

**CHAPTER - II**

**IMPACTS OF BRITISH RULE**  
**AND WESTERN CULTURE**

The nineteenth century in India saw a period of tremendous change and activity throughout the country. The British impact was felt in almost all areas like education, administration, agriculture, economy and politics. It was disruptive with respect to the old socio-economic and political order. Nevertheless it had a progressive effect in that the ancient sluggish and unchanging order, was shaken for the first time in the history of the country.<sup>1</sup>

The British Raj affected the different segments of Indian society in a different manner and hence was bound to evoke different and even contradictory responses from them. The range of responses was very wide indeed. It included from hostility to appeasement of the new rulers and the scheme of things. It also was varied with respect to the old order. The administrative and educational policies of the British had won over the urban based high caste groups. They prospered under the British raj and provided native leadership in the intellectual and professional field and were responsible for what is called "renaissance" in the country.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to the establishment of British rule in Maharashtra, for centuries together social set up of Maharashtra remained stable and static. But when the British rule was established English education and the western ideas which flowed with it there emerged many waves of transformation at all levels in the social life of Maharashtra.

Increasing contacts with the dynamic west, western philosophy and sciences and the pattern of British political institutions gradually made the benumbed, Indian society conscious of the need for reform in all spheres. The shape of things, political stability and occasional official encouragement under the British helped individual social rebels to initiate and organise reforms which ultimately changed the face of India by the turn of the 19th century.<sup>3</sup>

Especially in Maharashtra the transfer of power is marked by the social awakening among the people. The introduction of modern education by the British was an event of a great historical significance, which supplied potent stimulus for all round awakening. Moreover, the fierce attacks of the christian missionaries on Indian religions and social evils served eventually to rouse the Indian people from their slumber, and made them aware of their own backwardness and degeneration.<sup>4</sup> When human minds are stirred by new ideas, society can not remain static.<sup>5</sup> So as logical sequel to the various stimulating forces, there dawned during the first half of the 19th century a new era of social reform in Maharashtra.

Inspiration for social reform did not come from one single source but it was supplied by a number of forces like western education, British administrative reforms, the changed social and cultural policy of the British government and its acceptance of a definite social policy for India,

activities of the christian missionaries, the indigenous forces, the press and the superior culture of the west etc. In other words, the spirit of reform was engendered by the interaction of different forces, both indigenous and foreign, in our society.<sup>6</sup>

This was the period, when Bal Shastri Jambhakar worked for the salvation of his own people. Unless we know this period which helped to develop his personality, it will not be possible for any one to comprehend his varied and multifaceted activities in the renaissance period of Maharashtra. Therefore, it is intended here to analyse the various factors responsible for ushering in a new era of social reform in Maharashtra.

#### British Administration :

British system of administration is one of the important gifts of the British rule. Through administration they introduced a number of changes in the country.<sup>7</sup>

In 1773, the British Parliament passed the Regulating Act in order to bring about reforms in the Indian administration and put an end to the problems created by the Dual system of government of Lord Clive. This Act provided that company's government should exercise the legislative, judicial and executive functions of the state. Through this the foundations of a new system of government were laid. Under this Act, Warren Hastings introduced



successfully judicial and commercial reforms with greater success. But in all his administrative measures he gave no place of trust and importance to the Indians.<sup>8</sup>

Cornwallis improved upon the administrative reforms of Warren Hastings. He introduced the theory of separation of power by separating the administration of revenue from the administration of justice. His judicial reforms took final shape in 1793 and were embodied in the Cornwallis code. His police reforms, commercial reforms and his efforts to suppress bribery, corruption and evils of private trade went a long way in improving Indian administration. Cornwallis tried to put into practice the administrative machinery planned by Pitt's India Act of 1784. The system aimed at perpetuation of British rule over India and the exploitation of India for the benefit of its rulers. This produced demoralising effect on the Indians.<sup>9</sup>

In the first half of the 19th century, it was William Bentick (1828-35) who was responsible for bringing about far reaching social and educational reforms. Bentick was liberal minded and sympathetic towards the Indians. It was at his instance that the Charter Act of 1833 tried to undo what Cornwallis had done, by stating that Indians should not be prohibited from holding any office because of race and colour. But in reality this did not mean much and Indians continued to be excluded from high offices. He was the person, who abolished sati, infanticide and suppressed Thugi. He also

introduced certain judicial reforms to improve upon the system of Cornwallis. He was also responsible for adopting helpful attitude in granting freedom of the Press. His other outstanding administrative reforms which produced a far-reaching effect on Indian life was the introduction of Western system of education through the medium of English.<sup>10</sup>

In Maharashtra, when the British established their control in 1818, they not only restored peace and order but along with that introduced apt administrative machinery. It was Mountstuart Elphinstone, an able administrator, who laid the foundation of British power in Maharashtra. While looking after the British administration in Maharashtra, Elphinstone formulated a policy that would serve the purpose of both his government and the people. He as a statesman, a friend of the Indians, was sensitive to the needs and attitudes of his age. Therefore, while administering he followed apt policies for a slow and peaceful transformation without disturbing the social and economic institutions of the people. He accepted the desirability of improvement and the introduction of western ideas and values, but at the same time, he was also convinced of the value of the traditional institutions.<sup>11</sup> He was deeply interested in the education of the masses and with this view he encouraged the foundation of the Bombay Native School Book and School Society (August 1822). After Elphinstone, Sir John Malcolm (1827-30) also followed the same liberal policy in Maharashtra. In this way, in the first half of the 19th century, the British administrators were

mostly liberal and were also aware of the under currents below the apparently stagnant surface of the society, because of which they enforced gradual measures of reform and a type to suit Indian conditions.

### Western Education :

After the establishment of British rule in Maharashtra, the introduction of western education was an event of great historical significance. English education, supplied a potent stimulus for all round awakening not only in Maharashtra but in India in the 19th century. Before 1813, the missionaries with the object of proselytizing, endeavoured to spread western education. But while imparting western education, they criticised Hindu customs and institutions as worthless and extolled the merits of christianity.<sup>12</sup>

The East India Company did not favour the missionaries, as their teachings antagonized the Hindus. In 1813, the East India Company accepted the responsibility of educating the Indians. The debates and controversies between the Anglisists and the Orientalists started over the content of education and medium of instruction. Ultimately the Anglisists own.<sup>13</sup>

Mountstuart Elphinstone, the first Governor of Bombay Presidency (1819-1827) restored peace and order in Bombay Presidency by means of rare tact and wise administration. Side by side he began to devise means for the improvement of

the whole administration. The new order required new personnel, and educational reorganization was one of the main subjects that received his earnest attention. He was deeply interested in the education of the masses. His considered view on new education was that, western knowledge must and could be successfully imparted to the natives of the country through the medium of their own vernaculars, and that instead of encouraging a wholesale English education among the people, it could be wise to teach the English language and literature to the select few, who would then successfully communicate western knowledge of every kind to their ignorant countrymen. And with this view he encouraged the foundation of the Bombay Native School Book and School Society in August 1822. The society opened a few vernacular schools of new type in the island of Bombay and elsewhere and its first English school was started in July 1824.<sup>14</sup> The society's central school in Bombay proved more successful and remained the principal Government highschool.<sup>15</sup> Then the Bombay Native Education Society undertook the task of translating sciences and philosophies in the vernacular. In 1825, teaching of English was introduced in the Hindu College, Poona.<sup>16</sup>

In this way, though the island of Bombay had been under the East India Company's rule for long, it began to receive the impact of formal western Education only after the appointment of Mountstuart Elphinstone as the



Governor of the newly constituted Bombay Presidency in 1819. And there is no denying the fact that Mountstuart Elphinstone laid the foundations of modern education which produced a renaissance in Western India. Especially the educational institution that perpetuates his name accomplished for Maharashtra, what the Hindu College did for the Bengal renaissance.<sup>17</sup>

The resolution of 1835, declaring the promotion of European literature and science among the natives as "the great objective of the British government", gave a great impetus to the progress of English education in India. The Bombay Board of Education was created in 1840.<sup>18</sup> Sir Erskine Peirie, who strongly advocated English education, was appointed its President in 1843. During his term of presidency from 1843 to 1852, the number of English schools under the Board's control nearly doubled and nine private English schools were started in Bombay. The Grant Medical College was started in 1845, chairs for Botany and Chemistry were instituted in the Elphinstone College in the year 1846 and the English School and the Sanskrit College at Poona were amalgamated in the same year. The Board of Education in Bombay worked with "energy and foresight". Because of its efforts the number of schools and scholars increased and quality of instruction had greatly improved. There were in Bombay Presidency in 1850 ten Government or aided English institutions with about 2000 students.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, upto 1850, the liberal policies of East India Company and the liberal minded British administrators, the efforts of the missionaries and progressive elements in the society, gave a great impetus to the progress of English Education in Maharashtra. If we have to choose one single factor which helped more than others in bringing about the great transformation in Maharashtra in the 19th century, we can, without any hesitation, point to the introduction of English education. English education and the western ideas which flowed along with it, formed the foundation of all the wonderful progress that we witness in Maharashtra during the British rule.

English education brought about greater changes in the minds of the educated Hindus in Maharashtra. It opened the flood-gates of the western ideas which almost overwhelmed them at the beginning. Centuries together the Hindus kept themselves aloof from the outer world and were ignorant of the arts and sciences of the west. But a great change came over them at the beginning of the 19th century A.D. A new ideology suddenly burst fourth upon the static life, moulded for centuries by a fixed set of religious ideas and social conventions. It gave birth to a critical attitude towards religion and a spirit of inquiry into the origin of state and society with a view to determining their proper scope and functions.<sup>20</sup>

To put it in a concrete form, the most important result of the western education was the replacement of blind faith in current traditions, beliefs and conventions - characteristic of the Mediéval age- by a spirit of rationalism which seeks to inquire and argue before accepting anything. The revolt of mind against the tyranny of dogma and traditional authorities, beliefs and customs is the first requisite for freedom of thought and conscience which lies at the root of progress in social, religious and political spheres of life.<sup>21</sup> In Maharashtra, the rationalising effect of English education at first manifested itself more in religious and social ideas.

The dissemination of western knowledge as a result of the new education gave a new impetus to the minds of the newly educated youth. They had read Butler and Milton, Thomas Paine and Voltaire, and were exposed to western ideas of rationalism and humanism. In addition, they had to contend with Christian missionary, whose avowed aim was to convert, and who indulged in an indiscriminate attack on Hindu customs and practices. Perforce the neo-intellectuals were obliged to turn their attention to an examination of the existing social and religious institutions of the Hindus. While the new spirit of inquiry made this new generation of scholars conscious of the general ignorance and the degrading influence of superstitions around them, it also made them highly resentful of the wholesale condemnation of their national life and culture by the christian missionaries and by the totally prejudiced British colonial administrator-historians like James Mill.<sup>22</sup>

In this situation, the old order could no longer have any hold on the minds of these middle-class intellectuals. Though conversion of christianity did not appeal to them, Hinduism in its existing form was equally intolerable. They detested the spectacle of social tyranny working against the nobler impulses of humanity by making invidious distinctions between man and man and between man and woman. Besides western literature, some of them had also studied the ancient writings of the Hindus and were convinced that many of the customs and practices that prevailed in their day- such as idol worship, caste-distinctions and priest-craft with its attendant evils- had no sanction in the ancient texts. They were convinced that the prevalent obscurantism was responsible for social degeneration and the consequent national decline. The society had to be reformed if the country was to achieve national unity and progress.<sup>23</sup>

These English educated new class wedded to the principle of criticism and enquiry developed new tools of analysis for understanding and assessing the contemporary social set up; a new approach to the past and urge for a better future.<sup>24</sup> These intellectuals youths of Maharashtra helped in bringing about the great transformation in the social and religious life of Maharashtra in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Commenting on the impact of western education on the nineteenth century Indians Tarkteerth Laxman Shastri Joshi

writes :

"The western education introduced in the sphere of Indian thought the values of Rationalism, Individualism and the natural equality of man irrespective of national or racial differences. Rationalism gave vision to discriminate between right and wrong in the old tradition and employment of the scientific methods in knowing the meaning of the universe. The individualism helped in breaking the bondage of the old tradition that hindered the development of the individual. The idea of equality of man destroyed the old prejudices against the cultures of other people and broadening and liberalizing the outlook created an inclination towards accepting the essence of all the cultures of the world. These values in totality created a secular outlook among the Indians." 25

#### Social Policy and Social Change :

Although the state of social and cultural degradation of India had attracted the attention of the administrators of the East India Company from the very beginning and it had been felt by some of them that they were required to take official steps at a not very distant time to remove the social and cultural despondency, they were forced to maintain an indifferent attitude mainly for two reasons. First, till 1813, and more correctly till 1833, the East India Company was

primarily interested in its trading activities and the profits derived from the revenue administration of the territory under its control - it ruled, but hardly governed. Secondly, the strong religious basis of Indian society and culture dispirited many a reformer-administrator and liberal policy-maker of the company, who thought that because of their alien origin, culture, religion and status any attempt on their part to rejuvenate the society might be misunderstood by the people of India and even create antagonism and opposition, bitter and powerful enough, to shake even the foundations of the British rule in India. It was mainly because of this reason that, in the beginning, the East India Company's government viewed any attempt at proselytisation by the christian missionaries in India with alarm.<sup>26</sup>

But the leaders of the British public who surveyed the Indian scene in the late eighteenth century were conscious of their responsibilities in India and felt concerned with the problems of developing the country.<sup>27</sup> Especially after 1813, they took active steps to transform Indian Society and culture. This followed the rise of new interests and new ideas in Britain during the nineteenth century. The Industrial revolution, which had begun in the middle of the 18th century, and the consequent growth of industrial capitalism, were fast changing all aspects of British society. The rising industrial interests wanted to make India a big market for their goods. This could not be accomplished merely by adhering to the policy

of keeping peace, and required the partial transformation and modernisation of Indian society. And so, in the words of the historian Thompson and Barrett,

"the mood and methods of the old brigandage were changing into those of modern industrialism and capitalism."<sup>28</sup>

Science and technology also opened new vistas of human progress. The 18th and 19th centuries witnessed a great ferment of new ideas in Britain and Europe which influenced the British outlook towards Indian problems. All over Europe, "new attitudes of mind, manners, and morals were appearing". The great french Revolution of 1789 with its message of liberty, equality and fraternity generated powerful democratic sentiments and unleashed the force of modern nationalism. In the realm of thought, the new trend was represented by Bacon, Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Adam Smith and Bentham, in the realm of literature by Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Charles Dickens. The impact of the new thought - the product of the intellectual revolution of the 18th century, the french Revolution, and the Industrial Revolution - was naturally felt in India and affected the official notions of government.<sup>29</sup>

The three outstanding characteristics of the new thought were rationalism or faith in reason and science, humanism or love of man and confidence in the capacity of man

to progress. The new currents of thought in Europe came into conflict with the old outlook and produced a clash of attitudes among those who determined Indian policy or ran the Indian administration. The older attitude known as the conservative or the traditional attitude, was that of making as few changes in India as possible. The early representatives of this attitude were Warren Hastings and Edmund Burke and the later ones were the famous officials Munro, Malcolm, Elphinstone and Metcalfe. The conservatives maintained that Indian civilization was different from European Civilization but was not necessarily inferior to it. Many of them respected and admired Indian Philosophy and Culture. Realising that it might be necessary to introduce some western ideas and practices, they proposed to introduce them very very cautiously and gradually. Favouring social stability above all, they opposed any programme of rapid modernisation. The conservative attitude remained influential in England as well as in India upto the very end of British rule. But among the policy makers in Britain it was a gradually diminishing view because the course of trade and events was showing that the conservative policy did not lead to the desired expansion of trade or provide adequately for the perpetuation of British supremacy.<sup>30</sup>

By 1800 the conservative attitude was fast giving way to a new attitude which was sharply critical of Indian society and culture. Indian civilization was condemned as static, it was looked down upon with contempt, Indian customs



were considered uncivilised, Indian institutions corrupt and decadent, and Indian thought narrow and unscientific. This critical approach was used by most of the officials and writers and statesmen of Britain to justify political and economic enslavement of India and to proclaim that it was incapable of improvement and must therefore remain permanently under British tutelage.<sup>31</sup>

However, a few Englishmen, known as Radicals, went beyond this narrow criticism and imperialistic outlook and applied the advanced humanistic and rational thought of the west to the Indian situation as they saw it. The doctrine of reason led them to believe that India need not always be a fallen country for all societies had the capacity to improve by following the dictates of reason and science. The doctrine of humanism led them to desire the improvement of Indian people. The doctrine of progress led them to the conviction that Indians were bound to improve. And so the Radicals, representing the better elements of British society, desired to make India a part of the modern progressive world of science and humanism.<sup>32</sup>

The humanism of these men was aroused by the social injustice of such institutions as the caste system and untouchability, such customs as sati and infanticide and the low status of women in general and of widows in particular. Their scientific minds were also outraged by the many superstitions that gripped the minds of the Indian people and by

the complete absence of the scientific outlook in the country. To them, the answer of India's ills appeared to lie in the introduction of modern western sciences, philosophy and literature- in fact, in all out and rapid modernisation.<sup>33</sup>

The policy of modernising Indian society, and culture was also encouraged by the christian missionaries and religious minded persons such as William Wilberforce and Charles Grant, the then chairman of the court of Directors of the East India Company, who wanted to spread christianity in India. They supported a programme of westernisation in the hope that it would eventually lead to the country's conversion to christianity. They thought that the light of western knowledge would destroy people's faith in their own religions and lead them to welcome and embrace christianity. They therefore opened modern schools, colleges and hospitals in the country.<sup>34</sup>

Time and again the commons postponed policy decision for India, but at last, the wind of change started blowing and - the Radicals got an opportunity to influence Indian policies through James Mill, one of the leading Radical philosophers of England, who came to occupy in 1817 the very important position of chief Examiner in the office of the court of Directors, and William Bentick, who was a Radical and who became the Governor-General of India in 1829. Also some of the officials who came to India in the 1820's and after, were deeply influenced by the Radical outlook.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the situation completely changed in favour of

deciding a definite social policy for India with a determination of implementing it after the reforming whigs came to power in England after 1830 and, more so, after the Reforms Act of 1932.<sup>36</sup>

Although the Radicals were profoundly influenced by Benthamite doctrine of social reform, still they could not have carried out actual reforms, had not the contemporary Indian public opinion been favourable. At the time a section of the population led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other like minded Indians, who were conscious of the low caste to which their country and society had sunk, who were sick of caste prejudices and other social evils and who believed that the salvation of India lay in science and humanism, strongly demanded social reforms. Even in the spread of western education some of the social leaders in India took genuine interest.<sup>37</sup>

The changed attitude of the East India Company, its acceptance of the principle of formulating a definite social policy for India and the spread of western education opened the high road to European culture for the masses in India. The reaction to this in India was immediate and strong. Soon a series of national leaders with deep knowledge of western and Indian education and culture emerged, whose supreme task in the early nineteenth century was the defence of the Hindu society and culture from the challenging west. The process led in quick stages, to great intellectual and religious

ferment in the land. The Indian intellectuals of the period had the independence of the mind and integrity of character to acknowledge the fact that there was much good in synthesising and assimilating the dynamism, scientific learning and spirit of rational enquiry of the west as integral parts in our scheme of life without, of course, losing our sense of moral values.<sup>38</sup>

### Christian Missionaries :

India witnessed a remarkable outburst of christian missionary activities in the first half of the nineteenth century.<sup>39</sup> The christian missionaries were the first to come to India. Their flow continued till the East India Company started its trade activities in this country. But then the East India Company in the initial stage opposed their activities on the ground, among others, that they would interfere with Hindu religion and create difficulties for them.<sup>40</sup>

But the removal in 1813 of the restrictions which had earlier been placed by the East India Company on the activities and entry of christian missions in India, provided an opportunity for intensive missionary activities in the whole of India.<sup>41</sup> With this the missionaries got a free hand in the evangelical, social, educational and other activities and spread a net, wide and intricate covering almost all of British India as also the native states.<sup>42</sup>

The missionaries were trained primarily for the work of proselytisation, and they were imbued with an intense zeal of propagating the gospel of christianity and for converting Indians to their fold. Nevertheless it cannot be denied that the ideas and activities of the missionaries did eventually become a vital force for social reform in modern India. The missionaries contributed to it in several ways. They emphasised the conviction that the spiritual salvation of the Individual was bound up with that of his community, and that the social and economic advancement of a community must proceed simultaneously with its spiritual advance. They preached the doctrine of fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. They established schools and colleges for the education of the boys and girls. [They initiated the movement for abolishing the practice of Sati, infanticide and untouchability. They worked for the uplift of the backward tribes and for the amelioration of the womanhood in India. They pioneered numerous other movements for the welfare of the poor and needy. They often brought pressure, to bear upon the Government in India to abolish inhuman social practices and to initiate programmes for the welfare of the weak and sufferings in the society.<sup>43</sup>

The efforts of the christian missionaries to eradicate social evils in India though did not always achieve immediate success, yet these helped to popularise an ideology that was conducive to the growth of humanitarianism in India.

Their ideal of service inspired many an Indian to undertake social reform in an organised manner. Moreover, the fierce attacks of the christian missionaries on Indian religions and social evils served eventually to rouse the Indian people from their slumber, and made them aware of their own backwardness and degeneration.<sup>44</sup>

The missionaries believed that the human character could be quickly and totally transformed by a direct assault on the mind through an educative process. Also they thought it essential to point out the defects in Indian religion and society which were responsible, according to them for the poverty and social stagnation of India. On the practical side their activities attempted to demonstrate faithfully the christian ethics in action. The schools, dispensaries, orphanages and leper clinics were the manifestations of this desire. Thus they constantly and laboriously tried to expose Indian society to new religious and social beliefs. They also started journals and used them as media for hammering the minds of the educated Indians by constantly highlighting the defects of Hindu religion and way of life and generally promoting christian ideas.<sup>45</sup>

All this created a new intellectual climate in the whole of Bombay Presidency. There developed a hunger for education among the Indians as it opened up new opportunities for them under British government. The preaching of missionaries served to stimulate a spirit of enquiry among the

Indians. The missionaries challenged openly the validity of the religious philosophies of the Hindus and decried the customs of widowhood, celibacy sati, child marriage, caste, idolatry and the numerous superstitions then prevailing among the Hindus. They did not succeed, so much in eradicating these evils. It was not their objective either. However, they succeeded in making the Hindu customs look ridiculous and anachronistic. It was this challenge that made them realise the moral poverty and the cultural degradation of Hinduism in those days. Commenting on this George Smith wrote, "The hundred and fifty millions of caste Hindus still present to christendom an unbroken front or very little broken apparently. But that it is disintegrating under the combined influence of western civilization and christian truth, its own leaders allow, and their methods of meeting the assault confess."<sup>46</sup>

The net result was mass conversion of the depressed classes and the aboriginals. Some of the high caste Hindus were also attracted towards christianity and they embraced it.<sup>47</sup> The case of Shripad Sheshadri, Baba Padmanji, Ramchandra from Bankote in Konkan etc. may be instanced here. Though the number of converts was not very high still it was sufficient to alert the orthodox Hindus as well as the middle class intellectuals of Maharashtra. The impact of western education in liberating the mind from the bondage of tradition and the virulent criticism of Hindu religion and social order by the missionaries together necessitated a thorough and critical

review of Hindu tradition and society with the object of reforming it.

In brief, while assessing the progress of social reform in Maharashtra, and even in India in the nineteenth century, the importance of the missionaries cannot be minimised.<sup>48</sup>

### Indigenous Forces :

The course of Indian History through the ages is replete with numerous instances of social reform movements. All religious movements had social reform as their ultimate object. Indian society, particularly the Hindu society, accepted measures of social reform as stages in its evolution because all religious preachers and social reformers of this country laid strong emphasis on continuity, order, preservation of ancient virtues and moral values, and harmonious social change by peaceful means. Gradually religious texts and social tradition supporting revolts against, social and religious tyrannies, had taken shape. Rational and observant critics as well as individual social rebels in India in all ages drew inspiration from such religious and social sanctions to controvert the arguments justifying a time-honoured practice or custom and to show its futility.<sup>49</sup>

It was therefore, natural that in the background of widespread religious and social injustices and vices during the eighteenth century there should be strong and eloquent



demand for reform from all quarters in India. This demand became stronger, bold and organised for its fulfilment, in the beginning of the nineteenth century when the political respite and general security provided by the British, urged some people to improve their lives and condition in society, and when the impact of the western domination on Indian politics and economy made them conscious of their subordinate and degrading position in different spheres.<sup>50</sup>

The main architects of the Indian national reawakening and social progress were the sons of the soil, who had been moved to action by the prevalent religious and social maladies. They were fired by a missionary zeal due to their perception of the degrading conditions and sufferings of the millions. Their awareness of the superiority of the Europeans in politics and material life, goaded them constantly to strive for removing different social vices and injustices which had far long crippled the spirit and dwarfed the moral and intellectual stature of their countrymen. No doubt christian missionary activities, western education and contact, and British democratic principles enabled them to fix up their objectives and decide their lines of action, their strong desire for social reform was mainly due to their love and feeling for their countrymen. The milk of humanity in them was abundant and, it gave them strength to fight in most strenuous situations and against numerous odds for restoring social values, standards and welfare. They fought for social

advancement rather than for releasing and tiding the waves of a social revolution to success. They were less ambitious, more practical and truly Indian. The pattern of social change they envisaged, was therefore evolutionary and abiding.<sup>51</sup>

All the social reformers in the nineteenth century India, were essentially Indian in their attitudes and aspirations. Their revolt against the Hindu society and their attempts to purify the Hindu religion were entirely due to their patriotic feelings. Political and economic domination of India by the British created in them an impelling desire to strive for Indian political advance and for that they made efforts to introduce certain changes in their religion, at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort. It was mainly for this reason that nineteenth century Indian reformers founded the religious organisations which, they wanted, should work for re-establishing the "natural texture of society". With this view in mind Raja Ram Mohan Roy founded the Atmiya Sabha, and the Brahma Sabha (later Samaj) in Bengal and in the similar manner other social reformers in India founded their organisation or samaj in their respective regions.

All the social reformers of the nineteenth century had considerable grounding in Indian languages and scriptures, and most of them received western education by their own efforts. Their method of reforming the society was by

organising and setting up schools and thereby educating the public and making them rational, active and responsible members in society. Accordingly, in the Bombay Presidency, the money and support for the establishment of the Elphinstone Institution in 1827 came largely from the Indians. One of the early products of this Institution and its first Indian teacher Pandit Bal Gangadhar Shastri was the maker of many a social reformer in Western India.<sup>52</sup>

The practical social reform which started with the anti-sati movement, was the result of deep study of the religious texts by its agitators. The social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, were moved to take this stand out of their conviction created by their study and personal experiences in the falsity of religious prescription for the burning of widows. In similar manner other social reformers were inspired to agitate against Kulinism and Polygamy. They made use of the ancient religious literature to justify the cause of widow remarriage. With the spread of the desire of emancipation of women, social reform in India gathered momentum. For centuries education was restricted to only a few in the society, but in the nineteenth century, education became available to the masses. Naturally, there was general clamour for educating the girls for improved family life and more congenial atmosphere at home for intellectual pursuits. Education among women, at the beginning not much encouraged, spread quickly after 1840's. The growth of nationalism and pride in Indian heritage made social reform an urgent concern for the progress of the country.<sup>53</sup>

No doubt the emergence of these indigenous forces for social reform were facilitated by the political stability provided by the British, and rapid development of communication system, the actual stimulus for social reform was provided by the spread of western education and the activities of the christian missionaries. The missionaries from the very beginning used vernacular languages to propagate their ideas and undertook humanitarian activities to enlist local support. The Indian social reformers took clue from the missionaries and from the beginning started vernacular newspapers and journals, one positive gain of which was the rapid improvement of vernacular languages besides dissemination of advanced knowledge and progressive ideas. Whether in Bengal, Madras or Bombay, there was a mushroom growth of vernacular newspapers and journals, and a public platform was created everywhere to register protest against social vices and advocate reform.<sup>54</sup>

The the renaissance and beginning of a social revolution in the first half of the nineteenth century in Bengal and in other parts of the country were the result of a movement for religious and social reform largely indigenous in character and leadership, thriving in a society in which the leaven of western ideas had begun to work.<sup>55</sup>

#### The Press :

In modern times, the Press has become a powerful social institution. This is proved by the fact that the Press has been glorified as the Fourth Estate. The printing press

played a big role, in the history of a number of peoples, in their national awakening, in their imbibing progressive ideas and in their being drawn as active forces into great social, political and cultural movements.<sup>56</sup>

The printing press did not exist in the pre-British period. Though it was first introduced in India by the Portuguese Jesuits as early as in 1557 A.D. to print christian literature, it became a real social force influencing the life of the people in India only in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The introduction of printing press in India was an event of revolutionary significance in the life of Indian people.<sup>57</sup> In the first part of the nineteenth century, the western educated class made full use of the Press to foster the nascent ferment. The missionaries contributed much to the development of Indian Press. "Sanbad Kaumudi, a Bengali weekly published in 1821, played an important role in Bengal Renaissance. Through this paper, Ram Mohan Roy condemned the custom of Sati and wrote other articles concerning social and religious reforms.<sup>58</sup>

In Bombay Presidency, the first printing press was started by the East India Company in the year 1694. Then in the year 1789, the first paper, the weekly "Bombay Herald" appeared. Then came "Bombay Courier" in 1790 and the Bombay "Gazette" in 1791. Later on The Bombay Gazette was amalgamated with the Bombay Herald in the year 1792.<sup>59</sup>

Unfortunately, upto the decline of the Peshwa regime, the people in Maharashtra showed utmost lithargical attitude towards the Press. But after the establishment of British rule and introduction of western education, the middle-class English educated intellectuals in Maharashtra realised the importance of newspapers and journals in the process of social awakening. As a result, the first Anglo-vernacular newspaper - "The Bombay Durpun" - published in 1832 by Bal Shastri Jambhekar, the great pioneer reformer of Western India in the first half of the nineteenth century. He started this paper to promote the study of European literature and the spread of European knowledge among the natives. Then Bhanu Mahajan began his "Prabhakar" weekly in 1840, Balshastri Jambhekar started "Dig-Durshan" in 1842 and 'Dnanodaya' was started in the same year by the missionaries. 'The Jnan-Prakash' was started in Poona in 1849, and was followed by 'Vicharlahari'(1852), 'Vartanandipika'(1854) and 'Induprakash' (1862) in Bombay. All these efforts in the first half of the nineteenth century laid the broad foundation of Marathi journalism in Maharashtra. Not only this but all the newspapers and magazines of the period also had taken to bitter criticism of existing social evils and educate the public opinion in favour of social reform.<sup>60</sup> In a sense, this factor also helped the spirit of reform in the society.

In the first half of the nineteenth century in Maharashtra the social leaders like Bal Shastri Jambhekar, Bhanu Mahajan and others used this media as a powerful weapon

for public education. Balshastrri made herculean efforts through his paper - Bombay Durpun - for the spread of modern knowledge amongst his own natives and to make them aware of the changing conditions and needs of the period. Through it, he welcomed the use of Steam Boat by his natives, spread of western knowledge and such other modern concepts of that period, useful for the progress and development of the society. Through Durpun he made his earnest efforts for the overall mental awakening and advancement of his people. In educating the people from social, religious and educational points of view, he edited this paper with utmost devotion and honesty.

The press discussed freely the problem of religion, social customs and education. A general consciousness was being created. In brief it can be stated that the Indian Press played an important role in spreading the Renaissance movement.<sup>61</sup>

In general it can be said that due to the impact of the west, the administrative reforms effected throughout the country by British government and the changed social and cultural policy of the British government and its acceptance of a definite social policy for India, the modern education, the activities of the Christian missionaries, the emergence of indigenous forces, the Press and the superior culture of the west with which the educated Indians came into contact in their day to day life, made the intellectuals ponder over

their own traditions, customs and beliefs, and on finding out that they were lacking in force and vitality and completely unsuitable to the new exigencies, started thinking in terms of reform in the light of new ideas.

English education had given them the new values—rationality, equality and human brotherhood. In the light of these, they began to examine their own traditions and beliefs. Christian missionaries had constantly posed the challenge of conversion and it was to be faced. Particularly the criticism by the missionaries of the irrational traditions and superstitions, then prevalent among the Hindus, had given them an impetus to fresh thinking on the subject. And the objective changes in the socio-economic and political environment together necessitated a thorough and critical review of Hindu tradition and society with the object of reforming it.<sup>62</sup>

The cumulative effect of all this was a ferment which expressed itself in the form of efforts of the reformers in Maharashtra.<sup>63</sup> The most abiding influence on the earliest groups of social reformers in western India was that of Bal Gangadhar Shastri (1812-1846), a graduate of the Elphinstone Institution and its first Indian teacher. Bal Shastri advocated widow remarriage, liberalisation of caste restrictions, readmission of converts to Hindu society. His *Mumbai Durpan* (Bombay Durpan) was the first weekly in Western India to champion the cause of social reform with the object of preserving the Hindu religion.<sup>64</sup> Many of the reformers of



Western India like Bheu Mahajan, Dadoba Pandurang, Dr. Bheu Daji Lad, Prof. Karunana Chhatre, Dadabhai Naoroji etc. to mention only a few were his students or inspired by his example.

All the social reformers of this period, including Bal Shastri Jambhakar were convinced that mere official enactments and ceremonial breaking of existing local customs would not bring about social change. They, therefore, established schools, formed public associations, organised public meetings and started newspapers and magazines to focus public attention on the need for social reform. The newspapers of this period like Bombay Durpun, Prabhakar, Vicharlehari, vartamandipike and Induprakash had taken to bitter criticism of existing social evils and to educate the public opinion in favour of social reform.<sup>65</sup>

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