



MISSIONARY EDUCATION: A BOON TO PROSELYTISE OF KORAPUT DISTRICT (1882 A.D. – 1959A.D.)

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Abstract

Education plays a vital role in determining the development of human personality. However, this important branch was neglected in the undivided Koraput district for a long period of time and consequently the people remained ignorant, illiterate and backward. Education for women and lower caste was a reverie. It was the missionaries who for the first time took keen interest to literate them and established number of educational institutions. The prime objectives of the research work was to enlighten the hidden intention of the missionaries to introduce such marvelous steps for the poor tribals and Dalit people of Koraput district who were neglected, suppressed and oppressed tyrannically by the upper caste and the royal officials. The scholar adopted descriptive and analytical methods and library documentation to write this article. The major findings of this research work were that the missionaries were able to set up 48 missionary schools, Besides that they established Theological seminary, training school, Hostels, Boarding Homes. Adult education, Sunday schools, Night schools, and Bible classes for the eradication of illiteracy. Introduction of female education in this neglected, isolated and inaccessible hilly area was one of the outstanding contributions of missionaries.

Keywords: Tribals, Dalits, illiteracy, missionaries, Schools.



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Introduction

Education modernizes human behavior and it plays a vital role in determining the Socio - economic development of the society. But this important department had been totally neglected in this undivided Koraput District for a long period of time. This district was completely isolated from mainstream since time immemorial and could not see the light of modern world due to its inaccessible and hilly tracts and remained backward and undeveloped. The lower caste people were illiterate, ignorant, indigent and superstitious. They were spiritually captivated and blind and considered untouchable and uncivilized. Their life was miserable and deplorable. There was prevalent of rigidity of caste system in the society. Virtues like fraternity and fellow feeling was alien to the society. So, there was no

congenial atmosphere in the society. Therefore, prior to the advent of missionaries in this district, it was passing through a “**Dark Age.**”

There were only **Chatchalis (village schools)** and **Abadhanas (Acharyas)** that played a prominent role in educating the children of higher caste people. Guru, who earned his livelihood by teaching held a piece of wood used for writing at the top and wrote ‘**Shree**’ (Agreement favour). Then the pupils who wished to learn had also to hold the piece of wood and write ‘Shree’. This was a way of recognizing the teacher as such. Then the student put a piece of clothing and food items for the teacher in a special plate. In those days, the teacher payment was known as ‘**Khodi Chhuani Dino**’ (beginning of schooling day) (Padhi. 1992, p.166).

With the March of time, the village Chiefs and the Zamindars of different parts of the district established schools for high caste students only. There was no question of education for lower caste people. Therefore, they remained undeveloped and uneducated. Practically, there was no female education in this region. The general feeling was that, it was “**unbecoming of the modesty of the women**” to attend schools. So, they were prohibited from attending educational institutions. The women’s activities were confined to hearths and homes and they were totally isolated from the outside world. Besides that, superstitions was an impediment to the tribal education The tribals developed a strong sense of prejudice that, by learning, **their eyes would drop out and their heads burst into thousand pieces and their health would deteriorate** (Ibid) Such superstitious beliefs discouraged the aboriginals to allow their children to attend schools. Above all, the unhealthy climate coupled with existence of vast areas of inaccessible forest belts kept this district out of the light of modern civilization for longtime. The education of Dalit or untouchables was totally naught. They were considered outcaste by the high caste people and prohibited from attending any Government or private run educational institutions. Besides this, they were economically very poor and earning their livelihood by doing small business, craftworks, carpentry, music and manual work. So, due to their impoverishment and social rigidity they were not sending their children to the then available educational institutions. Therefore, they remained gross illiterate and superstitious.

Until 1866 A.D there was not a single school in the Koraput - Jeypore agency tract. The Administrative Report from 1880 - 81 A.D. of Andhra Pradesh does not make mention of any School in Jeypore Estate. The argument put forward in the Government Report of 1882 A.D, states that whilst schools in Koraput, Jeypore and Kotpad were very desirable it was not set up due to lack of financial means (Das, 1985, pp.155 -167).

It is in this juncture that **missionaries** came to Koraput district on **15th May, 1882 A.D.** and heralded a new epoch in the field of education .They were the first people to understand and realize the difficulties and sufferings of these people and tried to eradicate illiteracy by establishing missionary schools.

The missionaries realised that without providing education, their mission of God wouldn't be fulfilled and Gospel of God wouldn't be disseminated among the people to Propagate and popularise Christianity because most of the people who became Christians during that time were illiterate. The converted Christians also did not want to go to Hindu schools and study general syllables. Rather, they demanded separate schools for them. Therefore, the missionaries decided to set up mission schools in this hilly region. The main aim of establishing Christian schools was, according to Anthon Asha, "to teach the students simple Bible stories, Christian Hymns, Catechism and prayers. Thus, this type of education would help the pupil to grow - in biblical knowledge and faith in God".

Research Method

Descriptive and Library documentation method have been adopted with analytical and historical perspective for the present study. The archival materials like the then journals, newspapers; letters, books, articles and internet archives and e-books etc. are considered for the present study. Through this method information about condition of undivided Koraput District, status of education and role of Christian missionaries to develop missionary education have been collected for this research work.

Results

By the incessant efforts and dedication, the missionaries were able to spread the Gospel of God through the weapons of missionary education. The missionaries set up 34 primary Schools, 05 Middle English schools, 05High schools, 01Theological seminary, 01 training school, 02 Girls schools, 01Hostels and 10Boarding Homes. Besides, they

introduced Adult education, Sunday schools, Night schools and Bible classes for the eradication of illiteracy. Introduction of female education in this neglected, isolated and inaccessible hilly area was one of the outstanding contributions of missionaries. The missionaries also adopted new techniques of Zenana and Deaconesses systems for the development of education among the people. The tribals and Dalit people were spontaneously dragged towards Christianity and thereafter a mass conversion took place in this district in the year 1934. Now, more than 20 percent population of this district is Christians.

Discussion

For the eradication of illiteracy and spreading of Gospel of God among the people the missionary decided to introduce a number of educational institutions nook and corner of the district. Let us discuss briefly below;

On 30th January 1888 A.D, the first mission school was opened by Harless in Koraput. It began with 40 children. Out of them 17 children belonged to Odia speaking families and 23 to Telugu-speaking families. Thereafter a number of schools were established all over the district. They set up mission school at Kotpad on 2nd April 1891 A.D., mission School at Jeypore in 1892 A.D and mission school at Nabarangpur in 1892-93 A.D. Mission schools were also established at Kumzoro, Ghatguda, Kholiguda, Dhodra, Budisorgi, jamboguda, Dengaguda, Kamtagaon, Turinji, Kurmuti, Nishahandi, Chopia, Karlahandi, Khondi Baghodhori Pirinji and Ontalguda etc. In these schools Bible Stories, catechism and also reading and writing in Oriya were taught.

By the year 1905 A.D, 14 small schools had cropped up within the jurisdiction of Nabarangpur mission station. Schools were established in each village where a catechist, a teacher and a helper Guru (Preacher) lived. Besides old mission stations, schools were also set up on the newly founded stations such as Gunupur (1904/05) A.D, Nandapur (1909/10) A.D Bissam Cuttak (1909/10) A.D, Doliambo (1910/11) A.D, and Lakshmipur (1910/11) A.D. (Waack, 1997, p. 508)

The following table - (I) shows the school statistics of number of pupils in the left hand columns and number of schools in the right hand columns (Bell, 1945:155-57).

Years	1902	1907	1912	1914	1902	1907	1912	1914
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Jeypore	46	81	218	209	04	03	10	10
N.pur	91	130	298	309	03	08	12	20
Gunupur		03	07	29		01	01	01
Nandapur			34	131			17	15
B.Cuttack			07				01	
Doliambo			64	42			01	01
Lakshmipur			20	88			01	01

The missionaries ran 4 types of schools.

- a) **The Boys Schools** - Which taught a basic curriculum of English, Odia, Arithmetic, History, Geography, the Bible and other scriptures. In some village schools, religious instructions were imparted in the vernacular language and promising students from those schools used to go to the mission school in the town.
- b) The **orphanages and destitute boarding Homes** where there were provisions for shelter and free education for the poor students of the locality.
- c) **Girls schools** - They began as orphanages or as schools for the daughters of the converts as well as of the lower caste people. Female education was restricted to primary level and the rudiments of domestic science.
- d) The **missionaries had mixed schools**. In boys' school education was also imparted to girls. But they were very few. In those institutions they received instructions in their native languages (Ibid).

In order to fulfill their main objectives, the missionaries concentrated on establishing the 4th type of schools, which were intended to teach local non-Christian boys and girls in rural areas.

The missionaries took various more steps for improvement of education. They had opened **Industrial schools** to impart training to the students to fit for employment. They started **adult education** and **night schools** for the illiterate and ignorant adults. **Sunday schools** were organized. Bible classes were taken by educated women. Mrs. of missionaries

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took the onus to literate the rural uneducated women and non-Christian women by introducing **zenana system** through door to door campaign.

The Aim and Objective of Missionary Education

1. Christian or non-Christian would be provided some basic education in order to enable to achieve independence and self sufficiency in their daily lives.
2. The main emphasis was without doubt, on the schooling of Christian Children. Christians were to be enabled to read the Bible, the catechism, the Hymnal Book and other Christian writings themselves. They should be given the opportunity to become responsible Christians.
3. Third main emphasis was on supporting education for girls. As the statistics above shows, good results were achieved in this direction for that time. The success in educating girls, many of whom later on married church workers cannot be valued highly enough in its importance for the congregations.
4. However schools were not only intended to pass on knowledge, but above all also to influence the lives of young Christians. A Christian way of life was to be demonstrated and encouraged through the way of life practised in the schools. The mission stations with their combination of schools and boarding homes offered especially good opportunities for this.
5. Schools were important for achieving the declared mission aims, the Christianization of the nation and the formation of a National church.
6. The schools and the education were particularly important in order to prepare Christians who were to be in the service of church and mission. This preparation, through a wide general education, was not only necessary for the catechists, congregational teachers, and school teachers, but above all also for the future pastors.

Boarding Homes - A centre of learning for the poor, destitute and orphans

Boarding Homes or orphanages were the principal centre for educational activities. The mission started boarding homes and hostels in all its mission stations from the very beginning. Poor, orphan and helpless children were picked and accommodated in those hostels to provide free lodging and education. In 1888/89 A.D, a Boys boarding home was started at Koraput only with one boy but the number suddenly jumped to 58 boys and 27

girls. Mrs. Timmcke was house mother in this boarding home from 1899 A.D to 1914 A.D. In 1891 A.D, another boarding home was started at Kotpad with 7 children and it increased to 13 in 1896 – 97 A.D. This was called “**Boarding and Care School.**” In this way, the missionaries established 10 Boarding Homes and Hostels in Koraput District. Those were (Proceeding, 1867, p. 63) -

1. Jeypore - in 1903 and again on 25th October, 1942 (Boys).
2. Nabarangpur - on 30th March, 1944.
3. Kotpad - (Boys and Girls) in 1891 and again on 25th. April, 1946.
4. Koraput - Koraput in 1888.
5. Kalahandi.
6. Doliambo - (Boys and Girls).
7. Laxmipur - (Boys and Girls).
8. Gunupur.
9. Lamtaput.
10. Rayagada

There were two quite convincing reasons for establishing boarding home institutions. Firstly, it was to rehabilitate orphan children, and secondly, it was to take children from rural areas, where there were no educational opportunities .Apart from boarding homes, the Missionaries were running the **Day boarding** in all small stations and in mission villages. The students were imparted secular education, spiritual guidance and also vocational training in these boarding homes. In India they were known as boarding but in the mission Reports these were called **Kosthauser** (Journal, 1896,p.3).

Girls’ Schools and Hostels – A unique step to literate the Girls students

There was no school exclusively for girls nor were there any mixed schools for them. After 1871 A.D, a noticeable change was found in the development of education in the Southern Odisha. Up to the year 1873 - 74 A.D, no girls were receiving instructions in this school. The social system had prevented them female section from their right to education.

It was the Missionaries who took keen interest to literate the girls and set up not only schools for them but also establish hostels and boarding homes for accommodations. They realized that without girls being literate their message could not reach to any household.

Hence was the importance of Girls education in the region. For the purpose a hostel was started in 1901 A.D at Kotpad with 16 girls by Mrs. Timm. In 1904 A.D a girls' school was set up just outside the hostel wall. There were 100 girls in 1906 A.D and 125 girls in 1913 A.D (Admn, 1883-84, p. 508). So, the missionaries provided Hostel facilities in every mission station for the accommodation of the Girls. Special care was taken for hostel students both in studies and in their pursuit of biblical knowledge. A primary school for the girls was established at Kotpad and further the Girls Upper School at Kotpad was upgraded to Middle English School.

The **table-II**, below shows the number of girls attending school from 1932 A.D to 1937 A.D. (Report, 1887-88,pp.8-9).

Year	No. of Students
1932	367
1933	533
1934	441
1937	353

The message in the percentage of girls' pupils' attendance was due to incessant work of American missionary Agatha Tatge at Kotpad girls' school. This enabled the two Deaconesses Otty Jessen and Mathilde Jespersen to take up where she had left off. After the two Deaconesses had left India on account of differences of opinion with the Missionaries and the Mission Boards, the station Missionaries Rev. Gloyer, Rev. Meyer and Rev. R. Speck took the responsibility of this school (Op.Cit, Padhi, p.177).

Besides that, for the development of female education, the missionaries took various steps in this region. The wife of Johannes Timm was teaching Bible stories to women as early as 1893 A.D. It was observed that, women were very much interested to learn from the missionaries. The wives of Rev. Timm and Rev. Gloyer were teaching some girls and women in their respective places. Those who were qualified to read and write were given special training in the seminary for the future ministry of the Church. The missionaries suggested the authorities of the SHEL Mission regarding their special ministry among the women of the Jeypore Estate to send some women missionaries for guiding the women. So, the authorities were very much satisfied with such activities and sent first two **deaconesses** in 1905 A.D. and later two deaconesses in 1909 A.D. to Koraput District for carrying out women work

vigorously and more efficiently. One of the deaconesses was in charge of the Christian hospital at Nabarangpur and another was in charge of girls' boarding school and training of Women in Bible. The third supervised the work of the women in the villages. The three were stationed at Kotpad. The fourth took up zenana work in the town of Jeypore (Asha, 1982, p.97). **Mrs. Speck** was young but experienced enough in Oriya language to teach the Seminary students; **Mrs. Gloyer** was in charge of instructing the women. The wives of the missionaries were also joining their husbands in preaching camps. The Missionaries were preaching to men and at the same time their wives were preaching to women.

This kind of combined preaching was fruitful for the extension of the Gospel. **Mrs. Leuckfeld** was always with her husband during his camp and was teaching among the women.

The sister of **Rev. W. Ahrens** had opportunity to keep relationship with the Muslim women and had a dialogue with them about Lord Jesus Christ. So, many non-Christian families were converted to Christianity through this kind of personal contact.

Certain steps were taken by the Church Council and the Synod to prepare women for the future Ministry of the Church. It was realized that, women could serve as the best mediation to approach the non-Christian women.

Theological Seminary - An Institution for Spiritual Development and Training Centre for future Pastors

For popularization of Christianity, the missionaries felt the great need of the theological education in the church. They wanted the people who accepted Christ to be properly nurtured and deeply rooted in Christian faith. So, they decided to provide theological knowledge, to the students of Christian schools, youth, adults, women, pastors, preachers and elders. As the number of converts kept increasing, it was not possible for the limited number of missionaries to teach the whole mass. Therefore, they planned to produce trained people to look after the spiritual development of the congregations.

That’s why; Rev. E.Gloyer had drawn the attention of the Home Board authorities to the necessity for “Theological education” in the church and to prepare the national workers. This request was gladly accepted by the authorities of the Home Board and as a result of this a ‘**Theological institution or a seminary**’ for teachers was founded at Kotpad on 2nd February 1896 (Op.Cit.Waack, p.510). Rev. E. Gloyer says “Kotpad Seminary is the gold mine of mission work and pillar of all mission work”. The seminary was formerly known as SHEL Seminary. But later on it was named as “**Jensen Theological College and Bible School**”. This theological seminary had been started with “6 Boarding Boys” named Eliya, Michael, Ruben, Eliazar, Isaac and Krupa (Ibid, p.511).

Rev. Von Frieling and Rev. Wohlenberg used to take the classes. The seminary was started when there were only 292 Christians in this area (Ibid). From the statement of Rev. Tauscher; it is known that, Rev. Timm was the first Director till 1900 A.D.

In the beginning elementary subjects such as dictation, writing practices, geography and arithmetic were taught to the students. To them were added biblical history, reading the Bible, catechism and hymns. Later on Church history, mission history, Hinduism, the art of preaching and lessons on health and hygiene were included. Preparatory classes called “**Advanced Catechist Course**” for pastors were opened in 1910 A.D. and only selected students were admitted there. But the First World War interrupted the whole theological programme of the Church because all the German missionaries were interned and their mission stations were vacated. However, the whole charge of the mission was handed over to the American Lutheran Mission.

The **table –III**, below shows the number of Seminary students varied with a growing tendency (Op.Cit, Asha, p.62).

Year	No. of students
1897	06
(1898-1899)	12
1900	33
1904	38

1905	47
1906	40
1907	60
1908	32
1909	22
1913	62

Now this seminary has been shifted to Gopalpur (Berhampur University) on 27.4.1993 A.D which is in Ganjam District. Presently it is known as **Odisha Christian Theological College, OCTC**.

Besides that, for the vigorous propagation of Christianity, the missionaries published a monthly magazine named ‘**Christian Mitra**’ (Christian friend) in 1911 A.D. and carbon copies of it were circulated among the converted and non – converted people. This magazine was started by **Rev. Larsen** (Op.Cit, Waack, p.511). It helped the Christians to get information from both inside and outside the church. A printing press was set up in 1931 A.D. and it was declared as **Jeypore Evangelical Lutheran Church Press** in 1974 A.D. By this press various articles were published and printing materials were circulated among the literate people who helped immensely in propagating and popularizing Christianity in this hilly and inaccessible region.

Conclusion

The missionaries brought tremendous impact on the society introducing missionary education and preaching the Gospel of God in the name of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Mankind. The converted Christians and literate people were engaged in various economic activities and got employment opportunities in various public and private sectors and now they are well-off. They are no more considered untouchables, uncultured, uncivilized and backwards. Superstitions and blind faith is now outdated for them. Due to development of education social mobility is being seen in the society and rigidity of caste system fell like a Berlin wall. Whatever might be the missionaries’ motive behind such campaigns, introduction of education in this area but their marvelous jobs was really an avant-garde transmutation in the caste ridden society that cannot be overlooked.

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