CHAPTER III

THE PROFILE OF MIDDLE-CLASS WOMEN IN
PRE-INTEGRATION TIMES

To understand the cultural changes that the region of Marathwada has undergone, it will be fruitful to have a glimpse in the period during the first half of the Twentieth Century which encompasses the era before Marathwada merged in Maharashtra State.

It was mostly a feudal society and feudal culture embedded in the rural world as it was almost all over the country. In the region of Marathwada, it was superimposed by the Nizami culture. Both these cultures were hardly helpful to bring the woman to a high status. On the other hand, the forces of both the cultures were effective in keeping the women within the four walls of the house and the Nizami culture added to it the purdah system. Though Hindu women did not actually observe purdah, they would not come out in public. Thus the purdah system was existent in the sense of social segregation of women.

Information was gleaned regarding the status of woman in the family and the society, from literature
and articles of the period around the integration of Marathwada in Maharashtra. A picture of the women in the family and society of those times emerges out of these literary sources.

The autobiography of Satu Madhavrao Pagdi, in Marathi, throws light on the social situation of the Marathwada of feudal Hyderabad State and Marathwada in the post-merger days. In his memoirs are shown the interior of a Brahmin joint family, which may well be regarded as an average middle-class family of those times. It exemplifies the stresses and strains that the families underwent during the decades of change.

The average middle-class families were rural based and were joint families or extended joint families. There was a heavy atmosphere of religious rituals during which Brahmins were invited to perform the worships and were given meals as a part of the religious duty. The family used to be a cluster of many distant relatives, brothers and their wives, widowed sisters, aunts, old people and other such relatives. There were hardly any servants for doing the household chores. The work of sweeping, cooking, fetching water, preparing for worships, looking after the children and the sick persons in the house, cleaning the grain for the whole
year and many such duties were performed entirely by
the women in the family. There was hardly any leisure
time and if at all there was any, needle-work or
pursuit of fine arts were not encouraged in orthodox
families. There were days of worship, days of
festivals, days of fasting, days of feasting and family
occasions and rituals to be followed, like naming
ceremonies, pregnancy and marriage celebrations,
illnesses and deaths and anniversaries. Women would
be totally involved in all these activities. They
would also have to feed the farm hands when extra work
was to be got done like sowing and harvesting etc.
The autobiography of Sitabai Nandapurkar, Setu
madhavrao Pagdi and other articles, short stories,
show that the women of those times used to go through
laborious work and even young girls were not spared.
Tarabai Paranjpe in her article says that it was
generally believed that a woman is meant to do the
household chores. There were very large joint families
even in comparatively bigger towns and cities. One
could even find nearly forty or even fifty members in
the family. One woman told Mrs. Paranjpe in the
interview that even if women cooked sixteen kilos of
rice, they sometimes used to eat hardly a mouthful of
rice for themselves or sometimes there would be nothing left. In such a situation education or individual freedom were unimaginable. Moreover there were excessive and rigorous ideas and norms about receiving guests and looking after them. Due to this there were always some guests in the family.

Treatment for girls and boys was different in those days. Male children were always well cared for and well-fed. Boys were never asked to do the house work. They could spend their leisure time in listening to stories whereas Mrs. Mandapurkar had written about girls getting scoldings if they were found spending time in needlework or found reading books. Girls had to remain in the house. They were not allowed to go to the streets at all, nor to speak or play with boys. The girls would be thrashed if she ever spoke to a boy or a man outside the house. Mrs. Mandapurkar mentions one particular incident. At the age of 7-8 years, she was found talking to some man in the neighbourhood. Her father, when he knew it, thrashed her so hard that she fell unconscious. She also mentions that if at all girls slipped out of the house to roam about, and were caught in that, they used to get punishments like confinement in some dark room of the house. They were
not allowed to read or write. They were used to work in the house since childhood. All the day they had to engage themselves in laborious household work, looking after the cattle-shed and such other work.

From her autobiography and from books and articles of others, it is seen that the age of marriage was eight to eleven years. She describes how one day (or rather evening) when she was awakened from sleep at eight o'clock, she was taken to the main hall of the house and asked to do obedience to two persons - strangers sitting there. It was only later that she came to know that they had come to 'see' her for marital purpose and one of them was her future father-in-law. She was eight years then. Soon she was married and sent to her in-laws' place. There she had to work hard and silently, respect the in-laws - even the little younger ones, had to experience hunger and keep on working in order not to tarnish the image of her parental home. These girl-wives were naturally living in total obedience to the mother-in-law. Everything depended on the attitude of the mother-in-law. The description of family matters also reveals some facets of husband-wife relations, not only in her family but also about her other friends. It is seen that the
conjugal bonds of husband and wife were totally dis-
couraged and they were always under the keen guard of
the mother-in-law so they should not speak to each
other. She never dared to read letters from her
husband in front of her mother-in-law. The husband
was also somebody who was to be worshipped. There
was such an aura of fear and respect — so much awe that
the girl-wife remained silent and withdrawn.

Women were not allowed to handle money, they
had to ask for it of their husbands. Tarabai Ratanjpe
in her article states that 'The wife did not have
authority of giving even four annas to anybody even
if she wished.' They were not consulted in important
family matters regarding purchases of finances. Seetaram
mentions the narrator's pleasure when one day she found
a brand new car at their house which was newly purchased
or at building a new house. She does not even feel
that she was not consulted in such a big matter as
women were never consulted. She also mentions how she
used to buy stealthily some trinkets for which she had
to give accounts to her husband. These autobiographies
articles, the short stories of B. Raghunath, show that
in youth wives had to go through child bearing and
child rearing. They had to be completely subservient
to their husbands. They had no voice in financial or money-matters or in decision making.

There were signs that the situation was changing. Enlightened husbands like S.M. Pagdi or Advocate R. Nandapurkar would want their wives to read, write and whenever they showed some spark, would admire it. During the times of freedom struggle they had encouragement from their husbands. The Hyderabad freedom movement, and the struggle against the atrocities of the Razakars made many a woman who could not even read and write, to help the menfolk indirectly or even to participate directly.

The examples of some women who participated in freedom struggle brought a confidence in the hearts of other women to come out of the house for participating in the freedom struggle. Yet there were no conscious efforts for making women aware of their rights as an equality in sex. Segregation of woman from social life still remained.

Tarabai Paranjape has described the social situation of women with the help of some interviews. (1930) 6. The picture which emerges out of that shows the slow pace of change. According to her the main reason for
unwillingness to the education of a girl was that the
girl passes the crucial age of marriage. If she was to
be sent for graduation, she would pass the age of 21-22
years and would lose her bloom and as looks were and
still are the major consideration for marriage, it would
be difficult for the parents to get her married. These
comments show that education was secondary and was used
as a platform for waiting for marriage. There was a firm
belief that marriages have to be arranged by parents.
Self-choice marriage was totally non-existent. Some
interviewers told her that even the girl's approval
should not be asked because "what a girl can understand
regarding this?" and "we are not her enemies to do any
harm", whereas now the approval of the groom is asked.
Many marriages were fixed among relations and at a very
early age. Tarabei Paranjpe further mentions that 64% of
people opposed marriage in different subcastes.

She also mentions that caste rules were
strictly observed. Even the rules about purity and
pollution were observed. Fear of social censure was
always there if these rules are not observed but the
very rich families were free from it because nobody
dared to criticize them. She further states that everybody
believed in horoscopes. Dowry and gifts had a social
sanction and were a prestige issue of the families.

Child bearing was one of the prestigious duties and functions of a woman. If a woman failed to bear a child within three to four years after marriage, the husband and in-laws would start to plan for a second marriage. As a barren woman, she would not be allowed to mix with other children nor would she be invited or would be avoided for religious or social functions. On the contrary, as for a woman who had many children, nobody would think about her troubles for children were regarded as a gift of God.

Setu Madhavrao Pagdi describes the plight of child widows. They were uneducated and completely at the mercy of the relatives in the joint family. They had to work very hard, go through religious fasts, live a secluded life. They were not to appear at suspicious and religious functions. They were often victims of the rapacity of male relatives. He narrates the heart-moving episode of his own aunt, a child widow who had come to the family shelter which proved to be no shelter at all. She cared for the little ones in the house, worked all the time but fell a prey to the wolfish designs of his maternal uncle and died by the medicines she was forced to take for inducing an abortion.
Whereas the uncle was not punished, the woman lost her life.

Prof. Bhagwantrao Deshmukh has reviewed some folksongs ('ovi') which women used to sing while grinding the corn. The emotions and feelings reflected in these songs are related to their daily family life. Though Marathi literature of these times and earlier too, was essentially influenced by the 'Moksha' concept, in these songs the woman does not want to go away but wants to live the family life with its overflowing joys and sorrows. He pertinently points out how these songs give a kaleidoscopic picture of woman's sufferings in various roles from her childhood till she becomes old in the joint family, suffering in girl-hood, suffering as a wife or as a daughter-in-law. The one hope that was reflected was that a woman would have a son as that only would bring a rise in her status in the family. These songs also show how a woman is guarded by the mother-in-law or other relatives of the husband, so that she cannot even speak to her husband even though she wishes to go to him. There is a religious note in all songs, no doubt, but as pointed out by Deshmukh, it is to call God in the 'sansar', i.e., family-life, to ameliorate the suffering. The woman reflected in these songs
had no vision out of the family circle, but she did want God to come to her and often managed to fill her hard life with a note of devotion.

The various literary pieces show that a woman's life was severely restricted only in the family and from girlhood to old age it was a tale of work-suffering-sacrifice.

Setu Madhavrao Pagdi mentions in his autobiography how the author's wife whose maternal home was from outside Marathwada was different. She loved hockey, badminton and to participate in outdoor sports. Cycling, horseriding were her hobbies. She created a women's circle and made them to participate in social activities in Kalamnuri (Marathwada) during 1935-38.

Stories of B. Raghunath is a live picture of the situation of that time. In his 'Saki', a collection of short stories, he describes that an outcaste woman, changes her religion and marries a muslim sanitary inspector and then she spits on the officers under him who had harrassed her. The stories also describe the plight of women kidnapped by Muslims, how the police constables arrest girls and rape them in custody, how menfolk send their own women to officers to get their work done.
Mrs. Shankuntala Waghmare, reviewing the 'New Woman and Old Woman' describes the plight of the woman of old times. Her life was limited to the joint family. She had to satisfy and please the in-laws and was always buried in house-work. These women never worried about their future, while marrying, because they used to be too young and so they did not even have the capacity to think in these terms. While this was the general situation, in these days, the new woman's image was that of the one who wore a six yard sari, used cosmetics and went for strolls with her husband. Further she explained that now there is the need to understand the woman as one who wants to develop her educational capacity and also wants to participate in social and political movements.

The eminent political and social worker as well as a leader of Marathwada, late A.K. Waghmare, has mentioned about the pitiable conditions of the women of Marathwada, in his articles. In his collected articles written in 1936 to 1947, one finds the references about the plight of women in Marathwada. Based on the census of 1931, he illustrates the social conditions of those times. He states that though Hyderabad was a first rate princely State, considering the geographical area, it was second in the list of India. But the
leaders of India were not aware of the social situation of Hyderabad because of the Muslim rule. He further points out that the purdah system affected the social life and administration so much that if anyone wanted to know about the social situation, it was not easily possible. Very few reports were available. From these reports he inferred that the ratio of girls to boys above five years was going down. About this, the Census Commissioner had written, "The natural law becomes operative, namely that the cause of death during the earlier age-group is selective, eliminating the weak and leaving the strong." This comment shows the apathy on the part of the government about the upbringing of girls. The Government Report gave sanction to the indifferent attitude of the parents towards girls. Customs of child-marriages and lack of care about health of the girls could be the reason of deaths. Sitabai Nandapurkar also mentions in her autobiography that when her brother had been ill with the sisters, her father used to abuse his daughters and pray to God to take away girls instead of his son.

In his articles, A.K. Waghmare reveals the miserable and humiliating condition of women in those
times. Bereft of education, status, confidence, they were not even aware that they were not regarded as human beings. His opinion was that women, educated and bold, coming from urban areas were required to make efforts to bring the women out of their plight. The Maharashtra Parishad tried to create confidence in the minds of women in Marathwada. Women, he felt, were half of the part of society. If they remained down-trodden, half the society would remain paralyzed. Some of the comments in his articles reveal the bare facts about the backward situation of women in particular and Marathwada in general. While discussing about the backwardness of Marathwada he says, Hyderabad State was backward and Marathwada still more so. Maharashtra was progressive because it was under the direct rule of British. Naturally the necessity of Marathwada is greater. Further, he points out that the problem of education of women is still more difficult. There is six times difference between Marathwada and Maharashtra in this respect. It would be necessary to give all the facilities that are given to backward classes, to these women. The literacy ratio of women in Marathwada was 2.2% while that of women in Bombay was 12.9%, that is six times more.
In 1952-53, there were only three colleges, thirtytwo high schools and 10,597 primary schools in Marathwada.14

A review of the books of memoirs, fiction and various articles written in the pre-integration times shows that the education of women in Marathwada was almost nil prior to the Police Action, in 1948. The awareness for the education of women in Marathwada emerged and developed out of the political movement of the struggle for freedom from the Nizami rule. The State Congress and its political workers played a major role in various ways. For while working and helping the political workers who were directly involved in the political movement, the women were exposed to the outside forces and currents that were sweeping through the region. This was totally a new experience for women. They were able to come in contact with the workers for political freedom and were inspired by them to struggle for freedom by direct participation. Even uneducated women became confident that they could lend a hand in the momentous struggle for freedom. Both the men, as well as the women realized that the strength of women was being wasted by keeping them uneducated and in the precincts of the house. So, political workers, freedom fighters, social workers together as well as individually
started motivating and organizing women for educational purpose. With the inspiration of Swami Ramanand Tirth, S.R. Deshpande, known as S.R. Guruji all over Marathwada and reported to be the pioneer in the field of education for women, organized the first 'shibir' of women at Nanded in 1945. Such 'shibirs' and 'Mahila Mandals' were soon formed at the taluka levels. Though the first purpose was mainly political, simply coming out of the house and joining a well-organized movement created a confidence in the minds of women. In his interview S.R. Deshpande said that in the 'Mughlai Raj' women had started thinking, being active and functioning for a political cause for the first time after a stupor of ages. Finding that the women were so willing and useful and had so much potentialities, the socio-political leaders felt the need for educating women. However, the odds were heavy. There were no schools for girls, generally the education of a girl would be terminated at the fourth standard. After the fourth standard, the medium of instruction was compulsarily Urdu language. Moreover, the parents were unwilling to send the girls through streets due to the fear of fanatic Muslim Hazakars and they did not even approve of co-education. The efforts of educating girls suffered a set-back in 1946 because of the violent and fanatic activities of
the Hasakars. For some years, whatever education women could get was from the men folk at home. One outcome of the political struggle was that women wished to get educated and the menfolk also felt that there was no harm in women getting education.

After the police Action, S.R. Deshpande stayed at Nanded and helped women to study and appear for Matriculation examination. Though this effort started with only two women students it increased soon and Mahila Shikshan Samiti was formed at Ambajogai in Ambajogai in August 1949. By 1950-51, classes upto seventh standard started at Nanded, Selu, Parbhani and Vaaramat whereas classes upto Matriculation started at Ambajogai, Jalna, Parbhani and Nanded. Again the development was marred by new obstacles, such as transference of authority to hold examinations from Maharshekarve University to S.S.C. Board, Pune, and refusal of the S.S.C. Board, Hyderabad, to give any concessions which were necessary for women. All during this period the total number of women student consisted mostly of adult women who were separated or widowed or wives of political workers. The condition of the separated women and widows who enrolled as students, was pitiable. Most of them had hardly any
money for food and clothing. Their very deplorable condition, compelled them to get education. Some of these helpless women, however, after completing their seventh standard, secured jobs in government service.

However, in 1954, Government made a rule that minimum matriculation would be required for securing government jobs. This resulted in closing down nearly all the schools. The women students were the needy ones who wanted jobs immediately and could neither spend much time nor money on education. However, efforts continued and again various classes were opened wherein women could learn and pass matriculation. These classes were run with Government aid. This was the situation of education till the independence of Marathwada from Hyderabad State and continued onwards till its merger in Maharashtra State.

The general attitude of parents towards the education of women is seen in the memoirs of Sitabai Nandapurkar, which are published after her death. Her father had a firm belief that girls would become rude if they were sent to school. Even then by persistent requests she could manage to go to school, but for hardly a month. Even at home if she was found reading she would be scolded. Reading was regarded as not only a waste of time but also smelt of rudeness according to elders.
Tarabai Paranjape in her article on women of Marathwada, narrates her experiences in her interviews with women. She also lays bare the social situation of women in the period of 1960 and prior to that. There was only one school for girls in the time of the Nizam at Aurangabad which was the most developed town in Marathwada. Even that school was only up to fourth standard. Yet parents were reluctant to send girls to the school. During the twelve years after the regime of the Nizam, that is till 1960, the number of girls' schools did not increase above ten. The students in these classes were mainly from higher middle class and of Brahmin caste. As the custom of child marriages was prevalent in the other castes, hardly any girl would go in for higher education after the seventh standard. In all classes attendance would be poor. Even in larger towns in Marathwada the schools would be empty if there was any religious festival. The girls had to stay at home and help in household work on such days. Girls were not allowed by the parents to participate in cultural programmes of the schools. Obviously the education of girls was considered to be a secondary aim. Even in Aurangabad which is supposed to be the centre of education and progress in Marathwada region the majority of people were not agreeable to the college education for girls.
The reasons that were given throw light on the social conditions of the girls.

Tarabai Paranjape points out in her article in 'Stree', 1960, special issue, that many parents prefer to educate their sons. Since the boy could be relied on in old age, whereas a girl was somebody else's property, they were unwilling to spend their meagre income on the education of the girl, who would be given away in marriage. Moreover marriage expenses and dowry were unavoidable items of expenditure for the parents of a girl. The parents also felt that the expectation of an educated girl about a bride-groom, standard of life etc., would rise in all aspects. In some castes, ideas of behaviour and clothing were very rigid. The elders would think that a woman who did not keep her head covered with her pallav was regarded loose in morals. Orthodox parents would not agree to send their girls to college where girls would crave for modern fashions in dress. They would also not agree to send their girls to co-education schools. They felt that it was enough for a girl just to know to read and write. It was found that the small group which recommended college education consisted of rich families and few Brahmin families which had migrated to Marathwada.
She concludes that the situation that was prevalent more than half a century ago in west-Maharashtra, was still here, in Marathwada around the time of the Police action. She recalls one incident. In 1952, it was decided to open a girls' hostel at Nanded. When she went around with others to some taluka places, to convince the parents to send their girls to the hostel, for education, women looked down upon her dress, i.e., six yard saree and a plait, and refused to send their girls, with the comment that they wanted to bring up their girls decently.

Impetus to the education of women in the region of Marathwada was given by the political situation. Though slow in the beginning, it gathered momentum after the merger of Marathwada in Maharashtra. Where there were two or four students at college level, at Nanded in 1950, the strength rose within a few years to 40 and above. A number of colleges sprang up in Aurangabad and girls entered college. Since then there was no looking back.

The difference of the public towards women's education in Pune in the twenties and in Marathwada in the fifties and sixties is worth noting. The movement of education of women in Western Maharashtra started in
Pune. At the beginning there was a tremendous violent reaction from the orthodox people and the women had to face hardships while getting education. In Marathwada, however, in comparison women did not have to suffer any such hardships. Though criticism was there, from orthodox circles, it did not reach to a level of violent reactions. The social and political leaders in Marathwada worked hard for the education of the people, girls as well as boys. Gradually people became aware that education of women was necessary for progress. The rather fast change may be attributed to the example set by the social workers in Maharashtra.

At last, education of women which was hampered by the uncertainty in policy matters during the Nizami rule was able to get a better policy after the merger of Marathwada in Maharashtra State. Before merger, education of women had received hardly any support. The women who came to schools were mostly young widows or separated women for whom there was hardly any financial support. The pressure of circumstances would force these women to find jobs. The general belief of people was that only widowed and separated women should take up employment if it was very necessary. These women would start working after passing the seventh
standard. Tarabai Paranjpe points out in her article on women in 'Stree' (1960) that the percentage of educated employed women in this area was very poor. Men in case of the widowed and separated women they would not be allowed to work if the family had financial ability to support them. In case of separated women, there was the further difficulty of a rule in the State of Hyderabad that a separated woman required her husband's permission to accept a job. In some cases, the husbands were unsympathetic enough to refuse to give permission for employment to their separated wives. After many efforts and much delay by the government, this law was cancelled. Tarabai Paranjape states that many people believed that women who worked in gainful employment become very rude, and do not pay any respect to their husbands and neglect their homes and children. Such old views and suspicions still worked in orthodox circles.

However, the rise in education created an aptitude for employment in women. It also gave them confidence. At the same time, the steep rise in prices forced many women to seek jobs. The additional income that flowed in, melted away the objections of the orthodox elder members of the family. The effect was to be seen in two decades during which time the
old order changed, yielding place to new.

Factual information was elicited about the social situation of Marathwada region of the time when it was in the clutches of Nizam rule and after its integration with West Maharashtra. Some eminent women who had participated in or helped the liberation struggle of Hyderabad, were interviewed for this purpose.

Some facts that have come to light in these interviews illuminate the changes that have occurred in this region. All the interviewees pointed out that changes that would have taken time of a whole century took place in a decade after the merger of Marathwada in Maharashtra State. This was supported by a number of examples. It was revealed from the interviews that there was no social life as such for women but her life was only limited to family affairs and there too she had a subordinate place.

There were hardly any girls' schools in this region. The only private girls' school was in Aurangabad, which offered Marathi language as medium of instructions. Expansion of this school could be made only upto high-school level but due to the uncertainty in the policy matters and extremely adverse situation there was
instability. In few other places in Marathwada, the schools were there, only upto fourth standard. The difficulties of Urdu medium deferred to Hindu girls from joining the schools while there were facilities and incentives in cash and kind in the government schools of Urdu medium. It was informed that for admission in Urdu medium school, Nizam government used to give ten rupees and thirty kilograms of jawar. For Hindus, the fear of girls being kidnapped was so great that parents were afraid to send them to schools. One respondent informed that if due to any reason, the girls were detained in the school, there would be a crowd in front of the school consisting of panic-stricken parents.

There was a general reluctance for sending the girls to school. After coming back from school, a girl was expected to join the household work immediately as a duty as well as training for her future life. The maximum age of marriage was twelve-thirteen. Thus the school career would come to a half by the fourth standard. One interviewee informed that permission for co-education was granted in 1935 when Mr. Eskote was the Education Minister.

All the interviewees recalled that the middle-class women of Marathwada, in those times, used to go
elaborately through various religious performances. Rules of purity and pollution were strictly observed, specially during cooking, serving and eating. There were various religious observances for unmarried and married women which were observed very strictly in those times.

Fardah system was observed not only among Muslims but also among Hindus, but in the sense of social segregation. Marathi women while going to her parental home or to her in-laws' place, would cover her body with a shawl. The closed horse-cart would take her from the longest route, from out of the city. Till mid-sixtees, in theatres, there would a separate place for women to sit and two door keepers and hold a long curtain whenever the lights were on.

No woman dared to come in the outer section of the house (drawing room or hall) where men sat together. Talking with the husband in front of other men or even women was disapproved and talking with other men was something unimaginable. Guests were treated very respectfully and the daughter-in-law was expected to look after their convenience. The daughter-in-law had to look after the house-hold duties and work
silently. She would be the last person to have meals. Visiting the other women folk was not a practice. Only old women would go to temples. The only occasion of social get-together would be some religious function. The daughter-in-law would be always accompanied by her sister-in-law so she would not dare to complain about family affairs. Some interviewees told how the daughter-in-law would get scoldings if she delayed in fetching water from the river or the well, as that was the only opportunity of women coming together and thus the in-laws would suspect that she would complain about the family.

Marriage ceremonies would go on for three to five days. Tallying horoscope, enquiry about 'gotra' 'kula' was essential. The criteria when searching for a bridegroom was that he should have some farmland and a house of his own. Moreover the status and reputation of family was also considered. Fixing up marriages was the authority of elderly male members in the house. Women were usually not consulted regarding this. Dowry and exchange of gifts was commonly practiced.

Inter-caste marriages were unknown. Even marrying out of subcaste was not approved or practiced. However, some women informed that specially in smaller
towns in Marathwada, in the rich families of higher
status, man would have a 'keep'. In short-stories of
S. Raghunath, one comes across references to this
prevalent practice.

One interviewee, Mrs. D., recalled that she
heard only one case of widow-remarriage in which woman
became a subject of ridicule and she left the town.
Widows had to face the practice of tonsure. The widow
was relegated to a life of a slave in the house.

Women were not supposed to go out for market-
ing, which was supposed to be the work of men. Usually
the shopkeeper would bring the sample of goods or clothes
to houses from which women could select whatever they
wanted. But this was a privilege of few upper-class
women. Women walking on the mainstreets was unknown.

All the interviewees expressed that after some
years of the integration of Marathwada with Maharashtra
State, the society progressed a decade ahead. There
were changes in the field of education. Girls started
going to schools and colleges. Cultural activities
in schools or colleges were unknown but teachers who
came from outside Marathwada started organizing cultural
programmes, dramas etc. One interviewee recalled the
first drama in which women participated was organized in Nanded, by some migrated women from West-Maharashtra.

Women started moving freely in society with courage and confidence which was not seen in the pre-integration times. Mrs. V.'s view was that the participation of women in the freedom struggle acted as the catalytic agent. Helping the political demonstrators and first chance of coming out of the house for political purpose gave confidence and courage to women, out of which they also aspired for education and employment.

Mrs. D. commented that the safer situation due to the integration of Marathwada in Maharashtra State was the major factor for encouraging the women to come out of the house to participate in social life. She also reflected that there was a general feeling that the women who came from outside i.e., West Maharashtra were going forward, and women of Marathwada were lagging behind. This gave them an incentive, to adopt the progressive attitude.

Mrs. W. commented that the changes in the social situation of Marathwada started occurring when the communication with West-Maharashtra was established. She said the main reason was, the girls, educated in
Pune-Bombay came here by marrying the boys here, who were from well-off families. Due to the feudal system and Nizam rule, jagirdari and deshmukhi system was prevalent; moreover, many government officials under Nizam rule were hatandara, having farmland. Thus the prevalent middle-class in the first-rate princely state in India, was well-to-do.

The women who migrated in this area by marriage, were already educated and brought with them the comparatively liberal behaviour pattern of western Maharashtra. These women started going out to the market, moving on the main roads. In those times, if a woman had to go out, she would go via lanes and not further from her house. These women, who came from 'outside' started going out in the market etc. The first reaction of people was that of contempt and disapproval but later on there was a general acceptance and following of that behaviour. These migrated women also started taking up employment as they had necessary educational qualifications.

A clear picture of the society of the pre-integration times can be found by observing the image of society in the literature of the time around the
integration period and also by analysing and compiling the interviews of the women who have seen the life of those times. The dark shadows of the atrocities perpetrated by the Razakars lie over the literature of those times. The interviews also have revealed how the whole society was in a grip of fear, more so the women. Also the Nizam's government, through its officers had a prejudiced attitude towards the Marathi speaking people who were neglected and also harrassed. Through the articles of A.K. Waghmare and the autobiography of S.M. Pandit, it is clear that the Marathi people were neglected, harrassed and hounded from all aspects - from farming to religion. People were, therefore, always in fear and in a stupor. Progress was impossible, what with the attitude of the Nizam to create obstacles. The old system and social structure of feudal nature, the landed property system which had created large joint families remained unchanged.

In such conditions, women were completely neglected. Bereft of education, freedom to move out of the four walls of the house, woman's whole world was the home. She was not allowed to mix in the society. In addition to that there lurked the constant fear of Muslim dominance. This had resulted in the
formation of rigid normative patterns. The sphere of
women's activity was limited to the house, and there
too her role was of a dependent person. Woman lay
in the darkness of ignorance. It was in the times of
Police Action that she started groping and wishing to
do something. What she did or tried to do gave her a
confidence and a desire to change. The women who
migrated from West-Maharashtra and settled in Marathwada
thus set new norms of education and patterns of behaviour.
Their example gave an impetus to seek education, and
employment, which served as a force to change their
role in the family, society and life.

The historical antecedents of a particular
region have to be taken into consideration along with
the empirical data. To draw a clear picture of the
changing profile of middle-class women in Marathwada
region which was under the Nizam's rule, the historical
background needs to be reviewed. The profile of middle-
class women in Hyderabad State, gleaned from literary
sources, can be considered the point of departure.
A study of the further changes which have occurred
in the various institutional areas is required.
There is a change in the position of the middle-class woman of the past and woman of the present. The age at marriage of a woman, the attitudes towards marriage indicate the position of the woman in the family. Other indicators are her attitude and participation in work. Her participation and exposure to friendship patterns which have changed need to be explored with the help of empirical data.
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