



1866 Orissa famine and Renaming of Ravenshaw University

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The Union Education Minister has proposed changing the name of **Ravenshaw University in Cuttack**, citing the association with **Thomas Edward Ravenshaw** a British administrator, who oversaw the 1866 Orissa famine that resulted in over a million deaths.

- The 1866 Orissa famine, known locally as “**Na Anka Durbhikshya**,” ravaged coastal Odisha. Historians attribute the famine to a combination of **failed paddy harvests, inadequate rice import infrastructure**, and supply chain failures.
 - The famine **claimed the deaths of about a third of Orissa’s population**, prompting the British Government and Christian Missionaries to open ‘**Anna Chatras**’ to feed people. Many died of [cholera](#) and [diarrhoea](#) later on.
- Founded in 1868 as a small school, **Ravenshaw College became a full-fledged college in 1876 and was renamed in honour** of T.E. Ravenshaw. It evolved into a university in 2006 and has been a key player in Odisha’s education and political spheres.
 - Ravenshaw also advocated for **women’s education in Odisha**, leading to the establishment of **Cuttack Girl’s School**, which was later renamed Ravenshaw Hindu Girls School.

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