

The Local Narrative of the Salt Satyagraha: Narghat

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Abstract: *The Salt March was a non-violent and tax-resistant protest movement in colonial India against the British monopoly on salt. Through this movement, Mahatma Gandhi initiated the Civil Disobedience Movement on April 6, 1930. Two places in Medinipur played a particularly significant role in this regard - Pichhaboni in Contai and Narghat in Tamluk. Narghat is a historic site in the Tamluk subdivision of East Medinipur district. It is situated just at the crossing point of the Haldi River, a little beyond Nandakumar on the Digha–Tamluk National Highway, at a distance of about 102 kilometres from Kolkata. It lies close to the police stations of Tamluk, Nandigram, Mahishadal, and Satahata. Shahid Amin, while writing about the Chauri Chaura incident in his essay Gandhi as Mahatma remarked, “In Champaran in Bihar or Kheda in Gujarat, Gandhi spent quite some time, but he gave hardly any time to Gorakhpur. ... In this region, Gandhi was physically present for less than a day.” That is to say, through this article he meant that although Gandhi spent very little time in Gorakhpur (compared to Champaran or Kheda), his influence on the popular mind lingered there for a long time afterward. In this article, I will show that during the Salt Satyagraha, Gandhi was not in Tamluk for even a month, a day, or an hour, yet the Congress satyagrahis here, following his directives, successfully conducted the Salt Satyagraha, which was in no way less significant than the movements where Gandhi was physically present. However, this movement was quite distinct from the conventional Congress-organized ones. At the local level, the satyagrahis adopted their own strategies, methods, and programs of action.*

Keywords: *Civil Disobedience Movement, Nationalism, Purna Swaraj, Tamluk, Salt Satyagraha etc.*

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Introduction

The Lahore Congress session of 1929 gave birth to a new phase of radicalism, and for the first time, the demand for *Purna Swaraj* (Complete Independence) was adopted. In this session, a resolution was passed to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement. On January 31, 1930, Gandhi issued an eleven-point ultimatum to the then Viceroy, Lord Irwin, declaring that if these demands were accepted, the Civil Disobedience Movement would not be launched.¹ Apart from these eleven demands, Gandhi also wrote to Irwin, saying, “British

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rule in India is a curse. For it has resulted in the extreme oppression of millions of Indians and the gradual destruction of India's cultural heritage".² Lord Irwin did not respond to this letter; instead, he refused to meet Gandhi. In this context, Gandhi remarked, "On bended knee I asked for bread, and I received stone instead".³ After that, Gandhi had no path left except to launch the movement. On February 27, 1930, in the Harijan newspaper, he wrote, "Next to air and water, salt is the most essential necessity of life. ... It is the only thing that gives taste to the food of the poor."¹⁰ He further stated, "There is no article like salt outside water by taxing the maimed and the utterly helpless, the tax the ingenuity of man can devise".⁴

Background

Considering the overall situation in India, Bengal witnessed the strongest Civil Disobedience Movement after the Bombay Presidency.⁵ Between 1930 and 1931, Bengal had the highest number of freedom fighters imprisoned.⁶ The movement found significant response in districts such as Calcutta, Midnapore, Hooghly, and Bankura.⁷ However, compared to the Non-Cooperation Movement of 1921, this movement did not spread equally throughout the rural areas of Bengal. The major reason for this was the lack of enthusiasm among Muslims to join the movement.⁸ Hindu-Muslim clashes in Dhaka and Kishoreganj further strained communal relations. In districts like Pabna, Jessore, Khulna, Dhaka, and Faridpur, the movement failed to gain much momentum. In fact, in some areas, it even faced open opposition. For instance, in Faridpur, as many as 54 meetings were held within a single week in June 1930, all aimed at opposing the movement.⁹ In Calcutta, the Hindu middle class actively participated in the movement, while both students and teachers took part directly.

At this time, the Congress workers of Midnapore felt a deep and urgent call of duty within themselves. After Calcutta, the Civil Disobedience Movement was most intense in the Midnapore district.¹⁰ Following the Salt Satyagraha in this district, the boycott of government employees and attacks on chowkidars and police made the situation extremely volatile. The movement was most widespread in the sub-divisions of Contai, Tamluk, and Ghatal.¹¹

Permission to initiate the Salt Satyagraha in Midnapore came directly from Gandhi himself. On March 7, 1930, Dr. Suresh Chandra Bandopadhyay, President of the Cumilla Abhoy Ashram, along with members Annada Prasad Chaudhuri and Dr. Nripendranath Bose, met the Mahatma and discussed the advantages of salt production along the coastal areas of Midnapore district. Gandhi, after listening to them, was convinced and gave his approval to start the Salt Satyagraha there.¹²

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Preparations for the Salt Satyagraha then began in Midnapore. On March 19, a conference of prominent Congress workers from all over the district was convened in the town of Midnapore. It was decided at this meeting that a 'District Civil Disobedience Committee' would be formed, under which sub-divisional and police station-level committees would function.¹³ In the Contai sub-division, Promothanath Bandopadhyay¹⁴ and Satishchandra Jana¹⁵ were elected as President and Secretary, respectively, of the Civil Disobedience Committee. Dr. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh was chosen as the head of the main committee. The chief centers of the Salt Satyagraha in this sub-division were Pichhabani and the Contai National School. The prominent worker Satyaranjan Sen was placed in charge of this camp, assisted by Jnanendranath Manna, one of the teachers of the Contai National School.¹⁶

In the Tamluk subdivision, the Salt Satyagraha movement also took on a massive scale. The President of the Civil Disobedience Committee of this subdivision was Narendra Nath Maity, and the Secretary was Satish Chandra Chakraborty.¹⁷ On the banks of the Haldi River, Narghat emerged as the main center of the Salt Satyagraha in this subdivision. With the financial assistance of Maheshwar Raja Surendra Narayan Roy¹⁸ of Tamluk, a part of his residence was used to establish the Salt Satyagraha camp.¹⁹ The camp was led by Acharyas Satish Chandra Samanta and Sushil Kumar Dhara.

From March 12, the day of Gandhi's Dandi March, enthusiasm for the Salt Satyagraha began to grow among the Congress workers of the subdivision. After the workers' conference held in Midnapore town on March 19, a team led by Jibesh Chandra Dev Pattnayak²⁰ organized a *padayatra* (foot march) throughout the subdivision to form groups of workers and inspire them. Meetings were held in various places to raise the spirit and emotions of the volunteers. Following this, preparations began to register the names of willing *satyagrahis*. Nearly fifteen thousand young men and women enrolled their names to join the Tamluk Salt Satyagraha.²¹

The main Salt Satyagraha centre of the Tamluk subdivision was Narghat. On March 29, on behalf of the Bengal Civil Disobedience Council, Sushil Kumar Bandopadhyay and Ajit Kumar Mallik extended special assistance to the subdivision committee in selecting a suitable place for the campaign. Finally, Narghat, situated on the banks of the Haldi River, was chosen as the site of the Satyagraha.

A committee was formed to conduct the Salt Satyagraha in the Tamluk subdivision. Mahendra Nath Maity²², a prominent Congress leader of Tamluk, was elected President of this committee, and Satish Chandra Chakraborty²³ was chosen as the Secretary. All Congress

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activities were directed from his residence. The pledge of independence taken on January 26 had already infused new energy among the workers of the entire subdivision. As the day of the Salt Satyagraha, April 6, drew nearer, the desire to participate in the struggle grew stronger among Congress volunteers. On March 19, during the district-wide workers' conference held in Midnapore, a strong contingent of volunteers from the Tamluk subdivision, under the leadership of the well-known Congress worker Jibesh Dev Pattnayak, attended the meeting after marching there on foot. After returning from the conference, they vigorously propagated the message of the Satyagraha throughout the region. The Subdivisional Congress Committee motivated the satyagrahis to engage in the movement in a disciplined and organized manner.²⁴

It was decided that Congress workers from different subdivision towns would march on foot to reach Midnapore town, and along their route, they would hold public meetings at various places to inspire the people. From the Tamluk subdivision, a group of fifty selected workers resolved to walk to Midnapore. The leader of this team was to be Ajay Kumar Mukhopadhyay. Among the fifty members was the then-young Sushil Kumar Dhara, who later wrote: "From Tamluk, a group of fifty leaders and workers, under Ajay-da's leadership, began a march of fifty miles on foot through the villages toward Midnapore in the last part of March. Every morning we walked about seven or eight miles, and near the resting place in the afternoon, we held public meetings. The villagers arranged our meals. Because of Ajay-da's reputation and his connections, in many places, we were invited to dine and rest at the homes of respectable families. The purpose of our march was to stir enthusiasm in the villages before the Salt Satyagraha began. Our destination was to join the Midnapore District Conference at the Narajol Palace. Among the leaders in our group were Satish-da, Hansadhwaj-da, Nalini-da, Jibesh-da, and others. All of them, along with Ajay-da, addressed the gatherings at every meeting".²⁵

The royal family of Tamluk made a special contribution to the national movement of Midnapore. A volunteer camp was established in an abandoned section of the palace. Satish Chandra Samanta took charge of directing this camp, and his enthusiastic young assistant was Sushil Kumar Dhara. Having just completed his matriculation examination, he joined the volunteer camp. Apart from the volunteers from various areas within the subdivision, many leaders and workers from outside the subdivision also arrived in Tamluk to take part in the Salt Satyagraha.²⁶

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The General Officer Commanding (G.O.C.) of this volunteer group was Madhusudan Bandopadhyay.²⁷ With all the young members of the team, he organized parade drills in the vast field in front of the royal palace. The responsibility for supplying provisions to the camp was taken up by the well-known Congress leader of Panskura, Rajanikanta Pramanik.²⁸ Besides, several well-wishers of Tamluk town extended special assistance to this volunteer group, among whom were Bipradas Maity, Haripada Dalui, Jatindra Nath Pattnayak, Ranjit Singh, Rohit Adhikari, Haripada Manna, and others.²⁹

Why Narghat?

Narghat, in the Tamluk subdivision of undivided Midnapore, was once a nimak mahal (salt factory) under British rule.³⁰ The East India Company had started a monopoly business of salt production and sale in the coastal areas of undivided Midnapore, such as Khejuri, Hijli, Birkul, Nandigram, Mahishadal, and Narghat.³¹ Moreover, the Company employed local villagers exclusively as laborers. The “Malangi Rebellion,” which had erupted in Khejuri, had also spread its wave to Narghat.³² Thus, having already been influenced by earlier anti-British uprisings, Narghat was chosen by the Tamluk Subdivisional Congress Committee as the site for the Salt Satyagraha.³³

The coastal regions were most suitable for establishing a salt centre. Although Narghat was not directly on the seashore, saline water would flow abundantly through the Haldi River. For this reason, the Congress satyagrahis of Tamluk selected this place. During high tide, the saline seawater entered through the river and flooded the adjoining lands, leaving behind salt deposits. This saline soil was then soaked in water to extract brine through the distillation method. When that brine was boiled, salt was obtained.³⁴ Narghat had all the facilities necessary to carry out this entire process.

Moreover, this place, situated on the banks of the Hooghly River, was located at the junction of the Mahishadal and Nandigram police stations. There were six police stations in the Tamluk subdivision—Panskura, Tamluk, Mahishadal, Sutahata, Moyna, and Nandigram—and Narghat was conveniently accessible from all of them. Each station was connected by road. Although there was no paved road in the Nandigram police station area, Narghat’s location on the main road from Tamluk to Contai made travel easier for the workers of the Nandigram area.

Preparation for the Satyagraha

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According to the schedule of Gandhi's Dandi March, the marchers were to start from Sabarmati and reach Dandi on April 5. It was decided that on the following day, April 6, Gandhi would prepare salt on the seashore at Dandi and thus break the Salt Law.³⁵ The Tamluk Salt Satyagraha Committee also resolved to inaugurate their Salt Satyagraha on the same day, April 6. In keeping with that plan, advance notice was officially given to the government and police administration.³⁶

For several days before the event, the leaders and worker groups of the subdivision were engaged in organizing meetings, processions, workers' conferences, and volunteer recruitment drives throughout the region. On April 5, 1930 — the day before the Satyagraha was to begin — a massive public meeting was held in a coconut grove near the Bargabhma Temple in Tamluk as the final stage of preparation. The principal speaker at the meeting was the famous orator, Dr. Pratap Chandra Guha Ray.³⁷ The young student Sushil Kumar Dhara recited Nazrul's poem Bidrohi ("The Rebel"), earning much praise from all present.³⁸

In that meeting, Dr. Pratap Chandra Guha Ray, the renowned orator, captivated everyone with his emotional speech, and many people became eager to enlist themselves as volunteers. About this meeting, Ananda Bazar Patrika wrote: "Last Saturday, the people's leader Pratap Chandra Guha Ray came to Tamluk. He personally inspected the battlefield and was very satisfied with the selection of the site, giving several suggestions regarding camp arrangements. He summoned the local residents and warned them of the dangers they might face in the future. But he was satisfied with their replies. Even if the police completely destroyed the villages for supporting this movement, the villagers were neither afraid nor hesitant. ... In the afternoon, a huge public meeting was held in Tamluk. ... After speeches by Jibesh Chandra Dev Pattnayak, Chandi Charan Dutta of the Civil Disobedience Committee, and Ajay Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Pratap Babu stirred the crowd with his soul-stirring words. ... When he called upon people to volunteer, even at the cost of their lives, the women were the first to rise, and soon everyone present stepped forward to register their names".³⁹

This account proves that there was immense enthusiasm among the general public of Tamluk to participate in the Salt Satyagraha. The villagers were even ready to sacrifice their lives to make the movement successful. The same day's newspaper also reported: "When help was sought for the provisions of the soldiers, Mrs. Pushparani⁴⁰, wife of the chief commander of the Tamluk Volunteer Corps, Madhusudan Bandopadhyay, was the first to donate her gold

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necklace. Mrs. Nandarani, sister of Ajay Kumar Mukhopadhyay, secretary of the Civil Disobedience Committee, offered a ring; his sister-in-law, Mrs. Durgarani, gave a pair of bangles; his younger sister, Mrs. Ramalika, gave a pair of earrings; and his other sisters, Radharani and Shovarani, each donated a pair of earrings. ... Subodh Chandra Maity, the zamindar of Lakshya, contributed one hundred rupees”.⁴¹

This information demonstrates that the Subdivisional Congress Committees spared no effort in strengthening Gandhi’s Salt Satyagraha movement. It also reveals that the grassroots workers of the area, regardless of their social status or wealth, contributed according to their ability, breathing new life into the Narghat Salt Satyagraha movement.

Regarding this meeting, Indumati Bhattacharya,⁴² the noted freedom fighter of Panskura, recalled in her memoirs: “Once Pratap Chandra Guha Ray held a meeting in Tamluk. With his emotional and powerful speech, he could completely captivate the audience. Many women at that meeting took off their ornaments and donated them for the movement. In that gathering, Felu⁴³ gave away her earrings, while Bani⁴⁴ offered a marble that she had in her pocket. Pratap Babu auctioned that marble at the meeting and raised thirty rupees. It felt as though a flood of patriotic fervor had swept through everyone. No one could remain silent. Many registered their names as volunteers; several women did the same. Among them were my elder cousin and my friend Suhasini Devi.⁴⁵ I too felt a strong desire to become a volunteer. One day, I went to Tamluk myself to learn all the details”.⁴⁶

From the above discussion, it becomes evident that people from all sections of society—irrespective of caste, creed, religion, or economic status—came forward to make the Narghat Salt Satyagraha a success. A powerful wave of public support emerged, driven by clear planning, a strong sense of purpose, and a steadfast commitment to achieving the goal. Alongside this, the movement also demonstrated the sincerity and dedication of its leadership.

Beginning and Expansion of the Satyagraha

On the morning of April 6, 1930, a group of six selected Satyagrahis started their march from the Tamluk Rajbari camp towards Narghat. After the ceremonial rituals, Raja Surendra Narayan Roy embraced and blessed them all. Among the six Satyagrahis, Hansadhvaj Maity was the leader of the group—he was known as the “Gandhi of Narghat.” Just as Mahatma Gandhi began his Dandi March from the Sabarmati Ashram with seventy-eight associates,

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Hansadhwaj Maity too began his journey towards Narghat with his five companions: Indrajit Singh, Khudiram Dakuya, Rakhal Chandra Nayak, Abinash Chandra Das, and Kunjabihari Bhaktadas.⁴⁷

When the group of Satyagrahis reached in front of the Bargabhima Temple, women led by Subhashini Devi, the sister of Ajay Babu, welcomed them with conch shells, garlands, and sandal paste. Nearly five hundred women, along with several thousand people, followed the Satyagrahis. Ananda Bazar Patrika reported about this grand procession: “The next morning (April 6, 1930), a magnificent procession was arranged to escort the first batch of soldiers to Narghat. After chanting sacred hymns, Raja Surendra Narayan Roy of the ancient royal family of Tamluk embraced all, and the soldiers left the camp. ... At the front of the procession was a kirtan group, followed by the Satyagrahis carrying the tricolour flag marked with the spinning wheel, then came the young girls, followed by the mothers symbolizing strength. Behind them were officials such as Pratap Babu, Mahendra Babu, Bankim Babu, Chandi Babu, Kumar Babu, and Bidhu Babu”.⁴⁸

When the Satyagrahis reached three miles outside the town, they were warmly welcomed again. Under the leadership of Mrs. Tarulata Bhattacharya, local women adorned the Satyagrahis with garlands and sandal paste. After a short rest, the Satyagrahis resumed their march. At Byatara Hart and Nandkumar, two massive public meetings were held, where Pratap Babu and other leaders delivered speeches. As the procession moved forward, its size continued to grow—thousands of men and women from different directions joined, advancing toward Narghat. Ananda Bazar Patrika reported: “By the time the procession reached Narghat, it had turned into a massive sea of people stretching nearly two miles. About thirty-five thousand people attended the meeting”.⁴⁹



1930, police brutality on the procession during the Narghat Salt Satyagraha

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Image Source: 'Smritisoudha', Nimtouri, Tamluk.

Around 4 p.m., the procession reached Narghat. Then the Satyagrahis began the work of salt production. They collected saline soil from the riverbank and deposited it in a pit. A thick layer of straw was spread at the bottom of the pit, upon which the saline soil was placed and brine water was poured over it. Beneath the pit was an outlet for the filtered water to drain. The saline earth dissolved in the brine, and the concentrated salt water slowly dripped through the outlet into a pot. The water collected in the pot was then boiled to produce salt.⁵⁰

On April 6, the Satyagrahis prepared the salt and made small packets of it. In the presence of a large gathering, Dr. Pratap Chandra Guha Ray and other prominent leaders of the subdivision explained the significance of producing salt and called upon everyone to join the Civil Disobedience Movement as directed by Gandhi. On that day, the Satyagrahis produced a total of 125 packets of salt, which were sold at 16.25 paise. The women present sang national songs, inspiring the Satyagrahis with renewed enthusiasm.⁵¹

On the first day, April 6, the police tried to obstruct the Satyagrahis' work but did not behave violently. However, from the second day, April 7, they began to act brutally. Following the orders of the District Magistrate, Mr. Paddy, the police overturned the salt pans, broke pots and utensils, poured water on the fuel wood, and chased the volunteers with batons.⁵²



1930, Narghat Salt Satyagrah Police Torturing.

Image Source: 'Smritisoudha', Nimtouri, Tamluk.

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On the third day, April 8, more Satyagrahis from different areas of Narghat arrived to resist police brutality. The police found it difficult to control the situation. District Magistrate Paddy himself came to the spot, baton in hand, to restore order. That day, Satish Chandra Samanta, the head of the Tamluk Rajbari camp, led the Satyagrahi group at Narghat. He endured severe torture at the hands of the District Magistrate and other police officers.⁵³

Despite various forms of police oppression, they failed to stop the salt production at Narghat. So the police decided not to kill the Satyagrahis outright but to starve them. Instead of attacking the salt-making camp, they raided the adjacent camp where the volunteers stayed. They overturned the rice pots, spoiled the food, and broke the cooking utensils, making it impossible to prepare or serve meals for the volunteers gathered at the camp.⁵⁴ Even then, the Satyagrahis could not be subdued. The authorities arranged to send cooked food from Tamluk to Narghat. The responsibility of distributing the food was taken by Ramesh Chandra Kar, Ram Chandra Roy, and Rabindranath Giri of Nandigram. They transported the food by motorcar from Tamluk and stopped one mile before Narghat at a predetermined secret location. The Satyagrahis went there in small groups to eat.⁵⁵

Many policemen in the Tamluk subdivision could not accept such cruel acts ordered by their superiors. One such constable, Bhushan Chandra Samanta of Sarberia village under Mahishadal Police Station, known as a 'Nimki Police',⁵⁶ was deeply disturbed by the brutality. He decided to resign from his post, returned his uniform, and left his job. Not only did he resign, but he also joined the Satyagraha camp and took part in salt production at Narghat. Upon learning this, the police arrested him, and he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. This incident greatly boosted the morale of the Satyagrahis.⁵⁷

On April 13, the responsibility for salt production at Narghat was given to the Nandigram Police Station. When they marched towards Narghat, they were arrested by the police. On the same day, another group reached Narghat through an alternative route and attempted to join the work there.⁵⁸ On April 14, a nationwide hartal (strike) was observed to protest the arrest of Jawaharlal Nehru and J. M. Sengupta.⁵⁹ On April 15, Ajay Mukhopadhyay, Secretary of the Civil Disobedience Committee, was arrested. He was taken from his house in Tamluk to Narghat, where a special magistrate's camp court was set up for his trial. He was sentenced to one year and three months of rigorous imprisonment.⁶⁰ In protest, a complete hartal was observed throughout Tamluk.

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On April 16, Acharya Satish Chandra Samanta, the head of the Rajbari camp, was arrested.⁶¹ Sushil Kumar Dhara, his deputy at the camp, recalled in his memoirs: “For three or four days earlier, he had gone to Narghat for Satyagraha, where he was brutally beaten by the police. Upon returning to Tamluk at night, he was arrested. After his arrest, he was produced at the Narghat camp court and sentenced to one year of rigorous imprisonment. On April 17, while shopping at Balughata market under Sutahata Police Station, Congress leader Kumar Chandra Jana was arrested. At the Narghat camp court, he was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment”.⁶² That same day, Nalini Ranjan Hota and Lalit Kumar Dhara were arrested for delivering speeches at the Narghat salt center and were both sentenced to imprisonment.⁶³

On April 18, a massive meeting was held at the Narghat salt center, attended by prominent women leaders from Calcutta such as Jyotirmoyee Ganguly, Khemankari Devi, and Charusila Devi. The gathering drew a huge crowd. On learning about the meeting, the police imposed Section 144 in the area. Nevertheless, being unable to disrupt the assembly, the police resorted to violent lathi-charges, sparing not even a ten-year-old boy.⁶⁴ Thanks to the care of the women leaders, the child eventually regained consciousness.

Despite all efforts, even the personal intervention of the District Magistrate could not stop salt production at Narghat for a single moment. The salt center continued successfully under the presence of the Satyagrahis for nearly four months. With the arrival of the monsoon, however, it became impossible to continue salt production properly. Consequently, as the Salt Satyagraha movement came to an end across the entire Midnapore district, the Narghat salt center was also closed. Afterward, picketing against excise and foreign goods began in various places, followed by a widespread no-tax campaign throughout the district.

Evaluation

The Narghat Salt Satyagraha movement remains a unique example within the framework of the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 in the Medinipur district. Following Gandhi’s path and defying the Salt Law, the satyagrahis of Tamluk strengthened Gandhi’s nationwide Salt Satyagraha movement by enduring brutal repression and continuing the production of salt at Narghat. Louis Fischer wrote, “Gandhi did two things in 1930; he made the British people aware that they were cruelly subjugating India, and he gave Indians the conviction that they could, by lifting their heads and straightening their spines, lift the yoke from their shoulders. After that, it was inevitable that Britain should some day refuse to rule India and that India should some day refuse to be ruled”.⁶⁵

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Women of the Tamluk subdivision played a particularly significant role in the Salt Satyagraha. Among them were Mrs. Pushparani Bandyopadhyay, Nandarani Mukhopadhyay, Durgarani Mukhopadhyay, and Indumati Bhattacharya. They actively supported the satyagrahis in various ways. Every day, a number of women from different parts of Tamluk appeared at the Narghat Salt Centre. When the police tried to destroy the salt-making equipment, they stood in groups around the furnaces, forming a protective circle. Ignoring the police's rude behavior and obscene remarks, they continued to assist in the salt.⁶⁶

People from all sections of society joined the Narghat Salt Satyagraha movement. Regardless of social or economic status—rich or poor, students, youths, women, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and industrialists—all took part. Students from various schools joined the movement with boundless enthusiasm. Many registered themselves as volunteers. District Magistrate Paddy wrote in a report dated 29 December 1930: “Out of a total of 450 students of Hamilton School, Tamluk, nearly 80 students were present between April and August 1930”.⁶⁷ These students worked hand in hand with the volunteers. Three meritorious students of the school—Bishwanath Mukherjee, Dharendra Narayan Roy, and Surendranath Ghorai—were arrested for participating in picketing and imprisoned.⁶⁸ Due to this massive student involvement, all forms of government assistance to the school were stopped on 31 August 1930.

The lawyers of Tamluk also extended considerable support to the Narghat Salt Satyagraha. Following the resolution passed at the Bengal Provincial Congress's Dinajpur session, when it became impossible for lawyers to boycott courts entirely, the lawyers of Tamluk decided to engage in the sale of illegal salt and personally went from place to place selling small packets of salt. Notable lawyers like Srinath Chandra Das, Bidhubhushan Hait, and Bankim Chandra Bhowmik sold satyagrahi-prepared salt packets in Tamluk town. On 30 April, Tamluk's leading lawyers—Mahendranath Maity, Bidhubhushan Hait, Prafulla Kumar Chattopadhyay, and Harisadhan Sarkar—resigned from the membership of the “Town Club,” an organization supported by the government and favored by government officials.⁶⁹

Conclusion

The satyagrahis' methods of protest, strategies of resistance, and ability to mobilize mass support at Narghat deserve full recognition. On one hand, the movement symbolized liberation; on the other, it invigorated grassroots movements at the village level. For the people of the district, Narghat remains a place of pride to this day. Moreover, it strengthened

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Gandhi's leadership in the subsequent phases of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The satyagrahis at Narghat remained entirely non-violent, unarmed, and endured police brutality with unwavering courage. Their selfless sacrifice now stands immortalized only on a stone plaque at Narghat, engraved with the words: "In April 1930, during the Salt Law-breaking movement, disregarding the unjust prohibitions of British rule and enduring police atrocities, thousands of unarmed satyagrahi men and women from the villages plunged into salt preparation at Narghat on the banks of the Haldi River. This victory flag of non-violence remains our eternal pride and glory".⁷⁰ That is all, no other trace remains today. For the knowledge of the present and future generations, their heroism must be remembered. Endless respect to the satyagrahis of Narghat.

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13. Bidyut Chakrabarty, LPINM, p. 101.
14. Resident of Manoharchak, Contai. Born into an educated Mahishya peasant family; a devoted Congress member. Passed B.A. in 1912, joined Contai Model Institution as Assistant Headmaster. Resigned during Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement and later became Headmaster of the National School. Under Deshapran's leadership, elected Chairman of Local Board in 1922 and 1925; MLA in 1927 and 1946. Became Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) in 1957 as a Socialist Party candidate. Died in 1967.
15. Resident of Sankhapai, Bonomalichatta, Contai. Left college in Kolkata to join the Non-Cooperation Movement. Close associate of Deshapran; founded Contai and Bonomalichatta National Schools; led Union Board Boycott, Salt Satyagraha, and No-Tax Campaigns. Later Member of Bengal Legislative Council; died in 1968.
16. Sankar Kumar Das, FMMC, p. 88; Basanta Kumar Das, SSM, p. 10.
17. Basanta Kumar Das, SSM, p. 73.
18. The 60th Raja of the Tamluk royal family. A patron of satyagrahis and nationalist activities. Presided over a massive public meeting in 1905 at Brahmabarwari Maidan. During the Salt Satyagraha, opened his palace to volunteers; when the District Magistrate Peddie tried to shut it, he failed. Later arrested; his salt allowance was stopped by the government. The royal family took refuge in the Panskura estate due to police terror. Died in 1942.
19. Sushil Kumar Dhara. *Prabaha*, Vol. 1, Janakalyan Trast, Mahishadal, Midnapore, 1983, p. 26.

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20. Resident of Jamalchak, Sutamata. Served as teacher at the National School established by Kumar Chandra Jana. Actively organized Civil Disobedience meetings and committees throughout the sub-division.
21. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, *Swadhinata Sangrame Tamruk, Adiyug Theke 1940* (hereafter SST-AT1940), Tamralipta Jatiya Sarkar Smarak Committee, Tamralipta janakalyan Samiti and Tamralipta Swadhinata Sangram itihās Committee'r Joutha Uddoge Prakashita, (Ed), Tamruk, 2009, p. 149.
22. Resident of Tilantapara, Sabang. Father: Bipradas Maity. A lawyer by profession; settled in Tamruk. Gave up law practice in 1921 during the Non-Cooperation and Union Board movements under Deshapran's leadership. Chairman of Tamruk Municipality (1920–28). Died in 1940.
23. A noted social worker and freedom fighter. Hosted Subhas Chandra Bose at his residence on 11 April 1938. Vice-Chairman of Tamruk Municipality (1925–28).
24. Sushil Kumar Dhara, *Prabah*, Vol. 1, p. 29.
25. *Ibid*, p. 25.
26. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 146.
27. Brother-in-law of Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee's younger sister.
28. Resident of Kalai village, Panskura. From a Mahishya peasant family; dedicated Congress worker. Passed matriculation from Hamilton High School, Tamruk (1915), B.A. from Vidyasagar College, and LL.B. in 1923. Joined Local Board in 1923; imprisoned during Civil Disobedience and Quit India Movements. MLA in 1946; later served four terms as MLA in independent India.
29. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 146.
30. Tarapada Santra. *Medinipur: Sanskriti o Manab Samaj*, Kaushiki, Howrah, 1987, p. 62.
31. L. S. S. O'Malley. *Bengal District Gazetteers: Midnapore*, Government of West Bengal, Calcutta, 1995, p. 153.
32. Jogesh Chandra Basu. *Medinipurer Itihas*, Sen Brothers & Co., Kolkata, 1416 B.S., p.p. 227–228; and O'Malley, p. 154.
33. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 147.
34. Nagendranath Roy, *British Amale Medinipure Laban Shilpo o Malangi Sramik Bidroha*, Dove Publishing House, Medinipur, 2009, p.p. 18–34.
35. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, p. 271.
36. Basanta Kumar Das, SSM, p. 74.
37. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 147.
38. Sushil Kumar Dhara, *Prabah*, Vol. 1, p. 17.
39. *Anandabazar Patrika*, April 10, 1930.
40. Younger sister of Ajoy Mukhopadhyay.
41. *Anandabazar Patrika*, April 10, 1930.
42. Resident of Jorapukur, Panskura; wife of Surendranath Bhattacharya. Actively participated in Salt Satyagraha and No-Tax Campaign. Served as 4th Director of Samar Parishad during the Tamruk No-Tax phase. Later President of local Congress Committee (1945–onward). Her younger son, Shyamadas Bhattacharya, was also active in the movement.
43. Wife of Kalidas Bhattacharya, eldest son of Indumati Bhattacharya.
44. Banibrata Mukhopadhyay, nephew of Ajoy Kumar Mukhopadhyay.
45. Sister of Ajoy Kumar Mukhopadhyay. Longtime President of Tamruk Thana Congress Committee; imprisoned several times.
46. *Anandabazar Patrika*, April 10, 1930.
47. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 148.
48. *Anandabazar Patrika*, April 10, 1930.
49. *Ibid*.
50. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 150.
51. Basanta Kumar Das, SSM, p. 75.
52. File No. 249/30, 2, Riots of Non Official Enquiry Committee regarding incidents in the district in Midnapore; Home Political Govt. of Bengal 1931; D. O. No. 18-C Dated Contai the 7th/10th January 1931, a letter from J. Peddie, District Magistrate, Midnapore, To- H. Tufnell Barrett, Press Officer to Government of Bengal, p. 17 (hereafter Letter from J. Peddie to H. Tufnell).
53. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 151.
54. Basanta Kumar Das, SSM, p. 76.
55. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 152.
56. The coastal regions of South Bengal (Midnapore, 24 Parganas, Noakhali, Chittagong) were traditional salt-producing zones, known as *Nimki Mahal* during the Mughal era. Special revenue was collected from local landlords for these areas. Under British rule, after the Permanent Settlement, the

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- boundaries of these *Nimki* zones were demarcated. Police deployed there were known as ‘Nimki Police’.
57. File No. 249/30, 2, Letter from J. Peddie to H. Tufnell, p. 167.
 58. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 152.
 59. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India*, p. 295.
 60. File No. 249/30, 2, Letter from J. Peddie to H. Tufnell, p. 173.
 61. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 152.
 62. File No. 249/30, 2, Letter from J. Peddie to H. Tufnell, p. 187.
 63. Basanta Kumar Das, SSM, p. 79.
 64. Sushil Kumar Dhara, *Prabah*, Vol. 1, p. 55.
 65. Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, HarperCollins, 2006, p. 300.
 66. Sushil Kumar Dhara and Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahapatra, SST-AT1940, p. 153.
 67. *Midnapur's Tryst with Struggle*, ed. Pranab Kumar Chatterjee. Kolkata: West Bengal State Archives, Higher Education Department, Government of West Bengal, 2004. “General Note on Tamluk” by the District Magistrate of Midnapore, 29 December 1930, p. 179.
 68. File No. 249/30, 2, Letter from J. Peddie to H. Tufnell, p. 189.
 69. *Nihar*, October 7, 1930.
 70. Inscription on a commemorative plaque at Narghat, unveiled on February 15, 2015, by Prashanta Adhikari (This time Additional District Magistrate, Purba Medinipur), Sukumar De (This time MLA, Nandakumar), and Sukumar Bera (President, Nandakumar Panchayat Samiti).