PART II

SOCIAL THOUGHT
CHAPTER 3

Gopalrao’s Analysis of Social Life
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GOPALRAO'S ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL LIFE

The introduction of British rule in India brought a new feeling and infused people with new Western ideas. It was a challenge which had never been faced before. As a consequence, two main trends of thoughts emerged in the nineteenth century. One of them believed that the introduction of British rule was not only a political phenomenon brought in by a political change, but a manifestation of imperfections in the social life of the Hindus. If a social change is brought about in the Hindu society, a consistent political change could consequently take place. This school dominated Maharashtra in the earlier phase and was represented, directly or indirectly, by the earlier thinkers like Baleshastri Jambhekar, Gopalrao Hari Deshmukh, Mahadev Govind Ranade and subsequently, by Gopal Ganesh Agarkar.

The other trend, however, believed that if a political change was brought about, it would ease out all social ailments; and, therefore, gave priority to political change. This school of thought emerged in the later part of the nineteenth century when institutional life in Maharashtra had begun; and the seeds of political evolution were being sown. By this time, the Bombay University was established, the revolt of 1857 was crushed, the power of the East India Company was
transferred to the Crown, newspapers multiplied, and the attitude of the British rulers gradually began to undergo a radical change. The telephone, telegraphs, railways and such other means of communication were introduced and deliberations for establishing Indian National Congress were conducted. This school was represented by Vishnushastri Chipulkar and Lokamanya Tilak.

Gopalrao represented the former school of thought and as such, gave prominent place to social thought in his writings.

With the defeat of the Peshwa in 1818, his territories were transferred to the East India Company and Elphinstone, with his able statesmanship, gradually pacified the people. Only five years after the transition took place Gopalrao was born.

As his introspective and critical mind was not prepared to put the blame for the change at the door of 'destiny', or the influence of time, he began to investigate the underlying causes. What impressed him most was the social solidarity among the new rulers. A comparison of the social life of the rulers with that of Hindus revealed that the latter was responsible for the catastrophic change, and only an improvement in it would motivate political emancipation. Gopalrao regarded the advent of British rule as a sign of our social retreat.

After tracing the causes of the disintegration of the Hindus in their social institutions, Gopalrao tried to
investigate further the causes in detail. He adopted a twofold
analysis: in the former part he generalised the causes, while
in the latter, made their application to the Hindus in parti-
cular.

General Causes

While trying to formulate a general theory of social
change, Gopalrao thought that decline and prosperity follow a
cyclical course. Rise and fall take place like a sandclock:
one prospers, then declines, and prospers again. The Sun rises,
reaches the zenith and sets. Similarly revolutions occur like
the gyrations of a chariot-wheel revolving around the axis
of time. It is a perpetual cycle, running since the origin
of the earth.

These ideas are significant: while the Sun rises, sets
and again rises, a new day dawns. Similarly, the chariot-wheel
involves two types of movements: the one circular and the
other linear: the wheel following a circular and the chariot
a linear course; the former represented by ups and downs, rise
and fall; the the latter by progress. Thus Gopalrao's idea of
progress is more dynamic than the traditional one.

In the Mahabharata, Sanjaya explains to Dhritarashtra
that rise and fall, happiness and misery were caused by time
again and again. Gopalrao's analysis might be identified with
this theory, but still there is a fundamental difference.
Gopalrao did not mean that human beings were powerless in these natural forces. Had he believed thus, he would have been a fatalist. But he held that there were definite human causes such as injustice, sensuality and wickedness behind the deterioration. The affluence of a country paves the way for its decline.

Having a deep faith in the ability of man, he regarded that the phase of prosperity can be prolonged with the help of knowledge. As human deficiencies accelerate the process of disintegration, human efforts, reflected in the propagation of knowledge could retard it and elongate the phase of prosperity.

With the help of the foregoing analysis, Gopalrao demonstrated that Aryans, Muslims, Marathas, and even Sikhs had undergone both the phases of prosperity and degeneration. As for the British people, he said, they were then in the phase of prosperity. About two thousand years ago, we were prospering while they were so ignorant that nobody was prepared to purchase them as even as slaves. But ever since that time they struggled hard for attaining prosperity.

Particular Causes

Gopalrao, however, was not satisfied merely with stating the general causes of the downfall. He extended his general analysis for finding out the causes of the degeneration of Hindus in particular and concluded that the imperfections and
and drawbacks in the Hindu social system, were responsible for the catastrophic change.  

While analysing the social life of Hindus, he found two diametrically opposite stages: the period of homogeneity and prosperity which they enjoyed some five thousand years ago and that of heterogeneity, decline and disintegration at the time of the Peshwas's defeat.

With historical insight, he explained that when Hindus were prosperous five thousand years ago, there were no social evils. During the phase of prosperity they were resolute and courageous, devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, and resourceful. He alluded that at the time of the Pandawas, Hindus were prosperous, and the period was characterised by wise and learned poets like Valmiki and Vyasa, singers like Narada; scientists like Kapila; warriors like Arjuna; truth-tellers like Dharma. India, at the time, occupied a coveted position. But several causes conspired and made the disintegration of Hindus evident.

Attracted by the affluence of India, Aryans settled here, and in course of time, became inactive. All the time they lost themselves in the mechanics of routine rituals. Muslim aggression took place when the Aryans were under torpor, as it were. Ferocious Muslims annihilated them and desecrated their temples. After some time, they all fell victims to the affluence and were intoxicated with wealth. Afterwards, they fought
with each other and mutually weakened themselves. The Marathas took advantage of the confusion and ruled the country for some time; but having no wisdom to retain the fruits of their conquests, were conquered by the British. 15

As a rationalist, he remarked that the process of degeneration started soon after Hindus lost their self-consciousness and disregarded reason. The light of reason was extinguished and people began to evade responsibilities by solely blaming 'time' for their individual imperfections and failures, and excused themselves under the all-inclusive concept of 'Kaliyuga' for their inaction. 16 The religious attitude of the Hindus, based upon scriptural authority rather than on any rational principle, made them antithetical to mundane reforms. 17 Brahmins, protected by the framework of caste system, abdicated their responsibility of pursuing knowledge. The process was further accentuated by books on 'Agama'. 18 People spent all their time in seeking pleasure. Festivals such as Holi, were practised. In a mood of self-contentment, they lost their critical attitude and dynamic character. Through the influence of customs and blind traditional beliefs, the social machine lost its motion.

Bacon, Descartes and Luther led an attack on scriptural authority, blind faith, and fatalism which brought the Dark Ages to an end. Kopaleo revolted against the same evils. 19

In the meantime, no modernisation was effected, nor any new ideas originated. 20 Society remained internally divided on account of injustice to women on the one hand and
caste differences on the other. Patriotism seemed to have disappeared. All the social evils culminated during the reign of Bajirao II. Gopalrao compared the social system to a watchdog; when it remained indifferent, foreigners entered India under the garb of missionaries, preachers, traders or physicians, and claimed ownership of the land.

In his analysis, Gopalrao's principal stress was upon the social aspect. He gave only secondary importance to the political aspect, and still less to the economic aspect. It was only at a subsequent stage during the great famines in 1876-79 that he was impelled to give more thought to economic causes.

Gopalrao appears to have devoted himself intensively to this problem of social dynamics before he formulated his theory of social change. It might have haunted him ever since he was a child and can be traced back to his early age. Once a General happened to remark: "If the Brahmins were so accurate in shooting, why did they lose their kingdom?" Gopalrao promptly answered that they did not lose it on account of their deficiency in shooting, but on account of their internal dissensions.

Evidence from Indian history justifies Gopalrao's stand that the Hindus were far advanced and homogeneous in the beginning. Terkaateertha Lexmanshastri Joshi points out that only in India, there was complete freedom of thought and
religion during the ancient and medieval period, but after 800 A.D. the stagnation began. 24

The invasion of Islam demonstrated imperfections in the traditional society and its first prey was Buddhism. Till the seventeenth century, Muslims destroyed the Somnath Temple four times, but the social system of the Hindus failed to organise and consolidate political and military power for counteracting the Muslim challenge. At the same time, Gopalrao was not blind to the achievements of rulers like Shivaji, but he regarded that it was a consequence of individual efforts rather than of the social system. 25

While criticising the Hindus, Gopalrao launched a scathing attack on their social system, but he was not a pessimist. He did not regard the defects as insurmountable, nor did he ignore the obstacles in the path of progress. He said that the extensive character of the Indian territory was the greatest impediment in introducing reforms. 26 Still more formidable was the social difficulty of widespread apathy: the Brahmans were not prepared to pay attention to mundane reforms. Money-lenders and shopkeepers were engrossed with their business alone; women were not regarded as human beings; Shastris and Pandits had restricted themselves to academic luxuries and the Kumbis were ignorant. 27

Nevertheless, Gopalrao was not an impatient reformer, convinced in his heart that the process of social dynamics
could not be hastened, he said that reforms could not be introduced overnight. He pointed out that even a child takes ten to twenty years for his advancement; the nation would normally require three to four hundred years. 28

It is significant that in course of his reflections upon Indian history, Subhas Chandra Bose arrived at the following general conclusions, which favourably compare with Gopalrao's analysis:-

1. A period of rise has been followed by a period of decline to be followed by a new upheaval.
2. The decline is the result chiefly of physical and intellectual fatigue. 29

Criticism

Through this analysis of social life which involved a direct attack on the tenets of Hindu religion, Gopalrao invited criticism upon himself. Some critics alleged that the argument of underestimation of Hindu religion was borrowed from Christian missionaries.

Vishnushastri Chiplunker was Gopalrao's vehement contemporary critic. Overwhelmed by extreme patriotic sentiments, he tried to portray Gopalrao as an iconoclast in his 'Kibandhamala'. 30
Vishnushastri believed in the soundness of the principles on which Hindu Society was based. He said: "there is nothing basically wrong with the nation or the health of the body politic. What it does need is not strong medicines, but good nutritious food." He further regarded that: "The present plight of our country is not due to the innate defects in us, but to the stroke of misfortune which may come to the lot of any country in the world." 31

Vishnushastri’s above remarks show that he was unduly fatalistic about the problem of change. But as we are eager to take the credit for a good result, we must also be prepared to accept the responsibility for its distasteful consequences and should treat the whole thing as the result of our own creation instead of merely blaming fate for it.

Vishnushastri also believed in the cyclical nature of the process of rise and fall. He argued that Time would automatically change the present plight. Gopalrao, however, gave importance to human efforts and said that the phase of prosperity could be prolonged with the help of human knowledge and effort. 32

Vishnushastri, in principle, agreed with Gopalrao in that the imperfections of the Hindus were responsible for their degeneration but hastened to add that theoretical considerations had no bearing upon the practical analysis. 33 Agreeing with Gopalrao, Vishnushastri said that perhaps their views were
virtually identical but still for him, there was a substantial difference. While Gopalrao argued that India throughout the preceding period of three thousand years remained degraded, Vishnushastri, glorifying the past, believed that during that time, there were several eminent people in India. As a social critic has pointed out, Vishnushastri's argument was not based upon social diagnosis; and if there was any, it was only superficial. Of course, it is also true that, at that stage, the study of Indian history had not made much progress or reached perfection.

Even Lokamanya Tilak criticised Gopalrao for using his weapon of criticism mercilessly and humiliating Hindus all the time. But it was to awaken and prod a usually dormant society to action that Gopalrao had to utilise every available means. The Marathi language at that time was in a developing stage. Moreover, it is not correct that he criticised the Hindus all the time. He warned that it was unfair to underestimate the achievements of our forefathers.

Gopalrao's analysis of social life deeply influenced the thinkers during the later part of the century. Even his adversaries like Vishnushastri Chiplunkar and Lokamanya Tilak later virtually accepted the principles underlying it. When they started the New English School for propagating knowledge, and Gopalrao's vehement critic Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, in his 'Nibandhamala' and Lokamanya Tilak and Gopal Ganesh
Agerkar in their 'Kesar' and 'Maratha' attempted to educate and influence public opinion, they actually recognised the implications of what Gopalrao had been advocating all the while.

Gopalrao's social analysis is unique in that none, at any rate, in Maharashtra before him, had made such a comprehensive analysis of the process of social change. While arguing that good education, belief in reason, extinction of castes and religious differences, liquidation of parochialism, elimination of the principle of heredity and a brotherly attitude towards the cultivators were the sine qua non of governing a country, he virtually introduced democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity based upon social justice, to strive for.

It was in light of the foregoing social analysis that Gopalrao further examined the institutional framework of the Hindus.
NOTES

English

11. Subhas Chandra Bose also wrote: "After all, what has brought about India's downfall in the material and political sphere? It is her inordinate belief in fate and in the supernatural - her indifference to modern scientific development - her backwardness in the science of modern warfare, the peaceful contentment engendered by her letterday philosophy and adherence to ahimsa (non-violence) carried to the most absurd strength."

The Indian Struggle, (1920-1934), P. 162.

29. Quoted by V.P. Verma in Modern Indian Political Thought, P. 428.

30. Vishnushastri Chiplunkar wrote more than 150 pages on 'Lokahitawadi' in his 'Nibandhamala'.
1. मनोबोध २१
2. सार्थ अन्वेषण पृष्ठपृष्ठ, पृष्ठ १
3. मनोबोध २२
4. स्वाभाव, पृष्ठ २२
5. पुरातत्त्व देशातील इतिहास, पृष्ठ १
6. स्वाभाव, पृष्ठ २२
7. सार्थकवता, त्यातीत व्यक्तित्व आणि त्यांची हत्तीची विघटनी, पृष्ठ ६१
8. मनोबोध २२
9. सार्थकवता, त्यातीत व्यक्तित्व आणि त्यांची हत्तीची विघटनी, पृष्ठ ६१
10. किता पृष्ठ ६१
11. किता पृष्ठ ६२
12. पुरातत्त्व देशातील साहित्य इतिहास, पृष्ठ २२-३१
13. मनोबोध २२
14. मनोबोध २२
15. "कल्याणाचा पारंपर सनूंचे १०१२ या वर्षात फेलूवारी या १४ तारखा शान्ती आणि संध्या असल्यास... " "कल्याणाचा ज्या गोहणी निर्धारित बांधुवैयक्तिक आहेत त्यांचा कल्याण असे नाव आहे. समुदायाने... अंतरा-प्रत्येक चित्राव याचे अध्यात्मवाद व्यक्त करून... अध्यात्मवादाला क्रम येते असे अनेकाच्या व्यक्तींनी संस्कृत आहे."
पारम्परिक संस्कृतिकोश, भाग १, पं. महादेवताराम जोशी (संपादक) पृष्ठ १५२-१५४
16. पुरातत्त्व देशातील साहित्य इतिहास, पृष्ठ २२-३१
17. "...केंद्राना निष्ठा हे हुशारे नाव आहे. त्याचे प्रमाणे त्यांच्या आम्ही ही अन्य संता आहे. त्याचे, राज्यविभाग व शहरात आहे आमाचे तीन तेथ आहे. ...
प्रित्यूंबुवें रुपारे हुशारे शासन हा आम्हाच्या कार्यात मानात.
भारतीय संस्कृतिकोष, पं.महादेवरावासानी जोगी (संपा.) भंड १, पृष्ठ २२६-२१७

१९. जोग रावणी., (संपा.) माराठी वाच्यासाठी इतिहास, भंड ५, (१६००-१६५४), पृष्ठ ६१७

२०. निवेदनांक ५०

२१. स्वाध्याय, प्रस्तावित, पृष्ठ ६-६

२२. गुजरात देशाचा इतिहास, प्रस्तावित, पृष्ठ १

२३. लाल रमावर, राज विद्याधर गोपालराव इंद्री देशावधि महापृणे "छोळकिलाडी" यांचे जीवन, पृष्ठ १४

२४. "नयात", नोव्हेंबर १९११

२५. "नयात", नोव्हेंबर १९२१

२६. तोळकिलाडी माफिक पुस्तकाचा उदेश

२७. निवेदनांक ५१४

२८. फिसा ५११

२९. फिसा ५५

३०. रिपवन राम गुप्तासारी, "निवेदनांक", रिपवन, पृष्ठ १३९

३१. नामतेंगू, भारतीय प्रचार्यांत गोमती देवींची निष्ठाती, पृष्ठ ६९

३२. विश्वास कर, विश्वनाथ, "निभादाचा", विष्णुनाथ, पृष्ठ १०१

३३. फिसा १५५, फिसा १५७, फिसा ४१३

३४. फिसा ४०९, फिसा ४०२

३५. पारीश गोक्तने, भारतीय राजनीतीचे निष्ठाकार - वालंग प्रकाश टिक, पृष्ठ ५

३६. अपवरत, (संपा.), तोळकिलाडी माफिक राजकी आत्मकथा व आत्मकथांनी, भंड १, पृष्ठ १०५

३७. "नयात", ऑगस्ट १९२२
"अकडित्वादी यांची निगडक प्रामाण्य प्रस्तावना, ऑक वि.को. पृष्ठ १६४

२१. स्वाभाविक प्रस्तावना, पृष्ठ १६५

३०. प्रभावारोग १७६
CHAPTER 4

LEADERSHIP: TRAHMINS
CHAPTER 4

LEADERSHIP: BRAHMIN

"Leadership" says Bernard: "refers to the quality of the behaviour of individuals whereby they guide people of their activities in organised effort."\(^1\)

Gopalrao criticised the uninspiring leadership of the Brahmins, and pointed out that Brahmins, as the leaders of Hindu Society, evaded the responsibilities they were expected to shoulder and kept the Hindus under constant illusion. Had the Brahmins pursued true knowledge and enlightened the people, instead of the British people coming over here we would have gone to their country.\(^2\) He further pointed out that it was an inherent defect of the Brahmin leadership, when England was ruled over by the priests, their dogmatism brought disastrous consequences, and England could make no progress.\(^3\) It was only after the disintegration of the Holy Roman Empire, however, that England began to emerge as a powerful nation.

As for the Hindu society, Gopalrao shifted the entire responsibility for its disintegration to the Brahmins because he pointed out that the non-Brahmins were already plunged in the darkness of ignorance, and as all others followed Brahmins, their reformation meant reformation of all the Hindus in general.\(^4\)
Looking back, he observed that in the very early stages there was perfect homogeneity in the Hindu society as it was based upon *Varna* - the principle of division of labour. Those devoted to learning were known as 'Prahmins', and those who fought were called 'Kshatriyas'. The Brahmins shouldered the responsibility of acquiring knowledge and the Kshatriyas defended the country from the enemies. The Kshatriya rulers patronised Brahmins for their learning, Vaishyas for trade and commerce, and also reduced the burden of taxation on Sudras.\(^5\) The conduct of the Brahmins being ideal, blameless and pure, even kings used to fear them.\(^6\) Moreover, the Varna was not inherited, and one could achieve prominence by one's own efforts. On account of this mobility, Valmiki, a fisherman by birth, became a saint. King Cakravala, a Kshatriya, became a Brahmin.\(^7\) As everyone enjoyed equality of opportunity, society was based upon justice, and each Varna excelled in its own function. The Brahmins pursued knowledge, investigated sciences like grammar, astrology and logical and scientific reasoning;\(^8\) and were renowned for it. They invented several fundamental principles of medicine and astrology, and at the same time benefited the people.\(^9\) Fourteen Lores (Vidyas) and sixty-four arts (Kalas) were their achievements. In the absence of the printing press, they preserved their essential texts, commentaries and illustrative lore by oral tradition.\(^10\) They handed down oral tradition and disseminated it for the benefit of common men through discourses. Their leadership was not only established, but also justified.\(^11\)
Gopalrao believed that the system, being based upon just principles, worked perfectly well. But in course of time, injustice crippled it and the system lost its balance.

Gradually the Varna system was relegated to the background and the caste system developed. Instead of the acquired qualities, heredity became a crucial factor. Birth in a Brahmin family automatically made a man a Brahmin irrespective of his educational attainments. As the caste system became rigid, Brahmans were assured of their superiority. Protected by heredity they, instead of improving the system, caused its further degeneration. The erstwhile distinction between Brahmans and non-Brahmins, based upon learning faded away. The Hindu society was permanently disabled by its concept of inequality.

After the principle of heredity was established, there was no longer any need for the Brahmans to work hard for achieving excellence and advance. The veil of security assured them unchallenged supremacy and closed the doors of knowledge to others.

Gopalrao pointed out that the pursuit of knowledge, the principal function of the Brahmans, was now disregarded by them. They exploited the principles of religion for self-aggrandizement, and for meeting their private ends and became instrumental in developing vice and inaction in contemporary society.
Had the Brahmins themselves pursued knowledge, there would have been no harmful effect upon the society. But instead, they were intoxicated with superiority complex and discovered Mantra, Tantra, Paryaṇa and Anusṭhāna as means of passing time. These were so absurd, that if anybody determined to follow the Shastras literally, the entire day would be wasted.

The system of education fostered by the Brahmins led them to inaction and rendered them enemies of reforms. While books are important instrument of acquisition of knowledge, printing presses dissemnate it. But Brahmins, considering that writing books was the privilege of sages only, ceased to write books. When no new book was written, no new thought originated. They began to worship books instead of prosecuting the study of knowledge. Whatever they wrote, contained the praise of kings and fabulous stories for entertainment, which confused the historians. They used all their influence for self-aggrandisement. As a consequence, propagation of knowledge came to an end.

As propagation of knowledge came to a standstill, the Brahmins fell back upon the Scriptures, believing that everything contained in them was true. Though it was inconsistent, they literally followed it, and made themselves a laughing-stock.

They represented Sanskrit as the 'Language of God', and monopolised it and became instrumental in keeping the masses
away from knowledge. Easy communication in the social system came to an end. They spent most of their time in the recitation of the Vedas without knowing its meaning. Ban on foreign travel circumscribed their experience.

Gopalrao accused Brahmins of insincerity. While performing the function of custodian of religion, they eclipsed religious principles with ritual, used it for serving their private ends and became avaricious. They propounded a myth that Brahmins were the agents of God, or even God incarnate; and that those who gave alms to them would reach heaven. Of course, he pointed out, he had no grudge against accepting alms. He only wanted that they should be utilised by the recipients for proper purpose — and in the case of Brahmins, for propagation of knowledge. When the Brahmins were relieved of the responsibility of propagating knowledge, they found ample spare time at their disposal. But that too, they spent for selfish purposes, by inventing a novel idea of pilgrimages and began to extract money from those who visited the pilgrim centres. Credulous people began to spend money lavishly on pilgrimages.

Once their selfish ends were served, Gopalrao continued, Brahmins never cared for social morality. He justified his attack by quoting an example from the earlier history: Yeshwantrao Holkar and Bajirao's brother Amritrao plundered Poona and used all vile means for extracting money from the people. Amritrao, with the booty of about four crore rupees,
fled to Kashi. The Brahmins of Kashi, alleging that Amritrao's act was immoral, threatened to outcaste him if he did not disburse half of the amount to Brahmins. Amritrao, in turn, spent a lot of money on charity to Brahmins, served them dinners, performed sacrifices and was then readmitted to the caste. Thus the wicked Amritrao was purified, accommodated and even praised by the Brahmins. 23

He also pointed out that the Brahmins lacked patriotic spirit. They neither thought of the prosperity of their country, nor showed concern for the loss of independence. They all the while criticised British rule not because it deprived them of their independence, but because under it charity had declined. 24

As Brahmins discarded their principal function of acquisition of knowledge, it resulted in social and intellectual stagnation. The light of reason was extinguished and led to fatalism on all fronts. Consciousness of the mission was relegated to the background; and untold misery was inflicted upon the poor and the uncared for (e.g. widows). They ceased to discriminate right from wrong; and became blind to their own well-being. 25

Gopalrao attributed fatalism of Brahmins to their inertness. He believed that fatalism led to inaction while activity led to wisdom. 26
He regarded that the stagnation of the Brahmins was a consequence of their dogmatism. Superstitions made them inimical to reforms. Gopalrao rightly criticised them for going against the main stream of reforms. In fact, all the social reformers of the earlier nineteenth century had to face this problem.

Apart from the institutional defects, he pointed out that vices of corruption and perjury, unknown hitherto, were developing in the contemporary Brahmins.\(^{27}\) He specifically attacked them for these vices. The Government dismissed a corrupt Brahmin Kotwal and thereafter decided not to appoint any Brahmin to responsible posts like that of a Kotwal,\(^{28}\) Gopalrao, deeply perturbed by this move, contributed his maiden letter on March 19, 1848, to 'Prabhaker' a progressive periodical published from Bombay, on the same subject. Against perjury, he wrote a separate book entitled "Khoti Shapat Wahu Nave Ani Khoti Saksha Dau Nave Ye Visayee Lokenshi Sambhasan". He remarked that it was on account of this vice that the Brahmins were not trusted by anybody and if truth was to be ascertained, evidence of a Mahar is taken instead of Brahmins.\(^{29}\)

Gopalrao's reaction to these vices was natural. With the liquidation of the rule of the Peshwas, domination of Brahmins declined and under British rule the only opening left to them was government employment. If they were excluded
from government service, there was no likelihood of any other opportunity being left for them. This was, in fact, Gopalrao's most constructive criticism.

While criticizing Brahmins Gopalrao held them doubly responsible: in the first piece, for not being instrumental in pursuing knowledge themselves, which was their great social responsibility, and secondly, for prohibiting others from undertaking this responsibility. Thus, they neither pursued knowledge themselves, nor allowed others to pursue it.

V.K. Rajwade, agreeing with Gopalrao, pointed out that the leadership of the Brahmins was one of the causes of the disintegration of the Hindus.\(^3\)

Gopalrao, however, did not indulge in wholesale criticism upon Brahmins. He specifically distinguished between the Brahmins performing religious functions i.e. priests; and those engaged in other pursuits.\(^4\) In fact, he wanted to criticize the Brahmins coming from the first category, but since it was difficult to differentiate between them every now and then, it is misconstrued as a wholesale criticism on Brahmins.

As regards those who were proud of their Brahmin heredity, he said that their importance had declined under British rule; and since the functions of all the castes were being performed by the British government no pure Brahmin could be found. The Britisher, as a teacher, perform the
function of a Brahmin; as an army official, of a Kshatriya; and as a trader, becomes Vaishya. Thus, the erstwhile distinction had come to an end in the British rule. Only the function of the Sudra had been left out by the British rulers for others, and as that function is performed by the Hindus, they were all Sudras. 32

Again, he found no difference between Brahmins and others, Brahmins had a distinct place in the society only so long as they performed the important function connected with knowledge; but since they were no longer concerned with it, there was no distinction between Brahmins and others. 33

Thus Gopalrao pointed out the inconsistencies and unjustifiability in the self-aggrandisement of the Brahmins.

Although he criticised Brahmins for increasing self-importance, he did not absolve people of other castes of their responsibility. By extending charities to Brahmins and by imitating them, people of other castes actually encouraged self-aggrandisement of Brahmins. He expressed surprise at the attitude of the people in extending charity to Brahmins' follies and discouraging publication of books or newspapers, and on the contrary, humiliating those who undertook this task. 34

Gopalrao was not the sole critic of Brahmins in the nineteenth century. Principal Mahadev Shivram Gole, writing in
1895, remarked that his (Gole's) criticism on Brahmins, though perfectly correct, instead of serving any good purpose, would invite scathing criticism upon him. He continued that the teachings of Vishnushastri Chiplunkar had instilled vanity in Brahmins. Principal Gole warned that if the Brahmins continued this practice, they would be doomed. 35

Gopalrao understood the implications of the political change introduced by British rule, and pointed out that the age of Brahmin superiority had come to an end. He advised Brahmins to discard their conservatism, keep pace with the times, and take to other professions instead of running after government employment.

To what extent Gopalrao's views on Brahmins influenced his contemporaries, it is difficult to ascertain; still Vishnushastri Chiplunkar believed that Jotiba Phule and Baba Pedmenjee, who in turn made similar attack on the Brahmins, were influenced by him. 36

Gopalrao's criticism of Brahmins attracted the attention of his contemporaries. One with pseudonym 'Yatharthwadi' and Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, came forward to answer it. 'Yatharthwadi's argument was refuted by Gopalrao, 37 while that of Vishnushastri remained unanswered.

'Yatharthwadi' remarked that Gopalrao, while criticising Brahmins, made sweeping generalisations from their behaviour; in fact they did possess knowledge of God and recalled His name.
Gopalrao answered that his generalizations were justified by his own experience, 'Yatharthwadi's conviction that Brahmins possess knowledge of God was wrong, and that Brahmins did not know the true meaning of God. When there was no unanimity among Brahmins about true nature of God, how could he claim that Brahmins possessed such knowledge? Some regarded that God consisted in the Vedas, others thought it was in Purana, or in matter or in syllable (akshara) and so on. Again while reciting the name of God, they merely recited it without understanding its implications.37

The second, and perhaps more formidable, criticism was levelled by Vishnushastri Chiplunkar. While defending the Brahmins, he argued that they performed an important function of preserving the valuable possession of knowledge by recitation. At the same time, he agreed with Gopalrao that people's ideas regarding charity were fantastic, and they squandered wealth on dining, temples, pilgrimages and such absurd acts,38 but as usual hastened to add that these were perpetrated in advanced countries also. Further he advanced his pet optimistic argument that in course of time everything will be rectified.39 Vishnushastri also reminded Gopalrao that priests existed in all the religions.40 But this is beside the point, because the system existed in other countries does not justify its existence in our country. Moreover, the social framework of the Hindus, based as it is upon the caste system, is conspicuous by its absence in other religions.
Vishnushastri remarked that to blame Brahmins as lazy was to inflict injustice upon the poor folks. Considering the efforts they put in from early morning till late at night, it was unfair to accuse them of laziness. He argued that no knowledge is original or entirely new — it is all acquired, and no wonder, Brahmins too acquired knowledge from Scriptures.

Throughout his arguments, Vishnushastri missed a very important point which Gopalrao had stressed: that the Brahmins worked as a reactionary force in the process of social development, and failed to modernise themselves. Their leadership was uninspiring.

Lastly, true to his style, Vishnushastri indulged in personal criticism of Gopalrao, and expressed doubts about Gopalrao’s knowledge of Sanskrit language. It is, hard to believe his contention. If, however, the scriptural references he made for justifying his stand are considered, Vishnushastri’s criticism hardly stands.

Nevertheless, as for the degeneration, Vishnushastri’s remark that non-Brahmins too could not be absolved of their responsibility, that Brahmins achieved significance due to their intelligence, hardwork and perseverance is worth considering. But Gopalrao too had not absolved others.

Gopalrao’s principal contention against the Brahmins was that they failed to discharge their social responsibility.
Significantly Professors Palmer and Perkins also have viewed Leadership as a distinct factor or element of national power. 45
NOTES

English


11. The occupationally stratified social system has been advocated by Plato.

45. Palmer and Perkins, International Relations, P. 78.
मराठी

२. निमिन्तेसंग्रह १६
३. निमिन्तेसंग्रह १०६
४. निमिन्तेसंग्रह ७१
५. किता ९१
६. किता ७१
७. किता ०९
८. किता २२
९. किता २२
१०. निमिन्तेसंग्रह, पृष्ठ १९२
११. निमिन्तेसंग्रह १२२
१२. किता ४२
१३. किता ७७
१४. किता २२
१५. निमिन्तेसंग्रह २०
१६. निमिन्तेसंग्रह २०१
१७. किता १२४
१८. किता १९२
१९. किता १५९
२०. किता २२

२१. ग्रामरच्या, त्यांतीवर व्यक्तिच्या आणि त्यांच्या हल्लोंच्या रिखती, पृष्ठ ६६
२२. "लोकहितवादी" माध्यम पुस्तकाचा उद्धेश
२३. निमिन्तेसंग्रह १५२
२४. किता ७१
२५. किता ७१
२६. किता १४२
२७. किता १२२
२८. किता ७५
२९. किता ०१
३०. किता ७२
२०. राजसाहे विक्रम. राजमाघोकंताशब्द, प्रस्तावना, पृष्ठ १२५
२१. निर्देशसूत्र ११
२२. फिटा १२३
२३. फिटा २०
२४. फिटा ९२
२५. सोडे म. चित्र., स्वरूपन आर्या त्यंजी विषय प्रस्तावना, पृष्ठ ४
२६. चित्रमंगळ, चित्रज्ञाती, "निर्देशांक", चित्रसाहित्य, पुणे, पृष्ठ ११४
२७. निर्देशसूत्र ७२
२८. चित्रमंगळ चित्रज्ञाती, "निर्देशांक", चित्रसाहित्य, पुणे, पृष्ठ ११५
२९. फिटा
३०. फिटा
३१. चित्रमंगळ चित्रज्ञाती, "निर्देशांक", चित्रसाहित्य, पुणे, पृष्ठ ११६
३२. फिटा पृष्ठ ११६
३३. फिटा पृष्ठ १११
३४. फिटा पृष्ठ ११९
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CHAPTER 5

PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE
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Pursuit of Knowledge

Gopalrao regarded knowledge as the key to progress. He believed that the Western domination of India could not be counteracted by political or military means. He was convinced that we had to retreat when confronted by outdated knowledge of the British. The only weapon to succeed in those days, according to him, was development of knowledge. Having implicit faith in knowledge as an instrument of social change, he spared no efforts to stress its social significance.

While giving the highest place to the path of knowledge (Dvyanamarga), he explained that Hindus recognised three paths (marga): the path of knowledge (Dvyanamarga), the path of devotion (Shaktimarga) and the path of action (Karmamarga). The followers of the path of knowledge should abandon family life altogether. The advocates of the path of devotion believed in worshipping God as perceived through the senses (Sarulla). It was a path on the lower plane. The followers of the path of action may lead a regular family life and as such it is the path on the lowest plane in which there is no specific knowledge of God.

The Kalivasa specifically advocates the path of devotion; as for the path of action, the Brahmins have reserved it to
themselves, so that others can follow the path of action only through their hegemony. ⁴

Gopalrao demonstrated with the help of the above analysis that the Hindu religion attached supreme importance to knowledge (dnyana), and held that without knowledge there could be no salvation. ⁴ Nevertheless, for him, the meaning of knowledge was fundamentally different. Knowledge for him was the education which made men wiser and more practical.⁵ Again, it meant eradicating all that is unreal and concentrating only on what was real.

In the former definition, he connected knowledge first with wisdom and secondly, by referring it to the practical aspect, he introduced a utilitarian criterion into it. Further, he explained that knowledge meant understanding several things about practical life: wisdom in speech and writing. This can be achieved only by those whose mind has been enlarged.⁶ But mere reading and writing was not knowledge: he regarded it only as a gateway to knowledge.⁷ He regarded wisdom as the inevitable consequence of knowledge.

He next dwelt on the fruits of knowledge: first and foremost, it led to an intensification of belief in God and a contribution to our happiness; and secondly, it promoted benevolence towards people.⁸ Knowledge being a panacea for all the diseases, he who achieved it could find several ways for his improvement.⁹ Again, he continued, it would enlarge
our mind, suppress bad qualities, and create virtues like calmness, generosity, gentlemanliness and the like and suppress petty enmities, greed, irrationalism and anger. 10

Gopalrao did not remain content with the theoretical discussion of knowledge. He was much more interested in finding causes of the disintegration of the Hindus. He inferred that the Hindus were lacking not in strength or courage, but in wisdom, that is why they disintegrated. 11

The Hindus in the beginning were devoted to knowledge, but their knowledge stagnated and no renovation was achieved in the last three thousand years. So blissful was their ignorance that the Brahmins actually obstructed every effort at renovation of knowledge. Their concentration on free feeding houses, charity, and feeding of Brahmins resulted in rendering them lazy and indifferent. Consequently, all the country was plunged into the darkness of ignorance, and referring to the British expenditure he pointed out, import of the results of knowledge from abroad became imperative for which crores of rupees were spent. This plight could not be avoided unless knowledge was renovated. 12

The Brahmins relinquished their primary responsibility of renovating knowledge. They recited the Vedas in various textual formation (for instance by reversing the words) and designated it knowledge; but such knowledge was no better
than that of the scavenger. Had they cultivated true
knowledge, instead of the British people coming over here,
we might have migrated to their country (as rulers and con-
querrers). Moreover the Brahmans were not genuinely inclined
to obtain true knowledge; illustrated this by pointing out
that for dinner in a marriage ceremony, hundreds of them would
throne together and waste hours together, but for a thought-
provoking meeting, none could turn up.

Copalrao believed that if people were to be awakened
from this illusion, new vistas of knowledge should be searched
for. In these, he included mechanics, navigation and chemistry.
He was so influenced by mechanics that for disseminating at
least some knowledge of this subject, he wrote a separate book
entitled 'Yantraadhyana'.

With a practical outlook, Copalrao introduced the utili-
tarian principle in connection with the pursuit of knowledge.
He condemned the tendency of concentrating on the study of
grammar continuously for fifteen years. Taking an exceptional
view he said that even teaching of the hewing of trees would
be better than that of grammar.

He pointed out that those who had received English
education were a hundred times better than the Sanskrit Pandits,
but at the same time he remarked that only reading and writing
did not make man wise, and as such, those who merely read and
write English could not be regarded as wise.
No wonder, he gave a prominent place to the system of education introduced by the British. If reform was to be made, he emphasised, people should not be taught Sanskrit which made men behave absurdly and inconsistently, but instead some useful knowledge embracing the fields of politics, modern arts, sculpture etc. should be taught. Poignantly Copalrao asked: "Is there no 'wise' man here, who could achieve something concrete like preventing purchase of sugar, paper, glass, iron and coal from other countries?"

The wise man, according to him was one whose mind had become enlarged, teeming with ideas in it, whose mind has been cultured and who had acquired definite knowledge of all subjects.

It is noteworthy that he included fine arts too in his concept of 'Knowledge'. About music, he said that its allied branches like vocal music, instrumental music and dancing were popularly regarded as unwelcome. He pointed out that this attitude, resulted from ignorance and absence of wisdom and traced it to the music teachers who were usually men not particularly known for high character.

Dr. Altekar too, pointed out that in the case of women by the beginning of the nineteenth century, singing, dancing and writing were regarded as achievements fit only for the class of dancing girls. Ladies of orthodox families would have been shocked, if a report had spread that they were acquainted with any of the above mentioned arts.
As a progressive reformer, Gopalrao was not likely to be content with the traditional type of knowledge, as distinguished from the modern and up-to-date knowledge of the British rulers. Believing that the regeneration of India could only be achieved by Western knowledge, he opposed all the institutions imparting traditional knowledge, and as such, when he found an opportunity, he advocated the diversion of the Dakshina Fund for propagation of useful knowledge rather than Sanskrit. No doubt, the Dakshina served an important purpose of patronising the Hindu learning during the Muslim rule, but apart from that it served no other useful purpose.

Gopalrato criticised the Hindus for not renovating their knowledge. To what extent our knowledge was un-renovated during the Peshwas times, has been aptly described by V.K. Dhave. He pointed out that considering the advance in the knowledge of physiology the indigenous system at the time of the Peshwas was extremely backward. Medicine was taught by the teachers based upon the books written by Charwaka, Wagbhat, and medicines were prepared under the supervision of the teachers.²³

While advocating Western knowledge, Gopalrao was unduly critical and rather unjust to Nana Phadanwees when he said that had he been alive in the nineteenth century on seeing the developments, he would have gone mad.²⁴

Though in his early writings, Gopalrao was very critical about all the Hindu knowledge of antiquity, his views were
afterwards softened and he began to hold true Aryan knowledge in high esteem. He felt that degeneration followed when the Hindus, instead of pursuing the study of Aryan knowledge, resorted to non-Aryan knowledge. Under British rule, though knowledge was being disseminated, material wealth was declining. As a utilitarian, he suggested that only useful knowledge be imparted to posterity.

Gopalrao recognised that for the advancement of knowledge adequate financial provision was essential. Knowledge being an effective weapon in the contemporary world, he recommended the establishment of schools for its dissemination and voyages undertaking abroad for its acquisition. In order to broaden our outlook and to encourage visits to foreign countries, he suggested that a centre should be created in England, so as to facilitate mutual contacts. He placed all the responsibility of imparting education to the poor people broadly on the shoulders of government and even propounded it to be the principal duty of the government.

No doubt he was a protagonist of European knowledge but at the same time he believed that before acquiring information about others, we first should acquaint ourselves with our own knowledge. While dispelling the doubt about Indian traditional knowledge, he warned that all our knowledge was not useless.

Gopalrao's views on knowledge were strongly criticised by his contemporary, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, on two grounds:
in the first place, for applying the criterion of 'usefulness' to knowledge; and secondly, for his observations calculated to belittle Nana Phadanwees.

Vishnushastri retorted that it was dangerous to apply the criterion of usefulness to knowledge and added that if this criterion was applied, only the knowledge of the peasant and the baker would be worthy of the term\textsuperscript{33} and that, while defining knowledge in an unusual way, Gopalrao himself did not understand the implications of knowledge.

As for Gopalrao, it can be said that the criterion of usefulness was in fact a revolt against the traditional knowledge and as such he advocated recourse to modern up-to-date knowledge.

Nevertheless, while respecting modern knowledge and introducing the criterion of usefulness, Gopalrao appeared unduly critical about Nana Phadanwees when he remarked that had Nana been alive in the Nineteenth century he would have gone mad. He blamed Nana even for his general ignorance and failure to modernise.\textsuperscript{34} At the same time, he gave due credit to him for efficiency in administration.\textsuperscript{35}

Of course even after admitting his application of the criterion of usefulness to knowledge as biased and his criticism on Nana Phadanwees as partial and unjust, one cannot ignore the true spirit behind it.
Incidentally, the estimates of the two historians viz. V.K. Rajwade and T.S. Shejwalkar on Nana are worthy of consideration. Rajwade remarked that the wisdom of Nana Phadanwees was instrumental only in so far as the British did not sweep the Maratha kingdom in his life-time, and credit for this, no doubt, goes to his diplomacy; but once it is considered that the British civilization was much more advanced than the civilization of the Marathas, it becomes rather difficult even to give that much credit to him.\textsuperscript{36}

When the Marathas had to face the updated and modernised military equipment of the British, they were defeated.\textsuperscript{37}

It did not mean that Gopalrao disputed the achievements of Nana Phadanwees,\textsuperscript{38} and the Hindus in general. He only pointed out that in course of time, they lost their dynamism and refused to modernise which led to their defeat. Their failure to modernise was rooted in their traditions and beliefs. That is why when the Bhonsela was attacked, instead of fighting against the fire of the enemy, he made four naked women stand on the fortification, believing that it would repel the attack of the enemy,\textsuperscript{39} and Nana Saheb Peshwa, when attacked by the Moguls, went on telling his beads (reciting Japa).\textsuperscript{40} Had they acquired European knowledge, they would not have lagged behind. At that time, the maps showing the globular shape of the earth were common throughout Europe and the Europeans had made considerable progress in navigation. It is astounding, therefore, that we, on the other hand, did not even know where they come from.
Gopalrao's main criticism was that traditional knowledge failed to meet the contemporary challenge which required new and up-to-date methods for counteracting it. Here Gopalrao, as the herald of the dawn of new knowledge, rightly advocated modernisation and renovation.

Books

In his discussion on the pursuit of knowledge, Gopalrao gave supreme importance to books as an important instrument of disseminating knowledge. Emphasising its importance, he pointed out that the books published in a nation were a fair index of its superiority or inferiority and reflected the achievements of the wise and learned men. In order to ward off ignorance, he exhorted Hindus to disseminate knowledge by writing as many books as possible. It was his ardent desire to enhance the standard of our publications and to bring them on a par with those produced in advanced countries. He argued that eminent authors like Dadoba Pandurang, should be treated as sages and scholars like Kero Laxman Chhatre and Vishnushastri Chipulkar as Acharyas.

He pointed out that the writing of books had been continued in India from ancient times, but was the British people who studied them carefully, carried them to their country, and discovered new principles out of them. Our books were the oldest in the world which the Brahmins have tenaciously
preserved in the absence of the art of printing. The Vedas constituted a very important source of knowledge and the books of the Aryans were superior to those elsewhere in several respects.

The books written by the Brahmins had reached the zenith before Agamaparakash was written. It can be said with certainty that the downfall of the Hindus could be traced from the date of writing of such books.

The work of writing books was discontinued when the Sanskrit language went out of use and became obscure. All the subsequent writers either wrote books based upon ancient material or maintained the fables contained in it intact. Consequently, nothing new appeared in their mythology. Almost all the Puranas contained fabulous stories and fantastic tales. The Vedas, the oldest book, however, was an exception. As the scriptures were written by the Brahmins for self-aggrandisement or for entertainment the number of books propagating useful knowledge diminished considerably.

Gopalrao was of the opinion that the Hindus might regain wisdom when many original books come to be written. In addition, he also pointed out how books would serve another useful social purpose: as more and more publications are brought out, misdeeds of the corrupt people would be exposed before all and would act as an effective check upon the activities of the miscreants. He hoped that enhanced publication of books would facilitate social and political reforms.
Gopalrao, however, recognised the difficulties in the way of writing books by saying that it would take a long time to improve the language so as to serve as an appropriate vehicle of thought. He deplored the tendency of his contemporaries who refused monetary help for publication of books and even to humiliate those who undertook the task. He thought that the principal religion (duty) of the day consisted in affording monetary help for printing books.

In this connection, he did not render only lip service to the cause, but took active interest in publishing books and with the help of Justice Ranade, established an 'Association for encouragement of Books' (Granthottak Mandal), but unfortunately received no encouraging response.

Sanskrit

With the advent of British rule, gradually, the importance of Sanskrit declined. Gopalrao noticed the change. He was very critical about the Sanskrit language and regarded it as one of the greatest impediments in the dissemination of knowledge.

Nevertheless, he admitted the influence which Sanskrit exerted in ancient times by saying that it was the language of God and Hindus at that time. It was called Sanskrit on account of the fine and subtle cultural influence (sanskara) which it wielded.
The object of knowledge, he pointed out, was to make men wise and practical, but the study of Sanskrit in his time instead of promoting wisdom, made it absurd and inconsistent. It could not prove useful for understanding the problems of everyday life or solving any practical problem. None of the prominent people in those days had received Sanskritic education. Nana Phadanees, and Sakharem Bapu Bokil were not proficient in Sanskrit. 59

Gopalrao here wanted to indicate that the study of Sanskrit did not make anyone eminent nor those who were prominent had received Sanskrit education.

Explaining how obsolete it had become, he pointed out that Sanskrit books which were written some five thousand years ago, have remained unmodified since then. 60 The Mantrasamhitas, and the Brahmanas contained instructions regarding the application of Mantras but the Brahmins used them only to serve their own selfish purpose. Everywhere there were attempts at annotation, repetition and elaboration. The total result is purely secondary stuff abounding in inconsistencies and absurdities.

The Vedanta advocated that everything previous to it was absurd. Subsequently, magic was included in it. The Buddhist thinkers humiliated the Vedas. The knowledge based on the Puranas contained a hotch-potch of Vedanta, devotion
Vaidik Karma, new goddesses, all leading to absurdity. They thought that Lanka was undiscoverable because the Sudarshan Chakra was revolving; it that the Tapti (or Jemna?) river was the sister of Yama and similar fantastic fables. No wonder, the reader becomes the prisoner of illusions by reading such stuff. 61

The ritualist thinks that only his help would carry the Yajamana (host or performer of sacrifices) to heaven; those who read the Dharmaśāstra are involved only in arguments like how many articles are required for performing the obsequies to ancestors (Śhraddha). If a student learns logic and grammar, he also goes on making theoretical arguments; those learning astrology say that a particular planet was harmful and dangerous. 61 In fact, grammar was introduced for avoiding the misuse of words, 62 but instead of treating it as a means, they made it an end in itself.

Gopalrao thought that the attitude of Sanskrit scholars was detrimental to the development of Prakrit languages. Those who study Sanskrit despise Prakrits and abstain from writing in Prakrits. 63

In the beginning, he was so much an antagonist to Sanskritic knowledge that he advocated abolition of the pathashālas, which were seats of Sanskrit learning at that time, 64 and he took active interest in diverting the Dakshina Fund from Sanskrit learning.
Thus, Gopalrao criticised Sanskrit learning; but on the other hand, he praised the English language for being the repository of rich and extensive knowledge, which the British people had developed with perseverance. Naturally, those who studied English came into contact with a variety of subjects. 

Incidentally, it may be pointed out that Gopalrao's eulogy of English language was not exceptional. Even Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, though charged with patriotic sentiment, confessed its revolutionary role (in the long run) when he referred to it as "the milk of tigress".

However, Gopalrao's criticism on Sanskrit attracted his attention and that of the conservative groups such as the Kalyanonnayak Mandali, which in turn was answered by Gopalrao. Vishnushastri, expressing doubts about Gopalrao's acquaintance with Sanskrit, advised him first to learn it from the Pandits before criticising it. But considering the quotations Gopalrao used in his works such as Srachyava, Vishnushastri's criticism could hardly be said to have a grain of truth in it.

Gopalrao's main contention here was that it was a false propaganda made by the Pandits that Sanskrit lore contained extensive knowledge. On the other hand, he believed that one who studies it is dragged deeper and deeper into
ignorance. In support of his argument, he pointed out that in the absence of historical material in Sanskrit lore, we cannot analyse the causes of our disintegration that there is no geography, no mechanics, no politics, no information about other countries, no material on physics, astronomy, medicine, or chemistry. What Sanskrit contained was merely grammar, figures of speech, logic etc. which are of no practical significance. 67

Gopalrao, in the later part of his life, appears to have modified his views about Sanskrit language. In 1880 while praising the Sanskrit language, he said that it was highly developed and comprehensive. 68 He expressed regret observing that foreigners were investigating the knowledge contained in it while our Pandits were disregarding it. 69

Gopalrao's view about the Sanskrit language has been illustrated by R.C. Dose in a similar manner. 70

History

Gopalrao all along justified his views with the help of history. In the absence of historical knowledge, he said, we cannot understand the contemporary condition of our country. 71 His love for history impelled him to write several books on history. 72 Though these appear as translations at first, his annotations gave additional significance to them.
While writing the history of Lanka, he pointed out that there were either misconceptions or fantastic notions about Lanka and the history had been specifically written so as to enable people to dispel their misunderstanding and acquire true knowledge of Lanka.73

Gopalrao believed that with the help of comprehensive historical knowledge appropriate conclusions could be drawn. By studying Roman history, one could judge the cause of the downfall of the Romans and the general causes for the loss of kingdoms. Moreover, these conclusions prove useful for further investigation.74 Thus Gopalrao integrated the present with the past. Burke also viewed society as an organic growth, a partnership of past, present and future generations.

Gopalrao regretted the absence of any reliable and comprehensive history in India. Though books on other subjects were written, he pointed out, we lagged behind in historiography. Ignorance of history, he continued, was not a new phenomenon, but he insisted that at least our lack of interest in history should be removed. He expected that we should at least know the true history of different provinces in India, and was pained to notice mutual ignorance of the neighbouring states.75 Owing to the absence of the historical insight we had to depend upon the testimony of foreign historians.76
While examining why books other than historiography had been written, he found the following causes:

1. **Ignorance**: Hindus did not know how to measure time. The reliability of the Vedas and the Puranas is doubtful because while the former contained fables of sacrifices, the latter included stories written either for increasing the importance of Brahmins or for entertainment of the people.

2. **Difficulty of Language**: Innumerable languages made mutual communication difficult.

3. **Cynical attitude towards mundane life**: Hindus being cynical of earthly life, abstained from writing history.

4. **Colossal destruction of books**: After the Muslims destroyed the treasure of books, no new book was written.

5. **Corrupt Brahmin Authorship**: All the knowledge was concentrated in the hands of the Brahmins who, being dependent upon kings, wrote everything for praising the kings.

6. **Absence of peace and security**: This factor, for a long time, prohibited writing of books.

7. **Nothing worthy of writing occurred before the advent of the Muslims.**
8. **Exaggeration**: The ancient people exaggerated the stories. Gopalrao said, however, that this phenomenon was common even to other countries.

9. **Lack of new books**: When Sanskrit was no longer in current use, no new books were written, on the other hand, only copying and translation became the order of the day. 77

Vishnusahastri Chiplunker too, understood the significance of history and deplored the tendency of disregarding history and insisted on its proper study. 78

**Language**

Gopalrao held that diversity of languages in India was one of the greatest impediments to national unity, 79 and dissemination of knowledge. Language, as a vehicle of understanding, deeply influenced social cohesion.

Under Muslim rule, one who knew Hindustani had no difficulty in travelling to any part of India because the language could be understood even in the South. The use of Sanskrit, on the other hand, was restricted to the Pandits and the learned. Apart from these two languages, separate languages were spoken in different parts of the country. As a result the Marathi newspaper becomes useless in Gujarat and vice versa. As there were as many as twenty different languages throughout India, mutual communication became difficult. This
difficulty was not felt previously because all the parts were distinct, but with geographic integration, a common language would be essential as it would be absurd to expect a man to follow all the twenty languages. The tempo of life has further been intensified by the rapid means of communication introduced by scientific research.

Gopalrao expressed deep concern over the diversity of languages and advocated a common language for India as early as 1863. It was before the transport system was fully developed that he anticipated the problem of a langue franc, and visualised it much before it actually appeared.

The makers of the Indian Constitution also recognised the significance of media in Article 351 of the Constitution which enjoins the Union to promote the spread of Hindi language and to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression of all the elements of the composite culture of India.
NOTES


57. Refer Chapter 2.

70. "The Hindu geographer does not travel, does not explore, does not survey, he simply sits down and dreams of a central mountain of a height greater than that of the Sun, moon and stars, and circular oceans of curds and clarified butter. The Hindu historian does not examine documents, coins and monuments, does not investigate historical facts, weight evidence, balance probabilities, scatter the chaff to the winds and gather the wheat in the garner; he simply sits down and dreams of a monster monkey who flies through the atmosphere with huge mountain resting on the hairs of his body, and constructs thereby a durable bridge across an arm of an intermediate ocean. The Hindu biographer ignores the separating line between history and fable, and converts even historical personages into mythical or fabulous heroes. The Hindu anatomist does not dissect, does not anatomise, does not examine the contents of human body, he simply dreams of component parts which have no existence, multiplies almost indefinitely the number of arteries and veins, and speaks coolly of a passage through which the atomic
soul effects its progress and egress."


31. The first railway started in 1853, and the C.I.P. Railway connecting Poona with Bombay was opened in 1856.
M A R A T H I

1. निवेशंगढ़ ४०
2. किला १२
3. किला ४२
4. किला १९
5. किला १७
6. किला ११२
7. किला ११८
8. किला ११२
9. किला २१
10. किला ७६
11. किला ६४
12. पैविहारिक मौली का उपयुक्त माहिती (भाग २, पृष्ठ १५)
13. निवेशंगढ़ ७७
14. किला १४
15. किला १२
16. किला ६६
17. किला २२
18. किला "
19. दिल्लीतील दरभंगा थेपाखांची कारणे, पृष्ठ ६
20. निवेशंगढ़ १७२
21. किला ७९
22. भावे वर्ष २०२१, परताकाजीन महाराष्ट्र, पृष्ठ १२३
23. निवेशंगढ़ ४१
24. स्वाध्याय प्रस्तावना, पृष्ठ ५
25. किला पृष्ठ ६५
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>संख्या</th>
<th>नाम</th>
<th>पृष्ठ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>वचनी खान</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>नियोजसंग्राह</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>किता</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>वचनी खान</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>चित्रकूटका चित्रपुजाराजी, निक्कासात्ता, चित्रकूटका पुणे</td>
<td>51 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>किता</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>राजवाडे विहार</td>
<td>ऐतिहासिक प्रस्तावना भाग 1, पृष्ठ 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>किता</td>
<td>पृष्ठ 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>शोभकार वृं. शोभकारांचे अध्याय भाग 2, पृष्ठ 97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>किता</td>
<td>पृष्ठ 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>प्राचीनी, त्यांती क्या कथा सार्वात्मक त्यांची उल्लेखनी स्थिती, प्रस्तावना पृष्ठ 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>&quot;अक्षिलबादी&quot; भाषिक पुष्करणा उद्धेष</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>सार्व अपकाण श्रवणपुस्तका, पृष्ठ 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>क्षाकासां, प्रस्तावना, पृष्ठ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>निगममार्गांचा, पृष्ठ 926</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>निक्कासंग्राह</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>किता</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. किता 19
20. ग्रामरचना, ल्यांतीय व्यवस्था व ल्यांची हदींनी दृष्टी, प्रस्तावका पृष्ठ 1
21. निरीक्षणान्व 12
22. किता 49
23. किता 129
24. निरीक्षणान्व 48
25. किता 120
26. किता 77
27. किता 44
28. किता 138
29. किता 77
30. किता 101
31. किता 31
32. विद्या, सिद्धनुसारानुसार, निश्चयाता, विश्लेषण पुणे, पृष्ठ 1111
33. निरीक्षणान्व 101
34. स्वाधीन प्रस्तावका पृष्ठ 2
35. बाराथ आस्थायन गुड्ड्हूच, पृष्ठ 55-56
36. गुजरात देशातील इतिहास, प्रस्तावका पृष्ठ 4
37. पानपत्री उठाई, ऐतिहासिक गोष्टी, हिंदुस्थानातील इतिहास, पृष्ठविराज भ्रमण, राजस्थानातील इतिहास, उदयपुराण इतिहास, गुजरात देशातील इतिहास, ऋषिका इतिहास.
पुराण देशाचा सत्ता इतिहास

६. देखना इतिहास, प्रस्तावना, पृष्ठ १

७४. निर्वकांग्रह ५८

७५. गुजरात देशाचा इतिहास, प्रस्तावना, पृष्ठ ४

७६. निर्वकांग्रह १२४

७७. कित्त १२४

७८. विकासकर विचारणशस्त्री, निविधमाता, विन्दुराला पुणे, पृष्ठ १२ व

७९. हिंदुस्थानचा इतिहास, पृष्ठ १०१

८०. निर्वकांग्रह १२७
CHAPTER 6

WOMEN AND WOMEN'S PROBLEMS
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WOMEN, AND WOMEN'S PROBLEMS

While criticizing the social system of the Hindus, Gopalrao ascribed the causes of their degeneration to three factors: caste differences, degraded position of women, and early marriage. He pointed out that Hindu society remained internally divided on account of these factors.

Gopalrao believed that the backwardness of the Hindus resulted from their attitude towards women. He also regarded that no improvement could be effected unless women are properly educated. As the entire destiny of the child is entrusted to the women, lack of wisdom on their part adversely affects posterity and hindered the introduction of reforms. He warned that in a country in which women's rights were not recognized, the position of men also deteriorates. Dr. Altekar also points out that one of the best ways to understand the spirit of civilization and to appreciate its excellences and realize its limitations is to study the history of the position and status of women in it.

With his insight into history, Gopalrao examined the position of women in Hindu civilization and found that the
age-old customs and traditions abundantly proved that women had a respectable place in Hindu society. In marriage, they used to lead, while men followed them, for every religious function, their presence was absolutely essential and even at the time of coronation, the queen had an honourable place. Thus, prominence was given to women and it was recognised by Hindu society.\(^5\) With the help of scriptures, Copalrao demonstrated that women shared equal rights with men\(^6\) and enjoyed freedom. Women were entitled to undergo the thread ceremony (Upanayana) and wore sacred thread (Yadnyopawita) and moved freely with men.\(^7\) Dr. Altekar, supporting the above argument stated that: "Till about the beginning of the Christian era, Upanayana or the ceremonial initiation into Vedic studies was as common in the case of girls as it was in the case of boys".\(^8\)

In course of time, however, the position and status of women gradually underwent a radical change. Their servitude increased, they were bound in chains, and no longer enjoyed equality with men. Several restrictions were imposed upon them. As child marriage came into vogue, education of girls came to an end. Remarriage became a taboo, and in order to discourage remarriages, tenure of widows was introduced. The climax of restrictions was reached by introduction of the practice of Sati. Thus, while the dependence of women increased, men became absolutely free.\(^9\) As a consequence, birth of a daughter
was regarded as a calamity. Dr. Altekar points out that the survey of the position of Hindu women shows that their condition has been on the whole deteriorating during the last two thousand years.

While investigating the causes for the deterioration in the position of women, Copalrao recalled that before the advent of British rule, the Muslims ruled over India for about eight hundred years during which the Hindus acquired their uncivilised (literal rendering of his Marathi expression would be barbarous) habits. It was, according to him, a consequence of association with Muslims. Moreover, as Muslims used to abduct beautiful Hindu girls, Hindus had to conceal their daughters, and on account of their continuous association of about eight hundred years with Muslims, Hindus too followed their custom of keeping women secluded. The impact of Muslim rule was so deep that our customs and conventions underwent a radical change and even charters which were previously written in Sanskrit, began to be written in Persian. During the rule of the Peshawas, no efforts were made to restore the old practice.

Dr. Altekar, however, gave a different account of the deterioration of the position of women. He pointed out that as time passed, the importance of ancestor worship increased and sons alone were regarded as eligible for offering oblations to the manes. Daughters could not perform this
very important religious duty. Child marriage came into vogue from about the beginning of the Christian era and soon thereafter, both levirate (Niyoga), and widow marriage were prohibited. 13

Marriage

While tracing the origin of the institution of marriage, Gopalrao pointed out that in the beginning, there was neither any marriage ceremony nor the matrimonial bond. Women enjoyed freedom and were not restrained by the marriage bond; but after some time, marriage was regarded as a contract. Then polyandry followed. Afterwards, remarriage was prohibited, and, lastly, the climax was reached with the Sati system. Thus, gradually, the marriage tie became extremely rigid for women. 14

Pointing out that prevalence of early marriages was detrimental to the Hindu society, he argued that it was not supported by any religious principle. 15 Dr. Altekar traced the history of early marriages and pointed out that in the Vedic period girls were married at a fairly advanced age (15 to 16). 16 Down to about the third century B.C., girls could remain unmarried till the age of 16. 17 But at the advent of British rule, the usual marriageable age of girls was 8 to 9. 18
Gopalrao ascribed the custom of early marriages to the peculiar attitude of the Hindus. He said that the ancient sages wanted to get the girls married at an early age, in order to increase the population. Secondly, wealthy people in order to avoid the moral deterioration of their children, might have introduced it, and fixed the most desirable marriageable age for girls at eight years and prescribed the tenth year as the maximum limit. As for the marriage of boys, the Peshwas too were married at an early age. Balaji Pajirao got married at 9, Vishwanathrao at 8, Madhavrao at 9, Narayan ao at 10 and Sawai Madhavrao at 8. Nana Phadanwees was married at 10. Even deuterogamists' wives were below nine years. Nana Phadanwees married nine girls consecutively out of whom seven died in his lifetime and Jiubai, Nana's youngest wife, was only nine years old while he was 60. Considering the disparity of age, this was responsible for certain deviations and certain undesirable practices in the society.

Early marriage, Gopalrao pointed out, adversely affected the social system and not only increased the anxiety of the father of the bride from which none escaped, whatever his rank, but also hindered the educational advancement of the girls. Parashurambhaau Patwardhan painfully wrote that his daughter was grown up and would cross the nineth year, and if her marriage was postponed for another
year, it would have to be performed at the age of ten. 23 The father of the bridegroom, on the other hand was anxious for getting his son married soon so as to secure the highest dowry. 24 Moreover, observance of social restrictions like Muhurta, Gotra, sub-caste differences narrowed the chance of marriage. With the practice of early marriage, the progeny became weak, cowardly and ignorant. 25 He attributed the high mortality rate and ill-health to early marriages. 26 He, however, hoped that under British rule, equality of women would be restored, 27 and that society would be placed on a sound footing.

So deeply was Gopalrao distressed by the pitiable condition of widows that he spared no argument to advocate remarriage, and when all the arguments failed, he appealed to emotion.

To those who opposed widow remarriage on religious grounds, he appealed that though no religious acceptance could be found for remarriage, in order to promote the wellbeing of the people, new practices should be introduced. Nevertheless, other practices were introduced for the sake of convenience. 28 The clothes worn in childhood would not fit the grown-up; similarly, an outdated custom was required to be changed and a new one introduced. Appealing to reason, he advocated equality of right for men and women by saying that God had created men and women and hence
they enjoyed equal status. If, therefore, men were allowed to remarry, why should similar privilege be denied to women?

While advancing the cause of widow remarriage on humanitarian considerations he argued that the question of remarriage was a heartbreaking question. Women being naturally weak and helpless, if the calamity of widowhood befalls upon them at a tender age, their grief breaks the heart of the father. The child widows had to waste the rest of their life pitifully in an uncared-for condition.

The bleak future of the widows could be lit up by instituting remarriage which would enable our daughters and sisters to lead a happy life. Moreover, it would reduce chances of adultery which is an important cause of disorder.

He deprecated the practice of tonsuring widows, introduced for making widow-remarriage difficult and thereby compelling beautiful girls to lead the life of nuns. He regarded that neither the Srimitas nor the Sutras advocated tonsure. He plainly asked: if on the death of the wife, the husband's hair and moustach were shaven off, what would he think? He advocated that widows should be treated on an equal footing with widowers.

Flaming the Pandits for their cruelty towards women, he pointed out that they viewed the advocates of remarriage as iconoclasts.
He found no theoretical difficulty in introducing remarriage. Ignorance of the people, according to him, was the only obstacle. He thought that but for the opposition of the Shastris and Pandits, people in general agreed with him.\textsuperscript{35} He, however, warned the people not to pay any attention to them because if the majority of the people accept remarriage, the Shastris would either keep mum, or join the majority, but in no case oppose or create trouble.\textsuperscript{36} Further he pointed out that if the women had been educated they would not have tolerated this malpractice.\textsuperscript{37}

Gopalrao was a champion of reforms; still he was against state interference in social matters. When a suggestion was made that the Government should take a lead in encouraging widow-remarriage, as they had done earlier when prohibiting Sati, Gopalrao opposed it by saying that the Britishers had not come to India for getting the widows married because they came from a long distance and had no interest in us.\textsuperscript{38}

Marriage reforms

As a utilitarian, Gopalrao attached a distant meaning to the word 'reform'. For him, reform was the path of general well-being.\textsuperscript{39} While revolting against the dogmatism of contemporary society, he advocated adaptation of new principles to suit the changing needs of the time, and modification of the dogmas.
As a constructive reformer, he suggested a line of marriage reform based upon the principle of equality. For him, the best form of marital relationship was that the women should, with a singular mind, be devoted to their husbands nor should men take to bigamy. Divorce should be granted with mutual consent, and in case the husband maltreats the wife, he should be asked to pay appropriate maintenance allowance to her.40

In order to extend the scope of marriage, he recommended that the barriers of sub-castes should be broken. Marriage should be consummated within the caste. It is noteworthy that he did not advocate inter-caste marriages. He held the consultations with astrologers for marriage as superfluous. He argued that though all the marriages were performed in consultation with astrologers not all of them have proved successful. Thus, he held that astrological considerations and happiness in marriage had no necessary or causal connection.41

For reducing the financial burden of the father of marriageable girls, he exhorted people to curtail the expenditure incurred in marriage to suit the pocket of the father, and criticised the prodigality of the father who dragged the entire family into indebtedness.41

As for the marriageable age, Gopalrao showed flexibility and recommended no specific age limit. He believed that marriage should be consummated when the bride is fit to take
a decision of her own. He, therefore, said that in childhood education should be provided to her and her marriage should be arranged with her consent as well as that of the parents roughly till the age of twenty. He pointed out that this measure would abviate compulsion of the parents to offer their daughter to a particular man in return for money. He expressed surprise that even those who counted their last days married girls of nine or ten years. Gopalrao was confident that if woman were given a free choice, she would marry the right man. In stressing the importance of consent in marriage, he went to the extent of advocating free choice and warned others that marriage was the entire concern of the bride and the bridegroom, and it was unfair for others to interfere with it.42

With all the defects in the system of marriage, Gopalrao was very cautious to avoid governmental interference in such matters. He advocated that such reforms should be initiated by the people themselves as it was improper to use compulsion in social matters. He even preferred delay in reforms to compulsion by the Government.43

While advocating remarriage Gopalrao admitted that he did not find any support of religious principle. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, went further and argued that no religious support was necessary for rooting out blatantly unfair and unjust practices. Injustice is always injustice, it is never made justice by religious sanctions.44
Gopalrao did not just pay lip-service in advancing his cause. He, together with his colleagues, embarked upon a new programme to institutionalise the efforts out of which the Association for encouragement of remarriage (Funervivahottajak Mandali) was evolved. The Mandali organised a remarriage ceremony, but the strong opposition of the conservatives inflicted untold hardships on those who arranged it.\textsuperscript{45}

Surprisingly indeed, Vishnushastri Chiplunkar criticised Gopalrao's views on remarriage. In fact, the former's criticism is both unbalanced and inconsistent. On the one hand, Vishnushastri sympathised with widows by saying that they lived a very pitiable life and it was most detestable in our country,\textsuperscript{46} and on the other, he argued that the custom of early marriage should continue to prevail and he insisted upon it.\textsuperscript{47} He wanted to continue the practice only because it was an accepted custom for a long time and it did not affect the earlier generations adversely.\textsuperscript{48} While sympathising with widows and at the same time supporting early marriages, possibly Vishnushastri treated child marriages and the premature widowhood (necessarily entailed by them), as entirely different issues having no bearing upon each other.

Further criticism which Vishnushastri levelled, was personal in character. Questioning Gopalrao's motives, he said that Gopalrao paid only lip-service and when an
opportunity of introducing his pet reforms was extended to him, he evaded his responsibility. When a widow-remarriage was actually performed at Bombay, he abruptly left for Surat. However, Gopalrao's biographer pointed out that the criticism was unwarranted in that, though he was one of the organizers of the remarriage, he was not in Bombay when it was actually performed, as such, the argument that he left Bombay in order to evade facing of boycott by Brahmins did not stand.
NOTES

English


9. Altekar A.S., op cit. PP. 9-10


18. ibid. P. 61.

36. Gopalrao's experience proved otherwise. Jotiba Phule and D.K.Karve were humiliated when they introduced a simple reform of educating women in Poona. In Bombay, however, such type of opposition was not felt.

45. Refer Chapter 2.
निवेंद्धांग  ५५४
किता  ५५४
किता  ५५४
किता  ५५४
किता  ५५४
किता  ५५४
किता  ५५४
किता  ५५४
राधाकृष्ण गोपाळ भाषास्तरकर यांचे वरिष्ठ, ५५४
मात्र वा. के. पेशवे काहीन महाराष्ट्र, ५५४
किता  ५५४
किता  ५५४
निवेंद्धांग  ५
राधाकृष्ण गोपाळ, ५
किता  ५
किता  ५
किता  ५
किता  ५
स्वायत्त ५५४
निवेंद्धांग  ५५४
४४. आकाशक नादा. गोपाल गणेश आगरकर, पृष्ठ ९६
४५. चित्तूरकर विज्ञानालिकी, निवेदनालय, वित्तालक गुणो, पृष्ठ २०५
४६. चित्तूरकर विज्ञानालिकी, आमला देशाके सिंहली, पृष्ठ ६६
४७. चित्ता पृष्ठ ८७
४८. "विविधतारंगिनी" पुस्तक १०, अक्टूबर १६७९, पृष्ठ १२४
४९. आचार्य कृ. नाथ., रामधार बोपालराव हरी देशाकूल महाके "दौकटिकादी" यांचे शब्दित, पृष्ठ १४५
CHAPTER 7

RELIGION

A study of Gopalrao's social thought cannot be complete without his religious ideas which, in fact, were the backbone of his social teachings. In course of his official duties, he was entrusted with the work of preparing a digest of religions which afforded him an opportunity of studying comparative religion as well.

In his writings, he interpreted the word 'Dharma' so as to convey different meanings: first, as the basic principles of religion; secondly, as sectarian religion like Hindu religion, thirdly, as duty; and lastly, as charity.

While tracing the origin of religion, he explained that its principles were introduced for promoting happiness, and convenience. The principle object of religion was to motivate people to love God and imbibe the spirit of mercy and love; and elimination of grief and mitigation of sorrow was its essence. In short, religion as he understood it was humanitarian in character.

Coming to the Hindu religion, on the other hand, he found that it had impeded the spontaneous behaviour of the Hindus by circumscribing their outlook and obstructing
mobility. Their attitude towards this religion had bound them in chains. Setting aside the true religion and devotion of God, they had resorted to means entirely inconsistent with the spirit of their religion.

How prohibitive the restrictions of the religion were could be easily understood from the boycott against those who participated in conducting widow-remarriages or even those who sympathised with them or who dined with other caste-fellows. In effect, no social reformer of the nineteenth century escaped boycott altogether.

As already pointed out, Gopalrao held Brahmins responsible for imposing religious restrictions even on flimsy grounds, in order to enhance their own importance. The Hindu religion had accepted preponderence of middleman between God and the devotee. He was surprised to observe that most Hindus, instead of performing religious function themselves, allowed their intermediaries i.e. Brahmins, to perform it on their behalf. For example, in case of failure of rain, the Brahmin priest could be called upon to propitiate God and perform the rituals through him - and through him alone! Gopalrao pointed out that this had made a business of religion undertaken for extracting money from the superstitious people. N.C. Chapekar points out that at the time of the Peshwas Brahmins were hired for Namaskara as a means of attaining physical health, at the rate of one rupee per
thousand Namasakers. All the scriptures of which the authors were Brahmins, praised those who were benevolent to Brahmins or served dinners to them particularly, thereby diverting all the mundane benefits in their favour alone disregarding the deserving poor, the destitute, the blind and the ignorant who remained uncared-for in the same miserable position.  

While pointing out the utter disregard for true religious principles in which ritualism resulted, he said that, instead of following the moral principles, teachings of outward manifestations of religious behaviour such as rituals were impressed upon the youngsters since their early childhood. Everybody felt that the sins committed by him could be obliterated by expenditure on religious ceremonies, like absolution, propiation and pilgrimages. He was very much distressed by the travesty of religion in everyday practice.

Gopalrao was very critical about the degeneration of the Hindu religion. While admitting that initially i.e. some five to ten thousand years ago, it cherished noteworthy principles, he found that they were honoured in the breach than in the observance in the contemporary condition. Hindus, like Muslims, believed that the Dharmastra was complete and exhaustive and that there could be nothing beyond it. Muslims also emphasised the all-inclusive nature of the Quran and believed that the root of all science and learning
could be found in it. Expressing surprise at this, he said that this tendency has instilled fanaticism. Such people being conservative, welcome everything old. In explaining why flexibility in the application of religious principles is always necessary, Gopalreao pointed out that our Dharma Shastras ordains absolute power to the kings and regards them as uncontrolled and uncontrollable. But as the time has changed, and a democratic form of government has been evolved, this characterisation of rulers would now appear irrelevant and require modifications. 9

Gopalreao all along stressed the importance of good behaviour and morality. He said that though the Dharma Shastras lay down certain family rituals, these were mistaken for religion. The Puranas contained innumerable ritualistic austerities (Karmas) which, if followed literally, would consume the entire day. 10 There were many superficial elements, which were neither useful nor conducive to enlightenment or moral improvement and several of them were wastefully time-consuming. 11

Hindus, he said, neglected true religion and true devotion and were led astray by attaching importance only to the ritualism. They thought that sacred baths and ablutions and similar acts were the real means of attaining salvation. In order to attain salvation, he continued, they would not hesitate to take to evil practices. He warned that God could hardly be realised by mere performance of Karma. 12
He pointed out that many wealthy people go on pilgrimages, spend hundreds of rupees on charity and erect temples at colossal costs. As a herald of the new dawn of industrialization, he suggested that instead of wasting money on these items, cotton mills should be established so as to open up employment opportunities for thousands of people and promote their happiness. He was surprised to find that acceptance of bribe was not regarded as immoral in the religious principles, though they do pass strictures against greed. His mention of bribe is significant in that there was a widespread prevalence of corruption in those days amongst the Brahmin employees in particular. As pointed out earlier disturbed by this social disease, he wrote his maiden letter in the contemporary newspaper 'Prabhakar'. Not satisfied with the article alone, he wrote an independent book on perjury viz. entitled 'Khoti Shanat Wahu Naye Ani Khoti Sakaha Deu Naye Ya Vishayee Lokanshi Sambhashan'. In those days, as new employment opportunities were created, the disease of corruption was also spreading. Gopalrao found the best way of counteracting the evil practice with the help of religion itself.

He examined the two diametrically opposite views of life in Hindu religion: one, that of the Vedanta, whose followers believe the world to be unreal and the other, Bhedanta, believing it to be real. Those who followed the former path remained inert all the while and isolated
themselves from the people. On the other hand, those who followed the latter path, were active and paid attention to the mundane reforms. Gopalrao advocated the latter path as the true path of progress - the only path which would make the people happy.\(^{15}\) He wanted to instill the spirit of activity into the Hindu religion. Apart from this, he referred to an additional path viz. the Shakta cult which, according to him, followed the most deprecable and detestable practices. He expressed deep concern over its spread especially in Poona and suggested that those who followed it should be legally punished.\(^{16}\) The disease however appears to be so deep rooted that even Tukaram used strong language against it.\(^{17}\) The evil perpetrated by this cult was explained by Gopalrao in his book: 'Agamanprakash'.

Reviewing the reformation movement, he pointed out that the Sikh religion in fact was established for religious reforms, but in course of time the same old evil practices were revived in it.\(^{18}\)

Thus, he pointed out that the religion followed in his days was unworthy of being called true religion. It was an anachronism. With the liquidation of the principles of morality, the principles of religion had been diluted and often violated in contemporary Hindu society infested by corrupt Brahmins devoid of any morality and interested merely
in the outward manifestation of religious observances like Achāres. It is the Brahmins who distorted the principles so as to serve their own ends. Superstitious people spent their wealth for serving dinner to thousands of Brahmins, and for dispensing charity on them, at the end of pilgrimages, disregarding the true religion. In Islam and other religions, on the other hand, he pointed out, principles of morality were impressed upon the children for which 'Pandanas' and 'Gujatān'—the books on morality and ethics—are introduced.

Gopalrao suggested that instead of spending money on unworthy purposes, schools should be opened, voyages abroad should be promoted to advance trade; books should be written for renovation of knowledge, and printing presses installed. True charity, according to him, consisted in expenditure on these items. On the other hand, the expenditure incurred according to the direction of the religious priests was futile and inexpedient. He acknowledged that the Brahmins were intelligent, but remarked that their intelligence had been circumscribed by the restrictions placed by their religion.

As pointed out earlier he believed that the sages have introduced the religious principles for promoting happiness and creating order in society. Naturally, for him the principles were a replica of contemporary social conditions,
and as the conditions change, he insisted, the rules also should be modified. It is on the basis of these postulates that Gopalrao suggested reforms.

He advocated that everyone should pray to God faithfully and devoutly. The devotion should not be superficial. Everyone should recognise others' right to live and respect others' lives. Here he suggested that nothing should be done merely because it gives happiness to the individual himself. In order to absolve contemporary Hindus of the labyrinth of procedures and ritualistic observances, he recommended that only three out of the traditional sixteen sacraments of thread ceremony, marriage and funeral ceremony should be followed and the remaining be abandoned as superfluous. Gopalrao had observed that the solemn utterances, being couched in the Sanskrit language, were hardly comprehensible to the persons concerned and affected; hence he advocated that these should be pronounced in the language understood by the parties concerned.

Significantly, as a religious reformer, he suggested that everybody should have freedom of speech, writing, and action and there should be no restriction imposed by religion in these matters. Possibly, he specifically mentioned it because the contemporary society was reluctant to listen to what one had to say if it went against the established principles of religion. As for women, he observed that the
restrictions were placed upon them by religion and, as such, advocated that in matters religious as well as social women should enjoy equal rights with men in the family. Attention should be paid to the underlying moral purpose rather than the external manifestation of a ritual, as the religion then was heavily ritualistic. In order to render the taking of pledges significant and purposeful, and to facilitate carrying them out, he said that nothing should be recited unless its meaning is known. Referring to the Brahmins, he said, receiving religious charity should not be the privilege of the few but should be extended to all, irrespective of caste and creed. Everybody should be considerate towards the well-being of all. He wanted special attention to be paid to develop patriotism and asked for freedom of occupation, thereby suggesting that no occupation should be reserved for a few people on a hereditary basis. Moreover, he suggested a very radical measure that caste differences should be based upon the function performed by the individual and not upon birth - a reconversion from caste system to Varna. It was a system based upon occupational stratification rather than heredity. Laws codified by the king and ordained by God should be obeyed. He, however, did not specify the laws ordained by God. Everyone should work hard for propagating knowledge, and be honest.

Thus, Gopalrao's code of conduct, though originally spelled out in relation to the Hindu religion, is so comprehensive that it includes over and above religion, the canons
of social and political behaviour and can as such be termed 'Universal Religion'. His thoughts on religion covered the four basic elements of a sound, serious religious system: rational, moral, traditional and emotional.

He viewed the entire world as the real incarnation of God who did not require any propitiation or expiation. Benevolence towards the people as and when possible and as much as constituted for him real worship of God. As such, he warned that in the absence of this, even with repeated sacred baths and ablutions and incantations, our life is wasted in idleness and God will not be pleased nor forgive us. 28

He gave a significant place to Mercy in religion, and stressed that it should form a prime article in religion. It should not be indiscriminate, but should be shown to those who deserve it. 29

As pointed out earlier, criticising the caste system as it has enshrined rigidity in the Hindu society, he said that the disintegration of the Hindus was caused by heterogeneity, developed by differences such as caste. He believed that help of the religion can and should be sought to obviate this tendency and said that conflicts between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins could be resolved only when religion was reformed. 30 He thus believed that reformation was the sine qua non of our social advancement.
Nevertheless, Gopalrao appreciated the built-in adaptability of the Hindu religion when he said that there were appropriate concessions and exemptions which have made it elastic and accommodative e.g. the rule that for promoting an important item less important item could be neglected.\(^3\)

Besides the question of religion, he also incidentally expressed his views on a related question, i.e. of reconversion which was disregarded by Hindu orthodoxy. Gopalrao supported reconversion as could be seen from the letter favouring it written by the Pandits of Kashi and published in 'Induprakash' on November 18, 1877, which Gopalrao reproduced with approval in his book 'Swadhya\(_v\)ya'.\(^2\)

With all his views on religion, critics have expressed surprise at his simultaneous membership of two principally antithetical associations, viz., the Prarthana Samaj, and the Arya Samaj. While the Prarthana Samaj with its non-authoritarian bias did not recognise the authority of the scriptures, the Arya Samaj which was authoritarian, and regarded the Vedas as the utterances of God, and advocated their authority.\(^3\) It was, therefore, a contradiction that Gopalrao actively participated in both the movements.

Historically, his association with the Arya Samaj was prior to the Prarthana Samaj. It was probably after 1875 that his contact with the Arya Samaj became closer.
It may be pointed out that though he was associated with the Arya Samaj, he held the view that the Vedas were man-made i.e. written by the sages. Thus, with all his association with the Arya Samaj he does not appear to have deviated from his earlier views.

The further question then arises: if he did not, in principle, agree with the Arya Samaj, why did he participate in its activities? The proper answer to this can be found in Gopalrao’s conciliatory and all-inclusive nature. Probably, on the grounds of expediency he might have thought of associating with a movement for religious reform, though in some respects differed from its stand.

Gopalrao is also criticised for making a partial and incomplete analysis because he considered only the Hindu religion and disregarded the imperfections of other religions, though to a great extent he compensated for this omission in his introduction to 'Hindusthanecha Itihas'. In it he referred to other religions as well. He advocated that as all the people share equal responsibility of defending their country, laws for followers of all religions should be alike and that they should be treated with no difference in actual administration of justice. Of course, the hope he cherished was never fulfilled, and the measures he suggested remained on paper—unimplemented. Besides he also advocated amicable relationship between believers in different
religions saying that vanity of one's religion arises out of ignorance, and all the people should develop friendly relationship with each others and be happy. When we discard malice towards other faiths, mercy and peace would reign in our life.37

.Customs, conventions, traditions and beliefs.

Copalrao held a distinct and dynamic view of the dharmaas. As pointed out earlier, he argued that their intention was to promote welfare of the people and create order out of chaos.38 These principles were introduced for facilitating mutual communication, and were, more or less, based upon the contemporary conditions. He pointed out that formerly, there were no clocks and time was measured by the waterclock. Now though the clock has been invented for measuring time, the same outworn chronometer continues to be used. This, according to him, was the result of the absence of conscious thinking on the part of our people.39

And, as nobody is inclined to go to the root of the customs and conventions,40 blind adherence has resulted, and mechanical restraints have been put upon the Hindus in their conduct. Besides, this has further delayed reforms.41

Customs and conventions, responsible for the degeneration of the Hindus, were firmly rooted on account of blind faith in religion and, as a result the people have lost
dynamism. In order to improve our lot, these outdated customs and conventions should be discarded. He also warned that unless these were modified, wellbeing of our country could never be promoted.

Gopalrao considered the traditional institution of the joint family as an impediment to the growth of trade and commerce. It contributed to lethargy in that only one of the members of the family earned while all others lived on him as parasites. In case of the death of the head of the family, the bread-winner, all the dependents are thrown to the winds. He, however, found an advantage in the joint family; it accommodated orphans and disabled members.

He specifically criticised festivals like Holi, which vocalised the most shameless expressions and was the most unholy ceremony. He was so critical of it that he wrote a separate book criticising the festival viz. 'Holichya Duracheravishaye'.

He found no consistent principle in ritualistic touch-me-notism, and expressed surprise for using the same age-old, worn-out and dirty silken garment and at the same time prohibiting the use of newly washed and pure cotton dhoti. He also deprecated the tendency of teaching meaningless and inconsistent modes of religious behaviour in childhood, disregarding the true principles of morality and good behaviour.
He welcomed the efforts of the British rulers calculated to suppress anti-social customs. 47

The views Gopalrao held about the limitations of the Hindu religion were, to a certain extent and in certain respects, identical with the criticism of the Christian missionaries, but there was a substantial difference between the two - as regards the motives. Gopalrao was concerned with material wellbeing of the Hindus. He wanted to strengthen the Hindu religion by purifying, adopting and modifying its institutional set-up and breathing dynamism into it.

**Caste System**

As pointed out earlier, for Gopalrao, one of the principal causes for the disintegration of the Hindus were caste differences which created bad blood among the people of different castes, 48 and hindered national unity. 49 The differences he said were reflected in the heterogeneity of prayers. 50

Tracing the history of the caste system, he pointed out that the caste system was not rigid in the earlier stages, when castes depended upon the function performed by the individual rather than upon heredity. 51
The caste system was so much rooted in the minds of the people, that even benevolence was shown on the basis of caste rather than on the principle of need; and human consideration was thrown to the winds, they preferred helping a dying cow, rather than a dying human being.\textsuperscript{52}

As a liberal thinker Gopalrao advocated equality, and said that the interest of all the people being interlinked, they should cooperate with one another and promote common well-being.\textsuperscript{53}

He regretted that no one paid attention to the extremely pitiable condition of the unfortunate and backward tribes such as \textit{Ehila, Koli, Katkari, Ramooshi, Kotwadi} etc. and other backward and ignorant people who maintained themselves only on labour and hunting. No language could be found for depicting their miserable plight. Their life was no better than that of animals.\textsuperscript{54} It is notable that the framers of the Indian Constitution, aware of their plight have now granted special protection to them by classifying them as Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under Articles 330, 332 and 335.

In his thoughts on the caste system, it is significant that he did not advocate its abolition altogether — perhaps not because he thought it desirable, but possibly because he appreciated the difficulty in its abolition altogether. But he advocated that the caste differences should be
mitigated, by reducing the pride for one's caste so that the Brahmins would not show disregard for the Mahars. He advocated classification based upon deed rather than heredity. He admitted at the same time that the differences arising out of variation in qualities, would have to be accepted as inevitable as individual dissimilarities were bound to arise.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the caste system manifested its rigidity in several ways. It was in the latter half of the nineteenth century that the first organised effort to abolish the caste system was made by the Parameshwar Sabha, but its sequel sufficiently proved the effectiveness of the caste rules and of its methods of punishment. Those who tried to outstep them were duly punished.

He observed the inconsistency in the behaviour of the Brahmins who showed more regard for the British people. He appealed to the Brahmins not to accord discriminatory treatment on the ground of caste, and pointed out that if the principles of religion were scrupulously followed the Mahars were nearer and better than the British people.

Gopalrao wanted to resuscitate a positive outlook which could accommodate materialism.
Rationalism

Gopalrao could be called a rationalist but his rationalism was not entirely consistent with his views on religion. His rationalism could not fit into the framework of its accepted traditional meaning.

The Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences explains rationalism as "a comprehensive expression applied to various theoretical and practical tendencies which aim to interpret the universe purely in terms of thought or which aim to regulate individual and social life; in accordance with principles of reason and to eliminate as far as possible or to relegate to the background everything irrational. In individual and social life; rationalism seeks to establish universal and self-evident principles for the regulation of human behaviour. Rationalism here signifies the effort to rationalise life."

Gopalrao was a rationalist in that he revolted against the scriptural authority and said that whatever be the dictum of Manu or Yadvayavalkya, or any other authority or even of God, reason was important. The Shastras should be set aside, and conscience should be regarded. He believed that the degeneration of the Hindus followed when the light of reason was extinguished.

While introducing the principles of rationalism, Gopalrao wanted to suggest that the religious principles being subjective, should be modified to suit the needs of the
changing time. Still, aware of the dogmatism of the contemporary Hindu society, it was hard for him to base his argument exclusively upon reason, disregarding entirely the scriptural authority. It is out of this consideration that, for justifying a particular action, he had to quote scriptural authority in support of his stand. That is why, in order to impress the adm issibility of widow remarriage on contemporary society, he stated that it was not practised in ancient times. Relevant citations from scriptural authorities for justifying a cause abounded in his writings.

Gopalrao knew the limitations of the society in which he lived. In an orthodox society of the nineteenth century, it was not feasible for any social reformer to go against the mainstream of religious traditions, and in order to appeal to the common man, scriptural references were required to be quoted to justify a reform. People too, were so used to getting such references that they were not prepared to listen to the voice of Reason by itself. Gopalrao, in his later writings, extensively quoted scriptures for justifying a reform. Even Ram Mohan Roy took the Upanishads as the basis of his reform movement. Considering the spirit of the times this partial leaning on religious tradition was inevitable.

Gopalrao's rationalism therefore, was circumscribed by the reasonableness of any principle. He advocated that the principle which had become obsolete should be discarded, and
a new and reasonable practice, in keeping with the spirit of the times be introduced. He warned against outdated beliefs and advocated investigation into fresh vistas of knowledge. 63

Nevertheless, the rationalism which he advocated was quite consistent with his analysis of social life in which he regarded that there was a reason behind the degeneration of the Hindu society which long ago was dynamic and prosperous, and which, due to its internal defects, became stagnant in course of time. This rationalism is further embodied in the remedies which he advocated to counteract the deficiencies pointed out by him.
27. Plato also advocated occupational stratification of Society.

58. Refer Chapter 1.


"आष्टे नाटकांनंतर नमस्कार गाडविणे हा अनोपलाभासबी वा अपायस सुमारे मानवाल केले. सूचना १००० नमस्कार वातावरण वाहिले. नमस्कार-राचा दर हजारी उत्सवाळे असे".

बापेक नाणे, पेशवाईच्या साक्षीत, गृठ ५४

२५. निवंदंग्रंह १५२
२६. किता ४६
२७. किता १०
२८. किता ६१
२९. किता ६३
३०. किता ६२
३१. किता ४६
३२. किता ५२
३३. किता ५०
३४. किता १५२ बादांत:(यसकाचे बैंडक या शाखाशी अबोणाऱ्या पणा उल्लेख असलेला अनविकलेला शाखा) प्रत्येकप्रमाणे,
अनुभवसुद्धा उज्ज्वलाचिष्य सिद्धांत
महाराष्ट्र राजकोश विभाग ५ था,
गृठ १५१७
१५. शाक्तवाची शुरुकी माय | किंतू काय बिचीती| त्याप तही तेवा | मागे धारे महारोनि
शाक्तवाची गाढवी माय | पुरुषे ताय वेदांतरा
कुआ महाप्रेम हिंदीचे | बोझते वाचेय सिंह ते
श्रीमुकारम महाराज गाथा भाष्य, माग २, शंकर महाराज वंदारकर,
पृष्ठ १३६३

१६. निष्कब्रक्ष्मांग | १३६
१७. किता | ६५
१८. पुस्पवन | पृष्ठ १
१९. निष्कब्रक्ष्मांग | ९१
२०. किता | ७७
२१. निष्कब्रक्ष्मांग | १५२
२२. किता | १६६
२३. किता | १६६
२४. किता | ६४
२५. स्वाध्याय | पृष्ठ १७१
२६. निष्कब्रक्ष्मांग | ७४
२७. किता | ६५
२८. किता | १२२
२९. स्वाध्याय, पृष्ठ १४४-१४४
३०. "नवभारत", जानेरारी १६२२, "अक्षिश्वासी यांचे अन्विषयक महात्मांबंधी
एक विचार", डॉ. गणाधराचार्य भारते
३१. स्वाध्याय, प्रस्तावना, पृष्ठ १
३२. जोग राश्री (संपादक), मराठी वाइब्ल्यु इतिहास बंड ४ (१५०० -
१६३२), पृष्ठ ६२६
३३. स्वाध्याय | पृष्ठ २२६
३४. निष्कब्रक्ष्मांग | १४७