

**CHANGING POLITICAL LEADERSHIP PATTERN AMONG  
TRIBALS OF ORISSA :  
A CASE STUDY OF SANTALS OF MAYURBHANJ**

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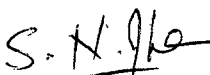
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*Ashok Kumar Mishra.*

ASHOK KUMAR MISHRA

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## INTRODUCTION

India has been the abode of many ethnic stocks and culture from pre-historic times and people with different primordial loyalties are staying here together. She can boast of a population belonging to diverse races, languages, castes and tribes. After the achievement of independence, attempts were made to integrate all these groups, with different primordial loyalties, to the mainstream of Indian life and special attention was given to the upliftment of the backward communities through various social welfare programmes. It was realized later on that the local leaders and traditional institutions may be of immense help in the implementation of these programmes, if they can be associated with planning and execution of the welfare and developmental programmes. The study of local leadership is also assuming importance due to behavioral revolution in social sciences, emphasizing the impact of leadership in influencing a group action.

Generally the tribal people do not settle alone. They go in a body with a leader. A tribe is regarded as a political unit and most of the tribes have traditional tribal institutions, which have considerable influence upon them. Each tribe is considered as a racial group (sharing a common descent), having a clear linguistic and well-defined political boundary. These indigenous tribal social institutions exist both at the village level and at higher

levels. Tradition makes these leadership posts hereditary in nature. But the advent of various social welfare schemes has slowly led to change in the outlook of tribals towards the leadership. Various agents of modernization like improved communication system, education, industrialization, urbanization, community development programme and other government-sponsored developmental programmes like TDA (Tribal Development Agency) and ITDP (Integrated Tribal Development Programmes) and politicising agents like periodic election through universal franchise, introduction of panchayatiraj, impact of Jharkhand movement and the changes in the revenue and administrative system from time to time brought about a slow but sure change in the socio-political ethos, which influences the values and belief system connected with the leadership pattern of the tribals. Whether this has led to the weakening of the traditional type of leadership and the emergence of a new pattern of leadership, that is elected, development-oriented and non-ascriptive, is the main thrust of the study.

The main objectives of the present study can be summarized as follows:

- i. To relate the leadership pattern with the socio-economic life of the tribals;
- ii. To study the traditional and emerging pattern of



- leadership among the tribals;
- iii. To study the impact of modernization and politicization on the tribal leadership; and
  - iv. To find out the change in the manner of recruitment to various leadership positions.

While conducting the study one should take precautions in defining and analysing the concepts and variables, precisely and distinctly, for they may have wider connotation and may be used loosely by different writers. Secondly, one will have to distinguish leaders from other type of authorities, decision-makers and office-bearers who may exactly fall into the category of leaders. Thirdly, at the level of generalization one must keep it in mind that though leadership is a universal phenomenon its pattern may vary from society to society in terms of their socio-economic systems. And this is also the case among the tribals. The leadership pattern among various societies may not be same because of relative impact of modernization and politicization on these societies. But at least we can generalize about the trends in the leadership pattern among the tribals, when they are open to various agents of modernization and politicization, which affects their socio-economic life.

The Santal tribe of Mayurbhanj district has been selected for the present study. The district is situated in the north-eastern region of the state of Orissa. The selection of Santals of Mayurbhanj is guided by a number of considerations. Firstly, concentration of scheduled tribe population is highest in the district: they comprised 58.6 percent of the total population and among them Santals constitute the majority - 79.37 percent of the Santal population of Orissa resides in Mayurbhanj district.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, the Santals of Mayurbhanj are more affected by the agents of modernization and politicization than other tribal communities because of their proximity to industrialized areas. This is found in a study by Mr. S.K. Palit, which says:

"The trend of development of various categories of Scheduled Tribes over the last two decades indicate certain prima facie imbalances in the rate of growth of the various communities. The more advanced communities such as Mundas, Oraons and Santals have developed at a much faster pace than the comparatively backward communities like Saoras, Juangs, Khonds, etc. A comparative study

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1. Census of India (1971), Series 16 (Orissa), Part-IA, General Report.

of some of the major tribes in respect of pre-matric and post-matric scholarships awarded annually tribe-wise would corroborate this point".<sup>2</sup>

Thirdly, Santals of Mayurbhanj have experienced different types of administrative system from the administration of Garjats (princely-states) to that of the Britishers indirectly for a short period, and finally, the present system of administration of free India. Lastly, they were influenced by the Jharkhand movement and the Naxal movement more than the other tribal communities of Orissa. This helped arousing political consciousness among the tribals of the area.

The two villages selected for the study are 'Jagan-nathi', in Kaptipada subdivision and 'Niranjan', in Rairangpur (Bamanghati) subdivision. While selecting the two villages for the study care was taken to select them in such a manner that each should represent the area under the princely state of Mayurbhanj and the area under 'Sarbarakar' of Kaptipada, representing different systems of revenue collection with which the tribal leadership was connected. While the first one - Niranjan - in Rairangpur subdivision is affected more by the agents of modernization, the

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2. S.K. Palit, "An approach to the fifth plan for tribal welfare", Adibasi, vol.XIV, 1972-73, No.1, April 1972.

second - Jagannathi in Kaptipada subdivision is not affected so much although it cannot also be claimed to be totally traditional and isolated from the impacts of modernization, and politicization. Niranjani is around 8 km. from Rairangpur and of about the same distance from Gorumahisani, an important mining town. Similarly, Jagannathi is around 2 km. from Udla and 35 km. from Baripada the district headquarter. The amenities available to the villagers can be found from table I.

For identifying the tribal leaders, observation, participant or non-participant and structured or unstructured interviews are generally considered to be the most valuable methods for the purpose. For the present study non-participant observation and non-structured interviews are the field-methods used for identifying the tribal leaders since we are taking into consideration only the institutional and formal leaders and keeping in view the illiteracy still prevalent among the respondents in the villages.

After identification of tribal leaders, they were interviewed and attempts were made to find out their attitude towards modernity, ~~their~~ their opinion about tribal leadership, goals, functions, qualities, value-orientations, leader-follower relationship, attitude

TABLE I : INDICATING AMENITIES AVAILABLE TO VILLAGERS AND THE NEAREST TOWN

Police Station/ Tahsil	Name of the Village/ Town	Total Area of the Village (in acres)	Amenities available to villagers						Nearest Town & distance in km.	Day or Days of market/hat if any held in the village	Any Religious/Historical/Archaeological place of interest
			Educational	Medical	Power Supply	Drinking Water	Communication	Postal & Telegraph			
Rairangpur	Niranjan	488	Pr.S. (1), M.E.S. (1)	--	E	W, Tk	Pr, Kr, T.	--	Rairangpur (7 km.)	Sunday	--
	Rairangpur		Pr.S. (10) (H) Sec.S (2) A.S. (1) V. (1)		E	W, Tk	Pr, Kr, T.	PTO Phone	--	--	--
Udla	Jaganathi	958	Pr.S. (1)	--	E	W, Tk	Pr, Kr	--	Baripada (35 km.); Udla (2 km.)	--	Temple
	Udla	468	Pr.S. (2) (H) M.E.S. (1) FC Sec.S (2) D A. (1)		E	W, Tk	Pr, Kr	PTO Phone	--	Tuesday Friday	--

Pr.S.=Primary School  
M.E.S.=Middle English School  
Sec.S=Secondary School  
A.S.=Arts & Science College  
A.=Arts College  
V=Vocational College  
D=Dispensary  
H=Hospital

FC=Family Welfare Centre  
E=Electricity  
W=Well  
Tk=Tank  
Pr=Pucca Road  
Kr=Kuchha Road  
T.=Train  
PTO=Post & Telegraph Office

Source: Census 1971, Series 16 (Orissa), Part X, District Census Handbook; Part A - Town & Village Directory, Mayurbhanj.

towards traditional type of leadership, panchayatiraj election participation, political parties and government-sponsored programmes. This method was also followed in case of elected M.L.A.s and M.P.s also. Socio-economic status of these leaders and the activities with which they were associated beforehand, in other words, their comprehensive biographies were also taken into account. This was applicable to both traditional and modern leaders.

Besides this, the followers mainly some of the residents of the two villages were also interviewed to know their attitude towards leadership at various levels, their attitude to modernity and their political consciousness. In addition, attempts were made to find out the shift in the image of a leader that exists in respondent's mind, their expectations, frustration and their experience with the emerging leadership pattern. While choosing the respondents among followers special care was taken to include people from different walks of life, viz., people of various ages, with varying educational background and occupation and also of some non-tribals living in these villages. The details about all these will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

**Chapter I**

**TRIBAL LEADERSHIP: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY**

Though leadership is a universal phenomenon and although the concept has been mentioned at different places, still there is no unanimity among the scholars regarding the definition of the term. That is why, according to Cecil A. Gibb, "the concept has largely lost its value for the social sciences although it remains indispensable to general discourse".<sup>1</sup> According to him, an essential feature of the concept of leading is that, influence is exerted by one individual upon another or more commonly that one or a few individuals influence a large number. But he discards the disapproved of behaviour which even influences one, because the influenced person is driven to act rather than led by such behaviour. It implies that leading is a question of shared direction in which all the parties to the leadership relation have a common or at least similar compatible goals.

When one tries to define the term 'leader', he finds variety of opinions among scholars based on their belief in the century long debate on the question "whether leaders lead or do they follow?" The questions that often strike one's mind are: Whether a person is born with qualities

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1. Cecil A. Gibb, "Leadership", Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, Macmillan and Free Press, vol.9, 1968.



that make for leadership? Can anyone achieve it? Or do circumstances elevate an individual to highest power? Does leadership require some qualities or mere charisma or can it be grabbed forcefully? Park and Tinker define leadership as "a situation-process in which a person (or persons) because of his actual or supposed ability to solve problems in the field of current group interest, is followed by others in the group and influences their behaviour".<sup>2</sup> According to W.H. Cowley, "a leader is an individual who is moving in a particular direction and who succeeds in inducing others to change".<sup>3</sup>

An UNESCO paper defines a leader as "a person who holds a position of prestige, power, authority or any sort of influence in initiating, directing, organizing or controlling the behaviour of members of a community and leads them towards some culturally defined or other goals".<sup>4</sup> Gusfield conceives it "as a social status within

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2. L. Park and I. Tinker (eds), Leadership and Political Institutions in India, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1960.
  3. Cowley in Dynamics of tribal leadership in Bihar, by L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1978.
  4. UNESCO, as quoted in Emerging patterns of rural leadership in Southern Asia, Report on Mussoorie Conference organised jointly by UNESCO Research Centre, New Delhi and NICD, Hyderabad, 1965.

an organized group, manifest in an office".<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Leela Dube "considers decision-making as an essential feature of leadership and a reliable index of leadership".<sup>6</sup> She, however, adds that while all decision-makers are not leaders all the leaders certainly are decision-makers. R.T. Lapiere and P.R. Fransworth define leadership as "the behaviour that affects the behaviour of other people more than their behaviour affects the leaders".<sup>7</sup> Cecil A. Gibbs also expresses a similar view when he says that leaders are those members of a group who influence their fellow members more, than they are influenced by them. Most of the sociological studies have emphasized the role of leadership in maintaining the integrity and viability of the group against threats, both internal and external, in minimizing dissension and conflict and in motivating members for acceptance of the collectivity, its goal and

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5. Joseph R. Gusfield, "Functional Areas of Leadership in Social movements", Leadership in India, L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.), Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1967.
  6. Leela Dube, Studies in leadership in village India and some field techniques in the study of rural leadership, an anthropological approach in emerging pattern of rural leadership in Southern Asia, Report on Mussoorie Conference organised jointly by UNESCO Research Centre, New Delhi and NICD, Hyderabad, 1965.
  7. R.T. Lapiere and P.R. Fransworth, Social Psychology, 1949.

the leadership itself. Since they give emphasis on maintenance of the system than its change they are conservative in their approach. According to them they just want to maintain order in the society and their authority, rather than helping the group in changing the social structure which may be beneficial for the society.

Some are of the opinion that "social needs work themselves out", with the result that it is more the masses or the classes which are the motivating forces than the individuals, however, powerful. For example, Hegel saw in Napoleon "the world's soul on horseback"; at the same time he believed that if Bonaparte was not there, someone else would have done this job.

#### How to identify a leader

There are various approaches to the identification of leaders in specific groups but these different approaches do not frequently lead to identification of different leaders.

The first approach "owes much to the work of Hemphill, who identifies leaders in terms of relative frequency, with which they perform defined acts of leading.

It recognizes the fact that groups develop leadership hierarchies and that differentiation between successive levels is primarily in terms of frequency of leading".<sup>8</sup> But this approach is helpful in case of highly structured organizations. In groups where there are many leaders, the difference between leaders and followers on frequency dictum may sound arbitrary.

A second approach seeks "those who exercise influence in a shared direction over other individuals".<sup>9</sup> It has been shown that the leaders may be reliably identified in terms of the extent of such influence and this approach has been followed frequently by Gibb, Seeman and Morris in identifying the leader.

An important variant of the influence criterion has been proposed by Cattell. He suggests, "the measure of a leader's influence is to be sought not so much in his influence on other group members but in his influence upon total group locomotion which is judged from the effectiveness of total performance of the group as a group".<sup>10</sup>

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8. Cecil A. Gibb, op.cit.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

At this point it is necessary to distinguish leaders or leadership from certain other similar terms and concepts. First of all we must distinguish between leadership and headship, which are very often confused. According to Gibb they differ first of all with respect to the source of authority. The leadership status itself is within a group and not outside of it. While leader's authority is spontaneously accorded to him by his fellow group members, the authority of the headman derives from some extra-group power that he has over members who cannot be called his followers.

Secondly, while the leader is not immune from group sanctions if he deviates too far from the bounds of acceptable behaviour prevailing in the group while a headman is independent of sanctions applied by the group.

Cowley also distinguishes between a leader and a headman, who because of his ability or prestige <sup>attains to</sup> a position of leadership.

J.A. Ponsien distinguishes authority from leadership and considered leadership to be more spontaneous in its origin and persistent than authority. "Authority is associated with 'must-be-obliged' while leadership with

'actual following'.<sup>11</sup> A leader is often considered to be the incarnation of the values in the group is thus emotionally accepted as a leader frequently with more power than authority".<sup>12</sup>

Philip Selznick opines that leadership is not equivalent to office holding or high prestige or authority or decision-making. However, Leela Dube gives importance to the decision-making aspect of the leaders.

#### Historical review of Leadership theory

Coming to a brief review of the leadership theory construction, one observes that during the last 30-40 years researchers in this field have shifted their attention from one aspect of leadership to the other. While some gave emphasis to leadership traits capable of characterising leaders whenever found, some others emphasized leadership as a function of the situation and dependent on social forces, while some researchers put emphasis on individual leadership studies some others emphasized plural leadership.

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11. J.A. Ponsien, An analysis of social change reconsidered, Mounter and Co., 1962.

12. Cowly, op.cit.

In the beginning leadership researchers focussed on the salient traits of the leaders which helped them acquiring leadership positions and excluded other variables. They took interest in what leaders are and in the traits which are a means of ascending the ladder of success and which separate the leaders from the non-leaders. "This is also known as the 'great man theory' of leadership. They assumed that leadership could be explained by isolating psychological and physical characters of traits presumed to differentiate the leader from other members of his group".<sup>13</sup> But it failed in establishing the existence of universal leadership traits.

The inadequacies of the trait approach led the leadership researchers to search for other variables. The emphasis then shifted from individual leadership traits to the situation. Leadership was viewed as a function of the situation".<sup>14</sup> A leader becomes a catalytic agent and represents the will of the people to change for a better situation. The 'situationists' did not abandon the search for significant personality characteristics but they tried to look for them in situation containing common elements.

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13. Hans Nagapūl, Leadership: A frame of Reference, in Leadership in India, L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.) ...

14. Ibid.

Donal D. Searing in his article "Models & Images of man and society in Leadership theory" argued that all these controversies in leadership theory "involves the two alternative images of man and society, mechanistic and organismic. In individual leadership analysis, great men in history studies usually construct the familiar mechanistic model of social action, whereas the social forces approach, typically turns the organismic model to good account. In aggregate or elite studies we find the same two models again: pluralist analyses producing the mechanistic, and stratification studies the organismic in this case".<sup>15</sup>

The mechanistic and organismic model cut across both individual leadership and elite which is summarized as follows by Searing:

	Individual Leadership Studies	Elite Studies
Mechanistic Model	Greatman in History	Pluralist
Organismic Model	Social Forces	Stratification

15. D.D. Searing, "Models & Images of man and society in Leadership theory", in G.D. Paige (ed.), Political Leadership: Readings for an emerging field, Free Press, New York, 1972.



The mechanistic image starts with the notion that society and human beings are composed of discrete parts which are not naturally integrated but linked together in stable relationships of attraction, repulsion and like. This has been marked in the atomistic parts. Secondly, the mechanistic model emphasizes on conflicting relations. Finally, it gives priority to the part over the whole or sub-system over the whole. Society is viewed as an aggregate equal to but no more than the sum of its parts.

On the contrary, the organismic image depicts society not as an aggregate of discrete parts, but rather as a system. The parts are interdependent and can be understood in terms of their relations to the whole or the complete social matrix. Secondly, it emphasizes on evolutionary change. The society evolves while the institutions and individuals within it evolve in harmony with larger organism. Finally, the system is dominant over the subsystem or the whole over the parts in this model.

According to the proponents of those who follow organismic model with individual leadership analysis "all leaders became little more than others in an inevitable historical progression. Although, Hegel, Spencer and Marx each identified different mainsprings within the

historical process they all agreed that individual leaders were unable to manipulate the controls".<sup>16</sup> From their point of view "at most no leader was more than a catalyst for events, events which from their deterministic perspective would have occurred with or without these heroic personalities".<sup>17</sup> This model has been applied in Lewis J. Edinger's "Kurt Schumacher: A study in personality & political behaviour", in James H. McRandle's study on Hitler in "The track of the wolf" and Erik Erikson's "Young Man Luthar: A study in psychoanalysis & history". In all these the social setting in which the leaders would struggle for leadership was given more emphasis.

Thomas Carlyle was the progenitor of an extreme version of mechanistic individualistic image. The leader as hero, the creator of history was accorded its most full blown expression in his writings. In this model the leader is treated as dominant over the whole, the situation. Action is considered from the leader's perspective because the situation is not well integrated. "Hargrove's study of six American Presidents and Harold Laswell's approach to individual political leadership follow this model. The

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16. G.D. Paige (ed.), Political Leadership: Readings for an emerging field, ...

17. Sidney Hood, "The hero in history", from G.D. Paige (ed.), ...

leader's actions are explained more by the internal psychological sources of his behaviour than by the influence of the systemic leadership context".<sup>18</sup>

The pluralistic leadership study based on organismic models is attributed often to Plato whose 'Republic' was a highly integrated system. In this ideal society each unit would perform its natural function as part of an integrated, organic whole and such society was controlled by a cohesive group of philosopher kings. Pareto also understood society as an integrated system of interdependent parts: atop hierarchical social organizations stand both ruling elites and potential elites. Gaetano Mosca also saw a social world organized in the same systemic configuration. He argued that 'recruitment to a ruling class follows selective standards set by a society's esteemed values and attributes in any given period'. The interrelatedness in elite research is often treated on two distinct levels. One is the elite - elite focus which describes internal characteristics of governing groups. The other is the elite-mass focus which describes relations of these rulers to the ruled. On the elite - elite level several scholars have constructed typological categories for 'closed' or

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18. D.D. Searing, op.cit.

'unified' elites. Turning to elite-man relationships William Kornhauser finds "although from the individual citizen mass society may appear atomized, when viewed as a whole its major characteristics are homogeneity and integration".<sup>19</sup>

The socio-economic factors are often accorded primacy in determining relations among the parts by the exponents of this model as is shown by C.W. Mills because of the system dominant character of the social content.

The pluralistic leadership studies based on mechanistic model present less interdependence among their parts in a less integrated and somewhat more atomized environment. Coming to the elite-elite and elite-man relationship we find divergent opinion among researchers. T.B. Bottomore finds that the most salient facts about elite groups in several industrial societies is that they are not part of a homogenous whole. Instead they are best understood as competing for power among themselves. In New Haven, Robert Dahl found different sorts of "leaders making decision in different issue areas". With regard to elite-man relationships the question turns on the degree of

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19. W. Kornhauser, The politics of mass society, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972.



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mass participation in decision-making".<sup>20</sup> In New Haven, for instance, Dahl found that from time to time elections clearly have a decisive effect on public policies.

Lacking strong interdependence the parts in this model are related by checks and balances. There is more room for group conflict over value preferences as power relations are not grounded in socio-economic positions. That's why more attention is paid to the elite itself than to its situational context.

Besides trait approach and the situationist approach some leadership researchers have also followed group-follower oriented approach. They put emphasis on the structure of the group in which the interaction among the members had taken place. Leadership was viewed as a set of functions performed by one or many members of a group under various conditions. Group-members were considered major variable in leadership research. Kenneth F. Janda considered leadership as a power phenomenon<sup>21</sup> and studied the concept of leadership in terms of the concept of power.

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20. R. Dahl, Who governs: Democracy and Power in an American City, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1972.

21. Kenneth F. Janda in G.D. Paige (ed.), ...

All the above approaches reveal only a part of the total phenomenon. That's why as Hans Nagapul pointed out all these approaches represent different facets of the same social phenomenon. According to him "leadership is a complex social phenomenon and to concentrate on anyone approach without taking into consideration the characteristics of the culture in which the group exists, is not enough".<sup>22</sup> Dube too expresses a similar view when he points out, "leadership is implicit in the processes of all human groups and it is only in the contexts of the structure norms and goals of these groups that we can understand leadership scientifically".<sup>23</sup>

### Typology of Leaders

Several attempts to develop a general typology of leaders have ended in failure. Different authors have evolved their own typology of leaders. In his "Dynamics of Leadership", Sahay evolved three types of leaders - "Traditional, who stand for old values and sentiments; Emergent, who stand for new ideas and ethos of changing

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22. Hans Nagapul, op.cit.

23. S.C. Dube, Tribal heritage of India, Vikash Publishing House, 1977.

nature; and thirdly, Traditional-Emergent, leaders with traditional learning but emerge with emergent roles".<sup>24</sup>

Hans Nagapul differentiates between four types of leaders - "Institutional, which refers to formal leaders who by virtue of their positions are expected to take leadership role; Situational, which emerges when institutional leadership proves to be inadequate in guiding the community; Dictatorial, which tends to centralize all functions in one individual and democratic which promotes responsible participations by other members".<sup>25</sup>

M.A. Ayyangar says about three types of leaders "those that are born leaders by their superior skill or ability, those that acquire leadership by consent or by force and those that have leadership thrust upon them".<sup>26</sup>

Bartlett has divided the leaders into three groups: institutional leaders, dominant leaders and persuasive leaders.<sup>27</sup> Vidyarthi makes a two-fold classification of

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24. B.N. Sahay, Dynamics of Leadership, Bookhive, New Delhi, 1966.

25. H.J. Nagapul, op.cit.

26. M.A. Ayyangar, "Tribal and rural leadership in India", in Leadership in India, Vidyarthi (ed.), ...

27. Bartlett in L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, Dynamics of Tribal Leadership in Bihar, ...

tribal leaders, traditional and modern. Traditional leaders are those who were hereditary and institutionalized. But the impact of various agents of modernization and politicization led to the emergence of new types of leaders which symbolize the aspiration and needs of the tribal people.

Leaders were also recognized in terms of the way in which they attain leadership - gradual leaders who come to prominence in a gradual manner and charismatic leader who come to prominence all of a sudden. Leaders are even classified in terms of their area of influence as suggested by Dube. "He divides them into village-level leaders, inter-village or sub-regional level and regional level and the like".<sup>28</sup>

Various approaches are suggested for the study of political leadership. One can begin by examining the classics of world literature on the subject, like Plato's 'Republic', Machiavelli's 'The Prince', Kautilya's 'Arthashastra', Stimson Bullitt's 'To be a politician', etc. But by following such approach one will fall short of the unwritten traditions in many parts of the world

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28. S.C. Dube, A framework for the study of rural leadership in transitional societies, in Emerging patterns of rural leadership in Southern Asia, Report on Mussoorie Conference organized jointly by UNESCO Research Centre, New Delhi and NICD, Hyderabad, 1965.



where man transcends his political knowledge and there is need for recording and interpretation of these relations.

Another approach would be to examine leaders in terms of their relationship to various political issues of their time. The issues include for instance freedom versus dictatorship, poverty versus wealth, war versus peace, etc. Then one can relate it with the behaviour of leaders.

A further approach would be to begin by enquiring into the concrete behaviours of political leaders in the contemporary environment. One can begin by analysing the surrounding environment and finding out as to who are the political leaders. Thus any scientific study on political leadership should start with the analysis of the surrounding environment and the identification of political leaders in it. In order to find out the changes in the political leadership pattern among the tribals we will first consider the characteristics of the tribal culture.

### Tribal Leadership Pattern

As mentioned earlier the leadership pattern of a group or community cannot be conducted without a prior understanding of the community itself. For a study of

the leadership pattern of the tribal community, one has to get himself acquainted with the ethos of the tribal culture, its structural norms and group goals. "Although everybody agrees about the distinct characteristics of the tribals, and their contacts and interaction with neighbours is even mentioned to the days of the Ramayana and Mahabharata where these tribal communities are referred to as 'Jana', still there is no unanimity of opinion among scholars as to what should be the criterion for calling a community as tribal or not."<sup>29</sup> They are even mentioned in various terms like 'Adibasi', 'aboriginal', 'Girija', 'Vanyajati' and the like.

Article 366(25) of the Constitution of India defined 'Scheduled Tribes' as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of their Constitution". S.C. Dube described a tribe as "an ethnic category defined by real or putative descent and characterized by a corporate self-identity and wide range of commonly shared traits of culture".<sup>30</sup> In other words, it is believed that they

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29. N.K. Bose, Tribal Life in India, National Book Trust of India, New Delhi, 1971.

30. S.C. Dube (ed.), Tribal Heritage of India, ...

have a common descent, consciously hold a collective self-image and possess distinctive cultural ethos. One can settle this problem of searching a definition of the term 'tribe' in either of the two ways - by examining the existing definitions or by finding out distinctive attributes of the groups regarded as tribes.

Following the first principle a tribe in an ideal state is considered to be a self-contained unit constituting a society in itself. Politically, linguistically and culturally the boundaries of the tribe as a society have been defined by various authors. First of all, it is frequently said that the tribe is a society, the members of which have a common government and share a common territory. The common government sets the frame for legal action within the society and for political action with other societies. Secondly, they are a society with distinct linguistic boundary. The possession of a common dialect is considered by many as a decisive test in demarcating the boundaries of tribal societies. Finally, 'tribe' is defined as a collection of individuals sharing a common culture. Culture here denotes those traditional beliefs, arts and practices which an individual acquires as a member of a particular society. But defining tribals as culturally homogenous community is unfortunately much

more elusive than its definition in terms of the previous two boundaries discussed earlier and that's why we can hardly consider the possession of a common culture as a primary criterion for defining a community as tribal. Summing up the tribe can be stated as a racial group having a clear linguistic and well-defined political boundary.

Following the second approach today the situation in India is found to be more complicated. Hardly any of the tribe exist as a separate society. Through constant interaction with their neighbours they have been absorbed in varying degrees into the wider society of India. Most of the aboriginal tribes have fairly intimate contact with the Hindu neighbours for a long time and a section of them look upon themselves as Hindus. (Only very small sections living in hills and deep forests have not been touched by Hinduism.) For the sake of convenience they may be designated as tribal sections of Hindu society, suggesting thereby the social fact that they have retained much more of the tribal creeds and organization than many of the castes of Hindu society. Yet they are considered as "backward Hindus"<sup>31</sup> by Dr. Ghurye.

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31. G.S. Ghurye from A.R. Desai's "Tribes in Transition", Tribe, Caste & Religion in India, Romesh Thapar (ed.), Macmillan India Ltd., 1981.

The tribal population in India belongs to various stages of cultural development according to Dr. V. Elwin. They have been divided into four classes according to their stage of cultural development. Class I is the pure tribal groups. They have a religion which is characteristic of the tribe and the belief; their tribal organization is unimpaired; their artistic and choreographic traditions are unbroken; their mythology still vitalizes the healthy organization of tribal life.<sup>32</sup>

The second category constitutes those sections of tribes who are experiencing contact with the plains and are undergoing change. Instead of a communal life this group lives an individualistic and village life. They do not share things with one another.

The tribes belonging to class III are in a peaceful state of transition. Because of outside influence they lost their moorings from their tribal economy, tribal social organization, tribal religion and tribal cultural life and have become backward Hindus constituting a sizeable section of the lower rung of Hindu society. The fourth category consists of those who retain the old tribal

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32. V. Elwin, The aboriginals, OUP, 1944.

names and their clan and totem rules though they generally adopt the full Hindu faith and live in modern style. They include "Naga Chieftains, the Gond Rajas, Bhuiyan landlords, Korkas noblemen, wealthy Santals and Uraon leaders and some high cultured Mundas". "Dr. Nirmal Kumar Bose in his 'Tribal Life in India' divides the tribes into four categories - (1) Hunters, fishers and gatherers, (2) shifting cultivators, (3) peasants and artisans, and (4) nomadic tribes".<sup>33</sup>

G.S. Ghurye in his book "The Scheduled Tribes" has divided the tribes into three classes: "First, such sections of them as the Raj Gonds and others who have successfully fought the battle and are recognized as members of fairly high status within Hindu society; second, the large mass that has been partially Hinduized; and third, the hill sections which have exhibited the greatest power of resistance to the alien cultures that have pressed upon their border".<sup>34</sup>

At this stage a discussion of the characteristics of the tribal economic life would be helpful. Economic cooperation at all levels is the fundamental basis of the

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33. N.K. Bose, Tribal Life in India, ...

34. G.S. Ghurye, The Scheduled Tribes, ...

tribal economy. There is mutual cooperation in the economic pursuits from production to consumption. Secondly, there is lack of specialization in the production of goods among the tribals unlike in the caste divided Hindu society. Thirdly, the tribal economy lacked money as a medium of exchange. Usually, they follow the barter system of exchange. Since most of the tribals reside in hilly regions, in the absence of any irrigation facility some of them have taken to shifting cultivation. Finally, most of the tribals are engaged in primary sector than in the secondary sector in comparison with the non-tribal population. But because of constant interaction with their neighbours most of these characteristics of tribal economic life are affected. Barring a very small fraction there is now little difference in economic life between them and their neighbouring peasant communities. Yet as the tribes have more or less retained their separate social identity they have been placed under the category of Scheduled Tribes.

After Independence, the problem of the tribal population acquired new significance and a conscious attempt was made to integrate them in the mainstream of Indian national life. This vast tribal population poses a baffling problem of social adjustment, of integration

in a democratic polity, integration of values and of manpower accommodation. Earlier during the colonial rule the tribesmen were left alone, partly because "the task of administration especially in the border areas was difficult and unrewarding, partly from the desire to quarantine the tribes from possible political infection and partly because certain officers held the doctrine that the people were better and happier as they were".<sup>35</sup> In modern times the situation has rapidly changed due to various reasons:

- i) the network of communication that has broken the isolation of the tribal habitant;
- ii) the rapid growth of India's population causing land hungry people to invade the jungles;
- iii) the conscious policy pursued by the government after Independence to bring the tribal regions and the tribal people within the orbit of participating democracy - its processes and laws leading to the disruption of their traditional isolation;
- iv) finally, the ambitious programmes of education, reform and change now being initiated by the

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35. V. Elwin, "Do we really want to keep them in a Zoo", Adivasis, The Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1960.



government are likely to bring to an end the older values of tribal life.

The tribes have been undergoing a variety of socio-political changes initiated by various external factors. In sharp distinction to the policy of 'isolation' some others propounded a policy of 'assimilation'. Both Christian missionaries and Hindu social reformers have in their different ways desired to see the primitives civilized, eliminate their 'inferior' social customs and ideas and assimilate their identity into the Christian Church or into the Hindu society.

Prof. N.K. Bose in his thought-provoking essay "Hindu method of tribal absorption" has compared the Hindu or Brahminical method of tribal absorption with Soviet Union's method of tribal acculturation and has shown how the method of tribal acculturation "should be studied in the context of property-relations".<sup>36</sup> According to him the mode of tribal acculturation will differ in feudal, capitalistic and socialist societies. "The mode of acculturation of the tribals in India before the 19th century took place within the matrix of a different social

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36. N.K. Bose, "Hindu Method of tribal absorption", in Cultural Anthropology and Essays, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1961.

order". After that it occurred on the basis of 'a colonial and capitalist matrix'. The problem that arises after Independence according to him is whether the difficulties of the tribal people can be resolved within the framework of a social order which is founded on a mixed economy, functional planning, and profit-oriented production for a competitive market.

The third school of thought between the above two extremes have opted for the integration of the tribals in the mainstream of Indian society. It does not presuppose assimilation and is compatible with heterogeneity of cultures. The Santals, Gonds, Onges, Nagas, Bhils and Todas may maintain their identity and distinctive cultures and yet be an integral part of the Indian society. The various cultures have not to lose their identity. The tribes while maintaining their social distinctiveness and traditional background may acquire certain common denominators of national culture, valued by all, and thereby develop a sense of national unity. The process of integration includes several points. The first is to preserve, strengthen and develop all that is best in tribal society, culture, art and language. The second, is to protect tribal economic rights. The third, is to unite and integrate

the tribes in a true heart-unity with India as a whole, so that they may play a full part in her life. And the last, is to develop welfare and educational facilities so that every tribesman has an equal opportunity with his fellow citizens of the open country and the plain.<sup>37</sup>

The Area - Mayurbhanj  
District of Orissa

The state of Orissa has as many as 62 tribes the important of which are Santals, Kondhas, Koya, Bonda, Gadha, Paraja, Juang, Oraon, Saora, Gond, Bhuiyan, Binjhal, Bathudi, etc. They amounted to around 23 percent of the total population of Orissa according to 1971 Census. Each of the tribe is marked by its own cultures. For the present study the Santals of Mayurbhanj district are chosen as the unit of analysis. Mayurbhanj is a landlocked district with an area of 10,416.6 sq. kms and is situated in the north eastern part of Orissa. It is bounded in the north by Midnapur district of West Bengal and Singhbhum district of Bihar, in the south by Keonjhar and Balasore districts of Orissa, in the west by Singhbhum and Keonjhar and in the east by Balasore district. The central part of

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37. Nehru quoted in V. Elwin's "Do we really want to keep them in Zoo", The Adivasis, ...

the district is covered by group of hills known as Simlipal range and the district is divided into four subdivisions - Sadar, Bamanghati, Panchpir and Kaptipada. The district is rich in forest and mineral wealth.

Mayurbhanj was one of the nineteen garjats or princely states (tributary states) before joining Independent India. Thus the tribal political system was thoroughly affected by the administrative system of the garjat with 'Maharaja' of Mayurbhanj as the fountain head and source of all authority and power. Then the establishment of British rule brought changes in the socio-economic life of the tribals indirectly, thus affecting their political system also. And finally, the achievement of Independence which aimed at bringing the tribals into the orbit of participating democracy and uplift the so far backward communities by extending various social welfare programmes. This affected the socio-economic life of the tribals, their cultural values and political ethos.

The purpose of this study is to examine the changes in the political leadership pattern among Santals of Mayurbhanj through various changes in their socio-economic life brought about by various agents of modernization, initiated by these social welfare programmes and by the politicisation of the tribals through periodic elections

and democratic self-government at local level. Our hypothesis is that though tribals are not exactly the same everywhere but most of them share certain common characteristics and at least in Orissa they have experienced (undergone) the same administrative systems everywhere (most of the tribal areas being earlier garjats excepting Kandhas who do not owe any allegiance to Rajas) and the impact of modernization would be a matter of degree, one can generalize from this study about the changes in the political leadership pattern of tribal communities of Orissa because of the impact of modernization and politicization on their socio-economic life.

"The tribals constitute around 58.8 percent (839,835) of the total population of Mayurbhanj"<sup>(38)</sup> and among them Santals are the most numerous. They are the largest homogenous tribe in the state. Since the Santals have no written records of their own, various theories have been advanced regarding their origins and it is very difficult to predict when and how they settled down in Mayurbhanj. But whatever their original habitat might have been authentic records show that during the eighteenth century many Santals began setting down in Chhotanagpur

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38. Government of India, Census of India, 1971, ...

TABLE II : TAHSILS WITH HIGHEST PERCENTAGE  
OF SCHEDULED TRIBES POPULATION

Tahsils	T-Total R-Rural U-Urban	Total Population	Scheduled Tribe Population	% of Scheduled Tribe to total Population	Rank
Rajgangpur	T	156,096	107,289	68.73	1
	R	134,220	99,960	74.47	1
	U	21,876	7,329	33.50	1
R. Udaigiri	T	125,258	82,252	65.67	2
	R	125,258	82,252	65.67	5
Bonai	T	177,064	115,815	65.41	3
	R	177,064	115,815	65.41	6
Udala	T	218,827	143,046	65.37	4
	R	218,827	143,046	65.37	7
Rairangpur	T	331,173	213,239	64.39	5
	R	319,947	211,536	66.12	4
	U	11,226	1,703	15.17	4

\* 79.37% of the Santal population of Orissa resides in Mayurbhanj district.

Source: Census of India, 1971, Series 16(Orissa), Part I-A, General Report.

and in the neighbouring districts of Midnapur and Singhbhum".<sup>39</sup> One may suggest that they would have started migrating to the neighbouring district of Mayurbhanj also. The Santals cleared the jungles for cultivation and slowly settled down in the area. Variation in Santal population as recorded in the census is as follows:

VARIATION IN SANTAL POPULATION<sup>40</sup>

Year	Santal Population	Percentage of increase or decrease
1891	91,490	
1901	185,149	102.1 increase
1911	214,164	15.6 "
1921	221,132	3.2 "
1931	258,195	16.7 "
1961	340,327	31.7 "

Two reasons are suggested to explain this migration. "Towards the end of the eighteenth century many of the Chhotanagpur jungles had been cleared and there was a

39. J. Troisi, The Santals, A Classified and Annotated Bibliography, Manohar, Delhi, 1976.

40. Government of Orissa, Orissa District Gazetteers, Mayurbhanj, 1967.

considerable influx of population from the infertile uplands which could not support them. Second, the new set of landlords created by the introduction of permanent settlement in 1793, began hiring Santal labourers to clear the forests and bring more land under cultivation".<sup>41</sup>

The Santals are divided into twelve exogamous 'paris' one of which is claimed to be vanished. The twelve paris are as follows: (1) Hansdak, (2) Murmu, (3) Kisku, (4) Hembrom, (5) Marandi, (6) Soren, (7) Tudu, (8) Basak (Baske), (9) Besra, (10) Paunria, (11) Seral, and (12) Bedea. Each 'paris' is further subdivided into 'khuts'. By tradition a Santal cannot marry within his own paris nor within his mother's and 'khuts'. Each 'paris' is patrilineal/patriarchal. Every Santal village includes members of different paris and the paris are never ordered in a hierarchical fashion. The family constitutes the smallest segment of Santal society. The children belong to their father's 'paris' and women adopt their husband's clan after marriage. According to the Santal law of inheritance property passes from father to sons in equal proportion and females in reality do not inherit property. Females at best are entitled to maintenance allowance or may act as custodians of property on behalf

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41. J. Troisi, op.cit.



TABLE III : SCHEDULED CASTES/SCHEDULED TRIBES LITERACY RATE (ALSO SEXWISE) IN PERCENTAGE OF MAYURBHANJ DISTRICT IN COMPARISON WITH ORISSA

	SCHEDULED CASTES/SCHEDULED TRIBES LITERACY RATE, 1971 (including 0-4 age group)			SCHEDULED CASTES/SCHEDULED TRIBES LITERACY RATE BY SEX		
	General/ SC/ST	Total	Rural	Urban	Males	Females
Orissa	General	26.18	24.09	49.00	38.29	13.92
	SC	15.61	15.14	22.57	25.98	5.17
	ST	9.46	9.20	18.17	16.38	2.58
Mayurbhanj District	General	18.05	17.00	54.63	27.97	8.00
	SC	17.23	16.88	25.40	28.59	5.60
	ST	9.64	9.54	31.91	17.17	2.14

Source: Census of India, 1971, Series 16 (Orissa), Part I-A, General Report.

TABLE IV : RURAL AND URBAN SCHEDULED TRIBES  
POPULATION OF MAYUREHANJ

		1971 Census		1961 Census	
		ST Population	% to total Population	ST Population	% to Total Population
Orissa	Total	5,071,937	23.11	4,223,757	24.07
	Rural	4,924,582	24.50	4,136,206	25.16
	Urban	147,355	7.99	87,551	7.89
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Mayurbhanj	Total	839,835	58.56*	729,764	60.61**
	Rural	836,212	59.98	727,074	61.85
	Urban	3,623	9.07	2,690	9.47

\* Ranks 1st in Orissa percentagewise whereas Koraput district ranks 1st numerically.

\*\* Ranks 2nd to Koraput district percentagewise in 1961 Census.

Source: Census of India, 1961 & 1971.

of their minor male off-spring who are the real inheritors. Though Santal women occupies comparatively inferior position, she still plays important role in Santal social organization.

### Method of Study

In the present study, leadership has been conceived to cover the formal leaders who occupied the formal positions of authority in the past or occupy it now. It is true that formal positions do not necessarily guarantee leadership characteristics. But "the formal and informal leaders play a complementary role of each for effective communication adoption of innovations".<sup>42</sup>

The study is restricted to Santals of Mayurbhanj district only. As mentioned earlier tribe is said to be a political unit and every tribe has its own socio-political organization both at the village level and at higher levels like inter-village confederation, known as Pargana. The earlier tribal leadership pattern at both the levels was ascriptive in character and the leadership positions were filled on a hereditary basis. We will try to find out any change in the leadership pattern under the impacts of

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42. Udai Pareek (ed.), Studies in rural leadership, Behavioural Sciences Centre, Delhi, 1966.

modernization and politicization which brought about socio-economic changes in tribal societies.

The study, therefore, consists of two parts: The first part describes the traditional tribal leadership pattern, the process of filling up these posts, the functions they were performing and may thus try to find out the relationship between the tribal leadership pattern with the value system of the tribals and their socio-economic conditions. Data for this part are to be collected from widely scattered historical sources. One will have to collect relevant data from similar studies, gazetteers, handbooks, government reports, monographs, etc. Secondly, interviews with some of tribals who have knowledge about the traditional leadership pattern also will be helpful. This is more or less a historical study and we will study the leadership pattern in various phases and the impact of the administrative system which tribals of Mayurbhanj had experienced will be discussed in phases. The impact of British administration and the feudatory administration of the Garjat on the leadership pattern of tribals will be studied.

The second part of the study examines the contemporary leadership pattern among the tribals. We can again divide

it into two parts. In the first part, we will collect data on the present tribal leadership pattern by conducting informal interviews with formal leadership occupying leadership positions presently. For this reason the elected tribal M.L.As and M.Ps of Mayurbhanj district and the formal leaders at village (which are chosen for the village study) panchayat or block levels will be interviewed. In the latter part the data will be collected through first hand information collected from villagers in tribal villages and through the method of observation.

In the present study two Santal villages were selected, one from Rairangpur (Bamanghat) subdivision and the other from Kaptipada subdivision and the present leadership pattern was observed and compared with the traditional leadership pattern. The purpose of selecting these two tribal villages - Niranjan (in Bamanghati subdivision) and Jagannathi (in Kaptipada subdivision) - is to see as to how on a traditional level the villages have undergone transformation in present times and to what extent the agencies of modernization like communication, education, industrialization, Community Development programme and government sponsored panchayats, periodic elections, etc. have brought changes in the traditional type of leadership and has led to the emergence of new

type of leaders. Both these villages were under different types of administrative system before independence when the areas were administered by the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj. The selection of villages from different parts is deliberate to show the impact of different type of revenue system followed in both the areas. In Niranjan, which was coming directly under the princely state of Mayurbhanj the traditional tribal leaders were in charge of collection of revenues. But in Jagannathi which was under Kaptipada directly and Mayurbhanj indirectly the traditional tribal leader was not associated with the revenue collection, which was performed by another officer specially posted for the purpose. Niranjan is situated in the region which is more open to the agents of modernization. The extension of communication facilities, industrialization, educational facilities, influence of Jharkhand movement and Naxalite movement, etc. are felt more in that region than in the region in which Jagannathi is situated. However, we have not distinguished them as totally acculturated or totally isolated villages because it is very difficult now-a-days to find out such tribal villages. And more or less all the tribal villages are influenced by the agents of modernization and at the same time they preserve some characteristics of a tribal community. The difference is only of degree.

**Chapter II**

**THE TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP PATTERN OF SANTALS**

From ancient times Santals had their own traditional leadership pattern. The past trend in the migration of Santals and their settlement shows that they usually settled in groups. "Before selecting their settlement the migratory group used to make careful readings of divinations and omens".<sup>1</sup> If a place was favourable the village was settled. A formal selection of headman and a priest and establishment of 'Jaherthan' and 'Majhithan' (the sacred places where sacrifices were offered to specific deities) were done in the beginning. The headman (Manjhi) was selected by popular opinion generally through consensus and the priest (naeki) was selected by a possessed individual through whom the 'bongas' (spirits) themselves expressed their choice. "The office-bearers were granted rent free land which passed patrilineally".<sup>2</sup> These leadership posts generally passed patrilineally to the eldest son or in his absence to the nearest kin. In some places the secular and religious leaderships are found to be combined in one person.

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1. P.O. Bodding, Traditions and institutions of the Santals, A.W. Broggers Broktrykkery, Oslo, 1942.
  2. W.J. Culshaw, "The Tribal Heritage", K.P. Chattopadhyaya, Report on Santals in Bengal, Calcutta University, 1947.



When Santals live in mixed villages they also try to keep up their traditional values and norms and maintain social cohesion among themselves. In these villages the Santal families are clustered in one part of the village and constitute a separate socio-ritual entity maintaining their separate social identity.

The Santal political structure is hierarchical in structure and they have a three-tier system working at separate levels. L.B. Prasad, in his article "Three-tier panchayat system of Santals", compares the tribal administrative structure with the three-tier panchayat system of today. Says he, "The Santals have their own panchayat system very similar to the panchayatraj three-tier system, which includes panchayats at the village level, panchayat committees at the block level and Zilla Parishad at the district level for the implementation of governmental plans and programmes".<sup>3</sup> The Santals too have a self-administrative three-tier system namely at the village level, at the 'Pargana' or inter-village level and at the area level. In this chapter we will discuss the administrative structure and the political leadership

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3. L.B. Prasad, "Three-tier Panchayat system of Santals", Vanyajati, 20(1), January 1972.

pattern at various levels and the tribal method of ostracization and excommunication of those found guilty against the tribal laws governing marriage. An attempt also will be made to find out a relationship between the change in the administrative pattern in Mayurbhanj and the role of political leaders and their scope of authority. In the next chapter we will examine the question whether the traditional type of leadership is giving place to a new pattern of leadership emerging out of changes in the socio-economic-cultural life of Santals, due to impact of agents of modernization and the constitutional changes which have taken place in independent India.

#### TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

##### 1. Village Level

The basis of Santal administration was the village. At the apex of the hierarchy of village level leaders was the village headman or the 'Manjhi'. In some places of Mayurbhanj he was also known as 'Pradhan'. While in some villages he performed only religious functions, at most of the places he had both political and religious functions. He was the formal head of the village council and the formal spokesman of the village. All important matters

of the community were brought to his notice by the 'goddet' (the messenger) and his opinion and participation was respected and desired by the community. The Manjhi could punish the guilty through the village council. His participation was expected at the time of initiation, betrothal, marriage, funeral rites in any Santal family of the village. His presence was desired in formal occasion like 'phulbhangon' (when they offer to the spirits and deities), purification ceremonies and in occasions when rice-beer is served. The dates for festival, marriage, village worships, etc. were generally settled by the headman after consulting other persons in the village. He was supposed to offer sacrifices to the deities and bongas (spirits) on behalf of the whole village.

The headmen were often economically better off in areas where it was their function to collect rents and allot land amongst tenants. One finds difference in the status and the authority the village headman exercise, according to the role he played in revenue collection. Regarding the land revenue system in the princely state of Mayurbhanj, the "Report on the Administration of Mayurbhanj for 1945-46" by the Dewan of the state Mr. B.P. Pande says: "For the purpose of land revenue administration the state has been divided into four subdivisions. The

control of the revenue administration rests with the Chief Revenue Officer. In Bamanghati, Panchpir and Kaptipada the SDO exercises both revenue and judicial powers. For the purpose of revenue collection each subdivision is divided into units of Pirs and Parganas which are placed in charge of either Sardars or Tahsildars and Naib Tahsildars the lowest collecting agent being the Pradhan or village headman".<sup>4</sup> About the land tenure system, he says: "The system of tenure is Raitwari and the tenants hold land directly under the government. The only notable exception to this is the 'Sarbarakar' of Kaptipada whose estate extends over an area of nearly 200 square miles".<sup>5</sup> In Kaptipada subdivision the function of Pradhana (Manjhi) was thus restricted only to religious and other affairs regarding social norms and the function of the collection of revenue was given to the tahsildar. But in other subdivisions the Pradhanas were enjoying enormous power of revenue collection from the villagers and allotting land to the tenants. In tribal areas above the village headman there were Sardars in charge of some villages who were collecting revenues from the headmen under them. The Sardar was enjoying enormous

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4. B.P. Pande, Report on the administration of Mayurbhanj for 1945-46.

5. Ibid.

economic and political power. So with the difference in the land revenue collection system there was difference in the role and the status of the traditional Santal leaders (Pradhans or Manjhis) in Kaptipada subdivision, where his functions were purely of social and religious nature and in other areas where they were enjoying economic power in addition to these.

### Paranik

Next to Manjhi in the hierarchy was Paranik who was to assist him in performing his functions. He was appointed in the same manners as the headman was appointed. In the absence of the headman paranik was called upon to perform the duties of the Manjhi. In some places there may be an assistant to him called 'Jogparanik' "whose duty is to assist jog-manjhi".<sup>6</sup>

Jogmanjhi: The jogmanjhi is described as the guardian of morale in P.O. Boddington's "A Santal dictionary" and in W.J. Culshaw's "The tribal heritage". He was a deputy to the headman as we find in Mayurbhanj. "His special function was to preside over the marriage ceremonies

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6. A. Campbell, "A Santali-English & English-Santali dictionary", R.M. Mcphail (ed.) (1953), from Kochar, Social organization among Santals, Editions Indian, Calcutta, 1970.

and to get evidence or statement about cases brought before the village council".<sup>7</sup>

Goddet: 'Goddet' or the 'village Beadle' is the messenger of the headman (Manjhi). He informs the villagers, summons them and collects funds in cash or in kind for specific occasions like offsprings, festivals, births and deaths, etc. Because of the enormous functions the Goddet performs, now a days it is found out that in most of the places the post is held by a person only for a year. On the 'Phoolbhangan day' (the day when Santals offer rituals to Sal tree) the term of Goddet is over and a new goddet is appointed by the Manjhi in his place for the next year. Since in bigger villages it becomes very difficult to inform the villagers by a single person, more than one goddets are chosen for convenience.

In villages where the headman does not perform spiritual functions there are 'Naekis' or the village priest who offers sacrifice to the spirits at the jaherthan on scheduled occasions on behalf of the whole village. The 'naeki' is chosen by the deities themselves through a possessed individual.<sup>8</sup> Generally, the eldest son of

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7. V.K. Kochar, Social organization among the Santals, Editions Indian, Calcutta, 1970.

8. Ibid.

the 'naeki' inherits the positions although there is possibility that he may be replaced by another individual chosen by the deities. He is also required to perform purificatory rites. In some areas of Mayurbhanj it is found that the functions of 'naeki' are performed by the Jogmanjhi who is also the guardian of morals. In some other places the spiritual or religious functions are done by the village headman or the Manjhi himself with the help of the Goddet.

There is another priest called 'Kudum naeki' in some Santal areas "who performs special sacrifices to the 'Sima-bonga', spirits of the village boundary with his own blood. He also sacrifices a fowl to 'pargana bonga'. Both these spirits are dealt by him are notoriously malevolent and have to be dealt with separately".<sup>9</sup> There used to be yet another priest called 'dihiri' selected specially at the time of annual hunt and who used to offer sacrifices to the bongas of the forest for the safety and success of the hunting parts. In some villages like Kuapara where V. Kochar made his study "the village medicine man - 'ojha' happened to hold a place of authority on account of informal leadership he created for himself".<sup>10</sup>

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9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

But he did not hold significant position in the village organization.

Village Council and its Powers and Functions

Regarding the constitution of the original village council there is no unanimity of opinion among scholars. According to some authors all the village officials constituted the village council ('Monren hor') while according to some others Monren hor originally constituted of five members. All the households were usually sending member each to the council. When any question for decision comes to the headman (Manjhi or Pradhan) he or in his absence the 'paranik' was receiving the complaint. "The Manjhi with the Monren hor decides all matters of a socio-religious, legal and quasi-legal nature of the village. They are the fountain heads of justice and custodians of Santal customs and manners, the first court of law both civil and criminal, for the Santal is generally averse to litigation in legally constituted courts and prefers arbitration of the village-elder".<sup>11</sup> The village council meetings were generally held at Manjhithan or in 'Manjhipinda'.

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11. Charulal Mukherjee, "The Santals", A Mukherjee and Co. Private Limited, Calcutta, 1962.



"Any dispute pertaining to a family was referred to the family head". The family head could make explanations. He was questionable for the conduct of any member of his family and the punishment was imposed on the family as a whole, not only on the person found guilty. The headman used to convene the village council after getting a complaint or at his own instance. If the matter was simple enough and there was enough evidence to prove some one guilty or to acquit him it was decided immediately. If there was lack of enough evidence or if the case involved some questions of tribal law a date was fixed for decision pending the collection of evidence by Jogmanjhi and vivid discussion and analysis of the traditional tribal law in question. In the beginning an attempt was made for reconciliation, if possible. If not, punishment was imposed which was generally a fine in cash or in kind (rice-beer). In most of the cases the sum collected as fine were spent in drinking rice-beer. The headman with his assembly also used to raise subscriptions for the public festivals. Besides they dealt with breaches of all social taboos by Santals. Thus the decisions were taken collectively by the village council though much depended upon the personality of the headman in influencing its decision.

## 2. Inter-Village Level

The Santal villages in their turn were combined into a number of larger groups and were placed under the supervision of a federal officer. In Mayurbhanj they were known as 'Desh Pradhan'. These federal units were coordinated under the superintendence of a Santal overchief called Parganaik. These posts were hereditary, the eldest son taking the place of his father after his death.

The inter-village council besides the Parganaik consisted of the headmen of all the villages under his jurisdiction. The federal council provided the second court of appeal in Santal tribal law. The cases which were tried in the intervillage council consisting of the headmen (Manjhis) of all the villages of that Pargana, were generally complicated in nature, for example, the case of sexual relationship of an unmarried girl and if the village headman failed to trace with whom the girl had such relationship or disputes about tribal customs, etc. The intervillage council <sup>is</sup> convened when someone complained against the decision of the village council or if the Desh Pradhana convened a meeting out of his own initiative.

### 3. The Area Level: The Highest Court of Santals

The forest sitting called 'Sendra Durup' or 'Lo: Bir Sendra' at the time of annual communal hunt in which the entire population of the region covering a number of Parganas participated was the highest court for the Santals. This extra-ordinary meeting used to take place on the conclusion of the spring flower-festival which used to give an opportunity to discuss various questions affecting the social and religious problems of the tribe and cases moved by the aggrieved party from the inter-village level were also decided. The cases decided included grave social offences necessitating 'Bitalha' (social excommunication and ostracism). "Such meetings were convened by the circulation of a mysterious notice by means of a knot tied to a rope in Mayurbhanj or a branch of 'Sal' tree carried from 'hat' (market place) to 'hat' in Santal Pargana".<sup>12</sup> The Desh Panchayat consisted of the Parganaitis or Desh Pradhans of all Parganas "presided by 'Dihiri' (the superintendent of the hunt)".<sup>13</sup>

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12. Ibid.

13. A. Campbell, op.cit.

This ancient institution is almost extinct in Mayurbhanj, as wild games are protected by the state and no question of a tribal hunt arises. So instead of this the Santals of Mayurbhanj have a form of parliament during "Sankrant basi (Mokorbasi on the second of Magh), but its authority is very much limited and restricted.

Supreme Council  
at Mokorbasi

This is the Council of Desh Pradhans which is held "at some halting place towards the river Damodar to which the Santals journey to throw the bones of their dead relations on the holy river".<sup>14</sup> Here the cases against the decisions of Desh Pradhans are appealed and frequently these appeals are admitted and tried by the council consisting of all the Desh Pradhans of various parganas. Important questions relating to the payment of bride-price or restriction of conjugal rights form the subject matter of the decisions of the Supreme Council. Parties are asked to produce evidence in support of their case. If the accused person pleads guilty he is either fined or ostracized. If he does not pay the fine in time, he is ostracized and excommunicated in lieu of the fine. In the 'Mokorbasi' council if the accused party is found guilty, the Manjhi who initially

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14. Gharulal Mukherjee, op.cit.

took cognisance of the offence is given credit, but if the evidence shows that the person so accused is not guilty, the Headman is seriously punished.

#### Method of Punishment

This was how the hierarchical three-tier administrative structure of Santals worked satisfactorily for years before the impact of other cultures and alien political and administrative structures. Social offences were dealt at various levels in the traditional way. But due to the impact of various factors these traditional leaders began losing respect and authority and signs of decay of the traditional administrative structures were found. Even during the time when Mayurbhanj was a 'garjat' the police powers had been left with the traditional leaders at various levels. Tribal village panchayats were working satisfactorily and appeals were made in the council of Pargana. The hunt council or the 'Mokorbasi' (as in Mayurbhanj) was the highest court of appeal where important cases were dealt with. And at all the levels the social offences were considered in a traditional fashion and the guilty was punished in the same way keeping in view the norms and taboos of the society. But gradually because of the impact of several factors, like that of improved

communication system, the educational facilities, impact of panchayatraj and taking away of police powers, etc., the traditional leaders began losing respect and authority. 'Police stations' have been established in all areas including the tribal ones and disappearance of the absolute police power of the traditional leaders is marked. The trail of ordinary cases has passed either to government sponsored grampanchayat or to the police-stations. Yet certain grievous social offences which are against the norms and taboos of the Santal social life are still dealt with by the traditional tribal leaders. Sachidananda in his article "Bitlaha" describes "how in carrying on this traditional operation the tribal authorities come into contact with the local administration".<sup>15</sup>

The nature of the punishment awarded to the person found guilty varies according to the degree of crime committed. Most of the offences are comparatively minor in nature and the wrong-doer is fined in most of the cases which rarely exceeds twenty to twenty-five rupees. Sometimes even a fine of rice-beer is charged on the offender. "But if a Santal breaks the Santal marriage law by marrying or

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15. Sachidananda, "Bitlaha", in The Eastern Anthropologist, vol.IX, no.1, 1955-56.

having sexual relationship within the same paris or khut (clan) or with the dikus (non-Santals) the sentence may lead to a full and immediate ostracization or excommunication of the guilty from the community known as 'Bitlaha'. One may also invite 'Bitlaha' by eating with forbidden kinsmen or touching tabooed relatives<sup>16</sup> which are considered a major crime. The institution of Bitlaha exists both among Santals of Mayurbhanj and also among Santals of Santal Pargana though with slight difference in its manner of execution.

Any case of a major nature is considered either when a complaint is made by a villager or the Manjhi himself learns of the offence. A surprise incidence of an act of illegal and clandestine intercourse may often necessitate the calling of a meeting to decide the nature of crime and punishment thereof. In the beginning if the matter is in its infancy the village council may try to settle the matter among themselves. But if the crime is either proved or the offender pleads guilty the village council then considers the degree of the crime and the attitude of the offender. If the crime is minor in nature and the parties do not intend to repeat it in future a warning

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16. V.K. Kochar, op.cit.

is served on them with the imposition of a fine. But when the incident or the crime annoys the villagers and excites intense and angry disapproval of the community as a whole the village council takes drastic action against the offenders. When the village council decides about the imposition of the Bitlaha, the Manjhi or the Pradhana of the village, first of all, informs the Parganait about the recommendation of the village council and requesting him to summon a meeting of five Manjhis. This body of five Manjhis then reopen the case and the parties are asked to provide evidence in support of their case. When the parties are found guilty by this council and the decision of the village council is confirmed then only Bitlaha can be performed. In his article "Bitlaha", Mr. Sachidananda describes vividly how 'Bitlaha' is actually performed now a days and how 'Bitlahas' take place with the permission of the subdivisional officer. According to him "on receiving such an application the Sub-Divisional Officer at once starts a revenue miscellaneous case and enquires if the proposed 'Bitlaha' has the consent of the "Disum Hor" and other allied bodies and after fully satisfying himself that the 'Bitlaha' is justified and has been conceived according to custom and customary procedure and then gives necessary permission".<sup>17</sup>

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17. · Sachidananda, "Bitlaha", The Eastern Anthropologist,



If the prior permission of the SDO is not taken then the 'Bitlaha' is stopped with the help of the police. If a call is given to assemble for Bitlaha without the permission of the council, also steps are taken for immediate withdrawal of such call. If despite this, people assemble for Bitlaha it is prevented with the help of the police.

When the council of five Manjhis give a verdict favouring a Bitlaha and the approval of the SDO is obtained a general decree of excommunication is issued and a date is fixed for the ceremony. "The date and place of Bitlaha is communicated among the entire community by means of a branch of a Sal-tree on the shoulders of a Santal from one hat (market place) to another and from one village to another".<sup>18</sup> Then a bamboo pole is fixed in the house of the offender and a leaf-plate on which some one has dined hung from this pole. On the appointed day people gather with flutes, madal (drums), bows and arrows, at a distance from the village of the offender. Obscene songs are composed against the accused person and loud drumming accompanies the songs. The crowd marches towards the offender's house with wild shouts beating the drums and blowing their flutes singing the obscene songs. "If the

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18. C. Mukherjea, op.cit.

headman of the village meets the gathering on the outskirts of the village with water in a 'lota' or pot, people would stop singing. When they reach the house of the offender, a bamboo pole is fixed at the entrance of the house of the offender with a broom and a leaf plate on which some one has dined tied to the pole. Sometimes the crowd turns violent and damage the house or household articles of the offender. Now-a-days any damage in course of performing Bitlaha is not permitted by the government and the administration takes steps to guard against excesses in course of a Bitlaha. "Destruction of property is forbidden. Vigorous propaganda has been taken up on behalf of the executive that Bitlaha must be performed in a peaceful manner as sanctioned by custom and nothing beyond usual dancing and urinating should be done".<sup>19</sup>

The Bitlaha on a non-Santal or a Christian Santal cannot be performed since a Christian Santal is governed by the Christian code and not by the tribal customs. Sometimes when attempts are made by Santals to perform Bitlaha on non-Santals the situation leads to violence. The institution of Bitlaha is more violent and frequent in Santal Pargana and other areas in comparison to that of Mayurbhanj. In Mayurbhanj if necessity arises the imposition of Bitlaha is even decided in the assembly at

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19. Sachidananda, "Bitlaha", The Eastern Anthropologist,  
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Mokorbasi after the case is heard by the village council and then at the inter-village council.

JOM JATI OR READMISSION  
OF THE OUTCASTE

The persons who are ostracized from the community because of the performance of Bitlaha against them, have to suffer a lot. They are debarred from dining with others and cannot get their children married with others. In fact, Bitlaha is not carried on a person but upon the family, the member of which is found guilty. The guilty are forced to leave the village. But if it is carried out on a person who is quite well-to-do and, therefore, finds it difficult to dispose of his property and leave the village the outcasted people continue to live in the village and seek readmission into the community. This is done by a ceremony called Jom Jati. He first of all gives up his old way which laid to a Bitlaha and subsequent ostracization. Then he informs the Manjhi about his readiness for the Jom Jati ceremony, who in turn informs to the Parganait. The Parganait then informs (twelve) other Parganaits. A big feast takes place on the day fixed for the purification ceremony. After all the purification rituals are observed the outcaste serves by

himself to all the persons sitting in rows. From that day onwards all his pollution is washed away and the outcaste is readmitted to the community. He becomes a Santal again and the Parganaite declares it before the gathering.

4. Regional variation in the scope of authority & power of traditional leaders

This is how the Santals of Mayurbhanj had a well knit traditional structure of their own. In almost all the subdivisions of Mayurbhanj irrespective of the revenue policy followed, Santal villages had secular and religious functionaries, who provided leadership to the community. In some areas the secular and the religious leadership among Santals are combined in one person and in some other areas it is divided between two persons. In Panchpir, Bamanghati and Sadar subdivisions, the formal leader of the most important territorial unit, the villages- the Manjhi or Pradhana - was entrusted with the task of revenue collection in the village. So in addition to his political power, in the execution of which he was assisted by the village council, he also enjoyed some amount of economic power. In these areas the religious functions were separately performed by other functionaries. In matters

of revenue collection there were 'Sardars' above the village headman (except in Kaptipada and Sadar subdivision) but in case of social matters, there were parganaitis with absolute police powers at the inter-village level. But at least at the lowest level the village headman or Manjhi enjoyed police powers both in respect of social offences and in matters of revenue collection.

In Kaptipada subdivision, however, the village headman had no role to play in matters of revenue collection and mostly his powers were restricted to the socio-religious matters. The religious functions were generally attached to the 'Pradhana' of the village. The functions of revenue collection at the village level in Kaptipada subdivision was entrusted with a separate functionary known as 'Tahsildar'. Unlike in other subdivisions, where there were Sardars in charge of collection of revenue from the villagers under him, 'Sarbarakar' of Kaptipada, whose estate extended over an area of 200 sq. miles was collecting revenue from the tahsildars. Thus the scope of authority of the traditional leaders at various levels varied in different areas of Mayurbhanj. Yet they were alike in many respects, at least regarding their socio-political role, the method of recruitment to leadership posts and the traditional

leadership structure. The eldest son was succeeding the father as the next chief. If he was a lunatic, a murderer, leprosy patient or if he migrates to other area, the next eldest son was occupying the office. In case the chief died issueless his immediate brother or his next brother's eldest son or his next brother's next eldest son was made the chief.

This is how the traditional formal leadership pattern of Santals existed in Mayurbhanj which shows the regional variation in the scope and power but similarity in structure of the traditional Santal leadership pattern throughout the district. Some authors have compared this traditional three-tier panchayat system, also called 'Kulhi durup' in some areas, "with the three-tier panchayat system of the post-Independence period". In the next chapter, we will try to find out the impact of various agents of modernization and politicization on the traditional tribal leadership pattern which was based on this three-tier panchayat system of the Santals.

**Chapter III**

**CONTEMPORARY TRIBAL LEADERSHIP PATTERN**

In India the process of integration of the backward with the advanced sections of the society started with the Buddhists. The study of Indian history shows that Buddhism which revolted against the existing social evils, unified different sections of the society and brought about harmony among different communities.<sup>1</sup> But this process of integration received a setback with the revival of Brahminism and the hierarchical caste structure after the downfall of Buddhism. The conflict between the forces of integration and those of disintegration continued till the advent of the Muslims to this country in the 11th century. The Muslims were strongly opposed to the Buddhists. So the Buddhists and their institutions became the target of attack for the Muslim rulers of India. Thus the forces of disintegration got a strong support from an unexpected quarter. The disintegration process went on for centuries dissociating the lower castes and the tribal sections from the mainstream of social life. Then came the Britishers. With them came the Christian missionaries with their preconceived notions regarding aborigines in the western countries. They (the Britishers)

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1. This line of argument has been further elaborated by Dr. H. Mahtab in "The Problem of the so-called tribes is more social than economic", Tribal Problems of Today and Tomorrow, P.C. Mohapatra & D. Panda (ed.) Sabari Cultural Society, Bhubaneswar, 1980.



completely ignored the social structure of India as it developed for centuries. They separated the tribal population in administrative sphere from the rest of the society. While the upper sections of the society received the benefits of modernization, the backward sections of the society including the tribals remained backward and were denied of the benefits of modernization. There was discontinuity in modernization between 'macro-structures' and 'micro-structures' and between 'the little' and 'the Great' traditions during the British period. But following Independence the modernization process in India has undergone a basic change from its colonial pattern. As an integral part of development strategy, modernization has been envisaged to encompass all the sections of the society. Attempts are made to reverse the course of separation and integrate those large sections of the society which were deprived of the process of modernization which the upper sections of the society had gone through. To integrate the tribal communities with the natural mainstream various attempts are made. Besides various development projects for the upliftment of tribals which have carried the cultural norms and role-structure of modernity to every tribal villages, the introduction of adult franchise and a federal parliamentary form of

political structure have also carried politicization to all sectors of the society. The change in the judicial structure coupled with land reforms and the elected village panchayats also affected the socio-political life of the tribals. To show the forces of modernization, working among tribals, a brief history of tribal development in Orissa is needed at this point.

#### Brief history of Tribal Development in Orissa

Apart from the Christian missionaries the tribal development in India first began with the pioneering work of 'Thakkar Bapa' (Sri Amrit Lal Thakkar) among the Bhils of Panchmahal district of Gujrat. With his 'Bhil Seva Mandal' organization he worked to wane the tribals away from drink, and to set up schools for them and get trained in some trades.

"In Orissa the initiation for tribal development was taken by the district Congress Committee of Koraput under Sri Radhakrishna Biswasray in 1937 with other prominent Congress leaders. A systematic action for tribal development spread all over Orissa and led to the formation of 'Utkal Navjeevan Mandal' in 1946 which was registered in 1947. The objects pursued by the

Mandal with its headquarter at Anugul, have been to work among tribals and other backward sections in Orissa for eradication of the evil of addiction to drink, spread of literacy and education, free the 'Gotis', etc."<sup>2</sup> The tribal development work initiated through the government departments became noticeable when the residential form of schooling known as 'Ashram schools' was first introduced in 1947. In Ashram Schools the emphasis was on occupational education like agriculture, tailoring, carpentry, etc. The scheme later came under the Tribal & Rural Welfare Department.

Prior to the Fifth Plan the development effort for the tribals was administered through the schematic budget, which provided for marginal increase in budgetary allocations a year after year. There was, however, no change in the administrative structure and the implementing machinery. The object was that these resources should be directed for welfare scheme of tribals in the Tribal Development Blocks, numbering 750 in the state of Orissa in the Fourth Plan period. "On a review of the programmes of these Blocks the Committee on Plan projects, i.e. the Shilu AO Committee

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2. Dr. Gopinath Mohanty, "New horizons and Old" in Tribal Problems of Today & Tomorrow, P.C. Mohapatra and D. Panda, (ed.), op.cit.

made the pronouncement that although the Tribal Development Blocks had made some impact much remained to be done".<sup>3</sup> In fact, the programmes failed miserably to improve the economic life of the tribals and this led to violent extremist movement in some tribal areas. Towards the closure of the Fourth Plan period, the Naxalite movement swept some tribal areas. As a result economic oriented and quick maturing programmes like Tribal Development Agencies (TDAs) were established. In contrast to earlier programmes this was to help improving the economic conditions of the tribals within a short period, through quick maturing programmes. Subsequently, at the beginning of the Fifth Plan period the tribal subplan was launched. "It envisages that all Development Blocks in a state having more than 50 percent of tribal population should be identified and constitute sub-plan area. In Orissa 118 Blocks were identified. They were constituted into Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDPs) each coterminus with a sub-division. Thus 4 TDAs and 19 ITDPs came into existence in the Fifth Plan period".<sup>4</sup>

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3. Bhupinder Singh, "Tribal Development at cross roads: A critique and a plea", Tribal Problems of Today & Tomorrow, P.C. Mohapatra and D. Panda (ed.), op.cit.

4. Ibid.

The objectives animating the subplan and ITDPs are as follows:

- i) Protection against exploitation and positive economic development should be woven into the subplan fabric;
- ii) Programmes should be framed to suit the tribal genius. In other words, they should be oriented to the tribal context. Further, since the 62 scheduled tribes of Orissa vary widely in their socio-economic acculturations, etc. status planning should be specific for a tribe or for a group of similar tribes;
- iii) There should be a totality of effect. This means that in an ITDP, resources from all sources should be pooled to mount a total effort aimed at specific goals; and
- iv) The development processes should not operate to the extinction of the distinctive tribal personality and culture. Their customs, traditions, songs and dances should remain preserved.

These government sponsored programmes may not be a total success but at least they initiated changes in the lifestyle of the tribals and the so far an almost static society started responding to these changes which

affected the leadership structure among the tribals as well. The Community Development Programme opened up vast possibilities of economic betterment and consequent social change. Efforts were made to improve the economy of the people by putting agriculture on a rational basis, improve the breed of the cattle, plant fruit trees, afford irrigation facilities, etc. Efforts were likewise made to develop a number of community organizations such as the panchayats and cooperatives, etc. The existing village institutions were also to be utilized and strengthened out of Block funds. A number of training-cum-production centres were opened for giving tribals, lessons on bamboo and cane work, toymaking, soapmaking, knitting, etc. The educational programme included the opening of a large number of basic schools. Several social education centres were also opened to give elementary lessons to adult illiterates and to serve as a place for community assemblies. In Orissa large-sized Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies in tribal areas called 'LAMPS' have been organized to extend to the tribals credit facility at low rates of interest, purchase from him his agriculture and minor forest produce and sell to him his consumer needs. Although these developmental schemes have not succeeded in bringing about a marked change as expected, at least, they are successful in initiating change in their life pattern.

"In some places the influential non-tribals in the tribal areas joined hands with the officials to strengthen their hold on the tribal population. Some of them became contractors for various constructional activities in which money had to be spent".<sup>5</sup> "In some other places only a small section of influential tribal people received a larger share of the development resources at the cost of many others".<sup>6</sup> The introduction of government sponsored panchayats in tribal areas where the traditional panchayats existed led to a conflict of jurisdiction between the traditional panchayats and statutory panchayats in some cases.

As mentioned earlier the Independence of the country gave a setback to the traditional tribal leaders in a tradition bound and isolated social structure. With Independence attempts were made to uplift and bring the so far backward sections of the Indian population including the tribals into the mainstream of Indian life and society by bringing them under the countrywide socio-political and administrative network. As it had to be done by

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5. Sachidananda, Culture Change in Tribal Bihar: Munda and Oraon, Bookland Private Limited, Calcutta, 1964.
  6. Sitakanta Mahapatra, "The Insider Diku: Boundary rules and marginal man in Santal society", Tribal Problems of Today and Tomorrow, P.C. Mahapatra and D. Panda (ed.), op.cit.

promoting induced culture change among the tribals through a number of agencies which gave rise to various types of emergent tribal leaders under the changed context. For instance, the introduction of panchayatraj marked the emergence of a new type of secularized, elected educated and urbanized leadership of the tribals. Similarly, various programmes of social and economic development which were introduced among the tribals carried new values and modern ideas. It also led to the rise of various social institutions and brought the tribals into contact with many non-tribal officials associated with the execution of these social welfare programmes.

Freedom from the colonial rule also brought in its wake a democratic form of government and sense of equality among the citizens for which periodic election of the representatives of the people became necessary. This system of electing their representatives, i.e. MLAs and MPs through democratic method and the pre-election propaganda by various political parties acquainted the tribal people with important political developments of the country. It also made them politically conscious and they became aware of their rights. The role of the leaders also changed, who acquainted them to wider socio-



economic demands in comparison with the developmental activities at other places and tried to politicize and mobilize the people. Finally, "through these elected leaders, the local tribal leadership gets integrated within the wider regional, state or national network of leadership".<sup>7</sup>

One important factor also to be kept in view is the slow process of industrialization and urbanization. Although the industrialization process is quite slow in Mayurbhanj in comparison to other tribal areas in Bihar, the proximity to the industrialized areas in other adjoining states and various mining areas of Orissa and the slow industrialization process in the district brought about transformation in values, tastes, needs, aspiration and the life style of the people. The new emerging leaders - rational, secular and educated had to cope with many problems arising out of this process of slow industrialization and urbanization of tribal areas.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF TRIBAL LEADERS

The tribal leaders, on the basis of the data collected in the field study, may be classified into several categories

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7. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, Dynamics of tribal leadership in Bihar, ...

on the basis of several criteria. But it should be also noted that even these categories are not exclusive and sometimes overlap.

First of all, the tribal leaders may be classified from the point of view of their functions. They may be classified into three types:

- i) the traditional leaders fulfilling traditional needs of the tribal society;
- ii) the modern leaders fulfilling the needs of a modern society; and
- iii) the transitional leaders - who operate both in the traditional as well as modern or emergent social structure and performs both the roles.

In his analysis of tribal leaders in Bihar, K.N. Sahay also classified them into the above three categories.

The traditional leaders were those who were operating in the traditional social structure. In a tradition-oriented tribal society they stood as the custodian of traditional values and institutions while satisfying its traditional needs. As mentioned in the second chapter, we can find the traditional leaders at various levels. While at the village level the 'Manjhi' or 'Pradhan',

'Jogmanjhi', 'Goddet', 'Naeki', 'Ojha' and others provided traditional leadership, at inter-region and other higher levels 'Parganait', 'Sardar', 'Deshmanjhi' and other provided leadership to the traditional Santal society. Sukul Manjhi of 'Jagannathi' comes under this category. Besides providing leadership they also performed religious and other necessary function in some areas.

After Independence, under new situations, with the introduction of various developmental programmes and politicization process, emerged new and modern leader for fulfilling the new needs of a changing social structure. This category includes the newly elected representatives of the people in village panchayats at local level and MLAs and MPs and party leaders at the district and the state level besides those associated with welfare programmes. Mr. Faguram Murmu, the sarpanch of 'Sanpakhna' gram panchayat, Mr. Mohan Manjhi, the wardmember from Jagannathi village may be included in this category.

Mr. Vidyarthi defines the transitional leaders as those, "who operate both in the traditional as well as modern or emergent social structure. It was because they were not in a position to shake off their old values and faith in the traditional institutions all at once,

because of their deep-rooted association with them".<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, as they were exposed to the new situations and forces of modernity, because of their fear of being drowned into oblivion of village masses, some of them tried to swim with the new events".<sup>9</sup> Mr. Faguram Murmu II, who holds the position of Manjhi in 'Niranjan' and contested elections for the post <sup>of</sup> /MLA several times may be included in this category.

Secondly, on the basis of holding social positions the tribal leaders may be classified into (a) formal leaders, and (b) informal leaders. The formal leaders are those who enjoy the privilege of leadership by occupying a position in the formal hierarchy or formal organization. These formal leaders include both traditional and modern leaders. From Manjhi and Jogmanjhi at village levels to Sardars, Parganaits and Desh Manjhis in the traditional leadership structure and from wardmember and sarpanch to MLAs and MPs form a part of the formal leadership pattern. While these posts were ascriptive in nature in traditional societies, with the change of time, they have become achieved in nature. The informal leaders on the other

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8. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, Dynamics of tribal leadership in Bihar ...

9. B.N. Sahay, Dynamics of Leadership, Bookhive, New Delhi, 1969, p.84.

hand includes those who are not associated with any type of formal hierarchy or organizations. They still hold influence over the people and people come to them for consultation as they possess some leadership qualities. The elderly people in the villages who are very often consulted by the people in facing difficult situations, i.e. even influence the voting behaviour at times and people who have more contact with the outside world may be included in this category. Keeping in view various constraints, the informal leaders are kept out of the present study and only those occupying positions in formal hierarchies are considered for the analysis of change in the leadership pattern among Santals.

Thirdly, a classification of the leaders can also be made on the basis of the level or the area at which they function. Thus we can have broadly three categories of tribal leaders on the basis of their area of functioning: (i) the village level, (ii) sub-regional level leaders, and (iii) regional leaders. The village level leaders are those who belong to the village in which they function and whose influence operation and following are confined among the people of that village. The Manjhi and other village functionaries and the new representatives like ward members are the formal village level leaders, besides

informal village level leaders like elderly people in the village and village level party workers who are not included in the study.

The sub-regional level leaders are those who wield their influence and following confined to a group of villages in an area. This category includes the sub-regional leaders of traditional leadership pattern like parganait, Sardars, etc. It also includes Sarpanch and Chairman of panchayatsamiti and other informal leaders who have influence over the people of a group of villages.

The regional level leaders include those who wield their influence and have followings even outside an inter-village ring. Their sphere of influence coincides generally with an assembly or parliamentary constituency and even in some cases on a contiguous larger area. The traditional leaders like Deshmanjhi and the new emerging leaders like late Mr. Jaipal Singh, besides the MLAs and MPs interviewed for the study, comes under this category.

As mentioned in the beginning, the purpose of the study is to see as to how on a traditional level the villages for the study have undergone transformation in modern times and to what extent the agencies of modernization, i.e. education, urbanization, community development projects,

industrialization and other government sponsored developmental programmes like TDA and ITDP and politicizing agents like periodic election through universal franchise, introduction of panchayatiraj, impact of Jharkhand movement, etc. have worked towards its disintegration and weakened the traditional type of leadership, leading to the emergence of a new type of leaders.

### VILLAGE STUDY

#### I. First Village: Niranjan

While interviewing the respondents at Niranjan it was found out that most of the villagers still look to agriculture as their source of income. As many of them have very small land holdings, they, including two Jogmanjhis, often work as agricultural labourer. Of about twenty respondents only Mr. Faguram Murmu I, the Sarpanch of Sanpakhna grampanchayat had around 30 acres of land and the present Manjhi of the village Mr. Faguram Murmu II had around 50 acres of land. Both of them are related brothers (both are sons of Mr. Mahendra Majhi but from different wives) and their grandfather was a Sardar or

the revenue collector of around 15 villages. While the present Manjhi is a lawyer by profession, some of the respondents also mentioned about their sons or son-in-laws either working in Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (TISCO) or in some other governmental offices. Of the 20 respondents around 14 were either illiterate or dropped before completing their primary education. The Sarpanch, who is a youngman of 26, joined politics, after completing his intermediate degree. The Manjhi of the village had to his credit Bachelor degrees in Arts and Law. He also unsuccessfully contested in the elections for the Legislative Assembly in 1974 from Bahalda constituency with the support of the Pragati party.

The village is cut into two 'Sahis' by a pucca road running between Gorumahisani and Rairangpur and is connected by an open space with many Mango and Sal trees which serves the purpose of village market (hat) that sits on Sundays. To one side of it, is the Jahirsthan, where the Santals offer their praying on the day of Makar for Phoolbhangan festival. On the same day every year new Jogmanjhis, one from each Sahi are selected now-a-days. Although according to the Census Report, 1971, there is only one primary school in the village, in the meantime, people are running a middle english school in the same school house. At



Rakhasahi, a high school - Rakhasahi Panchayat High School (private) - was also set up with the help of the panchayat samiti in which the present Sarpanch took an active interest.

In the process of interviewing the respondents it was found out that all of them including the non-tribals in the village had detailed knowledge about the traditional leadership pattern and their function in traditional panchayats. Almost all of them clearly knew about the manner of recruitment and the roles played by various traditional leaders in the tribal administrative structure. But many of them did not clearly know the roles of the functionaries of the present day panchayat. When asked about the role of hereditary traditional leaders in present day society most of them answered that although the Manjhi is honoured and respected in various social occasions, they complained that old systems are breaking down and they no longer enjoy any political power. The Manjhi even stated, "the post to be of a mere statutory head and recognized the division of social and political power between traditional and newly emerging leaders". However, people still gather on the 'Manjhi pinda' (corridor of the house) to decide matters of social importance. But his power to punish is restricted so much that virtually

people prefer the present day courts to that. The scope of jurisdiction of the Manjhi, the Sardar or even the Parganait is very much restricted, who enjoyed enormous power, during the days of the princely state, including the power of arbitration of revenue cases and granting of land to tenants, etc. Even the Manjhi started loosing interest in the village matters and remained absent in village meetings as complained by some villagers. On the other hand, the role of the new emerging modern leaders is on the increase. They articulate the demands of the people, mobilize them and help them in fulfilling their needs by putting forward their demands before the authorities. When the respondents were asked as to what do they see in the candidate while choosing their representatives, excepting two, all of them said that it is not the party that matters, nor even the wealth, but the ability of the leader to work for them and put forward their demand and grievances before the authority, thus, serving as a link between the authority and the people. That's why they gave importance to education and the past activities of the candidates. When asked about their present Sarpanch they mentioned about his active role in setting up the High School at Raksha Sahi and his involvement in working for the tribals and the village as a member of 'Niranjan Kalashri Yuvasangha'. He was even elected as an independent

although he made no secret of the fact that he is a member of the CPI(M). The Sarpanch was, however, of the opinion that people are not yet politically conscious, and complained that no political party has ever tried to make them conscious. When a cross-question was made as to how he got elected if people were not conscious, he answered that his party is trying in that regard and people are slowly understanding the ideology and perspectives of different political parties and the interest they represent. He even complained about the role of money in influencing the voters. When the respondents were asked as to how do they decide as to who is a better candidate, they said that during election informal discussions they discuss the past activities of the candidates and the decision they take as to whom to vote for is totally their own. When asked about the role of the Manjhi in influencing the voting behaviour almost all denied of any such influence held by the Manjhi. On the other hand they expressed the respect they give to the opinion of present day political leaders although they were not always bound by their persuasion.

Regarding their attitude to modernity the respondents complained that the benefits of modernization is inadequate and how other areas have got these benefits. They

specifically complained about the poor (or no) medical facility in the villages and government's apathy towards granting help to the High School at Rakshasahi. They made no secret of it that they will choose a person as their leader who can bring them these benefits.

When asked about their opinion about the demand for a Jharkhand state, many of them replied that only forming a new state will not solve their problems; they will have to unite and fight for their rights. Few others like Rajaram Manjhi told that he finds no distinction between the Jharkhand party and the Congress or other political parties. Even Jharkhand party people are joining hands with the Congress party, he complained. The Sarpanch Mr. Fagurem Murma I was very much against the idea of a separate state and "accused them as separatist and opportunistic, who instead of mobilizing and politicizing the people are trying to get electoral advantages by flaming up separatist trend". Regarding the relationship between the traditional and emerging political leaders in the village he said that there is no conflict between them although they have political differences.

## II. Second Village: Jagannathi

Like the primary occupation of the people of Niranjan, most of the villagers of Jagannathi also

depended heavily on agriculture as their source of income. In contrast to Niranjan, at Jagannathi not even the Manjhi, had larger landholdings. Almost all the respondents including the Manjhi of the village Mr. Sukul Manjhi had very small landholdings. Even the Manjhi of the village worked shoulder to shoulder with other tribals as agricultural labourer in other people's fields. When asked about the cause of this difference in the size of landholding between two places, Mr. Sukul Manjhi answered that unlike the Manjhis or Sardars of princely state of Mayurbhanj, the Manjhis or Pradhanas in Kaptipada area were not connected with revenue collection. It was the Tahsildar who was in charge of collecting land revenues for the sarbarakara of Kaptipada (who was in charge of administration of the area). Many of the respondents said that at times they go in groups to work in other villeges and at times engage themselves in building roads and other similar jobs as under the food for work programme. Unlike at Niranjan, where the Manjhi is an educated person and engaged in legal practice, at Jagannathi all the respondents including the Manjhi and the present day ward members, all were drop-outs.

The village Jagannathi is quite thickly populated and forms a contiguous zone. When asked about the reason

of keeping the name of village as Jagannathi which is clearly a Hindu name, Mr. Somayam Manjhi, the Jogmanjhi of the village, answered that it is because of the impact of the Gaudiya math which is quite close to the village. There is a primary school in the village and at Udla there is a High School and a college. When asked about the role of traditional leadership, the respondents viewed that his functions are restricted only to religious functions and during Magha Puja and Jahira Puja he makes offerings on behalf of the villagers. The people respect the Manjhi as he is neutral on political affairs and has a higher social status and offers prayers for the villagers. When village meetings are held in case of any conflict the Manjhi does not have any opinion except declaring the verdict which is decided by the elderly persons of the village. Unlike at Niranjan, the post of Goddet is even hereditary at Jagannathi, where Borju who is now working as a peon in the Block office at Udla holds this post. He made it no secret that although people do not prefer him to preach for any candidate, they still seek his advice as to who will be a better candidate. Mr. Somayam Manjhi, who holds the post of Jogmanjhi performs the duties of Manjhi in case of his absence, otherwise he has no specific work. Thus one important thing to note is that while at Niranjan the traditional leaders held

enormous power before Independence and with the coming of elected leadership, the traditional leaders lost their position to these new leaders, at Jagannathi the traditional leaders never hold any political power. And there is almost no change in the functions the traditional leaders were performing in the past. When questioned as to what qualities do they actually expect from their representatives (at the village level) while casting their votes, almost all of them said that the candidate should be familiar to him or must have taken active interest in village affairs. Although they give importance to his educational background, it is not the most important criterion. While choosing MLAs or MPs, 11 respondents said that they gave more importance to the party which can serve their interest, another 9 said that they cast their vote on the basis of the moral character of the candidate and his ability to work for them. Mr. Lakshana Manjhi, however, expressed his dissatisfaction towards the present system of election. He complained that the candidates came and approach<sup>ed</sup>/only during the days of election to ask for vote. But after getting elected they do not look to the problems of the voters. When asked more about the present election system he said he hated politics and except casting vote he did not know anything nor was he interested in knowing that. This clearly shows

his dissatisfaction over the nature of impersonal relationship between the present day leaders and the followers and the way the present leaders are functioning.

When the respondents were asked as to how they get themselves acquainted with the candidates, contesting for the seats of MLA or MP, they informed that most of them come to their village during the election, with the party workers and seek their support. They gather information from the discussion at Udla market and the meetings held by political parties. They also discuss among themselves and seek information from those who have outside connections, for example, the wardmember from the village, Mr. Borju who is working as a peon in the Block office at Udla. Mr. Mohan Manjhi, the wardmember from the village said that he took active part in election for MLAs and MPs and tried to influence the people.

The attitude of the respondents from Jagannathi towards modernization can be summed up in the words of the Yogmanjhi of the village, Mr. Somayam Manjhi, who said, "the government is trying to help the Adivasis and improve their living standard. But the help does not reach them because of the inefficiency of the middlemen and corrupt works like supplying of drinking water facility, which is provided to his village.



Impact of Jharkhand Movement  
on Tribal Leadership Pattern

A discussion of the impact of the Jharkhand movement on the modern leadership pattern among Santals of Mayurbhanj is necessary at this point. It can be considered as an important landmark in the development of tribal leadership as it provided a modern type of leadership completely different from traditional ones. The Jharkhand movement which is a widespread movement of socio-political importance began as a philanthropic movement in the Chhotanagpur area of Bihar and turned into a political force in the area to project its ethnic and separate identity affecting the adjoining tribal areas of West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

Mr. Vidyarthi, in his discussion of the Jharkhand movement in Bihar, divided the course of development into four phases;<sup>10</sup> (a) the formulating phase of Christian student's philanthropic movement, (b) the constructive phase of movement for socio-economic uplift, (c) the elaborative phase of the political movement; and (d) integrative phase of Jharkhand - Congress merger.

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10. L.P. Vidyarthi (ed.), "Aspects of Tribal leadership in Chhotanagpur", in Leadership in India, ...

During the first and the second phase various philanthropic organizations like 'Chhotanagpur Unnati Samaj', 'Kisan Sabha', 'Chhotanagpur Catholic Sabha', 'Chhotanagpur Adivasi Mahasabha' were formed which led to the formation of Jharkhand Party in 1949-50. "It emerged in reaction to the deep seated prejudice of the tribals against the non-tribals which to a large extent seems to be due to their historical experience with the non-tribals and their past conditioning as well reflected in their linguistic reaction on the use of the term 'Diku' (one who harasses) for the non-tribals". Almost all the leaders as well as supporters of Jharkhand in order to justify their demand for separate Jharkhand state argue that the lot of the tribals can never be improved as long as they are 'ruled' and administered by the non-tribals.

After its formation in 1949-50 the party became very popular and its candidates became victorious with overwhelming majority in the tribal constituencies of Bihar. But after 1957 General Election, its popularity started declining as "the tribals became disillusioned and disheartened mainly because of the non-fulfilment of their demand of a separate Jharkhand state...."<sup>11</sup> This

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11. L.P. Vidyarthi and K.N. Sahay, Dynamics of Tribal Leadership in Bihar, ...

led to a strong move on both sides, Congress as well as Jharkhand to come closer which resulted in the merger of Jharkhand with the Congress in 1963. But after the defeat of the Congress in 1967 and formation of a coalition government in Bihar the tribal leaders became disillusioned about the merger and the idea of the Jharkhand again haunted them. This led to the revival of several Jharkhand parties by various tribal leaders. In 1967 General Election, these parties did not fare well in tribal areas. After the election the leaders realized that none of them can win if there will be so many Jharkhand parties. As a result, a move for unity was started but it failed because of sharp differences among leaders. Various attempts were made from time to time for the merger of the splinter Jharkhand groups, but they were of little use.

Coming to the role of Jharkhand movement in Orissa we find that the ups and downs of the history of Jharkhand party in Chhotanagpur area also affected the chequered history of Jharkhand party in Mayurbhanj district of Orissa in a great way. With the rise of popularity of the Jharkhand party in the neighbouring Chhotanagpur areas before 1957 General Election the hopes and aspirations of the tribal people of Mayurbhanj for the formation of the Jharkhand state reached its apex resulting in the

election of Mr. Ramchandra Majhi, the Jharkhand candidate, in 1957 General Election for the first time. But with the decline in the popularity of Jharkhand party which led to its merger with the Congress its base was eroded from this parliamentary constituency for all time to come. There was a slight revival of Jharkhand party during the 1971 and 1974 assembly elections and each time out of 9 reserved constituencies in the district, two Jharkhand MLAs were elected to the Assembly and even in 1971 Jharkhand party joined the coalition ministry in Orissa, but they never became successful in reviving its popularity in a great way or even electing a Jharkhand member to the Parliament.

Various tribal organizations were formed from time to time for the upliftment of the tribal people like 'Mayurbhanj Adivasi Mahasabha', 'Nikhila Utkala Adivasi Congress' (NUAC), 'All India States People's Conference' (AISPC), 'Adivasi Pragati Sangha', 'Adivasi Mangal Samiti', etc. While the first one (Adivasi Mahasabha) was styled after the Chhotanagpur Adivasi Mahasabha, which played an important role in the formation of the Jharkhand party, the second (NUAC) and the third one (AISPC) were related with the 'Praja Andolan' in princely states and the All India Congress Party.

During post-Independence era, with the movement for the integration of previously princely states with the Indian Union also arose the dissent movement not to join the Union and remain independent. In Mayurbhanj against the decision of the merger of the state the tribal people raised in revolt in 1948-49. The Bombay Chronicle, March 4, 1949, reporting about the clash of tribals with the police reports: "Ten persons were killed and several others were injured in yet another clash between the police and the Adivasis which occurred Yesterday in the Baripada- Rairangpur road. About 10,000 Adivasis gathered on the Chat section of the road yesterday morning and according to official sources laid an ambush by placing boulders and other barriers on the road. The first victim was retired Forest Officer, Mr. P.N. Sinha who was driving a jeep.... Police fired blank shots and opened fire to disperse the crowd".<sup>12</sup> It was found out that the movement was led by those tribal leaders who occupied higher positions in the revenue collection system and they apprehend<sup>ed</sup> that the merger would affect their position and lead them to a position of insecurity. Later they joined the Ganatantra Parishad or the Swatantra

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12. Report on the firing at Mayurbhanj, The Bombay Chronicle, March 4, 1949.

Party which was largely a party of the earlier rulers of these princely states and big landlords. During the post-merger period Ganatantra Parishad fared well in the constituencies which were earlier parts of princely states and mostly inhabited by the tribals. It succeeded in exploiting the tribal sentiments attached to their traditional leaders. In 1952 General Election it won one out of four reserved parliamentary (ST) seats in Orissa and in 1957 it won two. In 1962 and 1967 elections the Swatantra party won two and three seats (including Mayurbhanj parliamentary seat) respectively.

Among all India political parties the performance of the Congress Party has been quite satisfactory. It won the Mayurbhanj parliamentary seat in 1952, 1962 and 1980, besides winning (one or two) seats in other reserved (ST) constituencies of Orissa in 1952, one in 1957, one in 1962, two in 1967, three in 1971, two in 1977 and all four in 1980. In 1977, Janata Party won from the Mayurbhanj parliamentary constituency and won two more seats reserved for Scheduled Tribes.

#### Education & Previous occupation of MPs

After going through the life sketches of the members of Parliament it was found out that all the five MPs who

represented Mayurbhanj were educated. Out of them two received education at high school and three other got their college education also. Almost all of them claimed agriculture as their occupation. Out of these five, two were previously government servants. While Mr. Maheswar Naik an elected M.P. in 1962 was registrar, cooperative societies and joint-stock companies, Mr. Chandramohan Singh, elected in 1977, served Orissa Police Department as a finger print expert. All the five MPs, elected from the district were associated with various tribal organizations for their upliftment before joining politics. Mr. Maheswar Naik was associated "with the state branch of All India States People's Conference; Director, development and industries, Mayurbhanj state (1932-46); M.L.A. (1944-46) (1947-49); member of provisional parliament (1950-52) and initiated Bharat Sevak Samaj".

Mr. Mahendra Majhi elected in 1967, was former member of 'Mayurbhanj Adivasi Mahasabha' and 'Ganatantra Parishad, member of 'Mayurbhanj Vidhan Parishad' 1946) and elected Desh Majhi in 1951-56.

Mr. Chandramohan Singh, elected in 1977 was previously associated with Praja Andolan Movement; Adivasi Congress; Indian National Congress and Utkal Congress; Secretary Adivasi Pragati Sangha, Member of INTUC and Indian National

Mine Worker Federation; M.L.A. from 1961 to 1967 and served as deputy minister for labour, home, revenue and excise.

The present MP, Mr. Man Mohan Tudu was minister of Tribal and Rural Welfare Department of Orissa (1967-70); was the founder chairman of Adivasi Mangal Samiti, formed forest cooperative societies for the benefit of the tribal people.

This is to provide a detailed account of the association of the present day formal leaders of the tribals (especially the tribal MPs from Mayurbhanj since Independence) with various associations, organizations and movements for the improvement of the conditions of the tribals. This indicates their involvement with the present day problems faced by the tribals and how they help the tribal society in highlighting their problems and articulating their demands.

#### OPINION OF MLAs ON TRIBAL LEADERSHIP

To find out the attitude of modern tribal leaders, to different aspects of leadership, informal and unstructured interviews with the present MLAs of Mayurbhanj were arranged. Out of nine MLAs from constituencies reserved



for scheduled tribe candidates interviews could be arranged only with five. Besides the life sketches of MLA elected in 1961 (earliest possible available record) was compared with that of the members of the present assembly to find out any significant change in the outlook of the voters while electing their leaders.

The MLAs of Rairangpur, Udla, Karanjia, Bahalda and Hangriposi were interviewed separately and attempts were made to seek their knowledge of traditional tribal political structure and the earlier leadership pattern, and they were asked to compare it with the present leadership structure. Besides, an attempt was made to find out their attitude towards tribal problems - economic, social and cultural - their attitude towards various political parties including the Jharkhand Party, the way they approached the voters and what according to them were the attributes to which the voters gave importance while electing their leaders.

In the process of the interview it was found that almost all the respondents had a sound knowledge about the traditional tribal political structure and the role of traditional leaders. None of the respondents was found to be holding any traditional leadership posts. They were aware of the manner of recruitment to the hierarchical

traditional leadership structure at various levels and they gave a clear hint to the difference in the revenue collection system, with which traditional tribal leaders were associated at some places. Mr. Siddhilal Murmu, the MLA from Rairangpur constituency described vividly as to how the officer for revenue collection in tribal areas and the traditional tribal political leadership pattern was closely knitted. According to him the economic status of the traditional tribal leaders in the area under Mayurbhanj state were higher not only from other tribal people from those areas but also from those traditional tribal leaders from areas which were not directly under the princely state of Mayurbhanj and had no connection with the revenue collection system. After Independence, the tribal leaders, enjoying a higher economic status, could get to themselves various benefits which were opened to the tribal people, including the educational facilities and thereby still became capable of maintaining the higher status they were enjoying before the introduction of the system of election.

According to the respondents the tribal people are not very much conscious about their political rights, as the electoral system was quite foreign to them, but with participation in subsequent elections they are

becoming politically conscious. While choosing their representatives the voters take into account various attributes like the educational qualifications of the candidates, their concern about the problems of the tribals, their ability to bring to them the benefits of various developmental programme. Mr. Kangoi Singh, the MLA from Bangriposi was, however, of the opinion that the charisma of party leaders and the importance of a political party works as charms on voters, while electing their representatives.

All of them, when asked as to how they approached the voters, said that taking the help of modern means of communication, they generally approached the villagers through the persons whom the villagers respected. At some places they approached through their party workers and at others they took the help of traditional leaders.

The MLAs were also asked about the impact of Jharkhand movement on the leadership pattern and its future. Mr. Siddhilal Murmu, who was earlier elected on Jharkhand ticket and served as a Minister in the Swatantra-Utkal Congress-Jharkhand coalition ministry, when asked as to why he left Jharkhand party and preferred to join the Congress (I), stated that he saw no hope in the fulfilment of the demand for a separate Jharkhand

state and the people are quite disillusioned about the Jharkhand movement and realized that it will only impair the developmental activities. Although the popularity of the Jharkhand Party was on the decline, still its importance as a political force, which projects the ethnic and separate identity of the tribals of the adjoining areas could <sup>not</sup> be totally overlooked.

While analysing the biographical sketches of the members of the Legislative Assembly, elected from reserved constituencies of Mayurbhanj in 1961 (including one elected from Bangriposi in 1964 by-election), it was found that out of seven MLAs elected from reserved (ST) constituencies, three got their education upto M.E. (middle education) standard, one of them was a matriculate, two more passed intermediate of Arts, and the other one was a graduate with Bachelor degree in Law. When this figure was compared with that of the present MLAs, elected from reserved constituencies, it is found that in contrast to the 1961 figure, the educational qualifications of present MLAs are much higher. Out of nine MLAs from the reserved (ST) constituencies, only one was under matric, another two matriculate and one more passed intermediate of Arts, three more were graduates, the remaining two did

their post-graduation one of them having LL.B. degree, as well. Thus elected members from tribal constituencies in later years are found to be more qualified than those elected to the earlier assemblies. Out of the nine MLAs elected in 1980, two were previously serving as teachers and one more was practising law. All of them took interest in the service to their community and associated themselves with various tribal organizations and before getting elected proved their ability to serve the community in different capacities.

Thus, to sum up, a marked change was observed in the role of modern political leadership pattern from that of the traditional one. In comparison to the traditional leaders, the modern leaders are more educated and development-oriented. The difference in the role and the manner of recruitment and the division of political and social responsibilities is a matter to be noted. The demarcation of functions among the leaders at different levels and the regional differences found in the revenue collection system and the impact of modernizing agents were also quite important. Besides this the attitude of the leaders to various agents of modernization and politicization; and the attitude of the followers towards their leaders were also discussed and analysed.

## **Chapter IV**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

This is an attempt which provides a deep insight into the understanding of the leadership pattern of the tribals of Orissa. In politics, each situation provides a different leader and it is the ecological setting, nature of economy and type of social structure which determine the leadership pattern of a community. The introduction of various modernizing agencies and the politicization processes led to a change in the socio-political ethos of the tribals. It resulted in the weakening of the traditional leadership structure and emergence of a new pattern of leadership. One important point to be kept in the mind is that the leadership pattern among various tribal communities may not be same because of relative impact of modernization and politicization on these societies. But we can at least generalize about the trend in the leadership pattern among the tribals when they are open to various agents of modernization and politicization.

The objective of the present study is to relate the leadership pattern with the socio-economic life of the community and to find out any change in the nature, function and organization of tribal leadership with the introduction of various modernizing and politicizing agencies. Besides filling up a gap in the much neglected

tribal polity, the study may prove helpful to those who are associated with planning and execution of developmental programmes in tribal areas and those who consider seriously the involvement of local leadership in the execution of the developmental programmes.

The study covers the nature, function, organization and recruitment pattern of tribal leadership - both traditional and transitional. It makes a comparative study of village-level, subregional and higher (area) level leaders. The regional variation even at the same level of leadership structure is also studied. Besides these, attitude of modern leaders towards various modernizing and politicizing agents, their reaction to the Jharkhand movement and followers' attitude to the change in the leadership pattern, etc. were also covered in the study.

Methodologically, the study has taken into consideration only the formal leaders, keeping in view the time and resources at hand. Two Santals villages of Mayurbhanj - 'Niranjan' and 'Jagannathi' were selected for the study and interviews were held with the local level leaders and the followers. The sitting MLAs, who were available were interviewed and they put forward their opinion on the tribal leadership pattern, Jharkhand movement and their reaction to various modernizing and



politicizing agents. The biographical sketches of the earlier MLAs and MPs were also analysed to find out any significant change or continuity.

In the first chapter, a brief theoretical discussion of the leadership phenomenon is done. Besides discussing various definitions of a leader given by different authors, various approaches for identification of leaders were discussed. A comprehensive historical review of leadership theory was also done and the term 'leader' is distinguished from terms used similarly. A scholarly attempt made by Donald D. Searing in relating the models and images of man and society with leadership theory was found particularly interesting and useful, where the mechanistic and organismic model of man and society cutting across both individual and elite leadership studies were described in clear term.

After this a brief study of the tribal leadership pattern is examined in the light of studies of some reputed sociologists and anthropologists. This helped us in understanding the ethos of the tribal culture, its structural norms and group goals of the Santals of Mayurbhanj. The area chosen for the study has been described providing the details of the administrative system, as it has evolved over time.

In the second chapter, the three-tier traditional hierarchical political structure of the Santals is discussed. It starts from the way the migrating tribal groups settle themselves in areas and how the selection of their leaders passed on generation after generation before the introduction of various modernizing and politicizing agents. Then the traditional leadership pattern at different levels, e.g. the village level, the pargana or inter-villages level and the area level is discussed. Different functionaries at each level, the nature of their job, their manner of recruitment and their scope of authority, etc. were described. Besides this, the regional variation in the status and authority of the traditional leaders because of difference in the revenue collection system is also shown clearly. The functions of village council and the role played by the village level leaders in settling disputes and the method of punishment at different levels including the institution of 'Bitlaha' - a typical tribal method of punishment - is also discussed.

The third chapter discusses the process of integration of the tribal communities with the national mainstream, which was initiated by various developmental programmes and the politicization process in the post-Independence era. The modernizing process is discussed with a brief

account of the history of tribal development in Orissa, including the present day Integrated Tribal Development Programme (ITDP) and the Tribal Development Agency (TDA). Various agents of modernization and politicization, e.g., improved communication and educational facilities, impact of industrialization, urbanization, introduction of panchayatiraj and universal adult franchise, etc. which affected the life style of the Adivasis including their political leadership pattern are also examined. An account of the field study of the two selected villages, e.g. 'Jagannathi' and 'Niranjan', is given, which includes unstructured interviews with formal leaders at village levels and the existing traditional leaders, interviews with the villagers regarding their reaction to the traditional and the present day leadership pattern, etc. The influence of new emerging leaders at the local level vis-a-vis the traditional leaders, with much reduced authority is compared.

At higher levels some of the present day tribal leaders occupying a position in the formal leadership hierarchy, e.g., the MLAs, were interviewed. The biographical sketches of these leaders were compared with that of the earlier MLAs to find out any significant change or continuity in their educational status, party

affiliation, economic status, etc. They were also asked as to how they approach the vast number of voters during elections and the role played by the existing traditional leaders in influencing the voters.

A small discussion of the Jharkhand movement in influencing the trends of tribal politics is also discussed. It is shown, how with the growth and decline of the movement for a separate Jharkhand state in the adjoining tribal areas of Bihar and West Bengal, the popularity of the Jharkhand party in Mayurbhanj also went through ups and downs and the performance of the party in general elections.

In a study of biographical sketches of members of the Parliament and the Legislative Assembly elected from reserved constituencies of the district some interesting data were found regarding the educational status and previous occupation of the modern tribal formal leaders. It was found out that the elected members in later years are more qualified in comparison to those elected to earlier assemblies. Besides this, after an analysis of the previous occupation of members it was found that more and more members of the present assembly were previously government servants, or were in such positions where they could help the tribals in redressing their

grievances or putting forward their demands before appropriate authority, than it was in case of members of the earlier assemblies most of whom were agriculturists.

It is necessary at this point, to sum up the main findings which emerge out of this study of the tribal leadership pattern.

From a historical perspective, the traditional leadership pattern among the tribals, in the beginning was not so much diversified. When the tribals settled in a particular place they elected their leaders who was the sole authority in religious as well as secular matters. But later on with the variations in the revenue collection system, in some places the traditional leaders acquired wide economic powers with a higher economic status. In those areas the traditional leaders became powerful with wide economic and political powers. But in those areas where another functionary was appointed for revenue collection, the status of the traditional tribal leadership declined with the splitting up of his authority. The functionary with wide economic power came to acquire most of the political powers, leaving only the religious matters to the traditional tribal leaders. The leadership status got split up in the areas where the traditional leader had no revenue collection power

as we find in Kaptipada area.

After Independence with the introduction of the panchayatiraj system and the system of electing leaders on the basis of adult franchise, the political powers were taken away from the traditional tribal leaders, in all the areas. This led to a considerable decline in the status of the traditional leaders. The power of collecting revenue which was earlier entrusted to the traditional leaders, in some areas, were also taken away with the uniform revenue collection policy and appointment of specific officials for the purpose. With the introduction of law courts and installation of police stations the power of punishment, enjoyed earlier by the traditional leaders also declined considerably. The elected panchayats and elected leaders started taking the place of traditional panchayats and the traditional leaders.

We also find that the ancient institutions, called 'Sendra Durup' or 'Lo Bir Sendra' at the time of the annual communal hunt, which served as the highest court of appeal is now almost extinct in Mayurbhanj, as wild games are protected by the state and no question of a tribal hunt arises. The 'Supreme Council at Mokerbasi', Council of Deshpradhanas - a proto-type of 'Sendra Durup' is held now-a-days. But its authority is very much

restricted and limited to matters of petty social matters only.

Another important point is that the nature of the job of the traditional leaders who were operating in a traditional social structure, was by and large conservative. Because in a tradition-oriented tribal society they stood as the custodian of traditional values and institutions while satisfying its traditional needs. But in comparison to them the new emerging leaders are more and more development-oriented and help the society fulfilling the new needs of a changing social structure.

It is also found that the recruitment pattern to the leadership positions now-a-days is quite different from that of the traditional leader. The earlier traditional leadership posts were hereditary and ascriptive in nature - leadership positions passing patrilineally to the eldest son or in his absence to the nearest kin. Almost all the leadership positions at village level like Manjhi, Jogmanjhi, Goddet, Paranik were filled up in the same manner. At the inter-village level (Pargana) and the area level also the posts were hereditary. But with the introduction of the adult franchise and the process of democratic decentralization the newly created leadership posts have become achieved in nature. Various

modern leadership posts at the village level, e.g. the wardmember, Sarpanch, etc. and for the representatives to the Assembly and the Parliament are filled up through the process of universal adult franchise.

One interesting development which was marked during the study was that in the areas where the revenue collection job was associated with the traditional leadership posts and the status of the traditional leadership positions has declined considerably, the earlier traditional leaders took advantage of their higher economic status and acquired the benefits of modernization and thus tried to maintain a higher status. Some of them thus became successful in adapting themselves to change and on acquiring modern leadership posts.

While analysing the impact of Jharkhand movement on tribal leadership pattern it was found that the ups and downs of the history of Jharkhand party in adjoining states affected the chequered history of Jharkhand party in Mayurbhanj district. At a point of time it became very popular with the new emerging leaders in post-1957 period. But with the decline in the popularity of Jharkhand party and its merger with the Congress the faith of the people in the demand for a separate state by the Jharkhand party. Gradually the tribal leadership



too is getting integrated with the state and national politics.

Another point of interest is that in some tribal areas which were earlier 'Garjats' the traditional leaders opposed the merger of these states with India, apprehending that it would affect the position they were enjoying. Later, they joined Ganatantra Parishad (later the Swatantra Party) which was largely a party of the earlier rulers of these princely states and big landlords.

An analysis of the biographical sketches of the present members of the Legislative Assembly and the Parliament shows that the educational status of the elected members from tribal constituencies is higher in comparison to those who were members in earlier assemblies or were MPs earlier. Finally, while the previous occupation of most of the MLAs was cultivation, the number of members elected now-a-days, who were earlier government servants or legal practitioners or have wider contacts, is on the increase.

Thus a change in the leadership pattern - from traditional to emerging ones - is marked, with the change in ecological setting, economic relationship and the change in the outlook of the tribals of Orissa because of the impact of various agents of modernization and politicization.

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## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX-I

THE STATUS, EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION, AGE  
AND OCCUPATION OF THE PERSONS INTERVIEWED

THE MLAs ELECTED FROM TRIBAL CONSTITUENCIES  
OF MAYURBHANJ IN 1980 GENERAL ELECTION

1. Mr. Kangoi Singh - Elected M.L.A. from Bangripesi reserved (ST) constituency on Congress (I) ticket. Education - Undermatric; Age - N.A.; Prior Occupation - Cultivation & Social Work.
2. Mr. Raghunath Hembram - Elected M.L.A. from Karanja reserved (ST) constituency on Janata Party ticket. Education - M.A.; Age - N.A.; Prior Occupation - Cultivation and Social Work.
3. Mr. Ram Chandra Hansda - Elected M.L.A. from Bahalda reserved (ST) constituency on Congress (I) ticket. Education - I.A.; Age - N.A.; Prior Occupation - Teacher & Social Work.
4. Mr. Ravaneswar Madhei - Elected M.L.A. from Udla reserved (ST) constituency on Congress (I) ticket. Education - Matriculation; Age - N.A.; Prior Occupation - Teacher & Social Work.
5. Mr. Siddhilal Murmu - Elected M.L.A. from Rairangpur reserved (ST) constituency on Congress (I) ticket. Education - B.A.; Age - N.A.; Prior Occupation - Cultivation.

(Of nine elected MLAs from reserved constituencies, interview could be held with only five.)

PERSONS INTERVIEWED AT NIRANJAN:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Caste</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
1.	Mr. Faguram Murmu I	Sarpanch (Sanpakhna G. P.)	--	26	Intermediate	Cultivation & Social Work
2.	Mr. Faguram Murmu II	Manjhi	--	33	B.A., LL.B.	Advocate
3.	Mr. Pratap Ch. Patra (SC)	Ward Member	Pana	31	Middle English	Business (selling clothes)
4.	Mr. Mohan Majhi	*Jogmajhi (Goddet)	--	25	Upper Primary	Carpentry & Cultivation
5.	Mr. Bholanath Majhi	*Jogmajhi (Goddet)	--	30	Middle English	Cultivation & Agricultural labourer
6.	Mr. Dewan Fudu	--	--	49	no education	Agricultural labourer
7.	Mr. Rajaram Majhi		--	52	Lower Primary	Cultivation
8.	Mr. Chandra Majhi		--	50	Lower Primary	Cultivation
9.	Mr. Chiranjelal Barik		Barbar	32	Middle English	Barbar
10.	Mr. Ghasia Mahanta		Mahanta	52	N.A.	Cultivation
11.	Mr. Ugrasen Behera		--	50	Upper Primary	Agricultural Worker

\* At Niranjan, Jogmajhis perform the functions of a messenger, generally reserved for Goddet in other areas.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED AT JAGANNATHI:

1.	Mr. Sukul Majhi	Majhi	--	40	No education	Cultivation
2.	Mr. Somayam Majhi	Jogmajhi	--	42	-do-	-do-
3.	Mr. Borju	Goddet	--	38	Middle English	Govt. Servant (Peon in Block Office)
4.	Mr. Lakshan Majhi	Paranik	--	45	N.A.	Cultivation
5.	Mr. Mohan Majhi	Ward Member	--	36	N.A.	-do-
6.	Mr. Prasad Ch. Baske	Ward Member	--	30	Middle English	-do-
7.	Mr. Seral Soren			27	Upto Class VIII	-do-
8.	Mr. Sri dhar Murmu			24	Upto Class IX	-do-
9.	Mr. Hemendra Majhi			40	Lower Primary	-do-

APPENDIX-II

THE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE MLAs ELECTED IN 1961  
(EARLIEST AVAILABLE DATA) AND 1980 (OF THE PRESENT ASSEMBLY)

Term	Constituency	Name	Party Affiliation	Educational Standard
1961-66	Udla	Mr. Manmohan Tudu	Jana Congress	Matriculation
"	Jashipur	Mr. Mochiram Tiriya	Congress	Middle English
"	Rairangpur	Mr. Chandramohan Singh	Congress	I.A.
"	Bahalda	Mr. Sonaram Soren	Jana Congress	B.A., B.L.
"	Muruda	Mr. Sakila Soren	Jana Congress	Middle-English
1964-66 (By-election)	Bangriposi	Mr. Prasanna Kumar Das	Congress	I.A.
1961-66	Baisinga	Mr. Arjun Majhi	PSP	Matriculation
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1980 - (continuing)	Khunta	Mr. Romesh Soren	Congress (I)	B.A.
"	Baisinga	Mr. Kuanria Majhi	Congress (I)	B.A.
"	Udla	Mr. Ravaneswar Madhei	Congress (I)	Matriculation
"	Karanjia	Mr. Raghunath Hembrum	Janata	M.A.
"	Jashipur	Mr. Sundermohan Majhi	-	M.A., LL.B.
"	Rairangpur	Mr. Siddhilal Murmu	Congress (I)	B.A.
"	Bahalda	Mr. Ram Chandra Hansda	Congress (I)	I.A.
"	Kuliona	Smt. Saraswati Hembrum	Congress (I)	Matriculation
"	Bangriposi	Mr. Kangoi Singh	Congress (I)	Undermatic

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