



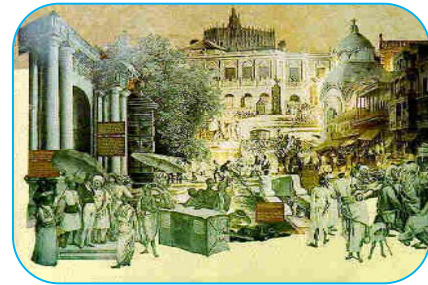
A STUDY ON THE GROWTH OF EDUCATION IN ODISHA DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

Mr. Anjan Kumar Pal

**Ph.D. Scholar, P.G. Department of History and Archaeology
F.M. University, Nuapadhi, Balasore, Odisha.**

ABSTRACT:

Education is indispensable for the progress of any nation, no matter where it is located in the world. During the ancient and mediaeval periods in Odisha, the traditional education system was the dominant form of instruction. However, during British rule, modern education was introduced, which ultimately resulted in the demise of the traditional educational system that had been in place in Odisha. Printing of the Old and New Testaments in Odia was initiated by Christian missionaries working for the East India Company, which is credited with marking the commencement of modern education in Odisha. In the year 1822, missionaries were the ones who established the very first primary school. The beginning of modern education in the form of English education in Odisha may be traced back to the time when it was ruled by the British. In this respect, the beginning was laid by the Missionaries in order to fulfill the evangelical aim. Over the course of time, the British administration took the initiative to introduce modern education in the form of English education in Odisha. This was done for the administrative convenience of the British government, and it was also done to keep the people of Odisha quiet by providing them with minor employments and other conveniences.



KEYWORDS: *Pathasalas, Avadhanas, education, evangelical, Anglicists, Orientalists, Magnacarta, Despatch, British, colonial, administration etc.*

INTRODUCTION:

Education is indispensable for the progress of any nation, no matter where it is located in the world. During the ancient and mediaeval periods in Odisha, the traditional education system was the dominant form of instruction. However, during British rule, modern education was introduced, which ultimately resulted in the demise of the traditional educational system that had been in place in Odisha. Printing of the Old and New Testaments in Odia was initiated by Christian missionaries working for the East India Company, which is credited with marking the commencement of modern education in Odisha. In the year 1822, missionaries were the ones who established the very first primary school. The establishment of English-language schools across the country is one of the legacies that the British colonial administration left behind in Odisha.¹ This initiative on the part of the British set Odisha on the road to modernity by fostering the expansion of educational opportunities across the state.

Education in Odisha during Pre-British Period

The private sector was in charge of education in Odisha prior to 1803 (the year the British conquered the region), when they took over.² The schools, known as Pathasalas, were held in various

locations, including temples, Sanskrit Tols and Bhagavat Tungis, as well as the homes of wealthy individuals. The Avadhanas, who are known as teachers, place a strong focus on reading, writing, and performing basic mathematical calculations or acquiring traditional knowledge. The students were educated in the Odia literary canon, which included works such as Jagannatha Das's Bhagavata and several puranas. At that point in time, the Kings of Odisha were not responsible for the administration of any Odia schools. As a result, receiving an education in Odisha during the time before British colonial rule was a very trying experience.³

Factors responsible for the spread of English Education

The factors for the growth of English education were many.

- In the beginning, the East India Company was much apathetic to the growth of English education in Odisha. In course of time, they realized that if the people will not be well acquainted with English, their administration and the entire system will not work properly.⁴ So they took interest for the growth of English education in Odisha.
- On the other hand, Charles Grant, the member of the British Parliament and Lord Minto, the Governor-General took keen interest for the spread of English education among the Indians who will understand the British administration and will help the officials in discharging their duties.⁵
- The Christian missionaries in the spirit of evangelism wanted to uplift the Odishan people through the spread of education. The main aim of these missionaries was to preach the natives the words of Jesus Christ. The missionaries prepared the Odia letters and printed the first Odia Bible in 1804. The New Testament was translated in 1809 by Pandit Mrutyunjay Vidyalkar. This translation was possible due to the efforts of three missionaries namely Me.Carry, Marshman and Ward. ⁶
- The British thought that the appointment of the Odias in the Government service would be beneficial to them because they would get very less salary in comparison to others.
- Lastly, the need of educated elites to help the British administration was a need of the time. It was true for all the provinces of India and Odisha was not exclusion to it.

Macauley's Minutes and education in Odisha

Lord Macauley, who served as President of the General Committee of Public Instruction and as a Law Member on the Governor-General's Council in 1835, was the one responsible for preparing his Minute at that time.⁷ After a great deal of back-and-forth between Anglicists and Orientalists about the question of which language should be used as the medium of instruction, it was ultimately decided that the Indian people should learn European subjects through the English language. As a direct consequence of this, the British took action to establish English language schools in Odisha.

Prior to that time, Christian missionaries had constructed schools where English was the primary medium of instruction. The missionaries had been successful in establishing a few schools that they had opened themselves. On June 1, 1822, the doors to the mission school located in northern Orissa were first opened. And after that, the government assumed control of fifteen native schools that it had previously been responsible for.⁸

The first English School in India was established in Puri in 1836 by the British. Despite the fact that Christian missionaries were responsible for founding the Cuttack English School in 1823-1824, the government took over operation of the institution in 1836. Because of this, Cuttack Missionary School became so well known, but Puri English School was forced to shut its doors just two years after it first opened its doors. In the same year (1853), the government reopened the Puri School and also established an English School in Balasore. After that, Zilla Schools were created in the cities of Balasore, Puri, and Cuttack in order to produce a group of English-literate individuals who could assist the British government in its operations throughout Odisha.⁹

Growth of education under Wood's Despatch

Another important turning point in the annals of Odisha's long and illustrious history of educational advancement was the publication of Wood's Despatch. In the year 1854, while Lord William

Bentinck Sir Charles Wood was serving as Governor-General of India, Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control, developed a plan that would later become known as Wood's Despatch. It came to be known as the "Magnacarta" in the annals of the English educational system's history in India. It suggested both the establishment of brand-new educational institutions and the continuation of existing ones. As a result, in the year 1855, a second Zilla School was created in the city of Berhampur. The purpose of this dispatch, which was sent on July 19th, 1854, was to examine the development of education in the area through time.¹⁰

It provided a number of insightful recommendations, and as a result of those recommendations, a number of adjustments were made, which ultimately resulted in an improved educational climate in this part of the country. In the school year 1858–59, there were a total of 30 institutions, whereas by 1868 there were 63, and by 1870 there were 95. During the time after Wood's dispatch, school operations began in the outlying regions of the province. A school with 35 pupils had established itself in Kendrapara, and there was also a school in Puri with children. In a similar manner, schools had emerged in many locations such as Bhadrak, Balasore, Mahanga, and Hariharpur. The manner in which the schools determined and collected tuition was one of the challenges faced by the educational system. Even though it was prohibitively expensive for some students, some did choose to forego their education altogether.¹¹

Spread of Vernacular Education

As a result of Wood's Dispatch, the Zilla School in Sambalpur was promoted to the position of Anglo-Vernacular School. It was helpful to the Odias for the growth of English Education when the strategy of placing Middle English School on a vernacular basis was implemented. On the other side, T. E. Ravenshaw was responsible for the upkeep of the 832 Pathasalas, also known as indigenous village schools. As a result, it served as a catalyst for the progression of primary education throughout the state of Odisha. The Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati of Paralakhemundi is credited with being the driving force for the expansion of primary education throughout the state of Odisha. By 1947, the total number of primary schools in the state of Odisha had climbed to 6998.¹²

Secondary Education

Besides primary education, the secondary education also received a fresh impetus by the Wood's Despatch. The Middle Vernacular Schools, Middle English Schools and the High Schools were established for the growth of education in Odisha. In the Middle Vernacular School, English was not a compulsory subject. The Middle Vernacular Schools added two years of education after upper primary stage. In the Middle English School, English was a compulsory subject in the curriculum. M.E. School also had four years of courses of study. High Schools also provided four years of courses of study after the M.E. School. Accordingly, private High Schools were established at Cuttack. The Pyari Mohan Academy which began as a ME School in 1875 assumed the status of a High School in 1879. The Victoria School at Cuttack also assumed the status of a High School in 1888. By the end of Nineteenth century there were 12 High Schools and 82 M.E. Schools in North Odisha and 4 High Schools and 26 ME Schools in South Odisha.¹³

Lord Ripon and the Hunter Commission

Lord Ripon, the Viceroy of India, appointed a commission under W.W. Hunter which famous as Hunter Commission in 1882.¹⁴ According to its recommendations, private schools and colleges were opened in different towns of Odisha.¹⁵ In the full spirit for amalgamation of Odia speaking tracts, Pandit Gopabandhu Das established Satyavadi Bakula Vanvidyalaya at Sakshigopal in 1909. The *Panchasakhas* of modern Odisha like Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Acharya Harihara, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Pandit Godavarish Mishra and Pandit Krupasindhu Mishra took over the charge of this school for the growth of education in Odisha. The creation of Odisha as a separate province created an urge in the mind of the leaders of Odisha for spreading education in Odisha. By 1947 there were 42 High Schools and 61 M.E. Schools existed in Odisha.¹⁶

Growth of Higher Education

After the terrible famine that took place in 1866 was finally resolved, the British government began to consider the possibility of focusing more attention on the expansion of higher education in Odisha. In the year 1868, Ravenshaw College was founded, marking the beginning of a new era in the field of higher education in the state of Odisha. In the year 1968, the Cuttack Zilla School was changed into Collegiate School with the opening of FA (First Arts) class, having only the facilities to teach the Intermediate level.

After then, on the advice of T.E. Ravenshaw, it was transformed into a degree-granting college. The construction of a new college building was made possible by a donation of 20,000 rupees made in 1878 by Maharaja Krushna Chandra Bhanja. Up to the year 1878, the only college in Odisha that was capable of providing higher education was Ravenshaw College. In 1878, the first year that students could enrol in FA classes, the Berhampur Zilla School was upgraded to the status of a collegiate institution. It was recommended by the Hunter Commission that privatisation be encouraged, and as a result, that school was renamed the Berhampur Native College. In 1893, the school was renamed the Khallikote College after Raja Harihar Mardaraj Dev donated property to the institution. Maharaja Gourachandra Dev created a second college in the town of Parlakhernundi in the year 1896. This college remained a Junior (Second Grade) college till the year 1936. In 1937, improvements were made to it. In addition, S.B. Women's College was established in the city of Cuttack. There were only seven reputable colleges in the state of Odisha, and they were as follows: Ravenshaw College in Cuttack; Khalikote College in Berhampur; S.K.C.G. College in Parlakhemundi; G.M. College in Sambalpur; S.C.S. College in Puri; and F.M. College in Balasore. In addition to the aforementioned educational institutions, there was also a Training College in Cuttack during the time, which would later become known as the Radha Nath Training College. For the purpose of establishing institutions of higher learning within the state of Odisha during the time of the British colonial administration, each of these colleges was founded.¹⁷

Technical Education in Odisha during the British period

The technical education was also provided by the British in course of time in order to full fill the need of the British Government. In 1923, the Odisha School of Engineering was opened at Cuttack which at present known as the Bhubanananda Engineering School. On the other hand, the Boys' Industrial School at Balasore was started in Balasore by the American Baptist Mission and education was imparted in carpentry, book-binding, cane work, painting, cement work etc. Two weaving institutes were opened at Sambalpur and Cuttack districts.¹⁸ The Odisha Medical School was established in 1876 which worked with galvanizing effect from 1917 which is recognized as the S.C.B. Medical College and Hospital. The Sanskrit *tois* (schools) offered *Prathama* and *Madhyama* studies. Some special schools were established. 35 special schools for Scheduled castes and 19 schools for Scheduled tribes were established at Angul and Sambalpur in 1917. After that a training college to impart the process of teaching was established at Cuttack, which later on became Radha Nath Training College.¹⁹

Approach of British Government towards Education in Odisha

Despite this fact, the British were the ones who brought modern education to Odisha.²⁰ However, it did not move forward very quickly. The preceding attitude taken by the British towards the education system in Odisha can be explained by a number of different factors. (1) The British were not particularly interested in promoting the development of higher education in Odisha. (2) Even though it desired for the people of Odisha to acquire English language skills, it never intended for them to get a high level of education. Simply put, it wanted people to have a working grasp of English for the sole purpose of creating a clerical class of people, just as it sought to do with India. (3) The cost of higher education was extremely high. There was never a desire on the part of the British government to invest more money on education, which would be to the advantage of the indigenous population. There was not even a single college in the state of Odisha when the Bombay University, Madras University, and Calcutta University were all founded in 1858. (4) There were not nearly enough universities and secondary educational institutions in the state of Odisha. In the case of Odisha, this resulted in a delay in

the establishment of the upper class. (5) The British took advantage of the traditional attitudes that the people of Odisha held regarding education, and as a result, they did not push the use of English in the educational system in Odisha. In conclusion, the British did not promote engineering education, particularly that which was related to agriculture, despite the fact that Odisha was a land where the majority of the population relied on agriculture as their primary source of income.²¹ These were reasons that also acted as a barrier to the expansion of educational opportunities in the state of Odisha.

Therefore, the beginning of modern education in the form of English education in Odisha may be traced back to the time when it was ruled by the British. In this respect, the beginning was laid by the Missionaries in order to fulfill the evangelical aim. Over the course of time, the British administration took the initiative to introduce modern education in the form of English education in Odisha. This was done for the administrative convenience of the British government, and it was also done to keep the people of Odisha quiet by providing them with minor employments and other conveniences. On the other hand, the expansion of educational opportunities was not quite as significant as what has been seen in the case of other regions of India. Following the fall of British colonial control in India, Odisha saw an increase in the number of students studying the English language.

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