

CHAPTER - V
**ARYA SAMAJ MOVEMENT
IN ORISSA**

Arya Samaj Movement with its fresh interpretation of the Vedas, its unceasing tirade against all blind beliefs that had crept into Hindu religion, its pragmatic approach in dealing with burning social issues, its social works having far-reaching consequences had made a tremendous impact on the socio-religious texture of the Indian society towards the last part of the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century. The movement was like a gust of wind of change removing the staleness of the then Hindu society polluted with many social evils. Because of its unorthodox, modern outlook while coping with social problems, the movement became immensely popular spreading its network all over undivided India. The state of Orissa was no exception to this. A few dedicated individuals, being influenced and inspired by the ideals of Arya Samaj movement took over the responsibility of opening its branches in Orissa and thus initiated a new phase in the religious history of Orissa.

Before presenting a detailed account of the Arya Samaj movement it would be interesting to throw light on a less publicised chapter in the life the

founder of this movement, Swami Dayananda himself. The great social reformer and an annotator of the ancient Vedic literature was born in 1824 and died in 1883. His life-story spanning over fifty-nine years is known to everybody, except for a period of four years between 1885 to 1860. None of the biographies has revealed anything about the events of Swami's life in this period. However, after eighty-five years of his passing away, some manuscripts were discovered written in Bengali by six different persons. The Hindi translation of these Bengali manuscripts came out first in *Sarvadeshik* weekly, an organ of the International Aryan League, New Delhi in its issue national dated 5th, January, 1969 to 8th November, 1970. These were later published in a book *Yogi Ka Atmcharita* edited by Swami Sachidananda. This book says that Swamiji met Mangal Pandey at Barrackpore near Calcutta and then he requested Raja of Khurda (Orissa) to render all possible help.¹

Again the same book refers to his visit Berhampur in 1857, on his journey to Merut.² But as no details were available of his visit to Orissa, the biographers at a later period, conveniently remained silent on these two episodes of his life. It has led many Arya Samajists to believe that Swami Dayananda Saraswati had never come to Orissa during his life time.

My assertion is that, Swami Dayananda had really paid a visit to Orissa, which can be ascertained from an article published in Hindu *Sarvadesik* weekly dated October 25, 1970. In his article, '*Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati, Ajnat Jivani, Puri se Dhanuskoti Aur Lanka*' (The Unknown Biography of Swami Dayananda Saraswati) Sri Dinabandhuji Veda Shastri even gives a

complete account of Swamiji's fateful meeting with the Raja of Khurda. Swamiji implored Raja saying that as the king, he was the protector of religion. He should save the religion, which had faced great threat from the foreigners, especially the missionaries. Even he suggested to the king to prevent wasteful expenditures in temple in the name of rituals and divert the same for public welfare.³

Thus, I can emphatically say that, indeed, Swami Dayananda had visited Orissa. But, it might be that his visit had no huge impact on the Arya Samaj movement in Orissa, yet it helped to sow the seed of the movement, which later germinated and turned into a huge tree.

Then it was Swami Shradhananda who had come to Berhampur in June 1924 and he had been paid a warm welcome by Utkal Swaraj Congress Committee. In a public meeting, he delivered a speech in Hindi, in which he vehemently attacked social evils, especially forced conversion. When he spoke of his intention to bring sixteen thousand lower caste Hindus back to their religion, a person named Digamurti Ramaswami donated fifty thousand rupees needed for the purpose. Swami also spoke about the protection of cattle population.⁴ Another great figure of Arya Samaj movement Lala Lajpat Rai, came to attend a meeting at Puri organised by Pandit Gopabandhu Das, the then President of Orissa branch of Hindu Mahasabha. In that meeting, attended by a huge crowd, Lalaji drew the attention of the people to the evils like untouchability, poverty and illiteracy which were a stumbling blocks in achieving national unity and integrity.⁵

Inspite of these visits by the two great leaders, it is interesting to note that, till the first decade of the twentieth century, the Arya Samaj Movement had not gained any significant momentum in Orissa. Orissa was deprived of Swami's great teachings for a long period of time. Possibly, it was Swami Nityananda Saraswati, who acted as the envoy of Swami Dayananda carrying his message to the state. But Swami Nityananda Saraswati also did not find enough of time for the spread of movement in Orissa. So, his contribution in this regard was very limited. The Arya Samaj movement in Orissa was given a concrete shape by the great reformer Sribatscha Panda in the second decade of the twentieth century. He was like *Bhagiratha* in bringing the *Mandakini* of Arya Samaj movement to Orissa to remove the sorrows and suffering of its people.⁶

Sribatscha Panda was one of the only three graduates belonging to then district of Ganjam. Then Orissa was a part of Bengal and Brahmo Samaj movement of Raj Ram Mohan Roy, the reformative thoughts of which had attracted and influenced many intellectuals including Sri Panda. With an uninhibited outlook to life, Sri Panda not only became a member of the Brahmo Samaj, but also, lost his faith in the Hindu religion, into which formal, meaningless and sometimes evil customs such as caste distinctions, idol-worship, untouchability and others had crept into. In fact, Sri Panda wrote many articles questioning the rationality of the many rituals of the Hindu religion, which were published in different Oriya journals. A series of such essays appeared in *Utkal Dipika*, a renowned Oriya literary magazine at that

time which drew the attention of none other than Sri Ram Shankar Rai. Ram Shankar invited Sri Panda to his residence to discuss the religious issues. Sri Panda was unable to reply to the queries of Sri Rai and at the end of the meeting Sri Rai advised him to go through *Satyartha Prakash*, a great holy book written by Swami Dayananda in order to have a clear and thorough understanding of Hindu religion. Sri Panda, then serving as Sub-Register in an office at Aska, ordered for the copies of translation of *Satyarth Prakash* in English and also the English book *Arya Dharma*, composed by Lala Lajpat Rai. These two books brought about a great transformation in the life of Sribatscha Panda. *Satyartha Prakash* revealed to him the greatness of the Vedic tradition and like his beloved and respected teacher Swami Dayananda, Sri Panda, belonging to a traditional brahmin family, became instrumental in setting up its first branch in Orissa.⁷

With the intention of having a branch of Arya Samaj in Orissa, Sri Sribatscha Panda formed an Antaranga Sabha of Arya Samaj with cooperation from persons like Jaya Mangala Rath, Harihar Sadasya, Antaryami Pattnaik and Mahadev Rout at Rasulkonda, now known as Bhanjanagar. The Arya Samaj first started to function in 1913 in his house at RasulKonda. He donated the southern part of his residential building for Utkal Arya Samaj's office and the deed to this effect was registered in the sub-register's office on the 5th, March 1923. By that time Sri Panda had completely dedicated himself to the cause of the Arya Samaj movement. In the year 1925, a *Gorakshashrama* (Cow Protection Shed) was built at Tanarada near Rasulkonda, the money

for which was donated by Sri Panda. In the same campus, to commemorate the memory of Swami Shradhananda as well as for the spread of Vedic religion, a library named Shradhananda Pathagara was built. He availed twelve acres of land from the government for this purpose. In 1927, he donated all his properties in the name of Sarvadesik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and in the next year and he formed a trust board to run the organisation. After the marriage of his only daughter, he could be able to devote full time for the activities of Arya Samaj.⁸

Sri Panda had deputed three persons named Sri Bedabrata Shastri, Laxmi Narayan Shastri and Rabi Pattnaik to Brahma Mohavidyalaya, Lahore, who, he thought, would help in propagating the message of Swami Dayananda. Sri Panda had also built a temple of Arya Samaj along with a school for the teaching of the Vedas, a Kanya Pathasala (a School for Girls) and a widow home at Puri. It was he, who inspired many others to accept the faith of Arya Samaj and to work for it. Among them were Raghunath Tatwanidhi, Shri Lingaraj Sharma and Basudev Tripathy and Bira Kishore Behera who had a major role in carrying on the movement of Arya Samaj. Sri Panda passed away on May 11, 1943, but he had already laid the foundation of Arya Samaj movement in Orissa and it was his effort which not only did give a definite shape to the movement, but also under his able leadership, it had been transformed into a well-organised movement, making the Oriya people taste the sweetness of renaissance in the religio-cultural sector.

As an ardent follower of Arya Samaj ideals, he had composed a number of books on the movement of self-rule, the movement for a separate Orissa

state and also books on the different concepts of the Vedas. His literary achievements will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. He fearlessly advocated in support of removal of untouchability, widow-marriage, and community feasts among different castes and raised his voice against the dominance of the Brahmins in the Hindu Samaj in Orissa.⁹

For a short period of time, the activities of the Arya Samaj had slowed down after his demise. But the movement had already made its presence felt in Orissa. As a result, on November 5, 1921, Cuttack Arya Samaj was established on behalf of Arya Pradeshik Pratinidhi Sabha of Lahore.¹⁰ There were twenty two members comprising of Oriyas, Bengalis, Marwaris and Gujuratis. Sri Ganga Prasad Marwari, Sri Shyam Sundar Sahu, Sri Nrusingha Das were elected as President, Vice-president, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Treasurer respectively on October 14, 1923. Besides the above mentioned office bearers Babu Radhanath Satpathy and Banchanidhi Parida had been elected as members of the executive body of the Antaranga Sabha. The meetings of the Samaj were held regularly at 8 O'clock at Buxi Bazar of Cuttack town every Sunday.¹¹ The members of the Samaj at Cuttack gave a call to the people of Orissa to join the Arya Samaj in order to awake themselves and their motherland from the long slumber of ignorance and slavery. The members were certain that only Arya Samaj could inculcate real knowledge and true religion.¹²

It was Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, who shouldered the responsibility of carrying on the activities of the Arya Samaj activities in Orissa after the

death of Sribatscha Panda. Christened as Yudhisthir in his childhood, he could remember many sacred scriptures, which showed his extraordinary memory power and his brilliance as a scholar. When Iswar Lal Vyas came from Gujrat to his village carrying the message of Gandhiji, the young Yudhisthir was influenced by him and started spinning cotton thread with charkha and put on khadi clothes. He led the newly-formed Vanara Sena of his village consisting small children and picketed in front of the shops selling imported cloth and wine shops. He gave up his formal education and became closely associated with Naba Krishna Chowdhury in organising the non-cooperation movement in Orissa in 1942. Apart from taking part in the struggle for freedom he also took a vow to work for the oppressed and the downtrodden and started his work in this respect from Sonapur, a place near Chabis Pragana of Calcutta.¹³

When communal riots broke out in 1947, many Oriyas settled in Matiaburj and Medinapur had to face the wrath of rioters; some of them even were killed. Yudhisthir immediately arrived at Calcutta to help these Oriyas affected by the riot. At that time, a camp of Arya Samaj had opened at Lilua near Howrah to help the riot-victims. The famous Arya Samaj leader Mohatma Kushal Chand Anand was the chief supervisor of this relief camp. For the first time, Yudhisthir came into direct contact with Arya Samaj and was impressed with the ideals upheld by the Arya Samaj. Subsequently, he attended the annual function of Calcutta Arya Samaj and there he was profoundly influenced by the great saints of Arya Samaj like Ayodhyanath Shastri,

Budhadev Vidyalkar, Swami Abhedananda Saraswati and Pandit Umashankara etc. He went through Veda- related Arya literature and more importantly *Satyartha Prakash* of Swami Dayananda and finally accepted the faith of Arya Samaj and he was re-chastened as Swami Brahmananda Saraswati. He organised many meetings in Calcutta and advised people to give up the ritualistic traditions and accept the true message of the Vedas.¹⁴

On the day of Basanta Panchami in 1950, Swami Brahmananda returned to Orissa and lived in the village Kaluga on and spent time in preaching the Vedic religion in the nearby villages. Finally in 1952, in search of an associate for the propagation of his work, he came to Bolangir and joined the Arya Samaj working there. In the village of Sunamudi, he set up his Vedic Kutir. By that time, the Arya Samaj had already established its network in Bolangir in particular and Western Orissa in general.¹⁵

In fact, two main centres of Arya Samaj were working at that time, one at Sambalpur and the other at Bolangir. Bimalleswar Nanda, a headmaster of a school was the founder of Arya Samaj at Sambalpur, which started in 1925. The centre's success led to the setting up of many Arya Samaj centres in the nearby areas. A new centre had cropped up at Gudjaley of Sambalpur by Sri Dharmananda Arya, Sri Basudev Shastri and Sri Mukteswar Panda etc.

When the construction of Hirakud dam was under way after the independence, skilled men from all over India came to work for it. Many of them belonged to Arya Samaj and they started spreading the movement there. Thus, in 1953, because of the efforts of Krushna Chandra Arya, Sri Narayan

Das Mehra and Sri Naba Kaulishore, an Arya Samaj centre began to function formally at Hirakud. Another centre was also established at Burla in 1955.

But, Arya Samaj at Bolangir was the oldest of all the centres in the western Orissa. It was established in the year 1940 by a saint named Shri Dharmananda, who refuted and rejected the blind belief prevalent in Hinduism which were contrary to the tenets of the Vedas, when he was staying at Ram Krishna temple near Bolangir. From 1940 to 1942, Dharmananda spread the movement of Arya Samaj to nearby localities with the help of his friends. In 1945, the famous Arya leader Sri Madan Mohan Seth, while on a visit to Orissa, was appointed as the Chief Justice by Moharaj Rajendra Singh, then ruling over the small state of Patnagarh. Sri Madan Mohan Seth, provided all kinds of financial aid to Sri Dharmananda Arya and his friends. Thus the movement gained momentum and popularity because of the combined efforts of the above mentioned two along with other persons like Sri Balabhadra Bahidar and Sri Maheswar Meher.¹⁶

In 1952, it was Swami Brahmananda, who came to Arya Samaj at Patnagarh and due to his organisational ability, a seven-day *Viswa Shanti Maha Yajnan* (Maha Yajnan for World Peace) was held at Sunamudi, where he had settled. Under the supervision of Dharmananda Arya, Updeshak of Patnagarh Arya Samaj, Swami Abhedananda Saraswati, the president of *Sarvadesik Sabha*, Sri Dinabandhu Shastri of Calcutta Arya Samaj, Balaram Sidhant Bhusan and Sri Priyabrat Das etc., the whole ceremony was carried out and the villagers of Sunamudi, Sri Yudhisthir Dharua, Sri Arjun Sahu, Sri

Krishna Chandra Sahu also provided great help for the function. Sarvadesik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was impressed by the organisational talent of Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, and he continued the organisational work for a few more years.¹⁷

Swami Abhedananda discovered the hidden potential in Swami Brahmananda and made arrangement to send him to Agra to gather more knowledge related to Vedic religion and Arya Samaj. He learned the concepts of the Vedas under many learned teachers at Agra and finally in a formal ceremony, he gave up all his worldly relations to become a Sanyasin to devote his life for the country and its people. While at Agra, Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab, then the governor of Agra collected his address from Swami Abhedananda Saraswati and called him to Delhi requesting him to go to the district of Sundergarh to prevent the people from being converted to Christianity by the missionaries working there. By that time the separatist movement known as Jharkhand movement had affected the bordering parts of Orissa under the leadership of a man named Jayapal Singh. Thus, Swami Brahmananda left Agra with three hundred rupees donated by Sri Basantalal Murka, an M.L.A. of Bengal to prevent conversion of the tribals to Christianity. With a letter of recommendation from Dr. Mahatab to the then Congress President Sri Dhananjaya Mohanty to render all possible help to him, Swami Brahmananda arrived at Kalugaon on August 21, 1954. He immediately came to the rescue of some tribals from being converted. He set up Kalugaon Vaidika *Sevashram* and then proceeded to Veda Vyas and made it the centre of all his further activities.¹⁸

Gadadhar Dehuri Contributed ten acres of land for the proposed centre being influenced by Swami Brahmananda and Dhananjaya Mohanty. By that time an Arya Samaj and a Dayanandaji Pathshala were also established in Kalugaon and the then chief of the village panchayat Sri Sashi Bhusan Panigrahi became the president of both the organisations. In the year 1957, Dr. Harekrishna Mahatab laid the foundation of Gurukul Ashram at Veda Vyas. In 1960, the Ashram was inaugurated by the learned Swami Sivananda Tirth, who later became its first vice-chancellor. A Vedic Gurukula was also opened simultaneously. The Arya Samaj opened its branches at Hatibari and then at other places, and many stalwarts belonging to Jharkhand politics such as Sukura Munda, Birsa Munda, Nirmal Munda, Jusura Munda etc. joined this movement.¹⁹

Gurukul Ashram at Veda Vyas with its educational institutions for students belonging to all levels along with its publication unit, bear the testimony of Swamiji's dreams. But Swami's activities were not confined to Veda Vyas alone. He had extended his sphere of work by trying to spread the message of Swami Dayananda to each and every district of Orissa. His work area stretched from Kalahandi and Phulbani to the tribal dominated Sundergarh. Swamiji had established a teachers training centre and an Ayurvedic hospital at Kalinga of Phulbani. He tried his best to develop a liking among the small students for the language of Oriya and Sanskrit in his schools. About one hundred and forty seven tribal people professionally worked as Sanskrit teachers in the Sanskrit schools and colleges, set up by his organisation.²⁰

Swami Brahmananda Saraswati breathed his last on September 6, 2001 at the age of fifty-six. He was not only the founder of Utkal Arya Samaj, but also he was the brightest star in the Arya Samaj sky of Orissa. He had completely devoted his life to make his dear motherland free from foreign rule and provided commendable service to the tribals of Orissa enveloped in the darkness of ignorance and lethargy. He was the great awakener of social consciousness and an unchallengeable hero of the spiritual world. His death deprived the poor wretched orphans, destitute of a true friend. With his humanitarian service, he has made a permanent place for himself in the hearts of all Arya Swamajis of Orissa.²¹

One of his classmates and colleagues, Sribatscha Mohan Sahoo was also influenced by Arya Samaj ideals and took the vow of Sanyasi from him. He set up an Arya Samaj at Kanpur of Cuttack district.²²

The Arya Samaj movement in Orissa gained momentum, thanks to the selfless dedicated effort of a large number of Sanyasis, Banaprasthis and Brahmacharis. They were the products of the ancient system of Ashramas and they had a very decisive role in the spread of Vedic religion in Orissa.

The first name that strikes our mind is Swami Pranabananda Saraswati, an extraordinarily gifted talent among the wandering sanyasis in Orissa. In his quest to find out the religion, which could satisfy his inner thirst for true knowledge, he was immensely influenced by Swami Bhrhmananda Saraswati and joined the Arya Samaj. He travelled far and wide of Orissa and put in all his efforts to attract people to the movement. The assessment of Arya Samaj

movement in Orissa would be incomplete without taking into account the contribution of this noble saint in this regard.²³

Swami Satyananda Saraswati, another great contributor to the movement of Arya Samaj, like Swami Pranabananda had accepted the Mahima faith before joining the Arya Samaj. Then he was impressed by Swami Brahmananda Saraswati's learning and personality. After earning sufficient knowledge on the Vedas, in Eta Gurukala of Uttar Pradesh, he worked for a short period of time at Vedavyasa Gurukula. He quit the place and for the next twenty years, he wandered from one place to the other in Orissa propagating the ancient Vedic religion. However, his prematured passing away left a permanent void in the Arya Samaj movement in Orissa.

Swami Swarupaananda Saraswati, who now heads the Gurukula Ashram at Pinchabaniya, founded by Swami Bhrahmananda Saraswati, has done a lot of work in spreading the message of Swami Dayananda in the district of Mayurbhanj of Orissa. He deserves the credit for motivating the people to accept the Vedic ways of life by organising yajna and fighting against superstitions and blind beliefs.²⁴ Swami Omananda Saraswati became a banaprasthi after coming under the influence of Swami Brahmananda Saraswati. He took over the charge of Shanti Ashram at Raikia of Phulabani district and devoted his life for social reforms and spread of Arya Samaj ideals.

Janmejay Bhoru was transformed to Banaprasthi Jagadananda after receiving dikshya from Swami Brahmananda Saraswati in 1996. He set up the Gadabhoga Ashram of Sambalpur and engaged himself in propagating the

Vedic ideals. He wandered different places in the western part of Orissa and worked for the spread of Arya Samaj movement. In 1997, he established a yoga ashram as well as Veda mandir and *yajnasala* at Paramanpur. Later on, he founded Bal Bikash Gitasharma and started imparting Vedic education to its forty five inmates. He is also a poet of great merit, whose books like *Shudha Hanuman Charita* has earned a great deal of popularity among the rural masses.

After receiving dikshya from Swami Omananda Saraswati, Swami Dhableswar Banaprasthi gave up his worldly life to dedicate himself to the cause of Arya Samaj. His greatest contribution lies in his propagation of Vedic ideals among the women. Because of his effort and encouragement a number of Stree Arya Samaj (Women Arya Samaj) were established at places like Maniabandha (1995), Kanpur (1994), Karabara (1996), Nandabara (1996). He also took an active part in over-all activities of the Arya Samaj in Orissa.

Swami Sudhananda, another reckonable figure of Arya Samaj movement in Orissa assumed this name after being initiated into the Arya Samaj fold, but he came under the spell of the movement after coming into contact with Dr. Umesh Patri, a renowned educationist and an active propagator of Arya Samaj ideals. Swami Sudhananda, after adequate learning of the holy scriptures arrived at Gurukula Amasena in 1992 and there Swami Dharmananda assigned him an important role in the academy of the Ashram, and also in the edition of the monthly journal 'Kulabhoomi'. He also wrote a number of books on Vedic culture and tradition which have been appreciated by the readers

irrespective of their faiths. Sanatana Brahmachari is another important figure belonging to the Arya Samaj movement, who devoted most of his time till death, in delivering the noble message of Swami Dayananda to the common people. It was his honest effort, that helped a number of branches of Arya Samaj taking concrete shape all over Orissa. As a priest of Arya Samaj, he conducted the yajna activities in villages and towns.

I also include the names of late Omkarananda Saraswati Machalo of Keonjhar Biswamitrananda Saraswati of Tanarada, Ganjam, Gayananda Saraswati of Narshinghanath, Vivekananda Vikhu of Buguda, Devananda Tirtha of Siddhapur, Bhumananda Saraswati of Vedavyasa, Swami Chinmayananda Banaprasthi of Puri, Swami Dibyananda Banaprasthi of Guduka Tikra etc., whose contributions to Arya Samaj movement in Orissa have been out-standing. While tracing the history of Arya Samaj movement in Orissa, it is desirable to have a glance over the working of Utkal Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, which is the most distinct representative branch of the national organisation.

Utkal Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was first of all set up at Bhubaneswar in 1976. In the elections held in 1978, 1983, 1988, 1991, 1994 and 1997 ; Swami Dharmananda Saraswati, Priyabrata Das, Bishikeshan Shastri, Birendra Kar, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, Lakshman Patel, Chaturbhuj Sahu, Dhaneswar Baliarsingh and many others were elected as office-bearers of the organisation at different periods of time, carrying on the programmes of the organisation. Taking the above-mentioned noble men as their role-models,

many people have rendered invaluable help to the organisation either as writers, or speakers or preachers or priests of Arya Samaj. This group includes Lambodhar Pattnaik (Balangiri), Haribandhu Mohapatra (Berhampur), Raghunath Nayak (Odagaon), Sankarshan Pratihari (Rajgarh) and others, who have actively engaged themselves in preaching the ideals of Arya Samaj by delivering speeches or forming organisations or bringing out books and journals. When we talk about organisations, the commendable work done by 'Manurbhaba Asharm' founded by Dileswar Patel and 'Anantpur Arya Samaj' established by Debabrata Arya immediately draw our attention.²⁵

Though they have parted ways, the two groups; one led by Priyabrat Das and the other led by Arya Kumar Jnanendra go on working unceasingly to materialise the dream of their supreme leader Swami Dayananda to make India a spiritually ideal nation. I have discussed about the specific contributions of the group led by Priyabrat Das. The other group has also not lagged behind, by holding Vedic Parivar Sammilani (Conference of the Vedic family), and four other conferences for the propagation of the Vedas every year. The members also hold Karma Kanda and Shivira and Veda Saptaha which are meant to explain to the people the practical utility of this great ancient scripture. They also observe the foundation day of Arya Samaj which falls on Chaitra Shukla Pratipada each year. Apart from organising such functions, they also bring out journals and books reiterating our faith in the Vedas. Birendra Panda, Dr. Debabrat Raj Kishore Hota, Acharya Sombesh, Raghunath Naik, Prof. Valmiki Patnaik, Usha Padhi, Swami Gyanananda, Dileswar Patel and

many others have done a lot to persuade people adhere to the ancient faith of the Vedas. Dr. Umesh Patri is also a name to reckon with, when we make an assessment of the impact of Arya Samaj movement on Orissa and the roles of its members.

Inspite all the differences in opinion, lust for money and power, Arya Samaj as a movement in Orissa has opened a new direction in the life of a large number of people by bringing about a change in their outlook to basic issues of life. It spearheaded the campaign against the social evils eroding the strength of the social fabric. One of these evils was untouchability which had alienated a large chunk of people from the Hindu society. Towards the close of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth century, much before Gandhi's movement against untouchability, Sribatscha Panda, an ardent follower of swami Dayananda had revolted against the idea of rigid hereditary caste distinctions. Not only did he write several articles against untouchability, but also spoke against it by organising meetings. He had realised that without the eradication of the social malady of untouchability, it is impossible to form a healthy and strong society. He tried his best to revive the *Varnasharama* of the Aryas in the past.²⁶ To convert his deeds into actions, he had employed untouchables as his servants and used to eat the food carried by them earning discomfort and criticism of the orthodox Hindus.²⁷

Sri Panda felt that the distinction of caste showed its ugly face more in the community feasts arranged in the villages. So he arranged such feasts where every one was allowed to sit with each other irrespective of his caste

and used to eat the food, sometimes even prepared by the untouchables. Once the distinction of caste diminished in such feasts, it would slowly meet its end, he thought. Sri Panda explained to the people that every one is equal before God, and he was sad to see the people belonging to the lower caste being oppressed by their counterparts of higher caste. He expressed his apprehension that if the evil system of untouchability was not eradicated, then crores of people might accept Islam or Christianity. His fearless crusade against untouchability yielded fruits, though in a limited manner. But he continued his campaign till he died.²⁸

Another memorable personality is Dr Laxmi Narayana Sahoo who had dedicated his life for the down-trodden. Being inspired by the ideals of Arya Samaj, he contributed a lot to develop the social life of Oriya people by removing all kinds of distinctions among them. He called himself a 'Barabula' (Wanderer) and introduced himself as a pana (a scheduled caste) by caste.²⁹ Kuntala Kumari Sabat's contribution in this respect can not be ignored. She called upon the people of Orissa to unite under the flag of Lord Jagannath and to initiate the ideals of equality and fraternity among them.³⁰ The prominent Arya Samaji Braja Bihari Bahidar spoke and wrote against caste differences and tried his best to root out this social evil.³¹ Lingaraj Agnihotri, had to suffer a lot when he put in his efforts for the removal of untouchability. He had constructed his house near untouchable slum and refrained them from taking meat and wine. He also organised Yajna ceremonies by them much to the chagrin of the conservative Hindus.³²

Thus Sribatscha Panda and some other Arya Samaj leaders stressed on the eradication of untouchability as a pre-condition to bring unity in the country. Like their guru Swami Dayananda, they opposed casteism by citing references from the Vedas, Upanishads and Manushriti. They explained to the people that the four-fold division of the Aryan society into Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra was not done on the basis of birth, but on the basis of action or occupation of the individual which was determined by the same person's ability, aptitude and interest. They achieved success in their mission.³³

The Brahmans had a complete dominance over the Hindu society in the later part of the nineteenth and in the first part of the twentieth century. The public life was in danger and the innocent people were trapped in the net of rituals in the name of culture and tradition. People showed their faith in religion though some formal meaningless functions like on which day the festivals should be celebrated or offering money to the Brahmins to atone a sin.³⁴ Sribatscha Panda and other Arya Samaj followers raised their voice against, such ritualistic traditions. They were specially opposed to the cheating of the Brahmans in the name of 'Shradha', a ritualistic function, supposed to appease the souls, after a man was dead. The son was to perform 'Shradha', a necessary ritual for the soul of his father to extricate himself from all mortal bonds in order to go to heaven.³⁵ The Arya Samaj followers explained that 'Shradha' is performed out of affection for the late superiors by remembering and thinking about the good qualities they possessed and by trying to remodel

ourselves taking them as our models. The service to the parents when alive was really *Pitru Yajna*, they argued. Sribatscha Panda, criticising the *shradha* custom then prevalent in the Hindu society said that. The society lost more than gaining anything by following the ritual of *Shraddha. Pinda* or offering was required in that and for the offering, a man had to marry several times. The number of child-widows increased as a result of people marrying in the old age, or they adopted sons who wasted away the hard-earned property.³⁶

In a bitter criticism of the Brahmanism in the Oriya Hindu society, Sribatscha Panda further remarked.

These illeterate Pandits called Brahmans have harmed the country as well as Orissa. They are humiliated at every step as a result of their evil deeds. Still, they do not understand things. I, pray to God that these Brahmans should gather true education and they should behave like true Brahmans after being properly educated.³⁷

The Arya Samajist Kuntala Kumari Sabat had exposed the greed and cruelty of the Brahmans in the name of some social rules. To free the common people from, the torture of the Brahmans and to remove the blind beliefs from their minds, the Orissa Arya Samaj has done a lot of a work.³⁸ The editorial of *Arya Patrika* gives a version of the evils perpetuated by Brahmans in the name of religion.

You will find all oppressions, evil deeds, pretension, betrayal, cheating etc. in the Brahman society, especially

in the Vedic Brahman society. Without practising Brahmacharya, they go on begging. Being angry they curse people, always resort to lies to feed their stomachs make people afraid of ghosts and devils, betray people in the name of priesthood, prepare horoscopes in the name of astrology and increase the pain and suffering of the people, they get married to child-wives, the old Brahmans also get married and keep their wives like widows from their childhood till they die. They treat their own wives less than widows. Instead of providing them freedom and education, they deprive them of human duties and rights. These people are the head of all castes, what knowledge, special knowledge or ideals can be learn from them ?³⁹

This was the extent to which the Arya Samaj in Orissa went to demolish the Brahman hierarchy in the then Hindu Society. The clash was imminent, but the Arya Samaj with their advocacy of a liberal society free from prejudices and evils triumphed and paved the way for a more advanced caste-free society to grow up later on.

The Arya Samajis were opposed to anything that was not decent and good in the society. They, therefore, criticised eroticism in literature and temple architecture. They vehemently expressed their displeasure over the nude erotic stone images of the gods and goddesses on the walls of the temple approved

by Hinduism. The Arya Samaj of Orissa went to the extent of denigrating the vulgarity of even the temple of Lord Jagannath. Arya journal says that the temple of Lord Jagannath was a prodigious display of vulgarity. The images on the walls of the temple are the very incarnations of vulgarity.⁴⁰ Even they could not approve of the tradition of 'Devadasi' and wrote against it. Sribatscha Panda in his book '*Sanskara*' had expressed his surprise, how the Hindus with a taste for decency bore with such obscenity in the name of religion.⁴¹ Thus the Arya Samaj pleaded for a decent and civilised society where there is no place for vulgarity and obscenity.

Orissa was famous for its long coastline. At one time maritime activities in Orissa was at its peak with *sadhabas* going over-seas countries and thus establishing a cultural link with those countries. But it faded in course of time and in the nineteenth century, many people from Orissa went to Rangoon to work as coolies. The people had to go by sea and thus they were treated as outcastes, when they returned and had to pay a fine and other kinds of punishment in order to go back to their own caste. In Puri, at the meetings of the learned pandits to propose restrictions on cooking and eating while going abroad, Chintamani Shastri severely criticised travel by sea and said that in the past the Indians were sailing to foreign countries, but never tried to keep any sort of relation in matters of cooking and eating with foreigners. The present Hindus had lost their castes by not following the old traditions.⁴²

The prominent Arya Samajists in Orissa criticised such evil practices. Sribatscha Panda remarked :

Perhaps, stomach is the holiest place for the Hindus and the organisers of the Hindu society in the past were more focussed in filling the stomach. Eating was the chief purpose of their life. Moreover, the process of cooling was the only way to salvation.⁴³

He further said :

Like dogs guarding the piles of grass, the unworthy descendants of the Brahmans placed the Vedas in a closed bag inside the house. Being deprived of learning from the Vedas, they turned from the Vedas, they turned from ignorant to more ignorant and now they have lost all knowledge. Travelling to foreign countries was banned. Sailing was stopped, commerce came to a stand still. The people going to England to gather knowledge and for trade lost their social rights. The foreigners amassed wealth by coming to Utkal and India by doing business here.⁴⁴

The Arya Samaj followers supported travel to foreign countries and gathered public opinion citing references to the Vedas. Because of their consistent effort, the taboo to foreign travel finally was removed and now-a-days lots of people move abroad without any kind of inhibition.

One of the most important social works done by the Arya Samaj was their agitation to provide freedom and equality to women in the society. In the

name of tradition, the women were treated like maidservants and sometimes their condition was worse than the domestic animals. They were confined to houses and were even deprived of the warm sunlight, free air and pure water. They were not allowed to go out because of the fear that they they would be defiled and would lose their virtue by coming into contact with male members other than her husband.⁴⁵ Thus they were treated as objects of pleasure. At this critical moment, when women were tortured, humiliated, exploited and raped by men in a male-dominated society, the Arya Samaj is of Orissa had accepted a revolutionary role. They had realised that the degradation of the society was chiefly due to the humiliating status provided to women in the society. The Arya Samajists took up the cudgels against the orthodox, superstitious society not allowing freedom to women. They cited *slokas* from the Vedas explaining to the people, how women were placed high and were treated respectfully in the ancient time. They mentioned the names of Gargi, Maitri and others.⁴⁶

Again, it was Sribatscha Panda who led the campaign for freedom of women on behalf of Arya Samaj in Orissa. He was pained to find women accepting slavery because of their helplessness. He wanted every woman to learn the Vedas and thus become free from ignorance and blind beliefs. He even urged that girls should be employed in religious work like the boys. He quoted the Rig Vedas in which a woman has been depicted as a girl, a young woman, wife and then mother. He also cited the example of Kaikai of the Ramayan, who had helped Dasharatha, king of Ayodhaya in the battle. He

tried his best to teach grammar, religion, Ayurveda, science and mathematics to girls wherever it was possible. The Arya journals pleaded that the women should be provided with freedom, and they should not be subservient to men. She should hold respectable positions in all conditions. The Arya Samaj had opened a number of Kanyashrams to provide education to women.⁴⁷

The slavery of women was best signified through the purdah system, inherited from the maghuls, who treated women as objects of pleasure. The Arya Samajists of Orissa opposed this evil practice and carried on agitation to root out this evil. In the third convention of the Utkal Arya Samaj at Tanarada of Ganjam, in 1928, comprehensive discussion was made to gather public opinion against this custom of purdah. Sribatscha Panda was of the opinion that segregating women from men with the system of purdah had led to moral degradation on the part of men.⁴⁸ In fact By hiding woman under the purdah, and depriving man and woman to meet and talk to each other, the resultant temporary meetings always created a mental perversion. For that the moral fabric of the society was polluted.⁴⁹

In this regard, an interesting incident deserves to be mentioned. The visit of great woman leader Kuntala Kumari Sabat to Berhampur to preside over the *Madhu-Pyari* conference being organised by Sanskar and Seva Sangh of Berhampur had created enthusiasm among the women who had come to attend the meeting. Sabat's speech against the purdah system had a great impact on the women, some of whom were princesses and daughters-in-law belonging to the royal families.⁵⁰

One of the major means to provide freedom and equality to women in the society was to make them educated. Both in Orissa and India, female education was not given any kind of consideration. It was believed that if the girls were educated they would not obey their elders, would show their displeasure towards the customs of the society and would not attend domestic duties. Besides this, there was a blind belief that the educated girls would turn into widows. But the main reason for the lack of women education was that many people of the country were so poor that they were unable to provide education to their sons. A girl's education was a luxury.⁵¹ As a result the female education was moving in a low pace.

Summing up the whole situation then J.K. Samal says :

A great portion of the people were conservative. They did not like the girls should go out and come into contact with boys, teachers or any other resident. Similarly the education of their female children was a matter of great indifference to a large portion of parents and guardians. They usually did not take the same amount of care and interest in the education of their female wards as they did in that of boys. Besides, the system of early marriage presented an almost insurmountable barrier to education beyond the primary stage. Finally, the scarcity of educated female teachers and want of adequate state aid and aid from other public funds hindered the smooth progress of female education.⁵²

Of course the Christian missionaries were the first to take steps in this regard. They opened schools to provide female education. For the spread of female education in Orissa in the beginning stage, the contributions of Madhu Sudan Das, Reba Roy, Krishna Prasad Chowdhury, Dharendra Nath Chowdhury, Sribatscha Panda, Pareswar Mohanty, Rudra Narayan Sarangi, Biswanath Kar and Salibala Das were memorable. A census study shows that by 1879, there were twenty two girls school in Orissa with a strength of six hundred and eighty-three students. Nirmalabala Nayak gets the credit of being the first lady graduate degree holder of Orissa.⁵³

When Oriyas were completely indifferent to female education, Sribatscha Panda had realised that social development was only possible through female education. In whichever place he was posted as a government official, he tried to open school for the girls. He set up such a school at *Purusottampur* of Ganjam. Not caring for the public opinion against him he also established girls schools at Bellguntha, Aska, Dighpahandi and Mandar. Initially he had to pay the expenses for the running of the schools and even paid salary of Rs.10/- to the appointed teachers. To attract girls for education, he offered them sweets, toys and other things. Then the collector visited the schools and gave his consent to to make the schools permanent and bear the expenditure of the schools.⁵⁴

Sri Panda went to the extent of believing that the girls like boys should learn the Vedas and wear *Yajana Pabita* (the sacred thread) and also practise brahmacharya. He was unable to fulfill his dreams during his life time. But

after his death, it was Swami Brahmananda Saraswati who was instrumental in setting up the first Kanya Gurukul and the fifth in India in July, 1970. Even today, from the backyard of this Gurukul, placed in a mango grove, each morning and evening, the sweet recitation of the Veda *mantras* is heard.⁵⁵

The contribution of Arya Samaj in removing the social evil of child marriage is praise-worthy. Child-marriage was a common practice in the nineteenth century society and it was thought that the most appropriate marriageable age of the girls, was before the age of ten and in case of boys, it was less than twelve. An unmarried girl crossing the age of ten was a moral liability to the parents.⁵⁶

Being influenced by Swami Dayananda's ideals, it was Sribatscha Panda, who protested against such evil practice. He explained that child-marriage destroys the physical strength of the society. Sexual relation at an immatured stage is harmful to both body and mind. He argued that such practice had never been accepted by the Vedas.⁵⁷ He expressed his displeasure over the so-called learned people's attitude to this and urged the government to stop this practice by formulating a law.

The famous Arya Samajists had passed Sarada Marriage Act to stop child-marriage in the central assembly. Sribatscha Panda supported this move of Harbilas Sarada. He, along with other Arya Samajists of Orissa tried his best to implement Sarada Act in Orissa. Kuntala Kumari Sabat had also raised her voice against child-marriage in many of her writings. Birakishore Behera had also condemned such practice in his writings. Because of the non-stopping

efforts of the above-mentioned noble men, the government has finally abolished child-marriage by a legislation which makes child-marriage a punishable offence.⁵⁸

Another evil from which the Hindu society suffered in the pre-independence period was the humiliating condition of the widows at a tender age. The condition of the widow was the most pitiable in a Hindu family. She was not allowed to take part in any auspicious activity in the family. Her life was a hellish experience and she had to experience death in life.⁵⁹

For the re-marriage of the widows, the Arya Samajists of India have shed their tears and blood. Though widow-marriage had been accepted as an act in 1856 by the effort of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, it became effective only when Arya Samaj made people aware of the utility of this act.⁶⁰ In the beginning of the twentieth century, Sribatscha Panda made an all-out effort for widow-marriage. Pandit Harihar Sadasya and Binayak Mohapatra etc rendered all possible help to him in this matter. Sri Panda had solemnised the marriage of a Brahman child-widow when he was working as sub-register at Parbatipur in 1904. Moreover, he also got Sri Artatrana Mohapatra of SurangiGarh of Ganjam district married to a child-widow named Baidehi. He donated a plot of land costing five hundred rupees to the newly-weds and also spent one hundred rupees for them. For his bold step, he incurred the anger of the orthodox Brahmans. Even his life was at stake.⁶¹

In the year 1902, while working as sub-register at Rasulkonda, he along with his friends Pandit Harihar Dash, Harihar Tripathy, Binayak Mohapatra

etc, started the reformative movement of widow-marriage. He wrote a long essay in support of it and got it published through Biswanath Kar at Cuttack and sent copies of it to the respectable people of the state seeking their support in the noble cause. But unfortunately, there was neither help nor encouragement from anyone.⁶²

That did not deter Sri Panda from his mission. He himself conducted many such marriages and sensible people began to support him. His initiative in this regard also inspired other social reformers. A reformer named Bairagi Mishra of Gunupur, a village belonging to Cuttack district also conducted a lot of such marriages of child-widows terming them as *bibaras*.

In 1921, on behalf of Lahore Arya Pradeshik Sabha, an ashram for widows had opened at Cuttack with four inmates. Sribatscha Panda had also set up such an ashram at LanchiPalli. He used to donate money for the maintenance of such ashramas all over Orissa. With near abolition of child marriage, the problem of child-widows does not pose a big problem. With the society accepting the modern trend the widows do not any more suffer from an inferior social status. Even the society has become liberal enough to sanction widow-marriages.⁶³

In the ancient India, Gandharba marriage was valid in Aryabarta. The Vedas firmly believed that marriage should be performed according to the choice of the bridegroom and bride. Many reformers like Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, Jitendra Mohan Sengupta and Devdas Gandhi set the example by marrying girls from other castes in Gandharba way. Orissa was not left

behind in this regard. Krupasindhu Mishra, Sharat Chandra Mukharjee, Naba Krishna Chowdhury and Alekh Prasad Das etc. showed their courage by accepting inter caste marriages.⁶⁴

The Arya Samajists of Orissa like Sribatscha Panda, Dr. Laxminarayan Sahoo, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Birakishore Behera and Bimaleswar Nanda etc. made this agitation more effective. They tried to convince the parents when they were unwilling to approve of such couples. By doing so, they not only tried to obliterate the caste-barrier, but also made the society more liberal, more dynamic and more comprehensive than it was in the past.⁷⁴

‘Suddhi’ was an integral part of Hindu traditionalism. Individuals breaking caste taboos knowingly or unknowingly were restored to their castes by undergoing one or more rituals.⁶⁶ Rishi Dayananda Saraswati completely altered the meaning of Suddhi by making it a movement in which the converted Christians were again taken back to Hindu fold.⁶⁷ The movement aimed at preventing rapidly diminishing Hindu population; the majority of people accepting Islam or Christianity either because of the stepmotherly attitude of the higher caste Hindus to them or were influenced and pressurised by the Muslim ruling class or the Christian missionaries.⁶⁸ Orissa was also no exception to it. Between 1842 to 1845, a number of missionaries like Kampton, Mrs and Mr. Keri, Mrs. and Mr. Sutton and a few others had started a conversion campaign resulting in a large-scale conversion.⁶⁹

The Arya Samaj made an all out effort to re-convert the newly-turned Christians back into Hindu religion. In fact Dr. Kuntala Kumari Sabat was the

first Oriya Christian lady to be brought back to Hindu fold by Krishna Prasad Brahmachari in a Shuddhi ceremony. It was done in Delhi on July 29, 1928.⁷⁰

I have discussed earlier in this chapter how Dr. Harekrushna Mohatab, the then Governor of Bombay suggested Brahmananda Saraswati to go to tribal-dominated parts of Orissa to stop large-scale conversion of Hindus into Christianity by Christian missionaries. In fact, on October 17, 1966, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati had brought back 801 tribals to the Hindu religion through a *shuddhi* ceremony. Further, on November 28 of the same year, he reconverted 24 men and women of six Christian families to Hinduism. A rough estimate shows that, within a span of less than four years, Swamiji could bring back about 20,000 Christians to Hindu fold through Shuddhi functions. The shuddhi work of Swami Brahmananda covered the districts of Sundergarh, Phulbani and Kalahandi.⁷¹

The dominating attitude of the missionaries was not palatable to Brahmananda and his friends. The result was communal tensions between the Arya Samaj and the missionaries. Lungai, a small place near the industrial town of Rourkela of Sundergarh district came to limelight, when police had to intervene to keep peace in the locality. The subject of Lungi reached the Indian parliament and a committee of delegates under the leadership of the tribal leader Nirmal Munda had met the union home minister to apprise him of the situation. Thus the missionary activities could be prevented in an effective way.⁷²

In the year 1970, many people were attracted by the selfless work of Swamiji at Raikia of Phulbani. The conversion to Christianity by the

missionaries was at a high rate as people accepted Christianity because they availed free education and free treatment. But Swami Brahmananda brought back about 1300 Christians to Hinduism there. He was assisted by Swami Dhabaleswar Banaprasthi, Dr. Umesh Patri etc. in this noble work. From 1954-1985, Swamiji brought back up 27, 488 tribals to Hindu religion.⁷³

Swamiji's illness slowed down the shuddhi movement for a while. At this critical moment in 1981, Swami Dharmananda Saraswati, the recognised president Pradeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha took up the work left by Swami Brahmananda and went on working unceasingly for the movement. The effort of Swami Dharmananda and the teachers of Gurukul at Amsena yielded definite results. On June 6, 1983, more than 1,000 men and women were reconverted to Hinduism through large shuddhi ceremony held at Kumudini of Bolangir. To thwart the attempt of the aim of the missionaries to convert lakshs of Hindu into Christianity on the eve of Pope Paul's arrival in India on February 1, 1986, Swami Dharmananda had organised a large gathering at Gurukula, Amsena in which many learned sadhus and sanyasis of Arya Samaj were present. The president of Sarvadeshik Sabha, Lala Ram Gopal Salwali had been invited to this function.

Swami Dharmananda has been carrying on the 'Shuddhi' activities since 1983 and has been able to bring back sixty to seventy thousand tribal people to Hinduism. To make the movement more effective, he has launched Dharma Rakshya Abhiyan (The Agitation for Religious Protection), and about 110 Arya Samaj follwers are now active in the tribal districts of Orissa in this work

of re-conversion. The Hindu society of Orissa is really indebted to Swamiji for his contribution in this respect. Apart from the activities mentioned above, all big or small Arya Samajs functioning in different parts of Orissa organise shuddhi ceremonies from time to time to save Hinduism against the attack of Christianity and Islam.⁸²

Another commendable work, Arya Samaj had taken up was the protection of the cows. Insisting on a vegetarian diet and the importance of milk-products in such diet, the Arya Samajists made efforts for the protection of the cows. Sribatscha Panda was the first man of Orissa, who thought along this line, and made his point by saying that, India being an agricultural country should take care of its cow property.

Sri Panda's dream of building a Goshala (shed for cows) finally turned into a reality when the Goshala was completed in 1925, with Sri Gobinda Panda as its first manager. Sri Panda handed over the charge of the Goshala by establishing Goraksharma-managing Trust with five members in it.⁷⁵ Later, abiding by the request of this trust and by the encouragement of Sri Ayodhya Nath Khosla, Swami Brahmandanda Sarawati set up a Goshala at the Ashram of Ved Vyas in 1971. It had started with fifty cows and by 1997, it had 215 cows in it. The Goshalas aimed at not only the protection and the growth of population of cows, but also nursing old, diseased population of cows. These Goshalas are supervised by the Goshala Samiti, now comprising of nine hundred and eighty members. From 1992, an annual, journal named Godhuli has been coming out every Gopasthami day of the year which not only mentions

the annual income and expenditure of the goshalas, but also contains some valuable essays to facilitate the growth of cattle property in Orissa.⁷⁶ The Arya Samaj's another cattle-pen was running in the campus of Gurukula Amasena founded by Swami Dharmananda Saraswati, which was also dedicated to the protection and betterment of cattle-pen population in Orissa.⁷⁷

One of the most important mass-beneficial programmes undertaken by the Arya Samaj movement was its DAV education institutions rendering invaluable service to millions of young Indians in quest of higher learning. After the demise of Swami, in order to achieve a harmonious blending of eastern philosophy and the western science in Indian educational system, Dayananda Anglovedic College Trust and Management Society was founded in 1885, a landmark year in history of Indian Renaissance. Soon, the network of the organisation spread with six hundred institutions working all over India by the next thirty years.⁷⁸

The country-wide DAV movement had a visible impact on Orissa, in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Dr. Ayodhyanath Khosla, the ex-governor of Orissa, an eminent engineer himself, founded D.A.V. Trust and through it he tried to realise his dream of setting up both general as well as technical colleges in different parts of Orissa. He got the help of Swami Brahmananda in materialising his dream. Heeding the advice of Swami Brahmananda, DAV Trust founded eight colleges at different places of the state like Koraput, Titilagarh etc. It was in accordance with the wish of Mrs. Susila Devi Khosla, the wife of Dr. Khosla, who had bequeathed all her

property would be spent for the educational development of women, especially of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and also the widows and the disabled. I mention below some of the prominent D.A.V. institutions working actively in Orissa.⁷⁹

Susila Devi Khosla D.A.V college, at Rourkela is the only womens' college imparting general education in Arts and Science level upto degree level. Susila Devi D.A.V. Girls' School, established in 1967, teaches school subjects in three languages; Hindi, English and Oriya. Susila Devi D.A.V. Polytechnic, Rourkela, set up in 1968, is engaged in offering vocational training to women in subjects like library science, short hand and telecommunication. The institution has helped a large number of students to find jobs after they have achieved their required qualifications.

D.A.V. College, Koraput, established in 1968, teaches Humanities, science and commerce upto degree level. The college has acquired prominence in providing high quality education inspite of being situated in a remote tribal district. D.A.V. college, Titilagarh, established in the same year, offers teachings in science, arts and commerce streams upto degree level and the majority of its students belong to Scheduled Castes and Tribes, who are a dominant population here.

D.A.V Schools located at Bhubaneswar have turned into a very prominent institutions since their inception in 1971, because of their quality education, discipline and care for the all-round development of its students. The Aeronautic D.A.V. Public School at Sunabeda established in 1968, catered

to the needs of the children of the officials working in Sunabeda's Mig factory, desirous of obtaining good education.⁸⁰ Apart from the institutions mentioned above D.A.V. institutions are working through out Orissa.

I mention below a complete list of such institutions.

1. DAV Public School, Unit-VIII, Nayapalli, BBSR-751012
2. DAV Public School, Chandrasekharpur, BBSR-751012
3. Primary unit, Khandagiri, BBSR-751031
4. DAV Public School, 699, Pokhariput, Old Town, BBSR-751002
5. DAV Public School, Sector-VI, Markat Nagar, CDA Bidanasi, Cuttack-753014
6. DAV Public School, Rajabagicha, Cuttack, 753009
7. DAV Public School, Srivihar, Tulsipur, Cuttack-753008
8. DAV Public School, Mahanadi Vihar, Cuttack- 7530014
9. DAV Public School, Gandhi Nagar, Berhampur-760001
10. DAV Public School, Water Works Road, Puri-752002
11. DAV Public School, Bhabanipara, Titilagarh- 767042
12. DAV Public School, Near Basanti Colony, Rourkela- 769012
13. DAV Public School, Jharsuguda- 768201
14. DAV Public School, Savarampur, Near Settlement Office, Balasore-756001
15. DAV Public School, PPL, PPL Township, Jagatsinghpur, P.754145

16. DAV Public School, OPGC. IB Valley Thermal Power Station, Banharpali, Jharsuguda- 768234
17. DAV Public School, MCL Ananda Vihar, Burla Sambalpur-768018
18. DAV Public School, MCL Jagannath Area, Ananta Vihar Colony, Dera, Dist- Angul- 759103
19. DAV Public School, MCL, Lakhanpur Area, Bandhbahal, Jharsuguda- 768234
20. DAV Public School, MCL Kalinga Area, Balanda, Angul-759116
21. DAV Public School, MCL, Basundhara, Sundargarh, 770076
22. DAV Public School, MCL, Hill Top Colony, Samaleswari, OCP, IB Valley Area, Brajaraj Nagar, Jharsuguda-768216
23. DAV Public School, MCL central workshop, Balanda, Angul, 759116
24. DAV Public School, NTPC, TTPS, Talcher, Angul, 759107
25. DAV Public School, Sakti Sugars Ltd. Sunapal Badambagarh, Cuttack- 754031 (12)

The D.A.V. organisation has also stood by the people of Orissa during calamities that had affected Orissa on many occasions. Their relief work during the floods, cyclones and other natural calamities have earned the praise of everyone.

The organisation has also distributed clothes to the needy and the poor during the winter every season. This type of social work was first of all started under the direct supervision of Sri N.D. Grover, vice-president. D.A.V.

College managing committee, who used to seek the help of other persons like Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, Sri S.K. Gupta, Dr. Nirmal Kumar, Dr. Umesh Patri, Sri Krishna Lal Agarwal, Sri Ratan Kumar Kejriwal, Sri Raj Kumar Arya, Sri L.R. Saini, H.L. Kapoor and S.C. Anand to implement these relief works.

The D.A.V. Schools and Colleges have indeed achieved tremendous success in producing a large number of educated youngmen, but also they have been able to enthuse these students to take up the responsibility of country's future. In fact, it is D.A.V. organisation which will keep the flag of Arya Samaj movement fly high in years to come.⁸¹

The Gurukula, an institution to train students for future is one of the most original, interesting, wonderful and stimulating institutions. The Arya Samaj is credited with a lead given to revive the Vedic tradition of the gurukula type of educational institutions which is regarded as the most original contribution of the Arya Samaj to the modern India education.⁸² Mahatma Munshi Ram, latter known as Swami Shradhananda, under took to give practical shape to underlying principles of Gurukula system of education by founding an educational institution at Kangri village near Haridwar in 1902. The institution represents a system of education, a sort of an education movement, which was in vogue in ancient India, continuing traditionally since thousands of years. That system is not invariably connected with the Arya Samaj, through Arya Samaj took an initiative to revive and propagate it.⁸³ After the establishment at Kangdi Gurukula, a number of other Gurukulas came into

existence in India, today now 65 Gurukulas are working all over India with 10,000 pupils in them.⁸⁴

In Orissa Pandit Harihar Dash was highly interested to found a Gurukula when Swami Dayananda Saraswati was alive. Harihar Dash meet Swamiji in Kolkatta in 1871, for this purpose and expressed his intention to establish a Gurukula at Puri of Orissa. Swami Dayananda assured him of financial aid of rupees ten lakhs for this Sanskrit Gurukula. He was told to go to Rajputana to receive the said amount. But unfortunately on his way, Pandit Harihar Dash went mad and was rescued half burnt from Kolkatta. Hence his dream remained unfulfilled.⁸⁵

Another outstanding Arya Samajist Sribatscha Panda developed a deep sense of hatred towards many short-comings in modern education. He tried to establish a Gurukula Ashram. But the more he worked for it the more financial difficulties he had to face along with the jealousy of his own men. Finally he was able to fulfill his dream by opening a school on the 10th May, 1943. Presently it is named at *Sribatsha Pathasala*. However then there was no hostel facilities. Latter when the school was taken over by government, his dream of Gurukula remained incomplete.⁸⁶

In 1960s, venerable Swami Brahmananda Saraswati after visiting Gurukulas in different parts of India decided to open such institutions in Orissa. Hunting for a suitable place, he selected Vedavyasa for the purpose. Vedavyasa, one of the famous holy places of Orissa, was the birth place of Maharshi Krushna Daipan Vedavyasa.⁸⁷

Maharshi Vedavyasa was living in the caves of the mountain and there he wrote great book *Brahma Sutra* and *Mahabharata*. So Swami Brahmananda Saraswati founded the first Gurukula in Orissa at this holy meeting place of the two rivers. The Christian missionaries were also trying for the spread of the religion there. To convince people they had opened many schools and educational institutes. But Arya Samaj entered into it with Gurukula to preach Arya Samaj ideas and as well as Vedic education. The credit goes to Swami Brahmananda Saraswati. Being inspired by the honest motive of advocate Sri Dhanjaya Mohanty and Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, the priest of Vedavyasa temple Late Gadadhar Dehuri donated ten acres land for the Gurukula Ashram. Initially a small cottage was built on this land called as Vedavyasa Ashram on the 9th day of the month of Kartika in 1954. In 1957 the foundation stone of Gurukula was laid by Dr. Harakrushna Mahatab, the then Governor of Bombay. Latter on 22th February 1960 Gurukula Vedavyasa was inaugurated by the great sage and Vedic scholar Swami Sivananda Tirtha with the co-operation of Swami Vivekananda Saraswati. Swami Shivananda Tirtha became the first chancellor of the Gurukula. Appreciating the work of Swamiji, Seth Sohanlal Dhungada donated rupees five hundred to Gurukala. In this way Gurukula Vedavyasa started with 25 Brahmacharies (pupils).⁸⁸

Initially this Gurukula followed the syllabus Mahavidyalaya Jhanjhar, Hariyana from 1936 to 1968. During this time the job of teaching was successfully pursued by wise scholars like Swami Shivananda Tirtha, Pandit

Deshpal Dixit, Pandit Omprakash Vyakarana Charya, Pandit Tribesh Pani, Pandit Nagendra Jha, Pandit Aditya Narayana Upadhya, Sri Subhasi Banaprasthi, Pandit Dayananda Vyakarana Charya, Pandit Dharmadeva Dixit etc. From 1968 the previous syllabus was changed and new syllabus was introduced, recommended by Utkal Sanskrit Samiti, Puri. Presently Gurukula Vedavyasa is imparting teachings on the basis of the syllabus recommended by Sri Jagannath Sanskrit University, Puri, a syllabus which equally emphasises, the western education as well as the ancient Vedic Gurukula system.⁸⁹ This Gurukula was registered as per Indian Societies Act during the chief-ministership of Sri Binayaka Acharya. It is also during the time of Sri Binayaka Acharya, Gurukula Vedavyasa got Government permission and the boarders of Gurukula received scholarships. Before that this Gurukula was run on the basis of Panini Astadhyayee. After being permitted by the state Sanskrit Board, this Gurukula introduced new syllabus in its Sanskrit teaching institutions. Gurukula Vedavyasa was managing all the activities, but owing to growing work load separate departments were formed for smooth conduct of educational activities. A committee was formed in the name of Banabasi Vidya Sabha. This committee has its own by law and was registered as per 1960 Societies Registration Act in the year 1967. The main purpose of this committee is to lookafter education, health and other activities in tribal areas. Important persons like Pandit Dhukhiram Vedacharya, Pandit Bishikeshna Shastri, Pandit Devabrata, Pandit Devanarayana Pathak and Pandit Yogendra Jee Upadhyaya etc., acted as Acharya, Adhista and members of the committee. At present

this committee is supervising the departments like(1) Gurukula Vedic Ashram (2) Gurukula Vedavyasa Sanskrit Vidyalaya (3) Gurukula Vedavyasa Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya (4) Banabasi Sanskrutika Samity (5) Utkal Sahitya Sansthan (Publication Section) (6) Shanti Ashram Press (7) Gurukula Magazine section (8) Gurukula Vedavyasa Gosala (9) Veda Bhawan (10) Dayananda Sishu Bhawan (11) Brahmananda Vedic Pustakalaya etc.⁹⁰

There is hostel facility in Gurukula Vedavyasa in which the students are being accommodated without any caste and colour discrimination. The boarders in Gurukula Vedavyasa don't make any payment for their food, cloth and accommodations Wise and efficient wardens are incharge of these hostels. There is provision for teaching up to Madhyama in Gurukula but now it is imparting teaching up to the level of Shastri (+3). Gurukula Vedavyasa has its own publishing house and this is called *Utkal Vedic Sahitya Sansthan*. It has broughtout useful books like *Sanskar Vidhi*, *Upanishad*, *Kenoponishada*, *Kothaponishada* etc. in Oriya and three monthly magazines. One of them is *Banabasi Sandesh* in Oriya, edited by Pandit Desabandhu Vidya Vachaspati and another is *Ashram Jyoti* in Oriya edited by Sri Sachindra Swain and the third in sanskrit *Utkaladoya* a fortnightly magazine edited by Pandit Digambar Mohapatra. Another magazine also appeared in English in the name of *The Voice Vedic Culture*. The Gurukula libraries have a collection of more than four thousand books on Vedic literature. There is also an orphanage Dayananda Sishu Bhawan to accomodate the helpless and poor orphans and to educate them properly. This Sishu Bhawan was inangurated on August 21, 1976 by the then chief-minister of Orissa Srimati Nandini

Sathapathy. More than one hundred children are now staying in this orphanage.⁹¹

In order to produce efficient educators of Arya curriculum and able propagator in Orissa, Swami Brahmananda provided scholarships to a big number of learners and sent them to prominent Gurukula educational institutions of Northern India like Sadhana Ashram, Jamuna Nagar (Hariyana), Brahma Mahavidyalaya, (Hisar) Gurukula, (Jhanjar) Arya Gurukula (UP), Gurukula Vidyapitha (Hariyana), Gurukula Chittorgarh (Rajsthan), Gurukula Kirthala (Meerut), Gurukula Mohavidyalaya Jawalapur (UP), Prabhat Ashram, Meerut, Kanya Gurukula, etc. Many of them are now imparting teaching in Orissa after successful completion on of their studies.

An Ayurvedic pharmacy is also running in Gurukula Vedavyasa on behalf of Vedavyasa Vedic Ashram. This Gurukula Ashram is the centre of Vedic religion and the activities of Arya Samaj in Orissa. This is also playing important role in rescuing the ignorant tribals who are ready too quit their religion for the sake of money or other easy profits. During 1954 to 1985, 27.488 made Christians have returned to own religion through proper Sudhi rituals. In addition, it encourages sanskars and international marriages. More than 5000 such marriages have been conducted so far. Being pleased with the activities of Swamiji the Calcutta Arya Samaj presented Swamiji a jeep for his convience.⁹²

Gurukula Amasena is another famous Gurukula established and run by Arya Samaj in Orissa. It is located at Khariar Road of Kalahandi district which is the most underdeveloped and drought-ridden district of Orissa. It is

60 k.m. away from Raipur, now the capital of Chhatisgarh. Its campus is just two k.m. away from the Khariar Railway Station. This Gurukula was founded by Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, later it was restored by Swami Dharmananda Saraswati on 7 March, 1968. At that time, Swami Divyananda Saraswati was the vice-president of Madhya Pradesh and Bidharva Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. With his encouragement, Sri Devanarayan Saha started a Hindu school at Amasena. This school in the course of time changed into a Gurukula and the man behind transition was Swamiji. Since then Dharmananda Saraswati has been working as an Acharya of this Gurukula and is sincerely trying to look after the development Sri Yogendra kumar Vyakarana charya was appointed as the first assistant and later Akhilesh Vyakarna charya and Agnimitra Vyakarana charya joined him.

In addition to teaching they are also discharging their roles in management of this Gurukula. Sri Bamadeva Arya is the principal of this Gurukula, a great scholar in Sanskrit. A registered society is managing Gurukula Amasena, the name of which is Paschima Bharatiya Bidya Sabha. The basic objectives and behind the aims of objective of the Gurukula as decided by managing committee are given below :-

1. To teach the Veda to the local boys in the ancient Gurukula system and to develop the sense of character in them and an urge to sacrifice life for the cause of religion.

2. To make them self-reliant through vocational education in addition to develop the spiritual intellectual and physical talents in them.

3. To create ideal teachers, doctors, scholars and qualified citizens of Vedic religions.

4. To propagate and protect Indian culture in under developed tribal belts.

5. To publish, advertise ancient scriptures and literatures.

Gurukula Amasena is the first Gurukula to follow the teaching methods recommended by Maharshi Dayananda Saraswati in South-Eastern region of India. The disciples don't pay any dues for their education or accommodation. They only pay Rs. 40/- per month towards their fooding. The facility of lodging and boarding is equal for all. This students of Gurukula follow a strict routine life. Majority of the families are socially and economically backward in the border areas of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. It is matter of big achievement that children from these tribal families are learning Sanskrit and are successfully passing the examinations like Shastree (+3) Acharya (M.A) to find their place among the scholars of the country. Gurukula Amasena takes a credit for it.

The total assets of Gurukula Amasena including land and buildings worth around Rs. 10,000,00. The landed properties had been acquired in terms of donation by Sri Nathuram Sahu; Icharam Sahu from Amasena and Lilabati Devi from Delhi. Government aid has enabled the construction of five rooms (20¹ x 15¹) size for the hostel. The kitchen has been built from the public donation. The annual expenses of this Gurukula is around Rs.3,00,000 from which the state government bears Rs. 40,000/- through grant in aid. The

Gurukula itself raises fund for the rest through agricultural activities like diary, printing and publication, selling of books and running flour mills.

There is also a library in Gurukula Amasena which has a big collection of The Veda, Vedanta, Upanishads and Indian classic like the Ramayana and the Mohabharata etc. The number of books in the library is more than three thousand. It also has collection of ancient scriptures of inscription in metal plates. There is also a publishing house in the name of Utkal Sahitya Sansthan for the spread of Vedic religion in Oriya. It has brought out innumerable books in Oriya and Hindi. A monthly magazine under the title *Kulabhoomi* is appearing Hindi and Oriya from this publishing house. This Gurukula has a good relation with Madhyayananda Arsha Vidyapitha, Jhanjar and it follows the syllabus designed there. The Brahmacharis of this Gurukula appear examinations like Prathana, Madhyama, Shastree and Acharya conducted by Arsha Vidyapitha and get honours like Sastree, Vyakaranacharya etc. This Gurukula has already completed 25 years and produced many graduates who are now working in different wings of the Arya Samaj for the spread of Vedic religion.

It is needless to say that the Gurukula Amasena is performing praise worthy activities in a backward district and more than 150 Brahmacharies of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Moharastra are getting education here. The importance of Gurukula Amasena has much increased through its multifarious activities like running dairy-farm, preparing Ayurvedic medicines, organising yoga club, publishing unit and many others. The influence of Gurukula Amasena has minimized the prevalent superstitions like animal sacrifice

etc. Even the youngsters from the tribal families are getting ample scope for learning Sanskrit, Hindi, Veda and Upanishads through it. To sum up, Gurukula Amasena is illuminating the border regions of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh with the light of knowledge and wisdom.⁹³

After the establishment of Gurukula Vedavyasa, Gurukula and Amsena Gurukula, a number of other Gurukulas came into existence in the province of Orissa. These Gurukulas were established in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Pandit Dhaneswar Behera mentions the names of the following Gurukulas:

1. Topobana Gurukula, Chachedi (Phulabani)
2. Arsha Kanya Gurukula, G. Udaygiri (Phulbani)
3. Arya Kanya Gurukula, Gayatri Bihar (Phulabani)
4. Gurukula Nrusinghanath, (Koraput)
5. Manurbhaba Gurukula Ashram, Bhusma (Sundergarh)
6. Mohapurusha Sanskrit Gurukula, (Bhadrak)
7. Gurukula Bhojpur, (Sundergarh)
8. Dayananda Kanya Ashram, Balia (Kendrapara)

Several prominent leaders have played a significant role in popularising the Gurukula movements in Orissa, especially Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, Swami Sivananda Tirtha (the first Kulapati of Gurukula Vedavyasa) Utkal Keshari Dr. Harekrushna Mahatab, Sashi Bhusan Panigrahi, Bandhuras Nanda,

Chandra Singh, Dhanajaya Mohanty, Somanath Panda, Biswanath Dsah (ex-governor of UP) Dr. Ayodhya Prasad Khosla (ex-governor of Orissa). Swami Pranabananda Saraswati, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Swami Dharmanadna Saraswati, Dr. Devabrata, Susil Singhal, Pandit Sadasiva Sharma (Calcutta Arya Samaj) Dinabandhu Behera, Banchanidhi Pattnaik, Basudeva Tripathi, Khetravasi Panda, Kasinath Sabat, Swami Indraves, Swami Atmananda Banprasthi, Sri Subash Shastree etc, have contributed a lot to popularise this movement in Orissa.⁹⁴

One of the worthy sons of Orissa and a great patriot, an established critic and a man of literature, late Sribatsha Panda dedicated his life to bring about enlightenment in the Oriya society driving away the superstitions and evil practices by introducing and spreading women education. He was equally committed to restoration of the ancient Aryan culture.

After his death, a Brahmacharya Ashram was founded at Sribatsha Gorakshaya Ashram with the efforts the president of the Trust Board Late Dinabandhu Behera, Secretary Sri Banchanidhi Pattnaik, Member Sri Kshetrabasi Panda and Sri Kasinath Sabat etc. But this institution did not last long due to lack of co-operation. A middle English school was established in 1964 but it could not last long. The founder of the Gurukula Vedavyasa and a prominent Arya Samaji, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati took over charge of Sribatsha Gorakshaya Ashram in March 1970, and founded a school to revive Aryan culture and traditions. It is a matter of great fortune that Swami Brahmananda Saraswati with his sincere efforts and the selfless support of

well-wishers was able to establish the first Arya Kanya Gurukula in Orissa at Tanarada, on July, 1970.

The Kanya Gurukula was inaugurated by the then chief-minister of Orissa Late Biswanath Dash and started with ten number of Brahmacharinies (girls students). Many dignitaries and lovers of learning contributed for its development. Hansaraj Chhada donated Rs. 25,000 for the construction of guest house and Sri Jagadish Budharaj of Bhubaneswar donated Rs.30,000/- for the hostel building. In addition, yajnasala was constructed by Smt. Raghuveer Dayal Gupta and Satree Arya Samaj, Shaktinagar, New Delhi also rendered financial assistance.

The main aim and objectives of the Kanya Gurukula was to protect the dying Indian Aryan culture as well as make women free from superstitions. The basis features of these Gurukulas are given below:-

1. This is a residential school based on Brahmachaya Ashram method.
2. The girl students are looked after to develop spiritual thinking and to participate in regular activities like evening, morning prayers and Agnihotras (Havana). Besides they are made to participate in scriptural discussions and often given discourses on immorality.
3. For physical development they are made to practise yoga, exercise, gardening, games and others activities.
4. They are also taught household duties like cooking, house management, decorations, food preservations, sanitation and making artistic things.

5. They are also provided with vocational education with the help of government organisation to make them self-dependent.

6. This institution cares for humanity and sees no difference between caste, creed, colour and religion.

7. It emphasises on the elements like simple living, good behaviour and productive work.

A managing committee was formed with eleven members. It has been working as a fully aided educational institute since the days of its foundation. It has become possible because of the kind recommendation the ministers of education and youth welfare, government of Orissa.

The medium of the teachings of the Kanya Gurukula was Oriya. There is provision for teachings from class six to ten. In addition to the syllabus prescribed by the Secondary Board of Orissa, it gives importance to the teaching of Vedic matters as far as possible. The teaching of Hindi and Sanskrit is compulsory.

The curriculum of this Kanya Gurukulas is designed for the allround development of the girl students. It has been encouraging the students to participate in state level competitions. This Gurukula is one among the few established institutions dedicated to the cause of women education of Orissa. Many parents are taking interests in admitting their daughters in this Gurukula for its level of studies, undisturbed atmosphere, proper management and emphasis on character building. Women education is always free. However

the annual expenses of this Gurukula is around rupees three lakh. It receives government help in terms of aid. The rest is collected by Swamiji from public as donations- In the state of Orissa this institute is doing praise worthy work for the spread of education and particularly among the girls. This is the fifth kanya Gurukula for girls in India and first in Orissa.⁹⁵

Another similar institution in the name of Arya Kanya Gurukula Amasena is running at Khariar Raod in the district of Kalahandi. It is a sister institution founded by Swami Dharmananda Saraswati in 1982. This is also playing an important role to educate and train girls for all practical purpose in addition to their studies. Apart from the prescribed course, the girls learn the Veda, the Upanishads and etc. in this Kanya Gurukula. It has a student strength 150 now. Five trained ladies are managing this school after having accepted brahmacharya.⁹⁶

The primary object of Arya Samaj is to do good to the whole world and promote physical, spiritual and social progress of all humans beings.⁹⁷ The Arya Samaj possesses no mean record of social service. Many orphanages and widow homes stand to its credit, many a famine, many an earthquake, many flood has found the Arya Samaj busy in rehabilitating the helpless wreck. "The misery of the whole world requires the service of whole humanity and what we are depicting to-day is the social ideal, not the actual achievements of this society or that. The achievement is only an infinitesimal part of what remains to be done."⁹⁸

Orissa is state of perennial natural calamities and had often been devastated by cyclones, floods, and droughts. It seems as if the God of nature is revengeful on the people of Orissa. Despite their sincere efforts, the people of this state don't get harvest to their expectations; scarcity of rain cause nightmarish drought situation in the western part of the state when the coastal belts are, frequently swept away by high floods. Storms and tornados are not unexpected in this state. For the people of the state, confronting natural calamities is an integral part of their existence. So this state was never able to compete with progressive states economically. Orissa has been frequently victimized by such destructive forces of nature. The geographical diversion in the state has also laid to unmanageable and unbearable situations time and again.

The Arya Samaj in Orissa, Utkal Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and International Aryan League have always played a very vital and significant role in bringing relief to the hopeless people during the times of such natural calamities- The Arya Samaj has always contributed significantly at the times of real need. Be it cyclones or the horrifying famines the Arya Samaj is always ready in discharging its social and spiritual responsibilities through a good number of philanthropic activities.

Utkal Anatha Ashram was eastablished on November 5, 1921, on behalf of Lahore Arya Pradesika Pratinidhi Sabha of Punjab. The inmates of this orphanage were all the victims of famine from Chandabali area. Two hundred orphans were accomodated in the orphanage. The Anatha Ashram at that

time was situated at Buxi Bazar of Cuttack just in front of Telegram office. The Ashram house was donated by Sri Ramachandra Dwarika Das.⁹⁹

This orphanage was meant for the orphans whether boys and girls below sixteen. For the management of this orphanage a committee was constituted and the following persons took over their responsibilities :-

- President - Kalpataru Das
- Vice-President - Laxinarayan Marawari
- Secretary - i. Sri Bichitrananda Das
ii. Pandit Mehetasabala
iii. Gangabakshi Marawari
- Treasurer - Sri Sundar Das
- Manager - Syamasundar Sahoo
- Editor - Hakim Abdul Karim.¹⁰⁰

Vedic hymns, Sandhya etc were being taught and spinning and weaving were also the part of common activities here. Soon after the independence it became difficult to feed and clothe the adult members let alone take care of their children. Arya Sanyasi Swami Brahmananda Saraswati had clearly foreseen the pitiable conditions of poverty-stricken people in Sundergarh, Phulabani, Kalahandi and Koraput in Orissa. So he founded the "Dayananda Sisu Bhavan" in the campus of Gurukula Vedavyasa in 1962 to restore laughter in the faces of hungry and orphaned children. He also took over the grave responsibilities of making them self-reliant and disciplined.¹⁰¹ By the 1987

the number of orphans in this Sisu Bhavan was more than one hundred and after 1987 the number increased by fifty. The ex-chief minister of Orissa Sri Nilamani Routray visited this Dayananda Sisu Bhavan on October 11, 1977 and remarked:

The way in which this organisation is training and educating neglected children is really appreciable. As a result of the selfless efforts and inspirations of late Swami Brahmananda Saraswati this institution has become acceptable to the societies. The recitation of Veda hymn by small children fascinated and greatly pleased me. I hope for the best development of this institution and a prosperous future for the orphan children learning here.¹⁰²

After that Dayananda Sishu Bhavan was extended to Topabana, Phulabani in the year 1976 because of the honest efforts of late Swami Brahmananda Saraswati. In this Sisu Bhavan poor and orphaned children from the near by areas were given shelter till today this Ashram is dedicated to cause of the welfare of the children.

At Kanjipal in the district of Bhadrak one such Ashram emerged in the name of Mahapursa Ashram, which was founded on January 1, 1978 by the late Swami Brahmananda Saraswati. This Ashram is now imparting education to fifty orphan boys and pandit Nakuladeva Shastri is remains in overall change.¹⁰³

Sribatscha Bala Ashram was founded in the campus of Arya Kanya Gurukula, Tanarada in the year 1976 by late Swami Brahmananda Saraswati. This Ashram is dedicated to the development of village women and teaches them self-reliance through different short term courses organised by Government at different times. Presently it is managed by government of Orissa. The number of boys and girls in this Ashram is fifty.¹⁰⁴

‘Manurbhaba Ashram’ was set up in the serene valley Bhusma of Sundergarh, on behalf of Gangapur Mandal Arya Samaj in the year 1992. Seven orphaned children were the inmates of this Ashram. They are taught yogasana, physical exercise, sanskara, Vedic thought and other elements needed for the development of their personalities. The foundation stone of this Ashram are laid by Swami Brahmananda Saraswati.¹⁰⁵

The Arya Samaj, apart from its activities related to relief work for the victims of natural calamities, has also played a role in defferent social welfare activities in the field of health and education. Community health is one of its priorities in inaccessible and remote places. Several health programmes have been conducted at different places to create health awarness as well as to save people from diseases.

Towards 1965, charitable dispensaries were opened because of the dedicated effort of Swami Brahmananda Saraswati to provide free consulatance and medicines to the people in tribal areas. For example, in the Gurukula Aushadhalaya, Panposh, thousands of people from nearby villages were given

the opportunities for health check-up and medicines free of cost. Similar charitable dispensaries were set up at Chatta, Gudiali, Panchara & Arya Nagar.

A primary health centre was founded by Swami Brahmananda Sarasawati, in the memory of Danaveer Badri Prasad near Shanti Ashram in Phulabani district in the year 1975. The T.C.I company provided more than one lakh rupees for the establishment of this centre. The workers of Bhoruka Charitable Trust assisted Swamiji in this noble work.¹⁰⁶ The Homeopathic clinic which is run by Arya Samaj Patnagarh, Balangir, has been rendering health service and medicines free of cost to needy people since 18th Aug. 1997.¹⁰⁷

Dharmarth Hospital located the campus of Gurukula Amasena, was founded by the peasants of the nearby areas who were earlier going to far away places and were shouldering huge financial burden for their treatment. A hospital in the name of Braja Kishore Ramadulari was established to help local people to get over such difficulties. In this hospital sophisticated medicines including x-ray machines are at work and four experienced doctors are working here now.¹⁰⁸

A Homeo databya hospital has been founded on behalf of Bhubaneswar Arya Samaj with the help of members of Arya Samaj and senior homeopathic doctor Dr. Murali Mohan Pattnaik. He is running this hospital selflessly. Patients from far and near come to this hospital for treatment. It is also organising free check up for diabetics and patients suffering from a blood pressure.¹⁰⁹

Late Swami Brahmananda Saraswati established 'Tapoban Shanti Ashram' in the district of Phulabani on the 8th May 1971. In the inaugural ceremony, respected figures like Swami Sivananda Tirtha, Swami Devananda Saraswati, Swami Laxmananda Sarasati, Pandit Priyadarshna Sidhanta Bhusan (Calcutta) were present along with a number of dignitaries from Orissa and abroad. This "Vanaprastha Ashram" is located at a place of fine scenic beauty. This Ashram is meant for the Sanyasis scholars and retired senior officers to spend their leisure and spare time.¹¹⁰

The scarcity of rain in 1918 and high flood in 1919 caused famine in the district of Puri and other parts of the state. "The condition of the people was miserable. What was feared come true. In most rural areas, people suffered the most. At this time Arya Pradesika Pratinidhi Sabha decided to render help to famine effected people. This relief operation was carried out with the help of Lala Mohan Lal who was deputed by Mahatma Hansraj and Lala Lajpat Rai.¹¹¹

The failure of rain in 1942 caused another famine in Orissa. On this occasion reformer Sribatsha Panda called the leader of Punjab Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Lal Khushal Chand (Mahatma Ananda Swami) to Orissa. Lalaji came to Orissa with a few students and opened relief centres at many places.¹¹²

By 1960's the senior Arya Sannyasi Swami Brahmananda Saraswati was always the first one to appear whenever the people of Orissa were affected by flood, cyclone and drought. In this noble work he was supported by Sarvadisika Sabha, New Delhi, ex-Governor of Orissa a Dr. Ayodhyanath

Khosla, Dr. Radhanath Rath and other generous persons.¹¹³ In this regard Sri Bamadeva Sahu says: “At that time of flood and cyclone Swamiji takes up relief work restlessly. He has spent many sleep-less nights for these natural calamities. The memory of Gopabandhu comes to our mind when we see Swamiji.”¹¹⁴

In 1965, the Arya Samaj opened a help centre for the cyclone affected people of Orissa. This centre was patronised by Swami Brahmananda Saraswati and assisted by Gurukula Vedavyasa, Panposh. This centre continued working for a very long time. Similarly when there was a drought like situation arose in 1974, relief work continued for several days on behalf of Gurukula Amasena. The cyclone affected people of Balangir in 1984 and of Sambalpur in 1985 were in a major way helped by Arya Samaj. The Pradesika Pratinidhi Sabha provided help to all the affected people.¹¹⁵

The Arya Samaj of Bhubaneswar has come to the aid of victims of different natural calamities at different times. The contribution of Bhubaneswar Arya Samaj to lessen the distress of the people of the state is certainly noteworthy. In 1982 when most of the parts of Orissa came in the claws of high flood and the district Jagatsingpur was badly affected by Dalai Ghai, the members of Bhubaneswar Arya Samaj Sri Madanmohan Behera, Sri Birendra Kar and others rushed to the affected village like Madhusudanpur with relief materials. The relief operation carried in these areas by Arya Samaj was highly appreciated.¹¹⁶

At the time of great earth quake in the Lathur, Maharastra in October 1993 the Arya Samajists in Orissa reached the afflicted area and organised relief in a large scale for the sufferers, and earned the gratitude of the people and government. Under the leadership of Swami Bratananda Saraswati the teachers of Gurukula Amsena, Vyasadeva Thakur, Brahmachari Satish Rabindra, Chakradhara left for Lathur on October 3, with food rations and clothes loaded in trucks and reached there on 5, October. The relief materials were given away to affected people in nine villages. At every place the local police and military helped the volunteers to conduct the relief work smoothly. Medicines worth rupees twenty five thousand were donated to the Red Cross Society branch there.¹¹⁷

February, 1997 was an in auspicious month for the people of Orissa in which a devastating fire accident took place in the premises of Thakur Nigamananda Paramahans Utkal Pradesika Bhakta Samillani at Madhuban, Baripada. More than two hundred people were brunt alive and many more were badly injured. At the time of this tragedy, the Arya Pradesika Pratinidhi Upasabha played a leading role. The Additional District Medical Officer, Mayurbhanj, Baripada, P.N. Bhuyan Says :

We like to convey our sincere thanks to your organisation 'Arya Pradesdika Pratinidhi Upasabha Orissa' for opening the relief centre for the fire victims of "Madhuban Tragedy" at Baripada. The service rendered by your team under the guidance of principal N. Jena is

commendable. They have come up to the occasion to meet the urgent requirement for patients... In addition to the medicines, they have also supplied hand-gloves, sanitols, dettols and others requirements for patients.¹¹⁸

However, a critical estimate of the over-all performance of Arya Samaj activities in Orissa makes us inclined to believe that still, there is a lot of to be done to protect, preserve and promote to the great visionary ideals of Swami Dayananda Saraswati. The movement has not been able to achieve the expected success, because of personal ambitions, love for power and money and selfishness, which have become more important than collective welfare. The clash of egos has resulted in making the posts of the office-bearers disputable, thus completely unnermining the prestige of the organisation. The conflict leading to two broad divisions in the Arya Samaj, has been dealt in another chapter.

The efforts to unite the two warring groups have yielded no result so far. This has placed the Arya Samaj in Orissa in the most pitiable condition. I hope that good sense prevails soon and the Arya Samaj should stand firm and united and help Hinduism in its true essence spread to every nook and corner of the state and accept a major share in building a new, vibrant Orissa as well as India. Shedding lethargy and lotus-eating attitude, the Arya Samaj movement in Orissa should activate itself to make it as the most dynamic religio-cultural movement India ever had or has.



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