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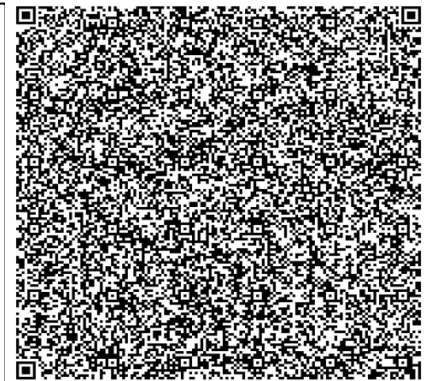
Sister Nivedita's Educational Vision and Her Contribution to Women's Upliftment in Bengal (1895–1911)

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Abstract

This qualitative study delves into the significant contributions of Sister Nivedita to women's education in Bengal, challenging the conventional portrayal of her as merely a devout promoter of Mother Kali worship. Through historical research, the research highlights Nivedita's radical philosophical concepts and her relentless dedication to the emancipation of marginalized communities. The study reveals Nivedita's transformative journey from an ideal teacher to a formidable social reformer, emphasizing her innovative educational approaches that defied societal and religious norms. Drawing upon primary sources from the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls' School, the research elucidates Nivedita's vision of education as a cornerstone for nation-building and empowerment. It sheds light on her struggles against social and religious obstacles and her commitment to the holistic development of women through curricular and co-curricular activities. The findings underscore Nivedita's pioneering role in laying the foundation for women's empowerment in Bengal and advocate for further scholarly inquiries into her multifaceted legacy.

Keywords: Sister Nivedita, Women education, Social reform, Marginalized communities, Ramakrishna Sarada Mission.



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Introduction:

The pivotal role of Sister Nivedita in the sphere of Indian education, particularly women's education in Bengal, remains a subject of immense significance and exploration. While conventional portrayals often highlight her as a devout lady promoting the worship of Mother Kali, this study delves deeper into her radical philosophical concepts and her unwavering dedication to the emancipation of the marginalized. By meticulously examining her contributions, this research seeks to shed light on her innovative approaches to education, challenging prevailing societal and religious norms. Through a qualitative exploration grounded in historical research, this article unravels the transformative journey of Sister Nivedita from an ideal teacher to a formidable social reformer. It probes into her vision of education as a cornerstone for nation-building and empowerment, drawing upon primary sources from the Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita

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Girls' School. This article thus aims to offer fresh perspectives on Sister Nivedita's indelible mark on the educational landscape of Bengal, urging further scholarly inquiries into her multifaceted legacy.

Significance of the Study:

This study is of great significance or importance because here attempts have been made to understand the actual contributions of Nivedita in the field of Indian education especially of the women folk. It is also important because instead of the conventional depiction of Nivedita as a highly devoted Hinduised English lady who even encouraged the worship of the mother Kali, a different sight of Nivedita's Philosophical concept has been attempted to be presented especially her radical approaches to all kinds of emancipations of the poor and oppressed people.

Objectives of the Study:

- To identify the effort of Sister Nivedita for women's education in Bengal.
- To explore and analyse the educational practices for women's education in Bengal.

Research Questions:

1. Who was Sister Nivedita and what contributions did she make for the education of women in Bengal?
2. What inspired Sister Nivedita to work for the case of women education in Bengal?

Delimitation:

- This investigation is an attempt to make a proper evaluation of the contribution of Sister Nivedita to education for girls children, child, widows and housewives of poor, middleclass Hindu community of North Calcutta.
- Thus the study will be delimited to the schools established by Sister Nivedita and her contribution to women education in Bengal.

Review of Related Literature:

i. Giri, P. (2021), revealed a study on 'Political Involvement of Sister and is Educational Importance in present Indian Society'. In this research paper, researcher tried to found out about pre-determined goals of Sister Nivedita, her political contribution in India and also to analyze the educational importance of her political thought in present society.

ii. Taraphdar, T. (2018), conducted a study on 'The discovery of India by Sister Nivedita: A guidance of value Education'. The study concluded that path of Sister Nivedita of 'Discovery of India' would lead us towards development of values that would promote self-actualization and self-imagination.



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iii. Jana, S. (2011), conducted a study on ‘Sister Nivedita’s role in J.C Bose’s publication: a historical perspective’. The study explained that the purported reasons of Bose’s non-acknowledgement of Nivedita in his works.

iv. Sahoo, S. (2018), revealed a study on “Women Empowerment in Bengal and Sister nivedia:A sesquicentennial Accolade.” The approach of the study is qualitative. A major finding of the study is the cognitive empowerment of woman, leading ultimately to the overall improvement of her status in a patriarchal society.

v. Boyal, K. (2016), published a study on “contributions of sister nivedita to the Education of women, their empowerment and awakening of nationalism in the early twentieth century Bengal.”The objective of the study is to analyse the educational concepts of nivedita about education in general and especially after the independence of India from foreign rule.The finding of the study is in science education in India have been globally changed.

vi. Basak, S. (2016), conducted a study on “Sister nivedita and women’s education in Bengal in the first decade of the 20th century.” The approach of study is qualitative in nature. The finding of the study is great influenced to the women and women empowerment.

Methodology of the Study:

The present study is qualitative work that involves with historical research. The research was conducted by visiting Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Sister Nivedita Girls’ School.

Research Findings:

Objectives-1- To identify the effort of Sister Nivedita for women’s Education in Bengal

Research Questions- Who was Sister Nivedita and what contributions did she make for the Education of Women in Bengal?

Findings- Sister Nivedita was a creator of constructive education in India. She desired to make a nation based on both men and women strength. Swamiji dreamed of that powerful nation and Nivedita attempted to attain the dream. To work for Indian people, she transforms entirely. From an ideal teacher to a social reformer - the journey was not so smooth. She faces many social and religious obstacles. People of the Hindu religion earlier did not accept her as a teacher of their daughters. They did not want to send their daughter to Nivedita’s school. But by the gentle behaviour, Nivedita overcomes all obstructions. She became an ideal teacher and guide of the girls of her school. She did not care about her comfort and peacefully lived in the small residence of Bagbazar. The summer was unbearable for her because she came from a temperate climate. Nivedita was never disturbed by the circumstance

Objectives-2- To explore and analyze the Educational practices for Women’s Education in Bengal.



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Research Questions- What inspired Sister Nivedita to work for the case of Women Education in Bengal?

Findings- Only knowledge in synthesis is true knowledge. Only knowledge that is true in synthesis yields power of, thought to become new knowledge. Holding itself in its own place, the rightly trained mind projects its own new synthesis. The educated woman should not be less a home-maker than the uneducated. Rather, she should make a finer home. We are educated, not that we may find easier duties but that we may add to ourselves duties that the uneducated never thought of. Submission was the noblest effort of the uneducated woman. Responsibility is rather the call that comes to the educated. To fill a small part in a great whole was the ancient destiny of woman: to create that whole in which her own life is to form a part, is the modern demand upon her.

Discussion of the Contributions to the Field of Knowledge:

Sister Nivedita was a creator of constructive education in India. She desired to make a nation based on both men and women strength. Swamiji dreamed of that powerful nation and Nivedita attempted to attain the dream. To work for Indian people, she transforms entirely. From an ideal teacher to a social reformer - the journey was not so smooth. She faces many social and religious obstacles. People of the Hindu religion earlier did not accept her as a teacher of their daughters. They did not want to send their daughter to Nivedita's school. But by the gentle behaviour, Nivedita overcomes all obstructions. She became an ideal teacher and guide of the girls of her school. She did not care about her comfort and peacefully lived in the small residence of Bagbazar. The summer was unbearable for her because she came from a temperate climate. Nivedita was never disturbed by the circumstances. On a day of May, she brought her students to visit the Museum. She entirely dedicates herself in the worship of humanity. "Nivedita addressed India as 'our nation', and she referred to Indians as 'our people'" (Bhattacharya 2017). When the British Government banned the Swadeshi song, she introduces 'Vande Mataram' as the daily prayer of her school. Nivedita wanted to make a nation in the foundation of education. Education is the perfect means to grow a sturdy society.

Conclusion and Suggestions for the Research:

In this study, the introductory chapter where the topic of the study has been introduced. It is mentioned how Sister Nivedita, a Western lady, came to India as a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and preached the essence of Hindu religion and philosophy. She became a pioneer in the field of women's education as early as 1898, when she opened a girls' school in the orthodox Hindu locality in Calcutta. Review of related literature is dealt with in this chapter. The need of the study undertaken is also dealt with. The research design and method that has been utilized by the researcher for the study, has also been discussed. The life and works of Sister Nivedita are thoroughly discussed.. She was a believer and follower of Advaita Vedanta as his Master



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and applied this philosophy in practice as well. This chapter also highlights how her contemporary great men held high esteem for her and paid their tributes. She contributed immensely through her novel ideas, great oratory and powerful writing. This aspect of her versatile personality is dealt with in this chapter by the researcher. The role of Sister Nivedita as a great educator is highlighted. She was a pioneer in women's education in India. This chapter helps to bring out how sister Nivedita brought in a silent revolution in women's education as she opened a girls school in Calcutta in 1898. The present relevance of Sister Nivedita's contributions is it highlights how her school even after the passage of hundred years is still progressing. The researcher tries to analyse how the principles of Sister Nivedita are still being followed in her school and the modern relevance of her philosophical ideas. The researcher tries to bring out the modern relevance and importance of Sister Nivedita in the present Indian scenario. Recommendations for further research have also been incorporated at the end of this last chapter. As early as 1898, when India was at the height of its agony under foreign rule, sister Nivedita fought against all odds to establish a school to train Indian women so that they could stand on their own feet. A country in which women hardly thought they would come out of their home, what to speak of attending schools, were convinced of the value of women's Education by Nivedita's hard labour. The seed of women empowerment was perhaps first sowed by sister Nivedita in her humble school. One research opens various new directions for further research. Thus study gives rise to many new problems for further researches. Her study has been conducted on Sister Nivedita and women Education in Bengal. So in future several studies should be conducted about Sister Nivedita and several aspects of Sister Nivedita. Besides, the study would be conducted on parents and community's members with same aspect or other aspect that is influence on Sister Nivedita.

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