TRIBAL IDENTITIES AND POLITICAL PARTIES: RISE OF BJP IN ORISSA

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CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation **TRIBAL IDENTITIES AND POLITICAL PARTIES: RISE OF BJP IN ORISSA** submitted by **Mr. Nishikanta Mohapatra** in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy** has not been previously. submitted in any other University.

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

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DEDICATED TO MY FAMILY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

The sharpening of identity-politics in the 1990s has pushed the issue of ideological battle to the background. With the failure of the congress party as an umbrella organisation to meet the interests of the different sections of the people, there emerged a number of political parties representing different castes, classes and religious groups in the 1970s, only to be radicalised now. While the Mandalised politics put the Backward castes in the forefront of power in the states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar; riding on the wave of "Hinduitva" identity, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) acquired the center-stage of Indian politics. Similarly, the Dalit identity of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) made it indispensable for any political calculation in the northern politics. It is a fact that the politics of South India has been based upon casteism since a long time.

The increased emphasis upon identity politics redefined the sketch of Indian polity in a way that led to stagnation of vote bases. As mobility of voters got restricted to a pre-defined notion of identity in terms of caste, religion and region, political parties found it quite difficult to plead for issue-based politics transcending the strongly conceived unity of purpose within an identity group.

In this context of political stagnation, the issue of 'tribal identity' no doubt assumes much importance for the political parties desirous of wider support base since, this section of the society is the only segment, which has not been sufficiently politicised. When the tribal

representatives get elected, they quickly got involved in the main concerns of the party to which they belong and in the process ensured a nominal place for tribal issues[1]. As a result, the tribal areas more or less remained uninitiated into the intricacies of the representative political system.

As the tribals failed to articulate their demands in terms of dominant language i.e. of legal entitlements, of rehabilitation and resettlement, of compensation etc. which govern the Indian state and civil society, they lacked recognition[2]. There is hardly any comprehensive and coherent endeavour from within as well as from outside to delineate an independent tribal political outlook based upon tribal identity. Of course, the difficulty of various tribal groups to identify with each other has prevented to them from becoming a formidable political force to dictate the terms of negotiation.

The tribal population is sprinkled all over India with a strong localised sense of place, language, religion and tradition. As a result any simple definition of the term 'tribal' will be inadequate to give expression of the intention. Therefore, from the very beginning the tribes are described differently by different experts. Mostly the anthropologists and in a latter time the sociologists have ventured into the tribal arena to study the impact of development and industrialization in order to find out the problems of the transitional phases. Depending upon these multiple concerns, a number of definitions have cropped up which somehow speak

of 'tribal identity' in various terms. This has ensured a lack of agreement on the unity of purpose among the protagonists of 'tribal interest' and effectively curtailed the independent discourse of tribal polity in a plural society. Rather, the tribal leadership has sought refuge under the patronage of mainstream political parties to further their narrow, short-term interests in defiance of the urgently needed indigenous, long-term developmental paradigm.

The tribal uprisings in the Chotanagpur region of the central India, western Maharashtra, Gujurat and Telengana region of Andhra Pradesh, with the secessionist movements of North-East provide for arguments in support of assertion of tribal identity. The creation of states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttaranchal also justifies the means of tribal assertion through the national political parties. But, all these ethnic assertions in contemporary India can be defined only in terms of differential orientation to the predominant culture and society as reactionary, conservative, revisionary or revolutionary[3]. It lacks independent political-economic discourse of evolution.

In the absence of programmes and policies that are intimate and conceivable by the tribals themselves, the state sought to homogenize the existing pluralities through expansion of the market and extension of citizenship to them. It also tried to integrate the ethnic minorities into a national society characterized by the ethos and interests of the ethnic majority[4]. As a result the subaltern view of politics got sidelined in the

concern of political parties representing majority interest. This instrumentalist approach also ensured alienation at the gross-root level.

With increasing developmental activities, interest articulation, spread of education and consciousness, the hitherto uninitiated population of Indian society has begun to assert itself. The frustration with the existing mode of peripheral treatment has necessitated the search for core representation through the dual method of progress and punishment. As a consequence, the political horizon is witnessing the emergence of new entities as well as debacle of existing structures.

Research Problem:-

With the extinction of regional outfits and establishment of competitive two-party system in Orissa politics, the 1980s gave the impression of interest consolidation and complete politicisation of the Orissa society. But the advent of BJP as a third force in the upland politics of Orissa cannot be explained through the accepted structure. Rather it has necessitated a fresh enquiry to reason out the space for BJP in the tribal domain of Orissa.

In the rest of the country, the rise of BJP in the 1990s is generally explained in terms of the 'Ayodhya Movement' with expressed resentment against the appeasement policy of the congress. The 'Hinduitva' wave is being perceived as an upper caste and middle class connivance against the Dalit and minorities' interests. But, this perception

defies the electoral expression. BJP has been able to corner a sizable section of the scheduled Tribe and scheduled caste vote base in Orissa.

The success of BJP in the Hill areas of Ores can not be attributed to the sole cause of religion, as Orissa has a history of communal harmony and absence of radicalism in terms of violent movements. Although, the stray incidents of killing of Graham Steins and Atul Ramdos give an impression of emerging communal hatred, the Orissa society in general is anti-communal and peaceful.

Therefore, the present situation needs a different explanation. Social scientists usually focus on impact of politics on ethnicity. The impact of ethnicity and nationalism on politics is less commonly treated, because most analysts adhere to an instrumentalist view of ethnicity and nationalism[5]. The changing notion of identity in a changed circumstance, in a way determines the fortune of the political parties with or without an identified cause. This speaks for investigation of grounds that give rise the formation of identity and consequently determines the electoral politics.

Objectives: -

The present study attempts to understand the upland politics in the light of identity assertion and pacification in a transitional society. Depending upon the developmental phases, different strands of identities came into the focus and affected the political discourse to their

convenience. The political parties very often get hold of the situation and pursue identity politics to bring a change in their electoral fortunes.

In the Hill areas, Orissa politics is marked by three distinct phases. Regional political parties like the Ganatantra Parishad and the Jharkhand party dominated the first phase (1951-1971). These parties put emphasis upon ethnic and primordial identities of the tribals and mobilised them against the Coastal population. As a result, the first phase witnessed absence of congress party in the western Orissa politics.

The national political parties like the congress (I) and the Janata Party dominated the second phase (1974-1990). The developmental efforts to a large extent dominated the primordial considerations and promoted assimilative identities to the advantage of congress (I) and Janata Party.

The third phase starting with the 1990 saw the emergence of Bhartiya Janata Party as a dominant force in the tribal areas. With the decline of Janata Dal and failure of developmental efforts, the primordial identities again came to the forefront and helped the cause of BJP.

Therefore, the present study analyses each phase with its identity-politics, linkage and has tried to answer the shifting fortunes of political parties in the tribal belt of Orissa. In this context, the rise of BJP in Orissa politics is investigated in the backdrop of reemergence of tribal assertion.

Review of Literature:-

Orissa politics in general and tribal factor in particular lacks sufficient literature. "There has been no serious empirical study and publication of a comprehensive nature on Orissan society and politics"[6]. As the post-independence period witnesses lack of large movements sufficient enough to attract national concern, the dearth of literature can be explained. However, this does not diminish the underlying potentialities of the socio-political discourse of the state. As the Orissan society is yet to be politicised as a whole, it has remained pregnant with a number of possible turmoils.

Although a few in number, there are some good works, which provide guidance for the subject under consideration.

Amal Ray in his article "*Sub-Regional Politics and Elections in Orissa*" gives a vivid account of the process of assimilation of the Coastal and Hill political parties. His endeavour is to understand the electoral dynamics in a tradition-transition framework. It helps in recognising the factors that helped the endeavour of coastal politics to venture into the upland domain.

R.N. Mishra in his book "*Regionalism and State Politics in India*" exposes the regional dimensions of tribal identities. He has been able to lucidly express the differences among the northern and southern tribals,

thereby giving the reason for limited appeal of tribal political parties in the North and the South.

In his book *"Party Politics and Electoral Choice in An Indian State"* S.N. Mishra has provided the electoral pattern of the state's elections till the year 1980 and has been able to high light the politics of loyalism and separatism that existed among the tribals of Orissa.

Aswini Kumar Tiwari in his book *"State Politics in India: A Case Study of Orissa 1961-71"* details the under-representation of the tribals in the councils of ministers of the decade. It speaks of nominal representation and peripheral treatment to the tribal cause.

Monoranjan Mohanty in his project report *"Politics of Underdevelopment: Orissa"* speaks of Orissa politics in terms of destitution, domination and disentitlement as viewed by the tribals. Not withstanding the party in power, the tribals in general have been impoverished and felt alienated from the existing administration. As a result, the scope for new political entities like the BJP, which has been seen as spotless, can be explained.

In the Iqbal Narain edited *"State Politics in India"* Manoranjan Mohanty and L.N. Mishra prefer the term *"inter-regional combination"* to political integration to highlight the underlying social distrust of the two areas. The article *"Orissa: Politics of Political Stagnation"* discount existence of any evidence of increasing political integration in the 1960s and emphasises the prevailing regionalism. To quote the authors, "In

Orissa situation we find 'partisanship' based on regionalism having higher salience than 'mutuality'."

J.K.Baral and J.K. Mohapatra in *"Political Culture of a Backward Indian State: Orissa"* give the instance of pressure-group politics of western leaders. The agitation against kendupatra (leaf of 'Kendu' tree) dealership shows the insensitiveness of the government and the dichotomy of interests of the Hill and coastal population.

S.N. Dwivedy in his book *"Politics of Regionalism in Orissa"* undermines the perceived regionalism and tribal reactions. Rather, he goes to a length to emphasise upon the developmental impacts and the slow assimilation of the tribals into the mainstream. To him the Cost- Hill divide is more mental than material.

Dr.Madhusudan Pati in his book *"West Orissa – A study in Ethics"* highlights the historical grievances of the people of Western Orissa and suggests ways of their accommodation.

Dr. Puspa Asthana in her book *"Party System in India: Development or Decay"* gives a comprehensive description of rise, growth and decay of different political parties with the necessary electoral dynamics. Although, it has not ventured into the socio-cultural angle of the political dynamics of the state, the book has been able to highlight the discourse of political parties, which provides scope for presumption of underlying social currents.

F.G.Bailey in his book *"Politics and Social Change: Orissa in 1959"* through case studies provides for the socio-political interaction. In a series of articles in the "Economic and Political Weekly" he has highlighted the antagonism of Coastal and Hill political discourses.

Bijaya Kumar Behera in his book *"Tribal Culture, Modernisation and Development"* tries to raise the issue of 'Hinduisation' and 'Christianisation' of tribal culture and has highlighted the different groups working in the Kandhamala district of Orissa.

Subrata Mitra in his article "Religion, Region and Identity: Sacred Beliefs and Secular Power in a Regional State Tradition of India" explains the encapsulating capacity of the regional Hinduism and the endurance of the Jagannatha cult which brings a sense of belongingness to the aboriginals.

N.K. Das in B.B. Goswami and Jayanta Sarkar edited *"Ethnicity, Politics and Political Systems in Tribal India"* sheds light on some aspects of tribal ethnicity in Western Orissa. To him, the ethnic identities of the tribals is experiencing the dual process of continuity and change and giving effort to the politics of modernisation and conservatism.

Biswajit Sen in M.C. Behera edited *"Tribal Religion: Change and Continuity"* analyses the impact of Hinduism and Christianity on the life style of the souras of the south and Southwest Orissa. He has also accepted religion as a means of reducing the gap between the tribals and the exploiters consisting of middlemen.

Thus the review of literature shows that the earlier studies concentrated mainly upon tribal-coastal dichotomy and the issue of conversion. An independent study of tribal politics is lacking in the field. The political perception of the tribals emerging out of changing socio-economic conditions in a way, gives the picture of the identities with which they associate themselves. Therefore, instead of comparing electoral performances of coast and Hill areas, limiting the performance of political parties only to the tribal belt will serve the purpose of explaining the gradual evolution of tribal politics. Electoral performance combined with socio-economic appraisal of the tribals will be helpful in focussing upon the socio-political gap which is crucial to the future political discourse of the state.

Theoretical Framework: -

This study is based upon the underlying argument that social identities guide electoral politics. The political parties mobilise the voters emphasising upon the difference in 'identities' and also through pursuance of commonality of different identities. As a result, both primordial and assimilative identities are of importance in electoral politics. With changing times, one or the other identity dominates the social perception and accordingly, the fortune of the political parties espousing the respective cause gets shifted.

Hypotheses: -

1. An ethnic group becomes a self-conscious community only when its leadership selectively uses ethnic symbols; such as language, religion, race or territory for political mobilization to attain specific goals, including political power and socio-economic advancement vis-à-vis competing actors.

2. Ethnic differentiations may be either sharpened or downplayed in tune with changing exigencies. One set of demands can replace another in response to socio-economic developments and accommodative politics.

3. Ethnic competition emerges when there is economic and political development and it can lead to identity pacification or assertion depending upon the degree of deprivation resulting form the effort of development. Therefore, the instrumentalist approach although thrives for assimilative endeavours, can lead to primordial assertions on its failure.

4. The driving force for 'identity' assertion may be real inequality in terms of perceived factor of importance like culture or politic-economic status, or imagined apprehension like future loss of advantages, or deliberate initiative on the parts of the leadership.

5. With the changing phase and nature of 'identity' politics, the fortunes of political parties change.

The Concept of Identity: -

"Identity is certainly not a clear and undisputed aspect of a personality but rather a claim, faced with counter-claim"[7]. It presupposes the dynamic nature of identity formation in response to available stimulus over a given period of time. But the primordialists consider identity based upon ethnicity as a natural element of peoples that is immutable or primordial[8]. As tribal identity is generally explained on the basis of ethnicity, the primordialists oppose the changing notion of identity. But, the instrumentalists try to explain identity within the context of changing socio-economic and political paradigm. Both the perspectives have some relevance when considered against wider theoretical framework of nature of man and organization.

For a primordialist any hereditary group with shared values, style of life, symbol of identity and consciousness of kind can be considered as an ethnic group[9]. But for instrumentalists like Urmila Phadnis ethnic group can be defined as " a historically formed aggregate of people having a real or imaginary association with a specified territory, a shared cluster of beliefs and values connoting its distinctiveness in relation to similar groups"[10]. Here "ethnicity is above all a flexible concept and processes leading to the formation of ethnic groups are fluid and not primordial in nature"[11].

According to Devas "Ethnicity is a sense of ethnic identity consisting of the 'subjective, symbolic or emblematic use' by 'a group of

people.... of any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from other group' "[12].

Paul R. Brass regards formation of an ethnic identity among groups, and the transformation of that identity the result of (1) actions taken by elites within the group to promote the changes and (2) favorable conditions which arise from the broader political and economic environments rather than from the cultural values of the ethnic groups in question[13]. He also implies that "the process of ethnic identity formation and its transformation is reversible".[14]

James Manor speaks of five 'ethnic' identities on the basis of religion, language, Adivasis/STs, Himalayan/remote N.E.areas, and Aryan/Dravidian divide. To him, Adivasis are a difficult category to define, but they can be identified with the absence of caste structure and Hindu religious practices.[15] "In so far as they fix on their 'tribal' identities they erode the solidarity of the regional linguistic group".[16]

Plurality of intentions and multiplicity of expressions in a complex Indian social structure, provides for a variety of ethnic criteria including race, caste, language, religion, territory and shared history to sharpen the distinct identities of ethnic groups in keeping with the trend of competitive politics. These features of identities are used in varying combinations by ethnic leaders to mobilise communities to compete with perceived, actual or artificially created rivals and to bargain for political power and access to socio-economic resources with enhanced status.

Therefore, development of ethnicity as 'ethnic' group stresses the importance of inequality in distribution of available resources, social benefits and opportunities between distinct groups as the source of antagonistic identities. A feeling of frustration or relative deprivation precipitates ethnicity. It involves the articulation of social, economic and political rights for the member groups or for the groups as a whole[17] . Paul R. Brass further points out that the 'ethnic' consciousness takes the form of political consciousness only when the political leaders mediate between the state and the ethnic group.

Political struggle based upon identities can be divided into three main categories: Systemic, Anti-systemic and Extra-systemic[18] . The first category, which does not challenge the existing power structure, includes demand for affirmative action, preferences and equitable treatment. Anti-systemic politics of the second category demands for greater autonomy and refutes the existing political system with an aim of restructuring the system. But, extra-systemic politics of the third category consists of secessionist demands and is irreconsible to the prevailing system. It thrives for independence.

"Ethnic demands are flexible in nature and one set of demands can replace another in response to socio-economic developments and the centre's response to pluralistic aspirations"[19]. Ethnic polarization is bound to intensify in the perceived notion of different groups if the state is seen as a partisan actor. The state should be in a position to explain the

differential treatment if any, in terms of acceptable and persuasive, logical arguments.

The Concept of 'Tribe' in the present study: -

The Oxford Encyclopaedia Dictionary of 1983 defines the word 'tribe' as a group of primitive or barbaric clans under some recognised chiefs. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of 1994speaks of 'tribe' as a racial group, especially in a primitive or a nomadic culture united by language, religion, customs etc. and living as a community under one or more chiefs. The Dictionary of Anthropology (1956) defines tribes "... a social group, usually with a definite area, dialect, cultural homogeneity and unifying social organization".

According to P.K. Bhowmick, an anthropologist, "a tribe ordinarily has a leader and may have a common ancestor or patron deity. The families or small communities making up tribes are linked through social, religious, family or blood."[20] This aspect of 'tribal' identity restricts its appeal to a limited sphere as blood relationship after certain extent of geographical area fails to appeal other tribes.

In the Indian context, the word 'tribe' has been defined in different ways. F.G. Bailey in his writing has emphasized the 'tribal society' as segmentary and the pre-dominating 'caste-society' as organic[21]. His endeavour was to conceptualise a bi-polar model with tribes and castes, at the two different poles. He deals with the problem of specifying the criteria for deciding at what point on the continuum of

tribe-caste, a particular society is to be placed. He states that the larger is the direct access to the land, the closer is the society to the tribal end of the continuum. Conversely, the larger is the proportion of people whose right to land is achieved through a dependent relationship nearer the society comes to the caste pole[22]. Therefore, as the tribes are not altogether alienated from the 'caste-society' it is not always easy to mobilise the tribals against the dominant order. To the contrary, the tribes consider themselves as superior to the 'untouchables' and demand better treatment from the 'caste-society'. That is why, G.S. Ghuriye in his book "The Scheduled Tribes"(1959) has ultimately accepted the tribes as 'backward' Hindus. This aspect of 'tribal' identity helps terms of negotiation between the tribals and the upper caste Hindus at one hand, and also militates against consolidation of 'Dalit' identity instead of a great degree of similarity of purpose and interests.

Methodology: -

The present study is basically a historical and analytical one. Both primary and secondary informations are used for this purpose. As there is a dearth of appropriate literature specifying the tribal angle of 'Orissa politics' and the problem under scrutiny is of recent phenomena, the primary sources constitute an important part of the study. But, the secondary sources, no doubt, provide for the bulk of historical construction of the 'tribal identity' as the most crucial factor of the present analysis.

Government documents seminars and oral testimonies constitute the primary source; the books, periodicals, newspaper articles and thesis constitute the secondary source.

A Field trip to the tribal district of Mayurbhanj gave the necessary feel of impulse underlying the tribal perception of state politics.

Organisation of the Study: -

In pursuance of the basic research questions mentioned earlier, data generated by the present work have been proposed to be presented under the following scheme of chapterisation.

Chapter I: The introductory chapter discusses the research problem and the objectives of the study with the espousal of the theoretical framework. The literature review tries to pinpoint the problem. It also discusses the methodology suitable for the study.

Chapter II: Formation of 'tribal' identities in terms of tradition, race and region is discussed vis-a-vis the growth of regional political parties in the Hill areas. The primordial aspect of electoral politics tries to explain the fortunes of the political parties in Orissa.

Chapter III: It discusses the impact of development on the notion of identity that leads to a changed political situation and affects the fate of the political parties of the period. With the formation of assimilative

identity[23], the changing fortune of the national political parties like congress (I) and Janata Dal is being highlighted.

Chapter IV: It discusses the shortcomings of the instrumental approach in explaining the re-emergence of primordial perceptions with an emphasis upon politic-economic negativism. It sees the current turmoil in the Hill areas of Orissa through the window of deprivation and tries to explain the primordial assertion of identity in favour of BJP.

Conclusion: It sums up the discourse of tribal politics in Orissa and explains the success of BJP as a circumstantial outcome rather than a conscious instrumental effort on the part of the party.

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23. *Assimilative identity* indicates the dilution of tradition and primordial identities in the face of increased developmental parameters like education, industrial activities, job, opportunities and population profile etc. Simultaneously, it speaks for new identities in terms of educated/non-educated, employed/non-employed, forward/backward, modern/conservative and exploiter/exploited etc.

CHAPTER – II

Primordial Identities and Regional Political Parties

in Orissa : The Early Phase

Introduction: -

Orissa is a maritime state on the East Coast of India. It has an area

of about 1,55,707,sq.km. according to the census of India, 1991. It is

bounded by West Bengal in the northeast, Jharakhand in the north,

Chhattisgarh in the west, Andhra Pradesh in the South and the Bay of

Bengal in the east. It obtained statehood after its separation from Bihar

and came into existence on 1st April 1936.

"The territory of the state can be geographically divided into four

distinct zones having specific character of their own. They are the coastal

plains, the Eastern Ghats, the Central Table Land and Northern Plateau"[1].

The hilly areas in the north and northwest and the central and western

plateaus constitute the mineral belt of the state. They may be regarded as

parts of Vindhya ranges of the Gondwana verity and cover major portions

of the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundergarh,

Sambalpur,Kalahandi and Bolangir. Most of the tribal population of the

state lives in this region[2]. Koraput and Dhenkanal districts as a part of

Eastern Ghat range also bear a substantial part of tribal population.

Spacial Distribution of Tribes: -

In India, Orissa has the largest tribal population after

Chhattisgarh. Leaving aside the North Eastern States the proportion of

tribal population is the highest in Orissa. "The social, political and

geographical situation of the tribal people in North Eastern states are very distinct. But Orissa's Tribal situation is comparable with that of central Indian regions"[3].The tribal population (6.07 millions) constitutes 22.2 percent of the total state population (1991 census).

The scheduled areas constitute one third of the total area of the state and comprise underdeveloped, inaccessible hilly and mountains terrain in the districts of (i) Koraput excluding Kashipur Tahasil, (ii) Mayurbhanj, (iii) Sundergarh, (iv) the uplands of the district of Ganjam excluding a small portion of the Soroda Taluk and (v) Baliguda sub-division of Phulbani district excluding Chakapad block[4].The tribals account for 56.85 percent of the total population of the scheduled area which covers 56,553 square kilometers[5].

The distribution of tribal population in Orissa is uneven. Three districts in Orissa are taken to be tribal concentrated zones having more than 50 percent of its population being tribal. These three districts are Mayurbhanj, Koraput and Sundergarh. But, after the re-organisation of the old districts and creation of 17 new districts out of previous 13, in 1991, four new districts have acquired a tribal population of more that 50 percent. They are Rayagada, Malkangiri, Kandhamal and Nabarangpur districts. The six coastal districts have only a small percentage of tribal people living mainly in the areas adjacent to the inland forest region. Balasore with 10.57 percent, Bhadrakh with 1.69 percent, Kendrapara with 0.4 percent Puri with 0.27 percent, Jagatsinghpur with 0.61 percent

and Ganjam with 2.93 percent (1992-93 District statistical year books). Barring the six coastal districts and district of Khurda which was carved out of the old coastal district of Puri and the Cuttack district all the remaining districts are inhabited by sizable proportions of tribal population. Extending from northern Balasore bordering West Bengal , the tribal populations live covering the Eastern Ghat ranges bordering Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh right down to the Malkanagiri in the south. District wise distribution of the tribal population is given in the Appendix –1.

Tribal Communities: -

"There were 62 tribal communities (including 13 primitive tribal groups) in the state mostly confined in the Tribal sub-plan (TSP) area"[6].There may be a principal tribe inhabiting a particular area but in reality every district and every tribal block has more than one tribe within it. According to one survey more than one community practically live in every village[7]. Each tribe has its own language[8].

The Santhal, Kolha, Munda, Bhuyan and oraon are the major tribes of the districts of Sundergarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj. All these tribes are Central Indian Tribes which are sometimes commonly refereed to as Kols and speak a dialect of the Mundari group of language and culture and claim to have migrated from Chota Nagpur, Singhbhum and their neighbouring places in Bihar, thus claiming a regional identity in matters of their origin, mythology, culture and tradition".[9] The other

tribes found in the north-east belt are Bhumija, Bhatundi, Bhuiya,Ho, Gond, Sounti and Khond.

The major tribes of the southern Orissa coming under the tribal region are Bhottada, Bhumla,Gadaba, Gond,Khond,Saros, Parojas and Koyas. "The tribes which are seen in this part of the state are either the original settlers or the tribes of the Dravidian origin and have little affiliation to the tribes of northern Orissa. They have their own distinctive tradition, mythology and culture and are influenced by the Dravidian Tribes"[10].The khonds numbering 9,89,342 are the dominant tribes of the region. They live mostly in the districts of Koraput , Kalahandi and Phulbani In fact , 90% of the khonds of India live in Orissa and they form 16.72% of Orissa tribal population"[11]. kui is the language of the khondas .

The large number of tribes spread over a land stretching from north to south with particular as well as regional affiliations explains the absence of any holistic and radical tribal movement in the tribal history of Orissa.

Hill and Coast Divide: -

Regional parties often develop as the institutional framework for redressing the regional grievances and imbalance in the particular society[12]. This has been largely true of Orissa where it were the geographical and historical differences that greatly contributed to the long and deep-rooted conflicts between the two broad region – the coastal region and the Hill region of the state. As prior to 1948, the state was not

under one administration and its two broad regions were placed under two different administrative systems. In terms of political evolution, one part stands in marked contrast to the other. This has had an important effect on the growth of distinctive sub-regional political personalities[13].

To a certain extent princely Orissa and tribal Orissa overlap each other. Prior to the merger of the native states there was a sprinkling of tribal population in the districts of Koraput, Ganjam, Sambalpur and Balasore. In the Government of India Act 1935, tribal Koraput was kept as excluded area and it was under the direct control of the Governor. A portion of Sambalpur was also treated as excluded area. The tribal inhabited areas of Ganjam were known as Agency areas with the addition of native states, the tribal area or the Hill region in the state was increased.

While the Hill areas under the native rulers were more or less backward and ill administered, the coastal areas underwent the process of development under the British administration. It became apparently the prosperous part of Orissa enjoying the benefits of a bureaucratic administration. It not only developed economically but socially and politically at a faster rate than the former princely states[14]. In the absence of a concrete and time-bound regional policy, the disparity has persisted over the years.

The contrast between the Cuttack area and western Orissa in terms of political evolution, non-political development, demographic

characteristics, and intensity of regional demands is then quite marked[15]. This accentuated the deep-seated belief of the latter that they had long been exploited by the coastal people.

Both the British administrators and the princely rulers discouraged inter-regional movement and communication between the to regions for their own interests. In spite of this, some coastal people during the pre-independence period managed to enter princely states and settle there. They in a short period of time captured the economic and administrative life of the states. This created suspicion in the minds of the people of the princely states. There is also another reason why this suspicion took the form of hostility.

The princely rulers before independence, mostly preferred to recruit outsiders for their administrative services, as the subject people were not able to qualify for the services[16]. These outsiders in most cases were either from coastal districts or non-oriyas. The rulers quite safely used to rely upon them, for these outsiders were, in general, very disciplined and loyal to the Rajas. However, these Rajas' men were very rude to the local people and therefore, could expect nothing from the locals but their aversion and wrath. The people of the states thus began to hate them as exploiters. In fact, all exploiters hailing from the coastal areas were nicknamed as 'Katakis' with all the contempt and venom attached to the word[17]. The term 'Katki' which strictly speaking means as

man from Cuttack district was applied indiscriminately to any man from any part of the coastal Orissa.

The Coast-Hill dichotomy has remained the distinct hallmark of Orissa politics. As the coastal politics has always been guided by the national trend, only the tribal politics of the state presents true developmental reflections of the indigenous society. With its longer incubation period of assimilation and also of alienation, the tribal politics provides for differential explanation of substantial and sentimental causal factors. Therefore, the recent developments taking place in the state political scenario can be well explained by tracing the evolution of the Upland politics with the under-lying social dynamics.

What distinguishes the tribal problem from the overall polity is the tradition and transition interplay. As the rest of India came closer to the administration under the British rule and got politicised, the tribal-India remained comparatively isolated and uninitiated. As a result, the latter forays of tribal regions into post-independence politics met with the ardent task of searching for an effective communication channel and enabled leadership to bargain for their interests in terms of the dominant language.

Tribal Representation in Orissa: -

The tribal representations in Orissa legislature since 1952 has remained constant upto 1967 around 28 seats and since 1967 there are 34 seats reserved for scheduled Tribe candidates. In the first three elections

held in 1952, 1957 and 1961, Balasore, Cuttack and Puri districts had no tribal representation .Two more districts, Bolangir and Dhenkanal lost tribal representation since 1967. Thus eight districts out of the total thirteen districts had got tribal representation prior the Year 1991. But, with the creation of 17 new districts in 1991, the number of districts with tribal representation in the Orissa legislature has gone up to eleven. (District-wise distribution of SC/ST seats: Appendix -II).

Out of the eleven districts with tribal representation, eight districts are of predominantly tribal population and constitute the 'core group' of the tribal constituencies with more than 50% tribal seats. The other three districts are of mixed nature with more representation of the non-tribals.

Keonjhar with four out of the total six seats, Kandhamal with two out of three, Sundergarh with five out of seven, Nabarangapur with three out of four, Koraput with two out of four, Rayagada with four out of four, Mayurbhanj with five out of five and Malkangiri with one ST seat out of the total two seats of the district, constitute the core tribal districts. Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Gajapati districts with 1/3, 1/3 and 1/4 tribal seats respectively, constitute the mixed tribal districts.

Tradition of loyalism and Ganatantra Parishad: -

The initial phase of tribal politics in Orissa was primarily based upon traditional and ethnic considerations. The tradition of loyalism to the princely rulers provided the support base for the 'Ganatantra Parishad', while the politics based upon tribal ethnicity and exclusiveness

guided the separatist politics of the 'Jharkhand Party'. Although both the political parties represented the tribal area and people, they worked at cross-purposes to each other and failed to dominate the Orissa political discourse for long.

In the year 1948, under the leadership of two powerful ex-rulers R.N. Singh Deo of Bolangir (Patna) and P.K. Deo of Kalahandi the "Kosala Utkala Parja Parishad" took birth. After two years it was renamed as the "Ganatantra Parishad". It was a party that emerged partly out of the regionalist feelings among the people and partly out of the anti-congress attitude of the feudal sections of the society in Western Ores[18]. In giving berth to a few insignificant ex-rulers of the coastal region in the ministries and other important posts to them, the congress government incurred the enmity and opposition of the ex-rulers of western Orissa who felt neglected[19]. Feudal loyalism and anti-congressism were the two most vital weapons of the Ganatantra Parishad in the electoral politics of Orissa.

After the merger of the princely states with Orissa, sudden transformation of the western areas from the feudal grip to democratic set-up created a jolt in the administrative machinery. There was considerable tension as men found themselves dealing with new administrative posts, with a sense of forced imposition of the internal bureaucratic rules of the provincial administration upon these merged areas. Both the structures of authority and the levels of participation were

new to the people and their elites. That is how there developed enough discontent and distrust. For comparatively simple people of these areas the administrator was identified with the congress party and thus for them the congress assumed the image of an unwanted tyrant[20]. The congress party became quite unpopular with the people of the Western Orissa. When the exiting coastal parties were not sufficiently responsive to the rise of local discontents, state party systems became hospitable to the emergence of new local parties[21]. This necessitated the emergence of 'Ganatantra Parishad' as a local response to the alien coastal political parties. Along with the prevailing anti-congressism, the 'Ganatantra Parishad had in-built advantage in the form of tradition and nativity.

In all feudatory states there was the full ritual paraphernalia of kingship. 'The Raja, while not precisely the religious head of the state, was the manager of its temples, and was responsible for financing and organizing the great festivals that take place every year"[22].Certain customs which were being observed even after establishment of democratic polity in the post-independence period by some of the former ruling chiefs of erstwhile native states of Orissa, clearly indicate that these rulers who are now khatrias had their origin in the tribes[23]. As for example, the ruling chief of Kalahandi used to sit on the lap of a khond woman that constituted a part of the rites celebrating his ascendancy to the guddee[24].

Under the system prevalent then, a high sense of cordiality prevailed in the relationship between the tribes and the ruling families. In the Western Orisssa, a large number of Zamindaris were held by the tribal chiefs belonging to Gond, Binjhal and Khond tribes and as such they were very close to the rulers[25].

Although, people in the princely states were reeling under poverty and atrocities, they had a very high opinion about their kings. "A king-even a bad one-belongs to his people, and for the greater part of the population in the ex-state areas the king alone symbolized their existence as a political unit and indeed as a religious unit[26]. It is also to be remembered that the exactions and impositions of the princely states were sanctioned by tradition and they would not appear as outrageous to the state subjects as they did to the democratically minded agitators who came from outside.

All these factors stood solidly behind the initial success of the 'Ganatantra Parishad' in the 1950s and 1960s. Some of its leaders were able organizers and played the elements of nativity and loyalism to the full tune in furthering the advantages in terms of political gains and electoral success. They tried to radicalize the Hill and Coast differentiation and mobilised the voters in the name of 'anti-kataki'[27] sentiments.

The electoral fortune of the 'Ganatantra Parishad' provided for oppositional politics in Orissa. In the 1952 Assembly electrion, it

captured 29 out of 50 seats allotted to the districts of Koraput, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Sundergarh and Keonjhar. Except the districts of Koraput and Sambalpur all the districts mentioned above were the ex-states ruled by the native rulers. Therefore, it is apparent that the influence of the 'Parishad' was mainly confirmed to the former princely areas of Western Orissa.

By 1957, the 'Parishad' had grown very powerful. Not only it consolidated its position in Western Orissa, its original fort, but also it made some inroads into the coastal Orissa (Table-1). Of course a degree of deparochialisation had taken place over the years among the princely elite in the Western region. The formation of Ganatantra Parishad with former congress minister from Ganjam, Godavarish Mishra, as its leader was the first move away from princely regionalism. The sharing of power with the congress in 1959-61 and the merger of the GP with Swatantra Party in late 1961 were other important steps in that direction"[28].With the merger of the 'Ganatantra Parishad' in the conservative but a national political party like 'Swatantra' ended the exclusiveness of GP as a regional political party.

Table-1

VOTES POLLED IN EACH DISTRICT IN THE 1957 ELECTIONS TO THE ORISSA LEGISATIVE ASSEMBLY BY THE GANATANTRA PARISHAD AND THE CONGRESS PARTY

District	Congress Votes	G.P.Votes
Cuttack	441,434	100,664
Puri	216,363	41,108
Balasore	203,487	41,406
Ganjam	199,659	41,219
Koraput	99,939	84,019
Mayurbhanj	47,293	49,540
Dhenkanal	60,337	122,298
Kalahandi	77,827	172,612
Keonjhar	37,907	61,705
Phulbani	21,660	46,100
Sundergarh	53,575	107,752
Sambalpur	102,965	148,558
Total	**1,628,180**	**1,225,577**

Source: Statistical outline of Orissa 1957, in F.G Bailey (Political & Social change) p.198.

The Swatantra party played an important role in Orissa politics as an opposition party and also as a partner in the coalition governments (with Jana Congress and later with Utkal Congress and Jharakhand). Its success as the main opposition party in Orissa had been true till 1977, till it become a consistent unit of the Pragati Party in 1974. (Table–2 performance of GP / Swatantra party in state legislative assembly elections).

Table – 2

PERFORMANCE OF GANATANTRA PARISHAD AND SWATANTRA PARTY IN STATE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS.

Year	Total Seats	Number of seats contested	Seats Gained	% of Votes
1952	140	58	31	22.2
1957	140	109	51	28.7
1961	140	121	37	22.3
1967	140	100	49	22.58
1971	140	--	36	--
1974	147	56	21	11.9

Source: The Report of General Elections in puspa tsthana's Party System in India Development and Decay" p. 141

In order to play an effective role in the state politics, it was essential for the Ganatantra Parishad and later on for swatanta to shed their image as a party of Western Orissa to gain acceptance among the people of the rest of Orissa. They advocated democratic principles and demanded the end of privileges. In the process, they lost their identity politics and the state headed for a bi-party system with two national political parties trying to accommodate these splinter groups.

Ethnic Identity and Jharkhand Party: -

The significance of the Jharkhand party in the politics of Bihar as well as in Oirssa can be hardly overlooked as it throws much light on politics.[29] After the creation of the Jharkhand state in the year 2000 by carving out 18 districts from Bihar, the party, no doubt has lost its radicalism. Of course, Jharkhand party as a political force only played a marginal role in Orissa politics.

As a party representing the tribals of Bihar and the northern Orissa, the Jharkhand party had little appeal in Western and Southern Orissa. At no stage, the movement had aimed at keeping all the existing tribes of Orissa together. It remained primarily a party of the north aiming at amelioration of the grievances of the tribes through the formation of the Jharkhand State. Although a party espousing the cause of tribals, it remained at a distance from the Ganatantra Parishad and worked at cross-purposes to the princely party. In the opinion of the Jharkhand party "the parishad is staunchly Oriya nationalist, and it has been a constant opponent of the Jharkhand"[30].

The Jharkhand movement which latter on gave rise to the the 'Jharkhand party' started with the formation of 'Chotanagapur Unnati Samaj' in 1928 by a few educated tribal Christians for the uplift of the tribals. The samaj was renamed as the 'Adibasi sabha' in 1938 and it was decided that the sabha would serve as the only political party to represent tribal interests. In 1951, the 'Adibassi sabha' took the name of 'Jharkhand

party' and was organised as a full-fledged political party under the leadership of Jaipal Singh. The factors which guided the separatist politics of the Jharkhand party may be summed up as the growing discontent among the tribal people on account of alienation of land, exploitation by money-lenders, a strong antipathy towards non-tribals and political developments in the wider setting of the country[31]. In the 1938 meeting of the 'Adivasi Sabha' it was stated that the physical type, mental make up, culture, language and the values of the Adivasis (tribals) were distinct from the non-tribals[32]. It has often been highlighted that the non-tribals who settled down on the Hills have been agencies of ruthless exploitation and have drained the life and blood of the tribals. Large-scale alienation of tribal land is another factor that has spread discontent among the tribals. Instead of existence of laws to protect tribal lands, "local lawyers and the engineers of interested parties have combined to discover loopholes in these laws so as to destroy their protective wings"[33]. The role of Jharkand party in Orissa politics was of peripheral nature. Its influence was limited to the northern tribal areas. The merger of the district of Mayurbhanj with the state of Orissa caused a lot of tribal unrest and provided a fertile ground for the Jharkand party to espouse its "identity" politics.

The Jharkhand party propagated the tribal exclusiveness and tried to build up 'tribal- identity' in opposition to the non-tribals or 'Dikus'. Non-tribal castes like Milkmen, Oilmen and Moneylenders who came

from outside and settled in the Hill areas, were identified as oppressors and commonly denounced as Dikus. The Dikus have been described as parasites whose exploits could make "St. Augustine stand and gasp"[34].The party resented against the forest laws, Excise Duties and other government control over the tribals and demanded tribal self-rule in the form of a separate 'Jharkhand' state. While the Jharkhand movement was on a high mark in Orissa, the party won 5 seats each in 1957 and 1961 Assembly elections. Both in 1952 and in 1967, the party had drawn a blank. Again, in 1971 and 1974 Assembly elections, it secured four seats each. Then it drew a blank. The election results suggest the impotency of the Jharkhand party in the political discourse of Orissa. Therefore, in 1963, the Jharkhand party merged with the congress that lasted for a brief period. Having seen the formation of states like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Nagaland with demands from within the congress, the Jharkhand leaders thought of fighting from within "If we also follow the course taken by the leaders in those states and be a little militant we shall also achieve our goal[35]. But, soon they realised their mistake and came out of Congress.

Thus, the political manifestation of the search for a separate identity of the santhals could not become vibrant and effective. Although, it became completely successful in Bihar, its ability to dent the Orissa politics has been quite reduced. Factionalism and differences of opinion have given the Jharkhand party in Orissa, a complete setback.

The "All India Jharkhand Party " in Orissa splited into two distinct groups in the 1970s. The groups led by Bagun Samari weilded influence in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts. The groups led by N.E. Horo had marginal influence only in Sundergarh district. Its hold in Mayurbhanj district was nominal. The Horo group in Orissa got further divided, on the eve of the 1977 Assembly elections. As a result, with the progress of assimilative endeavours of the congress party, the Jharkhand movement came to a dead-end.

Conclusion:-

To sum up the politics of tribal extensiveness of the Jharkhand Party and the 'anti-kataki' movement of the Ganatantra Parishad provided initial success to both the regional parties. Till the 1970s, they dominated the electoral scene of Western and Northern Orissa politics. But with increased emphasis upon development and power politics the solidarity among the regional leadership gave way to factionalism, opportunism and defections. Some leaders joined the Congress (I) and worked for assimilation of tribals with the mainstream. Similarly, the formation of Janata Party as a coalition of coastal and western interest groups reduced the perceived identity antagonism and helped assimilation.

With the growth of assimilator identities the primordial consideration get sidelined and so also the fortune of the political parties based upon these considerations.

CHAPTER – III

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Development, Assimilative Identity and Party Politics:

The Congress and Janata Dal

Introduction: -

With the decline of the regional political parties and rise of developmental politics, the course of upland politics in Orissa took a new turn. The increased emphasis upon assimilation and co-option provided for emergence of a bi-polar politics in the form of Congress (I) and Janata Party.

The 1970s saw the Orissa politics heading for a bi-party system. The state Assembly elections in the year 1977 established beyond doubts the advent of a two-party competitive system. While the Anti-Congress political parties merged into a single political party named "Janata Party" and sealed; in effect, the fate of regional politics, the Congress Party on the other hand, became able to end its isolation in the Hill areas by putting a better performance. The extension of the regional political parties of the Hill areas to the overall state politics by forging bonds with the coastal elements through the Janata Party, and the acceptance of the congress party by the Hill voters negating the anti-coastal sentiments cannot be explained on the basis of "primordial" identity of the initial stage. The two-way process of integration of the Hill and Coastal politics to some extent can be explained on the basis of the instrumentalist approach that advocates for an emerging 'assimilative' identity.

Five-Year Plans and Tribal Development: -

After independence, the governments at the center as well as at the state level tried hard to focus upon the backward areas of the country and utilized the developmental projects in eradicating the regional imbalances. By special measures like reservation policy and promulgation of protective laws, they tried to drive out the apprehension of the marginalised sections of the society.

The mandate to initiate measures for the welfare and development of tribal areas and scheduled Tribes (ST) flows from the constitution of India. These constitutional provisions are not isolated directives but a well-knit cohesive and comprehensive arrangement aimed at achieving substantial results. They bear testimony to the vision and statesmanship of the founding fathers to correct the injustice done over the centuries to a section of the society and to arrest their further exploitation.

India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru put forth the policy of 'Pancha Sheel' towards efforts of tribals' integration to the mainstream.[1] It emphasises that people should develop along the lines of their own genius and one should avoid imposing anything on them. (1) One should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture. (2) Tribals' rights in land and forest should be respected. (3) One should try to train and build up team of their people to do the work of administration and development. (4) One should not overadminister these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. One should

rather work through and not in rivalry to their own social and cultural institutions. (5) One should judge results not by statistics or the amount of money spent, but by the quality of human character that is evolved.

The public sector outlay in the First five-year plan was Rs.96crore; Rs.39crore was for backward classes and nearly Rs.25crore for the Scheduled Tribes. On the allocation of this fund, the Dhebar commission observed, "the claim that the effort made was anything in the nature of an attack on the problem would be wrong. The effort has to be considered in the light of the possibilities then before the country... the limitations of the institutional arrangements... and the burden that such a set-up could carry... This was a beginning which can justifiably regarded as fairly good and symbolic of what was to come." [2]

In the second Five-year plan with allocation of Rs.43crores for STs, an important landmark was the opening of 43 special multipurpose Tribal Blocks (SMPTB), latter called Tribal Development Blocks (TDB). Each was planned for about 25,000 people as against 65,000 in a normal Block. An amount of Rs.15lakh per SMPTB was contributed by the central government in addition to Rs.12lakh for a 'normal' Block. The committee on SMPTB studied the working of these Blocks and found that they were proving useful. In the Third Five-Year plan (1961), the public sector out lay was Rs.8600crore, with Rs.51crore for STs. One of its principal objectives was "to establish progressively greater equality of

opportunity and to bring about reduction in disparities in income and wealth and a more even distribution of economic power."

There were many programmes for the development of triblas in the Fourth Five-Year Plan. The programmes can be broadly categorised as: (i) Centrally sponsored schemes: Tribal Development Blocks, cooperation, construction of Girls' hostels, post-matric scholarships, coaching and pre-examination training schemes and research; (ii) State plan schemes: Education including pre-matric scholarships, stipends, boarding grants, hostels, ashram schools and supply of free books; (iii) Economic Development: Subsidy for agricultural implements, seeds, fertilizers, etc; cottage industries, rehabilitation, communications, animal husbandry, horticulture, pisciculture, cooperation, minor irrigation, soil conservation; (iv) Health, housing and others: Housing, drinking water supply, medical and public health, social and cultural activities, aid to voluntary agencies, legal aid and miscellaneous.

During the Fifth plan the concept of Tribal sub-plan (TSP) was implemented. The essential features of TSP are (I) It accepts the uniqueness of individual tribal communities and formulate policies, programmes and schemes to suit each individual situation; (ii) ensures accountability, non-divertability and utilization; (iii) highlight priority to protective measures for elimination of exploitation of tribal people; (iv) restructuring of the local needs and aspirations. (v) Supplementation of state efforts substantially by the Union government.

In the sixth plan, a "Modified Area Development Approach (MADA)" was devised for pockets of tribal concentration with population of 10,000 at least half of them being ST. It was relaxed to 5,000 in the seventh plan.

All these policies, plans and programs at the national level, to a great extent helped to reduce the isolation of tribal. With the integration of the tribal areas to the mainstream, the national leaders could get recognisation among the tribes along side the local leaders. The expansion of infrastructure with new avenues of job opportunities, also contributed to the growth of a new generation of tribal who are modern in outlook and eager to compete in a democratic system. The developmental paradigm also invited outsiders to the tribal regions and in the process the tribal-nontribal interaction increased to the extent of creation of a new 'assimilative' identity.

Tribal Development and Orissa: -

As a backward state on a whole and due to the presence of significant section of tribals in particular, Orissa always drew central attention and got a mention in every central scheme for developmental drive of the tribals. Therefore the five-year plans to a great extent helped Orissa to carry on developmental activities in the Hill areas.

The post-independent period showed a positive growth during 1966 to 1989 in all the variables of the process of industrialization. The number of factories and number of employees grew at a same rate

(around 3 percent per year), whereas fixed capital and value added witnessed a higher growth at an annual average growth rate of 8.61 percent and 19.22 percent respectively[3].

As western Orissa possesses a large chunk of the mineral and water sources of the state, the developmental activities in this part of the state took place in the form of major industries, dams and mines. Although there was initial protest from the natives, the developmental paradigm overwhelmed all oppositions. Instead of lack of communication facilities and presence of dense forest covers, there came up the Hirakud Dam, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO), Hindustan Aeronatics Limited (HAL), Ordanance Factory, Upper Indraviti Multi-purpose Project, Upper Kolab Project (UKP) Rengali Multi-purpose Project, Talcher Thermal Power Station (TTPS), IB Valley Thermal Power Project and various mining projects.[4]

The industrialisation process in Orissa put the Hill areas at par with the Coastal region in terms of investment and capital mobilisation. The three Hill districts Koraput, Sambalpur and Sundergarh along with the two Coastal districts of Puri and Cuttack are the five major districts contributing 66 percent of total number of factories, 87percent of employment, 82 percent of fixed capital and 93 percent of the value-added in the manufacturing sector[5].

Along with industrialisation, the growth of transport, communication and education helped the people of the Hill area to

broaden their outlook. The establishment of schools and colleges by the government and the spread of services by the missionaries and other social service organizations have helped the tribals to understand the nuances of development and in the process they are learning to assert themselves.

With increasing democratization of institutions and political socialisation of individuals, day by day, people are learning the process of interest-articulation through the medium of electoral politics. As a result parochial considerations and tradition are giving way to the calculation of political gains. This explains the weakening of traditional bonds and acceptance of utility as a test for popularity.

Assimilative Identity and The Congress Party: -

The Congress party in Orissa found itself in a spot over the issue of garnering support base in the tribal districts after the merger of the princely states to Orissa in 1949. As its leadership constituted mostly of high castes and educated people of the coastal urban areas, it was considered as alien to the people of western upland[6]. The leaders of the Orissa Congress party, and of other national parties are virtually all 'Katakis' and they started with this handicap when they try to win popularity in the Hill areas[7]. As the ex-rulers depended on the outsiders for administrative jobs, this part of Orissa lacked a large indigenous professional middle class in contrast to the Coastal region[8]. It had two effects. Firstly, there was found no significant mobilization of the people

into politics. Because, the task of articulating the aspirations of the people and organising them at the political level is generally undertaken by the middle classes[9]. Secondly, it created scarcity of organisers and leaders from the middle classes for the national political parties to establish their organisational branches[10].

Soon after independence, representative institutions were established in all parts of the state. But, these institutions were alien to the people of the feudatory states, and were responsible for exposing the incoherence between the polity and society that existed in those days[11]. This encouraged resentment among the Upland people and the emergence of the 'Ganatantra Parishad' offered a new challenge to the congress. Congress had to fight the Ganatantra Parishad not only in terms of electoral politics, but also in terms of narrowing down the perceived differences of Hill and Coast division. It was to widen its base in western part of the province by curbing regionalism through creation of a conducive atmosphere for emerging pluralism. In short, Orissa with a combination of two different types of sub-structures, feelings of regionalism, deep rooted feudal values and antiquated model of social organisations made the Congress's task much more arduous and challengeble[12]. Similarly, in the extreme north, the affiliation of tribals to the Jharkhand party remained a headache for the congress. The demand for a separate state of Jharkhand amounting to strong antagonism for the

rest of Orissa, in the post-merger scenario, also diminished the prospect of congress in terms of organisational and electoral advancement.

While the northern and western tribal areas see Congress as a party of Coastal interest, owing to their differential experience of administration and politicisation, the districts of sambalpur, Koraput and Phulbani refuted the water-tight compartmentalisation of Orissa politics into the Hill and Coastal denomination.' These areas constituted the 'marginal' tribal districts in terms of the general complex of characteristics which distinguish the Hill from the coastal division of Orissa[13].Although geographically all are upland, these districts differed from the rest of the tribal areas in terms of their experience of bureaucratic administration rather than feudal rule. Therefore, Sambalpur, Phulbani and Koraput districts provided the necessary foothold for the congress to venture into the tribal politics. Although, these districts were in more proximity to the upland politics than the coastal one and had their share of hatred for the Katakis, there was a substantial section of Coastal administrative class to influence the public opinion in favour of the congress. As a result, in the elections to the Legislative Assembly in 1952 and in 1957, congress party could mark its presence in the Hill politics against the rising wave of the Ganatantra Parishad.

In later years, Congress party took different steps to strengthen its presence in the extra-Coastal areas of the state. It became successful in the skilful use of developmental funds making the way for enlargement of

mercenary following which resulted in electoral fortune. Secondly, it could successfully exploite the long-standing feudatory conflicts to its advantage. With huge investments and coming up of heavy industries in the tribal areas like Rourkela, Sunabeda, Belpahad, Hirakud, Angul, Talcher and Joda etc, allied industries and services grew at a rapid rate to meet the requirements of industry and population. It created scope for the Coastal educated persons to settle in the Hill areas. Also, a small section of traditional society got the taste of development and longed for transition. By 1961, the traditional balance between the core and mercenary following had been disturbed in Western Orissa[14]. Thus, the effect of the developmental efforts was the rise of a mercenary following whose support for a particular political party in elections would depend upon the party's ability to realise patronage demands. Instead of loyalism based upon tradition, tribe, religion and region, the mercenary population extended its support to different political parties on the basis of their policies and programmes conducive to the voters' interests. This helped Congress to mobilise support against the regional outfits based upon primordial considerations.

A perusal of the election manifestos of the congress party over a period of time clearly shows its reliance upon investment, industrialisation and preferential treatment to the backward areas as the prime means of enlargement of vote-base and growth in electoral fortune[15]. It explains the interest shown by a section of traditional tribal

leadership who repose faith in developmental paradigm and instrumentalist approach of the Congress party. The merger of Jhakhand party with Congress in 1963 for a brief period and the resolve of the leadership to pursue their course through the Congress shows the extent of acceptability of Congress's policies and programmes by the ethnic leadership.

Another factor that helped the Congress to increase its acceptability among the tribals of western and northern Orissa was the complexity of electoral politics. In the absence of a clear majority after the 1957 elections to the Legislative Assembly, Congress took the help of Jharkhand party's five elected members to rtetain its majority. This supports of the Jharkhand party antagonised the Ganatantra Parishad and prevented a tribal solidarity. Again, to give stability to the government in 1959, Congress made a partnership with its archrival the Ganatantra Parishad and the government functioned till 1961. This co-alition in a way reduced the 'un-touchability-tag' of the Congress in the up- land politics.

Orissa politics is full of cases of floor-crossing[16] and coalitions. Due to low level of political consciousness and lack of political socialisation of people at large, the leadership of every party took the core support group for granted. Therefore, not withstanding the popular sentiments, they took steps to further their immediate interests. This process of decision taking at the top without utilization of the feed-back[17]

prevented democratisation at the grass-root level and alienated people from the party. As a result, the support base of the regional parties and ethnic based parties started to ruin. People could not differentiate their exclusiveness from others, when they saw their leaders in the national political parties representing Coastal interests.

Thus, the growth of Congress party in the tribal region of Orissa can be attributed to the change that came with the developmental paradigm. Spread of education, dilutions of tradition and identification with interest groups have brought in a number of identities to the integrating tribals. The work of Christian missionaries and Hindus religious groups has also augmented the process of integration. With considerations on the basis of education, income, religion, place and exposure to the outside, to a large extent the tribal solidarity has declined and so also the scope for exclusive tribal polity. With the development of multiple identity or the 'assimilative' identity congress as an 'umbrella party'[18] got a leverage in attracting the tribals to its fold. Of course, lack of leadership and programmes in the regional parties and opportunism of the local leadership paced the growth of Congress in Orissa politics.

Assimilative identity and the Janata Dal: -

With the formation of Janata Party in the year 1977, the state politics seemed to be heading towards a bi-party system. While Congress Party tried hard to increase its hold over the tribal population, the Janata Party got immediate access to the upland politics for the nature of its

origin. In Orissa, party building process and working of non-congress parties are characterized by alliances and coalitions.[19] After the merger of Ganatatra Parishad in a national political party like 'Swatantra' which played a vital role in Orissa poilitics, to futther consolidate the opposition forces, on 28th January, 1973, the Swadhin congress of Harekrishna Mahatab, the Utkal congress of Biju Patnaik and the Swatantra party of Singh Deo, formed a united front under the banner of 'Pragati Legislature Party'. It functioned under the leadership of Biju Patnaik. With the formation of Bharatiya Lok Dal at the national level in opposition to the congress dominance in 1974, the Pragati party joined it and Orissa branch of BLD came up. Again in 1977, with the movement of Jayaprakash Narayan all the four non-communist parties, i.e., the congress-O, the Jan Sangh, the Bharatiya Lak Dal and the Socialists agreed to 'work as one party' to face the election. The new party was named as the Janata Party[20] .Janata Party which was later in 1990 came to be known as Janata Dal in Orissa, gave an effective electoral challenge to the Congress under the leadership of Biju Patnaik.

The Janata Party brought the western Orissa feudal leadership and the coastal leaders on to a single platform. The Congress background of the coastal leaders and the feudal/tribal background of upland leaders in the Janata Party started a new chemistry of assimilation at the top. While the politics of anti-Congressism occasioned their convergence, the compulsions of electoral arithmetic cemented their association. As a

combination of western and Coastal interests and facilitator of 'assimilative' identity formation through a 'top to bottom' approach, the Janata Party also helped Congress to get an advantage in tribal politics. Because, as an alternative to the Janata Party, the Congress got immediate acceptance in the Hill areas as a party of opposition. The Janata Party/Dal with its 'Biju-centric' politics to a great extent enabled itself to remove the main contradiction[21] and fight congress on issue-based politics. The grand personality of Biju Patnaik guided the policies, programmes and aspirations of the party in complete indifference to the party's central leadership[22]. So also the leaders pursuing sub-regional sentiments got marginalised in the party under the shadow of Biju's advocacy of great Oriya nationalism.[23]

Although, Janata Party started in anti-Congressism and represented the coalitional interests of the Hill and Coastal areas, in a short period it was reduced to a personality based Party with only an anti-congress orientation. Biju Patnaik acted as the sole driving force of the party at the state level. "The party draws sustenance from his image, his unmatched crowd-pulling and vote catching potential. However, in the process the party has lost its orientation and ideology. It has nothing to offer but for its one-point goal-that Mr. Biju Patnaik should be Orissa's chief Minister"[24].The veracity of the statement can be realised from the fact that, with his death, the Janata Dal got disintegrated and a new regional political party Biju Janata Dal (BJD) came into existence.

The above analysis shows the growth of national political parties like the congress and Janata Dal at the cost of regional and ethnic based political parties. This political development at the top was equally matched by socio-economic developments at the base level. The dilution of tradition through education, migration and material considerations to a large extent reduced the scope for parochial considerations. The emergence of interest groups and mercenary followers has also provided dynamism to the electoral politics. The formation of new identities on the basis of income, education, power and service etc. also created fluidity among the primordial identities and provided scope for growth of an "assimilative" identity. Thus, the emergence of an 'assimilative' identity based upon developmental paradigm with the simultaneous change in the prospects of the political parties shows the underlying principal interdependence among development, identity and politics.

Electoral Performance of Congress (I) and Janata Dal: -

Starting from 1977, Orissa witnessed a strong trend of bi-party politics till 1990. The Communist Parties were of minor importance in the electoral politics of the state. Primarily, the Congress Party and the Janata Dal determined the political discourse of the state. (Table-3): -

Table - 3

Elections To The Look Sabha				Elections To the Legislative Assembly				
Year	Janata Dal		Congress(I)	Year	Janata Dal		Congress(I)	
	Seats Won	% of Votes polled	Seats Won	% of Votes polled		Seats Won	% of Votes polled	Seats Won	% of Votes polled

Elections To The Look Sabha					Elections To the Legislative Assembly				
Year	**Janata Dal**		**Congress(I)**		**Year**	**Janata Dal**		**Congress(I)**	
	Seats Won	% of Votes polled	Seats Won	% of Votes polled		Seats Won	% of Votes polled	Seats Won	% of Votes polled
1977	16	51.77	4	38.18	1977	110	47.17	26	31.02
1980	1	14.56	20	55.69	1980	16	19.56	117	47.93
1984	1	32.00	20	57.46	1985	19	30.31	117	51.80
1989	16	49.41	3	38.44	1990	123	56.68	10	28.78

Source: - B.B. Jena " Orissa Politics" Indian Journal of Politics, July – Sept 1994, p.292

From the above table, it is evident that Congrsss (I) and Janata Dal more or less together cornered 85 percent of the popular votes most of the times. The swing in favour of a particular party is complete when it has come to power. In other words, both the political parties proved as alternatives to each other with a substantial section of floating votes managing the uncertainty part of the electoral outcome.

The prevailing bi-party system was disturbed in the 1990s. Two events marked the destabilisation of Orissa politics. One is the increasing acceptance of Bharatiya Janata party as a relevant player in the state politics and the second-one is the death of Biju Patnaik. With the change of fortune all over the country, the Bharatiya Janata Party also witnessed its growth in Orissa. Although not in a position to drive the state politics,

it experienced tangential growth in electoral performance with the demise of Janata Dal. "Widely described as a 'signboard' party in Orissa until a few years ago, BJP is giving sleepless nights to both the ruling congress and the main opposition JD"[25].The death of Biju Patnaik also sealed the fate of JD in Orissa. Of course, most of the former JD members formed a new regional political party named 'Biju Janata Dal' under the leadership of Nabin Patnaik and inherited the JD legacy. Recognising the growing strength of the BJP, BJD has accepted it as a coalition partner and both the parties along with congress give a triangle set up departing from the bi-party structure.

Conclusion: -

The second phase in Orissa politics (1974-1990) this is widely accepted as a phase of assimilation and development. With the significant rise of mercenary population and politics of accommodation and co-option at the top, the Hill-Coast divide to a large extent got marginalised. While Congress (I) could manage to create a significant tribal vote-base depending upon assimilative identities, the Janta Dal represented the right –wing sentiments in the state politics. But over a period of time, the Janata Dal lost its significance as a party of co-alitional interests and under the leardership of Biju Patnaik persued the same assimilative politics of Congress (I).

As both the parties resembled each other in terms of policies and programmes the failure of development politics provided the scope for a

third alternative in the form of Bharitiya Janta Party. Also, the resurfacing of antagonism of interests of tribals and non-tribals encouraged the hitherto suppressed primodialism and promotion of right-wing politics.

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12. Puspa Asthana, op.cit. : 84

13. F.G. Bailey, (7) :1276

14. Amal Ray, op.cit. :2034

15. *Election Manifestos for General Elections,* 1991,1996,1998 and 1999: Congress (I).

16. *Floor-crossing:* Change of party after elections are over, for considerations other than ideology.

17. *Feedback:* as a concept of structural approaches it speaks of demands and supports as is resulted from the decisions.

18. *Umbrella party:* A party where different section of the population get an equal representation.

19. Puspa Asthana, op.cit. : 154

20. Ibid: 158

21. *Main Contradiction:* Perceived difference of interests of Hill and Coastal Leadership.

22. Biju Patnaik denied to implement Mandal Commission Report and went against the wish of national leadership.

23. *Oriya Nationalism:* Biju emphasised the great past of Orissa and glory of Kalinga to invoke popular sentiment and unity among people to fight central apathy and impoverishment of Orissa.

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CHAPTER – IV

Return of Primordialism: Emergence of the

Bharatiya Janata Party

Introduction: -

The rise of Bharatiya Janata Party in Orissa is a recent phenomenon. Although the party had gained five Assembly seats in 1985 and 6 seats in 1990, before 1996, it had no representation in the Lok Sabha. "It polled 9.5 percent of votes in the 1991 parliamentary elections which rose to about 16 percent in 1996. It constitutes, in additon, the only third political force in Orissa and has dug in itself deeply in eight Lok Sabha constituencies in north-western Orissa, mainly in the tribal areas bordering Bihar and Madhya Pradesh"[1].

To explain BJP's rise in Orissa in terms of its all-India growth is inadequate, because, the issue of communalism has not been a part of Orissa politics. "Religion is also not a major factor in Orissa elections as religious minorities do not have a decisive say in any constituency. Besides the BJP could not create a religious frenzy in Orissa during the heyday of its Ram Mandir Movement, as the people were not amenable to its communal ideology[2]. Again, one should not underestimate the fact that the BJP has succeeded in wooing the tribals of Hill areas, known for their loyalism and continuity. "It has no temple or masjid issue to whip up passions on religious lines. The only weapon that it has is the loss of faith of the electorate in both the congress and JD, particularly their leaders"[3].

From Table-4 it can be realised that BJP is gaining ground over a

period of time. Although not in numbers of seats won, but in terms of

percentage of votes polled, BJP's claim is noteworthy.

Table-4

PERFORMANCES OF BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY IN ORISSA ELECTIONS

Elections To The Lok Sabha			Elections To The Legislative Assembly		
Year	Seats Own	% of Votes Polled	Year	Seats Own	% of Votes Polled
1991	0	9.5	1985	1	0.68
1996	0	13.42	1990	2	3
1998	7	21.19	1995	9	7.88
1999	9	24.3	2000	38	26.4*

Source: - Statistical reports to General Elections, Election Commission of India

*The Samaj 14th April

The peculiar angle to BJP's better performance is its cornering of

a sizable number of votes of Hill districts of Orissa (as is evident from the

electoral results). It belies the claim of consolidation of 'assimilative

identity' through the developmental paradigm. Inotherwords, the

politicisation of the tribals of Orissa is not yet complete. "The traditional

socio-economic divide between the region is again becoming politically

relevant which the BJP is expected to exploit for its campaign for dominance in Orissa".[4]

As under the bi-party system since the 1970s, it was the endeavour of each government to integrate the tribals to the mainstream, it is worthwhile to evaluate the extent of success of the instrumentalist approach. Again, defining the limit of 'assimilative' identity formation will provide further scope to see through the discourse of tribal polity of Orissa and predict the future of BJP as a political force in the tribal belt.

Developmental Paradigm and State of Tribals: -

In Chapter II, it is seen that both at the central and state level a significant part of planned economy is being spent for tribal welfare. Specific policies and programmes were implemented to put them at par with the general population. But, in reality, the instrumentalist approach has failed miserably to bring any tangible gain to the tribals. Rather, day by day, the tribals are getting alienated and impoverished under the ruthless march of destitution and dis-entitlement.

In the course of five decades of development since independence, they had achieved very little in terms of independent standing and citizenship rights. Particularly in the case of Orissa, tribals have been living wretchedly in different parts amidst rich natural resources plundered by the developmental projects like irrigation projects, big dams, industries, power plants and mining projects. The tribals have borne the brunt of development in such a fashion that they have lost

everything; their cultural identity threatened, traditional livelihood disappeared and they were forced to settle outside their friendly environment and migrate elsewhere to survive like slaves[5]. According to the Indian Social Institute in Delhi, as many as 1.4 million people have been displaced or otherwise affected by projects in Orissa between 1951 and 1995. PIRG estimates that with the current projects on the anvil, it can be safely assumed that another one lakh people will lose their homes and land"[6].For example,contrary to the Orissa government's tall talk of looking after the resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced persons of developmental projects like Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project (UIMPP) which happens to be the second largest hydropower project in Asia-the fact is that even over after over a decade, a large number of displaced persons are left in the lurch. Most of them are hoping against hope to escape suffering at resettlement clusters.

Large-scale launching of plantations of tea, coffee, cashews and other profitable cash crops in the tribal areas have also provided very little employment and income to the tribals who lost vast tracts of land due to this. In many places these plantations do not form part of the ecological or cultural tradition of the region. All these measures have had a cumulative effect of disentitlement of the tribals. They have increasingly lost land and rights over their environment.

In recent years a great deal of attention has been paid to the promotion of tribal culture. But, since, the colonial days, their culture had

been either subject of anthropological inquiry or items of metropolitan exhibitions for the curiosity of the non-tribals. It is hardly appreciated that the tribal people represent as rich a culture as that of the non-tribals[7]. Therefore, instead of promotion of tribal art, culture and language, government-tokenism has ensured its museum status.

With the increasing displacement and dis-entitlement of lands, low economic and educational status of the tribals has augmented the state of underdevelopment. The extent of economic exploitation of the tribals can be guessed from a survey carried out in the Narayana Patna Tribal Development Block by the 'Programme Evaluation Organisation' of planning commission to study the problems of land-alienation and indebtedness[8]. Six villages, namely Bodosurupalli, Jaiguda, Bodomaturu, Khaspavalsa, Nagulabeda and Karkaitika were selected for the study. It was found out that out of 153 households studied 85 households (55percent) were indebted. As regards the source of credit, it was found that 78 percent of the total outstanding amount was borrowed from the non-tribal moneylenders, including traders and 12 percent from tribal moneylenders. The rate of interest charged by the moneylenders varied from 25 percent to 100 percent and sometimes it exceeded even 100 percent. On about 26 percent of the loans the interest charged ranged from 25 percent to 50 percent, whereas on 35 percent of the loans interest charged ranged from 50 percent to 100 percent. On about 30 percent of the loans the rate of interest charged was above 100 percent. In such a

situation of impoverishment, that the tribals could not buy even the rice offered at fair-prices is another matter.[9]

Even after five decades of efforts for development of education in the backward areas, the Hill region is far behind the Coastal area in terms of literacy rate. Even, within the same district there is no parity between the tribal and non-tribal literacy rate (See Table –5).

Table-5

DISTRICT WISE DISPARITY IN LITERACY BETWEEN SCHEDULED TRIBE AND NON SCHEDULED TRIBES IN ORISSA

Districts	1971	1981	1991
Balasore	0.77	0.68	0.64
Bolangir	0.24	0.25	0.23
Cuttack	0.73	0.72	0.68
Dhenkanal	0.47	0.47	0.45
Ganjam	0.58	0.48	0.47
Kalahandi	0.30	0.28	0.28
Keonjhar -	0.52	0.48	0.11
Koraput	0.62	0.56	0.94
Mayurbhanj	0.52	0.48	0.43
Phulbani	0.17	0.23	0.22
Puri	0.48	0.48	0.45
Sambalpur	0.16	0.30	0.28
Sundergarh	0.28	0.29	0.27
Orissa	**0.54**	**0.49**	**0.47**

Source : Sailabala Devi "Regional Inequalities in Orissa" Indian Journal of Regional Science 28(2), 1996 : 19 (Table-3).

The lack of infrastructure and civic amenities in the interior areas has always discouraged people to get posted here. As a result, most of the schools and colleges in the tribal areas run without teachers. "According to a senior officer in the state-education department, there are several tribal dominated pockets in the state where there are no primary schools. Most of the work is completed on paper only. It was learnt that about 50 percent primary schools in Phulbani, Mayurbhanj, Koraput and Gajapati districts are running just on pen and paper"[10].

The above appraisal of tribal state of socio-economic condition clearly indicates the failure of governmental policies to bring the tribals into the mainstream. Inspite of being the part of a democratic process, they are still not able to express their opinion. The fact that reservation of jobs has not been fully utilised by the STs in Orissa is due to general level of poverty and underdevelopment suffered by the tribal people.

As the Congress (I) and Janata Dal strived for tribal votes depending upon 'co-option and legitimation[11]' they failed to champion the rights of tribals and could not address the tribal issues intimately.

"The small tribal elite that has emerged out of missionary education and state assisted development process is sought after by all political groups. The influentials among them perform the role of middle men between the agencies and the targets. The national, state and regional leaders, business people, cultural organisers and their mobilisers for their

respective ends approach them. In effect, the tribal elite has become part of the instrument of domination by the Diku (non-tribals)"[12].

With the failure of percolating down of developmental efforts to the ground level, the hope of universalisation of 'assimilative' identity has remained a distant dream. Only a small portion of the backward areas of Orissa could be brought to the level of comparison with the coastal districts. These industrial towns of the Hill areas although have provided succour to the people, it is hardly for the indigenous tribals. Rather the non-tribals and elite-tribals have profited from all these efforts. The general people at large have remained unattended and untuned with the common dislike and apprehension to the whole government machinery and its efforts.

As the process of assimilation remained incomplete, the instrumentalists' faith of 'development as the panacea for everything' got disproved. In the absence of proper mechanism and 'will power' to reach to the grass-root level, the primordial considerations continued to play their effective role amidst slogans of change. Therefore, the transition period is effectively marked by both change and continuity.

Primordial identies and BJP: -

Both the Congress (I) and Janata Dal tried to integrate the tribals to the mainstream through the policies of development and also through accommodation of traditional tribal leadership in their party structure. Practically every political party in Orissa has some tribal members some

70

of who have been ministers in different governments. But "they have acquired this status as followers of one or the other non-tribal political leaders or Chief Ministers rather than on the basis of their own mass base or organizational success[13]". The point is that even though nearly ¼th of the MLAs are tribals, their collective influence on the politics of the state is marginal.

Therefore, it is easy to understand the lack of politicization of tribals, even after five decades of democratic governance in the country. Living in a sense of aloofness and suspicion towards the administration the tribals are yet to evolve their own perspective of government and representation. They are yet to refute the small section of elites among themselves, who are cornering all the benefits in the name of the total community and playing into the hands of non-tribals for small time considerations. As such the tribals are yet to achieve independent representation and to play there decisive roles in the state politics confirming to their numerical strength.

In contrast to the tribals, the Scheduled Castes or Dalits are far better politicised. In different parts of India, they have their own standing and own organization. Dalit political parties like Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Panthers Party and southern caste based political parties etc. have provided a new meaning and orientation to Indian politics. The resurrection of 'Dalit' identity has made them inevitable players in the central and state politics. Although in Orissa radicalization of 'Dalit'

politics is yet to take place, they are more politicised than the tribals. Even in the Hill areas some scheduled castes like Domo, pano etc. are the dominant groups in Orissa.

The above discussion shows the tribals as the only 'uninitiated' section of the polity that needs to be politicised. They assume more importance for their sheer number which counts first in a democracy. For the upcoming political parties the tribal areas constitute a fertile field to reap electoral harvests. In this context, BJP's rise in the upland politics of Orissa should be seen both as necessity and opportunity. It is a necessity for BJP, because it wants to establish itself as a prime force in Orissa politics. Again, a huge section of population remaining 'uninitiated' has provided the much needed opportunity for BJP to break through the established bi-party polity of the state.

The rise of BJP in Orissa politics has put forth many questions to be explained. Why did Congress(I) and Janata Dal fail to play their role effectively? Why did Bharatiya Janata Party occupy the opposition space in Orissa politics? Why did the tribals vote for BJP? All these questions are to be understood taking into account the whole socio-economic-political environment of the state.

Congress (I) and Janata Dal, although provided the two party structure, in the long run their policies and programmes did not differ from each other. As was led by Biju Patnaik an ex-congress leader, Janata Dal found it quite difficult to develop its separate identity. In functioning

of the party, work-culture, developmental orientation and outlook both the parties looked alike. Then, the politics of defection ensured certain faces common in both the political parties. As a result, to common people, the difference between the two parties became blurred day-by-day.

At this juncture, the advent of Bharatiya Janata Party with the slogan "a party with difference" provided an alternative to the voters. The demise of Biju Patnaik, also augmented the fortune of BJP. As a cadre-based party, BJP differed from other parties in the sense that there was no single individual to be projected as leader in the state politics. In terms of policies, programmes and issues BJP put forth concepts, which were not familiar to the state politics. The nascentness of the party was in itself an uniqueness to the public. Disenchantment with the prevailing state of affairs coupled with curiousity and hope for an untested party, proved conducive for BJP's acceptance in Orissa politics.

The rise of BJP in the tribal belt of Orissa has drawn special attention of political scientists. As a party, seen to be representing upper castes and merchants, it was hard to predict the performance of BJP in the upland politics. With negligible presence in Coastal areas, its performance in the tribal areas has been focused upon and the synthesis between the 'tribal' identity and the party's character has come to light.

While evaluating BJP, the whole 'Sangh Parivar' is to be taken into acount. Because, BJP's electoral success to a large extent lies upon

the grass-root movements taken by the other outfits of the parivar. Similarly, the parivar's image and advertisement have built the party's image to a great extent. According to A.G.Noorani, at a BJP camp in Coimbatore on 17th March 1990 Advani told that, "there has been a conscious effort on the part of the swayamsevaks who are working in the BJP to make each one understand the ideological base to which we belong, and our connections with the sister organisations like the VIP, the ABVP, the BMS, the Seva Bharati and the Kalyan-Ashram which are all based on the inspiration from RSS... we have to intensify our efforts. We have to project the view points of the R.S.S., which is not being reflected, so that with the instrumentality of BJP in politics it gets more acceptance".[14]

"The R.S.S. and Vishwa Hindu Parishad have set up many schools, colleges, dispensaries and other social welfare centres in the tribal areas of Orissa."[15] Through the Vanavasi Kalayan Ashrams they have tried to spread education, awareness and indigenous culture among the tribals. Through establishment of single teacher schools (Akalavya Vidyalaya) they have tried for rapid spread of education. There is 600 Aklavya School in Orissa[16]. Moreover, other organisations like Sanatan Hindu Dharma Prachar Samiti and the Seva-Bharati etc. are working in remote areas to spread the message of the parivar. As a result, in the backward tribal areas of Orissa, the parivar has been able to match the

efforts of the Christian missionaries and has blunt the process of conversion to the benefit of BJP.

In the case of religious identity, the tribals of Orissa put forth altogether a different picture. Instead of their remote inhabitation and worship of local deities with legends of their own, they constitute an intimate part of the larger Hindu society. The 'cult of Jagannath' has created the necessary bridge among tribals and the Hindus to identify each otheras the sacred beliefs and social practices of aboriginal tribes have been encapsulated within the structure of regional Hinduism[17].The endurance of the Jagannath cult has contributed to the relative communal peace of Orissa, in marked contrast to the spectre of growing religious violence in India.

Therefore, it is argued that BJP's performance is a result of politics of underdevelopment than that of communal mobilisation. Analysing the success of BJP in the 1995 Assembly election in Orissa Bishnu Narain Mohapatra and Manoranjan Mohanty write, "Interestingly, its increased strength in the present Assembly has little to do with the Ram Temple issue. The party highlighted the problems of inland Orissa, exploited the indifference of other parties towards the tribals in the Hill districts and, focussed on the issue of corruption".[18]

In its developmental promises BJP has tried to address the issue of entitlement for the tribals. It has promised "to amend the existing forest policy to provide vanavasis their rightful share of minor forest produce

and to process claims of vanavasis and Girijans for pattas in forest and Hill areas promptly"[19].By challenging other political parties in terms of their own 'instrumental' approach, BJP has tried to avoid criticism. But its real strength lies in the fact that its emphasis upon tradition and Indianness brings it closer to the primordial considerations."The movements which find a confluence in the BJP and have brought credibility to its politics are a new type of non-anglicised nationalism, a mosaic which reflects a return to Indian ways of thought and behavior after decades of stress and strain of playing the brown Englishmen and erecting caste and class barriers through political formulae of sectarian politics".[20]

Describing BJP's policy towards ethnicity, James Manor has termed it as 'polarising management"[21] i.e. to intensify ethnic consciousness to the point where 'ethnic transformation' occurs. Therefore, BJP puts emphasis upon tribal culture, language and Hindu dimension of identity, to sensitise them against conversion to Christianity and to consolidater its Hindu base. Its support for the 'Alchiki' language in Mayuarbhanj and its readiness to accept the creation of the three tribal states shows its eagerness to bring the tribals into the overall Hindu-fold.

Even though BJP's claim for an alternative model of development through indigenous policies and programmes attract indigenous population, its efficacy is yet to be tested. "The ingenuity of Hinduitva forces lie in performing a balancing act. They have judiciously combined

the elements of modernity and tradition thus overcoming the dichotomy between the two."[22]

In the process of indigenous and traditional developmental paradigm, BJP somewhat, has reverted back to the 'primordial' identity. There are a number of Assembly members from the former princely families in BJP. Of course, a significant section of emerging educated tribal leaders have found place in BJP. But, the reason can be seen in terms of the newness of the party and lack of recognised leaders to be fielded in elections.

Therefore, BJP's rise in tribal Orissa is to be seen in terms of the transitional phase of the society and the continuing identity of primordial considerations. Its usefulness in future can only be predicted on the basis of capability of BJP to meet the aspirations of the tribals, in terms, defined by them only.

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12. Manoranjan Mohanty, op. cit.: 102

13. Ibid: 98

14. A.G. Noorani, (1999) *Advani's Oath-II,* The Statesman, 4 Feb.

15. Manoranjan Mohanty, op. cit.: 103

16. As stated by Harihara nanda of Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram, SIS Committee Room, SSS/JNU, 18 Sept. 2000.

17. Subrata Mitra, (1998) *Religion, Region and Identity: Sacred beliefs and secular power in a regional state traditon of India*: 92

18. Bishnu, N. Mohapatra, and Manoranjan Mohanty, (1995) *Orissa: the Real Change, Beyond the Election, Victory and Defeat,* Frontline, 16 June: 44

19. Bharatiya Janata Party, Election Manifesto, 1998: 35

20. M.L. Sonali, (1998) *BJP and India's Future,* The Hindustan Times, 26 Feb.

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22. Melwin Pereira, (2000) *Hinduitva and Hatred on Minorities,* Social Action, vol. 50 (3), July-Sept.: 312

CONCLUSION

The tribals live their simple life and constitute an egalitarian society in isolation. Their tradition, belief, religion and occupation give them a compact life at a subsistence level. But, with the intervention of non- tribals, modernity and Welfare State, they have developed contact with the rest of civilisation. Promulgation of forest laws, dis-entitlement of lands and the complexity of modern state have forced them to think in terms of the dominant paradigm.

The integration of tribals well the mainstream, is always a contentious issue. Some sociologists demand that they should be integrated to the outside world only on their terms. Others, argue that de-tribalisation must precede integration. But, they agree at one point, i.e. the tribals must be integrated to the mainstream. Therefore, through state action, they are compelled to shed their isolation.

As a result, a section of tribal society has already started talking in terms of dominant language. With the effort of Christian missionaries, Kalyan Ashrams, reservation policy and process of accommodation in state politics, they have acquired a new 'identity' indicating the success of instrumentalist approach. But, a large section of the tribals is yet to come to terms with the developmental paradigm. Although they have suffered under the system, they have not recognised and participated in the prevailing system. As a result, a wide 'divide' is emerging between the converts and the non-converts.

This brings in the transitional phase of the tribal society, where change and continuity reside side by side. To a great extent the 'changes' are attributed to the instrumentalist approach with emphasis of intervention and welfarism. Most of the governments have tried to tread this path. Political parties have more or less accepted this path of tribal integration. Based upon developing 'assimilative identities' their policies and programmes have got acceptance among the converts and their electoral fortune has got buoyancy. But, for the non-converts tradition still holds the life-thread. They oppose blatant intervention and persue a politics of negation. As a consequence they feel alienated and do not rely upon mainstream political parties. Their own regional or ethnic outfits try to mobilise support with the 'primordial' identity-based upon parochial considerations. Over a period of time, depending upon the changing notion of 'identity' these political parties either become stronger or give way to the emerging forces.

Orissa is clearly displaying the signs of the transitional phase. But, her specificity lies in showing a reformulated primordialism. The earlier political parties like the Ganatantra Parishad and Jharkhand Party exploited the ethnic and parochial considerations to their electoral advantage. Similarly, Congress (I) relied heavily on accommodation and assimilation of tribals, pushing aside the process of de-tribalisation at the ground level.

It is easy to start movements by channelising sentiments, but difficult to sustain them without a long-term vision or perspective of progress. Therefore, the regional outfits in Orissa became insignificant and got marginalised in the state politics. Their support groups continued their opposition politics through the 'Janata party' that came òut of a co-allitional effort.

The Janata Party under the leadership of Biju Patnaik initially provides accommodation to the primordial identities of the Hill areas. But, with passing of time, Biju Patnaik's Oriya nationalism perceived a vigorous policy of assimilation and integration. In a way, both the Congress (I) and the Janata Party went for developmental politics and negated the distinctness of the Hill-people. Although, occasionally the politicians talked of regional and ethnic deprivations, there was very little effort to solve the problems in a multicultural framework. As a result the indigenous people got disillusioned with the government and nurtured resentment towards the established political parties.

With the weakening of Janata Party/Dal, the politics of negation searched for new avenue and found BJP as the suitable political party to express its intention. With its right-wing politics based upon traditional values and conservatism, BJP attracted the primordial sentiments of tribals and presented itself as a natural choice to them. Of course, the grassroot works done by the Sangh-parivar and the opportunity as an emerging political party that it provided, proved fruitful to develop a

sizable vote base among the tribals with 'assimilative' identity. The timing of BJP's rise, no doubt, coincided with the prevailing general discontentment against the Congress (I) and Janata Dal for their opportunism, corruption and inaction. But, in the larger context, the shifting of tribal loyalism follows the deeper explanation.

The recent rise in the demand for a separate Kosala state consisting of western districts of Orissa and the reservation agitation led by Adivasi Jharkhand Jandhikar Manch (AJJM) headed by Salkhan Murmu speaks of renewed emphasis upon primordial identities. Giving the berth of the president of the state unit to a tribal leader and also by focussing upon the tribal problems, BJP has been able to identify itself with the tribals of Orissa. Therefore, BJP's growth in tribal Orissa is both evolved and occasioned. Its sustenance will depend upon its ability to meet the demands of indigenous population through the alternative paradigm of development that it speaks of as a different discourse than the prevailing one.

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APPENDIX-I

District wise Distribution of Schedule Tribe Population

Districts	Total Populations	ST Population	% of ST to Total Population
Sambalpur	809,017	283,801	35.08
Sundergarh	1573617	40762	79.06
Malkangiri	421917	246214	58.36
Deogarh	234238	78032	33.31
Bargarh	1207172	236072	19.56
Nuapada	464482	168777	35.95
Kandhanamal	546482	281386	51.51
Boudh	317622	41022	12.92
Rayagada	713984	400097	56.04
Sonepur	476815	45286	9.5
Koraput	1029986	521849	50.67
Nabarangapur	846659	467919	55.27
Jharsuguda	446726	142418	31.88
Angul	961037	112293	11.68
Kalahandi	1130907	826648	28.88
Bolangir	1230938	271511	22.06
Dhenkanal	947870	120226	12.68
Gajapati	454708	217725	47.88
Kendrapara	1149501	4252	0.4
Khurda	1502014	77242	5.14
Puri	1305365	3481	0..27
Mayurbhanj	1884580	1090626	57.87
Jaipur	1386174	102546	7.4
Ganjam	2704056	79120	2..93
Balasore	1696583	179289	10.57
Bhadrak	1105834	18703	1.69
Nayagarh	782647	46624	5.96
Jagatsingpur	1014242	6232	0.61
Cuttack	1972739	68858	3.49
Keonjhar	1337026	595184	44.52

I

APPENDIX-II

District wise Distribution of Schedule Tribe Population

Districts	Total No. of Assembly Seats	SC Seats	ST Seats
Sambalpur	3	1	1
Sundergarh	7	0	5
Malkangiri	2	1	1
Deogarh	1	0	0
Bargarh	5	1	0
Nuapada	2	0	0
Kandhanamal	3	1	2
Boudh	1	0	0
Rayagada	4	0	4
Sonepur	3	1	0
Koraput	4	0	2
Nabarangapur	4	0	3
Jharsuguda	3	0	1
Angul	4	1	0
Kalahandi	6	0	0
Bolangir	6	1	0
Dhenkanal	4	1	0
Gajapati	4	0	1
Kendrapara	5	0	0
Khurda	6	1	0
Puri	6	0	0
Mayurbhanj	5	0	5
Jajpur	7	2	0
Ganjam	6	1	0
Balasore	7	0	0
Bhadrak	5	2	0
Nayagarh	4	0	0
Jagatsingpur	4	1	0
Cuttack	5	1	0
Keonjhar	6	1	4

Source: District Stastical Hand books, 1993
   Directorate of Economic and Statistics, Orissa, BBSR