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## Role Of Women During The Civil Disobedience Movement In Rayalaseema

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### Abstract

After the withdrawal of Non-Co-operation Movement in February 1922 there was a lull in the political activities in India. The Lahore Session of the Indian National Congress in 1929 is an important landmark in the History of the Indian Freedom Movement. Jawaharlal Nehru, representative of younger elements in the congress was elected as the President. Congress declared attainment of Purna Swaraj (complete Independence) to India as its objective. To achieve this goal it also decided to start Civil Disobedience Movement and if necessary no-tax campaign against the British Government. It was at this session the congress has adopted to observe 26<sup>th</sup> January 1930 as the day of Indian Independence.

**Keywords:** Women. Civil, Disobedience, Movement, Rayalaseema

### Introduction

The great enthusiasm shown by the people in celebrating the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1930 and taking the pledge given by Gandhiji, has indicated the mood of the people and their willingness to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Before taking a final decision on Civil Disobedience he gave another opportunity to British to prevent Civil Disobedience Movement. He addressed a letter to the Viceroy in which he has mentioned eleven demands, which if acceded by the Government he would not start Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi considered these eleven demands as the substance of Independence. His eleven demands are:

1. Total Prohibition
2. Lowering of the Rupee-Sterling Exchange ratio to 1s 4D
3. 50% reduction in land revenue.
4. Abolition of Salt Tax, and Govt. monopoly on Salt
5. Reduction of Military expenditure by atleast 50%
6. Reduction of salaries of the Higher level services.

7. Protection to Indian Textiles
8. Reservation of Coastal shipping for Indians
9. Release of all Political prisoners
10. Reform of C.I.D. or its popular control, and\
11. Liberal issue of licences for the use of Fire-Arms for self defence and the permission to all Indian exiles to return home.

Gandhi felt that the acceptance of these demands would have announced to the achievement of most of the objective for which Indians had been agitating. Their non- acceptance revealed the exploitative nature of the British Rule. The Viceroy made no response. On the country, the Government started arresting the prominent leaders as a preventive step. Subhas Chandra Bose was the first Congress Leader arrested by the Government and was sentenced to one year imprisonment. So, Gandhiji decided to launch the Civil Disobedience Movement by breaking the Salt Law first by himself at Dandi. On 11<sup>th</sup> March Gandhi declared wholesale illegal manufacture and auctioning of salt should begin, after he had himself violated the law at Dandi. On 12<sup>th</sup> March Gandhi started his march from Sabarmathi Ashram to the Sea at Dandi through the heartland of Gujarath with 71 Ashram Members. This is popularly known as Dandi March.

It attracted the attention of the entire country and the world. Enormous publicity was given to this event all over the world. The March reached Dandi on 5<sup>th</sup> April. The very next day Gandhi started Civil Disobedience Movement by picking a handful of salt lying on the shore. This was the signal for starting Salt Satyagraha throughout the country by manufacturing salt flouting the law. It was a deliberate act of defiance to the mighty British Government and a signal to the nation that another stage in the fight for freedom has begun. Where facilities for flouting salt law do not exist, i.e., interior areas far away from the sea shore, Tripple Boycott, of Liquor shops, Foreign Cloth, Educational Institutions and services has to be followed.

### **Civil Disobedience Movement, 1930**

On 10<sup>th</sup> April 1930, Dhurgabayamma, Headmistress of Girl's High School at Kakinada, addressed a meeting at Gandhi Chowk in Chittoor. Audiences of about 100 persons were present. One Krishnaswami, who accompanied Dhurgabayamma, also addressed the meeting. They exhorted the audience to join the Civil Disobedience Movement and enrol themselves as national volunteers. On 11<sup>th</sup> April, Dhurgabayamma had an informal meeting at Chittoor with the women of the Brahmin Street in the house of M. Ananthashayanam Ayyangar. She requested the women to induce their husbands to join the movement. Another meeting was held in the Varadappa Nayudu Girl's High School, mostly for women. In the evening, a public meeting was held at Gandhi Chowk with M. Ananthashayanam Ayyangar as the President. Dhurgabayamma spoke on the occasion. She repeated what she said the previous day. About 150 to 200 people attended. They included also a dozen women. On 13<sup>th</sup> April, there was a meeting of about 50 persons, mostly students at Gandhi Chowk, in Chittoor, to celebrate the Jallianwala Bagh Day and the National Week. M. Ananthashayanam Ayyangar who presided over the meeting spoke on the Khaddhar and temperance movements and the salt campaign. In April 1930, K. Subramanyam of Pennaperur village in Kadapa District wanted to take advantage of the Brahmotsavam at Vontimitta and

convened a political conference. He invited V.L. Sastri, President, Madras Andhra District Congress Committee to address the conference. He also endeavoured to organise a no- tax campaign in Badvel Taluk when the Taluk Board attempted to secure volunteers at Chittoor. On 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1930, three agitations from Vellore in North Arcot District were invited to address the meeting at Chittoor. As the meeting was prohibited under Section 144 Cr.P.C., the three Congress emissaries from Vellore reached Tirupati. On 24<sup>th</sup> June 1930, they wanted to hold a meeting. They were served with an order under Section 144 Cr. P.C. and one of them disobeyed the same. He was arrested and put up before the Joint Magistrate, Chandragiri, who convicted him and sentenced him to six months rigorous imprisonment. On 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1930, another Congress emissary from Kadapa District arrived at Kuntrapakam a small village near Tirupati to organize meetings.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1930, a procession consisting of a few students went through the streets of Madanapalle with a photo of Gandhi. A meeting was held in the evening and the President of the meeting had been warned. The pamphlets advertising the meeting were printed by a local press and its proprietor was warned. One Mahadheva Sastry who had been imprisoned for violation of Salt Laws and who was released from the jail arrived at Madanapalle on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1930 on his way to Tirupati. He lectured to the people urging them to join the movement and to boycott foreign cloth. An attempt was made by him to take out a procession. He was prosecuted under Sections 153 and 290 I.P.C. and was sentenced to six months R.I. and a fine of Rs.50/-. In November 1930, some young men of Korlakunta, a village in Pulivendula Taluk tried to organise a procession with the photos of Gandhi and Tilak.

### **Gandhi-Cap and Ceded District's College Incident**

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 1930, a hartal was observed in Anantapur in connection with the arrest of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and shops were closed. A number of students of the Ceded Districts College, Anantapur and also of the Municipal High School stayed away from their classes and went in a procession through the streets of the town. The next day, finding that two of the boys in the college were wearing Gandhi caps, the Principal sent them out and put up a notice prohibiting the wearing of Gandhi caps inside the college. This was exploited by the local Congressmen like Y.Ramamurthy and Lakshmana Pillai who exhorted the students to disobey the orders of the Principal. An order for a large number of Gandhi caps was placed with a local tailor. The situation was, however, tactfully managed and on the students assuring the Principal that the wearing of Gandhi caps did not show that they were associated with any political party and that they did not intend to join any political propaganda while at college, the Principal withdrew his prohibition order.

### **Civil Disobedience Movement in 1931**

In Chittoor, the conditions saluting to the National Flag was prohibited. Holding meetings were also banned. On 31<sup>st</sup> July 1931, A. Kaleswara Rao, General Secretary of the APCC visited Chittoor and made a very stirring speech abusing the Government. On 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1931, two Congress volunteers defied the D.S.P's order and went in a procession through the streets of Kuppam carrying Congress flag. The Sub-Magistrate of Kuppam issued an order under Section 144 Cr. P.C. prohibiting meetings, processions and carrying of national flags.

Kadapa for publicly approving political assassination. At Rajampeta, the police dispersed a public meeting.

### **Achanta Rukmini Lakshmi pathi's Tour, 1931**

In August 1931, Achanta Rukmini Lakshmi pathi of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and A. Kaleswara Rao toured Anantapur District on the invitation of Kalluru Subba Rao. On the morning of 29<sup>th</sup> August 1931, there was a public meeting in the Church Compound at Gooty (Gutthy). Rukmini Lakshmi pathi spoke in English. Her speech was translated into Telugu by A. Kaleswara Rao. At 11:00 AM., there was another meeting at Peddhavaduguru on the invitation of Chinna Narayana Reddy. C.P. Obi Reddy presided over the meeting.

At Anantapur, Rukmini Lakshmi pathi and A. Kaleswara Rao addressed a women's meeting at Sharadha Samajam and urged the women to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. From there, they proceeded to Gandhi Chowk. She said that the country was passing through a difficult period. Tracing the history of the struggle launched by the Congress in 1885, she appealed to the people to fight unitedly for Swaraj. On 30<sup>th</sup> August 1931, Rukmini Lakshmi pathi hoisted the national flag at Dharmavaram. On behalf of the Mahila Samaj, Smt. Ambamma garlanded her. At Penugonda, both Smt. Rukmini Lakshmi pathi and A. Kaleswara Rao were taken in a procession from the railway station to the residence of T.Sivashankaram Pillai. At the meeting held at Ramaswamy Temple, Venguswami Ayyar garlanded the guests. Agali Narayana Rao proposed a vote of thanks. On 31<sup>st</sup> August 1931, Rukmini Lakshmi pathi and A. Kaleswara Rao addressed a meeting at Hindupur. P. Ramacharlu and Kalluru Subba Rao also spoke.

### **A.P.C.C. Meeting at Chittoor, 1931**

The Andhra Provincial Congress Working Committee met at Chittoor on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> September 1931, under the presidentship of the Kumara raja of Gampalagudem. Among those present were Messrs. T. Prakasam, K. Nageswara Rao,

A. Kaleswara Ro, B. Gopal Reddy and Narayanamurthi. The Committee passed resolutions condemning the prosecutions of Messrs. Lingaraju and Subramanyam. The Committee adopted the Secretary's report to the AICC regarding breaches of Gandhi- Irwin pact by officials in Andhra.

The Sub-Magistrates of Chandragiri and Puttur issued orders not only prohibiting the hoisting of the flag but also prohibiting the holding or attending of any meeting in support of the Congress Party or creed. At Madanapalle, cases were lodged by the police against V.V. Vedhanthacharyulu and Nagarathnam Mudhaliar for trying to extend monetary help to some volunteers. Proceedings were instituted under Section

109 Cr.P.C. against four young strangers who came apparently from Madras to Rompicherla.

In Kurnool District, the Civil Disobedience Movement was led by Swamy Narayananda Saraswathi, D. Sessa Reddy and K. Chenchu Reddy. D. Sessa Reddy, invited Kalluru Subba Rao toured Athmakuru Taluk for one week and explained to the people about the evils of the British rule in India.

### **Repressive Measures**

The Government struck heavily against the people by resorting to severe methods of repression. By a Gazette Extraordinary, the Madras Government declared the APCC, the District Congress Committee of Anantapur and Bellary Satyagraha Shibiram as unlawful associations.

### **Resignation of teachers and other Government servants**

During the Civil Disobedience Movement, teachers and other government servants in Rayalaseema resigned in protest against the repressive measures of the government. Those who resigned were C.R. Reddy, the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, T.K.T. Veeraraghavacharya and R.Venkata Reddy (Chittoor District), Nivarthi Venkata Subbaiah, D.H. Krishna Rao and D.Govinda Doss (Kurnool District), D. Rama Reddy, M. Rangaiah Naidu and K. Subramanyam (Kadapa District).

### **Boycott of Educational Institutions**

The students who gave up their studies during the Civil Disobedience Movement in Rayalaseema were: A. Chidhambara Reddy, N. Sanjeeva Reddy and H. Narasinga Rao (Anantapur District), M. Durvasulu Naidu, K. Mal Reddy, V. Ramachandra Reddy, P. Thimma Reddy, A.P. Vajravelu Chetty, K. Venkatesayya (Chittoor District), M. Shamsheer Baig and A. Venkatasubbayya (Kurnool District). **Action against Local**

### **Bodies**

The Anantapur District Board which met on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1930 and passed a resolution condemning the action of the government for arresting national leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Abul Kalam Azad and others, was superseded on its refusal to cancel that resolution.

### **Action against the Press**

The Telugu newspapers in Rayalaseema did their best to cover the movement and sent the messages to the nook and corner of the region. Therefore, the government's censor fell upon them to restrict their freedom. The Government had included a list of printing presses and newspapers in its blacklist. Warnings were issued or security was demanded from them. Among them were the Kowmodaki and Aindravathi published from Nandyal and Pattikonda respectively in Kurnool District. Kypa Subramanya Sarma, Editor and Publisher of Kowmodaki and P. Kondaiah Chetty, Keeper of Vani Nikethan Press were warned for publishing three articles, "Boycott of foreign cloth", "Prohibition" and "Mr.Gandhi's March" in their paper dated 27<sup>th</sup> June 1930. Vanam Sankara Sarma, Editor of Aindravathi was warned for publishing an article "The Gandhi Cap" in his paper dated 4<sup>th</sup> July 1930. P. Ramacharlu, Editor and publisher was warned for publishing two articles, "The Round Table Conference" and "The Cease of toddy shops and Kapus and Reddis" in his paper Sri Sadhana published from Anantapur. In 1930, Rayalaseema Ugadhi Kaanuka, a Telugu annual was published from Tadipathri by K. Venkatarangachar. It contained a seditious article, "Wash thy feet in warm blood". It was a prayer to the Goddess of Freedom written by K. Venkataramanacharyulu, a partner of Deshabhandhu press where the journal was published. The government warned the printer and publisher for publishing the objectionable article.

### **Gandhi's Harijan Tour, 1933-1934**

Gandhi, as part of the 'Harijan' uplift campaign, once again, visited Rayalaseema from 31<sup>st</sup> December 1933 to 4<sup>th</sup> January 1934 and covered places like Kalahasthi, Renigunta, Tirupati, Kadapa, Gooty, Peddhavaduguru, Ramarajupalle, Thimmancherla, Guntakal, Penugonda, Konakondla, Uravakonda, Vajrakaruru, Anantapur, Hindupur and Alur. He was accompanied by M.Bapineedu, Secretary, Andhra Harijan Sevak Sangh. Prof. Malkani, Meerabehan, Chandra Shankar Shukla, Uma Bajaj, Krishna Behan, Viswanatha Pandya, Dhamodhar Dhass, Ramanarayana Choudhary and one Mr.Sarma.

### **Gandhi Jayanthi Celebrations in Rayalaseema**

In this connection, activities such as the portrayal of the life and importance of Khaddhar feeding of poor people, public meetings and processions were organized at Jammalamadugu, Kurnool, Kuppam, Nandyal, Proddatur, Palamaneru (Pallavan Eri means Pallavas Tank), Madanapalle and Narayanavanam. Prayers were also held in the Mahanandiswara Swamy temple.

### **Rajendra Prasad's visit, 1935**

A notable event of 1935 was the visit of Rajendra Prasad, the President of the INC to Rayalaseema. From 23<sup>rd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November 1935, he toured places like Nandyal, Panyam, Kurnool, Adoni, Nemakal, Guntakal, Vajrakaruru, Uravakonda, Kuderu, Tadipathri, Jalalpuram, Anantapur, Dharmavaram, Kuntimaddhi, Penugonda, Hindupur, Parigi, Lepakshi, Chilamatthuru, Kodikonda, Pathapalyam, Palasamudrum, Gorantla, Obuladhevara Cheruvu, Kadiri, Thanakal and Madanapalle. During his tour, he was accompanied by Acharya Kripalani, Hukkerikar, Chakradhara Saran, T. Prakasham, P. Ramacharlu and Kalluru Subba Rao.

### **Keshava Vidyanilayam**

On the evening of 25<sup>th</sup> November 1935, Rajendra Prasad opened Keshava Vidyanilayam (behind District Board office at Anantapur), built for Harijans in memory of P. Keshava Pillai. Yerramala Kondappa donated two acres of land for the said school during Gandhi's Harijan tour of Rayalaseema in 1933-1934.

I. Sadhashivan was kept in charge of the school. Addressing the students, he appealed to them to sacrifice their lives for the service of the motherland.

### **N. G. Ranga's Election Tour, 1937**

On 6<sup>th</sup> January 1937, a meeting was held at Thimmancherla near Guntakal in Anantapur District. N.G. Ranga addressed public meetings at Madanapalle, Anantapur, Dharmavaram, Pamidi organized the public meetings. At Pamidi, N.G. Ranga asked the people to defeat the Justice Party and vote for Congress. From Pamidi, N.G. Ranga left for Adoni.

### **Dhuvvuru Subbamma's Speech, 1937**

In 18<sup>th</sup> April 1937, Desabhandhavi Dhuvvuru Subbamma from Nellore also addressed a public meeting at Gooty. She spoke about the political situation in the country. She criticised the Justice Party Government headed by K.V.Reddy Nayudu. She appealed to the voters to elect the Congress Party in the coming elections. She also addressed a women's meeting separately and asked the women to join

the freedom struggle. On 20<sup>th</sup> April 1937, Subbamma addressed a meeting at Pamidi. It was presided over by M. Sethu Rao.

### **C. Rajagopalachari's visit to Rayalaseema, 1938**

In 1938, Gandhi Jayanthi was celebrated at Kadapa with the introduction of prohibition by C. Rajagopalachari, Premier of the Madras Government. At Rayachoti, C. Rajagopalachari asked the people to give up drinking. At Chittoor, the prohibition was inaugurated by Yakub Hussain, Minister for Public Works of the Madras Government. Later Yakub Hussain, C.R. Parthasaradhi Ayyangar, R. Venkata Reddy, District Congress Secretary, L.Sundhararaja Ayyangar, Secretary, Prohibition Committee, Andhra region visited Murukkambhat, Kalavakunta, Penumury, Kothapeta, Poothalapattu, Venganapalli and asked the people to vacate the toddy and arrack shops. C. Rajagopalachari accompanied by Yakub Hussain, Muniswamy Pillai and S. Ramanatham visited Chittoor and expressed happiness as the toddy and arrack shops were closed. In the evening, they addressed a meeting near the police grounds.

### **Peasant Movement in Rayalaseema**

A notable feature of 1930's in Rayalaseema was the organisation of Summer Schools of Economics and Politics for peasant activities. A Rayalaseema Peasants' School of Politics and Economics was opened at Giddhaluru in Kurnool District on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1937 under the direction of N.G. Ranga in which about 25 students were enrolled.

N. G. Ranga also started in 1938 a Political and Economic Summer School at Madhanapalle in Chittoor District. It had 75 students on its rolls and it was an organ of socialistic propaganda. The lectures dealt with the evils of Imperialism and Capitalism and were intended to direct the energies of the students towards active participation in movements aiming at the abolition of these forms of domination.

A Summer School of Economics and Politics was organised during 20<sup>th</sup> May to 20<sup>th</sup> June 1939 at Kalwabugga in Kurnool District. G. Harisarvothama Rao was its Principal and it had strength of 64 students.

In Andhra all the Prominent Leaders of the Congress like Tanguturi Prakasham Pantulu, Pattabhi Seetharamaiah, Mutnuri Krishna Rao, Bulusu Sambamurthi and Pyda Bapayya were arrested. In spite of these arrests, the Congress volunteers continued the boycott and the swadeshi.

The prominent leaders of Rayalaseema and their followers in various districts participated in the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement. They had organized hartals in several places like Guntakal, Adoni, Kuppam and Nandyal. Gooty Kesava Pillai condemned the arrests of the Gandhiji and other leaders. The popular leaders like Kalluri Subbarao, Pappuri Ramacharyulu and Idhukallu Sadhasivan raised the revolt in Rayalaseema, but were arrested and sent to Jail. Several individuals sacrificed a great deal by participating in this Movement.

## Participation of Women

Thousands of women participated in the second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1932. The participants like Vallabhaneni Sithalakshamma, Digomerti Janakamma, Chukkamma, Duggirala Kanakamba, Kanagarthi Nagarathamma, Vasireddy Hanumayamma, Dasari Krishnavenamma, Harikapudi Manikyamma, Suguna, Mahalakshamma, Cherukuri Sowbhagyamma, Kotamarthi Kanakamma, Tripuraneni Kausalyamma, Vedhantham Kamala Devi, Kambampati Manikyamma were very prominent in the propagation of defying salt laws, picketing of liquor shops and boycott of foreign cloth. All the women were awarded one year imprisonment. Smt. Manikyamma had to go to prison with six months old baby in her arms. The women detenues were treated very badly. At this juncture, the Rayalaseema women were inspired by the leadership of Bharathi Devi Ranga wife of N.G.Ranga who led a campaign in Guntur district. She came to Rayalaseema Districts to propagate the movement among the women of Rayalaseema. She was arrested and sentenced to one year imprisonment and a fine of Rs.500/-.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement, number of Teachers serving in Municipal Schools, District Boards and Government Schools in Rayalaseema resigned to their jobs in protesting against the attitude of the Government. C.R.Reddy, Chittoor; Nivarthi Venkata Subbaiah, Kurnool; M. Rangaiah Naidu from Kadapa District. Many of the students of Rayalaseema gave up their studies during the Second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement.

### Anantapur District

#### Lakshmi Devi D/o Narasayya

She was born in 1896, daughter of Seshamma and Narasayya. She was very much interested in studies but her parents got her married early and soon she became a widow. Even then she did not give up her hopes about studies. It was her uncle (mother's brother) who supported her in her studies. By 1925, she became the first Doctor in the Anantapur District. While studying Medicine in Bombay, she had observed social and political leaders and developed independent views. She got married in 1929 with Nivarthi Mrutyunjaya Sastri, a Junior Lawyer under her Uncle. She started her medical practice for common people. She was interested in maintaining not only a healthy body but also a healthy society.

By 1930 she was driven towards the Salt Satyagraha Movement. She met Gurgabayamma under whose influence she started addressing the people in large gatherings and picketing foreign goods. The police arrested her and brought her before the Sub-Magistrate Court. After heated arguments she was sentenced to six months Rigorous Imprisonment and a fine of Rs.200/- or in default of which further two months imprisonment. She was lodged in Vellore Jail in 1932.

Lakshmi Devi, worked for Harijan upliftment. She encouraged and followed inter-dinning and collected Harijan Fund when Gandhiji visited Bellary in 1934.

She was also served as Vice-President of the D.C.C. and worked for involving more women in the Congress and its movements. In 1935, she was elected as a member of composite Madras State Assembly for Two and half years and worked hard for her constituency. She was a representative from Bellary to the All India Women's Conference. The Sastri couple suggested change of the name of Ceded Districts as Rayalaseema they also suggested Tungabhadra project for improving irrigation



facilities in that region. She worked for the cause of unity and integrity. She died in February 1976.

## **Kadapa District**

### **Kadapa Rama Subbamma**

She was born in 1902 in Kadapa district, daughter of Ramachandra Reddy and Atchamamba. Her father was a great Sanskrit Scholar. She was married to Kadapa Koti Reddy in 1917. He was a Barrister Law in London and Oxford University, but turned a nationalist and inspired Rama subbamma. As a result of this atmosphere she joined the Congress in 1921 and started her political activities. She was highly inspired by T. Prakasam activities during the boycott of Simon Commission at Madras. She participated in the Salt Satyagraha of 1930 along with Durgabayamma, Dronam Raju Lakshmi Bayamma, Ponaka Kanakamma and other great leaders.

During the Individual Satyagraha in 1941 she participated along with her husband but was not arrested. When her husband was arrested, she organized the movement from 1918, and served as its Vice-President. She served as the Municipal Councilor for 40 years and did great service. She worked for women upliftment. She was the President of District Congress Committee from 1938-43. She left it during the Quit India Movement.

She was the President of All India Women's Conference State Wing. She toured extensively throughout the State. She was a great social worker and worked for the establishment of a Women's College in Kadapa. She donated One Lakh rupees for this purpose. She served as a Member of All India Social Welfare Board. State Social Welfare Board and President of Guild of Services. She worked in the relief programme of Rayalaseema famine. She was a member of All India Congress Executive Committee. She visited foreign countries. While addressing a meeting of Andhra Yuvathi Mandali. Hyderabad in 1940 she inspired the women of Hyderabad to come out of the seclusion. Though she was not arrested. She took an active part in the freedom struggle and social field.

### **Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy**

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was one of the great women leaders of this period. Though her work was confined to Madras Women of Andhra derived benefit of her services as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. She was responsible for the enactment of laws concerning education and Health of Women, the abolition of Devadasi System and the suppression of prostitution. All her reforms had their impact on women in Andhra as there was already awakening in these matters dawned by the social reformers. Prominent person's like Yamini Purnatilakam, her daughter Rama Tilakam and the famous cinema star of the day Bezawada Ranla Tilakam had carried a movement for abolition of the Devadasi System. Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy started a number of institutions for women. She did not participate in the Salt Satyagraha or in picketings and boycotting like other women of Andhra. But as a staunch follower of Gandhiji as an educated lady, she tried to awakening the women through meetings, discussions and organizations. As a follower of Gandhiji she resigned her membership in the Legislature in 1930. She represented Women's Indian Association and attended the Round Table Conference at England. When Gandhiji visited Madras in 1933, she was the President of Women's Indian Association and organized a large women meeting with Gandhiji. These women took a pledge that they would carry on the campaign against untouchability. She had already established Avvai Home, in which she

sheltered women of all castes. She took up the task of constructing a Cancer Hospital through the Women's Indian Association and collected huge donations. Though her eyesight was deteriorating due to age she convinced Gandhi and carried on the work.

Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy was the first lady Doctor in the composite Madras Province. She was highly influenced by the Brahmo Samaj and its founder and leaders. **Conclusion**

Thus, Mahatma Gandhi's call of Civil Disobedience Movement has enormous effect which spread to the nook and corner of the country symbolizing that irrespective of age, education, profession, religion all joined together for the cause of freedom for the country. It is important to note here that because of the sacrifices made by the lakhs of people who suffered in the hands of the British by serving jail sentences, hangings, firings and Lathi charges. We are enjoying freedom. In this context the role played by Rayalaseema Women freedom fighters who involved in this movement played a key role in arousing national sentiment among the people for the cause of national independence.

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