For citation please use the following:

Padma Anagol, "The Navin Stri (New Women), Male Reformers and Alternative Hegemonies through Higher Education in Colonial Maharashtra" in Anagol, P., Banerjee, P., Banerjee, S., (eds.) *Mapping Women's History: Recovery, Resistance and Activism in Colonial and Post Colonial India*, (Kolkata: Stree, 2022), pp.56-89.

CHAPTER 4

The Navin Stri (New Woman), Male Reformers, and the State
Alternative Hegemonies through Higher Education in Colonial Maharashtra

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> At first, the Girls' High School was established at Poona... The High School provided at its own expense carriages to convey pupils who studied in it. Even then, there were very few high-caste girls among them: and those who attended rarely continued up to matriculation... The institution absorbed many destitute women, but mainly from castes other than Brahmin. [However], times have changed. *Now girls of average middle-class families mostly go to Huzur Paga* (my emphasis).[1]

> Indeed it happens that many intellectuals think that they *are* [*sic*] the State, a belief which, given the magnitude of the category, occasionally has important consequences and leads to unpleasant complications for the fundamental economic group which *really* [*sic*] is the State.[2]

In the first quote, the prominent feminist writer, Kashibai Kanitkar mused, not without some puzzlement about the nature of women's higher education and its changing complexion in just a short duration of setting up the famous Huzur Paga School in Poona which produced a dazzling galaxy of nationalist-feminist leaders by the time of the 1920s Non Co-operation Movement.[3] The fact that it had started with "destitute" and "low-caste" girl students but had turned into an elitist institution was noted by her keen insights of social changes in colonial Maharashtra.[4] How and why, did an elitist education for middle-class girls and women emerge is the first research question posed here. The growing aspirations

of the acculturated Indian middle classes who had benefited from colonial rule, especially in the urban areas, have been a worthy subject of many monographs.[5] Ways and means to secure more rights and a voice in the running of Indian polity were discernible in the gradual but firm encroachment of Indian elites through their bargaining powers with the British government in public and urban institutions such as the municipality in larger cities. It was in another area of civil society—education for women—an arena that interested the state the least, that Maratha intellectuals spotted a vacuum and one in which they stepped in eagerly in order to regulate and manage their womenfolk.

In the second area of investigation, I will examine how higher education for women became a hegemonic tool, not in the hands of colonial authorities but for Indian men. The rationale for seeking such control mechanisms and the tortured processes through which they secured these triumphs are outlined in the essay. It points to unusual centripetal forces and movements of assertion and resistance by Maharashtrian women as the trigger point for making education as a vehicle for male hegemony as male elites sought to bring "reformed domesticity"[6] and their version of the "new woman." The conclusions point to the highly gendered nature of the making of the Maharashtrian middle class and how it moved away from liberal to more authoritarian political positions by assuming or trying to assume state power and keeping the domestic in check.

THE LAG IN EDUCATING GIRLS: EARLY INITIATIVES (1820S–1870S)

It would not be an understatement to say that the enterprise of educating women lagged considerably behind that of men's in western India. Missionary enterprises went back as far as 1824 when several missions (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Church Missionary Society, and Scottish Missionary Society) made progress in setting up girls' schools not just in Bombay city but in smaller towns of Nasik, Ahmednagar, Thana, and Bassein.[7] The aims of missionary educational work for girls was to "improve the minds, morals and habits of future mothers" but at the same time ensure that they remained "incorporated"

in their own local customary and cultural expectations of their communities as Jana Tschurenev has noted in her work.[8]

In comparison, a quarter of a century passed before Indian elites in Bombay Presidency themselves showed an interest in the movement. A shrewd collaboration between the leading members of the Bombay intelligentsia and affluent Shetias (mercantile community) saw the opening of the first girls' schools in 1849 under the aegis of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. Caste and communal interests surfaced and the Society split in 1851 into the Gujarati Dnyan Prasarak Mandali, chiefly for Parsis, the Marathi DnyanPrasarak Sabha and the Gujarati Hindu Buddhi Vardak Sabha.[9] The issue of female education was resolved by dividing the girls' schools on a linguistic basis into Gujarati, Parsi, and Marathi schools. Parsi schools flourished partly due to the Parsi community's decision to adopt western values and lifestyle. Gujarati Hindu schools had consolidated their position by 1865 when they received support from the rich banias (moneylenders) such as Mangaldas Nathubhai and Bhagvandas Purshotamdas. It was the Marathi schools, which lagged behind due to lack of support and patronage from the Marathi-speaking Hindu communities. Ultimately, the professional middle classes of Brahmins (Chitpavan and Saraswat), along withPathare Prabhus, supported their precarious existence with a monthly contribution.[10] In Poona, the earliest school for low-caste girls was opened by Jyotirao Phule in 1841 and was run by Savitribai Phule. His foster mother, Sagunabai, ran a school in 1848 within Poona which taught low-caste girls up to the primary level.[11]

In the Bombay Presidency, the government's policy towards women's education was similar to that of Indian men and was marked by apathy until 1854. Mountstuart Elphinstone, who worked strenuously for the improvement of boys' education, was silent on the issue of education of women, and his long Minutes of over 80 paragraphs do not contain a single reference to it.[12] It was as late as 1854 (Educational Despatch), when the responsibility for women's education was formally accepted by the government. Small rewards were offered to male primary teachers who showed initiative in forming separate girls' classes in their schools. In 1870–71, there were 218 girls' schools with 9,190 pupils in the whole of the Bombay Presidency.[13] The only notable achievement

during 1870–80 was the establishment of two training colleges for women in Poona (1870) and Ahmedabad (1871). Their creation was entirely due to Mary Carpenter, a well-known Victorian philanthropist in the field of social reform. She visited India four times between 1866 and 1870, and on her suggestion, the Bombay government decided to provide training colleges for women.[14]

A yawning gap is witnessed in the state's rhetoric and its practice in the field of female education. This discrepancy is evident in the deliberations of the Indian Education Commission of 1882–83 and reflected in the elite debates on women's education within the Bombay Presidency too. The Commission studied all the problems associated with women's education and made thorough recommendations but these remained on paper alone. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the government had withdrawn from the field entirely.[15] The only section in the bulky report that showed some potential for fostering women's education was on "non-official co-operation." The government promised that wherever Indian agencies came forward to promote the cause of female education they would be given "a share in the supervision of the schools."[16] None of the Department's Girls' Schools offered secondary education before 1882 in the provincial towns of the Bombay Presidency. Even among the schools run by missionary and Indian agencies, there were only a handful of girls in Standards V and VI.[17] The statistics compiled by the Department of Public Instruction for the year 1882–83, revealed that there were no scholars above Standard IV in the district towns of Poona, Solapur, Satara, Ratnagiri,Thana, and the Marathi schools in Bombay.[18] The stimulus for provision of higher education for women originated only when the Maratha intelligentsia was galvanized into action by the activities of the self-fashioned "New Woman."

RISE AND THREAT OF THE NAVIN STRI (NEW WOMAN) IN COLONIAL MAHARASHTRA

Acculturated Indians in the1880s, were faced with a conundrum—how could they respond to the challenges of the new rulers' programs of colonial modernity and reconcile them with long-held Indian traditions and values? There were no easy solutions in sight.

It is against this backdrop that the formation of a "modern" Indian self was carved reacting to colonial conditions. The emergence of the *Navin Stri* was equally born out of meeting the trials of modernity that faced the diverse castes and communities and especially the Maharashtrian intelligentsia. However, the Navin Stri in Maharashtra needs to be contextualized in reference to the "New Woman," a major concept in the current debates of Indian gender and women's history. Partha Chatterjee's pioneering interpretation has caught the imagination of countless gender historians regarding the construction of the early twentieth-century "New Woman."[19] Although, he agrees that for a nuanced explanation of power relations, struggles by the marginalized cannot be subverted or stilled by dominant parties, yet, in the construction of the new Bengali woman, he argues that nationalist discourse simply subjected her to a "new patriarchy" which was not accompanied by "any autonomous subjectivity of women."[20] Not knowing Bengali, I am not in a position to either refute or accept Chatterjee's claims for the lack of Bengali women's subjectivities during the rising tides of nationalism.[21]

In this study, I argue that the western Indian contexts produced complex events and unfolded intricate historical processes wherein the rhetoric and doings of the Navin Stri invited the regulatory and disciplining instincts of Maharashtrian men. In contrast to Chatterjee's formulation, Tanika Sarkar has painted a more realistic picture of Bengali societal relations and the evolution of a new woman in her strikingly original interpretation of Rassundari Devi's formation of a Self. Sarkar has argued that the debate on *strishiksha* even in conservative Bengal "included far wider social problems and perspectives than the matter of education alone."[22] In debating Bengali education, traditionalists and radicals alike, interrogated or defended upper- caste patriarchal strictures. The question of "how should women behave" in order to cope with change had inaugurated new forms of handling strishiksha and in doing so, strishiksha itself had become "normalized."[23] In other words, the idea of "women's education" had come to stay in Bengal. Its form and exact content were yet undecided, but it was the "new normal" if one were to use the latest vocabulary.

In many ways, Sarkar's formulation is a more comprehensible scenario not just for Bengal but parallels the situation in late

nineteenth-century Maharashtra too. There are, however, both stark and nuanced differences between Maharashtra and other regions of India. In western India, we see the evolution of a more strident political heritage through Maratha warrior cultures and Bhakti traditions of women's participation and visibility in political and social life in medieval and early modern periods of its history. Unique trajectories of development brought with them processes that allowed for the colonial gaze to incorporate Maharashtrian women into the civilizing mission agendas.[24] A more tolerant environment which I shall call enablers-of-women was emerging during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries due to the presence of missionaries and British administrators. Missionaries of multi-denominational folds stationed in western India often cited the unveiled and physically mobile Maharashtrian women as ideal subjects for apostasy agendas. British administrators and generals alike such as Mountstuart Elphinstone, Grant Duff, Arthur Wellesley and John Malcolm often heaped praise not without some wonderment on the martial skills and freedom of the *lugadi* wearing Maratha women astride horses.[25] The question of "how should women behave" and "what women learnt" in the active decades of social reform to a large extent determined the birth of the Navin Stri in Maharashtra and it is this radical difference that separates the Maharashtrian woman of this region from other parts of India.

Chatterjee's formulation of the "Modern Woman" as educated and refined but loyal, self-sacrificing and whose identity would be subservient to the needs of the family and community as promoted by male nationalists was not quite the same as the one fashioned by women themselves in Maharashtra prior to their male reformist groups taking control of women's education. The first generation of female intelligentsia in Maharashtra started their engagement with the world by asking "why is our plight more pitiable than animals and birds?" rather than "how should we behave?" and "what should we learn?" A unified strand of questioning of whether or not women have rights (strihak) is present in the Maharashtrian women's collective, that is, women's autobiographies in Marathi, personal memoirs, letters to the editors, and poetry made available to the public through the growth of the Women's Press in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These processes are

especially evident in the activism engendered by the fiery debates over the relevance of the institution of child marriage during the Age of Consent controversy of the 1880s by women.[26]

The Navin Stri was beginning to fashion a self in the quest for an identity that was not determined solely by conjugality, home management and child rearing. It arose out of an aspiration for self-fulfilment and seeking portals for individual expression.[27] It led the Navin Stri to use strong motifs of "prison" and "cage" (*bandhivasan*) to describe their restricted lives. Independence in thought and action with full belief in women's equality with men led women like Pandita Ramabai, teaching in Cheltenham Ladies College in Britain, to request the British government that she ought to be allowed to teach British graduates preparing for a career in the Empire's Civil Service; and, for Cornelia Sorabji, a Parsi who became the first Indian woman barrister, to demand a teacher's position in a male college in Poona after her graduation from Deccan College, Poona in 1888. The fact that neither of them were granted their desires by the British government does not negate but shows how strongly felt was the idea of equal rights for men and women held by these new women. Those who did not convert to Christianity but nevertheless were firm believers in women's rights were equally strident.

The social reform movement of the nineteenth century has only been studied from a male-centric perspective but close readings of women's texts yields women's rich critiques of the existing social structures of India. Religion itself came under severe introspection. Women such as Anandibai Joshi came close to being a Brahmo rather than a Hindu; Parvatibai poured ridicule on Hinduism by tearing apart its rituals meant solely for women. Women's subordination was tracked within Hinduism—in text and practice—to show how it harmed not only women but also society. Itinerant feminists moving across the globe had led many of the Navinv Stri to compare and contrast their lives with that of American and European women and even as an international sisterhood was imagined by them, it had certainly led to a spill over of discontent once they returned home.[28]

Experience of widowhood as the most painful state of a Hindu widow's existence prompted many outpourings on revisiting Hinduism and its customs which were identified as singular weapons

of women's oppression. Stalwart feminists, in times of crisis, came together as a women's collective with singularity of purpose on the core question of *striyanchi sthithi* (position of women) and were determined to facilitate dialogue between different women's groups and organizations which professed different ideologies and aims.[29] These distinct women's organizations did, however, unify intermittently under by the umbrella organizations of the Poona Native Women's Association and the Arya Mahila Samaj when major scandals broke out in the media such as the furore over infanticide debates that laid blame solely on women, characterizing them as criminals.

A 24-year-old Brahmin widow, Vijayalakshmi was sentenced to death in 1881 for the act of murdering her new-born infant. The uproar in the media of the times showed interesting commonalities between official discourses and male reformist ones which were laced with notions of Indian women's sexual depravity and lack of ethical values. Both Tarabai Shinde and Pandita Ramabai sprang into action when they saw how the role of men was hidden in the cacophony of voices which tried to implicate women alone for the crime of infanticide. In the petition protesting against the harsh judgment meted out to Vijayalakshmi, from the Arya Mahila Samaj, to the Bombay governor, Pandita Ramabai, its President, astutely pointed out that it "takes two hands to clap" indicating Indian men's involvement in this specific crime.[30] Tarabai Shinde, instead picked up her pen to attend to the media's lopsided representations of women. In the "Preface" of her radical treatise, she outlined her fury at the injustice meted out to women, which had compelled her to exonerate Vijayalakshmi's position and rescue women from the scandalous acts of men by pointing out "who is really wicked?" as the title of her work reveals.[31]

The Marathi language saw a renaissance through women's writings wherein new phrases and terms were invented regularly, pointing to a rich and vibrant feminist vocabulary.[32] The often used and known term for caste, "jati," was appended to "stri," making it a powerful term to denote the "plight of the *stri-jati*." Women's collectives and coming together were regularly termed as *stribhagini* and *strivarg* (sisterhood) and women's bondage referred to as *stribandhivasan*. Parallel processes of discontent amongst ordinary women have been studied in court cases where Maratha wives in

thousands came forward to claim maintenance from husbands who had neglected them for long. Such strong movements of women's assertion were recounted by eminent judges such as M. G. Ranade soon after Rakhmabai's case hit like a meteor on the unsuspecting but already fearful Maharashtrian patriarchal societies through the tabloids and the national press of India.[33] The plight of child wives and the misogyny in institutionalized child marriage along with Rakhmabai's bold request to the British government to legislate for divorce and declare child marriages as null and void was the last straw. Even radical reformers thought she had gone too far as no one had yet suggested divorce and alimony as negotiating weapons in a war of rights for women. When their menfolk abandoned them, Rakhmabai and a close group of fellow feminists sought the wider sisterhood of the West for funding, comfort and lobbying activities. What Maharashtra was experiencing in the late 1880s was a veritable war of the sexes spilling over from dissatisfied homes to the Press and into Courts and in the process, it had sliced Hindu society, leaving open a chasm where the government could step in and utilize the situation as a bargaining counter.

By the 1880s, the Navin Stri denoted in the profiles of Cornelia Sorabji, Rakhmabai, Pandita Ramabai, Anandibai Joshi, and their sisterhood in Maharashtra became a loathsome spectacle for conservative groups of Hindus and a worrisome one for reformers as this self-fashioned New Woman combined components that may be best described as independent, spirited, mobile, educated, ambitious, critical of the caste system but most of all driven by an insatiable thirst for questioning women's position within different religions and societal contexts.[34] As Tarabai Shinde puts it eloquently, why would women follow *stridharma* (women's duties) when mainstream Hindu society was riddled with hypocritical men who had abandoned Dharma?[35] It is against this backdrop one may comprehend the vast counter movements of hostile pourings from Maharashtrian men who wrote semi-pornographic novels, under the more benign genre called *stri charitra* about the new woman gone astray into alleged immorality; and to curb their perceived behaviors many a prescriptive manual was written to bring them back on the straight and a narrow path as they saw it.[36] Within this tumultuous context, we may understand the coming together of reform-minded Maharashtrian men, those acculturated

middle-class Indians who were to carve out alternate hegemonies to contain the perceived subversive new woman.

RE-PURPOSING *STRISHIKSHAN* (WOMEN'S EDUCATION)

The preceding section has outlined the emergence of the Navin Stri as fashioned by women themselves and how she represented a threat to the patriarchal values of Maharashtrian communities led by dominant brahmanical cultural groups who set standards of behavior for the Marathi-speaking elite. The acculturated middle classes of Poona and Bombay also had a vision of an ideal woman, however, it was quite at variance with that of the self-fashioned new women. Many Maharashtrian reformists longed for a companionate relationship with their wives,[37] wanted their mothers and sisters to reform their dress, attitudes, and deportment;[38] they desired mothers who would be modern parents and herald a new generation of Indian citizens by developing expertise in all matters of home management. Education was seen as the pathway for the realization of this model woman. The New Woman of their fantasy, however, was to have a re-purposed educational programme which was not to include the ideas of autonomy, independence of thought over and above family and community-driven needs, nor did it emphasize on individuality or a professional education beyond that considered as seeking "seva" towards Indian society as the following sections will demonstrate.

By the 1880s public opinion in Maharashtra mirrored in the debates over female education which conceded that girls needed primary education. In towns there was no real opposition and acceptance of elementary education for girls was even reported in remote villages such as Ratnagiri, where the local inspector remarked that illiterate mothers sent their daughters to the village school although motivated for the wrong reasons, such as "keeping them out of mischief."[39] The 1870s and 1880s inaugurated new and pressing issues in the debates over women's education that included the differentiation in the curriculum of girls' schools, segregated schools for females, the gender of teachers and inspectors in girls' schools, and the admittance of female children of prostitutes in girls' schools. Throughout the social reform period, the most persistent argument for female education was

one which held that for an "enlightened race," an "enlightened mother" was essential. The stalwart intellectual M. G. Ranade puts this succinctly saying that it was the mother who had"to train the young in the most susceptible period of life to lisp the lessons which are never learnt in matured [sic] life."[40] Many urban-based middle-class men of Maharashtra found a lack in their wives, whose lifestyles and outlook had not changed in tandem with colonial pressures. A few tried educating women at home but the situation was unsatisfactory. S. P. Pandit, an influential Poona-based social reformer, articulated this need clearly in his letter on "Female Education in Bombay Presidency" to the government thus:

> The educated male population especially in the larger towns is forming new habits, acquiring new tastes, and imbibing aspirations which a refined and cultivated social life alone can gratify, such social life is rendered impossible by the almost total neglect of the work of educating the female world...[41]

The need for intellectual companionship and for a helpmate beyond domestic matters was an important reason for men to seek to educate their wives. Meredith Borthwick has noted a similar trend in Bengal in the education of the *bhadramahila* (women of the bhadralok families, or men who were English-educated middle-class);[42] Nita Kumar for United Provinces,[43] and Madhu Kishwar's analysis of the ideology of Arya Samaj and its efforts to promote female education also indicate the drive towards improving conjugal relations in Punjabi homes.[44] It was not just unmarried girls but the fate of Indian widows was also addressed by Pandita Ramabai,a prominent women's rights activist who had successfully garnered funds from American sources and opened a school meant for educating Hindu widows called Sharada Sadan and a rehabilitation center for prostitutes titled Kripa Sadan. She had converted to Christianity, raising fears in prominent nationalists such as B. G. Tilak who launched attacks on her through his own Marathi and English press. The need for a comprehensive education package broadening the argument to encompass widows was made by Parvatibai Athavale, a dynamic feminist whose own life was transformed when D. K. Karve, a

visionary reformer, married her widowed sister Bayabai. Parvatibai Athavale helped maintain single-handedly 60 widows through fund-raising activities in the Hingne Widows Home (1897), set up by her brother-in-law, D. K. Karve. Her tireless campaigning for the higher education of widows with the aim of making them self-reliant would come to fruition only as late as the mid-1910s when Karve founded the S.N.D.T. Women's University in Poona.[45]

Repurposing the end goals of women's education took priority for yet another pressing reason: modernity and the drive towards fast-tracking India on to the path of political self-determination. In the mid-nineteenth century, woman's low status was considered to be a result of a degenerate Indian society and the dogmatic Hindu religious texts. The criticisms of missionaries and state alike stung reformist groups. Male reformist discourses combated these accusations by moving away from the idea of the woman as a "victim" of social conditions and increasingly pointed a finger at Indian women as the upholders of tradition who retarded social reform and progress.[46] In a letter to the government pleading for state support to the Poona Girls' High School, S. P. Pandit argued that conservatism and "three-fourths of what is popularly understood by the term 'religion' are in the minds of mothers, mothers-in-law and grandmothers."[47] Therefore, to remove these obstacles to social reform, women had to be educated. Ranade also voiced similar thoughts when he said that Hindu society was, "being dragged down by the weight of our own members."[48] While women's ignorance and conservatism was used as a symbol to cloak the inaction or compromises by liberal Indians, it served a different role: a function that gave them considerable control over a key civil institution. One may observe how this process unfolded during the reformers' negotiations with the government over the establishment of the High School for Girls in Poona.

Reformist ideology on gender issues was intertwined with the politics of the period in a complex network. Reformers holding prominent posts in the administrative departments in Maharashtra had been excluded from any real participation in the executive powers of the Educational Department. They were not consulted on any of the major decisions affecting girls' education such as the choice of textbooks prescribed for study; segregation or co-

education; whether or not male teachers should be employed in female schools; that low-and high-caste girls were being taught in the same classes; the dress and demeanour of girl students; the hours of attendance and which calendar months were to be granted as vacations (e.g., Christmas/Diwali). Throughout the 1870s, however, following the constitutional methods of agitation benchmarked by moderate Congressmen, reformers continued to voice the need for their participation by expressing their disgruntlement via the vernacular and Anglo-vernacular press. The main issue that generated friction was the nature of education for girls. There was a strong preference for a set of books containing information as regards the duties of wives towards their husbands, fathers, and in-laws, the treatment of children and household management.49 The clamour was for values of obedience to family members (both filial and the in-laws) to be instilled into the pupils' minds for the purpose of preserving the patriarchal family. However, the government steadfastly ignored their demands, and apprehension grew over the question of the transfer of private schools of Bombay to the Education Department. The result was a cacophony of voices in the voluminous press. The *Bombay Samachar* put it succinctly:

> If that Department is not prepared to do this, it is better to leave the schools in the hands of those persons who manage them at present; because some subjects suitable to the proper education of girls are taught on a small scale in these schools; but if these schools pass into the hands of the Government, those subjects will most probably be given up under the present arrangements of the Educational Department in regard to girls' schools in general.[50]

Similarly, the press expressed disappointment when the Annual Report of the Director of Public Instruction (1881–82), omitted any mention of producing a different set of school books embodying topics which they felt were suitable for Indian girls.[51]

At the heart of the creation of an alternate hegemony by seizing higher education for women lay a deep-seated fear of how the self-fashioned Navin Stri was undermining male control in the home. Education for women, unless strictly regulated, was perceived as a release from subjection to male authority.

Conservatives poured out their fears in print, the idea that the literate woman exercised her mind independently of her father, brother and husband, hence, would give full reign to her free will. It invited trouble in the form of rebellious daughters, adulterous wives, and arrogant sisters. A case of a Maratha girl educated up to high school-level in Kolhapur who refused to live with her husband, along with the famous Rakhmabai case, were cited by local newspapers as evil consequences of higher education.[52] The Rakhmabai case opened a hornet's nest in western Indian society. Rakhmabai, the stepdaughter of Dr Sakharam Arjun, a reformer and elite member of Bombay's indigenous circles, was caught in a fraught domestic quarrel. In 1884, the Bombay law courts saw the stormy opening of a case for restitution of conjugal rights from Rakhmabai's husband, Dadaji Bhikaji who claimed that she had wilfully refused to live with him. In the first hearing Rakhmabai was released from her marital duties by the British judge who argued that no enlightened nation would resort to such barbaric demands. This decision, however, was received with grim premonitions by Maharashtrian patriarchs. Emboldened by the conservative support, Dadaji went back to the courts. In the second hearing, the harangued British judge fearful of a full-scale Indian rebellion, acquiesced to the orthodoxy, ruling that Rakhmabai had failed in her duties as a Hindu wife and ordered her to return to her husband's home. Unsurprisingly, and true to her personality, Rakhmabai openly defied the court's injunction to resume conjugal life with her husband, and instead opted to go to jail.[53] B. G. Tilak, the rising star of Indian nationalism, utilized this opportunity to point to the masses how emasculated a country could be when they were without *swaraj* (self rule). He launched an erudite attack on Pandita Ramabai and Rakhmabai warning fellow-Indians about how these women threatened "Hinduism" and raised the cry of "Hinduism in danger".[54] Her fiery participation in the social media of the times shook Maharashtrian society to the core, exposing both patriarchal fears just as much as it showcased widespread women's discontent in contemporary gender relations

Extended families in the late nineteenth-century witnessed their homes becoming a site where social reform struggles were waged between more orthodox members (in-laws) and their reform-

oriented acculturated sons. An archetype is Kashibai Kanitkar, a renowned feminist and writer, who had carved a literary space for herself with the efforts of her reformist husband, even if, despised by the senior womenfolk in her in-laws' home. In her memoir she records the hostility posed by her own uncle, Narayan Bapuji Kanitkar, who had produced a satire titled *Taruni Shikshan Nataka* (A Play about Women's Education). The parody had appealed to thousands of Maharashtrians and many theaters staged it for months and drew many laughs from eager audiences. In this play, N. B. Kanitkar talked of the modern woman as someone who wore glasses, her cheeks had sunken in her head; her progeny were short lived; and to cite him—

> When they access vulgar books like Reynolds and Boccaccio... when they develop contempt for Hindu customs and caste practices and feel like imitating the foreigners' customs... when they drink alcohol to their hearts' content along with men and develop a taste for forbidden foods, when they desire to indulge in English ballroom dancing, when they start to insult their in-laws,... when they begin to like love marriages, when they enter courts of law to break their marriage bonds because their husbands are stupid, illiterate or poor...[55]

Clearly, in N. B. Kanitkar's vision of a Maharashtrian hell, the modern woman would tear apart the fabric of Hindu family, community and society with her new-found weapon—women's education. Tilak's Kesari and Mahratta tabloids gave Kanitkar's parody much weightage and circulation pressing male elites to act swiftly if they wanted their version of a "New Woman" to materialize. Some vernacular papers such as Native Opinion opposed high school education for women on the grounds that it would make girls unfit for the drudgery which comprised most household work. Such fears were not unfounded, as reforming circles realized that domestic chores involved an unrelenting routine and monotony. Education, then, might provide an escape route for women. This fear fuelled Maharashtrian men in their conflict with the Education Department over what was being taught to girls in state-run schools. A curriculum for girls' education consisting of the natural sciences, history, and mathematics was considered to make girls "bookish" and taught them to think on their own,

leading ultimately to subversive behavior in defiance of family values.[56] Thus, the 1880s saw active mediation by Maharashtrian male elites in western India in creating opportunities whereby they could oversee and direct the movement for the higher education of women.

MOULDING THE NEW WOMAN: THE POONA HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS (HUZUR PAGA)

By the 1880s it was increasingly clear to orthodox and progressive Maharashtrian men that if they wanted to mould the minds of their womenfolk and create their desired ideal of the Navin Stri, then the crucial civil institution of girls' education had to be brought under private enterprise. The time seemed ripe for action, when Sir W. Wedderburn, a prominent judge serving in Poona, offered a substantial donation towards the expansion of female education in the Deccan.[57] M. G. Ranade and R.G. Bhandarkar, two leading reformers, called a meeting on July 19, 1884 to gauge the support of the Poona public and formed a committee comprising influential gentlemen to represent Maharashtrian public opinion. A deputation headed by Jayasingrao Apa Saheb Ghatge, chief of Kajal and regent of Kolhapur, and a committee of leading reformers worked out proposals for the establishment of a high school for girls. The school was intended to teach girls up to the matriculation standard of the University of Bombay.[58]

The proposals embodied in this deputation contained a novel experiment to be tried for the first time in the history of women's education in India. The Poona High School for Girls was to be classified as a government institution to be aided by Indian managers. For an initial period of 25 years, it was to be financed by the Education Department and managed by a School Board of Maharashtrian intelligentsia. While the Education Department paid for the salaries of staff, school appliances and 75 percent of the rent of provisional school buildings, the Committee was responsible for miscellaneous expenditure such as scholarships, prizes, carriage hire, and a quarter of the rent of the school buildings.[59] In financial terms alone, this meant the government had to bear two-thirds of the cost of maintaining the school. But the more unusual demands were the powers the School Committee

claimed for itself. Some of the important general conditions were:

(a) The school will be open to girls from *respectable families* from all castes of natives;
(b) the school staff must consist entirely of *lady teachers*;
(c) *no fees* will be levied as a start.[60]

The drive for "respectability" meant that the High School would be open to professional middle-class families of Poona even whilst it rejected, although covertly, lower castes, thus pandering to the conservatism of Puneri Brahmins. Some of the main powers claimed by the School Board were unprecedented in the history of women's education in India. They related to the following items:

(a) The Board alone should have the *power of admitting girls* to the school.
(b) The Board will *administer and control the proceeds of the private funds* and contributions including those from municipal sources.
(c) The School Board should be consulted as regards the *appointments* of all teachers.
(d) The Board will *regulate the course of studies* in the School, *fix the standards*, make rules for the general management of the School, e.g. for the hours of attendance, *holidays, vacations*, etc.
(e) The Board will *visit and examine and superintend* the School and will advise on all matters regarding it.[61]

Higher education for women from then onwards in the Bombay Presidency came to be linked with a caste-and-class bias, as the Poona High School for Girls became an exemplar with only "respectable girls" admitted into its privileged portals. A highly segregated education was inaugurated through a separate syllabus and by appointing female teachers, inspectors, and matrons. Notions of segregation were, however, part of a conscious policy carried out by leading male reformers, which they articulated in their policies and institutions, as seen through the politics in the establishment of Huzur Paga. A long drawn out battle lasting several years was fought between the School Board and the Government of Bombay before the former was granted the above powers. It was inevitable that the government reacted negatively at

first to the idea of supporting an educational experiment bearing two-thirds of the cost, and having no executive authority over it. In this aspect, the acting chief secretary wrote in a derisive tone to the director of public instruction:

> Every rupee of the building fund has been drawn from native chiefs and nothing had been subscribed by the "'Council" or ordinary Poona citizens. Much help has been obtained from Gujarat Chiefs who have no personal interest in the School. And the site which "the Council and not the Government" has "provided" is the gift of the Chief of Sangli. It must be agreeable for gentlemen to have higher education provided for their girls in this way and there is not much of "patient self-denial" in it.[62]

It was not until November 1885 that the government finally agreed to concede to the Board absolute powers over admission of girls to the School and to "co-ordinate powers" with the Department in all other respects.[63] It was one of the biggest concessions wrenched out of the colonial government by an Indian agency quite contrary to Vishwanathan's findings, who suggests that the colonial state was hegemonic in its control over the educational enterprise in India.[64] Instead, powerful indigenous elites of Maharashtra successfully mediated with the government seizing complete control over certain educational projects and exercised power over admissions, curriculum content, selection and scrutiny of teachers, levy of fees, and examinations.

The Board argued for more powers in the management of the High School on the single issue of inspiring confidence in the local population assuring the government that the "school is managed as far as possible in accordance with native ideas of what education should be given to native girls and how it should be given."[65] Regarding the appointment of teachers and the lady superintendent, they wrote that only "respectable" women teachers could make the school a popular institution. And, only the Board could assess the respectability, character, and reputation of the teachers. The level of regulating appointments is reflected in the Board's choice and suggestion of Miss Hurford as the lady superintendent of the new school. Miss Hurford had served as a zenana teacher for 15 years in India. Between 1879 and 1883, she

had taught 50 girls of elite families in Poona and knew Marathi fairly well. R.G. Bhandarkar, remarking on the Board's choice, said that as the School would:

> Necessarily be attended by a large number of girls from families to whom Miss Hurford is personally and very favourably known, she will be in a position to start the School under the best possible auspices.[66]

The debate over the curriculum issue was integral to the question of whether the girls were to receive a professional education or vocational training. The initiators of the movement for the higher education of women were clear at the outset that women were not going to receive a training geared to employment. Their rejection of the existing Poona Female Training College, where their daughters could have easily learnt what they were to learn later in the High School, was based on the contention that this particular institution

> affords no provision for the education of girls whose fathers or other guardians do not wish to see them bound to be schoolmistresses but who seek education apart from any such intentions.[67]

Maharashtrian girls were to be taught to become skilled housewives, accomplished companions and hostesses and competent mothers by the brand of education they were to receive in the High School. R. G. Bhandarkar outlined the Board's policy on this issue:

> We do not propose in this institution to make our women learned and teach them to neglect their household duties and take to books. What we intend to do is to make them more fit to discharge these duties.[68]

It was thus that needlework, fine embroidery and music lessons, childcare, the nursing of sick and elderly people, learning to read and write and appreciate Marathi literature, and the acquirement of culinary skills, found a greater emphasis in the syllabus of the School. Arithmetic, English, and Sanskrit were taught to

the higher classes but it was meant to make them companionate modern conjugal mates and provide them expertise in household management. Towards these goals, the Poona High School adopted an Anglo-vernacular medium where English was given a greater emphasis instead of being made into a "subsidiary" subject, as in the Bethune institution in Bengal.[69] The reason for choosing the English language as a medium was that the woman could then get a comparative perspective on social issues. All the liberal influences from Europe were supposed to penetrate the minds of Maharashtrian women and thus make them enthusiasts for the social reform movement in India.[70] Here it is crucial to mention that although the "English language" as a medium of communication was stressed it did not necessarily lead to adoption of "English literary studies." The curriculum was still subject to close scrutiny by male reformers and the insistence on English "language" was more a reflection of facilitating conjugal and extra-domestic relations within a largely colonial milieu where the wives of indigenous elites could relate to western-educated husbands and who were at the same time expected to mingle with memsahibs on social occasions.

Without prospects of employment or a professional training, how did the reformers intend to attract girls and obtain parental permission to an Anglo-vernacular education? A conscious policy on this all-important question was devised by male reformers. The Board instituted a system of economic incentives by generous scholarships, prizes, tuition waivers for the first three years for all students. After the completion of three years, fees were compulsory for those pupils who could afford it, and the School offered free carriage services to pick-up and drop-off students from home to School. They created a separate expenditure item called "Encouragement to Students," and private donations were utilized for it. It is significant that this item was handled entirely by the Board, whose idea it was in the first place. The government refused to participate in this venture. However, Rs 330 were to be spent per month on this item alone, which was very high when compared to Rs 750 which the government spent every month on the rent of the buildings, salaries for the lady superintendent and five assistant lady teachers.[71] In 1888, the School's expenditure on scholarships was Rs 1,992 per annum. Every month 19 to 22 girls received

scholarships and prizes.[72] This amounted to about Rs.4 per annum in cash and a further Rs.4 in prizes and other incentives to each girl-student who showed even a little acumen and industry in her work. A comparison with boys' education is a good illustration here to comprehend the management's techniques in promoting a benign girls' higher education. We already know that vocational training barely existed for male youth in 1880s India. In 1884, the Education Commission paid a monthly scholarship of Rs4 for the boy students of agriculturalists in Bombay Presidency training for fitting them to a vocational purpose.73 It was no wonder that the Governor of Bombay referred to the girl student's incentives to gain education in the Poona High School with some cynicism as a "little salary" for a "high class education."[74]

Instead of incurring a huge financial burden through a system of incentives, it might have been easier to have made the education employment-oriented. However, the anxiety and willingness to create and maintain a costly private Scholarship Fund was more appealing to the elite Board. This demonstrated the strength of the intelligentsia in western India to avoid professional training for women at all costs in contrast to the educational enterprises started by women like Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade.[75] During the years 1885–90, the School registered a fair amount of success. One of the most encouraging signs was that it was able to attract a new school-going age for girls, especially from 12 years to 16 years. According to T. B. Kirkham, the Educational Inspector, there were 27 girls out of 58 who were above 12 years of age in 1886, and then it increased to 39 in the following year.[76] Girls above 13 years were also increasing in numbers rather than declining.[77] As regards marital status, there are no statistics until 1891. However, Mr Kirkham reported a favorable change in social opinion, quoting 42 out of 56 girls as unmarried, 9 married and 5 widows in 1885.[78]

A breakdown of the various castes to which the pupils belonged reveals the striking fact that the caste of Brahmins dominated the school once the reformers took over the school management. The School Board's policy in making the school "respectable" by excluding low-caste girls, and by including notions of segregation through the creation of a separate curriculum and only female staff, seemed to have attracted girls belonging to the professional

middle classes of Poona, who were again largely recruited from Maharashtrian elite communities. The statistics compiled by the educational inspector shows that the majority of girls came from a Brahmin background on the rolls of the school in three years (1886–88).[79] Brahmins numbered 19 in 1886 out of 58, 20 out of 61 in 1887, and 14 out of 56 in 1888. There were no Muslim girls in 1886 and 1887 and only two in 1888.[80]

The School thus became an elitist institution popularly known as "Huzur Paga" catering for the educational needs of the female members of the princely families, sardars and influential reforming homes of Deccan. The trend was set in the late 1880s when Indian men seized control of the admission policy of girls and tailored the curriculum to their satisfaction. Even though Christian and Muslim girls were admitted, they belonged to influential wealthy families, while there were no girls from the lowest strata like Mahars and Mangs. Thus a caste- and class-biased institution was created by male reformers. This bias had an adverse effect on the gender and class politics of the twentieth century, when women studying in such elite institutions took control of women's organizations and addressed themselves specifically to elite women's issues alone.[81]

MAHARASHTRA FEMALE EDUCATION SOCIETY

The educationalist Mary Carpenter convinced the Bombay government that the absence of trained female teachers had slowed down women's educational enterprises and heeding her advice, the Female Training College was subsequently formed in Poona in 1870. Gopal Hari Deshmukh, an influential social reformer, suggested harnessing the energies of Hindu widows in this direction.[82] The Poona Female Training College (henceforth PFTC), thus began as an institution with welfare objectives rather than educational ones. It attracted widows to a teachers' training course with generous stipends. However, the movement of primary education for girls suffered because the college in 1884 had amongst its rolls 17 married (though deserted) women, and 14 widows, a total of 31 out of 42 trainees.[83] It was reported by the educational inspectors that this enrolment had stigmatized the institution, as whenever women took up employment as schoolmistresses of primary schools for girls, the schools suffered in attendance and

faced closure.[84] In 1884, seeing the success of the PFHS under the judicious management of the School Board, it occurred to the acting director of Public Instruction that the same Committee of Indian gentlemen might be appointed to supervise the PFTC. It was hoped that this Committee would bring in policies to improve its reputation and enhance its status enough to make it function efficiently.

Realizing the advantages of incorporating another institution for the higher education of women to mould the minds of the New Woman, the School Board promptly agreed, but attached certain conditions to it. It is in these conditions one can gauge the desire of male elites to shape the higher education for women. In the beginning the idea had grown out of the School Board being a "consultative" body, but the Board suggested that if it was given certain powers such as "*absolute control* over admission of pupils" (emphasis mine) to the College and "co-ordinate powers" over the "*appointment of teachers*" (emphasis mine) without financial liabilities, it would take over the management of the College.[85] The Education Department hesitated to part with such major decision-making powers, and the negotiations dragged on for a few years. More disturbingly, it was also the wide divergence between the government and Maharashtrian male reformers on the methods to be deployed and end goals of the higher education of girls and women.86 The government had a uniform policy of educating children of all classes and castes, irrespective of their status in Indian social hierarchies. If the Board were to be given complete control over admissions and scholarships, it was feared that the College would be filled with the daughters of the members of the Committee or their friends, on whom the scholarships would be bestowed, while the cost of maintaining lady teachers would be borne by the government.[87] In addition to this, the other non-Brahmin castes would have no representatives in the College. The Education Department resolved the dilemma by relinquishing the powers over admission but held on to the Endowment Fund. A reluctant government finally reasoned that the College which had suffered from low social esteem might secure a better status if a few important concessions were made to the Poona Brahmins and the Governor-in-Council figured that relinquishing authority over an important civil institution was perhaps a noble sacrifice.[88]

The committee of Maharashtrian reformers appointed to hold positions of authority consisted of nine members. The most influential amongst them were M.G. Ranade, R. G. Bhandarkar, N.B. Dandekar, M. Kunte, and K. L. Nulkar who were to play sterling roles in the looming Age of Consent and child marriage debates. This Committee was simultaneously moving towards forming a society in 1885. They realized the immense possibilities of enlarging the scope of the work besides ensuring the proper management of the PFHS and of other primary schools started as feeders to the Huzur Paga School. The Committee reasoned that the proposed society would provide better guarantees for the funds, buildings, and endowments, and serve the cause of women's education more attuned to the needs of the local communities. In 1885, the Committee of the School formed itself into a society called the Maharashtra Female Education Society (MFES). Under the Act XXI of 1860 for the registration of Literary, Scientific and Charitable Societies, it assumed the status of a regular institution by 1888. The objectives of the Society, as stated in its memorandum of 1888, were:

> The provision and encouragement of the higher education of native girls in Poona, the Deccan, the Konkan and the Southern Maratha Country by means of schools established, aided or controlled by the Society.[89]

Applications for admission to the MFES were subject to close scrutiny by the School Board and its members had the right of dismissing applications that they deemed dissatisfactory.[90] It retained equal powers with the government in prescribing subjects of study and could offer suggestions in all other areas of administration. The Council nominated a "Lady Visitors Board" consisting of European and Indian women whose powers were carefully limited to minor details such as supervising arrangements for boarding and lodging facilities for students from outside Poona.[91] Women reformers had enthusiastically helped the cause of higher education of women through large donations, and institutional support as revealed through the correspondence of Arya Mahila Samaj to M. G. Ranade as well as the Poona Native Ladies Association throughout the discussions over the

establishment of Huzur Paga.[92] But women were deliberately excluded from any position of authority on the School Board thus rendering them powerless in influencing policy for girls' education in male-led enterprises.

The Society had four major institutions under its management by 1890: the Huzur Paga High School for Girls; the Female Training College for School Mistresses; the Practising School for Women; and a Primary School. The takeover of these institutions by a society comprising influential Maharashtrian male leaders perceptibly improved their performance but it also gave the nature of women's education a shade and flavor that took away autonomous roles for women and replaced it with partial emancipatory possibilities tightly regulated by male ambitions for women. Statistics show that the Society's takeover was a distinct advantage to elites too such as the Poona Brahmins and other high-caste communities. In the High School there were 20 Brahmins, 9 Marathas, 8 Prabhus, altogether numbering 37 out of 71 girls on the rolls.[93] In the Training College, Brahmins and Marathas comprised 22 out of 38, a disproportionately large number, indeed.[94] In the four institutions as a whole Brahmins were 84, Prabhus 18, Marathas 40, altogether 142 out of 227.[95] Pupils belonging to the high castes were more than half the strength of the schools and colleges run by the Society. That prejudices against higher education for women were reduced in an educational enterprise run by Indians can be gauged by the increasing number of married students among Hindus coming forth for higher education. But this increase was obtained by the "respectability" tag and at the cost of admitting widows into these institutions. The statistical returns for the Maharashtra Female Education Society in the year 1890–91 showed that 15 married Brahmin girls, 13 married Maratha girls, and 11 among other caste-Hindus were continuing education in addition to their household duties.[96] However, the number of widows did not increase. The Society's report for the same year reveals that only 15 out of 227 students were widows.[97] This is a startling contrast to the schools run by Pandita Ramabai and Ramabai Ranade where widows formed a high proportion of the students.

The MFES was a significant landmark in the development of the higher education of women. It represented a political shift in

the assumption of independent powers by an Indian agency. Much more significant was the great degree of control it assumed over the movement for the higher education of women in Maharashtra. In the hands of the leading male reformers of the century, this Society set the standards for the next century in higher education for women. However, by emphasizing on the reproductive and civic roles of women, it created separate schooling for girls and retarded the growth of professional and employment-oriented training of women. It also created a category of educated women: the New Women of the twentieth century who were more responsive and pliable to taking orders and being controlled by the Gandhian-led nationalist movement in the early part of the twentieth century.

CONCLUSION

Education for girls and women was no longer considered as subversive in the 1880s in Maharashtra. Educating girls was seen as a pathway to attain the modernity that the reformists longed for but the debate was now about repurposing education to create a pliable new woman: to be moulded in the eyes of the new patriarchs, radically different from the vision of practising women reformers and feminists of the 1880s. Education became a hegemonic tool not for the colonial state, but for Indian males to control women. The colonial state had limited ambitions to intervene in civil society as this study shows in the field of women's education. The state itself was riven with contradictions and tensions and often following the Mutiny, strategies of governance were dictated by pragmatism whereby ruling with a mask on, was preferable to taking off the mask. The gradual but sure encroachment of Indian elites through their exercise of autonomy via public urban institutions such as the municipality was already in process in the 1870s within major cities. This left scope for others to pursue hegemonic strategies. Into this vacuum stepped Indian males. As demonstrated, far from being motivated by enlightened values of emancipating the woman, male intervention in the field of female education was about the management and control of change. The social status and prestige enjoyed by the elites and the consequent inspiration and confidence of the masses made the seizure possible. In Gramscian theory, new intellectuals in

any given society act as mediators and fulfil "technical, directive, and organizational functions" of the state.[98] In late nineteenth-century western India, acculturated classes representative of their own dominant social groups mediated prevailing social, political, and economic relations and relationships and acted as standard bearers for a more complex evolving colonial milieu in which they found themselves. The state treated them as harbingers of progress and agents of change representing all subordinated groups in the colonial society, however, in reality, they furthered their own patriarchal and class-led interests ostensibly without sacrificing their liberal stances.

By paying attention to the desires and aspirations of the New Woman as fashioned by women themselves and contrasting that with the male elites' vision is a methodology learnt from gender and women's history and this study has demonstrated how Her/story alongside His/story can illuminate the broader processes of political and social history too. What we need to understand is that late nineteenth-century India had inaugurated the buoyant Indian middle class, self-assured and confident, which had arrived on the historical stage sufficiently equipped to shoot the first challenges to an alien government and was in a strong position to resist the state as well as demonstrate that they were not in a mood for any compromises where the "domestic" arena was concerned. By sieving out lower-caste tutees and concentrating on high-caste enrolment, the admission policy of the managing committee in the PFHS and MFES demonstrates the elitist nature of the higher education for women in Maharashtra. Through segregation, checking the curriculum content, and scrutinizing the admission policy of the various educational schemes, they were able to ensure that women were assigned to their "proper roles" and thus began a new generation of pliant New Women.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: My respect and gratitude for Professors Geraldine Forbes and Barbara Ramusack remains boundless. They have been excellent mentors from the start of my career some three decades ago.They have been influential in taking the best from gender history without sacrificing "women" at its altar. The methodology of women's history—i.e., not losing sight of Her Story—often gives us startling peeks into broader processes of political and social history of India, a lesson I learnt from them is hopefully demonstrated in this study.

NOTES

1 Kashibai Kanitkar, *"Samrajyasatthekhali StriShiksha nachi Pragati"* (Progress of Women's Education under Imperial Rule), *Vividhadnyanvistar,* April 1912: 552–561.

2 Antonio Gramsci, in Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, eds, and trs., *Selections from Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1991): 16.

3 The casteist policies of Huzur Paga were never as starkly pro-low caste as Kashibai indicates, yet her impressions are a clear reflection of the prejudiced viewpoints of Puneri Brahmins towards female education projects.

4 The idea of a Maratha homeland within a larger collective coming together as "Maharashtra" has been tracked by scholars to the eighteenth century which gathered momentum by the nineteenth century due to the presence of a common enemy, the British rulers. In the period 1850 to 1910, commonalities of the Marathi language, historical memory of a shared martial tradition combined with "Maharashtra Dharma" (spiritual uniqueness and way of the Maratha) united diverse castes and communities of Brahmin swith the Maratha peasants (*kunbis*) and Maratha castes of soldier-warriors (the *mavales*). These trends included women belonging to these communities too, as epitomized in the major women's magazine of 1900, the *Maharashtra Mahila*. "Maharashtra" in this sense is the territory that the people lived in whilst the shared identity of Maratha-ness is denoted in the term "Maharashtrian." For excellent forays into the building of an exclusive Maratha collective see Prachi Deshpande, *Creative Pasts: Historical Memory and Identity in Western India, 1700-1960* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2007); Chris Bayly, *Origins of Nationality in South Asia: Patriotism and Ethical Government in the Making of Modern India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), especially chapters 1–4.For the processes through which Maharashtrian women constructed and negotiated with identities of region versus nation, nationality and religion see Padma Anagol, *Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

5 The term "acculturated" refers to Indian social groups who adapted to the new economic, social, and cultural colonial milieu and rose to the challenges of British rule. This definition is taken from the theoretical model offered by Kenneth Jones in his stupendous work on the Indian social reform movements. See Kenneth W. Jones, *Socio-religious Reform Movements in British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).An impressive collection of extracted pivotal works focusing on an "all-India" frame are in Sanjay Joshi ed., *The Middle Class in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010); there are also excellent regional monographs: for the Punjabi middle class, see Tim Allender, *Ruling through Education: the Politics of Schooling in the Colonial Punjab* (Australia: South Asian Studies Association; New Delhi: Sterling, 2006); for Bengal, see Tithi Bhattacharya, *The Sentinels of Culture: Class, Education, and the Colonial Intellectual in Bengal* (1848-85) (New Delhi: Oxford University Press 2005); for the elites' tussle with bilingualism see *Veena Naregal, Language Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere: Western India Under*

Colonialism (London: Anthem, 2002).

6 Swapna M. Banerjee, "Debates on Domesticity and the Position of Women in Late Colonial India," *History Compass* 8, 6 (2010): 455–473.

7 Aparna Basu, *Essays in the History of Indian Education* (New Delhi: Concept, 1982).

8 Jana Tschurenev, "Women and Education Reform in Colonial India: Transregional and Intersectional Perspectives," in Ulrike Lindner and Dorte Lerp (eds.), *New Perspectives on the History of Gender and Empire: Comparative and Global Approaches* (New Delhi: Bloomsbury Academic: 2018): 241–268.

9 Christine Dobbin, *Urban Leadership in Western India: Politics and Communities in Bombay City, 1840–85,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972): 55–60.

10 Ibid.:58.

11 M. G. Mali, *Krantijyoti Savitribai Jotirao Phule* (The Revolutionary Savitribai Jyotirao Phule) (Kolhapur: Asha Prakashan, 1980): 68, 93.

12 J. S. Richey, *Selections from Educational Records,* Part II, (Calcutta: 1922):67–89 (Maharashtra State Archives, Bombay, henceforth, MSA).

13 Ibid.: 69.

14 H. W. Schupf, "Single Women and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth Century England: The Case of Mary Carpenter," *Victorian Studies* 17, 3 (1983): 301–317.

15 For the evolution of colonial policies on female education see Tim Allender, *Learning Femininity in Colonial India, 1820-1932* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016); *S. P. Chaube, Landmarks in Modern Indian Education* (Mumbai: Himalaya, 1997).

16 *Report of the Indian Education Commission appointed by the resolution of the Government of India dated 3rd February 1882* (Calcutta: Government Printing Press, 1883), (India Office Collections and Records, British Library, London): 548.

17 There were only two students enrolled in Standard V and VI in the entire city of Bombay. Compiled from the examination results of Bombay Presidency in *Annual Report of the Director of Public Instruction of Bombay Presidency for the Year 1882-83,* 2, 3 (1883) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

18 Ibid.

19 Partha Chatterjee, "Women and the Nation: the Trouble with Their Voices," in Partha Chatterjee (ed.), *Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994): 135–157.

20 Ibid.: 137.

21 Chatterjee's intriguing model is however, largely unevidenced, based as it is on a select number of Bengali women's works and for other regions of India, it remains untested.

22 Tanika Sarkar, "*Strishiksha* or Education for Women," in Tanika Sarkar (ed.), *Words to Win: the Making of Amar Jiban: a Modern Biography* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999): 67–81.

23 Ibid.: 68

24 Padma Anagol, "Indian Christian Women and Indigenous Feminism, c.1850–c.1920," in Clare Midgley (ed.), *Gender and Imperialism* (Manchester,

Manchester University Press, 1998): 79–103.

25 Sharada Deshmukh, *Shivkalateel ani Peshwaikalateel Stri-Jeevan* (Marathi) [Women's Position in the Times of Shivaji and the Peshwas] (Pune: Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, 1983): 189–200.

26 Padma Anagol, "Rebellious Wives and Dysfunctional Marriages: Indian Women's Discourses and Participation in the Debates over Restitution of Conjugal Rights and the Child Marriage Controversy in the 1880s and 1890s," in Sumit Sarkar and Tanika Sarkar (eds), *Women and Social Reform in Modern India: a Reader*, vols 1, 2 (Bloomington: Indian University Press, 2008): 282–312.

27 The arguments in this paragraph are built upon chapters 2, 3 and 4 of Padma Anagol, Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920 (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2006).

28 Tara Puri, "For the Record: An Educational Memoir in Late Colonial India," *Cracow Indological Studies*, 20, 2 (December31, 2018): 47–70; Inderpal Grewal, *Home and Harem: Nation, Gender, Empire and the Culture of Travel* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

29 I have used the term "collective" more as an adjective rather than a noun as the latter merely indicates ownership and management. For an analysis of the different women's groups see chapters 2 and 3 in Anagol, *The Emergence of Feminism in India*, 1850-1920.

30 "Petition of Arya Mahila Association," June 11, 1883, to "Hon'ble Sir Bartle Frere Saheb Baha-door," n. p. (Institutional Collection of the Mukti Mission, Kedgaon).For details on the Vijayalakshmi case and women's protests see Anagol, "The Emergence of the Female Criminal in India: Infanticide and Survival under the Raj," *History Workshop Journal,* 53 (Spring, 2002): 73–93.

31 Tarabai Shinde, "*Stripurush Tulana Athava Striya Va Purush Yant Sahasi Kon He Spasta Karun Dakavinyakarita Ha Nibandh* (Marathi) [Women and Men, A Comparison or An Essay Showing Who Is More Wicked], in S.J. Malshe (ed.), 2nd edn (Bombay:Mumbai Marathi Grantha Sangrahalaya Publications, 1975; 1st edn 1882).

32 Padma Anagol, "Feminist Inheritances and Foremothers: the Beginnings of Feminism in Modern India," *Women's History Review* 19, 4 (2010): 523–546.

33 See statistical accounts and analyses in Anagol, Chapter 6, *Emergence of Feminism in India*.

34 The reader will find brief biographical notes on these women stalwarts in the 'Appendix' to my work Anagol, Emergence of Feminism in India, 1850-1920: 227–240.

35 Tarabai Shinde, *Stripurushtulana:* 8–9.

36 Rosalind O'Hanlon, *A Comparison between Women and Men: Tarabai Shinde and the Critique of Gender Relations in Colonial India* (Madras: Oxford University Press, 1994): 38–47.

37 Marathi autobiographies of women abound in tales of the aspiration of their reformed malefolk and subsequent attempts made by women themselves to reach these goals. For details see Anagol, Emergence of Feminism.

38 An interesting case is that of G. S. Sardesai, a foremost Maharashtrian historian

whose efforts at making his wife, Lakshmibai (Mai), a modern woman were thwarted when she stopped draping the shorter straightforward six-yard sari and reverted back to the traditional Maratha *lugadi* after her mother-in-law boycotted her son. See "Excerpts from Mai's Diaries," in D. K. Karve, *The New Brahmans: Five Maharashtrian Families* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963): 121–122.

39 *Annual Report of the Director of Public Instruction in the Bombay Presidency for the Year 1881-82,* (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1882) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

40 "Speech during the Annual Prize-Distribution Ceremony of the High School for Native Girls on 29 September 1885," 37, 2 (1886) (Loose Paper Clipping Appended to Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

41 S .P. Pandit to Lee Warner, Director of Public Instruction, Bombay Government, titled "Female Education in the Bombay Presidency" n.d., 37, 2 (1886) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

42 Meredith Borthwick, *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal, 1850-1905* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984): 60–108.

43 Nita Kumar, "Oranges for the Girls, or the Half-Known Story of the Education of Girls in Twentieth-Century Banaras," in N. Kumar (ed.), *Women as Subjects: South Asian Histories* (Kolkata: Stree, 1996): 211–232.

44 Madhu Kishwar, "Arya Samaj and Women's Education: Kanya Mahavidyalaya, Jalandhar," *Economic and Political Weekly* 21:17 (1986): WS9–WS24 (April 1986).

45 Padma Anagol, *Emergence of Feminism in India*: 234–235.

46 See chapters 1, 2, and 3 for the ways in which women contested such representations. Anagol, *Emergence of Feminism.*

47 S. P. Pandit, "Native Girls High School, Poona",dated December 9, 1885 to Lee Warner, Director of Public Instruction, Bombay Government 37, 297 (1886): 7 (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

48 Speech by M. G. Ranade at the Annual Prize Distribution Ceremony of the Poona High School for Native Girls, 37, 3, 1886 (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

49 Samsher Bahadur, January 4, 1879 (*VNR*).

50 Bombay Samachar, April 20, 1878 (*VNR*).

51 Indu Prakash, February 3, 1883 (*VNR*).

52 Dnyan Sagar, June16, 1888 (*VNR*).

53 For more details see Padma Anagol, The Emergence of Feminism,especially Chapter 6.

54 "Hindudharmavar Ghav Ghalnaren Navin Trikut" (The New Confederacy of Three in Assaulting Hinduism), *Kesari* (Marathi) (September 20, 1887): 2, Kesari Archives, Poona.

55 Narayan Bapuji Kanitkar, *Taruni Shikshan Natika athava Adhunik Taruni Shikshana va Stri Swatantrya Yanche Bhavishya Kathan* (A Play about Young Women's Education, or Prediction about the Future of Women's Education

and Women's Independence), (Marathi), rev. 2nd edn. (Pune: N.B. Kanitkar, 1890), 1st edn. 1886:14–15.

56 *Bombay Samachar*, April 20, 1878 (*VNR*).

57 Letter from T. Cooke, Acting Director of Public Instruction, Poona to Chief Secretary to Government, regarding "Donation of Rs. 10,000 by Sir W. Wedderburn in Aid of Female Education in the Deccan,"(dated October 6, 1884), 11, 399 (1884) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

58 M. G. Ranade et al., to J.B. Richey, Acting Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay (August 31,1884), 32, 181, 1884 (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid., emphasis mine.

61 Ibid., emphasis mine.

62 'Resolution of Governor-in-Council regarding provision of funds in connection with the Poona Native Girls' High School (dated December 8, 1885), 38, 47 (1885) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

63 Letter from Lee Warner, Director of Public Instruction, to the Chief Secretary to Government of Bombay (dated November 9, 1885), 37, 50 (1886) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

64 Gauri Vishwanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015).

65 Letter by M. G. Ranade, member of the School Board of the Poona Native Girls High School to J.B. Richey, Acting Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay(dated August 31, 1884)38, 47: 4–17 (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

66 Letter by R.G. Bhandarkar, member of the School Board of the Poona Native Girls High School regarding "Appointment of Miss Hurford, as Lady Superintendent of the School," to K. M. Chatfield, Director of Public Instruction, Government of Bombay(dated September 2, 1884) 38, 47, (1885): 1–4 (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

67 S. P. Pandit, quoted in "Higher Education of Women; Important Government Concessions," *Bombay Gazette*, August 11, 1884, extract of clipping from 11, 399 (1884) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

68 Quote from "The High School for Native Girls, Poona," *Times of India*, October 10, 1891, extracted from 60, 87(1891) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

69 Borthwick, *The Changing Role of Women*: 74–75.

70 Speech by R. G. Bhandarkar at the prize-distribution ceremony by the Maharashtra Female Education Society reported in the *Times of India,* October 10, 1891; extracted from 60, 87 (1891) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

71 "Annual Report of the Female High School at Poona, 1888-89," 32, 815(1889)

(Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

72 Ibid.

73 David Hall-Matthews, *Peasants, Famine and the State in Colonial Western India* (New York: MacMillan 2005): 50–53.

74 Informal Minutes of the Governor-in-Council 38, 47 (December 17, 1885) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

75 In the schools started by Ramabai Ranade (Seva Sadan) and Pandita Ramabai (Mukti Mission) in Poona, vocational training was high on the list of priorities. See chapters 2 and 3, Anagol, *Emergence of Feminism in India.*

76 The statistics are from "Report on the Prospects and Position of the Female High School, Poona," by T.B. Kirkham, Educational Inspector to the Director of Public Instruction, Bombay (dated October 17, 1888) 32, 815 (1888) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

77 Ibid. For example, enrolment of girls above the age of 16 increased from five in 1886 to 13 in 1887.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

81 Geraldine Forbes, *Women in Modern India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

82 J. E. Carpenter, *Life and Work of Mary Carpenter* (London, 1879): 282–285.

83 T. B. Kirkham, Educational Inspector to Director of Public Instruction, Poona, 11, 399 (February 2, 1884) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

84 ibid. Kirkham, Educational Inspector to T. Cooke, Acting Director of Public Instruction, Poona, 18 September 1884.

85 N. Dandekar, Joint Secretary, Maharashtra Female Education Society, to K. M. Chatfield, Director of Public Instruction, Poona, 13, 278 (September 29, 1889) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

86 See the voluminous correspondence between the Director of Public Instruction, Poona, and the Secretary to Government of Bombay, 32, 815 (1888) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

87 K. M. Chatfield, Poona, to the Secretary to Government, September 23, 1889, 13, 278(1889) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

88 Ibid. Governor-in-Council's observations.

89 'Memorandum of the Association known as the Maharashtra Female Education Society', item 2, Vol.77, Comp.no. 496, 1888 (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

90 'Memorandum of the Association known as the Maharashtra Female Education Society', items 11 and 12, Vol.77, Comp.no. 496, 1888 (Proceedings of the

Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

91 item 9, Ibid.

92 11, 399 (1884) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

93 "Report of the Maharashtra Female Education Society for the Year 1890-91," 60, 87 (1891) (Proceedings of the Education Department of the Government of Bombay, MSA).

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Postcolonial scholars on Gramsci agree that these functions are typically educative and progressive in content, but they disagree on who benefits from the intelligentsia's efforts. See Neelam Srivastava and Baidik Bhattacharya eds, *The Postcolonial Gramsci* (New York: Routledge, 2011); for a good interpretation of Gramscian thought on the intelligentsia and their functions see Marcus E. Green (ed.), *Rethinking Gramsci* (London: Routledge, 2011).