



GROWTH OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN UNDIVIDED SAMBALPUR DISTRICT OF ODISHA: 1950-1992

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Abstract:

Education is an indispensable need of mankind. It aims at educating the masses to become better citizen and more useful of society. Therefore, all over the world, women education has been viewed as an important instrument for an all-round development of individuals. Education is associated with the quality of life related to production and interlinked with the promotion of social and national integration.

Sambalpur, the most important district of Western Odisha has been named after the head quarter town Sambalpur. It is situated between 20° 44' and 20° 14' North Latitude and between 82° 39' and 84° 23' East Longitude. It is surrounded by the undivided district of Sundargarh on the North, on the South by Bolangir, on the East by Dhenkanal and the North west and west by Raigarh and Raipur district of Chhattisgarh. The district had play an important role in the field of education as well as socio-political consciousness during British rules. After independence, women's emancipation has taken a long leap. Article 14 and 15 of our constitution have ensure complete equality and freedom of women. Our study on "Growth of Women Education in undivided Sambalpur district of Odisha 1950-1992" will be deal with (a) Historical background (b) Growth of primary education (c) Spread of secondary & Higher education (d) Impact of Women education. Therefore, we propose to attempt a systematic codification of the efforts made for development of women education in undivided Sambalpur district and historical analysis of its impact on society. In this context the growth of women education assumes a special significance for the educational history, its impact upon the society and its success in achieving these objectives in the post-independence period. Through the chapters of this work attempts have been made in bring out the salient creatures of the process leading towards the qualitative and quantitative growth of women education in undivided Sambalpur district of Odisha.

Keywords:- Assimilation, Chauhan, Hirakhanda Matrumangal, Missionaries

1. Introduction

Social changes are a must for the progress and prosperity of the society. Women play a vital role in this context mobility is always in accordance with the democratic spirit and way of life. Social practices based on religion and customs have placed women as inferior and subordinated to men. Women remained dependent on men for subsistence and security since been traditionally eulogized as mother and wife. But seldom a woman has been socially recognized as an entity independent of her husband. House hold was a women's complete world. Her highest accomplishment was in providing supportive roles to the male members in the family.

Sambalpur, the most important district of Western Odisha has been named after the head quarter town Sambalpur.¹ It is situated between 20°44' and 20°14' North latitude and between 82°39' and 84°23' East longitude. It is surrounded by the undivided districts of Sundargarh on the North, on the South by Balangir, on the East by Dhenkanal and the North West and West by Raigarh & Raipur district of Chhattisgarh. The district had played an important role in the field of education as well as socio-political consciousness during British rule. The women education was introduced in the district very early to the 19th century. The highest standard reached by the girls in Sambalpur was the Middle Vernacular Scholarship. Till independence only one high school for girls was functioning in the district. The progress made in the subsequent years was not appreciable.

The period from 1950 to 1992 saw striking changes in the field of Woman Education in Sambalpur. The spread of Woman Education and the establishment of new institution in the five years plan periods led to social change in Sambalpur. After 1950 when the constitution of free India was formed, female education received some consideration from the Government. As a result several schools and colleges were opened for the enlightenment of women. The impact of modern ideas began to operate through perceptible and imperceptible ways. It had its positive and negative aspects. Modern idea begins to penetrate into the throw and habits of Sambalpur. Since 1950 several welfare measures has been introduced for improving the socio-economic life of the people of Sambalpur. A wave of unrest swept over the thinking minds as the education progressed.

2. Origin of Sambalpur

The district of Sambalpur has been named after the headquarter town Sambalpur. According to L.S.S.O. Malley, the town itself derives its name from the presiding deity Samalai, whose image was founded by Balaram Dev, the first Chauhan king of Sambalpur, beneath of simul (silk cotton) tree. Ptolemy, the Greek geographer (middle of the 2nd century A.D). In his work geographike refers to a town named Sambalaka situated on the bank of the Mananda. Sambalaka and Mananda may perhaps be identified with modern Sambalpur and river Mahanadi respectively.² From time immemorial Sambalpur was famous for the finest type of the diamonds available on the river bed of the Mahanadi. Ptolemy also wrote that diamond was obtained there and was exported to other parts of the country for which this part was known as 'Hirakhanda' all over the world. Tribals of the area were engaged in collection of diamonds from the river Mahanadi.

Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, mentions that a tribe called the 'Jharas' used to collect diamonds and sell those at Kalinga.³ Mainly diamonds were obtained from the river IB, a tributary of the Mahanadi near Kosa of Sambalpur. The French traveler Tavernier writing about the middle of the 17th century A.D., referred to Sumelpur as a region rich in diamonds obtained from the most ancient mines. This region was reputed as containing one of the largest diamond mines in the world. Meanwhile the king of Sambalpur used to be addressed as the 'Hirakhanda Chhatrapati' i.e the emperor of the land of diamonds.

The history of Sambalpur can be traced as back as 4th century A.D., when Samudra Gupta, the king of Magadha occupied Kosala. In the historic period it's saw the rise and fall of many dynasties ruling over Sambalpur one after another. After the Guptas and Nalas, the Saravapuriyas, the Somavamsis the Telgu Chodas, the Kalachuris, the Gangas, the Chauhans. The early history of Chauhan rulers of Patna is known from a Sanskrit work Kosalananda Kavya written by pandit Gangadhar Mishra and a Hindi (Laria) work called Jayachandrika written by Prahallad Dubey in 1664 and 1781 A.D respectively.⁴ These two literary works throw much light on the administration of the Chauhan rulers, the king Balram Dev built the Sambalpur. Kingdom and after him a number of successors were rule over this territory.

The early British administration in Sambalpur was neither judicious nor conciliatory. The resistance movement led by Surendra Sai of Sambalpur against the British imperialism is a landmark in the history of Odisha as well as of India. Surendra Sai, the uncrowned hero of Sambalpur was born in the Chauhan family of Rajpur-Khinda. By 1827, Maharaja Sai, the king of Sambalpur died without a son for which Surendra Sai, who then represented the next line of succession claimed for his succession to the Gadee of Sambalpur.⁵ This act of total negligence to the claim as Rajpur-Khinda family for succession infuriated Balaram Singh, the brother of the Dharam Singh who unfurled the flag of rebellion against the British authority. Surendra Sai along with his six brothers enlisted the support of the likeminded Zamindar and Gauntias organize the rebellion against the British.⁶

The great Indian revolt the so called Sepoy Mutiny, broke out in May 1857. The close of 1857 and the following year witnessed a terrible period in the history of Sambalpur, During that time the British and the rebels were equally strong. The great revolt of 1857 had been suppressed else were in India by 1858. But in the district of Sambalpur it had continued till 1862. The secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces rightly pointed out to Government of India that, "The Sambalpur district was perhaps the very last district in India, in which the members of the disturbance of 1857 were finally stamped out."⁷ The anti-British feelings were very deep in Sambalpur. But it was specified after much efforts and after Surendra Sai was tried and kept in the Asurgarh Fort. The brave son of Sambalpur breathed his last on 28 February 1884.

The people of Sambalpur showed another massive discontent in 1895 when Odia, the mother tongue of people was not recognized as the official language of the district and it was substitute by Hindi. The Chief Commissioner of Central Province in his order dated 15 January 1895 abolished Odia as the court language and introduced Hindi in its place in order to facilitate the Hindi speaking officer in that district.⁸ The language agitation which thus spread to different part of Odisha. Sir Andrew Frazer, chief commissioner of Central Province visited Sambalpur in 1901 when people met him in large number and submitted a

memorial to restore Odia language and to transfer the district of Sambalpur to Odisha Sir Andrew Frazer appreciated the cause of the popular movement of Sambalpur and recommended it owing to the ethical and linguistics difference between Sambalpur and other districts of Central Province. As a result, subsequently in October 1905 the bulk of the district was transferred to Odisha and remain a part of the province of Bengal until 1st April 1912. When the province of Bihar and Odisha was constituted.⁹ Lastly, Odisha get State hood on 1st April 1936 with Sir John Austin Hubback as the first Governor. The Independence day was celebrated with great eclat by all sections of the public throughout the district on 15 August 1947. The constitution of India was adopted on November 26, 1949 by the Constituent Assembly and came into effect on January 26, 1950.

3. Statement of the Problem

Social changes are must for the progress and prosperity of the society women play a vital role in this context. Mobility is always in accordance with the democratic sprit and way of life. The spread of women education and the establishment of new institution in the five year plan period let to social change in Sambalpur. The Government paid very little attention to female before independence. But after 1950, when the constitution of free India as formed women education received attention from the Government, As a result several Schools and Colleges were open for the enlightenment of women. The present study is “Growth of Women Education in Undivided Sambalpur District of Odisha 1950-1992”.

4. Objectives of the Study

The present study has designed with the following objectives

1. To study the status of Women in Primary Education of undivided Sambalpur district from 1950 to 1992.
2. To study the Women in Secondary Education of undivided Sambalpur district from 1950 to 1992.
3. To study the Women in Higher Education of undivided Sambalpur district from 1950-1992.
4. Findings and discussion

Therefore, we propose to attempt a systematic codification of the efforts made for Growth of Women Education in undivided Sambalpur district and historical analysis of its impact on society.

5. Review of Literature and Methodology

Very little work has far been attempted on the history of education in Sambalpur and growth of women education in particular, K.K. Das's (1982) work, Elementary Education in Odisha (Odia) Govt. Press Cuttack and J.K. Samal's (1984) work History of Education in Orissa 1905-36, Punthi Pustak, Kolkata have not specifically referred to the state of education in Sambalpur. Even S.P. Das (1962) work, *Sambalpur Itihasa* (Odia). Sambalpur in this work he has not thrown much light on the history of education in Sambalpur systematically. Another work of A. Behera's (2018), *Growth of Education and Social Consciousness*, alfa

publication, New Delhi have not thrown much light on women education after independence of undivided Sambalpur. Therefore it is sincerely felt that a historical investigation into the growth of women education in undivided Sambalpur district of Odisha 1950-1992 as much desired.

For preparing such a research paper care will be taken to review all the literature available on Socio-educational life of the people of Sambalpur. This work will base on original records available from different sources i.e Government Report, District Gazetteers, periodicals at Odisha State Achieves, Bhubaneswar, Regional Archives, Sambalpur will also be consulted for scientific and statistical analysis to show quantitative and qualitative aspects of education. Out of the above the present study based on historical research. The research has collected data both from Primary and Secondary sources mainly from Official Reports, Gazetteers, Statistical Handbook, Commissioner Reports and data from various educational institution. After collecting data, the collected data have been analysed and interpreted and results have been drawn.

6. Educational Status of Women in Primary Education

The importance of women education in the society is essential as moon in a dark night. Women were respected in our society during the Vedic Period. Coming to the Smritis, we find that the women were considered incompetent during the Post Vedic period of perform sacrifices and to read the Vedas as they could not be initiated. Manusmriti declares that initiation of women was instituted in their marriages.¹⁰ In ancient time the female education was entirely domestic and vocational, they being prepared for the duties of the household. The evil of child marriage, which also crept in made the education of girls virtually impossible.

For countless centuries women in Odisha had been subordinate to men in socially oppressed as in other part of India. The women's education began to progress under the British. The spread of modern education among the Odia girls was not solely the work of the government. The Christian Missionaries and number of enlightened Odia also played an important role. The limited progress of women's education during the period under review contributed to the liberation of Odia women in a remarkable way. It plays a very important role in creating political and socio-cultural awaking among them. Among the Western districts of Odisha, Sambalpur is far more advanced in respect of education and since the British time this district has received educational facilities on a large scale than any other district in western track of the state.¹¹

During the British rule the progress of women education was very slow. It was only in 1813, that the Charter Act entrusted them with the responsibility of educating the people of India. It set a fund of Rupees One lakh for this purpose. The female education made a beginning in Odisha under the initiated of the Missionaries as early as 1822.¹² In the matters of education no interest was shown by the company for a long time. But their early attempt did not mention anything about the education of women. It was the dispatched of 1854, which for the first time laid stress on the education of girls.¹³

In undivided Sambalpur, the progress of women education was seen to be not satisfactory. A great portion of the people were conservative. They did not like that the girl should go out and come into contact with boy teachers or any others residents. They usually, did not take the same amount of care and interest in the education of their girls as they did not case of boys. Besides this the system of early marriages presented an almost insurmountable barrier to education of girls expanded considerably. After independence, several Commissions and Committee were appointed to suggest measure for the improvement of education in general. To accelerate the progress of women education different measures were taken in independent India.

In the constitution of India, it is categorically mention under section 16(a) that ‘there shall be equality of opportunity to all citizens.’ So the problem of women education well examined by different committee and suggested measures for their improvement. The National Committee of Women Education appointed in 1958 under the Chairmanship of Srimati Durgavati Deshmukh for making a survey for the present system of women's education on the following ground.¹⁴

- I. To suggest certain measures to bridge the gap between education of men and women.
- II. To examine the problem of illiterate women.
- III. To examine the cause of wastage and stagnation.
- IV. To see what help could be obtained from Voluntary Welfare Organization for Women's Education.
- V. To suggest, what type of vocational education should be given to the women.

There had been a study advanced in the education of girls in Sambalpur district. The total number of all Primary Schools in the district was 1827 in 1961-62, 2058 in 1962-63, 2095 in 1963-64, 2010 in 1964-65 and 2175 in 1965-66,¹⁵ So there has always been an absolute increase in the number of Primary Schools in every year. In 1950-51, there were only 725 Primary School in the district. Such enormous increase in the number of Primary Schools was the results of effective measures taken during the First, Second, and Third plan period to spread the primary education with an object to carry into every door of the children.

In 1961 the district could have 10 Middle School and 26 Primary School for girl. But the picture was somewhat different in after 5 years. During 1965-66 the number of institution was rose from 10 to 21 and 26 to 29 respectively, Some of the learned and noble person of undivided Sambalpur district took impetus steps to encourage female education in district of Sambalpur. As a result of this, the co-education was also very popular in the locality, it was believe that the increase in the number of girls students during the period from 1961-1966. There was no denying the fact that the main difficult with, which female education had to contend was the scarcity of qualified teachers. In order to meet the deficiency of female teachers.

As far as the primary stage of education is concerned there should not be any controversy over co-education and boys and girls is the age group 6-11, may study together Smt. Han Mehta Committee on co-education (1962) recommended for the adoption of co-education as the general pattern at the elementary

stage with a vigorous propaganda to overcome resistance to co-education. The Committee suggested for, the appointment of male and female teachers in the both boys and girls institutions. In the Third Five Year (1961- 66) plan period, the state government laid Stress on the extension of girl students in Primary School. Various measures have been suggested by the National Committee of Women's Education for the improvement of girls education.

The education of girls continues to make slow but steady progress. Prejudice against the education of girls gradually dwindled. Child marriage had become illegal and purdah system had been slackening, although the number of all kinds of educational institutions for girls could not progress rapidly.

7. Educational Status of Women in Secondary Education

The Government of Odisha was almost completely indifferent towards the opening of Secondary School for girls of Sambalpur, First time in 1931, an attempt was made by Nilamani Senapati, Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur and President of the Managing Committee of Zilla School, Sambalpur to introduce Secondary Education for girls in the district.¹⁶ Accordingly to his reports " A proposal came for admission of girl in the High School classes. I was in favour, All the non-official member were against. They apprehended, if girls were admitted boys would be withdrawn. I order admission of girls and waited to see the result. No girls came forward for admission. No boy withdraw virtually, the door to high school education for girls remain closed, until 1942, when the Lady Lewis girls High School started.¹⁷

Secondary education occupies a very strategic position in the educational pattern of the state, As it is the link between primary and higher education, it exerts its influence on both. In the chain of education, secondary education is the Central link and considered to be the most important link. Therefore, it is expanded that secondary education must be of the highest quality if it is to satisfy the needs of the modern age. In Odisha Secondary school is the gift of modern education. This type of schools was not prevalent in ancient and mediaeval times. There were started in our state for the first time by foreign Missionaries and their after, by the eminent educationist.

The Girl's High School named Lady Lewis at Sambalpur was open 1942. The school was a very promising institution. This continue to be the only High School for girls till the country got her freedom. During 1965-66 the picture was somewhat different. There were 8 Girls High School and 21 Middle Schools for them. By the end of 1965-66 the district has as many as 74 High Schools/Higher Secondary Schools, 2 Senior Basic Schools including above mention Girls High School.¹⁸

8. Status of Women in Higher Education

In Odisha the number of separate women's college is very few up to 1943, there was no college in the district of Sambalpur. In July 1944, the Sambalpur college was established at Sambalpur. But a separate college for women's was started by private enterprise in July 1959 with only 19 students. This women's college became Government College started in 1961-62 with the roll strength of 43.¹⁹ During the year there was 185 students and 20 teachers. Simultaneously, other places like Bargarh Women's College in 1978,

Jharsuguda Women's College in 1982, Deogarh Women's College in 1992, Rairakhol Junior College in 1991, Padampur Women's Junior College in 1991 and its was converted in to degree college in 1995-96.

The education of girl and women in an integral part of national development. The awakening among Odia Women has been rally considerable during the recent years. Our girls have all potential quality, in respect of mental, physical but these will have to be nourished and cherished until they grow into the full and glorious woman hood. Dr Radhakrishna quoting Manu believed “Where women are honourshed Gods are pleased, where they are not honoured all works became fruitless.”²⁰ Women as human being have as much right as man have and the honour they expect in society depends on the degree of their education.

The Indian Education Commission 1964-65 rightly emphasize, “For full development of our human resources the improvement of homes and for moulding the character of children during the most impressionable year of their fancng.²¹The education of girl is of greater importance’s then that of boys”. However, the change in the attitude of public towards women’s education would go a long way in improving the situation.

9. Findings

The period from 1950 to 1992 saw striking changes in the field of women education as well as social consciousness in Sambalpur district. After 1950 when the constitution of free India was form various reformative measures were taken by the Government of India with a view of bring about educational development of woman in Sambalpur. The growth in number of Primary Schools become spectacular in rural areas. As far as the primary stage of education is concerned there should not be any controversy over co-education and boys and girls in the age group 6-11, may study together. The number of Secondary School began to increase considerable. There was appreciable growth of women's education in spite of the barrier like deep orthodoxy of the people, scarcity of qualified female teachers and the general apathy towards women education. The Higher Education of girls and women is an integral part of national development. The awaking among Odia Women has been really considerable during the recent years. Despite all the obstacles and many difficulties Women Education advancing. They are making their influence felt in national affairs.

I) Firstly, The Government was never willing to spread more than the scanty sum of education.

II) The Second important factor was the neglect of education of the girl for which very little funds were allotted. This was partly due to the Government’s anxiety not to hurt the susceptibilities of or orthodox people of Sambalpur.

III) Thirdly, the local bodies which could have carried the system to its natural size themselves become fictional in approach political in motive and slow by nature.

IV) Fourthly, because of the remoteness of rural area and lack of communication, proper supervision and Inspection of School by the educational agencies could not be possible.

V) Fifthly, the growing poverty of the people continues to be a stumbling block in the path of educational progress.

VI) Sixthly, the caste prejudice continues to be among in every part of Sambalpur district and the children of the so-called lower class did not find easy to enter into the schools.

Lastly, 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 person of the same caste or even to different members of the same family.

10. Discussion.

Due to the various problems the Spread of Women Education in Sambalpur district was not up to marks. The development failed to keep pace with other aspect of social and economical progress. However attempts had been made to improve the education of women in undivided Sambalpur district. It has contributed significantly for the modern political, social and economic ideas spread in Sambalpur. It was due to the contributed made by the modern education among women. The impact of modern Idea became inevitable, the impact became manifest. It had its positive and negative aspect. Through action and reaction antagonism and assimilation, modern ideas begin to penetrate into the thought and habit of Sambalpur.

After 1950, the self-conscious and self-confidence women like Prabhavati Devi and Parvati Giri had worked for the uplift of women in Sambalpur, with the establishment of "Matrumangal Kendra" by Prabhavati 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. Parvati Giri had also worked a lot towards the spread of Women Education in Padampur block under undivided Sambalpur district.

Thus, as in the other parts of Odisha so also in Sambalpur a major impetus to the development on modern lines was given by the growth of education and social consciousness. The period from 1950 to 1992 was a period of all round development in Sambalpur. Its achievement was to serve as a base for more vigorous reform and modernization of Sambalpur's society, education and economy in later years.

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