

**FORMATION AND THE IDEOLOGY OF
THE SWATANTRA PARTY :
A STUDY OF THE ORISSA UNIT ✓**

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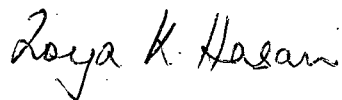
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CERTIFICATE

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FORMATION AND THE IDEOLOGY OF THE SWATANTRA PARTY:
A STUDY OF THE ORISSA UNIT submitted by Mr. Asit
Kumar Tripathy in partial fulfilment for the award
of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE has not been
previously submitted for any other degree of this
or any other University. To the best of our
knowledge this is a bonafide work.

We recommend this dissertation be placed
before the examiners for evaluation.



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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
I INTRODUCTION	1
II FORMATION AND IDEOLOGY OF THE SWATANTRA PARTY IN INDIA	19
III SOCIO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GANATANTRA PARISHAD	58
IV THE SWATANTRA PARTY AND THE POLITICS OF ORISSA	98
V SWATANTRA PARTY IN ORISSA	126
VI AN OVERVIEW	154
APPENDICES	165
BIBLIOGRAPHY	170

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This study is essentially concerned with the growth and development of the Swatantra Party in Orissa. It also attempts to examine its political antecedents in Orissa because the formation of the Swatantra Party was closely linked with the political aspiration and interests of powerful agrarian groups in Orissa society. These were feudal interests who had earlier opposed the merger of princely states of Orissa to the province of Orissa and supported demands like the creation of a separate state. The groups and organisations involved in these movements were mainly the 'Patna Praja Mandal' and the 'Eastern States Union' prior to the merger and the 'Koshala Praja Mandal' after the merger.¹ Having failed to stall the merger of the erstwhile princely states to the province of Orissa, their activities culminated in the formation of the Ganatantra Parishad in 1950 with the support of princes and the landed elements of western Orissa. The Ganatantra Parishad was the precursor of the Swatantra Party in Orissa.

The support of the landed aristocracy, however, created problems of legitimisation for the Ganatantra Parishad, a

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1. The 'Patna Praja Mandal' was founded in 1966 by the royalists in the premier state of Bolangir-Patna to fight back the Congress-Praja Mandalists. The 'Eastern States Union' was founded in 1947 by the Chattisgarhi and Orissa princes to work for the creation of a separate states. The 'Koshala Utkala Praja Parishad' had the same purpose.

fact recognised by a section of the Ganatantra Parishad. In consequence, this section strived to achieve secularisation of the party. They also tried to reorient the programmes in the changed socio-political context of post-independence India. They did so by replacing outmoded political symbols with a rational and secular political argument. It was in this light that the merger with the Swatantra Party offered the possibility of acquiring a new image for the Ganatantra Parishad. Thus the Ganatantra Parishad and the Swatantra Party merged in 1961 to create and organise a new conservative force in Indian as well as Orissa politics.

In many ways, the political fortunes of the Swatantra's were closely tied to the Ganatantra Parishad, a fact which necessitates an understanding of the relationship between the two. This requires an understanding of the Swatantra Party, its ideology, forces behind its formation, and the nature of its programmes and goals. Above all, by combining our knowledge of various regional variables one can hope to understand the politics of the Swatantra Party in Orissa. In a plural society of India's magnitude a generalisation of Party's nature at the national level would at best yield superficial knowledge. The working of a political party at the regional level throws light on the character and operation of a party. It gives us insights into the social and

economic structures of regional society, the nature of dominant groups and how their interests are reflected in political parties. The politics of different parties, the experience of different movements, the leadership; each affects differently yet very substantially the working of a political party at the regional level. In this study the Swatantra Party has been analysed at the national level as well as in its working in the state of Orissa.

The Swatantra party in Orissa had a remarkable political career spanning a period from 1961 to 1974, when it merged with several other constituents to form the Bharatiya Lok Dal. The success of the Orissa unit of the Swatantra Party can be explained in terms of powerful feudal support, recieved by the party, after Ganatantra Parishad's merger with it. The Swatantra party like Ganatantra Parishad solidly entrenched itself in the western region. Its hold could be perpetuated for so long because of the sub-regional contradictions of Orissa politics. The deep chasm dividing eastern and western Orissa arising out of differences in history, political experience and culture, had made the Congress virtually an alien party in the region. For this reason the local variables are to be given due importance.

Framework for the Study of a Political Party

Organised political parties have become important means through which political processes can be studied. Facile categorisation, viz., Insiders, Outsiders, Parties of Patronage, Parties of Principle, Parties of Personages and Programmes, Parties of day-to-day expediency interests, suffers from serious limitations.² Such categories and frameworks do not take into account the material bases of politics. Consequently, the class base of parties is often ignored. In case of capitalist and underdeveloped societies, the omission is serious because in an unequal society political parties represent and articulate economic and political interests of various classes. Our understanding of a political party would be hampered if the class character and ideological position are not taken into account, particularly in case of political parties operating in a class divided and unequal society.

How? This study assumes that major political parties by and large represent classes and class interests. Thus a political party is an organised representation of the

2. For details, see Maurice Duverger, Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State, London: Methuen & Co., 1959.

political and economic interests of a single class or a combination of classes and sometimes of fractions of classes. Therefore, the politics of a party cannot be understood fully without investigating the class character, ideology and political strategy of the party. This study attempts to understand some of these aspects in the case of the Swatantra Party. Maurice Duverger developed a framework to study political parties. He outlined three factors, as common to all countries - socio-economic, ideological and technical. "The first one", Duverger says, "is mainly concerned with the influence of class structure on political parties and there is no doubt the influence is very great. The division of European Parties in the 19th century in conservative and liberal camps can be described as the opposition between conservatives and landed aristocracy and the industrial and intellectual middle class. The appearance of socialist party at the beginning of 20th century coincides with the entry of the working class in political life... To a certain extent political ideologies themselves correspond to class attitude. The most decisive influence are aspects of the life of the nation, such as ideologies and particularly the socio-economic structure".³

3. Maurice Duverger, Approaches to Comparative Politics, The University of Chicago Press, 1956, p.346. In order to understand politics in a society whether developing or developed, one of the important foci of attention
...contd...

In addition to the social base and ideology of a party, it is important to investigate the actual performance of the party which may vary in the national and regional contexts. This is necessary because in the case of non-communist parties, there is a tension, indeed a gap, between the ideology and practice of the parties. Ideology invariably serves as an instrument of legitimization. This was more than evident in the case of Swatantra Party in Orissa. Swatantra party in Orissa was an organisation of princes and feudal lords, yet it enjoyed the image of a modern capitalist party; because at the national level it was projected in terms of modern categories notwithstanding the regional compulsions.

The foregoing framework enables us to identify the important features for investigation of ideology and politics

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is the working of political parties. See Joseph La Palambora and M. Weiner (eds.), Political Parties and Political Development, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1966. To gain a theoretical perspective on parties and political development, see S.P. Huntington, "Parties and Political Stability", in Political Order in Changing Society, Yale University, New Haven, 1959; R.A. Dahl (ed.), Political Opposition in Western Democracies, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1960, etc. For Indian context, see Myron Weiner, Party Building in a New Nation, Chicago, 1967; Horst Haftmann, Political parties in India, Meerut, 1971; W.H. Morris-Jones, The Government and Politics of India, London, 1971 (revised edition), and Rajni Kothari's, Politics in India, Boston, 1976, etc. More specifically, see Rajni Kothari, "The Congress 'system' in India", Asian Survey, vol.4, No.12 (Dec., 1964), pp.1164-73; Morris Jones, "Dominant and Dissent", in Government and Opposition (1965-66), pp.451-66, etc.

of a party. These are:⁴

- i) Socio-economic background of the party.
- ii) Character of interest groups in the party.
- iii) Perspective on major socio-economic issues, i.e.,
land reform, bank-nationalisation, etc.
- iv) Study of actual policies and class interests.

The question that has to be raised is why was the Swatantra party formed in 1959? For this it is important to identify the right wing elements in Indian politics who at a particular juncture combined to form the Swatantra party. Our primary concern is to investigate why conservative forces and elements so preponderant in Indian society could not emerge as force until 1959 and why they did not meet with success. This study seeks to trace the formation of the Swatantra party, assess its performance and analyse the reasons for its indifferent record.

Context of Indian Politics

After Independence there was a noticeable proliferation of political parties, "basically as a result of the interaction between the tradition-bound and horizontally stratified

4. For a similar framework in application, see C.P. Bhambri, "Ideology and Political Parties in India", Economic and Political Weekly, vol.III, No.16, 20 April 1968, pp.643-46.

status groups, consciously sustained and reinforced by British policy, and the newly emerging social groups united ideologically according to a similarity of interests, convictions or individual loyalty".⁵

The consequence was a proliferation of regional parties created by vested interests like feudal aristocracy, caste groups, as well as the attempts by reactionary, religious chauvinistic elements to float parties like 'Rama Rajya Parishad' in Rajasthan.⁶ At the regional level conservative forces remained amorphous in nature, although they managed to organize parties in some states and regions. The Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa represented the feudal forces in the western part of the state and Janata party of Bihar, are examples of such attempts.

At the national level, emergence of a rightist alternative was to some extent precluded by the nature of Congress monolith which accommodated an array of interests ranging

5. B.B. Mishra, The Indian Political Parties: A Historical Analysis of Political Behaviour upto 1947, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1976, p.640.

6. The extension of universal adult franchise and self-governing institutions in the new India, coupled with problems of social diversities among the regions in the hastily made provincial units, induced demands by the vernacular elites for creation of separate states, basically, to reap the opportunities thrown open by the new state. This is the background of the sudden proliferation of political parties immediately after Independence.

from the conservative to socialist elements. Yet, there were many elements who were utterly dissatisfied with Congress but remained latent in the absence of an organised alternative. The Jana Sangh was there, yet it was tainted with communalism and for this reason found unsuitable by various modernist sections. Thus the lack of a national, secular, modern party was keenly felt by the right wing, particularly from the mid-fifties when right wing groups perceived threats of Congress 'socialism'.

The inadequacy of a well developed system of communication, inter-state language barriers, differential growth of various regions in economic terms and social diversities posed significant obstacles for a unified ideological response, though in most cases these regional groups shared common ideological concerns. The belated emergence of the Swatantra party as an explicit rightist party can probably be explained in terms of these drawbacks. Not surprisingly, once the Swatantra party was formed there was a virtual cascade of requests or inquiries from regional parties sharing the class view of the Swatantra, though in most cases such political formations were undefined and regionally circumscribed, nevertheless they were ready to recognise a party of their kind.

The feudal and rich landholders and urban-based grain dealers formed the social base of the Swatantra party. This was the section whose interests were threatened by the principles 'agricultural co-operatives' and 'joint farming', ideas debated and passed by the Congress party in the fifties. Gradually the party also represented the ex-princes who joined the organisation in great numbers, and the Swatantra welcomed them because of their immense electoral value.

Many other elements who had been marginally affected by Congress policies also supported the formation of a right wing party. For instance, a section of industrialists lent their support to challenge the Congress brand of 'socialism'. The ideology of the Swatantra party was thus shaped by modern proponents of 'Free Enterprise' and some Gandhian stalwarts too had thrown their moral weight behind the party.

However, the party was not created suddenly. Apparently the spokesman of the free enterprise did create the party. But then, the strength with which the party presented itself in the Inaugural Convention in 1959 showed that it drew large numbers of disparate interests within a shortwhile. This has to be explained in locating the latent sources of conservatism in Indian society who were stirred to action when the Nagpur Resolution on Agricultural Co-operatives was adopted in 1959 by the Congress party.

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not a
neg. factor?*

However, majority of the big industry did not share the concern of their minority counterpart who while proclaiming that 'Nagpur Resolution' completed the 'communization' of the Congress exhorted them to support the Swatantra party. Indian planning never envisaged total governmental takeover of means of production. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1947 and 1956 guaranteed private initiative and the later developments showed that private business has not suffered in anyway.

Besides the industry was never averse to any scientific pattern of land management sans collectivization which would have increased production, generating greater demand and in its wake economic growth. So the industrialists were not much concerned about the talks of oncoming radical land reform. And this is where the problem for the party began. Bereft of the big bourgeois support the party reduced itself primarily to a representative of rural landowning class who had panicked at the talk of collectivization. The association of some princely parties with it brought the increased opprobrium of and the image of feudal and obscurantist party - a far cry from what the original founders of the organisation intended the Swatantra party to become.

Right Wing Politics in Orissa

The peculiarities of the Oriya society had helped

create the Ganatantra Parishad. The party drew its strength from regional factors which enabled it to challenge the Congress. The inter-regional differences between eastern Orissa and most parts of western Orissa, in terms of political structure, socio-economic conditions, language (dialect) and in most other sectors of life, have affected post-independence politics in Orissa in a significant way. The Congress party which vigorously led the national movement for independence, was the undisputed political force in the ex-Mughalbandi areas of coastal districts. But the Congress could not dislodge the Ganatantra Parishad's largely feudal agrarian base in western Orissa, which was largely beyond the reach of the independence movement. Other factors which helped the Ganatantra Parishad was the Congress party's lack of dynamism and a strong political will to affect a radical transformation of the system of landholding.

It had the added disadvantage of being perceived as the 'intruder' party which is how it was characterised by the anti-merger movement in the western districts. The royalist instigated tribal uprising, the police retaliation and consequently the violence that engulfed the western region following the merger, were all attributed to the Congress 'outsiders' that had come against the wishes of the people. The regionalist politics of the princely party

of the Ganatantra Parishad created a sense of alienation, a persecution complex in the average westerner's mind, which was sustained by the actualities of economic development, as has been reflected in the vast regional imbalances between the two parts of the state.

On the other hand, the Ganatantra Parishad had significant political success in the two general elections of 1952 and 1957. The initial period of antagonism was replaced by a pragmatic co-operation between the Ganatantra Parishad and the Congress, which resulted in the coalition government in 1959. However, the coalition lasted only for two years. Ganatantra Parishad by 1961 entered into negotiations with the Swatantra for a merger. The formal merger came about in 1962.

The merger of the two parties has to be seen as the part of the general consolidation of rightist forces to oppose the threat of collectivisation caused temporarily by the 'Nagpur Resolution on Agricultural Co-operatives'. Apart from being part of a general right wing offensive the merger had other reasons too. The special features of region-based politics had posed certain problems for the Ganatantra Parishad. The regional and princely identity became a liability for the party in its attempt to expand its electoral base. In addition, doubts were raised in

party quarters about its continued capacity to contain and fight the Congress - an organisation with immense resources and patronage. In comparison to Congress party, Ganatantra Parishad after all was a small regional party with very limited means. Alignment with a national party was thus viewed as a necessity. The fortuitous emergence of the Swatantra, in whose creation, some Ganatantra Parishad leaders played a role provided an ideal answer.

The merger was, however, not entirely successful. Although in 1967 the party led a coalition government and subsequently in 1972 it participated in another coalition government, yet in the long-run it had to contend with erosion in its support structure. This was because the Congress party never fulfilled its threat of collectivization and in fact the Congress itself took a turn for the right. These developments were a setback for the Swatantra, many of whose supporters increasingly joined the fold of the vastly more successful Congress, which had more capacity to bestow power and privileges on its followers. Moreover, Swatantra party did not possess enormous financial resources as would be expected from a party of its orientation. Consequently, the Ganatantra Parishad's expectation of receiving financial help from this national party after merger remained largely unfulfilled.

Besides, there were certain regional factors for the weakening of the party unit in Orissa. The most important was the increasing irrelevance of regional forces and the successful organisational offensive mounted by the Congress party which had emerged with a new vigour after Mrs. Indira Gandhi's takeover of the organisation at the Centre.

This pattern of political polarisation existed in Orissa until 1974, resulting in unstable and at times weak coalition governments. The lack of a strong political leadership affected the state's progress. The politics of different political parties marked by the absence of a 'left' alternative, remained generally conservative. The land reform measures and its shaky and half-hearted implementation, in the wake of modernisation in agriculture widened the gap between different agrarian classes. Instead of any progressive movement, the state experienced various chauvinistic and parochial movements, organised by the two main parties - Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra and the Congress parties.

This study traces the political development of the Swatantra until 1974, when it merged with the Bharatiya Lok Dal at the national level. The following questions would be investigated in the course of the study:

- 1) In a country where conservative and reactionary forces are abundant as latent factors, what hinders

their transformation into a powerful political force, in the shape of a political party? Why do the existing rightist varieties do not gain ascendancy?

- 2) What led to the birth of the Swatantra party? Was there any essential difference in its ideology with that of Congress?
- 3) Why was the Swatantra party unsuccessful to enlist the support of those very elements it intended to serve?
- 4) What were the factors behind Swatantra's success in Orissa? What dynamics of Orissan society did it rely on?
- 5) Was there any difference in its politics to the Congress? If there was, did it get reflected in its programmes and activities in its role as an opposition or, a partner in the government?

Chapterisation

The study has been organised into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the problem. The second chapter deals with the Ideology of Swatantra party, its policies and social composition. There is a significant lack of documentation of rightist politics in India. The only authoritative work on the Swatantra party was by Howard L. Erdman in 1967. His work suffers from the limitations of perspective as he identified the Swatantra as conservative response of majority

of Indian conservative elements, against the Congress, which he views as a socialist organisation.⁷

The third chapter traces the origin, composition, and the role of the Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa politics. This chapter introduces certain important regional variables which serve as the background chapter to the subsequent chapters on Swatantra party politics.

The fourth chapter analyses the Orissa unit of the Swatantra party's performance in political and electoral terms.

The fifth chapter analyses certain policies of the Swatantra governments. It is in the nature of evaluation of the character of the Swatantra party.

The sixth and the final chapter forms the conclusion.

Limitations of the Study and the Source Materials

Collection of data in Orissa presents problems of enormous dimension to individual researchers because of the absence of standard literature. If the nature of the concern is historical it creates more problems. More than

7. Howard L. Erdman, Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism, Cambridge South Asian Studies, London, 1967.

that, Orissa unit of the Swatantra being almost an one-man-show by late R.N. Singh Deo, there are no coherent documents pertaining to its organisation, policy decisions etc., were to be found. The mainspring of the party, Singh Deo, has since died, making the party literature more inaccessible.

We contacted many middle level and a few top leaders, some of them are still active, and some are in retirement. We have corroborated information from various respondents.

Chapter II

FORMATION AND IDEOLOGY OF
THE SWATANTRA PARTY IN INDIA

This chapter attempts to analyse the ideology of the Swatantra party. This requires an examination of both the active and latent sources of conservatism and reaction in Indian society. Such an attempt will provide the historical context for this study, and enable us to locate the various ideological strands operating in Indian society. We will attempt to study the Congress as well, because the impetus for the formation of the Swatantra party was provided by the politics of the Congress and the consequent shift in confidence of a section of Indian bourgeoisie from the Congress to the Swatantra party. This chapter is essentially concerned with formation and the ideology of the Swatantra party.¹ It explores in particular the conservative basis and content of Swatantra party's ideology.²

1. "Ideology is one variant form of those comprehensive patterns of cognitive and moral belief about Man, Society and the Universe in relation to man and society, which flourish in human society". "Ideology", International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, L. Sellis David (ed.), vol.7, MacMillan and Free Press, p.67. For a detailed discussion, see the above article.
2. Conservatism is aspiration and activity characterized by defensive actions rather than willingness or desire to change. This type of an ideology draws its support from men, 'who have a substantial material and psychological stake in the established order'. See "Conservatism", International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, David L. Sellis (ed.), vol.3, MacMillan & Free Press, pp.290-95. Also see Peter Viereck (ed.), Conservatism, Princeton, 1959, p.15.

Formation of the Party

The Swatantra Party was established on 4 June 1959. The party itself was formed through a process of "regrouping of the conservative elements in Indian society which was making itself felt in other parties earlier".³ In that sense the Swatantra party did not altogether represent a new political force. It was formed through the efforts of several organizations. The most important organizations among them were the Forum for Free Enterprise (FFE) and the All India Agricultural Federation (AIAF). They contributed in a large measure to the formation of the party.

The FFE was founded in 1956 by a group of businessmen, financiers in Bangalore. The AIAF was formed later in 1958, an organization which represented essentially the interests of the bigger landholders mainly in South India.

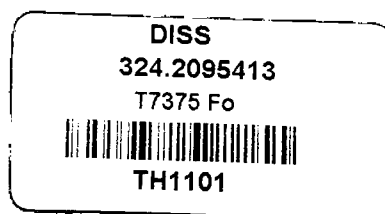
Forum for Free Enterprise

The FFE was composed of a section of big industrialists and managers and executives belonging to various big companies. A.D. Shroff of Tatas and Murarji Vaidya of the Indian Rayon

3. K.P. Karunakaran (in Poplai (ed.), 1962 General Election, p.2. Quoted in Howard L. Erdman, Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism, London: Oxford University Press, 1967, p.65.

concern were among its more important founders. Another organization, All India Manufacturers' Association, also played an important role. All these elements were brought together by Minoos Masani who was the key figure of this organization,⁴ which carefully avoided identification with any political party.⁵ This led to the claim that the Forum was a non-political, non-partisan organization. In this role it sought to disseminate authoritative information to educate public opinion...(and) bring to public notice the achievements of Free Enterprise in the country,⁶ as also the dangers of socialism, planning, public sector and corruption in public life. At the same time, the Forum cautioned against 'laissez faire' or the nineteenth century capitalism, which it said, had no place in contemporary Indian life. It

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4. Masani's career has been a very controversial one. He was the founder member of Congress Socialist Party established in 1934, with Acharya Narendra Dev and Jai Prakash Narain. He was in the Constituent Assembly and later appointed an Ambassador to Brazil. After Independence he drifted away from the Congress, due to his much publicized revulsion against Congress socialism.
 5. The Forum had opened branches at various centres. Strangely enough, at least the Delhi Unit was more sympathetic to the Jan Sangh in the beginning. Howard Erdman, op. cit., 1967, p.66.
 6. "Manifesto", published originally as a pamphlet titled, The Forum for Free Enterprise, July 1956, Bombay, p.4.



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published pamphlets and booklets which attacked state
 intervention.⁷

The FFE contended that state intervention discouraged private investment and introduced the problem of corrupt mismanagement by bureaucracy. Broadly speaking, FFE opposed 'statism' and undemocratic 'socialistic' bias of the Congress which it alleged had accommodated crypto-communists. Masani felt that the Indian business was facing dangerous polarization between the Congress and the communists. "Congress", he complained, "was increasingly being communised".⁸ He cited the example of the 'Nagpur Resolution' on 'Agricultural Cooperatives', which amounted to an 'insidious' attempt to bring the Communist Pattern by the backdoor.⁹

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7. Some of the pamphlets were scathing attack on Congress policies by eminent economists; i.e., Economic Implications of Union Budget 1971-72 (Prof. Rusi Jai Taraporewala), Equality as a social objective (Lord Leonel Robbins), Industrial and Economic Growth in India (Dr. F.A. Mehta) and the Gold Problem in India (B.R. Shenoy, et. al.), etc. As is evident the Forum was still active even when the Swatantra party came to force.
8. Masani's statement, Modern Review, 3 March 1959, p.182.
9. The 64th Annual Session of Indian National Congress convened at Nagpur passed the following resolution in January 1959: "The future agrarian pattern should be that of cooperative joint cultivation, the farmers continuing to retain their property right and getting a share from the common produce in proportion to their lands. Further, those who actually work in the land, whether they own the land or not will get a share in proportion to the work put in by them in joint farms - quoted in M.A. Jhangiani, Jan Sangh and Swatantra, Delhi, P.C. Manaktala and Sons Pvt. Ltd., 1967.

The forum bemoaned the absence of a political party which could articulate the position of free trade and unfettered growth of private enterprise. In the absence of a political platform, the Forum complained that its 'case was going by default'.¹⁰ Thus it was evident that people associated with the FFE recognized the need for a party.

Its crusade against the Congress 'socialism' struck a chord among likeminded organization and individuals. Among them was C. Rajagopalachari, who openly expressed his views against many Congress policies, and agreed to lead a political alternative to the Congress. Initially, however, he hesitated to lead the proposed organization, because he was unwilling to be identified with an organization created by Masani and his friends to champion the cause of liberal capitalism. However, he was persuaded to support it.

All India Agriculturists Federation

AIAF was a very small Madras-based organization presided by N.G. Ranga, a distinguished economist and 'peasant leader'. The organization was dominated by Kulaks and rich landholders who were opposed to the 'cooperative

10. For Masani's argument against socialism, see M.R. Masani, The Communist Party of India, New York, Mac Millan, 1959, p.230.

farming'. This organization tried to mobilize public opinion against the various ceiling laws and restrictive land legislations, on grounds that these laws violated the principles of economic viability and productivity. This organization too shared the scepticism of FFE regarding the efficacy of public managed enterprises of production.

According to AIAF, increasing food production was only possible under a system of peasant proprietorship. The organization was firmly opposed to collectivization which it said would destroy India's capacity to be self-sufficient in foodgrains production by bringing in disastrous bureaucratic mismanagement of rural economy. It propagated its views, through published literature and held public meetings. The proposed Nagpur resolution had caused panic in this organization thus raising its activities to a feverish pitch.

In June 1959 the leaders of AIAF, notably, B. Ramachandra Reddy (former President of Madras Legislative Council) and N.G. Ranga met with the leaders of FFE and other likeminded politicians in Bangalore. Rajagopalachari extended his support to the idea of forming a new party. Thus on 4 June 1959, the Swatantra party was launched. Thus, the first ever formal coalition between the industrial capitalists and the landed interests was forged. It immediately attracted

a cascade of announcements of merger with the new party. The party received the support of existing local and regional organizations, caste groups and locally influential people. These organizations had previously entered into negotiations with FFE and Rajaji to lead a right-wing alternative to the Congress.¹¹ These groups and individuals joined the party.

The Indian National Democratic Congress (INDC) of Tamil Nadu announced its merger with the party.¹² The Forward Block (Tamil Nadu) and Tamil Nadu Toilers' Party and Raja of Ramgarh's Janata Party of Bihar which had 23 MLAs and 4 members of Parliament were represented at the inaugural convention. They later joined the party. The Jana Congress, another minor party from Bihar, led by Janki Nandan Singh (MLC) too joined the party. S.K.D. Palliwal, a veteran ex-Congressman with considerable influence in U.P. and another ex-Congressman in Punjab, Nagoke, who had formed 'Dalit Janata Manch', to spread resistance against the concept of cooperative

11. Those who solicited Rajaji's help against the Congress included persons like Raja of Ramgarh (Bihar), Maharaja P.K. Deo (Kalahandi) a leader of Orissa Ganatantra Parishad, Janki Nandan Singh (Dharbhanga House), H.N. Kanungo (a prominent Oriya lawyer), etc. Besides influential people like K.M. Munshi, Gen. Kariappa, S.K.D. Palliwal (U.P.), etc., who were dismayed by the Nagpur Resolution were also drawn towards Rajaji's personality.

12. INDC was reported to have joined first according to Swatantra Party Preparatory Convention, Bombay, Swatantra Party, 1959, p.27.

farming, announced their merger with the party.

The Swatantra party achieved considerable success in Orissa, where it managed to enlist the support of the Ganatantra Parishad, although the merger could not be immediately realized as the Ganatantra Parishad was then a partner in a coalition government with the Congress. (These aspects are dealt with in the third chapter.) The final merger between the Ganatantra Parishad and the Swatantra party took place after the general elections in 1962.

Structure of the Social Support

The Swatantra party enjoyed the support of many distinguished individuals drawn from diverse backgrounds. But none of them possessed a political base. This was true of Rajaji, Masani, Sir Homi P. Mody, Ranga, Professor Ruthnaswamy, V.P. Menon and K.M. Munshi.

Rajagopalachari, the most revered among them, was a venerated statesman of the Gandhian era and rightly called the 'conscience keeper of the Mahatma'. His association with the party gave an aura of respectability to the new organization. Humayun Kabir was not considerably wrong when he observed that "the only rallying point of the Swatantra Party is the personality of Rajaji".¹³ The importance of

13. Humayun Kabir, "Congress Ideology", India Quarterly, XVI, pp.9-10; quoted in Erdman, op. cit., p.74.

Rajaji's association was borne out by the fact that the party could not survive his death in 1974. The same year the Swatantra disappeared from the political horizon.¹⁴

Rajaji although traditionalist, was committed to modern free enterprise. In a peculiar sense, he embodied the social and political contradictions of the party. He defended caste divisions because it served useful economic purposes and joint family system because of its harmonious impact on society. As a Gandhian, he abhorred the machine culture which increased needs and spread materialism.

He called for a party of right. Because to him, "dislocations are not less real or important than the need for change and progress".¹⁵ The Congress policies according to him preached 'organized covetousness and steals spiritually out of the people's life'. In the ultimate analysis Rajaji sympathised with aristocracy, evident in his opposition to the abolition of privy purse, which he called 'a betrayal of trust'.

14. Political Commentator, Atri wrote, "Just as Christ was the first and only Christian, so we may hail Rajaji as the first and last of Swatantrites". See "Swatantra Party's Harkiri", Organizer, 24 August 1974.

15. Rajaji, quoted in Erdman (1967), op. cit., p.93.

In contrast to Rajagopalachari was K.M. Munshi. Though a militant nationalist and staunch Hindu, Munshi spoke vehemently against caste system and other social evils. He had a secular outlook and was concerned for the unity of the nation. He demanded a ban on communal parties. Selig Harrison observed that "Munshi was the most sophisticated ideologist of Hindu Revivalism".¹⁶ He was wooed by the Jan Sangh for some time and was even offered their presidency. Munshi had held many important public posts under the Congress government.

N.G. Ranga was fundamentally anti-industry in his attitude. He called himself a peasant-socialist, which in "concrete terms (means) a defence of peasant proprietorship as opposed to land nationalisation and it is incumbent to add, to feudal landlordism".¹⁷ Ranga was a Congressman for a fairly long time but like most Swatantrites left the Congress after the Nagpur Resolution.¹⁸ He represented the new class of prosperous landlords who formed the bastion of

16. Selig S. Harrison, India: The Dangerous Decade, Madras: Oxford University Press, 1968, p.313.

17. Quoted in A.R. Desai, Social Backgrounds of Indian Nationalism, Bombay: Popular Prakashan, p.173. (at the context of Champaran Struggle)

18. That was not yet final. Ranga found his way back to Congress when he was elected a Congress (I) M.P. in 1980 general elections.

rural conservatism which greatly benefitted from various governmental policies and the new agricultural schemes of the government since the start of the 'Green Revolution' in the sixties.

Minoo Masani, Sir Homi P. Mody and others on the other hand, were the modernist elements, representing the interests of industrial capital. They were secular in outlook and were anti-traditional. According to Minoo Masani, joint family system was a "remnant of the primitive tribal community" which "had its advantages but often led to family discord and encouraged idleness and dependence even among the able-bodied".¹⁹ He argued instead for the joint stock company, "an institution invented by the genius of man to increase industrial production",²⁰ and the concept of limited liability as a 'sacred principle', further marked him as a spokesman of liberal capitalism. All these spokesmen of the Swatantra had earlier remained Congressmen. The paranoid fear of crypto-communism inside Congress drove them out of it.

Among the feudal elements who joined the new party were Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur and Raja of Bilaspur

19. M.R. Masani, The Communist Party of India, New York: MacMillan, p. 15; quoted in Erdman, op. cit., p. 103.

20. Masani, quoted in Erdman (1967), op. cit., p. 104.

who was a sitting Rajya Sabha M.P. The upper caste landed interest was further strengthened by the presence of many zamindars, belonging to both Muslim and Hindu communities. V.P. Menon, retired ICS, tried to mobilize the support of princes for the Swatantra party. Yet his best efforts and contacts did not bring about the support of major princely houses, such as Dharbhanga, Mysore, Kashmir, Hyderabad, etc. Many Houses like Bikaner, Rajkot, Jasdan and Wankaner extended tacit support but were reluctant to associate publicly with the party. Swatantra's efforts were pre-empted by the Congress which promptly tried to accommodate and woo the other important houses. The Princes were sought after largely because of the social respect they commanded, which could be transformed into electoral support.

The party enjoyed some support among the middle classes mainly in Tamil Nadu and to a lesser extent in Andhra Pradesh, largely due to the presence of Rajaji and other distinguished leaders like K.M. Munshi. It was an important political event as its formation signified the existence of powerful forces opposed to the Congress, which it attracted. It posed a potential danger to the Congress in so far as the new party consolidated and reinforced the rightwing elements in Indian politics.

But ironically the party received hardly any support from the industrial bourgeoisie which could have helped the party immensely. Although the Swatantra party was originally initiated by the exponents of free enterprise, the support from industrialists and business was lukewarm. Some industrialists no doubt sympathised with Swatantra party and were even willing to support the party. But the number who openly identified with the party was small, because the majority of industrialists by and large found the Congress more agreeable, though some sections of the industrial bourgeoisie represented by Masani and others were opposed to the Congress. The Nagpur Resolution and the Second Plan and the growing influence of leftwing inside the Congress seemed ominous to them.²¹ Unlike the majority in trade and industry, they found the threat of collectivization real and considered the acquiescence of people in general to these proposals as naive. They thought it necessary to oppose and confront Congress.

21. The Second Plan was a radical departure from the First Plan. Government initiative in industry was assured. Ceiling was proposed on land and it was emphasised that cooperative principle to agriculture be extended. Important at this context, Nehru had solicited help from economists like Oscar Lange (Poland) and Charles Bettelheim (France) known for their socialist leanings, to prepare the Plan.

It is not difficult to explain why the industrial bourgeoisie did not support the Swatantra party. After all the Congress promoted and encouraged industrialisation and private enterprise. It took the initiative in high-risk-low-profit-yielding ventures with long gestation periods. In fact it laid the foundation for the development of capitalism in India. The private industry greatly benefitted from these efforts.

On the other hand, the agrarian policies, particularly, land reform and its half-hearted implementation had no doubt threatened feudalism to a certain extent, by creating a powerful class of rich landholders, with the potential of developing capitalism in agriculture. This section skirted land legislations and flourished due to the introduction of modern technological and other impetus into agriculture.

In effect (the Congress never really posed any serious danger to the interests of business and landed groups, whereas the Swatantra, through its strident advocacy of free enterprise, lacked the legitimacy which the Congress commanded. The Congress by reiterating its adherence to the ideals of 'socialism' made it extremely difficult for an explicitly rightist party to appear respectable and that much more

difficult to survive.²²

Thus, for the majority of Indian business there was no need to shift their support because even a cursory glance at the economic policies of the Congress reveals the manifold privileges and protections extended to business groups by successive Congress governments. Private industry expanded, as is evident in the galloping profits of big business houses and steady expansion of the areas under their investment and control. Majority of industrialists recognised that by

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22. A pronouncedly authentic work, and most authoritative, Erdman (1967) expertly documents Swatantra party's history. To him, a political party is not the creation by economic classes rather elements and individuals. (individual accentricity included.) He maintains, various conservative elements in the new society, which were latently very powerful, were subdued because they, i.e. princes, industrialists, etc., were afraid of the Congress reprisal, to overtly come out against it. He identifies the Swatantra as the reaction of the totality of the industrial bourgeoisie, feudal landholders and rich landed interests and other elements. Since he writes during 1966-67, he does not have to explain the eventual disintegration of the party, which in any case he would have found very difficult to rationalise given the kind of hypothesis he had because such a characterization would have endowed the new party with formidable social base. He, if not, thoroughly sympathetic to the Swatantra party is neutral and even appreciated its emergence as a possible alternative to the one party hegemony of the Congress. For details, see Howard L. Erdman, Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism, London: Cambridge University (Cambridge University, South Asian Studies), 1967. Another treatment is by H.D. Malaviya, where he is more concerned with the landed interest fighting back Congress socialism, which he treats as genuine albeit with some minor opposition from rightwing inside the Congress. He reasons the lack of efficient implementation, structural problems, bureaucratic disinterest etc., as the factors for the failure of Congress policies. For details, see H.D. Malaviya, The Danger of Right Reaction, a Socialist Congressmen Publication, New Delhi, 1965.

fighting Congress they would objectively harm themselves. Thus, G.D. Birla, the doyen of Indian industry in a speech before the 1967 General elections, warned the business community against the dangers of trying to break or weaken the Congress party. He said:

"I can tell you from my political experience there is not the slightest chance (for) any Swatantra party or Jan Sangh or any other party to come into power to replace the Congress. You can break the Congress. You can weaken it, but it is not going to help. You will be replacing this government by Communist (Sic) to cut your throat. Do not make that mistake. Therefore, I tell you that there is no party in this country except the Congress which can give stability. It is a question of self-interest... Therefore, I say that with faults I support the Congress. Because there is no other alternative... Therefore, for God's sake, forget about breaking the Congress. Because there is no other party which can help you".²³

Nationalization or the threat of nationalization was a major issue raised by the Swatantra in the tirade against the Congress. But it posed no serious threat to big industry, for whom "threat of nationalization was a Red-Herring" as the Federation of British Industry in its report on investment opportunities in India stated. It conceded that the situation

23. Stanley A. Kochanek, Business and Politics in India, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1974, pp.36-37; quoted from G.L. Nanda, et. al., Government and Business (Text of speeches delivered at Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, 10 April 1965), pp.8-9.

was not "inordinately oppressive".²⁴ Because after all Indian planning was gravely limited in its purpose. The industrial policy resolutions of 1948 "among its central features", provided an "explicit rejection of nationalization of existing private enterprises for a period of ten years".²⁵

Context?

Similarly, government was not opposed to private sector. In fact, it encouraged the private sector and gradually increased their sphere of investment. Heavy industry was taken up by the public sector "because even if given a chance, private sector would not have had the funds to do so".²⁶ There was little scope of friction between public and private sector because of the clearly demarcated sphere of investment of two sectors. Public sector, for example, entered field of high risk capital investment with long gestation periods, while the private sector was free to invest in the rest.²⁷

24. Quoted in Erdman, op. cit.

25. Jagdish N. Bhagwati & Padma Desai, Indian Planning for Industrialization: Industrialization and Trade policies since 1951, Oxford University Press, London, 1970, p.141.

26. Ibid., p.143.

27. Prabhat Patnaik, "Industrial development in India since Independence", Social Scientist, vol.7, No.11, June 1979, p.5.

In spite of this, some sections of industry found it difficult to reconcile to public sector. However, the majority of business recognized the usefulness of a mixed economy. This fact was noted by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce (FICCI), in 1964, when it agreed that,

"The real stimulus to industry was received by the emergence of a strong National Government at the Centre with the objective of rapid industrialization of the economy... In the planning process which is the mechanism through which (the social) the objectives are to be obtained, the public and private sectors are conceived not as two separate entities but as two parts of a single organism each contributing to and deriving strength from the development of the other".²⁸

In other policy spheres, significant help was extended to the private sector. First, extensive protection was granted to the up and coming industries by employment of stiff tariff against import. Second, agencies were established and financed by government to fulfil the capital requirement of the private industry. To ensure that private investment "did not suffer from a lack of long-term funds, which it might have owing to the narrowness of the long-term capital market, a series of specialised financial institutions were set up, which with the exception of the life Insurance Corporation and the Unit Trust of India, obtained the funds

28. Quoted in E.M.S. Namboodripad, Indian Planning in Crisis, Chintha Publishers, Trivandrum, 1974, p.70.

from governmental sources and rationed these out at low rates of interest".²⁹

Another feature of capitalist development was that, financing was largely borne by indirect taxes, foreign aid and deficit financing. Direct tax was not resorted to, because it would affect the investment potential of the private business. The share of indirect tax increased from 61.9 percent in 1955-56 to 70.7 percent in 1965-66 in the overall tax revenue.³⁰

Broadly speaking, industrial expansion was sought "not in a radical egalitarian shift in the pattern of asset and in income distribution but by perpetuating the existing pattern, of asset ownership, lending a 'top heavy' character to the industrialization in India, which was perpetuated and reproduced over time".³¹ This led to growth of monopoly and strengthening of private sector. The share of their assets had increased, as also their assets. (See Table-2.1)

Monopolistic type development was reflected in the pattern of interlocking directorship. For instance,

29. Prabhat Patnaik, op. cit., p.6.

30. Ibid., p.6.

31. Prabhat Patnaik, op. cit., p.6.

TABLE 2.1 : COMPARATIVE ASSETS AND SHARE OF TWENTY BIG HOUSES (1964-1976)

House	Assets 1964	Assets 1976	Increase in Assets	% Share of the House in total expansion	% increase in 13 years
1. Birla	292.7	977.63	681.91	20.92	232.96
2. Tata	417.72	980.77	563.05	17.27	134.79
3. Mafatlal	45.91	256.54	210.63	6.76	438.79
4. J.K. Singhania	60.10	241.23	181.13	5.56	301.38
5. I.C.I.	36.89	198.99	162.10	4.97	439.41
6. Kirlosker	19.12	152.47	133.35	4.09	697.44
7. Thaper	71.90	202.24	130.34	4.00	191.28
8. Scindia	46.96	177.08	130.12	3.99	277.08
9. Sriram (DCM)	54.68	171.70	117.02	3.59	214.01
10. Bangur	77.91	195.33	117.42	3.60	150.71
11. Modi	11.28	117.79	106.51	3.27	944.23
12. Mahindra & Mahindra	20.12	126.42	106.30	3.26	528.33
13. Khaitan	13.62	100.22	86.60	2.66	635.82
14. T.V.S.	21.87	105.78	83.91	2.57	383.69
15. A.C.C.	77.36	160.21	82.85	2.54	107.10
16. Bajaj	21.14	101.51	80.37	2.47	380.18
17. Kastur Bai & Lal Bai	33.94	109.62	75.69	2.32	223.01
18. Walchand	55.17	129.42	74.25	2.26	134.58
19. Sarabhai	43.16	116.73	73.57	1.93	170.46
20. M. Magar	50.34	113.35	63.01		125.17
Total	1471.91	4732.04	3260.13	100.00	221.49

Data for 1964 from the Monopolis Inquiry Commission Report and for 1976 from Company Department.

Source: S.K. Goyal, Monopoly Capital and Public Policy: Business and Economic Power, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1976, p.57.

546 top businessmen held 917 Directorship in 117 big companies and 4,174 Directorship on the boards of 1905 companies.³²

In certain sectors like luxury consumer goods, automobiles, newspapers and banks the monopolies had exclusive control.³³

This pattern of development resulted in a rapid growth of capitalism as well as control over the state by the corporate sector. The smallscale industries which were hailed as socialist and anti-monopoly helped immensely the development of new groups of industrial entrepreneurs who increasingly used modern technology. They in turn supported the big bourgeoisie and became its social base. With the broadening of social base the big bourgeoisie had acquired more ideological ammunition against any possible threat from the leftwing in the Congress party. Therefore, in the context of a reciprocal relationship prevailing between the industry and Congress, it became rather hard for industrialists to support Swatantra party.

32. The figures are quoted in H.D. Malaviya, The Danger of Right Reaction, A Socialist Congressmen Publication, New Delhi, 1965, pp.71-106.

33. The monopolies' control of banking sector specifically can be highlighted in former Governor General of RBI, H.V.R. Iyengar's words: "One of the structural features of Indian banking is thus economic concentration of power which in some cases is enormous in relation to the capital employed. We come across cases in which a family or group has the controlling interest in the banks". (Statesman, 1 September 1960.)

Land Reforms

In the sphere of agrarian relations the task after Independence was to affect real changes in the system of landholding. The landlordism which was a universal feature and the feudal possession of land, more specifically in former princely areas, were attempted to be abolished by legislations. The legislations themselves were by no means revolutionary in their intent since the ruling elite itself was largely drawn from the landowning classes and most of the political parties dependent on these powerful agrarian interest for electoral support. The laws again were not foolproof. The loopholes were cleverly exploited by interested sections. Coupled to it was the problem of slack implementation of land reform measures. All in all changes were very superficial. Yet this resulted in capitalist development in agriculture, the rural rich benefitting from various state schemes; a development which the government clearly seemed to prefer.

No less than a Land Reforms Commission Report states:

"Enactment of progressive measures and land reforms and their efficient implementation call for hard political decision and effective political support, direction and control. In the context of socio-economic conditions prevailing in the rural areas in the country, no tangible progress can be expected in the field of land reform, in the absence of requisite political will. The sad truth is this crucial factor

has been wanting. The lack of political will is amply demonstrated by large gaps between law and its implementation. In no sphere of public activity in our country, has the hiatus between precept and practice...been as great as in the domain of land reforms... Considering the character of the political power structure obtaining, it was only natural that required political will was not forthcoming".³⁴

For the rich peasantry which is the product of agrarian capitalism, land was a source of profit. While they have consolidated their position, they have increasingly used their new economic power to subordinate the oppressed sections. The primordial ties are being replaced and bonds are being established on economic relationship. Links are established between rural rich and urban foodgrain traders and hoarders in mandis. All these sections have indulged in highly profitable speculation in foodgrain and other crops. Yet, the whole countryside was not entirely transformed by capitalist farming. The remnants of feudalism formed the base of the right reaction in India. In the hinterland generally high caste feudal lords wielded enormous power. They realised the tremendous scope for commercialised agriculture and were slowly taking to new technology and modern methods.

34. Correspondent, "Land Reform is dead, Long Live Land Reform", Economic & Political Weekly, vol.VIII, No.20, 19 May 1973, p.894; quoted from P.S. Appu (Chairman of Land Reforms Commission), Report of the Task Force on Agrarian Relations.

It was this section which was increasingly uncomfortable with ceiling and the Nagpur Resolution on joint cooperatives.

The enormous socio-economic wealth the princes wielded were not altogether eliminated. The princes were given a number of privileges and liberal compensation, in a spirit of give and take. Apart from the princes the smaller royal houses and feudal landed gentry who enjoyed immense social prestige, power and acceptance as new leaders in the countryside, comparable concessions were extended. The greatest landholders in the land, they too benefitted from the laxity in land reforms and wisely diversified their investment and had become a part of trade and industry.

All political parties of right, and Congress specially, realised their electoral potential and were not averse to recruiting princes. But, where an organized group of this class was present inside a geographical unity they tried to pool their strength and formed independent parties, as in Orissa and Rajasthan. However, forming a national party was practically impossible, because the national movement eroded their strength and legitimacy. But in pockets they were powerful and they created antagonistic regional parties against the Congress.³⁵

35. The Congress party's relentless struggle to abolish the States and to affect the merger had irked the princes a lot. Most of them nursed grievance against it. Whenever possible they raised their banner to fight the Congress. They were immensely successful in Orissa. This has been discussed in a slightly different context by Erdman, op. cit., pp. 22-28.

Sentence is incomplete

As would seem evident from the foregoing discussion, it was the feudal elements, the aristocracy and other conservative forces, which greatly feared 'collectivization' and supported the idea of a conservative party. If to some section of the industry, a logical corrolary of 'collectivized agriculture' was a wholesale nationalization of the private capital, this concern was not shared by a large majority of their colleagues in industry. As a result, the Swatantra party ended up more concerned with protecting the propertied in rural areas.

Ideology of the Swatantra party

The Swatantra party advocated the free enterprise model of economic development as an alternative to the Congress model. It opposed planning, public sector and state intervention in the field of economic development. In particular, the party attacked collective farming. To them it was a virtual denial of freedom to own, dispose of and enjoy private property. Masani voiced the concern in the following words:

"The collective farming has nothing to do with socialism. That system (the Soviet-Chinese model) has been so devised so that the greatest amounts of surplus value or surplus grain can be squeezed out of the peasantry for the greater glory of the dictatorship, its military machine and for the forces and process of industrialization which is being erected on the back of groaning peasantry

of Russia and China".³⁶

The Swatantra party did not support the principle of land-ceiling and redistribution of land to the tillers. It opposed any legislation which would restrict the quantum of land in possession of individual farmers. In its view such artificial limitations on personal possession were constraints on productivity.³⁷ The Swatantra party stood for the unquestioned security of ownership and highly remunerative and competitive prices for agricultural products. However, it wanted no state intervention in procurement, sale, movements or pricing of foodgrains as it was considered undesirable. The party vehemently opposed the 'Nagpur Resolution' which envisaged ceiling on landholdings. State trading in foodgrains and the establishment of service co-operatives over a period of three years with ultimate intention of converting them into 'voluntary service-cooperatives'.

With regard to cooperatives the party stated explicitly that "it does not believe that by joining cooperative farming food production will be increased... The party believes in every form of genuine cooperative effort, such as, service-

36. Masani, Congress Misrule and the Swatantra Alternative, p.69.

37. For a detailed exposition of Swatantra Ideology, see N. Dandekar, "Swatantra", Seminar, No.89, 1967, pp.28-33.

cooperatives, industry-cooperatives, and cooperative farms, but not as means of collectivization".³⁸

The party alleged that the Congress misrule had resulted in grave economic ills. These were reflected in enormous taxation, abnormal deficit financing and foreign loans. Instead of giving up the 'bureaucratic mismanagement of economy', the party complained, the Congress was indulging in self-defeating dangerous socialist manoeuvrings. Such a course of action would seriously compromise with the individuality of the farmers which would reduce the peasants into landless bonded labourers.

Industry

In the spheres of industry also it was opposed to controls. The party argued such restraints would seriously hamper savings, investment and capital formation in private sector. It opposed the public sector on grounds of productivity and, therefore, demanded its transfer^{to} the private sector.

The party's ideological position was influenced by neo-liberal schools of thought represented by economists

38. See Election Manifesto, Swatantra Party, 1962, p.7.

like Hayek. In its 1962 election Manifesto Swatantra echoed his words that "the business of the state is not business but governance".

To the Swatantra, the government which governs the least was the best. Freedom of the individual was demanded, because the economic and political fundamentals of liberal capitalism, directly expounded attracted meagre following. Yet in a class society unrestrained freedom of the individual only amounted to liberty of exploitation by the privileged class. Thus, on the one hand, 'laissez faire' was not accepted, on the other hand, Masani said, "State should be for individual and not the individual for the state".³⁹ Prosperity could come, "...only when the creative potential of individual endeavour and enterprise is released, developed and harnessed for the common good, within the restraining framework of government, can there be significant moral and material progress".⁴⁰

The Swatantra party^t said it was not opposed to planning as such, but planning should be concerned with infrastructure

39. Minoos Masani, Party Politics in India, Laski Institute, Ahmedabad, 1962, p.10.

40. Minoos Masani, Why Swatantra?, Popular Election Guides, Bombay, 1967, p.33.

only. It conceded that some sort of a planning was indeed necessary but it objected to coercive planning of the Soviet type. The Monnet Plan in France or the National Economic development Council in Great Britain, was preferred by the Swatantra party. In other words, it favoured western capitalism and all that was necessary for its growth in India.⁴¹

It argued that social justice and welfare can be served better through Gandhi's doctrine of Trusteeship. It advocated a moralist, spiritual politics which would be in accordance with the religious canons.⁴² Force and compulsion should be completely done away with in the economic sphere. In its view Congress rule, which it characterized as Statism had resulted in 'Licence permit, quota rule'. Swatantra promised that once it came to power it would lift all restrictions on the industrialists. The party's central argument was that

41. The Swatantra Party supported the American Foreign Policy. It ridiculed India's condemnation of American intervention in Vietnam. For a fuller exposition of Swatantra's views on Foreign Policy, look in A.K. Sen, "Swatantra's Foreign Policy", Swarajya, vol.12, No.12, 22 July 1967. This was amply reciprocated by American media, which hailed it as a progressive liberal party. See "For Nehru: An Opposition", Life, 16 March 1960 (Editorial).

42. The party's approach was strictly secular, though naturally the party was dominated by upper class Kshatriya Hindus. This marked an important difference between the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra. The party called for equality of all, without distinction of religion, caste, occupation, etc. ✓

once, the volume of production is increased, it would result in greater benefit to the whole population.

However, as has been maintained, the Swatantra's ideological position was a reflection of the irrational fears of the big bourgeoisie which was not justified by subsequent events. Congress equivocation over the Nagpur Resolution no doubt substantially eroded the conservative appeal of the Swatantra party as it was not particularly useful to the landed elements. In view of the dilemma faced by the industrialists they were not enthusiastic about the Swatantra party. Thus the new organization could not capture much support in breaking the hegemony of the Congress.

The party bereft of the big bourgeois support tried to secure the support of rich and influential people, mostly the princes. This did pay quick dividend but spelt disaster in the long run. The financiers wanted their ablest spokesman like Masani and Dandekar to go to Parliament. This could not happen because these modernists lacked actual mass support. They were dependent on the princes for the safe constituencies and the princes who were solidly entrenched in their enclaves were in no mood to oblige the party or its stalwarts.

Performance of the Swatantra Party

The Swatantra party secured 8 percent of votes in the

1962 General Election contested by the party. It was the third largest party in the Parliament and the principal opposition party after the split in the Communist Party in 1964. It came second as far as its showing in the State Assembly Elections were concerned.

Its strategy in 1962, election was 'to be in a position to provide an alternative to Congress in the Centre and provide best possible representation in assemblies'. Thus, it put up 1038 candidates for the State Assembly and 170 for the Lok Sabha elections. For a party with so many limitations, it did rather well. Its assembly seats were 207 as against 153 of the Communists, 149 of the PSP and 115 of the Jan Sangh. It became the principal opposition in four States, Bihar (50), Rajasthan (36), Orissa (36) and Gujarat (26).

For the Lok Sabha it polled about 9 percent of the total votes. The Swatantra party obtained 25 percent of the valid votes in Gujarat, 18.21 percent in Bihar, 18.10 percent in Rajasthan and 18.77 percent in Orissa. (For Swatantra's position in Lok Sabha, see Table 2.2) It bagged 25 seats for the Lok Sabha and 11 seats for the Rajya Sabha, remarkably most of the former came from the rural areas.

TABLE 2.2: PARTY POSITION IN LOK SABHA

Political Parties	1952		1957		1961		1967		1971	
	Seats cont-ested	Seats Won	Seats cont-ested	Seats won	Seats cont-ested	Seats won	Seats cont-ested	Seats won	Seats cont-ested	Seats won
C.P.I.	4	1	5	1	2	-	3	-	3	1
C.P.M.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-
Congress	16	11	20	7	20	14	20	6	19	15
K.M.P.	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-
Jan Sangh	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-
P.S.P.	-	-	6	2	5	1	5	4	6	-
Socialist	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
S.S.P.	-	-	-	-	3	1	2	1	2	-
Swatantra Ganatantra	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	8	13	3
Parishad	12	5	15	7	10	4	-	-	-	-
Jharkhand	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-
Utkal										
Congress	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	1
Congress (O)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-
Independence	12	2	11	3	8	-	14	1	9	-

Election Office Record - Taken from Mohanty & Mishra (Table 12.3) in Iqbal Narain (ed.), State Politics in India, Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1976, p.251.

Various political events like China's attack, Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964, the Indo-Pak war in 1965 and the devaluation of Indian currency in 1966 resulted in the crystallization of popular discontent against the Congress which gave the Swatantra an opportunity to assert its presence more strongly in 1967.

In 1967, it had the advantage of electoral understanding with the Jan Sangh in Rajasthan and with the Jana Congress in Orissa. It fielded 978 candidates for the state assembly and secured 259 seats in 12 states against 207 in 1962 from 9 states.⁴³ In U.P., Bihar and Punjab, Swatantra party fared poorly. In Bihar, because the Raja of Rambagh had withdrawn support from the Swatantra, it could secure only three seats, compared to the 50 seats in the 1962 elections. But the overall result was satisfactory. The party formed the Government in Orissa and became the main opposition in Rajasthan and Gujarat. It showed modest increase in strength in Mysore and Madras. The party made some headway in other southern states too. Interestingly there were more industrialists this time in its parliament wing. It showed that for some of these sections, the party looked more relevant, if

43. P.D. Sharma, "Diagnostic appraisal of the Swatantra Party in Indian Politics 1959-74", Indian Journal of Political Science, vol.40, No.3, September 1979, p.453.

only for a short time.

The party fared better in the Lok Sabha elections. This showed it was concentrating its effort and means for the Lok Sabha, obviously as it thought its economic policies could be better executed if it came to power at the Centre.

But the election also showed that it had not become a major factor in Indian politics, as its support was confined to those areas where ex-princes and local notables held sway. The party did not build an efficient organization, a fact admitted by Minoo Masani, who observed that, "while the Swatantra party had made good progress politically, I am dissatisfied with the progress made on the organizational front. We have excellent manifesto, excellent policies, but still lack the organizational efficiency, that should accompany this".⁴⁴

The rather dismal performance of the Swatantra party in the mid-term poll of state assemblies in 1969 and in 1971 and 1972 can attribute the 1967's success, more to the anti-Congress avalanche which was sweeping at the time, than to its own effective strength. In 1969 mid-term polls held in some states, it contested in 155 seats, won 11, lost

44. The Hindustan Times, 13 September 1967.

deposits in 120 instances, and secured only 1.15 percent of votes polled.

The party in its mid-term Report of November 1969 observed that there was "an inadequate appreciation on the part of the party's own rank and file and middle leadership of the principles and policies particularly when they ran counter to pervading emotional attitude".⁴⁵

In 1971, it contested in 58 Lok Sabha constituencies, and could win in 8 only as compared to 44 in 1967 and got 3.08 percent of popular votes as against 8.08 percent in 1967.

After 1969 split, Mrs. Gandhi, triumphant from her battle with the Syndicate, nationalised the major private sector banks, abolished the privy-purse granted to the princes, and gained a creditable victory over Pakistan in 1971. She rode on the waves of populism in 1972 elections, by giving the attractive slogan of 'Garibi Hatao'. The support base of all rightwing as well as 'centrist' parties was substantially eroded.

In 1972 once again the Swatantra party as well other rightwing parties perceived another major threat from the leftwing in Congress. And there was increased skepticism

45. Quoted in P.D. Sharma, op. cit., p.435.

about the viability of independent existence among them. Piloo Mody of Swatantra party, delivering his presidential address at the Sixth National Convention of the Party at Madras (19 April, 1973), complained, "The greatest difficulty I have encountered building the party has been the limited thinking of our own members. Many of them are tired of fighting, others take what described as a practical view and some want to talk in terms of accepting reality and discussing possibility".⁴⁶

Finally, the leaders of seven rightwing parties met in Delhi in the 3rd week of July and agreed to create a new party. The seven parties and their representatives were - Charan Singh (BKD), R.N. Singh Deo (Swatantra), Biju Patnaik (Utkala Congress), Raj Narayan (SSP), Ram Subhag Singh (Bharatiya Khetihar Sangh), Balraj Madhok (Lok Tantrik Dal) and Chand Ram (Harijan Sangharsh Samiti). The Muslim League was optimistic of joining it.⁴⁷ The DMK, Bishal Haryana Parishad, Arya Sabha and the Akali Dal evinced interest but did not join. Finally, the Bharatiya Lok Dal was formed.

46. Piloo Mody, Only Swatantra Can Do It, Swatantra Party Publication, Bombay, 1973, pp.12-13.

47. "Rightist Gamble", Link, vol.16, No.37, p.12.

The urgency revealed in the unity efforts of the disparate rightwing parties does not, however, compare with the situation obtaining in 1959 where similar polarising responses had created the Swatantra party as a rightwing challenge to Congress. In the meantime the Congress had effectively contained opposition and emerged through the decisive decade from 1964 to 1974 (Nehru's death to the formation of BLD) stronger, its hegemony more foolproof. The 1974 efforts provide a spectacle of egoist leaders in vain bid to unite and create horror for the rightwing elements, to snatch their patronage to Congress.

This weakened the right wing parties

Evidently the rightwing political parties in India lacked the strength to fight the Congress. It was indicated in this chapter that the Congress party had accommodated in varying degrees various rightwing interests and ideological strands. The legacy of independence movement rendered the Congress very powerful. As a national party, the Congress party has aligned with influential sections in all the regions and has grown in strength. The rural agrarian interest, itself accommodated in the Congress, never faced with any serious threat; notwithstanding the socialistic rhetoric of the party. The ideology of 'socialism' has been a big legitimising factor garnering for its popular acceptance. In this context, it is not difficult to perceive the reasons for the

failure of rightwing parties contesting for support.

Though 1959 'Nagpur Resolution' did provide a threat to the landowning class the period following it did not see the implementation of the scheme. To industry the threat was minimal from the same resolution. In this sense the FFE was even less representative of the private industry's concern than AIAF was of landowners. The concern of the Swatantra party was not shared by those sections for whom the new party was created. The princes too did not join the party in a big way; most of the bigger princes shying away from the new organisation. The middle class was uncomfortable with overtly free-enterprise ideology. Swatantra party's uncompromising position on nationalization, landreform and foreign policy was ^{not} attractive for the supporters of capitalist mode of development. The Congress party policies; excepting occasional pronouncements, did not seem to them very harmful. They were confident of their strength in checking the so-called 'left tide' inside and outside the Congress.

Lack of support from financially powerful sections weakened the Swatantra party severely. However, it did cost it ideologically too. Finding it economic ideals too academic and staid for the average public, it came down from its original position of modern and secular politics, to taking recourse to conventional issues and counting the

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that?

princes. Some princes joined the new party. Ironically the presence of few princes lent it the image of a feudal party, whereas the Congress had been accommodating many more princes never drawing the same criticism. The princely character did little help the Swatantra party, except in Orissa; in fact it further distanced it from private industry. The Swatantra party survived for 15 years until 1974.

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Chapter III

SOCIO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF
THE GANATANTRA PARISHAD

Until recently Congress party in Orissa was not a dominant political force. In fact, it faced a serious threat from regional forces which were substantial enough to organize a regional alternative to it. Ganatantra Parishad and later Swatantra party provided a formidable regional challenge to the Congress forces in Orissa. Ganatantra Parishad's political support was confined to western Orissa. The political success of Ganatantra Parishad was possible largely because of the dissimilar political configurations in the two major sub-regions namely Western and Coastal Orissa.¹

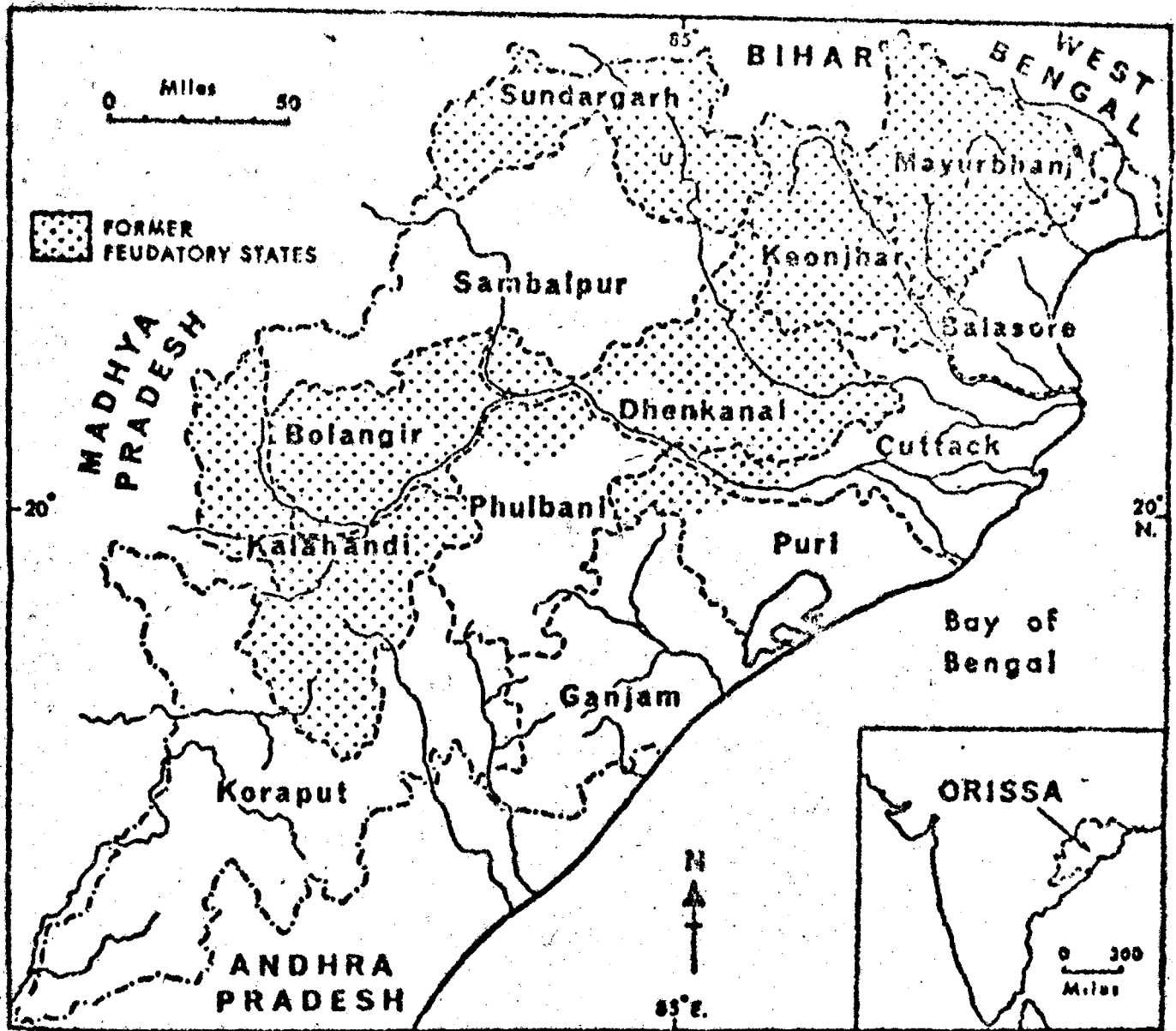
To understand this problem we need to know the history of the region, the social forces which operate in these areas and the differences in elite structure caused by the nature and background of both the regions. The modern districts of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and the Anugul area (part of Dhenkanal) formed a division of Bihar and Orissa under the British India till 1936, and subsequently were

1. Both the regions, however, are roughly equal in size. Because of this factor neither of them stood the prospect of being overwhelmed or even otherwise influenced by the other. The number of constituencies in both the regions being roughly equal, in the early phases of post-Independent politics in Orissa, the competition to capture power was more acute between different political forces which represented both the regions.

included in the province of Orissa. The western districts with minor variations constituted the Khasmahal or the ex-feudatary states in colonial India.² (See the Map of Orissa.)

It is on these lines that the modern Orissa still remains divided in socio-cultural terms. The modern districts of Bolangir, Kalahandi, Sundargarh and Sambalpur form the core of western Orissa.³

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2. The ex-princely state of Sambalpur was annexed to British India in 1849 and was attached with central provinces. Persistent Oriya nationalist demand succeeded in transferring it to Orissa-Bihar province as the fourth district of Orissa. Placed in western Orissa this district today forms its core, yet was under marginal control of the GP/Swatantra apparently because the princes could not extend its influence, for the ruling house in the district had disintegrated long ago. For the history of founding of these tiny states in these inaccessible tribal hinterland, refer to J. Campbell, Narrative of Operations in Hill tracts of Orissa for the suppression of Human Sacrifice and Infanticide, Hurst and Blackett, London, 1865. Also W.W. Hunter, Orissa, Smith, Elder and Co., London, 1972. And for some modern reference, see F.G. Bailey, Caste and the Economic Frontier, Manchester University, 1975, p.178; and J. Pathy, Political Elite in Orissa, Ph.D. thesis, JNU, New Delhi, 1978, pp.198-201.
 3. The northern districts of Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar and southern district of Koraput are placed geographically and politically at the fringes of modern Orissa and are relatively unimportant. But on no account could they ever be lodged with the coastal districts, whereas the reverse could possibly be true on occasions, should one insist on a bipolar division. Because while the Eastern Orissa districts are comparatively well-developed the other districts suffer from economic backwardness. The demographic composition of the western and the fringe districts reflect a high tribal percentage unlike the coastal part. The folk hinterland culture of ethnic tribes and the original settlers could well be contrasted with the traditional coastal milieu heavily influenced by the Jagannath Vakti-cult.



MAP 1. THE DISTRICTS OF ORISSA

(THE FORMER PRINCELY STATES' AREA BEING DOTTED.)

Source: F.G. Bailey, Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959, University of California Press, London, 1963, p.9.

Origin of the Garjats

The British conquest of Orissa during the Second Maratha War during 1803 had brought the Garjats⁴ or the tributary Khasmahals into some kind of workable administrative relation with the coastal districts under the British administration. No policy of interference was pursued as far as the domestic policy of Garjat was concerned because they had entered into the subsidiary alliance with the British against the payment of fixed annuities.⁵

The retention of the feudatory states under British protection provided the princes with uninterrupted and untroubled long years of tenure. The arrangement created a highly exploitative feudal social structure. The personal

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4. The Garjats were the feudatory states. This has been interchangeably, used with ex-princely states or simply the 'states' in this study.
 5. From 18 in number in 1937, the number of the princely states were reduced to 14 when the small states of Banki & Anugul were confiscated. After the division of a state into two and finally when in 1905 seven Oriya speaking states attached to the central provinces were taken out, the number grew upto 24. In 1916 Saraikela and Kharswan were added to the charge of the political agent (since 1906), appointed under the Superintendent of tributary Khasmahal (since 1814), placed at Cuttack. In 1916 the Eastern States Agency, composing 26 states in western Orissa and 14 states in central provinces, was established, headquartered initially at Ranchi, later transferred to Calcutta, which continued till the Independence.

whims of the princes and the courtiers and the feudal intermediaries were the law of the land.

The consequences were a highly backward economy with lack of communication, educational facilities, and health amenities. These backward enclaves remained isolated from the mainstream of political development. The rising tide of National Movement was not an important factor in these erstwhile princely territories. In the major states like Bolangir and Kalahandi, the urban landed elements who were educated and professionally trained served in the royal administration. These classes were loyal to the king whose position was strengthened by the support of this class which was the most effective force in rural areas.

The small middle class organized movements against arbitrary princely administration. But these movements remained isolated and ineffective because they were not linked with the more widespread and influential Congress agitations in the nearby British Orissa province. The Oriya nationalist movement succeeded in creating the modern state of Orissa on 1 April 1936 after having successfully retrieved Ganjam, Koraput and Baliguda subdivision of Phulbani district from the Madras Presidency. Oriya nationalists demanded the abolition of the princely

administrations and their merger with the state of Orissa. The princes anticipating trouble from the Congress nationalists worked in different ways to forestall them. In spite of the fact that they have been rendered quite powerless by the British, their sovereignty was emphasised and efforts were made to create unity among brother princes of Chattisgarh and Orissa region.⁶

Movement for Merger

The first feeble attempt to mobilise the state's people against the unjust rule of the princes and link it to the wider national movement against the British rule was attempted in the creation of the Orissa State's People Conference, convened at Cuttack. The convention was presided by Bhubanananda Das.⁷

The second session of the states' Peoples Conference was held in 1937, presided by the Congress stalwart Pattabhi Sittaramaya. It demanded among other things the immediate

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6. To comprehend the helplessness of the rulers due to the dragnet control of Britishers and on coming waves of Independence, look at the copy of letter, sent from Maharaja of Dungarpur, dated 9 May 1946, in H.K. Mahatab, Beginning of an End, The Book Co. Ltd., Calcutta, 1949 (Appendix-I), pp.51-52.
 7. For details, see K.M. Patra, Orissa State Legislature and Freedom Struggle - 1912-1947, p.4.

Confusing

end to the illegal exactions like Rasad, Bethi and the Magan (different varieties of enforced labour by the States' people put in the feudal and princely lands during cultivation and hunting parties, constructions of roads, etc.). An Inquiry Committee was appointed to look into cases of atrocities in the princely states by the first Congress Government of 1937. It brought out shocking revelations of arbitrary functioning and exploitation and exaction of unpaid labour from the people.

Hareskrushna Mahatab, the Premier of Orissa in 1937, presided over another non-official Inquiry Committee which in its report made clear that the sovereignty of the princes was a myth. These tiny states were mere estates and for "political reasons", he maintained, "these had been bolstered up as 'states' by the British Government".⁸

The Committee Report in 1939 pleaded to put an end to these artificial divisions and recommended:

"In view of the inherent inability of the Orissa States to support popular enlightened administrations within their areas and in view of the inevitability of a strong and irresistible popular demand from the people of the state for right of self-government and self-determination... The acceptance of this recommendation will bring these states under the jurisdiction of autonomous provinces and the people

8. Mahatab, op. cit., p.8.

concerned will be enabled to join hands with their brethren in the provinces of Orissa in their attempt to solve the problems common to them all".⁹

To counteract the princely argument, historical facts were marshalled by the princes to prove that their possessions were in nature of mere zamindaris as against feudatories.¹⁰ Under the Maratha domination over Orissa, 'adaptation Sanads' were granted to them, i.e., Kalahandi in 1862, Bamra, Patna (Bolangir-Patna) and Sonepure in 1865, Rairakhol in 1866. But, the Congress pointed out, that these zamindaris were transferred from central provinces, to Orissa in 1805. It was argued since these areas were inaccessible because of mountainous terrain the zamindars became virtually independent. The Political Agent appointed by British made them sovereign princes in course of time. In pursuance of this policy the Government of India Act 1935 granted them all powers and separated them from the province of Orissa.

Praja Mandal movements supported ^{by} the Congress were organized against the princes. Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, a

9. Ibid., pp.8-9.

10. Biswanath Das ministry passed the 'Orissa Tenancy Act' which was to abolish the mutation fee, reduce interest rate on arrear rent and provide full transfer of occupancy holding to the tenants. This was opposed by the zamindars and the Viceroy rejected the Bill.

Congress leader of central Orissa, organised a very successful movement in the small states like Talcher and Nilgiri. But such movements did not make much headway in the bigger princely states like Bolangir-Patna and Kalahandi. These states were comparatively bigger and the princes could resist the Praja-mandalists intruding from Eastern Orissa. Secondly, these states were located in the remote Western extremities of the province.

Meanwhile, the Second World War broke out in 1939 which diverted Congress' attention from the demand of merger of these Garjats with the province of Orissa. During the following period certain important developments took place, which reflected that the princes were willing to fight the pro-mergerists. Their intentions were evident in the formation of a political party called the National party. Its founder the King of Parlakhemundi, who in effect was a feudal lord initiated the process of linking the feudal aristocracy of the southern areas of Orissa to the politics of Orissa. Independence was seen as imminent and it was evident that the National movement did not aim at a revolutionary transformation of social structure. The tone of negotiations between the states and the Congress and the latter's acceptance of conditions imposed by the British regarding the management of princely states bolstered the

confidence of the princes that their cause would not go by default. Out of such confidence was born the inclination to participate in the democratic politics.

In the first ever election in 1937, in the non-princely areas the Congress got 40 seats in a house of 60. But the Congress declined to form the ministry when the British Government refused to accede to conditions laid down by it. K.C. Gajapati Narayan Deo of the National party was sworn in on 1 April 1937 as the Premier. But the minority government fell on 19 July 1937 and the Congress government led by Biswanath Das was installed.

In 1946 the National party again formed the government albeit briefly. Harekrushna Mahatab in the elections of 1946 led the Congress to victory and took the initiative to affect the formal merger of the princely states with the province of Orissa, in the face of stiff opposition from the princes.

Princely Intransigence and the Merger

In 1945, an organisation called the Krushak Parishad was created by Kapila Nanda, Yudhister Mishra, Chintamani Rath and other pro-mergerists to mobilise mass opinion for the merger of the state of Bolangir-Patna with the province of Orissa. To counteract its influence another organisation

was founded by royalists like Nanda Kishore Mishra, Ram Prasad Mishra and Sunadhar Bag called Patna Praja Mandal in 1946. This organisation condemned the other organisation as outsiders and stooges of Congress.

In the meantime some of the rulers of Orissa and Chattisgarh (in central provinces) met at the Raj Kumar College at Raipur and formed the Federation of Eastern States Union which started functioning from August 1947. The purpose of the move was to create a separate state of all those states after the merger, which seemed inevitable. The area involved was considerable, and the princes tried to impress on the British government not to accede to Mahatab's demand for a merger.

In December 1947, the royalists in a shrewd move confabulated with Mahatab, the Chief Minister of Orissa. They broached the idea of creating two states, one of the province of Orissa and other of the princely states. The talks were kept secret. One of the leading royalist negotiator said in an interview that,

"Our purpose was to convince Mahatab of the soundness of our plan. We had proposed to create the Eastern States Union comprising 26 Oriya states and 13 Chattisgarhi states. So in effect, two Oriya states were to be created. But ultimately we would have merged our state with Orissa. In such an eventuality Orissa would have straight gained 13 ex-states belonging to the central province. To such a proposition the

Chattisgarhis were not particularly averse. Apart from that our (Garjat) and their (Eastern Orissa) system was totally different. They should have given us sometime to adjust with the new circumstances. We were suggesting such a mechanism, precisely to have a smooth transitional phase".¹¹

Mahatab disagreed with the move to form a separate state, while royalists in yet another move formed the organisation called the "Koshala Utkala Praja Parishad", in the Premier state of Bolangir-Patna, which opened up branches in all of western Orissa. (The western region is called Koshala.) This was done ostensibly to counteract the attempts by Congress and socialists to take over the land of the princes and the feudal-lords. In any case the land-grab movement was not very successful, "because of the overpowering awe with which the population, even the educated held towards the King".¹²

The princely groups also exploited the discontentment generated by the large scale acquisition of 'Parja' (peasant)

11. This information was given in an interview with Nanda Kishore Mishra, distinguished G.P./Swatantra leader and ex-speaker in Orissa Legislative Assembly 1967-74 (Bolangir, February 1982).

12. Surendranath Dwivedi (Veteran Socialist leader) informed in an interview that most intensive attempts at grabbing the princely land was made at Bolangir by him, in co-operation with local anti-royalists, notably Sarat Chandra Panigrahi. These movements failed because of the lack of organisation and the social respect the King commanded (Bhubaneswar, June 1981).

lands for the proposed Hirakud Dam Project in the district of Sambalpur.¹³ This was encouraged by the royalists to promote the idea of separation. It was argued if the proposed Eastern States Union was established and strengthened Sambalpur and Anugul would join it. In their attempts to attract Sambalpur, they emphasised Koshala unity.

In another interesting development the "political department (of the Eastern States Union) was planning to group together the Eastern States and join it with Hyderabad so that it would be a strong unit to withstand any kind of pressure from independent India".¹⁴ This was an unhealthy trend for those who wanted the integration of states with India. In view of these developments Mahatab urged the central leadership to take quick action. But the Congress could begin to change the structure of the states only after British departure from India. Even towards the end of the British Rule the political department of Central Government in pursuance of the overall British policy made attempts to

13. Mahatab, op. cit., p.24. In simultaneous moves the princes attempted to draw the district of Sambalpur, which is located in western region, but was a directly-administered area since 1854 when the King of Sambalpur died childless. They emphasised the Koshala unity.

14. Ibid., p.25.

return the power to the rulers of Nilgiri and Dhenkanal who were divested of all powers as a result of mal-administration.¹⁵

In the small state of Nilgiri the Congress Prajamandalists were attacked by the Raja-inspired tribal arsonists. Mahatab under instructions of the central leadership took charge of the state administration with the help of provincial police. This incident on 14 November 1947 convinced Patel and others that there would not be any violence in the event of a forcible takeover of the remaining princely states.

In December 1948, Sardar Patel with V.P. Menon and Mahatab invited the Orissa princes for the talks on merger. The conference began at Raj Bhawan at Cuttack with the 'B' and 'C' states and 'A' class states separately. A memorandum on behalf of the state government was circulated urging the states to sign the documents of merger.¹⁶ V.P. Menon says in the first ever merger talk in the country,¹⁷ the

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15. Refer copy of a note recorded by H.G. Todd, the resident to remove all restrictions on the power of the rulers, ibid. (Appendix-XXI), p.250.
 16. See, for Orissa Government's memorandum, ibid. (Appendix-XXVI), p.291.
 17. V.P. Menon, ret'd I.C.S., Secretary in the Home Ministry during Merger was taking a conservative stand regarding the merger. He suggested to Patel a system of joint control, leaving some administrative powers in the hands of the Princes. He later joined Swatantra Party.

proceeding was marked by "ruthless and high handed tackling of Sardar Vallab Bhai Patel".¹⁸ All the states except the state of Mayurbhanj immediately signed the 'Instrument of Accession' on 14 December 1948. The state of Mayurbhanj joined on 1 January 1949. Thus, 25 states joined the state of Orissa, necessitating a redrawing of the territory which now included 13 districts. As a result of merger the strength of the Legislative Assembly increased to 91 with 31 nominated members from the states.¹⁹

However, the Oriya States of Saraikela and Kharswan were temporarily given to Bihar for administrative convenience, as they did not have a common boundary with Orissa since the states of Mayurbhanj south to them was yet to merge with Orissa. However, the real reason was that there was a spate of tribal violence against Orissa government officials in these two states. Mahatab says that the royalists created problems in Saraikela and Kharswan. He writes that in the controversy between Bihar and Orissa as to where should these two states go, the princes thought "they would have the protection of

18. For details, see V.P. Menon, The Story of Integration of Indian States, Orient Longmans, Bombay, 1961, pp.144-66. For an excellent compilation of relevant documents, see Mahatab, op. cit.

19. The nomination of members by princes continued in the interim period till 1952 elections.

the Bihar Government against the vigilance of the Orissa Government".²⁰

For a while the princes considered merger a temporary arrangement. They hoped to undo this after independence. However, the central government at the behest of Mahatab explained the long term political and legal implications of the merger. The Governor General issued a notification on 1 August 1949 making it permanent.²¹ After a lull, the western part of the state was rocked by a series of tribal uprisings. It is during this period that the Ganatantra Parishad^{was} conceived.

The Tribal Uprising and the Birth of Ganatantra Parishad

After the merger in 1948 there was a serious tribal uprising in the northern areas, particularly in the district of Mayurbhanj. Later it spread to the western districts of Sambalpur and Sundargarh. The thrust of the agitation was primarily against merger of princely states with Orissa. The royalists mobilised the tribals on their side. The uprising provoked severe police action which left 14 dead

20. Mahatab, op. cit., p.32.

21. For the correspondence between the Government of Orissa and Centre during the merger, see ibid. (Appendix-XXVII), pp.296-301.

and many wounded. The police action in turn led to massive protest in the ex-princely areas.

Orissa government defended its action by arguing that,

"At the time of merger at the highest level there was a discernible effort to be conciliatory or at least to avoid vindictiveness. But at the same time the climate of 1948 was not suitable for gentleness and whoever showed recalcitrance were suppressed with heavy hands... The rulers of these states who were dreaming dreams of sovereignty after withdrawal of the British awoke from the hopelessness which had led them to merge. They misused their privileges and were joined by self-seekers whose ambition could not be fulfilled because of Congress in power, Freedom was unscrupulously used for subversive activities. Congress boldly suppressed such activities in Bamra, Mayurbhanj, Rourkela and later Hirakund. Naturally Congress was misrepresented... Subsequently Hon'ble member Mr. Ranjit Singh Bariha and others eased out the tension among Adivasis. Foundation of Nikhila Utkala Adivasi Congress, which gave birth to Jharkhand party was established..."²²

The Congress also alleged that the Kings fomented the troubles by instigating tribals and by,

"Extensive leaf-letting (which) urged the adivasis to rise and nullify the merger. Agitations started in Kalahandi, Bolangir and Bamra. The royalist demanded an Eastern State Union... Excited violence, which led to mob lawlessness, and firing at Deogarh on 26 July 1948".²³

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22. Orissa 1950-51, Publication Department, Government of Orissa (Bhubaneswar), 1951, pp.4-5.
23. Anonymous respondent quoted in F.G. Bailey, Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1970.p.201

Supporters of the princely cause such as Nanda Kishore Mishra of Ganatantra Parishad and later of the Swatantra party denied these charges in an interview. He said, the uprising was "due to certain factors for which the Congress was responsible. After merger there was instant price rise. The benevolent personal administration of the princes was replaced by an outsider bureaucratic set up. Too many restrictions were imposed upon the tribals in their use of forests. Earlier in Bolangir state there was elaborate and very sympathetic arrangement for this. Building material and firewood requirements were provided in cheap rates. The new laws were too complicated and harsh. So the tribals spontaneously rose against the government".²⁴

However, these factors are not sufficient for a prolonged and spontaneous uprising involving a large number of tribals, which sustained itself for quite sometime. In other words the uprising could not have been sustained without the active help and cooperation of the princely group. For instance, 'Bhalu Kandh' a young tribal was killed by police action which prompted royalists to rush to the place and organised public opinion against police action. Meetings were immediately held in which Congress was accused

24. N.K. Mishra, Interview.

of annihilating the tribals. Such propaganda had immense emotional appeal, which the princely groups tried to mobilise in their favour. They sought to translate these sentiments into political opinion against the Congress party and government. In pursuit of these objectives, representatives of various ex-states discussed ways of fighting the Congress. At this juncture the idea of forming the Ganatantra Parishad was mooted.

In the first week of January 1950, the 'Koshala Utkala Praja Parishad' met at Bolangir. The meeting was attended by zamindars, princes and lawyers, who authorized Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo, the Maharaja of Bolangir-Patna to meet Jawaharlal Nehru and express their unhappiness at what they perceived was injustice done to the princely states. R.N. Singh Deo went to New Delhi to apprise Nehru of the police atrocities and to demand an inquiry into the police brutalities. "But inspite of his best efforts for two months he could not meet Nehru and came back utterly dejected", bemoaned N.K. Mishra.²⁵

In the premier state of Bolangir, 'Patna Dipika', a taboloid which came out at the behest of the royalists,

25. Ibid.

created intense public feeling against the Congress.²⁶

People went and met the king and requested him to form an anti-Congress party.²⁷ The police retaliation which was in most cases excessive upset the supporters of the anti-merger movement. Harihar Patel, one of the founder member of Ganatantra Parishad complained, "we were prosecuted because of our democratic protest against police action. We knew it would be like that if we did not show our strength".²⁸

Disappointed by the Congress response the consensus was to form a political party which would fight for the cause of western Orissa. The group agreed that "It was within everybody's democratic right to take certain political decisions such as living in a state of one's own choice and creating a political party to represent oneself".²⁹

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26. The influence of the Patna-Dipika as the only newspaper in the region, must have been enormous since it was published by the Bolangir Durbar. Many westerners still retain vivid memory of the published anti-merger posture in this long defunct paper.
27. For a detailed description of anti-merger sentiments, refer to F.G. Bailey, "Politics in Orissa VIII", Economic Weekly, vol.XI, 24 October 1959, p.1473.
28. H.K. Patel (ex-Swatantra Minister), Interview, Bhubaneswar, June 1981.
29. N.K. Mishra, Interview.

The culmination of these deliberations was the formation of Ganatantra Parishad in 1950 at a meeting of royalists at Bolangir. The two most important personalities behind the new organisations were R.N. Singh Deo, the Maharaja of Bolangir and P.K. Deo the Maharaja of Kalahandi. These two states were big in size and were in the westernⁿ-extremities of Orissa. These two kings had earlier led the Eastern States Union movement too. They remained with the Ganatantra Parishad and later joined the Swatantra party.³⁰ Among the important founder members of the Ganatantra Parishad were Harihar Patel, Rajballav Mishra, Nanda Kishore Mishra, Ram Prasad Mishra and Aintoo Sahu. To begin with Ganatantra Parishad's politics was marked by an intense anti-Congress stance prompted by the apprehension that eastern Orissa dominated Congress party was neglecting the interests and

30. Until his death in 1975, R.N. Singh Deo, the ex-Maharaja of Bolangir-Patna, remained Central to G.P./Swatantra parties in particular and Orissa in general. The second son of Maharaja of Saraikela (b. 31 March 1912), he was adopted by the issueless Maharaja Sri Prithviraj Singh Deo of Bolangir-Patna and was coronated in February 1933. Undenibly charismatic, he was held in awe and reverence by the state people. He did away with the brutal practices of his foster-father and had created some representative democratic institution, in his short rule. For his career in details, see India's Who's Who 1969, INFA Publications. Another important personality was ex-Maharaja of Kalahandi P.K. Deo (b. 5 October 1919). He was the chairman of the Eastern States Agency from 1945-1947 and vice-president of the Eastern States Union in 1947. He was a distinguished parliamentarian of the Swatantra period. (Information source - Bio-Data, Palace, Bhawanipatna, 21 November 1980.)

demands of western Orissa.

The Ganatantra Parishad contested the elections of the 1952, as the "only course left was to fight the Congress".³¹ The Ganatantra Parishad endowed with the aura of a victim, started with an advantage over the Congress and other parties in Orissa which were considered outsiders.

Apart from the aristocratic-feudal influence, whose political aspirations were projected in the new party, there were other factors which gave an enormous advantage to the Ganatantra Parishad over the Congress. The sub-regional divide was exacerbated by the differences in historical and political experience, economy language/dialect which had divided the eastern and western Orissa. This resulted in the bi-polar political divisions between the two regions. This will be discussed in the context of 'political development and Ganatantra Parishad' in Orissa.

The regional diversity is strongly reflected in the working of the parliamentary process in Orissa because the state is not homogenous. Although there exist several geographical regions; yet the geographical difference between the Eastern and Western region is more distinct. The former

31. H. Patel, Interview.

is generally alluvial, plain and fertile and the latter is hilly. Consequently, the coastal region has become more advanced than its western counterpart. (See Table 3.1 for select economic indices.)

There are discernible differences in social structure. The upper caste Hindus constitute majority of the migrant population in this largely uninhabited tribal-land. Vaishyas and trading communities are conspicuous by their absence in what was essentially a self-sufficient barter economy. Nevertheless, Vaishyas are even fewer in western region than eastern region where trading is dominated by the oilmen-caste who took vigorously to trading and have become successful businessmen. This, however, has not precluded non-Oriya traders, i.e., Marwaris, Sindhis, Gujaratis and Punjabis from settling down in the state and in the process monopolise the trade and commerce. The non-Oriya trading groups particularly dominate the profitable timber and Kendu leaves business. This again is more true of western region and less of eastern region where a noticeable stratum of native traders have established greater control. However, the local hierarchy of castes, sub-castes had become so ossified that these groups have not been assimilated and

TABLE 3.1: REGIONAL IMBALANCE IN ORISSA

Districts	Population 1974	Perce- ntage of urban to rural	Literacy (0-4 age group includi- ng 1971)	Perce- ntage of SC 1971	Perce- ntage of ST 1971	Number of Colle- ges	Number of Re- stu- dents	Number of st- udents in co- lleges 1964-65	Number of Ho- spital & Dis- pensary
Cuttack	3,827,678	8.0	36.4	18.06	2.89	19	5,625	8,832	62
Balasore	1,830,504	5.5	33.7	18.51	7.06	8	2,597	2,782	40
Puri	2,390,859	9.0	35.3	13.53	3.70	18	3,016	5,849	54
Ganjam	2,293,808	11.3	24.4	15.92	9.98	12	3,253	3,099	55
Koraput	2,043,281	8.2	10.6	13.52	56.34	2	2,547	288	64
Kalahandi	1,163,869	4.9	13.9	17.11	29.26	2	1,423	179	21
Sambalpur	1,844,898	12.0	27.1	15.61	28.13	12	2,622	3,649	49
Sundargarh	1,030,758	23.3	26.5	8.02	53.40	5	1,448	1,363	37
Keonjhar	955,514	7.0	21.3	11.28	46.96	3	1,122	342	21
Mayurbhanj	1,434,200	2.8	18.1	7.23	58.56	4	2,766	1,140	21
Dhenkanal	1,293,914	4.0	27.8	16.76	12.91	4	1,957	1,110	30
B.Khandamals	621,675	3.1	19.8	18.98	40.31	1	1,331	86	21
Bolangir	1,369,657	6.9	19.0	16.49	19.72	5	1,805	527	18

Compiled from: For the first five columns, Census of India 1971, Orissa Final Population Figures, Education & Health Statistics for 1964-65 from Statistical Abstract of Orissa 1969, pp.87, 114 & 120 (Bhubaneswar, 1969). By Mohanty 1976 (State Politics in India), Table No.12.1, p.243.

remain identifiable targets of popular hatred.³²

Another important feature is the variation in the agrarian patterns of the two regions. In the eastern Mughal-bandi (Direct rule) areas where the settlement of land with the zamindars, resulted in most of the land passing into the Khasmahal or Government's land. Most of the Oriya zamindars could not sustain themselves for long. The terms and conditions were uncertain and highhanded. This land generally passed into the hands of rich Bengali and Muslim speculators in the auctions held at Calcutta in the wake of the permanent settlement in 1915. However, some prosperous zamindars grew in stature and strength and were called the Rajas in small territories in eastern Orissa called the Kilajat states.

The situation has changed after independence with the creation of a class of rich landholders who have developed tremendous stakes in commercialised agriculture. They have

32. The suspicion and hatred against the Marwaris in western Orissa sparked off large scale violence in September-October 1981. However, the students led agitation has subsequently been absolved of any communal undertones by Peoples Union of Civil Liberties' conducted Inquiry. Refer PUCL Bulletin (13), vol.2, No.1, 19 January 1982, p.13. Tension still persists. There have been persistent and sporadic violence against the easterners in western Orissa and vice-versa too.

not been affected by the land legislations initiated after independence. In spite of this development the size of general holding in eastern Orissa remains smaller (than in western Orissa) because of the excessive pressure on land. The 'Karana' caste constitutes the main landowners in eastern Orissa.

Unlike eastern Orissa, ^{in western Orissa} the whole state, i.e., land belonged to the King. The King vested the villages to the Gountias (village headmen), who collected rent from the tenants on his behalf, and retained a percentage of rent for their work. There were bigger Gountias called the Umras and the zamindars too. The zamindars were minor royalties. But all these sections who were initially drawn from the tribal communities lost their land and status to caste Hindus. Many Brahmins came and sought favour in the courts of the King who gifted away villages to the Brahmins belonging to the earlier tribal intermediaries. The 'Gountias' and 'Umrahs' were the sole possessors of the lands in the village, with some others, holding marginal quantity of low quality forest or waste lands.

Since education was restricted, the professional middle class of doctors, lawyers and government officials was practically absent in the western Orissa. In headquarter towns a small group of elite emerged from the educated upper

class landed gentry of the Brahmin caste. They supported the royalists and were the leaders of the anti-merger movement after independence.

The westerners speak a dialect commonly called 'Sambalpuri', which is a variation of Oriya. The easterners call it inferior and tribal in nature, this evokes intense annoyance among the Sambalpuri or Garjat people. The easterners are generally labelled as 'Katakias' in western Orissa. The term has a very odious connotation. A 'Kataki' to an average Sambalpuri, is a crook, sly profit-monger who though talks smoothly is without scruple. Such a feeling reflects the psychosis of the ex-state people towards the alien administration mainly composed of coastal educated professionals, hired by the kings. These officials were ruthlessly exploitative and corrupt.

The lack of communication between the two regions has delayed the process of assimilation. Nevertheless those differences in themselves did not create antipathy between the two regions. The subregional differences were exacerbated by the politics of Ganatantra Parishad. It was Ganatantra Parishad's political strategy which sharpened the differences and sought to create cleavages between the two regions.

Political Strategy of Ganatantra Parishad

Ganatantra Parishad's initial mobilization stressed basically two themes. To begin with it dwelt on the oppression of tribals, thus, gaining considerable political advantage by harping on death of tribals in police firings. To this was linked the larger question of regional disparities and the discrimination against western Orissa, most strikingly evident in the attempts to nationalise kendu leaf trade. Westerners resented the restrictions imposed by the government on the use of forests. Many of these issues provided ample scope for political mobilization against the Congress which was labelled as a party of outsiders. To the so-called martyrs of the anti-merger movement the conflict was between intruders and resisters.³³

This was naturally an extremely important issue for the Ganatantra Parishad whose leaders contended that there was discrimination against the western districts, because the western districts did not return the Congress in the first elections. Ganatantra Parishad leader P.K. Deo said that this was inspite of the fact that the integration of

33. At least one Bhalu Kandh, a tribal who fell to Police bullet was highly spoken of by all G.P. leaders. Krishna Panda (ex-MLA & M.P. of G.P./Swatantra) tells that this death was the limit of tolerance - Interview, Bolangir, June 1981.

erstwhile princely states reduced the budgetary deficit of Orissa province from 104 lakhs in 1948-49 to 65 lakhs in 1949-50.³⁴ The partiality of the Congress was obvious in the attempted nationalisation of kendu leaf trade, whereas lucrative cash crops in eastern Orissa were not considered for takeover. The location of the capital and other important governmental offices in the coastal regions, lower literacy rate and overall backwardness of western Orissa were among the many grievances attributed to the exploitation of the Congress government.

The politics of subregionalism was diluted when Ganatantra Parishad assumed the role of the principal opposition after the first general elections. Now it became a fervently Oriya party which identified with Oriya nationalism as opposed to the Congress which was an all India party. The Ganatantra Parishad championed regional causes. It participated in the agitation against the anti-State Reorganisation Committee Report which did not concede the Oriya demand of getting back Kharswan and Saraikela from Bihar. This agitation in 1956 indeed hastened the fall of

34. P.K. Deo, Orissa Legislative Assembly Debate, vol.1, Pt.II, Nos.25-42, 28 May 1952, p.18.

N.K. Chaudhuri's Congress Ministry. The Congress party was branded an anti-Oriya party because it did not support Ganatantra Parishad's position on the issue.

Being a regionally oriented party, Ganatantra Parishad sought to mobilise public opinion on local issues such as payment of compensation to the displaced persons in Hirakud and Rourkela projects and stressing the non-advisability of allowing the Dandakarnya rehabilitation of refugee settlement on grounds of ecological disturbance. In a similar vein it opposed the formation of Food Zone of Bengal and Bihar. Ganatantra Parishad argued that, "while the industrially advanced states were not independent as regards the food-grain yield, the backward states were generally found to be having the requisite quantity. Making a food zone out of the two dissimilarly developed **regions** would be disastrous for the less developed **region**, since it would be robbed off of its precious surplus and result in the increase of the price of foodgrains".³⁵

However, the party's endeavour to widen its support base by championing regionally emotive causes concerning the whole state in order to underplay its earlier sub-regional

35. Ganatantra (the Vernacular Daily, G.P.'s mouth piece founded in 1955), 15 October 1959.

character did not yield much success. It remained for all practical purposes a western Orissa party.

This was manifested in the voting pattern in the elections. The Ganatantra Parishad maintained its hold over the entire western region including the district of Sambalpur. While the Congress was influential in coastal areas. The inevitable result was that neither party was strong enough to form a government on its own strength. Consequently Orissa experienced a series of unstable and precarious coalitions.

Political Development between 1952 and 1961

In the First General Election, Congress polled roughly four times as many votes as Ganatantra Parishad in the coastal districts. In seven of the remaining nine districts, Ganatantra Parishad polled one and half times to 3 times more than Congress. In the other two districts both parties polled roughly the same. But the Congress party with 48 percent of seats and 39 percent votes formed the first Ministry in Orissa. Congress won 67 seats while Ganatantra Parishad with 31 seats and 32 percent of votes was the principal opposition party. Its percentage of votes was 20.5 percent. In the Second General Elections Ganatantra Parishad captured 51 seats with 29 percent of popular votes.

Congress's strength came down to 56 seats with 39 percent of votes. The relative success of Ganatantra Parishad was attributed to its supposed advocacy of popular issues. (See Table 3.2 for the district-wise pattern in 1957 elections). N.K. Mishra said so in an interview. He claimed that "In 1955 Mr. R.N. Singh Deo submitted charter of demands to N.K. Chaudhuri, demanding mainly the restoration of Tenancy Rights of the people over the forest. After the expiry of two months deadline, when no action was taken. I resigned in February 1956. This was an exemplary gesture. I was again reelected without contest. Over the Government's failure in retrieving back our territory (Kharswan and Saraikela were not returned back to Orissa, since, an issue which evokes powerful feelings) we again resigned six months before the 1957 elections. This was appreciated by the people".³⁶

Again Congress succeeded in forming the Ministry but the highly unstable minority Government of H. Mahatab could not complete its terms and finally tendered its resignation on 9 April 1959. After this, strangely enough Ganatantra Parishad joined the Congress to form a coalition govern-

36. N.K. Mishra, Interview.

TABLE 3.2: VALID VOTES POLLED IN EACH DISTRICT IN THE 1957 ELECTIONS TO THE ORISSA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BY THE G.P. & CONGRESS

Districts	Congress Votes	G.P. Votes
Cuttack	441,434	100,664
Puri	216,363	49,108
Balasore	203,487	41,406
Ganjam	199,659	41,219
Koraput	99,639	84,019
Mayurbhanj	47,293	49,540
Dhenkanal	60,337	122,298
Kalahandi	77,823	172,612
Keonjhar	37,907	61,705
Phulbani	21,660	46,100
Sundargarh	53,575	107,752
Sambalpur	102,965	148,558
Bolangir	Not Compiled	

Source: Taken from "Politics in Orissa II",
F.G. Bailey, Economic Weekly, vol.XI,
No.91, 10 October 1959, p.1405.

ment.³⁷ Evidently, Ganatantra Parishad succumbed to Mahatab's overtures after it failed in its attempt to form a non-Congress opposition front with the PSP.³⁸

The P.S.P. issued a statement on 26 April 1959, alleging that the Congress-Ganatantra Parishad coalition was a betrayal. Ganatantra Parishad defended its position arguing that P.S.P. did not evince adequate enthusiasm, furthermore, such a coalition would have proved unstable. Ganatantra Parishad argued it entered into a coalition with Congress to avert President's Rule and avoid a mid-term election which would not yield a definite result. Thus the coalition was created to provide a political leadership committed

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37. The Ganatantra Parishad Parliamentary Board approved of the coalition and a draft agreement on principles was signed on 18 May 1959. The principles were (1) Minimum Economic Unit and Co-operative farming on voluntary basis; (2) State Trading: (a) producers must be ensured a fair remunerative price, and (b) Administration of state trading must be tightened; (3) All-Party Committees on various issues to be set up; (4) To raise more non-tax revenues for avoiding higher incidences of taxation on common people; and (5) Curtailment of Administrative Wastes and extravagance; and (6) Unification of Oriya speaking tracts in general and restoration of Saraikela and Kharswan in particular - Taken from an unpublished G.P. "Party Document", not dated.
38. Surendra Nath Dwivedi states that G.P. and PSP were in the middle of the negotiations when GP suddenly joined the Congress to form the opportunistic coalition - Interview, June 1981.

to speedy implementation of second Five Year Plan. The statement maintained, "coalitions are a historical necessity where there is less probability of having a single majority party".³⁹

As for the Congress party, approval for the coalition with Ganatantra Parishad was managed entirely by Harekrushna Mahatab. It was opposed by younger leaders like Biju Patnaik who opposed it on ideological grounds leading to considerable bickerings among factions for and against the coalition. In spite of the best efforts of Mahatab who tried to cling to power, Congress organisation directed him to withdraw from the coalition and the ministry fell on 24 February 1961. Thus the first spell of President's Rule was proclaimed on 25 February 1961. Immediately after the fall of the coalition the hitherto secret negotiations with the Swatantra party were conducted vigorously and the decision to merge Ganatantra Parishad with Swatantra party was made. The decision was hastened by the complete route of Ganatantra Parishad in the 1961 Assembly elections. Against Ganatantra Parishad 36 seats (22 percent of popular votes) Congress won a massive majority of 83 (43.1 percent

39. "Party Communique" (signed by Secy, G.P. Assembly Party), 26 April 1959 (Oriya).

of popular votes). Ganatantra Parishad explained its disastrous performance in terms of lack of funds and the massive use of government machinery by the Congress. The party leaders ruefully maintained "Ganatantra Parishad was suddenly caught unprepared by the mid-term elections and thus lost heavily".⁴⁰

Merger of Ganatantra Parishad with Swatantra party

The anxiety of Ganatantra Parishad to join ranks with a newly emerging Swatantra party with explicit rightist ideological position was motivated by many factors. The foremost among them was ideological. At a general level the decision appeared to have been prompted by the desire to associate with a national party in order to counteract the disadvantage of being a regional party. Thus, in the ultimate analysis, merger with Swatantra party was Ganatantra Parishad's search for legitimacy and national cover.

More specifically, Ganatantra Parishad's attempt to merge with the Swatantra party should be viewed in the context of the Nagpur Resolution of 1959 which proposed joint cooperative farming. The proposition appeared ominous to rightwing elements who combined to fight joint cooperative

40. N.K. Mishra, Interview.

farming. Obviously for Ganatantra Parishad, a party of the landed elite and aristocracy, such a plan appeared immensely threatening. Moreover, despite their apparent conservative orientation Ganatantra Parishad was bereft of any ideology. Between 1952 and 1960 the party's stand was ambivalent on major socio-economic issues, notwithstanding their perception of threat by 'socialism' and Congress ideology.

In view of these limitations, Ganatantra Parishad was not at all averse to the idea of merger with Swatantra party which was a more coherent party. In fact, Ganatantra Parishad welcomed the opportunity of embracing Swatantra party and through it a conservative ideology as well. In pursuit of these aims Rajaji was requested to lead an all India party to combat the Congress threats to their interests. Pratap Keshari Deo of Ganatantra Parishad was directly involved in the negotiations and process of establishing the Swatantra party. The founders of the Swatantra party prior to the creation of the party visited different states to scout potential recruits. They took the initiative to convince the Ganatantra Parishad leaders of the desirability of such an alliance or a merger to curb socialistic trend inside the Congress. Thus, the merger was inevitable and in fact was a part of the process of the creation of the Swatantra party. After the collapse of the 1959 coalition

on 11 November 1961, the proposal of merger was passed unanimously at the Ninth Party Convention at Sundargarh.⁴¹

The Ganatantra Parishad Working Committee appointed a Sub-Committee to discuss with the Swatantra leaders the modus operandi of such a merger. The Sub-Committee included R.N. Singh Deo, P.K. Deo, Rajballav Mishra and Harihar Patel who deliberated with Ranga, Masani and Rajaji in 1961. The committee unanimously recommended merger as it felt there was complete affinity of views between the two parties. Harihar Patel aptly observed, "It was like a realisation of oneself in a mirror".⁴² The Committee also believed, "the merger would help in building up a representative democracy and would be helpful in spreading the Swatantra party message and principles".⁴³

However, the Sundargarh resolution was underplayed as the Ganatantra Parishad put off the decision of merger with Swatantra party's to the Second Convention at Agra in late 1961. In this convention, Ramprasad Mishra the President of the Ganatantra Parishad signed a joint statement with N.G. Ranga (President of the Swatantra party) affirming

42. H. Patel (Member of the Sub-Committee which recommended Merger) - Interview.

43. "General Secretary of Swatantra Party, Orissa Unit's Report", 1965, p.2 (Oriya).

its adherence to Swatantra party's ideals. The final merger was yet again deferred to a later date in view of certain complications pertaining to elections. The Election Commission was requested by the Ganatantra Parishad leaders to allow the party to use its old symbol of 'bow and arrow' even after its merger with the Swatantra, temporarily in 1962 elections. "It was felt that too little time was left for the third General Election in 1962, to familiarise the electorate with the new symbol of star (of Swatantra)".⁴⁴ But the Election Commission did not approve it. So the final merger had to wait till 3 March 1962.⁴⁵

Apart from the ideological factors there were other considerations which encouraged merger. Ganatantra Parishad was keen to live down its the princely image which had become a handicap.⁴⁶ The party, because of its origin in the anti-merger movement and its antecedents in opposing the Congress on charges of intrusion into western Orissa, had become a target of considerable criticism and ridicule. Thus, joining a national party like the Swatantra was one way of

44. Ibid.

45. However, in the General elections in February 1962, G.P. adopted the Swatantra Party's Manifesto. It was titled "To Prosperity Through Freedom".

46. H. Patel - Interview.

changing its image of a sub-regional party.

Secondly, there were problems of finance. "Of course", N.K. Mishra stated, "the Kings made tremendous sacrifices".⁴⁷ But concerns were raised in party circles about the viability of such a small organisation in the face of Congress's massive power of finance and patronage. It was understood, if not articulated, that the princes could not match the organisational strength of the Congress. Merger seemed the answer to all such problems and everybody shared this optimism.

Ganatantra Parishad in the beginning had specifically concentrated on reaping maximum political benefit in the western region. However, the first election result brought home the possibility of a larger role for the party in the politics of the state. It emerged in the first election with substantial strength as the principal opposition party in the state assembly. It was felt that with the widening of its base the party stood the chance of capturing power in the state. The initial aggressive regional outbursts were toned down.

47. N.K. Mishra - Interview.

The 1957 election manifesto touched broader issues. The Ganatantra Parishad put forth a programme for guaranteeing each cultivator an "economic unit of land". The Parishad called for free and compulsory primary and secondary education, health and maternity care for common man, etc.⁴⁸ Again the Parishad turned out to be a fiery champion of Oriya nationalism. It spearheaded the movement in Orissa to demand the merger of outlying Oriya speaking tracts with the state. In this exercise of championing Oriya nationalist cause it sought allies among the factions of Congress where there were always too many. However, till 1961, it remained unsuccessful in its drive to develop support in the eastern region. It was thought by joining Swatantra party it would broaden its influence and the regional stigma of the Ganatantra Parishad would be taken care of.

48. See S.C. Dash's article on "Orissa", in S.V. Kogekar and L.R.L. Port (eds.), Report on the Indian General Elections, Bombay, 1956, pp.120-34.

Chapter IV

THE SWATANTRA PARTY AND
THE POLITICS OF ORISSA 1961-1974

Swatantra Party was established in Orissa in 1962. The process of forming the Swatantra unit was initiated in 1959 itself. The party emerged formally in 1962 after the merger of Ganatantra Parishad with the Swatantra party of India. Effectively the Swatantra party in Orissa was confined to the Ganatantra Parishad, indeed it was new name for the old Ganatantra Parishad. In the present chapter developments from 1961 to 1974, the role of the Swatantra party and the coalitions in which it participated are discussed. Naturally in such a study other parties and forces particularly the Congress and its various factions figure prominently.

The performance of the Swatantra party in Orissa can be divided into three distinct phases. (See Table 4.1, for Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra position in Orissa State Assembly.) From 1961 to 1967 Swatantra party was in opposition. It was very effective as an opposition party because of its bold and sustained exposure of serious financial improprieties which besmirched Congress ministers. The marked unity and homogeneity of the Swatantra party was in contrast to the infighting and factionalism dominant in the Congress party.

1. Swatantra Party ceased to exist in 1974 when it merged with Bhartiya Lok Dal.

TABLE 4.1: GANATANTRA PARISHAD AND SWATANTRA PARTY
IN STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Year	Total Seats	Candidates	Seats gained	% of Seats	Votes Polled	% of Votes	Votes per Candidate
1952	140	58	31	22.1	741,887	20.2	19,523
1957	140	109	51	36.4	1,221,794	28.7	11,209
1961 (Mid-Term)	140	121	37	26.4	655,899	22.3	5,414
1967	140	100	49	-	909,421	22.58	-
1971	140	NA	36	-	-	-	-
1979	147	(56)	21	-	684,653	11.9	-

Table is taken from, Pushpa Asthana, Political Parties and Political Development in Orissa (Ph.D. thesis), JNU, 1980, p.298.

The second phase from 1967 to 1971 would include the party's activities while it led the coalition government with Jana Congress. This phase is of trial for the Swatantra party.

The third phase begins with the fall of Jana Congress-Swatantra coalition in January 1971 and includes political events till 1974 when the Swatantra with six other parties merged to form Bharatiya Lok Dal at the national level. The phase witnessed confusion, myriad alliances succeeding one another with astonishing rapidity, in short it reflects the unstable nature of politics in Orissa. The Swatantra party was on the verge of disintegration, as a result of Congress inroads into Swatantra strongholds in western Orissa.

First Phase 1961-67

The Swatantra party in the process of transition became a weak force in the 1962 elections. This was doubtless disappointing for the erstwhile Ganatantra Parishad, as party of the motivation in joining the Swatantra was to improve its image and to broaden its support structure. This was, however, belied by the results of the 1962 elections. Nevertheless the party's morale was kept high because during this period many important issues were

debated and political support mobilised around these issues. The party now found an ideological purpose to fight the Congress.

The social composition of the Swatantra party was effectively an hierarchy of the feudal elements, the King at the top and the middle tier constituted of elite royalists and Gauntias and the Umras with the mercenaries forming the base of the party. The Swatantra party relied on feudal elements for mobilization. The party was garnered and reinforced by the Kings, so that although its numerical strength in the legislative assembly was never very large, nevertheless the party was able to exercise political influence disproportionate to its size. This was largely because of political alliance and loyalty commanded by the Kings.

The 1962 Lok Sabha elections were disappointing to the Swatantra party which got only 4 seats compared to 7 in 1957. All these seats were in western Orissa. Assessing the election result the Working Committee of the Orissa unit observed that "...In the last Lok Sabha elections the deplorable malpractices, and corruption resorted to by the Congress has come as a great shock to the electorate's faith in democratic institutions and practices... The Orissa

Congress with the concentrated force of enormous money power has been able to win an absolute and confident majority in an unequal fight, at the cost of moral degradation of the people of Orissa".²

It alleged that voters were bribed and tempted with cash, dhotis, saris, and wooed by donations to school and other village funds. The party maintained, "It will, therefore, be self-dellusion on the part of anybody to regard the result of the mid-term elections in Orissa as the real verdict of the people".³ However, the Ganatantra Parishad maintained that, since the Congress had an absolute majority, it could no longer have the excuse of political instability being the factor of ineffective administration.

After the mid-term poll the party contested two more assembly by-elections, one at Jharsuguda and one other at Jeypore (West). It was defeated in both contests. Once again Executive Committees reiterated its earlier allegation in a resolution: which states "Government Machineries'

2. General Secretary's Report (Oriya), Orissa Swatantra Party Unit, Cuttack, 1965, pp.4-5.

3. Working Committee Resolution, Orissa Swatantra Party Unit (Private papers, H. Patel, General Secy, Swatantra Party, 1962-65).

interference and abuse of power increased alarmingly and the voters were subject to incredibly dishonest and immoral electioneering by the Congress".⁴

However, the real reasons lie elsewhere. Swatantra party suffered because the Congress-Ganatantra Parishad coalition ministry had gained notoriety as a reactionary get-together of feudal royalists from the western region and the corrupt and conservative Congress leadership from the eastern coast which lacked perspective. It is important to note that the Ganatantra Parishad's poor performance coincided with the eclipse of Mahatab and his followers in the Congress organisation and the rise of Biju Patnaik in Orissa politics. Under the unorthodox and charismatic leadership of Patnaik the Congress organisation became very effective. Enjoying the confidence of central leadership Patnaik led the Congress to a massive victory, for the first time securing more than 43 percent of the popular electoral support in the assembly elections. (For the percentage of electoral support to the successive popular ministries, see Table 4.2.)

Among the more important issues raised by the opposition political parties during the period of 1961-67 was allegations

4. General Secretary's Report (Oriya), op. cit., p.5.

TABLE 4.2: ELECTORATE SUPPORT TO THE
POPULAR MINISTRIES OF ORISSA

Year	% of total V. votes polled	% of votes polled by the G.P.	% of votes polled by the combi- ned oppo- sition	% of actual electorate support to the govt.
1952	32.5	42.7	56.3	13.9
1957	34.3	42.5	57.5	14.6
1961	34.5	43.1	56.9	14.9
1967	40.8	36.1	63.9	14.7
1971	43.8	38.6	61.4	16.9
1974	51.6	37.4	62.6	19.3

Note: Column (5) is calculated from the total eligible voters, the percentage secured by government party(ies).
Taken from, J. Pathy, Political Elites in Orissa (Ph.D. thesis), JNU, 1977, p.90.

of financial misappropriation against the Congress Chief Minister Patnaik and the Deputy Chief Minister Biren Mitra. The opposition relentlessly pursued these improprieties. It managed to unearth a lot of facts of corruption in Congress ranks. These charges and exposures livened the political atmosphere in the sixties. It had the effect of discrediting the Congress and damaging the reputation and careers of many Congress leaders.

The firm 'Orissa Agents' (whose proprietress was Mrs. Iswaramma Mitra, the wife of Deputy Chief Minister Biren Mitra) was said to have been favoured in the supply of some articles to various Government departments. Mitra's transactions with Messr. Serajuddin & Co., a concern with mining interests in the district of Keonjhar were found objectionable too. The Chief Minister, pressurised to reveal facts, requested the leader of opposition, and Chairman of Public Accounts Committee to examine the veracity of the allegations. Patnaik wanted to underplay the problem. But because of the unrelenting political pressure of the opposition Biju Patnaik referred the matter to the Auditor and Comptroller General of India in September 1963. Pursuing the case further, Singh Deo and 62 other persons including MLAs and MPs submitted three successive memoranda in 1964. The Home ministry referred the matter to the CBI

which confirmed the existence of prima facie case.⁵

The CBI report was examined by a sub-committee of the Union Cabinet which stated that though no cases or motives of monetary benefits could be established, administrative impropriety was certainly a fact. Reacting against it, the opposition parties alleged that the Congress high command was trying to hush up the matter. Swatantra party spear-headed an agitation⁶ against the Congress ministry. The immediate result was the resignation of Mitra on 20 February 1965.⁷ He was succeeded by Sadashiv Tripathy, an obscure and non-controversial Congressman. This was doubtless an

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5. The CBI report stated, "on the basis of scrutiny of the records it is not possible to say that all the allegations are unfounded, unsubstantiated or untrue. There are quite a few, and some of them are serious which require further inquiry to come to definite and clear conclusion. On number of points doubts remain..."
 6. Surendra Nath Dwivedi, MP (PSP) from Orissa created quite a furore in the parliament by producing a copy of secret CBI report pertaining to Mitra's irregular transaction with Messr. Serajuddin & Co. Incidentally, the earlier petroleum minister K.D. Malaviya's ignominious exit was due to the exposure of certain shabby deal with the same company.
 7. Curiously enough, however, the chief minister reasoned that his resignation was in response to the student demonstration which had violated the dignity of the Legislative Assembly when they ranshacked the house protesting against the assault of a fellow student by a transport personnel.

important victory for the Swatantra unit. Meanwhile Patnaik had resigned in pursuance of the Kamraj plan.⁸ Mitra a close confidante of Patnaik had succeeded him inspite of serious charges of corruption against him.

In the meantime in a very significant development, a new regional party was formed drawing its strength mainly from the Congress. This greatly weakened an already beleaguered Congress. The new party named 'Jana Congress' included such Congress veterans like Mahatab, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan and Banamali Patnaik. Subsequently, this party gained much strength. Emergence of an eastern Orissa rival to Congress posed a serious threat to its prospects in 1967 elections. Besides, negotiations were underway between the new party and the Swatantra for a common electoral understanding.⁹ For the Jana Congress such an alliance was

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8. A controversy was created on Patnaik's submission of resignation to the Prime Minister instead of the Governor. Raising issues of 'Privileges' of House the opposition contented that the action violated article 163 of the Constitution whereby he was appointed by the Governor and answerable to the legislative assembly.
9. The common understanding was the result of sustained but tortuous process of negotiations. Nanda Kishore Mishra the ex-Swatantra speaker said in an interview that Mahatab asked Singh Deo to agree to a Jana Congress led coalition. When Singh Deo did not agree he finally yielded to a Swatantra led coalition. But, Mishra said, his real intention was to convince the Swatantra in the long run to merge to his party.

a necessity if it wanted to capture power. For the Swatantra, which was clearly sympathetic to the new party of conservative Congressmen, such an alliance would have been one step ahead in its purpose of wrecking the official Congress.

Both the parties finally agreed to form a common platform for the fourth General elections and signed a joint-21-point programme presented as the Manifesto. (See Appendix-II for the document.)

Second Phase 1967-71

The second phase marked the Swatantra party's capture of political power in the state with the help of an eastern ally, the Jana Congress. The electoral success in a certain sense was because of the disadvantageous position of the Congress party which was thoroughly discredited by allegations of financial impropriety and corruption. Swatantra party won 49 seats in the assembly elections. To this was added 26 seats of Jana Congress. (For party position in State Assembly, see Table 4.3.) Together they formed an alliance and the first non-Congress government. R.N. Singh Deo and P.M. Pradhan were the chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, respectively.

The coalition ministry was faced with two no-confidence motions in June and the December of 1968 which it survived

TABLE 4.3: PARTY POSITION IN THE STATE ASSEMBLY

Political Parties	1952		1957		1961		1967		1971	
	Seats cont-ested	Seats won	Seats cont-ested	Seats won	Seats cont-ested	Seats won	Seats cont-ested	Seats won	Seats cont-ested	Seats won
CPI	37	7	43	9	35	4	31	7	28	4
CPM	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	1	11	2
Congress	135	67	140	56	140	82	140	31	128	51
F. Block (M)	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F. Block (R)	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
KMP	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jan Sangh	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	21	-
PSP	-	-	45	11	46	10	31	21	49	4
Socialist	79	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SSP	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	2	15	-
Swatantra	-	-	-	-	-	-	101	49	115	36
G.P.	58	31	108	53	121	37	-	-	-	-
Praja Party	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Peoples Ind. P.	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Radical Democrats	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jharkhand	-	-	-	-	9	-	10	-	16	4
Jana Congress	-	-	-	-	-	-	48	25	66	1
Sul	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-
Utakal Congress	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	137	32
Independents	204	24	172	11	181	1	211	4	187	4

Source: (Election Office Records) - Taken from, Mohanty & Mishra (Table 12.2) in Iqbal Narain (ed.), State Politics in India, Meerut, Meenakshi Prakashan, 1976, p.247.

fairly comfortably.

Among the first things the coalition did was to appoint a Commission of Inquiry consisting of Justice H.R. Khanna of Delhi High Court to investigate the charges of corruption against the previous Congress ministers. The Congress opposition considered this an act of vindictiveness alleging that the period of Inquiry was arbitrarily determined. The Congress demanded the commission's scope be enlarged to include under it the charges of corruption levelled against the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and other members in office in the 1959-61 coalition government. The Chief Minister assured the opposition that if specific charges were levelled against him and others and if prima facie cases could be established he would not hesitate to widen the scope of inquiry. Subsequently, however, the charges against him and Mahatab were referred to an Inquiry Committee constituted of Justice Mudholkar, a retired judge of the Supreme Court.

The Khanna Commission submitted its report in January 1969. It could not establish any charge of corruption against Biju Patnaik and Mitra. Nonetheless, the Commission felt administrative impropriety was definitely involved in many of the decisions.

The rather mild indictment of Patnaik was disappointing for the coalition ministry, since it had fought the 1967 elections on the issue of corruption in the Congress. Ironically, the Mudholkar Commission report which came close on the heels of 'Khanna Report' substantively established charges of financial irregularities against Mahatab while exonerating Singh Deo and his colleagues of any such impropriety.¹⁰

The coalition was put in an embarrassing position, so much so that it threatened the viability of the coalition. Mahatab was sore as he failed to get the cabinet to reverse the unfavourable decision by annulling the report. He questioned the power of the Committee and started litigation against it.¹¹ The court process involved the chief minister as a respondent, which understandably irked the Swatantra constituent. This led to acrimony and bitterness between Mahatab and the Swatantra and his persistent attempt to pull the Jana Congress away from the coalition.¹² At

10. Times of India (Delhi), 9 November 1968.

11. Mudholkar was appointed as a special Judge by a govt. notification and not under the provisions of the Commissions of Inquiry Acts.

12. N.K. Mishra chose to put Mahatab's attitude after this point in the following way in an interview: The whole political career of Mahatab after the publication of Mudholkar report could be explained by a mere fact that he would always try to align with anybody in government to persuade and pressurise to put the suggested inquiry in abeyance and if possible have the report rejected. How successful he was in this game could be seen from this, that the court proceedings against him have not been completed!

Mahatab's behest, seven Jana Congress MLAs openly demanded the end of the 'unholy alliance' with the reactionary Swatantra. This was preceded by overtures to the Congress(R) to form a coalition. He worked for a brief while to instal a PSP, Congress(R) and Jana Congress coalition.

This effort was aborted when the state level Committee of the Jana Congress decided to stick to the coalition. But soon after this seven ruling parties MLAs (5 Jana Congress and 2 Swatantra) withdrew their support from the government in March 1970. This happened inspite of a Joint Grievance Committee formed under Singh Deo to look into the causes of disaffection in a bid to pacify the rebels.¹³

The defections from the Swatantra members weakened the unified command structure of the party which had lost its position as the only opposition from the non-coastal region. The creation of the Jharkhand party in the northern part of the state, which coincided with emergence of the dissident factions inside Congress under stalwarts like Mahatab and Patnaik, had in the process robbed the Swatantra of a substantial chunk of its support-base and more important its prestige.

13. Hindustan Times, 20 February 1970.

The shaky coalition got a further lease of life when there was another split in the Congress. Patnaik who faced humiliation inside his party eventually walked out with 23 out of 31 MLAs to form the regional party of 'Utkala Congress'¹⁴. The danger of the Congress(R) replacing the coalition was for the time being averted.

However, at this juncture the decision of Haraprasad Mahapatra the Swatantra Forest Minister to grant a 20 percent subsidy to 'Kendu leaf Contractors' ostensibly because of bad harvest caused a major uproar. The decision was taken against the objections of the bureaucracy. Mahatab got a chance to precipitate a crisis, while Pradhan was in favour of abating the impasse by negotiations.

Nevertheless the end of the coalition came soon. In August 1970 the state level committee of the Jana Congress decided to withdraw from the coalition on grounds that, "The

14. Biju Patnaik's official Congress nomination for a Rajya Sabha seat was cancelled by High Command in favour of an old guard, Narayan Patra. The reason was that, Patnaik had lobbied for Morarjee Desai in 1966 to succeed Lalbahadur Shastri. Mrs. Gandhi weeded out her antagonists after the split of 1969 in her party. By sending Mrs. Satapathy to the state to lead the unit she meant to placate Patnaik. Patnaik took up the challenge by forming a fiercely Oriya nationalist party in the oversaturated politics of Orissa where there were too many parties already. See Times of India (New Delhi), 26 February 1971.

political situation in the state has dramatically changed after the Congress split of 1969, which does not in anyway resemble what it was in 1967".¹⁵ Therefore, the Jana Congress hoped that an election would clear up the mess and restore order. This resolution obviously underscored temptations of ex-Congressmen to return to the fold of the parent organisation. Responding to the Jana Congress resolution, the Swatantra party noted, "any attempt at such a point of time to pull down the coalition government would not only be undesirable and unfortunate but will be breach of trust, which people have reposed in the Swatantra party".¹⁶

Support for the Swatantra party was forthcoming from Utkala Congress which was interested in keeping the ministry alive to "enable it to implement the steps recommended by Mudholkar Committee" against Patnaik's arch rival Mahatab.¹⁷ But it was an ambiguous support and Singh Deo ultimately had to resign on 9 January 1971, after appointing the Sarjoo Prasad Committee to pursue the charges framed against Mahatab.

15. Resolution, State Level Committee, Jana Congress, 6 August 1970.

16. Review of the Present Political Situation in Orissa, Swatantra Party Orissa Unit, 28 August 1970.

17. Resolution of Joint Committee of Pradesh Congress Committee and Assembly Party of Utkal Congress, not dated.

The decision to resign before facing the February Assembly Session, came as a surprise to most of coalition members as well as the Central leadership. They favoured remaining in government at least until their strength was tested in the assembly. Harihar Patel the industry minister in the 1967-71 government complained, that "Singh Deo took a unilateral decision to resign, which had particularly disastrous ~~result in the next elections~~ since the opposition had highly exaggerated the Kendu leaf scandals case, undoubtedly affecting our credibility. I (he) wonder what would have been the history had he not resigned in haste."¹⁸

Third Phase 1971-74

The process of disintegration of the Swatantra was accelerated in the early seventies, particularly after the result of the 1971 elections. In this phase the Swatantra party lost its separate identity and strength, most strikingly evident in the readiness to accommodate Biju Patnaik who until then was treated as a pariah.

No single party emerged with a clear cut majority in 1972 elections. The Swatantra party emerged as the single largest group with 49 seats. The Utkala Congress of Patnaik

18. Harihar Patel, Interview, June 1981.

gained 33 seats at the expense of Congress(R) which suffered because of the two splits. The Congress(R) managed to get only 26 seats.

The Swatantra party formed the government with the support of the Utkala Congress and the Jharkhand party. There was no ideological cohesion among the two partners in the coalition. Its only significant feature was the coming together of arch rivals Singh Deo and Patnaik. The coalition repeated the pattern of Jana Congress-Swatantra coalition of 1967.¹⁹

Biswanath Dash a veteran ex-Congressman was recalled from virtual political exile to lead the ministry. Dash and Patnaik, who were not the members of the Legislative assembly, were returned in two bi-elections held subsequently. Soon after the results Patnaik was anxious to regain the Chief Ministership. But his efforts were checkmated by the Swatantra party. After the failure of his efforts, Patnaik manoeuvred to rejoin the Congress by pulling out his party from the coalition. When Patnaik joined the Congress, its number swelled to 96. Dash ministry fell on 9 July 1972,

19. N.K. Mishra, the ex-speaker 1967-74 of OLA told in an interview that Patnaik's intention was to persuade R.N. Singh Deo to merge his party with his own. The party was aware of it.

when 10 Swatantra members led by Gangadhar Pradhan defected to the Congress.

Subsequently another Congress government was formed under leadership of Mrs. Nandini Satapathy in July 1972. But again the ministry was engulfed by a crisis. Mrs. Satapathy did not accommodate Patnaik in the Congress who in turn retaliated by pulling out his former Utkal Congress followers from the Congress. Congress government headed by Mrs. Satapathy was reduced to a minority and it fell in March 1973.²⁰ Before resigning she set up the Mitter Commission to enquire into the charges of justiciability of granting the rebate to Kendu leaf contractors by Singh Deo and colleagues.

In 1973 Swatantra joined hands with Mahatab and Patnaik to form a broad anti-Congress alliance under the banner of

20. When Mrs. Satapathy's ministry fell, instead of calling upon the leaders of the Pragati Party which was the opposition, the Governor advised the President to promulgate the President's Rule. Biju Patnaik who had earlier physically shown the support of 73 MLAs, filed a writ petition in the High Court challenging the constitutionality of the Governor's act. The High Court, dismissing the writ petition on grounds of lack of jurisdiction, noted that the 'Governor did not fulfil all the constitutional requirements'. Refer Biju Patnaik's "Letter to the President of India" (printed), 11 November 1973.

the Pragati party.²¹ This step of the Swatantra party was not taken in consultation with the high command. However, the State unit offered the explanation that the new party 'Pragati' (Progressive party) was a temporary affair. But the fact that the Swatantra, the Utkala Congress and Mahatab's Swadhin Party had altogether submerged their identity, issuing a common manifesto, was not in consonance with their claim that it was only an electoral alliance.

This gave rise to serious misgivings at the Central level about the intention of the Orissa Unit of Swatantra party. P.K. Deo who had represented the Orissa unit at the National Executive meeting of the Swatantra party defended the move to join Pragati on the grounds that: Unless they got together Mrs. Satapathy would have succeeded in destroying the opposition by engineering defections. She had become totally arbitrary in her conduct of the state government and dealing with the opposition.²²

He reaffirmed that the arrangement was purely temporary in nature. The president of the Swatantra party

21. Mrs. Satapathy did not drop the charges against Mahatab. Hence his resignation from Congress and formation of his 'Swadhin Party'.

22. Draft Minutes (Meeting of the National Executive), Swatantra Party, New Delhi, 18 February 1973.

claimed that he was not sufficiently informed of the arrangement. He cautioned the Orissa Unit that the new arrangement was to be confined to the state Legislature and must not in any way interfere with the party organisation. However, other leaders like Minoo Masani, Lobo Prabhu and H.M. Patel were highly suspicious of the last paragraph of the joint statement (included in Appendix-III~~7~~) issued by the Pragati constituent, which stated that,

"The Orissa Pragati Legislature party will be an example to other political parties...believing in democracy...to fight against all undemocratic and totalitarian trends towards the dictatorship...as a viable alternative to the totalitarian rule of Congress clique".²³

The formation of the Pragati party was not a deviation from the pattern of 1967 and 1972 coalitions between the Swatantra as the sole representative from western Orissa, with a Congress faction from eastern Orissa. Mahatab and Patnaik sought to exploit regional sentiments raising demands like establishment of a second steel plant in Orissa; but this was hardly an issue on which public opinion can be mobilised for long. Patnaik's ambition to model his Utkala Congress after DMK of Tamil Nadu did not have any chance of success because of the absence of issues like religion or

23. Joint Statements, Orissa Pragati Legislature Party, not dated.

language which provide a basis for mobilization. Finally, both factions under Mahatab and Patnaik could not have matched the Congress organisation and money power.

In short, the Pragati did not result in the creation of a broad-based political force which integrated both the regions, but was a small time affair between the subregional force of Swatantra and two personality-oriented factions. Pragati party realising its lack of strength tried to mobilise public opinion on the basis of Oriya nationalism. A whole gamut of regional complaints was projected. It pointed out discrimination against Orissa in the field of industry and demanded greater state autonomy.²⁴

The Kendu leaf scandal in 1971 marked the end of the Jana Congress-Swatantra Government and ushered the process of disintegration for the Swatantra. The alliance with the Utkala Congress and finally the creation of the Pragati Dal by the triumverate of Singh Deo, Patnaik and Mahatab accelerated this process of denouement. From the position of the only party to challenge the Congress, Swatantra party

24. In the election, Congress retaliated by pointing out the contradictions of the new party - the presence of three rivals. Pragati's demand of greater state autonomy was termed as irresponsible and subversive.

was reduced to a minor constituent of this loose combination of anti-Congress elements drawn from both the regions. In the new set up, Biju Patnaik had ascended in leadership thereby further decreasing the importance of the Swatantra constituent.

The decision to enter into the 'Pragati' had created dissension in the organisation. Leaders like Harihar Patel and others who were against diluting the nature of the party stayed away. Patel said, "associating the party with Patnaik and others sounded the death-knell of the party in Orissa. The state which had taken the Swatantra into new heights by creating many 'Firsts' (i.e., the first Swatantra led government) brought its ruination too by submerging its identity".²⁵

The Swatantra party for all latent and purpose was based at Bolangir, the erstwhile seat of Bolangir-Patna State. The landed and professional elites of this town who had graduated to political prominence via Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra politics and held powerful influence over R.N. Singh Deo. This was resented by others drawn from other areas. The middle class members who had joined the

25. Interview.

organisation in the genuine belief that the western Orissa oriented party would improve the situation in this backward areas were quickly disillusioned. The spontaneous popular support in the urban centres on this count too waned gradually.

The increased processes of communications between both the regions introduced the west to the coast and the alienation of western Oriyas was greatly reduced. There was a substantial growth of the educated middle class in urban centres. They were the recruits of the new national parties, mostly the Congress. The Congress had attracted such support, because it could rally progressive support in the areas against the identifiable elements of feudalism. The youths and the students joined the Congress in large number to end the hold of the King and his supporters.

The Swatantra party had limited capacity to bestow privileges to its middle class supporters. Because electorally it could never account for a majority with the independent strength of its own. The governments it formed in ~~1962~~, 1967 and 1971 could be possible only with the help of Congress dissidents from coastal region. Preference in allocation of funds and investment in industry for western Orissa would have created opposition in the delicately balanced coalitions. To an average western Oriya the

repeated success of the Swatantra because of his support was an exercise in futility because the party failed singularly in ameliorating the condition of the western Orissa.

The immense power and the patronage of the Congress, the unchallenged representative of the big bourgeoisie was more than a match for the Swatantra. After the threat of collectivization faded the Congress policies posed no serious threats to the bigger land holders and to much lesser extent the industrialists. The utility of the Swatantra was thus exhausted almost immediately. Yet the Swatantra leaders who considered themselves as crusaders for freedom felt the disinterest and lack of support as cowardly shortsightedness of the rich for fear of retaliation. Swatantra found: some consolation in the fact that the heart of the rich is with us but their money is with Congress.²⁶

The developments such as the formation of Pragati in the State level and subsequently of Bharatiya Lok Dal at the national level could be seen as desperate attempt by rightist politicians to pool their waning resources to fight the Congress. But the situation was different. The urgency of

26. Rajaji (Swatantra News Letter), Bombay, March 1960, quoted in Dillip Hero, Inside India To-day, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, p.106.

1959 was absent. In 1974 the Congress no more posed grave threat to those elements on whom a 'right of the centre' challenge to the Congress could count upon. If 1967 had provided a leeway to the regional forces, the 1972 reversed the process. Congress had integrated most part of the country excepting these areas where the regional opposition was based on the strong ascriptive ties of religion, language and culture. The regional opposition in Orissa, not being based on such strong bonds, could easily be contained.

The election result in 1974 elections was uninspiring for the Pragati and disastrous for the Swatantra party. The latter could get only 21 seats. Patnaik's gain was slightly better with 35 seats. Congress having captured 69 seats formed the government with the help of CPI in a house of 147.

The reasons for the Swatantra party's failure in Pragati experiment were many. In western Orissa the absence of anti-centre psychology which the Pragati tried to exploit was absent. The Swatantra having entered into such broad-based arrangement was constrained to exploit the anti-eastern Orissa psychosis in its own area. Only the princely influence helped it retain the seats in the feudal stronghold of Bolangir and Kalahandi districts. Besides as the Swatantra

formed government twice in alliance with eastern Orissa parties, it had indirectly helped the political integration of the state. Moreover, the regional factor had become obsolete because of increased communication and expansion of education.

Finally, as was suggested elsewhere, the Swatantra party had become obsolete having served no important ideological purpose at the national level. The peculiar determinants of Orissa society had kept the Swatantra unit alive for such a long time. But the 1974 elections ended the pattern of regional political recruitment and with it the strength of regionally based parties. For the first time after 1962, Congress successfully made dents into the western strongholds of the Swatantra party in Orissa.²⁷ After this it was not surprising that at the central level there was move to create the BLD by merging Swatantra and six other rightist parties.

27. However, the Congress could not penetrate into the districts of Bolangir and Kalahandi. The Swatantra had managed to secure a total of 14 seats with a lead of 75,000 and 57,000 votes respectively in these districts against the Congress. In western Orissa the Swatantra's haul was 16 only. The erosion of its sphere of influence elsewhere in western Orissa was thus substantial. And then with R.N. Singh Deo's death in 1975, the erstwhile Swatantra did not have any influence left.

Chapter V

SWATANTRA PARTY IN ORISSA

This chapter discusses the response of the Swatantra party primarily on the question of agrarian reforms and issues concerning agriculture. The emphasis is on agricultural policy because Swatantra party both at the national and the state level was greatly concerned with these questions and the concern dictated largely by the rural base of the party. Industrial policy has been discussed marginally because the Swatantra party in Orissa hardly initiated any industrial policy. It was seized with the issue of industry only when the demand for a second steel plant in Orissa was vociferously made. Therefore, in present chapter attention is focused on Swatantra's agrarian policy.

In an earlier chapter while locating the forces responsible for the formation of the Ganatantra Parishad a partial understanding of the social composition of the Swatantra unit has been made. A discussion on above-mentioned questions will throw more light on its character. At this point, however, it should be noted that sharp divergence of views among the parties has not developed in Orissa. Barring the left parties, most other parties are not marked by striking difference in their approach to socio-economic issues. Ideological ambivalence is the general trend, with parties generally being under the control of

rural rich and middle class professionals with strong rural links.

Land Reform Measures

The Congress Ministry (1961-63) under Biju Patnaik introduced a Bill called "The Orissa Merged Territories (Village Officers Abolition) Bill, 1962". The purpose of the Bill was not particularly revolutionary. The Bhogra lands under the previous Gountias were to be taken away by the government and auctioned. The Gountias who were the officers of the ex-State administration were the representatives of the King in the villages. The office was hereditary and was awarded to persons who were favoured by the Kings. The Gountias who were predominantly from tribal communities were subsequently drawn from the Brahmins. The Gountias variously called as Pradhans, Nayaks, etc. were the masters of the whole village, and more often than not of a number of villages and had vast personal holdings, apart from being paid in cash or kind by those who cultivated rest of the village lands. Gountia was the headman of the village, the tax collector and the link with the royal administration.

The above Act intended to take away the Bhogra or the surrendered and unclaimed lands of the various tenants which the Gountia traditionally enjoyed over and above his personal

lands. The upper limit for the government takeover was fixed at five acres which, however, was a fraction of the land owned by Gountias.

The Swatantra party violently opposed the Act. Harihar Patel, the theoretician of the party said: "Gountias were not intermediaries, but they were officials who got commission for their collection works. They got money in some cases equal to that. The land was entirely his personal property. The Gountias were pioneers in reclaiming forest land into cultivable land... They had full occupancy rights over the Bhogra land and to deprive them of a portion of it as contemplated in the Bill, in the name of reservation, amounts to pure expropriation".¹

During the debate in Orissa Legislative Assembly, Nanda Kishore Mishra praised the role of the Gountias and exhorted the Congress to give fair deal to them. He demanded the Gountias be given Ryoti status over the Bhogra land. Swatantra pleaded that there was actually a lot of confusion regarding the nature of various holdings of the Gountias. N.K. Mishra who was a revenue official in the ex-Garjat administration

1. H. Patel, Assembly Debates, September Session, Orissa Legislative Assembly, 7 March 1963. (Private papers - "Contribution by Swatantra Members, Mr. H. Patel".)

of the Patna State in fact asserted that it was Gountia's personal property and therefore government had no right to take it away. An earlier Act which had taken away 5 acres of land from the Gountias of Bolangir and the Kalahandi districts was condemned. The critics demanded that the land be returned back.²

Most members of the Swatantra who were largely drawn from various feudal groups (like Bhanuganga Tribhuban Dev, Rajballav Mishra and Anirudha Dip) argued that auction of Bhogra land would be disastrous since it would take away a part of the highly productive estate of the Gountias. Besides that the minor holding created by takeover would be highly uneconomical.

Swatantra party pleaded for just compensation for all abandoned and surrendered landholdings, since the Gountias had made enormous investments in these lands, which in most cases were waste dry-lands. It was argued that for the sake of justice the High Court which was to be only a supervisory court as provided in the Act should function as the highest appellate court to take care of such cases arising out of the implementation of the Act. Swatantra MLA, Dayanidhi Naik

2. Ibid.

(Swatantra Minister 1967-71) a Gountia himself, said that the Gountiaship was purchased with money and all surrounding holdings which was called 'Khudcast' belonged automatically to a Gountia. So taking a part of it away would be tantamount to expropriation of his private property. Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo, the leader of the party said that when the Jagir lands have been converted into Ryoti (personal) land, there was no meaning in taking away the Bhogra land which was more secure.

The party's offensive was directed against the proposal of putting the land under panchayats as belonging to 'Grama Shasan' (village administration) if it could not be disposed of in the auction initially. It would be financially ruinous, since co-operative farming was considered unproductive and basically against the spirit of private enterprise. All other attempts which sought to divest the Gountias of their staggering possessions, was fought tooth and nail. Swatantra's strong defence of Gountia was because they formed the backbone of support of the Swatantra in the western region. Government conceded the demand and asked that auction would be stopped and if the panchayat did not find it convenient to cultivate those five acres it could give the land back to the Gountias or his successors for a period of five years

in lease subject to renewal in future.³

The Estates Abolition Act (Amendment) was passed in 1963. The Act was found wanting in many respects. It excluded those tenants under religious trust and endowments from its purview. Compensation upto one lakh rupees was to be paid immediately in cash. Swatantra sources expressed delight when the Revenue Minister Sadasiv Tripathy admitted that the earlier Acts which had provided for Government take-over of trust and endowment lands were found to be suffering from poor and inefficient management. This was cited to be one vindication of the Swatantra stand on collectivisation and state enterprise.⁴

The Central Government's introduction of the Constitution Amendment Bill (17 Amendment) on 6 May 1963 was condemned. The Swatantra mouth-piece Ganatantra charged the tampering of article 31 of Indian Constitution as an attempt to introduce communism through the back door and thus ending private proprietorship.⁵ A Text opposing the proposed Amendment was printed and distributed which was intended to be sent to

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3. Ganatantra, 7 July 1963.
 4. Ganatantra, 7 April 1963.
 5. Ganatantra, 9 August 1963.

the Lok Sabha Secretariat by individual proprietors of land conveying their dissatisfaction over the proposed amendment. This was a part of general strategy of Swatantra party undertaken by other State units too.

Girish Chandra Rai, the General Secretary of the state unit condemned the proposed amendment which provided for Government takeover of such lands as; leased lands to the cultivators by the absentee landlords and all kinds of Jagirs, rewards or free or equivalent land enjoyed traditionally by hereditary authority of different feudal classes. He wrote, "73 percent of the rural small farmers who constitute around 85 percent of the rural population of India who in turn form 94 percent of India's total population, invest in land and to take such precious possessions away was not at all proper".⁶ The sentiment was obviously self-contradictory since the rest 13 percent of the rural farmers who by implication were large/landholders had monopolised the land. The proposed takeover to reallocate the land to the landless should have been for the betterment of rural population, it was argued.

The Land Reforms Act of 1960, passed by the coalition Government of Congress and the Ganatantra Parishad had

6. Ganatantra, 18 July 1963.

intended to abolish intermediaries rights and fix ceiling on landholdings. The Act was amended by the Sadasiv Tripathy Government in 1965 which raised the ceiling limit from 20 to 80 acres on personal cultivation differentially applicable to various types of land, depending on their qualities. But the above Act was implemented only in 1971 by the coalition Government of the Swatantra and Utkal Congress.

The Biswanath Das Government (Swatantra-Utkala Congress) in 1973 raised ceiling to 10 standard acres for the best quality lands. The Orissa Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill of 1973 partially modified it by granting 18, 27, 54 and 81 as the highest limit for respectively class I, II, III and IV quality lands for a family of five members. It aimed at abolishing all estates including trust estates and provided for the distribution of surplus lands.

This Act initially opposed by the bigger landlords largely failed in its purpose because the ceiling limits was too large to leave much surplus land. The poorly maintained revenue records made manipulations easy. Finally, the local Advisory Committees which was constituted of local MLAs, Sarpanchs, and important persons to supervise the operation because of its class composition, lacked the requisite political leadership and will to implement ceilings.

Thus, instead of affecting genuine change, all the above Acts resulted in massive confusion and creating a false sense of achievement on the part of the administration. The various legislations relating to ceiling on land, tenancy reform agricultural labour and moneylending do not seem to have substantially altered the traditional landholdings. But as has been discussed as the laws are defective, so are the implementation of laws.

In backward state of Orissa all the parties including the Congress represent vested landed interest. Yet, all parties including Ganatantra Parishad and the Swatantra party initiated and supported land legislation. Ganatantra Parishad passed the Land Reform Act 1960 while the Swatantra passed the Main Ceiling Law in 1972. (See Table 5.1.) This only shows that passing of land legislation does not make a party more progressive. In fact, it suggests parties pass land legislation to gain a popular image.

The ~~intra-party~~ difference over the land legislation indicates ~~an interesting pattern.~~ The highest support for land reform legislation came in 1960 when the coalition of Congress and the Ganatantra Parishad was in office. Enthusiastic support was obtained again in 1972 when the Swatantra Utkala Congress coalition introduced the Main

TABLE 5.1: OPINION OF THE MLAs OF PARTIES IN POWER ON LAND REFORM POLITICS

Year	Legislation	Party in Power	Support	Oppos- ition	Absent no op- inion	Oppos- ition Absen- tee	Diffe- rence between support and op- position absent- ee	Strength of the House
1948	Tenancy	Congress(95)	36	18	6	24	+12	60
1951	Estate Abolition	Congress(67)	78	38	24	62	+16	140
1955	Tenancy	Congress(67)	69	45	26	71	- 2	140
1960	Land Reform	Congress+ Swatantra	56+ 51	81	39	20	+22	140
1965	Land Reform Amendment	Congress(83)	60	47	27	74	-14	140
1972 June	Ceiling Land	Swatantra+Utkala Congress(78)	78	29	32	61	+17	130
1972 July	Ceiling +Tenancy	Congress(94)	58	49	33	82	-24	140
1974	Ceiling +Tenancy	Congress(68)	70	59	17	76	- 6	146

Source: Collected from the Second Interim Ministry Debates of 1948, and OLA Debates of 1951, 1955, 1960, 1965, 1972 and 1974.
Jagannath Pathy, Political Elites in Orissa (Ph.D. thesis), JNU, New Delhi, 1977, p.136.

Ceiling Bill in the Legislative Assembly. Again when the so-called conservative parties introduced land legislation Bills they received higher percentage of intraparty support than the Congress did (Abstention is assumed as negative vote). In 1965 and 1972 when the Congress did introduce legislations, it found a minority of its members supporting the said Bills. Again the fact that 1/5th of the MLAs either remained absent for the whole period of debate or preferred to abstain shows the lack of interest among legislators on fundamental issues, as land distribution and agrarian reorganization.

Another striking feature borne out of the voting pattern in the Orissa Legislative Assembly is that the parties in power generally lend greater support to land legislations than the party in opposition. (See Table 5.2.) Table reveals the support index of various parties towards the progressive measures. The Congress alone consistently maintained a high percentage of support to the land legislators. (support of all members in a party considered 100 and opposition - 100.) But the Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra in opposition opposed the measure. However, when the Swatantra party formed the government with Congress it supported various progressive measures.

TABLE-5.2: PARTYWISE OPINION OF THE LAND LEGISLATIONS IN THE OLA

Party	Status in Assembly	Voting Support	Decision Opp./ Absentee	Total (3+4)	Difference between (3&4) as % of (5)	Assembly Strength
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Congress	In power	54	10	64	68.8	141
	In coalition	40	16	56	42.9	140
	In opposition	23	28	51	-9.8	140
			117	54	171	36.8
G.P./ Swatantra	In coalition (Congress)	22	29	51	-13.7	140
	In coalition (Utkala Congress)	20	16	36	11.1	139
	In opposition	1	30	31	-93.5	141
			43	75	118	-27.1
U.Congress J.Congress Congress(O) Jharkhand	In coalition (Swatantra)	28	10	38	47.4	139
	In opposition	2	19	20	-81.0	143
		30	29	59	1.7	282
PSP, SSP, SP, FB	In opposition	5	2	7	42.9	141
		5	2	7	42.9	141
CPI CPM	In opposition	5	2	7	42.9	141
		5	2	7	42.9	141
Independent	In opposition	3	8	11	-45.5	141
		3	8	11	-45.5	141

Note: The figures are reduced to average indicating equivalent of a single contest. Thus all frequencies have been standardised to a single contest for the sake of comparability. There are in all five contests standardised to one.

Source: Jagannath Pathy, Political Elite in Orissa (Ph.D. thesis), JNU, New Delhi, 1977, p.139.

Thus it appears that support for the land reform measures depends upon whether the party is in power or not. Nevertheless the Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra members because of their social outlook were generally inclined to oppose such measures notwithstanding the fact that when their party was in government it introduced land legislation.

The ideological orientation of the Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra was sharply reflected in their response to the proposed nationalization of Kendu leaf trade. The continuance of private management of Kendu leaf trade would have sustained the party financially. The private contractors paid huge donations to the village headman, the gountias of the village, around which the Kendu leaf was produced. The Gountia in return saw to it that the contractor did not have any problem in recruiting buch cutters and pluckers and managing them. The contractor in season needed large number of labour and the Gountia provided him with enough labour from the village itself. The donation though earmarked for the development of the village was pocketed by the Gountia, part of it going to the party fund as he invariably belonged to the Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra party. It was a system in which all profitted, the contractor got sufficient labour at a very low wage, the Gountia received personal gratification and the party was given substantial donation. Not surprisingly

the government suffered heavy losses as the contractors under patronage of the Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra party could secure the forest lease term after term.

The Kendu leaf constitutes one of the most profitable cash products mainly grown in the hilly areas of the western and to a lesser extent in central Orissa. Orissa to-day produces about four lakhs quintals of excellent variety of leaf, which is used in wrapping up the tobacco in Biri making. The revenue yield from this source is substantial. Till 1973 the trade was in the hands of private business.⁷ They were mostly Gujratis. The Kendu leaf contractors exercised powerful influence in state politics by making massive donations to different political parties.

7. The management of kendu leaf in the state had become a major source of controversy throughout. In the Garjat administration, N.K. Mishra who had served as the SDO of ex-Patna administration told: the contractors were leased the right of collection against a stipulated payment for a specified period. After the merger the lease system continued with minor adjustments like having two types of auctions, one for Tenants (Praja) leaf and the other for Forest leaf. This too came to be dominated by the earlier contractors since most of the contractors belonged to Gujrati community and were related by kinship they could substantially lower the quotation rate at the tenders. Again the government could not know the total quantity of production, being exclusively dependent on the estimates provided by the contractors themselves. The state lost enormous revenue due to the lack of more scientific system of management.

The Congress Ministry of Biju Patnaik brought the Kendu Leaves Control of Trade Bill 1961, which provided for nationalization of the trade. There was tremendous opposition to this Bill. An agitation was started in the western region spearheaded by the Ganatantra Parishad which condemned it as another encroachment by the state into the sphere of private trade.

Harihar Patel of Ganatantra Parishad made the party's approach clear. He said that any policy on kendu leaf should have two objects in view, (a) to safeguard the right of tenants, and (b) to safeguard the right of the pluckers. He pointed out that the coalition Government's policy in 1959-61 gave independence to the pluckers and growers to accept or reject transaction. The government should not encroach upon anybody's private property simply because a revenue earning commodity is grown in his land.⁸ Swatantra leaders also criticised awarding of large areas to the agents. They alleged that such an arrangement helped develop monopolistic tendencies.

Basically they objected to the discrimination against western Orissa which was being perpetrated by nationalizing

8. H. Patel, Assembly Debates, Orissa Legislative Assembly, 24 November 1961. (Private papers, "Contribution by Swatantra Members", Mr. H. Patel.)

the kendu leaf trade. In contrast no restrictions were imposed on cultivators in eastern Orissa who grew cash crops like, cocoanut, pan (bittle leaf), etc. It was maintained this was done to put the western Oriyas ^{at a} disadvantage.

It was argued that mainly the poor tribals of western Hills find subsistence during lean season by selling kendu leaf to the contractors. The proposed Bill would condemn them to starvation because they would ~~have~~ to sell the fresh as well the dry leaf by same flat rate to none other than the agent appointed by the government on the latter's own conditionality. In the Parliamentary Board Meeting of the Swatantra party, R.N. Singh Deo, the party president, observed that the agitation against the Kendu leaf contract system which bred unrestrained monopoly of contractors has been fast spreading in the region. "The objective of the agitation", he pointed out, "was to bring into public consciousness of the sacredness of the right of individual property".⁹

The agitation assumed such proportion obviously because it was realised that the new system which would substitute the private contractors would deprive the headman of his

9. Ganatantra, 16 May 1962.

share. Though, in the proposed Bill, there was a provision that a percentage of the profit from the trade would be assigned to the village, it was realised that the sum would be officially used, which would put an end to private manipulation.

The Swatantra Party Executive said, that "Early in 1968, the party decided to end the monopolistic trade in view of the interest of the pluckers, growers and that of state government in matter of revenue without jeopardising at the same time, the prevalent flourishing trade, in kendu leaf. It sought to progressively free the trade from monopolistic trend".¹⁰ The trade was to be conducted by appointment of Agents in the different units to collect leaves. Besides the collection from the government land, in the case of private producers, the pluckers were not compelled to sell their produce. The reason given was that compulsion was causing them great loss since they could not collect all the leaves at a time and there was no differential price, for dry leaves which fetched higher prices. The coalition Government fixed a minimum price for dry and the processed leaves by the growers. In case Agents did not

10. Resolution (Passed in the State Executive), 30 March 1968, Swatantra Party, Orissa Unit.

purchase from the growers there was a provision that the Government would purchase it from them. On the argument that it would ensure stability and confidence in the minds of Agents and purchasers the contract was increased to 3 years. These did not substantially change the earlier policy though the party claimed the tenant pluckers greatly benefitted. Clearly it was to the greater advantage of the bigger tenants and those sections who earlier benefitted from the kendu leaf trade. The Jana-Congress-Swatantra coalition Government finally fell on the question of arbitrary grant of a 20 percent rebate on the royalty rate fixed per quintal of kendu leaf by the Swatantra party's Forest Minister on the ground that there was particularly bad harvest in 1970.

The exposure of this questionable deal led to widespread public controversy on the management of the trade. Mrs. Nandini Satapathy on assumption of office appointed the Mitter Commission to enquire into the said affairs. She implemented the 1961 Kendu Leaf Nationalisation Act and established complete government control over the trade in 1973.

The 21-Point Blue Print

The Swatantra party and Mahatab's Jana Congress had reached an agreement before the 1967 elections to form an

electoral alliance. It was decided to draft a list of programmes acceptable to both of them. The result, the 21-Point Blue Print was put up as the joint manifesto in the elections and it was promised that the alliance would implement the points if returned victorious.

The blue print of 21 points on which both parties had in principle agreed to, was not to touch the traditional power structure, the rich landholders in the eastern Orissa and the feudal intermediaries of the western Orissa. The main thrust of the Blue Print was directed against corruption and administration. The Blue-print envisaged abolition of land revenues, reduction of the tax-burdens and elimination of harassment in collection of state dues. Another of its major plank was the "abolition of multifarious panchayat taxes and entrusting the panchayats with references of non-tax revenue and affecting real discentralisation as envisaged in the Directive Principles of the Constitution".¹¹ (The Blue-Print is attached in the Appendix.)

The Swatantra party on assumption of office abolished land revenue and various other panchayat imposts. Land revenue was considered by the Swatantra as the legacy of

11. The 21-Point Blue Print.

imperialistic imposition. This decision was hailed immensely by conservative interests. Land revenue was abolished. Revenue from the increased excise duty was to have balanced the Rs.2 crores loss incurred on the abolition of land revenue. Swatantra party ridiculed the opposition charge that the abolition would benefit the large land-holders by arguing that it was the smaller ryots who faced tremendous difficulty in paying the revenue taxes. Referring to the criticism of the government's increase of Cess from 25 percent to 50 percent, it retaliated by saying that if abolition of land revenue helped larger landholders it was the same class which bore the increase of burden of the Cess.¹² It maintained with concern that the increasing land hunger of the rural areas had come to a dangerous pass. To prevent the situation from going beyond the government's control the party suggested to the Government that the anabadi (unclaimed) lands and such areas out of the forest lands which had no forest growth and could be conveniently spared should be made available for this purpose.¹³ It strongly objected to the Central Government move to levy wealth tax on agricultural lands.

12. Executive Council Resolution, 3/4 July 1968, Swatantra Party, Orissa Unit.

13. Executive Council Resolution, 16 March 1969, Swatantra Party, Orissa Unit.

This it felt was an encroachment on state's authority. The party maintained, it clearly contravened the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution which excluded taxes on the capital value of agricultural land from the purview of the Central Government. The party also disapproved of the levy of excise duty on fertilizers and electric pump, which it said, hampered individual initiative in increased production of food.

The State Executive Committee of the Swatantra party recommended the following measures to reverse the strangulating effect of the "Congress Statism" on land:

1. Abolition of Agricultural Income Tax;
2. Distribution of fertilizers through private agencies to expedite distribution of fertilizers;
3. De-nationalisation of bus routes, encouragement to private bus owners, etc.

Many conservative elements in the party were not happy with the progress of Government's implementation of Swatantra policies and ideology. In a paper circulated inside the party it was observed that "though Swatantra Unit got an opportunity to translate the Swatantra ideas into the reality the process of democracy was bound to be slow in matters which were not of evidently urgent in nature. The general

approval of the people had to be secured, particularly of representatives who were to be enlightened, educated and enthused for change. The path of the least resistance had to be carved out".¹⁴

The Ganatantra Parishad during 1957-59 had opposed the creation of the food-zones on the ground that the grain-surplus states like Orissa would suffer if linked to other states chronically short of food. It had pointed out that prices will rise in Orissa if it was structurally linked with Calcutta market. The Swatantra Unit now attacked the existence of food zones on grounds of productivity. The restrictions did injustice to agriculturists and farmers as they were deprived of a proper and free market for their own produce, while they bought other consumer items in the market at exorbitant prices. Also such restrictions created corruption, smuggling and black-marketeering. It felt that a food zone embracing the whole of India should be constituted, where food commodities could move freely from one state to other.¹⁵

14. Untitled Party Papers (not dated).

15. "Food zones and compulsory procurement of food-grains", Swatantra News Letter, No.68, April/May 1969, Bombay, p.13.

Swatantra government in Orissa vigorously pursued a policy of cutting down the role and significance of Zila Parishad, cooperatives and Panchayats. In spite of this drive to reduce the role of government institutions, the conservative critics felt not enough was done by the Swatantra to curb state monopoly. This apprehension was expressed in a draft resolution which complained;

"In the main subject of monopoly in the State Transport and procurement of paddy and rice, though the State and National Leaders had advised the party, enough is not done to remove the State monopoly. If the public sector undertaking could not be wound up, at least incentive oriented methods could be evolved (for private enterprise). Transport must be left to free competition immediately. The sales tax which had been troubling the business community should be done away with. Though land revenue was abolished people were still kept in dark about Cess and other levies on land.¹⁶ It was pleaded to introduce the most successful scandinavian method of cooperatives, where individual members arrange their own fund - government's interference being absolutely

16. Six Point Draft Resolution (By Mr. S.C. Mohapatra, Jt. Secretary Swatantra Party, Orissa Unit), circulated to be discussed at State Council Meeting, Puri, 2/3 May 1969.

absent. No monopoly business or controlled commodities be given to the society. Serious thought should be given to devise ways and means to eliminate 'licence, permit, quota raj' in the state level as far as possible.

The coalition Government industrial policy was like its agricultural policy based on 'pragmatic approach and not on any doctrinaire considerations' for achieving rapid industrialisation in the state. "Establishment of industries", the policy statement said, "involves in large measure private entrepreneurs".¹⁷ The Government's policy was to encourage private investments by extending certain concessions for establishment of major, medium and small scale industrial unit in the state. Those included, availability of land on long term lease at a concessional rate of premium and rent, 12.5 percent subsidy on power consumption, exemption of the sales tax and octroi levy on raw materials and machinery for certain periods and price preference in respect of Government purchases to small scale industries. But a condition was imposed that these units provide employment to the local people. Ratios were fixed.

17. A Blue Print released by the Government in 1970 (States progress in last three years), p.5.

The State Government invited private capital and promised to vigorously pursue applications for grant of industrial licence at the central level. However, its free enterprise-directed industrial policies did not attract large number of investors. The Chief Minister R.N. Singh Deo once said, "the delicate mechanism of a coalition Government did not allow much change and development, which inhibited government's perusal of Swatantra ideology which resulted in limited result".¹⁸

On the question of location of a second steel plant in the state during the IV plan, the Swatantra-Jana Congress government assumed a confrontationist posture against the centre. Since 1964 the Orissa government tried to prevail upon the Central Government to grant two new steel plants at Bonai in Sundargarh district and at Nayagarh in Keonjhar district in the State, as they were some of the lowest-cost locations for iron and steel plants in the country.¹⁹

18. Amal Ray (Non-Congress coalitional Govt. and change: With reference to Orissa and West Bengal), in Om Prakash Deepak, The Coalition Government, Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1974, p.96.

19. In early 1964 Dr. A.N. Khosla the Governor had sent a memorandum in this regard to Central Department of Steel & Mines. Subsequently a Calcutta firm M/s Dastur & Co. Pvt. Ltd., was employed to prepare a feasibility Report for building blast furnace complexes in different regions in the country. Even though the said company submitted its report in 1966, it was kept in cold storage. When the
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It was well known that M/s. Dastur in its report suggested to the central government that Bonai and Nayagarh area "was about the best location in the country for the establishment of a large integrated steel plant".²⁰ But the Central Government decided to locate the next three plants at Vizag, Hospet and Salem and not in Orissa. This incensed the state government which now pursued the demand through an agitation. The eleven party 'Ispat Karkhana Sangram Samiti' organized a total Orissa Bund on 27 July 1970. It paralysed the essential services and resulted in the unprecedented closure of the AIR Broadcasting.²¹ On this highly emotional ground of discrimination to the state of Orissa massive mobilisation was made and the tottering government tried to wrest a fresh base of life when it was clear that even the Jana Congress was not in favour of

...contd...

Orissa government tried to contact the same consultancy organisation to prepare a feasibility report of its own, the company refused supposedly because the central government advised it against undertaking Orissa government's project. There was indignation all over and the Swatantra party pointed it out as blatant discrimination against the state - Government papers (Notes on Efforts made by the State Government of Orissa to impress upon the Centre to set up a second steel plant), not dated, p.1.

20. Ibid., p.5.

21. Statesman (New Delhi), 5 August 1970.

remaining in the coalition.

To sum up, the Swatantra party unit in Orissa did not make any sharp departure from other parties in its working as an opposition party or while in the government. Doubtless, it was constrained by the nature of coalitions it had entered into and the fact that in the state level not much scope for introducing large scale policy changes was available. Yet as the leadership of the Swatantra unit was in the hands of feudal elements it invariably lacked a clear perspective of industrialization of the province and had but an indiscreet perception of its role in the modernization of the province. The contradiction which was discussed earlier in the context of Swatantra party's free-enterprise ideology and the social composition of its members, was strongly reflected in the working of the party in the state. The party had been a regional opposition to the dominant Congress party. It did not graduate to become an ideological opponent to the Congress. This was not necessary since the 'socialism' with which the Congress party was charged at the central level was simply not an issue at the state level. Both the Swatantra and the Congress parties responded to the local challenges in similar fashions. Both the parties passed land reform measures while in government, which had become almost customary in Orissa politics. But since the Congress

party was more successful in these exercises the Swatantra party took upon itself the job of promoting Oriya nationalism where the Congress was faced with the obvious disadvantage of being a national party.

AN OVERVIEW

The formation of Swatantra party in 1959 was an important event in the political life of post-Independent India. Apparently, the Swatantra party was formed in response to the Nagpur Resolution of the Congress party passed in 1959 which envisaged joint cooperative farming in agriculture, but in fact the reasons for its creation go much earlier in time. It has been earlier pointed out that the roots of the Swatantra party can be traced to the activities of those conservative groups who not only disagreed with many aspects of Congress politics but were also affected by its political and economic policies. Among these were feudal landholders who were affected by the abolition of zamindari, obscurantist groups, and advocates of 'Gandhian politics'. The combination of these elements resented the predominance of the Congress and, above all, its modern liberal and secular posture. In addition to these divergent groups who came together on the basis of a common grievance against the Congress, there was an identifiable articulate group which exalted the ideology of 'free enterprise' and propogated the line of capitalist development for the country. This group took the initiative in forming organisations like the Forum for Free Enterprise in order to disseminate the merit of capitalism, to educate the people of the evils of socialism, and appealed to

industrialists to come out openly against the Congress.

The Nagpur Resolution, doubtless, served as the catalyst. The FFE and the AIAF marshalled all their resources and went around the country to enlist support for launching a right wing alternative to the Congress. The initial response was enthusiastic, but much of it petered out soon.

We have delineated some important developments which had vital bearing on the future of the Swatantra organisation. The modernist founders of the Swatantra party were not the representatives of the majority of industrialists. In other words, much of the big bourgeoisie in India was neither alienated from the Congress nor did they find much reason to oppose the Congress government. The mixed economy pattern the processes of planning and the limited land reform suited their interests and went a long way to usher in the capitalist path of development. Though the Nagpur Resolution caused anxiety and widespread concern, the big bourgeoisie continued to doubt the efficacy of creating an alternative political party because it feared that such an effort would not only be counter-productive but also ineffectual. The big bourgeoisie, after all, lacked the legitimising instrument of socialist ideology which the Congress possessed.

Likewise, the landed elements initially panicked and later recovered to consolidate their strength inside the Congress. They had been accommodated in the Congress in a big way and they now fought within the Congress to stall the implementation of Nagpur Resolution. They succeeded in their efforts as Congress rescinded its commitment to joint cooperatives. Their victory was evident in that Jawaharlal Nehru gave a reassurance in Parliament that cooperatives would not be implemented. For them too there was no great reason to fight the Congress from outside by creating an overtly rightist organization.

Thus, the creation of the Swatantra party as a response to alleged 'communization' of Congress party seemed irrational to many who were supposed to be the natural supporters of the new organisation. Their lack of support cost the Swatantra party both in financial as well as in ideological terms. To make good the loss suffered and to gain some influence, the party opened its door to disperate groups. These included, for instance, some regional opposition parties, led by erstwhile princes in Orissa, Bihar and Rajasthan. Though the presence of such easily identifiable feudal groups helped the party in a limited way, but in the process the party went farther away from its intended image of a secular, modern and ideological challenge to the Congress party. In

most areas, the Swatantra party was reduced primarily to a rural party where its modernist founders found themselves hopelessly out of tune with the more powerful and organised Gandhian and anti-industrial spokesmen of rural India.

Electorally, the Swatantra party never achieved national viability. It depended heavily on the influence of its members in ex-state areas as in Orissa. In the third chapter the Ganatantra Parishad antecedents of the Swatantra party in Orissa was explored. The existence of the 26 Garjat states before independence in the socio-cultural sub-region of western Orissa had made the princes very powerful. The princes' sought to create a separate state consisting of the ex-princely states but were not successful. The Ganatantra Parishad, the precursor of Swatantra party was born in the princes' endeavour to stall the merger of their states with the province of Orissa. The socio-historical support of the Swatantra party in Orissa depended largely on the regional antagonism and political differentiation between eastern and western Orissa which generated differing, often conflicting, political organisations.

The cleavage in terms of historical experience and dialect between both the regions and the circumstances accompanying the merger of the western region with the province of Orissa had induced bitterness in western Orissa.

The creation of Ganatantra Parishad in the western region by the princes and its promotion in the early years as an exclusively western Orissa party served to sustain the alienation. The princes had their own grudge against the Congress and this regional difference was of immense practical significance to them. Besides, their influence among the people of the former princely states was overwhelming. As a result, they were invincible in the western region, more specifically in the districts of Bolangir and Kalahandi. Later, when the Ganatantra Parishad and the Swatantra tried to broadbase their politics, the sub-regionalism was curbed to some extent, but never abandoned.

While the Ganatantra Parishad/Swatantra party remained powerful in the western part, the Congress party and its breakaway groups, woven around rival personalities, maintained its steady hold over eastern Orissa and met with infrequent success in the western region. This pattern of regional recruitment of political forces, reflecting the lack of political integration of the state, institutionalized the differences between both the regions. As such numerous coalitions of expediency between the rival forces were necessitated. But because of the in built contradictions none of the coalitions could be stable and fell at rapid intervals. This process of permanent instability gave rise

to defection, rampant factionalism and other unprincipled political practices.

The Swatantra party was functional from 1961 to 1974 in Orissa. After the 1962 elections the Swatantra party performed the role of a vigorous opposition, relentlessly exposing the financial irregularities committed by the Congress ministers. This was a specific local factor contributing to the general disenchantment with the Congress party in the mid-sixties. After 1967 saw Jana Congress-Swatantra coalition succeeding in forming the government.

The 1967 election demonstrated the capability of the Swatantra party to sustain its influence over traditional stronghold. This feat was not matched by the Congress party in the eastern part. This gave the Swatantra party an advantage, enabling it to form another coalition with the Utkala Congress in 1971. But it could not repeat its performance after 1971 and was forced to align with two other Congress factions to form the 'Pragati' alliance in 1973.

The party's change from the Ganatantra Parishad phase to the Swatantra party did not substantially alter its organizational structure on the lines of modern parties, a fact which reflects the marked difference between parties

at the national and the regional levels. There was no organizational discipline in terms of office work, inner hierarchy of decision-making authority, and no attempt was made to either broaden the party or to recruit effective and devoted political workers.

The Swatantra organization was instead dominated by the princes who were in the forefront of the political mobilization campaigns and helped the party to gain electoral support. The kings of Bolangir-Patna and Kalahandi formed the apex of the organizations, where all decisions were taken. The feudal landlords or 'Gountias' and 'Umrahs' formed the middle-tier leadership, and were the most effective manipulators of votes. This system was clearly reminiscent of the pre-merger princely command structure, the difference now being that the scope was much larger compared to the earlier administration in the princely states. The urban professionals, who had taken to the Swatantra party in the anti-merger sentiments were later alienated from it. Interestingly enough, the educated middle class who served in the erstwhile princely administration of Bolangir-Patna remained largely loyal to the party till the last. Because of their personal association with R.N. Singh Deo, they were able to extract much patronage, a fact which caused much bitterness and led to dissensions in the party elsewhere.

The state unit paid scant attention to the central directives because it was not dependent on the High Command for electoral support. Financially, too, the Orissa unit raised its own funds, a fact which not only enabled the state units to adopt an independent posture on several policy matters but also led it to forge local alliances often in violation of the directives of the High Command. This was best evident in the unilateral alliance-cum-amalgamation with Mahatab's Swadhin party and the Utkala Congress of Biju Patnaik in the Pragati experiment, a development which hastened the decision at the central level to end the independent existence of the Swatantra.

How do we explain the disintegration of the Swatantra party at the national level in general and Orissa in particular? This study has indicated the contradictions in the views and policies of the Swatantra governments on matters relating to agriculture and industry. Furthermore, we have attempted to highlight the distorted focus of the party. We have also argued that many of the contradictions as well its limitations stemmed from the fact that the Swatantra party was dominated by disparate social groups, dominated by feudal and semi-feudal interests, who adhered to the ideology of 'free enterprise' to promote what they perceived were their material interests.

The Swatantra unit in Orissa, on the other hand, did not have the ideological fervour projected by the party at the national level. At the same time, the local unit tried to maintain its distinctness, and identity by espousing regional causes even at the risk of appearing 'parochial'. Swatantra party tried to distinguish itself through an overdose of Oriya nationalism. An absence of radicalism in the politics of Orissa, resulted in almost all parties blaming the advanced neighbouring states for the comparative backwardness of the state leading to parochial anti-Bengali and anti-Bihari movements. The Ganatantra Parishad and the Swatantra party, not constrained by all India compulsions protested openly against the states reorganization committee report in 1956 and actively supported the demand for second steel plant in the seventies, while the Congress was constrained by the fact that it could not support movements against the central government of the Congress. But in this effort the Swatantra Party was rivalled by other eastern Orissa parties like Utkala Congress which too exploited Orissa nationalism. However, by the early seventies, the potential of regional exclusiveness was exhausted as these regions were better integrated after the decline of princely influence in the western Orissa. This obviously eroded very significantly the political basis and the *raison d'etre* as it were of the Swatantra party.

At the national level the limitations of the Swatantra party were recognized earlier which led to the gradual winding up of the party. In fact as a conservative alternative Swatantra party was eclipsed by the Jan Sangh. Swatantra party which initially played a significant role in shaping the ideology of the new organization sought to pose a secular alternative to the Congress party. Jan Sangh was rejected because of its communal ideology. By preferring to create another party the Swatantra leaders set upon themselves two important tasks. The first effort was to awaken the right-wing elements inside and outside the Congress to the danger of 'collectivization'. The second task was to wean away the traditional supporters of the Jan Sangh, to the fold of Swatantra party in order to organize a massive rightist build up capable of displacing the Congress.

Doubtless, in the second task the Swatantra party could not achieve any measure of success. Dispossessing the Jan Sangh of its supporters was difficult as it was a cadre-based party with various front organizations working to ensure sustenance. Its support was augmented by vigorous indoctrination. Besides, the Jan Sangh ideology of Hindu chauvinism and ultranationalism was relatively more influential than the Swatantra party's straight economic argument. Again, considering the more widespread appeal of the Jan Sangh,

Swatantra which was successful in pockets found it hard to displace the Jan Sangh.

The initial distrust over Nagpur Resolution and the readymade support of some anti-Congress regional parties had elevated the Swatantra party into the principal opposition to the Congress thereby eclipsing the Jan Sangh marginally. But when the 'socialistic threat' from the Congress receded the Swatantra party's fortunes also declined, whereas the Jan Sangh maintained a steady record. While the Swatantra has ended its independent existence the Jan Sangh rechristened Bharatiya Janata Party endured as the conservative alternative.

In spite of its weaknesses, the Swatantra party succeeded in reinforcing right-wing elements both inside and outside the Congress. The Swatantra party underlined the latent conservatism in Indian society, and served to assert the point that the political and economic interests of the powerful groups in Indian society could not be taken for granted.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-I

The 21-Point Blue Print adopted by the Swatantra-Jana Congress Electoral Alliance, February 1967.

1. Establishment of a clean and good Government.
2. Ruthless elimination of corruption, favouritism and nepotism at all levels and setting up of a Commission for Enquiry into charges of corruption by Ministers.
3. Setting up an institution of the type of Ombudsman for eradication of corruption.
4. Increasing efficiency, uprightness and integrity of administration and elimination of administrative delays.
5. Establishment of Rule of Law.
6. Change of outlook of the Police for public service and increasing their efficiency and sense of discipline.
7. Freeing the administration from political pressures and ensuring impartiality and fair deal to the employees.
8. Equal justice and fair deal to all.
9. Utmost economy in expenditure and strict avoidance of all wasteful expenditure.
10. Elimination of unnecessary control, permits, licenses and quotas and administration of remaining controls, permits, licenses and quotas through a non-political independent statutory Board.
11. Abolition of Land Revenue, reduction of tax burden and elimination of harassment in collection of state dues.
12. Establishment, expansion and completion of existing universities.
13. Elimination of restrictive procedures and creation of proper conditions and freedom for expansion of business and industry and creation of increasing employment opportunities.

14. Introduction of Oriya as State language in all spheres of administration.
15. Special attention for development of scheduled castes and tribes and other backward classes and underdeveloped or backward areas.
16. Abolition of multifarious Panchayat taxes and entrusting Panchayats with resources of non-tax revenue and effecting real decentralisation as envisaged in the Directives Principles of the Constitution.
17. Liberating primary education from control of Panchayat Samities.
18. Expansion of both technical and general education throughout the State with special attention to backward areas.
19. Reorientation of development plans on a practical basis with emphasis on development of Agriculture, provision of basic necessities for the people and provision of infrastructure for economic development.
20. Changing of monopoly system in Kendu leaves trade.
21. Appointment of Famine Commission for enquiry and report on all respects of the Orissa Famine of 1966.

APPENDIX-II

WORK PROGRAMMES OF THE ORISSA PRAGATI LEGISLATURE PARTY IN THE STATE OF ORISSA

1. Safeguard interests of Orissa and Orissans everywhere and in every spheres;
2. Establish efficient progressive, impartial and effective administration;
3. Fight for adequate share of Central projects and investments with a view to make up for the decades of gross neglect;
4. Ensure balanced development of the different regions of the State with weightage to backward and under-developed areas in full consultation with the people of the regions;
5. Accelerate all-round development of the State increasingly employment opportunities with assured incentives for increased production and productivity in industrial, agricultural and power sectors; and accelerate industrialisation ensuring balanced major, medium, small, village and cottage industries throughout the State for equitable industrial growth and employment in every Block for affording multiple benefits to the society;
6. Development of Paradip Port and Township and strive for establishment of Oil Refinery, ship-building yard and Chemical Fertilizer Plant, Jute Mill, etc., at Paradip; promote development of Port facilities at Chandbali and Gopalpur with Rail and Road networks from the hinterland;
7. Establishment of Boy's Naval Training School in Orissa; development of Chilka Lake including Inland Water Transport and Fisheries Harbour;
8. Strive for Jakhpura-Bhanspani with extension to Koira Valley and Mayurbhanj region, Talcher-Bimalgarh Railway Links, Khurda Road-Bolangir, Gopalpur-Bolangir and Talcher-Sambalpur Railway lines, all with through links to the three port sites, beginning with the establishment of the S.E. Rly Headquarters in Orissa;

9. Take up multi-purpose river projects from Indravati-Kolab in the South to Subarnarkeha in the North for fuller utilisation of the State's river resources within a decade with special emphasis on chronically drought and flood affected areas. Protection from flood inundation should be given top priority;
10. Ensure early implementation of the Orissa Land Reforms Act; distribute available surplus land to deserving families solely depending on agriculture so as to provide such families with an economic holding of minimum five acres; encourage early mechanical cultivation and provide adequate perennial or lift water supply; tractor and pumps to be manufactured inside the State and all other inputs to enable the cultivator to produce the maximum at all times;
11. Ensure early implementation of the Orissa lokpal and Lokayukta Act 1971 so that corruption at all levels can be eliminated;
12. Strive for early establishment of Second Steel Plant, Nickel and Lead Smelter Plants in Orissa with full participation of our people and immediate implementation of Industrial Projects for which Industrial Licenses or Letters of Intent have been received by the State;
13. Twenty-five years of planning has brought out clearly that there is no emotional involvement of masses in our planning. To correct this terrible deficiency, we would consciously strive for full implementation of the Panchayati Raj institutions with statutory authority and adequate share of the Consolidation Fund of the State, so that the people and their representatives at the lowest administrative unit of Panchayat can become fully responsible for and responsive to the great task of developing grass-root planning and execution of multi-development programmes;
14. Rearrange the State administration with larger number of Districts and several development Zones for close supervision and competition in all fields of development work with a view to ensuring equitable per capita prosperity in the entire State. Considerable structural and qualitative changes in the State's administrative apparatus have to be made to meet the present-day demands;

(This is considered imperative as the old revenue Districts are outmoded since they were based largely on maintenance of law and order and land revenue collections. The present-day guide-line for District administration should be based primarily on intensive multi-functional development programme to enable the people not only to receive maximum and speedy attention to their various problems but also to be able to participate closely with the entire Development policy and programme of the Government.)

15. Radically alter the State's education system so that the Youth develop a sense of duty and purpose and are able to utilise their knowledge and capacity in the great adventure of Orissa's rapid progress in all fields;
16. Strike down the price rise by strong administrative actions and ensure that the common man and the low income groups obtain essential commodities at the proper price; further ensure that the labour get a fair share of their contribution to productivity in factories, mines and in all other fields; and share in the responsibility of management. Fix minimum wage at Rs3.25 per day and ensure subsidised supply of rice at one rupee per kilogram to the common man;
17. Take all such progressive, legislative and administrative steps which would bring about dynamic social and economic changes and remove for ever social barriers of castes and economic exploitation of man by man.

...

Adopted unanimously.

Sd/- R.N. Singh Deo
PRESIDENT

OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
ORISSA PRAGATI LEGISLATIVE PARTY
1.2.1973.

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