CHAPTER -- 1

A BRIEF HISTORICAL OUTLINE

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- Oriya Movement, Language Agitation
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Chapter- 1
A Brief Historical Outline

The history of Orissa dates back to antiquity, its most famous old names being Kalinga, Utkal, Odra and when its boundary extended far beyond the present one. Orissa extended from the river Ganges in the north to the river Godavari in the south. It almost included the present province of Orissa, the district of Bankura, Medinapur, Howrah and Hoogly of West Bengal, Bilasapur and eastern part of Raipur district of Madhya Pradesh and the Godavari and Vishakapatnam districts of Andhra.¹

By the time of Mahabharata, Kalinga, Utkal and Odra had entered into the Aryan polity as Powerful Kingdoms. Frequent reference is made to Kalinga in the Mahabharata and there are some references to Odra and Utkal. By the time of Mahavira and Buddha, the Kalinga-Utkal region on the east coast of India had definitely acquired recognition and fame.²

However, the recorded history of Orissa starts with the rule of Nanda emperor of Magadha. The Hati Gumpha inscription of emperor Kharavela at Udayagiri refers to a Nanda King twice. Kalinga prior to the Ashokan war of 261 B.C. had been an independent country and the attempts to subjugate it by Ashoka had far-reaching consequences. It is believed that 100,000 Kalingans died in the war and 150,000 more were deported. The suffering of the Kalingan people had a deep impact on Ashoka and transformed him from Chandashoka to Dharmashoka. Then after a while, Kharavela, one of the greatest rulers of ancient India, revived the glory of Kalinga in the first century B.C. by placing it on the political map of India through successful military campaigns. The successive dynasties such as Bhaumas, Somavansis, Gangas and Suryavansis ruled-over the land in subsequent periods and they were able to preserve its independence till 1568.³

Mukundadeva, the last independent Hindu King of Orissa was killed while fighting the Afghans and the subsequent periods witnessed strife, bloodshed, intrigue, anarchy, conspiracy, civil war, and internal dissensions. The Afghans ruled for roughly two decades after which the Mughals under Akbar took over the region and ruled for little over a century. The Marathas forced the Bengal Nawab Aliwardi Khan to cede Orissa to them in 1751 and their (Marathas) reign lasted until the British conquered Orissa in 1803.  

Orissa had come within the orbit of the East India company's political interest after the battle of Buxar, but actual possession was gained only in the year 1803, after the second Maratha War. The British defeated the Marathas and brought the main lands of Orissa under their rule. Subsequently, the feudatory states were forced to submit one by one. However, the difference between the 'mughalbandi' and 'Gadjat' areas created by the Marathas continued.

The plain and fertile lands in the coastal region comprising of cuttack, puri and Balasore districts were kept under the direct management of the British while the wild tracts of lands covered by hills and forests were asked to pay tribute only. This remained the situation till the end of the 19th century and Orissa remained a divided house being ruled by twenty-six feudatory Chiefs and three provincial Governments i.e Central province, the Madras and Bengal Presidencies. Even till 1936, When Orissa became a separate province, what Orissa actually meant was the portions of different provinces inhabited by Oriya speaking people.

5. 'Mughalbandi' comprised of the plain and open part of the country from Subarnarekha to the border Khurda and was the royal domain paying a regular assessment and the Gadjats included twenty six states covering the wild tracts under a Magistrate who supervised the tributary Mahals.
Under the seemingly peaceful rule of the Company there were protests against the British Occupation. In the pre-1857 Phase, these protests were primarily anti-British in nature and were supported by the local Chiefs. The Khurda uprising (1817-1824) under Buxi Jagabandhu, the Ghumsar uprising (1835-1837) under Dhananjaya Bhanja and the Sambalpur uprising (1829-1864) under Surendra Sai were notable among these. A noticeable feature among all these uprisings was the large-scale participation of the common people in it, both directly and indirectly.8

However, in the post-1857 phase of political protest, the local chiefs seem to have backed out on account of the new British policy of leaving princely states alone. While three Gadjat states were confiscated before the 1857 revolt,9 no more states were annexed despite the acknowledged incompetence of some of the rulers and complete mal-administration in the Gadjats.

The pre-1857 movements of resistance couldn’t have been anti-feudal because they were led by the local Chiefs and princes who acted as the 'natural leaders' of the uprisings. But in the post-1857 phase, when these leaders backed out, these protest movements could become anti-British as well as anti-feudal. Here, forms of defiance were attacks on the local chiefs and other royal symbols which were now increasingly identified with the colonial state.

In the Keonjhar uprising (1867-68 and 1891-93) for instance, the tribals such as the Bhuyans, Juangs and Kols refused to recognise the authority of the ruler. The royal palace was stormed and occupied by the rebels for some days. The local chief had to leave his own palace more than once.10 The loyalists were attacked and their houses were burnt down by the meli-sardars. The Raja's constables and other officials were held captives.11


9. Ibid, p.190

10. Ibid, p.171.

In the Domapada uprising (1876) the peasants organised by the ex-Diwan Nidhi Patanayak set up a meli-Durbar or an parallel court and ordered their fellow men to pay rent to meli court and not to the chief. The local chief was also socially ex-communicated.

All these uprisings were ruthlessly suppressed by the combined forces of the local chiefs and the British army. These uprisings were spontaneous reactions of the people against their oppressor which lacked a clear understanding of the contradiction with imperialism and the nature of imperialist exploitation. The real force behind the immediate Indian oppressor was never exposed to their concerted attack.

Having passed through political domination and balkanised for nearly three centuries under outsiders-Afghans, Mughals, Marathas and the British-Orissa towards the later part of the 19th century presented the picture of a mass of administrative areas "grown up almost haphazard as the result of conquests, supercession of the former rulers and administrative convenience".

Such a condition could hardly promote unity among the people for any type of collective endeavour. Moral and material development of the people had suffered a serious setback and the interest of the local population had been grossly overlooked by the outsiders who had subjugated them.

In the Orissa division of the Bengal Presidency, the Bengalis dominated over the Oriyas and were regarded as "an intermediary ruling race". Their longer experience with the British rule and their propinquity to the seat of Government at Calcutta helped them to emerge in positions of authority in Orissa. The lawyers and teachers were Bengalis and the facilities of teaching oriya in Orissa were almost non-existent.

Similarly, the people of Sambalpur and Ganjam were left at the mercy of the more powerful Hindi and Telugu-speaking people respectively. The highhanded attitude of these intermediary rulers can be gauged from the fact that an order was passed by the chief commissioner of central Provinces on 25 January 1895, abolishing Oriya as the court and official language of Sambalpur.15

The problem of administration and sufferings of the Oriya speaking people drew the attention of the British authority at the time of the catastrophic famine in June 1866, in which, one third of the population died of starvation and the diseases that supervened.16

The famine of 1866 forms a major landmark in the history of Modern Orissa as it brought about a change in the social and intellectual life of Orissa. When the Oriyas were languishing culturally and morally, the dreadful famine struck the land catching both the Government and the people unawares and taking a heavy toll on human lives. Apart from those perished, millions were left destitutes under its impact. The famine is commonly referred to as "Na Anka", as it visited during the ninth regnal year of the King of Puri. Some of the causes commonly attributed for this ruthless outbreak were the failure of crops due to insufficient rainfall during 1865, shortage of food grains in the stores, lack of foresight on the part of the information-machinery of the Government, geographical isolation of Orissa and apathy of the landlords.17 Till this time Orissa had no recorded experiences of any seasonal calamity of this nature. Orissa had, in fact, been a surplus region in the field of paddy production and was a regular exporter of rice.18 The communication system was, however, highly

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15. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
irregular. The land route to Calcutta was intersected by large unbridged rivers and sea contact with Orissa was virtually non-existent. Orissa, thus, used to be completely cut off from the rest of the country during the rainy season. The situation was made more complex by the defacto rulers who were the people from Bengal in most cases.

One positive aspect of this calamity was that it proved a great blessing for the people who were so long taken for granted and who were forced to establish contacts with the rulers only through the Bengali intermediaries. It was quite but natural that these overlords got the larger share of the blame for the mismanagement and their domination was bound to slacken over the local populace.

The Oriya movement from its genesis (in the immediate aftermath of the Famine of 1866) till its culmination (with the formation of Orissa as a separate province in 1936) can be broadly classified into three phases. The First phase can be said to have begun in the immediate aftermath of the Famine and culminated with the formation of the Utkal Union Conference in 1903. The Famine compelled the Government to take interest in the affairs of a land which had been long neglected. However, the initial phase is remarkable for the language agitation, in which the contents of the Oriya identity were given a shape and a race was aroused to thwart the evil designs of cultural subjugation by dominant neighbours. The movement for the preservation of the Oriya language or the Phase of the Bhasa Suraksha Andolan as it was called, not only helped the Oriyas to rally behind a cause, but it also opened new avenues for channeling their grievances through proper forums. Simultaneously, It also exposed the manipulative designs of the more powerful neighbours.


20. The Famine Commission indicated the administration for their inept handling of the situation in Orissa, They Kept feeding the authorities in Orissa with wrong informations regarding the stock of paddy in the province till the situation became alarming and irretrievable. Ibid, p.18.
During the first phase of the movement, it was realised that the main cause for the general backwardness of the Oriyas under the British rule was territorial dismemberment of the Oriya-speaking areas. And, therefore, amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts under a unified administration was the most prominent issue during the second phase of the Oriya Movement which can be said to have begun with the formation of the Utkal Union Conference in 1903 and reached its climax roughly in 1920, when the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee was formed. The movement for amalgamation was bound to invite fierce opposition from the Bengalis, Biharis, Andhras and the Central Provinces, because, the Oriyas lay scattered over many provinces and their amalgamation obviously implied territorial dismemberment of the concerned provinces.

Orissa became the first linguistic province of the British Indian Empire. Having been neglected for a long time by the British Government and the Indian National Congress, for almost four decades, a section of the Oriya leadership did not want to become involved in the greater Indian anti-colonial movement or the mainstream nationalist movement, as they thought that statehood should come first and then the nation. However, many realised that there was nothing contradictory in both the goals. The demand for a separate province emerged only after attempts at consolidating all Oriya-speaking tracts under one administration was frustrated. The third phase of the Oriya Movement can be said to have extended from 1920 to 1936, the year in which Orissa became a separate Province. An unfortunate aspect of the Movement was that separation was achieved with the bitter awareness that some Oriya-Speaking tracts would not be included in the new province.

Orissa as a separate Province was formed on 1st April 1936 (along with Sindh), but the movement for forging a separate identity and the union of the Oriya-speaking tracts can be said to have started immediately after the Famine of 1866. The Famine brought about a perceptible change in the socio-economic and cultural life of Orissa. The economic insecurity which was evident in agriculture forced the upper strata of the rural population to seek alternative means.

21. Orissa was to be separated from Bihar and formed by adding to it an appreciable bit from Madras and a small bit from the central provinces. S. C. Patra, op. cit., p.207.
of employment for which an essential pre-requisite was modern education. They began to give priority to modern education and Government services over agriculture. As result, the post-famine phase marked a significant increase in the number of students and educational institutions. 22

Growth of education, development of communication, increase in the volume of trade and commerce gradually diminished the economic backwardness of the people. Establishment of printing press, publication of periodicals journals and establishment of different cultural institutions helped general consciousness to grow. All these factors contributed towards, the creation of a powerful conscious educated class in Orissa.23

The Famine also produced a considerable stir among the emerging intelligentsia who began to take a fresh look at the nature of the British rule. The unwise Famine policy of the Government was largely held responsible for the deplorable situation. The lower level officials were also not spared. The intelligentsia complained that these officials who happened to be mostly Bengalis gave wrong information and largely contributed to the famine.24

The Oriya-Bengali controversy which had been going on intermittently since 1840's became particularly virulent now. In Southern Orissa, the controversy was against Telugu and in the west against Hindi.25

22. K. M. Patra, op.cit., pp.4-5.
The Oriya identity was in the making as well as stake. Some Bengali officials posted in Orissa made deliberate attempts to replace Oriya with Bengali on the ground that it was but a variant of Bengali. One Kanti Chandra Bhattacharya even went to the extent of publishing a book which said that Oriya was a mere dialect of Bengali.\(^{26}\)

The fear of Cultural submersion by the neighboring regions led by many educated Oriyas to resist the domination of the outsiders. In the course of the agitation attempts were not only made by the Bengalis to prove that the Oriya language did not have a separate identity but books and articles were printed which distorted the history of the land.\(^{27}\)

First, it was Uma Charana Haidar a Deputy Inspector of schools, who had suggested to replace Oriya with Bengali. And then it was Rajendralal Mitra and Kanti Chandra Bhattacharya who through their speeches and writings encouraged the domiciled Bengalis and their associates to forcefully market the idea.\(^{28}\)

\(^{26}\) Kanti Chandra Bhattacharya wrote a book to entitled, "Udiya Swatantra Bhasa Nae" and he dedicated the book to Rajendralal Mitra who in his Cuttack Debating Club speech of 9 December 1868 had advocated abolition of Oriya language as a pre-condition for development and progress of the state. (K.C. Dash, Language movement in colonial Orissa, in *Orissa Review*, Vol. Lvi, No. 9, April, 2002, P.12. Rajendralal Mitra's remark about abolition of Oriya language was apparently based on the wrong information that was fed to him by the Bengalis in Orissa. Mitra admitted this before Madhusudhan Das, an eminent Oriya leader later on.

\(^{27}\) Utkal Hiteisini, a periodical of the domiciled Bengalis even attempted to prove that Gangas came to Orissa from Bengal and that Sarala Das wrote his Oriya "Mahabharata" under the influence of Chaitanya. *Utkal Dipika*, 16.4.1870. It is an irony that the Bengali scholars did not know Sarala Mahabharata was written in late 15th century while Sri Chaitanya came to Orissa in 1510 A.D.

\(^{28}\) Encouraged by such scholars, a group of Bengali gentlemen launched a signature campaign of illiterate Oriyas in favour of the Bengali language. *Utkal Dipika*, 26.3.1870. In another meeting held at Jajpur an Oriya gentleman was even bribed to speak for the substitution of Oriya with Bengali language. *Ibid*, 14.5.1870.
The attempt by the Bengalis to enforce their language in place of Oriya had very little impact on the Government. British officials were rather sympathetic towards the cause of the Oriyas. John Beams, through his scholarly arguments countered the views of Rajendralal Mitra and Kanti Chandra Bhattacharya.29

T.E Ravenshaw, the commissioner, was even more supportive of maintaining the separate character of the Oriya language.30

The Oriya intelligentsia on the other hand was shocked and gallantly fought back to save their language from extinction. Gourishankar Roy, a domiciled Bengali, was one of the first to raise weighty arguments in defence of Oriya language. He portrayed the plight of the Oriyas under three Governments—those of Bengal, Madras, and C.P. where they were prevented from fulfilling their aspirations.31 He also exposed the designs of vested interests to abolish the Oriya language. It had an impact on the educated people in the main land who became aware of the sufferings of their brethren in the outlying areas in three provinces where they were being forced to disown their mother tongue and learn Bengali, Telugu or Hindi. This is significant because persons like Gourishankar were guided not by their ancestral language but by the genuineness of the cause and

29. Beams condemned Kanti Chandra's book as "profoundly destitute of philological arguments." He said, "at a time when Oriya was already a fixed and settled language, Bengali did not exit." John Beams, Comparative Grammar of our Languages, Vol.1, p.120, cited in Pt. B. Mohapatra, op. cit., p.39.

30. Bahika, 16.3.1875.

31. Utkal Dipika, 13.03.1869.
became pioneering leaders of Oriya nationalism.32

While trying to demand for recognition of a separate identity, the Oriyas definitely emphasised on cultural markers. However, it probably would be a sweeping generalisation to say that other ethnic groups were isolated. There is enough evidence to suggest that many Bengalis played significant roles in championing the Oriya cause. Gouri Shankar Roy, the distinguished editor of the leading Oriya weekly, Utkal Dipika, Raja Baikuntha Nath De of Balasore, Radhanath Roy, Ramashankar Roy and Rammohan Roy were some of the domiciled Bengalis who ushered an intellectual renaissance and created profound consciousness in public affairs. Pyari Mohan Acharya was another eminent domiciled Bengali, who in his "History of Orissa" described the glorious legacy of the Oriyas by providing the Oriya children with great inspiration and pride.33

The difficulties faced by the Oriya people of Ganjam and Vizagapattam agency tracts were equally insurmountable. Although Oriya was offered as a subject of study in 1873, it was not taught due to indifference of Telugu teachers.34 Quick attention was paid to the application written in Telugu, than those written in Oriya.35

Bishnu Mohapatra, however, has taken a somewhat different approach to this emerging Oriya consciousness and identity during this formative phase. He speaks of two principles- principles of exclusion and principles of inclusion -by which the Oriya middle class attempted to create a political community by emphasising the cultural markers. By principle of exclusion, he means that while trying to define their identity, the oriya elites isolated the neighboring ethnic groups (Bengalis, Biharis and Andhrites) and by the principle of inclusion, they attempted to bring other Oriyas (Oriyas lying scattered in the various outlying areas in C.P., Bengal and Madras presidencies) into the political fold.


Utkal Dipika, 3.6, 1876.

Utkal Dipika, 18.04.1874.
William Mohanty, an Oriya nationalist, started an Oriya weekly paper in 1876 to highlight the Oriya problem in the area. The Oriya boys studying in the District South of Ganjam were in a distinct disadvantage when they were in minority in the educational institutions. In 1870's there was also a move to write Oriya in the Telugu script in Ganjam. Harihara Mardaraj Deo, the Raja of Khallikote took the leadership of the Oriya movement in the area and he was helped by Nilamani Vidyaratna. Prajabandhui, a weekly paper appeared at Rambha under Nilamani Vidyaratna's editorship and it duly focused the language issue in it.

The plight of the Oriyas and their language was more or less the same in Sambalpur. However, the Oriya movement in Sambalpur inspired a powerful language agitation which ultimately lent vigour and dynamism to the Oriya identity at large. The Central Province was a Hindi speaking region and when the Oriya speaking Sambalpur was added to it for long 30 years (1865-1896) the Government was confronted with several administrative problems. The Hindi speaking officers found it difficult to work in Sambalpur, a non-Hindi area and similarly, the Oriya employees of Sambalpur also disliked their transfer to the Hindi-speaking districts. The problem was intensified due to the prevalence of a social custom known as Mahaprasada, which fostered a sense of brotherhood among the officials. This affected the efficiency in administration and the chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces on 15th January 1895 that Oriya shall be replaced by Hindi as the official language of Sambalpur district. The members of the Utkal Sabha, presented a memorandum

37. Ibid, p.76.
protesting this policy which they thought would disrupt Oriya identity.41

The Oriya-speaking people of Sambalpur patiently watched the impact of Hindi for long five years (1896-1901). They observed that Government language policy put a great strain on the mental faculty of the Oriya children and the number of Hindi schools and Hindi teachers multiplied at the cost of the Oriya schools and Oriya teachers. Consequently the Hindi speaking people had better scope of employment in Sambalpur and the local discontent swelled. It got further intensified when the Government abolished 82 Oriya primary schools in the district during 1898-99 and instruction in Hindi was made compulsory for the students of class III and IV.42

Apart from the difficulties from an educational point of view, those that arose out of its adoption as the court language were too numerous. The difficulties in connection with the settlement operations were also visible.

The Oriya speaking people of Sambalpur submitted a memorandum to the viceroy which was signed by all the leading persons of Sambalpur. The Sambalpur Hiteishini in its 13th and 27th February issues of 1901 put forth the language problem of Oriyas in a forceful manner. They demanded to replace Hindi by Oriya as the court, revenue and official language of Sambalpur.43 The Oriyas who submitted the memorial were quite at a loss to understand that while the same Central Provinces Government had made a special concession in favour of Sironcha, a tehsil of Chand district in central provinces to retain Telugu as its court language, it had decreed otherwise in case of Sambalpur. The Oriya petitioners also pointed out the difficulties faced by the officials while collecting the census returns which were initially prepared in Hindi and later abandoned in favour of Oriya, which was more convenient.44

42. P. K. Mishra, op. cit., p.31.
44. Ibid, p.17.
The administrative difficulties couldn’t permit retaining Oriya in Sambalpur while the court language in the Central Provinces was Hindi. The Oriya leaders thus suggested that Sambalpur with its Gadjat Mahals might be made over to Bengal as apart of Orissa Division, with which this portion of the province was geographically and socially connected. The distance from Sambalpur to cuttack in any case was not more than that from Sambalpur to Raipur.45

The memorial presented by the people of Sambalpur to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India marks a highpoint in the resurgence of the Oriyas. The Oriya identity was in the making and was also at stake.

Fortunately for the Oriyas, Lord Curzon, whose attention had been drawn by Madan Mohan Mishra regarding the closure of the 82 Oriya primary schools, sympathetically asked the Central Provinces Government to have a fresh look and reconsider the decision regarding the Oriya language.46 A delegation comprising of Madam Mohan Mishra, Baladeb Supakar, Mahanta Bihari Das and Braja Mohan Patnaik met the Chief Commissioner at Nagpur and presented their grievances.47 Madhusudan Das sent a lengthy telegram to the private secretary to the Viceroy on 2.09.1901 drawing attention of Lord Curzon to the impractical order of the Chief Commissioner.48 However Andrew Fraser's visit to Sambalpur in 1901 and his strong recommendations for replacement of Hindi by Oriya as the official language sealed the issue in favour of the Oriyas.49 The Government of India finally accepted the Chiefs commissioner's recommendations and orders were passed accordingly rescinding the resolution of 15th January 1895.

45. Ibid.
47. Ibid, pp.35-36.
49. Ibid.
The agitation to protect their language forms the most remarkable episode in the articulation of the Oriya identity. The Oriyas fought tooth and nail to preserve their unique identity in a multi-cultural set-up. The success story of the language agitation in Sambalpur also convinced the Oriya people of their helplessness caused by their divided existence. And this finally inspired a movement for the amalgamation of all the Oriya-speaking tracts under one administration. Any account of the Oriya movement is almost inconceivable without a reference to the role played by Utkal Gourav Madhusudhan Das and Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das, the two great sons of Orissa. Their association with the Oriya movement points to two distinct streams which at different stages captured the imagination of the Oriya people and eventually succeeded in creating a separate Province in 1936. The modus operandi of these two leaders might have been different but one thing that was common to both was that both held the Oriya cause very close to their hearts and tirelessly strove for it.

The attempts to put forth the cause of the Oriyas before the colonial authorities at the turn of the century had been sporadic and at best semi-organised. Co-ordination among the leaders of the different parts and among various associations had been lacking and the language agitation clearly drove home the point that territorial dismemberment was the Chief cause of the backwardness of the Oriyas. Integration or the amalgamation of all the Oriya-speaking tracts, it was felt was indispensable, if the Oriya nation with its language and culture was to develop and sustain itself.

The question of amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking areas was advocated not only for the preservation of the Oriya language, but also for economy in administration. As the Oriya tracts were under three Governments, Utkal Dipika wrote "Oriya language remained undeveloped as oriya-speaking areas were lying in three different but contiguous provinces like a cucumber garden under three owners...... subjugated to different set of rules....." it was supposed that keeping

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50. *Utkal Dipika*, 13.03.1869.
the entire Oriya-speaking population would minimize the expenditure. Many of the Oriya leaders had keenly observed the Sambalpur agitation and were strengthened in their belief that only a well organised joint endeavour with a greater thrust could carry the aspirations of the Oriya people to fulfillment. Among them was Madhusudan Das, the architect of the Oriya nationalist movement in the twentieth century.

The desire to have an Oriya organization was also motivated by a feeling of estrangement with Bengal that was deepening everyday. In 1902, When Oriya was introduced as a separate language in Calcutta University the Bengalis raised strong protests, which disappointed the Oriyas. They became further disillusioned when S.N. Banarjee, the great nationalist leader of Bengal, requested Madhu Babu to include Orissa under the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee which had been formed by him. This proposal was not acceptable to Madhu Babu as he had started aspiring for a separate organisation for Orissa.

Early in 1903 a small band of enthusiasts gathered at Rambha in Ganjam district under the Raja of Khallikote and resolved to establish the Ganjam Jatiya Samiti (Ganjam National Conference). Its first meeting was held at Berhampore in April 1903 and was presided over by Shyamsundar Rajaguru of ParalaKhimendi. Nilamani Vidyaratna was the Secretary of the conference and Harihara Mardaraja Deb(Raja of Khallikota) and Madhuri sahoo (a businessman of Berhampore) bore the expenditure of the Conference. Six delegates from Cuttack, four from Puri, three from Balasore and two from Sambalpur attended the conference.

Delegates from Cuttack included Madhusudan Das, Biswanath Kar, Nanda Kisore Bal, Krishna Prasad Choudhry and Gopal Chandra Praharaj. This meeting of the Ganjam Jatiya Samiti can be regarded as the first national conference of the Oriya people. It gave birth to the famous "Utkal Samilani" or the

51. Utkal Putra, 18.1873.
52. N.K. Das, Utkalgaurab Madhusudhan, Utkal University, 1951,P.50,
53. Ibid.
55. Utkal Dipika, 18.11.1903.
Utkal Union Conference which played an active role for the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking areas from hence-onwards.

On the 30th and 31st December 1903, representatives of Oriya-speaking tracts of Madras, the Central Provinces, and Bengal met in a conference at Cuttack. It was the historic gathering of the Utkal Samilani which met amidst unprecedented enthusiasm and with its birth the Oriya Movement received a new impetus. Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo, the Maharaja of Mayrubhanj presided over the first Conference and Rajendra Narayan Bhanj Deo the Raja of Kanika was the Chairman of the reception committee. Madhusudan Das was the Secretary and in a sense the moving spirit behind the Organisation.  

The Organisation from 1903 till the formation of the separate Orissa province was the sole representative Organisation of the Oriyas. It served as the forum for the discussion and deliberation on the Oriya problem and provided the platform from where the grievances of the Oriyas were ventilated. Attempts were made for the linguistic, cultural, political, economic and emotional integration of the Oriya people.

Since the Oriyas felt that "injustice and thwarting of healthy patriotism." was perpetrated by the go-between class because of the unnatural union of Orissa with various provinces, and not by the British Government, the nationalistic feeling that inspired the Utkal Union Conference was directed, at least to begin with, against these intermediaries. So, it is not at all surprising that the Utkal Union Conference formulated a policy of appeasement towards the British Government. Madhusudan Das was of the firm opinion that Orissa would not profit much by being critical of the British policies and therefore most of the sessions of the Utkal Union conference paid glowing tributes to the British crown and the Viceroy.  

56. The policy of aligning with the British strengthened the Utkal Union. K.M. Patra and Bandita Devi, op.cit., P.191  
57. N.Mohanty, op.cit., P.53
The policy of aligning with the British strengthened the Utkal Union Conference's ties with the feudatory chiefs. Madhusudan Das had the shrewdness to notice and exploit the Chiefs' abhorrence for the Congress. The patronage of the Chiefs was accepted as usually one among them was chosen as President of the Conference for a long time. It was said that the Utkal Union Conference was the brain-child of Madhusudan Das and was nurtured in the lap of the Kanika Chief. It was only in 1913 that for the first time a commoner, Madhusudan Das became the President of the Utkal Union Conference.

The Utkal Union Conference was an elite association of the ruling Chiefs, officials and non-officials having moderate political views and of common men eager to have an identity. On the other hand, the Union's relations with Indian National Congress was embittered from its inception due to a resolution adopted by the Madras session of the Congress under the Presidency of Lal Mohan Ghose in 1903. The resolution said: "This Congress views with deep concern the present policy of the Government of India in breaking up territorial divisions which have been of long standing and are closely united by ethnological, legislative, social and administrative relations and the Congress deprecates the separation from Bengal of Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong divisions and portions of Chhota Nagpur division and also the separation of the district of Ganjam and the agency tracts of Ganjam and Vizagpattanam from the Madras Presidency".

A review of the activities of the Utkal Union conference during its existence from 1903 to 1920 shows that the annual sessions were usually presided over by the ruling chiefs and zamindars of Orissa. It concerned itself with problems like (i) Union of the scattered Oriya-speaking people, (ii) development of industrial potentialities, (iii) spread of education (iv) improvement of agriculture, (v) extention of railways and roads, (vi) more representation of Oriya members in Legislative Council and Imperial Council. Political Unification was

60. Two Bachelors of Arts, *op.cit.*, P.37.
accorded first priority in the agenda of the conference. The members also evinced interest to send Oriya children abroad for technical training and advocated mechanisation of agriculture. Madhusudhn Das, the moving spirit behind the Utkal Samilani advocated industrialisation, growth of local crafts and spread of technical training as essential measures to remove poverty. Revival of salt manufacturing industry and exploitation of natural resources were some of the proposals which he wanted the Government to undertake. At the time of annual sessions, he organised industrial and agricultural exhibition to expose people to new ideas and techniques.

During the period to 1903 to 1920, though the Movement met with no concrete achievement in securing the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking territories, it was a great success so far as it constantly watched and safeguarded against any further sacrifice of the Oriya interests. It repeatedly reminded the authorities of the existing grievances of the Oriya people and their language in the absence of which the Oriya cause would have been lost in the oblivion. It secured the cultural and sentimental unity among the Oriya people.

The decline of the Utkal Union Conference as amass-force was evident in a few years after its birth. Role of feudatory Chiefs left a wide credibility gap in the mind of the common man and squabbles and misunderstanding among the chief organisers also reduced the importance of Utkal Union Conference considerably.

63. *Ibid*
65. A prominent example of this was that Gokulananda Choudhury, a lawyer of Cuttack who broke away and formed a splinter group called "Oriya People's Association", *Utkal Dipika*, 24.9.1932.
However while assessing the performance of the Utkal Union Conference, due credit should be given to Madhusudan Das who put his heart and soul into the organisation and managed to generate mass consciousness in a relatively less educated environment. Unfortunately, the creation of the Bihar and Orissa province in 1912 without giving due consideration to aspirations of the Oriya speaking people of Ganjam and the agency tracts cast a severe blow against Madhusudan's leadership. A new generation of young political activities like Gopabandhu Das emerged in Orissa challenging Madhusudan's "mendicant policy". At the Chakradharapur session in 1920, they snatched away the leadership from Madhusudan and plunged Utkal samilani in the national mainstream of the Congress Movement. Madhusudan withdraw himself from active involvement in political work of the Conference in favour of the new generation who enthusiastically followed Mahatma Gandhi in his historic struggle for freedom from the foreign rule.

The year 1920 is a turning point in the history of political developments in Orissa. Younger members of the Utkal samilani increasingly felt that the union or the merging of the Oriya Movement with that of the larger national movement of the Congress might serve Oriya interest best and Utkal (Orissa) could not probably move separately from other parts of India in solving her problems. In the 14th session of the Utkal Union Conference at Cuttack on 19th April 1919, Pt. Gopabandhu Das in his Presidential address voiced the necessity of sub-ordinating the local nationalism to the Indian nationalism. He said that "People of Orissa were human beings first, Indians next, and Oriya at last". In the next session

69. *Ibid*.
71. *Ibid*. 

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held at Puri it was pointed out that the national freedom of the Oriyas was impossible unless they merged themselves into all Indian nationalism.\textsuperscript{72}

Although Madhusudan Das's political strategy seems quite unclear, he appeared convinced that priority to the socio-economic problems of the Oriyas would bring fulfillment to their political ambition. Therefore even though he attended the sessions of the Congress prior to the setting up of the Samilani, he did not consider it worthwhile to spare time for it later on. On the other hand, Gopabandhu was sympathetic to the cause of Orissa, but to him the problem of the country—that of freeing her from the British bondage—was of prime importance. And he believed that the Oriya cause would be better served by the identification with the national cause.\textsuperscript{73} Gopabandhu argued that there was no contradiction between the ideals of the Samilani and those of the Congress and that joining the all-India politics would facilitate the unification of Oriya speaking areas.\textsuperscript{74}

The Indian political scenario changed considerably with the emergence of Gandhi on the scene and the Congress gradually transformed from a party of the 'babus' to that of the masses. The acceptance of the Congress creed also had a significant impact on the whole outlook of political agitation in Orissa. The emergence of Gopabandhu eclipsed Madhusudan's leadership to a considerable extent and the flagging image that the Samilani had received a severe blow when the supporters of the Congress carried through a resolution in favour of Gandhi's call for non-cooperation.\textsuperscript{75}

Acceptance of the Congress creed by the Oriya leaders did not mean that the Non-Coperation Movement instantly took off in Orissa. In fact, it started with sporadic incidents of protests in various towns, such as spontaneous

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Utkal Dipika}, 20.12.1919.
\textsuperscript{73} N. Mohanty, \textit{op.cit.}, P.99.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{The Samaj}, 06.11.1920.in \textit{Gopabandhu Rachanabali}, (hereafter GR)\textit{Vol.3}, Janma Satabarshiki Samiti, Cuttack 1977,pp.130-131.
\textsuperscript{75} N. Mohanty, \textit{op.cit.} p.102.
demonstrations by school and college students. In January 1921, just after the Nagpur Congress, demonstrations were organised by students of Ravenshaw College at Cuttack and by the Zilla school in Sambalpur where attention was drawn to the Congress ideas. In Ravenshaw College, sixty students out of which thirty were members of National Congress participated in a strike. By the middle of February 1921, four national schools had been established at Satyabadi, Cuttack, Sambalpur and Chakaradharpur and attempts were made by the leaders to set up Congress organisations and Swaraj Ashrams at various places. The house of the Satyabadi students at Cuttack was converted into a Swaraj Ashram by Gopabandhu, and shortly afterwards in March 1921, the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee was formed with Gopabandhu Das elected as president, Akram Rasool as Vice president, Bhagirathi Mohapatra as Secretary and Brajabanhdhu Das as joint Secretary.

Various individuals were chosen to carry out party work in specific areas. Nilakantha Das remained in charge of Sambalpur district, Harekrusna Mahatab took up the responsibility for Balasore, Godabarish Mishra for Singhbhum and Niranjan Patanaik for Ganjam. Jagabandhu Singh and Krupasindhu Mishra looked after the work in Puria district and the responsibility for Cuttack district was left with Jadumani Mangaraj, Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Dr. Atal Bihari Acharya and Gobinda Mishra.

77. H.K. Mahatab, Dasabarsara Orissa, Cuttack students store, Cuttack 1935, P.21.
80. Ibid.
A factor which contributed to the buoyancy of the Congress activities was the visit of Gandhi to Orissa in March 1921 when meetings were held in Cuttack, Puri, Bhadrak, Berahmpur and other places and were attended by thousands of people.\textsuperscript{81} Gandhi was deeply moved by the scenes in the drought and flood affected areas and wherever he went, he assured the public that if his programme would be adhered to then freedom could be achieved in a year's time.\textsuperscript{82}

This created tremendous excitement all over the place and the congress organisation received the necessary boost. The Ahmedabad Session of the Indian National Congress in December 1921 thus attracted 127 delegates and enthusiasts from Orissa.\textsuperscript{83} A local newspaper by way of information wrote that by date 30.06.1921, Orissa had about 40,000 Congress workers and as much as Rs. 22,000 had been raised for the Tilak Swaraj Fund.\textsuperscript{84} The effort of the Orissa Congress in furthering the cause of non-cooperation were very much appreciated by others outside Orissa and was reported in other newspaper.\textsuperscript{85}

The most important result of the political campaign in Orissa was the growth of political consciousness among the peasants or as the government put it, "the lower classes", It was the first organised political agitation against the colonial administration and the limits (weaknesses?) of the Gandhian-led mass agitation were visible in the first count. There were instances of hat-looting during this period. In Khurda, attempts were made to break forest laws. In some places police and chowkidars, the tangible symbols of oppression and authority for the ordinary people were attacked. In the uprising in Kanika, The police officials who were seen as the protectors of the landlord, were also attacked by the

\textsuperscript{81} Pabak Kanungo, \textit{Odisha O Gandhi}, Gyanamandal Foundation, Cuttack 1999, p.65.
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid}, p.95. Also G.C.Mishra (ed.), \textit{op.cit}, p.225.
\textsuperscript{84} \textit{Aasha}, 18.07.1921.
\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Ibid}, 27.03.1922.
Congress attitude towards such developments was distinctly ambivalent there was no attempt to build a peasant movement during this period. In fact, the congress members were instructed not to organise 'no-tax campaigns'. Although, there is evidence to show that some of the district and village level workers in the Congress were in favour of launching a no-tax campaign probably the leaders of the Provincial Congress Committee believed that Orissa was not ripe for such political actions.87

It is, however, a fact that Congress leaders were involved in campaign in Kanika. The Congress leaders, of course, did not approve of a no-tax campaign. Instead they wanted the movement to be restrained and a comprise worked out. On advice of the police, the Balasore District Congress Committee did not interfere in this region (Panchamukha).88 In 1923, The Utkal Provincial Congress committee (UPCC) appointed a committee of three members Gobinda Mishra, Lingraj Mishra and H. K Mahatab to enquire into the uprising of the people and the police atrocities in Kanika.89 The enquiry, however, could not start because of indifference of some members of the committee.90 As per Gobinda Mishra's version Mahatab subsequently changed his mind and thought that the enquiry would not be in the interests of the peasants of Kanika. Thus, from the very beginning the congress in its political and ideological practice was caught in a dilemma. While it intended to mobilise vast numbers of peasants and ordinary people for its organisational growth, at the same time, it also had to control them and their activities within its framework.

86. Telegram from Viceroy to the Secretary of State,1.5.1922,L/P & J/6/2483/1922, cited in Bishnu.Mahapatra, op.cit., P.150.
90. Ibid.
An important factor which affected the political work of the Congress in the state was the colonial administration. In spite of its avowed policy of non-interference, the colonial state attempted to check and obstruct the movement. In the rural areas, the police terrorised the common people to prevent them from joining or indeed even attending Congress meetings.\textsuperscript{91} There are reports regarding attempts by officials to terrorise people of Khurda and Banki from attending Congress meetings.

While evaluating the Non-Cooperation Movement in Orissa one comes across many limitations of the Congress in Orissa. As stated earlier, the Non-Cooperation Movement was the first anti-colonial political agitation which started with the primary objective of mobilising the middle classes and bringing them into the fold of national politics. Its other objectives such as renouncing titles, boycotting educational institutions and Government jobs were hardly realised. At best, it can be said to have been a moderate success. A backward region like Orissa is, of course, not the right area to evaluate the success and failure of such objectives. In 1920, the lone title-holder in Orissa was Madhusudan Das and he was opposed to the Congress. Not more than ten Oriyas left their Government jobs or law practices to join the Congress.\textsuperscript{92} Out of 442 national colleges and schools established during 1921-22 in Bihar and Orissa Province,\textsuperscript{93} only ten were in Orissa.\textsuperscript{94} The number of Congress supporters in Orissa who went to jail during this period, probably was not more than twenty.\textsuperscript{95} By end of 1922, the imprisonment of the Congress leaders meant that the Congress activities had virtually ceased. The euphoria created by Gandhi’s call of "Swaraj in a year" gave way to disillusionment and frustration. In 1923, there was a dramatic slump in the

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{91} The Samaj, 7\textsuperscript{th} and 14\textsuperscript{th} April 1921, \textit{GR, Vol. VI, op.cit.}, PP.90-91,92-94.
\bibitem{92} Bishnu Mohapatra, \textit{op.cit.}, P.153.
\bibitem{95} \textit{Ibid.}
\end{thebibliography}
Congress membership all over India and in Orissa the number fell below one hundred.96

While looking at the Non-Cooperation Movement in Orissa, the question of amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts should be taken into account. The first Congress-led political agitation in the Mughalbandi areas hardly created ripples in the feudatory states which had a large chunk of Oriya speaking population. Although outwardly, the identification of the Oriya nationalism with that of Indian nationalism seemed quite smooth, tension was brewing below the surface, nevertheless. The articulation of regional concerns with that of the Congress politics was not smooth. For Gopabandhu Das and other younger leaders, Oriya cause could not be any more served by "Politics of isolation". But for many old members of the Utkal Samilani, the entry of Oriyas into the Congress meant the loss of their autonomy and a diversion from their original aim of creating a separate Oriya province.97

As stated earlier, at the Chakradharpur session of the Utkal Union Conference, the younger leaders under Gopabandhu managed to pass the Non-Cooperation resolution but after that they did not use the samilani as a platform to co-ordinate their activities. On the other hand, the Provincial Congress Committee was formed and the differing attitudes between the Congress and the Samilani or the non-Congress members definitely had its impact on the Congress activities in the state. The old members of the Utkal Samilani adopting the Congress creed blamed the Congress for diverting the movement from the original aim of creating a separate Oriya province. The samilani became so disorganised that, during the Non-Cooperation days, no annual session of the Utkal Samilani was held.98 While Gopabandhu Das and his followers adopted a soft stance towards the Samilani leaders like Mahatab, Gopabandhu Choudhury, and their followers were bitter critics of it.99 The differing attitude among leaders led to tension in the Congress

98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
party and a large number of middle class people were torn between Congress activities and working for the unification of the Oriya-speaking areas.

An uneasy interaction between regional concerns and the impetus of all India politics characterised the political and social conjuncture in which various shades of politics hinged in Orissa. Such a political equation was also responsible for a lack of cohesiveness among the Oriya leaders. The non-congress supporters of the Samilani followed a policy of pursuing their demand through the Government channels during the Non-Cooperation days in order to keep the issue alive in the media. Biswanath Kar took this opportunity to pass a resolution concerning the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council.\(^{100}\)

Attempts to revive the Samilani were, however, made by the end of the Non-Cooperation Movement and in February 1923, a meeting for this purpose was held under the leadership of Shashi Bhusana Rath, a member of the Madras Legislative Council.\(^{101}\) In this meeting held at Berhampur it was categorically declared that the 'Samilani' was neither a part of the National Congress nor did it accept its political creed. In another meeting held two months later in the same town, the old political agenda was revived.\(^{102}\)

It would, of course, be incorrect to say that all members of the Utkal Samilani were anti-Congress. Some of the members of the Samilani had criticized the Congress during the Samilani's meeting in April at Berhampur. But Madhusudan Das and Gopal Chandra Praharaj, who were opposed to the Congress, became its members later. The problems of the Samilani were that once the regional concerns and aspirations for which it stood, started being reflected in the Congress, it gradually lost its relevance. Nevertheless, it would be highly improper to regard the samilani as a static entity.

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A very significant aspect of the Congress organisation and the pattern of political agitation during the Non-Cooperation Movement was that, the Utkal Union Provincial Congress Committee was loosely-knit body without any financial or administrative control over its branch units. And, moreover, the political actions of the Congress activists to a large extent came to be determined by the All India Congress Committee as the UPCC was highly dependant on the grants from AICC for its political agitation and campaigning. For example, UPCC contributed only Rs.6000 to the Tilak Swaraj Fund but by the end of 1921 had received Rs. 60,000 from the same fund. This excessive dependance of the UPCC on the AICC for funds and on Gandhiji for decisions did not augur well for the effectiveness of the Congress in the State. The fact that the movement collapsed when Gandhi abruptly called it off shows its basic weakness.

Organisationally, the Congress all over India was in disarray in 1924 and in Orissa the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee was virtually non-existent. The activities of the District Congress Committees were also on the wane. However, there were attempts to bring the people from different parts together.

Soon after their release from jail, (Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mohapatra,) the first Utkal Provincial Conference was held at cuttack in June 1924. The Conference declared its full support for Gandhi's strategy of Non-Cooperation and urged the Congress members to work for his "Constructive Programme". For the first time a Committee comprising of four leading members of the Congress was formed to look into the question of the amalgamation of the Oriya-speaking tracts and to take effective steps to promote solidarity among the Oriya people. In a resolution passed in the Conference and ratified by the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee (UPCC), the AICC was requested to appoint Gandhi as the sole arbitrator for the settlement of the "Oriya question".

104. Utkal Dipika, 12.7.19245.
105. Letter from Nanda Kishore Das to the Secretary, AICC, AICC Papers, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, dated 03.08.1924.
106. Ibid.
A year later the second session of the Orissa provincial Conference was held in Bolagada (Puri). 107 Apart from stressing the need to revitalise the Congress in Orissa, the leaders of the Congress stressed the importance of unifying the Oriya-speaking tracts. Gopabandhu Das, the President of the Reception Committee, spoke about the need for an organisation to look after the cultural and social interests of the Oriyas living in the various provinces. 108

Between 1924 and 1929 the activities in Orissa can be said to have belonged to two strands. Those who were sympathetic to the Swaraj Party, participated in the elections and joined the representative institutions and those who followed the Gandhian path took up his idea of constructive activities such as Khadi, campaign against liquor and opium. During 1924, Phillip and Duff Committee was set up to enquire into the attitudes of the Oriya population living in the Madras Presidency towards the question of amalgamation. Various organisations including the Congress mobilised a large number of Oriyas in this connection. Meetings were held in towns like Cuttack to press the Government for the unification of the Oriya-speaking areas and the youth organisations were formed during this period in Orissa. 109 The announcement of the all-white Simon Commission in 1927, however had a tremendous impact on Indian politics. Most of the established political organisations including the Congress decided to boycott the Commission. And demonstrations greeted the members of the commission as they toured the country. In the meantime, the Nehru Report had been tabled in Calcutta Session of the Congress in 1928. The Oriya delegates who numbered around three hundred at this session of the Congress 110 were visibly disappointed and made their displeasure known. In spite of the boycott of the Simon Commission, a large number of petitions advocating the unification of the

110. Utkal Dipika, 05.01.1929.
Oriya-speaking areas into a separate province were received by the Commission\textsuperscript{111} and a delegation of the Oriyas (non-Congress members) also met the Commission.\textsuperscript{112}

Gandhi decided to launch the salt \textit{satyagraha} in March 1930 and with 'Dandi March' began another phase of hectic activities all over India. On 12 March, 1930, a circular was sent to the Provincial Congress Committee s(PCCs) to commence Civil Disobedience not only against salt tax but also to protest against other grievances such as rent, land revenue and the \textit{Chaukidari} tax.\textsuperscript{113} On 6th April, 1930 with the beginning of the "national week", the UPCC embarked upon the historic salt \textit{satyagraha} in Orissa.\textsuperscript{114}

The movement, however, can be said to have begun with the celebration of 26 January 1930 as the Indian Independence day.\textsuperscript{115} The Congress leaders began intense propaganda. Women leaders like Sarala Devi, Kishorimani Devi, and Malati Devi accompanied by Niranjan Pattanayak toured South Orissa and raised funds.\textsuperscript{116} Under Rama Devi's leadership, another group of women organised Civil Disobedience at Balasore.\textsuperscript{117} In Cuttack and Puri, the agitation was organised by Gopabandhu Choudhury and Acharya Harihara.\textsuperscript{118} The students warmly responded to the call of the agitation. The lawyers at Cuttack, under the leadership of

\textsuperscript{111} S.C.Patra, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.77-78.
\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Utkal Dipika}, 22.12.1928.
\textsuperscript{113} Circular to PCCs, Allahabad, 12.03.1930, S. Gopal (ed), \textit{Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol.IV}, New Delhi, 1973.
\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Samaj}, 29.01.1930.
\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Aasha}, 7.04.1930.
\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Utkal Dipika}, 26.04.1930.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Aasha}, 14.04.1930.
Janakinath Bose, boycotted British clothes. Bose even relinquished his Rai Bahadur title.

The salt Satyagraha was quite uniformly spread over the whole of coastal Orissa. Within the first ten days, five batches of volunteers went to different places for the purpose of breaking the salt law and subsequently many of the leaders were arrested by the police. Inchudi, a village in the Balasore district, witnessed the most massive concentration of Congress volunteers for breaking salt law. In the Kujang and Pandua estates of Cutack district, and Kakatpur of Puri district, salt was illegally manufactured by the batches of volunteers. Balasore was the nerve-center of the campaign and as a Government report suggests, it was most effective in this area because a considerable section of the population was distinctly sympathetic to the Congress cause because of their dislike of the Government's statutory prohibition. Volunteers in Ganjam district adopted an alternative strategy of raiding the Government salt factories.

Apart from the manufacture of salt, the Congress Volunteers organised mass picketing in various areas like Cuttack, Puri, Sambalpur and Ganjam. In certain areas of Khurda and Koraput, attempts were made to break the forest laws. Police, Government officials and schools were boycotted with great vigour.

The British Government, however, took quick action and put almost all the important leaders behind the bars by the middle of 1930, which considerably weakened the agitation for sometime. Towards late 1930, the movement again

119. *Utkal Dipika*, 10.05.1930.
123. FRBO, first half of April, 1930, *Ibid*. 
gathered momentum under younger leaders and continued till 1931.  

The Civil Disobedience was called off and was followed by the Gandhi-Irwin pact on 4th March 1931. The release of Gandhi generated a great deal of enthusiasm in Orissa. As a confidential report of the time from Balasore suggests, in spite of Gandhi's talk of non-violence, the Congress leaders of Balasore were "not in a conciliatory mood". The report also described the way the police were attacked by the 'angry mob' and arrested persons were forcibly removed from police custody.

However, the official ban on Congress in January 1932 certainly reduced the intensity of such political activities. Sweeping ordinances such as 'unlawful Association, unlawful instigation' and the prevention of Molestation and boycotting ordinance, created a difficult political environment in the country. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to assume that there was no official repression before 1932 or to assume that such repressive tactics completely h­ated political activities in Orissa. Picketing and other forms of civil disobedience continued on a low key at a few of pockets. The movement however, collapsed towards the middle of 1933 before being officially called off in May 1934. Compared to the Non-Cooperation Movement, the Civil Disobedience Movement was more popular in terms of appeal and participation. There was an increase in the number of the people jailed during this Movement. By March 1932, more than 1200 satyagrahis from Orissa had been jailed on political grounds.

124. N. Mohanty, op.cit., p.112.

125. B.C.S. Confidential file No.2, 1931, in WHO's WHO compilation Committee Records, Orissa State Archives, Bhubaneswar, ACC, No.37, Under the title: "Effect of Mr. Gandhi's release on political situations".

126. Ibid.


128. Ibid.
The increasing participation of women in political movements, was another new development during the Civil Disobedience Movement. Yet another feature of the Civil Disobedience Movement was the impact it had on the feudatory or the princely states. In states like Nilgiri, Dhenkanal, Talcher, Bamra and Keonjhar there were visible signs of growing tension between the rulers and their subjects.

However, the most significant development during this period was the formation of peasant organisations in the state. Although the congress had been taking up stray cases of the peasantry in the state, there was no organised peasant movement during this period in Orissa. The Congress Socialist Party, which was to champion the cause of the peasants, was formed roughly around this period. The members who started the league were Gouranga Chandra Das, Sudhir Chandra Ghosh, Nrupen Sen, Manmohan Choudhury, S.N. Dwibedi. Rabi Ghosh, Prananath Pattanayak, Mohan Das, Bhagabati Panigrahi, Dibakar Pattanayak, Gatikrusna Swain, and Loknath Ray joined later.

Another equally important event during this period was Gandhi's visit to Orissa in May 1934 and his subsequent *Yatra* (Foot Match) to bring about social awakening for the cause of the Harijans. Despite resistance of the Sanatanists, Gandhi's *Yatra* gave a new momentum to programmes like Village reconstruction, harijan welfare and Khadi. Gandhi's *Yatra* marked a new beginning (though small) in the sphere of social regeneration. Most of the Civil resisters who turned to constructive work devoted themselves to the new programme of Harijan upliftment as a part of the broad socio-economic uplift of the people of Orissa.

129. The Utkal Samyavadi Karmi Sangha was established in February 1933 with its mouthpiece ‘Saarathi’. P.C. Nayak, Anirban, Best Sellers Publications, Bhubaneswar, 2001, pp. 5-57.


However, in spite of the mainstream Congress-led nationalist movement gaining ground in Orissa, regional issues and aspirations could not be forgotten by either the Congress or the Samilani leaders. In the Round Table Conference of 1931, the demand for a separate province was raised by Gajapati Krushna Chandra Narayan Deb, the Raja of Paralakhemundi. 132

On 22nd November 1934, the Joint Select Committee under the Chairmanship of Marques of Linlithgow, made their announcement regarding the separation of Orissa. The Government of India Act of 1935 announced that from the 1st April 1936, the new province would come into existence. 133 Accordingly on 1st April 1936, the Orissa province came into being comprising of an area of 32,695 sq. miles with a population of 8,043,681, and with six districts. 134

The group which was in favour of the amalgamation of all the Oriya-speaking areas felt that Oriya nationalism had succumbed to a compromise which was humiliating as well as tragic. The separatists were, however, happy not because some areas were left out, but they realised that probably nothing more could have been achieved under those circumstances.

In the first election after the 1935 Act, Congress captured power in Orissa. In the Orissa State Legislative Assembly, the Congress won a majority of 36 seats out of the total 60 (56 elected and 4 nominated) 135 The Congress, however, refused to form ministry in Orissa when there was a conflict with the Government over the discretionary power to be used by the Provincial Governors. 136 By July 1937, a compromise was reached between the Congress and the Government and a Congress ministry was formed in the state with Biswanath Das as the Chief Minister.

133. N.Mohanty, op.cit., P118.
134. Ibid, P.184.
136. Ibid, P.44.
The responsibility before this new ministry was enormous. A united Orissa now represented areas which had been hitherto exposed to varied systems of education, public works, revenue and so on. To work out a unified and successful administrative pattern from this and in the midst of great expectation was an uphill task. On the other hand, the elected leaders who were mostly from the middle class found that acceptance of office and its allied benefits opened new avenues for the consolidation of their power. Hence, conflict and bickering within the Congress ranks in the state became a constant phenomena in the ministerial phase.

The Ministry remained in power for about two and a half years. The achievements accomplished in such a short span of time were certainly worthy of praise. Their victory in the constitutional issues enhanced the prestige of the ministry in the eyes of the public. The agrarian initiatives in way of tenancy reforms and the Harijan upliftment were definitely steps towards the amelioration of suffering of the poor. A new beginning was made in preparing the ground for evolving an effective system of education. Paucity of funds and shortage of time, however, were the main obstacles for the Ministry not living up to the expectations of the people. Amalgamation of the outlying Oriya-tracts was a festering sore which kept hurting the people.

Meanwhile, the Second World War broke out and as per the decision of the Indian National Congress the Ministries in the Congress-ruled provinces were asked to resign. The Congress Ministry in Orissa, accordingly tendered its resignation on the 4th November 1939. 137

137. History of Freedom Movement Unit Papers (Here after HFMU Papers), R-I, File No-30/4,P.64.

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