In politics defection can be compared with cancer because it influences the moral standard of the people giving rise to divergent problems in the society. When a person leaves the party on whose ticket he was elected in order to achieve any self interest or to bring out the downfall of a party in power, then it is called defection. Political defection is a threat to our Parliamentary democracy as it paralyses a representative form of Government. As the Government depends more upon these defectors either for its continuation or for a change, each rational being was thinking for a solution to this plague. The Government of Rajiv Gandhi which secured a thumping majority in the eighth General Election 1984, has come forward with antidote to this plague. On 24 January, 1985 the Congress (I) Government of Rajiv Gandhi introduced a bill in the Loksabha to secure automatic disqualification of political defectors from membership of either House which the political set-up will turn a new leaf for coming years. Political turncoatism emerged as the base of Indian
Politics since 1967 and though every party has condemned the evil, none had the honesty and courage to confront and combat it.

Political defection was not unknown in a Parliamentary system of Government but it became too common and widespread in state legislatures. Defection generally means desertion or running away from duty. In politics it means change of party or shifting of loyalty or floor crossing. Such defections means switching of loyalty by a legislator after getting elected. The menace of defections in recent years in the form of floor crossing, changing parties, party hopping, and switching over loyalties to a great extent spoiled the image of politicians, made nonsensical party principles and reduced the parliamentary system to a mockery.

Jaya Prakash Narayan defined defection thus, "Any elected member of a legislature who has been allotted the reserved symbol of any political party, can be deemed to, have defected it, after being elected, he voluntarily renounces allegiance to, or association with, such political party, provided his act is not in consequence of the decision of the party concerned." He called defection a "fraud upon electorate".

Political defection in India occurs due to various reasons.
First and foremost was the ambition for power. The Congress Party ruled as a single dominant party both at the Centre and states for nearly two decades from 1947 to 1967. The strength of this party was considerably reduced in Parliament and it lost majority in eight states legislatures including Orissa in the fourth General Election of 1967. But the Central Parliamentary Board of Congress took a decision on 27 February, 1967 that the Congress should enter a coalition Government in any state, where it did not have an absolute majority. In this circumstance, the independents discarded their party and joined the Congress Party with the intention of getting power. In this way the Congress encouraged the politics of defection and in course of time the other parties followed it up. The second factor that led to defection is that there is a great deal of difference in the status of a minister and an ordinary M.L.A.. If and when these M.L.A.s are offered or promised ministership, they do not hesitate to leave their party on whose tickets and symbols they are elected. Though all the defecting legislators do not get the ministership but they are satisfied if one or two among their group get it, they would utilise the office of that minister to fulfil their personal ends. The third reason is that legislators sometimes lost faith in the policies and ideologies of the party to which they originally belonged and developed a liking for the policies and programmes of some other party and therefore, they crossed the floor. This is quite democratic but such cases are very rare. Generally
most of the legislators are motivated by personal gain and love for power. The absence of a strong and dynamic leadership within the party, the unstable and slender majority in the Legislative Assembly has paved the way for political defections. Another factor that encourages defections is the complete aloofness and indifference of the electorate to acts of defection by their representatives particularly in states like Orissa, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. There was hypocrisy in Indian politics as there was a great difference between false ideal and political realities with high degree of poverty and illiteracy. Temptation of money, status, power or the denial of all these leads to defections. The electorate are ignorant of the consequence of defection as a result of which the prominent defectors are re-elected. As Indian democracy is purely guided by the principle of personality oriented politics. The defectors have no fear of loosing the support of their electors and indulged in the politics of defection as repeatedly as necessary to come to power. S.C. Kashyap in his book "Politics of defection" says defection in politics covers a wide range of activity of the defector and each lead to the act of political desertion. Such as:

(a) Leaving a party after being elected as a legislator on its ticket and joining another party.

(b) Leaving the party, joining another and then returning to the original party.
(c) Resigning from a party but remaining independent.

(d) Leaving a party to form another party.

The act of defection begins with the shifting or severance of political allegiance of a legislator from a party with any intention whatsoever. Thus a number of factors are responsible for political defection.

Political defection in Orissa was well known since the inauguration of the constitution of India. The political development of Orissa from 1952 to 1961 was described as the era of the 'Politics of defection', 'Politics of confusion', 'Politics of survival', and 'Politics of transition'. It was also given a name of 'Politics of floor crossing', 'Politics of Political turncoatism', 'Politics of Changing party allegiances etc'. The election of 1952 was the first election on the basis of Universal adult franchise. Out of the 140 seats, the Congress party contested for 135 seats and won 65 seats. The Ganatantra Parishad set up 58 candidates and 31 were elected to the Assembly from the Old Garjats. The Socialist party procured 10 seats whereas the communists got 7 seats. There were 202 independent candidates contested and 23 out of them got elected. None out of 7 Krushaka Majdoor Praja Party candidates could be elected. There were three forward Block (Marxist) candidates and only one could be elected. After
the General Election of 1952, 12 Independent members formed the "Independent Legislature Group" with Dr. Prana Krushna Parija as its leader. Another party named as the "Independent People's Party" was formed with four members under Pandit Nilakantha Das. In 1956, all the MLAs and MPs of Ganatantra Parishad took a decision at the Party level that they should resign in protest against the implementation of the states Re-organisation Scheme. The Congress leadership was discredited as it could not present the case either before the S. R. Commission or before the Central Government.

Accordingly, all members of the Ganatantra Parishad resigned except the two, who preferred to continue as independent members. They are Ganeswar Mohapatra and Brundaban Sahoo who were elected in Parishad's ticket but remained as Independent candidates. They were no doubt guilty of violating the commands of the party and of not carrying out the decision of the party on whose tickets they were elected to the legislature. In other words, this has been evidenced by the fact that Ganeswar Mohapatra and Brundaban Sahoo did not gain political power except continued as the members of the legislature. So they were defected from their party, and wished to adopt the principle of neutrality in the Assembly.

During the period of the Assembly, three Independent members
Godavarish Mishra, Himanshu Sekhar Padhi and Bhaiga Sethi joined the Ganatantra Parishad. Two other independent members Srikantha Bhagga and K. C. Singh Mandhata joined the Congress Party. Biswanath Sahoo of Ganantantra Parishad joined the Praja Socialist Party. Further Dipankar Pattnaik of the Forward Block joined the P.S.P.\textsuperscript{11} Girish Chandra Ray of P.S.P. joined to Communist Party in 1952\textsuperscript{12}. Bhagwan Khemudu Naik of Congress Party joined the Communist Party in 1956\textsuperscript{13}. In 1955, Mohan Nayak of the Communist Party joined the Congress Party\textsuperscript{14}. These were the clear cases of defection after the First General Election. N. K. Choudhury formed to first Congress Government in 1952 with the support of the independent members. An analysis of defections in Orissa reveals that most of the defections were based on non-ideological considerations. However, a defector is justified when he defected from a party on ideological basis or ground. But what we observed in case of Orissa during and after the First General Election was that defection took place on the basis of the elements of opportunism, and for personal gain. In Orissa defection was so common that political stability was totally absent for full one decade (1952 to 1961). Factionalism and intra-party rivalries inside the Orissa Congress forced N. K. Choudhury to step down from power in favour of Mahtab in October, 1956. Mahtab took the advantage of the situation which arose due to S.R.C. agitation and conducted the 1957 election. In addition to these general factors, there were also certain immediate causes which were responsible for
the downfall of the Congress Party in the state. The opposition party (the Ganatantra Parishad) capitalised on the alleged "inaction" of the Congress Government in dealing with the flood situation. The consequence of the flood were almost disastrous for the people of Orissa. The state-wide demonstrations and agitations further exposed the alleged, cruelty, high-handedness and misdeeds of the Government. By the end of the 1956, thus, a political climate had arrived where the sight of a Congress man had become a source of irritation to the people of Orissa for the loss of the two Oriya speaking tracts (Kharsuan-Sareikala). This peculiar situation of the state could not enable any single political party to form a Government on its own. In fact, the sharp reduction in the strength of the Congress Party at the polls was itself a matter of surprise to the opposition parties and they could hardly believe that the Congress Party was not in a position to form the Government.

After 1957 General Election, the Congress Party formed the Government under the leadership of H. K. Mahtab with the support of the Jharkhanda Party and Independent members. In this Election, the Congress Party secured 56 seats in the state legislative assembly. The Congress lost miserably in the election and despite the increase of strength of the Ganatantra Party, none of them was in a position to form the Government. The legislators were crossing and re-crossing the floors and efforts were made at inducing legislators to change sides and both Congress and Ganatantra
Parishad were constantly winning and losing supporters.

After the election, Nilakantha Das was appointed as speaker and the strength of the Congress Party reduced to 55. The examples of defection were many in the assembly. Mahtab tried his ceaseless efforts to become the Chief Minister of Orissa because he was not satisfied with the post of Governor of Bombay which kept him away from active state politics. During this period, he encouraged defection by adopting the politics of intense manipulation. The anti-Mahtab Group within the party had weakened the Congress Party first by the defection of Mahtab and his followers and secondly by the internal dissension over distribution of party tickets. The young politicians like Biju, Biren and Nilamani did all to secure the support of the Jharkhand Party, the Independent and the C.P.I. to form the Ministry. Mahtab was completely indulged in corrupt practices and buying off legislator with money through Biren Mitra and Biju Pattnaik. Biju Pattnaik and mine-owners were prepared to spend money in Bhûbaneswar. Accusations to the affect that the Government is surviving because of corrupt practices were floating. Four of the six independent candidates namely Nalakuru Naikulu, Krushna Chandra Mohapatra, Krushna Chandra Singh Mandhata and Ram Chandra Pattnaik joined the Congress. Five members of the Ganatantra Parishad who defected from their party joined the Congress Party, were Himanshu Sekhar Padhi, Sarangadhar Pradhan, Mruturijaya Pal, Mochiram
Triya and Purusotam Panda. Besides Narendra Kumar Nayak, who was elected as a candidate of the Communist Party defected into Congress Party\(^{18}\). The Congress too had lost eight of its legislators as a result of defection. They were Mitrodaya Singh Bariha, Kailash Dehuri, Mrutunjaya Pal, Sridhar Nayak, Jatiraj Praharaj, Harihar Dash, Ghasiram Majhi and Anup Singhdeo. But the strength of the Congress Party was 57 which it gained out of defections.

The Ganatantra Parishad secured 51 seats in the election and five of them defected into the Congress. But five Congress defectors joined the Ganatantra Parishad. In the Second General Election, Jharkhand Party could not contest\(^{19}\). In the legislature five members, who were re-elected as independent members, declared themselves as members of the Jharkhand Party. There was no "Lohia Socialist Party" during the election. Narayan Sahoo who was elected as an independent member, preferred to be recognised as a member of the Lohiya Socialist Party. Similarly no candidate contested on Swatantra Party Ticket. Ghasiram Majhi and Harihar Das, who were elected on Congress ticket resigned from the party and continued as independent candidates. Subsequently, they joined the All India Swatantra Party.
The following table shows the number of defections in the 1952 Assembly.

TOTAL SEATS - 140

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>SEATS CONTESTED</th>
<th>SEATS OWN</th>
<th>NUMBER OF DEFECTIONS</th>
<th>PARTY TO WHICH DEFECTED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Congress</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Communist-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. G.Parishad</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>P.S.P. -1, Independent -3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Socialist</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Communist-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Communist</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Congress -1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Independent</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>G.Parishad-3, Congress -3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Forward Block</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P.S.P. -1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. K.M.P.P.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of the defection shows that the Ganatantra Parishad lost its strength but Congress Party gained out of the defection in the First General Election. The Communist Party was also in an advantageous position as it lost one and gained two members. The P.S.P. maintained its status quo.
The following table show the number of Defections in the 1957 election.

TOTAL NUMBER OF SEATS - 140

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>Seats contested</th>
<th>Seats own.</th>
<th>Number of defection</th>
<th>Party to which defected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>G.P. - 5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Swatantra - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Independent - 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>G.P.</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Congress - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Communist</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Congress - 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>P.S.P.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Independent and others</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Congress - 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Defections in the 1957 Assembly enhanced Congress strength as it lost 8 members but gained 10 who were defectors. The Ganatantra Parishad lost 5 representatives, the independent 4 and Communist lost one to the Congress. After the Second General Election of 1957, the Congress Party returned with only 56 seats out of 140 seats in the legislature. It formed the Government after successfully inducing defection of four of the independent members to its side and securing a promise of support from Jharkhand Group. The Party position, however, continued to remain unstable from time to time.
GENERAL OBSERVATION:

Orissa was the foremost casualty of constant defections. Cabinets were formed and overthrown and at no time was a Government installed with the prospect of stability. An analysis of the process and inclination of defection in each of 1952 and 1957 Assembly shows that the Congress Party played a major role for encouraging political defections. It not only encouraged defectors to enter into Congress but could not take any legislative measure to check defection though it had overwhelming majority both at the centre and state legislatures.

It also reveals that those candidates who were elected as independent members were not maintaining their independent status. Rather most of them joined either Congress or Ganatantra Parishad in order to get some political favour or personal gain. The other factor is that those who were unable to get a ticket under the banner of any political party, sought to contest as an independent candidate. Hence in the ultimate analysis it is found that none of the parties (Congress and Ganatantra Parishad) had gained constantly out of defections. Rather the gain was purely temporary or transitory. Hence we can came to the conclusion that those parties which derived benefit out of defections, sustain loss on other occasions. An observation from 1952 to 1961 shows that no political party including the Congress could have secured absolute
majority since they go out bifurcating themselves, losing the identity of their original character. For the craze of forming the government, defection and counter defection take place destroying the stability of the government. Defection is part and parcel of the Government of Orissa. It is primarily guided by two distinct groups. The people of Western Orissa had full faith in the leadership of the ex-rulers. Most of the leaders of the Congress Party belonged to the coastal areas. In 1948, the ex-rulers lost their kingdoms due to integration of their states with the Indian Union and later on handed over to the Congress Government led by H. K. Mahtab. So in order to challenge the Congress leadership they organised a political party called as the Ganatantra Parishad. It was the general practice with the people of the Western Orissa to vote against the Congress. When such a vast area was voting against Congress, it lost about 60 M.L.As in a House of 140 till 1961 and that caused the failure of the Congress to gain majority to run the Government. Encouraged by the failure of the Congress Party to secure an absolute majority in the House, the Ganatantra Parishad decided to explore possibilities of forming a coalition Government in the State. Mahtab was no more the unchallenged leader of the Congress Party. In May 1959 Mahtab resigned and Congress-Ganatantra Parishad coalition ministry was formed later on. The constant attempt of gaining majority encouraged floor crossing, horse trading and defection which is primarily guided by considerations of power, patronage
and material rewards. A critical study of the political defection leads to the conclusion that the factor of personal gain or self interest had played an effective part in most of the cases. Nothing but self interest has been the foundation of shifting party loyalty. Therefore, the defector is a political culprit who renounces or forfeits his right to represent the people.

The comparative study of the first two General Elections (1952 and 1957) shows that the Congress Party has gained or received maximum advantage of defections. Defections from the opposition and independent helped the Congress Party from time to time to form the Government. But in no case defection from the Congress Party had helped the opposition to form a non-Congress Government in Orissa. Thus the Congress party took the chance of the situation. The Congress ministry of Mahtab during the period between 1957 to 1959 survived mainly because of defection and enabled him to continue as the Chief Minister despite his leadership of a minority party. Mahtab was a pioneer who has been associated with maximum defections. Of all the political leaders who have been involved in defection, Mahtab holds the first rank. Mahtab maintained some tricks in the game of defection upto 1959 and never gave any office to any defector. Other members of the Orissa Legislative Assembly next to Mahtab in this regard are Himanshu Sekhar Padhi, Nilamani Routrai, Gangadhar Pradhan and others left the Congress. Biju Pattnaik defected only once.
in 1969. Another point is to be noted down in this regard is that the Congress leaders have defected, maximum number of times. All the leaders defectors belonged to the Congress Party. The maximum loss has been endured by the Swatantra Party and its leader R.N. Singhdeo because of these defection. During the period between 1952 to 1961, he was regarded as the leader of the opposition and the Ganatantra Party was treated as his party, but the strength of the party was reduced because of these defections induced by Mahtab. Singhdeo had to resign from the Government because of defection to the Congress. Defections made him completely demoralised and unpopular and ultimately he had lost his clean image and position as the leader of the opposition. The Ganatantra Party had lost its identity and merged with Swatantra Party in 1962. It has been a major pollutant of the policy during the period between 1952 to 1961 in Orissa. The sale of legislators like commodities in the open market at an ever increasing "Price" has, in fact, been the subject of much criticism by observers of India's political system. The horse trading has caused considerable concern among those interested in the future of democracy. After all, defections imply subverting the will of the electorate.

In most other parliamentary democracies, the switching of loyalty by a legislator is an uncommon phenomenon. In U.S.A. and Britain, for instances, almost all politicians stick
to their party ideologies and remain with it through good times and bad. In India, trading in members of the state Assemblies, has been a common and highly distressing practice. The phenomenon of defection and counter defection may be said to have become a speciality of the state of Orissa. The political monster of "Aya Rams and Gaya Rams" raised its head for the first time in 1952. During the decade 1952 to 1961 there were 33 defections. Between the years 1952 to 1961, as many as 35 legislators crossed and re-crossed the floor to get adequate rewards in the shape of office and power. Almost every party has gained by defections, and the Congress gained the most. This explains why the much talked-of Anti Defection Bill had not been passed by Parliament all these years even though all parties publicly favoured such a ban.

In any case, public life in the country needs to be cleaned by an effective ban on defections and boycott of political turncoats. Political defection or crossing the floor has become a serious political problem and has discredited the system of parliamentary democracy in India and particularly in Orissa, for only in rare cases legislators changed their party affiliations out of political convictions. Political defection induced by force or by lure of money or office are widely branded as unprincipled and a grave danger to democracy. The Congress Party in Orissa was not very serious about this unprincipled defections. From
the inauguration of the constitution of India till 1961 the Congress was the greatest beneficiary from defection. But when the Congress Party was defeated miserably in the Fourth General Election of 1967, and lost absolute majority in eight states and failed to form government in seven of them. The eight states where the Congress lost were Bihar, Kerala, Madras, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Significantly, every single case of collapse of a State Government during this period was the direct result of change of allegiance by legislators. Some scholars have suggested to check the acts of defection by the legislators by mobilizing public opinion and through the Press. They also advocate legislation and, if necessary, constitutional amendment for out lawing the practice of defections.

In between 1967-72, there are instances of 60% defection in the political scenario of India. The ministries which took oath between 1967-70 of which 51 ministries collapsed for these defections. Owing to the defections the ministries of Uttar Pradesh, Mysore and Gujrat collapsed soon after the mid-term poll. Politics had become worst since 1967 when the Phrase of "Aya Ram and Gaya Ram" began (The phrase coined by Late Y. B. Chavan, the then Home Minister of India)\(^{30}\). There had been a great deal of discussion about blanket ban on political defection, ever since a parliamentary committee was set-up late in 1967 under the chairmanship of Y. B. Chavan to go into the question. In
the past two decades, over 2,700 legislators have crossed the floor. Altogether 212 have acquired their position due to defection, 15 Chief Ministers have come to power for this floor crossing.

The Janata Government, too went through the motion of introducing a more or less similar bill in 1978 in the form of 48th Constitutional amendment bill. But the same was rejected outright for, it was objected by senior party leaders like Madhu Limaye. The first anti defection bill was passed in the Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir in September, 1979 by the Government of Sheik Abdulah. Defection symbolises opportunism in totality. The people have hopelessly looked on, while the elected representatives switched sides with impunity and thereby mocked the popular mandate. People generally voted for a party and rarely for an individual. The mandate of 1977 which installed the Janata Government at the Centre led by Morajee Desai, but his ministry could not last long. Charan Singh and others defected from the Janata Party as a result of which the Desai ministry collapsed.

Due to defection Charan Singh became the Prime Minister of India with the formal support of Congress (I). The Congress party which was in opposition bench then, too, supported defection but as per the direction of Indira Gandhi, the Congress (I) revoked its support and again the Government of Charan Singh collapsed. The people of India reacted against this and voted Indira Gandhi
back to power. The political salvo which fired the opposition party in 1984 through the ballot was also partly responsible for defection. When Charan Singh crossed the floor along with his supporters to break the ministry of Morarjee Desai, then it was Indira Gandhi who abetted this defection of Charan Singh. When the Government was toppled in J&K by defectors, led by G. M. Shah, immediately the Congress(I) came to the rescue of G. M. Shah against the legitimate government of Farook Abdullah as a result G. M. Shah formed the ministry with the help of defectors and the Congress(I) members as curtain puller.

The same dirty politics was repeated in Andhra Pradesh too, Bhaskar Rao, was abetted to topple the legitimate Government of N. T. Rao and they could succeed because Governor Ram Lal was main accomplice to help Bhaskar Rao to form Government. There was widespread agitation against such undemocratic attitude of Congress(I) and ultimately Bhaskar Rao was forced to step down from power. The Congress(I) tried its best to topple the government of R. K. Hegde, Bangrappa became dissident and withdrew support from the Janata Government. The Maily tape scandal in Karnataka and blatant use of money to topple the Hegde Government was a total fiasco for Congress(I). If we analyse the aforesaid incidents then it would be candid that Congress(I) had been indirectly abetting defection in the non-Congress(I) ruled states strengthening its position.
A historic and momentous step towards ensuring a healthy parliamentary democracy was taken by the Lok Sabha on 30th January 1985 by passing a comprehensive anti-defection measure in the shape of the constitution Bill (52 Amendment). The Bill voted by 418 of the 419 members present in the House, imposes a ban on legislators defecting from one party to another. The Bill was passed unanimously by the Rajya Sabha on 31st January, 1985. It thus outlaws the evil of political defection in the country.

REFERENCES

4. The eight states in which the Congress lost were Bihar, Kerala, Madras, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal.
9. Ibid.
11. Records of the Orissa Legislative Assembly.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
17. Ibid, Page. 305.
18. Records of Orissa Legislative Assembly.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. The Ganatantra Parishad was a regional party of Orissa mostly confined to the Garjats and the districts of Western Orissa. This party subsequently merged with the Swatantra Party of India and lost its regional character.
24. Political & Services Department, Notification No. 11465/Gen. dated 9,9,1957.
26. Ibid.
Corruption is as old as civilization itself. It grows fast when the climate for dishonesty, unfairness and under-the-table dealings are quite favourable. It is corruption which shapes the social and moral foundations of a society. In its broad sense, corruption includes the improper or selfish exercise of power and influence securing some kind of financial or other material benefit directly or indirectly for oneself or for one's own family relatives or friends. This is otherwise known as nepotism. The extent to which corruption prevails or flourishes in a society depends on the people's attitude. Unfortunately, the general attitude is now of apathy, indifference and acceptance of the evil as inevitable and a normal feature of life. As late (Pt.) Nehru said, "We have become so used to corrupt ways that we now accept them as the normal and recognised way of life". In an interview to chief executive of an American quarterly journal; Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India said, "the real problem in the administration is the rampant corruption at the bottom; at the top very few people are involved, in corrupt practices..."
about which most people in India complain. At the bottom there are millions of people spread out through the villages which make it difficult to control the menace. Evidently, the Prime Minister's assessment of the extent of corruption is not correct, because as recent instances have indicated, officials, politicians and others in high positions are no less guilty than those who function at the lower levels. In fact, it would not be incorrect to say that corruption often flows from the top to the bottom. People in key positions have opportunities to make money through commissions, payoffs, kick-backs and percentages; they also accept handsome bribes and costly gifts openly without any qualms of conscience. By and large, officials of various ranks exploit their positions. In a frank and perceptive analysis of the problem, B. K. Nehru, a former Governor of Jammu & Kashmir said that corruption had spread to every part of the governmental apparatus. An uncomfortably large number of politicians and ministers are corrupt and have infected even the apex of our administrative structure - the All India Services.

In a couple of decades, Indian society has degenerated from being an honest society into a dishonest one. The existing political system, in which pursuit of power, love of money and promotion of self interest are widely prevalent. The irony is that corruption has increased with the development of democracy. The implicit link between politics and money is scandalous. The total expenditure
which the politicians and the major political parties have to 
incure on elections runs into crores. Since, most of it is black 
money, the principal source and channel of corruption are right 
there. Things rarely move in offices and other establishment 
unless the palms of the politicians at various levels are greased. 
The dose of the grease increases with the nature and seriousness 
of the work.

The political history of Orissa has been regarded as the 
history of Kendu leave business. It is needless to say that almost 
all the governments formed in Orissa during 1952 to 1961 were 
dissolved untimely mainly on the question of Kendu leave trade. 
From 1967 to 1974, there had been three Enquiry Commissions 
and two Probe Bodies to enquire into charges of corruption in 
respect of five chief ministers and a number of cabinet ministers.

The era of politics of commissions began soon after the 
1967 general election. The Congress which was commanding a 
thumping majority, a strength of 82 in a house of 140 members 
in 1962 election under the leadership of Biju Patnaik came down 
to 31. The Swatantra - Jana Congress allies had secured an absol­
ute majority in the fourth general election. These two parties 
fought the election with a 22 charter of programme and the most 
important of them being the appointment of commission to probe 
acts of corruption of the Congress ministers who had held office
The 1967 election was won by the Swatantra-Jana Congress on the issue of corruption at the highest level. It is interesting to quote that R. N. Singhdeo, the then Chief Minister of Orissa who was instrumental in the appointment of all the Enquiry Commissions, was found guilty of committing administrative improprieties only in the interest of the traders and was ultimately the victim of the Mitter Commission of enquiry in 1974 set up by the then Congress Chief Minister, Nandini Satpatny. The politics of Orissa during the aforesaid period seemed to be regulated by kendu leaf trade. The politics of this period as Prof. S. C. Dash characterises it, may be termed as "Politics of Commissions".

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

It is equally important to mention here some of the ex-chief ministers and ministers who held offices from 1947 to 1961. When India became free on 15th August, 1947, H. K. Mahtab headed the Congress ministry which lasted till May 1950 and was succeeded on 12th May 1950 by another congress ministry headed by N. K. Choudhury which lasted till 18th October, 1956. During this period H. K. Mahtab joined in the central cabinet as the minister of Industry and Commerce and remained in power from 1950 to 1952 and was later appointed as Governor of Bombay from February, 1955, which post he held till 18th October, 1956. Again on 19th
October, 1956, a Congress ministry came to power headed by H.K. Mahtab which continued to function till 22 May, 1959. On the very day, the Ganatantra Parishad joined the Congress government and a coalition ministry was formed under the leadership of H. K. Mahtab. R. N. Singhdeo, the leader of the Ganatantra Parishad, then became the deputy Chief Minister. This coalition ministry lasted till 24 February, 1961, when the President's Rule was imposed in Orissa from 25 February, 1961, to 22 June, 1961. The mid-term election took place in Orissa in June, 1961, and the Congress secured an absolute majority and on 23 June, 1961, Biju Pattnaik, leader of the Congress Party was sworn in as Chief Minister of Orissa. He formed the ministry with Biren Mitra as deputy minister of Orissa. He formed the ministry with Biren Mitra as deputy chief minister, while R. N. Singhdeo became the leader of the opposition. This Congress ministry of Biju Pattnaik lasted till October, 1963, when Pattnaik resigned under the "Kamraj Plan" and Biren Mitra headed the Congress Ministry from 2 October, 1963, upto 20 February, 1965. After Biren Mitra, Sadasiv Tripathy became the Chief Minister of Orissa from 21 February, 1965, to 8 March, 1967. In March, 1967, the Fourth General Election was held and R. N. Singhdeo, the leader of the Swatantra Party formed the Swatantra-Janacongress coalition.

The politics of Orissa in 1967, had witnessed the defeat of Biju Pattnaik, the architect of Party victory in 1961 in all
the 5 constituencies he fought and hence there was the formation of a coalition Government. This coalition was noteworthy in the sense that, the partners of this Swatantra-Janacongress were H. K. Mahtab and R. N. Singhdeo, the two political arch rivals who shared political powers of the state of Orissa.

The Fourth General Election of 1967 came off at the peak of anti-congress wave in the country which caused a set back for the Congress in 9 states in India. In Orissa, the once bright image of the Congress was spoiled by corruption charges against the ministers in general and Biju & Biren in particular. The oust-congress campaign was spearheaded by 3 eminent persons H. K. Mahtab, R. N. Singhdeo, N. K. Choudhury. In Orissa, the congress was weakened due to the defection of Mathab and his followers, and by internal dissension over distribution of party tickets. In sharp contrast to the divided congress house, the two powerful opposition parties - Janacongress and Swatantra - which had entered into an alliance on the basis of 22 point programme, promised for the establishment of a clean and honest government and "Ruthless elimination of corruption, favouritism and nepotism at all levels, setting up of an enquiry commission into charges of corruption by ministers. The Swatantra-Janacongress alliance gained an absolute majority of 75 seats in the house of 140 members and formed a coalition ministry with the swatantra leader, R. N. Singhdeo, as the chief minister, and the Janacongress
leader, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, as the Deputy Chief Minister. The Congress was practically rooted out by getting 31 seats and suffered a debacle in the poll. Soon after Singhdeo became the Chief Minister, he wrote a letter dated 14 May, 1967, to the leaders of the opposition party informing them that the government has decided to appoint a commission of enquiry to enquire into the charges of corruption and administrative improprieties alleged to have been committed in the sphere of administration by the "Minister" who were in office during the period between 1961 election and the recent election of 1967. To this, the leader of the congress legislature party, Sadasiv Tripathy, an ex-chief minister of Orissa (1965-67) acted swiftly. He submitted a memorandum along with 24 members of the Orissa Assembly dated 26 June, 1967, to the President of India, Dr. Zakir Hussain alleging that Singhdeo has arbitrarily chosen the time to exclude himself from the purview of the enquiry. The declaration of the Government of Orissa about appointment of a commission of enquiry for the period after June, 1961, is malafide. The date June, 1961, is arbitrarily chosen by the present government of Orissa against the leaders of the congress party is to throw a cloud on their reputation so that they can no longer affectively oppose the government in power and displace it when occasion arises. Hence, Sadasiv Tripathy requested Dr. Zakir Hussain, the President of India to extend the scope of time from 1947 to 1961. H. K. Mahtab, the leader of the Janacongress was ousted from government
in February 1961, when he lost the confidence of the congress in Orissa. Similarly, on the very day, the leader of the Ganatanka Parishad, predecessor of the Swatantra Party, R. N. Singhdeo, was also thrown out of power. Hence, the persons to be included for enquiry according to the memorandum were H. K. Mahtab, R. N. Singhdeo, N. K. Choudhury, P. M. Pradhan, S. K. Das and S. N. Pattnaik. Excepting Choudhury, all other accused persons were actively associated with the coalition government of 1967 and were responsible for acts of corruption, misrule, nepotism and political oppression and improprieties during various periods when they had held high office of ministers in the government since independence. The first task of great political significance undertaken by the Singhdeo government was the appointment of an enquiry commission headed by Justice H. R. Khanna of Delhi High Court to enquire into the allegations against three former congress chief-ministers - Biju Pattnaik, Biren Mitra and Sadasiv Tripathy. The commission found Biju Pattnaik and Biren Mitra guilty of administrative improprieties, but praised Biju for his great calibre and devotion which paved the way to economic betterment & future prosperity of Orissa. It exonerated Sadasiv Tripathy and all the other thirteen ministers besides these two.

Y. V. Chavan, the then Union Home Minister, sent a copy of the memorandum submitted by Sadasiv Tripathy to the then Chief
minister of Orissa R.N. Singhdeo who wanted to know the letter's opinion. Singhdeo accepted the contention "In the interest of public life" and wrote back to the Home Minister, Government of India, saying that, on examination he found there was no prima facie case in any of the allegation mooted in the memorial as against persons who held office as Chief Minister or ministers during the aforesaid period (1947-61). In reply to R.N. Singhdeo, the Home Minister Chavan intimated that he should take the responsibility of entrusting the task of preliminary verification into the allegation to any retired Judge of the Supreme Court or of a High Court. Singhdeo accepted the challenge and agreed to face the Judicial probe body headed by Justice J.R. Mudholkar, a retired Judge of the Supreme Court who was authorised to hold a preliminary verification into any definite allegation as against any person who held office as Chief Minister or minister during the period 1947 to 1961. Had not Singhdeo accepted the challenge himself, the misuse of power by eminent political leaders of Orissa would not have come to lime light.

In the receipt of the letter dated 31st May 1968, of R.N. Singhdeo, the then Chief Minister of Orissa, Justice Modholkar hold a preliminary enquiry. He sent letters to each memorialist to appear before him. He submitted his report on 26th September 1968 to the Government of Orissa. But, Singhdeo did not publish the report on the plea that the Government was examining the report.
Justice Mudholkar while exonerating others recommended the appointment of a full fledged commission of enquiry in respect of four allegations. Singhdeo assumed that if he disclosed Justice Modholkar's Report, Mahtab might feel humiliated and immediately withdraw his support from the Swatantra-Jana-Congress coalition Government and the coalition might fall. That was the reason why Sarjoo Prasad Commission on the line of its recommendation was set up only in 1971. Mahtab put tremendous pressure on Singhdeo and forced him to give up the idea of full fledged enquiry commission. Singhdeo was quite aware of the consequences on an enquiry commission against the political stalwart, like Mahtab. It was also clear that, if Jana Congress withdrew its support from the coalition, it would lead to fall of the Government which created political instability in the state and an early election to the Orissa Legislative Assembly was not ruled out. Mahtab tried to convince his supporters to resign and looking for a plea for resignation of Jana Congress ministers. At this stage, the Swatantra minister of forest, Hara Prasad Mahapatra, in consultation with the Chief Minister, who was also the Finance Minister granted rebate to the Kendu Leaf traders and it was estimated that the Government sustained a net loss of Rs.18 lakhs. As the quantum of rebate was so high, the matter should have been referred to the cabinet and the decision should have been taken on cabinet's approval. R.N. Singhdeo, the then Chief Minister failed to settle this crisis. His failure provided the immediate plea for the Jana Congress leaders to desert...
the coalition and join Congress (R).

R.N. Singhdeo as per the recommendation of the Mudholkar probe body to enquire into the charges of corruption, act of misconduct, misappropriation, acceptance of illegal gratification, favouratism, irregularities, improprieties and abuse of power in respect of Mahtab's role as Chief Minister of Orissa during the period from 23 April, 1946 to 11 May, 1950 and from 19 October, 1956 to 25 February, 1961, in the formulation of Kendu Leaf Policy by the State Government, appointed Sarjoo Prasad Commission on 9 January, 1971.

SARJOO PRASAD COMMISSION

The Government of Orissa appointed Justice Sarjoo Prasad, Ex-Chief Justice of Rajasthan and Assam High Courts as the one man commission on 9 January, 1971, under section 3 of the COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY ACT 1952, to enquire into and report in respect of certain charges specified in the Mudholkar Report against H.K. Mahtab. The commission was appointed on the basis of the findings of Justice Mudholkar, who had exonerated all except Mahtab in respect of four allegations; they are:

1. Grant of remission of Government dues to Kendu Leaf contractors in 1959-60.
2. Grant of lease of a Chromite mine to Md. Serajuddin in 1957 and the receipt of money by H.K. Mahtab from Md. Serajuddin which was known from the extracts of the accounts of Md. Serajuddin dated 15 November, 1953.

3. Rapid acquisition of wealth by Mahtab between 1956 to 1960 AND

4. Withdrawal of criminal prosecution against ten iron and steel dealers of Cuttack.

The commission commenced working from 17 February, 1971. The Head Office of the commission was maintained at Delhi with minimum staff to manage its secretariat, but the commission held its office from time to time at Puri and Bhubaneswar to suit the convenience of the party and the witnesses.

FINDING OF SARJOO PRASAD COMMISSION IN RESPECT OF GRANT OF REMISSION BY H.K. MAHTAB TO KENDU LEAF CONTRACTORS IN 1959-60.

The first important charge against H.K. Mahtab is the grant of 25% remission to Kendu Leaf contractors in payment of their dues to the state for the year 1959 which caused a net loss of
nearly Rs.17 lakhs to the State Government by misuse of his power as Chief Minister and by the acceptance of illegal gratification

Kendu leaves are used for the manufacture of bidis and these leaves grow mainly in the fellow lands of the forests in the districts of western Orissa. On the merger of princely states in the state of Orissa in 1948-49, the sale of the leaves provided a major source of revenue to the state exchequer and various legislation were enacted to regulate the Kendu Leaf trade. In view of its importance, the kendu leaf was declared as essential commodity under the Orissa Essential Articles: Control and Requisitioning Act of 1947. In 1949, The Orissa Kendu Leaf (Control and Distribution) Order was passed to reconcile the interest of the State, the trade, the tenants and the pluckers. This order remained in force for a decade and was substituted by a new control order namely : The Orissa Kendu Leaf Control Order of 1960. N.K. Choudhury was the Chief Minister of Orissa from 1950-56. Up to 1950, the settlement of kendu leaf with traders was made by private agreement or negotiation. This helped the contractors to make huge profits while the State Government gained a very meagre amount of its revenue. But when Choudhury came to power, after the First General Election in 1952, the New Orissa Kendu Leaf Order was passed. According to the new Act as enforced by Choudhury, the tenders were to called upon and settlement was to be made with the person offering the highest tender. Choudhury,
the then chief minister did this in the interest of earning maximum revenue for the state. By the earlier system the state was actually getting only about Rs. 20-30 lakh annually but by the change of the system, the state got Rs. 90 lakhs. The traders had to bear a great loss for the Act which was made by Choudhury on 19 October, 1956, H. K. Mahtab succeeded N. K. Choudhury as Chief Minister of Orissa and continued to hold that office till 24 February, 1961. During his tenure of office leases were granted to Kendu Leaf merchants for 3 years beginning from 1 January, 1957, to 31 January, 1959.

Sarjoo Prasad after careful examination came to the conclusion that Mahtab had close linkage with Kendu leaf traders of Orissa when the former was the Governor of Bombay. He wrote a letter on 21 September, 1956, addressed to the then Development Minister, Radhanath Rath, to postpone decision on the Kendu leaf till he became the Chief Minister within a very short period. Within 3 months of Mahtab's joining as the Chief Minister of Orissa on 19 October, 1956, and only 4 days after the commencement of the lease, the Kendu leaf contractors filed a petition on 5 January, 1957, before the Chief Minister for changing the schedule for the payment of instalments on the ground that the amount of instalments being heavy, the traders should be permitted longer intervals. The Chief Minister made an endorsement on the petition. While this petition was still pending (as the then Development
Minister, Radanath Rath rejected the petition by the traders made another petition on 5 June, 1958, to the Chief Minister requesting him for 25% royalty. This was rejected due to the stern opposition of the Chief Conservator and the minister of development, Radanath Rath. A third petition was made by the traders again directly to the Chief Minister on 23 August, 1958, which the latter endorsed to the minister of development. The petition contained an alternative prayer for extension of their leases for one year without the payment of any royalty. The representation was strongly opposed by the Chief Conservator of forests, the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of the Development Department, including the Development Minister, Radanath Rath. It was pointed out by the above authority that if the prayer was considered, there would be a loss of revenue to the tune of Rs. 83 lakhs to the Government. Mahtab being the Chief Political Executive, ignored the opinion of the Chief Conservator of forests, Secretary, Deputy Secretary and the Development Minister by taking up a totally new decision on Kendu Leaf and granted 25% concession in favour of Kendu Leaf Traders. Babubhai Patel, the Secretary of the Sambalpur Bidi Leaf and Tobacco Merchants' Association, had filed his affidavit and also given his evidence before the Sarjoo Prasad Commission. The Commission came to know that monetary consideration was the influence which forced Mahtab in showing favour to the Kendu Leaf contractors. It appears from his affidavit that Babubhai was a Kendu Leaf lessee for the year 1950-56.
From 1956-57, he was a partner of one Ramkumar Makhanlal, a firm of Kendu Leaf traders. He knew Toppulal of T. R. & Co. Bolangir, the biggest Kendu Leaf Merchant of the state. He also knew Hiralal Sodha, an income tax Practitioner who was the brother-in-law of Toppulal. H. T. Sodha was not only engaged as an income tax practitioner of T.R. & Co. but also engaged to represent the case of all the Kendu Leaf traders. Along with H. T. Sodha, one Sophy Kelly, the principal of Hill Green High School, Bombay, was known to H. K. Mahtab when he was the Governor of Bombay. Both H. T. Sodha and Kelly were meeting Mahtab on behalf of the Kendu Leaf Contractors at his 'Ekambra Nivas' residence, pleading for remission of royalty in favour of the merchants. The entries in the register of the state Guest House for the year 1959 proved her visit to Orissa. The Guest House accounts showed that the bill for her stay, there was paid by Mahtab. T. Sodha and Kelly gave the idea to the Kendu Leaf Merchants that they would get 25% remission for all the three years from 1956-59 and the lease period would also be extended for another one year, i.e., 1960 at 50% of the royalty payable, provided the Kendu Leaf merchants contributed 3% of the lease amount for the period of the lease, for payment to Mahtab. On the instruction of Mahtab, the merchants met the Secretaries of the Finance and Development Departments of the Government of Orissa along with their Income Tax Practitioner, H. T. Sodha. Atlast, the Cabinet approved the remission of 25% of the lease
amount payable for the year 1959 and in accordance with the previous arrangement, the 3% of the lease was accordingly collected from lessee and a sum of Rs. 2.5 lakhs was paid to H. K. Mahtab at his 'Ekambra Nivas' residence. The commission remarked that Babubhai Paptel's evidence about the payment of money was definite and direct. This allegation was confirmed by the evidences given by two important witnesses, R. N. Rath, the Development Minister and Satyapriya Mohanty. Mahtab confessed and admitted that he had mentioned casually about the granting of remission of royalty by the Cabinet to the Kendu Leaf contractors to Radhanath Rath and Satyapriya Mohanty to whom he met in latter's residence when he had fallen ill. He also mentioned that R. N. Rath was against remission but a political party could not be managed without such a decision; as a result of which a sum of about Rs. 6 lakhs was collected from the Kendu Leaf Contractors. Both the Ganatantra Parishad and the Congress Party shared the funds. It was to be shared as Rs. 3.5 lakh by the Congress Party and Rs. 2.5 lakh by the Ganatantra Parishad.

N. K. Choudhury who was the Chief Minister of Orissa from 1950-56 made a statement which has been published in 'The Samaj', the Oriya Daily that the Kendu Leaf traders contributed Rs. 12 lakh to 13 lakhs as donation during the election period to the ruling Congress Party and in return they were allowed to get an extra Rs. 50 to 60 lakh every year, which the state could
have earned as profits. In 1949-50, when Mahtab was the Chief Minister, the income of the state from Kendu Leaf was more than Rs. 30 lakh. When N. K. Choudhury succeeded him, the amount had been reduced to Rs. 11 lakh in 1953-54. When again Mahtab became the Chief Minister in 1956, the revenue of the state from Kendu Leaf showed an upward trend. The first year's income was Rs. 38 lakh, 2nd year 58 lakh, 3rd year Rs. 70 lakh. But during the last year of Mahtab's Chief Ministership, the income reduced to the amount of Rs. 12 lakh. This is due to the rebate granted by Mahtab's Ministry to the Kendu Leaf contractors and their subsequent withdrawals of four instalments were responsible for such a decline in the state income. Mahtab showed undue eagerness in granting remission for the bribe which he received from the Kendu Leaf contractors. Mahtab, a man of ability and calibre who had held high offices was found guilty of accepting illegal gratification in order to show favours to the Kendu Leaf traders.

Like Biju Pattnaik, who was found guilty of committing administrative improprieties, by the Khanna Commission, Mahtab too, could not care less for the finding of Sarjoo Prasad Commission. He went on saying that inspite of Justice Mudholkar's findings, he was simultaneously elected from two assembly constituencies of Bhadrak and Bhubaneswar and he considered the people as his ultimate arbiter not any commission.
Another serious charge of which Mahtab was found guilty of favouritism and abuse of power was in granting the lease of chromite mines to Md. Serajuddin in Sukinda Taluk of Jajpur Sub-Division, Cuttack, against the interest of the state. In 1953, Md. Serajuddin applied to the Government of Orissa for the grant of a mining lease for chromite over an area of about 6 sq. miles for a period of 20 years. Under the Government of India's Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, declaring chromite as an industry considered it a state undertaking. The Government of Orissa jointly with the Government of India set up the Orissa Mining Corporation Ltd. in which each had equal share till 1961 when it became exclusively a state owned corporation.

Md. Serajuddin's application was the pending consideration when Mahtab became the Chief Minister of Orissa in 1956.

The application of Md. Serajuddin dated 29 March, 1953, came up for consideration by the state government, the Dy. Secretary in his note dated 20 April, 1957, pointed out several defects in the light of Mining Laws. The officer again pointed out that the area applied for was covered by the prospective licence granted to TISCO Ltd. and although the date of the licence expired, the area could not be regranted under rules 68 of the Mineral Concession Rules. Dinabandhu Sahu, the then minister of mines, was doubtful whether the state leased out mines to private
parties or to operate them through Orissa Mining Corporation. Atlast, he decided to grant mining lease of 244 acres to Messers, Serajuddin and Co. It is important to note that this lease was to be given for a particular purpose namely, "for feeding the Ferrochrome Plant for which they were making efforts". The lease may be terminated in case of failure to establish a plant within 5 years. Mahtab entrusted the job to private applicants and ordered that private parties were allowed for private exploration of minerals in areas not considered worthy of exploration by the state. The Secretary, Mining and Geology, requesting the Chief Minister to reconsider his order in view of the fact that the Orissa Mining Corporation should not be confined only to mining iron ore. Dinabandhu Sahu, the Minister of Mines, rejected Serajuddin's application by an order dated 26 November, 1957. But mysteriously, this order of rejection was never communicated to Md. Serajuddin and was held up by the Secretariat. Surendranath Dwivedy wrote to Prime Minister, J. L. Nehru, enclosing extracts from the newspapers report and pleading for thorough examination of the entire case. He said the report in the press had alleged regular annual payments by Md. Serajuddin to some central ministers. K. D. Malavya, Central Minister for Mines and Fuel, was reported to have confessed that, he had directed a Congressman who fought Assembly Election in 1957 from his parliamentary Basti constituency in U. P. for a financial contribution of Rs. 10,000/- from Md. Serajuddin which subsequently he had obtained.22.
It was an accepted fact that Md. Serajuddin & Co. had paid large sums to ministers both at the centre and Orissa. Whether this contribution and the consideration shown to his firm were inter-related or Serajuddin was financing Congress Party for purely philanthropic or selfless reasons. K. D. Malavya gave evidence before the Sarjoo Prasad Commission and admitted that Md. Serajuddin met him once in his office of ministry in connection with an arrangement for setting up of a Ferochrome plant in Orissa in order to process its own minerals. K. D. Malavya once visited Orissa and in the course of his talk with Dinabandhu Sahu, the state minister for mines, he expressed his views that the area might be leased to Serajuddin if the area was necessary for the Fero-chrome plant.

Dinabandhu Sahu, the state minister for mines, confessed before the commission that though he had once rejected the application of Serajuddin had re-opened the matter at a later stage. In his evidence he said that when he was a cabinet minister in 1957-58 under the leadership of Mahtab, he felt that Biren Mitra was the best confident of Mahtab. Biren Mitra was managing the party in the Assembly, to keep the minority government in power because there were only 56/57 members in the party and for keeping the party in power, huge amount of money was required to get the measures passed. Md. Serajuddin was one of the contributors for maintaining the party in power. Biren Mitra used to come
to pester Dinabandhu Sahu to give mining lease to Md. Serajuddin saying that it was the desire of the Chief-Minister. Serajuddin approached the government of Orissa in July, 1958, for permission to prospect over an area of 2.80 sq. miles out of an area of nearly 6 sq. miles for which he had applied in 1953\(^4\). He represented that he had obtained a licence for import of machineries and other equipments for the manufacture of Ferro-chrome and had enclosed with his application a copy of the import licence dated 5 June, 1958. The minister of mines was prepared to accept it provided the establishment of the Ferro-chrome plant was a certainty and so was the opinion of the Chief-Secretary. At this stage, the Chief Minister intervened with a directive to the department to expedite the disposal of the matter and even set a deadline - 10 September, 1958. On 9 September, 1958, Mahtab ordered that immediate permission should be given to Serajuddin to prospect the area. It was interesting that "The order appears to have been passed by the Chief Minister in the presence of Serajuddin who was in the Chief Minister's Office at the time".

The state government informed Serajuddin of its decision to grant him the lease, subject to two conditions, first, if the plant was not set up within the stipulated period of 5 years, the state government would have the right to terminate the lease without compensation. The second condition was that whatever Chrome lifted up in the leased area should be used in the Ferro-
chrome plant and not sold or exported privately. The Chief Minis-
ter, Mahtab sent for the file directly, without through the minister of mines and ordered that the second condition regarding the ban on sale and export of the chrome ore should be deleted. He also ordered that no further reference to the government of India was necessary. Sarjoo Prasad's report strongly criticised the Chief Minister's conduct in ignoring a Cabinet colleague.

Serajuddin got into the possession of the mines on 26 March, 1958, but the mockery of it is that no Ferro-chrome plant was ever put up by Serajuddin or Messrs Serajuddin & Co. and therefore, on 5 December, 1963, the lease was terminated by state government. Even then Serajuddin didn't deliver the possession of the mines and as a result of which the state government was forced to file a suit. Serajuddin made an appeal in the Supreme Court as the case was dismissed in the State High Court. Supreme Court also refused and ultimately the state government got possession on 15 April, 1970. Serajuddin made huge profits by extracting minerals during all these long period of 11-12 years. Serajuddin wrote letters directly to Mahtab ignoring the ministers and the secretaries and obtained a favourable response from him.

Though there was no evidence before the commission of any monetary consideration given to Mahtab which inspired favouratism, he exercised in favour of Serajuddin. The commission again
hints that Serajuddin rendered financial support to keep the Congress Party in power the same was also confessed by Dinabandhu Sahu before the commission.

Between 1949 and 1956, Serajuddin had been financing politicians belonging to the ruling Congress Party in Orissa. Mahtab received money through his political disciple Biren Mitra from Messrs Serajuddin and Co. In 1956, the business offices and residence of Serajuddin were searched in connection with the tax evasion and the private account books fell into the hands of the Income Tax authorities. Serajuddin recorded all the under table transactions in the private accounts book. The seized account books of Serajuddin & Co. contained references of cash payments for Rs. 2,00,000 to Biren Mitra. It was also admitted by Union Home Minister, G. L. Nanda on the floor of the Lok Sabha, when Surendra Nath Dwivedy had drawn the attention of Pt. Nehru about the Serajuddin affairs. In reply Pt. Nehru wrote to Dwivedy a letter dated 13 December, 1963, that since the money was paid when Biren Mitra was not a minister and hence there was no need for enquiry. He also told that Biren Mitra was not holding any public office at the time. "We are not concerned with making any enquiries into these payments and we are treating the matter as closed." Mahtab appears to have taken almost a partisan attitude and gone out of his way to help Serajuddin. Mahtab ignored the minister of mines in granting the lease to
Md. Serajuddin and had shown unusual eagerness as Chief Minister which he should not have done. In conclusion Sarjoo Prasad holds that Mahtab was guilty of gross favouritism, improprieties and abuse of power as Chief Minister in granting lease to Chromite mines to Serajuddin to the great detriment and loss of the state.

Rapid acquisition of wealth by H.K. Mahtab between 1956-60 through illegal means is one of the most important charges against him. Before Mahtab took the charge of Chief Minister of Orissa in October, 1956, he had been the Governor of Bombay for about a year and eight months. He continued to hold the office of Chief Minister till 24 February, 1961. The alleged acquisition of wealth related to the period when Mahtab was the Chief Minister, it is found that during the relevant period Mahtab acquired wealth which is excess of his ostensible source of income.

When Mahtab assumed office as Chief Minister of Orissa on 19 October, 1956, he had a debit balance of Rs.11,648.25 in his bank account in the United Commercial Bank Ltd. Cuttack. This was inclusive of the debit balance transferred from Bombay. It appears that he deposited heavy amounts in the bank during the period of his Chief Ministership from 1956-60 in the shape of cash and cheques. The total deposit amounted to Rs.3,08,115.87 which he made from time to time during the period in cash. While the amounts deposited by cheque amounted to Rs. 35,717.35, thus
making a total amount of Rs. 3,43,833.22. It was also pointed out that most of the cash had been deposited between January, 1957. Out of this amount a sum of Rs. 73,000/- was invested in the purchase of National Savings Certificates in the name of his brother, G. Das. He further invested a sum of Rs. 1,56,000/- in the purchase of Treasury Saving Certificate in the name of himself and his wife. Mahtab had purchased a house known as "Ekambra Nivas" in Bhubaneswar with an area over 1 acre, which belonged to one S. C. Bose of Calcutta in February, 1957, for Rs. 20,000/-. It was repaired, reconstructed and re-modelled with all the modern amenities before Mahtab occupied it. He also acquired a plot of land in 1961 and constructed a double storeyed building at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,25,000/- and let out to Central Family Planning Department on a monthly rent of Rs. 655/-.

As against these asset and properties, the known sources of income of Mahtab during these period according to the government of Orissa were:

1. Salary as Chief Minister @ Rs. 1000/- per month; Rs. 100/- as car allowance and Rs. 100/- as house rent allowance per month.

2. The annual income shown by Mahtab to the Income Tax Officer for the financial year 1957-58 was Rs. 12,000/- only.

3. Rs. 35,000/- as from salary with a house allowance of Rs. 635/- as compensation for Zamindari until 1950, was received.
by him. It would appear that this income is totally inadequate & disproportionate of Mahtab's known source of income and Sarjoo Prasad Commission came to the conclusion that acquisition of wealth during the period from 1956 to 60 is by illegal means and by misuse of his office as Chief Minister. The commission has obtained extracts of accounts of Mahtab for the relevant period from the United Commercial Bank, Bombay, and also from United Commercial Bank, Cuttack.

The findings of Sarjoo Prasad clearly revealed that acquisition of wealth by Mahtab was beyond his known sources of income and have been derived through unauthorised and illegal sources for which he has completely failed to account.

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35. Ibid
36. Ibid
Political Parties today occupy an important place and are an integral part of the modern political system. It exists in every system of government, no matter whether democratic or totalitarian. It is very useful as it serves as an effective link between the masses and the rulers. A political party is a voluntary organisation joined by persons having common aims and objectives and seeking to gain control of the governmental apparatus with a general view to continue them. These aims and objectives have a certain measure of stability and autonomy. Sigmund Neuman regarded "Political Parties are the life-line of modern politics". A political party is emerged when elections are held on a broad based franchise. It came into existence with the growth and development of representative institutions, and expansion of suffrage. The first and foremost aim of each political party is to dominate over other parties in order to get into power and to stay in it. Political party may be defined as groups organised and united for the purpose of achieving and exercising power within a political system. In some of the society there
is only one political party which dominates the whole political system. This party dominates the entire political system and nobody is allowed to form any other political party or undertake any other political activities. This system is called single party political system. It exists in totalitarian society where party is placed much above the individual. The multi party system exists in the liberal democratic society in which citizens are at liberty to form and dissolve it.

Orissa has a multiplicity of political parties like the all India Party pattern. In the first, second and third General Elections, candidates were contesting from various party tickets like Congress, Ganatantra, PSP, Communist and independent. All the parties in Orissa have their all India organisation except the Ganatantra Parishad which was born in 1948 in the name of Koshal Utkal Praja Parishad and was later known as Ganatantra Parishad in 1952. The pre-independence First General Election in Orissa was held in 1936. Out of 60 members in the House, 56 were elected and 4 nominated. The Congress secured 36 seats and the rest 20 went to the Independents. In the Second Pre-independence General Election held in 1946, the Congress secured as many as 47 seats in a House of 60. It is worthy to be noted that 37 members out of Congress's 47, returned uncontested in the election. This clearly suggests the impact of the national movement led by the Congress and the popularity of the Congress leaders in
the state. For this reason the Congress has made a record in this pre-independence elections by securing 75% of the seats in the Assembly. The grand electoral success of the Congress Party in Orissa in 1946, failed to maintain it in 1952 General Election. This was due to the geographical expansion of Orissa on account of the merger of ex-princely states with it. The greater Orissa of 1948 was much larger than what it was in 1946. So there was a great change in geography and demography of Orissa. Congress had no root in Western Orissa due to the feudal loyalty of the people which was solely responsible for the decline of electoral strength of the Congress in Orissa in 1952 General Election. The rise of strong regional party like the Ganatantra Party in the state after independence prevents the Congress's one party dominance, in the two consecutive general elections. The sub-regional conflicts of the Western and Coastal Orissa greatly affected the political development of the state. The changing electoral pattern in the post-independence period clearly signifies the Congress-Ganatantra - two party composition in the election politics of the state between 1952-1962.

On the basis of party ideology a party may be divided into two groups: - Rightist and Leftist. The Rightist Group believes and tries to seek political changes through peaceful ways. Whereas the Leftist group is mainly concerned with the revolutionary changes in the existing structure. The Ganatantra Parishad
was formed inorder to provide an alternate political organisation in Orissa. This Party was born under the leadership of Late R.N. Singhdeo and of a few ex-state rulers. It avoids extremism both of the rightist and leftist and chose the middle path. It believed in the liberal progressive outlook of the 20th Century. The Ganatantra Parishad highlighted and reacted to Congress misrule or mal-administration and callous attitude of the Congress party which affected the people of Western Orissa. During the Congress rule both before and after independence the western parts of the Orissa remain backward and continued to be neglected by the ruling authority for a long time. The coastal area was much developed under the British administration. It developed economically, socially and politically at a faster rate than the princely states. The people of coastal areas had got opportunity in political participation which was not possible in the hilly areas, mainly governed by Rajas. The Ganatantra Parishad believed in the essential principles and value of democracy and tried to abolish authoritarian attitude of Congress. Its aim and objective was to build up a strong opposition to strongly protest against the Congress Government's imbalanced socio-economic and political principles of the state. So long as the ideology, policy and programme of the Ganatantra Parishad is concerned this party was born with a view to protect the interest of the people of high-land of Orissa whose sufferings knew no bounds due to the construction of Hirakud Dam. The people were displaced by the water of the Dam and Ganatantra
Parishad demanded the immediate rehabilitation and payment of compensation to the affected and displaced people. It also put emphasis on regional disparities in the state by the Congress rulers which largely endangered the unity and integrity of the nation. Thus, the Ganatantra Parishad emerged as a Provincial Party for efficient administration. The Parishad was officially recognised as the opposition party in the state legislature and gradually increased its popularity in 1952 and 1957 General Election. The origin of Ganatantra Parishad created a sense of relief in the minds of the people of Western Orissa who whole heartedly supported the party and considered the Parishad as an alternative organisation to challenge the supremacy of the Congress Party. Another reason of the popularity of Ganatrantra Parishad in the hilly areas was due to hatred and suspicion of the people of these areas towards the people of coastal area in general and the Congress Party in particular. The feeling of anti-katki was generated in the minds of the people of Western Orissa because the rulers of highlands before independence preferred to appoint the people of coastal districts to help them in administration. These administrators were very rude to the local people for which the people of Western Orissa hated them and called any man of any part of coastal areas as "katkees". They were also harassed by the traders and many of whom belonged to the coastal areas. Inspite of all the serious problems the tribals of the Western Orissa, suffered too much due to the rise of price and imposition of new taxes. They
were prevented to utilise the forest products to earn their livelihood. The anti-katkee feeling and the hostility towards katkee was much stronger when foundation stone was laid in 1946 for the construction of Hirakud Dam in Sambalpur to control the flood of the Mahanadi river in Cuttack district. For the construction of this dam, thousands of people had to lose their homes and lands as a number of villages were immersed in water. The loss of land and the administrative delay in the payment of compensation created a sense of resentment among peasants as land was their only source of income. The issue of Hirakud dam seemed to be a blessing in disguise for the ex-rulers who took the maximum political advantage out of this anti-Hirakud agitation. The entire Indian Republic faced the first major test of Democracy in the First General Election, 1952 with the national Congress in power. There was radical change in the political scene of Orissa with the emergence of Ganatantra Parishad in the electoral field. This party emerged as one of the major political parties in Orissa in the post-Independence period and had no existence before independence and had established itself as strong political force between 1948-52. It had no previous political experience and was facing its maiden electoral fight in the first General Election. As the Ganatantra Parishad was formed by the ex-rulers of princely states, this party had immense influence over the tribal people of Western Orissa. The western part of Orissa was regarded as the electoral fort of Ganatantra Parishad. The architects of this party were
R.N. Singhdeo and P.K. Deo who were kind, generous to their subjects and regarded efficient administrators.

The result of the First General Election of 1952 brought about a great change in the electoral politics of the state. The Ganatantra Parishad did fairly well in this election though it was born only in 1950. It bagged 31 out of 58 contested seats and no doubt it was a spectacular achievement of the Ganatantra Parishad. The Congress won 67 seats out of 135 contested seats. It lost majority and came out as the single majority party in the First General Election. The electoral performance of the Congress Party was remarkably poor in comparison to its electoral strength in the pre-Independence Assembly election. On the other hand the Ganatantra Parishad emerged as the second largest party and was regarded as the principal opposition party in the State Legislature. The success of the Ganatantra Parishad was due to the leadership of the Charismatic feudal-rulers R.N. Singhdeo, Maharaj of Bolangir and P.K. Deo, Maharaja of Kalahandi.

Out of the 13 districts, the Ganatantra Parishad had strong root in the districts of Koraput, Sambalpur, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Sundergarh and Keonjhar. The party bagged all the 9 seats allotted to the district of Bolangir which was the Headquarters of the Ganatantra Parishad and the ex-princely state of R.N. Singhdeo, the veteran leader of the Ganatantra Parishad. However, the
Congress was able to keep its image in the coastal districts of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and Ganjam. Out of 66 seats of these districts the Congress got 41 while the Ganatantra Parishad managed to get only one. The socialist and the communists secured 10 and 7 seats respectively from the coastal districts. These parties had no political base in the hilly areas.

In the election to the Lok Sabha, in the First General Election there were in total 58 candidates set-up by all parties for 20 seats. The Ganatantra Parishad set-up candidates only in the western region and managed to get 5 seats. Whereas the Congress fielded candidates in almost all constituencies and bagged 11 seats. The rest were divided between communist and independents.

The Congress failed to secure absolute majority for the first time in 1952 General Elections and with the support of some Independent members, it was able to form a Government. N.K. Choudhury assumed the office of Chief Ministership. But his ministry could not last long. During this period Dalai Ghai collapsed causing devastation in the Cuttack district and there was the state wide agitation against the report of the State Reorganisation Commission which recommended the merger of Saraikala and Kharsuan, the two Oriya speaking tracts with Bihar. Chaudhury ministry had failed to tackle the situation of Orissa and resigned in 1956. There was a change in leadership of the state and a new ministry was sworn under the able guidance of H.K. Mahtab.
In the Second General Election of 1957, the Ganatantra Parishad had grown more powerful not only in its original area of western region but it became popular in coastal districts. The Congress grew weaker due to dissidence and factionalism in Congress party. The Ganatantra Parishad's electoral performance was spectacular as it increased its strength from 31 to 51 in the Legislative Assembly. Congress Party's strength was reduced to 56, which was 11 less than its strength in the 1952 election\(^\text{17}\). It secured five more seats than the seats secured by the Ganatantra Parishad. The Communist and PSP secured nine and eleven respectively.

In the election to Lok Sabha there were 57 candidates for 20 seats. In 1957, the Ganatantra Parishad had increased strength from 5 to 7. The strength of Congress was equal to that of Ganatantra Parishad. The Communist won 1, the PSP 2 and independents 3. The electoral analysis of the Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha clearly shows that the Ganatantra Parishad did extremely well and was able to create massive popularity in the political scene of Orissa.

In the Second General Election of 1957 neither of the two main parties was able to win absolute majority in the Assembly and thereby failed to form a Government of its own. The game of defection, floor crossing and horse trading became so common that there was complete political instability in the state\(^\text{18}\). And
at last Congress was forced to seek the support of Ganatantra Parishad to form a coalition ministry in 1959. Ganatantra Parishad was strong, popular and stable party so long as it played the role of opposition in the state Legislature. When it joined hands with Congress for sharing power in 1959 coalition ministry it showed its downfall due to internal dissidence inside the Ganatantra Parishad. Some of prominent and veteran leader like P.K. Deo, Maharaja of Kalahandi opposed the formation of coalition government with Congress. Similarly, the anti-Mahtab group in the Congress opposed the coalition tooth and nail. So, due to political defection, two ministries were formed and collapsed after the Second General Election as a result there was a constant political instability in Orissa. The Congress-Ganatantra coalition collapsed on 25 February, 1961 and President's Rule was proclaimed. The mid-term election to the Orissa Legislative Assembly was held in June 1961. The Congress was reorganised throughout Orissa and became stronger under the dynamic leadership of Biju Pattnaik. The Congress came out victorious with 82 seats by securing absolute majority for the first time in the Legislative Assembly and created a landmark in the electoral history of Congress Party in Orissa. The electoral performance of the Ganatantra Parishad was poor in comparison to its strength in the last two elections of 1952 and 1957. It secured only 31 seats in 1961 which was 15 less than it had won in 1957. In the mid-term election, Biju Pattnaik came out with flying colours in the Chaudwar Constituency of Cuttack.
The poor result of Ganatantra Parishad in Mid-term election forced the Parishad to merge with the Swatantra in 1962.

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THE POLITICAL SYSTEM IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ORISSA AND THE ROLE OF OPPOSITION:

Modern democracy is unthinkable and unconceivable without an opposition because an election would never be a fair and real election unless there are two or more parties offering a choice to the electorate. Opposition is regarded as an institution which constitutes an integral and indispensable part of the democratic system. The present day democratic system has three prominent features: People's participation in policy making, their right to be represented and the presence of an organised opposition to ventilate or mobilise public opinion against the ruling party. The presence of an organised opposition strengthens the democratic Government and prevents the ruling party from becoming arbitrary and oppressive. A democratic Government can function well if there is tolerance, patience among the various political parties. The role of the opposition in a democratic Government is to prevent the Government from acquiring autocratic and absolute power. In other words, the functions of the opposition is to oppose not to obstruct; it is constructive rather than destructive.
The parliamentary system implies and recognises that majority has the right to govern and minority has the right to criticise and regulate the functioning of the majority which constitutes the government. The opposition has to play its role continuously and has to discharge its duties very responsibly and sincerely. An opposition may not remain as a minority only to criticise the ruling party for ever because today's opposition will assume the political reins of tomorrow by offering a constructive criticism of the ruling party and thereby putting forward its own claim to provide a more efficient and better alternative. In a parliamentary system like India, there is daily and periodic assessment of governmental activities for which the government can run efficiently and smoothly due to the presence of a vigilant opposition.

The success of a parliamentary government depends on a strong opposition and a potentially alternative government. An well-organised opposition can prove itself a better and effective alternative to the ruling party by mobilising the public opinion against the government policies.

The Indian National Congress had dominated the political system at the centre and in most of the states of the country in the post-independence period. The constitution of India provides for a parliamentary system of government both at the centre and states. The successful working of this government mainly
depends upon a strong opposition and on a potentially alternative government. In India, the Indian National Congress was deeply rooted in the minds of the people of our country due to its role in the long struggle in Freedom Movement. India has a multi-party system. The intellectuals believed after the achievement of independence that there should be two party system, so that the ruling party could be ousted from power provided the opposition confronted unitedly. But, the opposition party in India has remained so scattered and ineffective that the Congress Party has come out as the single dominant party.

But the politics in Orissa from its emergence as a state is significant in the sense that the Congress had never been a single majority party in the state legislature right from 1952 to 1961. This period was a period of political instability when it failed to secure a clear majority in the legislative Assembly. The opposition in Orissa like that of India has a multiple character. More than five recognised All India Parties and Regional or State level Parties took part in the First General Election of 1952. The Congress Party was very popular in coastal districts whereas in Garjat Tracts, the Ganatantra Parishad appeared to be most popular. Inspite of these two parochial rival parties, there were Praja Socialist Party, Communist Party and Independents who were active in mobilising anti-congress wave in the coastal areas.
THE SCOPE OF PRESENT STUDY:

It is the opposition alone which keeps a democracy alive and prevents the ruling party from becoming autocratic. The result of First General Election to Orissa Legislative Assembly reveals that no party secured a majority in order to be eligible to form a ministry. Six independent members joined with the Congress and N. K. Choudhury was invited to form the ministry. In fact, it was the period of Coalition in Orissa Politics, coalition explicit or tacit. The Ganatantra Parishad was recognised as the main opposition party in Orissa Legislative Assembly and Srdahakar Supakar was accorded the status of the leader of the opposition. Politics of Orissa entered a new phase after the merger of the Ex-native states during 1947-48. The formation of the Ganatantra Parishad as an anti-ccongress opposition party, on 7 January, 1950, was significant in Orissa's party politics during the post merger period. It was organised by R. N. Singhdeo, the Maharaja of Bolangir. Patna, Ganatantra Parishad which was a Regional Political Party played an important role in Orissa Politics since India's Independence. It is important to study Orissa Politics because there was no "one party dominance system" in Orissa as was found in most of the states in India. The active participation of the regional party like Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa prevented the Congress from gaining absolute majority in the state legislature for a long time. Orissa politics was also
affected by deep regional differences. There were important differences between the coastal and western regions in respect of their social, economic and political development and the two regions were placed under two different administrative systems. The coastal region was placed under direct control of the British Government whereas the western region was placed under the native princes who were controlled by the British Government as a result of which one part became more developed than the other. The Ganatantra Parishad acquired an impressive record of performance in the First & Second General Election in the state.

In the First General Election, the Ganatantra Parishad secured 31 out of 58 contested seats in the house of 140. The party polled 20.5% of the total votes cast in the state as against Congress's 39%. The Congress lost majority and secured only 67 seats although it had set up 135 candidates. The Ganatantra Parishad emerged as the second largest party and assumed the role of the principal opposition in the state legislature. In between the First and Second General Election, the Ganatantra Parishad increased its support in the whole of western region and polled 28.68% by securing 51 seats in the Assembly. The regional trend in the electoral patterns was still more prominent in the Second General Election. The Congress Party secured only 56 seats that was only 5 more than the seats secured by the Ganatantra Parishad. The Congress once again failed to secure the required majority and emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly. The Ganatantra
Parishad also increased its representation to Lok Sabha as it secured 7 seats in 1957 instead of 5 in 1952 election. Thus the Second General Election of 1957 constituted a landmark in the electoral history of the Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa. The regionalism in the struggle for obtaining ruling power in the state, which began in 1950-51 became a fact of tremendous importance in the Second General Election of 1957 in Orissa. Orissa is one of the states of India where the regional parties took active participation in the state politics and the one-party dominance system which was suitable for most of the states in India deviated from it and Orissa became a problem state for the Congress Party which failed to gain absolute majority in the state legislature for a long time.

The growth and development of the regional political parties is the outcome of deep rooted regional feelings and the socio-economic problems of coastal region and western region of the state. Because prior to 1948, the state was not under one administration and these two regions were placed under two different administrative systems.

As a principal opposition, the Ganatantra Parishad could raise a voice in the Assembly to express the grievances of the people of Western Orissa and ex-princely states. The role of the Ganatantra Parishad as an Opposition was remarkable in exposing
the party in power for inefficiency, corruption and red-tapism in administration of the state. It also took keen interest and demanded the resettlement and rehabilitation of those displaced and whose lands were inundated by the construction of Hirakud Dam. It also criticised the Government on the issue of the construction of the Rourkela Steel Plant in Sundargarh District of Western Orissa which led to the demolition of several tribal and non-tribal villages.9

The opposition made ceaseless and untiring efforts for the restoration of Sareikala and Kharsuan, the two pre-dominantly Oriya speaking tracts to Orissa from Bihar. It submitted memorandum to S.R.C. for linguistically homogeneous states. In protest against the decision of the S.R.C. in overlooking the claims of Orissa over these areas, R. N. Singhdeo, the leader of the Parishad, then a member of the Lok Sabha, resigned from his membership in the Parliament and his example was also followed by the Ganatantra Parishad legislators of the Legislative Assembly of Orissa. The Ganatantra Parishad attacked incessantly the carving out of a party in power for regional imbalance in the state.10. It could not be denied that the Ganatantra Parishad as a regional political party in Orissa has contributed something significant to Indian Democracy. As a regional party, it could form an effective opposition and could displace the Congress from power and force the Congress to form a coalition Government in May 1959. It proved itself
as a strong and powerful opposition party in the state for about a decade from 1952 to 1962. From the very beginning the Ganatantra Parishad was very critical and consistently demanded for a review of centre-state relations and held the Congress Party in power responsible for Orissa's industrial backwardness and poverty. It also claimed for a greater share of central resources and for Orissa's economic development.

Regional Political parties were formed in Orissa on geographical basis and it is also true that in the coalition government in which the Ganatantra Parishad was a party also formed on geographical consideration. The Ganatantra Parishad was mainly confined to the western and Congress in coastal area and could not extend their base beyond their respective boundaries and tried to remain strong and powerful in their own region. For this reason none of these parties could be able to secure absolute majority in the election of 1952, 1957. As a result, there was constant political instability in the state. The Ganatantra Parishad which emerged as the second largest party in the state legislature in the first and Second General Election could not strengthen its position in other regions of Orissa except in the Western Zone and its performance was very poor in the mid-term election of 1961 which reversed the electoral process of the state which had started in 1952. The Ganatantra Parishad secured 36 seats in 1961 which was 15 less than the number of seats it had won.
in 1957. This poor result of the Ganatantra Parishad in the mid-term election of 1961 gave a lesson to its leaders who ultimately merge with the newly formed Swatantra Party in order to form a broader opposition in the state. After the merger of the Ganatantra Parishad with the Swatantra Party, it had lost its identity as a regional party in Orissa which had been playing the role of an active opposition in the Orissa Legislative Assembly for about a decade.

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