WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN ORISSA: A REFLECTION FROM HISTORY

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Women’s Education In Orissa: A Reflection From History

'It is impossible to understand the present without reference to the past. In order to explain the differential status of women and men in contemporary society, it is necessary to examine the impact of specific historical forces and recognise their power in creating attitudes about the sexes.'

Lindsey, L. 1999, p. 55

"... The cultural products of any given society at any given time reverberate with the themes of that society and that era."

Rose Weitz, 1977, P. 194

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at providing a historical overview of women's education in Orissa in both pre-independence and post-independence period. It is important to trace the history of education as it can contribute to examine the status of women in Orissa in general and educational status in particular. There is an attempt to review briefly the growth of women’s education in Orissa at Primary, Secondary and Higher educational levels. The chapter also aims at identifying the gender disparities in educational participation in rural and urban context. The focus of the present study is on higher education. Because higher education constitutes a very important institution in the context of a developing state, not only because it trains individuals and provides the foundation for an advanced society, but because it is the most important intellectual institution with widespread impact on culture, politics, and ideology.

It is also important to discuss primary and secondary education, as it provides the foundation for a further step to achieve higher educational and occupational goal. With the expansion of primary and secondary education, the scope of higher education can be broadened.
The process of expansion of schools, colleges and universities, curriculum construction and indeed the planned change in educational system is not only a major concern of developing academic systems, but can provide insights into the process, institutional adaptation, the politics of education and related issues. It is important to understand the position of different educational institutes, especially in a developing state like Orissa. Educational institutes are supposed to assist in the creation and specially the dissemination of knowledge in societies (Kamat, 1985; Chanana, 1988).

Thus discussing the history of all the three levels of education is important. Understanding the internal dynamics of primary, secondary and higher education as well as the broader structural and systemic aspects is equally significant since they are interdependent with each other. The purpose of dealing with historical context of education in Orissa with such details is to gain a clear idea on how the process of education has evolved since pre-colonial period and its reflection and impact on contemporary Orissan society. It also can provide an idea, how gender disparity in education gets shaped and articulated through various social forces.

In this chapter each level of education (primary, secondary and higher) in Orissa has been dealt separately, to have distinct ideas and more clarity, with a focus on both pre-independence and post-independence period.

4.2 Primary Education

Primary education contributes a lot in shaping educational structure of any society. It is the initial step and the gateway to enter into the higher educational sphere. Other stages of education cannot be discussed without referring to primary education.

4.2.1 Primary Education during Pre-independence Period

Orissa was merely a geographical entity till April 1936, because the state was merged with Madras, Bihar and Bengal. The heterogeneity in administration was reflected in the developmental map of the state. Central Orissa had an edge over other parts of the state in the matters relating to education. The English Missionaries laid the foundation of the
modern system of education in Orissa. The Cuttack Baptist Mission had established the first school on 1st June 1822 in Cuttack. Within one year the number of such schools increased to fifteen out of which three were in Cuttack. The rest of the schools were set up within a radius of three miles of Cuttack. There were two vernacular schools, one at Puri and the other at Cuttack till 1944. Afterwards the Government had set up seven more schools in Hariharpur, Mahanga, Bhadrak, Remuna, Balasore and Kendrapara. The strength of the students in these schools was 368. In 1854 the Cuttack Charity School was set up at Puri. As per Lord Auckland’s Minutes (1845-46), it was proposed to establish Zilla School1. By the year 1851 there were three Zilla Schools and 208 primary schools in Orissa. By 1866 there were 16 Anglo-vernacular, 61 Vernacular schools. During the decade 1866-76, a college, a medical school and a survey school were established. By the year 1884-85 the number of primary schools in Orissa was 9402, out of which 209 were upper primary schools and the rest were lower primary schools. The number of students there was 122,074. The number of high schools increased to nine by 1885, to which two more schools were further added in 1887. In South Orissa there was only one high school, at Chhatrapur established in 1885. In 1869 an intermediate College was opened at Berhampur with private initiative, which was subsequently named as Khalikote College (Mishra, 1987). This College at the moment is taken over by Government of Orissa. Now the Institute has gained the status of being an autonomous educational Institute.

But the demand for setting up a school for girls was put forth by the public only in 1871. A letter of Sri Abinash Chandra Chattopadhyaya, published in the ‘Utkal Dipika’ of September 23, 1871 reveals that the first girls’ school was started at Cuttack with private initiative. There was no separate school building. The classes were held in the residence of Sri Chattopadhyay. Education during that time was free for girls and they were not allowed to come to school alone. Women were appointed by the school authorities to escort the girls to the school. Only girls with upper

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1 Zilla School is referred here as the school, which is situated in the district, headquarters.
caste and class background were admitted. The 11th August 1887 issue of the Dipika published a letter of Sir John Samson Rout, Secretary of the girls' school. This letter reveals the concern of the people for female education, particularly of the Christians. The letter was an appeal to the people to provide financial support for the improvement of the school.

Girls were not encouraged to pursue education by their parents due to lack of female teachers. A letter published in 'Dipika' (18 January, 1908) states that the reconstituted executive Committee of the Ravenshaw Hindu Girls' school hoped that the number of girl students would increase with the appointment of female teachers. There was a proposal for upgrading the school to a high School in 1928. By that time Sailabala Das was the secretary of the management. She was trained in female education in England, this time when women's education was not widespread in India. Naturally the educated public endorsed faith on her for the development of girls' education. But the schools were not exclusively meant for girls. Boys up to the age of eight years were admitted along with girls. Learning Oriya was not imposed. The system of escorting girls to schools continued. The school authorities arranged horse drawn carriages for the transportation of girl students. Subjects like sewing and cooking were considered relevant for girls. But still the parents were not willing to send the girls to school. Ms Das had to convince the parents regarding the importance and desirability of female education (Nanda, 1960, Mishra 1987).

The later half of nineteenth century witnessed increase in the number of girls in the primary schools, which were mostly co-educational. In 1905 the total number of primary schools for girls was 259. The number of girls studying in these exclusive schools for girls was 6894. The number of girls in co-educational schools was 9009. There were four aided English medium schools managed by the American Baptist Missionaries. During 1902-07, eight model primary schools for girls were opened, two each in the four districts of Orissa. These model schools were set up with a motive to set examples for the aided schools. The report on the progress
of education in Orissa Division for the period ending 21st March 1907 stated that during the period 1902-07 there were more girls in primary schools meant for both boys and girls than in primary schools, exclusively for girls. The inadequacy of female teachers was a major factor restraining girls to take up education. In order to provide trained female teachers, the Christian Missionaries set up three training schools for female teachers. But this did not help in getting female teachers, because of the conventional idea, that women should not take up employment or move out of the house.

The Female Education Committee of 1914 proposed the following suggestions for development of female education in the province:

1. Separate schools for girls when the strength of girl students would be twenty in co-education schools;
2. Restrictions of male teachers in girls' schools;
3. Reservation of quarters for the lady teachers;
4. Provision of lower primary scholarships for meritorious girl students.

The committee had also the agenda to see the places where training classes of different grades could be set up with reasonable prospect of success. It was left by the committee that the number of inspectors and assistant inspectors should be increased. It also prepared a draft curriculum for use in girls' primary schools where learning of female stereotyped subjects like needlework, cooking first aid and the related subjects were emphasised. In a way the traditional role of girls was reinforced at school as an extended activities performed them at home.

In 1919, a temporary training class for Hindu women was opened at Cuttack, which proved to be successful. Steps were taken in 1925 to improve the training class. In 1926, a deputy inspector was appointed to be in charge of female education in the state. In 1927, a special scale of pay was sanctioned for trained matriculates in vernacular teacher's service. This hike of pay scale was to encourage the women to join the teaching service. The Primary Education Committee (1931) suggested that at the primary stage, co-education should be encouraged, with the assumption that girls would be better taught in co-educational institutions.
than in girls' schools. In view of the financial difficulties this argument seemed to be more acceptable to the government to encourage co-education at the lower primary and primary stages. The government stopped opening of separate schools for girls.

4.2.2. Post Independence Period and Development of Primary Education:

By the year 1947, the literacy rate among the female was not higher than two percent, and it was surprising that most of the girls were still in primary stage. In 1947-48 there were 192 primary schools for girls, with a total enrolment of 0.09 lakh. With the problem of wastage and stagnation the overall rate of women's education was very discouraging. The percentage of enrolment of girl students to total in this age group was only one percent. Thus compared to the overall picture of primary education in Orissa during 1947-48, women's education was lagging far behind. During 1947-48 there were 6814 primary schools, with 16529 teachers and an enrolment of 3,69,387 children. The primary schools in Orissa consisted of six classes – one pre-primary and five primary classes up to the year 1958. After those pre-primary classes were abolished, reducing the number of primary classes to five, basic education was adapted as the pattern of educational system at the primary level. But due to lack of funds, the programme of converting primary schools into basic pattern could not be implemented. The schools with five-year course are commonly designed as Upper Primary (UP) schools, and with three years course are called lower primary (LP) schools. Basic features were however introduced in all the Primary Schools, which cater to the needs of the children in the age group of 6-11 years.

4.2.3. Educational Development in Primary Stage During Plan Period

In the year 1948-49 schools of as many as 24 feudatory Eastern States Agency merged with Orissa. Thus the number of schools increased to 9801 with 445,623 students by 1950. During the Second Five Year Plan (1956 – 57) to (1960 – 61) efforts were made to set up adequate number of schools and to give sufficient incentive for enrolment of all children in
the age group of 6-14 years to achieve the constitutional commitment for universalisation of primary education. But still the target seems to be too high to be fulfilled within a short span of time, considering the state of education in Orissa, during that time.

During the Third Five Year Plan (1961-62 to 1965-66) special efforts were made to provide facilities for the education of girls at the primary stage. To encourage women's education in the state, some special schemes such as award of attendance scholarship, construction of quarters for women teachers, appointment and training of school mothers, organisation of condensed courses for adult women and refresher courses for women teachers, provision of sanitary facilities in primary schools were implemented during this plan period. In spite of all these efforts, the enrolment of girls had not been as encouraging as it was expected (Devi, 1984). The enrolment of girls was only 47.9 percent of total enrolment by the end of the Third Plan.

During the Fourth Plan (1969 - 70 to 1973 - 74) the efforts were multiplied and intensified, particularly special steps were taken to bring more girl students to schools. The main thrust was to enroll girl students in large numbers at different stages of education and to expand the educational institutions for girls at different stages. For fulfilling the target primary education was provided free of tuition fees. As a result of the exception of fees the expense was too high. However, the enrolment of girls was not proportionate to the expenditure incurred under that head. Besides, there were many villages in the sparsely populated areas of the state, where facilities for primary education were not readily available. For a clear picture of the prevailing situation of education, another survey was conducted in the year 1965-66. It was revealed that the result of all these efforts were not at all encouraging and further steps were to be taken for accelerating the speed of progress; specially for women's education in the state. At the end of the Fourth Plan (1973-74), it was however noticed that the increase of enrollment was only marginal. The enrolment rate was only 24% in the age group of 6-11 and 5% in the age

During the Fifth Plan period, i.e. 1974-75 to 1978-79 in spite of some special efforts and top priority given to primary education, studies have shown huge wastage and stagnation, which became the major obstacles. But still the pace of progress was accelerated both qualitatively and quantitatively. A good number of primary schools were established and various incentive measures were taken for promoting education of the weaker sections. The state plan aimed at an enrollment target of 78.3 per cent for the age group of 11-14 years. Accordingly a major portion of the outlay, amounting to Rs. 3036.60 lakhs (out of Rs. 4897.50 lakhs) was earmarked for the development of Elementary Education. The enrollment of girl students increased to 67 per cent during 1977-80.

The major focus during Sixth Plan (1980-81 to 1984-85) was the expansion of primary education among the girls to achieve the enrollment target of 80 per cent. However, by the end of the year 1983-84, the enrollment of girl students was 11.98 lakhs, which was 75.5 per cent of the total population of girls in the age group of 6 – 14 years.

During the Seventh Plan period (1985-86 to 1989-90) the number of Primary schools was 39,793 and the number of middle schools was 9,368. The total number of teachers in primary schools was 91,720 of which 69,144 were males, and 22,576 were females. By the end of the Seventh Plan the total enrollment at primary stage (Class I to V) was 3,555,000 of which 2079000 were boys and 1476000 were girls (Statistical Abstract, Orissa, 1996).

After 7th Plan, there was no five-year plan for two consecutive years i.e. 1990-91 and 1991-92, however the state had its annual planning during these years. During 1990-91 and 1991-92, the total number of primary schools was 40,293 and 41,204 respectively. The number of Primary school teachers subsequently in these two years was 93,992 and 98,108 respectively. As far as the enrollment is concerned for these two years the total enrollment at Primary stage was 3,611,000 and 3,654,000 respectively.
Eighth Plan Period (1992-93 to 1996-97) has witnessed remarkable changes compared to the previous plans. By the end of eighth plan (1996-97), the total number of Primary Schools was 65,552 of which 42,104 were formal and 23,448 were non-formal. (Economic Survey, Orissa 1999-2000). The number of primary school teachers by the end of the 8th plan was 134,488 for formal schools and 23,448 for non-formal schools. The number of students by the end of this plan period was 45.31 lakhs.

The ninth plan period (1997-98 to 2001-02) has now focused on accelerating the progress of universal primary education. However it is important to note that the number of primary schools, at both formal and non-formal levels is the same for both the years for 1996-97 and 1997-98. That means the proposed educational institutes have not been opened. But there is a difference in students’ enrollment between these two years, which was 45.31 lakhs in 1996-97, reached up to 45.91 lakhs in 1997-98. Many plans and programmes made during the 9th plan period are yet to be implemented.

The post-independence development in female education at primary level indicates a marked contrast with the pre-independence period. The Government mainly shouldered the responsibility of expanding women's education after independence. Private initiative was not absolutely lacking, but it was not to the extent as it was during the pre-independence days. Even there was considerable increase in the enrolment of girls in the primary schools during the three successive plans. But there was not appreciable change between the second and third plans. The enrolment rate did not increase as was expected. However, the increasing response of parents to educate girls was evident which was reflected in the changing pattern of enrolment.

Realising the importance of primary education as the strong foundation for the entire educational system, Government is trying to intensify the spread of universalisation of primary education. In this context, National Education Policy, constitutional directives and five-year-plans have been taken into consideration with much seriousness. It is now more than half a century, since India has obtained freedom. After the
introduction of National Education Policy 1986 and 1992, Black Board Operation programme is in full swing since 1990-91, with the co-operation of the Government of India. A number of facilities have been provided to primary schools with government initiative such as providing drinking water facilities, sports materials, books and juvenile literature, text books, books for teachers, audio-visual-materials and so on. Since 1988, September 5, all the primary school teachers have been accepted as government employees. The responsibility of government primary school has been vested on Panchayat Raj and Notified Area Council (N.A.C.). Some of the Primary Schools are running under the direct supervision of the state government. Apart from these, there are number of primary school functioning under the supervision of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Welfare Department. To implement certain changes made in National Education Policy of 1986 and 1992, at the same time, to improve the quality of the continuing education system in Orissa, State Government had given the responsibility to a committee headed by ex-educational director and vice-chancellor Prof. B. Das. The purpose was to modernise the existing education as well as qualitative improvement of the Primary Education in the state. The report was prepared in the year 1998-99. However, the suggestions and the required changes have not been taken into consideration and implemented till now.

The state of primary education in Orissa is still far from satisfaction. Plans, programmes and policies are mostly in papers and yet to be implemented to meet the practical needs of the students and teachers. Installation of tube wells, toilet facilities etc are very recent phenomena to be introduced at some of the primary schools in Orissa. Still now, permanent school building, drinking water facility, toilet facility and many other minimum facilities are not prevalent in many primary schools in Orissa. Super-cyclone has worsened the situation to a great extent. Though the state has received considerable attention from all over world in terms of donation and contribution to school resources, still it needs proper planning and much more to be done for the improvement in primary education in the state.
District Primary Education Programme (D.P.E.P.) was introduced in Orissa since 1996-97 to facilitate the process of primary education. It is a long-term programme of Government to universalise primary education. D.P.E.P. is a centrally sponsored plan with a fund-sharing pattern of 85:15 between the center and state. The objective is to universalise access and retention, to improve learning achievements and to reduce disparities among social groups. Orissa Primary Education Programme Authority (O.P.E.P.A.) has taken the initiative to implement D.P.E.P. in 8 (eight) districts with low literacy and backwardness, namely Bolangir, Dhenkanal, Gajapati, Kalahandi, Rayagada, Baragarh, Keonjhar and Sambalpur. The purpose is to extend primary education facilities to all children with special emphasis on SC, ST and Girl students. Another objective was to control and reduce drop out rates. There was a proposal to extend D.P.E.P. to eight more districts, namely Nuapara, Koraput, Nawarangapur, Malkanagiri, Boud, Kandhamala, Sonepur and Mayurbhanja, with funding from the Department of International Development (D.F.I.D.); U.K. Government of India is considering this proposal on priority basis. (Economic Survey, Orissa, 1999-2000). Steps taken by an institutional way have not been sufficient to materialise this long cherished dream. That is the reason non-institutional steps have been introduced to intensify the process, though the outcome is yet to be examined.

It was planned to give more focus on the children belonging to 6-14 age group to universalise primary education. Majority of children in this age group are dropped out of the school or some of them have never come to the school, because they are busy fulfilling the financial needs of their families. For such categories non-institutional education system has been introduced with different timings to suit their conveniences.

Non-Formal Education (N.F.E.) is one of the methods to materialise universal primary education in a non-institutional way. It is a centrally sponsored plan scheme, in operation in the state to supplement the formal stream of primary and upper primary Education. The objective is to impart minimum level of learning and to create awareness among the children of 6-14 age group. Special emphasis is given on girl children and children of
backward castes. Working children and children from the areas where there is no primary schools has also been included in this programme.

At the moment there are altogether 24,400 non-institutional education centers out of which 8,000 are for boys and 14,000 for girls. Rest of the institutions is for adults. These centers are run both through Government and non-government organisations. Now 198 Non-government organisations (N.G.Os) are working for such non-institutional education in the state (Mohanty, 2000).

Considering the facts and figures, no doubt, the number of educational institutes has increased considerably at primary level. However, universalisation of primary education is far from reality. The financial support is coming from both government and non-government sources. Whatever financial grant is released from central government, the state government is not able to spend it in a proper way and the grant is spent in other directions, so that primary schools have been deprived of the facilities due to them. For rapid spread of primary education, UNESCO and UNICEF are also providing grants in huge amount. Both Center and State are also spending a lot of this money, however the success rate is very low. Diversified plans and programmes have been implemented. But have not been implemented for the upliftment of primary education in the state considering the effort of planning, this success rate for the outcome and implementation is not remarkable because of lack of co-operation and involvement. The concerned authority is indifferent and aloof of the existing educational programme at the primary level because of the monopoly of spending money. Without any clear-cut objective, the present state of education in Orissa is deteriorating. Since more than half a century of independence, the success rate is not up to the mark, compared to the expenses incurred so far. The reality is far from the statistical facts, figures and indicators. No body questions the existing system – the way it operates, the way it gets manifested with the complex interactions within a stratified society.
4.3. Secondary Education

Secondary education brings the linkages between primary and higher education. Students decide their choice of disciplines and future employment opportunities during this stage, which is considered to be the prior stage to higher learning.

4.3.1 Secondary Education in Orissa during Pre-independence Period

Before Orissa became a separate province the state of secondary education was not very encouraging. In 1916, when Bombay had a university for women, girls’ education in Orissa was only in the primary stage. Education committee during that period did not give much importance on secondary education for girls. There were total five middle vernacular schools. Cuttack, Puri, Balasore had three Middle English Schools and one high school for girls at Cuttack. Subsequently it was named as Ravenshaw Girls’ High School. As on 31st March 1917, it had 45 students in the high school classes, 112 students in the middle and primary classes. However, this school was not free from imparting gender-stereotyped subjects, traditionally assumed to be useful for girls. Needlework, first aid, home keeping and cooking were compulsory in the matriculation classes and cooking class was made popular among the girls.

4.3.2 Secondary Education during Post-Independence Period

With the expansion of primary education, the basis of secondary education was also broadened. It is mentioned in the Third Educational Survey, Orissa, that, the establishment of the Utkal University in Orissa in 1943 increased the number of graduates and contributed in the development of secondary education. Within a few years, more and more qualified teachers began to be available for secondary education/schools. There was one Training College to impart necessary training to secondary school teachers. In the wake of the independence, the state had only 106 High Schools and 286 middle Schools, with 1,281 teachers and 61,136 students and the government incurred expenditure of Rs. 24.89 lakhs (Third Educational Survey, Orissa 1978, P.24).
By the year 1950-51 there were 172 high schools and 542 middle schools with student strength of 51,323 and 53,750 respectively. The recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission, 1952-53 brought about changes in the structure and curriculum of secondary schools. The Board of Secondary Education was set up in 1955-56 by an Act of the Legislative Assembly. During the second plan period, seven high schools were upgraded to higher secondary schools. Due to lack of trained and qualified teachers and inadequacy of fund, the plan was not successful as expected.

But the overall picture of women's education at secondary level was far from satisfactory. Before independence, secondary education for girls was severely affected with a higher rate of wastage and dropout. By 1947-48, there were only 7 girls' High schools with an enrolment of 0.01 lakhs, which was only 0.2 percent of the total population in this age group. During the post independence period considering the urgency and need for women's education, various committees were formed by the government of India. These committees examined the problems of education. The National Committee on Women's Education (1958-59) under the Chairpersonship of Mrs. Durgabai Deshmukh, the National Council of Women's Education under the chairpersonship of Smt. Hansa Mehta, and the Bhaktavatsalam Committee examined the problems of women's education and suggested some important measures for the expansion of women's education at various levels.

The number of girls high schools rose to 92 with an enrollment of 0.11 lakhs, during the third plan. Many schools could not be upgraded and meritorious students were not attracted to such experimental schools recommended by Kothari Commission (1964-66). On account of all these problems, the state government decided to drop the idea of expanding these higher secondary schools (Mohanty, 1990).

4.3.3. Secondary Education during Plan period

By the end of First Plan (1955-56), the number of middle and high schools had increased to 732 and 276 with pupil's strength of 64,239 and 72,456 respectively. During the 2nd plan (1956-57 - 1960-61), government accepted the policy of consolidation and improvement of standards.
Although teachers' training facilities increased, there were a large number of untrained teachers, which led to establishment of new training institutions. By the end of the second plan, the number of high schools for girls was 34 and one higher secondary school for girls was also opened. It is interesting to observe that the ratio of girls to boys during this period was 1:10 in the high school stage. In the Third Education Survey, it is indicated, "by the year 1960-62, the number of high schools increased to 452 including 5 senior basic, and post basic schools and that of middle schools, to 1,406 with 195,545 and 10,165 teachers and the state incurred an expenditure of Rs. 138.84 lakhs" (Third Educational Survey, 1978 p.24).

The number of training colleges increased from 4 to 5 and the number of secondary schools increased from 67 to 122. The number of middle and high schools increased to 3,881 and 1,438 respectively by the end of the 4th Plan, in 1973. By the end of 5th plan (1977-78) the total number of Middle English schools and high schools were 7,150 and 2,169 respectively. High schools were opened to bridge the existing gap between boys' and girls' education. To encourage and improve the state of women's education, all the girl students were allowed half-fee concessions in high schools. Considering the prevailing need the central government provided financial assistance for the expansion of girl's education during this plan period.

The main objective of the Sixth Plan (1980-81 – 1984-85) was to improve the quality of the existing educational facilities instead of quantitative expansion of such education. By the year 1978-79, the number of high schools for girls went up to 233 with an enrolment of 0.69 lakhs. The percentage of enrolment of girl students in secondary schools was very depressing, as it was only 0.2 percent during 1947-48 and 8.1 percent of the total enrolment during 1978-79. By the end of the year 1983-84, the enrolment of girl students in secondary schools rose to 0.80 lakhs, which cannot be considered as a significant change.

The major problem was that the girls' schools were most ineffectively started and managed. As a result, teaching was neither
productive nor effective. It could not attract either students, or teachers. Thus a century of survey reveals that women's education in the state flourished at a snail's pace for about eight decades beginning with the setting up of the Hindu Girls' Schools.

Before 1982, the secondary stage of education comprised of classes eight to eleven. Since 1982, the number of classes included in secondary education is eight to ten. It falls under the academic control of the board of secondary education, Orissa. The higher secondary stage of education (+2) is under the academic control of the Council of Higher Secondary Education. Due to infrastructure limitation and long historical tradition in Orissa, most of the higher secondary classes remain attached to general colleges.

The focus of the 7th plan period (1985-86 – 1989-90) was also on both qualitative and quantitative expansion of educational facilities. By the end of the 7th plan, the number of schools at secondary level was 4,311 and the number of teachers was 38,725 out of which 32,148 were male and 6,575 were female. The figure shows a wide disparity in male and female teachers' recruitment. As far as enrollment is concerned, there was a total enrollment of 770,007 out of which 511,714 were boys and 255,293 were girls during the end of the 7th plan. The figures itself show a wide disparity between boys' and girls' enrollments. During 1990-91 and 1991-92 annual plan, the number of institutions was increased to 4,475 and 4,495 respectively. During these years, the total number of teachers was 39,873 and 40,020 respectively. The total number of students for the year 1990-91 was 773,031 out of which 5,15,527 were boys and 257,504 were girls. For the year 1991-92 the total enrollment was 778,998 out of which 517,654 were boys and 261,344 were girls.

Eighth Plan (1992-93 – 1996-97) did not witness drastic changes in terms of number of schools, students and teachers. Though there was steady growth, the growth rate was not very high. By the end of the 8th plan the total number of high schools, number of students and number of teachers were 5,267, 866,000 and 50,218 respectively.
The objective of the 9th Plan (1997-98 - 2001-02) was also the growth and development of education at secondary level. By the end of 1997-98, the total number of high schools, the number of students and number of teachers were 6,072, 881,000 and 51,436 respectively.

Analysing the above figures, it becomes clear that the number of high schools, students and teachers have gone up from 4,499; 7.79 lakhs and 40,020 in 1991-92 to 6,072; 10.31 lakh and 51,436 by 1998-98 showing an increase of 35%, 32% and 29% respectively – (Economic Survey 1990 – 2000). Teacher-pupil ratio, which was 1:19.46 in 1991-92, has risen to 1:28.04 during 1998-99. The drop out rate in high school stage, which was 72.5% in 1997-98, has remained at the same level in 1998-99. The drop out rate in fact is alarming, considering the present state of education in Orissa. Apart from high schools, there are twenty 'madrasas' and 85 Sanskrit Toles, which also provide secondary education in the state. There are 56 Kendriya Vidyalayas and independent schools, as well as 13 Navodaya Vidyalayas providing secondary education in Orissa (Economic Survey, Orissa, 1999 – 2000).

The Board of Secondary Education (B.S.E.), Orissa every year, conducts high School Certificate (H.S.C.) Examination. The responsibility of the B.S.E. is also to look after the academic standard of the high schools. Annexure-VI gives a picture of the results of High School Certificate Examinations in the State for the year 1988-89 to 1998-99. The figure shows, there is not much of variation in all these years in terms of percentage of success. The percentage of successful students was 46.71 for the year 1988-89 which has become 45.90 in 1997-98. It shows a lower rate of success among the students appeared for the H.S.C. Examination. For the year 1998-99, the percentage of success was 48.20 excluding the figures for supplementary examination. The results of H.S.C. examination in Orissa, shows a depressing picture at Secondary Education Level. The percentage of success during last 10 years or more shows that more than 50% of students who appear at the H.S.C. Examination are unsuccessful. Subsequently, the enrollment rate in college education also becomes lower.
During the current plan period, considering the lower growth of secondary education, government of Orissa has decided to extend the coverage of secondary education to the Gram Panchayat level. It is planned to give adequate emphasis on girls' education and guidelines have been formulated for up-gradation, recognition and permission or grant-in-aid to high schools. Measures have been taken to introduce, profession-oriented-courses, improve science education, and generate environment awareness among the students at Secondary level of education.

4.4. Higher education

Higher education is an advanced stage of learning in educational structure. The academic and intellectual standard of any society gets shaped and reflected through the institution of higher education.

4.4.1 Higher Education in Orissa during Pre-independence Period.

The Women's Education Committee in 1914, recommended college education for Girls, by opening intermediate classes in the girls school at Cuttack, if the number of girls was minimum ten. It also recommended consideration for setting up of a separate girls college if the number of girls rose to twenty. Subsequently in 1915-16 intermediate classes were opened in Ravenshaw Girls' School with only eight girl students. Two girls were sent up for examination out of which only one girl passed. Later on 5 girls could manage to take admission in Ravenshaw College by setting a landmark in the history of education by joining the college for boys.

4.4.2 Higher Education during Post Independence Period

At the time of formation of Orissa in 1936, as a separate state there were only 5 colleges. Out of which 4 were arts and science colleges and one teacher's training college. Ravenshaw College was the only college having post-graduate teaching in English. During 1947-48, there were 11 arts and science colleges and one medical College affiliated to Utkal University with an enrolment of 3,885 students, out of which 219 were girls. The girl students constitute only 5.64 percent of the total enrolment. During the post-independence period Radhakrishnan Commission (1948)
was formed, which influenced the development of higher education. Before that in the year 1943, Utkal University was established, and higher education started expanding. As a result of the impact of Radhakrishnan Commission, there was a growing demand for higher education in the state. The number of colleges increased to 14 including four Intermediate Colleges and one women's college with an enrolment of 6,671 at the beginning of the First Plan period (1951-52). After the matriculation examination, the Intermediate College provides two-year courses and the degree colleges provide three-year courses. Post graduate courses for M.A. and M.Sc. degrees over a period of two academic years after graduation.

Establishment of Utkal University brought a drastic transformation in the field of higher education in Orissa. Setting up one University prior to independence was no doubt a great achievement. Though the University was accepted formally on 30th June 1943, in Orissa Legislative Assembly it was inaugurated on August 2nd and in the same year since November 27 it started functioning as an autonomous. November 27 is considered to be the university foundation day, the most important one in the history of higher education of Orissa. Chronologically this is the 17th University established in India. The existing campus of the University was inaugurated by the then President of India Dr. Radhakrishnan, on 2nd January 1963. Since, then the campus was named as Vani Vihar (Das, 1993).

4.4.3 State of Higher Education during Plan Period

All the colleges were affiliated to the Utkal University, which had the status of an examining body. One training college at Angul, one engineering college at Burla and some general colleges for intermediate students were opened in different parts of the state during first and second plan period. The number of colleges increased to 36 with an enrolment of 12,977 boys and 1,792 girls. During the Third Plan, 26 general colleges, one engineering college at Rourkela (REC), one medical college at Berhampur, another medical college at Burla in Sambalpur district and one Regional College of Education at Bhubaneswar were started (Mohanty,
The number of colleges by the end of Third plan 1965-66 was 72 with an enrolment of 37,190. With the introduction of 3 years degree course in the state, all the existing intermediate Colleges were upgraded to Degree colleges, during the Third Plan period.

With the recommendation of the Kothari Commission (1964-66), three more women's colleges were opened, during the Third Plan. Thus the total number of women's colleges rose to 7. The main objective of the Fourth Plan was the larger participation of the girl students in colleges. They were given half fee concession for better participation. The number of women's colleges was 8 with an enrolment of 8910 women students by the end of Fourth Five Year Plan. The percentage of enrolment of women students to total population in the age group of (17-22) was only 0.4 percent during the First Plan, while it was only 2 percent by the end of the Fourth Plan.

This is the general overview of higher education in Orissa. Women's participation in higher education is even more disappointing. During 1947-48, there was only one college for women. Towards 1958-59 some important steps were taken with the recommendation of different committees. (Four arts and Science colleges for women were opened in Orissa, during 1960.)

In the year, 1963, the Government of Orissa appointed a Committee headed by Dr. Parija, the then vice-chancellor of Utkal University. The purpose was to examine the need for more Universities in Orissa. During 1966-67, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Committee, two more universities in Berhampur and Sambalpur were established. These two universities had 10 and 11 post-graduate teaching departments respectively, established on the 1st January and 4th January 1967 respectively. The emergence of these two universities had great influence in higher education in Orissa. But the improvement was not up to the level of satisfaction, which was expected. Consolidation of the existing institutions, expansion of facilities for part-time education, correspondence courses, development of research facilities, introduction
of semester system and improvement of women's education on the whole, were concentrated during the Fifth Plan.

During Fifth Plan period (1974-75 to 1977-78) period, in spite of the extra efforts to expand women's higher education, the participation rate was 3.1 percent of the total population in the age group of 17-22 years. During this period two more women's colleges, one at Baripada and another at Dhenkanal, were established. The total number of women's colleges were 13 with an enrolment of 1,7721 students, by the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan. The main objective of the Sixth Plan (1980-81 to 1984-85) was to improve the quality of higher education, rather than quantitative expansion (Mishra, 1987). The enrolment of women students in higher education was 35,787 by the end of the year 1983,84. But the increase of educational institutions for girls did not contribute in encouraging satisfactory number of girls to take up higher education. This was more so in the backward districts, where the prevailing social prejudices did not encourage the girls to pursue institutional education (Report of Directorate of Elementary Education, 1980-89).

One of the major achievements during the 6th Plan period was the establishment of another university in Puri on 7th January 1981, named as Jagannath Sanskrit University. This was set up after a gap of more than 14 years and it was in great demand.

The Seventh Plan (1985-86 to 1989-90) aimed at spreading higher education at different levels. By the end of the Plan Period (1989-90), the total number of colleges for general education was 459, out of which, 409 were co-education colleges and 50 were women's colleges. The total number of enrolment during this time was 263,208 out of which 202,012 were boys and 61,196 were girls. Boys constitute 76.75% of the total enrolment at Higher Education level, whereas the girls' enrolment rate was only 23.25%. This figure shows a wide disparity between boys and girls' enrolment rate at higher education level. The total number of teachers in different general colleges in Orissa was 10,949.

During Annual Plan 1990-91, the total number of colleges for general education was 516 out of which 454 were co-educational colleges.
and 62 were women colleges. The total enrollment during this period was 268,315 in different colleges of Orissa, out of which 62,776 were girls and 205,539 were boys. The rate of enrollment for boys and girls was 76.60% and 23.40% respectively. During 1991-92 Annual Plan, the total number of colleges increased from 516 to 542, out of which 475 were co-educational colleges and 67 colleges were for women. As far as the enrollment is concerned, there was a total enrolment of 275,210 students in different general colleges out of which 210,974 were boys and 64,236 were girls. The enrollment rate for boys and girls was 76.66% and 23.34% respectively. The figure shows a very minor improvement in girls' enrolment rate compared to the figure shown during the end of the 7th plan.

The focus of the 8th Plan (1992-93 to 1996-97) was to protect the system of higher education from degradation. The objective was to consolidate and expand the facilities in the existing educational institutions. By the end of the 8th Plan Period (1996-1997) the total number of colleges in the state was 967; the number of students was 474,000 and the number of teachers was 16,610.

By the end of 1995-96, the enrolment rate for boys and girls in different colleges was 74.95% and 25.05% respectively. No doubt the figure shows slight increase in the enrolment ratio between boys and girls during these years. But gender disparity remains to be high.

The major achievement during the 9th plan is the establishment of three more universities after a gap of 17 years. These universities are North Orissa University, Baripada, established on 13th July 1998; Fakir Mohan University, Balasore, established on 11th July 1999; Culture University, Bhubaneswar, established on 4th January 2000. Table No. 4.1 provides the list of Universities in Orissa with dates of establishments in chronological order.
Table No. – 4.1

List of Universities of Orissa with Dates of Establishment in Chronological Order.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the University</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date of Establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utkal University</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>27.11.1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (O.U.A.T.)</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>24.08.1962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berhampur University</td>
<td>Berhampur</td>
<td>01.01.1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sambalpur University</td>
<td>Sambalpur</td>
<td>01.01.1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jagannath Sanskrit University</td>
<td>Puri</td>
<td>17.07.1981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Orissa University</td>
<td>Baripada</td>
<td>13.07.1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phakir Mohan University</td>
<td>Balasore</td>
<td>11.07.1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture University, Orissa.</td>
<td>Bhubaneswar</td>
<td>04.01.2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: University Records

The state at the moment has eight universities and 1034 general colleges. By the end of 1998-99, there were 20 engineering colleges with an intake capacity of 4000 students and 25 engineering schools and polytechnic institutes with an intake capacity of 3600 students. In the field of medical education, the state has 3 medical colleges one dental college, one pharmacy college, five ayurvedic colleges, six homeopathy colleges and one nursing college.

Literacy and overall education in Orissa has come a long way. Looking back to the history, we know that in 1951 the overall literacy rate was only 15.8%, which was 4.5% for females. As per 1991 census figure, the overall literacy rate has increased to 49.1% and for females it is only 34.7%. The literacy rate for S.C and S.T. population is even lower, which is 36.8% and 22.3% respectively. The overall literacy rate reminds us that more than half the people of Orissa are still illiterate.

4.5 Women’s Education in Orissa: The past and the emerging issues

The historical analysis with minute details has revealed a number of problems pertaining to girls’ education in Orissa. The idea of providing such detail information is because history can be envisioned as a science—a search for truth. The purpose of historical analysis is not necessarily meant for glorifying the past; rather it contributes in understanding, where the problem lies, based on the previous experiences. This section aims at
providing an overview of issues related to women's education in Orissa, based on the historical analysis.

Despite the rapid participation of women at various levels of employment in non-traditional areas, educational status has not changed much. During the nineteenth century when education for women was introduced, families permitted girls only when the content of the curriculum and method of teaching was not regarded as threatening to the existing power relations and the patriarchal structure of society (Karlekar, 1987). Education among the girls, even during those times is considered to be a requirement for marriage or a gap filling activity up to marriage (Ahmed, 1979, Karlekar, 1983 and 1987; Desai and Krishna Raj, 1987).

The expansion of educational institutions did not increase the number of students. Parents were reluctant to send their children to school due to the fear of conversion to Christianity and deportation to England. Such a society where Western education for boys was not widely permitted, the possibility of educating girls was beyond imagination. The societal values prevailing in Orissa society prescribed the role of women to be the preserver of traditional values and serve the parents till the marriage and the in-laws after marriage. Child marriage was widely prevalent. A girl was given in marriage when she was ten years old. Even marriage of girls below ten years was not uncommon. The choice of the girl and the age of husband were least considered by the parents. Naturally, girls were widowed at a very early age. A widow would either immolate herself in the funeral pyre of the husband or live socially ostracised. The role appropriate for women was procreation and nurture of children. Education for women was not allowed. The first half-century of British rule in Orissa witnessed no development in the socio-cultural field. During the latter part of the 19th century an unparallel cultural resurgence was witnessed in Orissa giving glances of hopes and expectations. This cultural awakening co-existed with the coming up of middle class intelligentsia who were exposed to Western education. The societal transformation brought about in the Orissa society during this period was largely due to the effort of these educated elites. In 1865,
Gourishankar Ray, Bhagirathi Sathia, Bichitrananda Das and some other educated persons set up the Cuttack printing Company. ‘Utkal Dipika’ was published from this press, which happened to be the first newspaper in the state. The news media helped to some extent to spread women’s education in Orissa. But still it was only catering to the needs to the privileged groups of the society.

Women’s education in Orissa is far from satisfactory at all levels. It is already more than half a century, since Orissa is declared as a separate state. But still the number of girls who attend schools is very less, compared to the boys. Even among those girls, who do attend school, there are high rates of wastage and stagnation. The question always comes to mind, for which there is no satisfactory answer, that is why the level of education is so low in general and in particular women’s education. What are the basic problems with the girl children and adult women? The reason is definitely a mixture of economic and cultural factors. According to the Report of UNICEF (1991) two principal reasons that deny girl’s access to education in Orissa as elsewhere are poverty (which forces children to work) and traditional belief that education is of little use to girls whose only destiny is marriage and motherhood and child care responsibilities from a very young age in order to release their mothers for remunerative work. It is a fact that Oriya society is extremely patriarchal. From birth, the girl child is considered as a burden, though she spends a great deal of time in cooking, cleaning, looking after younger siblings, fetching water etc. Boys are always preferred in all walks of life. In rural areas, especially in the districts of Koraput, Kalahandi and Sundergarh, people do not feel it is necessary to send a girl to school, with the fear of impending troubles, as a young girl goes to school.

This is in brief the picture of rural Orissa. The same practice goes on in some parts of urban Orissa also. Apart from this, there are many other factors that act as major obstacles in the progress of women’s education.

One of the greatest drawbacks of the poor educational status of Orissa women is that they are discouraged from taking any initiative for
their own career. This is mainly because of the confined attitude, as well as intolerance of the existing patriarchal structure of the society. As a consequence, there is absolutely no change in attitude, leading towards more confinement. Even at higher educational levels especially post graduation level, girls are always encouraged to select subjects, like Oriya and Sanskrit which is in a very neglected and morbid condition. The outlook of literature students is too limited and with regard to job prospect it is insufficient for any career except being a traditional language teacher.

There is no standard book on methods of teaching language. Language teaching is absolutely neglected, the subject which is taken mainly by girls starting from primary to the post graduation levels. It is important to introduce the new methodology, new technique new tools, and aids etc. for the fulfillment of women's education that has been suffering for decades, without proper scope for learning. The curricular design and syllabi in all levels of learning require re-orientation which is not supposed to suit the needs of the existing patriarchal structure of society in Orissa.

The structures of textbooks are not properly planned, which is an essential aspect of learning. Structuralist like Piaget is of opinion that structure, which is an outcome of culture and philosophy of a race, has an inevitable role to shape one's own education and control the knowledge (Piaget, 1952). Hence, structures need to be analysed, selected and graded. But the structural selection of the textbook is mainly male oriented in Orissa. The pictures, the titles and the courses of many textbooks have excluded the gender aspect; if they include women they perpetuate the image of a subordinate person (Kalia; 1979,1980). In Orissa the curriculum for different courses has undergone no change for years together even in the post-independence period although several committees and commission at the national as well as state level have highlighted for rapid change of curriculum.

Women's education in Orissa thus faces a number of social, cultural, economic and psychological barriers. Societal expectations
reflect a traditional bias, the ideal women being one, who is loyal, faithful, passive, submissive, self-sacrificing. The institution of marriage defines and circumscribes the life of a woman as a wife, a mother, and a homemaker. Any other work that a woman does, receives little weightage. Increasing malnutrition and repeated pregnancies makes her life expendable. She fulfills her main role through bearing children, particularly sons. This social practice is reinforced by the general lack of employable skills in women, on account of their low literacy and lack of training. Cultural and religious practices also play a dominating role for deteriorating the status of women. The resultant low self-image is so internalised, it inhibits self-motivation for learning on the part of most women (Chanana, 2001). Also with acute poverty, the poor cannot see how sending their daughters to school can change their existential reality. Girls are expected to help with housework and with the care of younger siblings. At the age of seven or eight, girls are generally considered to be old enough for housework and childcare. Consequently they are withdrawn from schools earlier than their brothers, who may be allowed to continue until a little later, when they are considered old enough to help their fathers. Further childbirth and other events that increase housework affect the attendance of girls, who may have managed to survive at school.

Even when the girls enroll in school, the scheme of education seems to reinforce their subordination. The existing system of education, thus reproduces, not only the social class power structure, but also the prevailing gender disparities.
District Map of Orissa

N

CHHATTISGARH

JHARKHAND

WEST BENGAL

BAY OF BENGAL

ANDHRA PRADESH

Bhubaneswar

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