

"This magnificent book demonstrates how precolonial Indian forms of textual exegesis and debate foundationally shaped the birth of the modern Indian public sphere. By unearthing the nexus between patriarchy and accumulation of capital, it provides us new intellectual resources to critique 'marital capitalism.' A tour de force—must-read for anyone interested in Indian intellectual and gender history."

—MILINDA BANERJEE, author of *The Mortal God: Imagining the Sovereign in Colonial India*

"Only Brian Hatcher could have so elegantly translated a text like *Against High-Caste Polygamy*. Hatcher's fascinating introduction highlights Vidyasagar's contribution toward an imaginative sociology of Bengal, embellished by an early data-driven perspective, and informed by enormous sympathy for Bengali women trapped in Kulin marriages. Hatcher's voice merges with this sympathy, while retaining its analytical acumen. This book is central for understanding women's reform in colonial India and is a tremendous read."

—DEEPA DANDEKAR (PhD), Researcher, Leibniz-Zentrum
Moderner Orient, Berlin

"A daunting task indeed—to make relevant a late-nineteenth century text on the plight of high-caste Hindu women, subject to, as Vidyasagar writes 'the practice of this hideous and cruel custom' of serial polygamy. Hatcher's seamless introduction and extremely readable translation successfully highlights Vidyasagar's fundamental ethical commitment to women's dignity. He neatly contextualizes the author's Brahmanical heritage that could have predicated an inherently patriarchal viewpoint."

—MALAVIKA KARLEKAR, Editor, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*

Against High-Caste Polygamy offers a complete, annotated translation of Ishvarchandra Vidyasagar's influential social-reform tract from 1871. Crafted by one of the nineteenth century's most prominent voices for social change, Vidyasagar's work calls upon the classical discourse and argumentation of the Sanskrit legal tradition while engaging norms of modern historical and social criticism. Vidyasagar deploys a mode of "imaginative sociology" geared at capturing the suffering of Kulin women alongside a kind of proto-statistical analysis aimed at opening the eyes of readers to the extent and ramifications of polygamous practices that left Hindu women ostracized, neglected, and abused.

Brian A. Hatcher's translation makes Vidyasagar's polemic available to English-language readers for the first time. It features a scholarly introduction, extensive notes, and a variety of supplementary critical tools.

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