
MORALIZING WOMEN: SCHOOLING IN COLONIAL UNITED PROVINCES

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Abstract: The development of Indian Feminism has been as historical process and its roots lies in the education of Indian history. Education played important role in determining the space and nature of feminism. Schooling has been a mechanism through which cultural values and morality of dominant groups and castes taught to children. In Indian history, caste and gender are interlinked with each other as women are a prominent component in maintaining caste system through marriage and reproduction and other socio-economic means. It ensures 'purity' or non-mixing of the blood of two castes or groups. Hence, it helped patriarchy to control the sexuality of women on one hand and the other hand maintaining the caste system of society. Education plays an important role ideologically, in its thought and actions, in maintaining caste structure and gender roles as well.

Schooling (learning inside or outside school) taught upper caste and class cultural and moral values through textbooks and didactic literature. In the case of United Provinces, it was generally the upper caste and middle class people of the United Provinces who wrote on the necessity of imparting morals to women through education. The 'appropriate behaviour of women' was determined through the practice of ancient religious texts. Textbooks which were written for women did not go beyond the urban and middle class perspective even if they were studied and taught in rural areas. Textbooks propagated stereotyping of 'good' or 'bad' women. Differences were made in the light of caste and patriarchy. Moral education was different for men and women and further lower caste women and upper caste women. This paper will be an attempt to explore following question: Why was morality became important component of Indian schooling, especially for women? How caste and gender created a space of differences in terms of morality? How the question of morality, caste and patriarchy linked to school education?

Paper will look after the government files; reformers' writings and pamphlets, magazines of missionaries and records of elite women conferences etc. to show the politics of morality and immorality and its connection with the caste and education.

Keywords: Caste, Education, United Provinces, Women.

Introduction: The roots of the history of Indian feminism in India lie in the development of nineteenth-century historical processes and institutions. The nineteenth century was very vibrant in terms of social-religious reforms, the establishment of educational institutions (introduction of English Education) and rise of the cultural nationalism which led to recasting and reshaping of gender roles in Indian history. Indian feminism is quite different from western feminism in the nineteenth century because it had its peculiar characteristics such as it worked within the ambit of patriarchal structure, middle class, and upper caste orientation and motivated by nationalist

movement. This paper shows intersectionality of caste and gender which emerged in the process of women schooling in colonial United Provinces.

It is a necessary step to understand the impact of socio-religious educational reforms which encouraged Indian males to recreate their domestic stereotyped gender roles at the one hand and twisted consciousness among women to aspire independence and liberty on the other hand. Schooling has been a mechanism through which cultural values and morality of dominant groups and castes taught to children. This paper is an attempt to explore how educational culture helped to reaffirm or modify gender and caste roles in United Provinces? Which groups were targeted and which were alienated? How and what was the link between caste and gender?

The first section of the paper will deal with the concept of morality which was conceived by upper caste and middle-class male reformers to reshape their domestic happiness. It will show how the morality of lower caste and upper caste was different? The second section will examine how school textbooks and culture reaffirm or modify caste hierarchy and gender roles.

Morality and Reshaping Roles of Women: In the colonial period, schooling possessed the potential of introducing women to new ways of thinking about family, caste, and social order. It also introduced them to new forms of knowledge while simultaneously buttressing notions of patriarchy and caste inequality. It became an important site for the self-definition of the middle classes and for the assertion of cultural nationalism.¹ Women's schooling reproduced and reinforced castes and its norms. The term 'brahminical patriarchy' denotes a set of rules and institutions where caste and gender are linked and shaped by each other. Women played a crucial role in maintaining the boundaries of caste. Patriarchal structure ensured the reproduction of caste system through closed endogamous circles and maintained the hierarchy. Uma Chakravarti further explains that codes for women differed according to caste hierarchies. For instance, the high caste women's sexuality was reserved exclusively for higher caste men. Patriarchy controlled reproduction and marriage through enforced laws of *Brahminical* prescriptive texts and endogamous marriages. According to Uma Chakravarti, 'Brahminical patriarchy is a mechanism to preserve land, women, and ritual quality within it.' Within this patriarchy, lower caste men's sexuality was understood as a threat to the purity of higher castes women. These women were thus guarded and their sexuality controlled. Ironically, the same control was asserted by the lower caste patriarchy on their women in the first half of the twentieth century in the United Provinces. Dalit (low caste and untouchable) patriarchy imitated upper caste morals for their women and helped in maintaining the caste structure.²

Control over women's sexuality ensured the reproduction of pure blood, an important tool for the maintenance of the caste structure. 'Pativrata dharma' was an ideological tool for controlling the biological aspects of women. Schooling played an important role in inculcating values such as 'devotional' and 'pativrata dharma'. When schools could not inculcate these values firmly through

¹Kumkum Sangari and Suresh Vaid (Ed.), *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989, pp. 5-9.

²See, Charu Gupta, *Caste and Gender: Dalit Women in North India*, Delhi: Permanent Black, 2015, and Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Caste, Culture and Hegemony: Social Dominance in Colonial Bengal*, New Delhi: Sage, 2004.

the formal curriculum, the reformers controlled women's sexuality through dialectic literature, determination of womanly virtues for higher caste and lower castes women. Women of higher castes and lower castes were differentiated in terms of sexual and moral behavior. The higher caste women were asked to preserve their sexuality only for higher caste men while lower caste women's sexuality was accessible to men of all castes. Therefore women of higher castes were warned not to socialize with lower caste men and women. But it was not only a question of controlling sexuality. The schooling of upper caste women simultaneously helped in maintaining upper caste virtues, religion, domestic happiness, and patriarchal structure. This chapter will explore the ideological control over women's education through different morals, virtues, and norms which were inculcated inside and outside the schools.³

The case of the United Provinces presented an example of very poorly developed education for women in the early 20th century. The indigenous elite and upper caste people of the United Provinces questioned the content of the curriculum of formal schooling. There were many attempts to create a 'new literature' which could make women more 'moral' according to the suitability of the caste Hindus. There was fear among the elite and upper caste Hindus that explicit matters in the contemporary literature would erode the ideals of 'pativrata' and lead women to ignore caste injunctions and thereby disturb caste hierarchies. The education of women (formal and informal) in the United Provinces was partially shaped by that fear. On the one hand, these upper castes and elites were influenced by progressive ideas of encouraging women's education while retaining the control over the knowledge given to women. On the other hand, there were also some who were against educating their women for religious reasons.⁴ There was a wider acceptance that the curriculum and subjects taught to girls in formal schools were not 'appropriate' for the needs of girls. Subjects such as history, geography, and science were considered redundant for girls as their study time (due to early marriage and lack of tradition of study after marriage) and needs (use in the domestic sphere) were different from that of the boys. The lack of religious orientation in the formal curriculum was a constant complaint of the upper caste intelligentsia. An attempt was made by this intelligentsia to work on the weakness of the formal curriculum and establish a link between religion and education.

³Uma Chakravarty argued that Brahminical patriarchy regulates the women's sexuality and caste played important role in it. See Uma Chakravarty, *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens*, Kolkatta: Stree, 1993.

⁴ Some Hindu and Muslim elite wished to keep their daughters in ignorance in order to ensure that they would prove faithful wives and better housekeepers. It was also the notion that God would snatch the happiness of an educated daughter. There was also a fear that missionary education would make them unfit for the house. Missionaries had given many examples of such attitudes that they came across. For instance, Miss Blaze wrote of Etawah during 1880s, she wrote that, 'I was speaking to one of the richest men in this town about the building of a girls' school, which he wishes to have in the same street where his own palace stands, together with many others belonging to him. I asked if he had any daughters who would attend the school, upon which he answered sadly, that some time ago one of his daughters began to learn reading, and almost immediately became a widow. He really seemed to believe that goddess Kali had been offended by his daughter's learning, and had killed her husband out of revenge, so as to bring upon her widowhood, which is here considered the greatest misfortune that can befall a woman. He therefore resolved that no girl of his family should again attempt reading, or attend the school we were planning.' *The Indian Female Evangelist*- Vol. v, October 1880, No. xxxvi, London: James Nisbet & Co., pp. 252-53.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, indigenous upper caste elites were writing and discussing broadly three notions related to women's education. The purpose of didactic writing for women was to teach them anti-colonial cultural nationalism, national awakening, and domestic happiness. These lesser-known reformers⁵ adopted the alternative pedagogy to instill in women what they thought was 'appropriate.' This didactic literature was specifically written for upper caste women. There was a feeling among these reformers that formal schooling was not providing an 'appropriate knowledge' that aided domestic happiness. These reformers evolved a new kind of pedagogy which taught women outside the school 'how to behave', 'what to know' and 'how to know' through texts, tracts, pamphlets, novels, and songs. The era of commercial printing press started in the United Provinces only in the 1860s. In 1868, the first official year of registration, over 6, 00, 000 printed books were recorded in Hindi and Urdu. The number of printing presses rose from 50 in 1868 to 110 in 1888. These were concentrated in six urban centers:- Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Aligarh, Agra, and Kanpur. Eighty percent of the total production of the provinces took place through these presses.⁶ In fact, most of the books written in this period were published in these cities. As these social reformers were mainly from the educated middle class and from the cities, they focused on the problems of their sect/ class/ caste women, ignoring the problems and specificities of rural women and their education.

In the United Provinces, the discourse on education and morality were closely interlinked. Tanika Sarkar has argued that in the nineteenth century, people feared that the education of women would lead to their widowhood and sexual intrigues since a literate woman could write and 'make secret assignments of an illicit nature'.⁷ This situation slightly changed after the reform movements and the spread of western education among men. The reform movements of the early nineteenth century had taken the form of legislating against social evils, but in the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a shift in the focus towards the gradual removal of evils by recasting and reshaping Indian women's minds through education. They wanted to change women's conditions through enabling rather than punitive legislation.⁸

Moral instruction was introduced to make men obedient and honest subjects, while moral instruction for women was aimed at making them better, obedient and devoted housewives. Hence, obvious differences could be seen in the curriculum. It was apparently the same for the boys and girls, but some changes were made from time to time. One of the main objections made by people of the United Provinces and India generally regarding the instruction of women was the unsuitability of the curriculum, perceived to be of no practical use for them as it lacked religious instruction.⁹ There were a lot of complaints to the Indian Education Commission of 1882, regarding

⁵I am using the term 'lesser known reformers' who were writing to reform the society but not very widely known. Their agenda was to improve their condition of women of their own sect, caste, or religion.

⁶Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007, p. 65.

⁷Tanika Sarkar, 'Stri Shiksha or Education for women', in Mary E. John (ed.) *Women's Studies in India: A Reader*, Delhi: Penguin Group, 2008, p. 321.

⁸Indrani Sen, 'D'evoted Wife/Sensuous Bibi: Colonial Constructions of the Indian Woman (1860-1900)', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, Vol. 8, No, 1, 2008, p. 15.

⁹*Problems in Education- V, Women and Education*, Paris: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1953, p. 108.

the unsuitability of subjects and the medium of instruction.¹⁰ The curriculum for girls in the government schools was not very different from the boys, and the system of inspection or examination was kept lenient. However, people of the United Provinces wanted to keep their daughters and sisters away from education because, for them, it was not a question of 'domestic happiness and convenience but also a matter of cultural and religious importance'.¹¹

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the didactic literature focused on making women more efficient, obedient and devoted to the family and husband. Their morality was supposed to revolve around their family and home. A woman who was a good and devoted wife (*pativrata*), obedient and good mother, was considered 'moral'. Women's morality was usually defined by the men who wanted to modify them according to their needs and circumstances. In the second half of the nineteenth century, men wanted to educate women for their own benefit and not necessarily for women's emancipation. Shobhna Nijhawan points out that the middle class aspired for employment in the British administration and Indian males were soon educated in English. They were influenced by Victorian ideals of partnership, domesticity, and education. They introduced formal education to their females. Their objectives ranged from consolidating anti-colonial opinions and securing political power for themselves. These feelings are also reflected in the literature for women.¹² Similarly, Tanika Sarkar also explains that the first women writers carefully underlined that their education was initiated by their husband, it was to counter the association of education with widowhood and immorality.¹³ Education of women was not seen as a 'self-absorbed, self-centered activity' by reformers. It was seen as the basis for a companionate marriage and to train the women for familial affairs.¹⁴ At the same time, due to the expansion of education among men and the rise of a middle class, there was the rise of a new model of womanhood which was a fusion of the older traditional *brahminical* value of *pativrata* (self-sacrifice and devotion to husband) combined with a Victorian emphasis upon women as 'enlightened mothers and companions to men'.

In the case of Bengal, Tanika Sarkar has revealed some of these contradictions clearly through the autobiography of Rash Sundari Devi. For Rash Sundari, the reading of sacred texts used to be a secret and silent affair for a long time to fulfil a long-held desire without disturbing the structure of power in the household. Similarly, J. Devika has pointed out that the Victorian ideals, which were against women's education claimed that 'such an exercise of the mind's energy would de-feminize women, in fact, shrink their wombs', because women were biologically unstable and unable to receive rational thoughts.¹⁵

¹⁰Report of the Indian Education commission, p. 533.

¹¹P. J. Hartog, *History of Rural Education in U. P.*, Simla: Central Publication Branch (Government of India), 1929, p. 188.

¹²Shobhna Nijhawan, *Periodical literature in Colonial North India: Women and Girls in the Hindi Public sphere*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 10.

¹³Tanika Sarkar, *Stri Shiksha or Education for Women*, In Mary E. John (Ed.) *Women's Studies in India: A Reader*, Delhi: Penguin Group, 2008, p. 321.

¹⁴Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001, p. 109.

¹⁵J. Devika, *Herself: Early Writings on Gender by Malayalee Women (1898-1938)*, translated from the *Malayalam*, Kolkata: Stree, 2005, pp. x- xi.

A similar trend was seen in the United Provinces. 'Babu Tota Ram', an advocate in the High court of N.W.P. during late nineteenth century wrote a book called, 'Stri Dharma Bodhini'. In this book, the middle-class person such as Tota Ram himself wanted to educate women in order to make them better obedient companions for men (life partners) who could obey them without questioning, yet serve his parents in a better way and care for children efficiently. He related education with the household. He even declared that the main religion of a woman was to obey her husband, take care of the children, to perform religious duties and behave appropriately. At the same time, he advocated that sons and daughters should be educated equally.¹⁶ The same view was expressed by Moolchand Bhatt in the Saraswati magazine (didactic literature). He wrote:

*Koi jaati tab takunnatike shikar par nahinpahunchsakti jab takuskegharo ki striyokogyannahinhota. Aachi grahini banana keliyestriyokoaisishiksha ki awashyakata hai jisseygrahasthijivanmeinpravesh hone kepehle hi veyuskebhavahankarneyogya ho jaye. Unki shiksha ka laksyayahi hone chahiye ki veyagyakariistri, aachimata, and aachigrahini ban sake, auraurokeliyeaadrasht ka kaam de. Mata keache ya bure vyavahaarkodekhkarsantanbhiaachi ya buribanti hai. Grahini aachi hone hi seghar ka purasukhaanubhavhota hai.*¹⁷

(No nation can be reach at the peak of progress without educating its women. To shape women as efficient housewives, they ought to be educated in such as way that they are ready to shoulder the burden of the family before marriage. The objectives of their education should be to become an obedient wife, a good mother, a good housewife and be a role model for others. Children imbibe good and bad qualities of a mother. A good house-wife can make a happy home.)

Similarly, a book (literature for the women) called 'Adarsh Mata: Pratham Bhag', written by Hemant Kumari Chaudhari¹⁸ discussed the importance of education in the home affairs, child upbringing and their education, pedagogy of teaching, and the roles and duties of women in the progress of house and society. She made comparisons of educated and uneducated women by using fictional conversations between husband and wife.¹⁹

Against this background, education was considered important for the 'appropriate behavior of women' in society. Everyone who wrote for women accepted that there was a decline in the 'high character' of women in the contemporary period. Rao Mahabir Prasad Narain Sinha Bahadur wrote a book (literature) for the use of Indian girls with the permission of private Secretary, and in the preface, he accepted that *Strikehathomeindokulo ki maryada hai*. (The dignity of two families i.e. the natal home and marital home is in hands of a woman.) But he wrote on contemporary

¹⁶Tota Ram, *Stri Dharm Bodhini*, Aligarh: The Bharat Bandhu Press, 1899, p. 94.

¹⁷Moolchand Bhatt, 'Striyon ki Shiksha Kaisi Honi Chahiye?' In Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi, (ed.), *Saraswati Sachitr Masik Patrika*, (Monthly Hindi Magazine), Part- 18, Vol. 1, January- June, Prayag: Indian Press, 1917, p. 67.

¹⁸Srimati Hemant Kumari Chaudhari, *Adarsh Mata, Pratham Bhag*, Lahore: Punjab Economical, 1911. Hemant Kumari Chaudhari was a Bengali Lady born at Lahore and educated mostly in Upper India but finally in Calcutta. She was daughter of Pandit Navin Chandra Rai, prominent Bengali in the Punjab and member of Brahma Samaj. Her book is based on conversation between husband (School teacher) and his wife (house wife).

¹⁹Ibid.

education system that women were taught neither 'High Character' nor high education. According to him, every book was full of critique of 'Karkash, kalahpriya, Aasabhya Banitao' (harsh (rough), quarrelsome, uncivilized). That is why he accepted the need to improve the 'character' of women and wrote 'how to improve the character of these Banitao' (women).²⁰

School Inside and Outside:Class, Caste and Womanly Virtue: Women in the nineteenth century Indian society were defined within a set of binaries such as 'good' (aachi) versus 'bad' (buri), modest (lazzawan) versus immodest (nirlazz) and appropriate (ucchit) versus inappropriate (annuchiit). Simultaneously, a pedagogy was developed to teach upper caste women 'good', 'modest' and 'appropriate' behaviors in contrast with 'bad', 'immodest' and 'inappropriate' behavior of lower caste and untouchable women. Words like 'lazza', and 'nirlazz' were used very frequently. 'Jiseylazzanahin us sepaapbahuthote hai, Strinirlazzjaisevyanjanbina loch ke'.²¹(The woman who is not shy or modest (lazza) is sinful. Shameless women are equal to food without starch.) Simultaneously 'bad' women were compared and equalized with low caste and 'untouchable' women. Sexual accessibility was given a low status in the hierarchy.

The British, as well as the indigenous elite, had deployed the stereotypes about 'bad' women which equated them with lower caste women.²² Textbooks which portrayed the lower caste women as 'bad' were issued under the permission of the Director of Public Instruction. This stereotyping was also made explicit in the efforts to control prostitution in the Kumaun region. The report of 1871, for instance, it was stated that women who were involved in prostitution and spreading venereal diseases among British army men, were women of low caste specifically 'dom' women. It was imagined that these 'dom' (untouchable women) were involved in prostitution as the source of their income because their husbands did not work. They were considered 'utterly immoral' by the colonial officers and were seen as easily accessible to the soldiers. Their employment as grass and woodcutters, and coolies employed in the cantonment gave them every opportunity of practicing their illicit trade in the hill areas where there were so many ravines and quiet spots suited to their purpose, and the police were unable to detect every case.²³ The Cantonment Magistrate of Raneekhet wrote to the Commissioner of Kumaon on 25th August 1871 wrote that he was informed by 'respectable' person that seventy percent of 'dom' population were diseased in the province. Colonial officials depicted it as general immorality which was common among both 'dom' men and women. The females of this class worked as grass cutters and coolies, cultivators, etc. They were called 'quiet prostitutes', as it added an extra income to their family.²⁴

Many proverbs of the nineteenth century celebrated this fact. For instance, *Gadha mare kumhar ka aurdhobinsatihoye*. It was a critique of the sexuality of lower caste and untouchable women. Here the *dhobin* (washerwoman) could have relations with the donkey and when the donkey died, would

²⁰Rao Mahabir Prasad Narain Sinha Bahadur, *Shri Hari, Banita- Prabodha*, Kashi: Bharatjivan Press, 1894, p. 2. He was from Baraon, Allahabad.

²¹Pandit Jasram, *Stri Shiksha Subodhini, part I, Maharajah of Viziangram's Series of Books for Native Female Schools*, Benares: E.J. Lazarus and Co., 1869, p. 18. Author was part of Queen College of Benares.

²²*Proceeding of the Government of North-Western Provinces, in the General Department, for the month of February, 1872*, Allahabad: Government Printing Press, pp. 5-14.

²³*Proceeding of the Government of N.W.P. for the month of February, 1872*, p. 14.

²⁴*Ibid.*

immolate herself. Most of the low-caste and untouchable women used to be portrayed as sexually accessible.²⁵ Prostitution and poverty were linked with each other. Moreover, women of poor classes were also considered easy to harass. Proverbs such as *Garib ki jorusabh ki bhabhi* explained that the wife of the poor man is the sister in law of every man. The relationship between a woman and her husband's brother always aroused the suspicion that there was a sexual relationship. The sexuality of poor man's wife was considered accessible to men of society. Other proverbs such as *Nayi naiyn, bansh ka niharna*, also implied that women of barber caste were stared even by bamboos. Hence it explained that low caste women and 'untouchable' women's sexuality was considered promiscuous not only by the colonial officials but reformers and upper caste middle class urban men.

The textbooks of the time help us to explore the binary that was developing between good and bad women. In 1870, Babu Kali Charan, (Head Clerk in the office of Director of Public Instruction) translated a textbook *Stri Bhushan*, into Hindi with the permission of Bareilly Society. He explained *Aao Lakshmi Jaldi karo Ab apnikitabpadhoishh kalam seaksharokopahichano Kitab phado mat Issh sabadkehijekaro Tum aachiladki ho Ab jaoaurkhelo Jab tak hum tumkobhitarnabulaye*.²⁶ (Come Lakshmi (name) and quickly read your book, identify the alphabets with this pen, do not tear books, practice these words, you are a good girl, now go and play till we call you inside.) A girl was 'good' if she behaved in this manner.²⁷ It was advisable to speak the truth and taking sweet (*meeta*) and not to speak in such a way that subjected you to insult.²⁸ (*Meeta aur such bolo, kabhi hath uchhalaurmuhmatakarna bolo jissetumarithithaisuchit ho.*)

In another chapter of the same book, the author gave the example of a girl named 'Kaushlaya' who was also considered a 'good' girl, because she used to go to school and studied hard as long as she was in school. She concentrated on her books till she finished her chapter, and played only after that. She was so kind that every girl was pleased to play with her.²⁹ The writer wanted to stress that a 'good' girl always worked hard at her school work and finished her work on time but also enjoyed playing. If the girl was kind, every girl wanted to play with her. In another chapter, through the example of another girl *Parvati*, showed the love towards birds and the importance of their freedom. It was a conversation between two girls, one who wanted to keep the bird in the cage while the other wanted to set it free. She said that *Tumko aisakarnaucchitnahin hai kyunki hum jante hai ki tum bhipinjaremein band honaaurkhetomeinnadhauhdnanahinchahogi*. (This is not appropriate for you, you know that you will not want to stay in prison and not run in fields.) Then *Parvati* freed the bird from the cage.³⁰

In this passage, the writer is comparing the girl with a bird. Both wanted to fly in the sky. Neither wanted to stay in the cage: the cage and fields were used as metaphors of Dependence and

²⁵Babu Prabhu Das, *Drishant Kosh- Proverbs, Hindi, Urdu and Persian Collected and alphabetical arranged* Allahabad: Allahabad: Mission Press, 1870. He was a Clerk in the Settlement office of Gorakhpur and Basti, and was Head Master of Gorakhpur Mission School

²⁶Babu Kali Charan, *Stri Bhushan*, Bareilly: Ruhelkhand Literary Society, 1870, pp. 1-2.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Pandit Bansidhar, *Suta Sikshawali, Part II*, Agra: Nurul Iulum, 1865, p. 76. This textbook was published with the permission of Director of Public Instruction for the girls' school.

²⁹Charan, *Stri Bhushan*, pp. 2-3.

³⁰*Ibid*, pp. 3-4.

Freedom. This example promoted a love of the environment and animals while it was argued as a matter of freedom for both of them. Simultaneously, it taught the virtues of kindness and selflessness which were considered as prerequisites for a 'devoted and pativrata wife'. There are many examples in the textbook given by other authors, too, which emphasized love and sensitivity towards the animals and environment. In the other stories using animal characters, writers demonstrated the difference between 'moral' and 'immoral', 'good' and 'bad'.

Another story was about a young goat who was eaten by an older wolf because he did not adhere to suggestions of his mother and strayed outside the control of the shepherd. The Shepherd was portrayed as kind by other goats and wolves. But the freedom to go outside enjoyed by the young became the cause of his death. Through this and various other stories the writer seemed to show that freedom was good but it should be under the guidance of elders or parents. If we interpret the moral of such stories for the behavior of girls, it would be that a person (girls) should not do anything without the permission of her parents; otherwise, she will be in trouble.³¹

The author one of the textbooks declared that, *Acha bacha woh hai jo apne ma-baap ki aagya manta hai aur jhutnahinbolta.* (A good child never lies and is obedient towards own parents.) *Aachi ladkiwoh hai jo ma ka kahna manti hai uskoaanaddeti hai.* (A good girl is always obedient towards her mother and pleases her.) Girls were asked to follow mother, grandmothers and other women in these textbooks. One interesting observation is that some kinds of morals were the same for both girls and boys such as obeying parents, hard work, telling truth, not being greedy, sensitivity towards the environment, kindness, and being hygienic. But the difference arose with reference to morals and its application to the family.

In general, it can be observed that the textbooks of that time referred to an 'Aachi ladki' (a good girl) as a girl who does not hurt her family. It was explained that to be scolded by your mother is better than to lie. It was, hence said that one should not fear punishment in the way that one fears telling lies. This textbook was for girls' schools, but most of the animal characters were masculine except the Goat and the fox as mother.³²

*Tum sab ladkiyo ko ucchit hai ki bade savare prasannta se uth kar apne aankh muh ko dhulao phir kapde ko pahin ma ya dadi ke paas jao jahan badi namrata se baitho aur bina puche mat bolo aur jise puche usey kaho aur veh jis kaam aur khel ko kahe usey karo aur jisey roke usey mat karo kyunki abhi tum aagyan ho isiliye ma ya dadi ke kehne ke annusar bartogi toh sada sukh pati rahogi.*³³

(It is appropriate that all you girls wake up early in morning, clean your face and eyes and after wearing your clothes, go to mother or grandmother, sit politely, not speak without being spoken to; you must say and play whatever they ask you to do, not do that which is forbidden, because you are still ignorant. If you obey your mother and grandmother, you will be always happy.)

³¹*Ibid*, pp. 4-5.

³²*Ibid*, pp. 14-17.

³³*Ibid*, p. 75.

For the adult women it was prescribed that they should be 'pativarta', 'pray to god', 'Not look at other men with evil eyes', 'stay away from lewd women', 'do not fight with children', 'do not allow children to wear jewellery', 'take care of cleanliness of children', 'develop the good habits and virtues among the children'.³⁴

Most of the contemporary literature on advice and morality appreciated the hard work and criticised idleness. *Samay kovryathanagavayo, sadaaisekamomeinlagiraho jin sebhala ki aasha ho.* (Do not waste time, always pursue meaningful works).³⁵ Idle women were taunted and literate ones were assumed to be working and praised. It was considered that literate women always does work and does not sit idle. Proverbs such as *Sui tuti, kasidese chute* was a taunt to those women who used the excuse of a broken needle to avoid crochet (knitting)). *Sui* (needle) and *kasida* (crochet) both were related to women.³⁶ It was a very important part of the mission schools' curriculum. Hard work was prescribed for both the girls and boys, but criticism of laziness and idleness was only for girls as it was to criticize most of the upper caste and middle-class women who had servants and did not pay proper attention to the house. Here again, most of the morals for the girls were connected with family welfare and the economic efficiency of the house.

Satire was used to explain which kinds of the woman were considered 'good'. *Nayi jawani, manjhadhila*, compared women to the thread of a kite which is very difficult to control. *Dileri mardo ka gehna hai aurnazakatar to ka.* (Wholeheartedness is jewellery of men and softness of women.) These kinds of proverbs revealed the kind of virtues that emerged for both men and women.

Poor people and poverty itself were treated as if they made society vulnerable. Many examples showed that poor can alleviate their positions through education but there was not a single example of a lower caste person improving their social status through education. This can be seen in proverbs such as *Jahan jayebhuka, vahipadesukha.* (Wherever poor goes, there is drought).³⁷ Education was imagined in these textbooks as an asset only to alleviate poverty. There were many examples of women who came from a poor background but were educated and appreciated by society. For example, One poor girl 'Shubdhra' learned reading and writing and needlework and when she went to her in-laws' house, all women in the in-laws' family were impressed by her intelligence and politeness. She was so highly appreciated in the town that even the queen visited her place.³⁸ This example showed that a poor girl can also get appreciation through education. This education was, however, notably given in schools, but it is described that most of the poor girls also used to learn reading, writing and needlework from their mothers. This training used to be given by the mother to her daughter before marriage. But there were no instances of writers talking about education as a means for overcoming caste prejudices, and caste was explicitly explained in textbooks and encouraged. The Maharajah of *Vizianagram* opened two institutions in Benares, one

³⁴Pandit Taradutt, *Hitopadesh*, Allahabad: Government Printing Press, 1899, Taradutt, wrote this Textbook under the permission of Director of Public Instruction for the primary schools, he was Deputy Inspector of Kumaun region.

³⁵Charan, *Stri Bhushan*, p. 76.

³⁶Das, *Drishant Kosh*, p. 76.

³⁷*Ibid*, pp. 76-77.

³⁸ Pandit Bansidhar, *Suta Sikshawali, Part II*, Agra: Nurul Ilum, 1865, pp. 76-77.

for young Hindu ladies and others for the poorer high caste girls. With the consent of the Maharajah, a series of textbooks for girls schools was prepared which contained reading, lessons in grammar, geography, and arithmetic. The tenth chapter of the book explained that:

Vidya kepadhnesabadalaabh hai,
Brahman jati uttam hai,
Kshtiya vaisya seuttamhote hai,
Shudra sab senich hai³⁹

(There are many benefits of learning, Brahmans caste is supreme, *Kshrityas* are superior to better than *Vaisyas*, and *Shudra* are the lowest.) While the education was appreciated, the caste hierarchy was simultaneously reiterated through the textbook.

Most of the reformers who were writing popular literature and textbooks were from the middle class and upper castes, occupying government jobs such as lawyers, teachers, headmasters, head clerks, inspectors or working in the education department, members of legislative assembly and part of various reform movements (such as *Arya Samaj*, *Brahmo Samaj*, *Kayasth Samaj*, or *Agarwal Samaj* etc). Influences from these positions are reflected in their writings. Through popular literature and textbooks they created a discourse of ‘morality of women’ in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century U.P. One noticeable thing was that all writers were writing in middle class, upper caste and urban settings. That was the reason why the issue of the morality of low caste women and rural women came into focus, though only through inference. Even women who wrote did not challenge the morals of the middle class in urban areas, nor did they go beyond this perspective. It was only in the 1920s (after the Royal Commission on Agriculture of 1917) which gave special attention to agricultural conditions of India that women of a rural setting came into such written discourses. Neither these reformers nor the colonial state had discussed rural women and their education before the 1920s. Similar textbooks (urban and middle class centric) were prescribed in rural schools where the contents of the textbook did not match the circumstance of rural and lower caste women. Textbooks were alien to rural children to connect with their circumstances.

The main objective of educating women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was clearly to maintain cultural and domestic happiness and to provide ‘appropriate knowledge’ to them. It was not imagined by reformers that education would make them conscious of their roles outside the home. By the 1880s, however, women started to come into various professions such as teaching, nursing, compounding, etc., and therefore put their education to different uses beyond the home. Even so, as we shall see, the emergence of women in these new professions could not alter the role they played in the domestic spheres.

Conclusion: In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, women, in particular, were educated in order to make them better and more efficient housewives and mothers. Education was necessary to make women ‘modern’ according to certain Victorian ideals, provide good companionship to men

³⁹Pandit Jasram, *Stri Shiksha Subodhin*, part I, Maharajah of Viziangram’s Series of Books for Native Female Schools, Benares: E.J. Lazarus and Co., 1869, p. 8.

while retaining the good traits of the devoted wife or 'pativrata' as it was perceived to have been the case in the Indian past. It was generally the upper caste and middle-class people of the United Provinces who wrote on the necessity of imparting morals to women through education. Colonial officers' writings are silent on this question. The colonial policy was to make the education 'secular' or 'neutral', but in the case of women's education however, the content betrayed the strong influence of Brahmanism. The 'appropriate behavior of women' was determined through ancient religious texts. Textbooks which were written for women did not go beyond the urban and middle-class perspective even if they were studied in rural areas. A caste and class bias is explicitly reflected in them. Voices and perspectives of the marginalized and minority communities such as Muslims, untouchables and lower castes were not taken into account by the colonial education system and its debates. They accepted the need for education for women in general, but it was full of moral tenets which were decided by the moral tone of the upper caste reformers and officers in colonial education offices. Control over the upper caste women's sexuality was the main agenda while low caste women and the women of untouchable castes were seen as embodying 'inappropriate behavior' in comparison to the upper caste women.

Colonial school textbooks understood morality as based on the general principle of 'moral' behavior while the indigenous elites who wrote didactic literature for women emphasized on morality that was prescribed in the sacred texts of religion. References of caste were seen in both notions of morality.

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1. Kumkum Sangari and Suresh Vaid (Ed.), *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989, pp. 5-9.
2. See, Charu Gupta, *Caste and Gender: Dalit Women in North India*, Delhi: Permanent Black, 2015, and Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Caste, Culture and Hegemony: Social Dominance in Colonial Bengal*, New Delhi: Sage, 2004.
3. Uma Chakravarty argued that Brahminical patriarchy regulates the women's sexuality and caste played important role in it. See Uma Chakravarty, *Gendering Caste: Through a Feminist Lens*, Kolkatta: Stree, 1993.
4. Some Hindu and Muslim elite wished to keep their daughters in ignorance in order to ensure that they would prove faithful wives and better housekeepers. It was also the notion that God would snatch the happiness of an educated daughter. There was also a fear that missionary education would make them unfit for the house. Missionaries had given many examples of such attitudes that they came across. For instance, Miss Blaze wrote of Etawah during 1880s, she wrote that, 'I was speaking to one of the richest men in this town about the building of a girls' school, which he wishes to have in the same street where his own palace stands, together with many others belonging to him. I asked if he had any daughters who would attend the school, upon which he answered sadly, that some time ago one of his daughters began to learn reading, and almost immediately became a widow. He really seemed to believe that goddess Kali had been offended by his daughter's learning, and had killed her husband out of revenge, so as to bring upon her widowhood, which is here considered the greatest misfortune that can befall a woman. He therefore resolved that no girl of his family should again attempt reading,

- or attend the school we were planning.' The Indian Female Evangelist- Vol. v, October 1880, No. xxxvi, London: James Nisbet &Co., pp. 252-53.
5. I am using the term 'lesser known reformers' who were writing to reform the society but not very widely known. Their agenda was to improve their condition of women of their own sect, caste, or religion.
 6. Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007, p. 65.
 7. Tanika Sarkar, 'Stri Shiksha or Education for women', in Mary E. John (ed.) *Women's Studies in India: A Reader*, Delhi: Penguin Group, 2008, p. 321.
 8. Indrani Sen, 'D'evoted Wife/Sensuous Bibi: Colonial Constructions of the Indian Woman (1860-1900)', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, Vol. 8, No, 1, 2008, p. 15.
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 14. Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001, p. 109.
 15. J. Devika, *Herself: Early Writings on Gender by Malayalee Women (1898-1938)*, translated from the Malayalam, Kolkata: Stree, 2005, pp. x- xi.
 16. Tota Ram, *Stri Dharm Bodhini*, Aligarh: The Bharat Bandhu Press, 1899, p. 94.
 17. Moolchand Bhatt, 'Striyon ki Shiksha Kaisi Honi Chahiye?' In Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi , (ed.), *Saraswati Sachitr Masik Patrika*, (Monthly Hindi Magazine), Part- 18, Vol. 1, January- June, Prayag: Indian Press, 1917, p. 67.
 18. Srimati Hemant Kumari Chaudhari, *Adarsh Mata*, Pratam Bhag, Lahore: Punjab Economical, 1911. Hemant Kumari Chaudhari was a Bengali Lady born at Lahore and educated mostly in Upper India but finally in Calcutta. She was daughter of Pandit Navin Chandra Rai, prominent Bengali in the Punjab and member of Brahma Samaj. Her book is based on conversation between husband (School teacher) and his wife (house wife).
 19. Ibid.
 20. Rao Mahabir Prasad Narain Sinha Bahadur, *Shri Hari*, Banita- Prabodha, Kashi: Bharatjivan Press, 1894, p. 2. He was from Baraon, Allahabad.
 21. Pandit Jasram, *Stri Shiksha Subodhini*, part I, Maharajah of Viziangram's Series of Books for Native Female Schools, Benares: E.J. Lazarus and Co., 1869, p. 18. Author was part of Queen College of Benares.
 22. *Proceeding of the Government of North-Western Provinces*, in the General Department, for the month of February, 1872, Allahabad: Government Printing Press, pp. 5-14.
 23. *Proceeding of the Government of N.W.P.* for the month of February, 1872, p. 14.
 24. Ibid.

25. Babu Prabhu Das, Drishant Kosh- Proverbs, Hindi, Urdu and Persian Collected and alphabetical arranged Allahabad: Allahabad: Mission Press, 1870. He was a Clerk in the Settlement office of Gorakhpur and Basti, and was Head Master of Gorakhpur Mission School
26. Babu Kali Charan, Stri Bhushan, Bareilly: Ruhelkhand Literary Society, 1870, pp. 1-2.
27. Ibid.
28. Pandit Bansidhar, Suta Sikshawali, Part II, Agra: Nurul Ilum, 1865, p. 76. This textbook was published with the permission of Director of Public Instruction for the girls' school.
29. Charan, Stri Bhushan, pp. 2-3.
30. Ibid, pp. 3-4.
31. Ibid, pp. 4-5.
32. Ibid, pp. 14-17.
33. Ibid, p. 75.
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36. Das, Drishant Kosh, p. 76.
37. Ibid, pp. 76-77.
38. Pandit Bansidhar, Suta Sikshawali, Part II, Agra: Nurul Ilum, 1865, pp. 76-77.
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