CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND MARATHI WOMEN:

The women's movement in India was an integral part of the national movement of India. Awakening among the women for self-rights and their understanding the problems of the nation made them conscious to play their role in the national life. It was however, till the times of Mahatma Gandhi came to the horizon of Indian politics, and took over the charge of the Congress, no sufficient attention was given to make Indian women to join the Freedom Movement. Gandhiji, from the beginning of his taking over charge as the foremost leader of the Congress in 1920, i.e., after the death of Lokmanya Tilak, began to appeal and inspire not only men folks of all religions and castes but women-folks also to join the freedom movement. There was again a total change in the form and approach of the struggle for freedom after the end of Tilak era.


Before Gandhiji, the Congress leadership was divided into two groups, the Moderates and the Extremists and they had their separate ways to fight for freedom. The strategy which was adopted by the moderates was not appealing and could not satisfy the militant elements in the Indian society. Militants, those who believed in the terrorist activities, did not like the Moderates, submitting to the British Powers, simply petitions. It was against that background the Extremists followed violent methods to achieve their goals. But both of the groups—the Moderates and the Extremists, and their respective methods could not convince and even attract majority of people for making the freedom movement on a large scale.

Gandhiji, therefore, to attract majority people and to get their support for the freedom struggle tried from the very beginning to get the masses involved into his novel methods of Satyagraha. To fight for freedom against the British was not in any way a simple task. The mighty British

4. After the Session of the Indian National Congress held at Surat in 1907, the Congress practically divided into two groups, the Moderates and the Extremists. Surendranath Banarjee, Pherozshah Mehta, Dinshaw Wachcha, Shankar Nair and others belonged to the Moderate group with G.K. Gokhale as the representative of the group—Bose, N.S., Indian National Movement, Firma KML Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1982, P.65.

5. The second group of the Congress, i.e. Extremists thrived in Punjab, Maharashtra and Bengal. Lala Lajpat Rai, from Punjab, Bal Gangadhar Tilak from Maharashtra and Bipin Chandra Pal from Bengal were the leaders of the Extremist group and became famous as Lal-Bal-Pal. After 1907 Extremists had hold on Indian Politics—Ibid., P.66.
Empire had its rule all over the parts of the world and India was just a part of its largest Empire. To fight them was a death challenge and there was no guarantee of success in any circumstances, if the old methods of weaponry battles or struggles were followed. In fact, fight against the British by the Indians for their freedom with the help of weaponry methods was impossible. Basically, Indians had no weapons in comparison to the modern weapons of that time of British Empire. On that occasion, what Indians had in those times as weapons with them were not at all weapons in the military sense, but simply instruments of household uses. Such a fight, therefore, was impracticable against the British. Inspite of the fact, i.e., the lack of weapons, freedom struggle was to be carried on, and its march was to continue to get freedom, for freedom is the right of every life and soul of every man and nation. Gandhiji and all other leaders, although, had differences of opinions, they all had one basic and common understanding among themselves that, India could not live without freedom and the time had come that all Indians should come together and fight for their freedom with whatever methods and approaches they had before them.

Gandhiji, the well-versed politician, who fought for
the Indians in South-Africa thought it prudently that what methods and weapons he had used in South-Africa would be useful, here, in India, because of the impossibility of the weaponary fight against the British rule. He, therefore, along with the male section of the society began to convince the female section also to come forward and join the Congress to continue the freedom movement on the basis of his famous principles of Non-violence and Satyagraha. The way, he preached the philosophy of Non-violence and Satyagraha, made the people to accept him as the leader.

In a large country like India, where masses are poor and ignorant, no other way but preaching them to stand erect for truth and die even if death comes while protecting truth, was the only alternative. People, including women, naturally felt to follow him and thus commoners, including women, began to feel that they could play their role ably in the freedom movement. Naturally, all those women, who previously puzzled as how they should join the freedom movement without any training of handling weapons and even

6. Gandhiji was in South-Africa for a decade till 1914, in connection with professional work on behalf of a Mohammedan firm. His stay in South-Africa was a formative period of his political life. It was in South-Africa that he put into practice his famous weapon of Satyagraha. In 1906 Asian Registration Act was passed by the Government of South-Africa. The Act required all Asians to register themselves and give their thumb impression. This involved measure of humiliation for the Indians to put with and Gandhiji organised peaceful resistance. He inspired womenfolk including his wife, Kasturba to court arrest and ultimately able to reach a successful settlement with General Smut-Ghose, Shankar., Op.Cit., P.176.
by the lack of weapons, prepared to join freedom movement under Gandhiji’s leadership. It was how Gandhiji became successful to drag masses including women into the freedom movement of India. Rightly, therefore, the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru commented on this role of Gandhiji as follows—

"It was Gandhiji, that wonderful man and great revolutionary, who brought a dramatic change among our women, when at this binding they came out in large numbers from their homes to take part in the struggle for India’s freedom. Once the old shackles were removed it was no longer possible to replace them in the same way, attempts were made to replace them in the same way, attempts were no doubt made, to go back, but they were bound to fail."

Thus, the statement of Nehru is although concerned with women's participation in Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, it had well revealed as to how women were brought by Gandhiji in the struggle for freedom.

In 1920 Ghandhiji declared that there would be Swaraj within one year. Whether such a promise or declaration was to materialise or not, was not important to Gandhiji. What

he wanted was to take the concept of freedom to the commoners in India and awake them to stand for the demand of Swaraj. Because of such a declaration or slogan of Gandhiji all were surprised in the country, as no struggle for freedom in any country achieved freedom within one year. However, people in India, because of that slogan, began to feel that the breeze to secure freedom had been started to come to Indian horizon and they should be prepared to exploit situation. Under the circumstances masses, including women, became inspired to join the struggle for freedom and Gandhiji declared his famous non-cooperation movement in the Nagpur Congress Session in December 1920.

While appealing to women section of the Indian society for joining Non-cooperation Movement Gandhiji told that,

"I expect the women to do their full share in the struggle. Let the Government capture every one of our soldiers. I don't mind. Our work is so easy that even our

10. In the Special Session of the Congress held at Calcutta on 4th September, 1920, the resolution of the non-cooperation movement was passed, though, C.R. Das, B.C. Pal, Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya, Mrs. Annie Besant and Mr. Jinnah opposed it. Then in the annual session of the Congress held at Nagpur Session it was passed. The movement included the programme of the boycott of Councils, Law Courts, non-payment of taxes, opening of the national schools etc. as well as constructive work just as the removal of untouchability, starting of village industries, preparation of Khaddar, and working for rural development etc. Ibid., P. 135, P. 90.
women can carry it without difficulty".

Mahatma Gandhi's inspiration to women was very much fruitful. His movement for freedom was to ask all men to join it without weapons but with determination and courage. This had very expected good result on the women of India and especially, women of Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, in comparison to other provinces of India, freedom movement was quite living than other provinces, before Gandhiji took the leadership of the Congress. What it required was proper guidance to fight for freedom without weapons and to make feel all the sections of our society that freedom was to come to all, irrespective of their religions, castes, or sects. Gandhiji's preaching that freedom is for all made Marathi women inspired and join the freedom struggle.

SATYAGRAHA OF MULSHI (1920-1924):

In Maharashtra, besides the main struggle for freedom, there were some problems for which people wanted to fight for justice and removing insults done to them by the British power. Among such of the problems, was the problem of Mulshi dam project granted to the Tata Company by the British.


It was, according to that, a project on Mulshi river in Poona District, to produce electricity for industrial purpose was to be erected. Alike this project, some other projects at other places in Maharashtra were also granted to the Tata Company. And the Company was to start initially the Mulshi project. As soon as the matter reached to the public in the surrounding area, there was a great resentment against the Government as well as against the Tata Company. Because of that Mulshi project, many farmers were to loose their lands and had to become homeless also. It was, therefore, decided to oppose the erection work of that project and under the leadership of Mr. Vinayakrao Bhuskute and other eminent persons of Poona like Mr. J. S. Karandikar, Mr. S. M. Paranjpe, Dr. Mr. V. D. Phatak, Mr. P. M. Bapat 13 Vasukaka Joshi and others, a Satyagraha was planned to stop that work. The Company had already started the work of 14 the project in the month of September 1920 even though, there was a strong opposition from the peasants and villagers 15 of the project hit to 54 villages. It was, therefore,

decided by the organisers to stop the work by performing Satyagraha on the sight of the project on the 16th April 1921. Accordingly, before the Satyagraha, all preparations were made. A big pendal was erected near the river Mulshi, where Satyagrahis were to assemble at the sight of the project on Mulshi river. Two days earlier, i.e., on the 14th April, of the commencement of Satyagraha Mr. J.S. Karandikar, an assistant editor of the Kesari arrived and a meeting of the Satyagrahis was organised on the same evening. A War Council was established under the chairmanship of Mr. J.S. Karandikar. Batches were formed of Satyagrahis under the leadership of Mr. Bhuskute V.M., Dr. V.D. Phatak, Mr. Bapat P.M., and others. It was thus planned for the Satyagraha.

In the morning of the 16th April 1921, the Satyagrahis, in batches, went to the work sight, knowing fully legal suppressions of their actions of stopping the work. Within half an hour the Satyagrahis became successful to stop the work. But in the afternoon again, the Company started its work and the request of the Satyagrahis was neglected. Satyagrahis, therefore, went again to the sight to request the workers to stop the work. But to the Company officers, it was not acceptable. Some or the other, the Company

officers wanted to carry on the work. They prepared even to prevent the Satyagrahis from coming to the project site and stopping the work. Further the officers used foul means to harrass the Satyagrahis. And as a part of that foul means hot water was poured through hose-pipes on the Satyagrahis. But this did not help the officers as Satyagrahis were determined to bear any consequence and in this way on the first day of Satyagraha, there was a partial success in stopping the work of Mulshi project. On the second day, Satyagraha was again continued and continuously for three days Satyagrahis were making efforts to stop the work on Mulshi dam. During those four days, they met a number of hardships and faced difficulties, but their zeal was unending. It was under those circumstances, the Company felt to negotiate with the Satyagrahis and at the end of the fourth day of the Satyagraha, the leaders of the Satyagraha were invited by the Company for discussion. But both the parties could not come to any decision or compromise and the Satyagraha continued for 15 days. Ultimately, the Company saw, that the work of the erection of the project could not be carried on and hence again negotiations were made successfully and the Company promised to stop the work for six months. Hence, the Satyagraha was stopped on the 1st May 1921 by the Company. But it was not that the project

was given up by the Company.

In the meanwhile the Satyagrahis as well as the Company started their plans of counter actions one way or the other. Both of them, i.e., the Satyagrahis and the Company were firm for their respective decisions to carry on their respective designs. In Poona a meeting was held on the 18th April 1921 and an organisation known as "Satyagraha Sahayyak Mandal" was established under the Chairmanship of Mr. S.M. Paranjpe to help the Mulshi Satyagraha. During the period pamphlets were prepared regarding the Mulshi Satyagraha by Mr. Bapat P.M., another hero of Mulshi Satyagraha and distributed. Mr. Bapat stressed in his pamphlets that people from all over Maharashtra should join the Satyagraha. Mr. Bapat himself with other volunteers toured all over Maharashtra. He delivered speeches in which he asked people to help the Satyagraha by money and men. During his tour Mr. P.M. Bapat stayed in Belgaum for six days and in those six days he had a series of speeches which were so impressive that women of Belgaum came forward to help the Satyagraha. They collected Rs.100 as Mulshi fund and in a special meeting 21 women presented the fund to Mr. P.M. Bapat.

20. Ibid., P.148.
21. Ibid., P.190.
In 1922, the second meeting of the Regional Congress of Maharashtra was held at Pen in Kolaba district, at present in Raigad district, in which a resolution of the support and help to Mulshi Satyagraha was passed. And accordingly, in the same month, the meeting of the Congress of Khandesh district was held in Yaval under the presidency of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. In her presidential speech Naidu stressed the Mulshi problem as the problem of the people of Maharashtra and appealed to all to help the Satyagraha by direct participation or by money.

In the month of June 1922 another attempt was made to popularise the Mulshi Satyagraha. On the 11th June Mulshi Parishad was held in Muzaffarabad Hall in Bombay, where more than 1000 representatives of the various Congress District Committees of Maharashtra and peasants and women of Mulshi were present. In the meeting about forty leaders and workers delivered speeches expressing the nature of injustice done to them and guided for the future course of action.

22. (1) Before 1921 the Congress of Maharashtra was known as the "Bombay Presidency Congress". But in its annual session at Vasai in May 1921 it was designated as the "Regional Congress of Maharashtra"—Ibid., also refer to


One Maratha lady, namely, Mrs. Jaibai Bhoi too delivered a speech in which she stated that injustice done to the people of Mulshi was intolerable and harassment of the Satyagrahis was unlimited. She, therefore, sincerely appealed the people to join the Satyagraha. The resolution was passed in the meeting that all leaders and people should involve and help the Mulshi Satyagraha. In this way efforts were made to get help from all over Maharashtra and as such the Mulshi Satyagraha got support even from the long distances like Yaval in Khandesh District and Belgaum on the Karnataka boundary and other places.

The Satyagraha was again opened on a large scale on the 1st May 1922. On that day, only leaders like Mr. S. M. Paranjpe, Dr. Mr. V. D. Pathak, Mr. J. S. Karandikar, etc., were arrested and tried by the special court which was established in the Tata Company office by the Government and sentenced three to six month's imprisonment. Though the work was not stopped, the Satyagrahis disturbed the work.

On the 9th January 1923 Mr. J. S. Karandikar, President of the War Council published a pamphlet stating that there would be a common Satyagraha on the 23rd January 1923 and

24. Ibid., PP.152-53.
25. Ibid., P.133.
26. Ibid., P.139.
asked the people of Maharashtra to join it. Though Mr. Vinayakrao Bhuskute was prohibited to enter Mulshi by the Government he visited some of the main villages of the Mulshi Peta and prepared people for the proposed Satyagraha and took part in it. The leaders like Mr. Bhuskute, Mr. Dev, Mr. Gore and other participants were arrested. Though the Satyagraha was continued for another year till December 1924, the Company raised the rate of compensation and attracted the peasants. As such the response from the peasants was little day by day and in April 1924 the Satyagraha of Mulshi was stopped by the War Council.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE MULSHI SATYAGRAHA:

The role played by women in the Mulshi Satyagraha was of utmost importance and unprecedented. For the first time, women of Maharashtra in a group, participated in the non-cooperation movement and for the first time were sentenced to imprisonment.

Shrimati Janakibai Ghaisas, though, not actually participated in the Satyagraha, played very important role in the movement. The arrangement of satyagrahis, who came to participate from various places of Mulshi Peta as well as from various parts of Maharashtra, was made properly by her in the Vithal temple of Puad village, near Mulshi. While doing that work, many a times she fell ill and got troubled

27. Ibid., P.171, Appendix III P.218.
28. Ibid., P.170.
29. Ibid., P.215.
but she did not leave the work incomplete. After Mulshi Satyagraha she continued her association with the freedom movement and sentenced to jail.

The actual participation of women in the Mulshi Satyagraha started from the 4th May, 1922, under the leadership of Mrs. Jaibai Bhoi, a common woman of Vaduste village. On that day, she, with some other women came to the place of the dam for satyagraha, when some of the Company people, beat them and even a Pathan tried to treat Jaibai badly. By seeing this, some irritated satyagrahis tried to attack the Pathan but the volunteers stopped them and other labourers ran away. On the next day also Jaibai with other ladies went on the dam sight. On that day there was no beating of the ladies. But two days later, Mrs. Jaibai Bhoi was arrested and tried in the special court, which was set up in the Company office, and sentenced three months' rigorous imprisonment. However, women at Mulshi and other women Satyagrahis, along with other Satyagrahis including volunteers, continued the satyagraha. But no woman arrest was done. Mrs. Jaibai Bhoi with other satyagrahis, who were arrested, kept in the Yervada Jail, Poona. And when Mrs. Jaibai was released with other satyagrahis, Mr. Vinayakrao Bhuskute, with many other people of Poona went to Poona Station to

30. Ibid., P.113.
31. Ibid., PP.143-44.
receive the Satyagrahis. A great procession was arranged in honour of the Satyagrahis which ended in the office of Satyagraha Sahayyak Mandal of Poona, which was placed in the house of Haribhau Phatak.

In the last phase of the movement, which was started on the 23rd January 1923, women from outside of the Mulshi Peta participated in the Satyagraha. Mrs. Saraswatibai Buskute, the wife of Vinayak Rao Bhuskute, with her little baby, and mother-in-law from Poona, Mrs. Annapurnabai Ghare, the wife of Ghareshastri, a friend of Mr. Bhuskute, with her little baby from Chinchvad, Mrs. Parvatibai Parchure and Mrs. Vaishampayan from Chembur, participated in the movement. On that morning, those ladies with 40 volunteers came in a procession to the place where the work of blasting was continued. Mrs. Saraswatibai Bhuskute came forward and sat near the blasting place. As a result of the explosion she got wound on her forehead and the work was stopped. All the Satyagrahis then were arrested and kept in the office of Mamletdar of Paud. On the next day they were taken to Yervada jail, where they were to be checked as other ordinary prisoners. When lady wardens were to check women Satyagrahis, they denied to be checked by saying boldly, that they were not robbers. After fifteen days they were sentenced to a fine of Rs. 50 or in default three months' simple imprisonment and kept with third class prisoners.

32. Ibid., P. 168.
33. Ibid., P. 172.
34. Ibid., PP. 171-72.
During the period of Mulshi Satyagraha 425 Satyagrahis were arrested including the following ladies—

Mrs. Parvatibai Kathi from Hinganghat, Mrs. Satyabhama Govindwar from Wardha, Mrs. Annapurnabai Ghare from Chinchvad, Mrs. Parvatibai Parchure from Sangli, Mrs. Sarswatwabai Bhuskute from Poona, all were participated with their respective husbands, Mrs. Jaibai Bhoi from Vaduste, Mrs. Savitribai Manmadkar from Manmad, Mrs. Janakibai Walimbe from Chembur, Mrs. Shakubai Sondkar, Mrs. Baijabai Sondkar from Walane and mother of Vinayakrao Bhuskute. Thus in all eleven ladies were sentenced to jail. As the Mulshi Satyagraha, being the first experiment of Non-Cooperation in India, Mrs. Jaibai Bhoi was the first woman to sentence jail.

According to Dr. Mrs. Rohini Gavankar, the leader of the women satyagrahis was Dr. Mrs. Indumati Naik. However, the hero of the Mulshi Satyagraha, Mr. Vinayakrao Bhuskute, did not mention the name of Dr. Indumati Naik even as a participant, in his famous book named "Mulshi Satyagraha".

Because of the tense atmosphere in Mulshi and punishments to women satyagrahis sympathy for them was expressed from

35. Ibid., P.244.
36. Ibid., P.245.
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., P.246.
39. Ibid., P.248.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid., P.249.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., Introduction by the author, P.13.
every corner of Maharashtra. As such, women, from Bombay and Poona, visited Mulshi to express their sympathy to the satyagrahis and encouraged the people to continue that satyagraha. However, the arrival and the visit of women of Bombay and Poona was not liked by the officials of the Government as well as by the servants of the Company. In fact, Deputy Superintendent of Poona, namely, Mr. Shinde and his police force treated badly the women of Bombay and Poona. Even then, without losing courage those ladies appealed people of Mulshi to continue the Satyagraha and the Non-cooperation movement. However, as stated earlier the Mulshi Satyagraha was brought to an end in April 1924.

Though the Mulshi Satyagraha was unsuccessful it was in principle not without success. The Tata Company which was to erect not only the Mulshi project, but some other twenty projects at various parts of Sahyadri also, stopped erection of the projects. Further due to the Mulshi Satyagraha, the Company decided to start the work of one project, i.e. the Koyana project but that one was also given up due to the fear of the Satyagrahis. Thus the Mulshi Satyagraha had gone

46. Miss Krishnabai Tulaskar, Principal of Tilak National Girl's School, Bombay, Smt. Sushilabai Kudmal, Superintendent, Seva Sadan, Bombay, Smt. Umabai Kundvar, Secretary, Sarswat Samaj Bombay, Smt. Gangubai Phanse, Nurse, Bombay, and Rukmabai Chitale, Smt. Ramabai Soman, Smt. Ratanbai Labhadaya, Smt. Radhabai Limaye all from Seva Sadan Poona with some other women of Poona visited the Mulshi Satyagraha—Ibid., P.211.

47. Ibid.
as one of the mile-stones in the history of the satyagraha and freedom movement of Maharashtra. In fact, it was, the first experiment of non-cooperation and non-violence struggle in India as stated by Mr. Vinayak Rao Bhuskute.

SIMON COMMISSION AND MARATHI WOMEN:-

The second large scale participation of women in the boycott movement took place in 1928 when the Commission visited India. As Montague-Chelmsford reforms could not satisfy the Indian National Congress and citizens of India, nation-wide non-cooperation movement was commenced. The British Parliament appointed the Simon Commission to see the implementation of the reforms of 1919 and grievances of India against it. The Commission but was consisted of all the British members and not a single member from India was in it. The Indian National Congress, therefore, decided to boycott the Commission, when it would visit to India. A meeting of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress was held on the 15th January 1928 in Bombay to decide the steps to be taken to boycott the Commission. Among the ladies in the Congress Working Committee Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mrs. Annie Besant were present. According to the historians the Simon Commission's visit was a 'direct cause' of a political movement against the British rule.

48. Ibid., P.13.
50. Home Department (Spl.), File No.143(K)-Pt.(a) 173.
to the directives of the Working Committee, a meeting of the Bombay Provincial Committee, was held on 21st January 1928, in which it was decided that students should also co-operate in the proposed boycott. Many students and girls from Bombay participated in the meeting and then in the boycott movement. The Rashtriya Stree Sabha, a leading organisation of women in Bombay also participated in the boycott movement. A public meeting of women was held on 25th January 1928 under the presidentship of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, in which 75 women were present. Speeches were delivered by Miss. Bachubai Lotwala, Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale, Mrs. Ratanben Mehta, as well as Mr. Shaukat Ali, Mr. Vaman Gopal Joshi, Mr. Nimbkar and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, appealing women to help Hartal a success. They also appealed to women to see that male members from their respective houses joined them to boycott the Commission which was about to land in Bombay. Avantikabai Gokhale advised women to refuse to cook food on the day if their men persisted on going to work.

To propagate the proposed Hartal, the Bombay Provincial Committee of the Congress held its meetings with the help of Wardwise district Committees in Bombay. In such meetings, Mrs. Mathurabai Metkar, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mrs. Ratanbai,

51. Ibid., also refer to the Home Department (Spl.), File No. 143(K)-Pt.IV(a).
52. Ibid., File No. 143(K)-pt(a)173.
53. Ibid., File No. 143(K)-pt(a)81-161.
54. The meeting of D ward was held on 28th January 1928., Home Department (Spl.), File No. 143(K)pt.IV(a) 87.
L. Mehta, instigated women through their speeches, to participate in the proposed Hartal on large scale. This made most of the elite women to share responsibility of making the boycott, a great success. Lady representatives from various colleges of the Bombay city, also held a meeting appealing students of the colleges to join the boycott. In the propaganda pamphlet, published by them, they expressed full sympathy to their counterparts, who were taking active part in the proposed boycott. Further they appealed, as other similar organisations, to students for not attending colleges on 3rd February 1928, as well as by enlisting their names as volunteers to make the boycott successful. In their published handbill, they had stated that the student community of male and female students certainly would stand by the side of the patriotic struggle that the Congress proposed to do against the Simon Commission and the British Government.

Accordingly, the Simon Commission was welcomed with black flags by the people of Bombay on the day of its arrival, i.e., on the 3rd February 1928. A strict Hartal was observed in all the parts of the Bombay city. In the afternoon of the same day, a meeting of the students of

55. The meeting of B and C ward was held on 31st January 1928, Home Department (Spl.) File No.143(K)-Pt.III(a)87.
57. Home Department.File No.143(k)-Pt.119.
2)Home Department.(Spl.)File No.143-K Pt.IV(a).
Bombay was held at Sir Cawji Jahangir Hall. Mr. K. F. Nariman presided the meeting where about 2000 citizens, including students, were present. In that meeting, speeches were given by Yusuf J. Meharali, Miss. Bhesania, Miss. Prema Kantak, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and a couple of others and lastly by Mr. Nariman, the president, congratulating the students for taking very bold and active part in the nation's demonstration against the Simon Commission.

Like Bombay in all other parts of Maharashtra, people including women were against the Simon Commission. It is true that accounts of the anti-Simon demonstrations at various places in Maharashtra, although, are not correctly listed in the history of the freedom struggle in India, it is in fact, that there was large scale impact of the Bombay boycott to Simon Commission on Poona and some other district head-quarters. To the Congress party, it was creditable that within a short notice of the Simon Commission's arrival in India, it arranged successfully to boycott the Commission, wherever it went in India, to record Indian opinions about the future course of the British strategy, after the end of the Act of 1919.

58. Ibid.
The Simon Commission was not an happy episode in the history of India's struggle for freedom. It was basically appointed not out of the demands of the Indian people, but out of the British Government's difficulties. In the ensuing elections of Great Britain, there was likelihood of the Liberals coming to power. And the Liberals were in favour of India's demand for freedom. The Conservative party did not like it. It wanted to rule India as before granting no concessions. That Government, therefore, asked the office of the Secretary of State for India to appoint a commission before the new elections in England were held. By that, the British Government of the Conservative party wanted to make its permanent hold over India. They were not in favour of even granting dominion Status to India. To study, therefore, the actual possibilities of the results of handing over power to Indian people, they wanted that, they would get backing from the British people. In the 1919 Act, it was clearly stated that after the period of ten years another Commission would be appointed to study the impact of the working of the Act of 1919 and the maintainance of law and order in India. But as the conservative party coalition Government was not confident to return to the power, they had appointed the Simon Commission.

But when there was large scale protest and boycott in India against it, the Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin was asked to deal with the situation and see, that India would not go to chaotic conditions. Accordingly, when the Commission was facing strong opposition, the Government of India declared, on the 31st October 1929, that to fulfill the suggestions granted by the Commission to the Indian people, they should not declare non-cooperation and boycott against the Government. And to appeal to the people of India, the Viceroy, therefore, assured that opinions of the Indian people would be taken into consideration in the meeting and such a meeting would be held under Ramsay Macdonald, the Prime Minister of England in 1930.

WOMEN IN THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE OF 1930:-

In the Annual Session of the Congress, on 31st December 1929 held at Lahore, ultimatum was given to the British Government for implementing the Nehru report. But no attention was given by the British Government to the ultimatum of the Congress and hence it was decided in Lahore Congress of 1929.

64. Ibid., P.157.
65. The Congress at its Session on 31st December 1928 held at Calcutta accepted the Nehru Report. It demanded Dominion Status for India including 19 fundamental rights. The resolution was passed accordingly and it further stated that if the British Parliament did not accept on or before 31st December 1929, the Congress will organise a campaign of nonviolent non-cooperation movement—Ibid., pp.152-53.
that if the British Government would not accept the request of the Congress, to implement the Nehru report, powers should be given to Mahatma Gandhi for choosing the future course of action against the British. It was thus, that, the British did not implement the Nehru Report and Mahatma Gandhi, gave a call for nation-wide famous Civil Disobedience Movement against the British for non-cooperating the Government. And as one of the programmes of the non-cooperation movement and Civil Disobedience Movement Gandhiji decided the famous Dandi March on the 12th March 1930, to break the Salt Law. Before the Dandi March, Gandhiji made last minute efforts to avert Satyagraha by writing a letter to the Viceroy with his eleven demands like reduction of expenditure, imposition of protective terriff against foreign cloth, abolition of salt-tax, release of political prisoners, conferring on Indians the right to carry firearms and so on, which were not conceded. Secondly, as it was decided in Lahore Congress of 1929, not to the Dominion Status but complete independence was declared as the goal of the Congress and according to it 26th January was celebrated as the day of independence throughout the country.

BOMBAY SALT SATYAGRAHA:-

The Civil Disobedience Movement was started with the salt Satyagraha at Dandi and it was spread all over India. Earlier to that, some students from Poona visited Ville Parle in Bombay Suburban with a view to break the salt law and on the 28th March 1930 that group from Poona students broke the salt law. While such an action of the Poona students was taking place, volunteers from all over Maharashtra went to Bombay for joining the proposed satyagraha as was wished by Mahatma Gandhi. And immediately after the Dandi March of Gandhiji on 6th April 1930, the Civil Disobedience Movement was started by the Congress volunteers in Bombay and at important places of Maharashtra on the 7th April 1930. On the 7th April, it was decided by the Congress leaders of Bombay to break salt law at Mahalaxmi. On that day in the morning, Mr.K.F. Nariman, a youth leader of Bombay led first batch of volunteers to Mahalaxmi, where 20,000 people were present. Salt-water in four pots was boiled for half an hour and salt was prepared against the Salt Act. It was thus, that the Salt Satyagraha as well as the Civil Disobedience Movement were started in Maharashtra. The salt was kept in the Congress House of Bombay for sale, and the sale was to begin

68. Home Department (Spl.), File No.750/39.
69. Ibid., also refer to Chitramaya Jagat-Marathi magazine, May, 1930, an article by Mr. S.D. Jawadekar, P.235.
on the 11th April, but as the police of Bombay somehow learnt of that, they raided the Congress House on the evening of 10th April. The police seized utensils and pans were destroyed amid the passive resistance of women like Mrs. Perin Captain, Mrs. Jamnaben, Ratanben and Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya. Never before such a courage was shown, by women volunteers. The police force also surprised to see women resisting them for the success of Salt Satyagraha. And this was how, heroic role was played by the Marathi women at the opening of the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930.

Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya was one of the most prominent Congress workers of the time and the leading figure in the movement. The salt-satyagraha under her leadership, in Bombay, was proposed on the 17th April 1930. But it could not take place on account of her arrest before a day, i.e. on the 16th April 1930. Soon after her arrest Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya expressed her wish for the fight against the British saying "Carry on the fight until British Imperialism becomes only a dark shadow of the past. India's freedom will open the gates of world freedom." When Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya was presented before the Court for trial, taking little care of the Court, the patriotic lady sold salt in the Court room.

70. Home Department(Spl.), File No.750/39.
and also asked the Magistrate to resign the job and join the Satyagraha army. For this, she was awarded six month's imprisonment and a fine of Rs.150 and for breaching of the salt law, she was sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs.20 or in default 2 weeks' imprisonment. Both the sentences she had to complete consecutively.

WADALA SALT RAID:

Then the Congress workers and the people of Bombay turned their attention to Wadala, a suburban of the Bombay District. Wadala was one of the biggest Salt Works of the Government. In 15 days, i.e. from the 18th May to the 1st June 1930, people raided Wadala Salt Works for six times in which 911 arrests were made and about 170 persons were injured. On the first day about 500 mounds of salt were removed. The last raid which was held on 31st May was the biggest one where 10,000 people were present. Though a large number of police force was there, to control the mob, it was found necessary for the Government to call Indian Infantry. Of course, the latter was not used. In that raid hundreds of mounds of salt were removed. It shows that, how people became fearless as well as how they were eager to get rid of the British imperialism.

74. (1) Home Department(Spl.), C.D.O. Movement 1930, File No. 750 (39) I.
(2) Young India, A Weekly Journal, Vol. XII No. 21, 22 May, 1930, P. 190.
78. Home Department(Spl.), C.D.O. Movement, 1930, File No. 750(39) I.
The incident given in Daily 'Herald' of Bombay throws light on the Courageous and spontaneous participation of people, especially of women in the movement. It had given an account of Wadala salt raid and participation of women in it as follows-

"...One of the raiders carried out her mission with quite dignity, very impressive to behold. It was a woman who emerged from the crowd, climbed through the bared wire and approached the salt mounds and filled her sari with salt as a part of some unknown ritual."

SALT SATYAGRAHA IN THANAJ:-

The main camp of the movement was at Ville Parle. It not only started the breaching of salt-laws, but also established camps at places like Ghansoli, Ghoddev, Mulund, Varsova, Ghatkopar and Chembur and trained the people of the respective areas for the movement. Hundreds of men, women and children took training in those camps.

With such a preparation, the third big salt-satyagraha at Ghansoli in Thana District was performed on the 8th May 1930. Before the starting of the Satyagraha, Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi visited the Ghansoli camp and delivered a public speech at Kalve, near Ghansoli, appealing the people to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. After her speech, Satyagrahis numbered about more than 100 in which a good number of women

79. The Indian Annual Register, Vol. I., P. 119.
including Muslim women, decided to prepare salt. The salt was prepared and packed in small packets. On the 8th May the Satyagrahis took up packets and moved towards the Thana city with victorious slogans as "We breach the Salt Law," "Boycott British goods". Afterwards when the demonstrators came to Vitava near Kalve, about 200 police in four jeeps came there and stopped the procession of the Satyagrahis. First, the police asked them to throw away the packets. But as the volunteers turned a deaf ear, they were severly lathi-charged and the police tried to take off packets from them by force. The Satyagrahis faced the situation very courageously and could not bent before the police force. At last, they moved away with a pinch of salt and continued their march. Though a large number of women participated in the Satyagraha, only names of famous women leaders like that of Yashodabai Kotwal, Sushilabai Nadkarni, Gangubai Mule, Sarswatl Owlekar, Lahanubai Dharadhar and Sushila Tamhane are known to the public and all others are still hidden.

Then 'Bhagini Mandal,' a ladies club, which was established during the movement, at Thana, showed organisational power as well as women's ability and eagerness for the cause. The club helped the cause very much by organising various types of

82. Ibid., P.40.
activities like that of distributing bulletins, supplying meals to political prisoners whenever necessary and actual participation in the Satyagraha. Mrs. Sumatibai Kirtane, the wife of Appasaheb Kirtane, was an eminent personality of the time. She, with the help of Mukundrao Save, another leader from Thana, trained women in using the weapon of Satyagraha. It was she, because of whom a large number of women of Thana participated in the movement. For many years she was the president of the Thana District Congress Committee also.

In addition to Thana Women's participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement, women from surrounding areas like Virar also participated. A camp with that view was held on the 21st December 1930, where more than 100 women were present. Women leaders like Smt. Banutai Deshpande, Sarswatibai Phadake, Gangabai Vaidya, Laxmibai Deodhar, Radhabai Karandikar and others played very decisive role to see women from their area also join the movement.

SELLING OF SALT:

During the Civil Disobedience Movement, the Government of India declared, the act of selling of salt as an illegal and took rigorous steps against those who violated that law.
However, it never affected the Congress volunteers. On the other hand, the volunteers took the opportunity to sell salt in public meetings in Bombay, and women did not lag behind. The incident of the meeting of the 23rd October 1930 proved not only the courageous participation of women in selling of salt but how their act inspired passers by to buy salt and become a patriot also.

On that day, there was a public meeting in Bombay where 10,000 people were present. Eminent women leaders, namely Sarojini Naidu, Avantikabai Gokhale, Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya and Sumatiben Morarjee with other political leaders sold contraband salt to the public. While selling the salt, they shouted "We have broken the salt-law and we are free", "Who will buy the salt of freedom?", "Don't you want to buy the salt of freedom?". The cries of the women satyagrahis never went in vain. Every one who was going along the road was tempted to buy salt from the women Satyagrahis. Thus, the salt law breakers were increased by the women Satyagrahais. They also appealed to the rich people. They went in big markets in Bombay, like the Cotton Market, the Gold Bullion Market, and auctioned their salt for fabulous sums. Once, a tiny packet of salt fetched as much as Rs.10,000. Once they went to the High Court of Bombay and sold salt to the

87. Home Department(Spl.), File No.750 (39),V.
High Court of Bombay and to the High Court Lawyers. They even persuaded judges to buy illegal salt. Thus the rich and poor, men and women were drawn into this mighty struggle by women Satyagrahis until the prisons of India were over flowed.

**IN PICKETING CAMPAIGN:**

Perhaps, the most vital, though not so drastic as salt or forest campaign in the Civil Disobedience movement, was the picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor shops, where a large number of women participated. From the 7th June 1930, the picketing of liquor shops became more severe as drink had always been regarded censure in India both by Hindus and Muslims alike. Drinking was regarded as vice and had no traditional recognition.

Since, the 12th June 1930 picketing of various liquor shops was carried on, which continued for a week. It seems that from the 16th onwards the Government started arresting the picketers and fifty one Satyagrahis were arrested and sentenced to four months rigorous imprisonment. On the very next day, i.e. on 17th June, another twenty five arrests were made. The volunteers went to the customers and tried to stop them from drinking and women were much ahead requesting customers for not buying liquor. They insisted upon the customers that liquor was responsible for personal as well as family ruin. Further, women pleaded that the liquor shopkeepers were

90. *Home Department (Spl.), File No.750(39)V.*
responsible for family disturbance and while picketing they prayed customers, "Don't be a traitor to your conscience and your people and become accused as destroyer of homes."

The picketing became successful as the Government revenue derived from liquor sales dwindled. In cities and villages where unrestricted sale of liquor, women prevailed upon public organisations and charities, to supply milk and fruit drinks to the merry-makers.

The auction of liquor licences was also picketed by women. The working and intensity of picketing of auction sales of liquor shops in Thana as mentioned in the "Thana Swatantrya Andolana" correctly gives gravity of situation as follows:

"On the 11th, 12th and 13th February 1931, there were auction sales of liquor shops in the Collector's office. The Satyagrahis of Virar decided to have picketing before the office on the 11th February. And accordingly picketing was started in which there were about 70-80 women picketers with Mrs. Lukamani and other leaders. The women Satyagrahis requested people who came to take part in the auction sales not to enter the office. But it was of no use and there was auction of two to three shops on that day.

92. Ibid.
On the next day then picketing was started from 8.00 a.m. in the morning with a view that nobody should enter the office in morning times. One Parsi shopkeeper was going inside when a woman picketer as a mark of respect touched the feet of that man and requested him not to go in the office for purchasing liquor shop. But that man kicked that lady satyagrahi and he went in the Collector's Office carelessly. Outside the office it was seen that woman satyagrahi was wounded and people around her made a huge cry. Naturally, a big crowd assembled there and on account of that the auction sale of liquor shop could not be taken place.

On the third day, the same story was repeated. Even on requests one Parsi woman was not ready to stop going inside the office. So, the Satyagrahis fell down on the way to office and asked her to go walking on their bodies. The woman was ready to go, but the men accompanied her stopped her from doing so. And on that day, also no auction sale of liquor took place. In this way the satyagrahis succeeded in stopping the auction sale.

**IN PICKETING OF FOREIGN CLOTH SHOPS:**

In the movement, like picketing of liquor shops, women of Bombay participated on a large scale in picketing of foreign cloth shops in October 1930. On the 18th and 19th October,

women picketed shops in the Crowford Market, Bombay. One of the owners of foreign cloth-shop near the market, complained against them to the police. As a result of it, 32 picketers were arrested. People of the area then demonstrated against the arrest of the Satyagrahis, though they were dispersed twice by the police. Women, like Jaishri Raijee, Hansa Mehta, Perin Captain, Lilavati Munshi, Jotiben Captain, Maniben Patel, Dave sisters, Mhatre sisters of Bombay and Mrs.Bhide from Poona were at the top of the picketing business. They marched to the dealers' depots of foreign cloth market in Bombay and persuaded them to abandon that trade which impoverished the country.

Though, the method of picketing seemed simple, picketing of shops was not an easy task. Many a time, women had to listen harsh words and abuses from the shop owners. But instead of submitting to such an attitude, of the shop owners, they pasted posters at the shop entrances and persuaded customers, by way of traditional salute of folding hands, for not buying foreign clothes. Picketing of foreign cloth shops by women was continued on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th October 1930, in Bombay, including the Fort area. Fortunately some of the merchants cooperated and supported them as they hoisted the

94. Home Department(Spl.), C.D.O. 1930, File No. 750(39)v.
96. Ibid.
Congress flag at their shops in the Divali Festival of October 22nd 1930, instead of traditional light lamps as a mark of Divali celebration. On that day, a procession was taken to Esplanade Maidan, where a meeting of about 200 women took place to decide the future course of action and propaganda.

The picketing of foreign cloth shops by women was so fruitful that the dealers of the foreign cloth placed their entire stock of foreign cloth under the seal of the Congress.

While women participants engaged in picketing of foreign cloth shops, women of Rashtriya Stree Sabha, the ladies organisation of Bombay, launched an intensive campaign of Swadeshi, throughout the city of Bombay. Women of the organisation paid house to house visits and collected signatures for the pledge of Swadeshi. The organisation made efforts to mobilize support for the picketing movement and a scheme of picketing was planned. An advertisement was published in the newspapers, requesting women to enlist their names for the movement on a large scale. The advertisement, shows that 25,000 women were needed for picketing of 500 liquor-shops in Bombay at the rate of 4 women in two shifts for two hours a day. Another 200 women as reserved were needed for...

97. Home Department (Spl.), C.D.O. 1930, File No. 750(39)V.
98. Young India, weekly, Ahmedabad Vol. XII No. 26, June, 1930.
99. The Times of India, 24th March, 1930.
regular picketing. This was how, systematically women had played their role in that Great Movement even though, they were very badly treated by the evil laws of the Government.

REVIVAL OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND MARATHI WOMEN:

However, when women and all others were engaged in carrying on the Civil Disobedience Movement, Gandhi-Irwin pact was signed on the 5th March 1931 and Gandhiji withdrew the movement. But the pact could not last long, for, the terms and conditions of it were not implemented as wished by the Congress. The Second Round Table Conference, to which Gandhiji was present, proved to be in vain. Gandhiji, therefore, after coming from England gave again the call of Civil Disobedience Movement as before, but in more severe way. And picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor-shops was again started by women. In a message to the nation of the 3rd January, 1932, Mahatma Gandhi summoned the people to face "a fiery and cordial" without malices, hatred or violence. On the 4th January, 1932, the Government arrested Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the President of the Indian National Congress. Soon other members of the Working Committee of the Congress and leaders in the country were arrested. The Viceroy wanted to crush down the movement within six weeks, but in spite of his harsh measures of repression the movement

100. The Bombay Chronicle, 30th April 1930.

went on till August 1932. As Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, the Prime 
Minister of England, declared the famous Communal Award on 
the 16th August 1932, the leaders were engaged with the 
Communal Award and the movement was as would as stopped. 
But from the Government records it seems that the Civil 
Disobedience Movement in Bombay continued till November 1932.

About a week before the declaration of the Civil 
Disobedience Movement by Gandhiji, i.e., on the 31st December, 
1931, Bombay opened the movement. On that day 146 Congress 
volunteers, all men, in Bombay picketed 94 toddy and liquor 
shops.

During the Civil Disobedience movement, systematic efforts 
were made to make the movement a success. The Bombay Provincial 
Congress Committee arranged training of picketing for women 
Congress volunteers. And 127 women Congress volunteers in 
batches attended the training during three days, i.e., from 
2nd January to 4th January, 1932, at Central Training Camp, 
Congress House and Madhav Bagh in Bombay.

102. Ibid., P.235., also refer to Gokhale, Baburao., Op.Cit., 
P.153.
Pt.10.
104. Ibid., File No.800(72)
105. Ibid.
Like the training of the technique of picketing, the Bombay Provincial Congress held many public meetings to popularise the movement and to ask them to join the movement on a large scale. Some of the meetings were held as follows—

On the 5th January, 1932, two meetings were held in Bombay in which women in hundreds were present. A public meeting was held on Esplanade Maidan regarding the repressive measures of the Government even in celebrating birth-day of the national leaders like Gandhiji. About 7000 to 8000 people including about 800 women were present. Notable ladies present were Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi, Miss Maniben Patel, Mrs. Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya, Mrs. Goshesp Captain and Mrs. Privat. Mrs. Captain made speech welcoming the repressive measures and asking the public to carry out the Congress programme successfully.

The second meeting was held by the Emergency Council at Chowpatty in the same evening in order to condemn the arrest of Babu Rajendra Prasad. About 2000 persons including 200 women were present. As soon as the meeting was over the police arrested 48 persons including 7 women, namely, Mrs. Lilavati K. Munshi, Mrs. Lilavati Hansotti, Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale, Miss. Dilshad Sayyed, Mrs. Yamunabai Ghodekar, Mrs. Shantabai Vengaskar, and Mrs. Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya.

106. Ibid., also refer to File No. 800(72) pt. 6.
107. Ibid., File No. 800(72)
Three other meetings were held on the 9th and 11th January, 1932, in Bombay to initiate people to boycott of British goods and to join the movement. The first meeting was held in the night at Mangaldas Road, Bombay, where about 100 persons were present. Two women, namely, Mrs. Shantabai Parkar and Miss Gulab Parkar with others delivered speeches advising the audience to boycott British goods and help the picketing movement of the Congress. Five Congress people were arrested.

The second meeting was held on the same day at Chowpaty. About 500 persons including 20 women attended. It was stressed in the meeting that people should respond to the call of the Congress and should share in the efforts of the Congress to make struggle against the British a success. Eight persons were arrested.

On the 11th January, again, a public meeting was held at Chowpaty where a large number of persons including women were present. In this meeting 40 persons including 20 women, out of thirty-two were present, were arrested and sentenced rigorous imprisonment. From this it is clear that the effective participation of women in the movement made the Government to feel necessary to give attention towards women. In order to stop them entering the movement, the Government even sentenced

108. Ibid.
them to rigorous imprisonment for simply attending the meetings.

During the period, the Bombay Provincial Congress as well as women of Bombay concentrated on the foreign cloth shops. In the months of January, February, March and April, 1932, women on large scale picketed almost all the foreign cloth shops in various places in Bombay like Hornby Road, Esplanade Road, Hammum Street and Bohara Bazar, Musjid Bandar Road and Chakla Street, Mangaldas Market, Mulji Jetha Market, Chira Bazar, Charni Road, Kazí Bazar etc. Shops in those areas were picketed many a times under the leadership of women like Mrs. Indumati Atmaram Jadhav, Miss Chandrabai Ramji Jadhav, Mrs. Gajarabai Srinath, Sarswatibai Anaji, Mrs. Javeribai Jamandas and others. They, all were arrested and sentenced 3 to 6 months' rigorous imprisonment. In those four months there were 2736 men arrests and 996 women arrests were made in Bombay city only and sentenced rigorous imprisonment.

Like picketing of foreign cloth shops, programmes of picketing of liquor shops and even banks like the National Bank, Mercantile Bank, Eastern Bank were undertaken under the leadership of women like Miss Mamalabai Tipnis, Mrs. Amrit Kaur, Mrs. Hansa Mehta, Miss Sofia Somji, Mrs. Goshesp Captain and others. While picketing before the banks they shouted a slogan as "to send the exploiters away".

109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
   3. Ibid., File No. 800(72) pt. 1932.
112. Home Department, File No. 800(72) pt. 1932 also refer to File No. 800(72) pt. I.
Endless groups of women were arrested and assaulted in front of foreign shop-owners. To see them, thus, insulted by the police, the shop keepers stopped opening their shops. And as Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya told, "One fine morning a city awoke to find foreign cloth market closed." The Government mandated by this prospect. As a result, the closing of shop was declared as an offence. Police made compulsory for shop-keepers to open their shops and those who were unwilling to open the shops, were arrested along with the picketers.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932, two programmes were undertaken by the Bombay Provincial Committee to popularise the movement and the use of Swadeshi in which women of Bombay participated. The first programme was the celebration of the National Week from 6th April to 13th April, 1932, was sponsored by the All India Congress Committee and it was to be observed all over the country. The Bombay Provincial Congress Committee made some changes as the first day was observed as "Ladies Day" instead of the Gandhi Day. Various programmes like flag salutation, processions, meetings, opening of Swadeshi Shops etc., were arranged.

Early in the morning of the opening day of the National week, i.e., on the 6th April, 1932, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the acting president of the Emergency Council of Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, accompanied by Mr. V. A. Desai, went to Mulji Jetha Market and performed opening ceremony of three Swadeshi shops in Sancha Galli, Dharam Raj Galli and Office Galli. About 250 persons including 40 Desh Sevikas attended the ceremony.

In the evening of the same day, ladies meeting was held at Tamba Kanta Maidan where inspite of women about 2000 persons from all sides of Tamba Kanta Maidan were present. Mrs. Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya was to address the meeting and as soon as she came people welcomed her spontaneously by shouting slogans as "Boycott British Goods", and "Vande Mataram". The police arrested Mrs. Kamla Devi with seven other Desh Sevikas, namely, Mrs. Vidyabai Bruza, Mrs. Shantabai Paudval, Mrs. Shantabai Nandlal, Mrs. Mahalaxmibai Viharilal, Mrs. Kamladevi Vora, Mrs. Dodabai Javeri, and Mrs. Laxmibai Giridhar Lal.

The second programme, i.e., the Swadeshi League was observed from 5th September to 13th September 1932. During the week various programmes like hawking of Khaddar, selling of Swadeshi stamps, public processions, moving lorry exhibitions of Swadeshi goods, etc., were arranged. The fifth

116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
day was celebrated as "Ladies Day" in which ladies Swadeshi Bazaar and Fancy Dress Carnival was arranged and a large number of women participated in it. On the next day which was celebrated as "Kamal Dal Day", i.e., lotus day, women participated in various activities like selling of Kamals, presenting Kamals to purely Swadeshi shops, Hawking Khaddar, and Swadeshi goods etc.

The activities of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee inspired the youth also. In the month of October 1932 the Bombay Students' Social League came forward on the 26th October, the organisation opened a Swadeshi exhibition at Rambagh near C.P. Tank, Bombay. Mrs. Swaroop Rani Motilal Nehru inaugurated the exhibition when about 300 persons including 100 women were present. Mrs. Swaroop Rani Motilal Nehru and Jamnadas Mehta delivered speeches insisting that people should take Swadeshi by not only excluding British goods but all foreign articles.

IMPACT OF THE GOVERNMENT MEASURES:

During the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 and 1932, the Government tried its level best to suppress the movement in the name of law and order. As a result, suppression became the order of the day. Like men, women had to face lathi-charge, kicking in the abdomen, pulling by their hair etc.

118. Home Department, File No.800(7a) Pt.-3.
119. The president of the Bombay students' Social League was Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and Miss Sarla Munshi and Mr. Shaukat Raval were the Secretaries— Ibid.
120. Home Department File No.800(72) Pt.9, Oct.1932.
The accounts of the weekly news of young India proves that how the atrocities by police became common and how there was no rule of law in many parts of the country. Writing about the situation in Bombay the young India stated thus-

"We are under the rules of the lathi, kicking women in the abdomen is worthy of prowess of the knights of the crusade who turn in their graves at the doings of their worthy successors who aim at maintaining stability of society by such deeds," But even then the women of Bombay had shown such courage and devotion to the cause that very few of their sisters elsewhere could surpass.

Long processions, even a mile long, were held in Bombay by the people of the Parsi and Muslim communities through the important localities of Bombay in protest of the Lathi Raj, i.e., the atrocities of the police. The Bombay Corporation was also adjourned twice in the protest of the police action.

The atrocities done by the police were such that they not only irritated Indian people but Britishers also. One eminent woman, namely, Miss Dickonson, who was nominated by

121. Young India, Vol.XII No.24 of 12 June, 1930 P.25 and No.26 of 26 June 1930 of the same volume, BP.272,281.
122. Ibid., Vol.XII, No.26, 26 June, 1930, P.272.
123. Ibid.
125. Ibid., Vol.XII No.26, June 1930, P.281.
the Government to the Bombay Legislative Council had resigned her seat as a mark of her protest against the Government repression. She even renounced the Kaisar-i-Hind gold medal. Though the Government adopted repressive measures the movement was in full swing. On the other hand many more men and women came forward to join the movement. Mrs. Namla Devi Chattopadhyaya described the situation as follows:

"The Government measures to harass the Satyagrahis and the declaration of picketing as illegal, in fact, only added to fire the campaign! Thus the Government measures not only failed in attaining their aim of crushing the Civil Disobedience Movement but also helped to cement the Satyagrahis and others who were till then merely onlookers and thus intensified national feeling and gave impetus to the movement.

**IN THE JUNGLE SATYAGRAHA:**

The Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, was opened in cities and coastal areas in the form of Salt-Satyagraha, picketing, morning processions, or Prabhat Peris and in villages in the form of Jungle Satyagrahas. The Government Reports show that the disobedience in the forest laws assumed an aggressive and on certain occasions violent forms.

in many parts of the Presidency. Both men and women joined hand in hand in the jungle satyagrahas. On the 9th May, 1930 the meeting of Maharashtra Civil Disobedience Committee was held at Ville Parle in which the programme of the Jungle Satyagraha was discussed. Before that, the Congress Committee sought information regarding the places suitable for the Jungle Satyagraha. In that meeting a Committee of four persons, namely Mr. Ramkrishna Maharaj, Mr. S. S. Navare, Dr. Krishnarao Antrolikar and Mr. Govindrao Deshpande was formed to look after the satyagraha. At the same time, it was decided that the main centre of the satyagraha would be at Sangamner in Ahmednagar district. The programme of the Jungle satyagraha was carried on as follows:

Mass meetings were held in various parts of Maharashtra, urging people to cut down trees and grass, to graze cattle in closed forest, to refuse to purchase meadows i.e., grazing lands, not to pay grazing fees and assessment on forest lands given out for cultivation and not to help Government servants in any way. The spirit of lawlessness was preached far and wide and everything done to create in the minds of villagers that forest laws could be broken with impunity. Mass satyagrahas were organised at some places and the leaders and their followers despite of all attempts of control by local forest Revenue and police officers, entered the forest and committed one offence or another against the law.

The incidents of jungle satyagraha in the Nasik, Thana and Khandesh districts and places like Tambave, Bilashi, in Satara district show the courageous behaviour of the people against the suppression of the British rule. People attacked the range forest officers and paralysed the administration. As a result the Government directed by the resolution dated 8th August 1930 that in dealing with agitators use of provision of Section 109, Criminal Procedure Code should be used.

Below are the accounts of some important Jungle Satyagrahas in which a large number of people including women participated.

**SATYAGRAHA IN SANGAMNER:**

The Jungle Satyagraha of Maharashtra started on the 22nd May 1930 by the Satyagraha at Sangamner. On that day a camp of volunteers was opened by hoisting the Congress flag. A large number of people including many women of Sangamner were present for the ceremony. Three days later, i.e., on the 25th May, a big crowd of about 10,000 including women participated in jungle satyagraha near Sangamner.

**IN BAGLAN TALUKA:**

The Jungle Satyagraha in Baglan Taluka of Nasik district was started on the 23rd June 1930, by opening the first camp of volunteers in Nampur village. Within a short period, 16 such

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131. Home Department, Jungle Satyagraha-1930-31, File No.750(38)-A
132. Ibid., File Nos.750(29), Pt.-I and 750(38)A.
134. Home Department, Jungle Satyagraha-1930-31, Daily Reports, File No.750(39)II.
camps were opened in the Taluka and volunteers of the camps propagated to refuse to pay the grazing fees to the Government. In this way, the taluka of Baglan opened its Civil Disobedience Movement and played its role in the freedom struggle.

But the actual jungle Satyagraha took place on the 5th August, 1930, on the Mangi-Tungi hill at Bhilwad. It was the biggest satyagraha in which about 1,00,000 peasants including more than 2,000 women participated. On that day, the thousands of awakened people from various villages of the Baglan Taluka gathered on the hill of Mangi-Tungi. Dadasaheb Gadre, the Congress leader of Nasik, opened the movement by cutting the grass, which followed then by thousands of people. Though, the Deputy Superintendent of Police with his police force was present, due to the large number of participants, he could not do anything against the satyagrahis.

Some villagers then in the Baglan Taluka refused to pay the grazing fees. Of these, the two villages, namely, Chirai and Tembhe opposed strongly. So raid was undertaken on the 13th October 1930 on Chirai. The raiding party reached Chirai at about 9.15 a.m., when villagers refused to pay the fees. The case was therefore tried by the Magistrate in the Chavadi of Chirai and the accused pleaded guilty. A sentence of 3 months' rigorous imprisonment was passed against the four of the accused who were present. When the raiding party together

with the Magistrate and the arrested persons were on their way to the police station, the whole village of Chirai started to go with them including 100 women. Naturally, it became difficult for police to use force against them as those women surrounded the accused in order to prevent them taking to the police station. Lastly, due to heavy police force the efforts proved in vain.

As there were severe Jungle Satyagrahas in the Taluka, the Government soon took up the aggressive measures to crush the movement. The police arrested prominent leaders like Dadasaheb Gadre and others as well as camps of volunteers were destroyed. The police entered in many houses of the Baglan Taluka and lathi-charged the people in which women of Satana also became the prey of the police.

IN SATARA DISTRICT:

At Tambave, a hilly region in Karad taluka of the Satara district, people launched a jungle satyagraha, where a large number of village women participated. In the Satyagraha, villagers attacked two Range Forest Officers with some guards and constables who were raiding Tambave village forest. Some women, especially, Chandrabai Babar and Tanubai Harba Babar came forward and seized weapons from the jungle officers. They snatched the barrel of Ranger's gun and an axe from a

guard and two lathis from the constables. On account of that they were arrested and sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment. The incident shows that how women not only from cities but from villages also became courageous and awakened of the suppression of the British rule.

In Bilashi, both zenda, i.e., flag satyagraha and jungle satyagraha were performed simultaneously. At the instance of Maharashtra Civil Disobedience Committee, preparations were being made for jungle satyagraha in Charan-Bilashi region. From the account of the Kesari, it seems that the people in round-about area had boycotted the auction sales of grazing fields reserved in forests and non-cooperated with the Government officials and police. Next step was, then taken of actual satyagraha, which took place on, the 18th July 1930. On that day people brought a teak wood rod of 34 feet high from the jungle and fixed it up, on the top of the Mahadev temple and hoisted a trio-colour flag. The police patil, Mr. Laxman Patil, complained against the proposed jungle satyagraha to the police. Accordingly, the police force arrived at Charan-Bilashi and found a large number of people including many women and children protecting the flag. Both the parties, i.e., the police and the public made that issue of prestige point and compromise did not arrive between them. It was under the circumstances shri. Bankat Sing, the


Police Sub-Inspector of Shirala, while reporting the case in his letter dated 22nd August 1930 described the zenda Satyagraha as "revolt of Bilashi."

On the 28th August, again about 1000 people from Charan-Bilashi and surrounding areas performed satyagraha peacefully. The Government decided to crush the satyagraha and a large force of police under Mr. Amin-ud-din, the District Collector, reached at Shirala on the 5th September 1930. Next day early in the morning the police force reached at Bilashi and started beating men and women alike indiscriminately, who were protecting the flag. The camp of Satyagrahis was broken up and the crowd was dispersed. Several leaders with satyagrahis were arrested. One woman, namely, Raju Kadam showed unprecedented courage. She embraced the flag and bitterly opposed the police and could not leave the flag for a long time. At last the police dragged her away and dishonoured the flag. In that satyagraha about 50 women were arrested.

IN KHANDESH DISTRICT:-

Next to Baglan taluka, jungle satyagrahas were performed on a large scale in various villages of the east and the west Khandesh districts. The Civil Disobedience Committee selected the places in West Khandesh for satyagraha and on the 17th August 1930, the first jungle satyagraha in the district was

140. 1. Home Department, Jungle Satyagraha 1930-31, File No. 750(39)IV.

performed in a village, namely Diwalmal in the Sakri Taluka. In that satyagraha about 25,000 people including women and children in hundreds participated.

On the 27th August 1930, there was a big satyagraha at the village Lalinga in the Dhulia taluka, where about 3,000 peasants were present. After three days, i.e., on the 31st August, another big jungle satyagraha near Jayantnagar of Shahade Taluka was performed where about 25,000 people of which about 8250 women were present. Due to such successful satyagrahas the police started to arrest people in the district on a large scale. As such, though the big satyagrahas were stopped the volunteers in the batches of ten or more performed the satyagrahas in the villages like Kudwad, Pattepur, Kondaval, Tarhali, Bhilarwadi, Mhasadi, Dangurane and other villages of the Shahade, Nāndūrbar and Sindkhed Talukas and kept the movement alive.

IN KOLABA DISTRICT:-

On the 18th September 1930 the famous jungle satyagraha of Chirner in the Panvel Taluka was performed on a large scale. During the satyagraha, the police opened firing in which many injured and the Mamaltdar, who was chief Revenu Officer and

144. Ibid., also refer to Home Department, Jungle Satyagraha, 1930-31. Daily Reports File No.750(39)-IV.
magistrate and one forest guard had been killed. A batch of Desh Sevikas of Panavel under the leadership of Miss Vimalabai Gupte went to Chirner to help the satyagrahis and when the Mamaltdar was injured, Miss Vimalabai Gupte with her one of the colleagues tried to help him. They brought water and poured it in his mouth but soon after that Mamaltdar died. Like the Satyagrahas mentioned above, there were many more satyagrahas in villages of the districts of East Khandesh, West, Khandesh, Thana and Nasik were performed successfully.

In the Civil Disobedience Movement, thus women from all parts of Marathi land played their role as patriots and shared the struggle for India's freedom equal to men. In comparison to men even if their number was small, the courage and enthusiasm that they had showed in all these Satyagrahas had no precedent. Women from villages, illiterate and poor, never before dared to oppose the British police and magistrates as the women of Satara and Nasik did.

146. Home Department, File No.750(39)IV, 1930, Daily Reports.
148. Home Department, File No.750(39)IV
149. Ibid., File No.750(39) IV, 1930, Daily Reports
150. Ibid., File No.750(39)-A.
151. Ibid., File No.750(39)I, 1930, Daily Reports. also refer to file No.750(14)-K.
In the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 and 1932, many women in Maharashtra played their heroic roles in the Satyagrahas, just as the satyagraha of breaking salt-law, picketing of the foreign cloth shops, jungle satyagraha and others. It is true again that common women and women from villages contributed richly to the struggle for freedom by their active participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement. But it was not sudden that a large number of women prepared to join the movement. To prepare them and to create a spirit of freedom among women, many women leaders had devoted their lives and even directly taken active parts in the movement. Information there of some eminent women leaders and their contribution is given below—

SHANTABAIVENGASKAR (1887-1956):

Shantabai Vengaskar was one of the prominent women leaders during the Civil Disobedience Movement. Though, details of her are not available, some sort of information, published in some old Marathi magazines reveal that she came from a well-to-do family and started her activities in 1929, when she was forty years old. By that time Gandhiji toured all over India to popularise the proposed Civil Disobedience Movement and as a part of it he delivered a lecture in the Congress House of Bombay. Jmt. Shantabai with some other women attended that meeting and was much impressed by the appeal of Gandhiji for joining the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Shantabai, as a result of Gandhiji's message, enrolled her name in the Desh Sevika Sangh of the Civil Disobedience Movement. She did a remarkable work with the help of Mrs. Perin Captain. Shantabai soon established the "Hindu Stree Sanghatan Club" to propagate the Congress movement among the ladies. The 'Club' undertook many useful activities like spinning, hawking of khaddar, enlisting Congress members etc. She worked then as the Vice-President of the Dadar Congress Committee for about four years from 1931.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement, Shantabai Vengaskar organised morning processions and flag hoisting programmes in Dadar. She also used to undertake, picketing for eight to ten hours, mainly in the Muslim crowded area in Bombay like the Crowford Market, Mohammad Ali Road and Bhendi Bazar. In the movement's time about 500 students of the Chhabildas Lalloobhai Boys' High School in Dadar went on a protest, on the 28th July, 1930, against the Head Master's action of removing the national flag hoisted by them. And in the evening of that day a public meeting in support of the boys and against the action of that Head Master was held at Tailak Bridge. About 500 students were present to that meeting. Mr.T.R. Naravane presided the meeting. In that meeting, alongwith, other speakers like G.S. Kanti and other student leaders Shantabai insisted upon the students, that

153. Ibid.
unless the flag was rehoisted they should not attend the school and remain firm on their stand. She was thus very active lady. In the course of, Civil Disobedience Movement, she was sentenced to six months' imprisonment in 1931 for participating in picketing and in 1941 for the second time, when she performed the individual satyagraha in Bombay.

RADHABAI APTE (1898-1986):

Radhabai Apte, the wife of well known Gandhian, Mr. Pandurang Shridhar Apte, was another eminent woman who devoted her life for the nation's cause.

Born in 1898 at Poona, Radhabai was educated in the girls school in Poona known as "Huzur Paga." At an early young days, when she was studying in the VIIth standard, her marriage was arranged on the 4th February, 1915, with Mr. Apte P.S. of Nasik. At that time Mr. Apte P.S. was studying his first LL.B. at Nagpur. After marriage, as per

156. Mr. Apte Pandurang Shridhar (1887 to 1956) was well known as "Apte Guruji". He served in the National School of Yaval since 1921. He was a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi and did great service for the nation. In 1923 he participated in the Mulshi Satyagraha for which he was sentenced four months' imprisonment. During the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932 as per the Government policy to arrest eminent Congress workers, Mr. Apte P.S. along with four other teachers, was arrested and sentenced two years' rigorous imprisonment. After the release he again joined his service. He died on 19th December 1956, - See for details Apte Radhabai., Umatleli Paule (Marathi) Sadhana Press, Pune, 1961.
the wish of her father-in-law, Mr. Shridhar Apte, who was retired railway officer, Radhabai started her education at Huzur Paga. But she could not complete her education as Mr. Apte P.S. joined the service in Akkalkot as the Head Master, and Radhabai had to join him. After some time Mr. Apte left the service and again joined his LL.B. at Nagpur. And Radhabai instead of completing her matriculation joined the nursing course at Seva Sadan, Poona which she completed in 1918. Though, Mr. Apte completed his LL.B., he told his father that he wanted to devote his life for the nation's cause. In 1921, he joined the service in the National School of Yaval in Nasik district. Then onwards Yaval became the field work of both Mr. Apte P.S. and his wife Radhabai Apte.

**VANITA SANGHA AND RADHABAI APTE:**

Radhabai did a good deal of work for the freedom movement of India. Local ladies in Yaval of Jalgaon district established Vanita Sangha, a ladies club, just before Radhabai shifted there but within no time she became the main pillar of that organisation. Because of her, the organisation sponsored various activities including social

157. Ibid., P.46.
and political. It also started an adult education class for women. Members of the club undertook the work of cleanliness in the backward class areas and propagated importance of cleanliness among them. Various social issues were discussed in the common meetings of the club. Another contribution worth mentioning of the organisation was an effort of creating spirit of nationalism among school boys and girls. Accordingly, the organisation arranged lectures of eminent persons on national topics. They started celebrating birth-anniversaries of national heroes and Ganesh festival. The teachers of the national school, at Yaval, also, joined in the activities. Besides, all these activities Radhabai did Kirtanas as she was a good Kirtankar. Through Kirtanas she kept political movement alive in Yaval. The ladies of Yaval, also then took the benefit of Radhabai's guidance and carried on, successfully, the programmes of the Congress.

The Vanita Sangha of Radhabai did help on a large scale to propagate Swadeshi in Yaval and in the surrounding villages. For this, they used yearly celebration of religious festival of the goddess "Kottam". The festival was to last for nine days. In that festival under the guidance of Radhabai funds were raised to start a Swadeshi shop. In that shop, Swadeshi articles like toys of clay and wood, paintings, Swadeshi bangles etc. were kept. Each and every woman came to the festival was stopped by these ladies and compelled to

159. Ibid., P.141.
purchase at least two bangles from their shops. In this way, the ladies organisation popularised Gandhi's call of Swadeshi in villages through the medium of festival and Radhabai played a very creative role in it.

**ACTUAL CONTRIBUTION OF RADHABAI**

In 1932, Apte P.S., the husband of Radhabai and her husband's friend, Mr. Vaishampayan were arrested. After their arrest, workers in the Congress of Yaval decided to work under the leadership of Radhabai and declared her as a dictator of the Congress of Yaval. But soon after, she with her sixteen male colleagues were arrested and sentenced to four months' imprisonment. She was kept in the jail of Dhulia. She met there, about 70 political prisoners. Yashodabai Bhat, from Bombay, Gangubai Potadar, from Dhulia, and Shantabai Kale from Wardha, were notable among those to whom she met and made contacts. All the women Political prisoners including Radhabai made complaints against the bad condition in the jail and for separate bathroom to women but no attention was given by the authorities. Thus, although, it was in vain, she kept the spirit of Satyagraha alive in the jail.


161. During the Civil Disobedience Movement, the head of the local Congress was called as dictator and many women of Maharashtra held that position.—Dev, S.D., *Op. Cit.*, p.22.

In 1936, for the first time, the Annual Session of the Indian National Congress was held in a village. It was in Faizpur, in the East Khandesh district of the Bombay Presidency. Shankarrao Dev, a staunch follower of Gandhi and one of the eminent Congress workers from Maharashtra had taken the responsibility to arrange the Congress Session and made it a success. As a part of his responsibility, he asked Radhabai Apte for collecting lady volunteers and shoulder the responsibility of serving the delegates. As such, Radhabai collected 10 to 12 lady volunteers from Yaval village and attended the Session.

Besides her political contribution, Radhabai worked for the social upliftment of Yaval. Due to her services of nursing and participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement, she was then nominated as the lady representative in the Municipality of Yaval in 1932. She held that post for ten years. During that period, she tried to eradicate casteism by way of opening public places of drinking, water to backward classes.

Radhabai with the help of her husband, celebrated three widow remarriages at her home in Yaval. All people, including the backward classes were invited to attend weddings and receptions. Thus it was she, who opened the gates of reformation in Yaval and surrounding villages.

163. Ibid., P.218.
164. Ibid., P.144.
Satyabhama Kuvalkar alias Padamati Harolikar, one of the prominent women of Maharashtra, was the most active participant in Gandhiji's Constructive Programme as well as participant in the Civil Disobedience Movement. She was one of the pioneers who worked for the propagation of khaddar in Maharashtra.

Padmavati was born on 16th June 1890, in the well known family of Pitre from Dharwar. Her father, Mr. Kashinath Pitre was an advocate in Dharwar. As Mr. Pitre married second time after the death of Padmavati's mother, she stayed at Kolhapur with her grand-father. There, at Kolhapur, she completed her primary education up to 5th standard in Laxmibai Girls School. She could not complete her matriculation due to her marriage in an early age. But unfortunately, her husband died within a period of two years after her marriage and she became a child-widow. However, fortunately due to good relatives from her husband's side she completed her matriculation in the Seva Sadan at Poona. Then she started her Khadi programme and became a

165. Though the real surname of Satyabhamabai was Kuvalkar the word was spelled as Kuelekar by the British. Home Department File No.
Congress worker. She then came into contact with Mr. Harolikar V.B., another Congress worker of Poona and got married to him in 1931.

In 1920, Mahatma Gandhi visited Poona for propagation of the non-cooperation movement. In a lecture, at the Kirloskar Theatre, he impressed upon women, present there, to subscribe their ornaments for the nation's cause. Padmavati alias Satyabhamabai was very much overwhelmed due to Gandhiji's patriotic thoughts and donated all of her four gold bangles to the national fund and even sworn to use no gold ornaments and use only Khadi throughout her life.

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168. Personal interview of Padmavati Harolikar, Poona, dated 23rd April 1987 by the Scholar.

169. Mr. Harolikar Vinayakrao was the son of the famous advocate Mr. Balawantrao from Chikodi of Belgaum district. He completed his graduation in Poona when he came into contact with Mr. Haribhau Phatak, an eminent Congress worker and a staunch follower of Gandhi. He and his friends in Poona started Swadeshi Sangha under the guidance of Mr. Haribhau Phatak. Thus, from the student life he devoted to nation's cause. In 1923 he participated in the Zenda Satyagraha of Nagpur for which he was sentenced one year's imprisonment. During that period he served a prisoner who was suffering from leprosy. As a result, when Mr. Harolikar was released he became prey of leprosy. Padmavati used to nurse him and later she married him. In 1927 with the help of Mr. Bhuskute V.M. and Mr. Dev S.D., Harolikar edited "Swaraj", a marathi weekly in 1928 Harolikar was sentenced two years' rigorous imprisonment for writing against the Government. During the Civil Disobedience Movement he, again was sentenced one and half year imprisonment. After release he, with the help of his wife, worked for the Constructive Programme of Gandhiji at Sholapur. He died in 1939.

(1) Stree, Marathi magazine, May 1959, P.
(3) Dev, S.D., Daiva Nete Pan Karma Nete (Marathi), Sulabha Mudranalaya, Poona, 1976, P.133.

170. Stree, Op Cit.
HER CONTRIBUTION TO CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME:

From the inception of the time of Non-cooperation Movement, women in India and in Maharashtra actively participated in it. Satyabhamabai Kuvalkar, Dwarkabai Gujar, Ramabai Kuvalkar, Ramabai Biniwale, Anandibai Jogalekar, were the prominent women from Poona who participated in the Constructive Programme of Gandhiji and took keen interest in hawking of Khadi.

In the year 1920, Padmavati with the help of Anandibai Jogalekar established the "Poona Spinning Committee". Ramabai Biniwale, Dwarkabai Gujar and Padmavati were respectively chosen as the president, vice president and secretary of the Association. Haribhau Phatak, a Congress worker assisted them in collecting 40 charakhas and in giving them training of spinning. Padmavati made efforts to increase membership of the association to 300 women members by simply charging Rs.3/- as annual subscription. At the beginning spinning class was held in Padmavati's house and afterwards trained women started three other classes in Shanivar Peth, Budhavar Peth and Narayan Peth in Poona.

Padmavati was not happy with spinning work only. She wanted to start even weaving section and hence two weavers from Hyderabad were called to give training to Poona women. In that section, she, along with other women prepared handkerchiefs. Ramabai Biniwale later distributed those handkerchiefs in her son's marriage. It was, thus the message of Khadi was spread among women and Padmavati's work became popular.

She then made efforts to get fine yarn from Savli, a village in Wardha district and started weaving fine Khaddar saris in Poona. In 1924, the Maharashtra Khaddar exhibition was held at Jalgaon and Padmavati attended it on behalf of the Poona Spinning Committee. In that exhibition two Khaddar saris, one simple and the other of golden border, were exhibited and for that the Poona Spinning Committee received gold and silver medals as prize. In the presence of people present in that exhibition Padmavati demonstrated the preparation of sari and blouse by weaving Khadar and surprised all those who were present. As a result of her skilful work, she was awarded a gold medal. And the golden border sari was purchased by Bal Gandharva, the famous drama actor of Maharashtra.

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According to the Constructive Programme the Congress of Maharashtra had undertaken Khaddar propaganda and Maharashtra was divided into nine sections assigning one propagandist to each section. Women came forward for the propaganda. Anandibai Jogalekar of Poona, Smt. Parvatibai Thakar, and Varubai Dastane of Khandesh and Padmavati Harolikar did a good deal of propaganda of Khaddar and awakening of women in Jalgaon, Bhusaval, Varangaon, Edlabad, Changdev and Yavat. Anandibai Jogalekar especially, toured all over Maharashtra and made efforts to propagate Khaddar.

All India Charkha Association was established in 1925 and after five years of its inception, i.e., in 1930 the Poona Spinning Association was abolished. However, Padmavati continued spinning, and weaving individually at her home. It was thus Marathi women did a lot to take national movement to grass root.

PART IN THE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE:

Like in the Constructive Programme of the Congress, Padmavati contributed richly to political activities of the Congress. Because of her work in the Constructive Programme, she was nominated as a member of the All India Congress Committee for three years from 1925 A.D. to 1927 A.D. and honoured as one of the active workers in the Congress.

During the Great Movement, college students in many places had closed down their colleges. Some students from Ferguson College Poona, met Yashodabai Bhat and her co-workers like Padmavati Harolikar, Anandibai Joglekar and others. They requested those ladies to start demonstrations before the College and if demonstrations were arranged the students assured them to come out of their classes and join them. It was a kind of picketing and a new idea in Poona, although picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops was common. On the 13th August 1930, accordingly, Yashodabai Bhat, Satyabhamabai Kuvalkekar, Anandibai Joglekar with 10 other members of Spinning Association picketed Ferguson College. Immediately then about 50 students joined them and created a great chaos. The college authorities, therefore, closed the college for that day. In the next two days picketing was continued successfully and it was called off by Mr. G. M. Deshpande himself, the president of the Satyagraha Mandal.

175. Ibid., P.204; also refer to Manushi—a journal about women in society, Published by Madhu Kishwar, Archana Printers, Delhi, issue No.48, 1988, P.32.
176. 1.Home Department(Spl.),File No.750(29)Pt.I.  
3. Personal interview of Mrs. Indumati Kelkar, the daughter of Yashodabai Bhat, Poona, dated, 24th April, 1987 by the scholar.
Padmavati participated in the Salt Satyagraha of Wadala and Shiroda as a volunteer and looked after the injured Congress volunteers. In Wadala Salt Satyagraha about 150 to 200 volunteers were injured in police raid. Padmavati with the help of local women nursed them. Besides nursing of injured volunteers of Shiroda Satyagraha she helped for collecting funds for the movement. Similarly she tried to awake people of the surrounding areas to join the Civil Disobedience Movement.

After the release of Mr. Harolikar from the prison at the end of the year 1933 she stayed with her husband at Poona. But within a short span of time they, as per the message of Gandhiji undertook the Constructive Programme in a village named Mundhave near Poona as other workers in the Congress. Works like cleanliness of village, adult education, Spinning, service to the downtrodden, and other programmes were practised by them. The Congress workers of Pandharpur were very much impressed by such works of Harolikar couple and requested them to benefit their services for the Pandharpur area. They accepted it immediately and went to Mangewadi, a village of Sángola taluka of the Sholapur district in 1935. There, they continued their services for the benefit of the villagers.

for 3 to 4 years and when Mr. Harolikar became ill, Padmavati on her own continued the programme of cleanliness, spinning etc., along with her service to Mr. Harolikar, her sick husband. But soon they had to shift to Pandharpur for Mr. Harolikar's treatment. Unfortunately, however, Mr. Harolikar died in 1939.

After the death of Mr. Harolikar Padmavati stayed at Pandharpur and continued her work. During the Individual Satyagraha Movement of 1941, she was the only member from the Sholapur district who was selected by Gandhiji as an individual satyagrahi. On the 14th January 1942, she shouted anti-war slogans at Pandharpur and declared herself as a satyagrahi. The police, therefore, arrested her and sentenced a fine of Rs.150 or in default two months' simple imprisonment. She accepted the later and lived in the jail. Then during the "Quit India" movement she was sentenced to nine months' home arrest.

After the completion of sentence of house-arrest, Padmavati established an organisation for women known as "Rashtriya Stree Yuvati Sangha at Pandharpur and with the help of that organisation undertook the work of looking

178. Ibid.
179. 1. Home Department, Civil Disobedience Movement 1940, Reports from Central Division, File No. 1020(9)-57.
after the children and women who came to Pandharpur for
the Vithal festival. Then for two years from 1946 to 1948,*
she was the Chairman of the Municipal School Board,
Pandharpur, and worked successfully.

After some days she shifted to Jaisingpur, a village
in Kolhapur district and stayed there till 1952. At
Jaisingpur also she continued her social work. Soon she
became the organiser of the Kolhapur branch of "Maharashtra
Stree Sanghatan Samiti". In that capacity she organised
a big exhibition of Khaddar handicrafts in Jaisingpur.
Lastly, however, in the beginning of 1953 Padmavati
shifted to Poona and carried out the Constructive Programme
in a nearby village known as Shindewadi- a sub centre of
Pirangut Sarvodaya Programme. And due to her old age she
180 retired from the work in 1956.

Even after the retirement from social work, Padmavati
Harolikar used to weave saries and blouse-pieces for her own
use. Thus till the end of her life she used khaddar clothes
made by herself only. This great freedom fighter of
181 Maharashtra, died at the age of 99 on 31st August 1989.

PREMA KANTAK (1906-1985)

Prema Shamrao Kantak was one of those Marathi women who devoted her life to the cause of India's freedom and to the Congress party. Like Smt. Padmavati Harolikar, Prema Kantak did a good deal of social service. And more than that she was a staunch disciple of Mahatma Gandhi.

She was born in 1906 at Bombay in a Karvari family and completed there only her graduation in 1927. In her primary and secondary education she was impressed by some of her teachers and since then she began to take interest in Hinduism and in philosophy. As a result she read Marathi translation of Mahabharat in her school days. She is well known to Maharashtra not only as a freedom fighter but as an author also, as she wrote books on history of freedom movement of Maharashtra, Mahabharat, novel, one act play, problems of Hindu women etc.

While studying her higher education at Wilson College, Bombay, Prema Kantak came into contact with the Bombay Youth Organisation. And on the 3rd February 1928 when the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee arranged a meeting at Sir Cawsjee Jahangir Hall, congratulating students for

181. The names of the books written by Prema Kantak are, Satyagrahi Maharashtra, Mahabharat-EK Mukta Chintan, Pankaj, Bhagat Jeevan, Hindi Striyanche Prashna all are in Marathi and Kam Aur Kamini in Hindi.
their active participation in the boycott of Simon Commission, Prema Kantak with other leaders like Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Yusuf J. Meharali delivered a speech congratulating the students for their role in the nation's demonstration. This was how she started her public life. During the Satyagraha of Bardoli in the same year, she visited Bardoli and observed the situation. While coming back she visited Sabaramati Ashram of Gandhiji and sought permission of Gandhiji to join the Ashram. But as she was doing her M.A. in Marathi, Gandhiji did not encouraged her to join the Ashram. However, without completing her M.A. she joined the Ashram in 1929.

She stayed at Sabarmati Ashram for about four years. During that period she taught drawing to children in the school of the Ashram and learned herself also Gujarati and Urdu languages. Within a year of her stay at the Ashram, the Great Dandi March was started. Prema Kantak wanted to join in that Great March but was not allowed by Gandhiji. She had to remain at the Ashram and to carry out other responsibilities.

Soon after the Dandi March Prema Kantak got an opportunity of being close to Gandhiji. On the 5th March, 1931 Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed and at the end of the same year the Annual Session of India National Congress was held in Karachi. In both the incidents prema Kantak was present with Gandhiji. As we know that in 1932 Gandhiji again opened the Civil Disobedience Movement, as per Gandhiji's wish Prema Kantak instead of participating remained in the Ashram. Then in June 1933, Gandhiji advised to suspend the mass Civil Disobedience movement and continue Individual Satyagraha. And prema Kantak took part in the Individual Satyagraha. She was arrested twice for participating in the Individual Satyagraha and for each time sentenced six months' imprisonment and kept in Ahmedabad jail.

After completion of the sentence, Prema Kantak, as per Gandhiji's advise, decided to work in village and on the 5th August 1934, she joined the newly established Sasvad Ashram in Poona district by Shankarrao Dev. For about 3 years she stayed at Sasvad Ashram. The work of Ashram. Due to the political activities and activities of the Congress, Mr. Shankarrao Dev could not give much attention to the Ashram. Prema Kantak with the help of Mr. S.J. Bhagvat organised various constructive activities.

188. Ibid.
Prema Kantak was one of those members who attended the session of the Indian National Congress held at Faizpur in 1936. Shankarrao Dev, the president of the Regional Congress of Maharashtra and one of the main organisers of the Faizpur Congress asked Prema Kantak to hold the responsibility of the lady volunteers. It was not an easy thing in those days to involve women in the activities outside home. But Prema Kantak made it a success by her tireless efforts. From August to December she toured all over Maharashtra and appealed women to participate on a large scale as volunteers in the Faizpur Congress. While on tour Prema Kantak met Mrs. Radhabai Apte of Yaval and appealed her to be present with 10-12 lady volunteers.

A camp for the training of lady volunteers was to be arranged on the 20th October, 1936, in Poona. Prema Kantak declared the programme of the Camp before going on tour of Maharashtra for getting lady volunteers. As there was tooth and nail opposition to hold the camp in Poona she was advised by eminent Congress workers to hold the camp outside Poona.

Poona. But Prema Kantak with the help of women like Smt. Anandibai Jogalekar held the camp in Poona successfully. She along with a good number of lady volunteers remained present in the Paizpur Congress. Thus she held the responsibility as the organiser of lady volunteers successfully. Like Paizpur Congress, prema Kantak was present as the organiser of lady volunteers in the Ramgarh Session of the Indian National Congress held in 1940.

**INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA AND PREMA KANTAK:**

The individual satyagraha of 1940 in Poona district was opened by Prema Kantak. On the 21st November, 1940, a public meeting was held at Sasvad. Prema Kantak delivered anti-war speech before the audience of about 1000 people. For that she was convicted a fine of Rs. 200 or in default three months imprisonment. She accepted the later. Like Prema Kantak, seven other women from Poona, namely, Laxmibai Thus, Durgabai Jog, Miss Jogalekar, Kamal Tulpule, Anubai Bhosale, Laxmibai Vaidya and Tanubai Mogi participated in the individual satyagraha by shouting anti-war slogans. They were arrested and sentenced imprisonment.

Within a year Prema Kantak offered satyagraha for three times and for that she was, sentenced every time for three months' imprisonment. This shows that how that lady, Miss Prema Kantak was fearless about imprisonment as well as
eager for the freedom of the country. The sentences could not with-hold her activities. As a result during the Quit India Movement she was sentenced one and half-years house arrest.

After the completion of her house-arrest Prema Kantak again came to Sasvad and started the Ashram which was closed in 1942. Later, in 1950 she became the representative of the Kasturba National Trust and the branch of the trust in Maharashtra was started in Sasvad. She was incharge of the training of Gram Sevika and thus, after independence she held many camps of Gramsevikas in Maharashtra and worked for the betterment of village women. She died on the 17th October, 1985 in Sasvad.

195 Ibid.
198 Kantak, Prema, Bhrant Jeevan (Marathi), P.7.