

CHAPTER-VIII**DR. RADHAKRISHNAN AND RURAL EDUCATION**

- VIII.1 INTRODUCTION**
- VIII.2 THE RURAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL**
- VIII.3 THE DURATION OF RURAL EDUCATION**
- VIII.4 NEED FOR RURAL COLLEGES AND RURAL UNIVERSITIES**
- VIII.5 WORK AND STUDY OF RURAL COLLEGES AND RURAL UNIVERSITIES**
- VIII.6 THE CURRICULUM OF RURAL UNIVERSITIES**
- VIII.7 THE ADMINISTRATION OF RURAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**
- VIII.8 AUTONOMY IN RURAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES**
- VIII.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

VIII.1 INTRODUCTION :

The present chapter deals with Dr. Radhakrishnan's thoughts regarding rural schools and rural universities and rural education in general. Some of his thoughts regarding rural education are found in his speeches but the major source is the Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49).

Dr. Radhakrishnan believed that India was a country of villages because more than 85% of the people lived in villages (as per the census of 1941). In the villages where the large majority of people lived, there were not adequate facilities for the education of the children, for the fostering of village industries, for medical relief and cultural growth. So it was essential that the village life should be vitalized and the development of rural life should be vitalized and the development of rural life should be made. To explain, to quote from his speech - "We must rouse the minds of the villagers; if we are to vitalize village life."¹

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, preparation and framing of the proper design for rural development was badly needed. Hence he was of the opinion that the rural education should be planned, designed and executed as early

as possible.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, rural life lacked the primary, secondary as well as higher education. So he thought it would be wise and better to create the types of educational opportunity which would be appropriate to Indian rural life, and which would give a quality and range to rural life. This was necessary to remove the disparity between urban and rural life. He was of the opinion that the existing educational system was distinctly urban-centred. So it was a matter of practical necessity that new institutions should aim at extending the educational opportunity to the great mass of rural India. These educational institutions should give vitality and quality to rural life. They should have their own independent designs and programmes. He opined that some such new designs should be formulated for rural upliftment by our universities and the states as well as the Central Government should provide finance and encourage them.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, for a long time cities had drawn the cream of life and culture from the villages, returning almost nothing in the last two centuries; hence, the current village resources of culture and energy became empty and the strength of the nation was reduced. So India should decide whether to aim at a widely distributed

population, making the villages such prosperous, interesting and culturally rich places. In fact, for this, definite governmental and educational policy and a change of public attitude were required. He pointed out that more than half a million villages in India consisted of mud huts with earth floors and with open drains; which had resulted in a large amount of water-borne, insect-borne and earth-borne diseases.

He hoped that with good water supply, drainage and sewerage, malaria and intestinal diseases would practically disappear. Health centres and proper public health care would nearly eliminate communicable diseases. With corresponding development of character and culture; the economic and hygienic advantages would be secured. He, therefore, opined that economic, cultural, ethical and health education should be given together to villagers.

VIII.2 THE RURAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS :

On the lines of Mahatma Gandhi's idea of Basic Education the Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) designed, 'Rural-primary school' and 'Rural-Secondary School' or 'Primary-school village' and 'Secondary school-village'.²

The concept of Primary School Village was framed by Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) on the lines of Primary Basic Education as put forth by Mahatma Gandhi in 1937. Dr. Radhakrishnan wanted to develop the human personality by the universal method of education. He, like Gandhiji, wanted that education should combine practice in the every day processes of living with more formal training.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, small unit of 150 to 200 students would be far better than big schools. The small school should have probably sufficient land for school house, hostel, homes, playground, workshops, and for agriculture, forest and pasture too. According to him the Primary School Village should be the model example of good village planning, construction and operation.

The boys should live in the nearby hostel or the entire family, if wishes to move to the school village, then it may live in the house which might have been built according to the standards of the school. In such cases, the whole family may share in the educational process of village development.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, it would be an ideal school village, similar to the idea of Gandhiji's

self-supported and independent village. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the school village should be built by the pupils and the teachers alongwith the villagers.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the duration of primary school should be of eight years only and afterwards, the students may enter to post-basic or Secondary School Village Education. The aim of the Primary School Village should be to help the students to lead the most effective living.

Thus, the concept of 'Primary School Village' is in most respects, similar to the concept of primary basic education of Mahatma Gandhiji. The Primary School Village according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, is the model of an ideal village which should be self-supporting and independent. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the primary school should become the centre of all kinds of developments and for the upliftment of that particular village.

According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, a number of types of rural secondary school could be emerged according to different practices. The University Education Commission (1948-49), had designed one type of rural secondary school as a combination of the Basic Education Programme. It could be a residence school, with the pupils living in hostels or

if feasible, in such houses, as would be suitable for good village life. The grounds and streets would be planned and also buildings would be planned and built as per design of the well-planned modern village. The entire setting would be an example of the ideal one. It would make students familiar with practical ways of creating new villages, within the reasonable financial and social resources available. The school village should be an example of what was desirable and practical in village planning, construction and operation.

Students might live alone in the school village or also with his family members provided that the whole family wishes to move to the school village. In such cases, the family as a whole might share in the educational process. There could be such secondary schools or colleges where the young family as a unit might be educated.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan preferred residence secondary schools to ordinary schools.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the student should be inspired by school experiences and might not escape from the desire of improving his village. Naturally, the boy who lived in the school village setting could free his mind from rigid village tradition and could have the friendly living together and intimate relations with his teachers,

as they were in ancient times of a 'guru' with his pupils. The University Education Commission (1948-49) warned that, residence schools should not be allowed to wither because of the supposed economy of the parents or of the Government.³

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan hoped that the residence village schools should become successful in arousing a desire for progress of their villages but not to abandon their villages.

The secondary school village would serve a group of villages and should be conveniently located with reference to them. In case of the reconstruction of the new villages, provision might be made in them for secondary school plants, with suitable land and environment. In such cases secondary school students might live at home or partly at home and partly in hostels as would be desirable. The cost for buildings should not be more than the buildings for mass education. The buildings could be very simple. If possible the school village should be built by the pupils and their teachers working together with the help of the trained villagers. During construction, they would live in temporary shades. Nearly all the work of maintaining and clearing buildings and grounds, preparing food and doing other necessary work, could be done by the students as part of their practical education.

Dr. Radhakrishnan expected that residence school students should profit from their studies under the leadership and companionship of teachers of mature character and culture. They could learn a way of life together largely through personal friendships, acquaintances and mutual trust that the society held together.

Dr. Radhakrishnan thought that the type of schools would be the threads of acquaintance and fellowship and would help towards widening social understanding and unity.

The life of the school should follow the course of life of a good village; half the working time would be given to study and half to practical work. Both teachers and pupils would clean the village, working together. Every student should become familiar with the works such as child-care, cooking, home-keeping for girls and agriculture and the use of the household tools for boys and girls. The boys should learn to grow the crops and thus the school should raise most of its food. Farming, building, carpentry, cabinet making, house-keeping, weaving, street cleaning should be included in the practical work.

The programme should also include one or more modern industries and manufacturing goods for sale. It was recommended that a two to four years' course for modern industry under skillful teaching, which would produce highly

skilled workers ready to perform many of the processes in new industries in new secondary school villages. Some students could continue advanced training also.

As students grew older the periods of work would also grow longer. There would be two shifts of students who would work or study on alternate days or alternate weeks or fortnights. Some students might be allowed to do some part-time work away from the school village to have a more representative view of practical life.

After some period the students would begin to specialize. In the secondary school period they would complete their special training but some students may follow the more advanced rural schools or colleges. The pupils may get an allround well-proportioned education, where feasible, subjects of study should be related to practical work. They should be acquainted with geography, geology, astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology. They should set the general knowledge by the history of their locality of India and of the world. They should know practical maths and general knowledge of local and national government. Giving the information and knowledge is important but more important is the development of habits and attitudes of mind and spirit. The habits of goodwill and fairplay, openness and honesty are to be formed.

Teachers also should have these qualities with themselves. The scientific attitude should be formed which would put new life into India.

The rural secondary school should aim at creating a new industrial tradition in its industrial work. The tradition should be developed not only for extra profit but for reasonable and decent living and for economic security as well as for strengthening the industry, for accumulating reserves for expansion or against depression for founding new industries for new secondary schools, for improving quality, for lowering prices or raising wages and bettering working conditions.

Rural education should aim at forming good citizenship than that of making money only. Secondary school villages planned and built according to approved standards would be suitable centres for rural clinics, rural library service, agricultural extension work, cooperative banking and other village activities. Such services should become parts of the secondary school training programme. Through the school system they should be integrated into a unified process of social education. As per report of the University Education Commission (1948-49), the secondary school village thus might well become the cultural and service centre of a group of

villages and it might ensure the success of these various services.

Short-term technical courses should be associated with secondary school villages. Short courses of mechanics, craftsmen and technicians might be given at both secondary school villages and at rural universities. Such schools or rural university might develop reputation for skills and leadership in different fields.

Dr. Radhakrishnan expected that industrial development in India would serve widespread decentralization on a high economic, social and spiritual level. From urban area, small industries should be shifted to rural areas. Each unit to become vigorous, the inter-relationship between the units should be maintained. The units will be developed with the aim of independence as well as of interdependence.

The whole scheme seems to be very similar to Gurudev Tagore's methods at 'Shanti-Niketan' as boys and teachers there also lived and worked together and served the rural people too.⁴ This is also like the atmosphere of the Boarding Houses of Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil, where also all students worked together, stayed together, cooked and dined together irrespective of their castes and creeds, etc.

**VIII.3 THE DURATION OF RURAL
EDUCATION :**

The duration of the post-basic or secondary school period should be related to the entire span of education. It would be 8 years for basic education (or primary school village), 4 years for post-basic education (or secondary school village education), 3 years for college (Rural University Education) and 2 years for Post-graduate University work for Master's degree.

The students who enter to post-basic-education should be well prepared for their life work in two/three years.

This programme should become the programme for the reconstruction of the Indian villages. The reconstruction of new and fine villages throughout India should become a great national movement. The money received from the rural public, from the taxation of rural lands should mostly be returned for the use of rural education and for village improvement and reconstruction. Rural University should carry on research for it. Provincial Governments should share considerable part of the funds to improve the condition of the villages. Thus, Rural Universities and Central as well as Provincial Governments would plan and counsel for it.

To expand this movement, specialists trained from rural secondary school, rural colleges and rural universities must be taken help for the movement for village construction.

The University Education Commission (1948-49) believed in new rural India, like the idea of Ram-Rajya of Mahatma Gandhi, which should be clean, independent, happy as well as ideal one. To explain, to quote some lines from the Report -

"Give the villager a picture of a good life with health, cleanliness, variety of occupations, place and time for recreation, and a feeling that his hopes may be fulfilled, and the energies of the people will make a new rural India, a fit and fine dwelling place for a great people."⁵

VIII.4 NEED FOR RURAL COLLEGES AND RURAL UNIVERSITIES :

Dr. Radhakrishnan opined that rural India demanded for an increasing range and quality of skill in all fields for the general advancement. In order to supply these needs and to meet requirements of an educated citizenship, a system of rural colleges and universities was necessary. Again rural undergraduate colleges would get the advantages

of fully developed universities, which would offer a wide range of specialized and advanced educational opportunity to rural students. The University Education Commission (1948-49) has, therefore, designed a new type of university. According to the Report -

"As a general type of arrangement, that a rural university should include a ring of small resident, undergraduate colleges, with specialized and university facilities in the centre."⁶

Number of students should be limited to get the good results. It should be for each of the undergraduate, resident college about three hundred, and that of the maximum overall enrolment for colleges and university combined, about 2500. Each college of about 300 students should have separate teaching staff and facilities according to the demands of their basic courses. But the under-graduate libraries, laboratories, gymnasiums and hospital facilities may be shared by many or all colleges. The aim of each college would be to equip its students with a general educational foundation and to encourage the development of individual aptitudes and interests. Each student should have the opportunity to begin specialization at whatever time when he chooses with the core of general education. Hence, an undergraduate student may undertake professional or other

specialized studies in some particular fields. Such students may carry their single courses in university or in professional school. Some students who may show clearly their occupational bent at an early stage they should find the expression but some may follow such bent after some years. For this, there should not be any strict rule between undergraduate and post-graduate education. A student might be an undergraduate in most subjects but he may be doing this Post-graduate work in some field of his special interest. The college and university programmes should be flexible enough to serve such cases who may begin these specialized studies at any time and continue to them upto university education or even upto the education at professional schools. Thus, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) this was a classless scheme of education.

VIII.5 WORK AND STUDY OF RURAL COLLEGES AND RURAL UNIVERSITIES :

It is recommended that the students be given the practical course alongwith general education, as in rural secondary schools are given. By this, the students may become cultured and trained as well as skilled in some field.

Most of the rural college students would not have further schooling, except for 'refresher courses' and hence their courses should include occupational preparation.

As with rural secondary schools, rural college students may spend half their time at studies and half at practical work. But working and study periods should be longer than in secondary school. Some of the teachers should be engaged in securing suitable working opportunities and some would supervise working periods. The working places might be located anywhere within several hundred miles, in a great variety of fields. The colleges may develop their own industries and other economic activity which might be more specialized and more exacting than those of rural secondary schools. It was recommended that the practical skill should be looked upon as equal in dignity as to intellectual skill. Like scholarship, it should also have ascending grades of achievement and opportunities; so that a man who develops high practical ability may advance equally to that of the purely intellectual workers.

VIII.6 THE CURRICULUM OF THE RURAL UNIVERSITIES :

The cultural values are same to all humanity; whether it may be rural or urban area. Hence, the common core of liberal education may be also assumed for the rural

university. Only the teaching methods and ways of learning may be different. The common core may include substantial introduction of the various fields, like, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Physical Education, Social Sciences, Philosophy, Languages, Arts and Literature as it is followed in other universities. But for specialized subjects, foreign subjects other than the rural concern should not be there in rural universities. The rural setting should be seen as a suitable environment for the full sweep of human interests. The needs and necessities as well as the interests and possibilities especially related to rural life should be attended explicitly and for realization of them, the ways should be prepared. There may be many common elements but the curriculum should be made to fit the needs of individuals. With the help of the teachers students can combine courses from several fields to meet individual needs. For the development of balanced personality some general courses may be prepared by combining some subjects together. For example, a combination of law, engineering and business in some cases has made men exceptionally able to handle important work; this will make a well-proportioned preparation for the person to face the rural problems. The Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) recommended for such possible combinations in large number.⁷ Men prepared

by such courses will be most useful for personal success as well as for social usefulness. Rural secondary and higher education should constantly search the changing needs and opportunities of Indian life, and should make sure that these programmes will be useful for present and future times. Intelligent assessment of current needs will be effective and useful in guiding students' vocational choices. There should be flexibility and adaptability of the programmes. The rural university students can prepare for administration and leadership in primary, secondary and higher rural education. In agriculture he can prepare for leadership in production, marketing, breeding and agricultural co-operation. He can become skilled in the processes of planning and rebuilding agricultural villages, in the consolidation of small agricultural holdings and in many other phases of rural life.

Those students who are interested in industry should study the design and improvement of machines and processes. Students should study the methods by which many small industries can co-operate in purchasing, research, marketing in business ownership and management. The curricula of professional and specialized subjects should deal with important fields which are of major concern to rural life. The student of the rural college should not be

isolated from life of his time. Rural life should be made interesting, productive, full of opportunity and adventure, so that it will be preferred. Rural India is a great supply of creative life. But good patterns of rural life should be designed which would be the patterns of excellence. So far as our rural population is concerned, the development, enlargement and refinement of that design should largely be the work ^{of} rural education. The curriculum of the rural university should try to supply the proper design for rural development.

Some new and useful rural professions should be the concerns of rural universities. They may be like; various phases of water-control engineering, engineering of soil improvement, temperature control engineering, food processing technology, ocean product technology, mineral processing, rural industrial counselling, rural public administration, rural social welfare, rural land and village planning, social engineering, rural sociology and anthropology, rural arts and rural medical services.

It was suggested that rural universities should have thoroughly trained scientists with well-equipped laboratories because research has important place in rural education. These researches can be made in population, in rural public administration, in rural economics, in rural

natural resources, in rural industries, in housing, in building materials and in agriculture.

VIII.7 THE ADMINISTRATION OF RURAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES :

Rural education should be administered by the persons who have been directly concerned with rural life and with rural education of modern type. It should include a substantial minority from outside the field also. The new rural education should maintain independence and self-direction until it is mature and stands with self-assurance and equality and it should be free to create its own pattern and organization.

In each province there should be a rural-education-council. It should be made up in the first place of leaders in rural education. Council should have a democratic government. The membership would be organized into a number of sections, one with pre-basic education, one with basic education, one with post-basic education and one with research. Also there should be an All-India Rural Education Council. These Councils or sections would be recognized assessing and accrediting agencies for rural education. They could carry on educational research and would strive to raise the quality of rural education.

As per Report of the University Education Commission (1948-49) the Rural University should have two governing bodies. (1) Small Academic Council and (2) The Executive Council.⁸

A small Academic Council consisting of a dozen members of staff chosen by proper means, should formulate policies and programme for the academic and related affairs of the institution, sometimes acting through suitable committees. This would deal with educational policies, curricula, inter-relations of fields and departments, students counselling, etc. But it would not undertake the day-to-day business and administrative management of the institution. Student participation on the Academic Council and its committees has been found to be an enlivening, stabilizing and unifying influence. Encouragement of student participation is a desirable aim.

The current administration of the University would be in the hands of the Vice-Chancellor with a few chief academic and business assistants, such as the academic dean, the dean of practical work and the treasurer.

The second governing body would be 'Executive Council'. It would be the overall authority to direct University policy and to pass on the major acts and proposals

of the academic council and administrative staff. It would not handle details of administration but would control general policy and programme. It would meet 3 to 6 times a year. Sole as well as joint meeting with the Academic Council and the Vice-Chancellor and his chief assistants would be there.

The choice of members of the rural university executive councils will largely determine the quality of the institution. Most of the members would be of directly concerned with rural life. Some would be co-opted members.

The primary aim in selecting members of the Executive Council of a Rural University should be to secure general competence, character, judgement and experience, an acquaintance with rural India and rural education.

As to the specific process of choosing members, and as to the specific make-up of the council, the rural university should not be bound by the earlier happenings. The new university should develop its own traditions which should be outgrowths of its own genius and spirit, and that of the new India.

VIII.8 AUTONOMY IN RURAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTES :

Each institution should be autonomous, free to work out its own programme, in its own way. Heads of Departments

should prepare their own syllabi with the approval of the Academic Council of that College or University and should test the achievement of their students in their own way. Each institute should determine the certificates and the grades, etc. There should be no external examination, but there would be one or more appraisal committees, for each level of the rural education programme i.e. primary, secondary, under-graduate college, graduate and university to encourage the high standards of education. These would be appointed by Rural-Education-Council, to make periodical examinations and appraisals of each institution and the reports will be submitted to Rural-Education Council.

Similarly, the Rural University could be the regional centre for all such rural service agencies. University students could assist rural workers. The University Education Commission (1948-49) was of the view that -

"It would be a great loss to India for the varied rural services to develop without such co-ordination with rural education."⁹

VIII.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS :

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) the success of the programme depends not on external

circumstances but upon the spirit of the people.

Dr. Radhakrishnan believed that the educationists, the experts and the constructive village workers should arouse the most powerful qualities, like faith, hope, goodwill and courage. They should establish some primary and secondary schools. But Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-49) stressed more on university education. It wanted that the experts, the educationists and the village workers should establish two or three universities and thereby the special attention should be paid to the development of higher education in rural areas. Thus, Dr. Radhakrishnan wanted to create the mass movement for the rural education and thereby he wanted to achieve the rural development and the rural upliftment in India.

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