

**WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN THE BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
1916-1947**

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SOOFIYA AZEEM KHAN



Centre for Historical Studies

School of Social Sciences

Jawaharlal Nehru University

New Delhi-110067

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CERTIFICATE


It is certified that the dissertation titled “**Women’s Education in the Bombay Presidency: 1916- 1947**”, is an original work by **Soofiya Azeem Khan** submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of the Master of Philosophy. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any other degree of this University or to any other University to the best of our knowledge.

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Soofiya Azeem Khan


Chairperson

CHAIRPERSON
(Prof. Neeladri Bhattacharya)
Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110067


Supervisor

Centre for Historical Studies
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067

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This dissertation proposes to present in four thematic chapters a general history of the development of women's education in the Presidency of Bombay. It highlights the cultural crisis and social changes that took place in the wake of the establishment of the British rule in the Presidency, and the effect this had on the education of women. It focuses on the difficulties faced by the early reformers in making the notion of educated women acceptable in the society and the private efforts made in this direction by the Indians. Above all, it narrates the efforts of the women themselves to secure a better position for them in the society, by carrying forward the tradition of protest established by the early feminist writers such as Tarabai Shinde.

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Chapter-I

INTRODUCTION

Nineteenth century western India witnessed a change in the political structure of the country which resulted in further socio-economic changes. This period was marked by the ending of the Peshwai rule¹ and the establishment of the English East India Company as the political masters of the country. Cultural contacts with the British and the new administrative measures which were introduced resulted in a series of protest movements in society to enable it to cope with the changing socio-economic circumstances. As the ability of the Indians to control these changes became increasingly difficult, they sought to compensate themselves with an increasing control in the domestic sphere. The strategy which the Indians adopted to accommodate these changes led to an increasing competition among ethnic and religious groups. This resulted in what Anil Seal had described as; “between their tongues, sects and, communities, there were intense competition which under the circumstances of foreign rule mainly took the form of struggle for status”.²

The beginning of western education in India lay in the Charter Act of 1813, which not only allowed the missionaries to travel to India, but provided for the allocation of one hundred thousand rupees per year for two specific purposes: first, “the encouragement of the learned natives of India and the revival of and improvement of literature; secondly, the promotion of a knowledge of the sciences amongst the inhabitants of that country”.³ Missionary educational activities and the lure of government jobs attracted Indians to the new western education. One of the first groups to take advantage of this new education in western India belonged to the Brahman community. This was not surprising given the

¹ Peshwas were the Brahman Prime minister of the Maratha Chatrapatis, it was they and not the successors of Shivaji who wielded real political power in western India. They dominated the political affairs by controlling the Maratha confederacy, spanning western and central India. _ Meera, Kosambi; Crossing the Threshold: Feminist Essays in Social History, New Delhi, 2007.

² Anil, Seal; The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1968, pp-11

³ S.C. Ghosh; The History of Education in Modern India, 1757- 1986, Orient Longman, Hyderabad, 1995, pp-20

traditional monopoly of education by the Brahmans. Even during the Peshwai rule, “the key administrators of the Maratha power from the Peshwa to the level of the village official”⁴, was provided by them. So when the new educational system was introduced, it easily came to be dominated by the Brahmans.

The criticism of the Christian missionaries and the increasing awareness created by western education gave rise to a group of social reformers, who initiated movements to reform Hindu society. Though, western philosophy and ideas played a crucial role in this process, the tradition of revolt against the existing social customs and religious beliefs had always been a part of the Indian society. The only major difference in the nineteenth century reform movement from that of the earlier periods was its secular character based on a rationalist critique of society which led to social as well as religious reforms.⁵ The main plank for reformist activity was the position of women in the society. As it has been argued by Meera Kosambi, the pre-occupation of the reformers with gender issues, “was dictated primarily by the Brahman community’s oppressive marriage related customs and, increasingly, also by the British official policy of making political rights contingent upon social reforms”.⁶

The reformist programme for the education of the women was the least contested one from among all the other movements for reform. According to the Brahmanical tradition, women along with the Shudras were not to be educated at all. This meant their complete exclusion from the educational institutions. But the situation began to change in the second half of the nineteenth century as more and more liberal educated Indians began to demand a reform in the existing structure of educational institutes and the inclusion of women in such institutes.

This dissertation attempts to trace the growth of this demand and also the development that took place in the field of women’s education in western India. The first chapter deals with the origin of the debate that took place between the reformers and the anti-reformist orthodoxy on the question of women’s education and the educational

⁴ Christine, Dobbin; Urban Leadership in Western India: politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840-1885, London, Oxford University Press, 1972, pp-6

⁵ Charles, Heimsath; Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, Bombay, 1964

⁶ Meera, Kosambi; Crossing the Threshold: Feminist Essays in Social History, New Delhi, 2007, p- 21.

efforts of the Christian missionaries. The middle decades of the nineteenth century saw an increasing reformist activity in western India and, also an intensification in the debate between anti-reformist orthodoxy and the social reformers. The leading role in the entire debate was played by the Brahman community, whose members comprised both the reformers as well as the orthodoxy.

The second chapter traces the growth of education of women in the Presidency. It also highlights the efforts of educationalist like Karve and others, which led to the formation of the first Women's University in India, the Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thakersey or the S.N.D.T University at Poona. The efforts of non-Brahman reformers like Jotirao Phule and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, in the development of education among low caste girls and the increasing participation by women in political activities in the country, is also noted. The efforts of non-sectarian institutes such as the Seva Sadan, the Arya Mahila Mandir and the All India Women's Conference in the field of women's education and the debate on the curriculum which in the twentieth century took place between the first generation of educated women. This was an ideal continuation of the debate on the nature and structure of education for women of the nineteenth century. The final chapter deals with the development of education among the Muslim women in the Presidency and the role played in this direction by the Muslim social reformers and their institution, the Anjuman-i-Islam. The Muslim community in the Presidency, due to their sectarian divisions, was the last to take advantage of the secular education and to introduce it among their women. This chapter deals with the social circumstances which hampered this process and the role of government in the development of their education.

A Historiographical Review

The English East India Company had firmly entrenched itself in all aspect of Indian life – political, economic and even to a lesser extent in the socio-cultural life- by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Simultaneously, a modern education was launched in earnest, as patronage of traditional education declined. Initially, following a policy of non-intervention in Indian social matter, a continuation of the existing systems of education was initiated, which was best expressed Warren Hastings’s policy of orientalism and the establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The balance finally tilted in favour of the Anglicists when William Bentinck, a utilitarian reformist, took over as Governor General in 1828 and Thomas Babington Macaulay was appointed the law member in his council in 1834. On 2 February 1835 he issued his famous Minute on Indian Education, which became the blueprint for the introduction of a English language based education in India. The purpose of such an education, he argued was to create “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and intellect.”⁷ Thus, as Sabyasachi Bhattacharya has put it, a new education system was introduced in India, in which the task of producing knowledge was assigned to the metropolitan country, while its reproduction, replication and dissemination was left for the colonized people.⁸ This was the beginning of the new modernization project for India.

English education, as Gauri Viswanathan has argued, was present in India in various forms before 1835. But while previously English was studied primarily as a language, the new shift was towards the study of literature as a medium of modern knowledge. It incorporated a group of natives in to the structure of colonial rule, which was the main political agenda of Anglicism.⁹ This select group of educated Indians began to look their own society through a prism ideologically constructed by such concepts as reasons utility, progress and justice. In other words, there was a rise of a civil society. Though it was very limited it was still articulate in defending its rights, while locating its identity in an Indian tradition. But this tradition it was also felt, needed reform. This led

⁷ S.C. Ghosh; The History of Education in Modern India 1757-1986, Hyderabad, 1995, pp. 31-33

⁸ S. Bhattacharya; Introduction to The Contested Terrain: Perspective on Education in India, Hyderabad, 1998

⁹ G. Viswanathan; Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India, New York, 1989, p.20

to the rise of a small but dedicated body of liberal social reformers. In seeking a psychological advantage over their subjects, colonial ideologues felt compelled to assert the moral superiority of the rulers in many ways. The 'higher' morality of the imperial masters could be effectively established by highlighting the low status of women among the subject population.¹⁰ The best known work of this genre is James Mill's monumental account of India and her past. In sharp contrast to the Orientalist who had suggested that Hindus were a people of high culture, now in a state of decline, Mill deemed Hindu civilization as crude from its very beginning. According to him Hindu women were in "a state of dependence more strict and humiliating than that which is ordain for the weaker sex... Nothing can exceed the habitual contempt which Hindu entertains for their women... They are held in extreme degradation, excluded from the sacred books, deprived of education and (of a share) in the paternal property... That remarkable barbarity, the wife held unworthy to eat with her husband, is prevalent in Hinduism."¹¹

This attitude produced a reaction among educated Indians supported by the Hindu orthodoxy and it took the form of militant nationalism. This nationalism sought to preserve the "only space that was still understood as inviolate, autonomous."¹² This was the result, as Tanika Sarkar has argued, of "two different readings of Hindu domestic practices and culture. While liberal reformers describe them as a distortion of earlier purity and a major symptom of present decay, Hindu nationalists celebrated them as an excess reserved over and above colonization, any change in which would signify the surrender of the last bastion of freedom."¹³

The claim of British administrators that it was the English who undertook the hard task of reforming the Indian society has been hotly contested by historians such as Indrani Sen and, Lata Mani. But colonial legislation did not represent an abrupt caesura. As has been argued by Lata Mani that, "colonialism or their legislation did not represent a total transformation...But that it entail decisive albeit differential shifts in socio-economic and ideological relation, reconstellating in the process the mutually

¹⁰ Uma, Chakravarty; "Whatever Happened to the Vedic Dasi" in Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History, Edited by Kumkum Sangari & Sudesh Vaid, New Delhi, 1989, p.34

¹¹ James, Mill; The History of British India, with Notes by H.H. Wilson, (5th ed) London, 1840, pp. 312-13

¹² Tanika, Sarkar, Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism, London, 2001, p. 36

¹³ Ibid, p.36

consolidating system of caste, class and patriarchy. Colonial and post colonial modernity emerge, rather as contradictory forms of existence constituted by multiple paradoxes: hard won gains and painful losses...and, new principles of social division.”¹⁴ Similar argument has been forwarded by Indrani Sen in her ‘Women and Empire’. She has pointed out the contradictory attitude of Englishmen towards the women back home as compared to the ‘native’ women. The colonizers claimed themselves to be “the great emancipator of Indian womanhood.”¹⁵ However they did a volte-face and valorized certain ‘native’ social practices that they had all along condemned as oppressive and had sought to eradicate. Indrani Sen has further argued that the English in fact “militated against any real female emancipation, furthering at best a ‘Victorianisation’ of the Indian women.”¹⁶

This does not mean that the Indian social reformers had an altruistic motive to promote female emancipation. In fact, as Lata Mani has argued this increasing focus on the ‘low-status’ of women in fact led to new forms of gender discrimination. But the women, Lata Mani maintains, were not passive in this process. They were “acutely conscious of the disjunction of patriarchal discourse, and some even sharply satirized it.”¹⁷ Tarabai Shinde’s “Stri-Purush Tulana was the first full-fledged feminist argument, which focused its analysis on the ideological fabric of patriarchal society.”¹⁸

Scholars such as Kumkum Sangari, Sudesh Vaid, Susi Tharu, K. Lalita and Sumanta Banerjee on the other hand, have argued that a peculiar and highly contradicting blend of Victorian and brahmanical ideology of womanhood came to be privileged during the nineteenth century, one which more over eroded social and economic rights customarily enjoyed by the middle and low caste women. Sumanta

¹⁴ Lata, Mani; Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India, University of California Press, California, 1988, pp.5-6

¹⁵ Indrani, Sen, Women and Empire, New Delhi, 2002, p.67

¹⁶ Ibid, p.70

¹⁷ Lata, Mani; Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India, University of California Press, California, 1988 pp.81-82

¹⁸ Vidyut, Bhagwat; “Pandita Ramabai’s Stri-Dharma Niti and Tarabai Shinde’s Stri-Purush Tulana: The Inner Unity of the Text”, in Anne, Feldhaus (ed.); Images of women in Maharashtra Society, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1998, p-205

Banerjee, for instance, suggests that Bengali women's "emancipation" by bhadralok men destroyed an earlier more vibrant female identity and culture.¹⁹

Similarly, Sangari and Vaid have pointed out that in the colonial context reform of the status of women became part of the self-definition of India's nascent bourgeoisie.²⁰ According to them, the patriarchal set up was thus not destroyed but it only underwent a change on the western model. With the spread of western education and the need for government employment it became absolutely necessary for the Indians to imitate the model of their imperial overlord. This new class desired a legal status in society and the reform were a reflection of these desires. Amrita Shodan has also argued that the reform movement was not an effort to modernize or liberate the Indian women but to reform the Indian social structure according to the newly acquired notion of western morality and the idea of an ideal society. The reform project, she insisted, "... are entrenched firmly in the patriarchal fold. This conclusion helps us to understand how, even though we ostensibly went through a period of social reform on behalf of women in the nineteenth century; Indian women today are still seeking emancipation. Modern India women's oppression continues ... because the paradigmatic contours of that reform project firmly placed women in a private and domestic arena as possessions of man and infantile objects to be regulated and controlled."²¹

These arguments have been further extended by another group of historians led by Partha Chatterjee, Uma Chakravarti and Judith Walsh. Their main argument was that the nineteenth century reform movement was not directed towards providing an independent status to women in society either professionally or socially, by providing them education that was geared towards the creation of a "new" patriarchy in which the control of the husband on wife would be strengthened by breaking her away from the control of the old patriarchy. The Indian reformers imagined a new order in which they intended to fit women with the skills necessary for family life in British ruled India and to create condition and structures in the private sphere that would compensate men for their loss of

¹⁹ Sumanta, Banerjee; "Marginalization of Women's Popular Culture in the Nineteenth Century Bengal." In *Recasting Women, Essay in colonial History*, Delhi, 1989 ed. by K. Sangari & S. Vaid.

²⁰ K. Sangari & S. Vaid ed. *Recasting Women: Essay in colonial History*, Delhi, 1989

²¹ Amrita, Shodan; "Women in the Maharaja Libel Case : A Re-examination" *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 1997, pp. 137-38

power and position in public life. To this end, proto-nationalist reformers of the period offered women participation in a “new” patriarchy.²²

“Recent historians of the liberal persuasion”, writes Partha Chatterjee, “have often been some what embarrassed by the profuse evidence of women writers of the nineteenth century including those at the forefront of the reform movement in the middle class home, justifying the importance of the so-called feminine virtues ... (such as house work), chastity, self sacrifice, submission, devotion, kindness, patience and the labors of love.”²³ This emphasis on the so-called “feminine virtues”, Chatterjee suggests, occur because nineteenth century Bengali women accepted the new patriarchy of the nationalist and the “resolution of the women question” it implied. Thus, he has argued that through this process (of reform) the nationalist fashioned a “new women” controlled by “new patriarchy”.

Uma Chakravarty has presented her argument about the establishment of a ‘new patriarchy’ in the same vein. According to her, the nineteenth century patriarchy is both reformed and preserved during the struggle for “the extraction of the husband-wife unit”, out of the extended family, a struggle that involves the “schooling of wives”, and tensions “between father and son and between the older women and young wife” (as in the case of Justice Ranade and his father or Anandibai Joshi and her in-laws) over what husband expected of their wives.²⁴

These arguments, however, tend to ignore the crucial role played by the women in the entire process. They often had to make huge sacrifices and struggle to break free of indigenous custom such as Purdah and ban on literacy. No doubt some of the male reformers tried to establish a ‘new’ patriarchy but the ultimate decision to choose between the old and the new patriarchy rested with the women. Women achievers like Ramabai Ranade had to pay dearly for her intimacy with her husband and for the dyadic relationship she built with him within the existing Ranade joint family. In repeated encounters with the older women of the family, Ramabai was ridiculed and humiliated

²² Partha, Chatterjee; The Nation and its Fragments, Princeton University Press, N.J, 1993

²³ *ibid*, p.130

²⁴ Uma, Chakravarti; Re-writing History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai, New Delhi, Kali for Women, pp 200-45

and punished for not abandoning her husband's plan for her studies.²⁵ This determination to bear the consequences of her choice, without any assistance from her husband led to a start of re-writing of both old and new patriarchal traditions.

Judith Walsh has also recognized the agency of the women in accepting their new role as educated wives. But she point out that the "central point of new patriarchy reform was to move wives beyond the control of the extended family, to create women whose morality, conduct, attitudes and ideas would be more appropriately adjusted to their husbands need in British ruled India."²⁶ Tanika Sarkar has similarly pointed out that the autobiography of Rashundari Devi (who published the first autobiography in Bengali language in 1876) "shows that she was as familiar with enforced starvation as the poorest labor would have been ... Men guarded more jealously against her education than they could against the literacy of poor people."²⁷ In spite of all such difficulties she not only taught her self to read and write but she also wrote a critique of existing Hindu tradition like the puja. In her memoirs, she does not look forward to or enjoy the process of making preparations for the puja, which a pious Hindu woman is supposed to, as she alone is responsible for the entire work.

Unlike the above stated view some historians like Ghulam Murshid had blamed the twentieth century sensibility for the problem and not the nineteenth century for it. Murshid gave his position in a most straight forward way when he asserted in the 'The Reluctant Debutante' that the nineteenth century Bengali women "were quite content with and eager to receive this kind of education that men arranged for them who turn them in to better wives and better mother, or, in other words to play their traditional roles and to be exploited as wives and mothers by men."²⁸

This kind of reasoning however ignores the enormous influence and holds the traditional culture and religion had on the society. The reformers while introducing reforms for the women – limited as they might have been in nature – had to face tremendous social and peer pressure. Social ostracism was one of the most frequently

²⁵ Judith, Walsh; Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women learned when Men gave them Advice, U.S.A., 2004, p.27

²⁶ Opcit, p.110

²⁷ Tanika, Sarkar, Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism, London, 2001, p. 20

²⁸ Ghulam, Murshid; The Reluctant Debutante, Rajshahi: Rajshahi University Press, 1983, p.67

used tool by the orthodoxy to break the reformers will. This in the context of the Indian social set up with its caste hierarchy, had a very significant impact. Even a low caste social reformer like Jotirao Phule had to leave his parental home when he instituted reforms to educate women. Had the reformers adopted a more radical approach like those adopted by the Derozians or the Young Bengal, they would have found little support from even among the educated Indians. The British would then not have been as willing to legislate for reforms if they had no social sanction.

Limited as the reforms were in their nature, they helped women like Pandita Ramabai, Kashibai Kanitkar, Rakmabai, among others to forge out an independent identity for themselves. "Neither liberal reformers", asserts Tanika Sarkar, "nor revivalist nor the colonial state articulated the notion of a female selfhood based on an absolute possession of rights. Yet their argument in public created a space for at least a qualified acceptance for the notion of the women's assent to her prescribed condition."²⁹

Similar arguments have been offered by historians like Meera Kosambi and Padma Anagol. Pointing to the need for a re-writing the history of prominent women achievers of the 19th century, Kosambi argued that this was not needed to emphasize that "... benefits like education were 'gifted' by male reformers to grateful but passive women recipients; they aimed to reconstruct a more balanced version of the same history by acknowledging women's subjectivity and agency and by celebrating their role as actors."³⁰

Scholars such as Padma Anagol and Tanika Sarkar have pointed out that women were not passive objects and the writings of this period revealed the resistance they built up against the patriarchal setup. These resistances differed from individual to individual depending on their caste and class status in society. These resistances led the society at large to question the existing patriarchal mode. The writing of the 19th century educated women like Kashibai Kanitkar, Rashundari Debi's autobiography as discussed by Tanika

²⁹ Tanika, Sarkar; "Pragmatics of the Hindu Right: Politics of Women Organizations" in *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 34, No. 31, 31 July – 6 August, 1999, p. 2160

³⁰ Meera, Kosambi, "A Widow in the Prison-house: Women's Education and the Politics of Social Reform in Nineteenth Century India", *History of Education*, 2000, Vol. 29, No. 5, p.441.

Sarkar, Pandita Ramabai's work, and others provided proof of their resistance. Anagol had argued that this resistance need not necessarily be an open rebellion.³¹

The writing of these scholars emphasized the role of women not as a passive recipient of the generosity of the male led reform movement but as an active agent who shaped the future reforms for women. They pointed out the pioneering effort made by these women in the field of education. Meera Kosambi asserts that the writing of the women achievers of the 19th century do not merely append, "... to the existing historical role in, which claim that benefits like education were 'gifted' by male reformers to the grateful but passive women recipients; they aim to reconstruct a more balanced version of the same history by acknowledging women subjectivity and agency by celebrating their role as actors."

Anagol had argued that women in 19th century Maharashtra had started a full-fledged self-authorization movement and their, " their modes of resistance, both individual and collection, were aimed not only at installing their position as 'subjects' within the home, as seen in the call for domestic reform, but also in the creation of a more just and humane society." These resistance were fashioned "... towards transforming Maharashtrian society were, therefore accompanied by 'purpose' and 'intention'."³²

By and large, one can say that it was definitely the introduction and spread of western education that inaugurated the process of self-criticism among that newly educated intelligentsia, who for varied reason which have been stated earlier worked relentlessly for reforming the Hindu religion and society in general and more particularly for women. But recognizing the contribution made by the male reformer does not detract from the value or the credit due to the women themselves. The project of modernity was, of course, inaugurated by the male reformers but they had no control over the results it had on the society. They definitely pioneered the efforts for introducing educational institutions for girls. But they could not control the impact this education had on the thought process of the educated women, as visible from the writing of women like Ramabai, Rakmabai and others. The reformers never intended the Indian women to make a complete break from the Hindu culture or religion. Neither did they want to lose their

³¹ Ibid, p. 441

³² Padma, Anagol; "From the Symbolic to the Open: Women's Resistance in Colonial Maharashtra" in Anindita Ghosh ed. Behind the Veil, p. 28

superior position in the society or to make women their competitors. Their intentions are debatable as they were formed between ancestral traditions and also influenced to varying degrees and increasingly by a more cosmopolitan view of the world.³³

But whatever the intentions the effort was definitely positive as the women did not act as mere passive recipient, but as an active agent in shaping the future discourse on gender reform and in giving voice to the Indian women in general against the exploitation. As Anagol argues that, "... women were almost always conscious agents of resistance ... intention and deliberations are constant, and they serve the express purpose".

³³ Shills, *The Intellectual between Tradition and Modernity in the Indian Situation*

Chapter II

Debate on Women Education in Bombay

The last quarter of the nineteenth century in western India witnessed a hotly contested debate between reformers and anti-reformist orthodoxy on the question of women's education. With the establishment of British rule in Maharashtra and the ending of the Peshwai rule, there were series of individual revolt against the existing social traditions. Even prior to the modern times, there had been a number of protest movements against the existing socio-religious institution. The excesses committed by the Brahman priest and other high caste Hindus had resulted in the introduction of new trends within Hinduism, like the medieval Bhakti movement, Vaisnav and Shaiva (like that of the Lingayats in south India or the Kalamukhas and Kapalika in North India which were extremist sects who revolted against the brahmanical order of society); all of them rejected the monopoly of the Brahman priest, protested against the prevalent methods of worship and, rejected the caste system.

These socio-religious movements provided the lower caste Hindus with an opportunity to break out of the existing caste system and improve their social position. Another kind of rebellion against the traditional pattern of society did not reject the traditional pattern of society, but it was a movement to gain a better position within the existing caste hierarchy. With the changing economic scenario the upper echelon among the lower caste who were now economically well¹ off___ like the lower caste of the Marathas and gold smiths in Western India___ demanded a social position which would correspond with the economic advances they had made. In order to justify their claim they adopted the upper caste social practices like the sexual segregation of their women folk, ban on widow remarriage and imitation of other Brahman custom which adversely affected the position of women in their caste. This process has been termed as 'sanskritisation' by M.N.Srinivas. Although this was an important movement among the lower castes to improve their social status, it did not result in any significant break from

¹ Charles, Heimsath; Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1964, pp-5- 7.

the existing social system and, on the contrary, it adversely affected the position of women by imposing the same restriction on their freedom as was imposed on the women from the upper castes. Thus, mobility within the caste system had always existed as a result of a group's desire for betterment. But these protest movements did not result in any significant change and the social structure remained the same. With the coming of the British, Indians were exposed to western education, and through it they became familiar with the European morals and philosophies. This had a critical impact on Indian thought, morals and culture. Though the new educational system gave the initial impetus for the reforms that were introduced in Western India, the general support which it received in the society was based on the tradition of protest that already existed in India. Traditional Hindu beliefs and practices came under scrutiny among these western educated Indians. In the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century a small but well-organized and highly articulate body of reformers came to the forefront. The main plank for their reformist activities was the marriage related custom in the Hindu religion and the overall position of women in society. As pointed out by Anagol, one of the main motivations for the reformers in the nineteenth century was their increased awareness of national identity.²

The British regarded their domination of the sub continent as a proof of their moral superiority. James Mill had argued in the *History of British India* that, the degree of progress made by a society is measured by the position occupied by women in that society; "among rude people, the women are generally degraded; among civilized people they are exalted"³ According to this rationale, the domination of India seemed quite natural to the imperial overlords. The degraded condition of the Indian women was taken as an indicator of India's inferior status in the hierarchy of civilizations. Not all westerners, however, painted such a pessimist picture of the Indian society. Some of them, like Abbe Dubois, who worked in South India from close of the eighteenth century to the first two decades of the nineteenth century, painted a rosy picture. In his *Letters on the State of Christianity* published in 1823, he wrote,

² Padma. Anagol; *Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, England, 2005, pp-72

³D. Chakrabarty; "The difference deferral of a colonial modernity: Public debates on domesticity in British India". In *Subaltern studies: Essays in Honour of Ranajit Guha*, vol.8, ed., David Arnold and David Hardiman, Delhi, 1994, pp.50-88.

“They are (Indian women) under much less restraint, enjoy more real freedom, and are in possession of more enviable privileges than persons of their sex in any other Asiatic country. In fact, to them belong the entire management of their household, the care of their children... they can be considered in no other light than as perfectly the mistress within the house.”⁴ This image of Indian women was true only in the case of the wife of the head of the Hindu joint family. In a Hindu family there were several hierarchies, of sex and age. A woman's status within the family usually depended on her husband's position in the household. The young wife or a widow had a subordinate position as compared to that of the mother-in-law. Thus, it was the senior women of the household who exercised power by enforcing rituals at home and by extracting submission from family members. Although their position was better than that of the daughter-in-law or young wives, who had absolutely no authority on family affairs and domestic matters which were the sole concern of the mother-in-law, their position was subordinated to that of their sons. Thus, the only way of asserting their authority was to strictly enforce the religious injunctions and traditions. This often led to the abuse of widows, as it was believed that widows, through the sins committed by them in their previous life, were responsible for the death of their husband⁵. The uneducated and superstitious older women therefore abused the young widows for a crime which they did not even commit. The overall position of the women was subordinate to that of the men of the household and their condition was further worsened by the restriction that was placed on their movement by their sexual segregation.

A number of factors contributed to the growth of demand for women's education. The first impact of European liberalism on the English educated Indian elite was to make them reflect upon their own cultural traditions. This introspection led them to question the traditional practices and customs that led to such suffering for women. The reformers reasoned that reform in the social position of women would reform the entire society. They argued that, education was the only way for improving the social conditions and were convinced that it would exercise a humanizing influence on society and help in the

⁴ Cited in Y.D.Phadke; Women in Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, Government of Maharashtra, New Delhi, 1989, p- 11.

⁵ Padma. Anagol... Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, England, 2005, p- 48

removal of social ills such as, infant marriage, the condition of widows, providing educational facilities for women, reducing the restriction on their movement, it could help in dispelling ignorance and superstitions among women, etc.

Another objective of the reformers was to meet the challenge posed by Christian missionaries who were proselytizing while imparting education. The mission schools were suspected of trying to influence the young girls so as they would want to convert to Christianity. This actually happened in the American Mission School at Ahmadabad in 1842. Till then the numbers of girls in the Mission School had steadily increased. In 1842 three girls were baptized and when their parents appealed to the magistrate, he declared that girls of 13 years of age and above could take such decision for themselves. As a result many girls were withdrawn from the school run by Christian Missionaries.⁶ Due to this reason upper caste Hindus did not send their daughters to these schools. In the initial stages, western educated Indians looked up to what they considered the superior morals and philosophy of their British masters and believed that as responsible liberals their rulers would bring about the reforms and changes required in the society. But towards the last quarter of the nineteenth century these reformers were disillusioned by the timidity of the British rulers on the issues of reforms. There was also a growth of conservative revivalist movement. The Government adopted an ambivalent educational policy, as they feared that any firm stand on their part would be seen by the caste Hindus as interference in their social customs. This made the reformers skeptical of British intentions. Due to the lack of the Government's willingness to work in this field, the Brahman⁷ leaders of the reform movement now decided to set up schools for girls on their own and then apply for grant from the Government.

Gail Minault outlines the response of Muslim leaders to women's education as compared to that of Hindu leaders and the Christian Missionaries. She contends that one

⁶ Karuna. Chanana; "Social Change or Social Reform: The Education of Women in pre-independence India." In Karuna Chanana (e.d); Socialization and Education and Women Exploration in Gender Identity, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1998, pp-100- 101

⁷ Unlike Bengal, where the reformers though predominantly of the Brahman and Kayastha castes, were drawn from varied caste background, in the Bombay Presidency reformers as well as the anti-reformers were not only from the predominantly Marathi speaking areas but were mostly Brahmans. _____ Meera, Kosambi; Crossing the Threshold: Feminist Essays in Social History, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007, pp 20- 21.

of the motivations of Muslim social reformers and leaders in setting up schools for girls was to counteract the influence of the Christian missionaries and their proselytizing zeal. They were particularly suspicious of the Zenana schools⁸. Again, the fact that educated men, looking for a more companionate marriage relationship, came to prefer educated girls as brides further reinforced this concept of education and motivated their parents to send their daughters to schools.⁹ These young educated men believed that they and not the older women of the family should control the social behaviors of their wife. This was possible only by breaking the hold of the old patriarchy.¹⁰

One of the first Indian groups to take advantage of western education was the Parsi community¹¹, first by carrying out reforms and welfare schemes for itself, and next, by providing leadership for reform movements among others. Parsi reformers like Dadabhai Naoroji realized that only support from the leading commercial families of the community would provide the money and the pupils with which such schools could be started. The first Parsi school for girls was opened in October 1849 by Sir Jamshedjee Jejeebhoy's Parsi Benevolent Institution.¹² Though it was not favored by the Panchayat members of the Parsi community, by 1852 there were four schools with 371 pupils up to the age of twelve learning to read and write Gujarati as well as rudiments of geography and natural history¹³. One of the most important Parsi institutes which helped in breaking the hold of narrow orthodoxy over the community was Naoroji Ferdoonji's Parsi religious reform Sabha, formed in 1851.¹⁴ In the 1850s Parsi Girls' Schools were opened by Sir Jamshedjee Jejeebhoy's Parsi Benevolent Institution. The lead was taken by the

⁸ Gail Minault; "Sisterhood or Separation? The All-India Ladies Conference and the nationalist movement". In Gail Minault (e.d); The Extended Family : Women and Political Participation in India and Pakistan, Chanakya Publication, New Delhi, 1981.

⁹ Judith. Walsh; Domesticity in Colonial India: what women learned when men gave them advice, Rowman and Littlefield publishers, U.S.A, 2004, pp- 3 to 5.

¹⁰ Ibid... p-74

¹¹ The Parsis were Zoroastrians from Persia, who had fled Muslim persecution and taken refuge in Gujarat from the eighth century onwards, accepting the local language and dress as well as some customs. They worked with the East India Company in various capacities, for example, as export-import agents and shipbuilders; they mixed freely with English men and accepted some of their cultural practices.

¹² Charles, H.Heimsath; Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1964, p-148.

¹³ Christine.Dobbin; Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics Communities in Bombay City 1840-1885, Oxford University Press, London, 1972, p- 57

¹⁴ Charles, H.Himsath; Indian Nationalism and Hindu Social Reform, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1964, , p-148..

Gujrati Dnyan Prasark Mandali. In 1863 a group of Parsis, led by Manakji Kharshedji, opened the Alexandra Institution to give modern education to girls belonging to middle class families in the English medium. About two-thirds of its students were Parsis, though the daughters of some important Hindu reformers such as Atmaram Pandurang, Thakurdas and Karsondas Madhavdas also attended.¹⁵

The Government did almost nothing for the cause of the education of women and girls in India till the mid-nineteenth century. During all these years, the education of women was mainly a concern of the Christian missionaries and of a few philanthropic Indian individuals. The main reason for their reluctance to interfere in Indian customs was their fear that their tampering with traditions would make them unpopular and destabilize their rule. Company's officials believed that, "the scheme of female education is doubtless unpopular, and looked upon by the masses with fear and dread, whether Hindus or Mohammedans, and that suspicious, ill-disposed natives may consider it subservient in some degree to the views of proselytism."¹⁶ The government therefore, "purposely abstained from acting towards its female subjects as it acted towards its male."¹⁷

The initiative in this matter was first taken by the British and the by Foreign School Society of London. In consultation with its agent, Harington and William Ward of the Baptist Missionary Society of Serampore, the society in 1821, decided to depute Miss Mary Ann Cooke (Mrs. Issac Wilson from 1824) to open schools for girls under the auspices of the Calcutta School Society set up in 1818 following the foundation of the Hindu School in 1817.¹⁸ In 1826 Miss Cooke had set up 30 schools and 600 pupils under her charge, which were concentrated in 1828 into a central school in Calcutta under a committee called the Lady's Society for Native Female Education.¹⁹ The first girl's school in Western India was opened by the American Marathi Mission in Bombay in

¹⁵ Opcit...pp-76.

¹⁶ Y.D.Phadke; *Women in Maharashtra*, Maharashtra Information Centre, Government of Maharashtra, New Delhi, 1989, p- 11

¹⁷ Monier.William; *Modern India and Indians; being a series of impressions, notes, and essays*, 3rd rev., Oriental Publication, Delhi, 1971, p- 324.

¹⁸ Suresh.Chandra.Ghosh; *Education Policy in India Since Warren Hasting*, Calcutta, 1989, p.70.

¹⁹ Arthur, Howell; *Education in British India. Quoted in J.A. Richey, (e.d), Selection from Educational Records. Part II, 1840-59, Calcutta, 1922, p- 46*

1824.²⁰ Later, Christian Missionaries established girls' schools in various places. But due to existing prejudices and since the instruction in these schools was given by Missionaries, upper-caste Hindus did not send their daughters to these schools due to the fear of their conversion. In one of the accounts of the early missionary effort as provided by Rev. W. Taylor, we come to know about the extent of the progress of female education in Bombay. The following extract taken from the Education Commission Report, 1882, of the Bombay Provincial Committee will give some information as to the beginning of female education in that Presidency;

“The first native girl's school in the Presidency was opened by the American Mission in 1824, and two years later they reported an increase of nine girl's schools with an aggregate attendance of 340 pupils. In 1829 the number rose to 400, of whom 122 were able to read, write and cipher and to do plain needle-work. One of these institutions was a boarding-school which was successfully maintained for many years at Byculla in the island of Bombay. In 1831 two native girls' schools were established by the same mission at Ahamadnagar and a boarding school for girls was soon afterwards opened in that town and has been maintained there ever since. In 1829-30 Dr. and Mrs. Wilson established in Bombay six schools for native girls. The number of the pupils soon rose to 200. Their (Church Missionary Society's) first school for native girls was established in 1826. In the course of the next ten years the society opened separate elementary schools for boys and girls at Thanna, Basssein, and Nasik.”²¹

But as pointed out earlier, all these efforts were directed at educating low-caste girls, as upper-castes invariably kept their women away from missionary schools. Nor did they allow English ladies to enter their Zenana. The first girl's school established by Indian effort was Jotirao Phule's 'Low Caste Female School' at Poona in 1848.²² Phule, one of the most prominent and radical non Brahman social reformers in the nineteenth century, was born in a family of vegetable vendors in 1827. He belonged to the Mali caste. After great hardship and trouble he completed his education from the Scottish

²⁰ Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island, Vol- III, Facsimile reproduction, Pune, Government Photozinc Press, 1973 (1st edition.1909), p-102.

²¹ J. Richey ed., Selections from educational records, Part II, Chapter II, Calcutta, Bureau of Education, Superintendent of Govt. Printing, India, 1922.

²² Dhananjay, Keer; Mahatma Jotirao Phule: Father of Indian Social Revolution, 2nd edition, Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1974., pp- 23, 24

Mission's High school at Poona, with which he had a life long association. It was also here that he met Sadashiv Ballal Govande, a Brahman and a fellow student and his life long friend.²³ Both of them were greatly influenced by the ideas of Thomas Paine and read with great interest Paine's famous book The Rights of Man. After completing his Secondary education in 1847, Jotirao decided not to accept a job under the Government.²⁴ Phule believed that the education of low caste Hindus and women (whose position was even lower than that of the Shudras) deserved priority. After visiting the American Mission School at Ahamadnagar in 1848, he opened the first of his girl's schools with the help of Govande at Poona in the same year. Through education, he believed, a fundamental change in the social attitude could be brought about. His father, Govindrao, turned Jotiba and his wife, Savitribai out of the house, when he refused to give up the scheme. The difficulty of finding teachers to teach in the Girl's school led Savitribai, who had been educated by Jotiba, to teach in the school.

The scheme was chronically short of money. For about a year, the expenditure incurred in running the girls' school was borne by Phule and his friends, Paranjpe, Hate, and, Govande. Despite these problems and with a grant of Rs.75 a month from the Dakshina Prize Fund Committee, several more schools were founded in Pune by Phule and his associates in the next four years.²⁵ He opened a second school for girls in Rasta Peth on 17 September 1851. The curriculum comprised of reading, grammer, arithmetic, geography, history, map-reading, etc.²⁶ In 1854 F. Warden, the Judicial Commissioner on female education in Bombay pointed out the progress made in the direction of the female education in one of his addresses delivered on 3 April 1854:

“But the most remarkable incident in the history of public instruction which has recently occurred in this Presidency is the spread of education among females. When I went to Poona in 1851 as Judicial Commissioner, I visited the two first girls schools established in that city, they were lodged in small houses, and my visit to them reminded

²³Y.D. Phadke: Social Reformers of Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, New Delhi, 1985, p-12.

²⁴ P.G. Patil; Collected Works of Mahatma Jotirao Phule, Vol. II, Selection Education Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, Mantralaya, Bombay, 1991, pp xv- xvi(introduction).

²⁵ Rosalind.O' Hanlon: Caste Conflict and Ideology: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low Caste Protest in Nineteenth Century Western India, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.117.

²⁶ Meera, Kosambi: Crossing the Threshold: Feminist Essays in Social History, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007, p, 10- 14



me of the account of the assembly of the early Christian ...The school mistress, the wife of a gardener, who educated her in order that she might be the means of elevating her country from their state of miserable ignorance and a band of young matrons, who had formed themselves into a normal class, refused to see me on any terms ...” This reluctance on the part of Savitribai to have her pupils examined was due to the existing Purdah system. Parents were willing to send their girls to school only if the school management made arrangements that no stranger was to be permitted to visit the school without the permission of the members of the managing committee and for proper escort for the girls. But the attitude of the parents gradually changed and the students in the schools were publicly examined by eminent educationists such as Major Candy and Dadoba Pandurang Tarkhadka. And in 1854 as F. Warden remarked that, “I assemble at the courtyard of the Poona College, in the presence of the Governor, the Bishop, and a host of others, a collection of more than a hundred girls, who were publicly examined ... So effectively is this leaven spreading that although we might appropriate part of our new grant to girl’s schools, the general feeling of the Board seems to be that we should “leave well alone”.²⁷

Upper caste Hindu and Muslim girls were kept away from such schools. In 1882 the first Education Commission which met under William Hunter found the picture of female education in British India quite dismal since 98 percent of the girls of school going age were still outside the schools and out of their total population of 99.7 million, a little less than 99.5 million were unable to read and write. The Commission, therefore, recommended that education of women in India needed to be encouraged by the Government. The Government should give liberal aids to existing private girls’ schools, prescribe a simple syllabus in girls’ primary schools and organized a separate inspectorate for girl’s education.²⁸

In 1886, Alfred Woodley Croft (1841-1925) the Director of Public Instruction, made a review of the progress made in the direction of female education in Bombay. This

²⁷ Richey, J.A: Selections of Educational Record Chapter II, Calcutta, Bureau of Education, Superintendent of Govt. Printing, India, 1922.

²⁸ Hunter, W.W, Report on the Indian Education Commission 1882, under Female Education, No.1, Calcutta, Superintendent of Govt. Printing, India, 1883.

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review substantiated the fact that despite some progress made in this direction, upper caste Hindus still kept their women away from such institution:

“The young ladies passed the matriculation examination in 1886, of whom seven were European and there were three Parsee But, as stated in the last chapter, no Hindu or Mohammedan girls in the Bombay Presidency have yet passed in Entrance examination. It was with the object of remedying this defect that the Poona High School for girls was established in 1884. There was in 1886, an attendance of 69 pupils, the expenditure amounted to Rs.17, 000 of which ‘one-third’ was contributed from private sources and the remainder by Government.”²⁹ This was due the fact that the Purdah system was strictly followed by caste Hindus and Muslims. Apart from this, the custom of child marriage was in vogue and the girls had to be married off before they reached the age of puberty. Since they were married young and acquired household responsibilities at an early age, they could not spend several years in school which was regarded as a waste of time. Due to these reasons, home-education was a popular option. The orthodox opinion as represented by the Native Opinion, though conceding that “home-education... will be desultory”, distinctly preferred it to the perils of school education.³⁰ Another danger they perceived from the formal schooling of girls was their movement across the public streets. They were regarded as unsafe for unescorted ladies. It was due to this reason that the school established in the initial period had to bear the additional cost of providing escorts to bring the girls to schools.

Observing this trend and also the lukewarm official support, Monier William enthusiastically commented in 1878: “the men will themselves raise their own women. They will throw down the barrier which at present surround their homes. They will tear down Purdah, pull down the shutters of their Zenana, throw open the doors of their inner apartments, invite us to enter in – entreat us to do for their wives and daughters what we have done for themselves”.³¹

There was, however, a deep schism among the Indians as to what constituted the ideal educational system for the Indian women. This led to an intense debate in the last

²⁹ Croft, Alfred. Review of Education in India, with special reference to the Education Commission, Calcutta, Superintendent of Govt. Printing, India, 1886, pp.278-280.

³⁰ Native Opinion, 17 September, 1882

³¹ Monier William, Modern India and The Indians: Being a Series of Impression, Notes and Essays, 3rd rev: Oriental Publication, Delhi, 1971 (first edition 1879), p.125.

quarter of the nineteenth century in the Bombay presidency between the reformers, on the one hand, and the conservative anti-reformist orthodoxy, on the other. The debate centered on the question of the extent and in what manner to educate women. It was no longer a question of whether to educate them. The orthodox position was taken up by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and his two newspapers the Kesari (in Marathi) and the Mahratta (in English), while the reformers were led by Mahadeo Govind Ranade.

II

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century Indian society admired men who wrote or spoke excellent English. But it detested women who had even a smattering of it. Learning of English by women was associated, in the minds of these people, with the adoption of western ways of thoughts and conduct in domestic life. It was feared that women on learning English would mix freely with men and stop doing domestic work, as did wives of English officials. The orthodox group led by Tilak conformed to this line of thinking. Tilak stoutly opposed every attempt made by the social reformers to seek help from the alien government in social matters. This brought him, time and again, into conflict with Ranade. He was the exact opposite of Ranade in social as well as in political matters. Ranade was a liberal reformer with moderate tendencies in politics, while Tilak, politically, was a fiery extremist. Their backgrounds were also very different. Tilak was fourteen years younger than him, and had been brought up in circumstances bordering on poverty. As a student in the Deccan College at Poona, Tilak exhibited qualities of genuine love for the acquisition of learning, intellectual energy, and courage. He was a great Sanskrit scholar and a highly intelligent man who devoted his energy to the preservation of the existing social order.³²

When he was in the in the Deccan College, he met Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, who was a brilliant student. Although all his life he had suffered extreme poverty, yet, when he was offered a government job after completing his graduation he refused and decided to dedicate his life to the service of the country. Agarkar was the most thorough-going rationalist among all the social reformers of Maharashtra in the nineteenth century.

³² P.G.Jagirdar: Mahadeo Govind Ranade, printed by The Manager, Government of India Press, Nasik, 1971, pp-109 and 162. ;

Despite their differences of opinion on social matters, the two became great friends. Their lofty idealism and willingness to dedicate their entire lives to the cause of national regeneration by making the people aware of their political rights and demanding self rule from the alien government brought them together.³³ They believed that proper education should be imparted to Indians by Indian themselves. This would inculcate the spirit of patriotism and would be an important prerequisite for the upliftment of the nation. They decided to co-operate with Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, who had just resigned from a government school and planned to start a private school. Tilak and Agarkar joined hands with him, and the three of them started the New English School for Boys in 1880. In order to extend true education to the general public, they started two weekly papers, the Mahratta (in English) edited by Tilak, and the Kesari (in Marathi) edited by Agarkar.³⁴ In the very first year the Kesari published articles, mostly written by Agarkar, condemning child-marriage and supporting widow-remarriage. These articles sometimes created tension between him and Tilak.

The Tilak- Agarkar group started the Fergusson College in 1885, in which the two became Professors. For running the New English School, including the College, the group had established the Deccan Educational Society.³⁵ In the meantime, the Age of Consent Bill controversy had thrust to the foreground the question whether social reform should take precedence over the political. The old difference of view point between Tilak and Agarkar on the question of reforming women's social position now became acute. In October 1887 Agarkar's association with the Kesari came to an end as Tilak took over the responsibility of managing and editing the weekly. Agarkar soon started his own newspaper the Sudharak (the Reformer). He was assisted in his efforts by G.K.Gokhale, the political successor of Ranade, who like him, was a liberal social reformer. Gokhale had just joined the Fergusson College as a Professor and a life member of the Deccan Society and he extended his full cooperation to Agarkar. Agarkar saw education as the only means for the intellectual advancement of society. Agarkar believed in John Stuart Mills view expressed in the Book IV of the Principles of Political Economy, that, " it

³³Y.D. Phadke; Social Reformers of Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Center, New Delhi, 1985, pp-34-35.

³⁴ Ibid...p-135.

³⁵P.G. Jagirdar; Mahadeo Govind Ranade, printed by The Manager, Government of India Press, Nasik, 1971, p-34.

cannot and ought not to be a deference to personal authority of the sort of characteristic of hierarchical systems... critical deference is found upon respect and intelligence and demands a social and political structure which is characteristically modern in its outlook and organization”³⁶ Thus he not only outlined the importance of education for society but especially stressed the fact that education and intellectual improvement of the of the non educated groups, like women and the non-elite class, can take place only with the help of the educated Indians.³⁷

Agarkar was a staunch champion of women’s rights. He opposed the ban on widow marriage, the disfiguring of the widows by shaving their head, supported the cause of women’s education, the raising of the age of consent for girls, co-education. He wanted girls to acquire higher education and compete with men in all spheres of life. He was totally against discrimination between the sexes and was not at all in favour of designing a special syllabus for women.³⁸ Unlike other social reformers (Ranade or Bhandarkar) Agarkar was an agnostic if not an avowed atheist. He did not need the support of religious scripture to advocate reforms. He differed from Ranade in one other important aspect as well, that is on the question of political reforms. While Ranade advocated a moderate political programme and was reluctant to criticize government policies, Agarkar was not only merciless in his criticism of the British Government but he also backed the demand for self government.³⁹

Another very important reformer of the nineteenth century was Jotirao Phule. While other social reformers concentrated on reforming the existing social customs, Phule represented a revolt against all existing social institutions, which had enslaved the people in the name of customs and Vedic laws. According to him women belonged to the category of “ati-shudra”,⁴⁰ as their position was lower than that of Shudra men. In his evidence before the Hunter Commission, Phule questioned the authenticity of the concern expressed by the “superior classes” for the education of the masses , and he also

³⁶R.J. Halliday; “Some Recent Interpretation of John Stuart Mill”. In John Cunningham(ed.); John Stuart Mill: Critical Assessments, Vol I, London, 1987, pp-323.

³⁷ Aarvind. Ganachari: Gopal Ganesh Agarkar: The Social Rationalist Reformer, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, p- 124

³⁸Y.D. Phadke: Women in Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, Government of Maharashtra, New Delhi, 1989, p-13

³⁹ Y.DPhadke; Social Reformers of Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, New Delhi, 1985, p-34

⁴⁰G.P. Deshpande (e.d.); Selected Writings Of Jotirao Phule, Left World Books, New Delhi, 2002.

questioned the theory propounded by Macaulay that 'filtration' of education from the enlightened to the lower orders of the society would occur gradually. He argued that;

"The cry over the whole country has been for some time that government have amply provided for higher education whereas that of the masses have been neglected. To some this cry is justified, the classes directly benefited by higher education may not readily admit it...what contribution have these made to the great work of regenerating their fellow-men? How have they begun to act upon the masses? Have any of them formed (teaching) classes at their home or elsewhere for their less fortunate or less wise (educated) countrymen? Or have they kept their knowledge to themselves as a personal gift, not to be soiled with the ignorant vulgar?...Upon what ground is it asserted that the best way to advance the moral and intellectual welfare of the people is to raise the standard of instruction among the higher classes?"⁴¹

On 24 September 1873, Jotirao convened a meeting of his followers and admirers, and it was decided to form the Satya Shodhak Samaj(society of seekers of truth), with Jotirao as its first President and treasure.⁴²The main aim of this organization was to liberate the 'shudra and ati- shudra' and to prevent their exploitation by the Brahmans. A follower of Jotirao, Narayan Magahji Lokhande(who is regarded as the father of Indian trade Union movement) took over the management of the Deenbandhu, which was published from Bombay. With the help of this newspaper, Jotirao created an anti-brahmanical movement in the Bombay Presidency, whose main aims was the amelioration of the social condition of the depressed classes and women. He also tirelessly worked to promote their education.

The education of women ran into an obvious conflict between the ideals of education, which should create a spirit of enquiry and independence of thought, and the norms of women being dependent and obedient. As a result, the Hindu orthodoxy led by Tilak started advocating a separate syllabus for the proposed High School for girl's in 1884. When they saw that their opposition to the scheme of such a school failed to carry weight either with the government or with the Indian public opinion, they changed their

⁴¹ Report of the Education Commission, with the Report of the Bombay Provincial Committee, with Evidence taken before the Committee and Memorials addressed to the Education Commission, Govt. of India, Calcutta, 1884, pp-140-145.

⁴² Y.D.Phadke; Social Reformers of Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, New Delhi, 1985, pp-15-16.

argument and started opposing the proposed curriculum of the new Girl's High School. Tilak's newspaper the *Mahratta* and the *Kesari* led this propaganda and in *Mahratta* Tilak thus argued:

".... Our girls are required to have only so much knowledge of English as would enable them to understand pretty well a Standard English author I don't see any necessity of teaching Algebra and Euclid to our girls. Arithmetic should only be taught up to interest (English to be taught as optional subject). There is no need of giving them knowledge of chemistry: some abstract truth of astronomy Girls should be taught constitutional history ... Sanskrit should be made compulsory I should also be glad to see needle work in the school".⁴³

These were the subjects the *Mahratta* thought should not be taught while criticizing the existing curriculum of the Female High School in Bombay, the *Mahratta* proposed the following subjects that ought to be included in the syllabi:

"... but there is one feature of this curriculum which strikes us very forcibly; religious and moral instruction as can be conveyed by lessons inculcating high principles of ancient Aryan religious morality, finds a place nowhere in the list of subjects taught. There are innumerable lessons of excellent advice to young women with regard to chaste, wifely conduct, scattered over the old historical and legendary works of Indian mythology which can be 'safely' studied and acted upon by our women even at the present day and which they cannot afford to be ignorant of".⁴⁴

These opposing views on education of women gained momentum with the decision of the government to establish the Girl's High School, with English as a medium of instruction in 1884. The opinion of the anti-reformist orthodoxy as voiced by Tilak found an expression in the articles of *Mahratta* and *Kesari*. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was one of the leaders of the extremist group in the Congress. He took an anti-reformist position on the education of women in order to gather "support from the upper-caste elite for a militant Hindu nationalism".⁴⁵ In Tilak's opinion, the primary role of women was that of the home-maker and any education given to her should be so designed as to enhance her

⁴³ *Mahratta* - September 7, 1884, p.6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, September 18, 1887, p.1.

⁴⁵ Sabyasachi. Bhattacharya (ed), *Educating The Nation Documents on Discourses of National Education in India, 1800-1920*, New Delhi, 2003, p.210.

ability to do so. Her primary goal was to become the ideal house-wife, “every educated and middle class man wants his wife to be literate, and well trained in household duties, to spend her leisure hours in reading religious texts in order to improve her mind; and to help in domestic duties generally primary for women and education incidental...The husband’s home is a workshop of female education.”⁴⁶

When it became increasingly clear to Tilak that his opposition to the establishment of a Secondary School for girls was not having its desired effect, he used all his scholarship and wit to promote such a feeling in a different grab. The orthodoxy now did not oppose the establishment of a Girl’s High school but opposed the use of English as a medium of instruction in these schools and also the knowledge of western science, literature and arithmetic. It stated that Hindu girls receiving English education would lose their traditional character and will be anglicized. A correspondent thus wrote in the *Mahratta*. “The system of education adopted for boys has in itself many a flaw, and thus why then should the same sort of ‘education be imparted to girls? ... it is not in the least degree to tax them with such subjects as will hardly prove useful to them when they commence their domestic life”.⁴⁷

Another article in the *Mahratta*, titled as ‘On the State of Female Education in Bombay, demonstrate the fear of anglicization of the Hindu girls through English education: “... Our Shastras and customs require a girl to qualify herself for a married life and if our schools cannot give them the necessary training they are worse than useless. Nothing can be gained by anglicizing our girls of teaching them to ape the ways of man ... for as long as the school attempts to instruct our girls in habits which must create a sort of aversion to our domestic life, so long it can never hope to be a success. Nay more, for as in that case the High School will only be attended by low class girls ...”⁴⁸

Similarly, the editorial in the *Kesari* setting up guide-lines for female education wrote, “God has created men and women differently. He has also assigned different duties for women from men. It is very wrong and it goes against God’s nature to allow women to continue their studies like men up to the age of 15-16 years”.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Bal Gangadhar. Tilak; *Samagra Lokmanya Tilka (5 Vol)*, Vol V, Pune, 1976, pp- 219-20.

⁴⁷ *Mahratta*, August 10, 1884, p.6.

⁴⁸ *Opcit*, 13 November, 1887, p.1.

⁴⁹ *Kesari*, March 6, 1888.

Tilak was very critical of the nature of female education as well. With the assumption that female education should be subservient to the Hindu social customs, he felt that female education should supplement the woman's traditional role in fulfilling matrimonial and household obligations rather than alter her social status. As girls were married before attaining the age of puberty, he called the matrimonial home as "the best workshop of female education."⁵⁰ Tilak felt that the promoters of the Girl's High School have shown disregard for the existing social condition while setting their objectives.

An article in the *Mahratta*, thus, predicted the outcome of giving English education to girls at the high school level.

"..... the present institution if conducted in the manner in which the high school for boys are conducted, will I think make the thing 'worse compounded'. The ambition of every woman (with whom generally vanity is a predominant passion); of course this result in distant but one may count it as certain will be to blubber in a tongue whose force will be soon overpowering... Under the powerful magical influence of such a language poor Marathi, already crippled, will soon be discarded as the dialect of the intellectual Kunbi"⁵¹

Education was, thus, seen as a threat to male domination in traditional Hindu society. This view of Tilak was not supported by reformers like Agarkar, Ranade and Phule. Since his plan for a non-formal schooling for girls did not get general acceptance in Maharashtra⁵² society, Tilak now changed his stand and started advocating institutionalized education for girls in the vernacular (Marathi) medium with a separate curriculum. The plea for a different curriculum was based on the rationale that, while boys received education to get jobs and as the girls were not required to do so, as they were not to be allowed to move out in the public spaces, there was no need to provide them with the same curriculum as the boys.

Even the Education Commission of 1882 supported this line of thinking. But again the reformers did not approve of having a separate curriculum for girls. They wanted the girls to have the same educational attainment as the boys. They did not accept

⁵⁰ Mahratta, October 5, 1884.

⁵¹ Ibid., August 17, 1884, p.6.

⁵² Marathi speaking area of the Bombay Presidency, after independence reconstituted as Maharashtra in 1960.

the orthodox argument that the psychological and physical difference between men and women necessitated a different curriculum. Reformers like Agarkar argued that all individuals_ irrespective of sex, caste, and creed_ should get an opportunity to develop their potentialities to realize the best in themselves. He argued that, "Education in itself is only a power, its value depends on its application"⁵³ Here he was referring to the fear of the orthodoxy that education by proving the communicative skills to women, led to romantic intrigues. Therefore, he argued, that it would be wrong to condemn female education and to make wild generalization based on some stray examples⁵⁴. Siquira in 1939 and Chiplunkar in 1930 argued that, although the moral, emotional, and intellectual makeup of men and women were common, they were physically and psychologically different. Therefore there was a need for a separate curriculum to enhance these differences.⁵⁵ According to Jotirao Phule the real motive of the Brahmins to restrict women's education was due to the fact that "... They (wanted to) deprive them from education so as to prevent them from being conscious of their human rights and subject them to oppression".⁵⁶

Another reason for the reformers to press for the same curriculum was due to the grants-in-aid policy followed by the government. This policy did not allow any innovation in the subjects to be taught in the High Schools. Thus, the whole debate was directed to convince the Government officials that a different curriculum was required for girls. In this process certain subjects became classified as 'feminine', e.g. hygiene, domestic science, needle work, music, home-science, etc, while subjects such as physics, chemistry, mathematics, etc, were regarded as 'masculine' subjects.⁵⁷ The basic aims of this argument were to stress the creative and nurturant aspects in girls and to prepare them, to be good mothers and wives. Only those subjects were to be taught to the girls which were regarded as non-threatening to the existing gender relations. Girls were not to be taught subjects taught to the boys, because they were not to be allowed to do jobs. Therefore, the girl's School run by Hindu voluntary Organization, like the Seva Sadan at

⁵³ Aarvind.Ganachari; Gopal Ganesh Agarkar: The Socialist Rationalist Reformer, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2005, p-142

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ T.NSiquira; The Education of India: History and Problems, Oxford University Press, Madras, 1939.

⁵⁶ Jotirao.Phooley "Govindrao, Sarvajanic Satya Dharm Pustak (The Book of True Faith)", in G.P. Deshpande(e.d); Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule, Left World Books, New Delhi, 2002, p.232.

⁵⁷ G.M.Chiplunkar, Scientific Basis of Womens Education, S.B. Hudilkar, Poona, 1930.

Poona, imparted music lessons, home science, first aid, nursing, mid-wifery, etc. Thus, a girl had to receive sufficient education in terms of the educational levels of her endogamous group.⁵⁸ It was to be molded along the requirement of her traditional role expectation.

The notion that a higher degree of knowledge would make women a rival rather than a companion of men arises not because of an inherent mistake in giving education to women but because of men's ignorance, their lack of industriousness, male chauvinism and to some extent out of jealousy. The anxiety about the content of education was not just in terms of threat to Indian identity. But it was also feared that education would overturn the existing gender order, which was based on the control of female sexuality which was essential for the maintenance of the caste system. Not surprisingly there was an increasing preoccupation with defining the kind of education that would be suitable for Indian women. Commenting on Tilak's opposition to women's education, Agarkar wrote despairingly that, from the tone of such argument, it would appear as if "ignorance has been the great civilizer of the world."

Agarkar contradicted Tilak's charges in the Mahratta that English education would cause the Hindu girls to lose their natural modesty, or that they will indulge in displays of their intellectual attainments. Assuming it to be true for a while, the best way to combat such a tendency, according to Agarkar, was the dissemination of knowledge among all women. When learning ceases to be uncommon among women, learned women will be free from such an attitude. The apprehension of the orthodoxy like Tilak that, if education is given to women, there will be an end to all domestic life, and neglect of all household duties, wrote Agarkar, is purely 'delusive (Bhram-Mulak).⁵⁹ He pointed out that if knowledge produces any bad effect at all, it does as much mischief to one sex as to the other and one cannot attribute arrogance and eccentricities to women only.

In face of such criticism and since a beginning in the direction of educating women had already been initiated by reformers such as Jotirao Phule and Ranade, efforts were directed by the orthodoxy in controlling what was to be taught in these schools. A

⁵⁸ M.N.Srinivas; Changing Position of Indian Women. The T.R. Huxley Memorial Lecture, 1976, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, p-24

⁵⁹ Cited from Ganachari Aarvind: Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, The Secular Rationalist Reformer, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2005, p-140.

correspondent wrote in the *Mahratta* as follows: “The method in which our delicate sex is to be molded is far from being productive of immense good, when I learnt that the girls were to be taught in English, that the softer sex was on the eve of receiving higher education to study the alphabet of that language which had impaired the health of many youth. The present system of education followed in schools and colleges is the source of a great evil. No true Hindu will like to see India lose its nationality, its individuality as a separate nation Nobody can be ignorant of the fact that it is the fair sex that has to play a prominent and a difficult part in the work of increasing the human species”.⁶⁰

Women were, thus, regarded physically unfit to take up the task of being educated in English language, science and literature. But the real reason or fear of the orthodoxy was that once the girls started receiving English education, similar to that of boys (on western science and philosophy), they would become discontented with their lot and traditions, and perhaps even with the husband their parents had chosen for them. That the management of the *Mahratta* upheld such view is demonstrated by a rejoinder to the above letter by its editor: “We give this communication prominent place because it sets forth fully the merits of the question English vs. Marathi”.⁶¹

“Start with a High School for girls”, wrote Tilak, “and it will soon lead to women running away from home.”⁶² Their ability to make an independent contribution to literature was doubted in a fashion. The hollowness of such an argument was demonstrated by the success of Dr. Anandibai Joshi, the first Indian women doctor, trained in America. She was married at the age of nine to a widower, Gopalrao Vinayak Joshi, who taught his young wife English and then he sent her to study medicine in America in 1883. Though she faced severe hardships she strictly adhered to caste rules and diet restrictions during her stay abroad. After returning to India she was appointed as a resident physician for women at the Albert Hospital at Kolhapur but her promising career was cut short by her early death from tuberculosis on February 26, 1887.⁶³ Criticism of Tilak’s argument appeared in the *Mahratta* itself. In one of his letters a supporter of women’s education, who called himself, WILL-OF-THE-WISP, argued that;

⁶⁰ *Mahratta*, August 24, 1884m, pp-2-3.

⁶¹ *Ibid*.

⁶² *Kesari*, 25 October, 1887.

⁶³ Y.D. Phadke; *Women in Maharashtra*, Maharashtra State Information Centre, Govt. of Maharashtra, New Delhi, 1989, pp- 34- 35

“Many Parsee girls who have had the influence of English education directly brought to bear upon them, have contributed largely to the enrichment of Gujrati, by translating several English books into that language. What grounds, then has he to say that the same result will not be had in the case of our girls ... he hazards his opinion that the Maratha women generally lacks simplicity as opposed to pride. These uncommon powers of your correspondent have dazzled my sight”.⁶⁴

The correspondent in the Maratha then goes on to counter the reformer’s argument that women well-versed in both English and Marathi would enrich vernacular literature by translating English work into it: “Do you seriously hope, are you really in earnest that our women will do anything in the direction of original literature for centuries to come? I know very few female names that have added perceptibly to the stock of human knowledge or have modified by their brain production the current of human thought”.⁶⁵

Tilak believed that teaching girls the English language would only result in a waste of their valuable learning time, which comprised of only four to five years as they had to be married before reaching twelve years of age, as they were not required to take up any profession. Also, learning a foreign language would create an additional burden. Another letter to the editor argued; “... about the comparison of the two type of girls (the girl educated in English as well as in the Marathi language and the girl only educated in the Marathi vernacular) I say nothing more than this, that the girl knowing English will have absolutely nothing substantial, no tangible knowledge, while the impression of the one tongue girl will be more vivid and accurate”.⁶⁶

Expressing the importance of Marathi for girls and the need to disseminate its use as the medium of instruction, another letter to the editor, signed by one GBL, states:

“Surrounded by environment as we are, over which we have hardly any control, we should rather give prominence to our own vernacular than to a language on more grounds than one it would be better as regards our women to regard it only of a second-rate importance”.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.7.

⁶⁵ Mahratta, August 31, 1884, p.7.

⁶⁶ Mahratta, September 23, 1884, p.1.

⁶⁷ Ibid., August 31, 1884, p.6.

A front page article expresses the concern that women were being educated in English. It attacks the curriculum of female high school more vehemently and more comprehensively than earlier articles and letters to the editors. The article says: "Holding as we do the opinion that men and women have different spheres of activity allotted to them in domestic economy, we think that the instructions which is to fit them for the duties pertaining to their respective spheres must be given on essentially different lines. In the first place, we fail to see the utility of teaching English to the majority of the girls".⁶⁸

The liberal reformers, however, did not feel any change was required in the curriculum of the girl's school, which included subjects like, mathematics, chemistry, physics, biology, etc. Justice M.G.Ranade, who is associated with most of the causes connected with women's welfare, gave his wife a Marathi and an English education and encouraged her participation in women's associations and in public speaking, at considerable personal distress (caused by members of his family) to himself and to her. Ranade founded a primary school for girls in 1881, in Pune⁶⁹, which was at first attended by only the wives and daughters of reformers. When he decided to start a High School for girls, the efforts were met with hostile opposition. William Wedderburn, the then Collector of Pune, and a friend of Ranade, offered a donation of Rs. 1000 in the memory of his elder brother, to the cause of women's education. With this donation as the nucleus, Ranade collected a few more thousand rupees. In 1882, he called a meeting of friends and sympathizer and it was decided to start a High School. The sponsors of this school included apart from Ranade, R.G Bhandarkar, W.A. Modak, and Shankar Pandurang Pandit. Their deputation obtained the site of Huzur Paga from the government for the proposed school. In 1884, the School was established, which popularly came to be known as the Huzur Paga High School for Girls.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid., September 18, 1887, p.1.

⁶⁹ Aparna.Basu; "A Century's Journey, Women's Education in Western India". In Karuna Chanana(e.d); Socialization, Education and Women Exploration in Gender Identity, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 1998. Social Change or Social Reform: The Education of Women in Pre-independence India, New Delhi, Orient Longman,1988,p- 70

⁷⁰ P.G.Jagirdar ; Mahadeo Govind Ranade, printed by The Manager, Govt. of India Press, Nasik,1971, p-109.

Although most of the newspapers of the time recognized the necessity to educate girls, they questioned the urgency to start a School at a level higher than Primary. The Poona Vaibhav, a Marathi paper, was the foremost among the critics. It alleged that the promoters of the school, especially Ranade and its supporters, like Pandita Ramabai, were out to spoil the character of the Indian girls.⁷¹ In subsequent years Tilak in his paper, the Kesari, started criticizing the courses and the method of teaching in the School. The objection of this paper was that, in this School the girls were being taught western etiquettes and that, being of impressionable age, they were apt to look down upon Indian ways of life.

Agarkar replied to these criticisms in an eloquent manner. He was opposed to Tilak's line of thinking that girls did not have the mental capacity to study the same subjects as the boys. In his opinion the common place argument regarding the inherent difference of intellectual caliber between man and woman is only an imaginary belief. If any difference is observed in their understanding in everyday affairs, it is due to the circumstances in which they are placed, and not due to any biological difference. If the intellectual betterment of women is considered to be of subordinate importance and if they are kept away from any opportunity for improvement, then all chances of improving their lot are completely lost. Agarkar felt that the social condition of women could be improved, not just by bringing in legislation, but by inculcating in them a sense of justice and dignity, which could be possible by raising their mental capacities. Through female education, he visualized the raising of the age of marriage, and a proper utilization of mental faculties of women who constituted half the Indian populace. Agarkar termed Tilak as an incarnation of "*Parshuram*" for his vitriolic attack⁷² on the reformers and refuted the contention that female education would produce an adverse effect on Hindu society. He agreed in principle that true knowledge can be acquired through the vernacular language and emphasis ought not to be laid on acquiring proficiency only in the English language.⁷³ He considered the study of English as inevitable and unavoidable due to the peculiar circumstances arising from colonial rule. He was not satisfied with

⁷¹ Ibid... p-110.

⁷² "Female High School Shikshan-Kram", Kesari, November 1, 1887

⁷³ "Gair Samaj", Kesari August 12, 1887

providing mere rudimentary knowledge to girls but he pleaded that all subjects taught to the boys up to the matriculation level be also taught to the girls.

Agarkar regards the Mahratta's criticism of the promoters of the school unwarranted as they had already clarified that no English instruction would be provided to girls in the lower classes.⁷⁴ When Tilak argued that prescribing the same curriculum to both boys and girls was an inappropriate utilization of public funds, Agarkar questioned the very propriety of raising such issues by the self-styled leaders of the Hindu religion. He reminded them that the responsibility of deciding what ought to be studied by the girls rests only with their kith and kin. In this way, some of the reformers adopted a moderate stance, like Ranade, and quoted the Shastras, while others like Agarkar and Phule advocated a complete overhauling of the existing norms and sought to advance the process of educating girls and tried to dispel the fear created by the orthodoxy.

III

The second and the most damaging argument against the cause of women's education, forwarded by Tilak, was that it would challenge male domination. The Mahratta propagated the view that education would make women strong willed, with an independent understanding of their status in Hindu society, and they would acquire new ideas on the dignity of womanhood. Women entering the professional sphere posed a threat to men and, the conservatives argued that when, "pursuing public power women lost their feminine qualities and became heartless tyrant."⁷⁵ Tilak substantiated his argument by pointing out the case of Pandita Ramabai and Rakmabai. Both Ramabai and Rakmabai, were educated women, who stood up for what they believed was right. Rakmabai, as the daughter of a social reformer (Sakaram Arjun) had received English education and had joined the Arya Mahila Sabha in the early 1880s and became its secretary. The institution founded by Pandita Ramabai, included women from families

⁷⁴ "Stree Shikshannavar shevathe Don Shabda", Kesari, September 16, 1884

⁷⁵ Padma, sAnagol; *The Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850- 1920*, Aldershot, Ashgate Publication, 2005, p- 85.

such as those of Ranade and Bhandarkar. Rukmabai's refusal to live with her husband and the subsequent Court case clinched the fears of the orthodox section of the society that every 'English' educated girl will gain the courage to "drop the façade of ideological and material arrangement of nineteenth century Brahmanical Patriarchy".⁷⁶ One of the results of the debate on the conjugal right issue, arising in the Rukmabai verses Dadaji case, was to bring the issue of child-marriage to the forefront.⁷⁷

Tilak decided to use the Rukmabai's case as a strong launching pad for his attack on the reformers position on women's education. "It is said that education expands and purifies the mind. But what is the case now? The thing is that 'God has so made the females that they are quite unworthy of either liberty or enlightenment'".⁷⁸ Rukmabai's refusal to live with her uneducated husband in an undesirable relationship, was seen as a result of western education. She was portrayed in the Mahratta as a spoilt western-educated woman, parodied as flying on her piano, and enjoying reading Milton, rather than taking care of her ailing husband.⁷⁹ The first judgment, given by Justice Pinhey, was in the favour of Rukmabai and it immediately aroused diametrically opposite reactions. For some it was a landmark judgment in asserting the right of women to her personal freedom and liberty. For others, it was an assault on the sanctity and integrity of the Hindu religion, and an attempt by the alien Government to subvert the Hindu laws.⁸⁰

The Times of India was the first to come out in support of the judgment. It saw in it, "...a shrewd blow to the whole system of child marriage, that could not fail to have a most wholesome influence on the direction of reform. With use of little firmness and common sense, Mr. Justice Pinhey has, in the course of the morning's work, probably done for the amelioration of the wretched condition of Indian women-hood that has ever yet been accomplished."⁸¹ Hostile reactions to Rukmabai and to Pinhey's judgment came from all over the country. The result of such opposition was that, in less than six months the Appellant Court set aside Pinhey's verdict. The court ordered Rukmabai to go to her

⁷⁶ Chakravarti, Uma; Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1998, p- 167.

⁷⁷ Padma, Anagol, *ibid*, p-188

⁷⁸ Mahratta, 10 April, 1887.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*...17 April, 1887.

⁸⁰ Sudhir, Chandra; "Rukmabai; Debate over Women's Right to her Person", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1996, Vol.31, No.44, p- 2938.

⁸¹ The Times of India, September 22, 1885.

Husband's house or else face the risk of imprisonment for six months. Even then Rakmabai refused and preferred to go to jail rather than going to her husband's place. This created a panic in the Indian society, as not even her worst critic like Tilak would want a woman of Rakmabai's family background to go to prison. While the court was dragging its feet in implementing the judgment, Dadaji accepted the unlikelihood of reconciliation with Rakmabai, and proposed a compromise that she should share the expense of the trial and he, in turn, would relinquish his rights over her. This being settled, the marriage was formally ended.⁸²

Earlier she had vented her grievance in a letter to *The Times of India* in 1885, under the pseudonym of 'A Hindu lady';

"We [Hindu women] are treated as worse than beasts. We are regarded as playthings objects of enjoyment to be unceremoniously thrown away when the temporary use is over. Our law-giver (i.e., the writer of the *Shastras*) being men have painted themselves ... noble and pure, and have laid every conceivable sin and impurity at our door. If these worthies are to be trusted, we are a set of unclean animals created by God for the special service and gratification of man who by right divine can treat or maltreat us at his sweet will. Reduced to this state of degradation by the dictum of the *Shastras*, looked down upon for ages by men, we have naturally come to look down upon ourselves. Our condition, therefore, can not ... improve, unless the practice of early marriage is abolished and higher female education is largely disseminated."⁸³

Pandita Ramabai, who had supported Rakmabai throughout the trial, thus wrote on the second judgment;

"Upon hearing the decision (the first one in favour of Rakmabai), the conservative party all over India arose as one man and girded their loins to denounce the helpless woman and her handful (of) friends. They encouraged the alleged husband to stand his ground firmly, threatening the British Government with public displeasure, if it failed to keep its agreement to force the woman to go to live with the husband..."⁸⁴

⁸² Meera, Kosambi; "Women's Emancipation and Equality; Pandita Ramabai's Contribution to Women's cause", *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 29, 1988, WS-44.

⁸³ Opcit.,..., p.41

⁸⁴ Pandita, Ramabai, "High Caste High Women". In Meera Kosambi; *Pandita Ramabai: Through Selected Works*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2000, p- 157.

Rakmabai's disillusionment with British justice after its verdict against her is reflected in one of her letters to Pandita Ramabai (dated March 18, 1887):

"There is no hope for women in India whether they be under Hindu rule or British rule; some are of the opinion that my case so cruelly decided, may bring about a better condition for women by turning public opinion in her favour, but I fear it will be otherwise ... since they are now fully assured that under no circumstances can the British government act adversely to the Hindu law."⁸⁵

Tilak now cited Rakmabai's example to prove to Hindu society that it was education which was responsible in making women irreligious and immoral. Not only this but the Mahratta also tried to deny the authorship of the letter's to 'The Times of India' to Rakmabai and this was in conformity with its earlier stand on women's education. It wrote:

"The letters which have evoked so much sympathy are not in all probability, the production of a lady, as they are represented to be, but that some irresponsible false and ill-informed enthusiast has probably caught hold of a school girl to subscribe for him as a Hindu lady in order to secure sympathy which he himself could not otherwise have done. At any rate, we are not inclined to believe the letters to be the genuine production of a Hindu lady until better evidence is brought forward. And till then we do not hesitate to consider them as worthless and undeserving of the sympathy they have evoked."⁸⁶

It was this fear of a threat to male domination by educated women which led Tilak to advocate the need to control what was being taught to the Hindu women. An article in the Mahratta on the state of female education in Bombay thus stated:

"Our *Shastras* and customs require a girl to qualify herself for a married life and if our schools cannot give them the necessary training they are worse than useless. Nothing can be gained by anglicizing our girls of teaching them to ape the ways of men ... for as long as the school attempts to instruct our girls in habits which must create a sort of aversion to our domestic life, so long it can never hope to be a success. Nay more, for as in that case the high school will only be attended by low class girls."⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Ibid, p.34

⁸⁶ Mahratta, October 18, 1885

⁸⁷ Mahratta, November 13, 1887

Similar was Pandita Ramabai's case. Ramabai's critique of Brahmanical patriarchy and her decisive break with its oppressive structure, through her conversion to Christianity was too much for the conservatives.⁸⁸ Her conversion fueled the fear that every western educated Hindu girl would opt out of the oppressive customs and traditions through conversion. Educated like contemporary boys (in traditional religious text), made self reliant by circumstances, capable of following her own decisions, she embodied the greatest threat to traditional Hindu beliefs and practices.⁸⁹ She was now attacked by Tilak as a betrayer of the nation. For him, Ramabai came to represent all the ill-effects of western education against which he had been trying to caution the Hindus. Tilak would not accept the fact that a woman could be well-versed in Sanskrit, understand the scriptures and form an independent point of view, be able to criticize them.

Ramabai belonged to the Chitpavan Brahman caste of Karnataka. Her father Anant Shastri Dongre, who in one of his visit to the Peshwa's palace was deeply impressed by the Peshwa's wife reciting Sanskrit verses, vowed to teach Sanskrit to his wife. Time and again he had to defend himself for doing so, which he did with the aid of the sacred texts, to an assembly of learned Shastris. Ramabai along with her brother and sister were educated in the Sanskrit text.⁹⁰ After the death of her parents and sister, Ramabai along with her brother undertook a lecture tour of the country and in Calcutta she was welcomed and feted in 1878-79. She was soon honoured with the title of 'Saraswati', for her learning and eloquence, not just in any vernacular but in Sanskrit, a rarity in that age.⁹¹ But Ramabai was soon to discover the duplicity of all such praise. After the sudden death of her brother she married his friend Bipin Bihari Das Medhavi, who belonged to the Shudra caste. She was attacked by the orthodoxy for taking such a step. Tragedy struck her once again when after two years her husband died leaving her with an infant daughter.

Some of Pandita's friends invited her to Poona where she began her social activities for the upliftment of women and establishment the Arya Mahila Samaj on the

⁸⁸ Uma, Chakravarti; *Rewriting History: The Life and Times of Pandita Ramabai*. Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1998, prologue-vii.

⁸⁹ Meera, Kosambi; "Women's Emancipation and Equality; Pandita Ramabai's Contribution to Women's cause", *Economic and Political Weekly*, October 29, 1988, p48.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p- 45

⁹¹ Uma, Chakaravart, Ibid)... p-viii

foundation of the earlier women's group. About this time she was also called on to give evidence before the Hunter's Education Commission of Pune in 1882. Ramabai clarified her position as "the child of a man who had to suffer a great deal on account of advocating Female Education, and who was compelled to discuss the subject, as well as to carry out his own views amidst great opposition." Her suggestion on the subject included the need for female teachers of "respectable families", "correct in their conduct and methods", and also the need for female Inspectress for girls schools, because male inspectors would intimidate the women and also magnify faults, since "in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the educated men of this country are opposed to female education and the proper position of women."⁹²

Tilak directed his wit and sarcasm in discrediting her and after her conversion to Christianity he was able to garner public opinion against her from both reformers and anti-reformers. An example of his scathing criticism can be found in one of his article in the Mahratta which blamed her parents for providing her the faculty of thinking: He argued that:

"But they made another mistake, which they could have avoided and would have certainly avoided if they had a glimpse of the future consequences of their action, [in] that they gave their daughter a smattering knowledge of Sanskrit. With the aid of this she could read the Sanskrit Shastras. The result was that, by applying her thinking powers to the little knowledge of Hindu Shastras derived from a smattering [of] Sanskrit, she drew her conclusions."⁹³

Tilak had always suspected an ulterior motive for Ramabai's reformist activities, and now he charged her for turning the Sharda Sadan into a religious institution. He attacked Ranade and his colleagues in the Prathan Samaj for their support to the Sadan, and warned that should there be any conversion in the Sadan; the responsibility would squarely lie on them. He could not accept the fact that a woman could possess genuine Sanskrit knowledge, to the extent of successfully challenging learned Brahman Pandits on the question of women's education on the basis of that knowledge. Since he could not argue with her in that field, he took on the job of discrediting all her effort after her

⁹². Quoted from Meera Kosambi; *Women, Emancipation and Equality; Pandita Ramabai's Contribution to Women's cause*, Economic and Political Weekly, October 29, 1988.

⁹³. Mahratta, January 10, 1904

conversion to Christianity. He claimed that she was carrying out missionary work in the garb of establishing a home for Hindu widows that she was trying to convert the impressionable young widows by giving them the knowledge of English language. In an editorial the Mahratta directed an obscene sarcasm against Ramabai and Christianity. This showed the desperation of the author:

“When she thought of Christ, he revealed himself to her on one night. No doubt, the revelation during a night must always be romantic in the case of an enthusiastic and interesting woman like the Pandita, but never, do they appear to have given out so much romance as in this case Christ and the Pandita.”⁹⁴

But not all the reformers were against Pandita’s effort of educating the Hindu widows. One of the most severe critics of Tilak in this regard was Agarkar. He doubted Tilak’s charge that education of women would result in the loss of modesty. Even Ranade, who was afraid of the orthodoxy due to his father, supported Ramabai’s effort and was one of the trustee’s of Sharda Sadan, which was a residential school for high caste Hindu widows. Agarkar argued that if all ethical rules are fruits of true wisdom and are aimed at increasing happiness, than education would form in women the habit of viewing all questions from a true perspective. It would make women more ethical and righteous. He argued that, “education in itself is only a power; and its value depends on its application.” Therefore it would be indiscreet to condemn female education.

In one of the editorial notes, the Mahratta openly accepted the danger which it perceived would arise by educating, arise by educating the girls:

“Miss Morris, the lady of Superintendent of the Female Training College at Ahmadabad, hit the right nail on the head when she said that the natives, who oppose female education, oppose it because they are afraid that the girls will be less dutiful as wives and daughters ... so long as the superiority of the male sex is apparent the female sex would obey them; if they are educated, that superiority they believe, lessen and hence they conclude that their wives and daughters will not obey them.”⁹⁵

Agarkar challenged this line of reasoning. According to him the notion that a higher degree of knowledge would make women a rival rather than a companion of man,

⁹⁴Ibid

⁹⁵. Mahratta, October 5, 1884, p.4

arises not because of an inherent fault in giving education to women but because of men's ignorance, their lack of industriousness, and to some extent out of jealousy. If the man reflects on the isolated condition in which women are placed, the ill-treatment to which they are subjected, which they endure in silence and without any complaint, he would feel convinced that the happiness of women would materially increase in proportion to the education she gets. If women could get education it would also help the men's education, for it is the mother who shapes the life of her son. One of the most agreeable consequences of knowledge is the respect and importance which it gives to old age.

IV

The third argument that was forwarded by Tilak against giving western education to women was that such knowledge would be useless as Indian women are not going to take up a profession. The Mahratta in one of its articles argues:

--“... English girls observe the writer, do not nowadays attend school simply to qualify themselves for domestic duties, but also, if possible, to avoid being a burden to their parents and guardians by qualifying themselves as profession ... But although such is one of the objects of girls high school in England ... our Shastras and customs require a girl to qualify herself for a married life [not for a profession].”⁹⁶

This real object of educating the women, according to the Mahratta, was to make them “useful helpmates of their husband”.⁹⁷ The men therefore, only desired, “that he should have a wife of good thoughts and improved ideas and not that he should have an English speaking woman for his companion.”⁹⁸ Agarkar, however, disagreed with Tilak on this point. He expected women to take up independent vocations like men. In order to

⁹⁶ Mahratta, November 13, 1887

⁹⁷ Mahratta, September 18, 1887

⁹⁸ Mahratta, August 10, 1884

make this possible, he suggested the girls be allowed to remain unmarried until the completion of their education, or be allowed by their husband or in-laws to continue studies uninterrupted without being chained to early motherhood. The contention of the orthodoxy that education be provided to women to make them better help-mate was also challenged by Agarkar. He saw in this argument an attempt to perpetuate male hegemony (Purushanche Varchaswa) and a master –servant relationship.

In one of its editorial notes the Mahratta in a very sarcastic manner referred to the success of Anandibai Joshi:

“Another lady of our acquaintance who showed still greater ‘pluck’ than Pandita (Ramabai) has also in some degree achieved a success. Mrs. Anandibai Joshi, who went to America last year has ... passed the matriculation examination of the Women’s Medical College of Pennsylvania Philadelphia ... There is one thing in Mrs. Joshi’s favour, which agrees well for her future; she has no bounce in her.”⁹⁹

Anandibai Joshi(1865-1887) was the first Maharashtra lady doctor, and one who has received her medical degree in the United States of America. Despite the rough treatment given to her by husband, she was nonetheless committed to the patriarchal ideal of the sacredness of the marriage bond, and of venerating the husband. In an eloquent letter written to Gopalrao, from America in 1884 reflecting on his treatment, Anandibai thus wrote; “It is very difficult to decide whether your treatment of me was good or bad... Hitting me with broken pieces of wood at the tender age of ten, flinging chairs and books at me and threatening to leave me when I was twelve; and inflicting other strange punishments on me when I was fourteen __ all these were to severe for the age, body and mind at each reflective stage”.¹⁰⁰ But even while admitting the severity of his treatment she remained firm in her devotion to him and her faith in the existing institutional framework of society. In the United States at a public address in 1884, she staunchly defended the custom of child marriage.¹⁰¹

In order to preserve male dominance in the family hierarchy, Tilak felt it was extremely essential to maintain the status quo in the family. Therefore, he advocated an

⁹⁹ Mahratta, June 22, 1884, p. 5

¹⁰⁰ Judith, Walsh; Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned, When Men Gave Them Advice. Rowman and Littlefield Publisher, U.S.A, 2004, pp- 75.

¹⁰¹ Rachel, Bodley; Introduction to The High Caste Hindu Women (1887), reprinted by Maharashtra State Board of Literature and Culture, Bombay, 1981, pp-ii.

urgent need to control the thoughts of women by giving them traditional and vernacular education, which would, according to him, give them,

“..innumerable lessons of excellent advice to young women with regard to chaste, wifely conduct, scattered over the old historical and legendry works of Indian mythology which can be ‘safely studied’ and acted upon by our women even at the present day.”¹⁰²

Under no circumstance were women to be allowed to feel equal to men. This was the reason why Tilak was dead set against women like Ramabai and Rakmabai. He thought that educated and independent women like these were a bad example for other Hindu women and they posed a serious potential threat to male domination.

Liberal reformers, however, like Ranade, Phule and Agarkar, applauded Ramabai’s effort aimed at educating women. Phule even used the columns of the Satsar to defend her right to convert and to attack the fierce criticism of Ramabai even by the so-called modernizing and reformist Brahmins. This constituted the only non-Christian defense of Pandita Ramabai, a brave act by someone who did not convert to any religion himself. In the second edition of the Satsar, Phule wrote:

“Today, because of the efficacy of the English rule and due to the efforts of Pandita Ramabai, many great scholars among the Brahmins felt ashamed and begun to make their ignorant and powerless women scholars like themselves in order to free their sage-like ancestors from blame.”¹⁰³

Like Phule, Agarkar also appreciated and supported the aims of the Sharada Sadan which was, to provide a home for young widows of higher castes, to educate them to be teachers, to prepare them for some gainful employment, whereby they could honestly and decently support themselves, if circumstances needed. In March 1893, Agarkar played a crucial role in arranging the marriage of Dhondo Keshav Karve, a friend and colleague from Fergusson College with Godubai Joshi, the first child widow of the Sadan.

Tilak who lost no opportunity to criticize Ramabai now charged her for turning the Sadan into a religious institution. He even attacked Ranade and his colleagues from

¹⁰². Mahratta, September 18, 1887

¹⁰³. Cited from G.P.Deshpande (ed); Selected Writings Of Jotirao Phule, Left World Books, New Delhi, 2002 , p. 216

the Prarthana Samaj for lending their support to the Sadan, and warned that there should be any conversion in the Sadan, the responsibility of that would squarely lie on them.

Agarkar did not take anti- Sadan propoganda very seriously to begin with, as he felt the storm would pass off in the course of time. But as the criticism became increasingly vituperative he took up his pen in defense of the Sadan. He thought that it was wrong to castigate Ramabai for being a Christian convert and to hold her noble aim in suspicion. He denounced the Kesari and other newspapers like Pune Vaibhav, Shivaji and Jagaddhitecchu, whom he called “gutter snipes”, for deliberately persecuting Ramabai and her Sadan.

V

About this time another movement to improve the status of Hindu women gained momentum which shifted the focus away from the debate centering around the curriculum for female high school. This was the movement to increase the age of consent for the girls from 10 to 12 years. It was initiated by B.M. Malabari, a Parsee reformer, whose publication of “Notes on Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood” on 15 August 1884 provoked an intense debate culminating in the passing of the Age of Consent Bill. A heated public debate was carried on through press – English and vernacular- and every available platform. Of special significance was the role played by the Kesari and Sudharak in the controversy which is indicative of the growing ideological rift between Agarkar and Tilak.

Increasing the age of consent was also important for the education of girls. If the age of consent was increased then a girl could get more formal institutional education before being sent to her in-law’s house. Though Tilak praised Mr. Malabari for bringing out such a sensitive issue into the public domain, he did not feel that anything could be gained by passing a legislation to improve the situation. He argued that an alien government had no right to interfere in the social custom of the Indians. The Government should not be allowed to regulate the intimate personal and religious matters of the people.¹⁰⁴ He then derisively questioned: “If legislation could be had on this custom, why

¹⁰⁴ Mahratta, Infact Marriage and Enforced Widowhood, August 31, 1884, pp-3 and 4

not Dinner Acts, Sandhya Adoration Act, Bathing Time Acts and so forth?”¹⁰⁵ He further argued that: “...in the early stage of any reform, legislation is an impolitic step as the whole community is opposed to it.” Not only this he also expressed his dissatisfaction at the fact that such a delicate social issue could be taken up or addressed by any non-Hindu reformer. Since Mr. Malabari was a Parsee, he had no right to demand government interference to cure these social evils in the Hindu society. He stated that, “... the reformer must be a Hindu ...legislative interference we do not like. Such a question is a purely social question and it behoves the community to move in the matter and bring about the so-much-longed for reform.”¹⁰⁶ In his opinion the government should always be the last resort for any appeal in social matters and “we have not yet reached that stage of utter helplessness in which we should implore and solicit a foreign government to do for us what it would expect of the leaders and reformers of the native society.”¹⁰⁷

Ranade’s stand was different than that of Tilak on the issue of early marriage, although he was not opposed to early marriage and he even stressed its positive effects in cementing the bonds of affection and facilitating adjustment between the couple. But he was opposed to early consummation as causing distraction from studies in young men, dwarfing physical growth for children, and generating a population of weaklings. Ranade supported state action in ensuring a gradual raising of the age at marriage and in setting a limit to the time of legal consummation.

In answer to the letter sent for consideration by Mr. Malabari, M.G. Ranade expressed his view on the subject which provided a deep insight into Hindu psyche and the complexities of reform in the Hindu society. He wrote:

“Our deliberate conviction, however, has grown upon us with every effort that it is only a religious revival that can furnish sufficient moral strength to the work out of the complex social problems which demand our attention. Mere consideration of expediency or economic calculation of gain or losses can never nerve a community to undertake and carry through social reforms, especially a community like ours, so spell-bound by custom and authority. Our people feel and feel earnestly that some of our social customs are

¹⁰⁵ “The Evil Effects of Child Marriage: How to be Prevented?”, Mahratta, May 29, 1884

¹⁰⁶ Mahratta, August 24, 1884, p. 2

¹⁰⁷ Mahratta, August 31, 1884, p. 3-4.

fraught with evil, but as this evil is of temporal character, they think that it does not justify a breach of commands divine, for each breach involves higher penalty.

The truth is, the orthodox society has lost its power of life it can initiate neither reform, nor sympathies with it ... It is this conviction in the hard conditions of the problem which retards our progress. People find fault with us, even abuse us for half-heartedness, for our apparent want of fire and enthusiasm. God only knows that in our households we are perpetually at war with our dearest and nearest, we struggle and strive to do our best, and have perforce to stop at many points when we fear the strain will cause a rupture ... As regards the two notes, I go in fully with you, that the time has come for a determined effort to secure a legislative and executive sanction, to a moderate limit of minimum age being fixed below which early marriage should be discouraged ... It is a very delicate subject. When the victim of cruelty welcomes the disgrace and effacement it is not to be expected that startling results will be achieved soon. We are slowly touching the consciousness of the people, disarming the opposition of the terror of excommunication and teaching the female sex to rebel or protest. These influences will be strengthened by our efforts to promote their higher education.”¹⁰⁸

Ranade, thus, fully supported legislative action for implementing social reforms. This infuriated Tilak and he opened a tirade against reformers in general and Ranade in particular, and said that the reformers do not practice what they preach. In an all out attack on Ranade in the Mahratta he argued that:

“We are not quite sure what the writer means by religious revival; he has not explained the form which this revival should take ... he insists upon something like religious Samajes being instituted, something like the Prathana Samaj of the day ... we fear the remedy would be as bad as the evil ... by laying stress upon his religious beliefs, he has probably laid himself open to the charge of being called zealous partisan.”¹⁰⁹

With regard to early marriage, Tilak was in full support of it although he was opposed to its early consummation. But unlike Ranade, he did not consider government legislation necessary to implement it. He claimed that early consummation between young couple could be prevented in a well managed household and the danger for early

¹⁰⁸ The Times of India, August 24, 1884

¹⁰⁹ Mahratta, August 31, 1884, p. 3-4.

consummation only arises where the husband is an older remarried widower. In such cases the wisdom to prevent early consummation cannot be acquired through legislation. On the question of enforced widowhood and widow remarriage Tilak's view point was once again different from that of reformers. According to him the evil custom could only be abolished by the practice of restraint on the part of widowers, and by a ban on their remarrying after a certain age. Thus instead of advocating the remarriage of young widows, his solution to the problem was to abolish the practice of re- marriage of men as well. In one of his sharp criticism of widowers he stated:

“People seem to think that in the case of [remarriage of] men, there is a market. When a cow, buffalo, horse, dog, etc., dies or becomes incapacitated, one should buy another; similarly a wife dies, one should acquire another – this is the common belief. A woman who has been accepted after exchanging marriage vows, who has borne half the share of domestic life, who considered it her duty to participate in her husband's joys and sorrows, and in whose company he has spent many happy years dies in the natural course of time, or often dies prematurely due to harassment of her husband. Then, to find a second wife within ten days, and to enter matrimony again within a month or two, or probably on the thirteenth day [of her death, when the funeral ceremonies are completed], is a deed of ingratitude, cruelty and inhumanity without a parallel ... These grown-up bridegrooms who consider a wife to be a god-given instrument of sexual release and a servant slaving in the house, are prepared, as soon as they have disposed of one [wife], to enjoy all festivities with another.”¹¹⁰

Thus, Tilak advocated a more humane treatment of women but he nowhere advocated or ever supported their right to get remarried or to have equal opportunities like men. He appeals to the conscience of the Hindu society to bring about this change but regarded social legislation as both “unnecessary and impolitic”:

“Society and government have their respective functions which are peculiar to themselves and therefore mutual interference cannot but prove detrimental ... In all social affairs government ought to be the last resort and the last remedy to secure the success of any reform ... To appeal therefore to a power above ourselves to open our eyes to our

¹¹⁰. Tilak, B.G; Lokmanya Tilakanche Kesaritil Lekh, Vol. V, Mahratta Sanstra, Pune, 1926, p. 254

own good, is not only a narrow minded policy ... but it is to lay bare our own weakness ... I therefore conclude ... that legislation should always be the last resort.”¹¹¹

Agarkar had severely criticized Tilak on this issue. He was in complete favour of a legislation to improve the condition of widows. He found Tilak’s advocacy of endless wait for a gradual change “to come from within” both unreasonable and impractical. Putting an end to certain inhuman practices such as child marriage and enforced widowhood brooked no delay. He also disposed of Tilak’s main argument against the Age of Consent Bill by making it clear that the initiative in this case came from the enlightened natives and not “the alien government”. Agarkar did not agree with Tilak’s argument that alien government and social reform are incompatible; rather, he said, perhaps more in anguish than out of conviction, that “foreign rule”¹¹² provides in some ways more favorable condition for religious and social reform. After the passing of the Age of Consent Bill, Tilak, in his *Fury* wrote in the Kesari that Ranade, Bhandarkar, and Telang, were not the leaders of the people; on the controversy, they were men who had brought destruction on the people. “They must be cut off, as a diseased limb of the body is done away with!”¹¹³ At one place Tilak even described these leaders as “wicked men adorned with learning”¹¹⁴

This debate on women’s education by and large demonstrated male attitudes on the question of women liberation and rights. Most of them thought that condition of women had to improve and they were to be given education: not to empower them or to provide them with equal opportunities as men but to enable them to adjust to the over- all changing social scenario which resulted from colonial rule.

Unlike the reformers like Agarkar or Phule, the others thought that girls were to be educated to make them fit “helpmates” for the newly emerging breed of educated men, to enable them to maintain the social status of their bureaucratic husband not to aspire for an independent status and identity. The patriarchal image of the ideal women, as the ideal

¹¹¹ Mahratta, August 31, 1884, p. 6.

¹¹² Ganachari Aarvind; Gopal Ganesh Agarkar; the Secular Rationalist Reformer, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2005, p-130.

¹¹³ Jagirdar, P.J; Mahadeo Govind Ranade, printed by The Manager, Govt. of India Press, Nasik, 1971, p-166.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

wife and, mother, was generally accepted and propagated even by progressive social reforms like Ranade.

Time and again the social reformers were unable to bear the pressure from the orthodox society or their family, and backed down from their demand for reform or perpetuated the same evils which they condemned. Lokhitwadi, after championing the cause of widow remarriage, refused to attend one such marriage due to the pressure from his family members. Justice Telang, after severely criticizing the custom of child marriage, married off two of his daughters at a young age. But one of the most famous examples of this which caused immense damage to the cause of increasing the age of consent, was done by Justice Ranade. Due to the pressure from his father who threatened him with breaking off all ties with him, Ranade, after the death of his first wife at the age of thirty-two, married not a widow, but a girl of eleven years of age. This act severely damaged his credibility as a genuine social reformer, as he did not practice what he prescribed to others. A famous missionary newspaper Dnyanodaya had rightly observed:

“... If the leaders do not practice what they preach, it is not to be wondered at, that those who follow show the same weakness ... This fear of men is always a curse; it prevents progress; it compels stagnation and saps the life away. Had all those who had been advocating female education, been true to their principles and allowed their daughters to remain at school without marrying them off at an early age; by this time there would have been a large number of well educated native ladies making homes brighter and happier. The welfare of their daughters has been sacrifices on the altar of the fear of men.

...Men do not give their daughters much education for fear of men; they must marry them early though they know that in so doing, they may be inflicting life-long injury.”¹¹⁵ It was this fear of social ostracism that led many of the reformers to adopt a conformist attitude and retarded the growth of women emancipation.

Radical reformers like Jotirao Phule were few. Phule was one of the very first reformers who argued for equal rights to women. He was also the only person to use the term “men and women” separately instead of simply writing “man”, which was a

¹¹⁵. Dnyanodaya, December 8, 1887, p. 1

practice, to denote human being. In 1891, he stated in his 'Sarvajanik Satya Dharma Pustak'.

“Of all the creatures on this earth, human beings are the most superior and are divided in to two women and men ... Of these two, women are superior. The reason for this superiority is her capacity to carry a child in her womb for nine months, to clean and care for it, teach it to walk and talk; all of which makes it difficult to repay the mother’s debt. Further, a woman protects and cherishes her brothers and sisters, and graces her home. A woman is capable of greater love than a man, because a widow endures many calamities but remain single; formerly she even burned herself along with her dead husband. But no man has ever been known to express his grief in similar fashion at being widowed, besides, he can marry as many times as he likes. All these injustices are inflicted by greedy and venturesome men upon women because they are weak.”¹¹⁶

Manu’s system treats women – all women irrespective of their caste – as Shudra or Dasa. Accordingly, Phule included women, Brahmin as well as low caste, in his notion of Shudratishudra. He even set up a home for women to stop the Brahmin widow from aborting or killing their illegitimate children. Phule himself adopted the son of a Brahman widow as his own. He played an active role in the remarriage of a sarvast brahman widow in 1864. Gail Omvelt has pointed out that Phule does not uses the common word ‘Manus’, (human being) but insists on using ‘*Stree-Purush*’, thus emphasizing gender differentiation, while pleading for equal and common human rights for women and men.

But active social reformers were few and the popularity of people such as Tilak was immense. But in spite of all this, considerable, progress did occur in the direction of female education and the emergence of educated and independent women like Ramabai, Anandibai and Rakmabai; bear witness to the fact that women education was progressing in the right direction.

¹¹⁶ Cited from G.P. Deshpande (e.d), Selected Writings of Jotirao Phule, Left World Books, New Delhi, 2002 , p-231

Chapter 3

INDIAN WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY AND THE GROWTH OF EDUCATION

“The true reformer has not to write on a clean slate. His work is more often to complete the half-written sentence.”

-----Ranade¹

Much of what is meant by this statement holds for the work done by the social reformers like Karve and others in the Bombay Presidency in the early twentieth century. They capitalized on the momentum created by the early reformers in the nineteenth century and gave a definite shape to the form and structure of education that would be imparted to women in the next fifty years. After the intense debate in the late nineteenth century on the nature and duration of education of girls, a consensus was eventually formed in society on the necessity to educate girls. The importance of education for girls was not only recognized by the liberal reformers but it came to be accepted by the orthodoxy as well. Dhondo Keshav Karve further built up this movement by setting up educational home for widows and worked hard to speed up the process of educating girls in general, which culminated in June 1916 in the first Indian Women's University.

The establishment of the first Indian Women's University was a part of the prolonged effort made by Karve to improve the condition of women in the Presidency. Born on the 18 April, 1858, at Sheravali in Murund, Dhondo Keshav Karve had to fight against adverse economic circumstance in his early years of education. Scholarships which he secured and a number of private tuitions which he undertook helped him on his way to the Matriculation Examination.² Solely by his personal efforts and perseverance he became a Graduate in mathematics in 1884. After this he took up a teaching job in the Elphinstone High School for a year. Later he took up part time teaching jobs at the Cathedral Girl's High School and Alexandra Girl's High School. At both these schools

¹Minan, G. Cowan; The Education of the Women of India, Oliphant Anderson & Ferrier, London, 1912, p-160.

² .N.M.Joshi.; Maharashtrache Shilpikar: Maharishi Dhondhu Keshav Karve, Maharashtra Rajya Sahitya Aani Sanskruti Mandal, Mumbai, 2007, pp-5 -6.

the students predominantly belonged to the Anglo Indian and Parsi communities, and very few Hindu girls attended these schools³. Karve always had a vision of social service before his eyes. That is the reason why even when he had just got a job at the Elphinstone school and had to take care of his wife and son who lived with him in Bombay, Karve took out one rupee every month from his salary and kept it aside for future social work.

Karve's life long passion for women's education can be traced from his early efforts to educate his first wife Radhabai at home .After brining her and his son Raghunathrao (later a famous social worker, who was the first in Bombay to disseminate ideas about birth- control as a means of providing greater liberty to Indian women in1921),⁴ from Murund to Bombay, Karve taught her Marathi and English. As a teacher, he joined Raja ram Shastri Bhagwat in his Maratha High School. While in Bombay, Karve and his friends made an attempt to improve the social condition of his village (Murund). In 1891 he was invited by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Ranade and others of the Deccan Education Society to join them at the Fergusson College. Meanwhile he had lost his wife, Radhabai, and so he decided to shift his base to Pune. It was in Pune, where he worked in the Fergusson College for twenty three years, that Karve decided to dedicate his life to the cause of women's regeneration.⁵

Karve showed his firm determination to espouse the cause of widow remarriage by marrying a widow [the sister of his friend Naharpant] who was the first child-widow to be educated by Pandita Ramabai's Sharda Sadan. The ostracism that he and his wife had to face from the orthodox Brahman community at Murund, strengthened his resolve to work for the cause of widow remarriage and he established a Widow Remarriage Association on December 31 1893 and, also started a hostel for the children of remarried widows. The remarried couples were treated as outcaste by the orthodox as their contact supposedly polluted the pure Brahmans. Due to this reason, the children born to such marriages were not allowed to study with other children. The Karves themselves had to face such opposition from upper caste Hindus immediately after their marriage. Though

³ Opcit, p-7

⁴ Y.D.Phadke; Women in Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, Government of Maharashtra, New Delhi, 1989, pp-56, 57.

⁵ Ganesh.L.Chandravarkar; Maharishi Karve, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1958,p- ix

Karve had established the Hindu Widow's Home⁶, his wife Anandibai was not allowed for quite some time to participate in the internal management of the institution. She was not allowed to touch the water used for cooking and drinking and had to take her meals separately. Realizing that it would take a long time to persuade people to accept widow remarriage, he thought the best way to advance the cause would be to educate widow.

In the field of women's education, Pandita Ramabai's Sharda Sadan had been doing exemplary service since July 1892, when it was formally opened with forty resident widows. In 1893, the Sharda Sadan had incurred the wrath of most of its sympathizers. Tilak's fear had been confirmed, when a Hindu widow was baptized in 1894. Parents and guardians withdrew twenty five girls from the school. Newspapers like the Mahratta and the Kesari filled their columns with condemnation, when the reports of conversion of twelve students from the Sharda Sadan were confirmed. This increased the unpopularity of the Sadan. In 1887, a home for widows has been established in Bengal by Shashipad Bannerji and a similar institution was started by Viresalingam Pantalu in Madras Presidency. Karve, who had heard of these institutions, decided to establish one in Pune. In 1899 the Anath Balikashram was started as an institution in a house which was rented at Sadashivpeth near Peru Gate. Dr. Ram Krishna Gopal Bhandarkar was elected as the president of the Anath Balikashram Associate and Professor Karve himself became its secretary.⁷

One of the problems faced by Professor Karve in the early years of the history of the Ashram was the reluctance of conservative parents to send their daughters to study. They feared that a widow might be tempted to marry again, following the example of the founder of the school and his wife. In view of such apprehensions, the governing council of the institution passed a resolution on June 21, 1916 and declared the Anath Balikashram [Hindu widows home] a strictly educational institution. Further, in 1906, it had been decided by the management that the number of unmarried girls who came to the Ashram for education should not exceed one-fourth of the total number of its inmates. This meant that a fairly large number of applications from unmarried girls had to be rejected. In order to solve this problem Prof. Karve started a Mahila Vidyalaya for

⁶ Y.D. Phadke; Women in Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, Government of Maharashtra, New Delhi, 1989, pp-32- 33

⁷ .G.L.Chandravarkar; Maharishi Karve, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, pp-90- 92

unmarried girls, on 4 March 1907, with six girls in the old building of the Deccan Education Society near Lakdi Bridge.⁸ An English man, Major Hunter Steen, in an article in The Times of India thus describes the Vidyalaya:

“In a small house in Narayan Peth, Poona city, not far from Lakadi Pool, is to be found the modest building at least on this side of India of what will one day prove the social regeneration of the country.”⁹ Mr. Steen was quite right in his prediction, as the Vidyalaya proved to be the seed from which the first Women’s University in India germinated. The idea of establishing a separate University for women, though not new, took a concrete shape in Prof. Karve’s mind in 1915 when he received a pamphlet giving an account of the work of the Japanese Women’s University which had been established in 1900. The pamphlet was sent to him by Babu Shivprasad Gupta, a wealthy landowner and a philanthropist from Benaras and Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar of Calcutta. It was explicitly stated in the pamphlet that, this University was not ‘a copy of the higher institutions for women in America and Europe’. Its main aim was to secure the participation of women in the national reconstruction that was taking place in Japan at that time. What attracted Karve’s attention was the emphasis laid on the life at home¹⁰ and, he decided to establish a similar University in Poona. He decided that it would provide facilities for education in the vernacular up to the University levels, suited to the needs and requirements of the Indian women, which meant emphasis on domestic training.

A college was started by the Hindu Widow’s Association in 1916 with four students at Hingne Budruk, near Pune. The Association also opened a Training institution for Primary School teachers and a High School.¹¹ These institutions were affiliated to the University. A generous donation of fifty lakhs was given by Sir Vithaldas Thakersey, an industrialist from Bombay. This gave it some financial stability and enabled Karve to open new schools. The University and the institution conducted by it were named after the philanthropist’s mother, Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thakersey, and came to be known as the S.N.D.T University from 1920.

⁸ Opcit... p-117

⁹ The Times of India, 14 March, 1908

¹⁰ Ganesh.L.Chandravarkar; Maharishi Karve, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1958, p- 148.

¹¹ Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Presidency of Bombay, for the years 1922- 1927, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1929, p- 144.

In the initial stages, when Prof. Karve formulated his plan for the University, he had to face opposition even from some of his good friends of the Ashram, like Dr. R.P. Paranjpe and Dr. R.D. Bhandarkar. His scheme evoked very lively interest. It was as enthusiastically received as it was criticized. The most vehement criticism came from the editor of the Indian Social Reformer, Mr. Natarajan, who wrote:

“The immense personal devotion and sacrifice which enabled him (Mr. Karve) to make the Hindu Widow Home at Poona what it is today are bound to make any project which he conceives, if not a success, at least a serious distraction, hampering progress along established lines. We do not think that the scheme will succeed; it certainly does not deserve to succeed. What it may do is to lead to divided councils and to further postponement of progress along established lines.”¹²

Natarajan believed that a separate University would create an additional burden and would in fact become a stumbling block in the way of women's education. He thought this because the funds which were procured for the Ashram were very hard earned and meager and he believed that the proposed University would harm the Ashram by further diverting the funds. Some of the other social reformers, who believed that the women should have the choice to decide whether they want to take up professional jobs or not, and, that the curriculum of the University should not restrict their choice, were not in favour of designing a separate curriculum for women with emphasis on subjects like home-science, which was the model Karve had adopted for his University. Objections were also raised about the adoption of vernacular as the medium of instruction, as it was not considered to be in the interest of the higher education of women.

On the other hand, it received support from a very unlikely source, the Mahratta, which had intensely debated against the establishment of a High School for girls in the late nineteenth century, as it feared it would divert the energies of the girls away from domestic duties. This support was in part based on the fact that opposition against the higher education of girls was useless in the present circumstances when education of girls had become quite popular and, also because Prof. Karve proposed to teach a different curriculum to the girls from that which was being taught in the government colleges. He laid emphasis on the woman's life of the home as the main sphere of her activities. The

¹² The Indian Social Reformer, February 27, 1916.

three guiding principles of this University were (1) to educate women for the development of their personalities (2) to equip them to become good wives and mothers and, (3) to educate them as members of the nation and as participant in the task of building the nation. An article in the Mahratta, stated that;

“Prof. Karve’s’ announcement about the ladies’ college classes to be started at Hinge as the development of the Mahilashram marks the beginning of an important movement which is bound to have a far reaching and we believe a very beneficial results. The proposed college will not be, we are told, a mere replica of the existing schools and colleges for men with difference of only spelling the ‘men’ with an initial ‘wo’. Professor Karve wishes to introduce a different curriculum which will be suited to the function and place which the average women in Indian occupy in the near future.”¹³

Initially, the number of girls who attended the University was quite small as the examination conducted by the University and the degrees conferred by it were not recognized by the Government. Slowly this situation changed and by 1927 there were three colleges (at Poona, Baroda and, Surat), 15 schools, and one Training School affiliated to the University. The Entrance Examination was held in four languages, i.e. Marathi, Gujrati, Sindhi and, Telugu, but at the college education was imparted through the first three languages only. Girls who studied privately were allowed to appear for the Entrance Examination and for the higher examination. The college course lasted for three years and the course of study was so framed that in addition to proficiency in the Vernacular, English and one optional subject, a general elementary knowledge of History, Sociology, Domestic economy and Hygiene, Psychology, and Child-study, were also taught. Besides these, optional subjects like, classical languages, physical and natural science, mathematics, comparative religions, history and economics, ethics and philosophy, pedagogic, and the fine arts of music and painting, were also taught.¹⁴

The number of women who graduated in 1927 was 12, as against 8 in 1922.¹⁵ By 1927, 8 High Schools, and 7 Middle Schools, with about 1,000 pupils, were affiliated to the University. The main reason why the University had abstained from applying for

¹³ Mahratta, “A Women’s University”, January 9, 1916, pp- 13

¹⁴ Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction... Opcit. Pp-144

¹⁵ Ibid

Government recognition was to maintain its academic freedom in framing the curricula and conditions of examination.

But the conditions changed considerably by 1946. Although a statutory recognition was not yet given to the University, girls holding the Entrance Examination Certificate of the University were admitted to the Government and semi- Government services on the same terms as those holding the Matriculation examination Certificate of the Bombay University and those holding the degrees of Graduation, and teachers training programmes of the Indian Women's University on the same terms as those holding the degrees of B.A, M.A and, B.T of the Bombay University.¹⁶ Thus, a tacit recognition was provided to the University.

The number of Secondary Schools affiliated to the University had increased to 14 by 1946 with 4,845 girls on roll. It had 342 women in the four affiliated colleges in Bombay, Poona, Ahmadabad and, Baroda.¹⁷ The Government, in recognition of the work done by the University, provided it with an annual grant of Rs. 5,000. By his selfless work and zeal for the cause of women's education, Prof. Karve was able to placate all his critics. Not only the Government but even the editor of the Indian Social Reformer, Mr. Natarajan, acknowledged the good work done by him. The department of Education of the Presidency of Bombay in its annual report for 1925-26 stated;

“In the cause of female education, especially the education of adults, the efforts of Professor D.K Karve on the one hand and of Mr. G.K Devdhar on the other are commendable. Professor Karve's little colony of thirty years ago has now developed in to a full-fledged University for Indian women. Its special feature is that the medium of instruction is the vernacular and the aim of adapting girl's curriculum to their special needs and conditions and of retaining the specialty of Indian style of living is steadily kept in view.”¹⁸

In the Bombay Presidency, the first All India Women's Conference which was convened at Poona, in January, 1927, lent its wholehearted support to the idea of giving this type of education which would develop the ideals of motherhood and of social

¹⁶ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Province, for 1945-46, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1949, p- 43.

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay, 1925-26, with Supplement to the Report, Bombay, Printed at Govt. Central Press, 1927.

service, as were proposed by Karve. It therefore urged the Government to give recognition to the University.

Apart from Karve's efforts, another noteworthy contribution in the field of women's education was made by the Seva Sadan, which was founded by two ardent social reformers and personal friends, Behramji Malabari and Dayaram Gidmul. It was one of the earliest non-sectarian institutions in the Bombay Presidency. Both Malabari and Gidmul had earlier protested against infant marriage and enforced widowhood. It was due to their efforts that in 1891 the Age of Consent Bill was passed, and subsequently, the age of consent was raised to twelve years for girls. In 1908, these men, in association with Ramabai Ranade (wife of Justice Ranade), Lady Jamanabai Sakkai who had also founded the Gujerati Women's Association for social work among Gujrati Women, and a Muslim lady, Dilshad Begum Nawab Mirza, who had also actively participated in the management of Muslim girl's orphanage, founded the Seva Sadan. It was one of the earliest secular institutions which provided women social workers, from diverse religious, economic and regional backgrounds, a common platform to unite and work for the cause of improving the socio-economic position of women in the society.

Unlike other educational institutions, the main aim of the Seva Sadan was to give vocational training to poor women. It also provided varied schemes for adult education. This unique initiative taken by the Sadan became quite popular and it began to attract students in large numbers. For instance, the branch that was established in Poona on 2 October 1909 started with six women in the first month, it reported an increase of 260 students by 1910, and, by the end of 1920, had on roll over 1000 students.¹⁹ In 1917, the Poona Seva Sadan severed its connection with the headquarters' organization in Bombay and began functioning as a separate institute. As the main focus of the Seva Sadan was to enable working class women to work outside home, it inaugurated the first women's co-operative in Western India. This attracted a large number of women from poor families who desired to supplement their income by receiving training in small cottage industries like papad, pickle-making, cane-work, basket-weaving, and toy-making. Almost 40

¹⁹ Padma. Anagol; Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850- 1920, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, England, 2005, pp-68- 69

percent of the students, in 1911, were reported to belong to very poor families, while another 35 percent came from families with modest means of livelihood.²⁰

The classes for primary teachers started by the Sadan had developed into a full time Training College by 1929, which met the need for trained female teachers in the Municipal Schools. Home education classes were also arranged by the Sadan to educate older girls and married women, who could not attend ordinary schools due to the existing social taboos. The curriculum of these Home Education classes mainly comprised of English and the Vernaculars, singing, home-nursing and hygiene.²¹ The Sadan also had an Industrial Department where sewing, laundry, cane-weaving, hosiery, etc.. In 1909, Ramabai Ranade, with the help of G.K Deodhar, (a founder member of the Servant of India Society) had opened a branch of the Seva Sadan at her house at Poona. Besides providing vocational education in basic crafts, this branch of the Sadan made arrangements to train students to become nurses and mid-wives. It was thus a pioneer in introducing medical education for women.

The most laudable effort in this direction was made by Ramabai Ranade. In order to break down the existing prejudice against women practicing medicine, Ramabai made use of the traditional notion of 'duty' and 'motherhood'. The fact that she was the wife of Justice Ranade also provided popularity to the Sadan. A large number of these students were trained in the Sassoon Hospital. Besides medical training, the school also awarded 'Certificates of Proficiency' in short courses on subjects such as, first-aid, hygiene, home-nursing, sanitation and, public health. It also conducted health education programme to create health awareness among women and to teach them practical ways of preventing illness.

Ramabai had also established a Hindu Ladies' Social and Literary Club at Poona in 1901 with a branch in Bombay which imparted instruction to women in needlework and embroidery, arranged lectures for women and by women such as Pandita Ramabai and Kashibai Kanitkar.²² By 1922, the Seva Sadan had over one thousand girls and women in its Poona branch in the various departments, 190 of whom lived in the four

²⁰ Mahratta, 25 May, 1913, p- 165

²¹ Evelyn C. Gedge and Mithan Choksi (ed.): Women in Modern India; Fifteen papers by Indian Women Writers, D.B Taraporwala Sons & Co, Bombay, 1929, p-44.

²² Phadke.Y.D: Women in Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, Govt. of Maharashtra, New Delhi, p- 25

hostels that had been established by the Sadan for the purpose. A large number of those who attended these classes were married women from the working classes who came in for two to three hours daily.²³ The main aim of the institute, according to the Report of the Government on the Progress of Education, was to “foster among women ideas of social usefulness and national service to the requirement of the country”²⁴ By 1927 the Industrial classes of the Seva Sadan had 138 pupils. It had a branch in Bombay and Satara and, conducted classes in both English and Vernaculars. Appreciating the work done by the Sadan the Education Inspectress wrote in 1927;

“The social and medical work of the Seva Sadan are meeting a very great need, and will do much to promote the physical of the women and girls of the future, while their Industrial classes and grown-up women’s classes, held after midday, when the Hindu women is most free from her household duties, give opportunities to those who would never had them otherwise. Their English classes and classes for the training of teachers are also a real help to many.”²⁵

Thus, it is clear that private education contributed greatly to the expansion of women’s education. Private efforts also helped by creating social awareness about the necessity to educate girls and its usefulness to the society. Even the basic intent of the All India Women’s Conference (A.I.W.C), which was formed in January 1927, was to organize women to demand reforms in the system of education. The Presidential address given by Maharani Chimanbai Gaekwad of Baroda at the first session of the A.I.W.C centered on the content and structure of female education:

“Here, with the rising tide of revival of Indian culture, here at the beginning of what may rightly may regarded as the Indian Renaissance, we are assembled to discussthose things which are essential for the education and general well being of the future mothers of the race ...Let us recognize that womanhood should be able to produce not merely healthy bodies but healthy souls ..”²⁶

²³ Progress of Education in India, 1917- 1922, J.A. Richey, C.I.E., Eighth Quinquennial Review, Vol I Superintendent Govt. Printing, Calcutta, 1923, p-137.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, for the year 1922- 1927, Bombay, Printed at Govt. Central Press, 1929; p- 149.

²⁶ Address of Maharani Chimanbai Saheb Gaekwad of Baroda to the First Session of the All India Women’s Conference, 5- 8 January, 1927, pp- 15, 16.

Thus, it is clear that education was looked upon as the only panacea for solving problems of society. Education was seen a means of improving position of women of the social reformers and they used it with best of results.

II

In the twentieth century, women's education developed at a relatively increased pace in the Bombay Presidency. While economic difficulties persisted, social prejudices started disappearing from the time when education became a provincial responsibility, in 1919, under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Further, increasing urbanization, the break up of the joint family which reduced the control of the family elders (the male patriarch and the older women of the house), the raising of the minimum age of marriage for girls to 14 by the Sarda Act of 1930 which removed the most important obstacle in the way of female education and the increasing participation of women in the national movement, were responsible for the increase in the number of educated women. The table given below will further clarify this point:

Year	Number of Primary Schools for Girls.	Number of Secondary Schools for Girls	Number of Colleges For Women.
1916- 17	1,110	58	—
1921- 22	1,438	60	—
1926 27	1,535	66	—
1930- 31	1,721	80	—
1937- 38	1,493	88	—
1939- 40	1,564	123	—
1945- 46	1,793	178	—

Table I; Number of Government Institution for Girls (All types).²⁷

²⁷ Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, for the Years, 1916-1922, 1922-27, 1932-37 1939-45. Printed at he Govt. Central Press, Bombay.

As it is clear from the above table, that there were no Government colleges reserved for women. Even the First Education Resolution of the Government of India which reviewed the progress of female education in India in 1904, did not say anything about the higher education of women which had made a promising start in the Presidency. This was not unnatural since the Educational Resolution was passed on the eve of the passing of the Indian University Act March, 1904, which was designed to check the spread of higher education in India. However, as it had been noted earlier private enterprise continued to fill this vacuum and it peaked with the creation of the first Indian Women's University in 1916. It was indeed the first "free" University for women in India, being completely independent of Government control and receiving no grant from it.²⁸

The increase in the number of primary institutions for girls shows a steady rise. However, in spite of this increase in the number of institutions and also in the number of pupils attending these institutes, the number of those who reached the Standard IV was still quite low even in 1945- 46. Out of the 477,187 numbers of girls studying at the Primary stage in 1945-46, only 39,787 or 8.3 percent went up to the Upper primary stage and 437,400 or 91.7 percent were in the Lower Primary stage of instruction²⁹. This means that the drop out rate among girls was still quite high in 1945- 46. They usually left the school after being educated for two or three years.

There was a sharp increase in the number of secondary schools for girls. By 1936-37 they stood at 104 against 67 in 1901-02 and their number rose to 178 in 1945-46. However, it must be remembered that most of these schools were started under private enterprise because even in 1936- 37, the Government maintained only one High School for Girls in Ahmadabad and 6 Middle Schools at Thana, Nasik, Dharwar, Bijapur, and Poona.³⁰ The total numbers of Secondary Institutions were also numerically low when compared to those for boys. One of the reasons cited continuously in the Education Reports was the financial difficulties faced in maintaining such schools. The average strength of a secondary school for girls was generally smaller; such schools were

²⁸ Dhondo Keshav. Karve: Looking Back, Poona, 1936, p-93

²⁹ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Province for 1945- 46, Bombay, Printed at Govt. Central Press, 1949, p- 45

³⁰ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay 1936-37 with supplements to the Report, Bombay, Printed at Govt. Central Press, 1938.

compelled to charge lower fees and to allow a large number of free places than in boys' schools because parents were not willing to spend as much on the education of their daughters as they did on that of their sons. This explains the fact that, the number of girls receiving Secondary and Higher secondary education was still quite low when compared to those of boys.

Another reason for this was the prevalence of co-education in Bombay. The practice of Purda was not as strictly enforced in Bombay as it was in other parts of India like, Bengal, Punjab, Bihar and the North Western Frontier Province. The practice of Purda meant that strict sex segregation was enforced and this resulted in the reluctance of the parents to send their daughters to schools. This is what happened in Bengal, Punjab, etc. but in Bombay the dominant communities were the Parsis and the Marathas (a lower caste Kunbi or peasant community), and neither of them practiced sex segregation. Therefore, the other Provinces lagged behind Bombay, where communities like the Parsis, led the movement for women's education.³¹

In 1939- 40 for instance, the actual number of girls receiving education in Government recognized Secondary Schools was 25,148. Out of these, 11,111 girls were studying in co-educational schools. Given a total of 3625 girls under instruction in Secondary schools, this figure was quite impressive.³² It meant that nearly one-third of the girls under instruction in secondary schools, were taught in the co-ed schools. These schools, however, were not co-education schools in the true sense of the term; they were boy's schools which admitted girls. As a result there was very little participation of girls in the school life, as it had been stated by the Director of Public Instruction for Bombay;

"In the class room they sit apart... nor do they take part in extra curricular activities.... This is a state of affair to be deplored, since these girls who are attending boy's schools (not co-education schools), are being deprived of a very valuable part of education, viz. participation in the life of the school as a whole."³³ But in spite of this there was no strong opposition on girls attending these schools. The main reason for this

³¹ Arthur, Mayhew; *The Education of India: A Study of British Educational Policy on National Life and Problems in India Today*, Faber and Gwyer, London, 1926, p- 267.

³² *Report on Public Instruction in the Province of Bombay 1939- 40*, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1941, p- 63.

³³ *Quienquennium Report on the Progress of Education in the Presidency of Bombay, for the years 1932- 37*, printed at the Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1938, p-174.

was the desire of parents to provide good education to their daughters; since owing to the lack of funds the girl's schools could not employ as an efficient staff as there was in the boys schools. The development of girls' school also suffered from financial difficulties and a dearth of qualified teachers.³⁴

The other reason for this, according to the Inspectress of Girl's Schools, Central Division, was the absence of adequate provision for higher secondary education in smaller towns. In the mofussil towns where there were no separate girl's schools the boy's school could not deny admission to girls. But this trend was not confined to small towns, as even in large towns parents preferred to send their girls to the boy's school. This was not only due to the desire of parents who had greater faith in the efficiency of boy's schools than in schools especially meant for girls, but also due to the gradual erosion of the Purda system. The custom of sex segregation, was practiced by the upper caste Hindus, had never been very rigidly practiced throughout the Presidency due to the influential position of the Maratha caste, except among the more orthodox Brahman caste. Even that was fast disappearing.

By 1945- 46, the total number of girls receiving education rose to 58,472 out of which 22,184 girls were in Secondary School for boy's.³⁵ This meant that, in six years (from 1939-40 to 1945-46) the total number of girls receiving instruction in various secondary schools in Bombay rose by 60 percent, which was quite a substantial increase by any standards. In spite of this, a large number of secondary schools were established by private efforts because Government enterprise in this field was limited and entirely out of proportion to the demand.

In the Bombay Presidency, public opinion was not hostile to co-education like it was in most of the other part of the country. Consequently, while even as early as 1901-02, there were, as many as 12 colleges for women in the whole of India- 3 in Madras, 3 in Bengal, and 6 in United Province-³⁶ there was no separate college for girls in Bombay until 1916 when the S.N.D.T Indian Women's University was established. But in spite of

³⁴ Report on Public Instruction in the Province of Bombay 1939- 40, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1941, p-64

³⁵ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Province for 1945- 46, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1949, p- 43.

³⁶ A Review of Education in Bombay state 1855- 1955, Govt. of Bombay, Published by the Director, Govt. Printing, Publication and Stationary, Bombay State.

the Women's University and its colleges, the number of girls attending colleges for men continued to be quite large when compared to those with the Women's University.

In 1895, two Hindu girls were admitted to the First year class by the Fergusson College.³⁷ They were the first two girls from Poona who had reached the collegiate stage since the beginning of the British rule. In 1901- 02, there were 75 girls studying in the colleges of the Presidency.³⁸ In 1939- 40, their number rose to 2240.³⁹ A study of the table given below will further stress this point.

Year	Number of women in Arts colleges	Number of women in Professional colleges	Total number of women in the University level
1916- 17	125	52	177
1926- 27	382	67	449
1930- 31	534	96	630
1938- 39	1,510	244	1,754
1945-46	4,118	467	4,585

Table II: Total number of female students under instruction in Government Colleges.

The table shows a steady increase in the number of women receiving higher education: from 177 in the year 1916- 17 to 4,585 in 1945- 46. By 1936-37 the number of women opting for professional colleges (like the Law, Medicine, Education, Engineering, Agriculture and, Commerce colleges) started increasing, and 186 were studying in professional colleges as against 45 in 1901-02. Even in 1916- 17 there were only 52 girls attending Professional colleges, and all of them were enrolled in the Grant Medical College.⁴⁰ There was no enrollment of girls in any other professional colleges.⁴¹ But by 1945- 46, the scene had changed considerably. The number of women in professional colleges had increased to 467.⁴² Thus, there was a steady increase in the number of

³⁷ Dnyanodaya, March, 1895

³⁸ Report of the Director of Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency for 1901-02, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1902.

³⁹ Report on Public Instruction in the Province of Bombay, 1939- 40, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1941, p-63.

⁴⁰ Report of the Director of Public Instruction on the Progress of Education in the Province of Bombay during the quinquennium from 1912-13 to 1916-17, Bombay, printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1917 p-95.

⁴¹ Appendix, Table I

⁴² Report on Public Instruction for 1945- 46, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1949, p- 43.

women opting for professional courses. Although degrees in Medicine and Education continued to be popular, some girls were also joining the Agriculture and Engineering Colleges.⁴³

Although there was no separate college of Secondary Training for girls, a tremendous increase was witnessed in the number of women attending the Secondary Training colleges affiliated to the University of Bombay, for the B.T. degree. There was a large increase in the number of women employed as teachers in secondary schools. In 1936-37, there were as many as 1,414 women teachers working in secondary schools (261 in middle schools and 1,153 in high schools) as against 1,087 male teachers in middle schools and 4,575 in high schools.⁴⁴ Further, in 1936-37, 186 women were studying in professional colleges as against 45 in 1901-02. Of these, 18 were reading in Law colleges, 140 in colleges of Medicine, 21 in the Secondary Training colleges at Bombay, 2 in the college of Agriculture, Poona, and 5 in colleges of Commerce.⁴⁵

The number of women attending Secondary Colleges for training had also increased. In 1945-46, there were 83 women attending the three Secondary Training Colleges in the Bombay Province.⁴⁶ There were three main reasons for the advance that was witnessed in this field. Firstly, the increasing desire of educated women to have a professional career for themselves led to much employment in this field which was quite respectable as well as fairly well-paid. The second reason was the increase in the secondary schools for girls, and lastly the insistence of the Department of Education that the number of women teachers in all boy's schools should be in proportion to that of the girls in that school, also led to an increase in the appointment of female teachers. But, in spite of this, there was still a dearth of qualified teachers in the province, as most of the women who received training after marriage left the teaching profession. The Inspector of Girl's School, Central Division, remarks;

“Even in the Bombay city and suburbs, there are hardly any schools staffed entirely by women. Men teachers are employed by schools for various reasons... Women

⁴³ Appendix Table II

⁴⁴ *A Review of Education in Bombay state 1855-1955*, Govt. of Bombay, Published by the Director, Govt. Printing, Publication and Stationary, Bombay State, p- 396

⁴⁵ *A Review of Education in Bombay State, 1855-1955*, Govt. of Bombay, published by the Director, Govt. Printing, Publication and Stationary, Bombay State, p- 395

⁴⁶ *Report on Public Instruction for 1945-46*, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1949, p-44

teachers, if unmarried, often leave the school to get married and, the young married women teachers cannot put in steady work.⁴⁷

Even then it is clear that there was a steady increase in the number of women opting for a professional career and the trend was changing. Women had, by the 1940's, started taking to University education in large numbers. One of the causes the low progress in women's education that has been stated over and over again in the various education reports was the high cost involved in educating them. Unlike boy's schools, no fees were charged by any of the Government, District Local Board, or Municipal Primary schools on the girls. Added to this was the salary paid to the women teachers, which was higher than that given to their male counter part in Government schools, as a means inducing them to get more women to teach in such schools. But as the salary paid to a woman was higher than that paid to their male counterpart in the same position, it was much more cost efficient for the Schools to employ male teachers. A woman under graduate started with a salary of Rs. 55, while a man of the same qualification got Rs. 45.⁴⁸ Thus, this in itself created an obstacle for the employment of women teachers and it also increased the average cost of schools for girl.

Year	Total Expenditure on education Of girls.
1916- 17	18,36,835
1921- 22	38,84,625
1926- 27	53,24,746
1930- 31	57,23,058
1939- 40	70,42,596
1945- 46	1,21,61,037

Table III: Expenditure on girl's institute (all types)⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Opcit.

⁴⁸ Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, for the Years, 1922- 27, Bombay, printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1929, pp-156- 157

⁴⁹ Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in the Presidency of Bombay, for the years of 1916- 17, 1921- 22, 1926- 27, 1930- 31, 1939-40, 1945- 46, Printed at the government central Press, Bombay.

A steady increase in the amount spent on women's institutes can be observed. This was not the total amount spent on women's education as a fairly large number of women were reading in institutes meant for boys. In 1945- 46 nearly 45 percent of the girls attended boy's schools.⁵⁰

III

There had been a fierce controversy with regard to the curriculum of girl's schools (primary as well as secondary), in Bombay in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although the reports of Education Commission like the Hunter Commission of 1882 or the Hartog Committee of 1929, which suggested that education be gradually made compulsory for girls and they favored a separate curriculum which would suit the special requirements of women,⁵¹ the curriculum for girls remained the same as that of boy's in all Government institutes for girls till 1922. In 1922, the primary curriculum, in the Government Schools, consisted of an Infant Class and six Standards, leading up to the Vernacular Final Examination for Girls. In addition to these ordinary subjects, Domestic Economy, Needle work, Nature Study, School Gardening, Drawing, and Handiwork were prescribed as optional subjects. Music was also a popular subject in most of the schools.⁵² In 1945- 46, a revised syllabus for Primary Schools was introduced at standard VI. Drawing and needle-work were taught in all girls schools, while provision for domestic science existed only in First Grade schools.⁵³

All the Secondary schools provided the same Departmental Curriculum for girls schools based on the University School-leaving certificate, which was same as that prescribed for boy's schools. It consisted of two languages, English and a Vernacular (Marathi in the Marathi speaking areas and Gujrati in Gujarat) and in addition Social Science, Mathematics, General science and, Philosophy were taught. In 1936- 37, a new curriculum was introduced in the secondary schools. Drawing and music were generally introduced as regular subjects while domestic science was introduced as an optional subject and girls were permitted to study it in lieu of science at the Matriculation

⁵⁰ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Province 1945- 46, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1949, p-42.

⁵¹ Interim Report the Indian Statuary Commission (Sir Philip Hartog Committee Report), 1929.

⁵² Quinquennial Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1922- 27, Bombay, Printed at the Government Central Press, 1929, p-153

⁵³ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Province For the years 1945- 46, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1949, p- 45.

Examination. But the value of this concession to women, who did not desire to take up profession careers after college, was largely destroyed by the fact that Physics was made a compulsory subject in the First Year Arts Course⁵⁴ and consequently the girls did not find it advantageous to take up this subject at the secondary stage. Moreover, the failure of the universities to provide for the teaching of this subject at the collegiate stage made it impossible for the schools to find properly qualified teachers to teach at the school level. The Education Inspector, B.D., remarked in 1927 that;

“There is a lack of suitable subjects for girls in the syllabus for boys and hence there is a tendency towards the appreciation of the curriculum of Poona University for Women, which includes useful subjects like music, sewing, knitting, domestic science, cookery, nature study, etc.”⁵⁵

The desire of the parents to get their daughters educated in colleges which provided a curriculum similar to that of S.N.D.T University and, which was considered adequate for girls who did not wish to enter in the professions dominated by men such as Law, Engineering, Commerce, etc, created an awareness in the official circles about the need for such an institution. Although the Government recognized the need, it did not make any substantial modification in the curriculum for girls at the collegiate stage. Again, as in the previous century, there emerged two opposed camps on the nature of women's education. Unlike the earlier debates in which male reformers took the lead and were the main agents in the debate, their place was now taken up by women reformers. The first group comprised of the 'traditionalists', who believed in the physiological or biological theories of difference between sexes, and the second consisted of 'progressives' who believed that both the sexes were equal.⁵⁶ The first group came to be associated with prominent social reformers like, Ramabai Ranade, Parvatibai Athavle and, others, while the second group was represented by radical reformers like Kashibai Kanitkar.

Ramabai Ranade, who was one of the key figures of the Seva Sadan, one of the most successful philanthropic institutions in India, was content to live under the shadow

⁵⁴ Report on the Progress of Education 1944-45 Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1949, p-152

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Padma. Anagol; Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850- 1920, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, England, 2005

of her illustrious husband and believed that the ideal education for middle class women should focus on equipping them with skills to manage the household and, should not train them to become professionals. This argument stressed the point that the primary role of women was that of housewives and mothers. Thus, the idea was not to bring about a radical change in the position of women but to reform it. Sarala Ray wrote in 1909 that,

“If education has any value for girls it must make her fit for her household work and daily life. Mere theoretical knowledge cannot make her a good wife or a good mother”⁵⁷. This thought was echoed by most of the traditionalist reformers. Though they agreed with the progressives on the necessity of providing primary education to girls in order to remove ignorance and superstitious practices from among them, they argued that secondary education should be so designed as to stress their role as nurturer and to train them to provide the family with security and care within the home (i.e., nursing the elderly and the proper care of children).

This point of view was also accepted by the All India Women’s Conference, which initially regarded education as the means of solving the problems of family and society. Teaching girls the same curriculum as the boys regarded by the Conference, as a waste of their time since the girls were not expected to take up jobs. Professional education, they believed, would result in political problems in the context of increasing political activity. The demand for separate electorate was given up in favour of a unified national demand for self-rule and it was believed by the A.I.W.C that under the changed circumstances any division in the Indian society would prove detrimental for the larger national good. Due to this reason A.I.W.C increasingly began to adopt a conformist attitude and it was increasingly felt that social changes cannot be brought about without concomitant political changes. The existing government curriculum for colleges was also considered dangerous, as a “masculine type of education for women”, they believed would result in an, “unequal fight for professions for which in the end it cannot be denied that men are far more suited”.⁵⁸ In the ensuing debate at the first session, Hansa Mehta

⁵⁷ Sarla Ray, *Notes on Female Education*, Sarla Ray Centenary Volume, Calcutta, Sarla Ray Committee, 1961, pp- 10- 11.

⁵⁸ *All India Women’s Conference on Educational Reform* (5 to 8 January 1927), File No. I pp-22

adopted a progressive stand point⁵⁹ and opposed this line of thinking. But a resolution supporting the traditionalists was passed which outlined the objective of female education:

“That in all education of girls in India teaching in the ideals of motherhood and in the making of home beautiful and attractive as well as training in social service should be kept uppermost.”⁶⁰

An amendment was proposed by Miss. Baladurje which adopted a progressive stand and it read;

“Teaching in the ideals of motherhood’ should be omitted unless the teaching in the ideal of fatherhood were also included as both men and women should cooperate in the beautifying of the home”⁶¹

But the amendment was lost as only three members voted in its favour. Similarly at the third session of the All India Women’s Conference on Educational reforms, Rani Saheb of Mandi in her Presidential Address opined;

“The recent introduction of Domestic Sciences, Painting and, Music in to educational courses among the optional subjects which girls take up at College is a step in the right direction.”⁶² It thus appreciated the work done by the Indian Women’s University, and the Syllabus prescribed by it and, demanded it to be made in to a model for all institutions for girls.

The progressive group on the other hand believed that there was no significant difference between men and women, and that the curriculum should be the same for both. They argued that the aim of educating girls should not merely focus on their roles as mothers and wives, but it should also equip them to enter any professions if they so desired. Institutions such as the Seva Sadan were popular mainly among lower class as they provided them with Industrial classes, but upper class and middle class women, who were not allowed to work outside their home could not benefit from them. Even the traditionalists were not oppose to the education of women per se⁶³ But they insisted that

⁵⁹ Opcit, p-25

⁶⁰ Ibid, p- 28.

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² All India Women’s Conference on Educational Reform (7- 10 February) 1928, p- 23

⁶³ Padma, Anagol; Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850- 1920, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, England, 2005, p-81

education of girls should aim at equipping girls with skills to manage a household rather than take up independent profession. But slowly this condition changed, the Sadan by appealing to the ideals of 'seva'(service), were able to recruit some middle class girls without incurring the approbation of the traditionalists, for they offered an education based on tackling 'need' and 'social welfare'. Its philosophy of social work earned for it respectability in the eyes of traditionalists⁶⁴, thereby increasing its popularity But their number remained quite small. Thus, the notion of education for the progressives differed radically from that of their opponents.

While the conception of education for the progressives was to make women financially independent through education, education for women traditionalists, like Parvatibai Athavle⁶⁵ was to include, "the first principles in medical care, care of children, cooking, care of garden, how to keep budget...singing, religious and moral instructions."⁶⁶ She was against women seeking education for employment, "for women there is a greater servitude in outside employment than in a married life... If by freedom from servitude is meant freedom from men and a life of independence from them, then that freedom is unnatural, impossible, disastrous and, opposed to the laws of right living."⁶⁷

Such views were also propagated and supported by the leaders of the national movement. Gandhi, like Ramabai Ranade, invoked figures such as Sita, Draupadi and, Damyanti, as the ideals of Indian womanhood. During his visit to Bombay in 1916, even though he encouraged Karve to establish a separate University for women, he disapproved of the provision to have English as a compulsory subject. He believed that the subject would prove as an unnecessary burden for women and a waste of time for them.⁶⁸ The main reason for this attitude of the traditionalists, was that they did not want to adopt a confrontational stance and come into direct conflict with the orthodox section

⁶⁴ Opcit

⁶⁵ Parvati Athavle was the sister of the sister of Anandibai Karve, wife of D.K.Karve. She was widowed at the age of twenty. After initial reluctance and a lot of persuasion by Prof. Karve, Anandibai received education, first by home classes and later in missionary schools. She was one of the main contributor in the success of the Women's University.

⁶⁶ Parvati. Athavle (English translation) Tr. Rev. Justin.E.Abbot: My Story: The Autobiography of a Hindu Widow, New Delhi, 1986, p-134

⁶⁷ Ibid...pp- 146- 148.

⁶⁸ Ganesh.L.Chandravarkar; Maharishi Karve, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1958, pp- 155- 156.

of the society who, though reconciled to the idea of women's education wanted to keep education at a non threatening level, by confining it to domestic sciences and social service.

During the 1937-38, a Congress Ministry headed by B.G. Kher was in power in Bombay. Kher believed that, "women's mission in life is neither equal, superior, nor inferior to that of man, but it is different, and hence she needs a different type of education."⁶⁹ However a, the report of the committee on Post war Educational Development in 1944 took a different view. It was not necessary, in its opinion, to treat women's education as a special problem requiring special measures for its development. It declared that "whatever is needed for boys and men, not less will be required for girls and women."⁷⁰

IV

When the modern system of education first began the efforts of the Government were directed to the education of the traditionally educated caste among the Indians, which invariably was the Brahman caste⁷¹ in Maharashtra society. In Maharashtra Brahmans occupied a hegemonic control due to their historic role as the chief administrators of the Chatrapati in the Maratha country. The Peshwas (Brahman Prime Minister) led the Maratha confederacy, spanning Western and Central India, and they had challenged the English East India Company march across their country.⁷² The situation did not alter considerably even after the establishment of the Company rule. The trade of the Presidency was under the control of the Gujrati merchants. The white collar jobs, on the other hand, were monopolized by Brahmans. Due to their educational qualifications they occupied the majority of the Government posts, and retained the social leadership of

⁶⁹ Y.D.Phadke; Women in Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, New Delhi, 1989,p-17

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ At the top of the caste hierarchy were the Brahmin caste cluster (Chitpavan, Deshasthas, Karhedes, and Saraswats) and the Prabhus, followed by the large Maratha community which was further divide among the elites with Kshatriya status, while the rest were peasants, known as Kunbis, generally treated as Shudras. The Mahars, Mangs, etc were the untouchable caste. _____ Meera, Kosambi; Crossing the Threshold: Feminist Essays in Social History, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007, p- 21

⁷² Meera Kosambi; Crossing the Threshold: Feminist Essays in Social History, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007, pp- 17- 18

the community. With the educational monopoly, Brahmans easily began to monopolize the government jobs and provided the key administrative personnel.

The main reason for the educational backwardness of the lower castes of Hindu society was the restriction imposed by religious scriptures on their education. The caste system had also put a restriction on the professional mobility among the lower caste, particularly on the untouchables, this increased their economic hardships. Along with women, the Shudras were not to be educated at all. As pointed by Philip Constable, the divine decree gave the "prerogative of learning, literacy, and godliness on Brahman alone, ... By virtue of their literacy, the Brahman jatis saw themselves as interpreters of the Hindu sacred texts... Moreover, their predominance in the colonial state's educational and administrative structure was perceived as a part of this brahmanic prerogative."⁷³

It was due to these reasons that when western education was introduced in the Presidency, the lower caste did not benefit. Colonial rulers, instead of trying to establish a more egalitarian educational system, decided not to interfere with the social customs of the land. They tried to justify this method by propagating their downward filtration theory, which stated that the duty of the Government was only restricted to educating the natives of 'good caste' and the superior classes in the first instance and to leave it to them to educate the lower classes at a later date. Political consideration also lent support to the same policy because the Government was anxious to win the goodwill of the influential upper classes and castes in order to consolidate its empire and it was hoped that such goodwill could be obtained by educating boys from the upper castes and by appointing them to subordinate posts under Government. Consequently, the education of the lower castes came to be neglected by the state system of education for a fairly long time.

The backward castes, (the Mahars, Mangs, Malee, Kolis, Vannari, Dher, Korwar, Agri and others) were divided by the Report of the Education Commissioner in to three groups, viz, the Scheduled Caste (comprising of the untouchables, prior to 1934 the Scheduled Castes were variously described as low caste or depressed classes), the Schedule Tribes (the so-called aboriginals and the hill tribes) and, the Other backward

⁷³ Philips Constable; "Sitting on the School Verandah: The Ideology and Practice of 'Untouchable' Educational Protest in the Late Nineteenth-Century Western India", the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 37, 4 (2000), Sage, New Delhi, pp-410.

classes⁷⁴ (erstwhile criminal tribes, nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, etc). As far as the private schools established by the social reformers are concerned, they did practically nothing for the education of the backward castes. Their children were not permitted to attend these schools. The reformers, due to the fear that the conservative parents would stop sending their children to schools if the children from lower caste were allowed to attend them, did not force the issue.

The main reason for this was the fear of pollution in the minds of the caste Hindus, who could not let their boys be polluted by coming in to contact with the Shudra boys. But as far as the other Backward classes are concerned, the reports given by some of the Collectors in the Enquiry of 1824 show that a very small minority of the children of these communities found their way into educational institutions. In South Konkan, for instance, it was reported that 3 Agri, 4 Kolis and 1 Patharwat-i.e. 8 pupils of backward classes attended the schools out of a total of about 1,500 students of all castes.⁷⁵ In Khandesh, out of 28 backward class pupils- 26 Vannari and 2 Manbhav pupils, attended the schools out of a total of 2,348 pupils of all castes;⁷⁶ and in Dharwar, 4 Dher, 2 Korawar, and 3 Helaver i.e. 9 backward castes put together⁷⁷. The Returns from other districts citing caste are not available. But what is true of these three districts can also be taken as applicable to all the other districts, and it may be safely be concluded that not even one percent of the pupils attending the indigenous private schools belonged to lower castes. Their education was therefore almost non-existent at the opening of the nineteenth century and the indigenous schools of the period catered only to the needs of the advanced or upper castes.

The attitude of the Government was also quite ambivalent in this regard. Though the Education Commission Report of 1882 had explicitly stated that all government-aided schools should be open to all caste and communities without any discrimination whatsoever, the fear in the official circle that the caste Hindus might see this as an effort to interfere with their religious affairs, led the government to adopt a vacillating position. The attitude of the Government is also reflected in the Report itself;

⁷⁴ A Review of Education in Bombay state. 1855- 1955, Govt. of Bombay, published by the Director, Govt. Printing, Publication and Stationary, Bombay State, 1958, pp-407- 408

⁷⁵ Ibid, p- 409

⁷⁶ Ibid,

⁷⁷ Ibid, pp-148- 149

“The educational institutions of government are intended by us to be open to all classes and we cannot depart from a principle which is essentially sound and the maintenance of which is of first importance. It is possible that in some cases, the enforcement of the principle may be followed by a withdrawal of a portion of scholar, but it is sufficient to remark that those person who object to its practical enforcement will be at the liberty to withhold their contribution”.⁷⁸ However, immediately on the next page the Report stated that, “... even in the case of government or board schools, the principle affirmed by us must be applied with caution. It is not desirable for masters or inspectors to endeavor to force on a social change which with judicious treatment will be accepted by society. If the low caste community seek an entrance in to the cess schools, their rights must be firmly maintained, especially in the secondary institutions where there is no alternative of a special school for them to attend. It is, however, undesirable to urge them to claim a right which they are themselves indifferent.”⁷⁹

The pioneering attempt for the education of low caste communities were made by the missionaries. The chief object of the missions being proselytisation, the missionaries were attracted to the backward classes among whom they expected to reap a rich harvest of conversions. These hopes did not materialize, but they did signal service by establishing schools for the low caste children and creating an awareness among them about their educational rights and the discriminatory attitude that had been adopted against them. If this was the condition of the education of the boys’ one can imagine the condition of the girls. The first girl’s school in western India was opened by the American Marathi Mission in the city of Bombay in 1824.⁸⁰

The first school for girls established by an Indian was the one set up by Jotirao Phule’s ‘Low Caste Female School’ at Poona in 1848.⁸¹ The agency for the promotion of untouchable education was not the British colonial administration, but untouchables themselves, often with the missionary support and contacts; they built up the movement

⁷⁸ Report of the Indian Education Commission, 1882, pp 515- 517, quoted from , Philip Constable; “ Sitting on the School Verandah: The Ideology and Practice of ‘Untouchable’ Educational Protest in Late Nineteenth Century Western India”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 37, 4, 2000, p-383-

⁷⁹ Ibid, p- 384

⁸⁰ Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island, Vol. III, Facsimile reproduction, Pune: Government Photozinc Press, 1973,(1st edition 1909), p- 102

⁸¹ Details given in the previous Chapter.

for educational reforms. Missionary educational efforts created a process of a parallel social development which aimed at social mobility and advancement for the different untouchable communities⁸². But they did not provide the ideology of protest which came from the radical practices of “untouchable protest that provided the agency and dynamism for untouchable educational development and cultural identity re-formation in the late nineteenth century western India.”⁸³

Unlike caste Hindus, the lower caste did not keep their women in strict seclusion. Low caste women were largely employed as laborers and they worked outside the home in order to supplement the family income. That is the reason why the industrial classes conducted by the Seva Sadan were so successful. They catered to the needs of a large population of working women. The demand for traditional education, though quite small in the beginning of the century, definitely began to register a considerable advance by 1944-45. Not only in the field of primary and secondary education but even at the collegiate stage there was a substantial increase.

The late 1920s were marked by an increasing struggle by untouchables to gain access to public places under the leadership of Ambedkar. It inspired women from the lower caste to gain education in order to improve their social conditions. These women began to compare educational developments in their community with that of the Brahman community, and found their educational backwardness was a direct cause of lack of progress among them.⁸⁴ This period was also marked by the organization of independent meetings and conferences of Dalit women, which was a result of Ambedkar’s practice of organizing a women’s conference along with every general meeting that was called by his party. “Strivargat jagruti zhale tar tya aspacha samajachi far mooti pragati ghadvun aanu shaktat.”⁸⁵(If the Dalit women are enlightened then they can bring about greater progress in the untouchable community). This had a very positive effect on their educational development.

⁸² Philip Constable, “ Sitting on the School Verandah: The Ideology and Practice of ‘Untouchable’ Educational Protest in Late Nineteenth Century Western India”, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 37, 4, 2000, p-420

⁸³ Ibid, p-422.

⁸⁴ *Sharmila, Rege; Writing Caste/ Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women’s Testimonial*, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 2006 pp-42.

⁸⁵ Urmila, Pawar and Menakshi, Moon; *Amhihi Itihas Gadavla (Ambedkari Chadwadit Striyancha Sahabhag)*, Sugava Prakashan, Pune, 2000, pp- 68.

Year	Hindus Advanced	Hindus Intermediate	Hindus Backward.	Total Hindus
1922-27	193	13	—	206
1927-32	321	15	1	337
1932-37	581	29	4	614
1940-41	1,458	145	10	1,613
144-45	2,433	167	22	2,622

Table IV; Number of Scholars receiving University Education.⁸⁶

The number of lower caste girls receiving higher education in the initial period is quiet low. There were a number of reasons for this. Due to their economic disability the low caste women and girls mainly joint the industrial schools, like that provide by the Seva Sadan, in order to supplement the income of their families. The private colleges established by the Brahmans refused admission to these girls. This was also true for the S.N.D.T Women's University, which refused admission to even girls from the Maratha community for many years. The reason for this given by Karve was that if the "Shudra girls are given permission to study in the University it will adversely effect the character of the Brahman girls"⁸⁷. It was only in the 1930s that some development in the field of higher education of the Dalit women took place.

In comparison to higher education, progress in the field of primary and secondary education of low caste girls was much quicker. In 1938 -39, the percentage of increase of the number of Intermediate class girls was 24.3 percent, which was higher than the progress recorded by any other community.⁸⁸ Though girls of Backward castes had not

⁸⁶ Quinquennial Reports on the Progress of Education in the Presidency of Bombay, for the years 1922- 27, 1927-32, 1932- 37 and Report on the Progress of Education in the Province of Bombay, for the years 1940-41 and 1944- 45, printed at the Govt. Central Press, Bombay.

⁸⁷ Dilip, Chauhan; Stri Shikshanacha Sangharsha,, Krantijoti Savitribai PhuleVidyarthini Manch, Ahmadnagar, 2006, pp-7- 8

⁸⁸ Report on Public Instruction in the Province of Bombay, 1938- 39, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1940, p- 119.

made any significant improvement in the field of secondary education, they did showed a considerable advance in the number of girls in the primary schools. In 1938- 39 they registered a 22.5 percent increase from previous year, while the Intermediate caste increased at the rate of 13.6 percent, against an increase of 6.0 percent in the case of Advanced caste.⁸⁹

Certain broad conclusions emerge from these trends about women's education. For one, it is clear that starting from nothing, women came to receive education in large numbers and were taking to professional careers in many cases. This development was confined to urban areas because women's education was very considerably in private hands and the activities of private organization were restricted to urban areas (like Poona, Bombay, Surat, etc). Lack of resources inhibited the Government from taking it to the rural areas. It was only after Gandhi's call for universal primary education that social activity spread to rural areas.

Second, while the women's education registered a definite increase, they were way behind the boys. Finally, Private education contributed greatly to the expansion of women's education until independence. Major initiatives in this field came from the Indians, like the Seva Sadan, Karve's institutions, etc, though their efforts were often hampered by the shortcomings of the grant in aid system, the mainstay of private initiative in education. The educational development of the low caste girls, though quite slow in the initial period registered a definite increase in the later part of the 1930s. By 1947, when India was finally free, the educational movement for women had gained momentum and girls were now increasingly opting for professional careers for themselves.

⁸⁹ Opcit, p-123

CHAPTER IV

THE ANJUMAN-I-ISLAM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION AMONG THE MUSLIM.

The establishment and consolidation of British rule in the Bombay Presidency generated reactions not only from the Hindus but from the Muslim community in the Presidency as well. As their ability to control political and social change became increasingly difficult under the changed circumstances, Indians, in general, adopted strategies to accommodate these changes, which led to an increasing competition among groups which were based on ethnicity or religion. The city of Bombay was an ethnic mosaic. Its access to sea had given it a unique character which was dominated in its economic life by the entrepreneurial communities, who were mostly immigrants from Gujarat and the Konkan. In 1887, only one-fifth of the people living in the City were original inhabitants of the Island.¹ The Parsi and Gujrati mercantile communities, which included Hindus as well as the Imami Ismaili Muslim communities, dominated the commercial scene and were followed, to a lesser extent, by the Marathas, who occupied influential positions as government bureaucrats. They were followed by the Jews as well as Goans, Negros, Europeans and, the Chinese². The nineteenth century reform movement among the Muslims in the Presidency of Bombay was not led by the western educated middle-caste intelligentsia or the government officials, as it had been in the case of the Hindu community, but it was the influential Muslim mercantile and trading communities who initiated the process of reform.

The consolidation of British rule led to an intensification of competition among the various religious communities. It has been pointed out earlier, this competition, "which under the changed circumstances of foreign rule mainly took the form of struggle

¹ Area and Population of Each Division of Each Presidency of India, according to the Latest returns, Government of India, Central Publication Branch, Calcutta, 1857, pp- x-xxi

² Census of the Island of Bombay, taken 2nd February 1864, Government Printing, Bombay, 1864, pp-x-xi. xix.

for status”³. In this process they created their own private politics, social organization, schools and, colleges. As happened among the Hindus, two different social trends also emerged among the Indian Muslims from their cultural contact with the British. The first one was a reformist trend, led by the ‘Ulama’ (jurists having complete knowledge of the Sharia, they also issue religious injunction or ‘fatwa’ on matters pertaining to religion), who sought to strengthen Islamic culture by reforming the existing cultural practices among the Indian Muslims, as a majority of them were converts from other religion who had brought the cultural practices from their old religion in to Islam. Their efforts were mainly directed towards the organization of new religious educational system to replace the old one. One of the best examples of this reformist movement was the establishment of the Dar-ul-Ulum at Deoband in the United Province in 1867. These institutions were designed to introduce reforms in the traditional curriculum, which included the promotion of basic religious education and the observance of Islamic laws (shariat), such as those relating to marriage, inheritance, religious observance (like prayers, pilgrimages) etc., in Muslim Society⁴. The second was a modernist trend which was opposite to the earlier trend and it advocated modern western education in the place of a religious one. It centered on the Aligarh movement under the supervision of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan.

The Modernists, approach to this problem as reflected in the curriculum advocated by Shaikh Abdullah, through the Aligarh Zenana Madrasa at Aligarh and in his Journal Khatun (Women), with its inclusion of English, was similar to the curriculum prescribed for modern middle-class men⁵. The emphasis on the earlier curriculum prescribed for girls had been mainly on religious instruction, a rudimentary education at home in Arabic and on the knowledge of household management. The pre-modern education mainly laid stress on the study of Quran, the girls were therefore received no education beyond memorization of few Quranic passages, others were able to get some rudimentary knowledge of Persian and Urdu from their father or brothers. Even some of the more broad minded people, like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, who realized the necessity of

³ Anil, Seal; The Emergence of Indian Nationalism: Competition and Collaboration in the Later Nineteenth Century, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1968, pp-11.

⁴ Azra, Asghar, Ali; The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women, 1920- 1947, Oxford University Press, U.K, 2000,pp-Introduction, xii- xiii.

⁵ Faisal, Fatehali, Devji; “Gender and the Politics of Space: The Movement for Women’s Reform, 1857-1900”. In Zoya, Hasan (ed.); Forging Identities: Gender, Community and the State, Kali for Women, Delhi, 1994, pp- 22- 37.

European education in the changed economic and political circumstances, and had advocated it for men, were opposed to the introduction of the same curriculum for women. In his testimony before the Indian Education Commission in 1882, he opposed the idea of establishing schools for girls on the same line as that of boys and he stated that;

“Those who hold that women should be educated and civilized prior to the men are greatly mistaken. The fact is that no satisfactory education can be provided for Muhammadan females until a large number of Mohammedan males receive a sound education. The present state of education among the Muhammadans female is, in my opinion, enough for domestic happiness, considering the present social and economic condition of life of the Muhammadans of India.”⁶ The main reason for this was his fear of conservative reaction which was even opposed to the idea of western education for men and, the restriction of the ‘Purdah’ system and early marriages among girls. The curriculum which was advocated by ‘reformists’ as important for women was, in fact, only designed to reform their traditional role as wives and mothers. But towards the end of the nineteenth century, this trend began to change, when the education of women was increasingly seen as the only way to accelerate the process of the regeneration of the Muslim community.⁷

The first important social organization among the Muslims to deal with the cause of social reform was the one organized by Badruddin Tyabji at Bombay in 1876. This organization was called the Anjuman-i-Islam. Unlike Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Tyabji’s education abroad had led him to forge relationships with leading Hindu and Parsi social reformers, such as, Telang, Justice Ranade, Pherozshah Mehta and, Dadabhai Naoroji, all of whom sought to emancipate the Indian society as a whole. The Anjuman aimed at “the amelioration of the Muhammadans community and to effect some improvement in their education, and moral and social state”⁸. While Sir Syed Ahmed Khan was a firm believer in non-institutionalized educations for girls, eh was of the opinion that the method of educating them with the means of a teacher at home was more than enough for

⁶ Report of the Education Commission, Appendix ed: Report for the North Western Frontier Provinces and Oudh with Testimony, Superintendent of Govt. Printing, India, 1882, pp-300

⁷ Azra, Asghar, Ali; The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women, 1920- 1947, Oxford University Press, U.K, 2000, pp-2- 4

⁸ Annual Report of the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay, in E.D. 1880/20, c-132, pamph, No.2, app-1, Govt. Central Printing, Bombay, 1880, p-41.

them. The promoters of the Anjuman advocated a very different line and tried to promote schools for girls. Badruddin Tyabji instituted other reforms as well. For instance, he advocated the removal of the practice of 'Purdah', and the women of Tyabji clan were among the first Muslim women in the Presidency to give it up and to participate in the public life of the city. Gradually, the Anjuman became an active forum where issues of social reforms pertaining to women were usually discussed⁹.

The three important founders of Anjuman-i-Islam were the Tyabji brothers, Badruddin and Kamruddin, and Muhammad Ali Roghay, one of the important shipping magnates of Bombay. The Tyabjis, were in the 1840's- 50's, one of the few leading Muslim commercial families who began to give their sons English education. Badruddin Tyabji was the first Indian Muslim to become a London-trained barrister in 1867. Returning to India he practiced law, supported western education combined with Islamic religious training for Muslims, and championed the cause of women's education and opposed Purdah¹⁰. He was among the handful of Muslims who supported the Indian National Congress, and presided over its third session at Madras in 1887. He was an outspoken secularist in his legal and political life.¹¹ He, along with his brother, Kamruddin, who was also the first Muslim solicitor in Bombay, was the leading force behind the Anjuman-i-Islam, and they maintained that in civic matters Muslims of all sectarian allegiance should co-operate.

Their endeavors attracted the interest and friendship of another modernist, Muhammad Ali Roghay, a member of Roghay ship-building family, who, though still in his early twenties, was a landlord of great wealth and position¹². Roghay's interest in the educational reform movement of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan led him to contact the Tyabjis and it finally led to the establishment of the Anjuman in March 1876. Like the Tyabjis, Roghay supported the cause of women's education and he used his wealth, and, social position to promote this cause. From 1876 to 1880, Kamruddin Tyabji was the President of Anjuman-i-Islam and Roghay its Vice-President, while the original secretaries were

⁹ Shahid, Lateef; Muslim Women in India: Political and Private Realities, 1890- 1980, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1990, p-28

¹⁰ Christine, Dobbin; Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City 1840-1885, Oxford University Press, London, , 1972, pp-229- 30

¹¹ Gail, Minault; Seclude Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India, New Delhi, 1998, p-184.

¹² Native Opinion, 5 May, 1878, p-281.

Ghulam Muhammad Munshi and Munshi Ghulam Muhieddin Dahlvi. The strongest support to the Anjuman came from among the reformist group in the Khoja community, particularly from Harsanbhai Visram, Jairabhai Pirbhai and Sayani.¹³ The efforts of the Anjuman were in sharp contrast to those of Sir Syed. Testifying before the Hunter Commission, Badruddin had this to say about Muslim girls' education in Bombay;

“There are very few indigenous schools for girls in the Bombay presidency. Amongst the Muhammadans however, females belonging to respectable families are usually taught at least how to read; if not how to write. There are some ‘Kari’ [Qaris, those who read Quran in the original Arabic language with linguistically correct pronunciations] or Mullahs in the chief centers of Mohammedan population who teach the Koran and perhaps a little Hindustani and Persian to the girls. Even Mohammedans of the highest order thinks it his duty to teach his daughter how to read the Koran if nothing more; and, as a general rule, women amongst the genuine Mohammedans are far more generally and far better educated than the women of other Native communities in India..... There are about 7 schools for Mohammedan girls in Bombay containing about 850 pupils. But very little more than reading the Koran is taught in these schools...”¹⁴ Criticizing the lack of effort made by the Government in promoting educating among the Muslim girls he further states:

“So far as I am aware, very little progress has been made by the Educational Department in instituting schools for girls.... At present Native girls have either to remain ignorant, or be educated at home at great expense, or to attend missionary schools, where, as a rule, Christianity is taught as a necessary part of the curriculum. There is not a single school for Mohammedan girls in Bombay where English is taught, although such a school, if established on a proper basis, would certainly be a great success and would be supported by the respectable classes of the community. This important subject is at present engaging the attention of some of the prominent members of the Anjuman-i-Islam...”¹⁵ The Anjuman popularized modern education for girls and, the Muslim women began to come out from their confinement into the public arenas to

¹³ Dobbin, Christine, Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City 1840-1885, Oxford University Press, London, , 1972, p-232.

¹⁴ Tyabjis testimony before the Hunter Commission in Bombay, Provincial Report to the Indian Education Commission, 1884, P-501 IOLR (I) 2095

¹⁵ Ibid

receive education. The objection against girl's education raised from the conservative side was similar to those expressed by their counterparts, like Tilak and others, and it mainly involved of the danger of women entering the male domain of streets. Schooling meant sending daughters outdoors, something which girls were and women were not expected to do except on social occasion. Further, it was regarded as dangerous to teach a girl how to read¹⁶ as they thought it would lead to romantic intrigues. Another reason for this kind of an attitude was that, as they were also not expected to take up jobs it was considered economically wasteful to send them to schools, so there was no need for a formal schooling for them. This attitude continued till the social reformers began to point out the relevance of education on rightful observance of religious laws. Some of the restrictions slackened a bit. But this was a very slow process and it was only gradually that the idea of girls schooling became acceptable among the Muslim.

II

The efforts of the Anjuman in the direction of girl's education in Bombay, however, were not successful as that of Sheikh Abdullah in Aligarh. The main reason for this was sectarian division among the Muslims, which were much more pronounced in Bombay than in the other part of the country. In Bombay, the Muslims were not only divided along the usual sectarian lines of Shias and Sunnis, but also into the more localized sects of the Konkani, the Khojas, the Bohras, and further on the basis of differences schools of Islamic jurisprudence (the Hanafi, the Humabali, the Maliki and the Shafi¹⁷). But despite these sectarian differences they had one thing in common. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Muslim community throughout the Presidency was noted for

¹⁶ Gail, Minault: Seclude Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India, New Delhi, 1998, pp- 22- 23.

¹⁷ Hanafi were the followers of Abu Hanifa, a Persian scholar of Sunni jurisprudence, who recognizes analogical deduction and consensus among jurists as important roots of Islamic jurisprudence. Humabali were the followers of Ahmad idn-Humbal, who rejected consensus of Muslim learned opinion as unlawful innovation and, depended heavily upon the actual wording of Hadis (the tradition), as a source of Islamic Jurisprudence. Malikis were the followers of Imam Malik. He regarded traditions, either that of the Prophet or the local custom, as having the first claim to consideration after the Koran. The Shahfii School was founded by an Arab scholar, Muhammad Al-Shafii, who insisted that, before any valid deduction could be made, the underlying motive in the Koranic verses must be taken into account.____ Imtiaz Ahmed (ed); Caste and Social Stratification Among the Muslim, 2nd edition, Manohar, New Delhi.

its unwillingness to espouse the new English education.¹⁸ The ratio of the Muslim population in the Presidency in 1881 was 2.65 percent.¹⁹ The relative proportion of different religious communities in the Presidency in 1881 was as follows; Hindus-65%, Muslims-20.5%, Parsis-6.3%, Christian-5.5%, Jains-2.2%, Jews-5%.²⁰ The Muslims were further divided among themselves in to numerous sects which can be studied from the following table.

Muslims	Percent of Total population.
Arabs	1.4
Sheikhs	11.6
Pathans	2.3
Moghals	2.3
Sheikh Bohras	7.3
Khojas	6.5
Memans	8.5
Konkani	4.3
Negro	0.4
Unspecified	54.5
Total	100.00

Table I: Proportion of the various Muslim sects.²¹

The above table shows the general proportion of the different sect of the Muslim community in 1881²². About 23.30% of the total population belonged to the local trading bodies (Moghals, Shia, Bohras, Khojas, and Memans). As the Census Superintendent had pointed out, the Arabs usually belonged to the trading class of the Presidency. The

¹⁸Dobbin, Christine, Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City 1840-1885, Oxford University Press, London, , 1972, p-229.

¹⁹ Appendix, Table-I.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Census of the Presidency of Bombay, 1881, J. Athelstane, Government Printing, Bombay, 1882, p- 148.

²² Ibid.

Konkani Muslims was comprised of two economic groups. The upper class of this section included wealthy merchants and landlords, while a large body of the second group included domestic servants and fishermen. The Sheikhs belonged to the artisanal class, such as cotton-cleaners, weavers, and dyers. But the most affluent sect among the Muslim community in the Presidency was that of the Bohras. The Bohras who had migrated to Bombay city in large numbers and were one of the socially and politically influential classes in the Presidency, originally belonged to Gujarat²³

Beside these, there were other divisions, like the Sayads, with 2.4 percent, the Pathans with 2.3 percent, and the Moghals, who constituted only 1.0 percent of the total Muslim population in the Presidency. According to the Census Report the prevalence of such titles in Bombay indicates that converts from the Hindu faith had assumed, "in default of any alternative caste-system, which they were unable to do without, the clan title of their patron, and these titles now function as alternative caste"²⁴. Among the Muslims who are distinctly recognizable as converts from Hindu caste the best known were the Shias, or as the Daudi Bohra community. They were found in all parts of the country, though principally in Gujarat and in the city of Bombay. There were two classes in this caste. The first and the smaller one, was a trading community in Surat. The other, and a widely spread section, was an agricultural population. Two other classes of cultivating Muslims, wholly confined to Gujarat, and evidently of local origin, (probably converts from Hinduism) were the Maliks and Moslesalims of Northern District. The aggregate strength of these two was not more than 3.16 percent of the whole, but they enjoyed a considerable local influence. The two important trading classes of the Khojas and Memans were concentrated chiefly in the city of Bombay, where they held high a economic position.²⁵ The Census of 1881 further noted that it was the maintenance of their former caste system in the case of cultivators, and the exclusiveness of the trading sections, that gave to their subdivision a real vitality.

²³ Ibid....pp-148-149

²⁴ Ibid, ,p-136

²⁵ Ibid

The Bohra and the Khoja communities belonged to the sect of Imami Ismaili²⁶. The Imami Ismaili Shia sub sect recognizes Ismail as its Imam. Even among these two there were major castes differences. The Dawoodi Bohra communities were the followers of Dawood-ibn-Ajab Shah, and have links with Yemenite Ismailism.²⁷The descendents of Lohans and possibly to a lesser extent, of other Hindu trading castes, the Khojas had been converted to Islam in the fifteenth century. From that time they seem to have been particularly mobile, both occupationally and geographically. Over the late eighteenth-century, the Khojas had spread out of Sindh, Cutch and Kathiawar and thence down to Bombay town and Island, as well as across Zanzibar, Muscat and other overseas centers of trade. They were not numerous, and it was claimed that there were perhaps 150 to 200 Khoja families in Bombay by the end of 1830s.²⁸By 1850 this figure rose to 730 and 1400 in 1866²⁹. These figures indicate the fluidity of the Khojas and of their movement in to Bombay.

The Khojas had a unique religious identity which was a blend of Hinduism and Islam. While, according to the Islamic law (shariat) the Muslim women had a right to one-fourth part in the parental property besides what she gets from her husband as 'Meher' (gift), the Khojas followed the Hindu law of inheritance and succession. They retained, for example, the joint family structure, where property followed the male line in matters of succession and inheritance and, women had a minimal property rights even over that of distant male relatives of the husband (like his brother or even his nephew). On the other hand the women were not kept in Purdah, and were allowed to move freely and serve in their husband's shop whenever necessary. All these were Hindu customs which had survived the Khojas adoption of Islam. The Khojas were also endogamous. All the marriages had to be first approved by the Jamat (a congregation of adult males of town or district), and the Jamat on no account ever sanctioned the marriage of a Khoja women

²⁶ Imam was a leader in Shia doctrine, the hereditary head of the community in line of succession from Muhammad through his daughter, Fatima and son-in law, Ali. The Shias believed in twelve Imams and the followers of Imam Ismail were called as the Ismaili the Imami Ismaili are divided in to two groups, Bohras and Khojas.. Yemeni Ismailis were those who lived in Yemen or the present day Oman. After the death of the twelve original Imams, the Bohra community now follows the 'Dai'. The Dai is the religious head of the Bohras and, at present they follow Dr. Sayyidina Mohd Burhanavi as their 'Dai'. _ *Census of the City and Island of Bombay*, 17 February, 1881, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, p- 46.

²⁷ *Census of the City and Island of Bombay*, Government Printing, Bombay, 17 february,1881, p-46

²⁸ *Telegraph and Courier*; Evidence of Hasoon Syed in the "Khoja and Meman's case", 24 June, 1847.

²⁹ *The Times of India*, 24 April, 1866.

to a non- Khoja man. However a man could marry outside the sect. Such marriages were, nevertheless, rare. The holy book of the Khojas, which they placed on par with the Koran, was Dasavatar, the story of the ten incarnations or avatars of Vishnu. This book accepted the first nine incarnations, but departed from orthodox Hindu theology in the final section where it maintained that the tenth avatar was Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet³⁰.

The last important community among the Muslims in Bombay in the late nineteenth century was that of the Konkani Muslim. Like the Parsis the Konkani Muslim had considerable advantage over the other inhabitants of the Island, for their community had long been associated with shipbuilding. Like them, they were also junior partners of the British in the China trade and profited enormously from opium and cotton trade and, were one of the leading Shetias of the city. Originally, the Konkani Muslims were the descendants of Arabs who had left their homeland in the eleventh centuries, came to the Konkan as seafarers and traders, and intermarried with its people. They were attracted to Bombay by the maritime nature of its European occupants, settled there and amassed wealth first as ship masters and sailors, and then as merchants and ship-owners. This was the social condition of the Muslims of the Bombay Presidency in the late nineteenth century, which created hurdles for the emergence of a unified leadership among them.

The problem faced by the early educationalists was that, divided as they were, they had no leading magnate who could lead his support to encourage English education. Although a unified religious leadership might have been provided by the Maulavis, they were opposed to the spread of western learning. The tradition of giving religious primary education to the children was very strong among the Muslims. In the medieval period a large number of 'Maktabs', institutions of elementary learning, had existed throughout the country. Elementary education was imparted in Arabic and Persian in these 'Maktabs', which were not only the cultural language of the Muslims, but also the official language of the provincial courts.

The syllabus of these schools comprised of learning the Quran by rote and also some basic knowledge in Persian literature was given to the students. The system of

³⁰ Masselos J.C; "The Khojas of Bombay; The Definition of Formal Membership Criteria during the Nineteenth Century". In Imtiaz Ahmed (ed); Caste and Social Stratification Among the Muslim, 2nd edition, Manohar, New Delhi, pp-6-7

examination in such schools was very simple, and the teacher himself conducted the examination in the class. Female education was also not neglected and young girls received education in the 'Quran' by the Maulavis in the Maktabas and Madrasa along with their brothers, and in the case of girls from among the Muslim elite, this education was imparted to them by female teachers (Ustans) at home. After the revolt of 1857, Muslim education suffered a setback all over India. The Presidency of Bombay was no exception to it, even though a full – fledged Department of Education was set up by the government in 1855 for promoting education. The support which these indigenous educational institutions enjoyed in the pre-British era now declined considerably.

The Director of Public Instruction Report for the year 1856 contains some information regarding education among Muslims. It states that, during 1854-55, the total number of Maktabas³¹ in the Presidency was 665 and more than 3538 pupils received instruction in them³². The principal instrument of instruction in these schools was religious instruction in the 'Quran' though in some schools, Persian was also taught. The general poverty of the Muslims was regarded by the Report as the main cause for the backwardness of these schools.³³ These elementary schools did not teach any of the secular subjects like, arithmetic, algebra, Euclid, trigonometry, astrology, geography of the world and geology natural philosophy and a broad outline of the world history which were taught in the vernacular medium schools set up by the Bombay Native Education Society in 1824.³⁴

There were a number of reasons as to why the Muslims did not join the English medium schools. One of the reasons which have been cited by both the Bengal civil servant William Hunter and Jawaharlal Nehru was that the aftermath of the revolt of 1857 created a deep suspicion in the mind of the entire Muslim community against their British masters. Nehru wrote in his autobiography;

³¹ MAKTABS were the primary level institute of the Mohammedan community where religious instruction, in Arabic of the Quran, was given to the young kids.

³² The Report of the Director of Public Instruction on the Progress of Education, 1855 – 56, Supt. Govt. Printing, India, Calcutta 1856, pp -124- 125

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Naik, J.P. (ed.); A Review of Education in the Bombay state, 1855.- 1955, Bombay, Macmillan, 1930, p-114.

“After 1857 the heavy hand of the British fell more upon the Moslems than on the Hindus”³⁵ and as a result the resentment which the Muslims harbored against the English, who had replaced them as the political masters of the country and, whom they blamed for the degeneration of their socio-economic position, grew stronger. Thus, their fear of the ‘evil’ effect of Western education on the morals and religion of their impressionable children was quite obvious. Hunter described the Muslims in the country as “in all a race ruined under the British rule”³⁶ The events of 1857 were, in any case, a trauma for the Muslims. It pointed out to them the necessity to adapt to changing circumstance. Some of them, like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan through the Aligarh movement, decided to propagate western education and sciences in order to bring the Indian Muslims educationally on par with the other religious communities in the country which were far ahead of them in the field of educational achievements. Simultaneously, another movement emerged which was characterized by increasing conservatism with regard to the adoption of new ideas and knowledge.

The efforts of the Anjuman-i-Islam in Bombay helped to change this. In comparison with the other Provinces like that of Punjab, United Provinces or the Presidency of Bengal, Muslims in the Bombay Presidency were less conservative with regard to the question of the education of women. But it would be wrong to assume that the early educationalists did not face any opposition. Though the position of women in the Presidency was better than what it was in the other parts of the country, the Muslim community was still more rigid in this regard than the other communities in the Presidency. Consequently Muslims were educationally far behind the other religious communities, like that of the Parsis or the Hindus.

The Anjuman-i-Islam, had already established a Madrasa for boys in 1880 that within a year had 400 students. It later became the Anjuman-i- Islam Boy’s High School of Bombay. The school aimed to teach the subjects taught in the English High Schools through the medium of Urdu. The elementary level taught only the Koran, in the middle

³⁵ Hardy, Peter ; Muslims of British India. Cambridge University Press, 1972, p-70

³⁶ Hunter, William ;The Indian Musalmans, are they bound in conscience to rebel against the Queen?, Lahore, Premier Book, 1968, p- 149

section vernacular was taught and in the highest section Anglo – Urdu was taught.³⁷ By December 1884, the school had flourished to such an extent that it had 595 pupils, of whom 156 were in Anglo – Urdu department.³⁸ The Anglo – Urdu department only taught up to the fourth standard, and boys wishing to continue their studies beyond this level were sent for admission to Elphinstone High School.³⁹

In contrast to their efforts for the education of boys the Anjuman's effort on behalf of girl's education were modest until the early twentieth century. They began with primary schools in the Muslim quarters of the city. The receipt of a trust fund increased funding for the Anjuman's girls school taking it to Secondary school level. This school moved to the enlarged and renovated quarters at Saboo Bagh in 1939 and became the Anjuman-i- Islam Girls High School. Mrs. Faiz Tyabji, one of Badruddin's daughters-in-law, was the principal patron of the Saboo Bagh School, which has since been renamed for her son, Saif Tyabji, President of the Anjuman from the 1930s until his death in 1957. Given the multiplicity of sectarian identities among the Muslims in Bombay, Anjuman Schools did not attempt to teach theology, but rather, left that to the religious institutions of the various sects.⁴⁰

Due to the sectarian difference among the Muslims, the founders of the Anjuman, Tyabji, Roghay and Sayani, were not socially very influential among the general populace as Sheikh Abdullah in Aligarh had been in his effort to promote women's education. More importantly, the anglicized way of the members of the Tyabji family – Badruddin's wife and other women of Tyabji clan had given up the Purdah.⁴¹ That was not acceptable to the majority of the Sunni Muslim middle class families. However, even then the initial efforts made by the Anjuman-i-Islam are laudable. Although not immediately effective, they helped in creating a general awareness of the need for institutionalized education of girls. This helped in increasing education among the lower and middle class Muslims families who were otherwise not in a position to provide home

³⁷ Report on the Progress of Education in India, No-3749 of 1880/81: K. M. Chatfield, to Chief Secretary Govt, E.D, Central Publication Bureau, Calcutta, 1882, 180/20, C.132.

³⁸ Times of India, 12 March, 1885.

³⁹ Native Opinion, 8 March, 1885.

⁴⁰ Minault Gail: Secluded scholars; Women's Education and Muslim Social and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial Reform education and Muslim Social reform in colonial India, New Delhi, 1998, p -187.

⁴¹ Minault Gail: Seculed Scholars; Women education and Muslim social reform in Colonial India, New Delhi, 1998, p-186.

based education to their daughters. Due to the Anjuman's efforts, the Government also started paying more attention to this need.

Despite these efforts, the progress of education among the Muslims was reported to be extremely slow even during the quinquennium 1897 - 98 to 1901 - 02. Two of the most important causes for this slow progress that were reported by the Education Commission was that "while the one object of a young Hindu is to obtain an education which will fit him for an official or professional career, the young Mohammedan must commonly pass some years in going through a course of sacred learning before he is allowed to turn his thought to secular instruction."⁴² The other important reason that was forwarded by the report was that, "the Mohammedan parents belonging to the better classes are usually poorer than the Hindu parents in a corresponding social position. He cannot afford to give his son so complete an education."⁴³ Speaking as the president of the Mohammedan Educational Conference in Delhi, 1900 Nawab Imad – ul – Mulk Syed Hasan Bilgrami said:-

"We usually take it for granted that everyone is alive to the benefit of education, that at any rate every literate person is convinced of the duty he owes to his children of giving them a sound education; but in practice the majority of literate Mohammedans are accustomed to feel satisfied that they have discharged their duty in an effective manner when they have put their children under a village pedagogue at the door ... The result is that in the majority of cases the children grow up in ignorance..."⁴⁴ More than any thing else, this statement clearly demonstrates the attitude of the community towards secular education at the beginning of the twentieth century. If this was the attitude towards male education, the slow progress in the education of girls had to be expected. According to the Census of 1901, taking the Bombay Presidency as a whole the Muslims formed 18 percent of the total population. The literacy figures of the Muslim population in general (male and female) for the corresponding period is given in the table below;

⁴² *Progress of education in India, 1897-98 to 1901-02* R. Nathan, C.I.E. Vol I, Govt. of India, Central Govt. Printing, Calcutta, 1904, chap XI, p-367 (para – 1, 112).

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid, p-367 (Para – 1, 113).

Table II: Literacy among Muslims compared to General Population in the Presidency of Bombay (Census 1901)⁴⁵

Male		Female	
Muslims	General	Muslims	General
73	116	5	9

These statistics taken from the 1901 census can be compared with the number of Muslim males and females in the Bombay Presidency, who could read and write, with the corresponding figures for general population. The comparison is unfavorable to the Muslim community. Only 73 per mille of Muslim male were returned as literate against 116 per mille on the general population. Again, only 5 female per mille were returned as literate. These figures are also swollen as the students from Maktabs are also regarded as literate, when they could hardly understand what they were studying there in the Arabic language.

A much better idea of the progress Muslim female education can be gauged from the statistic on secondary school from the same report.

Table III – Girls in secondary school in Bombay Presidency.⁴⁶

Race or Creed	Figures
Hindu	255
Christians	3,607
Buddhist	-
Parsis	958
Mohammedan	46
Other	118
Total	4, 984

⁴⁵ Progress of education in India, 1897-98 to 1901-02 R. Nathan, C.I.E. Vol I, Govt. of India, Central Govt. Printing, Calcutta, 1904, chap XI, Mohammedan Education, Table 236, Page 128, V01 II (Table), 1897-98, 1901-02.

⁴⁶ Ibid, Vol II, Page 111, Table 178.

These statistics quite clearly display the slow progress made in the field of secondary education among Muslim girls. The condition of higher education was still worse. There was no Muslim graduate girl in the entire Bombay presidency in 1904.⁴⁷

In comparison with the Muslim boys, the number of girls attending primary and secondary schools was very small; and this disparity was very greatly marked. The explanation for it has to be found in the fact that the progress of education among girls as pointed out by the Inspectress of the girl's school was retarded by "the absence of institutions with special arrangement for 'Purdah'. The difficulty of getting suitably trained teachers also seemed to defy solution, so much so that, the running of many a Girl's schools had to be left in the hands of men of matures years."⁴⁸

III

Despite the early difficulties faced by the educationalist and promoters of girl's education, the attitude of the Muslims in the Presidency changed considerably in the first half of the twentieth century. Taking advantage of the increasing receptivity towards Muslim girls' education, the Central Government introduced various measures for the promotion of girl's education through the Provincial governments. Thus, separate schools for both Muslim male and female students were set up, special primary Maktab schools were established, and Purdah arrangements were made for Muslim female students in middle and secondary schools, additional classes for Muslim women teachers were initiated and, a Muslim inspecting staff was appointed for Muslim schools.

Urdu was increasingly seen by the Muslims as a part of their religious and cultural heritage from the first half of the twentieth century. The formation of the Muslim League and the Urdu-Hindi controversy played a crucial role in hardening of such communal identities. The Muslims began to prefer receiving education through the medium of Urdu, even though they generally spoke their own language at home. For example, Gujrati was

⁴⁸ Report of the Director of Public Instruction on the Progress of Education in the Bombay Presidency during the Quinquennium 1907-08 to 1911-12, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1912, pp-67.

the mother tongue for most of Konkans, Memans and Bohra families. Similarly Marathi and Sindhi were the languages of the Muslims living in the Deccan and Sindh. Although they had different cultures and languages, Urdu was the common medium of communication. One of the factors which were held responsible for the slow progress of education among the Muslims by the educationalists during this period was the scarcity of cheap Urdu books. This point was taken up by the Anjuman-i-Islam in its Memorial to the Education Commission in 1880.⁴⁹ The Government of India conducted an inquiry into Muslims education in 1870, which showed that Muslims were generally educationally backward in all parts of the country. It then contemplated special measures to spread education in their midst. Viceroy, Lord Mayo, suggested, that encouragement be given to Arabic, Persian and Urdu in all government schools and colleges, and that patronage should also be extended to the field of private education and to the promotion of Urdu literature.⁵⁰

The Anjuman saw Urdu as a means of fostering unity among the Muslims of various sects in the Presidency. It, therefore, continuously stressed the importance of Urdu as the language of the Indian Muslims and not Gujarati or Marathi of the Bombay Presidency. It also appointed a Committee under R.M. Sayani and a Konkani Muslim, Shaikh Muhammad Kurtay, to investigate the existing position of Muslim education in the city. Their Report stressed two points, viz., that the main problem lies with the Urdu speaking Muslim population which lived mainly in the cities of the Presidency and that they had deliberately kept themselves aloof from the government education system. However, they blamed the Government for this stagnation. Secondly, it was declared that the revenue derived from Muslims should be spent on Muslim education in proportion to their numbers.⁵¹ The appointment of the Education Commission in 1882 brought into open all the grievances which the Anjuman had previously canvassed, supported by a depressing collection of figures and statistics. Badruddin Tyabji stated in his evidence

⁴⁹ Memorial From the Anjuman -i-Islam regarding Education of Mohammedans in Bombay in E.d., 1880, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1880, /20, C. 132, Parag-19.

⁵⁰ Director of Public Instruction Report on the Progress of Education in India, 1881 – 82, Supt. Govt. Printing, Calcutta, 1883, General Form No -2.

⁵¹ Annual Report of the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay no. I in Ed., 1880/20, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1880, C132, pamph. No. 1, app. 2, pp-56-9

that of the 15,247 students matriculated in the Presidency from 1859 to 1881, only 48 were Muslims.⁵²

Table IV: Percentage of Girls of school 1885 – 86. (All -India figures)

Race or Creed	In Public School %	In Private School %	Total %
Hindus	.96	.1	.97
Mohammedans	.54	.32	.86
Parsis	55.4	15.1	70.5
Sikhs	1.88	.16	2.04
Burmese	10.6	--	10.6
Native Christians	35.3	--	35.3
European And Eurasians	65.0	-	65.0

The figures given in the table for each of the chief communities of India gives a rough estimate of the proportion which the girls at school bear to the girls of school going age.⁵³

It is clear from the above figures that the Parsis had left all the other communities far behind in their zeal for educating their girls (70.5%). They were closely followed by the Europeans and Eurasians (65 %). The general body of Muslim and Hindu populations had less than 1 % of their girls at school. The percentage of Muslim girls would be still less if only recognized schools were considered; but the proportion is inflated by the large numbers of Muslim girls who read the Koran in the Maktabs, where nothing more was taught than to read it by rote. They could hardly be considered literate as they could not understand what they were studying in such schools.

At the end of 1884, it was calculated that though Muslims formed 18 percent of the population of the Presidency they were only 1.83 percent of all students in Government Arts colleges, and 3.87 percent of all high school students were Muslims.⁵⁴

⁵² The Memorial of Anjuman-i- Islam of Bombay in Education Commission Report.1882, Supt. Govt Printing, India, Clcutta, 1883, ii. 507, Ans.9.

⁵³ Review of Education in 1886, with special reference to the Report of the Education Commission, Sir Alfred Croft, D.P.I, Bengal, Supt. Govt. Printing, Calcutta, 1886, Section VI, chap III, pp.282-83.(para-23)

⁵⁴ No. 500 of 1885/86. W.Lee-Warner, Acting D.P. I. to the Chief Sec. to Govt. E.D., 24 April. 1885/27, Supt. Govt. Printing India, Calcutta, 1886, C.745, p- 215.

Special recommendations for the education of the Muslims were made by the Education Commission and it covered the whole field of education, and went beyond it into the domain of public life and employment. "(IX.1) Indigenous Schools for Mohammedans were to be liberally encouraged to add purely secular subjects to their curriculum. (IX.2) Public Primary Schools for Mohammedans special standards should be prescribed. (IX.3) In Primary and middle schools Hindustani and Middle Hindustani schools, as the Mohammedans vernacular, should be freely recognized and, (IX. 4.5) Persian in high school. (IX.6) Higher English education for Mohammedan both in school and in colleges, being that form of education of which they stood most in need, should be liberally encouraged (IX. 7)."⁵⁵

These suggestions, apparently did not find favour with the Government of India as in its resolution, reviewing the report and recommendation of the Commission, the subject of Muslim education was left out for separate consideration.⁵⁶ The Anjuman-i-Islam submitted a memorial on 25th April 1885 to the Government of Bombay, in which the memorialist stated that though the report of the commission was extremely exhaustive, it was essential for the Government to carry out the recommendations of the Commission in a liberal and a benevolent spirit.⁵⁷ The Director of Public Instruction considered these suggestions in the light of the criticism made by the memorialist and sent a detailed report on it to the Provincial Government.⁵⁸

The measures that were recommended by the Director of Public instruction as suitable for Bombay included the establishment of an aided Muslim college in the city of Bombay, the reservation of scholarships in colleges and secondary schools for the Muslims in order to promote higher education among them, the establishment of special primary schools and even Anglo-Vernacular schools for them in centers with high Muslim population, an increase in the number of scholarships in training colleges, and

⁵⁵ Review of Education in India 1886, with special reference to the report to the Report of the Education Commission, Sir Alfred Croft, D.P.I, Bengal, Supt of Govt. Printing, India, Calcutta, 1886, chap III Sec Vii (B). p-316 – 317, para -264.

⁵⁶ Government of India Resolution, No 10/302, Home Department, Education, dated 23-10-1884.

⁵⁷ The Humble Memorial of the Anjuman-i-Islam of Bombay, 25 April, 1885 in E.D. 1885/27, C-745, pp 275 -92.

⁵⁸ Director of Public Instruction Report on the whole field of Mohammedan Education with reference to Memorialist points raised in letter No 1934 of 1885-86 of the D.P.I to the Chief secretary, Supt. Govt. Printing India, Calcutta, 1886, pp –Xivii to Iv.

some concessions to the Muslims in regard to the rules for the appointment of graduates in high revenue appointments.⁵⁹

The Government of Bombay appointed a Committee to consider special measures to promote education in Urdu schools meant for Muslim students. The Anglo – Urdu Girls High School at Poona was established as a result of the representation of Maulvi Rafiuddin Ahmed. This committee was Presided by W. H. Sharp, the Director of Public Instruction and the other members of this Committee were; Mr. F. B. P. Lory, the Educational Inspector of the Southern Division, Khan Shaheb Ibrahim Khan, Deputy Educational Inspector for the Southern Division Fazulbhoy Currimbhoy Ebrahim, Mr. Fazulbhoy M. Chinoy, and Mr. Ibrahim Muhammad Sayani, retired Head Master of the Surat High School.⁶⁰ This committee recommended the immediate opening of a Central Urdu Girl’s High School, teaching a primary course through the medium of Urdu. It also suggested the setting up of a training school at Ahmadabad for Urdu teachers, Mr. I. Farroqui, the Assistant Headmaster of the Thana High School was appointed as the instructor of this training school. The Committee had also suggested that the Muslim students be allowed to take their Vernacular Final Examinations in Urdu and recommended that a new and revised syllabus be introduced in the schools for boys as well as girls.⁶¹

The recommendations of the committee were received favorably by the Government and the Department of Education opened the Central Urdu Girls’ High School at Poona, in a rented building. The Director of Public Instruction, while performing the opening ceremony of the school, expressed the hope that in due course of time it would commend itself to the Muslim public and would be a live center of educational activities pertaining to the education of Muslim girls in the Deccan.

The object with which this school was established was to educate the girls up to the Urdu Final Examination, so as to enable them to be able to serve as school mistresses in their town or village schools. The school was placed under the direct control of the

⁵⁹ Review of Education in India in 1886 with special reference to the Report of the Education Commission, Sir Alfred Croft, D. P.I, Bengal, Supt. Printing, Calcutta, 1886, cheap III, sec VII (b), p-266 (para 319).

⁶⁰ The Problem of Urdu Teaching in the Bombay Presidency, Govt. of Bombay, Govt. Printing, Bombay, Feb 1914. p-9.

⁶¹ Report on the Problems of Urdu Training in the Bombay Presidency, Government of Bombay, Department of Public Instruction, Bombay, 1914, p- 7.

Begum Halimunnisa, the Honorary Secretary of Mohammedan Ladies Educational Conference, and the Inspectress of Urdu Girl's School, Central Division, a post which was created in 1913.⁶² The school had 20 students in 1913 and in 1917 their number had increased to 101. A hostel was also provided in which 9 student resided in 1917. They were a given a stipend of Rs. 9 per menses. Seven day students were also give Rs. 4 per menses each.⁶³ Residential arrangements were made for the student but a hostel life was a novelty for 'Purdah' Muslim women and their families were reluctant in the beginning to send their daughters to these hostel. Begum Halimunnisa toured the whole of the Division, persuading parents to send their girls as boarders to this school. Due to her efforts, all the seats in the hostel were, by 1922, filled.⁶⁴

One of the things which the Muslim Head Mistress of the school did on her own was to start teaching English in the IVth, Vth, and VIth of primary standard, in addition to conducting the Normal trainees' class. When this fact was noticed by the Inspectress of school, she was greatly pleased at the efficiency with which English was being taught and she not only condone this irregularity, but also recommended to the Department of Education to provide an English teacher on the staff for teaching English, which was done. A training school for girls was also opened in 1919 – 20 in Hubli but was closed later.⁶⁵

The growing public interest in the education of girls brought about an increase in the state provision for their education by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. Although there was a remarkable progress in the field of primary education, higher education of girls still suffered from the same prejudices that had been faced by the Hindu women. Higher education for girls was regarded as useless both practically and economically, as they were not expected to take up any profession and primary education was considered to be enough to give them the basic knowledge that was required by them to be good housewives. This was more so among the Muslims than among other

⁶² Report of the Mohammedan Education, recent development in the Bombay Presidency, Government of Bombay, Department of Education, Bombay, 1914, p-4

⁶³ Report of the Director of Public Instruction on the Progress of Education in the Bombay Presidency during the quinquennium, 1912-13 1916-17, Govt central Pres, Bombay, 1917, p-112 (Para 391).

⁶⁴ Progress of Education in the Bombay Presidency, during the quinquennium 1917-18 to 1927-22, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1929, p-115.

⁶⁵ Director of Public Instruction Report for the Presidency of Bombay, 1920-21, Bombay, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1922, p-28.

communities because they were more rigid in their social practices than the others. Even in 1924 there was only one first year Urdu Trained teacher in the whole of the Bombay division.⁶⁶

The reason for this slow progress was due the absence of institutions with arrangement for 'Purdah' for one thing, and second, due to the difficulty of finding qualified and trained female teachers. This point was also made by the Inspector of Education for Northern Division; "The greatest obstacle to the expansion of girls education is the dearth of trained female teachers and reluctance of Mohammedan parents to send their grown up girls to school. It is highly desirable that the Mohammedan may make rapid strides in the matter of female education To gain this end it is the elite and educated in each town and city that should set an example by educating their female wards."⁶⁷ There by, it tried to push the responsibility for educating girls away from itself on to the Muslim elite class.

The Government Central Urdu Girl's School was fortunately successful in attracting Muslim girls in higher standard where English was taught. The number of girls who received instruction in the Normal class increased to 29 in 1927 and all of them except 3, received stipends. Of these 29 girls, 25 were successful at the certificate examination, and with the exception of 3, they were posted as teachers. This arrangement continued till 1936, when it was felt necessary that the English section of the Normal school should function separately as a middle school with a separate headmistress for it. On this being done, the school was located on the same compound in which the Normal school met.

This school (Central Urdu Girl) faced a number of difficulties. The medium of instruction being Urdu, the girls that passed out of it were practically stranded, for they could not join other local schools for further studies, which had a different medium of instruction. The only solution was either to breakup the middle school or built it up into a High School. Fortunately, through the efforts of Mr. Cameron, Education Inspector, Central Division, the Government resolved to convert the middle school into a High

⁶⁶ Quinquennium Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, for the Year, 1922-23 to 1926-27, Bombay, printed at the Govt. Central Press, 1929, p-175.

⁶⁷ Progress of Education in India 1917 – 1922, J.A. Richey, C.I.E. eighth quinquennium Review, Vol II (statistics), Calcutta, Supt, Govt Printing, 1924, pp-184-185 (Table:98).

School in 1939. When this was done, the school was shifted to a house on the compound of His Highness, the Aga Khan's bungalow near the Poona Railway Station. However, this place being far from the Muslim localities, the number of pupil attending it began to fall, and the school as a result was shifted again to another rented building that was close to the centers of Muslim population in the city. After 1940, it acquired a reputation for efficient teaching and good results in the Matriculation Examination.

After 1927, the number of Muslim girls in primary and secondary schools and colleges was steadily increasing. But the disparity between the figures for primary schools and those for secondary school and colleges was extremely striking. The Muslims were far behind the other communities in the education of girls. The statistics compiled in 1924 in the eight quinquennium review gives a clearer picture. There were no female students either in the Arts colleges, colleges for professional training or even in the middle vernacular schools. The figures for female students in secondary English schools were also not promising, with only a very small increase during the quinquennium of 46 students from 96 to 142.⁶⁸ Thus, the overall picture of higher education of women did not look very promising as most of the girls withdrew from school after completing the primary level and there were no student even in the middle vernacular school.

⁶⁸ Appendix- Table II

IV

The end of the second decade of the nineteenth century witnessed an increasing awareness among the Indians in general about the necessity of women's education. This period also witnessed the passing of a number of historic social reform laws which helped in increasing the demand for the education of girls. Under these circumstances, the Government granted funds as well as introduced a number of new educational schemes. The Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission, under the chairmanship of Sir Philip Hartog, appreciated the keen desire for education displayed by Indian women, even in the provinces with strict Purda, like the Northwestern-Frontier Provinces, Bengal, Punjab and others.⁶⁹In the same way the Quinquennial Report of Mr. Jalalludin Kadri, the Education Inspector of Bombay, highlighted the advancement which had been taking place in the field of women's education. As he observed;

"The wide and rapid awakening in regard to female education is not found only among the advanced classes but also among the backward classes. Even Muslim girls are now coming out of their seclusion and trying for their emancipation. These are signs of a growing appreciation of female education in the country brought about by improved social and political conditions and the large scope of rights and privileges and freedom enjoyed by women in recent years."⁷⁰

Women's education received an additional boost from the recommendations of the Hartog Committee. Among other things, it recommended the appointment of "women educational officers of high standing at the educational headquarters of different provinces, increase in the number of women inspecting staff and the nomination of women's representative in local bodies and educational committees"⁷¹. The Committee noticed the disparity between the educational development of boys and girls and, in order to remove this disparity it recommended the granting of more funds for girls' education. More training institutes for women were also recommended in order to remove the

⁶⁹ Sir Philip Hartog, 'Notes and Memoranda on the Growth of Women's Education in India in 1929, in the Interim of the Statutory Commission, Central Bureau of Publication, India 1930. p- 2.

⁷⁰ Ibid.. p- 3

⁷¹ Progress of Education in India. Tenth Quinquennium Review, from 1927 to 1932, Government of India, Central Publication Bureau, Calcutta, 1934, p-3

shortage of female teachers in girl's schools which had continuously been cited in the Report on education as an important cause for the slow progress of education among girls.⁷² These reforms, along with the relaxation of the custom of Purdah among the Muslims of the Presidency towards the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, and the passing of the Child Marriage Constraint Act (Sarda Act), removed one of the greatest hindrances in the way of education and enabled Muslim women to be gradually relieved from social fetters.

The Normal school attached to the Central Urdu Girls High School was developed during 1930-31 into a full-fledged Urdu Training school for women, by the addition of one more class for the senior first year candidate and was brought into line with other training institutions for women. It had 34 students in it. The Inspectress of the Urdu Girls' High School, Central and Bombay division, was, however, of the view that the progress of this Institution was greatly impeded owing to the inadequacy of the staff both in quality and quantity.⁷³ The Rahimutallah Currimbhoy Urdu Training Institute maintained by Bombay Municipality was established in 1931-32 and was recognized by the Government. It had 38 pupils on the roll that year.

During the quinquennium 1932-37, the Urdu Training School for women, Poona, was developed into a college by the addition of one more class for the second year candidates and was brought into line with other Training Institutes for women. The sanctioned strength of this institution was increased to 75 and its lady Superintendent was raised to the status of B.E.S class II Officer.⁷⁴

⁷² Opcit.

⁷³ Quinquennium Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency for 1927-28 to 1931-32, printed at the Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1933, pp-201.

⁷⁴ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency 1932-37, printed at the Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1938, pp-205.

Table V: Literacy of the each of the four communities per thousand of their own community and per thousand of the adult of the province in the Bombay Presidency.⁷⁵

Hindus literate per mille aged 20 and over		Muslims Literate per mille aged 20 and over		Christian literate per Mille aged 20 and over		Tribal literate per mille aged 20 and over	
Of own community	Of all community	Of own community	Of all Community	Of own community	Of all Community	Of all community	Of all Community
118	90	86	18	420	6	5	.03

The left – hand column, read downward, shows the relative literacy of that community in Bombay while the right hand columns read across show the proportion per 1, 000 adults in the province who are literate in each of the four communities. Thus Muslims aged 20 and over have 86 literates per thousand of their own community and 18 per thousand of the adult of the Presidency. The comparative figures of literate adult Hindu per thousand of the adult of the province is 90, while that of their own community is 118. Thus, it can be seen that though the Muslims were still far behind the communities, a tremendous advance had been achieved by them in half a century from the publication of the Hunter Commission Report in 1882.

Table VI:-Literacy by Religion and Sex in the Bombay Presidency per mile. (1931 Census)⁷⁶

Hindu		Jain		Muslim		Christian		Tribal	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
178	26	540	108	121	16	455	286	10	-

⁷⁵ Census of India 1931, with complete survey of Tribal life and system, J.H. Hutton, Government of India, Central Bureau of Publication, Calcutta, Vol II, chap IX- literacy; p-330 (Para 140).

⁷⁶ Ibid, p-340.

The above table further asserts the fact that though the pace of progress of education was slow, women's education among the Muslims showed a definite increase. One of the greatest obstacles to the rapid growth of education among the Muslim women was according to the Inspectress of Urdu Girls high school, the unwillingness of Muslim ladies to teach after training.⁷⁷ This trend changed, however, in the period 1932- 37, when the overall conditions became more favorable. By 1932 the total number of female students in British India stood at 24, 64,684⁷⁸. The number of Muslim female student in the Bombay Presidency was 2.9 percent of the total Muslim female population in 1932. This figure constituted 19.8 percent of the total number of female student in the Presidency.⁷⁹

The pace of progress made in the field of higher education by the Muslim girls was quiet slow when compared to with their achievements at the primary level. There were only 2 female pupils enrolled for a Professional course and only 82 girls in all the Special Schools⁸⁰. The situation remained the same even in 1934-35 and the Public Instruction Report stated that there were only 57 girls attending the Anglo-Urdu Middle School for Mohammedan girls at Poona, which was maintained by the Department of Education. The reason for this slow progress, according to the Report, was "an inadequately qualified and changing staff".⁸¹ This was the only Government School of its kind in the entire Presidency. It had five standards and it gave secular instruction in Urdu. However, the number of pupil in the higher standard was still low. In this connection, the Educational Inspector, Central Division, reported;

"Unless there are some avenues through the medium of Urdu to the University, it will be impossible to find qualified and suitable women graduates teachers for the Urdu Training School for women. Thus, the question of a High School for Urdu medium educated girls, does not merely affect Secondary Education and the few girls at present

⁷⁷ Report on Public Instruction in Bombay Presidency, during the quinquennium 1932-37, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1937, p-205.

⁷⁸ Report on the Progress of Education in India. Eleventh Quinquennial Review, 1932- 37, Government of India Press, Simla, 1938, p- 241.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Appendix- Table III.

⁸¹ Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency, 1934-35, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1936, p-97 (chap-XII).

who desire to pass the matriculation Examination, whose need for efficient and trained women teachers is urgent".⁸²

Thus, it can be seen that the problem was not only due to paucity of girls pupils to be trained but also due to the fact that as they received instruction through Urdu medium in the Middle school, they could not get into any other secondary school where Marathi was the language of instruction and which could prepare them for University education. There was a big difference in the number of Muslim girls receiving primary schooling and those receiving higher education. This lack of progress becomes quite stark if we study it along with the progress made by other communities like the Parsis, the Anglo-Indian or the Hindu community in the same period.⁸³ There were only 2 girls in Arts College in the entire Presidency between the periods 1933 to 1935, and there were no Mohammedan girls in any of the Professional colleges.⁸⁴

The period from 1937 to 1947, witnessed a number of political and social changes. The Government of India Act of 1935 marked a step forward in the country's march towards freedom, while the demand of the Muslim League for a separate state of Pakistan intensified, leading ultimately to partition. Simultaneously, in this period a number of Acts were passed which introduced reforms in the existing Muslim personal law which considerably reformed the position of women in the Muslim society. These included the Muslim Shariat Application Bill of 1937, which recognizes the legal share of the women in property and, the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act of 1939, which gave recognition to their right to get divorce. All these changes gave an additional impetus to the progress of education among women. Since educated women now had the right to vote, their education was now considered important for consolidating the demand for Pakistan.⁸⁵

The Government had also initiated various programmes to encourage this trend. Among other things, the Government in 1939, maintained a separate Urdu Training School in Poona, which was also a Purdah institution and which provided a two year course leading to the First Year's Certificate Examination. These measures led to an

⁸² Ibid...p-98

⁸³ Appendix- Table IV, V and, VI.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Asra, Asghar, Ali; The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women, 1920- 1947, Oxford University Press, U.K, 2000, pp-80- 83.

increase in the number of Muslim girls attending the Anglo- Urdu School. In 1940 the number of Muslim girls under instruction showed a large increase of 10.5 percent. There was an overall increase in the number of girls under instruction of all the communities.

Religion	Total number under Instruction	Percentage to Total.	Percentage to female Population of the country.
Europeans and Anglo-Indian	3,006	0.8	23.7
Indian Christian	17,376	4.5	14.2
Hindus (Advanced)	119,980	31.1	19.6
Hindu (Intermediate)	136,238	35.2	2.7
Hindu (Backward)	29,210	7.6	1.6
Muslim	57,234	14.8	7.9
Parsis	8,302	2.1	20.1
Others	15,042	3.9	9.3
TOTAL	386,388	100.0	4.5

Table VII: Number of girls of various communities under instruction.⁸⁶

The most spectacular advance, as shown by the above table, has been made by the girls belonging to the Intermediate Backward classes of the Hindu Communities, the percentage of increase in their case being 14.2 percent and 22.8 percent respectively. The Muslim girls, as stated above, registered an increase of 10.5 percent. The total number of girls under instruction in Primary institution increased from 45,950 in 1937-38 to 50,394 in 1938-39.⁸⁷ In 1944- 45, there were 2,503 Muslim female students in the secondary stage, out of them 113 students were receiving education in different colleges at Bombay, Poona, Ahmadabad, and Baroda which were affiliated with the S.N.D.T University for women.⁸⁸ The Government Anglo-Urdu Girl's School, Poona, was the only institution in the entire Province which provided English education to Muslim girls through the medium of Urdu. In order to foster secondary education among Muslim girls, funds were allocated to this school and classes for Standard VI and VII were started from June

⁸⁶ Report on Public Instruction in the Province of Bombay, 1938-39, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1940, pp- 116,117.

⁸⁷ Ibid...p-123

⁸⁸ Annual Report of Public Instruction in the Presidency of Bombay for the year 1944- 45, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1946, p- 39

1938.⁸⁹ The curriculum for Secondary School for girls was the same as in the boy's Secondary School and it prepared the girls for Matriculation Examination. Music and needle-works was also taught in all these schools.⁹⁰

The number of girls receiving education in Primary, Secondary, and Special School and Colleges, however, was on increase as could be seen from the fact that between 1937 and 1945 their numbers rose from 44411 to 68484 in Primary Schools, from 711 to 2503 in High School, from 113 to 1660 in Special School and from 28 to 113 in Colleges.⁹¹ The Anglo- Urdu girl's high school at Poona had already acquired a name for itself by 1940s and it was attracting girls from all over the Province.

Finally, it can be stated that the spread of modern western education among Muslim women was gradual. Undeniably, the degree of change in the life of these women was not as considerable as that among their counterpart in the Hindu community, yet keeping in mind the initial disabilities with which they started off, this progress was laudable.

⁸⁹ Report on Public Instruction, 1938- 39, opcit, p-120

⁹⁰ Ibid... pp--121

⁹¹ Report of the Director of Public Instruction of the Bombay Presidency, during the Quinquennium, 1937- to 1945, Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1946.

CONCLUSION

The development in the field of women's education had come a long way from 1824, when the first school in western India for the Indian girls was established by the missionaries of the American Marathi Mission in the city of Bombay,¹ till 1947 when the women themselves played a leading role in advocating the cause of education. The Christian missionaries had played a pioneering role and, the American mission had also established two girls school at Ahamadnagar in 1831. By 1850, there were thirty four Day and Boarding Schools run by the missionaries in the Presidency.² However, the progress of education continued at a very slow pace until Indian reformers themselves decided to espouse the cause of educating the girls. In 1824 even after the establishment of a girl's school, the number of girls who attended continued to be quite low.³ The main cause for this was the oppressive orthodox religious traditions that placed sever restrictions on the freedom of women.

The debate which took place, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century in the Bombay Presidency between the conservatives and liberals, on the question of the form and structure of education for girls resulted in a tacit agreement in 1916, with the formation of the first Indian Women's University. This University, established by Karve, accepted the traditional role of women, as advocated by the orthodoxy, as the ideal for the higher education of women. But this does not in any way reduces the significance of the efforts of the reformers, as it was only due to the struggle which they had waged for the introduction of institutionalized education for girls that gradually resulted in the spread of education to a wider section of the society. Social reformers like Phule, Ranade, Agarkar, Karve and others, waged a relentless battle to improve the position of widows in the Hindu society and, the best way they could perceived of doing it was through the propagation of education among them in order to reduce their reliance on their families.

¹ Gazetteer of Bombay city and Island, Vol III, Poona, facsimile reproduction: Govt. Photozinc Press, 1973, (first edition 1909), pp- 102.

² Y.D. Phadke; Women in Maharashtra. Maharashtra Information Centre, Govt. of Maharashtra, New Delhi, 1989, pp-10

³ A Review of Education in Bombay State, 1855- 1955, Govt. of Bombay, published by Director, Govt. Printing, Publication and Stationary, Bombay, 1958, pp-406 (para-11).

The new educational system introduced by the social reformers shaped the contours of social reforms for the future and it also propelled efforts to redress the caste and gender inequalities.⁴ The Brahman monopoly of education and through it to secular benefits by providing subordinate administrative officers in the government services came to be questioned by radical non-Brahman reformers like Jotirao Phule in the nineteenth century and B.R. Ambedkar in the twentieth century. Secular reformers, like Agarkar, made a considerable dent in the arguments of the orthodoxy against women's education by their brilliant exposition of the necessity and the validity of the demand for their education. Starting from nothing, the movement for educating women made considerable progress and, by the end of nineteenth century, the city of Bombay itself had fifty five primary schools for girls (with an attendance of 4,936), fourteen high schools (with 843 students) and, 11 high schools (1,229 students were reading in it).⁵

A similar movement for reforming the position of women began in the Muslim society. The Indian Muslim utilized the changes that took place in the Indian society with the establishment of British rule, to gear up for its internal consolidation as well as to face the social and intellectual attack that they perceived were taking place on their interest.⁶ Since the Muslim community of Bombay was divided in to numerous sub-sects, the process of reforming it became all the more difficult, due to the insistence of each sect on following the dictates from their religious head. But gradually, as it had happened among the Hindus, the resistance against educating girls grew weak. The main inspirations behind the movement to educate Muslim girls were the Bohra and Khoja social reformers of the Presidency. The establishment of the Anjuman-i-Islam by the Tyabji brothers, Badruddin and Kamruddin, with the help of leading Khoja and Konkani Muslim of Bombay, gave the initial impetus to the educational movement among the Muslims.

Despite the opposition that it faced the education of girls made rapid progress in the Presidency. The education of the low caste girls also registered a considerable progress. The work of educational institutes such as the Seva Sadan, the Social Training

⁴ Meera, Kosambi; Crossing the Thresholds: Feminist Essays in Social History, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007, pp- 155

⁵ Gazetteer of Bombay city and Island. Vol III, Poona, facsimile reproduction: Govt. Photozinc Press, 1973, (first edition 1909), pp- 125.

⁶ Asra, Asghar, Ali; The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women, 1920- 1947, Oxford University Press, U.K, 2000, pp-xii.

Center started by the missionaries which provided a course of practical and theoretical training in social work and, other similar institutes and schools such as those established by Shahuji Maharaj, did exceptional work in the field of education of low caste women. Another important non-sectarian institution in Bombay during the late 1930s was the Bombay Presidency Women's Institution. All the existing Women's societies in Bombay were affiliated to it. Though, it had been initially formed to assist in war work, it gave an impetus to co-operative efforts amongst women and it continued its activity with the assistance of the women social workers even after the war.⁷ The Arya Mahila Samaj, established by Pandita Ramabai to promote women's education by providing the fees for school and colleges for women and by holding home-classes for married and widowed women, also helped in spreading education.

Thus, it can be seen that though the movement for reforming the position of women in the society and providing them with educational facilities began with the efforts of male reformers in the nineteenth century, it was chiefly with the efforts of the first generation of educated women that the movement could survive and it even broke the boundary set up by the reformers. Pandita Ramabai was responsible for the entry of women as delegates to the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Bombay in 1889.⁸ During this period even liberal social reformers like Justice Ranade were not in favour of the participation of women in politics and he did not allow his wife, Ramabai, to attend the Bombay session. Though there was no significant participation in public life by women, visitors from other part of the country were impressed by the degree of freedom enjoyed by the women in Bombay. This was chiefly due to the fact that the practice of sexual segregation was not followed in the Presidency as rigidly as it was in the other parts of the country. This was chiefly due to the influential position occupied by low caste Maratha group, among whom Purda was not as strictly enforced as it was done by the Brahman community.

The increasing awareness about the necessity of education for the social upliftment of women was also reflected in the writings of women novelist of twentieth

⁷ Miss, Engineer; "Social Work in Bombay". In Evelyn, C.Gedge and Choksi, Mithan (ed.); Women in Modern India: Fifteen Papers by Indian Women Writers, D.B Taraporewala Sons & Co, Kitab Mahal, Bombay, 1929, pp-45

⁸ Y.D. Phadke; Women in Maharashtra, Maharashtra Information Centre, Govt. of Maharashtra, New Delhi, 1989, pp-8

century. Kashibai Kanitkar, the first women Marathi novelist and the secretary of the Arya Mahila Samaj, Bombay, through her utopian novel ___ Palkincha Gonda (the Palanquin Tassel)___ stressed educational and employment opportunity as the only way for the emancipation of women.⁹ Another women fiction writer Malatai Badekar, writing under the pseudonym of 'Vibhavari Shirurkar',¹⁰ in her short stories demonstrated the reconstitution of patriarchy against women's social advances and, the exploitation of working women to supplement their father's salaries. All this demonstrates an increasing awareness among women about the position they occupied in the society and, how they could improve it by gaining education. These developments were a result of a process which had begun in nineteenth century and they reached a mature form by the mid twentieth century. While in 1854, when the Department of Education was first created in the Bombay Presidency, there were 3500 girls under instruction as against 1,06,040 boys. At the turn of the century there were 93,063 girls under instruction as against 5, 46,805 boys and, by 1936- 37, the total number of girls in all institutions was 326,571 as against 10, 09,318 boys.¹¹ It can be seen that the gap between the education of girls and boys was quite large in the nineteenth century; and that not only the education of men and women had expanded since 1855 "but the gap between the two had also considerably been very rapidly bridged."¹²

⁹Meera, Kosambi; Crossing the Thresholds: Feminist Essays in Social History, Permanent Black, New Delhi, 2007, pp-173

¹⁰ Ibid,...pp- 198

¹¹ A Review of Education in Bombay State,1855- 1955. Govt. of Bombay, published by Director, Govt. Printing, Publication and Stationary, Bombay, 1958,pp -406

¹² Ibid,... pp-407.

Appendix Chapter 3

University Education	Europeans and Anglo Indians.	Indian Christians.	Brahmans	Non-Brahmans	Muslims	Buddhists	Parsis	Other Race.	Total
Arts College	35	110	2303	1635	156	—	502		4763
English-Male									
Female									
Oriental-Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Colleges for Professional training									
Law-Male	2	21	183	242	20	—	40	3	511
Female									
Medicine-Male	26	69	127	320	17	—	116	—	675
Female									
Engineering-Male	—	4	84	75	7	—	49	1	220
Female									
Teaching									

Male	—	—	15	15	1	—	—	3	34
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Agriculture									
Male	1	5	47	26	10	2	14	3	108
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Veterinary									
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Commercial									
Male	—	5	84	102	3	—	46	1	241
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Forestry									
Male	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Female	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	75	251	2,874	2,453	215	2	818	41	8,729

Table I: Number of Pupils in the Various Colleges in the year 1917.¹

¹ Report of the Director of Public Instruction on the Progress of Education in the Presidency of Bombay during the Quinquennium 1912-13 to 1916-17, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1917, General Table III A, xvi

Colleges	1944-45	1945-46
Arts and Science Colleges	3,870	4,118
Professional Colleges		
Secondary Training	85	83
Commerce	55	57
Law	33	30
Medicine	252	291
Engineering	1	1
Agriculture	2	2
Technology	2	3
Total Professionals	430	467
Grand Total	4,300	4,585

Table II: Number of Scholars at the University level in 1945-46, 1944-45.²

² Report on Public Instruction in the Bombay Province for 1945-46, Printed at the Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1949, pp-43.

APPENDIX: Chapter 4

Religion	1864	1872		1881	1881	1881
	Ratio of total population	Ratio of total Population	Percentage of Variation	Ratio of total population	Percentage of Variation from 1872	Percentage of variation from 1864
Brahman	3.75	4.00	-15.84	4.58	+37.54	+15.76
Bhatia	2.67	1.47	-56.42	1.22	-0.52	-56.75
Other Hindus	60.39	53.09	-30.63	52.88	+19.52	-17.09
Hindus of depress class	3.97	4.86	-3.35	6.35	+56.70	+51.45
Total Hindus	70.78	63.42	-29.29	65.03	+23.04	-12.99
Mohammedan	18.12	21.54	-6.18	20.53	+14.33	+7.30
European	1.03	1.13	-13.81	1.35	+44.09	+24.19
Eurasian	0.23	0.36	+24.38	0.15	-55.34	-38.23
Native Christian	2.44	3.90	+26.21	3.97	+22.25	+54.29
Total Christian	3.70	5.39	+14.95	5.47	+21.90	+40.11
Jains	0.98	2.35	+88.52	2.23	+13.87	+114.66
Parses	6.03	6.84	-10.39	6.29	+10.22	-1.23
Jews	0.35	0.41	-7.07	0.43	+24.43	+15.13
Chinese	0.04	0.05	-14.80	0.02	-44.59	-52.79
Grand Total	100.00	100.00	-21.08	100.00	+19.98	-5.31

Table I: The relative proportion of population of different Religion in 1864, 1871, 1881 in the Bombay Presidency, according to 1881 Census.¹

¹ Census of the Presidency of Bombay, 1881, J. Athelstane, Government Printing, Bombay, 1882, pp- 48-56

Sex	Arts College		College For Profess-ional training		Secondary English School		Middle Vernacular School		Primary schools	
Year	1916-17	1921-22	1916-17	1921-22	1916-17	1921-22	1916-17	1921-22	1916-17	1921-22
Male	156	233	58	91	4,896	5,833	—	—	95,647	115,678
Female	1	—	—	—	96	142	—	—	23,304	32,231

Table-II, Muslim students in different class of Institutions, by period. ²

Sex	Schools for Special training		Total Scholars In recognized Institutions.		Total scholars In unrecognized Institutions.		Grand total of scholars.	
	1916-17	1921-22	1916-17	1921-22	1916-17	1921-22	1916-17	1921-22
Male	839	2,463	101,596	124,298	17,129	16,165	18,725	140,463
Female	51	382	23,452	33,927	7,495	7,075	30,947	40,954

TableII (cont); Muslim students in different classes of Institutions, by period. ³

² Progress of education in the Bombay Presidency during the quinquennium, 1916-17 to 1921-22, printed at the Govt. Central Press, Bombay, 1924.

³ *Ibid*

Professional colleges	Number of pupils
Law	—
Medicine	2
Education	—
Engineering	—
Agriculture	—
Commerce	—
Forestry	—
Vetinary science	—
TOTAL	2

Table III: Number of Mohammedan girls in Institution for Vocational and Special education⁴.

Special school	Number of pupil
Arts	—
Medicine	—
Normal and Training	—
Engineering and Survey	—
Technical and Industrial	—
Commerce	—
Agriculture	—
Reformatory	
For Defectives	1
For Adults	8
Other schools	38
Total	171
GRAND TOTAL	173

Table: III (cont...) Number of Mohammedan girls in Institution for Vocational and Special Education.⁵

⁴ *Progress of Education in India, 1927-32*, Sir George Anderson, K.T., C.S.I, Education Commissioner, Tenth Quinquennial Review, Part VIII(b), pp-181-(Table-101)

⁵ Ibid.

Community	Number of	
	1934-35	1933-34
European and Anglo-Indian	3,034	2,907
Indian Christian	4,967	4,903
Hindus(Advanced)	11,217	9,548
Hindus(Intermediate)	968	748
Hindus(Backward)	70	46
Mohammedan	729	697
Parsis	3,547	3,615
Others	929	851
TOTAL	25,461	23,315

Table IV: Distribution of Girls attending Secondary Schools by community⁶.

Community	Number of girls	
	1934-35	1933-34
European Anglo-Indian and Christian.	9,453	9,101
Hindus(Advanced)	97,921	91,186
Hindus(Intermediate)	95,438	90,874
Hindus(Backward)	20,575	19,906
Total Hindu girl Pupil	213,934	201,966
Mohammedan	55,338	54,684
Parsis	3,607	3,654
Others	10,504	9,895
GRAND TOTAL	292,836	279,300

Table V; Distribution of girl pupil in Primary Educational Institutions by Religion.⁷

⁶ IBID...pp-97

⁷ IBID...pp-102

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