

= Vedaranyam March =

The Vedaranyam March or Vedaranyam Satyagraha was organised to protest the salt tax imposed by the British Raj in India . The march took place in April 1930 and was the second of its kind following the Dandi March organised by Mahatma Gandhi , both in the framework of the Civil Disobedience Movement .

The march was led by a group of 100 volunteers from the Indian National Congress ( INC ) under the leadership of C. Rajagopalachari ? often referred to as " Rajaji " . It began at Trichinopoly ( now Tiruchirappalli ) and ended in Vedaranyam , a small coastal town in Tanjore District . By collecting salt directly from the sea , the marchers broke the salt law . Rajaji spoke to people along the march 's route about the importance of Kh?d? , issues of ' social disabilities ' ( caste discrimination ) and civil disobedience . The campaign ended on 28 April 1930 when the participants were arrested , following which Rajaji was imprisoned for six months .

= = Background = =

In response to a nationwide protest against the British salt tax , Gandhi initiated a salt march on 6 April 1930 to Dandi ? then a small village in the Bombay Presidency on the western coast of India . Rajaji , a close associate of Gandhi who also participated in the Dandi march , organised a march to India 's east coast to make salt at Vedaranyam , Tanjore District in Madras Presidency . He chose Vedaranyam instead of Tuticorin , a larger salt @-@ making centre , because the former had convenient salt marshes and because Vedaratnam Pillai was a local resident , salt merchant , INC activist and philanthropist who would be able to supply moral and logistic support to the marchers . Rajaji started the march from Trichinopoly , 150 miles ( 240 km ) west of Vedaranyam .

Rajaji was unanimously elected president of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee ten days prior to the march , and insisted that only people willing to risk death or long prison terms should participate . Nearly 100 members of the INC , including T. S. S. Rajan , Sardar Vedaratnam , Rukmini Lakshmi pathi , K. Kamaraj , M. Bhaktavatsalam , and C. R. Narasimhan , joined the rally . In addition , social activists such as A. Vaidyanatha Iyer and G. Ramachandran also joined the group .

= = The march = =

The march , coinciding with the Tamil New Year , commenced on 13 April 1930 from T. S. S. Rajan 's house in Trichinopoly Cantonment . As the march proceeded towards Tanjore district its " astute and energetic " District Collector J. A. Thorne ( ICS ) tried to stop it . Using newspapers , Tamil handbills and town @-@ criers , Thorne informed would @-@ be hosts that anyone offering food or shelter to the marchers was liable to six @-@ months ' imprisonment and a fine . When informed of the threat , Rajaji retorted that he could understand the mindset of his own people better than a British ICS officer could , and added , " Thorne and thistles cannot stem this tide of freedom . "

Ignoring Thorne 's order , Sri Pantulu Iyer , a resident of Kumbakonam , and Sri Krishnaswami Iyer , a resident of aranthangi provided accommodation for two days and arranged a grand dinner for the group at his house before being arrested . Iyer 's arrest inspired people to invent ways to help the marchers without getting caught . Food packets were found tied to branches of roadside trees , and when the group rested by the Cauvery riverbank , they found indicators where huge food containers were buried . By contrast , the British police suffered from starvation when local residents refused them food or even water . Indian staff who were employed by the British stopped carrying out their day @-@ to @-@ day activities , while barbers and washermen refused service to government employees .

Despite various obstacles , the group reached Vedaranyam on 28 April , 15 days after setting out . When Gandhi was informed he wrote back : " It is good that our hands and feet are tied so that we can sing with joy . God is the help of the helpless . " The speeches made by Rajaji during the march highlighted the importance of Khadi ? issues of ' social disabilities ' ( caste discrimination ) ? and the significance of the Civil Disobedience Movement . The police , in spite of previous failures ,

heightened security at Vedaranyam to prevent the marchers from making illegal salt . As soon as they reached Vedaranyam , Rajaji declared that the salt laws would be broken on 30 April 1930 and called for more participants.mr.Krishnaswami iyer after 2 days trial came to join the march and gave support of Rajaji Sardar Vedaratnam offered accommodation to the group by constructing a camp on the shore . On the same day , when Rajaji and 16 others moved to a place called Edanthevar salt swamp 2 miles ( 3 @. @ 2 km ) from the camp , a police force led by the District Superintendent arrived there .

The group was asked to surrender . When they refused , Rajaji was arrested and produced before the district magistrate Ponnusamy Pillai . He was sentenced to six @-@ months ' imprisonment and was immediately sent to Trichinopoly . Other participants were also arrested and tortured by the policemen . Rukmini Lakshmi pathy was imprisoned for one year ; she was the first woman to serve a jail term for participating in the Salt Satyagraha movement .

= = Aftermath = =

The following day , shops all over the state closed . People continued to make salt at Vedaranyam , despite repeated arrests and the use of brutal force by police . Apart from the marchers , 375 people in the Tanjore district were arrested for protests against the British . Collector Thorne , who at first had been confident of his ability to prevent the march , was forced to report to his superiors , " If there ever existed a fervid sense of devotion to the ( British ) Government , it is now the defunct " .

At midnight on 5 May 1930 , Gandhi was arrested at his ashram in Karadi and sent to Poona , Bombay State . On 21 May , Sarojini Naidu and Gandhi 's son Manilal Gandhi broke into the " Dharasana salt works " together with 2 @, @ 500 volunteers . They were attacked and arrested by police , resulting in the death of two people and some 320 injured . A fortnight later , Rajaji was transferred From the Trichinopoly prison to Madras , then to the Bellary Central Jail .