

CHAPTER - I

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INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a government by the people. Evolution of democracy depends on evolution of people's power because people create government, empower it and also fix limitations upon its actions. In fact, people's power is reflected through elections held in regular intervals. But people's power to elect the government and to make the political system working in an effective manner depends upon their level of political knowledge, which they acquire through political education or political socialization. Where the people are kept ignorant about the affairs of the state, there people's participation in election or in making and unmaking the government becomes meaningless. Educated public opinion is the real strength of a democratic government. Therefore, right to know, is one of the important fundamental rights in every modern democratic country. So, it is said that of all liberties right to know, to speak and to criticise stands first and this freedom is the bugbear of the tyrants. This political knowledge is inculcated into the minds of individual through a number of agencies of which the Mass media are the most important agents to disseminate political news. Hence, the role of massmedia in elections cannot be overestimated or undermined in today's highly developed informatic society. This study is basically a fragmented one emphasizing on the role of newspaper, the oldest and the most important form of mass media in elections in Orissa.

Concepts:

Conceptual clarity is a prerequisite for any scientific study. In this study, we have used two main concepts, namely election and press media.

Therefore, an attempt has been made here to give operational definition and explanations of these two concepts.

a. Elections:

Election is important in a democracy as it is the most important device available to a self governing people of a democratic state. It secures people's participation in public affairs, ensures orderly transfer of power and clothes the authority of government with legitimacy. Election has been considered as a device for "Legitimacy, identification, mobilisation as well as for political choice and political control."¹ The function of an election is "to provide an opportunity for a peaceful succession and transfer of office."² Through elections, people's representatives form the government and make public policies. As direct democracy is not possible anywhere in today's world, representative democracy has been working through periodical elections. Hence, election is the basis upon which representative democracy has been evolved and working. Election is a mechanism through which people express their political opinions. Through election, political identity of the individual is established as well as the government becomes democratic, representative and legitimate.

Free and fair elections are granted to the people of India through the provisions of the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and subsequently thirteen General Elections were held to the Lok Sabha. Pt. Nehru characterised the First General Elections in India as a "great adventure on the part of the Indian people." Commenting on 1967 General Elections, V.M.Sirsikar has stated, "elections have become

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1. Norman D. Palmer. *Elections and Political Development : The South Asian Experience*. Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi. 1976, p-2.
 2. W. J.M. Mackenzie. "The Export of Electoral Systems". in David E. Apter & Harry Eckstein (ed.), *Comparative Politics - A Reader*. Surjeet Publications, New Delhi. 1989. p-318.

a part and parcel of the Indian political life. Elections are now taken for granted.”³

b. Press

Press or print media is the oldest form of mass media for mass communication. On the political process, mass communication has got two consequences, namely, formulation of demands and policies on the one hand and on the other, control over the rulers.⁴ Mass Media Communication structure is vital in ensuring that the “will of the people” is continuously communicated to the leaders by which the authorities can gauge the level of support and convey information to the population in order to win support. In the presence of adequate information and communication, citizens are also able to join together to form parties, interest groups and even more coercive organisations to press demands on leaders. Mass media link the government and people together.

Mass media help people to actively construct meaningful perceptions and express those meanings through their political behaviour. They mould the beliefs, values and expectations of a person about political objects like elections, leadership change, public issues etc. Mass media are specialized, professional, formal and organized communication structure.⁵ The nature of its audience is large, heterogeneous and anonymous.⁶

Of all, the mass media structures, the print media or the press acquires a unique place in the free and democratic society. As Smith has rightly pointed out, “Press can make or unmake a democratic government”.⁷

3. V. M. Sirsikar. "Electoral Process in Poona, 1967: A Study in Parties, Politics and Voters." (Unpublished Manuscript) University of Poona. p.182.

4. Almond & Powell. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View*. Little Brown and Company Inc., 1984.

5. Charles Wright. *Mass Communication: A Sociological Perspective*. New York. Random House, 1959.

6. Dan Nimmo. *Mass Media and Public Opinion in America*.

7. Anthony Smith. *Newspapers and Democracy*. MIT Press. London, 1980. pp.39-40.

D. R. Mankekar⁸ speaks of the social responsibilities of the press. To him, the press serves as a vital communication link between the government and the community and between one section of the community and the other. It also protects and promotes the interests of the society. It functions as the watch dog of the public interest by reviewing and criticising governmental actions and policies. As a private business enterprise it functions as a public institution. It acts as a watchdog as well as a catalytic agent in order to hasten the process of social and economic change thus securing peoples participation and involvement in alround development of the country.⁹ Therefore, Burke had remarked the press to be the fourth power of the Nation, greater than the other three powers, namely, the government, the opposition and the Judiciary. The press is so powerful that it does not only influence that Nation but influences many other Nations. It can create not only political and economic revolutions but can also bring significant cultural change.

The word 'Press' is commonly used to mean the printing of newspapers, journals, periodicals, books and magazines. But of all these publications, the daily newspaper has got utmost importance, as it publishes day to day events and the readers can get fresh news everyday. The duty of a newspaper is to keep people informed, honestly placing before them different viewpoints posing and discussing the burning topics of the day, so that the people can keep themselves abreast of the latest happenings around them and express their own free opinion when and where they feel, they ought to do so.¹⁰ Newspapers can easily mobilize the people, motivate them to behave in a particular way in politics and

8. D. R. Mankekar. *The Press Vs the Government*. Clarion Books. Indian Book Co., New Delhi. 1978. p.125.

9. Munirk Naseer. *The Press, Politics and Power*. The Iowa State University Press. Iowa. 1979. p-69.

10. Radhanath Rath. *Journalism: Its Origin, Objectives and Evolution*. Satyabadi Press. Cuttack. P.5.

society.¹¹ Thomas Jefferson, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States of America, once said that the basis of their government, being the opinion of the people, the very first objective should be to keep that right of the people and if it would be left to him to decide whether they should have a government without newspaper or newspaper without a government, he would not hesitate a moment to prefer the later.

Realising the role and importance of newspapers in a democratic setup, the framers of Indian Constitution tried to establish 'free press' in India by providing "freedom of speech and expression" as one of the fundamental rights of the people. In order that the press should play its role significantly and discharge its social responsibilities effectively, the basic condition is that the press should remain free from political and economic control. From this stand point, a free press, conducted in a spirit of responsible citizenship, may be at once the central problem and the main safeguard of modern democracy.

Problem of study:

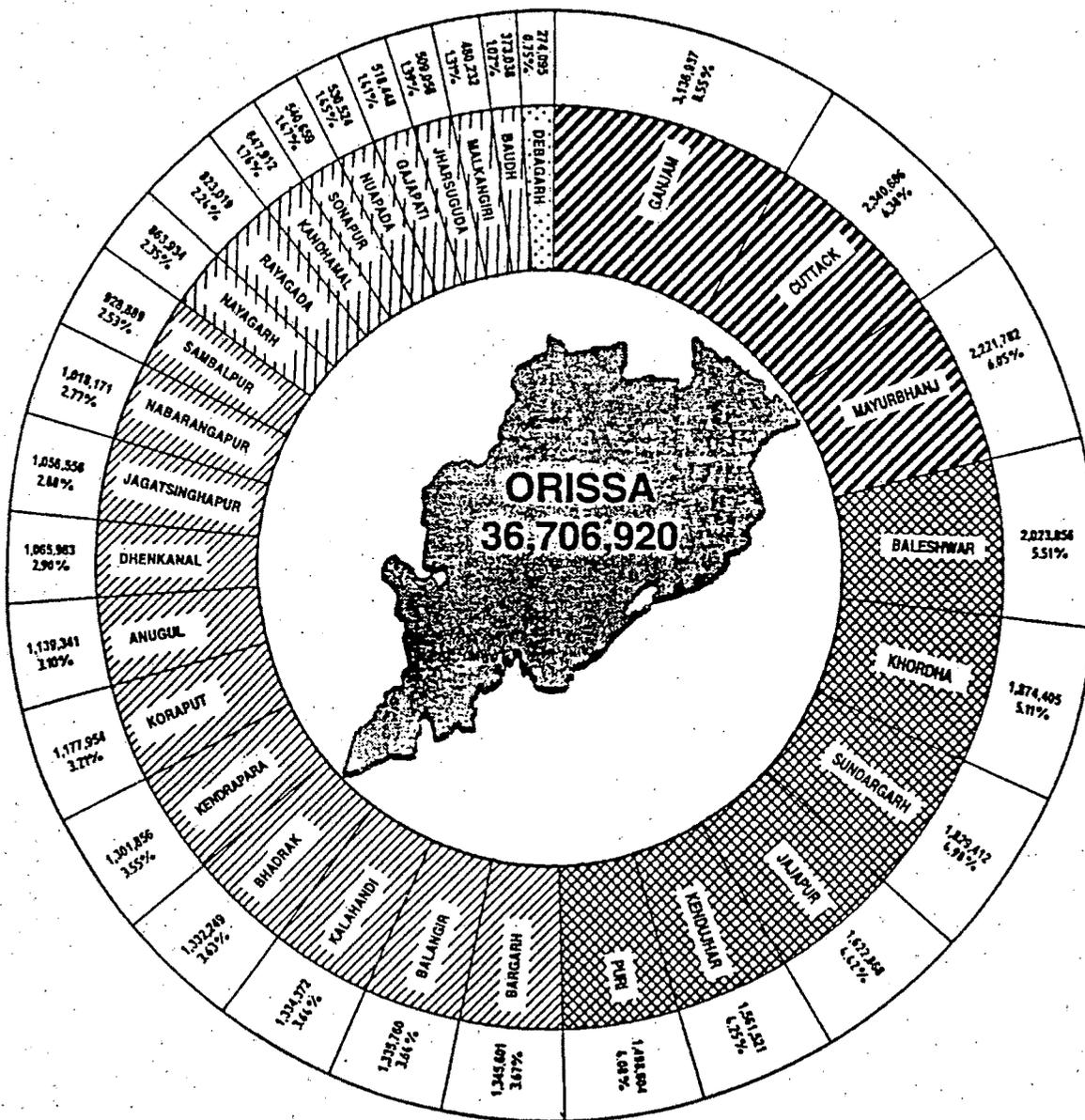
The present study focusses on a particular problem as to what extent the press is playing its role in the election: as the elections are the most important political events in all the democratic countries including India. Elections are responsible not only for good governance, but also for system persistence and goal achievements. However, elections require people's participation and involvement in a conscious and judicious manner, which infact are the results of political education. Press, particularly the newspapers, provides such political education to the people during the time of elections. Hence the core problem of the study is to

11. N. K. Murthy, *Indian Journalism*, Prasaranga Publications, Mysore, 1966, p-2.

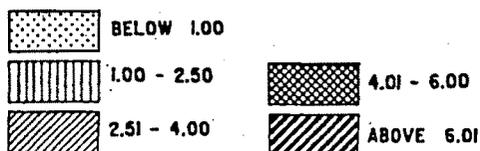


ORISSA

COMPARATIVE POPULATION SIZE OF THE DISTRICTS 2001

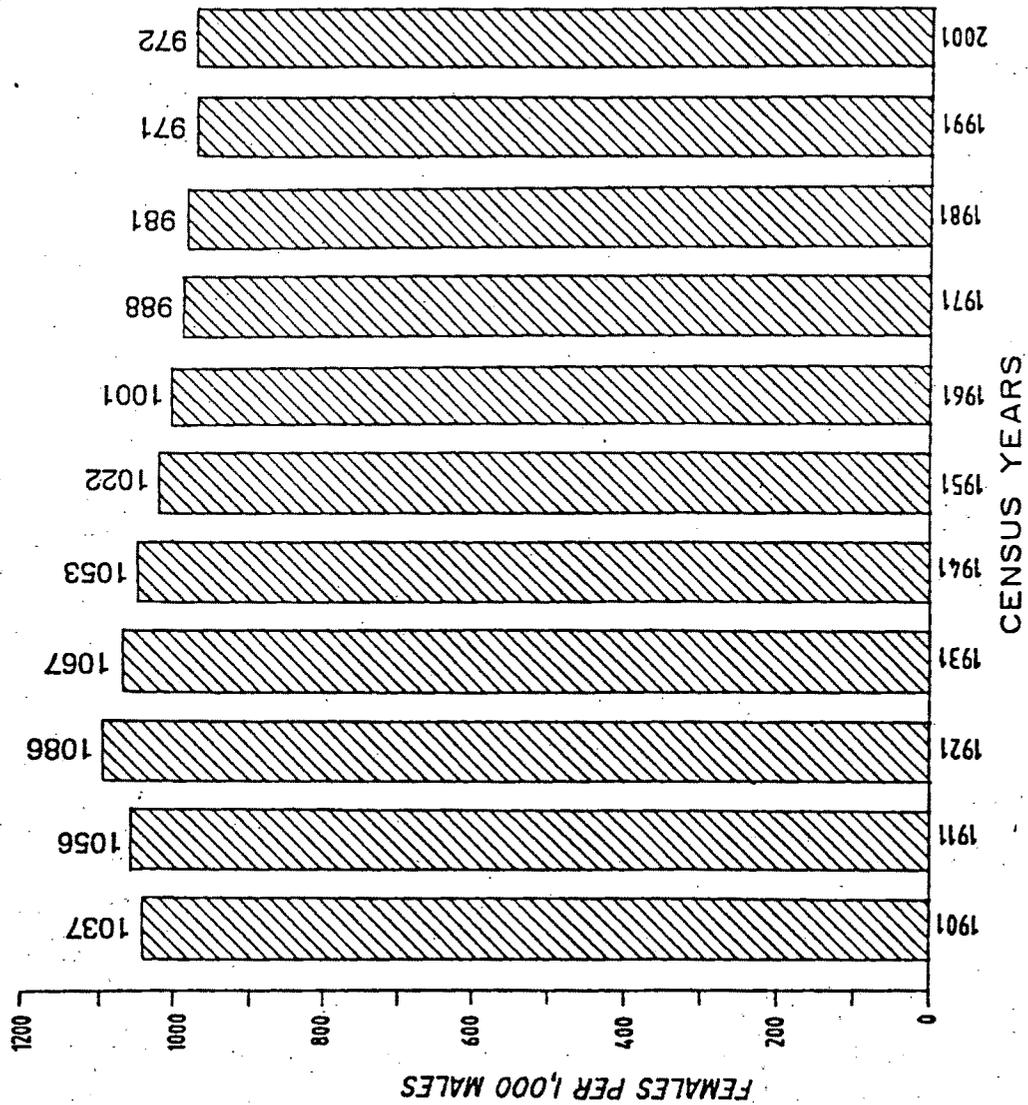


PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION TO TOTAL POPULATION.





ORISSA
SEX RATIO 1901 - 2001



find out to what extent the newspapers sensitize, mobilize, socialize and influence the political choice and political participation of the people in elections.

Scope and Objectives of the Study:

The geographical scope of the study is that it covers only the state of Orissa and the field study was conducted only in Cuttack district. The periodical scope of the study is that it covers only the 13th Lok Sabha Elections in Orissa which was held in 1999. The theoretical scope of the study is that it covers only the role of daily newspapers in the 13th Loksabha Elections in Orissa.

The objectives of the present work are as follows:

1. To study the nature, evolution and functions of newspapers in Orissa and in India.
2. To study the functioning of newspapers particularly during the time of elections.
3. To study the political contents published in the newspapers during the time of election
4. To establish the relationship between the newspaper and people's political behaviour and choice in elections.

Hypotheses:

Hypotheses are framed on the basis of review of literature. These hypotheses are verified through observable data. The following main hypotheses are formulated to give us a point of enquiry as well as specific directions in our study.

- H₀ . Exposure to press media may not likely be related to the socio-economic status of the people.
- H₁ . Education and preference to read political news in daily newspapers may likely be related.
- H₂ . Election news published in the newspapers may likely be impartial.
- H₃ . Newspapers are expected to play their role as agents of mobilizing voters for participation in election.
- H₄ . Newspapers do likely influence the political choice of the voters.
- H₅ . During the time of elections, newspapers may likely publish election news more than other news.

Methods of Study:

The present study is essentially empirical. But historical analysis has been made to study the growth of newspapers in India and in Orissa as well as the government intervention in publication of news in newspapers. Therefore, data are elicited from both secondary sources like published literature and primary sources like field study through schedule, news items, editorial notes, feature articles published in newspapers. Responses were elicited from the respondents with the help of structured schedule consisting of both closed and open ended questions. The schedule has been divided mainly into three parts, the first part deals with the exposure of the respondents to the political and election news published in the newspapers, the second part deals with the extent of impact or influence of the newspapers upon political behaviour, political

choice and political participation of the respondents as citizens in elections and the third part of the schedule deals with the socio-economic profile of the respondent. In order to supplement the responses of the respondents, the content analysis of the news published in daily newspapers has been made.

In order to test the hypotheses, non-experimental cross-national design has been prepared. Measurements of the independent and dependent variables are taken at the same point of time and the researcher has no control over the introduction of the independent variables.

Sample Designing and Coverage:

The present study deals with the role of press in elections and for this purpose, the area coverage is the district of Cuttack. The sample areas chosen are the Cuttack town and three adjacent blocks in order to find out the urban-rural differences so far as the role of press in elections is concerned. Cluster sampling of the areas has been made as these areas are adjacent to each other.

Sampling has also been made of the newspapers on the basis of language and wide reading. Though there is the circulation of newspapers in several languages like Oriya, English, Hindi, Telugu, Bengali etc., but we find that most of our respondents prefer to read daily newspapers either in English or in Oriya languages. So, two daily newspapers in Oriya, namely The Samaj and The Prajatantra and two daily newspapers in English, The Times of India and The Asian Age were taken as sample daily papers for the present study.

As the present study deals with the role of newspapers in the 13th Lok Sabha Elections 1999, the sample newspapers of the period stretching

from 13th July, 1999 to 14th October 1999, that is, from the date of notification of the election to the declaration of the results of the election are taken for study. Daily newspapers (sample) of everyday during that period has been taken into account for analysis.

Again when the schedules were administered, random sampling of the citizens has been made. Care has been taken to include in the samples, the respondents of both the sexes and of both rural and urban areas, though not in equal numbers but the numbers of sample respondents on the basis of their variations are significant for analysis. Care has also been taken not to include more than one person from one family in the sample structure. Attention has been given to include the respondents of different age groups in the sample. However, as the newspaper is to be read only by the literate persons, there is no question of including illiterate persons in the sample. All total 500 respondents are selected as samples for this particular study.

Data Analysis:

After the collection of data from the respondents, an attempt has been made to classify and categorise data on the basis of our points of query. Quantification has been made of the qualitative data. In case of the heterogeneity of the answer pattern to the open-ended questions, only those responses which could be quantified were taken into analysis. Frequency and percentage distribution of data had been made for analysis.

Content analysis has been made of the news items, editorial notes, feature articles on elections particularly relating to the 13th Lok Sabha Elections, 1999 in Orissa. We have tried to quantify these data, contents of the newspapers under study by giving 1 point for each item. An attempt

has been made to obtain frequency and percentage distribution of data for the sake of analysis.

Review of Literature:

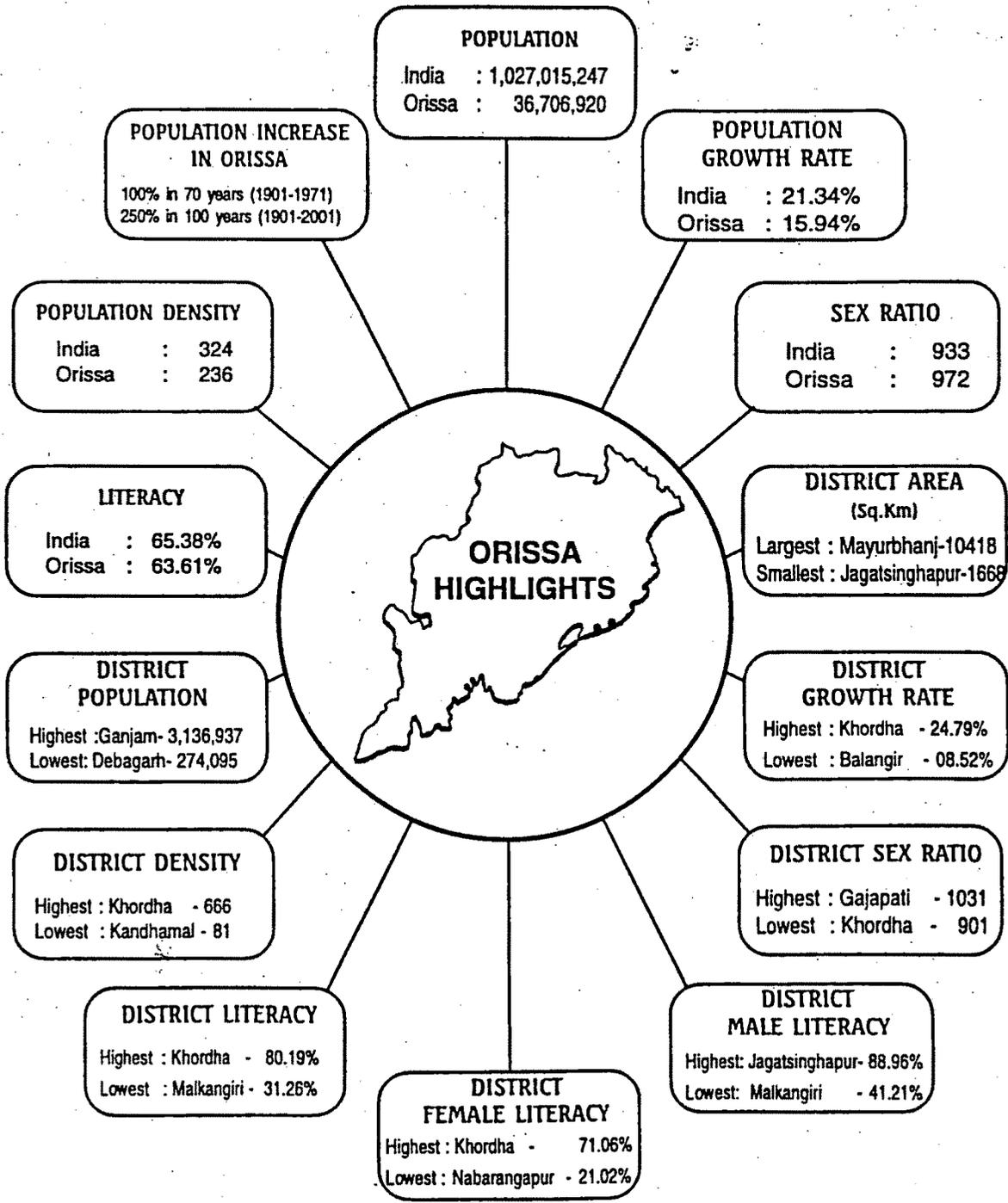
The hypotheses of the present study are developed on the basis of review of literature. However, a number of books and articles in journals relating to elections and Press media have been published but it is not possible to give an account of all these in this dissertation. Therefore the review of selected published literature in the forms of books and articles has been given in the following paragraphs. For the purpose of systematization of the review, the classification of literature in the following categories has been made.

1. Literature related to the evolution of Press media in the world, in India and in Orissa.
2. Literature relating to the censorship laws, government's intervention and autonomy of Press.
3. Literature relating to the elections in India.
4. Literature relating to the role of Press.
5. Various Reports like Census Reports, Reports of Press Council of India, Reports of Various News Agencies (P.T.I, P.I.B., Public Relations Department), Press Handbook. Annual Reports of the Registrar of Newspapers and Election Commission's Report etc.

Asian Newspapers Reluctant Revolution (1971)ed. By John A Lent contains several articles on the development of mass media and freedom of press particularly in Asian countries. This book also gives an account



CENSUS OF INDIA 2001 PROVISIONAL POPULATION TOTALS



of the development of press particularly in China and in other Communist countries.

Emphasising on the importance of press in globalization, Vivek Ranjan Bhattacharya in *Communication in Global Village* (1977) opined that the whole world would be shrunk into a global village through mass media. To him, Mass Communication should be treated as a new branch, which would add human knowledge and as such must be taught in educational institutions.

An account of the development of Press media in America has been given by Tom Wicker in the book, *On Press* (1979). In this book, the author reflects the state of American Press – its real and ideal role as well as its power and functions in society. He offered an insight analysis of the ethics of news media and its relationship with both the public and the system establishment.

A collection of articles and essays reflecting the views of western countries and the Third World on New International Information Order has been published in the form of a book titled *Crisis in International News* (1981) edited by Tim Richstad and Anderson.

Edward Barrett and Marie, in the book titled *Contextual Media – Multimedia an Interpretation* (1997) have described the communication process and the role of mass media as the communication structure. *Introduction to Mass Communication* (1985) authored by Edwin Emery describes the communication process, and examines the newspapers and news services. In this book also an account has been given about the influence of mass media on the lives of citizens Mr. Dua and V.S. Gupta in the book *Media and Development* (1994) deal with the development of mass media.

They conclude that despite the limited access an urban base mass media have been effective in communicating hard news, significant political issues and news about major political development etc.

The nature, quality and role of journalism in today's world have vividly analysed in different articles published in the book *Journalism Today* (1997) edited by Swati Vhauhan and Navin Chandra. The issue problems and prospects of mass media have been focussed in the book *Media and the Communication Challenge* (1993) authored by M. I. Khan and Kaushal Kumar.

N.C. Pant and Jitendra Kumar in their book titled *Dimension of Modern Journalism* (1995), have given an account of basic knowledge of the general principles of journalism. To them, journalism has become an existing and attractive profession in the field of communication under the banner of service and professional pride without flinching.

There are also certain books which exclusively deal with the history of Indian Press. Some of the selected books may be reviewed here.

Roland E. Wolseler's *Journalism in Modern India* (1954) has given a vivid description of the genesis and purpose of journalism in India. His main points of discussion are the growth of the press and its role and contributions to the educational development of the newly independent India. S. Natarajan gives an account of the development of press in India in the book titled *A History of the Press in India* (1962). In this book he tried to reflect the profound contribution of the Press on the changing life of the people of India. M. Chalapati Rao in his book *The Press in India* (1968) made a comparative study of Press in India before and after independence. He also pointed out the increasing response of Indian Press

towards the needs of the people. An account of the development of Press in India can also be found in the book titled *British Policy and the Evolution of the Vernacular Press. Press in India 1835 to 1978* (1978). In this book the author has mentioned the Press laws as evolved in different times during this period. This has also been vividly analysed by Chanchal Sarkar in the book titled *The Story of our Newspapers* (1986) and by G.N.S. Raghavan in the book *Origin and Growth of the Press and the News Agency* (1987).

Development of newspapers in India is not smooth and it has been described by Rangaswami Parthasarathy in the book titled *Journalism in India* (1989). In this book the author gives a detail account of the battle which the newspapers in India had to fight, to establish themselves in both social and political fronts. To him, newspapers are staunch upholders of freedom and democracy and catalytic agents of social change.

As this study is made on newspapers circulated particularly in Orissa, review of the books on newspapers in Oriya language has been made. In this context, the book titled *Orissa Ra Patra Patrika* (1955) (in Oriya) written by a veteran Oriya journalist Sri Chandra Sekhar Mohapatra, gives an account of the growth and development of Press media in Orissa during the pre-independent period. The same authors book, *Sambad O Sambadikata* (in Oriya) (1975,2001) deals with a number of issues such as bottlenecks in the field of Journalism, professionalism and sophistication in Journalism, freedom of Press etc. which the newspapers in India as well as in Orissa are facing today. Development of Journalism in Orissa has also been discussed by Sri Dolagobinda Shastri in the book *Sambadikata Prabesika* (in Oriya) (1977).

Chintamani Mohapatra tried to classify the development of Journalism in Orissa in three periods in the book *Journalism in Orissa* (1984). The first period extended upto the 19th century, the second period covered the pre-independence era and the third period covered the post-independence era. so far as development of Journalism in Orissa was in question. This question was also discussed by Radhanath Rath in the book *Journalism its Origin, objectives and Evolution* (1984). However, a vivid picture about the publication of newspapers in Orissa has been given by N.S. Ayyangar in the book, *Dailies in Orissa, Some Broad Trend* (1989). The trends of the publication of news magazines in Orissa has been discussed by P.C. Mohapatra in the book *Emerging Trends in Orissa Magazine Publication* (1989).

The issue of freedom of press has been discussed by a number of scholars, namely Harold L. Nelson in the book titled *Press Law – The Freedom of Press from Hamilton to Warren Court*, (1967), Lamart Berman in the book titled *Censorship of Speech and the Press* (1971), Philip. C. Horton in his edited book titled *The Third World and Press Freedom* (1978), Sharad Karkhanis in *Indian Politics and the Role of Press* (1981), Motilal Bhargava in the book *Role of Press in the Free Development* (1987), B.N. Ahuja in the book *History of the Press, Press laws and Communication* (1988). In the book titled *Press and the law* (1990), A.N. Grover has also critically analysed the problem of freedom of press in India. He opined that though in India freedom of press is an essential part of the freedom of speech and expression, it has been constitutionally guaranteed as a fundamental right of the citizen but Press laws have curbed the freedom and autonomy of the press to a large extent. The same view has also been expressed by K.S. Padhy in his book *Battle for Freedom of*

Press in India (1991) and the *Muzzled-Press- Introspect and Retrospect* (1994). P.M. Bakshi in the book titled *Press law: an Introduction* (1997) deals with the relationship of the press with the Parliament and the Court in India.

Another part of the dissertation is politics and elections in India, for which published relevant literature has been reviewed. A number of publications have been made on this subject and few have been selected for the purpose.

Political socialization, political participation and electoral system in cross-cultural contexts have been discussed by a number of scholars like Gabriel A. Almond and G.B. Powell Jr. *Comparative Politics Today: A World View* (1984), Robert E Lane, *Political Elite: Why and How people get involved in politics* (1965). Similarly, Lakeman Enid gives a picture of the election process and people's involvement in election in the book titled *How Democracies Vote: A Study of Majority and Proportional Electoral Systems* (1970). Norman D. Palmer also gives a critical analysis of the election system and election process in South Asian countries in the book titled *Elections and Political Development: The South Asian Experience* (1975). Electoral system and election process in India are discussed critically by scholars like Prayag Mehta, *Election Campaign: Anatomy of Mass Influence*, (1975); Amatiyaz Ahmad, *Election Studies in India in Economic and Political Weekly* (24 September, 1977); Shivlal in *Elections in India: An Introduction* (1978), David Butler, Ashok Lahiri and Prannoy Roy in *A Compendium of Indian Elections* (1984); C.K. Jain, in the article titled "Choosing the Legislator: Reflections and Reforms. *Journal of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies*, (Jan-June, 1998) and by many others.

Amal Roy in the article "Sub Regional Politics and Elections in Orissa" in *Indian Journal of Political Science* (Oct-Dec. 1974), Sukadev Nanda in *Coalition Politics in Orissa* (1979), Sunit Ghosh in *Orissa in Turmoil* (1978), B.B.Jena in *Orissa, people, culture and policy* (1981), B.B.Jena and J.K. Baral *Election Politics and Voting Behaviour in India* (1989), R.C. Mishra, *Role of Women in Legislators in India*, (2000) deal with the themes relating to the politics, society and election process particularly in India. These scholars also emphasize the process of political socialization and political participation of the people of Orissa in their respective studies.