CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION - ESTIMATE

FORWARD MARCH TOWARDS AWAKENING:

Marathi women as in other parts of India had common heritage of socio-religious and political life in our country. While coming to the stage of awakening from the earlier age of conservative form of life, they had to face a number of difficulties and hardships. In a society like ours dominated by male members, women had no role to play in the socio-political and religious life of the country. In the economic life, as they were compulsorily forced to labour for their family members and the nation, they had no more status than the slaves and serfs. And out of such an odd conditions prevailing in the society, Marathi women had turned to awakening in the first quarter of the 19th century. Some of the reformers like Balshastri Jambhekar, Gopal Hari Deshmukh alias Lokhitwadi, Mahatma Phule, Justice M.G. Ranade, G.G. Agarkar and others had taken pains to introduce reforms and to change the conservative form of life given to women. And their pioneer efforts only made a sudden and revolutionary change in the conditions and modes of women life. It was therefore, a long journey of socio-religious reforms introduced by them made women to stand erect. Even now, if one takes into account, Mahatma Phule's thoughts of equality between man and woman, one will surprise to know that he was far ahead, or say, a century ahead.
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of the present society in which, we see women coming to the stage of equality with men.

Under the socio-religious restrictions so also under the taboos like seclusion, non-permission to education, treatment equal to the Shudras, and such other common evils in the society, women in Maharashtra had taken a lot of time to move to the stage of awakening and progress. Similarly, Muslim women and other women belonging to some Indian religions like the Jainism had also to face a number of difficulties while following the path of awakening. The British rule, however, created rather conducive atmosphere for them. The societies or the institutions like orphanage, Sharda Sadan, Arya Mahila Samaj etc. paved a new way for reforms and education among them. Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve, Maharshi Vithal Ramaji Shinde and prior to them Savitribai Phule, the wife of great social revolutionary- Mahatma Jotiba Phule, made their respective marks on the history of 19th and 20th century reforms in the upliftment of women. And it was because of that only, women began to get confidence while moving towards the phase of reforms. Rightly therefore Neera Desai evaluated the work of reformers thus:

"The pioneers laid the foundation of the movement for the emancipation of the Indian woman. They built up among the people intellectual conviction that women must be liberated and made equal to men".

The good outcome of the pioneer reforms in the upliftment of women was witnessed at two different instances in the last quarter of the 19th century. The first took place in the year 1854 when some widows from Poona opposed to be tonsured by the order of Shankaracharya. And the second one in 1890 when they supported the "Age of Consent Bill" against the opposition of orthodox Hindus. In fact, Lokmanya Tilak was also one of the strong opponents of the "Age of the Consent Bill" and women even in those days went against Tilak. And that was the good sign that women in Maharashtra started their fearless forward march for better change and reforms.

The struggle for India's freedom was, that way a late dream of the Indian National Congress, although, it was established in 1885. For about first twenty years after the inception of the Indian National Congress, no thought of expressing demand for freedom or independence was expressed. It was only in 1906 that Dadabhai Naoroji, the Great Grand Old-man of India expressed for the first time at the Calcutta Session of the Congress, the demand of freedom on the lines of United Kingdom or the Colonies.

Onwards the time of 1906 India had soon a turmoil on the national level as people of her began to oppose the Partition of Bengal. Although, the Partition of Bengal was limited to the boundaries of the Bengal Province, people of both the religions, i.e., Hindus and the Muslims were to be divided for the open secret of British policy of "Divide and Rule". The then Governor of Bengal, Lord Curzon's provocative actions culminating in a virtually behind-the-scenes Partition decision was regarded above all as a national insult. Naturally, such an insulting treatment given by the British was not to be tolerated. Thus, against this background, forgetting all the differences just as the Hindus and Muslims, all the Indians stood united not only against the Partition of Bengal but British imperialism also. And it had inspired hundred thousand Indians to fight not only to nullify, the partition of Bengal but to seek also political power equal to free citizens in other country.

In that great movement against the Partition of Bengal, Maharashtra had played very important role and Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak made a huge cry against the British Government and also thrived for the Hindu Muslim unity. And as Tilak came from the Brahmin elite class of Maharashtra, many of the elite Brahmin women directly and even indirectly turned to support the Indian nationalist movement against the Partition.

of Bengal and the British. New seed of national spirit was sowed then in the minds of women of Maharashtra. However, there are no traces of the direct participation of Marathi women in the movement against the Partition of Bengal. The women like Yesubai Savarkar, Laxmibai Khare and others, of course, as earlier pointed out had definitely taken keen interest.

In the Annual Session of the Indian National Congress held at Calcutta in 1906 the Congress party was likely to be divided on the issue of adopting a strong and revolutionary policy against the British Government. Dadabhai Naoroji, the President of that Congress had some how managed to avoid the rift within the Congress and maintained its unity. However, the revolutionaries like Lokmanya Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai did not like the stand of the moderates and so also the ways adopted by it for seeking redress from the British Government. And to raise the anger of these people, the Partition of Bengal made by Lord Curzon helped a lot.
The revolutionaries, therefore, began to preach to the people that the British would never listen our prayers and would instead follow the policy of divide the Hindus and the Muslims for the benefit of their Government. So the revolutionaries told their Indians that they must remain united to fight against the British Government. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya nicely reviewed the circumstances of that time as well as the effect of Lord Curzon’s attempt of the Partition of Bengal in a very appropriate words. He writes:

6. This Dissertation, See Ch.IV pp.152-155.
“His curtailment of powers of the Calcutta Corporation, his Official Secret Act, his Officialization of Universities, which made education costly, his Tibetan Expedition . . . . . . . and finally his Partition of Bengal broke the back of loyal India and roused a new spirit in the Indian nation.”

It was thus, even loyalists and many of the moderates began to suspect the very good intention of the British empire after the Partition of Bengal in 1905. This had then helped the extremists in the National Congress to appeal to the people for creating unrest and turmoil in the whole country. During this period from 1904 to 1919 in the history of India’s struggle for freedom, the effects of the events of Russo-Japanese War of 1904, Morley-Minto Reforms in 1909, the beginning of the First World War in 1914, Congress-Muslim Pact of 1916, Khilafat Movement in 1918 and the Jalianwala Bagh incident of 1919, so also the contributions of Madam Cama and Sarojini Naidu and the Partition of Bengal in 1905, the anti-partition movement that took thereafter and later on reached to Maharashtra, caught the minds of Marathi women with sacrifice and patriotic zeal. In the Swadeshi Movement, Marathi women refused to use bangles imported from abroad, even though using bangles is a pious and religious symbol of religious tradition in Maharashtra. In those days, an extremists organisation known as the “Abhinav Bharat Society” for carrying on underground activities was

very much known and active. Its founders, the famous freedom fighters—Shri. Babarao Savarkar and his brother Vinayakrao Savarkar, had attracted and influenced elite class including women in it. Madam Cama from Bombay was highly impressed by the activities of the "Abhinav Bharat Society" and it was she, as mentioned earlier hoisted for the first time the flag of free India in Stutguard. And Babarao Savarkar, one of the famous founders of the society for the first time organised a woman's wing in the city of Nasik and made Laxmibai Khare as the President of that organisation.

After the split of the Indian National Congress at the annual Session at Surat in 1907, the Marathi women in the elite class of Maharashtra almost liked the revolutionary path that Lokmanya Tilak adopted to political power from the British. And it was because of the mountaineous pressure created by the movement and the demands from the majority people of Indians, were forced to reconsider and hence nullify the Partition of Bengal in 1911. In a way, at the initial stage, thus, the revolutionaries as well as all the freedom loving people in India and Maharashtra got a success against the strong and firm decisions of the British Government like the Partition of Bengal.

10. This Dissertation, Ch.IV, P.133.
The times, however, were changing very rapidly not only in Indian politics but in the international affairs from 1911 onwards. The clouds of the First World War were witnessed in the sky of European Continent and as India was the part and parcel of the British Empire she had also a kind of fear of the First World War. During the course of that War, leaders like Lokmanya Tilak and others supported the cause of the British Empire against Germany and her allies. Due to this help from India in August 1917 British Parliament assured more political reforms to Indians through his famous "August 13 Declaration" of 1917. The women had, therefore, no role to play in the national life but had to seek their legitimate shares in the society. So that the arrival of Southborough Commission to India to report on the feasibility of granting adult suffrage to Indians. Women of India, especially, women from Maharashtra, hence, took very active interest to secure the right of adult suffrage to them. A meeting of prominent active women held in Bombay and a memorandum signed by about 800 women was submitted to the Southborough Commission. Hirabai Tata, Mithin Tata and Ramabai Ranade from Maharashtra played very important role in pressing the adult suffrage to women. Sarojini Naidu and Mrs. Annie Besant carried on a campaign to awake Marathi women to the right of adult suffrage and it was due to their efforts that not only from cities like Bombay and Poona but from other parts also Marathi women became aware

of the rights of adult suffrage. This had naturally, very
gainful effect on the life of Marathi women to take the women awakening movement to the remote parts of Maharashtra. And as a result of such a movement and awakening among the Marathi women, grounds were prepared to allot them their legitimate place in the struggle for freedom that had taken place at the time of Rowatt Bill and thereafter the massacre of 1919. During, all those, days the activist Marathi women leaders like Avantikabai Gokhale, Mrs. Sushilabai Jaykar and Sarojini Naidu played very important roles. Under their guidance and leadership meetings were held of the women patriots and freedom fighters at Bombay and other places. Then at the time of Mahatma Gandhi's satyagraha on 6th April 1919 against the passing of Rowlatt Act, thousands of women in Bombay denounced the Rowlatt Act and about one thousand women actually participated in the Satyagraha against the passing of that Act.

It was, thus, during the period from 1905 to 1920, Marathi women have played very important role in the struggle for freedom and had not remained away as the timid folks in the past. They had thrown away the chains of slavery that the Hindu customs and traditions forced upon them and in the first stage of their awakening they played their constructive roles to make the freedom movement of India as the populist movement against the British.

FROM NON-COOPERATION TO CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT:

Mahatma Gandhi's taking over the leadership of the Indian National Congress after the death of Lokmanya Tilak in 1920, a new chapter of India's struggle for freedom was opened. Till that time the struggle under the banner of Indian National Congress was very much limited to elite class in the Indian society. But because of Gandhiji as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose told, after 1921, it was taken to masses to make it the mass movement against the British. Then his famous slogan "freedom within one year", really caught the minds of the common people in India to stand for the fight for their nation's freedom. No doubt it was all impossible for any great leader, whatsoever might be his power to get freedom within a year. But the slogan that Gandhiji made of that intention went as a magic rod to attract common masses to the movement for India's struggle. By that slogan masses in India were stirred with the idea of getting freedom at the earliest and without bothering for the mighty empire like the British. A new courage made people to fight for the cause of freedom. And to gain not only the mass support but to make it a mass agitation against the British, Gandhiji then came forward with two unprecedented weapons in hand— one, the Satyagraha and the other, Non-Cooperation.

However prior to the opening of the actual campaign of the Satyagraha that Gandhiji had envisaged, Marathi women had staged the first women Satyagraha against the proposed plan of erecting Mulshi Dam in Poona district. It was to practice the weapon of Satyagraha that Gandhiji had given to Indians. Marathi women right from work of making women to join that Satyagraha to the actual movement, had made successful efforts. In the Mulshi Dam Satyagraha women from rural areas joined for the first time with unprecedented enthusiasm and spirit. Thus it was made known to the British Government that even common women of Maharashtra could fearlessly stand for the freedom from the British. The effect of the women Satyagraha at Mulshi Dam then went far reaching not only women in the rural parts of Marathi land but in other parts of India also. Those who had desire to join the freedom movement but remained due to religious curtains and conservative form also joined the Satyagrahas. And eminent women participants like Jaibai Bhoi, Sarswati Bhuskute, Annapurnabai Ghare, Parvatibai Parchure, Mrs. Vaishampayan and others came to forefront of the group of freedom fighters for inspiring hundred thousand women for the cause of India's freedom. Soon after then the starting of Mulshi Dam Satyagraha, Gandhiji started his famous Non-Cooperation Movement in 1921. In the Non-Cooperation movement, although, it was firmly decided to express grievances against the imposition of British rule and its evil administration, stress

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18. This Dissertation, See Ch. VI, Pp. 217-221.
was given basically on the principles of Swadeshi, non-violence and boycott that Gandhiji wished from the followers. And as people liked to follow Gandhiji, the Non-Cooperation Movement was spread far away in various parts of India, from Bombay to a remote part of Champaran in Bihar. Women of Maharashtra were naturally very much busy in spreading the message of Gandhiji to women in rural Maharashtra and making all Marathi women aware of the situation that had taken place due to the Non-Cooperation Movement. While, thus, propagating the ideas of Non-Cooperation and philosophy of freedom, Marathi women had spared no time to see themselves, stood hand-in-hand with their male counter parts in the struggle for freedom. They began to play the roles, whatever came to their lots, like the direct participation, carrying on propaganda, or even supplying food to the satyagrahis.

Side by side when Marathi women were working in the Non-Cooperation Movement and as a part of that great movement carrying on Mulshri Dam Satyagraha upto 1924, many of them inspired common people to strengthen the cause of freedom. The adult franchise movement, then, seeking the right to women was still in good progress. And so the Government of British India promised to ask the Provincial Legislative Assemblies to take such decisions upto 1921. Accordingly the Madras Government


20. The Province of Madras was the pioneer in the matter when in 1921 its legislature decided to extend the limited franchise to women on equal terms with man- Thomas, P., Op.Cit., P.335.
took initiative to grant women the right of adult franchise. Then Bombay Government in 1921 granted such a right of voting to them. Against a provision that had been granted to women, women like Sarojini Naidu, Bachubai Lotvala, Hari Hadgikson and Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale were for the first time elected as the Corporation of the Bombay Corporation in 1923. Never before such a galaxy of women members was elected to the Bombay Corporation, and they were the first in India and Maharashtra to be honoured as the first women representatives elected by the people. The fight, however, was continued by them to have the same right in the Provincial and Central Assemblies in India. A women delegation was also sent to England in 1933. So as a result of all such efforts, in the Government of India Act of 1935 they were given the right of adult franchise equal to men in the Provincial and the Central Legislative Assemblies.

During all those days, from the days of Non-Cooperation to the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, Marathi women had left no chance to participate in any movement or in any call for India's freedom. While fighting against the old religious garb of evil customs and traditions, they continued campaigns for women education, against superstitions and for equality of

status with men. But that time cry for social equality and equality of men and women had, in fact, no good days. Leaders like Phiroz Shah Mehta, Lokmanya Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Gandhiji had not given much stress on social problems. Gandhiji no doubt, stressed on social equality and told that "freedom is meaningless without social equality", but he did nothing to cherish social reforms in his early career. "Whether social reforms should precede political reforms or vice-versa", although, was a burning problem of that time the extremist dominated Congress neglected the social reforms. Congressmen believed that, once if they get freedom they could solve social problems and establish social equality and social justice, within no time. Unfortunately therefore, not alone in the Congress party but in other political parties also, no importance was given to the social problems and eradication of evils in the social life. Even in Maharashtra, where many more reformers and social revolutionaries were born, stand for reforms relating to women life and equality with men was not encouraged during the period, from 1920 to 1930. They had, therefore, to carry on two different struggles at one time, i.e., one, against the British for the demand of freedom as male members did and the other, for the upliftment of their folks.

In the meanwhile, when, as mentioned above, women were continuing their movements, the Simon Commission created a turmoil in the national life. Known for its disliking of the Indians, it came in India having no Indian member on it, to evaluate, the practice of political reforms granted under the Government of India Act of 1919. Naturally, a great agitation was started under the banner of Congress Party to boycott Simon Commission and not to allow its access to the masses. In the Bombay Presidency wherein, Maharashtra is included, a committee was formed by the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee to oppose the Simon Commission. Eminent Congress leaders Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mrs. Annie Besant, Yusuf J. Meharali, K.F. Nariman, Shaukat Ali, Vaman Gopal Joshi, R.S. Nimblkar were the leading personalities to lead the masses against the Simon Commission.

Then, in the great movement known as the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930-31, Marathi women played their heroic role as was expected from them. Women freedom fighters under the leadership of Sarojini Naidu and Avantikabai Gokhale contributed their might to the Civil Disobedience Movement. The various stages of disobedience were, (1) Salt Satyagraha, (2) Preparing and selling of Salt to the public against the prohibitory orders of the Government, (3) Jungle Satyagraha, and (4) Picketing of foreign cloth-shops and liquor-shops. In the initial stage salt grabbing satyagraha was arranged. Mahatma Gandhi himself staged the first Satyagraha to grab the salt on the shores of Dandi on the western coast of Gujrat region.
His famous march was started from Ahmedabad to Dandi for about a distance of 350-500 kilo-meters and it was at the beginning he wished not to allow women to participate in it. However, because of spontaneous support from all sections of the society and even from the women folks, women had joined Dandi March of Gandhiji on 6th April 1930.

In Maharashtra it was planned under the leadership of Kamla Devi Chattopadhyaya to stage a satyagraha in Bombay on 17th April, 1930. But prior to that the leader was arrested by the British Government. In Wadala Salt Satyagraha of 31st May, 1930 and Ghansoli Salt Satyagraha in Thana district of 8th May 1930 women satyagrahis participated on a large scale and many of them were arrested. The special importance of those salt satyagrahas staged by Marathi women was due to the fact that women themselves joined the satyagrahas and gave a solid support also to male Satyagrahis. In the presence of Kasturba Gandhi, the wife of Mahatma Gandhi, the Hindu as well as Muslim women vowed to continue the campaign of Satyagrahas until its victory. Yashodabai Kotwal, Sushilabai Nadkarni, Gangabai Mule, Sarwati Ovalekar and many known and unknown women leaders had showed an unprecedented valour to press the

27. This Dissertation, See Ch.VI , P.230.
28. Ibid., P.
29. Ibid., Pp.231-32.
30. Ibid., P.232
demand of freedom. Many women organisations like the "Bhagini Mandal" in Thana were established in various parts of Maharashtra to awake, educate, and prepare women to understand the call of nation and to participate in the movements like the Civil Disobedience Movement. In a way, participation of Marathi women in the Salt-Satyagraha was beyond expectation of the supporters as well as the opponents of the Civil Disobedience Movement. In the salt selling campaign women had played very significant role to break the rules of the British Government as it was sold to far below cost than the Government had fixed. At the same time salt auction was made in public places by women where as small bag of salt was auctioned even to Rs. 1000. By selling of salt Marathi women collected a good sum of money for the use of the nation's cause. This was how, they helped the great National Movement that had taken place in the name of Civil Disobedience Movement.

Then, in the Jungle Satyagrahas staged at places like Sangamner, Baglan Taluka, Bilashi, Diwalamal, Cnirner they had their share of active participation in the jungle satyagraha and courting arrest. In addition to the expected number of women satyagrahis, there was unlimited number of women participants in the jungle satyagraha. More than 10,000

32. This Dissertation, See Ch.VI PP.252-258.
participants had broken the Jungle law of the Government. Alike that in liquor shop and foreign cloth picketing also, Marathi women had an active participation. In the places like Bombay, Nasik, Poona, Sholapur they had joined hand with the male satyagrahis and fearlessly did the job of picketing the liquor as well as foreign cloth shops as was desired by Gandhiji and the Congress. And as it has already been explained under chapter No.6, it is to be concluded that the role of Marathi women participants in the Civil Disobedience Movement and its programme was equally significant with that of the male members of the Congress Party.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE INDIVIDUAL SATYAGRAHA:

Onwards the times of the famous Civil Disobedience Movement of Gandhiji, Marathi women remained very much active for the cause of India's freedom. Those were the days of a number of upheavals in the national life from 1932 to 1940 A.D. The Round Table Conferences held in London in 1930 to 1932 had created a hope for a better political reforms at the earliest. With the demand of more political reforms by the Indians, new problems also co-incided, as ethenically India was divided and the conglomeration of various religions did not allow her to maintain her unity. She had to face religious problems very seriously. And a rift between the Muslims and the Hindus was a major problem. The Britishers wanted to take full benefit applying to it the policy of "Divide and Rule".

33. Ibid., PP. 204-281.
Side by side as it was a period of growing political conscious among almost all the sections of the Indian society, demands from them were coming to seek more and more political benefit for their respective groups. The Sikhs and the Indian Christians were quite alive to that extent. But unfortunately, inspite of the awakening and political consciousness was created by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the depressed class people, they were not desired by the Caste. Hindus to come out on par with them and hence all the while misunderstandings were created about them and their leaders. In such an attempt, none else but Gandhiji alone took a lead, by redressing their grievances and by denying them political concessions. The famous indefinite unto death hunger fast of Gandhiji at the Yeravda Jail in Poona in 1932, had attracted attention of almost all people including the Marathi women. But Gandhiji and all other great leaders like Tej Bahadur Sapru and others as were capable to find out a solution and to make Gandhiji to end his indefinite fast, Marathi women, although, were stirred on account of that event, had not lost their courage.

Then, the Government of India Act of 1935 was passed to grant more political powers and Federal Structure to India. Accordingly a new atmosphere was created for preaching the masses to coup with the new form of electing their representatives to the Provincial Governments. In Maharashtra, the idea of electing representatives by the masses had gone as wild fire.

and not only the followers of Indian National Congress but also the followers of other political parties, like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim league started creating strongholds for their respective political parties. Marathi women were not behind in that election politics. In the Bombay Presidency wherein Maharashtra lies the main contenders were the Congress Party and the Hindu Mahasabha. They put their respective candidates to contest elections to the Bombay Legislative Assembly. Out of women candidates who contested on the tickets of the Congress Party and Muslim League numbered to eight only. Of course, that was a good opportunity to women to get positions equal to men in the Legislative Assemblies to play their respective roles as well as to express their views on the subject of national unity and about the plans they had in their minds and what they were going to do after freedom. The two Marathi women legislators,

35. In the election of 1937, of the Bombay Presidency there were three types of constituencies reserved for women. the first was urban constituency in which four seats were reserved for women. The second was rural constituency and one seat was reserved for it where as third constituency was reserved for Muslim women. In addition to that women were given freedom to contest for election in general constituencies. Six out of seven women won in the elections of 1937. They were Lilavati Munusni, Annapurna Deshmukh, Laxmibai Thuse, Nagamma Patil, Vidyagauri Kanunga, Begum Tyabji and Hansa Mehta. Hansa Mehta and Anandibai Gadgil contested from general constituencies of Bombay and Poona respectively. Anandibai Gadgil could not win the election. - Gavankar, Rohini, Op.Cit., PP.110-111.
namely, Annapurnabai Deshmukh and Laxmibai Thuse participated actively in the discussions on the resolutions regarding economic and public health. Thus, they, opened the gates of Legislative Assembly for Marathi women and proved that they were equal to their counter part, i.e., male members. Alike this, women were making efforts, to see women are awakened, have become equipped with proper education and were ready to share their roles equal to male members in the struggle for India's freedom.

In 1937, because of the elections held in India to the Provincial Governments the Indian National Congress got majority in nine provinces and the Muslim League and others in remaining two provinces. The Congress legislators, including women legislators from the Marathi land made sincere efforts throughout the period of Provincial Congress Government to prepare people for the last successful fight against the British. The days, however, in the international affairs were politically very much disturbed. Like the time of the First World War, the world was again divided into two

36. Ibid., P.111.
37. The Congress Contested the elections in all seriousness. It obtained clear majorities in Madras, Bāhar, Orrissa. United Province, Bombay, and Central Province. In Bengal, Assam and North West Frontier Province, it was the largest single Party. - Aggarwala, R.N., Op.Cit., P.215.
major groups, one led by Germany and the other by England and France. Hitler, the dictator of Germany, went very rash in the international politics by opening a policy of aggrandisment. And out of that, he attacked Poland on the 1st September, 1939, to give opening to the Second World War. Naturally, as a counter part in the World leadership, England also joined the War as the protector of democracy against Hitler and his dictatorship. And India as a part of the Great British Empire joined the Second World War even if, her leaders like Gandhiji and his Congress were not consulted. This was very much insulting to Gandhiji and the Congress Party. They, therefore, resigned from the Provincial Governments and declared to start an agitation for India's freedom from the British. Subhash Chandra Bose, the then President of the Indian National Congress of 1938 held at Haripura appealed to the Congress and all the freedom lovers to take advantage of the difficulties of the British, their enemies, as problems of the British were increasing while fighting against Germany. But no attention was given by Gandhiji and his colleagues to the call of Subhash Chandra Bose. Instead he was made to quit the Congress. In 1940, one of the statements he declared that the Congress would not

create any problem before the British, even if they are enemies. The majority Congress leaders were not happy with the stand that Gandhiji had taken. Besides there were growing pressure on the Congress workers due to Subhash Babu's resignation from the Congress and starting a new party, the "Forward Block" in 1939 and starting revolutionary activities through it against the British. It seems then, as a result of Subhash Babu's firm stand to start revolutionary activities against the British, the Congress workers, those who had not joined him might have felt to make the Congress to start anti-British propaganda and agitation for getting freedom. And out of all these events and circumstances Gandhiji was made to give to the Congress, the famous programme of "Individual Satyagraha" in 1940 A.D.

The individual satyagraha was a great opportunity for Marathi women to play their respective roles as freedom fighters of India. When the programme of Individual Satyagraha was declared by the Congress Marathi women showed overwhelming enthusiasm to participate in that campaign. From among the Congress workers and followers who wanted to stage individual satyagraha, Vinoba Bhave was chosen by Gandhiji himself to stage that satyagraha at Pavanar in Wardha district on 17th October, 1940. And then others were to stage individual satyagraha at different places and different dates throughout the country.

In accordance with the appeals made by the Congress Resolution of Individual Satyagraha, Miss. Prema Kantak staged satyagraha at Saswad on 21st November 1940, as the first woman in the individual satyagraha. Secondly, Laxmibai Thuse, addressed a meeting at Sonya Maruti Chauk in Poona, asking all people not to help the Government in its war efforts either in cash or men. Later on Mrs. Durgabai Jog and Dr. (Miss) Jogalekar offered individual satyagrahas and many more women of Poona district then joined that satyagraha movement. Yamunabai Gajanan Kaduskar was the first widow in Ahmednagar district. She delivered an anti-war speech at Koregaon. In the first week of January, 1941 A.D., Janakibai Apte offered satyagraha before the Congress House, at Ahmednagar. Fatimabi Tyabji, a Muslim woman offered anti-war slogan at Wadale Madee, a village in Ahmednagar district. Jaibai Anandrao Rathod and Shrikrishna Kukade shouted anti-war slogans and were imprisoned by the British. Mrs. Ramabai Suvarnpatki, Shantabai Digambar Tendulkar, Ramabai Bhaskar Gosavi, Jaidevibai Keshavrao Deshmukh and Mrs. Sulochananabai Kashinath Bondre were the other women who took part in the movement in Ahmednagar district.

In Bombay Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mrs. Hansa Mehta, and Mrs. Lilavati Munshi joined individual satyagraha from 2nd December 1940. Later on Mrs. Nargis Battiwala, Mrs. Gangabai Bhulabhai

44. This Dissertation, See Ch.VII, P.283.
45. Ibid., PP.285-89.
46. Ibid., PP.289-92.
Patel, Mrs. Vasanti Shroff, Mrs. Ramabai Bairprasad Pandit, Mrs. Meenakshi Amalkarai Desai and Miss Sarlaben Kevalram Joshi joined the movement. Mrs. Miraben Mangalal, an old lady of sixty five years also joined it. Other women who participated in individual satyagraha later on, were Mrs. Sonabai Sitaram Rao, Mrs. Kamalben Kishordas Sanghavi and Mrs. Gangaben Patel. Some of these women were arrested and sentenced to imprisonment and fine. Similarly women in Thana district played their massive role with the same courage and zeal. The prominent among them were Mrs. Kirtane, Mrs. Hirabai Hirachand Mehar, and Mrs. Kalyani Devi Putranayra.

In Satara Mrs. Ambutai Ramchandra Lele, Mrs. Satyavati Raghunath Limaye, Mrs. Sulochanabai Joshi, Mrs. Vaijayanti Hadap, Mrs. Champabai Bhattad and Mrs. Muktabai Bandu Natu were the prominent women in the movement. Even women from the East Khandesh, West Khandesh and Nasik region also participated bravely. Thus, men and women played their roles in raising the public opinion against the British Rule in India through the individual satyagraha. The campaign continued for about one and half year. It was a unique feature of that Satyagraha as no incidence of violence had taken place in the course of Satyagraha. People, especially, women from Maharashtra offered individual satyagraha on their own and they were to

47. Ibid., PP.293-94.
48. Ibid., PP.295-97.
49. Ibid., PP.297-301.
50. Ibid., PP.301-304.
inform to the District Magistrate before staging satyagraha. They were first giving anti-war slogans, then delivered lectures for the need of freedom and were courting arrests. Instead of paying fine they accepted the imprisonment. Thus, the movement of Individual Satyagraha was successful in expressing and raising public resentment against the Government.

MARATHI WOMEN IN THE "QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT"

The "Quit India" Movement of 1942 was one of the greatest struggles given by Indian people for freedom from the British Government. In a 'way', it was an event of crowning the struggle for India's freedom movement. Naturally, including women all the sections of the Indian society had shared that glorious movement for the freedom of their mother land. Marathi women, of course, had played their heroic roles in that great movement, to show, as to how they were prepared to pay whatever cost the freedom of their mother land required. In the tense atmosphere of the course of the Second World War in 1942 had created an unprecedented atmosphere of an anxiety and uncertainty throughout the world. Hitler and his Germany as well as the allies of Germany like Italy and Japan were making sweeping attacks on all war fronts against England, France, Russia and other Allied powers. As far as India was concerned as a part and parcel of the British Empire, she had very odd circumstances to face. Large scale ammunitions and military personnel from India were used
by the British Indian Government to help England for fighting against Germany and her allies. The times were such, that without either monetary or military help from India, the British was not able to fight against Germany to get victory. Hence, when Britishers were in difficulty Indian freedom fighters had to take the advantage of the British difficulties to press their demand of India's freedom. It was, really, difficult for the British to continue ably the fight against Germany and her allies without help from India and even to control out-breaks in India. Many of the Indians like Subhash Chandra Bose had already wished and told that the difficulties of the British India Government, i.e., the enemy of Indian people, were the opportunities to get India's freedom at the earliest. But Mahatma Gandhi did not like such an action by the Indian people. However, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharal Nehru had changed their earlier stand that they had taken to remain inactive while the British were busy in the War. The great escape of Subhash Chandra Bose from India and the propaganda that he started from Germany to fight against the British made them uneasy. The establishment of Azad Hind Radio and the Azad Hind Fauj by him in Germany made the congress leaders most worried. The call then given by Subhash to Indian people to start fight for India's freedom against the British had very much encouraged and inspired all sections of Indian revolutionaries and even the Congress Workers.

Thus, it may be that, due to the fear of the spread of fascism and Subhash's appeal to Indian people, Gandhiji and the Congress were forced to take drastic actions immediately to prove the Indian people that they were not lagging behind than the persons like Subhash Chandra Bose and others to start immediate fight for freedom against the British. And, so under, an urgent meeting of the Working Committee of the Congress was called at Wardha on 14th July 1942 to decide the future course of struggle. Hence, in accordance with the resolution taken at Wardha, the All India Congress Session, was called at Bombay on the 7th August 1942. On the following day, i.e., on the 8th August 1942 the famous "Quit India" resolution was passed to warn to the British Government either to grant the freedom to Indian people or quit India immediately and if not, face the consequences. By passing that "Quit India" Resolution an ultimate warning was given thus by the Congress to the British Government. Uptil now, from the times of opening of the Second World War, although, the British Government had showed eagerness to grant more and more political concessions to Indian people, it was very adamant to fix up the limit within which it wished to grant complete freedom to India. So in the last paragraph of the "Quit India" resolution, it is clearly stated that the Congress would be compelled to act if, its appeal for complete independence

53. Ibid., P.342.
failed. It gave also a hint in a form of strong warning to the British Government. Accordingly, it told to the British that, if it would not act as per the demand of the "Quit India" resolution, it would have to possibly face the mass-agitation like the mass satyagraha or even non-violence movement under the leadership of none but Mahatma Gandhi himself.

In the beginning of 1942, the turmoil of the World War II was such that the British Government in India had to think over the demand of India for their freedom. The Cripps proposals were already rejected by the Congress in July 1942 and Indians were not happy simply by political concession. However, they wanted to pull on and see first to win the Great War. And the Congress knew it correctly. So after the declaration of the "Quit India" Resolution by the Working Committee, The Bombay Provincial Congress Committee decided to organise daily propaganda meetings in the different parts of the city to prepare people for the proposed movement. The first meeting under the leadership of Nagindas T. Master was held and attended by a big crowd of about 5,000 persons on the 26th July 1942. The leaders present there including Mrs. Shantabai Vengaskar made inspiring speeches to make people ready for the last fight of the freedom.

Then daily meetings were held. In an atmosphere like that the Session of the All India Congress Committee was held in Bombay on the 7th August 1942. It was attended by about 3,000 volunteers including 108 prominent personalities among which there were 18 women leaders. It was addressed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who explained the meaning of "Quit India" and the sacrifice that was required by the Indians to it. The famous resolution known as the "Quit India Resolution" was moved by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and forwarded by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Pandit Nehru also explained the meaning of the resolution that, it is not a threat, it is an invitation. It is an offer of co-operation, but certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of a free India. On any other terms there will be no co-operation but conflict and struggle. After speaking on the resolution Mahatma Gandhi gave call and declared that "Congress will do or die" with a slogan that "Do or Die" or "Karenge Ya Marenge". On the other hand the British Government decided that the Congress leaders would be arrested and the Provincial Congress Committees as well as All India Congress Committee would be declared as unlawful. On the 9th August, 1942, the Government arrested Gandhiji and some other 50 leaders including the members of the Working Committee Present at Bombay. Eight women leaders

55. This Dissertation, See Ch. VII, PP. 309.
56. Ibid., P. 311.
57. Ibid., P. 314.
were also arrested. So there were large scale protests by Indians. But the Government was very firm to its decision and many more leaders were convicted throughout the country. Frank Mores described the situation of the 9th August 1942 as—

"A hot gush of mass anger had swelled to the surface and over flowed in violent and non-violent protest. Despite the country wide arrests which had left them leaderless, thousands of Indians had demonstrated against the repression of the Raj. Continued at first to Bombay, Ahmedabad and Poona, these demonstrations soon spread throughout the country with the result that, the long arms of the British authority had ceased to function for several days".

There were peaceful protests, hartals and anti-British meetings, so also outbreaks of mob violence, arson, murder and sabotage. Students and workers were prominent in those demonstrations. Thus the revolutionary out-breaks of the mass uprising went to capture minds of the commoners. Message of freedom was taken to the grass root. And it was done through the meetings, morning processions, the Congress songs and slogans, leaflets, bulletins and national Kirtanas. The "Quit India" movement provided also an opportunity to women to prove, at the national level their ability to participate in it. The women who were strict Gandhian, like Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi, Dr. (Miss) Sushila Nair, Mrs. Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Sucheta Kripalani, Aruna Asaf Ali and Usha

58. 'Frank, Mores. Op.Cit., P.301.'
Mehta, played very important roles in that movement. Some of them were arrested and some of them were went underground to continue the movement.

**PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN:**

Participation of Marathi women in the last phase of freedom movement started since 9th August 1942 A.D. Miss Kisan Dhumatkar, Mrs. Sofia Khan, Mrs. Shantabai Vengaskar from Bombay were very much active and were arrested. They inspired the girls from Bombay to participate on a large scale and made them to know that they were not lagging behind in shouldering the responsibility of the Movement. So thousands of women along with girls participated with flags in their hands, they had to face lathi charges from the police throughout Maharashtra. And when the struggle for the masses in the rural Maharashtra went beyond the control of the Government it asked its police to fire and arrest the freedom fighters. At places like Sangli, Ichalkaranji, Satara, Tasgaon and at many other important places there were a number of arrests and beatings by the police.

Thus, Maharashtra, like other parts of India, opened its glorious chapter of Indian history. The people of Maharashtra including women responded to the "Quit India" movement rigorously. Everyone participated in that movement as a Congress volunteer. All people came forward and held their responsibility successfully though the Government was arresting

people on a large scale. Government actions did not affect the courage and valour of the people.

The prominent women from Maharashtra like Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Metha of Bombay, Rajmati Patil, Lilavati Patil, of Satara, Bhagirathibai Tambat, and Jayabai Haveri of Kolhapur headed the movement. The Parallel Government was established in Satara under the leadership of Nana Patil. The Parallel Government known as Prati Sarkar- Patrisarkar, worked successfully in the talukas of Khanapur, Tasgaon, Walva, Miraj, Budhagaon from the period 1943 to 1946 under the leadership of Nana Patil. The participation of women in it was unique one and because of them the Parallel Government became successful in Satara district. Rajmati Patil alias Tai Aitawadekar played a very important role in it.

ATTITUDE OF SOCIETY TOWARDS WOMEN AGITATORS:

For the first time in the history of India, women boldly participated in the freedom movement of India. The attitude of the Congress workers and co-workers towards women was sympathetic and co-operative. Due to this co-operation women could participate whole heartedly in the struggle for India's complete freedom distributing proscribed literature, supplying arms and ammunition, looking after the underground workers and taking any work courageously and confidently. But so far as their family members and neighbours are concerned,
the women freedom fighters got very little sympathy and cooperation. Even the neighbours warned their children not to play with the children of women freedom fighters. Many a time, being a wife of freedom fighter, women had to suffer a lot when their respective husbands were in jail. They had to look after home and at the same time to continue their work for nation's cause. But such difficulties could not with-hold the courage and work of the women freedom fighters. Besides unfavourable attitude of the society the women freedom fighters gave fight whole heartedly against the British, reached their goal to free their motherland on the 15th August 1947 A.D.