The Quit-India resolution was passed on 8th August, 1942 and in the early hours of the next day the Congress leaders country-wide were rounded up, unleashing an unprecedented and country-wide mass fury. The removal of established leaders left the younger and the more militant cadres to their own initiative. Three broad phases could be distinguished in the Quit-India movement. The first, a massive and violent phase was quickly suppressed. It was predominantly urban and included hartals, strikes and clashes with the police and army in most cities. The urban middle-class was extremely prominent in this first phase.

From about the middle of August, however, the focus shifted to the countryside with militant students from Benares, Patna and Cuttack, and other cities destroying communications on a massive scale, and leading peasant rebellions. Northern and Western Bihar, and eastern U.P., Midnapur in Bengal and pockets on Maharashtra, Karnataka and Orissa were major centres of this second phase.

From about the end of September the movement was characterised by terrorist activity directed against communications and police and army installations, occasionally rising to the level of guerilla warfare (such as the one along the Bihar Nepal border, led by Jay Prakash Narayan). Part-time peasant squads engaged in farming by day and sabotage activities by night (the so-called
Karnatak method) and in some pockets secret parallel national governments functioned (most notably at Tamluk in Midnapur, Satara in Maharashtra and Talchar in Assam). The movement was suppressed with a heavy hand with as many as 57 army battalions being used.

Considering the violent turn taken by the movement and its ruthless repression, it was not easy for women to participate on a scale similar to that during the Civil Disobedience movement. In the four districts with the exception of Ahmedabad, women participated mainly as lone operators or in very small groups. However, considering the nature of the movement it would not be proper to make a comparison with the level of participation in the Civil Disobedience movement on a quantitative basis. The scenario of women's participation in the Quit-India movement was more similar to that of their participation in the second phase of Civil Disobedience movement.1

AHMEDABAD AND SURAT.

In Gujarat the Quit-India movement was less dramatic and spectacular than in Bihar or Eastern U.P. but it lasted far longer. The agitation here gained momentum slowly, but once under way it continued into 1943 and in some cases even longer.2 In fact some sort of resistance continued till as late as 1944.3 In Ahmedabad city, the agitation was remarkable for its strength and duration.4

In Ahmedabad city, women made their presence felt. However, their activities were of a non-violent nature like
taking out processions, attending meetings and distributing patrikas. 'There was a women's group' which had its branches in every locality of the city. It conducted spinning classes as a cover for Congress propaganda and its main function was to make women aware of the current political situation. A group of women with the help of the Red-Cross Society arranged ambulances to take those processionists who were injured during the lathi-charges to the Vadi Lal Sarabhai Hospital.

Most of the women active in the movement were associated with the Jyoti Sangh. Because of the advantage of having a women's organisation, which had been extremely active for the past eight years, women were in a position to organise resistance. However, the large processions and meetings of women as seen during the Civil Disobedience movement were absent, which was natural in face of police repression. On 19th August, 1942 an unsuccessful attempt was made by women to hold a meeting. The next day a procession was taken out at Mandvi pole by the Hindu girls in Ahmedabad. However, it was dispersed on arrival of the police. On the same day about 40 girls from Golwed, Khadia came to place flowers where one Uma Kant was shot dead. The next day 'Prabhat Phories' were organised by girls alongside small boys of the Shanti Niketan and Maharashtra societies in the Ellis Bridge area, but they were dispersed by the police.

In Ahmedabad during August women's major role was in trying to take out processions, distribute patrikas and hold meetings. They were not very successful as the police
quickly broke up and dispersed the processions and crowds.

The next day in Virmangam five girls Vanmala Parekh, Shantabehn, Mathura Das Asar, Janma Bhadwar, Devendrabala Jayantilal Shah, and Chandramani Jayabhai Parmar were arrested under Rule 129 of the D.I.R. All of them had come to Virmangam for the purpose of spreading Congress propaganda.

On 22nd August, 1942 about 175 persons, which included women, attempted to form a procession near Gujarat College, but dispersed on the arrival of the police. An attempt to take out a procession from Desai's Pole by 20 girls was frustrated by the police. Later on an attempt to take out another procession of 22 women was foiled as all the women were arrested though subsequently released.

On 4th September, 1942, an attempt was made to take out a procession in Asar village by twenty-five women. It was, however, frustrated by the police. Two days later another attempt was made to take out a procession at Maninagar and Khangur of 40 boys and girls and 30 boys and girls respectively. Two days later another attempt made by 40 boys and girls was frustrated by the police. 60 girls from Parimal Society attempted to organize a procession on 10th September, but took to their heels with the arrival of the police.

On 13th September four processions of women were taken out. They consisted of 500, 400 and 100 women respectively and one of 200 girls. The procession of
400 women near the Ahmedabad Municipality had to be dispersed by the use of tear-gas. It caused some excitement and the crowds collected and pelted the police with stones. The next day a procession of 25 women was taken out at Dantipur village. On 17th September a procession of twentyfive girls in the Shahpur village was dispersed by the police. On the same day a procession of 20 girls in Lunawady, Dariapur was dispersed by the police. 60 girls who were shouting anti-war slogans near the Rangila Pole Chowkay dispersed by the police. 12

On the same day, two girls Bai Divyasrabha and Bai Shanta posted themselves infront of the Katchwali for picketing. Bai Shanta was found in possession of some 'patrika'. She was, therefore, arrested and prosecuted under Rule 39(i)(b) of the D.I.R. and was convicted and sentenced to one month R.I. and a fine of Rs.40, which was recovered at once. 13

On 23rd September, Vanmala daughter of Nanhari Dwarkadas Parikh and Bai Janana was found with 'Patrika' and posters and was sentenced to three months R.I. On the same day at Viramgam, a procession organised by girls along with boys was lathi-charged and dispersed. On 25th September, 1942 the Mahalaxmi Training College was picketed by five girls. They were dispersed by the police. 40 girls formed a procession near the Government Girls' High School and were arrested.

On 28th September, 1942, 100 women took part in a procession in the Saraspur area. The procession dispersed.
before the police arrived. A procession of 500 persons in which women were present was dispersed by revolver shots and one musket shot. Another procession of 100 men and women was dispersed by a lathi-charge. On 29th September, 1942 at Keccha Pole Dariapur, an attempt to take out a procession by 50 women was frustrated.

Women were present in a procession of 30 and 100 persons respectively, but they dispersed on arrival of the police. 300 women formed a procession near the Swami Narayan Temple in Ahmedabad but dispersed of their own accord.

On 6th October, 1942, was observed as 'Women's Day' in Ahmedabad. About eleven processions of women were taken out. A procession comprising of twenty five women dispersed before the police arrived. The first procession assembled near the Swami Narayan Temple, while the second assembled at Dhal's Pole. The third procession consisting of 200 women re-assembled at Kameshvari Pole, Raipur. They were singing national songs and shouting slogans and they dispersed at the arrival of the police. There was another procession of 100 women, which was dispersed by the police and one woman leading the procession was arrested. A procession of 150 women at Panchbai's Pole threw stones at an electric bulb. The police used four smoke containers to disperse it. Another procession of 100 women at Khaliq also threw stones at the police. A revolver shot had to be fired to disperse the procession. These were the only instances of processions of men taking recourse to violence.
Pelting stones at the police was a frequent occurrence by the processions of men.

On 7th October, 1942 'Harijan Day' as well as 'Gandhi Jayanti' were celebrated. On that day, about 250 women took out a procession at Dhal's Pole. These women performed a flag salutation ceremony. It was dispersed on arrival of the police. On 30th October, 1942 there were three processions consisting of 50, 25 and 25 women respectively. They dispersed on the arrival of the police in Ahmedabad.

On 24th November, 1942 some women picketers started a fast before the residence of six mill-owners, demanding that each worker should be paid Rs. 30 so as to enable him to live without employment for two months, as the mills remained closed. However, as the mill situation improved and workers began to resume work they ceased their fast unconditionally.

At Kudwa Pole, Lunawad about 150 men and women formed a procession. It was dispersed by the police on 3rd November, 1942. 27th December, 1942 was observed as Women's Day. At Padi Pole about 100 women formed a procession. They ran away at the arrival of the tear-smoke squad. Another two processions consisting of two hundred and fifty women respectively, ran away on the arrival of the police.

Numbers of processions were dispersed by the police. On 8th February, 1943 at Khadia Cross Road, 40 women assembled to put flowers on the spot where one picket was shot dead but they were dispersed by the police.
hour later they again collected and put flowers on the spot before they were dispersed by the police. On 20th February, 1943 was observed as 'Prayer Day' in sympathy with Gandhi's fast, which he undertook in jail. A mass prayer meeting of 500 women sponsored by the various women's associations was held in the compound of Sir Chinubhai's bungalow at Desai's Pole, at Khadia. They prayed for his long life.

6th to 13th April, 1943 was celebrated in Ahmedabad city, as 'National Week'. During the week two batches of twenty five and thirty women took out processions but they dispersed with the arrival of the police. 7th August, 1943 was observed as 'Martyrs Day' in Ahmedabad. About ten girls took out a procession but they dispersed on the arrival of the police.

During Gandhi's fast, Mrs Lata Meghato led a batch of volunteers to Poona where Gandhi was interned. She was arrested there. Pushpabehn Mehta was touring the villages carrying on Congress propaganda and was looking after the families of those persons who were in jail. Her daughter Ushabehn Mehta had attended the Bombay Session of the Congress where the Quit-India resolution was passed. She had brought some memorandum papers from Bombay to distribute them in Ahmedabad.

A notable feature of women's participation in Ahmedabad was the enthusiasm shown by young girls during the movement. Barring some stray instances of participation in the rural areas it was by and large an urban phenomenon. The level of participation, considering the scale of police
repression was quite high and there were many processions and congregations of more than 100 women and more than an instance of a procession or congregation of 500 women, a remarkable feat when we consider that the leading women nationalists of Ahmedabad, namely, Mridula Sarabhai and Indumati Chiman Lal were arrested very early. It really speaks for the organisational efficiency of the Jyoti Samaj. Among the members who participated were Gangabehn Zaveri, Pushpabehn Mehta, Nirmalabehn Desai, Sunitabehn Thakore, Pranodabehn Goea, Perrinbehn Mistri and Munchbhuk. Most of them belonged to upper castes, like Nagar Brahmins, Anavils, Vaniya, Jains and Brahmkshatriyas. However, a Harijan woman like Munchbehn was also active. Laxmibehn Patel, a Patidar by caste, who originally belonged to the Bardoli Taluka in Surat was also active in Ahmedabad. She was studying in the Gujarat Vidyapeeth at that time. Some of them belonged to nationalist families. Though there were exceptions like Sunitabehn Thakore, who participated in the movement against the wishes of her elders. At least four women who were active in the Quit-India movement were students of the women's college, which was affiliated to the S.N.D.T. Women's University. They were Sunitabehn Thakore, Chitshanti Diwanji, Nirmalabehn Desai and Vidyabehn Mehta. Most of the prominent women participants from Ahmedabad like Chitshanti Diwanji, Nirmalabehn Desai, Hemlata Nagda and Pushpabehn Mehta were graduates. The studies of Sunitabehn Thakore and Vidyabehn Mehta got hindered because of their participating in the Quit-India movement but they
eventually became graduates. They all belonged to the middle and upper class families and had been given a liberal upbringing.

Vannala Parekh had studied up to Matric and was unable to study further because of her political pre-occupation. All these women with the exception of Puchiabhan Mhita were in their twenties and were still unmarried.

Manchibhna seemed to be the only exception, who came from a poor family and was illiterate.

In Surat, the movement had taken a violent turn particularly in the rural areas. There the peasants took part in guerilla style attacks on government property and on the property of those people known to be loyal to the British government. Pressure was brought to bear upon the village headman (Patels) who refused to resign. Initially many resigned voluntarily particularly in the Bardoli Taluka. Those who refused to resign, often had to suffer loss of property. Ripening crops were destroyed and mango trees were cut. In this scheme of things, women could not get an opportunity to play a prominent part.

They mainly participated in the movement as lone operators or in very small groups. There were no instances of processions or meetings where hundred or more women participated. The activities of women were mostly of a non-violent nature like going in small processions and distributing leaflets and other unauthorised literature.

A procession of 1,000 persons, including 50 women was
taken out by the inhabitants of Bardoli and other neighboring villages. The women were allowed to pass, but the girls were lathi-charged and about ten persons were injured.

On 17th August at Parli, a small procession of a few girls started but dispersed immediately on seeing the police. On 7th October, 1942, a batch of twenty-five girls attempted to take out a procession at Chidi. They were detained and allowed to go after some time. On 18th October, 1942, a batch of twenty-five girls attempted to take out a procession in the city but it was dispersed by the police and two girls were arrested.

A lady doctor at Bardoli was arrested for attempting to take out a procession on 24th October, 1942. On 13th November, 1942, two girls tried to picket the Great College. A day later one girl along with four boys picketed the Great High School. She was removed by the police. On 25th November, 1942, in Bardoli Taluka, six women were arrested for possessing and distributing unauthorized literature.

One of the women to be arrested and convicted in Surat was Miss Prebhavati Manial. She was released on grounds of ill-health after a period of two months. She, however, died on 4th December, 1943. On 9th January, 1943, three women distributing illegal leaflets and asking policemen to resign near the Hanstadar's bungalow were arrested. At Bulsar on 18th January, 1943, one woman was arrested for leading a procession of twenty-five boys. 26th January, 1943, was celebrated as Independence Day in Surat. In the evening stray procession were attempted in different
localities. But they were dispersed. Five women who led the processions were arrested and prosecuted. The next day Vimala, a widow of J.R. Kapadia was arrested for taking part in demonstrations and possessing illegal leaflets. Shantabehn Harjivandas Patel was also arrested for taking demonstrations and possessing illegal leaflets. Another woman of the same name was also arrested on the same day under the D.I.R. The Mahila Vidyalaya girl students absented themselves from the school as a mark of protest against Shantabehn Harjivandas Patel's arrest.34

On 2nd February, 1943 the students of the Mahila Vidyalaya observed a 'hartal' as a mark of mourning for a student, who died of illness while on parole.35 On 22nd February, 1943 in Pardi Mahal two women were arrested for picketing the High School.36

A girl student attempted to hold a meeting but it was dispersed and she was arrested and prosecuted under the D.I.R. On 16th March, 1943, one Manibehn Desai daughter of Nagerji Desai made an unsuccessful attempt to take out a procession of a few boys in the city but the boys were dispersed and she was arrested and dealt with under the D.I.R. On 16th April, 1943 four girls came from Navasari and attempted a procession in Surat city, but they were arrested and prosecuted. Three days later a girl coming from Navasari attempted to do the same. She was also arrested and prosecuted. The boys, who had collected were dispersed. On 22nd September, 1943 at Buhari village in Valod Mahal on the same day one lady by the name of Shankersari
daughter of Ratan Lal Uttamchand was arrested and prosecuted for leading a procession of boys and girls in connection with Gandhi Jayanti. 37

There were other instances of women participating in the movement in places other than their native place. Ramabehn Chaudhary, a resident of Vedichi village was active in Olpad. 38 Urmilabehn, a resident of Ambaich was active in Bardoli. 39 Gangaben Patel, a resident of Karadi village was active in Surat city. 40 Ratnabehn Rana, a resident of Haripura was active in Bardoli. 41 Ishabehn Kandhurbhai Dabhad, a resident of Pardi was active in Kada district. 42

Unlike Ahmedabad, where the participation by women was by and large confined to the city, in Surat participation was spread all over the district. Apart from that quite a few women participants in Surat belonged to the backward castes like the Patidars, the Adivasis and the Kolis were equally prominent. Most of the prominent women in the rural as well as in the urban areas were associated with nationalist families. Apart from that they had a liberal upbringing. Rohinitabehn Thakore came from a nationalist family. She had studied up to Matric and had an inter-caste marriage in 1937 (see Chapter on Civil Disobedience Movement). She was 22 years old when she got married. 43 Saryabehn Vyas and Champaabehn were daughters of a government servant. Their father was a clerk in the Agricultural Department. However, he was a man of nationalist ideas and only Khadi was being used in the house. Her mother had volunteered to nurse those who were wounded in police action during the Civil Disobedience movement. Apart from that, they were
brought up in a liberal environment. Champa bhai had studied up to Matric and was teaching in a school at Pardi. Saroj was studying in B.A. 44

Kumadni bhai Desai also came from a nationalist family. After becoming a widow at an early age she continued with her studies. She had gone to Bombay to study in Malwa College and did her graduation from there. 45 Shantabehn Patel's brother had gone to jail during the movement. He had studied up to Matric. 46

Some of the women coming from the rural areas of Gujarat could be said to have had a liberal upbringing. From amongst their ranks there were two instances of women participating against the wishes of their parents. However, like their counterpart in Ahmedabad, namely, Kamalabehn Thakore, their liberal upbringing helped them to acquire a mind of their own. Lalitabehn Shah came from a lower middle class family of the Gandavi Taluka. In 1942 she was studying in a college in Bombay. She left the college and returned to Gandavi to participate in the movement. Her father opposed his unmarried daughter walking from village to village but could not stop her from doing so. Jyotabehn Kapadia was studying in the Gandavi New High School in 1941. She joined in picketing and other activities without the knowledge of her parents. She was severely beaten by her father. Despite this she continued to participate in the movement. 47

Champa bhai Kandhubhai Desai had done the primary teachers' course and was teaching in the Vichal Kanya
vidyala in Nadiad in Kheda district. She was inspired by her mother Tapabehn, who believed that Gandhi was an incarnation of lord ‘Rama’.\textsuperscript{48} Umilabehn Joshi was studying in an English medium school. Coming from a rural background this was also unusual. Her brother, Susil Chaudhary Joshi, who had virtually brought her up as her daughter, was a nationalist and had gone to jail several times.\textsuperscript{49}

In Surat participation by women in the movement was not just confined to the upper caste. Several Mali and Adivasi women were also active. Interviews with them revealed that they had been mainly inspired by the Gandhi Constructive workers. Some of them could be said to have had a liberal upbringing. Gangabehn Patel and Jemubehn Patel were studying in the National School at Karadi. Gangabehn Patel’s father was in South Africa. She was inspired by a teacher in her school.\textsuperscript{50} Similarly, Jemubehn Patel’s father was employed in a factory in Naimur near Indore.\textsuperscript{51}

Ramobehn Chaudhary, an adivasi, was sent to a boarding school in Godasamba. Her mother Gohabehn Chaudhary was also active in the movement.\textsuperscript{52} Earlier she was also active in the Civil Disobedience movement (as Chapter in Civil Disobedience). Desaribehn Chaudhary’s father Hasm Bhai Nama was a nationalist. She studied in the school for Adivasi girls at Maroli. Later on she had learnt music in the Gujarat Vidyaapeeth. She had studied a little bit of English also. In 1940 she managed a school for small girls at the Vedchi Ashram.\textsuperscript{53} Umilabehn Chaudhary, another Adivasi woman, had studied up to fourth standard in the
school for Adivasi girls at Maroli.\textsuperscript{54} These Adivasi were refer to the encouragement they received from Gondhia leaders like Jugatram Dave, Chunibhai Mehta, Lalji Bhai, Vasantbhai and Phoolchand Bhai Ravi.\textsuperscript{55}

The women participants in the Civil Disobedience movement hailing from rural Surat had received very negligible education and had been married by the time they had attained the age of 16. In contrast, the above mentioned women received a reasonable level of education considering the fact that they came from a rural background. Apart from that with the exception of Desaribehn Chaudhari who got married at the age of sixteen, they got married after they had attained the age of 18. Kandhubhai Desai and Gangabehn Patel remained unmarried. Desaribehn Chaudhari and Urmilabehn Chaudhari got married when they were 23 and 18 respectively.\textsuperscript{57}

Ratnabehn Rama, a Patidar, who was a resident of Haripura village had received very negligible education. But even she got married at the age of 32.\textsuperscript{58} Davibehn Patel, another Patidar had also received very negligible education and was married off when she was only 13. However, she belonged to an older generation.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsc{Agra and Meerut.}

During the Quit-India movement eastern U.P. was most vigorously affected particularly the districts of Ghazipur division (except Mirzapur), Azamgarh, Gorakhpur and Allahabad. In the western part of the province, Agra
was the only district to be affected seriously. There were no telegraph wires were out, rails were removed and they were accompanied by wholesale destruction of property. Government buildings of all description came in for special attention at the hands of the saboteurs.

In Agra since the movement took a violent turn active participation by women was reduced considerably. Some of the women who participated did so as lone operators. Most of them performed subordinate or indirect roles. Many of the participants such as Vidyawati Rathore had been active in the Civil Disobedience movement and had established herself as an important Congress leader of Agra were arrested on 12th August, 1942 as a part of the exercise to arrest all important leaders of the Congress party. Sukhdevi Paliwal also active in the 1930s was arrested on 21st September, 1942 for trying to hoist a flag in the campus of St. John's College. Gomti Devi and Anandi Devi were arrested for giving shelter to activists. Anandi Devi was arrested on 27th March, 1943 and was served with a sentence of 18 months' rigorous imprisonment, while Gomti Devi was placed under house arrest and remained so till 9th May, 1943.

Angoori Devi Jain was looking after the families of those persons, who had been arrested for taking part in the movement. Because of repressive policy of the government and the violent turn taken by the movement, there was no opportunity to organize the women. Apart from that the emphasis in this movement was more on activities like
sabotage than on processions and picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops. Therefore, any comparison regarding the participation in the two movements will not be in order. Moreover, in these circumstances when any show of sympathy with the Congress meant dire consequences for the person concerned, giving shelter to the revolutionaries was indeed courageous.

Bhagwati Devi Paliwal was arrested on 25th October, 1942 in Agra for carrying iron-bomb shells which she was bringing from Delhi. She was married to Roop Ram Paliwal, brother-in-law of Sri Krishna Dutt Paliwal in whose house they stayed. Most of the inmates of the house had been arrested. She was asked by Shri Ram Sharma, who headed a group of revolutionaries to bring sabotage equipment from Delhi. She was used for this purpose because she was a woman and hence would not be suspected and searched.

Bhagwati Devi Paliwal belonged to a Zamindar family of Gurgaon (Haryana). She had received very little education and was not politically conscious when she got married at the age of fourteen, but became so because of the nationalist atmosphere in her brother-in-law's household. Bhagwati Devi Paliwal immediately after her arrest gave her name as Kalawati alias Kamala Devi wife of Har Prasad Paliwal. She was questioned at length by the police without any result. The investigating officer referred to her as a ‘hard woman’ and much too anti-government and police.

Vijaya Kumari alias Sharbati Devi, a resident of Bachgaon village in Fresnabad Tehsil, was arrested on 10th...
February, 1943 in Agra for carrying explosives and equipment for cutting telegraph wires and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. She was assisted by Bhagwati Devi Paliwal and Kamla Sharma. She belonged to the Kachi, a backward caste. When she was barely nine, she married to Hub Lal, a middle level peasant of Bachgaon village who was a nationalist. He sent her to a school in the village which was again somewhat unusual, because the husbands of these nationalist women who belonged to an earlier generation (Davyanti Devi Chaturvedi, Vidya Devi Rathore and Angoori Devi Jain) encouraged their wives to study but at home. She had been encouraged by her husband to participate in the movement and had been called to Agra by Sukhdev Paliwal.

Purnima Devi along with her husband was looking after revolutionaries such as Basant Lal Jha and Pitambar Pant who were engaged in sabotage activities and were given shelter by Prabhu Dayal Shargava, the proprietor of the Midland Compressed Food Factory in Agra. The revolutionaries who were arrested were visited by their leader Shri Ram Sharma, while he was in the premises of Prabhu Dayal Shargava. Purnima Devi, the wife of Prabhu Dayal Shargava's manager Kamta Prasad was also arrested along with her husband on the charge of giving shelter to revolutionaries. After being arrested she said that she was very much aware of the fact that the men, who were kept by Mr. Shargava were revolutionaries and she had no regrets for being arrested. She was detained under section 129 of the D.L. 226.
Purnima Devi was an orphan brought up in an orphanage in Jhansi. Before coming to Agra she had worked alongside her husband in the Madan Khadi Kutir in Karoli state.

Bhagwati Devi, wife of Seth Achal Singh, was supplying funds to one Jang Bahadur Jha, head of the Science Department of Agra College. He supplied some of the chemicals used for explosions occurring in certain government offices, railway bridges, educational institutions and district jail between 8th September, 1942 and 27th February, 1943.

Dayawati Paliwal, wife of Ram Chandra Paliwal of Agra, was addressing meetings and taking part in processions with one Krishna Sharma, wife of Ancheshwar Sharma. Her husband had been interned in the Jodhpur jail. Ram Chandra Paliwal was writing long articles in jail and when his wife went to visit him these articles would be handed over to her and on the basis of these articles she would make her speeches in public. However, she was not arrested.

As mentioned in the previous Chapter, 26th January of every year was celebrated as independence day when processions used to be taken out. However, due to the strict vigil maintained by the police it looked extremely difficult to carry on with this ritual in 1943. However, that year Kamala Sharma daughter of Shri Ram Sharma, Satyawati Rawat, wife of Jagan Prasad Rawat and her 13 year old daughter Saroj took the initiative to lead processions of women and children to celebrate Independence Day. House to house visits were made the previous day to ask the
women to join the procession. All the three women were arrested and Kamla Sharma and Satyawati Rawat were served with sentences of one and a half years each.

Kamla Sharma was 18 years old and was studying in Intermediate. Most of the women, who were active in the Civil Disobedience movement, had got married at her age and none of them could study that much.

Prasavati Mishra was going to villages for doing Congress propaganda at night. She was also distributing hand-bills and was speaking in public meetings and also secret meetings organized during the movement. She was arrested for carrying the tri-colour flag and shouting pro-Congress slogans. Her six-year old son, was also with her in jail.

In Meerut, unlike Agra, the Quit-India movement was rather weak. The activities in which women participated in the movement were of a non-violent nature. However, despite the weak nature of the movement in Meerut, women made their presence felt.

On 10th August, 1942, most of the Congress workers of Meerut were arrested. The next day Kamala Chaudhary and Prakashwati Sud organized a public meeting but they were placed under house arrest. On 12th August, 1942, the male and female students of Meerut College organized a public meeting, which was presided over by Sharda Kansal, sister of Kamala Chaudhary.

Savitri Rastogi was distributing Congress hand-bills.
in the locality of Lal-Kurti. She, a niece of Prakashwati Sud, who came from Punjab to stay with her aunt in Meerut, made house to house visits for the purpose of doing propaganda for the movement. She visited some Harijan localities for this purpose when they were holding their 'Panchayats' all alone. She would tell the people that the Indians had to wrest the control of their affairs from the hands of the British, otherwise there was the possibility of the Japanese over-running the country and they would be subjected to another round of imperial rule. She was also speaking at the various meetings of the Arya Samaj. Vimla Puri says that during all these activities she was never conscious of the fact that she was a woman.

Some of the girl students of the Raghunath Girls’ College had proclaimed that the girls should not attend institutions which were aided by the government. Some of the women, who picketed the gates of the college, were Chandrakanta Jain and Pushpa Devi, daughter of Ram Kripal Singh, a very important nationalist leader of Meerut. During the movement a bonfire of foreign cloth was also made by women in Meerut.

Satyawati, wife of Shri J.H. Sinha, the district organizer of the Meerut Congress also took part in some processions and also tried to organize the women without much success. In December, 1942 she along with her husband left for Bareilly, where she was arrested. She was detained under section 129 of the D.I.R.

The high light of women’s participation in the Quit-
India movement in Meerut or the movement in the district itself was a procession of 80 women which was led by Shakuntala Goel. Section 144 had been imposed in Meerut. At a meeting of women it was decided that section 144 was to be violated. Accordingly, the procession was taken out through the main streets of the city but it was stopped by the police and was asked to disperse. However, the women refused to do so and they were all arrested.

Since the women were charged for violating section 144 their sentence was to pay a fine of 2.50 or in lieu of non-payment of the fine two months' imprisonment. All the women refused to pay the fine and were arrested as a result.

Shakuntala Goel, who led the procession had been active since the launching of the Civil Disobedience movement (see Chapter on Participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement). Ramwati Premi, wife of Bishambhar Sahai Premi, an important nationalist leader was also in the procession. She had been asked to join the procession by Vinay Puri. She was told by her husband not to apologize if arrested.

She belonged to an earlier generation. She had received very negligible education. She got married at the age of fifteen in 1917. She was married into an Arya Samaj family. At the behest of her husband she was attending political meetings. Her husband would discuss political issues with her and would also try to educate her on political issues and that is how she became politically conscious.
Savitri Raatogi, had been an active worker of the Arya Samaj, Lal Kurti. Her mother-in-law ShamBahati had also been associated with the Arya Samaj. Her husband Vidya Sagar Raatogi was a nationalist. She also belonged to an earlier generation. She got married in 1930 at the age of fifteen. She had studied up to eighth standard, which in the context of those days could be considered as a reasonable level of education. She had continued with her studies after marriage also. She had passed the Bhushan and the Prabhakar examinations conducted by the Prayag Mahila Vidyapeeth.

Vimala Puri, Pushpa Devi and Chandrakanta Jain belonged to younger generation. Vimala Puri was the niece of Prakashwati Sud. She had passed her M.A. in 1942 and was still unmarried. Chandra Kanta Jain's father Phool Singh Jain had gone to jail during the Civil Disobedience movement. However, he was not active in 1942. Chandrakanta's decision to join the movement was her own and she was very much aware that she was going to be arrested that day for taking part in the procession. Pushpa Devi's father Raja Kripal Singh was also an important nationalist leader of Meerut. Pushpa Devi and Chandrakanta Jain were about 15 years old in 1942. They were going to school at that time and subsequently became graduates. The main factor which motivated them was the nationalist environment of their house-holds.

Thus in the case of the above mentioned women participation in the movement was a natural corollary to
the nationalist environment of their house-holds. Apart from that those who belonged to a younger generation had the benefit of a liberal upbringing. However, there was one lady, Rajkali Kaushik, who came from a rural background and was totally illiterate. She expresses great resentment about not being given an opportunity to study by her father, who got her married off at an early age. At the age of seventeen she became a widow. During the movement in her village Kaithwari she used to see Congress volunteers coming to her village singing nationalist songs and she was inspired as a result to participate in the movement. Encouraged by her friend Taravati, daughter of Maheshaya Hardwari Lal, a nationalist, she attended some Congress meetings in different villages. She then came to the city to participate in the procession led by Shakuntala Devi. This was one instance, where a woman participated in the movement against the wishes of her elders. She says that no one came to visit her, while she was in jail.

Thus, in her case, participation in the movement provided her with an opportunity to outgrow the social inhibitions and restrictions imposed upon her by the conservative views of her elders.

If we compare women's participation in the four districts, we notice that women's activities in the Quit-India movement were of a non-violent nature.

In Agra, women as lone operators did have a kind of a role to play in the revolutionary activities but in
was of a strictly subordinate nature, like carrying bomb shells, financing some revolutionaries and giving shelter to them. This gives credence to the theory that the non-violent nature of the movement apart from facilitating greater participation by women also gave them an opportunity to participate at a more equal level with men and play a significant role as played by their male counterparts. For instance, in Meerut the impact of the movement was slight but considering the limited impact the movement had in the city, women by their non-violent activities did make their presence felt. At a quantitative level, among the four districts Ahmedabad had the highest level of participation, where several processions were taken out of more than 100 women. In Surat, on the other hand, there were instances of women offering satyagraha individually or in groups of four and five. In Agra three women led processions of women and children on 26th January, 1943. Apart from that there were instances of women offering 'Satyagraha' individually. In Meerut there were some women indulging in Congress propaganda and a procession of 80 women was taken out. This was the sole instance in the four districts where all in the procession were arrested. While in Ahmedabad the processions of women would disperse at the arrival of the police.

Another phenomenon common to all districts was the enthusiasm shown by young girls in their teens for the movement. Quite a few women belonging to the younger generation had the benefit of a liberal upbringing. In all the cases the political environment prevailing those
times evoked the enthusiasm in these women for the movement. Their participation in most cases had the support of their elders. If the members of their families were not political activists themselves they were nationalists in outlook. There were few instances like the case of Smita Keshar Thakore in Ahmedabad, Lalita Keshar Shah and Jyotana Kapadia in Surat and Rajkali Kaushik in Meerut, where women participated against the wishes of their elders. Smriti Keshar Thakore, Jyotana Kapadia and Lalita Keshar Shah had the benefit of a liberal upbringing, while for Rajkali Kaushik it proved to be an escape from the restrictions imposed on her by the conservative views of her elders.


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3. Civil Disobedience Movement, 1942, Daily Intelligence Reports, Ahmedabad and Surat Districts, Home Depttt., Special Branch Files 1942-1944, M.S.A.

4. David Hardiman, opcit.


9. Civil Disobedience Movement, 1942, Daily Reports, regarding Ahmedabad District (from 10.8.1942 to
20.9.1942), File No.1110(6)-A(3)/1942, Home Deptt., Special Branch, M.S.A.


11. Civil Disobedience Movement, 1942, Daily Intelligence Reports regarding Ahmedabad District (from 29.8.1942 to 20.9.1942), File No.1110(6)-A(3)/1942, Home Deptt., Special Branch, M.S.A.

12. Ibid

13. Ibid


15. Calendar of the Quit-India Movement in Bombay Presidency, opcit, P-168.


17. Ibid (from 1.1.1943 to 31.3.1943), File No.1110(6)-A(3)II/1942.

18. Calendar of Quit-India Movement in the Bombay Presidency, opcit P-309

19. Civil Disobedience Movement, 1942, Daily Intelligence Reports regarding Ahmedabad District, File No.1110(6)-A(3)-IV/1942, Home Deptt., Special Branch, M.S.A.

20. Interview with Namita Hegde, Ahmedabad 8.8.1907.


23. Interview with Laxmibehn Patel, Mulhi, Surat, 3.3.1937.


25. Interview with Chitshanti Diwanji, Sunitrabeen Thakore, Nirmalebeen Desai and Vidyabehn Mehta, Ahmedabad, August, 1937.

26. Ibid.

27. Interview with Chitshanti Diwanji, Nirmalebeen Desai, Hemalata Nagirote and Pushparebeen Mehta, Ahmedabad, August, 1937.


29. Interview with Vannala Parekh, New Delhi, 10.2.1937.


31. Interview with Manchibehn, Ahmedabad, 13.6.1937.

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33. Calendar of the Quit-India Movement in the Bombay Presidency, opcit.


35. Calendar of the Quit-India Movement in the Bombay Presidency, opcit.

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37. Ibid (From 1.3.1943 to 2.3.1944), File No.1116(6)-5.  


44. Interview with Sarubehn Vyas, Surat, 23.7.1987.  


50. Ganabehn Patel, opcit.  


52. Ramabehn Chaudhary, opcit.  


54. Urmilabehn Chaudhary, opcit.  

55. Dharibehn Chaudhari, Ramabehn Chaudhari and Urmilabehn Chaudhari, opcit.  

56. Ramabehn Chaudhari, Ichabehn Kandubhai Desai and
Gangaben Patel, op cit.

57. Dasaribeh Chaudhari and Urmilbeh Chaudhari, op cit.

58. Ratnabh Ram, op cit.


62. Swatantra Sangram Ke Sainik, Agra District, Information Deptt., U.P.

63. Interview with Roop Ram Paliwal (Sukhdevi Paliwal's brother), Agra 18.9.1986.

64. Interview with Pram Dutt Paliwal and Ram Dutt Paliwal, who were active in the Quit-India Movement, Agra, 5.2.1987 and 7.2.1987 respectively.

65. Swatantra Sangram Ke Sainik, Agra District, op cit.


71. Vijaya Kumari alias Shambati Devi, opcit.
77. Interview with Kamla Sharma, Agra, 5.2.1937.
78. Swatantrata Sangram ke Sainik, Agra District, opcit.
79. Kamla Sharma, opcit.
81. Swatantrata Sangram ke Sainik, Meerut District Information Deptt., U.P.
82. Interview with Savitri Rastogi, Meerut, 17.2.1986.
83. Interview with Vimla Puri, Meerut, 17.2.1986.
84. Interview with Chandrakanta Jain, Meerut, 30.3.1985 and Pushpa Devi, Meerut, 16.2.1986.
85. Pushpa Devi, opcit.
87. Swatantrata Sangram ke Sainik, Meerut District, opcit.
88. Interview with Shakuntala Cool, Meerut, 16.2.1986.
89. Interview with Anoop Singh Tyagi (Secretary Meerut Freedom Fighters Association), Meerut, 30.3.1987
90. Samavati Premi, 'Main ek Bhagyashali Nari' Vishwasaya.
   Sahai Premi, Vyaktitya aur Krititya, Swati Ank,
91. Savitri Rastogi, opcit.
92. Vimla Puri, opcit.
93. Pushpa Dovi, opcit.
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