CHAPTER VIII

CASE STUDIES

Participation of women in the national movement had in most cases some positive impact on the lives of the women concerned. It helped them to out-grow their social inhibitions and broaden their outlook. Nationalism, as far as the families to which these women belonged too, and to a lesser extent for the society as a whole, was a value system. A liberal outlook towards women was an integral part of this value system.

Case studies of seven women from each district reveal as to how participation in the national movement helped them and these are not exceptional cases.

AHMEDABAD

Gangabai Jhaveri, a Jain by caste was born in 1896 in a middle-class family. As a young girl her desire to study remained unfulfilled as she was married off at an early age. After a few years of marriage she became a widow. After becoming widow she started studying at home. A 'Shastri' would come to teach her Sanskrit. Conservative eyebrows were raised but she continued undeterred. She educated herself at home by reading newspapers and books at home. The example of Sharda Bakesha and Vidyagauri Bilkanth, the first two women to graduate in Gujarat, inspired her to pursue her studies. It was a case of some women who had a liberal upbringing presenting a model, which another woman found worthy enough to
emulate. The presence of women like Sharda Mehta and Vidyagauri Nalkant, who besides being highly educated were also well known public-figures in the society in which she grew up provided her with the incentive to outgrow her social inhibitions. She went to live in the Sabarmati Ashram and was active in the Civil Disobedience and the Quit-India movements. She was also actively associated with the Jyoti Sangh and was a member of the adhoc committee of the Sangh formed in 1934.

She continued to lead an active public life after 1947. Between 1958-1960 she was the President of All India Women's Conference. She was also on the Board of Directors of the Khadi Mandir. Participation in the national movement proved a stepping-stone for a more active public life after 1947. Apart from that she was prevented from leading a life of drudgery which a widow living in a traditional society would have had to put up with.

Gajrabhah Dasai, an Anavil Brahmin by caste, was a resident of Era village in Navasari Taluka. Her father was employed in the Post and Telegraph department. She studied up to seventh standard and got married at the age of thirteen in 1921. Her husband Ishwar Lal Dasai was a nationalist. She was active in the Civil Disobedience movement. She says that the general environment of those days inspired her to participate in the movement. She was in jail with Mridula Sarabhai, who thereafter became her path finder. She was associated with the Jyoti Sangh. She was active in the individual satyagraha as well as the Quit-India movement. After 1947 she was a member of the
Congress Seva Dal. She was the superintendent of the Nadiad Orphanage in Kheda district. She was also associated with the Gujarat Social Welfare Board and the Anuvil Ashram in Surat.

Gajarabehn had received very moderate education and was married off at an early age. However, participation in the national movement and her association with the Jyoti Sangh broadened her outlook and enabled her to establish an identity in society.

Manchibehn was a Harijan woman. She was the daughter of a mill labourer and was totally illiterate. The Jyoti Sangh employed her as a peon. She worked in the Food Department of the Sangh under Gangabehn Patadia. She was active during the Quit-India movement. Her association with the Jyoti Sangh and her participation in the National Movement served as an incentive to give a liberal upbringing to her daughter. While she was totally illiterate, her daughter studied up to Matric and did the Teachers Training Course. At the moment she is teaching in a school in Ahmedabad.

Indumati Chimanlal was a Jain by caste. She came from a family of mill-owners. Her brother Ambalal Sarabhai was sympathetic to the nationalist movement. In 1926 she graduated from the Gujarat Vidyapeeth. For sometime she was an Associate Professor of History and Politics in the Gujarat Vidyapeeth. In 1929 she was the Trustee of the Sheth C. N. Vidy-Vihar. She was active in the Civil Disobedience movement. In the period which followed the
abandonment of the Civil Disobedience movement. She was one of the women from Ahmedabad to have established herself as a political leader of some stature. (For detailed information see the Chapter on the Interregnum Period).

During the Quit-India movement she was amongst one of the first persons to be arrested from Ahmedabad. In 1946 she was elected as a member of the Bombay Legislature. From 1958 to 1962 she was the Minister for Social Welfare in Gujarat and thereafter until 1966 she was the Education Minister in Gujarat. She remained unmarried.

Sunitra Thakore was a Brahmathriya by caste. Her father was a government servant. He died in 1929. She had gone to the Jyoti Sangh to learn typing. She was studying in the S.N.D.T. Women's University of Ahmedabad. Her association with the Jyoti Sangh inspired her to participate in the National Movement. She was active in the Individual Satyagraha and the Quit-India movements. Her participation did not have the approval of her family members. She joined the Vikas Grah in 1946 and continues to be associated with it till today. Since 1963 she has been its Secretary. She did not marry.

Hemalata Megishte was a Baniya of Maharashtrian origin. Her uncle Govind Mahadev Megishte in whose household she was brought up was a man of extremely progressive ideas. Her brother Vasantraji Megishte was a nationalist. He had been active during the Civil Disobedience movement. She was a graduate and had studied law also. She was teaching in the Raj Bahadur Maganbhai Karamchand High School.
was active in the Quit-India Movement. After 1947 she was a very active member of the Jyoti Sangh. She was its President between 1964 to 1997. She also remained unmarried.

Chitshanti Diwanji was a Nagar grama by caste. Her father Ratanlal Diwanji was an active Congress worker. During the Civil Disobedience movement Chitshanti was making khaddar and organizing spinning classes. She was a probate and at the time of the Quit-India movement she was teaching in the Municipal Girls High School from where she was dismissed for taking part in the movement. She had also been associated with the Jyoti Sangh. She continued to be its active member after Independence. She has also worked for the Women’s Department of the Congress. She also did not marry.

Smita Behin Thakore, Hamlata Highaste and Chitshanti Diwanji say that they were so involved in their work that they did not think in terms of marriage. Perninbehra Mistri, a Parsi woman, who was active in the individual Satyagraha and the Quit-India movement, was an active member of the Jyoti Sangh and after Independence had been a member of the State Social Welfare Board, the Prohibition Board and the Cottage Industries Board. She also gives the same reasons for not marrying.

SURAT

Jyotanabehn Shukla, a Nagar Brahmin, was the daughter of Jeervacharan Trivedi a well known lawyer. He left his
practice when Tilak was sentenced to six years' imprisonment in 1908. Jyotamabehn had studied up to Matric. She had got married in 1907 at the age of 13. Her husband was teaching in the Ganganath School in Baroda State. There he came in touch with certain revolutionary groups and Jyotamabehn was also influenced by the revolutionary ideology.

When she came to Navasari with her husband she also wanted to learn to prepare bombs. A revolutionary group operating in Billimora was manufacturing bombs. Jyotamabehn made some contact with that group but as the leading members of that group were arrested, her desire to learn to make bombs remained unfulfilled.

In 1914, when she was in Bombay, she lost her husband. In that same year, she translated a Marathi novel into Gujarati. In 1922 she translated Tagore's poems and stories. In the next year she worked as a teacher in Mahila Vidyalaya in Surat. In 1923 she became the editor of a weekly journal called "Sudarshan". She was active in the Civil Disobedience movement and as a result, she established herself as a political leader of some stature. She was considered as a person having considerable influence in Congress circles. (For detailed information see the Chapter on the Interregnum Period.) She also went to jail during the Individual Satyagraha and the Quit-India movement. She continued to lead an active political life after 1947. From 1946 to 1950 she was the President of the Surat City Congress Committee. From 1947 to 1952 she was a member of the Bombay Legislative Council. She had also been the
Kumudiben Desai was born in 1909. She was a Nagar Brahmin. Her father Anantananda Pandit was a member of the Congress. Her mother Veermati used to ply the spinning wheel. She got married in 1925 to Manubhai Trivadi, who was the brother of Jyotsnabehn Shukla. She continued her studies after marriage. Her husband died of tuberculosis in 1930. She was active during the Civil Disobedience movement but was not arrested. She went to jail during the Individual Satyagrah and the Quit-India movement. She had gone to Bombay to do her graduation from Wilson College and was active in the students movement there. (For detailed information see the Chapter on Interregnum Period). In 1943 she got married to Ishwarlal Desai, an active Congress worker, of her own choice. After 1947 she along with her husband organised the labour unions in the textile mills of Surat.

Because of their liberal upbringing and their association with families of nationalists Jyotsnabehn Shukla and Kumudiben Desai after being widowed did not have to spend the rest of their lives in a state of socio-political wilderness. Jyotsnabehn after becoming a widow established herself first as a journalist and later on as a political leader. Kumudiben participated in the Civil Disobedience movement and later on went to Bombay for higher studies, which was a remarkable step for a widow. Such actions
certainly instilled a sense of self-confidence in her and she got married again of her own choice.

Saryubehn Vyas was a Nagar Brahmin. Her father Vinayak Bhdra Pandya was a clerk in the Agricultural Department and was a man of nationalist leanings. All the members of the family were wearing Phadi. Her mother had volunteered to nurse persons who were wounded as a result of police action during the Civil Disobedience movement. She was active during the Quit-India movement. At that time she was studying for her B.A. After 1947 she remained active in social work and has been the director of the District Industrial Association and the District Cooperative Union. She has also been a member of the Surat Municipal Corporation.

Gangabehn Patel was a resident of Karadi village. She was a Koli by caste. Her father Fakhribhch Chabilbhch Patel was living in South Africa. She was studying in the National School at Karadi. As a girl of 15 years, she participated in the Quit-India movement. She was inspired by a teacher of her school, Manibehn Shanabhai Patel. She had been married off when she was only two and half years old. However, she did not consumate her marriage. She decided to dedicate her life to public service. She took training as a nurse in the Vadilal Sarabhai Hospital and was also associated with the Kasturba Memorial Trust. At present she works as a nurse in the Mahila Maternity Home at Navasari. She is also the Vice President of the Mahila Mandal at Karadi.
Dasaribahn Chaudhari was a resident of Vedchi village. She was an Adivasi. Her father Rumsibhai Nema was a nationalist. As a young girl she came into contact with Gandhian constructive workers like Chunibhai Mehta, Surajbhai Mehta, Phool Chand Bhai Kavi and Rambhai. She was studying in a 'pathshala' at Vedchi. During the Bardoli satyagraha she was singing songs composed by Phool Chand Bhai Kavi to do propaganda for the satyagraha amongst the Adivasis. In 1929 she went to attend the school in Puna village for Adivasi girls. She was active in the Civil Disobedience movement and was arrested in 1930. After her release she continued with her studies in her school which had been shifted to Mithubehn Petal's Ashram in Maroli. In 1936 she stayed in the Harijan Ashram at Sabarmati. She learnt music in Gujarat Vidyapeeth and studied some English also. In 1940 she managed a school for small children at Vedchi. She was active in the Individual satyagraha and Quit-India movements. After independence she was associated with the Kanya Ashram in Mudhi village in Surat. This Ashram was managed by Anapurnabehn Mehta, the daughter of Chunibhai Mehta.25

Devibehn Patel was a Patidar. She has received very negligible education and was married off at the age of thirteen. Her husband Madhobhai Kunwarji Patel was a resident of Marud village. He was a nationalist and had participated in the Civil Disobedience movement. Encouraged by him she participated in the Quit-India movement. Her participation in the movement served as an incentive to give a liberal upbringing to her daughter. While Devibehn had
received very negligible education her daughter went on to become a graduate. Similarly, while she was married off when she was only thirteen her daughter got married when she was twenty-three.  

Santokhbehn Shah, a Jain by caste, was married to Utam Chand Shah, a resident of Bardoli. She got married at the age of 16. She had received very negligible education. Her husband was a Gandhian constructive worker. Santokhbehn was active during the Civil Disobedience movement. After that she was managing the Bardoli Swaraj Ashram along with her husband. Her daughter also had a liberal upbringing. Both were graduates. The younger daughter studied up to M.A. and is present in running a school for the Adivasi girls in Bardoli. Both got married when they were in their twenties.

**MRS. V.****

Kumta Chaudhari was a resident of Lucknow. She was born in 1908 in a Kayastha family. Her father, Madan Mohan Dayal, was in government service. She did not have any formal education. A 'Maulavi' and a 'Pandit' used to teach her at home. She was proficient in Hindi, Urdu and Persian. She was a voracious reader. As a young girl she was influenced by the personality of Gandhi. Her liberal upbringing made her politically enlightened. She got married at the age of seventeen in 1925. She insisted on getting married in a Khadi Sari. Her husband, Jyotindra Mohan Chaudhary, was a homeopathic doctor. He was a man of nationalist leanings, but he was not a political activist.
Kamaia Chaudhary joined the Congress in 1927 as a volunteer. She was active during the Civil Disobedience and Quit-India movements. Apart from that, she took to writing also during this period (see Chapter on Interregnum Period).

She continued to lead an active public life after independence. She was a member of the constituent Assembly formed in 1946. She was a member of the Lok Sabha (1962-67) and had been the Chairman of the Social Welfare Board, U.P.

Prakashwati Sud was born in 1902 in the Montgomery district of the Punjab. She was a Khatri by caste. Her father was a Sessions Judge. In the context of those days, she could be said to have had a liberal upbringing. She studied up to Matric and got married at the age of 18. She got married in 1920 to Jyoti Prasad Sud who was a teacher of political science in Meerut College. Her brother Shami Sagar Mahendra had been active in the Non-Cooperation movement in Punjab. Her husband had nationalist sympathies but like Kamaia Chaudhari's husband was not a political activist.

Two years before the launching of the Civil Disobedience movement, Prakashwati Sud was enrolling for many Congress members. She was active during the Civil Disobedience and the Quit-India movements. She was an important Congress leader of Meerut. She was elected as a member of the U.P. Legislative Assembly (see Chapter on Interregnum Period) in 1937.
In her case also participation in the national movement proved to be a stepping stone for an active political life after 1947. From 1944 to 1942 she was a member of the U.P. Legislative Assembly. She was a Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Welfare in the U.P. government. She was also the President of the State Social Welfare Advisory Board and the Vice President of the Mahila Sahayal Sangh.

Shakuntala Goel was born in a Vaishya family in 1907. Her father Shagwan Das was an accountant of a landlord Abdul Rashid. She was married in 1921 to Dr. Shagwat Dutt Goel, a dental surgeon at the age of fourteen. She had studied up to eighth standard. Her husband was an Aryasami. He was also not a political activist. She had attended the women's meeting addressed by Gandhi in 1921, and was encouraged to participate in the Civil Disobedience movement by her sister-in-law (husband's sister) Shobhavati. She went to jail during the Quit-India movement.

After independence she continued to be an active social worker. She was associated with the Kasturba Memorial Trust, was its representative in Meerut and established its centre in Samsauli village. The main function of this centre was Harijan upliftment and training women to be midwives.

Women, who had participated in the national movement were beneficiaries of a value-system which permitted women to participate in political activities. The cases of these three women show that this value system gave women the freedom to pursue a course of action independently of that.
husbands. In the cases of Prakshwati Sud and Shakuntala Goel they had relatives who had been political activists. Kamala Chaudhary, however, came from a family of a government servant and her husband was not a political activist. However, influenced by the liberal upbringing she had acquired a mind of her own when she got married. Her case is most remarkable because she became a leading political activist.

Savitri Rastogi was a Vaishya by caste. She was born in 1916 and studied upto eighth standard. She was married in 1930 at the age of fourteen. Her husband was an Arya Samajist and a nationalist. Her mother-in-law was one of the founders of the Arya Stree Samaj at Talkorti, established in 1929. She attended the meetings of the Arya Stree Samaj with her mother-in-law. After marriage she continued with her studies. She passed the Bhushan Prabhakar examinations conducted by the Prayag Mahila Vidya Pratishthan. She went to jail during the Quit-India movement.

After 1947 she continued to remain an active worker of the Arya Stree Samaj. She was the President of the Women's Department of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of U.P. Apart from that, she has made a name for herself as a Hindi poetess. Her poems have been published in various magazines. As a poetess she has been honoured by organisations like the Hindi Sahitya Pratishthan, Patna and the Bharatiya Sahitya Sammelan, Prayag.

Basso Devi, a Brahmin by caste was born in 1395. She was married in 1907 at the age of twelve in 1907. She had
received very negligible education. After marriage she had to observe 'purdah' in the house of her in-laws. Her husband Pt. Gauri Shanker was an accused in the Meerut Conspiracy case. She discarded the 'Purdah' when she joined the Gandhi Ashram in 1920. She was active in the Civil Disobedience movement.

In 1934 she founded the Prasutika Bhavan, a Maternity Home for the poor and destitute women. She also studied and practiced Ayurveda. Her participation served as an incentive to give a liberal upbringing to her daughter who became a graduate. She was also the sub-editor of a weekly newspaper started by her father. She got married at the age of 23.\(^{36}\)

Rajkali Kaushik, a Brahmin by caste was an illiterate girl living in a village. She was married off at an early age. At the age of seventeen she became a widow. Later on encouraged by Taravati she participated in the Quit-India movement against the wishes of her relatives. When she was in jail she came in touch with Shakuntala Goel and subsequently became her protege.

After her release from prison, she stayed in the house of Shakuntala Goel for four years and studied up to fifth standard. Later on she joined the Kasturba Trust as a 'Gram Sevika' and worked for the Gram Seva centre of Samshadi village.\(^{37}\) In Rajkali Kaushik's case, participation in the national movement was a form of protest against the drudgery which she had to put up within a conservative social order.
Participation in the national movement certainly broadened her social horizon as she came in touch with Shakuntala Goel, who educated her and helped her in finding employment. After being employed as a social worker she was able to carve out an independent identity for herself.

Vishnudevi Arya, a resident of Bhatiyana village was married off at the age of ten. Before her marriage she had had a fracture and as a result her one hand was slightly deformed. Because of this she was constantly harassed by her in-laws. They would physically assault her and would not give her enough to eat and one day she was thrown out of the house. Thereafter, she was adopted by Shivdayal Singh Mathur, who was the Secretary of the Arya Samaj in Hapur.

A few days after she was thrown out of the house of her in-laws, her husband died and she was able to sever all connections with her in-laws. Shiv Dayal Singh Mathur used to live in a joint family with his two brothers and mother. Vishnudevi was looked after very well by the family. She started her education in the house. In 1933 she passed the sixth standard. By 1936 she had passed the Hindi Ratna, Urdu Middle and the Upper Middle in English examinations conducted by the Punjab Board. In 1937 she passed the High School examination conducted by the Punjab Board. After that she taught in girls school managed by the Arya Samaj in Meerut.

From 1936 to 1938 she was the Secretary of the Arya
Vishnudevi was a beneficiary of the social reforms activity which was an off-shoot of the nationalist ideology. A new value system offered her a helping hand to overcome the shock of a traumatic childhood and establish her identity in society.

AGRA

Vidyawati Rathore was born in 1909. She was a Thakur by caste, and was resident of Khimsupur village in Farrukhabad district. Her father Kunwar Prem Singh was a man of nationalist leanings. Her brothers Sukhendra Singh and Narendra Singh had gone to jail during the Non-Cooperation movement. In 1918 she was married to Kunwar Baij Nath Singh, a resident of Parna village in Agra. He had been an accused in the Mainpuri Conspiracy case.

Vidyawati Rathore says that the 'purdah' system was very strictly enforced in her family. She did not attend any school but studied at home. A Pandit would come to her house to teach her. She also read some proscribed literature brought by her father. This kind of reading made her politically awakened. She continued to study after getting married even though the 'purdah' practice...
was very strictly observed in the household of her husband. Hindi journals like *Sri Dharma*, *Maryada* and *Arunavati* and the works of Mahatma Sharan Gupta, like *Bharat Bhurati* enhanced her political awakening.

In 1928 at the behest of her husband she discarded the 'purdah' to join Mata Parvati Devi's campaign to politically mobilise women. She was active in the Civil Disobedience Individual satyagraha and the Quit-India movement. She had established herself as an important Congress leader of Agra district. In fact her husband who had initiated her into politics was known later as Vidyawati Rathore's husband (see Chapter on Interregnum Period).

She continued to lead an active public life even after independence. From 1946 to 1974 she was a member of the U.P. Legislative Assembly. She was also the Minister for Social Welfare in the U.P. government for some time.39

Angoori Devi Jain, a Jain by caste was born in 1910. She got married at the age of ten to Mahendra Ji Jain, a man of nationalist leanings. She had been to school before marriage but after her marriage she studied at home. Her husband had kept a tutor for her. However, she remained in 'purdah'. She discarded the 'purdah' at the behest of her husband in 1930 to participate in the Civil Disobedience movement.40 During the Quit-India movement she looked after the families of persons who were in jail.

She also led an active public life after 1947. In 1955 she was appointed as the Organizer of the Agra Women's
Congress by the U.P. Women's Congress. She was the treasurer of Agra Branch of the Village Women's Organization for many years. She was appointed by the State government as the visitor to the Agra District Jail. She was the member of the Agra State Children's Home and the Women's Protection Home. She was also a member of the U.P. Congress Committee.41

Angoori Devi also gave a liberal upbringing to her daughters. Her three daughters studied up to M.A. while she herself had received very little education. Similarly, while she got married when she was only 10 years old, all her three daughters got married when they were in their early twenties.42

Damyanti Devi Chaturvedi was a resident of Salturi village in Agra district. She was married in 1920 when she was around fifteen years. The Chaturvedis Brahmin by caste, were an extremely orthodox community. They considered themselves as the last bastion of Hindu orthodoxy.43 Before her marriage she stayed in the village and had received some education there. In those days migration from the village to the city did not affect changes in the lifestyle of women. However, her husband Vishwanath Dayal Chaturvedi was a man of progressive ideas and encouraged her to discard the 'purdah'.

She passed the 'Vidya Vinodini' examination conducted by the Prayag Mahila Vidyapith, Allahabad.44 In 1929 she was one of the three volunteers appointed to attend to Gandhi, when he visited Agra that year.45 She was also...
active during the Civil Disobedience movement.

She could not participate in the Quit-India movement because of the chronic illness of her husband. Her husband who died in 1944 had before his death insisted that she should light his funeral pyre as their sons were very small at the time. Her husband's wish was duly fulfilled by her after his death.  

After her husband's death she managed his business. Her husband had some railway contracts, namely catering at the railway stations of Agra and the loading and unloading of goods at the Railway 'Malgoda'. Apart from that, he also owned two public carrier trucks. The business was managed by her single handedly for about twelve years. In the public sphere she was a Municipal councillor in the Agra Municipal Corporation and was also the Chairman of the Social Welfare Board of the Government of India.  

Both her daughters were given a liberal upbringing. They studied up to M.A. and were married when they were over twenty years in age.

Premwati Mishra was born in a Brahmin family, which was very conservative as far as women were concerned. She was withdrawn from school when she was only eight. Girls in the house could only read very selected books like the Ramayana.

Her uncle Pandit Thakur Prasad Sharma was a nationalist. He was accused in the Mainpuri Conspiracy case in 1918 and was active in the Non-Cooperation movement. She stayed
with him in Benaras, where he was an executive officer in the Benaras Municipal Corporation in the 1920's. But as he was very conservative in his views regarding women, she had to read 'Asaj' without his knowledge. Reading newspapers enhanced her political awakening.

In 1930 she came to Faizabad to stay with her aunt. There she joined Sukhdevi Paliwal's batch of female volunteers, who were picketing temples. She was arrested by the police for this offence. The citizens of Faizabad secured her release on the ground that she was unmarried. She was reprimanded by her parents for participating in the movement. She says that she faced all these problems because she was unmarried and her parents thought that participation in political activity would hinder her marriage prospects.

In 1933 she got married to one Bhogilal Mishra, a progressive minded nationalist, who was active in the Civil Disobedience movement. She resumed her studies after marriage. She studied upto B.A. and was active in the Quit-India movement.

After 1947 Pravati Mishra was the President of the Bharat Seva Samaj and she was also the organizer of the Mahila Congress Seva Dal. She also gave a liberal upbringing to her daughter. Her daughter became a doctor and she is today a well-known eye-surgeon of Agra. 50

Bhagwati Devi Paliwal, a Bohra by caste, belonged to a Zamindar family of Gurgaon district. 'Purdah' was very
strictly observed in her family. She studied up to class five and got married at the age of fourteen. She was married to the brother-in-law of Shri Krishna Dutt Patiala. After marriage she discarded the 'purdah'. She went to jail during the Quit-India movement.

She was interned in the Lucknow jail where she came in touch with Sucheta Kripalani who used to teach (see Sucheta's biography). After her release from prison Bhagwati Devi resumed her studies and studied up to Intermediate and taught in a school. She was active in the Quit-India movement. In jail, Sukhdevi Paliwal and Vidyawati Rathore encouraged her to

Vijayakumari alias Sherbati Devi was a Kachi who was a backward caste. She was married at the age of nine to one Hub Lal, a middle-level peasant. However, after marriage she was going to school in Sachgaon village. There was no 'purdah' system in the house of her husband. Her husband was also a nationalist.

She was active in the Quit-India movement. In jail, Sukhdevi Paliwal and Vidyawati Rathore encouraged her to
continue with her studies. She studied upto Intermediate and then taught in a primary school in a village in Rajasthan for about 27 years.53 A commendable feat for women who hailed from a village and was married off when she was only nine years old.

One notable feature in the case of these six women from Agra was the encouragement given to them by their husbands not only to participate in political activity but also to educate themselves and discard the 'purdah'. In case of Bhagwati Devi Paliwal the impetus to resume her studies was facilitated because of her contact with women nationalist leaders like Sucheta Kriplani.

Kamala Sharma, a Brahmin, was the daughter of Shri Han Sharma, who headed one of the revolutionary groups, which operated in Agra during the Quit-India movement. Her mother Lakshmi Devi was writing articles on women's issues in Vishal Bharat, a journal published from Calcutta. The 'purdah' practice was not observed in her household. There was no taboo on her receiving education. In 1943 when she was arrested for taking out a procession, she was studying in the Intermediate.

After 1947 she taught in a school and subsequently became its principal. She did not marry as she was supporting a family, five brothers and sisters.54

Kamala Sharma's father was a prominent freedom-fighter of the district. As a nationalist he did not think it necessary that his daughter should be married off even though she had attained the age of 16. Apart from that,
she was attending college, a privilege, which the women of an earlier generation in Agra were denied. The liberal atmosphere in which she was brought up enabled her to go for higher studies and later on fetch a job without the compulsion of getting married.

The above mentioned case studies reveal the positive impact which the participation in the national movement had on the lives of these women. This is not, however, to say that participation in the freedom struggle had a positive impact on all women. One could make equally valid case studies of women who retreated back into the four walls of their homes. Nevertheless, these case studies show. For some, at least it did prove to be a stepping stone for a more active public life after 1947. Four women from Ahmedabad and one from Surat got so involved with their work that they did not think in terms of marriage, which in a traditional society is considered as the ultimate destination of womanhood.

Participation in the national movement in some cases served as an impetus to resume their education which gave them the self-confidence to take up employment. For others it gave them the incentive to give a liberal upbringing to their daughters. In case of those who were widows it provided them with an escape from the drab and dreary existence which the society offered to their lot.

2. Interview with Gangabehn Jhaveri, Ahmedabad, 16.9.87.
15. Hamlati Hagishfe, Chitshanti Diwanji and Sunitrabehn Thakore, opcit.
27. Interview with Utm Chandi Shah (husband of Shantojib Shah), Bardoli, Surat, 2.8.1987.
28. Interview with Kamala Dayal (step-mother of Kamla Chaudhary) and Ira Samana (daughter of Kamla Chaudhary) at Lucknow 27.4.1987 and New Delhi 23.3.1987.
31. Interview with Vineta Puri (niece of Prakashwati Sui), Meerut, 8.3.1987.
33. Interview with Shakuntala Goel, Meerut, 27.3.1987.
34. Interview with Savitri Rastogi, Meerut, 9.3.1987.
41. 'Shrimati Angoori Devi Jain Dwara Kiya Gaya Congress Sangthan, Desh aur Samaj Seva Karya Ka Samshipt Vivran', A Leaflet in Hindi issued by Vidyavati Rathore.
42. Angoori Devi Jain, opcit.
47. Gnaneshwar Chaturvedi, opcit.
48. Ibid.