

A Peep into the Philosophy of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Relating to Education

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Abstract

The present study aims at focussing the educational thoughts of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and finding its significance in present day educational system. Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a creative thinker of modern India as a contemporary Indian philosopher. As an educational philosopher he took part in the educational process also studying the problems of education in depth. He was concerned about the social, political, economic and cultural issues. He not only theorised the educational principles but also practised the same in his own teaching. As he was a great teacher and a high level philosopher, the dual enterprise gave him a unique and in-depth insight into the Indian educational situation and problems and he could speak about the same to the authority. His educational philosophy touched all spheres of life and education. It exerted special emphasis on peace, love, co-operation, universal love, harmony, brotherhood, and secular culture in fusion of our rich tradition and culture of the East with the modern science and technology of the West. He wanted qualitative improvement of education through mass, women, technical and vocational education, fostering of creativity, spiritual training and understanding of human relationship with the end of abolishing the evils of the country like malnutrition, poverty, gender discrimination, superstition, illiteracy and unemployment. The Historical Research Method was followed in the study, and the data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. The major finding of the study is that the educational philosophy of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is multi-faceted and is relevant in all spheres of life and education in present and future.

Words: *Philosophy, Radhakrishnan, education, thoughts, contemporary.*

Introduction

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a creative thinker of modern India as a contemporary Indian philosopher. As an educational philosopher he took part in the educational process also studying the problems of education in depth. He was concerned about the social, political, economic and cultural issues. As he was a great teacher and a high level philosopher, the dual enterprise gave him a unique and in-depth insight into the Indian educational situation and problems and he could speak about the same to the authority. His educational philosophy touched all spheres of life and education. It exerted special emphasis on peace, love, co-operation, universal love, harmony, brotherhood, and secular culture in fusion of our rich tradition and culture of the East with the modern science and technology of

the West. He wanted qualitative improvement of education through mass, women, technical and vocational education, fostering of creativity, spiritual training and understanding of human relationship with the end of abolishing the evils of the country like malnutrition, poverty, gender discrimination, superstition, illiteracy and unemployment. His educational philosophy is multi-faceted and is relevant in all spheres of life and education in present and future.

Meaning of Educational Philosophy

Educational philosophy is the practical application of philosophical assumptions to the various aspects of education. It is an approach by the educationists and practical teachers to take philosophy into the field of education to solve educational issues. It is the branch of general philosophy and is an attempt to answer such educational questions as aims, values, curriculum, and method, discipline and so on. It includes principles, ideals, values and theories of life of particular people, at a particular time, in a particular country or society in the sphere of education and then puts them into practice. It seeks to comprehend education in its entirety through philosophical approach, thereby giving a synthetic view of the whole gamut of education. According to another view, it tries to construct wholesome system of education on the basis of conclusions arrived at by different disciplines and to co-ordinate common features by applying philosophical interrelations.

Significance of the Study

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan held a prominent place in the educational scene of young India. He not only theorised the educational principles but also practised the same in his own teaching. He once said, "We should weave different parts of experience. We should keep our general ideas connected so that different experiences may be explained." Accordingly he synthesised idealism and realism, mysticism and pragmatism in his philosophy of education. Actually, Dr. Krishnan had dual contact with education which gave him a unique insight into the Indian system of education and its problems. At the practical side, he was an eminent professor of philosophy in colleges and universities in India and abroad; he worked as Vice-chancellor of different universities and was closely associated as member or chairman with many important committees and commissions. At the theoretical side, he brought his profound extensive knowledge of philosophy to bear on the discussion of the ends and purposes of education.

According to Dr. *Sarvepalli* Radhakrishnan the ideal system of education should be democratic and socialistic. As per his belief an objective study of scientific truth means an intellectual excellence, moral excellence, and emotional commitment. In any kind of investigation of truth all these three sides of man's nature should be involved. In this way Dr. Krishnan tried to train the minds of the students for scientific pursuits. The major part of his educational philosophy consists of university education. The document of University Education Commission which is a systematic account of university education covers almost every aspect of education.

Dr. *Sarvepalli* Radhakrishnan believed that man cannot be satisfied only by wealth or by learning but by developing the quality of detachment and renunciation, and making himself the instrument of higher purpose. Though he wanted the students' training for livelihood, yet he emphasised the moral and spiritual training for the pupils throughout life. He knew that for the balanced development of the pupils both scientific and spiritual knowledge was essential. He was aware that mere study of science of study without the study of humanities may lead to dehumanisation. So he wanted the study of the great classics of the world by the children.

According to Dr. Krishnan, education is to stimulate all that is good in man and eradicate what is evil or unworthy. He gave much emphasis on the development of intellectual freedom and capacity for responsible criticism. He was in favour of training men and women in the 'art of living' in understanding human relationship and in working with people co-operatively. He also wanted the inclusion of various arts and other extra-curricular activities so that children's hands might be trained to skilful use. In the technologically advanced present society, fostering of creativity should have an important place in the educational process. Considering all these aspects the study of Radhakrishnan's educational philosophy seems to be quite significant.

Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study were as follows

- (i) To study different dimensions of the educational philosophy of Dr. Radhakrishnan; and
- (ii) To show the relevance of Radhakrishnan's philosophy of education in 21st century.

Methodology of the Study

The Historical Method was followed in the study, and the data were collected from both primary and secondary sources.

Presentation of the Results

From the speeches and writings of Dr. Radhakrishnan some invaluable ideas on education may be drawn out like the following:-

Aims of Education : As the chairman of the University Education Commission, he recommended the following aims of higher education—(a) To teach that life has a meaning; (b) To awaken the innate ability to live the life of soul by developing wisdom; (c) To acquaint with the social philosophy which should govern all our institutions—educational, economic and political;(d) To train for democracy; (e) To train for self-development; (f) To develop certain qualities like fearlessness of mind, strength of conscience and integrity of purposes; (g) To acquaint with cultural heritage for its regeneration; (h) To enable to know that education is a lifelong process; (i) To develop understanding of the present as well as of the past.

Means of Education: Dr. Radhakrishnan was a strong supporter of the modern means of education as the chairman of the University Education Commission. He recommended standards of teaching at different stages of education and practical training for the students undergoing professional course. He recommended the study of the following subjects ----(i) Agriculture, (ii) Commerce, (iii) Education, (iv) Engineering Technology, (v) Law, (vi) Medicine.

Moral Education: Encouraged by the views of Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Aurobindo Ghosh, Radhakrishnan wanted to introduce moral education as a compulsory subject at primary and secondary stages of education. He believed that without moral education, education would fail to achieve its objectives to educate the young generation, and life would become meaningless. So, he thought, great emphasis should be given on moral education in the system of education.

Religious Education: Dr. Radhakrishnan favoured religious education because it develops among the students a spiritual intuition. But it is to be noted that he was not in favour of a particular religion. For him, religious education is the means, while spiritual education is the end. He says, "The only secularism worth the name means that every individual has full liberty to follow his religion." He recommended the following in favour of religious education: -

- (i) All educational institutions should start work with a few minutes for silent meditation.
- (ii) In the first year lives of the great religious leaders like Gautam Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Socrates, Jesus, Samkara, Ramanuja, Mahammed, Kabir, Nanak, etc. be taught.
- (iii) In the second year some selections of a universal character from the scriptures of the world be taught.
- (iv) In the third year the central problem of the philosophy of religion be considered.

Primary Education: Dr. Radhakrishnan was a strong supporter of Gandhiji's Basic Education Scheme. He recommended that children at the primary stage of education should get an opportunity to learn humanities, science subjects and language studies. For him, this education establishes contacts of the students with everyday life. The body is the means of the expression of human soul. Therefore, physical education must be given properly.

Secondary Education: As Dr. Radhakrishnan holds, secondary education is the next step continuous to primary education. The secondary school students also should learn science, humanities and language. The main objective of education here is to create a feeling of national integration. Teaching of history can create this feeling among the students.

University Education: As he was the chairman of the University Education Commission, he could visualise the pros and cons of the higher education system in the country. He recommended the quality education at the university stage. For him, the talented students should be admitted to the university education. Dr. Krishnan also emphasised research studies. He was in support of the autonomy of the universities. For the promotion of

quality education, he recommended for the recruitment and promotion of teachers purely on merit basis, construction of syllabi, techniques of teaching, and research. Dr. Radhakrishnan also recommended for University Grants Commission.

University Teachers: According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, university teachers must be of the highest calibre---intellectually, morally and culturally. They should be able to relate to young minds, in every way, be young in spirit, enthusiastic and cheerful. Since they are to educate the leaders of the future, their words, their actions and their own lives, should provide living examples to young students. A dull introverted scholar, disinterested in anything outside of himself, is the worst type of teacher. He may be learned, but he is incapable of making his students learn anything from him. He is a truly good and kind person who relates to his students and attracts them to his teaching through his interest in each student. He has a desire to communicate with them through his life and actions in addition to his teaching. He can dispel their intellectual and spiritual ignorance accordingly. Teachers should set the highest example of truth, goodness and noble ideas to their students.

The Ideal Teacher: What Dr. Radhakrishnan said about teachers, he himself followed them in ditto. The success of education depends on high moral character, educative quality and teaching skill. So, an assembly of a large number of learned and experienced teachers is a must for a university. Only theoretical lecture is not sufficient. Curiosity is to be aroused in the minds of the young learners so that they can apply their intellect open-mindedly and can decide a matter individually. An ideal teacher loves not only what he teaches, but also those whom he teaches.

Medium of Instruction: Dr. Radhakrishnan wanted mother tongue as the medium of instruction. He was against English language to be the medium of instruction. He knew that if English would become the mother tongue, then people of India would forget their own cultural tradition. He also supported Sanskrit language as it is the repository of Indian culture. In his language formula the child can learn the national language Hindi and the international language.

Method of Teaching: As Dr. Radhakrishnan says, the teacher is the right person to decide which method to follow in the classroom situation. The teacher should be a scholar and possess knowledge in the field he teaches. To follow the suitable teaching method there should be proper student-teacher relations.

Student Discipline: According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, we must train the young to the best possible all round living, individual and social. We must make them intelligent and good. They must learn to observe spontaneously those unwritten laws of decency and honour felt by good men and not enforced by any statute. Whenever we act, we should not be hasty and quick but should wait and ponder, and discern the true from the false.

Women Education: Dr. Radhakrishnan, in his educational thoughts, assigned an equal role to women. Women should be given the same opportunities for intellectual development, equal rights and responsibilities in life. They should be regarded as citizens with the same

rights and obligations. The fact that we are human beings is infinitely more important than the physiological peculiarities which distinguish us from one another.

Educational Implication

Radhakrishnan wanted to build an India where the standard of education would be high at all stages of education. The teachers would teach with high service-satisfaction. Sufficiently diversified and integrated curriculum would be there. Vocational, engineering and technological institutions would be sufficient in number in the country. The examination and the administration systems would be flawless. Women education, rural education and religious education would be given much importance. People would be spiritually strong through education, and through human relationship, peace, love and co-operation, they would demolish the evils of the society like poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, superstition, gender discrimination communalism, unemployment and drug-addiction. But towards the end of the seventh decade after independence also, the dream has not been actualised fully. After the demise of Dr. Radhakrishnan, there has already been a generation gap; but still now all the educational thoughts of Radhakrishnan have not been implemented. So this is the time to implement the same for the betterment of the country, because the educational philosophy of Radhakrishnan is equally relevant in all spheres of life and education not only in the present century but also in the next. If his educational ideas are implemented, and followed in all our educational institutions, then only the present study will be fruitful.

Conclusion

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a great teacher and an eminent philosopher of education. He had experience of teaching both in India and the West. Therefore, his philosophy of education was pragmatic in nature. As the chairman of the University Education Commission, he got an opportunity to present the system of Indian education. His propagated philosophy of education was based on sound sociological and psychological foundations. With the object of building spiritual personality through education Dr. Krishnan had integral approach to curriculum, aims of education and school administration, and he desired to include all subjects in the syllabi of education at different stages. Being a philosopher he considered the individual as a part of the society. Dr. Krishnan was a humanist and emphasised human freedom. He says, "Human personality is a sacred thing. He has a right that he should be considered an end in himself, and, therefore, he has right to life, liberty and security."

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