

CHAPTER VICULTURAL CONFRONTATION OF EAST AND WESTSection ASlavery, Infanticide and Sati - An Intellectual
Institutional Problem Between 1819 and 1827 in
Elphinstone's Gujarat

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the problem of slavery, infanticide and Sati during 1819 and 1827 - the time when Elphinstone was the Governor of the Bombay Presidency. Though the happenings during this period are in the main focus, wherever appropriate situations from other periods are discussed in an attempt to trace back to some earlier incidents to highlight the developments in thought. Also, these three problems are discussed keeping Gujarat - apart of the Bombay Presidency in the centre of attention. At times these problems have been seen in the light of what was happening in the other parts of India as well.

Clarification of Terms:

Slavery, Infanticide and Sati are the main terms used in this chapter. In the following paragraphs an attempt has been made to clarify these terms.

The term slavery has been used to connote an established practice in which humans of different ages formed marketable article. Such a practice is not restricted only to home-trade. If in the case of children and grown-up male slaves the method used was mainly force, women were handled through several methods like fear inducing, tactful handling and also use of force. In most of these cases the slaves were ignorant about their destination and were disposed off with least possible noise.

By infanticide is meant a more or less secret practice where a young child is done to death for reasons such as good health, good fortune and fertility.

The practice of Sati is an extension of the Hindu conception of matrimony which requires a woman to follow her husband to the pyre. Though by and large the art requires a woman to burn herself along with her husband's

corpse, there are instances where the Sati has been conducted with certain belongings of her husband life turban and sword.

II. The Institutional Standing in the Colonial Age -

The Status and Modus Operandi:

Slavery no doubt has been one of the greatest evils from which India suffered since ages. In the 17th century when East India Company took over the reins of Government into their own hands they found that slavery was an established practice widely spread and was universally acknowledged.¹ Slaves formed marketable article both in the home-trade and in the foreign trade. The official documents of the Bombay Presidency show that slaves were imported in Arab vessels into native states of Kutch, Kathiawad, Porbunder, Sind and into the Portuguese ports of Goa, Diu and Daman. The biggest haul of slaves, however, was in Bombay and Surat. Thereafter slaves were distributed all over the Bombay Presidency. Ready market among the various communities within the Presidency was a reason for regarding to such imports.

During the 18th century the market for slaves had undergone irrespected fluctuations. All of a sudden the supply of slaves exceeded the demand. Excess number of slaves were found in Bombay than needed. The availability of slaves were so much that attempts were made by the native traders to dispose them. However the police authorities, occasionally tried to prevent the attempt by insisting on the particulars of the slaves being registered in the police offices. Half-hearted attempt was made to maintain a register of particulars of slaves and their owners. Due to this restriction slave traders were henceforth careful not to bring their Marchandise to Bombay. Hence outwardly the trade temporary ceased to prosper here. Nevertheless slave traders took all possible precautions to continue their nafarious activities. In the first place they brought young children as slaves, children were ignorant of their condition and not much of a management was needed in the trading of children as slaves. In the case of growing slaves it was practical to sell them and conceal the bargain untill the new purchaser found a fair opportunity of securing his bargain. In case of women slaves it was impossible to transfer them to a completely new surroundings. Hence, all sorts

of methods such as tactful handling, fear inducing and use of force were adopted, so that woman could be disposed off with the least possible noise. However, most of the women were either kept ignorant of their being sold or did not know where their new masters took them. These helpless victims thus accompanied their strange new owners to their native places.

The slaves were usually ignorant of the motives of their need owners. Some of these slaves were kept hidden for considerable periods for fear of government rules. Generally the Arabs who purchased the women slaves took them to their native countries and found little difficulty in sending them to the Bawds (A person who keeps a house of prostitution) where there was no body to enquire about these slaves.²

While the practice of Sati was in some measure sanctified by Hindu religion, the proprietors of female infanticide did not claim any religious sanction for their crimes. Sati was committed with a considerable amount of display, but infanticide was carried out in the privacy of the womens apartments. The discovery of

the practice was therefore a slow and gradual process. Even in the early 19th century it was accidentally discovered by the British Government.

The social structure in 19th century India was based on traditional principles which were sanctioned by religion. Caste, family and the position woman were traditionally determined and all of them had lives with the other worldly conception.

While a man was permitted to marry as many wives as he could afford to keep, a woman, when she became a widow, was not only not permitted to remarry in the higher castes, but was expected to die along with her husband. While the pyre is being prepared, recitation of the 'Brahma Puran' tells the faithful wife of the greatest duty of woman - 'She is loyal and pure who burns herself with her husband's corpse'.

The custom was usual among the warrior clans, but at times women of other castes also practised sati. At many places in Gujarat particularly on the banks of

rivers or tanks 'masoury shrines' dedicated to a sati may be seen. They are known as 'Satimano Paliyo'.³

Those women who did not follow their husbands to the pyre had to live a celibate life. Interestingly enough, castes like Kubis and Artisans did permit widow remarriage but the upper castes like Brahmins, Banians and Rajputs did not permit widow remarriage. A widow had to pass her life derying herself every thing but a bare sustenance. Her head was shaven, she wore only a single bangle and no other ornaments and wore only white or black or muroon sarees as prescribed by the customs of her caste. She was not permitted to take any part in any festivities. The Gujarati upper caste woman of those days was not expected to earn her living and whatever help she gave to her husband was within the four walls of her house. The widow was not expected and not allowed to move freely and there were few occasions forher to go out. When she did, she was not allowed to wear shoes or use an umbrella even if it was raining heavily.⁴

The roots of these evils of Sati, infanticide and

slavery lay deep in the institutions of caste and marriage. Among the Hindus there existed a complex system of social differentiations owing to the innumerable divisions and sub-divisions of caste and clans. New endogamous groups were constantly being created by various process. The rapidly changing political and economic conditions also must have given incentives for resorting to those evils of infanticide, Sati and Slavery.

III. Are these typical to Eastern Societies?

Slave trade was carried on in Zinzibar, Pemba, Mombasa in Eastern Coast, Mozambique and its dependencies in the southern coast of Africa and Island of Grand Comro.⁵ Bringing of slaves from Eastern and Southern Coast of Africa and Islands around them and selling them was done chiefly by Borah Merchants and traders as well as travellers at the time of their return journey. Initially they brought slaves for their personal use. These slaves were mostly of Habshi or Siddi origin. They were employed on ships to work. These slaves were generally imported from Zinzibar.⁶ They belonged to both the sexes. They were generally of age above six. More girl slaves were

brought than boys. In 1821 this trade was brought to the notice and the collector of Surat where this import generally took place advised the commander of British Navy to take stern action against slave traders. Several measure were suggested to curb slave trading. However it was made clear that there was no intention of the Governor in Council to authorise any interference with established usages and customs with regards to domestic slavery as it prevailed in India among the Muslims and Hindu inhabitants.⁷

Vessels trading from East Coast of Africa to Surat usually carried on the slave traffic.⁸ At the port of Majunga number of Arabs, Moors and Indians carried on a considerable commerce in slaves.⁹ However, a security was demanded in 1821.¹⁰

One rupee was collected per head on all slaves who were given option¹¹ by the Governor Mountstuart Elphinstone, to remain free at Surat or to return to their own country.¹² However, it was found that returning to their own country was impossible, so they were made free to work with private individuals who offered proper treatment and education for them.

Infanticide is sometimes practised for economic reasons as when an Australian mother thinks she is unable to rear the new born baby. Cases are known where a child has been killed in order that its soul may pass to a woman decisions of offspring. Some superstitions related to the social order is also attributed the destruction of every child born to a woman after her daughter's marriage. There are many proofs of Infanticide in religious possessing ethical potentialities such as in Egypt, Greece and Rome.¹³

Sati, world-wide primitive usage compelled the wife of husband's brother or near kinsman or if he had been princely standing to be immolated with his concerning, slaves etc., at his tomb to maintain in his dignity in the next world. This usage eventually found support in the Hindu conception of matrimony as a bond eternally received when the married pair were reborn in succeeding lives.¹⁴

IV. The Initiative and new Thinking.

The first movement for the repression of Sati was

made by Akbar, who directed that, if a Hindu woman wished to be burnt with her husband, his officers should not be compelled to immolate herself.¹⁵ In 1795 by Regulation XXI, the crime of Infanticide had been declared murder and soon a further Regulation VIII of 1799 was passed which strengthened the first by re the Muslim law which spared parents or grand parents who wilfully murdered a child from death sentence.¹⁶ Similarly regulation III of 1804 ordered Magistrates to issue preclamations prohibiting the practice in all the territories under the Bengal Government.¹⁷ These steps were taken mostly owing to the efforts of Jonathan Duncan, the Governor of Bombay Presidency, and the support of the Governor General, Sir John Shore, to him. By now it was found that infanticide had no sanction of religion whatsoever. In 1817 Jonathan Duncan's Government merely gave effect to the the decision of the Pandits that the widow of a Brahmin should not burn except with the corpse of her husband and the relations were threatened with punishment if there orders were violated. The reason for this order is illustrated by a case recorded by General Sleeman of a woman burning herself with the corpse of a man to when she alleged that she had been married in a previous birth.¹⁸

Though in 1805 a proper registration of slaves was decided upon by the orders of supreme Government, it was kept in abeyance, and thus slave trade was practically carried on without proper check and adequate control. However, the increasing demand of luxury as well as the clamourings of passion greatly contributed towards extending the dreadful traffic.

Jonathan Duncan was the first man to take initiative against Infanticide. First he detected the crime in 1789 among the Rajputs. He reported that the practice though general was not universal as there were some wealthy Rajputs who spared their daughters specially when they had no sons.¹⁹

The discovery of the practice of Infanticide was a rather slow and gradual process. Widow burning and other superstitions practices were committed with a considerable amount of display but infanticide was carried out in the privacy of the women's apartments. The reclusion practised by Hindu women of rank was one of the major obstacles in the detection of the crime. High caste Hindu women were kept away from the public gaze.²⁰ On

account of the pardah system the destacles in the way of its detection were great and the Hindus did little to enlighten the government on the matter.

The extent of the practice could be made known by a detailed enquiry of the families suspected of infanticide. This would have meant a probe into the internal lives of the Hindu families. Under these delicate circumstances only a very competent district officer possessing intimate knowledge of the people and having friendly influence over them could possibly usccced in discovering these crimes.

The institution of slavery was not an honourable one in the eyes of several European Officials, particularly in Bombay. As such it was observed by these officials that the number of slaves in their presidency was considerably below that of Bengal. This impression to a great extent was the result of the official attempts made in Bombay either by denying the extence of slavery or by minimising its evils. In fact as far as the number of agricultural slaves are concerned the presidency had a large number of them on record.

7 In Surat during 1825 the number of slaves present was estimated at 2,000 in a population of 1,20,000.²¹ At that time it was reported that in comparison to other parts in India, Surat and its surrounding paraganas had larger proportion of agricultural slaves.

In Ahmedabad the acting Judge was of the opinion that a great number of Hindu children of all castes were sold as slaves to Muslims and the objections which the Hindus raised against this practice, were calculated to bring about the abolition of slavery in those parts earlier than elsewhere.²²

In 1825 David Greenhill, secretary to the Government asked to the various judicial authorities in the Presidency, to direct special attention to the best-means of putting a stop to the crime of kidnapping children by 'Brinjaries' and others.²³ The Government officials clarified that the kidnapping of children was extremely rare occurrence in Gujarat and that the police were in general very active.²⁴ It is in this evidence that we feel inclined to doubt the deligations made in 1825 by

Government officials to the effect that the kidnapping of children was in last stages of inanition.

V. The Position in Gujarat:

After Elphinstone became the Governor of Bombay one of his first concerns was the question of slave trade. In 1822 a Regulation Committee was formed under his presidency.²⁵ This committee was particularly attracted towards the slave-trade in Gujarat and the prevailing Regulations concerning the trade. A detailed study of this trade was made by his committee and certain judicial reforms were suggested based on their study.

The system of slavery was more predominant in outward Surat district. The Desais, patidars, Brahmins from Pachora, Supa and other paraganahs were found to possess a large number of slaves than any other part of Gujarat.

Those who were frequently attached to their soils were the servants who had voluntarily engaged to labour in payment of loans made to them for performing marriages in their families or the like occasions. These slaves

were usually from the Koli, Dubla and other poor backward classes of the Hindus who were found to be much addicted to drinking intoxicant like toddy.²⁶

Some light is thrown on this class of people by Surat Zillah Magistrate. It was very common within southern districts of his collectorship, for a caste of labouring Hindus called Dublas to become bounded servants of Kunbee or Bhatela cultivators.²⁷

The masters raised the claim on the ground of the slaves in consequence of expenses incurred sometime by them to support these labourers when they were young.²⁸ The debtor in this case became bond to serve his master until the demand was reduced by the proceeds of his labour after which he was supposed to be free.²⁹

The Magistrate further noted that here slaves were very apt to run away at any time as he used to have 10 to 15 cases on this subject to try upon.³⁰ He would then instruct his Kamavisdar or Desai to go and seize such run-away Dublas and settle the dispute with Kamacisdars. According to magistrate such cases of bonded servants

were created any inheritance or by transfer of liabilities to the children or relatives.³¹

These were known as 'Hali Dublas' who were entirely distinct from the class of slaves of Koli origin. The name of Hali was derived from hul the Gujarati word for plough and their chief employment was that of a ploughmen.³²

The British officers also speak of the common practice of selling slaves in Kheda. It was said to have been carried to a great extent by the Muslims whose styles of functioning had encouraged it. It was a fashion of the day for every family of any rank to maintain several slaves, whose off-springs were brought-up and they constantly added to their holdings of slaves. They worked as domestic servants but they were also employed in agriculture and other outdoor labour.³³

In most Muslims dominated towns there were 'cusbatees' whose rank was higher among the inhabitants. These people had official establishments and kept slaves who had been long attached to their households due to their official

position and could trace the generations of slaves almost as far back as their own. Thus in Kheda the slave-trade was associated with the Muslims.³⁴

'Brinjaries' - a migrate tribe from bordering area brought slaves into Ahmedabad, whom they purchased in large numbers from the other parts of Gujarat affected by famine conditions.³⁵ Slaves had some extra facilities in Ahmedabad than in other parts of Gujarat. Their condition was dependent but some degree of land-ownership.³⁶

Slave trade was comparatively very less in Bharuch. The reasons that had persons into slavery in this part were poverty and famine. Great number of children were sold for good care and love.³⁷ A fee of about Rs.5/- was exacted in Gujarat for transfer of slaves.³⁸

The crime of Infanticide was detected owing to the enthusiasm and efforts of Jonathan Duncan, who discovered the practice to be widely prevalent among the Jadejahs of Kutch and Kathiawad.³⁹ Duncan had observed that practice among the Rajputs, but the reports of its prevalence in Gujarat and the several states of Rajasthan reached him

from different individuals which made him all the more anxious about the gravity of the problem. However, it was not until 1804 that the practice that was common in the family of the Rao of Kutch of drowning the daughters, as soon as they were born in a vessel of milk came to light.⁴⁰

The earliest opportunities to know something more about the Jadejahs was given in 1807, when Major Walker was sent to Kathiawad as the head of an expedition for the realisation of revenue.⁴¹ Major Walker's enquiries into the statistics of infanticide were not very accurate and appeared exaggerated. One account received said that 20,000 girls were annually put to death in Kutch and Kat iawad. Another estimated then as 30,000. In the absence of any Census of the Jadejah population, Walker realised the difficulty in ascertaining the actual number of infanticides Committee.⁴²

With the death of Jonathan Duncan there appeared a slight set-back as no new measures were enforced although proposed by the president, until Mountstuart Elphinstone became the Governor of Bombay Presidency in 1819.

Among the existing habits of the Indians, one that Elphinstone, like all his contemporaries particularly disliked was the practice of Sati and he felt this evil should be done away with. The Regulation Committee formed in 1822 under Elphinstone's Presidentship was attracted towards the 'Sati' in Gujarat. A detailed study of this custom of Sati was made by this Committee. Some pertinent observations relating to Sati may be noted here. It would be easy to find instances of satis dying with courage and exaltation.

Charles Norries, member of Regulation Committee described an immolating of Sati which he had been

Kasmoth Sokaji was a clerk in the collector's office of Surat, died of the epidemic cholera. His widow Dwarakabai declared her intention of immolating herself on the funeral pyre. She was an old woman between 50 to 60 years of age. Her relatives and her sons, grown up men were in great grief and declared they had used every persuasive measure to induce her to refrain from the view. But their attempts were in vain. She sat on the pyre and adjusted the faggots about her. She called her son and

directed him to heap the fuel upon her and then with her own hand applied the torch to the pyre. She sat with unchanged countenance, the flames bursted forth, she was seen clapping her hands and in less than a minute all of this most frightful and revolting spectacle was over. That sacrifice was most voluntary in that there was a total absence of all influence. Every facility was afforded by the collector of Surat to the widow to retract from the purpose, if she entertained any such disposition.⁴³

Another woman from Surat of the Brahmin caste immolated herself on the funeral pyre and later her son's widow also sacrificed herself in the same way.⁴⁴

It may be said generally that all the Hindus forming about two-thirds of the population in Surat favour the practice of Sati, and especially the Brahmins viewed the sacrifice as a religious triumph.⁴⁵

A woman declared her own immolation in Kheda. The collector dispatched an express letter to the Kamavisdar instructing him not to sanction it by order, and to inform

her relations and the people of her caste that by investigating her to the act, they would be treated as offenders. The ceremony was performed before his letter arrived. The Kamavisdar being a Brahmin his report was to be received with doubt, but he stated the woman acted on her own impulse, and that persuasions were used in vain to prevent her immolation.⁴⁶

Elphinstone made a study of the funeral pyre on which the widow was burnt. The study soon revealed that the pyre constructed was a trap which once lighted left no escape for the unhappy widow. A close examination of the religious works showed that the pyre must be so constructed that escape was not possible should the widow find the agony beyond her endurance. Though Elphinstone feared to abolish the practice he was determined to use persuasion with the widow before she burnt herself and to see that the pyre was constructed according to the instructions laid down in the Shastras.⁴⁷ A conference of Pandits in Gujarat was convened, where learned discussions were held, and the question of the construction of the pyre revised.⁴⁸

A practice was established by which the collector was

to be present when the Sati was performed.⁴⁹ He was free to persuade the widow to give up her resolve, failing which he was to supervise the construction of the pyre and check that no compulsion was resorted to either by the Brahmin or her relatives.⁵⁰

VI. Dynamics of Infanticide, Sati and Slavery:

The birth of a son in a Hindu family was always a cherished and desirable event. A daughter meant anxiety to the parents, particularly among certain casts who considered themselves to be of high caste or those who were at one time high up in the social ladder but had fallen in their status owing to a resuffling of social forces. Pride, poverty, contempt of the female sex, rigidity of the caste system and difficulties in finding suitable bridegrooms seem to have contributed towards the commission of the crime of Infanticide. Geographical isolation, constant movements of population evil associations and environment also aided in promoting it. The problem involved not only a deep study of human behaviour but an unravelling of the tangle of castes and ranks. The policy of the East India Company varried from state to state and province to

province, depending upon the ideas of the Governor
Generals and Governors and upon the influence of individual
officers.

After the husband's death, since the woman has to face
problems from many quarters like psychological, social,
cultural, moral and economic, she was forced into self
immolation. Taking these problems separately,
psychologically, it was considered that since she has to live
alone without her husband, she would suffer the emotional
insecurity from want of love and affection of the spouse.
Economically, it was considered that she would be at
disadvantage after her husband's death, if there are
husband's brothers or relatives who may have equal claim
or rights over the property of the husband. Socially,
culturally and morally the woman is again at a greater
disadvantage, since the Indian society built on the
particular social and cultural system does not allow the
widow to participate in any social or cultural or religious
activities.

Some pertinent observations relating to slave trade
may be noted here briefly. The slave trade that existed

during this period was characterised by both import and export of slaves. There was slavery based on occupational commitment on land. Slaves belonging to this category were found to be mostly working on the farm lands of big land owners. The sale of people as slaves in this category was not on permanent grounds. Moreover, there was an element of volunteering in certain cases of the internal slave system of labour. It was more or less attachment for a certain period of slavery within which the person or members of his family were to repay the amount spent on the upbringing of their children or money borrowed by them for the purpose of liberating their family functions such as naming ceremony, marriage, death ceremony etc. This type of slavery was found to be common among Hindus. It was mostly the outcome in fulfilling their social obligation. The treatment given to slaves in this category was found to be inhuman. However, in certain cases such a slavery continued over generations. In some cases the slaves fled away from their masters to get rid of the slavery, but these cases were brought to the Kamavisdar. He gave judgements suggesting alternative selections in terms of cash returns to the master to free the slave from this bondage or transfer or intercastance of slavery by children or relatives.⁵¹ This type of slavery is largely known as bonded labour.

VII. Intellectuals on Infanticide, Sati and Slavery: The Problems Facing Elphinstone - His conception conviction and Reformatory measures:

With the appointment of Elphinstone as Governor of Bombay the operations gathered a greater momentum. He showed the greatest anxiety to adopt every practicable measure to improve upon the existing system.⁵² His attitude towards the eradication of the practice accorded well with his general principles of administration. His main aim was to bring about changes gradually without disturbing the social order. Elphinstone suggested that the cooperation of the people was necessary, and requested his officers on circuit to obtain information on this crime. He was conscious of the practical difficulties and limitations imposed by circumstances. Very often he had to console his subordinates and others, who in their intense zeal for reform, were anxious to resort to more drastic and effective although some what hasty measures. Elphinstone seemed more worried about the right of interference with the private lives of the people.

Again he was prepared to introduce liberal reforms,

and western learning when the time would demand it. In short, Elphinstone possessed energy, great foresight, morality, experience and knowledge to synthesise the great elements of British thinking of the time and to take the right decision in right time to initiate the reforms.

Elphinstone strongly believed that the spread of education would gradually lead to the disappearance of some Hindu religious superstitions and social evils.⁵³ He was quite critical of certain Indian habits and customs, and cited for instance the ills of early marriages the burden of an excessive population on the land, the customs of an Indian squandering a life times saving on marriage or funeral ceremony, the hopelessness of moneylenders, and most significantly the absence of that courageous public spirit which alone could make good laws beneficial to the country. Elphinstone sincerely hoped that the Gujaratis would acquire more orderly habits, show increased industry, and obtain a taste for the comforts of life. Elphinstone spoke in terms of a moral improvement which would raise the minds of the people so that where Britain's connection with India ceased, the people would be able to govern themselves and design measures for their own improvement.

Elphinstone did not want to introduce any law or take any harsh steps towards the abolition of Sati, infanticide and slavery.⁵⁴ He was of the opinion that the Hindu religion itself could come to the rescue for the shastras themselves contained a number of restrictions upon the practice of Sati.⁵⁵ Like for instance, the Hindu law forbade Sati in cases of pregnancy or of infants dependent on the mother and even when the woman was below the age of puberty.⁵⁶ Besides that the practice of Sati differed from province to province in India.

Thus in Bengal, a widow could only be burnt in the company of her husbands corpse. If she had any infant children it was necessary for some one to guarantee them a suitable maintenance before she could be allowed to burn herself. On the other hand, in Gujarat the custom was that a widow might be burnt in company with the bones or even merely the turban or the dagger of her dead husband.⁵⁷

Elphinstone instructed his collectors that they should be present when the ceremony of Sati was being performed and to see to it, that it was in keeping with the Hindu law and that no widow was being forced into it.⁵⁸ In

order to discouraged the practice, on 18th of November 1819 Elphinstone decided that a pension should be given to the widow, who on herself took the decision not to comit Sati.⁵⁹ The Supreme Government also approved it. Several widows in the Gujarat were dissuaded from committing Sati and pensions had been promised and confirmed.

In 1825 Francis Warden, Secretary to the Government, advised a complete prohibition of the practice.⁶⁰ But Elphinstone opposed the suggestion, on the ground that it had so far been the practice of their government to exercise no direct interference in the religion of the country and the one to which he was persuaded. They owed their stability. He feared a departure from that wise policy would raise doubts on all other intentions, in all other cases, in the minds of their native subjects.⁶¹

Elphinstone was not willing to discuss what importance the Hindus gave to the Sati. But he had reasons to feel that if so many gave up their lives for it and so many more consent to the death of their loved ones, there was reason to feel that it was important and, therefore, they must go slow in proceedings that touched so delicated a question.⁶²

He argued that the practice was not required by Hindu law, but they would allow officials only the function of disauiding widows from burning themselves. The abolition of the practice, he believed, would have to come from Indians themselves, and for the stability of British rule and the prospects of the end of Sati, the British would have to avoid an outright abolition of Sati.⁶³

Failing to accept his proposal, warden was of the opinion that they should neglect the question of Sati altogether. Elphinstone opposed this attitude and said that they must see that the sacrifice was voluntary and that the woman was mature and in possession of her faculties. He was further of the opinion that they take advantage of the Hindu law which forbade the sacrifice of a pragnant woman or of a woman on whom lay the responsibility of infant dependents. Doubtful cases were always to be referred to the shastras. In accordance with Elphinstone's reluctance to interfere in any matter affecting the Hindu Religion, the Government refrained from deciding upon such matters.⁶⁴

He was well aware of the utility of appointing hired agents for detection of Infanticide cases, but he

considered that the success would not compensate for the disaffection it would create.⁶⁵ He seemed very calculating, weighing and balancing the effects of every measure in his scale of judgement, and at times he felt content to follow the footsteps of his predecessors until he could devise a safer and better plan. Moreover, he greatly feared the operations of fanaticism which he felt could be as irregular and uncertain as its effects tremendous.⁶⁶

He regretted that as long as the practice was congenial to the feelings of the people, no effectual check could be imposed with his characteristic urge for improvement. Elphinstone instructed captain Barnewell, the new political agent at Kathiawad, to favour the chiefs in whose districts the number of girls had increased by making pecuniary concessions such as postponing the revenue payment or to grant an abatement, reserving the right to recover if after a certain period unless the chief could prove his good intentions by the production of a certain number of children in his district.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Elphinstone made it very clear that when remissions are refused to any chief, it may be noticed as one reason for rejecting his request, that he had not been zealous in repressing infanticide. He authorised Barnewell

to throw all fines lived on chiefs for infanticide as well as for other offences into a fund to be distributed in position to children so preserved. Finally Elphinstone hoped that the direct contacts which were established with the Jadejahs of Gujarat would now be more efficient in obtaining information of the crime.⁶⁸

As a result of these, insurances of measures it was found that in 1824 there were 266 girls whereas in 1817 there were only 69.⁶⁹ Out of the 66 girls died, some were said to have been destroyed but no penalty could be enforced because of the impossibility of establishing the fact.⁷⁰ No fines were available, when again remained by Elphinstone of this fact, pointed out that the fines so far levied were appropriated as compensation for the loss of property and other incidental expenses.⁷¹

Elphinstone there upon issued instructions that all fines under Rs.20,000 which were not given up to the sufferers, on whose account the fine may have been levied, should thereafter be allotted to the infanticide fund.⁷² By 1828 the infanticide fund amounted to Rs.47,914.⁷³ Judicious use was made of the money, as not only were

presents and rewards given to the Jadejahs but also pecuniary aid in the form of loans to meet the marriage expenses of their daughters.⁷⁴

The Hindu and Muslim laws make no provision for punishing the ill-treatment of slaves. The policy of Judicial authority was strictly tied down to law whatever it was. However, in case of slaves they were equally treated with others as if free and protection of the criminal law was extended to them.

Elphinstone made some modifications for slavery in the Regulation XIV of 1827 such as:

1. The sale of child be entirely forbidden.
 2. Transfer of grownup slaves may be allowed.
 3. Transfer of children be allowed during famine allowing parents the right of resumption for a certain number of years after sale. This will save the life of children during famine.
 4. The sale of women for prostitution be prohibited.
- The native women who keep such slaves and make

profit by their prostitution should be allowed to sell them or to export them. The second condition permitting the sale of prostitutes was allowed because it was observed that in such cases, the men wished to have them as concubines and even as wife which was better than that of a status of common prostitute. The sale of slaves was made punishable offence and a specified penalty of several hundreds of rupees was suggested.

5. Kidnapping was considered as cognizable offence and severe punishment was extended.
6. It was suggested that a register should be maintained of the slaves at that time in the territory under the presidency.
7. Imprisonment in cases of kidnapping children was increased to 7 years from 6 months.
8. Care was taken in making the rule to guard against imprisonment among natives, that would excite the feelings of dissatisfaction in the relation of master and slave.

9. Importation into or exportation from the territory should be only in time of famine and under certificate and registry as prescribed in the Judiciary of Presidency of Bombay failing which there would be imprisonment for 5 years or a fine or both.
10. Sale of slaves not registered should be withheld. A female slave under 10 years is forbidden, except in time of famine. Same is true of the male child. In case sale of child for slavery in famine by either parent the right of resumption shall be resumed to either parents or the child itself after 10 years. If the female belongs to profession of prostitution, she can continue to follow it provided she is not sold for the same purpose.

Elphinstone permitted the trade to a limited extent such as famines and also the slavery of grown-ups with improved conditions of their welfare. However, Elphinstone did not completely come in the way of privileged class of people who enjoyed benefits from the slave trade.

VIII. Final Acts:

Sir John Malcom, the Governor of Bombay Presidency from 1827 to 1830, continued the policy laid down by Elphinstone though with greater caution. But no-thing was done to devise a suitable machinery for engagements. The Bombay Government informed the court of Directors that in the existing state of society and government in Kathiawad their chief reliance must be placed on measures of persvasion and encouragement.⁷⁵ After considerable discussion and mature deliberation the government of India passed a special Act in 1870 to stamp out the evil of Infanticide. It was only in 1906 that the Act was withdrawn, since by then the efficaciousness of the law had been successfully prevented.

In the Regulation Code of 1827 Elphinstone enshrined the indefinite attitude of the government towards the practice of Sati in contest to their strict prohibition of the murder of supposed witches - "The belief that sourcery was practised by the deceased shall not be admitted as a justifiable cause for putting her to death, nor shall the decased's own request be so admitted but assisting at any rites of self-immotation as directed by

the religious law of the person performing such immolation shall not subject any one to the penalty".

For incourse of time its meaning and purpose gave rise to protracted controversies and were settled when the Regulation of 1829 pertaining to Sati was passed, on 4th December 1829 by the Governor General Lord William Bentinck.⁷⁶ This Regulation which was passed as a result of the work of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others in Bengal was made applicable to Gujarat. This Regulation made the burning alive of widows culpable homicide, punishable with fine or imprisonment. It came into immediate operation in Bengal, and was adopted in Madras and Bombay Presidencies six months later. It was adopted with these modifications in Bombay Presidency; that the offence was murder if the widow were under 18, and on extreme limit of 10 years imprisonment was set for Sati that was not murder.⁷⁷ After the passing of the Act, only stray instances of Sati were recorded in India, and this practice was almost non-existence in Gujarat.⁷⁸

Unfortunately the simple Regulation XIV of 1827 was not destined to contribute in a large measure towards checking the evils of the slave trade. For incourse of

time its meaning and purpose gave rise to protracted controversies and were only settled when Act V of 1843 was passed by the Governor General Lord Ellenborough. Thus to site an example it was stated that the judges of the Sadar Foujdary Adalat decided on October 23rd, 1839 that the sale of a slave into a foreign territory was not an offence punishable by law as mentioned in Regulation XIV of 1827.⁷⁹

Slavery was not immediately discontinued, since it was associated with religious practices and Elphinstone was ever cautious not to hurt the religious susceptibilities of the people. He was therefore, never tired of warning his subordinates not to hurry social reforms as hold of tradition on society was tremendous. Yet, when possible, he never lost the opportunity to argue with the learned of the land why and where for of all customs and traditions of the people. Thus to site an example it was stated that the judges of the Sadar Foujdary Adalat decided on October 23rd, 1839 that the sale of a slave into a foreign territory was not an offence punishable by law as mentioned in Regulation XIV of 1827.⁷⁹

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For a Government with a long term perspective of profiting from the colony as a supplier of raw materials to British Industries and a consumer of British manufactures, it was an indispensable demand of British industrial capital that Indian society should be brought on to a stable footing, economically and socially, so far as the reforms did not affect the basic policy of the foreign rulers. The British Government felt the need for same reforms in order to establish a stable basis for British rule in India and laid the real foundations of the British power in India. But so long as British Merchant Capital dominated over India, a long term arrangement was not necessarily within the purview of the ruling power and a drastic change in the

socio-economic organization of India was not deliberately called for, whereas the need of British Industrial Capital to find a regular and a sustained market for British goods in India and for the constant supply of raw materials for British Industries from the subcontinent demanded the orientation of India's socio-economic life to that, and therefore relevant 'reform measures' became urgent.

As a result, while some social reforms were also hesitantly introduced in this period such as abolitions of slavery, sati and infanticide in order to pacify the insistent demand of the growing Indian intelligentsia the principal reforms were made in the direction of gearing India's life to the direct needs of the British Industrial Classes.⁸⁰

Elphinstone had always shown respect for the Indian Society. But circumstances impelled him to propose and introduce changes into the structure of the Indian Society. His main task was the focus of the people were conciliated by policies then a further step towards reforms and improvement of the social aspects of the people could be made. He loved the Indians and wanted to work for their welfare.

His aim was to serve the Indian people. Elphinstone's policies as a reformer it can be said that his attitude in the task of social reforms in India was a unique synthesis of the currents of the time. Elphinstone had enough liberalism of appreciating the best in Indian culture and the conservative emphasis on the improvement coming from the whole Indian society.

Elphinstone showed the greatest anxiety to adopt every practicable measure to improve upon the existing system. Very often he had to console his subordinates and others, who in their intense zeal for reform were anxious to resort to more drastic and effective although some what hasty measures. When Francis Warden advised a complete prohibition of the practice of sati, Elphinstone opposed the suggestion on the ground that it has so far been the practice of their government to exercise no direct interference in the religion of the country and the one to which he was persuaded they owed their stability. Elphinstone advised to Warden to see that the sacrifice was voluntary and that the woman was mature and in possession of her faculties. Elphinstone authorised Captain Bornevell to throw all fines levied on chiefs for infanticide as well

as for other offences into a fund to be distributed
in position to children so prescribed. He permitted
the slave trade to a limited extent such as famines and
also the slavery of

SECTION II

PROMOTION OF EDUCATION

Elphinstone was one of the first provincial Governors to propose that the Company should try to spread education among the masses by encouraging indigenous institutions. He was born in 1779 and after an undistinguished career at school, came to India at the early age of 16. By cultivating extensive and careful reading, however, he made-up for all the deficiencies, and became an acknowledged scholar with a variety of interests obtaining command over Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Persian, Hindi and Marathi languages. Elphinstone's contribution to the cause of education in India were greater in promise than in achievements. His proposals of educational reform are contained in his great minutes of 1824 and there was no doubt that if they had been accepted verbatim, the progress of mass education in Bombay Presidency could have been very rapid. But unfortunately, they were side-tracked and, therefore, the researcher's bunch in his work was more a question of speculation rather than an appraisal of reality. Elphinstone's proposals, however, have a great historical

value because they throw a light on how a shrewd and competent administration like Elphinstone's was, fully convinced of the worthwhileness of developing the indigenous institutions. Another interesting feature about Elphinstone was that he had written very frequently on the subject of the education of the Indian people which he always held dear to his heart, but could never treat the problem in a detailed and comprehensive manner. What went against the implementation of his educational policies, and what directions would they have been given, if they had been implemented are worth discussing from the historical perspective of the study. Therefore through discussions have been made in the proceeding sections with regard to:

- i. Indigenous system of education in Gujarat (Pre-Elphinstone period).
- ii. Private education enterprise by Elphinstone, and non-officials and Missionaries.
- iii. The experiment originated with the education policy and
- iv. Anglo-Vernacularist controversy.

(1) Indigenous System of Education in Gujarat:

It is unfortunate that the sources of information regarding the character and extent of the indigenous system of education in the first half of the 19th century is extremely meagre. In Bombay, an inquiry into indigenous system of education was ordered by Elphinstone in 1823 and statistics were obtained through the collectors, covering almost for all parts of the Province. At his instance the secretary to government sent a circular to all collectors, dated 10th March 1824, and called for immediate information regarding indigenous education. The replies from most of the collectors were received in 1824-25 which revealed the following facts.

Of the teachers, the majority were Brahmins who were attached to the profession more, by their tradition than considerations of actual gains in cash or kind. Besides the Brahmin caste from where most of the teachers came, there were teachers generally coming from other castes like, Kunbi and Baniyas. Regarding the remuneration teachers, the mode of payment varied from place to place, and in some parts of Gujarat the practice had attained peculiar dimensions.⁸³

The most distinguishing feature was that the monthly payment was not in terms of cash.⁸⁴ Cash payments were made at different occasions. Say, at the time of commencement of education or on the successful completion of certain stages of instruction and or at the time of leaving the school. These occasional payments in terms of cash also varied according to the ability of the parents. Another feature of remuneration in Gujarat was that the scholar offered the gifts in kind every day, thus compensating for the absence of monthly payment in cash.⁸⁵ An indigenous method was, however, adopted by which the income of the teacher was not allowed to be indefinitely augmented by these daily gifts when the number of scholars was 50 or more. A present, consisting of two seers of grain and a weight of 4 copper-price of ghee was given every 15th day by each pupil in rotation, but the amount and value of this donation never varied irrespective of the number of pupils.

In the town at Jambusar, fixed allowances were given ranging from Rs.2½ upto Rs.6 per month paid yearly which was a rather unique method.⁸⁶ In some places children being the offsprings of priests were exempted from payment.⁸⁷ In Kheda district the boys often beg something for their masters from visitors who were holding some ranks.⁸⁸ Mention

has been made of 'service land' produce to school masters in Surat district and in Ahmedabad district, land granted by patch, known as 'Pasaita', for teachers, a part from the presents offered by the villagers.⁸⁹ Despite all these varied modes of payments, the school masters in Gujarat did not receive more than others. In the rural schools of Surat, the remuneration including gifts came upto three rupees per month and in the town of Surat, it stood at five rupees per month for a school of 50 scholars.⁹⁰ In Bhuruch district on an average, the school master got twenty rupees to fifty rupees per year according to the size of the village.⁹¹ Even in Bhuruch town the emoluments varied from three rupees to five rupees per month and the same was the case in Kheda district.⁹² Even in very large schools, with more than 100 pupils, the total annual remuneration seldom exceeded Rs.150.⁹³ But in such schools the master had to take the help of assistant and pay him from his earnings.⁹⁴

The pupils of the elementary schools came from all Hindu castes, except the Harijans. About 30% of the pupils were Brahmins and their percentage varied from district to district. The other castes which sent large number of pupils to these schools were Banias. The advanced communities

contributed about 70% of the total strength of pupils.⁹⁵ The age of the pupils varied from 6 to 14 and the average duration of schools was, about 2 or 3 years in Gujarat and about 3 or 4 in the other areas of the province.⁹⁶

The difference of one year is the maximum of the average length of the school course in Gujarat and the rest of the Province. In Gujarat the occupation of the school masters was mostly inherited one.⁹⁷ The profession must have run through their families for generations. This was s to have given the master, some sort of efficiency and even a sort of training in general. As mentioned earlier in Gujarat, more or less payment was made in terms of grain every day. It was in the interest of the teacher that the boy attended the school daily and thus there was a check on the tendency of absanteeism.⁹⁸ In other parts of the Province, the payment internes of grain was made fortnightly, or monthly. In Gujarat the payment interms of cash was made in general, according to the stages of instruction attained by scholars. The master was naturally, interested is bringing up the pupils at each stage of instruction as quickly as possible.

It must be admitted that, in the year 1824 when the reports were received from the districts, there was no mention of a female scholar attaining to the schools. The common schools of the time were meant for boys only.⁹⁹

A detailed description of the Education system existed in different districts before Elphinstone's period are given in the following sections:

- (i) Education in Surat: There were 139 schools in Surat¹⁰⁰
- School teachers salaries were deducted from the Revenue of villages. They were paid from the village panchayat budget. They ensured the money being duly paid to the teachers who provide the teaching efficiency in the schools. This point involves several considerations. For example a teacher who goes to a village, where there would be no Residential teacher would receive not less than a total income of Rs.75 per year. But he were to teach in his own village, he would receive only Rs.50 per year. No religious endowments were available to be diverted to aid education.¹⁰¹

A rule that after a certain number of years notice,

no public servant of any rank whatever may be the case should be entertained unless he is able to read and write in his own language was made. This seem to have been supported by the natives, along with the demands of the public, for those who can read and write to fill the posts of nre servants and peons. But the condition which prevailed was such that, not even one in ten of the peons were able to read or write, for which the diffusion of education which was varely limited would have been the cause. Many common people, viz., Muslims, Rajputs who were engaged as peons were not literate, since they were restricted from doing so, except people from few castes who were privileged from the education point of view. This was another reason which limited the choice of peons, since those who were educated, were preferred to the uneducated ones. Consequently, the poorest who were in need of employment became the distributes of Education, whereas those who were economically better, that is, with little property were found among the educated mass.¹⁰²

Another cause for illiteracy was none of the children were fairing well in the examinations. Since the employment

public service demanded quite a high level of education, Elphinstone thought that the children were required to study a good deal even after completion of their courses. The children were unable to do beyond simple mathematical calculations. Most of the children were belonging to the labour class, like, coolies and others were Rajputs. Dhodias never sent their children to school. Even the school teachers seemed to have lost in their education. There were instances, where students have never paid the school fee for years, and when their parents were forced for payment there were instances of either stoping their children from going to school or shifting their wards to other teachers. Some poor boys were generously taught by their teachers with a motice of charity and they did not mind the little additional trouble. The application of any funds that was assigned was supprend to be connected with the object in view. If they are given almost unconditionally to the masters they were likely to generate indolence and to encourage extention.¹⁰³

Some contrivance seemed expedient. The masters might be paid so much for each student who had attained a certain degree of proficiency. He was rewarded in direct

proportions to the success of their endeavour. This would go a long way to ensure dissemination of education.

Elphinstone introduced certain incentives like prizes or donations to encourage every boy who passed on examinations. In the cases of poor people a grativity might be given annually to each child who had attended school. The grativity was 2 annas in the month or a 1½ rupee in the year.¹⁰⁴ This would be liable to the rise that the child might traffle and learn little however occasionally. The allowance might be withheld and the donation to the teacher which might be given on each poor boy might also be withheld. Elphinstone thought such a plan should be adopted to all the poorer classes so that they would send their children to school for the sake of 2 annas. It was thought that Rs.30,000 should be laid on each district on school masters and students. Reducting the classes Brahmins, Bantias who learnt at any rate this might be reduced Rs.20,000 which might eventually be all required to push the general diffusion of education.¹⁰⁵

- ✓(ii) Education in Bhuruch: There were 13 schools in township of Bhuruch district. They were located in Ankleswar, Hansot, Jumbooser, Anmode and Dehej. Village schools were 52 in Bhuruch district which was composed of 391 villages.¹⁰⁶

The allowance to school masters were paid by the parents or friends of the teacher. The teacher besides these payments early presents the teacher with one quarter of a seer of grain. When a boy became perfect in reading and writing he was discharged by his teacher. A present of Rs.1 to Rs.5 was made to the teacher. Children of priests however were exempted from payment.¹⁰⁷

A boy in the beginning of his schooling course he presents to his teacher from 1 quarter to 2 quarters of a rupee according to the circumstances of his family. Later on he daily used to give one quarter of a seer of a grain to his teacher. Besides which, supposing the number of students amounts to Rs.50 a present consisting of 2 seers of grain and 4 copper price in ghee was given every 15th day by each student in rotation to the teacher. But the amount and value of this donation never varied irrespective of the number of students.¹⁰⁸ When a boy begins to learn writing he presents his tutor with one half or one quarter of a rupee. When a boy had completed his course a present was made to the tutor varying from 1 rupee to 5. In small villages Rs.20 was the lowest yearly payment to a school master and in villages of the first class as much as Rs.50

was paid.¹⁰⁹ Generally village school masters were Brahmins and the functions of which they perform apparently in a very satisfactory manner.

Most of the school masters were Brahmins. They were capable of conducting the duties of a school. Children of Muslims also attended the Hindu schools. The situation of school master was not hereditary.¹¹⁰

The nature system of education appears to introduce as assistants into the schools persons who have been brought up under the society at Bombay and by offering rewards for high proficiency and holding out the prospect of employment in the public service. Several of the tracts published in the native languages might be used in the schools.¹¹¹

- (iii) Education in Kheda: 139 schools were in the Kheda district.¹¹² Daily the boys used to present to their teacher with a handful of grain, seldom exceeding quarter of seer. When they finally leave the school they used to make him a present of Rs.2 or 3. Boys of respectable families also sometimes gave him half a rupee on first entering the

school. On days of company they used to send him a meal of grain, ghee etc., The boys often beg something for their master from strangers of rank visiting the village.¹¹³ But these sources of emolument with the exception of the two first were very trifling and the whole, seldom amount to more than a mere substance. In principal towns and cusbas where the number of scholars were 100, the masters salaries were Rs.150 per year. In the large villages where 40 or 50 boys were to attend, the salary was Rs.75 per year. In the small village schools, the teachers used to get Rs.40 per year.¹¹² No enam lands or allowances were in the district which could with property be appropriated to this purpose. There were 2 or 3 villages given in enam to certain duties.¹¹⁵ The produce of which was under the charge of the collector and appropriated in reforming temples and feeding pilgrims and beggers of religions orders who daily crowd to them. Schools might be established and of the proceeds of these villages, as no one had any particular claim to the charity. It would however, be putting the allowance to a new use, and as it could only be done in a few places.¹¹⁶

As mentioned earlier, Elphinstone made a change that no peon or other person be promoted the rank of Hawaldar unless one is able to read and write his own language. Servants of this class were often placed incharge of small works, public property such as hay, wood etc. The duty would be better discharged if they had a knowledge of reading and accounts.

There were seldom 100 boys taught in each school and the number was generally much less. This however, altogether depended on the size of the village. All castes but the lowest attend the schools promiscuously.

Many Patidars and respectable conbis were well versed in reading and accounts, which gave them weight in their villages. Some of them were learned on trading transactions and similarly with agricultural persuits. Some of them were good in business as to be the bankers of the surrounding community. Two-third of children population in avillage were not sent to school. Few Rajputs and scarcely few coolies who attended their ignorance was proverbial, but if they have had any prejudices regarding education, any amount of fine and encouragement must have not overcome those.¹¹⁷

The office of village school master did not belong to any particular class or number of the village community.¹¹⁸ The school master indeed was often a stranger generally of the Brahmin..

- (iv) Education in Ahmedabad: Ahmedabad district was composed of 928 villages with 49 schools.¹¹⁹ This was exceedingly various and almost every village had a mode peculiar to itself. The more general one appears to be, a daily allowance about an eight of seer or a handful from each boy, and a small sum of money from Rs.1 to 5 upon his leaving school. It was also usual in most schools for the parents of the boy to pay a small sum, in general about 1½ rupee on their son being perfect in the first 15 lessons. A similar sum was paid upon his acquiring a perfect knowledge of the Alphabets also when he was able to write to cast up accounts and to draw out bills of exchange.¹²⁰

In the paraganahs of Dholka, Dhundhuka and a few villages in the Duskroie, the sons of Brahmins were taught gratis. At some schools the sons of vanees were required to pay more than any other cast but this custom was not

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general. Where the situation was hereditary the school masters were Brahmins, but it does not appear where the office is temporary that other castes were excluded from officiating as such.¹²¹

A school master was invariably invited to all great dinner at his own cast, and besides his fixed and established emoluments he generally received considerable presents at the Dassera, Diwali and other great days, from the wealthy inhabitants of his village. It was usual when a marriage procession passes by a school, to make a small present in money to the school master and to obtain a holiday for the boys. Pattidars upon the marriage of their sons, sometimes make a trifling present to the school master of the village.¹²²

In large schools the school master was frequently assisted in his professional duties by one or more of his relation to whome he assigns a certain portion of the emoluments of the school. Head boys were sometimes employed in instructing the junior classes and during the time they were not required to pay anything for their own instruction.¹²³

11. PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE BY ELPHINSTONE,
NON-OFFICIALS AND MISSIONARIES.

Elphinstone did not establish or conduct schools of his own, but he induced, encouraged and guided Indians to organise private schools of the modern type. Elphinstone played a very important part in organising the Bombay Native Education Society which did such useful service to the cause of Indian education in the province of Bombay. He found that only the non-official body which tried to provide modern education to the people was the Bombay Education Society. The Bombay Education Society was established in 1815 by members of the church of England-residents in Bombay, with the principal object of training Anglo-Indian or poor European children. It began its activities by taking over a charity school established in Bombay Richard Cobbe in 1819 and by starting others. As the society admitted Indian Children also, into its schools without compelling them to be present at religious instruction, many Hindu, Parsee and Muslim children were tempted to join. By 1820, the Society had 4 schools for Indian children enrolling 250 pupils on their roles.¹²⁴

In the same year the society appointed a special committee called the Native school and school Book Committee.¹²⁵ The idea was evidently by similar societies started in Calcutta, but credit was particularly due to Elphinstone, who was the president of the society and who took keen interest in the spread of education among Indians. The objects of this committee were two-fold:¹²⁶ To improve existing schools for Indian children establishing or aiding new ones, wherever necessary, and to prepare books for the use of Indian children under instruction. By 1822, the society's work for Indian children had grown considerably and it had undertaken activities which went far beyond its original aims. Hence the special committee appointed by it two years earlier was now formed into a separate society called the Bombay Native School Book and School Society to look after the education of Indian children whereas the parent society restricted its activities to the education of European or Anglo-Indian children only.¹²⁷ It was mainly due to the encouragement and guidance of Elphinstone, who was responsible for the independent organisation of the Bombay Native Education Society.

This is how Elphinstone made efforts to develop

private Indian Enterprise in modern education. He was convinced of the fact that neither missionaries nor the company could provide all the educational institutions which the country needed.¹²⁸ The Indians of this period were new to the modern methods of co-operative and organised educational enterprise and needed both initiation and guidance. This came readily from those enlightened officials of the company who had a sense of duty towards the country. They contracted leading Indians and persuaded them of the necessity of private educational enterprise on modern lines, and showed them how to form and conduct societies for the purpose.

(1) Missionary Educational Enterprise:

The charter Act of 1813 opened India to Missionary Societies. Consequently, the period from 1813 to 1833 was one of great mission activity in all parts of the company's Dominions. The missionary societies that were already working in India expanded their activities and new societies came into the field.

The London Missionary Society began its activities at several important places. In the Bombay Presidency this society was established a school at Surat in 1819.¹²⁹

The General Baptist Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Mission and the Scotch Missionary Societies had the stations in Bengal and Madras Presidencies. The Bombay Presidency made slow progress in these societies.¹³⁰

Three features regarding the educational work of the missionaries deserve special note. Firstly, it must be remembered that education was never the main object of the missionaries. They aimed at conversions and were obliged to take up educational work in order to meet the needs of the converted population and more especially to train up Indian assistants for their probelytising activities. Secondly, the importance which the early missionaries attached to the study of modern Indian languages deserves special mention. They had to work among the lowest classes of society who could not understand any language except their own. Hence the missionaries assiduously studied the Indian languages, prepared dictionaries, wrote books on grammar and translated

the Bible into them. It is worthy of note that most of the earlier mission schools gave instruction through the mother-tongue of the pupils and it never occurred to the Indian missionaries.¹³¹

Elphinstone as a typical British thinker of the time strongly favoured the introduction of the Christian ethics and morals to the Hindu people and the replacement of their beliefs and dogmas by the former.¹³² Elphinstone did not approve of the excessive zeal of the Christian missionaries and of interference in Indian religious practices. Such interference he felt would prevent western enlightenment from growing in India. Elphinstone agreed with J.S. Mills view on religion, which ought to be just and rational based on reason and revelation. However, like Bishop Heber Elphinstone also realised the risk of quick conversions, he favoured a gradual education of the Hindu people to the errors in their own religious thinking.¹³³ Therefore he claimed that Christianity would come through education, if at all it comes, and it would succeed only with humility and love not with distrust and antagonism.

However, Elphinstone's concern for spreading education

was a part of his larger concern for creating an extended base for the British rule. The expanding administrative machinery needed a large number of administrators of various cadres to carry out the routine work. Once their authority was fully established, Elphinstone knew it would be difficult to get enough Europeans for all the new posts, especially clerical ones, besides that, he also realised the Indian labour would be cheap. Thus all his plans and projects seemed from his desire to lay a deeper and more enduring base for the preservation of British privileges in India. In his minute on Education he categorically advised the strict exclusion of any programme in which either religion or any other topic likely to excite discontent among the natives should ever be touched upon.

About the Missionary work among the lower classes Elphinstone wrote:

"It is observed that the missionaries find the lowest castes castes the best pupils: But we must be careful how we offer any special encouragement to men of that description. They are not only the most despised, but among the least numerous of the

great divising of society and it is to be feared that if our system of education first took root among them, it would never spread further, and that we might find ourselves at the head of a new class superior to the rest in useful knowledge but hated and despised by the castes to whom these new attainments would always induce us to prefer them. Such a state of things would be desirable, if we were contended to rest our power on our army or on the attachment of a part of the population, but is inconsistent with every attempt to found it on a more extended basis".¹³⁴

Elphinstone's instance in excluding Christian Missionaries from Gujarat also seemed from his fear of popular resentment against religious interference. As Elphinstone had no high opinion about the Gujarati Brahmins, he was uncharitable to them to the extent of calling them a narrow minded bigoted and lying role. Elphinstone's anxiety to conciliate the Gujarat Brahmins is revealed in his resolve to continue the state patronage to the Brahmins through the distribution of dakshina. The dakshina, Elphinstone argues, could be exploited to weaken

the attachment of the Brahmins to their traditional values, and to encourage them to take an interest in the arts and the science of the west. After the British rule over Gujarat was firmly established, Elphinstone pointed out 'the Dakshina might still be kept, but most of the prizes instead of being conferred on proficient in Hindu dicinity, might be allotted to those more skilled in more useful branches of learning - law, mathematics etc., and a certain number of professors might be appointed to teach these sciences".¹³⁵

Elphinstone adopted the above policy to exploit the latent to the Brahmins, whereas he was sincerely interested in the welfare of the peasantry class. As he wrote in 1823, his aim was not only to provide clerks for offices, but to diffuse knowledge among all orders of the people of this country. Elphinstone insisted on the education of the peasants because under a ryotwari system which happened to exist in Gujarat, each peasant was given a 'patta' in which were laid down the terms of contract with the Government, So Elphinstone felt that if the peasants could at least learn to read and write, they could know how much they had to pay to the government and the moneylenders would no longer be able to cheat them.

III. THE EXPERIMENT ORIGINATED WITH THE EDUCATION POLICY.

Early in 1824, a special committee of the Bombay Native School Book and School Society was appointed to examine the system of education prevailing among the natives and to suggest the improvements necessary to be applied to it.¹³⁶ The report of the special committee pointed out, certain defects of the Indian system of education and suggested remedies to overcome them. The defects that the committee found were, connected with the instructional materials, methods of teaching, qualified teachers and funds.

Among the remedial measures of that the Committee recommended were,¹³⁷

- (i) a series of elementary publications on subjects like languages, arithmetics, geography, philosophy, history, astronomy and ethics.
- (ii) In order to the prevalent system of education, the Committee suggested that it would be desirable if the schools for teaching English, although it would be agreeable to the natives, it had the disadvantage of withdrawing them from learning of their own vernacular dialects.

(iii) Any consequence of this kind, however, might be obviated, by making it possible for every way to attend a Gujarati school, for a certain period before he was admitted into an English school. In this manner, it was that the interests of the natives might be safeguarded, and at the same time procuring educational benefits which could reasonable be expected at the cost of exertions of the society. For want of properly qualified teachers the committee suggested to train young teacher recruits. Finally, the committee appeared to the government to provide pecuniary assistance to the society.

There were two salient features of the report of the special committee, which call for particular mention.¹³⁸ First, the measures suggested by the committee were primarily applicable for the promotion of education through the medium of the vernacular and secondly for its promotion through English. Thus the committee's suggestions and recommendations went through to emphasise the importance of the vernacular medium of instruction. Secondly, not only did the Committee seek to give the vernaculars their due place in a national system of education, but was anxious to insure against their neglect on account of a

popular preference for English. From the outset, the educational bodies in Bombay, exhibited a marked predilection for the employment of the vernacular for the educating the people of the presidency. This predilection was reflected too in the educational scheme of Elphinstone.

The report of the special committee was forwarded to the government led Elphinstone to place before his colleagues, his plan of educational system on 13th December 1823. In that minute Elphinstone, after promising that no progress could be made in the education of the people without assistance from government, proceeded to point out two modes through which, the necessary assistance could be given. One mode consisted of taking charge of public education into the hand of the Government, and the other was to stimulate private exertions without direct intervention on the part of the government. But he preferred a combination of the two modes, the establishment of a dual control over educational affairs by the government, and to encourage the private books like the Native school Book and School Society. He said, "Many of the measures necessary for the diffusion of education must depend on the spontaneous zeal of individuals, and could not be

effected by any resolutions of the Government. The promotion of those measures, should be committed to the society, but there are others which require an organized systems and a greater degree of regularity and permanence than can be expected from any plan, the success of which is to depend upon personal character. This last branch therefore must be undertaken by the government.¹³⁹ So, at the benefit of this new ideology that no district official body was constituted for carrying out the educational policy of the government as was done at the other two presidencies. Elphinstone's plan embraced seven objects which he considered as prerequisites to the diffusion of knowledge among the people of the presidency.¹⁴⁰ The first three of them related to the promotion of elementary education through the vernaculars, the remaining four were related to the promotion of education in the higher branches of knowledge, through English as well as the vernaculars.

The three proposed objects under the promotion of elementary education were:

- i. The improvement and increase of native schools,

- ii. Supply of school books,
- iii. Encouragement to the lower classes to avail themselves of the means of instruction.

And under the promotion of education in the higher branches of knowledge, Elphinstone suggested:

- i. Establishment of schools for teaching the European Science and improvements in the higher branches of education,
- ii. preparation and publication of books of moral and physical science in native languages,
- iii. establishment of schools for the purpose of teaching English to those disposed to pursue it as a classical language, and as a means of acquiring knowledge of the European discoveries, and
- iv. encouragement of the natives in the pursuit of those last branches of knowledge.

Elphinstone suggested definite measures for the attainment of these various objects. Keeping the view

of improving conditions of the existing schools he suggested,

- i. supply of trained school masters,
- ii. provision for their maintenance from the income of the village, and
- iii. proper supervision and control measures.

With regard to the supply of school books, he proposed, that the expenditure connected with it should be borne by the government, while the superintendence of printing and distribution should be left to the school Book Society. For the preparation and publication of books, he deemed it best to leave it to the private enterprise. But confined the endeavours of the government to advertising, for the best translations of particular books by holding out liberal records to stimulate their production.

Elphinstone suggested to make few more modifications for establishing schools in Gujarat, after a detailed study of indigenous system of education.¹⁴¹ such as:

- i. Schools to be established in those villages where the number of houses exceeded 400.
- ii. In case of small villages the arrangement was to be made to see that two or three villages share one school. The number of schools for small villages could be depended on the local conditions.
- iii. Teachers could be appointed on permanent basis on a fixed pay scales by the government, apart from the allowances they received.
- iv. The appointing authorities of the teachers were then be magistrates based on the qualifications, ascertained by a committee of the court presidency.
- v. Schools to be erected on the plan of a broadshed, at the public expense in all cusbas and also in large villages, where there was no satisfactory accomodation, fitting for the purpose.
- vi. The examinations could be conducted at the Jammabundy settlements, and the Magistrate himself could a supervise as many examination centres as possible.

- vii. The Magistrate could distribute 5 prizes worth of Rs.9, 8, 7, 6 and 5, to best scholars if the number of students were more than 100 from particular school, (for the examinations) a total of 3 prizes of the value of Rs.7, 5, 5 were to be presented to the 3 best scholars, where their total number was between 50 and 100. If the number of students were less than 50 only 2 prizes of Rs.5 and 4 could be given.
- viii. Every district cutchery was suggested to appoint 4-5 best outgoing scholars with small allowances, depending upon the situations aroused. There could also be a system, where the recruits appointed in the above said manner, could be chosen to shoulder the higher posts, also full responsibility, whose character and conduct, proved better on the previous occasions. Apart this, it was suggested, in the district cucherries a few boys could also be appointed on daily wages, based on their capacities and office requirements.
- ix. Some general instructions could be laid down to the masters as to the attendance and discipline problems

of children were concerned, to give the children a teachers principal occupation was to impart skills of reading, writing and accounts.

- x. A few printed books containing easy stories, such as histories of good men who had succeeded in life, without referring to their religion could be supplied from the Bombay Presidency for the schools.

Press: As in the spread of education Elphinstone for saw in the development of the Press and obvious danger to British imperialism. Yet he supported it as a beneficial agency. He argued that the press may in a long succession of ages cause the natives to throw off out yoke is possible and even probable, but it will in the first place destroy the superstitions and the prejudices of the natives and remove the pressing dangers created by the entire and marked separation between them and their conquerors and this effect is certain while the other is problematical".¹⁴² But he wanted the press to function under restrictions imposed by the Government.

For any improvement in the general morals of the people Elphinstone looked solely to education, under which

he included the use of the printing press. He suggested the printing and cheap distribution of Hindu tales inculcating sound morals, and also religious books, if such could be found, tending more directly to the same end.¹⁴³ But he recognised that the slightest infusion of religious controversy would cause the total failure of the plan.

IV. ANGLO-VERNACULARIST CONTROVERSY

During this period there existed a large number of controversies. In fact, it may even be considered as a period of controversies, rather than as a period of achievements. The Elphinstone's Educational scheme along with its comprehensiveness, its leading features, embodying as it did, provisions for elementary education for the masses and for higher education for the wealthy classes, also kept in view, the vernacular medium as the most suitable channel under the circumstances for the diffusion of knowledge. Elphinstone entertained no expectations of an immediate, rapid spread of the English language among the people of the presidency for the sake of the knowledge or learning accessible through it. Hence he appears to have felt himself compelled to the English

language considered as medium of instruction. "If English", he said, "could be at all diffused among persons who have the least time for reflection the progress of knowledge by means of it, would be accelerated in a ten-fold ratio, since every man who made himself acquainted with a science through the English, would be able to communicate, it, in his own language, to his country men. At present, however, there is but little desire to learn English with any such view".¹⁴⁴

But the Bombay Government had a staunch Anglicist in Francis warden. He was opposed to almost every part of Elphinstone's scheme. He apprehended that Elphinstone's scheme attempted too much, and he deemed it necessary and expedient that government should restrict its endeavours to the promotion of education through the medium of English. He differed from Elphinstone in the view, that there existed little desire among the people for a knowledge of English, though he acknowledged the existence of obstacles to the rapid diffusion of education among the higher ranks, owing to their almost exclusive devotion to commercial pursuits and a corresponding disregard of intellectual or literary ones. But among the lower and middle classes of society,

qualified assistants to teach the elementary parts of the English language may be found in India."¹⁴⁵

The discussions between Elphinstone and Warden were the commencement of what was known as the "Anglo-Vernacularist controversy". However the controversy confined to an exchange of views at the Governor's council table.

Owing to their differences of opinion between Elphinstone and warden, the court of Directors did not accord sanction to the proposals of Elphinstone. They accepted the Bombay Native Education Society as their agent for organisation of education in the province and hence no committee of public instruction was appointed in Bombay.¹⁴⁶ They also sanctioned a grant of Rs.600 per month to the society and under took to bear the cost of compiling and printing its school. Books.¹⁴⁷ The proposals of Elphinstone were, thus, side tracked and when he left in 1827, he was deeply grieved that differences in his council should have prevented him from achieving substantial results in expending education.

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he believed that there existed ample means of encouragement to the study of English.

On the other hand, he objected to the method proposed by the Governor to encourage translations and compositions in the vernacular tongues, on account of the expense and tardiness of process involved therein. He said in one occasion, that ultimately and in a very few years, greater benefits would be bestowed on the country, and at less labour and expense, by circumscribing the efforts and the funds to the diffusion of the English language and the circulation of English books, than in instructing natives in their own works, translations of English tracts and of English works on arts and sciences in all the languages of India. Warden, however, did not the Anglicists view of English becoming the universal language of India. His plan of education was simple though narrow one was that, "without in any manner interfering with the native, village schools, bad as they are, seminaries should be established in each zillah, for instructing the children of the higher and middle classes in the English language, reading, writing, arthonetic, geography, political economy, and medicine by school masters to be sent from England,

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