The notable social reforms brought about in the 19th century were mostly related to the status of women. While broad minded Europeans like William Bentinck and Hardinge, and Indian reformers like Raja Rammohun Roy, Swami Vivekananda and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar figure prominently in history, the role of Christian missionaries in improving the status of women is little known. In the beginning of the 19th century missionaries pioneered the education of women, a sphere hitherto ignored almost by the British rulers. They also campaigned for legislation on two major evils of the period, Sati and widow remarriage which generated a reformist trend towards women's emancipation. In their zeal to evangelize and transform Indian society, the missionaries initiated a process of change which influenced the intelligentsia who later challenged many basic Indian ideas and practices.

Education of girls was particularly unknown in most parts of India. Owing to superstitious belief it was totally discouraged. However, daughters belonging to aristocratic families only received a smattering of elementary education.¹

It was pointed out that "Female education was carried on in response to a demand that did not exist." This has become a classic remark. Even in the early part of the 20th century, the census figures of 1921 show that only two females out of every hundred of five or more years of age were able to read or write. For higher education the figures reveal a more striking disproportion. The Calcutta University Commission found in Bengal only 490 girls in the four top forms of high schools out of a female population of twenty two millions. The figure would be far more distressing if communities such as Parsee, Anglo-Indian and Indian Christians were removed. Emphatically it can be said that the Government by its timidity and stumbling at the beginning had been largely responsible for India's inability to take up the matter seriously. The Missionaries, on the otherhand, had from the beginning been convinced and stalwart pioneers.

The first educational institution for girls in India was started by a man called May in Chinsura. Another pioneering effort was made by the Calcutta Female Juvenile Society founded


by Hannah Marshman in 1819. As has been mentioned earlier, Hannah Marshman was the wife of J. Marshman, one of the famous trio of Serampur (Carey, Ward and Marshman).

Female education made a beginning in Orissa under the initiative of missionaries. The women of the Orissa Baptist Missions had worked from the beginning with unspiring faith to make the ignorant women of Orissa enlightened. Besides cooperating with their husbands in many modes of service, they had assisted in the superintendence of the day schools, in the tuition of East Indian girls, in pastoral attention to the women converts, in visitation of Hindu women and children in their homes and still more productively in the creation of a succession of native women evangelists and Bible-readers. In the words of John Clifford, "for no sphere of missionary labour is more discouraging than that amongst Hindu women.... But the sisters saw in the difficulty and hazard of the task, a summon to fuller service, a call to increased devotion and with untiring zeal and earnestness, Mrs Bampton, Mrs Sutton, Mrs Stubbins, Mrs Lacey, Mrs D.F. Smith, Mrs Phillips, Mrs Bachelor and others devoted themselves from day to day to the visitation and instruction of Hindu women in things pertaining to the way of


6 The General Report on Public Instruction, (1871-72); (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1872), p.3.
salvation\(^7\) and enlightenment. With their sincere efforts women education made progress slowly and gradually in Orissa.

**Progress of Women Education**

Under general education, the early educational activities of the missionaries for girls in Cuttack, Balasore and Pipili have been discussed. The missionaries started these schools attached to female orphanages. The Cuttack female orphanage was established in 1836 by the General Baptist Missionary Society.\(^8\) Mrs Sutton was in charge. In Balasore the American Free Will Baptist Missionary Society established the first school for girls in 1839. Here Mrs Phillips was in charge.\(^9\) As mentioned earlier several girls' schools consisting of lower classes, some attached to the orphanages were well managed and efficiently conducted by the missionaries.

As per the report on the Progress of Education in Bengal, only a few girls' schools, mostly of elementary nature, at Cuttack, Balasore and Pipili were under the management of


\(^8\) "Statistical Returns of Aided Schools for Girls for the year ending on 31st March 1868", General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of the Bengal Presidency (1868-69) (Calcutta 1869), (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1869), No. XII, p. 103.

missionaries. The Report listed that the most useful girls' schools of Orissa were at Cuttack, Pipli and Jaleswar (The Balasore Girls' Orphanage was moved to Jaleswar in 1861 and it continued there till 1886 when it was again shifted to Balasore) and pointed out that, "all these are regarded as flickerings of light which, when generations shall have passed away, may blaze forth into the full day of Oriya female enlightenment."10

The girls' school at Pipli attached to the orphanage after working efficiently later merged with boys schools. Mention has been made of it earlier. During the famine of 1836-38 and again in 1865-66 the missionaries established orphanages which subsequently developed into centres of female education. The Cuttack female Orphanage with its school was the first of its kind in Orissa. The first impression of Mrs Sutton who was in charge of the school is worth mentioning. At the outset Mrs Sutton contrasted the facilities for women's education in Calcutta and Orissa. At Cuttack, according to Mrs Sutton, the natives were more prejudiced than at Calcutta. Even in the heart of Cuttack it was almost impossible to get girls of respectable character. The missionaries were much grieved to hear that the girls whom they collected for imparting education were of undesirable character. Their immorality

induced them to learn how to read. So the schools for girls started by the missionaries immediately after their arrival were all closed. But they were not discouraged. With persevering efforts they could overcome the difficulties. They maintained only one school which was denominated as a girls' school because there were eleven girls and seven boys in it. These children were considered as virtuous. Mrs Sutton and Mrs Lacey in charge of the schools for girls' education were determined to admit only such children. In the first instance itself they were suspicious of two girls and expelled them. The first girls' school which Mrs Sutton mentioned was the one attached to the female orphanage. The present Buckley Girls' High School was the descendant of this premier girls' institution which will be discussed a little later.

Progress of women's education in Orissa was very slow. According to the report of the Joint Inspector of Schools in 1874, if female education meant a little reading and writing then there were more educated women in Orissa than perhaps in any other part of Bengal. But when it meant good and sound learning then it must be confessed that very little had yet been done and for some years to come it would continue more or less in the same manner. The following reasons were ascribed for the slow progress of women's education by the Joint Inspector of Schools.

"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 public have access, and where they may be subjected to the gaze of the public, and will have to mix with girls of all classes, is revolting to their feelings and prejudices. Hence it is that while in the Pathasa carried on in the indigenous method, we often have few girls writing the alphabet on little pieces of palm leaf or with small pieces of chalk upon the ground, we do not find a single Oriya Hindu or Muhammadan girl of a respectable family in any of our middle or higher class schools."12

In 1875, there were nine Girls' schools and one Zenana association for the instruction of girls, of these five were in Cuttack, one in Puri and the rest in Balasore. One of the schools was unaided, and the others were all aided. The aided schools were under missionary management. The total number of girls under instruction on the 31st March 1875 was 967, of whom one was in Middle English School, one was in a circle school, 17 were in Middle vernacular schools, 634 were in girls schools. The rest frequented Pathasalas and the normal school at Santipur. Most of the girls in schools were Bengalis. The number of Oriyas was few.13 Girls schools were, for the first time, classified in the educational returns under the recognised standards of instruction in 1880.14


13 Ibid., pp.515-518.

As per the report for 1980-81, the special Girls' schools were 33 in number, viz., 25 in Balasore, 6 in Cuttack and 2 in Pooree. Of these 20 were under missionary management and the rest were Hindu Girls' Schools. The best Hindu Girls' schools were situated at Balasore, Cuttack and Bhadrak. Amongst these were the Christian orphanages conducted by the missionaries, all of which were efficient and well managed. The total number of girls under instruction was 3,100 against 2,446 of the year preceding. Of these 953 attended special girls' schools and the rest boys' schools. The number 953, above given does not tally with the figures of attendance. The reason is that as girls attended boys' schools, boys attended girls' schools and 953 was the number of girls at the girls' schools.

The special girls' schools in Orissa had not yet reached a standard higher than that laid down for the upper primary scholarship course. For many years efforts were directed towards the diffusion of the elementary knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic amongst females rather than to an ambitious raising of the standard of instruction to a point which the majority of girls were unable to reach in consequence of the early marriage difficulty. Out of four girls who competed during 1882-83 at the Upper Primary Scholarship examination, two passed the test successfully. Thirty two

15 Ibid., 1881-82, pp.62-63.
girls passed the lower primary scholarship examination in the three districts of the Division. Six female teachers attached to the Balasore Zenana Association successfully passed the final Guru examination of the third grade normal school.  

According to the Report of the Orissa Division 1983-84, the special girls' schools were 32 in number, viz., 21 in Balasore, seven in Cuttack and four in Poree.

Of these 20 were under missionary management and the rest were Hindu Girls' Schools..... The highest examination which a girl of Orissa had yet aspired to was the Middle Vernacular Scholarship Examination. A Christian girl from Jellosore school appeared at the above test for the first time but failed.  

The table below shows the progress of female education in Orissa.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of schools</th>
<th>No. of pupils</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1895-96</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>5638</td>
<td>Girls in Boys' schools are included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899-1900</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6062</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904-1905</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>14118</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


17 Ibid., 1883-84, pp.43-44.

By 1905 the progress of female education was not satisfactory. The highest standard reached by the girls in Orissa was the middle vernacular scholarship standard. The slow progress of female education was mainly due to the following reasons.

A great portion of the people were conservative. They did not like girls to go out and come into close contact with boys, teachers, or any other residents. Similarly the education of their female children was a matter of great indifference to a large portion of parents and guardians. They usually did not take the same amount of care and interest in the education of their female wards as they did in that of boys. Besides the system of early marriage presented an almost insurmountable barrier to education beyond the primary stage.

Finally the scarcity of female teachers and want of adequate State aid and aid from other public funds hindered the smooth progress of female education. Rev. William Orton, a representative from the General Baptist Missionary Society, London visited Orissa in November 18, 1886. In his report on Elementary Schools for girls where he mentioned that the Deputy Inspector of Schools in the Orissa district called upon him and stated that the Government were establishing

elementary schools for girls, that four and a half years ago there were no girls' schools in Orissa besides the mission schools, that in the year under report about 40,000 children were under inspection, that from forty to fifty percent of the boys were in attendance and only 10 percent of the girls. The children paid as school fees about three pence per month and that teachers were paid from five to six shillings per month and that attendance was not compulsory.  

Obviously, therefore, the missionaries alone established and managed girls' school for a considerably longer period in Orissa. Because of the reasons stated earlier, the progress of women education in Orissa had been slow. Inspite of this discouraging trend in the sphere of girls' education the missionaries carried on their efforts.

Regarding the progress of women's education through missionary efforts, Rev H.W. Pike gives an interesting and informative account in a report entitled, "The Missionary Situation in the Cuttack District in 1919". With regard to women's work he observed that the women missionaries were conducting a girls' orphanage with about 90 orphans, a large school with 139 pupils, 48 of them boarders, a Kindergarten with 129 children, and a Teachers' Training School with 30

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pupils. And they were also supervising four village schools.
Four considerable institutions, apart from the village schools, all serving, not Cuttack alone, but the whole district. The two ladies who remained (one on furlough) had charge of five primary schools and all the visiting and Zenana work in a town of over 55,000 people. This indicates that in 1919 the women missionaries were responsible for managing all these institutions efficiently in Cuttack district, specially meant for girls and women. During this period the number of girls' institutions were limited. The Cuttack Mission Women's Training school was the only institution for the whole of Orissa. Nevertheless, Cuttack Girls' Orphanage later known as Buckley House needs special treatment in order to highlight the type of teaching and training imparted to the girls for preparing them for the future.

Out of the girls' schools managed by the mission, it is therefore worthwhile to give the details of the two premier girls' schools of Orissa started in the early nineteenth century, one at Cuttack and the other at Balasore and raised to the status of girls' high schools. The female orphanage at Cuttack is popularly known as the Buckley House, Mrs John Buckley

21 The Missionary Situation in the Cuttack District after 97 years of work 1919, (Cuttack: OMP, 1919), p.2.

22 The Missionary Observer, (March 1887), ed. W. Hill, (Derby: GBMS, 1887), p.120.
was the first Headmistress of this school. She remained in charge of this school even after the death of Rev. J. Buckley in December 1886. At the committee meeting held at Broad street chapel, Nottingham on February 15 it was agreed that Mrs Buckley should retain the superintendence of the female orphanage at Cuttack. The details can be seen from the chart at page 221.

Buckley Girls' High School

It is very interesting to trace the origin of this particular school which is the pioneer educational institution for girls in Orissa. This particular school had its origin in the Boarding school or the female orphan asylum established in the year 1836.

In the orphan asylums the benevolent work had been continued and in this institution the fatherless and motherless had been cared and trained both for earth and heaven. In another context Rev. Frank Fellows described that 1936 was the centenary year of the Girls' Middle School, Cuttack - the largest girls school in India and it passed almost unnoticed.

23 The Missionary Observer, (March 1887), ed. W. Hill, (Derby: GBMS, 1887), p.120.


Rev and Mrs A. Sutton opened this girls' school for the East Indian girls in 1836 and taught them under the superintendence of the Baptist Mission. At the initial stage it was a primary school. In those days the girls were given plain education. Mr Sutton writes in this context that, "our object for the girls is while giving them a plain education such as for the boys, to which we add knitting, sewing, spinning, to render them sensible, modest, industrious and pious young women, fitted to be helpmates to their husbands in their humble sphere. Hence we avoid all merely ornamental branches, which can be of no use to them in after life." Only in boarding institutions mainly under mission supervision has it been found possible to ensure a really valuable domestic training by entrusting to the inmates duties in connection with the domestic arrangements and by practical training in such duties. "The experiment of organising such boarders into "family" groups and making each group responsible for its own domestic arrangements had been applied with some success." Apart from the above mentioned subjects at the primary stage children were taught reading, writing, reading of New Testament, memorising the life history of Christ, arithmetic and catechism. Miss Derry, later Mrs Buckley (married to Rev. John Buckley) was the first headmistress of


this school. Reference was made in The Missionary Observer regarding the other devoted and dedicated female workers of this school.

Help was given by the 'Society For Promoting Female Education in the East To The Orissa Mission'. Mrs Buckley, Miss Collins, then Miss Butler and Mrs S.M. Goadby were sent. Later on Miss Guignard and Miss Packer who had been labouring for some years in Calcutta were transferred to Orissa and lastly Miss Leigh. All these were sent to work in connection with the Baptist Mission, the last three having their salaries paid. In addition to all this for eighteen years they had supported the girls school at Chogamand from time to time made grants to teachers etc., the whole amounting at its lowest computation, to over £ 4,685. 28

Miss Guignard was the first lady teacher who arrived at Cuttack and took over charge from Mrs Buckley, the first headmistress of this school. Miss Guignard died here while in service. After her death Miss Packer became the headmistress. Prior to this assignment at Cuttack Miss Packer was in Calcutta for 7 years and was responsible for spreading education among girls and women as agent of the Society For The Promotion of

Female Education in the East. She spent some years at Berhampur and Pipli. When she retired after some years of service from this boarding school, Miss Leigh was the principal for many years. After her retirement Miss A.N. Thompson was the Principal till our country became independent. Miss E. Wigner, an enthusiastic and energetic woman, was the secretary of this school for a long period of time since the commencement of her service in the second decade of the present century.

As mentioned earlier in the initial stage and thereafter for quite some time the girls were given instructions and practical training of importance. Rev. John Buckley writes under "Notes and Gleanings" that "Our readers have probably observed in the papers, that a great international Exhibition will be held in Calcutta in December next, and it may interest them to know that the Inspector of Schools applied to Mrs Buckley for some lace to be sent from the orphanage. The articles sent were much admired by the few that saw them before they were forwarded."

Mr Rivers Thompson, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal visited the mission institution on the 28th November 1885, and

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wrote appreciatively in the Visitor's Book of the female orphanages, that the female orphanage, which he had an opportunity of visiting during his stay at Cuttack was one part of the great Christian work which Dr and Mrs Buckley and their colleagues were carrying out with such admirable success in Orissa. At the lower primary stage there were four classes, i.e. infant, I, II and III; at the upper primary stage there were two classes, i.e. IV and V and the other two classes VI and VII comprise the M.V. or Middle Vernacular sections. Girls reading in different classes of the school were making steady progress in their studies and received due appreciation for their success from the dignitaries who visited their school from time to time.

Regarding the excellent performance of the children, Rev Thomas Bailey writes in 1887 under "Scholastic" that twenty five girls from the orphanage of Cuttack went up to the government examination that year, all of whom passed successfully, viz., five in Middle vernacular, five in Upper Primary and fifteen in the lower primary. All these girls also passed in the first Division. The result was very satisfactory and encouraging.

32 Ibid., (August 1887), p.320.
Rev Thomas Bailey also wrote on the 15th September 1887 that the girls' orphanage at Cuttack was visited by the new Commissioner, C.F. Worsely esq. C.S. on August 20 and he manifested great interest in all he saw of its arrangement. He distributed certificates to the successful competitors of the Upper and Lower primary examinations, much to the happiness of the girls. He also made an appreciative entry in the Visitor's Book, and had promised a subscription of ten rupees per month towards the expenses of the institution so long as he would hold his present appointment.33

These appreciative notes from the dignitaries who used to visit the girls' school in the 19th century speak a lot of the satisfactory and successful performances of the girls under the able and efficient guidance of the missionaries.

As has already been mentioned in the preceding pages, Miss Leigh was the principal of this school for a long period. She gave an elaborate account of this orphanage in her letter to Rev W. Hill, the secretary to General Baptist Missionary Society, London, which appeared in The Missionary Observer, May 1888, where it was pointed out, that the important and leading position which the orphanage had gained in relation to female education in Orissa should encourage the friends of the

mission and lead them to resolve that its efficiency, as an educating agency, should be maintained and if possible, increased. The importance of having Christian teachers in native schools was incalculable. One department of mission work which demanded special attention was the training of Christian women who would become the instructors of others. Even in its secular and social aspects it was not unimportant, for as Sir William Hunter remarks, "The one profession in India which is not overcrowded is that of the school mistress; and if Christian native women can win the confidence of the non-Christian community, they will in time find well paid employment."34

With regard to the activities of the female orphanage at Cuttack Miss Leigh mentioned in her letter dated the 10th March 1888 that it was of great interest to learn about the Mission Girl's school. Two examinations were held. The Mission school was the centre. The children from the town schools came to the Orphanage, and it was very gratifying to find they were turning their talents to account, and training up the girls of Cuttack and Orissa to be useful, industrious and intelligent. During the past four years a great increase had been in the girls under education, and each year the number increased. One drawback was that they did not pay fees but this was to be

altered as the advantage of being able to read and write was appreciated. Some of the girls from other schools were very young, and on this special occasion had adorned their arms, ankles, necks and foreheads with gold and silver jewellery, and they wore very gay clothes. They presented quite a contrast to the girls at Mission School, who did not wear jewellery and whose clothes were always white. The examination of the lower primary lasted three days, and was partly verbal and partly written, and the contrast was very amusing between those who felt diffident and others who had all the assurance of victory. One little maiden would persist, when questions in mental arithmetic were put to her, in turning her back to the teachers; others covered their faces with their clothes. To some of them it was evidently a great ordeal but kindness and gentleness brought out from most of them ready answers.

The second examination was held on the 20th of last month and lasted four days. It was entirely in writing and each candidate received a paper of the questions. In that year ten girls came from the town schools and five from this Mission school. The special feature of these examinations was their proficiency in needle work, marking and darning. In the Mission School the girls had the advantage and the others were so anxious to do as well that the missionaries had been asked to help them. Miss Leigh was the superintendent for both the examinations.
Christians and Hindoos of various castes sat side by side, and it was pleasant to see the estranging influence of caste forgotten. But this was one of the very happy results of the training in mission schools. Spirit of nationalism was thus inculcated among the children.

Mrs Metcalfe, the wife of the Commissioner, visited the school before she left Cuttack. The girls read to her, and their work was examined; and when leaving she expressed her interest in the work and good wishes for its success. Evidently this school was playing the leading role.

The First Sub-Inspectress of Schools

Susela, who had been trained in the Mission Orphanage and having passed all the examinations possible in this institution, had been appointed Sub-Inspectress of Balasore. She entered upon a responsible and difficult work; but she had strength of character and would be able to honourably carry out the work she had undertaken. She had been a member of the church for many years, and had exercised in the school a wide influence for good. In the Public Instruction Report also it is found that a Sub-Inspector was appointed for Orissa to

35 H. Leigh, "Female Education in Orissa", The Missionary Observer, (May 1888), ed. W. Hill, (Derby: GBMS, 1888), p.120.

36 Ibid.
inspect girls' schools lying within the limits of the municipalities.\textsuperscript{37}

Susela was the first female Inspector. According to Rev Thomas Bailey, Susela, the head native teacher brought up and educated in the Cuttack orphanage, had been engaged by the Education Department as school Inspectress in the Balasore Division. She was the first native woman who held such an appointment in Orissa and her selection was an honour to the orphanage. She was the daughter of the late Jagu Roul, formerly assistant translator and tutor in the Mission college.\textsuperscript{38}

Susela's appointment marked a new feature in female education in the province.

The chief work done in the school and training class was the training of girls for their future life and service. To estimate the real value of the work being done the missionaries followed the course of the lives of the girls and young women who had been educated there and scattered throughout the province and beyond the borders of the province, as wives and mothers as well as teachers, nurses and other Christian workers. Although it was not possible to report the details of these lives, the mission schools as evangelistic agencies played the

\textsuperscript{37} General Report on Public Instruction in the Lower Provinces of Bengal (1887-88), (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1888), para 22.

\textsuperscript{38} The Missionary Observer (May, 1888), op.cit.
significant role in bringing the young people into touch with the living Christ, in developing Christian character and in the training of Christian workers.

The school was raised in 1936 to the status of a Middle English School. The community had been asking for this change for some time, and the time seemed opportune for it then. The increase in the number of scholars during the five years (1932-1936) was particularly noticeable in the Middle School section in which the numbers had nearly doubled. This was satisfactory as it showed that more girls were able and eager to continue their studies to a higher standard than was the case previously. Fifty five pupils passed the Government Middle School Examination, and four had won scholarships making a High School education possible for them. Although the majority of the pupils came from the Christian community, more non-Christians were attending and staying for longer period than was formerly the case. At the end of the period under review, there were thirty six non-Christians on the roll out of about 380, and of these ten were Mahommedans.

The Indian teachers on the staff had worked loyally and well and distinct progress had been made in the amount of responsibility they were able to take and in their powers of discipline and class-management. During the year 1935 it was possible to appoint a better qualified Oriya assistant teacher
who could help in the general management of the school. This need had been met after a long time. One happy note was that the necessarily increased expense of the school due to these changes had been met by raising increased fees from the pupils and by the increased monthly Government grant. Thus this premier mission girls' school made steady progress under the able guidance of eminent women. Miss E.C. Wigner was one of the prominent English women who did a commendable job for the development of women's education in Orissa since the early part of the present century. She was very well up in Oriya language and used to write letters in Oriya to her students after her retirement and departure to England. She was born in 1885 in a noble family of England. She arrived in Orissa in 1911 and retired in 1946. During this period of her tenure she dedicated her life to the development of Oriya women.

Her field of work was not confined to some of the institutions of Buckley campus only. She was in charge of three institutions viz. the Girls' Middle School, Women Training School, and the Girls' Hostel. Besides she used to serve the sick females of the Cuttack Leper Asylum, give moral instruction to the women prisoners of the jail with a view to reforming them, and at times used to teach the illiterate women living in the suburbs of Cuttack.

The three institutions of the Buckley campus were working under her able guidance. Those who had the good fortune to study during her tenure of work can never forget her. Her teaching, training, tradition and technique had a significant impact on the minds of students. She was a strict disciplinarian but her heart was never devoid of motherly tenderness. Students were disciplined and obedient before her robust personality. Therefore, students had the utmost respect for her despite her strictness. She was the pioneer in organising Girl Guide in Orissa. She was the Guide Commissioner until her retirement.

According to the Report on the progress of education 1930-31, the Girl Guide movement was flourishing in most of the schools under mission control and troops had been formed in some of the other high and middle schools. Blue Bird flocks had been introduced among the younger pupils and seemed popular. There was emphasis also on hygiene and needle work besides curricular subjects. The number of Middle, Upper Primary and Lower Primary scholarships won by girls was 13, 32 and 236 against 10, 27 and 242 last year. The third examination in hygiene and needle work for the Lady Stephenson Medals and diplomas was held in January, 1931 and an exhibition of the specimens of needle work was held in April. A great increase in the number of candidates entering for both the examinations, which were open to all the girls and women of the Province, showed their popularity and
widening sphere of usefulness. 40

In the 1st Annual Report of the Orissa Women's League Service 1937-38, it has been reported that Guiding had gone on satisfactorily during the year under the guidance of Miss Wigner. There were nine companies, five Blue Bird Flocks and one company of Cadet Rangers. All had held their meetings regularly. During the year church parade had been held in different churches and united rally was held at Lalbagh which was enjoyed by those who took part and those who came to watch.

In March 1938 Miss Hackon a diplomaed Guider from England visited Orissa. For about 10 days she gave a course of training in guiding to a good number of guiders, prospective guiders and cadet rangers. 41

In her appreciative note she (Miss Hackon) mentioned that in Cuttack district there was going on some of the best guiding which she had not seen for a long time. The companies were keen and guiders had original ideas. Besides Miss Wigner took special care of the girls in the hostel. She was very particular about the welfare of the inmates of the hostel since they were away from homes. She was very affectionate and made everything convenient for their stay and study. During the students'


illness in the hostel she used to serve and cure them personally with care and concern. The sick room of the hostel was close to her room.

These days the Christian institutions cannot develop owing to the lack of farsight of persons in charge of them. But Miss Wigner was an exception. Because of her efforts classes IX and X were started in Buckley Girls' High School before she left for England. Much earlier rooms for these classes were constructed under her supervision. The present prayer room and the sick rooms were constructed during her stay. She raised funds from the firms of England and personally made some donation for this purpose. She learnt from her father the noblest lesson of bringing up orphan children with love and care. She could not bear the sorrows and suffering of the orphans.

On the 18 February, 1976 she breathed her last at the age of 91. Her selfless love for the orphan children, dedication for the development of women education, concern for the welfare of these students even after her retirement have made her immortal. She was in the hearts of all who came in her contact. Till today people remember her with immense love and gratitude. Miss A.N. Thompson had been the Principal of this school from 1905 to 1946. Although she had been stationed at Cuttack for almost the whole time, yet her influence was felt

throughout the whole province. She had always taken a special interest in the education of the girls, and they were in Orissa and beyond its borders, many who thanked God for the ideals of the Christian life and service implanted in their minds, when they were under her. Her work in the Girls' school and training class will be remembered for many years to come although the lives and work of the students who had been educated in those institutions.

She had an excellent working knowledge of the Oriya language and her help and advice had been on practical lines. She had shown throughout a keen interest in the new plan of co-operative work. Her interest in the progress of the girls and women remained as keen as ever. For these dedicated workers Buckley girls' school could become a high school with hostel facilities. The orphanage is no longer there. But the last and only orphan Amodini Das is still going strong at the age of 75.

Today Buckley Girls' High School is considered as a prestigious girls' institution of the State.

Balasore

The missionaries made sincere efforts in establishing schools for girls in the district of Balasore immediately after

43 Third Annual Meeting of the Orissa Central Church held in Cuttack 6-10 October 1935, (Cutteck: OMP, 1935), pp.5-4.
their arrival. It is necessary, therefore, to mention here the progress of women's education in the district.

**Progress of Women's Education**

In 1870-71 there were 130 girls receiving education. Only four schools had been opened. From among these four, two schools were under the missionaries. From the available record it is seen that in Balasore female primary education was gaining ground every year. During the year 1883-84 there were 18 Girls' schools under the management of the mission and two under native gentlemen. The good work done by the devotion of the ladies superintending these schools was admirable and called for the warmest approval, for besides the men teachers, the children were brought under excellent influence which most effected their future lives.  

Female education in Balasore stands greatly indebted to the missionary ladies, Mrs Phillips and Mrs Smith who all along evinced a lively interest in the intellectual advancement of their native sisters.  

Mr. L.S.S. O'Malley's account also throws light on female education. In 1906 there were 128 girls' schools.

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44 *The Annual General Administration Report on Orissa Division* (1883-84), (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1884), p.43.

45 Ibid., 1885-86, p.32.
Of these three Middle vernacular schools (one at Balasore, one at Jalesware and the other at Santipur) were under the management of Baptist Mission. There were 3 Upper primary schools also under their management. Of the total 122 Lower Primary Schools 16 female classes were taught by Christian teachers. They worked under the superintendence of missionary ladies who instructed 252 Pardanashin Hindu ladies in their homes. There were also two kindergarten girls' schools at Balasore and Santipur respectively. These institutions were working very satisfactorily under the superintendence of missionaries. The state of female education in this district was satisfactory.

The most noticeable feature of female education in the district is that, owing to the increased population of co-education, as many as 3,791 girls (which is about equal to the number receiving instructions in girls schools, attended boys schools, and in this respect Balasore occupied perhaps the highest position among Bengal districts.

O'Malley quotes from the Government resolution on the General Administration Report of the Orissa Division from the quinquennial period 1900-01 to 1904-05: "The Lieutenant Governor is gratified to note the remarkable progress that has been made in education among the girls during recent years."
This has been particularly marked in Balasore. At the close of the last quinquennium the number of girls under instruction in that district was given as 2,005. In 1904-05 the number had risen to 7,462 or almost 250 percent.  

Missionaries had their remarkable contribution to this happy state of female education in the district. Not only many schools were maintained properly and effectively for the education of the girls but one training class was also started by them for supplying female teachers to various schools when this was almost a rarity and about which we shall discuss later.

In 1839 the mission started the first girls' school. Mrs Phillips was in charge of the school. From 1847 Mrs Sarah Bachelor took charge of the orphanage and school together which she carried on until 1851. The first missionary in the field, Mrs Phillips, gathered a few stray children and began a school. Other missionaries did the same. These waifs who were the nuclei of the future orphanage together with the children in the homes of the earliest converts, formed the material for the first girls' schools. These Christian schools established in every station, were followed in due course, as confidence was gained, by village and jungle schools for Hindu girls. These latter had not reached above the primary grade. The

Christian girls schools in Midnapore and Balasore were of higher grade, the latter fitting for high school. The Balasore Christian Girls' school had been buffeted about in very unsatisfactory housing for a considerable period of time, but in 1920 it came into its own beautiful new building. In 1921, the Women American Foreign Missionary Society celebrated its golden jubilee. At that time a special gift was given to the Bengal-Orissa Mission field for a girls' high school. Since there were many high schools for Bengalis and only one for Oriyas, it was decided to locate the building at Balasore. The new building was completed in 1927 which fulfilled the long felt desire of the girls of this district. That is, in the former the study of English was optional, in the latter it was compulsory above the third grade. At the same time the Government stipend was raised to ninety rupees a month. The Government Inspectress, and the educated Babus of Balasore had on many occasions spoken high words of commendation of the work done in the Christian girls' school. A number of girls from Balasore had gone on for higher education to Calcutta for High School and Cuttack for Normal Training, or to Berhampore for Nurses' Training. Mirmola Nayak, one of the Balasore girls,


was the first girl in the province of Orissa to take a full college course and won her B.A. degree. Following that, she became a teacher in the Government High School in Cuttack, later served as Assistant Inspectress of Schools in Orissa, and had been sent to England to study at Government expenses. Later she was promoted to the post of Inspectress of Schools, Orissa.

In 1886 the school became Middle Vernacular school and in 1889 Basanta Kumari Rout was the first girl to pass the Middle vernacular examination. In 1893, the Inspector of Schools wrote in his inspecting notes that the school stood first in the district list at the departmental examination and the Head Pandit Babu Syama Charan Mohapatra deserved commendation for the glorious result. In 1894 the Inspector wrote: "Mrs D.F. Smith the lady superintendent is justly regarded as the pioneer of female education in Balasore and her name will remain forever enshrined in the grateful memory of the people of Orissa." When in 1891, Mrs Smith went home on furlough, Babu Satyendra Nath De of Balasore placed a sum of Rs.500/- in the hands of Government in commemoration of the services of Mrs Smith.

The interest was to be utilised in awarding each year a medal


to the girl securing first position in the Middle scholarship examination in the district of Balasore. Gagan Mani Singh received the first medal in 1892.\textsuperscript{51}

The Mission Middle Vernacular Girls' School at Balasore was recognised as Middle English school with effect from the 1st August 1920. Miss Ethel M. Cronkite, B.A. trained took charge of the school in August 1923.\textsuperscript{52} She was both Secretary and Headmistress in order to meet the Government requirements.

The first matriculation class was opened in 1932.\textsuperscript{53} The two other girls high schools of Orissa then were Ravenshaw Girls High School Cuttack and Berhampur Girls' High School in Madras Presidency.

Progress of Mission Girls' High School, Balasore

During Miss Ethel Cronkite's stay the Mission Girls' Middle English School was raised to the status of a high school. According to the report of Miss Cronkite the school had qualified staff who used to look after the curricular and co-curricular progress of the girls.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p.2.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Old Log Book of Balasore Mission Girls' School, p.7.
The staff both for the high school and Lower Primary school was well qualified. During the year 1938-39 the staff consisted of 13 Indian women and 2 men. Miss Cronkite was the headmistress. Among the Indian women three were graduates, two others had passed the Intermediate Arts examination and they were trained. All the members of the staff except three were Christians.

The total enrollment was 252, of which 125 were Christians, 121 Hindu, 4 Santal and 2 Mahammadan. Fortyeight were studying in Bengali and the rest in Oriya. Thirteen girls of class VII took the Lady Stephenson Hygiene Diploma Examination and all passed, four in the first division, six in the second and three in the third. During the later part of the year one course of lectures on Home Nursing according to the St. John Ambulance Association syllabus was given to the girls for the four higher classes by the lady doctor of the Sadar Hospital. The Civil Surgeon and Assistant Surgeon gave the examination and all except one passed.

Out of three girls studying in the Matriculation class two were sent for the Government examination, Patna University in 1939.54

Each day, in school, was opened by a chapel service, conducted in various ways, viz., Bible memory work, general knowledge, singing and talks by different teachers. Bible was compulsory in the primary classes but optional in the higher classes because there was no other high school for girls either in the town or in the district. Bible prizes were given to groups consisting of equal number of Christian and non-Christian children.

The school had a hostel known as the "Sinclair Orphanage." During the year under report fifty girls were living in the hostel, of which number five were from non-Christian houses. Several more non-Christian girls were expected to come. Owing to scarcity of accommodation an excellent hostel was built during the tenure of Miss Ethel Cronkite.

Games and other activities

The school compound had a playground with see-saws and swings made possible by the gifts from well known gentlemen of the place, parents and friends. On the same compound there was a tiffin room for the Hindu students, built from the funds donated by benevolent patrons. There were Blue birds and Guides who passed several proficiency examinations.

The high school had the use of several periodicals. The Moga Journal, the Indian Guide, the Light, the Utkala Sahitya, Hygiene (an American Magazine) and educational section of the Orissa Gazetteer.

Supervision

Several dignitaries and inspecting officers frequently visited the school. The first Governor of Orissa, Sir John Hubback and his wife visited the school on 4th February 1937 in order to open the new Domestic Science building. Lady Hubback expressed her appreciation for all that was being done in the school for the children. She was very much pleased with the new building and the equipment.

The newly constructed Domestic Science building for the school consisted of a lecture room, laundry room, kitchen and a small store room. It was well equipped to meet the requirements of the Domestic Science course for the matriculation examination which included physiology, hygiene, child care, household management, first aid, home nursing, needle work, laundry work and cooking.

The school was visited by the new Oriya Director of Public Instruction Mr. S.C. Tripathy, M.A.(Cantab), I.E.S., Miss N. Nayak, B.A., B.T., Inspectress of Schools and Miss B. Sarangi, B.A., B.T.
District Inspectress of Schools who expressed their happiness on the progress made in the school. From the Old Visitors' Book of this very old Mission School appreciative notes of distinguished visitors are found. Dr. K.N. Katju, Governor of Orissa, was very much pleased with the activities of the school and pointed out that it was one of the brightest girls' schools he had seen in the Province. Smt. Chandramukhi Das, wife of the Revenue Divisional Commissioner, appreciated the bright and cheerful look of the children of this school and highly praised the special attention paid by the teachers to the welfare of the children. Spinning and handwork done by the small girls were of excellent nature.

Dr. H.K. Mahatab noted with appreciation that this school was one of the best girls' schools in the province and moved the education department to accord special grants for the conveyance charges of little girls and their refreshment, on his visit to the school. Shri Samuel Das the Revenue Divisional Commissioner of Orissa donated a sum of rupees one hundred fifty from his discretionary fund. This pioneer institution for girls established by the missionaries still holds a place of honour in the field of women's education. Presently the school is well

56 Old Visitors' Book of Balasore Mission Girls' High School, (M.S.), Page not mentioned.

57 Ibid.
maintained and well kept. The present Secretary of this school is Miss S. Power, an American Woman Missionary.

The Kindergarten Girls' Schools were in existence in the district of Balasore in the last decade of the nineteenth century. There were two kindergarten girls' schools, one in the town of Balasore and the other at Santipur, which were working very satisfactorily.  

Kindergartens

The first Kindergarten opened in the mission field was at Balasore through the efforts of Miss Hattie Phillips. Her niece, Miss Beebe Phillips (daughter of Dr. J.L. and Mary R. Phillips, a third generation Phillips in India), became the first kindergarten missionary, formally opening the school in 1896. Others quickly followed one in Oriya at Santipore in 1898, organised by Dr. Helen M. Phillips; one in Bengali at Midnapore in 1900 by Mrs H.E. Wyman; one in Oriya at Chandbali in 1902, by Mrs Ager; one in Oriya for Santal children at Santipore in 1905, by Mrs Griffins; one in Bengali for Santal children at Bhimpore, by Mrs Kennan; and a Kindergarten Department in the girls' school at Contai. Though this movement was started by a missionary of the Women's Board, none of these

schools except the first one at Balasore, was in charge of the F.B.W.M.S.

On the marriage of Miss Beebee Phillips, in 1897, her aunt, Miss Hattie Phillips with native assistance assumed charge until Miss Gowen arrived in October, 1909 and gained a working knowledge of Oriya. Miss Amy Porter took it from her in 1916, and in 1921 Miss Gladys Doe became head of the kindergarten work.59

A Kindergarten normal training school was maintained for several years, before 1910. Our first Indian kindergarten teachers were thus prepared. Later it was deemed expedient to send a limited number of girls taking such training to the English Baptist School at Cuttack, when it ceased to exist.

Caroline Bradbury Kindergarten Hall: The Balasore kindergarten started by Miss Hattie Phillips, formerly opened by Miss Beebee Phillips, a trained kindergartener in 1896, was housed first in their home, next to the chapel, then in a discarded boys' school building until the real kindergarten building was erected. The women and young people of Rhode Island were given the privilege of raising the money for, and naming this building in the name of Caroline L. Bradbury, who was the third recording

Secretary of the Free Will Baptist Female Missionary Society, Bradbury kindergarten Hall was erected in 1904. It was in that same year that its founder, guardian, and moving spirit, Miss Hattie Phillips, became Mrs J.L. Stone and returned to America. As a wedding gift, Mr. Stone gave one thousand dollars for the finishing and equipping of Kindergarten Hall. It stands as a worthy product of their united interest. At one end of the Hall is a beautiful stained glass window bearing the singularly appropriate words, "Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear." In 1904 its equipment was said to be the best of any kindergartens in Orissa and no other had its own building. It was occupied in January, 1905, and formally dedicated by July 26, 1905, when there were seventy children on the roll. The present Mission U.P. School at Balasore is the descendant of this Kindergarten school.

It is one of the best managed schools at Balasore.

BRITISH BAPTIST ZENANA MISSION

It was inevitable that, when the Baptists led the way in the initiation of modern missionary enterprise, women should soon come prominently into the picture. "The story of renunciation is lustrous with the tenderness of a royal Elizabeth of

Hungary in an age of ecclesiastical corruption and worldiness, a Catherine of Siena could wear herself out in the service of love; at a time when the revival of classical learning was opening the way for the reformation, a Margaret of Navarre showed how a brilliant mind could be wedded to a zeal for reform in sixteenth-century Spain, a Theresa could show that women, as well as men, had something to say on the culture of the devout life. 61

The nineteenth-century England was not exactly enthusiastic over the idea of women in any kind of public service. A long struggle was necessary before womanhood could come into its own. Yet, from the very beginning, long before the establishment of the Zenana Mission, the work of the Baptist Missionary Society owed much, if unofficially, to women's service.

In 1827, the famous William Carey could speak about Mrs Marshman's great work in female education. The girls' schools, which were a feature of early work in India, owed much to the wives of missionaries. Hanna Marshman was the virtual founder of modern education for women in the Orient and her school is still widely renowned. The debt that is owed to her is acknowledged by every missionary society. 62


Yet the nineteenth century was well past mid-way before definite and organised attempts by women for the evangelisation of women became a recognised part of the society's operations. The need, of course, had long been apparent. It was known that the condition of womanhood in non-Christian lands was pitiable. In India, for example, the once free and independent position of women had given place to a system whose results were tersely described by a Hindu woman: "Unwelcomed at birth, untaught in childhood, enslaved in marriage, degraded in widowhood, unlamented at death." As the Jubilee volume of the Women's Missionary Association puts it; "The evil system of early marriage, with all its attendant ills, the lack of fresh air and exercise, the absence of education and social life, the enforcement of life-long widowhood, and the oppression of dread and hopelessness in their religion, have all combined to make the life of women in India a hard and trying experience."

Elizabeth Geale was born in the south of France in 1818. A daughter of the Church of England parents, she showed her independence by following the guidance of the New Testament of the Baptist position, although that step meant family tension and ultimately Elizabeth's departure from home to London. In 1848 she married John Sale, who had been accepted by the B.M.S., and together they set sail for India. On their arrival, they stayed with Mr and Mrs Lewis who were already in missionary service in Calcutta. Thus, began a friendship between Elizabeth
Sale and Marianne Lewis which was to have an important bearing on the future developments of B.M.S. women's work.

No sooner was Mrs Sale on the field than she began to seek opportunities of service among women and children. She organised a tailoring class for boys at Barisal and undertook elementary service of a medical kind. But it was at Jessore, to which place the Sales had been moved, that Mrs Sale took an unprecedented step. She secured entry into a closely guarded Hindu Zenana. Ever since she had begun work in India it had been an astonishment to her that women were never visible in public places. But, to quote her own story:

"In 1854, a native gentleman came to visit my husband. One day, when talking, I said I would much like to visit his house - I must not say 'wife'. He said he would make arrangements for my reception, and at the appointed time I went and paid my first visit to the interior of a Hindu home - the Zenana. Where needle work and other womanly crafts opened the way, conversation naturally followed with the result that, eventually, the Hindu women whom Mrs Sale was able to meet lost their fears, learned to read, and thus came to know the story of womanhood's greatest Emancipator. Four years after this breaking down of the barriers, Mrs Sale moved to Calcutta where Marianne Lewis was doing all she could in a ministry to women and children."

It is relevant here to explain the term 'Zenana'. Here are a few extracts from Mrs Marianne Lewis' pamphlet on the subject.

"In every respectable Hindoo house a range of apartments is found set apart for the occupation of women. This is called the Zenana from the Persian word 'Zen', woman. To this part of the house no man has access except the fathers, husbands and sons of the family; and from it no female member of the family beyond the age of childhood is allowed to pass unguarded. The apartments of the Zenana are usually dreary, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated and miserably furnished rooms. These poor women enjoy little of their husband's society, they do not even sit or eat with them. And having received no education, useful or elegant art of needle work, or other pleasant occupation to beguile the weariness of their lot - they are shut up to utter indolence." 64

Attempts had been made by Christian missions to counter the evil effects of the social customs by house to house visits of educated women, and by special classes for adult women held at times and in places consistent with domestic obligations. As a part of religious campaign against the impending features of social system and as an attempt to convince Indian women in their house of the imperative need for change it was a heroic and useful, though painfully slow method. The influence of this all important "femina dux facti" was stronger than that of any resolution in favour of women's education, supported outside the house by the men of her house hold. 65

Mrs Lewis made an appeal through her pamphlet in a meeting held in John Street Baptist Church, Bedford Row, London, on


May 22nd, 1867. The meeting resolved: "(1) That an association be formed in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society to aid its operations among the female population of the East; (2) that the funds contributed shall especially be devoted to the support of ladies engaged in visiting the Zenanas, and of Biblewomen in connection with the missionaries of the respective stations where the work is carried on." Thus began an association with the cumbersome title of 'Ladies' Association for the support of Zenana work and Bible women in India in connection with Baptist Missionary Society. But there was nothing cumbersome about the ideal which inspired it, nor indeed, about the service which it quickly rallied to the needy-cause. Thirty years later the Association came to be known as the Baptist Zenana Mission. The title had been shortened but in the meantime as well shall see, the Associations' activities had achieved a wider range.66

The main idea behind the foundation of this Association seems to have been to raise in this country, from both men and women money to support agents' who should work in Indian Zenanas, largely, under the supervision of the missionaries' wives. Therefore, at the beginning agents were appointed in India, Indian and Anglo-Indian women, and missionaries' widows who were able to offer themselves for this service.

The Zenana Mission maintained this special work until 1902 when the Medical Mission Auxiliary, by then in existence, took over the responsibility of the Zenana Missions' five doctors. In the year when Dr Farrer and Dr Brown sailed for India, the amalgamation of the general and the particular Baptist Missionary Societies brought Orissa within the responsibility of the main organisation. This can be seen from the notes of Mr S.M. Goadby who writes - "Having for some time past had my thoughts specially drawn to the question of Zenana and other female teaching in Orissa. Almost every missionary society now has its two divisions, and the Zenana Mission is a most intensely interesting adjunct of these societies."

The General Baptist thus got involved in Zenana work in Orissa. Mrs Goadby also informed that only one missionary, Miss Packer had been entirely devoted to Zenana work. The missionaries' wives too had been keenly alive to the importance of this subject. They did in this field what they could but the entreaties to be taught were too numerous to be responded to without help. In this regard help was given to the Orissa Mission by the Society For Promoting Female Education in the East. This continued and valuable help was realised by the missionaries. Their only object was to evangelize and enlighten the Hindu women. According to General Report on Public Instruction (1871-72) that for the girls, home or Zenana teaching
seemed to be preferred to girls' schools. An American lady had organised a system under which some 40 or 50 governesses, some of them Americans, but most of them natives of India visited and taught as governesses in Calcutta and its suburbs. Under the lady's direction about 800 girls and women were taught in Zenanas. Home teaching of girls was to some extent practised outside Calcutta. 67 One Zenana association was started by Mrs Smith in 1855 for educating the married girls of Balasore. After 72 years, five Zenana schools in charge of peripatetic teachers worked at Balasore under the supervision of the Missionary Society.

About Zenana schools in Orissa, it has been pointed out that the part played by the missionary bodies in furtherance of female education in this country undoubtedly deserves all praise. The example set by these bodies was indeed actively helpful in breaking down the purdah system and in rooting out many prejudices which hinder the progress of female education. 68

In Orissa as has been stated earlier, the early missionaries' wives were visiting the ladies Zenana in order to teach them and make them acquainted with elementary hygienic


habits, sewing and lace work. As has been mentioned earlier Miss Packer was the only missionary engaged for Zenana teaching in Orissa. Later Miss Barras joined her. A farewell meeting was held at Peterborough on November 7, 1860 in connection with the departure of Miss Barras, the eldest daughter of the Rev Thomas Barras to Orissa as a missionary. Further as Miss Barras went as an agent and at the cost of the Society For Promoting Female Education in the East, a farewell meeting was also held in London.69

At the Conference the Orissa missionaries expressed their gratification that Miss Barras would come and be associated with Miss Packer in her important field of Zenana work. She had a name which was suggestive of sterling excellence. The conference expressed that she would be useful in the work to which she had consecrated herself. The female Education Society had been doing much for Orissa and deserved well of all the friends.70

As per the Annual Report of B.M.S., Zenana visitation and education were also carried on by Miss Packer and Miss Barras with encouraging signs of success.71


70 Ibid. (Feb. 1882), p.177.

Miss Packer and Miss Barras were holding their Zenana school in the new school room of Cuttack. 72

Later Miss Packer left for England as her health was much impaired. Miss Barras had a large additional amount of work and responsibility delegated to her. She was favoured in her new colleague Miss Hill who was working hard at Oriya and threw her whole soul into the work of teaching in Zenanas and schools.

Miss Packer's lovely Christian spirit, her self denying and ceaseless efforts to benefit all with whom she came in contact, female or male, young or old, had won for her the affection and admiration of all who knew her. The Mission owed more to Miss Packer's labour than was generally known. 73

Fortunately the accounts of some of these early Zenana missionaries, working in Orissa in the nineteenth century are available. These accounts clearly indicate the situation in which they had to carry on this work and the type of educational activities they had to undertake after establishing a good rapport with the women in the Zenana. It is, therefore, necessary to give some of their accounts.


73 Ibid.
Miss Hill, the colleague of Miss Packer, who lived at Cuttack has written about her Zenana work where she mentioned that,

She was sorry to have to tell that she had not been able to visit her two Zenana pupils lately, on account of sickness; one was ill herself, and the other had sickness in her house. They both sent her word they were unable to read just yet, and would let her know when they could do so again. She wanted to call and see the one that was ill, but it was thought she had better not, as she would be sure to send for her when she wanted her to go again.

She continued her visit to the Christian villages with Miss Miller. As she did not go out so much then, she had more time to study at home. She dismissed her Pundit at the end of the year, and then studying alone. When she commenced Bengali her two Zenana ladies had offered to hear her read, it being so difficult to get a good Bengali Pundit then. She would have been very glad to avail her of their kind offer.

On another occasion she had been with Miss Miller to three of Miss Barrass' house. The first one they went to, she had only lately commenced visiting. One woman in this house was a widow, and appeared to adhere very strictly to the custom, the widows observed in the plainness of their dress; she was attired simply in a coarse white cloth, and wore no ornament of any kind. She looked a great contrast to the newly-married little girl of about thirteen years of age, who was very nicely dressed, and had on a great deal of jewellery. Miss Miller and herself being freshcomers, the usual amusing questions were gone through, as to why they (Miss Hill and Miss Miller) were not married, how many brothers and sisters they had, how old were they? Then she was requested to take off her hat, so that they might see if she had any hair and how it was done. After their curiosity was somewhat satisfied, they sang some Oriya hymns to them, and they listened very attentively as Miss Barrass explained them. The newly married one was learning to read Bengali.
At the next house Miss Barrass had several pupils, and one of them had had her first baby, a little boy, a few days ago. They were asked whether they would like to see the baby and on assenting they were taken to what looked more like a prison cell than anything else. They were not allowed to go inside, but looked through the iron bars of the only window in the room and there saw the poor little mother, with her baby, lying on a rush mat spread upon the stone floor. There was not a single article of furniture in the room and the bare, whitewashed walls and stone flooring looked very comfortless and dreary. Miss Hill thought what a contrast to their English homes, where under the same circumstances, every possible comfort that could be obtained was provided, even amongst the poorest families; but in India it seemed that the Hindoo women are deprived of everything in the shape of comfort. The poor little mother had been very ill, and it was almost as much as she could do to raise her baby up for them to see through the iron grating. Such scenes were very saddening, especially when it was so entirely out of their power to alter them. They were not poor people, and could have provided something better. How much she wished she could have seen her on a comfortable bed before she left, instead of lying on the hard stone floor.

The third house was the home of their new pupil, and the little fellow looked very conscious as they went in; but she evidently liked coming, and upon being advised to stay at home, said, "No I would rather go to school."

Miss Hill subsequently wrote, that she was glad to inform that the Hindoo mother she told about in her last was better, and the baby, too was doing well. When Miss Barrass went the next week, she found the mother very ill indeed. It was their custom never to give water, and very little milk, to the mother, until the baby was a certain age, and the mother was getting better. Miss Barrass said the poor little woman was entreating them to give her some water, and begged her to bring her

some, but she dared not; she tried to persuade the women with her to give her some, but they would not. Some children belonging to the house were teasing her bringing a little in their hands from the well, and spilling it just as they came near. Miss Barrass gave them a good scolding, and tried to comfort the little mother. The following week, on going to the house, she found quite a change had taken place. The woman had been so ill, nearly dying, that the baby had sent for a native doctor, and had sent away the old heathen woman who had been attending to her. The doctor ordered them to give her as much water and milk as she could take, and had her put on a bed, and the fire that was kept alight in the room to be put out. They had also got a native Christian woman as nurse for the baby, so that altogether it was a much happier state of affairs. She was so thankful to hear of it. It is quite a remarkable thing for the heathen to have Christian women as nurses and she hoped this would result in much good to the women of the house.75

On another occasion Miss Miller and Miss Barras had been on a tour in the country in the month of January 1888. These ladies travelled in the Mission boat and stopped at Kendrapara in order to attend a large festival. Thousands of people assembled there. The ladies made attempts to approach the women but were prevented. A Brahmin who was in charge of them spoke to them angrily. Finding all their attempts to get at the women fruitless they turned their attention to selling books for which there was great demand. The ladies therefore thought that these silent messengers, taken to distant homes might be the means of bringing the truth to some dark hearts.76


76 Ibid. (July 1888), p.276.
The Zenana Industrial Work

In those days it was quite an uphill task to meet the women in the zenana. But with tremendous patience and strong determination, these agents, of the Society For the Promotion of Female Education in the East, established rapport with the women even in the remote villages. Here it is necessary to mention that in considering the subject of industrial work for women and girls, one is reminded of the fact that it was industrial work that first opened the doors of zenanas to Christian missionaries. The imprisoned daughters of India awoke to their need of education by the bribe of fancy work. The new world opened before India's womanhood was a world of educational opportunity. It stands to the credit of the Zenana Mission that it brought women's education into the foreground of missionary education. The Zenana Mission ever known as women's Missionary Association opened two large industrial centres at Cuttack and Salametpore. At these two places industrial work had relieved the Mission of considerable financial burden. At these places the moral advantage outweighed even the financial gain. Famine orphans mentally and morally deficient girls for whom others could do nothing were here trained into self respecting intelligent, industrious women. It was really wonderful how quickly and easily the majority of women learnt to do drawn thread work. These women until they came to these zenana missionaries did not know how to hold a needle. They were also taught lace work,
spinning and weaving.\textsuperscript{77}

The early woman missionary for Zenana work was Miss Packer. Later Miss Barrass joined and with true missionary zeal she carried on her work for 30 years. She started the Zenana school at Cuttack. Miss Miller and Miss Hill worked most enthusiastically. These women did not confine their work to Cuttack only.

As per the Minutes of November 1916, the Orissa Missionary Conference heard with sorrow of the death of sister Miss Packer, and also of Miss Barrass both of whom were originally agents of the society for the promotion of Female Education in the East. The former came out to India in 1869 and retired in 1886. During her long retirement she never lost her interest in Orissa, and every year she sent out a sum of money to Mr Young to be given to the poor of those districts in which she laboured. Miss Barrass came to Cuttack in 1882 and stayed in the one place for over 30 years. She was remembered for starting the school work among the Hindu children, and also much of the work among Hindu women. She was most affectionately remembered by the women in the Zenanas whom she so greatly helped. She was engaged in the crochet industry for many years and helped to extend and develop it. Her zeal and wholeheartedness in the work never flagged in

spite of much bodily weakness.\footnote{Minutes of the Orissa Missionary Conference, (November 1916), (Cuttack: OMF, 1916), p.8.}

Another enthusiastic worker in the field was Miss F.A. Vaughan. She was accepted as a missionary by the Baptist Zenana Missionary Society in 1902. She was asked to help Miss Barrass at Cuttack. Miss Vaughan was born in India, spent her early life here, and when her school days in England were over she returned with her parents to Sambalpur. Where she settled down to the study of Oriya, and later passed the examination with great credit. For more than twenty one years she worked at Cuttack, helping in primary schools for non-Christian children and visiting the Zenanas. She did her work faithfully and well, and took a very real interest in her women and children. She was regular in her habits; methodical in her work, punctual in her engagements, and almost over conscientious in all she did. In 1923 she was requested to go to Balangir. She continued her work there till 1933. Her ten years work in Balangir has left its mark on the lives of many women and girls.\footnote{Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Orissa Central Church Council (25th and 26th Sept. 1933), (Cuttack: OMF, 1933), p.2.} She was just as regular and methodical, just as conscientious, but there was a different urge, and to watch Miss Vaughan with a group of uneducated and untamed out-caste women, as she tried with infinite patience to teach that group, was to see one whom God equipped in a special way for this particular work.
The pioneer Zenana missionaries did a lot in teaching the Hindu women reading, writing, sewing, crochet work, and other useful work of practical bearing. Some of them were medical missionaries. They were teaching them health habits and practices and also how to adopt preventive measures. Personal cleanliness, child care and handwork were greatly stressed.

Besides these they were preaching Christianity through Bible stories. In order to remove fear and suspicion they used to talk about familiar household topics and sing sweet songs. In this way the ladies in the Zenana seclusion got the opportunity of knowing certain useful things thus making their lives meaningful and lively.

The Zenana Teaching in Balasore

In giving an account on the Zenana teaching at Balasore the Free Baptist Women's Missionary Society observed in 1921 that education in India was only for one girl out of one hundred and forty-four; and that one in most cases must get what she was to receive before she was twelve years of age. For, by that age the great majority of India's girls had the burden of domestic duties thrust upon them by marriage. And school for them was only a brief, interrupted dream of the past. The Christian girl remained unmarried till she was at least sixteen, and many longer while they pursued higher education. If then, the married, or betrothed, girl of the Zenana was to
have anything that the school could give her, the school must go to her.

This was early recognized by the missionaries. But an entrance into these closed or purdah homes was not easy to obtain, and confidence must first be inspired by long residence and tactful dealing on the part of the missionary.

It was in February, 1866, that entrance was gained into the first Hindu Zenanas by Miss Julia Philips, and Mrs. Mary R. Phillips at Midnapore. It came about through the desire of a Babu for embroidered slippers. Learning that the missionary could teach his wife this art, he reluctantly consented to the religious teaching that must accompany it in order to gain her services. The desire for embroidered slippers spread from house to house and so the doors opened for Christian teaching. More difficult was it to gain admission to Moslem homes. The achievement was made in this way. Mary Bachelor, in India as a child, often went with her father on his visits to the sick. One evening in 1867, he went to see a Mussulman of high rank. A crowd gathered about little Mary left in the buggy outside. A member of the household asked her to go inside and see the ladies. She went fearlessly. The ladies gathered about her in wonder and admiration, and when her father called for her they invited her to come again. She asked if her mother might come too, and was answered in the affirmative. Of course her mother
went, and went again. This was the first Mahammadan Zenana opened to Christian teaching in the province of Bengal. The rank and influence of this family was the means of opening other homes. Since those days, regular school instruction and Christian teaching had been carried on in an increasing number of homes in the vicinity of all the mission stations. For a number of years this work had been limited only by the number of available teachers meeting educational requirements. The British Government gave a generous grant-in-aid for this work which was under its inspection, the same as was all the missionary educational work. Reading, writing, number work and sewing were taught, and higher branches if there was a demand. And always Bible verses, stories, Christian hymns, and a brief catechism were taught. Mission prizes were given only for the Bible work done. When a pupil could tell six or more stories well she was given a New Testament. There were hundreds of New Testaments in the Hindu and Mohammedan homes throughout Bengal-Orissa acquired in this way. In Balasore alone fourteen Christian women went two or three times each week to three hundred and thirty women, explaining salvation and the way to walk there. Among the Zenana pupils were those from the wealthiest Hindu and Mohammedan homes, as well as many from the very poorest. Mrs Burkholder says of the difficulties, "The pupils are constantly changing. The little wives are sent away to their husbands' homes and we lose sight of them. Those who are in their husbands' homes are frequently sick from unsanitary
The Secretary of the Missionary Societies at Balasore recalled a visit with Miss Sadie Cowen, to Rosie Babu's house, typical of the better sort,

"Rosie Babu is a Zemindar, or land owner, renting his fields in small sections to poor cultivators. His house is a large one covering a quarter of a block. She remembers the mazes of its corridors leading through a bewildering series of courts and rooms. Eighty people live here, all related in some way to one another. One is a teacher of Sanskrit in our Christian Boys' High School, another speaks good English and was formerly a Deputy Inspector of Schools for Balasore. Among the many women of the household, ten are pupils of our Zenana school. One is a mother of thirteen years. Another is a widow, mourning bitterly at times for a husband whom she never saw because he died when she was five years old. Another, most interested in our teachings, had recently become a widow. It was easy to know it. All her gold chains and bracelets were gone, and only the plainest cloth formed the setting of a sorrowful face. Miss Cowen says, 'In India, as elsewhere, affliction brings people to the sense of their helplessness, and at such times many pupils have been brought very near to the true source of help. There are secret believers not a few in the fine residence and in the little mud-walled, thatch-roofed houses in and about Balasore.' This is equally true of the other parts of our field."


81 Ibid.
However the white-robed Christian teachers went with their message of love and cheer, followed in their round, once a month, by the educational missionary having Zenana work in charge. "Time was," says Mrs Burkholder, "when we had to plead with the women to learn to read. The reply was, 'No, we cannot, for we will become widows if we do.' She is nothing but a woman was the attitude of man towards womanhood. Now, how changed! Colleges for women have been established, and girls from Hindu homes have even braved customs and public sentiment and crossed the seas to England and America in search of knowledge. Now when a bride is sought, the question is asked, 'What of her education? What examinations has she passed?' And so even in India sentiment has changed in the more than fifty years now (1866-1921) since Zenana work began in Bengal Crissa."82

Widows' Home at Balasore

The idea of a widows' home for the Field was conceived in the heart of Dorcas Smith at Balasore, but hovered there for a quarter of a century before assuming tangible form. Since 1898 it had served about one hundred of India's needy women. Neither this nor the widows' home of the pundita Ramabai had fulfilled the purpose for which they were intended, the saving of high caste girl widows.

Family pride and prejudice would quench life itself rather than give the girl to Christian succor. But other needy girls

82 Ibid.
and women had come and gone receiving temporary shelter and assistance. From twelve to twenty were accommodated at a time. They were given shelter, a sari and jacket at Christmas, if in school a weekly stipend for food, if not, means of earning money to buy food and clothes. Their labour was unskilled, carrying bricks or mortar for building, cleaning up the compound, husking rice or making grass rope. Some of the younger women who had remained longer had learned to crochet. One young girl had married and went to another station to live. Another had refused offers of marriage. Three had been baptized and joined the church. Kuni was perhaps the best product of the Widows' Home. She came here when about eighteen, right from heathenism, entered the lowest primary grade and by persistence had made progress. She was of a happy, loving disposition. She had become a Christian and wanted to fit herself for Christian work. Several visits had been made by her to her heathen village with good results.

Mrs Smith says, in one article by her, printed after her death in 1899, "It is only a few out of the millions that we shall be able to reach, but the God whom we serve only requires faithfulness in doing what we can in His Service."

Appreciating the work of the Zenana Mission one of the Principals of the Boarding School observed that "education has helped people to live decent lives, has dispelled superstition,
has helped the parents out of the rut of undesirable traditional views and has taught that no honest work is to be despised. We have also seen that people have learnt to endure pain, have learnt hygienic habits, have improved social behaviour; caste feeling has been conquered, selfishness overcome and spiritual life firmly set."