POWER STRUCTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME : A STUDY OF DIGAPAHANDI BLOCK IN ORISSA.

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Under the Supervision of

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the Dissertation entitled "Power Structure and Rural Development Programme: A Study of Digapahandi Block in Orissa", submitted by Arun Kumar Patnaik, is in partial fulfilment for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of this University. This Dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or elsewhere and is his own work.

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

(RASHEEDUDDIN KHAN)
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C O N T E N T S

PREFACE

The present study is an attempt to overcome the dichotomy between 'power' and 'policy' in the existing social science literature on 'power' in India. It attempts to construct their relationship through the process of 'legitimacy', elaborated in our introductory chapter. Given the theoretical problematics as elaborated in Chapter 1, the research attempts to organise the information at the primary sources that have been carried by research techniques, viz. intensive interview technique and a small survey technique and, synchronic study as well as a longitudinal survey. The intensive interview technique was adopted to elicit information from selective respondents on the functioning of Panchayat Raj Institutions and Block Administration in the development process. Survey technique was adopted to collect data on various aspects of social bases of leadership of the Panchayat Samiti and also to collect information on agencies like members of bureaucracy, development target groups, and local leaders involved in the implementation of development programmes. Under constraints, a synchronic study has been attempted to project the social profile of the area under this 'case study'. But a longitudinal survey has been adopted to examine the patterns of leadership and implementation of

different programmes evolved over a period of time.

Chapter 1 is devoted to a theoretical discussion of various problematics on 'power' viz., legal-positivist, functionalist perspective, pluralist-theoretical framework, elite theory, Weberian and Marxian problematics, and their respective methodological strength and limitations. It also discusses various sociological schools of thought on power structure in the rural India, viz., the dominant caste approach, factionalism, stratification school and Marxist approaches and their relative utilities in different contexts. Chapter 2 deals with the socio-economic profile of the district and the concerned block. The study is primarily of a synchronic survey of the unit of analysis. Chapter 3 discusses the multiple aspects of the social bases of leadership that has evolved over a period of time at the level of Panchayat Samiti with the purpose of examining the question of who controls the Samiti and how they do so. Chapter 4 concentrates on questions of whose interests the power structure of the Samiti and the Block administration serve and the internal mechanisms of their functional aspects have been identified to the extent possible. Here two policy structures, viz., Community Development Programme and a state-based rural development programme of Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor and their implementation

processes have been examined. Finally, Chapter 5 concludes on the correlationship between power structure (Chapter 3) and the implementation process (Chapter 4) and has tried to identify some significant correlations. And in this context searches for the possibilities left for the Panchayat Raj Institutions.

It is a difficult task to acknowledge the innumerable but significant contributions of a large number of people who have not only contributed to the shaping of my ideas but also provided raw materials for this research at different points of time. Among those whose contributions remain outstanding is my research guide Dr. S.N. Jha who has been with me all through this work and worked with me assiduously on this research work in setting my problems and method in clear perspective. Also, I owe him for his cogent views and hall-by-hall evaluation of my works which has cleared the ways for this work to emerge in its final shape. I acknowledge the contribution of my brother Dr. L.K. Patnaik who has helped me in locating the 'unit of universe' and with Jagdish solved some problems of model construction during the term of my field work. Thanks ought to be extended to Mr. P.K. Choulia, a person who also as B.D.O. in a relatively cosy rural corner of this vast subcontinent with a spirit of Jeffersonian humanism to

serve the rural people and has left a deep imprint in mind which reminds me constantly his words and deeds emulating Jefferson, "Nothing gives one person so much advantage over the another as to remain always cool and unruffled under all circumstances". Needless to mention are my friends Sudarsan, Colol, Satish, Dhirajit, Rabi, and Kabu who have constantly inspired me to finish off this work in due time. Finally I am obliged to Mr. H.K. Taneja who has shared the final burden with me in typing the entire manuscripts.

Patnaik

(A. K. PATNAIK)

Chapter I

THE PROBLEM

In the social science literature especially in the twentieth century, there have been a variety of philosophical notions of 'power' and its subsidiary notions like 'authority', 'legitimacy', 'coercion' etc. We are concerned here briefly with an analysis of various notions of power that have evolved in different contexts. Broadly speaking there are possibly two distinct but opposed notions of power which may be categorized thus : (i) neutral notions of power, and (ii) committed notions of power.

1. Neutral Notions of Power

Defining power as expression of different institutions, it argues that power remains as a generalized capacity to achieve certain goals which are autonomous and neutral to competing social claims and express the real consensus in a society. However, there are different approaches to this problematic following their differential orders of conceptualisations of 'power' - (a) legal-positivist framework; and (b) pluralist framework.

(a) Legal-Positivist Framework

The legal positivist framework which is normally

in western societies will promote policies for economic expansion which, if successful, will raise the living standards of the population as a whole.

(b) Pluralist Framework

Pluralism begins from the observation that the industrial society today is differentiated into a variety of occupational groups and sectional interests. Diversity of occupational groups steadily grows. Organisations representing sectional interests of particular occupational groups are known as interest groups such as trade unions, professional associations like political parties, pressure groups etc. Leaders of these interest groups are known as elites. In such situations politics involves competition between a variety of interest groups through the process of bargaining and compromise. And power is seen to be dispersed amongst a plurality of elites which are actively involved in the process of bargaining and compromise. Thus there is only competition, not conflict and power is dispersed, not concentrated as the theory of 'ruling elite' claims it to be.

Thus set in the pluralist framework power is defined as a capacity of the interest groups to bargain and compromise in order to further its own interests. A significant implication of this approach is that power is

not merely associated with 'authority' but also with a variety of 'interest groups' in the society who are engaged, as it were, in an endless process of competition and interaction.

2. Committed Notions of Power

But such a neutral conception of power continues to disregard entirely one of the principal elements in political life, namely, the struggles that have taken place, and still take place, precisely over the 'legitimacy' of any established system of political power, and over the exclusion of some members of society - frequently a majority of the population - from any effective participation in the determination of collective goals (often in fact, as Marx observed, representations of an illusory, spurious 'general interest'), whether by a restriction of political rights (e.g., the right to vote), by coercion, or by ideological manipulation.[2]

Questions of this sort point to the serious limitations of neutral notions of power and correspondingly define power as different substantial concept situated within a variety of problematics, viz., elite theory, Weberian and Marxian problematics. First, it challenges

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2. T.B. Bottomore, Political Sociology, 1979, p. 75.

the notion of power as an autonomous and neutral process and points out that power is always partisan to social cleavages and constellation of interests. Secondly, it is not identified merely with 'legitimate authority' like State and other government institutions but is residual in various conflicting social types too. Power, thus defined, is now a broader substantial concept aligned with a concept of domination of various types, viz., 'constellation of interests' in economic sphere as important bases of domination, and also different ways in which domination can make claims to 'legitimacy' and so constitute 'authority'. Thus power is not merely identified with 'authority' but with various 'social bases' of domination and now the concept of power is aligned with a concept of domination. It identifies a problem of domination of various socio-political types, not merely of the type of 'legitimate authority'. Here, emerges a committed notion of power as sharply opposed to a neutral conception of power. However, such a notion is located in different problematics of divergent and sharply opposed character - like elite theories, Weberian or Marxist problematics.

(a) Weberian Problematic

Weber defines power: "In general, we understand by

'power' the chance of a man or of a number of men to realise their own will in a communal action even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action".[3] It has two important aspects combined together: (i) an individual or group do not hold power in isolation, they hold it in relation to others; and (ii) this relationship may be characterised as relation of domination, that is, power is power over others. In terms of Weber's definition, it is simply the degree to which an individual or group can get its own way in social relationship. This is a broad definition of power which is seen as an aspect of social relations. It covers the questions of domination not of 'legitimate authority' alone, i.e., the domination of State institutions . In its range, it includes power within the family, classroom, factory, political party etc. In each case, an individual or group has power to the degree to which others comply through coercion or legitimation or both which, for Weber, constitute aspects of 'domination'. Thus power is invariably aligned with a concept of domination. Thus in Weber, the concept of power has broader connotation.

(b) Elite Theory

One gets a reduced concept of power. Power is once

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3. Max Weber: Essays in Sociology, (Ed.) by Gerth and Mills, 1948.

again identified with 'legitimate authority': institutions of State. But unlike legal positivist notion, the concept of power is aligned with domination in the elite theory of Pareto (1848-1923) and Mosca (1858-1941). In case of Pareto, power is explained as an expression of domination corresponding to the innate differences among human beings like 'lions' and 'foxes' qualities of man. Lions with superior qualities are the embodiments of political personalities who manage the state and exercise coercion over subject class, e.g. military rule etc. Another type of governing elite is 'foxes' who rule by cunning and guile, by diplomatic manipulation, i.e. by 'legitimacy'.

In case of Mosca, power is the superior expression of domination exercised by an organised minority over an unorganised majority. But unlike Pareto, who believed in superior qualities required for elite rule for all time, Mosca argues for a sociological explanation for this superiority of the elite rule which also varies from society to society. Mosca emphasises on the social background of the elite as the source of domination and embodiment of power. For him, in some societies courage and bravery in battle provide access to the elite, in others the skills and capacities needed to acquire wealth. Thus war credibilities or richer possession of wealth

may give legitimacy to an organised minority to rule over an unorganised majority.

Both Pareto and Mosca regard domination as a universal and ineradicable feature of human societies, although in Mosca's work some concession is made to the view that the progress of democracy reduces the gap between the rulers and the ruled.[4] However such a concession is only an exception to Mosca's rules of elite theory. Thus in elite theory, power structure is identified with 'legitimate authority' meaning as 'governing elite' and its sources of domination over the 'masses'. However in so far as the concept of power lies in between elite theory and Weberian problematic we have three important convergent propositions: (a) its acceptance of the universality of domination; (b) its emphasis on the power of minorities over the 'masses'; and (c) its refusal to conceive any real possibility of ending, or even substantially limiting, domination through an extension of democracy.[5]

(c) Marxist Problematic

The Marxist problematic on 'power' which emerges by challenging the above propositions does not ignore at all

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4. T.B. Bottomore, op. cit., p. 73.

5. Ibid., p. 73.

the various substantive concepts associated with power as Weber has broadly emphasised such as: family, factory school, party etc., on the one hand and, authority (meaning, State institutions) on the other.[6] But the Marxian problematic differs with entire set of liberal notions including Weber's on power by a different location of correlations existing among these concepts of power and their identifications with the concept of domination. Thus a new meaning of power emerges in the context of Marxist interpretation of history of societies. Of course within Marxism, there has been no such agreement on the articulation of this correlationship. Yet the substantive emphases of Miliband and Poulantzas have been on a reduced concept of power: 'State'. The primary question for both of them is - who controls state power and how? Though both of them have tried in different ways to locate the 'social bases' of power and the question of domination associated with it, while doing so their substantive emphasis in an analysis of political power as identified with 'legitimate authority' only. However, we have a refreshing analysis of power as a problematic of 'hegemony' or 'domination' in Gramsci's Prison Notebooks. Here, power has not only the cognate

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6. A. Gramsci's Prison Notebooks is well concerned with some such issues.

notions like 'authority', situated within the political society but also notions like private property, other institutions like family, school, party, factory, etc., to add to the catalogue by relatively a new concept 'mass media' which are situated within civil society.[7] The correlation among these substantive concepts of power within civil society and within state institutions, and also relation among these concepts in between 'civil society' and 'state' institutions has been characterised at two levels of 'hegemony' by Gramsci. One is primarily coercion or violence and secondarily of 'influence'; the other is primarily of 'influence' or consent-manufacturing and secondarily of coercion or violence. While the former process of hegemony or exercise of power is associated with state institutions, the latter process is the function of the institutions of civil society and thus both are related to each other and taken together constitute an integral meaning of power as identified with Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony'.

Thus we have two broad conflicting notions of power: power as a neutral process within social relations and power as an aspect of domination or 'hegemony' corresponding to various forms of domination in the

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7. This is a modified version of Gramsci's original assertion.

society as a whole. Between these two notions are several sets of problematics: legal-positivist, functional perspective, pluralist theoretical framework, and elite theory, Weberian and Marxian problematics etc.

II

In Indian context, the social science studies on 'power' in general and especially, power structure in villages and panchayat institutions have been witingly or unwitingly dominated largely by positivist interpretations with its singular craze for the scientific method to unravel the socio-historical realities. These studies show a kind of methodological disdain to examine social realities on the basis of a logical procedure evolved out of a plurality of methods or problematics. An integrationist perspective of utilising the strength of various methods or problematics remains largely absent in the existing social science literatures. Hardly, there is any discussion on the strength and limitations and utilities of various methods. These studies subscribe to a singular logical procedure to explain the reality and often with a very closed structure of arguments - closed because reality appears to be adjusted with the method and ideological interests, not vice versa. However

arguing from an integrationist perspective one may say that these studies provide partial explanations of the socio-historical realities. Under circumstances, such explanations, though partial, constitute the strength of their problematics wherein lies the utility of adopting some of these and integrating these with different sets of problematics in order to interpret the situations to the extent possible.

The problematics of elite theory have overwhelmingly dominated the anthropological and sociological studies on the community power structure in India. The primary emphasis has been to analyse the patterns of leadership either through an examination of the social bases or through the styles, viz., traditional and modern types of leadership. Typical to the elite theory, it undermines considerably the role of conflicting political ideologies and political cultures. The interplay of different systems of interests is neglected - the assumption being that there is no substantial difference between leaders with similar social bases, even though they hold different political values. Political values of the leadership ('governing elite') are derived from the social background of the elite. The social background of the elite constitutes the source of domination and embodiment of power and over the unorganised majority.

The series of mediations of political values and political practices between social bases and the power structure are having no meaning, whatsoever. These are reduced to an analysis of social origin of the leadership in order to examine the power stucture, formal or informal. This has happened in the analyses of national, state and community levels of power structure.

There are some specific assumptions too in the sociological studies on power structure. Two such assumptions seem to be important: one is the issue of caste linkages with power structure, and second is that such an analysis is largely confined to sociology of the village structure only. The roles of other independent social categories like class, class ideologies, political forces which interact with caste linkages and power structure are reduced to the dependent categories of the caste structure. Similarly, other politico-anthropological units like regions, state, nation and political parties which influence the village are undermined by an exclusive emphasis on the village structure itself.

The concept of 'dominant caste' is used to explain the nature of power structure and formation of the rural elite. Srinivas' concept of 'dominant caste'[8] refers

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8. M.N. Srinivas, "The Dominant Caste in Rampura", American Anthropologist, 61(11), 1959, pp. 1-16.

to three 'basic' attributes of dominance of a caste: numerical strength, control of land, and ritual status. And a caste which is endowed with all these attributes at the same time is said to enjoy "decisive dominance" in the village power structure. But the decisive dominance is only occasional and the different elements of dominance are more often distributed among the castes in a village. A caste which is ritually high may be poor and lack numerical strength while a populous caste may be poor and ritually low. Thus as Oommen[9] emphasises the need to identify the particular variable or variables that bestow dominance to a caste against other castes in understanding the power structure in villages in the wake of democratic decentralisation of power. However, Bailey and Cohn (1958) argue that the high ritual status does not necessarily lead to political power and add that economic control of a caste, primarily in relation to the control of land, is central to dominance.[10]

On the basis of an empirical study in 100 villages spread over states in India, Bhatt (1977) reports a shift in the locus of power and influence from the ritually high

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9. T.K. Oommen, "The Concept of Dominant Caste: Some Queries", Contributions to Indian Sociology, New Series, IV, 1970.

10. F.G. Bailey, Caste and Economic Frontier, 1958; Bernard S. Cohn, "Anthropological Notes on Disputes and Law in India", American Anthropologist, 67(6), pp. 82-122.

ranking castes to numerically strong castes in the wake of universal adult suffrage which has introduced the question of majority to village politics. He shows how ritual status is the least important element in dominance and even when a high caste continues to enjoy dominance, it is not because of its high ritual status, but it is because of economic power, political influence and high level of education. However, he adds that the majority cases indicate that the most important criterion of dominance now-a-days seems to be numerical majority rather than economic power.

It is interesting to note that though there are among these approaches differences on the particular variable or variables weighing in considerations of 'dominant caste' between them there is a logical similarity. Their problematic is mono-causal. It is only a particular social variable which is identified as the cause of political dominance. It is either ritual status (in some cases with Srinivas), control over land (in all cases with Bailey and Cohn), or numerical majority (in most cases with Bhatt). For Srinivas the question of 'decisive dominance' is occasional, not causal. What is causal is that the different elements of dominance are more often distributed among the castes in the village power structure. Thus in these studies it is

a mono-causal framework which dominates in the analysis of the relation between social bases and power structure in the village. Also each of these variables is seen as an aspect of a particular caste which bestow it the status of dominance and is regarded thus as dominant caste. Only a category of a 'single caste' and its sub-categories, viz., 'numerical strength', 'ritual status' and 'control of land' are emphasised to examine the caste linkages and the power structure in the village.

Such studies have two serious implications. One is that it seriously undermines the role of 'multiple' factors which interlace with each other in a complex manner to shape the village power structure. Secondly, it is least interested to establish the correlation among the independent variables like caste, class and political structures, (e.g. structures evolved from political processes of adult franchise). On occasions multiple factors like numerical strength, control of land and ritual status have been taken care to analyse social bases of power structure, e.g., Srinivas' concept of 'decisive dominance'. On such occasions, each of these social variables appears to enjoy the same degree of precedence over the other one in the context of shaping and sharing of the power structure. Finally, each of the social variables enjoys, as it were, a flat rate of

effectivity over the political (e.g. power structure). In this logical process, the role of the political on social bases is considerably reduced to more examination of the social bases in order to arrive at an understanding of the nature of the power structure. Thus, it may be characterised as a empiricist mono-causal framework.

There are also other ways of raising doubts on the adequacy of the concept of dominant caste in analysing the power structure in institutions like panchayats which cover a group of villages, because separate castes may emerge dominant in the constituent villages in a panchayat (Oomen, 1970). Thus it may be difficult to identify a dominant caste at the regional level (Mayer in 1958; Marriott in 1960). Hence a more rigorous specification in the caste linkages and power structure is required.

Studies conducted by Dube (1960), Beals (1960), Mc Cormack (1960) et. al. indicate a more specification by emphasising on factionalism as an important social process linked with the power structure. Dube feels that the power structure in villages can be better understood with reference to dominant individuals or groups following factions and their complex alignments with the power structure rather than dominant castes. They attribute the development of faction-based political

process to the urbanisation which on the other hand has resulted in the breakdown of the traditional leadership. Dominant individuals and groups and their complex alignments, viz., factions formed in terms of commerce, ritual status and numerical majority now constitute the parameters of power structure. People who have a somewhat majority following, i.e., 'popular leader', are politically aligned with people economically powerful, possibly from different ritual and economic followings which normally go beyond the framework of alignments within a particular caste as the concept of 'dominant caste' makes us to believe. Hence factionalism formed within a dominant caste or outside it in relation with leaders of other castes constitutes the social bases of the power structure evolved in the wake of complex modernisation process, viz., process of commercialisation and institutions of universal adult suffrage. Further, despite factionalism, there is every possibility of a dominant caste standing united when some forces traditionally subordinated within the caste-class system threaten its authority and particularly when the question of capturing power in rural development institutions at the grassroots arises (Yogendra Singh, 1964). These are the occasions when traditional factions melt away contrary to the findings of Oscar Lewis and other studies on factionalism (Andre Beteille, 1965).

In the foregoing discussions we have pointed out the strength and limitations of the 'dominant caste' approach and 'factional' approach on community power structure. A more refreshing analysis preserving the strength and overcoming the limitations of these two approaches may be traced back to the arguments of stratification school (Singh in 1964, Beteille in 1965). Unlike the 'dominant caste' approach and 'factional' school, here class processes are seen as stratification system autonomous over the caste system and their relationship is more complex than what dominant caste approach tends to project. Political processes are seen as relatively autonomous processes but are interacting with the caste and class systems in the village structures. Thus a set of multiple variables are identified in their own specificities which are seen in their independent but interacting roles in the process of the shaping and sharing of the power structure.

A complex set of socio-political bases of power structure: caste, class, religion, numerically preponderant group through adult franchise etc., are identified contributing to the formation of power blocs through their multiple correlations and interactions. In such a set-up, the elements of power blocs in the political culture of village today are: panchayats, parties, which

may be characterised as formal structures of power and individuals, or factions which may be regarded as non-formal blocs of power structure.[11] Thus we have a model of power structure and its social bases as shown in Figure I.

But the crucial limitation in the problematic of the stratification school is that the levels of correlationship or 'interconnections' among the multiple variables are not identified at all. As it were, each variable enjoys a status of equal precedence over the other in the similar sets of conditions responsible for the formation of the power structure. This is typical to an empiricist logic with far reaching socio-political implications - a question which remains beyond the purview of this little introduction.

Precisely speaking, our assumption is that the levels of interconnections between class and political process, caste and class and, caste and political processes are not similar in the same set of conditions which contribute to the shaping of the power structure. Under such conditions, a status of primacy has to be accorded to either of these processes. Then it assumes further

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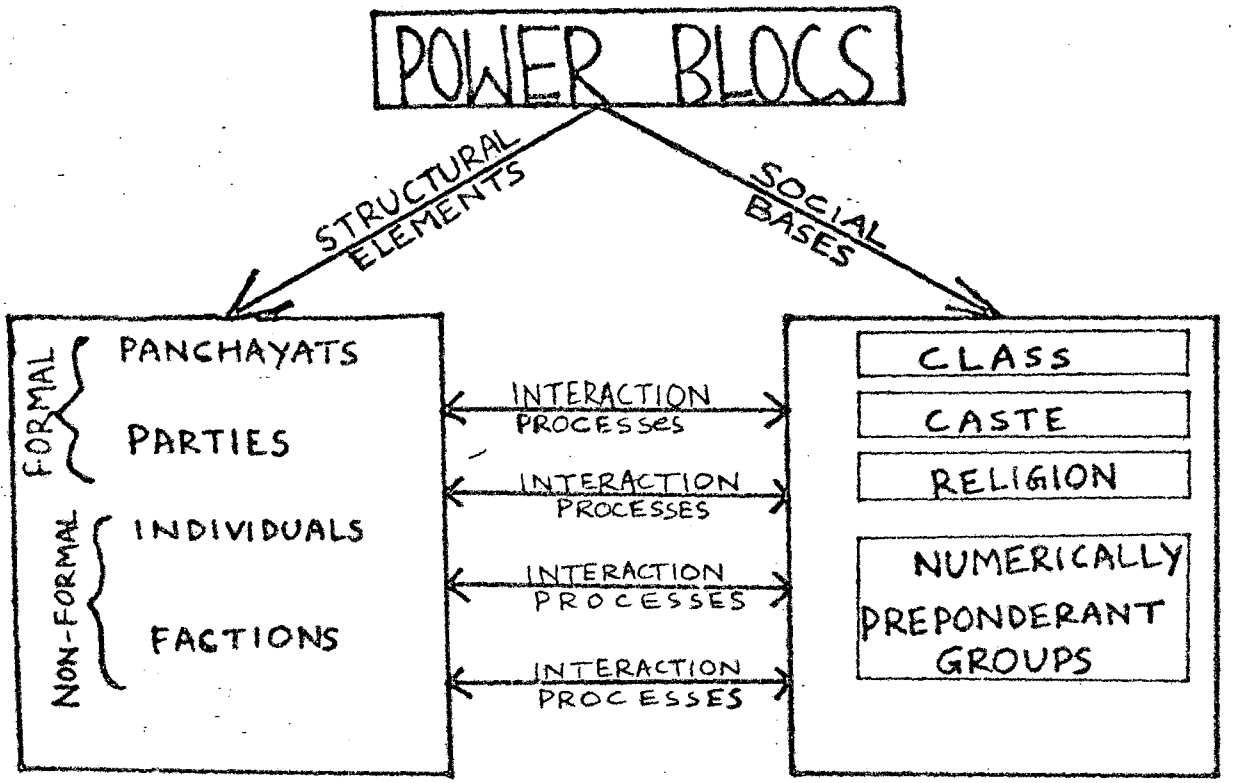
11. Andre Betoille, Caste, Class and Power, p. 144. But Betoille seems to undermine the institution of bureaucracy as a formal structural element of power blocs of villages today.

FIGURE - 1



[Derivative Source : Andre' Beteille , Caste, Class and Power, 1965]

importance to identify these differentiated levels of correlationship among variables like class-caste-political which contribute to the formation of power blocs. This brings us to locate an alternative problematic to examine the power structure in rural India which ought to surpass the substantive limitations of the 'dominant caste', 'factionalism' and 'stratification' schools of sociological thought on power.

There is of course a sociological vision to locate such a problematic which may be characterised as a Marxian attempt but there has been no sufficient endeavour to analyse these theoretical questions in detail in the light of the intensive and continuous organisation of social-historical evidences on power structure. Arguments developed in late 1970s[12] point towards such a sociological vision without being able to substantiate it with sufficient theoretical-empirical examinations of the type of questions we have raised above.

So far we have looked into the 'social bases' of power structure, i.e., factors which contribute to its structural formation. Hence these may be characterised as structural aspects of power structure. But these

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12. See, for example, interesting articles in Economic and Political Weekly, February, Annual Number, 1979.

factors do not indicate the power structure in its moving realities, in its manifold dimensions engulfing various social groups. Here it is important to note that in order to examine the nature of power structure we should look into its functional aspects, i.e., what are the social interests that it serves and on which conditions it does so.[13] In order to examine the power structure as a moving process it is important to look into its structural as well as functional aspects and establish their effective correlationship. While the examination of structural aspects help to identify the agents who control it and mechanisms which involve them, the functional aspects help one to peep into the questions of whose interests it serves and how it does so. Hence to ignore either of the two in the analysis of the 'power' is to enter into a kind of a theoretical reductionism of the socio-political realities. There, 'power' loses its internal meaning as a moving embodiment of socio-political practices of society.

This work does not claim to be ambitious to deal with all those sets of problematics and specific questions which we have discussed above. It is only a micro-scopic

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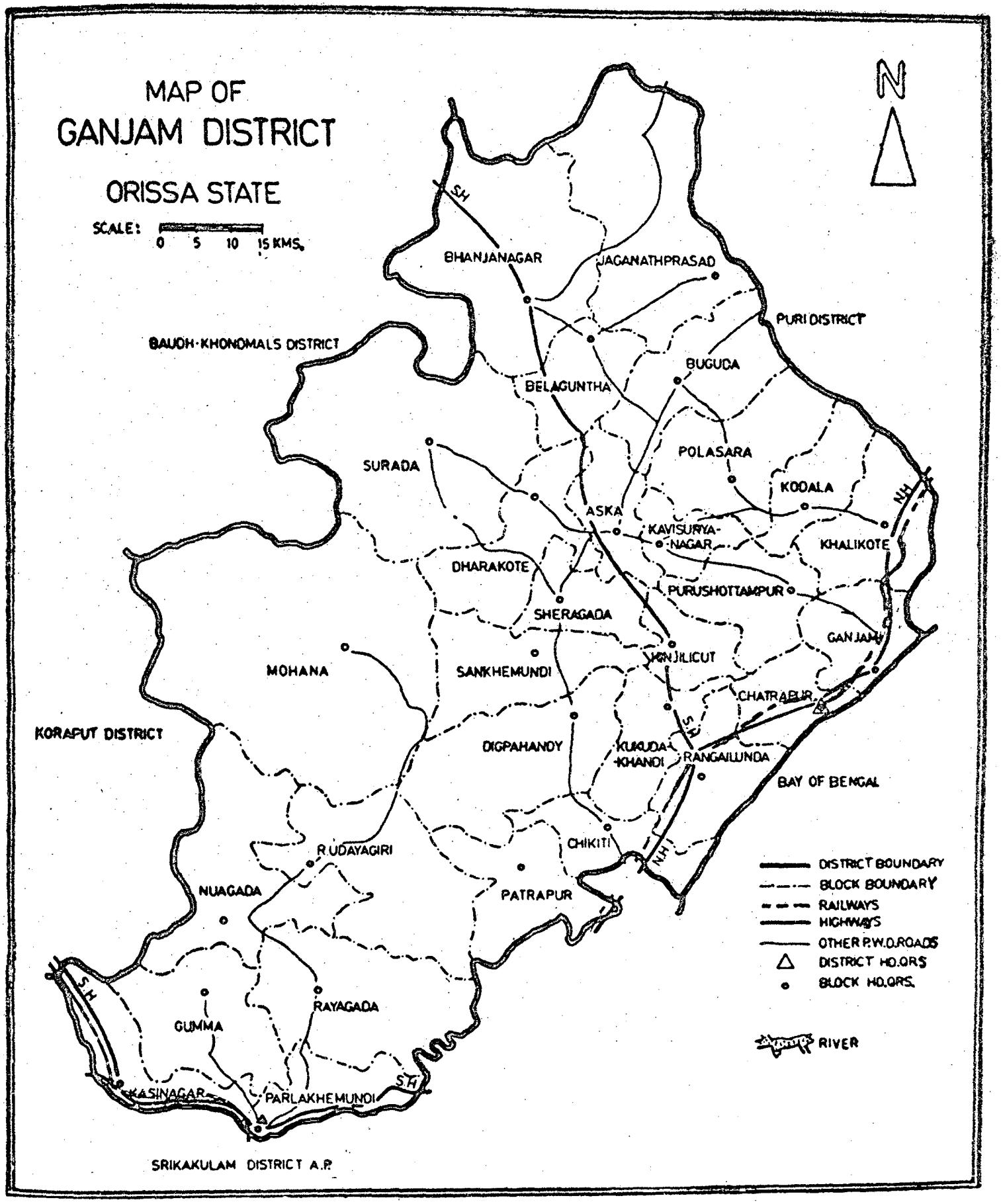
13. Here the examination of policy structures and implementation process weigh importance.

attempt at a micro-problem of the totality of relations of the power structure in the rural set-up of this country. To be specific, it concentrates on the question of 'authority' aspects of power structure in the context of Panchayat Raj Institutions. It is specifically concerned in this context, to examine the 'authority' structures in a Panchayat Samiti only, not panchayat institutions in the entirety. But the basic purpose of doing so is to examine the assumptions on the questions of 'legitimacy' or 'hegemony' or 'domination' which involve the study of the power structure in its structural as well as functional aspects and their complex alignments. These are the primary goals of this miniscule work. Yet it has raised the above sets of questions in order to make the assumptions of this study clear which because of certain constraints has not been further examined in an empirical context. This requires a further intensive study on the power structure in its totality of relations as embodied in the rural as well as the urban contexts of Indian society.

Though the questions of 'democratic decentralisation' constitute the basis of the life of Panchayat Raj Institutions, we are constrained to put it as a peripheral problem in our schema of goals. This work

is, to repeat, primarily concerned to examine the issues of power structure in the context of a study of a Panchayat Samiti as an integral part of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in Orissa.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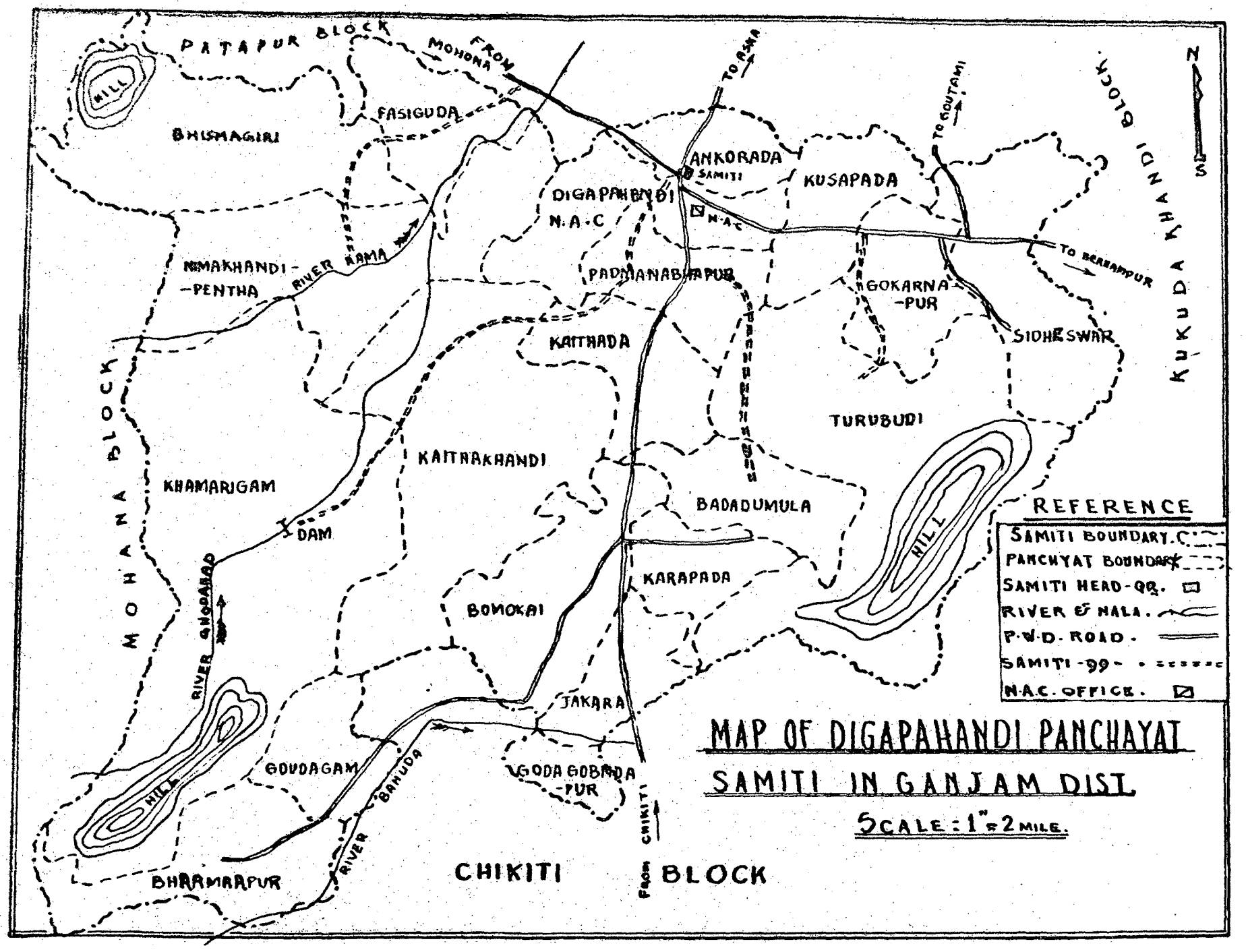
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MAP OF DIGAPAHANDI PANCHAYAT SAMITI IN GANJAM DIST.
SCALE: 1"=2 MILE.

Chapter 2

PROFILE OF THE GANJAM DISTRICT AND DIGAPAHUNDI BLOCK

This is a synchronic survey of the Ganjam district and the Digapahundi block - of its various socio-economic units projected in narrative details. Hence, the study here tends to be descriptive without much ado of explanatory exercises involved in it. This profile includes a description of natural resources, i.e., of geographical and topographical description, climate, rivers, forests, minerals etc. with an account of infrastructural facilities classified broadly into: (a) communications, and (b) productive uses of land and industry. While a description of natural resources helps one to identify the potentials required for development, an account of infrastructural facilities indicates the actual levels of transformation of those potentials undergone in the district. In between these two distinct processes, various areas of social organisation mediate: demographic features, occupational patterns, social stratification systems like caste etc., and the administrative set-up in the district. This cataloguing is perhaps not exhaustive but may suggest some general and specific trends of development in the district and the block.

Situational Context

The Ganjam district is the third largest among the thirteen districts of the State of Orissa. It lies between 18 46'N and 20 17' N of Northern latitudes and 83 48' and 85 11' of Eastern longitudes. It is bounded by - (i) Boudh-Khondamals popularly known as Phulbani and Puri districts in the North; (ii) Srikakulam district in the South; (iii) Boudh-Khondamals and Koraput districts in the West; and (iv) Bay of Bengal and Puri district in the East. The district can broadly be divided into five natural regions - (i) coastal, (ii) plains, (iii) upland, (4) hilly and (v) agency. Of the total 29 blocks in the district the coastal region comprises of six blocks covering - (a) Chikiti, (b) Rangeilunda, (c) Chatrapur, (d) Ganjam, (e) Khallikote, and (f) Kodala. The plain region comprises of seven blocks namely - (i) Kabisuryanagar, (ii) Hinjilicut, (iii) Polasara, (iv) Purushottampur, (v) Sheragada, (vi) Bellaguntha, and (vii) Aska.

The upland area comprises of four blocks namely, (i) Sanakhemundi, (ii) Patrapur, (iii) Digapahandi, and (iv) Kukudakhandi. The hilly region consists of - Buguda, Jagannathprasad, Surada, Bhanjanagar, and Dharakote blocks. The agency region comprises of seven blocks namely - (i) R. Udayagiri, (ii) Mohana, (iii)

Nuagada, (iv) Gumma, (v) Rayagada, (vi) Paralakhemundi, (vii) Kashinagar. Briefly this is the broad classification of the district geographically and topographically. The above description is given simply to enable us to have an idea of the district as the activities will vary from block to block depending on their location and geographical features.

Climate

The climate is generally equable. The South-West Monsoon commences in the district by the second week of June and ends by early October. The average rainfall in the district is 1374.50 mm. The district has alluvial soil in its eastern part and latonite soil in the west with small patches of black cotton soil at the centre and in the North-East close to the Chilika lake. The Eastern part of the district and some portions of Suradha, Sheragada and Digapahandi blocks contain alluvial soil. The Western portion of the district comprising the tribal blocks, Mohana, Rayagada, R. Udayagiri, Nugada and Gumma blocks contain red soil. The structure of the soil in the delta area varies from sandy loam to loam black cotton soil as is found in rare patches in the blocks of Sheragada and Dharakote. The soils in the hill slopes of Ramgiri are suitable for Mulberry cultivation as such intensive Mulberry plantation have been

taken up in those parts of Tribal Blocks with the assistance from a sericulture department. The soils of Sheragada Block are well suitable for lemon gardens and soils of Aska are suitable for sugar cane and potato.

Water Resources

The district is traversed by four major rivers namely, Rushikulya, Bedanadi, Mahendratanaya and Bansadhara. Besides, there are minor rivers like Bahuda, Hathibangi, Ghodahado and Baghua. The water of these rivers are more or less utilised for irrigation purposes, the largest contribution being that of the Rushikulya.

Forests

A rich endowment of forest resources provides a wide range of raw materials for industrial use in the district. These forests are rich in timber, bamboo, oil seeds, myrobalan, tamarind, Mohua flower, sal resin and ganduli gum. The forest area in the district was 5,099 sq. kms. during 1974-75 and it has decreased to 5,010 sq. km. in 1978-79. The area under reserve forest was 37.5 per cent of the total forest area during the year 1978-79. The major forests produce are timber, bamboo and firewood in the district. It may be observed here that forest area is more in the district (i.e. 46.63%) when compared to the net area sown (i.e. 41.00%).

Minerals

The contribution of mineral production to the economy of the district is insignificant so far. Unlike a few districts of Orissa like Sundergarh, Keonjhar and Koraput, the contribution of mineral production in all other districts is very very insignificant. Quite recently exploratory work by M/s Indian Rare Earths Ltd., a Government of India undertaking, has established the presence of valuable minerals like the Sillimanite, Monazite, Rutile, Zircon, Garnet and Quartz in the sands dews extending from Gopalpur upto the mouth of River Rushikulya. Of the total of twenty-nine blocks into which the Ganjam district has been divided, Digapahandi block is one containing a town, i.e. Digapahandi itself and 243 inhabited villages. There are 20 towns and 4,223 villages in the district as such. Situationally this block is surrounded by six blocks and is situated in the middle of the district.

Demographic Features

The Ganjam district is the third most populous district in the Orissa state with a population of 26,69,899 as per 1981 census representing nearly 10.12% of the total population of the State. The density of the population of the district is 211 per sq. km. Nearly 85% of the population of the district live in rural areas.

According to the official ratings the degree of urbanization in Ganjam district ranks second in the state. The population of scheduled caste is 401,116 and that of scheduled tribe is 253,034. The total number of workers is 923,803 forming 34.83% of the total population in this district. The Digapahandi block is the single largest block of the Ganjam district with the population ranging to 1,13,071 as per 1981 census of which the strength of the people living in the rural areas is 1,05,218 whereas the urban population is 7,853. The scheduled population in the block is 14,143 representing nearly 12.50% of the total population of the block. Table 2.1 shows the occupational (distribution) pattern in the district.

Table 2.1 Occupational (distribution) Pattern in theDistrict

S.No.	Category	No. of Workers	% of total workers
1.	Cultivators	3,89,525	42.16
2.	Agricultural labourers	2,99,617	32.43
3.	Household Industry - Manufacturing, Processing and Servicing repairs	31,879	3.45
4.	Other Workers	2,02,882	21.96
	(iii) Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Plantation, Orchards and Allied activities.		

S.No.	Category	No. of workers	% of total workers
(iv)	Mining and Quarrying		
(v)(b)	Other household industries		
(vi)	Construction		
(vii)	Trade and Commerce		
(viii)	Transport, storage and communication		
(ix)	Other services		
	Total population of workers	9,23,903	
	Non-workers	17,28,796	
	Marginal workers 1,85,702		
	Non-workers 15,43,094		
	TOTAL POPULATION	26,52,699	

Source: 1981 Census

Table 2.2 shows the occupational (distribution) pattern in the Digapahandi block.

Table 2.2 Occupational (distribution) Pattern in the Digapahandi Block

S.No.	Category	No. of workers	% of total workers
1.	Cultivators	20,500	52.5
2.	Agricultural labourers	12,538	32.11

S.No.	Category	No. of workers	% of total workers
3.	Cottage, Household industries	1,250	3.2
4.	Other industries	170	0.43
5.	Trade and Commerce	1,057	2.7
6.	Others	3,529	9.03
	Total Workers	39,044	

It may be seen from the above tables that the dependence of workers on agriculture is approximately 74.59% of the total workers in the district. Therefore, there is a wide scope for labour intensive schemes at the district level. In so far as Digapahandi block is concerned the dependence of the population on land as an important means of production is no less than what is in the district. It reflects the general trend of the district.

Infrastructure

(A) Communication Networks

(1) Roads and Transport, Railways and Port

Most of the schemes envisaged in the district development programmes depend on the availability of infrastructure facilities. A well communication of roads, railways is of vital importance for the rapid growth of

economy. The roads not only help in easy and quick transportation of goods from one place to another but also speed-up the mobility of manpower. The total length of the P.W.D. roads as on 1978-79 in the district is 1808 kms. of which 1,466.90 kms. come under surface roads, the rest 341.60 kms is under unsurfaced roads. The length of the national highway is 87 kms. and that of the state highway is 165 kms. Among the important towns on the national highway are Berhampur and Chatrapur.

Compared to its overall economic and social activities the district remains under-developed with regard to the railway facilities; it has only 11 railway-stations. The total length of the broad gauge railway line (Howrah-Madras) is 79 kms and narrow gauge railway line (Nuapada-Gunupur) is 45 kms. both under the South Eastern Railway Zone. The Gopalpur-on-sea has the potential for a minor port. Though there is a proposal to have a fishing harbour and cargo berth for export of rare earth exploited by the I.R.E., the proposal has not yet materialised.

In the Digapahandi block, of 422 kms of the road communications existing the metallic roads span across some 100 kms. of length, non-metallic 220 kms., with kuccha roads covering 102 kms. of range. By the end of 6th Five-Year Plan, it is proposed to extend the existing

network of roads by 69 km., 100 km. and 50 km. more respectively in the block as such. But out of a total 244 human settlements (243 villages and one town), only 25 number of villages and town are connected by pucca roads. This should suggest some sense of forms of development of communication networks in the block of whose development process, the share of the railway tracks is virtually a big zero.

(ii) Electrification

All the 19 NACs and 2 municipalities are electified. Out of 4,223 inhabited villages, 1747 (excluding hamlets 324) were electrified as on 1981-82 in the Ganjam district. Of 243 inhabited villages in the Digapahandi block the total number of villages covered so far is 107 and is expected to rise by 10 more villages during the 6th plan period.

(iii) Posts and Telegraphs

There are four Head post offices in the district one each at Berhampur, Chatrapur, Bhanjanagar and Aska. Besides there are 144 sub post offices, 631 branch offices, 5 other types and Head offices. The average population covered per post office in the district is 2,880 as on 1980-81. Post offices do have a very weak representation in the Digapahandi block with only 29 offices covering

about 135 villages out of a total of 243 inhabited villages in the block.

(B) Productive Uses: Land

(i) Irrigation

The main source of irrigation in the district is river Rushikulya. There are number of major/medium irrigation projects in the district irrigating an area of 1.00 lakh hectares. The ongoing medium/major irrigation projects are DAHA Irrigation and Harabangi Irrigation projects irrigating an area of 11,312 hectares in Khariff, 5,644 hectares in rabi and 9,650 hectares in khariff, 4,825 hectares in rabi respectively. Besides there are some on-going projects, viz., Bahuada Stage II and Bhagabati proposed to irrigate an area of 12,350 hectares. Besides the above, there are 512 tube wells and 114 river lift points, i.e. totally there are 626 lift irrigation points. So the net irrigated area till 1982 is 2,70,857 hectares covering approximately 41.63% of the total land in the district. In the Digapahandi block, among the net irrigated area of 12,770 hectares with a percentage of 37.37 within which the areas irrigated by canals accounts for 7,450 hectares of land.

(ii) Land Utilisation Pattern

The district of Ganjam is divided into three agri-

cultural divisions, i.e. Berhampur, Aska and Paralakhemundi. The district is very popular and fairly developed agriculturally compared to other districts in the State as per the claims of the officials. Table 2.3 shows the land utilisation pattern in the district during 1980-81.

Table 2.3 Land Utilisation Pattern in the District During 1980-81

S.No.	Classification of the area	Area in Hectares ('000)	% of total geographical Area
1.	Cultivated Area -		
	(i) Irrigated	271	22.22
	(ii) Non-irrigated	229	18.78
2.	Area under Forest	569	46.63
3.	Not-available for cultivation	146	11.97
4.	Other uncultivated areas	5	0.40
	Total Area	1220	100.00

Source: Director of Agriculture and Food Production, Orissa.

Table 2.4 shows the land utilisation pattern in Digapahandi block. It may be observed from the Tables 2.3 and 2.4 that whereas the forest area (46.63%) is more in the district as compared to the net area sown (41.00%), in the Digapahandi block the forest area is

Table 2.4 Land Utilisation Pattern in the Digapahandi Block

S.No.	Classification of the land area	Area in Hectares ('000)	% of total geographical area
1.	Cultivated Area -		
	(i) Irrigated	12770	70.46
	(ii) Non-irrigated	11309	
2.	Area under Forest	4275	12.75
3.	Not-available for cultivation	1015	2.97
4.	Other uncultivated areas	4800	14.04
	Total area	34169	100.00

very less (i.e. 12.75%) than the not cultivated area (i.e. 70.46%) of the block. One should keep this fact in mind while formulating as well as assessing the strength of agrarian policies for the district in general and the block in particular.

(iii) Cropping Pattern

The total cropped area during 1980-81 was 8.28 lakh hectares of these food crops account for 84.66% and the remaining 15.34% is shared by non-food crops and other crops. The most important food crops are paddy, Ragi, maize, green gram, black gram, and horse gram. Under the non-food crops sugar-cane, potato, ground nut

and til areas are important. Utilising the assured irrigation facilities, the coastal and plain regions have taken a lead in agricultural production in the district. Table 2.5 depicts the area under principal crops in the district as on 1980-81.

Table 2.5 Area Under Principal Crops in the District - 1980-81

S.No.	Name of the Crop	Area under cultivation (in Hectares)
1.	(A) Food Crops-Cereals	
	(i) Rice	3,16,460
	(ii) Ragi	75,584
	(B) Food Crops - Pulses	
	(i) Mung	1,56,211
	(ii) Biri	47,691
	(iii) Kulthi	39,075
2.	(A) Non-Food Crops - Oil Seeds	
	(i) Ground Nut	20,732
	(ii) Til	23,431
	(B) Fibres and Spices	7,074
3.	Commercial Crops	10,682
	(i) Sugar cane	5,450
	(ii) Other vegetables	40,975
	Total Food Crops	7,01,106

S.No.	Name of the Crop	Area under cultivation (in Hectares)
	Total Non-Food Crops	68,727
	Spices	10,682
	Commercial Crops	47,264
	Total cropped area	8,27,779

Table 2.6 shows cropping pattern in the Digapahandi block.

Table 2.6 Cropping Pattern in the Digapahandi block

S.No.	Name of the Crop	Area under cultivation (in Hectares)
1.	Multiple Crop Area	14,677
2.	Gross Cropped Area	38,753
3.	Area under Five Main Crops	
	(i) Paddy	15,938
	(ii) Ragi	5,703
	(iii) Ground-nut	3,426
	(iv) Vegetables	3,406

It can be seen from Table 2.5 that paddy constitutes 38% of the total cropped area in the district. Next to paddy are pulses, ragi, oil seeds, vegetables and other

important cash crops. In the block too paddy constitutes the highest percentage of the cultivated area. Hence among all other crops, rice production is greater, 4,01,770 tonnes during 1980-81, with about 36.34% as compared to different agricultural outputs. The dependance on agricultural outputs like rice, ragi, mung, biri, ground-nut (among oil-seeds), mesta, sugar cane and other vegetables (commercial crops) is significantly heavy on the part of the population in the district. Let us have a glance at the Table 2.7 below in order to understand the patterns of dependance on some agricultural outputs in the Ganjam district.

Table 2.7 Agricultural Outputs of Some Principal Crops (District-level)

(in Tonnes)

S.No.		Crops	Estimated total production under different crops during 1980-81
1.	(A)	Food Crops - Cereals	
	1.	Rice	4,01,770
	2.	Ragi	65,018
	3.	Jawar	4,599
	4.	Bajra	2,491
	5.	Millets	16,778
	6.	Maize	19,606
	7.	Wheat	697
		Total	5,10,959

S.No.	Crops	Estimated total production under different crops during 1980-81
	(B) Food-Crops - Pulses	
	1. Arhar	4,447
	2. Mung	79,218
	3. Biri	24,496
	4. Kulthi	20,163
	5. Other pulses	8,591
	Total	1,36,915
	Total Food crops	6,47,874
2.	(A) Non-Food - Oil Seeds	
	1. Ground-nut	22,038
	2. Til	11,564
	(B) Non-Food Crops - Fibre (in Bales)	
	1. Mesta	23,000
3.	Spices	
	1. Chillies	8,834
4.	Commercial Crops	41,300
	1. Sugar cane	41,300
	2. Other vegetables	3,14,108
	3. Tobacco	255
	4. Potato	2,995
	Net agricultural Output	10,91,004

(C). Productive Uses: Industry

The district is characterised by a very low level of industrialisation. There are four large/medium scale industries in the district, i.e., The Aska Co-operative Sugar Industries, M/s Jayashree Chemicals, Ganjam, East Coast Salt and Chemicals, Sumandi, Aska Multi-purpose Cooperative Society Solvent Extraction Plant, Berhampur (presently under closure). The total investment made in these industries is expected to be around 10 to 12 crores. By the end of 1982, there are 740 small scale industries registered in the D.I.C., Ganjam. There are another 741 small-scale industries [illegible] existing in the district, which are still unregistered.

The Digapahandi block is marked by large-scale presence of cottage, household industries (with some 650 units whereas the small-scale industrial units (both registered and unregistered) account for some 51 units (16 and 35 units respectively) with not a single large/ medium scale industry existing in the block. The table 2.8 indicates some broad trends of industrialisation in the block.

Table 2.8 Some Broad Trends of Industrialisation in the Block

1.	Large-scale	Nil
2.	Cottage, Household Industries	650

3.	Small-scale -	Registered	16
		Unregistered	35
4.	Carpentry		180
5.	Pottery		420
6.	Handicrafts		120

Land Holding Patterns

In order to understand the nature of social organisation in the village India, it is important to ploy various criteria among which land-holding pattern is certainly an important criterion. It means that various patterns regarding the ownership of land have to be identified in order to formulate policies not only to ameliorate the conditions of those groups or social strata which can be under all normal conditions called as weaker sections, but also to dissolve various forms of historical cleavages emerging due to differential patterns of land-holding.

Under those assumptions, let us look at the official statistics available classifying the land-holding patterns in the Ganjam district as well as in the Digapahandi block in particular. Table 2.9 depicts district level land holding patterns.

Table 2.9 District Level Landholding Patterns

S.No.	Size/Class of holding (in Hect.)	Individual holders		Joint Holdings	
		No.	Area	No.	Area
1.	Below 1.00	237367	111175	528	249
2.	1.00 to 2.00	66585	93299	344	482
3.	2.00 to 4.00	35567	91492	180	488
4.	4.00 to 10.00	11974	66627	101	565
5.	10.00 and above	964	12678	-	-
	Total size class	354458	275571	1161	1784

Source: Agricultural Census - 1976-77

It can be observed from the above table that small and marginal farmers form 86.44% of the total number of holders and holding 73.64% of the total area. Table 2.10 shows block level land-holding patterns.

Table 2.10 Block Level Landholding Patterns

S.No.	Size/Class of landholding	Individual holdings (No.)
1.	Less than 1 Hectare	5,235
2.	1.00 - 2.00	4,174
3.	2.00 - 4.00	3,781
4.	4.00 - 10.00	1,015
5.	10.00 and above	1,450
	Total size class	15,655

Rural Administration: Technical Organs

(i) Veterinary Services

There are 45 dispensaries and hospitals in the district including Berhampur and Paralakhemundi centres and 159 live-stock aid centres. There are 45 V.A.S. and 155 technicians working in that department.

(ii) Fisheries

The Ganjam district occupies an important place in pisciculture. The coastal blocks of the district i.e., Chatrapur, Ganjam, Khallikote, Rangeilunda and Chikiti are having a prominent place in pisciculture. The coastal belt will provide an excellent opportunity to exploit the marine resources. The district is included as one of the world bank project districts from 1980-81 and during 6th Plan period 3100 hectares of water area is to be developed for intensive pisciculture. As per the information available from the Chief Executive Officer, F.F.D.A., Berhampur out of 7250 projects with an area of 10310 hectares, the Gram Panchayats have reserved about 1000 tanks covering an area of 1300 hectares, for pisciculture by Gram Panchayats rest 6,250 tanks covering an area of 9010 hectares are available for development under long-term lease and F.F.D.A. has taken follow-up action to speed-up long-term lease.

(iii) Dairy Development

The district has not developed in respect of dairy. It has now taken up dairy schemes in a big way. The D.R.D.A., Animal Husbandry Department and Financing Institution are evincing keen interest in developing dairy schemes in the district. There is an acute shortage of animals in the district and therefore, most of the animals are being imported from the neighbouring districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram and Vizag. As the dairy is the most important and popular scheme both under DRRP and IRDP programmes, all out efforts are being made by both District and State administration to improve the present position. For a policy of breeding programmes, the District has been made into zone and for Paralakhemundi and Bhanjnagar sub-divisions, it has been decided to improve the local breed with Hariana and at Berhampur and Chatrapur, it has been planned to improve the local breed with Jersey.

Since Digapahandi block is covered under the Berhampur sub-division, Jersey has been utilised under D.R.R.P. and I.R.D.P. for cross breeding fertilisation. Vigorous efforts are made to improve fodder cultivation. At present there are three Chilling Plants at Berhampur with 1,800 litres capacity. There are proposals to cover

more villages under milk routes and to organise dairy co-operative societies and to increase the milk collection centres. It is important to note here that the two mini chilling plants at Konheipur and Balichhai with capacity of 200 litres and 240 litres respectively are not operating at all. So far as the Digapahandi block is concerned, the following table would indicate the number of dairy animals and cross-breeding facilities taken up under the block administration.

Dairy Animals			Number
(i)	Buffalo:	Cross-Breed	1360
		Others	1440
(ii)	Cows :	Cross-Breed	640
		others	2560

And so far the number of villages having veterinary facilities is only eight (8) in the Digapahandi block.

Financial Administration

Banking facilities have been fairly developed in Ganjam district. As by the end of 1982, there are 110 commercial bank branches, 25 branches of regional rural banks, two co-operative central banks with a network of 24 branches and five primary land development banks are

operating in the district one each at Berhampur, Chatrapur, Bhanjanagar, Aska and Paralakhemundi. So far as cooperatives are concerned, there are two co-operative central banks operating in the district, one at Berhampur and the other at Aska. There are 23 branches of cooperative banks operating within the jurisdiction of Digapahandi block with four centres of three different commercial banks under the block.

Development Administration

As the administrative set up existing in the district will also help into implementation and reviewing the programmes and problems, it is important to take stock of the structure of development administration in the Ganjam district. The district is divided into four administrative sub-divisions namely, (i) Berhampur, (ii) Chatrapur, (iii) Paralakhemundi, and (iv) Bhanjanagar. They are again sub-divided into 13 tahsils and 29 blocks. Accordingly, the district has got 4,757 villages of which 4,223 are inhabited. There are 18 NACs and two municipalities . Therefore there are totally 20 towns in the district. Of the 29 blocks under the district, the Digapahandi block is one under the Berhampur sub-division coordinating a range of 19 village panchayats out of a total of 407 village panchayats in the district as a whole.

Caste Configurations

The caste configurations in the block are as follows. Of the upper castes, the Brahmins constitute some one-eight of the population and the Khatriyas also enjoy a dominating social position within the stratified society. Of the eleven Khatriya families in the Ganjam district, there are two Khatriya families in the Digapahandi block namely Sanakhemundi and Badakhemundi families. These families lead two important warring factional groups of the Khatriya caste with different political followings and they are also the Zamindar Houses of the Digapahandi area.

Apart from these two upper caste groups, Brahmins and Khatriyas, there are several 'middle' caste groups, Karana (known as Kayasta in other states), Reddy, Komati, Kama, Sundhi, Kalinji, Gouda, Kachhara etc. Of the 'middle' caste groups, Reddys (known as peasant castes in Andhra and Karnataka) are having single majority in certain panchayats of the block. They constitute one-fourth of the total population and they are spread across the block but dominating the demography of some four panchayats under the Digapahandi block. They have also a caste association known as Digapahandi Reddy Samaj Sangh covering around four Taluks of the Ganjam district. While the Komatis known as the 'professional'

caste as in Andhra Pradesh with ethics to do business are dominant in one panchayat area, Kalinji and Kamas are single majority castes in certain other areas of the block. The caste groups like Reddy, Komati, Kama and Sundhi of this area belong to the telugu-speaking population.

There are also multiply divided lower castes like Kampa, Kouta (fisherman caste), Dhoba (washerman caste) etc. The scheduled caste population in the block is 14,143 representing 12.50 per cent of the total population. Among the lower castes, Kampas are also traditionally regarded as priests of the tribals of the area and are numerically dominating some areas covered by two panchayats. Unlike the Kampas, the other lower castes like Kouta, Dhoba etc. are widespread and diffused in the demography of the Digapahandi block.

Political History

The Digapahandi area is traditionally known as the Zamindari area. The two Zamindar Houses of Badakhemundi and Sanakhemundi area cover the peripheries of this block. These two Zamindar Houses are also traditional political rivals. After independence and thenceforth, they have been opposing each other from different political platforms. After the merger of the Zamindar Houses and

'princely states' with the independent India which followed the historic compromise in 1948-49 between the nationalist Congress and the feudal Zamindar Houses, the Dadakhamundi 'Raja' has always identified with the Congress. The Sonakhamundi 'Raja' has been part and parcel of the 'regional' political party namely Ganatantra Parishad which later came to be identified with the national level Swatantra Party. These Khatriya families have been very active to consolidate their positions in the state as well as local leaderships. While the members from their families have contested state level elections, other times they have fought against each other by giving patronage to their own candidates contesting for local political bodies like panchayats, cooperatives etc. But traditionally it has been the Congress dominating over the opposition, Ganatantra Parishad or Swatantra Party in the local bodies and state elections too. Yet, on occasions the Swatantra Party sponsored Sonakhamundi Raja or 'rebel' Congress leaders have won the state level elections as happened during 1980 elections to the Orissa Legislative Assembly. We have discussed the political process of the local bodies of the Digapahandi block in the next chapter.

Now, at the present, so far as the position of the Communist Party, viz. CPI is concerned, it is extremely

weak in the overall power equations of the block. But it has majority followings in two backward caste dominated areas, so to say, two panchayats of the block. The Janata-led opposition is also weak and it has achieved victory in a sarpanch election of one panchayat only. The Congress-S has its presence felt in this area through a sarpanch who has also contested MLA elections earlier on its ticket. Thus the 'opposition' has overall three sarpanchs only out of a total of 19 sarpanchs under this block. The rest 16 sarpanchs seem to be part of the ruling 'Congress-I Party'.

Chapter 3

POWER STRUCTURE

Although a number of studies have been conducted on the power structure of village panchayats[1] and a few studies on the political processes at the Block level[2], very little has been achieved to integrate the regional, state level politics with the power structure at the village and block levels. And wherever these political anthropological units have been emphasised, a theoretical-empirical continuum, i.e., a movement from theoretical to empirical and from empirical to theoretical has been considerably undermined by a so-called data analysis of the power structure.

Inspired by social anthropological works of the type in Pocock (1957), Oscar Lewis (1958), Siegal and Beals (1960) which conceptually concentrate on 'factional' aspect of cleavages within the political processes, these studies on power structure tend to view the village as an autonomous unit. And the political forces operating in it have been dissociated from the national, state or regional level political processes. Thus power structure in the village panchayat remains delinked from the political leavers of

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1. Refer, S.N. Mishra (1980), K.D. Gangrade (1974), Narain Hazari (1978), et. al.

2. Cf. B.P. Singh (1971); G. Ram Reddy (1965); S.N. Mishra (1981) et. al.

the state which influence and often create bases at the village or block levels.

The micro should be seen as a continuous process within various sets of the macro. To the extent it has been possible for us we have tried to trace the roots and linkages between micro and macro. For example, while analysing the political processes at the block level, it is important to examine the influence of an MLA over an election process of the Samiti Chairman. So also the participations of an individual or a party in the election process of the Samiti chairmanship keeping an eye on the future elections at the state level should be brought to picture to the extent it is meaningful in terms of the shaping and sharing of the power structure in the Block.

As an administrative unit, the Block is linked below to the village panchayat, and above to the state across the development district. At the political level, the Samiti administration is tied to the various political networks connecting the village panchayat, and state assembly which at best cut across the boundary of the Samiti. We must, therefore, deal with organs and institutions linked to the Panchayat Samiti even though they differ widely in their range of operation.

II

The principal objective of this chapter is to arrive at an understanding of the manner in which power structure is distributed in the Samiti. That is to consider the distribution of power and the composition of power blocs through a reflection on the shifts, if any, in the bases of power over a period of time. In the 'Introduction', we have discussed various theoretical models of power and its substantive aspects, and emphasised that certain cognate notions like 'authority', 'influence', 'coercion' or 'legitimation' et. al. constitute our central concerns.

We use the notion 'authority' as has been used by Weber (1948). Authority is power which is legitimised through certain institutional mechanisms of consent manufacturing policies and elements of coercion or physical force; it necessarily operates within an institutional framework. For example, a Panchayat Samiti Chairman or a Sarpanch or a B.D.O. can do certain things within [illegible] the sanctions of law and hence have power with authority, whereas an ordinary member of a village or leaders of factions have power without authority. Thus power [illegible] legalised in the various institutional framework of the 'State' may be regarded as 'authority'. Theoretically this substantive notion of 'authority' corresponds with the general problematic of the legal positivist understanding

of power which locates power only at the level of authority. Power then becomes a derivative concept of phenomena: authority. We have a reduced concept of power within the legal positivist framework as we see in Chapter I. Though this study is primarily concerned with 'authority' like the legal positivist framework, it regards so only in the context of authority being derivative phenomena of the broader concept 'power', not vice versa. Thus we are concerned with an analysis of power structures where power and authority tend to be converged with. Hence, for us, authority, its processes of 'legitimation', 'influence' remain cognate notions of the general problematic of power.

Our concern is with power in its political aspects, and particularly in its relation to social stratification and to group structures such as parties and local elites. And politics as a mechanism through which the relations between different communities in the villages are altered is a question examined in the next chapter in the context of case studies on the politics of development programmes undertaken by the Samiti and in its absence, by the Block.

The manner in which power is distributed in the Samiti leads to a division of social structures into two categories : those who have authority and those who do not, but have power to influence the former in myriad ways. Within

the former there are further subdivisions according to the sources from which power is derived. Thus there are those whose power is based upon ownership and control of land as against others who derive their power from the support of numerically preponderant groups owing largely to the introduction of adult suffrage or both.[3] This, in fact, brings us to the question of dealing with bases of power structure of the Panchayat Samiti.

Beteille (1965) notes that the introduction of the adult suffrage has created certain new bases of power like numerically preponderant group which has come to stay along with old bases of caste, class and religion. He further notes that these bastions of power have interplayed with themselves and interacted at important elements of power blocs in the villages which may be classified into two levels: formal-concrete structures and informal-fluid structures of power blocs. While panchayat institutions and political parties belong to formal concrete structures, individuals or factions, e.g., middleman, constitute the aspects of non-formal fluid structures of power blocs in the rural society.

This study is here concerned with the formal power blocs of the Panchayat Samiti : the patterns of leadership

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3. Refer: the concept of dominant caste.

emerging at this level and particularly its relationship with various elements of social stratification. The reading of the social background of the rural leadership may be done at a combination of two levels - in terms of the structural-social characteristics, viz., caste patterns, patterns of landholding, family ties, religious status etc., and also in terms of individual social characteristics like educational background, age, sex etc. These combinations along with an interpretation, normally inferences from these characteristics, which should not be stretched further beyond a point, may provide some hindsights to the nature of the Samiti leadership.

The basic purpose of doing this exercise is to work out the following two hypotheses - first is to see if "with each election the representatives thrown up are of better calibre"[4] and secondly, whether leadership is confined to the richer section of the society or is distributed across the various groups of structural and individual characteristics, i.e., whether the leadership has emerged from the middle and lower sections too.

III

Before we intend to return to the above discussions,

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4. C. Ram Reddy, Panchayati Raj: A Case Study of Block Administration in Andhra Pradesh, a Ph.D. thesis (1965).

the following sections III and IV are devoted to a discussion of politico-legal structure of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in Orissa. Since the substantial parts of Orissa were under the native princes (twenty-six of them, all) which were integrated into Orissa only after independence in 1950, there was no organised system of local government and much less of local self-government. And in Orissa under colonial system, the system of local government was of the British-India pattern characterised by the presence of local boards. There were district boards and local boards of which district boards served as the main revenue administrative unit of local government. These boards did provide for limited political participation through periodic elections under limited suffrage.

After independence the first major innovation in local self-government in Orissa occurred when, in 1948, the Orissa Gram Panchayat Act was passed. It is under this Act that for the first time Village or Gram Panchayat was established as a unit of self-government. By 1950, the merger of all the Princely States in Orissa was complete and the Gram Panchayats came to be established gradually in all these areas alone. Thus while the Gram Panchayats at the village level characterised the local self bodies, the district and taluk boards characterised the local government in rural Orissa, though in many of the newly

integrated areas, these bodies were just being introduced.[5] Then came the concept of Community Development and the National Extension Service (NES) Scheme in 1952. The administrative set-up to carry out these projects varied in detail but the principle behind them remained more or less the same.

It was at the end of 1959 that the three-tier structure was introduced following the Central acceptance of the suggestions of the Balwantray Mehta Committee Report, 1957. Before we go into the details of this structure, mention must be made of the recommendations of the Land Revenue and Land Tenure Committee headed by Nabakrishna Chaudhury (known as Chaudhury Committee in Orissa) in 1949. The primary concern of this committee was to abolish the Zamindars and the shaping of the future revenue set-up. This committee envisaged a scheme of decentralisation of authority for the proper revenue administration and development activities in the rural areas. It called for the enactment of the Orissa Land Management and Local Government Act. This was to inaugurate a new system of administrative decentralisation - evolved from Provinces down in order to Anchals. The local authority called as Anchal Sasan was to have an elected Sabha and an Executive Officer was to

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5. R.V.R. Chandrasekhar Rao, 'Orissa' in G. Ram Reddy, (ed.), Patterns of Panchayati Raj in India (1977), p. 197.

reorganise the already existing Village Panchayats. It is evident that this scheme was an attempt to evolve a comprehensive system of local self-government in Orissa which was also assigned with some development tasks.[6] Though the Orissa Anchal Sasan Act was passed in 1956, yet the pattern of democratic decentralization it envisaged, was never given effect to. This scheme was overtaken by the on-rush of events culminating in the Balwantray Committee recommendations.

The state, after accepting it passed the Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act in 1959, which provided for the establishment of the Samitis at the secondary and Zilla Parishads at the tertiary levels while it attempted to integrate it with already existing Gram Panchayat Act, 1948. However, it was only in the year 1964, a comprehensive and a new Gram Panchayat Act was passed, replacing the 1948 enactment. Between 1961-68, the three-tier structure of Panchayat Raj Institutions was in operation in Orissa and in 1968, the Zilla Parishad was abolished leaving Panchayat Raj Institutions as a two-tier structure in Orissa as it operates till today.

Panchayat Samiti

In the two-tier structure, the Panchayat Samiti is

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6. Ibid., p. 190.

envisaged to be the fulcrum of the administrative level of rural development. Under the Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act, the Samiti is composed as follows -

1. A Chairman elected by the members of the Gram Panchayats;
2. The Sarpanchs of the Gram Panchayats as ex-officio members;
3. A woman member, a member each from the scheduled caste and scheduled tribes to be co-opted by the Sarpanch members and the Chairman in case a woman and the SC/ST persons are not already there;
4. Chairman of the municipalities and notified area councils with a population not exceeding 20,000 within the Block;
5. The Block Development Officer appointed by the Government;
6. Other officials from the Government departments dealing with education, agriculture, cooperation, panchayat works, welfare, revenue, medical, forests and such other departments as may be decided by the Government. Some of these could be the block level Extension officers themselves.

The official members and the Chairman of the municipalities and notified area councils have no voting rights.[7]

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7. Orissa Panchayat Samiti Manual, 1984, p. 4.

The composition of the Samiti calls for a few important comments.[8] The inclusion of official members is a novelty. In many other states, the Block Development Officer and his team are there to run the administration of the Block but have no place in the Samiti itself. The intension of the Orissa model is to ensure that the technical and administrative aspects of a decision are brought to bear on the deliberations of the Samiti. In one sense, this may benefit the process of decision-making. Whereas in many other states, the local MLAs and MPs are members of the Samiti, the Orissa Act does not provide for their membership. It merely entitles the local MLAs but not the MP, to take part in the deliberations without a right to vote. We will deal with the functions in the next chapter.

There are 314 blocks which give an average of 12.3 Gram Panchayats per block. And when compared to the general pattern elsewhere in the country, population-wise, Orissa village Panchayats are quite big and the average number of villages per Gram Panchayat i.e. about 12 is the highest in the country. The Orissa Gram Panchayats, thus, are rather unwieldly in size. Taken together the fact that the conditions of communications are relatively poor in Orissa, the size of the Gram Panchayat is bound

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8. R.V.R. Chandrasekhar Rao, op. cit., p. 203.

to tell upon their effective functioning. Also Orissa has the highest proportion of blocks per district with 314 blocks distributed in 13 districts giving an average of 24 blocks per district. The assumption is that the communication networks, population-size, area, and their relative combined strength constitute the viability of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in any state. Since Orissa is one of those backward states in terms of the communication networks, it remains an interesting proposition for research that how far these factors have influenced viability of Panchayat Raj Institutions in the state - a question which is beyond the purview of this research.[9]

The Electoral Process of the Panchayat Samiti

The legal mechanisms, in so far as the elections to Samiti are concerned, can be divided into two processes ; one which links up the Samiti with all the Gram Panchayat members below and the other process is held within the precincts of the Samiti. In Orissa Panchayat Samiti elections, the first process has meant two different things

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9. However, we do not think as some authors have argued that the 'viability' of Panchayat Institutions and for that matter, decentralisation process depend merely on the population size of the Panchayat Institutions; its viability depends crucially on the substantive issues it picks up in the rural sector and also secondary factors like communication networks, socio-ecological criteria. See, BNC Proposals, Mainstream, January 21, 1984.

at two different points of time. In between 1961-1967 elections it meant the election of two elected components within the Samiti - (i) the election of the Chairman and (ii) the second order members to be elected each from the existing Gram Panchayats. During the second elections in 1967, the elected component was reduced to the election of the Samiti Chairman only. The rest two election processes: one for the Vice-Chairmanship and the other for the three co-opted members from among women, SC and ST groups, have always been confined to precincts of the Samiti.

IV

An MLA or state level politician who has long-term stakes at the state politics takes keen interest in the election process of the Samiti Chairman. Since at the Block level, the Chairman holds an office of political executive and remains an important agent of rural management, it is natural to take keen interest in this office to create or maintain some electoral bases. Secondly, when the MLA is not part and parcel of the political executive organ of the state assembly, he would among other things try to create a base at the Samiti headquarters so that he can wield some influence on the Samiti Chairman and can execute some locally needed programmes so that it might satisfy on the one hand his political leaders and on the other

fulfill some immediate needs of the locals which can at times work as a successful vote-catching technique. If the Chairman happens to be among his partymen, he would be in a better position to influence the Chairman to do this or that in those areas and channelise development programmes away from those areas which are not favourable to him. So it is a complex state and block political nexus where an existing MLA requires a favourable block leader and the local leader tries to win over the MLA and state-based leaders and also utilise their political experiences to enter into block politics.

While this is the vision of MLAs or state-level leaders to patronise the office of the political executive of the Samiti, the Sarpanchs who constitute the ex-officio members of the Samiti and have right to vote within the Samiti evince keen interest in the election of the Samiti Chairman. They participate in it keenly and enthusiastically by looking to the fact that 'our' person should be elected to the Samiti as its Chairman so that he could accrue some 'benefits' to 'our' areas and people. Thus the political participation of the Sarpanchs and MLAs in the power structure could be seen as a process which continuously moves in and out of the office of the Samiti, and constitutes the elements of the complex power nexus, i.e., of MLA-Samiti Chairman - Sarpanch equations at the Samiti level.

But, what are the socio-structural conditions which maintain such equations? This leads us to an investigation of the socio-economic background of the leaders at the Samiti evolved over time and further, an analysis of political linkages which perpetuate such types of leadership. Taken together the social origin of the leadership and their political linkages may provide appropriate clues to an understanding of the nature of the 'authority' structures evolved at the Block level in a period stable over time. The period spans from 1961 to 1984 elections and, in between, the time-points are 1967, 1970-71 and 1975 elections respectively. Thus we are left to analyse the leadership evolved at these points of time.

Since elections to panchayats are based on adult suffrage that is how Sarpanchs are elected in Orissa who constitute the ex-officio members of the Samiti, a particular caste or a landholding group would be considered dominant whose share in the total representatives is far higher than its proportion in the total population of the Block and if it maintains its position at that level over a period of time. This is following Robert Dahl's quota system. And further, the attributes of dominance are primarily ritual rank, numerical strength and economic power as reflected in the representation process.[10] As we noted, we have

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10. M.N. Srinivas, "The Dominant Caste in Rampura", American Anthropologist, 61(11), 1959, pp. 1-16.

largely confined outselves to an analysis of the social origin of the leadership in terms of caste rankings, land-ownership patterns, various occupational levels, educational status, age gaps, sex etc. . Below is an analysis of each of these variables as distributed among the Samiti members over a period of time.

(1) Caste

Table 3.1 indicates that the leadership in the Panchayat Samiti has been largely confined to the upper strata of the society - largely to Brahmins since 1961 even though quite recently during 1964 elections the Reddys (peasent castes as they are called in Andhra Pradesh) have risen to share the power structure along with Brahmins. Of course their idioms of conflict within the informal power structure of the village have been along with caste lines but occasionally it has been intertwined with Brahmins. This type of political alliance may be characterised as a process of semi-casteist politics where multiple caste considerations interpenetrate into politics for a truculent alliance between a Reddy and a Brahmin leader in which the Reddy is perhaps a symbolic representation of caste linkages at the formal power structure. This is in fact a political process of caste-alignments.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Panchayat Samiti Members by Caste Segments

Caste	Number of Members in									
	1st Samiti (1961-66)		2nd Samiti (1967-70)		3rd Samiti (1971-74)		4th Samiti (1974-75)		5th Samiti (1984 -)	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Brahmin	20	70.1	12	54.5	11	50.0	11	50.0	10	43.5
Karana	1	3.5	-	-	1	4.5	2	9.0	-	-
Reddy	-	-	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	5	21.7
Komati	2	7.1	2	9.0	1	4.5	-	-	1	4.3
Gouda	1	3.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Velama	-	-	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.3
Sundhi	-	-	2	9.0	2	9.0	-	-	1	4.3
Kacchara	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4.3
Kampa	2	7.1	2	9.0	2	9.0	3	13.6	2	8.5
Harijans	1	3.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	2	9.0	1	4.3
Others	-	-	-	-	1	4.5	1	4.5	-	-
ST	1	3.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.3
Total	28	100.0	22	100.0	22	100.0	22	100.0	23	100.0

In between 1961-74 on as many as four occasions of elections to Panchayat Samiti, the members were fairly dominated by Brahmins. During Ist Panchayat Samiti elections, nearly 70% of the representatives were distributed from the Brahmin caste and of the total 12 Sarpanchs 8 were Brahmins - a trend which continues till today during 1984 elections - whereas out of 12 second order elected members of the Samiti in 1961 as many as 10 were Brahmins. The Samiti Chairman and one coopted woman member were from Brahmin category too. In fact during 1961-67, it happened so primarily because the politics of consensus model which dominated the early phase of political participation in the Panchayat Institutions allowed the proliferation of already ritually-dominant leaders to enter into Gram Panchayats and hence into Panchayat Samiti. And since Brahmins have been regarded as ritually superior to other castes, the concensual model resulted in the growth of political representatives from this caste. This trend may be regarded as politics of casteism which does not allow leaders from other subordinate castes to emerge and consolidates its political position by allowing its own leaders to emerge into the power structure of the Panchayat Samiti through the politics of consensus and the accepted social norms of ritual superiority. Hence such type of leadership may be characterised as ritual-based leadership.

Set-back to this trend began during 1967-1974 elections - a phase which witnessed three significant elections. Non-Brahmins castes who have dominated the demography of certain panchayats have realised the political potentials that a Gram Panchayat and a Samiti provide for. In between 1967-74, the steady rise of four important 'dominant castes' - dominant sheer by their numerical strength or economic power along with numerical strength within these particular areas - belonging to non-Brahmin sections, viz., Reddy, Komati, Kalinji and Kampa reflects the test of power equations within these non-Brahmin castes. During 1967, '70-71 and '74 elections the Reddys have sent one member each to the Samiti from the same panchayat. The Komatis have sent one member (the same one) too on those three occasions from the same panchayat. While the Kalinji section has sent the same member four times representing the same panchayat in the Samiti, the Kampas have sent two members at least on each occasion from the same two panchayats.

Finally, 1964 elections indicate some specific trends which in one sense converge with earlier trends which have put set-back to the ritual-oriented leadership. The emerging Reddys of earlier days have now asserted their political power within the Samiti. They have not only increased their strength in the Samiti from 1 to 4 members

at present but also consolidated their position by capturing the post of the Samiti Chairman - an achievement which was appreciated by the Digapahandi Taluk Reddy Samaj/Sangh in its meeting held in the month of April, 1984. These are the three specific trends, viz., a ritual-based leadership, emergence of middle caste leadership and finally the assertion of the economically powerful middle caste leadership, viz. the Reddy caste. As we have seen these trends have developed at three different points of time as one may discern them from the electoral process and the nature of the leadership associated with caste structure.

(ii) Class

In a society like ours which is also stratified into a varied complex of ownership of means of production and non-ownership - of which control over land is only a particular segment - it is impossible to assume that caste is the only social structural characteristic of the leadership. Class is also another category to be taken care of while analysing either social forces or movements of the political society. But in the absence of primary data as in the present case on the questions associated with social stratification related to layers of ownership and control of means of production,[11] we have largely relied

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11. The recent IRDP surveys on-going under the RBI guidelines may help to grasp the social stratification at this level.

to collect data on "the ownership of land" as it is associated with the Samiti members.

There is a complex interpenetration of caste and class relations. People who have been historically associated with lower caste strata are also lowly placed in relation to their control over land. So also, though the prime controllers of land have been largely confined to the upper and middle strata of the caste hierarchy, there is also a significant population within these caste strata who are economically poor. In some such situations the question naturally arises is - how has been the Panchayat leadership distributed within the population which is hierarchically placed in relation to their differential controls over land? Table 3.2 shows land ownership patterns of Samiti members.

A comparative study of sociological classifications of landholdings patterns of all households under the Block and distribution of the Samiti members by the size of landholdings possessed by their households may provide some insights into the type of leadership emerged at different points of time. In the absence of any longitudinal survey indicating landholding patterns of the households under the Block, we have largely relied on a synchronic survey and the distribution of landholdings among the members of the Fifth Panchayat Samiti, 1984-89

Table 3.2 Land Ownership Patterns of Samiti Members

Categories	1st Samiti		2nd Samiti		3rd Samiti		4th Samiti		5th Samiti	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Big and Large Farmers (25 and above) and (12.50 to 25.0) acres	13	46.4	8	36.7	6	27.3	7	31.8	7	30.4
Medium Farmers (5 to 12.50) acres	8	28.6	6	27.3	8	36.7	7	31.8	8	34.8
Marginal and Small Farmers (1.0 to 5.0) acres	7	25.0	8	36.7	7	31.8	8	36.7	7	30.4
Agricultural Labourers (0 to 1) acre	-	-	-	-	1	4.5	-	-	1	4.3
Landless Labourers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	28	100.0	22	100.0	22	100.0	22	100.0	23	100.0

and their comparison.[12]

TABLE-3.2(a): LAND OWNERSHIP PATTERNS IN BLOCK VIS-A-VIS REPRESENTATION IN SAMITI :

Categories (Acre)	Families in the Block Area		Families of the Members of 5th Samiti			
			Elected and coopted members		Elected only	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Landless Agricultural Labour and Artisans (0 - 1)	5,065	24.4	1	4.3	1	5.0
Marginal and Small Farmers (1- 5)	10,664	51.5	7	30.4	4	20.0
Big Farmers (5 - 10) and 10 and more	5,000	24.1	15	65.2	15	75.0
Total	20,729	100.0	23	100.0	20	100.0

Occupational Levels

Commercial activities and the professional services have always been associated with the rural population in different forms. Since the development of commercialisation of agriculture, to some extent by the Mughul Rule and largely by the colonial system in India, the rural population have been connected in a complex manner with the urban population.

12. This is based on IRDP survey of Digapahandi Block where data collected so far have not been compiled as yet. Hence we have clubbed together categories which ought to be studied separately to draw specific theoretical insights.

Since then the rural population has not been merely depending on the output of the agriculture but also enjoys relative disassociation from the agrarian structure and been engaged in other occupational activities like commercial or professional activities. A man engaged in dual or triple occupational levels, say, agriculture and other commercial or professional occupations is considered to be more influential and also his social networks are wider in terms of their social dimensions and economic influence than a man who is merely engaged in agriculture or a man who is structurally confined to a kind of social mobility within the categories of professional activities. The section of the population which has reaped the fruits of commercialisation has normally enjoyed higher social networks and thus higher status within these occupational levels. Under considerations of universal adult suffrage these complex networks account as actual grounds of a person's accessibility into the power structure. Hence the occupational status other than landholding patterns should be analysed in terms of the distribution of its various characteristics among the members of the Samiti. And precisely because of this complex nexus, the occupational status analysed in conjunction with landholding categories may provide some theoretical insights into the nature of the power structure.

Table 3.3 Occupational Levels

Categories	1st Samiti		2nd Samiti		3rd Samiti		4th Samiti		5th Samiti	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Agriculture	25	89.3	18	81.8	12	54.5	10	45.5	10	43.5
Agriculture and Business (rice millers, contractors, Kirani shop, other business)	2	7.1	2	9.1	6	27.2	6	27.2	8	34.7
Agriculture and Professionals (teachers, lawyers, Vaidyas)	1	3.5	2	9.1	4	18.1	5	27.2	5	21.7
Business	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Business and Professionals	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Artisans	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	28	100.0	22	100.0	22	100.0	22	100.0	23	100.0

Tables 3.2, 3.2(a) and 3.3 when taken together indicate some interesting trends in the way the Samiti leadership has been distributed within the class divided society. The leadership is now not only confined to the agriculture population but also people who have developed larger social networks and become influential through allied activities like business and professional jobs. These sorts of people have witnessed steady growth of their positions and recently during 1984 elections, they have risen to assert their supremacy within the power structure of the Samiti. While during the first two Samitis (1961-70), persons merely dependent upon agriculture activities have consolidated their strongholds within Samiti's authority periphery, during next three terms of the Samiti (1971-84) till quite recently people of combined occupational status have steadily risen to assert supremacy within the power nexus of the Samiti. During 1961-71, the distribution of Samiti members in terms of agricultural occupation alone was as high as 89.3% and 81.8% respectively, whereas their percentage representation has significantly declined to 54.5, 45.5 and 43.5 per centages of the total Samiti members in the respective Samitis from 1970-71 to 1984 (Table 3.3). But in case of categories of people with combined occupations, they have a meteoric rise and consolidation within the power structure of the Samiti.

During first two Samitis (1961-71), even the combined strength of categories II and III (Table 3.3) is as low as 10.6 and 18.2 per centages respectively, whereas the same rose up to 45.3 and 54.4 percentages during 3rd and 4th Samitis. And in the 5th Samiti, their combined strength stands at 56.4 and have outnumbered the members whose occupational activities are confined within the agriculture sector (Table 3.3). This shows the emerging trends of the dominance of people with combined occupational status. In fact, today, people feel that to show the strength in the offices of the Samiti, a person is required to have larger networks involving agriculture, commerce and professional activities. These socio-economic networks are supposed to constitute better potential grounds to enter into political nexus around the Panchayat Raj Institutions. But this was not so required during the early phase of political participation in the Samiti possibly because people in this area did not feel the intense use of commerce and its combined strength with agriculture in this Zamindari area. And possibly also the penetration of commerce has been very slow in this area after independence.[13]

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13. This is an important issue of political economy which remains largely independent of this research work.

Linked with the issue of combined occupational status of agriculture and commercial groups is also the question whether all categories of people associated with agriculture have been fairly represented in the Samiti power structure - a question which has been tackled in Tables 3.2 and 3.2(a). One possible inference is that the big, large and medium farmers with 24.1% of the total population have been dominating the power equations of the Samiti with a overwhelming representation of 70 to 75% varying over time. Even though the small, marginal and agricultural labourers constitute the majority in the area, their low level of representation which has varied from 25% to about 35% has been continuing over a period of time. Even though the questions of majority have been introduced to political processes through the universal adult suffrage, it has been difficult for this section to challenge the economic hegemony of the big farmers on the political terrains. In fact, there is also a complex process behind that statistics (shown above) indicating their representation. If one does exclude the coopted members and consider the nature of representation of the elected members of the Samiti only vis-a-vis their occupational levels, one finds a grim picture of the political representation of the lower economic strata (Table 3.2(a)). For example, while 15 representatives, i.e., 75% of the

Samiti during 1984 elections belonged to the big farmers category constituting 24% of the total population, only 5 Samiti members, i.e. 25% of the representatives belonged to the categories of small, marginal and agricultural labourers who constitute nearly 75% of the total population in the Digapahandi Block (Table 3.2(a).

Thus the trends in the power structure of the Samiti have been in favour of the classes belonging to the big and medium farmers. In the absence of popular leadership which obviously could threaten the dominant political leadership through the processes of adult suffrage[14], the economic hegemony of big farmers - business-professionalist networks have successfully utilised the values of adult suffrage and its institutions at Panchayat level. But in between the economic hegemony of this group and the power structure of the Samiti, there is a complex intervention of the political culture - a proposition we will discuss in subsequent sections.

We have so far analysed the distribution of social structural characteristics of Samiti members and let us see how the members are distributed on the basis of some individual characteristics like education level, age, sex etc.

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14. This assumption has been negatively inferred from Beteille's arguments. See, Andre Beteille, Caste, Class and Power, 1965, p. 144.

Educational Status

Table 3.4 Distribution of Panchayat Samiti Members by Their Literacy and Educational Status

Literacy Levels	1st Samiti	2nd Samiti	3rd Samiti	4th Samiti	5th Samiti
University and College	-	-	-	-	2
Secondary School	9	7	8	8	9
Middle and Primary	15	12	13	12	12
Literate	4	3	1	2	-
Illiterate	-	-	-	-	-
Total	28	22	22	22	23

Table 3.4 gives the distribution of panchayat samiti members by their literacy and educational status and clearly shows that all the representatives in the Samiti are literates, though their educational status has been largely confined to the middle and primary school levels followed by the members from secondary school background. In fact all the members have been able to put their signatures on all the Samiti proceedings and their handwritings are not completely illigible which means there is some element of practice in writing. But the low development

of the educational standard of the representatives is possibly due to the fact that there have been only 170 schools of which there are 10 high schools with low intake capacity and the rest of the schools are distributed within certain villages out of the total of 243 villages and one town covering around 1,13,071 population (1981 census) under this Block. With further low development of communication networks which connect only 25 villages, it became increasingly difficult for the people to mobilise resources required to study in the institutions spread wide across the villages. All these three issues reason the development of the educational status of the people. Though quite a recently there has been upstart of a few colleges around three within the area under the Digapahandi Block, still its impact is to be seen at the socio-political culture of this area.

Now the assumption follows that literacy rates and educational levels are usually high among the socially and economically better-off groups. Thus the economically dominant groups would certainly exhibit higher literacy and educational levels. The foregoing analysis reveals that the power structure in the Samiti has been consolidated by the upper classes who appear to have good educational levels under the local standards and who emerge from locally dominant castes. The dominant

leadership is not highly educated. Even it is so, it is difficult to infer that they may not be aware of local needs while it is possible to infer that they might not be in a better position to relate the local needs to the national standards and also the national mechanisms involved in the development of the rural areas of their locality.[15]

Age Groups

Issues of knowledge about problems of the area and life of others can not be restricted to the prism of one's age or generational questions. A young man may also think like an old person; he may transcend the barriers of the age. And also the same may happen with an old one. Their interests may coincide. Perhaps there may be little difference in old and young person's interests. And especially in political situations where different 'interest blocs' are formed, aligned and realigned, it is very difficult to assume that there is in fact political cleavage between young and the old. During elections a man of sixties (say, A) may patronise a man of early thirties (A_1) against another man of sixties (A_2). But there is a no ground to think that there is a political

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15. See, for example, arguments advanced by B.P. Singh (1971) that the Samiti members' knowledge of the community development programme was largely poor. But it is difficult to agree with his implied proposition that members could show poor knowledge on the local implementation mechanisms of the said programme. For a detailed discussion on these aspects, see Chapter 4 in this work.

conflict between A_1 and A_2 in terms of their age or generational questions. Of course both A and A_1 (the old and the young who have formed an alliance) may propagate against A_2 that among other 'disadvantages' one such is that A_2 is a very old person; may not be able to do things immediately as might be required by villagers from time to time; may not move from block office to the village, from block to the collectorate and then to the village to get things done for the villagers and hence must not be voted for. And as it happens, people receive some such images and accept the novelty of these political ideas. Consequently among other factors the generational issue contributes to the electoral success of A_1 over A_2. Under some such circumstances, the criteria of age and questions of generation intervene into political processes. Let us try to understand how it has happened in this Block by looking at the age characteristics of the Samiti members.

Table 3.5 reveals clearly that a large majority of the members elected over a period of time are aged 40 years and above in the block except the recently formed 5th Samiti in 1984. Thus in 1961, 1967, 1970-71 and 1975, there have been 28.6 and 32.9, 41.1, and 27.2, 36.6 and 41.1, 31.7 and 41.1, 21.7 and 34.7 percentage

Ta-ble 3.5 Age Groups

Age Groups	1st Samiti		2nd Samiti		3rd Samiti		4th Samiti		5th Samiti	
	No.	Nage	No.	Nage	No.	Nage	No.	Nage	No.	Nage
19 - 20	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-
21 - 24	-	-	-	-	1	4.5	-	-	1	4.3
25 - 29	1	3.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.5	1	4.3
30 - 39	7	25.0	6	27.2	3	13.5	5	22.7	8	34.7
40 - 49	8	28.6	9	41.1	8	36.6	7	31.7	5	21.7
50 and above	12	32.9	6	27.2	9	41.1	9	41.1	8	34.7
TOTAL	28	100.0	22	100.0	22	100.0	22	100.0	23	100.0

of members respectively belonging to the age groups of 40-49 and 50 plus years. But during the same period, the representation of Samiti members from the age groups 25-29 and 30-39 taken together stands at 28.5, 31.7, 22.5 and 26.5 per centage of the total members. Secondly, while this trend of over-representation of the old age groups has been continuing over a period of time till 1974-75, only in recent elections (February 1984), this trend has been checked by a significant representation from the younger groups of people. In 1984, members from both these age groups of the young people have risen up to about 45% of the total representation. Of the newly elected 23 members in total 10 belonged to the categories of youngmen, i.e., about 45% of representation which was unforseen before. Yetthe older age groups with 55% of representation in the Samiti have an edge over the younger sections of around 45% of the total representation. However, there has been changes in people's perceptions. As we said in the beginning, there has been increasing trends to suggest that people are favouring younger sections of the population who can act immediately as and when requir d by the villagers and who have a flexible degree of social mobility from the village to the block and to the collectorate and vice versa so that he could get things done at these official levels.

Sex Groups

In a generally accepted male dominated society, it becomes socially difficult for the women to represent themselves on political terrains even in the institutions based on universal adult suffrage.

Table 3.6 Sex Groups

Sex Groups	1st Samiti	2nd Samiti	3rd Samiti	4th Samiti	5th Samiti
Male	27	21	21	21	22
Female	1	1	1	1	1
Total	28	22	22	22	23

The nature of female representation has remained constant over a period of time and their representation has been primarily due to the legal provisions that a woman member must be coopted, if not found elected. Even after the provisions for the cooption of a woman member in each Samiti, there has been several reported "administrative lapses" in selecting a woman into the Samiti membership in other blocks.[16] In the Digapahandi Block, even though there

16. See, for example, the case study of B.P. Singh (1971) in the Ranchan Block of Bihar.

has been no such "administrative lapse" not a single woman representative has been ever elected to the Samiti.

Table 3.7 Distribution of Panchayat Samiti Members by the Nature of Their Election

	1st Samiti	2nd Samiti	3rd Samiti	4th Samiti	5th Samiti
Elected unanimously	16	10	5	4	2
Elected in contest	9	9	14	15	17
Coopted unanimously	3	3	3	3	3
coopted in contest	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	28	22	22	22	23

The political culture patronised by the State government has been in favour of unanimous elections which in fact means that the village elders, normally caste leaders who are also leaders primarily because they belong to economically so-called dominant sections of the village, sit together and select one candidate as if it were an 'unanimous' choice of all villagers. So far as the old people are concerned there is a high degree of intolerance for contests to the Panchayat Raj bodies, while the young ones feel that they should have been elected without contest. In fact in my talk with some younger age group Sarpanchs, it was revealed that firstly, some of the

villagers congregated in an elders' house or in the common room of the village temples to decide who should be a real choice for the Sarpanch of their respective panchayats where some of the claimants came up and later withdrew 'unanimously' in favour of one selected claimant. But during the time of the nomination file and elections they found themselves 'driven' to contest and political cleavages among different groups emerged. This is commonly characterised as intervention of 'politics' into panchayat raj bodies.

The proposition of some of the academicians who think that the intervention of 'politics' into the Panchayat Raj bodies is unethical and against the spirit of community development for which these local self bodies are meant, is not an isolated political idea. It corresponds to the views upheld by the state government from time to time and so also by the political culture of the villages. In fact, during the recent elections in 1984, the Orissa government instituted a prize money for each village panchayat which would send a Sarpanch and a ward member each to its local bodies. The political values embedded to the consensual ideology discourage in practice the politics of open contest which normally forays large number of socio-political choices before the villagers.

Hence these values are essentially conservative not only in that it restricts some such choices which normally emerge during the electoral process but are largely incompatible with the segmentary and hierarchical character of the Indian villages.[17]

In the context of Digapahandi Block, there are three points one can make. Firstly, there has been a consistent trend of the decline of the uncontested category. Secondly, while during first two elections (1961-74) there has been a continuing trend of domination of the uncontested category, the significant growth of contested categories begins after 1974-75 elections and during this later phase, the Samiti elections became the hot bed of political paradigms.[18] Thirdly, there has been no single case of contest within the Samiti for the coopted categories representing weaker sections of the population, reflecting on a long history of political passivity of these groups.

V

State Politics and Political Life of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in Orissa

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17. See, Andre Beteille's, Caste, Class and Power (1965), p. 147 and also F.D. Vakil's study of Gujarat in G. Ram Reddy, (ed.), Patterns of Panchayati Raj in India (1977), pp. 105-106.

18. Some such trends have been discerned by G.Ram Reddy's study of Kota Block in Andhra Pradesh.

Though the Orissa Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad Act was passed in 1959, it came into force on the Republic Day, 26th January, 1961. First elections to local self-governments in rural areas of Orissa were held in 1961 followed by next ones in 1967, 1970, 1975 and recently in January-February 1984, even though the statute till 1977 required the elections to the Gram Panchayat and Samiti bodies be held within a span of three years. This was the provision till 1977 when the office of the Samiti Chairman was extended to five years with an amendment in the statute by the Samiti Act, 1977.[19] The 'extension clause', 46-D in the Samiti Act which vests the authority in the State Government to extend the life-term of the Samiti for two more years under each term of its office has in practice provided considerable flexibility to the state political leaders. Under the political conditions which were so 'fluid', 'informal' in their dimensions at the concrete political structures of the State, the political leaders were left with no choice but to think causually about the local self-bodies. Orissa state politics beset with various types of coalition politics formed in four such occasions and five Presidency Rules and seven mid-term elections held in between 1951- 1980

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19. See, Orissa Panchayat Samiti Manual, Section 46-C submitted by Orissa Act 18 of 1977.

have immensely affected the life-span and the functioning of Panchayat Raj Institutions in the State. The Panchayat Institutions left at the disposal of the state politicians and state politicians constantly engaged for their own political survival at the state level have adversely affected the life-span of popular participation in the rural self-bodies. The unnecessary extensions of rural bodies along with continued domination of certain sections of the population within these bodies have caused resentment and considerably waned the interests of people to participate in it.[20] Coupled with these intermittent extensions was the final verdict of the centralization process on the Panchayat Raj Institutions which meant their suppression from 1976 till January 1984 beginning with the National Emergency and this political melodrama continuing even after the expiry of emergency. During 1983-84, elections for Panchayat Raj Institutions have continuously been held in the major parts of the country and in Orissa too, without no genuine commitment to restore the process of 'democratic decentralization' and without any official

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20. The underlying assumption of this argument is that only continued normal elections meant for Panchayats along with some sense of autonomy in the formulation and execution of development programmes to mitigate the sufferings of common people can raise the level of political participation in these bodies. This may lead to 'gladiatorial activities' as Milbrath (1965) underlines.

commitment to setback the 'phase of decline'[21] of the Panchayat Institutions. Consequently one observes that the present elections during 1983-84 have been held to analyse the electoral strength of the ruling party at the Centre in the rural belt of this country while preparing itself for the forthcoming national elections in 1985.

Political Culture

Though it has not been possible on our part to study the political culture of the block in historical phases at the deeper levels of power structure, we have concentrated on the political forces operating at the Samiti level at different points of time. Under the Congress culture Panchayat system was practically introduced to the Orissa political system in 1961, and elections were held during that period. There was coalition government at the state level, the first coalition in the state formed in 1959 between the Congress and the Ganatantra Parishad. But their local units in the Block contested elections to Panchayat bodies against each other. This happened so possibly because each party was willing to contest elections independently keeping in mind the MLA general elections to be held in near future. That is how the entry of political parties began which were primarily interested

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21. As underlined by Asok Mehta Committee Report, 1978.

to assess their respective strength in the grass-roots politics preparing ground works for state level elections. However, the local unit of Gana Parishad was too weak to raise a political contest against a highly dominating Congress culture in this block.

We will stick to an analysis of the elections held to the Samiti. There were two types of elections in 1961 - first category was for the Samiti chairman and the second was for one Samiti member to be elected from each Gramkanchayat by all its members - a provision which continued till 1967. So far as the election to the Samiti Chairman was concerned there were two contestants - one was from the powerful Congress and the other was from a feeble opposition party, Ganatantra Parishad. The Congress sponsored candidate got a massive victory - a near consensus was achieved in his favour.

There were four important political factors involved in his victory. Firstly, the Digapahandi Block, formerly a Zamindari area witnessed the historic compromise between the nationalist Congress culture and the Zamindar of Badakhamundi (as this area is otherwise known) and this process had tremendous contribution for the continuation of the Zamindari culture among the people of this area. In the absence of the challenge from a popular leadership

to this political culture, this process continued. Secondly, the man who was elected was a faithful clerk of the Badakhemundi Zamindar supervising the Zamindar's revenue administration. And thirdly, his personal calibre of being an old matriculate, his economic position, Brahminical background and a faithful adjunct of the Zamindar helped him to emerge a happy political output of the holy alliance between the Congress and the Zamindar House. Fourthly, the political image of the Zamindar House whose 'Queen' was a Congress MLA of this area helped him considerably to emerge victorious for the post of the Samiti Chairman of the Digapahandi Block.

The second category of the elected members of the Samiti consisting of 12 members elected by each Gram Panchayat was consisting of members who were mainly Brahmins with 60 per cent representation and 70 per cent of them were from the category of big farmers of this area. Nearly 70% of them were elected on the basis of prevalent consensual ideology and were all supported by the local Congress unit. During the second elections to the Samiti held in November 1967 the Chairman was also the choice of the Badakhemundi Zamindar's 'Queen' who was a Congress MLA. In terms of socio-structural status, his position was similar to that of his predecessor. He succeeded in the

Chairman elections due to all similar factors even though this time the state politics was at variance with the local elections. While it was the coalition government of Swatantra Party and Jana Congress - one of those 'oppositionruled states' due to the rise and victory of the Swatantra Party at the national level - which was dominating state politics, still its political holds in this block could be regarded as those of a 'pale opposition'. During this time as a consequence of Gram Panchayat Act, 1964, the second category of elected members to the Samiti was abolished in Orissa and the 'opposition' was having four members as opposed to 18 of the Congress out of the total number of 22 Samiti members.

However, in 1964 the Swatantra-led State Ministry in Orissa which organised the elections to the Panchayat Raj Institutions in 1967 passed two important Acts before hand on the plea to restructure the Panchayat Raj bodies in Orissa. Firstly, it abolished the provision of elected members to the Samiti through the Gram Panchayat Act, 1964 which did not affect the Panchayat Raj Institutions so much as the second one. The second one, the Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act, 1967 restructured the three tier structure of the Panchayat Institutions by abolishing the institutions of Zilla Parishad in 1968. Apart from the ostensible reasons given for this, it is common knowledge that the

Swatantra-led Government after its election victories in 1967 in doing away with the Zilla Parishads aimed at striking at the erstwhile hold of the Congress Party over these bodies.

From its election slogan of 'real decentralisation' in a 21-point programme, the Swatantra Party moved to abolish the Zilla Parishad. The Government gave two main instances of the Zilla Parishads not doing their job and contributing to avoidable delay. First, that the Zilla Parishads had not submitted annual reports to the Government on the working of the Panchayat Raj Institutions as statutorily required, second that they caused inordinate delay in approving schemes and budgets of the Samitis and in allocating grants. The Government also reasoned that the Zilla Parishads cost the state exchequer heavily (i.e. 7 lakhs per annum).

However, evaluating this policy of the Swatantra Party one could say that the Government's criticisms of the Zilla Parishads could in fact be applied to all the Panchayat Raj Institutions in all states and also to all sorts of institutions throughout the country and hence, it seems rather drastic to wind up the Parishads on these grounds. Obviously, the ostensible reason behind this move was the political motive of the Swatantra Party to

weaken the influence of the Congress Party at the Zilla Parishad level.[22] The successive Congress ministers have never seriously acted to revive the three tier structure. Thus the forgoing discussion indicates some conservative trends of the dominant political culture in Orissa which has been unsympathetic and insincere to restore the values and institutions of the democratic decentralisation process.

Under these effects of the political trends at the state level, the third elections were held in 1970-71 in this Block now with a two-tier structure only. This time the political trends favoured the 'local' opposition. The Swatantra Party came to dominate the political equations of the Digapahandi Panchayat Samiti. It got a thin majority over the Congress and so also it captured the prestigious post of the Samiti Chairman. As earlier so also this time too, there was a bio-polar political conflict between the Congress-nominee who was an ex-Sarpanch, a Telugu Brahmin by caste and a Swatantra nominee who was also an ex-Sarpanch and Oriya Brahmin of the same area. Through an intense conflict, the Swatantra nominee won the political battle by a thin margin. Multiple factors have contributed to his success. First, he was under the direct patronage of one Swatantra Party Minister of the Ganjam district

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22. See, R.V.R. Chandrasekhara Rao, Orissa, in G. Ram Reddy, ed., op. cit., 1977, p. 200.

and secondly, he utilised the political patronage of the local 'Raja' of Senakhamundi area. The Congress nominee lacked these political images which could have acted as countervailing forces to the others' growing influence. Yet it was a tough time for the Swatantra nominee who succeeded ultimately only by a thin majority which indicated that the Congress-influence over Panchayat bodies under this area never waned.

In fact, during the 4th and 5th Samiti elections held in 1975 (June) and 1984 (February-March) respectively it was Congress and Congress-I capturing the political bastions of the Digapahandi Panchayat Samiti. During the 4th Samiti elections, Congress returned to power and the man who was Chairman last time changed his political colour and joined the Congress Party after the defeat of the Swatantra Party at the state level. But after four months of his elections he was removed from the primary membership of the Samiti because he maintained a dual membership of a Digapahandi NAC (then formed as a sequel to local body elections in 1975) and another Gram Panchayat. On this technical ground he was removed and the Vice-Chairman became Chairman but for three months only till the national emergency trampled upon the local self-bodies throughout the country in 1976. Thus the 4th Samiti was virtually a non-entity.

The 5th Samiti has witnessed some new trends in the local politics. The old veterans from the Congress Party have receded back into political passivity while the young and entrepreneurial leadership has emerged at the Samiti. There were two main aspirants from the Congress-I. And it was very clear from the beginning that no 'opposition' candidate could win because there was almost a massive majority in Gram Panchayats in favour of the Congress I. With nearly 15 Sarpanchs out of 19 in total in Congress pockets and a massive majority of ward members wavering around the Congress fold, it was clear from the beginning that a Congress-I sponsored candidate would win. On the one hand, these considerations put the entire 'opposition' (three in total; one each from the Congress-S, Orissa Janata Party led by Mr. Biju Patnaik and CPI) into obvlivion for whom the contest was only a ritual. On the other, within Congress-I circles, the election process to the Samiti Chairmanship created tense political moments, political lobbying in the state and district headquarters of the Party. There were possibly three considerations in selecting the candidature of the present Chairman which also led to his victory. First, the person was actively busy since at least the time when elections to the Gram Panchayat bodies have been declared and played an instrumental

role in the success of a number of sarpanchs. Secondly, he represented a rising community of the Digapahandi taluk, i.e., the peasant caste (Reddys) who also constituted 1/4th of the population of the block with 4 sarpanchs already elected from their Reddy Samaj Sangh covering 4 taluks of which the present Chairman remains as the General Secretary. Thirdly, the Chairman has established a considerable economic nexus - himself belongs to the category of 'big farmers' and is also a B-class contractor covering various government departments. All these factors indicate the potentials of a person to elevate to the political power of the Samiti.

But his success in the 'electoral college'[23] was due to three additional reasons - one is that he invested a lot of money, around Rs. 30,000/- to mobilise especially the ward members; second is that he carried the political support of the two Congress I MLAs[24] from powerful Brahmin families of the area and the absence of the third MLA, a Janata Party man covering around 11 panchayats of the Block out of the total 19 Gram Panchayats, during the

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23. An 'electoral college' means - All Sarpanchs and all the ward members of the Gram Panchayats who vote Gram Panchayat-wise to elect a person to the Samiti.

24. Digapahandi Block seems to be a hot-bed of state politics; three MLA constituencies, viz. Mohana, Chikiti and Rabisuryanagar, cut across its peripheries.

political campaign immensely contributed to strengthen his political bases. Thirdly, his capacity to move from the village to the block and to the collectorate and the state capital to meet BDO, SDO, Collector and the treasury bench MLAs has possibly influenced the electoral college to vote (about 75%) in his favour. These issues of political mobilisation contributed to his success not merely within the Party but also over his rival Janata candidate within the electoral college. The Janata candidate matched his Congress-I rival at the economic terrain only, not in terms of caste-followings and political influence. He was a Kamati by caste who were no match to the spread of the Reddys and further his political followings being a Janata candidate were no match to Congress-I's overwhelming dominance.

VI

Questions of Political Participation and the Standing Committees

Dahl (1961) argues that there are individuals who are unlikely to become involved in politics if they feel that the outcome of events governing the political institutions are going to do little with their life-process. We may add to it - there are also others whose level of

political participation in those institution is going to be continuous, ever flowing if the probability of theirs influencing, directing, governing and changing - the outcome of events is high. While those who are 'politically apathetic' and those agents who are involved in 'spectator activities' may belong to the former section, the third and fourth groups of people involved in 'transitional activities' and 'gladiatorial activities' respectively may be included in the later category of people whose level of political participation is normally high.[25]

Normally, the agents of 'gladiatorial activities' constitute the elements of 'authority' and the rest belong to the complex mechanisms of 'power' and related to 'authority' structures in multiple ways. Since this chapter is primarily concerned with the cognate notion 'authority', we are discussing only one level of political participation - that is, the 'gladiatorial activities' and their agencies. At the Panchayat Samiti, the MLA-Chairman-Sarpanch equations constitute the agencies of 'gladiatorial activities' and

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25. Lester Milbrath's (1965) classification of levels of political participation is as follows. Firstly, 'political apathetic' are those who are literally unaware of the political world around them. Secondly, those involved in 'spectator activities' which include voting and taking part in discussions about politics. Thirdly, those involved in 'transitional activities' include attending a political meeting or financing a political party. Finally, the category of 'gladiatorial activities' includes people who are involved in various 'decision-making process'.

are in fact part and parcel of the 'authority' structures of the Samiti.

Within the periphery of the Panchayat Samiti formation of the Standing Committee was certainly the cornerstone of members' political participation in formulation and evaluation of policies taken up by the Samiti. During the 5th Samiti, there has been no State Government circular regarding the formation of Standing Committees - a fact indicating another form of political insincerity on the part of the state government. However, during 1961-75, the Standing Committees were formed according to the suggestions made by the Chairman. There had been no voting for this. Every resolution to this effect was unanimously passed. There were five types of Committees in Orissa - (i) Planning, finance and Budget, (ii) Agriculture, Minor Irrigation, Cooperation, Industries and other allied schemes, (iii) Education, Health, Sanitation and Rural Water Supply, (iv) Welfare of Weaker Sections, and (v) Communication and works.

While during 1961-66, there were only five members in the Standing Committees, from 1967-75, there were more than 5 members. During 1961-66, there were only five Samiti members each who constituted each Standing Committee. But after 1966, normally the rules and the practice in this

Block had been to include the following types of members in each Standing Committee -

1. Three Ex-officio members - the Samiti Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the BDO;
2. Two associate members - normally invited from outside;
3. Five Samiti members who constitute the 'cornerstone' of the Committee; and
4. not more than three government officials - among the respective 'extension officers'.

In the Digapahandi Block, there was special lobbying by the Samiti members before the Samiti Chairman for the membership of these Standing Committees - (i) Agriculture, Minor Irrigation, Cooperation, Industries and other allied activities, and (ii) Communication and works. This was so primarily because these two Committees in fact dominated the works of the Samiti as a whole in the implementation of the community development programmes which were nothing but geared towards different types of 'construction activities' supervised by the respective Committees.

As we said when issues of politics concern the interests of certain types of people whose accessibility is greater to the political authority, they would take keen interest in the membership and the decision-making process of those political authorities. While this was true in case

of these two standing committees, the reverse was true in case of the Committee for Welfare of Weaker Sections whose membership was primarily confined to the three coopted members and two other Samiti members. Since Samiti's welfare activities, were very low as compared to agriculture, minor irrigation, communication and works, there was no political enthusiasm behind the formation and the working of this Committee.[26] Indeed, most of the times, either its reports were prepared in haste or its functioning remained defunct over a stable period of time. Following Milbrath (1965) one may infer from the above trends that the level of political participation of the 'coopted members' is that of people engaged in 'spectator activities'.

VII

Foregoing discussions on the institutional mechanism of the Panchayat Samiti, on the structural aspects of authority and the nature of political participation and the political culture have indicated some important political trends. In this concluding section, we will stick to a brief discussion on the micro level power structure as it has emerged in this Block and its complex linkages with

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26. Similar trends have been discerned by G. Ram Reddy's (1965) and B.P. Singh's (1971) studies of Kota Block (A.P.) and Kanchan Block (Bihar) respectively.

the state politics. During the sixties the political trends of the Digapahandi Panchayat Samiti indicate that the leadership was deriving its source of power from a ritual-oriented political culture; the considerations being the ritual status of a man, his intense linkages with the local ex-Zamindar House whom people still regard the 'Raja' of this area and his economic power over the land. While these three factors accounted for the source of the legitimacy at the micro level, the macro politics of the historic compromise between the nationalist Congress Party and the Zamindari Houses in this state which started from December 1947 to culminate in January 1949 helped the Zamindar of this Block to turn as a Congressman. Thus the Congress Party which controlled the state politics under the powerful nationalist leaders of the state accounted as a source of legitimacy in this area. The leadership was also confined to the minority section of the upper strata of the big and medium farmers who were also coupled with the ritualistic political culture. Their upper caste (see Table 3.2 and 3.3) background also accounted for them to derive legitimacy and sanction authority which commanded a ritual based popular respect. Therefore, the legitimacy of its action was taken for granted consensually (see Table 3.7).

But in the seventies, a new trend in the evolution of the leadership pattern began and has been continuing till today. Due to the slow development of commercialisation of agriculture which possibly began only after independence in this area which was otherwise under the Zamindari land tenure system, there have emerged groups of powerful farmers. Their economic nexus is not merely agriculture but also commercial activity like rice milling, rice business, contractors under various government departmental projects and merchant class. They are the powerful agriculturists who have sensed the benefits accruing from various state-sponsored capital projects. They have also realised the role of the representative political institutions in deciding these issues in their favour. They have utilised their middle and upper caste background to come to power - a trend which continues till today, and the upper class and caste people have been continuing to dominate the power structure of the Samiti.

In the early phase of seventies the political processes involving their coming to power have been largely competitive which has undermined the earlier consensual-ideology based leadership. The socio-economic demands, wants, grievances and needs of the people have been multiplied historically and their unfulfillment by the leadership are unsettling

the age-old images of the villagers about the leadership. Now they require a leadership to spring into quick action, to get some demands fulfilled immediately to satisfy some needs, if not all of them. Hence, people require to vote for a person who can get things done from among their shell of increasing wants and aspirations the sooner possible in their favour. This meaning has been grasped effectively by these powerful agro-commercial groups. By utilising the forces of caste, factionalism, certain political parties and a political culture, they have emerged to the leadership of the Samiti. A multiple of socio-political variables are responsible for the evolution of such a power structure. This type of leadership may be regarded as 'contractual'[27] leadership.

Thus while the early leadership in sixties tended to be largely ritualistic - a trend which continues to be present today too, there has emerged another type of leadership in seventies of this century which may be characterised as contractual leadership. The early leadership may be called as ritualistic because the higher ritual status and the powerful agriculturist positions converged with a leadership who derived its legitimacy from the consensual ideology. The consensual ideology tends to accept implicitly

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27. This is a term borrowed from S.P. Jain and B.C. Muthayya, 'Kerala' in G. Ram Reddy, (ed.), op. cit., 1977.

the economically powerful leadership with higher ritual status who are normally called 'elders' of a village or villagers. But the contractual leadership derives its legitimacy from the competitive politics which has emerged by breaking the consensual ideology possibly due to the emergence of the entrepreneurial groups who are not necessarily from the higher ritual status as for example Reddys and also increasing shell of demands and aspirations of the people who need leaders to do contract with them to fulfill some of their demands the sooner possible. Thus the emergence of a contractual leadership in the seventies is another trend in the leadership patterns.

So far we have only investigated the question, who controls the leadership of the Samiti and their processes of legitimacy. But another important question remains - whose 'interests' the leadership serves? This leads us to an investigation of the policies undertaken in and through the Panchayat Samiti which is supposed to be the primary unit of rural development in Orissa.

Chapter 4

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Most of the studies related to an analysis of the power structure tend to emphasise only on the structural components of 'power' as manifest in the institution building process of this country. Consequently, the functional aspects, viz. the policies that the power structure picks up and the 'legitimacy' question it confronts through the implementation of the policies, get reduced within the analyses. It is pertinent to take stock of the reality of their correlations which can only throw some insights to the internal meanings of 'power'. Here the political process is to be seen as a mechanism through which the relations between different communities in the society are altered. In order to study this aspect of the power structure, in this chapter we are concerned with an analysis of certain policies and their implementation process, and vice versa. Since the Panchayat Samiti is the primary unit for rural development, the political process involved in it constitutes an important element in the analysis of the implementation of programmes taken up by the Samiti over a period of time.

The specific aspect of this chapter is a comparative assessment of the two programmes - one is a participatory

programme[1], viz. the national sponsored Community Development programme and the other is a non-participatory programme, viz., the state-based Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor Programme. While the Community Development programme is focused to assess the role of the Panchayat Samiti in its early phase of growth, the later programme formulated for 1980-85 in Orissa is examined to draw attention to the role of the Block Administration and the local power structure involved in the policy process. The purpose of comparing the programmes initiated by the Panchayat Samiti and the Block, though organised at different points of time, is to see whether there is much difference in the actual operation of the participatory and non-participatory programmes in the context of similar movements of the local power structure over a stable period of time.

I POLICY STRUCTURE

A. Philosophy of Community Development

During the Nehru years, the development strategy was

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1. A programme which involves elected political agents at the level of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in its formulation and implementation process is called a participatory programme. On the other, a non-participatory programme is one where the elected leadership of the Panchayat Institutions is bypassed or superseded in the above policy process. In their place, the state level or central leadership takes the charges

the direct result of Gandhian-Socialist consensus.[2] Two important assumptions guided Nehru and the planners - (i) the decentralization of all economic activity to the extent compatible with overall central planning and direction of the economy; and (ii) preservation of the village as the primary unit of social organisation. These underlying assumptions set some specific programmes of action - that economic policy should aim for the progressive removal of inequalities in Indian society; that it is necessary to limit sharply the existing scope of acquisitive instinct in Indian economic life, and that as far as possible institutional changes should be introduced to substitute cooperative principles of economic organisation for the prevailing system based on private enterprise. But these assumptions and goals flowed from a particular style of reasoning of Indian society which dominated Nehru and the planners' approach to the concerned social transformation.

The village was seen as an autonomous and self-sufficient unit before the advent of the Britishers but it had decayed as a cohesive social unit during the British period. Yet the village could no longer return

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2. Francine Frankel, India's Political Economy (1978), pp. 15-20; for a well elucidated discussion of this consensus model.

to its pre-British form of a "self-contained economic unit, but it can very well be a governmental or electoral unit, each such unit functioning as a self-governing community within the larger political framework and looking after the essential needs of the village".[3] Thus in the independent India, the planners visualised village as a homogeneous unit which could no longer be left alone in the development process but ought to have harmonious unity with the city through a development process and central planning which would raise the cultural level of the rural areas and build higher forms of economic life through an all-rounded development of village life.

As opposed to a theoretical rationale which held village in India an already stratified unit - stratified on a large number of vertical lines like caste, religion, economic and sexual diversifications, the Gandhian-socialist consensus which dominated the first one and half decade of Indian planning held village as homogeneous unit.[4] Hence planners should provide full opportunities for bodily and mental development of the rural life as a whole. Thus this approach resulted in a series of policy formulations for rural transformation in the shape

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3. Jawaharlal Nehru, The Discovery of India (1946), p. 512.

4. Francine Frankel, op. cit., p. 102.

of a programme called Community Development (CD) programme with the village as the nodal point.

Community Development has been defined as a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community with the active participation and on the initiative of the community. Along with this were the policy recommendations for land reforms and cooperative village management. The Community Development programme was designed to stimulate popular pressures for social reform from below that would ultimately make institutional change at grass roots inevitable, while avoiding the "destabilising effects" of a frontal attack on the prerogatives of the propertied classes.[5]

(1) Administration

Thus started first 55 Community Projects in October 1952, under the supervision of the Planning Commission, with American technical and financial assistance. The programme was implemented in units of blocks, each block covered an area of about 400-500 sq. kms. with about 100 villages and a population of about one lakh. The project staff included not only agricultural extension workers and subject-matter specialists in crop production, plant

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5. Francine Frankel, op. cit., p. 110.

protection, fertilizers, but also extension officers for rural engineering, health, social education, social welfare, panchayats and cooperatives. Each project was divided into three development blocks for an intensive development effort. A multi-purpose extension worker called as Village Level Worker (VLW) was assigned to every five villages to demonstrate the use of improved seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and implements.

(ii) Objectives and Contents of the Programme

The aim of the Community Development Programme may briefly be narrated as follows. Firstly, the agricultural extension officers and village level officers, whose training was directed to educating poor peasants in improved practices using traditional techniques were concerned with educative aspect of the programme where officers were involved in educating peasants. Second was the more practical concern of the programme which was conceived as a catalyst or "practical aid" in simply supplying technical assistance in concrete forms like agricultural credit, and limited amounts of improved inputs to spark large-scale peasant mobilisation for labour-intensive projects. Thirdly, the programme was concentrated with efforts to mobilise local manpower and resources for construction of capital projects like minor irrigation, soil conservation etc. by inviting contributions

of cash and donation of labour to the concerned village projects. The purpose was to mobilise idle manpower through extension of the principles of cooperation from among the rural families. Finally, the programme was also concerned with the construction of social amenities projects through the use of surplus man power. The projects covered issues such as approach roads, drinking water, wells, tanks, community centres, library, children's parks, schools and so on.

Thus after 1953, the government's contribution to the Community Development Programme was conceived as no more than a catalyst to community action. While the official machinary would supply "practical aids", the very essence of the programme so was formulated in the First Five Year Plan was "peoples participation".[6] Thus came into existence the Community Development programme representing the only possible strategy, as the planners perceived, for the accomplishment of multiple economic, social, and political goals of planning. In the words of the planners, "it is in this way that rural life can achieve social and moral cohesion, which is the only basis for national unity".[7]

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6. Planning Commission, First Five Year Plan, p. 224.

7. V.T. Krishnamachari, Community Development in India, p. 4.

While the central concern of the community development programme was to raise the levels of community assets, the rural cooperative societies were introduced to raise the individual assets in the village through a well-planned credit system. But the infrastructure required for these two rural development policies was the philosophy of land reforms in the countryside. Thus these three policies constituted the core elements of the rural development strategy initiated during the First Five Year Plan.

Subsequently in response to the recommendations of the Balwantray Mehta Committee Report (1956) which was formed for an extensive review of the community development programme, the planners incorporated the proposals for institutional reform as an integral part of the agricultural development strategy during the Second Five Year Plan. Two important rural development institutions, the panchayat system and the village cooperative societies took their shapes during the Second Five Year Plan which only integrated the on-going rural development policies with these institutions. Thus henceforth the policies became the functional aspects of these institutions. The planners hailed the new institutional developments as progress towards equality whereas the policies were regarded as march of social justice. So during the Second Plan, in the words of planners, equality and

social justice became "both the means and the goal of (India's) development and the entire planning effort".[8]

With the Second Five Year Plan in operation, the panchayat system came into existence as an agency at the grass roots level to implement the community development programme. The implementational tasks of this programme through panchayats were set in motion in an Ooty seminar organised by the AICC in June 1959 which endorsed V.T. Krishnamachari's position, then the deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission who suggested four different ways in which the panchayat system should function - (i) to enforce customary obligations - digging field channels for utilising irrigation, maintenance of bunds and field channels : also work to be done in agriculturists fields under contour-bunding programmes; (ii) to undertake community projects to build up assets belonging to the village as a whole (tanks, fisheries, fuel plantations, and common pastures) through voluntary contribution of capital and labour; (iii) to construct social amenities projects under the Community Development programme and quality for matching government grants by donating an equivalent of money or labour; and (iv) to form labour cooperatives

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8. India, Planning Commission, The New India: Progress Through Democracy (1958), quoted in Francine Frankel, op. cit.

of skilled or semi-skilled workers to execute plan projects at the village level in the place of private contractors.[9] With the exception of the fourth category of rural works projects, for which villagers would be paid at village rates, every other programme that the planners proposed during the Second and Third Five Year Plan envisaged the mobilisation of surplus manpower without payment or with only token payment. These were some of the visions associated with schemes of the Community Development programme as these came to depend on the panchayat system for its effective implementation. Thus the tasks of the panchayat system and the implementation process of the community development programme came to be integrated at the grass-roots level of democratic experiment in the countryside.

Now in so far as the process of resource mobilisation for the implementation of this programme is concerned, the planners carried two important components into this process - one was the "peoples participation" meaning usually fifty per cent of the expenditures on any village project met by the voluntary labour and financial contribution of the villagers and second source was that the balance of expenditure was met by the State, the expenses

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9. Francine Frankel, op. cit., p. 178.

being shared between the State and Central Governments. While the State governments were free to provide resources for the programme from within their State plans, the Central Government's assistance to the States took the form either of loans or of annual lump-sum grants. Obviously these two components constituted the resource mobilisation process in which Panchayat systems were also involved as the local agency to share the financial burden with the State by raising taxes to qualify for matching grants to it to implement the Community Development programme.

B. Orissa Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor Programme

(i) Philosophical Roots

We are also concerned with a state-sponsored agriculture programme, viz. Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor Programme coming into operation in June 1980 till 1985 in Orissa. Its philosophy largely corresponds to centrally sponsored agricultural strategy which came into existence during the fifth Five Year Plan and continued to be integrated in the Sixth Plan strategy. This agricultural strategy normally known as Poverty Alleviation Programme was formulated after Congress victory in 1971 elections under the slogan of "Garibi Hatao" and in the wake of criticisms of the "Trickle Down Approach" adopted in the Green Revolution period commencing from 1961 to 1969.

Guided by the policy declarations of the World Bank in 1971, the government began to cast around for "new directions" in economic policy. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, then the new Prime Minister, arguing that "an increase in GNP must be considered as one component of multi-dimensional transformation of society", assigned highest priority to the political task of carrying out a "speedier programme to usher in socialism". Otherwise, she warned, evolutionary improvements based on "the gradual percolation of better living" to the lowest income groups would take a long time and wear thin the patience of the poor.[10] Such pronouncements led the planners to reorient the agricultural strategy from the "Trickle Down Approach" to Poverty Alleviation Policy. This was meant to ensure basic minimum standards of consumption to the poorest sections of the population.

The Planning Commission was politically directed to elaborate a strategy of development that was "directly anchored to the objective of removal of poverty in the

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10. Mrs. Gandhi, in April 1972, delivered what was considered a landmark speech to FICCI, apparently accepting the view then being advanced by Mahbub-al Haq, the then economic adviser to World Bank that "hot pursuit of GNP growth "by the underdeveloped countries, on the assumption that the distribution could be adjusted later, i.e. known as Trickled Down Approach, had led to worsening poverty and explosive political discontent. Cf. Francine Frankel, op. cit., p. 500. Also for a discussion on World Bank Policy declarations, cf. R. Sandbrook, Politics of Basic Needs (1982), pp. 7-10.

Fifth Plan". The policy framework advanced by the Planning Commission for reconciling goals of economic self-reliance and removal of poverty resulted in the integration of central sector programmes like Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourer (MFAL), and rural works projects like Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE) and Drought-Prone Areas Programme (DPAP).[11] This policy framework focused the need to provide the maximum possible productive employment in the rural areas "in a way that the assets created increase productivity and the welfare of the people".[12]

This policy framework continued to be the dominant theme of the agricultural strategy adopted during the Sixth Plan period (1980-85) which came to be known as the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). The

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11. All these central sector programmes were hastily incorporated to the Fourth Five Year Plan. While 20-45 pilot projects in a same number of districts were introduced in SFDA (July 1970) and 40 MFAL projects in 1971, a three year experimental CSRE pilot projects started in April 1971 followed by Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) in December 1971 in 74 drought hit districts. But all these four rural development programmes were only pilot projects in 4th Plan which were combined together and became the policy framework of the Fifth Plan Document.

12. Planning Commission, Towards Self-Reliance, Approach to the Fifth Five Year Plan, pp. 3-4, quoted in F. Frankel, op. cit.

policy objectives of poverty amelioration in the Fifth Plan continued. But the substantive issue is now more intensive and broader than the policy of Fifth Plan in a sense that it covers five categories now, viz., small farmers, marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, landless and rich peasants. Also it attempts to integrate the different policy objectives meant for these rural categories (known as target groups) under one administrative unit, viz., District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) at the district level. Thus as the planners claim, IRDP is now a multi-faced programme covering total aspects of the rural life ensuring economic amelioration through simultaneous promotion of agriculture and allied activities such as rural industrialisation, communication, transport, irrigation (minor), water supply, education, health and taking up subsidiary farm occupations like cattle raising, poultry farming, piggery, and goat and sheep raising. This is the general structure of the Integrated Rural Development Programme of the Sixth Plan period.

The state-sponsored programme, Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor (ERRP) - a policy adopted by the state government in Orissa during the Sixth Plan period - carries within itself the basic assumptions of the policy framework of the Sixth Plan Document. It is a rural development policy required to provide the maximum possible

productive employment in the rural ways "in a way that the assets created increase productivity and welfare of the people". But SRRP concentrates on the upliftment of "the poorest of the poor who have no income yielding asset of any kind and its principal means of livelihood is through wage earnings not exceeding Rs. 1,200 per year".[13]

Targets

Unlike IRDP, the target group in SRRP is very specific, though this target unit has not remained the same during the course of its implementation. The categories of rural population have been restructured thrice between June 1980, the time of its inception and March 1984. First, between June 1980 - May 1981, the categories of people who have no income yielding asset of any kind were only considered beneficiaries in this scheme. But with complaints coming up from different sections, this definition of the target group was extended to include people with landholdings of not more than one-and-half acre (0 - 1.5 acre) with the income ceiling of Rs. 1,200 per year. However, thirdly, this definition has been extended in August 1983 to include the category of people with land-based asset of two-and-half acre in maximum. So the

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13. Government of Orissa, Brochure on Economic Rehabilitation of Rural Poor Programme, p. 133.

definition stands at present that all those families which have income generating land assets of 0 to 2.5 acres[14] are entitled to receive the grants accrued to them under this scheme. It intends to rehabilitate 5,00,000 poorest families in the state over a period of five years, i.e, on an average 10 poorest families per village.

(iii) Contents of the ERRP Programme

Since the target groups are of uneconomic holdings it would be best for them to be provided with suitable cultivable lands. But the Government being constrained by its ability to mobilise the question of land reforms admits itself that availability of such lands for very large number of families would be difficult. Hence the projects set to be allotted to some such beneficiaries are normally similar to MFAL projects like - (a) land based programmes, viz., plantation areas suitable for cashew plantation, coconut, coffee etc., (b) animal husbandry units like diary, piggery, and goatery, sheep, poultry etc. and (c) long-term lease of tanks and other water spread areas for fishery schemes (pisciculture) and (d) sericulture (tussar, mulberry) and other non-agricultural employment schemes, like carpentry, black-smithy,

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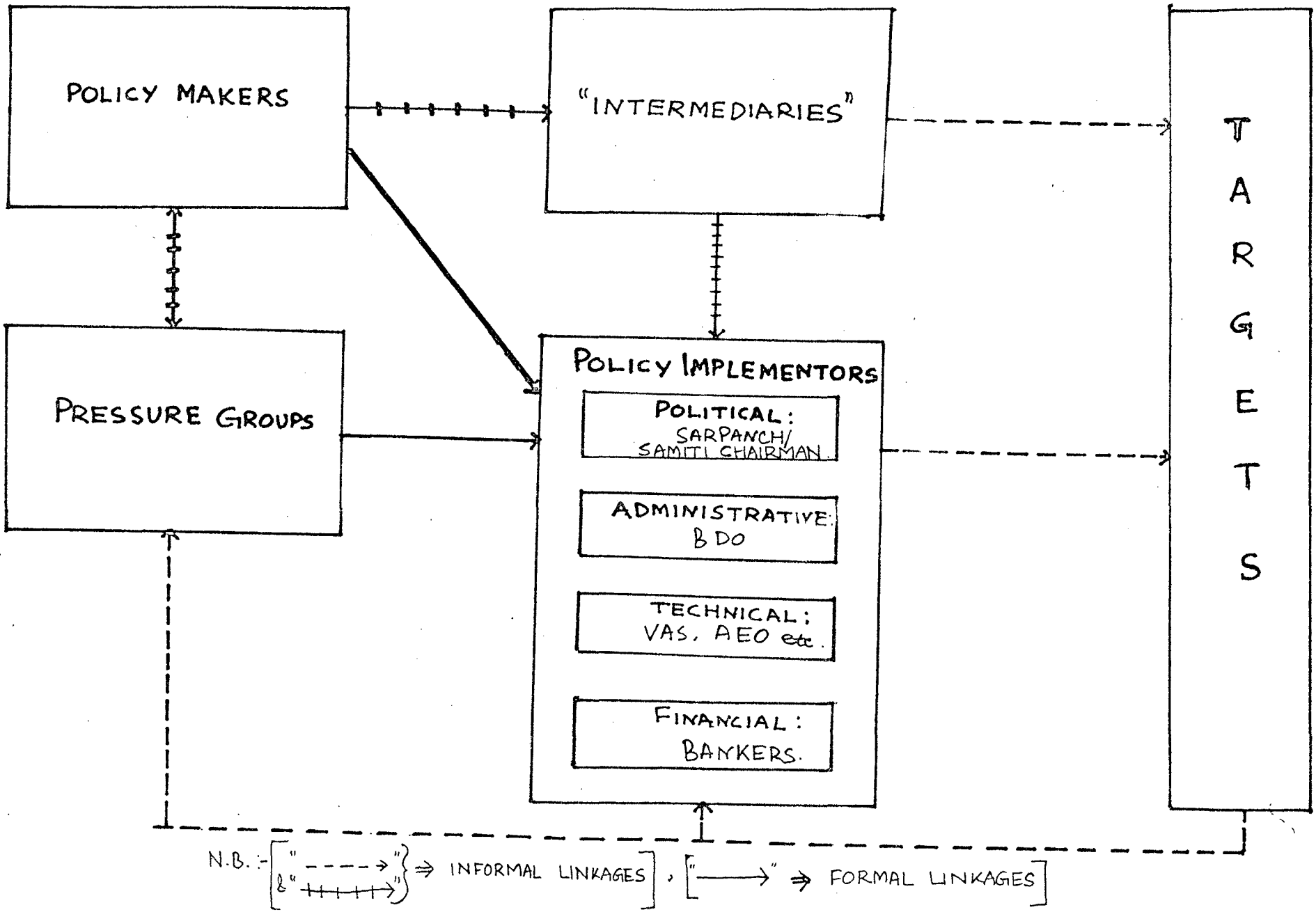
14. In a sense, the present category of target groups covered by ERRP is similar to that of MFAL projects now covered under the centre-sponsored IRDP.

small shop, bullock and cart, laundry, etc. which are normally rural artisan projects.

Finance

Since IRDP is a state-based plan, the resource mobilisation for this programme is from the state budget under head of expenditure known as 'Community Development funds' shared by Central Government too. While the state expenditure stands at $41^2/3\%$, the central aid accounts for $33^1/3\%$ of the total resource allocations which is further shared by the cooperatives or the commercial banks on a 25% loan basis. But the actual goals of this government programme are to provide assistance to the target groups on hundred per cent subsidy basis to the extent possible without any loan component involved within the scope of this assistance. The assumption is that the Banks by and large have been security-minded with the result that the rural poor have not been able to participate in other rural development programmes of central sector SFDA, MFAL and now IRDP projects. While the entire capital cost of the projects on land-based schemes, fishery schemes and sericulture and non-agricultural employment schemes are met by the Government and there is no loan component; in case of the animal husbandry projects 75% of the cost of the unit is Government subsidy and the balance 25% will be the loan component provided by the commercial banks.

FIGURE-4.1 : POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS



(iv) Administration

The Block is the primary unit of the state-based rural programme for its effective implementation and the District Rural Development Agency is the coordinating authority supervising the activities of the primary units, i.e., the Blocks, operating within the district. And the Commercial Banks are the financial institutions to administer the project costs selected for target groups under the authority of the Block Development Officer (BDO). These are the three coordinating agencies required to administer the plan effectively.

II POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

A. Implementation of the CD Programme and Panchayat Samiti

(i) Resource Mobilisation and Plan Proposals

During the Second Five Year Plan, the planners' emphasis on the institutional reforms resulted in the growth of panchayat system as the main agency to activate popular participation in order to implement the Community Development programme effectively in the countryside. Panchayats as they came into existence in Orissa in 1961 became the main vehicle to carry forward the central sector programmes and finish unfinished tasks related to the community development programme of the Second

Five Year Plan. In the Block of Digapahandi in Orissa which came into existence in 1957, the Panchayat Samiti of Digapahandi coming into operation as it was in March 1961 took the task of implementing the various schemes and sub-schemes covered under the Community Development programme. And these schemes were formulated in a schematic budget for five years with a proposal of plan outlay for each aspect of the programme the Samiti undertook and the Gram Panchayats were the vehicles to implement these programmes at the village level.

We intend to look into the plan proposals of the Samiti and the expenditure styles on the basis of the availability of data at three different points of time - firstly, 1957 to 1962 was a period where the role of the Samiti was largely confined in between 1961 to 1962 but it reviewed the performance of the CD programme in 1962. Second is the period between 1967-68 and third is the policy declaration for 1975-76. The main purpose here is to look into the types of issues picked up at the level of decision-making process of the Samiti and analyse its implementation process to the extent possible. Table 4.1 shows that so far as the issues and substantive questions in the expenditure styles of the community development programme during the Second Five Year Plan was concerned, the main emphasis was on construction projects under different heads than

Table 4.1 Statement Showing Progress of Expenditure from 1.6.1957 to 31.3.1962 (2nd Five Year Plan Period)

Head of A/c	Schematic Budget		1957-58	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	1961-62	Total	Balance
	Amount	%age							
Block Headquarters	3,15,000	26.25	43,810	59,892	66,486	58,474	77,298	3,05,950	9,040
Animal Husbandry and Agriculture Extension	50,000	4.17	2,600	8,682	15,744	5,660	7,850	40,956	9,464
Irrigation	3,40,000	28.33	4,750	30,000	14,000	52,875	81,582	1,83,208	1,56,792
Health and Rural Sanitation	1,15,000	9.58	6,500	24,150	4,312	15,784	9,950	66,696	54,304
Education	60,000	5.00	6,500	19,500	7,500	6,196	5,470	45,166	14,834
Social education	70,000	5.83	4,000	22,889	15,176	12,482	5,710	60,251	9,749
Communication	85,000	7.08	2,000	11,000	2,000	7,207	6,350	28,557	56,443
Rural Arts and crafts	65,000	5.42	-	2,550	-	-	11,064	13,614	51,386
Housing	1,00,000	8.33	2,000	18,000	32,700	6,614	3,925	63,239	36,761
Irrigation subsidy	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,250	1,250	-
	12,00,000	100.0	72,160	1,96,663	1,57,918	165292	213200	801227	398773

the agricultural development. Thus, though the priority given in the community development was on agriculture, the programme was primarily concerned with construction of social amenities projects through the use of surplus man-power and the state government funds. While only 4.17 per cent of the five year schematic budget was devoted to agriculture extension activities which covered the expenditures for "practical aid" to spark large-scale peasant mobilisation for labour-intensive projects, of the rest 95.83 per cent of the expenditures, 5.42% was devoted to rural arts and crafts and a massive amount of 63.16% was covered under the construction of social amenities projects through the use of surplus man power. This was so because the heads of expenditure maintained under labels 'irrigation', 'health and rural sanitation', 'education', 'social education', 'communication and housing' actually meant as the construction of school buildings, roads, canals, health centres, community centre buildings spread through a large number of villages. The rest 26.25% of expenditures under the community development programme accounted for the salaries of the Block officials under the head of account 'Block Head-quarters'. Thus when the agricultural extension activities and rural arts and crafts accounted for 4.17 and 5.42 per cent of the total expenditures incurred in between 1957 and 1962, the salaries of officials and

construction of social amenities projects amounted to 26.25 and 63.16 per cent of the plan outlay during this second Five Year Plan period. This shows that in terms of sectoral activities, the construction works were given a priority high above the agriculture and rural crafts.

It seems that the trends continued to be so till 1975-76 - a time when panchayat raj institutions in Orissa were superseded due to national emergency - indicating that these policies activities have been continuing since the inception of the community development programme in this block. Let us look at grants received by the Samiti during Third and Fourth Plan period respectively. Table 4.2 indicates allocations for 1967-68 and Table 4.3 indicates the same for 1975-76.

Table 4.2 Statement Showing Styles of Expenditure in 1967-1968

Heads of Expenditure		Grants	%age of the total Outlay
1.	Officers salary and Block Headquarters	85,592	46.27
2.	Agriculture and animal husbandry	17,000	9.18
3.	Irrigation	15,000	8.10
4.	Sanitation	15,000	8.10
5.	Education	-	-
6.	Non-recurring	8,500	4.59

Heads of Expenditure		Grants	Wage of the total Outlay
7.	Social Education	16,722	9.03
8.	Roads and Building	12,543	6.77
9.	Village education	14,300	7.72
		1,85,157	100.00

Table 4.3 Statement Showing Styles of Expenditure in 1975-76

Source of Grants		Total amount fixed (Rupees)	Details of the Works
1.	Block Fund	3,994.69	two village roads
2.	Non-Block Fund (Gram Panchayat fund)	13,850.00	16 unfinished wells
3.	C.D. Grant	85,500.00	construction of wells
4.	C.D. Grant	6,700.00	for unfinished wells
5.	Village welfare dept.	8,448.16	for wells, school building, etc.
6.	Revenue Dept. Grant	1,650.00	- do -
7.	Zilla Parishad Grant	8,026.39	- do -
8.	Education Grant	40,000.00	for schools at villages
9.	Health Grant	7,641.51	-
10.	C.D. Samiti Road Grant	76,310.00	for Samiti roads planned before (under minimum needsprogramme

Cont'd...

Source of Grants	Total amount fixed (Rupees)	Details of the works
11. Minor Irrigation C.D. Grant	452.60	for one canal repairing
12. Misc. Grant	6,849.16	for construction of three school roads
	2,60,522.51	

Thus Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 repeat the trends of expenditures as pointed out in Table 4.1. While during 1967-68 (Table 4.2) agriculture extension activities stood as low as 9.28 per cent of the total expenditures, the salaries and other official requirements as well as the rest of the activities on the construction of different social amenities projects covered a high percentage of 46.27 and 44.45 per cent of the total resource allocations for the programmatic actions of the Samiti. Table 4.3 indicates a thorough domination of the construction activities which stands at 100 per cent of the total expenditures incurred during 1975-76.

Thus one may divide the resource allocation patterns at the Panchayat Samiti under three heads - (i) agriculture extension, (ii) social amenities projects and (iii) block headquarters and analyse these patterns over a period of time as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Resource Allocation Patterns Over a Period of Time

Heads of A/c	1957-1962		1967-1968		1975-76	
	Amount	%age	Amount	%age	Amount	%age
1. Agricultural Extension	1,15,000	9.59	17,000	9.18	-	-
2. Social amenities Projects	7,70,000	63.16	82,560	44.45	2,60,522.5	100.0
3. Block Headquarters	3,15,000	26.25	85,592	46.27	-	-
Total	12,00000	100.0	1,85,157	100.0	2,60,522.5	100.0

(ii) Study of Four Substantive Proposals and Their Implementation

Now the developmental network which builds the relationship between the power structure of the Samiti and the local socio-economic power structure is comprised of two elements - agricultural extension activities and the social amenities projects of the community development programme which may be called as "developmental" aspects of allocations. And the allocations for the Block Headquarters, and its officials may be regarded as non-developmental allocations. However, this sub-section is concerned with some of those substantive 'developmental' issues the Samiti undertook which invariably brought the Samiti into questions of community development that common people confronted. The primary purpose is to look into a central question of this chapter - how far the type of the power structure[15] evolved over a period has been serving the 'interests' of people in general or a particular section in the context of a society which is highly skewed and hierarchically structured into caste, class, religion, ethnicity and male-female cleavages.

Now in a context where construction activities of the CD programme have constituted the overwhelming priority

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15. This question has been examined in Chapter 3.

of goals of the Samiti leadership over the more essential schemes like agriculture services[16], the question remains - whose interests such substantive issues the Samiti picked up could serve and had in fact served? And precisely, here, we are concerned with 'functional' aspects of power structure, not merely its 'structural' aspects which we have examined in our previous chapter. We concentrate below on four substantive issues of social amenities projects and capital projects, viz., (i) well construction, (ii) irrigation and roads building, (iii) library and (iv) distribution of agricultural inputs.

In one Gram Panchayat, the construction of a Gram Panchayat well which involved - (i) site selection by the Gram Panchayat, (ii) selection of contractor by the Samiti, there was controversy regarding the site selection. The village settlement was based on caste groupings and hence the site selection team which selected a better site for flow of water channels into the well in an area nearer to backward caste faced bitter resistance to their suggestions from a powerful upper caste Brahmin group. This resulted in the shift of the site from the backward caste area to the Brahmin populated area of the village. Along with the Sarpanch, some Brahmin leaders lobbyed hard and changed the

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16. Cf. Table 4.4, Section II, Chapter 4.

proposals of the Samiti for the site selection which they got endorsed by the Samiti around October 1968. Thus the site selection of the well was not purely on technical potentials of the water resources and the land but on the primordial loyalties like caste settlements of the village which depended on the intensity of their linkages with the Sarpanch of the area and his power of lobbying in the Samiti.

While the site selection of the well got entangled in the political networks, the selection of the contractors, too, who may be categorised as 'petty' contractors[17] depended upon the economic viability of the person assigned the job and also his linkages with Sarpanchs or the Chairman of the Samiti. A petty contractor working under a B-class contractor whose brother was a Sarpanch got selected easily and was assigned by the Block the task of implementing the well construction scheme. He was assigned more than one well spread across villages in the Samiti under the assumption that one contractor covering six or seven wells would involve less project costs and more effective resource mobilisation and quicker transaction of the work. Of course

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17. There are various grades of contractors in the town and the villages too - A-class, B-class, and a large chunk of 'petty' contractors who normally work under or along with above categories of the contractors. The higher categories work for larger projects under Public Works Department, Irrigation Deptts., RES, etc.

to some extent the assumption was correct but it basically helped in the proliferation of small contractors which became a concentrating group, though competing among themselves.

However, the power nexus was again involved in between the planned project costs and the actual project costs. Sometimes the actual one indicated more capital investment than what was planned and on some other occasions it was actually less than the planned one but adjusted later with the connivance of the Block officials by siphoning a significant share of the project costs. What was how the multiple nexus between the Block officials and the contractors worked successfully to siphon off the 'surplus' from the project costs into their pockets on a commission basis.

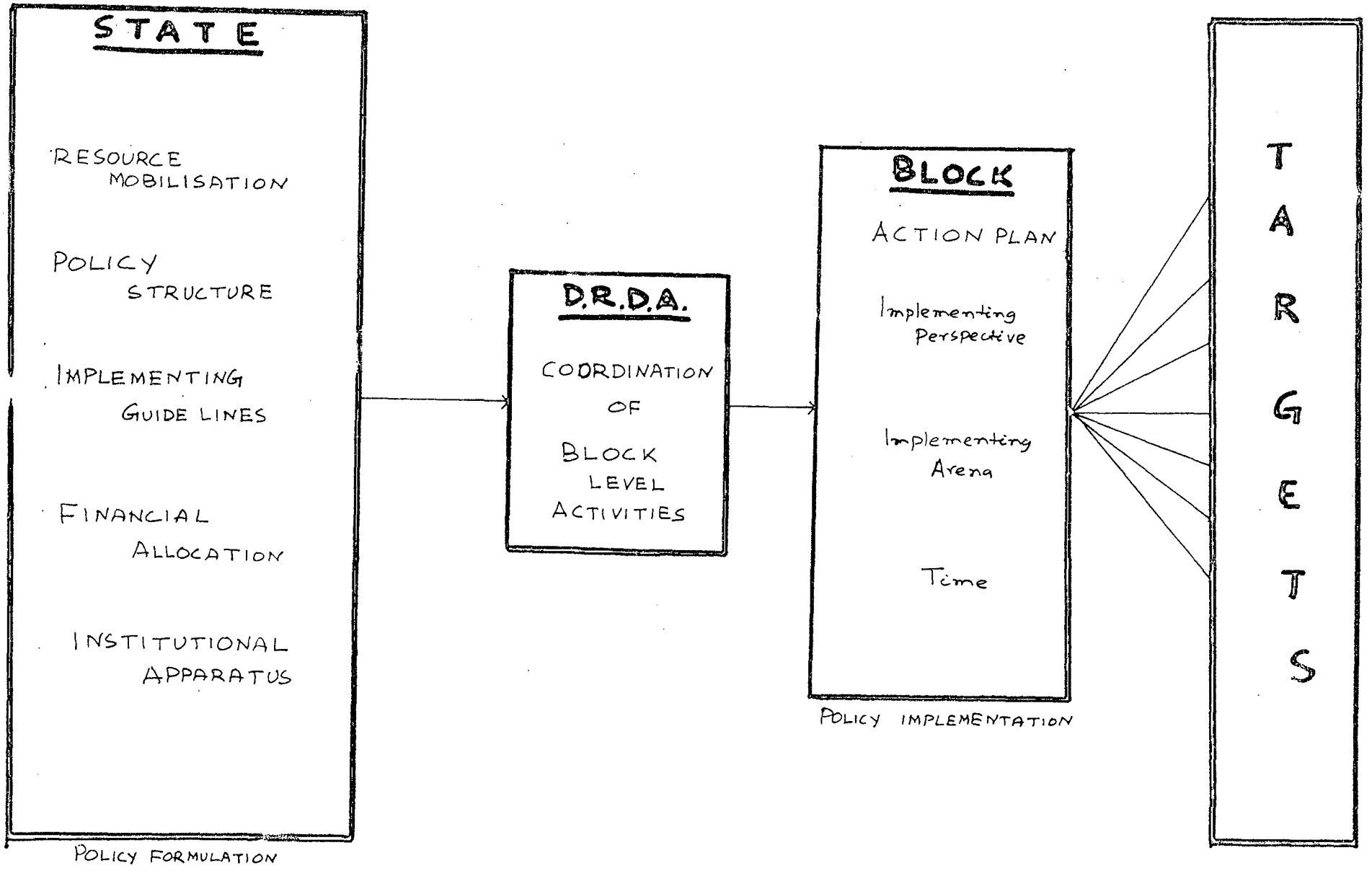
But in the case of capital projects with larger financial investment of Rs. 70,000 to 80,000, it demanded for more intensive political nexus and higher commission rates accrued to several individuals among the groups of Block officials and Samiti members or other important state leaders of the locality. In these cases the capital projects involved were schemes like Minor Irrigation Projects and construction of roads and buildings. Thus, for example, during 1974-75 there were two Samiti roads constructed with the project cost of Rs. 80,000

Now so far as weaker sections of the population were concerned, their involvement in the implementation of the CD programme was only in the form of labour contribution in lieu of the wages they received from the contractors engaged in the construction of the social amenities projects which constituted the top priority in the Panchayat's programmatic goals . Under all these conditions, it is difficult to imagine that a scheduled caste, an agricultural labour or even a small farmer could utilise the village library in a better manner, if at all he would be able to do so, than the educated rich and upper caste people.

However the strength of the community development programme lay in the introduction of certain elements of development to a village. A village or villages now with a library, though scattered here and there under the Samiti, remained certainly better than the villages without a library. A village now connected with roads to the main market area, normally an urban area, made the life easier for the cultivators to move from one village market to other and to the urban centre. Now a village street with drinking water wells provided soothing touch to villagers or at least to certain sections of the caste structure of the village who could not enjoy these facilities before the implementation of the community development programme.

Yet the major share of the benefits flowed from the Panchayat Samiti in the shape of construction of the social amenities projects went in favour of the economically viable farmers who could show necessary security deposits, and could utilise the surplus rural manpower and in turn become contractors. In 1970, the Digapahandi Samiti appointed, in response to State Government orders, as many as 13 contractors already working with R&B, PWD, Irrigation and Solvency certificates. Needless to repeat, these contractors were also economically viable farmers - normally of rich peasants category. Thus the trends indicating the implementation process suggest that the political networks linking the village power structure with the Samiti members and involving the relations between the contractors, rich farmers and the Block officials constituted necessary conditions to siphon off the development process accruing from the Samiti to their "own" villages and within the villages to their "own" streets and on other conditions within the streets, to their 'own' people who constituted vote banks or 'patrons' of the power nexus and finally to their 'own' pockets through a rate of commission. And a large chunk of population who are lowly placed in socio-economic hierarchy remained outside the purview of the development process or else a fragmentary section of the poorer classes was engaged in it as wage labourers

FIGURE-4.2:
POLICY PROCESS OF ERRP PROGRAMME OF ORISSA



on contract basis. Thus they worked as social groups subordinate to the development process.

B. Policy Implementation Process of DRDA Programme

The implementation process of the DRDA programme involves five stages - first, formulation of Action Plan followed by selection of beneficiaries, financial co-ordination, purchasing committee and last but not the least, the process of utilisation of the programme by the beneficiaries. The Action Plan for a particular budget year is formulated at the Block level which takes care of the total project costs and various projects as enunciated at the district level meeting for each Block. It also mentions the total sector-wise targets - women if any, scheduled castes and tribes and the general caste targets. In case of non-implementation of projects under a preceding Action Plan, the new one may carry a list of backlog of projects, sector-wise targets and outlay too. The Action Plan, after its approval by DRDA, sets the guidelines for the Block to implement the projects assigned to it. Take for example - Action Plan for 1983-84.

It is important to note at this stage that there is an increasing amount of backlog mounting in each action plan. The backlog in 1983-84 plan is Rs. 7,19,065

Table 4.5 Action Plan (1983-84)

Year	Targets				Amount Required				Backlog Total
	SC	ST	OC	Total	SC	ST	OC	Total	
1983-84	253	36	426	717	5,44,995	85,560	10,82,640	17,13,195	7,19,065

(i.e. 50% of the total plan outlay of 82-83) and during 1984-85, it shows Rs. 10,85,195/- (i.e., massive 63% of the plan outlay meant for 1983-84) indicating the failure of the State government to mobilise the resources for an effective implementation of the programme. Constraints of the resource mobilisation are imposing criteria to further constrain any sincere and honest attempt to fulfill the targets and that too in proper time. A continuous backlog of 50% to 60% is certainly too heavy a constraint to implement the Action Plan effectively and genuinely reach it to the targets.

Second stage in the implementation process of the programme is the selection process of the beneficiaries. It requires an administrative coordination of the sort which involves formation of a village level committee to select the beneficiaries comprising of following members - (a) BDO or his extension officer as the co-ordinating authority and (b) the VLW as the village officer who submits a list of beneficiaries selected from among the villagers according to the definition of the target groups. VLW also recommends the income criteria of the beneficiary (c) while Tahsildar or the Revenue Inspector (RI) comes to the meeting with land record of the beneficiaries. Under all normal conditions, the decisions of the VLW on income and of RI on land

record which entitle a person to be beneficiary under DRRP scheme are final; (4) An MLA or his representative in the village should attend the meeting who normally happens to be a political man or local member of the Panchayat Samiti if the Samiti is in operation. Since political persons are involved in the selection of beneficiaries, and in a situation where an MLA normally prevails over a BDO or a VLW or an extension officer, their role in the selection of beneficiaries should remain as an open political question.

This is how the identification committee mobilises the beneficiaries. Thirdly, the financial conditions require resource mobilisation reaching the beneficiaries from three levels. The central aid ($33^1/3\%$) is released as IRD grants by the DRDA to the Block through the Commercial Banks of the area and the state grants ($41^2/3\%$) are released as CD grants by the CD Department of the State government through BDO's PL account. And the Banks are fixed for the area to sanction loans (25%) to the beneficiaries which they do so after verifying the security of their loans, i.e. economic viability of the beneficiaries.

But so far as the assignment of the project is concerned, beneficiaries are not provided the money capital but assignment with different projects like goatery,

poultry, diary, fishery etc. by a Purchasing Committee. This Committee consists of following members - (a) BDO or his extension officer as the coordinating head of the Committee; (b) the concerned technical officers from other departments, e.g., soil conservation officer for a land based scheme, veterinary surgeon or supervisor for goatery, diary schemes etc.; and (c) the target groups themselves are invited to do purchasing of the type they like with the consultations of the technical officers; (d) the Bankers do accompany them. While in between 1980-83, the purchasing of the entire projects was done on the basis of high yielding varieties - purchased normally outside the local market, in between 1983-85, the purchasing has to be from the local market only. Thus the total project purchased from the market is invested with the target groups.

However, the final indications of an effective implementation depend on the nature of target groups (i.e. whether genuine or false target groups) and if genuine, to the extent these target groups are capable of utilising the projects accrued to them. Let us look at the ground works of this, implementation process, on the basis of 'case studies' on two schemes, goatery and diary schemes implemented in two different villages of the Block.

Example 1 Case of Goatery Scheme in Village Jharipadar

In the village Jharipadar out of a total population of possibly 20 families belonging to marginal and agricultural labourers, 10 families were selected. These ten members consisting of six scheduled caste members and four other castes were assigned a goatery scheme of ten goats each with project cost of Rs. 2,200/- which comprised of subsidy of Rs. 1650 and Bank loan (i.e. 25%) of Rs. 550/-. The cost of ten goats assigned to each family stood at Rs. 1500/-. There was no drum-beating in this village to make people conscious of the selection of the beneficiaries. The VLW selected ten beneficiaries on the basis of a rate of commission. The beneficiaries so selected paid the commission in anxieties; otherwise instead of them other people in the village might be selected and they would lose a scheme worth of Rs. 1500/-, which in itself was a great thing for them. Moreover they have never got any benefit from the government before. Even then, when they were assigned goatery project they accepted it reluctantly because goatery scheme did not provide them a vision of any substantial change in the wage labour conditions. Among these 10 beneficiaries there was a king-pin who was educated in the primary school and sometimes back working in the Tehsil office and PWD offices which enabled him to read the English

worded official letters sent to them, especially from the Banks. All others could not read and write at all. And these factors enabled him to come to terms with the VLW and other officials to approach for some benefits to accrue to them. All those 10 families selected were his relatives and the rest of the families in the village who could be genuine beneficiaries too under SRP scheme were not aware of it.

After the selection process was over, these ten villagers were informed by the technical officers to proceed to a commercial butchery shop at a town some 20 kms. away from their villages to purchase some 100 'quality' goats from the area outside the local market and the officials of the purchasing committee arrived there themselves. The illiterate peasants found a number goats there but were dissatisfied with their quality, which, they said, were physically weak and would be easily vulnerable to local diseases. But the 'knowledge' of the peasants was not emphasised. In this respect the voice of the Veterinary doctor prevailed. The peasants cowed themselves down and thus the beneficiaries along with 100 goats were loaded back in the truck to their village and the officials returned after paying the necessary amounts to the merchant. When the goats became diseased one after another beginning from the second month since they were purchased, the peasants turned

for the help of the veterinery doctor with their diseased goats and got prescription certificates. Being scared of the death of goats, these beneficiaries sold some goats to local merchants from a small town on : low prices and got some immediate money for their family consumption.

Now after 10 goats allotted to each of them, there are 3 to 4 goats left with them after one and half year of its allotment without much rehabilitation accruing to them. On occasions when their goats died the beneficiaries got death certifications and also on occasions when they have been constrained by circumstances to sell the goats to local merchants, they have managed to get certificates from willy-nilly veteranary officials who themselves have manipulated the purchasing of the goats. Now the question confronting them is how to pay the bank loans of around five hundred fifty. They are in a cylical dilemma of their life whether to sell the rest of goats also to repay the bank loan and return to their original poverty positions or to keep the goats to maintain a semblance of escape from their earlier positions.

These issues indicate the failures of the implementation and also something wrong with a scheme like goatery allotted to people who have an increasing shell of immediate

demands and needs, and hence do not feel the glowing tributes the planners and the Government accord to their so-called long-term strategy. In these situations the purpose of the project like goatery scheme gets completely diluted.

Example 2 Case of a Diary Scheme in Village Talasingi

In another case of a diary scheme allotted to ten villagers of a large-sized village Talasingi, the beneficiaries selected have a structural nearness to an old village leader who is the brother of the local MLA. Similarly as in the above example, a large number of other genuine beneficiaries have been isolated. But since the project cost of the diary scheme is ... far higher (i.e. Rs. 6000/- accrued in two instalments) than almost all other schemes under SFDP, there was an intense political lobbying by the local leader in the Block headquarters to get some such scheme to his village. Of course, the Block officials were convinced about the economic viability of such a project in that village under the considerations that the village being a large sized one with a population around five thousand would provide a consumption market for the beneficiaries to sell the milk and get some income. Apart from this the communication factor linking the village to urban or semi-urban towns, where the consumption of milk is of high order

is taken care of while allotting a diary scheme to a particular village.

In such a scheme of Rs. 8000/- allotted to each 10 beneficiaries of the village with Rs. 80,000/- as project costs, the Block officials, the village intermediaries and businessmen took keen interest. This process begins with VLW and village 'contact man' and ends with purchasing committee and the businessman. The villagers paid some 2% to 3% commission to the VLW and the contactman for their names being included in the beneficiary list of the diary projects. The resource was scarce for them and the genuine targets were far larger than the targets actually selected for the project. Hence, a more intense use of networks to get the project. The contactman, the village leader and the VLW became very active for their own reasons - with the village leader who was a Sarpanch aiming at next panchayat elections, the reasons were not merely economic and getting some commission but maintenance of his political status by intensifying village networks through the influence he exerted on the Block officials. With the VLW it was primarily some commissions for the selection of beneficiaries for the diary project. His signature on the proforma indicating the annual income of the target groups provided him the potential grounds to siphon off some monetary capital from the target groups.

After the selection of the beneficiaries was over, the purchasing committee set its sails for the tasks of making the projects available to the targets. The purchasing Committee, acting under the directions of the state government to purchase the high yielding jersey cows went outside the local market to a national market in Andhra Pradesh. It is widely believed that the in connivance with the local merchants there, the cows have been actually purchased on the subsidy component (i.e. 75% of the project costs) which included their T.A. and D.A. also and the loan component (25% of the project costs) have been siphoned off from the project costs in between the officials of the purchasing committee and the commercial groups. This from this one could guess the quality of cows and their price standards at different markets. Yet the fact that nobody could verify and legally establish it gave enough potential grounds for this siphoning process to occur.

Even though low quality Jesey cows were allotted in the diary projects to the beneficiaries, the beneficiaries have been able to continue with these cows with the initial anxieties to survive and generate some income by selling the milk in the local or outside market. But the entire market nexus and so many social factors baffled the illiterate peasants. Peasents baffled daily

for their basic needs soon found less and less relevance of the diary scheme which also required to fulfil the basic needs of the Jesey cow like the technical burdens to feed the cow by rice-polish and provide medicines to suit the cow to local ecological conditions. Moreover, the milch cow did not breed milk immediately which caused milking and marketing problem for the poor peasants who would require to work in seasonal employment opportunities to get some immediate wages to fulfil their families' daily requirements for rice, oil, potato and salt etc. Moreover ritual factors that cow is a godess and unless one is able to maintain properly it would become weak and cry and die, threatened the poor peasants' ritual innocent beliefs. Peasants were all provided with two Jersey cows. In some cases, they have sold one to the rich people of the area and in other cases they have sold both the cows to different people of the area. Now the initial consolations of getting some benefits from the Government are gone. For this the peasants feel in their ways that the officials are mainly responsible who not only provided low quality cows which could not generate expected milking capacity of 4 to 5 litre each which could have further generated Tk. 10-12 income per day for a particular period but also siphoned off the loan components of the project onto the project costs. These additional factors raised

the burden of the loans on the target groups. The peasants feel here, as also in the goatery programme that they were not provided quality cows and the Jersey cows (which they call fondly as 'foreign' (Bideshi) cows) maintenance was really burdensome for them.

Thus the programme has provided temporary gains and incomes to the peasants but in the long run, it has failed to reach to the basic needs of the people who are bound to survive as wage-labourers or seasonal-agricultural employees in the rich peasants land. Of course the State government has also realised belatedly the dilemma of the Jersey cows purchased from national level markets outside the State. Now it has issued instructions since 1983 (August) to the Blocks to do local purchases on each and every social amenities projects which include schemes like diary and goatery as well - under the assumption that target groups would have a say in the purchasing of animals from the local markets and with their knowledge about the local prices there would not be much scope for the officials and the merchants to manipulate the purchasing process of the projects. However, the official evaluation of the SRRP programme has not taken care of the bureaucratic-commercial nexus involved in subtler manner to siphon off the real project costs and reduce the value of the projects. Correspondingly, now the local merchants rack-rent the prices of

the concerned project costs under the philosophical assumption of the private sector - "Ae Sarkar Ka Mal Daryame Dal" (This is Government's project, throw it to the sea). When the local merchants find the officials approaching them they double the price of goats or cows etc. to which officials provide a subtle agreement and in turn get some commission from the local businessman.

Example IIa

The second possibility is of course open that under local purchases, the beneficiaries point out the commercial agency from which they intend to purchase the projects. In connivance with the local agency, they show that these are the goats or cows which they have purchased but obviously they do not do. In result, their purpose of getting some financial capital immediately is fulfilled and the commercial agency takes back its goats or cows with some additional commission accounting for 10-25% of the project costs. The rate of the commission depends on the nature of the project and normally maintains an inverse relations with project costs. Thus all these factors create blockades for the effective implementation of the programme.

III EVALUATION

The purpose of the programme of BRP is to help

the poor peasants (of 0-2 1/2 acre with Rs. 1200 as anjual income) in the generation of some income assets (e.g. Rs. 3000-4000) annually leading to their rehabilitation above the poverty line. Examples I and II discussed above show that whatever reasons are there, the programme has completely failed to generate an annually developing income asset for the poor peasants. Possibly the following reasons can be advanced in the assessment of these state of affairs of the implementation process (stage I) as well as the structure of the policy (i.e. the strategy itself)(stage II).

Stage I

In the context of the implementation of the programme following five possibilities contributing to the effective blockades on the strategy reaching the poor are open for further analysis -

(i) In situations where the target groups are found genuine they have been selected on the basis of the political contiguity[10] set within the range of political networks. For example, the targets (i.e. groups or the areas) are either directly related to an MLA and his henchman 'contactman' or to a Sarpanch (Example 2) or

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10. The concept of political contiguity refers to a situation of next in order in the category of political networks which may be either immediately above or below a political unit situated within the networks of power structure.

to a village level officer (Example I) or to all of these categories (as happened in Example I and II). The question of political contiguity arises immediately due to the scarce resources limited in quantity allocated to target groups which overwhelmingly outnumber the targets to be achieved according to the strategy. For example, the target groups selected in Example I and II both fell short of the actual number of genuine targets in the villages leading to intense political lobbying to get hold of the scarce resources.

(ii) On other conditions, false targets get benefits accruing from better projects like diary - these targets consist of a contactman or any official who take keen interest in the quality of milk of high yielding cows like Jersey. So they manipulate and transfer the benefits of poor to themselves and this is largely due to the technical and sociological constraints on the genuine targets to maintain Jersey cows and go for marketing daily to different places wide across their own villages in a situation where the poor peasants' day to day livelihood depends on wage-earnings and working in the field in seasonal times.

(iii) However, in case of genuine targets, the real value of the projects is reduced due to the value system perpetuated by what we may call intermediary regimes.

comprising of contractmen, officers from bureaucracy and commercial groups bound in chains of political networks of love and affection for each other or perhaps of a mutual competitive outlook and animosity too.[19]

(iv) With the reduced value of the projects, accrued to them, the poor peasants face further constraints of an inflated market where the large competitors in fish market or 'operation flood' market squeeze the small rising ones who are without any productive family assets to defend the market value of their fish, milk or other outputs. Primary constraint in this case is the 'basic needs' or in specific the "subsistence" requirements of the poor peasant families. Hence they have to be engaged in various seasonal employments so that they could get some immediate money/commodities to raise their purchasing power to meet at least subsistence requirements of the family.

(v) Finally at this stage of strategy reaching the poor remains at the back of the strategy the question of resource mobilisation and financial coordinations. The

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19. Take for example - sometimes officials resent the political intervention of political agents like an MLA or his henchmen but under constraints of transfer/suspension threats which create intense family and other social problems, officials succumb to select those 'special' targets: groups, sectors and areas as might be suggested by concerned political authorities. Thus a network emerges under a competitive outlook and animosity.

Government has failed to mobilise the resources to keep pace of the implementation process. It has allocated only 40 to 50% of its total plan outlay meant for the programme indicating a massive failure in the field of resource mobilisation reducing the strategy to a target oriented programme. While there are constraints for resource mobilisation for plan implementation, the Commercial Banks with whatever resources at their disposal are normally security-oriented and do not sanction loans (in a case of SRRP, loan is 25% in certain schemes only) to people who have no assets of economic viability without security guarantees of two persons meant for each target. Thus the Banks have created problems of financial coordinations.

Stage II

This section concentrates to analyse the structure of the strategy of SRRP in relation to rural poor.

(i) This strategy is primarily employment-oriented - the assumption of the politicians being that the lack of employment opportunities constitutes the fundamental problem for the poor to gain some purchasing power and hence some income-generating projects ought to be assigned to the rural poor. Thus the strategy leaves the poor to the preponderable questions of agro-based productive assets - their ownership and control - whose skewed

distribution over the population and area itself contributes to large-scale unemployment problem.[20]

(ii) Without such a strategy with alternative assumptions to not only raise the productive assets in agriculture but also balance its skewed distribution over the population and areas of the rural India, the existing employment-oriented programme is itself reduced to a quasi-temporal achievement of the present political regime. It only provides for a short-term upward mobility of the poor peasants in the context of existing social stratifications. On occasions this form of peasant takes a nose-dive forming a shape of cyclical mobility and on the other conditions, it has a relative upward mobility but remains stagnant overtime as the Example II indicates.

A cyclical peasant mobility, as Shanin[21] argues, means that the peasant attains a temporary status of a social mobility in the upper directions of the existing social hierarchy but under some constraints on his mobility capacity he returns to a structural position similar to his earlier position. Our examples I and IIa

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20. For macro assumptions of this argument, see, Francine Frankel, op. cit. , especially the sections dealing with land reforms and strategies of Poverty Amelioration programmes (SFDA, MFAL, etc.).

21. Theodor Shanin, "Polarization and Cyclical Mobility" in John Harriss (ed.), Rural Development, London, 1982.

indicate that as a result of certain types of benefits accruing to the poor peasants, they generate some forms of income, for example, by selling milk or fish, coconut etc. in the market. But there are a number of socio-economic cultural constraints which impose on them and force them to sell the cows, goats etc. to the people in the upper echelons of the social order. Consequently, a new situation emerges for the poor to return to his earlier situations of poverty. This type of mobility may be characterised as cyclical mobility.

Thus while the existing strategy is the short-term achievement of the political regime, for the intermediary regimes in the rural sector it initiates a development process accelerating their wealth. But the poor stays largely poor inspite of all these schemes meant to alleviate their status. The existing strategy is just a ripple in the pool of poverty.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

In the foregoing two chapters we have discussed separately the twin issues of institutions of power structure and their programmatic goals. The purpose of doing this exercise is to locate these two structures of power and policy separately in our process of abstraction of the reality. In reality, of course, both the processes are interrelated. Power blocs are necessarily formed to serve 'interests' of various social groups and social groups, in turn, constitute bases of various types of power blocs. Hence in order to understand the nature of power structure it is necessary to understand the 'issues' or substantive questions or 'policy' it formulates and implements to serve 'interests' of different social groups, and also the structural characteristics of power blocs, their social bases, regiments of 'interests' and political cultures which guide the policy issues on different social conditions. Hence it is important to examine the interconnections between social structural aspects of power and functional issues developing in different conditions. It is only in their interconnections lies the real meaning of power structure. However our primary concern in this work has been to examine a cognate concept of power

structure - 'authority' as it manifests at the level of a Panchayat Samiti. In Chapter 3, we have discussed the social bases of the authority or leadership of the Samiti and political-ideological processes which have transferred the political actions of those social groups into the authority structure of the Samiti. In Chapter 4, we analysed the types of actions the Samiti leadership performed through certain policies like community development programme. Here we compared the former with a non-participatory programme formulated at the state level and implemented by the Block Administration.

Now, in this concluding section, it is important to integrate these two questions : the type of the leadership and their performances which legitimise, if at all, the social structures the leadership represents. The analysis of process of 'legitimacy' may provide some insights into the internal meanings of power structure of the Samiti.

I

We have examined the trends of leadership in the Samiti over the period. During first phases of the authority of the Samiti, the leadership which emerged tended to be more ritualistic. In the case of a majority

of the members, elections were taken for granted. The assumption obviously was their ritual status - their Brahminical supremacy and political patronage by the ex-princely families. In the Digapahandi Block, the notions of "Raja's man" and the higher ritual status of Brahminism were possibly two overwhelming ritual considerations behind the emergence of the ritualistic leadership. The crescendo to it flowed from the consensual ideology. Thus the 'villagers' were sitting before the temples and were deciding 'consensually' the persons to be elected to their Gram Panchayats and to the Samiti. Under these political considerations people who were highly placed within the ritual structure of the society and have been traditionally regarded as 'village elders' came to be elected to the Panchayat institutions.

As we have seen earlier, in the sixties the leadership was primarily confined to the Brahmins. While of the total twenty-eight members in the Samiti (1961-66) nearly 70% of the members were Brahmins, as many as 64% of the members were elected unopposed. This trend of the uncontested category continued to exist till the end of the sixties.[1] Possibly the dominance of the uncontested category converged with the dominance of the Brahmins in the power structure. Of the total twelve Sarpanchs,

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1. See, Table 3.7, Chapter 3.

the ex-officio members of the Samiti, eight were Brahmins, whereas out of the rest twelve elected members of the Samiti as many as ten were Brahmins. The Samiti Chairman and one coopted member were from Brahmin caste too. The Chairman was the nominee of the ex-prince of the area. In fact he had been working in the Zamindar's House supervising their landed property.

However all those who were highly placed within the caste structure were not constituting the leadership. Only those Brahmins who were generally economically powerful with some forms of education and old age to their credit were thought as village elders. Only those Brahmins who commanded benevolent respect to their old age and controlled the landholdings as landlords or medium farmers were asserting over the consensual ideology of the villagers. Their social bases were taken for granted while the leadership status was accorded to them. So this type of leadership was based on a synthetic relation of some forms of education, old age morality, higher ritual status and the economic control of land. Thus, for example, during sixties people belonging to the categories of big farmers and medium farmers were overwhelmingly represented in the Samiti. While 75 per cent of the representatives of the Samiti belonged to the big and medium farmers categories constituting only

24% of the total population, only 25% of the members belonged to the categories of small, marginal and agricultural labourers who constituted nearly 76% of the total population in the Digapahandi Block. It seems that these people were also having reasonably good educational levels under the local standards. Most of them were from secondary or middle school levels.[2] However, the political considerations of the old age morality seem to prolong over time. This has resulted in the overrepresentation of the old age people of forties and above - a trend continuing since 1961 elections and has been checked only recently by a significant representation from the young groups of people during 1984 elections. Thus in 1961, 1967, 1970-1971 and 1975, there have been 61.5, 68.3, 77.7 and 72.8 percentage of members respectively belonging to both the old groups of 40-49 and 50 plus years of age. But during the same period the representation of Samiti members from the age groups 25-29 and 30-39 taken together stands at 28.5, 31.7, 22.5 and 26.5 percentage of the total members. However in 1984, members from both these age-groups of the young people have risen up to about 45% of the total representation in the Samiti.

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2. See, Table 3.4, Chapter 3.

While the early evolution of the power structure of the Samiti was based on such synthetic relations, the process of political mobilisation was dominated by the consensual ideology and accordingly legitimacy seemed to be accorded to the performances of the leadership. During the first two terms between 1961 and 1974, the uncontested category continued to dominate. As many as 64% and 53% of the representatives in 1961 and 1970-71 elections respectively were elected unopposed. A significant growth of contested categories began after 1974-75 elections.

But such a process of ritual-based leadership continued over a period possibly because of two political reasons. First, the nationalist Congress compromised with 'feudal' Zamindari Houses in Orissa which resulted in the growth of a different political culture after independence. Under these sets of political permutations and combinations, the dominant political culture of the time remained indistinguished in between 'nationalist' Congress and pro-British Zamindar Houses. So the Congress Party came to be patronised by the Badakhemundi's ex-prince. However his age-old rival Sanakhemundi's ex-prince joined the erstwhile Ganatantra Parishad.[3] The

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3. The Ganatantra Parishad was a major force in inland Orissa through which the ex-princes operated. For details, B.B. Jena, "The Feudal Grip", Seminar, October, 1968.

rural leadership now was dominated by the people engaged in these complex political permutations and combinations. In between the Congress and the Swatantra Parties led by the two rival ex-princes, the local leaders had been divided. But in these permutations and combinations the Congress had been largely dominant over the Swatantra Party possibly because the local leader of the Swatantra, Sanakhemundi Raja had not been always politically active in the local areas. Thus the first two Samiti Chairmen from 1961 to 1970 were Digapahandi "Raja's" men and most of the Samiti members belonged to their pockets of 'influence'. Only two or three of the members belonged to the 'Opposition'.

Secondly, the Congress regime in Orissa patronised such ritual leadership to emerge through a consensual ideology by instituting some prize money and propagating values of "village community", 'voluntary action' for "Rama Rajya" through its political wings in the rural area. But how far such political mobilisation could succeed depended largely on the political culture of each specific area, and its stratification system. However, in the Digapahandi Samiti area it could succeed. In other Samiti areas dominated by competing political parties, its consensual ideology might have been thrashed to winds.

Thus the interaction between state-based political trends and the particular political culture of this area resulted in the formation of a ritual-based leadership in the Panchayat Samiti politics. However, some of these trends could be found in other areas of the country too. Yet the possibility of its presence in every part of the country could be easily excluded. As we see studies conducted in different parts of the country too indicate some such trends in the formation of the rural leadership of the Panchayat Raj Institutions. Iqbal Narain's works on Rajasthan indicate that the early phase of leadership could be characterised as 'ritualistic'[4] or traditional. So also works of G. Ram Reddy on Kota Block (Andhra Pradesh), D.P. Singh on Kanchan Block (Bihar), S.P. Jain and B.C. Muthayya on Kerala's rural leadership of village panchayats, et. al. point to similar trends in the evolution of leadership patterns in Panchayat Raj Institutions.

However in the Digapahandi Block the above pattern of Samiti leadership has not remained same over time. A new phase of leadership has already begun in late seventies. It is not merely agricultural-based. It has changed its

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4. A term borrowed from Jain and Muthayya, "Kerala", in G. Ram Reddy (ed.), Patterns of Panchayati Raj in India, 1977. Also see, Iqbal Narain, et . al., "Rajasthan", in G. Ram Reddy, ibid., pp. 242-60.

dimensions to economics of commerce and other professional categories of occupations, more especially of commerce. People engaged in a combination of occupational levels are also people who have constructed intensive networks which are now larger in dimensions than people who are merely confined to agricultural activities only or at best, with different types of professional activities. These larger networks have now become potential grounds to enter into political structures of the 'authority' through the mechanism of universal adult suffrage grounded on the principle of majority. To attain a 'majority' what is now expected from a leader is his networks constructed to a larger extent possible. By utilising caste linkages and the economic networks they have come to stay within the power blocs of the Samiti.

During 1961-71 the distribution of Samiti members within the occupation characteristics of agriculture alone was as high as 69.3% and 81.8% respectively, whereas their percentage representation has significantly declined to 54.5, 45.5 and 43.5 percentage of the total Samiti members during the period 1971 to 1984.[5] But in case of categories of people with combined occupations, they have a meteoric rise and consolidation within the power structure of the Samiti. During the first two Samitis

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5. See, Table 3.3, Chapter 3.

(1961-71) their combined strength stood as low as 10.6 and 18.2 whereas the same rose up to 45.3, 54.4 and 55.4 per cent in between 1971 and 1984. Thus they have in fact outnumbered the members whose occupational activities are confined within the agriculture sector.[6] In fact today we feel that to show strength in the office of the Samiti, a person is required to have larger networks involving agriculture, commerce and professionalism. Also while the first two Chairmen were agriculturists, the rest two Chairmen have been from the category of agriculture and commercial nexus.

However the larger the caste networks along with combinations of occupation levels, the better the chances of a village leader to enter into power equations of Panchayat institutions representing from the area where he has constructed these networks. Thus quite recently, the middle castes Reddys who have considerable caste followings in this area and among them the economically powerful belonging to agriculture and commercial nexus have risen to Samiti leadership. In 1984, four Sarpanchs, ex-officio members of the Samiti are from this caste and also the Samiti Chairman, a local leader of the Reddy Samaj who has been practising as a B-class contractor under Government departments is a Reddy.

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6. Ibid.

But so far as the entry into the authority (formal power structure) structures of the Panchayat Samiti are concerned, caste and economic networks do not in itself constitute the bases for such an entry. It gets relayed through certain political forces like popular organisations or political parties or different political ideologies. Under the considerations of the universal adult suffrage, it ultimately depends on how far the leader and his groups have been able to utilise these village-based networks along with the choices of political parties available to them. Thus the two middle caste people with similar economic positions may contest elections to the Samiti Chairmanship but one wins over the other through his use of a political party or a leader of an organisation historically popular in the area. As we have seen in 1984 elections to the Samiti Chairmanship, a person from the Reddy caste won over the person from the Komati group with similar economic followings (both being B-class contractors) primarily because of his intense political activity in helping a number of candidates to win over Sarpanch elections. Secondly because he belonged to the Congress Party ruling in the state at present which has maintained a somewhat 'popular' base in the area. His opponent's, the Janata candidate, political inactivity before the Samiti elections have also negatively contributed to his success.

Thus there emerges a complex correlation among the caste, class and political networks contributing to the shaping of the 'formal' power structures at the Panchayat level. An intensive study on these complex correlative aspects of class-caste and political culture should be interesting which has remained largely a neglected aspect of social anthropological studies dominating the social science literature on village power structure. Thus the consensual ideology dominating the initial evolution of the leadership of panchayats resulted in the growth of ritual-based leaders. And the attributes of the ritualistic leadership were viz. higher ritual status primarily Brahmins, big landowners of the area and the consensual ideology according legitimacy. This process, may be regarded as process of political casteism.

However, a phase of contractual leadership has begun in seventies. Here politics has swung its networks through a complex alliance of more than one caste on the basis of universal adult suffrage. In these caste alliances occuring on political lines people now vote for an enterprising leadership and expect a number of economic benefits from them and force the leader to promise to provide some development benefits before being elected. Whoever is successful in this gamut of

promises and can move from the Block to the Collectorate and to the Ministry offices in the state is now thought as a potential leader for the Panchayat Samiti or state assembly. Thus the development needs, expectations, economic aspirations of the villagers have been rising spontaneously and demanding the leadership, if elected, to supply some development benefits to them. Election provides the necessary contract for such type of entrepreneurial leadership to emerge which may be characterised as contractual leadership. The following attributes are normally associated with it, viz. the caste alliances, agro-commercial nexus and some form of popular leadership emerging in the competing process of adult suffrage as opposed to the earlier consensus-based leadership. This process may be characterised as 'semi-casteism'. It indicates that politics is disassociated increasingly from earlier single-caste based political authority and has come to be associated with different caste alliances to achieve some political goals and economic gains.

One more important thing one should note here is that irrespective of different political parties like Congress and Swatantra, it is that the upper castes like Brahmins, ex-princes and the Reddys and the economic groups like big and medium farmers have continued to dominate the power blocs of the Panchayat Samiti - an

issue whose investigation has remained beyond concerns of this work.

II

Taking both the suggestions of Dahl (1961) and Milbrath (1965) together, we may suggest that when issues of politics are going to produce outcomes useful to a particular section, that section or group is going to take keen interest in the existing political process. But others isolated from it would be either 'politically apathetic' or 'spectators'. Now the types of leadership we have discussed above and the socio-political processes which have engulfed its emergence and consolidation in the power blocs of the Samiti make it a doubtful issue whether the types of rural development programmes the Samiti picked up could accrue to the lower strata of the population who are multiplicitly divided on the lines of caste, religion and other village-based primordial loyalties.

The Community Development projects concentrating on construction activities of social amenities projects and few capital projects like minor irrigation could hardly do better to the lower socio-economic strata in as much as it led to the proliferation of petty contractors from the rich agriculturist section. This small

but concentrating group of petty contractors were legally recognised by the Panchayat Samiti and were having complex networks with Samiti members and the patronage of big class contractors who were reaping benefits from the major infrastructural facilities (like irrigation, road, dam and buildings) provided to develop the agriculture sector under the government departments.[7] Substantive development issues such as construction activities alone could only engage sections of the lower strata as labourers. But their engagement also depended further on the quantum of issues being implemented.

Two questions developed immediately - nature of the development of strategy and secondly, the limited nature of the resources for the strategy. So far the substantive issues of community development programme were concerned it could hardly do better to the lower rungs of the agriculturists (agricultural labour, marginal and small) than what it could provide rich potential for contractors to reap profits from its projects. Thus a complex 'intermediary political regime' - of contractors (businessmen), Block officials and Samiti leaders - emerged which siphoned off the surplus of the projects in legal and non-legal ways. While the implementation of the community development programme led

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7. Elaborated in Chapter 4.

to the emergence of such a political regime (seen above), the scarce and limited resources of the Community Development projects led to intense political battles between village vs. village, and also within the village, between this caste settlement vs. that caste settlement and between different clients of the area. Thus different primordial political contradictions emerged in the dialectics between the scarce and limited resources of CD projects and an historically stratified society. As we have seen in Chapter 4, how the construction of a well led to intense lobbying among the contractors to get hold of the project and how the village leaders lobbied hard to divert it to their own villages as against the genuine requirements of another village and finally how the political 'clients' succeeded in settling the site for the construction of the well in their own street creating considerable resentment among the lower caste population in the same village. Thus due to the interaction between the already stratified society and the scarce resources of development programmes multiple levels of political conflicts emerged in the countryside.

Under such conditions, as we have seen earlier, political leaders of the Samiti were cornering the benefits to the contractors adjacent within their power networks, to the village which would easily provide more votes and

consolidate their positions and to the extent where their 'patrons' were existing. And wherever the 'clients' were involved, they were at best the labourers of the CD projects undertaken by the Samiti(if at all these scarce and limited projects could provide the scope to utilise surplus labour of the countryside and employ them for the time being).

The foregoing discussions show that the legitimacy of the rural leadership (at least in this area) was derived from the two sources. First, the political processes engulfing the social bases and the electoral process gave the leadership a shape. Secondly, the problem of development programmes was solved in a way which attempted to legitimise the social bases (existing and emerging) which it represented. Possibly because the question of creating rural social bases out of the existing social stratification and the electoral politics have always confronted the rural leadership and political organisations. That is how the 'legitimacy' question remains as the fundamental problem for the political authority - how to legitimise the social bases in the 'authority' structures and how to maintain its political values by implementing development policies in a way which does not undermine its 'social bases'. As for example, Congress Party in Orissa has been careful enough to take care of the newly emerging social bases of middle

castes and agro-commercial groups in the 'authority' structures of the Samiti and found it useful to consolidate its political position through these economic groups.

There is also another process confronting the very survival and relevance of the Panchayat Raj Institutions which needs little focus. This is when they are superseded or become victims of centralization process. Under such conditions the legitimacy question of rural leadership in relation to the implementation of programmes shifts its bases to the power nexus associated with the Block Administration. That is because the primary implementation unit is the Block Administration, not Panchayat Samiti. Thus the villagers too think that the Block Administration is responsible for the omission and commission in the implementation process.

However, in the context of poverty amelioration programmes implemented by the Block Administration we have observed complex political networks too. Similar trends of political networks - of the commercial-bureaucratic-political nexus - are operating upon the implementing process. As we have seen in Chapter 4, in case of the state-based programme (ERRP) the MLA sees that his men[8] should be involved everywhere in the target selections;

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8. Who are normally called as 'middle men'.

the target groups and villages or sites (for pisciculture or cashew plantation) favourable to him should be identified; better projects with scarce resources be sanctioned. And the bewildered technical officials soon find their technical knowledge constrained by political considerations of a powerful Samiti Chairman or an MLA. They soon lose development enthusiasm, wherever they do possess genuinely, and make holy alliances with local leaders, MLA, his 'middle man' and with commercial groups. With their own reasons these groups make combined efforts to siphon off the 'surplus' from the projects and sometimes the whole project. The real value of the project is reduced through a series of commission rates distributed among these groups which recognise each others' activities tacitly. Low so far as beneficiary selection is concerned, the target groups are of specified numbers from specific categories like SC, ST and OC. Even then the 'clients' from each section are only selected as target groups. On occasions better projects like Diary schemes with lucrative high yielding Jersey cows have been transferred automatically to the administrators' homes.

However granted that the genuine circumstances where the programme has reached the needy beneficiaries, under the stresses and strains of competitive markets, the

poor peasants get squeezed. Each and every project under SRRP programme (like IRDP) brings the poor peasants to markets characterised by forms of inflation and thus they are forced to sell their output with marginal 'profits' which can hardly meet the patterns of family consumption of the poor peasants who are normally without productive assets.

There are also occasions where technical and primordial sociological factors[9] have tremendously influenced the peasantry to lose the projects too. Goats are sold under requirements for family festivals like marriage, dowry etc. Sometimes they consume too or sell the non-consumable projects (like Diary scheme) which would result in some immediate cash required for their family consumptions etc., or to meet medical expenses and health care or other 'conspicuous consumptions' owing their origin to multiple primordial sociological factors.

III

Whether it is implementation process of a participatory programme (e.g. CD) implemented under the supervisory

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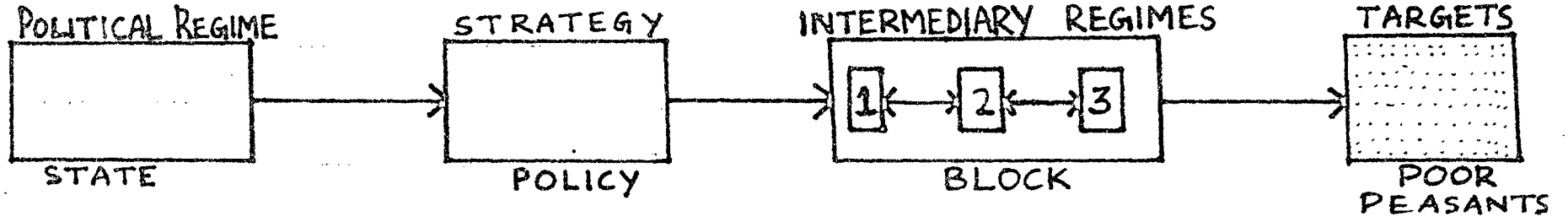
9. L.P. Vidyarthi underlines how several primordial cultural factors do frustrate the tribal development programmes and following a mechanical understanding of Indian society and development process, the planners have underestimated the importance of the social issues in the formulation of the plans. See, L.P. Vidyarthi, ed., Rural Development (1982).

role of the Samiti or non-participatory programme undertaken by the Block Administration, the politics of 'intermediary regime' hovering between the targets and the strategies has always mediated. Perhaps with the passage of time this regime has changed its forms, dimensions of influence and is consequently consolidated in the rural area. Questions of this sort should be studied further to examine the structure and the roles of this regime in the context of the development process undergoing in the countryside.

As we have seen the 'intermediary regime' has created its own regiments to establish its own legitimacy through complex political networks spread across block office boundaries to the state level administration. For example, in the operation of panchayat institutions, the state leaders have taken interest in instituting their own 'party' man as Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti to implement the development programmes in order to give legitimacy to their political roles. In the absence of panchayats the Block Administration has been cornered by the state leaders either through its tacit consent or political threat, to implement the target group programmes to their 'clients' and 'villages. Thus there emerges a nexus between Block Administration and local political leaders linked further to the state political executive. As we have seen MLA's brother emerged as a

FIGURE - 5 :

AN OPERATIONAL MODEL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS OF ERRP



[N.B. :- 1 ⟹ POLITICAL AGENCY. 2 ⟹ BUREACRACY. 3 ⟹ COMMERCIAL GROUPS.]

powerful local 'patron' of the target groups and influenced considerably the officers of the Block to sanction programmes to his 'clients'. The commercial groups of the local area have also joined with this nexus to accrue some benefits from the various development projects. While the officials and the 'middle men' take keen interest to get as much 'commissions' from the projects possible, the commercial groups are keen to drive home some profits by selling various items required for the projects. Ultimately the real value of the projects get reduced. Consequently it becomes burdensome on the genuine targets (poor) to maintain scarce projects of reduced value like diary, poultry etc. Thus for the various groups of the intermediary regime their relation may be "interactional" (Bailey, 1959) but for the genuine targets such relation is burdensome, hegemonistic. Thus, we have an operational model as represented in Figure ..

The reasons why such a phenomenal set of intermediary regimes has occurred and come to stay permanently may be varied from region to region and state to state. Yet at macro-level, one possible argument is the issue of disjunction of economics of planning and subsequent institutional reforms like panchayats and cooperatives from a major set of political inputs required to overcome

constraints of primordial social structures like religion, caste, ethnicity et. al. and the institutions of private property.[10] In fact since Nehru's time itself perspective of the planning has been economistic and its concepts of politics, as the Congress emphasised, have been "mass mobilisation" of the "village community" and 'pada yatra' to villages without even anything of that sort ever happening on a large scale. The economics of planning and institutional reforms for rural development have been isolated from political mobilisation and organisation of rural poor which ought to have protected the 'interests' of the peasants. And further, without any skillful attack on primordial loyalties a political void has been created in the countryside. Consequently this void has been filled by different groups of 'intermediary regimes' - organised on multiple lines of caste-class, religion, ethnic structures and their political networks spread wide across the villages and the Samiti boundaries to the state and national levels.

In such political situations engulfing the Panchayat Raj Institutions, the tragic paradox of these organs is that these have been reduced to 'watch dog' bodies from its earlier position of 'participatory' institutions for rural development. They have no

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10. Francine Frankel, India's Political Economy (1978), see especially, "Introduction".

statutory role in the formulation of whatever is there in the shape of so-called 'Block-level planning' (i.e. 'Action Plan') or the 'district level planning'. After severe budget cuts of the resources of CD programme under Panchayat Raj Institutions beginning with 3rd Five Year Plan at a time when panchayat institutions were yet to take their shapes in major parts of the country[11], these local bodies faced severe threats of their extictions during the national emergency, 1975-77. This trend of their political extinctions continued in the major parts of the country up to 1983 when the political regime at the centre realised to assess its electoral strength in rural and urban bodies in different states in order to prepare itself with sufficient armoury for victories in the forthcoming national elections. Precisely because of this experimental outlook with elections which has resulted in the proliferation of panchayats in different states in between 1983-84, the political regime has not realised the necessity to de-centralize the planning process and assign the panchayats specific tasks of planning and development. Thus the rural development programmes of the state and the Centre have flooded the rural sector through bureaucracy. The panchayat bodies wherever existing have been reduced to

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11. F. Frankel, op.cit., pp. 316-17.

watchdog organs in this planning and development process. As a result with their meagre resources they are resorting once again to construction activities to maintain their political images before the public by achieving some short-term economic gains. Instead of development bodies, panchayats are now reduced to bodies for electoral experiments at national or state levels.

Thus there are two types of fundamental constraints on the panchayat system. One is the economic constraint of the centralisation process and the other is the political constraint of the 'intermediary regimes'. Unless questions are raised as to how to remove both the constraints, it is difficult to imagine that panchayat system as it exists today could play a substantial role in the removal of rural poverty in particular and rural development in general, and ensure thereby the process of democratic planning in the countryside.

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