

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar: 

PHILANTHROPY AND REFORMS



EDITORS:

PROF. (DR.) DEBABRATA DEBNATH | DR. PARIMAL SARKAR
| DR. SANJAY SARKAR | MR. AMIT ADHIKARI

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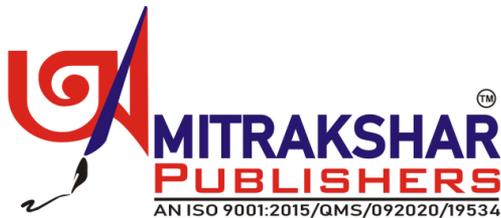
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First Published on 17th July 2024

By

Amitrakshar™
Publishers

Kolkata -700068

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ISBN: 978-93-6008-568-1

(Hardback)

Price: 600.00

Title of the Book: Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar : Philanthropy And Reforms

EDITORS: Prof. (Dr.) Debabrata Debnath | Dr. Parimal Sarkar

Dr. Sanjay Sarkar | Mr. Amit Adhikari

Language: Multiple Languages

Publisher and Type setter: Amitrakshar Publishers

Typeset in Times New Roman and Kalpurush

Page No.: 218

Printed by: Amitrakshar Publishers & M. Enterprises

Website: www.amitrakshar.co.in

Email id: amitraksharpublishers@gmail.com

Phone number: 9735768900

Published by:



Office: 1/199, Jodhpur Park, Gariahat Road, Kolkata- 700068

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PREFACE

The book “**Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar : Philanthropy and Reforms**” offers a comprehensive exploration of the life and contributions of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, one of the foremost social reformers of 19th-century India. Vidyasagar’s efforts towards education, women’s rights, and philanthropy reflect his unparalleled dedication to creating a just and enlightened society. This volume brings together diverse perspectives on Vidyasagar’s legacy, focusing on his multifaceted role as an educator, reformer, writer, and humanitarian.

The Editors—**Prof. (Dr.) Debabrata Debnath, Dr. Parimal Sarkar, Dr. Sanjay Sarkar, and Mr. Amit Adhikari**—have carefully curated essays that connect Vidyasagar’s reformist ideas with contemporary social challenges. The book aims to inspire readers to reflect on Vidyasagar’s relevance in today’s world, where issues of gender equality, education for all, and social justice continue to demand urgent attention.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar’s name resonates with the spirit of Renaissance in Bengal and the broader Indian context of social reforms. His remarkable contributions in establishing women’s rights, particularly through widow remarriage advocacy and opposition to child marriage, changed the societal landscape of his time. His passion for education led to the establishment of several schools, particularly for girls, despite fierce opposition from orthodox groups.

This book explores Vidyasagar’s dual role as a philanthropist and reformer, presenting an in-depth analysis of his transformative efforts. It also delves into his writings and translations, which made complex ideas accessible to the common masses, empowering them through knowledge. The chapters reflect on Vidyasagar’s ability to blend tradition with progressive values, striking a balance that was essential for societal acceptance of reforms.

Through contributions from 15 eminent authors, this volume examines Vidyasagar's legacy from multiple angles, including historical, literary, and philosophical perspectives. The book also attempts to contextualize his thoughts in the framework of modern socio-political challenges, offering valuable insights into how his vision can still guide efforts toward building a more inclusive society today.

The combined efforts of the contributors and editors ensure that this book serves not only as a tribute to Vidyasagar's legacy but also as a call to action for those committed to social change in the present era.

Fifteen contributors discuss the introduction and thematic overview.

Chapter 1: “Barnaparichay” as a Tool for Empowerment: Vidyasagar’s Educational Philosophy and Social Reforms, Authors: Mr. Arabinda Dey & Mr. Amit Adhikari.

This chapter examines how Vidyasagar used “Barnaparichay” to promote literacy and empower marginalized communities. It highlights his educational philosophy rooted in simplicity and inclusiveness, which laid the foundation for social change and emphasized the importance of education as a tool for personal and societal transformation.

Chapter 2: Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar: A Visionary of Cultural Nationalism and Social Reform in Colonial India; Author: Dr. Sk. Abul.

This chapter focuses on Vidyasagar's role in blending cultural nationalism with social reform. It discusses his vision for a progressive society and his efforts to reshape traditions, making them more inclusive, especially for women and lower-caste communities, within the framework of India's colonial context.

Chapter 3: Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar’s Educational Philosophy: The Mark of an Effective Teacher; Author: Avijit Maity.

This chapter delves into Vidyasagar's teaching methods and his philosophy as an educator. It presents him as a model teacher who believed in practical learning, discipline, and compassion, inspiring generations of students and teachers through his progressive approach toward education.

Chapter 4: Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar: Pioneering Modern Women's Education in 19th Century India; Author: Rajesh Senapati.

This chapter highlights Vidyasagar's pioneering role in advocating for women's education. It examines the challenges he faced in establishing schools for girls and promoting women's empowerment through education, thereby setting the foundation for gender equality in India.

Chapter 5: The Role of Sanskrit College in Shaping Modern Bengal: Contributions of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar; Author: Asit Kumar Sau.

This chapter discusses Vidyasagar's transformative influence on Sanskrit College, turning it into a center for modern education. It explores how his reforms in curriculum and administration at the college were instrumental in fostering intellectual growth and shaping the cultural renaissance of Bengal.

Chapter 6: Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar: A Pioneer in the Evolution of Bengali Language and Literature; Authors: Dr. Chandan Mandal & Mira Mandal.

This chapter delves into Vidyasagar's pivotal contributions to the development of Bengali language and literature. His simplified prose writing and editorial work in textbooks made education accessible to the masses, fostering literary growth in Bengal. Vidyasagar's linguistic efforts paved the way for modern Bengali literature, establishing him as a pioneer in the field.

Chapter 7: Bridging Tradition and Modernity: Vidyasagar's Educational Reforms in the 19th Century; Author: Supriya Debnath.

Vidyasagar's educational reforms aimed at bridging tradition and modernity. He introduced Western education alongside traditional knowledge, promoted vernacular learning, and played a key role in establishing educational institutions. His pragmatic vision transformed education, making it inclusive and forward-thinking, while respecting India's cultural heritage.

Chapter 8: Vidyasagar and the Evolution of Educational Reforms in the 21st Century; Author: Dr. Prodip Das.

This chapter examines the contemporary relevance of Vidyasagar's educational ideals. His advocacy for women's education and inclusive policies resonate with modern educational reforms. The principles Vidyasagar championed—equality, accessibility, and practical learning—continue to shape policies, proving that his ideas remain crucial in the 21st-century educational landscape.

Chapter 9: Iswarchandra Vidyasagar: The Architect of Modern India; Author: Dr. Bula Dey.

This chapter reflects on Vidyasagar's influence in building modern India. His reforms in education, literature, and society challenged deep-rooted traditions and laid the foundation for a progressive, enlightened society. Vidyasagar's relentless efforts helped redefine India's social structure, marking him as one of the architects of modern India.

Chapter 10: The Lasting Legacy of Vidyasagar: Educational Reforms in Modern Perspective; Author: Mousumi Sarkar.

Vidyasagar's legacy in educational reforms remains unparalleled. His vision for gender equality, accessibility to education, and social justice resonates with the principles of modern education. This chapter discusses how his efforts continue to inspire reforms in today's educational system, ensuring inclusive and equitable education for all.

Chapter 11: Breaking Social Barriers and Changing the Educational Landscape for Women by Iswarchandra Vidyasagar; Authors: Samata Kundu, Dr. Jugantar Mishra & Professor (Dr.) Debabrata Debnath.

Vidyasagar's pioneering efforts in promoting women's education were revolutionary for 19th-century India. He challenged orthodox norms and worked tirelessly to establish schools for girls, believing education was key to women's empowerment. Despite societal resistance, his reforms marked a turning point in the educational landscape for women. This chapter explores how his work broke social barriers, setting the stage for gender equality in education and inspiring future generations to advocate for women's rights and access to knowledge.

Chapter 12: Vidyasagar: Modernity on Women Education; Author: Shubhankar Saha & Prof. (Dr.) Arjun Chandra Das.

This chapter delves into Vidyasagar's pioneering efforts to promote education for women in India. It highlights his relentless advocacy, establishing schools for girls, and challenging societal taboos. Vidyasagar's vision of gender equality through education laid the foundation for the gradual empowerment of women in colonial Bengal.

Chapter 13: Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar : Pioneering Educational and Social Reforms in 19th Century India; Author: Dr. Debanjan Das.

This chapter Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, a key figure in 19th-century India, championed educational and social reforms. He modernized the curriculum, advocating for the inclusion of vernacular languages and establishing accessible schools to promote enlightenment. Vidyasagar's influence went beyond education, as he courageously tackled social issues like widow remarriage and the rigid caste system, pushing for a more equitable society. His visionary contributions left an indelible mark, laying the groundwork for progressive change and the upliftment of marginalized communities in India.

Chapter 14: Īswarcandra Vidyāsāgara: Nabajāgaraṇēra Prāṇa Puruṣa; Author: Dr. Sanjit Sarkar.

This chapter portrays Vidyasagar as the soul of the Bengal Renaissance, emphasizing his influence in ushering social and

cultural awakening. It reflects on his moral courage, empathy, and practical approaches that inspired generations to challenge traditional norms and embrace progressive ideas during a time of societal transition.

Chapter 15: Dārśanika Drṣṭibhaṅgitē Īśwarcandra Vidyāsāgarēra Śikṣābhābanā; Author: Sumana Chanda.

This chapter explores Vidyasagar’s educational philosophy from a philosophical standpoint, focusing on his holistic approach toward learning. Vidyasagar believed education should cultivate rational thinking, moral values, and humanistic ideals. The chapter evaluates his contributions in building a comprehensive education system that combined tradition with modernity.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the 15 contributors who enriched this book with their scholarly insights. Their dedication and research made this work a truly collaborative effort, for which we remain ever grateful.

A special word of appreciation is reserved for Dr. Amrita Dutta, founder of Amitrakshar Publishers, Kolkata, for her unwavering support and guidance throughout the journey of this publication. Her belief in this project was instrumental in bringing it to fruition.

We also extend our sincere gratitude to Amitrakshar Publishers, Kolkata for their seamless collaboration and dedication to publishing this book, ensuring it reaches readers who seek to understand Vidyasagar’s ideals and their relevance in today’s society.

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Place: Kalyani

Date: 01.07.2024



বিদ্যার সাগর তুমি বিখ্যাত ভারতে ।
করণার সিঞ্চ তুমি, সেই জানে মনে,
দীন যে, দীনের বন্ধু! —উজ্জল জগতে
হেমাঙ্গির হেম-কান্তি অম্লান কিরণে ।

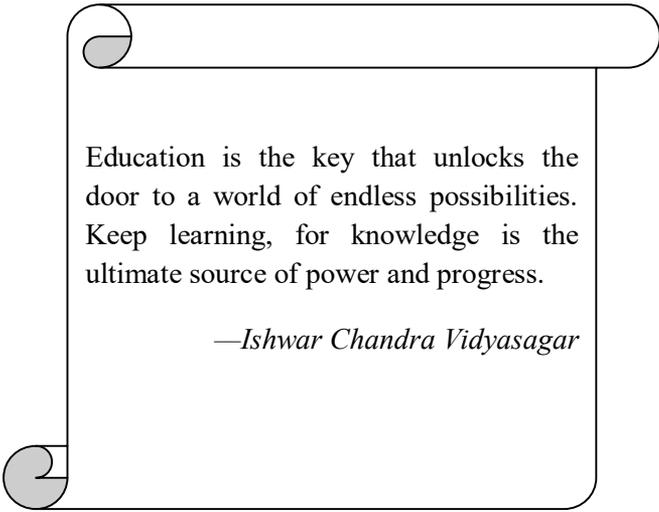
ঈশ্বরচন্দ্র বিদ্যাসাগর সম্পর্কে মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত ।
চতুর্দশপদী-কবিতাবলি— মাইকেল মধুসূদন দত্ত

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Education is the key that unlocks the door to a world of endless possibilities. Keep learning, for knowledge is the ultimate source of power and progress.

—*Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar*



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website.: www.amitrakshar.co.in

Price: ₹ 600.00

ISBN: 978-93-6008-568-1



9 789360 085681

(Hardback)

website.: www.amitrakshar.co.in

Email.: amitraksharpublishers@gmail.com

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