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Exploring Links Between the Social Reform, Nationalist, and
Women's Movements in India

By

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ABSTRACT

The investigation utilized a historical/comparative methodology to trace connections between three social movements - the Social Reform, Nationalist, and Women's Movements in India. While some researchers (e.g Tarrow (1994); Snow & Benford (1992)) offer the concept of the cultural and master frame to explain linkages between movements, this research went further by probing additional elements such as social networks and political career patterns. Connections were evident since all three were united through the master frame. The social reform movement laid the groundwork for both the nationalist and feminist movements. However, the impact of the reform and nationalist movement on Indian feminism was paradoxical. While both social reform and nationalism advanced the concerns of women, they also hindered the progress of the feminist movement through the propagation of contradictory roles and images of women. These movements also omitted certain feminist issues and thus many dissatisfied women mobilized their efforts to raise the status of women. Consequently, the master frame both empowered and limited movements. However, this cultural frame represented but one facet of the link between movements. An analysis of the life histories of women suggested that social networks and political career patterns also played a significant role in further connecting these movements.

Dedicated to the memory of Jasper....

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CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

Introduction

> Women's movements do not occur in a vacuum but
> correspond to, and to some extent are determined by,
> the wider social movements of which they form part.
> The general consciousness of society about itself, its
> future, its structure and the role of men and women,
> entails limitations for the women's movement; its
> goals and its methods of struggle are generally
> determined by those limits (Jayawardena 1986: 10).

Numerous studies have dealt with social movements and the circumstances from which they have arisen. While research suggests that some movements tend to originate from others, few studies have examined this link. Yet it is crucial to analyze such linkages since they may be instrumental in shaping the development of some movements.

While there is an array of literature documenting women's movements across the globe, research on the impact of other social movements on the struggle for women's rights is much more limited. Thus, it is necessary to explore the extent to which women's movements are determined by wider social movements. With respect to the Indian feminist movement Jayawardena (1986: 10) argues that it did not "occur in a vacuum" but was in fact defined or moulded to some extent by other social movements. In other words, women's movements tend to be inspired and restricted by larger social movements. This thesis will explore the influence of the reform and nationalist movements upon Indian feminism.

With respect to nationalism Jayawardena (1986: 85) argues that

struggles for women's emancipation were an essential
and integral part of national resistance movements.
The organization of women around their own demands was
closely interrelated with the nationalist movements.
They rarely organized autonomously, but more usually
as wings or subsidiaries of male - dominated
nationalist groups.

This research will also analyze the link between the social
reform movement of the 19th century and the women's movement
on the one hand, and the quest for Independence on the other.
The objectives will be achieved by tracing the lives and
career paths of Indian women through an analysis of primary
and secondary data sources. Examples include autobiographies,
biographies, diaries, memoirs, and an assortment of secondary
texts. The nationalist movement will be analyzed from the
moment of its conception during the British Raj to the point
of Independence in 1947. The emergence of the women's
struggle within the Independence movement will also be
explored. Although India is very much a land of diversity,
the analysis will be confined primarily to the Hindu majority
with minor references to other groups such as Muslims and
Sikhs.

A comprehensive analysis of the affiliation of Indian
nationalism with that of the women's movement will require an
exploration of concepts such as nation, nationalism and
feminism/women's movements. The utilization of metaphors of
woman and nation by nationalists and feminists alike, and
their impact upon Indian women. This will assist in
determining the influence of the one movement on the other.

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Significance of Research

This particular research question is of significance for a number of reasons. To begin with, any study seeking to trace the history of any women's movement, is contributing to feminist research since this is still a relatively 'new' field. While literature on various women's movements in the West is clearly available, more information on movements in 'Third World' countries such as India is required. As Calman (1992: xiii) argues

> with regard to women in the developing world, books on the historical development of women's status and on women's roles in economic development far outnumber any on women's collective action or the special problems that gender poses to political organization.

Thus, this research is of concern to those interested in feminist issues especially women's movements. In particular, this study is intended to provide more information on the manner in which various movements (Reform and Independence movements) relate to the Indian women's movement. The lack of research in this area is apparent upon perusal of the literature and the evident concern expressed by various researchers (e.g. Hall 1993; Innes 1994; Walby 1992; Yuval-Davis 1993). While the literature on nation and nationalism is very opulent, there are clearly gaps in terms of the analysis of the contribution of women in independence movements. In addition, the impact of independence struggles on women and their movements also tends to be overlooked. Consequently, this research is significant since it seeks to

probe the linkages between a number of movements - i.e. the influence of the reform and nationalist movements on the Indian feminist movement.

Social Movements

> Power in movement grows when ordinary people join forces in contentious confrontation with elites, authorities and opponents. Mounting, coordinating and sustaining this interaction is the peculiar contribution of the social movement. Movements are created when political opportunities open up for social actors who usually lack them. They draw people into collective action through known repertoires of contention and by creating innovations around their margins. At their base are the social networks and cultural symbols through which social relations are organized. The denser the former and the more familiar the latter, the more likely movements are to spread and be sustained (Tarrow 1994: 1).

Tarrow (1994: 3) defines social movements "as collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities". Therefore, there are four aspects to this definition. Firstly, collective challenge refers to agitation attempts by those lacking resources who wish to to attract the attention of elites through collective action. Secondly, common purpose refers to collective grievances against similar adversaries. Thus, common or overlapping concerns form the foundation of such action (Tarrow 1994: 4). Thirdly, solidarity is crucial since interest alone cannot carry a movement. While mobilization is crucial,

> leaders can only create a social movement when they tap more deep-rooted feelings of solidarity or identity. This is almost certainly why nationalism and ethnicity - based on real or "imagined ties" -

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or religion - based on common devotion - have been more reliable bases of movement organization in the past than social class (Tarrow 1994: 5).

Finally, it is crucial that any collective action be sustained in order for it to be rendered a movement. While all attributes are critical for a movement, if action is not sustained for some time it will "harden into intellectual opposition or retreat into isolation" (Tarrow 1994: 5).

Snow & Benford (1992: 142) argue that particular movements within a time period are "tributaries" of a rather more universal current of disruption. In other words, social movements cluster together and are linked through cultural master frames. The manner in which collective action is framed is crucial since it will determine mobilization potential. Organizers structure their action around selective symbols and ideas which will appeal to those they wish to enlist. "The symbols of collective action cannot be read like a "text", independent of the strategies and conflictual relations of the movements which diffuse them over time and across space (Tarrow 1994: 119).

According to Tarrow (1994: 122), the concept of frames is useful when attempting to "relate text to context, grammar to semantics". As Snow & Benford (1992: 136) argue, frames are valuable in explicating how social movements fabricate meaning. They contend that a frame is "an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the 'world out there' by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations,

events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment" (Snow & Benford 1992: 137). Thus, movements seek to relate their injustice to other larger protests via the construction of expanded frames "that will resonate with a population's cultural predispositions and communicate a uniform message to powerholders and others" (Tarrow 1994: 122).

> A typical movement mode of discourse is built around what William Gamson calls an "injustice frame". 'Any movement against oppression', writes Barrington More, 'has to develop a new diagnosis and remedy for existing forms of suffering, a diagnosis and remedy by which this suffering stands morally condemned'... Inscribing grievances in overall frames that identify an injustice, attribute the responsibility for it to others and propose solutions to it, is a central activity of social movements (122 - 123).

Snow & Benford (1992: 137) state that there are two attributes of collective action frames. The first is a punctuating function whereby a condition or situation is selected and classified as unjust. However, this labelling is insufficient "to predict the direction and nature of collective action. Some sense of blame or causality must be specified as well as a corresponding sense of responsibility for corrective action" (Snow & Benford 1992: 137).

The second quality deals with diagnostic and prognostic properties. While the former focuses on problem identification through labelling possible culprits, the latter contends with the resolution of the problem (Snow & Benford 1992: 137). Therefore, the manner in which ideas are framed is very important for the successful mobilization of masses for

movements. Inherited symbols are manipulated by leaders in a deliberate and discerning way. "When a movement organization chooses symbols with which to frame its message, it sets a strategic course between its cultural setting, its political opponents and the militants and ordinary citizens whose support it needs" (Tarrow 1994: 123). However, framing is not easy since there is much competition with others.

It is habitual for successful collective action frames of movements to be incorporated into the tenets of other movements (Tarrow 1993: 131). Such a successful frame is referred to as a master frame. An example of a master frame is the utilization of the concept of rights by many movements in 1960s and 70s America (Tarrow 1994: 131).

> What is most important in a "master" collective action frame is that, in a context of general turbulence, permissiveness and social enthusiasm, it is adapted to and honed down by the practice of a variety of actors engaged in different struggles against different opponents. In the disillusionment and repression that often follow such periods of mobilization, more confrontational versions of the frame fall into disuse. But beneath the surface, they are still available for future generations of insurgents. What emerges is a flexible and adaptable residue of oppositional framing that may become a permanent feature of the political culture (Tarrow 1994: 131).

Collective action frames are broadened through the incorporation of unique symbols and beliefs into the cultural medium. The selective and deliberation inclusion of particular ideas will depend very much upon the population being appealed to. "It is in struggle that opponents find out what values they share, as well as what divides them, and fashion new and

synthetic frames that they can take to other battles and that evolve into master frames for others" (Tarrow 1994: 134).

Early movements within a cycle of dissension often serve as precursors of master frames which are utilized by other evolving movements. While these later movements benefit from these early initiators, they also "find their framing efforts constrained by the previously elaborated master frame" (Snow & Benford 1992: 145). Once a master frame has been invented and agreed upon, efforts to reform or extend its appeal are defied by its its creators and others who stand to benefit from it.

Master frames not only serve to structure meaning and symbols, they also guide leaders in terms of what strategies are to be employed for confrontation with adversaries. A narrow master frame will certainly promote a narrow range of tactics to be utilized by the movement and its participants. However, external factors also play a role in determining strategy (Snow & Benford 1992: 147).

The nature of a protest will also depend upon the master frame. For example, the mobilizing potential of a frame will depend upon the extent of its appeal. If the structure is such that it espouses a broader concern, then the chances are high that a national movement might be possible. However, "the shape of a cycle of protest is in part a function of the capacity of incipient movements within the cycle to amplify and extend the master frame in imaginative and yet resonant

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ways" (Snow & Benford 1992: 149). Transformations in the cultural climate can diminish the power of a cycle of protest. Consequently, the fundamental master frame becomes ineffective. This weakness in the master frame is further hastened by the evolution of rival frames (Snow & Benford 1992: 150).

The clustering of movements within a cycle of protest implies that the master frame formulated by the early risers is also shared by later movements, although modifications are made to suit individual purposes. Each movement requires a frame to explain a particular injustice and the ideology from which it stems.

This research seeks to probe connections between particular social movements. While Tarrow (1994) and Snow & Benford (1992) offer a partial explanation when they emphasize the concept of the frame as a connection between movements, this thesis will also seek to probe the links through an examination of social networks (e.g. family background, husband and household composition) and the political career patterns of women. Thus, it will go beyond the notion of master frames in an effort to further clarify the nature of the connection between specific movements. In other words, the theory of the cultural frame as a link between movements will be tested in the course of this research. For instance, a continuity of ideology will be perused. For example, did the feminist movement partially share the cultural frame of the

social reform movement by focusing on similar issues such as the education of women, the abolition of sati and child marriage, etc. However, this thesis will go beyond the partial explanation of the cultural frame and explore elements such as social networks and political career patterns.

<u>Feminism</u>

A point of contention for many is the use of the term 'feminism' in reference to Third World movements. As Mohanty (1991: 7) argues

> feminist movements have been challenged on the grounds of cultural imperialism, and of short-sightedness in defining the meaning of gender in terms of middle-class, white experiences, and in terms of internal racism, classism, and homophobia. All of these factors, as well as the falsely homogeneous representation of the movement by the media, have led to a very real suspicion of 'feminism' as a productive ground for struggle.

Despite problems with the actual term, women of the Third World have invariably been engaged in feminist activities.

Jayawardena (1986: 2) describes feminism as any movement which attempts to change a system or seeks to acquire equality within such a system. She suggests that Third World feminisms have arisen in the aftermath of specific contextual variables. These include efforts to mobilize against imperialism, attention to national identity formation, and the enactment of social and religious reforms in an attempt to modernize the nation. She claims that feminism is commonly envisioned as a Western fabrication and there is a tendency to disregard the fact that the term has been in circulation in Europe and elsewhere during the 19th and early 20th centuries. While

initially 'feminism' was utilized to refer to only a few issues pertaining to women, it is now employed to depict "an awareness of women's oppression and exploitation within the family, at work and in society, and conscious action by women (and men) to change this situation" (Jayawardena 1986: 2). In essence, Jayawardena employs the term to refer to movements striving for equality within any present system, and also important struggles which have sought to modify this system. The present study will utilize the term 'feminism' in a similar manner to describe the women's movement in India since the movement sought emancipation, equality and modifications within the prevailing system.

The feasibility of applying the term 'feminism' as employed in reference to women's movements in the West, is questionable. This is particularly true when one appreciates that in nations under colonial rule, women have had to deal with issues of sovereignty in addition to any desires for their own uplift. Thus, it is hoped that this research will shed some light on the viability of such an application.

CHAPTER II - METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The study sought to demonstrate the presence of linkages between the Indian women's movement and other movements, in this case, the social reform and nationalist movements. The lives of Indian women were traced through the use of primary and secondary historical sources in an effort to establish the presence of connections. For instance, speeches of key 'feminist' leaders were perused in an attempt to assess the use of metaphors of nation and women. **For example - to what extent are metaphors of nation, freedom and resistance utilized by proponents of the 'feminist' movement in an effort to further their cause?** In essence, the documents were examined in order to establish the impact of Indian nationalism and social reform on 'feminism' at the ideological level.

A range of documents were utilized. On the one level, autobiographies and biographies of members of the Indian women's movement were scrutinized. These provided useful information regarding the background of members and leadership and assisted in establishing the influence of the reform and nationalist movements on the women's struggle. The educational status of the membership also provided invaluable details regarding the position of women. Education was important since it permitted an analysis of the impact of educational reforms on the position of women. Yet another crucial source was an analysis of 'feminist' rhetoric and

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ideology in order to assess the impact of nationalism on the women's movement. The intention was to scrutinize these 'feminist' documents carefully in order to determine if nationalism did indeed impact 'feminism'. Another point of interest was to establish whether feminism preceded nationalism or vice versa.

Historical/Comparative Methodology

The methodology employed was unobtrusive - historical/comparative analysis. This depicts a methodology in which historical records are perused. Thus, it is the examination of written materials which provide information about a particular phenomenon (Bailey 1987: 290). According to Babbie (1992: 312) the term *comparative* is included in the name of the methodology "because social scientists - in contrast to historians who may simply describe a particular set of events - seek to discover common patterns that recur in different times and places". Marshall & Rossman (1989: 95) define history as a record of

> some past event or combination of events. Historical analysis is, therefore, a method of discovering, from records and accounts, what happened in the past.

Bernard (1934: 260) discusses the relevance of history in research.

> History is the only source of data for the determination of the universal and timeless aspects of social life, for we cannot inspect modern life and expect to comprehend any of it fully on the basis of its contemporary characteristics alone. We need to have the record of the entire procession of human events, the experience of human groups at different

times and under a great variety of conditions (Bernard 1934: 260).

In his discussion of this unobtrusive methodology, Gottschalk (1969: 48) argues that the historical method is the "process of critically examining and analyzing the records and survivals of the past". He contends that all historical documents need to be scrutinized cautiously to ensure that they do indeed come from the past

> and are in fact what they seem to be and that his imagination is directed toward re-creation and not creation. This is what distinguished history from fiction, poetry, drama, and fantasy (Gottschalk 1969: 49).

Historical data - whether written or oral - can be categorized as either a primary or a secondary source. Primary sources consist of information compiled by eyewitness accounts. These records are written by those individuals who actually experienced/witnessed the phenomenon. Examples of primary sources include oral testimonies of eyewitnesses and government statistics (Marshall & Rossman 1989: 95). However, secondary documents are compiled by those individuals " who were not present on the scene but who received the information necessary to compile the document by interviewing eyewitnesses or by reading primary documents" (Bailey 1987: 290). Secondary sources are essentially those which document the statements of others. These include history books and journal articles.

Clearly then, historical documents come in an assortment of forms since they can be any of the following: - contemporary records (e.g. legal documents), confidential

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reports (e.g. diaries), public records (e.g. newspapers), written questionnaires, government documents (e.g. the Census), opinion polls, fiction and even poetry (Marshall & Rossman 1989: 95). However, they differ according to the purposes for which they have been written. For instance, primary documents written for personal reasons include diaries, memoirs, letters and autobiographies. Nonpersonal documents are those which are commissioned by individuals and organizations and can include minutes of meetings, financial records, etc. Such records provide details about the operation of particular organizations.

Historical research is valuable for studies seeking to illuminate unexplored areas. According to Bailey (1987: 312) "if one is interested in learning how some contemporary event or institution came into being, a historical approach is invaluable". Consequently, this methodology has been incorporated in the present study since it seeks to examine the impact of social reform and nationalism on the women's movement in India.

Historical analysis is also important because it enables researchers to evaluate previously posed questions which have not been satisfactorily answered. Historical analysis is a research strategy which permits information to be objectively classified. While this research strategy is extremely useful, it is essential to guard against potential problems which might crop up during the course of the investigation. Some

concerns stem from the fact that this method entails an evaluation of testimonies of others. The researcher must refrain from imposing "modern thought patterns on an earlier era" (Marshall & Rossman 1989: 96). For instance, the meaning of words might have altered over time so a researcher must guard against imposing modern interpretations. There is a dependency on the ability of the researcher to work in a systematic and impartial manner.

Marshall & Rossman (1989: 96) suggest that there are also weaknesses in the actual categorization of the data. For example, documents might have been falsified for various reasons and they are also prone to fallacious interpretations by the recorder of the information.

> The meanings of relics are perceived and interpreted by the investigator. Errors in recordings as well as frauds, hoaxes, and forgeries pose problems in dealing with the past. Thus the researcher can never have complete confidence in the data. The researcher must decide what is or is not fact (Marshall & Rossman 1989: 96).

The survival of documents may depend upon the manner in which information has been classified. Consequently, over time, only certain documents have survived. This is in part dependent upon the purposes for which records have been maintained. Therefore, facts might be incomplete, fragmented, concocted, or even embellished. This selective survival of documents will introduce a sampling bias. Documents are also difficult to compare since there is no standard format. Finally, such material is unduly reliant on the honesty of

those providing the data. Writers are susceptible to countless weaknesses, biases, and influences, all of which make systematic research difficult.

The analysis of historical data is valuable for a number of reasons. To begin with, it permits access to those individuals who are otherwise deemed inaccessible, e.g. those who are deceased. Another benefit is that it allows quicker access to a larger population thereby also increasing the degree of possible generalization. In addition, the data are not open to reactivity since data has been 'collected' or documented for many reasons. This method is also quite inexpensive when compared to other techniques such as surveys. Historical analysis also enables a researcher to utilize a longitudinal design since documents collected over time are examined. The longitudinal design is essential in the present case since connections between movements can only be accurately assessed by analyzing each movement as it evolves, matures and fades.

The study of a range of documents enables the phenomenon to be examined from a number of vantage points. This ensures that the phenomenon is depicted in a much more accurate and representative manner (Bailey 1987; Marshall & Rossman 1989; Bernard 1934; Gottschalk 1969; McNeil 1990).

Reliability of the data can be corroborated through a review of similar documents at two or more time periods. This ensures that instrument reliability is maintained. Another

technique is to examine the results obtained by two or more researchers at the same time period - analyst reliability (Bailey 1987: 314). Instrument reliability can be hampered by the selective survival of documents and also by the subjective nature of document analysis.

The problem of selective survival of documents can be partially overcome through an analysis of as wide a range of records as possible. This can help in maintaining representivity, minimizing writer biases, and ensuring accuracy in depiction of phenomenon. Bailey (1987: 313) discusses the use of internal checks which can be conducted through an examination of "word patterns, writing style, and composition of paper and ink". Such checks can assist in determining the authenticity of a particular document. Subjectivity in analysis can be minimized through clarification each step of the way. For example, the maintanance of a journal by the researcher, documenting thought processes for the perusal of others reviewing the research. Face validity is enhanced when there is the testimony of the author of a document. However, difficulties arise in terms of motives for compiling a record. For instance, incentives such as monetary concerns can lead to bias, fabrication and inaccuracy. Also time issues provide problems in terms of memory and the selective survival of documents can further bias the sample (Bailey 1987: 313).

Bailey (1987: 314) argues that the validity of this

methodology can be enhanced through the establishment of criterion validity - i.e. the use of external measures to relate to a measure/document in order to enable comparisons. In other words, external checks are made on the validity of the document by comparing it with other documents through the use of external criteria (Bailey 1987: 314).

Northey & Tepperman (1986: 68) also discuss the importance of carrying out sound research. They suggest the inclusion of supporting texts in order to introduce and enhance construct validity. The authenticity of a document can be partially established through the analysis of other documents by the same author or group and written during the same period. The researcher must acquaint herself with the language of a document. She must also interpret the records and subject her own conclusions to rigorous tests in order to establish coherence. Bernard (1934: 271) in his discussion of the sociological analysis of historical data probably puts it best. He says "this is an art for which no absolute rules can be laid down (Bernard 1934: 271).

Present Research Considerations

In the present research, secondary data has been utilized in the compilation of Chapters 1 - 5. This material has provided comprehensive information on the background of each of the three movements and has been prepared by historians and social scientists. Connections between movements have been established through this secondary material. While this data

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provided information on linkages in terms of cultural frames, it was supplemented by details yielded in the Life Histories chapter. Here, these links were further probed through primary sources which shed light on other elements such as social networks and political experience and activism of women.

Information on 35 women was gathered. This information took various forms ranging from primary data as yielded by autobiographies, biographies, diaries, speeches and memoirs, to secondary sources such as secondary analyses, textual references, translations etc. Wherever possible, events and information were verified through the use of external documents and references. The material was attained through a perusal of bibliographies of secondary sources. Texts were also obtained for key participants and those whose names cropped up frequently as for example in the case of Sarojini Naidu or Pandita Ramabai. Other methods of attaining information included simple library and computer searches.

The sample was not as representative as hoped, for a number of reasons. To begin with, data was limited to that available in English, whether as originally written or translated. In the latter case, with a few exceptions, only selective information was available since it was a secondary source and translations were utilized by authors for their own purposes. For example, due to language barriers I could only access the first Bengali autobiography entitled "My Life", written by Rassundari Debi in 1876, through the works of

others who selectively referred to it in their own contributions (e.g. Ghosh 1986; Karlekar 1991). Thus, due to language difficulties, a wealth of information still remains untapped with respect to this and related topics. In addition, while there are numerous works highlighting the achievements of particular prominent personalities, little is accessible, or indeed available, on other individuals who have played a vital role, but whose praises still remain unsung. This stems from the preoccupation with the "elite actor as the sole subject of history" (Visweswaran 1990: 2).

> History, from one point of view, is the sum total of innumerable biographies. Political history generally concerns itself with the lives of great men and women. The stories of lesser individuals are overlooked, yet they include details that can be of value in rounding out the period and giving it a completeness. Many people have kept letters, diaries and written their memoirs, but these are much rarer in India than in the western world. Memoirs, like letters and diaries humanize the past. Through these materials it is possible to visualize the past and to feel the writer's emotions as he/she watched events happen. They do not tell the complete story, but memoirs give us the past in concrete and vivid terms (Forbes IN Mazumdar 1977:1).

A related difficulty was my inability to access some valuable documents. For example, I came across the names of many works which I was unable to procure due to limited resources such as library restrictions and the form in which the information was available. For instance, transcripts of interviews with prominent women were available but only at various libraries across India.

Reliability of the data was enhanced through an examination of multiple documents pertaining to key events and

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personalities. For example, Naidu's leadership on one of Gandhi's salt raids is verified in many other works such as Chattopadhyaya (1938) and Ali (1991). Another example is the life of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. A number of sources were perused in an endeavour to exact an accurate depiction of her contribution to the various movements. These documents described many aspects of her life ranging from imprisonment and election to legislative assemblies to motherhood and marriage. In essence, wherever possible, reliability of the data was confirmed through an examination of an assortment of documents pertaining to particular events and people.

Problems such as the selective survival of documents and the honesty of the writer were dealt with in a similar manner as delineated above. As wide a range of material as possible pertaining to specific events and personalities was perused in an effort to verify and enhance the credibility of the research and its very foundation. However, there were imbalances in terms of abundance and scarcity of information. For example, while there is a wealth of material pertaining to prominent women such as V.L. Pandit, S. Naidu and K. Chattopadhyaya, the life histories of women such as Anandibai Joshi, the 'Unknown Rebel Daughter of India' - M (Jhaveri & Batliawala 1945) and Kalpana Dutt, remain incomplete and fragmented. However, major events and occurrences delineated in the life histories of women have been verified through secondary material. For example Dhanvanthi Rama Rau's

attendance at a Women's Conference in Britain and her displeasure at the arrogance of British feminists has been documented many times in secondary data compiled by historians and also in the life histories of other women.

Another consideration is that these writings offer only one depiction of the Indian life of the period since the lives they describe occupy particular social and religious groupings. The majority represent the middle and upper classes and little is available or accessible to shed light on the vantage point of the lower class woman.

> One of the major problems of embarking on such a work has been the paucity of literature available as a source, and the unevenness of the sources which were traceable. For example, some information is available on notable women reformers in the late 19th century, or on nationalist leaders who were women, in the 20th century. We find a number of biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, collections of speeches and writings throughout the first half of the 20th century fairly readily - but these are largely about the lives and work of individual women (Kumar 1993: 1).

In order to delve deeper and probe further into the participation of lower class women, it is necessary to utilize unconventional sources such as folklore and songs. However, this has not been possible in the present research due to various constraints.

Diaries and journals are useful sources "because they are written daily or under the pressure of the moment" and so "tend to reflect more directly the author's views and circumstances than events recalled, reshaped and recorded years after they have taken place" (Cooper 1987: 95). They

assist in ordering chaotic thoughts and are also important because they yield information about small but vital details in the woman's life. However, they are written for a number of reasons. For example, they might be private enabling a more detailed probing of the mind, or alternately, they might be intended for publication and so written with a specific purpose in mind (Cooper 1987: 97).

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit(1945) and the "Unknown Rebel Daughter of India" - referred to as M (Jhaveri & Batliawala 1945), both send their diaries to publishers describing their reasons for writing and submitting their works. In the case of the former, she states,

> This little diary does not attempt to record all the events which took place during my last term of imprisonment. It was not written regularly and is of no special importance. But since the period from August 1942 onwards was enveloped in darkness and many people still have no idea what prison life means, this may help in giving a picture of the conditions prevailing in one of the better run jails of the United Provinces (Pandit 1945: preface).

M - sends her publisher the following request: - "I am sending you valuable material, my diary for the critical period of our struggle for Indian freedom. If you think it would be useful for the cause of our country, you are free to make any use you like of it" (1945). While Pandit views her literary contribution as unimportant, M - recognizes that her diary contains valuable information. Such diaries are precious since they enable the reader to enter the world of the author and her thoughts. Both women do not write as consistently as

they wish due to time and mood constraints.   As Pandit clarifies,

> It is several days since I was in the mood to write... I can't understand I am such a creature of moods and tenses. I see other people around me, placidly accepting life as it comes to them. If things go against their wishes they put it down to their own bad luck and resign themselves to the inevitable. But with me it is not like this. There seems to be a volcano inside me which is always on the point of irruption and which does irrupt too, very much oftener than is desirable. I chafe and fret at my surroundings - at my helplessness at the various pin-pricks which are part of life in prison. I can never get used to the state of affairs here nor can I settle down in a resigned mood to take things as they come (Pandit 1945: 78).

Autobiographies and biographies are other important primary sources providing insight into the lives of Indian women living during the turbulent period that witnessed the emergence of many movements. Many of these women expressed surprise when encouraged to relate their life stories. For example, Monica Felton wrote Sister Subbalakshmi's story.

> As for Sister Subbalakshmi herself, the more she talked about the past, the sharper her memories became. She talked so utterly without the egoism of old people that she had destroyed, as worthless, the diaries which she had kept throughout her adult life; but she had preserved what she called a consolidated diary, in which she had noted the principal dates in her own history and the history of her family. She allowed me to read it, and I don't think I ever asked her a question which she refused to answer...... She still, too, seems to think that I am wasting my time in writing about her (Felton 1966: 9 - 10).

Sister also confides thoughts to her biographer that she claims she has never divulged. For example, she describes her sadness upon being told that she could no longer don her beautiful wedding sari due to her new fallen status of widow.

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She looked directly at me, smiling with great sweetness. "I have never told this to anybody before, but I was thinking last night that since you are so interested in all these little details there was no reason why I should not tell you how I felt. I did so want to wear that sari again. Of course I wouldn't have dreamed of telling my mother how I felt, but those bitter feelings lasted for a long, long time" (Sister Subbalakshmi as cited in Felton 1966: 30).

Other women only agreed to have their lives documented after persuasion from friends and family as in the case of Sharda Divan and Dhanvanthi Rama Rau, to name just a few. In addition, some women only provided selective information for a number of reasons. For example, Saradasundari, an illiterate woman, could not fathom the interest in her life. She agreed for a relative to document her experiences on the condition that it only be published upon her death. In addition, she remained silent with respect to those stories she believed would harm any one and she refrained from delineating her role in her famous son, K.C. Sen's life. Her biographer argues that "her biography would have come out much better, had these incidents and events been mentioned" (Karlekar 1991: 133).

Another such incident pertains to the life of Binodini Das, the queen of the Bengali stage for twelve years. She writes her experiences of those years but is cautioned by her mentor Girish Ghosh to gear her autobiography to the public in order for it to sell mulitiple copies. "One should not be so much outspoken in one's autobiography. It is likely that, owing to such harsh comments, the memoirs will be

counterproductive. Readers will find it difficult to be compassionate for the writer. After all that is why the book has been written" (Ghosh 1986: 94).

Many women in their writings tend to either dwell extensively upon their husbands or refrain from any mention of them due to conventional attitudes. For example, Ramabai Ranade's autobiography revolves primarily around her husband and at one point she says,

> From the beginning I determined that this story should not be about myself; that I would write only of him! But the surprising thing is that a wife is like a shadow. You may tell it to leave you, but it can't! Consequently, I can't very well tell about Himself and his state of mind in regard to me, without mentioning myself. So this is my story! (Gates 1938: 221).

However, her 'story' of herself is a mere reference to her own health problems and how very often they were of secondary concern to her while her husband is accorded priority. She continues by explaining how she once required surgery and how this distressed her husband so much that she had to prepare him for her operation (Gates 1938: 226).

Another such example is the story of Kailashbasini Debi married to reformer K.C. Mitter. In her autobiography she concedes to having been influenced and moulded by her husband. She describes her relationship with her husband in immense detail but is not merely a passive companion. She also influences and guides him when his self-confidence is plummetting as he says "your staying power is greater than mine. The knowledge of this has washed my pain away" (Karlekar

1991: 128). Kailashbashini's autobiography ends as quite a few do, with the death of her husband.

> Dear readers, my book ends here. My life ended today.
> Twenty fourth of Shravan, the thirteenth day of the
> moon, Wednesday, at 11 p.m. I threw all my material
> happiness in the water. While being alive, I died...
> The word 'widow' is like a thunderbolt to my ears.
> Oh, Father of this world, why do you give me this name?
> How long shall I bear this! What a word.... I tremble
> when I hear its sound (Kailashbasini as cited in
> Mukherjee 1988: 260).

Personal stories of women are crucial since they provide "many important insights into attitudes, perceptions as well as anxieties and fears" (Karlekar 1991: 4). In addition, any emergent awakening amongst women can become evident through their written expressions. While some writings have focused on personal fears (e.g. Pandit, Nehru), others show an awareness of the volatile social and political climate (e.g. Kailashbashini Debi, Reddy, Dutt, etc). However, all fragments are necessary in order to build a more accurate picture.

The level of complexity of this research is apparent when one learns of the extent to which women participated in various movements through an assortment of organizations and activities. An overlap of issues, participants and goals is also evident.

Organizations and Interests

Interests in various causes and enrollment in an assortment of organizations developed for many reasons. For

instance, Reddy wished to practice medicine and find a cure for cancer since she had witnessed the death of loved ones and had seen many women in distress due to the lack of female physicians. Rau and Divan both viewed population as the root cause of many problems. Consequently, they both worked in the field of family planning. Divan even practiced abstinence in the early years of marriage since she did not wish to have a family to distract her from her career.

Intially women tended to concentrate their efforts on a few areas of interest such as the welfare of widows and child marriage, but later individuals and organizations broadened their horizons to incorporate many issues. Some women such as Durgabai, sought change through their own efforts. As a child she witnessed a domestic incident and organized girls to march and protest this injustice (Baig 1988: 116). Early organizations centred on socializing through sports and tea parties. For example, Tata, interested in social reforms, was jubilant when she persuaded some princesses to temporarily discard purdah and play tennis with her (Natarajan 1932: 5). Many describe small organizations developed by their mothers and relatives for the purpose of social interactions amongst women. Later they evolved into discussion groups pertaining to current events and issues. For example, Sahgal's mother formed a ladies' club and another equivalent for girls. Daughters of such women along with other inspired women began to organize on larger scales in order to seek change and

reform. Key issues included education, enfranchisement and the abolition of customs, all leading to the uplift of women and children.

Pandita Ramabai, a pioneer in the women's movement established early organizations seeking change through empowering women. Widowed, she refused to accept the customary fate of widows and started the Sharda Sadan, a home for widows in 1890. Her institutions taught women "to be useful to society, restored their self-esteem thus giving them a purpose in life" (Brijbhushan 1976: 33). She recognized the need to educate herself in order to assist women. She wrote books to finance her journey to the U.S. to attain an education (Nikambe 1929: 21). In her words,

> I have tried to tell my readers briefly the sad story
> of my countrywomen, and also to bring to their notice
> what are our chief needs. We, the women of India,
> are hungering and thirsting for knowledge; only
> education, under God's grace, can give us the needful
> strength to rise up from our degraded condition
> (Sarasvati 1976: 60).

Saroj Nalini Dutt and Ranade also began on a small scale in their campaign to improve the position of women. Ramabai was influenced by the work of both Pandita Ramabai and Saroj Nalini. Nalini formed the Mahila Samitis (Women's Institutes) and wrote profusely on the need to improve the lot of the Indian woman (Dutt 1929: 21). She emphasized education and service to one's husband and others in an effort to improve humanity (Dutt 1929: 53). She believed that if women were given the opportunity to participate in national and social

life, they would awaken (Dutt 1929: 90). The success of her Samitis was such that after four years there were 240 institutes formed.

Ranade formed the Seva Sadan focusing on service, education, and the general uplift of Indian women (Gates 1938: xi). Her larger initiatives developed from small beginnings which included study groups and poetry evenings. "These meetings usually consisted of men teaching women while the latter lacked courage to stand up and speak" (Gates 1938: 68). However, women finally awakened and took the helm, something which was not always easy according to S. Mazumdar. She formed local Mahila Samitis and was once nominated president. "When I found myself the 'President' I realized with a sinking heart how much was expected of me and how ill-equipped I was for my task" (Mazumdar 1977:163).

The early 20th century witnessed the formation of organizations specifically with a national focus, e.g. the All India Women's Conference and the National Council of Women in India. These organizations encouraged mobilization and focused on the uplift of women and children. They sent delegations to place women's concerns before committees and sought to internationally publicize the plight of Indian women. Many describe the perception of Indian women they encountered during their travels. For example, Rau resented the attitude of British women hosting a conference on Indian Social Evils where no Indians were scheduled to speak.

From an examination of various writings, it becomes apparent that the majority of women were simultaneously affiliated with various organizations and they played a significant role in their lives. For example, Subbalakshmi travelled and lectured on behalf of various organizations for an assortment of causes. She gave evidence before the Age of Consent Committeee in 1928 and utilized religion and experience to support her argument against child marriage (Felton 1966: 163). Following the release of the Committee Report in 1929 the age of consent was raised.

The following summaries also shed light on the degree to which women participated in various movements. Although multitudes participated in each of the Social Reform, Nationalist, and Women's Movements, only specific names are frequently mentioned in texts. However, the contribution of the silent masses must also be acknowledged.

THE SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT - EVOLVED EARLY 19TH CENTURY AND FADED IN THE 1930S.

CENTRAL ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED: - The Brahmo Samaj (1828), The Christian Missionary Society, The Widow Remarriage Association, Indian Social Conference (1887), Arya Samaj (1877), Prarthana Samaj (1864), Mahomedan Educational Conference.

WOMEN'S REFORM ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED: - The Ladies' Associations (1886), Sharda Sadan (1892), Mahila Samitis (Women's Institutions), Bharat Stri Mahamandal (1910), Arya Mahila Samaj (1875).

PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED: - M. G. Ranade, Ram Mohan Roy, M.K. Gandhi, Keshub Chunder Sen, Swami Vivekananda, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, Susie Sorabji, Sister Subbalakshmi, Behram Malabari, R. Bhandarkar, Pandit Iswarchandar Vidyasagar, Swami Dayanand Sarasvati, Ramabai Ranade, Saroj Nalini Dutt, Anandibai Karve, Lakshmibai Tilak, Sunity Devee.

NATIONALIST MOVEMENT - EVOLVED MID TO LATE 19TH CENTURY AND
AND ENDED WITH INDEPENDENCE IN 1947.

CENTRAL ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDED: - The Indian National
Congress (1885), The Theosophical Society, Servants of
India Society (1905), Zamindary Association of Bengal
(1837 - later known as the Landholders' Society), The
Muslim League.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS WORKING FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE: -
Rani of Jhansi Regiment, Congress Mahila Sangh, Desh
Sevika Sangh, the Ladies' Picketing Board (1931),
Women's Indian Association (WIA), All India Muslim
Women's Conference (Anjuman-E-Khawatin-E-Islam - 1914),
The National Council of Women in India (NCWI), Mahila
Rashtriya Sangh.

PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED: - J. Nehru, M.K. Gandhi, M.G. Ranade,
B.G. Tilak, G.P. Gokhale, Sarojini Naidu, Annie Besant,
K. Chattopadhyaya, Durgabai Deshmukh, Manmohini Zutshi
Sahgal, M - The Unknown Rebel Daughter of India, Kamala
Nehru, Kalpana Dutt, Preeti Waddadar, Madame Bhikaji
Cama, Kasturba Gandhi, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Krishna
Nehru, Sucheta Kripalani, RajKumari Amrit Kaur, Aruna
Asaf Ali, Muthulakshmi Reddy, Jahan Ara Shahnawaz.

FEMINIST MOVEMENT - EMERGED MID TO LATE 19TH CENTURY AND FADED WITH INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE IN 1947.

CENTRAL ORGANIZATIONS: - All India Women's Conference (AIWC or Akal Hind Mahila Parishad or AHMP - 1927), Women's Indian Association (WIA - 1917), the Women's Council of India (1920), The Ladies' Association (1886), Sharda Sadan (1892), Mahila Samitis (Women's Institutions), National Council of Women in India (NCWI).

PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED: - RajKumari Amrit Kaur, Aruna Asaf Ali, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Madame Bhikaji Rustom Cama, M - 'The Unknown Rebel Daughter of India', Kalpana Dutt, Anandibai Joshi, Pandita Ramabai Saraswati, Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Muthulakshmi Reddy, Dhanvanthi Rama Rau, Jahan Ara Shahnawaz, Sharda Divan, Rokeya Hossain, Durgabai Deshmukh, Manmohini Zutshi Sahgal, Kamala Nehru, Sarojini Naidu, Margaret Cousins, Annie Besant, Mridula Sarabhai, Ramabai Ranade, Sharda Divan, Saroji Nalini Dutt, Lady Tata, Sucheta Kripalani.

CHAPTER III · LINKAGES BETWEEN THE

SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT AND THE POSITION

OF WOMEN IN INDIA

Introduction

The position of Indian women was a central feature of the social reform movement since it attempted to modernize the nation through the uplift of women. The movement raised the status of women through the advocation of education and the eradication of societal evils such as sati and child marriage. However, the movement also served to hinder women since its agenda did not seek to challenge the patriarchal basis of society. Instead, the focus was on improving the position of women within the confines of the traditional family.

P.B. Gajendragadkar (as cited in Natarajan 1959: x) asserts that the history of the Indian social reform movement spans back hundreds of years before the 19th century but while reform movements of the medieval era were awakened by religious enthusiasm and the occult, the movement which commenced in the early 19th century, was inspired by more rational factors such as Western beliefs and English education (Asaf Ali 1991: 29). "The Social Reform Movement, therefore, was a movement that was stimulated by the impact of ideas which had their origin in, or are associated in some way with, the modern period of European history" (Natarajan 1959: 5). Reformers worked for many causes including equality for women, the abolition of societal customs such as sati which degraded women, and they also sought social and legal equality (Bannerjee 1979: 27). The social reform movement focused mainly on social issues although some reforms were religious

in nature and agencies based on religious philosophies did assist in the enactment of some measures.

Surendranath Banerjea (as cited in Bannerjee 1979: 20) suggests that

> you cannot think of a social question affecting the Hindu community that is not bound up with religious considerations, and when sanction, in whatever form, is involved in aid of a social institution, it is enthroned in the popular heart with a firmness and fixity having its roots in sentiment rather than in reason. Thus the social reformer in India has to fight against forces believed to be semi-divine in character, and more or less invulnerable against the common place and mundane weapons of expediency and commonsense.

In other words, the work of the social reformer is difficult since he/she faces an Indian nation whose social fabric is comprised of tradition which in turn is fortified by religious beliefs. Swami Vivekananda, himself a reformer, argued that social reform can only be successful when it is supported by religion (Bannerjee 1979: 26). Consequently, reformers such as Ram Mohan Roy translated and utilized religious texts to justify proposed reforms. "Though it sounds contradictory, yet it is true that rational measures had to find some traditional support to get to the heart of the common folk" (Bannerjee 1979: 26). Bannerjee (1979: 27) suggests that individuals seeking ideologies and reforms distinct from traditional beliefs can be liberally ranked as social reformers "for the purpose of historical analysis of an intellectual movement". Reformers condemned those uncivilized customs which subordinated the Indian woman (Chatterjee 1989: 622). Jayawardena (1986: 78) suggests that a number of factors

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initiated these reform movements, e.g. Western ideas of education, enlightenment, missionaries preaching about the evils of particular societal customs, and an emphasis on religion and culture. The reformers sought to combat the influence of colonialism and Christianity. By the middle of the 18th century the British controlled India completely. This meant that Indians were increasingly interacting with their usurpers and as a consequence they were exposed to the various cultural and ideological beliefs of the British (Shah 1984: 31). "One of the most significant outcomes of the contacts with the Britishers was the rise of the liberal ideology in the Indian society" (Shah 1984: 31). The Indian upper classes especially became aware of various events in Europe such as the French Revolution of the 18th century and a concern with the position of women in Britain. "The concept of 'human freedom' took on a concrete meaning which asserted equality, fraternity and freedom as well as educational achievement" (Shah 1984: 31).

The early 19th century witnessed the beginning of a new wave of reforms undertaken primarily by elitist Indian males influenced by the diverse ideologies to which they were increasingly exposed. These efforts concentrated on bettering the position of Indian women although they "passed through various stages in terms of issues involved and the then prevailing conditions" (Shah 1984: 31).

Women's Status in Pre-Reform India

According to Asthana (1974: 5) British entry into India encountered a population of women who occupied a lowly status in their society. They were subjected to many harmful customs and practices. Such rampant rituals included infanticide, sati, child marriage, polygamy, kulinism (the practice of one wealthy man marrying multiple women of the same family), and prostitution. "The devices which were often justified as ways of protecting the person of a woman, rapidly became the instruments of her degradation" (Natarajan 1959: 26). They were not permitted access to even a basic education. In fact, a common conviction at that time was the belief that an educated woman would become a widow very early on. Even if education was preferred, there were many restrictive customs such as early marriage, which served as impediments. Thus, illiteracy and ignorance abounded amongst women (Asthana 1974: 6). Fuller (as cited in Asthana 1974: 6) asserts that "the girl-child from the moment of her birth to her death undergoes one continuous life-long suffering as a child-wife, as a child-mother and very often as a child-widow".

Isolation was the lot of upper class Hindu and Muslim women who often faced a life of confinement in particular rooms within their homes. Such practices of seclusion and prohibition of succession to property served to encourage women's dependency on men and so they were viewed as burdens on Indian society. Facing barriers to education and in the

case of upper class women, unable to enter the employment sector at all, the only option available to women was that of marriage.

Widows were also subjected to many harsh traditions. They were expected to become sati upon the death of their husbands and this practice prevailed in part, because it had been blessed by priests, and also because those who refused to participate, faced the wrath of Indian society. The alternative to burning alive was to lead a life of solitude and strict discipline where specific clothing was worn and the minimal amount of food was to be consumed. Asthana (1974: 8) claims that widows who found such alternatives too taxing, often fell prey to prostitution.

The Influence of Western Ideas

With the arrival of the British, Western ideas circulated throughout India through missionaries and the implementation of English education (Natarajan 1959: 6). Missionaries worked in many areas such as education, religion and the betterment of the position of women.

> The idea of imparting education to Indian women by establishing exclusive schools for them originated from the missionaries in 1819. They opened girls' day schools, orphans' domestic establishments, and domestic teaching by governesses inside the houses of upper class people (Asthana 1974: 15).

The projects were not too successful due to the perception that these enterprises were 'blemished' by Christian and Western thought. "The people of lower stratum who were comparatively free from social bondages sent their daughters

to these schools" (Asthana 1974: 16).

Up until 1835 the British felt that education should remain in the languages of the natives but after this date, English education was promoted. This decision was to have far reaching consequences for the Indian population (Asthana 1974: 16).

Initially, exposure to Western thought overwhelmed Indians, but this was followed by a repulsion of their own mores as contact with Western ideas continued. Religious and societal customs were viewed in an increasingly critical manner. "A new ideology suddenly burst forth upon the static life moulded for centuries by a fixed set of religious ideas and social conventions" (Asthana 1974: 18).

The 19th century also witnessed the emergence of a myriad of reformers seeking to free women and thereby improve Indian society. References were frequently made to a 'golden' Vedic period, a time of social health and well-being for India and her people. Reformers focused on a number of social practices including the abolition of sati and the introduction of educational reform.

Sati

A pioneer in the reform movement was Ram Mohan Roy who rejected the notion of the woman as an intellectual and social inferior. He is also credited with awakening reform tendencies amongst Indians and also for creating an environment conducive to the enactment of various reforms

(Natarajan 1959: 10). He sought the eradiction of one societal evil in particular - sati.

> Raja Ram Mohan Roy the Father of Modern India is thus the active inspirer of the Social Reform Movement which, manifesting itself in different parts of India as so many protests against social evils, came together in 1884 as a single movement. And it is with the Raja's work in Bengal that the history of the movement begins (Natarjan 1959: 11).

Roy petitioned the British continually to legislate against this primitive practice. Originally, the East India Company preferred to refrain from comment and involvement in issues pertaining to the native population since they did not wish to offend them but this position was altered following pressure from reformers and missionaries. Roy criticized the British for breaching their neutrality stance by permitting missionaries to dispense literature condemning Hinduism and Islam (Natarajan 1959: 27). Finally, legislation relating to the abolition of an assortment of practices was put into place (Asthana 1974: 20).

> In 1812, the government permitted the practice in those regions where it was authorized by religion only.

> In their search for supporting texts in the shastra, the pundits had disclosed that the practice of sati was meant to be governed by conditions - and that these were being ignored. The British accepted the interpretation and set about distinguishing between "legitimate" and "illegitimate" sati, placing the responsibility for securing observance of the shastras on police officials. As these were mostly Hindus and Muslims living under the prevailing system, the perversion of official orders was inevitable, and it was taken by the people to mean official sanction to sati (Natarajan 1959: 31).

Girls under sixteen, pregnant women and those who were

believed to be intoxicated were prohibited from participating in this ritualistic burning. The general perception was that the ritual could be completed only in the presence of the police and the significance of this was tragic. It appeared as if the government was condoning this custom. As a result, there was an increase in the number of satis officially reported (see Appendix).

Roy presented extensive religious material to the Indian people and the British government in his efforts to show that abhorrent customs such as sati were not religiously sanctioned. He focused on the relationship between inheritance rights and the prevalence of sati. He believed that the ritual prevailed in cases where the widow had a right to inherit. Overtly, it represented a wife's aspiration to join her husband in the after-life rather than to live an empty life without him. However, Roy asserted that sati was no more than a masquerade for murder with increased economic benefits to be reaped by male successors (Asaf Ali 1991: 156).

> In some parts of the country, customary Hindu law gave the widow a share in the property of the deceased... It is significant that Sati used to be in vogue in Bengal among the upper castes who also happened to be the propertied classes. Liquidation of the widow who was drugged and forced to climb the funeral pyre, and forcibly prevented from fleeing, increased the share of the male successors to the dead man's estate (Asaf Ali 1991:157-158).

In 1818 Lord Cavendish-Bentinck, the new Governor General, sought to abolish sati. He argued that "the practice of Suttee is revolting to human nature; it is nowhere enjoined

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by the religion of the Hindus as an imperative duty" (Bannerjee 1979: 28). While Bentinck sought direct legislation, Roy was cautious about official interference. He was anxious that the reform be "accepted without the repercussions likely to follow on an imposed change" (Natarajan 1959: 35). However, when a statute banning sati was adopted in 1829 through Bentinck, Roy did support this measure.

Ram Mohan Roy also favoured conferring property rights upon women. "The abolition of the custom of sati was not just enough for the emancipation of women. In fact it also necessitated the acceptance of widow remarriage which was largely forbidden at that time" (Shah 1984: 32).

Roy made another contribution to the reform movement in the form of the Brahmo Samaj which he founded in 1828. This group of religious reformers accepted the worship of Brahma (monotheistic) as the lawful religion (Natarajan 1959: 39). Roy enlisted the assistance of his Samaj in his efforts to promote widow remarriage. However, members separated due to differences of opinion in terms of how to tackle issues pertaining to Hindu society. Religious deviations and conflicting ideologies caused schisms amongst the members, "but the parting of the ways invariably came over social issues" (Natarajan 1959: 40). Despite the rift, reformers continued with their work to improve Indian society.

In other parts of the country, too, similar movements grew in momentum. In Western India, the Prarthana Samaj and, in Northern India the Arya Samaj, both counterparts of the Brahmo Samaj, brought about a revolution of old concepts in an atmosphere of religious questioning and a broadened outlook. The age of social and religious reform dawned (Sen 1958: 34).

Between 1864 and 1869 eight widows remarried under the patronage of the Brahmo Samaj. Pandit Tatvabhushan (Natarajan 1969: 45) claims that

> in those days, specially in the seventies, the reform activities of Brahmo young men often found expression in the zeal with which they helped young widows among their friends and relations to come out of their homes and join the Samaj, for purposes of remarriage; and in the absence of any public institution where these widows might find shelter and education, they generally had to be accommodated in Brahmo families, whence as opportunities arose, they were married out. The work of rescuing young widows was always undertaken from the purest of motives, and in no case was marriage permitted between a young widow and her rescuer, the inevitable result of which was that these widows had to live in some Brahmo family for years before they could be married.

Education

Disputes often occurred amongst reformers in terms of what aspects of society required improvement and what needed to be accorded priority. However, "of all the items of social reform that of the education and emancipation of women engaged the attention of all schools of social reformers most" (Singh 1968: 167). Although debates ensued regarding the nature and extent of education to be imparted to women, there was little disagreement regarding the necessity and urgency of education. Swami Vivekanand argued that education was the first step towards social reform.

> Most of the reforms agitated for during the 19th
> century had been mostly ornamental. Each of those
> reforms touched only the first two castes. The
> question of widow marriage would not touch 70% of the
> Indian women, and all such questions only touched
> the higher castes of Indian people, who were educated
> at the expense of the masses. That was no reformation.
> Reformers must go down to the root of the problem,
> they must touch the masses (Singh 1968: 65).

Up until the beginning of the 19th century, only a small
group of upper class women received any education and this was
primarily at the hands of their menfolk so they could assist
in the running of large households (Asthana 1974: 130).
However, during the third decade of the 19th century, the
itinerary of Christian missionaries and Indian reformers
included women's education since this was thought to be an
asset to widow remarriage and the campaign to raise the age of
consent.

> Education alone, it was believed, would free these
> helpless women from their miseries by training them for
> an independent livelihood. For girls, in general, as
> soon as they married the possibility of education was
> removed. At the same time, it was felt that
> introduction of education would in itself, hopefully
> raise the age of marriage. Education thus was the
> keystone on which the whole question of raising the
> status of women rested (Kamerkar 1979: 315-316).

The East India Company due to its non-interference policy
refrained from commenting on issues pertaining to social,
religious and educational reforms. However, the company did
later introduce non-religious education. "Their motive was
clearly utilitarian. The educational system was supposed to
provide the personnel for the Company's administration"
(Kamerkar 1979: 314). This education was restricted to boys

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only since Indian society objected to the education of its women. The Company claimed that "the strong prejudices against female education were so deep rooted in the minds of the people that any attempt to educate women was sure to create a great commotion" (Asthana 1974: 131). In fact, an inquiry by the Company found that there were no females enrolled in any schools across India.

While exposure to new ideologies initially inspired reformers to seek reforms, missionaries, from the beginning, sought to educate women. The first girls school was founded in Bombay by the American Mission School in 1824. By 1829 the number of pupils enrolled had increased to 400 girls (Kamerkar 1979: 317). Once female education was accorded priority by reformers, 1849 witnessed the foundation of the first nonmissionary school for Hindu girls of the higher castes in Calcutta (Natarajan 1959: 46). This was followed by the opening of a few more schools across India. However, they relied on public donations for funding since government funding was not forthcoming due to its 'selective' non-interference policy.

The 'Indian Society' was established in 1851 and its goal was to lay the foundation for girls' schools within the Bombay Presidency. 1854 saw the release of the famous Wood's Despatch on education. This witnessed the government's acceptance of its task to advance primary education amongst the entire Indian population and girls in particular. The

Despatch was comprised of the views of Lord Dalhousie, Governor General of India. He believed the Indian social climate was now conducive for female education.

> Lord Dalhousie was of the opinion that "no single change in the habits of the people is likely to lead to more important and beneficial consequences than the introduction of education for their female children". He felt that much work had been done for the "successful introduction of native female education in India on a sound and solid foundation" and that a stage had been reached when government should lend its "frank and cordial support to the education of Indian women" (Asthana 1974: 132).

Despite the optimistic tones of the Despatch, little was achieved until 1870 due to the mutiny of 1857 which saw the government resume its stance of neutrality. However, while government support was not forthcoming, Indians worked enthusiastically to promote education amongst females. Thus, more schools were opened across India thanks to the work of reformers and women such as Pandita Ramabai, Maharshi Karve and Ramabai Ranade who all emphasized the importance of this goal in the liberation of women. In 1870 the first training college for women teachers opened (Asthana 1974: 133). However, there were discrepancies in the ratio of girls to boys enrolled. For every 1000 boys there were 46 girls enrolled. While 1 in every 16 boys could write, this was true for only 1 out of every 434 girls (Asthana 1974: 34). This was partially due to the continual reliance on private donations for the establishment of schools for women. By 1882 some progress had been made in terms of women's education but this was only at the primary level of education. However, in 1883

the first two women graduated at university level from the Bethune School of Calcutta University (Asthana 1974: 135). Despite the enthusiasm for educational reform, progress was slow. Little achievement beyond the primary level was evident.

> The girls in the schools were mere infants, studying mostly up to Primary A and B standards. Their attendance was irregular, and early marriage was still prevalent. There was, as yet, no demand for education as a means of livelihood. Gradually this factor was being projected by the reformers, when advocating education for young widows. Another big handicap was the absence of women teachers. Parents were reluctant to send teenaged girls to schools taught by male teachers. This lacuna also held back the spread of secondary education among girls (Kamerkar 1979: 321).

In 1882 the Indian Education Commission released a report discussing the plight of women's education. The Indian female population consisted of 99.7 million women of which 99.5 million or 98 per cent were unable to read or write. The Commission made a number of recommendations which included the following: increase number of schools educating females, encourage girls above 12 to continue with their education, employment of women teachers, appointment of female school inspectors, incentives for widows wishing to enroll in teacher training colleges, and finally it recommended the allocation of greater funds for female education at all levels (Asthana 1974: 136; Shah 1984: 37).

The last quarter of the 19th century saw a rise in the number of girls enrolled. For example in 1854 25,000 girls were enlisted but this increased to 127,000 in 1892. There

was also an increase in the number of women graduating from universities and professional colleges (Shah 1984: 38). In 1902 there were 12 colleges for women but, only one - Bethune School - was government funded. The reliance on donations for funding women's education persisted, e.g. of 422 schools, 356 relied on donations.

By the early 20th century there were three types of schools: private schools imparting traditional learning in languages such as Sanskrit and Arabic; missionary schools teaching English and Christian beliefs; and finally, government schools which taught a more secular education through English or Indian languages (Shah 1984: 38-39). Clearly, differences of opinion persisted in terms of the type of education to be made available to women. "Though social reformers advocated and worked for women's education, the purpose of imparting education differed from time to time and from one reformer to another" (Shah 1984: 39). For instance, conflicts arose about whether education should be in English or the vernacular, domestic or academic, etc. "The aim of education was to enlarge the sphere of women's activities by enabling them to perform their duties more efficiently" (Singh 1968: 169).

The general consensus was that a differentiation in curricula of boys and girls was required. The education of girls at the primary and secondary level should be simpler than that of males. A focus on domestic life and entry into

careers deemed suitable for women should also be encouraged. In addition, there was an emphasis on the need for texts geared only for female eyes (Asthana 1974: 136). Middle class men wished their wives to be educated in order that they could mingle with Europeans; a social necessity for educated Indians occupying positions within the British administrative system. "The main aim of education was to produce good Aryan mothers and wives" (Asthana 1974: 39). Due to the sex differentiation of roles, it was believed that education imparted to males and females should also differ. As M.K. Gandhi (Shah 1984: 39) claimed,

> In framing any scheme of women's education this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind. Man is supreme in the outward activities of a married couple, and therefore it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of woman, and therefore in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children, women ought to have more knowledge.

Between 1901-1921 the number of women's colleges increased from 12 in 1901-2 to 19 in 1921-1922 and student enrollment rose from 256 to 905.

> A significant development of this period was the rise in the age of marriage, especially in urban areas and among the upper classes. This received further impetus by the demand of educated men themselves for educated wives, and preferably those who had been to secondary schools and colleges. Consequently, both Hindu and Muslim girls began attending secondary schools and colleges in increasing numbers (Asthana 1974: 138-139).

Women also began to enter new professions and areas of study. Particular favourites included teaching and medicine. In 1902

76 women were enrolled in medical colleges and 166 in medical schools. However, many of these students were from Indian-Christian and Anglo-Indian backgrounds. "Hindu and Muslim women had not yet taken to these careers" (Asthana 1974: 137).

The number of women enrolled in schools in general was clearly on the increase. The rise in the age of marriage was one of the reasons. In rural regions the age of marriage was now 12 and it was even higher - about 16-18 - in the more urban areas and especially amongst higher castes and classes (Kamerkar 1979: 323). Education was increasingly becoming beneficial to women in more ways than one. Kamerkar (1979: 323) discusses the report of the Director of Public Instruction who argued that "at the time of marriage negotiations, the education of the girls has become an item of inquiry favouring the alliance". Asthana (1974: 139) claims that the three main obstacles to women's education had been apathy, early marriage and a lack of funds. While public propagation dealt with the first, the Sarda Act sought to regulate early marriage. However, although a lack of funding was still problematic, women's education continued to spread across India.

Despite the steady increase in numbers of educated women, dicrepancies continued to persist in terms of ratios of girls to boys enrolled in schools. There was an increase in discrepancy by 2 million (Asthana 1974: 140). The rise in women's education is amazing when one considers that the

nation and its people had to contend with World War I and a growing nationalist movement which emphasized other concerns (Asthana 1974: 141).

M. G. Ranade was another central figure in the social reform movement in India. He conceived of the movement as an all-India concern which would embrace individuals of all castes and beliefs. Following the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, there followed a series of disputes amongst those concerned with social reform issues and those seeking political reforms. The climax witnessed the exclusion of social reform issues on the part of the National Congress. Consequently, 1887 saw the formation of the Indian Social Conference which served to bring together social reformers who had previously operated in isolation (Natarajan 1959: 66). Ranade's goal was to launch "an all-India organization which might give a definite shape to the social reform movement in the country" (Singh 1968: 26).

The progress of the Conference was slow since it faced much opposition seeking to retain the more orthodox way of life. However, by 1901 the Conference had managed to bring "into focus the scattered elements of social reform throughtout the country" and it also served to inform the country of its philanthropic work" (Singh 1968: 136). Singh (1968: 152) claims that the "main achievement of the National Social Conference, however, lies not in what it itself did for the promotion of social reform, but what it stimulated others

to do". For instance, many reform agencies emerged nationwide dealing with issues relating to women, castes, religion and others. An instance of this inspiration can be seen within the Sikh community,

> The Sikhs also did not escape the reforming spirit of the time. All the evils of Hindu social life had crept back into the Sikh society - idols had found their way not only into the homes of the people, but back into the Sikh temples themselves; caste had again come back. About 1890 a body of reformers arose among them, and summoned their leaders to action for the revival of Sikhism and the uplifting of the community (Singh 1968: 164).

In addition to the formation of new organizations of social reform, there also emerged other tools such as media resources and journals.

At its early sessions in particular, the Conference emphasized the importance of educating women. It recommended the establishment of schools for females, the need to enlist the assistance of women teachers, home instruction for those unable to attend schools, etc (Singh 1968: 175). Zenana classes were also made available. There were 368 pupils and Urdu schools with 48 girls. Due to the restrictions of purdah, progress amongst Muslim females was slower. This period also witnessed the emergence of a small group of women seeking to work to elevate the position of Indian women across the nation. For example, Ramabai Ranade founded the Hindu Ladies Social Club in Bombay which dealt with instruction in areas such as hygiene, sewing, etc.

In 1899 two women were appointed as examiners at Calcutta

University. There was an increase in the number of women attaining higher education.

> Since 1858 more than 20 women had obtained the B.A. degree of the Calcutta University and many more of the Bombay University. These educated ladies were engaged in useful work; some were doctors in connection with the Lady Dufferin Fund, or with Missionary Societies; others had shown literary talents; several had married and helped to raise the standard of home life. They formed a valuable class whose influence indirectly affected the large custom-governed portion of the community (Singh 1968: 183).

The fact that Indian women became conscious of their new responsibilities and their position in Indian society can be assumed from the following list of women and papers read at a meeting of the Bharat Mahila Parishad in 1905 (as cited in Singh 1968: 188):

1) The Hindu Wife And What She Should Be

2) Female Education

3) The Place of Women in Modern India

4) Responsibilities of Our Sex

More women's organizations sprouted across India: The Ladies' Association (1886) - founded under the auspices of the Brahmo Samaj and focused on nurturing social service amongst women; Sharda Sadan (1892) -founded by Pandita Ramabai dealt with education, assisted destitute women, etc; Seva Sadan (1909) - by Ramabai Ranade sought to educate and train women for social work and also functioned as a shelter; Women's India Association (1917) - first All-Indian in scope and aimed to bind women together for the good of the country (as cited in Asthana 1974: 85). Postwar women's organizations tended to

concern themselves with the development of women. The Women's Council of India was founded in 1920 while The All-India Women's Conference was established in 1927.

Gradually, opposition to the education of women began to diminish. Even the orthodoxy began to recognize the value of educating women and also since education continued to emphasize the traditional role of women.

> A sound education, elementary, secondary, or technical, will equip them for the duties of their position, which will make them better wives, better mothers, better sisters and certainly infinitely more useful members of the society (Singh 1968: 193).

The Plight of Widows

As mentioned earlier, the plight of widows was also a major concern of reformers.

> Devoid of all earthly happiness, they were consigned to the most dismal and desolate life. The most heart-rending of all was the shaving and disfigurement of child-widows. The awakened soul of a proud Nation could never be unsympathetic to the wails of hapless widows. All the Reform Associations, all-India or Provincial, all the Samaj movements, all the individual reformers did their best to ameliorate the condition of widows. They might differ as to the propriety of widow remarriage, as to the ideal of Hindu widowhood and as to the methods to be adopted for bettering their lot; but there was no difference of opinion as to the gravity of the problem and its solution (Singh 1968: 198).

Remarriage was suggested in the case of young widows while for the older widow, teaching was viewed as a possible life-long vocation. In 1888, the National Social Conference championed widow remarriage for child-widows.

Earlier in the reform movement Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar had led the widow remarriage crusade. He based his arguments

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on religion and he petitioned the government to legislate against this prohibition on widow remarriage. He sought to legalize remarriage and advocated the removal of "all obstacles to the inheritance of the sons of remarried widows" (Bannerjee 1979: 29). As a result of his efforts and the work of numerous other reformers, the campaign culminated in the enactment of the Hindu Women's Remarriage Act of 1856. This represented a significant victory in terms of the plight of Hindu widows who derived primarily from the middle and higher castes. As Pandita Ramabai, a pioneering female reformer, describes (as cited in Asaf Ali 1991: 33):

> Throughout India widowhood is regarded as the punishment for horrible crimes committed by the woman in her former existence. But it is the child-widow upon whom in an especial manner falls the abuse and hatred of the community... Among the Brahmans of the Deccan the heads of all widows must be shaved regularly every fortnight. The widow must wear a single coarse garment. She must eat only one meal during the twenty-four hours of a day. She must never take part in family feasts. A man or woman thinks it unlucky to behold a widow's face before seeing any other object in the morning. In addition to all this, the young widow is always looked upon with suspicion, for fear she may some time bring disgrace upon the family by committing some improper act.

Statistics showed that despite the enactment of this remarriage law, the number of widows in India was steadily increasing. For example, in 1895 there were 114,532 widows under the age of fourteen and nearly half of these resided in the province of Bengal. In his 1897 Conference address Ranade discussed the slow progress in the widow remarriage crusade. In all, 25 widow remarriages had taken place - Punjab 10,

Bombay 6, Provinces 4, Madras 3, North-Western Provinces and Bengal 1 each (Singh 1968: 214).

Opposition to marriage reforms entailed arguments praising the ability of women to suffer in silence. Personalities such as Annie Besant denounced widow remarriage in all cases even when the widow was still a virgin. She claimed that there would always be a surplus of women - widowed or unwed - since there were more women than men (Singh 1968: 215). Reformers seeking widow remarriage did not wish to attack the high position of Hindu widows. Instead, they focused on the concept of choice whereby widowhood would be a voluntary decision on the part of the widow and not something she felt compelled to enter into due to pressure from various sources. Despite the conflicting opinions, widow remarriage occurred on an irregular basis. In fact, the Social Conference of 1900 reported only 29 widow remarriages and it offered support to those wishing their widowed children to remarry (Singh 1968: 219).

The year 1900 saw the advent of natural disasters such as plague and famine which destroyed much and left in their wake an even greater number of widows. This resulted in the Conference working harder for widow remarriage reforms. The work of the reformers was rewarded by a greater consistency in widow marriage. The number of widows per one thousand females was 187 in 1881 and this fell to 176 in 1891. The number rose to 180 in 1901 but fell to 173 in 1897 and 1900

due to the abnormal conditions (Census of India 1911, vol I, part i as cited in Singh 1968: 224). The Census of 1911 also speculated on the ban on widow marriage amongst the lower classes by claiming that "castes who do not allow it rank higher than on that account in social estimation".

Despite the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, widows faced many problems. Some, rather than burning on the funeral pyre or living a life of silent suffering, sought other solutions and often turned to prostitution on the streets or in brothels. An emphasis was placed upon the education of child widows since it was felt that only through education and vocational training could these women become independent and lead better lives. At this time the removal of obstacles impacting Hindu women through legislation was also focused upon. For example, women were banned from "possessing full dominion over property" and they also faced constraints in terms of succession and inheritance (Singh 1968: 204).

Marriage Reform

Marriage reform also received much attention.

No real uplift of women was possible without radical reforms in the marriage system. Most of the disabilities from which women suffered were due to the evils which had crept into the institution of marriage itself. If women suffered as widows, it was due to infant marriage and the denial of the right to widows to remarry; if they were illiterate, it was because they were married early, and thus their educational career was cut short; if the birth of daughters was a cause of sorrow, it was because marriage of a daughter meant the humiliation of her father at the hands of her would be husband's guardian and heavy expenses at the time of her marriage (Singh 1968: 208).

Many evils stemmed from the Hindu marriage system. These included polygamy, child marriage, unequal marriage in terms of age discrepancies between the older groom and the younger bride and dowry (Singh 1968: 208). Polygamy was especially prevalent in Bengal.

> From a tract published by Vidyasagar it came to be known that there were 133 polygamists, who had more than 5 wives each, in less than a 100 villages in the Hugli District. One polygamist had 80 wives, another 72, a third one 62, a fourth one 56 and a fifth had 55. There were three polygamists with 50 wives each, one with 42, one with 41, 3 with 40 each, one with 36, three with 30 each, 7 with wives ranging between 21 and 28 in number, 6 with 20 each, one with 19, two with 17 each, two with 16 each, 13 with 15 each, 3 with 14 each, two with 13 each, eleven with 12 each, three with 11 each, fourteen with 10 each, two with 9 each, fourteen with 10 each, two with 9 each, fourteen with 8 each, eight with 7 each, sixteen with 6 each, and twenty-one with 5 each. Vidyasagar did not count those having less than five wives each (as cited in Singh 1968: 210).

Prior to the end of the 19th century, efforts, both collective and individual, sought the abolition of restrictive customs pertaining to marriage. For example, in 1884, B.M. Malabari condemned child marriage and compulsory widowhood but his efforts received little encouragement (Singh 1968: 211). The Social Conference also worked for reforms within the marriage system and Ranade utilized scriptures in his arguments for widow remarriage and marriage reform.

The year 1899 witnessed much progress in marriage reforms. In this year, more late marriages occurred whereby girls 16 and older entered into matrimony. Even in orthodox regions such as Bengal, protests against evils pertaining to

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infant marriages, dowries, etc were becoming more frequent (Singh 1968: 231). In addition, efforts were made to pressure the government and Native States to implement laws for some reforms. However, while liitle progress was made in the case of the former, the latter did take some legal measures to curb various practices. "We find thus that marriage reforms were being propagated and brought into practice, because those who sought the good of the Nation were firmly convinced that a degenerate marriage system was inconsistent with a progressive national life and policy" (Singh 1968: 240).

Purdah

Another custom also negatively impacting women was the practice of purdah. "It is physical, economical and cultural loss to the nation to render a section of the society unproductive" (Chattopadhyaya 1939: 20).

> In a country where people demand democracy, Purdah is
> an anchronism, for it denies the most elementary rights
> to citizens who are entitled to them. It stands in the
> way of education and of healthy physical growth,
> stultifies the mind and retards all development.
> Moreover, it creates a harmful psychology in their
> progeny. Free, healthy, courageous citizens cannot be
> evolved out of dark seclusion (Chattopadhyaya 1939:
> 20).

Child Marriage

Expenses relating to marriage, birth, etc were condemned by reformers as was the concept of child or infant marriage. Thus, there was a concern with raising the age at which an individual should enter into marriage. This movement was progressing quite well as was indicated by Conference and

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other reports. In different localities the marriageable age of males and females was slowly rising, e.g. while most advocated 12 as the minimum for girls, the Brahmo and Arya Samaj suggested 25 for boys and 16 for girls.

The National Social Conference 1899, expressed satisfaction with the progress made by the movement for marriage reforms. Reports from various provinces, especially Bombay, Madras and the Punjab and from several caste associations such as the Rajput and Vaishya Sabhas and the other bodies showed earnest efforts being made to raise the marriagebale age of boys and girls, to prevent the exaction of large sum of money and the sale of girls for money and to curtail the expenses on marriage occasions. The Conference recommended that the age-limit for marriage of girls was to be raised to 12 or 14 and for boys to 18 or 21 (Singh 1968: 229).

Chattopadhyaya (1939: 14) argues that the issue of child marriage is crucial since many other problems stem from this practice. She asserts that approximately 43.7% of girls are likely to be married before they are fifteen. Many die early due to reasons such as early childbirth, lack of medical attention, etc.

The figures per 1000 at three different ages are listed below:

Age	0-5	5-10	10-15
Per 1000	30	193	381

(as cited in Chattopadhyaya 1939: 15).

She continues by condemining official reports for failing to accurately reflect the situation,

But these figures hardly indicate the enormity of the damage. These reports pass silently over hundreds and thousands of young blossoming girls, wrecked for life physically and psychologically by forced premature motherhood. By all moral codes, it is rape but our social conscience is hard bound by dead old useages and the sharp edge of the dumb agony of these innocent victims penalised for life by cruel customs, hardly touches it (Chattopadahyaya 1939: 16).

Progress of the Social Reform Movement

In 1915 the Indian Social Reformer compared the progress of the social reform movement over the previous twenty-five years. The number of educated women had increased "and their influence was beginning to be felt in all social movements" (Singh 1968: 353). Women's organizations also sprouted across India and women themselves began to demand access to compulsory and higher education.

From the moment of their conception the National Congress and the Social Conference engaged in debates regarding whether social or political progress should be prioritized. Many believed social reform was a priority. The political camp, on the other hand asserted that political progress was vital before other reforms could be possible. They did not necessarily oppose social reform but they felt that reforms were too diverse in nature and if dealt with on a political platform, would serve to divide the already diverse Indian population. Harmony on the basis of political unity was more important than rifts due to culture and religion - specific practices. For example, Hindus had religion-specific questions to deal with which did not affect Muslims. In

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addition, the opinion was that independence could be attained much more quickly than the pace at which traditions bound in ancient beliefs could be transformed (Singh 1968: 80).

The Social Conference attracted much attention during the latter portion of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th century. However, its progress was greatly impeded by the volatile political climate - e.g. partition of Bengal, repression of Indians through arrests, etc. Another hindrance was the formation of issue specific organizations such as the Caste Conferences and womens' organizations.

In 1919 Congress under the leadership of Gandhi decided to place social reform on its programme. After 1920 the general consensus was that political progress was essential in order for the attainment of an environment conducive to social reform (Natarajan 1959: 119). Reforms in general were also impacted by the work of Congress which launched its civil disobedience campaign requiring withdrawl from elections and assemblies.

The social reform movement began to fade in the early 1930s. While it had constantly been led by Indians educated in India "and inspired by British thought, the political movement had passed into the hands of Indians educated in England and highly critical of British practice" (Natarajan 1959: 182). In 1933 social workers sought to render the Conference permanent through framing a Constitution but the political climate prevented this. However, when the movement

abruptly came to an end, its ideas had penetrated Hindu society and few wished to revert to old ways. "Nowhere was this more strikingly demostrated than in politics where the Indian National Congress gained rather than lost support by espousing social reforms" (Natarajan 1959: 184).

Class Bias and Ethnic Diversity

The reform movement in India was dominated by the bourgeoisie which thought it important to mobilize the masses. Jayawardena (1986: 9) contends that most of the reforms were selective and had little impact on the daily lives of the majority of women. For instance, while some of the reforms included the elimination of various discriminatory customs and the right to vote, the project failed to probe central issues such as the inferior position of women within the family and society.

The social reform movement in India was not confined to the Hindu portion of the population since Muslims and others sought to abolish specific customs. While Hinduism was widespread in India, a substantial portion of the population adhered to the Islamic faith. However, in order to co-exist Islam adopted some features of Hinduism e.g. the caste system (Jayawardena 1986: 75). Since Muslim women were also oppressed by the patriarchy, 19th century social reformers also included Muslims. They also embarked upon a mission to socially rejuvenate their community.

When Sir Syed Ahmad Khan began his movement for
education, on Western lines, of the Muslims of India,
he made it quite clear that he did not include women
in his scheme. He was a firm opponent of female
education. And we can well understand the general
state of the Muslim mind at this time, if we remember
that even the proposal of men's education on modern
lines met with strong opposition. The advocacy of
female education branded a man with apostasy in
orthodox circles (Hasan as cited in Nehru 1938: 22).

Muslim reformers later began to criticize the
backwardness of illiterate Muslim women and so men such as
Molvi Nazir Ahmad advocated the education of women. "They
preached obedience, fidelity, and the virtues of efficient
housekeeping to the new Muslim woman" (Hasan 1938: 23).
Practical programmes were implemented to educate Muslim women
through the founding of schools. In 1896 Islamic schools for
women were established.

As Muslims would not send their girls to be educated in
non-denominational schools, these reformers thought of
starting purdah schools for Muslim girls. The Muslim
parent, none too enthusiastic to educate his girl, had
to be assured about the absolute moral and intellectual
security of the new institution, before he could be
persuaded to allow his girls to leave home for a few
hours a day (Hasan 1938: 24).

Although the reform movement within the Muslim sector of
the Indian population is comparable to that which occurred
amongst the largely Hindu community, Muslims lagged behind the
rest of the nation due to their hatred of the British. Syed
Ahmed Khan advocated English education to his community which
had not been as astute as the Hindus in recognizing the merits
of embracing Western ideas. He asserted that an acceptance of
new ideas did not mean a rejection of Islam - "Islam, Islamic

culture and the Muslims prospered as long as the Prophet was followed in respect of these teachings; when we ceased to take interest in the knowledge of others, we began to decline in every respect" (Ali 1991: 39). In 1875 he founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College.

> The Committee on the Status of Women in India notes in its report that the emancipation of Indian Muslim women was delayed "partly because modern education entered the Muslim community much later, and partly because the seclusion of women was defended by leaders of the community more persistently" (Ali 1991: 39).

While the Muslim reform movement liberally promoted change within the male sector of its community, it's attitude towards reforms for women, were far from liberal. For example, Dr. Syed Mahmud, an educated reformer, refused to enroll his daughters in school despite pleas from people such as Kamala Nehru (Ali 1991: 40).

> The spread of education, delayed and slow though it was, together with reduced material prosperity led to a decline in the practice of polygamy among Muslims, according to the historian R.C. Majumdar. Reformers tried also to revive widow remarriage which had become taboo among the higher classes of Muslims, perhaps in imitation of the corresponding layers of Hindu society. Denial to daughters, in practice, of a share in the father's property was also criticized by the reformers as being contrary to the tenets of Islam (Ali 1991: 40).

Despite the criticisms levelled against the social reform movement as a whole, it was important since

> it created a long-awaited awakening among Indian women as a result of which women attempted to organize themselves in strong units, and began to demand their rightful place in society (Asthana 1974: 39).

To summarize, links between the social reform movement

and the position of Indian women are very much apparent since reformers assisted women raised through the promotion of education and the eradication of harmful customs such as child marriage. Thus, women were able to assume greater roles and partake of expanding opportunities. However, the movement restricted women's participation through the propagation of contradictory roles and images and its failure to challenge the traditional basis of society. This period also witnessed an intensification in nationalist sentiment. Links between the reform movement and nationalism will now be examined.

CHAPTER IV - NATIONALISM AND ITS LINK

WITH THE SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENT

Introduction

The social reform movement partially laid the foundation of Indian nationalism since much of its ideology, was appropriated by nationalists. The latter particularly incorporated ideas pertaining to reform and women into the nationalist cultural frame. Linkages between the reform and nationalist movements are apparent in this ideological continuity and the manner in which nationalists, like reformers, promoted contradictory images and roles for women. Linkages between these movements are the focus of this particular chapter.

There was an awakening of the Indian people due to the birth and impact of an assortment of reform movements such as the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, and the Theosophical Society. "The early efforts at social, religious and educational reforms were an important factor which gave birth to the idea of political liberty as expressed in the West" (Dua 1967: 5). Dua (1967: 8) claims that the objective of these movements was to eliminate the "evil influence of religious tradition and superstition" and to strive to rejuvenate the country through an intense programme of social reform. The relationship between these three reform movements is complex and dynamic so in order to fully comprehend the one movement, it is essential to be knowledgeable of all three (Heimsath 1964: 6). Heimsath (1964: 57) further argues that "these three distinguishable traditions of reform... laid the

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intellectual foundation for the emergence of nationalism".

The Rise of Political Activism in India

For most of the 19th century social and religious reforms were central in the minds of Indians but the latter quarter of that century saw the emergence of political issues to the forefront. Nationalist ideology impacted social and religious ideas "and the methods of political organization and propagation for nationalist purposes set the pattern for other endeavours organized on an all-India basis" (Heimsath 1964: 57).

Nineteenth century India was a land relatively free of British government controls. Political thinkers tended to be gentlemen seeking to further their own interests via the formation of issue-specific political groups. One group was the Zamindary Association of Bengal formed in 1837 and later known as the Landholders' Society but "none of these can be said to have achieved great popularity, but there can be hardly any doubt that they served to rouse the political consciousness of the people" (Majumdar 1962: 317).

These pioneering endeavours did not appeal to the nation since they represented the interests of a small segement of the population. Any concerns with political progress of the country were absent and these efforts "were not motivated by an idea of a united nationality and of national interests" (Heimsath 1964: 62). However, India's political progress is evident as early as 1852 when numerous political groups sent

petitions to the British government during consideration of the Charter Act (Majumdar 1962: 318).

With English education being made available to Indians, in the late 1860s there emerged a distinct group of political intellectuals. Politics now became more of a middle class concern as the number of university educated men steadily increased (Heimsath 1964: 60).

One of the issues around which many rallied was the removal of restrictions preventing the advancement or entry of Indians into the civil service. Although protest techniques such as petitioning and picketing were utilized, campaigns lacked solidarity and structure. Thus, there was no real platform around which to unite. However, the late 19th century witnessed an increase in the number of political organizations such as the Indian Association.

While early political activities were confined to specific groups rallying around specific grievances, an expansion of communication networks served to rapidly propel information across the nation. Thus, in the late 19th century "local efforts to achieve religious, social and political reform began to combine into organized movements with adherents scattered throughout several provinces" (Heimsath 1964: 131). Nationalism emerged as Indians sought to relate to the struggles of comrades around the country.

Pioneering political struggles and organizations were vital since their efforts did culminate in the formation of

the National Congress. Heimsath (1964:132) cautions against labelling these efforts as nationalist since nationalism was not merely a continuum of these efforts on an all-India level. The Congress did in fact operate as an instrument for the expression of a 19th century all-India nationalism.

Nationalism Defined

According to Smith (1979: 2) the national ideal is a "belief that all those who shared a common history and culture should be autonomous, united and distinct in their recognized homelands".

> At the root of the 'national ideal' is a certain vision of the world and a certain type of culture. According to this vision, mankind is 'really' and 'naturally' divided into distinct communities of history and culture, called nations (Smith 1979:2).

Smith (1979: 2) contends that this national ideal has undergone much change in order to indulge the diverse concerns of various nationalist movements and groups. History is an important element of any culture since it links consecutive generations of any group of people.

> A man identifies himself, according to the national ideal, through his relationship to his ancestors and forebears, and to the events that shaped their character. The national ideal therefore embodies both a vision of a world divided into parallel and distinctive nations, and also a culture of the role of the unique event that shapes the national character (Smith 1979: 3).

Connor (1992: 48) argues that a nation is comprised of a group of people who believe they are ancestrally related. This is the largest group to share such a myth of common descent. While a specific myth of national descent is not

crucial, it is vital that members "share an intuitive sense of the group's separate origin and evolution" (Connor 1992: 48).

Anderson (1989: 13) argues that a nation "is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". Since members will never 'know' all of their fellow members, the image of the nation resides within the mind of each individual. In his discussion of nationalism, Anderson draws upon the work of Gellner (1964) who claims that "nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist" (Anderson 1989: 15). Anderson redefines Gellner's nationalism by emphasizing the processes of imagination and creation rather than invention. For Anderson, communities are renowned by the style in which they are imagined.

Nations are also imagined as limited since each has "finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations" (Anderson 1989: 16). Finally, nations are imagined as communities "because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal relationship" (Anderson 1989: 16).

The national ideal is not merely comprised of a view of the world, it also requires a form of solidarity and a political agenda (Smith 1979: 3).

> The national ideal leads inevitably to 'nationalism' a programme of action to achieve and sustain the national ideal. The solidarity that a nationalist desires is

based on the possession of the land: not any land, but the historic land: the land of past generations, the land that saw the flowering of the nation's genius (Smith 1979: 3).

Solidarity and kinship cannot be gained without the possession of the homeland. Consequently, the nationalist becomes engaged in a political battle for self-government. The intention is to establish a sovereign state in which individuals are at liberty to create that which best suits the needs of "the nation and its historical culture" (Smith 1979: 4).

Smith (1979: 4) asserts that nationalism has four components: a vision, a culture, a form of solidarity, and a programme of action.

It answers to ideological, cultural, social and political aspirations and needs. Its success over two centuries is partly attributable to the range of needs that it satisfies. But equally important is the manner in which nationalists can adapt the vision, the culture, the solidarity and the programme to diverse situations and interests. It is this flexibility that has allowed nationalism continually to re-emerge and spread, at the cost of its ideological rivals, from 1789 until today (Smith 1979: 4).

Nationalism in India

In terms of India, Heimsath (1964: 132) contends that nationalism was not a solitary unified movement but was instead comprised of multiple, often conflicting movements. Singh (1968: 106) argues that in the Indian case, nationalism as a contentious force developed with the work of Raja Ram Mohan Roy who introduced more humanitarian and universal elements. However, by the latter quarter of the 19th century,

other forms of nationalism were emerging. Since India was a land of many national groups it was not surprising that more than one nationalism emerged.

> Nationalism in India, therefore, having grown up in its own separate environment, had its own individual personality and distinctive character, though some its features were inevitably common to nationalism everywhere. It was, in the first place, a product of British rule being a reaction and a protest against foreign usurpation of national liberty, and a by- prodrt of European liberalism, although the influence of the latter has sometimes been over-emphasized. British imperialism, in its turn, had a contradictory set of features. In some respects it was revolutionary and enlightened, and in others it was reactionary and oppressive to the extreme (Singhal 1967: 5)._

Individuals sought to spread their particular brand of nationalism through the use of religious mythology and symbolism and through the use of historical propaganda. "The nationalists must be given credit for the spread and acceptance of a concept which never existed in India before the 19th century" (Heimsath 1964: 135).

Very often the nationalisms would be regional or issue - specific so very few could relate to any particular one. However, nationalists were derived from many groups - politicians, reformers and scholars, to name just a few. In addition, nationalism meant many things. For instance, while some actively sought change, others were nationalists by virtue of their devotion to their motherland. The fact that there was no "observable" nation and solidarity did not hinder the nationalist course. "A nation could not be discovered, it had to be created" (Heimsath 1964: 135).

Majumdar (1962: 321) asserts that while the definition of nationalism varies, if one considers the following as fundamental tenets of the concept, then there was no nationalism evident at the beginning of British rule; residence within a specific geographical region, beliefs of racial unity, common political interests and histories. In fact, India in the late 18th and early 19th century was a a nation of segregated communities

> almost mutually exclusive in character, and the conception of India as the common motherland was still in the realm of fancy. There was no India as it is understood today. There were Bengalis, Hindustanis, Marathis, Sikhs, etc, but no Indian at the beginning of the 19th century (Majumdar 1962: 323).

The mid-19th century witnessed the development of an intense nationalism. This was due to expanding networks of communication which provided the necessary medium for the transmission of radical ideas from 19th century Europe - e.g. knowledge of the French Revolution (Majumdar 1962: 328). Other influences included "English education and the impact of Western culture, religious and social reforms, vernacular literature, press and periodical literature, and political associations and organizations" (Majumdar 1962: 350). Other factors included an increase in foreign travel by Indians, and also the tendency to invoke Indian history. This historical element worked well to unite people and it inculcated nationalism with the Hindu philosophy which attracted the masses (Majumdar 1962: 328).

The Indian nationalist movement had three facets of

resistance to colonial rule which included a need for internal reforms in an attempt to modernize (e.g. abolition of customs such as sati which colonialists believed contributed to India's 'backwardness' as a country); disassembling of old pre-capitalist structures impeding progress; the declaration of a national identity to mobilize and combat imperialism. The first two facets overlap with the reform movement that emerged during the early 19th century.

The first phase occurred during the period of Ram Mohan and sought social reform in an "outlandish and rootless" manner and "had no touch with the reality of Indian national life" (Singh 1968: 132). The second stage was somewhat militant in nature and advocated reform along more orthodox guidelines. However, the final facet of the nationalist movement began in the latter part of the 19th century when there was a preoccupation with the creation of a national identity. This identity could only be created through "reforming and rationalizing existing structures and religious and cultural traditions". This usually involved a reinterpretation of sacred texts and a reform of clerical structures. "All three currents of nationalism ran side by side between 1885 and 1920, and all of them in varying degrees contributed to the growth of the social reform movement" (Singh 1968: 132). After the formation of the Congress in 1885, the social reform movement began to operate a little more in conjunction with nationalist ideology and consequently

appealed to a larger segment of the population. This, "in turn, gave a greater impetus to the nationalist movement" (Singh 1968: 132).

The Brahmo Samaj, a religious organization seeking both social and religious reform, motivated other similar movements across India such as the Arya Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj. While the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj sought to build a Hindu nation founded on the doctrine of Hinduism, they did in fact oppose some Hindu principles and this led to conflict with a revivalist camp which emerged in the latter part of the 19th century. Revivalists glorified Hindu religion and culture and rationalized its presence in the face of criticism from reformers and missionaries (Majumdar 1962: 299). B.C. Pal (as cited in Singh 1968: 47) contends that this revivalist spirit was in fact a national awareness which encouraged Hindus to denounce the British belief in their own superiority.

> The social reaction and religious revival possessed the Hindu mind all over India, and offered an effective check, for a time, to our religious and social reform movements. It was not really an honest return to popular or current Hinduism. The motive force behind it was more a determination on the part of our people to assert themselves against the imposition of imported European thought and ideals on the one hand, as it was, on the other, an organized expression of the deep anti-British feeling that had overcome every class and section of the educated community as a result of the open insult which the defenders of the class privilege in British Indian policy and administration had offered to their culture and character (Pal as cited in Singh 1968: 47 - 48).

This Hindu revivalism was not a rekindling of Hindu

orthodoxy since the two groups were quite distinct. While revivalists promoted social reform, the orthodoxy was not particularly in favour (Singh 1968: 52). Theosophists glorified ancient religious scriptures and encouraged Indians to embrace the heritage that had been handed down to them by their ancestors (Singh 1968: 69). Singh (1968: 76) contends that the Hindu revivalist philosophy was realistic enough to unite the masses and thereby render "both nationalism and social reform more effective".

From 1875 onwards a nationalist spirit was very much evident in India. Its intitial expression was prevalent in the province of Bengal and in particular, Bengali literature (Singh 1968: 18). There was concern with the modernization of society and a recognition of the importance of social reform as an essential aspect of national emancipation. Thus, social interests became a vital aspect of the nationalist movement (Dua 1967: 4).

> In Bengal the rationalizing effect of English education at first manifested itself more in religious and social ideas, but it was not long before it profoundly affected also the political consciousness of the people. The Brahmo Samaj was the outcome of the first two, and it has often been claimed that it has contributed largely to the ideals of political freedom. It would perhaps be more correct to say that all three are the result of the same rationalistic urge which was created by Western culture. In any case, it is impossible to deny that these movements were linked (Majumdar 1962: 291).

The power of this early nationalist sentiment was limited due to its segregated and vague nature. India was a country of immense diversity and lacked unity. Consequently communities

had diverging languages and conflicting opinions and goals (Singh 1968: 20).

The Brahmo Samaj which had thus far excelled in the promotion of social and religious reform, was unable to keep pace with the growing political fervour. The emphasis was now on the promotion and exaltation of all that was Indian. This is where the Arya Samaj, founded in 1877 by Swami D. Saraswati, gained much support. It emphasized the need for an education based on national guidelines and exhorted Indians to seek a purer religion through a perusal of ancient scriptures (Natarajan 1959: 74). Thus, the Arya Samaj assisted both the revivalist and nationalist causes.

Another organization which advocated the need to focus on all that was Indian was the Theosophical Society which sought to reconcile the intellectual mind with the traditional base of the nation (Singh 1968: 23). "Theosophists applied themselves to the moral regeneration, educational reclaimation and social reconstruction of India" (Singh 1968: 23).

Many societies emerged which proclaimed the supremacy of Indian or Hindu values. There was a tendency in the late 19th century to base nationalism on the premise of Hinduism. Organizations such as the Arya Samaj assisted immensely in the promotion of Hindu nationalism.

Dissatisfaction with the British government served to further propel the nationalist movement in the late 19th century. Indians received little promotion within the British

administrative system and stringent controls favouring the British were placed upon Indian industry. Such practices assisted in further impoverishing the nation and rendering it subordinate to its colonial master.

> In addition to these internal forces which worked from within, there were others supplied by current events in the history of the world. The defeat of Italy in the Abyssinian War, the rise of Japan as a great power, and the defeat it inflicted upon a mighty European power like Russia had a great repercussion upon Indians. The myth of European invincibility in war against Asiatics was rudely shattered and this infused hope and faith in the heart of the Indians in their own power (Majumdar 1962: 357).

Central personalities assisting in the promotion of various nationalist philosophies included Surendranath Banerji, Swami Vivekananda, B.G. Tilak, and G.K. Gokhale. Banerji expanded the definition of nationalism to include the unification of all communities residing in India. Vivekananda glorified all that was Indian and encouraged patriots to embrace religion as written in the Vedantas. Tilak, for his part, "requisitioned into the nationalist service two of the great forces which are calculated to deeply stir the national mind, namely, religion and history" (Majumdar 1962: 339-340). Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society in 1905.

> The fact that we are Indians first, and Hindoos, Mahomedans, Parsees, or Christians afterwards, is being realized in a steadily increasing measure, and the idea of a united and renovated India, marching onwards to a place among the nations of the world worthy of her great past, is no longer a mere idle dream of a few imaginative minds, but is the definitely adopted creed of those who form the brain of the community - the educated classes of the country (Gokhale 1905 IN Majumdar 1962: 363).

The new nationalism accentuated a love of the motherland through an emphasis on religion and history and by invoking images of a past India that had been supreme. Consequently, the close of the 19th century witnessed much progress in political thought since previous desires for minimal reforms were now discarded as Indians increasingly began to make more demands on the British government. For example, they sought the removal of restrictions impeding the entry of Indians to higher positions within the British administrative system. In addition, they demanded the right to a representative government. "The idea of a representative Government was not, however, a new thing in Bengal politics. A demand for it was included in the petition of the British Indian Association, Calcutta, to the British Parliament, in 1852" (Majumdar 1962: 367).

The India League was founded in Bengal in 1875. It's objective was "'to stimulate the sense of nationalism amongst the people' and awaken political consciousness among them" (Majumdar 1962: 367). Its existence was shortlived and it was replaced by the Indian Association, an organization seeking to become all-India in nature and unite all groups on common political grounds. It dealt with a number of contentious issues such as the maximum age of writing the Civil Service Examination which the government dropped from 21 to 19 with the intention of discouraging Indian applicants. The Indian Association sought feedback from all provinces regarding this

issue and the response was profound. "This is the beginning of a novel feature in the political agitation of the country which soon became almost a normal procedure" (Majumdar 1962: 369).

Other repressive measures which also propelled the nationalist movement included the Vernacular Press Act which censured the messages of Indian newspapers seeking to spread the nationalist doctrine. Individuals and organizations from across the nation corresponded in an endeavour to counteract this restriction. Majumdar (1962: 371) asserts that the meeting held to discuss these developments is significant since it represents a shift in political leadership from the old order of the aristocracy to the intelligentsia of the middle class. Two other events occurred in 1883 which further heightened the displeasure of the Indians with their colonial usurpers. The first was the imprisonment of Surendra Nath Banerji on a trivial charge. The nation's outrage was clearly evident. Another point of contention was the Ilbert Bill seeking to eliminate racial equality by rendering the British exempt from trial at the mercy of Indians. However, Indian protests were quashed by the defence presented by the British (Majumdar 1962: 375).

> The whole agitation left behind it a rankling sensation of defeat, disgrace, and humiliation in the hearts of the Indians, and an increased degree of racial arrogance in the minds of the Englishmen. But every cloud has a silver lining. The Ilbert Bill greatly helped the cause of Indian political advance. The method which was so successfully pursued by the

Englishmen was not lost upon the Indians. They learnt the value of combination and organization in political struggle, and their eyes were opened to the ignoble status of the Indians in their own country (Majumdar 1962: 374 - 375).

These events highlighted the need for an all-India political organization. The Indian Association was very important since it held the First National Conference in Calcutta in 1883. However, its power was limited by its provinicial nature. This new organization would need to be impartial and not associated with other political groups or particular provinces. Its purpose would be to present the demands of the Indian people to the British government. "Such an organization was the National Congress brought into existence in 1885 through the idealistic challenge and organizational skill of Alan Octavian Hume, but prepared for and anticipated for nearly a decade by farsighted Indians" (Heimsath 1964: 71). While Hume's goal was to provide a forum in which Indian people could discuss issues pertaining to them, the British government viewed it as an effective instrument to confine the activities of Indian intellectuals (Majumdar 1962: 392).

The National Congress dominated the political climate for the next twenty years and it "gave a shape and form to the ideas of administrative and constitutional reforms which formed the chief planks in the political agitation of India" (Majumdar 1962: 387). However, Majumdar (1962: 387) claims that it is not accurate to assume that activities of the

Congress alone reflects the entire Indian freedom movement. There were many forces present prior to the conception of the Congress, and after it ceased to be effective, which worked for the same goal. "Nevertheless, the Congress must always form the central theme in any delineation of India's grim struggle for freedom. It is the pivot round which revolves or evolves that story of epic grandeur" (Majumdar 1962: 387).

At the beginning, the Indian Association was far more radical than the moderates controlling the Congress. As a result, many individuals dissociated themselves from the former organization. There was also the belief that since the Congress was founded by an Englishman, the British government would view it more favourably. However, the Congress changed significantly from what it had been originally intended by the British into a more influential realm for the expression of advanced intellectual ideas. It became very much infused with the intense nationalist sentiment in circulation at that time (Majumdar 1962: 401).

Year after year Congress made its grievances clear to the British government and each year it passed numerous resolutions seeking various reforms. However, each effort was ignored by the colonialists and even deputations to Britain achieved little. In 1892 the Indian Councils Act was passed and though "it was hailed as the first victory of the constitutional agitation inaugurated by the Congress", very few of the original demands were met (Majumdar 1962: 405). The

British viewed the Congress as a most destructive force and so in order to encourage opposition to the Congress, they applied "pressure upon the rich and the aristocracy, who were amenable to Government control, to withdraw their patronage from the Congress" (Majumdar 1962: 414). However, what the British failed to realize was that political thought was now dominated by the educated middle classes and not the aristocracy.

Although the Congress failed to incorporate Muslims who constituted a fourth of the total Indian population its work was essential for the promotion of nationalism. As a result of the Act of 1892, Indians were able to form legislative councils which had few practical gains but served to effectively mobilize nationalist opinion (Majumdar 1962: 418). "For at least two decades following its foundation in 1885 the Indian National Congress was the movement best representing nationalism on the All-India level, despite the fact that it 'was more a general movement, an idea, and an attitude of mind than a concrete political party'" (Heimsath 1964: 144). Despite not securing vital reforms during this period, the Congress assisted Indian politics by uniting individuals, providing a forum in which to air grievances and debate issues, and finally it served to nurture patriotism amongst the population (Majumdar 1962: 417).

The Congress was not the only medium working for political liberation.

> An abstract love of liberty for its own sake and as
> our birth-right, a passionate desire for freedom based
> upon a sense of greatness of our ancient culture, an
> innate hatred of British rule on account of its
> iniquitous character, and a spirited protest against
> the arrogance of the English - all these which deeply
> stirred the neo-nationalists of the period, are
> conspicuous by their absence in the programme and
> proceedings of the Indian National Congress during the
> first twenty years of its existence (Majumdar 1962:
> 419).

The moderate dominated Congress was unable to function in a

manner that would appease the enthusiasm of the extremists.

The Congress was viewed unfavourably since it continued to

seek government assistance and it also failed to incorporate

the masses of Indian society (Majumdar 1962: 421). This did

not hinder the development of the nationalist movement. In

fact, the Congress lost control of the movement until Gandhi

appeared on the political scene.

> During this long interval the real national
> movement ran its course outside the Congress pandal
> and the legislative chambers. The same factors which
> gave birth to it and sustained it so far, were not only
> still at work, but some of them grew more and more
> intense with the progress of time and cast their
> influence over a larger and larger sphere of people
> (Majumdar 1962: 423).

Key proponents of this extremist/militant nationalism

were Arabinda Ghose, B.C. Pal and B.G. Tilak. The latter

emphasized the four distinctive features characteristic of the

movement: - faith in superiority of Indian history and the

need to utilize this as a platform; assertion and expression

of goals with little reliance on moderate-dominated Congress;

self-government is the ultimate goal not bureaucratic reforms

as focused on by the Congress; necessity of rousing

nationalist sentiment within masses and enlisting their help in overthrowing British rule (Majumdar 1962: 425).

Tilak utilized religious festivals to unite Indians and inspire nationalist emotions amongst the masses. However, his work was cut short by his imprisonment and his trial represents a significant development in Indian nationalist history. Whereas previously eloquent speech signified distinction, now there was an emphasis on sacrifice and martyrdom for the freedom of the country. Courage and spirit in the face of adversity were revered (Majumdar 1962: 433). Tilak's work was also crucial since he invoked religion in order to bring nationalism to a level which could be comprehended by the masses and which would encourage their participation.

The philosophy of the Congress differed from this new nationalism in a number of ways. While Congress believed that Indians were not yet ready to self-govern and still needed the British to preside over them, the new nationalism advocated self-rule. Congress also emphasized the need to rid India of certain social evils prior to realizing the dream of self-government. The new nationalists condemned this and asserted that if this was the case then the nation would wait forever (Majumdar 1962: 440).

According to Singh (1968: iii) "nationalism and social reform were interdependent, the one accelerating and not retarding the pace of the other". Social and religious reform

were accorded priority for most of the 19th century since during this period individuals were still becoming acquainted with Western ideas and English education. They admired the British way of life and sought to better themselves and Indian society through the incorporation of particular ideas and beliefs into their daily lives. However, this allegiance to the British was soon replaced by a devotion to the Indian nation. Extensive criticism from the colonialists, missionary efforts, and English education all served to encourage a programme of intense social rejuvenation of Indian society which was later usurped by a preoccupation with political liberation.

Social Versus Political Reform

A debate emerged which centred upon whether political advancement or social reform needed to be accorded priority and it lasted well into the first quarter of the 20th century. Singh (1968: 118) contends that the interdependence of social reform and political progress becomes apparent when one recognizes that the National Social Conference was formed in 1887, a mere two years after the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. These two organizations united various local associations existing prior to 1885 and functioned to raise their issues to an all-India level.

> The very aims of the national movement were the
> fusion into one national whole of all the different
> and, till recently, discordant elements that
> constituted the population of India; the gradual
> regeneration along all lines, mental, moral, social

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and political, of the nation thus evolved; and the consolidation of the union between England and India by securing the modification of such of its conditions as might be unjust or injurious to the latter country (Singh 1968: 120).

The Indian National Congress was criticized for not placing social issues on its agenda but Congress members were often members of other committees and groups working to implement social and religious reforms on a deeper level (Singh 1968: 120). Individuals felt that it was necessary to segregate political and social reform in order not to hinder progress in either sphere. For example many felt that social reform would not permit political unity due to the diversity of groups residing in India. Each group whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, or other, had to contend with reforms unique to their own community. In fact, there were many Congress members who regularly attended meetings of the Social Conference. "Societies sprang up which advocated social reform with a view to securing the welfare and prosperity of the Nation" (Singh 1968: 124).

Those advocating the primacy of social reform claimed that foreign rule was the consequence of an imperfect Hindu social system which needed to be rejuvenated in order to realize any dream of national independence (Natarajan 1959: xvi).

Those favouring political reform asserted that social rejuvenation would divide the country due to the diversity of people inhabiting the nation. Since social issues tended to

be culture - or religion-specific- little unity could be maintained if this path of reform was selected. They believed political emancipation was crucial for progress in all other areas of life. It was therefore essential for all to unite on this political platform. Social reform would be a slow process since the traditional foundation of social beliefs would be very difficult to overcome.

According to K.T. Telang (as cited in Singh 1968: 79), both issues were very much intertwined. For instance, education was equally important to both the social and the political arena. "The question of infant marriage was, no doubt, a social one, but the modes suggested for remedying the evil had raised great political issues touching the province of legislation, and the true functions and limits of state activities" (as cited in Singh 1968: 79). However, he believed that political reform required more attention.

Another advocate of the primacy of political reform was Tilak who viewed political progress as an effective tool for bringing about social reform. He asserted that it was essential to focus on ridding India of her British conquerors since only when political freedom was attained could the nation hope to progress in the arena of social reform (Singh 1968: 101).

The early 20th century saw a drop in the level of orthodox resistance to social reform. "The creed of social reform had been accepted by the great majority of the

University-educated men and a considerable number of semi-educated people who were under their influence" (Singh 1968: 125).

The Congress widened its scope of activity and this was accompanied by an equivalent augmentation of interests on the part of the Conference. In fact, the reform movement was also affected by the nationalist fervour sweeping across the nation. While early reformers sought to ease the lives of individuals suffering due to unjust social customs, the nationalist doctrine impacting later reformers, served to prioritize the nationalist programme. Social reformers still had to contend with extensive criticism from others accusing them of encouraging the denationalisation of India and also reproving them for allegiance to the British (Singh 1968: 128).

By the dawn of the 20th century the Social Conference had been incredibly successful in promoting social reform and uniting various groups and agencies across the nation. However, in 1902, under the leadership of Bhandarkar, the objectives of the Conference were further expanded. He argued for the elimination of customs impeding the healthy development of the body and mind. This marks a shift from the previous policy of administering minor repairs to the social framework to "a complete scheme of national regeneration for India" (Natarajan 1959: 109). The appeal of social reform continued as it sought to attract attention from many agencies

across the nation who also adhered to a similar code of beliefs. This increased attention was not lost on Congress members many of whom began attending sessions and expressed an interest in social reform. Thus, the attraction of reform spread (Natarajan 1959: 113). The Conference was the first to promote "social reform to a level of equality with political progress" (Singh 1968: 137). For example, the Social Conference of 1907 emphasized the importance of a national education and especially the education of women. In 1917 the Congress took an interest in the plight of the depressed classes, a departure from its past neglect of social concerns (Singh 1968: 271). "From the very beginning patriots of all schools realised that no real national progress was possible without a radical change in social outlook" (Singh 1968: 273). Other social changes of interest to the Congress included the removal of caste discrimination, elimination of bias against foreign travel, and an encouragement of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Communal Issues

There had been a gulf between the Hindu and Muslim communities since the advent of British rule. Prior to this Muslims had occupied positions of power within India and when English education was made available, Muslim hostility prevented them from utilizing it (Majumdar 1962: 465). Movements such as the Wahabi and Aligarh enterprises did nothing to endear Muslims to the rest of the Indian population. While the former sought to restore Muslim rule in

India, the latter advocated the need to segregate Hindus and Muslims. There was a fear of representative government since it would place the Hindus in a position of power over the Muslims. Consequently, Muslims were frequently loyal to the British government since they viewed it as a fate more preferable than subservience to their eternal enemies, the Hindus (Majumdar 1962: 477).

By the first decade of the 20th century, neither the Congress nor the Conference could contain the vibrant fire of nationalism burning across the entire country. The definition of nationalism had expanded and it now appealed to many more individuals.

> A reconstructed, Hindu nationalism, therefore, emerged, which was expected to lead to a more rapid and a more widespread advancement. One result of this third stage of modern intellectual development was a new alignment of political and social reform movements which the expediencies of an exclusively secular nationalism had thrust apart. Both social reformers and political leaders found that they could agree when their aims were defined in Indian, rather than in Western terms (Heimsath 1964: 309 - 310).

This new reconstructed Hindu nationalism did not appeal to some of the other communal groups since "Muslims and Christians would be tolerated and respected but they must reorganize their essential 'Indianness', which meant the essential Hindu quality of their particular beliefs and practices" (Heimsath 1964: 314). The nationalism "remained predominantly Hindu, but in a predominantly Hindu country, such as India was, no national movement, irrespective of its political ideology, could be otherwise" (Singhal 1967: 11).

Although this nationalism had great appeal there was no real programme of implementation since there was no political organization representing it. The moderate-dominated Congress and repressive government measures served to ensure that its appealed remained only theoretical.

The Partition of Bengal

The progress of the National Social Conference was impeded at the dawn of the 20th century by the turbulent political climate prevailing at that time - e.g. the partition of Bengal, terrorism, repression of speech, arrests, and deportations (Natarajan 1959: 114).

Bengal was conceived of as a serious threat to British rule due to its advanced political beliefs. Consequently, the government devised a sinister plan to divide the province in such a manner as would effectively destroy the solidarity of the progressive province. Lord Curzon's plan was as follows: "the Bengalis would be divided from their kith and kin; the Bengali Hindus, hated and dreaded by Curzon for their advanced political ideas, would form a minority in both Provinces; and a thin wedge would be driven between the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal" (Majumdar 1963: 5).

The Swadeshi Movement

Indians united in their efforts to protest this partition. One form of protest was the swadeshi movement which was launched in 1905 and lasted until at least 1918. Its initial purpose was to protest the partition of Bengal

"but within an incredibly short time it led to, and merged itself in, a national struggle of All-India character against the British, which never ceased till India won her independence" (Majumdar 1963: xiii). Two crucial features of this movement were firstly that its power expanded across the nation, and secondly, it encouraged Hindu-Muslim unity. (Majumdar 1963: 23).

The swadeshi movement advocated the boycott of foreign goods with a simultaneous promotion of indigenous products. Majumdar (1963: 31) asserts that these two aspects "were indissolubly bound up together. The first was known as Boycott and the second as Swadeshi movement - but these were merely two facets of the same stone. The Boycott was the negative, and Swadeshi, the positive aspect of the same idea". These two ideas were not new in India but they did take on a different meaning as they became infused with the nationalist spirit and served to unite an entire nation. The idea of boycott shifted from an economic tool to something now implying non-cooperation on the part of the Indian people with the intention of attaining political liberation. Swadeshi, which had in the past referred to the promotion of indigenous goods, now represented a loyalty to all that was Indian (Majumdar 1963: 33). Goods that were targeted included cloth, salt and sugar.

The impact of the Boycott and Swadeshi movement was significant since it not only served to further propel the

nationalist movement but also rejuvenated India's ailing industry. "As the demand for indigenous cloths grew, increasing attempts were being made to start new mills" (Majumdar 1963: 60).

As the movement gathered momentum in the form of numerous protests, petitions, meetings, etc, through the hard work of volunteers, students and others, the government also increased its pressure on the people by imposing stringent controls. Various meetings and media publications were banned, Hindu-Muslim dissension was encouraged, and students were expelled from schools for participation in national activities. However, the expulsion problem was resolved through the establishment of schools imparting a purely nationalist education.

> The real state of things can best be described as an incipient rebellion - an undeclared war between the Government and the people. Each side fought with the weapons it possessed - an imperialistic and autocratic Government making full use of its organized civil and, as need arose, military forces, while the unarmed, or rather disarmed, people fought with the only weapon they could command, namely, a sort of organized Passive Resistance. Psychical force was pitted up against the physical force (Majumdar 1963: 51).

Government restrictions did not have an immmense impact on the Indian population which was floating on the tidal wave of nationalism fuelled by the boycott and swadeshi movement.

> The four-fold ramifications of Swadeshi movement - industrial, educational, cultural and political - and its spread all over India unnerved the Government of India. It was not long before they realized that a local movement for removing a local grievance was being slowly, but steadily, developed into an all-India

national movement against British rule (Majumdar 1963: 91).

The movement significantly affected the political climate since it spread across the nation and it also resulted in the inclusion of the landed aristocracy which had previously remained aloof from affiliation with any political organization such as the Congress (Majumdar 1963: 135). The swadeshi movement which eventually evolved into a nationalist enterprise "constitutes the first great landmark in the history of India's fight for freedom in the first half of the 20th century" (Majumdar 1963: 139). Majumdar (1963: 140) asserts that swadeshi and boycott derived inspiration from the Bengali nationalism of the late 19th century and only bore fruit through the hard work of countless dedicated individuals. "Thus nationalism and Swadeshi movement acted and reacted upon each other, and each influenced and widened the scope of the other" (Majumdar 1963: 140).

Following the partition of Bengal, secret revolutionary societies became more organized and spread across the nation. They did not advocate the non-violent means promoted by the majority. These militant individuals were willing to utilize any means to attain their goals which were not necessarily inspired by nationalist sentiment but also stemmed from religious, personal and social beliefs (Majumdar 1963: 161).

> History records numerous instances where a nation or a group of people within it, smarting under the tyranny of a foreign or despotic rule but unable to resist it openly, takes to secret organization to bring about its

fall. Love of the suffering motherland and impotent and impotent rage at the inability to relieve her distress gradually lead to the growth of secret societies as the only possible means to achieve the end. The moral justification of the methods pursued and the extent to which real success is or can possibly be achieved by them, are matters of dispute (Majumdar 1962: 442).

This militant nationalism enlisted young middle class intellectuals for difficult revolutionary work. The workload was immense and the risks were plentiful. "Like nationalism, it was a movement by the middle class but not for the middle class alone. It had in view the interest of India as a whole to be achieved through complete freedom" (Majumdar 1962: 448).

The partition of Bengal was also significant since it was at this time that another political party emerged which was distinct from the moderate philosophy dominating the Congress at the time. The basic tenets of this party had been present before but had found little expression due to a lack of organization. The two parties thus were the Moderates of the Congress and the new Extremists. As the anti-partition protest became an all-India movement so too did the Extremist party under the guidance of individuals such as Tilak, B.C. Pal, Lajpat Rai and Arabindra Ghose. However, the activity of this party was severely impeded by the repressive measures of the government. For example, Tilak was imprisoned in 1906 for indirectly causing the death of a number of officers.

The Home Rule Movement

Tilak's release in 1914 marks a "turning point in the history of the struggle for freedom" (Majumdar 1963: 351).

This, combined with international events such as World War I, "set in the process of transfer of power from the Moderates to the Extremists" (Majumdar 1963: 354). The launching of the Home Rule Movement further heightened the power of the Extremists. The Home Rule League was started in 1915 by Annie Besant with the intention of agitating for Indian Home Rule. Leagues were founded across the country and the campaign was publicized through lectures, meetings, etc. Two features of this enterprise was the participation of women and the use of religious symbolism to propel the doctrine. The Home Rule endeavour assisted in the expulsion of the Moderates from the forefront of the Indian political scene.

> The Home Rule Movement was the natural culmination of the Nationalist movement which had been gathering force since the Partition of Bengal and Swadeshi movement in 1905. But for the disintegration of the Extremist Party after 1907,... some such movement would probably have made its appearance much earlier (Majumdar 1963: 383).

With the Moderates no longer dominating the Congress, this left the door wide open for the admission of the Extremists. This was followed with an alliance in 1916 - the Lucknow Pact - between the Congress and the Muslim League, the latter being established in 1906 (Majumdar 1963: 352). This alliance left the government disgruntled since it had now lost a crucial weapon in its plan to segregate the nation. In 1917 the Congress passed a resolution seeking self-government within a specific time period. Within the course of ten years the Congress had become an Extremist organization (Majumdar 1963: 379).

Entry of Gandhi

The year 1915 marks the entry of Gandhi into the arena of Indian politics. Prior to his entry, the political climate had been dominated by men such as Tilak and Agarkar - all of whom differed in their attitudes towards social reform. For instance, while Tilak's orientation was more extremist and orthodox, Agarkar was very much in favour of reform (Natarajan 1959: 118). Earlier movements, including mass movements, did not really affect the rural sector since they had been primarily confined to the urban centres. Gandhi emphasized the need to include the rural masses in the quest for independence since the nation was predominantly rural (Singh 1968: 310).

> His real entrance into the Congress politics began with his participation in Congress proceedings at Amritsar. Attendance at previous Congresses were nothing more than an annual renewal of allegiance to the Congress. With the assumption of the membership of the Constitution Committee of the Congress, he really began to mould the shape of the Congress. By this time the events on the Indian political scene were marching with kaleidoscopic speed, and Gandhi was at the helm of a mighty mass movement. The soul of a great nation had been stirred and, thanks to the genius of Gandhi, the political upheaval was accompanied by a great social awakening also (Singh 1968: 331).

Under Gandhi's guidance, the Congress became a more democratic organization which incorporated more than just the previous majority of the upper classes. Congress membership also rose. Social reform and political advancement were equally important in Gandhi's emancipation programme. However, like others before him (e.g. Swami Vivekananda), he

advocated a social reform framework based on national guidelines.

Gandhi sought the participation of the entire nation in his visionary quest for Indian independence. He encouraged the participation of women since he viewed them as infinitely suited for this battle (Singh 1968: 315). The participation of various societal groups was essential. Consequently, Gandhi sought the abolition of various customs which impeded their involvement. He was particularly vocal about the need to eradicate untouchability since it was not possible for a nation to become emancipated if at least one fifth of its population was repressed and denied access to the national culture (Singh 1968: 325).

> Gandhi thus stood for real Swaraj not only in the
> political and economic sense, but also in the
> cultural sense. He did not agree that the ideas
> of social service and social betterment had come
> to India from Christianity or the West; he held on
> the other hand, that these ideas were indigeneous
> to India (Singh 1968: 325).

Gandhi also introduced the nation to the spinning wheel which was very symbolic during the entire nationalist struggle. Through spinning their own cloth, Indians were in a better position to boycott the use of foreign cloth and consequently restore to India, a source of income of which it had been forcibly deprived of by the British. He was successful because he was able to enlist the support of the masses in his nationalist endeavour which included both a political and a social campaign. Previous reformers and

organizations such as the Theosophical Society had only appealed to specific segments of the Indian population hence the scope of their achievements reflected these limitations (Singh 1968: 38).

Under Gandhi's leadership in 1920, the National Congress adopted social reform on its agenda. In 1917 Montagu declared self-government as the ultimate goal for India. However, the British contradicted their promises and a massacre ensued at Amritsar (Singhal 1967: 6). Gandhi launched his first political struggle in 1919 in protest of the Rowlatt Bills. He encouraged the closure of businesses, offices, and public activity. Gandhi's programme included the boycott of courts, schools, etc - essentially a boycott of all that was government owned (Ali 1991: 86).

The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms of 1919 "brought a new element into social reform - the political one" (Natarajan 1959: 148). These reforms also introduced non-official majorities in the provincial legislatures and set up ministers for some departments in the provinces and "brought back the political centre of gravity to India, and though the largest political party at first stood out of the legislatures the pull of the Councils had begun" (Natarajan 1959: 136).

> The wave of repression preceding the 1919 reforms and the failure of the Government to satisfy the strong sentiment in the country created an atmosphere which, even without non - cooperation, was not conducive to stable administration; the constitutional reforms themselves carried within them the seeds of failure - divided responsibility in the provinces, the

introduction of communal electorates and the domination of the Central Executive over the Central Legislative gave an air of unreality which would have been more rather than less if the Congress had not pursued its self-denying policy (137 - 138).

The Prohibition Campaign

Prohibition was an important issue since it pitted the British against the Indian nation and once the battle in this arena intensified, prohibition became a political issue. In 1924 the National Prohibition Association was founded. However the government opposed prohibition. "The opposition of the Government of India and the facetiousness of British officialdom brought it into the political field. By 1926 the issue had become one of the Government versus the nation" (Natarajan 1959: 164). Prohibition was crucial since it formed a platform in the Civil disobedience movement which required a picketing of liquor shops, etc. Foreign cloth, on the other hand, "became a national cause in the interest of workers in the urban area" (Natarajan 1959: 164).

> The moral value of such a cause in satyagraha -
> where the exposure of the opponent's weakness is an
> important factor - was too obvious to be missed. As
> Prohibition became one of the three issues -
> picketing of liquor shops ranked with picketing of
> foreign cloth shops and salt satyagraha and appealed
> far more to American and even British opinion - the
> reaction of neutral opinion became more definite (165).

While this turmoil served to provide the Congress and temperance workers with a common platform, officially little was achieved. "It shifted easily from a policy of maximum revenue and minimum consumption to cheapening country liquor to net in consumers of illicit alcohol, until the Congress

took office in 1937 in the provinces" (Natarajan 1959: 165).

International Influences

There were many international influences on nationalism -
e.g. World War I. During this period India's desire for
political emancipation escalated. "We can clearly visualize
the three phases of Indian nationalism - liberal,
revolutionary and mass movement in this period" (Srivastava
1973: 169). The Russian Revolution of 1917 also impacted
Indians. It encouraged the participation of working class
Indians and it also advocated self-government for all nations.
"For the redressal of the grievances of the workers, the
Trade Union Congress was founded in 1920 and organized working
class movements began in factories" (Srivastava 1973: 170). At
this time the Hindu-Muslim alliance strengthened due to the
British invasion of Turkey. Gandhi "advocated the cause of
Khilafat to win the favour of the Indian Muslims to the cause
of the Indian liberation movement" (Srivastava 1973: 171). He
utilized the technique of non-cooperation. Muslims and Hindus
enlisted but the agendas of both differed. While the former
sought restoration of the Khilafat (i.e. Muslim rule), the
latter sought national liberation (Srivastava 1973: 171).

Nonviolence Policy

In 1920 Congress adopted the policy of nonviolent
cooperation or Satyagraha evolved by M.K. Gandhi for
combating grievances (Ali 1991: 81).

It was not the passive pacifism of conscientious

objectors to war but a dynamic mobilization of the people to resist wrong, even if the resistance entailed having to endure physical assault, imprisonment or death. This new method, based on moral force, rendered obsolete the gradualist and constitutional approach of the early Congress and the Home Rule League. The militant mass action of Satyagraha also made unnecessary the resort to isolated acts of revolutionary violence (Ali 1991: 81).

Gandhi sought to relate Khilafat demands to India's national goals with the intention of incorporating the Muslim masses into the movement. However, the non-cooperation movement was halted by Gandhi in 1922 because of an incident of violence in a village in the United Provinces. With Gandhi's encouragement, the Congress adopted a Constructive Programme "which included the eradication of untouchability, promotion of Khadi, and Prohibition" (Ali 1991: 87-88).

In 1929 Congress passed a resolution declaring full independence as the ultimate national goal. Consent was given to launch a mass movement of civil disobedience (Ali 1991: 100). Gandhi decided to base this civil disobedience movement on the non-payment of salt tax. Ten years elapsed between the civil disobedience movement and the final phase of the anti-colonial crusade. During this period, according to the Government of India Act of 1935, Indians were at liberty to "order their own affairs" (Ali 1991: 110).

Consequently, the 1935 Reforms Act enabled the Congress to contest elections. As a result elections were held with wider franchise than previously and Congress was able to form governments in eight provinces.

The looming shadow of World War II resulted in the 1939 Congress session passing a resolution condemning German fascism. That very same year, Britain declared war on Germany. Indian support of the British against the Germans served as a bargaining tool in India's struggle for independence.

The All-India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.) decided to launch a mass non - violent Quit India movement under Gandhi's leadership with the intention of persuading the British to leave India (Ali 1991:136). This movement spread rapidly. Many were imprisoned and others went underground in order to aid the movement on a more militant level. The goal was to dislocate the war effort. The Quit India movement liberated a number of areas temporarily since these regions were soon recaptured by the British and their superior armies (Ali 1991: 144). However, this did not serve to quench the thirst for independence since shortly after, the British tried a number of officers of the Indian National Army in 1945. This trial was greatly publicized and the nation including British Indian armies, learned of the atrocities Indians suffered at the hands of the British (Ali 1991: 144).

In 1945 many weary Congress leaders were released from prison. This was followed by an announcement of the defeat of the Germans at the hands of the allied forces. When the British devised a plan to settle the dispute with the Indians, it was hastily accepted. The Labour government of Britain sent a delegation to India to discuss the transfer of power.

The proposal was based on a constituent assembly whereby there would be a three-tier format of provinces "and a federal Centre with responsibility for foreign affairs, defence and communications and the powers necessary to raise the finance required for these subjects" (Ali 1991: 146).

This period was also one of high Hindu-Muslim discord and Muslims demanded their own state.

> With all its qualities of assimilation and humanism, Indian nationalism failed to pacify Muslim nationalism. The historical background and the political ideals of Indian Muslims were identical with the rest of the Indians, and it was not until 1940 that they, in desperation perhaps, demanded a separate homeland (Singhal 1967: 19).

The separatism that had been nurtured by the British for so long now bore fruit. While the newly elected British government sought to maintain a unified India, its intentions appeared on the political scene too late. Following extensive Hindu-Muslim rioting in 1946, Congress reluctantly accepted the plan for partition. Consequently, in 1947 the partition of independent India was announced.

> Had the revolutionary spirit shown by our people during the Quit India movement and the R.I.N. mutiny been mobilised for a final round of the struggle for freedom, the sub-continent's partition might possibly have been averted (Ali 1991: 145).

The reform movement partially laid the foundation of the nationalist project since the latter movement utilized certain features of the former's cultural master frame. For example, ideas pertaining to women and reform were usurped by the

nationalists in an endeavour to propel their cause. Once the

nationalist struggle did commence, both movements progressed

in a somewhat similiar manner.

> Nationalism and the Social Reform movement went side
> by side, each reacting upon, and influencing the
> nature and character of the other. As the character
> of our nationalism underwent transformation, so   the
> social   reform   movement   also   took   a   different   turn
> (Singh 1968: 339).

Nationalism was also propelled by the participation of women

and it is to this that the discussion now turns.

CHAPTER V - THE IMPACT OF THE

NATIONALIST MOVEMENT ON THE POSITION

OF INDIAN WOMEN

Introduction

The Indian nationalist movement appropriated the cultural frame proffered by the social reform movement, particularly as it pertained to the position of women and reform. However, nationalists modified these roles for women by extending them into the political arena without directly challenging the patriarchal framework of Indian society. Consequently, nationalists, like reformers, also offered contradictory roles and images for women. The nationalist movement served as an opportunity for women to gain political experience and women also became enlightened in terms of strategies of protest and mobilization for the attainment of goals. This chapter will examine the links between the nationalist agenda and the position of women.

Nationalism and Women: A Comparative Perspective

Parker, Russo, Sommer & Yaeger (1992) review the work of George L. Mosse in their discussion of nationalism and sexuality. Mosse describes the influence of contemporary European nationalisms in the formulation of middle-class norms of the body and of sexual behaviour (Parker et al.1992: 2). They further draw upon the work of Anderson (1991) when they argue that "nearly every aspect of Anderson's account of the nation raises issues of gender and sexuality". For example, Anderson (as cited in Parker et al. 1992: 5) claims that "in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender". Parker et al.

(1992: 5) claim that Anderson's analogy is valuable since it intimates that nationality, like gender, is "a relational term whose identity derives from its inherence in a system of differences". In other words, both nation and gender are delineated in terms of what they are not.

Yuval-Davis (1993:621) contends that gender relations are important in understanding nationalism and nations and they play a pivotal role in delimiting boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. She also claims that the status of women is significant since women facilitate the transmission of national culture through biological, cultural and political reproductions. Gender represents a critical component of the national project. For instance, gender has a bearing upon the construction of citizenship, cultural formulation and boundary definition, and finally, policy formation pertaining to issues such as population control in terms of biological reproduction (Yuval-Davis 1993: 630). Thus it is imperative to define men and women as both reproducers and producers of a nation.

> In terms of cultural reproduction and definition of boundaries, women are symbolized frequently as the national collectivity and represent the honour of the nation. They are also allocated the role of transmitting culture down to the children of the nation. In addition, they must abide by a specific code of behaviour as befits the women of a particular nation (Yuval-Davis 1993: 627).

Walby (1992: 82) asserts that it is inadequate to assume that nationalism impacts gender in a one way relationship. Nationalism very often accords primacy to one perception of gender. She goes on to argue that men and women have

disparate identifications with the nationalist struggle and women repeatedly advocate a different nationalist project from their male counterparts. There is a battle to define the nationalist programme and typically women's sentiments are those that tend not to be heard. Consequently, gender plays a vital role in determining the nationalist agenda (Walby 1992: 90).

McClintock (1993: 61) asserts that "all nationalisms are gendered, all are invented, and all are dangerous". The danger derives from the fact that nationalisms depict relations to power and the capacity for violence. Equality is merely an illusion. She suggests that all nations rely on strong formulations of gender and while the emphasis is upon equality, the partial foundation of the movement resides upon the institutionalization of gender difference.

> No nation in the world gives women and men the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-state. Rather than expressing the flowering into time of the organic essence of a timeless people, nations are a contested system of cultural representation that limit and legitimize peoples' access to the resources of the nation-state (McClintock 1993: 61).

McClintock (1993: 62) claims that in male nationalisms women merely occupy symbolic roles. For example, they are frequently alluded to as 'mothers of the nation'. Nationalisms rely extensively upon gender divisions in order to more effectively accentuate boundaries and the magnitude of male power. She argues that an examination of any history illustrates that if women are not empowered to mobilize during

a nationalist struggle, they will most definitely not be empowered after the struggle. If nationalisms fail to include an analysis of gender relations, they will continue to remain indicative of male aspirations. McClintock (1993: 78) argues that nationalists often utilize the rationale that colonialism is the battle women need to fight in order to attain liberation and, with the expulsion of colonialists, patriarchy will also be eradicated. However, no feminist revolution has accompanied any successful anti-colonial movement. Women's issues are rendered secondary to the nationalist agenda with acknowledgement only at a superficial level while little is done to actively assist women (McClintock 1993: 78).

Parker et al. (1992: 6) also discuss the idea of the nation-as-woman and the propensity to portray women as dutiful daughters of the nation.

> No nationalism in the world has ever granted women
> and men the same privileged access to the resources
> of the nation-state. Their claims to nationhood
> frequently dependent upon marriage to a male citizen,
> women have been subsumed only symbolically into the
> national body politic, representing in this process the
> limits of national difference between men.

Mosse (as cited in Parker et al. 1992: 6) suggests that nationalism tends to favour a male society and this coupled with respectability, assists in legitimizing male dominance over women. Enloe (1989: 87) also insists that nationalist struggles have often emerged from the experiences of men than women: "nationalism has typically sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope".

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Innes (1994: 1) discusses the union of the national and the feminine which she claims has predominated in a number of "colonial and anti-colonial discourses including India, Africa". She scrutinizes the relevance of the rhetoric of manhood and nationhood which she argues is employed quite extensively in the struggle for national freedom. Innes (1994: 11) concludes that "the identification of country as woman significantly affects the ways in which male writers imagine and create women characters". For instance, the concept of a country as a Motherland is extremely popular - Mother Ireland, Mother India, etc. Such mythical figures appear to have been conflated as a result of nationalist and anti-colonialist struggles rather than the converse (Innes 1994: 10).

According to Innes (1994) the nationalist crusade is often portrayed as a family saga whereby the sons of the nation attempt to rescue the mother/wife who has been surmounted by the fathers or colonialists. By embarking on this crusade to rescue the motherland the sons seek to redeem themselves and their masculinity.

Hall (1993) asserts that nationalism is a powerful force in recent political life particularly with issues such as citizenship and ethnic conflict at the forefront. However, the relationship of gender to national identity has not received as much attention. Hall (1993: 99) claims that national identities are fluid and in a constant process of

reformulation through the utilization of tradition, symbols and myths which are selectively incorporated into the national framework. She suggests that the gendering of nations and nationalism can partially account for the fact that while women may participate in a national crusade, they often fail to maintain much political power once independence has been attained. Since the nation is portrayed as female, it follows that the citizen of the nation must be male. Consequently, limits are placed on "the forms of national belonging available to women" (Hall 1993: 100). The perception of the woman as the 'mother of the nation' places an emphasis on the female reproductive system and the service it can render the nation. Also, the language of the home and gender associations form a part of the 'imagined community' (Hall 1993: 100).

Hall (1993: 100) claims that the relationship between nationalism and feminism is both complex and paradoxical. While nationalism has made some forms of feminist enterprise possible, it has also served to confine the feminist sphere. For instance, when a nation needs to increase its population, while some women are encouraged to reproduce and granted numerous child privileges, others are not. A case in point is Australia where white middle class women were accorded privileges whilst Aboriginal women were penalized. In this situation, aboriginals were not considered part of the "imagined community" and so were consigned as the other. Feminism, when affiliated with nationalism, benefits some

women but not others (Hall 1993: 101).

Parker et al. (1992: 7) also question the nature of the relationship between nationalism, women's political movements, and the representation of sexual difference(s). They argue that in Western societies women began to organize together once the initial waves of nationalism had abated. Issues pertaining to welfare, suffrage, and reproductive rights were extensively focused on. In essence, women challenged the idea of the "common" nationhood and its intrinsic inequalities. However, in the case of anti-colonial struggles women's interests have been rendered secondary to nationalist issues. In many instances women have played a significant role in a country's quest for independence. However, once a country did attain the right to self-government, women have been "reconsigned to their formerly 'domestic' roles" (Parker et al. 1992: 7). This was the case in India where tradition enunciated partially through gender, was mobilized as a crucial feature of the newly formulated nation (Hall 1993: 101).

From an examination of the central concepts it becomes apparent that nationalism does indeed have an impact upon the status of women. However, the nature of the association varies in relation to the specifics of any particular case. There now follows an analysis of the Indian nationalist movement as it relates to changes in the position of women.

The Indian Case

Jayawardena (1986: 3) asserts that attempts to better the lives of women occurred during periods of strong anti-colonialist sentiment which sought political sovereignty, national identity, and also attempted to modernize society. India had three facets of resistance to colonial rule which included a desire for internal reforms in a bid to modernize; dismantling of pre-capitalist structures impeding progress; and a proclamation of national identity in order to mobilize and combat imperialism. She claims that this resistance utilized the paradoxical strategy of embracing Western ideals in order to oppose imperialism, strengthen cultural identity and fortify the nation. In India, while there was an effort to abolish internal atrocities, attention was focused on the political arena. Thus, much change was evident in the political rather than the social sphere.

The initial facet of the resistance movement entailed social reforms to prevailing customs which were set into motion following colonial criticisms. In addition, nationalists sought to create an image of a 'new woman' who was "superior to Western women, traditional Indian women and low class women" (Chatterjee 1989: 622). While the superficial focus was on the 'woman question', what concerned nationalists most was the need to contest criticisms aimed at them by the conquering imperialists.

At this time, the issue of creating a national identity

also emerged at the forefront of the political arena. This identity could only be created through "reforming and rationalizing existing structures and religious and cultural traditions". This usually involved a reinterpretation of sacred texts. Efforts were made to reinterpret Hinduism on the basis of the idea of one God and a unified humanity. Thus, atrocious social customs such as *sati* (widow burning) and the caste system were viewed as misinterpretations of scriptures (Jayawardena 1986: 6).

Women were of great concern to a number of groups. To begin with, landowners and capitalists viewed them as a possible source of cheap labour. Secondly, colonial powers emphasized the need to educate women in the art of being "good housewives" in order that they might better 'serve' their husbands who were to be employed by the British. Finally, male reformers of the local bourgeoisie thought that if women were educated, India and especially Indian men, would be viewed internationally as modern. In addition, it was felt that educated mothers would be beneficial to future citizens of the nation (Jayawardena 1986: 8).

With the onslaught of capitalism, there was a need for cheap labour. Women were viewed as the obvious choice. However, a challenge to scriptures and customs was imminent since tradition had mainly confined women to the home. Capitalism also created a new bourgeoisie with the intention of providing labour for the colonialists. This group of

bourgeoisie men conceived of the plight of women in an explicit way. While working class women were being proletarianized, the bourgeoisie women were groomed to adapt to new social roles which adhered to the bourgeoisie ideology of the time (Jayawardena 1986: 9). An example of these beliefs included the emancipation of women from societal evils such as sati which were disapproved of by European society. Many reformers felt that the abolition of detrimental customs would enhance the stability of home life and thus they sought to strengthen rather than change the traditional foundation of Indian society. "There was thus an in-built conservative bias in many of the reform movements" (Jayawardena 1986: 9).

The 'New Woman'

Modernization of the nation was viewed as the key to overthrowing the colonial usurper. Of particular interest was the freedom accorded to women in the West. Consequently, there was a conviction that the present society's 'backwardness' was due partially to the lowly status conferred upon women. Civilization of a nation was subsequently parallelled with the status of women. Reformers sought to improve the position of women through the abolition of specific rituals in order to create an "enlightened woman" (Jayawardena 1986: 10). While this 'new' woman would be suitably equipped to appear in public, her primary role would continue to remain in the domestic sphere. Of importance is the enthusiasm with which both educated men and women embraced

this concept of the "new woman". However, whilst this "new woman" would not be governed by selectively abolished traditions, she still had to function as the preserver of the race, religion and family tradition. In essence, she had to be concurrently 'modern' and 'traditional' (Jayawardena 1986: 14). Thus, reformers sought to stabilize the family by educating women without challenging the traditional basis of Indian family and society (Jayawardena 1986: 15).

This image of the 'new woman' was a pivotal feature of the powerful dichotomy employed by the national programme - the outer/inner or the material/spiritual realm (Chatterjee 1989: 624). While the colonialists ruled supreme in the outer sphere, the inner spiritual core remained untouched. This arena was the haven of the Indian woman. Throughout the anti-colonial battle, great care was taken to preserve the spiritual nucleus of Indian society. Identification on the basis of gendered social roles apparently prevailed. Nationalism answered the 'woman question' within a model founded on the dichotomy of private/public which encompassed the idea of gendered social roles (Chatterjee 1989: 625).

The incorporation of Western beliefs in the public realm was expected but it soon became apparent that the private domain would also need some reform in order to maintain some level of consistency. This essentially is what led to the creation of the image of the 'new woman' who would remain subordinate to her male counterparts but yet would be accorded

some privileges such as education in order to permit her to conduct herself in such a manner as was deemed suitable in the public sphere.

Chatterjee (1989: 629) contends that by redefining Indian womanhood, the notion of femininity was also revised. Femininity now became

> invested with a characteristically nationalist content, which made possible the displacement of the boundaries of the home from the physical confines earlier defined by the rules of purdah to a more flexible, but culturally nonetheless determinate, domain set by the differences between socially approved male and female conduct (Chateerjee 1989: 629).

Nationalism transformed the patriarchal system in such a manner that the amelioration of women became equated with the goal of sovereign nationhood. This was essentially a new form of legitimate subordination which utilized an amalgamation of coercion and persuasion. "This was expressed most generally in the inverted ideological form of the relation of power between the sexes; the adulation of woman as goddess or as mother" (Chatterjee 1989: 629).

According to Chatterjee (1989: 629) the concept of freedom within this new patriarchy overlooked the masses in terms of national life since though they would be represented and led by the elite, they "could never be culturally integrated with their leaders".

The concept of the 'new woman' mainly applied to the middle class which formed the majority of the Indian intelligentsia at this time (Thapar 1993: 83). Nationalists

contended that this highly valued association of woman to the spiritual domain was indicative of her "newly acquired freedom" (Thapar 1993: 83). Thapar (1993) asserts that nationalists also invented the construct of the 'common woman' in order to safeguard and restrict this new freedom of women within the confines of the nationalist agenda. The 'common woman' was unrefined, crass and promiscuous. This category included street-vendors and labourers - women who had to earn a living due to economic necessity and they were thought to lack "the attributes of docility and submissiveness which were ingrained in middle-class women" (Thapar 1993: 83).

Nationalist leaders in order to further their interests, imposed an alternative upon women; to be either a 'new' or a 'common' woman. The construction of the 'common' woman permitted the leaders to impose moral boundaries regarding the behaviour of women. Those who adhered to the 'new woman' concept were confined to a limited range of activities within the nationalist struggle. For example, due to their perceived gentility, they were encouraged to participate in non-violent forms of protest.

Femininity and Motherhood

As mentioned earlier, nationalists were also concerned with the concepts of femininity and motherhood which were brought to the forefront by colonial justifications for imperial rule. The British argued that Indian men were not sufficiently masculine to rule over their own country. They

defended their claims by referring to social practices such as child marriage and they believed that since Indian men lacked the 'manly' qualities of self-control and restraint, they had to marry and consummate relationships early. Consequently, the aim of the nationalists was to counteract these claims through a redefinition of the concepts of femininity and motherhood in order to publicly enhance their masculinity without threatening the traditional patriarchal family (Thapar 1993: 83).

The femininity of the 'new woman' was to be concocted through the aid of mythology and history.

> The woman was supposed to be devoted to her husband and to show reverence for elders. In addition, she was supposed to be her husband's *Ardhangini* (complementary half) and *Sahadharmini* (help-mate), as well as to possess the virtues of benevolence and self-sacrifice. There was at the same time equal stress on her acquiring the practical skills of running a house and rearing children. All these virtues were considered non-threatening in the traditional male hierarchy (Thapar 1993: 84).

Colonialists also criticized Indian motherhood particularly since they felt it was imposed early upon women by impotent effeminate men. However, Indian tradition had always revered motherhood through goddesses such as Durga and Sita who were constantly portrayed as mothers. Nationalists sought to emphasize this sacred image of motherhood to the British. Indian mothers were women who loved and raised healthy children. The focus now was on women as nourishers of the nation (Thapar 1993: 84).

The 20th century also witnessed revisions to the term

'motherhood'. It now referred to the mother as defender of the nation or the race. Thus, she was identified with the motherland. A woman's daily duties were equated with the duties of a woman to her nation. This idea of aligning motherhood with the motherland prevented women from protesting when their male counterparts were imprisoned during nationalist struggles. Also, the idea of a devoted single mother whose honour was at stake roused strong nationalist emotions within the population (Thapar 1993: 88).

Thapar (1993: 88) argues that while symbolic images encouraged women to participate in the anti-colonial crusade, nationalist leaders were the ones who benefited the most from this manipulation of women.

The equivocal definition of the 'new woman' also posed problems in terms of educating women. Motives for promoting female education varied. Consequently, disputes prevailed regarding the nature of education to be imparted to women. Reformers viewed education as a prerequisite for family stability (Jayawardena 1986: 16). Education was certainly class biased since there was a preoccupation with educating women to become good wives and mothers for those men advancing socially and economically in the colonial world. According to Jayawardena (1986: 16) "'modernity' meant educated women, but educated to uphold the system of the nuclear patriarchal family".

The concept of the 'new woman' was depicted as a

homogeneous category which pertained to all Indian women. However, in actuality it was nothing more than an illusory misrepresentation that related only to middle and upper class Hindu woman. It did not include the working class woman or the Muslim woman.

> Seen in the light of the construction of the 'new woman' the difference between Muslim and Hindu opinions is particularly significant. For the Muslims whose womenfolk were said to perceive men other than their fathers and brothers as threats to their morals and chastity, activities which were regarded as 'respectable' by Hindu nationalist leaders were seen as 'immodest'.Clearly then the construction of 'new woman' was hardly a homogeneous category, either in terms of class, generation or religion (Thapar 1993: 91).

Nationalists persuaded women to adopt various constructs and adhere to a particular code of behaviour. There was an erroneous connotation of homogeneity (Thapar 1993: 91).

Jayawardena (1986: 19) argues that although education enticed women to leave their homes and enter other spheres, it also functioned as a "conservative influence" especially with nationalist reformers at the helm. There was a call to revert once more to tradition with a focus on women as wives and mothers. Thus, this selective education quavered in pushing "the consciousness of women beyond the appearance of legal equality" (Jayawardena 1986: 19). In addition, education tended to primarily be the luxury of the middle and upper classes.

Working class women also featured in the struggle as well by virtue of their class position. They became aware of colonial economic exploitation and consequently they began to

battle for economic rights as well as for national freedom. Asthana (1974: 110) contends that early Indian history indicates that women participated in politics very minimally. Examples of such women include the Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi who died whilst bravely defending her country against the invading British. These women were viewed as courageous individuals symbolizing 'Indian' qualities such as courage and sacrifice in their valiant efforts to defend their nation. With the dawn of the 20th century, other courageous women also began to slowly penetrate the typically male veneer of politics.

Women's Participation in the Nationalist Movement

Early participation indicated a class rather than a mass movement due to the representation of middle and upper class educated enthusiasts. However, it did finally evolve into a mass movement through the inclusion of other groups e.g. women, rural groups, religious communities etc. As Mrs Ramsay MacDonald, a visitor to India stated, "the movement seems to be spreading as much among women as men" (Ali 1991: 73). Author Valentine Chirol also claimed that the awakening had impacted the zenana or women's quarters to such an extent that secluded Hindu women influenced their husbands more than their liberated counterparts in the West (Ali 1991: 73).

The National Congress granted women membership and so in 1889 ten women attended the assembly (Jayawardena 1986: 93). Leaders of the Congress recognized the strength of masses of

women for the nationalist cause and encouraged their participation as equals. Women participated in all spheres of nationalist activity from Gandhi's Satyagraha and Construction programmes to various boycott incentives. In addition, they did not refrain from militant activity. While it was unconventional for women to function as politicians and reformers, "the framework within which this activity took place, minimized the need for a break with the traditionally acceptable pattern of a woman's life" (Agnew 1976: iii).

Annie Besant's 1916 Home Rule League also managed to entice women into the nationalist arena. She claimed that the inclusion of women in this movement strengthened it tremendously (Ali 1991: 76). Women participated in many ways. Some helped through activities requiring mass participation with the intention of implying movement strength. Such women often did not associate with organizations such as the Congress and very often their participation was limited to geographical vicinities and confined to specific issues. Elite women, on the other hand, tended to immerse themselves with all levels of nationalist activity.

Three developments significantly propelled women into the political arena. To begin with Gandhi's nonviolent initiatives such as Satyagraha, Civil Disobedience and non-cooperation movements encouraged the mass participation of women. Secondly, the revival of militant/extremist activity

enticed women into the nationalist project. Finally, the Khilafat movement of the Muslims, worked in close cooperation with Gandhi's enterprises and had a significant impact on women (Chaudhuri 1993: 120). According to Chaudhuri (1993: 120) these three developments assisted in the reformulation of beliefs pertaining to the acceptable role of women in Indian society.

> What constituted their "society" for each of them at one level was the same. And yet at another level, differed significantly. The anti-colonial element was the unifying element. The central "other" had been defined. But many "others" lay buried within the redefined "us". To illustrate, the "Mother India" 6 resurgent Hindu patriotism hinged on one set of assumptions. The struggle to protect the rights of Khalifa, "successor to the Prophet Muhammad, Commander of the faithful, the shadow of God on earth" hinged on obviously different parameters (Chaudhuri 1993: 120).

Chaudhuri (1993: 120) contends that the crucial component in the fragile unity amongst these three groups is the context - i.e. colonial usurpation of the Indian nation by the British. Consequently, although religious beliefs might ordinarily create divisions, solidarity against the British is prioritized in order for India to gain sovereignty.

Gandhi's Role

Gandhi, a key figure in the independence movement greatly influenced women. Although he championed women's rights, he believed in gender-specific roles and that women occupied a specific position in society. The following comment by Gandhi provides an appropriate example.

> In framing any scheme of women's education this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind. Man

is supreme in the outward activities of a married couple, and therefore it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of woman, and therefore in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children women ought to have more knowledge (M.K. Gandhi as cited in Shah 1984: 39).

Gandhi recognized the advantage of mobilizing women in the nationalist movement so he encouraged their participation. He emphasized the ability of women to weave and endure suffering and so women boycotted the use of foreign material and protested imperialism through non-violent techniques. He realized that in order for women to participate in the struggle for freedom, they had to leave their homes and enter the external realm. This conflicted with the constructs of the 'common' and 'new' woman since women who wished to assist the nationalist endeavour did not desire to be associated with the 'common' women of the streets (Thapar 1993: 87). "Thus the 'new woman' construct had to be modified to allow for women taking to the streets. The modified construct incorporated qualities like strength of will, steadfastness of purpose and fortitude in the face of adversity" (Thapar 1993: 87).

Gandhi believed that although women should have the freedom to participate in the national project, their main responsibility still lay with the family since this was a woman's role in life. Even when he wished to encourage the involvement of women, Gandhi sought the permission of the guardians of these women to whom he ensured their safety. "While Gandhi encouraged women's participation, he was careful

that their activities did not threaten men's masculinity in any way" (Thapar 1993: 87).

Katrak (1992: as cited in Parker et al. 1992) claims that while other resistance movements have invited women to fight alongside men, Gandhi coaxed Indian men and women to protest through passive resistance. This served to feminize this particular struggle. Despite the involvement of women in his satyagraha (truthforce), Gandhi ensured that the role of men and women remained distinct and did not overlap (Katrak 1992: 395). Thus, he failed to challenge the patriarchy subordinating women. Katrak (1992: 396) claims that Gandhi's nationalism nourished a "traditional" ideology which stressed the legitimacy of female sexuality only in marriage, motherhood, and the home; all of which represented forms of controlling women's bodies. Gandhi deployed various representations of women and sexuality, and he utilized a select group of mythological female figures, whom he believed to personify the spirit of nationalism.

Tradition was extensively relied upon to define, control and legitmize female sexuality. He invoked convention by dehistoricizing mythology and its figures. He centralized female sexuality by emphasizing "female" virtues such as chastity and self-sacrifice.

> Since resistance in satyagraha is offered through self-suffering, it is a weapon pre-eminently open to women. Woman is the incarnation of ahimsa. Ahimsa means infinite love, which, again, means infinite capacity for suffering. Who but woman, the mother of

man, shows this capacity in the largest measure?.. She can become the leader in satyagraha, which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith (Gandhi 1946: 34 as cited in Bald 1983: 9).

Hindu mythology assisted in this sphere once more since it glorified female suffering. Although Gandhi was aware that Indian men occupied a position of privilege, he did not discern that sexual inequalities within the domestic sphere were preserved by both the economy and the power structure within the patriarchal society (Katrak 1992: 396).

Gandhi utilized women's sexuality in his attempts to formulate a national identity. This was achieved through the use of symbols such as the charka (spinning wheel) and khadi (home spun cloth) which are characteristically gendered items. He likened the birth of a nation to the birth of a child when he pleaded for the cooperation of women. "This is the time for the birth of new India. Will you not be ready at least to carry the weight of heavy clothes at this hour?" (M.K. Gandhi 1921 as cited in Viseweswaran 1990: 66). He also invoked mythological figures such as Sita and Savitri to provide role models for women in the nationalist endeavour (Katrak 1992: 397). For example, he encouraged women to participate in 'Prabhat Feris' or religious practices which merged women through singing and worship. However, through the manipulation of religious symbolism, Gandhi inspired women to inculcate these songs with political themes, thereby further uniting women in this nationalist cause (Agnew 1976:

85).

Gandhi himself gendered "khadi" when he intimated that women had a natural advantage over men since spinning was a slow and silent process. However, later he contradicts himself when he claims that no vocation is exclusively reserved for one sex. He was able to effectively mobilize women in favour of his nationalist agenda.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement Gandhi intially sought to exclude and discourage women from participating in the salt raids. He argued that the inclusion of women in his first march would be an act of cowardice on the part of Indian men. "Just as it would be cowardice for Hindus to keep cows in front of them while going to war, similarly it would be considered cowardly to keep women with them on   this march" (Basu 1984: 10). However, women would not accept Gandhi's rationale and were finally able to participate fully in this particular nationalist activity. Sarojini Naidu was chosen to head an equivalent Salt field raid in Dharsana.

Women worked hard to assist the anti-colonial movement and participated in every sphere of activity. They manufactured and sold salt, recruited new participants, united through songs and worship, founded national training camps for women, led processions and blatantly courted arrest and imprisonment (Sharma 1981: 68). They assisted the cause through picketing liquor stores, boycott of foreign cloths and products, the distribution of nationalist literature, the

manufacture of indigneous products such as khadi and salt, and they also functioned effectively as messengers. For example, at one point the Congress was proclaimed to be illegal and so communication between members was extremely suspect. However, women served as verbal messengers relaying information thereby ensuring that demonstrations took place (Chattopadhyaya 1958: 23).

Arrest and Imprisonment

Through participation in the nationalist movement, women, like men, courted arrest and possible imprisonment. They were often terrorized by the police through lathi charges, removed from demonstration sites and relocated to jungles where they were left to make their own way back. There are also instances of police hosing women down with water pipes to quench their thirst for nationalist activity (Chattopadhyaya 1958: 25).

During the first year of the 1930 campaign, there were 17,000 convictions of women alone (Chattopadhyaya 1958: 25). "Colonial policy toward the 'fair sex' seems to become more strict as officials were forced to recognize women as political agents" (Visweswaran 1990: 100). Arrests of women meant that separate prisons for them had to be established.

> Sexual segregation was just one marker of the nationalist conflict that increasingly focused on women as symbols. In fact, it can be argued that the degree of legislative elaboration around the treatment of women satyagrahis exemplified the extent to which nationalism was enacted on the terrain of women's bodies (Visweswaran 1990: 100).

Although individuals participated in the same nationalist battle they were separated according to social considerations. A three-tiered system of prisoner classification was established. Grade A prisoners were usually members of the elite classes who were permitted to wear their own clothing, have food rations delivered to them, and could also access possessions and were free to receive and send correspondence. Class B prisoners had similar privileges but were only able to access smaller amounts of their own food and were entitled to receive and write one letter per month. Class C prisoners occupied the lowest rung of this prisoner scale. They were subjected to coarse prison clothing and unhealthy food. However, all prisoners were able to partake of nationalist activities such as spinning within the confines of the prison (Visweswaran 1990: 108). No special categories existed for women specifically although many lobbied the government to introduce them. Interestingly though, while there was a communal consensus regarding the treatment of women, few protested the treatment of lower class political prisoners despite their perceived unity on the nationalist battlefield.

Although participation in the freedom movement did enable women to leave the domestic sphere, they still remained shackled to it in many ways.

> The jail posed a powerful set of proxemics which
> threatened nationalist notions of space intensely
> focused on the home. As a consequence, many women
> did not enjoy the support of family when they entered
> jail. With no one left at home, or spouses unable or

> unwilling to care for children, women often went to
> jail with them (Visweswaran 1990: 166).

Children younger than three were permitted to accompany their mothers for their term of confinement. However, older children had to either fend for themselves or be cared for by relatives. Some of the women "were with babes in their arms, some were expecting babies to be born to them and some were quite young girls" (Sharma 1981:77).

Imprisonment enabled interaction amongst diverse groups. "Few factors contributed so effectively to social merging as the sharing of this intimate life together, first on the battlefield, then in confinement" (Chattopadhyaya 1958: 29). Within the prison cell, religious and social diferences ceased to exist.

Nehru's Role

Jawaharlal Nehru was another prominent figure in the nationalist struggle. His views were more enlightened and reformist and he thought it imperative for women to emerge from the home and become more active in the world. He believed that superficial reforms would not emancipate women and it was instead necessary to question the very fabric of Indian society.

Like Gandhi, Nehru advocated education for women but he claimed that it was unnecessary to discriminate between men and women in terms of the actual curriculum to be taught. He was also astute in recognizing that women had to battle on two fronts; colonialism and patriarchy. Nehru felt that these two

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struggles were intricately linked. He encouraged women to confront the oppressors and seek change since no oppressed group had ever won liberation at the hands of those who subjugated them. He asserted that India needed to overthrow colonialists just as women needed to do battle with their male counterparts for their own emancipation their rights (Jayawardena 1986: 73).

Militant Activity

While many women participated in nonviolent protests such as Gandhi's Satyagraha, others became more militant and went underground.

> By idealizing women with regard to ahimsa, selflessness and spirituality, Gandhi was able to co-opt the tremendous mobilization and politicization of large masses of Indian women who took part in public activities for the first time during the Freedom Movement. However, if one looks more closely at the performance of many women during this period, one finds that a great number did not fit into the non-violent Sita model, but advocated a radical and, if necessary, violent revolution (Mies 1975: 60).

Many terrorist organizations had formed during the Bengal anti-partition struggle and these utilized religious symbolism to entice individuals to enlist. "It had emphasized the characteristics of aggression, violence and destruction in the feminine deities such as Shakti and Kali in order to attract ordinary women to these groups" (Mathew & Nair 1986: 12).

Bengal, the most ideologically progressive state, nurtured many male and female revolutionaries including Suniti Chaudhri, Bina Das, Kalpana Dutta and Binalata Dasgupta

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(Sharma 1981: 72). These women engaged in extremist militant activities such as assasination attempts, distribution of literature, weapons, etc. They were either imprisoned or paid the ultimate price and lost their lives in their efforts to restore their nation to its sovereign state (Sharma 1981: 73). As Bina Das, explains, following a failed assasination attempt on the Governor of Calcutta,

> My object was to die and if to die, to die nobly fighting against this despotic system of government which has kept my country in perpetual subjugation to its infinite shame and endless suffering and fighting in a way which cannot but tell. I fired at the Governor nor impelled by my love for my country (Chaudhuri: 1993: 122).

Individuals were recruited through schools and gyms and it was also emphasized that a committment to extremist political activity meant a dissociation from family and other groups. Although there was some initial hesitation in enlisting women, no concessions were made once they enrolled. Women effectively camouflaged their male counterparts, participated in various raids (e.g. Chittagong Armoury Raid) and attempted assasinations. The utilization of female symbolism delineating typically masculine traits such as strength, refuted traditional arguments opposing the activities of women. Women as weaker creatures was a philosophy that could no longer restrict women's roles. Now, women engaged in militant activities without the fear of being labelled unfeminine since courage was now associated with women. In this regard, their behaviour did not defy convention

(Agnew 1976: 105).

Hills & Silverman (1993) examine the Rani of Jhansi Regiment - the all-female brigade of the Indian National Army (INA) founded by Subhas Bose. He devoted his life to the freedom of India which he believed could be attained through the involvement of women. Bose appealed to women through conventional ideals and his own desire for a mighty mother figure (Hills & Silverman 1993: 742). He emphasized the legend of the Rani Lakshmi Bai who died whilst defending her town against British invasion. While he stressed qualities such as courage and reverence, the legend of the Rani also originated from other cultural and religious traditions such as the prehistoric Mother, Shakti, etc (Hills & Silverman 1993: 743).

> The warrior Rani as a freedom fighter provided a legitimate alternative to the Gandhian non-violent mainstream as represented by Sita, the submissive female ideal. In choosing the Rani as a symbol, Bose was able to wed strains of nationalism to imagery of powerful, effective women assuming roles of active leadership and responsibility (Hills & Silverman 1993: 743).

Hills & Silverman (1993) analyse the testimony of a number of regiment veterans in order to explore their impulse for enlisting and also to gain further insight into Bose's ambitions for these women. Whilst Bose's primary motive was to advance nationalism through the deployment of women, he did advocate greater rights for women. These included education, economic autonomy and the option not to marry. He believed that many groups of individuals in India were oppressed and

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their issues could only be addressed once the country had attained greater political freedom.

The political violence of the early 1930s stimulated an intense movement by the police against terrorist societies. Thus, by 1934, many had disbanded due to imprisonment or death (Mathew & Nair 1986: 6). However, due to considerable isolation and little leadership, their level of effectivity was minimal. In 1942 Gandhi declared that the Quit India Movement would not be a traditional satyagrah and individuals were given carte-blanche to invite arrest by law-breaking. This ambivalency was interpreted in a multitude of ways. "The 'do or die' pledge of Mahatma Gandhi had such revolutionary connotations that many in their enthusiasm felt that it incorporated all manner of activity and sanctioned them" (Agnew 1976: 113). In fact, Aruna Asaf Ali, dissatisfied with Gandhi's guidance, assumed leadership and introduced a more violent edge to the Quit India Movmement. Women such as Aruna Asaf Ali

> were successful as leaders precisely because of characteristics not found in the Sita model. They had a great appeal to the masses, particularly to youth and women, because they emotionalized the freedom struggle by their passionate call for action. They all appealed to religious feelings, either by a direct revivalistic effort to restore the dignity of the Indian past or the people themselves looked up to them as reincarnations of the Mother-Goddess. Secondly, these women were above all leaders of political actions. Though they were well educated and had a broad theoretical knowledge which they used as journalists and orators, they all emphasized the need for militant action in contrast to argument and the legalistic approach (Mies 1975: 60).

The Quit India Movement is one instance whereby women were able to participate in nationalism through violent and underground activity (Mathew & Nair 1986: 6). Although they participated during the 1920s, these numbers increased significantly for the following decade and this was accompanied by harsher government controls and a monitoring of the behaviour of militant women (Agnew 1976: 99).

Muslim Women

The early 20th century witnessed the birth of the Khilafat movement which was essentially based on three premises seeking to keep the defeated Ottoman Empire intact. Muslims demanded that the Turkish Sultan, Khalifa, maintain control of sacred Muslim sites despite defeat at the hands of the British. They also demanded that he be given ample land for him to govern over the Islamic faith. Finally, territories such as Arabia and Iraq must remain in Muslim hands. The Khilafat movement lured Muslims into politics and often worked in conjunction with Gandhi's plans (Chaudhuri 1993: 105). "The Khilafat movement gained added significance because it took place simultaneously, and cooperated fully with Gandhi's first non-violent non-cooperation movement against British rule" (Chaudhuri 1993: 128).

Muslim women played a vital role in the Khilafat movement and also raised awareness of women's issues thereby also impacting the Indian women's movement. They assisted through the donation of personal items and through other activities in

order to fund the movement. The All-India Muslim Ladies Conference (Anjuman-E-Khawatin-E-Islam) also worked in conjunction with the nationalist movement. Bi Amman even addressed a Muslim League conference in the absence of the president, her husband, M. Ali. She "spoke briefly on his behalf from behind the veil of her white burqua. This was perhaps the first time that a Muslim woman spoke to a mixed political gathering, as opposed to a purdah meeting" (Chaudhuri 1993: 130).

> Among Muslim ladies the name of Abida Bano Begum, popularly known as Bai Aman, mother of Ali Brothers stands foremost. She toured extensively and preached the message of khadi and Hindu-Muslim unity "which had become an article of faith with her". She also worked in the Khilafat movement. She also asked Muslim women to give up purdah and join the movement (Sharma 1981: 62).

While Muslim women worked closely with their male counterparts, their duties differed. In the case of women, there was a tendency to invoke religion, tradition and family. Women travelled across the nation and were able to mingle with others and spread the doctrine of both the nationalist and Khilafat movements. Consequently, the Khilafat movement encouraged the participation of women in its efforts to attain its goals which also overlapped with the nationalist movement. The Muslim League also attempted to mobilize women in the 1940s and many did in fact play a vital role in the agitation for the partition of India and the establishment of a separate Muslim nation.

Opposition to Women

Nationalism bestowed its approval upon those issues pertaining to women which sought to assist the independence endeavour (Joshi & Liddle 1986: 33). However, this conditional endorsement was not unanimous and many avidly opposed concessions for women. Many Congress leaders such as Prasad opposed reforms in the legal position of women (Joshi & Liddle 1986: 34).

One of the issues favoured by nationalist leaders was the enfranchisement of women. Although this was one battle extensively fought by women themselves, it was also endorsed by nationalists. They recognized the value of women's participation in the movement and they were also astute enough to realize that this would serve to increase Indian voting power. Another consideration was the attempt to portray India as an advanced nation which had enfranchised its women before the colonialists had offered British women the same right (Joshi & Liddle 1986: 35). The matter of enfranchisement was passed to the Indian legislatures which subsequently enfranchised women. However, the franchise pertained primarily to the middle and upper classes due to various property ownership and income qualifications. "Since most of the Indian women did not own any property, in practice the franchise did not help women. Only one lakh women were enrolled as voters" (Shah 1984: 42). In 1921 women were permitted to vote in legislative assemblies and councils and

this was followed in 1926 with the right to contest seats within the legislatures. Despite these advancements, enfranchisement still relied extensively on particular qualifications such as property. Consequently, many women were not eligible to vote due to their inability to meet this property criterion. Thus, between 1921 and 1933 only 315,651 women were eligible to vote compared to over 6.8 million men (Menon 1969: 7).

Following enfranchisement, women sought entry into the provincial legislatures. Consequently, 1927 witnessed female participation in a number of Indian state assemblies - Madras, Bombay, Punjab, Central Provinces, United Provinces and Assam (Shah 1984: 42).

The government of India Act of 1935 served to elevate the number of enfranchised Indians. Now women over 21 years could vote if property and income qualifications were met (Shah 1984: 43). Thus, wives, widows of property owners, etc were enfranchised. Consequently, 6 million women were eligible to vote compared to 29 million men. In addition, 42 seats were reserved for women in the legislatures (Ali 1991: 131). A general election took place in 1937 under the India Act of 1935. A number of women contested the elections and were elected - 6 took office as minister, deputy speakers and under secretaries. The success of women in politics was profound and as Shridevi (1969: 99) relates, in 1937, India was the third country in the world with the largest number of

legislators.

The impressive role of women in the anti-colonial crusade served to enlighten men regarding the repressive status of their females. "In the process of struggling against their own exploitation and oppression, men can become more sensitized to the oppression of women, more conscious of the necessity to combat it, and more aware of the importance of women as an allied fighting force" (Desai 1985: 86). Women who had previously relied on the efforts of men to ameliorate them, "now began to take upon themselves the responsibilities of improving their own status in all fields" (Kamerkar 1979: 325).

Shridevi (1969: 86) argues that women, while fighting for political independence, were also fighting for their own rights. With the passage of time they began to strive for further rights. These disgruntled women focused on social reform issues pertaining to child marriages, dowries, purdah, etc. They were further assisted by the establishment of numerous autonomous women's organizations. For example, during the dawn of the 20th century women formed a special organization, the Desh-Sevikas within the Congress. Their goals included social reform through nonviolence and they helped the nationalist cause through the picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops (Shridevi 1967: 47).

While most organizations worked independently, in 1932 the All India Women's Conference consented to participate in

national politics for the first time. This decision stemmed from a concern with fundamental issues affecting the status of women - enfranchisement, property rights, and representation in government (Shridevi 1969: 96). However, the participation of women in the nationalist movement did not diminish as they embarked on their crusade to better their own position in Indian society. For example,

> The civil disobedience movement saw the emergence of the Hindustani Seva Dal as the volunteer corps of the Congress. It had a women's wing, of which Kamaladevi later became the 'General Officer Commanding'. Women volunteers in Bombay went through rigorous exercises and route marches as part of their training in a camp at Borivli. This led to anxious questions in the British parliament about a "women's army" being raised in India. The local authorities closed down the Borivli camp and banned the Seva Dal (Ali 1991: 103).

Despite barriers to their participation, women continued to play a pivotal role during the civil disobedience movement. They formed *desh sevikas* - organizations seeking to raise funds for the movement, they nursed the wounded, participated in strikes, etc. In fact, in 1942 with the imprisonment of multitudes of Congress leaders, women assumed leadership of the Quit India Movement. They also asssisted through the formation of the Prisoners Relief Fund (Asthana 1974: 118).

The process of transferring power from the British to the Indians began in 1946 and so a temporary government was formed which included one woman. A number were included in the Constituent Assembly and when India finally gained independence in 1947, women were wooed by many political parties (Chattopadhyaya 1958: 31). At the time of independece

in 1947 women had "already established themselves as equals in political life" (Chitnis 1988: 87). According to Basu (1976: 39) two decades of political action brought about more change in the position of Indian women than a century of social work and protest could ever have achieved. However, while the nationalist movement did somewhat improve the position of women, the goal for independence ultimately prevailed over any agenda concerning women.

> Chatterjee argues that the "Women's Question", while it was a topic of extensive debate during early nationalist discourse, "disappears by the end of the 19th century. This is because nationalists refuse to make women (and by extension the home and family), an issue of debate with the colonial state. In so doing, the nationalists "resolve" the women's question by abandoning the outside "world" to the colonialists, claiming women and their place in the "Home" as the site of nationalist victory (as cited in Visweswaran 1990: 65).

However, Chattopadhyaya (1958: 29) contends that women played a significant role in India's quest for sovereignty.

> With the very first phase of the political movement, a new chapter had opened in the history of Indian women. There is no doubt that theirs was a key role. It can confidently be said that without their help the movement could never have been a success (Chattopadhyaya 1958: 29).

To summarize, links between Indian nationalism and the position of women are apparent. Nationalists proffered contradictory images and roles for Indian women in a manner similar to that of the social reform movement. However, nationalism extended the role of women into the political arena and enlightened women in terms of strategies of protest

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and the importance of solidarity for the attainment of collective goals. Women's participation also assisted them in terms of activism in the feminist arena, and it is to this that the discussion now turns.

CHAPTER VI - THE INDIAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The reform and nationalist movements discussed earlier, assisted in improving the lot of the Indian woman. These movements "moulded women to take their rightful place with men and they in turn fell perfectly in line with the discipline of the non-violent and non-resistant political struggle and paved way indirectly to what was later known as the Feminist Movement" (Shridevi 1967: 54).

The Indian women's movement being reviewed here is complex and deals with many issues. Therefore, its analysis has been divided into a number of sections, each of which will be dealt with in turn.

Preconditions

The Indian women's movement is quite distinct in comparison to women's movements in the West since it emerged during India's subjection to imperial rule during the time of the British Raj, and Western feminist movements did not have to contend with issues of colonialism. Jayawardena (1986: 2) claims that India's anti-colonial movement relied heavily upon its ideological ancestries. These teachings had an impact upon the position of women "as well as on the modes and characteristics of women's movements". She asserts that the struggle for women's rights occurred during periods of strong anti-colonialist sentiment which sought political liberty, national identity, and improvements to society. According to Basu (1976: 39) the Indian women's movement can be divided into three stages. The first stage probably began in the

early 19th century when social reforms such as the abolition of sati were attempted. The middle of this century witnessed the second stage with an emphasis on the education of women. However, it was only in the third stage (early 20th century) that women slowly began to infiltrate the political sphere.

The 19th century was a period of immense activity for women all over the world as they embarked on crusades for equality and emancipation.

> In Europe feminist consciousness began spreading during and after the French Revolution, and by the end of the century feminist ideas were being expressed by radicals in England, France and Germany. By the mid-19th century the 'woman question' had become a central issue for Russian reformers and anarchists; while in India the wrongs of women began to be deplored by social reformers mainly in Bengal and Maharashtra (Kumar 1993: 7).

A preoccupation with the 'woman question' emerged during the early 19th century, at which point the social reform and nationalist movements were slowly evolving. Reforms pertaining to the position of women were viewed as paramount and these missions were led primarily by Western-educated men of the upper caste. However, reform was more "symbolic than real, attempted through appealing to the Shastras, rather than changing social circumstances." (Niranjana 1992: 395).

> The reforms were very far removed from the problems that affected the majority of Indian women. A computation based on the Census of 1931 showed that at date less than 10 per cent of the Indian subcontinent was affected by the ban on divorce and widow remarriage. Essentially high caste Hindu customs these bans did not extend to the rest of the people (Mazumdar 1979: xi).

In actuality, laws were quite liberal and compliant for the

majority of women. The patriarchy advocating repressive customs did not apply to the lower classes and since they possessed little property, they were not overly concerned with issues of caste purity or inheritance (Omvedt 1975: 44). "Their problems stemmed from poverty, discriminatory and low wages, insecurity, and helplessness against exploitation of many kinds. The instruments of change advocated by the reformers - education and legal reforms - could not have touched the lives of the vast masses of working women" (Mazumdar 1979: xi).

This early stage witnessed the gradual filtration of women into educational institutions. Previous to this, some fortunate women had received an education through male family members in order to render them useful for household and estate management. However, reformers, and later nationalists, advocated the need to educate women in an effort to modernize the nation. While initial attempts for female education were made by reformers, women also began to express their desire for an education. Subsequently, towards the end of the 19th century they emerged from the shadows and shackles of repression and slowly began to work towards improving themselves and their nation.

Despite stringent controls upon education, enlightened women "became alive to the sufferings at the hands of orthodox society and were able to launch a crusade against the pernicious social evils" (Asthana 1974: 19). Women were

playing a larger role in public and many such as Nirupama Devi

and Anurupa Devi, became instant celebraties

> even though their works were scorned as being 'low',
> or merely entertaining. Maharashtra's first woman
> novelist, Kashibai Kanittkar, started writing in the
> 1890s, and its first woman doctor Anandibai Joshi,
> qualified at the same time. Despite these signs of
> progress the milieu in which such women lived was often
> a harsh and hostile one. When Kashibai Kanitkar and
> Anandibai Joshi, who were friends, first ventured out
> wearing shoes and carrying umbrellas they were stoned in
> the streets for daring to usurp such symbols of male
> authority (Kumar 1993: 32).

In 1882 Tarabai Shinde's work, entitled Stree Purush Tulana,

caused much controversy since it compared men and women.

Shinde accused men of possessing those faults which were often

associated with women, e.g. treachery, and insolence. She

defended women and enouraged them to stand tall and "shame men

into hanging down their heads" (Kumar 1993: 32).

Another indication of the growing power of women's

presence was the campaign to raise the age of marriage. While

the orthodoxy protested against the necessity of such an act,

reformers and others worked hard for legislation since child

marriage was viewed as harmful for both the child, and

ultimately, the nation. As the debate intensified women

entered this arena to voice their concerns. " Women doctors in

Calcutta supported the social reform argument for raising the

age of consent: and 1,600 'Hindu Ladies' sent a petition

asking for legislative reform to Queen Victoria in 1890"

(Kumar 1993: 25).

Access to education opened up a whole new world for women

and with this knowledge came the realization that the position of Indian women required improvement. Through education they were able to mingle with other women and discuss differences and commonalities of experiences. These intial stirrings enabled women to mobilize for a common goal - the improvement of their position in Indian society.

Maturity of the Movement

The dawn of the 20th century was a period of tremendous activity for women since numerous organizations were established to assist them. These early organizations tended to be very issue - and region - specific, consequently the power they wielded was limited (Sharma 1981: 105). Educated and enlightened women began to establish various organizations across the nation in an effort to enact further reforms and laws, and ultimately to improve the position of women. Asthana (1974: 84) observes that "this development marked the maturity of the feminist movement in India".

Although male reformers had assisted women through various organizations such as the Brahmo and Arya Samaj, the women's movement only progressed further with the participation of masses of women. "The women's movement in India which had begun earlier, became stronger" (Sharma 1981: 257). Enlightened women set about establishing their own organizations which flourished under their care and focused upon the amelioration of women nationwide. Women protested against an assortment of impediments in their daily lives.

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Thus, the significance of this lies in the fact that the leadership of the Women's Movement was appropriated by the women themselves (Sharma 1981: 257).

Asthana (1974:84) contends that there were two types of organizations: pre World War I and those formed after. The former were characterized by dispersed and individual efforts while the latter consisted of more organized programmes of action. Examples of earlier organizations include the following (as cited in Asthana 1984: 85):

The Ladies' Association - founded in 1886 by Swarna Kumari Debi with the support of the Brahmo Samaj. It was an assembly seeking to promote social service with the intention of bettering humanity. An example of constructive work was the establishment of homes for destitute girls.

Sharda Sadan - established in 1892 by Pandita Ramabai Saraswati - home for destitute women but was later transformed into an educational centre and expanded its work to include famine relief, social work, etc.

Mahila Samitis (Women's Institutions) - established by Saroj Nalini with the goals of education, employment, etc (Sharma 1981: 106).

While such organizations were useful in enlightening and assisting women, their limited scope and programme ensured that they only impacted a small population of women. An all-Indian organization was required. An attempt was made in 1910 with the establishment of the Bharat Stri Mahamandal by a

number of women's groups seeking to unite women nationwide. However, "the conditions not being ripe enough for this, it did not take deep root" (Sharma 1981: 107).

In 1917 the Women's Indian Association was founded and its "aim was to be All-India in scope, to include as members all types of women, who were residents in India and to bind them together for mutual service and the good of the country" (Asthana 1974: 88). The objectives of this organization included the abolition of specific customs, enfranchisement of women, equality between sexes, and also to assist women to recognize that the nation's future resided with them "for as wives and mothers they had the task of training, guiding and forming the character of the future rulers of India" (Sharma 1981: 108).

The Women's Indian Association was founded by leading women of the time such as Dorothy Jinarajadasa, Margaret Cousins and Annie Besant. It had multiple branches nationwide and the organization even published a journal - Stridharma - in more than one language. This journal served to notify women across the country and around the world of the progress of the Indian women's movement. In the first year of its formation, there were 33 branches. However, between 1923-24 there were 51 branches with a membership of 2500. This rose to 80 branches and over 4000 membership for 1926-7 (Sharma 1981: 110). This organization was crucial since it was the first to demand women's franchise and also because it

"became the parent of the All-India Women's Conference which was born in early 1927. It became the vehicle for the expression of the united voice of Indian womanhood" (Sharma 1981: 110). The organization's power gradually diminished with the establishment of other similar associations and so by 1937 it restricted its activites to the Madras Presidency (Sharma 1981: 111).

Postwar organizations were much broader in scope and outlook and worked to better the position of India's women. For example the Women's Council of India was established in 1920 and was open to all women. It worked for the welfare of women and children and provided shelters and rescue homes (Asthana 1974: 89). In 1927 The All-India Women's Conference (AIWC or Akal Hind Mahila Parishad or AHMP) was founded in 1927. It advocated women's rights, promoted women's education and emphasized social service and the welfare of the nation. In its first session it dealt with the issues of child marriage and female education. The organization assisted H. Sarda in his crusade for legislation prohibiting child marriage. Finally, in 1930 the Sarda Act was put into place whereby girls under 14 and boys under 18 were prohibited from marriage. However, due to a lack of support and state execution, few reaped the benefits of this Act. "An apathetic government and the absence of public conscience, nullify and render ineffective the best of legislations" (Chattopadhyaya 1939: 17). The Conference also encouraged separation from the

political arena and party politics. However, this policy would change with the rising tide of nationalism that would eventually sweep the nation.

The early 20th century also witnessed an expansion of bourgeois definitions of motherhood which were widened to incorporate working women. Concerted efforts were made by the organizations to define the boundaries of a woman's work and very often, in the case of middle and working class women, this was based on biological attributes focusing on the woman's role as mother. For instance, when the AIWC embarked on fund-raising missions, monies would be collected for typically female fields such as social science with little mention made of 'male' spheres such as physics or chemistry (Kumar 1993: 71).

Although the Conference achieved little within its first four years, in terms of social and legal reform, "there was a change in the spirit and atmosphere created and the interest awakened in social reform in general and women's rights in particular though not tangible was felt by everybody" (Sharma 1981: 118). Thus, the All-India Women's Conference became the voice of Indian women and subsequently represented them on many platforms including educational, legal, and political (Sharma 1981: 122). In fact, although it was originally conceived of as a colloquium for educational concerns, "within a decade (1927 - 37) its objects became comprehensive and they included 'all forms of activity for educational and social

advancement, promotion of national unity and welfare and international understanding and good will'" (Sharma 1981: 122).

International Links

Autonomous women's organizations maintained international links with other women's organizations across the world in order to benefit from their experiences and knowledge as well as to inform the world about the evolving Indian women's movement. Indian women began cultivating international links as early as the 18th century and others either travelled with their spouses or commenced studies abroad during the 19th century. Thus, women's organizations of the 20th century did not proceed in isolation but maintained an international perspective through extensive contact with other countries (Sharma 1981: 126). However, international collaboration was always a topic of much debate. For example, in 1927, British feminist Eleanor Rathbone, representing the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship, expressed a desire to assist the AIWC. This interest was awakened after the publication of Katherine Mayo's notoriously inaccurate depiction of Indian life in her novel Mother India. This novel encouraged Indian feminists to further view their Western counterparts as arrogant and so they often tended to remain aloof. Kumar (1993: 89) describes a conference sponsored by Eleanor Rathbone and British feminists at which they discussed the plight of women in India. Dhanvanthi Rama Rau attended this

conference with the hope of enlisting the support of the wives of British officials. However, she was outraged at the assumption that British women were responsible for the uplift of Indian women through the eradication of specific social customs.

> 'Angered as much by the discovery that most of the speakers were English women who had never been to India,... Rao told the Conference that Indian women were already working against 'social evils' all over the country, adding 'we are sure we could be more successful than any outsiders especially those ignorant of the cultural patterns of our society' (Kumar 1993: 89 - 90).

The question of international links continued to be the topic of extensive discussion amongst the members of women's organizations. M. Reddy asserts that the "women's movement from its very beginning has been international in its scope" (Kumar 1993: 32). However, the belief was that in order for India to emerge in the international scene, emancipation from the colonialists was essential, consequently many felt that nationalism had to precede any ambitions for international ties (Kumar 1993: 92).

Communal Threats to the Women's Movement

Related to this discourse was the communal threat which frequently reared its ugly head during the debates emerging in the numerous movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. Social reforms within the Muslim community lagged behind those of the Hindus since Muslim hostility towards the idea of a Western education ran much deeper. In addition, Muslims worked harder to preserve their community and to protect it

from external influence. However, the situation in terms of the position of women ran along similar lines to those of the larger Hindu population.

Women's Muslim organizations also evolved in the early twentieth century, the prominent one being the All-India Muslim Ladies Conference (Anjuman-E-Khawatin-E-Islam) which was established in 1914 under the patronage of the Aligarh movement which emphasized the need to retain British supremacy in order to protect Muslim concerns and it also asserted the separation of Hindu and Muslim political entities due to conflicting interests (Majumdar 1962: 482). Elite Muslim women advocated education for females within the confines of Islam (Chaudhuri 1993: 107). "The Anjuman wanted women to be exposed to change only to be better carriers of tradition" and the aim of the Anjuman was to safeguard Muslim society (Chaudhuri 1993: 109). However, over time, education was embraced by Muslims of all social levels. Thus, ideas of liberty advocated by earlier reformers matured and "the conception of women's liberation began to take a definite shape" (Dhurajti 1987: 31).

Although the Anjuman wished for women to emerge from the shackles of the domestic sphere, it also encouraged women to retain purdah on a minor level and enabled Muslim women from across the nation to meet and interact. However, its power was limited due to its alliance with the Aligarh movement.

On the whole the Anjuman was an urban movement.. The

> value of its work cannot be dismissed as ineffectual. If
> nothing else, the members of the Anjuman would have
> become aware of the issues the organization involved
> itself with. Even though the women involved were often
> from progressive families, it would be assuming too
> much to suppose that they would have gone ahead and
> become involved in the bustees, or in education, on
> their own initiative (Hossain 1992: 18).

The organization functioned to assemble women from across the
nation under the auspices of a women's association, and it
encouraged them to focus on issues pertaining to them and
their nation (Hossain 1992: 19).

A key figure in the Muslim women's movement was Rokeya
Hossain, who despite any formal education, rose to prominence
in her community.

> Most remarkably Rokeya did not confine herself solely
> to discussions on evolving ways for a better
> dissemination of education among the Muslim girls but
> her ideas ranged from the economic freedom of the women
> to the negation of the fact of male superiority. She
> was deeply influenced by the then leader of the Women's
> Lib Movement, an English lady, Marie Corally whose work
> 'Murder of Delicia' was a sort of protest against
> male domination. (Dhurjati 1987: 28).

For Rokeya liberation meant full equality with their male
counterparts. She encouraged Muslim women to cease to view
themselves as victims and through the use of extensive role
models she taught women to aspire to higher levels within
society (Hossain 1992: 3). She also advocated education for
women and established the Bengal branch of the Anjuman.
However, schisms erupted between various branches and the
central Anjuman which ultimately resulted in the collapse of
the organization in 1932 (Hossain 1992: 11). This
demonstrates "the fragile nature of committment and unity of

women of different regions, to each other and their cause in general" (Hossain 1992: 12).

Rokeya was also unique since she refused to enter the political arena and render her demands as a woman, for the rights of women, subservient to issues of national concern (Hossain 1992: 15). She also emphasized the concept of similarity between the sexes as opposed to segregation and difference as propagated by many feminists.

The fact that Muslim women felt excluded from 'mainstream' women's organizations indicates that communalism was a definite threat to the unity of the women's and other movements e.g nationalist and social reform.

> The anti-colonial movement drew women's organizations into its orbit. An inevitable radicalization took place. The question of freedom of women became a question of freedom of the nation. Unity across classes and religions was the deemed task of the hour. Yet communal antithetical ideas to this unity were never far away. It continued to weave itself into the dominant dicourse on the national and women's question. Discussions on women's vote, Hindu legal reform and purdah reveal how intertwined questions pertaining to communal representations, religious autonomy and cultural identity were with the women's movement (Chaudhuri 1993: 138).

According to Chaudhuri (1993: 138) the process of defining the 'self' was two-dimesional. In the case of religion there is the 'self' and there is the 'other'. In the discourse on nationalism there is the 'self' as a member of a repressed nation and there is the 'other' - the colonial usurper.

The women's movement had to especially contend with the communalism issue during the struggle for enfranchisement when

women opposed the idea of reservation in legislative assemblies on a communal basis (Kumar 1993: 92). By the 1940s the issue of communalism intensified within women's organizations as Hindu-Muslim unity became fragile within the turbulent political environment. Consequently, Muslim women became more distant and eventually left the confines of the AIWC. As Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya describes in 1941, "for the first time we noticed that they felt that they were a separate group, and had to sort of stand together" (as cited in Kumar 1993: 92).

> This 'we' and 'they' had been present right from the start of nationalist feminism. Sarojini Naidu had joined the hands of a Muslim and a Hindu woman as symbolic of Hindu-Muslim unity; both Margaret Cousins and Muthulakshmi Reddy spoke of individual women as 'representatives' of their respective communities, though Cousins used the adjective 'proud' and Reddy 'enlightened' By 1944 the AIWC had split, and most Muslim women left. After the partition of India, they formed the Pakistan Women's Conference (Kumar 1993: 92).

Enfranchisement and Political Activity

Although autonomous women's organizations intially concerned themselves with social and legal reform pertaining to females, there was a gradual shift towards a desire for enfranchisement. Consequently, the major organizations such as the A.I.W.C. and the Women's Indian Association focused on the right of women to vote (Agnew 1976: 167). The National Council of Women in India performed a pivotal role in the an women's suffrage movement. With cooperation from other organizations the "National Council took a firm stand in

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favour of unqualified adult franchise for both men and women and opposed reservation of seats on the ground of sex" (Sharma 1981: 112).

Women's struggle for the vote was viewed as a crusade against the despotism of orthodoxy and injustice rather than an attack on men. "The Indian woman desired the vote not from a sense of self-aggrandisement but from a desire to fulfill the duties and responsibilities in public life" (Rameshwari Nehru as cited in Agnew 1976: 176). This movement for enfranchisement represents the first real demand of women within the political, typically male, domain and it was propelled by the thre large women's organizations - the Women's Indian Association (WIA), the AIWC and the National Conference of Women in India (NCWI). They "claimed the authority to speak for the women of India" and fought for the vote through deputations, reports, and resolutions (Mathew & Nair 1986: 11). Thus, 1917 witnessed the first deputation of women arguing for the enfranchisement of all women in India.

While their participation in politics was restricted at this point, their comprehension of politics was quite evident. Earlier political activity was minimal due to limited franchise in areas such as Bombay and Madras. The number of women who could vote in Madras was so small, that it failed to make any impact on women's consciousness of their political responsibilities and they did not protest when it was withdrawn" (Agnew 1976: 180). However, women would play a

profound role in politics after World War I.

Progress in terms of the enfranchisement issue was initially slow and stringent conditions were imposed every step of the way. Arguments against it were made by both the British and orthodoxy through the use of religion and customs such as purdah which were viewed as barriers to any political involvement of women. However, Indian leaders recognized the importance of mobilizing women for the independence crusade and they also were astute enough to realize that the support of women for the passing of social reform laws would also be invaluable. Consequently, to the surprise of the British, Indian men supported women in their quest for enfranchisement (Shah 1984: 40 - 41).

The first group of women to be enfranchised were the educated few. This dissatisfied the women and politically active men and organizations such as the Congress. In its 1918 session, Congress legislated the enfranchisement of women. This legislation stated that "Congress urges that women possessing the same qualifications as are laid down for men in any part of the scheme shall not be disqualified on account of their sex" (Asthana 1974: 112).

The argument put forward by women demanding the vote relied heavily on their perceived role as supplementary to men. In order for women to discuss issues pertaining to them, they needed to have a say. The involvement of women in politics would be conducive in the creation of an environment

which would nurture the nation's healthy offspring (Mazumdar 1979: 5). Prominent women such as Sarojini Naidu continually reassured men that women did not want superiority over men. Instead, she focused upon the separation of the roles of both men and women.

> I do not think that there need be any apprehension that in granting franchise to Indian womanhood, they will wrench the power belonging to men. Never, never, for we realize that men and women have separate goals and separate destinies and that just as man can never fulfill the responsibility of a woman, a woman cannot fulfill the responsibility of man. Unless she fulfills the responsibility within her horizon and becomes worthy and strong and brave there can be no fullness or completeness of national life (as cited in Agnew 1976: 191).

Indian men were anxious about enfranchising women. However, the need for greater voting power combined with the need to appear modern superceded all other concerns. Also, male authority would not be questioned since the majority of women were illiterate and orthodox (Agnew 1976: 191).

Finally the question of franchise was passed by the British to the Indian legislatures which one by one gradually enfranchised women. By 1929 all Legislative Councils enfranchised women on the same basis as men. During the early elections women's participation was minimal. In Madras while male voters represented less than 11.6% of the male population, females represented only 1%, in Bombay 0.8% women and 13.4% men, Bengal 0.3% women and 9.7% men and in the Punjab the male percentage was 11.96 while for women it was 0.5% (Mazumdar 1979: 7). Discrepancies between ratios for men

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and women stemmed from restrictions on the right of women to vote. These included property laws, economic dependency and educational qualifications. The politically inexperienced women were assisted by the numerous women's organizations such as the Women's Indian Association. Hindu women were more experienced than their Muslim sisters and they were further propelled by the support of the Congress. Muslim women lagged behind due to considerations such as purdah and the fact that the Muslim community had refrained from embracing education for so long (Agnew 1976: 211).

Although women were able to seek nomination and participate in legislative elections, the focus still remained on the value of women's input on social issues than on the notion of equality with men (Mazumdar 1979: 9). Clearly, the power of the vote was more symbolic. "It was not a means of bringing about change in the structure of society" (Agnew 1976: 193).

Slowly women began to infiltrate the political arena. While two women were nominated in 1926, in 1927 Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy became the first women elected to a legislative council (Mazumdar 1979: 8). The process of enfranchisement in India was compared to that in England by N.M. Dumasia, a member of the legislature; "it is gratifying to find that in a country where men are accused of treating women as chattels the political progress of women has been more rapid than in England and free from the war of the sexes

and the smashing of the heads which preceded the enfranchisement of women in England" (as cited in Mazumdar 1979: 6).

During the early 20th century women emerged as enlightened citizens of their nation aware of their duties to their country and their obilgations to their sex. They opposed wifehood, property, reservation, and other prerequisites on their enfranchisement. They demanded equality with their male counterparts (Asthana 1974: 115).

The suffrage struggle represents an important aspect of the Indian women's movement since it illustrates organized activity on the part of women for a collective goal. After much opposition, the general election of 1935 witnessed the participation of multitudes of enfranchised women. "It was evident that many women were awake to their responsibilities and powers as enfranchised citizens using the vote as a direct means of securing self-government" (Sharma 1981: 259). A number of women were nominated and even elected to the legislative assemblies. Others occupied positions such as speakers, secretaries, and one took office as minister. "In 1937 India held the third place among countries having a large number of women legislators. Thus in 20 years (1917 - 1937) women in India passed from apathetic indifferences to eager activity and an acute awareness of their responsibility as citizens" (Sharma 1981: 259).

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Class Issues and Other Limitations

While women's organizations were crucial for the mobilization of women and for the enactment of various reforms, their power was restricted by their elitist nature. In addition, they were limited by the decision of organizations such as the AIWC to refrain from participation in party politics. For example, in the case of the AIWC there was a rift between the Conservatives who desired no political ties even if it assisted the nationalist cause, and those seeking political affiliation (Chakravarty 1972: 177). Consequently, the process of resolution passing was always a difficult endeavour since many members such as Naidu and Chattopadhyaya were active in the political arena (Chakravarty 1972: 177). Organizations also had difficulty in incorporating the masses of women including working women and peasants.

> That is why one never found a Matangini Hazra in the A.I.W.C., a simple peasant woman who stood boldy before British bullets and was shot down in Midnapur (Bengal) when the Swadhin Tamtali Sarkar was set up by Ajay Mukherjee in 1942. The A.I.W.C. remained in the main a middle-class organization, led by women of the intelligentsia, some of them distinguished (Chakravarty 1972: 177).

The membership of the Conference and most other organizations was comprised of educated and awakened women. Members of the elite or royal families were often found to be occupying the higher positions within these organizations. For example, in the case of the AIWC the president at the first session was Her Highness the Maharani Chimnabai Saheb Gaekwar of Baroda

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while for session 2 the president was Her Highness the Begum
Mother of Bhopal (Sharma 1981: 116). According to Shah (1990:
139) "the women's organizations that emerged were primarily
restricted to, and comprised of 'urban educated upper class
women'". Women in positions of power were often incorporated
into various movements by virtue of their connections with
prominent male figures such as government officials or
political leaders (e.g. in the case of the Nehru women).

The Conference also attempted to probe the conditions of
mine workers and other industries in which working women were
concentrated.

> They also asked for an enquiry into the conditions of
> women mine workers, following a memorandum submitted to
> the Bombay Conference on Labour, called by the National
> Council of Women in India. The memorandum, sent by a
> visitor to the Asansol mines, said that though attempts
> were being made to give women lighter work overground,
> neither the men nor the women wanted the sexes to be
> separated in this way, for when underground, they
> engaged in 'immoral' acts. The Memorandum ended with
> the pious statement that the 'place for women is in the
> home in this day of building New India' (Kumar 1993:
> 71).

Women leaders were also concerned with the difficulty of
balancing a comfortable home as a good wife and mother while
faced with the prospect of entry into the working world. They
sought to resolve this dilemma through the use of domestic
gadgets to shorten the time required for housework.
Consequently, the Conference attempted to transform the method
of work without delving into the nature of work itself.
Members sought to demonstrate that modern women still enjoyed
domestic chores such as cooking. Thus the Conference favoured

the introduction of time-saving appliances which would enable women to tend to domestic duties in a shorter period, thereby freeing them for work in the public sphere. In essence, the Conference overlooked the fact that the majority of Indian women were impoverished and unable to access such modern gadgets. Therefore, the activities of the AHMP were restricted to upper class women (Shah 1984: 49 - 50).

Women became effective in many ways and through many organizations. They did not confine their participation to groups working solely for the advancement of women. For example, during the second decade of the 20th century women surfaced in movements focusing on labourers rights.

> Not only were there several prominent women trade-unionists, but women workers began to be consciously organized and a special role began to be given to them in the workers' movement. Bombay was in some ways the centre of this development with Maniben Kare emerging as a socialist leader of railway workers, and Ushabai Dange and Parvati Bhore as communist leaders of textile workers. In the 1928-29 Bombay textile strike women were placed at the head of the demonstrations in the belief that the police would not lathi- charge them; and were used to picket the mills to prevent strike-breakers from entering (Kumar 1993: 69).

With the formation of the Communist Party of India in 1920 women also became active through this venue. For example, women such as Ushabai Dange intiated the organization of women working in the Bombay textile industry in the 1930s (Kumar 1993: 92).

A point of contention was the delineation of issues to be focused upon by the AIWC. For instance, while many wished for the organization to embrace a multitude of causes, others

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emphasized the need to centre upon 'safe' fields which would not alienate the majority of women (Kumar 1993: 71). This debate also overlapped with the uncertainty of whether or not to pursue political concerns. "There were those such as K. Chattopadhyaya who were seeking an expansion of the Conference to encompass all issues pertaining to women while others such as Sarla Devi Choudharani and Lakshmi Kutty argued that a concern with the political would usurp any social intentions" (Kumar 1993: 72). Echoes of the social versus political reform debate are clearly evident in the evolving women's movement. The Conference resolved this with a promise to deal with all concerns affecting women but it also issued a mandate for the organization and its members to refrain from any political involvement. This latter resolve would however, be eradicated by the intensifying nationalist sentiment which would witness the entry of an influx of women into the freedom struggle (Kumar 1993: 68). Despite these problems organizations were extremely useful and performed miracles with the meagre resources that they acquired. The organizations were crucial since they showed the committment of women to better themselves and consequently their society. "Through these organizations they showed that they were no longer ready to put up with the degraded and depraved state in society and fought against social inequalities" (Shah 1984: 103). For instance the AIWC did extensive work for illiterate and impoverished women through the establishment of schools of

learning. However, efforts to "organize the downtrodden women
to fight and struggle against exploitation of the vested
interests and feudals" were viewed as beyond the mandate of
the association and since it was perceived as political work
it was prohibited. "To fight against the powers that be,
would mean an agitation - that too was taboo" (Chakravarty
1972: 177).

Further Political Activity and Nationalism

The dawn of the 20th century witnessed an intensification
in anti-colonialist sentiment. As nationalist politics began
to impact the autonomous women's organizations, this period
also saw an influx of women enter the freedom struggle. While
women had been permitted to attend Congress meetings since the
close of the 19th century they had not been "allowed to speak
or vote on resolutions" (Kumar 1993: 34). Kumar (1993: 34)
claims that there is much confusion in attempting to establish
when women were first permitted to speak at Congress sessions.
She argues that one writer contends that it was in 1890 that
of four female delegates, one "was allowed to speak, or
rather, to present a vote of thanks to the President. In her
speech, she thanked him for allowing her to speak, saying that
this 'raised the status of our Indian women'" (Kumar 1993:34).
However, the rising tide of nationalism engulfed more and more
women. Even women's organizations began to alter their
positions. For example, the WIA, once a loyal supporter of
the British government, now altered its position. "Even

members of the Anjuman, who were even more than the others secluded from the hurly burly of politics, felt the need to eschew show of wealth and practice austertity as an expression of their solidarity with the people of India" (Chaudhuri 1993: 137).

Nationalist leaders sought to include women in the nationalist enterprise, but while they stressed the need to improve the position of the Indian woman through the abolition of customs such as purdah, they continued to retain separate spheres for women through an emphasis on nationalist activities such as spinning and weaving which could be performed within the domestic sphere (Rao & Devi 1984: 23).

> "Free India means free womanhood", chanted the women of
> Bombay while marching in processions. How much freedom
> did women gain? Participation in politics did not
> generate an adequate social consciousness among them...
> The nationalist movement welcomed and encouraged women's
> participation so long as it did not threaten the
> patriarchal society, just as the social reform
> movements had done before them (Basu 1984: 15).

Male nationalists also had to contend with the issue of women's rights and the degree of 'freedom' to be accorded to them. Those who argued that women would be accorded rights in due course, were refuted through a reminder that all rights had to be fought for. At this point, the ability to fight alongside their male comrades, implied freedom for many women.

> And the demand for equality between the sexes was
> itself based on the principle of sameness rather than
> complementarity. Thus by the 1920s, two quite different
> rationales for women's rights were being expressed: the
> one that women's rights should be recognized because of
> women's socially useful role as mothers; the other that

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women, having the same needs, desires and capacities as men, were entitled to the same rights. The former held that the biological difference between men and women affected the sexes qualitatively; the latter that biological differences did not determine the nature of each 'sex' (Kumar 1993: 66).

As the anti-colonial movement gathered momentum, nationalism began to permeate every aspect of daily life. Women were increasingly educated along nationalist lines. In fact, women already active in the freedom struggle emphasized the importance of education for a woman since it equipped her to become a wife and mother who would raise nationally conscious children. Initially, the role of the woman as wife, mother, teacher, nurse and companion was emphasized over the woman as an independent and educated entity. The insinuation was that women at present were unable to fulfill such roles. However, after 1905 the role of a woman as a powerful and courageous mother was emphasized. Education was viewed as her right and denial of this right was perceived as detrimental to the nation since the woman was, after all, the mother of the nation (Kumar 1993: 50).

The scope of women's activity within the anti-colonial movement widened. They picketed, protested, spun and wore khadi, courted arrest, participated in Gandhi's satyagraha and constructive programme, and established nationalist women's organizations. As the contribution of women in the nationalist project became evident, political organizations sought to enlist the support of this segment of the population. In fact, during the 1940's the All-India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.)

formed a Women's Department to encourage the input of women in issues pertaining to the improvement of their position within Indian society (Agnew 1976: 136).

> By the 1940s there was a sense of seeing independence on the horizon, and the women's movement was absorbed into the struggle for independence in such as way that the issue of women's emancipation was felt to have been resolved. With independence the inequalities between men and women would be righted, and all would be well with India. The nationalist feminist woman activist was seen both as a symbol and a bulwark of women's emancipation: the fact that the image of a woman activist which had been constructed in this period itself limited and restricted women was not questioned.

Kumar (1993: 81) contends that the impact of nationalism on the feminist movement was extremely vital since it encouraged women of the lower castes and classes to enter the women's movement. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya reflects on progress in this field which is evident when one realizes that while earlier presidents of the A.I.W.C. were confined to dignitaries and royalty, it was later decided that such persons merely functioned as figureheads. However, since the organization encouraged activism, the president ought to be any individual who was prominently active in the cause. Thus 1931 witnessed the election of Sarojini Naidu (Kumar 1993:81).

The nationalist movement created an awakening even in women of the rural regions. Through the incorporation of 'minor' activities (e.g. singing of nationalist songs) into their daily routines, they "decried the purdah system and desired to participate in the movement. They glorified the ideal of patriotism and expressed their pious wish to see the

tricolour flag flying aloft in the country" (Asthana 1974: 63).

> It is the activities of these women, in both local and national organizations for women, and the activities of the thousands of women who supported and joined the nationalist movement that together make up what has been termed the 'women's movement'. That no distinction has been drawn between the struggle for independence and the efforts to improve the status of women partly reflects the similarity in the arguments used to draw women into the two types of activity (Forbes In Rao 1979: 150).

Through participation in the nationalist movement women gained further political experience. They travelled extensively on lecture tours thereby advancing the national programme while at the same time serving as role models to their own sex. In addition, they assumed leadership roles and often occupied positions within various delegations vieing for an assortment of political concessions from the British.

Relation to Western Feminism

Omvedt (1978 as cited in Shah 1990: 131) contends that there are two types of women's movements. The first seeks equality for women within the confines of conventional societal structures. The objective is to eradicate the most visible forms of oppression without directly challenging the traditional basis of society. The second type of movement focuses on women's liberty by directly questioning the sexual segregational base of society. The former was more indicative of the Indian women's movement since women sought equality through an emphasis on complementarity. In other words, they sought equality by emphasizing the notion that women

complemented men and they needed a forum in which to voice their concerns. They sought to improve their position without challenging the patriarchal fabric of Indian society. This entailed an emphasis on their role as women and subsequently, as wives and mothers. However, Western feminist movements differ due to their tendency to directly challenge the patriarchal matrix of society.

> One of the points of definition which pre-Independence feminists used was that Western feminists were pitted against men, whereas Indian feminists were not. This was explained on the grounds that while the suffragettes had had to struggle for the vote, 'our men' (i.e. the Indian National Congress) supported the demand for female suffrage. In other words, Indian feminists were not anti-male because our men were better than Western men (Kumar 1993: 195).

According to Shridevi (1967: 57) there was no real feminist movement in India comparable to those occurring in the West. In countries such as England and America

> the very thought of emancipation of women horrified men who started imagining of "licentious women running amuck in a society of sober men, divorcing husbands, breaking up homes, neglecting children, and sinning in the open street". As for women's suffrage it was "prophesised to be the beginning of anarchy. Men were afraid that their wives would grab political power, turn all the man-made laws of the country upside down and reduce man to a state of dependence on woman. The fact that in all the countries that agitated for women's suffrage the female population is greater than the male aggravated this fear and turned it into a panic" (Shridevi 1967: 57).

While the agitation for women's rights in the West was a slow and gradual process, the Indian women's movement was quite sudden. In addition, with prominent male figures such as Gandhi, Roy and Nehru advocating the emancipation of women,

Indian men did not fear this development as much. Women's movements in various countries of the Third World have also been closely aligned with the anti-colonial movement and it has not been uncommon for the women's question to be rendered subservient to the greater, more pronounced discourse of nationalism.

The Indian feminist movement also diverges from equivalent movements in the West, with respect to the notion of sexual difference. While some feminist struggles in the West emphasized equality with man in all spheres, there was a tendency for Indian men and women to dwell on the idea of separate roles for males and females.

> In the early years of movements for women's rights...
> it was more or less taken for granted that the
> difference between the sexes was such that their roles,
> functions, aims and desires were different. And hence
> not only had they to be differently reared but
> differently treated in general. Over time this
> difference was itself adduced as a major reason for
> reforming women's conditions. While early 19th century
> reformers argued that women's difference from men was no
> reason for their subjection, later reformers argued
> that it was precisely this difference which made women
> socially useful (women as mothers), and hence proper
> care for their conditions of being was socially
> necessary (Kumar 1993: 2).

As enlightened women emerged at the forefront they also demanded further rights, access to education, liberty, etc, and they also based their arguments on these issues of differences between men and women. According to Chaudhuri (1993: 146) "two themes emerge here, both of which are emphasized through the history of the women's movement; one relating to the naturally nonantagonistic relationship of the

sexes in India as compared to the West and the other relating to the need for women representatives in various forums to put forward their views".

While Western women had to contend with much opposition in their endeavour for emancipation, Indian feminists argue that they had little opposition from their menfolk in their own crusade for rights. In fact, it is argued that women's emancipation was a requisite for the social reform and nationalist enterprises. Consequently, women were permitted to fight alongside their male counterparts as both parties struggled for the same goal (Ali 1991: 42 - 43). "So the feminist movement in India could not in any sense be said to be a rebellion or a revolt against man, it was rather an attempt to regain lost ground. It was neither actuated by any spirit of competition, nor marked with violence; it was on the other hand, a movement of calm assertion" (Singh 1968: 167).

Shridevi (1967: 142) contends that the Indian women's cause has been assisted by a number of factors such as reforms, nationalism, and education. She argues that the Indian feminist movement was also assisted by the formation of autonomous women's organizations such as the A.I.W.C. "under whose auspices it had worked for the establishment of schools and colleges on the one hand and for women's franchise and the codification and rectification of the ancient Hindu Law for better privileges to women on the other" (Shridevi 1967: 143).

A point of contention for 'Third World' movements is the use of the term "feminism" . As argued earlier in the introduction, Western feminism has been challenged for its imperialistic bias "and of short-sightedness in defining the meaning of gender in terms of middle-class, white experiences, and in terms of internal racism, classism, and homophobia" (Mohanty 1991: 7). While women in the West had to primarily contend with suffrage demands, women of oppressed nations had to concern themselves with the freedom of their country amongst other things. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Indian women's movement emerged at a time when the nationalist movement was also gathering momentum. However, Forbes (1994: xxiii) contends that although Indian women may not be defined as feminist in the European sense, they still expressed a "concern with women's well-being and women's rights" and this "causes us to doubt the utility of trying to apply Western standards in other cultures".

Lerner (1993: 274) asserts that feminine consciousness is present if a number of conditions are met. Firstly, women need to be cognizant of the fact that they constitute an oppressed group. Secondly, they need to comprehend that this repression is the result of social factors than a natural order of things. Thirdly, women need to recognize the commonality of their situation and move towards mobilization. Fourthly, they must independently develop a mandate of objectives and strategies for improvement, and finally, they

need to cultivate an "alternate vision of the future". If these conditions are met with, then feminist consciousness can be deemed to exist. Since these five components were present in the case of Indian women and their movement, it can be regarded as a feminist movement according to Lerner's definition.

Despite problems with the term 'feminism', women of the Third World have consistently been engaged in activities seeking to improve their position within Indian society.

Post-Independent Activity

At the time of Independence in 1947 women had "already established themselves as equals in political life" (Chitnis 1988: 87). In addition, the Indian Constitution granted women equal political rights. The Constitution, asserts that women, untouchable castes, and those living in isolated regions, are to be offered assistance in living a life of equality due to their recognition as "weaker sections" of society (Chitnis 1988: 88). Other legal and political stipulations include equality in spheres such as divorce, employment and property rights. Despite these provisions, the position of women in contemporary India is still unsatisfactory especially when one considers that the ratio of males to females is 1000: 933 (Chitnis 1988: 89). This discrepancy stems partially from inadequate health care of the mother and child and the increase in clinics utilizing amniocentisis and thereby permiting the selection of males over females through

abortion. In addition, illiteracy continues to flourish amongst women who still represent a minority within the Indian labour force, and further detrimental social customs such as dowry still prevail.

Chitnis (1988: 89) contends that the position of the Indian woman has failed to improve significantly due to a lack of knowledge of, and a failure to make full use of, her rights. Women face a paradoxical situation since on the one hand they encounter liberal laws, while on the other the inequalities still remain (Joshi & Liddle 1986: 75).

> The implementation of the laws to secure equality continues to be hindered by patriarchal family structures and by barriers of caste and class... The laws also require honest implementation by the male-dominated administrative machinery. And a majority of women are both illiterate and poor, unaware of their legal rights, and without the resources to fight for them through the courts (Joshi & Liddle 1986: 75).

Although the Constitution endorses equality, women are denied such justice in areas such as the family, workplace, and society in general due to the prevailing patriarchal nature of the sociocultural environment (Bald as cited in Katrak 1992: 402). In fact, after Independence and the partition of India, many groups such as the Socialists, peasants, workers, and feminists felt betrayed by the National Congress since it stalled considerably in the fulfillment of all its pre-Independence assurances. In the case of women Congress attention to the Constitution was minimal and there was much opposition to the Hindu Code Bill. "Demands for a reformed, uniform and all-encompassing codification of Hindu personal

laws had been first raised by feminists in the thirties"
(Kumar 1993: 97). However, this Bill was only implemented in
the form of separate Acts in the 1950s.

In the Post-Independent period sharp divisions were
evident amongst feminists since their one common adversary had
now been conquered.

> Political divisions became more important than they had
> been earlier, especially since feminists had neither
> openly sought nor identified the enemy in gender terms,
> due partly to the extingencies of colonialism, and
> partly to the complexities of a culture in which gender
> relations were not as clearly distinguished as in the
> West (Kumar 1993: 97).

Women who had worked hard for the nationalist movement now
occupied positions within the Congress government since "the
Congress stood for an improvement in women's condition, and if
disillusionment was setting in, it was doing so gradually"
(Kumar 1993: 97). The fifties and sixties were comparatively
quiet in terms of feminist activity but this all changed in
the 1970s when there was a resurgence in feminist activity due
to other radical movements of that time, e.g. the anti-price
agitation. Such rejuvenated feminist activity rallied around
two crucial concerns - dowry and rape - both of which focused
on a new factor - violence against women.

In conclusion, the work of Indian women can be categorized as
a movement since it represents sustained collective action on
the part of a particular segment of the population to attain
specific goals.

If we define the women's movement as autonomous women's organizations with an analysis of women's subordination and a programme for changing it, then the 'first wave' women's organizations in India must be seen as such a movement. As Geraldine Forbes points out, "Indian women wrote and spoke about women's condition, formed organizations to secure desired changes, and eventually had an impact on the institutions of their society" (Joshi & Liddle 1986: 21).

While the focus of the struggle was the improvement of the position of women within the confines of the prevailing structures, the movement can be categorized as anti-patriarchal since it opposed the bestowal of privileges upon men (Agnew 1976: 42). Agnew (1976: 234) asserts that the Indian women's movement did not utilize the strategy of confrontation in the attainment of its goals. Instead, women utilized the assistance of reformers and politicians to improve their own position. They did not threaten sex roles or the prevailing social basis of society but instead sought to raise their own position within the confines of this traditional structure.

CHAPTER VII - THE LIFE HISTORIES OF

INDIAN WOMEN

This research has hypothesized that linkages exist between the following movements in India - social reform, nationalist, and the Indian women's movement. In this chapter, connections between these movements will be examined by tracing the lives and career paths of Indian women. More specifically, social networks (i.e. family background, household composition) and political career patterns will be probed.

The impact of the social reform upon women is evident from the fact that prior to its evolution in the early 19th century, only a few upper class women were educated within the confines of the home for the purposes of household and estate management. The reform movement enlightened many men who consequently gave an opportunity to their daughters and wives to receive education. As I will show later, many women active in the feminist movement either originated from households where men embraced reformist ideas or married such men.

Some women who later joined or headed the feminist movement benefited from the eradication of social practices such as child marriage and purdah. Being able to marry later in life and/or not be constrained by purdah allowed these women to profit from education.

The reform movement also impacted women in other ways. For instance, some were able to remarry despite being widowed and others were able to enter into intercaste marrriages. Such an expansion of rights enabled women to step out of the

confines of rigid roles and embrace a life of greater social and political participation. Women were also able to progress from a severe life of imposed widowhood and embark on satisfying careers to assist others. There are also some references to a battle for property rights especially upon the death of the husband. For example, Pandit, fully aware of her rights, went to court to fight for her deceased husband's property.

Access to education is probably the greatest legacy of the social reform movement in terms of its impact upon the Indian women's struggle. Education enabled women to enter the public sphere and interact with other women and thereby become aware of commonalities and differences in experiences amongst them as a collective. In addition, it encouraged women to embark on careers and enter new fields of study. In essence, education empowered women thereby equipping them to improve their own lives.

Nationalism also impacted the women's movement since it provided women with an opportunity to gain political experience through participation in the political arena. By assisting the independence crusade, women learned techniques of protest and mobilization for the attainment of collective goals. They picketed, petitioned, entered militant societies and also joined legislative assemblies and organizations. In addition, nationalism is linked to the women's movement since nationalists supported women's demands for enfranchisement.

While the agenda of nationalists may have differed to that of feminists, they did support women in their suffrage campaign. They recognized the importance of women for their own struggle and did not wish to quarrel over the issue of the vote. They discerned the value of enfranchised women and that social reform legislation would be more easily passed with the inclusion of women in assemblies. To add to this, India would appear more advanced if it enfranchised its women before the British bestowed the same right upon their own women.

The writings of women also show the development of autonomous women's organizations close to the dawn of the 20th century as awakened women began to take control of their lives and demand improvements in their position. Both the social reform, and more so the nationalist movement, while advocating improvements for women, also offered contradictory images and roles for women. While women were encouraged to participate in the national movement, traditional roles were continually emphasized through the use of symbolism and ideology. However, many women refused to accept such injustice and focused their energies on the women's movement. Women such as Shahnawaz and Sarabhai describe their disillusionment after independence and the penchant to relegate women back to the domestic arena. Women recognized that both reformers and nationalists were rendering their needs secondary to their own agendas, consequently, they separated and established their own associations. The formation of autonomous women's

organizations shows an awareness on the part of women, to focus solely on improving their position by establishing a forum in which to air their opinions and mobilize in order to attain a collective goal.

To summarize, linkages are apparent between the women's movement and other movements, in this case the social reform and nationalist struggles. However, while both the latter did impact women and their movement, this is not the case for all women since some did not receive an education and participate in various movements. This is where factors such as wealth, class and family background, etc come into play. The lives of these women have also been included in this analysis in order to provide a contrast and demonstrate the impact of the connections in the lives of other women.

For the purpose of clarity the analysis has been divided into three areas. The first section deals with early life and examines parental and family influences, education and role models. The second section probes the impact of marriage upon women by exploring the climate into which the bride enters. This also involves an assessment of spousal influence and her changing aspirations with her new role. The final section probes the career paths of women in terms of paid work, interests, feminist, reform nationalist activity and political activism and/or experience.

Section I - Early Life

Family Background/Family Climate

The majority of women in the sample grew up in middle and upper class, affluent homes. Many were raised in progressive families where members were either politically conscious and/or active and/or advocated reforms of various kinds. For example Sarojini Naidu and Sucheta Kripalani grew up under the auspices of the Brahmo Samaj. Since Kripalani's family was an integral part of the Samaj, she was able to participate in numerous religious and cultural activities from an early age (Kripalani 1975: 23). In Naidu's case, her father's reformist ideas on equality resulted in ostracism and so he temporarily left the country. In the interim, the family was cared for by the Samaj (Sengupta 1966: 10).

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit had a privileged childhood that many could only dream of. "She was pampered, loved, and spoiled. Whatever she wanted was hers" (Guthrie 1962: 17). Jahan Ara Shahnawaz also grew up in a very progressive family in which women were able to pursue issues dear to their heart while still observing purdah. For example, her mother and aunt were interested in the advancement of Muslim women. "Mother was known as the rebel in the family circle and Uncle Shah Din used to call her the Mrs Pankhurst of the Mian family" (Shahnawaz 1971: 8). Her uncle encouraged the women of the family to excel. "'Become worthy daughters of today and develop into women who could be leaders of tomorrow'"

(Shahnawaz 1971: 14 - 15).

The Parsee community into which were born the likes of Susie Sorabji, Lady Tata, and Madame Bhikaji Cama, was broad-minded and encouraged the uplift of women. Consequently, these women grew up in households where the free association of men and women was encouraged and where the impact of Western ideas was huge. "This no doubt contributed to Bhikaji's unusual social and political awareness, her knowledge of and interest in public affairs" (Sethna 1987: 5). Tata's "father was one of the first Parsis who went to England to complete their education" (Natarajan 1932: 1).

Other women were raised in orthodox families and found their behaviour restricted with a minimal and selective access to education. For example, Kasturba Gandhi received no education and was raised in a very traditional family (Prabbhu 1944: 12). Sister Subbalakshmi also grew up in a traditional environment and describes an episode very much indicative of the view of women among the orthodoxy. The incident is also an example of a woman's refusal to accept the status quo and so she rebels in her own way. She is having a discussion with her great-uncle who contends that

> "Women must never utter that OM. Never. It is too
> sacred for them. Women must, instead, only say U".
> She tossed her head scornfully, and again I could
> picture the young girl, proud, obstinate, outwardly
> obedient yet, with all her devoutness, refusing to
> swerve from her own conception of her rights as a
> human being. Then she laughed. "All the time I was
> repeating to myself OM. OM. OM. I could see no reason
> why women should be less than men in the eyes of God"
> (as cited in Felton 1966: 43).

In Kamala Nehru's household women were confined to their own quarters but purdah was sometimes not sufficient to prevent her from rebelling.

> When Kamala was nine or ten years old the family went on a visit to Jaipur. Purdah was strictly observed there, and she was given strict instructions to stay indoors like the rest of the womenfolk of the family. But she felt suffocated, almost jailed. But she found a way out. Donning her brother's clothes, her long hair tucked inside a small turban, she would sneak out to play with them (Kalhan 1973: 3).

Women who were able to defy customs in their early years were able to do so due to the advanced ideas and support of family, status, wealth, and of their own volition.

As young girls many women received contradictory messages regarding the role of a woman in Indian society. Sharda Divan's upbringing is a prime example where the girls were raised in an orthodox manner and "were trained to cope with routine, household chores and taught the rudiments of all that would be demanded of them as future wives and mothers" (Nath 1992: 5). However, equal opportunities in terms of education were emphasized.

Pandit also dwells upon contradictions in her childhood.

> A paradox about my father was his championship of women's rights but his disregard for his daughters' education. He provided opportunities but there was no supervision and no plan. Studies were haphazard, and because there was no competition they were also rather dull. Beginning with a governess, lessons were later conducted by a series of tutors (Pandit 1979: 59).

Her sister Krishna Nehru, discusses her father's advanced ideas of women.

> You seemed to have turned into quite a little
> politician, but do not think that being a girl will in
> any way be a handicap to you....There is no bar of
> sex - on the contrary a determined woman's influence
> is much greater than a man can ever sway. So there is
> every chance for you. You must remember that true
> patriotism is in your blood and unless you actively
> suppress it, it is bound to assert itself sooner or
> later (Nehru 1945: 52).

This contradictory parental behaviour was resented by Dhanvanthi Rama Rau.

> My resentment was always assuaged by the argument
> that my parents desired progress for women. While we
> lived in a narrow society, was it not worth maintaining
> the greater ideal of education and work,even if it meant
> renouncing the lesser one of a pleasurable hour or two
> which might be misconstrued? I cannot really say that I
> felt confined, I was free to take an interest in matters
> that at that time were just breaking the surface of
> orthodox Indian life. Many of these new social concepts
> were connected with that small segment of educated women
> who were examining intelligently the reforms necessary
> for the progress of society generally and women in
> particular (Rau 1977: 83).

Education

Diverse experiences are evident with respect to educational options and the ability to access these opportunities. Women such as Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Naidu, Pandit, Krishna, Manmohini Sahgal, Shahnawaz, to name just a few, came from affluent, upper class, progressive families and so faced few barriers within their families in terms of accessing education, social interactions, etc. They were also able to more easily step into roles unique for women at that time, e.g. leadership in women's organizations and nationalist activity. They had greater access to education and so many gained fame for being among the first to attain distinctions.

For example, in Sahgal's family, her three sisters and herself all gained their B.A. and three of the four attained the M.A. degree.

Many women had at least one liberal parent. In most cases it was the father who attempted to raise his daughter(s) along evolving reformist ideology. For example, Muthulakshmi Reddy's father relished the attention showered upon him due to the academic excellence of his daughter who surpassed males in every examination. However, many women such as Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Rau and Sahgal were propelled by the actions of their mothers and grandmothers. Girjabai, Chattopadhyaya's widowed mother, recognized the importance of educating women in order to make them independent. "Since inheritance was not accessible, economic security could be assured through education" (Brijhushan 1976: 6).

> Girjabai, a strong exponent of women's rights found herself forced, from time to time, to make compromises which really went against her grain. A vigorous opponent of child marriage, she found herself with no choice but to marry off her daughter at an extremely young age. Her husband was dead, she herself was not in the best health and her great fear was that if anything happened to her Kamaladevi would be left alone with no one to look after her (Brijbhushan 1976: 8).

Her grandmother was an avid religious reader and debated with scholars. Chattopadhyaya "once confided to her grandmother how scandalized people were at her doings but she shrugged off their comments" (Brijbhushan 1976: 6).

Other women were raised in a more orthodox environment where education was very much selectively imparted. For

example while Jnanadanandini was encouraged by her father to
pursue her studies, these aspirations did not extend to his
wife.

> "One night I suddenly woke up and raising my head I saw
> my mother writing or reading something. Seeing me, she
> quickly hid all these, fearing that I was a child, I
> might tell someone. One of our elderly neighbours knew
> how to read and write, but engaged in these activities
> for fear of being ostracized behind closed doors.
> Nevertheless, people got to know, and she was publicly
> denigrated by residents of the locality". Incidents such
> as these were however, rare as women who defied tradition
> were few (Karlekar 1991: 78).

According to prevailing beliefs and interpretations,
religion did not sanction the education of women and it was
emphasized that educated women would become widows. Ramabai
Ranade's upbringing sheds further light.

> The girls of our family were carefully guarded from
> any modern ideas. No women of the house or girls over
> eight years were allowed to appear before the men, or
> even to come outside the house. We knew nothing of
> reading, and the word 'writing' had no meaning for us.
> I had one aunt, my father's sister, who was married to
> a strict Brahman. He himself taught her to read
> Sanskrit. Not long afterward her husband died, and his
> death was considered a punishment on her for having
> ventured to learn (Gates 1938: 2 - 3).

Rassundari Debi, also raised in a strict environment,
describes her overwhelming desire to learn to read in order to
feel closer to God.

> Left alone voicing my innermost feeling, my heart
> used to quiver at the thought of anyone guessing how I
> felt: so much so that if I saw a sheet of paper which
> had been written on, I used to look away. This was in
> case anyone accused me of wanting to study. But within
> my mind I kept praying to parameshwar (addition mine,
> God), 'oh parameshwar, please teach me how to read and
> write. Once I have learnt, I will read religious
> poonthies (manuscripts) (Karlekar 1991: 116).

Even after marriage and entry into an orthodox family she was
prohibited from reading. She

> recounted how she use to hide pages removed from her
> son's books within the folds of her sari. When alone,
> she laboriously attempted to decipher what was written.
> She felt strongly about being denied education and
> reflected 'that women were indeed unfortunate and could
> be counted as animals'. But 'my mind would not accept
> this, and was always restless with the urge to learn'.
> The quest for God led her to the activities prohibited
> to women, namely reading and writing (Karlekar 1991: 4 -
> 5).

In the case of women such as Rassundari, their desire to learn
was so strong that they taught themselves to read and write.
Thus one finds many courageous women who learned to read and
write through their own efforts. For instance, while Pandita
Ramabai was educated by her mother, she learned much by
listening to her parents' discussions. This is important since
such women enlightened themselves through education despite
the insurmountable barriers they faced. This education served
a crucial purpose as for example in the case of Ramabai, who
embarked on numerous lecture tours advocating greater rights
for women.

Rokeya Hossain, born into an orthodox Muslim family in
1880 was denied an education and was instead brought up
observing purdah. Her lack of a formal education was one of
her biggest regrets. Hossain's sister learned by listening to
teachers instructing her brothers. Her father intially
indulged the desire of his daughters to learn but this
leniency was short-lived due to criticism from relatives
(Hossain 1992: 6). Within this same community Miss K. B.

Ferozeuddin represents the fortunate Muslim minority of educated women since she attained her M.A. and became a college principal while still observing purdah (Zaidi 1935: 111).

Once women were lucky enough to move on from primary education, they faced criticism from the orthodoxy, male students and faculty members. When Subbalakshmi excelled at school many questions and rumours surfaced. For example many claimed that her father "must have bribed the examiners. There is no other possible explanation" (Felton 1966: 44). However, the majority were only provided with a minimal education. Sunity Devee's childhood provides some insight into the debate regarding the nature of education to be imparted to women. She is the daughter of reformer Keshub C.Sen and she talks of his beliefs that degrees are less important in the life of a woman than her ability to be a good wife and mother. (Devee 1921: 21).

While reformers agreed that women needed to be educated, their reasons always varied. Many emphasized the role of women as mothers while others wished for educated wives.

As the nationalist movement intensified, education in general also took a nationalist slant and women who were fortunate enough to succeed in school continued to face many barriers within the private and the public sphere. Since nationalist education profferred contradictory roles and

images of women, educated women had to struggle to step out of the confines of such rigid formulations.

Role Models and Childhood Aspirations

Many women discuss inspirational figures - people who left an impression on them - during their developing years. They impacted them in many ways. Women such as Naidu, Divan, Sahgal, etc lived in homes of affluence and clout and so they were able to meet many dignitaries which included central figures in both the social reform and nationalist movements of the period.

Pandit idolized prominent women such as Sarojini Naidu and Annie Besant - "deep within me was born the desire that the gift of speech might also be mine someday" (Pandit 1939: 89). Reddy also had the opportunity to meet people such as Gokhale who was active in the reform and political movements of the time. She would sit and listen to them discussing important issues of the time.

> There were only a few highly educated women in those days who could stand up on any platform and address the gathering. In one such meeting, I was introduced to the late Poetess and Orator, Smt. Sarojini Naidu.....who had come....to attend a Congress Session at Madras... My contact with all these great men and women and participation in some of their meetings was a very valuable experience to me (Reddy 1964: 11).

Other inspirational figures in the lives of many women were the Irish feminists Annie Besant and Margaret Cousins, who had fought for the amelioration of women and also the liberation of Ireland from the British. As a young child, Kamaladevi was taken by her mother to listen to Besant. Her mother asked

Besant to bless Kamaladevi so that she would become strong like her (Brijbhushan 1976: 10).

Rau was one of the fortunate women able to attend political meetings. She discusses her first Congress Session through which she became aware of the social and political problems plaguing her oppressed nation.

> To me, the most astounding and personal new vision came with the realization that I was not one of the first generation of Indian women who aspire to higher education. Women older than I had already taken professional degrees and were working as doctors, lawyers, and teachers. Though they were only few in numbers and communications were difficult and slow, still we heard something about the social changes that were making an impact, however limited, on orthodox society in different provinces of the nation....I was determined to learn as much as I could about these pioneers and their work in the emancipation of women, and I date from that time the incentive their courage provided my own drive to work in social welfare and the women's movement. The first step was for me to get a higher education (Rau 1977: 65).

A prominent figure who impacted almost every woman's life whether during childhood or later years, was M.K. Gandhi. For example, Mridula Sarabhai met him when she was only ten and was very much inspired by his philosophy and approach to life. His influence will be discussed later.

Rau's mother taught her daughter much and despite her mother's loneliness and isolation from other women, her thoughts were very advanced for the time.

> Her reason told her that many of the customs and doctrines which she had accepted as inviolable were meaningless. Her religion taught her that all men were equal... Why should women be considered inferior to men? Women were capable of handling every sort of problem within the domain of their large households.

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> Why should they not be interested in and consulted about men's work in the outside world? She saw that, among her contemporaries, women clung to old traditions out of fear (Rau 1977: 34).

Rau dwells upon her mother's strength in her autobiography,

> it is difficult after such a long time to realize the courage and the farsightedness of my mother at that time. So much of what she did in her own small sphere to break the chains of orthodoxy which she felt instinctively were wrong is now the most ordinary practice of society (Rau 1977: 43).

Shahnawaz was influenced by the progressive ideas of her father, uncle and grandfather, who were all active in the social reform and political movements. The "women of the family used to wait anxiously for the return of the men to hear all they had discussed, the resolutions passed, the plans formulated and the functions attended" (Shahnawaz 1971: 5).

Revolutionary Kalpana Dutt discusses her childhood with fellow militant Preeti Waddadar. She describes their childhood aspirations and how the nationalist movement impacted their future aspirations.

> We had no clear ideas in our school days about our future. Sometimes we used to dream of becoming great scientists. Then the Rani of Jhansi fired our imagination with her example. Sometimes we used to think of ourselves as fearless revolutionaries (Dutt 1945: 53).

Ramabai recognized early on the hardships suffered by Hindu women. Her childhood together with this vision of oppressed womanhood was an inspiration to her. "We travelled...and had a good opportunity of seeing the sufferings of Hindu women. We were able to do nothing directly to help them, but in the towns and cities we often addressed

large audiences of people and urged upon them the education of the women" (Nikambe 1929: 17).

Clearly then, Indian women had numerous role models and influences which helped to mould their childhood aspirations. These role models had diverse backgrounds. For example, while some women were inspired by parental figures, others were impacted by prominent players in the social reform and nationalist arenas. In addition, parents were also active in these movements and raised daughters who also embraced their enlightened ideas. While some aspirations remained constant for many women, others developed new goals as they matured and also as a result of the uncertain and volatile climate in which they lived

The impact of the social reform movement in the early life of women is evident in the enlightened families in which many grew up. Parents, fired with the spirit of reform, sought to educate their daughters and refused to indulge in societal practices such as early marriage. However, the degree of impact varied with each woman since factors such as affluence and social background also affected family and communal practices.

The effect of the nationalist movement is less evident at this point since it has yet to intensify. However, educated families are very much aware of the volatile political situation and its impact can be traced in terms of contact

with dignitaries and discussions held by male family members. Essentially, its impact at this point is the creation of an awareness of political subordination amongst some of the women.

Section II · Married Life

Marriage and the Matrimonial Climate

Through tracing their lives, it becomes apparent that all women, with the exception of a few, were married at least once in their lives. The exceptions include Sorabji, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Sarabhai, and Dutt. In the case of this latter group of women, while their writings do not explicitly state that they remained single throughout their lives, no mention is made of any marriage, husband or in-laws. Thus, this inference has been made based on the works that have been perused.

Women hailing from more progressive and affluent families were able to marry later, often to partners of their own choice and in quite a few cases, intercaste unions were deemed acceptable, e.g. Naidu, Rau and Sahgal. However, women raised in orthodox and poorer families tended to be married earlier through arranged unions. Kasturba, a young illiterate girl was married to Mahatma Gandhi when she was only thirteen although the actual betrothal occurred when she was seven (Prabbhu 1944: 10). Even Kamala was married at seventeen although she wed and entered a liberal family (Kalhan 1973: 10).

Lakshmibai Tilak grew up in a very oppressive religious household which adhered to strict religious beliefs which would be hastily abandoned during her father's absences. While Tilak married when she was eleven, Rassundari, married at twelve.

> One day I was bathing at the ghat when a number of persons arrived there. Upon seeing me, a man said, "Whoever gets this girl will be very fortunate. His prayers would have been answered". A second man said, "Many have wished to win her as a bride. If she was given, I would be too happy, but her mother won't agree". Yet another said, "It will not do to give her hand in marriage. She will have to be given to someone, otherwise it is pointless to be a woman" (Karlekar 1991: 43).

When she was married shortly after Rassundari says "my heart flew away" (Karlekar 1991: 43).

An examination of the age at marriage and the reaction of the girls and women to their impending union with a stranger is useful since it sheds light on the impact of the social reform movement on the position of these women. For example, the 'age of consent' debate ranging at the end of the 19th and dawn of the 20th century, impacted the lives of some women. In addition, families embracing reformist ideas tended to postpone the marriage of daughters and instead enrolled them in schools. However, many women were withdrawn from schools against their wishes and betrothed to men deemed suitable husbands. Women were raised to view marriage as their ultimate vocation and so all was rendered secondary to this one goal. Her status was enhanced through marriage and she did all that she could to make her husband happy. Amiyabala's

husband sent her back to her parents since she did not live up to his expectations. She was devastated "but her remorse did not lead her to question the social injustice. Amiyabala wrote in her diary, 'You did not take the responsibility of cultivating your wife but put all the blame on me....I humbly accept the injustice'" (Ghosh 1986: 93). Her relatives sought to appease her husband through gifts to compensate for her failings.

> But Amiyabala refused not because her dignity was hurt. She wrote, "How could she tell her husband, "I do not care whether you are happy or not, you have to accept me?" She considered it selfish to place her happiness over that of her husband. Women after all "are born only to drink the poison of the world" (Ghosh 1986: 93).

Shudha Mazumdar was married when she was thirteen. "Marriage was the only sacrament for Hindu women and the only institution through which women could gain status. In addition, it was the most important institution for forging connections between families" (Forbes 1977: 5). Shudha was upset since marriage meant ending studies and separating from friends. "I burst into tears and begged her to allow me to go to school. I did not want to get married I told her between sobs, I only wanted to go to school. But my opinion did not count and matters proceeded" (Mazumdar 1977: 80).

Women from progressive and affluent families were able to marry later, pursue education in the interim, and also faced few barriers in terms of selecting their marriage partner. For

example, Sahgal, Pandit, Krishna Nehru and Naidu, entered love marriages.

Rau was fortunate to have had a strong mother who insisted on educating her daughters prior to the consideration of any matrimonial offers. Although her mother defied many a convention, societal pressures forced her to marry her older daughters earlier. Such women were aware of reformist ideas and sought to improve the lives of their daughters through these beliefs. According to Rau, her mother's views "were far more advanced than those of most women her age, and her regret was only that her three daughters had not had my opportunity for higher education" (Rau 1977: 68). She married at twenty five.

> I knew that someday I would have to submit to an
> arranged marriage and that to an unknown partner. It
> was then that I came to the conclusion, after deep
> thought, that mine would be a registered marriage, for
> that alone would give me the right to a divorce should
> I find it impossible to make the adjustments that
> would be asked for. It would be the first Kashmiri
> marriage by registration, and I would have to broach
> the subject of this determination to my parents with
> plausible reasons for my decision and then to the man
> who had done me the honour of accepting me a place in
> his home, and I hoped, later on in his heart (Rau 1977:
> 89).

Reddy was in a similar predicament - young, educated, and pressured to settle down and become respectable. She was reluctant to marry.

> After taking my degree I said to friends that I should
> practise for some years to learn the profession and live
> an independent life. I did not want to become saddled
> with marriage and become subordinate to a man
> whomsoever he may be. I had seen in my place the ill-

treatment accorded to wives by their husbands. So I
did not want to be one of such victims of man's
superiority and domination. I did not want to become
a mother so soon with all the responsibilities of a
married life. Therefore, when Dr. T.S. Reddy applied
for my hand, I declined (Reddy 1964: 18).

Finally, she consented to marry. "I was satisified with his attainments and conduct and I gave my word to marry him on condition that he should always respect me as an equal and never cross my wishes" (Reddy 1964: 19).

A number of women married very young and also became widows at a young age. Included in this group are Chattopadhyaya (who later remarried) and Subbalakshmi. Shahnawaz is unique since she was widowed late and also remarried later in life. She does not dwell on this second marriage much but mentions it in passing. "On 1st January, 1948, I married a relation, Chief Conservator of Forests, Mian Mushtaq Ahmad. He had been educated at Oxford and was very fond of my children. It was mutually agreed that I should retain my earlier name" (Shahnawaz 1971: 236). She was fifty two at the time of this second marriage.

Once married, it was common for the new bride to enter into a joint family environment, a situation, which for the majority, led to many problems. Either women entered a house of oppression where every movement was carefully scrutinized or she was fortunate to be welcomed by loving in-laws. Alternately, the woman was freed from joint family obligations due to her husband's position which required much travel. This was the case for a number of women such as Shudha, Divan,

Tata and Rau.

Once married women sometimes rebelled against the beliefs of their orthodox in-laws. While for some like Tilak, rebellion was in thought only, others such as Divan were a little more vocal.

> Never one to abandon her own principles or beliefs, Sharda's only protest in her new home was her refusal to wear khadi. Gandhi had made the spinning wheel the symbol of his struggle for freedom. The logic he advocated was that its benefit was twofold -it would give the families work and income in the dead months and simultaneously loosen the grip of British capitalism (Nath 1992: 36).

Influence of Husband

In many cases women married men employed in the civil service. Thus, their positions required travel across the nation and abroad and also enabled couples to develop their relationships away from the confines of the joint family. However, such prominent positions within the government also restricted the participation of women in the nationalist movement since every movement was carefully scrutinized.

Many women married liberal minded men who encouraged their wives to develop their potential. For instance, Shudha's husband encouraged her to read and write and he also wished for her to discard purdah and interact with other women. They also began to shed other customs such as sharing meals. However, "the old ways were not suddenly and completely abandoned; Shudha was the ideal daughter-in-law when necessary" (Forbes 1977: 7).

Kasturba was young and illiterate when she married

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Gandhi. He sought to educate her "but lustful love left me no time. For one thing, the teaching had to be done against her will, and that too at night" (Gandhi as cited in Prabbhu 1944: 12). He wished to make her his ideal wife.

In Kamala's case, Jawaharlal's involvement in the nationalist project inspired her to assist her nation. However, their early years were problematic due to differences in age and upbringing and so communication problems arose. His preoccupation with the nationalist cause, often caused him to overlook his wife and her desire to be his partner in the movement.

Ranade's husband M.G. Ranade was a reformer so he sought to improve their lives through reforms such as female education. Thus, he set about educating her in Marathi and English. This behaviour was not approved of by the joint family. The women were content for their men to perform their public duties while they tended to domestic chores. "Our imaginations and tongues were as busy as our fingers. Someone might repeat a chance remark heard at meal times, and this would be discussed and developed until no one could possibly recognize its harmless origin!" (Gates 1938: 45).

Ranade also gently propelled his wife into the public sphere through debating issues, attending functions, women's organizations and giving speeches. Once he prepared a speech for her. "It was my first attempt to do anything in public and I was terrified. But I could not disobey Himself" (Gates

1938: 59). Once she made her own speech at a girls' school.

> I rose and stood there, but my breathing was hurried and
> my feet and hands shook. This kept up for a few
> seconds. But after I began to speak, no-one knows how,
> I spoke some twenty-five or more sentences without
> pausing and with no difficulty. It was absolutely the
> first time that I had stood before an audience and taken
> the leading part (Gates 1938: 104).

Kailashbashini Debi was married to Brahmo reformer Kissory Mitter who advocated female education. She discusses her relationship with her husband and his influence upon her life.

> Kailashbashini's reflections on life were clearly
> influenced by contemporary events as well as by all
> that she had been through personally. For her, reform
> had been a bitter-sweet experience. On the one hand, it
> had meant personal emancipation and the evolution of a
> meaningful marital relationship; on the other it also
> involved putting up with a style of life which
> ultimately spelt destruction for her immediate
> family (Karlekar 1991: 124).

She travelled with her husband and was able to interact with other women.

> While Kailashbashini was not hostile to the Brahmo
> faith, she was reluctant to give up her fundamental
> beliefs. In a particularly dramatic passage she
> described her discussion with Kissory Chand regarding
> their differing beliefs. She told her husband that from
> childhood he had been teaching her as one would teach a
> pet bird to speak. Thus, "I cannot have any views that
> are basically different from yours. But I will not
> leave Hinduism and I have given you reasons why"... As
> an obedient wife she knew it was her duty to follow her
> husband... Yet she ultimately chose to abide by her
> beliefs.. It indicates a strong-minded woman's ability
> to make a choice and gain the respect of her husband
> (Karlekar 1991: 128).

Anandibai Joshi's husband was a major force driving her to succeed in her ambition of becoming a doctor. They married after he was her tutor for a number of years. His teaching

inspired her tremendously. Many a time she dropped out of school, discouraged by the criticism and arrogance of missionaries, and many a time he persuaded her to continue (Dall 1888: 33).

Rau's role as wife required extensive travel and intermingling. Through this, she ventured into other fields of activity in which she was interested. She was sometimes unhappy in her marriage due to communication difficulties and "the tendency for one to revert back to traditional values ingrained into one's mind as one grew up" (Rau 1977: 105). Although her husband claimed to be advanced in terms of his ideas about the position of women, she sensed that he did not always approve of her activities.

> For all his education, for all his liberal views about marriage and the sort of woman he wanted as a wife, deep down in him lay the old-fashioned conviction, though unexpressed, that a woman's place was in her home, and her husband and children should be her main preoccupation.... Soon I learned to assume, without anything being said, that while he wasn't exactly on my side, as long as he wasn't clearly against me I could go ahead. Finally, I gained enough confidence to assert myself by pursuing what I thought were purposeful outlets for my interests and activities in public affairs, always taking care that I did not neglect my duties and responsibilities to my home, my husband and children and did not compromise my husband's position or career (Rau 1977: 109 - 110).

Many marriages did not survive the tumultuous period and dynamic coupling of personalities. For instance, Asaf Ali, Chattopadhyaya, and Cama, all separated from their husbands. In the case of Asaf Ali, diverging political desires and strategies caused rifts, while in Cama's case, when faced with

a choice of service to a husband or nation, she chose the latter, a decision for which her estranged husband never forgave her.

One marriage particularly stands alone in the mass of material that has been perused. She is M - the unknown 'Rebel Daughter of India with the Rani of Jhansi Regiment' and he is P, her husband and colleague. Their marriage is unique since both enlisted with Bose in his Rani of Jhansi Regiment and the Azad Hind Fauj respectively. Their love and support for one another is clearly evident.

> When I came home I saw a cut on P-'s finger. He had
> been hiding if from me. One look and I understood.
> He had signed on for the Suicide Squad. For a second,
> fear gripped my heart and tears drowned my   eyes. But
> the nervousness soon passed. I clutched at   my hero and
> kissed him.... (M. 1944: 115).

Many women entered into particular work partially as a result of their husbands' influence. For example, while Ranade pursued reforms with the same zeal as that of her reformer husband, Kripalani pursued the goal of national freedom with her husband.

Changing Aspirations and Roles

While for many women marriage meant a relocation from one oppressive environment to another, for others it entailed an expansion of roles often including greater public participation. This was especially true if they married men in prominent positions which required extensive entertaining and mingling with dignitaries. This entailed access to further opportunities such as social service, self-development, and

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travel also served to enlighten women through contact with alternate lifestyles and people from which they had been sheltered in early life.

Roles expanded as women matured and participated more in public. Some were able to discard restraints such as purdah and were fortunate enough to pursue activities that interested them. Despite changing roles women were mindful not to forget their primary roles as wives and mothers.

The impact of the reform movement is still evident throughout married life as women assume new roles. For instance, educational enlightenment and the eradication of particular customs enable them to participate more in the public sphere. While for some 'liberation' ceases upon marriage due to controlling spouses and/or in-laws, for others, marriage entails further liberties such as discarding purdah and participation in the public arena. However, the influence of the nationalist movement is becoming more evident here since many women marry civil servants and are able to travel and mingle with others as well as observe the political situation from the outside in. Some women marry into families very much involved in the national struggle and this forever alters the paths they would take. Nonetheless, many still remain ignorant of political events.

For many women, their careers - whether volunteer, interests, employment or political activism, developed primarily after marriage. From their writings it is abundantly clear that all women wish for the upliftment of their sex. This is true for women regardles of social position, caste and religion.

Women sought to improve their nation through improving themselves. Consequently, one finds women such as Joshi and Ramabai embarking on trips abroad to further their education since restrictions within their own nation proclude their entry into specific programmes. Joshi, before leaving for America to pursue her dreams of becoming a physician, holds an information session to deal with community concerns."In my humble opinion there is a growing need for Hindu lady doctors in India, and I volunteer to qualify myself for one" (Joshee 1883: 83 - 84). These instances are indicative of the enlightenment of women since both Joshi and Ramabai recognize that opportunities for them are limited in their own country. Consequently they embrace the concept of education abroad in order to improve their lives and the lives of other women.

Women desired to improve their position and this desire permeated even rural sectors. This is evident when one recalls episode after episode related by women when they visited villages and were surprised by the desire of their rural sisters to improve their lives through education and the

abolition of oppressive customs. Reddy writes of her travels.

> It was not only interesting but also highly instructive,
> as I came in intimate contact with every quarter of the
> country, both purdah and non-purdah areas. I found to my
> delight during this tour that even in States where purdah
> was observed there were women among them highly educated
> and intelligent and who conducted girls' schools.
> Everywhere I found a keen demand for girls' and women's
> education and demand for abolition of purdah and
> child marriage (Reddy 1964: 58).

Shudha describes her experiences in a village where she

established a Mahila Samiti (woman's organization). At a

meeting a young woman emphasized the need for education for

independence, assisting spouses, and raising healthy

offspring. An elderly woman also spoke at this meeting.

> "Our needs are many", she continued. "But the first
> thing we want is education. We must have knowledge for
> only this can give us the power to break our fetters of
> ignorance and superstition and then the women of India
> will be able to regain the honoured position that was
> theirs in the golden days of the Vedic Age" (Mazumdar
> 1977: 204).

Shudha was very surprised. "Here were minds different from the

fiercely conservative ones I had met in West Bengal. Yet all

these women were from orthodox homes. I don't remember what

I said in reply, but they enjoyed voicing their thoughts to

sympathetic ears" (Mazumdar 1977: 204). These reflections are

crucial since they illustrate the slow awakening permeating

even the rural sectors of society. In such remote areas women

are also aware of reformist and nationalist ideas and though

their options are even more restricted than their urban

sisters, they also seek to better themselves and their lives.

Organizations and Interests

Interests in various causes and enrollment in an assortment of organizations developed for many reasons. For example, while some were inspired by the work and philosophy of people such as Bose, Gandhi, Gokhale, Naidu and Besant, others sought to work in areas of interest to them and for causes dear to their heart. For instance, Reddy wished to practice medicine and find a cure for cancer since she had witnessed the death of loved ones and had seen many women in distress due to the lack of female physicians. Rau and Divan both viewed population as the root cause of many problems. Consequently, they both worked in the field of family planning. Divan even practiced abstinence in the early years of marriage since she did not wish to have a family to distract her from her career.

Initially women tended to concentrate their efforts on a few areas of interest such as the welfare of widows, destitute women and child marriage, but later organizations and individuals broadened their horizons to incorporate many issues. However, some women such as Subbalakshmi and Sorabji focused on select areas and refrained from political activity since they felt social reform was more essential for women and the nation.

Sorabji worked tirelessly for the education of women and children of all religions. Even when nationalism gathered momentum she did not let opinions swerve her and she appealed

to Gandhi to emphasize peace. She

> was outspoken in challenge when great issues were at
> stake. In the political crisis in India she early
> realized the danger of Gandhi's appeal to the young and
> to those immature in judgement. She knew India, and
> that the call to sacrifice themselves for their country
> stirred in the blood of Hindu women the same impulse
> which had resulted in Suttee.
>   She could not bear the waste and bad manners..
> incidental to picketing; she was genuinely angry that
> Indian women should be exposed to the hazards of
> hooliganism, and habituated to love the limelight,
> when there was so much work for India to be done in
> quiet places (Sorabji 1932: 34).

Subbalakshmi also chose to focus on causes she believed

needed to be accorded priority - child marriage and the plight

of widows. She believed "her first duty was to her girls, and

it was perfectly clear to her that she could serve her country

in no better way than by helping them to grow into women

worthy and capable of filling whatever demands the future

might make of them" (Felton 1966: 122).

Nationalist and Political Activity

Women entered the sphere of politics as early as the late

19th century as is evident when one hears of Ramabai's

testimony before the Education Commission in Poona in 1921.

She condemned the practice of child marriage and advocated the

necessity of female education. Other instances of early

participation in the political sphere include Cama's

testimonial before the International Social Congress in 1907

at which she launched India's first national flag (Sethna

1987: 2). Since then other women have emerged in the national

and political spheres and spoken out at various conferences

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for the enactment of laws improving the position of women. For example Reddy spoke in the capacity of physician, at a conference delineating the detrimental effects of child marriage.

Participation in the national movement took many forms and depended very much on the background of the woman. For example, Mazumdar as a child had her initiation into nationalist activity through fruit meal prepared by her mother in honour of the swadeshi movement in 1905 (Mazumdar 1977: 57). Later as an adult she interacted with neighbours and learned to sing nationalist songs. However, as was the case for other women, she was banned from participation in nationalist activity due to her husband's position with the government.

For women such as the Nehru women, whose menfolk were prominent figures in the cause, it was not uncommon for them to plunge wholeheartedly into the national movement. They protested, courted imprisonment and wore khadi. Sahgal was politically active early and was also the first female president of a student union. She led strikes and organized volunteers for Congress. Kasturba assisted her husband and when he was imprisoned, she spoke at rallies to ensure the movement thrived in his absence.

> My dear husband has been sentenced today to six years' simple imprisonment... I have no doubt that, if India wakes up and seriously undertakes to carry out the Constructive programme of the Congress, we shall succeed not only in releasing him, but also in solving to our

satisfaction all the three issues for which we have been fighting (K. Gandhi in Prabbhu 1944: 34).

Even sickly and shy Kamala "wanted to play her own part in the national struggle and not be merely a hanger-on and a shadow of her husband" (Kalhan 1973: 45). Her sister-in-law, Pandit also played a crucial role in both the struggle and the political sphere as a minister.

Reddy, was also politically active and she, like the majority of women was inspired by Gandhi. Thus, in their writings it is not uncommon to find glowing references of Gandhi. He was clearly an inspirational figure and many describe the impact of a meeting with him. Reddy's belief in him was such that she resigned her from the Madras Assembly. "I am obliged to take this step as a mark of respect for that great soul Mahatma Gandhi who has been arrested and imprisoned by the Government" (Reddy 1964: 82).

Many women believed that independent India would lead to the emancipation of women. This becomes apparent when one reads the writings of women such as Naidu, Reddy, Chattopadhyaya and Hossain.

> If women could participate wholeheartedly in the movement, it would be a short cut to their own emancipation, because it would give them a tremendous opportunity to prove their own worth, to show how much initiative, sense of responsibility and dedication they had (Chattopadhyaya as cited in Shintri & Rao 1983: 36).

Naidu in her speeches constantly stresses that she is a woman in order to emphasize equality and unite the nationalist and women's movement.

What can a mere poet, a mere woman talk to you about that? You gentlemen know from my ignorance what shall I teach to your experience? From my weakness what shall I offer to your strength? Only the dreams of a poet, only the prayers of a woman that night after night and morning are offered to that temple of the great Bharata Mata.

If I speak to you tonight, it will not be as a politician, since I say it over and over again,

my woman's intelligence cannot grapple with the transcendant details of politics (Naidu 1917: 67).

She speaks at a conference on the Arms Act and here again she discusses the passive nature of women and their need for protection.

"Your Honour, President, and unarmed citizens of India. It might seem a kind of a paradox that I, a woman, should be asked to raise her voice on behalf of the disinherited manhood of the country, but it is suitable that I who represent the other sex, that is, the mothers of the men whom we wish to make men and not emasculated machines, should raise my voice on behalf 6 the future mothers of India to demand that the birthright of their sons should be given back to them, so that tomorrow's India may be once more worthy of its yesterday... Who but a woman," she questioned, "shall raise a voice for you who have not been able in all these years to speak for yourselves with any effect?" (Cries of shame) (as cited in Sengupta 1966: 116).

Naidu's references to herself as a woman are criticized by many including the newspaper the Statesman.

"Such stress on femininity tends to undermine the case for admitting mere women to public affairs. And the speaker wished for a 'woman's angle'; it was not far to seek in the still shockingly depressed condition of many of the women of Asia" (Sengupta 1966: 199).

This tendency to link the nationalist and the women's movement promised much and disappointed many such as Shahnawaz, Sahgal and Sarabhai. While the former two pinned their hopes on the nationalist movement to free women, the

latter was one of the small group of women who recognized that national liberation would not result in the emancipation of women. Such women poured their energies primarily into the women's crusade. Sarabhai established a number of women's organizations and often came into conflict with many Congress members due to her radical ways. For example, she criticized the Working Committee's failure to include any women.

> Unlike many others, men and women, within and outside the Congress, Mridula realized that by merely taking part in the Non-Cooperation or Civil Disobedience Movements, women had not gained their individual freedom. The liberation of the country was not necessarily going to emancipate women. In a letter to Acharya Kripalani she wrote: "If India were to gain freedom today, there is no reason to believe that we will not have to launch a battle for allowing women to live as free human beings. The history of Europe shows that women who participated in revolutions shoulder to shoulder with men were relegated back to their homes and to their inferior status once the revolution was over. What reason have we to believe that this will not happen in India?" (Basu 1995: 22).

Shahnawaz was disillusioned by the shameless treatment accorded to Muslim women prior to, and upon the formation of Pakistan particularly since they too had fought alongside their men during the national movement. She refused to be silenced by rising politicals and was disliked by her colleagues, but she did not concede defeat and continued her work to improve the position of women. Even Sahgal felt betrayed by both Congress and Gandhi since she found her political ambitions thwarted at each turn.

Many women did not think that adherence to Gandhi's non-violent ideology would ensure India its freedom from colonial

usurpers. Thus, these women turned to more radical strategies in their efforts to assist the cause. Such women include Dutt, Waddadar, Asaf Ali and M, the 'rebel daughter of India'. Cama is a pioneer among politically active women. She launched many newspapers and journals and from exile she assisted through the provision of arms and organization of radicals (Sethna 1987: 13).

> Some of you say that as a woman I should object to violence. Well Sirs, I had that feeling at one time. Three years ago it was repugnant to me even to talk of violence as a subject of discussion, but owing to the heartlessness, the hypocrisy, the rescality of the Liberals, that feeling is gone. Why should we deplore the use of violence when our enemies drive us to it? If we use force, it is because we are forced to use force. How is it that the Russian Sophy Perovoskai and her comrades are heroines and heroes in the sight of Englishmen and Englishwomen while our countrymen are considered criminals for doing exactly the same thing for the same cause? If violence is applauded in Russia, why not in India (a speech from Cama in 'Bande Mataram' - 'A Message to the People of India', in 1908 as cited in Sethna 1987: 66).

She was always conscious of the plight of women and emphasized equality.

> I see only the representatives of one half of Egypt. The assembly is full of only men. Sons of Egypt, where are your Mothers? Where are your Sisters? Do not forget that the hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that shapes the individual that moulds the character (Cama in 1910 address of National Conference as cited in Sethna 1987: 129).

Her work is unique since she was active on the political scene before the likes of Nehru and Gandhi emerged. "In days when even brave men were afraid to associate themselves openly with revolutionary activities,...this fearless woman joined the revolutionary ranks abroad" (Sethna 1987: 148).

Aruna Asaf Ali, another revolutionary, refuted Gandhi's non-violent strategies and often disagreed with him and other prominent politicians. She went underground when Congress leaders were being arrested and she worked to ensure the movement continued during the absence of these figures (Dhan 1947: 33). Other revolutionaries include Dutt and Waddadar who assisted with numerous raids and were arrested many times. However, Waddadar was injured in a raid and killed herself than risk capture.

> From Preeti's actions, people were convinced for the first time that Indian women can do what our men have done. They can give their lives for their country as easily as men can. Whatever criticism there may be of the methods of terrorists, all Chittagong remembers Preeti as their brave daughter. They say with reverance "She did not give herself to the Police" (Dutt 1945: 51).

The rebel daughter M and her husband worked with Bose and his Azad Hind Fauj. While she wished for women to be free her desire for her nation's freedom appears stronger. "India, Motherland, - how these two words inspire me! (M.1942: 16). She defends her decision to enlist. "You shall know that the timid wife who shrieked at the presence of the tiny cockroach or rat, has changed into a Rani of Jhansi, who will not shrink from killing because her country, her patriotism demands it" (M. 1943: 69).

Women in any sort of nationalist activity did not shy away from any activities. For example, M. and her regiment petitioned to Bose when they were relegated to nursing duties only. "We are denied access to the front-line. We are reduced

to a corps of nurses... You gave us the name of the valiant Rani of Jhansi... We beg of you to give immediate orders to send us to the battle-front" (M. 1944: 83). They were successful and went to the frontline. Similar occurrences were prevalent in other nationalist activity when women were allocated specific duties 'suitable' for their sex such as picketing. However, when Gandhi did not include any women in his salt march he was compelled to change his plans after protests from women.

Political strides were made by women in terms of the enactment of various laws improving their position and also in terms of mobilization for enfranchisement. Consequently, one finds numerous references in the writings of the role each woman played in this vital crusade. For example, Kaur, a key player in the nationalist movement, never turned her back on causes promoting the welfare of women and children. She was part of numerous delegations sent to present the argument of women for enfranchisment. "She once remarked seriously amongst a crowd that "women came last in your vocabulary" (Seth 1989: 39).

Conflicting Roles

The turbulence of the social and political climate together with contradictory images of women as projected by the social reform and nationalist movements, all served to provide conflicting roles for women. This is relevant to the analysis of establishing linkages between movements since it

highlights the various factors moulding and shaping the 'accepted' roles for women in Indian society.

While women of the lower classes have laboured through the centuries, it is only in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that women of the middle and upper classes slowly filtered into the labour force in India. For women such as Reddy and Kripalani, employment meant the need to work for a wage. Both needed to work in order to support their families. Kripalani became a paid history lecturer in order to financially assist her family which had been struggling since the death of her father. This pressure to maintain employment was intense especially in the volatile climate of the period. Many times she wished to plunge into the nationalist movement but was unble to do so due to this obligation to her family (Kripalani 1975: 25). However, when sympathy strikes occurred on campus, she used her class time to discuss the importance of the freedom movement.

Reddy's family had always been in financial difficulties, therefore her earnings as a physician assisted them. In addition, her new husband had many debts so she toiled hard to fulfill all her obligations.

> Medical women if they really love the profession and wish to practise should not think of marriage, because they cannot perform two functions at one and the same time, i.e., the functions of a wife, and mother as well as a medical officer. As a mother I had to look after my delicate baby day and night and as a wife I had to look after my domestic duties and as a medical officer I had to do justice to my profession. I found it a great strain as well as a hardship to go through all these duties.... Nobody could imagine the pain and

suffering which a woman especially a wife and a
mother, nay an educated and economically independent
woman, has to go through especially when the husband is
not very co-operative in the economy of the family
(Reddy 1964: 22).

This difficulty in balancing obligations and roles with one's
own interests, arises often in the lives of women. The desire
to work and participate in organizations and activities is
constantly overshadowed by a woman's traditional role as a
wife and mother. An example is imprisonment.

I have never quite forgiven myself for that first jail
term which broke up my home when my children most
needed its security and comfort. To stay at home and
look after them would have been dull. Perhaps I was
envious of my friends who had broken away from their
ties and placed the burden of their personal
responsibility on others; perhaps I had a too lenient
husband who seldom, if ever, interfered with my
decisions. Whatever the reason, I am now sure that I
acted selfishly, thinking in vague terms of personal
political achievements rather than satisfaction I could
have gained through domestic duty (Pandit 1939: 110).

Pandit went on to have a very distinguished political career.
She became the first Indian woman minister of the Indian
cabinet and the first woman President of the U.N. General
Assembly, among other positions.

Naidu also played a vital role since she was a visible
personality and many women mention her as their role model and
initial source of inspiration. She travelled and attended
many conferences and despite criticism for neglecting her
family, she continued her work due to her own dedication and
support from her husband and children (Sengupta 1966: 157).

Divan was also a very fortunate woman since she was able
to pursue her interests while her husband tended to the needs

of their children.

> There were moments when she felt torn in two, uncertain
> as to whether she was giving a fair share of herself to
> the children so precious to her and to her other
> fledgling, the university (Nath 1992: 80).

Family support was vital for a woman to pursue her

ambitions. The extent of this reliance is evident upon reading

Shahnawaz's thoughts upon the death of her daughter.

> Tazi was gone, and in her I lost not only a brilliant
> daughter but my best friend and companion in the world.
> In the last few years of her life, she had taken care of
> everything. She almost mothered me, leaving me free to
> carry on my social and political activities without any
> worries of home and property... The world seemed to
> have come to an end, for a part of me was gone, and yet
> one had to continue as before, the hardest and the most
> difficult task in life; to go on as if nothing had
> happened when the world seemed to have crumbled under
> your feet (Shahnawaz 1971: 240).

Not all women were able to pursue their dreams. Many

obstacles often made the path to self-fulfillment very

difficult. Tilak's story illustrates the desire of one woman

to seek self-fulfillment and improve her life. However, her

story is also indicative of the insurmountable barriers faced

by women despite the influence of reformist ideas.

Her husband, very much inspired by new reforms and

nationalist activity, attempted to teach her to read and write

but his short-temper and high expectations greatly hindered

her progress (Tilak 1950: 69). Finally, she came to the

following realization - "I wanted to learn something which

would be useful in an emergency" (Tilak 1950: 221). While her

husband tended to the family she enrolled in a practical

nursing course but was soon told to vacate her room and leave

since she was not able to lift heavy patients. She was
shocked and asked a friend to intervene on her behalf to
determine the real reason for her dismissal. The doctor in
charge showed her friend a letter from a family friend Dr.
Hume.

> See this, Dr. Hume says "Send Lakshmibai back at once;
> her husband and children are being neglected here". It
> is no fault of hers. Look Dr. Hume has written above,
> "Do not show this letter to Lakshmibai".... Now what
> can I do? (Tilak 1950: 239).

Although her husband voiced no objections to her studying,
orthodox public opinions prevailed in Tilak's case and
prevented her from pursuing her dreams of further learning.
She merely says sadly, "I now understand why students commit
suicide when they failed in their examinations. I know what
examinations and learning are worth" (Tilak 1950: 240).

Women, in their careers were influenced by both the
reform and nationalist movements. For example, many fought
alongside reformers for the enactment of various laws
assisting women and others worked hard for the freedom of
their country. However, they gradually came to realize that
both reformers and nationalists were not prepared to stray too
far from their own agendas. Thus, as the section on
organizations shows, women ventured away from these two
movements and focused instead on mobilizing and attaining
goals pertaining to their needs such as enfranchisement. In
this quest women were supported by the male counterparts in

both the reformist and nationalist camps. While participation in the reform and nationalist endeavours continued, women did not relinquish their own battle. However, many assumed that freedom of one kind would bring freedom of another, and these individuals were greatly disappointed.

In conclusion, linkages between the various movements are evident upon an analysis of the lives of women. The reform movement provided women with opportunities for education and this in turn opened up a vista of possibilities. Enlightened families also endeavoured to marry their daughters off later in order to enable them to partake fully of educational opportunities. In addition, other social customs such as purdah were discarded. Some fortunate women were also able to avail themselves of remarriage options despite being widowed.

There is a clear continuity of ideology between issues embraced by the reform movement and those focused upon by feminists. For example, both groups dealt with widow remarriage, the education of women, abolition of societal customs, etc. Clearly, there is an overlapping of ideological frames. However, a sharing of cultural frames is an insufficient explanation for explicating connections between movements since social networks (e.g. family background, husband and household composition) and political experience and activism also play a role in linking the various movements.

Exposure to a volatile political climate also meant that many families were very much aware of India's oppressed position. Consequently, some women were aware of political events at an early age. In addition, contact with prominent figures also served to inspire women to set and attain particular goals and participate in various movements. However, awakened women recognized the need for organizations established by, and exclusively for them, since reformers and nationalists offered contradictory images and roles for women.

CHAPTER VIII - CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This research attempted to establish the presence of linkages between a number of movements. More specifically, the objective was to determine the nature of the relationship between the feminist and the social reform movement on the one hand, and nationalism and this same women's movement, on the other. This was accomplished by tracing the lives and career paths of women through a perusal of primary and secondary documents. While some researchers such as Tarrow (1994) and Snow & Benford (1992) offer the concept of the cultural and master frame as a concept for explaining linkages between movements, this research goes further by probing additional elements such as social networks and political career patterns.

From this analysis, it is evident that there are certainly connections between these movements and the social reform movement did in fact lay the groundwork for both the nationalist and feminist movements. However, the impact of the reform and nationalist movement on Indian feminism was paradoxical. While both social reform and nationalism did advance the concerns of women, they also hindered the progress of the feminist movement. For example, social reform advocated female education and emphasized the eradication and improvement of specific customs. Women were also encouraged to participate in the nationalist enterprise. In addition, women were able to penetrate the male veneer of

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politics and venture into the political arena for the first time. However, the masses of women remained consigned to their traditionally conservative roles within the domestic sphere. While leaders like Gandhi encouraged women to leave the domestic sphere, they were often still confined to traditional submissive roles even during the nationalist crusade. In addition, the nationalist movement did not encourage women to mingle with their counterparts of the lower classes since it inspired women to participate on the basis of their roles as spiritual and moral guardians of Indian society (Kumar 1993: 43). However, reforms, education and the tradition of leadership and protest, all equipped women to go on and voice the concerns of Indian women throughout the nation.

There is a continuity in the ideology and arguments advanced by the cluster of movements emerging around the period from the 19th to the early 20th century. These include movements concerned with social and religious reform, the women's movement, and those manned by Gandhi, Khilafat and the militants. This reformist ideology can be viewed as a sort of a master frame since all these movements focused on reforms of various kinds.

> The early years of the 20th century marked two important land - marks in the history of the Indian women's movement: the birth of all-India women's organizations and the beginnings of women's participation in the national movement. Both processes heralded changes probably unforeseen by founders of women's organizations and pioneers who championed the

involvement of women in India's freedom struggle. This
should, however, not create an impression that these
happenings in the beginning of the 20th century
marked a complete break with mid-19th century reform
and late 19th century revival (Chaudhuri 1993: 101).

This master frame served to advance and limit various
activities since it was based on a traditional patriarchal
framework. In the case of the feminist movement, autonomous
women's organizations often originated from this reformist
ideology and consequently shared many of its tenets (Shah
1990: 135). Thus, it was not uncommon for these organizations
to promote the traditional image of the Indian woman. Kalpana
Shah (1984 as cited in Shah 1990: 133) argues that both men
and women viewed the woman as complementary to man than his
equal.

> She is asked to perform some of the functions outside
> the four walls to assist her husband rather than to
> raise her head, to develop her dignity as a human
> being.... They (such women's organizations) have become
> instruments in spreading an ideology which assigns an
> inferior role to women. They strengthen revivalist
> values which are oppressive to women.

The acceptance of reformist ideology was evident from the
educational programmes of these organizations which emphasized
the traditional role of the woman as wife and mother. There
was a tendency to accept and promote separate roles for men
and women. "Neither the social reformers nor the women
activists believed in the separation of roles since according
to them, it neither caused, nor led to, inequality between the
sexes. They believed that their roles were 'complementary to
one another'" (Shah 1984: 47).

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When more radical ideas were proposed which opposed these traditional beliefs, they were not taken seriously by those in positions of power. For example, at one point younger members of the AIWC attempted to reduce the membership fee to enable others to join but this resolution was defeated since the majority felt that such an enterprise would result in communist control of the organization (Chakravarty 1972: 177). "The leaders of the A.I.W.C. never thought or accepted the fact that the real masses of Indian womanhood were in the villages, exploited and crushed under feudal superstition, ground down by poverty".

While women gained much from the social reform and nationalist movement, these movements propagated contradictory roles and images of women. Both these movements sought to dispel the notion of the suffering Indian woman but they sought to do so in such a manner that did not challenge the traditional basis of society. In fact, nationalists partially embraced the cultural frame of the reform movement by expanding and defining roles of women as propagated by reformers to now include politics (Agnew 1976: 239). Ideological continuity ensured that women initially fed on the frames circulated by both the social reform and nationalist movements. For instance, some of the issues dealt with by feminists overlapped quite extensively with those focused on by reformers. However, enlightened women reacted to the injustices evident in terms of negative images of, and

restricted spheres for, women. Consequently, women dissatisfied with the ommission of many feminist issues from both the reform and nationalist agendas separated and mobilized in order to launch contentious collective action against these injustices that they perceived in Indian society. For example, battles for enfranchisement, property rights and the codification of laws were propelled by women themselves.

The cultural frame represents but one facet of the link between these various movements. Other elements examined included social networks such as family background, influence of husband, household composition and the political career patterns of women in terms of experience and activism. Enlightened parents, husbands, relatives and prominent figures in diverse movements, also moulded these women and served to further link the various causes.

There was also some ambivalence in terms of framing the argument of the women's movement since some feminists believed that rights should be accorded on the basis of sexual differentiation and complementarity.

> When it came to the sphere of rights, for example, feminist demands for parity with men (in property rights, to suffrage and education), cut across the affirmation of gender-based difference, for these said that in these spheres at any rate men and women were equal, or the same. To this extent Pre - Independence feminists clung with the one hand to gender-based definitions of themselves while reaching with the other for an existence based on equality and sameness rather than complentary and difference (Kumar 1993: 2).

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However, despite this ambivalence and the fact that many emphasized "the principle of complementarity between the two distinct biologically defined areas of masculine and feminine" the Indian women's movement can be labelled as anti-patriarchal since it contested societal customs that privileged men over women (Kumar 1993: 3 - 4).

To summarize, the cultural frame only partially explains the nature of linkages between various movements. It is vital to examine other elements such as social networks and political career patterns in order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of linkages. In the present analysis, there was a continuity in the ideology employed by all three movements since the master frame generated by the social reform movement is evident in various forms in both the nationalist and women's movements. However, social networks and political career patterns are found to play a significant role in further connecting these movements.

Appendix

Appendix

The returns for the years between supervision and repression in the Bengal Presidency were as follows:

Year	Satis Officially Reported
1815	378
1816	442
1817	707
1818	839
1819	650
1820	598
1821	653
1822	583
1823	575
1824	572
1825	639
1826	518
1827	517
1828	463

(as cited in Natarajan 1959: 32).

Report of the National Committee on Women's Education, Delhi: Ministry of Education 1959: p. 13 (as cited in Shah 1984: 38).

Year	Education Level	Ratio Girls: Boys
1900	primary	12 : 100
1950-1	primary	30 : 100
1901	secondary	4 : 100
1950-1	secondary	15 : 100
1965-66	secondary	26 : 100
1901	college	177 girls
1950-1	college	40,000 girls
1965-66	college	70,000 girls
1901	professional schools	87 girls
1950-1	professional schools	5000 girls
1965-66	professional schools	14 : 100

GLOSSARY

Glossary

AHIMSA - nonviolence

A.H.M.P. - Akal Hind Mahila Parishad - also known as the All India Women's Conference established in 1927 for the uplift of Indian women

A.I.C.C. - All India Congress Committee - executive body of Congress Party

A.I.W.C. - All India Women's Conference - national women's organization founded in 1927 to raise the status of women through education

ASHRAM - religious retreat

BABA - suffix of respect

BAI - meaning "woman" attached to names in Maharashtra

BHAI - brother

BEN - Gujrati term for sister, also term of respect (Basu 1995: 23)

CHANDLA - red vermillion mark on the forehead - indicates marital status

CHARKA - spinning wheel

DADA - elder brother/term of respect

DESH SEVAK - servant of the country

DHARMA - code of conduct

DIDI - elder sister

DURGA - the Mother Goddess - divine energy

GHAT - "the area around a village tank or pond used for bathing and washing" (Karlekar 1991: 43).

HARIJAN - "Child of God" - term used by Gandhi for 'untouchables'

HARTALS - "cessation of work because the soul is suffering, a strike for moral reasons" (Sahgal 1994: 159).

JI - honouric suffix added to names

JYOTI - light

KHADI - handspun handwoven cloth

KRISHNA - "the 8th avatar of Vishnu who is often the object of devotional love" (Mazumdar 1977: 242).

KUMARI - sanskrit for virgin/ unmarried girl (Basu 1995: 23).

KUMKUM - red vermillion worn by women on the forehead or worn as a streak in the parting of the hair - indicates marital status

KUNKU - red powder used in Maharashtra to mark the foreheads of unmarried girls and married women whose husbands are still living (Karve 1963: 303)

LATHI - metal tipped stick utilized by police

LOKAMANYA - title of respect - great sage

MAHARAJA - ruler of high rank

MAHATMA - title of respect - great soul

MAHILA SAMITI - women's society or organization

MANGASUTRA - black thread worn for luck - gold and black chain worn by married women (Basu 1995: 23).

MANTRAS - sacred verses

N.C.W.I. - National Council of Women in India - women's organization formed in the 1920s with the goal of raising the status of women in India through an expansion of rights such as enfranchisement.

NAUTCH - DANCING - "performances by professional girls often suggestve of or leading to sexual involvement" (Heimsath 1964: 355).

PANDIT - title of respect; learned (male)

PANDITA - title of respect; learned (female)

PANT - suffix of respect (only for men)

PUJA - worship

PURDAH - seclusion of women, literally means curtain

RAO - suffix of respect (only for men)

SAMAJ - a society

SAMITI - a society

SATYAGRAHA - literally truthforce - political strategy of nonviolence

SHAKTI - energy personified as Goddess

SHASTRI - man learned in Sanskrit classics

SHASTRAS - Hindu Scriptures

SHRI - Mr

SRIMATI - respectful address for women equivalent of Mrs

SUTTEE - self-immolation of widows usually through fire

SWADESHI - production and use of indigenous products

SWARAJ - self-rule

TAI - older sister (suffix also)

VARNA - one of the four traditional classes of Hindu society - Brahmin, Kshatryia, Vaishya, Shudra (Heimsath 1964: 356).

VEDANTA - "a monistic philosophical system underlying much Hindu religious thought" (Heimsath 1964: 356).

VISHNU - "the second god of the supreme traid, the preserver, often worshipped in the form of one of his avatars such as Rama or Krishna" (Mazumdar 1977: 242).

W.C.I. - Women's Council of India - formed in 1920 for the welfare of women and children through the provision of shelters and rescue homes.

W.I.A. - the Women's Indian Association - women's organization formed in 1917 and assisted in the battle for enfranchisement and laid the foundation for the All India Women's Conference in 1927.

ZENANA - women's quarters of the house

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