CHAPTER IV

Non – Co-operation Movement
With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, the course of national movement in India took a new turn. Gandhi gave a new orientation to the Indian National Congress by enlarging its horizon with increasing support of the mass. In organisation and the programme, the Indian National Congress entered into a new phase. The era of moderation gave way to Gandhian Programme of Non-Cooperation. This change had its echo in Orissa as well. After the Chakra Dharpur Session of the Utkal Union conference the leadership of Madhusudan Das was suddenly replaced by a new group led by Gopabandhu Das. Gopabandhu spearheaded the Congress Movement in Orissa through the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee of which he became the president in 1921. He also brought out a newspaper called “the Samaj” to propagate the Congress ideals. He left no stone unturned to make the Congress a mass movement in Orissa and Cuttack emerged as the focal point of this new upsurge.

In the annual session of the Congress held at Nagpur in the last week of December 1920 under the presidency of Vijayaraghava Chariar, the final decision on the launching of Non-Cooperation Movement took place. C.R. Das and others who had opposed the programme at Calcutta, changed their views. Though some prominent leaders were still uncompromising, yet C.R. Das himself moved the main resolution about the movement. It was a long and comprehensive resolution covering all aspects of the problems. The
Indian people now entered the decisive phase of their freedom struggle. Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.¹

From Orissa as many as thirty five delegates including Gopabandhu Das, Niranjan Patnaik, Bhagirathi Mahaputra, Jagabandhu Singh, Mukunda Prasad Das and H.K. Mahtab attended the Nagpur Session. It was the largest number of Orissa delegates ever attending the Congress session. Besides, accepting the main resolution on Non Co-operation, the members from Orissa supported the formation of provincial Congress committee on linguistic basis. It was a very wise move to spread the Congress programme to different regions of the vast sub-continent. It was agreed that Orissa should have a separate Congress committee to be known as "Uktal Pradesh Congress Committee". Rules and regulations on organizational matters were also adopted at Nagpur to give the Indian National Congress a new shape and outlook before the ensuing struggle.

Gopabandhu Das and Jagabandhu Singh on their way back from Nagpur attended the Chakradharpur Session of Uktal Union Conference on 30 – 31 December 1920. This session became a land mark in the history of the conference, because for the first time it accepted the Congress creed as one of its objectives. The session was presided over by Jagabandhu Singh but Gopabandhu played a dominant role in bringing about the change in the outlook of the conference. On the second day of conference, Gopabandhu
moved the resolution asking Utkal Union Conference to accept the objectives and aspirations of the Indian National Congress which was the national forum in which the people of Orissa should join in large number, and their demands for a separate province and other privileges could be fulfilled only by participation in the national movement spearheaded by the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. After heated discussions the resolution was adopted by overwhelming support.

Gopabandhu Das, being an ardent protagonist of Oriya nationalsim, was becoming by, 1920, the symbol of the nascent spirit of Congress nationalism among the youth of Orissa. He expressed his commitment to the cause of the Indian nationalism in the issue of Satyabadi in following words:

"The Utkal Sammilani has attained majority now and its isolated existence in the national life is no longer possible. By nature youth can not tolerate limitation on vital force and it is our duty to allow the youth to go ahead. Indian National Movement is marching ahead and its reaction is felt in Orissa. There is spontaneous excitement among the Oriya youth but their guardians say "Bewâre, the time has not come in Orissa for this kind of activities". When we wait for time, the national movement has advanced a step further. This means that while we are waiting for the opportune moment nationalism forges ahead. Who can explain the meaning of "opportune moment"? It is true that our participation in the national movement might bring

\[\text{1 K.M. Patra., History of Orissa, (New Delhi 1983), P. 221 (Modern Period)}\]
tribulation on us. We are probably waiting for that moment when participation in the national movement which means no dangers but only partnership in the fruits of victory. Can any one tell me if any nation in the world had profited by this type of attitude? A slave country fighting for her independence must be ready to brook all dangers and difficulties. Every time is appropriate time for such a country. The fighters for freedom are facing a great danger. No one joins a national movement after drawing up a ‘balance sheet’ of suffering and sacrifices on one side and the fruits of victory on the other. The question of ‘opportune moments’ reflects the spirit of cowardice. This is a psychology of slavery. We must drift in the current nationalism.²

In the same writing making an appeal to the people of Orissa to transcend the limits of parochial outlook Gopabandhu further wrote:

“No one can definitely say what is the extent of danger inherent in any movement. It may be that Orissa may lose her identity altogether as a result of the national movement and we must be prepared for it. If obliteration of Orissa can save Indian nationalism is it not desirable? It will rather be a stroke of good fortune for Orissa. People may not appreciate this sacrifice of Orissa, still Dadhichi’s sacrifice remains very noble. Where is the question of appropriate time”.³ There were two lines of political thinking in Orissa in 1920. On the one hand, Madhusudan Das and his followers believed in achieving

² S.C. Dash, Pandit Gopabandhu : A Biography (Cuttack, 1964), P. 86.
³ Ibid., P.P. 86 – 87.
the goal of the unification of Oriya speaking tracts by Co-operation with the British Government. On the other hand Gopabandhu Das and his young followers were receptive to the call of the national Congress under Gandhi's leadership. Gopabandhu had already been disillusioned with "Callousness" and "indifference" of the British Government towards the Oriyas.

By the middle of 1920, the Indian National Congress was planning to hold a special session to decide its future course of action. Having a clear perception of the events and in the hope of getting the unflinching support of the people Gandhiji thought of launching his famous Non – Co-operation movement as the only remedy for the Amritsar and Khilafat wrongs. The special session of the national Congress held in Calcutta on September 4, 1920 took a firm pledge to attain "Swarajya and adopted the policy of progressive non – violent – non – co-operation as enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi. From Orissa the session was attended by Gopabandhu Das, Jagabandhu Singh, Krupasindhu Mishra, Nilakanth Das, Nanda Kisore Das and Hara Krushna Mahatab.

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4 Young India, March 10, 1920.
5 Proceeding of the Indian National Congress (Microfilmed) 1920. Real No. 6
6 Utkal Dipika, September 11, 1920
The Congress reaffirmed the resolution on non-co-operation passed at the special session at Calcutta and declared that in the meantime the country should be prepared for that scheme by continuing to take effective steps to:

Educational

i. Call upon the parents and guardians of school children under the age of 16 years to make greater efforts to withdraw them from schools, owned, aided or controlled by the Govt., and concurrently to provide for their training in National Schools or by other means.

ii. Call upon students aged 16 or over to withdraw without delay irrespective of consequences, from the instruction mentioned above if they felt it against their conscience "to continue in institution dominated by a system of government which the nation had solemnly resolved to end." Such students were advised either to devote themselves to some special services or to continue their education in national institutions.

iii. Call upon trustees, managers, and teachers of government affiliated or aided schools and municipalities and local boards to help to nationalise them.

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7 P. Chopra., India's Major Non Violent Movement (1919 – 1934) )New Delhi 1979), P.62
Legal

iv. Call upon lawyers to make greater efforts to suspect their practice and to devote their attention to the national service including the boycott of law courts by litigants and fellow lawyers and the settlement of disputes by private arbitration.

Commercial Boycott

v. Call upon merchants and traders to carry out a gradual boycott of foreign trade relation, to encourage hand spinning and weaving and to have a scheme of economic boycott planned and formulated by a committee of experts to be nominated by the All India Congress Committee.

Popular Appeal

Call upon every section and every man and woman in the country to make the utmost possible contribution of self sacrifice to the national movement.

Organisation

Organise Committed in each village or group of villages with a provincial central organisation in the principal cities of each province to accelerate the progress of non-co-operation.
Organise a band of national workers for a service to be called the Indian National Services.

**Finance**

Take effective steps to raise a national fund to be called All India Tilak Memorial Swarajya fund to finance the Indian National Service and the Non-Co-operation Movement in general. The Reformed Council would resign their seats.\(^8\)

**Govt. Services**

Its attitude towards the government services was defined as follows: The Congress while recognising the growing friendliness between the police and soldiery on the one hand and the people on the other, hoped that the former would refuse to subordinate their creed and country to the fulfilment of the orders of their officers. The Congress appealed to all person in government services, pending the call of the nation, to resign their services, to help the national cause by imparting greater kindness and stricter honesty to their dealings with the people, and fearlessly and openly to attend all popular gatherings while refraining from taking any active part in them and more especially by openly rendering financial assistance to the national movement.\(^9\)

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\(^8\) Ibid. P.P. 62 – 63.

Gopabandhu returned from Calcutta Session of the Congress, being committed to the idea of Non – Co-operation. On 30 October 1920, he wrote in the Samaj about the powerful impact of the Non-Co-operation Movement upon the students and lawyers in different parts of the country.\textsuperscript{10}

The programme of the Non-co-operation Movement launched by Gandhiji had two aspects which may be called positive and destructive, or constructive and destructive. The former included the promotion of Swadeshi, particularly the revival of hand – spinning and weaving, the removal of untouchbility among the Hindus, promotion of Hindu – Muslim Unity, the prohibition of the use of alcoholic drinks and the establishment of "national schools".\textsuperscript{11} The negative aspect of which is usually referred to as the triple boycott: namely boycott of legislatures, courts and educational institution both schools and colleges, maintained and aided by the Government.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} Young India, March 10, 1920
\textsuperscript{11} R.C. Majumdar, (Ed) Struggle for freedom, (Bombay 1988), P. 337
\textsuperscript{12} Utkal Dipika, 13 November 1920
According to this programme, Gopabandhu, who had already been a member of Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, did not seek re-election to the council, when election were held in November – December 1920 under the Government India Act 1919. Many voters boycotted this election. On 11 December 1920 Gopabandhu made the following observation on the progress of Non – Co-operation in Orissa:

"The success of Non – Co-operation Movement within a short span of time has sprung a little surprise to its critics. We are of the opinion that people are upright, and if we can convince them in any matter. Properly, they will not fail to act. In Orissa wherever non-co-operation principle has been applied in respect of election to the Council, the result have been surprisingly successful. In the Puri district, in some thanas, out of four hundred voters, only thirty to forty have cast their votes..... In Puri municipality twenty percent have cast their votes. In the Sambalpur Municipality out of almost 300 voters only 28 have voted. No Mussalman has voted. How can those who have..."
secured such small numbers of votes, claim themselves to be the true representatives of the people? The council business (election) is over. Now it is time to implement other items of Non – Co-operation programme.¹³

Formation of the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee in Cuttack

The dawn of the year 1921 saw the beginning of the organised Congress movement in Orissa under the pioneering leadership of Gopabandhu Das.¹⁴ After the special Congress in Calcutta, there were brisk Congress activities in the district headquarters. The existing organisation and their activities were to be reinforced and renewed. A group of young college students of Cuttack who had formed “Bharati Mandir” to discuss the political trends in the country were inspired by the Congress ideals of establishing “Swarajya” through Non – Co-operation. They invited Gopabandhu Das to take leadership of this group.¹⁵ After his arrival, the Utkal Pradesh Congress

¹³ The Samaj, 11 December 1920
¹⁴ G.E. Owen, (Ed) Bihar and Orissa the 1921, P. 147
¹⁵ H.K. Mahatab; Sadhanar Pathe, P. 28
Committee was organised in the last week of February 1921. Gopabandhu Das and Dr. Ekram Rasool were chosen as President and Vice-President respectively. The other office bearers who took charge of the organisation were as follows: Bhagirathi Mahapatra, the Secretary, Brajabandhu Das, Joint Secretary.\textsuperscript{16} There were five members in the executive committee. The district Congress committees were gradually formed and some members were given specific charges of organising the Congress activities in different parts of the province.\textsuperscript{17}

The Congress leaders and their respective fields of work were:

- Bhagirathi Mahapatra → Cuttack Sadar with headquarters at Alaka Ashram, Jagat Singhpur.
- Raj Kumar Bose → Jajpur
- Jadumani Mangaraj → Kendrapara

The Cuttack District Congress Committee was formed on 30 August 1920 with Dharmananda Patnaik as its president and Nishamani Das its Secretary.

\textsuperscript{16} N. Satapathy., He Sathi He Saratho, (Cuttack, 1969), P. 238
\textsuperscript{17} H.K. Mahatab, Op. Cit. P. 34
Pandit Gopanbandhu made extensive tour throughout Orissa and kept himself in touch with the organisation and activities of the district committees.\textsuperscript{18}

Braving all odds and adversities, he forced the Oriya speaking tracts of the Central Provinces and the Madras Presidency (Jeypore estates) and thus roused Congress Consciousness all over Orissa.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} The Samaj, 9 March 1921
\textsuperscript{19} Godavarish Granthavali, Vol. I, P.P. 111 – 112
Non – Co-operation Programme

(a) Impact of Gandhi’s visit to Cuttack

The Non-Co-operation Movement in Orissa got much momentum due to Gandhiji’s visit to all province in the last week of March 1921. He arrived at Cuttack on 23 March 1921 and addressed mass meetings at Cuttack, Bhadrak, Satyabadi, Puri and Berhampur within six days. It was Gandhiji’s first visit to Orissa. He established people through the existing Congress organisation. When Utkalmani Gopabandhu invited Gandhi in Nagpur Congress to pay a visit to Orissa he gave his promise. Earlier in 1916 Gandhi had deputed Amrittal Thakkar to work on the flood and famine affected parts of the state. He had a very soft corner in his heart for the people of Orissa who were mostly poverty stricken. Once Gandhi said “Orissa haunts me like a nightmare. Such a splendid country and yet poverty stricken? Despite his heavy pre occupation with various matters of freedom struggle he managed to make time to visit Orissa, when non-co-operation movement was in full swing in Cuttack. At the end of an all India Whirlwind tour, Gandhi visited for the first time on 23rd March 1921. The people of Cuttack had great veneration for the Mahatma and received him as an incarnation of god and a worker of
Miracles.\textsuperscript{20} Gandhiji, Kasturba and the youngest son Devdas were taken to Swarajya Ashrama in a procession of thousands of people.\textsuperscript{21}

The same day in the afternoon Gandhiji addressed a large gathering of women in Binod Bihari at Cuttack.\textsuperscript{22} While addressing the rally, Gandhiji appealed to the Women folk of Orissa to work for their country's independence for the cause of the country.\textsuperscript{23} Rama Devi acted on the advise of Gandhiji and donated around one hundred tolas of her personal gold for satyagraha.\textsuperscript{24}

In the evening Gandhi addressed a large gathering on the sands of Kathajodi river near Hatigadaghat which was named as Gandhight in the memory of the first public meeting of Mahatma held there. The place so to say, was sanctified and all subsequent meetings organised by Utkal Congress in Cuttack were held on that memorable spot.\textsuperscript{25} By way of introducing Gandhi to the citizen of Cuttack Utkalmani Gopabandhu told the audience:

"All the great religious preachers of India have set foot on the sacred soil of Orissa. Great men from Budha upto Kabir, Ramanuj, Shankar, Nanak, \textsuperscript{20}\textsuperscript{Annual Administration Report, Bihar and Orissa, 1920 – 1921, P - 150} \textsuperscript{21}\textsuperscript{H.K. Mahatab, Gandhiji "O" Odisa, P. 21} \textsuperscript{22}\textsuperscript{The Samaj, 28 March 1921} \textsuperscript{23}\textsuperscript{Ibid., 30 March 1921} \textsuperscript{24}\textsuperscript{CWMG, Vol. XIX, P. 474, Speech of Gandhi at Cuttack on 23 March 1921 and also The Samaj, 24.3.1921}
chaitanya and others who have lived in India have their symbols in Orissa. About three hundred years ago on this very day of Holi, Chaitanya Dev had preached the doctrine of love on these sands. Today three hundred years after on that very day another great man is here to preach the doctrine of political love.  

Nearly fifty thousand people were present in the Kathojari river bed. Gandhiji sat on a chair, which was placed on a long table. Gandhi put on dhoti and a Khadada topi, Kasturaba and Gopabandhu sat on that stage. In his long speech Gandhiji explained about non-violence, non-co-operation, self-reliance, untouchability and communal harmony. Gandhi published an article about his Cuttack experience in Young India Magazine.

The editor of the Utkal Dipika also published the full speech of Gandhiji on 24 September 1921. Gandhi set the target for Orissa to enroll at least three lakhs of Congress workers, one lakh Charakha or spinning wheels and collection of three lakhs of rupees for Tilak Swarajya fund. Around forty women leaders including Roma Devi, Sarojini Choudhury, Saral Devi, Haimavati Devi etc attended this meeting on the bank of river Kathjodi. Gandhiji stayed in Swaraj Ashram. Pandit Gopabandhu looked after the

25 Gandhi to C.F. Andrews, Jubalpur, 21 March 1921. From a Photostat: G.N. 961 GNML
26 S.C. Dash, Pandit Gopabandhu : - A Biography, P. 103
27 Young India, Dt. 24.4.1921
28 The Samaj, 29.3.1921
arrangement for his stay and other programmes. Gandhi wanted to meet a cross section of the society. On 24th Morning he attended a private meeting, arranged by the Muslim Community, which was an instant success. He explained about Khilafat Movement and appealed to them to make their contribution to the attainment of Swaraj and for the promotion of Hindu – Muslim unity. He also requested to give money to Tilak fund in a separate meeting held on the same day night, organised by business community.\textsuperscript{29} Gandhi also addressed the meeting of students and lawyers of Cuttack.

Gandhi’s second visit to Cuttack was at the invitation of Madhusudan Das. He arrived at the Cuttack Railway station on the 19th August 1925. He was taken to the residence of Madhusudan in a big procession. Gandhi went to Utkal Tannery, situated with a vast land near Chauliaganj. Madhusudan and Gopabandhu showed them the factory and discussed various problems of tannery. He appreciated the project of tannery as a big venture in the field of cottage industry in Orissa. Gandhi addressed a meeting held in the church premises of Cuttack. On the next day, he visited Cuttack “Kustashram” and spinning centre in Swaraj Ashram. Gandhi, being influenced by Madhusudan, established a tannery at his Sabarmati Ashram. Gandhi wrote on 16th March 1928 to Madhusudan “you have opened my eyes in the fields of Cottage industry”.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29} Amrit Bazar Patrika, 31.3.1921
\textsuperscript{30} H.K. Mahatab, History of Freedom Movement in India, Vol – III, P.55
Thus Cuttack had a special place in Gandhiji's heart and the city responded to him in ample measure. His visit to Cuttack and his inspiring speech created an atmosphere of dynamism. For him Cuttack became the centre of Renaissance. Gandhi's speeches in the public meetings were translated into Oriya by Gopabandhu himself. His visit had created an unprecedented enthusiasm among the masses in Orissa. The Congress ideal - the message of non-co-operation spread like wild fire in different parts and touched the imagination of the people even in the remote corner of far off villages.31

As pointed out by H.K. Mahatab, Gandhi's stress on the attainment of Swarjiya as the birth night of the people and denunciation of the British Government as the Satanic Government dispelled fear from the people's minds and roused a new spirit of self-confidence.32 So far as Gandhi was concerned, he left Orissa with an "ineffaceable" memory of her poverty. He found that natural calamities had made the peasants of Orissa poorer than those of Champaran in Bihar. At the Belgaon Congress of 1924 he told the delegates from Orissa:

"The picture of Orissa which is dancing before my eyes has convinced me that it will be Swaraj for them if we can provide food to the people of Orissa. So I would request the Congress workers of Orissa to forget their

31 The Samaj, 28 March 1921
internal squabbles and work to provide food to the starving people of Orissa". He held that the remedy for Orissa's poverty lay in the promotion of Khadi work in the villages. He exhorted the Oriya Congress workers to make Orissa "The khadi Store of India". Accordingly Gopabandhu Das and other Congress leaders tried to make Khadi an efficient vehicle for economic relief of poverty and flood-stricken Orissa.

(b) Boycott of Educational Institutions

As a mark of appeal of the Congress, thousand of teachers and students left school and colleges to join the movement. Among them were H.K. Mahatab, Nityananda Kanungo, Naba Krushna Chowdhury, Nanda Kishore Das and Raja Krishna Bose who later became the prominent leaders of the Congress in the province. Gopabandhu cut off his links with courts and all other government institution. Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Jayabandhu Singh and a few other gave up their legal practice. At Balasore Nilambar Das, Subodh Chandra De, and Biswanath Hota left their schools in response to the call of Gandhi, Gopabandhu Choudhury who was a Deputy Collector,

32 H.K. Mahatab, Dashbarsara Odisa, P. 33
33 Choudhury Gopabandhu, Gandhi and Utkal (Ahmadabad, 1969), P.P. 16-17
34 Ibid. P. 17
35 Ibid. P. 4
37 The Samaj, 28 March 1921
resigned from his job and joined the Congress movement. Pandit Nilakantha Das gave up his teaching assignment in the Calcutta University and came to take charge of a national school and the Movement in Sambalpur. Pandit Lingaraj Mishra, Surendra Nath Das, Mahammad Hanif and a few others resigned from the Government services and devoted themselves to Congress works. Such instances provided much impetus to the movement in Orissa.

The Congress leaders who left school and colleges decided to establish national schools and colleges for educating their children in a new system. In Orissa also some national schools were established. The first school on such line was established at Sambalpur. A large number of students of Sambalpur Zilla School took the lead in giving up their studies in a Government School. Soon a national schools was organised their under the guidance of Pandit Nilakantha Das.

The Non-Co-operation Movement also had its inevitable impact on the Oriya students who had gone for higher studies to Patna, Calcutta and

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38 H.K. Mahatab, Sadhanar Patha, 2nd Ed., P. 49
39 The Samaj, 28 March 1921
40 Patnaik’s. Op. Cit, P. 60
41 The Samaj, 4 April 1921
42 Ibid.
43 The Utkal Dipika, 15 February 1921
Formation of Ashram and National Schools at Cuttack

During this period Sabarmati Ashram in Gujrat had been the epicentre of All India Congress Movement and Gandhiji experimented his weapon "Non Violent Non – Co-operation there to fight against the British Raj. Similar type of Ashram were also established by the leading Congress men in Orissa. They housed the non-co-operations. The mess of the students Non – Co-operators in Cuttack was named as Swaraj Ashram in which some college students were residing and Gopabandhu used to stay there during his Sojurn at Cuttack. With the beginning of non – co-operation all students of that mess joined the movement and it came to be known as "Swaraj Ashram". Later on it came under the control of the congress and gradually became its headquarters in Orissa.

44 Utkal Prasanga, August 1972., P. 36
45 Patnaik, S, Po Cit. P. 62
46 S.C. Bose, The Indian Struggle, 1920-42(Bombay) 1964, P.52
47 The Samaj, 22 January 1921.
48 H.K. Mahatab, Dasha Barsara Orissa, (Cuttack 1997), P. 17
50 S. Patnaik, N. Odishare Swadinata Andolana, (Oriya) Cuttack,1972, P.33
The "Alakashram" at Jagat Singhpur was built by Sri Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Pandit Prana Krushna Padihari and Babaji Ram Dash and a few others. On a big Mango grove in the outskirts of Jagat Singhpur town on the bank of the once flourishing rivers "Alaka" close to the shrine of the well known Somnath Mahadev, whence the name "Alakahsram". These 'ashrams' housed the non - co-operators, trained the congress volunteers and educated the people of Gandhian Principles.

"Swaraj Mandir" was under the guidance of H.K. Mahatab. In those centre, the Congress volunteers were taught how to spread among the villagers the idea of non-co-operation and to convince them of the desirability of using "Charakha", of establishing Panchayats and national schools etc.

Besides, there was also formed another institution of the student non-co-operators at Cuttack named "Swaraj Sevak Sangha" controlled by Brajabandhu Das, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Ramprasad Singh, Raghu Rout and Raj Kishore Das. They were engaged in some works in constructive side and were organising the meetings where they preached the cult of Non -

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52 The Samaj, 21 May 1921
54 Ibid., P. 74
Violent Non-co-operation, enrolment of Congress Volunteers, doing propaganda for spinning and discarding foreign cloth and so on.\textsuperscript{55}

Apart from these ashrams, a national school was established at Nayabazar, Cuttack in January 1922 under the guidance of Madhusudan Biswal and Atal Bihari Achayra. Another national school came up at Jagat Singh pur in February 1922. National Schools also sprang up at Balasore, Bhadrak, Basta, Sara, and Guamala, all are in Balasore district.\textsuperscript{56}

The method of teaching in these National Schools was totally different from the Government maintained schools. To inculcate the spirit of nationalism events of French Revolution, Italian Unification, German Unification, Irish Liberation Movement were taught to the students. Along with the general curriculum the pupils were to learn spinning, weaving and other crafts. Hindi was taught to them as national language. Both the teachers and students disseminated the ideals of the congress and enrolled themselves as its volunteers.\textsuperscript{57}

In addition to these, the Utkal Swarajya Siksha Parishad (National Education Council) was set up at Cuttack to formulate the Educational policies for these schools and to conduct the examination for the University students. Gopabandhu and Nilakantha Das were its Chairman and Secretary.

\textsuperscript{55} H.K. Mahatab, Dasha Barsara, Orissa, P. 19
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Young India, 20 December 1920
respectively. In 1921 the visit of Gandhiji to Satyabadi during his Orissa tour gave much fillip to the National Schools in Orissa and the students' community was inspired to plunge into the Non – Co-operation movement.58

Resignation from Government Services

Many young and dynamic persons of Orissa were magnetised towards the Congress activities with launching of the Non – Co-operation Movement and gave up their lucrative jobs and renunciated the titles. Gopabandhu Choudhury, then a deputy collector, resigned from his job and joined the Cuttack district congress Committee, expressing his indignation at the meagre flood relief of the Government in the Bari – Jajopur area.59 His example, was emulated by Purna Chandra Das and Reghunath Mishra who left their teaching profession and Kshetra Mohan Mohanty and Hari Charan Mahanty resigned from their Clerical posts. Pandit Nilakantha Das, professor of Oriya and Comparative philosophy and Pandit Lingaraj Mishra, the professor of Sanskrit in the Government College at Muzzafarpur, both were requested by Gopabandhu to tender their resignation and join the Gandhi's call of Non – Co-operation Movement.60 At Cuttack, Madhusudan Biswal, Deputy Inspector of School and Bira Kishore Das, who worked in the Public works department

58 H.K. Mahatab, Gandhi Odissa, (Cuttack 1971), P. 4
59 Amrit Bazar Patrika, March 27, 1921
60 P.K. Mishra, The Political History of Orissa, (1900 – 1936), P. 42
resigned their jobs at Balasore and Bhadrak respectively. Surendra Nath Das and Mahammad Hanif along with few others resigned from the Government Services and devoted themselves to the Congress works.61

In Ganjam, Sribatsa Panda, Biswanath Das, Niranjan Patnaik, Mahendra Kr. Patnaik, Banchhanidhi Patnaik and Jaimangal Rath, being influenced by the Congress Programme and personality of Gopabandhu Das, resigned from their lucrative Government post and joined the non-cooperation Movement. Such example of Personal Sacrifice provided much impetus to the Movement.62 In fact, in Orissa, as elsewhere, in the country, a dedicated cadre of Congress workers and leaders was formed by those who joined the Movement in 1921. They made tremendous personal sacrifice and suffered most in our struggle for freedom.63

Boycott of Law Courts and the establishment of Private arbitration Courts

Another remarkable programme of Non-Co-operation was the boycott of Law courts and subsequent establishment of private arbitration courts for the settlement of disputes. Gopabandhu Das, a pioneer of the movement had given up his legal practice along with Bhagirathi Mohapatra at Cuttack, Jagabandhu Singh at Puri and Mahendra Nath Verma and Achyutananda

61 H.K. Mahatab, Sadhanar Pathe, P. 42
62 The Samaj, 8 October 1921
Purohit at Sambalpur. Many other lawyers ardently and whole heartedly supported the movement by the call of Gandhi and suspended their practice in order to work for the congress. The boycott of law courts was accompanied by the establishment of private courts and village Panchayat for arbitration on petty civil and criminal cases was to some extent successful. The villagers enthusiastically set up such organisation to solve their problems. Some Zamidars of Cuttack and Balasore without registering rent suits in the law courts, sent a list of defaulters to the Congress office. In some Panchayat, the sale deeds were also registered. In the headquarters of the provincial Congress Committee, i.e. at Swarajashram one Panchayat adalat was constituted with local pleaders and gentlemen as members and they met usually every Saturday and Sunday to dispose of appeals from the Panchayats of the Cuttack district.

As a result of this the land lords could not file rent suits against their tenants. The boycott of legal court was a grand success at several places in Orissa due to establishment of Private arbitration courts and revival of old Panchayat system in villages. Many lawyers thus gave up their practice and participated in the Non – Co-operation Movement. Seth Jamnalal Bajaj

63 The Samaj, 3 December 1921
64 S. Patnaik, HFMO (Cuttack 1957), Vol. III, P.P. 63 – 65
65 Ibid.
66 H.K. Mahatab, Sadhanan Pathe, (2nd Edition Cuttack 1972), P. 49
67 The Samaj, 3 December 1921
created a fund from which non co-operating lawyers who needed financial assistance could get it at the rate of Rs. 100/- per month. This incentive gave a boost to the Morale of the lawyers who played a leading role in the freedom struggle.  

Organisational and Constructive Programme

Gradually the sphere of Congress activities in Orissa spread to all parts and even in the remote village the echo of the Movement was heard. District Congress Committees were formed in all district for streamlining the Movement. Organisational work of Cuttack Sadar, Kendrapara, and Jajpur Sub-division was entrusted to Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Jadumani Mangaraj, and Rajakrishna Bose respectively. Dharmananda Patnaik and Nishamani Das were the first president and Secretary of the Cuttack district congress committee.  

Prohibition

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68 Ibid.
70 S. Sarkar, Modern India, (1883-47) (Madras 1975), P. 197.
To strengthen the economies standard of Common people and save them from the evil effects of intoxication Gandhiji insisted on total prohibition. It had also another purpose to deprive the Government of the revenue incurred from excise duties. This Programme appealed to the people of Orissa because most of her people were natural teetotallers. The Congress volunteers started to picket before the liquor shops to prevent the sale of drinks. They attempted to convince the drunkards of the pernicious effects of liquor. As a result the people not only abstained from drinking but also from the use of other intoxicants. Appeals were made to the traders not to import foreign liquors. Similar appeals were made to those who produced country liquors or to discontinue their business in intoxicants. Picketing before the foreign liquor was widely practised. It was an uprecedentent success in Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Bhadrak, Berhampur & Sambalpur.

**Boycott of Foreign Goods and Use of Khadi**

The main activities of the district Congress Committee during the first phase were vigorous propaganda for non – co-operation through mass meeting, lectures in different areas, distribution of leaflets, spread of Charkha, enrolment of Congress Volunteers and picketing infront of foreign cloth and

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71 Ibid.
72 S. Patnaik, HFMO, (Cuttack 1957), Vol. III, P. 69
73 K.M. Patra, Op cit, P. 227
74 Ibid.
excise shops. Gandhiji had made his ideas clear about the boycott of foreign goods in "Young India". According to him, Swadeshi meant the increase in the production and use of Khadi. The production of Khadi led to the revival of hand spinning and hand weaving. It was the main industry in Orissa. It was gradually disappearing on account of the import of "Lanchashire and Manchester" cloths. With the boycott of foreign goods, hand spinning and hand weaving became very popular. Gopabandhu tried his utmost through his public utterances as well as his writing in Samaj to work out the Bejwada Programme of All Indian Congress Committee. He appealed to all section of people, lawyers to housewives to devote their leisure hours to spinning. Having obtained training, the Congress Sevadal toured the rural areas to popularise the Charkha and Khadi. Spinning and weaving provided employment to a large number of people. Khadi became a uniform of all congressmen. It created a sense of unity among them. The campaign for Swadeshi formed an important aspect of the Non-Co-operation programmes. Gopabandhu appealed to the cloth merchants of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore and Sambalpur not to import cloth from England. He also appealed to the people of Garhjats (Tributary Mahal), where congress organisation did not exist, to

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75 Young India, 25 August 1920, "Boycott of Goods Vrs Non Co-operation"
76 Young India, 2 March 1921
77 H.K. Mahatab, Sadhana Pathe, P. 48
78 The Samaj, September 17, 1921
79 Annual Administrative Report of Bihar and Orissa, 1921, P. 153
80 Ibid.
contribute to the implementation of Khadar Programme by spinning in large scale.\textsuperscript{81}

In the Bombay session of All India Congress Committee held on 28\textsuperscript{th} July 1921 which was attended by Gopabasndhu Das, Niranjan Patnaik, Bhagirathi Mahapatra and Hare Krishna Mahatab, Gandhi gave a call for complete boycott of foreign clothes by the end of September and to boycott the visit of the prince Wales.\textsuperscript{82} On July 31, 1921 Gandhi had a great bonfire in Bombay where a huge stock of foreign clothes was burnt.\textsuperscript{83} It was followed by an intense boycott of foreign clothes in Orissa. Violent speeches were made by the leaders in different meeting in the province. Huge bonfires of foreign clothes were organised at Cuttack and Puri.\textsuperscript{84} Hare Krishna Mahatab along with some volunteers of Cuttack staged Satyagraha in front of the train carrying foreign clothes. Accordingly to the Government report, bonfires also occurred at various other places of the province on 2\textsuperscript{nd} October 1921, the 53\textsuperscript{rd} Birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. On November 17, 1921 the day prince of Wales landed in Bombay, complete hartal was observed throughout Orissa.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{81} Indian Annual Register, 1921 – 22, P. 390
\textsuperscript{83} G. Choudhury. Gandhi & Utkal, P. 28.
\textsuperscript{84} Annual Administration Report Bihar and Orissa – 1920 – 21, P. 153
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
On 8 September, 1921 in an appeal to the people of Orissa on the eve of Durgapuja and Kumar Purnima festival (When people wear new clothes) through Samaj, Gopabandhu asked them to wear clothes woven out of self spun yarn instead to wearing foreign clothes.86 Early in September 1921, at the advice of Gopabandhu, the Oriya labourers of Calcutta refused to carry the foreign clothes. In the Bara Bazar area of Calcutta, where the cloth merchants depended upon the Oriya labourer, the merchants were forced by the latter not to have deal in foreign clothes upto 31 December 1921. At Jaleswar a Marwari Cloth merchant was socially boycotted for having sold foreign cloths. He was forced by the local congress workers to pay fine and given an undertaking that for a year he would not sell any foreign clothes.87

A week after Pandit Gopabandhu addressed a mass meeting of the Oriyas who were working in Calcutta and exhorted them to totally boycott the foreign clothes. It created a sensation in the business community as their transactions were almost paralysed.88 Thus inspired by Gopabandhu and Gandhiji, those poor men from Orissa carried on the agitation for about a month. There were about one and half lakhs of Oriya in Calcutta during that period and their strong determination no doubt, had profound effect on the business community. Finally an agreement was reached through the

86 The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. XIX, P. 550
87 Utkal Prasanga, August 1986, P.P. 4 – 5. S. Supkar. “Asahayoga Andolan and Sambalpur” (Oriya)
88 The Samaj, 10, September 1921
mediation of Jamunalal Bajaj and those merchants agreed not to import foreign clothes after a certain period.\textsuperscript{89}

In another incident during Gandhiji’s visit to Orissa, he saw the use of foreign cloth in the Temple of Jagannath and objected to it very much. He raised the issue in the public meeting in Puri and subsequently the people requested the management of the temple to change the practice. Gopabandhu, in his editorial in the Samaj on 18 June 1921, strongly advocated the old practice of the temple rituals in which no foreign elements of any sort was used. It was expected that the boycott of foreign clothes from the temple would have its due effects on the religious minded people of the country. In fact, about a year later, the Chief priests of the temple issued an appeal to our countrymen not to offer any foreign cloth to Lord Jagannath as they were pledged to use only Swadeshi articles for worship.\textsuperscript{90} It was a significant lesson for our Orthodox people to imbibe the spirit of Swadeshi.

\textbf{Repressive measures of the Government}

While the Congress tried to mobilize the people for total dedication in the Movement, the imperial Government took all sorts of repressive measures to quell the Non - Co-operation movement thorough out India. The government of Bihar and Orissa directed all district Magistrates and Sub - Divisional officers to take all possible steps to suppress the Movement and

\textsuperscript{89} H.K. Mahatab, Sadhanar Pathe (Cuttack 1972), P. 49
move about in the rural areas to propagate against the Non-Cooperation. Gandhi and other prominent congress leaders were arrested and kept behind the bars. In Orissa, under section 144 and 108 I.P.C. warrants were served on many leaders. Subsequently, arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of Congress leaders as repressive measures followed, punishment for holding meeting and publication of patriotic literature, leaflets and news was inflicted. Raj Krushna Bose, a student of Cuttack Medical College, was arrested and imprisoned under Section 108 IPC on 21 June 1921 and had the honour to be the first political prisoner in Orissa. Then followed the confinement of Gopabandhu Das, Jadumani Manjaraj, Kamrudin Haq, Krutibas Nanda, Digambar Srichandan, Ananta Mishra, Gobinda Mishra, H.K. Mahatab, Abhiram Nanda, Dr. Atal Bihari Acharya, Bhairab Chandra Mahapatra, Mathura Behera, Purna Chandra Naik etc. On different occasions Gopabandhu Das, Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Atal Bihari Acharya and Gopabandhu Choudhury were prosecuted following a false statement of police officers. Some government officials tried harassing people on the alleged ground of their involvement in the Non-Co-operation Movement. In some Mofussil areas police official told the people that those who were working on spinning wheels would pay taxes and fines. Hence many people

90 The Samaj, 22 June 1922
91 The Samaj, 8 September 1921
92 The Samaj, 3 December 1921
93 The Samaj, 8 April 1922
began hiding spinning wheels instead of using them. As restrictions were imposed on meeting and procession, the school students had to take permission from the police authority even to go in procession for the immersion of the image of goddess Saraswati.

On 10 December 1921 the Congress offices and houses of congress workers were searched in various places. The congress leaders were not allowed to hold any type of meeting in prohibitory areas. Gopabandhu Das had to cancel his three meetings scheduled to be held at Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Bargah. On 21st, 22nd and 23rd January 1922 respectively on account of section 144 being clamped by the Government.

Gopabandhu Das was arrested and tried as an undertrial prisoner for publishing a news item in the Samaj on 13 August 1922 under the caption "Very Serious indeed if it is true". The entire police force stood combined in hatching the case. The case was heard by Mr. Suresh Chandra Bose, the elder brother of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose. He did not find anything offensive in the articles and had the courage of conviction to acquit Gopabandhu Das. There was a serious row over the matter. Government preferred an appeal against the acquittal. The High Court however upheld the acquittal order. All the same Mr. Bose was given severe verbal snobbing by

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94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
the authorities which he was, however, not afraid of and resigned his service shortly thereafter. Gopabandhu's acquittal aroused large scale public rejoicing.

**Suspension of the Movement**

While over 20,000 civil resisters were in Jail, the Congress met at Ahmadabad in its regular session and reiterated its faith in non-violent non-co-operation, described civil disobedience as the only civilised and effective substitute for an armed rebellion, asked Congress men to prepare masses for individual and the mass civil disobedience and appointed Gandhiji as the sole executive authority. In these circumstances, the annual session of the Indian National Congress was held at Ahmadabad in December 1921, which was attended by 127 delegates from Orissa. It decided to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement against the British Government under the sole executive authority of Mahatma Gandhi. The delegates returned to Orissa with much enthusiasm to start no-tax campaign at the call of Mahatma. Innumerable volunteers were recruited for the purpose. Tirtol and Sartha in the districts of Cuttack and Balasore respectively were selected for Civil

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96 Chittaranjan Mishra, Freedom Movement in Sambalpur, (1827-1947) (Delhi-1987), P.199
98 H.K. Mahatab, Dashabarsara Odissa, P. 44
99 H.K. Mahatab, Sadhanan Pathe, P.55
100 Mahatab (Ed) History of Freedom Movement in Orissa, Vol. III, P.71
Disobedience Movement. Political activities, so far as it can be constructed from the fortnightly reports of the Government, were quite intense in Cuttack, Balasore and Sambalpur districts. There had been some defiance of the police who prohibited the meeting in Cuttack. In Sambalpur, the people opposed the settlement operation in the shape of passive resistance. A good deal of underground agitation was going on throughout Orissa. Leaders of the Non-Co-operation were in readiness waiting for orders from Gandhi whose pronunciation were regarded more important than those of Government.

When Gandhi was getting ready for the Bardoli Campaign in Gujarat, news came like a thunderclap about the ghastly mob outrage of Charui Choura in Gorakhpur district of united province. All of a sudden it changed the course of events. The Congress Working Committee resolved to suspend sine die the mass Civil Disobedience Movement. After this, there was a lull in the Non-Co-operation Movement in Orissa which appeared to be on the wane. Only the programme of constructive work was to continue as before.

The suspension of Non-Co-operation and the arrest of Gandhi were followed by repression of a violent type in Orissa. Many Congress leaders

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101 Mahatad Sadhanan Pathe, P-55
102 Home Political proceeding, File No. 11, January, 1922
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid. F. No., 18, February 1922
105 Ibid. F. No. 18, March 1922
including H.K. Mahatab, Gopabandhu Das, M.M. Behera etc. were prosecuted on various charges, detention, distrain and imprisonment were associated with looting of property, assault on innocent people, lathi charges, and brutal treatment of the prisoners including flogging. However the new awakening of the people could no longer be suppressed and the trend of events in Orissa followed the all India Pattern without much variation. Even after the suspension of the Non - Co - operation Movement, the machinery of repression did not cease. Suddenly, from middle of March 1922, devastating arson started in Cuttack. The cause of this arsons are not definitely known but it was suspected to be a creation by anti - social elements. Most of the houses in coastal towns of Orissa were thatched. Strangely all of a sudden several houses caught fire. From 19th March to 28th March 1922, there were a series of fire in Cuttack town. On 22nd March, 80, houses were burnt in one place and 135 in another. On 27th March there was another fire in which 40 to 50 houses were burnt and it seems that some of these fires at least were the work of the incendiaries.\textsuperscript{106} It was the primary duty of the Government to arrest the miscreants and put down incendiarism, but the Government officers were doing nothing to stop fires nor to detect the offenders.\textsuperscript{107} Therefore, it was avidly believed that fires were actually the works of the police or their agent.

\textsuperscript{106} The Samaj, 29 March 1922
\textsuperscript{107} Home Political Proceeding, file No. 19, April 1922
H.K. Mahatab, an eye witness of these events give a vivid description of arson in Orissa in his autobiography and "Dasha Barshara Orissa" (Ten years events of Orissa) and doubts the complicity of the police in incendiarism. The panic was so widespread that the people in the town and village did not sleep in order to watch their houses. Even they did not allow the police constables or chowkidars to tour their village or lane.108

**Kanika Uprising – 1921 – 1922.**

With the launching of the Non – Co-operation Movement, the peasant movement in India took a definite shape. In the beginning of 1922 no tax campaign was organised in Bardoli, with a view to redress the grievances of the indigo workers against British exploitation. After assessment of the condition of the agricultural workers in different provinces, the All India Congress Committee took a decision to launch a peasant movement there. This encouraged peasants resistance movement at Sitamari, Champaran and Muzzafarpur in Bihar against the Zamidar. In Orissa the peasants and subjects of Kanika estate were exposed to the blatant exploitation of the native chief. As many as sixty four exorbitant taxes were imposed on the peasants. They were very much influenced by the no tax campaign launched by the congress.109

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108 S.C. Dey, Story of Freedom Struggle in Orissa, (Bhubaneswar 1990), P.P. 64-65
109 Op. Cit, F. No. 18., April 1922
Kanika was a permanently settled Zamidari Estate, about 440 square miles in area situated in the Cuttack and Balasore district. The Cuttack portion known as Chhamuka, which was 260 square miles in area. The Balasore portion was known as Panchmuka. The rivers Baitarani and Dhamra constituted the natural dividing line between Cuttack and Balasore portion. The economic condition of the Kanika tenants was miserable because of frequent failure of crops caused by Climatic abnormalities and feudal exploitation.\textsuperscript{110} The people had to live in continuous fear of cyclones and sea waves, floods and draught till harvesting. At the times of Non – Co-operation Movement, Rajendra Narayan Bhanjadeo was the Raja of Kanika. He was a man of public spirit and had distinguished himself as a leader of Utkal Union Conference and as a member of the legislative council, both provincial and central. He was also a close associate of Madhusudan Das.\textsuperscript{111}

In 1921, the Raja of Kanika, proposed a fresh land settlement in the Zamidari, which was highly resented by the tenant who were already “heavily burdened with the existing high rate of land tax and various other illegal exaction numbering over sixty.”\textsuperscript{112} They were also groaning under the impact of draught followed by flood for the last three years from 1919 – 1922.

\textsuperscript{110} Das, Barsara Orissa, Op. Cit., P. 49
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} S.C. Dey, Op cit, P. 66
The tenants also apprehended the Raja's move for land settlement to be a pretext to raise the land tax further. So they protested against it and demanded Government settlement instead of private settlement by the Raja.\textsuperscript{113}

Mean while, the Non – Co-operation Movement profoundly influenced the tenants who held meetings and remained firm in their demands. Thus started the agitation which might have been solved had both the parties sorted out the problems between themselves.

But the Raja gave a different colour to the agitation, saying that the tenants had stopped rent because of the non – co-operation movement, even though tenants were in reality prepared to pay revenue at the previous rate and the Raja took the help of British Govt. and the police to quell the rebellion.\textsuperscript{114} The government, with a hand in glove attitude, believed that, "the Raja's tenants had been stirred up by his semi lunatic brother, the proprietor of the adjoining small estate, who had called into his assistance the local non – co-operators and under the guise of agrarian agitation, organised a hostile conspiracy\textsuperscript{115} of the Kanika tenants.

To curb the agitation, section 144 was clamped down on many congress leaders of Cuttack and Balasore and on many meeting held in

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{114} S.N. Patnaik, Freedom Struggle in Orissa, (Oriya) (Cuttack 1972), P. 46
connection with the Kanika problem. This sort of problem caught the attention of Here Krishna Mahatab, so with some workers, he wanted to hold a meeting at Matto on their way to Chandabali but the Tahasildar served a notice on them that the meeting was banned. Similarly all meetings were banned in Kanika. But nevertheless, the meetings were held.116 Many non-co-operators, the prominent of them Ramdas Babaji, a native of the princely state of Tirgiria, was a firebrand, a passionate speaker with a vulgar tongue, entered Kanika in third week of August 1921 and began his fiery propaganda against Raja of Kanika. The propaganda of Ramdas had an electrifying effect on the people of Kanika. It marked the beginning of congress organisation and nationalist movement in Kanika. A swaraj Ashram was esstablished at Kantapara about half a mile away from Rajkanika. Through this ashram a swaraj flag was hoisted on a tree named as Gandhibata. Non-Co-operation songs and kirtan were sung for some times.117 Bharigarthi Mahapatra, the Secretary of Utkal Pradesh and his wife Sarala Devi, Jadumani Manjaraj, Dr. Ekram Russol and Madhusuda Patnaik carried on their propaganda and activities in Kanika. By the end of September 1921, Ramdas Babaji was arrested.118 He was prosecuted and sentenced to imprisonment for one year. During his trial, he made the following statement before the court:

115 Ibid.
116 Ibid.
117 Proceeding of legislative council of Bihar and Orissa, Vol –V, 1922, P.1023
118 Op Cit P. 1024
"The sinful oppressive government which had been ruling over India for 200 years has ruined us. Don't trust this sinful satanic government. The Raja of Kanika is a creature of this satanic government and he has been oppressing and opposing Non - Co - operation is various ways. If you are really Hindus and love the blood of Aryan, do not be deceived by the Satanic Government. They are swindlers"119 Ramdas Babaji's arrest intensified popular agitation. The Kanika agitators hereafter became inclined to adopt non - payment of enhanced rent as the main technique of their agitation against the Raja as well as the British Government. To carry on the agitation for non payment of rent, a meli was organised for one hundred villages and four thousand villagers were enrolled in it. The organizers of Meli established a regular council with office bearers at the village Meghpur. A meeting of the council at Raj Kanika attended by prominent tenant leaders like Dinabandhu, Khandayatray, Nidhi Tripathy, Biswanath Rout urged the people not to pay rent at the enhanced rate.120

The village committee of tenants were formed in Kanika to work for the local agrarian cause as well as implementation of Congress Programme. The committees also discharged functions like enrolment of congressmen, promotion of khadar, settlement of disputes through arbitration, persuading

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119 Quoted from Muralidhar Mallik Biplabi Chakradhar (Haldia, 1973)
Hare Krishna Mahatab circulated a printed leaflet protesting against payment of enhanced rent and preaching the idea of no tax campaign. In February 1922, in response to a petition from 5000 tenants of Kanika, B.N. Ray the collector of Cuttack conducted an inquiry to ascertain:

I) To what extent the rents had actually been raised

II) Whether the enhancement was justifiable or not

III) Whether allegation of the tenants against the Raja was justified.

After inquiry the Collector reported that enhancement was reasonable but he had been convinced about the truth of the following allegations of the tenants against the Raja.

1. Paddy had been forcibly purchased by the Raja.

2. The tenants were forced to work gratis in the construction of roads

3. For the construction of bridges eight annas per acre had been collected and the people were found to work gratis.

4. the tenants were prevented from borrowing money from money lenders, they were to borrow from the Raja only.

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121 M.D. Mallik, Biplabi Chakraddhar, P.P. -11-15
5. The Raja did not apply for remission of revenue, offered by the government, on account of destruction of crops, caused by the floods of 1920.

6. The forest rents had been raised.\textsuperscript{123}

The collector B.N. Ray tried to bring about an amicable settlement and advised the tenants "to pay into court such dues as were undisputed and to leave the Raja to maintain in the courts the right which he claimed and which they denied".\textsuperscript{124}

Mr. Ray was soon transferred probably because of his sympathetic attitude towards the tenants.\textsuperscript{125}

At this stage the tenants organisation decided to pay revenue at earlier rates in the Kendrapada government treasury but in any case they refused to pay the rent to the Raja.

The suspension of the Non – Co-operation movement by the congress in February 1922 came as a serious blow to the Kanika agitation. The Raja took a strong repressive measures against the tenants in the Kanika estate. Even he took the help of the police contingent from Cuttack to take ruthless

\textsuperscript{122} The Samaj, 10 July 1922
\textsuperscript{123} Proceeding of Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa, Vol – V, 1922, P. 1022
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., P.1007
measures to suppress the movement at any cost. The foremost congress leaders of Orissa like Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mahapatra were forbidden from further involving themselves in the Kanika affairs and subsequently they were arrested for violation of the Govt. order.\textsuperscript{126}

Thus, the repressive measures adopted by the government was temporarily successful in suppressing the peasant agitation. Nevertheless the tenants continued to fight against the Raja. So far as Rajendra Narayan Bhanjawdeo, the Raja of Kanika was concerned he became determined to fight the congress after the tenants agitation of 1921 – 1922, as the congress party's moral support had been an important factor in it. In 1924 he formed a Zamidars' party to fight the congress. The fight ended in the defeat of the Kanika party in the election of 1937.\textsuperscript{127}

With the suspension of the Non – Co-operation movement by the end of 1922, congress work had been seriously hampered. Most of the leaders were put behind the bar and Ashrams and national schools had been closed. The recruitment of the congress volunteers had drastically curbed enthusiasm for the party work in the rank and file.\textsuperscript{128} Common men's faith in the congress

\textsuperscript{125} H.K. Mahatab, Dasarbarsara Odisa, (Cuttack-1977), P. 50
\textsuperscript{126} Op cit, Sadhanan Pathe, P.P. 60-64
\textsuperscript{127} Prafulla Das, Kanika Praja Andolana Itihas, (Oriya) Raj Kanika 1987, P.178
\textsuperscript{128} Home Pol. Progs, F. No. 25, February 1923
was in a downhill trend following the failure of Gandhi's promise of Swaraj within one year.

Some congressmen in Orissa such as Niranjan Patnaik, Gopabandhu Choudhury, Jayamangala Ratha and Krupasindhu Hota devoted themselves to the implementation of Gandhian Constructive Programme. Gopabandhu Das, gave the message while in Jail to the Congress workers “Orissa has been chronically affected by famine. Production of Khadar is the best way to alleviate the effect of famine”.129

After coming out of jail in June 1924, Gopabandhu devoted himself in two constructive works-promotion of Khadar and famine relief.

In the annual session of the congress at Cocanada in 1923, All Indian Khadar Board was constituted “with full power to organise and carry on Khadar work throughout India.” During this time Utkal Provincial Khadi Board was constituted with Niranjan Patnaik as the President. After release from Jail early in 1924, Mahatma Gandhi concentrated on constructive Programme, particularly Khadar. In All India Congress Committee in its meeting held at Ahmadabad, Gandhi prescribed spinning franchise for every regular congressman. It was also decided that every member of the elected congress bodies was to send at least two thousand yards of self spun yarn to “All India Khadi Board” in every month. On 19th July 1924, Gopabandhu Das appealed

129 The Samaj, 10 June 1922
to the people Orissa through daily "The Samaj" not only to implement Khadar Programme but also to produce cotton in their fields. He made the following arrangements for the implementation of Khadar programme:

1. In every district, there shall be a Khadar centre. The workers in charge of the centre should give the people training in all aspects of cotton industry from cultivation to weaving.

2. In the Swarajya Ashrams of all district and sub divisional headquarters Khadar should be sold. The provincial Khadi board might open the Khadar sale centre in other places.

3. besides the Khadar centre, in some appropriate places able and honest workers should be employed for reorganising village life through promotion of spinning enrolment of congressmen, raising handfuls of rice for Tilak Swarajya fund, establishing primary school on the model of national education and inculcating the habit of newspaper reading among the villagers.

4. These workers would have to abide by the rules for the village organisation and manufacturing and sale of Khadar.

5. Provincial Khadi Board would bear the expenses of the Khaddar centre. By June 1925, the All India Khadi Board took up the direct supervision of the provincial Khadi board. On 25 August, 1925
Gopabandhu Das went to Akarai to study the appropriate methods of execution of Khadar programme.\textsuperscript{131} The Khadar workers tried to popularise khadar among the people through lecture programme along with visual demonstration by magic lantern and spinning competition. It appears that by the end of 1926, the Khadi works in Orissa was progressing systematically.

**Formation of the Swaraj party – 1923**

The year 1923 witnessed an ideological split within the National Congress i.e. pro – changers and No – changers and it had its political impact in Orissa. The group of pro changers constituting the Swaraj Party on 1 January 1923 under the leadership of Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, and Vitthalbhai Patel advocated council entry and continuation of the policy of obstruction within the legislature. As a result of the imprisonment of top congress leaders, particularly Gopabandhu Das, the discipline and unity within the party received a great set back. The Swaraj party in Orissa was formed in 1923, with Nilakantha, Godavarish and other members of the Satyabadi group as its protagonists. The no changer team led by Hare Krishna Mahtab opposed the Swarajists.\textsuperscript{132} Early in January 1923 the congress leaders selected village Tirtol in Cuttack district for an experimental Civil Disobedience. After the

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 19 July 1924
\textsuperscript{131} Utkal Dipika, 5 September 1925
formation of the Swaraj Party, its activities centred round the Satyabadi School. The Swaraj party of the congress led by C.R. Das and Motilal Nehru had already taken part in second general election held in the same year under the Government of India Act 1919. The newly formed swaraj party of Orissa contested election and Bhubanandanda Das of Cuttack was elected the member of Central Legislative Assembly. However swarajists could not achieve anything spectacular in Orissa.

The third general election was due in 1926. Some congressmen in Orissa were keen to contest the election. The Utkal Provincial Congress Committee met to decide whether Orissa Congress men should accept the council entry programme. Gopabandhu Das was personally not in favour; but as he found that the majority were very eager for it, he did not like to stand in their way. In the election four members of the party were elected to the provincial council and two to the central Assembly. Gopabandhu after his release from jail in 1924 associated himself with Lala Lajpat Raj and started taking active interest in the servant of the people society of which he became the member later. Despite the strong advocacy of Madhusudan for the release of Gopabandhu, the Government released the latter from jail in June, 1924 after of his sentence. Due to sincere efforts of Gopabandhu Choudhury, the first session of Utkal Provincial Congress Conference was held at Cuttack on

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132 B.K. Samal, Comprehensive History & Culture of Orissa (Ed) (New Delhi – 1997), P. 330
28th and 29th June 1924 under the presidentship of Prafulla Chandra Roy, an eminent scientist of the country and congress leader of Calcutta. Madhusudan Das who had resigned his seat in Bihar Ministry owing to some differences of opinion with the Government, attended the meeting. Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mohapatra who were respectively the president and secretary of Utkal pradesh congress committee attended the conference. Being impressed by the warm and spontaneous ovation given by the people to Gopabandhu Das, Acharya Ray, the president of the conference conferred on him the title of “Utkalmani” (Jewel of Orissa). To the emotionally charged audience poet “Banchhanidhi Mahanty sang a song depicting the suffering of the people of Kanika “How long will ill fated Kanika bear injustice and oppression”. Long, suffering have hardened her into stone:

Who will hear her Sufferings? Like Ahalya, the beautiful women, the women of Kanika has turned into an image of stone after persistent sufferings,

Is there no here like Rama in this land of Bharat to deliver her”?

The entire audience, including the president P.C. Ray was deeply moved by the pathos and rhythm of the song. The Orissa Provincial Conference passed resolutions supporting Gandhi’s Non – Co-operation and constructive programme.

133 Nanda kishore Das, Mo Jiban O Janjala Kahani, (Oriya autobiography) (Cuttack 1981), P. 40
Another notable achievement of Utkal Provincial Congress was the formation of Utkal Women’s Conference sponsored by Sarala Devi, wife of Bhagirathi Mahapatra. The first all Orissa Women’s Conference attended by 200 ladies. The most prominent among them were Rasomoni Devi, Haimavali Dei, and Kishoremoni Dei. This was the most encouraging phase of the freedom movement in Orissa when the conservative Oriya Women gave up the security of their home to suffer privations of public life. In 1926 at Puri Gopabandhu established a Widow Home named “Jagannath Ashram” and widows irrespective of caste and creed were housed in it. A number of Bengali widows, too found shelter in this. Widow re-marriage was also encouraged. He also tried to inspire them to participate in patriotic social service activities.

In 1925, Lala Lajpat Rai paid a visit to Orissa in connection with the establishment of a branch of Hindu Mahasabha and stayed at the “Samaj” Press where he was hosted by Satyabadi leaders like Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Pandit Lingaraj Mishra and Sri Radhanath Rath. Lalaji had offered to give Gopabandhu the entire charge of the Hindu Mahasabha to work in the province. The movement for the eradication of untouchability was launched with the help of Satyabadi Group. Leaders attempted to establish congress Committee in each police station of the Cuttack district.

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134 Utkal Dipika, 12.7.1924
135 Utkal Dipika, 1 May 1926
Gandhi's Second & Third visit to Cuttack

Mahatma Gandhi came to Cuttack for the second time in August 1925, and again in December 1927. These were landmarks in the political movement in Orissa in general and Cuttack in particular. This time he was invited by Madhusudan Das to visit his "Utkal Tannery" which was running through a financial crisis and the latter was seeking the assistance of Gandhiji to revive it. Gandhiji was highly influenced by the personality of Madhusudan and working conditions of the workers there. He addressed the workers of the "Utkal Tannery" in its factory compound and said that "I am very happy to know that employment has been provided to the untouchables in this tannery by M.S. Das. As long as untouchability was done away with from our society we can't achieve Swarajya".\textsuperscript{136} Gandhiji also addressed a large gathering in the Municipality Hall of Cuttack on 19\textsuperscript{th} August and paid a visit to the leprosy colony situated in the outskirt of the Cuttack.\textsuperscript{137}

The year 1927 was significant in the Orissan history. That year Gandhiji came to Orissa for the third time. He arrived at Cuttack on 20 December and became the guest of Gopal Chandra Praharaj. On the occasion of his visit a meeting was organised at Cuttack in the evening of that day. That was the day when Gandhiji observed silence for which he did not open his month. So his speech was read out in the meeting. Next day he

\textsuperscript{136} Amril Bazar Patrika, 13, September 1925
\textsuperscript{137} H.K. Mahatab, , Gandhiji O Odissa (Cuttack 1971), P. 25
attended a meeting of the congress workers and discussed with them various matters with regards to the use of Khadar, to strengthen the Swaraj Movement and chronic poverty of the people of Orissa. While he proceeded to Madras from Cuttack, Gandhi gave the people of Orissa four instructions:

1. Do not be afraid of anybody – Raja, Zamidar or Police. Do not be afraid of men, only be afraid of God.

2. Don’t waste your time in idleness. Earn your living by honest means. Whenever you find time, spin, wear Khadar

3. Do not create division among men. Treat nobody as untouchable. Hate none.

4. Give up all intoxicants like wine, opium and Ganja: do not indulge in corruption.

Visit of Simon Commission – 1928

The political scene in India took a dramatic turn with the announcement of the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission. On 8th November 1927, the announcement was formally made both in London and New Delhi. The commission constituted of Seven British members of the parliament including Sir John Simon, the Chairman. The primary purpose was to evaluate

\[137\] H.K. Mahatab, , Gandhiji O Odissa (Cuttack 1971), P. 25
\[138\] Amrit Bazar Patrika, 26 August 1928
the working of the Government of India Act 1919 with a view to determine the future course of action. The exclusion of Indian from a body was so unreasonable and unjust that the people reacted very sharply to the announcement. Almost all political parties and prominent leaders were unanimous in their decision to boycott the commission. Simon and his team were greeted with black flags, mass demonstrations, and shouts of “Simon go back” from the very day i.e. February 3rd, 1928 on which they arrived at Bombay. Hartal and massive demonstrations were mounting on a large scale.

The congress resolved to boycott the commission as the only self-respecting course for India and simultaneously called an All Party Conference under the president ship of Motilal Nehru to draft constitution acceptable to Indian. An ultimatum was served on the British Govt. stating that if the constitution framed by the Nehru Committee was not accepted entirely on or before December 31, 1929 the Congress would revive the non-violent no-co-operation campaign with the aim of realising complete independence.139

The revival of revolutionary activities leading to the Merrut Conspiracy Case, the Lahore conspiracy case involving Bhagat Singh and his comrades and the Martyrdom of Jatin Das generated a strong reaction in the minds of India. However, in the wake of these developments, Lord Irwin, the Viceroy of

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139 P. Sitaramayya. The History of Indian National Congress (Bombay 1944), Vol-I, P.P. 364-57
India issued a statement on October 31, 1929 stating that the natural result of India's constitutional progress is the attainment of Dominion status.\footnote{Op. Cit, P. 350}

**Reaction to the Simon Commission in Cuttack**

With the boycott of Simon commission by All Indian Congress Committee, it produced a mixed reaction in Orissa too. The Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee under the leadership of Gopabandhu Choudhury and Hare Krushna Mahatab decided to follow the boycott policy of All India Congress Committee. However, despite the opposition the Simon Commission arrived in India in 1928. So it was greeted everywhere with black flag and slogan “Go back Simon”. But while the atmosphere in India was surcharged with cry of hostility it is a wonder that a few leaders of Orissa decided to welcome Simon Commission and present their demand to make Orissa a separate Province. In this context a meeting was held in the Cuttack Town hall on 10 November 1928 under the presidentship of Bhubanananda Das.\footnote{The Samaj, 14 November 1928} This decision was taken and a delegation committee was set up consisting of Braja Sundar Das, Laxmidhar Mahanty, Bhikari Charan Patnaik and Brajananda Das. The delegation committee was sent to Patna where commission was to arrive on 12 November 1928. Orissan delegates waited to welcome with placards “ORISSA WELCOMES THE SIMON COMMISSION”. This unusual welcome by the Orissan deputation attracted the attention of the
commission. However, Simon Commission made a note of their demand and recommended in its report to create the separate province to create the separate province of Orissa. Orissa caused great annoyance to the top ranking leaders of India National Congress. Especially Motilal Nehru in the Calcutta Session condemned this action vehemently as it was against the interest of Indian National Congress. But the leaders pleaded that they did if in the interest of their motherland. The commission was convinced of the genuine grievances of the Oriyas and accordingly a sub committee was appointed with Major C.R. Atlee as Chairman. This committee reported that the grievance was well founded, the demand substantially supported by the people and the Oriya case deserving sympathy. It recommended the creation of Orissa as a separate province.

Death of Gopabandhu

At a time when the Central India was stirred by the anti Simon agitation, Pandit Gopabandhu Das, the main architect of the Congress movement in Orissa, popularly known as "Utkalmani", led the people of the

142 J. Pattnaik, Cuttack one Thousand years, (Ed) Cuttack, 1990
144 Ibid., Vol – II, P.P. -51-52

The Sub Committee had recommended that the separate province of Orissa shall comprise the Orissa Division, Orissa Feudatory States, kharia, greater part of Ganjam district and agency area inhabited by the Khonds
province in the Non - Co-operation Movement was no more on the scene. His premature death on June 17, 1928 created a vacume in the hearts of millions of his fellowmen. While mourning his death in the columns of young India on 21 June, Gandhiji paid high tributes to him as “the noblest son. Making a summary of his contribution for the country the Mahatma wrote:

“The country is poorer for the death of Gopabandhu Das. Though he is not in our midst in the flesh, he is in our midst in spirit. Let that noble spirit guide the workers of Orissa, let his death result in a larger dedication to service, greater efforts, greater self effacement and greater unity among the scattered workers who are too few for the national requirements. I tender my condolence to the relatives and the many disciples of the deceased patriot. The news of his sad demise shocked the people of Cuttack most because Cuttack had been the pivotal centre of his political activities. All political institutions of Cuttack observed mourning. Pandit Gopabandhu Das pioneered Modern political in Orissa. He was primarily a social service oriented man. He entered politics for social service. He was product of the movement of amalgamation of Orissa. He was a member of Congress organisation in India. While a student of Calcutta University in Law faculty, he was moved by the misery of the Oriya people who were earning their livelihood by working primarily as porter (kulis). When Cuttack district was affected by flood havoc,

145 Young India, 21 June 1928
Gopabandhu collected money and materials to rescue the flood-affected people.

After completion of his education, Gopabandhu returned to Orissa. Now he associated himself with Barrister Madhu Babu, the veteran leader of the then Orissa. After the death of his parents, wife and son, he detached himself completely from the family life and resolved to dedicate himself for the cause of service to the society. His two young daughters were left under the care of his elder brother. Gopabandhu performed two types of social service—first, constructive, like helping the distressed people, and second, reformatory such as reform by means of education. He knew that long term reform could be realised only through education. In the year 1906, he established a High School at Nilgiri and became its Headmaster. In the due course under certain circumstances, he shifted over to the practice of Law at the court of Cuttack under Madhusudan Das. In 1919, he started Satyabadi National School in Puri district with only nineteen students. He organised “Visvasiksha Parishad” to spread education throughout Orissa.

“Amalgamation of Oriya Speaking Areas” Movement started in 1903 under the stewardship of Madhusudan Das by Utkal Sammelan. In 1909, British Parliament passed Indian Councils Act. It started the cleavage of Morley – Minto Reform. According to this Act, some members were to be elected indirectly into the Provincial Councils by the people. Bihar Orissa was constituted as a separate province in 1912. In it Orissa was to be represented by only one member who was to be elected by the local bodies of the Orissa
division. For this membership Madhu Babu persuaded Gopabandhu Das to stand for the election in 1917. Gopabandhu was elected and continued in the Council till 1921. "During the short period", writes Dr. Sadashiv Mishra, "in a council dominated by an official bloc and steadfastly supported by nominated members, he (Gopabandhu) made an indelible mark as a legislator and earned respect and admiration from all, including those who were opposed to his presentations. He had absolute identity between his philosophy of life, work, and activities on the one hand and his writings, speeches and deliberations on the other.... His speeches fascinated even the staunch custodians of British imperialism in India... He prepared his speeches with utmost care, personal investigation and extensive studies... His facts were unimpeachable, his references were uncontrovertible, his style was unassailable, with winning manners and emotional appeals, he made presentations effective. Though his speeches were turned to in deaf ears, it leaf deep impression and has a lasting value as finest example of legislative deliberation".

In 1919, Puri district was affected by draught. Under the leadership of Gopabandhu, Satyabadi school turned into a relief centre.

On October 4, 1919, the day of Vijaya Dasami, "The Samaja", an Oriya weekly was inaugurated under the editorship of Gopabandhu himself. In his first editorial, Gopabandhu appealed for communal peace and harmony and to mark the day as national day. He ventilated people's grievances and
exposed the lapses of the government through "Samaj". He was very much successful in his mission.

In 1920, a special session of the Indian National Congress was held at Calcutta. Gopabandhu participated in it. He accepted the Gandhian ideology and programme of non-violent non-co-operation movement through boycott of foreign goods, non-consumption of liquor, etc. He returned to Orissa and accepted the responsibility as the President of Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee. Twenty-Seven delegates attended the Nagpur session of the Congress same year under his leadership.

A session of Utkal Union Conference was organised at Chakradharpur by Gopabandhu and his associates on December 29, 1920. Madhusudan declined to preside over the conference since Gopabandhu intended to turn it into a nationalist party under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. Madhusudan, however, remained silent. Gopabandhu got the following resolution passed in the conference.

"Resolved that the aims and objects of the Indian National Congress be accepted as the objectives of the conference". He said, "When India to stand aloof. For by such dissociation from the main stream of national struggle, Orissa stood to lose very much". Thus the stream of regional patriotism merged with Indian nationalism. For the first time in the history of the nationalist movement in Orissa, "The Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee", a sister-association of the Indian National Congress was created under the presidency of the Gopabandhu Das. Now Congress organisation in Orissa
In December, the annual session of Indian National Congress was held at Lahore with Jawaharlal Nehru in the chair. In this session on the 31st December 1929 a historic resolution for complete Independence of India was adopted by the sincere efforts of Jawaharlal Nehru. It was also resolved to observe the 26 January 1930 as independence day. Accordingly on that day the independence day was observed in Cuttack in great solemnity. The National Flag was hoisted in Swaraj Ashram and Lokaseba Ashram in Cuttak. A big public meeting was arranged in the bank of the river Kathjodi. Speeches were delivered on policies the programmes of Mahatma Gandhi by Gopabandhu Choudhury, Jadumani Mangaraj, Nila Kantha Das, Dr. Atal Bihari Achayra, Pranakrushna Padihary, Purna Chandra Bose and few others.146

Thus Cuttack played no less eventful a role in the non - co-operation movement and in the events following it. Their of course the curtain was not rung down on the role of Cuttack in the freedom Movement.