

Role of Vidyasagar on Women Education

Vidyasagar was born on 26 September 1820 in Midnapore district of Bengal Presidency (now in West Bengal). From 1829 to 1841 Vidyasagar learned Vedanta, Vyakaran, Literature, Rhetoric's, Smriti and Ethics in Sanskrit college. Meanwhile, he took part in a competition testing knowledge in Sanskrit in 1839 and earned the title of 'Vidyasagar' meaning Ocean of Knowledge. In the same year, Ishwar Chandra cleared his Law examination. Vidyasagar joined the Fort William College as the Head Pandit in the Sanskrit department in 1841. In 1846, Vidyasagar left Fort William College and joined the Sanskrit College as 'Assistant Secretary'. In 1849 he supported John Elliot Bethune to establish the first permanent girls' school in India, the Bethune School. In 1851, Vidyasagar became Principal of Sanskrit College. In 1854, Vidyasagar started his campaign for widow remarriage. In 1854, he began writing against the practice of ascetic widowhood for Tattvabodhini Patrika, a progressive journal.

Contributions to Widow Remarriage –

Vidyasagar was always vocal about the women who were subjected to oppression by society at that time. He was very close to his mother, a woman of great character, who once instructed him to do something to alleviate the pain and helplessness of Hindu widows, who had to live a life of self denial. The women were denied basic pleasures of life, marginalized in the society, often exploited unfairly and treated as a burden by their family. The compassionate heart of Vidyasagar could not take their plight and he made it his mission to improve the quality of life for these helpless women. Ishwar Chandra challenged the Brahminical authorities and proved that widow remarriage is sanctioned by Vedic scriptures.

Vidyasagar took his arguments to the British Authorities and his pleas were heard when the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act, 1856 or Act was decreed on July 26, 1856. To set an example Vidyasagar initiated several matches for child or adolescent widows within respectable families and even married his son Narayan Chandra to an adolescent widow in 1870.

Contributions to Women's Education -

Ishwar Chandra was a keen advocate of education for women. He rightly viewed education as the primary way for women to emancipate themselves from all the social oppression they had to face at the time. He exercised his power and lobbied hard for opening of school for girls and even outlined a suitable curriculum that not only did educate them but also enabled them to be self-reliant through

Coordinator
R. Ghosh

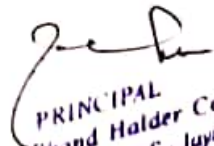
Jee Pr
PRINCIPAL
Jhruha Chand Halder College
P.O.- B. Barua, P.S.- Jagmagar
South 24 Parganas, Pin- 743372

vocations like needlework. He went door to door, asking family heads to allow their daughters to be enrolled in schools. Throughout Bengal, he opened 35 women's schools and succeeded in enrolling 1300 students. To support women education Vidyasagar organized a fund called Nari Siksha Bhandar. He supported John Elliot Drinkwater Bethune to establish the first permanent girls' school in India, the Bethune School, on May 7, 1849.

He frequently campaigned for women's education through contemporary English and Bengali publications like the Hindu Patriot, Tattwabodhini Patrika and Somprakash. He not only opened 35 girls schools across Bengal, enrolling 1,300 girls successfully, but also helped JE Drinkwater Bethune establish the first permanent girls' school in India, the Bethune School, in 1849.

Vidyasagar expressed his ideas through regular articles he wrote for periodicals and newspapers. He was associated with prestigious journalistic publications like 'Tattwabodhini Patrika', 'Somprakash', 'Sarbashubhankari Patrika' and 'Hindu Patriot'.

Coordinator
Bhosh,


PRINCIPAL
Dhruva Chand Halder College
P.O.- D. Barasat, P.S.- Jaynagar
South 24 Parganas, Pin- 743372