CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

VI. (A) AS THE LEADER:

'Leader' and 'Leadership' are the inescapable and inevitable facts of human life. Hence, it is claimed that the leader and his leadership are as old as the human civilisation itself. The urgency of both the leader and leadership are felt more in the political aspects of life. And, since every human being is a political person - already in power, struggling for power or apolitical\(^1\) - he constantly requires a leader for himself.

The leader provides leadership both to the society and to the political community. The leader knows what to decide, when and how to decide it, when to change the decision and how to implement the decision and upon whom. In the process he directs and controls the following, sensitizes and motivates them and activates them to help him realise the goal. He sets

---

the goal and decides the way to reach the goal. He reaches the goal, carrying with him the support of the followers. In course of leadership exercise, the leader may either gain a paradise or may suffer a heavy loss in terms of personal prestige and honours.

Who is the leader and who is the follower to be led by him? It is not an easy question to which an answer can be provided easily. It all depends upon the place of the individual in society. What attitude towards his life and societies the individual takes, what values he cherishes and what goal of life he wants to reach? The majority of individuals in the society form the attitude, nourish the ideas and accept the goal as they are told by their leader. It can be said and, without exaggeration, that the leader influences the followers and, hence, he is influential.

1. See, Krech, David et al., in "Individual and Society", op. cit. p. 313.
2. "The Social place of the individual largely determines with particular participation in the total culture of the society. The total culture of a complex society is too complex and too rich for any one individual to participate in its entirety....Thus the men in a society will have certain skills and knowledge, they will hold certain attitudes and values, they will entertain certain goals". See, Krech David, et al., in "Individual and Society", op. cit. p. 316.
How does an individual become a leader?
The most popular way to answer the question is to view a leader either as a 'Pawn' or as a 'greatman'. Most of the leaders are just like the helpless pawns, like ordinary individual, swayed away by the current of history.

But in course of the sway, some establish their potentialities to be appreciated by a group of individuals. Such a group of individuals is the followers to be led by the individual they appreciate. However, rarely some individuals appear on the scene who are the products of the timeless historical process but they become successful to change the direction of the historical flow. The products of history, they create history by turning the mighty waves of history to their own advantage. Such individuals are 'greatmen', ('Leadership' has been discussed in detail in Chapter-I).

As the English proverb goes "some are born great and, the others, on whom greatness is thrust upon". But, Biswanath Das has been interestingly a synthesis of both. He was not only born in an affluent family but also through a disciplined and dedicated life greatness was thrust upon him. We

1. Max Weber prefers to call them as charismatic leaders.
are inclined to believe that he was perhaps or to be great. (A peep into his life and activities has been discussed in Chapter-II).

Living in the midst of the contemporaries, Das was unlike almost many of them. His life and activities pertained to that period of history and evolution of Indian Society when the leaders of India cherished no selfish desire behind their activities - they were a band of dedicated workers. Whatever they did was aimed at liberating the motherland from the alien rule. But Das was the most remarkable in the sense he was born with silver spoon in his mouth, but he launched an uncompromising tirade against the established landlords just to upgrade the status of the poor peasants. In whatever position he was (the Premier, the freedom fighter, the member of the Constituent Assembly, the Parliament of India, the Governor or the Chief Minister of the State), he was never away from the Indian culture, tradition and the way of life. His critics dubbed him as a conservative. Some one can argue for a longtime in support of such a
criticism.¹ Mc Closky still goes a step forward and brings out another interesting personality trait of a conservative.² But such criticisms against Das, does not seem tenable. It is surprising that the Biswanath Ministry (1937-1939) appointed a committee under the Chairmanship of the renowned Engineer Sir M. Visweshwaraya to devise means to control the floods in Orissa. The Committee recommended for the construction of a dam at Hirakud. The Hirakud Dam, the longest of the dams in Asia and one of the finest in the world, stands even today as the living testimony of Das's foresight and humanitarian consideration. Secondly, in 1939, the British political agent - Major R.L. Bazelgette, was murdered in Ranpur, a native

¹ "The extreme conservatives are easily the mostly hostile and suspicious, the most rigid and compulsive, the quickest to condemn others for their imperfections or weaknesses, the most intolerant, the most easily moved to scorn and disappointment in others, the most inflexible and unyielding in their perceptions and judgement. Although aggressively critical of the shortcomings of others, they are usually defensive and armoured in the protection of their own ego needs......" See, Krech, David, et al., op. cit. p. 320.

² "......it is almost as though disliking themselves, they seek solace and support in an over-defence of society and over-institutionalisation of life". Quoted by Krech, David., et al., op. cit. p. 321.
princely State. It was the period of Das's Premiership. Das as the Premier was to send police to the State. At this juncture, he divided his personality. As an individual, a law-abiding citizen of India, he should have supported those who were fighting against the British administrative excesses. But, at the same time, as the Premier of the State, he was under constitutional duties to send police to control the rebelling mob. He did both simply by delaying the despatch of police for twenty-four hours and allowing the people to desert their villages during the time. The police was sent to Ranpur but there was no one to be shot down. (The incident has been discussed in Chapter-II). Such an individual with compassion for the fellow-beings and consideration for the whole society and motherland can be anything but a conservative. Das seemed to be a conservative in his personal life. He was strictly a vegetarian, every day was performing 'Asanas' and 'Pranayam' and sat in a position with knees down for hours. But in the matters which did not touch his personal life but concerned the society, he seemed to be a humanitarian and a philanthropist.
VI(B) AS THE LIBERATOR:

Biswanath Das can safely be identified as a liberator. By virtue of his education at Cuttack and Calcutta he could totally liberate himself from a series of superstitions and taboos. His fellow-beings and even most of his co-workers had been the victims of such taboos but the English and legal education made him a liberal and taught him to analyse a situation dispassionately and objectively. By the time Das returned to Orissa, he seemed to be a Statesman in the making. His leadership, which has been discussed already, craze for liberation and nation building; and dedication for the national cause were all in search of a fertile land for germination and growth. He was not required to go farther Orissa, his native state, provided him the much-awaited fertile land.

Das began the life of a liberator in a triangular way (a) Starting and pioneering the movement for the liberation of the peasants and the royats against the exploitation of the landlords. (b) Merging himself with and, in course of development, becoming a front-line leader of the movement aimed at liberating the Oriya from the incursion of the Bengal: the Hindi and the Telugu and to accord it a status of an independent official language; and liberating Orissa
from Bihar-Orissa, Nagpur and the Madras Presidencies and making it a separate province by amalgamating the Oriya-speaking tracts; and (c) Becoming a freedom fighter and associating himself with different revolutionary programmes of Gandhiji for the liberation of the nation.

The activities of Das as the herbinger (for the first-time in the history of India) of the peasants' movement have been discussed earlier in Chapter-III. It has also been showed how he realised his dreams only after becoming the Premier of Orissa. The contribution of Das to the liberation of Orissa as a separate state and the Oriya has earlier been discussed in Chapter-I. His participation in the freedom movement, especially with the Gandhian Programmes of non-cooperation, civil-disobedience and quit-India movement etc has been discussed in detail in Chapter-IV.

VI.(C). AS A BUILDER:

Biswanath Das was a builder par excellence. He was a builder in two different dimensions -
(a) Nation building; and
(b) Institution building.

It has been argued that the problems of nation building engulfs within itself four different sub-dimensions -

(a) Nation building;
(b) State building;
(c) Economy building; and
(d) Citizenship building.

There has not been a single sub-dimension which had not been contributed to by Das. Through his participation in the freedom struggle, courting arrest, suffering sentences and the blows of the lathis, he could see his motherland free and independent.

The next task remained for Das - the problem of State building. During his short tenure as the Premier of Orissa for two years and as the Chief Minister for one year and half, he did initiate some radical reforms measures which a socialist might also envy. The different bills in the legislature for land and agricultural reforms are the living testimony to
explain to what extent Das was sincere in providing the permanent solutions to the age-old-vexing problems of the Orissan societies.

In two different capacities of heading the Government of the State he realised that Orissa is a poor State inspite of having the potentialities to be economically progressive and better of. He initiated certain humble steps to uplift Orissa from a State of dismal poverty. He correctly understood that no State or nation can progress economically if its producers-class is not adequately protected from exploitation. At this direction, he initiated legislative measures for the creation of the Land Mortgage Banks and the co-operative society through which finance may actually reach to the farmers. Added to this, he regulated through Acts, the private money-lending business and protected the poor farmers from the clutches of the greedy unscrupulous money lenders. Lastly, Das strongly felt the urgency of citizen building. He was clear to the extent that sound citizenship can not come out of illiteracy. Thus the primary task of his government in (1937-1939) was to provide primary education at the minimum to everyone. He geared up the entire administrative machinery to fight illiteracy in all
fronts. Higher education equally important because that makes better exposure to a people. Realising that Orissa needs a University, he appointed a Committee under the Chairmanship of Pandit Nilakantha Das to study the feasibility of such a step. He got the recommendation of the Committee but could not lay the foundation due to the short tenure of his government. Lastly, he was against everything that dehumanises the human beings. Through legislative measure, he imposed heavy limitations upon the sale of opium, ganja and their bi-products.

The second aspect of building refers to the institution building. Das, under the situation was associated with a number of offices and institutions. At the late youth of forty eight, he was required to head the Government of the State of Orissa. At the time, the office was not that attractive; the three ministers were getting per month less than Rs. 500/- as their salary. But the office under Das became one of the most enviable. By the time Das left the office in 1939, the office has even known to the people of England (the different incidents during his Premiership have been discussed detailly in Chapter-V). In the post-independent India, the situation again dragged him to the political arena and made him the Chief Minister
in 1971. Das understood the situation that the two ex-Chief Ministers of the State were fighting for the office but were unable to reach an agreement. Hence, himself as the compromise candidate. In case the two fighting leaders agreed next day, Das calculated, he might be humiliated. But as the Chief Minister, he did not want to push the office into the centre of controversy. Thus the day he was administered with the oath, he declared that he was not a leech and he did not like to stick up to power. He was always moving with a letter of resignation in his pocket. Just after a year in 1972, when he felt that it was better to resign than to compromise, he resigned as the Chief Minister of Orissa.

In 1949, he was nominated to the Constituent Assembly to draft a Constitution which would determine the future destiny of India. In his honest capacity of being a member, he had althrough been guided by one objective—unity and integrity of India must be upheld. Not infrequently, he was seen arguing with the stalwarts whenever he felt that India might be harmed by adopting a particular proposal. He was honest and brutally frank in whatever he said and he stood by every word of himself (See, Chapter-IV, for exhaustive discussion).
Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru recommended to the President of India to appoint Das as the Governor of the native State of himself. The five years of the gubernatorial position was not that smooth for Das. At one time, attempt was made to bring insult and ill-reputation to Das - the Governor himself. Even some disgruntled section did not hesitate to implicate him as hobnobbing with the politics of another states right from the Uttar Pradesh Rajbhawan. The same section did not even hesitate to demand the resignation, or, even the dismissal of the Governor but as Das was honest, and his honesty was known to the uppermost circle, he survived all the onslaughts.

"In his death, a veteran multi-dimensional career has been extinguished". Within the tottering figure gifted by an equally frail health of Das, was a heart that was melting at the sight of the needy and tortured and was hardening equally at the sight of tyranny and injustice. Socialized from early childhood in the rigorous Vedantic tradition, he remained life long a testimony of the culture and heritage of his motherland. He, at the same time, by virtue of his

1. See Annexure- 17.
English education, was a liberated youth filled with dreams, reforms, challenges and achievements. His establishment of the Chaturdharma Ved Bhawan Nyasa (Trust), at Puri for the propagation of the Vedic teachings, and the Biswanath Trust Fund to cater to the needs of poor students stood in sharp contradiction with his government's - appointing a committee under the Chairmanship of M. Visweswarāyya to recommend permanent solution to the flood-problem in the State and the decision of a dam to be constructed at Hirakud; and another Committee under the Chairmanship of Pt. Nilakantha Das to recommend feasibility of having a University in Orissa. He may be seen engrossed in Asanas and Pranayamas, taking meal on the banana leaves, or meeting the Viceroy in typical Indian dress. Somebody else might have seen him fighting for the peasants against the land lords, addressing rallies for the liberation of his state and his mother under; or even courting arrests and suffering sentences in course of fighting the freedom movement. He never let the prestige of the office, he occupied, down; rather made it an enviable one. He was an excellent builder. In the death of Biswanath Das, the Liberator, Builder and a Leader of Orissa is extinguished.