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Trends of Educational Development in Colonial Odisha from 1866 to 1947: A Retrospective

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ABSTRACT: In ancient times, India had the Gurukul system of education in which anyone who wished to study went to a teacher's (Guru) house and requested to be taught. If accepted as a student by the guru, he would then stay at the guru's place and help in all activities at home. This not only created a strong tie between the teacher and the student, but also taught the student everything about running a house. The guru taught everything the child wanted to learn, from Sanskrit to the Holy Scriptures and from Mathematics to Metaphysics. All learning was closely linked to nature and to life, and not confined to memorizing some information. The modern school system was brought to India, including the English language, originally by Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay in the 1830s. The curriculum was confined to "modern" subjects such as science and mathematics, and subjects like metaphysics and philosophy were considered unnecessary. Teaching was confined to classrooms and the link with nature was broken, as also the close relationship between the teacher and the student. This drawbacks of modern education system should be clearly understood and necessary rectification should be introduced. The purpose of the study is to point out the merits of the old education system and the defects of the English education which is continuing till now.

KEYWORDS: Gurukul, Sanskrit Pathshalas, Wood's Dispatch, English education in Odisha for their administrative convenience.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Education is the mirror of life and ignorance is the curse of God. The great philosopher Socrates had said "Education is not the filling of a vessel but the kindling of a flame". Through education alone, social transformation is possible. Hence it is highly essential to study the process of evolution of education.

Through Education alone, social transformation is possible. Hence it is highly essential to study the process of evolution of education in India which is at great transformation stage. The proverb goes, "Past is experience, present is experiment, future is expectation, use your experience in your experiment to achieve your expected Good Day". The education today is built on past experience. "The Legacy of Educational Movements in Odisha: is a legacy, which has not been adequately documented. "We need our historians to tell our side of the story of the evolution of India's educational development in the past. Hence there is need to study the evolution of education system in Odisha. Traditional structures were not recognized by the British government and have been on the decline since. Gandhi is said to have described the traditional educational system as a beautiful tree that was destroyed during the British rule. Hence there is need to study the development and characteristics of the education system of Odisha for a particular period.

India has a long history of organized education. The Gurukul system of education is one of the oldest on earth, and was dedicated to the highest ideals of all-round human development: physical, mental and spiritual. Gurukuls were traditional Hindu residential schools of learning; typically the teacher's house or a monastery. Education was free, but students from well-to-do families paid Gurudakshina, a voluntary contribution after the completion of their studies. At the Gurukuls, the teacher imparted knowledge of Religion, Scriptures, Philosophy, Literature, Warfare, Statecraft, Medicine Astrology and History (the Sanskrit word "Itihaas" means History). The first millennium and the few centuries preceding it saw the flourishing of higher education at Nalanda, Takshashila University, Ujjain, & Vikramshila Universities. Art, Architecture, Painting, Logic, Grammar, Philosophy, Astronomy, Literature, Buddhism, Hinduism, Arthashastra (Economics & Politics), Law, and Medicine were among the subjects taught and each university specialized in a particular field of study. Takshila specialized in the study of medicine, while Ujjain laid emphasis on astronomy. Nalanda, being the biggest centre, handled all branches of knowledge, and housed up to 10,000 students at its peak. British records show that education was widespread in the 18th century, with a school for every temple, mosque or village in most regions of the country. The subjects taught included Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Theology,

Law, Astronomy, Metaphysics, Ethics, Medical Science and Religion. The schools were attended by students representative of all classes of society.

The current system of education, with its western style and content, was introduced & founded by the British in the 20th century, following recommendations by Macaulay. Thomas Babington Macaulay introduced English education in India, especially through his famous minute of February 1835. He called an educational system that would create a class of anglicized Indians who would serve as cultural intermediaries between the British and the Indians.¹ Macaulay succeeded in implementing ideas previously put forward by Lord William Bentinck, the governor general since 1829. Bentinck favored the replacement of Persian by English as the official language, the use of English as the medium of instruction, and the training of English-speaking Indians as teachers. He was inspired by utilitarian ideas and called for "useful learning." However, Bentinck's ideas were rejected by the Court of Directors of the East India Company and he retired as governor general. Traditional structures were not recognized by the British government and have been on the decline since. Gandhi is said to have described the traditional educational system as a beautiful tree that was destroyed during the British rule.

The hegemony of the Britishraj cast its ugly shadow over India in very many fields. However, the liberal outlook of Lord William Bentinck, Ripon and others led to the spread of English education in India. He accepted Lord Macaulay's view of introducing English education in India. In 1935, he declared in a resolution that the great object of British Government ought to be the promotion of literature and science among the natives, and that the funds appropriated for education should be best employed on English education alone. Thus, through English language, history, philosophy, botany etc. were taught to Indians that removed the age-old dogmas from their mind and made them modern in outlook.

Wood's Dispatch – The Woods Dispatch of 1854 was a land-mark in the history in spread of English education in India. It was the Magna Carta of English education in India. Some of the milestones in spreading education in Colonial India were Hunter Commission, 1882, The Indian Universities Act, 1904, The Sadler Commission, 1917-19, The Hartog Commission, 1929, Wardha Scheme of Basic Education, 1937, Sargeant Plan, 1944. The ideas and pedagogical methods of education during the colonial period, from 1757 to 1947, were contested terrain. The commercial British East India Company ruled parts of India from 1764 to 1858. A few eighteenth-century company officials became scholars of Sanskrit, Persian, and Tamil and promoted "Oriental" learning, which was classical, demotic learning in indigenous languages. However, they were outnumbered by "Anglicists," those who denigrated "Oriental" learning and advocated the introduction of institutions for Western learning based upon the British curriculum with English as the medium of instruction. By the early nineteenth century, when English was made the official language of government business, British policy promoted a cheap, trickle-down model for colonial education. When the British crown abolished company rule in 1858, government universities existed at Bombay (contemporary Mumbai), Calcutta (Kolkata), and Madras (Chennai); about two thousand students studied at thirteen government colleges in all of British India, and another 30,000 students were in government secondary schools. Direct rule did not change the decision to deemphasize primary education to provide occupational training for young Indian men who took jobs both in the lower tiers of the government and in urban, Western-style legal and medical services.

The present caption is the historical study on the development of education in colonial Odisha during the period from 1866 to 1947. The period taken up for the study begins with devastating famine of Odisha in 1866 AD which became a landmark in the rise and growth of education in Odisha. Although had been under British Administration since 1803, the education in Odisha was more backward than any other province of India of equal importance by 1866. From the qualitative and quantitative point of view education was not satisfactory. In 1866 there were 77 schools of all grades and the number of pupils was 3536. Such backwardness in the field of education was mainly due to the indifference of Company's Government. There was total absence of any attempt on the part of the Government to provide the people with the means of education, even though a lot of money was spent annually in other parts of Bengal.

The negligence of the Government to develop education was well known from the comments of Dr E. Roer, the Inspector of Schools, South West Division, "It is to be regretted that no new educational operation can be carried out for Orissa is at a disadvantage, compared with other districts. For the whole of Orissa, with an area of 52,995 square miles and a population of 4,534, 813 souls, less is expended than for small district of Howrah, with an area of 800 square miles and a population of 7,50,000 souls....".

In 1857, with the Sepoy Revolt the company rule came to an end. The power was transferred to the hands of the crown in 1858. But it was noticed that the nature and process of English Administration did not change for the better. The legacies of the old system continued till a culminating tragedy occurred. In 1866, Famine of Odisha may be regarded as the epitome of the Company's unsympathetic administration. It was realized by everybody along with British administration that lack of educated people aggravated the sufferings of the people of Odisha. It is well known from the writings of T.E. Ravenshaw when he wrote; "No other province in the presidency was so deficient of intelligent and public spirited residents who would appreciate the

bearing on the prospects and means of people, and who could give practical information to authorities as would have been the case in any district of Bengal proper, and in carrying out remedial measures". After the Famine a policy of progress was undertaken for the material and moral improvement of the people of Odisha. Steps were taken for the spread of modern education in Odisha. Attempts were made in the Primary, Secondary and college level. In the field of female education, technical education, education for the minorities and moral education, special care was taken into consideration. The notion of National Education also was highlighted through different activities in Odisha by national leaders.

Education in Odisha after 1950: After 1905, Odisha entered into the mainstream of India's national life. Two main features which became conspicuous after 1905 were, first the Utkal Union Movement for the unification of all Odia speaking areas which completed in 1936 and secondly the National struggle for Freedom which completed in 1947. Under the impact of these two movements various reformatory measures were taken by the British Administration with a view to bringing about educational development in Odisha. The aim and objective of the research project is to make a macro and micro level study of an important phase by consulting the original and primary source materials and the thesis will be more than historical narration and compilation.

II. CONCLUSION:

In order to eliminate the harmful, lasting effects of colonial education, post-colonial nations or territories must remove the sense of nothingness that is often present. To decolonize our minds we must not see our own experiences as little islands that are not connected with other processes. Post-colonial education must reverse the former reality of "education as a means of mystifying knowledge and hence reality. A new education structure boosts the identity of a liberated people and unites previously isolated individuals. Hence a deep study of the colonial style of education is necessary.

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