

Rule and Modernization in Ballari

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Abstract

Colonialism is one of the most important aspects of Indian history and Indian literature. The colonial rule has left its impression in both positive and negative ways. The paper looks at the positive aspects of the British rule in Ballari a District in Karnataka. The paper/article deals with the development that took place during the colonial rule in Ballari. It explores the adoption of modern technology and science and opening of missionary schools at Ballari and its positive impact on the region and regional/native people. The paper shows how the modernization and Westernization made its way in Ballari.

Keywords:

1. Colonial Rule: A rule by the wealthy or powerful nation over a weaker country is called the Colonial Rule. In this paper it means the British rule in India.

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2. Modernization: The transformation from a rural, traditional society to a secular, urban and industrial society, adoption of modern tools and technology.
3. Missionary School: A school originally developed and run by Christian missionaries. The mission school was commonly used in the colonial era for the purpose of westernization.
4. Culture: arts, customs, lifestyles, habits that characterize a particular society or nation.
5. Westernization/ Europeanization: A process whereby societies adopt western practices and culture.
6. Native: relating to people inhabiting a region from prehistoric times, Inhabitants of a place by birth.
7. Theatre: a building where theatrical performances or motion picture shows can be presented.

Introduction

Collins English Dictionary defines Colonialism as “the policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker people or areas”. Colonialism refers to the rule of a powerful/ wealthy nation over other country or territory. Colonialism in India started with the ‘Age of Discovery’. Portuguese, French and the British have ruled India. Portuguese were the first to colonize India and then the French. They ruled for several decades followed by the British who colonized India for hundreds of years. These foreigners came to India with the purpose of trade and commerce, especially for the trade of Indian spices. There was a great competition for power between them. Each of them wanted to take complete control in their hands. The British established ‘East India Company’ in India in 1600 and became monopolistic trading body, taking

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complete control of trade in their hands. They gradually took over the political power and became the masters. And colonized India till 1947.

The British rule in India for hundreds of years caused many more changes in India and the Indian life. This change includes the social, political, economical, cultural, educational, agricultural, architectural, religious change. The British rule or the Colonial rule changed the lives of the common people of India. The colonial rule brought changes even at the small town and district levels. One of such districts is Ballari, which has gone under a huge change during the Colonial rule.

Ballari is a District in Karnataka state, in India. It is a hot city with iron ore and minerals as its natural resources. It was a part of 'Madras Presidency', during the colonial rule. The British officers set up cantonment in Ballari when they took over the control in their hands in 1800s. The colonial rule brought a lot of changes in Ballari.

The British rule brought scientific, cultural, religious and technological, educational, agricultural, social, economic changes in Ballari. The English missionaries introduced English language, literature, religion and culture in India through establishment of English schools, hospitals, railway station, post office, churches, theatres etc. These schools taught English language and literature. New crops were introduced along with new tools of agriculture. The industries were established.

Set up of a cantonment caused for the establishment of schools, mills and industries in Ballari. Weaving, spinning and garment industries were opened, which gave employment to the regional people. The British opened schools in Ballari too. The British children were given education in these English schools. Later the native/ local children also got an opportunity to get education in these schools. 'Wardlaw School', 'St. Philomena's School', 'Municipal Jr. College'

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‘St. Joseph’s School’, St. John’s School and St. Paul’s School are some of the schools established in Ballari in 1800s (these schools are running up to date). Wardlaw School was established in the year 1846 by Rev. R. S. Wardlaw, St. Philomena’s School was founded in 1885. These schools were based on the model of European schools. Like European schools these schools were run and controlled by fathers and nuns of the churches. Every school has a church in its ground/ campus. The Fathers and nuns of the church were administrators and teachers of these schools. The fathers and nuns of the schools taught English and other subjects and Christian values (Theology) as a major subject. Today English has gained so much importance that it is the second most spoken language in India (Indian census, 2011). Today there are more than 30 English medium schools running in Ballari.

The native students of these schools became familiar with English language, literature and culture. They loved English poets and playwrights, whom they studied at their schools. These native students became poets, playwrights and actors. They became the pillars and founders of the Indian English Literature. Theatres were opened in Ballari as were opened in other parts of India. The school boys performed in the plays. The plays were performed in regional languages. The plays were based on the Sanskrit stories, historical figures. Gradually, the English plays were performed (imitation of English plays) in local/regional languages. Later when the number of English learners increased, the Shakespearean/English plays were enacted in English language though for the small audience.

Ballari Raghava was one of such actors from Ballari who performed not only in Hindi, Kannada, Telugu plays but in English plays too. He played the role of king Lear, Othello, Shylock (*The Merchant of Venice*), Hamlet, Macbeth, Captain Absolute (*The Rivals*) etc. ‘Sarasa Vinodhni Sabha’, ‘Vanivilasa Nataka Shala’ and ‘Ramakrishna Vilas’ were the earliest theatres

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of Ballari where plays were performed. The Sanskrit plays were performed in regional languages. The plays also based on the famous historical figures such as Razia Sultan, Chand Bibi, Shivaji, Aurangzeb, on the life of the Kings and Queens of Vijayanagara Empire. During the British rule in India, plays on the life of British kings and queens were also performed in Indian regional languages. Plays on King Edward VII, Queen Victoria, George V and Plays of Shakespeare were performed in Ballari. Some innovative tragedies were produced too.

The Western theatrical performances were popular all over the world. The English colonizers started enacting plays in their leisure as an entertainment. It gradually helped in the development of drama form and establishment of theatres in India. Many theatres were opened in India. Especially in college yard/compounds. Slowly the theatres were built outside the colleges and churches. The regional people also showed interest in this field. Especially those who were educated. Dharmavaram Ramakrishnama Charyulu and Kolachalam Srinivasa Rao were the outstanding playwrights from Ballari. They established their own theatres and produced plays in Kannada and Telugu. Even the English plays were performed in regional languages such as Telugu and Kannada. Kolachalam Srinivasa Rao was well versed in English. He published a translation of the book 'Prapancha Nataka Charitra' in English *The Dramatic History of The World* in 1908.

Through the British rule Railway system, Postal system, hospitals, schools, churches made their way in Ballari. Set up of cantonment and settlements of British are primary reasons for the establishment of schools, hospitals, churches, railway station, and a post office in Ballari. This changed the everyday life of the people. The railway made transportation of goods and delivery of letters easy. Warren Hastings, governor-general of India opened the posts to the public in March 1774. A regular travelling post-office service was introduced in 1870. The

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railway station is located in the commercial area. Near the railway station, the post office was constructed in the 1800s.

With the establishment of hospitals, allopathic treatments began in India. With this many developments took place in the field of medicine and science. The medical colleges and hospitals brought a drastic change in Ballari. Two hospitals which were opened by British in Ballari are Wellesley hospital and The Vijayanagara Institute of Medical Science. It was the Central Jail, built during the British rule. Later a portion of the central jail was turn into a hospital with Medical Science College. Now the hospital is the biggest government hospital in the district. It trains students in the field of science and medicine. New technology and modern instruments are adopted here.

The British language and culture was not only adopted for theatrical performance but was adopted in real lifestyle. The Ballari theatre welcomed the western culture and western culture became part of this society. Christian missionaries and British schools preached Christianity. British existence in Ballari helped in the formation of Christian societies in Ballari. These Christian societies provided health treatments and charity to poor people. The churches were built in Ballari. The church near VIMS (OPD) is one of the famous and beautiful churches in Ballari built by the British during their rule. The city has orphanage and old age house run by Christian churches on the fund given by British.

The developments that took place during the British rule in Ballari have given Ballari a very unique identity. The western schools, churches depict western architecture. The modern industries and progress (railway station, printing press, post office, and theatres) indicate the importance of this city during the British rule. Ballari was one of the important centers of the Madras Presidency.

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The developments and modern technology that made its way through British has not only caused for national progress and modernity but caused regional progress and modernity. developments that took place during the Colonial rule can be seen at the regional level. This development is visible in almost every field, such as cultural, educational, scientific, technological and architectural, religious fields.

The establishment of hospitals in Ballari is a noticeable development. These hospitals have developed with time and adopted modern technology and instruments and attempts to eradicate endemic diseases. The development in the field of art and literature is traceable. These developments or experiments play an important role in the history of English literature. The cultural changes can be seen in the food habits of the people along with the dressing style which has been westernized to great extent. The religious changes are visible through the existence of foreign culture and religion which has become an important and inseparable part of Indian society. The invention of new technology such as mobile phones, camera, film Industry, textile industries, medical facilities, metro and internet have further changed the life of the people. The developments that took place during the colonial rule, switched India with the World.

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