

Niche of Left-Politics in Odisha

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Abstract

India is the largest democratic country of the world where multi-party system is functional. Various political parties representing the interest of divergent groups, communities and different sections of the country. Rightist, Leftist, centrist, socialist and so on parties are seen in the country. Odisha as a federal unit of India is no exception. Various political parties have played crucial role in Odisha politics. With the passage of time, many political parties have emerged and many have disappeared. Some of them have played dominant role where as some could not come to forefront with eye-catching imprint in Odisha politics. Left parties have not only played vibrant role in Odisha electoral politics, but also its non-electoral politics. But it is seen that in the last few decades elections, the role of left in electoral politics of Odisha has severely declined. The puzzle of the study is to find out whether left parties can able to maintain its role in electoral politics of Odisha.

Key Words: India, Odisha, Left- Politics, Election, Ideology, Social Movements

India witnessed the left politics in 1925 to emancipate working class people from their suffering and the milestone of Communist Party of India (CPI) was led down by eminent Marxist thinker M. N. Roy. From 1925 Communist Party of India has been working for the oppressed and exploited people and has led enormous number of successful movements for the interest of the working class people. The ideological conflict which had started in the central leadership right from 1955 had its impact on the state leadership of the party. This also affected party prospects in the election. The party could win 9 assembly seats by scoring 8.1% of votes in the second Assembly Election of 1957 (Boity). The contradiction has been shown within the Communist Party of India on the issue that on what line Communist Party of India will operate and

make revolution within the country. The contradiction was that whether CPI will follow People's Republic China line led by Mao-Tse-Tung or will follow United Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) Russia line led by Joseph Stalin. This contradiction became so severe that finally, the whole India split of CPI held in 1964, and this was a turning point in the history of communist movement in the country. It resulted in the creation of CPI (M) and the followers of communism were divided into two camps — CPI and CPI (Marxist) (Boity). Gradually, several other left parties were formed in India who are fighting for the rights of the working class people. Some of those parties have already disappeared not only from national politics, but also from local politics, and some are still struggling to maintain their position in electoral politics and fight for

the rights and necessities of the common people.

Electoral Performance of Left Parties in Odisha:

Participating in the electoral politics of Odisha and to acquire some seats in the election to fulfil their narrow interest is not only reason for the left parties of Odisha to contest in election. Their primary aim is to make revolution in the country, and for that reason they are participating in the election to place the positive and negative impacts of elections on the daily life of the people and to make understand them that

through parliamentary election, the emancipation of common people from their exploitation is not possible. Keeping this in mind since the first general election of 1952, left parties have been continuously participating in the elections of Odisha to gain some seats in both the parliamentary and assembly elections which will be proved helpful to a great extent for them to fight for the rights of the exploited and oppressed working class of people.

Performance of Left parties in Odisha are discussed below:

Table no-1

Left Parties won MLA seats in Odisha

Left Parties	1952	1957	1961	1967	1971	1973	1977	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2004	2009	2014	2019
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	57	61	67	71	73	77	80	85	90	95	2000	2004	2009	2014	19	Cont inue
CPI	7	9	4	7	4	7	1	4	1	5	1	1	1	1	0	0
CPI(M)	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
CPI(ML)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Praj a Soci alist Part y	10	11	10	21	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUC I©	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

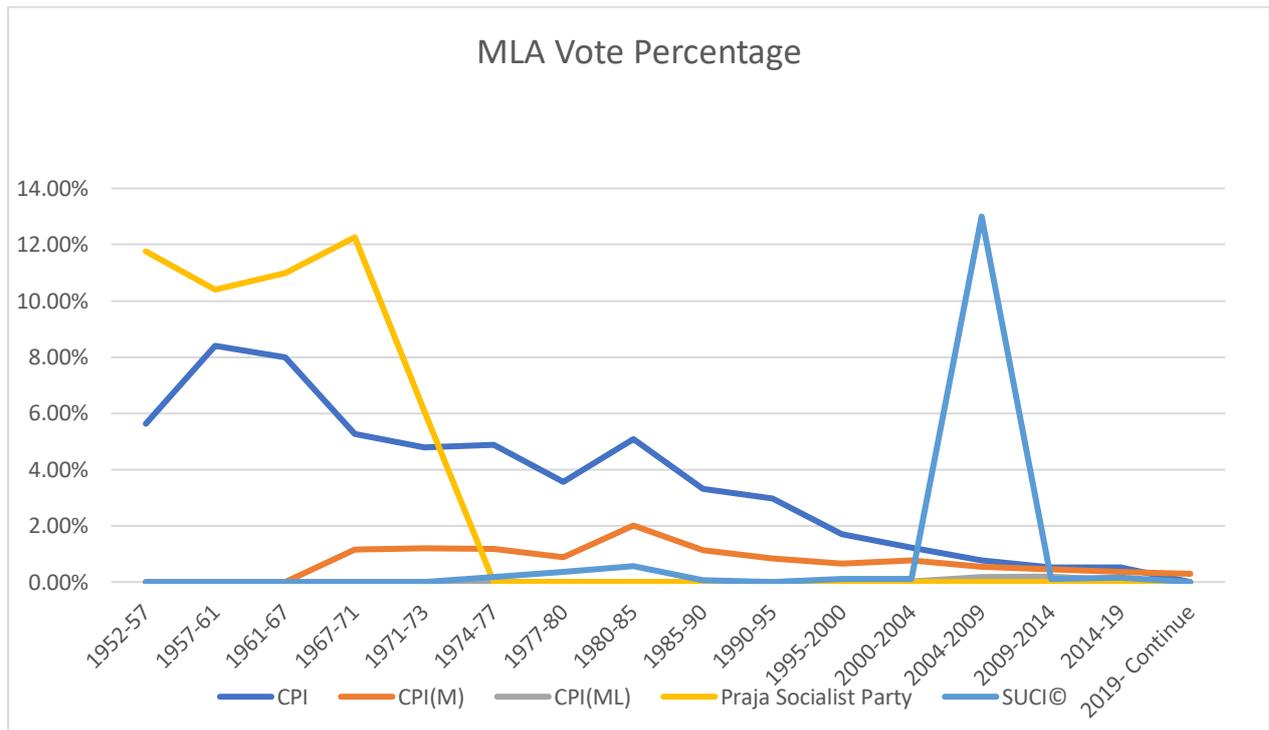
Source: Election Commission of India

The above table shows the performance of left parties in the assembly election of Odisha since 1952 to 2019. CPI won 7 seats in the first assembly election in the year 1952. Then it won 9 seats which is its largest winning seats in the assembly elections since 1952 to 2019 assembly elections. The data shows that till 1990 assembly election; CPI secure an average of 4-5 seats. But after that with the disintegration of USSR, CPI lost its significance in Odisha politics and its performance in the assembly election gradually declined. In the last two assembly elections, CPI could not secure a single seat.

CPI (M) was formed in 1964 as a split within the CPI and after that it participated in the assembly election in 1967 and secured 1 seat. Since then, it is continuously participating in the elections. The last two assembly elections held in 2014 and 2019, it secured single seats in each election. CPI (ML) as a party could not win a single seat in its whole life in the assembly election of Odisha.

Praja Socialist Party contested 1952 assembly election and won 10 seats. Then in the elections of 1957, 1961, 1967 and 1971, it won 11, 10, 21 and 4 seats. After 1973, Praja Socialist Party got dissolved. Hence, it did not contest in the 1973 assembly election.

Chart-1.1



Source: Election Commission of India

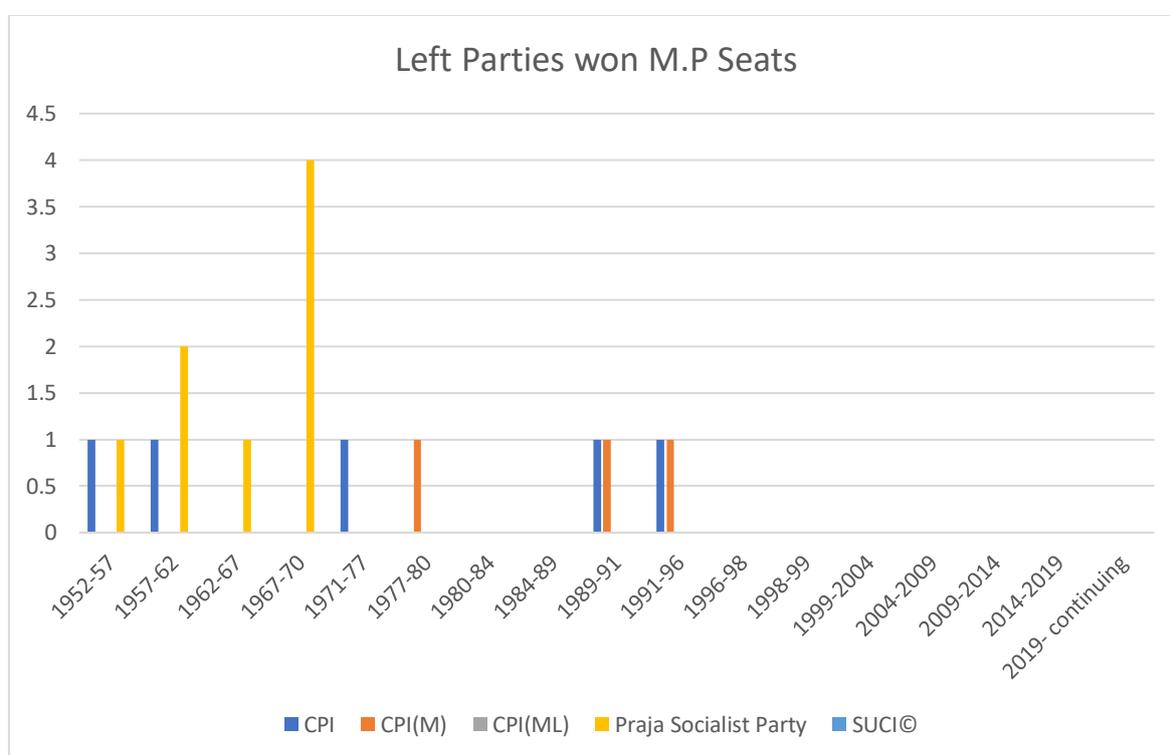
The above chart shows the vote percentage of different left parties in Odisha assembly election since 1952 to 2019 elections. In the 1952 election CPI secured 5.62% of vote and in 1957 election, it secured 8.40% vote. But after that its vote's percentage has gradually declined. In the 2014

election, it secured only 0.51% of vote. CPI (M) contested in the 1967 assembly election and secured 1.16% of vote. Its vote percentage reached its peak in the year 1980 election. After that its vote percentage has declined. In the year 2019 election, it got only 0.30% of vote in the

assembly election. CPI (ML) participated in the 1995 assembly election. Though, it could not able to win a single seat in the election, yet it started its career with 0.05% of vote. It secured 0.19% vote in the year 2019 election. Again, in 2014 election its vote percentage declined to 0.07% vote. Praja Socialist Party participated in the assembly election in 1952 with the 11.77% of vote. It secured its highest percentage of vote i.e., 12.26% in 1967 assembly election. After that in the

1971 election it could able to acquire only 6.08% of vote. Then the party was collapsed towards the 1973 election. Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) participated in election in the 1974 election with 0.18% vote. Then its vote percentage increased in 1977 and 1980 election, but after that its vote percentage decreased and again it increased in 1995 election. In 2014 election, it could secure only 0.15% of vote.

Chart-1.2

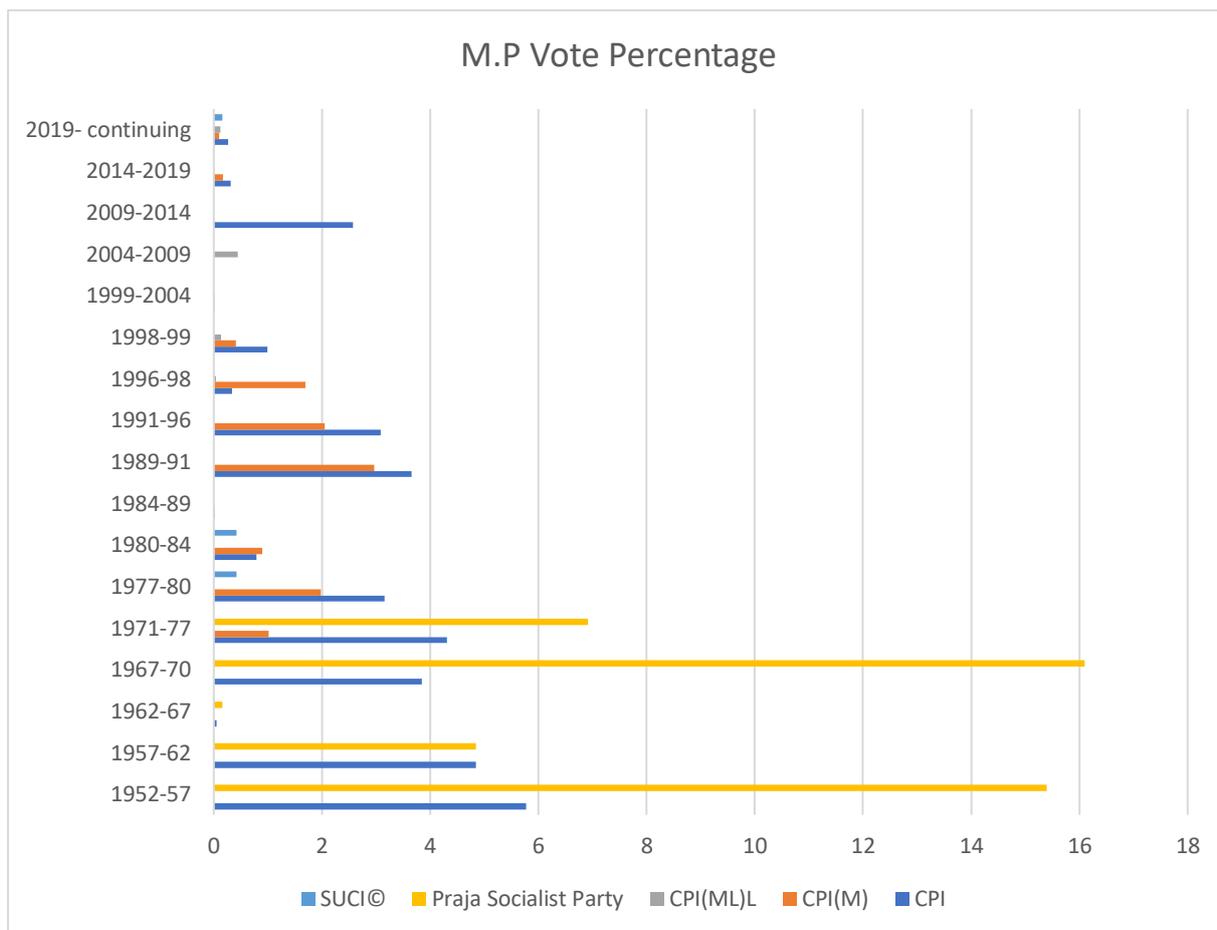


Source: Election Commission of India

The above chart shows the number of M.P. seats won by left parties in Odisha elections. The result of performance of left parties in the election is not satisfactory. In the 1952 election both CPI and Praja Socialist Party could only secure 1 M.P. each. But in 1957 election, CPI performance remained same whereas Praja Socialist Party secure 2 M.P. In 1962 and 1967 election, only Praja Socialist Party acquired 1 M.P. seat in each election and no other left party could able to gain any

seat. CPI acquired 1 seat in 1971 election and in 1977 election CPI (M) secured 1 seat. But in 1980 and 1984 elections, no left party could able to acquire a single seat. But in 1981 and 1991 parliamentary elections both CPI and CPI (M) acquired 1 seat each in both elections. After that no left party could able to acquire any vote in elections between 1996 to 2019 elections. This shows the measurable conditions of left parties in parliamentary elections.

Chart-1.3



Source: Election Commission of India

The above chart shows the percentage of vote of left parties in the parliamentary election of Odisha. SUCI© acquired 0.42% of vote in the 1977 and 1980 elections and secured 0.16% vote in 2019 election. It did not contest any parliamentary election in other years. Praja Socialist Party acquired 15.4%, 4.84%, 15.50%, 16.1%, 6.91% in the years 1952, 1957, 1961, 1967 and 1971 election. It could not contest in 1973 election as it dissolved that time. CPI (ML) is contesting in parliamentary elections from 1996 and it secured 0.04% vote. After that in the elections of 1998, 1999 and 2004 it captured 0.14%, 0.09% and 0.44% of vote. It did not contest the elections of 2009 and 2014. Again in 2019 election, it secured only 0.12% of vote. CPI (M) contested

parliamentary election in 1971 and opened its account with 1.02% vote. Then it contested elections of 1977, 1980, 1984, 1989, 1991, 1996, 1998, 1999 election and secured 1.98%, 0.89%, 1.81%, 2.97%, 2.05%, 1.69%, 0.41% and 0.20% of vote. It did not contest the election of 2004 and 2009. In 2014 elections, it captured only 0.17% vote and in 2019 elections, it could only secure 0.1% of vote. CPI contested parliamentary election in 1952 and secured 5.77% of vote. It did not contest MP election in the year 2004. In 2009 election, it acquired 2.57% vote. In 2014 and 2019 elections, it could able to gain 0.31% and 0.26% of vote.

Causes of decline of left politics in Odisha:

There are some prominent causes in the decline of left politics in Odisha. Firstly, there are many left parties are being seen in Odisha with their separate interest. These left parties are creating confusion among the common people that which left party is correct. As these people are not being able to make distinction among these left parties, so they fully discard these left parties and follow other parties. Secondly, most of the leaders of these left parties are trying to fulfil their narrow self interest or the interest of the party instead of fighting for the working class people. Thirdly, these left parties are analysing Indian condition as well as Odisha condition in different ways. Hence, they are not being able to fight against different types of capitalist class on common people. Fourthly, in the 21st century, capitalism

has advanced to such an extent that common people are not aware about their exploitation. They think that this is inevitable, and they only pray to god to emancipate them from their sufferings. Fifthly, these parties are not doing any ideological discussion within the party rank n file members as well as with common people. Thus, they are being influenced more and more by capitalist products. Seventhly, social movement in the interest of the people has decreased a lot. So, people are, now, not supporting these left parties who are only trying to fulfil their interest only.

However, in the past left parties have done a lot for the common people. If these parties could able to solve these short comings and maintain a good relation with the common people and work for their interest, they may win in both assembly and parliamentary elections.

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