CHAPTER III

The Proposed National Missile Testing Range and the Resistance Movement: An Historical Account

Ever since the announcement has been made by the Government to set up the National Missile Testing Range (NMTR) in Baliapal-Bhograi area, the erstwhile ‘peaceful’ region has become the epitome of a popular resistance movement. The last four years have witnessed the growth of a ‘militant’ agitation in the coastal district of Orissa, namely Balasore, against the proposed project especially in its two blocks, Baliapal and Bhograi (Sunday, June 1-7, 1986; The Amrit Bazar Patrika, June 30, 1986; The Economic Times, August 7 and December 8, 1986; India Today, August 31, 1985 and June 15, 1986). It is an agitation that has been able to mobilise people en masse from all classes and categories cutting across caste, gender and age. It has become one of the most organised resistances the country has seen in recent times.

What is most interesting and significant is the fact that it has been able to garner the support of almost all the mainstream political parties, except the ruling Congress (I) party, various political groups on the fringes of parliamentary process as well as other leading voluntary organisations with varied objectives. The details of the political parties and political groups which have supported and participated at various levels in the movement would be discussed later in this chapter. Active involvement in the agitation has also come from Marxist-Leninist groups.
The people of the area are not only sceptical about the project, but critical of its impact and usefulness also. The crux of the problem is the location of such a huge ‘non-developmental’ defence project in an agriculturally prosperous area. This will devastate the agro-based economy and pauperise the affluent communities by uprooting them from their traditional homeland. Such issues of displacement have been the driving force for many agitations in the country in the recent past. But what distinguishes this agitation from others of similar nature is the deep involvement of the people in this area irrespective of social divisions and hierarchies as well as its militancy (Patel, 1989).

Against the above backdrop certain questions, as follow, assume relevance here. How was such a controversial project conceived? What is the nature of the project? What is the logic behind the selection of this particular site? How far other forces have accepted such logic? Another set of questions arise concerning the historical development of the agitation and resistance against the project. First of all, how was the discontent against the proposed NMTR generated and resistance activities started? And, subsequently in what form of actions and events did the resistance manifest itself?

To grapple with the above issues, the objective of this chapter is to discuss the history of the proposed NMTR and to discern the process of crystallisation of the movement in terms of event structure. Events are the important constituents of the process of the movement (Oommen, 1977). The network of events not only traces the process, but also shows the gradual development of well articulated ideology, organisation, strategy and tactics.
SITE FOR
NATIONAL MISSILE TESTING RANGE

The Conception of the NMTR and its dimension

The idea of setting up a defence project in Baliapal-Bhograi area, which the people are opposing tooth and nail, was conceived by a British Officer in 1893 (Nayak, 1986). The area was considered suitable for defence purposes because of its peculiar geographical configuration which was conducive for such a project. However, the decision to locate the missile testing range in this region, according to the State Government sources, was taken during the Janata Party reign in the centre in 1979 (PUDR, 1988). An official release said that the final decision was taken following detailed studies conducted by expert committees for six years since 1979 (Amrit Bazar Patrika, Nov. 23, 1985 and May 22, 1986).

Initially the Central Government announced a land acquisition programme involving 115 sq. kms. for the test range and 45 sq. kms. for its safety zone. A total area of 160 sq. kms. was to be claimed which would have affected a population of 70,102 comprising 11,609 families of 130 villages (The Samaj, August 10, 1984; Link, October 26, 1986; PUDR, 1988) But in the face of stiff resistance put forth by the local inhabitants, at a later stage, the Government revised the land requirement plan. The new proposal involved a total land of 102 sq. kms.; 68 sq. kms. for the range and 34 sq. kms. for the safety zone. The revised plan claimed to affect only 54 villages (41 for the test range and 13 for the safety zone), 6484 families and a population of 40,793. The land to be acquired for the residential and administrative complex was claimed to involve no population displacement (The Prajatantra, August 9, 1986; Link, October 6, 1986). The original and revised proposals are presented in Table 3.1.
Table: III-1

Proposals of the NMTR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORIGINAL PROPOSAL</th>
<th>REVISED PROPOSAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S.No.</td>
<td>Block-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. No. of villages</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. No. of families</td>
<td>9902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Population</td>
<td>59566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Total Area</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sq. kms.)</td>
<td>(28750)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Link, October 26, 1986, p. 18

Block-A - Baliapal Block
Block-B - Bhograi Block

The agitationists and their leaders, however, viewed the revised plan with suspicion and considered it to be a mere eyewash. They strongly felt that this was a tactical move by the Government to divide the people and to sabotage the movement. It was commonly believed that once the missile testing range was set up, its further expansion and more land acquisition could be accomplished easily.

The proposed NMTR has a land acquisition programme consisting of three zones. The first zone is the core zone where the testing facilities will be installed; the second zone is the safety zone which is to remain free from any such installation. And the third zone consisting of 700 acres of land is only meant for residential and administrative complexes. The test range site falls in the area south of the Subarnarekha river, i.e. Baliapal Block. In this area, land acquisition and displacement are to be total, and no cultivation will be allowed.
The safety zone falls in the area north of the river Subarnarekha, between the river Subarnarekha and the flood protection embankment known as Bhuabandha to its north. For this zone 13 villages are to be displaced. While all the families in this area have to move out to the rehabilitation centres, they will be allowed to cultivate agricultural land on lease basis even after its acquisition. However, the land use is subject to the condition that the cultivators will have no ownership right on the land. But they can cultivate as temporary lease holders on payment of prescribed rent to the defence authorities. No private construction will be allowed in the safety zone and there will be certain restrictions on movement of cultivators during notified periods (India Today, August 31, 1985; Link, October 26, 1986; Surya, January 13, 1987).

Besides the land, the Government, under the plan, is to acquire the sea-coast as well as the Subarnarekha river mouth which are the sources of livelihood for a large number of fishermen who inhabit in the area. The fishermen families are also to be displaced (The Prajatantra, November 17, 1985; The Statesman, June 29, 1986). Despite their displacement, fishing operations in the river-mouth and the sea-coast will be allowed, as per the notification by the Government. However, as in the case of cultivation, the areas falling in the safety zone including the Subarnarekha river mouth and the sea will also come under similar restrictions.

Along with the revised land acquisition programme, the Government has also announced a rehabilitation programme for the prospective oustees. Under the programme it is planned that the evacuees will be resettled in well planned model villages with all modern amenities for comfortable living.
Occupationally also they are to be rehabilitated (Link, October 26, 1986; Department of Public Relations, Orissa, 1986).

The question which arises here is, if this area is an agriculturally rich area with high density of population and high literacy rate, as mentioned in the previous chapter, then why was this particular area selected by the Government as the test range site? An official release said, "- - - the decision was taken following detailed studies undertaken by expert committees for six years since 1979. The committees have found Baliapal-Bhograi as the only suitable site in the country having all the advantages for setting up the test range based on scientific, logistics and technical considerations compared to other places in the country (The Amrit Bazar Patrika, November 23, 1985 and June 19, 1988)).

Initially, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Dwarka in Gujrat, deserts of Rajasthan, Sunderban in West Bengal, Satbhaya area of Cuttack district and Baliapal-Bhograi in Balasore district in Orissa were taken up for consideration as alternative sites (ibid). According to the defence officials, two teams of experts conducted studies to assess the feasibility and suitability of the sites. And finally Baliapal-Bhograi area was selected (Surya, January 13, 1987).

The Government has stated that because of strong technical and strategic reasons Baliapal-Bhograi area has been chosen over other sites initially enlisted for the project. The Balasore coast is crescent shaped with Baliapal located on its tip. As missiles require intensive monitoring immediately after launch, the crescent shape is ideal for monitoring from land. In addition, Balasore has excellent infrastructural facilities in terms of railways and road
arteries, needed for constant flow of supplies. The area also has firm soil conducive for supporting heavy structures needed for launching pad. Though Balasore is cyclone prone, this part of the district remains free from such natural calamities. As a result of silting of ports in the east coast, there is not much of sea traffic in this region. Additionally, the Bay of Bengal unlike the Arabian Sea does not have any populated island which makes it safer for testing (PUDR, 1985; Call of Baliapal, 1986).

Dr. V.S. Arunachalam, the scientific advisor to the Defence Ministry, on May 21, 1986, said that several factors, including proximity to nearby countries, cities and towns were taken into consideration while selecting the range site (Nayak, October 15, 1986). The local weather conditions were also taken into account. It was ascertained as a vital factor that Baliapal would provide clear weather condition on 300 out of 365 days, compared to 200 to 240 days in a year in the Andamans (Surya, January 13, 1987). Moreover, Baliapal-Bhograi area has the advantage of having the Nilgiri hill situated nearby and an abandoned aerodrome at Rasgovindpur in the adjoining district of Mayurbhanj which was used in the second world war. This aerodrome is situated about 45 kilometers away from Baliapal. While the Nilgiri hill will provide an ideal elevated place for radar installations, the aerodrome can be revived as an ancillary. So the official sources claim that Baliapal is the only suitable site as it provides the required firing sector and is suitable for locating electro-optical and electronic instrumentation for evaluating the performance of rockets under test (Nayak, October 5, 1986).
The test range would meet the long felt need to develop and improve indigenously produced missiles and space vehicles and reduce India’s dependence on other countries. Dr. Arunachalam further stressed that this test range would enable India to develop Augmented Space Launch Vehicles (ASLV) and polar rockets (ibid).

According to the Defence Ministry, the possible sites in the west coast suffer from major strategic problems. The Arabian Sea is "bristling with Super Power presence". The U.S. has a permanent base at Diego Garcia and the sea traffic both local and international is quite substantial on the west coast. In addition, Maldives, an independent country, falls just south of Lakshadweep. The Defence Ministry had also surveyed a site near Dwarka in Gujrat. However, this site has more problems than those enumerated above. It’s proximity to Pakistan is said to make telemetric observation easy and the site vulnerable to air attack. The threat posed by this site to the Oil extraction installations of Bombay High is also taken into consideration. The similar strategic disadvantages were also found against the NMTR’s location near Bindur in South Karnataka and the desert area of Rajasthan (PUDR, 1985).

The feasibility of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as the site was also rejected on the ground that locating the project there would be much more expensive mainly because of transportation (The Samaj, April 19, 1985). The Defence Ministry also argued that the Islands did not provide the needful 200 clear days in a year required for experiments. However, on the contrary, a spokesman of the same Ministry revealed to the press that the Islands had 200 to 240 clear days in a year. The main reason for rejecting the islands has been the
fact that the Central Government has already decided to develop them as a free trade zone for the nonresident Indians (NRI) of Hongkong after China’s take over of Hongkong (Surya, January 13, 1987).

The veteran leader of Orissa belonging to the present Janata Dal and the present Chief Minister, Sri Biju Pattnaik had suggested another site south of Balasore in Cuttack district. The area called Satbhaya, falls in his electoral constituency, Kendrapara. He claimed that the area was sparsely populated, hence, there would be little problem of displacement. But the proposal was rejected by the expert committees on the ground that the area was marshy and had a rich flora and fauna (it was suitable for a wildlife sanctuary) (PUDR, 1985). And setting up of the NMTR at Satbhaya might also pose danger to Paradeep Port which is close to the site (Surya, January 13, 1987). Sunderban in West Bengal couldn’t be found suitable because of its soft soil.

The noted politicians like Dr. Harekrushna Mehtab, and Sri Nilamani Routray the former Chief Ministers of Sri Samarendra Kundu of the Janata Party, intellectuals like Dr. Manmath Das, a noted historian and the then Vice-Chancellor of the Utkal University of Orissa, Dr. Radhanath Rath, the Editor of the Samaj and the people from all walks of life vociferously and unequivocally criticised the Government’s decision and rejected the logic behind the selection of Baliapal-Bhograi area as the missile testing range site (The Telegraph, November 21, 1985; Das, 1986). They accused the Government of setting wrong priorities. They argued that in case of Andaman and Nicobar, while financial cost was given primacy over large scale displacement and human miseries to be caused in Baliapal-Bhograi, the flora and fauna was given more
Sri Nilamani Routray (1986), in a letter to the Prime Minister of India, wrote that all the mighty powers in the world in missile technology such as USA, USSR, UK, France, Australia and China have taken utmost care not to uproot people and destroy cultivable lands while selecting the sites for such purposes. Great Britain has set up its long range rockets and missiles test fire facilities in South-Australia in the vicinity of Victoria desert, France in the Polynesian group of islands namely Wallis and Funtana at a distance of about 12,000 miles from France, the Soviet Union in Siberia and China is utilising the vast areas of Gobi desert in Central China (Routray, June 16, 1986).

However, all the politicians involved in the debate on the logic of site selection do firmly believe that the ruling Congress (I) Governments both at the Centre and State have been adamant on setting up the project in the said area inspite of mass appeal and agitation only because the area does not serve the electoral interests of the Congress (I). So the very motive of demolishing a vote bank of the opposition parties has led the Congress (I) to remain firm on the site of Baliapal- Bhograi area without any regard for the consequences (PUDR, 1985; The Amrit Bazar Patrika, June 5, 1986).

Germination of discontent against the NMTR and the inception of the Movement.

Even before the formal announcement made by the Chief Minister, the news about the project and the intention of the Government to acquire land displacing villages had infiltrated into the two blocks of Baliapal and Bhograi. Some
informants revealed during the course of the field study that they learnt about it well before 1984, while the survey teams had visited the area. However, this information was confined to a handful of persons and was initially treated as a rumour. Some respondents also informed that they had enquired about the authenticity of the information from the village leaders and Sarpanches. But almost all of them categorically contradicted such information and ruled out any possibility of displacement. So the initial information remained as a rumour and went into oblivion after some time without creating any mark in the minds of the villagers.

Every one was taken aback when the Chief Minister formally declared in June, 1984 that the missile testing range would be set up at Baliapal-Bhograi, which would bring industrial development to the people and put Orissa in the World map (The Hindustan Times, August 28, 1985; The Amrit Bazar Patrika, June 30, 1986). The vernacular newspapers explained the information in the form of highlighting the huge and devastating dimension of the project and its consequences (Mohanty, 1985; Pattnaik, 1985; Panda, 1986).

The official announcement sent a shock wave through the area. It became the point of discussion inside and outside home. Some local level meetings by the village ‘elites’ such as upper caste educated persons started taking place. As informed by the informants, the students and teachers of the area were first to take initiatives in organising small meetings with the sole objective to make the people aware of the lethal consequences of the so-called pooja bheti to the people by the Chief Minister. The educated people consisting of mainly teachers, students and youth formed an organisation namely ‘Dakshin
Baliapal Kshepanastra Ghati Birodhi Samiti'. The date of formation of the organisation could not be found in record. The purpose of this organisation was to create a sympathetic 'pressure group' at a higher level and petition the authorities to withdraw the project. They appealed to the intelligentsia of the State to extend their support to the people in protesting against the project. However, at the same time, informal gatherings at the village level had also started taking place. Gradually different political forces rising over their differences in political interests and ideologies joined together on the issue. As a consensus leader of their aligned forces, Sri Gadadhar Giri, the sitting MLA of the local constituency and a charismatic leader associated with the erstwhile Praja Socialist Party, which had fought for rights of the peasantry in this area, took the stage to lead the agitation.

Since the objective of this chapter is to delineate the history of the movement in terms of the events and their network, it is essential to see them in retrospect, since the inception of the movement.

On September 12, 1984 Sri Chintamani Jena, the then member of Parliament belonging to the Congress (I) elected from Basta constituency, called for a meeting of local party workers in Jagai College premise to mobilise support for the Ghati. He reiterated that the project would bring about development to the area, in particular and Orissa, in general. So the people must sacrifice for such larger interest, he stressed. As informed by some of the informants, he was virtually humiliated for having consented to the project at the cost of the interests of the people and was forced to apologise. Again on December 15, 1984 of Sri J.B. Pattnaik and Sri Chintamani Panigrahi, the then Chief-minister of
Orissa and M.P. respectively, addressed another public meeting at the same venue for the same purpose. This time also the meeting was marred by protest put for by even the Congress (I) followers from the Ghati area (Nayak's record, n.d.).

However, as the informants said, the Congress (I) capitalised on the issue and encashed it at the time of elections to the State Assembly held in 1985. The Chief Minister in the course of election campaign, assured the people that the Ghati would be shifted if they would elect the Congress (I) candidate to the Assembly. He reiterated that it was only the Congress (I) which could shift the site since it was the party in power. On this one-point promise, the Congress (I) candidate Sri Judhisthir Jena won the Assembly seat defeating Sri Gadadhar Giri by a narrow margin. Despite the defeat, Giri continued to mobilise people and lead the agitation.

After the elections and the victory of the Congress (I) candidate from Baliapal constituency and in the State as well, the people hoped that the ruling Congress (I) would take positive steps towards shifting of the Ghati as per its election promise. But soon, the people found their hopes belied (The Armit Bazar Patrika, June 5, June 30, and August 8, 1986). So, again the local leaders, the sympathising intelligentsia and the state level politicians supporting the struggle launched by the people geared up their resistance activities (The Amrit Bazar Patrika, June 5, June 30, August 8, 1986).

In order to spread the message, the first Press Conference was convened by the ‘Dakshin Baliapal Kshepanastra Ghati Birodhi Samiti’ the initial organisation, on December 15, 1984 and the second one was convened by
Dr. Harekrushna Mehtab the veteran leader of Orissa and the editor of a vernacular daily called the Prajatantra. Dr. Mehtab categorically announced that there was a distinct possibility of "blood shed" if the government would impose the project on the people. Sri Giri declared, 'The Ghati could be set up only on my dead body' (The Telegraph, November 21, 1985).

After mobilising support and solidarity from the intelligentsia, politicians and others in the State, the local forces engaged in spearheading the agitation, realised that without mobilising 'people's power' at grass roots, the 'State power' could not be confronted. So the phase from the month of September to November in the year 1985 witnessed, for the first time, phenomenal mobilisation against the proposed Ghati by various political leaders, intellectuals and activists of voluntary organisations. Not a single space in the area was spared from public meetings. Each and every hata, the weekly market in the village, where people from many villages come to sell their products and procure their requirements, was used as a forum for mobilisation. This signifies that the traditional social and cultural arrangements assumed new function of social mobilisation.

During the above phase, the prominent political leaders like Sri Biju Pattnaik, Sri Gadadhar Giri, Sri Samarendra Kundu, Sri Sarat Kar of the Janata Party, Sri Gananath Patra of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), Sri Viswanath Pandit of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Sri Kshetrabasi Pati of Sarvodaya Samiti organised and addressed a series of public meetings in the Ghati area. In a famous public meeting held on October 26, 1985 at Narayanpur, one of the biggest villages in the core area, Sri Biju Pattnaik gave a call for 'mass
solidarity' in order to have cohesive and concerted action against the State (Nayak’s record, n.d.).

**Formation of the Uttar Baleswar Kshepanastra Ghati Pratirodh Committee (UBKGPC) and the movement aftermath**

All these activities of mobilisation created conditions and forces which led the movement to a higher level of formalisation. This resulted in the constitution of an organisation named the UBKGPC. The formation of the UBKGPC on December 25, 1985 bridged all ideological gaps and united all the streams for the common goal of fighting against NMTR and displacement and for the protection of their future. The details of the structure of the UBKGPC, its constitution and functions will be discussed in the succeeding chapter.

The first major event in the year 1986 was the massive public meeting held on January 18, 1986 in the *hata* of Ratai, a village falling in the safety zone. Sri Biju Pattnaik addressed the gathering of around ten thousand people. He again addressed another massive gathering at the other end of the *Ghati* area on the same day (Nayak’s record, n.d.).

The UBKGPC gave a call to the people to observe 28th of the same month as the ‘Black Day' and the call was successfully observed by the inhabitants of *Ghati* area. Concluding the ‘Black Day', Sri Rabi Ray, a prominent leader of the Janata Party addressed a gathering of around fifty thousand people at Baliapal (*ibid*).

The month of February, 1986 was an eventful month in the history of the movement. On February 5, 1986 the agitators from Baliapal block under the leadership of the UBKGPC demonstrated in front of the District Collector’s...
office and on the next day two hundred to three hundred people moved to the State capital to demonstrate in front of the State Legislative Assembly. Again on 10th of February, the Students' Front staged a dharna in front of the office of the District Collector (The Prajatantra, February 11, 1986). On 28th of the same month around ten thousand people including a good number of women gheraoed the Tehsildar's office at Basta in response to a call Basta Chala (Walk to Basta) given by the UBKGPC. On the very next day, the people of Bhograi gheraoed the Tehsildar of Jaleswar and submitted a memorandum. The UBKGPC also participated in the gherao of the Tehsildar of Jaleswar (The Samaj, February 29, 1986).

In the meantime, with the participation of the CPI(M-L) activists the movement had taken a militant turn, and the leadership of the movement started taking ‘radical’ steps. As a mark of radicalisation, the UBKGPC declared the Ghati area as the ‘no-entry zone’ for the government officials barring the health officials. Gates were erected on the three entry roads into the area. These gates were viewed as the symbol of the movement and the symbol of protection of the area and the people, their home and health, their past, present and future (India Today, October 31, 1985; Dutta, 1987; The Indian Express, February 7, 1987). The gates were guarded by the people round the clock.

The UBKGPC instructed the people not to allow any outsider to enter into the area. The UBKGPC also asked the people to blow Sankh (conch-shells) and beat Thalis (metal plates) and Jhalis (brass plates) as the means of communication whenever any threat was sensed or any outsider was spotted. The informants revealed that these means were suggested by Sri Biju
Sankh is a religious symbol in Orissan culture, especially in the coastal districts of Orissa. So the use of Sankh and Jhalis does signify the religious symbolism used in the movement.

The record keeper of the UBKGPC, Sri Srihari Nayak noted March 2, 1986 as a day of much importance in the history of the movement. In the evening on the same day, the District Collector along with the Additional District Collector and the Sub-Divisional Officer stealthily entered into the barricaded area. The moment they were spotted, innumerable Sankhs were blown. Thousands of people, men, women and children, came out of their homes and gheraoed the officials. The people asked the officials as to why they entered into the area defying the ‘people’s curfew’, as they called it? They were made to get down from the vehicle and walk out of the area. After getting this news, the Superintendent of Police (S.P.) rushed to Baliapal with a contingent of force to rescue them. The leaders released the Sub-Divisional Officer to contact the S.P. and to persuade him not to involve in a direct confrontation with the people. The S.P. complied and did not try to force his entry into the area. The officials apologised to the people for their action and crossed the area on foot. The incident was celebrated by the people as the victory of ‘people’s power’ over ‘State Power’. It gave immense boost to the morale of the struggling people.

On March 3, 1986, the representatives of the State Unit of Ganatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan (GASS) (affiliated to All India Federation of Fighting for Democratic Rights) visited the area to mobilise the people and to pledge their solidarity (GASS, n.d.). The group included eminent persons of Orissa such as Dr. G. Mahapatra, a Scientist, Prof. JayaKrushna
Mishra, Sri Brajanath Rath, a noted poet, Sri Binod Mohanty, a journalist and a literati namely Sri Samarendra Nayak. The group addressed a public meeting in the famous hata of Amchua, a core village. On the next day, the group conducted a *padayatra* across the area.

On March 5, 1986, Sri Maheswar Bag, a former MLA and two other noted politicians of the State named Sri Ramachandra Das and Sri Pyarimohan Das, a former MLA, on behalf of ‘Orissa Krushak Mahasangha’ (Orissa Farmers’ Association) led a *padayatra*, across the Ghati area which they called *Janjagaran Padyatra*, (mass consciousness arousing pedestrian march) aimed at arousing the mass consciousness against the project. On their way, they addressed several public meetings and assured the people of their active support (Nayak’s record, n.d.).

After prolonged correspondence and efforts, the people of Baliapal-Bhograi area got their long cherished appointment with the Prime Minister of India. On March 17, 1986, a group of representatives consisting of twenty-nine members left for Delhi under the leadership of Sri Samarendra Kundu and Sri Gadadhar Giri. On March 20 at 12.00 noon they met the Prime Minister whom they appraised of the area, the people and their high living standard and the perceived consequences aftermath the setting up of the NMTR. They appealed the Prime Minister to shift the site to a place which would involve less displacement and cause minimal human miseries. The Prime Minister agreed to their suggestion and he proposed to assign the task of studying other alternate sites to two committees, one official and the other non-official, formed by the Opposition parties (*ibid*).
After the discussion with the Prime Minister, the leaders of the UBKGPC and the State level leaders involved in the movement received an invitation from the Defence Minister to come to the table for a discussion on the issue. Again a group of representatives headed by Sri Biju Pattnaik and Dr. Mehtab met Mr. Arun Singh, the then Defence Minister. The group insisted on discussion about the change of the site, whereas the Minister insisted on the discussion on rehabilitation programme. This dissensus made the group to stage a walk out registering their dissent (The Prajatantra, April 11, and April 18, 1986).

In the meantime, on April 2, 1986, the students’ wing of the Janata Party (Chhatra Janata) held a peaceful demonstration in front of the State Legislative Assembly. The demonstration was concluded with a massive public meeting at Bhubaneswar, the State Capital.

Besides the Chhatra Janata, the Leaders of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the students’ wing of the national level Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) also visited the area on May 3, 1986 and for two days they organised and addressed several public meetings strengthening the morale of the struggling people (Nayak’s record, n.d.).

In the first week of June 1986, i.e. on 5th the UBKGPC gave a call Baleswar Chala (March to Baleswar, the district headquarter). It was reported by the local dailies that around thirty thousand people assembled at Baleswar and held a mammoth rally. The rally was addressed by the prominent leaders like Sri Biju Pattnaik, Sri Nilamani Routray, Sri Santi Das, Sri Sarat Kar, Sri Banka Bihari DAs, Sri Samarendra Kundu, Sri Gadadhar Giri, Sri Hrudananda Mallik

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and others. The important feature of this rally was massive participation by women (The Samaj and the Prajatantra, June 6, 1986).

Just after the above event, in a move to make it a state wide movement, the Socialist Unity Centre of India (SUCI) declared 10th of June '86 as the ‘Protest Day’ against the Ghati, and appealed the people all over Orissa to make it a success (SUCI, n.d.). On that day, in response to the call a rally was organised in the Ghati area by the UBKGPC.

To obstruct the mobilisation activities, the Government imposed restrictions on meetings, demonstrations and rallies, which could not be held without the prior permission from the Police (The Prajatantra, June 23, 1986). However, this measure proved to be futile since the police administration was virtually defunct in the area.

The UBKGPC and the Institute for Motivating Self Employment (IMSE), a Voluntary Organisation which was mobilising the people in Bhograi Block, jointly appealed to the people to observe a bandh on 16th of July in both the blocks. And the bandh was reported to be successful in both Baliapal and Bhograi blocks (The Prajatantra, July 14, 1986 and July 17, 1986).

After the call Baleswar Chala in June, 1986, the UBKGPC again gave a call Bhubaneswar Chala (march to Bhubaneswar) on September 3, 1986, in order to demonstrate in front of the State Legislative Assembly. Around three thousand people from Baliapal-Bhograi area reached Bhubaneswar and around the same number of people including some of the leaders were arrested and detained at Balasore on their way to Bhubaneswar. The Government took all measures to obstruct the people on the way but could not become successful
Just after a week, around three thousand people under the leadership of the UBKGPC gheraoed the Block Development Officer (BDO) and submitted a memorandum to him.

In solidarity with the movement and in its effort to mobilise wide support for the cause, the All India Federation of Fighting for Democratic Rights (AIFOFR) organised a National Convention on the theme ‘Missile Testing Range at Baliapal’ on 21st and 22nd of September, 1986 at Bhubaneswar. The convention presided by Srimati Malati Chaudhury, a prominent freedom fighter, was attended by scientists, intellectuals, freedom fighters, politicians and activists from all over the country. Sri Brundaban Raj, the Vice-President of the UBKGPC and Sri Arun Jena, the Convener of the Students’ Front, Ms. Rama Chaudhury, the convener of the Women’s Front, along with many others participated in the convention. On the last day, i.e. on 22nd September a peaceful march was conducted through the city. The march ended with the submission of a memorandum to the Governor of Orissa (Baliapal Bartta, Bulletin No. 1, August, 1987).

The Chief Minister had a programme to visit Baliapal on October 7, 1986. As per the call given by the UBKGPC, around twenty thousand people marched to Baliapal on the same day to register their protest against the proposed project before the Chief Minister. But the Chief Minister did not turn up (The Prajatantra, October 8, 1986). The local press ridiculed the cancellation of the visit of the Chief Minister.

One of the landmarks in the annals of the movement was the visit of six Opposition Members of Parliament (M.P.) to the area. They pledged their
solidarity and active support to the people. The M.P.s were Prof. Madhu Dandvate (Janata Party), Ms. Geeta Mukherjee (CPI), Mr. Basudev Acharya (CPI-M), Mr. Satya Prakash Malaviya (Lok Dal), Mr Piyush Tirkey (RSP), Mr Kishore Chandra Deo (Congress-S). In a large public meeting Prof. Madhu Dandvate declared, "........ missile base can only be constructed on my dead body." He also declared to launch a Bardoli-type movement at Baliapal if the Government did not withdraw the Project. The M.P.s assured the people that they would raise the issue in the ensuing Parliament Session. This event went a long way in boosting the sagging morale of the struggling mass (The Statesman, October 19, 1986).

The visit of the M.P.s was the reflection of the movement at the national level. The efforts of the local leaders to harness wider support seemed to bear fruits. This also signified the extension of the struggle to the floor of the Parliament.

In a counter move, the Congress (I) convened a district level party meeting at Baliapal on 19th of October, 1986. A strong contingent of para-military force was deployed at Baliapal for the purpose. This was interpreted by the leaders of the movement as a mere show of force by the State Government in order to terrorise the people. The meeting was attended by some of the Congress (I) Ministers, notable among them were Sri Jugal Kishor Pattnaik, Sri Bhopal Mahapatra and Sri Jadunath Das Mahapatra. The Ministers asked the workers to mobilise people to cooperate with the Government in setting up the defence project (Nayak’s record, n.d.).
On November 5, 1986 a handful of persons including the office bearers of the UBKGPC and some state level opposition leaders moved to the office of the District Collector to stage dharna as per the decision taken in an all Opposition Parties' meeting. At Balasore around one hundred and fifty persons including the office bearers of the UBKGPC were rounded up by the police under the National Security Act (NSA). While the news of arrest reached the Ghati area, thousands of people marched to the block head quarter in Baliapal and gheraoed the local Police Station. They threatened to continue the gherao until their leaders were released. The only slogan shouted was 'Police Julum Band Kara' (Stop Police atrocities). Finally the gherao was lifted when the leaders were released and brought to Baliapal (The Prajatantra, November 7 and November 11, 1986).

The people's movement against the missile base was also supported by the Teachers' Association of Orissa and all the Students' Organisations except the National Students' Union of India, affiliated for Congress (I). On November 11, 1986, the office bearers of the Teachers' Association addressed a public meeting at Balasore in which they appealed the Government to shift the site and pressed their support to the UBKGPC. On 15th of the same month, in the premise of Jagai College the Students' Front organised a public meeting which was addressed by the students' representatives of various Colleges in Orissa (The Hindu, December 11, 1986).

Besides the support of the teachers and students, the movement also received support from the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), affiliated to the CPI. On 29th of November around two hundred and fifty members of
AITUC conducted a by-cycle rally across the area and addressed a public meeting at Ratai, a village in Zone ‘B’.

All these activities went on unabatedly in the Ghati area which was under ‘People’s Curfew’, as called by the leaders. ‘People’s Curfew’ meant the ban of entry for the government officials into the area. It was the strategical backbone of the movement. The State administrative functionaries made persistent efforts to break this ban. On November 13, 1986, the Special Inspector General of Police and the Superintendent of Police entered into the area in civil clothes and in a civilian jeep. But they were detected by the people and forced to leave the area (Nayak’s record, n.d.). Again on November 30, 1986, the District Collector and B.D.O. made a similar abortive attempt.

When all the efforts made by the officials to enter into the area failed, the Government airdropped leaflets in the Ghati area on December 1, 1986. The content of the leaflet was a sketchy enumeration of the rehabilitation programme and simultaneously a threat of dire consequences for taking law into hands and for not agreeing to the proposal of the Government (Department of Public Relations, Orissa, n.d.).

To counter the State propaganda and to protest against the threat, the UBKGPC called for a bandh in the district on the 5th of December, 1986. The bandh was reported to be successful with the help of the Janata Party, the CPI and CPI (M). The vehicular traffic was off the road. Even the train services were effected. Not only the business establishments were closed, but also the agricultural activities were suspended (The Hindu, December 6, 1986, The Prajantra, December 6, 1986).
As per the assurance given by the six opposition M.P.s, just after a day of bandh, the entire Opposition in the Lok Sabha staged a walk-out in protest against the Government's obstinace on setting up the missile base at Baliapal ignoring the human cost. The Opposition in the Lok Sabha suggested that the authorities should keep its decision in abeyance till a team consisting of M.P.s from all the parties visited the area to ascertain the people's feelings and estimate the cost and benefit of the project (The Economic Times, December 8, 1986).

After the airdropping of the leaflets, the Block Development Officer along with some other official, on pretext to visit some Primary Health Centres located in certain coastal villages, entered into the area through sea on December 7. The Fishermen's Front which was assigned with the onus of guarding the coast, spotted the official boat. Around fifteen to twenty boats chased and nabbed the official boat. The officials were asked as to why they violated 'people's curfew'? They had to go out of the area by covering around 10 kilometres on foot (The Samaj, December 9, 1986).

Such persistent efforts by the administrative functionaries to enter into the area had mainly two purposes: first, the official could be able to mobilise support for the project and to inform the people about the compensation and rehabilitation programme; second, the strategical mainstay, i.e. 'people curfew' which was the symbol of strength of the movement could be broken which, in turn, would lead to the loss of confidence among the people in themselves and in the leadership. When all these efforts proved to be futile the Government resorted to repressive measures. Both the Baliapal and Bhograi
blocks were put under an undeclared economic blockade. The supply of essential commodities such as kerosene, edible oil, sugar, etc. was stopped. The students were not issued caste and income certificates. Even all the developmental activities such as construction and repairing of roads, school buildings were also stopped. None from the Ghati area was granted fresh loan by the bank (Ahmed, 1987; The Telegraph, April 2, 1987; Baliapal Bartha, Bulletin no 2, September, October, November 1987; The Statesman, May 1, 1988; The Indian Express, May 25, 1988). All these measures were aimed at pressurizing the people, in general, and small peasants, landless labourers, in particular, to concede.

The Government took all measures, though covertly, to obstruct the transportation of cash crops such as pana, betel nuts, cashew nuts, ground nuts, coconuts, fish, etc. (ibid). The purpose was to strike at the mainstay of the economy of area which would consequently make the people submit. Moreover, this was specifically aimed at hitting the interest of the upper and middle peasantry and the traders dealing with cash crops. These categories were the main targets for the Government since they provided both leadership and resources to the movement. So, the economic blockade was the main counter strategy adopted by the State to demoralise and demotivate the people, in general, and the upper and middle peasantry as well as traders, in particular.

In protest against these vindictive measures by the Government, the people of Baliapal observed January 1, 1987, the beginning of a new year as the day of pledge to continue their struggle in a more intensified way. On that day, to oppose the state imposed blockade a procession was taken out through the area
The month of January, 1987, witnessed a tragic incident in the history of the movement. On the 12th of January, Sri Gadadhar Giri, the charismatic leader and the President of the UBKGPC passed away. The demise of such a key leader created a vacuum in leadership. The implications in detail will be discussed in the succeeding Chapter. Almost the entire population of the area cutting across caste, class, gender and age, spent two sleepless nights after they received the shocking news of the death of 43 year old Sri Giri at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Delhi (The Samaj, January 15, 1987, The Baliapal Bartta, Bulletin No. 1, 1987; The Telegraph, January 22, 1987).

The people of Baliapal-Bhograi area, threatened with eviction and shocked by the loss of their greatest leader, resolved at the mass condolence rally to strengthen the movement for which Sri Giri gave, 'his blood, sweat and finally his life'. The leaders of all the Opposition Parties, such as the Janata Party, the CPI, the CPI (M) and the BJP, called upon the people in the same rally to honour Sri Giri's memory by renewing their pledge to resist the setting up of the test range with all determination (The Telegraph, January 22, 1987).

For the first time, in the whole course of the movement, street plays were used as the means of mobilisation. From February 7, 1987 onwards, two streetplays based on the 'anti-missile base' theme were enacted in various villages in the Ghati area. Seeing the unprecedented massive response of the people to the street plays, the Police made a futile attempt to stop the staging of
such plays (The Prajatantra, February 21, 1987; The Telegraph, November 30, 1988).

One of the major events which occurred on February 19, 1987 was, around twenty thousand people under the leadership of the UBKGPC, staged a demonstration in front of the Block office at Baliapal where the Sub-Divisional Officer and the B.D.O. were present. The officials were given a memorandum demanding the withdrawal of ‘economic sanctions' imposed on Baliapal-Bhograi area. On the same day, the opposition MLAs raised the issue of ‘economic blockades' in the State Legislative Assembly (The Prajatantra, February 20, 1987).

Post Giri Phase
In the meantime, after the demise of Sri Giri, schism germinated in the leadership between the CPI (M-L) and the block consisting of all other parties headed mainly by the Janata Party. It was noted by the official record keeper Sri Nayak that on March 7, 1987, around one hundred activists of the three Fronts namely Women’s Front, Students’ Front and Youth Front, jointly took out a procession from the village Panchupalli to Adobhutiya. They raised slogans like, “Weaving mill is death mill"Weaving mill is entrance to NMTR", "Model village is butcher field", etc. The ideological underpinning of such slogans will be analysed in the succeeding chapter. The processionists condemned the ‘favourable' attitude of the leaders, especially of those belonging to the Janata Party, towards certain rehabilitation measures such as Spinning mill, ITI, grants to the colleges, etc. They explained to the people in several small meetings as to what should be the attitude of the leaders as well as of the people towards
rehabilitation measures and how the attitudes adopted by the Janata Party leaders were harmful to the movement. Some of the Janata Party activists confronted them directly and a minor scuffle took place. This was the first instance of direct confrontation between the Janata Party followers and that of the CPI (M-L).

However, the leadership of the UBKGPC remained unchallenged. On April 5, 1987, the District Collector was scheduled to visit the Block Office of Baliapal. The UBKGPC gave a call to gherao the Block Office on that day. Several thousands of people gheraoed the office and blocked all the roads connecting the block headquarter. However, the District Collector did not turn up. (The Samaj, April 8, 1987).

On April 12, 1987, a public meeting was called by the UBKGPC at Deula, a village situated in the periphery of the Ghati area. Thousands of people from all corners came in huge processions to attend the meeting. The main point highlighted by the leaders was the utter failure of rehabilitation policies of the Government at several other places in the country. The case which was mainly highlighted was that of the oustees of Rourkela. The Rourkela Steel Plant uprooted around two thousand families who were assured of jobs by the authorities. But, till then, only one hundred and twenty-nine persons had been provided with jobs of unskilled and manual nature. It was cited that certain model villages, set up in the district of Cuttack had been washed away in rain and had turned into a grazing ground. The leaders also appealed to the Prime Minister to visit the area and see the affluence of the people with his own eyes and, then, to take the decision (The Samaj, April 16, 1987).
On May 4, 1987, more than one thousand Jute mill workers from a place called Rupsa (around 30 kms away from Baliapal) along with the representatives of the UBKGPC took out a big procession at Basta. The women workers who participated in large number, remained in the forefront as a strategical measure to hinder the Police. But, inspite of this, Police resorted to Cane-charge and arrested many of the processionists (Nayak’s record, n.d.).

On May 22, 1987, some Cabinet Ministers of the State were scheduled to attend the Silver Jubilee function of Sachindra Nath High School at Langaleswar, a place situated around fifteen kilometres away from Baliapal. The UBKGPC gave a call to march to Langaleswar in large number to demonstrate before the Ministers. It was reported that around fifteen thousand of people including a large number of women went to Langaleswar. The local officials and the Baliapal Youth Congress President were gheraoed on the way. When the Youth Congress President tried to defy the gherao, he was kidnaped by some of the CPI (M-L) activists and released later. This action of the CPI (M-L) activists was vehemently criticised by the leaders of the UBKGPC. This was used as a pretext to expel Sri Patra from the UBKGPC.

During the period from June to August, 1987, the movement went into relative lull without much activities as there was no provocation from the Government. However, in the month of September on the 5th, some Congress (I) activists distributed leaflets alleging that the leaders of the UBKGPC were engaged in embezzling funds and other corrupt activities (Satarka Ghanti, n.d.). In order to caution the people against such malpractice by the leaders, some of the local Congress (I) activists who supported the establishment of the NMTR
called a public meeting. As a part of counter strategy this was a move by the party in power, i.e. the Congress (I), to defame the movement leadership. This tactical move was not only aimed at creating cleavage between the leaders and the people, but also within the leadership. As a counter-action, the UBKGPC called a public meeting on the same day. The meeting unanimously passed a resolution to constitute committee in every Panchayat to look into such complain of corruption.

On October 2, 1987, the Labour Minister of Orissa, Sri Bhopal Mahapatra along with some officials was to visit Kasafal village to lay the foundation stone for the model villages for the oustees. The UBKGPC and all the Fronts jointly called upon the people of the Ghati area to blockade the main road. Thousands of people, men and women, responding to the call, blocked the road at a place called Bhaunreswar, eight kilometres away from Baliapal. While the Ministers learnt about the blockade, he went back. The protesters celebrated this as their success and held a victory meeting (Baliapal Bartta, Bulletin no. 2, September, October, November, 1987; The Samaj, October 5, 1987).

On November 17, 1987, a public meeting was organised in the hata of Kespura village. The meeting was addressed by the leaders of the Steering Committee, Students’ Front, Youth Front and Women’s Front, where they narrated the miserable consequences of the missiles and the missile testing range (Baliapal Bartta, Bulletin no. 2, September, October, November, 1987). Again on November 30, 1987, a massive public meeting was held at Pratappur village. Leaders like Sri Biju Pattnaik and Sri Nilamani Routray addressed the meeting reiterating their support (Nayak’s record, n.d.).
The third year, i.e. 1988 in the lifecycle of the movement unfolded with the vow taken by the UBKGPC on the occasion of the Shraddha, the death anniversary of Sri Giri which fell on January 31 to continue the fight till they finish. To rejuvenate the movement, the UBKGPC gave a call to blockade the main road connecting Baliapal on February 3, the routine date for the visit of the District Collector. The purpose was to hinder the D.C. from reaching Baliapal.

In order to avert the blockade, the authorities made massive police bandobast. As reported in a daily, fifteen platoons of Orissa State Armed Police, five platoons of Armed Police (Reserve), three platoons of Home guards and one platoon of women police were deployed. As many as six units of the Government's public relations departments were sent to Baliapal to explain to the common people the reason for choosing the area as the location of the test range and to acquaint them with the steps to be taken for rehabilitation of displaced persons (The Telegraph, April 21, 1988).

The District Collector arrived at Baliapal three hours ahead of the schedule catching the leaders and agitators unaware. However, around twenty thousand people gheraoed the Block office on that day and pressed their demands before the District Collector. The whole exercise was a covert threat of repression conveyed to the agitators. The people were exhibited the 'State power'.

The movement also attracted international attention when two M.P.s belonging to the famous Green Party of West Germany visited the area on February 19, 1988. They conveyed their concern to the Prime Minister about the ecological and humane disaster the project would bring about. A series of
articles highlighting the issue also appeared in the newspapers of West Germany (The Committee to Assist the Struggle of Bhograi and Baliapal Against Missile Base, 1988).

On April 14, 1988 a group of four to five hundred persons from the Ghati area marched to the village Basudevpur under the joint leadership of the UBKGPC and the Fronts to demolish the foundation laid for the construction of model villages (The Prajatantra, April 18, 1988).

In the meantime, the Government issued strict instructions to the district officials to break open the barricades by any means and to enter into the area. So, the idea of "Operation Baliapal" which would be discussed later in chronological order, was conceived and preparations on all fronts started. To give a political back up to such an action the ruling Congress (I) called a party conference at Baliapal on May 2, 1988. To oppose such moves, around fifty thousand people walked to Baliapal to disrupt the Conference. In view of the situation, the conference was postponed. But the Chief Minister visited Balasore to attend an official programme on 6th of May. The UBKGPC gave a call to demonstrate at Balasore but the police took all precautions to foil the plan of action of the UBKGPC (The Samaj, May 7, 1988).

The Congress (I) Party conference which was postponed earlier, was hurriedly convened on May 13, under heavy police deployment. It was reported that the conference was a lacklustre affair with the armed police heavily outnumbering the Congress (I) workers. The conference was concluded with a rally. The MLA of Bhograi, Srimati Uma Rani Patra and the local M.P. Sri Chintamani Jena did not participate in the rally despite the instructions of the
Defence Minister to the Congress (I) leaders to do so (The Indian Express, May 18, 1988).

Two days before the conference, i.e. on May 11, the State Government organised 'Operation Baliapal' in a massive way. The operation had the clearance of the top brass of the administration in the State Capital as well as Delhi. The company commanders were given permission to clear the passage by use of firearms if necessary. The small block headquarter, Baliapal looked like an army barrack (Kundu, 1988; The Telegraph, May 15, 1988).

The twenty-two gazetted officers who were ordered to be attached to the armed units refused to carry out the orders on the ground of their personal security. The Central Intelligence also sent an alarming report to the Centre as well as to the State Government cautioning about heavy casualties, if 'Operation Baliapal' would be carried out (ibid).

Despite all these, the District Collector moved with the forces to enter into the area. More than fifty thousand people, men and women, old, young and children had gathered on the main entry road to deter the D.C. and his platoons. The UBKGPC and all the Fronts unitedly led this protest action of the people. The children and the women remained in the forefront. The D.C. tried to persuade the leaders with also the show of force to allow him to enter into the area. At last, sensing the determination of the unyielding leaders and the protesters, and visualising the disastrous consequences, the District Collector retreated. Sri Samarendra Kundu, the Janata Party leader, actively involved in the movement, commented, "Fortunately another Jalianwalabagh was not enacted" (Kundu, 1988).
After this incident, Sri Iswar Das, the then District Collector who was specially brought to the district to handle the situation, confessed and conveyed to the Government that until and unless people were mobilised, it would never be possible to implement the project. Rather any arbitrary application of force would result in profuse blood shed, he cautioned. After this, Sri Das was replaced by Sri P. Pattnaik who had a reputation of handling such situations, was brought in. Since the date of joining, the new D.C. started planning a forcible entry into the area.

The Phase of Negotiations

After sensing the District Collector's plan and the repressive attitude of the Government, the UBKGPC wanted to negotiate with the Chief Minister to avert the situations which might cause heavy blood shed and innumerable deaths. Sri Biju Pattnaik agreed to mediate between the Chief Minister and the UBKGPC. In view of this, the UBKGPC held a meeting on May 16 to nominate a group of representatives which would hold talks with the Chief Minister (Nayak's record, n.d.).

The negotiation was held at Bhubaneswar on May 18. The Chief Minister apart, other Government representatives who participated in negotiation were the Revenue Minister, the Chief Secretary, the Home Secretary and the District Collector. From the Opposition, apart from Sri Biju Pattnaik, those present were the former Union Ministers, Sri Rabi Ray and Sri Samarendra Kundu. The UBKGPC was represented by a nineteen-member team headed by Sri Brundaban Raj, the acting President of the UBKGPC (The Prajatantra, May 25, 1988, Rao, July 9, 1988).
The representatives of the People's movement maintained that nothing short of shifting of the proposed test range from the Baliapal- Bhograi area would satisfy the people. The Chief Minister maintained that the issue of shifting the site could not figure in the talks as the matter was beyond the purview of the State Government. He alleged that the law and order had broken down in the area because of non-accessibility of the officials and urged to lift the barricades. In contrary, the leaders rejected the Chief Minister's proposal and refused to lift the 'curfew' (Rao, July 9, 1988). However, it was agreed upon that the negotiation would continue. The Chief Minister assured that the authorities would not use force to enter into the area, till the next meeting was held (ibid).

Such direct negotiation with the Chief Minister took place for the first time in the history of the movement. Sri B.H. Mehtab, the editor of the Prajatantra, a widely circulated Oriya daily, called this to be the beginning of the second phase of Baliapal People's movement (Mehatab, 1988).

Contrary to the Chief Minister's assurance, the District Collector, who had also participated in the negotiation talk, tried to break open the barricades on May 25 with the help of armed police. Within no time, innumerable Sankhs were blown. No sooner had the message was symbolically communicated, than thousands of people rushed to protect the gates and formed a powerful human wall to prevent the entry of the District Collector. Once again, the women and children remained in the forefront while the menfolk backed up. The District Collector along with the Police were forced to bid a retreat (Rao, July 9, 1988).
In the meantime, the Government unleashed a campaign in a section of the press that the opposition leaders had agreed to remove the barricades and lift the 'people's curfew'. Obviously this was aimed at confusing the people. To counter this rumourous campaign, a public meeting was convened at Baliapal on May 29, where Sri Biju Pattnaik and other leaders refuted the propaganda of the Government. In a public meeting, he called on the people to observe 30th of May as Baliapal Dibasa (Baliapal Day) (The Samaj, May 31, 1988). The UBKGPC also convened a public meeting on the same day as a mark of observance of Baliapal Dibasa. It was attended by around one and half lakhs of people. The meeting was addressed by Mrs. Menaka Gandhi and Sri Biju Pattnaik (The Samaj, June 1, 1988).

The year 1988 was closed in the life history of the resistance movement with a notable event which took place on December 30, 1988. Under the leadership of the UBKGPC. Around fifteen thousand of people marched in a procession to a place called Debbhog, the site for the construction of the model villages, to stop the construction activities. Earlier also the construction of foundation for model villages was destroyed by the people (Nayak's record, n.d.).

After this action, again the movement went into a lull. The Government did not take any further step to go ahead with the project. This was probably because of the forth-coming General Elections. So much so, the Government also lifted the economic blockades, stopped troubling the businessmen and resumed developmental activities. A brief note on the present situation is given in the appendix.