



## INNOVATIVE APPROACHES OF ANUTAI WAGH TO PROMOTE EDUCATION FOR TRIBAL PEOPLE

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### Abstract

*AnutaiWagh born on March 17, 1910. She was married at the age of 13 and became a child widow 6 months later. She returned to her parent's home where she continued her education. After passing the Vernacular Final (VII Std) examination, she took up primary teacher's training in Pune. In the final examination, she obtained a first class. She then served as a teacher for 3 years in villages, after which she joined the famous HujurPaga School in Pune. While teaching there, she joined a Night School and passed matric in 1937. Later in 1950, she graduated from the S.N.D.T. Women's University. As the eldest in the family & sole earner she had to support and educates her younger brother and sister. Anutai bore the burden of this domestic responsibility with cheer, but as the years went by, she longed to devote herself to social work in a rural area.*

**Keywords-** Innovative approaches, AnutaiWagh, Tribal People



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### Introduction

Madam Montessori's idea of informal education i.e. joyful learning reached India in 1914, when Times of India wrote some articles in their newspaper. Next year, in 1915 the very first Montessori school was established in princely state of Gujarat. Montessori's westernised concept of learning was Indianised by GijubhaiBadheka – a visionary in education. Soon TarabaiModak joined the wonderful endeavour of his educating the little ones in an organised but nondirective and informal way in the BalMandirs, established by Gijubhai on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi.

This heralded the era of Pre-primary schooling in India. NutanBalShikshanSangh (NBSS) was formed at Kosbad in 1926 for this purpose. Though NBSS was very successful in the field of child education, it was more of an urban effort and could not cater to a vast majority of the Indian children because of their economic condition and the prevalent caste system. TarabaiModak, a true Gandhian, pondered over this issue and gave her attention to the slums

and the poorer sections within the city. It was her firm belief that this deprived section of the society needed same type of education but imparted in a different way.

The cost of the preschool education was high as Montessori way is an elaborate equipment based education. TarabaiModak wanted to bring the cost of pre school education as low as she could so that education would have far and wide reach. This brought to her mind the rural and tribal children and KOSBAD was born many path breaking decisions were taken and there were many trials and difficulties. But today NBSS still functions at Kosbad Hill, in DahanuTaluka of Palghar district, in Maharashtra, as a guiding institution in pre-primary & primary education. But TarabaiModak, with her equally dedicated co-worker, AnutaiWagh persisted & preserved.

### **Objectives of the paper**

- 1) To explain the educational contribution of AnutaiWagh
- 2) To explain the work of Anutai in the field of Child Education
- 3) To explain educational contribution of AnutaiWagh in social field
- 4) To know the importance of Anutai's work in recent era

### **Conceptual Definition**

#### **Case Study**

Case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study. Case studies, in their true essence, explore and case study as a research method investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. Case

Study research method “as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

#### **Research methodology – Case study research**

#### **Tools of research sample**

Researcher has used interviews or observations & content analysis techniques for the research work

#### **Sampling -**

**Snowball or Chain Sampling**—Researcher has used snowball sampling for data collection. 25 interviews conducted for completion of above study. Researcher has also done the proper content analysis of books written by AnutaiWagh& book written by others on AnutaiWagh

### **Historical Background of AnutaiWagh**

During Tarabai's transition from Mumbai to Bordi and then to Kosbad she had met AnutaiWagh who offered her services and both of them worked hard tirelessly and endlessly in an atmosphere totally alien to them. Educating the tribals was very novel and new concept not only to these two devoted, dedicated and determined educationists, but also to the tribals themselves. In the years that followed selfless and tireless dedication helped to educate large numbers of children in an otherwise deprived section of society. Various new experiments were visualized and successfully implemented at Kosbad. Detail timeline of Anutai as follows

1910 Born in Morgaon, Pune, in 1925 First in the Vernacular Finals in Nashik, in 1929 First in the Primary Teachers Certificate course at Pune, in 1929 to 1933 Worked as a primary teacher Chandvad (Pimpalgaon), in 1933 to 1944 Worked as a primary teacher in HujoorPaga,Pune, 1937 passed her Matric examination attending the night school, 1945 attended a seminar cum workshop organised by the Kasturba Trust for the Early Childhood Teacher's Training Programme. Met her Mentor TarataiModak at the seminar, 1945 to 1956 Joined Taratai in GRAMBAL SHIKSHA KENDRA and worked along with Taratai, 1956 to 1973 Took the post and responsibility of the caretaker of GRAMBAL SHIKSHA KENDRA, 1961 In spite of failing eyesight due to cataract in both the eyes passed her BA examinations from the S.N.D.T. University, 1972 Received the prestigious Ideal Teacher's award given by the State Government, 1973 to 1992 Director of GRAMBAL SHIKSHA KENDRA, 1972 to 1992 Held the post of editor of SHKSHAN PATRIKA, 1980 Established a residential school for the Hearing impaired children, in Dahanu, Established a magazine SAVITRI for women, Established GRAMANGAL at Aine, in Taluka Dahanu, 1984 Awarded the Padmashri in recognition of her work in the field of childhood education in tribal area, 1985 Honoured with the Award given by the Jamnalal Bajaj Foundation, 1989 Honoured by being conferred with the D.Lit by the SNDT University in recognition of her work, 1992 Died at the age of 82 (27-09-1992)

### **Educational Contribution of AnutaiWagh**

The turning point in Anutai's life came in 1945 when she met the late Mrs TarabaiModak in a training camp for women village workers organized by Kasturba Memorial Trust at Borivli (Bombay). Tarabai was planning to start an experimental pre-primary school in a rural area, Bordi, in Dahanu Taluka. She asked Anutai whether she would like to join the proposed school and the latter readily agreed. So began an educational partnership between the two women which was to last till Tarabai's death in 1973. The Gram BalShiksha Kendra

(G.B.S.K.) started by both of them at Bordi in 1945. They moved to its present setting at Kosbad Hill in the heart of the tribal area in 1957. The GBSK became a fountainhead of new ideas, exploratory ventures, experiments and innovations in education, all closely related to the needs and problems of the children of the most under-privileged sections of society.

After Tarabai's demise Anutai became the Director if G.B.S.K. and Secretary of the parent body, the NutanBalShikshansangh, and guided the host of educational activities which had been started at Kosbad. The new and novel concepts of **Balvadi, Anganwadi and KuranShala** (Meadow School) born out of her continuous thought and applied work in the tribal areas of Palghar District, have been recognized as innovative and useful concepts in the history of education in this country and have been adopted by the Govt. of India, for rural & tribal pre-primary education. Her efforts to produce educational aids out of the indigenous material available in rural areas, has certainly revolutionized the pre-school learning methods in the country, and has provided a model to the other developing countries also.

#### **Social Work of AnutaiWagh**

Tarabai and Anutai had to confront the challenge posed by the indifference and apathy of tribal people towards education. But with their sustained work, patience and determination, they overcame this hurdle and laid the foundation of a system of education which was perfectly attuned to the needs, habits and culture of the Adivasis. Their success has been acclaimed by one and all.

Today a wide range of visitors, eminent educationists in India and other countries, representatives from UNICEF and UNESCO and a variety of professionals interested in reforming education make a pilgrimage to Kosbad and return with a sense of fulfilment, having seen something new, dynamic and full of life. In addition to her responsibility as the Director of Gram BalShiksha Kendra, Anutai was also the President of another registered voluntary organization called "**Thane District Shree Shakti JagrutiSamiti**" since 1977-till the end. **The teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and AcharyaVinobaBhave**, inspired her to take up the cause of women. She felt that an immeasurable spiritual strength lies hidden in women which, if released at the appropriate time, could profoundly influence the world beneficially. She believed that all possible efforts should be made to awaken the women community and make them realize that they must face and fight with courage the injustices, tyrannies and humiliations inflicted on them by society.

#### **Work of Anutai for Women Empowerment**

Under the **Thane District Shree Shakti JagrutiSamiti**this organization, she has started many activities for the welfare of women and children. Many MahilaMelawas (Gatherings)

have been organized were importance of Family Welfare Programmes, Health and Hygiene, Child Care, Nutrition, Cottage Industries, Evil Effects of Superstitions, and Social Education were explained to the women through various methods of community contact. Some creches were started in tribal hamlets for children of working women.

Under the auspices of Shree Shakti JagritiSamity, she started another monthly titled "Savitri" in 1981. She had received the first Award instituted by the Maharashtra State in memory of late SavitribaiPhule. This magazine was devoted to the problems and activities of the women community, Anutai wrote about all those, who had done outstanding work for the welfare of the community. A number of young girls and middle aged women, facing domestic or social crisis or problem came to Anutai to seek solution to their problems. They had full confidence in Anutai. She always listened to their problems and understood their difficulties, sufferings & worries. She also gave them sound good advice on how to overcome them.

### **Contribution of Anutai in Child Education**

In June 1980 she started a school for the Dumb and Deaf poor children. She devoted a lot of time of her daily routine to the work of this organization. She was the editor of a Marathi Magazine "ShikshanPatrika" in which very useful literature for children, teachers and parents is regularly published.

Anutai, in (1983), started a totally new project called "Gram-Mangal", at Dabhon, a remote village. Dabhon is a typically tribal area, inhabited by Warlis, who are the most backward among the tribals. No other social work agency had penetrated into this area so far. Anutai selected the place for trying out her experiment of an open school, a school with no building and syllabus and the subjects taught would be those arising out of activities, which aimed at all-round development of the waralis, including improvement of their economic status.

### **Idols of Anutai for the Great work in Education**

Anutai fully acknowledged her debt to the late TarabaiModak who had inspired and guided her and to the teachings of Gandhiji and Vinobaji, which had profoundly influenced her from a young age. Whenever she found herself faced with any serious problem in life, she immediately read the book "GeetaPravachan" written by Vinobaji and sought her solution there.

### **Awards & honours received by Anutai**

Anutai has been the recipient of several honours, conferred on her by the Central Government, Maharashtra Government and various voluntary organizations. The major ones among them are :

- National Award for the Best Worker in the field of Child Welfare,
- Title of 'Dalit Mitra',
- Ideal Teacher's Award by Govt. of Maharashtra.
- SavitribaiPhule Award,
- Recipient of Jannalal Bajaj Award for Uplift and Welfare of Women and Children-1985
- F.I.E. Foundation (Ichalkaranji) Award.
- Honoured by the President of India by awarding Padma Shri on 1984
- 1989 Honoured by being conferred with the D.Lit by the SNTD University in recognition of her work

### **Findings**

1. Anutai has work hard for Child & tribal Education
2. Anutai has also done great efforts for social education & social change
3. Anutai has used variety of experiments for making education innovative & cost free
4. Experiments of Anutai are result oriented & successful
5. Efforts of Anutai are appreciated by Government of India & Maharashtra in the forms of various awards

### **Suggestionsfor government of India &Maharashtra**

Govt. of India & Maharashtra taking inspiration from Kosbad experiment has established such institutions all over. Thus now some suggestions are there.

- To make Kosbad the Ruling Place of Pre School Education.
- To make it Globalised and Modern-without taking away its down to earth approach.
- To develop it into an International Research centre for Child Education

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