Chapter-VII

Conclusion
CONCLUSION

The period from 1862 to 1947 saw striking changes in the field of education as well as social consciousness in Sambalpur. Under the impact of Sipoy Mutiny, Language Agitation and National Movement for unification of Oriya speaking areas, various reformative measures were taken by the British administration with a view to bring about educational development in Sambalpur. Attention was directed not only to the establishment of new educational institutions but also to the improvement of those already established.

The growth, in number, of Primary Schools became spectacular in rural areas. The number of Secondary Schools began to increase considerably. There was appreciable growth of female education inspite of the barrier like deep orthodoxy of the people, scarcity of qualified female teachers and the general apathy towards female education. The education for backward classes tremendously improved during the period. For the first time in Sambalpur, the untouchable caste pupils were allowed to attend general schools, Muhammadans form a very small
minority in the district and the Urdu school of Sambalpur is the oldest school in Orissa. During this period the growth of education among the Muslims improved.

The qualitative improvement of education during the period under review was not, however, insignificant. The schools under the new system used printed books and followed improved methods of teaching with new subjects. The teachers appointed were of better educational qualifications than the teachers of indigenous schools. Training facilities for them improved their standard further. The government inspection kept the teachers as well as the managing boards alert to their duties.

Educational development which resulted from the British administration from 1862 to 1947 deserves merit in the context of specific policies, measures and their outcome. But in the wider context of general history, this period did not provide Sambalpur with satisfactory educational progress due to political disturbances. Much remains still to be done in expanding and improving the education of Sambalpur.
In 1936, the percentage of children at School to the total population was 2.4 percent. The total population of Sambalpur district in 1936-37 was 1065388. Out of the total population 4.0 percent boys and 0.9 percent girls received instruction at the primary stage in 1936.

The problem of wastage and stagnation continued to be the most formidable obstacle in the spread of literacy among the masses as could well be realized from the fact that out of every 100 pupils admitted into the lowest classes, only 25 could get through the full lower elementary course, which was the minimum course for attaining literacy. As a result, mass literacy prevailed in 1947.

Some formidable factors hindered the progress of education. Firstly, the Government was never willing to spread more than the scanty sum on education. Another important factor was the neglect of education of the girls for which very little funds were allotted. This was partly due to the Government's anxiety not to hurt the susceptibilities of orthodox people of Sambalpur. Even more, it was because female education lacked immediate usefulness in the eyes of the foreign
officials since women could not be employed as clerks in the Government offices. Secondly, the emphasis on English as the medium of instruction in place of Vernacular language at the High school level prevented the spread of education of the masses. Thirdly, the Local Bodies which could have carried the system to its natural size themselves became factional in approach, political in motive and slow by nature. To the Government, such weakness of the Local Bodies proved an opportunity to avoid the required attention. Fourthly, because of the remoteness of rural areas and lack of communication, proper supervision and inspection of schools by the educational agencies could not be possible. Many schools remained out of sight and many came under scanty attention. Fifthly, the growing poverty of the people continued to be a stumbling block in the path of educational progress. Sixthly, the caste prejudices continued to be strong in every part of Sambalpur district and the children of the so-called lower class did not find it easy to enter the schools. The growth of education in a complex and caste-ridden society was no smooth matter. It was one thing for an enlightened mind to appreciate the values of education, and an altogether different thing to carry the same value to the
minds of extreme conservatives or primitive dwellers in the hills. Seventhly, in the matters of female education the genuine conservatism of the people in general stood in the way of progress. The education of a girl could mean differently to different persons of the same caste or even to different members of the same family.

Lastly, the main difficulties in the way of the spread of education among the tribes were that the literary medium was not their mother-tongue, that qualified teachers were difficult to obtain, and supervision was hampered by the scattered nature of population.

Because of all these barriers, the improvement was poor and general backwardness continued as before. The development failed to keep pace with other aspects of social and political progress.

Yet, it may be said that the foundation of modern educational needs was clearly laid during the period under consideration. Even though quantitative growth was far from satisfactory by 1947, the qualitative improvement received a
standard shape. On the basis of those qualitative achievements the quantitative expansion became almost phenomenal in the Post-independence Era.

The chief instrument through which the modern political, social and economic ideas spread in Sambalpur was the modern education. The impact of modern ideas became inevitable. During the years following the political disturbances in Sambalpur, the effects of the impact became manifest. During the period, from 1862 to 1947, it was deep and far reaching. The impact of the modern ideas was felt in Sambalpur politically, socially, culturally and economically.

The impact of the modern ideas began to operate through perceptible and imperceptible ways. It had its positive and negative aspects. Through actions and reactions, antagonism and assimilation, modern ideas began to penetrate into the thought and habits of Sambalpur. The orthodox revolted outwardly, but searched inwardly for a change. For the intellectual, there was the need to rationalize the traditional society. A wave of unrest swept over the thinking minds as the
education progressed. Out of that unrest, "the renaissance in Sambalpur" began to take shape.

The educated masses of Sambalpur were the first to feel humiliation of foreign subjection. By becoming modern in their thinking, they also acquired the ability to study the evil effects of foreign rule. They were inspired by the dream of a modern, strong, prosperous Sambalpur. In course of time, the best among them became the leaders and organizers of the national movement, language agitation and Utkal Union Movement. The leading mind of Sambalpur like, Chandra Sekhar Behera, Dharanidhar Mishra, Laxminarayan Mishra, Gangadhar Meher, Brajamohan Panda and Baikunthanath Pujari (he was the first man of Sambalpur to be awarded B.A. and M.A. degree from Presidency College, Calcutta) not only played an important role in arousing national consciousness, but also took active interest in political, social, cultural and educational advancement in Sambalpur. Some of them set out to reform Sambalpur’s society and renovate her culture. They were vigorous advocates of social reforms and worked actively to improve the condition of women and to spread education among
them. They fought against untouchability and rigidities of the hereditary caste system. They were thus advocates of social equality and prompted social solidarity and consolidation, they also inculcated a spirit of self-respect and self-reliance among the people.

After 1942, the self conscious and self-confident women like Prabhabati Devi, Parbati Giri had worked for the uplift of women in Sambalpur. With the establishment of “Matrumangal Kendra” in 1945 by Prabhabhati Devi at Bargaon, the spread of modern education made the women and backward class people conscious of their position and rights in course of time. Some of them undertook the task of improving their conditions.

The spread of modern education and social reform movement and freedom movement played a significant role in weakening the caste system. As education and awakening spread, the backward class themselves began to stir. They became conscious of their basic human rights. With the formation of “Utkal Harijan Sevak Sangha” in 1932, the struggle against untouchability received a great impetus. It spread to
urban and rural centres of the district. Harijans were encouraged to sit and eat with caste Hindus in the same row. Wells and bathing ghats were opened for them.

In shaping and enriching Oriya literature, the contribution of English education was remarkable. It can be said safely that the influence of Sanskrit on Oriya literature is deep and it extended over centuries, beginning from the ancient till the modern period, shaping different forms of Oriya literature and enriching its contents. Similarly, the impact of English education on Oriya literature was also considerable. It had given a new shape to Oriya literature and enriched it in different ways after the publication of the weekly Oriya newspaper “Sambalpur Hitaisini” on 30th May 1889 by the Sudhal Press at Deogarh under the patronage of Raja Basudev Sudhal Dev of Bamra. After the establishment of this Printing Press, a lot of Oriya books were published and the educated mass demanded their social and political rights.

The process which began before 1947 is still continuing. Sir Basudev Sudhal Dev, Gangadhar Meher, and Bheema Bhoi who were considered to be pioneers of modern
trends of Oriya literature were some of the prominent writers of the period under review.

Thus, as in other parts of Orissa so also in Sambalpur a major impetus to the all-round development on modern lines was given by the growth of education and social consciousness prior to 1947. The period from 1862 to 1947 was a period of Renaissance in Sambalpur. Its achievements were to serve as a base for more vigorous reform and modernization of Sambalpur's society, education and economy in later years.