

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SAMBALPUR (1944 - 2015)

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Abstract

Sambalpur is the hub of western Odisha. It is famous all over India and abroad as well because of its music and dance, handloom, Hirakud Dam and rich culture. However, in comparison to elementary education, the development of higher education in this Sambalpur district is too late. The first higher educational institution of Sambalpur is Gangadhar Meher College, 1944 and the latest university is the Odisha State Open University, 2015. The main cause of delayed development of higher education in Sambalpur is the lack of interest of the British government. Nevertheless, after India got her independence, higher education was widely promoted through the endeavour of both Government and Private enterprise. Some of the colleges and universities worthy to be mentioned are Indian Institute of Management Sambalpur, Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur University, Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology, Sambalpur University Institute of Information Technology, Gangadhar Meher University, Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose College, Government Womens' College, Lajpat Rai Law College, Hirakud College, Orissa Medical College of Homeopathy & Research, Burla College, Govt College of Physical Education, Sambalpur, Nursing College, Dr Parshuram Mishra Institute of Advanced Studies in Education and Silicon Institute of Technology.

Keywords: *Sambalpur, College, University, Engineering College, Medical College*



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Introduction

Sambalpur is the hub of Western Odisha. It is situated between 20° 44' and 22° 11' North latitude and between 83° 49' and 84° 23' East Longitude. It is universally accepted that education is the basic input for any sustainable development, especially in the context of socio-economic development. It is also recognized that with a substantial proportion of population in abysmal ignorance and poverty, a nation, fails to achieve progress. Prior to

1803, a system of education firmly rooted in the tradition of the people had flourished in Odisha as well as Sambalpur and was controlled by the private initiatives such as Pathasala (Schools run at temples), Sanskrit Tols, Bhagavat Tungis and in the houses of rich men. The Avadhanas (teachers) put emphasis on reading, writing and working out simple mathematics or traditional knowledge.

Odia literature was taught to the pupils including the Bhagavata of Jagannatha Das and Puranas etc. There was no Odia school managed by the Kings of Odisha by that time. Thus, education in the Pre-British period was quite in a mess not only in Sambalpur but also Odisha. Particularly, education in Sambalpur was not a choice of parents alone but was regarded as a matter of community interest also.

From information relating to intellectual condition of Odias in the first half of the 19th Century, one could have education in Sambalpur in the pre-British days. There was no question of higher education in this district on the eve British occupation of Sambalpur or till the last part of British rule as the alien government had developed willful indifference towards intellectual growth of the people because it was expensive.

i. British initiation in education in Sambalpur-

After the minutes of Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay, the President of the General Committee of Public instruction and Law Member of the Governor-General's Council, English education was introduced in India on 7th March, 1835. In 1849, Sambalpur came under the direct control of the British and was administered by an Officer styled the Principal Assistant of the Agent. The first Administrative Agent of Sambalpur was Kedenhead, who had founded a middle vernacular school at the heart of Sambalpur town at Dalaipada in 1851.¹ It was upgraded to a Middle English School in 1852 and the dawn of a new era broke in the history of education in the province of Sambalpur when Western Education was introduced. During Governor General Auckland a High school named Sambalpur School was established at Sambalpur in 1852.²

ii. Growth of education under Wood's Dispatch-

The Wood's Dispatch was another milestone in the history of educational progress in the state of Odisha. In 1854 during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Dalhousie, Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control drafted a scheme which became famous as Wood's Dispatch. It became the 'Magnacarta' in the history of English system of education in India. As per the Wood's Dispatch, (You can't bypass the origin of Zilla school) the Zilla School at Sambalpur assumed the status of the Anglo-Vernacular School. The policy of

placing Middle English School in a vernacular basis helped the Odias for the spread of English Education. Apart from that primary education and the secondary education also received a fresh impetus by the Wood's Despatch.

In 1864, British Government decided to have one Zilla school at each District HQs. Hence Sambalpur School became Zilla School. It was renamed as Chandrasekhar Zilla School in 1952.³ Subsequently, on 11th June 1861; two primary schools were opened at Dalaipada and Bad Bazaar by H.B. Impey. In 1866, two more primary schools were opened at Gurupada and Patnaik pada by the administrator Colonel A.B.Cumberledge.⁴ From 1862 to 1868 there were 249 schools running in the district and 13276 students were admitted.⁵ After the end of the disastrous Famine of 1866, the British Government thought of giving attention to the development of higher education in Odisha.

Lord Ripon, the Viceroy of India, appointed a commission in 1882 under W.W. Hunter which was famous as Hunter Commission. According to its recommendations, private schools and colleges were opened in different towns of Odisha. So, by 1931, Sambalpur Municipality had 14 schools under its control.⁶

In this way hundreds of Primary, Upper Primary, Middle Schools, High Schools and higher secondary schools or +2 Colleges of both government and private enterprises were opened in this district for the spread of education but there was no higher educational institution (Degree Colleges) introduced in this district till 1944.

Higher education in Odisha and for that matter in Sambalpur was in a deplorable state as the British government was quite apathetic towards the spread of higher education. It wanted the people of Odisha to learn English, but it never wanted to make them highly educated. Its main focus was to provide a working knowledge of English to the people only to create a clerical class as in India. Such shrewdness was applicable to Sambalpur too. Furthermore, higher education was very expensive. The British Government never wanted to spend more on education which would benefit the native people. In 1858, when the Bombay, Madras and Calcutta Universities were established, there was not a single college in Odisha. Besides that, the British did not encourage the Engineering education particularly related to agriculture although Odisha was a land having agriculture as the chief occupation of the people. These factors hindered the growth of higher education in Sambalpur as well as in Odisha.

In the last part of British rule, A Comprehensive Educational Plan was formulated by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944. It is popularly known as Sergeant Report

named After John Sergeant, Educational Advisor to the Government of India. Henceforward, the British Govt. decided to introduce higher education in India. In this context, Sambalpur was destined to derive the benefits of this plan. Thereafter, many a higher educational institutions were established in this district. The article aims at casting a bird's eye view on how these institutions struggled from the grass root level and marched towards fabulous growth.

1. Gangadhar Meher College (Now Gangadhar Meher University)

A portion of Zilla School, an already-fixed-up educational institution, was converted to College on 7th July, 1944 with a view to providing higher education to the budding youths of the region and named as Gangadhar Meher College in 1949 after the name of the illustrious Odia poet.⁷ The College started on a modest scale with the student strength of only 192. It went on expanding and growing in stature with the passage of time. It made rapid stride to emerge as a premiere institution of the State in the domain of higher education. The college was able to carve out a niche for itself in the academic landscape of Odisha. It started functioning as an autonomous college in 1991. The institution was accorded 'College with potential for excellence by the UGC in the academic session 2004-05. It was converted to a Unitary University on 30th May, 2015, and has been named as Gangadhar Meher University (Amrut Vihar). This university is serving to the academic need of around 5500 students at present. The motto of this university is “**Knowledge imparts immortality**”.

2. Engineering College at Burla in 1956 –

Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology was initially founded as University College of Engineering (UCE) at Burla, under the direction of the Government of Odisha. Established in 1956, it earned the credit of being the first engineering college of the state. The primary purpose of the college was to produce efficient technical brains in electrical, civil, and mechanical fields. It is situated at nearby. The foundation for the college was laid by the first Prime Minister of the country, Jawaharlal Nehru. There were 20 students in the first batch comprising three 3 branches - Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. The University later came under the administrative control of Sambalpur University and then under the control of Biju Patnaik University of Technology. In 2008, the students of UCE actively campaigned for due recognition as an independent university and government too showed a genuine concern for such academic demand. Consequently, UCE Burla was officially changed to its current name on 12th

February 2009 and got the status of a unitary University following the resolution by the Government of Odisha.

VSSUT was declared to be eligible to receive central assistance under Section 12B of the UGC Act in 2012. The Motto of the VSSUT which was incorporated in its official logo is “Sidhirbhawati Karmaja”. Now there is 260 administrative staff, 4413 students- 3724 undergraduates and 689 post graduate students- pursuing higher education in technical field and working hard to make the dream of the nation come true.

VSSUT offers courses like Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech), Bachelor of Architecture (B.Arch), Master of Technology (M.Tech), Master of Science (M.Sc.), Master of Philosophy (M.Phil), Master in Computer Application (MCA) and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D).

3. Government Women’s College, Bhutapada, Sambalpur-

Women's College of Sambalpur was first started in July 1959 in the Town Hall (Victoria Memorial Hall) as a private institution with thirteen girl students and five lecturers till it was moved to its own building in 1961.⁸ Due to incessant and untiring endeavour of the members of the Managing Committee the institution got its own building and hostel at Bhutapada Chowk by 1962. The college was taken over by the State Government on 1st October, 1965.⁹ Now it is one of the prominent educational institutions in Sambalpur district committed and dedicated to catering needs of the girls’ students. It has teaching provision both in arts and Science stream with honours in a number of subjects and post graduate programme in Odia.

4. Medical College at Burla in 1959- (Now VIMSAR) –

It is with the philanthropic ambition to provide a permanent solution to healthcare problems in western Odisha that the then Chief Minister of Odisha, Harekrushna Mahatab, took the decision to set up a medical college at Burla, in 1958 which was to be the second in the State and the 54th in the country. Consequently, Burla Medical College (BMC) came into existence in July, 1959, with 41 boy and 9 girl students selected by SCB Medical College in Cuttack to become the first batch of students.

The College started to function in the present Old College Building (OCB), with Radhanath Mishra as its first principal. Initially, the Medical Council of India (MCI) refused to give recognition to BMC, citing gross infrastructural inadequacy. So, a new sprawling campus was designed for the main college building, hospital, hostels and staff quarters. Its construction began on 12th February 1961 and completed in 1966. On completion of the work in 1966. This is how it was able to conform to the criteria set by MCI which was

obliged to give approval to BMC in 1967. In 1969, it was christened Veer Surendra Sai Medical College in honor of Veer Surendra Sai.¹⁰

VSS Medical College offers both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in the field of medical science as well as other courses. The college offers the four and a half year MBBS course with a one-year compulsory rotating internship in affiliated hospitals to a maximum of 200 students per year. Admission to this course is on the basis of merit. Out of the 200, 30 seats are filled through the AIQ (All India Quota) of NEET exam conducted by the NTA and the remaining 170 seats are filled through the same exam by OJEE. The acceptance rate to this course is 0.2% (1 in every 500 aspirants).

The college has the permission for 74 seats in postgraduate courses. The admission is through Odisha Post Graduate medical Examination and at the national level through All India Post Graduate Medical Entrance Examination (AIPGMEE). 50% of the seats are reserved for in-service candidates. The courses award the degrees of MD or MS in various specialisations. The college also offers diploma studies in paramedical fields. So, Veer Surendra Sai Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), formerly Burla Medical College (BMC) and Veer Surendra Sai Medical College and Hospital (VSSMCH), popularly known as VSS, is one of the premier government-run Medical Institutes and Hospitals in the state and has been able to create an identity of its own even in the national level. In the long history of its reputation the college has never faltered to achieve its motto, that is, “to serve others always with a kind heart.”

5. Dr. Parshuram Mishra Institute of Advanced Study in Education (PMIASE) –

It is one of the premiere institutions in the state that have been rendering great service in matter of providing training to the teachers who always have a key role in kindling the lamp of education among the people. It is situated near VSS Stadium at Motolijharan, Sambalpur. This institution was established in 1962. It is recognized and approved by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Bhubaneswar.

Since the day of its start, the college has been committed to its objective of providing quality education and training to the future teachers. By dint of an exquisite combination of technology-based gadgets and deep human touch the teachers here build up the personality of aspiring students who later on dedicate themselves to carrying the torch of education through the rungs of the society and along with this noble mission they make a satisfying career for themselves. This institution is also accredited by NAAC. Affiliated to Sambalpur University, Jyoti Vihar, PMIASE Sambalpur offers 3 types of courses such as

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B.Ed, M.Phil, M.Ed for two years duration. This college also has facility for distance education programme under IGNOU.

6. Lala Lajpatrai Law College (1965) –

Lajpat Rai Law College was established in the year 1965 by the Sambalpur Trust Fund and it was initially under Utkal University. The College is approved by Bar Council of India (BCI). Equipped with highly qualified faculties it has created and maintained an academic atmosphere that enables a student's academic and professional growth to a great extent. Apart from this, guest lectures by leading advocates from time to time do supplement to the academic endeavour of the college. It provides good infrastructural facilities like hostel, library, computer lab, moot court room, updated teaching aids, internet, sports and several extracurricular activities. Lajpat Rai Law College has professionally trained and highly qualified faculty. It offers 3 years and 5 years Integrated B.B.A., LL.B. course approved by the Bar Council of India (BCI). Now this College is affiliated to Sambalpur University (Jyoti Vihar, Burla).¹¹

7. Sambalpur University (Jyoti Vihar)-

On 10th December 1966, the Sambalpur University Act was passed by the Odisha Legislature for establishment of a University in the Western part of Odisha. This institution embarked on its noble mission from 1st January 1967 and since then it has trained itself only to step forward caring incessantly the academic and intellectual growth of the students of entire western Odisha, parts of Chhatisgarh and even beyond that. The University started functioning in a rented private building at Dhanupali and thereafter in a government building at Ainthapali, Sambalpur. The first Vice-Chancellor was Prof. Parasuram Mishra. The foundation stone for Sambalpur University was laid at Burla in 1968 by Dr Zakir Hussain, the then President of India. The campus is located at a place surrounded by impressive scenic beauty at Burla, 15 km away from Sambalpur. Over the time, Burla town has grown to be the hub of learning which attracts students from all corners of the state. In 1973, the University was shifted to the present campus named Jyoti Vihar at Burla.

There are about 196 colleges affiliated to Sambalpur University excluding four other colleges SLB Medical College, Nababharat Shiksha Parishad, Sardar Raza's Medical College and Sarala Nursing College with totaling more than 200 colleges. Colleges that are afflicted to Sambalpur University belong to the districts of Western Odisha namely Sundargarh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Boudh and one Angul's sub division Athmalik.

This university offers teaching both in undergraduate and Post-graduate courses. Undergraduate Courses like +3 Arts/ Science/ Commerce, LLB, BBA-LLB B.A.- LLB, B.Ed, BCA, Bachelor of Journalism & Mass Communication, Bachelor of Library & Information Science, Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd), BAMS, BHMS, MBBS, B. Sc. (Nursing) and Bachelor in Physiotherapy and post- graduate courses like PG Diploma, MA, M Sc., M Tech, M.Phil, PhD and D.Sc degrees are offered by the University. All the departments are actively involved in research activities and well equipped for research facility for NET/JRF/GATE students. This University too offers scholarships for students to pursue their research work in various fields. Following are the courses taught in various fields. So, this university provides post-graduation education in 42 subjects through 30 post-graduation departments, with Education and Centre of foreign Languages as the recently added department continuing from the year 2018.¹² That's why, Sambalpur University is the life centre of Western Odisha. The motto of this university is, “**Vidyaya Vindatemrutam**” meaning education that liberate.

8. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose College - Only Co-education and Govt. Lead College of Western Odisha

NSCB College, initially known as Trust Fund College, was started in 1972-73 in the month of January at Victoria Memorial Hall (Town Hall), near VSS, Nari Seva Sadan, Sambalpur. It was affiliated to Sambalpur University and has received Government concurrence since 1972-73 (till 31.05.1975). The college used to receive grant in aid from the government from 01.06.1975. Now the college has its own building on the bank of rivulet Harod. The foundation stone for it was laid in..... by Sri Biju Patnaik, the then Chief Minister of Odisha. The Government of Odisha took over the Management of the college with effect 10.7.1982 with the courses existing till date. Basically, it aims at educating the students hailing from the weaker section. Teaching provision in Arts and Commerce in +2 level were started in this college with effect from 1983-84. The name Trust Fund College was christened as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose College in 1987. Science stream started from the year 2001-2002 and the +2 wing is separated with the nomenclature of NSCB Junior College from the session 2001-2002.¹³

After the construction of new College Campus at Putiband, Dhanupali, it was shifted there in 1989. This college offers under graduate course in History, Political Science, English, Odia and Commerce. A co – education institution, it is a growing learning centre of the students of SC, ST, Minority, OBC and SEBC categories. It has won the trust of more

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than 1500 students many of whom commute from distant and remote places to see their dream come true. This college also offers distance education mode programme under Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi and Odisha State Open University (OSOU), Odisha.

9. Sambalpur University Institute of Information Technology (SUIIT)-

SUIIT was set up in 2010 as a self-financing institution of Sambalpur University. It was the first Technical Institution in Odisha after 2002 which was set up in the premises of and under the control of a General University. SUIIT is the Brain Child of ex- Vice Chancellor Prof Arun Pujari. Most of the courses being offered by the SUIIT were pulled out from different existing departments of Sambalpur University and were assembled into a completely separate course having ample prospective of career building. Electronics was taken out of physics department, computer science from mathematics while bioinformatics was pulled out from life sciences department. Only the undergraduate courses were newly added to SUIIT. While the state government had given an initial budget of Rs 10 crores in 2009-10 for the institute, Rs 5 crores from Directorate of Distance and Continuing Education (DDCE) was given to it for the construction of its buildings inside the university campus.¹⁴ The campus of this university is in the vicinity of Mahanadi Coal Fields Limited, VSSUT and located at the foothills of the Hirakud Dam. Course offered are Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), Electrical and Electronics Engineering (EEE), Electronics and Communication Engineering (ECE). SUIIT being a constituent unit of Sambalpur University, does not require AICTE approval to run technical courses. However, SUIIT adopts AICTE norms for quality technical education. Motto of this university is, **“Leveraging Technology, Inspiring Innovation, and Flourishing Mankind.”**

10. Indian Institute of Management Sambalpur (IIMS) –

IIM Sambalpur is a milestone in the growth of higher education in Sambalpur that has reached it to a great height. It was announced in 2014 by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and was established in 2015. It is one of the Indian Institutes of Management in India. This institution is a public business School housed temporarily at Sambalpur University Sambalpur, Odisha. The first batch of students started in September 2015. It was mentored by IIM Indore until appointment of its independent director. IIM Sambalpur was registered as a Society under Societies Registration Act, XXI of 1860 on August 19, 2015. The Government of Odisha has selected 237 acres of land for the construction of the permanent campus of IIM Sambalpur at Basantpur. The proposed campus

is to house one academic block, canteen, hostels and an auditorium. In 2018, the Government of India sanctioned a budget of 400 crore (US\$56 million) for accelerating the construction of the permanent campus. On 2 Jan 2021, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the permanent campus that is expected to be ready by 2022.¹⁵

11. Odisha State Open University (OSOU) –

OSOU, the only university in the state offering the provision of higher education in distance learning mode is located in Gangadhar Meher University Campus, Sambalpur, Odisha. The University is established by an Act of the Odisha State Legislature in 2015. The University has jurisdiction over the entire State of Odisha. OSOU has established 52 Study Centres at Sambalpur, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Rourkela, Jeypore, Koraput, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Paralakhmundi, Malkangiri, Bolangir, Bargarh, Bhawanipatna, Athagarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Pallahara, Puri, Kendrapara, Khurda, Keonjhar, Koraput, Nabrangpur, Rourkela, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Baripada, Nayagarh, Rayagada and Sonpur. Learners are attached to these centres for academic support through trained counselors and tutors.¹⁶

Apart from above mentioned higher educational institutions in Sambalpur, there are other educational institutions playing major role to fulfill the need of the people. These are Hirakud College, Hirakud, Odisha Medical College of Homeopathy & Research, Sambalpur, Burla College, Burla, Govt College of Physical Education, Sambalpur, Sambalpur Nursing College, Dhanupali and Silicon Institute of Technology, Sambalpur, College of Agriculture, Chiplima affiliated to Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology, Bhubaneswar, Maa Jhadeswari Degree College, Dhama etc.

12. Conclusion

With the march of time new prospects are in view. Higher education is neither unreachable nor unaffordable in Western Odisha as it used to be few decades ago. Sambalpur along with Burla, its prominent corporation part, has given a long leap in the field of education with half a dozen of national standard educational institutions scattered all over the corporation area. It has grown to be the learning centre of education alluring aspirants across the country. In spite of weak network of communication, especially in air one, long prevailing poverty, conventional type of infrastructure and other variegated huddles Sambalpur has ventured into bringing about a great revolution in higher education by trying to give the best of education to the students so that they can complete at national and international level as well. All these educational institutions cater the need of the students of

not only Sambalpur or Odisha but also other parts of India to make them fit for employment. Though these educational institutions emerged in the last part of the British Government was in post-independent period that they grew to be as per the expectation of the people of Odisha. The long cherished dream of the people is like likely to materialize with the establishment of various general, vocational and technical educational institutions in this district. Still a long way lays untrodden. Though difficult, it is not impossible to make impossible possible only if we all set on perseverance with strong will power tiding us over all odds.

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