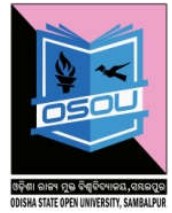


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# UNIT-1 NATIONALIST POLITICS IN ODISHA

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## 1.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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This chapter will discuss the nationalist politics in Odisha. The first two Gandhian movements, like the Non-Cooperation movement and Civil Disobedience Movement will be discussed here. After studying this lesson, the learners will be able to

- Know the nationalist politics in Odisha
- Understand the Non-Cooperation Movement in Odisha
- Know about Civil Disobedience Movement in Odisha

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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The second half of the 19th century witnessed the rise of nationalist consciousness in India. After a long rule in India, nationalist feelings blossomed in the minds of the oppressed and suppressed India. The whole of India plunged into the stream of nationalism. Odisha being a part of the nation showed unprecedented enthusiasm in it. Nationalism started in Odisha in two ways. The first was the unification of Odia speaking regions, which were there under different administrative divisions. Secondly, Odisha was involved with the mainstream nationalist movement in the later period. Under the banner of “Utkal Sammilani”, founded by Madhusudan Das, the Odia speaking areas were united. With the emergence of Gopabandhu Das, the Utkal Sammilani was merged with the idea of the Indian National Congress, and a new era started thereof. The two Gandhian Movements like Non Cooperation movement and Civil Disobedient Movement were undertaken in Odisha vigorously.

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## 1.2 NATIONALIST POLITICS IN ODISHA

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Before forming a separate province of Odisha, in 1936, different Odia speaking regions were there under administrative division of the then central province, Madras province and Bengal province. The then Odisha was only Cuttack, Puri and Balesore. And these areas were under the province of Bengal. For higher education, the people of these areas had to go to Calcutta University. Lack of communication, the distance of Calcutta University and the economic condition of students of these regions were different hindrances to take education there. That is why when the political consciousness in Bengal was high, that was very low or absent in the Odia speaking areas. Even the Odisha was not represented on the national platform. The Bengali elites dominated them. Demands of the Odias were not being put forth on a national platform. That is why the Odias wanted to have an organization of their own to ventilate their grievances. And in this line, the “Utkal Union Conference” was formed in 1903, under the leadership of Utkal Gourab Madhusudan Das. And between 1903 to 1920, the “Utkal Sammilani” was the most important political organization in Odisha. The people associated with this organization were some middle-class

intelligentsia and rulers of princely states and Zamindars. The political awakening was confined to them in the 1st two decades of the 20th century and did not percolate to the ordinary people. The primary objective of the “Utkal Union Conference” was to unite the Odia speaking people and regions which were under different providences. And till 1920, the sole leader of this organization was Madhusudan Das, who undertook all activities in the line of the moderates. He was getting the support of moderate leaders like R.N. Bhanja Deo, Baikuntha Nath De, Harihar Panda and Biswanath Kar etc. They had firm faith in the British sense of justice and fair play.

With the advent of Gopabandhu Das in Odisha politics, a complete change took in the ways and activity of the Utkal Union conference. A conflict of ideas took place between the two great sons of Odisha like Madhusudan and Gopabandhu. Ultimately Gopabandhu became victorious and dominated Odisha politics to words in 1920. Under the leadership of Gopabandhu Das, as many as 35 delegates from Odisha attended the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress in 1920. Prominent among them were HarekrushnaMahatab, Mukunda Prasad Das, Jagabandhu Singh, JadumaniMangaraja, Bhagirathi Mahapatra, Niranjana Pattnaik, Chandra Sekhar Behera, Dharanidhar Mishra. The National leaders accepted the resolution for the formation of a provincial congress committee based on language. The resolution of non-cooperation was passed by Congress.

### **1.2.1. Chakradharpur session of Utkal Sammilani**

After attending the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress, the leaders of Odisha attended the Chakradharpur session (1921) of Utkal Sammilani. The session was presided over by Jagabandhu Singh, an advocate of Puri and a close friend of Gopabandhu Das. Gopabandhu Das mainly influenced the proceedings of the session. The leaders felt that the Sammilani remained isolated from the ordinary people. The delegates accepted the objectives and programs of the Indian National Congress and merged the Utkal Union Congress with the congress organization. And after that, till 1928, Gopabandhu was the undisputed leader of the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee.

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### **1.3. FORMATION OF UTKAL PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE.**

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Based on the formation of a provincial congress committee on a language basis, the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee was formed. Gopabandhu Das became the president of the committee. The committee nominated Ekram Rasul as vice president, Bhagirathi Mahapatra, the Secretary and Brajabandhu Das as joint secretary. Other committees and sub-committees were also formed. In different regions, different leaders were given leadership for organizational work. HarekrushnaMahatab in Balasore, Nilakantha Das in Sambalpur, Godabarish Das in Singhbhum, JadumaniMangaraj in Kendrapada, Jagabandhu Singh and Krupasindhu Mishra in Puri, Rajakrushna Bose in Jajpur, and Bhagiarati Mahapatra in Cuttack Sadar were given organization work.



### **1.3.1. Visit of Gandhiji to Odisha**

The visit of Gandhiji to Odisha in March 1921 was an important event during the Non-Co-operation Movement. It encouraged the congress workers of Odisha. On the occasion of Dolapurnima, Mahatma Gandhi arrived at Cuttack with Kasturba on 23rd March 1921. On the riverbank of Kathajodi, he addressed in the mammoth gathering. After that, he met lawyers, students, women in different places and explained the significance of Non-Co-operation. Then he visited regions like Bhadrak, Puri, Satyabadi and Berhampur. He emphasized more enrollment and collection of the Tilakswaraj fund. Programmes of village reconstruction, the opening of national school, working of the panchayat, production khadi as village industry and removal of untouchability were the other programmes he focused on. He also visited Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya to see its functioning. Gopabandhu Das was in constant touch with Gandhiji throughout his tour.

### **1.3.2. Programmes of Non- Cooperation in Odisha**

Different programmes like boycott of foreign goods, courts and educational institutions, use of Khadi and charkha, hindhumuslim unity, eradication of untouchability, prohibition and spread of national education were carried out throughout Odisha.

### **1.3.3. Boycott of English educational institutions and establishment of national school**

The students of Zilla School, Sambalpur, were the first in Odisha to boycott their educational institution. Student leaders like Laxminarayan Mishra, Jagannath Mishra, Nrushingha Guru left the Zilla school and joined the Non-Co-operation Movement. Subsequently, students from undivided Cuttack, Puri, Balasore boycott school and join the movement. Prominent leaders like Harekrushna Mahatab, Nabakrushna Choudhry, Nityananda Kanungo, JadumaniMangaraj and others also left their studies and plunged into the stream Non-Co-operation Movement. The Satyabadi Bana Vidyalaya, established by Gopabandhu Das in 1909, played a prominent role in imparting national education to the students. Many national schools were established in Sambalpur, Berhampur, Chakradharpur, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Soro, Basta and Paralakhemundi. Spinning and weaving were taught along with general education to the pupils. To coordinate the activities of all these schools, The Utkal Sahitya Sikhya Parishad was established with Nandakishore Das as secretary.

### **1.3.4. Establishment of Congress Ashram**

To train and provide shelter to the Satyagrahis, the party leaders established many training centres or Ashrams in places like Puri, Cuttack, Balasore, Jagatsingpur, Sakhigopal, Soro, Bhadrak etc. Lesson on truth, non-violence, Satyagraha, spinning and weaving were imparted in these Ashrams. Swaraj Ashram of Cuttack, Alaka

Ashram of Jagatsingpur under Bhagirathi Mahapatra and Gopabandhu Choudhury, Swaraj Mandir of Balasore under HarekrushnaMahatab were the prominent Ashram of that time. The Swaraj Sevak Sangha was established at Cuttack to coordinate the activities of the students who participated in the movement.

### **1.3.5. Boycott of Foreign Goods**

Boycott of foreign goods was another program of the Non-Co-operation Movement. People all over Odisha boycotted foreign goods and used Swadesi goods. The Satyagrahi persuaded the cloth merchant of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Sambalpur to stop the import of foreign clothes. Merchant selling foreign clothes of Balasore were socially ostracized. People publicly burnt foreign garments. Under the leadership of Rama Devi, women organized bonfires of foreign clothes to bring awareness among the public of Cuttack. Even the Odia labour working in cotton mills of Kolkata refused to carry the boxes containing foreign garments. Gopabandhu Das persuaded the people to wear Khadi instead of foreign clothes on festive occasions. The Satyagrahis created public awareness to popularize “Charkha”. Public consciousness to boycott foreign goods and use of Swadesi goods was created through nationalist writings. Nirranjan Pattanayak played a significant role in popularizing Khadi in Berhampur.

### **1.3.6. Boycott of Courts**

Another programme of the Non-Cooperation Movement was a boycott of courts. Gopabandhu Das left the practice earlier. Bhagirathi Mahapatra of Cuttack, Achutyananda Purohit and MahendranathBarma in Sambalpur and Biswanath Das of Berhampur left their legal practice jointed the movement. They persuaded the people to boycott courts and judicial institutions and to establish local panchayat to get justice. Nationalist poet Banchanidhi Mohanty of Bhadrak and Goura Mohan Das of Srijong of Balesore district tried to administer justice to the ordinary people by establishing local adalats. Similar local adalats were established in Aul, Jajpur and Tritol.

### **1.3.7. Resignation from Government Services**

Many Government servants working in different capacities resigned to join the Non-Co-operation movement. Prominent among them were Pandit Lingaraj Mishra from the post of the profession of Sanskrit from Muzzafarpur Government college, Nilakantha Das from the post of professor of Odia from Calcutta University, GopabandhuChoudury from the post of deputy magistrate of Bargarh, Surendra nath Das from the post of Sub-inspector of Balesore, Mahammad Hanif from the post of exercise sub-Inspector, Purna Chandra Das and Raghunath Mishra resigned from teachership from Government schools. Similarly, Kshetra Mohan Mohanty and Haricharan Mohanty left the post of a Government clerk. Chandra Sekhar Behera of Sambalpur resigned from the post of clerk of Nagpur Secretariat. Those Salyagrahis spread the message of Gandhiji in their respective areas.



### **1.3.8. Prohibition**

Prohibition was another important programme of the Non-Co-operation Movement. Satyagrahis used to picket before the liquor shops and persuaded the people not to use any type of intoxicant. Gandhiji's programme of prohibition was immensely successful in Odisha.

### **1.3.9. Repressive Measure by the Government**

The British government adopted various measures to suppress the tide of the Non-Co-operation Movement. Lathi Charge and flogging were very common. For the publication of one article against the government in his "Samaj" daily, Gopabandhu was sent to jail. The Mishra press of Sambalpur was fined Rs 25/- for printing a poem captioned Swaraj Sangeet. The police arrested many leaders like Harekrushna Mahatab, Mathura Mohan Behera, Banchhanidhi Mohanty, Daitari Sahu, Kamruddin Hak, Balaram Das, Laxminayaran Mishra and many others. Due to the Chauri Chaura incident of 5th February 1922, Gandhiji stopped the Non-Co-operation Movement. After that, the Non-Co-operation Movement was also suspended in Odisha.

### **1.3.10 Kanika Meli**

The Kanika rebellion was another important event in Odisha during Non Co-operation Movement. Raja Rajendra Nayaran Bhanja Deo of Kanika was very powerful and a great supporter of the British authority. By imposing heavy taxes and land revenue he exploited the peasant. The Satyagrahis came to know about the injustice and exploitation of the peasants of Kanika. They requested the king to take some benevolent step. But the king ignored it. Consequently there was a rising in Kanika known as Kanika Meli. The Raja suppressed the revolt with the help of the British. As a result of which two persons died and many more injured due to police firing. The Kanika incident became public through the "Samaj" and "Utkal Deepika". Congress leaders were not allowed to enter Kanika. Gopabandhu Das and Bhagirathi Mahapatra were arrested in charge of breaking the laws and were sent to Hajaribag jail.

The non-co-operation movement was carried out by the leader of Odisha very successfully. People of Odisha boycotted foreign goods and adopted Swadeshi goods. The Visit Mahatma Gandhi promoted the men and women to follow the ideal and philosophy of Gandhiji and participated in the movement vigorously. Although the British Government suppressed the movement, still many leaders were created to carry forward the struggle in future.

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## 1.4. CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT

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The Civil Disobedience Movement was another remarkable movement in the nationalist politics of Odisha. After the authorization of Gandhiji to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 by the Congress working committee, Gandhiji started it by breaking salt laws at Dandi, a village of Gujrat coast. In Odisha the above discussion was received with great enthusiasm. Because Odisha, once upon was a great center of salt manufacture which has been hit by the government policy of salt monopoly. Hence forth efforts were going on to revive the manufacture of salt, but in vein. Imposition of salt law was considered as the worst form of exploitation by the colonial government. Salt was an essential commodity and any tax on salt was pinching the pocket of common man. People became happy to know that again thousands of families would earn their livelihood by manufacturing salt from sea water and selling it at low rate.

### 1.4.1 Salt Satyagraha

The Utkal Pradesh Congress committee held a meeting held at Balasore, on 16th March 1930 to resolve to break the salt law as a starter of the Civil Disobedience Movement. It was after the death of Gopabandhu Das in 1928, Gopabandhu Choudhury took the leadership of Utkal Pradesh Congress committee. He was also requested to chalk out the programmes and the district congress committee was to recruit volunteers for taking part in the movement. Inchudi was selected to be an ideal place for salt satyagraha. Congress leaders like HarekrushnaMahatab and Surendranath Das made untiring efforts to organize satyagrahis at Balasore. On 6th April Gandhiji broke the salt law. After that 21 satyagrahis of Odisha started their journey on foot from Swaraj Ashram of Cuttack. They were led by Gopabandhu Choudhury and Acharya Harihara. On 31st March leaders like Sudarshan Praharaj, Narayana Das, Akalananda Behera and SadasivaSadangi travelled to Balasore to explain to the people the significance of salt Satyagraha. Gopabandhu Choudhury was arrested on 8th April. After his arrest Acharya Harihar led the movement. Women leaders like Rama Devi and Malati Devi ceremoniously garlanded the satyagrahis at Cuttack before they left for Inchudi. On 12th April the satyagrahis reached Balasore and then they proceeded to Inchudi. Hundreds of people were gathered to give grand welcome to the satyagrahis. In the mean while women leaders like Rama Devi, MalatiDedvi, Kokila Devi, Janhabi Devi and Subhadra Mahatab had arrived at Inchudi. On 13th April Acharya Harihar waded into the sea and picked up some salt earth in the presence of thousands of people. Acharya Harihar and seven others volunteers were arrested by the police. But the satyagrahis defied the salt law with great enthusiasm. Women under the leadership of Rama Devi and Malati Devi violated the salt law by collecting salt earth on 20th April. The Satyagrahis had to face government atrocities by violating the salt laws in different phases.



LauhastambhaBahini of Cuttack, PatitapabanaBahani of Puri, GanjamBahini of Ganjam and Sambalpur Bahani of Sambalpur violated the salt law in different phases in Inchudi as if Inchudi had become second Dandi, a great place of pilgrimage of the satyagrahis.

#### **1.4.2. Spread of the Movement**

##### **1.4.3. Balasore**

The salt satyagraha started at Inchudi (Balasore) spread like wild fire to other parts of Odisha. It created lots of enthusiasm among the people. In different centers of Balasore like Sartha, Jamkonda, Iram, Chudamani and Bidehipur people broke salt law with great enthusiasm. People of Jamakonda responded well to this movement. At Sartha leaders like KarunakarPanigrahi, Biswanath Das, Nilambar Das and many others broke salt law with their supporters. Kuanrpur, Ratoi, Parikhi, Kharang, Gudi, Rajbala, Baita and the nearby villagers broke the salt law. A boy of fourteen years old Sadhucharan Mahapatra was in news to participate in the movement. Iram and Bidehipur (both in present Bhadrak district) were also famous for breaking salt laws. At Sundari, police resorted to lathi charge for the breaking of salt law. The women of the villages came and watched the satyagrahis overnight by the advice of Dr. KrupasinidhuBhukta. Thus the Civil Disobedience Movement became very effective in Balasore district.

##### **1.4.4. Cuttack**

Kujang of Cuttack district was also another hot seat of salt satyagraha. On 8th May salt satyagraha started here under the supervision of Narayan BirabaraSamanta Roy, Rama Devi and Malati Devi. It was after the joining of Rani BhagyabatiPattmahadevi of Kujang salt satyagraha received great impetus. Under her leadership 500 women of different villages violated salt law. Salt satyagraha was observed with great enthusiasm at Pardeep, Ersama, Kankardia, Chatua, Pardia, Kalipata. Leaders like Rama Devi, Malati Devi, Niranjan Ghose, Binod Kanungo, Bira Kishor Das moved from village to village to spread the movement.

##### **1.4.5. Puri**

Under the leadership of Nilakantha Das and Jagannath Rath salt satyagraha was organized at Puri. Satyagrahis took active role in places like Kakatapur, Astaranga, Khandasahi, Singheswari, Kuhudi and Latara. On 22nd May 1930, the police resorted to lathi charge to suppress the satyagrahis. Nila Kantha Das and others leaders were arrested. But it did not affect the satyagrahis. They continued the satyagraha with great excitement and enthusiasm without caring for the police atrocities.

##### **1.4.6. Ganjam**

Biswanath Das, NirnjanPattnaik, Sashi bhusan Rath, NarsinghaSahu, DibakaraPattnaik, Sarala Devi and Malati Devi organized the movement in Ganjam.



Influenced by Rama Devi and Malati Devi large numbers of women participated in the movement. Ganjam, Huma, Laxmipur, Pallibandh, Jayantgarh were the centers of salt satyagraha. Although leaders like Niranjana Pattnaik and Sarala Devi were arrested, the movement did not weaken. Satyagrahis continued to violate the salt law without caring for police atrocities.

#### **1.4.7. Sambalpur**

Sambalpur played prominent role in Civil Disobedience Movement of Odisha. Here the Satyagrahis were led by Laxminarayan Mishra. Other prominent leaders of this area like Dayananda Satapathy, Ghanashyam Panigrahi form a Satyagraha Committee at Sambalpur. Four batches of Satyagrahis were sent by the Committee to defy the British laws and prepared contraband salt at different places of coastal districts of Odisha. As Sambalpur was away from sea, here different other programmes were organized to disobey the British authority.

### **1.5. Other Programmes of Civil Disobedience Movement**

Apart from, the movement looked into other forms of programmes to disobey the British law like social ostracism, boycott of foreign goods, non-payment of choukidari tax and prohibition.

#### **1.5.1. Social Ostracism**

The Satyagrahi appealed the people to ostracize the government servant and their associates. At Rasulpur in Balesore district the young leader Sardar Surendra Nath Das explained to the people the significance of Satyagraha. Food grains and articles of daily consumption were no longer sent to the Motiganj market for sale. As a result police and other government servants were not able to get food stuff and other things and have to face lots of difficulties. Not only this even the journalist who were considered as the representative of the government were put into trouble by the people. On the persuasion of the Satyagrahis people refused to provide essential commodities to the police personnel. And for that many people were arrested by the police.

#### **1.5.2. Abolition of Chaukidari Tax**

Protest against Chaukidary tax and non-payment of other taxes was another programme of Civil Disobedience Movement. In this context the Satyagrahis persuaded many chaukidars to resign from government service. As a result of which many chaukidars resigned from their service. Gouramohan Das and Bidyadhar Rath of Srijang persuaded the people of different villagers not to pay chaukidari tax. As the police arrested some of the people of the village, there was severe public protest against it in May 1931. Many police personnel were injured due to skirmish between the villagers and the police. Thereafter, the district magistrate and superintendent of police started atrocities against the people which created disgraceful chapter in the history of freedom struggle. Women leaders like Rama Devi, Malati Devi and Kokila

Devi visited the place and vehemently criticized the repressive policy of the British government.

### **1.5.3. Prohibitions**

In response to the call of Gandhiji, The prohibitions campaign began in Odisha. As dates and date palm trees were the sources of intoxicating drinks, Satyagrahi persuaded the villagers to uproot all those trees. Picketing was organized before the local liquor shops of the villagers and foreign liquor shops of different towns and cities. People were asked not to pay intoxicating drinks. As a result the British government was deprived of excise duty. The prohibition campaign was very successful all over Odisha.

### **1.5.4. Boycott of Foreign Cloth**

The role of Banar sena and women as well was very important during the Civil Disobedience Movement. In staging demonstration in front of foreign cloths store the women were accompanied by the children below the age of sixteen, who were known as Banar sena. They collected signatures of the shopkeepers for not to buy foreign clothes. Those who refused to sign, demonstrations were held in front of their shops and costumers were advised not to buy from those shops. In the absent of women demonstrator, the banar sena performed the job. The Banar sena was banned by the government in many places. Still they continued it by uttering different slogans. The Satyagrahis also persuaded people to use Khadi clothes and burn foreign clothes. The Village panchayats were also establishes to solve the disputes among the villagers.

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## **1.6. REPRESSIVE MEASURES OF THE GOVERNMENT**

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The government adopted drastic policies in Odisha as in other places of India. Leaders like Harekrushna Mahatab, Gopabandhu Chaudhury, Rama Debi, Nanda Kishor Das, Nilakantha Das, Lingaraj Mishra, Jadumani Mangaraj, Rajkrishna Bose, Sarala Debi, laxminarayan Mishra were imprisoned during the movement. Newspaper like Samaj, Prajatantra and Asha were censored. All congress committees and Satyagraha committees were declared illegal. Police could search any individual or household premises. To escape police atrocities some nationalist went underground. This way the government tried to suppress the Civil disobedience Movement.

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## **1.7. END OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT IN ODISHA**

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The Gandhi Irwin pact of 5<sup>th</sup> March 1931 led the congress leaders to discontinue the movement. The congress decided to participate in the second round table conference at London. As a result of the agreement, congress leaders and workers were released from jail. Gandhiji went to London to attend the conference but returned broken hearted in Dec 1931. Again the Civil Disobedience Movement was resumed in Odisha as in other



parts of India. The government took repressive measures to contain the movement. Top level leaders were arrested. At last Mahatma Gandhi suspended the movement on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1934 as a result of which the movement in Odisha cooled down.



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## **1.8. CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMMES OF THE UTKAL PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE**

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After the suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement in 1934, leaders and workers of the Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee devoted themselves to various constructive programmes of Gandhiji. Spread of khadi and Charkha, abolition of untouchability, Harijan movement, and Anti-Alcohol movement were the programmes of the congress Leaders. The visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha in May 1934 gave great impetus to the congress worker. They continued the constrictive works till 1940.

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## **1.9. INDIVIDUAL CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT**

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The individual Civil Disobedience Movement of 1940 was another congress programme in which Odisha showed enthusiasm. It was in Ramgarh Session of March 1940 Indian National Congress decided to launch the individual Civil Disobedience Movement. In this session it was also decided to undertake the Gandhian constructive programmes with full vigor and not to co-operation the British in any form. In Bari training camp of Cuttack congress workers were given training regaining civil disobedience and Gandhian constructive programmes. Under the leadership of Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab the Individual Civil Disobedience in Odisha was started in 1st December 1940. This movement went on vigorously in Odisha. Leaders of Odisha congress like Mahatab, Bodhram Dubey, and Sadasiv Tripathy etc were arrested. Still, it continues till March 1941. At last it was faded away.

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## **1.10. CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Write a note on the visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha.
2. Describe briefly the role of Odisha in Non Co-operation Movement
3. Make an account of the response of Odisha in Civil Disobedience Movement

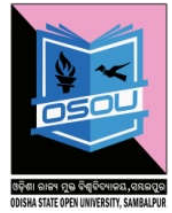
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## **1.11. LET US SUM UP**

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Thus, the nationalist politics of Odisha was a remarkable one. It showed unprecedented nationalist feelings like other parts of India. It was in the main stream of national politics. Odisha, not being a province then could able to form Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee on linguistic basis. Under the leadership of Madhusudan Das, Gopabandhu Das, Harekrushna Mahatab Odisha became a separate province. It also showed active parts in national events like Non Co-operation Movement, Civil

Disobedience Movement and Individual Civil Disobedience movement. The leaders as well as common people of Odisha whole heartedly followed the creed and ideology of Indian national congress.



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### 1.12. KEY WORDS

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Nationalism-: Love for one's own nation.

Prohibition-: To persuade someone not to do something.

Ostracism-: exclusion from a society or group.

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### 1.13. ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. See section 4.1.2.4
2. See section 4.1.3.1
3. See section 4.1.4

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## UNIT-2 QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT IN ODISHA

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### Structure

- 2.0 Objective
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.3 Movement in Odisha
- 2.4 Spread of the Movement
- 2.5 Kaipada Firing
- 2.6 Jajpur
- 2.7 Bhandari pokhari Incident
- 2.8 Firing at Dhamnagar
- 2.9 Firing at Tudigadia and Khairadihi
- 2.10 Firing at Iram
- 2.11 Reaction in Puri
- 2.12 Response in Ganjam
- 2.13 Reaction in Sambalpur
- 2.14 Reaction in Koraput
- 2.15 Let us Sum up
- 2.16 Key Words
- 2.17 Answer to check your Progress

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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The chapter will discuss the Quit India Movement. After reading the unit the students will be able to

- Understand the Quit India Movement in Odisha
- Know about the role of common man in Quit India Movement
- Evaluate the role of different regions of Odisha in Quit India Movement

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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The Quit India Movement, otherwise known as the August revolt, is a landmark in India's struggle for freedom. Never before did any other event create such a political storm as this movement did. No other movements of India witnessed large-scale participation of the masses either. Hence it formed a landmark in the history of the freedom struggle of India. With the declaration of the British government to make India a part of the allied power, the failure of the Cripps Mission and the impending Japanese danger to invade India compelled Gandhiji to prepare the Quit India resolution and got it passed on 8th August 1942 at Bombay session of Indian National Congress. The Congress committee declared that unless the government declared the independence of



India, a non-violent mass struggle would be launched under the leadership of Gandhiji. Gandhiji called upon the people and said. “I am giving you a mantra” “ Do or Die,” “You can imprint it in your heart. We will make India free or die in the attempt; we will not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery.” The call of Mahatma Gandhi acted as magic. People all over India responded enthusiastically to the call of Gandhiji.

The Indian National Congress gave Gandhiji the authority to launch a non-violent mass struggle. But, with in few hours of the passing of Quit India resolution, in the early hours of 9<sup>th</sup> August Gandhiji including all other members of Congress working committee were arrested. Mahatma Gandhi was confined in Aga Khan Palace in Puna. Towering leaders like Jawaharalal Nehru, Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, Acharya J.B. Kripalini and Aruna Asaf Ali were imprisoned in Ahmadnagar fort. The congress organization was declared illegal all over India. The police arrested congress workers and leaders throughout India.

To the utter misfortune of India, Gandhiji could not lead his last and the final movement. From congress side the country became absolutely leaderless. Still the common people did not give up their hopes. They took up the challenge to fight against the British. Thus the Quit India Movement began all over India. How could Odisha remain aloof from it ?

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## **2.2 MOVEMENT IN ODISHA**

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Odisha played a prominent role in Quit India Movement. The call of Mahatma Gandhi spread like wildfire to the nooks and corners of Odisha. The British administered Odisha, and Garjat Odisha joined the movement with great enthusiasm. The soil of Odisha became red with martyrs’ blood due to firing in places like Khairadihi, Eram, Dhamnagar, Papadahandi, and Mathili. The patriotism and sacrifice of the freedom fighters of Odisha are written in golden letters in the history of India.

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## **2.3 SPREAD OF THE MOVEMENT**

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As like the arrest of national leader like Gandhiji, Nehru and HarekrushnaMahatab on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942, the leaders of Odisha were also arrested by the British. The congress organizations all over India were closed down. In the mean while two other prominent leaders SurendranathDwibedy and Malati Choudhury reached Odisha on 11<sup>th</sup> August after attending the congress session at Bombay. With their arrival the moment accelerated in Odisha. As the arrest of prominent leaders made the movement leaderless, the people of Odisha spontaneously took the leadership of the movement. Violence took place in many places.



The students of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack were the pioneers of Quit India Movement in Odisha. In front of the gate of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, students organized a meeting and decided to support the movement and provide help to the leaders of the congress. On 14<sup>th</sup> August 1942, under the direction of student leaders like Bibhudendra Mishra, Surajmal Sahu, Ashoka Das, Biren Mitra and others the college office was set on fire and all furniture were destroyed. Government servants quit their services and joined the movement. Students of other educational institutions of Odisha also joined the movement. Bibhudendra Mishra and Surajmal Sahu were arrested by the police and were sent to Berhampur jail. The Bari congress Ashram which was occupied early by the police was attacked by the people on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1942. The agitated mob set fire to the clothes and other furniture. The movement became wide spread in other parts of Cuttack district like Badchona, Mahanga and Ersama. Even then people were trained to learn how to use lathi to protect themselves from the police. Gouranga Charan Dash of Bhogalur under Gobindpur police station was the master in teaching for the use of lathi. One “RaktaBahini” was formed in Batimara village under the same police station to face the police. “Marana Bahini” and “Sangrama Bahini” were also formed in these areas. Although he kept himself in hiding, Srendra Nath Dwibedi made the movement more vigorous after returning from Bombay.

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## 2.4 KAIPADA FIRING

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GopabandhuChodhuri and Rama Devi were the founders of Bari Ashram. During Quit India Movement, these leaders were arrested. This incident infuriated the people of the locality. They, along with Banarsena, set fire to the Kaipada post office on 17th August 1942. When the situation was getting out of control, the Deputy Superintendent of police reached there on 25th August. On the 26th morning, many people gathered at that place. The police resorted to blank fire to drive them away. The police arrested leaders like Indramani Tripathy, Dambarudhar Roy, Benudhar Dash. When Srimati Annapurna Maharana, the veteran women leader, reached that place, the excite mob demanded the release of arrested leaders. When Haribandhu Panda was running away with a rifle, the police caught him. He died instantly when the bayonet pierced into his chest. The police then resorted to indiscriminate firing. Three people were killed and 17 injured.

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## 2.5 JAJPUR

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The Satyagrahis arrested from Kaipada were taken to Jajpur expecting law order situation. Earlier the police had banned meeting and public gathering in that region. In spite of that around 15000 people marched towards police station and the office of the S.D.O. The people were forced to resort to firing. Tear gas was used to disperse the public. After that the situation came under control.



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## 2.6 BHANDARI POKHARI INCIDENT

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While the echo of Quit India movement was felt all over Odisha, more than 5000 people came together to besiege the police station of Bhandari Pakhari in Bhadrak district. They destroyed all the documents of police station. A constable was severely beaten up and police station was set fire. An assistant sub inspector took refuge in a nearby village. The only bridge linking to that village was destroyed. The furious magistrate imposed fine of six thousand rupees and the amount was to be collected from twelve nearby villages. Two leaders of the region like Jaganath Das and Dwarakanath Das were arrested in this connection.

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## 2.7 FIRING AT DHAMANAGAR

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In Dhamnagar area, the message of the Quit India Movement was spread under the leadership of Muralidhar Panda. It was alleged that Mr. Panda had burnt the uniform of a chokidar in the Srijang village. Hence the police proceeded to arrest him at Dhamnagar. But by that time, Mr. Panda had already moved away to the LuniakataSahi village. When the police reached there, the people started blowing conches and beating drums resulting in the gathering of many people from a nearby village. The police helplessly resort to firing. About 10/11 people died, and many more were injured. They were sent to the nearby hospital for treatment. A severe firing took place on 21 September 1942. At last, the leader Muralidhar Panda was arrested. A freedom fighter named Nidhi Mallik became the first martyr of Dhamnagar.

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## 2.8 FIRING AT KHAIRADIHI AND TUDIGADIA

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As like that of Dhamnagar, the people of Khairadihi were militant and enthusiastic. In an attempt to restore law and order a police party went over to Khairadihi on 22 September 1942 and arrested Baidynath Rout, a protestant activist of the Quit India movement of this area. The police party camped at the house of union president at night. A crowd of about 500 people armed with lathis, axes, bows and arrows attacked the police camp and rescued the prisoner. The sub inspector was bound with a rope and other policemen were assaulted and their uniform and records were burnt. After that more police came to Khairadihi and warned the people. The police opened fire killing two people. After this the police returned from the scene with two bodies.

At Tudigudia market some nationalist insulted the sub inspector and took off his hat. The people blew conch to gather their fellow villagers at Khairadihi. The police made 2 round of blank fire to control the people.





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## 2.9 FIRING AT IRAM

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There was marked enthusiasm at Iram in Basudevpur of Bhadrak district. It was a hot seat of Quit India movement. It got regular news and direction from the underground congress socialist party leaders like Surendranath Dwibedy and Gouramohan Das. Here a “BanarSena” was led by Anuradha Mahanty and a “Guerilla Sena” led by Ramnarayan Das were set up to make the movement intensive. Being determined not to pay the taxes the people had gathered at the *melana* ground of Iram in 28<sup>th</sup> September 1942. The DSP blocked the only passage to the ground and ordered firing. As a result of which 26 people were killed and 46 others was injured. At no other places of India so many people died in police firing during the Quit India Movement. So the place is rightly remembered as Rakta Tirtha Iram.

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## 2.10 REACTION IN PURI

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In September the Quit India Movement spread into the country side. It began with cutting of telephone wires at the Bhubaneswar railway station and Delang. The first major indication of this shift is evident from a meeting at Nimapada on 16<sup>th</sup> September. People from village like Hanspada, Bhatbanda, Chanarpada, Minigang, Adhia, Dihasahi and Villigram as well as some bauris (out castes) from Dihabani assembled at the Barabati field. They resolved not to pay rent or tax either to the Zamindar or to the government. Then the people reached the police station and asked the police personnel to quit service and join the movement. When they tried to enter the police station compound police obstructed them. This led to their pelting the police station and police resorted to firing which resulted in the death of one person and injuries to some others. Thus the district of Puri was also a center of political activity during the Quit India Movement.

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## 2.11 RESPONSE IN GANJAM

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The people of Ganjam also responded well to Quit India call of Mahatma Gandhi. The areas like Aska, Berhampur, Rasulkunda were centers of the nationalist. Telephone lines were uprooted in Aska. The political prisoners of Berhampur burnt a post office when the prisoners of Rasulkonda revolted against the authority. They were charged with lathis. Saraladevi suffered three years of imprisonment for participating in Quit India Movement.

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## 2.12 REACTION IN SAMBALPUR

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The undivided district of Sambalpur played prominent role during the Quit India Movement. It was very intense in Sambalpur. There was wide spread protest against the British raj not only in towns like Sambalpur, Bargarh and Jharsuguda but also in remote

villages. Laxmi Narayan Mishra and Prahallad Rai Lath were the two prominent leaders of a five member delegation of Sambalpur who attended the Bombay session of all India Congress. They spread the mantra of “Do or Die” of Mahatma Gandhi to the nook and corner of Sambalpur. Hartals were organized at Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Bargarh in protest against high handedness of the British government. The students as usual took active part in the movement organized strikes and demonstrations. Taking part in movement Nrusingha Guru was arrested by India defense Act. While returning from Bombay session of All India Congress L.N Mishra was arrested. Still the movement did not weaken. Other congress leaders like Ram Rakshya Sukla, Durga Prasad Guru, Dayananda Satpathy in Sambalpur, Fakira Behera, Bhagirathi Pattnayk, Ghanashyam Panigrahi of Bargarh region took the leadership of this movement. An attempt was made by nationalists to burn the police station at Bijepur. Ramachandra Puri and his associates were arrested before they could set the station to fire. There was widespread unrest in Villages of Sambalpur like Panimora, Samaleipadar, Remunda, Veunria, Temeri, Deuli, Purena. Panimora, a remote village under Sohela Police station played significant role in the Quit India Movement. As many as 32 freedom fighters from this remote village responded the call of Mahatma Gandhi and made the movement intense in their locality. They were charged with lathis and suffered imprisonment to serve mother India. They became the source of inspiration for the people of Odisha. Remunda, another historic land of Bheden Police Station had given birth 14 freedom fighters. They under their local leader Mangalu Pradhan participated in different anti-governmental activities in Bheden region. For their ant- British attitude they were arrested and suffered imprisonment. Bhagirathi Pattnaik of Barpali was also a great freedom fighter of Sambalpur. He, with his wife Jambhubati Pattnaik and lone son Prafulla Pattnaik spread the Gandhian ideology in Sambalpur area. He was the torch bearer of Quit India Movement in in undivided Sambalpur district. Prominent women leaders like Gurubari Meher, Prabhabati Devi, Jambubati Devi and Parbati Giri became role model for the women society by taking leadership of the Gandhian ideology. With all this energized manifestation of nationalist tamper, however the Quit India Movement in Sambalpur region was only sporadic in its success. It could not be sustained due to the arrest of all most all the important leaders.

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## 2.13 KORAPUT

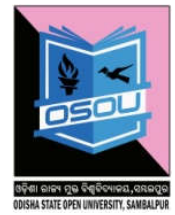
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The tribal dominated undivided Koraput district did not remain aloof from Quit India Movement. There was wide spread unrest in places like Mathili, Papadahandi, Jeypore, Maidalpur. People in large number took active part in the last and final movement of Gandhiji. Here Laxman Naik of Tentuliguma under Baipariguda police station greatly activated the movement. His initial thrust was to try to organise “Hartals” by closing shop and to campaign for a no-tax movement. The campaign seems to have been percolated into the interior with remarkable speed. Different police station, railway

lines, telegraph lines, Revenue office, foreign cloth shop, Ganja and liquor shop and other government offices and officer were the target of the nationalist.

The climax of the political activities was a huge meeting organized at Mathili on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1942. Observing the situation since about 17<sup>th</sup> August the police had apprehended that this would take the form of a raid on the Mathili police station. As it was apprehended, the nationalist on 21<sup>st</sup> August raided opium shop and the revenue inspector's office at Mathili. Following this a crowd of about 1000 people reached the Mathili police stations at about 9.30 AM, singing the Ramdhun and carrying congress flags. They raised slogans like Mahatma Gandhiji ki jay. These people were stopped by the police before entering the police stations compound, after argument with the police the crowd withdrew to the nearby market (Hata) in a procession. There Laxman Naik made a speech informing the police that the British Government was gone and that Gandhi was their king. After this the swelling crowd marched enthusiastically towards the police stations around 2pm. There agent Laxman Naik made a speech appealing people not pay any kind of taxes and disobey government orders. The police tried to disperse the public but the agitated mob did not leave the place. For which the police charged lathies and opened fire. Laxman Naik got injured in lathi charge and fell down unconscious. It was the police firing that killed Ramaya, a forest guard and 9 to 10 demonstrators. Laxman and few others were arrested. During trial Laxman Naik was sentenced to death and others were punished in different ways. On 29<sup>th</sup> August 1943 he was hanged to death. Among other prisoners three died in jail and rest were released after independence.

In Nawarangpur, areas like Mydalpur, Tenthuli Khunti, Dabugan, Kodinga and Umerkote the Quit India Movement was carried on enthusiastically. The local leaders appealed the people to join the movement and focus on the no rent campaign. The people were asked not to pay rent. They were advised to destroy public buildings, bridges, disrupt communication. Government officials and police personnel were the target. A popular leader named Madhaba Pradhani was leading the movement from this area. A large number of people joined him with traditional weapons like bows, arrows, spades and rations for few days. Trees were cut down from a reserved forest and roads were blocked. A wooden bridge on Ampanighati near Koraput Kalahandi border was destroyed. They marched forward to Gumapadar to increase the number of nationalist. When they reached there, a rumor had already circulated that the police station at Papadahandi, Mydalpur and Kodinga would be attacked. At Guma Padar, Madhab Pradhani addressed a large gathering. After this the mob marched towards Papadahandi. On 24<sup>th</sup> August a gathering of around 5000 people were fired upon by the police resulting in 19 deaths and 100 injury and arrest of 92 people. Gradually the Quit India Movement could not be sustained for long and died down in Nawarangpur area.





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## 2.14 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Write a note on Quit India Movement?

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2. Analyze the Quit India movement in Koraaput district?

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3. Give an account of Quit India Movement in Sambalpur?

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## 2.15 LET US SUM UP

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Thus, Odisha played significant role in the Quit India Movement. It was a movement of common mass. It was very wide spread. The movement got tremendous support from villages, towns, tribal areas and princely states. As the top level leaders of the movement were arrested after the passing of the Quit India resolution, the common people stepped out from their houses and participated in Quit India Movement. They paralyzed the government by undertaking different anti-governmental activities. Cutting of telephone, telegraph and railway lines, burning of post office, police station and foreign cloth, picketing in front of foreign liquor, foreign cloth shop were the common programmes of the satyagrahis. In some places they took resort to violence means and their approach became militant in character. In areas like Eram, Papadahandi, Dhamnagar, Bhandaripokhari, Nimapada, Mathili violent mass upsurge took place. The government offices, officers and police personnel became the target of the common mass. The Quit India movement was not only anti-colonial but also anti feudal. It was no doubt suppressed by the British forces which were sent India to resist Japanese invasion, but, instead employed against the Indians. Yet, that historic revolution shook the very foundation of the British rule in India.



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## 2.16 KEY WORDS

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Lathis - Long stick made of bamboo used by police personnel.

Mob - A large crowd of people that may become violent or cause trouble.

Banarsena - monkey brigade

Guerilla Sena – Guerilla brigade

Satyagrahi- one who practice Satyagraha (holding onto truth)

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## 2.17 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. See overall chapter
2. See 4.2.13
3. See 4.2.12

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## UNIT- 3 MERGER OF PRINCELY STATES

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### Structure

- 3.0 Learning Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Back ground
- 3.3 Rise of Political consciousness
- 3.4 Beginning of merger
- 3.5 Stand of Princely States
- 3.6 Merger of Nilgiri
- 3.7 Political Development
- 3.8 Conference at Cuttack
- 3.9 Integration of Mayurbhanj
- 3.10 Merger of Sadeikela and Kharsuan with Bihar
- 3.11 Check your progress
- 3.12 Let us Sum up
- 3.13 Key Words
- 3.14 Answer to check your progress

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### 3.0 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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This chapter will discuss about the merger of princely states with the province of Odisha. After reading this unit the learners will know about.

- Merger of princely states of Odisha with the province of Odisha
- Role of Dr.Harekrushna Mahatab in the merger of princely states
- Understand the stand of the Princely states

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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The merger of Princely States with the separate province of Odisha was a remarkable event in the history of modern Odisha. The way Sardar Ballabh Bhai Patel, V.P. Menon, and Harekrushna Mahatab handled the then situation is very praiseworthy. After the formation of the newly constituted Congress government in the province of Odisha in April 1946, the new congress premier, Harekrushna Mahatab, undertook

different measures to solve the problems of princely states of Odisha. In a memorandum addressed to Sardar Patel, he enlisted various administrative difficulties caused by the territories of the province of Odisha. It was for his persistent effort the princely states of Odisha got merged one after another. The Princely States of Nilgiri was the first of its kind. After taking over the administration of Nilgiri, the State ministry took initiatives to resolve the problem of other states of Odisha. On 23rd December 1947, in the exercise of the powers conferred by the Extra-Provincial Jurisdiction Act 1947, the government of India delegated to the Odisha government the authority to administer the princely states, “in the manner as the district in the province.” It became effective on 1st January 1948. Mayurbhanj was the last state of being merged with Odisha on 1st January 1949. Unfortunately, two states like Kharsuan and Sadheikela were integrated with the providence of Bihar.

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### 3.2 BACK GROUND

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The British East India Company occupied Odisha in the year 1803. The then Odisha was comprised of Cuttack, Puri, and Balasore. During that time, the Tributary Mahals of Odisha like Athgarh, Athmallik, Baud, Baramba, Daspalla, Dhenkanal, Hindol, Keonjhar, Khandapada, Mayurbhanj, Narasingpur, Nayagarh, Nilgiri, Pallahara, Rampur, Talcher and Tigiria were ruled by their ruling chiefs. As per the treaty of Deogaon, these Tributary Mahals were ceded to the British by the Maratha ruler Raghujji Bhonsle. Those Tributary Mahals were not under the Bengal Regulations. To supervise the judicial administration and succession issues, the office of the Superintendent of Tributary Mahals was created by the British in 1814. The Commissioner of Odisha was made the Ex-officio Superintendent of the Tributary Mahals. Collectors of the British administered Cuttack, Puri, and Balasore were appointed as their Assistant Superintendents. Subsequently, the designation Tributary Mahal was changed into Feudatory or Princely states. In 1905, princely states like Bonai, Gangpur, Patna, Kalahandi, Bamra, Sonapur, and Rairakhol came to the control of the Commissioner of Odisha division. The Commissioner administered those states through their chiefs as the Superintendent.

During the British rule those states were not the part of British India. The Status, power and position of the ruling chiefs and the British authorities were clearly defined and proclaimed. The post of Political agent was created in 1922 to supervise the administration of those states with headquarter at Sambalpur. The princely states like Saraikela and Kharsuan were brought under the jurisdiction of the political agent in the same year. With this the numbers of Princely states of Odisha became 26.

These 26 princely states of Odisha constituted one of largest forest areas of India. Some of them were inaccessible. They acknowledged the suzerainty of the Mughals, Marathas and the British successively to survive as feudatory or tributary or princely

states. Their size and population of those states were not uniform. Mayurbhanj was the biggest one having an area of 4000 square miles and about 10 lakhs population and smallest was Tigiria, with an area of 46 square miles having 20 thousands population. (1911 censuses)



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### **3.3 RISE OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS**

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The condition of the people of princely states was very deplorable under their ruling chiefs. The ruling leaders were exploiting the people in different ways. The people were forced to work free for the Durbar, repair roads and buildings, dig a pond, etc. They had to supply ration free of cost to the Ruling chiefs. During the time of the ruling families' functions and ceremonies, they had to pay either in cash or kind. Besides, they had to pay innumerable taxes to the treasury of ruling Chiefs. Such was the condition of the inhabitants of those princely states during that time.

Political consciousness among the people of princely states of Odisha started after the setting up of the State People Conference by Sarangadhar Das in 1931. The exploitation of the chiefs gave rise to the vigorous Praja Mandal movement in 1937. In different princely states like Nilgiri, Talcher, Dhenkanal, Nayagarh Prajamandals were formed. Leaders of these states mobilized the Prajamandal movement in an organized manner. For this, they got the blessings of the Congress organization. The movement pressurized the chiefs to relinquish power in favour of popular governments. They derived their inspiration from the Gandhian struggle for freedom from foreign rule. Their primary objective was to secure the elementary civil rights of the people against the tyranny of the chiefs.

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### **3.4 BEGINNING OF THE MERGER**

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With the restoration of popular Government in the province of Odisha in April 1946, under new Congress premier, Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab, persistent efforts were made to merge the princely states of Odisha with the province of Odisha. In his memorandum to the member of cabinet mission on 6th April 1946, he strongly pleaded for merger of princely state of Odisha with the province Odisha. He wrote to Stafford Cripps on 26th April 1946 to exercise his (Cripps) influence with authorities concerned to take necessary steps as quick as possible. But the cabinet mission could not look into the specific problems of Odisha, for its busy schedule. However on 16th May 1946, the mission issued statement that satisfactory solution to the problems of Indian states would be achieved by mutual negotiations.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May and 29<sup>th</sup> June 1946 Dr. Mahatab wrote letters to the chiefs of Odisha states to convince them the benefits of mutual negotiations. He argued, as Odisha province is a small one, still smaller its princely states, their resources would never enable them for any development. If the resource of both could be pooled together then Odisha



would be a richest state in India. He appealed the chief of every state to come together to make an emerging Odisha. In spite of his persistence effort the rulers of the princely states paid deaf hear to his words. Still Dr.Mahatab did not give up his hope.

He continued his efforts for some good understanding with the ruling chiefs. In 16<sup>th</sup> September of 1946, he met some of the chiefs of the princely states at Sambalpur in the presence of the Political Agent. In the discussion which lasted for six hours he tried to convince the chiefs for the necessity of a single administration for the larger interest of the states and the province. But the discussion did not bring any satisfactory outcome. To solve the problems of the princely states Dr. Mahatab approached the Nawab of Bhopal, the Chancellor of Chamber of Princes. But, it also went in vein. Because of maintaining of their separate identities the chiefs did not want merger of their states.

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### 3.5 STAND OF PRINCELY STATES

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Despite the consistence efforts of Dr.Mahatab the rulers did not show any interest to join the province. They met in July 1946 in a conference held at Alipore and decided to form a federal union of the Chhatishgarh and Odisha states.Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo, the ruler of Patna initiated the discussion on behalf of the rulers and argued in favour of Federal Union of Chhatishgarh and Odisha states. He claimed it would be a powerful unit of the Central Government. In the conference the British resident of Eastern States Agency encouraged the rulers for such disintegrating tendencies. A special committee was formed for functioning of the federation.

Rajendra Narayan Singhdeo, the ruler of Patna state tried to establish Eastern States Union as an autonomous unit. His ideas if successful would have linked together all the princely states of Chhatishgarh and Odisha.Singhdeo went to the extent arguing that the Odisha states and Sambalpur area never formed a part of Odisha rather once formed the South Koshala territory. He was a strong protestor of amalgamation of princely states of Odisha. However Dr.Mahatab thought merger of princely states with Odisha was the only answer to the disintegrating tendency of the ruling chiefs.

The ruling chief of Chhatishgarh and Odisha except Mayurbhanj and Bastar met at the Rajkumar College of Raipur in 1<sup>st</sup> August 1947 to announce the formation of Eastern States Union with its headquarters at Raigarh. They made a constitution which made provision for a premier but no legislature. As the union did not have the provision of representative government, the PrajaMandal movement continued in these states. There were serious political disturbances in all these states. Some of them occupied government office and building to form representative government on the eve of 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947.



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### 3.6 MERGER OF NILGIRI

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The process of integration of princely states began in Odisha with the taking over of the administration of the state of Nilgiri by the Central government. It was the first state to start the Prajamandal against its autocratic ruler. It was a small state of 284 square miles in area having a population of around 73109. About 15% of the total population were Adivasis. The Prajamandal leaders of the state tried to establish a parallel government in the state. On the other hand the chief of Nilgiri tried to suppress the agitation with iron hand because his status quo was in grave danger. He deployed a special contingent of Gorkha forces with the help of Raja of Dhenkanal and started repressive measures. Again to crush the movement the Raja of instigated the Adivasis against the non Adivasis. It was alleged that Raja had motivated them against the leaders of the Praja Mandal. Dr. Mahatab, who was eagerly waiting for such an opportunity communicated the government of India to take action in this regard to check the kind of situation to spread to neighbouring states. On 8<sup>th</sup> November the government of India authorised the government of Odisha to take over the administration of the state through the collector, Balasore. It was decided to take over administration of Nilgiri on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1947. The Collector of Balesore and the Revenue Minister of Odisha, Nabakrushna Choudhary were deputed to take action. Thus the operation to take possession of the state was over on the same day without any trouble. The following day a press communiqué was released to pacify the people of the disturbed state. The people of Nilgiri were assured to have a strong impartial and just administration with special consideration for the grievance of the aboriginal community of the state. Again an appeal was made to all political parties and the public bodies to extend their whole hearted support and cooperation for the welfare of the taken over state.

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### 3.7 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

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The state government of Odisha took further initiatives to resolve the problem of other states of Odisha after taking over the administration of Nilgiri. On 20<sup>th</sup> November 1947 a high level meeting was held in Delhi in which Dr. Mahatab, C.C Desai, V.P Menon, and B.D.S Bedi, regional commissioner of Sambalpur were present. In the meeting it was decided firstly not to recognize the Eastern States Union. Secondly the 'B' and 'C' class states should be asked to agree to common administration of certain subjects by the provincial government. Those subjects were communication, public health, education, excise, forests, industries, agriculture and police etc. Thirdly the ministry of government of India would call a meeting of the rulers of 'B' and 'C' class state at Cuttack in December 1947. This decision was taken with a view to preserve the unity of India. Different situations like exodus of the refugees, the attitude of the Nizam of Hyderabad and the possible encouragement of the Eastern States Union were the



threats for the disintegration of Indian union. That is why the leaders thought any deterioration of law and order situation in Odisha was to be nipped at the bud.

Regarding the idea of responsible government of the Prajamandal Movement, the central leaders thought that the organisational base of the states were not uniform. They lack political maturity and resources. Thinking of independent government for them was mere foolishness. It was therefore, necessary to hammer them together to form integral part of Odisha province. The Government of India left with no alternatives for other political consideration. The idea of Eastern States Union too was unreasonable and unsound. It was not based upon linguistic, ethical or geographical consideration. Sardar Patel was firm and free from any prejudice. Existence of any political unit where the rights of the people were ignored was beyond his imagination. Hence it was to be bound to crumble to pieces like Pakistan before the formation of Bangladesh. Realising that, the central authorities resolved to work upon an integration of Odia speaking states with Odisha.

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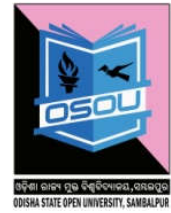
### 3.8 CONFERENCE AT CUTTACK

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In the morning of 14<sup>th</sup> December a historic conference was held in the Raj Bhawan at Cuttack in the presence Sardar Patel, V.P.Menon, H.K.Mahatab and other members. It was inaugurated by Sardarpatel with a persuasive speech. At first he had discussion with the “B” and “C” category states like Athagarh, Baramba, Daspalla, Hindol, Khandpada, Kharsuan, Narasinghpur, Nilgiri, Pallhara, Rairakhol, Rampur and Talcher. Twelve members of those categories excluding three were present in that meeting. Sardar Patel explained that as those states have no resources it would be better for them to join the Odisha province. They could prosper and progress if merge with Odisha. The chiefs of states were assured of their honour and privileges even after accession to the province. They were also assured of a Privy purse, commensurating with the income of their states on the basis of an approved formula. V.P. Menon explained about the Privy Purse in detailed. The chiefs of the states realised the then situation. The rising tide of the popular agitation against feudal rule would be difficult for them to hold on to power any more. They did not want to be thrown out of their kingdom by the people and rushed to Delhi for help. On the other hand Sardar Patel made it clear that in no situation the Central government would come forward for them to help further. After such kind of persuasion, these 12 rulers signed the document for merger with the Indian dominion and the remaining three rulers could sign the document later.

The “A” class states like Bamra, Baud, Dhenkanal, Gangpur, Kalahandi, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh, Patna, Saraikela, and Sonepur met in the afternoon session of conference. The then home minister, Sardar Patel told them

*“The Odisha states were like ulcers on the body of the province and that they must either be cured eliminated. If they listened to his advice, they could be cured; otherwise they might find themselves uprooted by the people.”*



Despite the threat the rulers of Patna and Kalahandi raised different issues against the merger. They sought clarifications on wide ranging subjects. They took hours to think over the issues. Still nothing could be yielded that night, except that the Raja of Dhenkanal agreed to the proposal of the merger. In the next morning Menon threatened to take military action over such states whose rulers would be unable to maintain peace. At the same time he showed soft voice regarding different demand of the rulers like succession, privy purse, private properties, personal privileges, security etc..The ruler of Mayurbhanj pointed out about his handing over of administration to the hands of the representative of the people. He expressed his inability to make commitment without consulting the ministry. It was the only state in Odisha which had not joined the Eastern States Union and had installed a popular ministry under the Prajamandal leadership. After a good deal of pressure and persuasion ten other ruling chiefs were agreed to accept the plan of merger. By the morning of 15<sup>th</sup> December 1947 they signed the document of merger. It was a historic moment in the history of Odisha as well in India. A happy Sardar left Cuttack for Raipur with his team. Dr. Mahatab had every reason to feel proud over the achievement.

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### **3.9 INTEGRATION OF MAYURBHANJ**

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As started earlier the ruler of Mayurbhanj had transfer the power to the hand of representatives of the people. That is why it took some time to be accomplished. The popular government headed by Sarat Das made the state exchequer empty. The Maharaja and his former Dewan K.C. Niyogi, who was then a central Minister wanted integration Mayurbhanj with Odisha. Some of the leaders of the state wanted to be merged with West Bengal. But Prafulla Chandra Ghose, the then chief Minister of West Bengal turned down the proposal as ridiculous. The Maharaja with Sarat Das together handed over the administration of Mayurbhanj to the Central Government on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1948. Mr. D.V. Reges was posted as the Chief Commissioner. He again handed over Mayurbhanj to the Government of Odisha on 1st January 1949. Thus it was the last state of Odisha to be merged with Odisha.

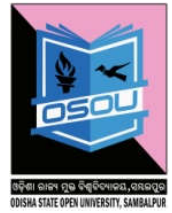
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### **3.10 MERGER OF SAREIKELA AND KHARSUAN WITH BIHAR**

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The two states of Sareikela and Kharsuan became the bone of contention between the two neighbouring states of Bihar and Odisha. They deviated from their earlier decision and wanted to remain with Bihar as the communication between Saraikela-Kharsuan and Odisha province passes through Mayurbhanj. And Mayurbhanj was merged with

Odisha in too late by the arbitration of the state ministry. Those two states were handed over to Bihar on 18th May 1948. Ultimately the 24 feudatory states of Odisha were integrated with the Odisha province for the emergence of greater Odisha.



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### 3.11 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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- 1) Discuss about the merger of princely states with the province of Odisha?  
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- 2) What was the stand of the princely states of Odisha during the process of merger? Discuss.  
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- 3) Critically discuss the role of Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab in merger of Princely states of Odisha. ?  
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### 3.12 LET US SUM UP

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Merger of the princely states of Odisha with the province of Odisha was a significant event in the history of Odisha as well India. The process of merger completed with the shroud diplomacy of Sardar Patel and Dr.Harekrushna Mahatab. They could thwart the disintegrating tendency of some leaders like Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo to form Eastern States Union. Somehow the close linguistic and cultural affinity between the states and the province remained intact, with the merger of the princely states with effect from 1st January 1948. Mayurbhanj was the last state to be merged with the province. But unfortunately Kharsuan and Saraikela joined Bihar by charging their earlier mind-set to merge with Odisha. Thus Odisha became a complete province with the merger of the princely states.



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### 3.13 KEY WORDS

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Status quo- The existing state of things at any given date

Privy Purse- It was a payment made to the ruling families of India during the merger of princely states Odisha

Merger- Integration

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### 3.14 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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- 1) See overall chapter
- 2) See section 4.3.5
- 3) See overall chapter

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### 3.15 SUGGESTD READING

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1. H.K. Mahtab: History of the freedom movement in Orissa
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4. Pradhan., Agrarian and Political Movements, States of Orissa,1931-1949.
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6. Harihara Panda: History of Orissa