

Relevance of Savitribai Phule's Ideas in OTME-industry Partnership for Female Students Empowerment in Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, Yaba, Lagos State

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Abstract

The study was poised to relevance of Savitribai Phule's ideas in OTME-industry partnership for female students' empowerment in Federal College of Education (Technical) Akoka, Yaba, Lagos state. Savitribai Phule's ideas create human awareness to deal with societal problems and bring equality with social change at the face of society which exhibits submissive behaviour, lack of social awareness, inhuman approach towards casteism, untouched ability, child exploitation, corruption and issues about reservation policies, religious discrepancy and power imbalance leading to social discrimination. Academic activities of Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) are not confined in the classrooms in the college, however, close cooperation between the department of OTME and various organisations in order to establish strong partnership towards the achievement of economic development, especially in light of the rapid pace of changes in the individual's environment; including technological development, speedy services and openness to foreign markets that help them adapt to their environment and contribute to the settlement of their problems and their societies. The study found out that, one of the Savitribai Phule's ideas was that an industrial department should be attached to the schools where children could learn useful trades and crafts and be able to manage their lives comfortably and independently. This suggests regular industrial training alongside with academic work which the college term Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (S.I.W.E.S) which is run in partnership with cooperating organizations. However, with the Savitribai's idea, female students should be mentored and monitored during and after S.I.W.E.S to ensure that, they become self-reliant even after graduation from the college and as such become employers of labour. The study recommended that, microfinance banks and other financial institutions charged with the responsibility of funding small

businesses should be encouraged to work in partnership to fund OTME female graduates with good and viable business ideas so as to create more jobs in the society.

Keywords: *Savitribai Phule, Office Technology and Management Education (OTME), OTME-industry partnership and female students' empowerment*

Introduction

Office Technology and Management Education (OTME) in Colleges of Education in Nigeria is playing an important role in developing skills and competences in students most especially the female ones who are regularly encouraged to be self-reliant in the world of work. This role is no longer limited to the provision of knowledge and professional business information and training to students, as active members of the society, but exceeded and expanded to include many aspects where the College through OTME has become a large and influential contributor. Therefore, the OTME had to come out of its isolation, to open up for new ideologies especially those from Savitribai Phule and also solicit partnership with industrial companies and to meet the needs for female empowerment.

Savitribai Phule's ideas create human awareness to deal with societal problems and bring equality with social change at the face of society which exhibits submissive behaviour, lack of social awareness, inhuman approach towards casteism, untouched ability, child exploitation, corruption and issues about reservation policies, religious discrepancy and power imbalance leading to social discrimination. According to Das and Das (2021) Savitribai Jyotirao Phule was a prominent Indian social reformer, educationist and poet who played an instrumental role in women's education and empowerment during the nineteenth century. Savitribai Phule was born on January 1831, in the village of Naigaon in Satara District, Maharashtra.

Das and Das (2021) revealed that, at the time of her marriage, Savitribai Phule had not been educated because Brahmins forbade it for people of her low caste and gender. Santosh Kumar (2019) stated that, girls in those days were married off early, so following the prevalent customs, the nine-year-old Savitribai was wedded to 12 years old Jyotirao Phule in 1840. Jyotirao went on to become a thinker, writer, social activist and anti-caste social reformer. He is counted among the leading figures of Maharashtra's social reform movement. Savitribai's education started after her marriage.

Counted among few literate women of those times, Savitribai is credited for founding the first girl's school in Pune in Bhide Wada with her husband Jyotirao Phule. She took great effort

towards educating and emancipating child widows, campaigned against child marriage and sati pratha, and advocated for widow remarriage. She was the first woman teacher, the first woman educationist, who inspired the downtrodden people to take up education and thereby played an important role in their emancipation (Das and Das, 2021).

According to Esene, Olumese & Ovbiagele (2018) Office Technology and Management which replaced the old secretarial studies is charged to prepare the students for employment after graduation; meet the manpower needs of the society; increase the options available to each student and serving as motivation in order to enhance all types of learning; present a laboratory in which students practice skills, knowledge and attitude to make the classroom instruction more meaningful and relevant; provide an opportunity through the use of local business for the students to acquire additional skill and knowledge; give the students background of training that would contribute to rapid advancement on the job and to also make students develop good working habits and attitude needed in the development of personality traits such as punctuality, responsibility, accuracy, fact, adaptability and serves of responsibility that makes for efficient work.

Further, Office Technology and Management is also charged with the responsibilities to help develop the high attitude towards work and the habit of mind conducive to the proper use of technology; provide the knowledge and skills necessary for industrial, commercial and economic development; provide persons who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement/solutions, and convenience of man; give training, and impart the necessary skills leading to the promotion of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self-reliant; it is also out to stimulate and encourage creativity and to enable our young and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of the society (Shaibu & Mbaegbu, 2012). These objectives stated above aimed at achieving sustainable improvements in the quality of life for all and sundry and to enhance economic growth in terms of capital, labour, resources and the use technology which are parts of sustainable national development.

Academic activities of OTME are not confined in the classrooms in the college, however, close cooperation between the department of OTME and various organisations in order to establish strong partnership towards the achievement of economic development, especially in light of the rapid pace of changes in the individual's environment; including technological development, speedy services and openness to foreign markets that help them adapt to their

environment and contribute to the settlement of their problems and their societies. Stibbe, Reid & Gilbert (2019), stated that, partnerships approach can be demonstrated to generate significant added value to deliver greater impact and focus energies and optimize the way they work and operate to ensure they deliver the greatest value.

Considering university-industry partnership, Naga (2018) opined that, establishing university or research centers - industry collaboration, by opening channels of cooperation, coordination and communication between different universities and development sectors, creates a dynamic of know-how exchange and experience sharing that serves the interests of both parties as the companies use university competencies to ensure its continuity by creating the spirit of innovation and initiative-taking that give the company competitive capabilities that distinguish it from other institutions, while the university benefits from this field experience to adapt its educational programmes to the requirements of companies, increase the employability of its graduates and link its objectives to development plans. These to a greater extent, will lead to sustainable national development in the country.

Analysis of Savitribai's Ideological Views toward Education

Das and Das (2021) revealed the Savitribai's Feminist Ideology and Pragmatic Views toward education as described below;

Feminist Ideology: Savitribai Phule started several initiatives for social transformation much before the early nationalists took up social reform as a campaign strategy. One of the main focuses of her interventions was the challenge she posed to the well-established patriarchal and Brahmanical relations especially in terms of combating female illiteracy and the caste system. The report says that 'The prejudice against teaching girls to read and write began to give way the good conduct and honesty of the peons in conveying the girls to and from school and parental treatment and indulgent attention of the teachers made the girls love the schools and literally run to them with alacrity and joy. Savitribai Phule fought against injustice against women at a time when women were subjected to oppression. She is known for her contribution to women's education in India, including the construction of the first school for women. For all of these special works, she has been called a feminist. In fact, many call her modern Indian's first feminist. This view of her is known as the feminist. The first modern Indian feminists who stood up for the rights of women and also fought against window shaving their heads.

Pragmatic Views: According to Phule- education was not simply alphabetical learning. It was not only gaining knowledge and getting degrees. Her thought was that everyone should get an

education through the free mind and free thought. She used to say that education is one of the basic needs like food, shelter and clothing. She realized the main reason for the backwardness of people which was none other than education. So, she looks towards the problem of educational upliftment of the masses as a pragmatist. She believed that an industrial department should be attached to the schools where children could learn useful trades and crafts and be able to manage their lives comfortably and independently.

She took the initiative to reduce malnutrition in children by taking care of the health of each and every child in school. She is also said to have inspired a young student to ask for a library for the school at an award ceremony instead of gifts for herself. She inspired young girls to take up painting, writing and other activities. She used to teach in simple language. Mostly participative and activity-based teaching methods she used in her teaching.

Savitribai Phule's Ideas and OTME-Industry Partnership implications for Female Students Empowerment

Industrial Training for Self-Reliance:

One of the Savitribai Phule's ideas was that an industrial department should be attached to the schools where children could learn useful trades and crafts and be able to manage their lives comfortably and independently. This suggests regular industrial training alongside with academic work which the college term Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (S.I.W.E.S) which is run in partnership with cooperating organisations. However, with the Savitribai's idea, female students should be mentored and monitored during and after S.I.W.E.S to ensure that, they become self-reliant even after graduation from the college.

Scholarships and Female Students' Supports:

Savitribai started the practice of giving stipends to children for attending school. She remained an inspiration for the young girls she taught. She encouraged them to take up activities like writing and painting (Santosh Kumar, 2019). This reduced dropout rates. OTME-Industry Partnership should be geared toward providing partial or full scholarships for female students to prevent dropouts, encourage them to be educated and become useful to themselves. Further, female Students' Supports Scheme should be provided within the college premises where they can go for counselling, financial supports, mentoring and academic award of excellence in honour of Savitribai Phule.

Female Care Centre and Counselling Room:

In 1863, Jyotirao and Savitribai also started a care center called ‘Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha,’ possibly the first ever infanticide prohibition home founded in India. It was set up so that pregnant Brahmin widows and rape victims can deliver their children in a safe and secure place thus preventing the killing of widows as well as reducing the rate of infanticide (Santosh Kumar, 2019). Female students in college often complain of raping and other forms of sexual harassment including physical abuse. Establishing Female Care Centre and Counselling Room will give opportunity for female students to be protected and catered for against such acts on campus. The unit can work in collaboration with disciplinary committee of the college and in partnership with legal firms for effective operations.

Savitribai Educational Trust Fund

In the 1850s, Savitribai and Jotirao Phule established two educational trusts. They were entitled: the Native Female School, Pune and the Society for Promoting the Education of Mahars, Mangs, and Etceteras. These two trusts ended up encompassing many schools which were led by Savitribai Phule and later, Fatima Sheikh (Kandukuri, 2019). Establishing Savitribai Partnership Educational Trust Fund in the college through OTME-Industry Partnership will help to raise adequate resources to support government allocation in funding the department, provide necessary ICT resources, provide learning materials for female students and to also provide soft loans for OTME graduates to start viable business ventures and become employer of labour based on the skill acquired during the programme on campus.

Women Education Foundation

In the age when women were confined to their kitchen and children, Savitribai laid down the foundation for women's education and women's empowerment. Society was rigidly based on caste, religion and gender separation. On 1st January 1848, she started the first school for girls in Bhide Wada. Savitribai provided slates and pencils to the girls. This led to the beginning of girls' education and these girls would uplift women in the future by spreading education. She worked to make the students have self-confidence. She struggled very hard to sustain this movement (Das and Das, 2021). In Nigeria, women who were dropouts, those who did not have access to higher education including those who could not afford it due to poverty level, these categories of women could be sponsored to register and run OTME course through the

efforts of OTME-Industry Partnership so as to make them relevant in the world of work and the society at large.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Savitribai Phule's ideas have implications for different fields of education. The efforts and impacts that can be achieved through OTME-Industry Partnership for empowering the female students in OTME based on the Savitribai Phule's ideas cannot be overemphasized. The College Management, OTME management and the partnering organisation should be encouraged to work together to give adequate supports to empower the female students. By this, level of discrimination and poverty will be reduced maximally.

It is recommended that, on-the-job trainings on new trends in the world of work should be regularly organised for OTME lecturers in conjunction with the various partnering organisations so as to enhance their input in female students' empowerment. Lastly, microfinance banks and other financial institutions charged with the responsibility of funding small businesses should be encouraged to work in partnership to fund OTME female graduates with good and viable business ideas so as to create more jobs in the society.

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