CHAPTER - IV

Describing the Text Books and Syllabi
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The circumstances that led to the introduction of English as the language of education are too well known to bear repetition. It is indeed impossible to make a people adopt an alien language through legislation or coercion. One cannot underestimate the role of the people who are the locus of change and who really determine whether the other language can be adopted. It depends upon the practical needs of the people who decide whether the peculiarities and obscurities of a language can be acquired. But that choice must also be preceded by a cultural stimulation on the part of the agency, which desires to introduce the same. Such a motivation worked in India. There were the powerful ideological apparatuses like school and texts. It was in the English classroom and with the help of texts (both English and vernaculars) that the politics of the cultural dissemination started.

With the introduction of English as a medium of instruction, the English textbooks became the most important part of the process of acculturation, and the classroom an important site for this to take place. In the beginning, the emphasis on the diffusion of western learning through Indian languages required the translation of English texts. With the printed texts at the centre of the new pedagogical practice, an entirely new education system started. These printed texts replaced the manuscripts. The centrality of the textbook also changed the entire nature of the educational institution. It introduced a wholly new apparatus – the agency of the prescribing authorities, fixed syllabus and an examination system based on the prescribed textbooks.

The first English school in Orissa, which the missionaries opened in May 1822, really had no fixed syllabus or prescribed textbooks. Their primary purpose was to make the students proficient in the Gospel. They planned to teach the three
R’s, the Gospel and the subjects like English grammar, geography and history. It was an introduction of an English method of study and a great departure from the indigenous system. In reality, they could not provide sufficient textbooks to the students. Lessons from the Bible were imparted to the students after making them efficient in reading and writing. The missionaries applied the same principles, which they implemented in their established schools in Bengal. In the school, the instruction was given through dictation. The teacher (sometimes, the monitor) with the textbooks in the hand had to pronounce a portion of each sentence audibly and deliberately, which each boy in the class wrote down in his copybook. When the lesson for the day was completed, the necessary corrections in each pupil’s book were also made. Every boy then in turn had to read what he had written sentence by sentence. The advantages of this scheme of instruction were that one printed book served for a dozen children and that the pupils made concurrent progress in penmanship and spelling. The same scheme was also applied in the vernacular schools established by the missionaries within a short period after the establishment of Cuttack English school. Thus, they helped the students to acquire a facility in reading and writing their own language.

Even in the Anglo-vernacular schools established by the missionaries, the students began the vernacular alphabet at the same time as they commenced the English alphabet and progressed in the two alphabets side by side. In this early stage of their education they were required to explain in their own language the meaning of English words. The next stage was to train them in the translation of easy English sentences into the vernacular or vice-versa. A primer for the teaching of Oriya had already been prepared by Rev. Sutton published from the Serampore press. No doubt, other books on spelling and grammar were used but the Bible was used as a classbook exclusively for religious instruction, never for parsing, syntactical, and other grammatical exercises for linguistic acquisition. Missionaries created a habit in the student to listen to the teacher form the Bible with apparent attention and to give answers to the questions on religion by rote without any exercise of understanding. Such an indifferent approach to the
meaning was encouraged only due to shape the minds of the pupils for conversion to Christianity. This method of introduction of the Bible as a classbook started a tradition even in the government schools later.

The Fort William College established in 1800 by Lord Wellesley in Calcutta set a pattern for English books, comparative grammars, dictionaries, and compilation of textbooks of history, geography, natural science and such other subjects. A galaxy of good teachers, both Indian and English created a revolution in the preparation of text books, both in English and in modern Indian languages. The General Committee of Public Instruction which was set up in Calcutta in 1823 no doubt stressed on the revival of Orientalism but began to attach English classes to some of the Oriental colleges. They expected that such a combined study would help social prejudices to drop off and if the same individual happened to be a good Sanskrit, Arabic and English scholar he would not only be mutually serviceable in public life, but would help in the translation of English books into the Indian classical and vernacular languages. Under the existing conditions, the teaching of European sciences through English language was difficult. The primary objective was to teach European sciences.

The Calcutta School Book Society established in 1817 aimed at the moral and intellectual improvement of the Indian by diffusing among them useful elementary knowledge on a non-religious basis and for this purpose to prepare good textbooks, both in English and Indian languages, suitable for schools. Thus the translation and writing of books on words and grammar started. The missionaries had already initiated this task at Serampore. Many of the regional languages of India, including Oriya, had their first printed books published from the mission press at Serampore. James Peggs mentions a few books written in Oriya before 1822. An English – Oriya vocabulary by Mohun Thakur in 1811; the Bible in Oriya by Rev Carrey; a poem of hundred pages by a Bengal Christian and a few tracts related to Christianity. We can get a reference to the first wordbook in Oriya in Roebuck’s book:
An Oriya and English vocabulary by Mohun Prasad Thakoor,
Native librarian to the college and author of a Bengali and English vocabulary already published. The Oriya language is the vernacular dialect of the Province of Orissa, and as no Dictionary of vocabulary of it has been yet printed, the present work will be of considerable utility. The compiler is well qualified for his undertaking, being a good English scholar, besides his knowledge of several other languages, Asiatic and European.

There were thirty sections in this book dealing with God, Universe, Gender, Body parts, Body and Soul, Diseases and their remedy, Materia Madica, Quadrupled, Birds, Fishes, Insects, Plants, Metals, Stones, Clothes, Food, House and Furniture, Vice and Virtues, Qualities of man, Arts and Science, Topics Related to Religion, Verbs, Adjectives etc. The words were arranged in three columns – Oriya words, their pronunciation in Roman letters and then the synonymous English words. Sufficient care was taken to compile the book for the sake of Company use and translation. The Viceroy had bought a few copies (almost hundred) for the use of the Company servants. It was really the beginning of arranging Oriya vocabulary in the English method of lexicography.

Before English was institutionalized in Orissa, the tradition had already been started in the use and preparation of English texts for the Indian schools. The Hindu college or the Anglo – Indian college, establishes in 1817 had started playing a significant role in modernizing the Indian mind. Its establishment itself was a breakway from the indigenous style and was a major step towards organising higher education on western lines. It was five years before the establishment of the first English school in Orissa that a generation of students had already started reading the texts like Richardson’s Selections, Shakespeare’s plays, Bacon’s Advancement of learning, Bacon’s essays, Novum Organum, Milton’s poetical works, Addison’s essays, Hallam’s Literary history, Campbell’s Rhetoric and Schlegel’s History of Literature.
They had already started understanding Goldsmith’s *History of Greece, Rome and England*; Russel’s *Modern Europe*; Robertson’s *Charles the fifth*; Gay’s *fables*; Pope’s version of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Dryden’s version of the *Aenied*; Milton’s *Paradise Lost* etc.¹¹ These texts started a craze for English studies. Such a training in advance English learning is in sharp contrast to that of the institution just established at a very late period in Orissa. There was also a sharp contrast in the method and quality of teaching used in the schools of Orissa. When the first generation of students in English schools of Bengal recited passages from English dramas and showed their efficiency in delivering speeches in high erudition, the hesitating Oriyas were still engaged in their spelling books and elementary English reader together with a hand book of history and geography.

The first government school in Orissa, Pooree Free Academy (1835), though designed to provide secondary education, however was forced by circumstances to start a field for the elementary education. Mr. Ganganarayan Bose, the first teacher of the school reported that ‘the school has only just opened and almost all the students having entered entirely ignorant of the alphabet, none are sufficiently advanced in reading and writing to commence any particular branch of study’.¹² The school had initially four classes. The students of the fourth class were the lowest. They were taught the alphabet and the words of three syllables. The next higher or the third class students learnt to read simple passages and words of five syllables and could spell them with tolerable correctness. Then the next higher class or second-class students could read short lessons, spelt the most difficult words with great accuracy and just started writing. In the first class, which was the highest class in the school, the students of 7 to 15 years of age had finished their first spelling book. They could write, spell and translate.¹³ The College, i.e. the upper classes of the school had three departments, English and vernacular, Sanskrit and Mohammedan. There was constant complaint of lack of Oriya books till the end of the school in 1840. It seems that the teachers were ignorant of the existence of the *Oriya English Vocabulary* by Mohan Thakur.
The English school of 1822 was taken over by the government from the Baptist Mission in 1841 which became Cuttack Zilla school in 1851 and then the high school in 1868. All these changes indicate a very interesting development in the field of English education in Orissa. Thus, until 1851, the school taught children up to the middle standard and it prepared candidate for the junior scholarship examination. The examinable subjects were English, English grammar, Mental philosophy, History, Geography, Map drawing, Mathematics, Natural history and the vernacular. The course of study which was set for the junior scholarship examination was like this: Literature and Grammar—Richardson’s Selections, Homer’s Iliad, Crombie’s Etymology and Syntax, and Graham’s English Composition; History—Russel’s Modern Europe, and Knightley’s History of England.

This course was so tough for the students that consequently the boys learned by rote what they did not understand. The local committee regretted in 1850 that there was only one student qualified to compete for a junior scholarship from the school that year. The cultural gap between the student and the text was so wide that the former could not assimilate him with the masterminds of English literature. There was a reaction against the matters taught to the pupils in these texts. The Cuttack Education Committee opined that to emphasize the strange history of English and only a good writing is less important than to teach the pupils about his own history and culture. Such an awareness so early is praiseworthy. Meaningless acquisition of such knowledge like the British history, world geography etc. drew the attention of a sensitive few towards the importance of their own history and local geography. There was a craze for the acquisition of some practical and meaningful information and advanced knowledge of the western sciences among the aspirants of English education. As the school began to teach Entrance courses after 1854, European sciences, arts, philosophy came in as new subjects. All instructions in the school were given through the medium of English and the full courses of studies for the Entrance Examination were English, Sanskrit, History, Geography, Mathematics, Mechanics, Natural history and one
It was really a very difficult course for the students of Orissa who started having their interaction with the English culture at a late period. On the other hand, the people had no interest in acquiring a benefit out of it. Likewise, there was a lack of inspiration from the government. As the Oriyas did not get appointment in any higher post, there was the obvious reason for their lack of interest.

In the process of training the Oriyas in English ways for the selection of persons to fill the lowest offices under the government, importance was given to a man who could have done a functional reading and writing of English. In that case introduction to a children’s spelling book and elementary English reader together with a handbook of history and geography was enough. English education for the sake of getting greater knowledge in European science and literature had not yet become the goal of the Oriyas. Goldsmith, Cowper, Milton, Shakespeare or Bacon was not impressive for them from the point of view of useful education. For that reason, we cannot trace the real impact of English education in the mind of the first group of students in Orissa before 1866.

In 1866 – 67, Cuttack College came into existence. Before that high schools were established in Puri and Balasore. Inspite of this progress general interest of the people yet remained away from high school education. Most of the students who came to read in these schools were the sons of government servants. Children of other classes of people (below the landlords, and higher than the poor) were still far away from the influence of school education.

The conservative belief still kept the majority away from the printed textbooks. Though a number of vernacular schools had been established by the missionaries in the nearby villages of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore, people prefered to send their children to chatsalis or the indigenous village schools where instruction was conveyed through manuscripts. The introduction of printed books had caused an alarm. The people apprehended that it was some kind of a plan for
ensnaring their children and destroying their caste. From some octogenarians from different parts of Orissa I have come to know that, even after 1936, the teachers still forbade the students to bring textbooks to the class. The teacher himself had an authority of the textbook and was imparting lessons in the traditional manner.

It was really astonishing that when a student of first class in the Hindu college, Calcutta wrote essays that revealed high style, literary flourish, erudition and a profusion of oratorical elements, a student in Orissa was struggling to introduce himself to the first book in English. But, gradually, the number of students increased in the schools. A craze for higher learning in English evolved and inspired the Oriyas to attend the highest centres of education then existing in Orissa and even to go to the nearby colleges outside Orissa. Gourishankar Ray, after passing his Junior Scholarship Examination from Cuttack Zilla School in 1856 went to Hoogley College for taking admission in the first Arts. He received a certificate from the college authority for his good standard in English. The texts which Gourishankar read while preparing for the Senior Scholarship Examination were: Titler’s Elements of general History; Bethune’s Selections from Goldsmith; Murray’s Grammar; Stewart’s Geography; Hind’s Arithmatic and Algebra; Elements of Euclid : First 6 books and Patterson’s Zoology.19

The above texts were selected for the purpose of making students introduced to the simple rule of grammar and arithmatic and still further to Murray’s abridgement and the rule of three and then afterwards to a wider knowledge of geography and natural sciences like physics and biology. The highest class read English, history and intellectual literary pieces.

Though such a course of study was highly literary, it proved useful for the emerging elites whose minds were getting shaped in the liberal education of England. As a result, the educated started taking interest in the political and administrative matters of the country. After his return to Cuttack, Gaurishankar took interest in public life and organised ‘Youngman’s Association’, the object of
which was to spread education among the poor and sufferings and render social
service to them.20 It has already been discussed how he became a pioneer in
brining a public awareness through his epoch-making periodical *Utkal Dipika.*
Equally praiseworthy was the contribution of Pearimohan Acharya, who for his
bold attack on colonial administration in the *Utkal Putra,* another Oriya periodical,
was rusticated from the College as an under-graduate student. He set up a primary
school independent of the government control. Its purpose was not to manufacture
imbecile clerks for the British offices, but to train Oriya youth to preserve Oriya
Culture. In a short while the tiny institution grew into a full fledged high school
maintained by public donation and managed by people independently on their
own. He also wrote a book on the history of Orissa in Oriya, which served as a
textbook for the students in schools.21

The above reference to the activities of the educated is remarkable in
the fact that such behaviour was a novel matter in accordance with the impact of
English education in this land. A perusal of the syllabus prescribed for English for
the various stages reveals the main influences on Indian mind. Famous works of
the most popular author like Bacon, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Scott,
Campbell, Addison, Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Southey, Defoe, Macaulay
comprised the English Syllabus. The aim was to foster the Indian literary taste in
an anglicised manner. The question papers set for the Entrance Examination
(1862) reveal the standard of training in English language and literature. Emphasis
was given in the critical understanding, paraphrasing, parsing, derivation and the
meaning of the words, grammar etc. The examination also included translation and
transliteration from Indian languages into English and vice versa and the
candidates were examined in composition, philology, the principles of
composition and the history of English literature.22

Remarkably, both literature and history were taught in one
composite unit and the stress was given more upon literary aspects than upon
historical. But the consequence was that the study of both together tended to
historicise literature. Thus the concept of the heroism, patriotism etc. captured the young imagination and brought a new inspiration into the young lives. By placing the history of Greece, Rome and England together, as in Goldsmith's History of Greece, Rome and England, the syllabus gave England a parallel status as a global civilizing influence and significantly put a comparison of the British with the Greeks and the Romans in their role as torchbearers of Western civilisation. By studying English authors whose books and poems were full of humane concerns, justice and freedom, the Indian youths conceived, with their simple faith, that even if they rebelled against foreign rule they should have the sympathy of the West.23

The inclusion of the epic poems by prescribing Milton and translations of the classics by Pope and Dryden in the syllabus served a dual purpose of moral and classical education. In Virgil’s epic, the ideal of a public figure is presented; a man with a mission, with all the heroic qualities of leadership. Such a hero, the British could have felt, would provide a useful model for the Indians setting out to reform their society. On the contrary, Satan the rebel hero of Milton’s epic is an anti-hero, whose opposition to God resulted in his fall. Such a hero, the British no doubt has felt, would provide the most useful model for the Indians setting out to raise their heads against the former. One can easily comprehend the ideological thrust behind the choice of these texts.

The missionary institutions did not set the same syllabus as the Government institutions had set. They tried to avoid the subjects that seemed to have no link with religion such as geography, general history and natural philosophy. Though they tried to obey the secular policy of the Government by not overburdening their syllabus with Christian literature, they showed an inclination for the romantic literature. Where the government curriculum was heavily classical, the missionary curriculum was predominantly romantic. According to the missionaries the Bible, as a text would make an appropriate impact on students, both logically and emotionally. The Bible is full of imagery and it could appeal to the imagination. The horrors of sin and damnation could not be
understood through reasons but through images that give the reader a shocking experience. Therefore, the Bible could be more appealing to the mind that was imaginative. This objective was to be served with the help of highly imagistic poetry of Cowper, Wordsworth, Young and other Romantic poets, than the classical poetry of the Pope, Johnson, Dryden etc. This stress on the training of imagination helped the Indian mind to dream for a better future. Romanticising about the past also helped the youth to seek for their identity.

On the other hand, the mingling of classical and Romantic literary texts in the government school curriculum had an echo of Arnoldian curriculum of the English Public Schools in England. This curriculum was entirely suited to the vocation of ruling. The course of study in English public schools was designed to foster leadership qualities required of a ruling elite: independent thinking, a strong sense of personal identity and an ability to make decisions on one's own authority. Though this curriculum was meant for a ruling elite, the texts that were a part of it were also taught in India. Until the end of the nineteenth century, Oriyas could not occupy government posts higher than those of clerks. But the authors they were reading in schools: Bacon, Butler, John Stuart Mill were not addressed to man who would be clerks and subordinates, but to those who would have taken responsibility in administration. The young Oriyas receiving English education were reading texts that taught them to be independent thinkers and leaders but they had neither the independence nor the scope to lead. In such a situation, the immediate consequences were frustration and rebellion. The Bengalis usurping the natural rights of the Oriyas to get government jobs in Orissa became the target of Oriya frustration. The formation of a number of social and political associations and publication of periodicals and newspapers formed a new consciousness in Orissa. We can cite the example of a number of English educated Oriyas in the period after 1866 who had been influenced by the philosophy of Bacon, Butler, Mills and others for whom social change was inseparable from moral reform of the individual. It can be easily conceived that Arnoldian
curriculum, which was adopted in India, might not be aiming at the training of a ruling elite but for setting educated Indians’ attention on reform their society.

The role of the Satyavadi Group of teachers on this line can be discussed. The Arnoldian concept of producing a class of educated with leadership qualities like independent thinking, a strong sense of identity, a deep love for cultural heritage was there in the minds of Gopobandhu Das, Nilakantha Das and others. Their introduction to the historical world figures like Mazzini, Garribaldi, Napoleon etc. from the historical texts had ignited a fire in them to produce such leaders through an educational institution. The Satyavadi School was the outcome of serious experiments in educational ideals combining the indigenous and modern methods of teaching. Though education engaged the immediate attention of its workers, they set before them also an ambitious programme of social and political advancement of their people. The students were imparted the lessons of democratic principles, social service, fellow feeling and values of physical and technical training. Nilakantha started the class library system in this school. The most important books in that library to be mentioned are Todd’s *Student’s Manuals*, I Smell Character, *The Life of Benjamin Franklin*, Up From Slavery, the *Biography of Sir Basudey Sudhal Dev* etc. Besides the texts prescribed for the students, Nilakantha encouraged them to read other books. He referred to Vincent Smith’s ‘*Indian History*’ and Morrison’s ‘*Geography*’, Hunter’s and Sterling’s *Histories Of Orissa* while teaching history. He also referred to Rajendralal Mitra and Manmohan Ganguli’s ‘*Orissa and her remains*’, ‘Antiquities of Orissa’ respectively. In order to make ‘history’ more interesting, he adopted a method of ‘Significant No. 6’ – by dividing Indian history into six important ages –Ancient, Vedic, Hindu, Muslim, Marhatta and British Age; by presenting six great Indian kings-- Chandragupta, Ashoka, Kaniska, Harshavardhan, Yashovardhan etc. The students were also encouraged to visit the historically significant places and were inspired to participate in the debating classes. Mostly the topics related to history like, ‘the Advent of the Aryans’, ‘Vedic civilisation’ ‘A Comparison between Ashok and Akbar’, ‘Importance of Rajputs in Indian history’ etc. were discussed
in the 'History club' every Sunday. The training was such that during the epidemics, the students went to the neighboring villages, distributed medicines and served the patients. The impression of the teachers' character upon the students was really remarkable.

This institution being a remarkable combination of the old and the new proved that the impact of English texts germinated a historical consciousness among the neo-literate. Thus far from alienating the reader from his own cultural background and tradition, English literature helped them to an essential unity with himself and with the past of his country and countrymen.

However, it had been gradually felt that the emphasis on English as the medium of instruction in place of Oriya prevented the spread of education to the masses. As the colonial intention was to teach English literature for cultural domination, the English text was clearly used in that situation as an instrument of social control. Vernacular education as a substitute for English education was not given importance though a side thought was given to teach vernacular along with English in the elementary level. The Bible, Aescp's Fables, Pilgrim's Progress were taught along with the Bhagabata, Gita Govinda, Amar Kosh etc. It has already been mentioned that there was the provision of teaching vernacular in the first English school in Orissa at Puri and the teaching was hampered due to the lack of textbooks in Oriya. But Missionary efforts improved the situation. Before 1854, there was no graded syllabus for the vernacular school students. The texts, prepared by the Missionaries before 1842, did not cater to the needs of the pupils. In 1840, the courses of studies were Introductory Lessons for the class I students; Padartha Vidyasara (Elements of Physics), writing and counting for class II students and Padartha Vidyasara, writing, translation and mathematics for class III students. The shortcomings, which we find in the textbooks, prepared and prescribed for schools in the period 1822-1842, were due to the lack of systematic planning. They suffered from the over-emphasis on transliteration and translation from Bengali textbooks. As the emphasis was in the circulation of modern
knowledge through educational institutions, translation of texts was given prime importance. Such a practice of translation started a wrong tradition. The translations of histories and such cultural texts gave a sophisticated view to Oriyas to gain access to their own past. Ironically, English education, with the help of such practices, familiarized the people of this country with ways of seeing or modes of representation that came to be accepted as 'natural'. An automatic filtration of English mode of thinking started.

Translation from English to vernacular or vice-versa became a part of the Examinations of Junior and Senior Scholarships from 1853 in Oriya schools. The first texts in Oriya, written in the imitations of English tried to inseminate the knowledge of modern science. *Padartha Vidyasara* written by Mr. Sutton in a dialogue form conveyed the information related to geography, history, astronomy, biology, physics etc. The book aimed at combining scientific and religious beliefs. Sufficient care had been taken to introduce an Oriya boy to his own history, history of England, Indian geography, world geography, a study of nature etc in this book. This was the first text for an Oriya to draw his attention to the useful knowledge. The other books like "The Vernacular Class book Reader" (1846) made the Oriyas introduced to the benefits of travel to distant places; relationship between the Hindus and the English; imitating the higher ideals of the English people- their culture and ideology; keeping commercial relationship with the outsiders; behaving courteously towards women and in a public gathering etc in this book. All these matters were prepared to inject a new taste and new ideology into the minds of the Oriyas, whom the British considered 'the most uncivilized among the Indians'. The famous Education Dispatch of Woods in 1854 gave a new direction to the progress of textbooks in Oriya. The evolution of an educated middle class accelerated this progress. As the number of schools increased, the government felt the need of encouraging this class to write texts in their own mother tongue. The educated also got a motive to prepare textbooks in different subjects. In 1858-59, Inspector Roer pointed out the scarcity of Oriya text books and told that the educational progress would be hindered in
this province, if a few text books on moral, grammar, history, primer, mathematics, geography were not circulated in the schools. Mr. Roer was the first English Officer who drew the attention of educated elites towards the scarcity of Oriya texts, which forced prescription of Bengali textbooks in the schools of the districts of Puri, Balesore and Cuttack. As the government was not ready to spend money on the preparation of textbooks in vernacular, the situation became critical. The discussion about the adoption of Oriya as the medium of education arose as early as 1862, when Patterson, the Executive Officer of Balesore, gave a suggestion for substituting Oriya for the Bengali language in the Government School at Balesore. In April 1863, Medlicott, the Inspector of Schools, reported that Oriya had been regularly taught in the Balesore Zilla School. On his inspection, he found that in every class, including the highest, the boys knew Oriya as well as Bengali. All the boys of the final class had, in 1863, selected Oriya as the second language for the Entrance Examination. But he said, "They do so, because they say no case of a candidate having failed in Ooriyah is known". So he proposed that the acquisition of such a practical knowledge should be encouraged only in the lower classes, but Bengali must be the proper subject of study for aspirants to University Entrance Examination. W.S. Atkinson, the Director of Public Instruction expressed his views in favour of the teaching of Bengali in the schools of Orissa in place of Oriya. Such adverse opinions of the British Officers gave a scope to a conspiracy of the Bengalis in Orissa to make the Oriyas deprived of their mother tongue. At this juncture of Orissa history, a new consciousness grew among the educated few. There was the gradual realisation of the fact that the prestige of a nation depends upon the prestige of its language and literature. As Phakirmohan Senapati says, "No nation has ever progressed by losing its mother tongue. The decline and the decay of any nation which neglects its mother tongue is inevitable".

In the Post-Famine period, the young elites collaborated with the missionaries in writing textbooks. It is a fact that the preparation of textbooks was not an easy matter. It was scarcely realised that the writing of a good school-book
called for a combination of many qualities. The textbook writer must have a very considerable knowledge of the subject treated and some knowledge of the psychology of children. As the authority of the selection of school-books was with the Calcutta School Book Society, the works of efficient Oriya authors were almost neglected. The prescribed books were not free from inaccuracies. However, the case in Sambalpur was something different. As it was under the direct supervision of the Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur, financial help was provided for the textbook production. Due to the sincere effort of Mr. Bichhanda Pattnaik, the Deputy Inspector of schools of that region (who himself was a textbook writer), the students got some good books in simple and correct language.34

With the establishment of Cuttack Printing Company by Gaurishankar Ray and a few other elites like Vichitrananda Das, a new phase started in the field of publication of textbooks. Gaurishankar himself wrote a number of textbooks in a variety of subjects keeping in view the need of the textbooks for Oriya schools. A host of writers including Vichhananda Pattnaik, Prabhakar Vidyaratna, Govind Chandra Pattnaik, Radhanath Ray, Madhusudan Das and others contributed in writing textbooks on the topics of Oriya literature, history, geography, mathematics, geometry, grammar, syntax etc. Inspired by Gaurishankar, Govinda Ratha wrote and published as many as two hundred books and earned a lot from this business.35 Gradually the number of textbook writers increased in such a manner that competition started in this field of production. Influential people started taking benefit out of it. As government introduced prize money for textbook writing, several author unqualified and unsuitable for this profession started producing books. Even some of them influenced the selection authority for getting favour in this. Mr. Natham writes:

The preparation of school textbooks is not an easy matter in European countries, and especially in Germany, it is not a task which is as a rule attempted except by persons who are not only
acknowledged authorities on the subject on which they write, but have also had years of practical experience in teaching it. Moreover, the production of textbooks by one man concerned with more than one branch of education is in Europe almost unknown. In Bengal one man who is perhaps not even a teacher by profession will produce textbooks in three or four branches of education – A new profession has been created, namely that of textbook writer. He requires only a few weeks warning and he will produce a school-book on any subject whatever.36

This remark can be applied to textbook production in Orissa too.

From the list of books printed from 1875 to 1889, we can pick up a few books written by the same authors. Varnabodhaka (the primer), Kavita Kalapa (a collection of poems), Nitiratnasara (a book on morals), Bhugolasara (a book on geography), were all written by Govind Ratha.37 Ramayana (translated into Oriya), Bharata Itihasa (History of India), Abasara Basare (a collection of poems) were by Phakirmohan. These were prescribed for the students in schools. Senapati said, “Orissa possesses plenty of talented educated people, who could write excellent books, if they wanted to, with practice any educated man can become an author. With concerted effort, there is nothing that can not be accomplished”.38

So they tried their hands in writing textbooks on different subjects related to western knowledge. Therefore, the writers took the role of not only creators but also producers. In accordance with the government policy of inspiring the educated to write textbooks, the rich landlords and the kings started financing them. Maharaja Bhagirathi Mahendra Bahadur of Dhenkanal donated Rs. 9000/- for providing inspirations to productions and circulation of the textbooks. Awards were declared for the selected books that prompted even the unqualified persons to write. However, a few innovations were also made. Pearimohan Acharya’s ‘Odisa Itihas’ (History of Orissa), Madhusudan Rao’s ‘Pravandhamala’ (A collection of Essays) were the results of some financial rewards.39 As per the policy of
‘payment by results’ books were given in prizes to students and teachers. In that way, many prominent persons including Sitanath Ray to Baikunthanath De, the famous landlord of Balesore engaged themselves in the vocation of textbook production. It was due to Radhanath Ray, the joint Inspector of schools, the textbook politics took a new direction. His Sahitya Bishayaka Adarsha Prashnavali (Ideal questions on literature) created a new turmoil in the educational administration. As Radhanath had control over the settings of questions and results, the teachers took the guidebook as an authority. It created restlessness among the elites of the period. This manipulating action of Radhanath was very much criticized at that time.

Before 1870, ‘Oriya Literature’ was not included in the curriculum of the schools in Orissa. Explanation was that no textbook for that purpose was available. The Selection Committee was perhaps not conscious of the existence of great literary pieces of Upendra Bhanja, Jagannath Das, Balaram Das and several of other. Oriya was taught in schools only to impart a basic knowledge of grammar and syntax related to the language. When ‘English Literature’ was reigning supreme in the schools and colleges of colonial India, no body had given a single thought to introduce ‘Oriya Literature’ in Oriya schools. But with the introduction of ‘Literature’ (Oriya) in the curriculum of the Teacher Training School, Cuttack by Bichhanda Pattnaik, the joint Inspector of schools, started the process of vernacular literary studies in Orissa. As no proper text on Oriya literature was available in the beginning, Pearimohan’s ‘Odisa Itihas’ (History of Orissa) was included in the literature syllabus of Minor Scholarship Examination 1872. The intention of including ‘Oriya Literature’ in the Syllabus was a praiseworthy one. Gradually some good books were produced and included in the syllabus. In this respect, Kavitavali (An anthology of poems by Radhanath Ray and Madhusudan Rao), Madhu Varnabodh (A first book on Oriya language by Madhusudan Rao), Kavita Kalapa (A collection of poems by Govind Rath), Shakuntala (A translation by Banamali Singh), Bhramabhanjan (A translation by Jagmohan Lala) are a few books to be mentioned. In this process, we can note the
importance of a number of literary clubs and literary journals that started a healthy tradition in the literary discussion. At this time, a new movement started in Bengal against the selection of some literary texts by the Calcutta Schoolbook Society on the ground of profanity and vulgarity in literary texts. Due to that, an order was issued for the omission of ancient literary works from the Oriya Syllabus. Gourishankar’s *Vichitra Ramayana*, which had been in the course suffered from this inappropriate judgement of the government. Pearimohan’s *Odisa Itihas* was also excluded because some of the committee members argued that the history bears an imprint of such evidence which defiles Hindu beliefs. On this regard, they pointed out the infamous treatment of the foreign invaders of Lord Jagannath: “Kalapahara threw the images of Lord Jagannath into the pyre at the bank of river Ganga”. Though the above decision was backed by a political conspiracy, it had the support of missionary objection to teach medieval Indian Literature to the people. For they considered that Indian mind was not shaped to cultivate a high degree of morality.

However in such an atmosphere, the contradiction gave rise to a duel between the supporters of medieval literature and that of modern literature. The erotic poems of Upendra Bhanja were criticised by the supporters of modern poems written by Radhanath Ray and Madhusudan Rao. Radhananth’s imitation of a few works from Ovid’s *Metamorphosis* was a matter of discussion for the supporters of medieval literature. The tragic love of Pyramus and Thisbe as naturalised in Radhanath’s *Kedar Gouri* gave a false conception to people regarding *Kedar Gouri*, the famous shrine in Bhubaneswar. Despite such criticism, Radhanath wrote a few other masterpieces in Oriya literature. His romanticism inspired him to revive Oriya culture and to immortalize Nature in his works. Unlike Radhanath, Madhusudan Rao, a firm adherent of Brahma Samaj and a dedicated teacher, propagated his religious and pedagogical principles through his literary works. A number of textbooks written by Madhusudan had often been prescribed in schools. His *Prabandhamala* (A collection of essays) and *Kavitabali* (An anthology of poetry) disseminated higher spiritual values and
moral lessons among the students. Most of the essays in Prabandhamala were translated from English and were kept in view to fulfill the scarcity of such genres in modern Oriya literature. The poems like Nirbasitara Bilapa and Atma Samarpana in the anthology were translated from English poems. Nirbasitara Bilapa was the translation of the famous poem ‘The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk’ by William Cowper. But most of his original poems like ‘Jivana Chinta’, ‘Akasha Prati’, ‘Stava’, ‘Phabhata’ etc. were full of a belief in the existence of an ideal world of truth and beauty beneath the shifting surfaces of reality.

His Varnabodha or the first book for learning Oriya was full of aphorisms. He was full of wisdom also. He tried to rouse a faith in every heart that one God is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. His belief in the universal brotherhood echoes, “Let man’s million voices sing in joyous chorus of the one God and the one race of man”. Madhusudan was consciousness of the demerits of modern education. So he tried to revive the traditional values of indigenous schools in his book ‘Abadhana Bandhu’ (Aid to the teachers). As the Principal of Teachers Training School, Cuttack, he helped the teachers in this direction. His texts echo his religious philosophy and establish him as a great teacher of the Oriyas. His heart was full of love and piety for mankind. He taught children to believe.

‘Whatever I do, I speak and I think
He, the creator, Almighty knows every moment
Day and night, He stays with me,
Let me remember
And worship Him, always in my heart.’

It can be easily apprehended that the impact of Brahmoism was very deep in the mind of Madhusudan.

Necessity of writing Oriya textbooks promoted the creation of modern Oriya literature. The main argument behind the introduction of Bengali in the schools of Orissa was the lack of Oriya textbooks. The scarcity was mitigated
due to the upsurge among the educated Oriyas to save their mother tongue. By 1901, the objective was set to give every Indian child a chance of acquiring a proper knowledge of his vernacular. Proper care had been taken to prepare and prescribe such textbooks, which could be beneficial for the students. In 1904, an order was issued that all reading books, both in the vernacular and in English should contain “suitable biographical selection such as would inculcate in the pupils- habits of order, diligence and truthfulness combined with submission to authority and reverence to their elders.” The order added that ‘those lessons should be drawn from the lives of Hindu, Mohammedan and Christian worthies instead of being confined to one section of individuals.’ It was a very good proposal, because it could shape the young minds with good examples.

Considering the development of Oriya language in the first decade of the 20th century it was impossible to produce a vernacular elementary science primer, which could be considered a good book from the point of view of language and style. The matter to be conveyed was largely foreign to the spirit of language and the scientific terms used had been either transliteration or farfetched reproduction. Under no circumstances was it desirable to teach a child our language through the medium of composition of an elementary science. Gopabandhu Das the then member of the Legislative Council of Bihar and Orissa in 1913, said: “The question of education, Sir, is a very difficult question in this country. It is really transplantation of the civilization of the West in the east”.

Much light had already been thrown on the usefulness of western knowledge through the textbooks in English and the vernacular. In this context, we should have a perusal of the above course in the elementary level, which had done a lot of harm to the pupils. Thick books had been published and introduced. Young minds were asked under fear of severe punishment to learn their contents by heart without understanding them. Some portions of these books were not intelligible to some of the teachers also. The same problem, which appeared in the beginning of the introduction of English texts in Orissa was reiterated even in the first part of
the twentieth century. This cultural gap can be easily seen between the privileged few who used the texts and those who did not. Those who believed that the scientific texts revolutionized the educational system should not do that. Gandhiji observed that ‘of all the superstitions that affect India, none is so great as that a knowledge of the English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty and developing accuracy of thought.’ The ideas of liberty and accuracy of thought which the new-literates imbibed from the English texts gave them a false sense of being the precursors of reformation in the society. A bulk of people being isolated from the modern texts remained suppressed under this false identity. The courses of historical events which preceded the introduction of texts in India obviously give us a false notion that the production of texts as a social and cultural institution played a powerful role in shaping particular ideas and in bringing a revolutionary change.

Though a gradual change appeared in the prescription of text books in Oriya School due to shifting of attention from English to vernacular education, until the creation of separate Orissa Province in 1936, the English texts were reigning supreme and playing the decisive role in imposing colonial ideology upon the subject people. The vernacular class books, which were produced in the background of language agitation but the echoes of British ideology. The educated were inspired by the English texts to compile dictionaries, write grammars, compose poems, arrange their ideas in essays and express their thoughts in speeches. It was the magic of the English text, which motivated the Oriyas to establish printing presses and to revive medieval vernacular literature in printed forms.

Diffusion of western learning through the translation of western texts inspired them to encourage the teaching of vernaculars in schools. Translation was employed in different kinds of discourses - philosophy, history, education etc. to perpetuate colonial domination. The educated elite’s English way of writing and publishing marks their willing acceptance of subjection. English education really
did not save them from this intellectual subjection though it gave a false notion of giving them ideas of liberty etc. In the beginning, the cultural discourses like missionary – writing, travel-writing and translation works of the English scholars started historicizing and naturalizing the degradation of natives. That was injected to the Oriya minds by showing the superiority of the English race. These cultural texts served as the models for the vernaculars texts. Sterling and Hunter’s ‘Histories of Orissa’ helped Pearimohan to look at his Orissa from the colonial perspectives. Radhanath conceived his ideas of love and heroism from the point of view of Ovid, Wordsworth and others. Madhusudan imbibed his mysticism from Blake, Cowper and Shelley. We can easily understand the colonial attitude “to form a class who may be interpreters between the British and the millions they govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but in English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect”. So we must see the whole process of the introduction of English texts in vernacular and the institutionalisation of texts both in the press and schools as a colonial practice of keeping the nation in subjugation even after the British left the coast of Indian Ocean. Macaulay echoes the same ideology as he spoke of the time when though India might become independent, the British would leave behind an empire in India that would never decay, because it would be “the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws”.

Notes

3. Ibid. p. 58.
5. Ibid. p. 34.
13. Ibid. p. 20.
16. Ibid. p. 279.
31. Proceedings of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, General Department (Education), June 1862, No. 15, Commissioner of Orissa to Government of Bengal, No. 180, 13 May 1862.
32. Ibid., June 1863, No. 143, Inspector of Schools, South West division to Director of Public Instruction, No. 1475, 16 April 1863.
34. Rath, Mrutyunjay. Karmayogi Gourishankar (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1925), p. 44.
35. Ibid. p. 71.
38. Quoted from 'Phakirmohan Granthabali' (Oriya), in J.V.Boulton, 'Phakirmohan Senapati- His Life and Prose Fiction', Bhubaneswar, 1993, p. 452.
39. Utkal Dipika, Cuttack, 8 May 1869.
41. Ibid., p. 130-131.
42. Sambada Bahika, Balesore, 25 September 1879.
43. Rath, Mrutyunjay., Kamayogi Gourishankar (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1925), p. 76.
44. Acharya, Pearimohan. Odisara Itihasa (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1879), p. 94.

49. Proceeding of the Legislative Council of The Lieutenant Governor of Bihar and Orissa, 1913 pages 104-105.


52. Ibid. p. 140.