

Death of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar: This Day in History July 29

On 29 July 1891 popular social reformer, writer, philosopher, educator and translator, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar passed away in Calcutta (now Kolkata) at the age of 70. In this edition of This Day in History, one can quickly learn the life and important contributions of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar.

Biography of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

Ishwar Chandra Bandyopadhyay was born in a Bengali Hindu Brahmin family to Thakurdas Bandyopadhyay and Bhagavati Devi at Birsingha village in Hooghly district.

His family was of modest means and hence could not afford the amenities that would allow him to continue his education in a feasible manner. For example, they not afford a gas lamp at home, but so intense was the quest for knowledge that Ishwar Chandra studied under the street light. Despite his hardships, he excelled in all of his examinations in quick succession, being awarded a number of scholarships as a result. He took admission in Sanskrit College, Calcutta and graduated in 1841, 12 years after joining. It took him long to graduate because he was working part-time to support himself and his family, while managing his studies at the same time. He qualified in Sanskrit Grammar, Literature, Dialectics Vedanta, Smriti and Astronomy. As was the custom then Ishwar Chandra married at the age of fourteen. His wife was Dinamayee Devi. Narayan Chandra Bandyopadhyaya was their only son.

Work of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

1. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar worked tirelessly for social emancipation and as a social reformer, he is remembered for his contribution towards the removal of social injustice, upliftment of women, allowing widow remarriage and preached the ills of polygamy.
2. **Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar** was a far-sighted social reformer, philosopher, philanthropist, and educationalist with a modern vision. Throughout his long life, he stood for morality, honest character, truthfulness, social reforms, unselfishness, and liberalism.
3. During the period from 1829 to 1841, Ishwar Chandra studied Vedanta, Vyakaran, Literature, Rhetoric's, Smriti and Ethics in Sanskrit College. And in 1839 the title 'Vidyasagar' was conferred on him for his unusual talent.
4. He was appointed as the Head Pandit of the Fort William College on 29th December 1841. Soon he learnt English and Hindi.

5. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, along with many other active reformer's opened schools for girls. This was because, for him, educational reform was much important than any other reform. He believed that the status of women and all kinds of injustice and inequalities that they face could be changed only through education.
6. Vidyasagar worked to uplift the status of women in India, especially in his native Bengal. He was a social reformer and wanted to change the orthodox Hindu society from within. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar introduced the practise of widow remarriage and worked against polygamy.