CHAPTER - 5

The growth of women education in British Gujarat: 1900-1947

Background:
The nineteenth century was significant for the institutionalization of female education in India. The chief agencies in the process were Christian Missionaries, private organizations and the colonial state or British Government. The British government however, did not take direct initiative for the spread female education. With the introduction of local self-government around 1882, the government support to female education underwent a change. Now, the bulk of female education came to be established and conducted by the Local Government bodies such as the District School Board in rural areas and Municipalities in Urban areas.

It was the private enterprise that vigorously strove to translate the issue of female education into a movement. Rich philanthropists, social reformers and social reform associations integrated the issue of women education into their sphere of activities. Therefore, without leaning too

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1 Progress of Education in India, 1892-93 to 1896-97, Chapter IX, pp.282-313
2 Alfred Croft, Review of Education in India in 1886, pp.278-293
much on Government support, these agencies went ahead with their activities and established several schools for girls. These schools were largely conducted and financed by indigenous Philanthropists and industrialist as mentioned above.

Again, the British Government to an extent was unsuccessful in stimulating female education. In the case for male education the employment factor played a pivotal role in motivating parents to send them in English schools. The education received from these schools made males qualified for B-level of government services. For girls, the idea of seeking employment did not exist to a large extent. However, learning of domestic management, arts and crafts, needle work were considered important for girls’ education. The new system of education which was predominately job oriented did not incorporate indigenous ideas of women education initially. However, Christian missionaries and political elements such as revivalists played a significant role in stimulating girl’s formal education. The endeavor put forward by the Christian missionaries and the revivalist led to the incorporation of the existing ideas of girls’ education and subsequently segregating boys and

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3 A Collection of Despatches from the Home Department on the subject of Education in India, Calcutta 1870, No.4

4 For detail see, S. C. Ghosh, opt.cit.; Howell, A. ‘Education in British India’, 1872; McCully, B.T. ‘English Education and the origins of Indian Nationalism’ 1940.
girls education. The revivalists interested in conserving indigenous cultural tradition began to support women's education on the grounds that women's education would help to strengthen the hold of indigenous culture through the institution of family. These revivalists thus, introduced a new concept into women education — women as the custodian of traditional cultural values. Thus, the growth and development of women education in late nineteenth century was, primarily determined by the efforts of private agencies.

The first half of the twentieth century was significant for the consolidation national movement. The growth pattern of female education was determined largely by the developments taking place within national movement and considerable impact of the British government's policies to counter these developments. We will discuss the growth and development of women education in first half of the twentieth century on the basis of political developments taking place during this period.

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5 Government of India, Education Department, A Proceedings, October 1917, No.9
Movement for National Education: General

The period from 1900 to 1920 was significant for the consolidation of National movement. Under the umbrella of National movement several movements cropped up viz. justice movement in south India, labor movement and peasants movement. One of these was the movement for National Education which was the consequence of western education system.\(^6\)

It is significant and relevant for our study to know the conditions in which the idea of National education came up. The idea of national education emerged largely during 1880's.\(^7\) During this period the defects and short coming of English education began to surface. One of the glaring defects of English Education was that it was predominantly service oriented. English education largely qualified people for government

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\(^6\) Gandhi, while promoting the concept of national education replied that 'for many years past, several friends and I felt that our education is not national and that in consequence people do not get from it the benefit they ought to. Our children languish as a result of this education. They become incapable of any great achievement and the knowledge they acquire does not spread among the masses- not even in their families. Nor do the young people have any aim in mind in taking this modern education except to get a job and make money. Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi(CWMG), Vol.13, p.332

\(^7\) See Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, 'The Origin of the National Education Movement, 1905-10' ,1957, pp.19-30
services and professions mainly of doctors and lawyers. Therefore, the scope of English education was less. For educated Indians the scope was further less as they were employed largely as clerks at the provincial and central level. It subsequently led to unemployment among the educated youth. English education, thus, aggravated the problem of unemployment among the educated youths. By 1883, there were already 25,000 B.A's and M.A.'s out of an estimated population of 25,00,00,000.⁸

We will now turn to the political ramification of discontentment among the educated youth. The growing unemployment among educated youth resulted in disillusionment towards English education. This factor strengthened the forces of Nationalistic nature, which were increasingly posing challenge to colonial state and its systems. These forces began to provide an alternative to the existing system of education. Discontentment with English education system and British Government policy towards the problem, increasingly added fuel to the nationalistic sentiments that had been growing ever since the middle of the nineteenth century. Bound together by common background and common occupational and grievances, the educated Indians began to

⁸ Ibid, p.103
demand representation at various government levels and more employment opportunities. It is therefore not surprising that the chief demand of Indian National congress from 1885 to 1905 was a wider employment of the people in the public services.\(^9\)

Now, the limitations and shortcomings of education became a concern for the British Government. This was reflected in the government's policies of this period in which due attention was given to the subject of education.\(^10\) During Lord Curzon's tenure as Governor General (1899-1908), Educational Reforms were given the top priority. In 1904, the government came out with the State paper on education.\(^11\) This was the first comprehensive document on Indian education policy ever issued by the government of India since the emergence of modern system of education. We will turn to the discussion of this document with reference to women education later. However, recommendations put forward by the education commission of 1904 were not implemented due to increase in nation wide protest against the British government policies.

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\(^9\) Ibid, p.105
\(^10\) Robert Nathan, Report on the Progress of Education in India, Calcutta, 1904
\(^11\) Ibid, pp.145-210
particularly on the issue of partition of Bengal.\(^\text{12}\) This protest took the form of Swadeshi and Boycott movements.

The Swadeshi and Boycott Movement (1905-1912) formed the first phase of the national movement.\(^\text{13}\) The objective of this movement was to achieve self-reliance and self-sufficiency in all areas.\(^\text{14}\) The result of this development was setting up of national institutions of various levels throughout the country. Educational institutions which were national in spirit and substance were set up during this phase of national movement. These educational institutions ranged from schools, universities, Gurukuls and Ashrams.\(^\text{15}\) Attempts were also made in this period to set up the National Council of education with the chief objective of conducting education on national lines. This meant – one, imparting education through vernaculars, two, preparation of suitable textbooks in Indian languages, three, importance to the knowledge about the country, four, imparting scientific, professional and technical indigenous education. Thus, national education, during this period, formed virtually a parallel system of education.

\(^{12}\) Ghosh, S.C., opt.cit., p.119
\(^{13}\) Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, opt. cit. p.55
\(^{14}\) Young India, 22-12-1920
\(^{15}\) CWMG, Vol. 13, p.332
The Swadeshi and Boycott movement acquired economic aspects as well. The economic aspect dealt with spirit of self-sufficiency and self-reliance in economic matters, reviving traditional glamour of trade and commerce and development of modern industrial base. Swadeshi and Boycott movement therefore, triggered the movement for national education as well as gave way to economic nationalism.  

III

The promotion of women education through the Swadeshi movement

The swadeshi and boycott movement initiated the trend of mass mobilization. For the first time men and women in large numbers began to participate in nation wide strikes, rallies, and agitation. It was women's participation that contributed for the success of the Swadeshi movement. This trend generated political consciousness among women to a large extent. Along with political consciousness however, a strong realization was felt particularly among the women leadership

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16 Chandra, Bipan, ‘The rise and growth of Economic Nationalism in India’, 1969, p.32
17 Subaltern Studies, Vol.IX., pp.40-45
19 Kamaladevi Chattopadhy, ‘Indian Women’s battle for freedom’, 1983, p.95
that without women’s reforms, Swaraj was meaningless, that is to say, women’s liberty was viewed in the larger context of the meaning of Swaraj. The meaning attributed to Swaraj was to seek liberty and freedom from oppressive system. Women, who formed subjugated subject, find the struggle meaningless, if their conditions were not improved. Women leaders, therefore, motivated other women to represent themselves in the struggle for liberty for their cause.

Within the movement, women occupied a considerable space to lend their ideas and opinions on women education. Their ideas on women education, however, were not divorced from the traditional views. But, they increasingly favoured the model of national education. This was evident from the speech of Annie Besant (1847-1933) in 1904. In the speech she said that, ‘the National movement for girls’ education must be on national lines; it must accept the general Hindu conceptions of women’s place in national life, not the dwarfed modern view of the ancient ideas. It must see woman the mother and the wife as in some case, the learned and pious ascetic, the brahmavadini of the older days... rather than girls graduates for the learned profession’.  

Ms. Annie Besant represented a stream of educational thinking that linked ideas with experiments. During the Swadeshi movement, Annie Besant supported the national model of education and endeavors to blend women education with that. However, the emergence of new ideas on education and gradual demise of Swadeshi movement made her to rethink and redefine women education. In 1915 she wrote that, 'the education of the past being some beyond recall a wisely devised new form of education must replace it.'

It can be seen from the above discussion that the issue of women education got intertwined somewhere between late nineteenth century's revivalist's views on women education and increasing nationalist's sentiments of early twentieth century.

\[\text{bid, pp.387-88}\]
IV

Movement for National education in Gujarat

The idea of national education gained popularity in Gujarat in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The consciousness of self sufficiency and self reliance particularly in economic matters led to the development of the idea of national education in Gujarat. This consciousness in economic matters that led to economic nationalism was much stronger in Gujarat as the region was economically prosperous and had the culture of trade and commerce. Through Gujarati literature, Journals and newspapers the ideas of Swadeshi or self reliance in economic matters were promoted and discussed. In 1851, Dalpatram Dahyabhai, a poet, recited a poem criticizing the British economic exploitation of India. The poem was 'Hunnar Khan ni Chaddai' – Hunnar Khan, the lord of industries of the west had invaded India.

This economic consciousness led to the production of corpus of Gujarati literature. Harjivanram Kashiram Pandya and Bhojilal Lakshmnram Tripathi, both teachers, wrote a book 'Swadeshi Hit Bodhale' (1877), Girdharilal Harivallabhdas Mehta and Keshavlal Ranchhoddas Joshi,
also teachers, published a book known as 'Swadeshi Hit Darshak' (1877). Motilal Dulavadas constructed Dohas titled 'Swadeshi Sukhvardhak.' Bharanishankar Joshi, a teacher of vernacular school in Ahmedabad and a literary figure, while eulogizing the Swadeshi spirit, showed the way how to develop modern industries from local indigenous material. Hargovindas Kantawala, a noted social reformer of the time, wrote a book, 'Deshi karigarine uttejan' (1876). In this book he addressed the urgent need for economic self-reliance.

Thus, these literary works popularized the idea of Swadeshi. This generated consciousness and awareness at least among the entrepreneur class of Gujarat to set up indigenous industries. In order to promote indigenous industries, initiatives were made to set up first technical educational institutions followed by general educational institutions in Gujarat. These educational institutions largely facilitated in developing an alternative system of education in Gujarat.

The slow and steady development of alternative education system in Gujarat brought into fore the Gujarati people’s dissatisfaction towards western education system. This was evident from the contemporary

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24 Ibid, p.134
25 Kantawala, Hargovindas; 'Desi Karigiri ni Uttejan', pt.1, 1876, pp.27-55
26 The first indigenous technical institution of Gujarat was Kala Bhavan. The Kala Bhavan was set up in 1890 in Baroda under the stewardship of Tribhuvandas Gajjar, a chemistry graduate from Elphinstone College.
literary works. Some of the contemporary literary works in Gujarati which reflected the dissatisfaction towards English education were – *M.A bane ke Meri miti Kvan Kharas Ki* (why did you spoil my life by making me an M.A.) *Aj Kal no Sudharo Ke Ramaniya Bhayankarta* (modern reform or a fascinating dangerous trap? *Navo jamano – Amrit Ke Zer?* (New era, nectar or poison)?

It is interesting to know the observations made by the noted social reformer of Gujarat *Shri Mahipatram Rupram* on the adverse impact of western education system. Mahipatram pointed out that ‘The British Government has been starting schools only for manufacturing English-writing clerks for their offices’. Further, Mahipatram refereed to this phenomenon of manufacturing English writing clerks by saying that ‘the luckiest of them (educated Indians) often glad to begin life as Mamlatdar’s clerks.’ Thus, we can see how predominantly provincial and subordinate services in various departments of the government were offered to Gujarati educated youths largely belonging to higher section of the society. It is significant to note that for other sections of the Gujarati society such as Gujarati artisans and commercial communities of the lower and middle strata, the

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27 Trivedi Navalram, ‘Samaj Sudharane Rekha Darshan’, 1934, p.148
29 Me Cully, ‘English education and the origins of Indian Nationalism’, 1940, p.103
English Education was largely irrelevant. The education did not impart skills and know-how on indigenous crafts and professions. Vernacular schools were the most sought after by these communities. For, indigenous knowledge and learning formed the course study of vernacular schools.\(^{30}\)

Efforts to develop alternative system of education in the form of national schools and colleges began to take momentum in the second decade of the twentieth century. One of the leading national educational institutions that were established during this period was *Gujarat Vidyapith*.\(^{31}\) The *Vidyapith* was set up in 1920 with the efforts of Gandhi.\(^{32}\) This was conceived of as a university, with national schools and colleges affiliated to it. Education in *Vidyapith* and its affiliated colleges and schools was conducted in Gujarati. To make education in Gujarati possible, the *Vidyapith* created Gujarati textbooks in various subjects.\(^{33}\) This institution was significant not only for its contribution to Gujarati literature but as a base to *Satyagraha* movement that Gandhi carried. Students, both men and women of *Vidyapith* participated as volunteers in Gandhi's *Satyagraha* movement. This institution therefore, became symbolized

\(^{30}\) Mr. Coverton, ‘Report on vernacular books in the Bombay Presidency-1906’, pp.22-23  
\(^{32}\) Social Transformation through *Nai Talim*- Success Story Series of *Nai Talim*- Institutions of Gujarat, No.20 ‘Gujarat Vidyapith’. Amdabad, 2007, pp.2-30  
\(^{33}\) Ibid, p.9
with national movement. Another significant feature of Gujarat Vidyapith was that it did not segregate boys and girls' education. Most of the educational institutions that were affiliated to Vidyapith were co-educational.\textsuperscript{34} We can therefore say that Gujarat Vidyapith not only generated national consciousness among men and women but paved the way for co-education in Gujarat.

While these developments were taking place, the social reform organizations of late nineteenth century were increasingly getting oriented towards political movement. The regional issues began to occur at the all India level organizations, such as Indian National Congress and Indian Social reform conference.\textsuperscript{35} In Gujarat, the Surat Praja Samaj (1871) and the Gujarat Sabha, Ahmedabad (1884) was founded by social reformers and political leaders like Ramanbhai Nilkant, Dr. Joseph Benjamin, Mulchand Shah, Harilal Desaibhai and Maganbhai Patel.\textsuperscript{36} These leaders gave a political orientation to the social reform movement. This was achieved by bringing increasing pressure on the Government to introduce reforms and set up educational institutions

\textsuperscript{34}Ibid, p.12
\textsuperscript{35} See, Yagnik, Achyut; 'The shaping of Modem Gujarat', 2005, p.144
\textsuperscript{36} Gujarat Vidyasabha (Pub.)- Varshik Vyakhyano, Pt.1, 1948, pp.160-166
particularly for women.\textsuperscript{37} Two of the prominent social organizations of Gujarat which played a significant role in women's education of the early twentieth century were the \textit{Gujarat Sahitya Sabha} (1903) and the \textit{Gujarat Kelavani Mandal} (1913). These organizations served as powerful medium for spreading ideas of national education in society. The leaders like Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950), G. V. Mavalankar (1888-1956), Indulal Yagnik (1892-1972), Dr. Surnant Mehta (1877-1968) and Amritlal Thakkar (1869-1951), were some of the leading members of these organizations.\textsuperscript{38} These leaders through these organizations propagated their nationalist sentiments in the society.

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\textbf{Women's social participation in Gujarat: 1901-1920}

As mentioned earlier, the Swadeshi and Boycott movements increased women's participation. Similarly, this period witnessed the increase in participation of women in the social life of Gujarat. Gujarati women leaders used the movement as an opportunity to raise the issues of

\textsuperscript{37} Shankarlal Banker; 'Gandhiji Ane Rashtriya Pravruti: Sansmarno Ane Anubhavo', 1967, pp.23-24
\textsuperscript{38} Gujarat Vidyasabha (Pub.)- Varshik Vyakhyano, Pt.3, 1951, pp.25-69
women reforms in Gujarat. They integrated women’s reforms with the struggle for swaraj and justice. In this way, women leaders endeavor to give meaning to Gujarati women’s representation in national movement.

Under the leadership of prominent Gujarati women leaders such as Sharda Mehta and Vidyagauri Nilkanth (the first women graduates of Gujarat), noted educationalists and social reformers like Dr. Sumant Mehta and Chimanabai (wife of Sayajirao Gaekwad III, the ruler of Baroda state)\(^{39}\), Gujarati women began to come forward to express their views on social problems. These women actively participated in the social organizations such as Sansar Sudaro, Gujarati Kelvani Parishad and many others, wherein they expressed their views several issues including women education. In the first Annual session of Sansar Sudharo Parishad on fourth November 1917 in Godhara, Sharda Sumant Mehta delivered a speech on women education. In the speech she incorporated ongoing movement for national education and women education. While stressing on the significance of national movement, she said that ‘today, all over the country new feelings of justice and liberation is seen. The sound of patriotism and self pride is heard.... Every person is having the right to freedom. However, this freedom has

\(^{39}\) Maharani Chinnabai Gaikwad, ‘A Blueprint for change and empowerment’, 1911, pp.13-18
no meaning if women are not liberated. The basis of women progress lies in self sacrifice, self assertion and patience... Women education should be given the first priority; other questions of women progress are related to education. The necessary lessons to be taught to women are ideals of good wife, patience of a mother and follower of Dharma. This will lead a nation into a path of progress."40

Similar views were expressed by Hariganga, a local activist, way back in 1910, in an article in Buddhiprakash. The title for the article was ‘Apna Sansar ma Strionu Yogy Stan ne Gyati Sudharma Striyoni Maddad Zrur "(Awareness of women’s position in our society and necessity of women’s help in improving the society). She opined that ‘other nations are marching towards progress. If women are not educated not only men but the whole nation will suffer. As a result, the country will remain enslaved for ever’.41

A noted educationalist of this period, Kusumgari Hiralal Uldyaram Raval, expressed her views on women education in 1918 in Sansar Sudharo conference in Godhra. She said that ‘if wife is uneducated and husband is educated the family will not run smoothly. If women are educated on

40 Budhiprakash, Nov. ,1917, pp.345-365
41 Budhiprakash, Vol.57, No.7, July 1910

248
domestic management, then not only the family but the nation will also benefit'.

In the second annual session of Gujarat Kelvani Parishad, in 1917, objectives of women education on national lines were specified. The session was presided over by M.K. Gandhi. While specifying the objectives of women education Gandhi said that 'it was decided to impart domestic education in girls' schools'.

Thus, a significant feature found in these speeches was that the issue of women education was increasingly got interrelated with national movement. Now, women education was not only related with progress of the family as was seen in the late nineteenth century but intertwined with the progress of the nation.

As mentioned above, Gujarati Kelvani Parishad and Sansar Sudharo Parishad were two significant social organization of this period in Gujarat that primarily worked in the area of education. Women began to participate in these social organizations. Women were however, not the passive members of such social organizations. They participated actively and exerted their views. The annual conferences of these organizations were often presided over by women. The speeches made

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42 Ibid, Vol.60, 1917, pp.21-22
43 Ibid, Vol.60, No.6, 1918, pp.314-322
by women leaders who presided over these conferences and other significant events of these organizations were regularly published in periodicals such as *Budhiprakash, Stribodh and Shalapatra*. The excerpts of some of the speeches of women leaders are mentioned above.

A regular change in curriculum in girls' schools was a significant feature of this period. This was evident from the annual reports of Gujarat Vernacular society, and *Khadiya Kanyakula's Annual reports*. The volumes of *Gujarat Shalapatra* from 1901 to 1920 had regularly published the year-wise improved and revised syllabus of female training institutes. What was significant in these reports was incorporation of indigenous knowledge of medicine and sciences. In the 1905-06 Annual report of *Rao Bahadur Ranchodlal Kanyakula*, the following new courses were added. These were tailoring, cooking, economics, sciences, elementary knowledge of business and *Ayurvedic* medicine system. Thus, the incorporation of indigenous subjects in girls' curriculum oriented the women education towards nationalistic lines.

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44 See, *Budhiprakash* from 1895-1911
45 *Gujarat Shalapatra*, Jubilee No. 1911, pp.1-55
46 *Budhiprakash*, Vol.55, 1908
In the previous century the issue of women education was intrinsically related to the issue of social reforms. However, in the twentieth century it gradually got transformed into a political issue. This shift to an extent was attributed to the strengthening of women agency or women organizations that actively participated in political and social activities. The women organizations of the previous period however, functioned largely as an auxiliary unit of other organizations headed and steered by male reformers.\(^{47}\) Educated women mainly from upper section of the Gujarati society of the late nineteenth were associated largely with social activities such as relief work, charity and philanthropic activities.\(^{48}\) However, the significance of the twentieth century was the increase in the number of women organizations and gradual strengthening of women organizations. In this period the women organizations began to work autonomously. Now, the work of women reforms and women education was largely undertaken by these organizations. This was a significant shift as in the previous century the issues of women reforms were implicitly held by male reformers.

\(^{47}\) Forbes, G; ‘Women in Modern India’. The New Cambridge History of India, IV 2, 1998, pp.30-50

\(^{48}\) Budhiprakash, Vol.72, No.9, May 1929
In Gujarat, by the beginning of twentieth century, noted Gujarati women began to participate in the mainstream political activities. In the congress session at Ahmedabad in 1902, the first women graduates from Gujarat Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth and her sister Sharda Mehta took part in the proceedings of the session.\(^\text{49}\) Here, these women represented as active agents of the movement. This helped to an extent, generating political consciousness in Gujarati women. Moreover, the Swadeshi movement provided considerable space for women to undertake various works such as picketing, bonfires, delivering speeches and writing pamphlets to infuse patriotism.\(^\text{50}\) Therefore, the movement was a facilitator in bringing Gujarati women to the fore-front of national movement.

There was a considerable increase in the Gujarati women organizations during this period. Two of the prominent women organizations of early twentieth century Gujarat were Gujarati Hindu Stree Mandai and Vanita Vishrams. The former organization was established in 1903 at the initiative of Gujarati industrialists and reformers like Sir Gokuldas

\(^{49}\) The Report of the 18\(^{th}\) Indian National Congress, Held at Ahmedabad, 1902 (1903): Bombay

\(^{50}\) On the question of women’s role in non-co-operation movement, Gandhi’s reply was that, ‘it would be in vain to hope for swaraj so long as women do not make their full contribution to the efforts....if women do not know or do not accept their duty of preserving the nation’s freedom, or of winning it back when it is lost, it will be impossible to defend it...But the most important work- work which should become a permanent activity- is promoting swadeshi.’ Navjivan, 3-10-1920
Parekh, Sir Vijbhukandas Atmaram, Sir Narandas Purshotamdas, Sir Lallubhai Shanaldas and Karsandas Mulji. Its membership was open to women largely belonging to Brahmins, Banias, Jains, Bhatias, Lohanas and Kshatrias. It is to be reiterated here that the beneficiaries of English education belonged largely from these castes. The first president of Gujarat Hindu Stree Mandal was Jamnabai Nagindas Sakkai. It also included wives of men sponsoring the Mandal like Lady Dhunkoverbai Purshotamdas Thakurdas, and Lady Parsanbai Gokaldas Parekh. The main object of this organization was to raise the social, economic and political status of women without offending the religious feeling of any section of the community.

The other important women association of this period was Vanita Vishrams. Its activities were in fact mission based; for it extended its activities in various parts of Gujarat and Bombay province. What is important to know here about Vanita Vishram is its contribution in women education. The important branches of Vanita Vishrams were founded in Surat (1907) Ahmedabad (1907) and Bombay (1915). These

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51 Gail, Olivia Pearson; ‘Women in public life in Bombay city with special reference to the civil disobedience movement’, pp.58-59
52 Ibid, p. 59
53 Ibid, p.60
branches of Vanita Vishram did excellent work in educating destitute women, housewives and widows and training them into professional courses. About the Surat Branch of Vanita Vishram, Miss Carbery, the lady superintendent, reported that, ‘the Surat institution is now well housed and is doing excellent work among widows and married women whose household duties do not permit of their joining a full time school. In addition to instruction in three R's and English, industrial work, dyeing and needlework are taught.'\textsuperscript{55} A detail discussion of this organization and other women organizations of Gujarat will be done in the succeeding chapter.

\textbf{V}

Growth of primary, secondary and higher education for women in Gujarat: 1901-1920

The promotion of women education through Swadeshi movement, women agencies and other social organizations had the following consequences. First, phenomenal growth in primary education for girls, second, growth in secondary education for women, third, a slow but

\textsuperscript{55} Vanita Vishram Golden Jubilee, 1915-1965
steady growth in institutions for higher education, and fourth, growth in professional education.56

Primary Education

As stated at the outset private enterprise was largely responsible for the growth of women education. In the post Hunter Commission period i.e. 1882 onwards, due to financial deficits, the British government's role in promoting education to girls virtually came to a standstill.57 The initiative taken up by private agencies led to the growth of education for girls' education particularly primary education. This was due to the fact that society at large had by now come to accept the necessity of elementary education for girls. The various Acts and Resolutions passed by the government since 1854 led to the expansion of primary education for girls in Bombay Presidency. However the picture of primary education in Gujarat was not that satisfactory. In 1916, there were 266 girls' schools with 22000 pupils.58

Following table will give an idea of primary education of girls in urban areas:-

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56 Gauri Srivastava, opt. cit. pp.90-100
57 Report on progress of education in India, 1887-88 to 1891-92
58 Gazetteer of India, Gujarat State, Ahmedabad District, p. 106
Table 1.1 The growth of primary education for girls in British Gujarat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Primary schools for girls</th>
<th>No. of pupils enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Ahmedabad</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Khera</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>5650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Bharuch</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Surat</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Panchmahal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>22000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It is to be noted that the above figures represented the government run schools. The number of schools runs by private agencies and semi-government agencies such as District board and Municipalities exceeded the figures of girls’ schools and enrolment.

Over and all, there was an increase in girls enrolment in primary schools in British Gujarat. The following table will illustrates the expansion of primary girls’ schools in British Gujarat.
Table: 1.2 The expansion of primary girls schools in British Gujarat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1901</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>1921</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expansion of Primary Girls’ Schools in British Gujarat</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from Annual Reports of D.P.I.s, Bombay for the years 1901 to 1921

The above table shows slow but steady increase in growth of primary education for girls in British Gujarat. Female literacy rate in British Gujarat was still at its lowest despite the expansion of primary schools for girls. In 1901 the Female literacy rate was 16 percentages which was increased to around 18 percentages in 1921. The main reason attributed to this dismal growth was the rate of wastage of resources in girls’ education. Here, the wastage is considered in terms of drop-outs and discontinuation of education. In British Gujarat, though, there was a substantial increase in girls access to primary schools, the rate of wastage in 1920-21 was 96.3 percentages. This means that a large number of girls who were brought under formal education system either

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59 Census Report of Bombay Presidency for the years 1901, 1911 and 1921
60 Annual Report of D.P.I.s, Bombay Province
dropped out at the initial stage or discontinued their studies after completing primary schooling.

To improve women's primary education in Gujarat, various measures were adopted. In 1903, Gujarat vernacular society—a significant private organization for educational and literary advancement—devised a plan for women's education.61 The plan suggested separate text books for girls, the revised curriculum and change in examination patterns. Another move in the direction of spreading primary education for women was the demand for free and compulsory primary education for girls. The demand for compulsory education was put forward by congress leaders like G. K Gokhale who believed that 'an illiterate and ignorant nation can never make any solid progress and must fall back in the race of life.'62 He moved a resolution in the Imperial Legislative council in 1910. However nothing tangible happened and the Bill moved by Gokhale failed. In 1915, in a memorial to the Viceroy on behalf of Gujarati Stri Hlindu Mandal, Suman Mehta wrote for free and

61 Budhiprakash, Vol.49, No.7, July 1902
62 Speeches of G..K.Gokhale, Madras, 1920
compulsory primary education for women. Nevertheless, the issue began to receive increasing attention later on.

Secondary Education

The gradual growth of women's secondary education followed by collegiate education was a significant development of the period 1900-1920. The secondary education encompassed two stages: the Middle school and the High school. Although the growth of secondary education gathers momentum in early twentieth century, its genesis had taken place in the previous century. Two factors were largely responsible for its emergence. These were: i) the growing need for trained female teachers ii) growing need of trained nurses and female doctors in western medicine system. Due to these growing demands, a few educated women began to take up teaching and medicine as a means of employment as well as careers. However, the growth of women secondary education was slow as this was largely in English, expensive and pursued with the exclusive object of seeking services under the government.

63 Government of India, Education Department, A Proceeding, March 1916, No. 55-59
Following table shows the number of secondary schools existed in various districts of Gujarat in the year 1914-15:-

Table 1.3 The number of secondary schools for girls in British Gujarat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
<th>No. of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>One government school</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>One convent school</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bharuch</td>
<td>One High School</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>One High School</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>One Vanita Vishram</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source:- Buddhiprakash Vol. 63, No. 11 Nov. 1916.

The table illustrates slow but steady growth of secondary education for girls. Here too, the figures suggest tremendous involvement of private sector in girls' education.

The statistical figures of secondary schools found in gazetteers and other educational documents of this period however, do not explain the growth of primary level schools into secondary level. Hence the figures of secondary schools appeared to be less. By the beginning of twentieth
century a large number of primary schools got upgraded into middle schools and high schools. It meant that primary schools had the potential to grow into secondary schools. The maturity of a school however, depended on number of pupils enrolled and drop rates. In British Gujarat from 1901 to 1921, the number of middle schools for girls instead of increasing decreased from seven to three.\textsuperscript{65} This was probably due to the upgrading of some of the former middle schools to high schools.

Thus, the growth of secondary education for women could be considered not in number of middle schools and high schools but in the number of girls' scholars who entered into the secondary levels. In British Gujarat, the numbers of high school for girls continued to remain the same as it was in 1901. But girls' enrolment which was 42 in 1901 had increased to 223 in 1921.\textsuperscript{66}

The phenomenal growth of primary education for girls and slow but steady growth of secondary education contributed to increase in female literacy rate.

Following table illustrates the literacy rate and status of women education in Gujarat province in 1921:

\textsuperscript{65} Annual Report of D.P.I.s for the years 1910-11, 1921-22, Bombay.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
Table 1.4 The literacy rate among men and women in British Gujarat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Literate</th>
<th>Literate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahmedabad</td>
<td>108,160</td>
<td>21,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bharoch</td>
<td>44,371</td>
<td>5,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>161</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaira</td>
<td>74,496</td>
<td>10,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>119</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panchmahals</td>
<td>21,980</td>
<td>2,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surat</td>
<td>95,504</td>
<td>19,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, 1921, Vol. VIII, Bombay Presidency Part II, pp. 104-06
The district wise inequality in female literacy rate was high in British Gujarat. Proportion between boys literacy rate and girls literacy was 1:10. Hence, it could be concluded from the above table that the female literacy rate was below the average.

**Professional education:**

The growth of professional education for women was a remarkable feature of this period. This was due to the reasons related to increase in job avenues to women, expansion of women education and to some extent rise of the marriage age. However, no separate colleges for women existed till 1921. Nevertheless, women began to study and received degrees at men's colleges.

In Gujarat a small number of women mainly belonging to upper section of the society began to avail the higher education system. The earliest Gujarati women who received college education were Vidyagauri Nilkanth (1876-1958) and Sharda Mehta (1882-1970). These were the first women graduates of Gujarat. Both of them completed their higher education in Bombay as there were no proper institutions for higher

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67 Gauri Srivastava, opt.cit. p.94
68 Sharda Mehta, *Jivan Sambharana*, 1939, pp.24-26
education in Gujarat. In the year 1916-17, there were 1,841 numbers of women scholars in the professional colleges in Bombay Presidency.\(^{69}\) The total number of women scholars in colleges for general education in Bombay Presidency was 125.\(^{70}\) A significant development of this period was establishment of the Indian women's university, later known as the Shrimati N.D. Thackersey University in Bombay in 1916.\(^{71}\) The impact of this institution producing women equipped with an education equal to that of their male peer group was far reaching. However, in an age when no radical change on women education had taken place, such an institution was considered as a threat to Indian culture and Indian womanhood. The following response of 'Mahrratta' towards the idea of Women University clearly depicts the apprehensions: 'Our society would welcome the New University with a whole heart, if the Hindu Home is given the consideration it deserves in the formulation of the course... We must make it clear that when we speak of the Home as the special sphere assigned to Hindu women-kind... we are only putting an extra emphasis on this part of our women's work in consonance with the

\(^{69}\) A review of education in Bombay state, 1855-1955, p.265
\(^{70}\) ibid.p.270
\(^{71}\) Panandikar S, Neera Desai, Kamalini Bhansali(ed); 'Future Trends in women’s higher education and the role of the S.N.D.T. Women’s University' ,report of the Round Table Discussion, p.6
traditional Hindu thought and practice.\textsuperscript{72} Most of the women colleges of Gujarat, for a long period remained attached to S.N.D.T University of Bombay.

As already stated, the profession of teaching was thrown open to women by the establishment of training college in Ahmedabad in 1877. From then onwards, government and private agencies showed keen interest in preparing teachers for primary and secondary schools. In the whole of Bombay Presidency the number of training schools increased to 21 in 1920-21 and the number of scholars increased to 929 in 1920-21.\textsuperscript{73} Though this growth was not impressive, it was better than other British provinces.

Next to teaching came the medical professions such as nursing, midwifery and medicine. In the first two categories, women always had a monopoly. The necessity of women doctors began to be felt very early because Indian women were largely reluctant to consult with male doctors. Moreover, the western system of medicine was becoming more and more popular. This created a demand for trained women doctors. The earliest known women doctor in Gujarat was Gangaben

\textsuperscript{72} Mahratta, Feb.20,1916
\textsuperscript{73} Report on Public Instruction on Bombay Presidency for the years mentioned.
Pranshankar Yagnik (1858-1939).\(^{74}\) She was not only a teacher and a social reformer, but was the first to enter into the medicine and chemist for earning. She studied indigenous medicinal system and in 1891 published a book named ‘Hunnar Vaman’.\(^{75}\) This work included useful information not only about the methods of preparing medicines, but also other indigenous industries. The book became so popular that by 1908 its seventh edition was published. Gangaben used to examine the diseases of womb for women. In 1897, she founded at her home town Mansa, a hospital called Garbhajvan Aushadhalaya and opened its branch at Ahmedabad in 1917.\(^{76}\)

One important event which contributed to the development of medical education of women and which merits attention was the Countess of Dufferine Fund in 1885.\(^{77}\) The main object of this fund was to establish a hospital and give scholarship to such women as desired professional education in medicine; to promote child-welfare and ante-natal care and to take such steps as to reduce infant mortality and the death-rate

\(^{74}\) For detail see, Damodar Revadas Shah ‘Mahikanth Directory’, Ahmedabad, 1905 and Manilal Ranchhodlal Dwivedi ‘Mahikanth Manual’, 1892

\(^{75}\) Himatlal Pandya and Pranshankar Joshi(eds); ‘Sudharshan Granthavali’, 1909, p.880

\(^{76}\) Ibid, p.15

\(^{77}\) The Countous of Dufferin’s Fund, Ninth Annual Report of the National Association for supplying female medical and to the women of India:For the year 1893, pp.7-13
among women during child-birth. Impetus to the professional education for women was given by the institutions such as the J. J. school of Art, Bombay which attracted several women students to pursue career in fine arts. These institutions i.e. Dufferine Medical College and J.J. school of art, was largely availed by women belonging to the upper section of the society. For the other section of society, vocational training courses were provided by social organizations. In Gujarat, some branch of Vanita Vishrams, provided professional courses to destitute and widow women. Similarly, schools such as Khadiya Kanyashal included courses in industrial training, medicines and sewing-stitching. Still, the number of women attending institutions of professional education was small in 1920-21 and a large percentage of them belonged to advanced communities. But the achievement of the period was that the professional education of women did make a beginning, however, humble. Furthermore, careers outside the home were thrown open to women for the first time. Following table shows the growth of professional colleges in Bombay Presidency.

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78 Vanita Vishram Golden Jubilee, 1915-1965
79 Budhiprakash, Vol. 55, 1908
Table 1.5 The growth of professional colleges for women in Bombay Presidency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Colleges</th>
<th>No. of colleges for women</th>
<th>No. of women in men's colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-07</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Thus, from the above table we understand that till 1920 there were no colleges for women in Bombay presidency.

The Government's expenditure on women education:

Right from the beginning, the British Government adopted a lukewarm attitude towards female education in India. It continued to appreciate the need and value of female education verbally but did nothing for its
promotion in actual terms. This lukewarm support to female education by the Government was clearly seen in British Gujarat. In 1881-82, in British Gujarat only 7.93% of the total primary schools for girls were government schools and 660.4% of them were private. In 1905, the percentage of Government girl's primary schools was only 1.06 and of private girl schools were 46.27. Out of these 52.13% were run by the local bodies.

Although the 1854 Dispatch on education and 1882 Education commission were considered as a benchmark in the history of women education, its recommendations remain mainly on papers. One of the chief factors of the government's lack in interest in the promotion of female education in India was lack of resources. This is because girls' schools required special infrastructure and a separate staff. Further, women teaches were paid more a higher salary than the men, for it was

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81 Administrative Report for the year 1881-82 for Bombay Presidency, p. 323
82 Administrative Report for the year 1900-1901 for Bombay Presidency, p.444
83 The Resolution to Government of India, 1919, points towards two facts related to female education in India. One, that the development of female education was not primarily a matter of money but of social development. Second, that the expansion of girls' education was mainly a matter of finance and that if only more money could be spent on schools and on training of teachers the number of scholars would rapidly advanced. See, Government of India, Resolution in the Education Department on the Secretary of State's Despatch, No. 191(Public), 5 November 1915, Education Department, Proceeding, October 1917.
difficult to get women teachers. Hence, schooling of girls was generally more expensive than that of boys. Female education formed virtually a separate and parallel system of education. The state, consequently took a backseat however, encouraged the private enterprise for the development of female education.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the British government came up with the education commission of 1904 or the state paper on education of 1904 which was a comprehensive document on Indian education. It included a chapter on female education. The chapter, while giving a detail account of the slow progress of female education provided certain recommendations for its growth. Significant of these was the special attention to medical instruction for females. However, other recommendations put forward in the chapter largely emphasized the views of the previous education commissions on female education. Thus, the documents presented nothing new on female education. Similar views and recommendations upheld in 1904 education commission were carried in the Government Resolution on Education

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84 Report of Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency for corresponding year 1881-82 to 1921-22
86 Ibid ,p.119
Policy of 1913. It stated that the Governor-General in Council accordingly hesitates to lay down general lines of policy which might hamper local government and administration and has preferred to call for schemes from each province, but he recommends the following principle for general considerations: i) The education of girls should be practical with reference to the position which they will fill in social life ii) It should not seek to imitate the education suitable for boys nor should it be dominated by examinations iii) Special attention should be paid to hygiene and the surroundings of school life iv) The services of women should be more freely taken for instruction and inspection; and v) continuity in inspection and control should be specially aimed at.

As a result of the educational reforms initiated by Lord Curzon in the beginning of the twentieth century, a marked increase in the governments' expenditure on female higher education became visible. The following table shows the expenditure on Training schools for women by Government and Private Agencies

87 Government of Bombay, Educational Department, Compilation, 1916, No.80, Pt.2
Table 1.6 Government and private agencies expenditure on women's training schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Govt. funds (Rs.)</th>
<th>Local funds (Rs.)</th>
<th>Other source (Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>25955</td>
<td>8688</td>
<td>19593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-07</td>
<td>24790</td>
<td>16073</td>
<td>24277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>47970</td>
<td>10757</td>
<td>26232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>95691</td>
<td>1336</td>
<td>39119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>183858</td>
<td>25904</td>
<td>5394</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Following table shows the expenditure on women's general education by state and other agencies:-
Table 1.7 Expenditure on women’s general education by state and other agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>State funds</th>
<th>Local funds</th>
<th>Other source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901-02</td>
<td>128906</td>
<td>14625</td>
<td>76732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-07</td>
<td>149038</td>
<td>14300</td>
<td>124127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911-12</td>
<td>146911</td>
<td>24249</td>
<td>114588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916-17</td>
<td>293828</td>
<td>19150</td>
<td>68189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-22</td>
<td>521023</td>
<td>16225</td>
<td>259507</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


VI

The Indians initiative in women education: 1920-1947

The second period of growth of women’s education was from 1921-1947. In this period the growth of women education was largely determined by: first, the responsibility of education taken up by elected Indians and second, the role of Gandhi in promoting women in national movement.
As mentioned earlier, the British government's stand towards female education was largely not encouraging. The huge expenditure involved in female education largely deterred the government to promote female education. However, the government continued to encourage other agencies to take up the responsibility of promoting and financing women education. From 1880 onwards, apart from private organizations, semi government agencies such as the local boards and municipalities began take up the responsibility of promoting and funding girls' education. Thus, as the number agencies for the promotion of women education increased the government's role in women education decreased considerably. This trend of decreasing role of the state continued in the twentieth century. This period witnessed the increase in the role of Indians largely associated with the government in education and other social areas. The following discussions of new systems of governance i.e. system of Dyarchy from 1919 to 1935 and system of Provincial Autonomy from 1935 to 1937, will illustrate the point of the decreasing role of the British government and increasing role of Indians in educational matters.

89 Alfred Croft, Review of Education in India in 1886, pp.278-293
90 Ghosh, S.C.,opt.cit. pp.149-176
Women education under Dyarchy-1920-1935

In 1919 the British government introduced the system of Dyarchy in the provinces. Under this system the subjects like education, health, agriculture and local bodies were transferred to Indian ministers responsible to the provinces. Now, the subject of education became the responsibility of Indian ministers and government's role in its promotion decreased further. One of the major limitations of this system was scarcity of funds. The Indian ministers had to work under limited resources. The British Government, after the introduction of Dyarchy had stopped spending its own revenues on any transferred subject and discontinued the practice of helping provincial governments with a part of its revenues in education. The work of reviewing the Dyarchical system of governance was taken up in Montague Chelmsford Reforms or India Act of 1919. This act devoted a chapter on the progress of women education under Dyarchy. The report vividly pointed out the lesser role of central government in the progress of female education.

91 Ibid, p.149
92 Ibid, p.150
93 Ibid, p.154
94 In a speech on female education in India, Secretary of State, Austen Chamberlain described the question of women's education as "delicate" and remarked that it was not possible for the government to make large outlays. See, Government of India, Education Department, A proceeding, March 1916, No. 55-59; Government of India, Resolution in the
It hailed the role played by women organizations, and local bodies in the growth of female education. These agencies were the significant agents in the private enterprise effecting the promotion and growth of female education in India.

**Women education under Provincial Autonomy**

The Dyarchical system was abolished in 1935. In the place of Dyachy a new system of governance was introduced in 1935 known as provincial autonomy. Under this system the whole field of provincial administration was placed under a ministry responsible to a legislature which had an overwhelming majority of elected members. This new system of governance came into operation in 1937 in eleven provinces of British India. As expected, the role of state in the promotion of education further decreased as Indian ministers were made responsible for its charge. The new set up however, provided ample opportunities for Indian educationalists of this period to experiment and come out with new schemes on education. A significant among these was Gandhi's

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96 Ibid, p. 167
scheme of Basic Education. Many of the recommendations of Basic education scheme raised considerable interest in the provinces of British India. However, with the breaking of the Second World War, not much was achieved.

The above discussion on government's policy on female education in particular and education in general, clearly points a constant decrease in the state's role in providing education. However, the state did not completely surrender its responsibility of providing education to private agencies. As mentioned earlier, the semi government organizations such as local boards and municipalities continued the work of expanding women education largely in rural areas. These bodies received the funds from the central legislature as well as from the private organizations. The government dripped down the funds to these bodies, based on the demands and local conditions. In this way, the state, with the help of district boards and municipalities played a significant role in promoting female education. In British Gujarat, there were 469 institutions under the management of Gujarat Local Boards and 83 under Private management in 1922-23. The district of Kheda, which

97 Ibid, p.168
98 A.G. Fraser, 'Village Education in India, Madras, 1920, pp.12-156
99 Directory of Public Instruction, Annual Reports, Bombay, 1922-23
stood second in literacy rate in Bombay Presidency, attributed its success to local Boards and Municipalities. Since 1920, Nadiad Municipality of Kheda district did considerable work in the promotion of primary education for girls. It constituted a committee called ‘Prathmik Shikshak Samaj’ in 1946 with an aim of collecting funds for the construction of school building.¹⁰⁰

VII

The role of Gandhi in women education: General

The lukewarm support of British Government in educational matter permitted the Indians to take initiatives in the formulations of educational policies and invent different means for its implementation. A striking feature of this period was the intersection of social reform movement with the political movement. This largely helped in the implementation of educational reforms put forward by Indians. Reforms became more vigorous with the advent of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) in Indian politics.

¹⁰⁰ Gazetteer of India, Gujarat State, Kheda District, pp.507-509
Gandhi intersected social reform movement with the political movement. In Gandhians ideology social reforms and political activities went together.\textsuperscript{101} Gandhi turned the nature of national movement into a social movement by broadening the social base of the national movement.\textsuperscript{102} This was achieved by forming a cohesive structure in which the district, the taluka and the village was made the unit of movement.\textsuperscript{103} Each of these units consisted of three levels of leadership. In the first level of leadership came national teachers. Under the national leaders were the local leaders. These were the link between national leaders and the local people. Under the local leaders were the volunteers. It was at this level i.e. the volunteers that the lower section of the masses such as poor peasants, laborers, untouchables and women, were mobilized and made grass root workers. Volunteers were the active agents in constructive programmes of the movement such as prohibition, \textit{khadi} spinning, developmental programs, and women education. The movement now constituted lower strata of the population such as peasants, laborer, untouchables, and women from all sections of the

\begin{flushleft}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{101} J. B. Kripalani, ‘Gandhi: His Life and Thought’ 1958, pp. 140-155
\textsuperscript{102} Desai, A. R., ‘Social Background of Indian National Movement’ 1948, pp.40-70
\textsuperscript{103} Vidyut Joshi, ‘A century of Tribal education in Gujarat’ p. 24
\end{flushleft}
The support derived from this section of the population, made the non-cooperation movement and other movements successful. In this way Gandhi integrated social reforms with national movement.

Gandhi was credited with making women visible in literal sense. Women particularly subaltern women constituted the main plank of his rural reconstruction programme which involved spinning, weaving, khadi, prohibition, untouchability and women education. Gandhi found involvement of women very useful for two reasons. First he found women suited for non-violent movement since they possessed the qualities of self-sacrifice, non-violence and sincerity. Secondly, he felt women have ‘historic’ role to play in struggle for non-resistance movement. The national movement denoted a non-resistance to a social order of oppression. Gandhi believed that like any other oppressed group-women who were historically oppressed could identify with the movement. Women therefore, should participate in non-resistance movement.

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104 Young India, 10-9-1919
105 In a speech at a Public Meeting, Broach, Gandhi said, ‘to the women, I say humbly that the success of swadeshi is in your hands. It is your dharma to spin. You should set an example to the men’. Navjivan, 10-11-1920. Also see, Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol.VII, pp.87-90
106 CWMG, XIV, Oct 1917 July-1918, p.205
To mobilize women into the national movement, Gandhi idealized women's personality. He wrote that, 'let her transfer that love to the whole humanity, let her forget she ever was or can be the object of man's lust. And she will occupy her proud position by the side of man as his mother maker and silent leader. It is given to her to teach the art of peace to the warring world thirsting for the nectar. She can become the leader of Satyagraha which does require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith.'

Gandhi used the elements of spirituality and tradition in a masterly way. He emphasized the ideals of Sita and Savitri among women and asked them to follow the footsteps of these epic women for making Satyagraha movement successful. Gandhiji stated that today nobody was ready to have faith in the power of celibacy of Indian women. He expected that the example of the 'Kumarikas' or unmarried women of the Ashram would begin back such faith. In one of the letter to Premabahen, Gandhi further reiterated these ideas. He emphasized on the ideals of Akhand Brahmacharya for girls. However he believed that, 'a girl who is a bramcharini should have knowledge for the child rearing; she will not be considered a Brahmcharini, if she steps in a cave. A Kumarika

107 J. B. Kripalani, opt.cit. .p.396
108 Bapuna Patro- Ashramni Behnone ,pp.77-97
integrates herself with the whole world. She becomes a mother of the universe. In spite of the fact that we may not find such a Kumarika, but the ideal is this. 109 In this letter he stated the ideal of Jagat Mata or world motherhood to women. Many such traditional ideals helped activated women from lower section of the society to participate in the various activities of the movement and played a note-worthy role.

Gandhi started the process of de-intellectualization process i.e. knowledge should be within the purview of common man. 110 It should be a meaningful and purposeful knowledge. These ideas were translated affectively in his policy on education popularly known as Nai Talim or basic education in 1937. 111 Following are some of the salient feature of this scheme:

1) Boys and girls should be taught together.

2) Education should craft centered. Also, Manual work should be considered as part of education.

3) All education should be imparted through the mother-tongue of the child.

4) A boy or girl of sixteen should know sewing and cooking.

109 Bapuna Patro Maniben Patel ne, p.28, letter No. 43, 1926
110 R.N. Sharma, opt. cit., p.190
5) The third stage of education begins at sixteen and ends at twenty-five, a young man or women should receive education according to his or her desire.

Gandhi was critical of the educational policy imposed by the British in India. Observing the impact of British educational system in India, Gandhi while speaking at the Round Table conference at London in 1931 said, 'I say, without fear of my figures being challenged successfully that today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago and so is Burma'. According to him education should make a person self reliant. Every educated man and women should be able to rely upon one self to carry on his or her life. Explaining his aim of education, Gandhi said, 'education ought to be far then a kind of insurance against unemployment.' Gandhi suggested that education in this country should be craft-centered. The knowledge imparted should be according to the common man's cultural, physical and economic environment. For him knowledge that develops one aspect of a child's personality at the cost of another is narrow and one sided. Such knowledge was imposed by British. Again, he did not restrict

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112 Young India, Vol. 13, 1931-32, pp. 19-67
113 Ibid, Vol. 9, 1927, pp. 115-116
education to the achievement of one single aim. He looked to aims of education from various perspectives.

He assigned different aims to education at different times, so much so that sometimes they looked mutually contradictory. However, the varying aims of education pointed by him such as self-reliance, character building, and social development were complimentary to each other. He said, 'True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of children.'\textsuperscript{114} However, he stressed mainly on self-reliance as the aim of education in his scheme of basic education. Explaining this scheme, Gandhi said, "The child at the age of fourteen, that is, after finishing a seven year course, should be discharged as an earning unit."\textsuperscript{115}

Gandhi's call for women education was largely linked to political motivation.\textsuperscript{116} For him the strength of women power or 'stree shakti', would arm the troops for India's passive, non-violent struggle for

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\textsuperscript{114} Ibid, Vol.6, 1924, pp. 123-125

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid, p.194

\textsuperscript{116} In his speech at National Education Conference Gandhi said that, 'the true spinning wheel cannot touch the hearts of women. That alone is their true education.....These resolutions (on education) is empty words. We do not see what grows in our garden. Are we able to give better education over many years than that which makes a woman, who had been looked upon as uncultured and uneducated, discard her veil and come out in the open? Women education is being carried on only because of this movement (non-cooperation); nay, if women were not being educated, this movement would not have been possible.' \textit{Navijivan}, 10-8-1924

284
freedom. He, therefore, put tremendous focus on channeling their energies into the non-resistance movement. There was also a strong realization on his part that education would help in developing and sharpening women's intellect which would stimulate them to social and political activities. It was this realization that to an extent encouraged him to open a national Girls school known as *Lokmanya Tilak* Girls' School in Bombay in 1921. Women education therefore, received fresh support and acquired yet another dimension from Gandhian approach to the nationalist movement for freedom.

Gandhi's ideas on women education, however, did not differ much from late nineteenth century and twentieth century social reformers. Undoubtedly, he was an ardent supporter of women education. He was reported to have advised women by saying, 'Do not enter the movement at this point.....go and get a university education instead. When India is free she will need educated women to take up some of the many

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118 The Bombay Chronicle, 27-6-1921
119 In his speech on Indian Women’s University, 1916, Gandhi said that ‘their (women’s) education should differ from men’s, as their nature and functions do. In progressive countries, women receive the very highest education but, after it is over, they do not have to perform the same duties as meant and in our country women have never to compete with men for a livelihood. The help this institution receives from us, whatever it is, will not go unveiling to us. *Prajabandhu*, 27-2-1916
responsibilities for building a new nation. However, he was in favour of culture centric education to women which would impart the knowledge of ideal mother, wife and virtues of self sacrifice and suffering. He did not favour aping of the western manners among women. According to him, 'they (women) must apply methods suited to the Indian and Indian environment. Theirs must be the strong, controlling, purifying, steadying hand, conserving what is best in our culture and unhesitatingly rejecting what is bad and degrading. This is the work of Sitas, Draupadis, not of Amazons and Prudes'  

VIII

Growth of primary, secondary and higher education for women: 1921-1947

Primary Education:
The Indians initiative and intervention of Gandhi in Indian politics impacted the growth pattern of women education. The period from 1920

120 CWMG, Vol.13, Jan. 1913, Oct. 1917
121 For detail see, M. S. Patel, ‘Gandhiji on women and their education’ in ‘women education in British India’ by Usha Sharma and B. M. Sharma(ed), pp. 386-395
to 1947 was significant for the growth of women education at various levels viz. primary, secondary and collegiate levels.

**Primary education:** The growth pattern witnessed in early the early decades of the twentieth century in girls' primary education continued in this period. The following figures will illustrate the expansion of primary education for girls in British Gujarat.

Table: 1.8 Expansion of Girls' primary education in British Gujarat: 1931-1947

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1947</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Gujarat</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of D.P.I.s for the corresponding years, Bombay

The above figures of girls' primary schools are slightly higher than that of 1921. In 1921 number of primary schools for girls in British Gujarat was 331. This shows the slow but steady upward trend in women education at the primary level. Another significant development in primary education for girls was decrease in wastage. As explained earlier here the wastage in education was considered in terms of number of
dropouts in school. In the early decades of twentieth century the percentage of wastage in British Gujarat exceeded 90 percentages. It was 96.3 percentages in 1920-21.\textsuperscript{122} However, by 1930 the wastage began to decrease, though slowly. In 1947 the wastage in girls' education in British Gujarat was 92 percentages i.e. a decrease of 4.3 percentage.\textsuperscript{123}

**Secondary Education:** The period from 1921 onwards was significant for the expansion of girls' secondary education in British Gujarat. The rate of growth was however, slow but trends were upwards and rising. The following table will show the expansion of secondary education in British Gujarat from 1931-1947.

\textsuperscript{122} Annual Reports of D.P.I's for the years 1921, 1931, 1941 and 1947, Bombay Province
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, p.134
Table: 1.9 Expansion of secondary education for girls in British Gujarat: 1931-1947

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Middle school</th>
<th>High school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of D.P.I.s. Bombay Province

The figures in table show that the picture of girls' secondary education was better than what it was before 1921.

The expansion of secondary schools for girls increased girls' access to secondary education. The number of enrolment in secondary schools increased significantly. The following table will illustrate the increase in girls' access to secondary education in British Gujarat.
Table: 1.10 Girls access to secondary education in British Gujarat: 1921-1947

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School/Enrolment</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>1931</th>
<th>1941</th>
<th>1947</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle Schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.Total number of female enrolled</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.No. of female pupils per every 100 males</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>12-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Percentage of female enrolment</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.Total female enrolment</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>721</td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>4034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Percentage of female enrolment to the total enrolment at the stage</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. No. of female pupils per every 100 male pupils</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3-8</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>8-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Annual Reports of the D.P.I.s, Bombay Province

The girls' access to secondary education at this stage, though slow, it was however, better than any other administrative division of Bombay Presidency. This could be assessed from an observation by the Bombay D.P.I., 1920-1921. The report stated that '2.1 percent of the female population of the presidency is under instruction- 1.9 in the Bombay Division, 3.4 in the Northern Division, 1.5 in the Central Division, 1.9 in Sind and 2.6 in Aden'.\(^\text{124}\)

**Collegiate Education:**

After the advent of Gandhi in Indian politics, the political awakening among the people intensified. This inspired many leading citizens to undertake the educational matters into their hand. The similar development was observed in Gujarat in the city of Ahmedabad. Many

\(^{124}\) Annual Report of D.P.I’s for 1920-21, p.43
leading citizens, who were influenced by Gandhian’s ideology, took up the task of establishing colleges and other educational institutions. These institutions were managed from the public funds. The city of Ahmedabad saw the mushrooming of institutions of higher education in 1930’s and 1940’s. Initially these institutions were meant largely for boys. However, as many women began to take up higher education they entered into private colleges of the city. By 1905, the Ahmedabad Education society came into existence. The first venture of the society was H.L. Commerce College which was donation of Rs. 50,000 by Shri Amritlal Harjovandas and his brother in 1935.

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125 It is important to know the conscious people behind the establishment of private colleges and institution of higher learning. The chief among these were Sarvashri G.V. Mavlankar, Anand Shankar Dhruv, Balvantri Thakore, Jivanlal Divan, Amritlal Harjovindas and Harilal Vadilal Kapadia. Gazetteer of India, Gujarat State, Ahmedabad District, pp.602-603

126 Ibid, p.603

127 Ibid, p.606
Table: 1.11 Following are the name of institutions and the year of establishment:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Institution</th>
<th>Year of establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) H.L. College of Commerce</td>
<td>1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) L.D. Arts College</td>
<td>1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) M.G. Science College</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) L. M. College of Pharmacy</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Physical Research Laboratory</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: - Gazetteer of India, Gujarat State, Ahmedabad District, P. 605.

Most of the above mentioned institutions provided co-education. The general public opinion was to an extent was positive towards co-education in British Gujarat. By 1947, most of the educational institutions in British Gujarat provided co-education. During 1942-47, around 19.7 percent of total girls under instruction in primary stage in British Gujarat were studying in boy's schools and at the secondary stage this proportion was a little higher. It was 25.1 percentages in British Gujarat.

128

128 Annual Report of D.P.I.'s for the year 1941-1942, Bombay Province.
Professional education: The decades after 1920s witnessed a significant growth of women’s professional education all across the country. Two factors influenced the growth of professional education for women in this period. These were the high cost of living and the rise in the marriage age among men and women.¹²⁹

The decades of 1930’s and 1940’s were of great political turmoil. The movement for independence was at its peak. It was during this time the second world was occurred. The high cost of living during the war years made it necessary for women from middle class and lower middle class families to earn in order to supplement the family income.¹³⁰ Prior to the war, few, if any, Indian women who attended universities intended to join careers or take up employment. The social reformers of late nineteenth and early twentieth century had considered women’s capacity to earn an independent living only in the context of some unfortunate situations such as widowhood or desertion from the family. But during the Second World War period, the economic situation of the country and world at large worsened. Unemployment reached to highest level and cost of living increased tremendously. In these circumstances women’s income was perceived very differently: as a contribution enabling the family to

¹³⁰ Suma Chitnis; ‘The education of women-A continuing challenge’, Sample Paper, p.5
make ends meet. Over the years the idea of second income as means for a better standard of life for the family came to be fairly well established. Earlier, the main professions taken up by educated women were that of teaching, nursing, doctors.\textsuperscript{131} Now, the field for women’s employment widened. Apart from teaching and medicine, the middle level administrative jobs like office secretary and typist were opened up for English educated women. Among the non literate and semi-literate women domestic jobs and craft based jobs, largely popularized by local women organizations and Gandhian workers became a means of earning. Gandhiji laid stress on Khadi spinning which was a major source of livelihood and a means of self reliance particularly among the rural women. He felt Khadi spinning was an activity which women could do better than men. ‘I swear by this form of Swadeshi because through it I can provide work to the semi-starved, semi-employed women of India.’\textsuperscript{132} Further, he said that ‘The spinning wheel should be, an it was the widow’s best companion. But for you who will read this appeal, it is presented as duty, as dharma’.\textsuperscript{133}

\textsuperscript{131} Bombay University Calendar, 1888, p.140
\textsuperscript{132} Young India, Vol. 11, No.8, 1921
\textsuperscript{133} M. K. Gandhi; ‘An Autobiography’, p.413
There was emergence of other factors that gave an impetus to the professional education of young women during this period. A significant among them was rising of the age of marriage for boys and girls. In 1929, the child Marriage Restraint Act, known as the Sarda Bill after its mover, Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda, was passed.\textsuperscript{134} It penalized parties to a marriage where the girl was below fourteen or the boy below eighteen years of age. The law came into force in 1930.\textsuperscript{135} The Act was generally not effective because of the lack of machinery for enforcing its provisions. However, it did make an impact on the higher middle urban classes. People from this class largely frowned upon the child marriage and adhered to the marriage law. Girls of elite section of the society found sufficient time to complete their studies. A significant feature found from elite section was their interest in sending girls to English medium schools particularly 'mission schools'.\textsuperscript{136} This feature was largely linked with girls’ prospects in marriage market. Since late nineteenth century, education and marriage were interrelated. Young educated men increasingly desired for educated wives. In this period English medium educated girls were largely desired by men who were in high positions.

\textsuperscript{134} The Gazetteer of India, History and Culture, Vol.2, 1973, p.690

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 691

In this way it was a distinct change from the previous century. Parents belonging to upper sections took initiative to provide their girls western education particularly in mission schools. Mission schools were largely known for strict code of behavior which segregated boys and girls in these schools. This appealed to parents since it was in accordance with the Hindu conventions. Further, rise in marriage age, prompted girls to pursue their college study. Pursuing studies was accepted as an alternative to marriage which largely took place at the age of 17 or 18. The job prospectus of English educated women was increased considerably. In British Gujarat women were more into teaching profession than other professions. This could be estimated from the percentage of women teachers in 1947. At primary level there were 20.2 percentages of women teachers, at the middle school stage there were 13.2 percentage women teachers and 27.5 percentages were at the high school stage in British Gujarat.

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137 The curriculum of mission schools laid special emphasis on women related household works in village girls' schools the emphasis was on activities such as cooking, lace-making, spinning, weaving or basket making. Later on other activities mainly making of jellies, jams, chutneys and curry-powder were added to the curriculum. See, A.G. Fraser, opt.cit. pp.120-130.

Tribal education: Gandhi’s intervention in Indian politics significantly helped in the growth of tribal women education. He developed a unique approach of imparting education to tribal men and women. The approach was popularly known as Ashram Pattern of education.\textsuperscript{139} The Ashrams were the centers of constructive activities and political movement. One such constructive activity undertaken in Ashrams was education, where basic education was imparted. This education was largely related with Khadi spinning and symbols of Brahmanical religion such as prayers, vegetarianism, ideal of vedic system and Brahmacharya.\textsuperscript{140} It was because of these Brahmanical values that the pattern of Ashram education or the “Ashrami Kelavani” among the tribal became largely popular and stood for reforms in tribal society. However, the ashram schools were largely aimed at preparing freedom fighters and social workers. The aim of imparting education was to mobilize people from tribal society into the national struggle. Hence, educational activities were carried to achieve political objectives.

\textsuperscript{139} Vidyut Joshi, opt.cit., pp.20-38
\textsuperscript{140} Social Transformation through Nai Talim, opt. cit., No.22, \textit{Sarva Kanya Vidyalaya, Bardoli}.\textsuperscript{298}
In British Gujarat, ashram schools were established in the tribal areas of Panchmahal district. Under the guidance of Gandhi many congress workers went to the tribal areas of Panchmahal where they conducted relief works, delivered speeches and set up Ashrams. In carrying educational activities among tribal of Gujarat, the role of renowned Gandhian and social worker, Shri Thakkar Bapa, is very significant.

He started relief works in the talukas of Dohad and Jhalod during the famines of 1919-20 and 1921-22. In 1922, Thakkar Baba established one Ashram school at Mira Khadi with the idea of imparting education to the children of Bhils and preparing social workers from the tribal themselves. Satisfied with the progress made by this ashram school, he started the Bhil Seval Mandal in 1923 at Doha. For girls one such Ashram school was set up in 1922 with a view of training women for satyagraha movement. This Ashram school was known as Sardar Kanyal Vidyalaya, Bardoli. Thereafter, a number of Ashram schools and hostels were started at different places in Panchmahal district.

Another association established by Thakkar Baba was the Panchmahal Kelavani Mandal in 1928. In the year 1937-38, the Bombay Government
provided grants to this Mandal. The work of this Mandal thereafter spread rapidly. It hit the figure of 100 schools in the district. In 1937 third important educational association in the district which was established. This was 'Shri Jhalod Kelavani Mandal'. The aim of this association was to organize and promote educational activities in the district. It started a high school in 1937 named as Shri Bhajubhai Mafatlal High School at Jhalod.

As stated earlier the Ashram schools were the centre of political activities. It basically trained volunteers for the movement. Apart from Panchmahal district, many Ashram schools were set up in Surat areas. The Ashram schools of Surat district participated in No-Tax Campaign, Dandi march and self Satyagraha. When they were not engaged in program of freedom movement, they carried out social work and relief activities.

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146 Gazetteer of India, Gujarat State, Panchmahal District, p.682
147 Ibid, p.683
148 Ibid, p.684
149 Vidyut Joshi, opt.cit. p.37
150 Ibid, p.39
Conclusion:
The Swadeshi movement provided sufficient space for women. Women began to actively participate in social and political organizations. This consequently strengthens existing women agency which worked for generating nationalistic consciousness among women as well as promoting the issue of women education.

The unenthusiastic support of the British government towards women education provided opportunity to Indian leaders to initiate educational policy. It was at this juncture, Gandhi came up with his Basic education scheme. Women’s education became internal to national movement. Gandhi’s approach towards women education helped in providing employment to subaltern women. Hence Gandhi added new dimension to women education.

The other factors that helped in the growth of women education were Second World War and rise in the marriage age. The former i.e. second world war resulted in deterioration of economic conditions worldwide. This led a change in perspective towards employment of women. Second income or the earnings by women in the family began to be accepted. The rising age of marriage during this period helped women to an extent to pursue their education. Thus, it could be concluded that the
growth and development of women education in the first half of the nineteenth century was impacted by the following factors: the Swadeshi movement, the decreasing role of British government, the role of Gandhi in women education and consolidation of women agency. The next chapter discusses the rise and consolidation of women organizations in India and in Gujarat.
Photograph

Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth