

## 19th Century Maharashtra



19th Century Maharashtra:  
A Reassessment

Edited by

Shraddha Kumbhojkar

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

19th Century Maharashtra: A Reassessment, Edited by Shraddha Kumbhojkar

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Neelesh and Prachetas are always there for me.

— Shraddha Kumbhojkar





## INTRODUCTION

### SHRADDHA KUMBHOJKAR

The post-globalisation understanding of History in India is facing serious challenges from identity politics, monopolization of History and intolerance towards alternative understandings. The papers in this collection were presented in a seminar that was organised as an attempt towards recognizing the validity and significance of reassessing Histories. Nineteenth Century in the Indian history is characterised by sweeping changes in almost all walks of life. Though the geographical process of colonisation had completed in the early decades of the century, the colonisation of the minds and bodies of the colonials went on for years to come.

Maharashtra in the nineteenth century exhibits all the characteristics of a society standing at the crossroads of civilization. Western education, press, industrialisation and material changes in production and consumption patterns resulted in fundamental changes in the thinking of the people. The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the beginning of the Postal Service in 1837, spread of the native press and rudimentary education, chiefly with missionary initiative. The second half witnessed more dramatic events that changed the destiny of the subcontinent forever. Western education was pioneered with the establishment of Universities. This was – not accidentally – immediately preceded by the revolt of 1857. As education and communication improved –Railways began their Indian journey in 1853 – ideas were exchanged faster than ever before. The society began to look at itself with a changed perspective that was strongly influenced by the interaction between the colonial present and the distant past. People devised various strategies to manifest their opposition to the colonial present – ranging from critiques of social stratification that was perceived to have invited the colonial rule, to violent revolts against the establishment instigated by local leaders. On this background, ways of thinking underwent fundamental changes in the nineteenth century Maharashtra. The present book is a collection of papers re-looking at the historical change and continuity in India in general and Maharashtra in particular.

The papers in this collection were presented at the seminar entitled “19<sup>th</sup> Century Maharashtra: A Reassessment” organised by the Department of History at the Tilak Maharashtra University, Pune in association with the Indian Council of Historical Research. They touch upon various aspects of Maharashtra in the nineteenth century and try to take a fresh look at the things that happened over a century ago. The first four papers review various aspects of the intellectual life of nineteenth century Maharashtra. These are followed by five specific case studies that relate to the Maharashtrian society.

The first paper in this collection by Shripad Bhat argues that the traditional processes of creation of knowledge in the Sanskrit language were still alive in the nineteenth century Maharashtra. He points out that while literary contributions to the Sanskrit language abounded in this period, traditional schools of Philosophy were not seriously touched.

The second paper by Raja Dixit provides the missing link as to why traditional ways of expression were not popular in the realm of philosophy. He has provided a review of the Historical writings in this period. He has also argued that a War of Positions was being fought in the philosophical and intellectual realm. The war implied threefold tension in the society – Colonial-native, Hindu-Muslim and High Caste-Low Caste. This led to the evolution of a counter-historiography that can be embodied in writings of Mahatma Phule.

Another trajectory that appears out of these tensions in the society is described at length in the next paper by Dilip Chavan. He argues that the threat posed to the Status Quo or the existing hegemony of the upper castes due to the changes introduced in the nineteenth century Maharashtra resulted in the various attempts of Standardisation of the Marathi Language in this period. By increasing the elitist Sanskrit component in the standardised Marathi language, it was aimed to become incomprehensible for the masses. Once again, it must be noted, that it was Mahatma Phule who challenged the straightjacketed notion that elite culture was synonymous with the Indian culture.

The next paper by Narayan Bhosale discusses the dialectics of women’s reforms in this period. He reviews the elitist and other attempts to bring about a change in the lives of women. He argues that these attempts initially were elitist and involved deliberations rather than actual empowerment of women. While the reforms cannot be seen as a linear progression, the attempts by Phule’s Satyashodhak Samaj and its followers led the way.

The elitist nature of early women’s reforms is the topic of the next paper by Jaswandi Wamburkar. She has taken a case study of Deval’s Play

“Sharada” which coincided with and contributed to the legislation banning child marriage that was introduced a century after a ban on the Sati. She has argued that the elite play had the “guilty readers” as the desired audience. It had to restrict the message of social reform to a level acceptable to its audience. Therefore, it could never reach the level of radicality as displayed by the followers of Phule.

Aravind Ganachari in his study of the Case of Erloo Bin Narayan throws further light on why radical reforms could be demanded only by the people from the lowest social strata. He has unearthed fresh evidence from the archives that shows that the colonial claims of benevolence were in reality quite hollow – a fact asserted by Phule as early as 1882. Colonial rulers boasted of principles of ‘justice and equity’ but their recipe was not for India, and their “utilitarian and political interests” over-ruled all humanitarian considerations. The paper shows that the Revolt of 1857 was not a defining moment for British administrative policy as such discriminatory policies existed even before an assurance of non-interference in social matters was given by the Queen’s Proclamation [1858].

Discriminatory policies are the colonial legacy that permeated the socio-cultural field as well. Aju Aravind’s paper discusses how Amar Chitrakatha- the most popular comic-books of twentieth century India- provide narratives of the lives of Ambedkar and Savarkar that are ideologically charged. With Nehruvian socialism and the developmental state as a hidden counterpoint to the narratives these comic books reduce real people to abstractions. This serves the rightwing project of depicting a seamless coexistence between rationality and credulity, secularism and spiritualism; accepting a monolithic understanding of the Indian society and wiping out the contribution of the subalterns.

All these papers point to the fact that Mahatma Phule’s contribution to the making of modern Maharashtra is seminal. The next two papers touch upon the various aspects of the life and times of Mahatma Phule. Merin Simiraj discusses the contribution of Phule in giving voice to those that were historiographically silenced. Shraddha Kumbhojkar argues that Phule’s works can be seen as an alternative route towards attainment of a subaltern Utopia.

It may be said in conclusion that the book takes a fresh look at the various aspects of nineteenth century Maharashtra. It includes the critiques and reviews of literature, language, history writing and women’s reforms in this period. It argues that the elite attempts at social reform had their own inherent limitations. They could not reach the level of radicality reached by the subalterns whose lived experience of discrimination was

the biggest stimulus for reform. Mahatma Phule stands out from among a range of thinkers in this period for his innovative understanding of the Indian reality. He widened the horizons of identity of exclusion and suffering by encompassing various classes of oppressed people in it; such as women, Shudras, slaves, African Americans, etc. Thus, Phule was one of the rare thinkers who reconciled the Indian reality with its Universal counterpart.

# CONTRIBUTION OF MAHARASHTRA TO THE FIELD OF SANSKRIT LITERATURE IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY<sup>1</sup>

SHRIPAD BHAT

The 19th century marks an important stage in the history of Sanskrit Studies in India. Sanskrit language opened up a new era in the study of world history. The contribution of Sanskrit Scholars in the 19th century has been of two kinds, viz. 1) along traditional lines and 2) along modern lines, involving critical edition of texts, and comparative, cultural and historical studies. The latter kind has been more prominent even in Maharashtra.

The first and foremost among the modern Sanskrit Scholars in Maharashtra was Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar (1837- 1925). One of his basic contributions to Sanskrit learning was the composition of two graded textbooks on Sanskrit grammar in English. They were commonly used in secondary schools throughout India and soon made a deep impact on the Sanskrit studies in this country.

Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856- 1920), the scholar patriot of India was well known for his 'The Arctic Home in the Vedas', 'The Orion', 'The Vedic Chronology' and the commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita. Shankar Balakrishna Dixit (1853- 1898) wrote a history of Indian Astronomy in Marathi language, which took into account all available Vedic evidence on the subject. Kashinath Vamana alias Bhau Shastri Lele of Wai (1863 - 1918) was a Sanskrit Pandit of the traditional type and was particularly well versed in Vedic ritual and Dharmshastra. He edited for some years a journal called Dharma in which he published Vedic and Dharmshastra texts together with Marathi translations. Laxman Shastri Chandratreya (1852 - 1920) translated Vajasaneya Samhita into Marathi, and five

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<sup>1</sup> I am thankful to Late Prof. R. N. Dandekar who edited the book, 'Sanskrit and Maharashtra', a collection of various articles written by well-known scholars, from which many references have been taken to compose this article.

Adhyayas of that translation have been published under the title Vedapushpa.

V.K. Rajwade (1860- 1944) is known for his works on Rgveda as also his edition, with translation and notes, of Yaska's Nirukta. Pt. S. D. Satvalekar (1866- 1944) made valuable contribution to Vedic studies by publishing neatly printed editions of all the Vedic Samhitas. His Marathi and Hindi translations of many Vedic texts and also his many writings bearing on Vedic culture popularized Vedic studies in Maharashtra and other parts of the country.

C. G. Bhanu (1856- 1930), has translated several principle Upanishads and other philosophical texts into Marathi. As far as the grammar is concerned, there were many works to be mentioned, Nilkantha Shastri Thatte (1750-1834) was acclaimed as one of the greatest grammarians in the Deccan. He trained a long line of worthy pupils, who on their part, made significant contributions to the study of grammar either through teaching and or by means of their writings, Sadashivabhattacha Ghule, wrote a Vivruti on shabdendushekhara and another Bhatti on the Paribhashendushekhara. A mention may be made here of Bhaushastri Ghule (1828-1925) of Nagpur who was the author of shekharavivrutisangraha (a commentary on the shabdendushekhara) and the Gajasutravritti (a commentary on the Panini Sutra 1.3.67).

One Venkatamadhava, who had migrated to Madras and was serving there as lecturer in Marathi in Fort St. George College about 1827 wrote a small work called Maharashtra prayoga chandrika. This is a grammar of Marathi in 227 Sanskrit sutras of Paninian type and is accompanied by a short Sanskrit vritti, a Marathi vritti and illustrations. Raghavendracharya Gajendragadkar (1792- 1852) of Satara one of the pupils of Nilakantha Shastri Thatte, who wrote Tripathaga on the Paribhashendushekhara, the Vishami on the Shabdendushekhara, and the Prabha on the Vaiyakarana bhushanasara. About the middle of the 19th century, Vishnu Shastri Bhat of Poona, wrote the Chitchandrika on the Paribhashendushekhara.

There was a great tradition of teacher and disciples. Bhaskar Shastri Abhyankar of Satara, pupil of Thatte who was himself a great teacher and whose disciples also attained eminence as great teachers of grammar. Kashinath Shastri Ashtaputre (1800- 1850) of Wai, one of his pupils, namely Rajaram Shastri Karlekar (1810 -1875), was the teacher of the great Balashastri Ranade. These three, Ashtaputre, Karlekar and Ranade, formed the backbone of teaching staff of the Government. Sanskrit College of Banaras, which during 1850-1910, had come to be recognized as the stronghold of Vyakarana and Dharmashastra. Among these Balashastri Ranade, in his short life (1839- 1882) attained an outstanding

mastery in the Veda, Ritual, Vyakarana, Nyaya, Mimansa, Vedanta and Dharmashastra. He was honored by Pandits of Varanasi with well-deserved title 'Balasarasvati'.

During this period, scholars of Dharmashastra, contributed a little part. Western scholar Colebrooke [c. 1800 A. D] prepared the digest Dharmashastrasangraha. Among some minor works belonging to about this period may be mentioned the shraaddhamanjari (1810), the Prayaschittamanjiri (1814) and the Kritiyamanjari (1818) (all the three) by Bapubhatta Kelkar of Phanashi (Dist.- Ratnagiri), the Acharabhushana (1819) by Tryambakram Oka and the acharendu (1838) by Tryambak Narayan Mate.

In the 19th century traditional scholars have made some significant noteworthy additions to the ancient Indian philosophical systems. Thus, Narahara Shastri Marelkar, later Shankaracharya of Karaveerapeetha, wrote the commentary Balabodhini on the Purvamimansa Sutras. Krishna Shastri Ghule (1873- 1953) of Nagpur wrote Hautradhvaantadivakara a critical work on Mimansa and shrauta. The Tanjore Kannadiga, author Vancheshwara (18th – 19th century) who received patronage at Poona and from Patwardhan Sardars of the southern Maratha states, is known his commentary Chintamani on Khandadeva's Bhaattadeepika. He also wrote on Dharma and shrauta. Swami Kevalananda Saraswati (earlier known as Narayan Shastri Marathe) (1877-1957) compiled the valuable Mimansakosha in seven volumes, and these were published by Prajna Pathashala, Wai (1952- 1966).

The literature on Vedanta, particularly the Advaita Vedanta produced by Maharashtrians is quite profuse. Raghunath Shastri Parvate (died 1820), who enjoyed the patronage of Nana Saheb, the minister at Bhore, wrote a commentary on the Gita, called the Padabhushana as also the Advaitic polemic against Dvaita, called Shankarapaadabhushana in 1848 A. D. Acyutaraya Modak (1778-1833) of Panchavati, near Nasik was a prolific writer who is credited with the authorship of as many as thirty works dealing with such varied subjects as poetics, religion and Advaita philosophy. He was also a noted Sanskrit Poet. Krsnananda Saraswati, pupil of saccidananda, was the author of Advaitasamrajya (1891), the Gitasaaroddhara (1892) and the Kaivalyagatha (1903) on Vedanta and Vishnubhakti according to 18th chapter of Bhagavadgita. Nationalist leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1908-14) wrote a Sanskrit Commentary on the Brahmasutras while serving his term at the jail in Mandalay. Vasudevananda Saraswati Tembeswami (1854- 1913) wrote the Shikshatraya with a Svopajna commentary. The work deals with the basic tenets of Indian philosophical thought. He also wrote the sutravritti on the

shankarabhashya, on the Brahmasutras and several other books, like the Gurusamhita and the Dvisaahasri, which seek to correlate the tenets of Advaita philosophy with the Dattatreya cult.

The Bhagavadgita is perhaps the most seminal of all Hindu scriptures. There is, therefore no wonder that it should have attracted the attention of a large number of Maharashtrian thinkers and commentators. In the 19th century, Chitsadanandalahari, a commentary on the Gita written by Raghunath Swami, (1891) which is actually a pravachana on the Jnaneshvari with a story affixed at the end of each adhyaya, the Bhaashavivrutiteeka (in prose) by Raghunath Shastri Parvate, and the Setubandhini teeka by Vishnubawa Brahmachari (1825 - 1871).

In his essays on the Bhagavadgita (1875, 1882), K.T. Telang has discussed, such problems as the 'Gita and the Vedas', 'the Chaturvarnya and 'Buddhism and the Gita' and has concluded that the Gita reflects a period of revolution in the concept of Dharma. The most outstanding Marathi exposition of the Bhagavadgita is the famous Gitarahasya (1915) by Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856- 1920). According to Tilak, nishkama karmayoga is the central doctrine of the Bhagavadgita. Tilak, further, shows how the Gita has provided a metaphysical basis for its ethical teaching.

An account of the contribution of Maharashtra to Sanskrit poetics during the 19<sup>th</sup> century would remain incomplete if one failed to mention Acyutaraya Modak who wrote Sahityasara with a svopajna commentary Sarasamoda, in 1831 A.D. This work consists of 12 chapters, called ratnas, and is worthily described as a convenient and well-written compendium on poetics. A reference also should be made, in this context to excellent editions of works on Sanskrit poetics, viz, Sahityadarpana of Vishwanath by P.V. Kane and the editions of Mammata's Kavyaprakasha by Chandorkar (Parts 1-3, 1896, 1898).

As regards music, some kind of realistic attitude can be observed in a work called Shrimallakshayasangeetam written by V.N. Bhatkhande (1886- 1936). Bhatkhande tried to explain the practice of music, which he called Lakshya. It is noteworthy to mention that his work reveals a keen historical sense on the part of the author. He sought to compare and contrast the various characteristics of the same raga as mentioned by different authorities and thereby to ascertain the oldest form of that raga.

The study and practice of Ayurveda underwent a reorientation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The art of printing was introduced. Indigenous plants began to be studied botanically. Attempts began to be made to collect manuscripts of Ayurvedic texts. Thus Krishnashastri Bhatvadekar of Bombay published, in 1860- 64, the shatashloka with the commentary



shatashlokachandrakala and a Marathi translation, the Vaidyamrita and the Kutamudgara with a new commentary. The nighanturatnakara, compiled by Godbole (Bombay 1867) contained the description and analysis of new plants and other substances. Vegetable Materia Medica of Western India was compiled by Dymok (Bombay 1883). The search for manuscripts in the then Bombay Presidency, made by R.G. Bhandarkar in 1882-84, brought to light a number of Ayurvedic works. Bhandarkar also published (Part I, Bombay, 1893) the lists of Sanskrit Manuscripts in private libraries in the Bombay presidency.

Anna Moreshwar Kunte (1844- 1896) of Bombay edited the Charaka Samhita and translated a part of the Sushruta samhita in 1876. He also edited, in 1880. Vagbhata's Ashtangahridaya with Arunadatta's commentary. Among other works, Vagbhata's Ashtangahridaya edited about the same time, may be mentioned by Ganesh Shastri Tarate (Bombay, 1888) and Vagbhata's Ashtangahridaya with a Marathi translation and a valuable introduction by G. K. Garde (Poona, 1891). The Yogachintamani Vaidyaka Saarasangraha by Harshakirti Suri was published in Bombay (1869). Hanumanta shastri Padhye of Poona edited in 1894 the Vrundamaadhava with Shrikanthadatta's commentary, while T.G. Kale edited two texts on Rasashastra with Marathi translation. There were also published editions of the Saharangadhara Samhita (Bombay 1891) by Prabhuram Jivanram and the Haareeta Samhita with Gujarati translation (Bombay 1892) by Jairam Raghunath. The Nighantushesha by Hemachandra, which deals with medicinal plants, was edited by K. P. Parab and others in 1889 (Bombay).

In the literature of mathematics and Astronomy a mention may be made of Govinda Balakrishna Dixit (1783- 1854) was a poet and a writer on Jyotisha and Dharmashastra. His kalaprabodhodaya and Ekadashikaprakasha are well known. Dinakara, son of Ananta of Poona, is known to have written the Grahavijnanasaarani, the Maasaraveshasaarani, the Garahanankajala etc. A reference may also be made here to the Sanskrit-Marathi work, muhurtasindhu which was written by Gangadhar Shastri Datar (1822-1855) of Poona. A special mention needs to be made of Venkatesh Bapuji ketkar (1854-1930) wrote authoritative Sanskrit works on astronomy, such as, the Jyotirganitam, the ketakigrahaganitam and the Vajayantipanchangaganitam.

Thus, in the 19th century Maharashtrians made definite contribution in various branches of Sanskrit literature. It is, however, found that the philosophical schools like mimansà, schools of Vedànta, other than Advaita, Nyàyavaisesika, and epics like Ràmàyana and Mahàbhàrata were not seriously touched in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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# HISTORICAL WRITINGS: CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE<sup>1</sup>

RAJA DIXIT

Any historiographical review will be incomplete without taking into account the sociological and ideological context. This article, therefore, aims at perceiving the nineteenth century Marathi historiography as a dialectical development.

The tradition of serious historical research and its presentation in the form of a historical narrative was almost absent in India until the middle of the 19th century. Though Indians used the term *Itihas* since the ancient times and occasionally showed an awareness of history in an informal manner, unlike the western people, they did not develop the art and craft of history writing. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* (12th Cent. A.D.) stands out as an exceptional piece of historical writing. Some bards and story-tellers in medieval Maharashtra dealt with historical themes and produced literature such as ballads (*Povadas*), romantic poems (*Lavanis*), chronologies/genealogies (*Shakavalis*), chronicles (*Bakhars*), family accounts (*Kaifiyats*) and biographical sketches of saint-poets (*Santa-Charitre*). Though this was 'history' narrated by them in their own way, it generally lacked in the discipline and rigour of historical research. Barring a few exceptions like the *Sabhasad Bakhar* (1694-97 A.D.) they were put aside as 'historically useless material' by most of the modern historians of India. It must however be admitted that this literature has immense historical value not because of its factual accuracy, but because of its ability to show some socio-psychological traces of the past. Though this literature cannot be termed as historical writing in a modern sense, it definitely made the Marathi people history-conscious, which is a pre-requisite of the production and reception of 'written history.' This medieval historical consciousness, coupled with the modern idea of history,

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the following article by the same author: Raja Dixit, 'Historical Writings And Research', in Rajendra Banhatti and G.N. Jogalekar (ed.), *A History of Modern Marathi Literature, Vol. II, (1800 to 2000)*, Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, Pune, 2004, pp. 238-78.

introduced by the Westerners in the 19th century, prepared a fertile ground for the rise and growth of historical writings in modern Maharashtra.

The British, who became the rulers of India, showed great interest in Indian history and culture. But this was not a purely academic pursuit. Their efforts at acquiring a 'command of ' Indian languages, literature, law, history and culture, to borrow the phraseology of Bernard Cohn, were mainly for creating the language, literature, law, history and culture 'of command.' The oriental studies of the 18th and 19th centuries were an occidental construction of the 'orient' as they perceived it and as they wanted the oriental people to perceive it. This process, as described by Edward Said as the 'orientalization of the orient', was the part of a comprehensive imperialist project of the Western rulers. Macaulay, who was instrumental in introducing English education in India, made his oft-quoted statement on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Feb. 1835 that "We [the British] must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." In the light of this conscious policy of Anglicisation, history obviously became an instrument of British hegemony in India. No wonder that a generation of British administrators came forward to study Indian history and to shape it in the new mould so as to suit British colonial needs. Mark Wilks' *Historical Sketches of South India* (3 Vol.s, 1810-14), James Mill's *The History of British India* (6 Vol.s, 1818), James Cunningham Grant Duff's *A History of the Mahrattas* (3 Vol.s, 1826), John Malcolm's *The Political History of India from 1784 to 1823* (2 Vol.s, 1826), Captain James Todd's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (1829), Mountstuart Elphinstone's *The History of India* (2 Vol.s, 1841), Sir William Hunter's *History of British India* (1899-1900), Vincent Smith's *Early History of India* (1904), W. H. Moreland's *India at the Death of Akbar* (1920) are some prominent works produced by British 'administrator-historians'. Though there was an imperialistic design behind the whole gamut of history-writing by the British, it cannot be denied that the Indians, in various ways, benefited by this exercise. History as a serious modern academic discipline and history writing as a research-based methodological exercise were introduced in India through these writings. Indian people's knowledge of history as a branch of knowledge was certainly broadened and their mental horizon vastly widened because of these writings and the new education to which they were introduced. Indians started reading, studying and assimilating this 'given' history and being influenced and affected by it. In course of time, they realised the dangers and drawbacks of this history and while launching their struggle for counter-hegemony and fighting their 'war of

position' they also used history as a powerful cultural weapon. The history of modern Indian and Marathi historical writings cannot be understood properly if we miss this dialectical dimension.

The first modern biographical work in Marathi was published in 1816, and this form of literature began to flourish by the middle of the 19th century. Most of these biographies were translations, adaptations or imitations of biographies from other languages. However, they contributed to the new historical awareness in Maharashtra. History became an important component of the new curriculum when the British rulers introduced New Education. The growing interest in academic pursuits and new awareness regarding the pedagogical value of history were the motivating forces for history writing. Historical works of the Western historians, especially of those associated directly or indirectly with the British administration in India, were read by the early generations of the English-educated natives. The works of James Mill, Grant Duff, Elphinstone, Murray and others were read in schools and colleges in Maharashtra. Many abridged editions, adaptations and translations of these works were produced so as to make their comprehension easier for the native students. Most early historical writings in Maharashtra were government sponsored textbook writings and were cautiously presented so as to avoid any governmental disfavour.

The first historical work in Marathi entitled *Raghuji Bhosale Yanchi Vamshavali* (Genealogy of Raghuji Bhosale) was published in Bengal at Serampore in 1816. It traced the story of Bhosale clan right from Babaji and gave an account of some activities of Shivaji too. One of the pioneering Marathi books on history was *Bakhar Marathyanchi* (1829-30), a translated version Grant Duff's 'A History of the Mahrattas.' Captain David Capon and Baba Sane were its translators. The book was prescribed as *vaachana-book* (reading text) for school children. Kushaba Limaye prepared its abridged edition in catechistic form. This book, named *Maharashtra Deshache Varnan* (1840), became popular and nine editions were published till 1866. Baba Padmanji's *Shalankarita Maharashtra Deshacha Sankshipta Itihas* (1866), a text-book published by the Christian Vernacular Translation Society, was a rapid survey of the history of Maharashtra from ancient times to the establishment of British rule. The pioneering work on Indian history was a book based on Elphinstone's 'The History of British India.' It was an abridged and translated version prepared by Balshastri Jambhekar (1846) that was later modified by Major T. Candy (1849). A two volume comprehensive translation of Elphinstone's book was done by Vishwanath Narayan Mandalika (1861). Many such translations and adaptations were published due to the

encouragement and help provided by the Department of Public Instruction. The British Government, while giving such patronage, obviously curtailed the freedom of the native authors and translators. M. G. Ranade's remark on the translation-works was: "Of the fourteen which relate to India, the translations of Elphinstone's and Murray's histories, and of Grant Duff's Maratha history, are the only ones which possess any literary merit" (1867). Many dynastic histories, histories of other Indian provinces, of England and some other foreign countries, and also of the world, were produced during this phase. All these works represented the initial enthusiasm and awareness of the newly educated intellectuals whose histories were mainly didactic narratives lacking in originality and interpretation.

Balshastri Jambhekar (1812-1846) was a pioneer of Epigraphical writings in Maharashtra, who contributed fourteen articles on ancient Indian inscriptions to the journal (1841-1847) of the Bombay branch of Royal Asiatic Society. History was sometimes narrated through books that were not formal histories and also through journalistic essays. Right from its infancy, the Marathi Press showed a deep concern for historical themes. The very first issue (May 1840) of Balshastri Jambhekar's magazine *Digdurshun* contained an article entitled *Itihas*, which discussed Shivaji's administrative system. The *Digdurshun* also introduced its readers to the history of Greece. Bhau Mahajan, in his weekly *Prabhakar*, published a series of articles on *Great Britain Deshachi Rajaneeti* (March-April 1842), which traced the development of democracy in England. Through another series *Frenchanche Bandacha Vruttanta* he gave an account of the French Revolution of 1789 in more than twenty-five articles (1842). He also gave a brief account of the history of America (1847). All these articles on non-Indian history were published with a view to making Marathi readers conscious about democracy and nationalism. The first treatise on Economics in Marathi was *Hindustanchi Pracheen Va Sampratchi Sthiti Va Pudhen Kaya Tyacha Parinam Honar Hyavishayin Vichar* (1843). Its author Ramakrishna Vishwanath wrote also on ancient and medieval Indian history, but this cannot be termed as methodical and specialized history-writing. Its importance lies not in the authenticity of the content, but in the new and nationalistic awareness of history. It was another early economic thinker and social reformer, *Lokahitawadi* Gopal Hari Deshmukh (1823-1892), whose contribution to history writing was more concrete. His sense of history was amply reflected in his socio-economic and journalistic writings (e.g. *Shatapatre*, 1848-1850) during the middle of the 19th century. He also wrote genealogical essays in *Induprakash* (1862) on medieval Indian Princes and Generals, and historical essays on various

religious communities. He regarded the neglect of history as one of the fundamental drawbacks of the Indian society. He firmly believed that a consciousness of history, which unfolds a story of change, was an important pre-requisite of social reform. Lokahitawadi made a critique of the past for shaping a better future. He wrote a number of books on history during 1870s and 1880s. He compiled volumes of a number of historical stories and useful information about the past. He wrote a monograph on the third battle of Panipat and also on the Kshatriya Kings of Delhi. His histories of India, Gujarat, Saurashtra, Rajasthan and Shrilanka stand as a testimony that Lokahitawadi was never parochial in his approach. He gave expression to his broad nationalistic and reformist sentiments through his historical writings.

The early period of historical writings in Marathi (1816-1867) is rightly termed as the 'Age of Grant Duff' by *Mahamahopadhyay* Datto Waman Potdar. This phase produced, in the words of M. G. Ranade, 'not a single original historical work of merit.' This was a period of imitation and education. But a new generation of Marathi historians started coming out of the spell of British administrator-historians. A landmark in this respect was the presentation of an essay by Nilakantha Janardan Kirtane (1844-1896) at the Poona Young Men's Association in 1867. Kirtane, a junior student of the Deccan College, in his essay entitled *Grant Duffkrut Marathyanchya Bakharivaril Tika*, made a critique of Duff's history. Pointing out Duff's mistakes and showing his limitations, Kirtane stressed the need for a fresh look at Maratha history. This essay, published in *Induprakash* and later printed in the form of a booklet (1884; new edn. 1926), was an emotional counter-attack on colonial historiography. A more profound, conscious and nationalistic attack was launched in 1874 by one of the admirers of Kirtane's thesis. Vishnushastri Chiploonkar (1850-1882) serialised his long and trend-setting essay *Itihas* (History) through his *Nibandhamala*. He explained the meaning of the term History, analysed the age-old neglect of history in India, described the contribution of ancient Greeks and Romans to historiography and listed the advantages of a study of history. He strongly criticized the 'biased foreign historians and frustrated missionaries for presenting the history of India in a selfish, mischievous, unjust and childish manner.' Mill, Macaulay and Morris were the principal targets of his attack. Chiploonkar also condemned those natives who blindly accepted such history as 'Mahaprasad' (pious blessing). He reminded the readers of the glorious historical tradition of India by citing numerous examples. He made a fervent appeal to the natives to stop the neglect of history, give up their indifference and take up the responsibility of collecting and preserving the source-material of their

history for the reconstruction of the past. His mention of the cyclical theory symbolised his optimism regarding the 'dispellment of the fog of untruth and illusion and the rise of the Sun of truth and knowledge.' Kirtane and Chiploonker, through their inspiring essays, opened new channels of historical research and gave rise to the 'great wave of affinity for history' which later found a special mention in Rajwade's introduction to his first volume of *Marathyancho Itihasachi Sadhane* (1898).

A New Age had thus begun. Marathi intellectuals concentrated their energies on creating a nationalistic counter-culture of which history was a vital component. The last quarter of the 19th century proved to be a period of great awakening. It witnessed the sharpening of the contradiction between the interests of British rulers and their Indian subjects. The other contradictions within the Indian society also began to crop up. This was a period of tensions, complexities and identity crisis. It is no wonder that history, under such circumstances, got a new prominence in Maharashtra.

The pre-Nibandhamala period witnessed the publication of sixty-one books on historical themes in Marathi, whereas one hundred and ten historical works were published between 1874 and 1900. The quantitative growth was also marked by a qualitative improvement in the form of research-orientation. In 1876, the *Bharatavarshya Pracheen Itihasika Charitra Va Sthalakosha* (an encyclopaedia of ancient Indian historical persons and places) compiled by Raghunath Bhaskar Godbole was published. This unique compilation was a result of seven years of constant hard work. In 1878 Chiploonkar, along with Kashinath Narayan Sane and Janardan Balaji Modak, set up a magazine dedicated to the exploration and publication of old literary and historical material. It was named as *Kavyetihas-Sangraha* (Collection of ancient poetry and history). The magazine had three sections devoted to Sanskrit poetry, Marathi poetry and Maratha history respectively. This journal, during its eleven years of existence (1878-1889), brought to light about twenty-five Bakhars and five hundred and one original documents comprising approximately 6,300 pages. The task of meticulously editing this huge volume of material was completed mainly by K. N. Sane (1851-1927), who also added explanatory notes throwing light on subtle historical aspects. Sane proved to be one of the great pioneers in the field of historical research in Maharashtra. Prominent among the historical works edited by him were *Bhausahebachi Bakhar*, *Panipatchi Bakhar*, *Peshwyanchi Bakhar*, *Malhar Ramraokrut Charitre*, *Holkaranchi Kaifiyat* and *Dabhade Va Gaikwad Yanchi Hakikat*. In 1896, Sane delivered a series of lectures on the 'sources of Maratha history' at Hirabagh, Pune. These lectures were published in the form of six articles in *Kesari*. This was a clear manifestation of a growing public



interest in historical research.

Two prominent scholars contemporary to Sane were Balaji Prabhakar Modak (1847-1906) and Rajaramshastrī Bhagwat (1851-1908). Modak wrote a series of books (1876-1887) on the history of Kolhapur and Karnataka. He also wrote the history of Muslim States of the Deccan. Modak's works were based on a careful study of numerous original documents. Bhagwat was versatile scholar and a forthright reformist. His most famous work was *Marathyanchya Sambandhane Char Udgar* (1887). He applied linguistic methods for analysing the past with special reference to the rise of the Varna and caste systems in Maharashtra. He wrote a small biography of Shivaji in 1889 and depicted Shivaji through a liberal progressive nationalist perception. In his essay on *Maharashtra-Dharma* (1895) he emphasised that the Bhagwat Dharma preached in Bhagwadgēeta was the real basis of Maharashtra-Dharma. His egalitarian philosophy was reflected in his historical writings. By 1890s dedicated scholars such as Narayan Bhagwan Pavgi, Vasudeoshastri Khare, Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade, Govind Sakharam Sardesai, Dattatray Balwant Parasnīs and Shankar Shrikrushna Deo were engaged in serious historical research, faithfully following the Rankeian dictum "No document, no history." Two of the nineteenth century historical journals set up by D.B. Parasnīs - *Maharashtra-Kokil* (1887-1892) and *Bharata-Varsha* (1896-1900) - published a number of *Bakhars*, *Kaifiyats*, *Yadis* and documents. In 1897, Vasudeoshastri Khare set up a journal *Aitihasik Lekhsangraha* for the same purpose. *Satkaryottejak Sabha* set up by Shankar Shrikrushna Deo at Dhule in 1893 was a pioneering effort in the institutionalization of historical research and writing activities.

Sayajirao Gaikwad, the ruler of the Princely State of Baroda, gave a generous patronage to the publication of historical writings. Two series of books entitled *Rashtra Kathamala* and *Maharashtra Granthamala* were published during 1890s under his patronage. In 1895, Bal Gangadhar Tilak launched the *Shivajayanti Utsav* (an annual festival to celebrate Shivaji's birth anniversary), which proved to be an effective instrument of mass-mobilization for the nationalist cause. A number of literary artists had also become historically conscious which led to the sudden growth of historical plays, novels and poems. Keshavsut, the pioneer of modern Marathi poetry, made an earnest appeal through his poem *Nairutyekadeel Vara* (Wind from the south-west, 1898) to read neglected historical documents lying in old Maratha forts. This appeal symbolised the spirit of the age. A tide of historical consciousness had burst forth. Its climax came at the end of the nineteenth century with the publication of three great works that laid the real foundations of modern scientific history writing in Maharashtra. In

1898, *Musalmani Riyasat*, the first volume of G.S. Sardesai's *Riyasat*-series and first volume of V. K. Rajwade's 22-volume series *Marathyanchya Itihasachi Sadhane* were published. This was followed by the publication of *Rise of the Maratha Power*, the magnum opus of Justice Ranade in 1900. It is also an interesting co-incidence that the real foundations of the history of Marathi literature were laid in 1898 by the pioneering works of Justice M. G. Ranade (an English *Note on the Growth of Marathi Literature*; later translated into Marathi by S. G. Malshe in 1982), L. R. Pangarkar, G. J. Agashe, Moti Bulasa and V. L. Bhawe. All the above-mentioned works marked the beginning of a new age of indigenous historiography.

Mahadeo Govind Ranade (1842-1901) was a prominent figure and the moving spirit behind a number of socio-cultural movements in Maharashtra including history-writing. He had the unique distinction of writing as well as making history. A man with a synthetic mind and broad vision, Justice Ranade represented the blend of Western liberalism and Indian humanism. He provided a scientific and theoretical base to 'written history' in Marathi. His approach was not narrative and biographical, but basically interpretative and sociological. His aim was to present a clear view of history from the Indian standpoint. Though he did not write a single book on history in Marathi, his name became immortal in Marathi historiography. His *Rise of the Maratha Power* (1900) set new standards and became a source of ideas and inspiration for future generations of Marathi historians. Though written in English, different scholars later translated it into Marathi separately. N.R. Phatak's translation (1964) is perhaps the best among them. Though Ranade's *Rise* is often consulted by history-lovers, all his writings are truly 'historical' as suggested by N. R. Phatak. Seen from this angle, Ranade's *Dharmapar Vyakhyan* (Religious Discourses, published posthumously in 1902) becomes very relevant historiographically. Though Ranade wrote about many individuals such as Shivaji, Tukaram, Ramdas, Martin Luther and others, he perceived them as individuals representing contemporary socio-historical trends and value-structures. While analysing the achievements of these individuals he tried to comprehend the historical processes and intellectual discourses with which they were associated. Dispelling the misconceptions created by Duff's history, Ranade showed that the rise of the Marathas exemplified "the first beginnings of what one may well call the process of nation-making." Avoiding deification of Shivaji, Ranade discovered the social evolution in Maharashtra that culminated in the political phenomenon called *Shivaji's Swarajya*. It was Ranade, who put the history of Shivaji in the wider socio-cultural context and tried to convey the moral import of

Maratha history. Though Rajwade did not agree with Ranade's views emphasising the social relevance of the medieval Bhakti movement, he praised Ranade for his theoretical foundation and for providing social causation of continuity and change in Maharashtra.

*Iithasacharya* Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade (1863-1926) and *Riyasatkar* Govind Sakharam Sardesai (1865-1959) began their illustrious careers as historians in the closing stage of the nineteenth century. Rajwade combined empirical research with sweeping philosophical vision. In him, we find a paradoxical attachment to objectivity and interpretation. He was truly a giant who represented the spirit of his age that was full of paradoxes, complexities and internal turmoil. Sardesai was a hard-working dedicated scholar. Many critics ridiculed and underestimated him as a 'mere compiler', forgetting the fact that interpretations and articulation of theories become possible only on the solid foundation of systematic compilation of innumerable facts laboriously woven into a logical and chronological narration. Beginning with his first volume of *Riyasat* series in 1898, Sardesai provided such a foundation through his narration of political history of India from thirteenth to mid-nineteenth century.

Ranade in his 'note' on Marathi literature (1898) significantly remarked, "No mere foreign graftings can ever thrive and flourish, unless the tender plant on which the grafting is to be made first germinates and sends its roots deep in its own indigenous soil....Unless the minds of our young men are disabused of the prejudice they imbibe in early life that the historical sense is wholly absent in India, and until they are trained to appreciate the value of these contemporary narratives and records at their true worth, it is hopeless to expect any real and permanent growth of the true historical and critical spirit which alone can ensure success in the future cultivation of this department of our literature." It was the 19th century spirit of Renaissance in Maharashtra, which fostered a new way of looking at the past. As explained by Arvind Deshpande, the history produced during the late nineteenth (and the early twentieth) century was a 'construct' derived from the triple conflict : (a) British hegemony and imperialist viewpoint of history versus Indian national identity, (b) Newly emerging Muslim identity versus Hindu revivalist identity and (c) new challenge of non-Brahman identity / movement versus traditional Brahmanic identity.

The intellectuals in Maharashtra, aware of British attempts at a cultural hegemony, launched a 'war of position' to create a counter-hegemony. Though elitist in nature, this movement played a significant role in the history of modern Maharashtra. The writing of modern scientific history was the part of a broad process of modernization of India within the

framework of Indian Culture. Writing history was one of the ways of making history. History was used as an instrument of hegemony by the British imperialists. The Maharashtrian elite used history, on the one hand, as a nationalist weapon to fight against the British, and on the other hand, as an instrument of creating and legitimizing their hegemony within the indigenous society. A counter-historiography, therefore, was bound to arise and create an inner upward pressure. In this context, the role played by *Mahatma* Jotirao Govindrao Phule (1827-1890) was very significant. He was not a historian in the strict sense of the term. But his thought-provoking and egalitarian writings had a specific historical perspective that gave birth to the subaltern streams in Marathi historiography. His severe indictment of the Aryan-Brahmanic tradition, his emphasis on focusing ideas and achievements of Buddha, Charvaka, Kabir, Tukaram and Shivaji and his counter-mythisization glorifying the pro-people *Baliraja* tradition effectively demonstrate his historical approach. Phule was basically a polemicist and his role was not that of an academic historian exploring unknown sources and insisting on narrating and interpreting authentic facts. His was the role of an organic intellectual aiming at the creation of a counter-culture. The alternative trends that developed mainly in the twentieth century were inspired by Phule's views and tried to turn the 'top-down' Marathi historiography in the upward direction, at least to some extent.

# STANDARDISATION OF MARATHI UNDER COLONIALISM: STRATEGIES OF CASTE-CLASS HEGEMONY<sup>1</sup>

DILIP CHAVAN

The medium through which the mass of the population must be instructed I humbly conceive must be their *Vernacular Tongues*, and neither English nor Sanskrit....In a word, knowledge must be drawn from...the English language, the Vernaculars must be employed as the media of communicating it, and Sanskrit must be largely used to improve the Vernaculars and make them suitable for the purpose.<sup>2</sup>

Standardisation of various regional languages is relatively a more recent phenomenon. Capitalism has an inherent tendency to homogenise and standardise various processes – cultural as well as material. Calling standard language a ‘normalized’ product, Pierre Bourdieu considers standardisation of language a modern phenomenon, which has emerged along with modern industry.<sup>3</sup>

Standardisation of language has been looked at from both the instrumental and the sociolinguistic perspectives. The instrumentalist perspective valorises the process of standardisation. It sees standardisation as a tool and defines it in terms of “efficiency, rationality and commonality.” Some scholars equate linguistic homogeneity to economic development. They argue that “a country that is linguistically highly heterogeneous is always underdeveloped, and a country that is developed always has considerable linguistic uniformity.” Heterogeneity is perceived

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<sup>1</sup> I am thankful to Simon Bernabas, Wandana Sonalkar and Bhalchandra Nemade for commenting on the earlier draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Board of Education for the Years 1847 and 1848, No. VII.* (Bombay: American Mission Press, 1850) 180. (emphasis in original)

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* trans. Ginto Raymond and Matthew Adamson (1992, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994) 46.

as a hindrance to progress as it generates conflict.<sup>4</sup> The term language standardisation designates the process of change in status, function, and form by which a dialect becomes 'standard'. The sociolinguistic perspective delegitimises the notion of standard and considers standardisation a deliberate and conscious attempt of a certain group.

Recent scholarship on the issue of language standardisation is more critical about the socio-cultural repercussions that result from standardisation. James Milroy and Lesley Milroy have distinguished between two kinds of mechanism that tend to encourage stability in the use of a language or dialect. Both may apply at any level of society but one or other may be dominant at some levels. The first mechanism is *covert* and *informal* pressure for language maintenance, which is exerted by members of one's peer-group or social group. The second is *overt* and *institutional* enforcement of norms through public channels such as the educational and broadcasting systems.<sup>5</sup>

Milroy and Milroy define standardisation as the suppression of optional variability in language, observing that the various stages that are usually involved in the development of standard language may be described as the consequence of a need for uniformity that is felt by influential sections of society at a given time.<sup>6</sup>

Though general linguists, usually, do not hold the superiority claim of a certain language valid, there is a strong tendency among these linguists to base their grammar on the language used by the elites. All early grammarians of English had resorted to Latin to provide them with a model.<sup>7</sup> The early grammarians of Marathi disregarded the linguistic variability prevailing in Marathi and considered the language used in Pune as the model for constructing their grammar. A. K. Priyolkar acknowledges that the language used by the Chitpavan brahmins during the *Peshwa* regime was drastically different from the languages used in the rest of Maharashtra. He also argued that the variety of Marathi used by the Chitpavans differed from those of other castes.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Aditi Mukharji, 'The Standard Problem' in R. S. Gupta ed., *Directions in Indian Sociolinguistics* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2000) 86.

<sup>5</sup> James Milroy and Lesley Milroy, *Authority in Language: Investigating Language Prescription and Standardisation* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985) 56.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Hogg and David Denison, *A History of the English Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2006) 273.

<sup>7</sup> Hogg et al 284.

<sup>8</sup> A. K. Priyolkar, *Hindustanche Don Darwaje*, (Mumbai: The Goa Hindu Association, 1974) 15.