

Rani Rasmani: Women Empowerment and Education

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Abstract: The present study was a Qualitative Approach in Educational Research. The main objectives of this study were to study the women empowerment and education of Rani Rasmani as reflected in her work; to know the relevance of Rani Rasmani's thought and idea on those contexts in the present situation.

The methodology of research was Historical method and the sources examined were the primary and secondary sources, documentary analysis were used. To study led to the following conclusions that she was in the real sense the mother of Bengal Renaissance. With love, sympathy and compassion, she stood by the common man and women in their struggle for self-defence, women's awakening and empowerment and education. She fought the supreme struggle for them against the British government and the superstitious society of that time. This struggle of her has kept him enlightened even today in this 21st century.

Key points: Rani Rasmani, Women Empowerment, Education.

INTRODUCTION

The 'concept of Women Empowerment and Education' is not something new it's a process that is on the run since the end of the nineteenth century. Tradition is often well-thought-out an obstacle to reform and the measure of any society is how it treats its women. A woman's life means a complete circle. Inherent in it is the ability to create nurture and transform. From time immemorial, the idea of female power has been flowing in Indian culture. Goddess Kali has been worshiped in various forms since ancient times. Women are always described and depicted as a source of energy. Here, the fight was with the traditions and conformists. In the West, the first-wave feminism of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries focused on turning legal inequalities, particularly women's suffrage, or simply put, the right to vote in political elections. It was in this duration that India was still tied up in religious and cultural bounds and burning women after their husbands died, shaving women's heads when they became widows and engaging in child marriages. (<https://www.indiatimes.com/news/india/how-raja-ram-mohan-roy-was-among-the-pioneers-of-indian-feminist-movement-345890.html>. Retrieved on 24June, 2022).

She was such an ideal character. The remarkable success she left behind in her spiritual, social and material life is exemplary for women of all walks of life. She was at the highest level among the majestic Indian Women. She was the one of the best saints in the world. The precedent she set in religion and worship is unparalleled in the world. Overall, she was incomparable, unique.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Hence, in view of the above research gaps and the problem of the present study can be stated as "Rani Rasmani: Women Empowerment and Education."

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

The researcher has highlighted the necessity to define some concepts operationally. These are:

➤ **Women Empowerment**

The researcher here while giving the definition of women's empowerment said to establish the social rights of women. For them, Rani Rasmani meant the struggle against the society of the time. The researcher studied the contributions of Rani Rasmani in establishing women empowerment. It is the upliftment of women in the society and giving them respect in the society.

➤ **Education**

The researcher has studied the contribution of Rani Rasmani in this regard through the education of women awakening and empowerment. So in this study 'education' is identified as 'women education'.

➤ **Rani Rasmani**

She was born on 24 September, 1793AD, in the village Kona of Halisahar, in the district of North twenty four Parganas, West Bengal, India. She was a strong women, educationist, freedom fighter, philanthropist, social reformer in the 19th century.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Was the empowerment and awakening of women reflected in Rani Rasmani's work?
2. What is the relevance of Rani Rasmani's thoughts and ideas on those contexts in the present situation?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has undertaken to achieve the following objectives:

1. To study the women empowerment and Education of Rani Rasmani as reflected in her work.
2. To know the relevance of Rani Rasmani's thought and idea on those context in the present situation.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was delimited to the women empowerment and Education contributions of Rani Rasmani in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present chapter provides a detail regarding the method that has been adopted for carrying out the work with respect to each objective. The study that is being conducted is on "**Rani Rasmani: Women Empowerment and Education**" a documentary analysis and it is based on the Historical Methods. As known that Historical Method is the system of organizing and classifying the recorded evidence of past events. The documentary analysis is the types of qualitative analysis. In documentary analysis the materials are converted into written words before it is analyzed.

SOURCES OF DATA:

In the present study a documentary analysis has been taken by the primary sources and secondary sources.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- ✓ Various Govt. Documents.
- ✓ Stone Inscriptions
- ✓ Zamindari Seal

SECONDARY SOURCES

- ✓ Various Books of Rani Rasmani
- ✓ Various Newspapers
- ✓ Magazines
- ✓ Research Paper

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In recent times, most women's desires and aspirations are not encouraged and considered necessary within the family and society. The responsibilities and duties of a mother, wife and daughter overwhelm women's suffering. Standing there in the first half of the nineteenth century, Rani Rasmani's idea of women's awakening and empowerment surprised all people.

The practices that influenced the lives of women in nineteenth-century Bengal were polygamy, child marriage, ascetic widowhood and prostitution, as well as denial of women's education. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was a great social reformer who raised questions against child marriage, kulin polygamy, caste barriers and for the spared of women education, widow remarriage, he was a staunch fighter for the rights and honour of women. She also patronized Vidyasagar's Widow Remarriage movement with substantial financial help. She is widely known for being one of the most influential women during that time period in Bengal. She was inspired by Raja Rammohan Roy. He was one of the greatest social reformers, religious reformer and educational reformers, drawn to Christianity but wanted its reform and regeneration from superstition and dogmatism; abolished social evils like Practice of Satidah, pardah system and child marriage from Bengal. Also, she raised her voice against social evils like child marriage and Practice of Satidah.

It is to be noted here that Rasmanidevi started thinking about the unfortunate plight of widows only after the Sati-immolation (1829 AD). Vidyasagar (born on 26.9.1820) was only eight or nine years old (**Samanta, 2018**). She used to collect all Vidyasagar's writings and try to understand the essence of them and she was closely acquainted with Vidyasagar and a discussion meeting on widow marriage was organized under her chairmanship at her house in Janbazar.

The researcher found that Rani Rasmani was against the Kaulinya (Polygamy) Practice which was not a story but it is proved by the news in Sambad Prabhakar on July 31, 1856 (Shravan 17, 1263 B.) of that time which is given below. This was:

"Two petitions from Calcutta, one from Shantipur and one from Mrs. Rasmani Dasi has been submitted to the managing society for the prevention of polygamy among nobles (kulin), Mr. Kalbil Saheb printed the said meeting allowed."(Self translated)

She also argued strongly in favour of women's education. Besides, some of her own activities also show how much women empowerment she had. She was married to Babu RajchShe was born into a caste considered low in the social stratification, encouraged to participate in the day to day administrative affairs of the vast zamindari estate, also, fought many legal battles against the East India Company and has won every one and her courage in times of conflicts with her adversaries like the East India Company. She stopped indigo cultivation even in Makimpur Parganas where indigo cultivation was extensive (Roy, 1990). East India Company imposed tax on poor fishermen for fishing in the River Ganga and she blocked the river traffic by iron chains and this caused great hindrance for big ships to pass over that portion of the river resulting in collapse of trade and commerce. She had a battle of wits with the British and tax on the fishing was withdrawn (Nandi, 2017). When Durga puja processions were stopped by the British on the charge that they disturbed the peace, she defied the orders, forcing the government to withdraw them (Ghosh, 1988). And her deep sympathy for the poor, her munificence in the cause of education and public health and construction of roads, channels, Ghats etc.

Rani Rasmani was a woman of unconventional, liberal minded; in outlook in an era when it was considered that upper class Hindu Bengali women should not cross purdahnor does things which are considered manly. She is the true role model of the Indian Women's liberation movement.

Her thought and idea on the empowerment and awakening of women were still praiseworthy. She was strongly against exploitation of women. She was a social, political, educational, economic, religious reformer. Her contributions to women empowerment and women awakening are particularly significant. She donated money to Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidhyasagar for the construction of School. She had connection with her Rammohan Roy, Dwarkanath Tagore, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Radhakanta Deb. Rani Rasmani was broadly in sympathy with the nineteenth century social, religious reform movements. She determined efforts to help the poor and the helpless. Her social works were notable aspects behind a great soul for which people started calling her Lokomata. So, the researcher has concluded that she was very kind and did fabulous efforts for Hinduism and for mankind. She handled financial matters of the family and donated money for various tasks of mankind.

She is harbinger of freedom, liberal and fundamental reforms and equality and humanism. Now she is gone more in the world but her significant place in this field will be remembered by every people. Gradually the stream of reforms spread in India and various movements followed one after the other appeared in India. Hence she can be considered as the inventor of modern women empowerment, women awakening and education. Education provides a nation in her economic development, social progress, political progress, scientific advancement and cultural progress and to increase efficiency and empowerment of people. It has been found that the spread of education increases participation of women in the nation building process and adds to greater empowerment and makes women conscious of their rights and duties.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The findings and conclusions of the study are social reformers of Bengal like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar etc. She worked hard to change the old blind social system for the betterment of women in the society.

Rani Rasmani is one woman who stands out in Bengal history because she was not afraid to do what it took to get the work done. She worked to improve the lives of Indian women of all castes. In an age when in Hindu society women were objects of sympathy and pity, when they were physically endangered as a result of cruel customs like satidah, child marriage or rigorous rules of abstinence for widows, Rani Rasmani by her independence of character and vigour of actions broke the age-old gender stereotype in society and took the first positive step towards women's liberation.

All these facts point to the conclusion that the great necessity of a balanced course of instruction giving due weight to both humanistic and qualitative studies was clearly realized by the Bengali educationist and intellectuals and a most remarkable nature in the opening of the century. She also had to her credit numerous charitable works and other contributions to society. She is in the real sense the mother of Indian Renaissance. She remains one of the most influential female figures of the world. She took keen interest in removing the social evils like practice of Satidah, polygamy and child marriage. Rani Rasmani was religious reformer, social worker like to abolish the tax imposed on fishing in the river and to her credit numerous charitable works also. Rani Rasmani is one of the important personalities to have initiated this operation for women's empowerment in India and she was the pioneer of women's awakening and education in Bengal. Given the information presented about Rani Rasmani, it can be said without hesitation that Rani Rasmani is the only Indian-even, the world – role model of women.

The women awakening of a nation is possible through education. In this case, it has been seen that the awakening and empowerment of women was almost non-existent in the nineteenth century and the important role played in the empowerment of women in that dark society was Rani Rasmani. From her life philosophy that she is such an ideal female character. She is also relevant in the 21st century society for her activities.

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