



Role of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in Education

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Abstract:

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was born on September 26, 1820, in the village of Birsingh in present-day Midnapore district. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was the father of Bengali prose. He chose the path of reform by eliminating various unscientific customs and practices in society. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's role as a social reformer, especially in the areas of child education, women's education, and his role against superstition, is still significant today. An analysis of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's lifelong endeavors reveals that the sole objective of all his work was the attainment of human welfare and human development. He never walked an unscientific path, always moving forward in the service of the needs of a rational and realistic society. Spirituality could not influence his life. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's work is of immense significance not only in the context of the 19th-century Renaissance but also in the present day. His conscious approach can be observed in various aspects such as child education, women's education, moral development of children, social issues, language education etc. His work in the 19th century in promoting children's education and women's education remains relevant today. The given research paper attempts to review the relevance of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's work to the present day.

Key words: Social Reformer, Child Education, Women Education, Women Empowerment, Moral education, Mother Language.

I. Introduction

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was born on September 26, 1820, in the village of Birsingha in the present-day Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal, India. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's father was Thakurdas Bandyopadhyay and his mother was Bhagavati Devi. Ishwar Chandra Bandyopadhyaya was the first name of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, which was given to him by his grandfather. His contributions to social reform and the expansion of education remain relevant even today.

Objectives:

1. To understand the extent of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's contribution to the field of child education.
2. To understand the extent of her contribution to women education and its expansion.
3. To know how relevant his works are in the present day, i.e. in the 21st century.

II. Discussion

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar studied in his village, Birsingh, at Kalikanta Chattopadhyay Mahashay's school from the age of five to eight and moved to Kolkata at the age of nine. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar began his studies in his village and subsequently moved to Kolkata to continue his education. He completed all his studies at Sanskrit College (Mukherjee, 2022). Subsequently, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar joined the teaching profession at Fort William College and Sanskrit College. He was involved in teaching for five years at Fort William College and almost nine years at Sanskrit College. Along with teaching, he handled administrative and other important responsibilities.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's role in social reforms and educational reforms is immense. He took several initiatives to eliminate social prejudices such as polygamy (De, 2020), child marriage, etc. Analyzing the overall field of education of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, it can be seen that he gave special importance to the mother tongue Bengali and wrote textbooks to expand the education of children and to acquire knowledge of education. Ishwar Chandra Banerjee's Barnaparichoy Part I and Barnaparichoy Part II are very significant in the field of children's education. Barnaparichay books are highly significant for a child's holistic development, and particularly in the field of language learning. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar played a pivotal role in establishing the Normal School for teachers. He established schools in various districts (Dubey, 2020).

Many educationists have created various types of textbooks for children's education. Every country is particularly conscious about the education of its children, because these children will build the country in the future. If a country does not give importance to children, then that country cannot progress because these children are the ones who will build the country in the future. The books on child education written by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar are not just about language learning or mother tongue education; he has highlighted everything about the society of that time, which can be learned through study, about the society, the country and the state. In his book *Varnaprichoy*, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar presents the psychologically Bengali Alphabet, 12 vowels and 40 consonants (Adhikary and bhardwaj, 2026) and sentence structure for children in a grammatically correct manner. Through the books on child education authored by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, children will be able to acquire language skills; similarly, they will be able to learn from various aspects of society and thereby shape their own personalities.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's *Barnaparichay* books are highly essential for the cognitive, social, and moral development of children or all round development of children (Mondal, 2018). An analysis of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's two *Barnaparicha* books reveals numerous characteristics. An analysis of the two *Barnaparichay* books reveals that he was deeply conscious of the field of child education. The characteristics observed in Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's book for children's education, *Barno Porichoy* are as follows:

- i. Drawing upon psychological insights, *Barnaparichay* was written to foster the holistic development of the child.
- ii. The two *Barnaparichay* books feature highly familiar aspects of society, enabling children to acquire knowledge about their social environment alongside learning their mother tongue.
- iii. The language in *Barnaparichay* is presented in a simple and straightforward manner, making it easier for children to learn and grasp everything.
- iv. In the books *Barnaparichay*, special emphasis has been placed on character formation and the development of morality in children.
- v. An awareness of modern education and modern society can be observed in the two *Barnaparichay* books.

The obstacles to women education in the nineteenth century were multifaceted. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar realized that unless the superstitions prevalent in society were eradicated, the expansion of women education would never be possible. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar played a pivotal role in the field of women's education (Roy, 2020). Overcoming multifaceted social, political, and religious obstacles, she played a particularly effective role in the expansion of women's education.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's contributions to women's education and its expansion remain remarkably relevant today. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar faced multiple societal obstacles to women's education, but he deviated from his goal. He worked tirelessly to eradicate social superstitions. He undertook multifaceted initiatives to eradicate the superstitions that prevailed within the female society of that era. The fundamental concept behind establishing *Nari Shakti Bhandar* is noteworthy (Deb, 2020). His ideas regarding teacher education in the nineteenth century are significant. It is highly essential to present the initiatives undertaken by Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar for women's education.

- i. He established multiple schools for women education.
- ii. He has built and provided financial support to schools in several places, not only for girls in the city but also for girls in the villages.
- iii. In the 19th century, in a male-dominated society, women education was not practiced and was not given importance. In this regard, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar went door to door and established relationships with parents, encouraging girls to come to school.
- iv. Upon joining the Bethune College, Vidyasagar played a pivotal role in the field of women's education.
- v. He undertook multifaceted initiatives to eliminate the social barriers hindering women's education.
- vi. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar did not merely think about women's education; he was also conscious of how to empower them.

III. Conclusion

In the present era, the field of child education faces numerous challenges, including poverty, health issues, gender inequality, child labor, and child trafficking (Bhunia and Sikdar, 2023). The graceful and well-organized education system in which we stand today owes a significant contribution to the initiatives of Vidyasagar. His endeavors of the nineteenth century remain remarkably relevant today. His contribution to the fields of child education and women education is significant.

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