

PHILOSOPHICAL AND EDUCATIONAL VIEWS OF DR. SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

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Introduction

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was born on September 5th, 1888, at a small place, Tiruttani, forty miles to the north-west of Madras. Veeraswami and Seethamma were his parents. He was the second child of his parents. His early life was spent in Tirupati and Tiruttani, both famous as places of pilgrimage. Perhaps on account of that early influence, he was naturally attracted towards religion. He admitted himself that since then he developed a firm faith in reality of the unseen world, a faith which was never forsaken. Radhakrishnan joined the Lutheran Mission High School in Tirupati in his early age and left it in 1900. He then joined the Voorhee's College at Vellore where he studied F.A in 1904. Next year he joined Madras Christian College, there he was successful in his B.A degree examination with a high percentage of marks. In 1905, while he was at Voorhees College, Radhakrishnan married Sivakamamma. She lived with Radhakrishnan more than fifty years and passed away in 1956.

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.

Nature of Philosophy

Radhakrishnan has the rare qualification of being well-versed in the great tradition of both the East and the West. His early education made him familiar with the knowledge of the East particularly of India, and his own scholarly adventure acquainted him with the wisdom of the West. He combined the two traditions with perfect ease, and is able to evolve a philosophy of synthesis. However his fundamental convictions are deeply rooted in Indian tradition. The basics of his own philosophy are derived from ancient Indian philosophy particularly from the vedantic tradition, but he has skills of presenting such ideas into idioms and models of western thought. In his works, Radhakrishnan presented the old and traditional ideas in a refreshingly manner.

C.M. Joad describes Radhakrishnan's metaphysical stand point as the function of a liaison officer. "He seeks to build a bridge between the traditional wisdom of the East and the new knowledge and energy of the West". This statement does contain an element of truth, because Radhakrishnan made persistent efforts to bring about an East-West synthesis. His basic philosophical position is a kind of synthesis of advaita vedanta and the philosophy of absolute idealism. He takes up the monistic character of the vedantic reality and combines it with some of the important aspects of absolute idealism. Like a vedantin he believes that the reality is one, like an absolute idealist he shows that everything is a necessary aspect of one. Consequently one finds it difficult to reduce his philosophy to any of the current metaphysical models. It can broadly be described as a philosophy of monistic idealism. It is monistic because reality is conceived as one, and it can be also called idealism for the reason that it emphasizes upon both idea-ism and ideal-ism. The former (idea-ism) means that reality is of the nature of an idea -that it is mental or spiritual. Ideal-ism, on the other hand,

emphasizes the ultimacy and value of some ideal. Radhakrishnan is an idealist in both of these two senses. He is an idealist in the first sense because he conceives the ultimate reality as spiritual. He is an idealist more particularly in the second sense because he is convinced that the world process is serving some purpose, is steadily trying to reach some goal. He seems to have the feeling that the scientific and technological advancement have made life's ways mechanical and that the materialistic competitions have almost leveled that soul of human-kind to sleep. Therefore he thinks that what is required is a reawakening of the soul, a recovery of the spiritual faith. His philosophy, thus, is nothing but an attempt to illustrate that the ultimate nature of the universe is spiritual, and that unless the spiritual sense is awakened, man's life will remain confused, a life of anguish and evil. On account of such a tremendous emphasis on the ultimate spirituality of everything, Radhakrishnan at times appears to be a mystic. However his mysticism is mysticism only to the extent to which idealistic thought of the monistic variety tends towards it.

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

Concepts and Functions of Education

The educational thoughts of Dr. Radhakrishnan are not merely idealistic but also very much pragmatic. Dr. Radhakrishnan is an Idealistic philosopher but his educational thoughts are influenced by the Pragmatic philosophy also. Dr. Radhakrishnan defines education as the instrument for social, economic and cultural change. For social and national integration, for increasing productively, education should be properly utilized. He believed that, "The importance of education is not only in knowledge and skill, but it is to help us to live with others." (Bhatia, S. & Sarin, A., 2004, p.239). Dr. Radhakrishnan opined that only the right kind of education could solve many problems of the society and the country. He wants that education which will help us to see the other world, the invisible and intangible world beyond space and time. Education has to give us a second birth, to help us realize what have already

in us. The meaning of education is to emancipate the individual and we need the education of the wholeness- mental, physical, intellectual and spiritual. Education should develop in the minds of students a love of sustained thinking, adherence to truth and the power of resistance to popular sentiments and mob passion.

Aims of Education:

Development of Personality

A satisfactory system of education aims at a balanced growth of the individual and insists on knowledge and wisdom. It should train the intellect, and furthermore, wisdom can be gained by the study of literature, philosophy and religion that interpret the higher laws of the universe. Education should develop in the minds of the students a love of sustained thinking, adherence to truth and the power of resistance to popular sentiments and mob passion. (Bhatia, S. & Sarin, A., 2004, p.239). The guiding motto of an education system should be the development of personality and faith, formation of character, cultivation of social, moral and spiritual values. In Radhakrishnan's opinion, the aim of all education is man-making.

Development of Character

According to Radhakrishnan, Character development is an important aim of education. Education for character building has been advocated by Dr. Radhakrishnan. To him character of a man is the aggregate of the tendencies of his mind or the sum-total of the impressions created by his action and speech. Real character of a man can be judged from his common actions and not from his great performance. Radhakrishnan said, character is destiny and integrity of character is necessary in every walk of life (Choudhury, S., 2006, p. 80). Education will be incomplete if it does not initiate in the child the values of love, truth, goodness and beauty. He felt that character building is key to all education. **Development of**

Spiritual Values

Radhakrishnan has given a right place to education for developing spiritual values among the people. Radhakrishnan has attached great importance to spiritual education. He thinks that education which does not inculcate spiritual feelings in students is not true. Without a spiritual bent of mind, the physical and intellectual development of a person remains stunted. This situation is detrimental to the progress of mankind. Radhakrishnan said, human development should not be confused with the acquisition of mechanical skills or intellectual information. It is the development of spirit in man. Education should develop human attitude and manly spirit through the refinement of heart and development of good habits.

Development of Vocational Efficiency

Radhakrishnan emphasized education for the development of vocation efficiency. This aim of education is to enable the child to attain certain skills in order to become economically self-sufficient. In order to enable him to become self-reliant, education should aim at imparting vocational courses. He viewed that by increasing his own income through involvement in national farms and factories an individual can increase the wealth of the nation (Choudhury, S., 2006, p. 84). **National Integration**

National Integration is an important aim of education. It is also one of the basic needs of India. Religious education, mass education programmes like social services, community living, and study of social services were emphasized for the development of nationalism.

The Role of Teacher

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.

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

Conclusion

Radhakrishnan's philosophy has been awarded rare honour of being included in the 'The Library of Living Philosophers', together with the philosophy of C.D. Broad, Bertrand Russell, A.N. Whitehead, Albert Einstein, Karl Popper and Jean Paul Satre. Sometimes he is described as nothing more than 'a liaison officer' in philosophy between the East and the West (as put it by C.M. Joad). He has also been characterized as a historian of philosophy and not a philosopher himself. Reacting upon this criticism D.P. Chattopadhyaya observes that, rightly understood, the above partial characterization of Radhakrishnan need not necessarily be considered as negative. Chattopadhyaya remarks that he has no hesitation in saying that Radhakrishnan has philosophized in the grand Indian tradition, criticizing his teachers, following them interrogatively and reconstructing them creatively. Any scissors and paste way of characterizing Radhakrishnan would not only be unfair to the thinker, but would also prove inconsistent with the huge corpus of writings he left behind him. Radhakrishnan was influenced by two different traditions of religion and philosophy: Indian Hindu and Western-Christian. He was deeply stirred within by these two traditions. It can be said that if B. Croce was justified in discerning what was dead from what was living of Hegel, Radhakrishnan was justified in disentangling what is living of Indian culture from what is dead in it. His interpretation of Indian culture in general and its philosophy in particular is not mechanical but a creative transformation of the same. Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is a pioneer of the wholesome and boom of the educational philosophy and he flagged it on the heart of educational sphere. A multi-dimensional creative genius, he made his original contributions in all diverse fields of life. Once upon a time a reporter asked to Radhakrishnan regarding the happiest moment of his life. He said the happiest moment of my life is when I am in the classroom among the students. It was very difficult to present in any language on account of the towering stature of personality of Dr. Radhakrishnan and successive stages of his creative contribution in philosophical, educational, social, diplomatic and political field. He is also a great exponent of Hindu Philosophy.

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