



PADMABHUSHAN TARABAI MODAK: CONTRIBUTION TO CHILD EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION :

In pre and post independent era, Maharashtra provided fine ground for the various movements. Many reformers contributed in social, political, economic and educational fields. No single woman has contributed more to the field of pre-school education in India than Tarabai Modak. She pioneered a new approach to teaching unprivileged rural and Warliadivasi children adopting the Montessori Method to Indian conditions.

OBJECTIVE

To study the work of Tarabai Modak in the field of pre-primary education.

METHODOLOGY

The scope of study becomes clear through the primary and secondary documents, visits to the educational institutes and relevant personalities. The period from 1930 to 1973 and in Gujarat, Mumbai, Bordi and Kosbad of Tarabai Modak taken into consideration.

DISCUSSION

Tarabai was a daughter of Sadashivrao Kelkar, who was an ardent missionary of Prarthana Samaj. She completed her B.A. in 1914 through the various migrations from Indore, Pune and Mumbai. In 1950, she married K.V. Modak. Due to a domestic crisis, she left the family and from 1922 to 1945, she worked as a teacher, tutor, and co-teacher, principal and held various posts in various institutions.

Preprimary education started in India in the 20th century. Under British rule, Lord Karzon started pre-school education. It continued until 1947. However, there was a lack of logical pattern and scientific framework. Like Rousseau, Froebel and Montessori Tarabai Modak conducted various experiments regarding child education and kept the movement alive. From 1923 to 1932 with the help of Gijubhai Badheka Tarabai Modak, laid the foundation of pre-primary education in India. She created Child Teaching Centre, Montessori groups and started Shikshan Patrika (monthly journal). She carried the campaign for child education throughout India especially in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Saurashtra. In Maharashtra, she established Shishuvihar Mandal at Mumbai in 1936.

She created great awareness regarding child education among the teachers, parents and children. She started Balakridangan, Diploma Courses, NutanBalShikshanSangh and Bal Shikshan Nagar (educational fair). After a meeting with Mahatma Gandhi, he urged her to take pre - school education to the village. Therefore she moved to Bordi and started 'Gram- Bal- Shiksha- Kendra' for the education of rural children.⁴ Here she used the necessary tools in the teaching appearance and techniques without altering the basic principles of Montessori Method. Her teaching at Bordi was multilingual and attracted teachers from Gujarat, Kerala, Bengal, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Kashmir who wanted to apply this method in their states.

At Bordi she came into contact with the Warliadivasitribals of Kosbad. After watching their poverty, plight and illiteracy, she decided to focus her attention on what could be done for them. Through 'VikaswadiProject', she carried out various activities for the upliftment of Warli tribes such as Palnagar, Balwadi, Nutrient Food Centers, Meadow Schools and hostel facilities. Along with education she founded the industries, factories, publications department, press extra for the educational solutions of Warli students.⁵ Her experiments in the field of education were successful. As a result, many educationists started coming to visit the project. TarabaiModak was writer and editor of ShikshanPatrika (monthly journal) from 1933 to 1955.⁶ She circulated the thoughts, the history of child education, and the practical method of education in child schools. Her journal contributed immensely to the society, schools, and parents and to the government providing it to be vital in the enlightenment of child education.

CONCLUSION

Pre and post-independence era of India has been historical for its many changes. Intellectual revolution and basic changes in thoughts were flowering of Indian enlightenment. For this, the rise of new education, social and religious reformations inspired a lot. The contribution of the social reformers in this movement is important. One of them was TarabaiModak, a social reformer and an educationist whose work became a kind of model for Indian society. She tried to spread child education in rural areas and in remote, hilly and backward regions of the country. The role of TarabaiModak in child education is unique. She created Social awareness of the child by shaping his temperament into that of a good individual who will grow up to be a responsible citizen of the country.

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