The origin of this project entitled "The Urban Political Elite in Tribal Orissa – A case study of Phulbani District" may be traced as far back as July, 1993, when I had almost completed seven years of my service as a lecturer in Political Science in a degree college within the target study area, i.e. Phulbani District. I had very often relished to record my observations about the local people, their life style, political behaviour, urban culture and, after all, about the traits of the Political elite. The desire found its expression in this research project when I got at the very first approach the green signal from Prof. B.C. Rout who was also at that time serving as Principal, Government (lead) College, Phulbani and consented to be my research guide. Incidentally, it was congenial for the project that out of the two target towns of the study while my guide was serving within Phulbani NAC town I was serving within G. Udayagiri NAC town. This helped me a lot to undertake the project in a better way.

The study of the political elite in relation to urban local bodies has already been taken up in many different ways by various scholars. But this study of the urban political elite of Phulbani District in relation to the tribal community offers a unique venture of unraveling new horizons of knowledge, facts, figures, and establishing new linkages and findings. The tribal pockets and people in Orissa as well as in India are generally less Urbanised and less modernised. Even in the face of strong currents of nation-building, modernisation, political change, the galloping waves of national development in the post-independence era have inundated every nook and corner of the segregated and uncared tribal promontory like the Phulbani District. Political consciousness and political participation are,
no doubt, gathering momentum in tribal areas of Orissa. The urban leadership in its changing perspectives in such tribal areas will serve as an index to know the growing aspirations and changing orientations of the community concerned.

This study has analysed the socio-cultural and politico-economic background of the urban political elites — the councillors including the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons, both past and present, of the two notified area councils of Phulbani district, i.e., Phulbani N.A.C. and G.Udayagiri N.A.C. Besides, the political awareness, ideals and aspirations, the approach to development, the role perception, the leadership process and political efficacy of the elites with special emphasis on tribal elites have been systematically studied. On the backdrop of a dominant tribal society, the political dynamics such as the political orientations and the attitudinal changes of the elites and the people in general and their correlations have been analysed. Phulbani district, the target area of research is predominantly a tribal district and is one of the most backward districts of India. Thus, the study has tried to add new knowledge, facts, figures and opening new vistas of the tribal political sub-culture and thus may attract the attention of all concerned including the planners and policy-makers. This work intends to contribute a new chapter to the tribal political study and add new dimensions to the field of research.

At the time when this project was undertaken, Phulbani district was officially known as the district of Boudh-Khondmals. But practically nobody used this name. Popularly and even in many Government documents and transactions this was referred to as Phulbani district. Thus, for easy perception of all concerned this project preferred to use the name ‘Phulbani’ for the district instead of the name ‘Boudh-Khondmals’. However, later on during 1993-94 in the process of reorganisation of districts which raised the number of districts of the state from 13 to 30, Boudh-Khondmals was divided into two districts such as Boudh and
Phulbani. Thus, Phulbani became the official name of the said district from 22nd December, 1993 vide Government of Orissa in Revenue and Excise Department Notification No. 56408/R., of the even date. However, the ethnic crisis which woke up in the first quarter of 1994 had serious ramifications, and even attracted the attention of the whole nation. The native tribals—the Kandhas gradually had developed a sense of insecurity due to various reasons and rose in rebellion. They demanded, *inter alia*, renaming the district as Kandhamal, meaning the homeland of the Kandhas. Ultimately the state government conceded to their demand and the district of Phulbani became officially the district of Kandhamal vide Government of Orissa in Revenue and Excise Department Notification No. DRC/136/94. 44250/R., dated 13.10.1994. However, the district is still popularly and even in some cases officially known as Phulbani district. This compounded with the reorganisation of other districts of the state raising the total number from 13 to 30 created certain problems, particularly for correlation of data and facts in this project which practically fell in a period of transition. Therefore, this must be made clear here that for this research project, Phulbani district will generally refer to the present Kandhamal district with occasionally referring to the undivided Phulbani or Boudh-Khondmals district wherever it is necessary.

As many as 54 elite members or councillors, both past and present—31 from Phulbani N.A.C and 23 from G. Udayagiri N.A.C. were directly interviewed by this researcher with a planned questionnaire containing both closed questions with limited choices as answers and open questions eliciting free answers. The elite members or the co-councillors who were interviewed ranged from the candidates who faced 1963 elections to those who faced 1997 elections. It is noteworthy to mention here that all of them showed overwhelming enthusiasm and spoke out their mind in all openness during interview. Interestingly enough, many of them were very curious to know whether their words would reach the government quarters to solve their myriad problems. I am thankful to them for their cooperation and interest in the project.
I am grateful to my guide Prof. B.C. Rout who has been very co-operative and homely and has guided me in proper direction all through. I am thankful to the Director, Sri K.K. Mohanty, Librarian Sri M.K. Samantaray, Junior Librarian Sri S.C. Patra and Research Officer Sri B.B. Mohanty of S.C. and S.T. Research and Training Institute, Bhubaneswar; Sri P.R. Giri, Deputy Secretary to Govt. of Orissa, in the Department of Welfare and his staff; Sri D. Mishra, Deputy Secretary to Govt. of Orissa in Housing and Urban Development Department and his staff including Sri L.N. Rath; Librarian Sri M. Sahoo in the Directorate of Census Operations, Orissa, Bhubaneswar; Personnel Secretary to Commissioner and other staff members in the State Election commission, Orissa, Bhubaneswar; Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Executive Officers and Staff members of Phulbani and G. Udayagiri Notified Area Councils; my colleagues and well-wishers for their kind cooperation and suggestion including collection of materials for this project work.

GOURANGA CHARAN NAYAK