The Simon Boycott movement stimulated the rapid growth of radical forces demanding not only complete independence but a variety of socio-economic changes in a socialist direction. The Madras Congress of 1927 met in the atmosphere of growing political discontent in the country. A Left Wing had grown within the Congress which was not satisfied with the goal of Dominion status and declared complete independence to be its objective.

In February, All Parties Conference, composed of the representatives of the Congress such as Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, Jawahar Lal and Liberal leaders like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Ali Imam met. In August, the conference published a report known as the Nehru report in which it outlined schemes of a constitution for India. The socialists and left nationalists criticised the scheme as abandoning the goal of independence and conserving Zamindari and property interests.

Throughout 1928 and 1929, Gandhi acted as a brake on mounting pressure for another round of an all India mass struggle, aimed this time explicitly at complete independence. He had strongly disapproved of Jawahar Lal's snap Independence resolution passed in his absence at the Madras Congress (1927) and at Calcutta next year, he was able to push through a compromise, a formula which accepted the Nehru Report's dominion status objective provided the British granted it by the end of 1929, failing which the Congress would be
free to go in for Civil Disobedience and Purna Swaraj. Gandhi-ji tried to confine Congress activities during 1929 to constructive activities in villages, prohibition and boycott of British goods, plus redress, along Bardoli lines, of specific grievances. He encouraged public bonfires of foreign cloth (for which he was arrested in Calcutta in March, and awarded a token fine) and toured the country collecting funds for 'Khadi' but repeatedly rejected pressures for an all out struggle.2

On 31st October, 1929 Lord Irwin, issued a statement in which he said that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress was the attainment of Dominion status. The Viceroy's statement created a hope of political settlement among the Congress and non-Congress leaders. They met at Delhi and published a Manifesto (The Delhi Manifesto) which said that to create conditions for the success of the proposed Round Table Conference, the Indian Political parties must have effective representation at the Conference.

On 23rd December, 1929 Gandhi and Moti Lal Nehru representing the Congress and Jinnah and Sapru representing the views of other political groups met the Viceroy at Delhi. Gandhi asked for an assurance that the Round Table Conference should start its political deliberations on the basis of the recognition of full Dominion status for India. The Viceroy pleaded his inability to give any such assurances and this led to a break-down of the negotiations.

At the Lahore session of the Congress the goal of Purna
Swaraj was adopted under the Presidentship of Jawahar Lal Nehru. This was followed by Gandhi's 11 point ultimatum which constituted a programme of demands such as total prohibition, the reduction of the rupee-pound ratio to 1 s. 4 d, the reduction of land revenue at least by 50%, the abolition of salt tax, protective tariff on foreign-cloth, the passage of coastal Tariff Reservation Bill and others. He said that if the Viceroy accepted these very simple but vital needs, he would hear no talk of Civil Disobedience and the Congress would heartily participate in any Conference.

As there was no response from the Viceroy, Gandhi took the decision to launch the Civil Disobedience movement by breaking the salt laws at Dandi on 6th April, 1930. On 11th April Gandhi declared that whole-sale illegal manufacture and auctioning of salt should begin after he had violated the salt law at Dandi, it was to be accompanied by the boycott of foreign cloth and a campaign for prohibition.

In the Civil Disobedience movement a specific role was prescribed for women. Picketing of liquor-shops and foreign-cloth shops was to be the exclusive concern of women. In an article in Young India on 10th April, 1930 Gandhi said:

"Let the women of India take up these activities, specialize in them, they would contribute more than men to national freedom. They would have an access to power and self-confidence to which they have hither to been strangers."

This task prescribed for women by Gandhi was a definite
advancement on what he had prescribed for women during the Non-Cooperation movement. During that movement women were being called upon to participate within the limitations of their social conditions. While staying at home they were to give up wearing foreign clothes, wear Khadi instead and use the spinning wheel. Besides that, they could utilize their influence at home to compel their husbands to leave a government job or see to it that their children did not go to educational institutions managed by the government.

However, in order to participate in the Civil Disobedience movement they had to step into the world outside their homes. Picketing of foreign-cloth and liquor shops meant that women were to persuade men who were not their relatives to stop buying and selling foreign-cloth and abstain from liquor. In other words, the task of motivating people to imbibe the ideals of the movement rested with the women.

Initially Gandhi was reluctant to include women as participants in the salt satyagraha, as he thought that the British government would be reluctant to use force against women unless provoked to do so. This would defeat the very purpose of satyagraha and might lead to accusations of hiding behind the protection of women. He explained that just as Hindus do not harm or attack cows as far as possible, for Hindus it would be cowardice to take a cow on the battle field. Similarly it would be cowardice on the part of the satyagrahis breaking the salt law to have women accompany them.

The task of picketing liquor and foreign-cloth shops was
certainly a more hazardous one than that of merely breaking the salt laws. In the latter women merely had to be a part of crowd going to the sea-shore or the river bank to manufacture contraband salt. While breaking the salt laws they were merely defying the alien government. But picketing involved defiance of the norms of their own society.

The response of Indian women to Gandhi's call was overwhelming. As the movement gained momentum, women's activities did not remain confined to the picketing of liquor and foreign-cloth shops. They participated in every activity associated with the movement. The participation of women in the movement could be referred to as one of its most novel features. It was a factor which attracted the attention of even the Viceroy. In 1931, in a report to the then Secretary to State Wedgwood Benn, the Viceroy Lord Irwin expressed his special concern regarding the support gained by the movement from the women as a new and serious feature.

In an annual government report it was stated that thousands of women, many of good families and high educational attainment suddenly emerged from the seclusion of their homes and in some instances actually from the 'purdah' in order to join the Congress demonstrations and assist in picketing and their presence on such occasions made the work of the police particularly unpleasant.

Despite Gandhi's directions that women were not to be involved in the breaking of the salt laws, women participated in a big way in the salt law violation campaign. Women's participation was extremely visible in the picketing of the
liquor and foreign-cloth shops, a task which was specifically prescribed for them. Attending meetings and participating in demonstrations in a big way were other forms of participation for the women. The participation was high in all other parts of the country with exception of North West Frontier Provinces and South India (barring Karnataka and Coastal Andhra). Women’s participation was visible even in the States where the movement was not all that effective like Punjab and Assam.

British Gujarat along with Bombay City had the highest level of female participation in the country, which was natural when considered in the context of the focus mentioned in the previous Chapter. Apart from that, it was from Gujarat that Gandhi gave the call to women for participating in the civil-disobedience movement. The women inmates of the Sabarmati Ashram were in a position to organise women for these activities. The charisma of Gandhi’s personality which was to bring women out of their homes in all part of the country could be seen by the women of Gujarat from close quarters. Dandi, where he violated salt laws, happened to be in Surat district. He was camping in the district till his arrest on 5th May, 1930.

Ahmedabad and Surat.

On 16th March, 1930, a youth meeting was held in Ahmedabad and a resolution was passed supporting salt 'Satyagraha'. A committee was formed to organise civil disobedience in Ahmedabad.

Hridula Sarabhai was a member of that committee.
On 13th April, 1930 four hundred and fifty volunteers from Ahmedabad marched to Dholera creek for breaking the salt law. The satyagrahis were accompanied by 10,000 villagers. Women in their hundreds were also part of the crowd. After the volunteers had broken the salt law the people including women beseeched Balwantrai Thakore to permit mass civil-disobedience. Women were also bringing contraband salt from Virangam and were being allowed to pass unmolested.

A Videshi Kapda Bahniskar Samiti was formed at Ahmedabad and women joined it in large numbers. Women formed a small committee of their own for the purpose of picketing shops selling foreign cloth and liquor in the surrounding villages. Khurshed bahu Narodzi and Vijayagauri Kanuga left Ahmedabad city with ten women volunteers each and pitched their camps in the villages. The Rashtriya Sree Sabha - a women's organisation launched an intensive campaign for the propagation of Swadeshi in Ahmedabad. A picketing association was also formed with Nandubeha Kanuga as its President.

The women of Ahmedabad started the programme of foreign cloth boycott on 20th April, 1930. A grand procession of women of the Videshi Kapda Bahniskar Samiti was taken out where women wore Khadi saris of saffron colour.

On 25th April, 1930, a letter was sent to the Viceroy on behalf of the women of Gujarat. It said:

"We the undersigned cannot remain aloof from the great national upheaval going at present. We fully, sympathise with the campaign of Civil-Disobedience of the salt laws. Women
In villages have already begun to manufacture contraband salt, but we women should find out an additional and special field of our activity. We easily accepted Mr. Gandhi's suggestion that we are better fitted to carry out the boycott of foreign cloth and the prohibition of liquor through picketing. As we contended to undertake this movement we beg to impress upon your Excellency that it is a function of the State to stop traffic in liquor and intoxicating drinks and import of foreign clothes."

Prominent among the signatories were Anasuyabehn, Sarla Devi Sarabhai, Mrs. Abbas Tayabji, Mithubehn Petit and others.14

The picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops in Ahmedabad was being successfully carried out by the labour unions and by women aided by men volunteers under the supervision of Khursheedbehn Naroji. A committee had been formed for this purpose. Sharda Mehta was the President of the committee while Mridula Sarabhai and Intumati Chimanlal were its general secretaries. The ladies were prepared to carry on their work despite anti-picketing ordinances.15

On 15th May, 1930 women volunteers made an attempt to induce the Cantonment Cloth merchants not to order foreign cloth but no decision was arrived at. Picketing of foreign cloth shops by the lady volunteers commenced the next day. In the morning a procession of women singing national and boycott songs headed by Lady Chinubhai passed on the main roads before the volunteers reached their places of picketing.16
Three days later a contraband salt-shop was opened in Ahmedabad and many women purchased salt from there.\textsuperscript{17} Picketing of liquor shop organised by Khurshedbehn Narooji was very effective. Out of the thirty three liquor shops in the district sixteen had closed down.\textsuperscript{18}

Khurshedbehn Narooji was also active in the Viramgam Taluk of Ahmedabad district strenuously working for the boycot of liquor by picketing liquor-shops day and night.\textsuperscript{19} In Rampur after Mrs. Jhaverchand Meghani's arrest, a hartal was observed and a procession of four-thousand men and women paraded the streets. In the night a big heap of foreign clothes were burnt and the fire was lit by Mrs. Jhaverchand Meghani.\textsuperscript{20}

Women volunteers of the foreign-cloth boycott committee consisting of members mostly from rich and aristocratic families of Ahmedabad were picketing shops of foreign cloth dealers with encouraging results for about three weeks. The President Mrs. Sharda Mehta, along with Bhulabhai Desai and Shanker Lal Banker conferred with various Mahajans dealing in cloth to consider the situation in view of the ordinance making picketing illegal. The Mahajans responded spontaneously and passed resolutions recording their protest against the ordinance making picketing illegal and agreed not to sell foreign-cloth upto 15th June.\textsuperscript{21}

On 11th June, 1930 about 300 men and women of Viramgam marched on their way to Shahpur for collecting salt when they were assaulted by the police. The women received serious injuries and one of them received a wound on the head which
Despite ordinances declaring picketing illegal, women commenced picketing of foreign-cloth shops led by Vijayagami Kanuga and Bharati Ambalal with striking sign-boards hung around their necks. The Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee consisting of women split into the picketing mandal and the propaganda mandal. The former decided to picket those areas in which merchants were not ready to stop the purchase and sale of foreign cloth. The other Mandal decided to start spinning centres and hold spinning competitions.

Picketing of foreign-cloth shops in Ahmedabad by women who were assisted by male volunteers continued before those shops, whose owners refused to undertake not to deal in foreign cloth. Devibohn was the 'sardar' of the Dhandhuka satyagraha camp, which was distributing bulletins to a procession which was organised to parade the streets. She was man-handled by the police when she was distributing bulletins. On 20th July, in Dhandhuka women held processions and distributed hand-bills regarding foreign-cloth boycott and 'Satyagraha bulletins'. The police tried to snatch the bulletins from their hands. In Rangpur, a Manjar Bana or 'Pussycotl army' of small girls was formed and the major portion of its work was to consist in propagating the use of 'Taklīs' and carrying carded and spun cotton prepared in individual houses.

On 3rd August, 1930 Sonabehn and Chanchalbehn were picketing a local liquor shop. They tried to persuade a
police constable, who was drinking inside not to do so. A
sub-inspector of police came up and after a hot conversation
with the lady picketers, he turned round on several ladies
of the town standing quietly at a distance and started
abusing them. This incident created a lot of excitement.
The ladies of the town convened a protest meeting which was
largely attended. 29

In Ahmedabad, when students and ex-students of the
Government Girls' School, carrying the national flag marched
to the school, they found the gates locked. A large number
of them with the help of a ladder climbed on the wall. The
school peons and teachers tried to push them back, but they
jumped inside and opened the gates, as a result the girls
standing outside the gate entered the school. They hoisted
the national flag and sang national songs. 30 By 16th August
several women had been arrested. Prominent among them were
Mridula Sarabhai and Khurshidbehn Naroji. 31

On 15th November, 1930, in spite of the District
Magistrate's orders prohibiting processions, meetings and
flag salutations in connection with 'Jawahar Day', large
crowds assembled near the Lady Willingdon Infirmary at the
Ramapura locality in Ahmedabad. In the evening, a small
procession headed by about 40 women tried to proceed from
there but the police formed a cordon around the women who
thereupon squatted to the ground and continued sitting. 32

The next day a complete hartal was ordered which was
observed by most of the shop-keepers. A huge procession
paraded the important parts of the city and at the place
where it terminated about 30,000 people, including a number of women assembled. The President of the G.P.C.C., Smt. Sarlabehn read these passages from the speech of Pt. Nehru for which he was convicted. Among the women to be arrested for no apparent reason were Mrs. Sarlabehn and Mrs. Sushilabehn.

About 60 picketers including 20 lady picketers went on a hunger strike in Manack-Chowk, where foreign-cloth was being sold. They sat in front of the shops since morning. Foreign-cloth dealers did not turn up and their shops remained closed.

On 8th December, 1930 a sensation prevailed in the city of Ahmedabad owing to the news that volunteers had decided to go on a hunger strike. Opposite these shops police officials had assembled on the police 'chowki'. Later on a batch of volunteers was arrested. But another batch immediately occupied their place. Like this four successive batches were arrested. By afternoon about 49 volunteers including 27 ladies had been arrested.

People were coming in large numbers to witness the scene. Three batches of volunteers were arrested successively. By evening 83 volunteers out of whom 38 were women had been arrested. However, a fresh batch of volunteers arrived at Manack-Chowk and the Mahajans pledged not to sell foreign-cloth for six months. As a result pickets were withdrawn.

Some of the foreign-cloth dealers were found selling
foreign-cloth on 16th December in contravention of the pledge given eight days earlier. A batch of lady picketers sat the whole day without food or drink near a shop in Maneck-Chowk till the owner of the shop gave a written apology and another gave a fine of Rs.1 to the picketing Mahatma. A third merchant who opened his shop in another locality for the sale of foreign-cloth agreed to close that shop as lady picketers picketed his shop without taking food.

As mentioned before, Gandhi was arrested on 5th May, 1930 when he was camping in Surat District. Kasturba and Kirtibehn Patel organised the women in the district. While Gandhi marched to Dandi women were seen every-where greeting him and coming to hear his speech. At Ahbrana on 16th April, 1930, in an audience of 5,000, 2,000 were women. At Dandi he was received by 13,500 women. It was perhaps, a case of women coming to have the 'Darshan' of a saint, who was going on a very vital mission.

A woman's conference was held at Dandi on 13th April, 1930. The conference was addressed by Mahatma Gandhi, resolutions were passed to picket liquor and foreign-cloth shops. One of the women at the Conference asked Mahatma Gandhi as to what they should do if they were assaulted by drunkards. He said that it was just the risk he had in mind, but picketers should have faith in themselves and their cause and believed that even drunkards would never dare assault the sisters of mercy. On the contrary, they would be affected by the noble appeals made by them.

Immediately after the woman's Conference Gandhi
addressed a meeting of women, where he said that if men proposed to help the mission of women, they should religiously refrain from picketing in any shape or form. They could usefully help the movement by creating a proper atmosphere by meeting individual liquor and foreign-cloth dealers and their friends who were addicted to drinking and wearing foreign-cloth.40

On 16th April a large number of prominent lady workers of Gujarat arrived in Navasari and met Gandhi for a couple of hours. Mithubehn Patit explained how they picketed in Bhimrod in Surat and were successful. She said that if educated ladies take up this work they could achieve very good results.41

Kasturba called upon a dozen women from the Sabarmati Ashram to help her in picketing activities. These women came under a pledge to devote their whole time to the fight without expecting to return to their homes till Swaraj was attained. There were about forty such women volunteers from the Sabarmati Ashram, who took the pledge, but Gandhi called upon only a dozen women, as he thought they were sufficient for the present.42

A batch of 13 women volunteers led by Kasturba started in a procession from the Navasari Ashram on foot and arrived in Jalalpur Taluka to picket liquor-shops. The batch included Mrs. Jamanalal Bajaj. Those volunteers camped in front of liquor shops owned by a Parsi. The male volunteers were given to them to act as despatch riders and for doing any work other than picketing. Kasturba addressed a woman:43
meeting and asked those present to give up the drinking habit. The children, she said were crying for a piece of bread, and they were wasting their money on drinks. 

Through the efforts of women volunteers at Bhimrod, Surat, a toddy-shop was closed. The women used to sit at the door of the toddy shop every evening spinning and singing national songs. The lady volunteers at Olped camp were going to the surrounding villages, where besides conducting the anti-drink campaign, they also did the work of cleaning, by going there with brooms, spades and baskets in their hands. At a camp of lady volunteers at Surat, new recruits were being trained. In the city, classes were started for giving training in spinning and carding to women.

In Navasari, 40 women enlisted themselves as volunteers and picketed liquor shops.

Kasturba toured extensively in the Kharoi and Parra villages of Jalalpur Taluka, where "Come out and fight bravely", was the burden of her speeches. She said that if they all come out in the field the government would have to yield within two months. The people were to engrave the words of Bapu in their hearts and discard foreign clothes and give up liquor. They should boycott courts, establish panchayats for the settlement of disputes and use contraband salt.

Throughout the month of May picketing of liquor-shops continued under the supervision of Kasturba in the Jalalpur.
Taluka where she, along with seven women volunteers marched throughout Jalalpur town singing songs against the consumption of liquor and toddy. While passing a toddy shop near the railway station, about five women, who had drunk toddy, were standing. The volunteers requested them not to drink, but the drunken woman abused them foully and said, "We shall drink toddy as we cannot afford to buy ghee, rice, etc".47

The women leaders like Kasturba and Mithubehn Petit always tried to emphasize that the task given to women was much more vital than that given to men. On 11th May, 1930, in an appeal to woman Mithubehn Petit said that after the arrest of Gandhiji, there should not be a single home in Gujarat that has not offered a single lady volunteer in the Swaraj struggle. She said that Gandhiji had called upon the men to save several crores of rupees by not paying salt tax, while he called upon the women to save sixty crores of rupees from foreign-cloth and twenty-five crores from liquor, making it a total of eighty-five crores.48

On 12th May, 1930, Abbas Tatyabji arrived at Navasara with all his 59 volunteers, from where he was to march to Dharasana. He was welcomed by Kasturba and her lady volunteers, who applied 'Tilak' on his forehead. He, along with his volunteers was arrested by the police. Then as the volunteers were placed in the motor-buses that were kept ready and taken to Jalalpur, the women along with the men of the village gave a hearty welcome to the volunteers, who were arrested and the women sang the song, "the drums of your end are beating".
As violence was anticipated during the raid by the Congress volunteers on the Dharsana salt depot, women were working at the Untadi camp hospital where injured volunteers were brought. 49

On 3rd June, 1930 a largely attended public meeting of Jain women was held under the presidency of Mrs. Manekbhai Chamanlal at which resolutions were passed requesting Jain ladies to use Khaddar, congratulating the volunteers of Dharsana, who had shown great courage and self-sacrifice and the local merchants for showing sympathy by recording their protests against the ordinances. At the close of the meetings a number of ladies signed the Swadeshi pledge. 50

Five days later the Jalalpur Taluka Conference was held under the presidency of Kasturba in Navasari where she appealed to the audience to stop paying rent to the government and resort to social boycott of government servants. She appealed to the women to take up in right earnest the picketing of foreign-cloth and liquor shops. 51

Volunteers, including six women picketed the gates of the Surat College. As the students intending to attend the college began to gather at the gates they were obstructed by lady picketers, who had formed a cordon. Within an hour a large number of students arrived and were waiting to get into the college but picketers would not allow them. The Principal broke the cordon and the students made a rush towards the gate. However, the lady picketers again formed a cordon. 52 On the same day in Surat women led an anti-drink demonstration. Their leader Miss Chotubai Dayabhai Choksey
In the month of July, under the leadership of Kasturba Gandhi and Abida Tayyabji about 500 women were picketing foreign-cloth shops in the Mata Mandir area in Surat city. The picketing of foreign-cloth shops by the women volunteers was quite effective as foreign-cloth dealers were compelled to close their shops for five days.

On 28th July, which was the day fixed for the disposal of tenders of toddy-shops in Surat, the Surat Sri Sangh began picketing work at the collector's office. Kasturba Gandhi, Mithubehn Petit and Hamida Begum were prominent among the picketers which included seven Parsi ladies. Afterwards the Superintendent of Police removed the picketers from the office gate and made a police cordon which enabled the visitors to go in. As a result of the picketing only a few shops in the city and the Chorasi and the Oplad Talukas were taken up by the bidders and that too at a low price. The auction of the rest of the shops had to be postponed till the next day.

Due to the vigorous picketing under the leadership of Kasturba Gandhi and Mithubehn Petit in Surat most of the foreign-cloth dealers of the city including the Muslim cloth merchants association signed an undertaking not to sell foreign cloth and not to order fresh stocks till Diwali. For about fourteen days women alongwith men and children were going round the city in the morning singing national songs. The boycott movement in Surat had a great impact on women who mostly took to Khaddar or Indian mill made dresses and...
'Saris' on public occasions. On 23rd July Sardar Patel addressed a meeting attended by 7,000 women, who sat patiently in torrential rains, on the banks of the Tapti river to hear him.57

Women were active in picketing polling booths during the election for the Bombay Legislative Council. On 10th September, Kasturba, who was leading the women volunteers came in for rough treatment and jostling heads of the voters and the polling officers. Voting was dull with just about fifty votes being polled. A lady volunteer was reported to have received injuries.

On the same day about five polling booths were picketed by ladies. Voting was generally poor, but there was some voting at the Muslim polling booths. At Rampur Mrs. Champabehn Trikamlaiah, four ladies and a number of volunteers were arrested. Only a few Muslims voted.58

In Surat again about 30 women picketed the polling booths during the election for the University seat in the Bombay Legislative Council. In the afternoon when Khan Bahadur Chakewalla came to give his vote the ladies formed a cordon at the entrance gate. Mr. Vetava, the District Superintendent of Police came and asked the ladies to give way but the ladies refused to do so. As a result all the ladies were arrested while Mr. Chakewalla was allowed to enter and vote but they were released when he came out.59

2nd October, 1930 was observed as Ordinance Breach Day by the Surat War Council. Women volunteers along with men
and boys were seen in almost every street offering to sell contraband salt. In the afternoon volunteers commenced selling unauthorised news publications and 'patrikas'. A large number of lady volunteers participated in this form of 'Satyagraha'.

Three days later villagers from the suburbs gathered at Karadi near Mahatma Gandhi's camp. In the afternoon there was a 'Pooja' of the spinning-wheel. There were 6,000 people of whom 1,500 were women, broke the salt-law and held a mammoth meeting at the Maidan when Sjt. Apteji Nagarji,Navin Mapara and Shardabehn spoke.

Thirteen toddy-shops were picketed on 'Dassara' day, under the leadership of Kasturba at Surat, as a result of which the sale of toddy nearly came down to nil.

A camp of the Stree Swarajya Sangh at Undach was demolished by the police on 1st November, 1930. The piece of land lent by the peasants for the use of the women was declared forfeited by the government on the ground that the peasants had used the field for non-agricultural purposes. The ladies present at the camp having refused to clear out were put under a lock-up at Bular.

Women walked all the distance from Undach to Billimore station, a distance of four miles, while the officers used bullock-carts. After detaining the arrested party for some time the ladies were set free. Later on they were asked to go wherever they wanted. No provision was made for their return. The incident created great excitement among the
people of Bulasar in general and particularly in the village Uhdach, whose peasants were vying with each other in pressuring Mithubehn Peti to accept their houses to be used as camps.

On 4th December, 1930, it was decided by the Surat War Council to hold a flag salutation in the castle Maidan the next day. On that day Syt Mangaldas Vakilwala, a prominent nationalistic leader, was arrested early in the morning at his residence. News of his arrest attracted a large crowd near the castle but they were not allowed to enter. A batch of twenty-five lady volunteers led by Vasumati Thakore arrived on the scene and tried to enter the Maidan. A police officer ordered them to disperse declaring that they formed an unlawful assembly and hence would not be allowed to enter the Maidan. The ladies did not pay heed to the warning which was repeated two or three times. Vasumati Thakore was arrested.

In the month of December, salt-satyagraha was resumed in Karadli. On 24th December, Gangabehn Fakirbai manufactured salt, Mrs. Sonabehn Naranji sold it and Mrs. Motibehn Keshebhai and Mrs. Roshibehn Hirabai purchased it.

In Surat it was reported that the minor government officials who defied the Congress addicts and aided in the collection of land revenue or in the enforcement of the anti-picketing and other ordinances were being treated with chilling silence or even open hostility by their own wives.

Women were also active in the no-rent campaign in the
Bardoli and Jalalpur Talukas. A piece of land of Morarbhui Kasanji, a prominent worker of Bardoli was forfeited by the government. New Ursias were placed on the forfeited land to prevent its original but rightful owner from reaping the crops. But Mrs. Danibehn wife of the imprisoned Morarbhui went to her husband's farm with a sickle, cut the 'Used' crops, placed the bundle on her head and came out.

The Mamlatdar of Jalalpore issued notice to 24 farmers of Pardi Sarpore and Satam to pay up their land revenue for the next year before they removed any crop from their field. In Sarpore village when Mrs. Ratnabehn was cutting rice in her field, the Chowkidar approached her and ordered her not to cut the crop as it was against the order of the Mamlatdar, but she refused and proceeded with her work. When the 'Chowkidar' caught hold of her hand, she asked him not to do so and with the bundle of crop on her head, she went home, defying the Mamlatdar's order not to carry anything from the field before paying revenue for the next year.

In the above mentioned cases the reluctance on the part of the authorities to use physical force against women seemed to have been taken advantage of.

In Bardoli peasants were migrating en-mass to some Non-British territory. Many villages were a deserted look. The inhabitants who stayed behind did so with the purpose of reaping the ready-rice crop from their field. In this type of activity women helped their husbands along with their children in cutting the rice and separating it from the straw.
In March, 1931, after considerable negotiations, the Gandhi-Irwin Pact was concluded. Under the terms of the Pact the government agreed to stop repression and release political prisoners excluding those convicted for violent offences. Gandhi on his side consented to withdraw the Civil Disobedience Movement and stood for the participation of the Congress in the Round Table Conference which would discuss scheme for a constitution of India.

Gandhi attended the Round Table Conference. He made a number of statements on the federation scheme, on the problem of minorities, the army and the safeguards, and explained the Congress position. He opposed communal electorates and due to the divergence of views on this question, the Conference broke up.

After his return to India, Gandhi asked Lord Willingdon, the new Viceroy, for an interview to discuss matters. The latter, however, declined, Gandhi was arrested on 4th January, 1932 and Civil Disobedience was revived.

When Civil Disobedience was resumed after Gandhi's arrest, a large number of women tried to keep up the tempo of the struggle. Jawaharlal Nehru in his autobiography says:

"The government had somehow got hold of the idea that the Congress was going to exploit women in the struggle by filling the gaols with them in the hope that women would be well treated or would get light sentences. Government, however, decided to discourage women by long sentences and bad treatment in prison."
In the period between January 1932 to April 1933 about 3,630 women were convicted from all over the country. The Province-wise breakup was Bombay-939, Madras-291, Bengal-775, U.P.-656, Punjab-121, Bihar and Orissa-370, C.P.-299, Assam-95, N.W.F.P.I., Delhi-66, Coorg-9, Ajmer Marwar-93.

In Bombay Presidency by the end of March, 1932, the movement was on the decline and after that except in Bombay city and Kanara area it was well and truly under control and no longer an active menace. However, women were active in the tentative efforts made by the Congress to keep the movement going.

In the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement in the districts of Ahmedabad and Surat, women became the targets of the repressive policies of the government in those districts. On 26th January, 1932, Independence Day was celebrated with a procession. Women in the procession were arrested by the police while the men were dispersed. On 29th February, 1932, a party of thirteen persons was arrested for picketing a Government Post and Telegraph office at Ahmedabad. The police released the ten men picketers while the three women were arrested.

In the week between 31st January to 6th February, 1932 about 279 persons were arrested in Ahmedabad city, and Dholera, Dhandhuka and Viramgam Talukas. Among the 279 persons arrested, 124 were women.

Picketing of foreign cloth shops was started at Ahmedabad immediately after the start of the Civil Disobedience movement in 1932. Throughout the months of January
and February women and men pickets used to be arrested immediately after they posted themselves before the shops. Over 500 of the total number of arrests made at Ahmedabad were due to picketing. More than half the number were women.

14th February, 1992 was celebrated as the 'boycott day'. Fifty-three persons were arrested at Ahmedabad for taking part in the boycott processions. Forty-four of these were ladies.

Mrs. Gangabehn Thakkar the 12th dictator of Ahmedabad was arrested with another woman and three men volunteers. She was taken in a bus to the limits of Varla state in Kathiawar and released there. Gangabehn Jhaveri of Gandhi's satyagraha Ashram and four other women were tried under section 17(1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act and section 143 I.P.C. on a charge of taking part in the National Flag salutation ceremony and fined Rs.50/- each and in lieu of non-payment of the fine six weeks further imprisonment. The Magistrate ordered a 14 year old girl to be released as she was under age and notice to be issued against the father of the girl for the recovery of her fine.

On 7th March 1932, the students of the Municipal Girls' High School took out a procession with the national flag in their hands. Police arrested all the processionists numbering about 80.

On 21st March, 1932 two women picketers went to the residence of a foreign-cloth dealer in Kamal's Polo, Ranpur and declared their intention of going on a hunger strike.
the latter did not come to terms with them. They sat there till noon when the dealer yielded. In another case three women picketers met with quicker success as their threat to offer satyagraha frightened the two shop-keepers to giving the desired undertaking. 82

In the week between 6th and 13th April, 1932 National Week was celebrated in Gujarat. At Ahmedabad a procession was taken out of twelve persons led by Vidyagauri Nilkanth. All the processionists were arrested. 83

On 7th March, 1932 there was an attempt to organize a procession of women but after a few women were arrested the procession dispersed. 84

About twenty-five leading citizens including several ladies met one evening at the office of the Gujarat Vernacular Society and decided to start an association by the name of "Swadeshi Vastu Pracharak Mandal" for the purpose of encouraging the use of 'swadeshi' articles. Dewan Bahadur Hira Bhai Desai, ex-minister of the government of Bombay was appointed its President and Lady Vidyagauri Nilkanth municipal councillor was appointed its Vice-President. 85

Five ladies were arrested while picketing foreign-cloth shops in Ahmedabad on 12th April, 1932. The next day a meeting was announced to be held in the Tilak Maidan. Gangabehn Jhaveri accompanied by Kamalabehn reached Maneck-Chowk. The 'maidan' was crowded by the police. She tried to address the meeting in Kansa Bazar. Immediately she was declared to be arrested. Kamala Behn was also arrested. 86
The 18th Lady Dictator of the Gujarat Congress Committee was arrested on the charge of attempting to hold a public meeting, in observance of the 'Derasana Day' on 22nd May, 1932. A procession consisting of some men and two women was taken out on 5th June, 1932 in Ahmedabad in observance of the 'Gandhi Day'. All the processionists were arrested.

Despite of all precaution and police arrangements, the Gujarat Provincial Political Conference took place on the 24th June, 1932 on the banks of the Sabarmati river and passed the Delhi Congress resolutions. Early in the morning a procession of ladies started towards the Sabarmati River bank but the police prevented it from reaching its destination.

On 2nd June, 1932, lady volunteers of the foreign-cloth boycott committee mostly members of rich and aristocratic families of Ahmedabad were picketing shops of foreign-cloth dealers with encouraging results. The President of the committee Mrs. Shankar Lal Banker, conferred with various Mahajans dealing in foreign cloth to consider the situation in view of the ordinance making picketing illegal. The Mahajans reciprocated spontaneously and passed resolutions recording their protest against the ordinance and agreed giving up selling foreign-cloth for a given length of time by way of protest against the ordinances.

On 21st June, 1932, three ladies were arrested for selling contraband salt. Three days later 32 persons
including 17 ladies went to picket foreign-cloth shops on account of the Congress Day at Ahmedabad. All of them were arrested and later released.

The first of the District Conference was held at Ahmedabad on 3rd June, 1932. Some ladies held a meeting at Akalis' pole wherein they were all arrested. 51 delegates including 16 ladies assembled in the square in front of the Swami Narayan temple. After the session, the delegates followed by the visitors formed a procession. The vanguard of the procession was arrested and the remaining were dispersed. Later on two processions including one exclusively of women was taken out and as they approached Namecho-Chowki they were arrested.

About 235 persons were arrested during the day in various parts of the district. Out of these, 59 were women. Out of the fifty-nine women, fifty-five were from Ahmedabad city, while four were from Dholera. However, only six ladies, including Smt. Kantochn Banerjee and Lakhubhai Seth and seven men were detained for trial, while others were let off.

A procession of men and women was attacked on 27th September at Virangam. Women in the procession were also injured.

In January, 1933 boycott of these persons ordering the purchase of British machinery for the Mills was being advocated. The person to take lead in this was the daughter of Seth Ambalal. She was arrested under section 306 Act XVII of 1932. Her father (not Ambalal Sarabhai) issued a statement disassociating himself with his daughter's
Nirdula Sarabhai and Anandi Shriv Prasad Thakore along with Morarji Desai attempted to hold an informal conference of the Gujarat branch of the Hindustan Sava Dal. They were arrested at Viramgam. On 13th March, 1933 nine women attempted to distribute authorised leaflets at the Manecia-Chowk. They were prosecuted under section 19(1) of the Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act of 1931 and section 142 of the Indian Penal Code and sentenced to six months R.I. on each count.

As compared to Ahmedabad, women's participation in Surat was even lower during this phase of the movement. By the first week of February the total number of persons arrested was fifty-two, which included sixteen women. Out of these fifty-two, only thirty-two were convicted, which included eleven women.

A party of twelve leading Congressites consisting of three men and nine women headed by Kasturba and Mrs. Mohan Lal Kanshekar Pandya reached Bardoli on 14th March. Next day on 15th March, 1933 the party formed a procession and marched into the main market of Bardoli, where they were detained near the police 'kachehri'. At that time all members of the party informed the police that they were carrying out the mandate of the Congress Working Committee.

The police ordered the party to disperse but as they refused, they were immediately arrested. A case under section 17(1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was made against the
whole party and they were produced before the Magistrate.
The Magistrate sentenced Kasturba to six months' imprisonment and a fine of £50/-. Four prominent lady workers were sentenced to six months R.I. and a fine of £100/-. Two others were sentenced to six months R.I. and a fine of £200/-. Each. The remaining two women were sentenced to six months R.I. and a fine of £500/- each.97

Mahatma Gandhi's adopted daughter belonging to the untouchable class was arrested in a village in Jalalpur Tehsil along with two other ladies. They were sentenced to six months' R.I. under section 17 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.98

During the National Week celebrated in Gujarat between 6th to 13th April, 1932 a batch of ten persons led by Sjt. Mehandi Sankar Patel went to Karadi and hoisted the national flag on the historic hut where Mahatma Gandhi was camping in 1930. A procession was taken out in the village joined by a large number of men and women.99

On 24th April, 1932 in spite of police precautions processions were taken out in some village. A procession of about more than 4000 ladies was held up by the police for twenty-two hours, after which time the police withdrew and the women processionists had a triumphant march to the villages.

On 29th May, 1932 Surat observed the Swadeshi day. An appeal under the signatures of five leading citizens was issued calling upon the people to take to Swadeshi. One of the five citizens was a lady. She was arrested while
hawking 'Khaddar' and other Swadeshi articles with a batch of six volunteers.

On 28th June, 1932 the Surat District Conference was held at Chikli. There were forty female delegates at the Conference. Smt. Gulabbehn Desai was the chairman of the reception committee of three persons. After the Conference was over all the delegates were arrested.100

In the second week of October women were singing 'Garin' songs at Begum Para, a suburb of Surat. Some of the songs were sung with reference to Gandhi. The police asked the women to desist and on their failure to comply with the order immediately charged them with canes and dispersed them. A similar incident occurred in Kater in Chorasi Taluka, when the women persisted in singing national songs.201

Meerut and Agra.

In the districts of Ahmedabad and Surat the socio-cultural environment was more conducive for participation in public activities by women. (see previous Chapter). Similarly in Meerut City, as distinct from the rest of the district, a more liberal environment existed. As mentioned in the previous Chapter, the proportion of literate females in Meerut city in 1931 was 129 per 1,000, as against 161 in Surat and 110 in Ahmedabad in 1921. Similarly, Meerut had three associations for women in 1930 as compared to four in Surat and five in Ahmedabad. However, there had been political participation in Ahmedabad by some women in the Non-Cooperation movement and in Surat they had participated.
In the Bardoli satyagrah. In Meerut, on the other hand, there was just one meeting of women addressed by Gandhi during the Non-Cooperation days. Similarly, in 1929 during his visit to Meerut, Gandhi was presented with purses of Rs.1,000, Rs.571 and Rs.145 by the ladies of Meerut city, Ghaziabad and Bareut respectively. There had been some women political activities in Meerut (see previous Chapter). The existence of three women’s associations in Meerut City was an indication that there was some social awakening among women, which in the context of those days could not be distinguished from political awakening. Thus here also, a high level of women participation in a movement where they were assigned a specific task was to be expected.

In Agra, as mentioned in the previous Chapter, the ‘Purdah’ practice was very widely prevalent. A campaign to politically mobilize women had begun about two years before the launching of the Civil Disobedience movement. A movement of the nature of Civil Disobedience was a test of the effectiveness of the campaign. In U.P. in many political meetings during the movement social reform issues were discussed and speeches were made urging women to discard ‘Purdah’ and abolish child-marriage. For example, speaking at the Jain Sabha in Meerut, Swami Shital Prasad justified the ‘complete independence’ resolution passed at the Lahore session of the Congress in December, 1929 and abolition of child-marriages.102

Similarly at a meeting in Rae-Bareilly District one Ram Bharose asked for the removal of the British government and
simultaneously appealed for the abolition of the 'Purdah' system. 103

During a meeting addressed by the daughter of a local Congress Leader in Sawai, which was attended by 100 women, the issues referred to besides the boycott of foreign-cloth and enlistment of women volunteers, was the necessity to abolish 'Purdah'. 104

Vidyewati of Hardoi addressed a meeting of 400 women at Bareilly. The issues referred to at the meeting apart from the necessity of women taking part in Congress work was the abolition of 'Purdah'. The necessity of the abolition of 'Purdah' was expressed at another meeting of women in Lucknow, which was addressed by Swarup Rani Nehru, Mrs. Bakshi and Mrs. Anashthi. 105

U.P. was one of the provinces where the level of participation varied in different areas. During the movement, women's participation was extremely high in the western part of the province (in the divisions of Agra and Meerut). However, the participation in the eastern part of the province (in the divisions of Gorakhpur and Benaras) was negligible except in Benaras City, where participation was confined to Bengali women. In Allahabad, a high level of women's participation was due to the charisma of the Nehru family, as Kamala Nehru, Swarup Rani, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Krishna Husabesingh were making efforts to mobilize women. Lucknow, Kanpur, Bijnore and Bareilly were some of other districts to have a reasonably high level of women's
participation. The interest taken in the movement by women extended beyond the number who actually joined processions or made speeches.

In U.P. the large scale participation by women in the movement was perceived by the media as some sort of a stepping stone for their emancipation. In an article in Chand, it was mentioned by one Rajendra Kumar that the collective enthusiasm shown by women in the Civil Disobedience movement was unprecedented. "The heroic activities of Rani Lakshmibai and Durgavati were just lone examples. The 'Jauhar' act of our Rajput women was nothing more than passive courage".

".....In India right now besides the political movement many more movements are afoot. Most prominent among them is the movement for women's emancipation. Women participation in the Civil Disobedience movement is definitely going to give a fillip to the movement for the emancipation of women."

"Before this, those who were responding the cause of women's emancipation were men whose hearts melted at the pitiable plight of the women folk. There was no demand from the women folk themselves for the upliftment of their conditions until it makes some efforts on its own. Women by participating in the movement are getting conscious of their prowess. This movement is educating them to fight for their own rights."

The Civil Disobedience began at the Nauchandi fair, a fair held in Meerut every year in April, a few ladies and some boys carried on propaganda for foreign-cloth
boycott, activities. On 12th April, 1930, at a meeting attended by 100 women, Umila Shastri urged the women to allow their sons and husbands to take part freely in the Civil Disobedience movement and appealed for the enlistment of lady volunteers for the purpose of cloth boycott. She and Prakashwati Sui addressed several meetings propagating anti-government and pro-Congress sentiments and asking for the enlistment of lady volunteers.

As per Gandhi's instructions women were active in the picketing of foreign-cloth and liquor-shops and in the propagation of Khadi. On 26th April, 1930 picketing was started by twenty-four ladies, who were led by Umila Shastri, Vidyawati Consul and Prakashwati Sui. In Ghazianabad 12 women volunteers were enlisted for the purpose of boycott of foreign-cloth. Umila Shastri and Prakashwati Sui addressed several meetings propagating anti-government and pro-Congress sentiments and asking for the enlistment of lady volunteers.

A Mahila Satyagrah Samiti had been formed with Umila Shastri, Prakashwati Sui and Vidyawati Consul as its prominent members. The picketing by female volunteers was quite effective. By the beginning of the month of June nearly all Hindu cloth merchants had agreed to seal the stocks of foreign-cloth as urged by the Mahila Samiti. However, the Muslim dealers refused to yield despite picketing by about sixty women and an equal number of men led by Umila Shastri, Prakashwati Sui and Vidyawati Consul.

The Mahila Satyagrah Samiti carried intensive propaganda
for the boycott of British goods and distribution of hand-
hills considered objectionable by the government from July
onwards. Throughout 1930 correspondence was going on with
the local Congress units and the A.I.C., as to what policy
should be followed regarding selling of foreign cloth, which
dealers should be boycotted and whether foreign-cloth
dealers should be allowed to sell their existing stock of
foreign-cloth. From Meerut such correspondence was being
carried by the Mahila Satyagrah Samiti. 112

Some of the other women's organisations formed in 1930
were the Mahila Charkha Sangh for the propagation of Khadi,
and the 'Bangle Leagues' for the presentation of glass
bangles to every individual who was reluctant to discard
foreign-clothes. The women's Civil Disobedience League,
consisting of 103 volunteers was divided into groups under
eleven Jathedars. Office-bearers of the Civil Disobedience
committee were Urmila Devi, Prakashvati Suli and Chameli Devi.
The office of the committee was located in the house of Resi
Kripal Singh, Vice president of the District Congress
Committee.

A C.I.D. report observed that in the first week of
June there were about 1,000 volunteers, out of whom only
250 were active. All female volunteers were active. Women
volunteers were engaged in house to house visits to propagate
the use of Khaddar and Swadeshi articles. This campaign 113
to most Hindu women of the city taking to Charkha and
promising to spin at least one seer of cotton a month.

In the week between 17th and 24th May, 1930 parties
of volunteers consisting of five ladies held a number of small meetings at which they preached the boycott of foreign-cloth and liquor. Among the ladies Prakasimati Sul, Vidya-wati Consul and Urmila Shastri were conspicuous. In the matter of foreign-cloth, boycott pledges of 2,211 persons were obtained.  

Protestions of women were taken out to propagate the use of Khaddar. On 9th July, 1930, a procession of about 400 ladies organised by the Mahila Satyagraha Samiti marched through the main streets of the city.

In the week between 16th and 23rd August, 1930 women's processions were taken out on four occasions to urge the use of Khaddar.

Participating in public meetings and demonstrations held in protest against the arrest of prominent leaders was another mode of female participation in Meerut. In such meetings and processions instances of more than 1,000 women assembling was a pretty common sight.

On 18th May, 1930, in consequence of the arrests of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya of Bombay and Lakshmi Bai of Madras and Sarojini Naidu, a procession of 4,000 persons marched through the city, led by fifty volunteers. In the course of its progress, the procession swelled to about 6,000 and the subsequent attendance at a meeting held was 10,000 which included about four to five thousand women. The prominent speakers at the meeting were Urmila Shastri, Vidya-wati Consul Durgeshmandini and Prem Kali, who were also responsible for
leading parties of women to light bon-fires of foreign-cloth.

Two days later, Qazi Majmudin presided over another gathering of about 10,000 persons including 2,000 women to protest against the arrest of Lakshmi Bai and Kamla Devi.

At the meeting, Prakashwati Sud stated that the Meerut lady volunteers had collected foreign cloth for a bon-fire to warn the government that the people could not be terrified. On setting fire to the heap of foreign-cloth she remarked that it was not foreign clothes but the British government that was on fire. Umrika Shastri spoke about the need for self-sacrifice. She said that support for the foreign cloth boycott movement could touch the pockets of traders and win Swaraj for India.

On 23rd May a 'hartal' was observed in the Hindu quarters in connection with Sarojini Naidu's arrest. In the evening, a procession of seven to eight hundred persons including 100 satyagrahi volunteers and about forty lady volunteers was taken out. In the course of its progress, the number increased to three or four thousand persons. Addressing the gathering Prakashwati Sud and Kamla Chaudhary referred to the observance of the Congress programme. Satyavati Satiika compared Mrs. Naidu's arrest to the capture of Sita by Rawan. Urmila Devi said that Indians were raising the edifice of Swaraj with the bones and blood of the martyrs. The proceedings were conducted with a bon-fire of foreign-cloth collected by the lady volunteers from the city.

On 25th May, 1930 a meeting presided over by Durgeshanandini.
wife of Master Jagannath, an important nationalist leader, was held to mark the arrest of Satyawati Devi in Delhi. At the meeting, Shakuntala Devi asked the audience to work for the redemption of the mother land. Atma Devi said that in Delhi on 6th May, 1930 unarmed persons were beaten and even small girls were molested. Prakashwati Sud appealed for non-violence as the means of winning government servants to the side of the Congress and compelling the government to leave the country. Urmila Shastri spoke at length on the boycott of foreign-cloths and appealed for volunteers. At the close of the meeting Shobhavati set fire to the heap of foreign-clothes.

On 29th May at a meeting presided over by Qazi Majamuddin, about 5,000 persons were present, including about 500 women. Urmila Shastri and Satyawati Snatika were the women speakers. Great stress was laid on discipline and self-sacrifice.

On 24th June, 1930, Kasturba Gandhi arrived from Delhi. In the evening Qazi Majamuddin presided over a meeting of 15,000 persons, nearly half of whom were women to welcome Mrs. Gandhi to Meerut.

On 30th June, 1930, Madan Mohan Malviya was taken in a procession by about 400 men and women volunteers of the Seva Dal, Mahabir Dal, Satyagrah Chawni and the Mahila Charkha Sangh. At the meeting which followed the procession Qazi Majamuddin presided over an audience of about 12,000 persons, including 2,000 women.
On 17th July, 1930 about 8,000 persons including 1,000 women assembled to protest against the arrest of Piaa Lal Sharma, a prominent Congress leader from Meerut, and some others. On 22nd July, 1930 Khushi Ram presided over a gathering of more than 8,000 persons which included about 2,000 women.

In connection with the Tilak anniversary celebrations about 2,000 students, 250 Congress volunteers and 200 ladies along with all the prominent Congress and student union workers went out in a procession headed by a photograph of Tilak. The procession was followed by a meeting attended by 15,000 persons, including many women. In the week between 16th and 23rd April, 1930 there was a procession of 500 women at Gargoh village. On 28th August, 1930 a meeting was held to protest against the arrest of Malviya, Ansari and Sardar Patel. Khushi Ram presided over the meeting of about 15,000 persons, which included about 1,000 women.

On 6th October, 1930, a procession of 300 persons was taken out as a protest against the arrest of the office-bearers of the District Congress Committee. The procession was followed by a meeting of about 5,000 persons including 15,000 women. The meeting was presided over by Girilal. Kamlala Chaudhari and Prakeshwar Sud were the women speakers at the meeting.

Meerut had the largest number of huge congregations of women, way ahead of any other district in U.P., including even an extremely politically conscious district like Allahabad which had only two such congregations. On 6th July,
1930, it was estimated that there were over 2,000 women in a procession which preceded a public meeting. On 22nd July, 'Ladies Day' was celebrated in Allahabad. An audience of about 3,000 women was addressed by Mrs. Uma Nehru. In Benaras another meeting of 5,000 women was addressed by Kamala Nehru. It was the only instance of a congregation of more than 1,000 women in the province during 1930.

The Mahila Satyagraha Samiti started work among the depressed classes. On 26th June a meeting of the Mahila Charkha Sangh was attended by 200 persons, mostly women of the depressed classes. Among the women who made speeches were Saraswati Devi and Hira Devi.

Some of the prominent women to be arrested and convicted during the 1930 movement were Urmila Shastri, Prakshwati Sud and Kamala Chaudhary.

In Agra when the Civil Disobedience movement was launched Mata Paravati Devi almost single handed tried to organise the women of Agra to picket foreign-cloth and liquor shops. Throughout 1930 Paravati Devi addressed many meetings of women where the number of women present varied from fifty to two hundred. At the meetings she exhorted the women to adopt Swadeshi, enroll themselves as volunteers and take part in the picketing of liquor and foreign-cloth shops. She was responsible for stirring up agitation among the women of Agra. Inspired by her example, Damyanti Devi Chaturvedi, Shanti Devi, Vaikunthi Devi, Muliya Devi, Champavati Devi, Suraj Devi, Saraswati Devi and Bhagwati Devi participated in the Civil Disobedience movement. While Sukhdevi Paliwal,
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Vidyawati Rat hare and Shiv Devi Dikshit were already involved with her.

The most remarkable feature of women's participation in Agra district was that a large number of women who participated in the movement discarded the 'Purdah'. This was specially true of the Jain women among whom 'Purdah' was most rigorously followed. Among them were Angoori Devi Jain, wife of Mahendraj, an important nationalist leader of Agra, Kasturba Bai, wife of Baba Kapurchand, their daughter Kanchanbai, Anoopabai, Asharfibai, Chameliabai and Shantibai.

At Agra on 11th and 12th April, two meetings of the Jain Mahasabha were held. Achal Singh and Parvati Devi were prominent among the speakers. Parvati Devi, in the course of a strongly worded speech, gave an account of the satyagraha in Punjab. She said that Indians were prepared to die now either by being shot down by the enemy or by hanging.

On 11th April, Parvati Devi visited Chilauli village in Agra. She addressed a gathering of 200 persons where she exhorted the audience to boycott foreign cloth and violate salt laws. On 6th April, Parvati Devi garlanded Shri Krishna Dutt Paliwal and 19 volunteers, who were to manufacture contraband salt on the banks of the river Jumna. Woman were noticed in the first procession which started from the 'satyagraha chaoni' on 6th April under the leadership of Shri Krishna Dutt Paliwal to break the salt laws. They also manufactured contraband salt.

On 14th April, Mata Parvati Devi exhorted women to burn
their foreign cloth and it was decided that the shops of those dealers who would not abstain from dealing in foreign cloth would be picketed. 35 lady picketer including Mata Parvati Devi and Damyanti Devi Chaturvedi went around the city making the foreign-cloth dealers sign pledge not to deal in foreign-cloth. The next day, Parvati Devi went through the city collecting foreign clothes. She enrolled eleven lady volunteers. In the evening about 3,000 persons met at Nayaganj. At the meetings she made an appeal for the boycott of foreign-cloth and asked the audience to start picketing. On 17th April many cloth merchants agreed not to import foreign-cloth for six months.

On 22nd April, a meeting of women was held in the Mankameshwar temple. Mata Parvati Devi, Sukdevi Paliwal, Angoori Devi Jain and Vidyadhari Jauhari spoke at the meeting. These women regularly patrolled the shops of the foreign-cloth merchants along with Damyanti Devi Chaturvedi. Women’s meetings were held in different localities where women volunteers were enrolled and pledges for foreign-cloth boycott were obtained.

Religious institutions and festivals were used for propagating Swadeshi. Women of Agra visited temples and persuaded the priests to dress the deity in Khaddar. Women outside the Jain temples obtained pledges from the people coming for 'darshan' for the boycott of foreign-cloth.

In the 'Sheetla' fair women volunteers stopped women, who were wearing foreign-clothes from offering their prayers.
Pledges of swadeshi were obtained from those who came to bathe in the Jamuna.

Doing 'Puja' and performing religious ceremonies in the home was part of a woman's traditional role. In the struggle against colonial rule, she made use of this, to make people realize that adhering to Swadeshi was a religious duty.

By June about 50 female volunteers had been enrolled. Women were also active in the picketing of liquor-shops but the sales were not seriously checked, as the liquor dealers were not sympathetic to the movement.

In the cantonment area women engaged in picketing, approached liquor vendors with the request that they should give a pledge not to sell liquor to Indians. However, the shop-keepers refused, adding that the presence of ladies before their shops increased their sales.

Women were also fairly active in the picketing of schools and colleges. The official view was that women were deliberately being used for picketing so that any police action would make the students sympathetic with the Congress. A procession of ladies led by Parvati Devi from the Mahila Satyagraha Chaoni would entice the students to leave their educational institutions and join the struggle. Vidyadhari was teaching in the Indrabhan Girls' High School. She was dismissed from the school along with another lady teacher from the same school for taking part in the movement. The school was vigorously picketed, as a result the management had to bow down and reinstate Vidyadhari Jauhari.
Children's Day was celebrated in Agra on 22nd August, 1930. A meeting of over 3,000 persons including a large number of women was held. On 20th September, 1930 a one thousand strong crowd which included women and children assembled at Agra Fort Railway station to greet Sri Krishna Dutt Paliwal on his release from prison. He was taken in a procession throughout the city. In the a meeting was held which was attended by 2,000 men and 300 women.

A Mahila Chaoni was established for women satyagrahis in a rented house and about fifteen women were residents there. It was the place from where the activities of the women satyagrahis were co-ordinated. With the encouragement of Sri Krishna Dutt Paliwal, Kumari Sabhas were started and more than 100 young girls became its members. Prominent among them were Prabhavati, Leelavati, Dayavanti, Shanti Devi, Gayatri Devi and Braj Kumari Devi. The members of the Mahila Chaoni and Kumari Sabhas collected funds for these organisations themselves. They also collected donations for the Dharasana fund.

Women volunteers visited many villages of Agra district for Congress propaganda. In the months of June and July, Parvati Devi and Sukhdevi Paliwal received generous donations from the villages. Angoori Devi and Champavati along with some others toured the rural areas of the district.

The women of Agra offered satyagrah in the neighbouring districts. Sukh Devi Paliwal led a batch of female volunteers along with Deoki Nandan Vibhav to Hathras in Aligarh district to persuade the local cloth merchants to
seal their stocks of foreign-cloth. Champadevi, Saraswati Devi and Angoori Devi participated in the 'Hathras' boycott week in Aligarh district. Many batches of lady volunteers went to Mathura to make efforts to hoist the national flag on the Municipality office. Angoori Devi Jain and Sukhdevi Paliwal went to Kasganj in Etah district for nationalist propaganda. 148

Sukhdevi Paliwal established a Mahila Samiti in the Firozabad township of Agra district. Temples of the township were vigorously picketed. The women insisted that the deity should be dressed in Khaddar and the national flag should be hoisted on the temples. Persons wearing foreign-clothes were prevented from entering the temple. 149

The priest of one such temple reported the matter to the police. As a result Sukhdevi Paliwal was arrested. After her arrest Angoori Devi Jain took up the work of the Mahila Samiti. There was a lot of excitement because of her arrest. Batch after batch of female volunteers started picketing the temple. In this satyagrah apart from Sukhdevi Paliwal the other ladies to be arrested were Angoori Devi Jain, Satyavati, Triveni Devi, Gulab Devi, Ramkali, Draupadi Devi and Takavati Devi. 150

After the internment of these ladies, the priest of the temple was socially boycotted. The women were released, received a grand welcome and were taken out in a procession. At many places they were welcomed with garlands. Firozabad became Sukhdevi's sphere of activity. She was arrested.
again on 10th October, 1930. After her arrest the Mahila Samitis established by her continued to function. Some of its members like Kabulidevi, Triveni Devi, Radhabai and Champadevi worked very enthusiastically.\textsuperscript{151}

Satyagrah performed before the temples by women was undertaken in Karachi in Sind.\textsuperscript{152} In Kanpur also women led by Tarawati Aggarwal picketed bathing ghats and insisted that persons wearing foreign clothes were not to bathe in the Ganges.\textsuperscript{153} In Saharanpur women picketed nine Jain temples and announced that only women wearing Khaddar would be allowed to enter the temples.\textsuperscript{154}

On 26th November, Kamla Nehru addressed a women’s meeting in Agra attended by 500 women. The women were asked to join the Civil Disobedience movement, to spin and wear Khaddar.\textsuperscript{155}

In December, 1930 a massive no rent campaign was organised on the lines of the Bardoli satyagraha in Baroda and Bhilaoti villages of Agra. Two sisters Champavati and Chandravati were the leaders of this campaign. On 20th December, ‘Baroda Day’ was celebrated and the next day the people of Agra, including a number of women and children decided to visit the village. The railway authorities decided not to issue tickets on the trains going towards that side, but the public nevertheless boarded the trains. ‘Ekhas’ and ‘tongas’ going towards that side were also stopped. Undaunted a procession was organized to march towards Baroda on foot. The women in the procession were led by Angoori Devi and Bhagyawati Devi.\textsuperscript{156}
In Agra, like in some other parts of the country, the leaders of women were referred to as dictators. As one dictator was arrested, she was succeeded by another. The four women dictators during 1930 were Mata Parvatidevi, Vidyawati Rather, Bhagyawati Devi and Angoori Devi Jain.\textsuperscript{157}

Unlike Meerut, large congregations of women were not visible in Agra. Perhaps the widely prevalent practice of 'Purdah' may have acted as a deterrent. However, the movement led to the decline of this practice and most people associated the eradication of the 'Purdah' in Agra with the Civil Disobedience movement.

During the second phase of the movement, in the face of repressive ordinances, the movement could not take off in U.P. However, women did participate in the tentative efforts to keep the movement afloat in the two districts of Meerut and Agra. They mainly participated as lone operators or in very small groups.

In Ghaziabad, Draupadi Devi persuaded the cloth merchants to seal their stocks of foreign-cloth.\textsuperscript{158} Gayatri Devi read a printed appeal at a meeting of 200 persons in Ghaziabad.\textsuperscript{159} Satyavati Snatika was the first woman in U.P. to become a member of the Municipal Board in Meerut.\textsuperscript{160} She resigned from the board as a sequel to the removal of the tri-colour flag from the building of the Municipal Board.\textsuperscript{161} Ram Pari was made the dictator of the Newari Congress Committee. She collected about 100 women volunteers for satyagraha but she was soon arrested. Kamla Chaudhary, Kusumlata and Sobhavati were arrested for preparing women
In Meerut, a Mahila Sabha was organised for swadeshi propaganda. Their leaders were members of formerly Town and District Congress Committees. They issued a printed bulletin entitled 'Golden Bird' purporting to be a challenge from Indian weavers to foreign manufacturers.

On 3rd February, 1932, the Mahila Sabha asked the people of Meerut to fast the next day to celebrate Gandhi's pilgrimage (imprisonment). The Mahila Sabha had been declared illegal and later on it appeared to have joined the Swadeshi League. A meeting of the Swadeshi League was held on 9th March, 1932. It was attended by about 300 persons. Chaudharani Kamla Devi appealed for the use of Khaddar and declared that the use of Khaddar meant bringing back the lost property of the country. Under the auspices of the Swadeshi League women had been carrying on Khaddar propaganda in Meerut. The Nauchandi fair in 1932 sold Swadeshi goods, and a large number of Swadeshi hand-knits were distributed at the fair.

On 18th September, over 1,000 persons attended a public meeting in connection with Ramsay MacDonald's Communal Award. Prakashwati Sud and Urmila Shastri spoke at the meeting. On 22nd September, Urmila Shastri and Mehtab Devi along with Ram Lachman Rai addressed a joint meeting of three hundred depressed class and caste Hindu women for the formation of a league to mitigate untouchability.

While in Jail in 1932, Kamla Chaudhari wrote a short
story 'Pagal' (a lunatic), inspired by Gandhi's fast. This story deals with the plight of an untouchable, Lakshman, whose ailing son suffering from cholera dies because the doctor refuses to prescribe a medicine for him. After the death of his son, Lakshman becomes insane and stays before the doctors clinic the whole day making pleas to the incoming patients to ask the doctor to prescribe a medicine for his son. Passersby refer to him as a lunatic and even hurl stones at him but he still remains there undeterred and keeps repeating his pleas. Because of Lakshman patients were scared to visit the clinic and asked the doctor to have him removed. One day when the doctor came to his clinic he was very relieved to see his dead body. The doctor looked a very sad man as he rested the dead body in his lap. In the story, she described the plight of an untouchable in Indian society. Nature has given him the strength akin to other human beings. But it is of no use. For an untouchable it does not matter if he has any mental or physical prowess. Appearance wise he may be like human-beings but his plight is worse than that of an animal. He is so helpless that he cannot even make use of his hard earned money. 168

A Rashtriya Mahila Samiti was established in Agra but after Mata Parwati Devi's arrest the organization was dissolved. 169 Before her arrest Mata Parwati Devi was obtaining pledges from dealers in foreign-cloth and securing the sealing of the stocks of foreign-cloth. 170 Similarly, Vidyavati Rathore got the stocks of foreign-cloth sealed in Bah village. Leaflets signed by Vidyadhari Jauhari were
issued against the use of foreign-goods. Women volunteers were active as usual in the boycott of foreign-cloth. They succeeded in sealing about fifty shops. They were making house to house visits urging women to use only country made cloth.

On 20th June, 1932, Vidyawati Rathore was arrested for leading a small procession of women. On 4th July there was a partial 'hartal' as prisoners' day was celebrated. Four women along with seven men were arrested in an attempt to take out a procession.

After the release of Mata Parvati Devi a private meeting of fifty women was held on 6th August for enlisting more volunteers. Anandi Devi along with Sheobharan Singh and K.J. Dass addressed a meeting of 50 persons in Madhakur village. Sukhdevi Paliwal along with Munshi Lal Goswami addressed an audience of 250 persons in Firosabad on 27th November, 1932.

On 26th January, 1933 picketing was intensified on Independence Day in Agra. 14 volunteers including five women were arrested. These volunteers had also put their own locks on two shops during the night and pasted slips marked 'Congress possession'. A woman volunteer was arrested three days later in attempting to hoist a flag. Sukhdevi Paliwal was appointed as the dictator of the Provincial Congress Committee. She read the Presidential address at the meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee, Agra. She was arrested with forty-eight other members of the Conference most of whom were delegates.
and Vidyawati Rathore were trying secretly to collect subscriptions for the Congress. 182

On 2nd August, Sukhdevi Paliwal and Vidyawati Rathore were arrested along with Shri Krishna Dutt Paliwal and two other persons for distributing proscribed books. 183 In the second week of August two women were arrested for distributing leaflets requesting the public to assist the Congress. 184

Some women of the Khadi Pracharak Mandal made house to house visits in order to obtain pledges to wear only Khadi. Parvati Devi and her daughter Vidyadhari Jauhari hawked 'khaddar' in the city, on 22nd October, 1933. Three other women also hawked 'khadi' in the city. They were workers of the local Khadi Pracharak Mandal. 186

On 10th May, 1933 a women's meeting was held on the occasion of the fast which Gandhi undertook. The meeting was addressed by Parvati Devi and Vidyawati Rathore. The eradication of untouchability was urged at the meeting. 187 Vidyawati Rathore had opened gates of a temple in her village, Parna for the untouchables. 188 In the second week of June one Gomamata was socially boycotted for participating in Harijan activities. 189

The women participants in the movement could be classified broadly into three categories, namely, the activists, followers and cheer-guard. The first group consisted of those women who were active in picketing liquor and foreign cloth shops, were working as Congress volunteers and were addressing public meetings. Women who
participated in processions could be referred to as followers. The third category comprised those who came to attend public meetings or those who took to wearing Khaddar or who as wives or relatives of government servants greeted them with chilling hostility and taunts.

The number of women activists in the districts of Gujarat was higher than that of the districts of U.P. The Stree Swarajya Sangh of Surat had about 1,200 members. Similarly a large number of women joined the Videshi Kapda Bahishkar Samiti in Ahmedabad. The picketing activities in Ahmedabad were carried on under the leadership of women like Sharda Mehta, Vijayagauri Kanuga, Atilaxmi Thakore and Manibehn Parekh. All these women had been active during the Non-Cooperation movement. Similarly Mridula Sarabhai had been active in the youth movement (see previous Chapter), Indumati Chimanlal, Khursheed Behn Narogi, Rehana Tayabji, Amina Qureshi, Gangabehn Jhaveri, Gajarabehn Desai and Nanibehn Jhaveri were some of the women to make their mark during the movement.

In Surat there were women like Mithubehn Petit, Gunvantti Ghia and Vasumati Thakore who had been politically active before the Civil Disobedience movement was launched. However, the impetus for a large number of women taking to political activity during the movement came from the presence of Kasturba Gandhi.

In Meerut participation in the city was extremely high as we have seen earlier and the number of women activists if not as high as in the districts of Ahmedabad and Surat,
could be said to be fairly high. There were three women's organisations namely, the Mahila Satyagrah Samiti, the Mahila Charkha Samgh and the Bangle League. Out of the 330 Congress volunteers who were active, 103 were women. Vidyawati Consul had been active since the Non-Cooperation days, apart from that she was also closely associated with the Arya Samaj. Similarly Urmila Shastri was also associated with the Arya Samaj movement in Srinagar. Kamala Chaudhary, Prakashwati Sud and Satyavati Shastri had been Congress volunteers a few years before the launching of the Civil Disobedience movement. Kamalalata and Satyavati Shastri had attended the Lahore session of the Congress in 1920 along with their husbands. What was most remarkable that the husbands of Kamala Chaudhary, Prakashwati Sud and Urmila Shastri were not active politicians.

Interviews with some of the participants in Meerut revealed that among the urban middle class, the Arya Samaj influence was very marked even among those who formally did not adhere to the Arya Samaj creed. This factor must have been responsible for such a large number of political activists from amongst the ranks of women.

Agra despite having a widely prevalent tradition of 'Purdah' did have a surprisingly large number of women political activists, which included women coming from the rural areas. It really proved the effectiveness of Mata Parvati Devi's campaign to politically mobilise women. Participation in the Civil Disobedience movement helped many women to outgrow their social inhibitions. Thus in the
districts of Gujarat and to a large extent in Meerut it was social change which was the precursor to political participation, while in Agra it was the other way round.

As far as women followers were concerned the districts of Ahmedabad and Surat were ahead of the districts of Meerut and Agra. Meerut also did have some followers among women. However, in Agra women were noticed in just one procession which was taken out to welcome Sri Krishna Dutt Pallwal on his release from Jhansi jail.

The numerical strength of the women who constituted the cheer-guard was the greatest in Meerut. No other district saw congregations of 1,000 or more women. In Meerut, there were nine congregations of more than 1,000 women, while Surat had four such congregations and Ahmedabad two. In Surat the women supported the movement through the network of communities like the Jain women holding a meeting to support Civil Disobedience, or the Parsi women wearing Khaddar. In Surat, there were also instances of wives of government servants showing resentment towards their husbands.

In Agra, however, there was a sole instance of five hundred women attending a meeting addressed by Kamla Nehru. In the rest of the women's meeting the audience varied between forty to two hundred.

In Ahmedabad and Meerut, women participation was predominantly an urban phenomenon. Most of the women activists in Ahmedabad came from the upper-castes like the Jains (Gangabehn Jhaveri, Manibehn Jhaveri, Mridula Sarabhai, #
Bharti Ambalal, Indumati Chimaniyal and Indumati Seth).

Anavil (Gajarbehn Desai), Brahmoshatriya (Atilaxmi Thakore),
Chaturlaxmi Dewan, Vijayagauri Kanuga, and Nandubehn Kanuga) Nagar (Sharda Mehta and Indumati Dewan) and even some Parsis
(Khurshedbehn Naroji).

In Surat also women came from the upper-castes like the
Nagar (Rohinibehn Desai, Jyotsnabehn Shukla, Malini Mehta).
Brahmoshatriya (Vasumati Thakore), Anavil (Kusumbehn Shimbhai
Vashi, Gajrabehn Kikubhai Naik and Parvatibehn Naik), Baniyas
(Gulabbehn-Lala and Gumventi Ghia) and Jain (Santikbehn Shah).
Apart from that, some Parsi women were also active. There
was a Muslim woman, namely, Hamida Tayyabji. There were
some Patidar women like Chanchalbehn Patel and Surajbehn
Jhaverbhai and some Adivasi women were also active like
Dandabehn Chaudhary and Gehnabehn Chaudhary. There were
a number of women in Surat who came from a rural back-ground
like Surajbehn Mehta, Dandabehn Chaudhary and Gehnabehn
Chaudhary, who belonged to the Vedali village. Chanchalbehn
Patel and Santokbehn Shah, hailed from Bardoli, Gulabbehn
hauled from Olpad while Kasumbehn Shimbhai Vashi was a
resident of Mahua Taluka.

In Meerut, most of the women belonged to the upper
castes like Brahmins (Vidyawati Consul, Urmila Shastri,
Bassodevi and Dureshmandini), Vaishya (Shahuntala Goel,
Ramkali, Kusumlata), Kayastha (Ramla Chaudhary) and Khatri
(Prakashwati Sud). There was an instance of an inter-caste
marriage also. Satyavarti Shastri was a Brahmin married to a
Jat Chaudhary, Vijay Pal Singh. Many of these women came
from Arya Samaj back-ground, namely Vidyawati Consul, Urmila Shastri, Ramkali, Shakuntala Goel, Prakashwati Sud and Satyawati Snatika. All these women had an urban back-ground. The only exception being Draupadi Devi of Ghaziabad and Ram Piari of Newari. They were active as lone operators in the second phase of the Civil Disobedience movement.

In Agra also women activists belonged to the upper castes like Brahmins (Shiva Devi Dikshit, Satyawati Rawat, Demyanti Devi Chaturvedi and Urmila Goswami). Thakurs (Vidyawati Rathore and Darshan Kumari), Jains (Angoori Devi Jain, Kashi Bai and Asharfi Bai), Vaishya (Chandravati and Bhagwan Devi), Jat (Champavati and Chandravati). However, there were women from backward castes also like Bohras (Vidya Devi, Veervati, Sumitra Devi Paliwal), Sonar (Kabuli Devi, Radha Bai Amulak) and Mali (Phoola Devi). Number of women came from a rural back-ground. Almost every tehsil had some women participating in the movement.

In the districts of Ahmedabad and Meerut not much effort seemed to be made to mobilize the women in the rural areas. In Surat, Mithubehn Petit toured all over the district to enlist volunteers and her efforts had the desired impact as the Stree Swarajya Sangh enrolled 1,200 members from all over the district. Similarly, Mata Parwati Devi's campaign to politically mobilize women in Agra was undertaken all over the district. Sufficient encouragement seemed to be given by the male relatives of the rural women-folk of Agra.
In the four districts some women activists from Ahmedabad could be said to be highly educated in the context of those days. Vidyagauri Nilkanth and Sharda Mehta were the first women in Gujarat to graduate. Khurshed Behn Maroji was also a graduate. Indumati Chaman Lal and Mridula Sarabhai had graduated from the Gujarat Vidyapith. Vinodini Nilkanth, the daughter of Vidyagauri Nilkanth, was also a graduate. She had graduated in 1928 and then had gone to the United States for further studies.

Similarly there were women like Nandubehn Kanuga and Nanibehn Jhaveri who had studied up to school, which could be considered a reasonable level of education. Similarly Gangabehn Jhaveri and Indumati Dewanjii had studied at home. Gangabehn Jhaveri was inspired by the example of Sharda Mehta and Vidyagauri Nilkanth to study. Her desire to study could not be fulfilled as she was married off at an early age. However, she started studying at home. A Shastri used to come to her house to teach her Sanskrit. Not of conservative eye-brow were raised but she carried on undeterred. Gajarabehn Desai and Nanibehn Parekh had also had very modest education.

All these women had got married very early. Gajarabehn Desai and Nanibehn Parekh had got married at the age of 13, while Indumati Dewanjii and Chaturlaxmi Diwan was married off at the age of fourteen. On the other hand women like Mridula Sarabhai, Indumati Chimanlal and Vinodini Nilkanth, who were graduates were in their twenties and were still not married. Mridula Sarabhai and Indumati Chimanlal were
associated with the families of mill-owners, while Vinodini Nilkanth came from a family of social reformers. 195

In Surat, Jyotanabehn Shukla had been married off at the age of 13 and was widowed at the age of twenty-four. She had studied upto Matric. She was also proficient in Marathi and English. In 1914 she translated a Marathi novel in Gujarati. In 1922 she translated the poems and short stories of Tagore in Gujarati. In 1928 she had become the sub-editor of a Journal "Surdarshan". 196 Gurvanti Ghia had also studied upto high-school. However, she was married at the age of twenty-three. 197 Rohinibehn Thake, studied upto High school and was married at the age of twenty one. She married out of caste. She was a Nagar Brahmin while her husband Harivadan Thakore was a Brahmkshatria. 198 Similarly, Kumudnibehn Desai was married at the age of 16 but she continued her studies after her marriage. 199

Women from the rural areas of Surat, who participated in the movement had received negligible education and were married off when they were below 16 years in age. Among them were Santokhtoehn Shah, Surajbehn Mehta, Gajarabehn, Lallbai Naik, Cennabehn Chaudhary and Chanchalbehn Patel. 200

In Meerut, Satyavati Shatika had graduated from the Kanya Mahavidyaleya at Jullundhar. She used the surname Shatika which means a graduate. 201 Similarly Urmila Shastri passed the 'Sidhant Visharad' examination conducted by the 'Arya Pratinidhi Sabha' and later on passed the 'Hindi Prabhakar' examination conducted by the Punjab University.
She had also taught in the Kanya Gurukul of Dehradun and later on the Srinagar Arya Kanya Pathshala. Prakashwati Sud had studied up to Matric. She was 18 when she got married. Kamala Chaudhary also did not have any formal education. A 'maulvi' and a 'Pandit' were coming to her house to teach her. She was proficient in Urdu, Persian and Hindi. She got married at the age of seventeen. Ramkali Devi received very negligible education. She was married at the age of 15. However, after her marriage she was taught by a 'pandit' engaged by her husband to teach her. Shakuntala Goel studied up to eight standard, a reasonable level of education in the context of those days. She got married at the age of 14. She also continued to study at home after her marriage. All these women were brought up and married into households where the 'purdah' practice was not observed. In the context of those days they could be said to have had a somewhat liberal upbringing.

Bassoo Devi was married off at the age of 12. She had received negligible education and was married into a household where the 'purdah' practice was observed. She discarded the 'purdah' when she joined the Gandhi Ashram in Meerut in 1929.

As mentioned earlier, women in Agra were observing 'Purdah' when the movement was launched. Some women at the behest of Mata Parvati Devi had discarded the 'Purdah' to assist her in the campaign for mobilizing women. Shiva Devi Dikshit, Sukh Devi Paliwal, Satyawati Rawat and Chandravati Devi had studied up to seventh or eighth standard. They had
been married when they were in the age group of 14-15. Damyanti Devi Chaturvedi was married at the age of 15. Her level of education was negligible at the time of her marriage, but she was encouraged by her husband Pt. Vishweshwar Dayal Chaturvedi to study. She passed the 'Vidya Vinodini' examination conducted by the Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth, Allahabad. Angoori Devi Jain got married at the age of ten. Her husband had engaged a tutor for her after marriage. Premvati Mishra had participated in the temple satyagraha in Firozabad as a 15 year old girl. She had been withdrawn from school very early. Her uncle, Pt. Thakur Prasad Mishra thought a nationalist was very conservative as far as women were concerned. She says that girls in the house could read very selected books like the Ramayana. She was reading newspapers in her house on the sly.

Vidyawati Rathor was a resident of a village. Her father was landlord. She studied at home and when she got married at the age of 17 she continued with her studies. However, some of the other women hailing from the rural areas of the district like Urmila Goswami, Darshan Kumari and Mohan Kumari were illiterate.

Most of the women, who participated in the movement in the four districts irrespective of their educational background and the fact that their upbringing had been liberal (married off at a mature age, no observance of 'Purdah') or conservative (married off at an early age, observance 'Purdah') had been associated with nationalist families. However,
there were few exceptions. The daughter of Seth Ambalal, a mill-owner of Ahmedabad participated against the wishes of her father. Similarly, Vasumati Thakore who was active in Surat was the daughter of a retired sub-judge, while her husband was a pleader. In her case the inspiration to participate in the movement came from Chandulal Manilal Desai, who was congress leader of Gujarat.

Two Adivasi women, namely Dandabehn Chaudhary and Gehnabehn Chaudhary were active in the movement while their husbands were not active. Vocational pre-occupations prevented their husband from taking part in the movement. These women were inspired by Gandhian leaders like Jugat Ram Dave and Chunnilal Mehta.

In Meerut there were as many as four women who were active in the movement, namely, Kamala Chaudhary, Prakashwati Sud, Urmila Shastri and Shakuntla Goel, whose husbands were not politically active. The husbands of all the four women were nationalists but were not active politicians. Prakashwati Sud's brother Shanti Sagar Mahendra had been active in the Non-Cooperation Movement in Punjab. Similarly, Shakuntala Goel was inspired by her husband's sister Shobhavati. Urmila Shastri's father had been an active Arya Samaj leader in Kashmir. However, Kamala Chaudhary was the daughter of a government servant. In her case it was the influence of Gandhi's charismatic personality and the socio-political environment of those days which inspired her to participate in the movement.
Thus the popular appeal which the Nationalist movement acquired under Gandhian leadership was responsible for women participating in a big way in the movement. The Gandhian factor which played such a vital role all over India to mobilize women worked as a local factor in the districts of Ahmedabad and Surat. Apart from that, it could be said to be a culmination of a process which got started by the social reform movement in the mid 19th century. The Arya Samaj influence was the local factor which helped in politically mobilizing women in Meerut. In Agra, the movement became an instrument used by the progressive minded nationalists to emancipate their women.

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31. Chand, September, 1930.


33. Ibid, 18th November, 1930.
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35. Ibid, 28th November, 1930.
36. Ibid, 9th December, 1930.
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38. Ibid, 18th December, 1930.
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45. Ibid, 31st May, 1930.
46. Ibid, 15th May, 1930.
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55. Ibid, 5th July, 1930.
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