In January 1948, all the 25 native princely states except Mayurbhanj were annexed to the territory of Orissa province. At that time two Oriya speaking tracts were separated from Bihar and merged with Orissa. Soon after the inception of these two princely states, the feudal forces started an intrigue against this merger. The then Government of Bihar inflamed the agitation. Unfortunately the ruler of Saraikala opposed the amalgamation from the very beginning. However, two important geographical factors went in favour of the Government of Bihar. Firstly, the ruler of Saraikala expressed his desire to merge with Bihar and secondly, Mayurbhanj was still not merged with Orissa and finally it was the only connecting link between Orissa and Saraikala Kharsuan.

At last the Government of India took the decision in favour of the Government of Bihar and took away these two tracts from Orissa and kept under Bihar. The Government of India proclaimed in May 1948 for its cessation from Orissa and was legally merged with Bihar in August, 1949. In the year 1953, when the State Reorganisation Committee was formed at the centre, the Government
of Orissa demanded before the central government for the restoration of Saraikala and Kharsuan with Orissa on the ground of language, culture and heritage. The SRC consisted of Pt. Nehru, K. C. Pant, the Congress president U. N. Dhebar, Moulana Azad and five central ministers, namely Deshmukh, T. T. Krishnamachari, K. C. Reddy, Jagajivan Ram, Dr. Katju and the secretaries of Congress Party namely, Sriman Narayan and K. P. Madhaban Nayar. This committee turned down the demand of Orissa. The Committee in its report opined that "these two tracts were having cultural and social similarities with the people of Podhat District of Bihar."

The commission also added that during the time of British rule, while Bihar was under the rule of Chotnagpur division, it was also then a part of Bihar. The people of Orissa got dejected and vexed with the report of the commission. In the year 1950, Mahtab joined the Central Cabinet as a Minister of Industry and at his request Chaudhury took the vanguard of Orissa where he continued till 1955.

After the first general election Pt. Nehru did not include Mahtab in his Cabinet for the second time and there was widespread surprise in political circles at the non-inclusion of Mahtab. Pt. Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India had assayed Mahtab as a meddler. It was considered a certainty that Dr. Mahtab would find a place in the Union Council of Ministers. When he was the incumbent of the Industry portfolio, instead of managing
his own department, he became a fault finder of different ministries of the central cabinet and advised Pt. Nehru accordingly. His behaviour enraged Pt. Nehru who conveyed his irritation and annoyance for the meddling attitude of Mahtab through senior party members. While taking oath in the Orissa High Court in the year 1968, Bijayananda Pattanaik acknowledged the said fact. Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel, the iron-man of India could not witness the result of the first general election for his sad demise. He was the only equilibrium with Pt. Nehru in the central cabinet. Both the savants differed on varied matters and Dr. Mahtab was taking undue advantage of these quibbles; but Pt. Nehru took it in a different way. After some days Dr. Mahtab was made the Secretary General of the Congress Party in Parliament but he remained dissatisfied with his new assignment. N. K. Chaudhury called on Pt. Nehru and requested him that a man like Mahtab should not be debarred from active politics. In this situation N. K. Chaudhury became puzzled and decided to relinquish the post of Chief Ministership in favour of Mahtab. At last, Mahtab was rewarded with the post of Governorship of Bombay. After staying there for one year, he felt uneasy. In the first week of September, 1955, Dalaihahai collapsed due to terrible floods in Cuttack district. Thousands of people were marooned in vast areas of Cuttack following torrential rainfall in the district. Due to heaviest down pour most of the areas of Cuttack were completely inundated. Due to this, harvest in that year got a severe
set back and weakened the economic condition of the people for years. The Chaudhury Government was severely criticised both inside and outside the Assembly that this havoc occurred due to the negligence of the dam authority. Another rumour spread that the authority did it intentionally so as to save Cuttack.

But this calamity too was given a political colour. The relief work in the affected areas was supervised by the then finance minister Radhanath Rath. A no-confidence motion was brought against the government in the plea of government's total negligence and irresponsibility in protecting the lives and property of the flood stricken people. Though the Chaudhury Government tried its best to provide relief and succour to the affected people, it could not escape popular discontentment throughout the state, people commented about the ineffective handling of the flood situation by the government. During this time sensational news and photographs of the flood stricken areas were flashed in the national newspapers of India. By then Mahtab was the Governor of Bombay. He visited the flood affected areas four months after the collapse of the Dalaighai and openly criticised the State Government and convinced Union Government to believe that due to the inefficiency of Governmental machinery, it had failed miserably in providing relief to the flood victims. So, the Chief Minister Chaudhury and Finance Minister Rath had shown their discontentment on such charges of Mahtab. Being discontented and dejected with the
caluminious remarks of Mahtab, Chief Minister Chaudhury wrote to Nehru and requested him to make him relieved of the burden, but Pt. Nehru had full confidence in Chaudhury and turned down his request. Chaudhury was maintaining an ascetic life for which he earned the sobriquet of hermit. But he used to get annoyed quickly. The diplomacy of Mahtab became efficacious here. He took advantage of the simplicity of Chaudhury and deliberately started creating problems by interfering in the administration of the Orissa Government. He had written a number of confidential letters to Pt. Nehru and Azad about the lack of foresightedness of the Orissa Government in controlling the flood of 1955. He described this terrible flood as the creation of the authority in power. He requested Pt. Nehru to declare emergency in Orissa and suggested certain administrative reforms in the state.

Mahtab was telling to his supporters that public memory was very short and due to their gullible nature a fiction could proved to be a fact by mere repetition in newspapers. He tried to make it feasible and directed his supporters to use "Prajatantra" for this purpose. When Dalai Ghai again collapsed in 1982, Mahtab described it as God's creation and wrote in the Prajatantra on 5th September, 1982, that "The creator will save His creation". Around this time the Congress party was divided into two fractions, one was supporting Mahtab and the other to Chaudhury. Nilamani Routray was Cabinet Minister in Chaudhury's Government but was
a staunch supporter of Mahtab. The strong supporters of Dr. Mahtab were Biren Mitra, Biju Pattanaik, Dinabandhu Sahu and Banamali Pattanaik. It was complained by the members of the Assembly that the Chief Minister was demoralising the Congress Party. In order to mobilise and attract the public opinion in favour of Congress, they felt the need for a strong leader in order to win the ensuing election. They also demanded the change of leadership in Orissa due to the indifferent and unenthusiastic attitude of N. K. Choudhury whose leadership would have diminished the chance of Congress in the election.

On 22nd September, 1955, Mahtab wrote one confidential letter to Dinabandhu Sahu where he described the dishevelled history of Orissa congress and criticised late Gopabandhu Chaudhury and N. K. Chaudhury as staunch orthodox and took the blame upon himself for not uprooting them. He also blamed himself for installing Chaudhury as the Chief Minister of Orissa and thereby brought a great loss to the state. He became dissatisfied with the procrastinating attitude of his supporters to dethrone N. K. Chaudhury. He was plotting to oust Chaudhury through a no-confidence motion but his dream could not materialise due to the supporters of Chaudhury. Being frantically eager to be the Chief Minister of Orissa he started telling that he has received a number of letters from the people of Orissa requesting him to rectify the precarious condition prevailing throughout the state. The All India Congress
Committee was scheduled to be held at Bombay in the month of June '56. It was decided by the loyalists of Mahtab who were getting ready to reveal the miserable condition of Orissa and make the senior members of the Congress Party convinced for the change of leadership. Biswanath Das, the then President of the Orissa Pradesh Congress Committee, had agreed for the change of leadership, with the followers of Mahtab on the ground that Choudhury would not provide any financial help in the ensuing election.

It was also decided by the supporters of Mahtab to submit a memorandum to the Congress High Command regarding the political as well as social problems of Orissa. Biju Pattnaik was entrusted with the task of carrying the followers of Mahtab in a special plane of Kalinga Airlines where he met each and every leader of the Congress Party and requested them for the change of leadership in Orissa. After observing the political situation of Orissa, Morarjee Desai, the then Chief Minister of Bombay had tried a lot to install Mahtab as Chief Minister of Orissa. However, Nehru was not at all in favour of the change of leadership in Orissa. Leaders like Moulana Azad, Dr. Bidhan Ch. Ray, Morarjee Desai and G. B. Pant were upset at the declining interest of N. K. Chaudhury. It was almost decided in the AICC Meeting at Bombay that Mahtab would replace Chaudhury. While the AICC Meeting was going on, the supporters of Mahtab were having several conclaves in Bombay Raj Bhavan for the change of leadership.
At that time Morarjee Desai commented upon the works of Mahtab's supporters and told "so you have turned the Bombay Governor's house into a place of conspiracy against Naba Babu ".

When the decision of the High Command, to change the leadership of the Government in Orissa was published, at that time the supporters of Choudhury were very much upset and agitated against such a decision. They complained before the High Command that there is no need for the change of leadership in Orissa. They got annoyed with the attitude of Biren Babu, Nilamani Babu and Biju Pattanaik. They again complained before the high command that most of the congress men and members of Assembly did not like Mahtab and these three leaders wanted to impose the leadership of Mahtab by any means. For this reason they were given the subriquet of "Three musketeers" by Pabitra Mohan Pradhan in his book "Mukti Pathe Sainik". These three leaders were having the idea that Pradhan was one of the dissidents who did not get a berth in the Choudhury Government, but at the same time was not in favour of Mahtab. Sadasiv Tripathy, a close friend of Choudhury tried his best to convince him not to resign and at last he resigned. Soon after the resignation of Choudhury in the last part of October, 1956, Mahtab resigned from the post of Governorship of Bombay and assumed the leadership of Orissa.

The ministry which was formed by Mahtab just before the
Second General Election was a sort of care-taker government. He took all the ministers of the Choudhury Government except five in his care-taker government. He excluded Sadasib Tripathy, Bhairab Ch. Mohanty, Tirthabasi Pradhan, Krupasindhu Nayak and Sunaram Soren intentionally. His revengeful attitude was unboasted soon after he assumed the leadership of Orissa. He played the "politics of revenge" with those who opposed his come back to Orissa politics. Nilambata Das, an established organiser of Congress Party and freedom fighter of the Soro Constituency of Balasore District wanted that Naba Babu should continue as the Chief Minister and as a result of which Mahtab got annoyed with him. He, as a resident of Soro wanted to be a candidate for the Assembly Election from the said constituency. In order to belie his desire Mahtab himself became a candidate from Soro Constituency. Whereas Das filed his nomination from Niligiri Constituency as an independent candidate against the wish of Mahtab. As the Leader of the Party Mahtab did not leave any stone unturned to defeat Das15. It was decided by the Congress much earlier that the second general election will be conducted under the supervision of Mahtab. Soon after the formation of Pradesh Congress Election Committee, a meeting was held in "Swarajya Ashram" for the selection of 140 candidates to the Orissa Legislative Assembly and 20 for Loksabha. At that time Biswa Nath Das was the President of Pradesh Congress Committee. Bidhan Ch. Ray, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, was assigned to supervise the election in Orissa by the High Command16.
REFERENCES

1. Balaram Mohanty, Orissa Ra Rajnaitik Itihas (The political History of Orissa,) Rastra Bhasa Samabaya Prakashan, 1979, Page 79.
2. Ibid.
3. Extract from 'Samaj', the Oriya daily, Dr. 19, 1955.
5. Ibid Page 287.
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
8. Balaram Mohanty, Orissa Ra Rajnaitik Itihas (The Political History of Orissa), Rastrabhasa Samabaya Prakashan, 1979, Page. 82.
12. Ibid Page 296.
13. Ibid
15. Nilamoni Routray, op cit page 299.
16. Pabitra Mohan Pradhan op cit page 117.
The year 1955 was really a turning point in the political history of Orissa. Around that time the States Reorganisation Commission declined to accept the claim of Orissa to Saraikala and Kharsuan, in their report dated the 30 September, 1955. The Ganatantra Parishad raised that question in the House of the People through R. N. Singhdeo, M.P. who resigned on that issue. The persistent demand of the Ganatantra Parishad for the amalgamation of Oriya speaking tracts with Orissa created a tense situation in the State. The Chaudhury Government took repressive measures. Secondly, during 1957, the construction of Hirakud Dam was nearing completion and while the construction was on, nearly two hundred villages lay submerged in river waters. The task of rehabilitation of the affected villages fell upon the Chaudhury Government. For this, a massive agitation was launched in Sambalpur and nearby areas to protest against the construction of Hirakud Dam. As a result of this reaction, the total number of seats held by the
Congress Party was further reduced in the Second General Election. Thirdly, in the month of September, 1955, Dalai Gai collapsed due to torrential rain in Cuttack District. Though the Choudhury Government tried its best to provide relief, it could not escape the popular discontentment. Throughout the state people criticised about the ineffective handling of the flood situation by the Government. For all these three events people turned away from the Congress. The Chief Minister N. K. Choudhury was defamed and tendered his resignation. Mahtab assumed the leadership of Orissa in October, 1956.

The Second General Election to the Orissa Legislative Assembly was held in February-March, 1957. In which neither Congress nor Ganatantra Parishad could secure majority of seats. Congress under Dr. Mahatab failed to improve its fortune.

Like the First General Election, there were double member constituencies, both for Hindus and Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes, so the number of constituencies present during 1957 election was 101. There were 28 seats for scheduled tribe and 21 for schedule caste reserved in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. Likewise, for parliamentary election two seats were reserved for Koraput, one each for Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh and Keonjhar for schedule tribe. Political process in Orissa since the first general election had revealed some trends in the operation of the party system.
The political process and the party system in Orissa since 1952-61 could be characterised as the phase of political instability. One party dominance by Congress was a complete failure in Orissa during this period. The Indian National Congress was not lucky enough to establish a stable government in Orissa during the first two general elections due to intra-party rivalry and dissensions. The Congress in Orissa has been based on factionalism and personality oriented politics. During the second general election of 1957, the people of Orissa participated both in the election to the Loksabha and to the State Legislative Assembly. The election was conducted and completed within a period of 14 days.

The electorate for the Legislative Assembly consisted of 1 crore 24 lakhs and 9 thousand voters. But 79 lakh 83 thousand voters actually responded to the polling and exercised their rights of franchise. The number of voters who participated in the election constituted only 35% (one out of three castes) of the entire electorate.

It was observed that after proper scrutiny and withdrawal of nomination papers, the total number of candidates contesting for the Assembly constituencies came to 507. The candidates in the second general election set up by recognised All India Parties, nominees of the regional or state level parties and the independent. For the Lok Sabha seats, the candidates contested too on the
tickets of recognised national level parties, state level parties and independent.

The following table would give an idea as to the different categories of contestants took part in the second general election.

**TABLE-I**

Candidates for the Legislative Assembly

Total number of seats : - 140

The number of constituencies fixed during the second general election was : - 101. Out of which 39 were double member constituencies and 62 were single member constituencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Parties</th>
<th>No. of candidates set up</th>
<th>No. elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantra Parishad</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.S.P.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent &amp; others</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lohia Socialist Party</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source - Report of the Election Commissioner of India, New Delhi, Government of India.
It was observed that all the parties put up more candidates in different constituencies in this election, in comparison to the first general election of 1952, in a hope to secure more seats in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. Congress put up 139 candidates which was equal to the total number of seats of Orissa Legislative Assembly. Ganatantra Parishad put up 15 more and communists 10 more candidates in this election. Only the PSP had reduced its strength from 79 to 45 to fight in this election. Actually 507 candidates were contesting for 139 seats of the Orissa Legislative Assembly as (Pt.) Nilakantha Das, a Congress candidate of Satyabadi constituency of Puri District was declared uncontested.

### TABLE-II

Candidates for Laksabha -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>No. of candidates</th>
<th>No. elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantra</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSP</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total number of seats for Laksabha - 20
Number of constituencies - 14
Out of which 6 are double member constituencies and 8 single member constituencies.

SOURCE - Reports of the Election Commissioner of India, New Delhi, Government of India.

In the second general election the congress suffered a debacle in the Poll, it secured only 8 seats instead of 11 in the first general election. So it lost 3 seats, the Ganatantra gained one more seat. So it improved its position from five to six. Independent improved its position by getting one more, PSP got two whereas it secured only 1 seat in the first general election. The party position of communist remained unchanged as it got one seat too in this election.

The figure in Table I & II depicts a consolidated picture of the candidates sponsored by different political parties and their success achieved in the second general election to the State Legislative Assembly and Loksabha.

It would appear from the election analysis of the second general election that out of 507 candidates, there were straight contest for 23 seats, triangular contests for 25 seats and more number of candidates were contesting in 53 constituencies.
Result of second general election to Orissa Legislative Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Party</th>
<th>Seats own</th>
<th>Popular votes polled</th>
<th>% of votes polled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>16,28,000</td>
<td>38.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantra Parishad</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>12,25,000</td>
<td>28.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.S.P.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4,42,000</td>
<td>10.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>3,57,000</td>
<td>8.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent &amp; Others</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6,00,000</td>
<td>14.28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political and social change in Orissa, 1959,

By : - F.G. Bailey.

Out of 507 candidates contesting in the second general election, 209 forfeited their deposits of which 11 were Congress candidates, 22 were Ganatantra Parishad, 14 were PSP, 18 were Communist, 166 were Independent and others. The highest number of votes cast in Tirtol of Cuttack District where 61% of voters actually responded in the polling. The lowest votes cast in dual member constituency of Ramgiri & Udayagiri of Ganjam was 6403 votes out of 55,065 votes, i.e., 12% of the total votes.

It is also remarkable that All India Parties like Congress
could not attain the position of a single majority party rather it presented a sordid picture of its electoral performance, with its strength reduced to 56\(^9\). The Congress captured more votes in coastal districts and had no base in western Orissa. The regional party like Ganatantra Parishad did remarkably well and attained the position of a close rival to the Congress by securing 51 seats. The Ganatantra Parishad also increased its strength from 31 to 51 seats in the second general election. Thus, this election created a landmark in the electoral history of Orissa. The Communist improved their earlier strength by two. The P.S.P. owned 11 seats but the percentage of votes reduced from 11.76 to 10.39%. The PSP did not field any candidates in Kalahandi, Bolangir, Sundargarh and Koraput. Independent and others secured 6 lakh votes but it lost 3 lakhs and 12 seats in the second general election. Because it had lost its importance in Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam, it achieved remarkable electoral success in Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Sambalpur, Kalahandi, Bolangir and Koraput. It secured 1 out of 4 votes in the first general election, 1 out of 7 votes in the second general election. In the single member constituency, Radhanath Rath, Editor of Samaj, a Congress candidate got highest votes from Athgarh of Cuttack District. He captured 23,733 votes i.e., 78.09% of the total votes. In double member constituency of Sundargarh, Pratap Sekhar Deo of Ganatantra Parishad secured
highest votes. He got 49,448 votes, i.e., 36.08% of the total votes. In this election 2 women candidates were also contesting.

What is more striking is that 5 out of 12 women won in the election. Basanta Manjari Devi was for the first time included as a Cabinet Minister in Mahtab's Government which was considered to be politically significant.

Mahtab was very much upset in the post election political situation, because Congress could not secure even half of the total strength of the house, rather its strength reduced from 67 to 56. No doubt, the Congress came out as a single largest party and was 5 seats ahead of Ganatantra Parishad. The result of the second general election accentuated political instability in Orissa. Mahtab took over to lead the Congress Party in the election of 1957 and wanted to remain in power at any cost. The political process of post electoral period of '57 was regarded as the politics of intense manipulation. The three musketeers, Biju Pattanaik, Biren Mitra and Nilomani Routray as referred by Pabitra Mohan Pradhan in his book "Muktipatthe Sainika" were entrusted with the task of winning over vacillating legislators of opposition parties. Ramachandra Pattanaik an affluent businessman was elected as an independent candidate from Pipli constituency of Puri district with whom Nilomani Routray was having a very good relation and succeeded in getting his support without much
effort. One Krishna Ch. Mohapatra was contesting as an independent candidate to the Assembly and the Chotray Saheb of Keonjhar Laxmi Narayan Bhanjadeo was contesting for the member of parliament seat with elephant as his election symbol, which coincided with the election symbol of Krushna Chandra Mohapatra. At the time of polling, people got confused as a single ballot paper was used for both Assembly as well as for Parliament election. So, while giving votes to Chotray Saheb, voters also stamped in favour of this tribal candidate. As a result of which Krushna Ch. Mohapatra got elected without spending a single paisa. But he claimed a sum of Rs. 10,000 as election expenses which was fully compensated by Biju Pattanaik and in return he assured to join in Congress. Mitrodwaya Singh Beriha was elected from Padampur constituency of Sambalpur district as a candidate of Ganatantra Party and steps were taken to get his support for Congress. While he was staying in a hotel in Cuttack and was brought before Mahtab, who was then staying in the two storeyed building of "Prajatantra". He, too, was compensated with a car. As per the conversation Beriha was given Rs. 20,000 to purchase a car but the same was not adequate for the purpose. However, the problem was solved as Sirajuddin, a mines contractor of Keonjhar paid the rest of the amount and thus he was purchased. Mochiram Tiria, a Ganatantra candidate of schedule tribe of Rairangpur, too, was lured with money. Congress was not at all thinking of getting the support of PSP as it was deeply attached with the Ganatantra Parishad and alliance between the Ganatantra Parishad and PSP was negotiated.
to establish "a discipline progressive political force" in the state. But the joint effort to form a non-congress ministry failed. The Communist Party occupied a position of crucial importance in that peculiar situation. Mohan Das was elected as a candidate of the Communist Party from Kakatpur constituency of Puri district who also was an intimate friend of Biren Mitra. He brought all the elected members of the Communist party before Mahatab for discussion. In order to get the support of Communist Party, all the elected members were given a sum of Rs. 50,000 each for their election expenses and the transaction was made through Harihar Das and Gobinda Das. They took the money and on the very next day returned the same as they did not like to go against their conscience and give more priority to idealism than money. At that time Ramamurty, a top level leader of Communist Party had visited Cuttack, the leaders of Ganatantra Parishad called on Murty for the support of Communist Party in the Assembly but their request was turned down by Murty. One press statement was issued by the Communist Party and was flashed in all leading newspapers which helped the Congress a lot to form the Government. This statement also helped the Governor to invite the leaders of the Congress to form the government. A plan was chalked out by the Mahatab group to get the support of the five elected members of Jharkhand Party. And Pattanaik was entrusted with
the task of negotiating with Jayapal Singh, the leader of Jharkhand Party. The Jharkhand candidates were staying in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts and was too difficult to communicate with them easily. Mahtab was meeting the Governor everyday and kept him informed about the position of all parties. Before getting any assurance neither verbal nor written from the Jharkhand Party, Mahtab told the Governor about their support to Congress. He gave a list of supporters while talking with the Governor. The nine Communist members declared to remain neutral, in the Assembly's total seat of 140. Out of the rest 131 members, 68 supporters consisted of; Congress 56, 3 defected members of Ganatantra Parishad, 5 Jharkhand members and 4 Independent members supporting Mahtab. But, beyond the expectation of Mahtab, the Governor wanted to see the written letters in which the Jharkhand expressed their support in favour of Mahtab. In this critical situation, Mahtab handed over a letter to the Governor containing fake signatures of Jharkhand members. But he was worried about the consequence of this illegal Act. Mahtab narrated the whole story before Biju Pattanaik who brought all the Jharkhand members from Sundargarh and Mayurbhanj districts and were duly compensated by him. Biju Pattanaik was spending money and was the main accomplice to make Mahtab the Chief Minister of Orissa. As a result of the politics of intense manipulation, four independent members joined the Congress and at a later date some Ganatantra Parishad members defected to it. Mahtab managed to carry on
a minority government with the support of the Jharkhand Party and the consent of the Communist Party. The leader of the Ganatantra Parishad, the second largest party of Orissa, Singhdeo became the leader of the opposition.

The members of the newly elected assembly took their oath in the first week of April 1957. Mahtab formed a two-tier ministry, in which Nilomani Routray, Lingraj Panigrahi, Radhanath Rath, Dinabandhu Sahu, Sailendra Narayan Bhanjdeo, Satyapriya Mohanty, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan and Srimati Basanta Manjari Devi were included as Cabinet Ministers. Santanu Kumar Das, Vir Vikram Singh Bariha, Kumud Ch. Singh Deo, Anup Singhdeo and Himansu Sekhar Padhee were appointed as Deputy Ministers. The first session was summoned on 27 May, 1957, and on the same day the election of the speaker was held. Pt. Nilakantha Das was elected as the speaker of the Assembly. On the 29 May, Jadumani Mangaraj was elected as the deputy speaker of the Assembly.15

Though the Congress Party lacked majority in the Orissa Assembly still it was invited to form the Ministry as a result of which the Governor was criticised by the Press as well as by opposition throughout India. The Congress Party was always struggling to gain the support of the opposition both inside and outside the Assembly. Those who defected to Congress were persuaded...
outside the assembly to withdraw their support. Out of 6 Independent candidates, 4 had joined the Congress beforehand, and one more joined later on. During the budget session of 1958, the opposition party demanded votes on each item and the difference of votes was always between 3 or 4. So, the Congress tried ceaselessly to win over the support of two or three more candidates from Ganatantra Parishad. Having realised the weakness of the Congress Party, the newly defected members constantly raised their demands in this horse-trading. It became difficult to appease the five Jharkhand members, who defected to Congress. Besides, the late Jayapal Singh was another headache for the Congress Party. Once the Governor received the telegram from 3 Jharkhand members of Keonjhar about their withdrawal of support from Congress. The leader of the opposition party called on the Governor and claimed of the said fact. The Governor told the leader of the opposition to show the document at 9 A.M. of the next day, so as to prove the veracity of their demand. Mahtab came to know that the Maharaja of Kalahandi Pratap Keshari Deo had taken the signature from each of the Jharkhand members. Pattanaik and Biren Babu were sent to Rairangpur to discuss with them about the future course of action. After convincing them and making them lure with money, they wrote another letter to the Governor indicating that they were compelled to write the letter to the Governor for the withdrawal of their support at the instigation
of Kalahandi Maharaja. With this letter they returned to Bhubaneswar. En route to Bhubaneswar they saw the car of Kalahandi Maharaja at Khandatara. While crossing the river with the barge, Biren Mitra gave a tip of Rs. 100/- and instructed him not to help any body in crossing the river till before the next morning. After some time the Maharaja of Kalahandi reached there and requested the boat man to help him in crossing the river but he denied flatly that his boat is filled with water and told his inability to help him. On reaching at Bhubaneswar, Biju Pattanaik and Biren Mitra handed over the letters to Mahatab who showed the same to the Governor before 9 A.M. But, the unfortunate Maharaja could not reach Bhubaneswar till 11 A.M. of that day.

By that time the issue of horse trading amongst the members of Assembly was very widely publicised. Pattanaik was spending money and many other businessmen and mine-owners were prepared to spend money in Bhubaneswar. Accusations to the effect that the Government is surviving because of corrupt practices were floating. Such accusations also reached the Congress high-command. The Congress high-command felt that the Congress Party's reputation was at stake because of such activities. U. N. Dhebar, the then President of AICC, had come to Orissa to investigate this. Many Congress activists had met him and gave details of such practices. When Dhebar met Mahtab and brought to his notice that he is...
indulging in such corruption and buying of legislators with money through Biju Babu and Biren Babu. Mahtab told Dhebar Bhai clearly that he was not aware of any such nefarious transaction and if they were doing it, this was for their selfish interest.

Gradually, it became more and more difficult to keep the minority Congress Government in power on the basis of other support and help. Mitrodwaya Singh Beriha, who had joined Congress, went back to the Ganatantra Party. The Loksabha M. P. from Kalahandi, Maharaja P. K. Deo, brought the Congress Deputy Minister Anup Singhdeo enticed him to the plan that if the Congress Ministry was to fall, then Ganatantra Party would form a coalition ministry where Anup Singhdeo would be the Cabinet Minister. Finally, the police intelligence informed that Anup Singhdeo was kept in hiding at the palace of the Sundargarh Maharaja's Bhubaneswar residence. Biju Pattanaik then left for the residence of the Raja of Sundargarh. There he saw the Sundargarh Raja, Kalahandi Raja and many other legislators of Ganatantra Parishad. Smelling danger, the Parishad men immediately shut Anup Singhdeo in a room. Biju Pattanaik did not care for any formality and entered into the drawing room and shouted "where is Anup". But, provoked by Pattanaik's vituperations, he came out of the room. As soon as he came out, Pattanaik caught hold of his hand which Anup could not withstand and rolled down on the floor.
When Biju Pattanaik tried to make him stand up, two servants of Sundargarh Raja slapped Pattanaik on the face and other Parishad members pounced upon him and dressed him down. Kalahandi Maharaja aimed a gun at Biju Babu and in the melee that ensued Biju Babu's shirt was torn. The appearance of Biju Babu with the torn shirt enraged the Congress workers waiting outside. Biju Babu then told Chief Minister, Mahatab everything. Home Minister, Lingaraj Panigrahi was previously the Chief Justice of the High Court. He called the S.P. to instruct him regarding the charges that were levelled against Kalahandi Raja P. K. Deo, Sundargarh Raja U. P. Deo, Anup Singh Deo and other MLAs as per the provisions of Indian Penal Code. Kalahandi Maharaja was charged with the act of kidnapping Congress MLA, Mohan Nayak and insisting on him to defect to Ganatantra Party. Following the recording of such charges in the Police Station, Kalahandi Raja, Sundargarh Maharaja and Anup Singh Deo were arrested and sent to Khurda Jail. Since Anup Singh Deo was a Minister, it was considered proper to dismiss him first before arresting him.

In order to make the people aware of the down fall of the parliamentary democracy, the Press Trust of India published the revengeful measures taken against the opposition just to enliven the minority government. Separate news were published in the Statesman and the Hindu regarding the misuse of power of the government of Orissa so as to file many cases against the legislators and make
them arrested. By that time the late N. R. Swamy was the reporter of PTI and the Hindu for the region of Orissa. In order to give a lesson to Swamy, Mahtab had a conclave with the retired chief justice and the then home minister Linga Raj Panigrahi. They branded Swamy a CIA agent. It was decided to flash in the papers that Swamy the bottle friend of the Ex-rulers and was bribed by them so as to scandalise Congress Ministry. Panigrahi instructed Pranakrushna Mohanty, Secretary of Home affairs to write against the P.T.I. Reporter. Just after 7 days of the receipt of the letter, the General Manager met the Chief Minister of Orissa in Bhubaneswar. Swamy was transferred from Cuttack to Bijayawada of Andhra Pradesh. In the meantime the revengeful attitude of Orissa Government to gag the Press created a sensation all over India. This incident put Nehru in embarrassing position. Pandit Nehru told on the floor of the Parliament "I agree that it is a serious matter and the home secretary did not function as he should have done. We enquired into the cases and found that he did not have sufficient justification in doing so. Even if he had justification he had no business to write". Being frightened at the pungent remarks of the Prime Minister, the Chief Minister of Orissa did not hesitate to put the secretary of Home Affairs into trouble. Thus in order to prove himself clean, Mahtab told to withdraw the letter written against Swamy and that an enquiry would be made against the home secretary to get
the fact. On this ground Swamy did not think it proper to serve and retired from the service of PTI to uphold his self respect. He lodged a defamation case against the Government of Orissa in the subordinate court of Cuttack. Swamy won the case and the Government of Orissa was asked to pay a sum of Rs. 40,000/- by way of compensation. But the Government of Orissa appealed in the High Court. The Hon'ble High Court upheld the decision of the lower court. However, after proper revaluation, the compensatory amount was reduced to Rs. 18,000/-. Dr. F. G. Bailey, an associate professor of school of Oriental and African Studies in the London University was engaged in the research on the politics of Government of Orissa during 1958-59. After finishing his research work he wrote a book titled "Political and Social changes in Orissa in 1959".

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15. Records of the Orissa Legislative Assembly.
The Mahtab ministry of 1957 was passing through a critical period due to political defection. This was one of the remarkable periods in Orissa's political history - due to intense manipulation, horse trading and rampant political corruption. Majority of the members of the Assembly were primarily guided by material rewards and powers. They attached no importance to ideological considerations. Consequently, defection and counter defection destroyed the stability of the Government. That was the case with the government of Mahtab during 1957 in Orissa. He came to power and thus manipulating an artificial majority through money. It was realised during the budget session of 1958 that it would be quite difficult to run the government. Mahtab sought the cooperation of the opposition and told that in the absence of political stability administration and planning could never be possible. Biju Pattanik seconded the version of the Chief Minister and requested the members of the opposition to prevent political instability for the development of the state. Mahtab was very much interested in the formation of a coalitional government, but he felt uneasy to discuss the matter with Pt. Nehru.
During the second general election, congress party got 56 seats of the Assembly's total seats of 140, while GP begged 51 seats. Later, with the defection of a few members from the GP and induction of few independent members, congress could raise its strength in the Assembly to 58⁵. The five member Jharkhand agreed to support the congress ministry and the 8 member communist party decided to remain neutral. In this circumstance Mahtab formed ministry in 1957. Returning to power Mahtab played the politics of revenge and tried to finish the political career of opponents like Surendra Nath Pattanaik, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan and Bijay Pani who had tried for the continuance of N.K. Chaudhury as the chief minister and opposed the return of Mahtab from Bombay⁶. Estrangement grew with some of his trusted loyalists like Biren Mitra, the then pradesh congress president and Dinabandhu Sahu, the minister for Industry and mines who had tried a lot for his return to the state from Bombay⁷. Biren Mitra aspired to become a minister but Mahatab never allowed him. Dinabandhu Sahu, the industry and mines minister fell out with Mahtab by not granting a lease to Sirajuddin for a chromite mine in Sukrangi in Keonjhar district⁸. Mahtab got annoyed at the attitudes of Sahu and called for file from the mines department and himself granted the lease in favour of Sirajuddin; a leading mine owner who spent a large amount of money inorder to help Mahtab to run his artificial majority party government⁹.
Mahtab was displeased with Sahu and dropped him from the cabinet when the coalition ministry was formed later with Ganatantra Parishad. During the 1958 budget session, the hostility between the ruling congress and the opposition party became acute. The opposition party demanded a vote on government sponsored bill tabled in the Assembly regarding the pay and allowance of the Deputy Speaker. On being put to vote the government just managed to scrape through by two votes (50-48). Again, during the 1958 budget session the government also escaped by 2 votes (68-66) on the appropriation bill in the Assembly. It is said that during the budget session, the supporters of congress had to be made satisfied everyday either in cash or in kind. Another reason which exposed the weakness of the Mahtab ministry was the election to three vacant Rajyasahba seats from state's Assembly on 24 March, 1958. When the result was declared it was found that Harihar Patel of Ganatantra Parishad, Dibakar Pattanaik of PSP and Bibhudendra Mishra of Congress had got through. Hannif another congress candidate lost unexpectedly in the by-election due to cross voting of congress members and supporters.

Changing its earlier position of neutrality the Communist Party slowly became pro Ganatantra Parishad. 4 members from congress party (who had earlier defected from Ganatantra Parishad to congress) now changed their allegiance back to Ganatantra Parishad. The circumstance in which one MP from Ganatantra Parishad, 3
M.L.As and one deputy minister who had just defected from congress to Ganatantra Parishad, were arrested at Bhubaneswar on 26th and 27th April 1957, created an uproar throughout the country. The concerned Deputy Minister was dismissed. Mahtab, the shrewd manipulator, soon realised the difficulty of running the government with such a perilous strength in the Legislature. Despite having a majority support in the Assembly, Mahtab's ministry had to accede to High command's dictates and resigned. Soon after congress party's victory in two subsequent byelections the decision of High command proved unjustified.

On the 1st January 1948, the princely states of Orissa merged and it led to the creation of a separate greater Orissa. R.N. Singhdeo till this time was a wellknown opposition figure in Orissa politics. From 22nd May 1959, he shouldered the heavy responsibility of administration as one of leading politicians.

When a separate Orissa came into being on 1st Januray 1948 a new political party called Ganatantra Parishad too emerged. R.N. Singhdeo held the leadership of that party. The Ganatantra Parishad had no history, no tradition, no sacrifices, no political propaganda and even no effective public relation. Yet the party managed to win 31 seats in the first general election and 51 seats in the second general election in the Orissa Legislative Assembly. Three main factors were responsible for the success of Ganatantra.
Parishad, particularly in the 2nd general election. Firstly, Raje-
ndraain's popularity in the Garjat areas. In the two subsequent
election, 9 members elected to the Assembly from his own state
and the neighbouring Sonepur, all belonged to the Ganatantra
Parishad. Secondly, in the old Garjat areas, such parties like
the congress, socialist, and communist had no existence. Nine out
of thirteen districts of Orissa belonged to the old Garjats. Hence,
in these districts Ganatantra Parishad could win 50 out of total 73
seats. In the coastal districts of Puri, Cuttack, Balasore and
Ganjam, owing to dominant influence of congress party, Ganatantra
Parishad could not get much success here. During the feudal
times Prajamandal movement had some effects in Dhenkanal, Nilagiri
and Ranpur estates still the traditional outlook of the people and
their habitual allegiance to the erstwhile rulers can be
cited, as one more reason for Ganatantra Parishad's victory.

Thirdly, after the merger of the Garjats, the subjects did
not like the new economic system. Previously, the inhabitants
of the Garjat used to pay less revenue for cultivating large areas
of land. After the merger people had to pay more revenue.
The exploitation of the Jungles during the Monarchical rule was
no longer possible now. The provincial administration did not
care for the people. Previously people had direct approach to
the Raja and could get their remedy. But the remedy was now
too far away. All these wounded the feelings of the Garjat people.
The proposal to back up land revenue owing to availability of irrigation facility, after the construction led to much discontent in Sambalpur and its neighbouring areas. Many people felt the necessity of a coalition ministry (of the two major parties) so as to muster the support of the people for execution of the plan for Rourkela steel plant and Hirakud dam project. The task of bringing about political consciousness among the people of these erstwhile Garjat areas, was entrusted upon Patna Maharaj R.N. Singhdeo.

The chief minister of Orissa, Mahtab told that to form a stable government, a coalition ministry comprising both the large political parties (congress and Ganatantra Parishad) was the only option. The Utkal Pradesh Congress working committee and the PCC both had recommended in their session of the 5th May for the formation of a congress Ganatantra Parishad coalition government. He also told that the proposal for a congress-Ganatantra Parishad coalition ministry was currently under the consideration of the Congress Parliamentary Board. If the Board accepts then a coalition ministry would be formed. Mahtab would go to Delhi to attend the meetings of congress working committee and AICC. The Utkal PCC president, Rajkishore Bose was then in Delhi.

Biswa Nath Das, M.P while opposing the proposed congress-Ganatantra Parishad ministry had said that "It is a matter of regret that the Utkal PCC has ratified this proposal for a coalition."
A coalition ministry, historically, has always been a failure. There is no reason to believe that this could not be repeated this time”.

With a view to know clearly the attitudes of Ganatantra Parishad regarding the proposal for a united Congress-Ganatantra Parishad front, Pandit Nehru, Morarjee Desai, U.N. Dhabbar and congress president, Mrs Indira Gandhi and other congress leaders including those from the state would discuss directly with the Ganatantra Parishad leader, R.N. Singhdeo. The talks would be held so as to dispel doubts about the terms and conditions of the proposed agreements. The AICC members from Orissa had met the congress president. Those members were, Mahtab, Rajkishore Bose, T. Sangana, Nityananda Kanungo, Basant Manjari Devi and Jaganmohan Rao. Biswanath Das opposed this proposal and did not even met the congress president.

A secret meeting of the AICC was held to consider the political situation in Orissa. The meeting was considering proposed formation of a coalition ministry in the light of those principles of congress party adopted at its Nagpur convention, such as fixing the maximum ceiling for land and co-operative farming movement etc. The chief minister, Mahtab and PCC chief Rajkishore Bose were present at this meeting. The Union Finance Minister, Morarjee Desai and the members of Central Parliamentary Board strongly
supported the formation of a congress-Ganatantra Parishad coalition in Orissa. The Union Deputy Minister for planning, S.N. Mishra and Govind Sahay were stiffly opposed to this proposal. Rejecting the argument, that the Ganatantra Parishad was a reactionary party and it was not desirable for the congress to associate with it. Desai contended that if the Ganatantra Parishad was prepared to accept congress principles then why should one oppose the coalition proposal. The Ganatanta Parishad had accepted all the principles of the congress party starting from its Nagpur programme. Desai pointed out that Mahtab would decide about the number of Ganatantra Parishad members in the coalition ministry along with deciding who would be in the ministry. Besides, there was the possibility of a mutual agreement with the Ganatantra Parishad. In case of any Byelection, both the congress party and the Ganatantra Parishad would not put candidates against each other in their respective areas of influence. Opposing the proposal, Syam Nandan Mishra said Ganatantra Parishad was a feudalistic party. Should congress members from now onwards start slogan like "long live Patna Maharaj" and "victory to Kalahandi Maharaj"? Rajkishore Bose is reported to have said that the formation of a coalition ministry was the only viable solution to the current political instability prevailing in the state. Otherwise, the economic development in the state would take a backseat. Prime Minister Pandit Nehru said that the real implication of the congress-Ganatantra Parishad coalition ministry is that the Ganatantra Parishad has
accepted the programme and policies of the congress party, particularly its Nagpur programme. Ganatantra Parishad constitutes of the representatives from predominantly tribal backward areas. There was no semblence of a political life there till independence. Ganatantra Parishad, over the last few years had been propagating socialistic principles and criticizing that the congress party is not moving along the socialistic path. Out of the five members of the Parliamentary Board of the Ganatantra Parishad, Rajendra Narayan Singhdeo resigned from Chairmanship and Surendra Mohanty became the chairman. Besides, Kalahandi Maharaja, P.K. Deo, M.P., Sradhakar Supakar, M.P., and Harihar Patel were the other members. Accepting the proposal for a coalition ministry, the Parliamentary Board of the Ganatantra Parishad, has sent a reply to Mahtab wherein three conditions have been laid down for the formation of the coalition ministry. Those three conditions are (1) There would be no question of merging the Ganatantra Parishad with the congress party, (2) Both Ganatantra Parishad and congress party would have equal number of representatives, (3) Only those programmes which are agreeable to both the parties would be executed.

After accepting the resignation of the fourteen members congress ministry led by H.K. Mahtab, the Governor, Sukhthankar has extended an invitation to the congress and Ganatantra Parishad for forming a coalitional ministry. With R.N. Singhdeo from the Ganatantra Parishad, Radhanath Rath from the congress, Mahtab formed
the smallest cabinet. The congress-Ganatantra Parishad coalition ministry, the 9th ministry till date was sworn in at the Rajbhaban at 10'0' clock in the morning, a Friday, the 22nd May 1959. Singhdeo was in charge of finance, law, planning, industry, mines, labour and tribal and community welfare. R.N. Rath was in charge of Development, supply, transport and commerce and urban development. H.K. Mahtab, the chief minister had the education, health, political and services, revenue and home portfolio under him. With the formation of this ministry, the two rival principal political parties influential in two distinct sub regions of Orissa since the integration of the Garjat areas would come to an end. During the first and second general election, Ganatantra Parishad could establish its hold and further consolidate it in many coastal districts and the ex-Garjat areas.

The congress president, Indira Gandhi had informed Mahtab that the present three member ministry be expanded immediately for an efficient administration. Any further delay in expansion would cause discontentment within the congress organisational setup. The three ministry was expanded with the inclusion of eight new ministers on the 15th July 1959. They are: (1) Satypriya Mohanty, (2) Sailendra Narayan Bhanjadeo, (3) Nilamani Rautray, (4) Brundaban Nayak from congress party and (5) Rajballab Mishra, (6) Ram Prasad Mishra, (7) Laxmi Prasad Mishra, (8) Udit Pratap Sekhar Deo from the Ganatantra Parishad. Portfolios were redistributed among the ministers.
H.K. Mahtab - Home, education and political services,
R.N. Rath - Development,
Satya Priya Mohanty - Revenue,
Nilamani Routray - Commerce & Supply,
S.N. Bhanjadeo - Irrigation and electricity,
Brundaban Nayak - Transport, Road & Building,

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R.N. Singhdeo - Finance, law, planning, industry,
Rajballabh Mishra - Health, rehabilitation,
Udit Pratap Deo - Valley Development & anticorruption,
Laxmi Prasad Mishra - Community Development and Grampanchayat.

After staying in office for a period of one year and nine months the coalition ministry collapsed in February 1961 and president's rule promulgated. Following the election in June 1961, Biju Pattanaik assumed the office of chief ministership.

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ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE MAHTAB GOVERNMENT

Hare Krushna Mahtab started his political career by challenging the leadership of Nilakantha Das in 1937 and established himself as the undisputed and unquestioned leader of the congress party. Mahtab contested against Das for the office of the President and defeated him by 13 - 12 votes, i.e by the margin of one vote only, and became the PCC President. In 1946 elections held under limited franchise, the congress came out with a comfortable majority with 47 seats and Mahtab formed the Government. Ballav Bhai Patel, the architect of the integration of states while inaugurating the provincial state Advisory Board, set up by the Government of central provinces in 1948, told very high of Mahtab and said that Mahtab alone could claim the credit for merger of the feudatory states with Orissa province. His ceaseless efforts for the merger of princely states started in 1938 and got executed in 1948 under the able guidance of Patel. So, Mahtab can rightly be called the maker of Greater Orissa. Significantly, the process of the integration of feudatory states in India began in Orissa. The Orissa states were the first to sign an agreement with the Government of India on December 14th and 15th, 1947 at Cuttack.
Where the rulers handed over the administration of their states to the Dominion Government who delegated the administrative power to the Provincial Government of Orissa. On January 1st 1948, the congress government of Orissa headed by Mahtab, assumed responsibility for the administration of all former feudatory states with the exception of Mayurbhanj. Speaking of Mahtab's role in the merger of states, Sardar said, "though Orissa is a undeveloped state it led the way for the rest of India to follow". But during the time of state reorganisation, Mahtab kept himself aloof from the issue for which he was subjected to public criticism. In the pre-independence period Mahtab was undoubtedly a strong leader of Orissa. Mahtab was a confidant lieutenant of Patel. He was impressed by the administrative skill of Mahtab and the way he had tackled the agitation against the Hirakud Dam.

Mahtab's tenure in the Central Cabinet as the Minister for Industry and Supply made him unpopular. Pandit Nehru was not satisfied with him "because of his lapses and interferences in the affairs of the other ministeries of the Government of India", for which he had received letters of warning from Pandit Nehru and who did not include him when a new cabinet was formed after the 1952 election. Mahtab, an active politician was so to say politically unemployed and remained as a member of Loksabha till 1955. In 1955 he was appointed as the Governor of Bombay.
but engrossed himself in the politics of Orissa state. He encour-
gaged a faction inside the congress party known as Mahtab Group
and thus weakened the integrity, discipline in the congress organi-
sational set up. This Mahtab Group led by two great stalwarts
Biju Patnaik and Biren Mitra deliberately creating problems, and
difficulty in the administration of the Chaudhury Government
almost everyday for which the congress party became unpopular.
In these circumstances Mahtab returned to Orissa for conducting
the second general election. But when the result of the second
general election was declared it was found that the congress could
not get majority votes in the Assembly and from 1952 to 1961
(the post-independence period) congress came out only as a single
largest party instead of a single majority party. Due to his
poor leadership, the congress party failed to secure absolute
majority in the Assembly and had to form Government with only
67 members and managed to seek the support of some Jharkhand
members and remained in power by manipulating artificial majority.
At last he was forced to enter into the coalition with the Ganatantra
Parishad in 1959 due to defection and counter defection.

Till 1960 Mahtab continued as the chief minister of the coaliti-

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...
that President's rule was promulgated for a few months.

Mahtab became complacent for his success in the following fields between 1957-1960.

1. During N.K. Choudhury's tenure, the construction work of the new capital was postponed at the advice of the then finance minister, Radhanath Rath. This was not included in the five year plan. So, all works had come to a standstill. Mahtab got it included in the second five year plan and after a lapse of about five years the construction work of the capital got started again.

2. The Orissa Museum was established as per the pattern of the Bombay museum.

3. The Zoo and Botanical garden at Nandan Kanan was set up.

4. All government offices were transferred from Cuttack to Bhubaneswar.

5. The new Governor's house was constructed.

6. The State Assembly building too was constructed.

7. The secretariat work of the secretariat complex too was completed.

8. Three Academies, viz. Sahitya Academy, Sangeet Natya Academy and Lalit Kala Academy was set up.
9. The Kala Mandap and Rabindra Mandap were built inorder to house cultural festival, meeting and gatherings.

10. The old Assembly Hall was named after Sardar Patel.

11. The site selection for foundation stone laying for the permanent building of Utkal University were done at Bhubaneswar.

12. The Kalinga Iron Work at Barbil, Ferro-Manganese Plant at Joda and Raygada, for refractories, one cement factory, one steel tube factory, one Aluminium plant, cable plant and few Industrial estates came into being during his tenure of chief ministership.

The State Financial Corporation also came into being during his time. Besides the Hirakud Dam Project, two other major irrigation projects the Mahanadi Delta and the Salandi were taken up for execution. In April 1960, the Hirakud Dam Project was transferred from the control of the Government of India to Government of Orissa as per the decision of Central Irrigation and Power Minister, Hafij Mohammad Ibrahim and Mahtab, the chief minister of Orissa.

Orissa Mining Corporation was established. This government gave utmost importance to the exploitation of the vast mineral
Technical education was imparted in various educational institutions. The University College of Engineering was inaugurated by Humayun Kabir on July 5th, 1959. Orissa under Mahtab’s leadership made wonderful progress. At this stage, Mahtab was at the height of his popularity because of his excellent performance as a people’s leader.

It is pertinent to mention here the process of change through which the congress party had started moving. A few weeks before his resignation as the chief minister of Orissa, Mahtab had long discussions with Ashok Mehta regarding the election expenses funds of the congress party. He tried to explain to Mahtab in view of its adoption of socialistic principles, the congress should not accept subscription from the rich. But it is appropriate for the congress Government to intercept a certain amount at a fixed percentage from the amount spent on developmental works. He particularly laid stress on interception.

Mahtab adhered to his argument on the way for collecting funds for the party. Then Mahtab went to the Union Home Minister, Lal Banadur Sastri and asked him whether the Ashok Mehta line of argument was the Prime Minister’s principles. Sastri smiled to add that such was the ethos of the then society. Then Mahtab decided not to participate in any provincial election, not to accept any post. In view of this decision, he did not contest in the
mid-term elections of 1961, held after the promulgation of the President's rule. Then in 1962, he contested for the Loksabha from an ex-princely state constituency and got elected uncontested.

The congress party spent a phenomenal amount in 1961 mid-term election (Assembly) and won a majority in the Assembly under Biju Pattnaik. Prime Minister Pandit Nehru appointed Maljiatajb as the vice chairman of the congress parliamentary board following the 1962 Lok Sabha election. At that time there were many active and experienced congress members in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha as well. They used to come to Mahtab's official residence almost every evening. There they decided that as a party the congress should not play a minor role and should have a distinct voice and role in influencing the administration. As a result, the executive committee of the party became as powerful as the Government.

REFERENCES


4. V. P. Menon, pages 153-162.


8. Records of the Orissa Legislative Assembly.


11. Ibid.


13. S. Nanda, OP cit page 32.
