, Utkal Congress got 8 seats, Communists won 1 and the rest 3 were won by the Jharkhand Party.¹⁸

18. The party position in 1974 in Orissa Assembly was: Congress 69, CPI 7, CPI(M) 3, Utkal Congress 35, Socialist Party 1, Jana Congress 1, Independents 9 — Total 146.
The Hindustan Times, March 2, 1974.

Mrs. Satpathy formed the government when the CPI extended its support to the Congress Party. Thus, by 1974, the role of Swatantra and Jharkhand Parties had greatly declined. Neither they became a party to the government nor could they play an effective role in Orissa politics in any other way.

IX. Janta Government - 1977

Mrs. Satpathy's second government collapsed on December 1976 and President's Rule was imposed. The new ministry came into office in December 29, 1976 under the leadership of Mr. Binayak Acharya. It was followed by the elections in 1977. Congress lost the mandate of the people in Orissa. The Janta Party came to power with a thumping majority.¹⁹ Out of the total 34 reserved seats for tribals, 24 seats were captured by the Janta Party, Congress got only 9 seats whereas one candidate was elected to the Assembly as an independent. By 1977 elections the Swatantra and the Jharkhand Parties were no more in the political scene of Orissa.

19. In 1977 the party position in Orissa Assembly was: Janta 110; Congress 26; CPI 1; CPI(M) 1 and Independents 9. See Asthana Pushpa, op.cit., p.146.

As most of the tribal representatives were affiliated to the ruling Janta Party and the other two tribal parties were out of the political scene of Orissa, the tribals as a separate political force could not play a significant role in Orissa politics during this period.

However, these tribal legislators have been the balancing factor within the political system of the State since 1952.

To sum up, in 1952 Congress could stay in power because of the fact that the Adivasi Congress joined the Party. Similarly, in 1957, 5 tribal legislators through the Jharkhand Party became the balancing force to maintain the Mahtab's government for some times. When the Congress was out of power, the tribal legislators have been a part of the government through other parties like Swatantra and the Jharkhand. The non-Congress coalition government formed in 1967 became more stable than the previous governments because of the loyalty of the tribal members of the Swatantra Party to its leader. It collapsed only when the other coalition partner, Jana Congress created some problems. Again, the United

Front government was destroyed by the tribal legislators as they were instigated to do so by the coastal leaders.²⁰

In conclusion it can be said that "the coastal leaders either collaborated with the tribals or provoked them or tempted them to break government by withdrawing their support. Of the coastal leaders, the non-Brahmin castes particularly Karanas, or Kshatriya helped to ruin the political stability of Orissa either because of their inter-caste conflicts or inter-caste conflicts, even though they never failed to give it a public welfare colour."²¹

B : TRIBAL LEGISLATORS AND DEFECTION POLITICS

Before the real problem of defection politics in Orissa and the tribal legislators' involvement in it is discussed, it is necessary to know the meaning of the term 'defection' in its political sense. It is difficult to

20. For detail see Table- XIV.

21. Nanda, Subadev, op.cit., p.147.

* For politics of defections, the political commentators have coined several catchytaxms like, politics of floor-crossing, 'politics of political turn-coalism', 'politics of changing party affiliations or allegiances', 'politics of carpet-crossing' etc. See, Kashyap, S.C., op.cit., pp.41-42.

provides a precise definition of the term which is universally acceptable. However, two views may be stated below. One is an official explanation of the term and the second one is of an author on the defection politics in India.

The Committee on Defections appointed by the Government of India in accordance with the resolution passed by the Lok Sabha on December 8, 1967, defines the term 'defection' as:

"...transfer of allegiance by a legislator from one political party to another political party or identifiable political group. Defection is also taken to occur when a legislator, without a formal transference of political allegiance or party label, votes against the policy sponsored by one's own party or group in the Legislature. In this sense of the term, a legislator who defects to a political party or group and returns subsequently to his own political party or group commits double act of defection."²²

22. Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, 'Committee on Defections, Part-II, Proceedings of the Committee and Papers Circulated to the Members, (undated), p.46.

The high level Committee on Defections was set up under the Chairmanship of the then Union Home Minister (Y.B. Chavan) on March 21, 1968 to consider the problem of legislators changing their allegiance from one party to another and their frequent crossing of the floor in all its aspects and make recommendations in this regard. The Committee consisted of very eminent jurists, leaders and publicmen.

But, this definition given by the Committee on Defections has been subjected to criticism because of its highly restricted and discriminatory character.²³

S.C. Kashyap observes:

"Unless otherwise stated, the term 'defection' in this study, should be understood to mean any change of political label and should include all cases such as (i) that of leaving a particular political party after being elected as a legislator on its ticket and joining another party; (ii) of resigning from the party but remaining independent thereafter, or (iii) of joining a particular political party after being elected as an independent. Legislators who vote against their party in the Legislature on the basic issues without actually resigning from the party should nonetheless be deemed to be defectors. Irrespective of its dictionary meaning, here, the term 'defection' would thus mean and include both an act of disaffection with one's party or independent platform as also of developing a new political allegiance either by outright joining the other party or by voting with it against one's own party. It would cover changes of party affiliation both from opposition to the government

23. See, Kashyap, S.C., op.cit., pp.45-46.

side or vice versa as also changes between the parties on the same side of the House, i.e., between the constituent units of a coalition government or between the different parties sitting on the opposition benches.²⁴

The definition advanced by Dr. S.C. Kashyap regarding the term 'defection' in politics is so far the most acceptable.

After the General Elections of 1967, the politics of defections was very much conspicuous in the Indian political scene. The Congress Party lost power in various States. In the States of Bihar, Punjab, West Bengal, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, the non-Congress parties formed governments by resorting to the game of political defections. The Swatantra-Jana Congress coalition was formed in Orissa under the leadership of R.N. Singh Deo.

For the reasons for defections the observations of S.C. Kashyap may be enumerated:

"Defections are, in fact, the product of various socio-political complexes under which

24: Ibid., pp.46-47.

we operate and have to be accepted as a hard sociological reality The real causes for the widespread spectacle of defections and counter-defections are historical, institutional and motivational and often a combination of all three."²⁵

In Orissa "most of the defections were based on non-ideological considerations".²⁶ But, so far as tribal legislators are concerned the causes of the defections are different and are motivated by certain considerations.

This section of the chapter is an exercise to discuss the nature, causes and impact of defections on the political stability of the State with special reference to Scheduled Tribe legislators' involvement in the politics of defections. The period of our study has broadly been divided into two phases: (i) period between 1952 to 1967 and (ii) the post-1967 phase.

I. The Pre-1967 Phase:

Before the Fourth General Elections (1967) political defection was not totally absent in Orissa's politics.

25. Ibid., p.67.

26. Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., p.155.

It not only caused the political instability in the State but also led to the downfall of the ministry. This process was accelerated by the top leaders of the Congress Party so as to keep the minority government of the party safely in power.

Soon after the Second General Elections Congress got the support of the Communists, Jharithand members and a few Independents to form the ministry. The Congress was successful in persuading some members from the opposition parties to join Congress. "Eight MLAs of the G.P., six independents and one Communist member crossed the floor and joined the Congress wing of the Legislature."²⁷

In the third week of April 1958 political atmosphere turned against the Congress "When four G.P. members out of eight had crossed the floor earlier deserted it and took their seats on the opposition benches. Again, four Congress MLAs including a Deputy Minister crossed the floor and resigned from the Congress as a result of which the Congress supporters were reduced to 67 including the speaker and the opposition had 69 members."²⁸ This process of floor-crossing and re-crossing

27. Jena, B.B., op.cit., p.490.

28. Ibid., pp.490-91.

continued upto May 1958 when the above said Deputy Minister staged a come back along with others. This type of politics was not approved by the Congress High Command and Dr. Mahtab resigned from the Chief Ministership on May 9, 1958. ^{But, it was withdrawn on May 28, 1958} with the request of the then Governor of Orissa. The Mahtab Ministry continued in office till May 1959 when a new coalition government was formed.

In the period between 1957-61, the political situation was very fluid and in the Legislative Front, the Ministry faced a series of no-confidence motions as a result of which defections took place from Congress to opposition parties and vice-versa. "Eleven members from the Ganatantra Parishad defected to the Congress. Out of these eleven members three were Scheduled Tribes. They are Sarangdhar Pradhan, Muchiram Triya and Krishna Chandra Mohapatra. On the otherhand during this period total 8 members defected from Congress to opposition. The tribal members were Kalia Dahuri, Mitrodaya Singh Barish and Ghasiram Majhi.²⁹ (see Table- XII)

After the mid-term elections (1961), the Ganatantra Parishad merged with S,atantra in 1962. The party had

29. See Astha, Pushpa, op.cit., pp. 230 and 311.

**Table- XII : LIST OF DEFECTING MEMBERS (ST) OF ORISSA
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY - The Pre-1967 Phase**

Date/Month	Name of defector	Party from which defected	Party to which defected
5-7-57	1. Mr. Sarangadhar Pradhan	GP	Congress
28-3-58	2. Mr. Mochiram Triya	GP	Congress
- -	3. Krishna Chandra Mahapatra	GP	Congress
23-4-58	1. Mr. Kalia Dehuri	Congress	Opposition
6-4-60	2. Mr. Ghasiram Majhi	Congress	Opposition
	3. Mr. Nitrodaya Singh Barish	Congress	Opposition
After 1961 mid-term elections	1. Mr. Dubara Padra	Swatantra	Independent
	2. Mr. Kalia Dehuri	Swatantra	Independent
May 5, 1966	1. Mr. Sonaram Boren	Congress	Jana Congress
	2. Mr. B.B. Singh Barish	Congress	Jana Congress
	3. Mr. Man Mohan Tudu	Congress	Jana Congress

Sources: Collected from Asthana, Pushpa, op.cit.,
(Ph.D. Thesis, Unpublished), (New Delhi: JNU, 1980),
pp. 280 and 311.

37 members in Orissa Legislative Assembly. But five of them defected from the party. Two of them were Scheduled Tribes. They defected from this party as Independents.³⁰

Thus, during 1961-67, the defections from the Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra Party hardly had an impact on the Congress government and political stability in the State because the Congress mastered the absolute support in the State.

On the otherhand, the defection from the Congress only affected the ministry as Congress was in power after 1961 elections. Though Congress had got an absolute majority it sat in the Orissa Assembly under two factions — one under the dynamic leadership of Mr. Biju Patnaik and other under the leadership of Dr. H.K. Mahtab. The basic reason for this sort of factional politics is personal rivalry between these two leaders. When the former denigrated the image of the latter, the factional politics started.

30. Those defected from the Party were:

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Smt. Nabakumari Dal | | defected to Congress |
| 2. Ram Prasad Mishra | | |
| 3. Raghunath Mishra | | defected as Independents |
| 4. Dubara Padra (ST) | | |
| 5. Kalia Dehuri (ST) | | |

In the period between 1965-67, Orissa witnessed a terrible factional politics within the Congress, the trouble first began when Biren Mitra succeeded Biju Patnaik as Chief Minister and it culminated during the tenure of Sadasib Tripathy's Chief Ministership.³¹ The dissident group of Congress numbering eleven broke away from the Congress Party and formed a regional party known as Jana Congress on May 5, 1966 with H.K. Mahatab as their leader.³¹ Of them there were only three tribal members: Sonaram Soren, B.B. Singh Bariah and Man Mohan Tefu. This group defections had no immediate adverse impact on the Congress government because, inspite of that, Congress could remain in power.

"The next development that took place on the eve of election was that the ruling party even after the defection of the dissidents, crumbled into factionalism again-one group was led by Sadasib Tripathy the Chief Minister and the other by Biju Patnaik."³² Later on, when more MLAs

31. Other members were: (1) Banamali Patnaik, (2) Himansu Shekhar Pacha, (3) Niralidhar Jena, (4) Uppendra Mohanty, (5) Ramad Chandra Singh, (6) Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, (7) Surendranath Patnaik, (8) Santanu Kumar Das.
By that time H.K. Mahtab was M.P. For this see, Asthana, Pushpa, *op.cit.*, p.321.

32. Jena, B.B., "General Elections in Orissa", Varma, S.P. and Narain, Iqbal (eds.), Fourth General Election in India, vol.I, (New Delhi:Orient Longmans, 1968), pp.349-50.

from the Congress defected between August and October, 1966 it paved the way for the collapse of the Congress ministry.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that the politics of defections before 1967 was more of an individual nature. Only on the eve of the Fourth General Elections as the factional politics was at its height within the Congress Party, the dissident turned defectors made a group defection and they caused a split in the Party in the State. And this new Party i.e., Jana Congress later on in combination with the Swatantra Party, for the first time was able to form a non-Congress coalition government in Orissa. Secondly, the politics of defections during this period was not an one-way traffic but the defections occurred both from the Congress and also the opposition groups. The tribal members also did not violate the general pattern of defection politics. Like non-tribals they have also defected to and from the Congress Party. Some of them also become a party to the politics of group-defections.³³

33. For defections of S.T. members in the pre-1967 phase, kindly see Table- XII.

II. The Post-1967 Phase:

The politics of defections in the post-1967 period is quite significant with regard to the fate of the Swatantra Party and also the political stability in the State. This period witnessed the fall of the United Front government and also the formation of the government by the Congress Party through the politics of large-scale defections. The group-defections caused by the tribal members made a great damage to the political future of the Swatantra Party. For the sake of convenience, this period has been sub-divided into two phases:

(a) Period (1967-71)

The defections that took place during the period between 1967-71 do not bear such significance as what had in the subsequent years. Defections have occurred not only from the ruling coalition but also from the Opposition Front. The Swatantra-Jana Congress Coalition functioned smoothly till the middle of March, 1970 when a crack was

discovered with the formation of the 'Progressive Party' by some defecting members from Jana Congress and Swatantra.³⁴ Two of them were tribal members. Sonaram Soren defected from Jana Congress and Bidika Malana from Swatantra.

This party had a very short span of life. It lost its existence within one month when Mr. Sukadeb Jena and Mr. S. Bhabagrahi Naik decided to join the newly-formed Utkal Congress but the rest defected back to their original parties. However, this series of short-term defections was not a threat to the ruling front.

From the opposition front also defections took place. Biju Patnaik was expelled from the Congress in 1970 following his indiscipline in the matters of nomination to the Rajya Sabha. His staunch supporter Mr. Nilamani Routrey managed to get away with a major chunk of the Congress membership of the Orissa Legislature

34. There were:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Sukadeb Jena | | defected from
Jana Congress |
| 2. Sonaram Soren | | |
| 3. Pratap Chandra Patnaik | | |
| 4. Harihar Bahadri | | |
| 5. Kumar Chandra Bahera | | |
| 6. Nabaghana Naik | | defected from
Swatantra |
| 7. Bidika Malana | | |
| 8. S. Bhabagrahi Naik | | |

See, Asthana, *Pustha*, op.cit., p.328.

(23 out of 31 members) and became the President of the newly formed regional Utkal Congress Party.³⁵

The majority of the tribal MLAs also rallied behind the Utkal Congress. Very few like Mr. Bhagirathi Gamango, Mr. Gangadhar Madh and Mr. Surya Narayana Majhi remained in Congress(R) under the leadership of Binayak Acharya but the rest defected to the Utkal Congress.³⁶

Since the Congress was not in power this defection had no adverse impact in the political stability of the State. Its impact was felt in the Congress Party and thereby Congress could not be elected with an absolute majority in the 1971 mid-term elections.

After the departure of Biju Patnaik from the Congress(R), Mahtab who was then a member of the Jana

35. Nanda, Sukadev, *op.cit.*, p.55.

36. Compiled from Who is Who of Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1967 and 1971. And also see, Asthana, Pushpa, *op.cit.*, p.328.
In 1967 General Elections total 9 tribal members were elected toⁱⁿ Orissa Assembly on Congress tickets. For the detail regarding defectors from Congress to Utkal Congress see Table- XIII.

Congress made attempts to rejoin the Congress(R) along with others. But, this was not acceptable to the faction led by Babitra Mohan Pradhan inside the Jana Congress Party. However, for his own personal reasons, Mahtab along with other three defected to Congress(R) in January 1971. One among them was a tribal MIA.³⁷

(b) Period (1971-onward)

The defections that occurred during this period made the Swatantra Party great sufferer so far as its political future was concerned and it had a substantial impact on the political stability of the State. This is the period when a record number of political defections had taken place from the United Front government (see Table- XIV).

The Table- XIV clearly indicates the trend of political defections from the Swatantra, Utkal Congress and Jharkhand Parties to the Congress(R).

37. Other three who defected with Dr. H.K. Mahtab for personal benefits in January, 1971 were:

1. Banamala Patnaik
2. S.K. Das
3. Man Mohan Tudu (ST).

Table- XIII : LIST OF DEFECTORS (ST) OF ORISSA ASSEMBLY
THE POST-1957 PERSE.

(1) Period (1967-71)

Date/Month	Name of defector	Party from which defected	Party to which defected
March 13, 1970	1. Mr. Sonarun Soren	Jana Congress	Progressive Party*
-do-	2. Mr. Bidhita Malana	Swatantra	-do-
	1. Mr. Porani Sardar	Congress	Utkal Congress
Between	2. Mr. Babasingh Majhi	do	do
1970	3. Mr. Anantaram Majhi	do	do
to	4. Mr. Malu Santa	do	do
1971	5. Mr. Arjun Singh	do	do
	6. Mr. Onkar Singh	do	do
** <u>January 1971</u>	1. Mr. Man Mohan Tudu	Jana Congress	Congress (R)

* Within one month the Progressive Party lost its existence and above two members went back to their respective parties.

** Collected from Handa, Sukadev, op.cit., (see Table-B), p.157.

Source: Collected from Asthana, Pushpa, op.cit., pp. 326 and 327.

Table- XIV : LIST OF DEFECTION MEMBERS FROM UNITED FRONT
TO CONGRESS (R) (1971-72)

Period (1971-77)

Date/Month	Name of the defector	Party from which defected	Party to which defected
March, 1971	1. Mr. Ignace Majhi	Jharkhand	Congress (R)
June 5, 1972	1. Mr. Gengadhar Pradhan	Swatantra	do
	2. Mr. Domburu Majhi	do	do
	3. Mr. Dhansai Randhari	do	do
	4. Mr. Kuanria Majhi	do	do
	5. Mr. Radhanandan Naik	do	do
	6. Mr. Hemendra Prasad Mahapatra	do	do
June 6, 1972	1. Mr. Rabi Singh Majhi	Utkal Congress	Congress (R)
	2. Mr. Chhotarai Majhi	do	do
June 9, 1972	1. Mr. Birabhadra Singh	Utkal Congress	Congress (R)
	2. Mr. Bisari Samu	do	do
	3. Mr. Niladri Naijak	do	do
	4. Mr. Saharai Oram	do	do
	5. Mr. Maheswar Majhi	do	do
<p>(In 1971 mid-term election 7 ST candidates were elected to OLA. Out of these two (Mr. Rabisingh Majhi and Mr. Chhotarai Majhi) had defected to Congress (R) on June 6, 1972. The rest five joined Congress (R) with the merger resolution of Utkal Congress with Congress (R) on June 9, 1972. The list of these five members has been compiled from election report 1971 -mid-term)</p>			
June 9, 1972	1. Mr. Gopal Pradhan	Swatantra	Congress (R)
	2. Mr. R.C. Singh Hoi	do	do
	3. Mr. Sôchalal Muzum	Jharkhand	do

Sources: Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., (Table-A), p.156.

- From United Front to Congress (R) :

During this period a large number of Scheduled Tribe members had changed their political affiliations.

Mr. Ignace Majhi of ^{the} Jharkhand Party changed his party affiliation by joining the Congress (R) in March, 1971. On the same day other two non-tribal members also changed their political affiliations. Both defected to Congress (R) — one from Congress (O) and another was an Independent member.

The defections that took place in the first week of June 1972, was most important as a number of tribal legislators changed their party affiliations in a group. On 5th June, six tribal legislators from the Swatantra Party led by Mr. Gangadhar Pradhan, a Deputy Minister of the coalition government defected to Congress (R).

Again, on the next day, two tribal legislators — Babisingh Majhi and Chhotaray Majhi — and one non-tribal member defected to Congress (R). Mr. Babisingh Majhi of Utkal Congress was the Deputy Minister for Health and Family Planning in the United Front Government. Thus, the ruling coalition came to a minority (69).

The Utkal Congress also passed a resolution on June 9, 1972 for a total merger with the Congress (R) and the multi-party coalition government headed by Mr. Biswanath Das collapsed on the night of June 9, 1972. Utkal Congress had a strength of 32 members out of which 3 had already defected.

In 1971, the mid-term elections had enabled 7 tribal members to be elected from Utkal Congress. As already noted, two of them had earlier defected, the rest five automatically became the members of Congress (R) on June 9, 1972 when the Utkal Congress was liquidated.³⁸

On June 9, 1972 through defections three more tribal legislators joined Congress (R). Mr. Gopal Pradhan and Mr. Ramesh Chandra Singh Bhoi³⁹ defected from the Swatantra Party and Mr. Sidhalal Murmu from the Jharkhand Party.

This process of political defections both by tribals and non-tribals from various parties continued upto 11 January, 1973. The Congress (R) Party which won 49 seats

38. See, chapter V, table-VIII (Party Affiliations of Tribal legislators).

Elected seven members were: Mr. Birabhadra Singh, Mr. Disari Samu, Mr. Niladri Nayak, Mr. Saharaj Oram, Mr. Maheswar Majhi, Mr. Rabisingh Majhi and Mr. Chhotaray Majhi.

39. Mr. Ramesh Chandra Singh was elected from a general seat in 1971 mid-term elections.

in March 1971, had its body swelled upto 94 seats on June 1972 and 96 on 11 January, 1973.⁴⁰ Mr. Satpathy, the Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting was sent to head the ministry.

→ From Congress(R) to Pragati Party:

All members of the Utkal Congress were not admitted in the Congress(R) Party. So, Mr. Biju Patnaik revived the party.

During this period another interesting political development took place in Orissa with the emergence of a regional party called Pragati Legislative Party in January 28, 1973. This party encouraged defections from the Congress(R) so as to topple the Satpathy Ministry. The President of this Party was Mr. Biju Patnaik.

40. Panda, Sukadev, op.cit., p.94.

The defectors included one MJA of Congress(O), two MLAs of the Swatantra Party, 28 of the Utkal Congress. Thus, the number of total defectors was 45. These defectors increased the Congress(R) party position from 49 to 94.

For this see, Journal of Society for the Study of State Governments, October-December, 1973, no.4, p.25.

"On his call, eleven MLAs came out of the Congress on December 22, 1972 and one on February 28, 1973 and twentyone on March, 1973, which reduced the Government to a minority on the day when the budget session was going on. On the same day four more MLAs resigned from the Congress Party and joined the Pragati Party, which was recently founded by Biju Patnaik, H.K. Mahtab and Singh Deo of Swatantra and raised its strength to 72 in a House of 140."⁴¹

Thus, in December these 71 members of the Utkal Congress who had joined the Congress previously, once again defected back to the Utkal Congress.⁴² Three of them were Scheduled Tribes.

The earlier party affiliations of those 25 members who withdrew their support to the Satpathy Ministry in March 1, 1973 and joined Pragati Party were as follows:

-
41. Sivach, J.R., Politics of President's Rule in India, (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1979), p.245.
42. They were: Jagannath Mallick, Batakrishna Jena, Raj Kishore Naik, Achutananda Mohanty, Man Govinda Samal, Hridayananda Mallick, Birkhadra Singh (ST), Niladri Naik (ST), Rabisingh Majhi (ST), Purna Chandra Mriyan and Dinabandhu Patnaik.

Table- XV : LIST OF DEFECTING MEMBERS (ST) FROM
CONGRESS(R) TO PRAGATI LEGISLATURE PARTY
(1972--1973)

Date/month	Name of the defector	Party from which defected	Party to which defected
Dec. 22, 1972	1. Mr. Birabhadra Singh	Congress (R)	Utkal Congress
	2. Mr. Niledri Naik	do	do
	3. Mr. Babisingh Majhi	do	do
** March 1, 1973	1. Mr. Baharai Oram	Congress (R)	P.L.P.
	2. Mr. Maheswar Majhi	do	do
	3. Mr. Gangedhar Pradhan	do	do
	4. Mr. Hemendra Prasad Mohapatra	do	do
	5. Mr. Radhemohan Naik	do	do
	6. Mr. Dhansai Randhari	do	do
	7. Mr. Gopal Pradhan	do	do
	8. Mr. Ignave Majhi	do	do
	9. Mr. Sidhalal Marmu	do	do

Sources:

* Collected from (i) Asthana, Pushpa, op.cit., p.330
(ii) Sivach, J.R., op.cit., p.245. (only for dates)

** See, Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., p.317.

Note: In 1973, 25 MLAs withdrew their support to the Satpathy Government. Out of them 9 MLAs were Scheduled Tribes.

To quote the then Governor of Orissa (B.D.Jatti),
 "From the list of 25 MLAs stated to have joined the
 Orissa Pragati Legislature Party 8 belong to Utkal Congress
 5 to Swatantra, 2 to Jharkhand Parties all of whom joined
 Congress Party only in June last, 9 belong to the original
 Congress and one is independent".⁴³

Out of these twenty-five members who defected to
 Pragati Legislature Party nine were Scheduled Tribes.⁴⁴
 The trend of defections by the tribal legislators from
 one party to another is like this: Mr. Saharaj Oram and
 Mr. Maheswar Majhi originally belonged to the Utkal
 Congress but subsequently they joined the Congress and then
 joined the Pragati Party.

Again, Mr. Gangadhar Pradhan, Mr. Hemendra Prasad
 Mahapatra, Mr. Radhemohan Nayak, Mr. Dhansai Randhari and
 Mr. Gopal Pradhan originally belonged to the Swatantra Party.
 Later they joined the Congress and then the Pragati Party.

43. See Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., p.317, Annexure III.

Here Nanda has reproduced the letter written by
 B.D. Jatti, the then Governor of Orissa to President
 of India advising him to impose President's Rule
 in Orissa.

44. For other nontribal members who defected to
 Pragati Legislature Party, see Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit.,
 Annexure- III, p.137.

Similarly, Mr. Ignace Majhi and Mr. Sidhalel Murumu originally belonged to the Jharkhand Party and later on joined Congress and then joined the Pragati Legislature Party.

Thus, Mr. Patnaik, Dr. Mahtab and Mr. Singh Deo in their joint efforts were successful in causing the re-defection of the defectors from the Congress (R) and ultimately the Setpathy government fell on March 1, 1973.

What are the factors that responsible for these large-scale defections of tribal legislators during this period? Precisely the answer to this question is that the defection of these legislators in the period between January 1971 to June 10, 1972 was mainly because of advantage associated with them. Like other nontribal members (some important) they have not defected to any party or parties either on the basis of ideology or political pragmatism and inter-elite clash.⁴⁵

In the Setpathy Ministry formed in June 1972, Mr. Gangadhar Pradhan - the leader of the tribal defectors

45. See, Nanda, Sukadv, op.cit., (Table- A-E), pp.157-59.

from Swatantra to Congress (R) - was taken as a cabinet minister. But soon, he was completely disillusioned and lost his faith in the party and leadership. Subsequently, he defected to the newly formed Pragati Legislature Party along with his supporters. In his resignation letter addressed to the Chief Minister he had mentioned a number of causes for which he was dissatisfied.⁴⁶ One of these causes pertinent to the tribal representation in the ministry deserves to be mentioned here. He writes:

"You, as the Chief Minister, instead of bringing about integration among the Adivasi and Harijan Congress legislators of Orissa have made a calculated division among them for your own selfish interests and political survival. Though the Adivasi Congress Legislators have a comfortable strength in the House, there is only one Adivasi member in your cabinet. Similarly, it is very significant -- and meaningful that not a single Adivasi member is taken in your ministry from three major districts of Orissa -- Nayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Phulbani."⁴⁷

46. For details see, Ibid., pp.310-11.

47. See, "Gangadhar Pradhan's resignation letter addressed to Mrs. Satpathy, the Chief Minister of Orissa", reproduced in Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., pp.310-11, (Annexure-II).

On the otherhand, B.D. Jatti, the Governor of Orissa in his letter to the President of India, wrote:

"Shri Gangadhar Pradhan of the Swatantra Party who joined the Congress Party in June 1972 became a minister in the Satpathy Cabinet. He lost his Forest and Animal Husbandary Portfolio at the time of expansion of the Council of Ministers in January, 1973. There were reports in the press at that time that he was dissatisfied at these arrangements. This as well as other factors appeared to have helped the Orissa Pragati Legislature Party in persuading him to leave the ministry."⁴⁸

* Impact on Political Stability and the fate of the Swatantra Party.

How does the Scheduled Tribe members' participation in the game of political defections affect the political stability? The change of party affiliations by tribal MLAs in the first week of June 1972 led to the fall of the Swatantra-Utkal Congress-Jharkhand coalition ministry. Again, when the nine tribal legislators under the same

48. B.D. Jatti, the Governor of Orissa's letter to Shri V.V. Giri, the President of India, written on March 1, 1973. For this see, Nanda, Sukadev, op.cit., (Annexure-III), p.315.

leader Mr. Gangadhar Pradhan withdrew their support to Mrs. Satpathy's government during the budget session, the ministry collapsed. And the President's Rule was imposed in the State. Thus, it is very clear that the political behaviour of tribal legislators during this period greatly affected the political stability of the State.

This defection politics had also a lasting impact on the Swatantra Party because this party mainly depended on the tribal people. The defections of 8 tribal MLAs and 3 nontribal MLAs from the Swatantra Party reduced the strength of the party in the House to 25. This group-defections of Scheduled Tribe members demoralised R.N. Singh Deo, the leader of the Swatantra Party and that was why he developed his grievances against Congress (R). He joined the Pragati Legislature Party to fight against the Congress government. After this period the role of the Swatantra Party gradually declined in the State and subsequently it merged with the Bharatiya Lok Dal, which was formed in October 1974.

The Congress formed the government for the second time under the leadership of Mrs. Satpathy in 1974.

The lure of political offices, patronage etc. encouraged the members of opposition parties to defect to the ruling party. Several members of B.L.D. defected to Congress in the post-1974 period. With these defections, the Congress strength increased to 84. Because of this defection politics and factionalism the Congress government could not maintain stability for a long period. On the eve of 1977 elections Congress was again plagued by defection, factionalism and corrupt politicians. By that time most of its senior leaders had joined the opposition. As a result, in the 1977 elections Congress got a severe blow in Orissa.

III. General Observation :

From an analysis of defection politics in Orissa, it is very clear that, though the tribal legislators are involved in the game of political defections, they are not the initiators. Rather they are instigated to do so. The political instability in the State has been the result of the active participation of the top leaders in factional politics. Every occasion they are successful

in winning away the support of some of the tribal members. The political defections that occurred during the period between 1957-59 was encouraged by top Congress leaders like Dr. Mahtab and Mr. Nilamani Routray.

Again, the same Mahtab was responsible for the breaking away of a dissident group from the Congress in 1966 and the formation of Jana Congress. The emergence of Biju Patnaik as the new leader in the Orissa Congress in 1961 became a challenge to the old leadership of Dr. H.K. Mahtab. As a result, Dr. Mahtab involved himself in the bitter factionalism within the Congress to weaken the political base of Mr. Biju Patnaik.

Similarly, the Das coalition government collapsed because of the tactical game played by Biju Patnaik to replace him. And also, on behalf of the Congress Party, Mrs. Satpathy had played a meaningful role in encouraging the defections from the United Front government. As a result of which large-scale defection was started by the tribal members in the first week of June 1972 from Svatantra, Utkal Congress and Jharkhand Parties. Ultimately, it increased the number of the Congress (R) and enabled it to form the government. In this respect Mr. Nilamani

Routrey of Utkal Congress also played an important role in instigating the tribal members to defect to Congress (R) so that the United Front Government will fall.

With the formation of the Pragati Legislature Party on the eve of 1974 elections, the three stalwarts of Orissa politics such as Dr. H.R. Mahtab, R.H. Singh Deo and Biju Patnaik temporarily forgot their past full of intense hostility and came together to dislodge Mrs. Satpathy from power. Ultimately, they were successful in causing the downfall of the Mrs. Satpathy's Ministry by resorting to the game of political defections.

Thus, a close look at history reinforces the conclusion that the brain behind the politics of defections in Orissa are the top political leaders especially who became the Chief Ministers at one or the other time. Other members of the Orissa Assembly especially tribals have been manipulated to support their causes by the promises of some official benefits and/or monetary rewards. The tribal legislators have not been able to form an independent base.

C O N C L U S I O N S

This study was an attempt to survey the socio-political profile of the tribal legislators in Orissa Legislative Assembly. Their socio-political profile brings us closer to one more pertinent point -- the role and nature of their politics. On the basis of such a study an assessment has been made regarding the effectiveness of the reservation policy so far as the representation of the tribal people in the Assembly is concerned.

This aspect of political life of Orissa is not being studied in isolation. An attempt was made to understand it in a broader historical perspective. As has been discussed earlier, the politicisation of the tribal people in India is a post-independence phenomenon. However, this study has gone beyond it and analysed the tribesmen's political activities in the pre-independence phase. The miserable socio-economic conditions of the tribal people and their sporadic militant activities of the pre-independence era made a lasting effect on the national leadership. When the Constitution was framed, their problems were specially

taken into consideration to provide for their socio-economic amelioration. To make them participate in the national politics, some political safeguards were provided to the Scheduled Tribes, so that they could be represented in the Parliament as well as the State Legislatures. As per these provisions (article 330 and 332) they get elected to the Parliament and the State Legislatures from the constituencies especially reserved for them.

The genesis of the reserved constituency and tribal uprisings in India in general and Orissa in particular have been discussed in the chapter- II. The reservation policy for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes got a concrete shape in the Indian Constitution after Independence, but its origin dates back to the 'Poona Pact' of September 25, 1932.

Our study reveals that the nature of tribal uprisings in Orissa have not always been the same. Some tribal uprisings were against the exploitation and injustice by the nontribals. When the socio-economic and religious systems of the tribals were seriously

affected, they revolted. Secondly, some tribal people had nationalist feelings. For example, Lakshman Nayak of Koraput district sacrificed his life for the cause of national independence. He made a heroic fight against the British Administration and the Raja of Jeypore. Thirdly, soon after the independence, when the integration of the princely States were attempted, some tribals were instigated by the rulers of the princely States to oppose it. Lastly, tribal people of north-western Orissa had shown some separatist tendency. They wanted Mayurbhanj to be separated from Orissa. Thus we find both separatist and loyalist tendencies among the tribal people of Orissa.

In the Third chapter, while reviewing the politics of Orissa and the pattern of party politics it is found that the distinct feature of the State politics is its factionalism and political instability. It is interesting to note that so far no ministry has completed its full term of five years. All the ministries were coalitional—either formal or informal—except in 1961 and 1977. This study also indicates that in the tribal region the Ganatantra Parishad/Swantantra Party had a strong political base.

It is assumed that non-political factors like demographic characteristics, socio-economic conditions to a great extent influenced the political participation of the tribal members. That is why an analysis of the socio-economic conditions of the tribal people as a whole in Orissa has been made. This aspect finds a place in chapter- IV.

Orissa has a sizeable tribal population, constituting 23 per cent of the State's population. They are concentrated in the hilly regions of Orissa. These regions were earlier under the rule of the princes. After independence these princely States were integrated into Orissa and came under the influence of democratic politics.

There are 62 tribes in Orissa. Our study shows them at different stages of socio-economic development. On the basis of their socio-economic development they have been broadly divided into three distinct categories, viz., primitive tribes, tribes in transition, and assimilated tribes. The tribes belong to different

economic groups. On the one hand, it is found that some primitive tribes still practise the collectional and foodgathering economy, whereas some advanced tribes have resorted to settled agriculture. In the recent past they have become migrant labourers and are absorbed in some steel plants and mining complexes. Thus, with the passage of time, socio-economic transformation of tribal people is taking place slowly.

Since independence educational opportunities have been extended to the tribal population in the State. Some positive trends are visible in this regard. In 1961 the literacy rate among the tribals in Orissa was only 7.4 per cent, but by 1971 it increased to 9.5 per cent. However, in terms of plan expenditure for the education of this community, this is not commendable. Educationally, the rate of literacy of the tribal people is even lower than that of the Scheduled Caste population. It is mainly because of their cultural barriers and other constraints like economic backwardness.

Against this socio-economic background of the tribal population in Orissa we have studied the socio-

political profile of the tribal legislators in chapter- V. Different variables like age, education, occupation, type of tribal origin, political affiliations, prior political experience, pattern of election, and their representation in ministries etc. have been taken into account. This analysis helps us understand the fact the tribal legislators do not belong to any single or homogeneous socio-political background.

Having done this, we have observed their actual participation in the State politics in the last chapter. Their role and nature of politics have been delineated. Their role through different political parties especially through Jharkhand and Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra in ministry-making have been discussed. Moreover, their involvement in the defection politics has also been analysed.

The major findings of our study can be discussed in the following order.

To begin with, since 1952 the Scheduled Tribes have been elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly from reserved constituencies. The observations show that from

general constituencies no tribal candidate has been elected to the Orissa Assembly excepting a few cases in 1967 and 1971. In 1967 two and in 1971 one candidate were elected to Assembly from the general constituencies. Further it has been observed that the number of contestants have continuously increased in the reserved constituencies indicating an increasing level of political participation among the tribal people.¹

Moreover, it is revealed that till 1977 no woman tribal candidate has been elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly. This reinforces the view that the tribal women are still not conscious and active politically.

Age-wise analysis of the tribal legislators reveals the fact that younger generation (i.e., between 25 to 34 years) have dominated every successive Assembly. Middle age group (i.e., between 35 to 44 years) tribal members are also fairly well represented. But, the old generation are poorly represented. In the beginning,

1. In the mid-term poll of 1974 out of 722 candidates 163 were Scheduled Tribes. The corresponding figure of the Scheduled Tribe candidates in the previous General Elections of 1961, 1967 and 1971 were 96, 133 and 189. This shows the increasing participation of tribal people in Orissa politics.

their strength in the Assembly was very insignificant but in the subsequent years their number has increased. It is because members of the previous Houses have grown older when they seek election to the next House.

Earlier, the Assemblies were dominated by the less educated tribal members. It is observed that many members had educational qualifications below the High School standard. Some members had only primary level education. This must have handicapped the effective participation of the tribal members in Orissa politics. But it is found that in the subsequent years their number has decreased. Because, with the spread of education among the tribal people more educated members are drawn into the politics of Orissa. Our study of educational background of tribal legislators reveals that in the subsequent years even graduates, law graduates and post-graduate members have shown an active interest in Orissa politics. However, their number is not substantial. Still, under-matriculate, matriculate and under-graduate tribal members dominateth Orissa Legislative Assembly.

The occupational profile of the tribal legislators indicates that the members with agriculture as their

prior occupation were elected in maximum number in every elections to Orissa Legislative Assembly. Lawyers and teachers have actively participated in the State politics. It seems that these professions suits them for involving themselves in politics. On the otherhand, people with government service as their prior occupation have shown least interest in Orissa politics.

As we have already noted, Orissa has a heterogeneous tribal population. Our tribe-wise analysis of legislators confirms the evidence that, all tribal sections are not politically conscious to an equal extent. Some major tribes like Bondh, Gond, Santal, Sabara, Oraon, Ho, Munda, Bathudi and Bhuyan etc. are more participative in the State politics of Orissa than others. Other sections are less exposed to politics because of their cultural and economic backwardness.

This study also reveals that tribal people are not united under any single political banner. They have been affiliated to different political parties in different periods of time in the various elections. They have been in the ruling party as well as in different opposition

parties. Major parties like Ganatantra Parishad/Svatantra and Congress have represented them in the Orissa Assembly. The support base of the Ganatantra Parishad/Svatantra Party was among the tribal masses. The role of the other parties have been less significant in the State politics. That is the reason why they have not been able to mobilise the tribal community in large numbers.

Other regional parties which have emerged out of the factionalism within the Congress have also tried to mobilise them into their political folds.

The Jharkhand Party (a tribal party) also has not been able to draw the attention of all sections of the tribal society. From the very beginning the party faced the challenges from the Ganatantra Parishad and the Congress Party. In the first General Elections, the leaders of the Congress Party wanted to divert the attention of the tribal population away from the Jharkhand Party's demand for a separate State. Under their instigation, Lal Ranjit Singh Bariah (a tribal member who was an old Congress minister) formed the Adibasi Congress. The

Adibasi Congress later on merged with the Congress Party in the State. The most important leaders of the Jharkhand party have changed their party affiliations many times. That is why the tribal people of north-western Orissa also lost their faith in the Jharkhand Party leadership.

Since then, the tribals have not worked as an independent political force to ameliorate their socio-economic conditions.

It has also been observed that every Assembly had contained both freshly recruited tribal members as well as the members who had earlier been in the Legislative Assembly. Both politically experienced and inexperienced tribal members have been elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly. Before they have been elected to the Legislative Assembly they usually have had some political experience in the institutions of local self-government. Some Sarpanchs and Chairmen, after establishing their influence in the Panchayat and Block levels, have tried to enter State-level politics. However, the overwhelming majority of those elected to the various Assemblies had no such

political experience.

Though the tribal people have from the beginning been in the power structure of the State they have not been able to play a very significant role. They have not been assigned important cabinet berths. This implies that the tribal members in Orissa have yet to emerge as very influential leaders.

Tribal legislators have played the role of the balance-keeper of Orissa political system through the Jharkhand Party, Ganatantra Parishad and Swatantra Party so far as the politics of ministry-making is concerned. Whenever, no single political party in the State has been able to secure an absolute majority, the tribal legislators have been able to play a vital role in forming the ministry.

Orissa politics has been plagued by factionalism and defection. After the fourth General Elections the politics of large-scale defection is quite viable. The tribal legislators have not been any exception to the general pattern of defection politics in the State

from the very beginning. In the post-1967 period it is observed that they have occasionally been involved in group-defections. Such defections, have also contributed to the political instability of the State. Their change in party affiliations have been mainly on non-ideological consideration.

However, the involvement of tribal legislators in the defection politics has been often engineered by the non-tribal MLAs. The defection politics also reveals that the tribal members are often manipulated to support the personal interest of the top non-tribal political leaders of the State, who have been involved in intense factional politics.

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