CHAPTER : III

THE EDUCATIONAL IMPACT OF SATYABADI SCHOOL IN THE SOCIO-CULTURAL HISTORY OF ORISSA
The nineteenth century saw an awakening in Indian society. That awakening was basically the outcome of the impact of Western civilization upon the Indian society and the English educated elite was its spearhead. The educated elite of Orissa like the elite elsewhere in India, sought to reform the social life through such measures as promotion of education, upliftment and emancipation of women. They were also influenced and inspired by social reform movements in other parts of India. Among them the most prominent person was Pandit Gopabandhu Das, the greatest leader and maker of modern Orissa.

Gopabandhu firmly believed in the ideal of plain living and high thinking and wanted to start a school on the lines of the old Gurukula. He had been greatly impressed by the work of the Deccan Education Society under the leadership of Gopal Krishna Gokhale and wanted to form a Universal Education League on similar lines in Orissa. Then the Satyabadi School came into being.

He has expressed his views on education thus: "The chief aim of education is to fulfil the national needs and aspirations. It should be based on the history and culture of the nation ... Each nation has an individuality of its own. That individuality manifests in its history. As long as this individuality is preserved, nation remains alive. Education is the best means to preserve the individuality of the nation. Hence education is different for different nations". Accordingly a national system of education should reflect the national spirit, temperament and the needs of the nation.
Gopabandhu wanted a society free from exploitation where people have natural disinclination to live on the labour of their fellowmen. Education, he believed, would go a long way in cultivating such an attitude of mind and hence his emphasis on vocational and manual activity as an integral part of education. Long before Gandhiji, Gopabandhu had put it into practice in his 'Satyabadi School'.

For a nation to survive, society to live healthy life, people have to cultivate physical strength. Gopabandhu realised "unless some immediate measure is taken for cultivation of physical strength of the people, nobody would be surprised, if this nation becomes completely dull and inactive and ultimately disappears from the earth." Independent thought, in Gopabandhu's view, is the source of all progress in the society, "Natural potentialities of the human individual are developed under the influence of education. Independent thinking is natural to man and is his supreme possession. This is the very essence of his humanity." The system of education, according to him, should be such as to allow for the full play of human personality and cultivate in the pupil a sense of human dignity. Development of human mind and spirit and the building of the character of the individual through self-discipline are what education basically aims at.

The primary purpose of education is the harmonious development of human life. Service to man is the only path to have real moral education. He hoped to restore Dharma, the moral values into social life through education. He himself founded the Satyabadi School to demonstrate the type of education the country needs and asked the Government to encourage education. He declared in the Bihar and Orissa
Legislative Council, "Education of the people is a duty of the State." He warns his countrymen, "Let us first perform our duties. Let us observe Dharma in all walks of life. Dharma, no doubt, will save us." Performance of one's own duty or swadharma serves as an integrating principle of society and maintains a healthy social order.

Gopabandhu's educational interest was not confined to the Satyabadi School. He wanted educational development of Orissa as a whole. However, he was conscious that Oriyas being poor by and large would not be able to donate substantial amounts for the purpose. So he started a fund called "The Orissa Education Fund", or "one Pice Fund". Each person was to pay one pice only for the cause of educational upliftment.

The Satyabadi School is not a local, communal or sectarian institution in respect of its ideals, form and management; its basic ideal is to impart liberal education to the community at large. This is the beginning of a comprehensive educational drive for which the leaders of Orissa have been preparing for a long time. Their idea is to build up a series of institutions of this type and it is only one of the series. Through these institutions he wanted to preach the message of nationalism and moral idealism and train up a generation of patriotic and selfless youngmen who would brave every hardship to free the country from bondage and foreign domination.

The Satyabadi School constitutes a glorious chapter in the annals of educational history of Orissa. The Satyabadi system of education stood for a cultural, moral and political renaissance. The shape and system of education as conceived in this School primarily aimed at building men in the true sense of
the term. Pandit Gopabandhu clearly visualised that self-reliance was the primary need for making life independent in the society.

The education imparted at the Satyabadi School had a speciality in as much as it aimed at and worked for making the social life healthy coherent and strong by inculcating noble thoughts and ideas in the society along with the spread of education.6

Some of the Special Feature of the Institution
The Open Air System:

The novel feature which this School possessed and with which it had favourably impressed high authorities was, as has already been indicated, its open air system. About the open air system Pandit Gopabandhu wrote: "Throughout the ages, the Indian thinkers had regarded Nature as the source of all holy inspirations. Nature to them was neither inert nor lifeless. It was full of life and was animated with a supreme power. Through their close identification with Nature they experienced individual soul in the universal soul and universal soul in the individual soul." 7 Gopabandhu believed as did Rabindranath that for an individual to achieve a truly integrated personality education ought to develop in him a sense of unity with all Nature and all life. Education of Gopabandhu's conception, in fact, takes into account three aspects of human life - the man, the nation and the universal humanity. The Honourable Mr. J. G. Jennings, M.A., Director of Public Instructions, Bihar and Orissa visited the Satyabadi School in 1915. During his first visit he opined: "I found the classes being held under the trees in the garden adjoining the School grounds. The garden is extremely beautiful, and the trees shady. During the cool
Sir Edward Gait
Governor of Bihar and Orissa during his visit to Satyabadi School in 1918

Front Row: from right; turbaned Gopabandhu, Utkal Gaurab Madhusudan, Lt. Governor Bihar and Orissa Sir Edward Gait.

Back Row: extreme left; Nilakantha wearing university convocation Gown.
Photograph of the table and chair of Satyabadi Vanavidyalaya

The Satyabadi School hostel
weather this open air teaching has much to be said on its favour. Dr. A. Lancaster, M.D. (London) on Special duty for Tuberculosis Enquiry, Indian Research Fund Association, highly appreciated the open air system during his visit to the school. Mr. W. V. Duke, Inspector of Schools, observed in his remarks: "It was delightful visiting classes out of doors under the thick shade of many trees instead of in stuffy class rooms. There can be no doubt that the Indian cold weather is eminently suited to such out of door teaching. But on the other hand, in very few places does one find such natural advantages as are found in Satyabadi. The boys are provided with mats to sit on, and low sloping desks to write on. The black-boards were hung on convenient tree trunks, as was also the routine card of each class. There is no want of space here and the classes are so far apart that no class can be disturbed by another. There was also no glare owing to the splendid protection afforded by the groves. A slight shower of rain which fell while I was visiting the classes, did not even penetrate to us." The great persons like Mr. F. P. Dixon, District Magistrate, Puri, Sir K. G. Gupta, Justice Sir Asutosh Mookherjee and Sir Edward Gait, Lieutenant Governor, Bihar and Orissa also highly appreciated the Satyabadi system of education.

**Seats:**

The use of benches was almost dispensed with. The boys sat on mats spread on the ground, as they generally did at home and low sloping desks were placed before them. The open mindedness and liberal spirit of the Departmental authorities were to be thanked as they had sanctioned this old system not only in this school but also were giving it a trial in primary schools where new educational ideas had to be implemented first
on experimental basis. The advantages of this system over the now prevailing system of bench seats are obvious in the case of Indian students.

**School Hour:**

The time-table of the school was well arranged and punctuality was insisted upon. The School started from 10:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. In the Summer months (March, April and May) the classes were held twice a day i.e., from 6:00 A.M. to 9:00 A.M. in the morning and 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. in the afternoon. Each day of the School consisted of seven periods.

**Hostel and Messing:**

The teachers of the Satyabadi School did not consider themselves as mere pedagogues and they were not satisfied with mere completion of course or preparation of candidates for University examinations. It was a residential system and it was compulsory for all students and teachers to stay in the hostel. The Head Master regarded himself as the headman in the family of teachers and students and the young teachers were like elder brothers who were anxious to share the joys and sorrows of the young students in their charge. The students were made to get up very early in the morning and after their morning ablutions there was a prayer meeting where a teacher explained the significance of prayer and some hymns were recited. The students used to go in two batches to the Dining Hall. The boys upto the age of fourteen used to go first to the Dining Hall and took their food at 8:45 A.M. in the morning and the senior batch used to go at 9:15 A.M. Between 9:45 A.M. and 10:20 A.M. students were made to go to the Common Room to see the News papers. The hostel was also well-arranged on a novel plan. Gudakhu, Betel, Bidi, Bhang and other intoxicants were strictly
prohibited. No one was allowed to indulge in idle indoor pastimes like playing cards and dice etc.

The hostel was divided into different blocks and each block had been placed in charge of a block-teacher. There was also a student monitor in each block. The Mess charges per month were Rs.3.75 paise and the room rent was Re.0.50 per month. The Mess was being democratically managed and there was a Board of Management formed by students by election. This Board comprised of 45 members of whom three volunteers per day used to do the marketing for the Mess. The Mess Board used to select the President and one Secretary from amongst the teachers residing in the hostel. The functions like Ganesh Puja, Sripanchami, Janmastami and 'Jagar' were celebrated at the hostel. Foods were prepared in the School boarding keeping the national festivals in view so that the students would not feel their absence from the home. Pandit Maguni Brahma, Raj Kaviraj of Puri, always visited the patients in the hostel whenever required. The hostel had a code of rules. The Satyabadi School hostel was, however, the largest of all the boarding houses in Orissa. Mr. Jennings, formerly Director of Public Instructions, Bihar and Orissa, when visited the School was pleased to look into every room of the hostel, the simplicity and orderliness of which impressed him very much. In the field of Social reform and removal of untouchability Gopabandhu did pioneering work. As early as in 1910-11 he introduced inter-dinning in the Satyabadi School Hostel and adopted a Harijan boy and got him educated in the said School and then in College at his own cost. Caste and scheduled caste students were treated alike in the said institution.
Physical Exercise:

Great attention was paid to the physical exercise of the students. In case of boarders, who formed the major portion of the students of the School, daily physical exercise for three quarters before evening was compulsory. But exemption was being granted only on grounds of illness and other physical disabilities of temporary or permanent nature. In 1914 the physical training given by Sri Basudev Mohapatra created a new record for the School. An old and experienced wrestler Sri Lokanath Mohapatra was appointed later to coach the students in wrestling at the School. Eminent authorities who visited the School had all been impressed with the proficiency and skill exhibited by the students in physical exercises. Sir Edward Gait, the Lt. Governor of Bihar and Orissa, had visited this School on the 17th April 1917. He was also pleased to know about the interests of the teachers and the students in the development of the villages and to see the gymnastic skill of the students. He sanctioned a grant of Rs.500/- for introduction of Tennis play at the School. The Honourable Mr. J. G. Jennings, Director of Public Instructions, observed: "In a gymnastic and drill display remarkable skill was shown." Mr. R. McCombe, Inspector of Schools, observed: "One of the most remarkable things in this School is the development of athletics. In no School have I seen physical exercise better done."

Carpentry:

The necessity of supplementing literary education with technical training was felt from the beginning. A Carpentry class had been opened in the School. The students of the Carpentry class used to work six hours a day, both morning and
afternoon. Other willing students also attended the class for only a period of 45 minutes a day. The teacher was a competent man, carpenter by caste. Regular students were wholly maintained by the School. In America and other countries poor students often earn their livelihood by manual labour and enable themselves to study in Schools. The maintenance of regular students in the Carpentry class was an attempt in this direction. Almost all the almirahs, shelves and tables of the School were made in the Carpentry class. The casket made of sandal wood with the designs on it, which the School presented to his Honour Sir Edward Gait on the occasion of his visit to the School on April 27, 1917, was made there. The Carpentry class on the whole promised success.

Agriculture, Gardening and Weaving:

Gardening was done as a part of School work even when it was an M. E. School. Lands measuring about 20 acres had been acquired on lease and by purchase and cultivation had been undertaken. The work was done mainly by hired labour under the supervision of an experienced agriculturist who worked on honorary basis. Almost all the students of the School, however, at sometime or other, worked in the School garden or in the fields. They used to dig earth, carry water, rear plants, reap corn and all sorts of field work. The main object was to bring home to the boys the dignity of labour. Some of them had shown very genuine interest in what they did. In a certain season of the year the School used to send its products from the garden to the market after meeting the need of its hostel students. In this connection the support and encouragement of the public spirited Zamindar Chaudhuri Narahari Das of Bhingarpur, who had given the possession of 12 acres of land may be mentioned.
The Weaving class was opened on experimental basis. Two local Weavers trained at the Cuttack Weaving School under the auspices of the School were employed as teachers. But this class did not work well and properly.\textsuperscript{20}

**School Bank and Store:**

A Bank had been started for two years on cooperative principle. The Bank also invested its money in a trading business known by the name of the Students Store. Both the Bank and the Store were mainly managed by students under the guidance and supervision of a member of the Teaching staff. On the whole, the business was yielding a good profit. Mr. N. K. Ray, Deputy Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Orissa Division, writes in his inspection remarks, "I have much pleasure in recording my appreciation of the thorough manner in which the books are kept and of the keen interest displayed by the teachers in its management. I hope this bank will soon be registered under the Act."\textsuperscript{21}

**Literary Efforts and Associations:**

Each of the classes in the School was encouraged to bring out the class-magazine in manuscript. There was also a School magazine published by the Headmaster to which the students and teachers contributed their articles etc. Besides the Class magazine, 'Bani', the magazine of Class-X was of great renown.\textsuperscript{22} The students used to get their compositions corrected and modified by the teachers who took keen interest in developing the latent literary faculties in them. Besides, occasional 'Kavi Sammilanis' or 'Poets Corners' were organised in which both the teachers and students used to read and recite their compositions.\textsuperscript{23} Later in 1919, the 'Samaja' was published from Satyabadi with Gopabandhu as its Editor. His associates in the
School helped him in publication of the 'The Samaja' and the students helped in despatch and distribution of this newspaper. This is one of the contributions of the Satyabadi School to the literary field of Orissa.

It has been said that Gopabandhu was immensely interested in developing oratorical abilities of the students and for this wherever he went, he organised Debating Societies. The Debating Society of Satyabadi School met every Saturday for discussion of different topics. It was almost compulsory for every one of the School to attend this meeting. Occasionally visitors to the School, who were the celebrities of India and Orissa, attended this meeting to address the students. Whenever Gopabandhu was available, he himself used to participate in these meetings either as President or as an ordinary speaker.

Some of his addresses had appeared in the 'Satyabadi' magazine. The speeches of Krupasindhu Mishra, Godavarish Mishra and Basudev Mohapatra were very interesting. Their fluency of speech and emotion made the meeting-place completely silent. Pandit Biswanath Rath, who was appointed then by the Government for collecting rare manuscripts from Orissa, reached the School on one Block meeting day. He delivered a valuable and useful speech. The revered poet and main novelist of Orissa Vyasakavi Fakir Mohan visited the School on one Saturday. He told about literature (Sahitya Sadhana) in a sitting position as he was unable to address the students by standing up.

So the Block meeting was very useful for the students. The students of each Block of the Hostel used to assemble to hear moral discourses from the teachers. The teachers used to inform the Block monitors' meeting about the mistakes and
A matter of pleasure for the students as well as the teachers of the Satyabadi school was competition or recitation of the Sanskrit Sloka which is known as slokanta.\(^7\) Either Nilakantha or Pandit Bhubaneswar became the judge in the matter. Slokanta was being held most of the time on the request of Mr. Das, Braja Sundar Das, Sri Jagabandhu Singh and the mahanta of Emar Math of Puri when they visited the School. It was hundred times more pleasurable than the foot-ball, cricket, badminton and play of cards.

The Lalegro club and the History club were organised on the last Saturday and Sunday morning of each month.\(^2\) These clubs were devoted to speech or oratory competition and discussion.

From the very beginning, the Chhatra Samiti of the School had been working with commendable zeal for the development of the literary and vocational thoughts of the students. The Sahitya Sabha, Itihas Alochana Sabha, Pramod Nijog and Kula Sammilani were functioning under the Chhatra Samiti. The matters relating to national, educational, merger of Oriya speaking out-lying tracts with Orissa, eradication of untouchability, village organisation, woman education, significance of poverty etc. were being discussed by the Samiti.\(^9\) The Chhatra Samiti honoured some eminent persons like Seth Jamunalal Bajaj, Bhubanananda Das and others.

The Library:

For the literary development of students a good Library was there in the Satyabadi High School.\(^9\) Mr. Duke, the Inspector of Schools, highly appreciated Nilakantha's system of
During his first visit to the School on the 1st and 2nd November, 1915 he remarked, "The School Library contains 1425 books, 16 maps and three globes. Thus, it has increased during the last seven months at the rate of 40 volumes per month, a satisfactory rate, which I trust will be maintained for some time to come. Some of the books are very good and very interesting specially those in the Science Section." Again Mr. Duke mentioned on the 22nd October, 1917 in his report: "Each of the first five classes now has its class library, Issue Register, Catalogue of Books etc. in-charge of the class teachers. I am informed, they have proved a success; specific hours have been appointed for the issue of books and a code of rules has been drafted."  

In this connection, as closely connected with it, is to be mentioned the Reading Room, where members used to meet from 7 to 9 in the evening. There were daily and weekly News papers and periodicals in the Reading Room in English, Oriya, Bengali and Sanskrit. So it was a novel system in the educational history of Orissa.

**Excursions:**

Excursions to places of interest were undertaken occasionally as a necessary supplement to the physical, intellectual and moral training imparted in the School. Almost all the students joined these pedestrian campaigns. An excursion lasted over a week. This type of excursion was an indispensable part of education. This living-education was not only pleasant, it gave them idea about the important phases of Orissan history. The places which the students visited were Bhubaneswar, Khandagiri, Dhauli, Konark, Khurda, Barunei, the hot springs at Baghmari, Khandapara, the Brass Industry of
Kantilo, the temple of Nilamadhaba and some other localities. The students at times marched from Sakhigopal to Puri, a distance of about 12 miles, with their teachers for a sea-bath.

**Social Service:**

The social service was being considered as a part of the School work. No opportunity was lost which gave the boys a chance to work for their neighbours. They used to work with their teachers. The teachers and students went round the neighbouring villages in batches during the outbreak of cholera, distributed medicine among the patients and rendered necessary help to them in all possible ways. It was by this social service that the School earned the good-will and favour of the people despite the opposition of the interested parties. Help was often rendered to pilgrims who came to Sakhigopal. Their efforts had saved many people from distress and misery. The services of the School were always sought by the Jagannath Temple and also by the authorities at Puri for distribution of water and fans among the pilgrims on the Car Festival day. In recognition of this service in 1913, the late Pandit Ramaballav Mishra, the then District Magistrate of Puri, had written to the Secretary, "Your volunteers did splendid work yesterday for which I am very thankful." 

The teachers and students of the Satyabadi School were guided by a new ideology. Although the teachers of this School had great regard for the ancient culture and tradition, yet they did not appreciate the blind superstitions. They were imbued up with the higher aspiration of giving a new shape to the country and the society with the new light of the new age. They did not appreciate many superstitions then prevalent in the society. Some Brahmin teachers were working as social reformers so far as
widow re-marriage, taking food together and flourishing a moustache were concerned and they were eager to be ideals in this respect. About Widow marriage, Gopabandhu writes, "There cannot be one principle for men and another for women. This is unnatural; Nature cannot tolerate it any longer. In not-too-distant future widow-marriage shall take place in society. Resistance to it shall be short-sighted; help to it shall be a part of wisdom. We implore the Pandits of Utkal. Let them interpret the scripture in the light of time and place, and show the people right path and preserve their own dignity and position, otherwise the public opinion shall take its inevitable course and never wait for them. Their resistance or indifference shall be washed away like a sand-dam before the spirit of time ... But in our opinion whatever changes are introduced in Hindu society should be done in the name of scriptures. This has been done by wise men throughout the ages; they have maintained the greatness of the scriptures by making necessary and desirable changes." Moreover, "Law alone cannot improve the society, nor can make it faultless. Unless people develop natural aversion to injustice and evil-conduct, and unless there is high ideal to emulate in society, how long can law prevent people from sinful conduct through the fear of punishment? Example is better than precept ... whatever a greatman does, the other men also do. Those who are leaders of the society and the country, superior in education, wealth and social status, their conduct, good or bad, easily permeates the entire society." Their actions regarding opening of Bidhaba Ashram and their opposition to obnoxious practices of casteism etc. became an eye-sore to the conservative people of the nearby Brahmin Sasanas. At that time the Brahmins were not ploughing
the land with their own hand. But Acharya Harihara Das and Pandit Krupasindhu Hota first ploughed the land with their own hand. During the outbreak of famine, floods and Malaria the students used to go in batches to the rural areas to serve the people. So this act of social service constitutes a brilliant epoch in the socio-cultural history of Orissa.

One of the main aims of the Satyabadi School was to plant the seeds of patriotism in the minds of the students. That is why speeches were delivered every week about the freedom struggle in Italy, America, and other countries.

Thus the Satyabadi High School and its hostels provided a good training-ground in self-discipline, democratic management and ideal student-life. Those who had come out of this institution, during its short life of about 10 years had never forgotten the glorious days spent by them in this institution in company with persons who subsequently became the noblest and leading figures in the land. The name 'Satyabadi' carried a hallmark of distinction and the stamp of the school was distinctly visible in the life, conduct and activities of most of them.

Mahatma Gandhi who also visited the School wrote in his 'Young India' on 13th April, 1921 - "Orissa has workers too. Pandit Gopabandhu Das, an ex-M.L.C., an ex-pleader and many other things besides, is a selfless leader. He and his band, live on rice and dal. They rarely take ghee now-a-days. After non-cooperation the workers have reduced themselves to the lowest honorarium even as little as ten rupees per month. No wonder if I believe that with such earnest men 'Swaraj' is possible of attainment during the year. Pandit Gopabandhu has an open-air School at Sakhigopal, twelve miles on this side of
Satyabadi High School as it is seen today
Puri. It is a grove School. It is worthy of visit. I passed a most delightful day in the midst of the boys and their teachers. It is a serious experiment in open-air teaching. Some of the boys are powerful athletes.\[^4\]

According to Kulabrudha Madhusudan Das, "This institution was the Nalanda of the Age." There was the thought of poet Gopabandhu, sincerity of Nilakantha and service and dedication of Acharya Harihar, Godavarish, Krupasindhu, Rama Chandra Rath, Narayan Samanta Patnaik of Baramba and many others.

Long before Gandhi came to the national political scene, Gopabandhu with his associates started the Satyabadi School with a view to preparing his people for the political struggle and opined, "We had established Schools at Satyabadi and in other places in order to protect the Oriya language, develop Oriya literature, lift the poor and the illiterate masses to a higher level of social life and above all to inspire them with patriotism for securing independence and bringing about social reforms.\[^42\]

With the principles of idealism and nationalism the Satyabadi School started a new awakening in Orissa. This new awakening created a socio-cultural consciousness among the under-developed people of Orissa. By this new consciousness the Oriya masses realised the cause of their poverty and misery and their lower status in the society.

The socio-cultural consciousness of the new Oriya elite manifested itself in two ways. Firstly, it took up the cause of safeguarding the interests of Oriyas who were scattered in different provinces, and finally agitated for the merger of Oriya-speaking areas; Secondly, it partook of national political consciousness for the Freedom Movement in Orissa.
REFERENCES

1. Satyabadi, Vol. VI, No. 3, p.99. (Quoted by Dr. D. G. Panda, in his "Political Philosophy of Pandit Gopabandhu Das".

2. Satyabadi, Vol. II, Nos. 5, 6, 7, p.125. (Quoted by Dr. D. G. Panda in his 'Political Philosophy of Pandit Gopabandhu Das'.)

3. Satyabadi, Vol. III, Nos. 5, 6, p.138. (Quoted by Dr. D. G. Panda in his 'Political Philosophy of Pandit Gopabandhu Das').


5. Satyabadi, Vol. II, No. 3, p.75. (Quoted by Dr. D. G. Panda in his 'Political Philosophy of Pandit Gopabandhu Das').

6. The Samaja, 12th February, 1927.


9. Ibid.


13. Ibid.


17. Ibid.


24. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
41. *Young India*, 13 April, 1921.