

Title: The Impact of Anandibai Joshee on Women's Empowerment: From Struggle to Success"



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Abstract

On March 31, 1865, a daughter was born into a Marathi Brahmin family. Not just any girl, but a girl who made a big impact on every girl's school life and inspired other girls to stand up for themselves and pursue their dreams.

Her name was Anandibai Gopalrao Joshee. She was a victim of child marriage, being married at the age of nine. She also delivered a baby boy at a tender age. Unfortunately, her son passed away shortly after birth due to the lack of access to high-quality healthcare in the nation. She didn't only cry, even in the face of this horrible incident. In fact, she saw this as an opportunity to learn about western medicine and reduce chances of people suffering from a lack of access to healthcare. She went to the US to earn a western degree in medicine, and became the 1st Indian woman to earn a degree in western medicine.

However, she faced a lot of criticism because of the 19th-century Indian culture mindset for her education abroad. Nevertheless, Anandi was unfazed and gave a speech at Serampore College Hall in West Bengal to the community, outlining the necessity for female doctors in India. People all throughout the nation expressed strong support for her remarks.

She lived her life to the fullest even though she passed away at a young age. As she states “be grateful for challenges because... Had there been no difficulties and no thorns in the way, then each woman and man would have been in his primitive state and no progress made in civilisation and mental culture” (The Indian Practitioner).

Key Words

Primitive, civilization, inadequate, traumatic, community

Introduction

Anandibai Gopalrao Joshee was the first woman to qualify as a doctor in western medicine. She was inspired by a traumatic experience which happened at a very tender age, which affected her health, both mentally and physically. However, despite facing numerous struggles, she still managed to achieve her dreams and set a great inspiration for people around her. She won many awards for her academic accomplishments including the award for the The Institute for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences.

Discussion

On March 31, 1865, Anandibai Gopalrao Joshee was born. Her name was originally Yamuna, however she changed it later on. She was born in Kalyan, Maharashtra, and raised in a Marati Chitpavan Brahmin household.

Out of her eight siblings, Anandibai was the oldest, with four brothers and three sisters. Ganga Bai and Ganpatrao Amriteshwar Joshi were her parents' names.

Her father, a farmer, raised her and her siblings at home until they were seven years old. Then he arranged for them to go to a nearby local school. Her father Ganpatrao was a person who believed women should be given the opportunity to study in school. (Pandey 2021) Anandi Gopal did exceptionally well academically while attending an English-medium school, (Team Her Circle).

Ananadibai Joshee experienced an underage marriage. She married Gopalrao Joshee, who was about 20 years older than her, when she was just nine years old.

At the age of fourteen, she gave birth to a baby boy. Unfortunately, her son died not long after he was born. This was due to the inadequate access of medical services in the nation. (Malaviya, Shikha) Her physical and emotional well-being were both severely impacted by this tragic and traumatic event. Yet, she demonstrated her strength by handling this tragedy in a motivating manner. It encouraged her to pursue a career in the medical field, to reduce the chances of these incidents (Malik).

In the 1800s, it was uncommon for husbands to support their wife's career and education choices. However, Gopalrao on the other hand was very supportive and fond of Anandi's education. At age of 15, Joshee gave in to her dream to pursue her medical studies overseas,

and her husband Gopalrao wrote to an American Calvinist minister based in Kolhapur, asking for his assistance in getting Joshee to America. However, the church refused to help Joshee because she refused to follow their demands and convert from being an Hindu to an Christian.(Pandey 2021) Later he enrolled her in a missionary school, and moved with her to Kolkata, where she sharpened her English speaking skills and learnt Sanskrit. One day, he found her working in the kitchen and told her he would take care of it, so she could focus on her studies, which increased her efficiency. (Vaishnavni 2020)

Furthermore, Anandi Gopal Joshi studied at Kalyan Girls' College in Bombay and graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1883. After graduating, she studied medicine in England, where she earned her doctor of medicine (MRCS) degree, (Team Her Circle).

Since she was Indian, she experienced racism and had a very difficult time getting accepted into a women's medical university. She also received a lot of criticism from 19th-century Indian culture, as they believed women shouldn't pursue higher education. To address these hateful comments, she gave a speech to the community at Serampore College hall, in West Bengal. She explained the need for female doctors in India. Her speech drew lots of attention from across the nation, and eventually the Medical University for Women finally accepted her (The story India). She attended London University to earn a double degree in medicine and surgery (MRCS LRCP) and graduated with honours in 1886.

Once she graduated from medical college, she studied in the United States for a year. She was awarded a Gold Medal for her academic accomplishments and finished third out of all female graduates at the time. While interning at St. Luke's Hospital in Chicago, she took a tropical medicine course at the University of Chicago. Her first encounter with academicians from across the globe was in Spring of 1891, while attending an international conference on Woman's Work for Women's Rights in Washington, D.C.

The British Indian Government observed her honesty and hard work and gave her a position as a medical officer at their facility in Belagavi. She also received an invitation from the Indian government to become the first female application examiner for medical programmes across several Indian locales.

She also won an award for medicine in the The Institute for Research and Documentation in Social Sciences in recognition of her pioneering work in promoting medical science in India. In 1882, Dr. Anandibai Joshi returned to India and began working as a medical officer at the Pune public hospital. Later on, she opened a clinic in Bombay to provide underprivileged women without access to high-quality medical care. She served there for a few months

however, unfortunately she was compelled to leave on account of her illness. (Team Her Circle).

On 26th of February, 1887, Dr Anandibai passed away from tuberculosis. Unfortunately, it was a very young age, however in the short years she lived her life to the fullest. Years before her death, she had been sick and exhausted. She had even received medication from America, but it didn't work, so she kept studying it until the day of her death. (Nair)

An empowered woman doesn't always mean sitting at the CEO position. Dr. Anandibai Joshi gave proof that any young girl, given enough effort, determination, and vision, may achieve her ambitions. She had to overcome several challenges, but she succeeded in doing so. She had to fight against cultural expectations and even some passionate supporters of the belief that women shouldn't pursue higher education. Her constant attitude should inspire any young girl who feels that her potential is limited. As she states, No man or woman should depend upon another for maintenance and necessities. Family discord and social degradation will never end till each depends upon herself or himself, (Joshee line 3).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Dr. Anandibai Joshi was a progressive woman who initiated the process of granting women's education. She committed her entire life to accomplishing her objectives, which ultimately transformed the lives of numerous Indian women. She is an inspiration to all young girls because of her unwavering commitment to giving back to society and participating in the cultural advancement of women.

Her accomplishments will always be honoured and as she quotes:

Be grateful for challenges because... Had there been no difficulties and no thorns in the way, then each woman and man would have been in his primitive state and no progress made in civilisation and mental culture. (Joshee line 6, love expands)

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