

THE ELITES IN ORISSA POLITICS

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C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled "THE ELITES IN ORISSA POLITICS" submitted by PRADEEPTA KUMAR NAYAK in partial fulfilment of the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) in Jawaharlal Nehru University, is a product of the student's own work, carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

It is hereby certified that this work has not been presented for the award of any other degree or diploma of this or any other University and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.


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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the last four decades the nation-building has been the major concern of the underdeveloped and the developing countries. The newly independent nations are in a search of a new identity and a new future. But the great obstacles that still lie ahead are poverty, illiteracy, immobility and in-fighting of people in these countries. The realization of a democratic and egalitarian image the developing countries like India hold of their future depends largely on the extent to which the elite in these countries are successful in playing their roles and fulfilling the goals expected from and promised by them. Since the leaders in these countries had dreamt of political liberation from colonial rules and had promised to their people not only for providing them political liberty, but also higher standards of living, they had included all these in their preparation of ambitious blueprints for economic development, technical change, and reconstruction of their countries soon after their political independence. But the goals are yet to be achieved and the roles to be studied. The developing societies are still facing the spectre of poverty, though a small section of the citizens in each country, called the elite, have attained the affluence of those living in the developed world. These elite have

been the trend-setters and a reference model for the lower strata of the society. The political elite constitute a small but most dynamic and supposedly dominant organ of the elite in general.

The political elite are said to constitute a blueprint of the type of a society. In fact, they are responsible for all acts of omission and commission. However, they play a dominant role in the decision-making processes and the power-structure of the society. It is, therefore, essential to examine their social composition, attributes and activities in the society. Such an enquiry is more relevant in a society like India which has born recently out of age-old alien rule and has adopted a democratic political system with a proclaimed welfare state. In India a study of the political elite assumes a crucial significance because here the parliamentary democracy acts as one of the most important institutions for deciding the path of socio-economic development.

There are two main types of theories dealing with the distribution of power in a society. These are: (a) diverse non-Marxist conceptions and explanations regarding the composition and functions of the elite and the masses; and (b) various interpretations of the Marxist theories of the ruling class(es) and the subject class(es). The elite theorists contend that it is always an organized minority which rules over the unorganized majority of a population,

due to their supposedly superior qualities. On the contrary, the ruling class is a dominant organized minority in contradiction and conflict with the subject majority. "The concept of ruling class refers to the nature of the social system and the internal socio-political forces. Thus, the concept helps in evaluation of the content of politics. But the concept of the political elite refers to the process of political decision-making, and thus can only analyse the form of the political process. However, in one sense, the two theories are complementary in nature. Both the theories look into the same phenomena, but examine different aspects."¹

The analysis of elite covers the whole area of studies, from specific studies of an elite in a micro situation² to a general study of the national elite over a broad period of time.³ At the same time some studies have also been made of legislatures,⁴ bureaucrats,⁵ top military bosses,⁶ businessmen,⁷ and intellectuals.⁸ Yet, the studies of elites have always faced some basic problems like the definition of the concept of elite, identification of the elite and the relationship between different types of elites.

Political sociologists like Pareto,⁹ Mosca¹⁰ and Michels¹¹ have contributed to the formulation of value-free and objective theories of elite. Besides, there are others like Ostrogorski,¹² Burnham¹³ and Mills¹⁴ who have made valuable contributions in this direction.

Scholars like Mosca, Michels and Ostrogorski held that an elite owes power predominantly to its organizational abilities. Pareto, by contrast, traced the elite's position to the psychological make-up of both elite and non-elite. This is explicable in terms of certain consistencies in human nature. James Burnham has seen the power of the elite as a consequence of its control of economic resources. Mills has also explained the dominance of the elite not as a product of the personal qualities of its members but of the positions they occupy in key institutions within a society.¹⁵

Further, it has been suggested that the evolution of the capitalist system, or possibly the future socialist system, may establish a monopoly of power by the educated elite (the know-how elite) over the working class. It is also anticipated that in such situation there may be dictatorship of the bureaucracy and the military.¹⁶ Such formulation has further been advanced and revised due to the inadequacy of the hypothesis of the dominance of the economic elite. This underlines and indicates the greater theoretical and empirical viability of the hypothesis of the multiple influence of the political power.¹⁷ However, one significant outcome of the theory of elite has been the contradiction of the basic assumption of democracy that government is in the hands of the people. It has also been brought

out that the elite in any society wield political or economic power, formulate policies, shape the destiny of a nation and decide the most vital issues of political life. This they do according to their own attitudes and interests though in the name of the welfare of common man.

There are two groups of theories of elite. One refers to the groups of persons who are famous in a particular field. The other is referred to the group composed of top persons from the institutions which govern the key sectors of the society. The first one is based on the pluralist model and the latter is the power-elite model. The pluralists contend that political power is, to a great extent, superior to and independent of economic power. In contrast, it is said that democracy always maintains a class character. A system adopts several means to defend the interests of the property-owners.

In contrast to the theories of the elite, Marx has divided the pre-capitalist societies into a ruling class and the subject class(es). The two classes antagonistic to each other are always in conflict. In fact, in his formulation the polity is largely determined by economy in the society. Almost all the Marxist theorists dismiss the theories of the elite as bourgeois ideology except perhaps Burnham who has attempted to combine both the Marxist and non-Marxist

theories of elite as mentioned above.

On the relationship between the ruling class and the ruling elite, Wesolowski has observed that "in the everyday occupation of decision-making the activities of the elite are to a large extent conditioned and limited by class rules."¹⁸ In India it is proposed that there prevails a system which combines the characteristics of a ruling class and also of a power elite. Here the big business continues to influence the government policies through financing different political parties. In turn, the decisions of the power elite cannot divorce from those of the ruling class. They control the political elite with their immense wealth, control over mass media of communication, access to decision-making bodies, and informal connections with the decision-makers. But this does not mean that every action or decision of the political elite is made by the command of the ruling class. The vital questions are whether the political elite are capable of determining the pace and form of development of a nation. Whether they formulate only those policies which they believe would gather votes as well as fulfill their private ends? The present study is a modest venture to find out answer to these and related questions.

The political elite are the law-makers. They have to meet the challenges like social progress, economic development and national reconstruction which are the major concerns

in the present day Indian society. Hence it is important to know whether the political elite adequately respond to these challenges, and if so, in what ways and with what means? Further, since the occupants of high status in the society provide a model which influences the activities and behaviour of the masses, the elite constitute an important field of enquiry. As Weiner says, "To understand modern India, one must understand this new leadership, the social background from which it derives, the groups with which it is associated, and whose interest it articulates, the values and ideologies it propagates and the influence it wields."¹⁹ In fact, the study of elite is an indispensable aid to the understanding of power structure and processes in any form of political system. And a comprehensive and scientifically substantiated analysis of power structure is needed to understand its nature in the Indian society.

In the above context, it is proposed to study the power structure of India with special reference to Orissa. Orissa has been selected for the study due to peculiarity of its empirical situation. First of all, Orissa is one of the richest Indian states in deposits of the natural resources. Indeed, the mineral wealth of Orissa alone equals to that of Western Europe. Secondly, despite its vast and abundant natural and mineral resources, Orissa remains as one of the poorest states in India. Every year there are record-making

and record-breaking starvation deaths. Poverty and illiteracy have been the regular features of the state. On the other side, the tiny minority of the elite who are in-charge of decision-making, have formulated and got implemented primarily those policies which have helped mostly to their own development. The large masses of people have only sparsely been benefited from such policies. It is therefore interesting to examine the role of the political elite in the nature and magnitude of social development of people in the state. Besides, Orissa is backward and underdeveloped in terms of transport and communication facilities. It lacks industrialisation as well. In fact it is one of the most backward states by applying any criterion of modernization and development in general. And thus, the study of the political elite in Orissa is called for.

There are a very few studies on Orissa politics, particularly on the political elite with reference to their socio-economic composition and their class-orientation. F.G. Bailey is a pioneer in the studies of politics, economics, castes and classes in Orissa, their interlinks and changes. He saw how distribution of wealth determines political structure, and how the 'extending frontiers' of the economy and the polity bring about changes. Caste was altered to a great extent but still a powerful factor in politics. The economic changes, too, became a harbinger of changes in the balance

of power. The new fluctuation of wealth to the 'New Rich' created a few discrepancies between the traditional and modern or secular elite. The high castes along with the rich peasantry were in 'horizontal solidarity'. He also saw the Scheduled Castes in solidarity for political purposes. The servicing and artisan castes were numerically poor and were, in state politics, nowhere prominent.

In his politics and social change, Bailey analysed political activity at three levels (the state, the constituencies and the villages) between 1947 and 1959. He found the Congress government in the state in a state of instability frictions, difficulties, down-right bungling and corruption. Some other political parties were also based on tradition, patronage, region, caste and class etc., all parochial. A man's economic role was found in a link with his and others' political, kinship and religious role. Thus the work shows that whatever was the negative impact of the decisions of the political elite, it was on the poor. The rich could avoid the danger and influenced the decisions in their favour. The recent studies by Jagannath Pathy and Puspa Asthana also show that class and caste and politics were interwoven.

Orissa harbours a highly great majority of the poor or the Dalits constituting the SCs (15%), STs (23%), OBCs (50%) and other minorities (5%). It is therefore pertinent to see how a tiny minority of the elite rule over them with reference to their both actual and expected activities and

attributes. Since the legislative elites are the formal and direct decision-makers and they constitute a relevant stratum in the state, they have been accepted as subject of the present study.

The main objective of the study is to explore the extent to which the democratic politics is exposed to the hoi-polloi. It is also the objective to know the social structure and composition of democratic politics in the state. It is also our intention to find out the factors conducive in getting some persons elected as representatives in the State Assembly. It is thus intended to explore both the formal and informal processes adopted by them to become the leaders or political elite. It is also proposed to know their socio-economic composition and their family background.

In a society the ownership of wealth is one of the main reasons of inequality in politics. Thus economic inequality leads to political inequality or economy as such influences politics. It is therefore interesting to know the type of role the major classes or social categories of people play in Orissa politics. And "any enquiry into the relationship between the ruling class and the political elite has to examine (a) the socio-economic composition of the elite, (b) the class interests they represent, in terms of their output both in the reduction of the proportion of

private wealth of the upper class, as well as the attempt to raise the income of the deprived groups and, (c) the degree of the autonomy of the decisions of the political elite."²⁰ It is, therefore, intended to know the elite's public policy-making processes with reference to the rural landed interest who play a dominant role in the predominantly agricultural society. It is also proposed to examine the policies formulated by them in favour of the SCs, STs, OBCs and the minorities who constitute a vast majority of the backward people in the state.

The data to be collected through the secondary sources pertain to certain specific questions like: Who are the elites? What are their activities, attributes and attitudes towards modernization and development? What strategies do they adopt and recommend for getting these objectives realised? How much successful and autonomous are they in influencing and getting their decisions implemented? Are their policies and programmes for the welfare of the hoi polloi (masses) or only in the interests of the classes they hail from, or they represent? In brief, the scope of the present study is centred around the main areas like the recruitment of the political elite and their linkages (in terms of policies formulated and getting implemented) with the ruling class, or the social group to which they belong, or to the whole society.

"The processes of recruitment are a good indicator of the values and the distribution of influence of the system."²¹ Recruitment pattern indicates various types of uneven changes in the society. It influence the stability of the system and affects the distribution of status and prestige. Thus, observing historically the political elite within the context of their background gives a picture of structural changes in the system. Again, comprehending their background is important in order to find out a relationship with their policy formulation and efficiency in governance. The Marxist view is that the elites in both the State and the Centre are dominated by the members of the privileged class. In fact, throughout the last 40 years most of the members of the political elite in India in general and in Orissa in particular had been clearly identified with the upper strata of the society.

The game of politics is so extravagant that the poor have a rare chance to play it. When dire poverty obstructs the majority from attending the booth, the elections are reduced to a "rich-men's game". Referring to the selection of the "British Political Elite", Guttsman observed that a middle or upper class social and educational background appears to be of increasing significance.²² We shall see in the present study whether the same is true in India as well as in Orissa.

For an analysis of the linkages of the elite, we require an analysis of the outlooks and commitments of the elites towards the people as a whole. A study of the perceptions of the political elites towards the wholistic problems of the people may provide an insight into their conscious behaviour in the decision-making processes. It has also been found that the role performance of the elite is directly related to their economic position or the class interest they represent. In this regard, it is important to find out the relationship between the elite perspectives and the areas (tribal, rural and urban) to which they belong. Such relationship is also interesting with regard to their educational, caste and class position.

The linkages of the elite have been found at rural, urban, tribal, agricultural and industrial levels. These have also been observed at military, bureaucratic and intellectual as well as political and economic levels. And all the elite have been eager to make a concerted effort to secure their status at any cost. The political apparatus, meant in principle, for the general people is misused to serve the elite's interests. It has been easy to deceive the illiterate, ignorant and non or less conscious people. While the elite really serve their own interests or the interests of upper class, they pretend to serve the working class, the mass and the nation as a whole.

The study is based on secondary source materials as stated earlier. These sources are journals, newspapers, magazines, census data and elections data published by the Election Commission and many other government agencies. The relevant data have also been obtained from articles, books and reports published by other agencies.

Besides this and concluding chapters, the dissertation consists of four main chapters. The next chapter entitled "The Concepts and Theories of the Political Elite and the Ruling Class" is about the role and nature of elites observed by different social scientists. Chapter III on "The Political Elite in India" deals with the elite's role and interaction in the socio-economic development of socio-economic development of people in the country. Chapters IV and V give the socio-economic profile of Orissa and the roles of Political Elites in the State respectively. Lastly, the concluding Chapter summarises the main findings of the analyses made in the dissertation and also suggests certain new aspects of the theme which may be of interest of later enquiry.

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CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPTS AND THEORIES OF THE POLITICAL ELITE AND THE RULING CLASS

Any deeper study of the political elite or the Ruling Class needs a review of literature or the research works that have already been done. These are relevant as these may provide some guidelines for present study. These may give us some idea as to who are the elite, what do they do and what are their roles vis-a-vis the masses, the classes and other groups. Besides, the discussion on theories of different elite and ruling class or classes may also reveal the type of power structure and continuities and changes in a particular society. The present chapter deals with the different concepts and theories of the political elite and the ruling class vis-a-vis the other types of elites and the masses.

The 'Neta' or the leader of a common parlance in the political field has been conceptualised by social scientists as 'political elite', 'governing elite', 'power elite', 'ruling elite', 'ruling class', 'political influentials', 'decision-makers', etc.. The term elite continues to be enigmatic and tantalising in nature because of its deep social significance in practical day-to-day life not only at the point of time but for future too. The elite have occupied

a prominent position in the theory and research undertaken in recent years. Despite profound writings of many social scientists of various hues and complexions, there are sharp differences of opinion about origin, nature, composition, temper and orientation of elite.

The elite have been regarded as the repository of power or resources and are largely instrumental in modifying the structure of society. They are regarded as the blue-prints of modernization, position-holders, power-wielders, decision-makers, and policy as well as decision executors. Very often they are considered as parasitic, privileged, exclusive and exploitative in nature. The term, thus, becomes anti-democratic and impedes the process of nation-building and national homogeneity, especially in many pluralistic societies. Many others interpret it as carrier of values of merit, excellence, and of leadership which tend to give pace-setting tone to the society.

The study of elite came to secure a significant position on the research agenda of social scientists since the early 19th century. The analysis of elite covers the entire gamut of studies from relatively specific studies of an elite in a micro situation¹ to the highly generalised study of the national elite over broad period of time.² At the same time, efforts have been made to single out different types of elites as members of legislatures,³ bureaucrats,⁴ top

military bosses,⁵ businessmen⁶ and intellectuals.⁷ All such studies generally assume that a definite cluster of individuals really dominate the system. The elite theories maintain that in every society there is a minority of people who influence the political decision-making process. Actually these theories reduce the study of politics and society to that of power relations. They only describe the formal exercise of power and almost remain silent with regard to the distribution of power and its relationship with economic development and class formation.

In recent times, the theoretical framework originally developed by Mosca, Pareto and Michels have been reassessed in the light of contemporary investigations.⁸ However, the studies of elite have always posed some basic problems such as the definition of the concept and identification of elite and the relationship between different types of elites.

Mosca used the term elite to refer only to the ruling class invariably or irrespective of time and space. All societies for him, have two distinctively important classes - "the ruling" and "the ruled" - the former numerically insignificant, an organized minority, compared to the preponderance of the unorganized latter. But surprisingly enough, it is the statistically fragile otherwise agile ruling minority which subjugates the majority to its superordination capitalizing on the privileges of power. The ruling minority, to

Mosca, "enjoys the advantages that power brings (and)... the more numerous class is directed and controlled "9 by them.

Pareto has, on the other hand, tried to provide some theoretical sophistication to the concept of elite. To him, elite are "a class of people who have the highest indices in their branch of activity."¹⁰ But in his analysis, like Mosca's division of the population into two classes, ruling and ruled,¹¹ he has divided the population into two unequal strata - elites and non-elites. The elite is again divided into a governing elite and a non-governing elite.¹² He also opines that societies survive due to the presence of elite who maintain their power by a continuous process of lying, cheating and manoeuvring. But when the elite no longer follow the above methods, they are invariably superseded by another elite. For him, the elite are superior to non-elite in intelligence, character, skill, power, etc. Hence, they are the best in a society.

Another important aspect of Pareto's thesis is the circulation of elite which is largely related to individuals, who shift from one group to another because of change in the constellation of psychological traits - 'residues'. Mosca also, like Pareto, speaks of the qualitative cleavage between the masses and the elite holding that it is the latter's

intellectual, material and moral superiority that empowers them to govern the former who remains naturally deprived of these possessions. He, however, talks of an appropriate interaction between the elite and the non-elites. Mosca displays great concern for the sources where this 'superiority' emanates from. This superiority, according to him, is a product of social background.

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Pareto's "circulation of elites" does by no means, encompass "the middle class" whose significance in being recruited to the elite is quite genuinely pointed out by Mosca. But both Mosca and Pareto have looked into the phenomenon of circulation of elite through the process of recruitment, rebellion, or incorporation of novel social groups. In contrast to Pareto's circulation of elite and its generalisation particularly revolution, Bottomore cites the example of India "which had over long periods, an extremely rigid form of stratification and so far as discovered relatively little movement of individual from the lower strata of society, into the elite, but which yet experienced until modern times few revolutionary movements, none of which resulted in the replacement of one elite by another."¹³ Even in Western democracies, it is said that there is not much circulation of elite. The members of the political elite are still recruited mostly from the upper class of the respective societies.¹⁴ A rich enters into politics



because of his wealth, control of mass media, contact with high commands of political parties. Miller also has found that "there is no historical evidence in favour of the social mobility from the manual strata of the population into the upper levels."¹⁵

Contrary to this, Mosca has exaggerated that the barriers for the lower classes in the modern democracies of the West to move to ruling class is removed or lowered and thus "the ranks of the ruling classes have been held open."¹⁶ Referring to Mosca's statement that inevitably one group or a partly succeeds another in power and it contains within its own ranks an unorganized minority, Michels has mentioned that the reality is of the principle of a minority in rule. To him, organization meant nothing more than oligarchy. According to him, unless the fight between the elite and the masses is over, it is impossible to install a true democracy. Of course, he has viewed democracy as the best existing form of government. The theories of Pareto and Mosca, insisting upon the inequality of individual endowment and the governing minority have suggested the futility of the democratic principles. This is more clear in Michel's analysis where he finds that the democracies in operation tend to become oligarchic.

Ignoring the above statement, Karl Mannheim wrote, "...the shaping of policy is in the hands of the elite, but this does not mean that the society is not democratic. For, it is sufficient for democracy that the individual

citizens though prevented from taking a direct part in government all the time, have at least the possibility of making their aspirations felt at certain intervals."¹⁷ Mannheim has expounded the relation between ideology and leadership and there he holds that the elite are more than each having some specific functions. He wrote, "We may distinguish the following types of elites: the political, the organizing, the intellectual, the artistic, the moral and the religious. The political and the organizing elites aim at integrating great number of individual mills."¹⁸

Talking about institutionalization of power, Schumpeter¹⁹ says that the democratic method is the institutional arrangement for arriving at the political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote. Reacting critically to the views based on the inequality of individual endowments and supporting the democracies, Schumpeter concluded that in many contemporary societies, the true nature of democracy prevails. Again, the view of human endowment and excellence is more critically examined in Guttsman's study of the British Political Elite. To him, it is wrong to conclude that the legislators of the democratic polity are the most suitable men to govern the people. He goes on to state, "We saw that in the struggle for place and positions, some are heavily handicapped and that on the long road to eminence others found

the barriers down against them. Institutional forces, prejudices and inertia prevented the free flow of talent even into the lower ranges of the political hierarchy and the conditions under which the politicians perform their duties will also determine the character and the qualifications of the men who will come forward."²⁰

Contrary to oligarchy, Dahl has described democracy as a 'poliarchy'. In his view, the control of the society by the elite is not a permanent feature.²¹ And the political leaders are subordinate to people who have a choice to send alternative candidates with alternative or different policies. According to him, "non-leaders exercise a high degree of control over governmental leadership."²² Nevertheless, he admits that power is enjoyed by those who have wealth, status or high business position. Here, his formulation becomes very superfluous as he has ignored the basic fact that due to certain structural constraints, all the people of a society cannot participate in the politics, with an almost equal weightage.

Hunter,²³ on the other hand, has found that the elite tend to be economic, political and social leaders. That they have power in one area is related to having power in another area also. He observes that the business leaders are active in policy decisions and the top leaders of the state formulate

such policies as are favourable to the big businessmen. However, studies of community power by Dahl and Hunter have implicitly recognized that in a group only the privileged few exercise political power. The elite groups which emerge to positions of leadership influence at every social level.²⁴ In fact, in a state all the Cabinet Ministers, civil servants, party leaders, industrial houses, executives and influential people who can impress upon the decision-makers essential form an elite group.²⁵

Theories of Elites:

Besides the above analysis, there are two specific groups of theories of elites; one refers to the groups of individuals who are eminent in a specific field, and the other refers to the group composed of the top persons from those institutions which govern the key sectors of the society. The first one is based on the pluralist model and the second one is on the power-elite model.

Taking the second group of theories first, it is maintained that elite are composed of men who have the most of what is there to have money, power and privilege. They are able to realise their will even if others resist it.²⁶ Although this theory of Mills reflects the influence of Pareto and Mosca, on the one hand, and of Karl Marx on the other, it is less encompassing compared to Pareto and

Mosca since it is limited to American society of 1950's. Rejecting Pareto's elite-rule-inevitability and domination doctrine, Mills ventures to analyze elite rule in purely institutional terms rather than the psychological one. Ruling out the view of qualitative superiority of elite vis-a-vis masses, he signifies that the structure of institutions is such that those at the top of the institutional hierarchy largely monopolize power. He identifies three pivotal institutions, hence, three kinds of elites in the US society of 1950s. These are major corporations, the military and the federal government as institutions proliferating three categories of elite - economic, military and political. These elite together in practice form a single ruling minority - the power elite - because the activities and interests of these elite are similar and interconnected. Though Mills has described the cohesiveness of the three principal elites, he conceptualises this phenomenon as the 'power elite' in preference to the concept of the 'ruling class'. Nevertheless, he does not provide any satisfactory explanation for this.

Like Mills, Guttsman has found, in studying the British political elite, that different elite groups "are mostly closely linked to elite positions in other fields either contemporaneously or chronologically."²⁷ An altogether different interpretation is given by others. For example, unlike all

of his predecessors, Lasswell comes up with an altogether new and convincing interpretation of elite. His is a perfectly utilitarian theory (of elite) for he sees the elite as primarily interested in appropriating what is there to appropriate. "Influential" is the term he employs to denote the appropriators and all that is worth appropriating he calls them as "values". In his own words, "the influentials are those who get the most of what is there to get. All that is worth appropriation or basic values are three: deference, income and safety. Those who get the most of these values are the elites, the rest are the masses."²⁸ Lasswell, thus, talks of a trichotomized power structure - maximum power with the top elite, less power with the middle level elite and finally, least power with the masses.²⁹

The term 'political class' refers to all those groups which exercise political power or influence, and are directly engaged in struggles for political leadership. Within a political class a smaller group of the political elite comprises of those individuals who actually exercise political power in a society at a given time. In the sphere of political elite are members of the government, administrative personnel, military leaders, and in some cases politically influential families of royalty, aristocracy, industrial houses and other economic enterprises. "The political class, therefore", writes Bottomore, "is composed of members of

groups which may be engaged in varying degrees of cooperation, competition or conflict with each other."³⁰ According to Wesolowski, "the elite (referred to power-elite) is comprised of those who because of their position in the political structure make government decisions or have direct influence on the decisions. These decisions are the outcome of the interactions between various elements of the political structure and bargaining between diverse circles of the elite, and all this is expressed in a so called political programme."³¹ It is expressed that there is an overlap between the different elite in other spheres.

Pluralist Model:

Both Marxism and elitism seem placating on the question of political elite being a minority pocketing power. The pluralists instead of seeing power solely invested in a definite, and composite group of elite, maintain that it is divided among various groups in society. They explain the mounting specialization of the division of labour resulting in growth of innumerable and diversified occupation groups with its particular interest. The organizations representing particular interests in society are known as interest groups. Power is seen to be dispersed among a plurality of elite which actively compete with one another to further particular interests.

The universal validity of the theory of elite has been questioned by such writers as David Riesman, H. Stuart Hughes,

of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders for political offices."³⁵

In opposition to the above mentioned view, it is said that democracy always maintains a class character. It is not very much different from the dictatorship of the ruling classes. In a bourgeois democratic state, the society is dominated by a particular form of the bourgeoisie. By law, personal and democratic freedoms are given but in practice these freedoms have a very limited use, chiefly because, the equality between the capitalists and the workers is not possible. The system uses several means to defend the interests of the property owners.³⁶ However, in a bourgeois democracy the process of the struggle between the capitalists, and the workers helps in bringing about the class consciousness and the eventual solidarity of the proletariat mass. Still, many more social scientists have found the class interests in politics.

With reference to voting behaviour and pattern, it is said that "more than anything else, the party struggle is a conflict among classes and the most impressive single fact about political party support is that in virtually every economically developed country the lower income groups vote mainly for parties of the left while the higher income groups vote for parties of the right."³⁷

An individual's political behaviour is strongly influenced by his/her class background. "The working class people

due to their less leisure, less education, less access to information, more exhausting jobs and the superstructural antagonisms divide and this weakens their interest in politics."³⁸ Similarly, since the mass media is controlled by monopoly houses, it carries the interests of the upper class and propagates its ideologies, and eventually this fact aids in the growth of unequal political power.³⁹ Further, the ruling classes maintain their privileged position and satisfy their vested interests through different means.

More generally, the unequal distribution of economic power means a very unequal distribution of the power to control political parties and their choice of nominees, as well as to influence elections. In this context, the pluralists write, "because campaigns are exceedingly costly, the wealthier a person is the more strategic his position for bringing pressure to bear on politicians."⁴⁰ Although the upper class controls the major part of the decision-making, it "is not complete, other groups sometimes have their innings, particularly when those groups are well organized and angry."⁴¹

The discussion on different theories of elite in this chapter, reveals not only the description and interpretation of the power structure in society, but also highlights its implication on the society. For our purpose of the analysis

of the Political Elite in Orissa, the theories of Pareto, Mosca, Michels, Mills and others initiate in-depth analysis of the concept of elite. Now, it is necessary to discuss the theory of the ruling class to have a comprehensive knowledge of the power structure in Indian society.

The Ruling Class:

The core of the elitist doctrine is that there exists in a society a minority of the population which takes the major decisions in the society. At the theoretical level, the elite theorists argue that every society has political elite who discharge the functions of government and enjoy certain powers and privileges as stated earlier. This distinguishes them from the rest of the society. Tawney says that there is little or no disagreement on the view that the disparity in the ownership of wealth is one of the main reasons of inequality in politics.⁴² The Marxist sociology also stresses the importance of the ownership of the productive instruments as the prime factor in generating socio-political inequalities. It has been argued by Laski that the main index to the nature of any actual state is the system of economic class relations which characterise it. The role of the state is to put coercive power at the disposal of the class which in any given system or society owns the instruments of production.⁴³

In contrast to the elite theories, Marx provided a new explanation to human inequality.⁴⁴ According to him, the distribution of political power is determined by the nature of social forces of production. The forces of production in all stratified societies are owned and controlled by a few, i.e., a minority or the ruling class. The existence of such a privileged minority in a society implies the presence of a parallel majority deprived of ownership and control rights. The ruling class being in possession of the instruments of production controls the military and the production of ideas and all these enable it to establish its political dominance. For, politics is about power - the source of which in society lies in the economic infrastructure. And since this economic infrastructure is dominated by a minority, this propertied minority has access to power, thus, becoming the 'ruling class'. The 'ruling class' uses power as a coercive means to further its own interests by forcing the subject class to submit to a situation which is against its (subject class) interests. The form in which the individuals of a ruling class, Marx argues, assert for their common interests is the state.

Marx also talks of a perpetual internal conflict between the two classes. This conflict is influenced by the change in technology. In a capitalist society, this class polarization reaches a radical extreme position. And this conflict brings the ultimate victory to the working classes. This victory

will be followed by a classless society. Hence, for Marx, in a class society, power rests in the hands of the economically dominant class, i.e. the bourgeoisie.

Similarly, Lenin's theory of bourgeois democratic leadership includes: (a) the masses are divided into classes, (b) classes are usually led by political parties, and (c) political parties as a general rule are directed, more or less, by the stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members, who are elected to the so called representative decision-making positions and are called leaders.⁴⁵

Mao-Tse-tung reduced analytically the numerous types of state systems of the world into three basic kinds according to the class character of their political power. These are: (a) republics under the bourgeois leadership in the old democratic states; (b) republics under the dictatorship of the proletariat as in the Soviet Union, and (c) republics under the joint dictatorship of several revolutionary classes as a transitional form of state adopted in the revolutions of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.⁴⁶ He says, "today... there is hardly a trace of democracy in many of the capitalist countries which have come or are coming under the bloody militarist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Certain countries under the joint-dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the land-

lords can be grouped with this kind."⁴⁷ Here, Mao supports the Manifesto of the Kumingtang's first national congress of 1924, which states that, "the so-called democratic system in modern states is usually monopolised by the bourgeoisie and has become simply an instrument for oppressing the common people."⁴⁸

Poulantzas talks of the relationship between the state and the bourgeoisie in the capitalist state, which, he feels, best serves the capitalists' interests. When the members of this ruling class are not the real political governing elite, to use his terminology, the state is relatively autonomous from the ruling class. To some degree it is free from its direct influence, independent of its direct control. He asserts that since the state is shaped by the infrastructure, it is constrained to represent the interests of the capitalists.

This perspective vehemently undermines the articulation of elitists' doctrinaire by challenging their basic contention that oligarchic elites enjoy uninterfered independence of action, unquestionable superiority and high autonomy of status. He is, therefore, insignificant whether the state is democratic, dictatorial or monarchical in form and is composed of ruling elites from among the masses. What is important is that under all circumstances its role is to basically protect the capitalist interests. The political elites under the

described state are, thus, an important lot reduced to the status of a rubber stamp serving only as indirect agents of the domineering bourgeoisie.

The hypothesization conceived by Poulantzas may seem bearing overtones since it basically seeks to underline high degree of independence and spontaneity of infrastructure. But in fact, it candidly unveils the political realities rampant in the capitalist societies disguised as "democratic set-ups". All the socio-political opportunities in a capitalist system - adult franchise, openness of recruitment to elite, equality oriented legal system etc. - serve as apparatus to shadow the exploitative character of the state.

Marxist sociology sees elites as a contingent phenomenon related to the nature of infrastructure of a society as opposed to elitism which seeks to define elite as a socio-psychologically superior but tiny segment of population responsible for taking major decisions in society. The elitist thinking is contrary to the Marxian position. The elitists believe that the power structure of any society is determined by the character and the abilities of its political leadership. It is the political skill or lack of it which determines who will rule and how power may change hands. Whereas Marx believes that the political leader is the representative of the dominant economic class. He says that political

elites can gain any independence of action by which there is a balance between classes. He further explains that the leadership formations come from the propertied class. Thus, he has related leadership to property ownership as stated earlier.

The radical perspective has obviously come to be vehemently repudiated by elitists as a contentious theorem on the grounds that first "Economics rather than politics is the determining force in history."⁴⁹ Secondly, the Marxian postulation of "single and uniform destiny for all societies, irrespective of their divergent historicities - classlessness, rational anarchy, equality and freedom in all spheres of life"⁵⁰ - is unjustifiable. The elitist theorists outrightly reject Marx's prediction of a future classless, egalitarian society. They find no justification for Marx's belief that the hierarchical structure of society is not inevitable.

However, Marx was wrongly criticized by Pareto and Mosca for his economic interpretation of human history. It is to be noted that Marx had never said that all social and cultural changes could be explained by the economic factors alone.⁵¹ Any how, it is reasonable to recognize the importance of the concept and formation of ruling

class which always starts with the concentration of economic power followed by the military and political powers.

Rejecting Marxian concept of classlessness, Pareto and Mosca assumed that the political elites are inevitable. But contrary to their own argument, they have admitted that the political elite are always drawn from the wealthier classes. This implies that as long as there are political elites, there must be classes of wealth or social classes. However, this is not an answer to the Marxian formulation,⁵² according to which the class struggle is of the economically deprived against those of the privileged ones. Some Marxists hold the the privileged are constituted of those leaders who are especially selected, purposefully trained, and are encompassed in an organization that is well defined and rigid.⁵³ Since party is a necessary area for the workers to be organized so that they can overcome the enemies through their struggle and capture the power.

Almost all the Marxist pandits dismiss the elite theories as bourgeois ideology. But some like Burnham has attempted a synthesis by combining the elitist and the Marxist theories. He opines that the dominance of the elites over the means of production determines the basis of their power, and there will never be a classless

after the establishment of China's socialistic system, Mao has observed, "the class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeois, the class struggle between the different political forces, and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue to be long and fortuous and at times will even become very acute."⁵⁸

Lenin was, however, quoted out of context by the bourgeois theoreticians when they suggested that he recognized the special role of intellectuals in the formulation of the socialist theory.⁵⁹ Marx had earlier admitted that the transformation of the trade union movement to a political movement could occur through the intervention of an intellectual leadership.⁶⁰ It is contended that Lenin also asserted that "in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of social democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the working class movement, it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of ideas among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia."⁶¹ Further, while analysing the success of the Bolsheviks, it is pointed out that he introduced an elitist notion in the form of the superior moral qualities of the revolutionary leadership.⁶² Of such an experience,

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CHAPTER III
POLITICAL ELITES IN INDIA

After introducing a federal structure of government, especially political democracy in India, the roles of the political leadership have acquired new meanings. The political leaders are the "law-makers" and have to respond to the big challenges like economic development and national integration which are today the main concerns in the country. Hence, it is essential to know whether the political leaders or the elite respond to these challenges, and if so, in what ways? Further, it is important to study them because, as occupants of high status, they provide a model which influences the behaviour and activity of the whole population.¹

Weiner has mentioned that to understand modern India one must understand this new leadership as to what is the social background from which it is derived and the groups with which it is associated. It is also interesting to know as to whose interests the political leadership articulates, which types of values and ideologies it propagates and the influence it wields.² In other words, any enquiry into the relationship between the ruling class and the political elite has to examine (a) the socio-economic

composition of the elite; (b) the class interests they represent in terms of their political output both in the reduction of the proportion of private wealth of the upper class, as well as the attempt (whatever) to raise the income of the deprived groups; and (c) the degree of autonomy of decisions of the political elite.³

It is found that in all societies the important decisions regarding the restriction of private capital are taken only after a thorough direct or indirect discussion with the leading capitalists. Hence, one can say that beyond a certain point, the political elite cannot go against private capital which poses a definite danger for survival. So long as they represent the ruling class, their practical utility for the people is definitely limited by the said class. However, they continue to remain an inadequate body until they represent the interests of the class whose members suffer from the age old exploitation, destitution and impoverishment. Similarly, the elite are also required to protect the interests of the religious and ethnic minorities.

The cherished principles underlining democracy are only flouted by some people, without any practice of the democratic values. Democracy today may be described as the government of the pettifogging politicians by the goons and for the aristocrats. Bottomore says, "if democracy is regarded as a political system, it may

be argued that government by the people is impossible in practice."⁴

It is true that the government in Indian democracy is certainly of the people, but it is surely not for the people or by the people. The forty-four years of mis-rule and mis-governance in the country is the proof of it. It is said that every M.P. or MLA starts his/her career with a lie about his/her real ambition, real property and real election expenditure. For instance, more than Rs.60 crores were spent by the Congress (I) in the last general elections. The other parties also spent large sums. It is generally held that a large sum was provided by the national and international industrialists who wanted to preserve their interests in this country. The common-man has no option but to vote for one party or the other. A candidate wins the election with more money, capturing booth and doing acts of violence. Such democratic governments do not work for the poor but only for the industrialists whose help is necessary for them to acquire power.

Thus, in India it is suggested that there exists a system which combines the features of a ruling class and a power elite.⁵ The institution of private property, in the Constitution of India, is more guaranteed than anything else. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who was fully aware of the

many socio-economic contradictions in the Indian society, said in November 1949, "On the 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognizing the principle of one man; one vote In other social and economic life, we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man-one vote. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions?"⁶ He warned, "We must end this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy, which this assembly has so laboriously built.... These downtrodden classes are tired of being governed. They are impatient to govern themselves."⁷

Over the last four decades the State has accumulated powers of direct ownership and control over the economy to an extent unparalleled in Indian history. To promote national economic development, the political elite have redirected and restructured the economy and in the process have exerted great pressure on the propertied classes. This has resulted in considerable complexity and fluidity in the composition of the propertied

classes and their relationship with the state. While the elite have formulated goals and pointed out policy directions, neither at the behest nor on behalf of the proprietary classes, they could have avoided the grave constraints on the framework of policy actions. They have also not put any checks on the constraints posed by the vested-interests groups or classes and which came in the way of the effective implementation of those policies.

With the introduction of a new economic policy at present. India has both practically and theoretically deviated from its proclaimed goal of socialism and has moved towards capitalism. However, the Indian public economy has always become a complex "circuitry" of patronage and subsidies. The heterogenous "proprietary classes" fight and bargain for their share in the spoils of the system and often strike compromises in the form of "log-rolling" in the usual fashion of pressure-group politics. Bardhan writes, "The Indian style of politics is deceptively consensual but over the years, the process of intense bargaining and hard-fought apportionment of benefits among the different partners of the dominant coalition have come out more into the open, and politics. has acquired a more unseemingly image in the public mind. And, as in all large complicated bargaining counters, there has emerged a group specializing as brokers, who act as agents for different

bargaining interests groups and, of course, take a cut for themselves for services rendered. These are groups led by a large number of MLAs and MPs and other political middlemen who over the years have specialised in the profession of brokerage services. The fees they charge and part of the favours they engineer for their clients in exchange are usually unaccounted in the official statistical book-keeping, contributing to the thriving underworld of what is called 'black-money'. As elections have become more expensive and as their professional expertise in brokerage increased, these fees skimmed off the surplus of the economy have multiplied over the years."⁸

Desai also has observed that after independence, the character of the Indian state has changed into the capitalist one and the leadership is representing capitalist class interests.⁹ Looking into the growing volumes of protest of all kinds from almost all quarters in India, Desai has further said that the parliamentary form of government has proved inadequate.¹⁰ Regarding the parliamentary democracy in India it is said, "the institution of elections is inadequate as a basis of democratic government" and "the theory of representation is misleading and fails to base government on the will of the people."¹¹

It is further stated, "by and large, parliamentary democracy has failed to embody the idea of democracy and this failure principally stems from the fact that under it there is little scope for popular participation."¹² However, there is an emergence of a "new elite" with a rural base in the state politics."¹³ Today's India "presents a scene of great tension between the structure of politics and the style of politics. The structure is modern, competitive, and institutionalized, the style is traditional, consensual and personalized."¹⁴

With the above discussion, "in repudiating the identification of the elite with a "ruling class" (one) cannot disregard altogether the need to pay attention to the role of certain elites as leaders of classes and exponents of class attitudes, as promoters of class consciousness and as opponents of the claims of rival classes. Not all elites rest on a class basis, but some do...."¹⁵ Any way, the study of the political elite assumes a certain significance in the developing countries where parliamentary democracy acts as one of the important institutions for setting the path of socio-economic development. According to Down, "...of course, though political elite is capable of determining the form and speed of development of a nation, often they do not do it. They formulate those policies which they believe will collect votes as

well as satisfy other private ends."¹⁶

No doubt, the political elite is an important element in the process of economic and societal development of a country but if it represents a ruling class, its practical utilities in this concern are made limited by the said class. In other words, the state acts not only at the behest of, but for all practical purposes on behalf of the proprietary class.

Bardhan tries to give the whole story. He writes, "The society-centred theories of politics and government of the orthodox Marxists as well as the liberal pluralists and structural functionalists have managed to keep our eyes averted from ... the explanatory centrality of states as potent and autonomous organizational actors."¹⁹ There are of course serious constraints posed by the imperatives of the dominant proprietary class, but to focus exclusively on them is to ignore the large range of choices in goal formulation, agenda setting and policy execution that the state leadership usually has, and the powerful impulses shaping policies and actions that are generated within the state, fueled not merely by motives of self-aggrandizement but quite often also "its conception of the national interest."²⁰

In many cases of state-directed industrialization the leadership genuinely considers itself as the trustee of the nation's most deeply held normative aspirations and in a world of international military and economic competition, these aspirations often take the form of striving for rapid economic growth."²¹ Thus, all governments are the executors of the economic necessities of the national situation. They also emphasise on national interests, besides fulfilling their class necessities.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA:

When the political parties and their elites are studied on the basis of their roles in different governments, some variations are found from the general picture. Since independence in 1947, there has been, by and large, one-party Congress-rule in India within the framework of parliamentary democracy. Whatever may be the index by which successive generations of Congressmen are compared in terms of the sources and their income, occupation, social origin, land-holding, education, caste and community background, it is clear that the composition of not only Congress party but also of all the political parties has undergone major changes since the 1950s. The early Gandhian period attracted the most devoted people who were drawn into the movement as fulltime Gandhian workers. This is no more evident in any

political parties in the present time. During the last three decades a major shift has taken place even in social composition of the MLAs and MPs of the Congress. The committed professionals, Gandhites and Nehruites are losing their weight in the Congress Parliamentary Party and the new urban and rural elite are gaining strength. The percentage of the Congressmen in the Lok Sabha from the rural areas has enormously increased. What is important is that most of them belong to the new elite class in rural areas. Similarly, there is dominance of those MPs of the Congress party in Lok Sabha who come from the upper classes in urban areas.

These changes in the Congress Party, and for that matter in other political parties also reflect the transformations in the socio-economic political structure taken place over the last four decades in the country. Another major change has taken place in the Congress Party. The Nehru model of social development has been side-tracked with the end of the dominance of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty in the Congress Party and also in the country as such. Even when the Nehru model of development was in operation for the last forty years, in its actual working the model was subverted to serve the interests of the political class and its businessmen

allies whose support was needed by the politicians to finance their elections. The political class all the time swore by socialism but in practice pursued policies that would benefit the entrenched industrialists, businessmen and the growing middle class. This class grew in numbers and prosperity since mid-60s. The actual working of the 5-year plans showed that planning was unwittingly designed to help this class.

Nevertheless, the dynasty and its outreach provided a binding nexus, a fulcrum of wide ranging loyalties which was not limited to the political arena only. It encompassed the entire elite and key institutions in so many areas - the literate, and the fine arts, the scientific estate, the press, industry, bureaucracy, the foreign service, legal luminaries, the learned professions. What made these diverse segments into one common elite was not just their locus-standi vis-a-vis the nation's premier family, but their common social class.²²

To get the mass support the Congress party adopted the policy for the establishment of a socialist society as its ultimate goal which has been distorted. The major aspects were mixed economy, nationalisation of banks and key industries, and land reforms. The Congress seemed to put its efforts on the general democratic reforms with the Nehru policy, to advance socialist

programmes to do away with poverty and exploitation, to curb the activities of the monopolies, to expand and make prevalent the state sector of the economy, to give land to the peasants, to improve the living standards of the common people, to abolish the zamindari system, etc. None of the programmes was a success. It is difficult to neglect the upper class pressure. A major section of the MPs and MLAs were former landlords, who did not want to sacrifice their earlier privileges. "Measures like bank nationalisation were political weapons used by the ruling faction of the party to win support of the people for itself and discredit its rivals for power in the public eyes."²³ Even today "it is said that the big business continued to influence the government policies through financing the Congress organization."²⁴ apart from many other political organizations with their both leftist and rightist orientations.

At present the Congress party is being criticized for its new economic policy of liberalisation of imports and concessions being offered to the multinationals. The principal criticism is that it is dictated by the two international financial agencies namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which have thrown some conditions for grant of credit. The Budget of the current

financial year of 1992-92 exhibits that the elite in India is striving to bring about a shift in economic policies on the line and design of foreign creditors and investors to work for an economic climate which suits the interests of this minority-elites and that of the Western lobby. Such form of industrialisation and economic development has a narrow social base and is not expected to bring any relief to the vast population in the country. The reforms are only meant for 100 millions of elites at the cost of 750 millions of poor in India.

A certain belief in the policy of the Congress Party government is now being articulated by a section of the industrial houses and it appears that these houses now believe that the BJP is emerging as an alternative to the Congress Party. During the last elections some of the industrial houses liberally financed the BJP. The Congress leadership, on its part, has compromised each of the key dimensions of the original premises of the Nehru model -- foreign policy, economic policy at home, social base of the polity, federal consensus, and the pluralistic and multi-ethnic model of secularism. The result is its own erosion and the erosion of the state. The gradual shift to the right-of-centre of the

Congress Party, its failure to stick to the pluralistic model of a secular policy and insensitivity to regional and ethnic aspirations have led to the phenomenal rise of the BJP. For all these problems and polarities, the Congress (I) Party has been as responsible as any other political force, if not more.

Minority politics had been playing a great role in the Indian democracy. A little after partition the Muslims discovered that they had become victims of a gigantic fraud, for those who were so keen on saving Islam suddenly did not have any time for the Mussalmans. Minority politics adapted itself to the warp and woof of democracy. The Muslims quickly became the first great vote bank of Indian democracy. Their strength may have come down from 25 per cent to 10 or 12 per cent, but there was literally no comparison with any other identity-block in our multi-fractured polity.²⁵ However, the Muslims in India have always been oppressed and suppressed and at loss.

It seems, almost all the political parties in India have not worked honestly for bringing the poor people into the mainstream. These have also not informed them of their rights and responsibilities. Unfortunately

the last two general elections of 1989 and 1991 were contested by some political parties on the issues of Mandir and Masjid and the issues of poverty, economic development and education of the masses were completely side-tracked. Communalism in India has always been a political problem. It is the politicians who encourage communalism for their narrow interests at the cost of the poor people.

The BJP has been vehemently condemned for spreading the virus of communalism. Narasimha Rao's non-confrontationist style and his government's need to survive must have also fueled the BJP's ambitions, which is out to disintegrate the country where the Britishers failed. The BJP leaders are trying to succeed by widening the religious disharmony especially between the Hindus and Muslims for their political ends. The party after capturing power in the important Hindi-belt, is now making a concerted effort to use the state machinery for giving a communal orientation to politics. The recent policy of the U.P. government on the Mandir-Masjid controversy graphically illustrates this. The BJP, with its militant wings of RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal, is trying to go to any length including blatantly ignoring court directives for constructing a Ram temple at the disputed place at Ayodhya in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The party has nothing

to offer to the people other than promises of constructing a Ram Mandir and establishing Ram Rajya. The party does not have any genuine economic and social policies.

Unlike the Congress and the BJP, the left parties have always fought with the ruling class on behalf of the working class. Now, there seems to be a major shift to the question of religion to be prevented from its being hijacked by the RSS-VHP-BJP-Bajrang Dal. Consequently, the left parties appear to be less concerned to the ideological issues like "stages of revolution" and "class character of the state". However a left party like CPI(M) is not totally inclined to abandon the tenets of Marxism-Leninism and embrace religion. The new realisation among the left parties is that religion can be a form of movement. Communists can continue to practise atheism, but they need not be anti-religion or shun religion. In any case "the communist movement in India has ignored critical aspects of Indian society"²⁶ Religiosity has always been a part of the Indian ethos.

It is seen that the JD and the political parties with the leftist and the socialist orientations champion the cause of the poor people, whereas the rightist and even the centrist political elites have their soft corner

towards the upper caste and class people and the people of the numerically dominant religion.

The recent controversy over the implementation of the Mandal Commission Report is a good measuring rod to determine the class and religious interests of the political elites. The elites, afraid of the ruling class, did not like caste to be adopted as a criterion for measuring socio-economic backwardness and thus providing reservation in jobs to the backward classes. On the other hand, the leaders of the JD under the leadership of the then Prime Minister V.P. Singh were rigid to take caste as the criterion for providing reservations to the backward classes. The pressures from the ruling class were tough. Ultimately, V.P. Singh had to sacrifice his power and quit the chair of the P.M. He is still strong to fight on behalf of the poorer castes, tribes, dalits and religious minorities. It is, in fact, a point of departure in the political process setting an example of a sort of unique and selfless politics.

Moving a little back in the political history of independent India liberal, and socialist and nationalist leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru derecognized religious communities and caste groups as objective determinants

of backwardness, because, as they thought, these expressed superstitions or feudal relations which could be superseded by science and economic development. They assumed that only wage labour and poverty were objective determinants required for political action. For instance, in the 1937 U.P. elections, Jawaharlal Nehru assumed that economic class was more powerful determinant than religious community for socio-economic backwardness. He thought that the Muslims would vote for land reforms rather than for Muslim political rights. But he proved to be more wrong than right.

Sometimes nationalist or progressive politicians accept status groups on the basis of religious communities. They think that such communities are real and legitimate objective determinant of socio-economic backwardness. In their opinion both religious communities and socio-economic backwardness are intertwined. The interest and votes of the Muslims are valued by secularists who decry appeals to the interests and votes of the Hindus, because Muslims are poor, backward, weaker and discriminated against minority. Namboodiripad and V.P. Singh (who claims to be a friend of SCs, STs, OBCs and Muslims) accept the reality and legitimacy of status orders.

Accordingly, they appeal to ex-untouchables, the tribes, the OBCs and Muslims to support them and give them power so that their interests could be easily promoted and protected.

To sum up, the political elites in India have been largely responsible for making democracy a mockery. In fact, democracy has been a cry of all, but a game of none. The greedy elites have been blamed for democratic distortions. Class, caste and communities have been the considerations in politics. The ruling class has highly influenced the elites in decision-making and implementation. The rich have been protected and promoted, but the poor have become poorer. They also suffer from deprivation, and discrimination of various types. The elite have always listened to the dominant class, but the Dalits or the Depressed classes are yet to be given a hearing. Of course, the JD is different and with its alliance with the left parties has proved to be a friend of the Dalits, the other Backward Classes and the minorities. Not only that but also the democratic values are expected to return in the Indian polity at the behest of such an alliance of the value-based political parties.

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CHAPTER IV
SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND POLITICAL POWER
IN ORISSA

Performance of the political elite is dependent on the factors like the social context of their programme and their election performance, the network of various alliances and linkages which they forge at the time of election. It is also determined by social base and recruitment patterns of the elites, their both formal and informal organizational framework, and their socio-economic background. In a developing country where the forces of tradition and modernization are both at work, the role of the political elite becomes still more difficult. The elite have to articulate, cannalise and balance even the less or not properly articulated demands of several competitive groups living in the multi-layered society. Here it is important to probe into the dynamics of interaction between the society and the polity.

It is proposed to discuss in this chapter the socio-economic background of the people occupying the formal positions of political power in Orissa. This is important, for, they represent a politically relevant stratum within the polity and the society in the state. Further, by dint of their vital position in the body politics and the interests of the group(s) or class(es) which they represent,

they significantly affect the making of the public policy. More especially, we shall analyse the socio-economic background of the legislators of the State Assembly. We intend to comprehend and relate the problem of the power of decision-making with the general issue of social stability and social change in the state. In doing so, we shall identify the elements in the political system of Orissa and highlight the interaction between the state, its polity and society. Finally we shall also examine the political elite from the angle of ruling class.

The political elite is only one organ of the elite in a society. The identification of the political elite is not adequate as the potential persons¹ or the politicians who are not elected to the Legislative Assembly of the state are not given necessary importance they deserve. This fact is important that a politician is elected to the Legislative Assembly for a term of five years, gets defeated second time, and gets elected for the next term. This is also true that the clout of the national political elite (MPs or the Central Ministers) influences the MLAs of the state. These types of omissions and some other key aspects related to social composition of elite may have some well-recognized inadequacies with regard to studying political elites located in a state.

But due to the limitations of time and also of other requirements, the present study is confined to the legislative elites of the State Assembly only. It is obvious that the study falls short of controlled sampling of the political elites of the state. But any study of the similar type faces the similar type of problems.

A Look at Orissa:

Orissa achieved its separate identity on 1st April, 1936. It is a typical example of a state which bears the characteristics of both the former British Provinces and the erstwhile Princely states. Prior to independence some parts of the province were under British occupation while other areas were under the control of feudatory rules. In fact, there were 26 Princely states located in this state. Only in 1948, these princely states were merged into the unified State of Orissa. The peculiarity of state even today is manifested in its historical, economic, social, cultural, regional and political processes. Today, even after 45 years of independence, Orissa continues to be a state of many paradoxes. For example, the slow role of industrialization, dire poverty, illiteracy, high concentration of tribal and backward sections of the population are some of the realities that account for low level of socio-economic development in Orissa as compared to other provinces of India.²

The State of Orissa is a land blessed with the bounties of nature but it is in a state of socio-economic and cultural backwardness as mentioned above. Being one of the most backward states in the country, it is featured by the highest percentage of population below poverty line (68%). It is one of the states with the lowest per capita income (Rs.1101) and the consumer expenditure. The agricultural and industrial productivity is a very low and there is higher dependence of the people on the underdeveloped agriculture. The rate of urbanization in the State is as below as 13.43 according to 1991 census. Besides a very low level of literacy, there are little surfaced roads and inadequate infrastructure found in the state.

The overall scenario in the state is stagnation, decline and decay. The large masses of people are doused in dire poverty, unemployment, ignorance and despair.³ What a strange downright desperate reality is in Orissa! It is puzzling that despite its abundant natural and mineral resources, Orissa continues to be the poorest, the most backward, predominantly agricultural and rural state with a very little industrial and urban growth. "Besides, vast reservoirs of vanadium, coal, copper, lead, tin, columbium, tantalum and tyanite. Orissa contains the country's only known commercially viable deposits

of nickel ore in the Sukinda valley of Cuttack district. Also, there is no dearth of limestone dolomite, fireclay, chinaclay, quartzing and 480 kilometres of mineral-bearing sand beaches. Indeed, the mineral wealth of Orissa equals to that of Western Europe. According to estimates, Orissa contains 25 per cent of the country's total iron ore deposits, and also an equal percentage of manganese and coal deposits. In a percentage breakup, Orissa contains 35 per cent of India's graphite, 65 per cent of bauxite and a staggering 98 per cent of India's chromite deposits. And veins of diamonds and other precious stones lie scattered along an extensive tract of land covering parts of Kalahandi, Koraput, Phulbani and Sundergarh districts. And yet the state's per capita income is among the lowest in India.⁴ If development or underdevelopment is the mirror of the political elite, they are to be blamed for their political indifference and inability for socio-economic backwardness of the state.

Orissa is, more or less, a state of one language with more than 90 per cent of the population having Oriya as their mother-tongue. It has a population of 32 million with a very high percentage of SCs and STs (38%). The Scheduled Tribes constitute 22.8 per cent and the Dalits consisting of 93 different Scheduled Castes constitute

14.9 per cent of the total population of the state. They are the most poor and oppressed people and they suffer from isolations and disabilities of different sorts at different levels, though these have constitutionally been abolished. The different policies and programmes meant for them have remained on paper and have not properly been implemented.

Though Orissa is called a state of synthesis of all religions, the predominant among them is Hinduism, and the people of all other religions have been highly influenced by it. But with the recent upsurge of the BJP and its communal politics, religion has become an issue in Orissa also, and it influences the polity in the state. Nevertheless, according to 1981 census, the Sikhs constitute 0.05 per cent and the Buddhists and the Jains 0.03 per cent each of the total population of the state. Other minor religions constitute only 1.05 per cent of the population. But only two religions of Hinduism and Islam play major roles in the state politics. This speaks of how religion is a factor like caste and class in Orissa politics, as elsewhere. These two religions are Hinduism and Islam. Though the Christians are more in number than the Muslims, and they constitute 1.82 per cent of the population of Orissa, but they

mostly belong to various ST groups.

The Hindus constitute 95.42 per cent and dominate in almost all the fields, especially in politics, though the lower caste and class Hindus are excluded from the said dominance in politics. Muslims constitute 1.60 per cent of the population and have very little control over the political economy of the state. In comparison to 1971 census, the percentage (1.49) of the followers of Islam has slightly increased in 1981 (1.60%). But only four districts, namely Baleswar (3.98%), Cuttack (3.63%), Sundargarh (2.33%) and Puri (2.17%) has higher proportion of the followers of Islam than their percentage (1.60%) found in the entire state. All of them have been highly influenced by the Hindu majority and have 'assimilated' themselves in the Oriya mainstream.

Muslims in Orissa constitute one of the lowest classes of the people. They are also lagging behind others in the fields of education and politics barring a few Muslim elites. Because of their ignorance and illiteracy, they are compelled to be in self-employed twilight informal economic activities like garrage work, garbage collection, selling meat of goat and cow, and tin and betel business. Some are in recycling industries also. Of course, not all are self-employed. Lack of political consciousness and economic strength makes them backward. But some Muslims are very rich and politically active. Their contribution to socio-economic

development of their own community is, however, much less. They have never made it a point that Muslims as a religious community in Orissa live their own way, i.e. like Muslims in the Islamic countries. Rather, they are in a good contact with the Hindu majority for which, it is seen, even the Hindus prefer the Muslim candidates to the Hindu candidates. Yet, the Hindus are in a majority and they are taken care of. But the Muslims suffer from all grounds.

In spite of all this, Muslims in Orissa are better placed in comparison to other states. They live in harmony with their Hindu counterpart. Communalism is very rare in Orissa. Sometimes politicians do try to incite communalism but the peace-loving people of both the religions easily foil such efforts. There is no doubt that the situation has changed to some extent after the ascendancy of the BJP and its communal politics, especially its Mandir-Masjid issue. The communal tensions between the Hindus and the Muslims have begun mounting up. The recent riot in Bhadrak, a small town in the Baleswar district on the day of Ram Nawami was a deliberate creation by the BJP. Even the present government in Orissa is to be held responsible for its indifference and lack of insight into dealing with the total law and order situation. Now, the Muslims are getting conscious and they strive in search of their lost

identity in the state. They want to live their Islamic way of life. They try to constitute an Islamic pressure and interest group to influence politics. Gradually, they are getting politically active. What they need is not perhaps an integration or assimilation, but a separate identity as Muslims in a plural society.

Jagannath Pathy's splendid work clearly gives a picture of socio-economic and political disparities in Orissa. He sees that the rural population (92%) constituting 46 per cent of small landowners remains disproportionately under-represented. The social structure of Orissa constitutes the upper and dominant caste of the Brahmins and Karans (8%), backward peasant and artisan castes (50%), SCs (15%) and STs (23%). The dominant caste-people (8%) maintain a lion's share (40%) of the seats of the Legislative Assembly of the state. Except the MLAs of the reserved category, a big majority of people come from the upper caste and/or class people.⁵ The same happens in case of the MPs also. There are 20 seats for the Members of Parliament in Lok Sabha and 10 in Rajya Sabha. Till 1974, there were 140 seats of MLAs but after that the number of seats has been increased to 147. The political parties that have fought the elections since 1952 are Congress (I), CPI, CPI(M), JD JP, JNPSC (SWA till 1974), PSP (SP in 1952 and 1974),

UC (GP till 1961), independents and others.

The numbers of seats won by the Cong.(I) in the Lok Sabha have been 11, 7, 14, 6, 15, 4, 20, 20 and 3 in 1952, 1947, 1962, 1967, 1971, 1977, 1980, 1984 and 1989 respectively. The JD achieved 1 seat in 1980 and 16 in 1989, JP 15 in 1977 and 1 in 1984, CPI 1 each in 1977 and 1989, whereas the BJP has never been able to acquire a seat in the Parliament from Orissa.

The numbers of Congress MLAs whose elections to the Legislative Assembly have been 62, 56, 82, 31, 51, 69, 26, 118, 117 and 10 in the elections of 1952, 1957, 1961, 1967, 1971, 1974, 1977, 1980, 1985 and 1989 respectively. The CPI got 7, 9, 4, 7, 4, 7, 1, 4, 1, and 5 in the chronological order mentioned above. CPI(M) won 1 seat each in 1967, 1977, and 1990, 2 seats in 1971, 3 in 1974. The JP won 26 seats in 1967, 110 in 1977, 3 in 1980 and 21 in 1985. The newly-built party, the JD for the first time contested the election in 1990 and achieved a vast majority of 123 seats.

It is argued by many pluralists that in a political system a political elite is the mirror of the system. It is a blue-print of modernization and social change and is ultimately responsible for decision-making. It would be of interest to know whether this is true of Orissa too.

Attention for this has to be drawn on the recruitment pattern of the political elite, their attitudes and roles in socio-economic development of people in the state. So, the questions to be answered here are: Who are the political elite? What are their attitudes? What policies and strategies do they adopt for socio-economic development of people in the State? How successful are they in influencing the implementation of their decisions? How autonomous are their decisions? Are their policies for the welfare of the whole society, or for the interest of the class they represent? Are they really secular? In brief, the discussion in this chapter is mainly confined to two major areas of their recruitment and intra and inter linkages with the ruling class or the social group to which they belong or the whole society. Here, their linkages are to be seen in regard to their formulation and implementation of the socio-economic policies for development of the state.

(a) Recruitment:-

In any political system the recruitment of political elite is an important function. It is an indicator of the values of and the distribution of influence in the system. The recruitment of political elite both reflects and affects the society, the degree of consistency and contradictions

of its value system and the nature of representative-ness of the existing polity. It also reflects the relationship between political articulation and social stratification in a given society. According to Almond and Coleman, "the political recruitment function takes up where the general political socialization function leaves off. It recruits members of the particular sub-cultures - religious communities, statuses, classes, ethnic communities, and the like - and inducts them into the specialized roles of the political system."⁶

Understanding the background of the political elite is essential to find out a relationship with their policy formulation as stated earlier. It is generally found that the political elite in both the state and the centre in India are presently dominated by the members of the privileged and dominant caste(s), class(es) and religion(s). Of course, there are some people who have come under the umbrella of the reservation system wherein they are elected from the reserved constituencies. But, throughout the last forty years, most of the members of the political elite had been clearly identified with the upper strata of the society. Since in India the game of politics is highly expensive, it allows only a small group of people whose income, social status^{and} material possessions are high enough to join easily in the political arena. ✓ In the

context of the wide social and economic disparities coupled with inequalities of welfare and other opportunities in India, Myrdal puts his negative view of the majority. According to him, "Behind its impressive parliamentary facade, India is still very far from being controlled by the majority of its people or even from having its policies devised so as to be in the interest of the masses."⁷ Because of the inequalities, in vogue, in the socio-economic structure, there is almost no political representation from the lower stratum of the society. There is a feeling that the values of democracy are secluded and far from their realization. And the absence of democracy makes the new efforts only a 'superficial graft'.

In the early years after independence, the political elites were recruited from the categories of the freedom fighters and ex-princes. Now, the recruitment includes their family members and relatives, businessmen, industrialists, resigned and retired bureaucrats, academicians, doctors and other professionals, landlords, charismatic leaders and the people of oratorical ability, organizational capacity, higher education, money and muscle. Panchayat and Municipality elections help in the recruitment of the political elite in the state, because these elites, too, are necessarily elected through their high socio-economic status and their muscle power. Thus the recruitment process

of the political leaders is determined generally by their caste, class and/or religious background.

Appropos of linkages, it is important to understand the relationship between the recruitment patterns of the elites and their social background in terms of whether they belong to rural or urban base. It is also interesting to their educational, economic and class positions besides their caste, tribe or religious background. The study of perception of the political elite may provide an insight into the conscious behaviour of those who are concerned with decision-making. And an analysis of the outlooks and commitments of the elite is also required for the detailed investigations of the structure and decision-making process of the political elite.⁸

It is found that the role performance of the elite is directly linked to their pecuniary position or the class. Their "principal weaknesses are found to be excessive self-orientation, gap between profession and practice, unscrupulousness in exploiting parochial issues for short-run political gains, inability to effect major structural changes and insensitivity to mass urges.⁹ Contrary to their talk of socialism, national integration, citizenship rights, universal values and secularism etc., the present structure of the political elites represent parochialism,

and communalism etc.

A careful look at different policies speaks of linkages of political elite at different levels. Most of the policies of different parties and governments are restricted in the present time to the interests of the rural elite. They have ignored the fundamental contradictions between the minority of the rural elite and the rural masses. Such contradictions are undermined even in urban areas. This is so perhaps it is not important for their elections¹⁰ to the State Assembly and also to the Parliament.

Apropos of the unworkability of the land reform problem, Kuldeep Nayar writes, "In India the Zamindar (landlord) is still the master of all he surveys, though he has been stripped of his feudal rights. His position and money enable him to control votes in his village and he supports only a like-minded candidate who when elected to the State Assembly will put his weight against any drastic legislation on land reform."¹¹ In fact, the laws relating to land reforms seemingly passed for the betterment of the deprived have not changed the traditional socio-economic structure in India. The privileged few have been able enough to challenge these laws and thus obstructed their rigorous implementation. In other words, there are large loopholes in these laws which provide grounds for large-scale manipulation. According to Myrdal,

"the upper class status of those who stepped into power disposed them to abstain from taking policy measures that would contravene the interests of the privileged groups. In addition, the Congress party was probably increasingly dependent on the few rich in commerce, finance and industry for financial support."¹²

It is obvious that the political machinery of the state is oriented to serve the interests of feudals and different sorts of capitalist forces. But to be in the power, the political parties make an illusive effort to satisfy the mass upsurge and to cover the loopholes of the system. This they do with the help of the new concepts and rhetorics of nationalisation, welfare state, mixed economy, socialism, secularism, 21st century India and integrated humanism etc. All these are resorted to by the different political parties in the state as well as in the country as a whole. In short, while it really serves the upper class, it pretends to be representing the mass and the working class, the dalits (both SCs and STs), the minorities, women, etc.

In sum, it is sure that Orissa has been one of the poorest states in India despite its vast natural resources. Along any criterion of modernization and development, the picture of the state is bitter and gloomy. There is much slow pace of industrialisation. People in the state

suffer from dire poverty, illiteracy, bad facilities of communication and transport. As it is obvious, the poor state of Orissa constitutes a highly substantial proportion of the poor people belonging to SCs and STs and other minority groups. In this respect, the big paradox in the state is that of a small minority of the ruling class and the political elite who also constitute an affluent class. They articulate much fluently their vested interests in the name of the development of the state.

Notes and References:

1. The term 'political persons' is borrowed from Jagannath Pathy. The term here comprises of the defeated candidates to the Legislative Assembly, labour leaders, student leaders and the prominent politicians who are no longer top executives of political parties and state level committees of their respective parties.
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3. Ibid.
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5. Pathy, J., op. cit., 1986.
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7. Myrdal, G., Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations, London: Allen Lane, 1972.
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11. Nayar, K., India: The Critical Years, Delhi: Vikas Pub., 1971.
12. Myrdal, G., op. cit., Vol.I.
13. For all statistical data, see Census, 1981; Census, 1991; India Decides: Elections 1951-1991, by Butter, Lahiri and Roy, New Delhi: LM Books (Ltd.), 1991; and also Jagannath Pathy's books like Underdevelopment and Destitution and Anthropology of Development.

CHAPTER V

ROLE OF POLITICAL ELITE IN ORISSA

Orissa has remained as one of the poorest states in India in spite of the fact that it is one of the richest states in natural resources. Another glaring contradiction is a widespread gap between the vast majority of the poor people constituting of a substantial number of the SCs and STs, on the one hand, and a tiny minority of the flamboyant rich people comprising the ruling class and the political elite, on the other hand. It is highly essential to know about these economic and political elites with reference to their interactions and influences, since they play a major role in the decision-making and development of the state. To study them through a number of general elections especially to the State Assembly is a very good criterion to know their expected and actual roles vis-a-vis the state and its people. General elections to the Parliament, State Assembly and other representative bodies and their results give us the promises and practices of the elites. Therefore, more specifically we shall try to examine the socio-economic composition of these political elites along with their affiliation to different political parties and their policies.

General Elections:

Before the first General Elections in 1952, people of Orissa had already experienced two previous elections, one in 1937 and the second in 1946. But these two elections were based on restricted franchise. It is only in 1952, there was Universal Adult Franchise (UAF). Prior to independence, the first elections of 1937 enabled the Congress Party to form the government but decisions of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) made the government to resign. The Congress Party again formed the government in 1946 securing 98 out of 152 seats.¹

During the 1952 general elections there were 28 reserved seats for the STs and another 21 for the SCs in the Assembly of 140 seats. The Congress Party secured 63 seats and the Ganatantra Parishad (GP) 31 seats. The performance of the Socialists and the Communists Parties was poor vis-a-vis GP and the Congress Party. The independents secured 23 seats with the help of which the Congress Party formed the ministry under the leadership of Naba-krishna Choudhuri. But the government was soon exposed to a series of violent agitations over the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Committee. Also, there were a number of administrative lapses and financial irregularities in the workings of the several departments of

the government. The factionalism became intense between the Mahatab (Harekrishna Mahatab, another prominent leader of the Congress Party in the state) and the Choudhuri groups. Thus, factionalism along with inefficiency and corruption in the administration created a political stalemate in the state. Subsequently, the CM, Choudhuri, resigned and Mahatab became the Chief Minister in 1956.

Besides, during "the period between 1957-61, Orissa Congress experienced a fierce factional struggle which ultimately led to the emergence of Biju Patnaik as a powerful rival leader in Orissa politics."² In 1957 Assembly elections, the Congress Party had won 56 seats closely followed by the GP with 51 seats. Yet, Mahatab could form the ministry with the help of some independent and some GP MLAs who had defected and joined the Congress. This was the time, when Orissa politics entered into the field of intense politicking. However, in 1959, a coalition ministry of the Congress-GP was formed under leadership of H.K. Mahatab. On this issue the Congress Party got divided and ultimately on 25 February 1961, Orissa for the first time after independence, came under the President's rule.

In the mid-term elections of 1961, the Congress Party under the dynamic and a sort of charismatic leadership of Biju Patnaik came to power with a thumping

majority of 83 seats out of the total 140. The unquestionable leader always wanted eagerly to industrialize Orissa and to pull the state out of poverty and economic backwardness. Several large and small-scale prestigious projects were set up in the state. Some of the projects were: the Paradip Port, Sunabeda MIG factory, Talcher Thermal Power Plant, Balimela Hydel Project, the Express Highway, Co-operation and Panchayat industries, etc. Under this scheme between (1962-63) 7 sugar mills, 21 tile-making units, 10 carpentering shops, etc. were launched in the state. The state level Planning Board, public corporations were also set up to formulate and execute the policies and programmes of the Government. Ruling the state, with confidence was no problem for Biju Patnaik, but soon in less than 2 years time he fell victim of the Kamraj Plan in September 1963 and had to resign from the Chief Ministership. He was succeeded by Biren Mitra, who faced, from the start, a state-wide student agitation. Corruption charges were levelled against him. Finally, he resigned from the office on 1 February 1965. He was succeeded by Sadasiv Tripathy who managed the state till the fourth general elections of 1967.³

H.K. Mahatab and Pabitra M. Pradhan, with many other old Congressmen, formed a new party - the Jana Congress (JC), to challenge the might of the Congress Party in the general elections of 1967 the Congress Party

met with a debacle securing only 31 seats while the JC got 26 seats and the Swatantra Party secured 49 seats. Both the Swatantra-Jana Congress formed the coalition ministry with R.N. Singh Deo as the Chief Minister. This coalition initiated the politics of commissions in the state. For instance, the Justice H.R. Khanna Commission was appointed to probe into the alleged charges of corruption against the previous ministers. The ministry also appointed the Sarjoo Prasad Commission to probe into certain allegations against Mahatab. However, the ministry did not last long. In January 1971 the JC withdrew its support on the issue of granting remission to some Kendu leaf traders by the Forest Minister (of the Swatantra Party). Thus, Orissa came under the President's Rule for the second time. The state had to face another mid-term elections.

By this time Biju Patnaik formed the Utkal Congress (UC), a new regional party and contested the mid-term poll of 1971. On the eve of elections, the old Congress Party was divided into four separate groups. These were Cong(R), Cong(O), the UC and the JC. The other parties which contested the elections were Swatantra Party, PSP, CPI, CPM, FB, SUCI,⁴ Jan Sangh, Jharkhand Party and Independents. In this election, the Congress Party

got only 51 seats, the Swatantra Party 36 and the Utkal Congress 33. In March 1972, the second non-Congress United Front Ministry was formed with the Swatantra Party, the UC and the Jharkhanda as partners. Biswanath Das was the Chief Minister.

To the incredulity of the political observers, Patnaik and Singh Deo - the two well-known political adversaries had joined hands in the formation of this ministry. As was foretold the inherent contradictions between the coalition partners became obvious over various issues, including the renewal of licence to contractors of the Kendu-leaves. Somehow, the ministry survived till June 1972, when the UC and the PSP merged with the Congress Party. As a result, the strength of the Congress Party increased from 31 to 94 members. In June 1972, Nandini Satpathy was made the Chief Minister. The Satapathy ministry had set up Mitra Commission to probe into the alleged shady deals of trade of Kendu leaves during the B. Das ministry. But shortly in 1973, some erstwhile UC members moved to opposition and the ministry got dissolved. Meanwhile, the one time adversaries - Mahatab, Patnaik and Singh Deo - together formed the Pragati Party. They paraded 75 MLAs to Rajbhavan as evidence of their support. Yet, astonishingly, the President's Rule was imposed in the state once again.⁵

During the third mid-term elections in 1974, the real fight was between the Congress Party and the Pragati Party. The Congress Party won 69 seats as compared to 58 seats won by the latter party. With the help of the CPI and the PSP, the Congress Party formed the Government. Nandini Satapathy assumed the Chief Ministership for the second time. But her party was not free from the factional feud. The leaders with the socialist learnings within the party were not given equal weightage. The anti-PSP attitude was prominent. Again, the alliance of the Congress Party and CPI also encouraged factionalism in the former. The pro-CPI attitude of Smt. Satapathy was attributed to her CPI background of earlier years.

One of the many factions in the Congress Party raised a campaign against Jadunath Das Mahapatra (the then Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs and the Chief Minister for corruption and favouritism leading to purchase of books worth of several lakhs of rupees from a private firm. Allegation was also levelled against the transfers of officers in the education department on the caste basis. All these along with Ministerial reshuffle and the Congress-CPI alliance were some of the many factors which led to political instability in the state. Besides, Mrs. Satapathy was also accused of confronting the centre and deviating from the national mainstream. Finally,

she was compelled to resign from the leadership of the Legislature party on 16 December 1976. Orissa again came under President's Rule for the fourth time.

Crisis of the leadership in the Congress Party was, however, resolved when Binayak Acharya, who was instrumental for the "oust of Mrs. Satapathy" formed the new government on 29 December 1976. But this time, the Congress Party had ruled the state for the shortest period of only 123 days. His opponents continued to raise issues against his leadership, his inability to take decisions and his procrastination in some important matters. While the state level political scene revolved around defections, factionalism, etc. at the national level, the country was developing a different pattern of political development which led to the declaration of the Emergency for 1977-79.

The elections to the Orissa Legislative Assembly were held on the 10th June 1977. The two Communist parties, the CPM and the CPI won one seat each, while the Independents won 9 seats. The Congress Party polled only 26 seats. But the Janata Party securing two-third majority, with 110 out of 147 seats, formed the government under the leadership of Nilamani Routray. He has remained a staunch follower of Biju Patnaik. But due to inter-party feuds and lack of alternative economic policies and programmes, the Janata Party failed to consolidate its position and was finally dethroned from the power in 1980.⁶

A Stable decade of 1980s:

The post-1980 period saw a different and politically stable Orissa. It was a decade of J.B. Patnaik and of his rise and fall. In the 1980 elections the contesting parties were the Congress (I), Congress-U, BJP, Janata (JP), Janata-S(R), Janata-S(C), CPI, CPM and others. However, the Congress-I won the two-third majority with 118 of 147 seats. The two former Chief Ministers - Biju Patnaik and Nandini Satapathy were elected to the Legislative Assembly. The new ministry was formed under the leadership of J.B. Patnaik. For the first time in the history of politics in Orissa, a party (i.e., Congress-I) remained in power and ruled continuously for the full term of five years under one leader. In this sense, the political stability prevailed in the state during 1980-85.

In the 1985 elections the Congress Party repeated its performance by winning 117 out of 147 seats, thereby acquiring again the two-third majority. The CPI and the BJP got 1 seat each whereas JP secured 21 and Independents 7 seats. J.B. Patnaik headed the Congress Party ministry again. He happened to be a literary giant and a public speaker of repute. He was a successful organizer as well as a conversationalist of no mean ability. He was the

uncrowned king of the Congress-I in Orissa and he ruled the state for nearly a decade (1980-1989) that too at a time when the average tenure of a CM had come to be limited to just 10 months.

But soon he became more infamous for there were much gaps between his words and promises made in his election manifestoes, and in his actions and implementation of the programmes. He was found more oriented towards his own class at the cost of the welfare of the masses. His sex-scandal, excess self-orientation, political immorality as well as ammorality brought his downfall. The dissident activities in the party began against his leadership. Kanhu Charan Lenka, the then Revenue Minister of Patnaik's Government was the first to speak out against his leadership and the style of his functioning. He allegedly ruled the state in alliance with a small coterie of his persons like his Jayanti Patnaik, Basanta K. Biswal, the then 'Super Chief Minister' of Orissa, his son-in-law, Somyaranjan Patnaik, his elder brother, Niranjan Patnaik and many others. Undue interference over the state's administration caused delay and inefficiency in functioning of the government.⁷

Patnaik Government was also criticized to have encouraged casteism and groupism. It was criticised for misgovernance, corruption, assigning heavy concessions to contractors and mine owners, indulging in secret understanding with opposition parties, providing tacit support

to the state convention of RSS in December 1981. His Government failed to implement policies like "economic liberalisation for the poor" and "industrialisation in the state". Both government and bureaucracy allegedly lacked proper planning and sincere commitment to implement various policies and programmes. Patnaik's promise to develop the Urdu language in the state and to solve the minority problems remained only in his manifestoes. Gradually, factional fight became intense.

In March 1985 Assembly elections, a large number of sitting MLAs and ministers were denied party tickets on the charges of corruption, loss of confidence on them in their respective constituencies, loss of confidence on them in the party leadership, etc. The cabinet in his ministry consisted of a large number of members who were corrupt and inefficient. It was complained that the central assistance of Rs.150 crores allotted for the relief assistance to the victims of natural calamities were appropriated by them. It was also found that the super chief minister, B.K. Biswal exerted pressure, in a cabinet meeting for diverting money for the development of the dominant and developed Cuttack district, though the money was already specified for the welfare of the STs of Keonjhar district.⁸

Niranjan Patnaik had to resign from the cabinet because the Orissa High Court censured him as a "habitual bribe-giver".⁹ Orissa High Court had also proved starvation deaths and abject poverty in the state which spoke of the inefficiency and indifference of the Patnaik Government to the situation. But the greedy political elite of the time were very active in pursuing their self-interest, in acquiring disproportionate property. This came to light when Biju Patnaik formed his JD Government in 1990. In reference to the corrupt Congress Government, the High Court gave recently a verdict that it was illegal to collect water tax from the farmers at an increasing rate. The peasants were forced by the local Tehsildars to pay the water tax, though in many cases the Government had not provided any water facilities for them. Even in the areas where there were neither rivers and canals nor any other irrigation facilities, water tax was collected. Even the people affected by drought were compelled to pay the tax. Having converted this illegal act into a legal one, the Patnaik Government had collected Rs.50 crore in 10 years from 15 lakhs farmers.¹⁰

The party had lost its image to such an extent that it failed to win any seat in three subsequent bye-elections held in Khurda, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur which accentuated factional feud in the party. Another factor which

brought down the image of the Government was the Burla tragedy of 1984 when the Marwari, Punjabi and Sindhi traders who wield a lot of political strength in Orissa attacked the students in collusion with the police and killed 14 students. The Government could not punish the rich traders.

Patnaik's continuance in the office along with charges like corruption, inefficiency, sex scandals, inability to implement 20-point programmes and the strong division of the Congress party into the 'loyalists' and 'dissidents' signalled the fall of the Congress regime in the state. Ultimately he was asked by Rajiv Gandhi to quit the Chief Ministership in the last part of 1989 following the Congress debacle in the Lok Sabha elections. Hemanand Biswal was appointed the caretaker Chief Minister of the state for same time.

The 1990s: The New Stability

The Congress debacle was again repeated in the Assembly elections in 1990 in Orissa. It secured the ever lowest 10 seats only. And the Janata Dal achieved 123 of 147 seats which was a spectacular two-third majority. The CPI got 5 seats, the CPM-1, Independents-6 and others secured 2 seats. The old but

youthful octogenarian Biju Patnaik has been continuing with his JD Government since March 1990. The man has been highly ambitious and adventurous.

Biju Patnaik has always dreamt of a glorious Orissa. But at the implementational level, he has always been a controversial figure. Still he is regarded a charismatic leader and the people have great faith in him. He has done some good jobs in the state. The Oriya people are confident and hopeful that Biju will do something magical. But it seems that Biju Patnaik has grown so old that he has forgotten himself, let alone his beloved Oriya people and his promises to them. Now, there is a feeling that whatever Biju is doing is on his own accord and whims. And there is no one to check him. Nor does he listen to others.

Biju Patnaik, however, made a promise on the eve of the 1990 elections that if his JD came to power, he would not only provide a corruption-free Government but also unearth the assets amassed by the Congress leaders during the 10 years rule of J.B. Patnaik. While the first part of the Chief Minister's promise is debatable, he did order, within 2 months of his Chief Ministership, a special vigilance squad to raid the houses of J.B. Patnaik and some

of his former ministers. The raids were conducted successfully to find the alleged acquisition of illegal property. On 1 May 1992, J.B. Patnaik, the former Chief Minister of Orissa was arrested to be charge-sheeted in connection with a case registered against him under the Prevention of Corruption Act. Besides, Ramachandra Ulaka, the leader of the Congress group in the Assembly, K.C. Patel, Niranjan Patnaik, Jadunath Das Mahapatra and seven other ministers of the erstwhile J.B. Patnaik Government of 1980-1989 have so far been arrested by the Vigilance Department and charged with having assets disproportionate to their known sources of income.

There is a general consensus that J.B.'s arrest is Biju's political vendetta. On the face of the Gram Panchayat elections to start from 20 May, Biju chose to arrest J.B. to bolster his allegedly dwindling charisma which had brought in votes in the past. But in successive elections, bye-elections and in the recent municipality elections since Biju was voted to power, the percentage of votes polled by his party has continued to fall. The Gram Panchayat elections have been completed by 6 June. The JD party MLAs and Ministers have remained afraid of the consequences of decentralisation of power. Chairmen of the panchayats have executive powers not enjoyed by the MLAs. It is

feared that the electoral process has thrown up new local leaders who may emerge as the alternate focus of power.

It seems that the people have started losing faith in the JD. Since Biju is strong and dynamic enough, factions within the JD are passive now. There is a prediction that JD after Biju will be faction-ridden and unstable. At present, the stable JD Government has brought about financial discipline by banning the use of government vehicles on Sundays and holidays and bringing the number of cars given to the ministers from 4 during the Congress regime to just one each now. Even it is seen that the old Biju comes to the Assembly and the secretariat riding a bicycle only to fall down. Besides, it is told that he takes only Re.1/- as his salary. And his open call to beat up corrupt officials appears to have won him accolades from a good section. The common man badly affected by bureaucratic red-tape has reasons to be enthusiastic about it.

Biju Patnaik's personal integrity is unquestionable. Even his own sons have been instructed to steer clear of state matters. Still, he has proved himself more a fiasco than a success. Critics say that Patnaik has begun to confuse his interests and whims with the needs and the interests of the state. Arbitrary decisions, an ear of sycophancy and an insouciant rejection of criticism are fast eroding the

patriarch's political base. But the increasingly arbitrary manner in which decisions are taken probably stems from the deep mistrust he harbours towards his officials and ministers. His decisions may be taken in good faith but his uncompromising attitude is starting to affect his political base and public popularity.

Already his two years in power have been tainted by some controversial issues, e.g. his clearance for developing the picturesque stretch of forest in the Puri-Konark area for tourism. When he was in the opposition, he had violently opposed the Government attempt to do exactly the same thing by leasing the land to the Oberoi group. Now, a list of 51 hotel groups has been compiled. One of the names on the list is the Prachi Group, owned by A. Singh Deo, Patnaik's, tourism minister. Patnaik is unfazed by his volte-face on the issue: "More hotels mean more tourists. The people will benefit".

There has been an agitation against the leasing out of land to the Tatas for prawn cultivation in the Chilka lake. Even the JD Forest Minister, Mr. Harish C. Buxipatro lost his portfolio when he expressed his opposition to Patnaik's decision to transfer fishing rights in the Chilka lake to the Tatas.

It is also suspected that there has been an under-hand dealing between Biju Patnaik and the Tatas in the handing over of the government Brahmnipal charge chrome Plant to the latter. More recently Mayadhar Nayak, a prominent trade union leader, has filed a case against Patnaik's decisions of the sale of the OMC Alloys - a unit of the public sector undertaking to the Tatas. He is of the view that no global tenders were floated so that it could have fetched a higher price than what the Tatas offered. Another cardinal political error, Patnaik has made, is to allow a coterie of ministers and bureaucrats to surround him and cut him off from grassroots feeling.

The combination Patnaik offers is an unhappy one: little to show by way of performance plus an arrogant personal style. His ministry is now virtually indistinguishable from the previous Congress Government led by J.B. Patnaik. While Biju Patnaik may not be entirely aware of public dismay at his performance, he would be short-sighted to disregard the erosion of his political base. In Orissa now, the CPI which supported the JD on the basis of a 18-point charter and CPI(M) have parted ways with the JD and the troika has broken up. The lacklustre performance of the JD Government has dismayed them. But the Government

has been repeatedly violating it, e.g., by arresting the striking OSEB (Orissa State Electricity Board) employees. The Government is also accused of lackadisical attitude towards the reforms outlined in the charter. The Government is reluctant to particularly introduce and implement the land reforms.

The CPI is no less vehement in its criticism. The party MLA, Mr. Nityananda Pradhan says, "The Government made a big noise about the loan waiver. But the poor peasant hardly got anything". The SUCI (Socialist Unity Centre of India) leader, Mayadhar Nayak fumes that the Government has not achieved anything except handing over some of the public sector units to private industrial houses."¹¹

BIJU and the MCR:

The Orissa Government's stand on the Mandal Commission's Recommendations lying presently in the Supreme Court for verdict is contrary to the party's declared policy. The government filed its affidavit in the Supreme Court stating that economic criteria should be used for providing reservations to the backward castes or classes. This position is quite opposed to the stand taken by the national JD Party. The party has always backed reservations for the

socially backward castes with no reference to their economic status. JD sources said that right from the beginning, Patnaik had opposed the party high-command's stand on this issue, refusing to implement the JD line of reservations on caste basis. He has compounded the problem further by sending, on 10 April 1992 against the party line, a communication to the meeting of the Chief Ministers, convened by the Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao on the subject. The Orissa government's stand has not only emphasized the economic criteria for providing reservations to the socially backward class people but has also argued for applying the same criteria to the SCs and the STs who have been covered by reservations for decades now. He reiterated his stand by suggesting an income ceiling of Rs.25,000 for providing reservation benefits to these people.

According to JD sources, this is a new issue that Patnaik had raised. By suggesting an economic criterion for the SCs and the STs, Patnaik is trying to deprive of whatever little they have gained so far through reservations. They charged the Chief Minister with having exceeded the brief.¹² Patnaik is also against reservations in his government. He has refused to allow reservations to be the criterion in promotions in the government jobs. The government has circulated an order that

there should be no reservations for SCs and STs in the government-aided institutions. Patnaik argues, "What is the use of allowing the children of a SC/ST IAS or IPS officer to enjoy reservation facilities? Why should an IAS or IPS officer be allowed reservations in promotions when their economic status has improved?"¹³

Patnaik has rejected the Mandal Commission recommendations and announced the appointment of the Justice N.K. Das Commission to find out the list of backward castes on the basis of economic criterion in the state. The Commission has not yet submitted its report.¹⁴ It seems that Biju and his government will never allow the MCR to be implemented in Orissa as it goes against the interests of those who constitute the upper caste and class people and who belong to the ruling class and the ruling elite. "About 60 per cent of the senior bureaucrats are from these two groups - the Brahmins and the Karans. They dominate every field and profession - legal, judicial, academic, bureaucratic and political. The majority of the chief ministers in the state to date have belonged to these two groups who are also in a majority in the State Assembly. They also wield power in the agricultural sector. Most of the small-scale industries in the state and some major units are owned by them. The backward groups are yet to emerge as a strong force in the state."¹⁵

The JD Government is accused of neglecting the SCs, STs and the minorities (or all weaker sections) and adopting a general apathy towards them,¹⁶ as mentioned earlier. The JD leaders are clearly irritated with Patnaik who, they say, "has been deliberately taking an anti-party line and cocking a snook at the high command. They also point to Patnaik's enthusiastic support to the PM, Mr. Rao on the issue of liberalisation which again is quite opposed to the party stand. The JD has termed Mr. Rao's opening of the economy as a sell-out to the IMF, the WB and the multi-nationals."¹⁷

However, Oriya politics centres round Biju Patnaik's vagaries and idiosyncrasies. His ministry's non-performance cost his party heavily in the Lok Sabha elections held in May/June 1991 and in November 1991 bye-elections. But Biju's stature and status remains unchallenged. And he will maintain his status quo, regardless of whatever happens to the JD. He may look dangerous for the poor, ignorant, innocent, illiterate common men. Still he is "their Biju Patnaik". The patriarch's charisma still carries the weight.

Briefly, the Orissa politics has always been polluted. It was very much unstable till 1980. But factions and defections are always in the state politics.

Corruption¹⁸ has been another important characteristic feature of Orissa politics. Let alone the ministers, almost all Chief Ministers of the state like Mahatab Choudhuri, Biju Patnaik, Tripathy, Mitra, Singh Deo, Satapathy and J.B. Patnaik have been victims of the Commissions of Inquiry set up from time to time by the Orissa Government. The Khanna Commission, the Mudholkar Commission, the Sarjoo Prasad Commission, and the Mitter Commission were appointed to enquire into the irregularities and mal-functioning of the government after a period of time. Besides, there were CBI enquiries and a number of vigilance investigations. During his first stint as the Chief Minister Biju Patnaik was held guilty on 5 charges of utilising state machinery and of administrative improprieties for his personal benefit, e.g., in the sale of Kalinga Iron Works, owned by his family. But no action was taken against him.

The late H.K. Mahatab was also found guilty by both the Mudholkar and the Sarjoo Prasad Commissions, of accepting illegal gratifications in order to show favour to the Kendu leaf contractors, and of grant of chromite lease to rapid acquisition of wealth by him and withdrawal of criminal prosecution against iron and steel dealers of Cuttack. But he was also acquitted by the High Court. Former Chief Minister R.N. Singh Deo and the forest Minister H.P.

Mahapatra also were found guilty by the G.K. Mitter Commission of having caused a loss of about Rs.40 lakhs to the state exchequer on account of questionable rebates and waivers. However, action against them, too, remained uninitiated. There were 36 cases of corruption instituted against Mrs. Nandini Satapathy during the Janata days. But she was acquitted in 35 of them. Since no actions have been taken against the guilty, the Commissions have been of little value. Therefore, corruption has still continued both at the individual and party levels in the state politics.

The political structure of Orissa shares many political problems with other states. Here, too, the gaps in the socio-economic structure are found. The social origin of ruling class including the political elite indicates that they tend not to be representatives of the population whom they are supposed to represent. The caste and economic background of the legislators help in finding the truth. Here, it is important to mention that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India have been assured proportional representation in the legislature through constitutional protection. In Orissa, 32 seats^{are} reserved for the STs and 22 seats for the SCs in the house of 147 seats.

It is also found that most of the members of the various political parties in different Assemblies in the state were drawn from higher caste and class background. The political parties vie with each other to recruit persons who belong to higher socio-economic strata of the society. It has been observed that the social structure of Orissa is comprised of upper castes (8%), backward peasants and artisan castes (50%), SCs (15%) and STs (23%). And only 8 per cent upper castes are represented by 40% of the legislative elites, whereas nearly 50% of the backward castes find only about 15% representation. Seen from the economic perspective, a predominant section of the elites are from the affluent families. Sometimes money has been the single factor in the recruitment. In the immediate post-independence days, among others, there were former freedom fighters, princes, zamindars, etc., found in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. Now, there has been an emergence of new elites in which both money and muscle power have been playing their dominating role."¹⁹

Power in the countryside rests on the control over land. Results of various elections in the state reflect social and political power of rural rich. There is a long felt need for a drastic social transformation which could alter substantially the relations of production by

reducing disparities and eliminating entrenched institutions of exploitation. This has necessitated the affluent political elites, particularly the rural elites, to work against their vested interests, to be honest, to make some great and honest sacrifices, and to bring about land reforms. But this all has gone in vain. The elite representing the dominant economic section have displayed extraordinary concern to retain power at any cost, and to protect their interest, positions and properties. So compulsive have been the general understandings of bringing about equality that every government in power has enacted legislations covering tenancy rights, fair wages, ceiling of land, etc. But they have never produced the desired results, for they have never been enacted or implemented properly and there has been political disinterestedness. This is how the elites have been cheating and exploiting the poor masses. Rationalisations about how they were sabotaged have been put forward by almost every political party.²⁰

To sum up, there has been political stability in Orissa since 1980. But corruption, factions and defections still continue. The chronic disease of floor crossing indicates that the ideological content of political parties do not hold their membership intact. Contrarily, it is the position of power a political party holds that attracts the legislators to join it. That means, not the ideology

or social service, but money, power, vested interests that are important for the political elites. They can go to any extent to remain in power. They show themselves to be secular but play caste and communal cards in politics for their own benefit. They have made religion an instrument of exploitation. They themselves act as an instrument of the dominant class/classes in the state.

The power for major decisions usually rests upon the ruling class. Marx is still relevant here when he says that the ideas of the ruling class are the ruling idea. That means, ideas of that class which possesses the dominant material and intellectual forces in the society. In the case of the state of Orissa, the political elite is trapped with the conflict between its class role and the challenge of the people. All its slogans of democracy, socialism, secularism, return of the lost glory and pride have failed bitterly to bring about socio-economic development, modernization, equality and social equilibrium in the society. The ruling elite has remained a status-quoist, class-oriented and self-interested body. The democracy has been by the people, but not of the people, nor for the people. It is in danger.

Notes and References

1. Pathy, J., Underdevelopment and Destitution, IIP, New Delhi, 1986.
2. Asthana, P., Party System in India, New Delhi: Criterion Pub., 1988.
3. Ibid.
4. UC = Utkal Congress; PSP = Praja Socialist Party; CPI = Communist Party of India; CPI(M) = Communist Party of India (Marxist); FB = Forward Block; SUCI = Socialist Unity Centre of India.
5. Pathy, J., op. cit., 1986.
6. Ibid.; and Asthana, P., op. cit., 1988.
7. Asthana, P., op. cit., 1988.
8. Ibid.
9. The Deccan Herald, 18 June 1985.
10. The Sworajya (Oriya Daily), 25 Feb. 1992.
11. Mohanty, N.R., "Biju Patnaik disappoints Allies", The Times of India, 3 Apr. 1992.
12. "JD asks Biju to explain stand", The Times of India, 28 April 1992.
13. "Mandal could cost JD Dear in Orissa", The Times of India, 28 April 1992.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. "J.B. Patnaik Accused", The Hindustan Times, 24 April 1992.
17. "JD Asks Biju to Explain Stand", The Times of India, 14 April 1992.
18. For corruption, see Asthana, P., op. cit., 1988, also "Biju bid to fulfill poll promises".

19. Pathy, J., op. cit., 1986.
20. Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

We have concentrated in the present study on the political elite, particularly the legislative elite in the state of Orissa since independence. Though the definition of the elite has always been a problem, the legislative elite have been taken under study since they are the formally elected and are direct decision-makers. They play a dominant role in formulation and implementation of the various policies and programmes for welfare and development of the people. They are responsible to the people for all acts of omission and commission. So, it has been regarded essential to study them in terms of their socio-economic composition, their activities, attributes and attitudes, their recruitment patterns and linkages with the group or the class they belong to and also with the entire people in the state.

The legislative elite is only one segment of the political elite in particular and the elite in general. The potential people who are not elected to the Legislative Assembly have not been given necessary emphasis because it has not been possible to find various ^{details} through the secondary sources of data, of such candidates. Besides, the national elites like the MPs and the other influential people who have got some clout on the decision-making have not been

studied due to the said reason.

The introductory chapter makes a brief review of the existing studies on elite, besides the brief discussion on the methodological aspects like the statement of the problem, relevance of the proposed study, types of data and methods of data collection etc. Chapter II makes an extensive review of the literature on the elite. It has been mentioned here that the elite theorists contend that there is always an organized minority which because of their supposedly superior attributes, rules over the unorganized majority. The elite go for all sorts of distortions and deceptions and exploit the masses to fulfill their self-interest at all costs. The theories contradict the basic assumption of democracy that government is in the hands of the people. It has also been observed that elite in the name of the people wield both political and economic power and do all the decision-making according to their own interests and attitudes though in the name of the welfare of common man.

Broadly speaking, there are two groups of elite theories: the pluralist model refers to the groups of eminent individuals in a specific field whereas the power elite model refers to the group composed of the top persons from the institutions which govern the key sectors of the society. In the first model, politics is superior to economic power,

and in the second, democracy always maintains a class-orientation. However, the elite studies have always offered some basic problems like the definition and identification of the elite, the relationship between different types of elites, etc.

The Marxian perspective (also analysed in Chapter II) explains that the social forces of production determines the distribution of political power in a society. In the context, any stratified society is divided into a ruling class and a subject class which are in a perpetual contradiction and conflict till a classless society is achieved. The ruling class establishes its political dominance. It controls the matter, the military and mind, or in other words, the production of ideas. The ideas of Lenin, Mao, Tawney et. al. have been discussed in this chapter. Both the types of theories have their drawbacks and are subjected to mutual criticism. After analysing the concepts of the political elite and the ruling class, it is found that these concepts fail to meet the demands of empirical description and its dynamics of power structure in a society.

The next chapter titled "The Political Elites in India" is a general discussion on the political elite at the central level in the country with reference to their local, national as well as international transactions. Besides the aspects of role and nature, they have also

been studied at the level of their linkages with industrialists, businessmen, etc. and most of them belong to the upper class. Their upper class linkages and resultant activities also speak of how the masses have been discriminated, betrayed, neglected and left behind.

No doubt, the elite have played a role in the national reconstruction but they could have done far and much better if they were honest, sincere and collectivity-oriented. Instead of discharging their duties, promised by and demanded from them, they have misappropriated and misutilised the power and positions, they were given by the people. The elite do not hold features of the real India in which majority of the people are poor, backward, underdeveloped and possess the traditional image. The elite, in a way, take the country away from its goals of socialism and secularism. The capitalism and privatisation are the price given to the poor for their franchise. The elite, the government and democracy in India have been of the people but not for the people. The role of affluence in politics, and of the political elite linked with the 'haves' leads to inequality of opportunity and abolition of political rights for the 'have-nots'. Politics remains a game of the 'exclusive society'. It is a status-seeking, status-protecting and profit-

oriented business which the entrepreneurs join directly or indirectly. Politics has become today an industry employing materially-poor but mentally-rich intellectuals to give advice and the poor-but-physically fit people to be used in campaigning, booth capturing and rigging. After the elections, the industry of politics produces ideas and decisions conducive to better production of goods in the industrialists' factories. The poor and illiterate people do not have time to think all these. It is a "New Slavery System" without political rights of the 'New Slave'.

The public economy in India has become a web of patronage and subsidies. The 'proprietary class' has largely influenced the decision-makers. The rightist and the centrist political parties have shifted towards capitalism while the Janata Dal and the Left parties are still striving to retain the country's basic features and goals of secularism, socialism, democracy and liberty, equality, justice - social, economic and political.

Chapters IV and V deal with the backwardness of the state and social composition of political elite. Despite the fact that Orissa is affluent of mineral and natural resources, it has been one of the poorest states in India. Orissa is in no way modern, stable, prosperous,

or even 'upto the standard'. The state has been paradoxically characterized by backwardness and underdevelopment in health, efficiency, proficiency, infrastructure like transport and communication facilities, irrigation and agriculture (let alone industrialisation), literacy, etc.

However

No doubt, the elite are to be given some credit for their contribution to little and slow development in the state. But it is again the elite who are to be blamed for the under-development or backwardness of the state. The sad state of affairs is that with growth of culture, civilization, development and modernization, Orissa is deteriorating even in the agricultural productivity. The policies and programmes of exhibitionism, pretension, half-heartedness and heartlessness by the elite are some of the main reasons. The poor have become poorer and the rich, richer. Thus, the gap between the two widens. The roadside small cabins and kiosks in towns and cities have been turned upside-down whereas the tax-evaders and the politicians enjoy 'cock-tail parties' in their 'still-rising-sky-highs'. Evicting the 'small-sellers' from the roadside in cities is merely to show that Orissa is not poor. What a pretension and escapism! Evicting the poor from the flamboyance of the cities leads to their nasty planning of beautification of cities at the cost of once

colourful countryside getting uglier now in poverty, starvation and social tensions.

Besides a tiny section of the elite in their respective groups, the SCs and STs which together constitute 38 per cent of population of Orissa, the Muslims (1.60%) and other minorities and backward classes make a substantial majority. They are largely poor and they face many other problems. They do not have control over the government and administration fully occupied by the elite who in the name of people and democracy, are busy in self-orientation and self-agrandisement. Orissa has been basically a peace-loving state. But now peace seems to be a distant dream. It is because of the nasty politics of castes and religions, there have been cases of communalism and caste-war wherein the poor have suffered and the rich are well-protected.

The political elite have been gauged in the standards of election promises, governmental decisions, policies, programmes and their implementation. The result is that the political elite, for most of the time have been an instrument of the people of the dominant class (even castes also) who have influenced all the major political as well as administrative decisions. The elite are trapped between the class-rule and the demands of the state.

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Thus, the demands of democracy, socialism, secularism, poverty-alleviation, etc. have failed bitterly to bring the long-cherished reality of socio-economic development. The justice - social, economic, political and equality of opportunity and of status - also remains unattended.

In Orissa the agrarian politics has remained very important and the elite have been highly interested in the rural politics. There, too, the decisions have gone in favour of the landed class. In the areas where such class as absent, the landed interests have subverted them. Irrespective of their commitments and ideology, the political parties have invariably supported the rural power holders who have been controlling land.

In sum, the political elite in Orissa have gone beyond and above their political ideology and commitment. They have their own vested-interest, and they maintain their class-oriented group. In any field, whether economic or religious, the elite have really supported, protected and promoted the dominant groups of caste, class, ethnic, religion and intellectual background with fear lest they should lose the political game. On the other hand, the poor have been given a poor show of sympathy and smile. They are yet to become conscious of their rights. But the 'power-

group' would not allow them to be conscious as their (of poor) consciousness would be a threat to their power and position. No one wants to lose his/her power. Thus, might is still right. And Machiavellism mocks at democracy. This is how, 'Social Darwinism' is a thorn in the flesh of democracy.

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