



# Growth Of Education And Social Consciousness In Sambalpur During British Rule: A Retrospect

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## Abstract

Education is an indispensable need of mankind. It aims at educating the masses to become better citizens and more useful members of society. The district of Sambalpur had played an important role in the field of education and social consciousness during the British rule. Prior to the beginning of first half of the Nineteenth Century, Sambalpur became a main centre for learning in Western Odisha. The primary education was introduced in the district very early. Many of the indigenous school were opened in various places of Sambalpur. The Secondary and Western education in the district was introduced after the foundation of Zilla School in 1852 at the town of Sambalpur. It is the oldest school in the district. There has been a steady advancement in the education of girls in the Sambalpur district. The Government paid very little attention to backward classes before 1905. After the National Movement for freedom, education of the backward classes received some considerable support from the government. First time in Sambalpur district, the untouchable caste pupils were allowed to all general schools. Muhammadans form a very small minority in Sambalpur and Urdu School of Sambalpur is the oldest school in Western Odisha. The present work is the first historical study, strictly speaking of the "Growth of Education and Social Consciousness in Sambalpur during British Rule: - A Retrospect."

**Keywords: - Agitation, Conciliatory, Elite, Hirakhanda, Plucking.**

## 1.Introduction

The district of Sambalpur has rich cultural heritage. Sambalpur, the heart of learning of Western Odisha lies between 20°44' and 20°4' 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 Bolangir, on the east by Dhenkanal and the northwest and west by Raigarh and Raipur district of Chhattisgarh.

## 2.Origin of Sambalpur

Sambalpur saw the dawn of civilization long before the introduction of any regular script in India. Ancient man has left at Vikramkhola (about 16 miles to the west of Jharsuguda railway station) on the wall of the cave pictograph writing still undeciphered. The Vikramkhola pictograph scripts clearly indicate that a cultured and developed people lived in this region about five thousand years ago.<sup>1</sup>

In ancient times Sambalpur was a part of South Kosala comprising roughly the modern district of Raipur and Raigarh in Chhattisgarh and the undivided district of Sambalpur, Bolangir and Sundargarh. According to the source from Budhaghosa, Kosala means one who is clever in the art of plucking. 'Kusa' grass, which is very useful in the performance of yagnas and the religious sacrifices. So, it appears that this area once used to supply 'Kusa' grass to other parts of India for use of the time of religious rituals.<sup>2</sup>

The district of Sambalpur has been named after the head quarter town Sambalpur. According to L.S.S.O. Malley, the town itself derives its name from the presiding diety Samalai, whose image was founded by Balaram Dev, the First Chauhans king of Sambalpur, beneath of Simul (Silk Cotton) tree. Ptolemy, the Greek geographike refers to a town named Sambalaka situated on the bank the Mananda. Sambalaka and Mananda may perhaps be identified with modern Sambalpur and river Mahanadi respectively.<sup>3</sup> Form 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 others parts of country for which this part of the country for was known as "Hirakhanda" all over the world. Tribals of the area were engaged in collection of diamonds from river Mahanadi. Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, mention that a tribe called the "Jhara" used to collect the diamonds and sell those at Kalinga.<sup>4</sup> The French traveller Tavernier, writing about the middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. refered to Sambalpur 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 diamonds.<sup>5</sup>

The history of Sambalpur can be traced as back as 4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., when Samudra Gupta the king of Magadha occupied Kosala. In the historic period, it saw the rise and fall of many dynasties ruling over Sambalpur one after another. After the Guptas and Nalas, the Sarvapuriyas, the Somavanshis, the Telugu Chodas, the Kalachuris, the Gangas, the Chauhans. The early history of Chauhans rulers of Patna is known from a Sanskrit work 'Kosalamanda Kavya' written by Pandit Gangadhar Mishra and a Hindi (Laria) work called 'Jayachandrika' written by Prahallad Dubey in 1664 and 1781 A.D. respectively.<sup>6</sup> These two literary works throw much light on the administration of the Chohans rulers, the king Balaram Dev built the Sambalpur kingdom and after him a number of successor 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 by 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.<sup>7</sup> Surendra Sai along with his six brother enlisted the support of the like minded Zamindar and Gountias organize the rebellion against the British.<sup>8</sup> The great Indian revolt the so called sepoy mutiny broke out in many 1857, the clase of 1857 and the following year witnessed a terrible period in the history of Sambalpur. During that time the British and the rebels were equal strong. The greatrevolt of 1857 had been suppressed else were in India by 1858. But in the district of Sambalpur, it continued till 1862. The Secretary of 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 member of the disturbance of 1857 were finally stamped out."<sup>9</sup> The anti-British feeling were very deep in Sambalpur. But it was specified after much efforts and after Surendra Sai was tried and kept in the Arurgarh Fort. The brave son of Sambalpur breathed his last on 28 February 1884.

### 3. Review of Literature and Methodology

For preparing such Research work care will be taken to review all the literature available on socio-educational life of the people of Sambalpur. Very little work has so far been attempt on the history of education in Sambalpur. Dr. K.K.Das's work (1982) Elementary Education in Odisha (Odia), Govt. Press Cuttack and Dr. J.K. Samal's work (1984), History of Education in Odisha 1905-36, Puthi Pustak, Calcutta

have not specifically referred to the state of education in Sambalpur. Even Shiva Prasad Das's, (1962) Sambalpur Itihasa (Odia), Sambalpur. In this work he has not thrown much light on the history of education in Sambalpur. A few articles such as the "Education in Odisha" (1991), vision, vol.xi, No.ii, Bhubaneswar, with very little historical antecedent. Therefore, it is sincerely felt that a historical investigation into the "Growth of Education and Social Consciousness in Sambalpur during British rule: A Retrospect" is much desired.

This work will be based on original records available from different sources i.e. Government Reports, Gazetteers, Periodicals at Odisha State Archives Bhubaneswar, Regional Archives Sambalpur, R.D.C. library Sambalpur. Official publications will also be consulted for cross examination of the data. For an holistic approach to the subject due care will also be taken to interview the leading personalities associated with education for socio-educational developments.

#### 4. Objectives of the study

During the British rule Sambalpur saw striking changes in the field of education as well as social consciousness in Sambalpur will be dealt with in the following framework.

1. Educational Status of Primary Education
2. Secondary and Higher Education
3. Education for Female, Backward Classes, Aboriginal and Muslims.
4. Rule of Odia Nationalism and its impact upon the social life of Sambalpur.
5. Finding and Conclusion.

Therefore, we propose to attempt a systematic codification of the efforts made for Growth of Education and Social Consciousness during British rule: A Retrospect and historical analysis of its impact on society.

#### 5. Educational Status of Primary Education

One of the unique features of Vedic education was that the pupils had to reside within the premises of the Ashram with their Guru. The Chandagya Upanishad speaks of the pupils as residing with the family of Acharya or Guru's family.<sup>10</sup> There is no definite information regarding the old centre of learning in Sambalpur district in the remote past.

During the medieval period the land of Sambala (Modern Sambalpur) was a seat of Tantric Buddhism.<sup>11</sup> It is said to be the land where the Sambara Tantra was propounded by Pitopada, a famous Siddha. Acharya Pitopada, who was a famous teacher in the Ratnagiri Mahavihara, attained the Siddhi of invisibility at Sambala.<sup>12</sup> A great Buddhist Vihara is said to have developed during the medieval period at Machalinda (identified with Melchhamunda in Padampur sub-division of Bargarh district). The Muchalinda Vihara, the ruins of which are still to be seen, was a famous centre of learning where Buddhist and Hindu philosophers were being taught.

The year 1862 is a turning point in the history of Sambalpur, when the district was tagged with the newly constituted central provinces. Sambalpur was a neglected area under the Central Province from 1862 to 1868, there were 249 schools opened in the district and 13276 students were admitted.<sup>13</sup> The people were very much interested to learn. But there were no such facilities extended by the local ruler or the British Government. The annual expenditure of all the schools was Rupees 19,600/-, out of which Rs.7770/- was donated by the local people.<sup>14</sup> Mr. Bichendra Pattanaik was the First Deputy Inspector in the Sambalpur. After a short period of service at Sambalpur, he had been transferred to Angul as Tahasildar.<sup>15</sup>

In 1880-81, there were 3266 children attending school and 7175 students in 1890-91. In the later years the number of primary schools gradually increased in the Sambalpur District. The Council maintained six upper primary schools. They were located at Sambalpur, Rampella, Attabira, Barpali, Bargarh, and



Padampur. The rest of schools were aided by Government.<sup>16</sup> During the above period, the area of Sambalpur district was 6764 square mile and its total population was 1202584 (1941 census) the density of population was 192.<sup>17</sup>

The literate person in the district were 211918 made up 183975 males and 27943 were females.

## 6. Secondary and Higher Education

Secondary Education occupies a very strategic position in the educational pattern of the country. As it is the link between Primary and Higher Education, it exerts its influence on both. Secondary education was imparted by the Middle Schools and High Schools. The schools coming under the scope of Middle Schools were broadly of two types one was the Middle English School with English as a compulsory subject in the curriculum and led to the High School stage. The other type was known as Middle Vernacular School. Hence English was not a compulsory subject in the teaching learning process.

In India, secondary school is the “gift of modern education”. This type of schools was not prevalent in ancient and medieval India. There were started in our country for the first time by the Foreign Missionaries and thereafter, by the Indian Educationalist. These efforts were made as early as 1830 A.D. the authority decided to give English education to the Indians in order to qualify them to take large share in the civil administration of their country.<sup>18</sup> The report of Lord Thomas Bahington Macaulay, which was accepted by Lord William Bentinck, then viceroy of India in 1835, paved the way for the expansion of secondary education.<sup>19</sup> The Despatch no.49, dated the 19<sup>th</sup> July, 1854 from the court of Director of the East India Company to the Governor General of India in council had been described as the “Magna Carta of English Education in India”. This dispatch is commonly known as the world’s Despatch of 1854.<sup>20</sup> It is a Landmark in the history of education of India and ushered in an era of reforms.

### a. Sambalpur Zilla School

The secondary education in the Sambalpur district was introduced after the foundation of Sambalpur Zilla School in 1852 at the town of Sambalpur.<sup>21</sup> It was raised to the status of a High English School in 1864. This school was maintained by the Government. The attendance of the school rose from 142 in 1886 to 214 in 1906-07 and to 484 in 1930.<sup>22</sup> There were eight classes. In the four top classes the medium of instruction was English.<sup>23</sup> In 1930, there were 25 teachers on the staff. All the teachers except three were trained. Four of the teachers belongs to Sambalpur district, one was from Bihar and rest were from the others districts of Odisha.<sup>24</sup>

### b. Bargarh High School

The Western Education was introduced in Bargarh in 1908. The Bargarh High School or George High School at Bargarh originally started as an Upper Primary School in 1862 and was converted in to a Middle English School in 1908. In 1919, the Patna University accorded sanction to the opening of the matriculation class and the class started from the beginning of 1920. The average roll number of students rose from 140 in 1920 to 175 in 1930.<sup>25</sup>

### c. Larambha High School

There were no more High School in the district of Sambalpur up to 1937 except Zilla School, Sambalpur and George High School, Bargarh. But the year 1938, witnessed the establishment of Larambha residential High School at Larambha a small village 30 K.M. away from Sambalpur town. It was established by Late Brajamohan Panda, an eminent educationist of Odisha.<sup>26</sup> The Larambha High School was one of the unique residential High school in rural of Western Odisha. The aim of establishing a High School at Larambha was to enable the poor students to continue Secondary education with much less expense and to pass matriculation examination.

## 7. Higher Education

When Odisha became a separate province in the year 1936, there were only 5 colleges in the state, of these 4 were Arts and Science colleges and one was a Training College. But up to 1943, there was no college in Sambalpur district. In the year 1943, proposal had been passed for establishing intermediate colleges in Sambalpur, Balasore and Puri. Sambalpur college was the only college to open Arts, Science and commerce classes. But the other two colleges were only Arts intermediate college.<sup>27</sup>

It was only after the Utkal University Act of 1943 came in to force on 27<sup>th</sup> November 1943, that the higher education began to expand slowly. In July 1944, the Gangadhar Meher College, which is the first and foremost college of the district, was established at Sambalpur. It was named after the great Odia poet, Gangadhar Meher. It is the oldest college of the district and one of the first grade college of Odisha.<sup>28</sup> The number of students in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years classes on the 31 March 1947 was 306. The college was maintained by the Government.<sup>29</sup>

## 8. Education for Female, Backward classes, Aborigines and Muslims

### a. Education for Female

Social practices based on religion and customs have placed women an inferior and Sub-ordinated to man. The important of women education in the society is essential as moon in a dark night. Women were respected in our society during 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.

During the British rule the progress of women education was very slow. The Female education made a beginning in Odisha under the initiated of the missionaries as early as 1822.<sup>30</sup> In the matters of education no interest was shown by the company for a long time. It was the dispatched of 1854, which for the first time laid stress on the education of girls.<sup>31</sup>

In Sambalpur, the progress of the Female education were seen to be not satisfactory. The highest standard reached by the girls in Sambalpur was Middle Vernacular Scholarship standard. In 1900-01, only 471 girls were attending schools. The number rose subsequently to 1332 in 1906-07. Out of that 899 girls attended boys schools and 433 downed girls schools.<sup>32</sup> During 1923-24, there was a steady advance in all classes of schools. Three of the schools had become Middle Vernacular Schools and were managed by Government. They were at Sambalpur, Bargarh and Rampellla. Besides these, there were 5 Upper Primary Girls Schools and 15 lower primary Girls schools.<sup>33</sup>

The Government was almost completely in different towards the opening of Secondary Schools for the girls of school. The Female Education Committee of 1914 did not lay any stress on the vital issue. In 1931, an attempt was made by Sri Nilamani Senapati, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of Sambalpur and president of the managing committee of Zilla School, Sambalpur to introduce Secondary Education for girls in the district. According to his report "A proposal came for admission of girls in the High Schools classes was in favour. All the non-official members were against. They apprehended, if girls were admitted boys would be withdrawn. I ordered admission of girls and waited to see the result. No girl came forward for admission. No boy withdrew virtually, the door to High school education for girls remained closed until a decade later when Lady Lewis Girls school was started" in 1942.<sup>34</sup> It was maintained the environment. The number of High School for girls in the district of Sambalpur was one till the country got her Freedom in 1947.

## 9. Education for Backward classes and Muslims

The Backward Classes of Sambalpur district can broadly be divided into two category (1) Depressed class and (2) the Aboriginal races.

### a. Depressed Class

Presently the Depressed classes are recognised as Scheduled Caste. Untouchability among Hindus is thus a unique phenomenon unknown to humanity in other parts of the world.<sup>35</sup> Nothing like it is to be found in any other society primitive, ancient or modern. It is being increasingly believed that education can be a powerful means of ameliorate the suffering depressed class and for overcoming the social psychological and economic barriers under which they have been reeling since long. The consciousness for upliftment through educating depressed class emerged during the nineteenth century and is still on. The idea originated with the coming of missionaries with the East India Company.

A contemporary event of the period was the legislation of Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1872. The British Government by introducing a uniform system of law in the county dealt a server blow in the social and legal inequalities. In 1930, there were 20 primary schools in Sambalpur district specially meant for educating depressed class pupils, attended by 714 in numbers. The total number of children of the said class attending school was 1981 during the year under review.<sup>36</sup> During the year 1938-39 the number of schools specially meant for depressed class community reduced in all Odisha level from 442 to 295 due to classification of such schools into depressed class and Tribal separately. But in the district of Sambalpur in particular the number of such schools was rose from 9 to 12. The district had received various grants from Government for the development of depressed class pupils of Sambalpur.

Subsequently from the academic session 1939-40, there was a rapid decline in the number of depressed class with the higher class. But the result was negative in case of Sambalpur district. The number of schools rose from 16 in 1939-40 to 18 in 1940-41. The Government had pleased to the performance of depressed class students of district and awarded scholarship to two lower primary school students of Sambalpur district at the state level.<sup>37</sup>

### b. Education Among Aboriginal Races.

The district of Sambalpur occupies a unique position in the tribal map of Odisha for having the largest varieties of tribal groups with high concentrations of tribal population. The British Government paid little attention to the education of the backward classes of Odisha as well as Sambalpur till 1882. Even though the depressed castes in certain parts of Odisha had the advantage of mission education given in the charity school and orphanage the aboriginal races did not get much benefit out of these institutions.

On the whole there was practically no efforts on the parts of the Government to provide the aboriginal races in Sambalpur with the means of education before 1905. According to the report of L.S.S.O'Malley in 1906-07. Altogether 1119 children belonging to backward races or aboriginal tribes institutions but great difficulty is experienced in persuading the forest tribe to send their children to school.<sup>38</sup> After the creation of separate Odisha province in 1936, the special schools for aboriginal had increased 511 (in 1937-38) in 708 (in 1938-39) in all Odisha level. But in Sambal had only 2 number of special schools for aboriginal races.<sup>39</sup>

### c. Education for Muslims

Primarily Islamic education was divided into two stages (1) Maktab primary grade (2) Madrasha (higher grades). In accordance with the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1882, Mohammedans form a very small minority in the district of Sambalpur. During 1901, there were 4373 persons living in the district with 14.5 percent literate. There were 113 Mohammedans pupils attending an Urdu school. It was the oldest Urdu School of Western Odisha, which was aided by the Municipality.<sup>40</sup>



## 10. Political Awakening

The spread of English Education, the modern ideas like democracy, sovereignty of the people, nationalism and humanism made their entry into Sambalpur. Socio- Cultural life of Sambalpur were deeply influenced by these ideas. The growth of political consciousness of Sambalpur was first manifest in a language agitation of the 19<sup>th</sup> century known as the Odia Movement.

### a. Language Agitation in Sambalpur

The Central Province was Hindi speaking province with the exception of Sambalpur district where Odia was spoken by the people. The Chief Commissioner, Central Provinces, Sir John Woodroff had declared on 15 January 1895 Hindi became the medium of instruction in school.<sup>41</sup> In spite of all the. Public protests, memoranda and personal pleading by the end of 1895 Odia ceased to be the official Language of Sambalpur. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 1896 Hindi became the medium of instruction and court language. From that year they started continuous agitation on all front for the amalgamation of Sambalpur with the Odisha Division. It was intensified by a group of persons like Madan Mohan Mishra, Braja Mohan Pattanaik, Mahana Bihari Das, Sripati Mishra, Balabhadra Supkar and others. The growing discontent found its expression in the form of a memorandum, the time signed by Madan Mohan Mishra, Braja Mohan Pattanaik and others and it was submitted in 18 January 1901. It was forwarded to the commissioner, Chhattisgarh on 29 January 1901 and subsequently to the chief commissioner on 5 February 1901. The Representation was made to meet then viceroy Lord Curzon in 1901. The British Government was finally forced to succumb to popular demands and Odia Language was reintroduced in place of Hindi in 1902 in Sambalpur.

### b. Amalgamation of Sambalpur with Odisha

The Amalgamation of Sambalpur with Odisha Division was not far to be attained their struggle to safeguard Odia- culture intimately assumed a political character, when the Odia Movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century got transferred into amalgamation movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. To spearhead the amalgamation movement the elite class like Madhusudan Das and others formed the first political organisation in 1903, which came to be popularly known as the Utkal Union Conference.

The Language agitation started in Sambalpur and became widespread in Odisha. Sir Andrew Fraser, Chief Commissioner of Central Provinces visited Sambalpur in 1901.<sup>42</sup> 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 Fraser appreciated the cause of popular movement of Sambalpur and recommended it owing to the ethical linguistic differences between Sambalpur and other district of Central Provinces. As a result subsequently in October, 1905 the bulk of the district was transferred to Odisha and remained a part of the province of Bengal until 1<sup>st</sup> April 1912 when the province of Bihar and Odisha was constituted. Lastly Odisha got statehood on April 1936.

## 11. Social Reformation

### a. Upliftment of Depressed Class

For the first time Gandhiji called the untouchability as Harijan out of sympathy for the Harijan Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi for the welfare of Harijans achieved a great success in Sambalpur as well as other parts of Odisha. Nursingh Guru, one of the leading lights in the annals of freedom fighters of Sambalpur worked for the downtrodden people of Sambalpur. Being a true Gandhian, he was confident that untouchability shall have to go. He wanted its removal in every sense. The year 1928 was a remarkable year for the people of Sambalpur. When Gandhi had arrived first time at Sambalpur on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. He stayed with Chandra Sekhar Behera and was pleased with the behaviour of the people of Sambalpur.

The Anti-untouchability Movement under the leadership of Chandra Sekhar Behera, Laxminarayan Mishra and Nursingh Guru assumed a new dimensions in 1932. "A District Anti- Untouchability

Committee” was formed in a public meeting on 26 November 1932 at the Fraser Club, Sambalpur. In 18 December 1932, a resolution was passed to admit the untouchables into temple of Sambalpur district.<sup>43</sup> Gandhiji had to pay a short visit to Odisha and it's was his second tour to Sambalpur on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1934 in connection with Harijan Movement. Gandhiji was given a warm reception by the people of Sambalpur. Gandhiji along with Nursingha Guru, Benimadhur Supkar and A.V. Thakkar visited Harijan bustee at Thelkopara (a place in Sambalpur town). He was pleased at the neatness of the bustee and encouraged the Harijan for further improvement.

### **b. Awakening of Women**

Along the pioneer women leaders of Sambalpur, Jambobati Devi, Prabhabati Devi and Parbati Giri stood foremost inspired by nationalistic and progressive ideas. They took active part in nation building activities. Most of them were not only great freedom fighters but also outstanding social workers. On the whole, it can be said that they had a tremendous influence on the social, cultural and political life of Sambalpur in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first meaningful social reform that came in the wake of renaissance was the abolition of human practice of Sati. There after the widows were liberally treated. Consequently, the women in general were found to have enjoyed greater freedom. Ground was also prepared for introduction of widow-remarriage. Child- marriage was indirectly discouraged. It opened a new vision of the women of Sambalpur. They became conscious of their Social status.

### **c. Role of Elite class and poets.**

The spread of English education led to the emergence of an elite class in Sambalpur. The middle class intellectuals always formed a core in any revolution. This class was most responsive to the call of socialism, equality and human right, for people of this class had the ability to look beyond their time. The Odia poets and writers like Gangadhar Meher, Bhima Bhoi, Brajamohan Panda and others advocated social reforms in their poem, stories and essays. Some of them made remarkable contribution in the field of Odia literature. Some played very important role in the spread of ideas relating to social ideas in Sambalpur. The prominent middleclass intellectuals played a significant role in the socio- cultural revolution in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## **12. Finding.**

The educated masses of Sambalpur were the first to feel the 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 and 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. Chandra Sekhar Behera, Narsingha Guru, Laxinarayan Mishra, Dharanidhar Mishra, Braja Mohan Panda, Prabhabati Devi, Parbati Giri, Bhima Bhoi, Gangadhar Meher not only played an important role in arousing national consciousness, but also took active interest in political, social, cultural and educational advancement in Sambalpur. 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 socio-equality and promoted social solidarity and consolidation. They also inculcated a spirit of self respect and among the people.

The spread of modern education 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 centers 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.



### 13. Conclusion.

Impact of English Education on Odia literature was also considerable. The main difficulties in the way of the spread of education among the tribes were that the literary medium was not mother tongue that qualified teachers were difficult to obtain and supervision was hampered by the scattered nature of population. Before all these barriers, the improvement was very slow and general backwardness continued as before.

Thus, as in other parts of Odisha as also in Sambalpur a major impetus to all round development on modern line was given by the growth of education and social consciousness during British rule was a period of Renaissance in Sambalpur. Its achievement were to serve as a base for more vigorous reforms and modernization of Sambalpur's society, education and economy in later years.

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