CHAPTER X

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Student politics constitutes a key area of enquiry in the Social Sciences. Numerous analyses of student politics have been made from the historical, philosophical, psychological and sociological perspectives. The focus of most of the scholarly works on student politics has been on student organisations, agitations and movements. Very little empirical research concerning the student political activists has been carried out. Most of the scholars on student politics in India have generally given a passing reference to the profile and performance of student leaders in short articles and monographs. The paucity of empirical studies on student leaders has motivated the researcher to undertake the study of student politics and leadership in Orissa with special reference to the district of Mayurbhanj, which is one of the most backward in the State with a predominant tribal population. The focus of the study is on the student political activists of the six major colleges of the district.

The study entitled "Student Politics and Leadership in Orissa: A Case Study of the District of Mayurbhanj" has a broad Scheme with ten chapters. Chapter I provides a broad conceptual framework on student politics and leadership. Besides, it discusses the scope and objectives of the study, the hypotheses and the method. Chapter II deals with student
politics in comparative perspective. It describes the global nature of student politics in three parts, namely, student politics in the advanced capitalist countries, in the socialist countries and in the developing societies of the Third World. Chapter III dealing with student politics in India, examines the evolution of the student movement, the sources and causes of student activism and a brief review of literature on student leadership in India. Chapter IV deals with the setting which includes a profile of Orissa, a profile of the district of Mayurbhanj and of the six colleges under study, namely, M.P.C. College, Baripada, M.P.C. Evening College, Baripada, Rairangpur College, Rairangpur, Karanjia College, Karanjia, Udala College, Udala and Mayurbhanj Law College Baripada. The study covers student leaders, both formal and informal of four academic sessions, from 1984-85 to 1987-88 and some informal leaders from the early eighties. A general discussion on student politics in Orissa and in the district of Mayurbhanj has also been provided.

The primary focus of the study is on student leaders who are politically oriented and politically active. In attempting to present a profile and the role performance of the student leaders of the six colleges in the district of Mayurbhanj, various facets of leadership, namely, profile, political socialization, political recruitment, perception and orientation and role performance have been studied. Chapters V, VI, VII, VIII and IX provide an empirical analysis of these facets of leadership.
In this concluding chapter, a brief summary of the foregoing chapters relating to the various facets of student leadership and the major findings are presented.

Chapter V of this dissertation presents a profile of the student leaders of our survey. An investigation into the social, economic, educational, residential and such other background factors is imperative for a thorough understanding of the type and nature of leadership emerging from the student community. From the responses of the student leaders relating to their backgrounds, it is possible to test the six hypotheses concerning their profile.

The first hypothesis, namely, "Student leadership comes from middle class and lower middle class families", is supported by the study. Of the 195 student leaders, 55.36% belong to middle income group and 23.07% to lower-middle income group. Taken together, they constitute an overwhelming majority (78.43%). This is applicable to all the six Colleges under study.

Father's occupation is an important indicator of socio-economic status and data show that most of the student leaders belong to families in which the occupation of the father is cultivation (35.35%), business (20.51%) and administration (18.97%). It is significant that only 2.05% of the student leaders belong to families in which father's occupation was
'politics'. Most of the student leaders come from literate families.

The middle and lower-middle class background of the majority of the student leaders is a feature of the state of political leadership in a developing country. Since independence, there has been a significant change in the socio-economic composition of the student population. The large percentage of middle and lower-middle class students in the student population is necessarily reflected in its leadership composition. Students from upper income brackets, as a rule, display a careerist orientation and are more likely to defend the status-quo. Students from middle and lower socio-economic strata are more likely to challenge the status-quo and to become the proponents of change. This finding is consistent with most other studies of student leadership in India.

The residential status of student leaders refutes the second hypothesis: "Student leaders come from rural background". 65.12% of the leaders come from urban areas and this finding is applicable to all the colleges except Udala College in which a majority (57.14%) belong to rural background. This finding contrasts with many other studies on student leadership in India. The predominant urban background of the leaders of our survey may be explained by the fact that all the colleges under
study are situated either in the district head-quarters or sub-divisional head-quarters. Students from these towns stay with their parents, take more interest in student affairs and political activities than their counterparts who hail from the rural areas.

The caste composition of the student leaders partly proves the hypothesis that "Student leaders belong to the upper brackets of the caste system". It is significant that leaders belonging to the two upper castes (Brahmins and Karans) constitute a minority of 33.33% of the total leadership. In our study, the middle and lower middle castes namely, the Khandayats, oilmen', 'Mohantas', 'Gopala', 'Gudia', 'Patra', 'Weavers' and 'Visvakarmas' are predominant in the student leadership population. A noteworthy feature of the study is that in a district with 57.67% tribal population, tribal students account for an insignificant 4.61% of the leadership population. The low level of representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes demonstrates the hegemony of the caste Hindus in the student power-structure.

Information relating to the faculty of the student leaders supports the hypothesis that "Students in humanities and social sciences are more politically involved than their colleagues in sciences". A majority of the student leaders
(67.59%) are from the faculty of arts which includes humanities and social sciences, while students from science and commerce faculties constitute a minority. However, in M.P.C. College, Baripada, a majority of the leaders belongs to the commerce faculty and in Mayurbhanj Law College, all of them have assumed leadership role as students of Bachelor of Law. The course content and the less demanding nature of the curriculum enables students from the faculty of arts to take greater interest in student politics. In contrast, students from the sciences are engaged in studies which are more demanding and are career-oriented. Generally students reading science courses are academically better equipped than students in the humanities. Politically, they are less involved than students from the humanities. As a result, very few students from the science faculty assumed leadership role in student politics.

The accommodation of student leaders during studentship shows that most of them (80.51%) stay at home. This finding is different from most other studies which show that a majority of student leaders reside in hostels and messes which provide greater freedom from parental control and better organised support base for student activists. Inadequate accommodation in hostels partly explains the predominant home accommodation of student leaders in our survey.
Academic merit is an important indicator of the quality and calibre of leadership in the student community. Academic excellence enables a leader to understand the social situation, grasp the ideological trends and articulate academic issues. The academic record of the respondents proves the hypothesis that "Student leaders are academically average". Student leaders with 'average'/'fair' academic performance constitute a majority (53.33%) of the total while the 'poor' category constitutes more than one-fourth. Student leaders with 'excellent' and 'good' academic career constitute a minority (18.45%). This finding is consistent with most other studies which show that student leaders are, in general, academically average. One major trend in student politics in India since Independence is that students of academic merit fight shy of campus politics and as a result student leadership has gradually passed into the hands of the academically average and mediocres.

Only a minority of the student leaders gained some distinctions in extra-curricular activities like literary, sports, dramatics and social work. Again most of the student leaders had no independent source of maintenance and were dependent upon their families for prosecution of studies.

The predominant male representation in our leadership population (98.47%) supports the hypothesis that "Men students
are more politicised than women students. In all the co-educational institutions under study, women students are underrepresented so far as student government and leadership are concerned. The conservative social milieu seems to be the primary inhibiting factor.

II

Chapter VI presents the political socialisation of student leaders of our study. The process of political socialisation has an important bearing on the attitudes and orientations of student leaders to politics in general and to student politics in particular. It is early political socialisation in the family, the school and the peer groups which provide the necessary orientation and drive to some students to play an activist role in campus politics.

Family provides the first socialisation structure encountered by the individual. Student leaders are generally supposed to come from politicised families. Family's social attitude and value commitments, parents' political affiliation and the overall political background of students are key variables in the political socialisation of students.

Data collected from the respondents show that an overwhelming majority of the student leaders (81.02%) has liberal family background. Most of the families provided scope for free discussion of political issues and were not opposed
to students' participation in campus politics. However, parents of a minority of the leaders (30.25%) encouraged their wards for participation in student politics, while a majority (56.43%) remained neutral. Neutral parents did not stand in the way of student leaders in the pursuit of their objectives. In a developing society like Orissa, parents are very much concerned about the academic achievement of their children for the purpose of a secure employment. They look upon active political participation of students as an impediment to academic pursuits.

Party affiliation of student leaders' parents is an important element of their (student leaders) political patrimony. Data confirm that an overwhelming majority (76.41%) of student leaders' parents do not have membership of political parties. Of those with membership in the party (23.58%), only a minority (45.65%) play any active role in the respective parties. Again, a minority of the student leaders (36.41%) belong to families in which any member (other than parents) or near relative had played activist role in politics/local bodies/trade unions/student politics or such other public sphere.

Data obtained from the student leaders relating to their political patrimony partly refutes the hypothesis, namely, "Student leaders come from politicised families". Only a minority of student leaders' parents do have political affiliation and a minority of them belong to families in which any other family
member or near relative has played activist role. Thus, most of the student leaders come from unpoliticised families and are first generation leaders with no worthwhile tradition of political activism in their respective families.

Data relating to the involvement of student leaders in certain political activities during school career were collected to ascertain their possible impact on the assumption of activist role during college career. A majority of the student leaders discussed politics with friends during their school career and attended political meetings. Data support the hypothesis that "School is the most important agency in the political socialisation of student leaders". A majority of the leaders played some active role during school career, ranging from the projection of student grievances and demands to the joining of strikes and agitations organised by local activists. Thus, most of the leaders received the necessary impetus and training during their school career to assume a bigger and more active role in their college career.

III

Recruitment of leaders is an important aspect of politics in any context. Election is one of the most universalistic criteria of recruitment. Students assume leadership positions in the College Union through electoral contests. The College Union is the most important and powerful official student
organisation around which student activities are organised. Key posts in the College Union carry prestige and power for its incumbents. These posts become the stepping stone for the assumption of leadership role in the larger arena of society for politically aspirant student leaders. Over the years, the College Union has become the main instrument for realising the ambitions of aspiring student political leaders.

Analysis of data relating to political recruitment of student leaders in our study enables us to test certain hypotheses. The hypothesis that "Motivation of contestants in fighting College Union elections is to prepare a base for future political leadership" finds slender support from the study. This motivation gets the third highest percentage of responses (14.11%) taking the total leadership into account. This is an important finding in as much as an overwhelming majority of student leaders do not aspire for a political career through the assumption of College Union leadership. The primary motivation of a sizeable number of student leaders (29.44%) was to protect the interests of the students and to solve their problems and more than one-fourth of the leaders (26.30%) contested the elections by the persuasion of friends.

Of the 163 leaders who contested elections, 11 were uncontested due to various reasons. Asked to indicate their
response to some suggested bases of support in getting votes in campus elections, all the respondents referred to the support of personal friends. This was followed by the support of student organisational leaders/volunteers, support of hostel mates, support of party leaders and support of local influential. It is clear that extraneous agencies like political parties and their youth and student fronts play a considerable part in promoting the electoral prospect of their sponsored candidates.

Data relating to the factors contributing to victory refutes the hypothesis that "Political patronage contributes to the victory of contestants". Taking into account, the total elected leadership, it is evident that past service rendered to the student community is suggested as a factor contributing to victory by the maximum number of leaders followed by factors such as 'personality', organisational network, popularity on account of extra-curricular activities and good oratory. The support of political parties and their student fronts has been cited as a factor by a small minority (6.18%) of the victorious student leaders. It is significant that various factors get priority among student leaders of the Colleges under study and no single factor played a significant role in the election of the candidates. That no elected student leader referred to good academic career as a factor is indicative of the fact that the
academic standing of the student contestants matters little to the student voters.

The hypothesis that "Sectarian politics contributes to the defeat of the contestants" is partly supported by the study. It gets priority among the second largest group of respondents (30.30%), while 'weak organisation' receives the highest number of responses (36.36%). Sectarian politics includes caste, regional and faculty feeling deliberately whipped up during elections to the College Union. It is a healthy sign for electoral politics on the campuses that almost all the defeated leaders have not complained of the use of force and methods of character assassination by the opponents. It is interesting to note that none of the defeated candidates acknowledged that his opponent was superior to him and that he lost on account of his own deficiencies and lacunae.

Student contestants usually give a conservative estimate of their electoral expenses. The amount spent by candidates has varied from a few hundred rupees to a few thousands. Most of the student leaders have attributed primacy to parental source for financing their elections. Some student contestants have been assisted by political parties, friends and student organisations. It is significant that financial contributions by political parties and their student fronts together constitute the primary source of finance for more than one-third (36.84%) of the student contestants. In recent years,
Campus elections have assumed significance for political parties and personalities and they contribute to the finances of their sponsored candidates.

Data substantiate the hypothesis, namely, "Political parties primarily contribute to the politicisation of the campus." Political parties and their student fronts have remained active on the campuses. Student leaders do have connections with them. A majority of student leaders (74.35%) in our survey are members of student fronts of political parties. These associations receive organisational and financial support from the political parties. They sponsor their candidates in the College Union elections and try their best to use the Union as a base of party operations. The political competition is primarily confined to the Chhatra Congress (Student front of the Congress(I) Party) and the Chhatra Janata (Student front of the Janata Party). The leftist student political associations like the AISF, SFI and DSO do have a very insignificant impact on the campuses under study. It seems that leftist radicalism is yet to make a dent in the region.

A majority of student leaders (75.38%) had connections with political parties and of them, 34.01% were members and 10.88% were office bearers of various political parties. Students have increasingly become important targets for recruitment by political parties and ideological movements. The linkage between
student leaders and party elites is an established fact of Indian political life. Of the 147 leaders who had linkage with political parties, 50 were members and 16 were office bearers. Together they constitute a sizeable 44.89% who are actively connected with political parties. Of the political parties, the Congress(I), the Janata and the BJP exercise greater influence on the student activists. The leftist parties like the CPI and the CPI(M) have very little hold over the student leaders in our survey. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha is influential only in Rairangpur region where the movement for the creation of a separate Jharkhand State is the strongest. Thus the involvement of political parties and their student fronts in student politics significantly contributes to the politicisation of the campus.

Our study shows that, unlike the larger political sphere, political defection has not been a significant feature of student politics on the campuses under study. Only 7.59% student leaders having membership in student political associations and 7.48% having connection with political parties changed their affiliation during studentship. The overall picture indicates the continuous loyalty of student leaders to the political parties and student political associations of their initial choice.
The overall perception and orientation of student leaders to social, economic, political and academic issues and problems have an important bearing on their political culture and political behaviour. To ascertain the overall perception and orientation of student leaders, four broad groups of questions were asked. The first group of questions seeks to test their attitudes towards political involvement.

Active participation of students in politics has generated much controversy. While leftists and radicals hold that students and faculty should be deeply involved in politics, moderate-conservatives and liberals argue that political and academic roles should be compartmentalized and students should be least involved in politics. Seven questions relating to political involvement and participation of students were posed to the student leaders of our survey and their answers have been elicited.

As to the first question, namely, "Should students take active part in politics?", 74.35% of the leaders agree. They argue that as a conscious, knowledgeable and energetic section of the community, students should take interest in the country's problems and do something worthwhile to provide solutions to them. Those who disagree put forth the argument that active involvement in politics will prove prejudical to
the academic atmosphere on the campus and will convert the campuses into hot beds of politics.

A majority of the student leaders (82.06%) disagreed to the suggestion, "Should students be members of political parties and render active service to the parties and organisations set up by them"? They viewed interaction with political parties and leaders injurious to the long-term interests of the students. Students have, more often than not, been exploited by political manipulators from outside. This provides an interesting contrast to the actual membership of student leaders of student political associations and political parties. While 44.8% and 74.35% of the leaders were actually members of political parties and student political associations respectively, only 17.94% agreed to the suggestion that students should be members of political parties and render active service to them.

One possible explanation is that while for practical reasons, many students are members/office bearers of political parties and their student fronts, they do not favour such intense form of interaction on ideological grounds.

To the third question, namely, "Should students seek support from political parties for public issues"?, 70.25% agreed. Thus a majority of the leaders deem it proper to seek support of the political parties and personalities for public issues affecting the broader society and polity. Those who
disagreed, had a feeling that party support has done more damage than good to the student community.

About half of the leaders agreed to the suggestion: "Should student organisations be affiliated to political parties?" It is significant that while 73.45% of the leaders are actually members of student organisations having affiliation with political parties, a lesser number (50.76%) favoured such affiliation. Those who favoured affiliation, argued that it would result in ideological conviction for their members and the creation of a second front of political leadership. Those who disagreed put forth the view that affiliation would compromise the independence and autonomy of student organisations and would create unhealthy competition among the groups.

Students were asked a few questions on the degree and extent of their political participation. A majority of student leaders (68.20%) favoured attendance at study circles and seminars conducted by political parties. A greater majority of the leaders (78.97%) favour a more intense form of student political participation, namely, "students should take part in off-campus agitations and movements". They felt that such student participation would remove sectarian outlook from the student community and enable them to fight for the multifarious issues and problems of the broader society and polity.

To the question, "Does the proliferation of student organisations affect adversely the unity and strength of the
student community. 40.51% of the leaders agreed. They argue that such proliferation reflects the fragmentation of political parties and contributes to rivalry among student organisations. But a majority feel that it is quite natural and democratic to have a number of student organisations who provide a common front on matters of common interests and issues pertaining to the student community.

The second group of questions sought to test student leaders' attitude towards student unionism. Much controversy has been generated in recent years about the necessity of student unions in educational institutions. All the respondents affirmed that there "should be student unions in educational institutions". They listed the primary objectives of student unions — both educational and non-educational. However, 77.94% of the leaders agreed to the suggestion that student union was fulfilling such objectives. An overwhelming majority (92.30%) favoured student participation in matters relating to student welfare in the college. They feel that such participation will ensure impartial distribution of funds to the needy and the deserving students.

In recent years, electoral politics on the campus had adversely affected campus peace and academic atmosphere. However, an overwhelming majority of student leaders (93.93%) disagreed to the suggested question: "Do you think that in the interest of campus peace, elections should be replaced by
nominations"? Generally, they feel that the system of election is in harmony with broad democratic values of life and throws up the ablest and fittest candidates. However, some of the leaders suggested suitable reforms in the present pattern of elections to the student union.

Only a minority (10.77%) of the leaders agreed to the suggestion that "Student union activities adversely affect the academic interest of the student community"? An overwhelming majority of the leaders feel that student union activities had no adverse effect on academic pursuits. College Unions, during most part of the year, organise cultural and academic functions for the students. It is only when student leaders give a call for a strike and organise agitations on some issue or other, that the normal academic schedule is disrupted. Quite often, Union leaders have organised protest activities in support of their demand for the improvement of physical and educational facilities in the Colleges.

The third group of questions seeks to test their perception of local/regional issues and problems. Student leaders in our survey belong to the six major colleges in the district of Mayurbhanj which is one of the most backward in the State of Orissa. They gave various reasons for the underdevelopment of the district ranging from misutilisation of forest and mineral resources to lack of an enlightened and committed leadership to project the problems of the district. Asked to state the efficacy of the tribal political elites in projecting the
needs of the region, almost all the respondents gave a negative picture. Again, student leaders have a feeling that educated tribal leaders maintain a distance from the mass of tribals and use their status and influence in promoting their own interests rather than rendering selfless service for the tribal masses.

An overwhelming majority do not approve of the idea of a separate 'Jharkhand' State as it would give a fillip to sub-regional forces and create tension between the tribals and the non-tribals. They feel that tribal development would be speedier by greater investment in the region and proper implementation of plans and programmes. Only a minority of nine tribal student leaders argued in favour of the creation of a separate Jharkhand State.

To the question, "What is the equation of Mayurbhanj political leadership with state political leadership?", most of the respondents replied that most of the political leaders who are tribals have, by and large, failed to impress upon the State level political leadership about the fulfilment of the genuine demands of their local people. Most of the student leaders take credit in championing regional issues and aspirations, while some of them frankly admitted that they could succeed only partially. Almost all the leaders strongly feel the need for the early establishment of a University in North Orissa.
comprising of the districts of Mayurbhanj, Balasore and Keonjhar.

In the last group of questions, student leaders' perception of the problems of the country was tested. Most of the leaders gave primacy to a number of political and economic problems, while some of them referred to faulty educational system. They correctly assessed the dangers to our polity and economy from diverse sources and offered some solutions to the country's problems. In particular, they stressed the role of selfless political leadership in setting an example for the elites in different walks of life and felt that well thought-out political solutions, backed by strong and impartial administrative measures would go a long way to provide solutions to the country's major problems.

A minority of the respondents (20.51%) agreed to the continuance of reservation of seats relating to admission into educational institutions and recruitment to jobs for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other socially and educationally backward classes. An overwhelming majority felt that the continuance of reservation would stifle talent and would continue to develop a vested interest in backwardness.

To the suggestion, "Should there be Compulsory Military Training (conscript) for the able-bodied youth of the country?", the response of the majority (55.38%) was positive. To the
suggestion, "Should there be compulsory social service by the students during vacations?", an overwhelming majority (87.17%) agreed. They feel that such service will create in them community spirit, an awareness of the problems of the common man, inculcate in them the dignity of labour and harness their youthful energies for nation-building activities.

Thus, the overall perception and orientation of the student leaders to the multifarious issues and problems have been liberal and progressive.

Student leaders constitute the 'active' few who play an important role in articulating issues, in aggregating interests, in fighting for student demands and in participating in broader movements. Student leaders, in our survey have performed many roles - both on-campus and off-campus. Our study supports the hypothesis that "Student politics is primarily interested-oriented". Almost all the student leaders (97.94%) took keen interest in academic issues and fought for the protection of student interests. This is consistently applicable to all the colleges in our study. Although some student leaders fought for social, economic and politico-administrative issues, their concern with educational issues and campus problems is most intense. The specific demands of various colleges have a large measure of commonality and relate mostly to the physical deficiencies with which most of the educational institutions in a
developing society are beset. Student leaders of all the Colleges have lent active support to some common demands projected at the district level.

Students, everywhere, are most concerned about the things that directly affect their lives. Their concerns are most likely to center in their immediate environment. The concern of our student leaders with deeper socio-economic-political problems was, on the whole, marginal. This finding is consistent with the national scene in as much as "the pattern of post independence student activism in India has been one of sporadic regional or local student movements usually concerned with limited non-ideological issues".

Our finding partly supports the hypothesis that "Student leadership does not reflect the aspiration of the people in the region". Public agitations and movements in the district of Mayurbhanj have focussed on such issues as the creation of a North Orissa University, rapid economic development of the district, better employment opportunity for the local people, conversion of the Rupsa-Bangiriposhi narrow-gauge railway line into a broad-gauge one and establishment of an All India Radio Station and Television Relay Station in the district. About half of the student leaders (48.20%) have taken part in such agitations. But, on the whole, incidents of student activism in our survey have been directed towards the improvement of campus life. Thus, student leaders, in general, have given more
attention to campus issues than to the overall development of the district.

The hypothesis that "the techniques of student protest are mostly extra-legal" is not supported by the study. Most of the student leaders have used techniques of protest that are legal and constitutional. By and large, they have not resorted to strong-arm politics. A small minority of the leaders (3.07%) testify to have resorted to some disorderly forms of protest like threats and violence. It is, of course, true that some degree of violence is usually associated with large scale and protracted agitations led by the student leaders. Quite often, violence is the reaction, as student leaders profess, to the action initiated by the law-enforcement authorities to control student protest activities.

An important index of political participation of students is their role in elections outside the campus. A majority of leaders (64.10%) have played an active role in such off-campus elections as Panchayat and Municipal elections and elections to the Legislative Assembly of the State and the House of the People of the Indian Parliament. Political parties have mobilised the energy and dynamism of student youth in electioneering.

A developing country like India requires proper mobilisation of the vast manpower to tackle the gigantic task of nation-building. Students perform certain functions for the
welfare of the community which receive less attention. Most of the student leaders in our survey are members of the National Service Scheme and some are members of the N.C.C., Red Cross Society, Rotaract Club etc. As such, they have got an opportunity to serve the community in various ways. Student leaders have taken part in family planning drive, adult literacy campaign, 'Sramadan', environmental conservation, cleaning the slum areas in towns, helping the old and the destitutes in getting pensions from the government, blood donations and relief camps during natural calamities.

Student leaders encounter a number of problems and are subject to many pressures which put physical and psychological strain on them. The study partly supports the hypothesis that "Student leadership is subject to diverse strains and stresses". In a developing society like India, conditions of life and study in most of the institutions of higher education are far from ideal. A minority of student leaders (44.61%) admitted that they had undergone stresses like dissuasion by family, pressure of academic schedule, factionalism, political interference and government/police pressure.

An analysis of the major student agitations and movements in the district supports the hypothesis that "Student politics in the district of Mayurbhanj is characterised by the absence of on-going movements". In the fifties, students have joined the all Orissa movement against the report of the States Reorganisation Commission, 1956 which had
denied the merger of two predominantly Oriya-speaking regions with Orissa. During the sixties, students of M.P.C. College, Baripada took active part in the All Orissa student movement of 1964 which led to the fall of the Mitra Ministry. In 1978, a protracted student agitation, under the leadership of Kishore Chandra Das took up a number of common academic issues affecting the district. During the eighties, students of Mayurbhanj lent support to students of Western Orissa in their crusade against unscrupulous businessmen and protested against the killing of some Engineering students of Burla. In recent years, there has been a steady growth of political activism in Mayurbhanj. Students of the district, over the years, have resorted to agitations and movements to achieve limited or specific objectives. All the same, there is no on-going student movement to combat the multifarious problems and deficiencies with which the district is beset. Students have frequently come forward to protect their interests and to fight for their rights, but seldom have they acted as agents of socio-economic development of the district.

Student movements in most parts of the world are plagued by the problem of continuity. Experience shows that student activism is one of the most ephemeral of political activities, and movements come and go after achieving limited and specific objectives. The absence of a continuous and an enduring leadership in student politics largely precludes the
possibility of on-going student movements. Again, the lack of a sense of efficacy to bring about a radical transformation of the society, economy and the polity prevents student leaders from projecting such goals during their studentship. In India, there has been a decline of ideological politics since independence. The student community has developed apathy and cynicism due to the general malaise of the broader society and the degeneration of the political system. One hardly comes across student leaders who are selfless, dedicated and committed. The plethora of student political associations leads to unhealthy competition and rivalry adversely affecting the solidarity of the student community to take up constructive activities.

The last hypothesis, namely, "Student leaders aspire for a career in politics after completion of studies" finds slender support from the study. Data relating to the occupational aspiration of student leaders show that only a minority among them (20%) aspire for a career in politics, while the rest project non-political occupational goals. Most of the student leaders prefer to enter into the stable world of occupation rather than embrace the uncertain and fluctuating career of politics. The insecure economic background of the majority of the student leaders rather forces them to look upon student leadership as something temporary and the urgency for a secure job, after completion of studies, a dire necessity. For the vast majority of student leaders, student activism is a transitional phase of life and the heady experience of student days is an exciting but passing phase of life.
It is felt that the profile and role performance of student leaders of six major colleges of the district of Mayurbhanj, one of the most backward in the State of Orissa with a predominantly tribal population, considered in this study provides some valuable insight into student politics and leadership in one important region of Orissa. The use of a microcosmic analysis of student leadership has facilitated the close examination of student activism in recent years. The study has focussed attention on the problems of underdevelopment in a backward region of the country and the role of student leaders in articulating the aspirations of the people and in projecting the regional needs and demands for the overall modernisation of the district. An indepth analysis of the nature of student politics and leadership in a tribal setting would contribute to the understanding of some aspects of student politics in Orissa and India at large. The hypotheses built and the conclusions drawn may have relevance to other parts of India as well as to other developing societies. It is sincerely hoped that the study can add some knowledge to an important area of enquiry in the Social Sciences.