

The Role of South Coastal Andhra Women in Freedom Struggle

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Abstract—The Present Paper is confined to the Role of Women in Freedom Movement with reference to South Coastal Andhra Districts of undivided Krishna, Guntur, and Nellore during the years from 1885 and 1947. Hundreds of women participated in the Indian National Movement in different stages. The First War of Indian Independence of 1857 had negligible impact on Andhra. Parlakimidi land movement under the leadership of Dandasena was an isolated movement, which was successfully suppressed by the British under the leadership of Captain Wilson. Another movement was led by Koraturu Village Munsif Korukonda Subba Reddy in Godavari district. Some Arab and Rohillas from the native state of Nizam raided the nearby districts of Krishna, Kurnool and Kadapa. Taluk Khajana at Jaggaiahpet and Rudravaram of Koilkuntla Taluk experienced the raids. As the outbreak of 1857 was very active in and around Delhi, the British in Andhra took suppressive measures on such outbreaks. Former ruling families of Andhra Area did not take any measures to use the existing unrest. So, the Andhra area was peaceful and obedient to the British rule. The Nizam of Hyderabad was friendly with the British during the 1857 movement. But there were anti British out-rage like that of Turrabaz Khan, the Rohilla leader.

Index Terms—Freedom Movement, Role of Women, etc.

I. INTRODUCTION

After 1858 with the beginning of Queen's rule in India, there occurred revolutionary changes in the life of Indians. New trends in lying of public roads, modernization of education system brought far reaching changes in the life of Indians leading ultimately to the Indian Freedom Movement. But the structure and functioning of village culture remained the same. Towns and cities played their role in business and industry and religious activity. Textile

making with good quality began to flourish, Metallurgy, stone work, pot making, paper making, Leather industry began to be patronized. Villages were self-reliant in providing domestic utensils used by villagers. With the outbreak of Industrial Revolution in Europe Great Britain was fortunate enough to have colonial empire as business and marketing in the Indian colonial arena. Due to this the age-old village economic structure was scattered giving place to new European based economy. Capitalism began to influence Indian economy.

Common administrative machinery and introduction of modern education policy encouraged the elite of the Indian society towards liberal ideas. A new renaissance began among the elite society towards progress and transformation in socio economic revival. The English system of education questioned the age-old social evils. The movements of Swamy Dayananda Saraswathi, Rama Krishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and Divyagnana Samaj played their role in the reformation of Indian socio-religious life. They encouraged Hindu religious renaissance and birth of nationalism. American war of Independence and the French Revolution had their impact on Indians. Queen Victoria proclamation assured equality of Indian subjects along with the British population, but during the course of administration from 1858 showed discrimination to Indians. Removal of Surendranath Benerjee from Indian Civil Service was the glaring example of such discrimination. This led to the starting of Indian Association in 1876 by Surendranath Benerjee. The British Arms Act of 1878 and restrictions on Indian vernacular press aggravated the situation.

Vice-Roy Rippon's administrative measures were favourable to the Indians, which measures like Ilbert

Bill (1883) irked the Europeans in India. To oppose the Anglo-Indian claims, Surendranath Benerjee started Indian National Conference in Calcutta in 1883. Lord Ripon abolished Vernacular Press Act and introduced local self-government. It was A.O. Hume who helped the Indians to form a political platform by starting the Indian National Congress in 1885. The establishment of Indian National Congress was one of the decisive events in Indian history.

Between the years 1858 and 1885 several news papers sprang up to air the public opinion in India. In Andhra in Bellary, a Christian Association started a magazine with the title of "Satya Duta". This was followed by 'Tatvabodhini' from Madras (1864). With the entry of Kandukuri Veerasalingam Pantulu, Telugu Press and social reform movement got long lasting impacts leading to a renaissance in Andhra. In 1874 he started a Telugu weekly with the title 'Vivekavardhini' from Rajahmundri. He had also started Satihita Bodhini exclusively for women folk. Through his articles he condemned child marriages, caste system, women prostitution and other social evils. He encouraged widow remarriages. Following his example several Telugu news papers sprang up from Madras. In 1885 the first Political newspaper 'Andhra Prakasika' began its first publication under the editorship of A.P. Pardha Saradhi naidu. Madras Native Association (1852) Madras Mahajana Sabha, Kakinada Literary Association played their part in the Andhra renaissance. From 1885 representatives from Andhra used to participate in the Annual session of Indian National Congress.

From the beginning of National Movement Indian men used to participate in public movements. But with the starting of schools for girls, women were also attracted to public agitation. Several women in the circar districts participated in the agitations organized by the national activists of Andhra region. As the present study is confined to the South Andhra Coastal districts of Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore, efforts are directed to bring out women participants in Indian National Movement between 1900 and 1947. More women were attracted to various phases of national movement with the call of Mahatma Gandhi. The writings and activities of Kandukuri Veerasalingam made the women to think in the lines of female literacy and participation of women in public affairs as against the belief that women were confined to domestic work of their families. The

period followed by the outbreak of 1857 was one of social reform and social reconstruction. Social reformers appeared on the stage of Andhra to uplift the womanhood of the land. The need of educating women in India had by now started receiving some attention. Girls began to join in school and colleges. There were still several impediments in the way of women's freedom on par with men.

The birth of the Indian National Congress in 1885 furnished a political platform to women. It was in the year 1900 that Swarna Kumari and J. Gangoli attended the Congress session held in Calcutta as delegates from Bengal. This was perhaps a begging of the new era and now onward women from around the country took an increasingly active part in the political activities of the country. The first decade of the 20th century witnessed revolutionary activities in the political field. The Home Rule movement indirectly encouraged women to participated in public affairs. In the following years women of India as well as of Andhra got a new tool in the form of passive resistance introduced by Gandhiji. Thousands of women joined the Satyagraha Army of Gandhiji. They raised their voice against the Rowlatt Bill, Salt Laws, Forest Laws and went to jail as a consequence of their defiance.

While men were in prison, it was left to the women of Andhra to guide and lead the people during the critical periods. In a bid to achieve their aim they had to face Lathi blows and bullets, but once they had decided to come out and work for freedom, there was no going back from it. The demand for independence brought in other concessions for Indians in the form of Government of India Act 1935. By virtue of this act, ministries were formed in the provinces after the general elections. Women contested some seats and were elected. Vijayalakshmi Pandit became the first woman minister while Ansuyabai Kale and Sipi Milani became the Deputy Speakers of Central Provinces and Sindhi Assembles respectively. The ministries did not last long and they functioned hardly for two years when the Second World war broke out and the Governor General thrust India into the whirlpool of war on the British side. There upon the congress ministries resigned. This crisis was followed by first the individual Satyagrahas and later by the Quit India Movement in 1942. The situation was the same with Andhra region of Madras Presidency.

The leaders who initiated the movement were arrested in the first round up. So the women of India stepped forward to carry on the movement for independence. Indian women outside India also took up the cause of their motherland and joined the ranks of the Indian National Army. The Second World War ended in 1945 and in the same year the Labour Party under Attlee came into the power in England. Prime Minister Attlee announced his government's desire to transfer power to the Indians. The Indian Independence Act of 1947 declared India as an independent country. "The impact of West on Indian Civilization has brought about changes that are more fundamental in the case of women than men. To men it brought a new conception of the political possibilities, but to the women it brought slowly but potentially a new conception on themselves. If men reassessed themselves citizens in a new India, women revalued themselves as human beings in a new social order."⁽¹⁾

II. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GROWTH OF NATIONAL FEELING AMONG THE WOMEN IN ANDHRA

Women played significant role in the history of freedom movement in India as well as South Andhra. Many are of opinion that the movement would not have been successful but for the participation of women. It is really surprising that women could take such a lead in the movement when it was often believed that they occupied a subservient position in the society. It may appear paradoxical but it is true. In the 19th and 20th centuries several efforts were made by the social and political reformers to uplift women, to educate them and train them so that they would imbibe the ideas of nationalism, patriotism, liberty, democracy etc. We come across individuals like Kandukuri Veeraslingam, Raghupathi Venkata Ratnam Naidu and others and institutions like Brahma Samaj, Women's Indian Association and other local associations which occupy foremost place in the emancipation of women. An attempt is made to highlight the various factors responsible for the growth of national feeling among women and Andhra. Social freedom was interlinked with political freedom. For the progress of a nation both are necessary.

Strictly speaking there had been no feminist movement in India similar to any of those that originated in the west. Raja Ram Mohan Roy began the movement for women liberation while Gandhiji; has brought it to climax. In between these two giant leaders there were a number of social reformers. India was blessed with a galaxy of leaders like Dr. Annie Besant, Mahatma Gandhi, Veerasalingam and others for the growth of national feeling among women. They made the utmost effort to reform women so as to enable them to participate actively in the freedom movement. There were men who, while struggling for political freedom, wanted their women to help them in realizing this and obeyed Gandhiji to whom improvement of women's status was a pre-requisite for political freedom. So women's movement and political movement come to be intertwined. An attempt was also made to explain how women, while working for country's freedom, were also fighting for their own freedom and hence started agitating for more and more rights. An attempt is also made to study the social and economic position of women in the society. Finally we find how the ground was prepared for the major struggle in which women took prominent part. By the middle of the 19th century various forces like English education, press and other factors prepared the ground to sow the seeds of reform.

The spread of western ideas and culture was facilitated by the growth of the press. Educated women soon started publishing standard words with a view to transform society which was steeped in the tradition and custom. One of the outcomes of development of the press was the library movement, which was started in 1914 to inculcate socio-political awakening among the people of Andhra. A number of libraries in different parts of Andhra came up. Ayyanki Venkata Ramanayya introduced a touring library especially for encouraging women's education. In some of the libraries separate sections for women and children were earmarked. Some libraries in villages organized home delivery of books for women in night school. This library movement and the press produced stalwarts like Rukmini Lakshmipathi, Ponaka Kanakamma and Unnava Lakshmiyamma who took a leading part in the freedom struggle. Rukmini Lakshmipathi emerged as the first graduate and an ideal example to the entire women folk of Andhra.

One more factor that was responsible for the growth of political consciousness among women was the role played by different organizations meant for women empowerment. They contributed much to the progress of women in education and politics and in bringing them out from their seclusion into public life. Thus, women were able to extend their activities from their homes to the country. The earliest organization was the Women's Association at Rajahmundry established in 1902 by Kitikalapudi Seetamma. In November 1902 Bandaru Achamamba and Oruganti Ratnamamba started a Women's Association in Machilipatnam. Their objective was to encourage like-minded women to gather at one place and occasion to exchange their ideas and persuade them to deliver a series of lectures to the illiterate on topics like management by household affairs and public issues. A few years later new blood got infused into this organization with the joining of Valluri Parvathamma, T. Singamma etc. Their example was followed by women of other towns in Andhra.

Women's Indian Association was started in 1917 in Madras (Chennai) with the inspiration of Mrs. Annie Besant. Its prominent members included Mrs. Cousins, Muthulakshmi Reddy and others to spread this movement by organizing its branches in several places. Later this organization developed as the All-India Women's Conference with branches throughout the country. It effectively highlighted the problems of women which gained considerable public attention. It started tackling the educational and social problems of the day with special reference to women. Its branch in Andhra took up the cause of women with spirited militancy, and intensified the agitation for a comprehensive programme of educational, social, economic and political advancement of women. It was successful in mobilizing public opinion in favour of women's rights. It eventually becomes an unofficial Congress auxiliary and urged women to take the Khaddar and Swadesi as effective instruments for the promotion of the economic welfare of the country as a whole.

The beginning was not attractive and was only on a small scale but nevertheless the process had symptoms of growth. By the middle of 1920's they had their share in the form of collecting funds for the Tilak Swaraj Fund or fund for the Congress party, providing food and shelter for freedom fighters'

families. Countless women contributed to these causes. Probably they could not go further an account of hearing their hardships of the male members of their families who participated in the Freedom struggle. Slowly some women started organizing processions, picketing liquor and government shops. Maximum number of women joined the spinning of Khadi. The charka reached every house-hold both in the urban and rural areas. This was largely due to the efforts of women, who did it with religious fervor. We see a gradual change in the trend by 1930, the activists came forward in courting arrests during the 1930 movement and this continued for a decade. They braved the Lathis and bullets of the army and the humiliations and tortures inflicted on them in the prisons. In short, they were present willingly and actively on whatever front they were needed. They did full justice to the confidence reposed by Gandhiji in them and their capabilities. However, we notice a change in the trend of women's mass participation in the movements of 1940 and 1942. They never resorted to hasty action. Further they were staunch believers of non-violence as such their participation in the 1942 movement was not very vigorous.

III. SALT SATYAGRAHA IN SOUTH COASTAL ANDHRA DISTRICTS

The following describes the participation of women in the coastal Andhra Salt Satyagraha Movement, which spanned from Vizagapatam in the northeast to Nellore in the south. Mass gatherings were staged at Eluru, Guntur, Vijayawada, and other locations before to the Salt Satyagraha campaign's official launch. Motivational speeches were given, and the public was urged to support the cause. Satyagrah received instruction on how to disobey salt rules without resorting to violence. Madgole and Vizianagaram in the Vizagapatam district, Sitanagaram in East Godavari, Eluru in West Godavari, Vijayawada in West Krishna, Masulipatnam in East Krishna, Guntur town in Guntur, and Pallipadu in Nellore were the destinations of special "shibirams" that were opened. These 'sibirams' were intended to be the centres where from volunteers were to move in batches to defy the provisions of the Salt Act.

To continue the Satyagraha Movement, the A.P.C.C. named Desabhakta Konda Venkatappayya the Dictator of the whole Andhra region. A war council was supposed to advise the district dictator in each district. With great zeal and fearlessness, the Andhriles joined the Salt Satyagraha, taking advantage of Gandhi's counsel and direction via their leaders. A march from the 'shibhram' to the coastal cities was originally planned on March 31, 1930, Telugu New Year's Day, with the salt rule to be broken on April 6. However, not all districts finished their preparations by April 6; instead, each district committee was given the freedom to select its own data for violating the legislation, with the requirement that it be done within the national week, which runs from April 6 to April 13.

The call of Salt Satyagraha and the civil disobedience campaign galvanized women in coastal Andhra. By disobeying salt and forest restrictions, removing "Prabhat Pheries," organizing processions, picketing schools, universities, legislative bodies, and clubs, the coastal Andhra women began their journey toward freedom. Lathi charges, shootings, arrests, section 144, press ordinances, illegal incitement ordinances, and intimidation ordinances were all used by the government to satisfy the legitimate demand.

Krishna District:

Krishna District, which had plenty of resources, was the area next to East Godavari where the Salt Satyagraha spread quickly. Geographically speaking, the district provided the best natural salt that might be likened to the English lanchashire salt or the Dandi salt on the west coast of India. On the eve of Salt Satyagraha, T. Prakasam visited Kona, which is close to Machilipatnam. He was so impressed by the white crystals there that he said they were on par with the best in the world. The people of Krishna district became extremely agitated and made the decision to produce salt on the seashore as a result of a number of occurrences, including the celebration of Independence Day on January 26, the raising of black flags in opposition to the governor's visit, and Sambamurthy's provocative statements.

Therefore, in Kona, which is about 15 miles from Machilipatnam and has a quantity of natural salt, all of the district's senior leaders, including A. Kaleswara Rao, Dr. Pattabhi, Mutnuri Krislma Rao,

and Cherukuvada Narasimham, agreed to break the salt ban. After the location was determined, a sizable contingent of volunteers from Machilipatnam and Vijayawada arrived in Kona without discrimination. On April 8, 1930, M. Krislina Rao and A. Kaleswara Rao violated the salt prohibition.⁴⁶ On the same day, Pattabhi also violated the salt prohibition. A third group of 120 volunteers, led by Kotagiri Venkata Krishna Rao, the district dictator, came in Kona on foot and broke salt regulations. At Machilipatnam's Tila Chowk, Dr. Pattabhi and Konda Venkatappayya delivered motivational remarks. As a result, salt became a curiously powerful term among the general public. The police started arresting the Satyagrahis after receiving orders from the Provincial Government. Kaleswara Rao and Pattabhi were both taken into custody. They encouraged their followers to keep going and complete the tasks they left undone instead of giving up.

Perhaps as a result of these messages, the women of the Krishna area took part in the Salt Satyagraha campaign with the greatest fervor, picketing liquor stores, international liquor stores, courts, and government buildings in addition to directly making salt. About 100 women, including Indumati Devi, Subhadramma, D. Durgamma, and Savithramma, who often stayed inside their homes, came out and marched in the streets, singing national songs and yelling slogans against their leaders' incarceration, as Women emerged as a new force. Since the days of non-cooperation, women's involvement in the Freedom Movement has been recognized in this neighborhood, but it was remarkable and uncommon to witness them in such huge numbers at a demonstration in the open streets.

An uneducated lady named Narra Seetaramamma was apprehended by a salt inspector on May 3, 1930, on suspicion of possessing illegal salt. As a result, she was forced to stand in the blazing sun from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and was also had to pay a fine of Rs. 50. But being an unflappable woman, she responded with great courage: "Why do I travel to the seashore and gather salt in the sweltering heat while perspiring if I could pay Rs. 50? I would be happy to go to jail, which is a better home for me, if you think I deserve to be imprisoned. Do you think that life is dependent entirely on food and foreign cloth alone?" when she

so rebutted, the inspector was dazed and hung his head as if admitting his defeat and he said, "I have never seen a woman so fearless as she is". This incident indicates that the police did not spare females also.

Narra Sitaramamma, Padurthi Sundaramma, Boppana Lakshmi Kanthamma, and Perambudhuri Subhadramma were the ladies from Krislina district who actively engaged in the salt preparation process. One of them, Perambudhuri Subhadramma, was a child widow at the tender age of fifteen and hailed from an orthodox Hindu household. However, she enrolled at Queen Mary's High School in Visakhapatnam after her brother encouraged her to do so. She joined the national campaign at Mahatma Gandhi's invitation and traveled the whole west Krishna district with Padurthi Sundaramma to spread the Salt Satyagraha campaign. She also objected to Pattabi Sitamayya and A. Kaleswara Rao's detention.

Alongside Perambudhuri Subhadramma, Padurthi Sundaramma also took part in Salt Satyagraha and spoke at public gatherings. She was able to motivate her kids in this way; one day, her eight-year-old son also spoke at a public gathering, inspiring many. She and her sister traveled to Nellore to take part in the liquor license auction and boycott of Akbari sales. Together with Subhadramma, she traveled to Kona and made salt. She courageously carried the national flag into the streets and performed patriotic songs when section 144 was put into effect. Everyone was in awe of her bravery and audacity. She was arrested on 26th August 1930 and sentenced to six months imprisonment in Vellore jail. She was in jail with eminent leaders like Durgabai Deshmukh, Achanta Rukminamma, and Chunduri Ratnamma. She was released due to Gandhi-Irwin Pact on 26th February, 1931.

Venkatappayya was the father of Kesavaraju Kamakshamma, who lived in Machilipatnam. She participated in the Salt Satyagraha Movement and was given a six-month S.I. term at Vellore prison on November 19, 1930. On March 7, 1931, she was freed as a result of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Another woman, Duggirala Kamalamba, lived in the Gudivada taluk's Angalur. She was an ardent

supporter of Gandhi's principles and carried out his beneficial initiatives, such as spicing, weaving, spreading khadi, picketing in front of stores selling foreign products and alcohol, and Harijan upliftment. She encouraged women to routinely wear khadi and spin. On January 27, 1931, she was given a 4-month S.I. sentence at Vellore jail for her involvement in the Salt Satyagraha Movement at the age of 22. However, because to Gandhi, she was freed on March 7, 1931.-The Irwin Pact.

Born in 1900, Tripuraneni Kousalya was the daughter of Arekapudi Brahmayya. She married Tripuraneni Anjayya and moved to Angular in Gudivada taluk. Both her mother and brother were imprisoned for their involvement in the National Movement. She took part in the 1930 Salt Satyagraha Movement. She was given one year of R.L. and a fine of Rs. 100/-, or six more weeks of R.J. if she didn't pay. Ernani Amrutamma of An'galuru is a well-known name among the picketers. She came from a line of liberation warriors. She took part in the movement against the Rowlatt Bill, the Guntur district's No-Tax campaign, and the effort to raise one crore rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Ernani Subrahmanyam, her brother-in-law, carried salt from Dandi to Vijayawada and represented Andhra in the Dandi March of Gandhi in 1930. Her family members sent it around in little packages, and money was raised for Congress.

Ghanta Mallikamba lived in the Gudivada taluk's Ankannagudem. She was born to Balta Penumarru in 1911. She was Viraraghavayya's wife and the daughter of Yelamanchili Kotayya. The Ernani family had an impact on her. Her spouse likewise fought for independence. He adhered to Gandhian ideals and was impacted by Gandhiji. He worked in agriculture. The pair, Viraraghavayya and Ghanta Mallikamba, promoted Gandhi's positive policies, such as boycotting liquor stores and foreign products and khadi. She was found guilty of participating in the 1930 Salt Satyagraha Movement and was sentenced to one year in prison and a fine of Rs. 100/-, or six weeks in prison if she didn't pay the fine. She went to jail with her nine-month-old infant in tow and left her three-year-old daughter at her grandmother's house. Elamanchili Sitamahalakshamma was the name of her first daughter, while Gutta Sarojird Devi was the name of

her second.⁵³ Donepudi Bamma, who lives in Divi taluk's Ghantasala. Vemuri Lakshmayya was her father, and Sitaramayya was her spouse. In 1931, she took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement and received a jail term.

Her husband, Dr. Ghantasala Sitarama Sarma, who was an ardent freedom fighter in the region, served as an inspiration to Ghantasala Kanaka Durgamba. She was a Bandar inhabitant. She was motivated by Gandhiji and adopted his positive initiatives, like spinning, donning khadi, and using Mahila Mandals to spread khadi among women. She took part in Nagara Sanicirtans and Prabhat Pheris. Along with other women, she participated in the Salt Satyagraha Movement. She made salt and sold it. Despite receiving a warrant, she was not taken into custody. She offered her spouse her whole cooperation. She advocated for the abolition of untouchability, the creation of libraries, and mahila mandals.

As a participant in the Salt Satyagraha Movement, Guttikonda Lakshamma was fined Rs. 200 and imprisoned for six months in 1930. Additionally, Kotagiri Mangatayamma participated in the 1930 Salt Satyagraha Movement. She was given a six-month jail term in Vellore after being apprehended at Nettaru. Arekapudi Manikyamba lived in the Gudivada taluk's Angalur. A. Brahmayya was her spouse. In 1930, she was incarcerated alongside her son and daughter for their involvement in the Salt Satyagraha.

In 1930, Tummala Satyavatamma participated in the Salt Satyagraha Movement. She was detained at Bandar while making salt, but she was released later. She then took part in the 20-day picketing of imported clothing in Vijayawada. She was arrested once again and released. By splattering her with colored water, the cops made fun of her. She was forced to endure the sweltering sun for the entire day without sustenance.

Ramineni Rajamma lived in the Vijayawada taluk's Garikaparru. Potluri Venkayya was the father of her. Both her husband and sister, Surapaneni Annapurnamma, were imprisoned for their involvement in the independence movement. She participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930–31. As part of the Gandhi-L'win Pact, she was

freed after being detained and held in Guntur sub-jail. Gade Subbamma lived in the Vijayawada taluk's Garikaparru. When she took part in the Salt Satyagraha Movement in 1931, she was arrested and held in detention at Guntur sub-jail for ten days. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact led to her freedom.

Gadireddi Putlamma was born at Janardhanapuram in 1911. She was the daughter of Kondapalli Venkata Reddy and the wife of Raghava Reddy. They resided in Nandivada in the Gudivada taluk. She was seized and taken into police prison in Ravulapadu in 1931 and 1932 while disseminating Congress bulletins. Purnatilakamma lived in Gudivada. Her husband was Rama Kotayya. She took part in the civil disobedience campaign. She was sentenced to six months S.I. in Vellore jail on March 3, 1931. She was freed on March 1, 1931, as a result of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact.

Vallabhaneni Sitamahalakshamma lived in Gudivada taluk's Jamigolvepalli. Women were separated into sections during the Salt Satyagraha Movement. One such group, led by Sitamaha Lakshamma, disobeyed section 144 by picketing in front of liquor and clothing stores owned by foreigners. She organized a sizable contingent of female volunteers to spread the Movement throughout the rural areas. She was cautioned not to leave the residence by the police officers who watched her. The cops doused her and other women's faces with mud, chilly powder, colored water, unclean water, and even alcohol when they disobeyed. This was flung at the women with such force that some of them passed out. All these women were arrested and left at distant lonely places. But none of the women were tired or disappointed but repeated their action with more vigour.

Paladuga Varalakshamma and her spouse, Venkata Subbarao, took part in the conflict and were imprisoned. In 1931, she took part in the foreign cloth burning. She was rendered unconscious when the cops poured colored and dirt-filled water in her face when she was picketing a foreign clothing store. A Swiss woman named Uppala Sholinger took part in every Congress Movement starting in 1930. At Kona, close to Machilipatnam, she manufactured illegal salt alongside Padurti Sundaramma and Perumbaduri

Subhadramma. She raised money for the Congress by selling salt. Because she was a European woman, the British government was hesitant to arrest her.

Following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact in Vijayawada, Padurthi Sundaramma and Perambudhri Subhadramma, together with a few other members, constituted a single "Reception Committee" for all the female volunteers returning from the prisons. Since inmates were not permitted to have head showers in the jail and the food served there was subpar, the female volunteers received a warm greeting, head baths, a nice meal, etc. Both Sundaramma and Subhadramma took a ship from Bombay to Karachi in 1931 to attend the Karachi Congress session. She learned at that time that Gandhiji had comforted Tliat Bhagat Singh's father over the loss of his son. Sundaramma became more resolved to fight for the country's freedom after seeing this pitiful scenario. She participated in prayers, flag raising, Prabhat Pheris, and other events every day. Gandhi commended her when she was first presented to him and said that only women could properly spin and weave khadi. Along with Devulapalli Satyavatamma, Durgabai Subbadramma, and Ranganayakamma, she attended the Hindustani Sevadal Sibiram, which was held in Bombay. For self-defense, she studied martial arts such as the use of a sword and stick. Women were more prevalent than any other community and played a major role in the Krishna district, where kmmas were common.

Guntur District:

Under the direction of K. Venkatappayya, the campaign was launched in the town of Guntur in the district. The women's section of the volunteers, led by Smt. Urmava Lakshmibayamma and Smt. Rukmini Lakshmi pathi, went around the city urging the women to participate in the Satyagraha Movement and observe Swarajya Lakshmi Vratam on Telugu New Year's Day, which fell on March 31, 1930. After notifying the District Magistrate beforehand of their plan to violate the salt laws, K. Venkatappayya, N.V.L. Narasimharao, and G. Sitarama Sastry led a group of 100 volunteers to the seashore near Ganapavaram and Vadarevu on April 9, 1930. They brought salt earth and brine and made salt in Venka Tappayya's home.

"Veera Gandham Techinaramu Veerulevvaro Telupudi" was spoken with passion by Smt. Unnava Lakshmibayamma after the salt crystals had formed and dispersed. As she stated, volunteers lined up, and she gave them little amounts of white powder one by one. She also tied their hands with rakhis, signifying that they would be stewards of the nation's honor and reputation.

16 of the 20 people in the group who made salt the next day were women. On the 12th, volunteers led by Istli A. Kaleswara Rao and Kasi Viswanadham successfully broke the salt restrictions at Vadarevu. The salt that was carried from Tliere was then sold during a public gathering in Tenali.⁵⁹ In addition to raiding the Kanuparti Salt plant on April 26, 41 volunteers persuaded 300 people to harvest salt by following their lead. At first, the District Collector showed no interest in this campaign. The Satyagraha's founders, N.V.L. Narasimha Rao and Itikala Venkata Rama Sastry, were detained after a while, and the police brutally attacked several defenseless men and women.

Notable was the efforts of Sarada Niketanam's female pupils and Unnava Lakshmibayamma. During the Gandhian era, she was a prominent female satyagrahi. As the spouse of Lakshmi Narayana, a social worker and liberation warrior, she assisted him in all of his endeavors. - As a devoted disciple of Gandhiji, Lakshmibayamma incorporated his beneficial initiatives into her Sarada Niketan. The Niketan's everyday activities included singing national songs, opposing untouchability, spinning, and wearing khaddar. Together with Achanta Rukmini Lakshmi pathi, she traveled throughout Andhra in 1930 to encourage women and spread the Satyagraha Movement.

Santi Samara Sibiram was organized in Guntur by Lakshmibayamma. On May 4, 1930, a group of female volunteers led by her arrived in Ghirala. They convened a meeting in Bodipalem, where Lakshmibayamma addressed women's assembly and conducted a bonfire of foreign textiles. When Lakshmibayamma was spearheading the Salt Satyagraha at Devarampadu, Kalangi Seshamamba was also with her in the sibiram. Lakshmibayamma was detained by the police without a warrant after they disrupted the sibiram. The circle inspector said

that he had every authority to arrest her without a warrant when she questioned why. Despite her tenacious protests against this illegality, it was regrettable that she was beaten and hurried into a vehicle before other satyagrahis could follow.

Similarly, the same day in Devarampadu, Smt. Seshumamba boldly led a party of sixteen women to offer Satyagraha, but she was halted by reserve constables, who had the women wait in the sweltering heat for an hour. Although the treatment of the ladies was unquestionably brutal and typical from the perspective of the police, it also demonstrated the women's strong sense of patriotism and loyalty. Lakshmibayamma received a sentence of six months in Vellore Prison, which she had to serve from June 9, 1930, to December 8, 1930. Suryadevara Armapumama and Vadlamudi Annapuramma also took part in the Salt Satyagraha of 1930 and were arrested and released soon.

Desiraju Sambasiva Rao had an impact on Konda Alivelumanga Satyavathi and her sister Kanuparti Hanumayamma, who thereafter joined the political activities. At Kothapeta in Guntur, K.A. Satyavathi organized a Congress sibiram. She also planned public gatherings, processions, nagara sankirtanas, and Prabhat pheris. She raised money for congressional sibirams. While picketing foreign clothing, she was taken into custody and held for 20 days at the Guntur sub-jail. She kept up the positive picketing in front of booze and foreign products stores. She actively made and marketed salt packets as well. She provided care for Salt Satyagraha participants who were injured. On August 20, 1930, she participated in the Salt Satyagraha and was given a sentence of six months in prison and a fine of Rs. 50, or two months in prison in Vellore if she didn't pay.

During the 1930 Salt Satyagraha Movement, Mantena China Atchayarfma took part. Gollapudi Sitarama Sastri's presence and invitation to join the Salt Satyagraha inspired all of the ladies in Mantenavaripalem. Due to her involvement in the Salt Satyagraha Movement, Tummala Chandramma was imprisoned in the Vellore Prison for six months starting on July 16, 1930. Participants in the Salt Satyagraha, including Pattipati Sitamma, Vasireddi

Hanumayamma, Gaddipati Pitchamma, Kalidindi Sitamma, Tummala Tulasamma, Nagalla Krishnavenamma, Ekkala Punnamma, Kalangi Seshamamba, and others, were imprisoned for varying brief periods of time.

The environment in which Konda Parvathi Devi was raised inspired her to take up the cause of liberation. Venkata Subbamma and Konda Venkatappayya were her parents. She and her mother met Gandhiji when she was ten years old. She really followed Gandhiji's advice to study Hindi, spin frequently, and wear khadi. The renowned song "Veera Gandhamu Techinaramum, Veerulevvaro Telpudi..." by Tripuraneni Rama Swamy was sung by Unnava Lakshmibayamma, Konda Parvathi, and the girls of Sarada Niketan during the 1930 Salt Satyagraha Movement. They also applied the fragrance and tied sacred threads to the satyagrahis' hands. Her involvement in the Salt Satyagraha was noteworthy even though she was not jailed. She served as editor of 'Veera Bharathi' a Telugu women's weekly during 1931-32. She followed the constructive programme of Gandhiji to a great extent. Due to ill health she could not come out frequently for participation in movements.

The government did everything it could to shut down the main sibiram in Guntur, but when it enforced Section 144, it was disregarded everywhere. The police went to the sibiram in Guntur, declared the gathering unlawful, and asked the prisoners to leave. When they refused, they made a lathi-charge and took some of the female volunteers by force.⁶⁷ Even wearing khadi and Gandhi caps is a serious offense. Mantena Annapurna Devi lived in the Bapatla taluk's Mantenavaripalem. Mantenavaripalem's political participation was well known. The visits of various leaders to their community served as an inspiration to the ladies of Mantenavaripalem. Armapurna Devi was already employed by and connected to the Congress. She wore khadi and was employed by Khadi. In 1931, she was arrested for picketing booze and foreign goods stores, and she spent three days in sub-jail as a result. ^^ On August 5, 1930, Maddula Chinnamraa was taken into custody and given a one-year harsh jail term along with a Rs. 200 fine. Because of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, she was

imprisoned at the Vellore Prison till her release on March 7, 1931.

As a result, while the Guntur district joined the Salt Satyagraha three days later than the East Godavari and Krishna districts, it nevertheless made a significant contribution. Guntur district rose to a high level with intense and profound nationalist consciousness thanks to the capable leadership of Konda Vehkatappayya, the bold and attractive N.V.L. Narasimha Rao, and women like Sheshumamba, Unnavalakshmi Bayamma, Tummala Durgamba, Suryadevara Rajyalakshmi Devi, Kollakanavalli Tayamma, and others. But with its ascent and comeback, Guntur district joined East Godavari and Krishna districts to create a powerful trio that helped bring Coastal Andhra to the forefront of the nationwide Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement.

IV. NELLORE DISTRICT

From an agricultural standpoint, the Nellore area, which is located next to Guntur, was incredibly resourceful. One of the nicest beaches in Coastal Andhra was located at Mypaud. On January 26, 1930, Independence Day was celebrated, sowing the seeds for the Civil Disobedience Movement. As a Satyagraha volunteer training camp, Pallipadu Satyagraha Ashram was selected. In order to establish Salt Satyagraha in Nellore, B. Gopala Reddy and O. Venkata Subbaiah prepared the essential ground. On April 11, 1930, they planned to proceed to Mypaud Beach in two groups to break the salt regulations there. So in the morning of April 7, 1930, O. Venkata Subbaiah, the dictator led the first batch of volunteers like V. Raghavayya, L. Subba Reddy, B. Gopala Reddy and V. Ramalingam. In the evening the second batch consisting of volunteers like Duwuri Balarama Reddy and others proceeded.

O. Venkata Subbaiah's wife, O. Mahalakshamma, offered 'haratis' and 'kumkum' to the members of these two batches and prayed to God for the movement's success. For the first time, women and men played a significant role together, making it a breathtaking sight. These satyagrahis were greeted with flowers and chandanam by the people of Mypad. People bowed before the pots as though they were

gods, and Ponaka Kanakamma and Oruganti Mahalakshamma adorned them with kumkum and turmeric.

The wife of editor 'Simhapuri' Paturu Subbaramayya, Smt. Paturu Bala Saraswathamma, joined the volunteer corps to provide Salt Satyagraha. She was the third female member of the Salt Satyagraha Movement in Nellore. She joined the second group of volunteers and marched through the streets of Nellore with them, carrying one kid in her arms and two others walking behind her. On May 20, 1930, O. Venkatasubbayya, Khasa Subba Rao, and sixteen other volunteers produced salt at Mypad and transported it to Nellore, thwarting the police's attempts to seize it. Thus, at a number of locations around the Nellore district, including Mypad, Gogulapalle, Gangapatnam, Tummulapenta, Naidupeta, Duggirajapatnam, Nidugurti, Venadu, and Sulturpet, among others, the salt rules were violated. The recruits were dispersed among several centers by the dictator. A significant number of women also joined the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Butchi Krishnamma was the sister of renowned artist Damerla Rama Rao and the daughter of Damerla Venkata Ramana Rao. She was Digumarti Hanumantha Rao's wife. Together with her spouse, she tried to improve the lives of Harijans. The couple established Pinakini Ashram for the Harijans in Pallepada, close to Nellore. She was a real Gandhian, a constructive worker, and a Satyagrahi who took part in the independence movement. Inspired by Gandhiji, she took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Salt Satyagraha from an early age. She carried out Gandhiji's constructive agenda, which included upliftment of Harijans and picketing of liquor and foreign goods stores. Khadi was spread by her. Because her father persuaded her to manage the Pallepada Ashram, she was able to avoid going to jail.

She continued to maintain Brahmacharya as a Gandhian even after she got married. She used songs, plays, and pamphlets to spread the word about Congress. She was a really good artist. She received awards from both the All-India Art Exhibition and English exhibits. Korutur resident Smt. G. Hanumayamma was summoned to appear before the salt inspector in order to respond to the accusation of

illegal salt. To oversee the activities related to Salt Satyagraha, P. Kanakamma, O. Mahalakshamma, and Gandavarapu Nagabhushanamma constituted a committee. The Salt Satyagrahis who were summoned before the court were asked not to come. The Committee urged Muslims and Hindus to coexist since their union would result in freedom. It asked American and European missionaries to sympathize with the Indians' nonviolent conflict with the British government. The Government cracked down on the press too. It gave a notice under the press ordinance to Paturi Subbaramaiah, the owner and editor of Simhapuri press.⁸⁹ Thus the Simhapuri, Ramakrishna and Sarada presses were closed owing to the demand of security in 1930.

The Movement involved Oruganti Mahalakshamma's entire family, including her husband, daughter, and sons. In 1930, Mahalakshamma participated in the Salt Satyagraha movement. On June 27, 1930, she was taken into custody, given a six-month R.I., and sent to Vellore prison. She once more joined the group of Congress volunteers who picketed foreign clothing stores during the 1931 Civil Disobedience Movement after being released. In addition, her daughter Maitreyi promoted the principles of the Civil Disobedience Movement and participated in picketing international clothing stores. She signed up as a volunteer. She sold khaddar and performed powerful patriotic songs for the crowd.

Despite her poor condition, Ponaka Kanakamma went into police custody. She is P. Subbarami Reddy's wife. Marapuri Kodanda Rami Reddy, her brother, was a renowned author. She acquired some literary traits from her Marapuri ancestry. She wrote several pieces for Hindu Sundari and Grihnlakshmi magazines. She worked as a social worker as well. She spearheaded the picketing of foreign clothing in Nellore after being influenced by Gandhiji. At Nellore, a group of women volunteers from Madras and West Godavari joined forces to burn piles of foreign fabric. The ladies of Nellore spontaneously supported and participated in the Salt Satyagraha in Mypadu and Pallepadu. Along with other women Kanakamma was also arrested for violating the salt laws. She underwent six months imprisonment from June 27, 1930 in the Nellore and Vellore jails.

The District Magistrate of Nellore also sentenced Subbavarapu Tayaramnia to six months of simple jail on the same day. Ponnaluru Ramanamma, a native of Nellore, was imprisoned for six months in both the Nellore and Vellore prisons starting on June 30, 1930, for her involvement in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Due to her involvement in the Salt Satyagraha Movement, Katta Raghavasankaranima, a native of Kavali, was placed in Vellore jail and subjected to a six-month R.I. beginning June 30, 1930.⁹⁴ Nellore's Tirupatamma took part in the 1930 Civil Disobedience Movement as well. Even for the female inmates, the conditions in the prisons were appalling. After being released from Vellore jail, Bttena Ramakrishna Reddy of Allur wrote on August 26, 1930: "The women in Vellore jail were not even provided with oil for their heads. Their own sarees were forbidden to them. They are required to don the sarees that the correctional staff provides. They would be folded in shackles if they refused to wear them. The women who endured arduous incarceration were assigned extremely hard labor.

The Nellore women's satyagrah did not lose sight of the positive agenda despite the violations of salt restrictions. They coordinated the boycott of foreign products, particularly clothing, promoted khaddar, and continued their anti-drink campaign. Because to its Khadi initiative, the Nellore area was dubbed the Manchester of India. At 4:00 p.m. on May 30, 1930, the female volunteers, including Smt. Digumarthi Butchi Krishnamma, Palakodeti Syamalamba, B. Subbamma, Mrs. Gadicherla Rama Murthy, Nalicheruvu Kamla Bayamma, and Miss Gadicherla Seshu Bhai, a twelve-year-old girl, started picketing foreign clothing stores in Kavali. Nearly all of the buyers bowed in to the women's pleas and stopped buying foreign clothing. Women began to picket foreign cloth shops on one hand and sell khaddar on the other. Smt. O. Mahalakshamma convened a public meeting for ladies in the Anjaneya Swami temple at Nellore. She asked the ladies not to hesitate to discard their foreign cloth. Some local ladies went from door to door for collecting foreign cloth and preaching the message of khaddar.

The Khaddar propaganda was widely publicized by the local press, which had a national perspective. In a

number of writings, Zamindari Ryot discussed the history of khaddar, its advantages over mill fabric, and its potential for employment. All of them had a positive impact, and the district's khaddar sales significantly rose. Another issue that the satyagrahis focused on was the picketing of liquor stores. The female volunteers made the decision to focus on the boycott of foreign clothing and alcoholic beverages. After picketing toddy stores in Santhapet, Nellore, Ponaka Kanakamma, Oruganti Mahalakshamma, Thayamma, Kameswaramma, Gaddam Seshamma, and Katta Sankaramma were taken into custody (98). Nellore women traveled in groups to Sulpurpet and other locations to picket liquor stores and spread khaddar ideology.

The Nellore women stepped up and were helpful. Ponaka Kanakamma, disregarding her poor condition, went into police detention. O. Mahalakshamma, like the wife of Unnava Lakshminarayana of Guntur, used to provide the volunteers haratis and tilakams. Pedaputtedu Ramanamma, Bhattaram Sundaramma, Kopparla Hanumayamma, Vemati Chenchulakshamma, Paturi Balasaraswa Thamma, Tayamma, and the wife of the editor of Simhapuri were among the other women who enthusiastically joined the campaign. that G. Durgabai, a well-known Madras volunteer, traveled to Nellore in order to gather firsthand accounts and provide more support for the Madras Salt Satyagraha. Up to 20 women were found guilty in the Nellore during the Salt Satyagraha. Thus the women of Nellore contributed significantly to the success of the Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement.

V. CONCLUSION

In spite of government orders and police brutality, women from all social classes—rich and poor, working class, peasant, and upper—poured out. Not only did they exhibit bravery and audacity, but much more astonishing was the organizational strength they displayed. On January 26, 1931, the Indian National Congress expressed its respect and appreciation for Indian women. The Indian women "who rose in their thousands and assisted the nation in the struggle for freedom" were commended at the Congress session in Karachi in March 1931. Thus, the women of

Coastal Andhra integrated themselves as an entity and took part in the Salt Satyagraha as a viable force. They contributed a great deal not only for the nationalist awakening and consciousness but shook the foundations of the British Raj. Hence, the Salt Satyagraha can be considered as a turning point in the participation of women in the national movement and public life.

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