



Education system in pre-independence India with reference to Odisha, India

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Abstract

Education is essential to create both new needs and the capacity to satisfy them. Monastery, Gurukula and teachers' house were the traditional Hindu residential schools of learning. They were imparting education freely and very often limited to the higher castes in the subjects like, Religion, Philosophy, Warfare, Medicine, Astrology, Literature, Statecraft, Scripture, and history. So, considering the importance of the education and gradual developments by the efforts of the educational lovers in India and particular to Odisha, this article aims to elaborate some of the important instances for the benefit of the all sects of people for the need of the hours.

Keywords: Educational system, literacy development, pre-independence era, education commission, primary education, secondary education, higher education.

Introduction

According to Henry S. Commager¹, "Change does not necessarily assure progress, but progress implacably requires change. Education is essential to change, for education creates both new wants and the ability to satisfy them".

Starting from the period of Gurukula till the time of independence in India, the entire education system has gone through the process of evolution and revolution. Monastery, Gurukul and teachers' house were the traditional Hindu residential schools of learning. Teachers were imparting education freely in different subjects like, Astrology, history, Literature, Medicine, Philosophy, Religion, Scripture, Statecraft, and Warfare and very often the system was within the higher castes. Students were paying Guru Dakshina as an intended donation when they were coming back from their studies. Some cases, benevolent students of the society were taking lessons from the outer part of the house because of the system of untouchability. Later on, after the independence, the structure and function of the educational system changed into a reality. During that period, In India and particularly to Odisha, many schools and colleges were imparting education in different subjects which were being managed by both government as well as private managements.

Veda is the treasure house of knowledge. The nature of receiving education was purely religious and Gurukula was the main learning centre of Veda. In this system, Guru was the sole authority over the students and he was providing education judging their mental and physical ability. But during the British period, the introduction of English education and establishment of different schools and colleges at different places in India

brought a change partly keeping the system of primitive system of education. Later on, after the completion of the British Raj, different amendments and commissions gave a new shape to the educational system. The behaviour, attitude, skill and many other factors of an individual changed because of spread of education.

Modern education is the perverted form of ancient and medieval period of education which had started during the British period. East India Company and Christian Missionaries printed old and new Testaments in Odia in the name of modern education in Odisha and created first primary school in 1822². Long British administration in Odisha made English education more advanced. Gurukula systems of education were being imparted either at teacher's house or in the monastery for the highest ideals for complete development of human being consolidating Physical, mental and spiritual ability of the human beings. It was traditional Hindu residential learning schools. It was free education and Sudras were not allowed for receiving education in those centres. Later on, considering the importance of the education to eradicate poverty, illiteracy and blind belief of the society, government of India and different non-governmental organisations established different schools and colleges for the complete growth of the society. Sometimes parental attitude and unaware about the importance of the education, they were not sending their children to the schools and colleges. So for the different pros and cons, this article is described about the pre-Independence educational system and its overall impact of the society in India in general and Odisha in particular.

Objectives of the study: This study broadly examines the attitude of the British people, Ancient Mughal rulers, Kings and Queens of the medieval period including the parents' attitudes

towards education in rural households in India with particular reference to Odisha. In other words, it is said that, the system was for the rural people, tribal communities and many other unprivileged groups of people who were not coming to the picture during monarchy and Zamindari, Zagirdary and Subadary Systems. In addition to this specifically the following objectives of this study are to be discussed for bringing complete pictures of the educational system and development of the pre-Independence period in India and Particular to Odisha. The following points are: i. To examine the attitude of the Britishers, Ancient Mughal rulers and Kings and Queens of the medieval period including the parents attitude of Odisha; ii. To examine the contemporary educational systems and the provisions of pre-Independence period; and iii. To examine the significant gender differences towards children's education in the society.

Literature Review: The literature review provides a background for the development of the present study and helps the researchers about their problems of similar interest. Furthermore, it helps the social researcher to achieve the following: i. It helps the researcher to understand the basic knowledge of the problem and its solution for the future; ii. It summarises the literature in the relevant field and helps to find out the gap between the past and present data; iii. It highlights certain useful and exemplary studies conducted in the relevant area of interest; iv. It assists the researcher to lead the study specifically and plan out the appropriate methodologies so as to make the improvement in the present investigation; and v. It helps the researcher to identify the problems in the identical research which has been carried out previously.

Ranjan³ stated that, Gurukula system is very old on earth and it was dedicated to the Physical, mental and spiritual development of the human being. Education in the Gurukula was free but some cases students were contributing as Guru Dakshina after the completion of their studies. In this context, Chand⁴ suffixing the statement stated that, traditional Gurukula system is for complete development of mind, body and spirit. Basha⁵ pointed out that, Vedas is considered as the treasure house of knowledge. Brahmans were called as 'Gurus' and they were imparting knowledge to few numbers of students in the Gurukula as Guru-Sishya Parampara. Das⁶ stated that, modern educational pattern collapsed the traditional pattern of education and introduced English education including different skill development courses and many more. But, 150 years of British rule in India gave a new shape to the Indian educational system. During this period, western Science and literature progressed through English medium⁷. They planned the curriculum, textbooks, and type of teaching methodology for the benefit of the Indian people and its impact fell upon the provinces.

The above discussions remarks that, Gurukula system of education was existed basing upon Guru-Sishya Parampara and with certain principles and code of conducts. Modern system of English education was flexible and limited for the few people as the system was in Gurukula.

Education System in Pre-Independence India

By the end part of the 18th century, India had an indigenous educational system which was being imparted through the schools, colleges, and universities. Professor J.P. Naik⁸, said that, formal education under the traditional educational system was limited with some higher learning institutions and numbers of elementary schools. But, the Hindu higher learning institutions like, Tols and Pathashala were imparting education through the Sanskrit medium particularly to the higher castes people. Similarly, Madrasahs was the centre for higher learning for Muslims in the Arabic and Persian languages. Some of the Hindus were also studying Persian language because they were working in Moghul Courts and their administrative institutions.

The Upanishadic Period: The word Upanishad means sit close. Here, it denotes the relationship between the teacher and students. Discipline and moral lessons were the main focal point in the teaching methodology. During this period, teachers were enjoying special respect and position in the society. Guru was considered as the fountain of knowledge because of their dedication, quality of teaching and spiritual attitude. Students were getting knowledge through the processes like, listening words from the teachers and to make comprehension, reasoning, solve problem by the teachers and friends, oral transmission of knowledge in ancient India.

The Buddhist Period: Any learner under the Buddhist Vihar was being guided by a preceptor. He was offering spiritual lessons abiding Buddhist religion and philosophy. The method of learning was to put questions to the students, instructions and exhortation. In addition to this, teachers were applying other techniques like, debate, discussion, oral recitation, question-answer, and storytelling.

The Medieval Period: During medieval period, Mughals wanted to educate general people and spread education. They allowed both boys and girls for primary education. During Vijaynagar kingdom, temples, Agrahar, Mathas were the centres of learning. Islamic education was being performed through the Maktabas and Mosques. They were imparting subjects like, architecture, astronomy, fine arts, mathematics, medicine, painting, philosophy, religion, and theology. Here, one thing can be pointed out that, Akbar was a great pioneer during medieval period in contributing education. During his reign, Fatehpur Sikri was the chief centre for Muslim learning. The Universities like, Takshashila and Nalanda were the centre for education in India. People from different parts of the world were coming to this place for higher learning what Huiyen Tsang in his travel has mentioned.

The Modern Period: According to G. K. Chesterton, Education is basically considered as the heart of a society which is passed from one generation to succeeding generation⁹. The European Missionaries first started teacher training institutions in India. But the general schools at the same time were established by

Danish Missionaries at Serampur near Calcutta. Warren Hestings opened a Madarsa at Calcutta in 1781 and in the year 1792, established a Sanskrit college by Jonathan Duncan at Banaras followed by Fort William College by Lord Wellesley in 1800 to give training to the civil servants. Here, some of the important educational acts, committees and commissions are described to understand the steps of educational development in India with reference to Odisha in particular.

Table-1: Different Educational Committees/Commissions in Pre-Independence India¹⁰.

Name of the Committee/Commission	Year of declaration	Key Features
Lord Macaulay's Minute	1844	British Government established English medium schools in 1844 aiming to strengthen their political authority and better trading in the country. They even compelled boys' students denying girl students to switch over from traditional schools to the English medium schools. By 1857, only three medical colleges such as Calcutta, Bombay and Madras and only one Engineering college at Roorkee were imparting technical education. The educational reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy proposed to the government to strengthen contemporary Sanskrit colleges which were situated at different places like, Madras, Calcutta and Banaras and many oriental colleges in the main city of Bengal. During the period of William Bentinck, the sort falls came to an end and he released sufficient amount of money for better educational development in India.
Wood's Dispatch on Education	1854	Sir Charles Wood after replacing the earlier committee of public instruction and council of education released 'Wood's Education Dispatch' on 19 July, 1854 which is considered as the Magna Carta of the English education. It was an important educational document and the main purpose of this dispatch was to make hierarchy in the educational system starting from the primary to university level.
The Indian Education Commission	1882	After the successful implementation of the school education, English people wanted to establish college and university education in India. In 1882, Lord Ripon made a Commission under the leadership of W.W. Hunter after the successful implementation of Wood's dispatch. The committee submitted the report in 1883 keeping the following primary objectives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Government should give autonomy to the District and Municipal Boards and they should run primary education on priority basis. • There should be the establishment of two types of high schools. One is to prepare students for vocational education and another is to provide literary education. • The government should not interfere much in the school and college education and it should be run by the management encouraging private enterprises. • The Female education is to be emphasized which was not available earlier except presidency towns. The government at that critical time accepted many recommendations of the commission. The growth rate of the education both in rural and urban areas increased than the earlier times. Philanthropic and religious associations also participated in this educational growth. As a result, Punjab University established in the year 1882 succeeding Allahabad University in 1887.
The Indian University Act	1904	Lord Curzon was the educational architecture and so pious in implementing educational system in India. In the year 1902, he appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir Thomas Raleigh keeping Indian members namely, Gurudas Banerjee and Syed Hussain Bilgrami. He passed Indian University Act for the improvement of higher education and provided annual grant of five lakh rupees which was in increased rate than the previous allotment for educational development in India.
The Government of India Resolution	1913	Indian national leaders wanted to bring a resolution before the government of India to provide free and compulsory primary education. In this context, Government agreed with the resolution and made a resolution on 21 st February, 1913 encouraging private voluntary involvements. Furthermore, it emphasized higher education followed by university education putting responsibilities on teachers.

Name of the Committee/Commission	Year of declaration	Key Features
The Hartog Committee	1929	As per the act of 1919, central government discontinued its grant on education and members of the private committee became more in number. As a result, the standard of education diminished. Taking to these reasons, a committee was formed under the leadership of Sir Philip Hartog in 1929. The main purpose of this committee was to give more attention to the Primary education making it as compulsory and few selected deserving students allowed to go for higher education to the outside if the facilities were not available in local.
Wardha Scheme of Basic Education	1937	Learning English education made a gap among English educated and the ignorant masses in 1937. The investment on primary education was not giving more attention to the poor students. Mahatma Gandhi called a conference on National Education at Wardha which had scheduled on 22-23 October, 1937. A resolution was made under the presidentship of Zakir Hussain where he submitted his report with a detailed syllabus in December, 1937. The main aim of establishing this report was to work out the following points. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To introduce skill development works in the syllabus and impart teaching through the medium of Hindi from standard II to VII; • To provide free and compulsory education consecutive seven years in the school and start English learning from standard VIII onwards; and • To create ways for contact with the community and building up school community. At last, the educational scheme accepted by the union and state governments as the model of national education.
Sergeant Report	1944	In the year 1944, Sir John Sergeant was the advisor to the educational development to the Central Advisory Board of Education of the Government. He made a scheme which was known as Sergeant plan keeping with basic objectives that, to provide Pre-primary education up to the age 6 years and free primary universal education from 6 years to 14 years. In addition to this, the students should learn 6years after high school education followed by 3 years as university course.

Table-1 states that, different committees/commissions have been constituted in different periods in India for the betterment of the education and particularly introduction of English education in India. Though it was the time for giving enforcement to the primary education, still different higher level educational institutions have been instituted in different parts of India in pre-Independence era.

Causes of the Spread of English Education before Independence in India: During the period of British administration, the effort of both government as well as Christian missionaries led the modern educational system in to a separate height¹¹. Lord Warren Hastings established Calcutta Madrassa for study of the Muslim law in 1781 followed by Sanskrit College by Jonathan Duncan at Varanasi in 1791. Charter Act incorporated the principles for encouraging the Indians and promoting the knowledge of modern Sciences in 1813. Another cause is that, British people were not compatible with the Indian languages. So, they wanted to introduce English education for their conversation which helped them a lot in their trading process.

It was really a critical time to think over the medium of instruction. Because, some people demanded that, method of teaching should be in Indian languages in the colleges rather than English. At last, English could be the medium of instructions in the colleges.

Causes of the Spread of English Education before Independence in Odisha: British administration wanted to establish schools, colleges and universities in different parts of India. They provided grant-in-aid for the English education. It was successful by the effort of both government as well as Christian missionaries and established numbers of educational institutions in Odisha. During the period of 1813, Charter Act incorporated the principles for learned Indians to educate on modern sciences. Medium of instruction was the national problem which has been discussed in the preceding paragraph. Apart from the above points, the following points are the responsible factors for the spread of English education in Odisha. i. East India Company realised that, people should be well conversant in English and they will not face any problem in doing business and to understand the British administration; ii. The appointment to the Odia people in the government offices would be more beneficial in respect to Bengal people because, Odia people are more loyal and they will work in less salary; and iii. Another cause is Odisha was not an exception like other regional people to help in the provincial administration.

Education System of Odisha during Ancient and Medieval period

During ancient and medieval period, Odisha had occupied one of the best leaning centres in India.

It was in the forefront of education and research. The ruins of ancient university like, 'Puspagiri' recently discovered in Odisha. Scholars from Greece, Persia, China etc. were coming to this university for doing study in the subjects like, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics and science. After 1568, when Sun dynasty was ruling over Odisha, Muslims and the Marathas occupied Odisha before the arrival of the British people. During Mughal period, Sanskrit Pathshalas and Makhtabs were the main stay of education.

Education system of Odisha during Pre-British Period

East India Company collapsed traditional pattern of education in Odisha in 1803. Christian Missionaries printed Old and New Testaments in Oriya language and helped educational growth. People of Odisha started learning Bhagabat Gita and many other theological books. Odisha was the mainstay of the education and advanced centres of Oriental learning. In Odisha, Cuttack Zilla School was established in 1866 and extended into a collegiate school in 1868. In 1873, Ravenshaw Hindu Girls' School was established. Reba Ray and Sailabala Das became instrumental for the cause of women's education establishing Sailabala Women's College at Cuttack. In addition to this, Dr. Stewart, the Civil Surgeon of Cuttack opened first medical school in 1876. His donation to the medical science was a lot for the then period. The first industrial training school opened at Balasore in 1884. Lord Thomas Macaulay made a resolution to impart education through English medium in 1835. So, in 1836, British government opened English Schools at Puri and Balasore. Subsequently, Zilla Schools established at Balasore, Puri and Cuttack to spread English education in Odisha. Likewise, during the period of Lord Dalhousie, Sir Charles Wood passed a resolution which is called as Magna Carta for English education system. In this period, another Zilla School was established at Berhampur in 1855. At last, Odisha acquired a separate state status on 1st April, 1936.

Primary Education: As a part of the Wood's Dispatch, spread of English education started in different schools in Odisha. Thomas Erric Ravenshaw opened 832 Pathshalas (primary schools) in the village level. It shows that, it was the period of renaissance in the educational growth in Odisha. Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati Narayan Deo emphasized on primary education in Odisha which increased the number of Primary Schools to 6998 by the end of the 1947.

Secondary Education: Likewise Primary School, Wood's Despatch gave a new impetus to the Secondary education in Odisha. Middle English Medium Schools and Middle Vernacular School opened to impart education English though it was not compulsory for all. Many Private High Schools established in Cuttack and Pyari Mohan Academy began as a Middle English School in 1875. The Victoria School at Cuttack upgraded its status to High School in 1888. By the end of the 19th century, 12 high schools and 82 Middle English Schools

were functioning in North Odisha and 4 high schools and 26 Middle English Schools in South Odisha.

Higher Education: Establishment of Ravenshaw College in the year 1968 gave a new shape to the higher education in Odisha. Cuttack and Berhampur Zilla Schools converted into the collegiate school with F. A. additional classes'. It was a kind of facility for the people of Odisha during that period. By the recommendation of the Hunter Commission, Berhampur Native College converted into the Khallikote College in 1893. Junior college in Cuttack upgraded into the S. B. Women's college in 1937. Furthermore, it can be said that, till the period of 1946, the numbers of colleges increased in different parts of Odisha namely, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, Khallikote College, Berhampur, S. K. C. G. College, Paralakhemundi, S.C.S. College, Puri, F. M. College, Balasore, and one training college named as Radha Nath Training College, Cuttack. All these colleges were imparting higher education before the independence.

Socio-Economic Status during Pre-Independence Period in Odisha

The income of the parents plays an important role for children's education. Children are also more aware about the benefits of education by themselves. During ancient and media period, people were depending upon the cultivation and the income from the agriculture was the main source of living. If the production is not enough because of natural calamities, the parents were facing lots of problems for their day to day expenditure and hard for them to send their children to the schools. Another cause was that, all the family members were putting their efforts for good production. So, children were not getting scope to go to the school for learning. It was very much acute in the tribal areas before 1980. Brahmin caste children were only allowed to learn Vedas and Upanishads as a customary process of their family. So, the situations clearly understood that, family pressure, poverty and distance of the school were the main problems for the children to go to the school and get education.

Conclusion

Grukula and monastery system of education were prevailing in ancient and medieval period for making the life more sanskritized and beautiful. According to Rig Veda, "teachers are selected and then educated or trained". Personal attention to the students and freedom to choose the teachers were the traditional system of education. Teachers during that period were imparting education orally. The Buddhist method of teaching was being provided by the Upajjhaya in the monastery. Teachers were considered most respected in the society and in vice students were also respecting them with high esteem. But, during modern period, British people constituted various committees and commissions to guide the system and instructed the teachers to impart education as per their plan and procedure. The

percentage of literacy improved than the previous when government implemented different provisions in the field of educational upliftment up to the age of 14 years. Education plays an important role in alleviating the poverty and making the society more progressive. Science from the ancient period till today, the importance of education has been realised by the people of the society and the progress of educational institutions imparting various programmes successfully.

Pattern of education during ancient and medieval period was a time being problem in the society. The role of the Church, and the missionaries were vital in introducing the English pattern of education. During that period, skill development programmes and different handicraft works had occupied a separate status in different parts of Odisha. Political leaders like, Gopal Krushna Gokhale, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Madan Mohan Malavya and many others really felt sorry for the poor literacy in the society. They tried to establish different educational institutions like, schools, colleges, Tols in different parts in India. Likewise, Missionary schools in Balasore, Cuttack, Berhampur and Dayananda Anglo Vedic (D. A. V.) Schools pioneered by Daya Nanda Saraswati brought a new era in the growth of literacy in Odisha. In this context, it can be said that, the minutes of Lord Macaulay and Sergeant's Report of 1944 played a crucial role to make the educational system proactive and standardised in India with particular reference to Odisha.

To sum up, it can be said that, the educational system before pre-Independence was not good till the end of the 19th century. But it has developed to the maximum extent after 20th century. Now, the situation is well parallel comparing to the other educational systems of the world.

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