

**Mugberia Gangadhar Mahavidyalaya**

**Seminar Report**

On

**Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar: A Great Social Reformer  
and Crusader of Women's Empowerment**



**Sponsored by – ICSSR (ERC)**

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

A one-day State level seminar was organized by Mugberia Gangadhar Mahavidyalaya in commemoration of the 200<sup>th</sup> Birth anniversary of the legendary Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, a great social reformer of Bengal. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, one of the most influential social reformers and intellectuals in 19<sup>th</sup>-century India, was born on September 26, 1820. Therefore, the 200<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was celebrated on September 26, 2020.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar played a pivotal role in various fields, including education, women's rights, and social reforms. He championed the cause of women's education and fought against child marriage and the practice of Sati (widow immolation). Vidyasagar also contributed significantly to the Bengali language and literature and played a crucial role in the development of the modern Bengali alphabet.

The 200<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was commemorated by various institutions, organizations, and individuals across India, particularly in West Bengal, where he had a significant impact. The celebrations included seminars, lectures, exhibitions, cultural programs, and discussions to highlight Vidyasagar's contributions and their relevance in contemporary society.

Keeping in mind of the same, Mugberia Gangadhar Mahavidyalaya had arranged a seminar sponsored by ICSSR (ERC) on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019. Many dignitaries were present in the seminar. Prof. Pradosh Nath, Director, Centre for Knowledge Ideas and Development Studies, Kolkata were present as Key note Speaker. Atasi Nanda Goswami of the same Institution had delivered an excellent talk on Vidyasagar's vision on Women Empowerment. Other dignitaries were also delivered nice presentations on overall activities of Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

Bengal. The Secretary Alumni Association Sri Mathuranath Tripathy, Sri Bramhamoy Nanda, GB member, Dr. Swapan Kumar Misra, Principal, Sri Manmatha Nath Das, Social Activist & Educationist, Sri Aswini Kumar Khatua, GB Member and other teachers were present and delivered lecture on the subject. More than 100 participants from different colleges and students were present in the seminar. The seminar was conducted by Dr. Prasenjit Ghosh, HOD, History Department and the vote of thanks were given by Dr. Bidhan Chandra Samanta, HOD, Department of Chemistry.

During the commemorations, Vidyasagar's life, works, and ideologies were revisited and acknowledged by speakers who were present in the seminar in order to understand during the 19<sup>th</sup> century how progressive he was and his visionary nature. The events aimed to create awareness about Vidyasagar's legacy and inspire future generations to uphold his ideals of education, gender equality, and social reform.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was a staunch advocate for women's empowerment and played a crucial role in championing their rights and education during a time when women's access to education and social equality was limited in India. His efforts had a lasting impact on the status of women in society. Here are some key aspects of Vidyasagar's contributions to women empowerment:

1. **Promotion of Women's Education:** Vidyasagar firmly believed in the importance of educating women. He worked tirelessly to establish schools for girls and fought for their right to receive formal education. He was instrumental in opening the doors of learning to women and played a significant role in expanding educational opportunities for them.
2. **Widow Remarriage:** Vidyasagar vehemently opposed the practice of Sati, where widows were expected to immolate themselves on their husbands'

funeral pyres. He actively campaigned against this inhumane tradition and advocated for widow remarriage. His efforts led to the passage of the Widow Remarriage Act in 1856, which legalized the remarriage of widows in India and helped alleviate their social stigma.

3. **Women's Rights and Social Reforms:** Vidyasagar fought for the rights of women in various spheres of society. He challenged prevailing social norms that restricted women's freedom and advocated for their equal rights in matters such as inheritance, property rights, and divorce. His efforts laid the foundation for future movements promoting gender equality and women's rights in India.
4. **Empowering Women through Literature:** Vidyasagar believed in the power of education and literature to bring about social change. He worked on simplifying the Bengali language and made it more accessible to the masses, including women. He wrote textbooks and created literary works that addressed social issues, aimed at enlightening and empowering women.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's relentless efforts to empower women and promote their rights have had a lasting impact on Indian society. His work paved the way for subsequent generations of reformers and activists who continued the struggle for gender equality and women's empowerment in India.

# Some glimpses of the event





















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