After the commencement of the new constitution of the Indian Republic, the first General Election was held all over India from 20th December 1951 to 25th of January 1952 and which constitute one of the most significant event in the history of the Indian Union. Election was conducted for the first time on the basis of Universal Adult Franchise in India. The Government could not take other qualifications into consideration except that age limit i.e. any one who has completed the age of 21 can cast his/her vote. The Central Government had to make necessary arrangements four months before the First General Election and had to give instructions to the people through the media of books, lectures, exhibitions and cinema in order to make them understand with regard to cast their votes in the voting centres. It also took keen interest to make the common people aware regarding the ballot paper, ballot box, preparation of the voters list and to enroll their names in it. The Government was also vested with the task of preparing the voter list, to determine the number of constituencies and make necessary arrangements for conveyance like vehicle, boat and elephant for carrying the ballot box to different constituencies. Government also gave training to the polling and
presiding officers regarding the conduct of the election four months before the commencement of the election.

Orissa got her statehood only in 1936 and separated from the province of Bihar. The Government of India order 1936 provided for a separate Legislative Assembly for Orissa having 60 members out of which 56 were to be elected and four members were to be nominated. The election before independence was confined to limited franchise. At that time the British Orissa consisted of only six districts and twenty six Garjats or Indian native states. But with the merger of Indian native states in the year 1948, the area of Orissa province had increased from 32,198 sq miles to 60,171 sq miles and there were thirteen districts instead of six districts. The strength of Orissa Legislative Assembly had increased to 91 instead of 60 in the 1948 Assembly. After the commencement of the new constitution the strength of the O.L.A. was fixed to 140.

In first and second General Elections 1952 and 1957 respectively there were double membered constituencies both for the Hindus and Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes, so the number of constituencies present at that time were 107 and 101 respectively. But the provision of double member constituencies were lifted and separate constituencies were set up for the scheduled castes and tribes in 1961. There were 28 seats scheduled tribes and 21 seats for scheduled castes reserved in Orissa Legislative Assembly.
likewise for Parliamentary election 2 seats were reserved for Koraput, 1 each for Mayurabhanj, Sundargarh and Keonjhar for scheduled tribes. The History of Orissa from 1952-1961 was constituted as one of political instability when the Congress party failed to provide a stable leadership and no single party could secure a clear majority in the Legislative Assembly. The Congress party which continued after independence, to be the ruling party both at the Centre and the states, was greatly disturbed when it failed to secure absolute majority in the house of 140 members and had to remain satisfied with 67 seats. Ganatantra parishad formed by the Rajas and princes of the native princely states in 1949 emerged as the second largest party in the state Legislative to play the role of the opposition. The Congress party was very popular in the coastal districts whereas in the Garjat tracts, the Ganatantra Parishad appeared to be most popular. These two parties (Congress and Ganatantra Parishad) represented the two divisions like the Garjat and coastal areas of Orissa which were led by N.K.Chaudhury and R.N.Singdeo respectively. The verdict of the electorate has in general gone against the Congress during the first general election and the factors responsible for the disastrous result of the Congress owing to political defections and the wishful thinking of Dr.H.K.Mahatab to come back to power politics of Orissa who failed to get a place in the Nehru Cabinet in 1952 having been charged with corruption in the ministry of Industries and Commerce. His persistent interference made Orissa
politics too critical for Chaudhry to survive. During the Chief-
Ministership Chaudhry tries his best to keep himself free from
the control of Mahatab by placing his own views on policies of
land reforms and Anchal administration. During the first general
election 1952, the people of Orissa participated both in the election
to the Loksabha and to State Legislative Assembly and 20 seats
of Loksabha were held during the first general election 1952.
One notable feature of the first general election was that the
Government of India got prepared and conducted the election for
a long period of four months.

The electorate for the Legislative Assembly consisted of
1 crore and 9 lakh voters of whom 36 lakh and seventy seven
thousand actually responded to the polling exercise of their right
of franchise. Thus the number of voters who actually participated
in the election constituted 33\% (one out of three cast) of the entire
electorate.

The 1951-52 and 1957 elections were conducted on balloting
system of voting. This was substituted by the marking system
of voting in the midterm election of 1961. In this type of election
the voter had to make a choice out of a number of contesting
Candidates.

It was observed that after proper scrutiny and withdrawal
of nomination paper, their total number for Assembly constituencies.
came to be 517. The candidates during the first general election set up by recognised All-India Parties, nominees of the regional parties and the independents. For the Loksabha seats the candidates contested either on the tickets of recognised national level parties, State level parties and independent.

The following table would give an idea as to the different categories of the contestants.

**TABLE - I**

Candidates for the Legislative Assembly

Total number of seats 140.
The number of constituencies fixed at that time was 107 out of which 33 were double member constituencies and 74 were single member constituencies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Parties</th>
<th>No of Candidates set up</th>
<th>No. elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantra Parishad</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praja Socialist Party</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of India</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent &amp; Others</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>517</strong></td>
<td><strong>140</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:- Report of the Election Commissioner of India New Delhi, Govt. of India.
TABLE - II

Candidate for Loksabha.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Parties</th>
<th>No of Candidate Sponsored</th>
<th>No. elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian National Congress</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantra Parishad</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.M.P.P. (Krushak majdoor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praja Party)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:- Report of the Election Commissioner, of: India New Delhi, Govt. of India.

Out of 20 Loksabha seats 12 were single member constituencies and 4 were double member constituencies viz. Dhenkanal, Paschim Cuttack, Jaipur, Balasore, Kalahandi, Bolangir. One of the important factors which is to be noted here is that the number of parliamentary constituencies during first general election were to be considered not on district basis but on state basis. Because, generally 7 Assembly constituencies constitute one parliamentary constituency but during this time it was found that in some districts there were less than 7 Assembly constituencies and in some other districts there were more than 20 Assembly seats.
The figures in Table I and II depict a consolidated picture of the candidates sponsored by the different political parties for the elections to the State Assembly and the Loksabha and the success achieved by the contesting parties and the Independent candidates.

It would appear from the election analysis of the first general election that out of 517 candidates, there was straight contest in 13 constituencies, triangular contest in 24 constituencies and more number candidates contesting in the rest of the constituencies. The total strength of the Orissa Legislative Assembly was 140 in which 5 were uncontented Congress candidates in first general election, they were Mudi Nayak from Nawarangapur, Yadab Patra from Dual constituency of Angul and Hindol, Baidhar Naik from dual constituency of Pallahara and Kamakhyanagar, Surendra Singh from the Dual constituency of Baripada.

<p>| TABLE - III |
| Results of Election to Orissa Legislative Assembly 1952 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the party</th>
<th>Seats won</th>
<th>Popular votes polled</th>
<th>Percentage of votes polled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>14,28,414</td>
<td>38.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantra Parishad</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7,46,000</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praja Socialist Party</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4,03,200</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,06,000</td>
<td>5.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent &amp; Others</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9,00,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is also remarkable that the All-India party-like Congress party captured more votes, specially in 7 coastal districts and had no base in the districts of the upland of western Orissa namely Bolangir, Kalahandi and Koraput. In these districts the regional party namely the Ganatantra Parishad captured as many as 31 seats out of 58 contested by it. The Congress party had not set up any candidates in Puri Sadar and Gunupur constituency of Ganjam district. It set up one candidate instead of two in the double member constituency of Dhenkanal, Paralakhemundi and Keonjhar district. Congress did fairly well in Balasore district where it captured all the seats and left only one to the independent. There was the straight contest between the Congress and Ganatantra Parishad in Koraput district where the Congress got 4 seats and the Ganatantra 7 seats. The Congress Government were rejected by the verdict of the electorate of all the districts except 7 coastal districts.

The Regional party namely the Ganatantra Parishad did remarkably well in the native princely states which were known as the fort of the Ganatantra Parisad. The western hill districts were inhabited by tribal people who were politically backward due to lack of communication facilities and poor socio-economic condition of the tribal population. The simple and uneducated tribal people had full loyalty towards their ex-rulers. Ganatantra Parishad which was born as a new party after the merger of princely states, emerged as the strong opposition to the party in power.
by winning 31 seats. Ganatantra had not set up any candidates in the districts of Ganjam, Puri, Balasore, but congress had set up candidates in Bolangir. Ganatantra could somehow manage to win a seat in Narasinghpur but fail to win Ersama constituency of Cuttack. It is naturally a remarkable incidence that Ganatantra bagged as many as 31 seats out of 58 contested by it.

Praja Socialist won more seats in Mayurbhanja and did not offer any candidates in Phulbani. It captured 10 seats out of 78 seats contested by it. It had not got a single seat in the western Orissa. Communist had more influence in Puri and Ganjam and scattered influence in Cuttack, Balasore and Dhenkanal. The influence of Independent candidates were more in Cuttack, Ganjam and Puri. The KMPP had set up 7 candidates, 6 in Cuttack and one in Ganjam but could get a single seat.

The result of first general election had let down the Congress as the party could not win a majority but come out as the largest single party with 67 seats. With the support of some of independent members, Congress formed the Government under the chief ministership of N.K. Chaudhury. Sradhakar Supakar of the Ganatantra Parishad was declared as the leader of the opposition.

The members of the first newly elected assembly took their oath on 4th March 1952 on the same day, the first session of
the assembly was held in the Sardar Patel Hall at new capital, Bhubaneswar. The election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker was held on 6th and 8th March 1952 and N.K.Das & Md.Maulavi Hanif were elected as Speaker and Deputy Speaker respectively. The significant factor of the election was the emergence of the Ganatantra Parishad as a powerful political rival of the Congress with 31 seats. The Parishad formed by the ex-rulers of the native states who were agrieved against the ruling party due to the loss of their states during 1947-48. So, Gantantra Parishad was an anti Congress Opposition party during the post merger period.\textsuperscript{13} The Ganatantra Parishad was organised by R.N.Singhdeo, the Maharaja of Bolangir and P.K.Deo the Maharaja of Kalahandi. From the very outset the intention of these rulers was to create anti-coastal Orissa feelings among the tribal of the Garjat and gradually spread all over the western region of Orissa.

So the ex-feudatory states gave solid support to the Ganatantra Parishad. The Congress party faced the P.S.P. and the C.P.I. as its principal rival in the coastal districts of Orissa. Where as the Ganatantra stood as political opponent in the anti- Congress fort in western Orissa which resulted in failure of the Congress to win a majority.

The success of regional party like Ganatantra Parishad during the first general election was possible due to the three main reasons. (1) The tribals of the western Orissa had strong faith in the
leadership of their ex-ruler and they were not prepared to give up their loyalty to the ex-rulers.

(2) There was the provision of direct administration in the ex-feudatory states. Where the administration and justice was exercised by two different persons. But after the merge of the states the tribals were placed under direct ruling of the state Government. Due to the execution of various rules and regulations which resulted in the delay of getting justice, the tribals instead of blaming the administrative system, started condemning the congress which was the party in power.

(3) The Ganatantra Parishad strengthened its position in the whole western region which was mostly inhabited by the tribals and where the congress could not take any necessary steps or measures in respect of their social, economical and political development. So the success of Ganatantra Parishad in Koraput was remarkable.

Out of 517 candidates, 221 were forfeited namely as party wise Congress 14, RSP 38, Communist 14, Ganatantra and Independent 149, Krushak Mazdoor parja Party 6. The highest votes cast in Bisra, single member constituency of Sundergarh. 39,877 vote out of 58,473 votes which is the 68% of the total votes and the highest vote secured by Madan Mohan Amat, a Congress candidate of Bisra.
The lowest votes cast in Udayagiri and Mahana constituency of Ganjam that is about 4,907 votes out of 48,337 votes which is about 10% of the total votes. In dual constituency, the highest votes bagged by Pratap Keshari Deo of Ganatantra Parishad in Junagarh constituency of Kalahandi that is 55,340 votes which is 44.34% of the total votes cast

In the first general election three women candidates were contested. They were Basanta Manjari Devi from Ranpur constituency of Puri district with a congress ticket, Kumari Ramraj from Pattamundai constituency as an independent nominee and Saraswati Dei from Rajnagar constituency of Cuttack district as a Congress candidate fought, and what is more striking is that two out of three women candidates won in the election, was considered to be politically significant.

Before the first general election of 1952, four ministries were formed since Orissa was emerged as a separate province in 1936. The first ministry was led by Krishan Chandra Gajapati, the Maharaja of Paralakhemundi which functioned only for three months. The second one formed by Biswanath Das and lasted for two years from 1937 to 1939. The third ministry of 1941 formed by Krushna Chasandra Gajapati, the Maharaja of Paralakhemundi and remained in power for nearly three years. The fourth ministry constituted by Dr. Mahtab, came to power in 1946 and lasted for a longer period of four years. Expect the first one,
the rest of the three subsequent ministries were based on the majority of support in the legislature.\textsuperscript{19}

Up to 1948, the coastal and upland hill areas of western Orissa were administered by two administrative systems. The coastal districts were directly ruled by the British where the Garjats and the native states generally scattered in the western region were governed by their rulers and thus kept under the indirect administration of the British.

A comparative study of the results of all the pre-independence elections and the post-independence election of 1952 would show that there has been comparatively a decline in the popularity of the congress in the assembly election of Orissa. In the pre-independence elections, congress party seemed to be acceptable and popular in the coastal districts. The politics of regionalism had led to political instability in the state for which a stable party system did not emerge after independence, so the first general election did not produce a clear mandate for any party.\textsuperscript{20}

Due to the poor results of the 1952 election, the congress party failed to capture comfortable majority in the Assembly for which N. K. Chaudhury desired to step down from the Chief Ministership of Orissa.\textsuperscript{21}

But he remained in power at the instance of the congress
party including Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister of India: With the support of some independent members specially the socialist congress backed by Pandit Nilakanth Das, congress formed the Government under the Chief Ministership of N. K. Chaudhury. Mahtab who was a mere member of the Parliament in 1952 wanted to come back to the Orissa Politics. Mahtab left Orissa in 1950 to join Nehru Government at the Centre as Union Industry Minister to keep him away from the state politics of Orissa. It was considered that Mahtab would remain in central cabinet atleast for five years, but after the first general election, there was a change in the Union Cabinet. Mahtab who was elected as a member of the Loksabha, was not taken in the Union Cabinet. Mahtab a shrewed politician was a total looser on both the fronts. Though he left Orissa in 1950 and got a berth in parliament in 1952, was always made himself involved in the politics of Orissa. His constant desire to come back to state politics sowed the seeds of factional politics in Orissa congress till the mid-term election of 1962. In 1955 Mahtab appointed as the Governor of Bombay but could not remain aloof from the Orissa politics. His continuous meddling in the affairs of Chaudhury Govt. which he could keep through his oriya daily 'Prajatantra' and created confusion and problems in the Orissa administration. The young leaders like Biju Pattanaik, Biren Mitra were engaged by Mahtab, the chief conspirator in destabilising the government to create uncertainty in the political atmosphere of the state.
The congress, which considered to be a tremendous force during the pre-independence period had proved to be a failure during the early post-independence first general election. The political climate had undergone a great deal of change and from the very beginning politics of political instability was cropped up in Orissa.

The Congress had not won a massive mandate for which the general election of 1952 brought about a great change in the political picture of the state. The simplicity and administrative inefficiency of Chaudhury Govt. became a victim of factionalism. H. K. Mahtab was able to prevail upon the central leadership to replace N. K. Chaudhury by himself as the Chief Minister of Orissa. He allegedly argued that Chaudhury was a weak leader and he, due to his strong and dynamic leadership, would help the party to have better result in ensuing election and also administered the state more efficiently and cleanly than the Chaudhury. He criticised the Government for its functioning on several fronts and pointed out that the Chaudhury Govt. had failed to fulfill the expectation of the people. Beside this, the anti-Hirakud dam Project and the 1955 flood which brought devastation and blamed for the Chaudhury Government. The report of the states Reorganising commission had knocked down the Chaudhury Government with a heavy blow which demoralised the Government due to massive agitation throughout the state.
Regional imbalance in political development

The study of political development is to be understood in the context of performance of an area in elections. The degree or the level of political development is to be measured on the basis of four factors namely on number of voters; two, the number of invalid votes, the number of personality oriented candidates or Progressive candidates and four, women candidates. It is assumed that a politically more developed areas would attract more voters and there would be less number of invalid votes. Similarly our state politics is purely influenced by personality oriented politics and least influenced by party manifesto.

Orissa is one of the most backward states of the country. But its backwardness is not evenly distributed. Because of historical and geographical factors, the coastal districts are more developed than the western hill districts. Because for long time the coastal districts were under British rule while western hill region were ruled by native rulers. Some of the administrative measures which were taken by the British Government were not introduced by the rulers of respective states or Garjats. So the people led a miserable life in Garjats than in British Orissa. Communication and education were more popularised and extensive in coastal areas than in Garjats. This socio economic gap between the two regions has been reflected in their respective political development.
The congress party which was the main stream of India's national freedom had to face some defections. The most important things is to note that the politics of Orissa from its very birth has been always been dominated by certain personalities and always characterised by instability. The most dynamic personalities in Orissa before independence were N.K. Dash, Pandit Godavarish Mishra, H.K. Mahtab, N.K. Chaudhury, Biswanath Dash etc. The important characters who gradually acquired importance in Congress party were the young and diligent like Biju Pattnaik, Nilamoni Routray and Biren Mitra.

Harekrishna Mahtab has always been an important and powerful political figure in Orissa Politics. His shrewdness and silent action of political manipulation has kept him on the right side of power. He is well known in Orissa as secret actor and manipulator against all the chief ministers who were disgusted with groupsim, defection formed by Mahtab and at last defamed and resigned from the post of chief ministership. In the First General Election the Congress stalwarts like Nilakanth Dash and Godavarish Mishra contested as independent candidates from Satyabadi and Banpur constituencies respectively. Those two strong Congressmen dissatisfied in the organisation of the Congress Party; Nilakantha Dash who was the chief organiser of the congress party in the General election of 1937, was a keen aspirant for the office of the Prime Ministership. Similarly Pandit Godavarish Mishra was
strong aspirant for the office of prime ministership of Orissa
in 1941, because Nilakantha Dash was a member of central legislature,
could not be permitted by the congress High command for leaving
the membership of the Central legislature. Harekrishna Mahatab
assumed the presidency of the Utkal Pradesh congress committee
by defeating Nilakantha Dash by a narrow margin of 12-13 votes.27
This gave much pains to Nilakantha Das who resigned from the
congress party in 1948 and later joined in a new party called
the Orissa Congress Swaraj Dal formed by Godavarish Mishra,
his close associate and supporter. They insisted to form a coalition
Govt. with the help of eight defector congress legislator. In this
situation in the visit of Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalini
made the situation more grave. Nilakantha Das was expelled from
the congress party, in 1941.28 The coalition ministry was formed
by Raja of Paralakhemundi with Godavarish and Abdul Sobhan
Khan as the ministers. The split in Swaraj Party of Godavarish
Mishra forced the Raja to tender his resignation in 1944 and Orissa
was placed under President rule. The broke away of Godavarish
Mishra and Nilkantha Das from congress party with some of his
followers caused factionalism, defection in the congress party.29
Both of them criticised the Chaudhury Government from tooth
and nail though they backed Chaudhury to form the Government
along with other members of the Independent party. The Congress
party did not emerge as a strong and stable party after Independe-
ence led to political instability in the state resulting in frequent
changes in the Government.

A comparative study of the results of all the General Elections held before and during 1952 would show the loss suffered by the Congress is not only in terms of seats but also in terms of popular votes polled.

One important factor as the political observers opine, has been the gradual undermining of the strength of the party from within. Owing to internal dissension of various sorts, congress in Orissa was gradually weakened.

Formation of the ministry

The first general election did not get a clear mandate for any party. Initially N.K. Chaudhury was reluctant to head the ministry and at last agreed at the instance of Pandit Nehru to remain as the Chief Minister. He received support from independent members consisting of former congressmen like Nilakantha Das and Gadavarish Mishra. His ministry was also backed by young leaders like Biju Pattnaik and Biren Mitra.

N. K. Chaudhury's ministry consisted of Radhanath Rath, finance and education, Sadashiv Tripathy, Revenue, supply & excise, Dinabandhu Sahu, Law, Kishore Chandra Bhanja Deo, Industry and transport, Sonarm Soren, Minister for Tribal & rural welfare and Satyabadi Mohanty, law, Home & Health. Besides these seven cabinet ministers the Chaudhury Government had introduced for the first
time in India the provision for the creation of the post of Deputy Ministers. He included the young and energetic leaders like Basanta Manjari Devi, Santanu Kumar Das, Trithabasi Pradhan and Krupanidhi Naik as the Deputy Ministers.

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9. Ibid.
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19. The Orissa Legislative Assembly in Historical prospective 1937-85, Monograph prepared by the Research wing of the Orissa Legislative Assembly.


22. Nilamoni Routray op cit page 290.

23. Ibid.

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30. Records of The Orissa Legislative Assembly.
Nabakrishna Chaudhury, the architect of modern Orissa, succeeded H.K. Mahtab on 12 May 1950 as the Chief Minister of Orissa at the request of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Following the 1952 election he was once again appointed as the Chief Minister. Concentrating on the Bhoodan movement he finally resigned on 1 October 1956.

Nabakrishna Chaudhury is well known in the country as a distinguished freedom fighter, intrepid revolutionary, honest and efficient administrator. As an eminent politician, he undertook sincere and untiring efforts against oppression and exploitation. He implemented many of his farsighted revolutionary concepts in the political, administrative and social realms. He never evinced any interest to publicise his own revolutionary thoughts and activities nor tried for any one else to do so. Though he had a pioneering role in many aspects of nation building, there has been no proper evaluation of his thoughts and activities in post-independent India.
Throughout his life, he was a friend and representative of the poor and exploited class and fought incessantly against oppression and exploitation. While fighting against the rich exploiting landlords, he strove to unite the peasants, labourers and the harijans.

Since the first election to Orissa Assembly in 1937 following the formation of the Separate state of Orissa he had always been elected as a Congress member in all elections till he retired in 1957. He took over as the revenue and supply minister between 1946 and 1948 and as chief minister in 1950 - 1956 and when it was decided in 1950 for Dr Mahatab the then chief minister to join the union ministry. There was a lot of political speculation about a possible contest for the leadership of the state Congress as it was assumed that Chaudhury would not once again return to power. But heeding to the request of the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Chaudhury once again returned as a chief minister. The task of setting up the foundation of modern Orissa by reorganising the administration as per the requirement of the constitution of Independent Indian Republic and implementing the First Five Year Plan was entrusted upon him as he was considered the most suitable choice for this role.

It was not possible to imagine then the financial and administrative condition of Orissa when N.K. Chaudhury took over the reins of the Chief ministership in the first half of 1950. Some
of the steps undertaken during his tenure as the Chief Minister from 12th May 1950 to 19th September 1956 were remarkable. The first five year plan was implemented under the stewardship of Choudhury. Land revenue was then the principal source of revenue of Orissa Government and agriculture was the only source or mainstay or livelihood of Oriyas. The Chaudhury Government basically dealt with the agrarian development of the state. Leave alone any large industry, there was not even adequate financial resources or other concomitant facilities to set up a medium scale industry. The industrialists from outside the state were not willing to set up ventures in Orissa despite its abundant natural resources due to lack of electricity, roads, communication and other infrastructural facilities. Furthermore, the local population had neither the financial resources nor trained manpower. Against this backdrop the onerous responsibility of implementing the First Five Year Plan 1951-56 fell on the Chaudhury ministry. It was considered a difficult task to raise the standard of the erstwhile princely states which were richly endowed with natural resources, and had joined the state just two years back to the level of the coastal districts. Even though the Central Government had promised to lend the required financial resources to implement planned economy as per the five year plans, Orissa Government did not have the required professional skills. There were no institutions to impart agricultural or engineering education then. The engineering school and the Medical College at Cuttack were the only technical
Chief Minister, Chaudhury set up the financial base of modern Orissa by implementing the First Five Year Plan (1951-56). Since then, primary emphasis in the First Five Year Plan was on agriculture. The Chaudhury ministry started a College of Agriculture and another college of Veterinary and Animal Husbandry. His ministry also took steps to increase the agricultural production by adopting improved agricultural practices.

The youth of Orissa did not show any interest for setting up industries mainly due to lack of capital. In order to encourage them, the Chaudhury ministry started a pioneering industrial estate at Madhupatana near Cuttack. The Government invested 90% of the total expenses in setting up this industrial estate and enabled the young entrepreneurs to become joint owners by contributing only 10% of the total paid capital investment. It was planned that these entrepreneurs would totally own the industries by purchasing the total shares gradually. Besides, the construction work of the Duduma and Hirakud hydro-electricity projects was expedited to be completed in time. It was possible for the industrialists to start a paper mill at Chaudwar, a Fero Manganese industry at Joda near Kendujhar and another Fero Manganese concern at Raigada near Koraput by the end of the first plan.

The first public sector steel plant started at the instance of the Central Government and was almost completed during the first plan period and the construction of Hirakud multipurpose...
project and Duduma hydro-electricity project were also completed during this plan period. The individual contribution of the then Chief Minister N.K. Chaudhury in setting up the Rourkela steel plant and Hirakud project is noteworthy. Four months after his resignation, these two massive projects, undertaken during his tenure were inaugurated. The then influential Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal had tried all available means to influence Pandit Nehru so as to have the first public sector steel plant of India located in their own respective states. But since Nehru had implicit trust and admiration for the then Chief Minister Nabakrushna Chaudhury, Rourkela was ultimately selected as the location for the first public sector steel concern. Of course technical experts from abroad had considered Rourkela as the most suitable site from the point of view of technical feasibility. But a lot of influence was brought down upon Pandit Nehru to change the location. Similarly N.K. Chaudhury as the Chief Minister paid keen attention to expedite the completion of the Hirakud Multipurpose project. When he took over charge, the preliminary work of this project had just started. He was the first president of the Hirakud control Board. He had faced the most difficult situation to rehabilitate the inhabitants of 200 villages which were to be submerged as a result of the construction of the Hirakud dam. He used to go personally to each of these affected villagers, persuading the villagers to shift to other specified areas. Still some of them refused to move out at the last instance, so their
entire belongings had to be removed through military vehicles. The way he faced the advers situation, with untiring and ceaseless efforts during the settlement of the inhabitants of the inundated villages is really memorable. Four months after his resignation, these two massive projects undertaken during his tenure were inaugurated. N.K. Chaudhury resigned in Oct., 1956, and Hirakud dam was inaugurated four months later in March 1957.7

As the chief Minister, N.K. Chaudhury not only set up the economic infrastructure of modern Orissa by successfully implementing the First Five Year Plan but during this period he attempted to give concrete shape to many of his revolutionary ideas. He outlined a plan to involve the people in every layer of administrative process through administrative decentralisation. During his term as the revenue minister in 1947, the Orissa Land Holding committee under his stewardship, prepared a complete plan to abolish Zamindari and recommended a scheme called "Local Government or Anchal sasan"8 which would lead to administrative decentralisation by involving people in the act of governance as per this blueprint the whole of Orissa was to be divided into different regions and each region, through its popular representative, was to collect revenues and implement developmental schemes. After he became the chief minister, he made statutory provisions for this in 1956.9 This was first ever blueprint in the country to decentralised administration as per the Directive Principles of State policy.
of the constitution of Indian Republic. But owing to the stiff opposition from the bureaucracy and the lack of interest of the ruling Congress Party, this revolutionary law could not be implemented. Five years after this, following the recommendations of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, a three-tier Panchayati Raj system with very limited powers, was introduced.

In order to realise administrative decentralisation by involving people's representation, it is absolutely essential to introduce the regional language at all levels of administration. After assuming office in 1952, he got the related legislation amended suitably in this manner and took steps to bring out an administrative English-Oriya Dictionary. This was the first attempt in the country to introduce regional language as the language of administration. The then high officials opposed N. K. Chaudhury's steps in this regard. Opposing this measure, the then Chief Secretary Brmhadev Mukherjee had pointed out that conducting official work in Oriya would create problems for the state Government in corresponding with the Central Government and the Accountant General's office. Further why should the Orissa Government hurry for its implementation while no other state had taken steps in implementing their own language as the official language. However, as per the CM's decision all preliminary works in this regard were completed. Apart from the publication of the administrative dictionary in 1952, a new key-board for Oriya type-writer was
designed in 1956 and orders were placed with the Remington Company to manufacture Oriya Type Writers. But, since subsequent Chief ministers had not been sincere in following up this, Chaudhury’s dream in this regard remained unrealised so far so promulgation of Orissa official language Act of 1952 could not be materialised.

During the course of the freedom struggle N. K. Chaudhury had gained direct experience about the problems faced by the farmers of Orissa by leading agrarian and socialistic movement. Further, as the Chairman of the Land holding Committee he had gone deep into the problems of the peasants of the whole country. Against the back drop of such experience he knew very well about the possible steps to be taken in reforming the farmers condition particularly the small and marginal farmers. It was clearly revealed that land owners would try to dispose the small farmers and share croppers their land before land reforms could be introduced. Hence N. K. Chaudhury as the Revenue Minister took steps to formulate the share cropper Act which came into force from 1947-48.

As per this law land owners having 33 acres or more land could not dispose the small farmers of their land and those tenants with tenancy rights were not compelled to give more than one-third of the produce to the owners. This amount was many times more than the actual due and in most cases the poor peasants
got ruined, compound interest was charged on all loans. Under
the pretext of loan repayment, they resorted to deceit and exploit-
ed the poor adibasis. For this reason, the adibasis had been
demanding the non adibasi land owners to quit their ancestral
lands. While Chaudhury was the Chief Minister, adibasis of Gunu-
pur in Rayagada Sub-Division of Koraput District started the 'land
Agitation Movement' in 1952. Nearly 90% of the population of
that area belonged to the 'saora' tribe but only 5% of them had
land of their own. All lands were appropriated by a very
small percentage of non-adibasis who were mostly Brahmins, Kumuti
and Sahukars. Once upon a time these lands belonged to the fore-
fathers of these tribal people. Gradually, through deceit these
lands were transferred and owned by non-adiyasis. The adibasis
served as their bonded labourers or Share croppers. Apart from
working as agricultural wage labourers they had no other source
of income. They could only earn their livelihood during sowing,
weeding and harvesting seasons and—make—-them
grown engage for three
to five months.

As the Chief Minister, he had the share cropping Act
(Tenancy Act) amended in 1955 so as to prevent the dispossession
of the actual share croppers. This amended law stipulated that
no land owner could dispose of the tenant from the land and further,
the share croppers were to give one fourth of the produce in
kind or its equivalent value to the land owners. However,
the share croppers could not benefit in appropriate measure from this law designed to protect their interest. Firstly, the big landowners of the Congress Party showed half-hearted support for such legislation and secondly the concerned government servants did not show the required sincerity to implement it. Since the sharecroppers had to resort to the courts to claim their rights, they had to undergo a lot of harassment. The leftist parties which responded and supported the cause of the small farmers could not render them the expected support. However, this was the first ever legislative measure in the country to protect the interest of the small farmers, before land reforms could be ushered in. After the passing of this enactment, the big landowners came to realise that they could not retain all the land they owned and shared. Before the Government could take away the excess land from them as per the land reforms legislation, they started selling off such land. Hence the price of land started showing a downward trend then. So indirectly the purpose behind this law was realised, there can be no comparison of the sincerity and firmness which Chaudhury, the friend of the poor, had shown in implementing this law. He extended all possible help to the anti-congress leftist parties towards this end. The kind of opposition Chaudhury faced from the ruling party as well as the bureaucracy in implementing the administrative decentralisation and sharecropper Act led him to believe that it was not possible to implement any progressive measure in the existing set up of the country.
To do this it was necessary to organise people by staying out of administration. Hence after retiring from administrative charge, he lent full support to such organisation and parties which were wedded to the cause of organising the masses.

Factionalism inside the Congress Party forced N. K. Chaudhury to step down from Chief Ministership in favour of Mehtab. Chaudhury was criticised and discredited openly by the supporters of Mahatab who started exposing the failure of the Government in its policies and programmes, handling of the flood situation of 1955 and the agitation against the decision of the Government of India on the State Reorganisation Commission. Chaudhury Government failed to restore saraikala and kharswan two Oriya speaking tracts which had originally merged with Orissa in 1948. Mahatab who was the real hero behind this political drama got the long awaited opportunity and became the Chief Minister of Orissa in October, 1956.

REFERENCES

3. Ibid
4. Ibid
6. Ibid
8. Ibid
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
13. Ibid 215
15. Ibid Page 8.
18. Ibid