



COLLECTED THOUGHTS OF GREAT EDUCATORS: THE WEAPON OF SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

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ABSTRACT

We, the individuals are the central part of a Society where our development fosters the entire development of the society. Education hits the process of social change by changing the mindset of individuals. Proper education establishes social equalities; it provides equal opportunities to individuals irrespective of caste, class, creed and social backgrounds. It also enables students to get rid of social rigidity and teaches them to lead a healthy peaceful life. India is the galaxy of great individuals who have made great contributions in progressing the society and all of them highlighted the role of education to fulfil the dream of social advancement. A pivotal part of social development is women empowerment which not only broaden the scope of women education but also motivates women to protest against several social violences. Present study is an attempt to explore major thoughts of some eminent personalities regarding social and educational development through which the moto of national development can be achieved.

KEYWORDS: *society, social advancement, education, women empowerment, great educationalists*

INTRODUCTION

From the earlier period of history, education is constantly working as one of the most powerful weapons to modify and reshape our society and social thoughts. A true education has the power to purify our body, mind and soul. Traditional concept of education only provides students the opportunity to achieve some degrees by enhancing their intellectual thoughts whereas a true education can ensure the process of all round development among individuals and also secure the entire development of our society. The concept of ideal education propounded by John Milton creates a platform through which a new universe will be generated (Maji and Saha, 2012). It is the pivotal fact of human development around the globe that a good education has the power to purify us as well as our thoughts. Rabindranath Tagore has also laid emphasis on education as the pathway of social development of learners through which they can lead their life with social connectivity and cooperation (Mondal and Gayen, 2021). Pandit et al. (2016) introduced Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam as the combined mind of science and spirituality who believed the thought 'simple living high thinking'. Gayen et al. (2021) also stated Dr. Kalam in their study as the motivational youth icon who is really influential for young minds to serve for the nation. The name Matthew Arnold teaches us that it is not possible to attain perfection by one strata of a society unless the others are carried along in seeking that particular goal (Adhikari and Saha, 2021a). By summarizing the thoughts and beliefs of great educators, it can be said that education is the most reliable tool that helps individuals to become good and responsible citizen.



OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The present study intends to explore an overview on the major thoughts of great educators as the key weapon of the social advancement. The authors also focused on making a short review on the basis of thoughts and beliefs of some great educators who have dedicated themselves in the service of mankind throughout their lives. They also highlighted the part of women empowerment in several aspects in the present study.

COLLECTED THOUGHTS OF SOME EDUCATIONALISTS FOR SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT

Saha and Maji (2013) conducted a study entitled, “*Remembering the Ancient Master of Education: Twentieth First Century Reception of Sri Aurobindo*” to explore the educational thoughts of Sri Aurobinda. India is blessed with so many stars in the galaxy of education; Sri Aurobinda is one of them. The Indian history of education is the witness of endless effort and dedication of Sri Aurobinda in the achievement of perfect goals of human life. He has treated child education as the most constructive part of child development because an ideal education must be befitting with the shifting demands of the world. Sri Aurobinda puts emphasis on the integral education and child learning in the perfect air of freedom. He believed that good education or elemental education should always be child-centred where liberty is the preliminary condition of child learning. Saha and Maji (2013) analysed the educational views of Herbert Spencer in their study entitled, “*Locating the Antique Master of Education: Twenty First Century Reception of Herbert Spencer*”. As an experimentalist his thoughts and ideas of education is thoroughly experimental. According to him, attempts should be made so that students can be facilitated with scientific discovery throughout the process of teaching-learning. Spencer’s pedagogical approach of student learning is still widely applied in this 21st century. Teachers should follow the maxims of teaching while teaching the students such as known to unknown, definite to indefinite, empirical to rational, concrete to abstract etc. Spencer has stated the basic aim of education as the preparation for complete living and also emphasized the necessity of ‘science’ in the entire education system.

Roy and Saha (2021) carried out a study entitled, “*The Monk Who Preached Education: Amalgamating Educational and Social Thoughts of Swami Vivekananda*”. The individual where the human soul and the spiritual soul overlap each other is the name Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji inspired the youths with courage and confidence and has taken place in the hearts of all Indians as well as the Westerns. His thought regarding man making education is a reliable way of development and modification of human character. He has also emphasized mass education and women education to make a better-balanced society with efficient individuals. He has treated Self-realization as a fundamental factor for students’ overall development with the help of an ideal teacher. Swamiji also dreamed for a world of humanization where all the individuals are connected with the bond of brotherhood. Adhikari and Saha (2021b) highlighted the teaching approach of Maria Montessori in their study entitled, “*Rationalizing Maria Montessori’s Teaching Methods in Global Contexts: ‘When Education met a femme reformatrice’*”. Maria Montessori was an eminent educationalist who had introduced a new way to carry out early childhood education according to the needs of those children. She strongly opposed the traditional concept of bookish education. Absolutely she focused on children centric approach so that children can learn with freedom. Children should be provided such environment where they are able to learn as per their own terms. This auto education or self-education is more beneficial if the concept of sense training is included in teaching-learning process. Her attempt to establish children’s house is still a crucial part of child learning in this 21st century. Montessori’s thoughts regarding education can satisfy the growing needs or requirements of the learners worldwide. Doctor Montessori supported scientific approach in education; she used her medical, pedagogical and anthropological knowledge for assessing children’s progress, development and learning.

Adhikari and Saha (2021c) highlighted the contributions of some social reformers in the age of Bengal renaissance in their study “*And There Was Light: Renaissance and the Pioneers of Education*”. These personalities like Raja Rammohun Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, David Hare, Henry Louis- all have tried to amalgamate Indian and Western education to eradicate social evils and also fought relentlessly in socio-cultural movements to confirm the path of Bengal renaissance. India is grateful to them for getting the opportunities to make the society free from several social boundaries, customs and traditions that were the common obstacles in the developmental stages of society. Our society and education are closely related to each other; society reflects its rules, customs, traditions and norms in the pages of education. These social reformers have selected the spread of education as the most significant weapon to make a new foundation of future India that will be free from all the negativity and also make people able to destroy their stereotype thoughts which are responsible for the degradation of our society.

Adhikari and Saha (2021d) made a qualitative discussion about Nel Noddings in their study “*Life, Works and Philosophy of Nel Noddings*”. She is hailed worldwide for her ethics of care and her life philosophy directly



reflects her educational philosophy. This concept of care is very much significant in an educational context in special reference to the teacher-student relationships. This caring relation enables students to strengthen the base of moral education. Adhikari and Saha (2022a) provided a clear explanation of the sketch of Mary Wollstonecraft in their study “*Deconstructing Mary Wollstonecraft: Reconstructing Modern Woman*”. This woman has contributed a ton in female empowerment in order to advance the society. She was not only an active feminist but also a modern philosopher, religious thinker and political activist. She fought for securing equal rights of women in the society and pushed up those oppressed women for the betterment of their overall status. She argued that education should not be like which makes women inefficient and frivolous; rather attempts should be made so that women can be benefited with the same advantages and opportunities that men receive. It is helpful for women in both of their personal and professional lives. Adhikari and Saha (2022b) also stated that every generation of feminists has gone back to re-examine Wollstonecraft in order to reinterpret her significance in social movements. Wollstonecraft has emerged a new beginning in the chapter of women empowerment with her best creation ‘*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*’ (Adhikari and Saha, 2022c) which was a ‘*revolution in female manners*’.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AS A PART OF SOCIAL PROGRESS

One of the most important parts of social progress or advancement is increasing the graph of women participation in each and every field of society. Their own efforts to get rid of various social evils are beneficial for them to make them established in every sphere of society such as education, politics, social service, occupation and so on. Unfoldment of their hidden potentialities will be easier if the entire mass can realize their importance in the development of society because it is the central part of social sustainability. The mechanism of sustaining our society enables us for further improvement of the society and also it can protect our world (Halder et al., 2022). There are lots of committees, commissions and Constitutional provisions that secure women’s positions in the society and reduce the scope of gender inequalities. Adhikari and Saha (2021e) made a clear discussion about women participation in education and politics in special reference to 21st century. Education is the best means to make women free from social boundaries that are harmful for them and also for the society. Women are like a wing of a bird without which the society cannot fly as per the requirements. Educating women is the pathway of women empowerment through which women’s political participation can be increased.

If we look back the last few decades, it can be seen that women’s position in social context has changed a lot in different dimensions. There was a time when women engagement in politics was literally a dream; people could not think about it. But in respect to present scenario involvement of women in political perspective is quite normal and expected to the society. Education has truly the ability to eliminate several kinds of violence from the society. A well-planned education can make women able to participate in political movements; it enables women to be vocal so that they can protest against any kind of unpleasant facts in the society. While scrolling the pages of Indian history it is understood that today’s India is grateful to those women educators of India who are lesser known but had a vast contribution in the refreshment and modification of our society. Adhikari and Saha (2021f) put light on some lesser-known eminent women educators as well as reformers in their study such as Durgabai Deshmukh, Anutai Wagh, Tarabai Modak, Pandita Ramabai etc. They all are pioneers of women empowerments who set a new milestone in the path of social service. They have tried to excel the society by their help and care to the huge number of rural and tribal women who belonged to the backward communities. She was Maria Montessori, the ‘woman of science’ who was a militant advocator of women’s emancipation and social medicine (Adhikari and Saha, 2021g). Another personality contributing in women empowerment is Savitribai Phule, who raised her voice against child marriage, feticide, infanticide, *Sati*, caste discrimination etc to make women free from slavery (Gorain and Sen, 2021). Today feminism is a widely discussed issue in multiple dimensions of research but the seed of feminism was implanted a long time earlier. They made the social environment where every woman can take breath in a secure and peaceful way. In the societies where the Muslim women are deprived, education enables them to be superior by proving economic or financial stability (Hossain and Saha, 2013). The main problem of feminists is that most of the believers are women (Adhikari and Saha, 2021h). Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria Montessori and Nel Noddings- these three women are the pillars of education who strengthen the foundation of women empowerment in every aspect of life (Adhikari and Saha, 2023). The rights of equality as well as equity has been increased in Indian context by the great hand of our educators and social reformers who have contributed a lot throughout their life in the betterment of future society.

CONCLUSION

There are lots of evidences of women victimization in Indian history but gradually women are fighting for their own rights and trying to explore themselves in the broader area of the society. Women engagement is a positive sign of the establishment of a sustainable society. From the ancient period India is blessed with various personality who have dedicated themselves in the betterment of the society by making it free from social evils and



superstitions. In case of changing the orthodoxy of society, the names of educators as well as social reformers are enrolled in the priority list for their endless effort and will power in social excellence (Sutradhar, et al., 2023). Education is the most valid and reliable means to reach the goal of social advancement. Hence, on the basis of these collected thoughts of eminent educationalists elaborated in the present study, it can be concluded with the sense of Nelson Mandela's words that, "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world."

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