CHAPTER-2

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Women's involvement in the agitation against British imperialism stimulated amongst them their own struggle for social justice—"a struggle within the struggle". The activity of women in the nationalist agitation not only radicalised the women into articulating their own grievances but also encouraged the nationalist movement into taking their grievances seriously.

The women were supported for their cause by linking freedom for women with freedom for India and formed an alliance with the nationalist movement for the removal of colonialism. This helped to diffuse male opposition to the principle of social equality which was accepted by the Indian National Congress and subsequently, enshrined in the new constitution of India.

The national movement had developed into a broad-based mass movement by the second decade of the twentieth century. It was during the same period that women made a rapid entry into politics. Questions regarding the status and role of Indian women were raised in different forms from the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The issue of the women's

1 Sen, Illina (ed.), A Space Within the Struggle, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1990, p.10.
3 Liddle, Joanna and Joshi, Rama, Daughter of independence: Gender, Caste and Class in India, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1986, p.33.
participation in the country's political life however came to the fore with the
women's active response to the national movement on the one hand and the
direct demand of women to have a right to vote and there by have a say in the
political process. At the very moment when congress and Mahatma Gandhi
were calling on them for a national effort, they recognized that the prophet and
the paramount power had each placed a valuable weapon within their reach.
With one hand they grasped passive resistance and with the other the vote. The
entry of Annie Beasant in Indian politics accelerated the process of women's
association with the freedom struggle. She maintained that the progress of India
depended on the emancipation of its women. In an article in New India she said
that for India's uplift the women must have an open field, unfettered hands and
unimpeded activity. The 1917 session of Indian National Congress was
presided over by Annie Beasant, four hundreds women attended that session. In
her presidential address, she said that the awakening of Indian womanhood to
claim its ancient position was one of the factor to arouse a new script in India
and to alter her attitude of mind.

During the modern period women's participation in the freedom struggle
began with the revolt of 1857. However, at that time women in the mass did
not participate in the politics, barring a few women of royal and aristocratic

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4 Choudhuri Maitrayee, Indian Women's Movement : Reform and Revival, Radiant
Publishers, New Delhi, 1993, p.120.
5 O'Malley (ed.), Modern India and West, 1941, p.475
6 Annie Beasant, Builder of New India, Her Fundamental of principles of Nation
Building, Beasant Spirit Series, Madras, 1942.
7 Mukherjee, Girja Kumar, History of Indian National Congress, Meerut, 1924, p.144.
families. Therefore we do not have any instance of active participation of women in politics for about half a century. Of course some women particularly from the enlightened section had started taking interest in the politics and joined the Indian National Congress right from the year 1885-86.\textsuperscript{8} The years following the First World War are most outstanding in the annals of the freedom struggle in the sense that it set in motion an organized and country wide attempt to overthrow the foreign rule by boycotting the Govt. on essential things and by launching satyagraha (passive resistance movement). It was probably due to this technique that the freedom movement which was more or less a monopoly of the intellectual found a fertilized field among the masses of the country and invited interest of the rich and poor, the old and the young, the educated and the uneducated, industrialist and labourers, merchants and customers, lawyers and doctors, teachers and social workers and above all of the women who now came forward to join the satyagraha. The question of suffrage for women brought them to a common platform.\textsuperscript{9}

Thus before 1919 women were participating in politics though on a very limited scale. Participation was confined mainly to a section of urban, upper caste and upper class women. They came from families which were involved in social reform or in politics. Education, social reform and women's association helped women to step out of the four walls of their homes. Public activity had

\textsuperscript{8} V. Rajendra Raju, \textit{Role of Women in India's freedom struggle}, Discovery Publishing House, New Delhi, 1994, pp.44-45.

become acceptable among a section of the politically conscious groups in the country. The reason for this was the intimate connection between the social reform movement and political activity of those times.\(^\text{10}\) An understanding of various movements in different provinces in which women were involved during the nationalist struggle which also borrowed from the west, will demonstrate whether or not inspiration and ideas from the west can satisfy the material needs and aspirations of Indian women. The history of remarkable century long women’s movement in India is connected with the growth of worker’s and peasant’s movement, movements against untouchability, cultural and literary movements, and of course their parent movement—the anti colonial struggle— which bounds them. The Hindi region has a lesser record of awareness and agitation on women’s issues as compared to Maharastra, Bengal and Madras during the nationalist movement.\(^\text{11}\)

The women’s movement in the Hindi provinces around the time of First World War is significantly different from the nineteenth century reform movements, in the fact that it was led by women, and in that it raised questions from the stand point of women rather than that of men. Another important difference had been the growth of women’s own organizations and groups. Women active in this movement wrote sharp criticism of the self-centered


egotistic behaviour of men, their privileged position in society, their disparaging attitude towards women and their predilection to exploit and rule over women.12 Feminist consciousness around First World War in the Hindi provinces is more closely linked to the women led movements of the last decades of the nineteenth century than the earlier male led reform movements. It can be said to have begun in the last decades of the nineteenth century when Pandit Ramabai, Ramabai Ranade, Anandibai Joshi, Frenana Sorabjee, Annie Jagannathan, Rukmabai and others crossed the bounds of familial and cultural restrictions of a patriarchal society and went abroad to study. They returned with a new awareness of their rights and immediately became involved in raising women’s issue in the country.13 The significant support for the women’s movement came from the national movement for swarajya (self-rule). The August, September and October 1917 issues of Stree Darpan, a Hindi journal, had an article called “striyan aur swarajya” (women and swarajya) which raised the question that if women are equal to men in every respect then how can there be true swarajya without the full participation of women. Annie Beasant, a major figure in the agitation for Home Rule, had become a symbol for the involvement of women in the nationalist movement. The women’s movement in the Hindi provinces in 1917-18 put forth a demand that after swarajya the equal rights envisaged for men and women should be evident in the process of attainment as well “You can grant as equal rights in the swarajya

12 Ibid., p.206.
13 Ibid.
of the future by first giving us equal rights in the present struggle for *swarajya.*’ The question of women clashed with the national movement in the same way as that of peasant, workers and untouchable. Uma Nehru in the May 1918 issue of *Stree Darpan* wrote to nationalist men in a sharply ironical vein:

“Just the loss of national freedom has made you so depressed so anxious, and so sorrowful. Consider then the enslavement of those who have lost not just political freedom but whose body, soul and spirit have been enchained. How can their hearts ever be joyful?”

From the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a struggle between nationalism and the freedom of press. Throughout the colonial period, the media in India was neatly divided into the English and the Vernacular press reflecting the division of Indian society into the modern or western and the traditional or Indian. It is mainly the vernacular press, which led the freedom struggle. The regular reading of newspapers or listening to other reading newspapers became the most important factor in politicizing the Indian people against the British domination and making them aware of their lack of freedom and also their heritage. The broadening and

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15 Quoted in Talwar, Vir Bharat, op. cit., p.225.  
deepening of the nationalist movement after 1889 was reflected in the growth of the nationalist press of various heces.\textsuperscript{17} The immediate post-war period witnessed the first wave of nationalist movement in India. It was the result of a profound political and economic crisis and the resultant ferment among the people. The movement expressed as well as further intensified the national consciousness of Indian people. This led to the further growth of the Indian nationalist press. In 1919 Gandhi edited young India, making it the mouthpiece of his political philosophy, programmes and policies. Subsequently, he also started Harijan (a weekly published in English, Hindi and a number of vernaculars), after 1933.\textsuperscript{18}

In the autumn of 1920, a special session of the congress under Lala Lajpat Rai endorsed Gandhiji's programme of non-cooperation. From the point of view of Hindi journalism, this session was very important, for it was here that for the first time national opinion was diverted on the absence of a recognized national language and Hindi was recognized as such under the lead of Gandhi ji. This at once started a new era in political journalism in Hindi language. Sri Shiva Prasad Gupta founded \textit{Aaj} at Benaras on Sept 5, 1920 and other papers like \textit{Dainik Vartaman} and \textit{Pratap} and others were soon to follow. Gandhi era was the 'era of political journalism' There was a rise in number of daily newspapers instead of weekly and monthly newspapers. Pt.

\textsuperscript{17} Desai, A.R., \textit{Social Background of Indian Nationalism}, Popular Book Depot Bombay, 1959,p.207.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., pp.208-209.
Ambika Prasad Vajpayee called this ‘the era of daily papers’. The increasing interest of the congress in the cause of Hindi journalism as Lingua Indica did much to foster courage and spirit of adventure in Hindi journalism and from this time onward Hindi journalism grew with the rapidity it had never known. The congress intended to reach the masses and they could not be reached by any other Indian language. As the national movement went deeper and deeper into the masses, Hindi journalism grew more and more powerful. The History of Hindi journalism hereafter is, in reality, the history of the Congress reaching the masses—a history of the rapid awakening of the man upheaval with the progress of the non-cooperation movement. While the movement for building an idea of Indian nation was spiraling into different directions, several constituents of this ‘nation’ were simultaneously negotiating their role in it. But, Hindi movement was primarily restricted to the middle classes; it was this class, which sought to appropriate different sections and communities in a specific way to give shape to its ideal of the ‘Hindu nation’. Women’s question was also taken up with this aim, where questions of tradition, social reform, nationalism etc. were being contested in the name of women’s emancipation. At the same time, it was deemed necessary to link up the issue of political swarajya to the issue of internal swarajya within the national community. Women’s questions continued to be raised with great consistency

20 Ibid
in this phase, but the pitch and fervor rose further and further. This can be witnessed not only by the abundance of such issues in all Hindi journals, but also by the rise of specific women's journals from early twentieth century onwards.\textsuperscript{21} The continuous raising of women's question in Hindi areas in early twentieth century can be partly explained through the fact that while Bengal witnessed the so called modernization phase in early nineteenth century; the period of renaissance and associated social reforms started much later in the Hindi speaking areas, when nationalism as a political ideology itself had begun developing radical signs.

Although it is true that the main issue of all Hindi journals remained confined to upper caste, middle class issues like, purdah, widowhood, child marriage etc., while at the same time, it made an attempt to accommodate the growing nationalist movement. The resultant effect was the conceptualization of a new national woman, who could fit in both the roles of a public woman as well as private woman under the changed circumstances. Yet, in both the places she was to be the 'accomplice', the 'helping partner' of a man and not as an independent entity in herself.\textsuperscript{22} The historical role of the modernizing movement was that of 'recasting women for companionate marital relationships and attendant familiar duties as well as of enabling middle class women to enter the professions and participate in political movement, in a


\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p.113.
limited way. By 1920, Hindi journals had begun to discuss women’s role in winning *swarajya* and raised the question through articles on: how can there be true *swarajya* without the full participation of women? The Hindi magazines were making women aware of the struggle for *swarajya*. In an editorial of *Stree Darpan*, the editor pointed out that having made its women docile and timid, India had lost its vigour and children were being nurtured as slaves. The editor of *Kumari Darpan* (also published from Allahabad) told her young readers to spin the ‘*charkha*’ and have their clothes woven from their handspun yarn. It would give them immense pleasure, she said, to enjoy the fruits of their labour and their pleasure would be doubly enhanced when they reminded themselves that the country was benefitting from their efforts. *Chand* (a Hindi journal from Allahabad) which brought out its first issue in November 1922, perhaps reflected best a progressive outlook that aroused an awareness of woman’s rights and women’s desire to realize their potential. The editorial page of the first issue, besides setting out the objectives of the journal, gave long comments on the importance of women in national life and on the freedom of women. In the note on the importance of woman to the nation, it was pointed out that a mother had a dominant influence on her child and it

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24 *Stree Darpan*, December 1921.
26 *Chand*, November 1922.
would be ruinous for a nation to ignore this important factor. Women must be given an equal place in the nation.27

The Non-Cooperation Movement

Gandhi’s approach was pragmatic; he did not shut his eyes to the actual situation of women. He laid stress on that part of the Non-Cooperation movement in which women could participate without having to make the attempt to break free of their fetters. He appealed to them to adopt *swadeshi* as their goal and to use the *Charkha* as the means to achieve that goal. Women were given the special responsibility of popularising the concept of swadeshi.28 Gandhi’s attempt had been to broaden the base of the movement at all levels. In an appeal made to women in ‘Young India’ Gandhi wrote: “We must be prepared to be satisfied with such cloth as India can produce even as we are thankfully content with such children as God give us. I have not known a mother throwing away her baby even though it may appear ugly to an outsider. So, should it be with the patriotic women of India about Indian manufactures.” Women were thus given some idea of their role in the fight for economic freedom. In the same article Gandhi exhorted them: “The economic and moral salvation of India thus rests mainly with you. The future of India lies on your knees for you will nurture the future generations”. For the first time women were being called upon to participate in the public sphere but in a manner that

27 Rao, Uma. op.cit. p.31.
28 Ibid., p.33.
would not remove them from the domestic world. With the nationalist campaigns of 1919-21, the content of women journal’s changed considerably. Political news started appearing regularly and all magazines espoused Gandhi’s message and the movement whole-heatedly. In November 1921 ‘a woman non-cooperator’ wrote to the editor of Stri-Darpan that she wanted to serve Mother India publicly but was hindered by her husband who held different views. The editor suggested that she could serve Mother India at home by spinning Khadi. Non-Cooperation made swadeshi chiefly a womanly concern, urging them to come out of purda to serve the country, and suggesting that service to the country might be as high a dharma as pativrata dharma but the journals were reluctant to discount the centrality of pativrata dharma.

Relatively few women participated in the Non-Cooperation movement. But the significance of their participation lies not in the number of women participating but in the fact that women organized meetings and demonstrations. In Jhansi the mother of the President of the city congress committee organized a demonstration of 500 women weaving the tricolour flag. It was important event when we take into consideration the fact that women for centuries had been deprived of initiatives. In 1921, though some women from elitist, educated families had come forward to participate, for the most part, women’s meetings were addressed by men. It is significant that the

29 Quoted in Rao, Uma. op. cit., pp.33-34.
30 Stri Darpan, November 1921.
32 Prabha, March 1922, p.46.
meetings were attended by ordinary, practically illiterate women and they were beginning to hear of the progressive women's magazines even if they could not read them. It was Chand which not only broke the mould of Stri-Upyogi literature but also located women's issues at the core of nationalist quest, just as socialists would do a decade later with peasants and the economic question. Chand's nationalism started with its perspective; from the very beginning, the awakening and activities of women in the Hindi belt were seen as part of a countrywide, indeed a world wide, phenomenon.

Most women joined the freedom struggle because like men they were inspired by patriotism and wanted to see the end of foreign rule from their motherland. An important factor was family influence. Women from families such as those of Motilal Nehru, C.R. Das, Jamnalal Bajaj or Lajpat Rai naturally wanted to share the privations and sufferings of their men-folk. Where the atmosphere at home was nationalistic, women also imbibed it. According to Sucheta Kripalini Gandhi's personality inspired confidence not only in women, but in their guardian-husbands, fathers, brothers who did not object to their women-folk coming out of their shelters homes to march in the streets. If Gandhi's leadership had not been there, such a large number of women might not have come out. Women worked in Bardoli 'Satyagraha-

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33 Rao, Uma. op.cit., p.25.
34 Orisini, Francesca, op. cit., p.267.
Sangram’, were smt. Sharda Bai, Suman Mehta, smt. Desai etc. All these women were belonged to high class families and gave up comfort and pleasure to serve the nation. This was a praise-able work and encouraged the men and women of Bardoli.\textsuperscript{36} The lives of these women transformed as a result of their brush with nationalism. There was a significant change in the quality of these women’s lives. Many became public figures, the domestic world became secondary and meetings, demonstrations and the pursuit of education assumed prominence. Not only did the domestic world become secondary but in the case of some of these women, it was even suspended temporarily when they went to jail. The case of Ram Pyari Devi, whose daughter was to be married in a few days time and who was arrested and imprisoned for two months.\textsuperscript{37}

Even after coming out of jail, at least some of these women did not immediately return to their domestic lives but rushed to places where they felt their services were required. Not only thousands of men, even mothers and brides of ordinary families neglected the orders and suppressive policies of British rule.\textsuperscript{38} There were no fear of imprisonment among women during ‘Satyagraha- Sangram’. In Meerut Smt. Parvati Devi got rigorous imprisonment for two years on 4\textsuperscript{th} Sept,1922. The wane of whizzing spreaded all over India because it was the first time when an Indian women got such a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{36} Bharat (Allahabad), 9 Sep. 1928, p.18.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Abhyuday, 28 November, 1930.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Prabha, Jan. 1922, p.65.
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punishment in political case.\textsuperscript{39} Even the women of the lower strata, inspite of the handicap of illiteracy and poverty, were steadily growing conscious of their rights. Thousands of women of the working class and peasantry took part in strike struggles, street demonstrations and conferences. They were also developing political consciousness, became members of national political organizations. This awakening of the Indian women was the manifestation of the growth of national sentiment and democratic urges for national and individual liberty among them.\textsuperscript{40} The widening of the scope of the nationalist movement brought into its ranks participation by industrial workers and certain sections of the peasantry. When women prisoners were asked why had joined the freedom movement. Most of them said, they had done it out of genuine conviction, the patriotic emotion and out of regard for Mahatma Gandhi. These women came from different sections of society. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay found women from all classes in prison including plantation workers.\textsuperscript{41} Though the number of women arrested was very small, yet a beginning was made and an example set that, if need be, women would not hesitate to face the most difficult situations. The Bardoli satyagraha, besides providing an eye opener to the people, displayed a large measure of strength

\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Prabha}, Jan. 1923, p71.
\textsuperscript{40} Desai, A.R., op. cit., p.258.
\textsuperscript{41} Basu, Aparna, op. cit., p.38.
among women. However, it served as a training ground for the women of Bombay and an inspiration for women all over the country.42

The image of a woman participating in the country’s struggle for the attainment of swaraj projected by Gandhi and by the other women political activists like Bi-Amman and Sarla Devi was a traditional one. Her sphere of work was still the home. However, movement gave women scope for coming out of their homes and taking part in politics while still working in their traditional sphere, the home. Any one giving up her foreign clothing and weaving khadi, plying the spinning wheel and giving up her ornaments as a donation for the ‘Tilak Swaraj Fund’ became a symbol of Non-Cooperation. The charkha which was to be one of the most potent weapons for crippling the economic interests of Britain in India was to be mainly used by women. In other words that nationalist leadership was trying to links the movement with every home in the country.43 A government annual report for the year 1921-22 said that the “growing interest displayed by the upper and middle class women in political and social question must be taken as the dawn of a new era. The fact that the number of women in public life is still very small, affords no reason to question its significance. In social and political gatherings the proportion of seats reserved for women is increasing.44 In the period between

42 Bharat, September 1928.
the suspension of Non-Cooperation movement in Feb., 1922 and the launching of Civil-Disobedience movement in March, 1930 women’s issues assumed some importance in the context of the public life of the country.45

Civil Disobedience Movement

Many leaders of the Indian National Congress took interest in mobilizing women both at the level of elites and at the grass root level. The All India Congress Committee passed a special resolution acknowledging the contribution of women to the success of the 1930 satyagraha. In the official records, for the first time, the presence of women acknowledged. There emerged later a totally new and revolutionary image of women. Within the congress, the women were sure of no opposition towards their new emancipated roles. They were accepted as equal comrades in political meetings and public processions.46 For the British rule, this large scale participation of women in the civil-disobedience movement was one of its most perturbing aspects. Among the policies adopted to counter the influence was a trick played by the railway authorities when Kamla Nehru and Hensa Mehta arrived at Delhi railway station in August 1930. In order to down the voices of those who were shouting slogans of Inquilab-Zindabad, the railway engine were

made to shout non-stop. In Allahabad, there were more reports of women being arrested for picketing in November, 1930. Seven women were arrested and out of seven one was a mother whose daughter was to be married in a few days time. She along with the others was given three months rigorous imprisonment. These arrests created more enthusiasm for picketing and in the following days picketing began in the early morning. Uma Nehru, who was organizer, had announced that there was no need for any male volunteers because there was a surplus of women volunteers. Hindi journals saluted women's empowerment and initiatives as an integral part of the nationalist project. They also helped to develop crucial tools and a political and historical consciousness through which women could question the double standards of patriarchy and could claim participation in public life. Photographs of the women who were given imprisonment, were published in various journals. For example, photographs of smt. Lavanya Prabha Mitra, Ashok Lata Das and smt. Shanti Das M.A., were published in Vishal Bharat. All these women were given four months imprisonment and smt. Shanti Das M.A. was the daughter of smt. Ashoklata Das. The British Govt. responded to the civil disobedience campaign by declaring congress an illegal organizations, arresting most of its leaders. At this point the women came out into their own, for they took over the

47 Abhyuday, 30 August, 1930.
48 Abhyuday, 28 November, 1930.
49 Abhyuday, 29 November, 1930.
50 Orsini, Francesca, op. cit., p.273.
51 Vishal Bharat, September 1930, p.400.
organization of the campaign when the men were in jail. That they did this on their own initiative can be seen by Nehru’s surprise at what happened.

“Most of us men folk were in prison. And when a remarkable thing happened. Our women came to the front and took charge of the struggle. Women had always been there, of course, but now there was an avalanche of them, which took not only the British govt. but their own men folk by surprise. Here were these women, women of the upper or middle classes, leading sheltered lives in their homes, peasant women, working class women, rich women, poor women, pouring out in their tens of thousands in defiance of govt. orders and police lathi”.

Arrest of the male leaders electrified the patriotic zeal in women which not only gave a two fold strength and support to the cause but also invited attention and appreciation from the outside world. At first, women had not been allowed to participate as Gandhiji had thought that they would complicate matters. But the women of the land, coveting a place of equality with men, could not sit back at the call of the nation. They protested that in these critical days there should not be any watertight compartment of service. Women demanded that “no conference, no congress or commission dealing with the welfare of India should be held without the presence on them of their

52 Quoted in Joanna, Liddle and Joshi, Rama, op. cit., p.34.
53 Kaur, Manmohan. op. cit., p.168.
kind. Similarly they must ask that no marches, no imprisonment, no
demonstration organized for the welfare of India should prohibit women from
a share in them. Later they were permitted to take part in all phases of the
campaign.\textsuperscript{54} In United province the large scale participation of women in the
national movement was recognized by the Hindi journals as some sort of a
stepping stone for their emancipation. In an article in Chand it was described
that the collective enthusiasm shown by women in the civil-disobedience
movement was unique.\textsuperscript{55} “The heroic activities of Rani Lakshmibai and
Durgavati were just lone examples. The ‘jauhar’ act of Rajput women was
nothing more than passive courage. In India right now besides the political
movement many more movements are forthcoming. Most prominent among
them is the movement for women’s emancipation. Women’s participation in
the civil-disobedience movement is definitely going to give a platform to the
movement for the emancipation of women”.\textsuperscript{56} The goal of swadeshi or
boycott of foreign cloth did inspire an enthusiastic response as was amply
demonstrated in subsequent years and particularly during the civil
disobedience movement. The charkha became a symbol of hope and
independence.\textsuperscript{57} Hindi journals were filled with articles and poems eulogizing
the charkha and swadeshi. Women were told of their duty to fight in a war
which was being fought not with weapons of iron and steel but with the

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Chand, Dec. 1930.
\textsuperscript{56} Kumar, Rajendra. “Stri Swatantrya’ in Chand, Dec. 1930.
\textsuperscript{57} Rao, Uma. op. cit., p.36.
weapon of *charkha*.\(^{58}\) It is difficult to determine how clearly women grasped the concept of economic independence or saw the connection between *swadeshi* and freedom. But there is little doubt that *swadeshi* became a symbol of something noble, of a duty higher than the duty to home and family, and a symbol of women's identification with a great and honourable cause.\(^{59}\)

Women picketed foreign cloth shops and threw their own foreign cloths into bone fire. Accounts of these events were well-reported in the newspapers. In an article in *Vishal-Bharat*, it was explained about the courage and enthusiasm shown by women in the national movement. Women had liberated themselves from purdah and tore off their veils. It was proved that they were not less than the men in bearing problems and in all types of sacrifices for the mother-land.\(^{60}\)

Women had determined to participate in the movement in the face of various punishment executed by the British govt. A meeting of women was held at Allahabad on 23\(^{rd}\) May, 1930 under the presidentship of Swaruprani Nehru. She said in her speech that women should come out of purdah and that they should be ready to remain in jails as prisoners. Durgadevi Verma, a kshatriya women was the first lady who discarded purda in the midst of her caste men.\(^{61}\)

In the 1930s, simple, unsophisticated women marched in processions side by side with the women of the Nehru family at Allahabad or at the

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58 Ibid. See also *Stree Darpan* Nov.1921, there was a song in *Stree Darpan* on khadi and charkha related to the freedom, which was usually sung by women during the demonstrations.
59 Rao, Uma. op. cit., p.36.
60 *Vishal Bharat*, July 1930, p.13. See article ‘Women in National Struggle’.
61 *Chand*, June 1930.
Sarabhais at Ahmedabad. Some Muslim women shed their purdah and joined the struggle and a few Parsi women also joined the movement under the leadership of Gandhi. Many more women participated in the Civil Disobedience movement as compared to the Non-Cooperation movement of 1921. No could deny that the participation of Indian women society in the work of nation was a significant event in reality. Before the national movement in 1930, those who were responding the cause of women’s emancipation were men whose hearts melted at the pitiable plight of the women folk. There was no demand from the women folk themselves for the upliftment of their condition until it makes some efforts on its own. Women by participating in the movement were getting conscious of their powers. This movement educated them to fight for their own rights.

In struggling for the country’s freedom women achieved their own freedom to an extent hardly credible. In the great crusade between 1929 and 1933 women of all castes, communities, all degrees of poverty and wealth shared the burden, the pain, the sacrifices, the joys and the individual new freedom of acting in response to the need of the movement without reference to the old precedents customs, shibboleths of sex conduct and sex separativeness. Men and women acted as souls, not as sexes, and soul force

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63 Vishal Bharat, June 1930, p.845. See editorial “Bhartiya Mahilaon Mein Jagriti”.
was their weapon. Women did not hesitate to occupy the new role provided by the changing time. They simply became the product of the new age. Though they lived as usual in the limited environment of the household, they did not feel any difficulty or obstruction in adjusting with the larger and more sophisticated world of politics. Leaders like Gandhiji always encouraged them. The leaders of the Hindu society did not perceive any harm in the women's role in politics which brought them outside. The elite women as well as the women from the masses, who participated in the national movement, were full of a rare confidence among themselves. They nourished the desire to be independent and free. They began to assert their point of view in family and society. Women suffered heavy losses and they faced physical, mental and moral agonies. Yet, they exhibited great moral strength. The participation in the political movement brought to them greater awareness of their own selves and provided to them many occasions when they could take independent decisions. The participation of women in politics indicated that they were competent enough to be assimilated into different political ideologies and strategies. Women's involvement in the cult of revolution made it very clear that they possessed the capacity and ability to take part even in dangerous ventures. The presence of Gandhi, a venerated leader, protected the women

68 Ibid.
69 Chand, June 1935.
when they joined the congress programmes from unfavourable comments and insinuations. Women in the revolutionary movement had no such patronage and they were put to hard comments, criticism and cruel treatment.\textsuperscript{70}

It had been argued that women were active in processions and marches when the struggle was on but when the struggle was over they lapsed into inactivity. But all the women who had been active in the Civil-Disobedience movement did not retreat back into the four walls of their homes once the movement was withdrawn.\textsuperscript{71} Attempts to expand the scope of nationalists activity to include poor women were based on the image of women as nurture rather than as workers themselves. Gandhi's role in mobilising women in an unprecedented way is unquestioned, although there might be difference in the assessment of the impact and limitations of this. Gandhi explicitly focused on 'feminine' qualities as having the strength to combat imperial power.\textsuperscript{72} He associated 'femininity' with spiritual and moral courage—the heroines he chose for women to emulate were Sita and Draupadi rather than, the Rani of Jhansi.\textsuperscript{73}

In his non-violent struggle against the foreign rule he said, the contribution of women should be greater than men because women were more sacrificing, having greater power of endurance and greater courage. However, he was very much reluctant to involve women in the salt-satyagraha in the beginning. But he had to change his mind later on, because of the keen interest and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{70} Asthana, Pratima, op. cit., p.70.
\item \textsuperscript{71} Panjani, Manoj, op. cit., p.156.
\item \textsuperscript{72} Hindi Navjivan, 28 Dec. 1921, p.148.
\item \textsuperscript{73} Madhuri, Jan. 1925, p.125. Quoted in the note "Mahila-Parisad Mein Mahatmaji".
\end{itemize}
constant insistence of women in joining the campaign. As a protest against the high handed measure of the government, the women in high places resigned their posts. To name a few only, Muthalaksmi Ammal resigned her seat in the Legislative Council and her office as Deputy President of the Council. Mrs. Hansa Mehta and Kamabbai Lakshman Rao resigned their offices as Honorary Magistrate. Smt. Suniti Mitra who was the school inspectress also resigned at the time of Non-Cooperation. Now, she was a member of Lucknow Municipal Board and also working in the field of women education. In the period between 1933-42 women's issues acquired an importance in the public life of the country. Among the problems engaging women's attention were electoral politics, women's role in a planned economy and reform of Hindu law. During this period a separate women's department was set up in the congress. Apart from this women's issues attracted the attention of film-makers also.

"The development outside and inside India have been overturning an ancient and valued institution, and women in India could not be indifferent to these threats of disruption, to the shakes of "peaceful earthquakes" initiated by the congress. But the growing intensity of the struggle for a new India of the strong and the free has been forcing on the consciousness of even conservative houses that women have duties outside the house that could not be neglected

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74 Raju, V. Rajendra, Role of Women in India's Freedom Struggle, Discovery Publishing House, Delhi, 1994, p. 44.
75 Manmohan Kaur, op. cit., p. 169.
76 Vishal Bharat, March 1929, p. 421.
77 Panjani, Manoj, op. cit., p. 156.
any more". Women’s question was tied with the nationalist movement. Here, the issue of social reform was transformed into a political issue of women’s right to equality. Women’s participation in freedom movement increased with mass mobilization. No one had imagined even in a dream that the women of India will do such wonderful works as they did during 1930-32. According to Mrs. Vijay Lakshmi Pandit, an active worker in the freedom movement, due to heroism of women, not only the boycott was successful but the whole movement was strengthened. It was noteworthy that no women belonging to the congress left the jail even after released. Women inspired men folk even to lay down their lives for the motherland. Kunwarani Gunavati Maharaj Singh, ‘wife of the then Home Minister of U.P. Govt. was of opinion that if the women of India had not joined, Gandhi’s political movement would not have been so successful. One must not overlook the tremendous changes in women’s perceptions that occurred during this period. They step out from the seclusion of their homes into the male preserve of politics and power. However, negotiating women’s access to the public sphere became problematic due to some reasons. The existence of parda, the primacy of wifely dharma, and the negative image of the ‘free’ westernized woman made even the ideal of ‘service to the country’ difficult to imagine for urban, respectable north Indian

79 Sharma, R.K., op. cit., p.76.
80 Vishal Bharat, Sep. 1936, p.295.
81 Ibid, p-299.
82 Ibid., p.263.
women. New codes of dress and behaviour had to be devised in order to show that the modesty earlier formalized by parda could now be interiorised. Three images incarnate this change: the widow and/or prostitute, the woman volunteer, and the educated wife, the heroine at home.

**Feminist Consciousness**

The ethos of housework as a woman’s only work and wifehood/motherhood as the supreme fulfillment of her life underwent an alteration, since it was proclaimed that a woman also had important obligation to the motherland, outside the parameter of the home. Moreover, the age-old notion of women’s total inferiority to men began to be slowly eroded. Women had proved that they were capable of fighting alongside men. While the political struggle was on, women leaders as well as the rank and file political workers became increasingly aware of their disabilities as women and were eager to be free from them. In an article in *Chand*, it was mentioned that for the welfare of society and nation, the legal status of women should be improved. On the question of feminist consciousness Mr. Chhavinath Singh wrote “to be free from the pitiable life, now the eyes of the society are opening slowly. There is awakening even in the women at a large scale. The local and

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83 Orsini, Francesca, op. cit., p.292.
84 Ibid.
86 Ibid., p.203.
interstate meetings of women are occurring at many places. In these meetings all types of women are contributing. Hindi journals are also publishing women editions." The Indian woman is struggling for domestic and national liberty at the same time and like a woman, she is utterly unreasonable and illogical in her demand and in her methods, but like a woman she has enormous influence over the stronger sex many loyal officials including police officers have suffered more from taunts and abuse from their female relatives than from any other sources.

It should also be noted that the Khilafat Movement provided Muslim women the opportunity to step out of their homes and discard the purdah. Their participation in the public sphere was by and large appreciated. "Such activities were not considered kufr (infidelity) by men in this period. We do not find evidence of any religious leader condemning the activities of these women". There was a peculiar exhilaration that the women of different provinces were proceeding beyond the mark to improve the condition of themselves and of the nation. In this matter women from Madras attained an excellent position. They got right of vote in the election of legislative councils and entered in municipal boards and estate boards. Mrs. Devdas was the first women commissioner of Madras-Corporation. She was the wife of Justice

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88 Ibid.
M.D. Devdas. Smt. Margret Cousin was appointed honorary magistrate. She was an Ayrish but a leader of the movement for ‘right to vote for women’. Women had right to vote in Karachi Municipality Board. The tremendous impact of women’s participation in the freedom struggle in unfastening centuries old shackles on the development of women’s individualities has been universally acknowledged. The confidence, consciousness acquired during the process of struggle in laying dharnas, going to jail, facing police brutalities and walking in processions made women realize their own strength. Their struggle for the nation’s freedom must have sowed in their hearts and minds the will and self confidence to fight for their own emancipation. On 29th October, 1933, Marwari women conference was held. In conference Smt. Janaki Devi said “now time has been changed. The huge waves of power, enthusiasm, life and awareness are knocking in the whole world. These waves are also influencing India. That is why; today the number of such women is increasing day to day who are incarnating to serve the nation with male colleagues. All these symbols are hopeful and enthusiastic”.

Women realized that they could also do a lot of service to bring back the freedom of their grieved country. Ten or twenty years ago no one could imagine that women in veil, would face the cruelties of police in the field of battle cheerfully and welcomed the harsh life of prison. The severe life of

92 Ibid., p.251.
93 Jain, Pratibha and Sharma, Sangeeta. op. cit., p.192.
94 Vishal Bharat, November, 1933.
95 Ibid.
prison realized them the real proud of womenhood and made them amazons. The vociferous participation reflected women's keen interest for inclusion in mainstream political processes. Women, consciously or unconsciously were becoming aware of power they could derive through political empowerment in effective articulation of their demands as women. Pertinently, women did not visualize limited roles for themselves and since the initial phase of the struggle were striving for inclusion at all levels of political activism. The American women had acquired the right to vote in 1920. After that, women of other western countries also earned the right to vote. Indian politics was also influenced by this change among the women of western countries.

In India women started participation in active politics after 1919. They not only enthusiastically exercised the limited suffrage granted to them but even participated in mass movement of the type started by the Indian National Congress. As a result of this, it was became a worthy of being demonstrated issue whether the Indian women should be given political rights or not. In this context, it was more important thing, whether Indian women should be given right to vote or not. The opinions of various scholars were publishing in the different journals of that time. The writers of these opinions were Indian, foreigners, women, men etc. of all classes. For example "Rajniti Aur

96 Ibid.
97 Jain, Pratibha and Sharma, Sangeeta, op. cit., p.194.
Striyan”, “Bhartiya Mahilayein Aur Vote Dene Ka Adhikar”, “Striyon ka Rajnaitik Adhikar”, “Sansar Samasyaon Mein Striyon ka Bhag” etc. were some important articles, which are worthy of quotation especially in this context. In the Pratapgarh countryside – women had enrolled themselves in large numbers as four anna members of the congress. These women members were not just passive members. Women took tremendous initiative not only during the direct action struggles but also in organizational matters. When a large number of women found their names missing in the voters list for organizational elections they flooded the DCC (District Congress Committee) office with representations during 1938-39. It is to be noted that Indian national congress had a branch of volunteers for political and social works. Women also joined the ranks of volunteers in a large number. They were called Des-Sevika in Bombay. The Nari Satyagraha Sangh of Bengal, Stri-Swarajya Sangh of Gujarat, Sevika Sangh of Allahabad and Swayam Sevika Sangh of Kerala were also important to serve the country.

The women of Hindi region, who were backward and more tradition bound than the women in other parts of the country, underwent a socio-economic transformation in the first half of the twentieth century. They joined the struggle for freedom and their participation was indeed abrupt and sudden.

100 Prabha, 1921-1924.
102 Ibid.
103 Vishal Bharat, September, 1936, p.295.
104 Ibid.
But it paved the way for their own social and economic liberation.105 Women who availed the opportunity of training themselves through their participation in the freedom struggle tasted the fruits of taking independent decision and firm action. They were filled with a new consciousness that possessed them through the revival of Indian cultural values and helped in flowering their genius.106

**Nationalist Ideology And Women's Issues**

The decades of the 1920s were a period when new values and new social norms were being advocated. There was growing awareness of women's role in the national struggle. The talk of womanhood as motherhood, with its nationalist overtones of the nation as the highest Mother whom everyone was called to serve, provided space for the inclusion of women's issues in the mind of men and women. In an article, 'need of women's education from a national perspective' a direct link between the revival of ancient ideals of Sita and Savitri and participation in the nationalist struggle was made-up.107 Indian women were not born ignorant but were regarded as ignorant. Women should come out in the public life keeping in mind the stories of those heroic women.108 During this time women's voices were appearing in the Hindi journalism and in Hindi literature. This was undoubtedly part of the general expansion of Hindi literacy, education and print, and the more widespread

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106 Ibid.
108 Ibid.
participation of people in the nationalist movement after the Non-Cooperation movement. Women were a special case because women’s access to the public sphere was fraught with peculiar tension, especially when it concerned ‘respectable’ upper caste women. Not only they generally forbidden to appear in public or to interact with men and the outside world because of pardah, their lives were also hardly in their own hands.

As a result of colonial rule, the questions related to the nation, nationalism and society had become the main issues in journalism and literature. The rise and widening of press as a medium of mass-communication gave more importance to three questions. These were nation, nationality and women issues. The main axis of the development of new nation and nationality was the path of women’s freedom and empowerment. That is why, the Hindi journals of this period were full of debates on women-deliberation issues. In the process of social construction of femininity, especially the Indian version, the most important step was taken in regard to its exclusion from the arena of colonial state. Further, this step itself categorized and signified the agenda of education for women, as being something different and (probably) quite opposite to that of men’s education. The issue of women education was taken necessary in the light of the task of making a new India. In an editorial notes, the editor of a Hindi journal Jyoti noticed that,

109 Orisini, Francesca, op. cit., p-244.
110 Kumar, Avinash. op. cit. p-114.
"It was good that the bill on the establishment of ideal government schools for girls was not passed, because the boy's education under the guidance of the government has been a failure so far, creating hurdles for women in this new age by raising the question of their education, is completely uncalled for. Community based institutions (religious, caste etc.) run by different communities and which are imparting education to women, should be developed and strengthened. Further Indian women should be prepared for the service of the country".111

From this editorial note we can say that the contemporary male society realized the necessity of women education for the cause of nation. But, it should be different from the male education. Nationalists believed that women would provide moral and numerical strength and indeed necessary for the nationalist movement to succeed.

The Hindi journals were concentrating on imparting education to women about their duties and morality, which was considered extremely important for them because lack of education in women was discussed one of the reasons of downfall of India.112 The education of women should be such that they memorized always their intimate relation with the country. First, they should be provided education as a human being. Second, they should be provided

111 Quoted in Kumar, Avinash, pp.114-115.
education as women; as a result they could be able to become good housewives and fortunate. Third, they should be given education as a part of country, so they memorized always that their lives had an intimate relation with the welfare or villainy of the country, even they were living at home. In other words, the question of the type of education suitable for women was linked to the status and role of women in the family and in society. It was a question that was concerned not only with field of education but also with a social attitude and recognition of women by society. The reformers, who since the nineteenth century had advocated some kind of improvement in the status of women as a necessary step for the progress of the nation, envisaged women education as a closely monitored process and with the object of making women better wives and mothers. Therefore, debates on the ‘women’s question’ were also profoundly affected by the symbolic identification of women-hood with Indianness i.e. with India’s peculiar spiritual essence, that which made it superior to and essentially different from the west.

According to Satyavati Devi of the Arya Samaj Kanya Gurukul in Saran, English education system was not appropriate for ‘Indian Civilization’ because it did not inspire patriotism. “Our stri-samaj is moving far away from Indian drape and sentiments in the present atmosphere of English education”. The western thoughts and fashions should be removed from the education system and

113 Ibid., p.81.
114 Talwar, Vir Bharat, op. cit., p.221.
115 Orsini, Francesca, op. cit., p.244.
thoughts of simplicity and sincerity should be proclaimed. Then, nobody could oppose the women education.\textsuperscript{117}

The articles related to the women movement were also based on the traditional images of women in the glorious past of India. “It is observed from the history of India, that the establishment, of great ideals of women-hood happened in India, was not occurred in any country of the world. But the present women movement is influencing this great ideal in a bad manner. In the agitation to get their rights, women do not avoid devotion, sympathy, maternity etc., the natural qualities of women. There is a request to the leaders of women movement that they do not follow the western path for the Indian movement”.\textsuperscript{118} As the Non-Cooperation movement of 1920-21 proceeded further, the nationalists had started to think about to organize women in a constructive manner. A majority of the urban educated male elite had traditional views on women’s role in society, however, in some cases the position of women became salient for the issues of political ascendancy and cultural identity. These elite male began to question social practices affecting women and develop a reformist or revivalist consciousness on this subject. They encouraged their female relatives to become educated and to participate in public activities. The elite point out these activities to the British rule as

\textsuperscript{117} Dixit, Mitra Devi. “Stri Shiksha Kaisi Ho?” \textit{Chand}, August 1935.
evidences of a progressive outlook suited for political leadership.\textsuperscript{119} Most of the women belonging to the elite and western educated families first participated in public activities connected with the \textit{swadeshi}, Non-Cooperation, Civil-Disobedience or Quit-India Movement. The number of women, who participated in active politics, without any politically active relative, as a result of their own experiences, was very small. Men supported social reform and women's advancement in India, which was initiated and led by enlightened leadership, for equality for opportunity for women and encouraged them to participate in national activity. Mahatma Gandhi’s \textit{swaraj} movement was not only for political emancipation but also for social and national reconstruction.\textsuperscript{120} Gandhi advocated the participation of women in public life to make the national movement, a mass movement. According to him, until women did not take part in public life of India, the country would not progress.\textsuperscript{121} But he liked to be in control of the women’s activities and was angry when they stepped out of line. The ideals of woman-hood for him were Sita and Draupadi and only those women who were pure in body and heart should participate in public life.\textsuperscript{122} In other words, we can say that Gandhi was one of the reformers whose models were typically Indian and not western. In real sense, the women movement attained momentum during the Non-

\textsuperscript{119} Everett, J.M., \textit{Women and Social Change in India}, Heritage Publisher,, New Delhi, 1985, pp48-49.
\textsuperscript{120} Mankekar, Kamla, ‘\textit{Women in India}', (International Women Year 1975), Central Institute of Research & Training in Public Cooperation, New Delhi, pp.8-10.
\textsuperscript{121} Madhuri, January 1925, p-125. See article ‘Mahila-Parisad mein Mahatmaji’. Also see ‘Prada Aur Pratigya’ in \textit{Hindi Navjivan}.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 22 June, 1924, p.361.
Cooperation movement (1918-22). Under the leadership of Gandhi, the collective partnership realized the women, their equality with men. Indian National Congress, invited them to get the right of freedom similar to men and supported the ‘right to vote’ for women. In the early twentieth century, the national movement and social reform movement were considered complementary to each other. In an article in ‘Prabha’, a Hindi journal, the complementary nature of the two movement was highlighted. “In reality a nation is developed by society and the nation developed the whole human caste”. Therefore, it was obvious to give attention towards the women issues when the steersmen of the national movement gave attention towards the social reforms.

There were, of course, differences in opinion amongst the men in the nationalist movement over the woman’s involvement and over their demands. Many of the congress leaders, such as Prasad were against any reform of women’s legal position. Nehru, influenced by socialism, supported the principle of equal rights for women. The contradictory approach of the nationalist movement to the women’s question, was because of the two issues, women’s suffrage and Hindu personal law. Votes for women was an issue which united the nationalist movement with the women’s movement but the nationalist were bitterly divided over personal law reform, which included

124 Liödle, Joanna and Joshi, Rama. op. cit., p.34.
issues like marriage and inheritance which were of special concern to women.
In the favour of women suffrage, the editorial ‘Striyan Aur Matadhikar’ was published in Chand. “Men and women should have equal rights of citizenship and there should be no discrimination in these rights on the basis of gender. If the principle of equality is true then the demand of women suffrage should be accepted”. Now it was considered that after getting right to vote, what would be the issues attended most by women. From the previous work of women, it was predicted that they would attend the issues related to the women lives, for example, management of house, children, education and health of women. The nationalists gave their full support to the issues of women’s suffrage partly, because of the women’s movement campaign around the issue, partly because of their gratitude at the women’s part in the Civil Disobedience movement and partly to show themselves as more progressive than the Britishers and to increase Indian voting power. The notion of equal citizens in both sex and caste terms was a revolutionary idea in Indian politics, although the impact of change on the majority of illiterate, rural women was rather less than revolutionary, since the women’s movement failed to mobilizes the mass female vote. The women movement was limited to the big cities, it was not expanded to rural India. Therefore, the rural women did not know about the meetings and resolutions passed related to women’s issues in cities. They were

125 Chand, June 1932, p.120.
126 Prabha, April 1920, p.60.
127 Liddle, Joanna and Joshi, Rama. op. cit., p.36.
ignorant about the demands produced by the educated women because they were illiterate and did not feel any requirement of change in the society.128

The demand for a Hindu code reforming area of personal law such as marriage, diverse and inheritance was initiated by the All India women’s conference in 1934.129 The changes to women’s position embodied in the Hindu code provoked a storm of opposition which highlighted the contradiction among nationalist men. They supported the principle of sexual equality and its implementation through women’s suffrage, which undermined Britain’s position of power. But they opposed the implementation of the principle in marriage and inheritance, which threatened their own privileges as men in the family.130 At the same time, there were some people who opposed even women suffrage. For example, there was an article “Bhartiya Mahilayen Aur Vote Dene Ka Adhikar” by Smt. Vidyawati Seth in Prabha. According to her, the Indian women’s movement for suffrage was influenced by the women movement in European countries. Indian women were united to get their rights and achieved the support of some intellectual and powerful men. But, this movement of Indian women was the transcription of western movements and did not match to our traditions.131 The nationalists should make the household life of women progressive and prohibited them to taste the bitter fruits of politics. When men had not right to vote completely, then why did the

128 Saraswati, September 1931, p.329.
130 Liddle, Joanne and Joshi. Rama. op. cit., p.36.
131 Prabha, May 1920, p.22.

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discussion of women’s suffrage. In these conditions, the imitation, of the western countries in political movement would not be correct, and would be harmful also.\(^{132}\) These thoughts were not according to the changes occurring in contemporary Indian society. In this context, it was also called that the question of women’s suffrage was new and we should have to study our ancient history and traditional presumptions, and considered the present situation before its implementation. The freedom of women by educating them was favoured but not the women’s suffrage because in these conditions, the results of providing right to vote would be harmful.\(^{133}\)

From the above discussion we can say that people neither accepted the complete freedom to women nor they rejected it. The nationalists and social reformers were in the doubtful condition on some women issues. It was obvious because they belonged to a society, in which the vision of people towards women was narrow and conservative. Therefore, the nationalists were not unambiguously in favour of greater freedom for women any more than the British were. Hindi journals discussed the women questions in detail. They raised the question of women freedom in the light of national movement through articles and editorials. Chand quoted that “Not only from the vision of women but for out collective development, it was becoming necessary that women should be free to choose their work field out side the four walls of the

\(^{132}\) Ibid., p.28.
\(^{133}\) Prabha, February 1921, pp115-116.
house". Two processes were running parallel in the Hindi Public Sphere. One was the gradual challenge to the category of Stri-Upyogi, which led to the questioning of male definitions of women. By widening women’s concern to include more and more public issues and by insisting that the totality of women’s life was open to debate, Hindi journals were crucial in politicizing women. They also helped to develop critical tools and a political and historical consciousness through which women could question the double standards of patriarchy and could claim participation in public life.

The Indian national movement created a social and political space within which women’s lives could change in a positive direction. It was recognized that women too could have a political sensibility. Yet, there was no immediate personal gain for women who came out to fight for swaraj but they invested the freedom struggle with a rare flavour of homeliness and unbending determination. Women had been generated a pride and a passionate involvement in winning swaraj and the abala strode ahead with confident self-reliance. At this time, women should be allowed to move ahead for construction of a new India because in their emancipation our nation was reaching near swaraj. By their participation in political movement, Indian women helped their own struggle for liberation. In India, feminism and

134 Chand, January 1937, p.269.
135 Orisini, Francesca, op. cit., p.273.
137 Rao, Uma. op. cit., p.49.
nationalism were closely interlinked. As the national movement gained momentum, the goal of independence became the only concern for both men and women. The cause was Indian; the goal India’s freedom.\textsuperscript{139} The women movement also gained momentum in the light of traditional thoughts but it happened to a limit. That is why, the path of freedom of women could not go far away.

In spite of close linkage between the nationalist movement and the women’s movement, the alliance broke down on the personal issues because women wanted freedom from male domination also, which not all the nationalists were willing to acknowledge. The men who did not support the personal issue of women said “what will women do to get political freedom?”\textsuperscript{140} At the same time, women’s answer was “Indian women know that they are able like western women and wanted to serve the nation. So, they want the same behaviour with them as it is done with the western women”.\textsuperscript{141} It is to be noted that women’s resistance to male domination in India was initiated by the European women who started the women’s organizations. During this period, the mass participation of women, radical women’s journalism as well as the choice of salt, a basic household necessity, as a national issue, all contributed in the widening of their horizon. The breakdown in the alliance of the two movements indicates that they were not identical although the goal

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\textsuperscript{139} Basu, Aparna, op. cit., p40.
\textsuperscript{140} Prabha, June 1924, p.437.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
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was similar. The nationalists limited the women’s movement and, kept control over the women’s activities and did not support the women’s demand when male privilege was under threat. By claiming themselves a recognizable identity, women established their ability to speak, decide and initiate for themselves. They impressed upon the leaders that they cannot be taken for granted by the patriarchal attitude of the nationalists. It is, indeed, a matter of crucial importance that women were consistently demanding, carving and fighting for challenging roles and greater involvement in the freedom struggle.\textsuperscript{142} Entry of women in politics and their involvement in the struggle for freedom was not the outcome of the generosity by male leaders. They demonstrated their dissatisfaction over decorative and subordinate roles assigned for them. Women expressed their deep disappointment on being manipulated by the nationalists, where they were relegated to being instruments in the hands of male leadership and became secondary in the entire process of decision-making.

Although, the reality remained the same- of women endlessly adjusted to whatever given situation- but at Hindi journals provided some space for individual self determination. According to a writer Ushadevi Mitra, a woman’s development should not be confined to the inner quarters but we should not forget that women could think about outside world only after fulfilled the duties of the home properly. “A woman’s highest duty is that of

\textsuperscript{142} Jain, Pratibha and Sharma, Sangeeta. op. cit., p.198.
rearing children for service to the motherland". So we can conclude that the centrality of the home, of motherhood and wifehood as women's dharma was maintained but the maryada of the house bound characters was largely self-determined, because of individual conception and not only because of imposed social norms.

143 Chand, October 1931, p.750