Establishment of English Schools before 1936

English education had a history of hundred years in Orissa before the creation of a separate province for it under the colonial set-up. The question of English education and its relation to the formation of an educated middle class in colonial Orissa acquires significance in the context of the construction of Oriya nationalism. English education in Orissa did not begin with any systematic planning by the Colonial Government but with the involvement of the Christian missionaries to transmit English culture based on Christianity to the people of Orissa.

A study of the Colonial Government's reports and official records in Orissa help us to interpret the prejudicial remarks made by the colonial servants regarding the Oriyas. Hunter perceived widespread ignorance among the millions of the Oriyas. He took the indifference of the people towards education as an obstinate orthodoxy. His national complex and colonial bias made him blind to the widespread existence of indigenous centres of learning in Orissa. This indigenous system of education, which was in extended operation in Orissa, made it quite independent of Bengal. Orissa had its own system of education, which was probably more far reaching in its influence than even that of Bengal. A long history of suppression and deprivation had dominated the Oriya mind to look into the alien charity with disbelief.

The colonial experience with the Oriyas had created bitterness due to the immediate protest of Oriyas against the British supremacy during the Paik rebellion of 1817. It was not easy for them to replace or marginalize the entire Oriya culture, as they did in Africa. The initial indifference of the people towards English education was not an outburst of conservatism or a stereotype adherence
to their culture as it had been displayed in the missionary discourses in Orissa. The natural protest of the native against the English (both the missionary and government programmes for cultural conquest) was seen as orthodoxy by the colonialists.

The British did not have a very noble intention to enlighten or civilize these people. They had to establish their political hegemony by transmitting their culture through the ideological apparatuses like schools and printed texts. Before the British, no other government had established centers of learning for the Oriyas. The Oriya interest in learning Persian was motivated by his personal endeavour. Persian was never imposed on the people of this land. Therefore, majority of the Oriyas was ignorant of Persian. Phakirmohan Senapati, once said, "If only our forefathers had cultivated their mother-tongue as well as the official language (Persian), what riches they would have bequeathed to us!" ²

However, the indigenous centres of learning transmitted Oriya culture with the imparting of four R s’, emphatically of the fourth one i.e. religion from one generation to another. The Colonial Government, conscious of people’s reaction to the teaching of English, did not attempt to spread it in Orissa from 1803 to 1835. The annual provision of one lakh rupees in the charter Act of 1813 was mostly spent in Bengal.³ But in view of the Dispatch of the court of Directors of 1830, the Governor-General passed a minute on improving the condition of education among the respectable classes.⁴ In response to that minute, the Commissioner of Orissa sent a proposal to educate the children of the feudal chiefs of the ‘Tributary Mahals’ for their security and improvement.⁵ This proposal as the first step to provide a system of education to a particular class, however did not materialize. The above mentioned minute was the result of indecisiveness whether the Government would educate a class or the masses as a whole. It was based on a view popularly known as the ‘Downward Filtration’
theory. In accordance with this, the company desired to educate only the upper class in India consisting of Sardars, Nawabs, Rajas and such other aristocratic classes. The attempt did not succeed in Orissa. The traditional ruling class in Orissa did not feel safe in their relationship with the Colonial Government. Thus, the Company directed its attention towards the provision of education for those who were quick to receive worldly advantages from the new system.

Lord Macaulay, in his Minute of 31 July 1837, wrote, “We don’t at present aim at giving education to the masses of this country. We aim at raising up an educated class which will hereafter be the means of diffusion among their countrymen some portion of the knowledge we have imparted to them”. Hereafter, the Company was expected to give liberal English education to only a few persons (these may or may not be from upper classes) and leave it to those persons to educate the masses through the vernaculars. The Colonial Government did not accept, until 1854, any direct responsibility for the education of the masses.

However, the Missionaries were not inspired by any such theory. Before the government started experimenting on the Downward Filtration Theory in Orissa, the missionaries made some private efforts for the spreading of education. Amos Sutton writes,

*In connection with English preaching our brethren early instituted a Sabbath school and then an English day school to which at length was added a boarding department for a number of poor and destitute children in English habits. These were truly benevolent efforts and for more than thirteen years did the English school afford the means of instruction to many who must otherwise have remained in total ignorance.*
Really, no 'civilizing mission' but 'Evangelico Preparatia' was their cry. They did not believe in the filtration of knowledge from an enlightened class to the lower classes. Their principal aim was to promote Christianity. However, they built the foundation for the furtherance of English education in Orissa. They attempt to prepare textbooks, both in English and Oriya. In 1823, they raised funds to help the local indigenous schools. Gradually they introduced training schools, craft schools, girls' school and schools for co-education. They also established Oriya schools at Balasore, Puri, Berhampur, Sambalpur, and at some of the rural areas. Due to a lower standard of education, the missionary schools did not attract the intelligent sections of the society. It was due to the fear of conversion, the orthodox higher caste Hindus did not come to these schools. These schools did not play any significant role in creating a middle class social order in Orissa.

However, the first English school, as an experiment on downward filtration theory, came to be established in Puri in 1835. It was referred to as 'Pooree College' in the official documents of that time. It is interesting to note that the word 'college' had been used rather loosely, at that time, to denote, "an institution where a high type of instruction was given". In the initial stages there was no systematic division of primary, secondary and higher education. So many of the colleges grew out of schools teaching English and contained classes "in which the alphabet was taught under the same roof with classes, reading Shakespeare, the Calculus, Smith's Wealth of the Nations and the Ramayana. Colleges in the modern sense of the term started to function after 1857 when the universities came to be established at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta.

Pooree College or Pooree Free Academy was designed to cater to secondary education. It comprised three departments: English and Vernacular; Sanskrit; and Islamic. Mr. Ganganarayan Bose, the first English teacher of the
school was from Bengal. It was the big gap between the students' upbringing and the English method of learning which prevented both teachers and students to keep pace with any kind of advancement. Mr. Bose asserted that the school having only just opened and almost all the students having entered entirely ignorant of the alphabet, non are (sic) sufficiently advanced in reading and writing to commence any particular branch of study.

The school had initially four classes. At that time, the classes were arranged in the opposite order as the first class was the highest and the fourth class was the lowest class. The fourth class student learnt the alphabets and they finished the first spelling books when they arrived at the first class. At this stage they could write, spell and translate. The gradual increase in the number of students from 25 in 1835 to 80 in 1840 in the English classes showed the increasing enthusiasm among the people to send their children for English education. But the lessons imparted in this school were confined up to the above mentioned courses. Not a single standard English text was prescribed to be taught there. Mr. Ganganarayan Bose left the school in 1837 and Mr. W.S.R. Davies took over the charge. In the local Committee Report of 16 January 1840, Davies wrote that, 'Orissa was such a province, where teaching in the vernaculars was quite wide-spread and of high-standard. The Government was not providing financial aid for English education nor was providing appropriate textbooks. Not a single English text was available which could be selected as a school book'. So he argued that it was not possible to impart mass education only in English.

From June 1835 to August 1840 the school faced the most trying circumstances due to the lack of efficient English teachers and good textbooks in English. Inspite of paying for the English education the inhabitants of Puri became deprived of this opportunity. The English historians often blame the people for the failure of the first experiment on downward filtration theory in Orissa. But, in
reality, the failure was due to the apathy of the colonial rulers. The financial estimate of the Government of 30 April 1839 gives a clear picture of the situation. Out of Rs. 3,75,000/- spent in education for the Bengal presidency, only Rs. 1,553/- was spent for the Puri College, whereas Rs. 3,051/- was spent for Midnapur school.18

The gradual acceptance of education proves that 'the whole population was not against the British'. Of course, they had a suspicion regarding the English system of schooling. The 'native' Oriya was not that much prompt and calculative like the Bengalis who embraced an alien culture unhesitantly. The Bengalis, whom the courts and public offices brought into Orissa, had a good relationship with the British system of administration. Their sense of security inspired them to attend the government schools established by the Colonial Government in Orissa.

There was a clash between the interest of the Government to popularise English culture with the help of modern schools and that of the Brahmins and Karanas to monopolize the indigenous culture through the native centres of learning. It instigated the British to undervalue the Oriyas as a people. The defiance from the traditional Oriya could be easily perceived from their front to fight against the colonial ego. They took different ideological sides to discourage the other Oriyas who became interested in English education. They circulate such misconceptions among the people that the latter looked down upon the government schools as 'infidel institutions'.19 They created an awareness (may be an absurd one) among the people that children if allowed to attend government schools, would be taken away from their parents and sent to England.20 The indigenous teachers instigated the guardians to prohibit their children to go to the school because they felt a threat to their authority.21 Even they did not support the establishment of Oriya schools by the Government. It was a period of strong
protest against the government control over education of the people. A critical understanding of the colonial historiography reveals a great many truth hidden in the sarcasm made by Hunter, Sterling and others. It was not really orthodoxy or conservatism, but racial consciousness, which inspired the Brahmins to prevent the genuine Oriyas to receive English education. For them English education was nothing but Christian culture. The missionary endeavour to teach the Gospel and to offer the bribe of education for the sake of conversion, made them suspicious about the colonial intention. They made collective effort to discourage and denounce English education. Hunter says,

At late as 1860, a learned Oriya, on being appointed even to the orthodox post of Sanskrit teachers in our Puri school was excluded for a year or two from the Brahmanical orders, and stormy discussion took place as to whether he should not be normally expelled from his caste.²²

Insipite of the organised resistance of the traditional elite class in Orissa, the Government took initiative in establishing more schools. The passive resistance of the Oriyas, continued up to the disastrous Famine in 1866. Hunter noted that out of the first eight Oriya students who up to 1868 reached ever the moderate standard exacted by the Calcutta University at its Entrance examinations, only ten were native Oriyas, while forty-eight belonged to migrant families.²³ Even the Cuttack school, started in 1841, did not capture the attention of the native Oriyas. In the beginning, there were a very few Oriya students in the school most probably due to its missionary link from 1822 to 1841.²⁴ The majority of the students belonged to the families of government servants.

Though the Government and the missionaries differed in their purposes, they met at a common ground to impart some basic knowledge in
English. So the Government took over the management of the Cuttack Missionary School from February 1841 as the Baptist Mission desired it for better financial support. Thus, a new experiment started with the downward filtration theory in Orissa. This Cuttack School of 1841 became Cuttack Zilla School in 1851, then a High School in 1868, which from 1875 began to be known as the Ravenshaw Collegiate School. The history of this school marks an interesting development in the field of English education in Orissa. In the course of time, it brought about a change in the outlook of the Oriyas. Perhaps, they started viewing some positive filtration from it. The School initiated a change in the traditional taste, opinions, morals, and intellect, though not in accordance with Macaulay’s desire.

Nevertheless, the failure of ‘Downward Filtration Theory’ was evident. It was due to two reasons: firstly, almost every person educated in English schools got employment under the Government and hence there was hardly any occasion for him to go and teach his countrymen. The ultimate goal for a newly educated was either to be a deputy in any office or to be a lawyer, not a teacher. Secondly, every person who was taught in English school was cut off from his own people in sympathy and ideology. The English knowing persons became a class by themselves and refused to acknowledge kinship with or feel sympathy for the masses that did not know English. This unhappy result was due to the use of English as a medium of instruction and as a medium of power. Therefore, the theory of downward filtration did not work out for a long time.

However, interestingly, an Eastern culture started being filtered from the English filter at the late years of the nineteenth century. It was from the ranks of this educated people in Orissa that the bulk of workers for the education of the nation grew. Among this brand of workers were many noble spirits who decided to turn their back on government service and devoted their lives to spread education among their fellow men. These patriots laboured hard to create modern Oriya
literature. They took the task of national education by the press and with the help of periodicals and magazines.

This group of conscious individuals evolved from three important centres of colonial education – the Cuttack school, the Balasore school, and the Puri school. By 1863-64, the total number of schools was 44, the government schools 24, and 20 grant-in-aid schools. These twenty four government schools included the above mentioned three schools (Cuttack, Puri and Balasore), Bhadrak Anglo-vernacular School and Cuttack Church High School. Besides, during this period, there were ten mission schools in Orissa. A change was also seen in the other Oriya regions. People in Ganjam demanded for modern education. In 1867-68, there were five government schools in addition to some missionary and private schools. At Sambalpur, an Anglo-vernacular school was established in 1857-58 due to the strong demands of the people.

Inspector E. Roer reported in 1860-61, “There is now demands for schools even at places where there is strong religious bias against innovation of any kind”. Here he referred to the people of Puri and Bhubaneswar who started having interest in English education. The shocking experience of the disastrous Famine brought a change in the attitude of the people. They realized that without co-operation of the Government they could not save themselves from the curse of natural calamities. They went through the disasters of non-co-operation with the Government. As there was an absence of the English educated public-spirited persons, no one communicated to the Government the administrative disadvantages they faced during the Famine. They felt that without learning the ruler’s language and without being proficient in the colonizer’s way of administration they could not protect their national interest and protest for the general good. Because of this awareness, in 1869-70, the number of the Oriya students grew to one third of the total strength in the Cuttack School.
Around this period, the people had come to see that their training in an indigenous centre would not bring any change in their material status. It could be possible only by receiving an English system of education in vernacular also. In order to get a government job, they were to be qualified in a certain standard of the government schools. As early as 1843, F. Goldsberry, the Commissioner of Orissa, suggested that without any worldly prospect the progress of education was impossible. He again added if employment in the government offices would be accosted to the educated natives, the parents would gladly send their children to the school. The above suggestion was made to attract people towards vernacular education if not to English education. In 1845, Lord Hardinge, the Governor General of India, made a provision for establishing 101 vernacular schools in the Bengal Presidency in order to impart elementary education. Out of that number, only eight schools were set up in Orissa. They were at Khurdha, Puri, Balasore, Remuna, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Mahanga and Hariharpur. These schools also could not thrive due to the non-cooperation of the traditional elites and the poverty of the general mass. By the year 1869-70 there were only two vernacular schools out of these eight. Though the reason for the failure of this resolution was mostly stuck to the resistance of the Brahmins and the indigenous school teachers, it was greatly due to the scarcity of school books and teachers also.

In order to keep pace with the changes, a new system was introduced in the history of education in Orissa. A ‘Normal School’ was established at Cuttack to educate the teachers of indigenous schools and government vernacular schools. Gradually this school impressed people a lot. The school became popular as “dharma vidyalaya” or the charity school. It was because people considered teaching a noble job. The teaching of a teacher had never been known in this land.
So they took it as a great charity conferred upon the society. With the establishment of the Normal school, a great problem was solved. However, until 1863, to get a qualified teacher was a serious problem. As there were a few Sanskrit scholars in Orissa, the ailment was partially solved with their help. They also minimised the problems of scarcity of books. They could teach grammar and Kosh from their own memory. No doubt, a few other texts prepared by the missionaries came to their use.

However, The Collector, Cuttack Division, observed that these government schools were of no real benefit, as the fee payable at these schools was higher than the poorest class could pay. The Commissioner, was of the opinion that these schools had been chiefly instrumental in creating the desire for education and this desire once fairly implanted in the people, the means of chief education would not be wanting. As such the Government declared that their purpose was not to design vernaculars schools to supply the means of education in every village, but to raise the character of vernacular education by drawing the sons of respectable classes.

The two vernacular schools, which survived at Khurdha and Mahasingpur had a very interesting history. Though the Hindus protested the colonial interference in their educational affairs, the Muslims did not have any objection to it. When the Hardinge School at ‘Mahanga’ in Cuttack-district was closed, another school at Mahasingpur was established. It was patronised by Maulvi Abdul Wahid, the Deputy Collector. He was the first native of Orissa who initiated the tradition of establishing schools through private enterprises.

Despite all these efforts, no real progress was felt even after the enforcement of the Education Dispatch of Charles Wood in 1854. The new scheme laid importance upon mass education, female education, improvement of the vernacular teaching, and prominently English education. It also emphasized on efficient teaching institution at primary, higher and college stages. A regular
system of scholarship was instituted. Provision was made to give grants from the government funds to the private educational institutions. A special Department of Education was created in place of Council of Education in each province to carry out these objectives. An adequate system of Inspection was provided by the appointment of sufficient number of Inspectors. Universities were established in each presidency town on the model of the London University in order to coordinate a comprehensive system of education in India. However, the Wood’s Dispatch produced no immediate results in Orissa due to the callousness of the Government. The education of the Oriyas was utterly neglected by the Company Government up to 1857 i.e. till the end of its rule.

However, some of the Commissioners and the School Inspectors showed generous attitude towards the Oriyas. Commissioner G. F. Cockburn made attempt for the appointment of a separate Inspector of schools for Orissa. Pointing out the disadvantages Orissa having under the jurisdiction of the Inspector of School of South Bengal, the Commissioner wrote, “The circumstances of the people of Orissa being in many respects so completely different from those of Bengal, speaking even a different language, add powerfully to the reasons, which induce me to recommended the appointment of a separate agency for the educational department of Orissa”. Consequently, E. Roer was appointed as the first Inspector of Schools of Orissa in 1857. His report gives a clear picture of the governmental apathy: “It is to be regretted that no new educational operations can be carried out for Orissa which is at a great disadvantage compared with other districts”.

Fifty-five years after the Company’s rule the number of schools throughout Orissa had to be counted by units. The Anglo-vernaculars schools, which were established at Balasore and Puri were different from Cuttack School. Even the syllabi of these schools were different from each other. At the end of
Company's rule, only these three schools were there to impart English education in Orissa to a limited few. Until this time, it could not draw the attention of most of the Oriyas. The traditional elites were still against the colonial interference.

However, after the assumption of power by the Crown, efforts were made to develop village pathsalas, to bring them under a prescribed standard and to maintain them. Thus, primary education began to spread in Orissa. In order to fulfill the demands of well-trained teachers, as it has earlier been mentioned, a training school was opened at Cuttack in 1863. The Government introduced the village pathsala scheme of Babu Bhudeb Mukherjee, also called the Normal School System. The term 'Normal' has been adopted from the western concept of training the elementary school teachers in a number of European countries but not in Great Britain. The object of this system was to improve the quality of instruction of indigenous schools by training their teachers. But interestingly enough, there was no provision for training English teachers until 1896. Later, arrangements were made for the training of English teachers for secondary schools by opening English classes in the training schools at Calcutta, Hoogly, Dacca, Patna and Cuttack. However, no training schools of the collegiate class were there in the province.

Entrance qualifications of the pupil teachers of these schools need here to be mentioned. Those who passed the University Entrance examination or failed at that examination in one subject only, that subject not being English were admitted to the third or the lowest grade of English classes. Those who passed the F.A. (First Arts) examination or failed at it in one subject only (other than English) were similarly admitted to the second grade class.

The point is that until 1896 the teachers, mostly in the English schools, were not properly qualified. When Radhanath Ray passed his University
Entrance examination in the First division from the Balasore Zilla School in 1863 no one of his teachers was qualified up to that standard.46 Again, interestingly, the provision of English classes in the training school was also not a success. As the classes were regarded as having a low status, it failed to attract good candidates. Even if the classes were well filled, the means of giving a proper did not exist since the practicing schools attached to this institution were not English high schools. Such as the students were afterwards to be employed in the vernacular schools. Moreover, the graduates in charge of the classes were themselves untrained men, without any acquirement with the training of secondary teachers.47 It was due to such defects, English education could not have a great impact in the creation of an educated class in Orissa.

As we are discussing the role of training schools in the progress of English system of education in Orissa, we must point out the missionary endeavour in establishing two training classes for woman teachers at Cuttack and Balasore in 1907.48 They were meant for the training of Christian female teachers, but were transformed to Normal schools in 1912, where the teachers of other religions could also be taken for admission.49

Ganjam had got its Normal School, even before the establishment of Cuttack Normal School in 1855.50 But the establishment of a secondary training school was not possible until 1925. But Sambalpur had to go through the colonial policy of deprivation for a long time. Even in 1907, when sub-divisional Guru(teacher) training schools were opened in all the districts of Orissa, Sambalpur was the only district which did not have one such school.51 Until 1912, there was no provision for training teachers for the middle schools. In 1923, a training college was established in Cuttack to provide L.T.(Licentiate in teaching) courses to the students. The Diploma courses started from 1926. Despite all these, according to Hartog Committee Report in 1929, not more than 30% teachers in
Oriya schools were trained. On the eve of the creation of separate Orissa province there were only two secondary training schools in Orissa to prepare the natives to teach English in this land.

However, the English had no confidence in the fitness of an indigenous intellect in Orissa to interpret an English text inside a classroom. Therefore, in the first phase, the English teachers were either the English or the Bengalis. That was the reason why, English Teachers' Certificate Examination was started very late in 1897. These training schools, as a part of English system of education, played a very significant role in introducing 'Oriya Literature' into the syllabus of Oriya schools and thus initiated a new trend in the history of modern Oriya literature. Before 1867, 'Oriya Literature' was not included into the courses of studies, as the emphasis was given on the circulation of general knowledge among the people. In that year, Babu Bichhanda Pattnaik, the School Inspector started a provision for the teaching of 'Oriya Literature' in the Normal Schools. Here we may also note the significant role played by the headmasters of Cuttack Normal School. The first headmaster Dwarikanath Chakravarti, in his 25 years of service in this school from 1869 to 1893, gave a strong foundation to the school and, remarkably, tried to replace Bengali by Oriya as the first language. The personality of the second headmaster, Madhusudan Rao, produced a great impact in the life of the students. He started a literary association called 'Utkal Sahitya Samaj' (A society of Oriya Literature) in 1894 in this school.

As the network of teacher training was not adequate, it did not provide for a widespread system of education in Orissa. The teachers themselves being unequipped with the modern methods of imparting education did not provide adequate help to the students. They were undoubtedly taught Oriya Literature, English, Arithmetic, Geography, Indian History, History of England, Geometry, Mathematics and educational methods, but the proper training could not be
provided to them due to the instructors' lack of training of their own. Until 1906, the failed Matriculate, I.A.(Intermediate in Arts) and B.A.(Bachelor of Arts) students were taken for admission in the Normal Schools. Whereas the passing certificates were required for the recruitment into any other government job. From this it can be easily understood how the teachers' qualification had never been taken seriously. Thus, it started a very wrong tradition in the history of education of this country. The elementary education suffered due to the lack of proper qualifications of the teachers. Their reading of English Literature was so much inadequate that it did not shape their critical understanding nor did it improve their aesthetic sense. Though Oriya Literature was introduced into the curriculum of the Normal School, it was not organised properly so far as a correlation between the learner and a literary-text is concerned. As the teacher himself could not understand a modern essay, his teaching was confined to the explanation of difficult words and memorising the details of grammar. The teacher did not seek to interpret the essay by highlighting critical aspects of it. So the teaching of Literature continued as the teaching of mere vocabulary for a long time.

The teachers' authority was also checked by the inspecting agency, which was strengthened after the operation of Campbell's Scheme towards the close of 1872 in Orissa. Though in the beginning, the scheme encountered much opposition yet the system of inspection proved very much successful in improving the English system of education in Orissa. The attempt to improve the conditions of the indigenous schools under the care and supervision of the Government gave rise to misconception on the part of the people. As a part of traditional elite's resistance against the activities of the Government, rumours were in circulation regarding the latter taking much interest in their education and paying a monthly stipend to the abadhanas. The Deputy Magistrate of Kendrapara reported:
In many instances, the people have run away, abandhanas closed their chatsalis, sent the boys away or secreted them on the sight of Sub-Inspectors. No sooner they see him they called out “padree is coming”, and are afraid of to meet him. They think this is a preliminary taken by the Government to make all of one caste, that is Christian and this is one of the reasons that several of chatsalis of the abadhanas have been broken up.57

The same type of reaction was there in Puri, Cuttack and Balasore Districts. One abadhana, who had been trained in the Normal School, was boycotted by the villagers on returning to his village. The Brahmins incited the villagers to reject the man on the ground that he became a Christian.58 The traditional elites picked up that by using the training apparatus and paying stipend, the Government was trying to mobilise the abadhanas by its favour, who were at the initial stage, protesting against the governmental endeavour to interfere in their educational affairs. The Government, as it seems, shrewdly extended its network. Not only were the abadhanas encouraged for training but also were the students to gain access to the schools. The primary scholarship examination was introduced to draw pupils and encourage them to continue their studies up to a standard. The so-called Midnapur system (as it was first experimented in the pathsalas of Midnapur) or the system of payment by result was introduced to mobilise both the teachers and the pupils. This was a system of aiding schools in proportion to the quality and quantity of their work according to the results achieved by the pupils at formal examination. Here we can see, how the institution of tests or examinations was introduced to enable the students compete for the scholarship and prizes placed within their reach.

Thus, the financial aspect involved in the education system accelerated the pace of governmental effort to create an awareness among the
people to receive education. By 1878, the system of payment by result proved to be a complete success. In 1876, there were 794 primary schools, but in 1877, there were 2091 and in 1879, the schools numbered 4569. It was a remarkable success in the field of people’s education. The Midnapur system became successful in bringing the indigenous elementary schools into a common system. Radhanath Ray, the Joint-Inspector of Orissa said,

*Indigenous education, as heretofore existed, had very common with an organised system. Each pathsala stood by itself a disjointed and isolated unit in the vast network of schools scattered all over Orissa without a common principle to animate the whole mass. This element of unity has been supplied by the payment by results, which is imbued one replete with interest in the eye of the educationist.*

Similarly, much stress was laid, in the Dispatch of 1854, on the promotion of secondary education through private enterprise on the line of grant-in-aid system. Due to that, there was a considerable increase in the number of English schools by the end of nineteenth century. At this time, out of the total number of schools estimated 6351, 96 were secondary English schools, 11 high schools, 85 minor schools and the rest primary schools.

According to the suggestion of the Indian Education Commission, 1882 the Government had to withdraw its control from the secondary education and to encourage private enterprises. It was of opinion that the relation of the state to primary education was different from secondary education. The state had a responsibility towards people’s education by providing primary education, but it had no such responsibility towards the secondary education. Thus, the Government kept a few English schools as models and withdrew from the direct
control of other schools. This step was not helpful to the Oriyas as they didn’t have fund or experience to be engaged in private enterprises. During the 1870’s when demand for education increased, the local officers at some places took initiatives in establishing schools. In this connection, Srinath Ghosh, Deputy Magistrate, Bhadrak and Pandit Biswambhar Vidyabhusan, Munshiff of Jajpur might be mentioned. Among the other elites, who perform this noteworthy task were Pearimohan Acharya, Madhusudan Rao and Trilochan Brahma. Madhusudan Rao established an English school at Cuttack in 1881, which later became a full fledged High School named after Queen Victoria. Pearimohan established a primary school in Cuttack in 1875 and invited Bipin Chandra Pal, a top freedom fighter from Bengal to be its headmaster. Under the stewardship of Bipin Chandra the High School acquired a reputation not merely for advanced scholarship but for free thinking and nationalism. Trilochan Brahma was the pioneer in the field of English education in the district of Sambalpur. He influenced Keden Hade, the political agent of the Government at Sambalpur to establish the first Anglo-Vernacular School in the district in 1852.

Those enlightened Oriyas, whose personalities carried an impact of both western liberalism and oriental sentimentalism made the most remarkable contribution in the field of private enterprises. Gopabandhu Das, Nilakantha Das, Godabaris Mishra, Harihar Das and a host of English educated Oriyas sacrificed their economic benefits from the government jobs and introduced a concept of ‘high thinking and plane living’ in the Satyabadi Vihar established in 1909. This famous school was an outcome of serious experiment in educational ideals on national lines and entirely independent of government help and control. Though originally started as an independent institute, the government interference in financial affairs necessitated its affiliation to Calcutta University. The school had some distinctive features, which gave the school the recognition of a national school. This famous institution, which assembled a group of nationalist leaders,
made outstanding contributions in social, cultural and national life of the Oriyas came to an end in 1926.

The grant-in-aid policy did not work successfully in Orissa. The Government provided enough incentives to the primary education by making provisions to give stipend to the teachers, rewards and scholarships to the meritorious students, but secondary education was quite neglected. Even proper steps were also not taken to encourage professional, technical and female education. On the eve of Orissa being a separate province, there were only one Medical school, one Engineering school in Orissa and a few Industrial schools to impart industrial training. There was neither a Medical college nor an Engineering school in the entire province of Orissa to impart higher technical education. It seems that the Government had no intention to make the Oriyas self-sufficient even in the field of commerce and industry.

The Cuttack Medical School might not have come to exist in 1876, if Dr. Stewart, the Civil Surgeon of Cuttack, had not displayed a great zeal in establishing it. Instruction was in the medium of vernacular as Dr. Stewart himself provided the translation of *Materia Medica* into Oriya. The Oriyas gradually overcame their detest for the English system of medical science, which they showed earlier. In 1874, one Janardan Mahapatra who had joined the Medical College in Calcutta was excommunicated for dissecting corpses. Within a very short period, the Cuttack Medical School not only supplied doctors to the hospitals and dispensaries in Orissa, but also trained the nurses. It shows how education brought a change in the attitude of the people.

However, considering the attitude of the people, no serious attention was paid to the promotion of female education. It was because female education having no link to the material benefits, importance was never given to provide
women with any useful practical education in a centre of learning. In 1874, the
Joint Inspector wrote:

If by female education we mean a little reading and writing, there
are more educated women in Orissa than perhaps in any part of
Bengal; if it means good and sound learning, then it must be
confessed, very little has yet been done and for some years to come
little more is likely to be done in this respect. The people do not
object to give education of some kind to their daughters, but the
idea of sending them to public schools, to which the public have
access and where they may be subjected to the gaze of the public
and will have to mix with girls of the classes, is revolting to their
feelings and prejudices.71

It was not surprising, if we consider the traditional sentiment of
people, to see a few girls attending the chatsalis, but not to find a single Oriya.
Hindu or Muhammadan girls of a respectable family in any of the middle or high
schools. Therefore, in 1875, out of 967 girls receiving the English way of
instructions, most of them were Bengalis. The number of Oriya girls was very
few.72

The progress of female education in comparison to the general
education in Orissa was very slow. Though the number of primary schools
increased fairly up to 1936, the secondary education was in its infancy. There was
only one high school at Cuttack, three middle English schools at Cuttack, Puri and
Sambalpur and five middle vernacular schools for girls.73 The highest standard of
English education, which the girls received from the high school was established
at Cuttack in 1869. This institution, which was later named Ravenshaw Girls' 
School, was taken over by the Government in 1913.74 During the year 1915-16, a
beginning was made in Orissa with collegiate education for women when I.A. classes were opened in the Ravenshaw Girls' School. English was the principal language and subject to be taught in this class. However, the demand for female education was not great, on the eve the formation of a separate administrative unit for Orissa. There was not a single degree college for the women. The slow progress was due to the indifference of people towards the education of their female children. They usually did not take the same amount of care and interest in the education of their female wards as they did in the case of boys. Besides, the system of early marriages created an almost insurmountable barrier to education beyond the primary stages. The scarcity of female teachers also hindered the smooth progress of female education. These hindrances in the acquisition of higher educational by the Oriya women checked them in cooperating with the nationalist ideology of their male counterparts.

The history of women education in Orissa has been intimately connected with the question of women's social liberation from traditionally prescribed roles and values. As the women themselves were not aware of the exploitation to which they were subjected, their education in the new English system can be viewed as an ideological emancipation from the traditional norms.

Interestingly, those women, who came to the fold of English education, belonged to those homes where their brothers, fathers, husbands and other kinsmen received English education. These newly educated elite male members, ashamed of their total control exercised over women, desired to introduce the latter into ideas of a new culture. Most of the nineteenth century social reformers were male and the members of the above-said households. The growth of national consciousness was on the background of cultural movement started by the newly educated. These reform movements received momentum by protesting against the anti-women practices like child marriage, polygamy, various
forms of oppression on widows etc. In this atmosphere, the reformer started viewing women as someone whose basic needs were confined to ‘education, health and welfare’, not to employment. Therefore, no provision was made in the Education Dispatch of 1854 to provide higher education for women though primary education was considered the state responsibility. Thus, interestingly, in 1857, when a girl sought for the permission to appear at the Entrance Examination, she was not allowed for it by Bombay University. This standard of qualification, at that time, was meant for getting a job in the post of a Deputy or Sub-Inspector in school. In 1877, when Calcutta University allowed women to sit for the Entrance, the gateway for higher education was opened for the women. Kadambini Basu was the first Bengali (Indian) woman to pass the Entrance Examination in 1879. Six years later, Sailabala Das, the daughter of Madhusudan Das, qualified this standard of education from the Davton School, Bengal. Sailabala had her contribution to the education of Oriya women as she served as the headmistress of ‘Ravenshaw Girls School’, Cuttack. This school produced a few qualified women who became pioneers in the field of women education in Orissa.

Thus, English education helped the modern elites to expose their women to the outside world and to help them in seeking a new identity. The modern elites started searching for a new definition womanhood in modern Oriya literature. In his short story Rebati, Phakirmohan showed how female education had been seen as a taboo or social stigma. Subhakanta Behera explains:

-Although education seems to be the centrality in the narrative, the most important consideration in Rebati is the question of identity. But, in order to provide Rebati with an identity of her own, Phakirmohan has first tried to empower her. And what else could be more powerful agency than education to empower Rebati in the
contemporary society. Rebati was the product of a society based on communal-rural-oral tradition, where values regarding women's role were historical embedded in socio-cultural structures of the society. So any suggestion for radical empowerment in economic terms would have been difficult to sustain. Hence, Phakirmoahn took the help of the most benign, but powerful agency of education to empower Rebati.  

This powerful agency of education empowered the women of Orissa, although a few, to seek for the personal identity. Kuntala Kumari Sabat, the famous Oriya poetess, who was also a doctor, tried to establish an identity of her own. It must be pointed out that the development of such a perspective in Oriya women was very novel matter in the cultural history of Orissa. This development as a corollary to the promotion of women education added a new facet to the construction of Oriya nationalism.

As we are dealing with the history of English education in Orissa, we cannot ignore the state of Muslim education in this province before 1936. Though Muslims formed about 1.66 per cent (according to census figure of 1931) of the total population of Orissa, their educational needs claimed for a different system of education for them in the traditional set - up. However, when the Colonial government came to offer English education to the Oriyas, the Muslims came to the forefront to receive it. The total number of Muslims under instruction in the English system was 3183 in 1885, 3236 in 1895, 4028 in 1905 and 8213 in 1936. Out of the total instructed in 1936, 40 and 350 students were in the collegiate and high school stage respectively. The Muslims of Orissa were not such a backward or neglected community as their co-religionists in Bengal. They also had a large share of ministerial and clerical appointments in the province. The
official records show that the British Government made efforts to enlighten the Muslims in English education.

The Muslim’s introduction to English literature and western science did not invoke in them to share a common sympathy for the Oriya cause. As their traditional background differed from the Oriyas, they could not identify themselves with the cause of Oriya identity. It was because Oriya nationalism stood in the background of language crisis, the Muslims failed to share it with the Oriyas. Their attachment to Urdu as their mother tongue hindered them to support the Oriya cause.

However, we can feel the emotion of the royal chiefs of the twenty-four Tributary states of Orissa in sharing the common sympathy for a linguistic identity with the people of the main land. Their education had been a sensitive issue at the time of colonial rule in Orissa. Most of the chiefs of these states were uneducated and had no desire to send their sons to the general schools established by the government and the missionaries. They considered it something of a dishonour to sit and mix with the ordinary people. Even when a proposal was given to establish a college specifically for this aristocratic feudal class, no enthusiasm was shown. But, some took interest in English education and consequently some feudal members took lead in the unification of Oriya speaking regions. After 1905, there was a steady progress in the primary and secondary education in the feudatory states. In 1923, there were 360 upper primary and 1603 lower primary schools. The missionaries did well in establishing a good network of elementary schools in these states, as elsewhere in the Orissa divisions. About 200 mission schools were established in the state of Gangpur. In 1931, there were 9 high schools and a number of middle English and middle vernacular schools in these feudatory states. It was due to the impact of education the chiefs themselves and the educated intelligentsia of the states voiced their protest against
peripheralisation under the Colonial Government. The transfer of the states of Gangpur and Banai from the Chotnagpur division and the states of Patna, Kalahandi, Sonepur, Bamra and Rairakhol from the Central Provinces to the Orissa division in 1905 was partly due to the result of the voice of protest raised by *Sambalpur Hitaisini*, the weekly started by Sir Basudev Sudhal Dev, the chief of Bamra.

At this point, our attention must be drawn towards the progress of English education in Oriya-speaking tracts in the adjoining provinces. Though the Southern portion of Orissa i.e. the Ganjam district was annexed to the British-Indian territory in 1766, 37 years earlier to the acquisition of what was known as Orissa at that time, it had its first English school only in 1858. In 1915, there were not more than two high schools for Oriya boys in the Madras Oriya tracts, whereas in Orissa proper there were 25 high schools. In the district of Samblapur, during 1930, there were two high English schools and six middle English schools at Samblapur and Bargarh. In the matter of collegiate education, the Oriyas of Midnapore, Singhbhum and the Central Provinces had scarcely any provision made for them. In that situation, an awareness grew among the people to demand for a remedy by the administration of the Oriya tracts in a single unit. A series of administrative difficulties made the people to seek for a political identity. The initiative was taken by the people of Madras Oriya tracts who organised a conference at Rambha, in the district of Ganjam for the amalgamation of all the Oriya-speaking tracts with Orissa. The same awareness was also reflected in the activities of the people in Sambalpur. Obviously, the progress of English education in all the Oriya speaking regions helped the English educated to establish a cooperation through the establishment of press, circulation of newspapers, and other printed matters and the formation of several social, political and religious associations. The liberal, philosophical ideas, which they imbibed from the English texts made them free from the limitation of their personal
interests. They learnt to identify their own sufferings with the plight of their brethrens. Such an ideology moved a great many educated elites like Madhusudan Das, Gopabandhu Das, Godavarish Mishra, Nilakantha Das, Chandrasekhr Behera, and a host of others to solve the Oriya problems related to its nationality.

In 1914, Madhusudan Das, said, “The foundation of Utkal Sammilani (the Oriya union conference) was laid in Ravenshaw Collegiate School. As the base of Waterloo was laid in the school of Eton, so we put the seed of this conference in this school”. This statement of Madhusudan points out the role of English schools in the national reconstruction and political re-generation of the people. At this point, we must have a note of the contribution of Ravenshaw College to the construction of Oriya nationalism.

In 1876, the Director of Public Instruction remarked, “The Cuttack College, properly equipped, will civilize Orissa, as the presidency and other Colleges have civilized Bengal, and as the Patna College civilising Bihar”. Having been established in 1876, the college started equipped with several branches of knowledge. But not all the subjects included in the curriculum of Patna University were taught in it. The Law Department was attached to it in 1881. In 1891, M.A.(Master of Arts) class in English was opened, but was closed in 1903 due to the vacancy of seats in successive years. It was again approved in 1921. B. Sc (Pass) and B.A. (Hons) classes were also opened. A beginning had been made with co-education in 1929-30. The institution had 595 students including 14 women students in 1936-37. The number of collegiate students in the year 1936-37 was 797.

In 1936-37, the number of high schools for Oriya boys was 32, the middle English schools 122 and the primary schools 7,569. The number of male scholars in the province was 7.06 in every hundred of the male population and that
of female scholars was 1.43. The total number of male scholars was 271,095 and female scholars was 59,993.94

Thus, English education went on influencing the social, cultural, political and religious life of the Oriyas. It was a long journey from 1822 to 1936 till the creation of separate province of Orissa. In England, the state accepted responsibility for education in 1833. But as the Government and the people were one, the progress of education was very rapid. In India, the Company accepted the responsibility for the people in 1813, twenty years prior to the similar event in England. But owing to the lack of sympathetic relationship between the Government and the people, attempts had not been widespread.95

As it has already been discussed, the intention of the Colonial Government was doubted by the traditional elites. But gradual progress in education broke down the intellectual and emotional barriers and made people aware of their own identity and helped them to search for it. The neo-literates, produced from the interaction of traditional mind with the advanced knowledge of the West, translated their new ideology into the practical necessities of the time. They gave a call to the millions of Oriyas to recognize their ‘Oriyaness’ and ascertain a new identity in the unification of the Oriya tracts in a single geographical unit.

The initial governmental apathy and people’s resistance to the Government’s involvement in education gradually transformed into people’s demand for English education and the Government’s concern for the improvement of the material status of the people. Thus, the establishment of schools in the second half of the nineteenth century led to the formation of a new literacy and the constructions of an indigenous mode of Oriya nationalism.
Notes

5. Board of Revenue Report, Letters from the Commissioner, Vol-48, No. 139, Commissioner to the Deputy Secretary in the Judicial Department, 9 July 1831.
12. Ibid. p. 185.
15. Ibid. p. 17-18.


23. Ibid.


25. Ibid. 1863-64 (Collected from the Statistical Returns).


32. Board of Revenue Report, Letter from the Commissioner (1848), Vol. 99, No. 667, Commissioner to the Sudder Board of Revenue 29 April 1848.


34. Ibid. 1846-47, Vol-97 No, 704, Commissioner to the Sudder Board of Revenue, 13 April 1846.

35. General Report on Public Instructions, 1869-70, Collected from Appendices.


40. Board of Revenue Report, Letter from the Commissioner (1856), Vol. 120, No. 150, Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government, 28 July 1856.

42. Proceedings of the Bengal Government (Education), May 1868, No. 52, Inspector of school, Southwest Division to Director of Public Instructions, No. 633, 9 August 1867.


44. Progress of Education in Bengal, 1892-93 to 1896-97 (First Quinquennial Review), Chap. VII, Para 197, p. 89.

45. Ibid. Para 198, p. 89.


47. Progress of Education in Bengal, 1902-03 to 1906-07 (Third Quinquennial Review), Para. 315, p. 65.


50. Ibid. p. 3.


55. Rath, Baidyanath. op.cit. p. 3.

56. Quoted from the essay “Pathyapustaka Adhyapana” (Oriya) from Siksha Bandhu, 1 February 1885.

57. Annual General Administration Report, Orissa Division, 1873-74, Para 96.

58. Ibid.

60. Ibid. 1880-81, Para. 265, p. 52.
61. Ibid. 1899-1900, p.p. XXIV-V.
64. Mohanty, Jagannath "Katakare Sikhya Parampara" (Oriya) p. 411.
68. Pandit Gopabandhu Das, Published in the Occasion of the Birth Centenary Celebration (Cutack, 1976), p.29.
70. *Utkal Putra*, Cuttack, 23 August 1901.
72. Ibid. p. 98.
74. Ibid. p. 128.
75. Review of the Education in Bengal, 1897-98 --- 1901-1902, p. 45.
77. Ibid. p. 146.
78. Ibid.
81. Ibid. 1894-95, Para.311.
83. Mahapatra, J. N. *Orissa in 1936-37 to 1938-39* (Cutack, 1941), Chapter-V.


90. Report on the Public Instructions in Bengal, 1876-77, p. 20.


94. Ibid. p. 56.