CHAPTER - V

CROSS SECTIONAL PARTICIPATION

(i) WOMEN
(ii) YOUTH
(iii) LABOURERS
(v) INTELLIGENTSIA
Indian Freedom Movement spreading over a period of 90 years from 1857 to 1947 was a great event in the history of India. It was not just a political movement aiming at the transfer of power from the British government to the Indian hands, but a social, cultural and economic movement. It was a sort of rebellion. The society seems to have awakened from an age old slumber because its very existence was on stake. The racial, cultural superiority of the British, the economic plunder and drain of India's wealth to England were the factors which could no longer be ignored. The Indian intelligentsia made the Indian masses aware of their degradation. That was the beginning of a new era in the social, cultural, political history of India.

Civil Disobedience Movement was a mass movement in true sense. Different cross sections of society had participated into it. There were men, women and children, rich and poor, traders and labourers, tribals and peasants and above all the intelligentsia who contributed to its success. In this Chapter an attempt has been made to give a vivid picture of the cross sectional participation of the people of Central Provinces and Berar in the movement. The tribals and the peasants have not been discussed separately because they have been dealt with in Chapter IV--Rural scene, under the heads Forest Satyagraha, Mob Agitation and No-Tax Campaign.
One of the most amazing events of contemporary Indian history was the rapid entry of the Indian women into politics, especially after 1919. In the pre-British India, barring a few women of the oryali and aristocratic families, such as Sultana Razia Begum, Chand Bibi, Nur Jahan, Ahilya Bai Holkar, the women in the mass did not participate in politics. Things considerably changed during the British period. They not only enthusiastically exercised the limited suffrage granted to them but even participated in mass movements of the type started by the Indian National Congress and Mahatma Gandhi.¹

In the beginning Gandhiji thought that the participation of women in the movement would complicate it² as they were not exposed to the tough realities of satyagraha. But women of the land, coveting a place of equality with man, could not sit back at the call of the Nation. They protested that in those critical days there should not be any watertight compartments of duties and service. Women demanded that no conference, no Congress or commission dealing with the welfare of India should

¹ A.R. Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, Bombay, 1976, p. 278.
be held without their presence. Later they were permitted to take part in all phases of the campaign. Their confidence filled Gandhiji with an enthusiasm and he decided that they should take charge of the boycott, picketing, demonstrations and **Prabhat Pheris**, the important programmes of mass awakening and action.

Pt. Ravishankar Shukla had an immense influence over the women folk both urban and rural, educated and uneducated, elites and labouring classes through his wife Bhawani Devi and his female students. Owing to his influence, the middle class women in Raipur enlisted their support for the Civil Disobedience Movement. They took out **Prabhat Pheris** and picketed cloth and liquor shops. In Arang, women from the labouring classes dislocated traffic during demonstrations against government officials, while other gathered for a Forest Satyagraha South of Mahasamund and abused the police when they dispersed satyagrahis.

In the towns, women collected funds for the Congress, spread the use of Khadi and preached against the liquor trade. Women and among them students also took part in **Prabhat-Pheries**, picketed

1. The Hitvada, 25 May 1930, 1 June 1930, 5 June 1930
2. D.E.U. Baker, Changing Political Leadership in an Indian Province, the Central Provinces and Berar, 1919-1939, Delhi, 1979, p. 133.
schools, colleges, cloth and liquor shops and the polls for the Provincial Legislature, joined processions and attended political meetings and broke the Salt Law.¹

Ladies of the Central Provinces and Berar also participated in the movement. The most prominent among them were Anusuyabai Kale, Dr(Mrs) Indirani Niyogi, Miss Vimla Bai Abhyankar, Mrs. Saraswati Bai Tikekar, Mrs. Chautur Bai Kotak and Mrs. Chandra Bhaga Bai Patwardhan. They enrolled many women volunteers and formed Desh Sevika Sangh. They held meetings in different mohallas of Nagpur and took to charkha and sold khadi from door to door. They undertook Prabhat-pheries and organised processions against foreign cloth. They picketed liquor shops and educational institutions. Ganga Bai Chaube and Mrs. Shakuntala Bai picketed the Law College and Hislop College. The ladies also broke the Salt Law and the Forest Law.²

With the efforts of Shrimati Anusiya Bai Kale* the women folk were persuaded to join the movement and a large number of them took active part in the movement and worked shoulder to shoulder with men.

At Dahihanda centre in Berar on 21 April 1930, under the leadership of Shrimati Durga Bai Joshi, the

¹. The Hitvada, 24 April 1930, 27 April, 25 May 1930, Indian Annual Register No. 11, 1930.
². A.I.C.C.Papers, File No. 5 and 23 of 1930.
* The First Legislative Councillor and a member of the Whitely Commission on Labour toured in India in 1929. She was the first women dictator of Congress War Council.
oldest among them, viz. Yashodhara Bai Agarkar, VijyaLaxmi Madhubala and Kashitai Limye broke the Salt Law. Inspired by this women at other parts of the province also broke the Salt Law. At Amravati, under the leadership of Dr.(Ku.) Jawdekar and at Yeotmal under the leadership of Shrimati Anandi Bai Damle such events took place.¹

On 15 September 1930 a meeting of ladies was held in the Kashibai Kanya Pathshala, Harda. In that meeting the arrest of Sitacharan Dixit, Dadabhai Naik, Mahesh Dutta Mishra and Gulzar Singh was condemned and a huge procession of ladies under the leadership of Vidyavati Bajpai carrying the National Flag and singing national songs paraded in the streets of the town. This was a miraculous event. The time had come when the ladies wielded out all their veils and came out openly on the platform to encourage the men folk to lead the Civil Disobedience Movement to a successful end. This was indeed a panoramic view, one of its own kind.²

At Raipur, Dr.Radhabai prepared a batch of satyagrahi women in which the famous freedom fighter Dr.Khubchand Baghel's old mother Ketki Bai, Phoolkunwar Bai (Mother of Congress volunteer Manoharlal), Rukmanibai, Shrimati Parbati Bai (wife of

Shankar Rao Ganodwale), Shrimati Rohinibai Parghania and Jamunabai participated, Radhabai was arrested while she was picketing. Ketkibai was let off as she was too old, but she was so much overwhelmed and internally and mentally hurt on account of not being arrested, that she resorted to hunger strike for her arrest and she only broke her fast when she was also taken into custody by the government. The temples of Raipur were converted into training schools for satyagrahis. The famous Jaitusao Math of Mahant Laxminarayan Das at Purani-Basti, Raipur was the biggest training centre for the satyagrahis. The ladies who were devoted to the cause of the nation have lectures on the prevailing politics in the country and induced more and more women to participate in the movement. The old lady Shrimati Parbatibai, mother of Mahant Laxminayaran Das, blessed those satyagrahi women who participated in the processions. The important lady leaders of the centre were Shrimati Anjanibai (wife of Nandkumar Dani), Rajnibai, Phoolkunwarbai Shrivastava and Jankibai Pande.1

The second biggest satyagraha centre was the Wamanrao Lakhe Bada at Budhapara. It was under the leadership of Shrimati Bhawani Bai Shukla (wife of Ravishankar Shukla). The procession carried out from there was being headed by Shrimati Indirabai Lakhe, 1. Renuka Jha, Raipur Z'le-men-Rashtriya Andolan-ka-Itthas 1905-1947, (un-published Thesis), 1981, p.155.
Umabai and Kashibai. The third centre was at Laxminarayan Temple at Kamasipara, which was sponsored by Shrimati Rukmanibai Tiwari. The important leaders of this centre were Shrimati Annapurnadevi Shukla, Susheelabai Gujrati, Gomtibai Marwarin, Ambika Pateria and Yashodharabai Gangile.

The fourth centre was the house of Dr. Radhabai at Tatyapara. Radhabai was incharge of the centre and besides her, Parbatibai Ganodwale, Rohniabai, Krishnabai, Sitabai, Rajkunwarbai Baghel (wife of Dr. Khubchan Baghel), Ketkibai (mother of Dr. Khubchand Baghel), Gangabai, Yashodabai Parghania were the leaders of the centre.

All the satyagarhi ladies roamed from door to door selling Khadi cloth and explaining and teaching the use of charkha and preparing of yarn and use of moonga-mala, at the same time burning the foreign cloth and foreign bangles. The women who observed Parda first made a blow on the parda system as it was the biggest hinderance in their moving out of homes. The boycott of parda system was very much objected by the Marwari society, where it had been prevailing from ages. Those days it was not customary for women in Chhattisgarh to wear blouse. The wife of famous national leader Pt. Sunderlal Sharma took a lead in establishing the use of blouse by wearing blouse with sari. It was more graceful and comfortable.

1. Ibid.
The number of women participating in the picketing and the demonstration increased day by day. It was a difficult problem for the government of the Central Provinces to deal with them. The local officials were instructed to impose heavy fines on them. Even then their enthusiasm and the spirit of satyagrah did not ebb. The question of dealing with them became so crucial that the Central government had to interfere. The Chief Commissioner of Delhi made some suggestions to the Government of India, Home Department and observed, "The problem of dealing with number of women demonstrators is a new one in India, and an Indian Government would be much better qualified to deal with it than we are, as they would be free from the odium which attaches to a "foreign government" when it employs what is called repression. The use of force is likely to arouse criticisms and sympathy for those to whom it is applied and what one wants is a method which will be moral rather than physical force to bear. It has been suggested to me that one way in which this can be done is to get people of respectable position to visit the families from which woman workers are likely to come and bring pressure and persuasion to bear on them. This suggestion is a very reasonable one, and endeavours are being made to act on it.

Another method which I have long been considering is to make use of the untouchables (females whenever possible) for dealing with women
picketers. Picketing by women and the participation by women in demonstrations I regard as a very grave menace, unless some method of dealing with it can be devised, and I consider that the experiment with the "Untouchables" is well worth making. The Congress party with his professed affection and sympathy for this class can hardly raise objections. The depressed classes look to the Government to champion their interests, and the enlisting of their assistance in the maintenance of order would be a measure tending to their uplift. A possible objection is that it might shock our own Hindu supporters. The Muhammadan shopkeepers would, I have been informed, welcome it, and would even be prepared to organize it. If the necessity arises, I shall start the experiment on a small scale and on what I regard as the most favourable ground.\footnote{Another meeting of the Defence Committee of the Central Provinces government was held at the Secretariat Nagpur at 12 noon on Monday 11 January 1932 where a number of issues were discussed and agreed upon. One such issue was about the treatment of women. The gist of the same is given below:}

\begin{itemize}
\item File No. 32/CDM of 1932, Secret Express Letter No. 37/-C. Home, dated the 14th January, 1932, from the Chief Commissioner, Delhi to the Government of India, Home Department.
\end{itemize}
"The Committee considered the wire from the Government of India about the treatment of women. 13 women have been arrested in Nagpur, uptodate, and a great care has been taken to see that no cause for complaint should arise. They have been kept in the charge of women warders. General instructions should be issued in the sense of Government of India's letter."

The increasing number of women participants in the Civil Disobedience Movement agitated the minds of the government as to how to check them and dissuade them from taking an active part in the movement. It was suggested that the cases against them which were being taken leniently deserve a change. They should be punished with imprisonment and fines should be imposed on them. It was felt that if their husbands learn that their wives let them in for fines and other pecuniary losses, they will exercise restraint on them. Hardened offenders should, however, be put in jail for longer terms, as the above consideration does not apply to them.

On 9 January 1932 at Nagpur Barristar Abhyankar, Punamchand Ranka, Mahatma Bhagwandin, Acharya Dharmadhikari and Rajabhau Dangre were arrested. On the same day Shrimati Vidyavati Dewadia,

Chandra Bhagabai Patwardhen and Susheelabai Gadgil were also arrested on the charge of delivering speech in the public meeting. The idea behind taking these women as prisoners was that they were the prominent organizers of women picketers.

On 25 January 1932 Brijlal Biyani, Dada Saheb Mole and Durgabai Joshi were arrested. Due to this the number of agitators was considerably increased and arrangements were made for delivering speeches from place to place. A large number of women also participated and courted arrest. In the same manner women were arrested in Yeotmal and Amravati.

The total foreign cloth was sealed at Akola in only one day picketing. In this connection Mrs. Gangabai Bahal, Ku. Tara Machhaliwala, Mrs. Sheelabai Neela, Mrs. Ramabai Kelhar and Mrs. Radha Bai were arrested. Every day some three, four volunteers were being sent to Khamgaon in Buldhana district, which also included some lady volunteers.

The government had started imposing heavy fines on the lady participants of the Civil Disobedience Movement so that they may find themselves in financial difficulties and desist from taking active part and also the financial stringency may compel their family members to not to allow their ladies to

participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement. The government thought that it would be an effective instrument in their hands. On account of this policy to collect the fine imposed on Shrimati Kasturibai the properties of Makhanlal were seized. Shrimati Kasturibai was a widow and had no property in her name. Makhan Lal was not even given a receipt for the same. When the question was raised in the Legislative Assembly, the government clarified that as it was an undivided Joint Hindu Family, it was treated as the property of Shrimati Kasturi Bai.¹

According to the government records up to 18 March 1933 total number of convicts in East Nimar were thirty-nine out of which two were women. In Raipur district 177 persons were punished which included eleven women and three children. In Bilaspur district seventy-eight were punished out of which six were children. A woman and three children were also included in eighty-four persons punished in Durg district.²

Thus the participation of women in the Civil Disobedience Movement was worthy of note. Their enthusiasm was unparalleled which could not be abated by the repressive policy of the government. As a matter of fact, Gandhiji revealed on immense wisdom in using womenfolk for picketing. To give an example;

in Amravati Mrs. Parwati Bai Patwardhan, Durga Bai Joshi and other women 'flung themselves prostrate' before vehicles conveying bidders to the liquor auction. No one can tread over a woman and, therefore, they easily won their battles. It not only had a psychological effect on men, it was social revolution. For the first time in the history of modern India such a big number of women forming a mob were treading the roads, standing before the liquor and cloth shops were pleading men not to use foreign goods and winning them with the immense power of their love, faith and truth. It was indeed the beginning of a new India, an awakened India. Indian woman was hidden by Purdah, who could not bear men's eyes upon her, who was could not bear men's eyes upon her, who was given in marriage while still a child, who upheld rigid orthodoxy was rethinking of her duty and had extended her loyalty from family to community, from community to nation. Centuries of suffering, repression and obedient service had endowed her with an undreamed of capacity. Nothing could defeat her. She was a new woman now. Gandhi had once again proved what George Meredith described in several pages of stately prose as "the friend of women."  

1. Home Political File No. 18/12/30, Fortynightly Report 1, 1930, November.  
2. Murial Lester, Gandhi World Citizen, Kitab Mahal, Allahabad, 1945, p. 52.
A conspicuous feature of the campaign in this region was the awakening of the youths and establishment of youth leagues in many parts of the province. A number of young boys participated enthusiastically in the movement and registered themselves as agitators. The work assigned to the young school going boys was chiefly picketing before the liquor shops, hoisting the national flag on school buildings, singing patriotic songs and shouting slogans. Youth is the strength of a nation. Inspired by the popular national leaders of the time and more so by their teachers these young boys jumped into the blaze of national struggle without the fear that the blazing fire would scorch their bodies—rather they came out of it as purer gold.

In November 1929 the Central Provinces Youth Conference held at Nagpur with Subhas Chandra Bose as its President, gave impetus to the youth movement. The Civil Disobedience had a special appeal to the students of schools and colleges. Soon after the summer vacation of 1930 the educational institutions became the strongholds of youth agitation.

The C.P. Marathi War Council issued four leaflets appealing to the students to leave their institutions and devote themselves whole-heartedly to the national movement, and to their parents and
guardians to persuade them to do so. The signatories of these leaflets were Dr. N. B. Khare, Nilkanthrao Deshmukh and M. G. Datar. 1

In July 1930 the students' agitations increased in the areas most affected by the movement for freedom. The situation in Nagpur city deteriorated considerably following the return of a large number of students on opening of the local schools and colleges. 2 On 14th July a procession of students entered Hislop College, Nagpur and hoisted the national flag on the building. This naturally provoked the provincial government, particularly because the college was a Christian Missionary institution. A warning was issued by the Education Department that if picketing and boycott were continued by students the government would be compelled to close down the educational institutions. This warning did not serve to subdue the students' spirits. Therefore, by 4th August all colleges in Nagpur including the Medical and Engineering schools and the government colleges at Amravati and Jabalpur were closed and it was not till nearly the end of the year that some of them were reopened. 3

2. Ibid
The King Edward Memorial College at Amravati was closed indefinitely. The students in the hostel were asked to sign a pledge that they would not participate in the movement. They refused to do so.¹

At Hoshangabad, when students of the Government High School hoisted the national flag on the school building, the headmaster sought the help of District Magistrate. The police arrived there and arrested Shambhu Dayal Mishra, an ex-M.L.A. and Secretary of the Congress. He was convicted for six months.²

The students of Bilaspur had organized themselves in a youth league popularly known as Vanar Sena, under the leadership of Vasudeo Deoras in 1928. The object of the league was to enthuse national spirit among the students and to prepare them for national struggle.

In 1930, the Bilaspur Vanar Sena became very active. A movement had already been started there against the use of liquor and foreign cloth. Under the leadership of Diwakar Kardikar, students led an agitation against the use of Taree and looted a Taree shop, spilling the liquor on the floor. Diwakar was arrested but his arrest only enhanced his popularity as is seen in the verse his associates sang:

"Jail gaya hai hamara Diwakar
Bhagat ki aankhon-ka-tara Diwarkar."³

¹. The Bombay Chronicle, 16th August 1930.
². Ibid.
³. Braj Bhushan Singh Adarsh, Bilaspur-mein-Swatantrata Sangram Andolan (typed) p.66
The Vanar Sena took an active interest in hoisting the national flag on government and public buildings. In a Congress party meeting at Bilaspur it was decided that the town hall building of Bilaspur would have the national flag hoisted on it. Kranti Kumar Bhartiya was chosen for this task. The procession marched towards the town hall and in spite of the police intervention the flag was hoisted.

Students of the Government High School, Bilaspur actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement and the school was closed down. Their agitation mounted and on 4th August 1930, Diwakar, Vishwanath Pandey and a few other boys met Kranti Kumar Bhartiya and decided to hoist the national flag on the school building. The school building had the flag hoisted on it for three days which disturbed the Head-Master of the school who feared that the government wrath would fall on him and informed Mr. Collins, the Deputy Superintendent of Police of the entire happenings and requested him to help him in hauling down the flag. According to the government records the police helped the Head Master to haul down the flag. But when they returned

1. Ibid. pp. 66-67
2. Note on Civil Disobedience Movement in the Central Provinces and Berar, 31 December 1930, p. 21.
4. Home Political Department, C.D.Campaign, File No 14/14/30.
to the police lines, the excited crowd hit the constables and threw stones on the police lorry. About half a dozen students managed to break into the lorry and assaulted the driver and two policemen.\footnote{Ibid.}

The above record differs from that of freedom fighter. According to Kranti Kumar Bhartiya the flag which was hoisted on the Government School remained there for three days. On the fourth day i.e. on 7th August it was hauled down and was kept at the feet of the police in the lorry— an act which infuriated the crowd. When the lorry started Kranti jumped into it, snatched the flag from the police and jumped out. Later for this 'crime' he was arrested and was sentenced to six months rigorous imprisonment under section 353. Two of his associates, Kalicharan Tiwari and Ramkishore were also arrested.\footnote{Ibid, p.67}

After the arrest of Kranti Kumar, Bhushan Bhaskar Singh kept the torch lightened and took a lead in hoisting the national flag in government office, schools and public buildings. He hoisted the flag on a school building and was sentenced to one month jail under section 447 on 22nd August.\footnote{Ibid,p.68} After these incidents the younger group grew all the more enthusiastic and led the agitation with renewed enthusiasm.

1. Ibid.
3. Ibid, p.68
vigour and zeal.  

At the same time a great upheaval took place in Bilaspur. The students and youth of the town formed a "Shanti Youth League". The Town Congress Committee appealed the residents to boycott the foreign cloth and appealed the merchants to seal off all the foreign cloth which they were selling. But due to the shortage of Congress workers no feasible progress could be achieved in this direction. Realising this the young men of the Youth League took this programme in their hands. They started picketing in groups before the shops of the foreign cloth dealers. The initiated programme was being successfully executed under the guidance of the President of the Youth League--Vaidya Ravindra Natha and his associates. 

The programmes of the youth were so much impressive and so hard that the merchants had to yield before the agitation. They sealed off all their foreign cloth. This was a great victory for the youth to bring the programme of the Congress to a successful end. This action of the Youth was also praised by the then Secretary of the Mahakoshal Congress Committee, Dr. D.P. Mishra, in his speeches in the various public meetings. 

2. Hitvada, Nagpur, 3rd August 1930, p. 6
In Seoni, students movement was inaugurated by Ganesh Kunjbiharilal Khare. The students boycotted their school and a new school after the name of Gandhiji, "Gandhi National School" was started. The students also picketed the liquor and foreign cloth shops.¹

At Sagar, Raipur, Jabalpur, Betul, Chhindwara and Hoshangabad 'Vanar Sena' and 'Bal Sabhas' were formed. At Sagar the teen girls formed a Sabha known as 'Durga Sena' which was named after Rani Durgawati.²

On 10 November 1930 boycott of Council Day was observed. On the same day 400 volunteers, 200 female volunteers and 500 children formed a huge Vanar Sena and picketed at various centres. The police resorted to caneing at few centres and arrests were also made.³

In the movement of 1930 in Central Provinces a majority of youth had courted arrest and their number was very large. On 15 November 1930 the number of arrested persons was 2573, out of which 1014 were youth below the age of 21 years and out of this 36

The Gandhi–Irwin pact signed with the purpose of creating an atmosphere of peace and harmony received a generous interpretation to all points of doubt by the government of Central provinces. So much so that in the Statement issued by Gandhiji and released for publication on 19 August 1931 no breach was alleged against the government. None the less from the outset the followers of Congress in this province laid themselves out to keep alive a war mentality, to misinterpret the generosity of government as a defeat, and to treat the settlement as a truce and not as a peace.

At the Mahakoshal Conference held at Sagar on 13 June 1931 Lal Shankarlal, president, stated that the *Seva Dal* organisation should not concern itself with the present truce. He had no faith in the truce. There was a great possibility of a fight being resumed for which it was necessary to organise. Shri Krishna Selat, Chairman of the Reception Committee said that the youth should organize the peasants and workers by establishing youth centres at every village, and an army of men should be kept ready for the future fight. The present opportunity of the truce should be utilized for preparation, and success would be theirs. At a session of the Mahakoshal Naujaven Bharat Sabha held on the same day at Sagar...

Mr. Mehar Ali said that the only message he could give to the audience was that of war. "It is our constant prayer that the battle should again be resumed and with double force, so that the government may run away with bag and baggage. War mentally should be maintained, and therefore, you should sharpen your swords so that as soon as you unsheath them the eyes of our enemies would be dazzled."¹

It was deeply felt that the students could lead the movement to a successful end. They were an enthusiastic lot who were inspired by Gandhiji and local leaders. In Nagpur Abhyankar addressed a highly emotional meeting calling youth to make sacrifices for freedom.² This appeal did not prove futile. The youth and students of Nagpur took an active part in the movement. It was essential that a large number of youth should enroll themselves as volunteers. Dr. Hardikar and Mrs. B. Chattopadhyay visited Jabalpur where they exhorted the youth to join the coming Congress struggle.³

Ganpati festival was made occasion of many students meetings addressed by well known Congress leaders who persuaded students to do national work.⁴

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1. File No.60/CDM of 1932, Government indictment of Congress in breach of Delhi Agreement.
2. Home Political Department, Fort-nightly Report 11, 1931, October.
3. Home Political Department, Fort-nightly Report 11, 1931, November.
4. Home Political Department, Fortnightly Report 11, 1931, September.
Owing to the long established contact which Gandhian Congressmen had with students, the later strongly supported the Civil Disobedience campaign. They did so also because leaders such as Abhyankar, Gole and Biyani, teachers and workers in the National schools and ashrams and lawyer leaders of the newly formed Youth Leagues urged students in 1930 to participate in the agitation.¹

Among the local leaders Pt. Ravishankar Shukla was also very popular among the middle class students in the towns and peasant groups in the villages. It is because he had a long standing interest in education, had addressed student conference, and maintained an office of the Students Federation in his house in Raipur.² Moreover, through his younger sons also Pt. Ravishankar Shukla and links with the Vanar Sena. Students also supported him because of the influence he had over the teachers in Municipal and District Council Schools. As a result many students 'mustered strongly'³ at Independence Day function, while some joined Youth League formed by Ravishankar Shukla or the Hindustan Seva Dal, a volunteer organization which he controlled.


3. The Hitvada, 30 January, 1930
In the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement youth of East Nimar played a very important role. Under the Unlawful Association Ordinance of 1932 the government had declared the District Congress Committee and Tarun Sangh as unlawful. As such the entire responsibility of carrying the programme further came on the shoulder of the youth themselves. Under the inspiring guidance and guidelines of Makhanlal Chaturvedi the youth could find the right path to lead the movement. There is no doubt that youth have an immense power and enthusiasm but they always need an inspiring leadership. Makhanlal Chaturvedi was one such leader who inspired youth through his nationalistic poems. A meeting of the youth was organized at Khandwa in which Makhanlal Chaturvedi made a speech in which he said that bloodshed of the English people in Ireland only paved the way for further negotiations and opened the door in this direction. 1

During Civil Disobedience Movement the Punjab Mail Murder case attracted the attention of the entire country towards East Nimar. On 23 July 1931 between Khandwa and Burhanpur Railway Stations near the dense forests of Dogargaon Lt.G.R.Hect of 218 Punjab Battalion was stabbed to death while travelling in Punjab Mail. In the same compartment

1. Extracts from some records of Commissioner, Collector, Sagar, regarding political events in the Sagar and under other districts of Mahakoshal region, p.13.
his companion Lt. Shaheen was brutally beaten. Yashwant Singh Thakur, Deo Narayan Tiwari along with one companion, who were in the service of the Rail Department at Bhusaval were arrested as suspects in this case. Later, it was revealed in the enquiry that these youngmen were associated with Bhagat Singh and other revolutionaries and were trying to collect money for the purchase of revolvers and other weapons which could be utilized by the revolutionary organizations for the cause of the national movement. Their trial was held in the Session Court at Khandwa. Yashwant Singh Thakur and Dev Narayan Tiwari were sentenced to death after the case was proved. Their third companion was punished with life imprisonment. Both, Yashwant Singh Thakur and Deo Narayan Tiwari were hanged till death in the Jabalpur prison on 11 December 1931. 1

This incident inspired the youth of East Nimar for the revolutionary movements and they were filled with great pride and enthusiasm. The tale of sacrifices of the East Nimar youth spread in the nook and corner of the country. In the Legislative Council the Central Provinces K.M. Syed Muzaffar Hussain raised this question and asked for clarification from the government. 2

1. Home Political Department File No. 18/17/31, 18/8/31, 18/9/31 and 18/10/31, Second Civil Disobedience Note March 1933, p.10.
2. Police Department File No. 13-17, Year 1931, C.P. and Berar.
Although this case was not connected with the Civil Disobedience Movement, it reveals the developing nationalistic feelings among the young men of the Central Provinces.

Thus, even in the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement students and young boys took an active part. In Raipur, Balbhadra Azad formed the Vanar Sena. The young members proudly called themselves 'soldiers'. They led prabhat pheris and took out processions. They also worked as messengers, distributed literature and pasted posters on walls. Brahmapara was their centre. On 13 March 1932 a procession led by Baliram marched for Gandhi Chowk shouting slogans. When they reached the square and Baliram started his speech, the police attacked the mob, snatched the national flag from Baliram's hands and stated flogging him. The police charged the crowd with lathis in order to disassemble them. Inspite of this in the evening they met at the Anand Samaj Library and Baliram delivered a fiery speech. While he was speaking the Head Constable started beating him with a cane till he fell on the floor--after fifteen minutes of continuous flogging. Baliram was only eighteen years' old and was arrested thrice within a short span of six months. The procession taken out by Baliram was also accompanied by Thakur

Ram Kishore Singh, Hanuman Prasad Dubey and Lakhan Lal Tiwari.¹

By 1932 Congress activities had been almost at a standstill. In Jabalpur a few boys continued to indulge in such pranks as pulling the communication cords of trains or attempting to hoist the Congress flag in the district office compound, thus obtaining the "martyrdom" to which they were taught to aspire. Elsewhere there was nothing reported.²

The picketing by a few boys of a cracker shop in Nagpur in 1932, when the offenders were let off after a short detention, appears to have been an attempt to revive the activities of the "Vanar Sena".³

The unabated zeal and enthusiasm of the youth made the movement successful in the Central Provinces and Berar like the rest of India. Inspite of the strict reactionary measures of the government and arrest of their local leaders the movement of the youth continued. It died down only with the calling off of the Civil Disobedience Movement but reawakened when Gandhiji made another call "Quit India".

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² Home Political Department File No. 18/13/32, FR 1, 1932, October.

³ Home Political Department File No. 18/13/32, FR 11, 1932, October.
LABOURERS

Another stream of a considerable strength that went to swell the freedom movement was Labour organizations. Congress connection with the working classes in Nagpur led to their participation in Civil Disobedience. Foremost among the Congressmen with influence among the workers in 1930 were Mr. Awari and his associates, P.K.Salve, P.M.Naidu and L.S. Sherlaker too had influence over the workers. Important among the labour leaders were P.D.Marathe of Nagpur Textile Union, V.S.Dandekar and M.L.Jaiwant of Girni Kamgar Union. V.R.Kallapp an office bearer in various railway Unions and Mrs. Kale who had influence among women labourers.¹

Through the influence wielded by these leaders, groups of workers participated in Civil Disobedience Movement. Municipal employees took part in the Salt agitation in Nagpur; railway-men went on strike; workers observed a hartal and joined procession on nationalist occasions orchins abused the police in city streets and tongawalas flew the Congress flag on their vehicles. Industrial workers were, however, driven to the movement by R.S.Ruikar and M.L.Jayawant.²

₁. Political and Military, File No. 302/CDM of 1930, p.3.; A.I.C.C. File No. 24 of 1930.
In November 1929 the All-India Trade Union Congress met at Nagpur with Jawaharlal Nehru as President. Unfortunately at this conference the labour movement was split into two wings, the Right Wing under N.M. Joshi and Chamanlal, seceding from the main body which was controlled by the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Union and the Giri Kamgar Union. The latter had distinct affinities with the league against imperialism and other leftist international movements. Though there had been differences in the Trade Union Congress for quite some level posts, the division was further hastened because of the appointment of the Whitley Commission on labour on which (unlike the Simon Commission) two Indian leaders N.M. Joshi and Chamanlal were appointed. Despite the differences of policy, organised labour was a powerful force in the freedom struggle in the province, as in most other parts of the country.¹

Efforts were made by R.S. Ruikar and M.L. Jaywant to drive the industrial workers into Civil Disobedience Movement.²

When Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested Ruikar made a violent speech on the usual Congress lines³ at Nagpur. On 4 January 1932 a hartal was observed in

2. Political and Military Department, File No.131/CDM of 1932 p.97.
3. Home political Department File No. 18/1/32, FR 1, 1932, January.
the town as a protest against the arrest of Subhas Chandra Bose. Ruikar and others went to the Model Mills very early in the morning that day and organised picketing outside the gate before the police could arrive. It was so successful that not enough workmen could come to make it worth while to work the Mills which remained closed during the day. 4 January 1932 was Monday. Normally workers are paid for a holiday, but when a hartal follows immediately after a holiday the Mill authorities claim a right to refuse the wages for the day. The management also decided that the hartal should be treated as a break in service and that all those who had participated in it should be refused the bonus for a month's continuous attendance. The attitude was one with which one is bound to have sympathy for the workers because of the financial loss they suffered. The hartal was organized purely as a political protest, though Ruikar tried to make out that it had no political significance and was merely organized because Subhash Chandra Bose was the Treasurer and an ex-President of the Trade Union Congress.

Trouble was brewing at the end of the fortnight in the Model Mills at Nagpur. Ruikar the labour agitator, chose the 4 February 1932 which had been advertised by the Congress as 'Gandhi Day' for a labour demonstration. An audience of 5 or 6 thousand was assembled at Model Mills. The following Unions
took part in it: The Textile, Bengal Nagpur Railway Men, Great Indian Peninsula Railway men, Scavengers and Motor Drivers Unions Tonga drivers were all represented. A great number of the audience were persons with no connection with trade unions, and who had been attracted by the prospect of a fiery political speech from Ruikar. His speech was purely political and was directed principally to attacking government's policy of repression. Independence was implied as the goal of the workers' movement, but Ruikar said that while they aimed at freedom, they did not believe in the Congress movement. Instead, they had in their hands the potential weapon of a general strike for political purposes. Ruikar was prosecuted for his speech. The events of the day had further consequences. 1

As a matter of fact Ruikar's object was to drive the working class into Civil Disobedience Movement. He said that the Moderate leaders in India considered Congress agitation to be constitutional in which he had no faith. But he enlisted his support to the Gandhian tactics of Civil Disobedience. He blamed the government for the renewal of Civil Disobedience. He pointed out that the present time was critical for the so-called working class.

In the above mentioned meeting held on 4 February 1932 eleven resolutions were passed, the

1. Home Political Department, File No 18/4/32, FR 1, 1932, February.
first three being of utmost political importance, viz.: 1

(1) Protesting against the Ordinances and the methods by which they were being enforced.

(2) Calling on government to adopt a policy of conciliation by releasing Gandhi, the Meerut prisoners, M.N.Roy and other Congress leaders and prisoners, and by granting freedom to India.

(3) Protesting against the heavy sentences inflicted on volunteers arrested in connection with the Congress movement.

A mass meeting of the Model Mill workers was held on 17 February 1932 which was presided over by R.S.Ruikar. The meeting condemned the attitude of the local district authorities prohibiting meetings and processions in the city thus putting restrictions on the legitimate trade union movement activities. The meeting also protested against the action of Model Mill authorities in cutting down the bonus of the workers for the month of January 1932 in violation of previous practice and procedure, which prevailed during the previous year and without giving any notice to the workers that there would be any change in the past practice. The meeting also congratulated the workers for their courage and unity in coping up

1. Political and Military Department, File No 13/ CDM of 1932, p.98.
with the financial problem and requested public for generous help for the Model Mill workers. The meeting further protested against the action of the authorities of Model Mills in resorting to threats and force for making the workers accept the payment and warned the Mill authorities to stop such threats, otherwise the consequences would be very serious and disastrous.

Later, on much pleadings and threat of the workers for another strike the management agreed to give Sunday's pay but was firm on the subject of bonus.\(^1\) This culminated in satyagraha by the workers and the management resorting to lock out. Later on the management paid the wages for the hartal and sunday, and agreed to consider to pay the January bonus after three four months' time. Thus normalcy was restored in the Model Mills.\(^2\)

The All India Trades Union Congress Executive Committee met in Nagpur from the 9th to 11th May 1932 to consider how to restore to the unity of the trade union movement. The meeting was attended by delegates from Bengal, Bombay and Madras, but no progress was made. The leading members of the Trade Union Federation wrote beforehand to their Nagpur supporters cautioning them against taking part in the

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the deliberations. The only thing that the meeting did, was to resolve that 26 May 1932 should be observed as an All India Independence Day to protest against the repressive policy of the government.¹

The labour movement at Nagpur was becoming more and more stronger and they had been expecting full support from the Congress front.² It was very natural. Gandhiji had shown his immense understanding of their problems and had fought for their rights long back in 1917 in Ahmedabad.

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¹ Home Political Department File No. 18/8/32, FR I, 1932, May.
² Home Political Department File No. 18/7/33, FR II, 1933, June.
INTELLIGENTSIA

No movement can be successfully launched without a leader. In the Civil Disobedience Movement although Gandhiji was the supreme but for the different regions the local leader and a group of intelligentsia were conducting the movement in a befitting manner.

Prior to the commencement of the movement, a meeting of the Hindustani C.P. Provincial Congress Committee was held at Gopal Bagh, Jabalpur on 30 March 1930. It constituted a Working Committee comprising of Seth Govind Das, D.P. Mishra, Ravishankar Shukla, Makhanlal Chaturvedi, K.B. Kandekar, Babu Ghanshyam Singh Gupta and Biharilal Patel. This Committee was authorised to formulate a scheme of Civil Disobedience and organise an effective campaign in the province. On its appeal 150 persons including pleaders, influential merchants and landed magnates enrolled themselves as styagrahis and volunteers for the movement.¹

1. SCHOOL MASTERS

Pt. Ravishankar Shukla was a natural leader who had a great influence over the school masters too. As President of the District Council he inspired its teachers to join the Congress, to observe 26 January as Independence Day in their schools, and undergo

¹ Home Political File No. 253 of 1930 and The Hitvada, 3rd April 1930.
training in methods of political propaganda. Consequently, as Civil Disobedience Movement started, the teachers in various parts of the district held political meetings, led processions and picketed shops, besides encouraging aboriginals and Harijans to abstain from liquor and participated in the forest satyagrahas.  

On 15 June 1930 the order dissolving the Raipur District Council was received. Within a week printed notices were sent to all school masters, supervisors and other members of the paid staff of the Council warning them to stop immediately all political activities under the threat of instant dismissal. It was thought necessary to issue these notices in order that the teachers might not turn round later on and say that they knew nothing about the change in the constitution of the council. As Raipur is a big district it took some time before these notices actually reached the school masters. It must be kept in mind that there were more than 600 school masters under the District Council and some of the schools were even in the interiors. Those printed notices were duly served on them by the end of June and throughout July and August and actions were taken against all of those teachers who were carrying on political activities inspite of the warning conveyed to them.  

2. File No 21/CDM of 1931.
The District Council was under complete control of Pt. Ravishankar Shukla, for full three years. As mentioned above he had spared no pains in inculcating anti-government doctrines in the minds of the school masters and getting them to spread dis-loyalty and disaffection in the villages. Every year, the teachers were brought to the head-quarters for conference and lectures were delivered to them on political subjects. They were also being trained in lathi, drill etc. Through supervisors whom he appointed without even obtaining the sanction of government, he controlled the school masters and harassed those who did not follow him. The successive 'victories' he scored over the government in the appointment of supervisors construction of press buildings, turning out Ramkishan a member from Kurud who was avowedly hostile to his policy, duly impressed on the minds of the staff his powers and considerably enhanced his prestige. 1

Soon after the District Council was dissolved a movement was set on foot to completely boycott the government schools and open the "National Schools". 2

Stern action was taken against school masters by the government. One of the masters, Jeorakhan was

1. Letter from Deputy Commissioner, Chhattisgarh Division, d/-28th August 1930.

dismissed. Another Umaryar Beg was transferred from Baloda Bazar to Pithora. He wielded considerable influence among the school masters. An enquiry was ordered against Bondhu Singh, Tithal Rao and Durga Prasad and the Officer Incharge was deputed to Pallari to take disciplinary action against them after the enquiry. Durga Prasad was dismissed in August 1930.

The Chairman, District Council, ordered to all the school masters to become members of the Congress and to enroll other people to the Congress membership. A printed leaflet of this effect was sent to all the school masters on 17 January 1930. Mahant Laxminarayan Das who was the Secretary of the School Board, issued a leaflet on 30 April 1930 to all the school masters asking them to hold meetings in their school to congratulate Mr. R.S. Shukla and others on their arrest and to pass resolutions congratulating them and to complete their work.

The following supervisors were suspected of having taken part in the anti-government movement and hence they were punished:

1. Kesho Gopal had been reverted from Supervisorship on Rs. 40/- to Head Master on Rs. 30/- of an un-important school in the jungle.

2. Beharilal had been reverted from Supervisorship on Rs. 40/- to Head Master on Rs. 23/-. 
(3) Shankar Rao, Supervisor of Dhamtari, was dismissed.

The following school masters had been dismissed for having taken part in the anti-government movement:

1. Jamna Prasad, Headmaster, Pithora,
2. Jawrakhan, Headmaster, Asonda
3. Samaroo Lal, Headmaster, Tumgaon
4. Madho Rao, Headmaster, Rajim
5. Ramprasad Halba, Asst. Master, Amdi
6. Sukhram, Asst. Master, Mahasamund
7. Dandiram, Headmaster, Karmada

The following school masters had been transferred at their own expense to distant schools as they were suspected of helping the anti-government movement:

1. Bhushanlal, Asst. Master, Neora
2. Umayyar Beg Head Master, Baloda Bazar
3. Jahru Singh, Supervisor, Kurud

Thus the school masters not only enthused their students with nationalistic feeling and guided them for the movement, they set their examples before them by taking an active participation in the movement, getting punished and by courting arrests.

1. A report in typescript dated 15th August 1930 on the Schools under District Council by Muniruddin, Officer-in-Charge, District Council, Raipur
Rashtriya Vidyalaya, Raipur, had also played an important role in the Civil Disobedience Movement of the district. Nandkumar Dani, was the Headmaster of the school. It was his daily routine to have a march of "Prabhat Pheri" with his students. One day in the month of November 1930 while the Prabhat Pheri team was coming back, Bashirullah Khan, Sub Inspector of Police, called Dani near the Goal Bazar Naka and asked him to drop his routine, defiance to it he was threatened to be booted. Dani retorted and said 'Do your duty and I will do mine.' This was the spirit of the teachers then.

2. **JOURNALISTS**

There was a scarcity of newspapers in the Mahakoshal area from the very beginning and its need was felt very badly. When the Civil Disobedience Movement started, people got very eager to know its details and day-to-day happening which only a daily newspaper can provide. To fill in this need a Hindi daily "Lokmat" was started on 14 February 1930 from Jabalpur. This newspaper was financed by Seth Govind Das and was edited by Pt. Dwarka Prasad Mishra. It took only a little time to be popular.

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was the first daily newspaper of the Central Provinces which became much popular within a short span and its circulation increased within a couple of months in the Central India and neighbouring districts of other provinces. The circulation of Lokmat went up to 15,000 before its publication was stopped by the government under the Press Ordinance. It had succeeded in carrying the message of the Congress far and wide in the province. It was being eagerly read by public and with fear by the government. It had Devi Dayal Chaturvedi, Satyalal Vidyalankar, Hukumchand Narad and Kuldeep Sahay in the editorial board, besides many correspondants in all parts of the nation and it subscribed to the news service of the Associated Press of India. The paper helped in generating nationalist spirit and anti-government feelings, in the masses. It was basically a political paper which openly and fearlessly criticised the government policies. Such a paper could not survive for long due to the oppressive policies of the government and in 1932 it came under the purview of the Press Ordinance and its publication was stopped.

3. PLEADERS

Like teachers and journalists the advocates too played their role in the Civil Disobedience Movement.

The leadership of Abhyankar and Gole\(^1\) induced some pleaders to suspend practice, to join the War Councils which replaced the Provincial Congress Committees or to participate in the various acts of disobedience initiated by the Congress. In addition, several Bar Associations passed resolutions supporting the nationalist cause, observed hartals and gave financial support to the families of the nationalists imprisoned for civil disobedience.\(^2\)

The leading lawyer and also a malguzar, Ghanshyam Singh Gupta of Durg made a speech at Jabalpur on 13 August 1930 condemning the ill treatment and mis-behaviour of the police towards the participants of the Civil Disobedience Movement, and exhorted the police not to obey the orders of their superior officers in this regard. He was arrested and sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment.\(^3\)

On 10 September 1930 at Durg and on 16 September at Baled a leading advocate and President of Durg Municipal Committee, Mr. Ratnakar Jha, made speeches and exhorted the masses to boycott government servants and not to provide for them ration, water etc. As a result of this speech he was asked to furnish a security of Rs.500/- along with

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3. A Compilation of Political Tribals in C.P. and Berar, p.28.
two surities as guarantors for one year.

One day, at Raipur, when the Prabhat-pheri team was marching through Baijnathpara, the students of the pheri in the last row were intentionally hurt by some constables near the bunglow of Mr. Rizvi, a pleader, and remarked the students: "Sale-dhakka-mar ke chalte-ho". But that was not the end of their duty; they started canning the ignorant students. 16 students were badly beaten and they received severe injuries.

On 17 September 1930 the Bar Council Association passed a resolution against the police atrocities:

"This association strongly condemns the atrocities that are being committed by the police of Raipur, evidently without provocation in the various wards of the town and further record its apprehension that unless immediate steps are taken by the government with a view to stop such wanton atrocities, it is just possible that a retaliatory spirit amongst the public by resorting to violence in self defence might give rise to unpleasant unnecessary commotion in the midst of hitherto prevailing peace in the town.

1. Ibid, p.19.
"This association strongly feels that the policy of the allowing policement in batches to roam about in the various wards of the town with canes and lathis in their hands and striking peaceful citizens mercilessly should be given up immediately."

But the government was not ready to give up its tyrannical policy. Punitive police was imposed in various parts of the region.

RETURN OF HONOURS BY ELITES

The Civil Disobedience Movement had an emphatic effect on people of all walks of life. It was due to the dynamic personality of Mahatma Gandhi that the government officers left their services and joined the movement. Dr. Khubchand Baghel resigned from his service as Assistant Medical officer. Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, Central Provinces and Berar had informed this case to the Secretary to the Government of Central Provinces and Berar in the following words:-

"During the year 1930 the services of one assistant medical officer Mr. K. C. Baghel on epidemic duty in the Raipur district were however dispensed with from 25th Nov. 1930. In a departmental inquiry held against him, the Assistant Medical officer was found guilty
of the following charges:—

(a) that he left his tour without previous permission and went to Raipur expressly to watch the trial of certain political prisoners whose case was being tried in the Court of Forester on 10th October, 1930.

(b) that after the sentence was pronounced on these political prisoners he forcibly garlanded these prisoners inspite of the police Sub Inspector having told him not to do so.

(c) that when he was prevented from garlanding he shouted the political slogan 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai' and 'Swatantra Bharat-ki-jai'.

The following government servants resigned from their posts in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement:

(1) K.S.Bhaskaram, Clerk in the Office of the Director of Industries.

(2) S.M.Khanwalkar, Clerk in the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Sagar.

(3) V.R.Gondhelkar, Clerk in the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Yeotmal


2. Political and Military Department, File No.48/CMD of 1931, p.20
There are also a number of cases of village officials in Berar who resigned or were removed in connection with activities connected with the Civil Disobedience Movement.  

MASS MEETINGS

To voice a mass protest against the repressive measures of the government, the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi, the promulgation of Press Ordinance and the heavy sentences inflicted upon the Congress leaders, a public meeting was announced by distributing pamphlets bearing signatures of persons of all castes, creeds, shades of political opinion and professions in Nagpur on 22 January 1932. Amongst the signatories were Rao Bahadur Madhavrao Kinkhede, Barrister G.V. Deshmukh, Madhavrao Pandhye, G.A.Ogle, S.Y.Deshmukh, I.Nityanand, A.V.Vazalkar, Maisubhai Taheali, G.S. Tinguria, M.Hassonji and Sons, Abbasali, Nisar Ali, V.S. Venkatraman, G.S.Tiwari, N.V.Trivedi, Ceril Christy, M.R.Bonde, T.D.Dalal, Dr.Akre, Krishna Manikand Amritlal Muljibhai. It is noted that many more persons had signed the leaflet. C.B.Parakh consented to preside over this meeting. It is understood that this meeting was planned by Dr. Hari Singh Gour and Rao Bahadur Kinkhede. A.G.Ogale.

1. Ibid.
Ruikar and Kande Sastri also made efforts to bring this about.

The meeting was held in the Municipal ground on 22 January 1932 with C.B. Parakh as President. It was a cosmopolitan gathering and was attended by about 6000 persons, including 150 ladies. The Mohammedan element was also present significantly and could be estimated to be 150. The Parsis also attended. From amongst the Congressmen Dr. N.B. Khare, C.D. Dhaole, P.K. Salwa were prominent. In the beginning the congregation was in a mood to turn the meeting into a fiasco and for a time it became impossible to start. The audience showed indifference to give hearing to Parekh and others and frequently shouted 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai'. Since Rai Bahadur Naidu and Y.M. Kale occupied the prominent seats near the president a few people from the audience challenged that the meeting was held by some agents of the government and showed hostile attitude towards the conveners. But on the request of Parakh, P.K. Salwa came to the rescue and made a short speech. The audience at this stage asked Parekh to throw off his foreign coat. But Salwa appeased them and said that under the present political conditions in the country convening of Congress meeting was not possible and hence he requested the audience to give a patient hearing to the speakers whose business on the agenda was palatable to every one of them, since it was to protest against the repressive measures of the
government and the incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi. The situation then came to normal and Parekh opened the proceedings. Several resolutions were moved by different persons and passed unanimously. The speeches were well received and the enthusiasm was apparent. These resolutions were sent to the Chief Secretary to the government of Central Provinces and Berar, Nagpur, by C.B. Parakh on 23 January 1932 along with a covering letter in which he suggested that the only solution to the present turmoil is the real transfer of power to the people of India.

On 29th May 1932 a joint meeting of Mahakoshal, Nagpur and Vidarbha Congress was held at Nagpur. Ghanshyam Singh Gupta was elected as the President, but he was arrested before the scheduled date of the meeting. In his absence Thakur Chedilal, a barrister, presided over the meeting. Out of about 800 volunteers, 255 were arrested on the spot and convicted with rigorous imprisonment. The convicted persons comprised of 76 from Mahakoshal, 213 from Nagpur and 19 from Vidarbha. On account of participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement the Degrees of Barrister Abhyankar, Karmveer Pathak, Dr. Barlinge, Shudurnikar, Ghangalwar, Rebhankar, Lokre, Ruikar etc. were seized by the government.

2. Letter from C.B. Parekh, Advocate, Nagpur, No. 4356 d/- 23rd January 1932, in the capacity of the Chairman of the public meeting held on 22nd January, 1932.
It has now been made clear that the Civil Disobedience Movement was, in a true sense a mass movement. Men and women, young and old, peasants and labourers, traders and consumers had taken an active part in the movement. The general masses, poor and rich had put in their best efforts to make the movement a success. The elites provided local leadership to it and happily courted arrests in return. It was indeed, the mighty masses which frightened the British for Gandhiji himself said that he could not have done anything if the masses did not come in his support. Central Provinces and Berar provided a minature picture of India.