WOMEN IN THE EARLY PHASE OF FREEDOM MOVEMENT:

One of the most important consequences of the British Rule has been the birth and growth of a spirit of Nationalism. Though 'nation' in the modern sense of the word in Europe, 1 emerged at the close of the middle age, the emergence of India as a nation is new one. It came into being during the British period as a result of the action and interaction of numerous subjective and objective forces and factors which developed the Indian Society under the conditions of the British rule and impact of world forces. While discussing the term "nation" what Ramsay Muir has said was applicable to India in the later half of the 19th century. According to him,

"a nation may be provisionally defined as a body of people who feel themselves to be naturally linked together by certain affinities which are so strong and real for them that they can live happily together, are dissatisfied when disunited, and cannot tolerate subjection to peoples who do not share these ties".

The British rule in India was motivated naturally by the considerations of the British interests. This brought

Britain into conflict with the Indian people and the various classes and groups composing it in varying degree, since the interests of the later collided with the British interests. Political Nationalism was the outcome of the conflict of interests and it gave birth to various political movements in the country. The political movements embodied the striving of Indian people and its various sections to secure political power which they could use to serve their respective social, economic and other interests.

Further, the Indian people, as a whole, recognised the British rule as an alien rule, which barred their normal social, economic and cultural development. The national sentiment was also spontaneously aroused among the people, who were ruled by a foreign nation since this rule imposed basic handicaps on the free development of the subject nation.

NATIONALISM PRIOR TO 1885:

Though, Indian nationalism as an organized movement developed during the last decades of the 19th century, its first spouting were visible in the beginning of that century. Secular Political organisations such as the British Indian Society were established in 1843 and the British Indian Association, which resulted out of the

amalgamation of the few existing political groups in the country in 1851, also sprang up during this early period.

These early political groups, which embodied the first feeble beginning of the rise of Indian political nationalism were composed of a few individuals and lacked a popular basis. They could not also exist on all India scale because the difficulties like, one language, communication etc., became hindrance in the way of the unity of people. As soon as these problems were solved, although in a very slow process, it became easier for early pioneer Indians to establish contacts with their brethren in the distant parts of their country. Indian nationalism as an organised all India movement came into existence only in the last decades of the last century when proper historical conditions matured for its birth.

The first agitation against the British administration was organised on 29th August, 1844 in Surat, against the increased salt-tax. On that day, about thirty thousand Hindus gathered and made the shop-keepers in the city to close their shops. They further filed a suit in the Court of Law against the Government. Next day, the Muslims also joined the Hindus and the mob became so violent that the British officers, unable to protect their own lives, had to take shelter at the Fort of Surat. On the third day also, the agitation was continued and the Government as

well as the judges had to withdraw the law of increased
salt-tax, for maintaining peace in the city.

Naturally, the Governor was to impose the said tax only after receiving orders from the parliament.

The Manav Dharma Sabha which was established on 22nd June 1844 under the leadership of Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadkar and which was the base of Param Hansa Sabha established later in Bombay, discussed the issue of salt-tax. The members of the organisation expressed their views for and against it, when Dadoba Pandurang and one of his colleagues, Durgaram Metaji stated that it was the right of the public to fight against injustice and they could not only fine such king but withdraw him and had a new king. The incident clearly shows that the feeling of nationalism with a very narrow basis had emerged in the first half of the 19th century.

Shortly after the Manav Dharma Sabha, the Bombay Association, the first political organisation in Maharashtra was established on 26th August 1852 under the presidentship of Jagannath Shankar Shet at Bombay. The organisation sent a petition against the administration of the East India Company to the Parliament. The leaders of the organisation

9. Ibid., P.247.
10. Ibid., P.379.
expressed their views in such a sound way that the intellelegntia of England could understand the ability and expectations of Indian people. Many of the contemporary English journals appreciated the petition filed by the Indians. The 'Spectator' wrote thus:

"The petition was not long, though it is full of matter. It is not querulous in the old Indian style, no rhetorical, not eloquent against 'grievance' or 'oppression' but it is remarkable for dealing with imperfections in the existing state of Anglo-Indian Government in a plain matter-of-fact style, and for offering practical, suggestions rather illustrate principles than to enforce dogmatic demands. Nothing could be more sensible."

The "Leader" another English newspaper appreciated the style of asking for participation in the administration and called it as political agitation. While commenting on that petition it stated, "

"The petition has been transmitted to this country and the movement which it has originated to prove that the people of Bombay not with-standing their diversities of race, are actually fitting themselves to receive if not to exert a due share of self-government, under the British institutions and now we find the natives, not begging like spaniels, at the feet of their masters, but conducting a political agitation, with money and moderation."

12. The Leader, January, 15th, 1853, Ibid., P.381-82.
The "Lancent", a six monthly medical journal also appreciated the petition while writing about Dr. Bhau Daji Lad, the secretary of the said Association. It stated,

"He was the secretary and in a great measure the founder of the Bombay Reform Association, the good sense, the good taste, and moderation of whose petitions elicited the universal approval of Parliament even when declining to assent the views they expressed".

It seems that the institution was under the strict attention of the British, as the Government always felt that the activities of the Association were detrimental to the British power. As such, it was difficult to continue the activities of the Association and soon it was closed after 1858. However, attempt was again made by the great nationalists like Phirozshaha Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, Justice Kashinath Teleng, and was brought again to the life at the beginning of 1885.

Though, at the beginning the emancipation of women was not aimed at by the Indian National Congress, Allen Octavian Hume, the Secretary directed in his opening speech

13. The Bombay Reform Association was established in P.
15. Ibid.
16. Allen Octavian Hume was a son of Joseph Hume and was born in 1829. He entered the Bengal Civil Service in 1849 and served in the North West Province as Commission of the Indian Customs. Secretary of Government of India, in the Revenue and Agricultural Department. He was a member of Board of revenue, N.W.P. in 1879. In the uprising of 1857 he was a magistrate of Itawah, N.W.P. He retired in 1882-Kaur, Manmohan., Role of Women in the Freedom Movement(1857-1947) Sterling Publishers, Pvt.Ltd., Jullandar, 1968,P.84.
at the first conference, that the efforts of the political enfranchisement would be in vain without the progress of women. While stressing the point he stated that:

"Political reforms of all shades of opinion should never forget that unless the elevation of female elements of the nation proceeds 'Peri Pasu' with equal pace with the work, all their labour for political enfranchisement will prove vain".

Madam Bhikajji Rustum K.R. Cama was present as a Spectator for the first Indian National Conference. But it was Sir Charles Bradlaugh, a member of the British Parliament and a sympathiser of India's cause, resulted in women attendance in the Indian National Congress and made the Indians to allow women to share Indian Politics. In 1889, he wrote to some Indian leaders and Pandita Ramabai regarding the participation of women in the Indian National Congress held at Bombay. And we notice that, in the same year no fewer than ten lady delegates under the leadership of Pandita Ramabai graced the assembly.

One of them was elected by men at a public meeting, the others by various ladies' associations, viz. the women Christian Temperance Union, the Bengal Ladies Association.

17. Weddernburn, William., A.O. Hume– The Father of Indian National Congress, Pegasus(India), New Delhi, 1913, P.64.
and the Arya Mahila Samaj. They included European and
Native Christians, a Parsi, an orthodox Hindu and three
Brahmo Samaj ladies. With one exception they were the
ladies who had for years done good work for India. It is
sufficient to mention Pandita Ramabai, who was well known
for her good work in India as well as in Europe and America.
Miss. S. Manockjee Cursetjee, the lady directress of the
well known Alexandra Girls' school. Mrs. (Dr.) Emma Brainerd
Ryder, who, travelling for health came to India with
Ramabai, was the organiser of Sorosis Club, a literary and
artistic association for Indian ladies, which was already
doing much good. She had also formed a Women's Technical
Education Association to give some kind of industrial
training to young native females who left widows and
unprovided for, would, in default of some occupation by
which to earn an honest livelihood, drift into evil courses.
Mrs. Trimbuck Shevantlibai Canaran had, with her husband,
devoted her entire life to the cause of education and by
beginning in an unamusing way new directrs, with happiest
results, a whole congeries of schools, day, night and
Sunday schools. This lady though a Christian, as her father,
was of pure Brahmin descent and alike physically and mentally,
exemplified the highest type of Aryan.

19. 1. Zaidi, Amain and Zaidi, Zahida., The Encyclopaedia
of Indian National Congress, S. Chand and Co., 1976,
New Delhi, PP. 327-28.
and Biography (Marathi), popular Prakashan, Poona, 1960,
P. 118.
Mrs. Kashibai Kanitkar, was the only Hindu lady from an orthodox Brahmin family. She was a joint editor with her husband Mr. Kanitkar, of the Marathi magazine 'Manoranjan' and the authoress of well known Marathi life of late lamented Dr. Anandibai Joshi. Mrs. Nikambé of Hindu patronage, the Christian wife of an well-known minister, she devoted much of her time to the work of education both secular and religious.

Mrs. Ghosal, better known by her maiden title of Swarna Kumari Devi, the grand daughter of Dwarkanath Tagore and Sister of Rabindranath Tagore was also present for the conference from Bengal. She had been for years the editor and chief writer in the 'Bharati', a Bengali magazine of ladies, which had done much to expand the minds and raise the mental standard of the Bengal women. Dr. Miss Jessie Royce Carleton, a young doctor from Umballa and Mrs. Gangoli nee Kadambini Bose, the most distinguished lady graduate from Calcutta University were the other women who participated in the Conference.

This was the first attempt of Indian women to attend the Indian National Congress and this could be called as the beginning of the real participation of Indian women in the national movement.

20. Ibid.
PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE ACTUAL MOVEMENT:

After the participation of women in the first Indian National Congress we do not come across any political activities of women till 1905, i.e., the participation of Bengal. After the participation a great wave of national spirit was spread all over the country. The problem of Hindu-Muslim unity was of greater importance and both the sections of people had come together to show their unity against the strong efforts of British policy of divide and rule. In that turmoil women of India understood their responsibility and moved ahead with patriotic zeal to share responsibilities of national unity and fight against the British. Almost all provinces in India saw women enthusiastic for standing firm with men nationalists in India. In the provinces of Bengal, Punjab and upper India, women patriots prepared themselves to join the national movement and bear the consequences of their participation, there of.

EARLY ACTIVITIES OF WOMEN OF BENGAL, PUNJAB AND OTHER PROVINCES:

In the province of Bengal, as Bengal was the headquarter of the British Empire and Calcutta was the capital city of India, there was every time new wind and new currents of national thought and national programme. As a result of that, educated Bengali women used to compete with their counterpart of European ladies in Bengal. Every time
there was a kind of zeal and enthusiasm to compete with the European women in every walk of life. The women of Bengal always felt that they were not less than the European ladies. From the very beginning of 20th century and even prior to that, Bengali women began to take active part in the national movement and struggle for freedom.

Some of the women leaders like Swarna Kumari Devi, and her daughter Sarla Devi, Choudhurani, Kumudini Mittar and many others were on the forefront of the national movement, and were carrying on the message of Swadeshi movement to the women of Bengal. They were arranging meetings to propagate the significance of spinning wheels and other Swadeshi goods or national goods. It was quite evident, therefore, that introduction of spinning wheels in the national movement was done quite earlier to the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi in Indian politics. It was against this situation that Valentine Chirol rightly commented that:

"The revolt seems to have obtained a firm hold of the Zanana... and the Hindu Woman behind the purdah often exercises a greater influence upon her husband and sons than the English woman who moves freely about the world.... In Bengal even small boys of tender age as still to have run of zanana have, I am told, been taught the pattern, of sedition and go about from house to house dressed up as little Sanyasis in the little yellow robes preaching hatred of English."

22. Ibid., P.96.
The movement known as Swadeshi movement, although, got momentum only after the partition of Bengal. It had roots in the pre-partition period also and so after the annual Session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta in 1906, the movement was spread to all the important places in India. The weapon of boycott was gradually used to disapprove the stand of the British and their beaurocratic repression in India. When male community was arranging its activities against the British, the women of India also joined to share responsibilities with their male brethren in India. It is true, that, though among the women of India there was no mass awakening, many of the women joined the national struggle with the same spirit and enthusiasm as male community in India. Looking at this phase of awakened women in India Lady Macdonald, the wife of Ramsay Macdonald, who visited India during the first decade of this century, rightly observed that,

"There was movement going on amongst the women. We are fond of lebeling the Indian aspirations as sedition when if they were amongst ourselves we should call them patriots. The movement seems to be spreading as much amongst women as amongst men. There was no mass awakening amongst the women at this time but there was some sort of movement spreading slowly in them".

SARLA DEVI CHOUDHURANI (1872-1945):

Sarla Devi Choudhurani was one of the prominent personages, who formed a link between Punjab and Bengal revolutionaries. She was the niece of the great poet and nationalist, Rabindranath Tagore, and was born in 1872. Her mother Swarna Kumari Devi was an ardent worker of the Swadeshi's cause.

The spirit of patriotism was imbibed in Sarla Devi by her mother. Her work, from the year 1897, when she took over the editorship of "Bharati", a Bengali journal, which she edited up to the year 1899, is of great significance. Through this journal she preached the Hindu-Muslim unity because unity amongst all classes alone could oust the foreigners. At the Seventh, Session of the Indian National Congress, a song composed by Sarla Devi invoking the people of different provinces of the country to join hands in the national struggle was sung in chorus.

She opened a shop named "Laxmi Bhandar" for popularising Swadeshi goods. In 1904, she won the gold medal for exhibiting improved kinds of textures.

Sarla Devi not only propagated Swadeshi but gave a new life to the "Suhrid Samiti" which was established in 1901 as a benevolent institution in Mymonshingh District of Bengal. After 1905, when the organisation secured

guidance of Sarla Devi, it became a political organisation. The members were well trained in religious ceremonies, speeches, songs, participation in political meetings and demonstrations and they had physical training too. Sarla Devi was looked upon as their leader and she continued to "exert powerful influence from Lahore" after her marriage.

Miss Kumudini Mitter was another Bengali woman who was very active during the period. She was the daughter of Kristo Mitter, a renowned nationalist. She organised a group of educated Brahmin women for maintaining an illegal liaison between the different revolutionary leaders who were watched by the police. The women's organisation also helped in the circulation of revolutionary leaflets and literature. She also preached the cause of the extremists through 'Suprabhat' a Bengali magazine, which propagated the cult of revolution.

Like women of Bengal, the women of Punjab, especially, the women workers of Arya Samaj were also responsible for arousing national spirit among the people. Smt. Purani, who was working for Arya Samaj was a prominent worker of the period. Another woman of the period was Hari Devi,

27. Sarla Devi was married to a popular Arya Samajist and well-known nationalist leader the late Ram Bhoj, Dutta Choudhary in 1905. - Ibid.
28. Kaur, Manmohan., Ibid.
wife of Roshan Lai, Barrister of Lahore, who was a great social reformer and editor of a Hindi magazine 'The Bharat Bhagini', also joined the rank of political workers. During this period she arranged meetings and collected funds for the purpose of assisting anarchists under trial.

Agyavati in Delhi was another woman who took interest in the movement. She addressed both men and women and described the part played by women in the past history of India. She urged that until women were educated and took interest in the welfare of the country, there was little chance for India to make real progress. She was reported to be a "very old woman".

PIONEER WOMEN FREEDOM FIGHTERS IN MAHARASHTRA:

Like the women movement in Bengal and Punjab, a movement of women was also started in Maharashtra. It would be right to say that politically the participation of women in Maharashtra was started in 1889, when they first attended the Indian National Congress. But the participation of women in the true sense started right from the beginning of the Swadeshi movement, that is, after the Congress of Benaras. Mr. B.G. Tilak and his followers popularised the Swadeshi movement in Maharashtra. The concept of Swadeshi was not new to Maharashtra as it was

first stated by Lokhitwadi before 1850. After that in 1870, due to the efforts of Vasudev Balawant Joshi alias Sarvajanik Kaka and Justice Ranade the movement became popular by opening co-operative Swadeshi stores in cities of Maharashtra. But after 1905, the movement became vigorous and many prominent women of Maharashtra participated in it. Madam Cama, Savai Ambutai Vaidya, Yashodabai Bhat, Avantikabai Gokhale and many others played a very important role in the pre-Gandhian era of the national movement of India. A brief account of their individual roles can be given as follows:

MADAM BHIKAIJI RUSTUM K.R. CAMA (1861-1939):

While women in India and Maharashtra involved first in the national cause during the Swadeshi movement, some Indian women were busy in making the national freedom movement popular in abroad. Most important of those who worked for the revolutionary activities were Mrs. Shyamji Krishna Varma, Miss M. Chattopadyaya, the sister of Narendra Datta Chattopadyaya, Miss Perin Naoroji, grand daughter of Dadabhai Naroji and Madam Cama. The last name was among the top ranking leaders of the revolutionary party in Europe.

Madam Cama was born on 24th September 1861.


in a rich Parsi family of Bombay. Her parents, Mr. Jiyaji and Mrs. Sorabji Patel looked after her education. She completed her secondary education in Alexandra Native Girls Institution. Though, Cama could not get university education, she acquired mastery over various languages like English, Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati. At that time cricket was the game of rich Parsi women, and Cama was a good cricket player. On August 3rd 1885 she married to Rustum Kurshid Cama, a soliciter, who came from a rich and reformist Cama family of Bombay.

Dadabhai's nationalism and criticism on the British Government impressed Madam Cama much as well as initiated her to take interest in politics. As a result, she was present as a spectator at the First Indian National Congress held at Bombay in 1885.

Madam Cama could not continue her married life for a long time. Within a short period after marriage she came to know about the illegitimate relations of her husband with a Parsi woman. Madam Cama tried her level best to change the behaviour of husband but as she failed in it, she left her husband in 1887 when she was only 27 years of age.

34. Ibid., P.119.
Cama's public life started since 1887 when she ended her married life. In October, 1896 plague spread over Bombay. Parsi Fever Hospital was opened by the Parsi Community to help the plague patients, in which Madam Cama became honourary nurse with her other colleagues like Shirinbai Framji Patak, Gulab Naoroji Patak, Batubai Khambata etc. In 1899 at the second time of plague epidemics, she herself became a prey but she was recovered and left India to Europe in 1902 to improve her health.

Madam Cama spent three years in Germany, Scotland and France before settling in London in 1906. These wanderings were perhaps a prelude to her political career. By the time she was back in London, where the seed of revolutionary party had already been sown by patriots like Shyamji Krishna Varma and others.

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35. Ibid., P.121.
36. Shyamji Krishna Varma was born at Mandvi in Cutch State. On 4th October 1857. In 1879, he went to England. After being called to the Bar he came back to India in 1885. He went again to England in 1897 but came to be known only when he started his paper, "Socialist" in 1905 and the India House and had a good claim to be regarded as the founder of Indian Revolutionary Movement abroad—Home Department, Political Confidential Proceeding No.169, December 1914. He died on 30th March 1930 in Geneva—See for Details Joshi, V.S. Op.Cit., PP.1 to 115.
CAMA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT:

In London Madam Cama came into contact with the British socialists like Hindman, Tom Mann, Ker Hardy etc., who were strong supporters of India. The friendship with Hindman helped Madam Cama to establish contacts with Russian revolutionaries like Vora Ginger, Cropatkin etc., who escaped to London and with some French, German, Irish and Egyptian extremists also. With the help of these nationalists she supplied to Indian extremists the revolvers concealed in toys ostensibly sent as Christian Presents. By nature she was not a revolutionary but due to the despotic behaviour of the British Government she turned over to extremism. At the same time she became the member of the "Free India Society," which was established by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in 1906.

During the next eight months she expressed her extremist thoughts through the lectures which drew attention of the British Government. As England wanted

37. Henry Moyer Hindman was one of the international extremist socialists and edited the paper 'Justice' which was the only paper of socialists of England and continued for more than 20 years Joshi, V.S., Op.Cit., P.119.
38. Ibid., P.125.
39. Home Department, Political B-Secret Proceeding No.18, Jan. 1911.
40. Home Department, Political Confidential proceeding No.1 of July 1913.
41. The Free India Society, was established by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar shortly after his arrival in London for higher studies. It was a branch of "Abhinava Bharat Society", one of the secret organisations, of India, and was started by Shri Babarao Savarkar, brother of Shri V.D. Savarkar in 1906 at Nasik-Joshi, V.S., Op.Cit., P.125 also refer to Deshpande D.N. Krantiveer Babarao Savarkar Shrividya Prakashan, Poona 1979, P.69.
to stop her activities, the Department of 'India Office' and the Department of Foreign Affairs of the British Government politely advised her to leave Britain. But as she turned a deaf ear to the suggestion, the Government warned her that the Government would take action, if she did not leave Britain.

It is because of this law and order from the British Government that Madam Cama was forced to leave England and went to France. It is because of her friend, Barrister Rana who was settled in Paris, she stayed in Paris for one year. There she established the society known as the "New India Society" and this society became famous by the name of "Paris Indian Society". With the help of this society she made a propaganda against the British rule in India and the harrassment done by the British.

In 1907, the Indian Government imposed the Regulation Act of 1818 to supress the nationalist movement. During the period people in Panjab opposed the Bill of Taxation, which was about to come and the Government thought that if, the leaders like Lala Lajapat Rai, Sardar Ajit Singh were arrested the movement would perish and accordingly, the leaders were not only arrested but deported to Mandalay.

New India Society was established under the presidency of K.R. Kotwal, a Parsi, with the aim of uniting various Indian nationalists. The other members of the society were P.D. Mehta, B.H. Godrej, M.P.T. Acharya, H.M. Shaha, and C.D. Varma-Joshi, V.S., Ibid.
on 9th May and 2nd June, 1907 respectively. Lala Lajapt Rai was a great potriot and was known all over India and to Indians outside India also. Naturally, there were repercussions of his arrest on the Indians in India and abroad.

Barrister Rana arranged a public meeting in Paris against the deportation of the leaders. While explaining the aim of the meeting he stated, thus:

"To condemn the very despotic action of the British Government in deporting Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh from Lahore without giving them a trial and to congratulate at the same time, the two patriots on their great and glorious sacrifice in the service of the country."

This was just two days after the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and it made France aware of the fact that Indians would not be cowed by such an act of deportation.

There in that meeting, while expressing her feelings Madam Cama asked Indian people to be courageous and follow the path of Lala Lajpat Rai as British had very few jails or places for either confining or deporting Indian people. Indian people to be self-respected and follow the principle of non-cooperation against the British rule and such acts

43. Ibid., P.127.
44. Ibid., P.45.
of nation-love, according to her, would bring the days of freedom nearer. At the end of her speech she read a pamphlet which she had prepared on the issue, in which she inspired Indians of all castes and creeds to unite for the fight against the despotic rule. She expressed her feelings thus:

"I wish, I could break open the very prison doors and bring out Lala Lajapat Rai.... We are three hundred millions. It is only unity we require." The copies of the pamphlet were distributed, later on 7th June, 1907.

There was a meeting on the same issue in England arranged by 'India House' where the Pamphlet of Cama was read and distributed.

45. Ibid., PP.127-129.

46. Ibid., P.45.

47. Shyamji Krishna Varma declared five travelling fellowships of Rs.2000 each in memory of Herbert Spencer, an American Sociologist, in 1905. Spencer advocated that there was no wrong in the efforts of Indians to free India, as British thought that Indians were for Anglo-Indians. In memory of this friend of India the fellowship was declared but as there was no good and reasonable accommodation for Indians who went to London with this fellowship, Shyamji built up a building which had great impress on the freedom movement of India. and was became popular by the name of India House. The building was three storied and was accomplished for 50 Indian students. It was consisted of lecture hall, room and library on the same and one storey. Various nationalists like Savarkar Vinyak Damodar, Lala Har Dayal, Madan Lal Dhingra, Apte Pandurang etc. stood there. Ibid., Pp.27.

48. Ibid., P.130.
MADAM CAMA AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONGRESS (1907):

Madam Cama took opportunity of the International Socialist Congress held at Stutguard in Germany, in August 1907, to acquaint the gathering with the conditions prevailing in India. Her speech on the memorable occasion dealt with dumb millions of Hindustan who were under going the terrible tyrannies under the British capitalism and the British Government. She expressed how people of India were losing their life in poverty due to the economic policy of the British rule and put forth the following resolution,

"The continuance of British Rule in India is positively disastrous and extremely injurious to the best interests of Indians and lovers of freedom all over the world ought to co-operate in freeing from the fifth of the whole human race."

It was in this Congress that for the first time the Indian National Flag—a trio colour—green, yellow and red with the words "Bande Mataram" in the middle band was unfurled by Madam Cama. She said thus:

"This is the flag of Indian independence. Behold it is born. It is already sacrificed by the blood of Indian martyrs. I call upon you gentlemen to rise and Salute the flag."

49. Home Department Political-B. Secret Proceeding No.18, January 1911.
51. Home Department, Political Confidential proceeding No.1 of July 1913.
By hearing these words all the members of the Congress rose up and respected the flag. Thus Indian flag of independence was unfurled abroad for the first time, and Madam Cama was the heroine of the Indian Revolution abroad.

**CAMA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM FROM AMERICA:**

After the International Congress, Madam Cama left for America for one year to torch the vigorous campaign for winning the sympathy of the people of America. She reached New York on 19th October 1907. Here in America the arrangement for her accommodation was made by Prof. S.L. Joshi, a converted Hindu and professor of Oriental Languages. There in New York, she was crossed by pressmen as how she would succeed to overthrow the despotic rule. She told that,

"By passive resistance. We are peaceful people and unarmed. We can rise and battle if we could. We are preparing our people for concentrated resistance".

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52. Smual Lucas Joshi was a son of Lucus Malaba Joshi, a father of Nasik, who completed his graduation and served as English professor for some period in Baroda College. In 1902 he came to America for higher studies. He acquired M.A. Degree in Economics and Sociology from Columbia University. He completed three years course in religion and stayed in America after that for six years. Like other Indians in abroad Joshi also impressed by free environment of America and participated in the freedom movement of India-Joshi, V.S., Op.Cit., PP. 143-44.

53. Home Department, Political B. History Sheet of Madam Cama, August 1913, No.61.
During her stay in America she started delivering lectures in public meetings and writing in newspapers regarding freedom movement of India. In a meeting once, she was asked about the aim of her movement. She told confidently that to obtain Swaraj or Self-government was her sole aim. She further told them that India would get freedom within ten years as there was rapid increase in the patriots. She put forth the picture of Indian people under the despotic rule of the British. She described how leaders were deported and treated inhumanly and at the end she asked America to help for the freedom of India.

Madam Cama was the first Indian woman-ambassador of the people of India to the United Nations.

After returning from America she went to England. There, she addressed to India House, when she justified the force and said that it was not wrong to use the force if one was forced to use it. She stressed that freedom struggle called for exceptional measure and that the successful revolution against foreign rule was patriotism. Finally, she inspired the youth of India thus by giving them the message,

"March forward, friends and lead to your helpless dying, down-trodden children of motherland to the goal of Swaraj in its right sense. Let our motto be we are all for India, India for Indians".

54. Ibid. P.145.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid. PP.150-51.
The lectures delivered by Madam Cama were treated as proclamation of freedom movement of India. She got them printed and sent to India through Pondicherry.

In 1910, she started the well known journal "Bande Mataram" in Paris, which was not only popular in India but also found the way to Egypt, America and in many parts of Europe. When in 1910, the Indian Government imposed the Press Act, Madam Cama wrote in the issue of her journal on 1st March, 1910 that the Act was a confession on the revolutionary party. She added that people should recognise the importation of revolutionary literature in India from foreign countries and explained in her journal that the centre of gravity of political workers had shifted from Calcutta, Poona and Lahore to Paris, Geneva, Berlin, London and New York.

Madam Cama was fully confident of attaining the goal of Swaraj in near future. In one of her articles in 1911 she appealed to the Indians in Europe to make the best use of their stay in the West by participating in the struggle for freedom and for such a strong as well as successful participation they should be fully trained in the military art.

57. Ibid. p.158
58. Ibid. p.167
59. Ibid.
ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN:

Madam Cama was the first woman, who fought for the equal contribution of women. As she was confidant of the potentialities of the women, while addressing at the Egyptian National Congress at Brusells in 1910 she said, "That soft hand is the chief factor in the national life. So do not neglect that powerful hand". She wanted women to share all responsibilities, sufferings and sorrows of their country men. She wished that women should join the nation's cause and make Indian women eligible and according to her, for that upliftment of women was necessary.

The great patriot died on 13th August, 1939 at Bombay. This brave lady, who sacrificed everything for the liberation of motherland and spent practically the whole of her life in exile on a far off land, was amongst the pioneers of the freedom struggle.

FOLLOWERS OF MADAM CAMA:

Many women from Parsi community were inspired by the work of Madam Cama. Jerbanu Patel the, sister-in-law of Madam Cama was one of them. She had close contacts with Sir G.L. Chandavarkar, who was justice in Bombay High-Court. He was one of the judges' bench who sentenced

life imprisonment to V.D. Savarkar in the Jackson murder case. When Jerbanu came to know about it she cut off all her contacts with justice Chandavarkar.

Perin Ben Naoroji the grand daughter of Dadabhai Naoroji, later Perin Ben Captain, was another Parsi woman who was inspired by the revolutionary party. In 1910, Perin Ben visited London. On 22nd August she went to Paris where she met Lala Hardayal, a colleague of Madam Cama.

Both of them visited Cama who was busy in organising Indian and Egyptian revolutionaries. Perin Ben got opportunity to hear the revolutionary thoughts of Madam Cama which transformed her into a revolutionary.

Perin Ben with full of revolutionary ideas came back to India in December 1910. Here she got opportunity for revolutionary action. By that time the tyranny of the British Government had become the order of the day. As a result, Perin Ben became very indignant and planned to shoot Sedneyham, the Governor of Bombay. Arrangement was made to supply revolvers. But the plan could not be materialized. Later, Perin Ben participated in the Civil disobedience movement of 1930 in Bombay. She was sentenced three months' imprisonment.

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62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., P.176.
64. Ibid. P.181.
65. Home Departments Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930, Bombay city and other Districts, File No.75(22)-B.
The second eminent nationalist during the period was Satyabhamabai from Satara. Her husband was one of the eminent personalities of Satara. Though, we could not get details about her personal life, it is true that she had accepted Swadeshi in her personal life. She had completed her education in homeopathy. She participated for more than forty years in the social and educational development of Satara.

She had a good hold on the Congress organisation of Satara during 1915 to 1920. She inspired the organisation as well as a number of men from Satara who joined the nation's cause. She did a great deal of constructive work in Satara.

In 1920, Ghanekar brothers, Bhide teacher and Dr. Satyabhamabai together started a national school, known as New English School, a branch of Deccan Education Society, in Satara. Afterwards, the school developed on account of the help of land and money, supplied by Satyabhamabai. She did a great deal of social work especially medical service among the downtrodden people of Satara. With this work she put forth the ideal of social equality and tried to eradicate caste barriers among the people of Satara.

YESUBAI BABARAO SAVARKAR (1883-1918):-

Yesubai Savarkar, the sister-in-law of an eminent nationalist, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who was popularly known as Yesuvahini in Maharashtra was one of the pioneer women of Maharashtra in the early phase of the freedom movement of India.

She was a niece of Nanarao Phadake, a Brahmin from Trimbakeshwar and was married to Babarao Saverkar, elder brother of Vinayak Savarkar, at an early age. Yesubai was inspired by the work of her husband, Babarao and co-operated him whole-heartedly.

In Maharashtra, Babarao had started to organise youths of Nasik which resulted in the establishment of Mitra-Samaj, a friends' club in 1901. It was later developed into "Abhinav Bharat", the first revolutionary organisation of Maharashtra. Under the leadership of Babarao the terrorist activities in Maharashtra were conducted by the Abhinav Bharat Society.

YESUBAI AND ATMANISHTHA YUVATI SANGHA:-

Babarao was of the opinion that women should also come forward and contribute to the cause of nation. In Nasik because of his efforts the "Atmanishtha Yuvati Sangha", a unique ladies' association of Maharashtra was established

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68. Gokhale, D. N., Krantiveer Babarao Savarkar, (Marathi), Shrividya Prakashan, Poona, 1979, P.68.
69. Ibid., PP. 42, 46.
in 1905. It was established in the Mansion of Mr. Vartak, under the presidency of Laxmibai Khare of Nasik. But it was Yesubai, under whose guidance the organisation became stable and the membership rose up to 50 to 60, within a short span of time.

The organisation helped to popularise the Swadeshi movement and created political awakening among the women of Nasik. The members gathered every Friday evening. The main activity of the organisation was the reading of news-paper by which they could get political information of the day-to-day incidents. The organisation performed birth-anniversaries of heroes like Shivaji, Rani Laxmibai. It also performed religious celebrations like Makar Sankrant, and Dasara, when all women from Nasik were invited. On such occassions the opportunity was taken to acquaint the women with the new ideas of Swadeshi and boycott. As a result, the women were accustomed to the new thoughts and started singing patriotic songs instead of cradle songs for their babies. The members of the organisation used to throw off the foreign sugar, which they got on the occasion of Vermillion programme during the Makar Sankrant festival.

70. Ibid., P.68.
71. Ibid., PP.68, 160.
We come across an ideal Hindu wife in the life of Yesubai. From 1905 onwards, with her husband, Yesubai also devoted her life to the nation's cause. She stuck up with the oath of Swadeshi till her death. She left use of the sugar since Swadeshi sugar was not available, then.

Though, the bangles made of glass was and is the sign of wedded women, Yesubai as well as a number of women in cities like Poona, Nasik boycotted the use of bangles, as glass was a foreign product. During the period of Swadeshi movement, Swadeshi glass factory was established at Talegaon, in Poona district with the aid of public fund known as Paisa Fund. Using Paisa Fund bangles which were produced in that glass factory was a sign of patriotism in those days and women mostly preferred them. Yesubai used her leisure time, which women got generally, in the afternoon to popularise the Swadeshi goods.


73. Paisa Fund Glass Factory was established by Sarvajanik Kaka, Dr. Nanasaheb Deshmukh and B.G. Tilak in March, 1908, in the Lacknow Congress of 1899 Antaji Damodar Kale represented his idea before the leaders of Congress of collecting from the people of India as one paisa per head. But his concept of Paisa Fund was over looked. Later he met Sarvajanik Kaka and B.G. Tilak in Poona and discussed the matter, B.G. Tilak propagated the idea through Kesari and people responded to it. Various Branches of Paisa Fund were established in Maharashtra. To donate for Paisa Fund became the sign of Patriotism.

CONTRIBUTION OF YESUBAI:

Being the wife of a revolutionary, Yesubai had to lead a very miserable life. The British Government wanted to destroy the national movement in India and as such the Government had a strict eye on the revolutionaries, which was automatically watching the revolutionary activities of Babarao in Nasik. The Government decided to arrest Babarao and soon it got the opportunity. Babarao was charged of starting war against the Government and was arrested and imprisoned in 1909.

After the arrest of Babarao, Yesubai behaved very courageously and diplomatically. She destroyed the hand made bombs which were kept by Babarao Savarkar in the house of Bhave at Kothur near Nasik. She became homeless as the police confiscated Babarao's house shortly after his arrest. At this critical moment Babarao's friends helped her, but being the wife of a freedom fighter she could not get shelter even from her maternal uncle. She had to face various difficulties during the period.

Yesubai, the first woman freedom fighter of Maharashtra died in 1918. In her last days, she asked permission from the Government to meet her husband, Babarao, who was

76. Ibid., PP. 164-67.
deported to Andman, but the permission was sanctioned three days after her death.

YASHODABAI BHAT:-

Yashodabai Bhat was one of the prominent women of Maharashtra who played an eminent role in the freedom movement of India, from Swadeshi movement to the non-cooperation movement, i.e. since 1908 to 1930.

Born in a village Bavdhan in Wai Taluka of Satara district, Yashodabai had education up to the fourth standard. She married at the age of fifteen to Mahaderae Bhat, a well-known advocate of Bombay.

Being the wife of an advocate she could have lived a luxurious life but she devoted all her life to the nation's cause. Her political life started in 1908. As she accepted the principle of Swadeshi, she left the use of foreign goods as sugar, bangles etc. Once to get the opinion of women regarding Swadeshi B.G. Tilak called for essays on the subject and the essay written by Yashodabai proved to be the best one. Though little educated, Yashodabai wrote about the role of women in nation building in various Marathi newspapers like Navaka\, Kesari, Mumukshu, Swadesh Samachar, and Indrprakash. Through these articles she insisted that women should come out of home and participate in the freedom movement of India.

77. Ibid., p.175.
78. Stree, January, 1936.
79. Ibid.
CONTRIBUTION OF YASHODABAI:

For seven years Yashodabai worked as a secretary to the Azad Hind Mahila Samaj, which was established by Avantikabai Gokhale in Bombay. She had the art of delivering Kirtanas which she used both for social, educational as well as political purposes. She delivered Kirtanas to collect contributions for many institutions like Shraddhanand Mahila Ashram in Bombay, Orphanage of Pandharpur, Swadeshi Sangh Hostel of the National Medical College. In 1930, she used her art of Kirtan for the Indian National Congress. She toured many places like Satara, Poona, Thana and delivered Kirtanas and collected an amount of thirteen hundred rupees for the use of the Congress. She was the first Marathi woman, to be the member of the Executive Committee of the Indian National Congress.

Mahatma Gandhi broke salt law on 6th April 1930 at Dandi and started Civil-dis-obedience movement all over the country. To suppress the movement the Government decided to arrest Gandhiji. He was arrested on 5th May 1930 at Karadi village and was promptly taken to Yeravda Jail. Hartal was observed all over the country in connection with the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi. There was

80. Stree, September 1936.
serious outbreak of non-violence in Sholapur and the
Government declared Martial Law to restore order and
regain control in the town. Yeshodabai went to Sholapur
and participated in flag Satyagrah. By this time she was
old but the police beat her severely. She did not leave
the flag from her hands. She was arrested and sentenced
one and half years' imprisonment. As she was ill in the
jail, the Superintendent of the jail decided to free her,
but she bravely answered that she could die for the nation
and regreted and refused to go out of the jail.

AVANTIKA BAI GOKHALE (1883-1949):

Avantikabai was one of the great personalities of
not only Maharashtra but of India. She was born in 1883
in Indore. Though she lived out of Maharashtra her parents
Vishnupant Joshi and Satyabhamabai were originally from
Tasgaon in Satara District of Maharashtra. She married
Baburao Gokhale, an engineer from Ratlam at the age of nine.
While going to foreign for higher studies, Baburao told
her parents to educate Avantikabai and education of
Avantikabai was started under the guidance of elder members
of the family. Within a year, she could read and write
Marathi and further she got the knowledge of English at
Surat, when her father-in-law was transferred there.

82. Stree, September, 1930 also refer to Apte, Radhabai,
83. Stree, November 1930.
While in foreign, Baburao was much impressed by the occupation of nursing and after coming back to India, he trained Mrs. Avantikabai in nursing. In 1913, Mrs. Avantikabai got an opportunity to go to England as a companion of Queen of Ichalkaranji. She stayed there for three months. During this period she visited various educational and social institutions and was much impressed by the sincerity and working capacity of the women there. This effected Avantikabai to begin with social work after coming back to India. She served in the educational institutions which were started by the Seva Sadan in Bombay and she began to mix-up with the working class women to understand their life and difficulties.

WORK IN CHAMPARAN:

Mrs. Avantikabai came into contact with Gandhiji for the first time in 1916, when she was present in Lucknow Congress with her husband and the very next year she started her work for the nation. In 1917, Mahatma Gandhi visited Champaran in Bihar where he observed the backwardness of the people. There, the people had to face the tyranny of the owners of Indigo plantations. Gandhiji started his first famous Satyagraha in 1917 in Champaran which forced the Government to look into the matter. At the same time Gandhiji proposed to improve the condition of the people in Ichalkaranji was a principality in the Kolhapur State, and after its merger in the union of India, the city and other parts of that principality are included in the Hatkanangale Taluk of the present Kolhapur district.

Stree, September, 1930.
Champaran and so he called the Congress workers from the various parts of India. From the Bombay Presidency four persons, Viz-Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale, Mrs. Anandibai Vaishampayan, Babasaheb Soman and Pundlikji Katgade were sent to Champaran. In Champaran two other ladies, namely, the wives of Mahadeo Desai and Narhari Parikh casted in the work of Kasturba Gandhi. Mrs. Avantikabai was the chief lieutenant.

Mrs. Avantikabai started schools in Champaran, some of which are still working. Working of these schools was different from those of regular schools. Emphasis was given on cleanliness and good habits. At night, she sang Bhajans for the villagers. Mrs. Avantikabai did a good deal of social work for the people of Champaran and she was respected by the name of "Mataji", i.e. mother, by the people of Champaran.

CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME AND AVANTIKABAI:

From 1920-21 onwards Mrs. Avantikabai was attracted by the non-cooperation movement and the spinning wheel became the constant companion of Mrs. Avantikabai. She would not let a single birthday of Mahatma Gandhi to go without offering him a piece of cloth woven by her. In the school of Bazharwa in Bihar, she and her husband taught the art of weaving to about forty women and would themselves clean

86. Apte, P.S., Gandhi-Darshan (Marathi) Anath Vidyarthi Graha Prakashan, Poona, 1948, PP.75-76.
87. Gandhi., M.K., My Experiment with Truth also refer to Pragatichya Nikashayar (Marathi) by Mrinalini Desai, Sadhana Prakashan Poona, 1977, P.P.49
88. Ibid., also refer to stree, November, 1930.
the village. Besides teaching she tried to abolish the purdah system, i.e., seclusion among the women of Champaran and villages round about it. While describing the importance of the work done by these ladies in Champaran Mahatma Gandhi states, "because of the work of Avantikabai, Kasturba and the other two ladies, it would be possible to reach the village women."

Mrs. Avantikabai used to spin five hundred yards every day and she strictly adhered to this rule under any circumstances. When she was courted jail in the non-co-operation movement she asked for spinning wheel in jail. She not only used self-woven Khadi for herself but tried to propagate for khadi during the period of 1922 to 31 when she was the member of the Bombay Corporation. She got two important resolutions passed regarding Swadeshi. The first was that pupils studying in the schools of the Corporation should be taught spinning and by the second resolution it was made compulsory that the members and servants of the Corporation must use Khadi. The Government offered her the post of Justice of Peace, but she rejected it saying that it was honorary and a kind of Government service. Mrs. Avantikabai was the only member of the

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91. Stree., Ibid.
92. Tivari, Vinayak., Adarsh Hind Mahila (Marathi), Vinus Prakashan, Bombay, 1974, P.64.
93. Ibid., P.68.
Corporation who attended all most all the meetings and tried for the upliftment of the backward classes. Her work in the Corporation was praised once in a general meeting by Mr. Claton, the Municipal Commissioner in the words that, the meeting had become prestigious due to Avantikabai only.

"Lokmanya Tilak was so impressed by the tireless work of Mrs. Avantikabai and her speech in the political conference held at Nasik that while delivering the presidential speech he praised her as "Sarojini of Maharashtra is being evolved".

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE MOVEMENT AND AVANTIKABAI:

The Montague-Chalsmford reforms could not satisfy the Indian National Congress and the nation wide movement of non-cooperation was continued. The British Parliament appointed a Committee of seven persons under the presidency of Simon, which was better known as Simon Commission and was consisted of all British persons. The Congress decided to boycott the Commission. A meeting of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress was held on 15th January 1928. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale were present at the meeting.

On 28th January, a public meeting of women was held in Bombay under the auspices of the Bombay Provincial

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96. Home Department Special. File No.143(k)-Pt.IV(a).
The meeting was presided over by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu when about seventy-five women were present. Speeches were delivered by Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Miss Bachchubai Lotvala, Mrs. Avantikabai, Miss Ratan Mehta, Saukat Ali, Vaman Gopal Joshi and R.S. Nimblkar appealing the women to help in making the hartal a success by including male members of their family in it and requesting them to suspend work on 3rd February. Avantikabai advised the ladies to refuse to cook food on that day if their men persisted on going to work.

In the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale was one of the leaders of War Council. There was a meeting conducted by Mrs. Avantikabai on the Azad Maidan at Bombay when women were lathi-charged by the police. The Government arrested them and left them in the jungle of Bhandup, a suburb of Bombay. Many a time, women had to face such torment from the police but in spite of all these difficulties Avantikabai, with her colleagues continued her work of arranging picketing, meetings, etc., very courageously. Many a time, she used to go in Bhendi Bazar along with Hansa ben Mehta for picketing.

97. Ibid., File No.143(k). Pt.IV(a) 173.
98. Ibid., File No.143(k). Pt.IV(a) 81,161.
99. Ibid.
Mrs. Avantikabai was arrested in the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930. She was sentenced six months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 450 or in default three months of imprisonment. She refused to pay the fine. Before going in jail, she appealed the women of Maharashtra to use Khadi and if not possible, use at least Swadeshi sarees instead of foreign ones.

**NON-COOPERATION MOVEMENT AND MARATHI WOMEN:**

The years following the First World War were the most outstanding in the annals of the freedom struggle in the sense that they set in motion and organised country-wide attempts to paralyse the foreign rule by boycotting the Government on essential things and launching Satyagraha movement i.e., passive resistance. It was probably due to this technique that the freedom movement, which was more or less a monopoly of the intellectuals, found a fertilized field amongst the masses of the country and invited the interest of all people especially the women who came forward to join the Satyagraha Army.

Gandhiji believed in the wisdom of co-operation with the Government. But soon he realised that his faith in the British Government was misplaced, especially due to the fact that the Government introduced Rowlatt.

100. Civil Disobedience Movement-Bombay City and Suburban District, Home Department Spl. File No. 750(22)-B.
101. Street, November, 1930.
Bill on March 17, 1919.

Gandhiji had already declared that he would start an agitation against the Bill passed, and advised the people to take pledge for disobeying it with truth and non-violence. After the Bill was passed, Gandhiji advised the people to observe Hartal against the Bill on 30th March 1919. While observing that Hartal, he insisted on three things which were easy to implement even for a common man and woman. They were common sea-bath, fast and hartal. Later the date of Hartal was changed to 6th April 1919.

The Act provoked widespread opposition. There was an impass and the leaders became helpless. Gandhiji saw a national wrong which could possibly be set only by his method of Satyagraha. Gandhiji advised the people to observe Hartal against the Bill on 30th March 1930. Later the date of Hartal was changed to 6th April 1930. Thus

On December 10, 1917, a Committee under the presidency of Justice Rowlatt was appointed to report on the nature and extent of the criminal conspiracies connected with the revolutionary movement in India and to suggest legislation which was necessary to meet their danger. On the recommendations of it, two Bills, were introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council in February, 1919 which were called as Rowlatt Bills after the name of the president. All the members in the Legislative Council opposed the Bills. The nationalist opinion feared that Bills would provide convenient tools in the hands of the Government to beat down even legitimate political agitation and to harrass the political workers—Aggarwala, R.N., *Op.Cit.*, PP. 129-30.
began the Rowlatt Satyagraha and it was an important stage in the growth of nationalism. This Satyagraha was the first country-wide agitation to be launched against the British Government. It transformed Indian nationalism from a class movement to mass movement.

The heart of the movement was the Bombay Presidency — the Bombay city and Ahmedabad. Gandhiji was elected the President of the Satyagraha Sabha. Among the 15 members like Jamnalal Bajaj, Justice K.T. Telang, R.N. Mandlik, Shankarlal Bankar and others there were two women, namely Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mrs. Avantikabai Gokhale. While observing that Hartal Gandhiji insisted on three things which were easy to implement even for a common man and woman. They were common sea-bath, fast and hartal. Mrs. Jaykar and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu arranged women's meeting in regard to the nature of Satyagraha.

105. The Home Rulers from Bombay and Ahmedabad met Gandhiji and from the meeting there emerged Satyagraha Sabha, an organ of the movement with head-quarters in Bombay. A manifesto containing the satyagraha pledge for its members was issued in the meeting, Choudhari, K.K., Maharashtra and Indian Freedom Struggle, Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, 1985, P.56.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid., P.57.
The Satyagraha began with the arrival of Gandhiji at Girgaum Chowpaty early in the morning. They were shortly joined by the Muslim Home Rulers, who arrived in procession with black banners. The women of Bombay came out of their seclusion probably for the first time, to join the mammoth gathering from sun-rise. They were in black saris as the day was to be observed as 'Black Sunday', a day of mourning—a mourning at the humiliation of the nation and sorrow at the enactment which was designed to curb the nationalist activity.

The hartal was resounding success as the Gathering swelled about one and half lakhs in which women were also participated on large scale.

Thus the Rowlatt Satyagraha was nevertheless, a great success in so far as it was the first mass movement teaching national decision. It was quite unprecedented as it drew the people belonging to different castes and religions and especially, women into the movement against the British Raj.

108. Ibid.
It was thus the Marathi women right from the Swadeshi Movement had contributed their might and played their role for the cause of India's liberation. One can really surprise to know that the Marathi women who were dumb and deaf in the last quarter of the 19th Century were awakened to play their role in the national politics in the first quarter of the present century. No doubt, there was much change and progress in the life of Marathi women as previously, they were simply house-wives and now they have become not only educated ladies but competent for equally capable with men to play their role in the life of nation.

So far the earlier life of Marathi women was concerned, it was very difficult to realise new change and rise of national spirit in Marathi women. At the beginning of British rule in Maharashtra, Marathi women were as earlier described in chapter I were just as dolls. But in the first quarter of the present century and there after a great change had come to their life. Their courage to attend conferences, seminars and meetings meant for and organised for male community was also praise-worthy and commendable as never before in Indian social life so many women at so many places freely and openly joined such seminars and meetings. This had both way helped to strengthen forces for the cause of national movement in India. By such attendance and
joining public meetings women, those who could not join them on account of fear of religion, pollution and of elderly persons in the house and society were inspired by the women, who actively participated openly in the national movement. Secondly, the courage and enthusiasm shown by the activist women inspired the male members to such an extent that they maintained their superiority and prestige in the national movement, started with ever growing stages of their valour and national spirit.

It is this spirit, that is, the love for nation and desire to fight for getting freedom from the British rule carved out a definite place for them in the history of India's struggle for freedom. The names of women like Madam Cama, Yesubai, Radhabai Apte and their participation in the Swadeshi Movement, in the Mulshi Satyagraha, in the Non-cooperation Movement and even in the Civil Disobedience Movement had certainly brought credit and glory to all women in India and even to the history of India's struggle for freedom.