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Ranjana Mary Varghese

Crossing Barriers and Breaking Stereotypes to Facilitate the Education of Differently Abled Students: Need of the Hour for Indian Higher Education System

Mangala M, Ravikumar K, B T Sampath Kumar and Srikantaswamy

Accreditation and Quality Assurance in India in the Next Decade

J S Dorothy

Desired Etiquette for the Betterment of Quality in Distance Education System

Ankush L More

Improving Quality of Higher Education in India: An Overview

M Venkaiah Naidu

Let's Keep Up with the Pace of Fast Moving India — Convocation Address

Celebrating 90 Years of University News



Seminar on Vidyasagar and Women Empowerment

A One-day State Level Seminar on 'Vidyasagar and Women Empowerment' was organized on the eve of Bi-Centenary Birth Anniversary Celebration of Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar by Yogoda Satsanga Palpara Mahavidyalaya, Palpara, Purba Medinipur, West Bengal, recently. More than 150 participants participated in the Programme along with the members of teaching and non-teaching staff of the Mahavidyalaya. Dr. Srimati Pandit, Assistant Professor, Department of Bengali invited the distinguished Guests to the Dias and the Seminar was inaugurated by Prof. Jyotirmoy Kar, MLA, Patashpur and Member, Standing Committee of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal. Dr. Mrinal Kanti Das, Head, Department of Bengali and Organising Secretary of the Seminar extended Welcome Address with introducing the distinguished Guests highlighting their credentials with contribution to the present society. Prof. Jyotirmoy Kar, Chief Guest of the Occasion, in his inaugural speech highlighted the unique attributes that were with the Great Personality, Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar which drawn the attention of one and all who was thinking for the cause of societal development. He told the gist of the Childhood happenings of the great social reformer that influenced him a lot. For this, Vidyasagar is recognized as a renowned social reformer even if after two hundred years of his existence in the Bengal Society. In his concluding minute, he thanked the Principal. Dr. P K Mishra, Dr. M K Das, Organising Secretary, Dr. M K Dey and other members of Seminar Organising Committee, all the members of teaching and non-teaching staff for organizing such a wonderful programme to recall the Bi-Centenary Birth Anniversary of the Legendary Figure of Bengal.

A Bulletin on 20th Inter College Sports and Games Championship, 2018-19 organised by Yogoda Satsanga Palpara Mahavidyalaya for Purba Medinipur District with the sponsorship from Department of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal was released by Prof. Jyotirmoy Kar. Prof.(Dr.) Pradipta Kumar Mishra, Principal of the Mahavidyalaya and Organising Chairman of the Seminar offered the Presidential Address of the Inaugural Session of the Seminar. Prof. Mishra, in his Presidential Address viewed that Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, a Key figure of Bengal

Renaissance whose Scholarship and Personality recognised him as a Philosopher, an Academic Educator, a Writer, a Translator, a Publisher, a Reformer and a Philanthropist. He highlighted the significant contributions of Vidyasagar for Hindu Widow's Re-marriage Act, 1856, Expansion of Girls' Education with exploring local popular support and participation in the spread of Mass Education leading to the emergence of the concept; "Women Empowerment" along with stating the State Government Programmes- Self-Defence Training Programme (Sukanya), Kanyashree Prakalpa Scheme w.e.f. October, 2013, Observance of National Girl Child Day w.e.f. 24th January, 2013, Seminars and Workshops on 'Women Empowerment' and the Central Government sponsored Programmes- *Mahila E-haat*, *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao*; One Stop Centre Scheme (*Sakhi*), *Swadhar Greh*, etc. for Women Development and Empowerment in the concluding aspect of his Presidential Address. Dr. Pragna Bhattacharya, Head, Department of Geography of the Mahavidyalaya proposed a Vote of Thanks.

The Technical Session was chaired by Prof. Tushar Chakrabarty, Former Teacher-in-Charge and Head, Department of History of the Mahavidyalaya. Prof. Bani Ranjan De, as the first Speaker of the Session highlighted the contributions of Vidyasagar for upliftment of Women in the Society with focusing on the social reforms- Stopping Child Marriage, Enactment of Widow Re-marriage Act 1856, Stopping many marriages, etc. undertaken by him. Vidyasagar established sixty Girls' Schools with initiating a fund, '*Nari Shiksha Bhandar*' for the cause of Girls' Education and its Expansion in West Bengal, he visualised. In his concluding view, Prof. De remarked that although Vidyasagar was not successful in all his attempts and movements for upliftment in the position of women leading to women empowerment because of time and situational constraints; he lifted a lot to the women during that time when women were neglected in the Society in which the condition of widows were in a very pathetic state. However, his initiatives and bold steps for women empowerment also made the base of women empowerment strong for which it is in a progressing state in India, he emphasised.

Prof. Srutinath Chakraborty, the next speaker of the Session characterised Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

as a broad minded, work committed, dedicated and multi-faceted personality. Out of a good number of entitlements, he proved himself as a benevolent social reformer with having a good number of humanitarian values, Prof. Chakraborty viewed. To him, Vidyasagar was ardent lover of human religion with focusing on 'secular humanism' and 'work culture' which can be achieved through sincerity, simplicity, honesty with confinement to work. For this, equal weightage must be given to both 'men' and 'women' in all respects in order to make the status and position of women par with the status and position of women in the developed Countries like France, Russia, America, etc; he justified. In order to actualise this, Prof. Chakraborty exemplified the Widow Re-marriage Act, 1856 basing on the dogmatic reasons and the act of stopping Child Marriage basing on scientific reasons. However, the multisided personality of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar proved as a strong protest against the blind beliefs, superstitions, social evils to which he crossed to provide the women a better position in the society, which provided a strong base later on and the mission of women empowerment is in the process of women emancipation, he concluded.

Prof. Tushar Chakrabarty summed up the speeches of Prof. De and Prof. Chakraborty, the two distinguished Speakers with justifying the clarification given by Prof. Srutinath Chakraborty in response to the query put forth by Dr. Sheikh Manirul Islam, Associate Professor, B.Ed. Department of the Mahavidyalaya.

The next Session was chaired by Dr. Sheikh Manirul Islam, Associate Professor, B. Ed. Department of the Mahavidyalaya. Dr Mrinal Kanti Das, Head, Department of Bengali emphasised on the modern feminism and the women related futuristic thoughts of Vidyasagar for women empowerment. He stated various examples on modern feminism with reference to the contribution of the great personality for upliftment in the status of women in the society. Prof. Tushar Chakrabarty, Head, Department of History of the Mahavidyalaya presented a historical trace out on the women education leading women empowerment with highlighting the contribution of Vidyasagar for the enlightenment of women with giving a glaring look on the role of Gautam Buddha for women empowerment. Dr Sheikh Manirul Islam, Chairman of the Session concluded the session with appreciating the speeches of the two speakers who focussed on the significant contribution of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar for women. Dr Pragna Bhattacharya, Head, Department of Geography of the Mahavidyalaya presented the report

of the Seminar and Dr. Srimati Pandit, Assistant Professor, Department of Bengali proposed Vote of Thanks.

Conference on Role of Higher Educational Institutions

A two-day National IQAC Conference on 'Role of Higher Educational Institutions in Promoting Lifelong Learning and Inclusiveness' was organised by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the Kristu Jayanti College, Bengaluru, recently. The inaugural ceremony was presided over by Rev Fr. Josekutty P D, Principal of Kristu Jayanti College. The Chief Guest, Prof. S N Hegde, Former Vice Chancellor, University of Mysore stated that Higher Education and research are instrumental in advancement and transfer of productive knowledge to constitute social, economic, cultural and scientific assets of our country. Lifelong learners can be groomed by conscientious teachers by creating exciting and challenging learning environment.

The Keynote Session by Prof. Yagnamurthy Sreekanth, Principal, Regional Institute of Education, Mysuru on 'Dimensions of Inclusive Learning and Teaching' was emphasized on evolving inclusive curriculum design, delivery and assessment methods. He called for collective efforts among educationists to promote inclusive learning and teaching for engaging students in learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all. The next keynote session on 'Effectiveness of Open and Distant Learning in Higher Education' was addressed by Dr. Jose Cherian M Head, School of Education, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore who enlightened the delegates on the types of Open and Distant Learning, its objectives and need today. The session on 'Enhancing Quality through Inclusiveness in Higher Education' was addressed by Dr. Aradhna Yadav, Director, Patel Institute of Science and Management, Bengaluru enlightened the participants on the employability factors through vocational courses and the urgency to make higher education accessible to everyone. The session also put forth a need to revamp the school education system to uplift the society to meet the industrial age.

The session on 'Promoting Lifelong Learning-Future of Higher Education Institution' was chaired by Dr. Ravichandra Reddy, Former acting Director of NAAC and Senior Academic Consultant-EMS. Prof. Anitha Kurup, Dean, School of Social Sciences and Head of Education Programme, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru in the keynote session insisted that we need to focus more on the increased