

The Role of Vidyasagar in Social Reform and the Emancipation of Women

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ABSTRACT

As Rammohan persuaded his very own huge segment compatriots and the public authority that Sati had no approval of the Shastras, Iswarchadra additionally needed to disclose to his kin that widow-remarriage was allowed by Hindu shastras. What's more, he found a verse from the Parashara Samhita, an antiquated legitimate book in Sanskrit which supported widow remarriage. He was amazingly viable and presented an appeal on fourth October 1855, mentioning the public authority to pass a law eliminating all snags to widow remarriage. The Bill attracted consideration of the reformers different territories. Maharashtra and South gave brief help. The bill was passed and became law in 1856. After his achievement in getting the Widow Remarriage Act passed, Vidyasagar started his mission against polygamy especially against the act of 'kulinism', among the Bengali brahmins. Vidyasagar, put before the general population and the Government the issue of 'Kulinism' and polygamy. Yet, the flare-up of the Mutiny in 1857 controlled the then Government to meddle anymore in the parties of their subjects. The issue remained along these lines until autonomy when the Hindu Code Act redressed it. In any case, Vidyasagar proceeded with his endeavors to uncover the shades of malice of polygamy. In this paper I propose to exhibit the role of Vidyasagar in social reform and the emancipation of women in modern period.

Keywords: Social, Upliftment, Emancipation, Sati, Education

Article Publication

Published Online: 17-Jan-2021

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Social change and the liberation of ladies continually used to connect with his psyche. Close to widow-remarriage and Kulinism, he checked out ladies establishment of some of young ladies schools. He tossed his entire soul in the reason for Female training, and the prominent Drink Water Bethune invited him and welcomed him to be the Honorary Secretary of the Bethune School in December 1850. He proceeded as privileged secretary of the Bethune School Committee till March 1869. Sir Fredrick Halliday, the primary Lieutenant Governor of Bengal appreciated Vidyasagar's work and on the passing of Bethune, he put the Bethune School under Vidyasagar's administration. Master Dalhousie supported the expansion of ladies schooling in India and he made a yearly gift of Rs.8000 for a very long time for the upkeep of the Bethune School. Vidyasagar kept on checking out Women's schooling and was related with the establishment of some of young lady's schools in the region including one at Birsingha, his place of birth.

Vidyasagar got appreciations from all quarters of life. The most extravagant zamindars pleased to respect him. Sir Cecil Beadon, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal frequently counseled him. His pay from books and press was given to the help of anguish and pain, many helpless widows relied upon him for their support, and many vagrants owed him their schooling. His name turned into a family word in Bengal. Individuals called him as 'dayar Sagar' or for example the expanse of generosity. The Government of Bengal formally recognized the liberality and significance of him in 1866.

...and twenty years after his retirement, the Government of India honoured itself by bestowing a decoration of the Order of the Indian Empire on the greatest Indian then living. (Dutt, 1975, p.XI)

Vidyasagar's book on polygamy was translated into English and German. In 1864, the society of German elite sent an address of honour to Vidyasagar. In the same year, he was made an honorary member of the Royal Asiatic Society of U.K. On the 1st January in 1877, Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal granted him a certificate of honour. (Adhikari, 1980, p.11)

In the last period of Vidyasagar's life, he became alienated from his friends and relatives and ultimately turned to be a lone traveller. The people were found to be exploiting his benevolent character. He went to reside in Karmatar, about 150 miles away in the 'Santal Parganas' and there he found peace in the company of 'Santal' men and women. He used to give them homeopathic medicine. The Santals took him as a friend, an honest benefactor and a good doctor. But by the end of 1880, he came to live in his own house at 36 Badurbagan Street, Calcutta and the end came on 29th July 1891 midnight at the early morning of 30th July. Vidyasagar had given himself selflessly to the service of man. To most people he remained 'dayar sagar' or the ocean of kindness. Nemai Sadhan Bose has rightly said

Individualism, dynamism, manliness, realism and a materialistic outlook were some of the salient traits of his character. He was the living embodiment of simplicity, honesty and integrity. His fearlessness, courage and determination became legendary in his own life time and are still recalled. (Bose, 1976, p.230)

The most exceedingly terrible to experience the ill effects of the social disasters and biases of our general public were the ladies and accordingly, all the significant social change had the regular destinations to liberate them from their subjugation. Vidyasagar battled with every one of his gifts and energies against the social wrongs of our general public against ladies. He gave his all endeavors in the government assistance of the ladies of our country and it created such a ruckus which was obscure to Indian culture. Of the multitude of endeavors, Iswarchandra Vidyasagar made toward this path, the most significant was his mission of widow-remarriage development. The distress and warmth of kid widow profoundly used to influence him as that of the Sati had influenced Rammohan Roy. The sati ceremony was annulled in 1829; however the kid widows were made to live the excess piece of their lives in unbending gravity and plain way.

Thinking back, we locate that preceding Vidyasagar's endeavor of presenting widow-remarriage; the predicament of kid widows and their parsimonious lifestyle were being denounced by Raja Rammohan Roy and his nearby partners of Atmiya Sabha. It is said that as ahead of schedule as 1756,

Raja Rajballav of Dacca tried to introduce it in the local Hindu Society...For this; he consulted the learned Pandits of Dravida, Tailanga, Benaras, Mithila and other places. They all gave the opinion that widow marriage was permissible under certain circumstances. But his efforts could not succeed owing chiefly to the opposition of the more favourable Maharaja Krishnachandra of Nadia and his Pandits, regarded as the custodians of orthodox Hindus. (Gupta, 1977, p.209)

Gautam Chattopadhyay has written,

Prosunno coomer Tagore, brought out the 'Reformer' as a weekly on 5th Feb. 1831 was a supporter of the liberal view of Rammohan Roy and from 1830 he became a Trustee of the Brahmo Samaj. The weekly was a champion of social reforms of women's emancipation was a favorite theme of the columnists and the editor...There are also slashing attacks on polygamy as practiced by so called upper-caste Hindu orthodoxy...Miserable condition of young widows also attracted the notice of 'Reformer'. It is well to remember that the letters and similar other articles brought out by the Derozians, full two -decades before the great Vidyasagar launched his famous crusade for widow-marriage. (Chattopadhyay, 1978)

The Bengal onlooker an organ of the Derozians, proposed in its July issue of 1842 that Hindu Shastras didn't contain any lawful bars to widow-remarriage. Yet, it was not until Vidyasagar took up the reason for widow-remarriage that it turned into a noteworthy and persuade, issue. The beset state of Hindu widows was one of the principal indecencies to draw his consideration. He composed an article on the shades of malice of youngster remarriage in the Sarvasubhakari Patrika in August 1850. He realized that the conventional Hindu people group followed the occupants of their Sastras thoroughly thus he considered giving a sastric verification, he spent his days and evenings in Sanskrit school in concentrating all the antiquated Sastras of the Hindus. At that point in 1853, he abruptly found what he needed the 'Parasar-Sanhita'. It was as per the following,

Naste Mrite Prabrajite Klibecha Patite Patan
Panchaswapatsu Narinan Patiranyu bidhiyate

which means, on receiving no news of a husband, on his death, on his turning an ascetic and on his being found impotent or on becoming outcastes, a women is permitted to take another husband under any of these situations.

Thus, on finding the sloka, he wrote a composition on widow-remarriage, got into print and distributed amongst all class of people. He also sent a copy to Raja Radhakanto Deb who had a great influence with the Hindu community. Radhakanto Deb arranged a

meeting for discussions but in the debate that followed, Vidyasagar stood alone against the great number of people and scholars. But Vidyasagar's writing stirred the society to its very depth and created heated controversies amongst people. Immediately after the publication of his pamphlet many contradictory pamphlets of articles and poems were issued. The topics became the subject matter of praise and parody and a household topic of discussion. Vidyasagar welcomed and relished the controversies. He

...did not declare war with social institutions but with social aberrations. By defending the widows' right to remarriage, he was not insisting on all widows' rights to remarriage but removing their present liabilities, which arose from erroneous interpretation of religion. (Chattopadhyay, 1978, p.62)

He used the press for persuading the individuals and composed another article in *Tattvavodhini Patrika* in January 1855. In the exact year in October, he distributed his subsequent flyer named if widows should be hitched. His compositions and endeavors prevailing with regards to making interest among taught youngsters. Other than the acclaimed *Tattvavodhini Patrika* and *Sarvasubhakari Patrika* (1850), various different diaries and periodicals established during this period. Among such diaries were *Jnanaarunoday* (1852), *Sulabh Patrika* (1853) of Keshab Chandra Sen, *Masik Patrika* (1854), *Vidyotsahini Patrika* (1855), and so on. *Umeshchandra Mitra's Bidhaba Bibaha* (natak) in 1856 turned out to be well known. Be that as it may, Radhakante Deb and his customary Hindu devotees proceeded with their dissent against this. Then again, the Derozians had consistently been supporting Vidyasagar and approached to help him. In fourth October, 1855, Vidyasagar presented an appeal in the interest of the Hindus of Bengal, endorsed by many recognized men of Bengal to the Legislative Council of India. The customary retaliated and two counter petitions, endorsed by 33,000 residents were presented by Radhakanto Deb and his supporters. It is said that at the very least 40 petitions had been submitted against the reason. Be that as it may, J.P. Award, an individual from the - Legislative Council showed incredible drive in the issue and esteemed Vidyasagar's letter more than resistances letters lastly on 26th July, 1856, the marriage of Hindu widows. The Act was passed however the individuals didn't approach to wed their bereft girls or sisters. The customary Hindus began manhandling Vidyasagar from various perspectives. There were some actual assaults on him and even endeavors were made to kill him. For a very long time, no one dared to step up to the plate. At that point on seventh December, 1856, the principal widow marriage occurred. *Srishchandra Vidyaratna*, an understudy of Sanskrit College, himself a single man wedded a long term bereaved young lady name *Kalimoti Debi*. Vidyasagar needed to spend a decent amount of cash on the marriage. The function of the marriage made an extremely incredible sensation and Vidyasagar needed to take police help. However, for Vidyasagar and his companions, it was a day of win. Later Vidyasagar's just child *Naryanchandra* needed to wed a widow and Vidyasagar turned out to be upbeat and gave his consent.

Pandit *Shivnath Shastri* entered the field with Vidyasagar with veritable enthusiasm. They saved youngster widows and orchestrated their insurance until they were parted with in marriage. In any case, Vidyasagar needed to pay costs of the marriage and endowments to the spouses. As he began paying the costs of the marriage, spouses regularly consented to wed youthful widows just for material addition. Still then the development was not acknowledged by the larger part and Vidyasagar got into substantial obligations.

In spite of this, he remained to the last day of his life the unbeaten champion of the renaissance, and he saw its steady advance in all parts of India. (Chattopadhyay, 1978, p.87)

The *Arya Samaj* established by *Dayanand Saraswati* empowered marriage of widows in the Punjab. In Western India, the development was driven by *Vishnu Parashuram Pandit* (1827-1876) and *Mahadeo Govind Ranade* (1842-1901). The previous converted into Marathi Vidyasagar's book on widow marriage and upheld the reason for social change in the everyday *Induprakish*.

After his accomplishment in getting the widow-remarriage Act passed, Vidyasagar started his mission against polygamy, especially against the act of kulinism; among the Bengali Brahmins. We realize that already, the *Atmiya Sabha* talked about the issue in their gatherings and *Rammohan Roy* assaulted the training in 1822 of every a booklet named 'Present day Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Female'. In this booklet he cited for his position *Yagnavalkya's* conditions for requiring a second spouse under certain predefined conditions. Yet, he was unable to seek after the issue with same energy as *Sati* was still to be killed and he stayed occupied with that issue. Close to him,

The *Samachar Darpan* of the thirties published many letters, some allegedly from females themselves, asking for its abolition. In 1855, the *Suhrid Society* petitioned the Legislative Council for a law abolishing the evil practice of unlimited marriage among the kulin Brahmins. One hundred and twenty seven petitions from Bengal and one from Benaras followed, including those of the Maharajah of Burdwan and the Rajahs of Nadia and Dinajpur. The petition of *Rajmohan roy*, a zamindar of Dacca, enclosed opinions of numerous pundits in favour of abolition. *Iswarchandra* corroborated them in a separate petition. (Chattopadhyay, 1978, p.65)

Simultaneously, Ramprasad Roy, child of Rammohan Roy reproduced his dad's 'Brief Remarks with respect to Modern Encroachments on the Ancient Rights of Females'. Then again, Radhakanto Dev and others presented a counter-appeal on first January 1856 citing writings from 'Manu' and from other Sastras. Be that as it may, the episode of the Mutiny in 1857 limited the then Government to meddle anything else in the parties of their subjects. Again in 1866, another request was presented by Vidyasagar, endorsed by 21,000 residents to the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Mr Cecil Beadan. He saw the request thoughtfully and guaranteed official help to Vidyasagar's work and left the issue to time and to spread of instruction all in all as Radhakanto Deb of Dharma Rakshini Sabha and other universal Hindus presented a counter-appeal contending that Government ought not meddle with the subject of Kulinism and polygamy. Strangely Bankimchandra Chatterji, the acclaimed writer of Bengal was perhaps the sternest pundit of Vidyasagar's perspectives on polygamy. In his 'Bangadarshan Patrika', he communicated his perspectives that he thought about the act of polygamy as an evil practice however didn't care for the possibility of Government's impedance in killing socio-strict disasters long pervasive in India society. He with Radhakanto Deb contended that if polygamy was awful for the Hindus, it was similarly awful for the Muslims.

Vidyasagar, hence, chose to awaken the sensations of the individuals by utilizing his pen as it was obvious to him that he didn't have anything to anticipate from the Government. In 1871, he distributed his book 'Bahu-Bibaha' trailed by one more second track in 1873, giving a record of the monstrous outcomes of Kulin polygamy with suitable references to Sastric dissatisfaction with regards to it. Yet, as Government was hesitant to make any stride against the training, the issue continued as before until autonomy when the Hindu code Act corrected it. For the duration of his life, Vidyasagar served the bothered and his compassion toward the powerless widows drove him to think to give them financial help. Nabinchandra Sen with the assistance of Vidyasagar and Justice Dwarkanath Mitra, begun the 'Hindu Family Annuity Fund' in 1872 with a perspective on giving financial assistance to the upkeep of widows and their youngsters.

To finish up I might want to say that, Vidyasagar had consistently been antagonistic to kid marriage and had composed an article on the indecencies of early marriage in the 'Sarvasubhakari Patrika' in 1850, was passed in 1860 at his asking which set up ten as the time of young lady to be given in marriage. He, at the end of the day, gave his own girls in marriage when they crossed girls and would not give them in marriage till they were eleven. Every one of these shows that Vidyasagar was a man with present day viewpoint had genuine profound worry for the government assistance of the ladies of our general public. He needed to change the conduct of our general public against all predominant fiendish practices. He, at the end of the day, demonstrated them by acting in his own life. Rabindranath Tagore summarized, his entire extraordinary trademark in two valuable expressions, *ajaya paurusha*, *akshaya manushyatva* for example strong masculinity and permanent mankind.

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