SECOND CHAPTER

AGRARIAN STRUCTURE AND PEASANT REVOLT IN UTTAR PRADESH, LAND REFORM PROBLEMS IN U.P. (1920-30) POLICY OF CONGRESS
Indian society had always been based on rural economy and agrarian activities of the rural areas, in which peasant is the central and important element. And this agrarian structure on Indian peasantry had always been oppressed by arbitrary evictions of the land lords and suffered from high rents, illegal levies, and unpaid labour in zamindari area. The impoverishment of the Indian Peasantry was a direct result of the transformation of the agrarian structure due to -

- Colonial economic policies.
- Ruin of the handicrafts leading to over crowding of land.
- The new land revenue system.
- Colonial administrative and judicial system.

The peasants fearing loss of his only source of livelihood often approached the local moneylender who made full use of the farmer’s difficulties by extracting high rates of interests on the money rent. The main cause of the peasant’s exploitation was the lack of definite land revenue system since ages. When the East India Company received the right of Diwani in Bihar and Bengal; land was given for five years on rent.

The agrarian class structure in U.P. was extremely complex, before the annexation of Oudh and the grant of sanads to the talukdars by the
British. There were no legal distinctions between the Talukdari tenure and Zamindari tenure. Estates were intermixed with each other.\textsuperscript{01}

There was no essential difference before 1857 revolt. After the mutiny talukdars received a distinctive superior status; even there privileges were not enjoyed by the zamindars of the permanent system.

No radical changes were made on this system till 1793. On 22 March 1793 permanent settlement was introduced by Lord Cornwallis through which zamindars were declared the permanent owners of the land, and big amount of land revenue was expected from the zamindars. And the cultivators were reduced to the status of tenants-at-will, shares croppers and landless labourers. In Uttar Pradesh the permanent settlement was introduced in Banaras, Baliya, Jaunpur, Mirzapur and Ajamgarh.

After Lord Cornwallis coming governor generals did not show any interest regarding permanent settlement. In Uttar Pradesh the people of rural areas who were engaged in agrarian activities were either landless or had nominal pieces of lands. Peasants or cultivators were not the real owner of the lands.\textsuperscript{02}

They were compelled to pay \textit{NAZRANAS} according to the demands of land lords and the practice of \textit{BEDAKHALI} was very common. The majority of the cultivators were subjected to high rents, illegal levies, renewal fees or Nazranas. Though there were frequent struggles between peasants and the land lords but the peasantry had no particular organization to give platform to their demands. Zamindari tenure were those in which the entire village land is either owned by a single land lord or a body of co-
sharers, who may represent a group of ancestrally connected families. Co-sharers in U.P. were those who on account of caste rules were prohibited from touching the plough like Brahmins.\textsuperscript{03}

Hence all agrarian society in U.P. was divided into categories of rent receivers, rent payers and agricultural labourers and each their were again sub divided according to the nature of their occupations.\textsuperscript{04}

Besides associations of land lords were also prevailing under the inspiration of British government. Some of them were British Indian Association in Oudh, the Agra land holders association, The \textit{Muzzafarpur Zamindar Association}.\textsuperscript{05} Below the land lords in the rural social ladder were those substantial peasants, who may be called peasant proprietors. In 1930 it was estimated that there were as many as 1-2 million peasant proprietors in the U.P. Who owned and cultivated the land themselves. Their tenure was permanent as long as they paid the negotiated rent demand; and they could not be disturbed in the possession of their land. The rent however was liable to be raised at each settlement, which was undertaken every thirty years. A greater part of 35 million acres of agricultural level in the U.P. was, however, cultivated by rent paying tenants of landlords. These tenants were of several kinds; occupancy tenants, statutory or non statutory tenants, privileged tenants and ordinary tenants.

In addition to the above, there were what were called \textit{KHUDKASHT} tenants who had hereditary rights in the land and which could be transferred to the family. In the case of tenants working in \textit{SIR} lands of the Zamindars, the Zamindar could evict the tenant every year. The number of tenants
estimated in 1930, were between five or six million. The occupancy tenants had the right to hold land for a period of 10 or 12 years in the non-tralukdari areas and for 7 years in Talukdari areas, after which they had to enter into a fresh agreement in respect of payment of rent. The statutory tenants paid higher rents whereas the privileged tenants who were mostly high caste tenants paid less rents, for the same kind of land; on account of their privilege of being in the upper caste bracket. Ordinary tenants had no rights and they could be ejected at the pleasure of the land lords. The pattern of land relations, were more or less operative in the other parts of the country also. Though the terminology used for different categories of tenants varied from region to region. But the sufferings were always same.

The landed aristocracy too had social structure, their own way of life and consciousness of belonging to a class. They owned land and jealous of their property rights and the privileges which they had enjoyed for generations. By virtue of their ownership of land they enjoyed a superior position in society. The zamindars employed musclemen for brow beating recalcitrant villagers and tenants. They would not permit sinking of wells or planting of trees and orchards or construction of houses on certain types of land lest occupancy rights would arise out of them. On top of all this, the taluqdar in the U.P. did noting to promote economic development or to initiate long term projects. It was recorded by the settlement officers that only one taluqdar attempted to dig tube wells before 1920.

It may be noted that British Government was also responsible for this state of affairs. The British Government knew that NAZRANA is being exacted mercilessly no law was passed to stop this practice. On the contrary,
The quantum of the exaction taken by the Zamindars was considered as a sure indication of the tenant’s ability to pay.

Though, the peasant proprietors in U.P did not seem to have been a very flourishing and affluent class. Yet in the Allahabad region petty land holders, prosperous tenants, shop owners and middle-sized commercial entrepreneurs worked for the congress in the 1920s and 1930s. There had been very close links between the Kisan organizations and the Indian National Congress. The Indian National Congress leadership however was dominated by the professional class and intelligentsia, but the leadership at grass root level and from the urban centers, who looked to the central leadership for guidance, hailed from the class of what may lossely be called middle gentry and tenantry.

The district of Unao, Rai bareli, Sitapur Hardoi, Kheri, Fyzabad, Gonda, Behraich, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh and Barabanki formed a short of feudal belt in the United Provinces. Here the number of peasant proprietors was large but their economic position was not satisfactory most of them were marginal farmers.07

Rai Bareli and Pratapgarh, which were prominent centers of Kisan agitation as well as of the nationalist movement, demonstrated considerable social and economic equality among the tenantry in general. The Khudkasht ryots and the occupancy tenants were quite numerous in Rai Barelie. But, there was a predominance of petty tenants. In the district 3/5 of the land was owned by the taluqdars. As for the tenants, 35 out of 100 families held 2½ acres of land or less each; another 35 out of 100 families held between 2½
and 5 acres; and 15 out of 100 families held more than 74% acres of land. Nearly 70% of the tenants therefore possessed less than 5 acres of land and must, from time to time, have work as labourers in the fields of substantial tenants.

There was considerable equality in respect of distribution of land among the different caste groups, Brahmins, thakurs, kayasths, ahirs, and kurmis and gadarias almost equal percentage of land under their control as tenants. The kurmis and ahirs were medium sized proprietors as well as petty tenants. The same was true of the high caste tenants. Members of there caste groups attended both the kisan sabha meeting as well as those organized by the leaders of the non-cooperation movement.

In Jaunpur, Pratapgarh and Sultangarh districts, the kisan sabha agitation was popular amongst thakurs, who were in a majority in the region as far their tenancy holdings were concerned. Here it should be noted that Kisan Sabha leaders mostly worked under the guidance of leaders of the non-cooperation movement.

Peasants were badly oppressed and congress too, which was a symbol of freedom movement, owing to its class character was not in condition to organize the peasants. And besides big land lords and Zamindars were also a part of congress party. Thus congress party fearing class struggle in future did not give due attention to the demands and difficulties of peasants.

J.L.Nehru had referred in his autobiography that congress party is a national organization which comprises small farmers, middle class zamindars and few big zamindars, and do not want any such step which
could led to class struggle. Congress Party had led the country towards the political freedom and had grasped the faith of the people in every nook and corner. It was not expecting any struggle during 1920-21 AD; whereas peasants were in great difficulty number of landless labours were increasing day by day. In 1911 AD it has emerged upto 19%, 26.5% in 1925 and 38% in 1931 AD.

So, the agrarian question was a dominant theme of the era of nationalist struggle and its ideology. It became very significant in the 1920s and 30s and the problem of land reform and associated contemporary politics received the considerable attention of the era. The nature and content of the peasant problem varied from time to time depending on governed by the social-economic compulsions generated by movements designed for redistribution of political power and social authority.

While evaluating the role of the Indian National Congress in resolving the agrarian question in India, it is necessary to evaluate that specific historical phase through which the congress passed. During 1919-35 two wars and successive movements were launched by Indian National Congress, which were of epic proportions, peaceful and non-violent in character.

These movements were led Mahatma Gandhi; the first being the non-cooperation movement between 1920 and 1922 followed by the civil disobedience movement of 1930-31. And Mahatma Gandhi was able to forge a powerful anti-imperialist united front of Indian People Comprising different caste, when Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from long sojourn in South
Africa he was a man with revolutionary idea but no political vehicle through which he could put it into practice. The idea of course, was Satyagraha, the application of the concept of ahimsa, whose conceptual roots by in the Bhagawat Gita and the Vaishnav sect in which he was reared to political action.

The logical setting for promulgating his doctrine was the Indian National Congress, the only major party structured political organization in India which was under the control of native leaders. However the Indian National Congress, while having came into existence in 1885, had thus for failed to evolve an ideology and organizational structure pervasive enough to generate a truly mass-based political movement of the proportions that would be required to cut across the vast congeries of cultures, nationalities, caste, classes and religious into which India was subdivided.

Once Gandhiji achieved a dominant position in the Indian National Congress, he successfully transformed it into a mass based organization. Especially important in this regard was the ability of Gandhi’s Charisma and Symbolic creativity to draw the country’s peasantry into the political arena creed and religion. Yet it should be noticed that a big part of the participants in the struggle for freedom was drawn from the peasantry. Before the emergence of Gandhiji into the political stage in 1919, with his call for Rowlatt Act Satyagraha, Congress party by the large was an elitist party comprising professional classes, the landed gentry of the liberal variety, and the upper and middle class.
The arena of political activity was also confined to towns and cities; but by 1920-21 with the advent of Gandhiji Congress itself was transformed into a mass organization. The period of 1919 onwards also constitutes a most significant epoch from a different stand point during 1919 to 1935 the basic formulation relating to socio-economic transformation, including the agrarian question, were debated and evolved.

Several leaders were drawn into controversy regarding agrarian question and contributed to the formulation of the congress policy; yet the most distinguished roles in this realm were performed by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru. Gandhiji motivated the congress men and made them conscious of the fact that no social or political change of any significance could be brought about unless the peasant and village were intimately involved in the process of social transformation. His sympathy for the peasant, and the peasant’s world-view was most pronounced, right from the beginning. When he attacked the aristocratic way of life while addressing to BHU students in 1916, he said;

“Whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India; be it in British India or be it in India which is ruled by our great chiefs, I become jealous and say Oh! It is the money that has come from the agriculturist over 75 percent of the population are agriculturists, our salvation commonly come through farmer.”

In 1917, Gandhiji heralded his entry into Indian Politics by using the technique of Satyagraha developed in South Africa. He went to Champaran, an indigo-producing district of Bihar; to enquire into grievances of the ryots
who it was alleged had been subjected to great oppression by the Indigo planters; most of whom were Europeans. Gandhiji accomplished this daunting task by adopting the persona of a political sadhu, an image that effectively resonated with so-called sadharan janta or ordinary folk in the country side whose social consequences was steeped in the morality and mythology of rustic Hinduism.

There he moved from village to village recording the grievances of the ryots and tenants. Thus he came face to face with the Indian peasantry and was shocked to learn of the plight of the Champaran; where ryots were subjected not only to illegal exactions, but were meted out inhuman treatment if they refused to submit to the demands of the planters.

Acts of violence, leading to torture and death were of common occurrence Gandhiji appealed to the viceroy and the Government of Bihar to redress the grievances of the ryots. As a result Champaran Agrarian Enquiry Committee, the Government of Bihar abolished the Tinkatia system; declaring it illegal.

Owing to the spectacular success achieved by Gandhi in Champaran he was hailed as the liberator of the ryots. So it was Gandhi’s and Nehru’s inspiration and guidance that the several facets of the agrarian question were perceived by the Indian Natural Congress during a period of intense political struggle-between 1901-1944.\textsuperscript{11} Congress party leaders had realized that agrarian question could only be resolved when India had the freedom to shape its destiny.
This question was tied up with the National Economic Policy. The essential feature of this policy was to remove the landed classes from the position of dominance; which was considered a hindrance to the prosperity of the peasantry. It was also pointed out that the question of such a seminal importance, which was designed to bring about a social revolution in the country, was bound to be hotly debated, by all the groups in congress party itself.

Jawahar Lal Nehru posed the question in 1921 “who constitute the masses of India” and answered it himself. It is the Kisan in the villages and not a few citizens or vakeels living in the cities, of what avail would Swaraj be if the Kisans” difficulties were not removed. Swaraj really means the removal of the difficulties of the masses of India, specially the Kisans. Their difficulties in the main relate to such question as rent ejectment and possession of land. 12

Nehru was thinking only of the peasant proprietors but was also deeply concerned about the welfare and the future of the dispossessed, the deprived and the oppressed sections of the peasantry. Nehru stressed that for the emancipation of the peasantry from feudal burdens, and grants the tenant security of tenure, so that they were not exploited by the landlords. He wanted the congress also to recognize the gravity of agrarian crisis. The deep concern shown by the congress for the peasantry did not emanate exclusively from the desire to utilize them for the national movement.

Despite of different categories of peasants rich, middle and poor Nehru did not go into the intricate distinction of classes, because these
distinctions were not sharp at any rate, they were not crucial at that juncture and he felt that it was more relevant to treat the peasantry as a whole as a deprived class.\textsuperscript{13} So, Nehru wanted the congress men to prepare the mass peasantry against British imperialism and channelize the mass discontent for a higher purpose.

Although Indian National Congress was a symbol of freedom struggle yet it could not seem to be capable of leading the peasant movement, because it could led to class struggle. Congress party was a national organization which comprises middle class zamindar and few big zamindar and did not want initiate any such work which could led to class struggle in the country side.\textsuperscript{14}

Mahatma Gandhiji, who became the supreme leader of the congress party had a view that zamindars are merely the parts of British imperialistic machine, so there is no need initiate any movement against them at the same time when we are already against British imperialism. On 18 May 1921 Gandhiji urged the Kisans for non-cooperation but advice them to pay their rents to zamindars and told them to maintain their relations with zamindars.\textsuperscript{15}

While asking the peasants to participate in the movement against the British power in India, Gandhiji often observed with telling effect that the British Government was the most powerful zamindar and the entire strength of the peasantry should be directed against it.
Agrarian Relations under British Rule.

Before we take a close look at the social reality obtaining in the Indian countryside during the period of our study, it seems desirable to recapitulate in brief the agrarian relations forged under British rule for a proper understanding of the situation.

Soon after the establishment of British rule in India; Lord Cornwallis architected the land policy who wanted to make Indian society on a British pattern. In Northern India, notably in U.P. the Mahalwari system, was established to which a group of village or village called a Mahal, where more than one unit of individual were entered with the government. So, he created big landlords in Bengal vested in them the right to private property in the soil. The headman was responsible for collection and payment of revenue to the government. The main aim of this type of settlement again was the quantum of revenue demand which was fixed at a very high rate. Since he knew that this wealthy landed gentry would remain loyal to this rule.

The consequences of the permanent settlement, however, proved to be disastrous it led to absentee landlordism and rack-renting of the peasantry. The settlement was irrevocable, and could not be altered and the government was left with few options to remedy the evil, although a series of tenancy laws were passed from time to time to grant some relief to the cultivating peasantry. The permanent system was devised to create a class of loyal collaborators for building the umpire.16
By creating a wealthy land lord gentry Cornwallis laid the social foundations of British rule in India\textsuperscript{17} some time in 1917 the first Kisan Sabha was formed by a small group of nationalist in Allahabad led by Madan Mohan Malviya Malviya drafted the rules of the association and funds for it were made available by the Home Rule League.

The reason for the establishment of a Kisan organization was to refute the charge of the government, that home rulers did not represent the masses of India. Hence, the home rulers in an attempt to reach the peasants, founded associations in villages, tehsils and districts and by 1919 450 branches were opened in U.P., Punjab and Bihar.

Malviya became the president of the U.P. Kisan Sabha and most of the Allahabad leaders were also associated with it. One thousand representative of U.P. participated in Delhi session of Indian National Congress which held in the year 1918. The Secretary of the U.P. Kisan Sabha asked the peasants to help the congress in every possible way.\textsuperscript{18}

It was the out come of Malviya’s initiative that \textbf{Newspapers} like \textbf{Bhavishya} and \textbf{Kisan} were launched to educate the silent masses in the country side.\textsuperscript{19}

After that 1920, 400 peasant delegates from U.P. attended the Amritsar Session of congress; where Malaviya proposed the formation of an \textbf{All India Peasant Congress}.\textsuperscript{17}
In district Jaunpur, Ram Chandra Sharma founded a Kisan sabha in a village named Rurnam 1918 and 330 branches were opened in Oudh which all help the non-cooperation movement.

1918 under the aegis of the congress and the U.P. kisan sabha, a memorial was prepared approving the congress league scheme of political reforms. Signatures on this memorial were obtained from village folk and sent to the secretary of state and the viceroy.

This memorial was adopted by the Kisan Sabha conference of 1920 held at Allahabad. The memorial demanded for the abolition of zamindars privileges, revision of law of ejectment for non-payment of rent. Panchayats to be established in villages to decide civil suits up to Rs. 500 and be empowered to deal with all non-cognizable criminal offences Malaviya’s interest in the agrarian situation was essentially a by product of his involvement in the home rule campaign. Further Kisan Sabha activities were confined to Allahabad district and although its aim was to advance the political interests of the peasantry as a whole, its actual appeal was limited to high caste Brahmin and Rajput tenants and small zamindars. Hence, there was little grass roots activity though Malaviya believed in emulating Gandhi and his methods of political mobilization.20

At some places they attempted to force the release of their arrested leaders and fellow kisans. The police and security forces had to open fire only on a couple of occasions. Kisans under the influence of Malaviya were persuaded to promote “Mutual trust and cordiality” among the land lords and tenants. Nevertheless, by August 1919, relations between there began
deteriorating peasants discontent was increasing. Six million people died of influenza in U.P. in 1918.

Expenditure on war was increasing and the economy of Britian prospered at the expense of Indian economy. Virulent attacks were made on the land lords for their rapacity. All the small kisan bodies were asked to agitate against injustice meted out to them by their oppressors, the taluqdars. News Papers devoted their pages to the grievances of the cultivators. The subject discussed in detail were rent, poverty, hunger, food problems.

The blessings of British rule were counted and question was asked “why had India become a graveyard??”

Throughout 1920, Gandhiji was busy in mobilizing public opinion and preparing for the eventual non-cooperation movement. The Malviya group of the congress was unable to appreciate the aggressiveness of non-cooperation program and creed. Besides opposed to Gandhi’s wishes Malviya had supported the idea of entering the councils and had not surrendered to M.K. Gandhi’s programmed. The right between led the conflict and in 1921 purushottam Das Tandon, J.L. Nehru, Gauri Shankar Mishra and Rangaiyer managed to oust Indra Narayan Dwivedi and Malviya group.

In the beginning of 1921, the movement under the Kisan Sabha according to an official report was captured by the non-cooperating party and there was only one movement in progress and that was non-cooperation movement; however non-cooperators were much more intent in making government impossible than in improving the conditions of the tenantry. At
the beginning the Kisan interest in non-cooperation may have been marginal, but since it promised abolition of practices like NAZRANA and ejectments, they became intensely interested.

In December 1920 and between January and March 1921, widespread disturbances took place in Raibareli, Pratapgarh, Sultanpur and Fyzabad districts, which led to the loss of life and property. Riots took place in Allahabad and Lucknow. Sizable group of Kisans-ranging between 3,000 and 10,000 in number were engaged in disturbances they attacked talukdars crops and property and looted bazaars, particularly the shops owned by notorious merchants and moneylenders.

In Pratapgarh, the agitation began as a protest by tenants against illegal cesses and ended with the protest against arbitrary ejectment. In Sultanpur, it was started with no tax campaign. All the high caste tenants participated in the movement. In Fazabad, the movement took the farm of a rising of agrarian labour, who was led to believe that Swaraj would be followed by a redistribution of land in which they would get a share.

In Raibarelli the rioting was quite serious, and was directed against the evil of ejectment from land. The leadership of the movement was taken up by Baba Ram Chandra, who acted on behalf of the congress and the non-cooperation movement. Other leaders like Deo-Narain and Kedar Nath supported him. These leaders were outsiders and their linkages with the movement were rather recent.

Their popularity was not dependent on caste affiliation; in fact, a lack of it enabled them to mobilize and unite all types of Kisan Sabhas, even
those which may have been caste dominated. Besides, a certain amount of high idealism fired by the zeal to uphold the national cause helped in giving them a stature among their follow men in the villages.

The spirit of nationalism was mingled with the village psyche and charisma of Gandhi made them to gather a large following.

As a result V.N. Nehta a member of Indian Civil Services, was appointed to enquire into the causes of the agrarian riots in Pratapgarh; who reported later about the disabilities from which the tenants suffered and enclored the leadership qualities of Baba Ram Chandra.22

Baba Ram Chandra began with discourses of Ramayana, Bhagawad Gita and Dharma, which were spiced with flings at individuals or at the system of land administration. All this was always followed by political overtones emphasizing the need of the amelioration of the agricultural classes and of involving the villages in the political movement of the time.

Leadership at the village level seemed to be rest on family position most of the leaders come from the high caste tenants. Most of the high caste tenants were treated in privileged tenants who paid lower rates of rents as compared to other castes.23 Owing to the economic pressures of social ceremonies; there high caste tenants were not always ready to assume the leadership. This point is of importance because the higher castes here in parts of Sultapur and Fyzabad did not show interest in the formation of Sabhas.
Ram Chandra was most popular in the Pratapgarh region; because there was a mass of low caste tenants in that area. Kisan Sabhas owed their birth to nationalist politics and that the non-cooperation movement gave an ideological thrust and inspiration to the kisan movement in 1920-21.

These kisan leaders pledged themselves to work for village uplift, they planned for digging of tanks, planting of orchards, preservation of jungle tracts for the grazing of cattle were given prominence.

The Awadh Kisan movement threw up a leadership whose imaging and modus operandi had, draws up precedents for political expression contained in the rich folk mythologies of rustic Hinduism. Its leader presented themselves to the rural masses as “Babas” or what may be termed “Political Sadhus”.

The most famous of there early political “Babas” was a man named Ram Chandra Rao who was a Sadhu of Ayodhya and settled in Pratapgarh. Moving around the awadh region with a copy of Ramayana under his arm, he blended readings from this popular Hindu epic. He was the major force in broadening the political impact of the first formal Kisan Sabha that had been established in 1917 by Jhingury singh and Sahdev Singh at an under proprietary village in Gorakhpur district named Rure.

Baba Ram Chandra, the foremost leader of the Kisan Movement in the villages of southern Oudh, urged the kisans to reserve half of the total land for cotton production, he enhanced on women education. He also emphasized that a union should be established of Zamindars, Kisan and labourers. He appealed the Kisans to support non-cooperation movement.
Baba led a delegation of 500 followers from Gorakhpur to Allahabad in early June of 1920 in an effort to broaden the movement by putting in touch with Mahatma Gandhi and other educated leaders.

An analysis of the leadership of the kisan sabha shows that at its top layer the leadership was elite groups. They were prosperous pleaders like Gauri Shankar Mishra who was the Vice President of the Oudh Kisan Sabha in 1920. Gauri Shankar was the brother of Har Karan Nath Mishra who was a barrister.

During the hey-day of Malviya’s ascendancy these leaders worked in close collaboration with him; but with the emergence of the non-cooperation movement, they came in contact with Gandhi, Moti Lal Nehru and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Among the middle ranking leaders in the peasant movement were pleaders, vakils and other professionals who had an interest in land though they were mostly down-dwellers. They belonged to the middle classes and by virtue of their abilities acquired through education, professional skills and political leadership were able to lead the movement.

Political agitation, in the shape of the non-cooperation movement, was not limited to the well organized campaign for the boycott of the council election (1921) but was also spread among the cultivators. On the other hand the relations of the landlords with their tenants were not of a harmonious nature. There was a persistent demand on the part of the peasantry for a greater security of tenure and its fair rents. The system of taking
NAZARANA, illegal ejectment, concealment of rentals and many other abuses of peasant problem were coming more into prominence.

The problem was more serious in Oudh than in Agra because the practice of taking NAZARANA was more common there. Agrarian agitation under Kisan Sabhas was initially against the abuse of power by the talukdars and ended in a general demand for protection against arbitrary ejectment. So, the kisan movement of U.P. particularly in Awadh was fully organized and complete in nature.

And the congress men who were finding their areas with the masses for action plan were helped by the peasants of Awadh.

In this way, the peasants of Awadh helped the non-cooperation in cities to seek their co-operation as well. Keeping in mind the extraction of revenue in Awadh a commission was established and after getting its report rent act of Awadh 1921 was passed.

Since a big part of Awadh Kisan was comprised of subtenants as referred by J.L.Nehru peasants could not get any benefit of this land act.

**Peasants Movement After 1922**

As it is said earlier that non-cooperation movement and peasant’s movement were two different movements occurred at same time, but influenced each other by its nature and helped each other as well.
Non-cooperation movement was widespread at national level and people under the leadership of Gandhi launched a mass movement. The non-cooperation movement initially catalyzed the peasant movement not because Gandhized congress was in ideological agreement with either its aims or its tactics; which they emphatically were not, but simply because in the peasantry’s eyes Gandhi was congress. What made him popular in the countryside was not his Satyagrah in South Africa on his undisputed leadership of the congress but the association of Champaran with his name, his works amongst the peasants to the *Sadharan Janta* Gandhi himself was the message. He was seen as a saint, a grand-scale holy man whose darshan purported supernatural powers and promise of Swaraj. He was larger than life manifestation of the political sadhus who were driving the kisan movement. His presence in every corner of society infused their struggle against the landlords. Besides local newspaper played a vital role in building the image of the Mahatma and in the countryside rumor added much to his popularity. During 1922 in Gorakhpur district at Chauri Chaura mob burst fire in a police station where 22 policemen were died; which shocked the non violent policy of Mahatma Gandhi. As a result Gandhi had to withdraw this movement. This decision disappointed the revolutionary peasants and independent peasants organizations were formed all over the country.

The peasants of Awadh their organization named (Eka Sangh); which was led by two down caste leaders named Pasi Madari and Shahrev. This organization led to the unity of Uttar Pradesh Kisan Movement. Now the Kisan organization were more efficient and revolutionary in nature than the earlier organization; and served committed as compared to them.
Eka movement of Awadh was demanding fixed rents, the receipt of rents, free water from the ponds, free cattle grazing from the local jungles, and urged the peasants not to leave their lands in case of Bedhakhali. This organization was confined to Awadh, touched all the demands of the peasants but did not clear the genuine demands, was not against the eradication of zamindari system.

Besides this organization was lacking equipments and resources and were not in condition to fight against army and police. As a result police and army could easily oppress the movements. In this way withdraw of non-cooperation movement and oppression of Eka movement led to a silence for 6 years.

Only one incident in Fatehpur district was reported at Khaga tehsil on Begar disputes were held in a village against a Zamindar.26 But there were not organized agitation during these six years. Agrarian unrest and no tax campaign in U.P. 1930

The civil disobedience movement was launched by the congress under the leadership of Gandhiji; which had emotive intensity and the patriotic fervor evoked among all classes and communities of the Indian People. The civil disobedience movement launched under the banner of the congress and led by Mahatma Gandhi was the most militant yet non violent mass movement.27

It created a popular upsurge, unparalleled in its dimensions, in its emotive intensity and the patriotic fervor it evoked among all classes and communities of the Indian people. At first the middle class people of cities
and towns were not in favour of strikes. So congress party found a reserved power among peasants and No Rent Campaign was launched in which many social and economic problems were raised in true sense.

A meeting of congress working committee was held at Prayag where no rent resolution was parsed and districts committees were urged to implement the programme. At the same time J.L.Nehru called a meeting of peasants at Allahabad on 19 October, 1930 and declared no rent campaign idea which was passed with complete consent and confidence. Even the Zamindars were told not to pay to the government.

During the no tax campaign in U.P. the congress took the leadership in its hands. The kisan Sabha leadership came under the influence of congress.

J.L. Nehru’s hold at district level was complete and confidential. The organizational strength of the congress in districts like Agra, Mathura, Allahabad and Raibarelli was effective and impressive. Active volunteers of peasants and tenants were made by congress in 840 panchayats villages started hoisting congress flags. All the Kisan leaders participated with full zeal and J.L. Nehru refers that it was a practical success for them.28

Before we go into the deep study of the no rent campaign of 1930; the critical scrutiny of the main causes of No rent Campaign reflects that the prices of the agricultural products began to show a tendency to fall in January 1930 and continued doing so month by month. The value fell between 50% January and December 193029; and tenants were not in position to pay their rents demanded by taluqdocs and zamindars. On the
other hand in many places the price that the cultivator could get for his produce at harvest time was appreciable less.

The cultivators had been nearby destroyed by the failures of the crops and were suffering from the bad seasons. It was the duty of the united provinces government to take initiative in the matter and to adopt adequate and liberal measures at once. But the provincial government showed complete apathy. The No Tax Campaign was part of the Civil disobedience programme of the congress. Civil disobedience movement not only encompassed the nationalist sympathisers, the masses, congressmen of all levels, shopkeepers, but also revolutionary elements and sane and thinking men, meaning thereby the educated and moderates. The left and the right all supported the movement though parties such as the Muslim league and the communist party remained aloof. Another expected segment was the women society which participated in the movement.

Speaking at Tangan, district Raibareli on 5\textsuperscript{th} February 1930, Jawahar Lal Nehru apprised the people that British Government wants nothing but exploitation of poor men. He said that British Government was run by the peasant’s money, realized as tax revenue from peasants. He stated that Gandhiji had appealed not to pay taxes.\textsuperscript{30} The congress organization at Tehsil levels were negotiating between peasants and landlords. G.B.Pant sent a copy of the resolution of the executive council of the provincial congress regarding agrarian situation in which he stated that oppressive measures were being taken to recover rent and revenue and police and tehsil staff was assisting taluqdars and zamindars.
Congress influence transcended all kinds of barriers—urban rural, class-community and religions. Practically the whole population was behind Gandhiji and congress. As a result collection of revenues in rural areas had entirely ceased.

The executive council of U.P. congress also recommended that land from which tenants had already been ejected should be restored to them; and revenue secretary of united provinces had long discussions with G.B. Pant regarding ejectments in all districts and revenue secretary had to issue a circular to all deputy commissioners enquiring statements of ejectment in their districts.\textsuperscript{31} J.H. Darwein, collector of Agra wrote that there were 2008 ejectment decrees in 1930-31 in comparison with 1119 in 1928-29 and 1941 in 1929-30.

A comparison of the figures of 1930-31 with those of 1929-30 showed that section 81 had been less used in Karauli, Khairagarh and Itreadpur. Naqsuddin Khan, collector Mainpuri, said that there were 902 ejectments in 1930-31 as compared with 229 in 1928-29 and 364 in 1929-30. These figures showed that the number of ejectments cases under section 79 had almost doubled as compared with average of past two years. The Deputy Commissioner, Fatehgarh stated that there were 862 ejectments in 1930-31 as compared with 775 in 1928-29 and 736 in 1929-30. The statement showed that excessive use was made of section 81 of the tenancy act. The police had not been used to assist zamindars in the collection of rents.\textsuperscript{32}

The collector of, Kanpur intimated that there were 2002 ejectments cases in 1930-31, 831 in 1928-29 and 883 in 1929-30. There was a
considerable increase under section 81. They resulted from the fact that under collector’s orders zamindars were encouraged to fight suits against well-to-do farmers tenants who could afford to pay rent but refused to do so from political motives.

In some villages which had been badly affected by congress agitation and refusing to pay any rent, revenue and the police officers took joint action during winter i.e. a few arrest were made and tenants were induced to pay some of the rent at the same time such action was very necessary at that time.33

The collector of Fathepur stated that he had issued orders to the tehsildars that tenants who had paid reasonable portion of the arrears were not be ejected from their holdings. The tehsil of Khajuha was much affected by the no-rent campaign started by the congress. The tehsildar went to the villages and persuaded tenants to pay rents to the zamindars to the extent of 10-12 annas (60 to 75 NP) in Rupee on the threat of immediate ejectment proceedings.

The Deputy Commissioner, Etawah wrote that the tehsil Bidhuna was especially affected by the civil disobedience movement and there were 1036 ejectment decrees out of 2259 in the whole district. The collector, Allahabad stated that many tenants would lose their holdings due to the civil disobedience movement. Many tenants were ejected who refused to pay for political reasons only 18 percent of the Kharif Kist had been collected. There had been a large increase in the number of ejectments, ordered was due to the political propaganda and the congress promise to recalcitrant tenants.
Congress tehsildars were appointed and taluqtdars and zamindars were attacked by the tenants who frightened Mahatma Gandhi and Mahatma was pressed to throw his weight against his wild men and withdrew claim of the congress to be an intermediary between the government and the people.\(^{34}\)

Gandhi met Hailey the governor in Nainital and issued a manifesto to the Kisan and stated that non-payment of taxes was a part of civil disobedience for the attainment of Purna Swaraj. Gandhiji appealed to taluqtdars and zamindars also that they should become trustees and trusted friends of their tenants. The should limit the privy purse and forego questionable perquisites they took from the tenants in the shape of forced gifts on marriage and other occasions or NAZRANA.\(^{35}\) So, when Jawahar Lal Nehru came back to the U.P., he found that taluqtdars were terrorizing the peasants with the help of police. Congress volunteers were beaten and were banned to visit certain places. The authorities adopted a policy of indifference to the congress representation and did nothing to stop the excesses of the land lords.

As a result provincial congress committee held a special session on 14 June, 1931; and appointed a number of committees to enquire into the agrarian situation in entire province in all districts.\(^{36}\) The gentlemen appointed for enquirey conducted careful personal enquiries in ten districts and in other arearas allotted to them. Those reports were summitted by them, were considered by the council of the provincial congress committee on 18\(^{th}\) July, 1931. The committee passed the following resolution. “**Strong efforts are being made to undermine the congress organization, atrocities of the**
various kinds are being committed on the tenants and there are authentic cases of rape.”

Again the U.P. congress committee by a resolution of 28th July 1931 appointed a committee of Govind Ballabh Pant, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Venktesh Narain Tiwari with Mohan Lal Gautam as secretary; who submitted its report on 2nd September, 1931. They wrote about the agricultural calamities and chronic poverty of the peasants, mentioned harrowing accounts which reached the committee from several districts. The Committee asserted:

The country is today faced with a difficult problem, mere remissions in rent and revenue will not solve it. We will have to devise and introduce a system, which will ensure to the tenant his subsistence. Unless this is done the problem remains unsolved. Remission or similar device might ease the situation for a year or two or even for a decade but the problem will remain there. The more the solution is delayed the more in danger of the situation getting out of control. If those on whose power it is today do not give the necessary relief to the distressed cultivators, hunger and starvation will force them to seek relief for themselves. And then who can what happen. Millions of Kisans and almost 35 millions they are will not meekly submit to starvation. They are bound to see relief.

The committee also mentioned that owing to the destruction of indigenous arts and crafts and dumping of cheap article from abroad, agriculturists are continuously losing their subsidiary vocations and there is an incessant flux of people industries to agriculture. Most of the people
were some how managing to exist and very few people were possessed of any resources on which they should draw in time of stress. The agriculturist classes are dreadfully poor, deeply in debt and illiterate. Their standard of life is inconceivably wretched. The government and the landed proprietors insisted on extracting “blood out of stones and the real cause which gave rise to the tenants penury was ignored and the myth was circulated that political forces of a dangerous character were leading to an outburst which could be checked only by an iron hand”. The government was abusing the law, and oppression in the grab of law was hard to resist. The section 107 Cr. P.C. was being misused with a notice confronting him with alternative of either going to jail for a year or severing connection with congress. Several persons were involved in a case under this section. When the case came up for hearing the accused were discharged or by that time they had paid all their rents. In Mathura actions were also taken under non-political sections in a number of cases though they were purely political reasons. Eighteen persons were affected in village Bijhari on the allegation that they had obstructed the Quark Amin in the execution of a process of court. The magistrate bound them down under section 144 Cr.P.C. In Raibareli, the well known order of the Deputy Commissioner was served on about a scare of congress workers under section 144 Cr.P.C. In Gazipur, a notice under section 144 was served on all congress workers on 11th July for one month and then further extended by another month, which J.L. Nehru condemned in All India Congress Committee meeting. As a congress person Gandhi Ji took it very seriously when in Baraipur there was a regular siege of the village which lasted for three days and houses were entered into forcibly property removed from them women beaten and ill treated. Gandhi included these incidents in the charge sheet and submitted it to the government of
The Deputy Commissioner harassed the prominent congressmen like Raghvendra Pratap Singh in different ways. Since Mathura district had a good network of congress committees in the villages. On 20th May, 1931 eighteen congress members were arrested, assaulted women and police took hold for the ornaments and cash they could find. Congress persons kept on their gatherings which were always dispersed by the police and pulled down the congress flags took congress registers from Bhudaria. On 20th June, 1931 congress workers were beaten by Quanoongo in Dedra. On 27th June, 1931, the Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police, Barabanki, visited Dadra; tenants were called together, had their Gandhi caps removed and were warned to use Gandhi cap and khaddar. People were forced not to connect with congress and got then sign a declaration to the effect. Even the high rent payers were not left by the British Government. A number of congress volunteers belonging to Panwara village were beaten and Thakur Bhagwan Singh who once entertained a party of volunteers was taken into custody.

The Allahabad district congress committee decided to approach the U.P. provincial congress committee and congress president Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel. A cable was sent to Gandhi on 16th October, 1931 regarding critical agrarian situation, forcible collection of rent, in adequate remissions, threat that if full payment not made within one month remission might be cancelled. Allahabad district congress committee resolved under circumstances ask permission start Satyagraha if necessity arises by advising with holding payment rent. When J.L. Nehru tried to view the deplorable conditions in Gonda district. All out efforts were made by the U.P. government to impede Jawaharlal Nehru. In the villages, there were serious
allegations of harassment; ditches were dug across the road and in Bahraich to prevent attendance at Jawaharlal Nehru’s meetings, the kisans were directed to stay in their villages to get slips of remissions.\textsuperscript{48}

Jawaharlal Nehru was at last forced to contemplate a no-rent campaign. He wrote to the Chief Secretary about the greater sufferings the Kisans had passed through. He stated that continuous oppression is leaning to the economic death of the Kisans. Nehru informed the Chief Secretary that Kisans are going to withhold the payment of rents since the U.P. government had reduced the remissions up to 17\% although the prices had fallen by 55\% and the government had assumed without checking or publishing the figures.\textsuperscript{49} Allahabad district congress committee and the Kisan conference recommended the cessation of payment of rents.\textsuperscript{50}

With the collection of rent impending from 15\textsuperscript{th} November, 1931, the U.P. congress committee with the authorization of congress president, Patel, directed the Kisans of Allahabad district to withhold payment of rent and revenue while negotiations were in progress.\textsuperscript{51} This paved way to the other district committees in Raibareli, Etawah, Kanpur and Unnao in addition to Allahabad to commence their no-rent campaigns.\textsuperscript{52}

Other districts of the province were also lining up and it was manifest that once the movement commenced it would encompass the whole province. So, it was quite clear that this no rent campaign was motivated and justified by economic causes. And the government authorities were of the opinion that no rent and revenue could be collected if Gandhi decided to support this agitation.\textsuperscript{53}
As a result all the leaders were arrested. Notices were served on Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders prohibiting them from speaking or writing in support of the no-rent campaign. Nehru was asked not to leave Allahabad without official permission and the united provinces provincial conference scheduled to be held on 26th December, 1931, was banned. And the congress party was managing to avoid the battle and postponed the battle. But the government was planning to crush the activities of congressmen. J.L. Nehru was arrested on 26th December, 1931, for violating the order restricting him to Allahabad. It was again a national event when congress leaders were reviving the civil disobedience movement. Which again gave strength to the National Movement of India? The great depression had already affected the entire economy. Civil disobedience movement brought a new doctrine of no rent campaign which spread like wild fire.

**POLICY OF CONGRESS**

During the year 1931 the activities of the congress were chiefly directed towards the no rent campaign. These activities resulted in serious clashes between the landlord and peasantry and suffering of the peasantry in some cases was very great.

Whereas, the remissions were thought inadequate to mitigate the suffering of the people, dissatisfaction was expressed from various quarters. Tension was growing; events were moving faster. The chances of the compromises between the congress and the government became remote because each was suspicious of the other. Thus again the no-rent campaign
which had come to an end with the conclusion of Irwin Gandhi Pact was restarted; when J.L. Nehru was arrested Gandhi was still in England, attending round table conference. After his return from there, he found the situation completely changed and out of his control. Gandhi Ji was also arrested and the period of suffering began afresh. Let we should also examine also the correlation between rents, revenue and prices money is valued for its purchasing power. Thus changes in the value of money i.e. price level, produce vast social consequences because changes in the value of the money do not affect all sections of society in the same.  

We need to have study sectional price levels of agricultural produce and their influence on rents and revenue. An examination of the figures of rents, revenue and prices (1901-37) shows that there is no direct co-relation between them. During the depression prices fell heavily and the index number of wholesale agricultural prices (base period being 1901-5) stood at 112, 119, 114, 103 and 122 in 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, and 1935 respectively. Rising prices lead to heavier taxation on the non-agricultural sections of the community. Falling prices inflict injuries on the cultivating classes. The fall in the prices of agricultural produce in the province started in April, 1930. It was slow in the beginning and it was not until December of 1930 that the fall became remarkable.

The continued low prices of agricultural products attracted the attention of the government and the congress and consequently the government in the summer of 1931 appointed a rent and revenue committee to recommend measures to alleviate the distress among the peasantry.
The unprecedented fall in the price of agricultural products synchronized with a period of intense political dissatisfaction which was prevailing in the country after the appointment of the Indian statutory commission (1930). The scale of remissions in revenue and rentals granted by the government were regarded as inadequate by the congress. Mahatma Gandhi interviewed Lord Hailey at Nainital in May, 1931 and a temporary settlement between the government and the congress was arrived at. Meanwhile events moved faster and ultimately the congress took resort to the no-rent campaign.

The agrarian situation during the depression, in United Provinces, reached a critical stage. The unprecedented fall in the price of agricultural produce, distress among the agricultural classes became very acute. The congress in its report on agrarian distress in the united provinces (1931) complained against the government for its policy of inadequate remissions and suspensions. On the other hand government was blaming the congress for exploiting the uneducated cultivators to over throw law and order in the country. The remissions granted by the government under the scheme of 1931 were regarded as inadequate. In 1931-32 approximately Rs. 411.5 lakhs of rents and 113.06 lakhs of revenue was remitted.\textsuperscript{56} During the period when the depression was at its worst the prices of agricultural produce roughly speaking, were reduced, on an average, by more than 100 percent. The percentage of the total rental remissions to the total rental demand was 30 percent in all the years, 1931-37. This shows that the relief given to the cultivators in some cases were inadequate.
And the high percentage of revenue collections and the increase in the number of coercive process and warrants to realize the demand however show to some extent the hardship caused during this period. The congress enquiry committee on agrarian distress (1931) in the United Provinces reported numerous cases of persecution, intimidation and coercion of tenants by the Zamindars and Taluqdars in a large number of districts.
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