CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AND PEASANT PARTICIPATION IN ORISSA: 1928-34

In the annals of Indian freedom movement against the mighty British Raj, few events are as dramatic, inspiring and significant as the historic 'Dandi March' led by Gandhiji during the early months of 1930. The march was the spark that ignited the flames of the freedom struggle and caused the idea of mass civil disobedience to spread like wildfire across the nation. This second great mass movement linked with salt Satyagraha, which stirred Indians to the core against the British colonial rule, of course, petered out by 1934. Both the mass movements could not achieve the promised 'Swaraj' for India immediately; nevertheless, the Indians were aroused to a new sense of self-confidence and self-esteem to resist the ruthless repression of the alien rulers, inspired by the messianic role of Gandhi.1

Following the suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement, till the revival of another Satyagraha in 1930, in which the increased salt tax became the rallying cry, Gandhi's major energies, time and concerns were directed towards the socio-economic upliftment of the villagers and different constructive programmes. Between 1922-30 the people of Orissa showed their active interest in the working of the Gandhian constructive programme and simultaneously they continued agitation for the creation of a separate Orissa province. Gandhiji's three more visits before his 'Harijan' campaign in Orissa, i.e., in August 1925, December 1927 and in December 1929, kept alive the fervour of political resistance and generated robust zeal in the people for his constructive programme. Gandhiji sincerely felt sad for the distressing condition of Orissa. He saw Orissa as a land of chronic poverty, famine, and disease

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and stated, “No where have I seen in the eyes of the people so much blankness, so much despair, so much lifelessness as in Orissa.”

During this period there was an increase in agricultural indebtedness in rural Orissa due to natural calamities and to world economic depression - the burden generally falling on the poor peasantry. The Bihar and Orissa Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee of 1929-30 found that in the coastal Orissa the average debt obligation of a household was at Rs 73. The average size of ryoti holdings in Orissa was very small - less than 4.5 acres. The moneylenders were the most flourishing class at that time and it exploited the peasantry of rural Orissa.

As early as in August 1925 in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, Jagabandhu Singh had moved a resolution that the land rent on certain lands in Orissa should not enhanced. However, McPherson on behalf of the Government disapproved the resolution and said, “Oriya ryots had been sympathetically treated by the government and the assessments imposed were very moderate. There was no part of the provinces on which the government had spend more for improving agriculture than Orissa.” Ultimately the resolution was turn down.

In Orissa, particularly in the coastal belt, there was a series of floods from 1926 to 1928. This led to the steady rise in the price of rice and other essential commodities. The condition of the peasants and the cattle of the affected areas were miserable. The whole area was under water, cattle were starving to death for want of fodder, and people were unable to come out of their huts to procure food - grains and all crops were completely washed away. The peasants were without means in

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2 Ibid., p.98.
certain areas. In addition to that, they were face to face with malaria, small pox, and cholera. Although sixty to seventy thousand people were affected in Cuttack and Puri districts, but no solution was attempted by the Colonial Government.

In 1926 in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council a resolution was put forward to provide relief to the peasants of the districts of Puri and Cuttack, which were affected by the recent foods, but in the Council Mr. Hammond, opposing the resolution on behalf of the government, said that, “trouble in Orissa was not widespread, and there was not famine or general failure of crops”. Subsequently, the matter of providing taccavi loans to peasants was discussed but it also led to nothing.

In the next Legislative Council meeting in September 1927, Hare Krushna Mahatab demanded the appointment of a committee to enquire into the state of things in flood-affected areas of Cuttack and Balasore districts. The government agreed to appoint an enquiry committee to look into the matter but nothing substantial was done to ameliorate the condition of the peasants.

The All-India Congress Committee meeting was held at Calcutta on 28th October 1927 under the presidency of Srinivasa Iyengar. Pandit Gopabandhu Das and Pandit Nilakantha Das represented Orissa. In this meeting T.Prakasam moved a resolution with regard to the disaster caused by floods in Balasore and Cuttack districts. Pandit Gopabandhu Das in this meeting said that, “if anybody visited the flood-stricken area he would not be able to bear the sight of it”. Again he said that, “Orissa was a problem in Indian politics not only on account of its dismemberment but on account of its annual floods. It was for the Indian National Congress to help

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the struggling people of Orissa”. A resolution was carried and the Congress Working Committee had resolved to contribute Rs 500 towards the Flood Relief Fund.\textsuperscript{8}

Here it may be mentioned that in Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council on 20\textsuperscript{th} January 1926, Chaudhury Bhagabat Prasad Samantarai Mohapatra introduced a bill to amend the Orissa Tenancy Act, 1913. It aimed at enabling cultivators to transfer occupancy holding by deed of exchange without paying registration fees with a view to make their lands compact and contiguous and thus to effect improvement in them. The amendment suggested that in case of registration both parties would be made to pay two rupees for changing their names.

Jagabandhu Sinha introduced another bill of a similar nature in the Legislative Council to amend the Orissa Tenancy Act, 1913. The bill aimed at removing certain difficulties experienced by both landlords and tenants in the working of the Act by necessary modification and alterations. On 22\textsuperscript{nd} January 1926, the Orissa Tenancy (Amendment) Bill of 1926 was passed in the Legislative Council.\textsuperscript{9} But the amendments failed to satisfy the aspirations of the peasantry.

The Government however, brought out the idea to put one paise cess on pan on every ‘kada’ (a bundle of fifty leaves of betel) of pan to enhance the revenue of the Government. The idea behind choosing pan was that it was universally consumed from the Raja to daily wage laborer. It was meant for nation building purpose as the colonial Government argued.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{8} Indian Annual Register, Vol.II, 1927, p. 22.
\textsuperscript{9} Indian Annual Register, Vol.I, 1926, pp. 321-325.
\textsuperscript{10} See Chandra, Trends of Political Events in Orissa from 1882-1936, Cuttack, 1996, Appendix, A.
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The year 1928 was of great importance for peasants all over the country because of the legendary Satyagraha in Bardoli Taluq and the nation wide interest it roused.\(^{11}\)

In Orissa as well, two major peasant movements that took place in Bamra and Nilgiri in 1928. In fact, these were the symptoms of the existing discontent among the peasants.

In 1928, the Meefer Settlement was carried out in the princely state of Bamra, by which the land rent was enhanced to an intolerable extent. The leaders like Hara Pradhan, Bhagirathi Pradhan, Jagannath, Daitari Hota and Bhagaban Patel mobilized the peasants. As many as four hundred people marched to Sambalpur and placed their grievances before the colonial Political Agent. But the authorities turned down their demands. A 'no-rent campaign' was organized in which many Gaontias (village headmen) took active part. Six Gaontias were deprived of the Gaonti rights, and some leaders lost their jobs. Section 144 IPC was served on Dayananda Satpathy and five co-workers; several others seen in Khadar were arrested. Thus led to a suppression of the movement.\(^{12}\)

In 1928, in the princely states of Nilgiri, an area adjoining Balasore, in connection with the celebration of the marriage ceremony of the Jema (princess), the Raja, besides the existing illegal cesses or abwabs, imposed a new kind of tax upon the peasants. There had been discontent among the peasants due to their already having been highly assessed on various pretexts and also due to forced labour on occasions like hunting and etc.\(^{13}\)

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Besides these illegal abwabs, the daily reports of the progress of the national movement in the adjoining district of Balasore largely influenced the peasants to agitate. So they did not accept to the imposition of further abwabs and resisted against it. They approached Hare Krushna Mahatab at Balasore for instruction. He asked the peasants to give him in writing about all the oppressions committed against them. This was compiled into a pamphlet, titled “Oppression in Nilgiri” and was widely circulated in different parts of Orissa.\(^{14}\)

The effect was that a wave of oppression was let loose. Hare Krushna Mahatab advised the tenants to leave the state and go away. Accordingly, tenants in thousands came away to Balasore. Meanwhile, Hare Krushna Mahatab had wired to C.F. Andrews in this connection and he came down to Balasore and looked into the situation himself. In his book, “*India and Simon Commission*”, C.F. Andrews writes about the Nilgiri peasants in these words: “that shortly after the departure of Mahatma Gandhi (1927) from Orissa for his Madras session of the Indian National Congress, about a thousand residents of a neighbouring feudatory state of Orissa went away to Balasore with stories of relentless cruelty and oppression perpetuated on them. Their allegation was that the Raja was squandering away everything in luxury that there were no accounts maintained of the rents realized, that their suffering had exceeded all limits and many of them had left the state in search of justice. They waited at Balasore for months together with endless patience. They were firm that they would not return home unless and until their sufferings were redressed. At Balasore, some Congress Swaraj workers came down to help these tenants by saving them from starvation”.\(^{15}\)

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 376.
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It was on Andrews' intervention that a settlement could be arrived at. The Raja agreed to pay proper remuneration for services obtained from the peasants, and then the peasants suspended the agitation and returned to their home. All these developments contributed to the striking response that was later witnessed to the Civil Disobedience Movement in Balasore.

In the Lahore session of Indian National Congress (1929) the 'Purna Swaraj' (Complete Independence) resolution was passed. The Congress Working Committee met on January 2, 1930, where it was decided to observe 26th of January as the 'Purna Swarja Day' all over India. The Independence Day was solemnly observed on 26th January 1930, and evoked great enthusiasm all over the country.

The Working Committee met again at Sabarmati on 14th – 16th February 1930 and passed the historic Civil Disobedience resolution. Mahatma Gandhi endorsed the 'eleven point' programme for the mass Civil Disobedience Movement. The Working Committee thus authorised only Gandhi and his followers in faith to start civil disobedience. But the All -India Congress Committee which met at Ahmedabad on 21st march, 1930, i.e., after Gandhi had begun his March to Dandi, not only endorsed the resolution of the Working Committee, but somewhat widened its scope.

They expressed the hope that the whole country would respond to the action taken by Gandhi and authorized the Provincial Congress Committees to organise and undertake such Civil Disobedience as to them may seem proper and in the manner that may appear to be most, suitable.

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16 Ibid., p. 100.
18 Ibid., pp. 322-335.
In Orissa, after the Lahore Congress, Hare Krushna Mahatab started propaganda work in British Orissa and appealed the Congress members of Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council to resign. By the end of January, 1930 as many as thirty members had resigned

The lull in Congress activity in the preceding years was at last broken and a strong hurricane of national activities swept the Orissa province from one end to the other. Mahatama Gandhi’s memorable ‘Dandi Yatra’ began on the 12th March 1930. During his march through the villages of Gujrat towards the sea he reminded the people that they had certain urgent duties towards the nation. One of these was the removal of untouchability and care for the poor; another was abolition of liquor traffic; a third was the promotion of Khadi and the fourth was the complete emancipation of women.

The All India Congress Committee Meeting was held at Allahabad on 12-15th May, 1930 under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru. It called upon each and every section of the society, including the peasantry to contribute to the success of the fight for freedom by making all the sacrifice they are capable of.

The Congress Committee retreated that the programme was to consist of boycott of foreign cloth, khaddar production, non-payment of taxes, salt satyagraha, forest grazing, use of Swadeshi, boycott of British goods and non-violence.

The call for non-payment of chaukidari-taxes in the provinces had tremendous impact on the peasantry in Orissa. The Congress Committee called upon

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the Provincial Congress Committee of Orissa to organize campaigns for non-payment of land tax or the Chaukidari-tax as the case may be, in areas to be selected by the Provincial Congress Committee concerned.23

The Utkal Provincial Congress Committee meeting was held under the leadership of Gopabandhu Chaudhary on 30th March 1929. In this meeting he outlined the national programme and the duty of the country at this juncture. Speaking about the dire poverty of the masses of Orissa, he stated that without amelioration of the economic distress political emancipation of the country was impossible. The most important resolution passed in the conference included the programme of impending struggle of 1930 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, enrolment of Congress members, setting up of Congress branches and boycott of foreign cloth.

The preparations for the breaking of salt law began on 12th March, 1930, when Gandhi on a 241 mile trek from Sabarmati towards the sea with a band of associates. Careful preparations were made all over India for breach of this law, as well as of ordinances prohibiting peaceful processions and peaceful picketing of shops dealing in liquor or in foreign cloth. As whole of India watched with bated breath; when Gandhi gave the signal by the symbolic breach of Salt Law on the seashore on 6th April, 1930. The whole country plunged into the campaign with unexampled enthusiasm.24

Gandhi issued a public statement confessing his breach of the salt law urging Indians everywhere it was convenient. It was a formal declaration of war against the

iniquitous laws of the mightiest empire in the world. Across the sub-continent, countless peasants looked to Mahatma’s advice and broke the law to obtain the daily salt they required. Louis Fischer saw in Gandhi’s Dandi March ‘imagination, dignity and sense of showmanship of a great artist’.25 “It appealed”, observed Fischer, “to the illiterate peasant and it appealed to a sophisticated critic and sometime fierce opponent of Gandhi like Subash Bose who compared the Salt March to “Napoleon’s March to Paris on his return to Elba”.26

The government monopoly of the salt industry was a terrible blow to the economic life of the peasants, which they could easily obtain it on the seacoast. The coastal districts of Orissa were reduced to a state of object poverty, as the salt manufacture was the only subsidiary cottage industry of the agriculturalists that could hardly make their ends meet from agriculture alone. It was through the export of salt to other provinces that the Oriya agriculturalists used to supplement his scanty resources all through the centuries. Naturally, therefore, the Salt Satyagraha appealed highly to the sentiments of the peasants of coastal Orissa, who threw themselves heart and soul into the movement.27

There were the cases of violation of Salt Law in coastal Orissa even before the Civil Disobedience Movement was started, as shown in the table given below.

**Case of Violations of Salt Laws in Coastal Orissa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cuttack</th>
<th>Balasore</th>
<th>Puri</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927-28</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>1928-29</td>
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<td>1929-30</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930-31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>27</td>
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26 Samal, Bidyut Kumar, op. cit., p.101.
27 Mahatab, H.K., op.cit., p. 35.
28 Pati, Biswamoy, op.cit., p. 35.
Besides, Gandhi's call for violation of the salt law, the All India Congress Committee in May 1930 had given a call for non-payment of specific taxes in certain provinces of colonial India. And again at the Karachi session in March 1931 the Congress called for a substantial reduction in agricultural rent paid by the peasants to the colonial Government, had tremendous affect on the peasant masses of India including Orissa.29

In March, 1930 the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee met at Balasore where a decision was taken to celebrate 1st April, 1930 as the breaking of salt law day in Orissa under the leadership of Gopabandhu Chaudhury.30 Another meeting was held on the riverbed of Kathojori (Cuttack) to discuss the political situation of the country as well as to start the Salt Satyagraha Movement in Orissa. The most prominent leaders who attended the meeting were Gopabandhu Choudhury, Jadumani Mangaraj, Prana Krushna Parihari, Naba Krushna Choudhury, Atal Bihari Acharya and Chintamani Mishra.31

Hare Krushna Mahatab and Surendra Nath Das, made arrangements for Salt Satyagraha at Inchudi32 on the Balasore seacoast only second to Gandhi's Satyagraha in Gujrat in its impact and importance.33 On 6th April, 1930, the day on which Gandhi broke the Salt Law at Dandi, the first of Satyagraha led by Gopabandhu Chaudhury and Acharya Harihara Das began with a march from Cuttack to Inchudi. After reaching at Inchudi (Balasore) on 13th April 1930, Acharya Harihara Das broke the Salt Law. He was arrested when he broke the salt law. After this a large number of Satyagrahis' from all over Orissa came to Balasore in quick

30 Utkal Dipika (Oriya Weekly News Paper), 22nd March, 1930.
33 Behuria, Krushna Charan, op.cit., p.108.
succession to participate in the Salt Satyagraha. The leaders like Gopabandhu Chaudhury, Hare Krushna Mahatab, Acharya Harihara Das, Raj Krushna Bose, Nilakantha Das and other Congress leaders who participated in the Salt Satyagraha at Inchudi were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. The arrest of prominent Congress leaders led to participation by large mass of the people. The peasants of Balasore, particularly at Inchudi started agitation against choukidari-tax.\textsuperscript{34}

As soon as the Civil Disobedience Movement started the peasants of Balasore responded enthusiastically. The movement spread to Iram, Sartha, Padmapur, Basta, Kasaba, Srijang, Atilabad, Bhadrak and so on. The peasants attacked on the propertied classes, and started no-rent campaign. The villagers, who sympathized with the Congress workers who came from Madras and Bihar, broke the salt laws and refused to pay the chaukidari-tax. The movement took a dramatic turn in May 1930, when about six hundred villagers from the surrounding villages of Inchudi carried nine maunds of contraband salt to Balasore and sold it. The colonial police remained a silent spectator.\textsuperscript{35}

The peasants of Srijang stopped paying chaukidari-tax, which in turn led to a violent attack on the peasants by the colonial police force. Around seven hundred villagers in turn attacked the colonial police when they proceeded to collect the Chaukidari-tax. In order to cow down the response of the peasants, collective fine was imposed upon them. On 2\textsuperscript{nd} July 1930, the Sub-Deputy Magistrate with forty-four constables went over to Khersai to carry out the attachment of property. The next day, half a mile from the yard, conch-shells began to blow and the villagers


followed the police party. The crowd grew larger every moment. When the police party marched to Khersai the crowd had swollen to near two thousand people, who were shouting at and threatening the police party. As the crowd grew more excited and came within a range of twenty yards, the police tried to disperse the crowd to proceed towards the police station.\textsuperscript{36}

Thus began a veritable reign of terror in the area by armed forces under the very nose of the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police. There was indiscriminate brutal assault, loot, plunder, rape, torture and confiscation of property. Over and above, the villagers were loaded with "punitive tax" as the government kept extra police at Srijang. Most of the notable persons of the area including Gaur Mohan Das and Bidyadhar Rath were arrested and they lost their property. The atrocities of police on thousand of peasants led to the decline of the movement.\textsuperscript{37} Laxmi Narayan Sahu (the member of the Servants of Indian Society) Bhubananada Das, Bhagabat Prasad Mohapatra, Surendra Pattanaik, Rama Devi, Malati Devi and many others visited the affected areas and condemned the severe oppression of the Colonial Government. Sashi Bhusan Rath was arrested for publishing the police atrocities at Srijang, in his daily 'Asha'. Gopal Narayan was prosecuted at Balasore for his pamphlet entitled "Lawlessness in Balasore". After the Srijang repression, the campaign for the non-payment of chaukidari-tax was not pursued elsewhere in Orissa.\textsuperscript{38}

In the district of Puri the Civil Disobedience Movement was started in May under the leadership of Pandit Nilakantha Das, and salt was manufactured at

\textsuperscript{36} Samal, Bidyut Kumar, op.cit., p.107.
\textsuperscript{37} Pati, Biswamoy, op.cit., p.37.
Kuhudi, Astarang, Khandasahi, and Mandanki in Kakatpur P.S. Pandit Nilakantha Das was arrested along with other workers and sentenced to imprisonment for six-months.

A Yuvak Sangh was formed at Bolgarh for recruiting volunteers and carrying on propaganda for salt manufacture and no-rent campaign. Picketing of liquor and foreign-cloth shops and cutting down of date-palm trees were carried on vigorously. However, the no-rent campaign during this period in different parts of Puri district by the peasantry was the most notable feature and was rapidly gaining ground. With the growth of political consciousness, the peasants asserted their position and demanded their rights.39

In accordance with the instruction of Mahatma Gandhi, under the leadership of Gopabandhu Chaudhury, the first batch of Salt Satyagrahi started to Balasore on the 6th April, 1930 from Cuttack. On 8th April, 1930 Gopabandhu Chaudhury and Atal Bihari Acharya were arrested. But, salt was manufactured at Nolia Sahi near Kujang. Narayan Birabara Samanta and the Rani of Paradip organized the movement at Nolia Sahi. Smt. Malati Devi Chaudhury and Rama Devi organized the Salt Satyagraha at Kujang.

The enthusiasm of the peasantry in Cuttack District was remarkable. Large numbers of them came forward and actively participated in the movement. In addition to manufacture of salt, picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor and opium shops, cutting down of date-palm trees, organization of village panchayats etc., were carried on. Hundred of volunteers were arrested and put behind the bars.

The Government was taken aback by the magnitude of the movement and the extent of popular enthusiasm. And so the Government started anti-Congress propaganda and arrest of the Satyagrahis'.

Though the tempo of the Civil Disobedience Movement gradually slowed down, picketing continued. Propaganda for breaking salt and forest laws was more widespread in the countryside among the peasantry. 40

During the Salt Satyagraha Movement of 1930, Sambalpur played an important part. A Satyagraha Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of Ghanashyam Panigrahi and with Dayananda Satpathy as Secretary. 41 They sent four batches of volunteers to defy the Salt Law and to prepare contraband salt at different places of coastal-Orissa including Inchudi. 42

All these Satyagrahis' and volunteers suffered ill treatment by the colonial police force and several of them like Sri Sudhansu Sekhar Gupta, Mahavir Singh, Dayananda Satpathy and Sri Lakshman Guru courted imprisonment. In 1931, a Congress Ashram was opened at Bargarh, where a large number of workers from different parts of Sambalpur came and resided. Bargarh became the hot bed of the nationalist agitation. At Barapali, Remanda, Panimora, Samalaipadar and Bheunria in Bargarh Sub-division the national rising took a vigorous form. In the interiors of Sambalpur, the peasantry was the activists of the Salt Satyagraha.

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In Sambalpur and Bargarh the police force resorted to lathi charge and a large number of people including many peasants were arrested and fined in order to bring the situation under control.43

The district of Ganjam also contributed its due share in the Salt Campaign in Orissa in 1930. A camp was established under the leadership of Biswanath Das, Dibakar Patnaik and others at Ganja and contraband salt was manufactured. The Satyagrahis raided the Salt factory at Huma. A batch of volunteers from Koraput under the leadership of Radha Krushna Biswasroy joined Ganjam volunteers for manufacturing of contraband salt. Radha Krushna. Biswasroy, Dibakar Patnaik and Narasingha Sahu and others were arrested under Agency Act and confined first at Vizag Jail and subsequently they were transferred to the Rajamundry Jail.44

With the efforts of Biswanath Das, the peasantry of Ganjam district came closer to the national movement and the Salt Satyagraha in Ganjam district became a grand success.45

The tribal peasants of Koraput, known as projas i.e., were a category of peasants were freedom loving and did not like the idea of subjugation. They made sporadic attempts to undermine the British Raj and the local chiefs. In 1929 many of them enrolled as primary Congress members.46 In 1930, under the leadership of

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Radha Krushna Biswasroy, volunteers participated in the Salt Satyagraha and many local leaders were convicted and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.\textsuperscript{47}

In Kalyansinghpur area, the \textit{kondhs i.e.,} the hill ryots, started ‘no-rent campaign’ against the Maharaja of Jaypore and stopped \textit{kists}. Narasingha Sahu of Jaypore organized the hill ryots and started protest movement in Bissemucuttack Taluk. But to suppress the movement, the Deputy Tahasildar served a notice and prohibited meetings and speeches. When the Sub-inspector attempted to serve this order, Narasingha Sahu hoisted a Congress flag and said that he took orders only from his government, presumably meaning Mahatma Gandhi. Attempts were made to isolate Narasingha Sahu from the inhabitants of this tribal tract.\textsuperscript{48}

During this time Subudhi Patra of Luhagudi, organized the Kondhs \textit{i.e.,} the hill ryots, and grabbed the inam \textit{lands} of the dominant \textit{Muttahadar}.\textsuperscript{49} In May or June, 1931 Hari Das a \textit{Paiko} in the Pavitrapur Agency of Vizagapatam district organized hill men tribes and started a protest movement. Dombru Naiko, Jaisingh Naik, Balaram Subudhi, Kadraka Chachri Bhimji and other leading men from the village Garidi supported the movement. These leaders were arrested and released only in 1936.\textsuperscript{50}

The reverberations of the Civil Disobedience movement were also witnessed in the princely states of Orissa.\textsuperscript{51} In Talcher, for the third time, peasants during 1930-32 agitated against \textit{bethi} and other miscellaneous cesses. Dhobei Chual Singh

\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., p.74.
\textsuperscript{48}Pati, Biswamoy, op.cit., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Home Political Department (Confidential)} File, No. 36/VI/1930, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Home Political Department (Confidential)} File, No. 44/55/1930, National Archives of India, New Delhi.
and Brundaban Pradhan took the lead and put forth a charter of demands and grievances before the Political Agent, Mr. Bruton, but it yielded nothing substantial. Dhobei Chual Singh, Brundaban Pradhan and Anadi Sahu, were imprisoned for a year. Further they were ordered to furnish bonds of good behaviour for having agitated against the administration. Punitive police were posted in their village on the suspicion that the villagers were holding a secret meeting. The arrest, imprisonment and humiliation of their popular leaders, besides the repressive measures, demoralized the movement. The *Chasas* (peasants) of Talcher formed an association called "*Sobhagya Samiti*" in 1925. The ruler of the state banned the association. Those who were in the service of the state and took part in the Association were suspended forthwith. The funds of the association amounting to one thousand rupees were confiscated. 52

In 1930, in Boud States under a new settlement, land rents were increased arbitrarily by one hundred to four hundred percent in the different parts of the state. About two thousand people went to the Raja to lay before him their grievances. But the officials prevented any access to the Raja. Subsequently, twenty-seven Kondhs i.e., the hill ryots went to Sambalpur to get some relief from the Political Agent. On their return to the state, they were mercilessly beaten, fined and imprisoned. Such was the relationship between the government and the governed; that the subjects were not allowed to see the Ruler and submission of the charter of grievances was considered to be a rebellious act. There were absolutely no cordial relationship between the ruler and ruled.53


53 Ibid., p.87.
Although all these peasant movements in different parts of the states were nipped in the bud by means of repressive measures, they were not altogether without any results. The experience gained in these agitations, though obtained at a heavy price was of far-reaching consequence. It became clear to the people of the princely states, that the oppressive rulers could preserve their authority only by the support of the paramount power and they failed because they neither had a common plan of action against the authorities nor had competent leadership. They also learnt that since the agitations were confined within the four walls of their respective states, it was easy for the Rulers to put down the agitations. However, over time there was a steady political awakening, and the people resolved to organize themselves and approached the Congress leaders for leadership.  

In order to suppress Non – violent Salt Satyagraha, the colonial government indulged in relentless repression throughout the country. Thousands of Indians courted arrest, faced lathis, bullets, lost their property during 1930. But by the end of 1930, due to mass arrest of Congress leaders, adverse affects of agricultural depression on peasants and various repressive measures of the Government, the movement began to lose its momentum and showed instead signs of exhaustion. Despite the pressure of Tej Bahadur Sapru, V.S. Srinivas Sastri and M.R. Jayaker for a settlement, Gandhiji was initially not favourable towards this proposal. However, he subsequently changed his views and entered into negotiations with the viceroy Lord Irwin and finally on 5th March 1931 was announced the historic Gandhi Irwin Pact.

54 Ibid., pp.87-88.
56 Samal, Bidyut Kumar, op.cit., p.108.
The viceroy, Lord Irwin, invited Gandhi for negotiations in a bid to buy peace. The incorrigible Winston Churchill voiced distress of an entire generation and Tory imperialists, when he expressed his disgust at the spectacle of 'the half naked fakir' parleying with Lord Irwin. These negotiations led to a truce under which Irwin persuaded Mahatma Gandhi to participate in discussions in Great Britain, designed to shape a new constitution for India.

Mahatma Gandhi attended the Round Table Conference held in London in 1931, was unable to gain much as expected, and he landed back at Bombay empty handed. His prominent colleagues Jawaharlal Nehru, Abdul Gaffar Khan and other had already been arrested and imprisoned. The Congress Working Committee advised the countrymen to launch mass Civil Disobedience, including non-payment of taxes.\(^{57}\)

The Utkal Congress resumed the mass Civil Disobedience Movement vigorously in Orissa. The Congress workers carried on the programme of boycott and salt campaign with redoubled zeal. Sardar Surendra Nath Das guided the movement from Paharasidinga near Balasore for a long time. He used to circulate inflammatory leaflet such as ‘Ranaveri’ to keep alive popular enthusiasm and radicalism. Nilambar Das also worked secretly in north Balasore to mobilize the peasants. In Athagarh, during this time Congress activists like Binod Kanungo, Radhanath Rath, Surendra Pattanaik and Bhramarbar Routray were busy in publishing revolutionary bulletins and sending them secretly to Cuttack for circulation. Due to dedicated leadership of Nrusingha Guru, Mahabir Singh, Fakir

Behera and Bhagirathi Patnaik, the movement in Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Barapali continued for a long time.\(^{58}\)

The 45\(^{th}\) session of the Indian National Congress was held in Karachi in March 1931, Gopabandhu Chaudhry and Nilakantha Das who attended the session proposed to host the 46\(^{th}\) annual session of the Indian National Congress at Puri and was thus accepted. Gandhiji, promised the Congressmen from Orissa at Karachi to support the demand for creation of a separate province in the Second Round Table Conference. To host the next session of the Congress at Puri, a Reception Committee was formed with Nilakantha Das, Gopabandhu Chaudhury, Jagannath Mishra and Hare Krushna Mahatab as Chairman, General Secretary, Treasurer and Sean Nayaka (chief of the volunteer corps) respectively. Popular enthusiasm was again stirred by brisk political activities.\(^ {59}\)

Unfortunately, Orissa Congress became faction ridden, one group constituted of Nilakantha Das, Sasibhusan Rath and Lingaraj Panigrahi, which was named as Council Group, whereas Hare Krushna Mahatab, Gopabandhu Chaudhry and Pranakrushna Padihari, were of Gandhi Group. Besides this, the Government encouraged 'Amunsabha', to carry on anti-Congress propaganda. The Peoples welfare associations were established in every part of the province with the initiation of the Government to counteract Congress activities. The Government officials, Zamindars and other wealthy tenants who were the members of this association acted on the whole as a restraining force.\(^ {60}\) When Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee set up Krushak Sangh throughout Orissa on September 1931 the official

\(^{58}\) Samal, Bidyut Kumar, op. cit., p.111. 
\(^{59}\) Ibid., p. 109. 
\(^{60}\) Ibid., p.109.
complained that the Congress work was worsening Zamindar-tenants relations in districts like Puri.61

Armed with the unlawful ordinance, the Government directed its energy to seize the places associated with Congress activities in Orissa. Sterner means of repression this time far exceeded those taken by Irwin. The repressive measures to crush the movement included “blocking of villages, bulleting, fines, curfew, special tribunals, firing, mass intimidation, ill-treatment in lock-ups, confiscation of lands, cattle, utensils and personal belongings, ill-treatment of women (savage, beating, rape, abuse and insults) and children, censorship of the press, searches without warrants, destruction of property, unprecedented police surveillances, parole orders, imprisonment after summary trial, beating of pickets and volunteers etc”. All these measures were undertaken by the British authorities to crush the movement.

To strike terror was the only remedy left in British hands and the Government was successful in attacking the leaders, resources and organization of the Congress. Therefore in the face of overwhelming repression the second Civil Disobedience Movement could not evoke as much massive popular support as the 1930 movement.62 The effort of Hare Krushna Mahatab to start “no-tax campaign” through Krushak Sangh could not materialise. Gradually, the Civil Disobedience Movement was pushed into the background. On 8th May 1933 Gandhiji, announced suspension of the movement for six weeks and afterwards decided to abstain from it. Thus the movement collapsed before the Congress officially called it off in May 1934.

62 Samal, Bidyut Kumar, op. cit., pp.110-111.
However, the Civil Disobedience Movement was put into a halt when Congress representatives took part in the Second Round Table Conference. But the mass Civil Disobedience Movement achieved one significant gain. The people of coastal Orissa were allowed to manufacture salt for their domestic use but not for sale on commercial basis outside their villages. As a result the rural economic discontent in the coastal districts of Orissa was minimized and the people in general, were happy to see that their old privileges had been restored. The Civil Disobedience Movement in Orissa did mark a great advance in every respect over the Non-Cooperation Movement. The issue of ‘salt’ was of great economic significance for the people of Orissa. The peasantry provided great strength to the movement.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., p.112.