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Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar on Women Education

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Abstract-- The nineteenth century is the most resplendent period in the history of India; since during the period India witnessed the reawakening of the people in the world of new ideals, new thoughts and aspirations in all the dimensions of life. The regeneration of India got its expression in Bengal and so this resurgence is called Bengal Renaissance Movement, though its spell had its far-reaching impact all over the country. In this time Eminent Leaders are born to build an impact on civilization. When our circumstances were screened with full of superstitions, illiteracy, unconsciousness, beside this, when British Imperialism were busy in their political conquests then Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) had raised like a sun to awaken our society. He worked unremitting to metamorphosis our society. His notable activity towards education systems, changing and reforming the status of women education and higher education was tremendous. He was the reformer of Women Education and pioneer of Women Development. According to Madhusudan Dutta' Vidyasagar was that, 'He had the wisdom and genius of a sage, heart of a Bengali mother and energy of an Englishman, is proof of Vidyasagar' s image in the 19th century'. In this paper, the researcher has intended to review and analysis the contribution of Vidyasagar in the various aspects of Women Education.

Keywords-- Women Education, Contribution, Reformer, Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar is an Ideal humanity in our Today Life. He was known as Karunasagar for his Kindness. He is not renowned only for his contribution in the educational aspects and social reformation, but also for his literary creation. He had reformed the Bengali Prose and development of modern Bengali language. He is the pathfinder who comprehends the problem of the then learners in compassionating the complicated Bengali language, whose origin was fully Sanskrit. Vidyasagar, who came in the middle of the 19th century, was a prominent personality among different modernizers. Vidyasagar was a Bengali Sanskrit Pandit, educator, social reformer, writer and philanthropist. He has a great contribution in the various perspectives of education. He enhanced and reconstructs the education system. He was born in Midnapore on 26 September, 1820. He was the great fond of his mother Bhagabati Devi. In this Inspiration, he had reformed and developed the Women Education. His thinking and consideration about women education and higher education was fabulous.

His effort to switch the society from superstitions, polygamy and so on. Following to Rabindranath Tagore said about him, 'One wonders how God, in the process of producing forty million Bengalis, produced a man'. The remarkable contributions of Vidyasagar on Women education have been enlightened and focussed in this research paper.

Vidyasagar turned his attention to the propagation of female education. He realised, "a change may be said to have come over the spirit of the times, and this may be reckoned as a new era in the history of education on Bengal" He propagated the ideal from the Shastras, kanyapyebam palaniya sikshaniyaiti yatnatah'- 'Daughters also are to be reared up and educated with care together with sons. He left no stone unturned to unfetter woman from the bondages and the ignominy. He fought against polygamy and child marriage. It is known to all that he had to undergo great pains to introduce widow remarriage He substantiated widow remarriage quoting from the shastras. We shall discuss his attempts to reform society later on. Let us now see what he did do for the education of women in Bengal.

The beginning of the 19th Century witnessed the efforts made by the missionaries for the education of women. Mention may be made of Miss Cook, Lady Amherst who set up schools and societies for ladies. The Female Juvenile Society, the Ladies' Society for Native Female Education, the London and the Church Missionary Societies set up many schools for women. These attempts failed because the motive behind the Schooling was the propagation of Christianity. Naturally the efforts made by the pioneers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Raja Radhakanto Dev, Raja Baidya Nath Roy and the young men educated in the Hindu College proved to be more worthy. The establishment of the Bethune School at Calcutta in May, 1849, may be regarded as the turning point in the history of women's education in India. Since, then, not only the authorities in India, but also the educated and influential members of Hindu Society began to take a genuine and active interest in the cause. Raja Radhakanto Deb, Jaykissan, and Rajkissen Mnkherjee, the influential persons of the time patronised women's education. It is needless to point out that the opposition of the orthodox Hindus grew violent as the schools grew in number. Even some of the enthusiasts were assaulted physically.



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But both Bethune and Dalhousie were determined to foster women's education. J. L. D. Bethune did yeomen's service for the education of women. For his undaunted spirit and unprecedented enthusiasm in the educational activities he was shortly appointed the president of the Council of Education. On his request to Dalhousie, one historic circular was issued on April, 11, 1850, which is a kind of Charter in the history of women's education in India. The circular contained the idea that the government of India would sympathise with those engaged in promoting women's education.

Bethune found in Vidyasagar a great fellow fighter in the cause of women's education from the beginning. He induced the Pundit to accept the Honorary Secretaryship in December, 1850. Bethune was now convinced of his institution's success as it had been placed under the care of a man whose moral courage, honesty and singleness of purpose were beyond question. This period marked the reawakening of the Indian spirit. So in every aspect there was advancement. The Derozians, some of the pundits of Sanskrit College took an active interest in the progress of women's education. Bethune expressed gratitude to three persons especially for their assistance rendered for the spread of women's education. They were Baboo Ramgopal Ghosh, Dakshinarajan Mukherjee and Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, a close associate of Vidyasagar. Madan Mohan Tarkalankar was no less enthusiast in social and educational reforms than his great friend, Vidyasagar. In a Bengali periodical, Sarbosubhakari Patrika, Madan Mohan contributed a comprehensive article in support of women's education, in September 1850. He mentioned in the article that Bethune was spending out of his own pocket something between seven and eight hundred rupees a month on girls' school.

The patronage of Lord and Lady Dalhousie was a great help to Bethune and his friends. But Bethune did not rest content with official patronage. He, in co-operation with English educated Bengali intellectuals and radical Bengali pandits like Vidyasagar and Madan Mohan Tarkalankar, took positive measures for the propagation of women's education. But he did not live long to see the progress of the cause for which he had fought and sacrificed so much. He passed away on August 12, 1851. Bethune School became a Govt. institution in 1856. The school was placed under the direct guidance of Vidyasagar that year, as Vidyasagar became the secretary of the school and a new committee was also formed as proposed by Cecil Beadon. With Vidyasagar as Secretary and with the new committee constituted, the Bethune School entered a new phase of its career.

Vidyasagar had his own way of taking up and fighting for a cause. His boundless energy and will were not confined to the Bethune School or to the limits of the city. They sought a wider field-the rural areas of Bengal.

In the Wood's Despatch 1854, the Court of Directors recognised for the first time the need and importance of women's education. Thus the Girls' Schools were included among the schools to which the new grants-in-aid scheme could be extended.

Early in 1857, Lieutenant Governor Halliday, enthusiastic in the cause of women's education had not made much headway in the city itself. Undaunted, Vidyasagar told Halliday that there was nothing that could not be achieved given determined will and sincerity.

The inexhaustible energy of the Pundit found full scope immediately. He reported to the D. PI on 30th May, 1857, the opening of a girls' school in the Burdwan district at the private enterprise. He also reported that the school was functioning well.

Between November, 1851 and May, 1858 Vidyasagar established thirty-five girls schools with an average total attendance of 1,300. The Govt. was requested to modify the grants-in-aid rules in favour of girls' school. The Govt however refused to modify the rules. Naturally, this had its effect on Vidyasagar's activities in the field of girls' education. He had already set up quite a number of girls' schools. Under the circumstances he had to bear part of the running cost, including teachers' salaries. He took the initiative in opening a fund for rendering financial assistance to girls' schools and collected money for it from persons of means in Calcutta.

The Govt. of India, however, being informed of the matter, agreed to pay the amount and free Vidyasagar of all worries.

Meanwhile, after the formation of the managing committee of the Bethune School, he issued a circular to prominent Hindu families in Calcutta and its suburbs in December, 1856, giving the method and purpose of education to be followed in the School. He held the post of secretaryship of Bethune School from 1856 to 1869. Vidyasagar was doing all these, besides his own regular strenuous duties as the principal of the Sanskrit College. During his secretaryship the Bethune School progressed much in respect of its enrolment and functioning

In the middle of the sixties a new impetus was given to the women's education in Bengal by Miss Mary Carpenter. She reached Calcutta on November, 20, 1866 and came in direct contact with Vidyasagar and other such advocates of women's education.



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She proposed a normal school for female teachers and prepared a scheme for it. This was sent to the Govt. Vidyasagar's opinion was sought by the authorities. He could feel the pulse of the time and he pointed out that the scheme would prove to be a failure as the Hindu families would not allow grown up female relatives to follow the profession of teaching. He fully appreciated the importance and desirableness of appointing female teachers for female learners but he was sure that the orthodox Hindu Society would act as stumbling block to such a good plan.

However, though Vidyasagar was not hopeful about the success of Miss Carpenter's Scheme, he gave the authorities every possible assistance and co-operation. The scheme proved to be a failure after three years' experiment. Vidyasagar's prophecy in this respect is really worth-mentioning. Iswar Chandra thus laid down his life for the welfare of women by rehabilitating them and saving them from numberless agonies. He made this ideal-"Gods dwell where women are adored."

II. CONCLUSION

Vidyasagar has brought off a new era of Bengal Renessa. He was the real maker of society. His greatest contribution in his contemporary century was a marvelous steps for society. His visions and personality for a better education are an ideal for even today. Whenever he found that his ideals. He has a great contribution in the field of social reform, educational reform and literature and liberation of women. His thinking about nationalism, humanism, and democratic liberalism had influenced the colonial middle class in 19th century. Reformation of Sanskrit College, development of Women Education, Barno Porichoy, Widow Re-Marriage is the envision activities of Vidyasagar. He has fertilized our Bengali literature and language by his written. He has opened the gateway of education to all. He will forever be bear in mind for his notable steps to whole nations.

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