



Role And Contribution Of ‘Women In Household’ (Mothers And Homemakers) In The Freedom Movement Of India- A Case Study Of United Province

Nuzhat Mushtaq

Research scholar

Dept of History, AMU, Aligarh

Abstract

Throughout our prolonged struggle for freedom, the widows and companions of nationalist leaders have endured immense suffering without lamentation or grievance. These women took part in the nationalist movements in a variety of ways. These were constructive programs such as spinning khadi, making family sacrifices, becoming pillars of strength and support for their families when the male members had been imprisoned. In this paper, we will discuss the role and contribution of various women in households i.e., mother, sisters and wives in the freedom struggle of India. These women in households have been ignored in various studies. Here our study will be particularly a case study of United Province. We will unravel the history of various unknown women freedom fighters of this province who themselves contributed to national movement. These women were at the same time mothers, sisters or wives of various freedom fighters who directly or indirectly participated in freedom struggle. Some of them endured a lifetime pain of being separated from their loved ones by sacrificing their sons, husbands and brothers for the sake of freedom. This significant contribution of these ‘women in household’ should be written in golden pages of history of freedom movement of India.

Keywords; Freedom Struggle, Women in Household, Secret Activities, Revolutionary activities

Introduction

An article titled "Narratives that Never Surfaced" (translated) appeared in the Kanpur district of Uttar Pradesh "Dainik Jagran," a local newspaper, on October 18, 1992, as part of a special Independence Day feature. The statement read, "The tears shed by Pativartas are not meaningless when they fall on their homeland. The wives and friends of nationalist men have endured great suffering throughout our protracted fight for freedom without moaning or whining. But neither the country nor anyone else seems to have recalled it. Men's names who gave their life in defense of the country are memorialized in books, recollections, stone slab writings, and inscriptions. But those mothers, wives, and sisters who supported their husbands and gave them their tears to light the paths of their husbands, their stories and names never mentioned".¹

According to the article, women who are "mothers," wives, and sisters who supported their husbands, sons, and brothers throughout the freedom movement are not mentioned, despite the fact that the contributions of men were noted and honored.

During the Civil Disobedience Movement, women's political and public activities became increasingly prominent. Family dynamics had a crucial role in empowering women to express themselves politically because many higher caste women were restricted to their homes. Compared to other ordinary middle class women, who faced negative family attitudes, the Nehru women, who were exposed to nationalist family attitudes in both their parental and married families, were in a totally different situation.

Those "mothers" or "women in households" established themselves as both providers and consumers of nationalist knowledge. Maintaining connections with external political activities was crucial for women to enable their own activities. There were three methods available for keeping themselves informed about the political events. They first educate themselves by reading printed materials, local vernacular newspapers and Hindi plays and poems by well-known nationalist authors like Subhadra Kumari Chauhan and Mahadevi Verma, the wife of Prem Chand. Second, they engaged in internal discussion while listening to the men's discussions inside the homes. Third, women who are illiterate listen to radios, which are a great source of information on national political happenings of the country.²

These "mothers" took part in the nationalist activities in a variety of ways. For instance in constructive programs included spinning khadi, making sacrifices for the family, and becoming supportive wives, mothers, and national activists. When their male family members had been imprisoned, mothers emerged as the families' backbone. Mothers supported the independence by engaging in secret operations as well. Many of these mothers, sisters, and housewives became "Revolutionaries Freedom Fighters," It is important to note here being "Mothers" of various revolutionary leaders and sacrificed their sons for the country's freedom movement is in itself a valuable

¹ Prasad Jagesh, *Dainik Jagran*, daily newspaper, October 18th, 1992.

² Suruchi Thapar Bjorkert, *Women in Indian National Movement Unseen Faces and Unheard Voices, 1930-42*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 178-180

contribution. For this reason, these mothers earned the titles of "Sacrificial Mothers." In this paper we will discuss and highlight the contributions that "women in household" played in India's freedom struggle.

‘Mothers’ in Constructive programme;- Gandhi expected that women would contribute to the political movement by becoming supportive mothers and wives. Women played a crucial role in this constructive programme because they were supposed to promote for Swadeshi, boycott foreign clothing, and highlight its significance in India's independence movement. Men and women wearing khadi as a symbol of national pride and picketing foreign cloth stores were part of the powerful nationalist message that was made by spinning khadi on the charkha. Women were able to contribute to their own freedom by becoming economically independent through spinning, weaving, and selling khadi. Producing Swadeshi textile allowed for self-sufficiency, which contributed in the struggle for national independence. For example, Smt. Rameshwari Devi founded the Mahila Mandal in Benares in 1934. Introducing purdha-clad to social and economic activities was one of the major objectives of this Mandal. Over time, the mandal grew into a small organization. Rameshwari was confident that women could benefit the country more if they got educated and achieved economic independence. The first committee was established with the goal of educating and raising women's political consciousness. In addition to producing the magazine Vidushi (liberate women), the organization ran a painting school, a rifle club, a charkha center, a home nursing center, a music department, and more. Women joined this organization as well, "were enlightened towards notion of loving one's nation," and contributed financially towards Azad Hind fauj.³

Familial Sacrifice by Mothers and wives;- We have a reference of Uma Dixit, a lesser known women freedom fighter who not just abandoned her marriage but also motherhood, economic security, and the status in society that came with marriage. Uma Dixit sacrificed a secure future to protest her father's political imprisonment. Kishori Devi her mother during the time when her husband was imprisoned, began to support her family both financially and emotionally. Women's spirit was maintained by reminding them that India's independence was the highest goal of all these nationalist activities. Women assured both themselves and their men folk that these sacrifices were supreme.⁴ We have a reference of the wife of freedom fighter Brahmdudd Mishra of United Province, known as "Sushila Devi Mishra," who quoted, "Until today, I remembered how great my husband was, whenever he went to jail, I always thought he had gone for a good cause." Consequently, these mothers, wives, and daughters made unparalleled sacrifices for the cause of India's freedom, including facing insatiable domestic demands, being separated from their husbands, sons, or brothers, or losing their life partners without protest.⁵

Supportive Mothers/wives;-

³ Transcript of interview with Smt. Sulbha Gupta, managing director of the Mahila Mandal, Nehru Memorial library, New Delhi hereafter NMML

⁴ Bjorkert, op.cit, p.191.

⁵ Ibid.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in his novel 'Anandmath' popularized the worship of the 'mother' as well as women's duties and power, thus laid the foundation for women's active participation in the nationalist struggle for freedom. This sacred image of the mother was now considered an important vehicle for symbolizing strong civilization inherited by the nation. For example Gandhi's wife Kasturbha was addressed as 'Rashtramata' (mother of the nation). We have reference of a 'freedom fighter' of United Province **Narayani Tripathi** who relates to the idea of 'Rastramata' and comments, "Children are Rastrashan (wealth of nation) and are nurtured by the Rastramata. We should cherish the, and devote our energies to them".⁶ Mothers became sole guardians of their children, particularly when their husbands had been imprisoned or involved in nationalist activities. They instilled in their children the popular nationalist sentiments and the significance of becoming informed future citizens of the country. A mother's duties included establishing a friendly environment in her household and educating her children about current political events. Here, we had a reference of Sushila Devi Mishra, a courageous wife of Brahmdukt Mishra and mother who actively supported her husband throughout the Civil Disobedience Movement. She had strong feeling about the importance and responsibilities of mothers both towards the country and to her family.⁷ Despite the influence of revolutionary ideas, being a good housewife and mother gave Sushila Devi personal satisfaction. She saw it as political support for her husband who was active in the country freedom struggle. She commented, "I never went to jail, I never led procession. I was actually housewife and would prefer to serve my husband".⁸ She further stated that political activities like participating in processions, did not affect her as she said, 'she took part only if she had spare time from her household duties'. It was suggested by her that political duties towards nation could be fulfilled through fulfilling duties at home. Thus having a sense of moral duty towards the nation was itself an involvement in the nationalist movement". Her husband had remarked about Susila Devi, "Because of you my life has become successful. You are managing the house and children".⁹ In the contemporary world, women as mothers exercise a great amount of power over their children and particularly their sons. Thus the symbolism associated with mothers enhanced their significance for the nation and the struggle for freedom.¹⁰

Mothers and /wives as source of moral strength;- Political upheavals shook domestic stability and comfort in the lives of many women activist. If a woman went out demonstrating in the streets then someone had to be at home to look after her family. Children and elderly people were the primary responsibility within families. Since it was harder to explain the causes for the family disturbance to children, they were thought to be more vulnerable. Every family had a different set of circumstances. We have a reference of a mother and freedom fighter of Kanpur **Vidyavati Saxena** and her daughter **Satya Saxena** who narrates an incident which is experienced as a child, when national movement turned into traumatic experience for the whole family. Satya Saxena narrated the event as, "following the hanging of Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev on 23rd March, 1931 at

⁶ Transcript of interview with Narayani Tripathi cited by Bjorkert, op.cit, p.191

⁷ Bjorkert, op.cit, p. 196.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid, p. 195.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 197.

Lahore Jail Central jail. Soon Hindu and Muslim riots broke out in Kanpur city. Satya mothers Vidyavati along with some Hindu women were shifted to safer place in the Kallu Mal building in Begungang locality of Kanpur. The father was busy defending people from riots. Satya Saxena was looked after in a nearby neighbor's house in Sisa Mau (a locality). She further said, "I was very young my mother was locked in the building. In the night I used to get up and enquire from the aunt (neighbor) if my father had come back. When I did not find him, I used to ask about the mother but could not understand what was going on. When I asked my father he used to say, "She will come back she has gone for some work".¹¹ At times neighbors took upon themselves the responsibility of feeding and clothing the children. **Uma Dixit** also narrates "when her father was serving long jail sentence and mother was also arrested after addressing a meeting, She was present there and then she was very young they came back home and were fed by father's friend Narayan Prasad Arora. His wife (Krishna Arora) used to buy flour, dal and rice for them'.¹² Uma dixit further said, "Participation in the nationalist movement does not have to be on the streets only, **Krishna Arora** was serving the nationalist cause by helping another family".¹³ Thus women saw involvement in nationalist activities more as a way of supporting and encouraging their men-folk in jail. Often parental families would disown their daughters and sons for nationalist involvement. We have reference of Uma Dixit father who was forced by his father to move away and resettle in Kanpur where the financial condition of the family deteriorated. Uma Dixit credits her mother **Kishori Devi** by saying that "my mother has very little money but still she never objected to paying for her education".¹⁴ The nationalist movement called for upheavals in households women soically faced the isolation and hardships which the movement demanded. Women often stay strong when their husband were arrested and even keep the morale of their husbands' high in these situations. We have another references of a mother and wife who were also freedom fighters named as **Phul Kumari Devi** and **Tulsa Devi** who told their husbands, "We might get destroyed, but never ask for forgiveness and come back home'...'I will bear all hardships but will not leave you alone' 'whatever you do I will never interfere, you carry on with your activities I will look after the children".¹⁵ Thus these women were aware then that deteriorating domestic condition could put a moral strain on men and force them into seeking pardons from the British government. Thus through their emotional and moral commitment to their husbands, they also support the nationalist cause. The pain of a ruined home and husband who was always in jail affected Kishori Devi more than the colonial crisis did. What was remarkable was her ability to conceal this, 'while still providing moral support to her husband was not so much support but itself a contribution to the national movement". She further said that 'it was possible to make sacrifice for the national movement without taking on public activities, for instance through looking after children of other nationalist families, facing economic adversities and long separations from sons or husbands or offering support and assistance to others who were involved in public activities like demonstrations, protests or holding public

¹¹ Transcript of interview with Satya Saxena and her mother Vidyavati Saxena, NMML

¹² Transcript of interview with Uma Dixit

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Transcript of interview with Tulsa Devi, Phul Kuamri Devia and Naryan Prasad, NMML

meetings and boycott movement'.¹⁶ Other women used to provide moral support to the wives or mothers of national activists. We have reference of **Tulsa Devi**, who was a Brahmin and spent her married life at Dhamangadpur village, Kanpur district. She was illiterate but supported her husband's political activities. She kept Purdha and her first child died because of lack of food in the house. The primary reason being that her husband spends most of his time either way from home or in the prison. Tulsi Devi stated that, "Other women would come and praise me for supporting my husband. They used to say, "Don't lose hope. We will all eat together and if we die will do it together'.¹⁷ Thus many women who never crossed the boundaries of their home, but they were able to identify with the nationalist movement by encouraging their men folk and supporting to their husbands, sons' political activities, managing the households and children, giving moral support to other women actives and bearing the mental trauma of long separation from husbands and sons and face adversity created by political demands is seen by women in terms of their own nationalist contributions.¹⁸

Mothers in underground political activities;- The broader social atmosphere influenced two types of nationalist activities that women understood. First if family did not permit nationalist activities, then politically conscious women supported the nationalist movement in ways that did not challenge family norms. These women relied on their own will power to serve the nationalist cause. Their activities supported the Congress ideology of Swadeshi through activities such as spinning and weaving khadi or as supportive mothers, wives and daughters.¹⁹ However there were women who specifically decided to support the revolutionary organizations through rebellious acts from within their homes. Because the homes were useful location for conducting underground activities since the police were less suspicious of women's activities. Women were primarily involved in holding secret political meetings, shifting people and proscribed literature from place to place and passing on information to men who were in hiding.²⁰ We have a reference of two freedom fighters from Lucknow "**Ganga Devi**" and her daughter "**Urmila Goorha**". Here we will discuss how a 'mother' Ganga Devi's clandestine activities contributed for the national movement without crossing the familial constraints. Ganga Devi avoided confronting her husband and tried to work her way around the familial limitations. She realized that all nationalist activities had to be undertaken secretly while maintaining a united domestic façade. Urmila recalls about her father attitude. She said, "My father wanted his food on time. At the same time, he did not want the name of the family to be associated with the national movement. When my father came back at 4 o'clock and realized that my mother had gone out of the house in relation to nationalist activities, he would get angry and not eat his food at all".²¹ In Indian household refusing food is taken as serious protest. Ganga Devi's consciousness of the political situation and her desire to support the nationalist cause led her to get round these domestic constraints. She started to organize secret meetings with people in hiding when the husband was away

¹⁶ Bjorkert, op.cit, p.200.

¹⁷ Transcript of Interview with Tulsa Devi C.f. Bjorkert, p.201

¹⁸ Bjorkert, op.cit, p.206.

¹⁹ Bjorkert, op.cit, p. 202.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 202.

²¹ Transcript of interview with Urmila Goorha C.f. Bjorkert,

at work. Urmila remembers, “Sometimes my cousins held a meeting in the house from 2 p.m to 4 p.m when my father was away. My mother used to sit n these meeting and was always ready to help”.²² Ganga Devi contributed khadi chadars and money in these meetings. For instance she contributed ten rupees to one of the activist in hiding from the money she had received from her husband for household expenses. She then managed the household with remaining money since she could ask her husband for more. She also prepared food late at night for activists who were in hiding. Urmila remembers how her mother cooked food for nationalist activists during late night hours. She narrates an incident, “The people who visited our house were ‘wanted’ by the police. ‘Swatantra Bhai’ (a pseudonym used by the person) came to our house and told my mother that he needed food at 3 O’clock in the morning for other inmates in hiding when my father was asleep, my mother made chappatis using five kgs of flour. After that she cleaned everything so that maid servant who cleaned domestic utensils did not realize the night activities. My mother gave the bundle to Swatantra and said to him, “God bless you” but I should not see you again in the mohalla”.²³ She did not want him to come to the house gain because the police could get suspicious and this would jeopardize the domestic order. Thus she played her role by supporting national activists secretly and used to serve them food. There were other women who play the ‘role of messengers’ to the people hiding from police. As the women were less suspected than men so they kept people in hiding who informed them of political developments in the country. We have a reference of another ‘unknown freedom fighter’ “**Tulsa Devi**” of Kanpur who supported her husband political activities despite the opposition of her in-laws. Here we will focus on her secret activities and her support to the husband. Tulsa devi used to keep purdha in the joint family of in-laws and her mother-in-law was specially opposed to any political activity of her son. However he continued in secret, to be politically active he used to go into hiding in the jungles near their village and emerge when it was safe. Tulsa Devi used to slip out of the house late at night disguised as a beggar or a religious saint. Then she would inform her husband about the political developments of the day. For instance about the police who were looking for him or any other message from his friends. Tulsa Devi was aware of the political upheavals of the time and was a support to her husband’s political works. She said in an interview conducted by Bjorkert Thapar that, ‘The constraints at home did not stop her from moving outside, though she was aware that her movement at night was dangerous. She stated that “Near the village there were jungles. I used to disguise myself and sneak out at night without informing my in-law”.²⁴ Some women facilitated the movement of political prisoners. Often the households were used as hideouts by the political prisoners who were on the run and usually in these cases both male and female were politically involved. Since women were less prone to suspicious they were responsible for moving people in hiding from one place to another. Women effectively used their homes for such clandestine activities. For instance we have reference of another unknown freedom fighter of Kanpur named as ‘**Tara Devi Agarwal**’. She describes the activities at her residence in Kanpur city and her role in facilitating the movement of political prisoners. She narrates an incident occurred during the

²² Ibid.

²³ Transcript of interview with Urmila Goorha. *C.f.*, Bjorkert, *Op.cit.*, 206

²⁴ Transcript of interview with Tulsa Devi

festival of Rakshabandhan- a Hindu festival when a sister ties thread of protection on her brother's wrist. She said, "My house in Latouche road was called Azad because Chandra Shekar Azad used to come and stay there. Once Azad was in my house and the police surrounded the house. Consequently, I pretended that I had to visit my brother to put rakhi on him. I disguised Azad as my servant and with my plate (Tahli) went out".²⁵ Thus Azad as Tara's escort to her brother home was transferred from one house to another and managed to escape arrest.²⁶ Women hide proscribed literature for the men-folk and it thus became difficult for the police to confiscate this literature. Tara's daughter Rameshwari Agarwal narrates an incident that, "My Mother used to hide my fathers' books and pamphlets regularly. There were difficult times because sometimes my mother used to keep the books with her women friends".²⁷ The British authorities did not suspect women as such much as men, so women would carry about banned literature and distribute copies to other families in a locality. Women also assist 'revolutionaries' by hiding their weapons and pistols. We have reference provided by 'freedom fighter' **Sushila Devi Mishra**, who narrates that 'women hid ammunition and pistols and other kinds of arms for revolutionaries, in the fields or near the house well and brought them out when they were required by their husbands or their friends'.²⁸ These are the activities which women freedom fighters performed within their homes and thus contributed and played their role in the freedom struggle of the country. However women also participated in other 'underground activities' outside their homes. We have reference of another freedom fighter popularly known as **Durga Bhabhi Vohra** of Ghaziabad who played an important role in transporting, shifting and hiding 'wanted' revolutionaries from one town to another. Here we will narrate an incident of her life when she saved Bhagat Singh and Rajguru from the police and transferred them to a safer place in Calcutta. During a protest march in Lahore against the Simon Commission, Lala Lajpat Rai who was a revolutionary died as a result of a police assault. His associates Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Jia Gopal avenged his death by shooting the British police official Saunders. Durga bai was assigned the task of bringing Bhagat Singh and Rajguru to her house in Calcutta. The revolutionaries were safer with a women escort than travelling alone. "The risk was heavy, as at any stage she could have been stopped by police. She would have lost not only her two compatriots but also her son".²⁹ Some women risk their lives through these clandestine activities. Here we have reference of another mother who lost her daughter who commits suicide in jail in order to protect from the police to disclose the whereabouts about her mother. Her mother was a schoolteacher who hid the members of Hindustan Republic Socialist Party in her house in Kanpur in 1930. She was addressed by the people as MA (mother). The police discovered her activities and issued a warrant for her arrest. MA escaped, but her daughter Khoki was caught and imprisoned in Alipore jail in Calcutta, where she commits suicide by jumping from the third floor. 'This

²⁵ Transcript of interview with Tara Devi Agarwal, NMML, New Delhi

²⁶ Bjorkert, op.cit, p. 206

²⁷ Transcript of interviews with Rameshwari Agarwal

²⁸ Transcript of interview with Sushila Devi Mishra

²⁹ Transcript of interview Ram Kishore Khatri- a make associate of Durga Bia .

incident wrecked the mother's life'.³⁰ During the 'Quit India Movement' in 1942 when most of the Congress Party leaders were arrested, men and women worked underground to publish Congress bulletins.³¹

'Sacrificial mothers'- mothers of revolutionaries leaders of United Province;- Mothers whose sons were executed by the British were venerated and exalted to the 'mothers of the nation' they were regarded as sacrificial mothers who offered their sons to the nation. No mother ever told her sons to ask for pardon from the Britishers. We have a reference of a mother of United Province which became a source of inspiration for the nationalist movement and were representative of 'sacrificial mother', and 'defender of nation'. A male activist Ram Krishan Khatri stated that, 'the role of mothers whose sons were killed has never been recognized'. In this context he narrated two incidents which recapitulated the important role of mothers in the national freedom movement. The first was of Chapekar Brothers of Poona and their mother Lakshmi bai. The second incident related to our study is of an activist named Ram Prasad Bismil a member of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association who was hanged in Gorakhpur jail on 18th December 1927. The night before Bismil was hanged, Moolmati his mother visited him. Bismil had tears in his eyes when he saw his mother. His mother asked him; "Ho gya Inquilab? Ho gya kranti? Kya kayaro ki tarah aasu baha rahe ho? (is this revolution/ is this revolt? Why are you shedding tears like a coward?).³² Bismil replied; "tumhara beta kayar nahi hai. Assu to is liyay hai ke tumrai jasi maa na tumray jasi godh milgi". (Your son is not coward. He has tears because he knows that he will neither get a mother like you nor a mother's lap like yours). Moolmati never actively participated in formal politics, but her consciousness was kindled by her son's death. In a speech addressed to the nation, she said, "I have one more son to offer to the nation. (she raised the hand of Bismil's brother). I want nothing in return of my son's blood".³³ This shows how the ordinary middle class mothers who sacrificed their sons in the political struggle. It also shows how some mothers understood their roles in relation to the nation. With reference to the projection of women in the political struggle Shiv Verma said, Women were not recognized through their family names. They were referred to as 'Maa' which means mother".³⁴

Mothers or women in household become 'Revolutionaries Freedom Fighters;- Here we have references of a freedom fighter named as Raj Kumari Gupta. She was born in Banda district of Kanpur in 1902. Her father was a grocer, and her mother observes purdha. She was married at the age of 13 to the Late Madam Mohan Gupta. He was a revolutionary but also participated in Congress activities. Raj Kumari Gupta played an important role in famous Kakori Dacoity. Women Satyagrahis had to face many difficulties at their in laws home if they took active part in the freedom movement. When Raj Kumari Gupta took active part in 'Kanpur Dacoity Case' in

³⁰ Transcript of interview with Shiv Verma.

³¹ Bjorkert, op.cit, p. 97 and 124

³² This episode was narrated by Shiv Verma who shared similar leaning as Bismil; Bjorkert, op.cit, p.90

³³ Transcript with Ram Krsihna Khatri. This has been cited by the Bjorkert, op.cit, p. 91.

³⁴ Transpirt with Shiv Kumar Verma husband of Phul Kumari Devi who kept purdha and lived with her in laws in Khamouli village near Kanpur.

1925 and was arrested. She was disowned by her in-laws and thrown out of the house. 'They went to extent of publishing a disclaimer in the local newspaper 'Vir Bharat' that 'We have no relationship with her'.³⁵

Conclusion;- Women's participation in the nationalist movement has primarily been discussed and analyzed in relation to their public and political activities, such as actively participating in processions, protests, boycotts, and political meetings. However, this was an area of activity inaccessible to all women. Thousands of women in the home like mothers, daughters, and sisters who indirectly supported their men by taking on household responsibilities when their men folk were imprisoned or killed were ignored.³⁶ Here, we made an effort to highlight various women in homes who have made significant contributions to the freedom movement. These women although failed to participate in any public political activities because of social and family restrictions. However, the political developments occurring outside their homes had an impact on their daily lives. It is critical to understand how these women in homes interpreted these events within their households. Since women participate in various political activities within their homes, therefore these activities cannot be viewed as the rights of public actors alone.³⁷ These 'women freedom fighters' from Uttar Pradesh mentioned the limitations and constraints of 'purdha' and segregation, but they were more interested in what they did despite these constraints.³⁸ Second, the domestic activities of these women suggest that homes can become areas of political practices; political participation does not always require access to formal political institutions. In Indian households, women rearranged their duties and responsibilities to support the nationalist movement. In addition to grief and distress, women who lose family members have to organize the responsibilities to both themselves and their immediate family. For example, women took over the role of caring for their elderly in-laws when their husbands were arrested. Some of these women had to work to support their families, and deal with food shortages. Third, some of these mothers and wives started secretly aiding and supporting their revolutionary leaders, thus indirectly participating in the revolutionary nationalist activities. Some of these women became revolutionary leaders and thus actively participating in the freedom movement. As Durgha Bia Vohra and Raj Kumari Gupta were previously mentioned. Thus these women in the households proudly bear the title 'Freedom Fighters' because of their participation and contribution by sacrificing everything for the freedom of their country

³⁵ Bjorkert, op.cit, p.150

³⁶ Leela Kasturi and Mazumdar ed., *Women and Indian Nationalism*, Vikas Publication, New Delhi, 1994, p. 26.

³⁷ Bjorkert, op.cit, p. 209

³⁸ Allien Judith. 'Evidence and Silence; Feminism and the Limits of History', in Carol Pateman and Elizabeth Gross (eds.) *Feminist Challenges; Social and Political Theory*, Allen and Unwin, Australia 1986, p 175