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**CAUSES FOR THE GROWTH OF ENGLISH MEDIUM  
SCHOOLS IN BERHAMPUR.**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Some twenty years back, there were only five English medium schools and a Kendriya Vidyalaya in Berhampur. But at present there are fifteen English medium schools in the town. Besides these day scholar English medium schools, three Residential English medium schools have come up in and around the town. In comparison to vernacular (Odia) medium schools, the popularity of English medium schools is increasing in the town. Here the question arises, why the popularity of English medium schools is increasing in the town. If this trend continues, what will happen to the Vernacular (Odia) medium schools? The present paper reports the reasons for the growth of English medium schools in Berhampur town and suggests a few recommendations for the improvement of vernacular (Odia) medium schools.*

Key words: Growth, English medium school, education, students, teachers.

**Introduction**

Day by day the popularity of English medium schools is increasing. In Odisha, people speak and carry out their communication in Odia which is also used for various official purposes. Berhampur is a town in Ganjam district of Odisha. It is the centre of education in the district. Most of the educational institutions like school, college, ITI, engineering school and college, medical college, pharmaceutical college and university are there in this town.

As far as school education is concerned, there are more government Odia medium schools, Saraswati Sishu/Vidya Mandirs run by private bodies and a few government Odia medium schools impart Telugu as a language. Most people in the town speak Odia and Telugu. But these days, the popularity of English medium schools is increasing very fast. There is only one Kendriya Vidyalaya which is a government English medium school. Rich people send their children to English medium schools. Even parents who are not able to help their children in studies and parents who are least aware the studies of their children send their children to English medium schools. They depend on tutors and coaching institutes to help their children in studies. So, private bodies are establishing new English medium schools to meet the needs of the people.

Before twenty years, there were only five English medium schools in Berhampur. Students used to study in Odia medium schools. But during the last twenty years, more than fifteen English medium schools have come up in the town and three Residential English medium schools have been established in the outskirts of the town. Knowing the reasons for the increasing growth of English medium schools in the town is a matter of concern for the intellectual mass. The present paper tries to find out the reasons for the growth of English medium schools in Berhampur town of Odisha.

### **Definition of English Medium School**

An English Medium School is one in which the medium of instruction for teaching is English. All the subjects like Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies etc. are taught in English except the second and third languages like Odia, Hindi, and Telugu. Students are exposed to English from the very first year of their studies in spite of their mother tongue background.

### **Difference between English Medium School and Odia Medium School**

There are many differences between English Medium School and Odia Medium School. First of all, in Odia medium school Odia is the medium of instruction for all the subjects of study except the language subjects like English, Hindi, and Telugu whereas in English medium schools English is the medium of instruction for all the subjects of study except the language subjects. Secondly, the Odia medium schools are affiliated to the Board of Secondary Education, Odisha whereas English medium schools are affiliated to either CBSE or ICSE. Thirdly, the teacher-taught ratio is maintained in English medium schools whereas it is not taken care of in Odia medium schools. Even there are Odia medium schools with one teacher looking after all the classes. Fourthly, particular subject teachers teach specific subjects in English medium schools but in case of Odia medium schools, Science teachers handle all the Science subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Biology and the Arts teachers take all the arts subjects like languages, History, Geography, Economics and Civics.

### **Review of Literature**

English medium education is growing at a faster rate in the post-independence Odisha. The people of the state have welcomed this with the perception that their children will learn better English which will help them in their future. Today English has become an international language. It is no more the language of the Britishers. A person well versed in English is in better position to pursue higher studies, to get a job and to do business in the international market.

During and after the independence of India, the freedom fighters deliberated for the development of different regional languages like Odia, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and making Hindi our national language. They wanted English to be used as an official language for a period of fifteen years. But English continued to play its important role in our educational system. In this context, Aslam (2003) points out, "Although Hindi became the national language in India and efforts began to be made for its development, doing away with English seemed an uphill task". (9)

The national leaders fought for the development of Hindi at national level and other regional languages at regional levels. But their efforts, perhaps, could not bear results as expected. As Das (2002) marks, "English lost its colonial stigma, oddly enough, around the time that the Hindu nationalists came to power and realised that Hindi had failed them. Hindi protagonists lost steam because they lost their convictions. Their own daughters wanted to learn English and get ahead in the world and their wives reminded them that English was their child's passport to the future." (1)

English is no more the language of the western countries. It is the language of Science and Technology, Information Technology and global means of communication. One can get the literature of any subject in English language but not in any other regional languages or in Hindi. Anyone who knows English can easily access the literature of the subject he wants. So the demand for English medium education is growing in today's world. Bhaskararao (2002) quotes, "Education in the medium of English language is still valued." (7)

Since independence, India has progressed a lot in the field of Science and Technology, IT, Education. English language is no more a foreign language on Indian soil. It has got the status of second language in our educational system. English medium education has been flourishing well throughout the country. The central government has taken steps for the improvement of the teaching-learning of English in the country by establishing institutes like CIEFL (presently known as EFLU), ELTIs in various states. All these make it clear that it is not possible to do away with English language. Krishnaswamy marks, "Not only English continues as the language of administration and judiciary but also the colonial pattern of education and English education; English continues to be the medium of instruction in our universities and colleges and the craze for learning English is growing day by day." (18)

Berhampur, the context of the study is a place where most people carry out their day to day business using Odia and Telugu. Though they do not use English, they want their children learn English and so

they send them to English medium schools. And the most interesting fact is that there are parents who hardly understand English also spend a lot of money to send their children to Residential English medium schools.

#### **Data Collection**

The participants who took part in this study includes Principals/ management persons of English medium schools, students studying in English medium schools and parents who sent their children to English medium schools.

#### **Sample**

The sample for the study consisted of 10 Principal/ management persons of English medium schools, 200 students studying in English medium schools and 100 parents who sent their children to English medium schools. Questionnaires were given to the Principals (Appendix-1), students (Appendix-2), and parents (Appendix-3) to collect their views on various issues pertaining to the growth of English medium schools in the city.

#### **Data Analysis**

The study points out that the popularity of English medium schools is increasing as there has been fourfold increase in the number of English medium schools in the town in the last twenty years. All the responses of all three questionnaires have not been analyzed here. Rather the ones which are the most relevant to the study have been analyzed.

#### **Analysis of the Responses of the Principals/ Management Persons**

Stating the reason for establishing English medium school, 60 % of the management persons viewed that they established English medium schools as it was the need of the time, 20% of them pointed out that the existing number of English medium schools was not sufficient to cater to the needs of the parents of the town and the rest 20 % of them viewed that they established English medium schools to produce students who would be competent enough to compete at all India level.

The English medium schools did not face any serious problem excepting 40 % of the management persons who faced the problem in obtaining NOC from the state government. Though all the schools faced problem in enrolling students initially, all the management persons viewed that the parents trusted them and sent their children to their schools. It points to the fact that the people want English medium schools to flourish well in the town.

Differentiating English medium school from Odia medium school, 40 % of the management persons view that English is the medium of instruction in English medium school whereas Odia is the medium of instruction in Odia medium school. But 60 % of them view that apart from medium of instruction, they give more importance to co-curricular activities which are not there in Odia medium schools. Regarding discipline, 100 % management persons point out that English medium students are disciplined.

Answering the reason for the increase in the importance of learning English, 50 % of the management persons opine that it is because of the advancement of Science and IT, 30 % of them view that it is due to English language being the international language whereas 20 % of them view that it is because English helps to maintain relationship among people who are far away.

Responding to the question if English medium students have better future prospects than Odia medium students, all the management people opine positively citing the reasons that English medium students are smart, spontaneous and good at English which is one of the criteria to get a job in modern society. Of course being smart and spontaneous in English is important in today's world.

Anticipating any problem for the English medium schools in future, 70 % of the management persons foresee no problem, 20 % of them view that it is unpredictable whereas 10 % of them opine that they may face some problem because of advancement in Hindi in the country. It points to the fact the future of English medium schools is bright.

### **Analysis of the Students' Responses**

All the two hundred students who took part in this study were from the English medium schools of the town. Responding to the question on the medium of instruction in their schools that is English, 92 % of them like the medium of instruction but the rest 8 % of them want their teachers explain them in Hindi or in Odia. 78 % of the students like their teachers teaching them in English all time but 22 % of them want some subjects to be taught in Hindi because they get bored listening to teaching in English. It means that the students have accepted English medium education very positively.

Answering the question on their perceptions of the Odia medium schools, 76 % of the students do not like the Odia medium schools as all the subjects are taught in Odia which will not help them to go out and there are no co-curricular activities in such schools. 16 % of the students view that Odia medium schools are good, 2 % of them opine that Odia medium schools are traditional, 2 % of them perceive that Odia medium schools give importance to learning of grammar but 4 % of them are silent on this issue. Thus it is an indicator that the English medium students have negative perception about Odia medium schools.

Of all the students, 84 % of them have friends studying in Odia medium schools, and they opine that their friends are not as smart as they (English medium) are because they (Odia medium) cannot speak in English and are very traditional. But 16 % of them do not have friends studying in Odia medium schools. It indicates that the English medium students undermine their counterparts.

Responding to the question if English will help them to have better future, all of them opine positively. It points out that children study in English medium schools to be able to have better future.

Answering the question if they learn English outside the classroom and the different ways of learning English, 86 % of the students view positively stating the ways as by reading English newspapers, watching English movies and programmes broadcast in Star TV, CNN etc. But 14 % of them respond negatively to this question. It indicates that the students have interest to learn English language on their own which is very positive.

Given a chance to study in Odia medium school because learning is better there, 98 % of the students do not want to join in Odia medium schools. Only 2 % of them answer it positively. It points out the fact that the students, though, hail from a town dominated by Odia people have very negative perception towards Odia medium education.

### **Analysis of the Parents' Responses**

Of all the parents, 84 % of them are not educated in English medium but 14 % of them are educated in English medium. It indicates that the parents have positive perceptions about English medium education for which they send their children to English medium schools though they have got their education in vernacular medium.

Stating the reason for sending their children to English medium school, 92 % of the parents opine that their children will have better exposure to English which will help them to have better future. But 4 % of them send their children to English medium schools as there are no Telugu medium schools in the town whereas the rest 4 % of them do so as they have got education in English medium.

Differentiating the students of English medium schools from that of Odia medium schools, all the parents view that English medium students are smart, advanced, spontaneous, and can talk fluently in English but Odia medium students lack all these. All of them think that English medium education will bring better future for their children. It means that the parents have high expectations for their children for which they send their children to English medium schools.

Expressing their views on the need of English medium education, 96 % of the parents opine that it is the need of the time but the rest 4 % of them point out that English medium education is not necessary if English is given due importance in Odia medium schools. It is an indicator that English is not given much importance in Odia medium schools.

Pointing out the demerits of Odia medium schools, 100 % parents mention that Odia medium schools do not give much importance to English. 60 % of them categorically opine that Odia medium schools

do not give importance to co-curricular activities but 68 % of them view that the teachers in Odia medium schools do not pay attention for the all round development of the students as the schools are run by the state government. 40 % of them mention that the same teacher teaches more than one subject in Odia medium schools. 32 % of them view that the students are not exposed to Computer education in Odia medium schools. The above analysis points out that the parents have very negative attitude towards Odia medium schools because of the prevailing drawbacks of the Odia medium schools.

Responding to the question on discipline of the English medium schools, 96 % of the parents are satisfied with it but the rest 4 % of the parents are of the view that discipline in the English medium schools is not up to the mark. 80 % of the parents opine that they are not doing any injustice to their mother tongue by sending their children to English medium schools but 12 % of them feel the other way and 8 % of them are silent on this issue.

Commenting on the future of the Odia medium schools, 32 % of the parents view that Odia medium schools will face problem in enrolling students if the drawbacks are not checked but 60 % of them foresee no problem as poor parents will send their children to Odia medium schools and the rest 8 % parents express their inability to predict the future of such schools. Thus, they have very divergent opinions on the future of the Odia medium schools.

### **Findings**

The analysis of the responses of the management persons, students, and parents shows that there are many reasons for the increasing growth of English medium schools in Berhampur. English medium education is the need of the present time. This has been validated by 96 % of the parents who send their children to English medium schools and 60 % of the management persons of the English medium schools.

It has been found that better future prospects of the English medium students is another reason for the growth of English medium schools because it is perceived that English medium student are smart, spontaneous, and better communicative skills in English. It has been supported by 100 % management persons, students, and parents. Of course communication skills in English play vital role in getting jobs in today's world.

Importance given to co-curricular activities in English medium schools is another reason for the growth of English medium schools in the town. It is supported by 60 % of the management people, 76 % of the students, and 60 % of the parents. To add to it, 68 % of the parents, pointing out the demerits of Odia medium schools, opine that the teachers in Odia medium schools do not pay heed for the all round development of the students. School is not only a place of learning academics but also a platform that should have space for the all round growth of the children. It should have space for the spiritual, mental, moral, and physical growth of the children and should conduct co-curricular activities for the students.

Discipline of the students in the English medium students is another reason for the growth of English medium schools as it is supported by 100 % of the school management people and 96 % of the parents.

Medium of the instruction i.e. English in the English medium school is another factor for the growth of English medium schools in the town because all the parents have pointed out that English is neglected in Odia medium school. They have viewed it as a drawback of the Odia medium schools.

### **Recommendations**

The study has found that there is increasing growth of English medium schools in Berhampur town. If this trend continues, the Odia medium schools will face problem in the coming days. Presently, the government of Odisha has established one Adarsh Vidyalaya following CBSE syllabus in each block. But it is recommended that the government should establish two medium (Odia and English) of education from class 1 by which the needs of the present day society can be met. Better infrastructure should be provided to Odia medium schools. Instead of appointing Science and Arts teachers, the government should appoint teachers basing on subject specialization like English, Odia, Hindi, Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry etc by which the teachers can impart better education and the Odia medium schools can compete with the English medium schools.

### Future Directions for Further Research

Future research on English medium education can take many directions. More research is required on teaching of English in Odia medium schools. Comparative study of the performance of the English medium students Vs Odia medium students can be taken up. Perceptions of the students and parents in rural areas need to be investigated before introducing two medium of education.

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### Appendix- 1

#### Questionnaire for Principal/Management Person.

**Name:**

**Designation:**

**School:**

**Address:**

1. When did you establish the school?
2. Why did you establish an English Medium School not an Odia Medium School?
3. What problems did you face when you established the school?
4. Did you face any problem regarding enrolment of students? How did the parents help you when you opened the school?
5. How is your school different from Odia Medium School?
6. There is rumour that English Medium students are indisciplined. What is your opinion?
7. Why do you think the importance of learning English has increased in recent times?
8. What steps have you taken for improving the standards of English language teaching in your school?
9. Do you think that students of your school have better prospects than Odia Medium students? If so, why?
10. Do you anticipate any problem for the English Medium Schools in future? If any, mention:

### Appendix- 2

#### Questionnaire for Student.

**Name:**

**Class:**

**School:**

1. What do you think about the medium of instruction in your school?
2. Do you like your teachers teaching you in English all the time?
3. What do you think about the Odia Medium Schools?
4. Do you have friends studying in Odia Medium Schools? How are they different from you?
5. What do they think about you?



6. How do you study your third language (Odia)? Do you understand it as easily as you understand your first language (English)?
7. Do you give equal importance to your first language as well as the third language? Which is easier for you?
8. Do you think English will help you to have better future?
9. Do you learn English outside the classroom? What are the different ways of learning English?
10. Given a chance, would you like to join in Odia Medium School because learning is better there?

**Appendix- 3**

**Questionnaire for Parents.**

**Name:**

**Qualification:**

**Profession:**

**Address:**

1. Are you educated in English Medium?
2. Why do you send your children to an English Medium School?
3. What is the difference between students of English Medium School and Odia Medium School?
4. Do you think that English Medium Education will bring better future for your children?
5. Do you think it is the need of the time to give English Medium Education?
6. What are the demerits of Odia Medium Schools?
7. Do you help your children in their studies?
8. What is the level of discipline in English Medium School?
9. Do you think that you are doing justice to your mother tongue by sending your children to English Medium Schools?
10. What would happen to Odia Medium Schools in the coming days?

