

CHAPTER XV

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

174. Historical back-ground. Centres of learning in ancient, mediaeval and early modern times. Beginning of Western Education and Pioneer work done in the district :

There is no reliable information regarding old centres of learning in the district. During mediaeval period some Brahmin settlements developed under the patronage of the Somavamsi kings. Important among these centres are Vineetapura (Modern Binka), Suvarnapura (Modern Sonapur), Royara (Modern Rohila), Ranipur, Jharial, etc. These places, as known from copper plate records and other archaeological finds, were important centres of culture during the early mediaeval period. During the rule of the Chauhan kings, Sanskrit education was greatly encouraged. King Vaijal Deva, one of the early Chauhan rulers of Patna, has compiled an admirable lexicon, known as Vaijal Chandrika (also known as Prabodha Chandrika), which is admired throughout India. Many poets and philosophers of repute also flourished in the ex-States of Patna and Sonapur under the patronage of the Chauhan kings. Chandramani Das, the author of 'Sudhasara Geeta', was living in Sonapur in the 18th century A.D. and the famous poet-philosopher Bheema Bhoi had his seat at Khaliapali near Sonapur in the 19th century A. D. The songs and *bhajans* of Bheema Bhoi, the leader of the *Kumbhi-patia* cult, are still inspiring the people throughout Orissa.

Bheema Bhoi was born blind in a poor Kandha family in the ex-feudatory State of Rairakhol not earlier than 1855, for he died in 1895 at Khaliapali (Sonapur) when he was (as the report is) on the sunny side of forty. In his childhood he was employed in the house of a rich cultivator and his principal business was to tend cattle. He was exceptionally intelligent and singularly receptive of ideas. In many Oriya villages a cottage (called the Bhagabat-Ghara) is set apart by the villagers where some religious books are kept and where in the evening, one reads aloud some passages of the metrical translation of the famous Bhagabat Purana to the villagers who assemble there. Bheema Bhoi being a Kandha by caste was not allowed to sit in the hall, but he regularly attended the evening meetings and committed to memory every syllable that was uttered. He chanted them while in the fields and thoughtfully considered the spiritual importance of the passages. He was spiritually minded, and when a boy of twelve got interested in

he doctrines of the *Kumbhi-patias* (i. e., wearers of *Kumbhi-pata* or bark of Kumbhi tree). He must have learnt something of them from some mendicant who came to the village. When a boy of sixteen he went to the feudatory State of Dhenkanal, which was at the time the principal home of the Alekh religion. The leader (called Gura or Mohima Gosai) to whom Bheema Bhoi went at Dhenkanal died towards the end of 1875. He then left Dhenkanal and after having preached his faith for some time, collected a good number of followers and settled with them in the ex-feudatory State of Sonapur in 1877. The fact that he was a man of great mental powers and could compose songs in chaste Oriya Language, though blind and illiterate, lent great charm to his personality. He had a considerable following. At least 30 villages could be counted in the district of Sambalpur alone where the *Kumbhi-patias* chiefly reside. Bheema Bhoi as a matter of fact did beget two children—one a son and another a daughter from two women, who became nuns and lived at Khaliapali in Bheema Bhoi's *math*. (B.C. Mazumdar—Sonapur in the Sambalpur Tract).

The spread of education was, however, not very remarkable during the 18th and 19th centuries A. D. Wandering teachers called *Abadhanas* were holding primary classes in towns and villages where they were teaching only reading, writing and arithmetic. The village Pathasalas were maintained by villagers where the *Abadhanas* were being engaged for teaching. Western education came to this area towards the end of the 19th century A. D. It was in 1894 that an English School was started at Balangir by the then Maharaja Ramachandra and English education was introduced also in ex-Sonapur state about this time. In 1891, there were 11 schools in Sonapur. By 1907-1908 there were one Middle English and one Middle Vernacular School in Balangir and two Middle English Schools and one Middle Vernacular School in the ex-State of Sonapur. The early part of 20th century witnessed appreciable progress in English education. Both Sonapur and Balangir had High Schools in 1912 and 1916 respectively.

175. Literacy and Educational standards

Growth of literacy, number of literates, matriculates and graduates, Spread of education among women and Backward classes and Tribes.

There are, according to 1961 Census, only 155,906 literates in the district which contains a population of 1,068,686. In terms of percentage it comes to about 14.6. The following statement gives the necessary details showing the number of literates with

different educational levels and without educational levels for the rural as well as the urban areas district.

Standard of literacy		Males	Females	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A. Literates with educational levels.	Rural	13,262	1,206	14,468
	Urban	4,777	699	5,476
	Total	18,039	1,905	19,944
1. Primary or Junior Basic.	Rural	12,236	1,188	13,424
	Urban	2,896	563	3,459
2. Matriculation or Higher Secondary.	Rural	1,026	18	1,044
	Urban	1,431	114	1,545
3. Technical diploma not equal to degree.	Urban	22	..	22
4. Non-technical diploma not equal to degree.	Urban	82	1	83
5. University degree or diploma equal to degree or Post-Graduate degree (Urban areas only).	Urban	211	15	226
6. Technical degree or diploma equal to degree or Post-Graduate degree (Urban areas only)—				
(a) Engineering .. ..	.. ..	13	..	13
(b) Medicine .. ..	.. ..	20	1	21
(c) Agriculture .. ..	.. ..	8	..	8
(d) Veterinary and Dairying.	.. ..	2	..	2
(e) Teaching .. ..	.. ..	31	4	35
(f) Others .. ..	.. ..	61	1	62
B. Literates without educational levels.	Rural	104,969	15,039	119,735
	Urban	10,520	5,707	16,227
	Total	115,489	20,746	135,962
Total literates	Rural	117,958	16,245	134,203
	Urban	15,520	6,707	21,703
	Total	133,478	22,952	155,906
Total illiterates	Rural	390,437	494,387	884,824
	Urban	10,527	17,429	27,956
	Total	400,964	511,816	912,780

Total number of schools in the ex-State of Sonepur in 1891 was only 11 with 484 pupils. But in 1900 the number of schools was doubled with more than 1,000 students. In 1907-08 this ex-State had 33 schools of which two were Middle English Schools, one Middle Vernacular School, three Girls' Schools, one Sanskrit Tol and two special schools for low caste children. There were altogether 29 Primary Schools, out of which 25 were Upper Primary and 4 Lower Primary Schools. Besides these, there were also 10 Elementary Schools called *Chatasalis*. The number of school-going children in that year was 2,117 boys and 471 girls. Progress of education in the ex-Patna State during the early part of 20th Century was also equally good. In 1907-08 the total number of schools was 44 and the number of pupils was 4,685. The percentage of school-going boys was 9.5 while that of girls was 1.6.

The following statement shows the progress of education in the ex-State of Patna :—

Year		Number of Schools	Boys	Girls
1910	..	56	4,265	893
1920	..	90	5,885	13,575
1936	..	140	10,228	2,307
1939-40	..	131	10,505	2,282
1940-41	..	126	11,100	2,450
1941-42	..	126	11,838	2,638
1942-43	..	126	11,374	2,720
1943-44	..	126	11,904	2,799
1944-45	..	126	9,803	2,053
1945-46	:	126	10,064	2,100

The decrease in the total number of schools in 1940-41 was due to the abolition of 4 Girls' Lower Primary Schools owing to the fall in their numerical strength and the separation of the Industrial and Technical Schools, Balangir, from the Education Department from the 6th September, 1940.

The statement given below shows the gradual development of education in the ex-State of Sonapur :—

Year	Number of Schools	Percentage of Literacy	
		Boys	Girls
1941-42	85	21.75	2.04
1942-43	85	24.72	2.04
1943-44	85	25.00	3.00
1944-45	81	25.00	3.00

Besides these institutions, there were special schools for backward class people. The decrease in the number of schools during the year 1944-45 was due to the reorganisation of some Primary Schools by consolidation of single-teacher schools by containing two schools into one in some areas.

In 1947-48, there were 3 High Schools and 206 Primary Schools in the district which increased in 1950-51 to 3 High Schools and 19 Middle English Schools and 224 Primary Schools.

The following statement shows total number of schools and scholars in different types of schools existing in the district during 1964-65 :—

Types of Institution	Number of Institution	Scholars
Boys' High Schools	39	4,519
Girls' High Schools	4	507
M. E. Schools for boys	108	7,467
M.E. Schools for girls	11	321
Primary Schools for boys	1,273	87,301
Primary Schools for girls	17	1,783
Ashrams	4	574
Kanya-Shram	1	68
Sevashrams	39	2,572
Junior Basic Schools	7	699
Elementary Training Schools	4	313

176. General education : Primary and Basic Schools, Secondary Schools and Colleges.

(i) Primary Schools

(a) *Patna*—In 1934-35, there were 112 Primary Schools, 26 of them being U. P. for boys and one for girls, of 85 L. P. Schools, 28 were reserved for girls only. Besides these, there were 20 more L. P. Private Schools. Out of the pupils on roll, 7,336 were boys and 2,349 girls. In 1939-40, there were in total 98 Primary Schools including 20 Lower Primary Schools for girls. The total strength of students reading in those institutions were 9,263. In 1941-42, there were 115 Primary Schools with 12,362 pupils. Number of institutions remained the same during 1942-43 and the strength of pupils was, 12,505. During 1943-44, there were 114 Primary Schools with 11,891 students. Total number of schools remained static (114) with 10,222 students during 1944-45. In 1945-46 there were 115 Primary Schools with 10,311 students in them.

(b) *Sonepur*—In 1891 there were only 11 schools with 484 pupils in the ex-State. By 1,900, there were twice that number of schools with over 1,000 scholars and of these schools two were for the education of girls. Caste system was prevalent in the sphere of education. Low caste children were not allowed to study in schools where higher caste children were reading. This is evident from Mr. Fraser's speech¹ which runs thus : "What you say in your address of the progress of education is to me very satisfactory not only because I know that what you say is correct, but also because I am glad to think that you give so much attention to this important interest of your subjects. I have this morning seen the Girls' School, the Middle School and the school for low caste children in Sonepur, and what I have seen has given me much satisfaction".

In 1941-42, there were two Upper Primary Schools and 69 Lower Primary Schools for boys. There were in all, 3,402 pupils. For girls, there were one Upper Primary and 4 Lower Primary Schools. Total number of institutions remained the same. The roll in them was 3,462. As regards Primary Schools for girls also, the number of institutions remained intact. Number of students in them was 536. In 1943-44, the number of institutions remained the same with 567 girls reading in them. The number of pupils in Primary Schools for boys was 4,207. Along with the curricular subjects increasing attention was being paid to outdoor activities like gardening, handicraft, rural reconstruction works and games, which improved the attendance in the schools to a great extent. In 1944-45 the number of pupils in the Boys' Primary Schools was 4,147. There were 607 girls receiving education in the Primary Schools for girls.

1. Sonepur Raj—From speech delivered in 1907 by A. H. L. Fraser. Lt. Governor of Bengal, in reply to the address presented by the Maharaja of Sonepur.

(c) During 1964-65, there were in the district of Balangir 1,290 Primary Schools of which 1,273 were meant for boys and 17 for girls. Of this, 394 were Upper Primary Schools (387 for boys and 7 for girls) and 896 Lower Primary Schools (886 for boys and 10 for girls). The total strength of students in Primary Schools was 62,828 boys and 5,256 girls, but taking into account those receiving Primary Education in Middle and High Schools the number comes to 67,657 boys and 25,363 girls. Teachers in all the recognised Primary Schools of the district were 2,467 in number.

There were also 7 Junior Basic Schools (run by Government) during 1964-65 with 699 scholars and 20 teachers. The expenditure was Rs. 31,474.

(i) Secondary Schools

(a) Patna—The following table shows the progress of Secondary Education in the ex-State of Patna:—

Year	High School	Students	M. E. and M. V. Schools	Students
1934-35	.. 1	..	5	..
1935-36	.. 1	299	5	633
1936-37	.. 1	299	5	631
1937-38	.. 1	317	7	802
1938-39	.. 1	338	7	899
1939-40	.. 1	367	8	1,045
1940-41	.. 1	411	8	1,170
1941-42	.. 1	410	9	1,173
1942-43	.. 1	423	9	1,129
1943-44	.. 1	513	9	1,146
1944-45	.. 1	610	8	939
1945-46	.. 1	643	8	999

In 1937-38, one Middle English School for boys was newly opened at Balangir. The status of the Girls' Upper Primary School at Balangir was raised to the Middle English Standard. In 1939-40, one Middle [14 B. of R.—56]

English School (aided) was opened at Mandal. Meetings were held in the following villages for explaining the value of adult education and adult schools were started there at night for removing illiteracy from among the villagers. :—

- (1) Ghasian
- (2) Bhutiabahal
- (3) Bhainsa

(b) *Sonepur*—There were 5 Secondary Schools in the ex-State of Sonepur during 1940-41 including one Elementary Guru Training School. Total number of students was 351. The number of students in the Elementary Guru Training School was ten in 1941-42. Six pupil-teachers came out successful against six in the previous year. Along with other activities the Gurus had a free instructive excursion to Baidyanath, Binka, Khandahat and to some schools in the rural areas. During 1942-43, the total number of schools remained the same but the total strength was raised to 571 from 351. In 1943-44, the total strength became 573. There were one High School, one Guru-Training School and 3 other Middle English and Middle Vernacular Schools. In 1944-45, the total strength became 638 as against 573 in the preceding year.

(c)—During 1964-65, there were 39 High Schools for boys and 4 for girls and 119 Middle English Schools including 11 for girls in the district of Balangir which constitutes the two ex-State areas of Patna and Sonepur. The total number of boys and girls in Secondary Schools including Ashrams and Sevashrams was 11,906 and 1,550, respectively.

The total amount of direct expenditure for education in recognised schools during the year was Rs. 41,58,996 (Rs. 39,82,582 for boys and Rs. 1,76,304 for girls). The indirect expenditure (i. e., money spent on inspection building, scholarships and financial concessions and hostels) was Rs. 13,80,144 (Rs. 11,14,173 for boys and Rs. 1,08,572 for girls).

(iii) Colleges

(a) *Rajendra College, Balangir*—Rajendra College was started in 1944 by the then Maharaja of Patna His Highness Sir Rajendra Narayan Singh Deo with Intermediate Arts classes. It was raised to a Degree College in Arts in 1946. The same year Commerce was introduced in Intermediate classes. Science was introduced in 1949. The College was taken over by the Orissa Government in 1948.

In 1964-65, there were altogether 29 lecturers and 391 students (including 29 women students) in the College. A hostel is attached to it.

(b) *Women's College, Balangir*—The Women's College was started, in 1962. It provides education up to the Degree Standard in Arts with subjects namely, History, Psychology, Economics, Home Science

Oriya, Philosophy and English. There are 40 students (as in 1965-66) and 9 lecturers including the Principal. There is no hostel. Orissa Government took over management of the college from 1st October 1965. Prior to this, it was a privately managed college.

(c) *Sonepur College*—It was founded in 1964 at Sonepur. Presently there are three classes: Pre-University, 1st Year and 2nd Year of Degree Course in Arts. There is provision for teaching of Logic, Sanskrit, Economics, Political Science, History, Oriya, Mathematics, English and General Knowledge. The teaching staff consists of 9 lecturers including the Principal. Forty-one students are on the roll. The college is housed in Mitrodaya Bhavan, the personal Guest House of the ex-Maharaja of Sonepur. There is also a hostel.

(d) *Patnagarh College*—The College came into being at Patnagarh in 1965. The teaching staff comprises 7 members including the Principal. The college imparts instruction in Economics, Logic, English, History, Oriya and Mathematics. Two classes have been opened namely, Pre-University and 1st year of Degree Course. Total students on roll are 30.

(e) *Bidyabhasan Sanskrit College, Balangir*—Started in 1948, the College is the only institution of the district imparting oriental education. The college provided education up to the 'Acharya' standard. There is also provision for teaching of 'Ayurveda' and 'Yotish'. During 1964-65 there were 11 teachers and 46 students in the institution. The college is affiliated to the Orissa Association of Sanskrit Learning and Culture.

177. Professional and technical school and college:

Legal, Medical, Engineering, Technological, Commercial, etc.

(i) There were two Elementary Training Schools in the ex-State of Patna and Sonepur before merger. Two more Elementary Training Schools have been opened, one at Patnagarh and the other at Titilagarh since 1957-58. So there are now (1964-65) 4 Elementary Training Schools with 313 scholars and 13 teachers. The number of admission in the old Elementary Training Schools have also been raised to meet the growing need of trained teachers. Each trainee is given a monthly stipend of Rs. 25. The duration of the training is two years. The training is open to those who have passed Class VII.

(ii) *Industrial Schools*—There were two Industrial Schools in the district, located at Balangir and Sonepur. Each used to admit 16 persons every year for training in different trades. The Sonepur Industrial School provided training for the three-year Wood Engineering Course and two-year Electric Wireman and Lineman Course and the Balangir Industrial School provided training for three year Light Engineering Course and two-year Tailoring Course.

Both of these schools have closed down in 1964-65.

(iii) *Schools for the cultivation of fine arts, music, dancing, painting, etc.*—There is a Nrutya Sangeeta Kala Parishad located at Balangir to impart teaching in Oddisi dance and music. Classical Hindustani music is also taught here. There are 76 students in the institution.

178. Adult Literacy, Social Education and measures for the diffusion of Culture among the masses.

In order to educate the backward classes and tribes, four Ashram Schools and a number of Sevashram Schools have been opened in which Adibasi students are reading. School mothers have been appointed in some of the Primary Schools to look after the girl students as well as the boy students. Enrolment drive was organised for the last two years in order to convince the guardians and parents the utility of education and to persuade them to send their children to schools. Milk feeding and mid-day meal programme have been introduced in the Primary Schools in order to attract boys and girls to the schools. Merit-cum-Poverty scholarships to non-Adibasi and non-Harijan students increased their attendance in the schools. Reading and writing materials and dresses are given to the Adibasi and Harijan students in the Sevashram and Ahshram Schools.

Community Centres and Adult literacy centres

Community centres and literacy centres are designed to impart social education to the people. These are generally opened in houses built by villagers.

There is one School-cum-Community Centre at Mahimunda. People gather here in the evening to relax themselves by participating, in *bhajans*, games, etc. The Centre is supplied with daily papers. Periodical talks on improved methods of agriculture, poultry farming, health and sanitation are organised.

During 1964-65 there were 295 adult literacy centres (198 for men and 97 for women). Total enrolment was 8,906 (5,996 men and 2,910 women). A total amount of Rs. 42,770 (Rs. 26,599 for men and Rs. 16,171 for women) was spent. Literacy forms the main part of activities of these centres. In addition, the women are imparted training in crafts like sewing, knitting and embroidery. Primary books are supplied free of cost to these centres to make the adults literate. Follow-up books are also made available to the new literates. The teacher of a literacy class who takes up a batch of illiterate adults and works continuously for 4 months to make them literate is remunerated at the rate of Rs. 2 per adult.

179. Libraries

About 218 village libraries have been organised so far. Only a few such libraries received Government grants. Rs. 2,114 were granted to 70 libraries in 1962-63, Rs. 741 to 42 libraries in 1963-64 and Rs. 2,990 to 88 libraries in 1964-65.