



## EDUCATIONAL CONTRIBUTION OF MISS EMILIE KIMMINS AS A HUMAN VALUE

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**Abstract:** The present paper focuses on the life and work of Miss Alice Emilie Kimmins in Panchgani. In school, children are members of a small society that exerts a tremendous influence on their moral development. Teachers serve as role model to students in school; they play a major role in inculcating their ethical behavior. Miss Alice Emilie Kimmins was the best example of good teacher. <sup>(1)</sup> Miss Alice Emilie Kimmins was the founder of Kimmins High School, Panchgani. She was known as “The Mother of Panchgani”. She was enthusiastic, confident and looked always happy. Miss Alice Kimmins, right from the beginning, was very much interested in the field of education. The teachers are the first role model to the children outside their family. When the children see the model showing concern for others, motivating them for their good deeds and cooperating and helpful with their academic issues, the children learn them by observing and imitate it with teachers. The children are taught basic morals and values in school. <sup>(1)</sup> With this approach Miss Alice Kimmins started her educational work. Miss Emilie Kimmins arrived in India in 1885. She started working first in Lahore then in Varanasi and finally in the Zenana Mission’s High school in Girgaum in Bombay now known as Mumbai. In the beginning, she was disappointed to teach the classes with 80% non-Indian children. But later on these very non-Indian children created in her mind interest and love. Bombay was then stricken by famine and Plague. Two outcomes of these disasters are relevant to the foundation of Kimmins High School in Panchgani. When she was working in Girgaum, Miss Kimmins had begun to dream of a school in the hills for the European children. The climate of Bombay was exhausting for them. The European children went white faced, pale, weak and anemic. They were struggled with the adverse and very hot climate. They needed to be transplanted into the cool breezes and free open air which was being existed in the Western Ghats. She under her outstanding leadership tried her best to support the construction of the buildings and during her 22 years’ of active and dedicated service, she constructed the school buildings.

**Keywords:** Emilie Kimmins, Human Value, Moral development

### Introduction:

Miss Alice Emilie Kimmins was the founder of Kimmins High School, Panchgani. She was known as “The Mother of Panchgani”. She was born in 1857 in the West of England in one of the large families having six girls and three boys. She was enthusiastic, confident and looked always happy. She believed in the existence of God and so she had great faith in the Power and love of God.

Miss Alice Kimmins, right from the beginning, was very much interested in the field of education. After her father’s death, her family ran a school in their home. Emilie started to teach the students. Later on, she worked as a teacher in Portugal to support her brother who was pursuing his college education. While in Portugal, she learnt French language and accepted the challenges of life and tried her best to cope up with the odd and adverse circumstances. There she established herself as a very good

teacher and became very popular amongst the students. <sup>(2)</sup>

Emilie’s elder sister had come to India as a missionary. She started her work in Varanasi under the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission. There she struggled a lot against the adverse conditions, while the other Europeans left India. After only two years, she died in India. Her death changed the total outlook of Emilie Kimmins’ towards the life. She took up her path to follow her sister. <sup>(3)</sup>

Miss Emilie Kimmins arrived in India in 1885. She started working first in Lahore then in Varanasi and finally in the Zenana Mission’s High school in Girgaum in Bombay now known as Mumbai. In the beginning, she was disappointed to teach the classes with 80% non-Indian children. But later on these very non-Indian children created in her mind interest and love. Girgaum School was being run in a rented building till 1896. When a double disaster

struck the great metropolis of Bombay, Miss Kimmins wrote, “We are standing on the threshold of a year which will long be remembered in India as one of the unutterable misery... During the previous year the shadow of famine had been creeping over the country. In poor Bombay, there is another foe to face, a foe more deadly in its effects, more relentless in its fury. The plague has taken our beautiful city in its deadly grip”.<sup>(4)</sup> Two outcomes of these disasters are relevant to the foundation of Kimmins High School in Panchgani. First, many Europeans moved away from Girgaum, and second, Miss Kimmins’ health broke down and she had to return home to England with the possibility that she would never return to India.

When she was working in Girgaum, Miss Kimmins had begun to dream of a school in the hills for the European children. The climate of Bombay was exhausting for them. The European children went white faced, pale, weak and anemic. They were struggled with the adverse and very hot climate. They needed to be transplanted into the cool breezes and free open air which was being existed in the Western Ghats. She communicated this idea to Miss Mary Ashlin.

Miss Ashlin advised Miss Kimmins to start a school in hilly area of Western Ghats. Over this Miss Kimmins replied that she had no funds and she could not use Missions funds for such a work. It was then Miss Ashlin offered a liberal grant of Rs.300/- per month continuously for two years. She also advised her to shift to Panchgani, which is the best place for health. She was given the same idea by her doctor too.<sup>(5)</sup>

At that time there was a small Protestant School being run by Mrs. Evans for the day scholars in Panchgani. Meanwhile, Miss Ashlin had achieved the goodwill of school and Miss Kimmins arrived in February, 1898 with some students mainly boys. The boys stayed at “The Ark” and the seven girl boarders with their staff lived in the American Mission Bungalow (later known as Little House). Miss Kimmins immediately started planning for the expansion of the school. She under her

outstanding leadership tried her best to support the construction of the buildings and during her 22 years’ of active and dedicated service, she constructed the school buildings.

In 1899, with the help of Miss Ashlin’s donation of Rs.2500/- the American Mission Hall was converted into a schoolroom. Besides, a piece of land was purchased at the cost of Rs. 1500/- by receiving a donation from her friends Mr. and Mrs. Rivers Currie. This donation was continuously offered by them for the period of five years. With this help the Prayer Hall was constructed and in addition to this a piece of land for the classroom building was purchased.<sup>(6)</sup>

In the year 1900, she began to build up a bungalow with 1000 pounds borrowed from Miss Ashlin. When the house was finished, Miss Ashlin again offered a donation and the debt taken by her was cleared. Similarly, she also built a Kindergarten and added a verandah classroom to the Mission Hall. Initially, the Government was unable to help the school for construction of the building because of Plague and famine but later on, it gave most generous grants and the remaining work of constructing the buildings was completed.<sup>(7)</sup>

In 1903, the government grant enabled her to build a much needed new wing at a cost of Rs. 12220/- which was entitled as ‘Lower Ashlin’.<sup>(8)</sup> In 1905, she acquired a cottage and adjacent land connecting the original piece of land. The cottage was bought as a school hospital and the total cost of it went up to Rs. 6000/-.<sup>(9)</sup> In 1910, she constructed a gymnasium at the cost of Rs. 9000/-. This was constructed with the help of the Government’s funds and the gift of her dear friend, Mrs. Armitage. So it was named after her. The new gymnasium was a great addition and proved very useful for the school. It was a big achievement of the school in point of view of the Government inspection committee.<sup>(10)</sup> In the year 1912, Hon. Mr. Sharpe (D.P.I.) advised Miss Kimmins that she should use the marble instead of the Shahabad stone, which was used in England for the construction of their schools. He advised her that she should

have everything as good as that is in England.

In the year 1918, a new plan of construction of the building was prepared because it was the most needed extension part of the Willington wing. It was completed with the help of Durbar grant. In fact, the very work was delayed due to the war. <sup>(11)</sup>

In the year 1913, in the Report of Inspection, it was mentioned about the school Inspector. In the same year the total strength of the students was 94 and in the year 1916 the same reached up to 103. In the year 1917, it was 140. But later on, due to the outbreak of the war the total strength of students began to decline. There was a condition that the European students should be more in numbers in order to get grants from the Government. It was mentioned in the circular of the British Government. But the strength of the Parsi students was more in number than that of the European ones. Owing to the school's popularity and the reputation, the girl students had come from the great cities such as Quetta, Karachi, Calcutta, Hyderabad and Madras (now known as Chennai), etc. <sup>(12)</sup>

The curriculum was the same as it was taught in the girls' schools in England. The excellent tradition in music and art was established and the same was maintained. The texts taught and studied were advanced and updated. During that time, the subject of Mathematics was considered very difficult and was not fully recognized as an acceptable skill for girls.

The careful records were kept of the health and hygiene of girl students by the school. The students were generally healthy. The Inspector commented on this in the year 1908, "The girls are healthy and full of life and enter into all games with zest, while Miss Kimmins and her staff exercise an excellent moral influence both in school and out". <sup>(13)</sup>

In the month of January 1921, Miss Kimmins went on leave. She due to her busy schedule could not take care of her health. She fell ill and died unexpectedly on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1921. This news was a devastating blow to the people of Panchgani and a stunning shock to the school also. <sup>(14)</sup>

### **The Kimmins School in between in 1921 to 1945:**

This period was of a great change in the history of the World and Kimmins School too. As there was a World War and the school was on the verge of closing down. But the victory of the Allied Forces and favorable atmosphere of circumstances helped the Kimmins School to breathe a new life.

Miss. Pearsall arrived in the year 1921 and took the charge of the Kimmins School. She ran the school at her level best with full efficiency from 1921 to 1928 and till the year of Independence of India, she remained a Principal of Kimmins School and extended her services excellently.

On 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1926, Kimmins Memorial Hospital was opened by Lady Lawrence, who was wife of the acting Governor of Bombay. <sup>(15)</sup> On 16<sup>th</sup> February, 1927, the electric lights went on for the first time. <sup>(16)</sup> In 1928 Miss Cullen became the Principal of the school. On 26<sup>th</sup> March 1929, Miss Cullen was expired by appendicitis in the office of the school. <sup>(17)</sup> In 1929 to 30 the motor pump was affixed to the well and hot water was also introduced. <sup>(18)</sup>

On 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1931, this school was opened with 61 girl students. Princess of Baroda, Shakuntala Raje Gaikwad sent 4 children to the school but permission for them to stay did come from the Education Department and so they returned to Baroda. <sup>(19)</sup> On 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1931 the girls began swimming on Tableland. <sup>(20)</sup> On 21<sup>st</sup> August, 1931 the Principal, three teachers and two girls left for the Art Exhibition in Poona. <sup>(21)</sup>

On 5<sup>th</sup> August 1933, the music examination was conducted in the Trinity College for which 16 students appeared. Out of these students 9 were honored for their excellent performance. <sup>(22)</sup> On 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1933, in Poona exhibition the school won first, second and third prizes for Art. On 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1947, the Independence Day of India was celebrated with a variety of activities. The new flag of India was hoisted and saluted and *Vande Mataram* was sung. <sup>(23)</sup>

1948 was the Golden jubilee year of Kimmins School. In the very year, the percentage of the Indian students had

grown up to 75%. In the year 1951, for the students of 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> standard Marathi subject was introduced for the first time. In March, 1963, the first 9 Tibetan girls arrived from the Council of Tibetan Education. <sup>(24)</sup> In 1967 the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship Trust was formed to take over the management of the school from Mission.

The British left the Indian soil but some social reformers, who with the selfless spirit nurtured the school and gave wholeheartedly themselves to mould the future of India in their own small way. The school has maintained its glory and status of education. It is one of the prestigious schools in Panchgani.

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