



International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)

A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal

ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)

ISJN: A4372-3142 (Online) ISJN: A4372-3143 (Print)

Volume-IX, Issue-II, March 2023, Page No.163-169

Published by Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711

Website: <http://www.ijhss.com>

DOI: 10.29032/ijhss.v9.i2.2023.163-169

A Study of Socio-Political Development in Odisha: Demystifying the facts

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Abstract:

The present research study examines the development status of Odisha. The state is basically an agricultural economy, and most of the population lives in rural areas. The development of Odisha gained momentum in the last few years, and now literacy and education are improving and continuing to progress. But the overall development of the state is still facing a lot of crises and challenges, like the barriers before models of development, education, poverty, and the social economy. These factors are certainly considered priorities by the government, and it is executing various policies to solve such issues for the comprehensive development of the state. The developmental pattern of Odisha is quite good and progressive, but due to the social structure and lack of adequate infrastructure and investment, the planning is not working effectively. The paper also tries to understand that the government must develop plans for investment in the local society to support employment and poverty eradication. Considering all the mentioned parameters, the present research paper is intended to examine the factors responsible for the development of the state and its present status. The also paper analyzed the theoretical underpinnings of the selected social factors and evaluated the prevailing scenario in the state. The methodology used in the research is mainly secondary in nature.

Keywords- Social development, Government planning, Socialization, Odisha

Introduction: Presently, the Odisha is recognized as a good economic performer as the state has a very high economic growth rate. The state of Odisha's development is really a good example, as it regularly maintained economic growth up to 7-8 percent in the crisis scenario. The state's development is certainly affected by the global and national economic slowdowns, but Odisha is really working towards economic development. As per the considerable facts, the economy of Odisha developed in the current year is around 7.8% in 2022-23, which is good in comparison to last year (Economic Time, Feb 2023). Notably, the growth of agriculture and related sectors is relatively good in Odisha and as per the perspective of the 5-year plan. It is also important to mention that human development has also been measured well in all social sectors in Odisha. In terms of literacy rate, performance and growth are improving, and in 2023, the literacy rate in Odisha has been

noted at 73.87%, as compared to the overall Indian literacy rate of 77.70%. The male literacy rate is 81.59%, while the female literacy rate is 64.01%. As far as the literacy gap between urban and rural Odisha are concern the urban literacy rate is 85.7% as compared to rural is 70.2%. Despite its rich natural resources and coastline, the economic condition of Odisha is one of the poorest in India. In the recent years, many positive steps have been taken to support the socio-economic scenario of the Odisha state. The government has taken so many steps such as 'Community Messaging' and 'financial literacy' to counter the literacy problems in the Odisha state, but other related issues like poverty, employment, and other social issues are very prominent, and these are the reasons that have made Odisha one of the most underdeveloped states in India. Remarkably, if we consider the overall growth rate, the state Odisha is really developing at a very low rate and lagging behind the national average growth. There are so many indicators which are mentioned below are responsible for the slow development of Odisha:-

1. High dependence on primitive farming methods. About 75 percent of India's population depends on agriculture, compared to 22 percent of gross domestic product. In services and manufacturing, growth was double-digit, but in agriculture, the growth rate was less than 4%.
2. Uneven distribution of resources in the state as most of the people are engaged in the agriculture or working in small factories.
3. Large differences in literacy levels as already mentioned that the rural and urban literacy gap is very big which ultimately indicates the poor management and developmental patterns.
4. Unemployment and part-time work i.e. 60% of our workforce produces 18% of our gross domestic product. Many Indian farmers blame agriculture as a reason for the poverty caused by low productivity.
5. The problems of development in Odisha are normal as the business opportunities are very limited and getting good quality infrastructure is a big challenge. Therefore, the physical, economic, social, political, technological, and environmental support is severely lacking. However, there are specific challenges and underlying factors that make the Odisha case unique.

The purpose of this article is to study the factors responsible for the status of Odisha as one of the underdeveloped states of the country, despite the special attention paid to it by the central government, international and national agencies. This research is mainly consider the comment given by developmental practitioners, government report and existing literature, as well as on observing the author at a lower level and understanding the problems. The present article also pointed out comparison with other states of the country. The author also intended to evaluate the motive behind the strategic plan and government strategies for the development of every corner of Odisha. The development of grassroot level people and accessibility of government plan to develop the village of Odisha is also discussed in the present paper as the development of society is totally depends on the socio-economic and political progress. Besides, the reason behind the underdevelopment of

Odisha state is also due to the failure of public policy. The development in the tribal sector of Odisha is categorically not satisfactory as the cases of mal-nutrition and anaemia is very alarming and the main victims are children and the women's. The development politics are certainly not performing adequately for the holistic development of social capitals. The government is making every effort to socialize the youth by using every possible plan and policy. The mutual communication is key to this effort. The social reality is very alarming as sometime it's very difficult to reach the community. In fact, the government is also working to create political socialization, which directly influences social change and cultural upliftment.

Remarkably, the state has witnessed a major change in the last fifteen years. The transformation in the socio-political structure is certainly evidenced by innovation and government willingness, and this is clearly shown in the economic growth, which is regularly above the national average. In terms of socio-political development, the main issue is related to the upliftment of poor people and the related crisis of the state.

"Odisha is a politically stable state. Since March 2000, Mr. Naveen Patnaik has held the position of Chief Minister, and he has played a crucial role in the development of Odisha. The Odisha region is very rich in natural resources, especially minerals, forests, and groundwater. Given all this, it was supposed to be one of the richest countries in India. But paradoxically, this is not so. Its per capita income is the fifth highest, and the poverty rate is the sixth highest among states." Odisha was a thriving hub for shipping companies. Today, the main issue is poverty, which is a major impediment to their development. The inhabitants of Odisha continue to starve and live a modest life. Today, millions of people are dying because of this multidimensional evil called poverty. So, it is time to take the initiative to end poverty and begin the perfect poverty-free Odisha. Then, in order to achieve the goals, we must first understand the current situation and its cause, and then we can find a way forward.

Power and policy control: Many scholars have mentioned in their report that political power in Orissa is very much influenced by mine owners, real state mafias, contractors, private entrepreneurs in the field of education, and multinational corporations. In addition, the policies related to subsidized meals and unemployment is very much affected by political and bureaucratic corruption. The lack of a social vision on stability and development of marginalized segments is insufficient. Besides, the same issues and crises are also present in long-term investments in agriculture, land use, and infrastructure development, as well as in the creation of human resources. The government's role seems a little irresponsible (Sainath, 1996). The government's generous policy of attracting national and multinational mega-companies to the mining, commercial, and extractive industries regardless of significant value added or reasonably feasible mechanisms is very much required, but it is not very effective, and the execution is not effective. In addition, weak government policies, weak technologies, weak resource management, the interconnectedness of national and global markets, and the growth of poverty have all led to

a decrease in the quality and quantity of public resources (Roy, 2009; CST, 2008; and Bhaduri, 2010).

Research Methodology: The present study is analytical in nature, and the researcher has taken mostly secondary data into consideration. The researcher has used the newspapers and research reports available on the internet database. Secondary data exclusively includes books, journals, and information from blogs.

Objectives of the study: Odisha is a state that is improving at a very fast pace, and the developmental pattern of the state is really impressive. The last 10 years have shown that there have been a lot of transformations in the state, but there are some issues that still need attention, as the socio-political scenario of the state is very diverse and most people are living in rural areas. Considering the social factors, situation and ineffective government planning, the researcher has critically evaluated the factors responsible for the socio-political changes and determined which ones need more focus and revision. The issues like poverty, biased planning, and developmental models. Therefore, the main objective of the present study is to review the socio-political scenario and reasons for inequalities in Odisha.

Analysis and Discussion: Considering the important factors of the socio-economic development of the state, agriculture is the main occupation of the rural population. The state's scientific assistance does not guarantee the standard level of production; therefore, the economic status of the vast majority is in crisis. Most of the rural people are poor and have job problems. Therefore, the level of financial investment is also very weak. The economic survey report clearly stated that financial ignorance and social disparities are the main problems behind the progress of Odisha, and the government must rethink the development of models and policies (Amitabh Kundu, Odisha Development Report, 2020). Odisha is a state that is growing very fast, and many of the regions of the state are transforming and developing at a good pace, but it's also very important to state that there are still many social issues like poverty, a lack of proper education, and health issues. The present study has taken certain selected factors into account that influence the development of the state of Odisha and the development of people in society. The social inequalities are the core reason behind the social underdevelopment of the state. Therefore, the present study is mainly focused on the analysis and review of the following indicators:

1. **Poverty:** The government has adopted several poverty alleviation programs to eliminate poverty, such as skill training for employment promotion, the urban community development program, and self-help programs. The government also established a poverty alleviation cell to look after the poor people residing in slums. The government-sponsored Swarna Jayanti Sahari Rozgar Yojna is also a very crucial step in poverty eradication. All these projects were carried out to ensure the well-being of the poor. The major problem is also with the execution of plans and policies. Therefore, corruption is also a major obstacle for the government.
2. **Lack of education:** education is at the core of development. Stability in education is very important for social uplift, as education is the only way to cope with the

challenges of globalization. Lack of education is the main concern for the Odisha state government, as the situation in the poor and backward regions of Odisha is really alarming. The government has declared Sarva Sikhya Abhiyan (SSA) to support primary education in the state. Surprisingly, the majority of the population lives in rural areas and has less access to higher education. As per the all-India survey on higher education, Odisha has 23 colleges per lac people. While the government has made primary education mandatory in the state, it is also true that the government needs to plan an effective model and allocate more funds for higher education. The state's literacy rate is 73.5 percent, but still a lot of good initiatives are needed for the development of backward regions in Odisha.

3. Industrialization: Odisha has a wealth of natural resources but is far behind in industrialization. Various minerals such as iron ore, bauxite, and chromite are found here in large quantities. Although the state manages to create certain large-scale industries, its revenues do not have large-scale scales and do not meet the welfare needs of the population. The state ignores small-scale fishing in rural areas, which leads to an increase in poverty. With globalization, various traditional activities, such as decorative arts and art, have lost their importance. It made it worse.
4. Development model: most of the state's population lives in rural areas. In fact the Odisha state needs to develop models to support people at the periphery as the people from the periphery suffer the most. It lacks infrastructure, capacity, and scale. The different development strategies were limited to the Central American countries. There is a gap between the theory and practice of the plan and policy. The expected results in the field of poverty reduction have not yet been achieved.
5. Lack of effective planning for land ownership -The unequal distribution of land ownership and the concentration of land among a small number of people lead to social gaps. The local state government must take the lead to solve such local issues, plan for social awareness about the developmental model, and plan for a wealthy life. The citizens must feel empowered to take decisions.
6. Business stateups – Ease of doing business is not adequate in Odisha; the condition of business start-up is difficult, and the position of the state is actually ranked poor. In comparison to other states in India, in Odisha, for instance, it takes 95 days to get electricity supply to start any business. It shows that the availability of resources is not sufficient and on time as the infrastructure is not upto the mark.

According to the data analyzed and reviewed, the development and progressive steps are truly commendable, and the policies implemented by the state government of Odisha are good and fine, but the conditions and social scenario are quite challenging, and many effective measures are required to eradicate the social problems. The current paper also assessed that the reality of the social scenario in Odisha is very clear, with the majority of the population belonging to the backwards class and poor categories such as scheduled tribes and scheduled caste, other backward class and women, and they are far away from the message of development and awareness. A decent salary and skill development

opportunities are missing. The government must work on a plan for small and cottage industries as well as an awareness campaign for human rights and social responsibilities as well as the overall development of society. The head of planning for the country, i.e., Niti Ayogya, must plan effective strategies to develop the accessibility of resources and generation of employment in the state. The research paper also concluded that the development policies are very much geared toward urban development, but most of the population lives in rural areas. The overall development of Odisha is really biased and not comprehensive, and it can be said here that the governance appears to be weakest or that the delivery of the plan is not effective.

Conclusion: In the present paper, an attempt has been made to understand the challenges and developmental factors. Considering all the factors and points related to state government policies, it is necessary to analyze and understand the circumstances in order to take effective measures to solve social issues. The study pointed out the fact that most of the population in Odisha state, including people from the backward class, adivasis, and women, lives in rural regions, they make up a significant proportion of the state's population, and their position in the majority society is threatened. To get them out of their predicament, it is necessary to encourage the development of each part of society. The majority of people in society are not aware of programs and policies related to the eradication of poverty, education, and other government supports. Therefore, it is necessary to take the necessary steps to transfer the interests of politics to the people, and authorities must take initiatives to make people aware of government policies and entrepreneurship, as well as information related to people about decent wages, decent educations, and skill development opportunities. The government must stimulate investment and small-scale production. The objective of the paper has been proven here: the social factors are not effectively dealt with by the governance, and there is a need to rethink the planning and its effective implementation. It is necessary to take tough measures against corrupt people who are an obstacle to the eradication of poverty, quality education, and health for all. Employment needs to be created to create jobs for unemployed youth and other groups. The authorities must plan concrete policies and tools for their effective implementation to find the best solutions to real scenarios affecting the poor condition of the area, including economic status, literacy, and an equal and fair division of land, poverty, and migration. There must be the right motivation to work as well as opportunities for innovation. Lastly, it can be said that the government has a long way to go as it's a fact that Odisha is a rich state with poor people, and proper planning and administrative balance between state and central government are very much needed for the holistic growth of the social capitals.

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