



The Weaker Sex as the Reformer of the Society: Delineating Maria Montessori, Mary Wollstonecraft & Nel Noddings

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ABSTRACT

A society stands on the two main pillars of the society namely man and women. Degradation of any one can lead to collapse of the society. Since the origin of human civilization women play significant role in the development of the society. A lot of great women personalities has evolved in the world who changed the society and gave it a new shape. Among such personalities, Maria Montessori, Mary Wollstonecraft and Nel Noddings are noteworthy. The present study deals with the role of women in various social issues with special reference to Maria Montessori, Mary Wollstonecraft and Nel Noddings.

Keywords: Maria Montessori, Mary Wollstonecraft, Nel Noddings, feminism, social issues, women.

Introduction

A society is similar to Noah's arch where both men and women are present in equal numbers, which keeps the civilization going (Adhikari & Saha, 2021). The best way for a woman to define her presence is to have equal access to high-quality education (Saha, 2023). She engages in a wider range of social issues, expanding her social participation portfolio (Adhikari & Saha, 2021f). In the past, Indian women were always held in great regard, but as time passed, their standing quickly plummeted. New concepts about women's roles and skills evolved with the entrance of the Europeans, and the educated Indians readily embraced them. Indian scriptures portrayed women as loving and selfless, but also on occasion rebellious and dangerous (Adhikari & Saha, 2021a). But in this modern 21st century, the role of women in various spheres of society has evolved to an esteemed position. According to studies, factors such as women's access to education, the media, and paid employment are some economic indicators of women's status, while involvement in decision-making, age at marriage, the severity, social acceptance of, and mobility of women are social indicators. While certain Indian women have held high-profile positions in the judiciary, education, politics, IT, medicine, and a variety of other sectors, the majority of women in the nation do not have these advantages (Adhikari & Saha, 2021e).

Maria Montessori, a Strong Feminist and a Great Educationist

Maria Tecla Artemisia Montessori (from August 31, 1870 to May 6, 1952), who is best known for her work in education and the "*Philosophy of Education that Bears Her Name*" was also a highly regarded science nurturer, psychiatrist, feminist, and played a crucial role in politics (Adhikari, & Saha, 2021c; Montessori, 1915; 1947). According to Montessori's theory, children go through various stages of development, which are reflected in how the Montessori programme is set up for kids. In all Montessori settings, regardless of the facts, whether they serve toddlers, pre-schoolers, babies, primary or secondary school-age children, the guiding principles is based on Montessori's early innovations, to sustain the child's individual capability, upholding independence and contributing freedom within its possible confinement (Adhikari, & Saha, 2021d). She has introduced an innovative technique in the teaching learning process called the Montessori Method. Based on the principle that education should enhance rather than diminish a child's innate skills, the Montessori Method of teaching was developed (Saha & Adhikari, 2023c; Montessori, 1964). Children learn in a variety of ways, and the Montessori educational philosophy accommodates all of them. Every student has the chance to develop as long as they are ready, have their teacher's support, and have an individual learning plan. It promotes children's physical growth and development by ensuring that they remain active all throughout the day (Saha & Adhikari, 2023a; 2023b; 2023d).

Mary Wollstonecraft, the Protector of Women's rights

One of the most important feminist writers in the world is Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), a British author, philosopher, and ardent supporter of women's rights, lived during the French Revolution (Adhikari, & Saha, 2023; Todd, 2000; Tomalin, 1974; Wardle, 1967). Up until the abrupt end of her career, Mary Wollstonecraft's writing was infused with a deep and urgent concern for education, especially the upbringing of girls and women (Adhikari, & Saha, 2022a). It is generally accepted that "*A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*" by Mary Wollstonecraft, which was published at the beginning of 1792, was met with shock, horror, and mockery. To counter this ambitious endeavour to promote women's equality, the forces of opposition purportedly

gathered and spattered the Amazon with their pens (Adhikari, & Saha, 2022e). Wollstonecraft can be called a modern philosopher, religious thinker, political activist and a great feminist (Adhikari, & Saha, 2022b). Besides all these, Wollstonecraft dealt with sexuality in her works which was a matter of great discussion in the time of 18th century (Adhikari, & Saha, 2022c). Apart from all the aspects, she talked about French revolution in one of her most famous writings “*An Historical and Moral View of the French Revolution*” (Adhikari, & Saha, 2022d). Another important work that deals with the aspects of feminism is “*Maria: or The Wrongs of Woman*” which is a kind of masterpiece in that respective field (Adhikari et al., 2023).

Nel Noddings

Education ethics help to make system more effective. It provides useful standards and protects the interests of both teachers and students (Adhikari, 2023). For his contributions to educational theory, philosophy of education, and care ethics, Nel Noddings, an American educator, philosopher, and feminist, has won praise from all around the world (Adhikari & Saha, 2021b). She is famous for her work on Theory of Care. The goal of her Theory of Care is to guide individuals towards ethically better moral thinking and behaviour throughout their lives (Adhikari, Saha, & Sen, 2023). Noddings contends that showing compassion is the same as acting morally and that cultivating compassion is a difficult and ongoing effort. Every educational activity based on the Theory of Care must contain the four fundamental components of ethical caring connections. Noddings identified motivational displacement, reciprocity, engrossment, and compassion as the essential components of the Theory of Care (Noddings, 1984; 1995; 2003; 2005).

Conclusion

Education must include a process of transmitting moral precepts in order to enable pupils to live fulfilling lives in conformity with the standards and prized values of society (Gayen, 2023). Education is the ongoing acquisition of knowledge, information, and skills throughout life, whereas the educational system is a framework that has been standardised and is used as a guide by teachers to instruct their students in a communicative, informative, and insightful manner (Gayen & Gayen, 2023; Gorain & Gayen, 2023; Gayen et al., 2021). As knowledge acquisition and application to the benefit of humanity are the main purposes of education, according to Tagore, the emphasis of the educational process should be on the entire development of the student (Mondal & Gayen, 2021).

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