

Imperial Influence on English Language of Ballari District

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Focus of this Article

This article attempts to analyse the impact of imperial (colonial) influence on English Language of Ballari District. Through the fresh lenses of socio-linguistic perspective, the essay takes traces from the past from the 'big picture' of the Raj and draws it to the present state of English Education in Ballari District. This connects the transitional account of decades of incubation of English language in the furnace of space and time to its present formation of relevancy to Ballari. Ballari district is given special privileges to improve from its backward rut. It is one of the districts under Hyderabad Karnataka Region identified under Article 371J of the Indian Constitution. In spite of its regional imbalance, Ballari has stood as an important hub for educational and professional requirements for the suburban areas. Under the Raj it was an important base-station for the British administration, revenue, missionary activities and educational endeavors. The colonial rule has left a tinge of its English language in day-to-day lives of Ballarians.

Introduction

By way of establishing his philosophy on how educational transformations occur as hegemony in society, Antonio Gramsci (1971) wrote that "Every relationship of 'hegemony' is necessarily an educational relationship and occurs not only within a nation, between the various forces of which the nation is composed, but in the international and worldwide field, between complexes of national and continental civilizations". Seen in this perspective, the onslaught of English Education on imperial India in general and on Ballari in particular, could be considered the most important 'ideological state apparatus' (Therbon 1980) devised by the imperial rulers.

English language and English Education were not just a pedagogical system but the whole relationship between the colonized and colonizer. To rule a new civilization, the colonial rulers had to create a new order of society that to be acted upon and coercion had to be replaced or supplemented by the English educational system through English Language. It was an indispensable endeavor of the colonizers to produce a newly educated middle class, for it could enable the British to consolidate their position in the newly colonized region. In other words, the colonial English educational system had to create a section of collaborator or a mediator between the imperial ruler and Indians whom they governed.

According to Gramsci, the people of an emergent class ‘are officers of the ruling class for the implementation of subsidiary function of social dominion and political government’. Evidently, this persuasion correlates with the introduction of English Education system as an ideological instrument forged by the colonial rulers to serve and preserve their own interest. And then they largely made a deliberate effort to maintain same approaches along with social & cultural, coinciding with economic and political dominance of imperialism. All these endeavors intended to consolidate its consequence through the medium and quintessence of English Language.

The Advent of English Language in India

The capture of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453 was not just a landmark in the world history but also an unexpected twist to the course of the Indian History. For this led to the discovery of new sea route to India by Portuguese traveler Vasco da Gama (in 1498), and thus Europeans found a new gateway to India for trade of spices. Chronologically India witnessed the advent of Europeans; Portuguese, Dutch, English and French, eventually English drove away the rest and did gain a strong foothold in India.

The British advent brought along; a new religion, culture and a language, viz., Christianity, Western Culture and English Language. Thus, English Language could infiltrate India. The British first arrived in India in the early 1600s. Though the British came to India for trade, they gradually acquired territorial control and soon established trading posts in a number of cities under the

control of the East India Company. By 1765 the Company's influence had grown to such an extent that the British were effectively controlling most parts of the country. This date is often taken as the start of what is referred to as *The Raj* – a period of British rule in India that lasted until Independence in 1947. And by 1813 the British became political masters of imperial or colonial India.

For a century (1600-1700), there were no official attempts to force the language on the masses. In fact, they hadn't interfered in the Indian educational scenario yet. The British focused on trade, then land acquisition and political control. As regards the intention to propagate Christianity, there was reluctance and ambivalence in the acts of the officials of East India Company as well as during the period of total British Rule. While individual officials could be greatly involved in support of the Missionary Work, official policies often tried to keep aloof and refrained from extending explicit support to missionary work because of political reasons. For all these endeavors English Language served as a strong catalyst. Initially English was only taught to the local population through the work of Christian missionaries. Henceforth English was introduced in India in three phases.

The Three Phases of The Introduction of English in India

There have been three phases in the introduction of English in India.

1. The **first** one of them, the missionary phase, was initiated around 1614 by Christian missionaries.
2. The **second** phase, the demand from the South Asian public (in the eighteenth century) was considered to come about through local demand, as some scholars were of the opinion that the spread of English was the result of the demand and willingness of local people to learn the language.
3. The **third** phase, the Government policy, begun in 1765, when the East India Company's authority was stabilized (Kachru 1983: 21-22).

The First Phase

No doubt the transformation of the British trading intent into power mongers had a transition in India's whole system per se. As already mentioned, ambivalence prevailed in relation to explicit support to Missionary work. Christian missionaries' effort led to the possibility of all classes or caste groups receiving education – caste barriers did not play an important role in their effort to spread education. The first and the foremost constraint was language. This barrier doubled in its potency with the fact of multi-linguistic perspective. Hence unless they teach the English language to the local people their ventures wouldn't proceed.

The Second Phase

There were prominent spokesmen for English. Kachru mentions two of them, Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) and Rajunath Hari Navalkar (1770). Roy and Navalkar, among others, were persuading the officials of the East India Company to give instruction in English, rather than in Sanskrit or Arabic. They thought that English would open the way for people to find out about scientific developments of the West. Knowledge of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic or of Indian vernaculars would not contribute to this goal (Kachru 1983: 67-68). Note that these individuals were not Christian missionaries.

A letter of Raja Ram Mohan Roy addressed to Lord Amherst (1773-1857) from the year 1823 is often presented as evidence of local demand for English. Roy embraced European learning, and in his opinion, English provided Indians with the key to all knowledge. In the letter, Roy expresses his opinion that the available funds should be used for employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy, and other useful sciences, which the natives of Europe have carried to a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world (quoted in Kachru 1983: 68). Roy's letter has been claimed to be responsible for starting the Oriental-Anglicist controversy, the controversy over which educational policy would be suitable for India.

As a result of the amalgamation or synthesis of the British and Indian, theology, and culture & language, various pressure groups emerged. This led to rise of many emergent issues of the colonial India, and the most important issue was on 'What type of Indian Education system is to

be incorporated? Great debates took place among the Indians and the British known as ‘Orientalists’ and ‘Anglicists’. The Indigenous and the British politics ushered the issue.

There were several reasons for the rapid growth of public opinion in favour of English Education;

1) English education was greatly popularized for missionary activities.

2) Urging the Indians toward enlightenment, social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy promoted and insisted the acquisition of English Language. Indians were like frog in the well. To come out of this rut, Indians needed to use the medium of English Language. In order to acquire the knowledge of Western Sciences and to ponder on other points of view, English Language was an imperative. Many educated Indians were demanding instruction in English as a means of social advancement.

3) The emerging middle class’s much coveted Government jobs’ first requirement was proficiency in English Language. As English was the language of the rulers, it became a deliberation of Indians to learn English for procuring lucrative post under the government. Indian social reformers and thinkers regarded English education as the only panacea for existing social ills. The system attained an artificial popularity and importance because the young men and women educated under it were freely employed in Government service.

4) The British people of the Victorian era complacently believed that their language, literature, and educational methods were the best in the world and that India could do no better than adopt them in toto.

5) The Indians of this period, on their part, were dazzled by their first contact with Western civilization and believed that their country could do no better than imitate the British model. (Syed Nururllah and J.P. Naik, 1943. page 7)

In addition to this, there was a constant pressure from different sections of the society – the Christian missionaries, the liberals, the utilitarians, and the Anglicists. Hence the British yielded and agreed to take up the responsibility of coining a new education policy for the colonial India. From another perspective the educational policy was designed to legitimize the domination of the British colonial needs.

The Third Phase

The third phase, the Government policy, begun in 1765. Though the British yielded and agreed to take up the responsibility of coining a new education policy for the colonial India, they didn't abruptly introduce western education in India. Instead they conducted a thorough survey of the existing Indigenous Education system of India. In Madras, an inquiry into indigenous education was ordered by Sir Thomas Munro in 1822 (Records of Madras, No. II, Appendix A). As per the British instructions the District collectors had to submit the information collected under the survey. The consolidation of the submissions of the reports on Indigenous Education system in India later formed the basis of Introduction of English Education in India.

Indigenous Education System

At the onset of modern system of education in India, India was politically divided into two parts – British India and Indian India also called as princely states. While British India was divided into eleven major provinces and a few smaller units of administration and Indian India into about 700 States which largely varied in area, population and revenue. Except for instances of continuation of patronage in few parts of India (Princely States), it may be stated that the impact of modern education system was generally on same lines in both British India and Indian India.

After the fall of Vijayanagar (1565), until the British conquest of South India, there were no changes in the educational system (Vraja Deva Prasad, 1969). There was an existence of Tols, Gurukulas and Patashalas to promote education of the caste Hindus and Madrasas and Makhtabs to promote the education of the Muslim community in India. These schools taught language proficiency based on oral tradition and memorization of the texts (Venkata Raman 1972).

Besides these, there were advanced centers of learning as well. In pre-colonial India, the indigenous education gave more stress to scholarship of languages rather than science and technology. In North India, Persian was the court language and irrespective of religious faith, both Hindus and Muslims learnt Persian to obtain jobs under the rulers of pre-colonial India. In the South, Tamil, Telugu and other emergent languages had their sway. Under this social milieu of India, the British colonial rulers looked forward to further outstretch their rule through Indian

manpower. Thus, in the early part of the nineteenth century, the indigenous system of education held the field.

By the end of the nineteenth century, therefore, the old indigenous system of education disappeared almost completely from the field and a new system of education, which aimed at the spread of Western knowledge through the medium of the English language, was firmly established in its place. (Syed Nurullah and J.P. Naik, 1943. page XIII Introduction)

Macaulay's Minute and the Beginnings of English in India

Macaulay was a trusted soldier of an imperialist regime that was interested in trade and power. He was loyal to his Government. It was under those circumstances that he wrote his famous Minutes on Education that became the Manifesto of English Education in India.

He argued, *'We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to redefine the vernacular dialects with terms of science borrowed from Western nomenclature and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population'*. (Munro's Minute, dated 25th June, 1822.)

Macaulay's attitude was that of a typical colonial administrator – a ruling master. The rulers were in need of a class of English knowing urban 'baboo's – Western-educated bureaucrats who would be loyal to their masters. Educating that class and allowing them to 'educate' the masses was the British policy. Macaulay visualized India 'to be a dependency of England, to be at war with our enemies, to be at peace with our allies, to be protected by the English navy from maritime aggression, to have a portion of the English army mixed with its sepoys, since he felt 'India cannot have a free government, but she may have the next best thing, a firm and impartial despotism'. (Macaulay, 1898:555-6). That was why he wanted a class of administrators to help the British masters. But, the second part, sometimes referred to as the 'filtration theory' (i.e., educating the classes and asking them to educate the masses), was part of the imperial plan,

designed to carefully destroy the indigenous system of education by neglecting it or leaving it to the classes who would be 'English in tastes, in opinion, in morals and in intellect'. The 'colonial educational economy' was willing to train only the 'baboo's by funding only that layer of the society.

Thus, Lord Macaulay was a central figure in the language debate over which language(s) should be used as the medium of education in India. Macaulay's proposal was a success; and Lord Bentinck expressed his full support for the minute, declaring that the funds "administered on Public Instruction should be henceforth employed in imparting to the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language" (ibid). On 7 March 1835, the Minute received a Seal of Approval from Lord William Bentinck (1774-1839), and an official resolution on Macaulay's resolution was passed. This resolution "formed the cornerstone of the implementation of a language policy in India and ultimately resulted in the diffusion of bilingualism in English". According to Bailey, in Macaulay's thinking Indian languages would be enriched by English, so that they could become vehicles for European scientific, historical and literary expression (ibid, 140).

Finally, to summarise, the history of the development of English education in India falls into four distinct periods:

1. from 1772 to 1818, the period of beginnings;
2. from 1818 to 1854, the period of foundation and decision of great importance;
3. from 1854 to 1901, the period of rapid expansion; and
4. from 1901 to the present day, the period of examination and modification.

English gradually became the language of government, education, advancement, "a symbol of imperial rule and of self-improvement" (McCrum, et al. 1988: 325). Under the backdrop of the above discussion let's focus on the theme of the present article; Imperial Influence on Ballari District and English Language.

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Popularly known as ‘dry zone’ Ballari is identified with its hot climate, iron deposits and its rich history. As rightly remarked by Chandra Mallampalli in his ‘*Cosmopolitanism in the Hinterland? Bellary District through Fresh Lenses, 1800-1840*’, ‘Ballari, may be viewed as a site of ‘hinterland Cosmopolitanism’, marked by dynamic interactions between persons of different linguistic, cultural and religious affiliations’. Located between Hyderabad, Mysore, the Maratha region and Madras, Ballari bridged Indo-Islamic, Sanskritc, South Indian and north Indian cultural terrains.

During the Raj (British Rule), Ballari was a prominent cultural frontier. It served as an important base station during the Raj. Research findings justify that there was a considerable imperial influence on Ballari (earlier spelt as ‘Bellary’) District. As an aftermath English Language has been an important catalyst for social change in this region.

It is but essential to put the study in a historical perspective. With reference to the evolution of English educational system in imperial India, English language proved to be instrumental in socio-linguistic improvements. The tracing out of the imperial influence on Ballari District and English Language should therefore be done with constant reference to colonial Society. Various policy formulations and differential political and social developments have had their impact on the promotion of English language in Ballari district under the imperial rule. Ballari region witnessed the processes of social mobility and social change through English Language, Culture, religion and socio-economic impacts. Such development is not a static event, it is rather a continuous process and hence its history is bound to have its effect on its present as well as future. The present study constructs the history of the introduction of English Language in Ballari District during the Raj and its relevance in the present. It mainly focuses on how different perspectives were transformed and responded towards the imperial furnace to shape into its present form.

Indigenous Education in Ballari

The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed but few changes in the existing state of education in Bellary district which was then under the administrative control of the Government of Madras. In 1822, Sir Thomas Munro, who was then the Governor of Madras, started a state-wide educational enquiry with a view to improving education. Interestingly, the report of the

Collector of Bellary contributed to the cause and has a special mention in the imperial gazetteer (Dharampal 2000). The Collector of Ballari, A.D. Campbell was an efficient, experienced and perceptive officer. He had previously held the post of Secretary of the Board of Revenue and had exhibited his potential caliber. Hence was one of Thomas Munro's favourites. (Report of A.D.Campbell, Collector, Bellary, dtd 17th August 1823, (TNSA: BRP: Vol.958 Pro.25-8-1823 pp.7167-85 Nos. 32-33)

Here is an excerpt from Campbell's report on Indigenous Education System in 19th century Ballari. "We have been since favoured with an authentic report of the state of native education in the province of Bellary, a territory acquired by treaty from the Nizam in the year 1800, and under the presidency of Fort St. George. The population of Bellary, according to an official statement, consists of 927,857 souls; the number of schools in the province is 533, containing 6641 scholars only, bearing a proportion of about 7 to 1000 of the aggregate population. Of the scholars, who are males, with the exception of 60 Hindoo girls, only 243 are Musulmans; the rest are Hindoos. The English language is taught in but one school; the Tamul in four; the Persian in twenty-one; the Mahartta in twenty-three; the Teloogoo in two hundred and twenty-six; the Carnatica in 235" (The Asiatic journal and monthly register for British and foreign ..., Volume 25P616, chapter 'State of Education in Southern India'). From political annexation to demographic figures, from statistics on schools' data to gender studies, from linguistic analysis to minority studies, this excerpt from the report of then District Collector Mr. A. D.Campbell, give us an exact reflection of the existing Indigenous Education system.

On the whole, the educational statistics and information collected in 1823 in consequence of Munro's enquiry showed that the district was backward in education when compared to the other districts of the Madras Presidency. As a result of the enquiry, a few Government schools were established in the district. According to the above excerpt in 1823 there was only one School where English Language was taught. But the following information of the missionary activities in Ballari gives us a great insight.

Missionary Works in Ballari District

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Following are the instances of missionary works in Ballari District:

1. In Ballari district, which was then considered as part of Andhra region (at present in Karnataka); the London Missionary Society set up a mission in 1810 under the Rev. J. Hands. The mission established a native school and a Charity school along with a Church at Ballari. The work of the London Missionary Society was the first attempt to set up school in the Andhra region.
2. The Ballari branch of the London Missionary Society did excellent work, in which Joseph Taylor a worker for missionary activity took an active part in 1819. From 1827 onwards, eminent and successful missionaries like Samuel Flevel, Reid Thompson, Ward Law and Coles went to Ballari. Churches schools and outstations were set up by the missionaries in good numbers. In addition to the above discussed missionary's contribution towards the spread of English Education in Ballari, colonial Government introduced novel policies (Kelsall J., Madras, 1873, Bellary District manual).

New Policies

“A new era was now dawning. The Court of Directorate of the East India Company advocated in 1830 the theory known as the filtration theory of education, according to which the best results could be obtained by educating the higher classes in the first instance and laying it to them to create a desire for education in the masses. They directed the “the higher classes” should be given instruction in English language, European literature and science” (Mysore State Gazetteer: Bellary 1972, Chapter-15 Education and Culture). This was a master stroke of the British to leave the everlasting tinge of English Education in the Region.

“Then came the “Anglo –Vernacular controversy” as to whether English or Indian languages should be given prominence in the scheme of education. It reached its climax in the famous minute of Lord Macauley of 1835 and the equally famous resolution of Lord William Bentinck, dated 7th March 1835 which endorsed it and pronounced that “the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science”, and that all funds appropriated for this purpose of education would be best employed on English education

alone (ibid, 1972). As a result of this policy, the Collectorate and Tahsildary schools in Bellary, as elsewhere, were abolished in 1836, the Board of Instruction was superseded by a “Committee of Native Education” and the committee was directed to organize a Normal School for training teachers. But this transformation was short lived.

“In the 1854 a series of propositions of first rate importance were propounded by the Court of Directors, Filtration theory was to be displaced by the theory of mass education. Elementary education was not to be sacrificed at the altar of higher education. Instruction in Indian languages was not to be superseded by instruction in English. Both were to be encouraged side by side and the indigenous institutions which formed the basis of elementary education were to be revived, reformed and assimilated into one great comprehensive scheme of national education. All this ushered in a new chapter in the history of education. Ballari witnessed rejuvenation of the vernaculars and promotion of English Language hand in hand and sighed relief.

It was with this background that education began to make progress in Bellary. Bellary has the distinction of being the oldest mission station in the Mysore Diocese of the Church of South India. The London Missionary Society started their activities in Bellary in the year 1810. Dr. J. S. Ward Law started in the year 1846 the famous educational institution called the “Ward Law Institution”. It was the first institution of its kind in these parts and attracted much attention. A matriculation class was opened in it in the year 1867 and an F.A. class in 1869. It was affiliated to the Madras University in 1891, and it recorded very good progress under its then Principal Mr. J.P. Cotlingam. Wardlaw Institution functioned as a Second Grade College. The College Continued until 1908, when owing to the peculiar circumstances then prevailing, it had to revert as the “Ward law High School” (ibid, 1972). This institution celebrated its centenary in the year 1945 and still continues to be a foremost educational institution in the district. Hence we can consider Ward law as a pioneer of English Education in Ballari.

In the early days of the present century, there were only three Upper Secondary Schools in the district. The first of these institutions was started in 1855 as a “Provincial School” at Bellary.

There were, in addition, three Lower Secondary Schools, besides three aided institutions intended solely for the education of girls. This is the antiquity of elementary and girls' education in Ballari.

As a result of the liberal grant of subsidies by the Government to the schools maintained by the local board and municipal councils took the initiative in establishing educational institutions in the district. There were four Municipal High schools in the district located at Ballari and Hospet (two in each) as on 1st April 1961. There were seven District Board High Schools in Bellary district, as on the 1st April 1961 located in the following places;

1. Kudligi
2. Kampli (Hospet taluq),
3. Kottur (Kudligi taluk)
4. Siruguppa,
5. Tekkalakota (Siruguppa taluk)
6. Chikkajogihalli (Kudligi taluk) and
7. Hadagali

In addition to the categories of High Schools mentioned above, there were five Aided High Schools in the district, as on the 1st April 1961 (ibid, 1972), which were:

1. Ward law High School, Ballari
2. St. John's High School, Ballari
3. St. Joseph's Girl's High School, Ballari
4. St. Philomena's High School, Ballari and
5. S.C.S. High School Sandur

Contemporary Ballari has been witnessing a proliferation of English Private Schools. Most of the above-mentioned institutions have a section of it as a govt. aided and parallel non aided sections too. There is a boom in investment in establishing educational institutes in Ballari District. In addition to the formal education entities, Ballari is also witnessing a proliferation in coaching centers of various natures. From Computer coaching to home coaching, from competitive exam

coaching to Exclusive English-language Coaching Centers, Ballari has stood as a hearth for such usurp.

Hence, Ballari can be seen as a microcosm of site of the British Raj. The impact can be viewed under the following excerpt, “A major impact of the British rule in India was the emergence of a new middle class. With the increase in the British commercial interests, new opportunities opened to a small section of the Indian people. They often acted as the agents and intermediaries of the British traders and thus made huge fortunes. The new landed aristocracy, which came into being after the introduction of Permanent Settlement, also formed a part of this new class. A major section of the old land-owning aristocracy lost ownership of their land, and in many cases were replaced by a new class of land owners. These people got some English education and became the new elite. With the spread of British power, new job opportunities were also created. Indian society witnessed the introduction of new law courts, government officials and commercial agencies. The English educated people naturally got the necessary patronage from their colonial rulers. Thus, a new professional and service-holding middle class was also created by the British, apart from those with landed interests” (Impact of British Rule on India: Economic, Social and Cultural (1757-1857)). This can be taken as an inference with absolute relevancy to the fact that there is a considerable influence of the colonial/imperial rulers on English language of Ballari District.

Conclusion

With the above discussion, one can come to a conclusion that, the very existence of Ballari District emerged out of the combo of indigenous and the British Politics. During the Raj Ballari was a cantonment and held a strategic importance. Ballari emerged as an important base station and served three major perspectives: British induced political prospects, Christianity missionary effort, Indian desire for the introduction of English Education. In course of time, English language became passion of Ballarians. For instance, Bellary Raghava founded Shakespearean Club, Shakespearean plays were passionately enacted by eminent Ballarians in Raghava Kala Mandir.

The so-called ceded district emerged as an important hub for political, religious, commercial, and educational endeavors. The present prominence of Ballari in its various facets of life is because of the imperial impact. Though Ballari District is counted as one of the backward regions of Hyderabad-Karnataka, it is indeed rich - communally harmonious yet the aspect of cultural heterogeneity cannot be denied. And English language continues to be an important precedence of Ballari.

Ballari has witnessed a strong influence of imperial rule. As such the tinge of English language is still on the tongues of Ballarians. Unlike other places of this district, Ballari city dwellers take pride in using English language in their day-to-day life. On interacting with laymen of this region, the researcher found that, Ballarians take pride in conversing in English. For instance, casual conversation with a butcher, grocer, chemist, businessmen, house wives and an aged daily wage worker can be mentioned here, all spoke considerably good English. Another example of the present relevance is Hampi. It is the favourite tourist destination of many Indian as well as foreign tourists. From a taxi/auto driver to a vendor, every commoner speaks English in different accents to attract the customers. They may not be literate in English, yet they speak follow-able English. The usage of English language in this region is necessitated from commercial perspectives, though, it has created a quantum shift in the linguistic scenario.

The researcher observed that the influence of English Language on Ballari print artifacts and found most of the hoardings in English, from publicity to sign boards, all in English language. With this it can be inferred that English language is a part and parcel of the lives of Ballarians. The British Established Institutions, viz., St. Philomena's, St. John's, Wardlaw, etc. have produced generations of English speaking Ballarians who are spread in the nook and corner of Ballari district in various professions and occupations. Thus, English language is thriving on the tongues of Ballarians with pride.

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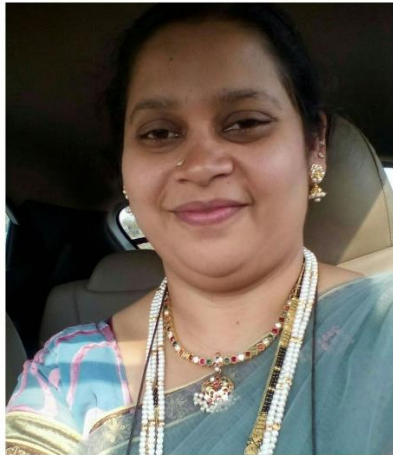
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