

Educational Contribution of Thakur Panchanan Barma and its Present Day Relevant

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate Panchanan Barma's contributions to education. He focused on the overall development of the backward community. The main objective of the study is to critically explore and analyze the educational thoughts of Thakur Panchanan Barma. To study the various educational and social reform activities of Thakur Panchanan Barma. This study will highlight his contribution to various fields and focus on their present-day relevance. The study has carried out a document-based qualitative approach to reach the objectives. Most of the information has been collected from primary and secondary sources.

Keywords: Panchanan Barma, Education, Overall development, Educational Initiatives, Relevance.

Introduction:

Thakur Panchanan Barma, was one of the most remarkable personality in the nineteenth century in North Bengal. He was born in Khalisamari, Coochbehar Princely State of India, on February 14, 1866, into a respectable Rajbansi jotedar family. Panchanan Barma is a significant social reformer who made commendable efforts to change the development of the Rajbanshi community. Being a progressive thinker, he struggled to upgrade the status of women in North Bengal and make them self-reliant. He was a well-known intellectual who was also an educationist, a philosopher, a politician, an efficient organizer, and an economist in unpartitioned India. In India, legendary figures such as Raja Rammohan Roy, Jyotiba Phule, Dr B. R. Ambedkar, Guru Chand, Vidyasagar, and many others were born. Thakur Panchanan Barma was one of them. We cannot even think about the development of the Rajbanshi community without Panchanan Barma. His significant contributions in various sectors have made him the Father of Rajbanshi community. He taught a new philosophy of life among the Rajbanshi community by establishing the Kshatriya Samiti.

Rai Saheb Panchanan Barma realized that if the light of education does not reach among the people of this region, the feeling of consciousness will not be awakened and the progress of the nation is not possible if the social consciousness is not awakened. Because, education is like a backbone of a society, without education a society unable to all-round development. So, he initiated many educational activities to encourage the Rajbanshi people as well as people of the North-Eastern India. His progressive thoughts and activities about education helped to developed the life of the people in this region (Mandal., Adhikary,2022)

Need Of the Study:

Panchanan Barma is frequently acknowledged as the father of the Rajbanshi community. During colonial British period his intellectual activities played a significant role to change social position of the Rajbanshi community. As a Rajbanshi reformer of the Nineteen century, Barma advocated for a rational and value-based system of education. His support for Religion education, moral education, women empowering thought marked a transformative shift in North Bengal educational discourse. Despite his acknowledge role on Rajbanshi and backwards community on substantial scholarship has examined, the intellectual, social and religious reforms systematic scholarly inquire into his educational thought remains comparatively limited and often fragmented.

In contempory times, educational reforms emphasizing secularism, moral value when injustice, corruption and lack of values are seen in every field of society, in this background revisiting Panchanan Barma's educational thought becomes significantly relevant.

Therefore, the present study is needed to critically analyze Thakur Panchanan Barma's educational ideas within present socio-educational contexts. The study is therefore needed to critically reinterpret Barma's educational ideas within present socio-educational contexts.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the various educational and social reform activities of Thakur Panchanan Barma.
- To study the present-day relevance of the educational thought of Thakur Panchanan Barma.

Methodology:

This study carried out a document-based qualitative approach to critically examine the educational thought of Panchanan Barma. This article is based on the primary and secondary sources collected from research papers, magazines, newspapers, websites, books of various authors. The information gathering process has been started with the goal of making it simpler to conduct research on Thakur Panchanan Barma's involvement in the social reforms and advancement of the Rajbanshi community modern education in India throughout the 19th century and its relevance in the present day. Qualitative analytical methodologies allowed for the development of the study's framework and the ability to arrive at an objective conclusion.

Findings of the study:

The current study explored the social and educational contributions of Thakur Panchanan Barma, A remarkable icon of the North Bengal socio-educational reformational activist during the 19th century. Panchanan Barma realized that education plays a vital role in the development of society. He had taken many initiatives for the development of education. Panchanan Barma established schools and hostels to develop education. He also arranged scholarships from Kshatriya Samiti for poor meritorious students. Panchanan Barma here refers to humanity as moral or value education. Panchanan Barma opined that excellence in education is enhanced through practice. He said that education is essential for the overall development of the personality. He divided education into three parts- Practice of Religion, sound morality, and position of wealth. The study uses a document-based qualitative approach, collecting information from primary and secondary sources. The following findings are mentioned below:

Different Activities and Reforms in Education:

Thakur Panchanan Barma was one of the greatest intellectual and versatile personalities of nineteenth-century North Bengal. He possessed enormous knowledge in many different fields of study. Panchanan Barma was a scholar, essayist, folklore researcher, educationist, social reformer, politician and editor. He played a vital role in the development of the Rajbanshi community. He wrote in Bengali and English on various social and educational issues. He encouraged Bengali language and literature; his notable instance of literary works was 'Kamata Bihari Sahitya'. Panchanan Barma was the editor of 'Rangpur Sahitya Parishad Patrika' and served for seven years. He established Kshatriya Samiti to develop the Rajbanshi society.

Aims of Education:

Thakur Panchanan Barma had a strong philosophical background. His main goal was to develop the society. Panchanan believed that education plays a vital role in the all-round development of individuals and nations. He worked on many matters like social education, female education, work education, social reformation, administration reformation, self-dignity, and self-establishment. Panchanan Barma gave immense emphasis on the development of sound human qualities. Some of the aims of education are as follows:

- Preserved the culture, values, and traditions for the development of the society.
- To promote the moral and spiritual development of the individuals.
- To give immense emphasis on the development of good human qualities.
- "The goal of education is the comprehensive development of humanity". (Asoar,2019).
- To take the initiative to provide scholarships for the poor and meritorious students.
- To set up schools and hostels to encourage poor and backward students.
- To Stress the need for women's empowerment,
- Established Nari Raksha Samiti in 1923 to make women self-reliant.

Kshatriya Samiti and education:

Panchanan Barman established Kshatriya Samiti (1910 at Rangpur Natya Mandir) for the growth and development of the contemporary Rajbanshi people. The primary objective of forming the 'Kshatriya Samiti' was to acquaint the Rajbanshi with global events and cultivate unity consciousness among them, drawing inspiration from the ideals of the Renaissance (Barman,2022). In every annual meeting, miscellaneous subjects were discussed, and the most important was given to education for the development of the society. In the annual meeting of the Kshatriya Samiti Assembly in 1319 B.S., Panchanan Barma discussed the aim of education. He gave importance to the excellence of education enhanced through practice. In the first assembly of the Kshatriya Samiti, he said that education is essential for all-round personality development. Education can be divided into three parts: practice of religion, good morality, and position of wealth. Barma's exceptional prime aim in life is learning for earning. He lays stress on theoretical learning as with its practical application, here the similarity of the modern educational system will be reflected.

Literary works of Thakur Panchanan Barma:

1. 'Katha O Chhilka'. It was written on myths, stories, proverbs and folk culture of Rangpur and published in the 'Rangpur Sahitya Parishad Patrika'.

2. 'Nata Manik Banda Kanta'.
3. 'Baha Se Bandhab'.
4. 'Nadim Paramaniker Patha'.
5. 'Jagannathi Bilai'
6. 'Gobinda Mishrer Gita'. Three articles were written on 'Gobinda Mishrer Gita'
7. by him and these were published in the Sankhya 1, Sankhya 2 and Sankhya 3 of
8. Bhag-2 of the 'Rangpur Sahitya Parishad Patrika'.
9. 'Kamata Bihari Sahitya'.
10. Footnote on 'Mahila Brata' of Girindra Mohan Maitreya.
11. (Barman,2022)

Women's Education and their Empowerment:

According to Panchanan Barma the main objective of women education is to make them self-reliant, strong, fear-less, and conscious of their self-esteem. 'A woman is an important half of a man. With any development of one half, another half can't be developed. So, he did much for women's emancipation and empowerment (Barman,2014). Women play a vital role in society. They are the backbone of families and community development. During 1921-23, many Rajbanshi women were abducted and raped in different villages in the Rangpur district. Panchanan Barma built up "Nari Rakhsa Upasamity" for the Protection of Women. He arranged some training for women for self-protection. Panchanan Barma wanted to make the women self-dependent and self-reliant by teaching them stick-play, word-fighting, and wrestling. He took permissible action in court to get legal justice for them. He dedicated his poem "Dangdhari Mao" to the youth community to stand up against wrongs and for justice. Panchanan Barma understands that without education, women's development could not be possible.

Hostels and scholarship:

During this time, most of the people of the Rajbonshi community were poor and educationally Backward. They cannot send their son to the city because of the financial problem. Barma wanted to overcome this problem, so he built hostels and provided scholarships to the poor and meritorious students from the funds of the Kshatriya Samity. He encouraged the students to improve their educational status, and these initiatives have great significance in spreading education in the Rajbanshi Society.

Moral and Value Education:

Panchanan Barma gave immense emphasis on the development of good human qualities. According to him "The goal of education is the comprehensive development of humanity". (Asoar, 2019). In this aspect, the education of humanity described by Panchanan Barma is beneficial for society. Barma here refers to Humanity as moral or value education, where right and wrong are mentioned and through which people can judge between good and bad. The only way to develop humanity is through education. Education is a process of humanisation. Panchanan Barma's one goal of education is to produce human beings with a broad and sympathetic mind.

Relevance of Panchanan Barma's Ideas in Present-Day's Education:

- His socio-educational thought encouraged the Rajbanshi community to lead a magnificent path of

equality and humanism that was lost to modern India.

- Panchanan Barma occupies a pivotal position in discussion on all round development and the holistic formation of human. In the 21st century, education focuses on developing well-rounded individuals.
- Thakur Panchanan Barma took the initiative to establish a special Kshatriya hostel in Rangpur in 1913 for the poor and meritorious students. Now NEP 20 also focuses on establishing hostels in dedicated regions for educational development and offers scholarships to talented poor meritorious students to facilitate into higher education.
- Thakur Panchanan Barma was a brilliant thinker social reformer and political leader in colonial British period who inspired the Rajbanshi community into a self-respecting value based, educated and organized group to make them good citizens. This concept of Panchanan Barma has found particular utility in Indian education today to make students ideal citizens.
- He gave importance to the regional Kamtapuri language, a unique dimension. In the present day, the Kamta Puri language is recognized as a language under the 8th schedule and a unique addition to the Indian language.
- Panchanan Barma used Kshatriya Samiti meeting to spread his educational, social, political economic thought and belief for the development of the backward community.
- Panchanan Barma was the editor of 'Rangpur Sahitya Parishad Patrika' and he publishing research paper in both Bengali and English. He preserved the local language kamtapuri and written poems ,short stories and article in regional language . He used regional language, English language and mother tongue to promote multilingualism now NEP 2020 also highlighted multilingualism.
- He promotes Value-based education and believed universal human values of truth, righteous conduct, peace, love, nonviolence, also an integral part of a holistic education.
- Panchanan Barma was the first of North Bengal who collect and preserved Rajbanshi language, folklore and literature. According to NEP 20, Indian culture and language are given special attention.
- Barma's ideas of religious political, economic thought are still very relevant for today.
- NEP 20 will be given special attention to the S.C. and S.T. for the educational development, and Ray Saheb Panchanan Barma's greatest contribution was to the inclusion Rajbongshi community into the list of S.C. in the Indian constitution.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Panchanan Barma was a political, social, and economic reformer and a great educational contributor to North Bengal and India. His valuable contribution to the field of education is very remarkable. His educational initiatives are still very relevant. His primary objectives are to protect, preserve and develop the backwards community. Women play a vital role in the development of the country. That way, he also imposed women's emancipation and empowerment. Barma realizes that it is only through education that uplifts the masses, of people. In the light of education, a society is to be reformed, and individuals should be brought to a constructive, practical, and comprehensive character. He promoted and preserved the traditional values of the Rajbanshi community. His moral and spiritual thought process shows the best remedies for today's social and global illness. He has given importance to improving humanity. Barma's selfless service is to improve the social condition of the backwards people.

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