

CHAPTER-II

A LIFE SKETCH OF DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN

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II.1 INTRODUCTION :

The first chapter introduces the problem of research on hand to the reader. It deals with such points as the approach to the problem, its significance, need, as also objectives. It also discusses the research procedure undertaken and limitations of the study. It also gives the scheme of chapterization.

Since this study deals with the contribution of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan to the field of education, it is thought appropriate to have his life sketch which may throw some light on the development of his educational thoughts and hence, this chapter. The researcher proposes to discuss such points as Dr. Radhakrishnan's childhood, his educational career, his academic achievements, his literary work. This chapter highlights mainly those aspects of his life which are significant from the view point of the development of his educational thoughts.

II.2 DR.S. RADHAKRISHNAN'S CHILDHOOD :

Every year all the Indian celebrate "The Teacher's Day" on 5th of September which is the date of Dr. Radhakrishnan's birth. He was born on 5th September, 1888 in a small village named Tiruttani in Chitpur district of Tamilnadu State.

Dr. Radhakrishnan's ancestors were living in a small village named 'Sarvepalli' before some years, but afterwards they came to Tiruttani to earn the bread. Tiruttani is at the distance of sixty kilometres from Madras city.

The name Radhakrishnan is pronounced as ra-da-Krish nan (रा-द-क्रिष्णन्)¹. He belonged to an ordinary middle class Telugu-Brahmin family. The economic condition of the family was not very good. His parents were traditional, pious and religious minded. So the gifts of religiousness, morality and faithfulness were naturally granted to Radhakrishnan from his childhood. Radhakrishnan's father was serving as an accountant under the landlord of the village. He had six children; a daughter and five sons. Dr. Radhakrishnan was a second son. The childhood was spent in Tiruttani as well as in Tirupati. Tirupati is just nearby to Tiruttani. Both places are holy and religious. Thus, domestic and external atmosphere was holy and religious. This pious and religious atmosphere had the strong effect upon little Radhakrishnan. And hence, from childhood he was deeply drawn towards spiritualism.

Right from the beginning Dr. Radhakrishnan was fond of reading. The reading of religious and philosophical books made his views wider and deeper. He himself had

admitted that the books were his guide and faithful friends of. ' मला पुस्तकांची वाचढ सुखातीपासूनच आहे. माझा दृष्टिकोन व्यापक करण्याचे आणि माझ्या ठायी मध्य स्वर्णाची सृष्टी निर्माण करण्याचे काम पुस्तकांनीच केले आहे. पुस्तकांनाच मी माझा मार्गदर्शक आणि विश्वासू मित्र मानतो. '२

By physic he was not strong and stout but rather weak and thin; and by nature he was shy, self interested, studious and meditative. His vast reading and his meditative nature made him a true philosopher and the true spiritualist in his later life. He said that he was very sensitive by nature of. ' मी अत्यंत खेदनाशिल आणि माकड ठप्पती आहे. '३

He had his primary school education at Tiruttani. But for further education he had to come to Tirupati. So he left his home at the age of eight and joined. The Lutheran Missionary High School for his secondary education in 1896 and had continued upto 1900. When he was in the high school he read the Bible thoroughly and came to know the Christian religion in his childhood only.

II.3 DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN'S EDUCATIONAL CAREER :

Dr. Radhakrishnan joined Vuris College in 1900 and continued upto 1904. Afterwards he joined the Christian College of Madras in 1905 for the final year of B.A. degree course. There were five optional subjects and out of them one was to be selected for the final year. At first Radhakrishnan could not select the subject. But when his cousin-brother gave some books of philosophy to read, then after reading them he immediately fixed the subject, i.e. philosophy. Since then for lifelong he became the disciple of philosophy.

From 1905 to 1908 he made a deep and thorough study of philosophy. He read the Indian Philosophers like, Gautam-the Buddha, Shankaracharya as well as the western Philosophers like, Plato, Aristotle, Kant and Hegel. He read Swami Vivekanand and it made a great impact upon his thoughts. His sense of pride in his own tradition was deeply aroused by the eloquence of Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore.⁴

About Hindu religion Vivekanand had said, "The evil lies not with (Hindu) religion but against the religion."⁵ This was agreed by Dr. Radhakrishnan too and

he found the solace in the views of Vivekananda. He became the strong exponent of Hinduism as he had studied Vivekananda's speeches, articles and books. In the same way he read Rabindranath Tagore's literature thoroughly. Vivekanand and Tagore had made a great impact upon Dr. Radhakrishnan's thoughts and works.

He had obtained his B.A. degree with distinction in philosophy from Madras University in 1907. He had achieved the great mastery over philosophy since his studentship. He had love for teaching profession. He taught his classmates as well as the students of lower classes.

He wrote the thesis for M.A. under Dr. Hbg, titled as "The Ethics of Vedant". At that time Dr. Radhakrishnan was of twenty years only. Dr. Hbg had encouraged him to write about the Hinduism and hence, Dr. Radhakrishnan put forth a clear and nice picture of Hinduism to Western people by his thesis.

Prof. Dr. A.G. Hbg had praised Radhakrishnan for his thesis and the knowledge of philosophy in the following words : ' हा प्रथम वाचल्यानंतर तत्त्वज्ञानासंबंधीचे सखोल ज्ञान या विद्यार्थ्याबळ आहे, याची प्रचीतो येते. तत्त्वज्ञानातील प्रमुख गोष्टी तर याला ठाऊक आहेतच पण संमत्त पाहणारे प्रश्नही तो आपल्या बुद्धीने सहजपणे सोडवू शकतो.'^६

Thus, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had obtained his M.A. degree with first class from Madras University in 1908.

Afterwards, in 1910, he joined the Teacher's College of Saidapeth for his L.T. (Licentiate in Teaching) examination and had completed the course with grand success in 1911.

II.4 DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN'S ACADEMIC CAREER AND ACHIEVEMENTS :

He had begun his academic career after his M.A. i.e. from 1908.

He had been invited by Presidency College of Madras. So he began his career there as an Assistant Professor of Logic. From 1911 onwards he had worked as a Professor of Philosophy and continued to serve there upto 1917.

At first Dr. Radhakrishnan was shy and was not mixing with others, but soon he became the popular professor among the students. He was helping the students throughout his life; for example, a student from Calcutta University could not purchase a book of philosophy. Hence, he wrote to Dr. Radhakrishnan. As soon as he wrote to Dr. Radhakrishnan, he (Dr. Radhakrishnan) sent his personal copy to the

student. Dr. Radhakrishnan attached a note with the book asking the student not to return the book. When he had sent a book he was the Vice-President of India, as well as he was working as the Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University.

Sir Moxagundam Vishweshwaraiyya was the Diwan of Mysore State. He specially invited Dr. Radhakrishnan and hence, he worked as the Head of the Department of Philosophy in Mysore University, Mysore from 1918 to 1920. He was a Professor of simple living with high thinking. So he became the most respectable professor among the students.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was the most intelligent and confident professor. A boy wanted to know about his educational qualification. So he asked whether Dr. Radhakrishnan had his education from the foreign countries. Upon this, Dr. Radhakrishnan replied that he would not go to Europe to learn, but he would go to teach them. And the same thing happened, he went to Europe and to other countries to teach and not to learn.

Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, the then, famous Indian educationist invited Dr. Radhakrishnan. And hence, Dr. Radhakrishnan became the Professor of Philosophy in Calcutta University. The faculty (chair) of philosophy was already opened by the name of King George Vth. Upon

this chair, the renowned professor Dr. Brajendranath Seal was working. After his retirement Dr. Radhakrishnan was selected when he was of only thirty two years. Dr. Radhakrishnan founded, "The Arts Faculty Club" in the University and arranged very good speeches and he himself delivered wonderful speeches as well.

After the death of Sir Ashutosh Mukherji he was selected as a Chairman of 'Post-graduate Council in Arts' in 1927, 1928 and in 1930.

From 1926 onwards, Dr. Radhakrishnan visited foreign countries as an eloquent speaker of Indian philosophy and Humanism.

Dr. L.P. Jacks, "The editor, of the famous periodical, 'Hibbert' had invited Dr. Radhakrishnan to give talks in the Apton series of speeches that were held in the Manchester College of Oxford in 1929. Dr. Radhakrishnan spoke in six series upon 'The Hindu View of Life' which were liked very much by the people. Dr. Jacks was very much pleased and said that Dr. Radhakrishnan had enlightened the new spiritual thoughts in their minds.

In the same way he went to Cambridge for the Conference of Universities of United Kingdom held in July 1926. He made speeches on Bradley and Shankaracharya in

Moral Sciences Club in Cambridge University. The speeches were delivered so nice that all the newspapers and the periodicals including 'The Guardian', praised Dr. Radhakrishnan heartily. 'The Guardian' said that those speeches were 'epoch making'.

He visited some of the churches in England and delivered spontaneous and brilliant public speeches. After listening them a woman said that they need not send the missionaries to India in future cf. 'राधाकृष्णन् याच्यासारखा त-या धर्माचा ज्ञाता भारतात विद्यमान असताना, आम्हा ख्रिस्ती लोकांना आपले धर्मप्रचारक किडे पाठवण्याची जरूर काय ?' ७

In 1926, he represented as the Indian philosopher in the International Seminar of Philosophy which was held in England. Then, he went on tour of U.S.A. and delivered open speeches in Howard, Princeton, Yale and Chicago, which were praised by the American people. In praise of Dr. Radhakrishnan, Professor Joad said, "At his touch the dead bones of Indian lore spring to new life."⁸

After these speeches Dr. Radhakrishnan became known as the world famous philosopher and renowned spokesman of Hinduism. He worked as the bridge to join the Eastern and Western cultures.

When he came back to India he was awarded with honour D.Litt. degree by Madras University. And thus Professor Radhakrishnan became Doctor Radhakrishnan.

In 1927, he was held as the Chairman of the Third Conference of Indian Philosophical Congress, which was held in Bombay.

In 1930, he became the Chairman of All India Educational Conference which had taken place at Banaras.

The British Government conferred upon him the precious award 'Sir' in 1931.

He became the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University of Bezawada from 1931 to 1937. Dr. Radhakrishnan opened the various new departments and appointed the renowned professors like; Sir Jahangir Koyaji, Prof. Hiren Mukherji and Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao. He arranged and developed the hostel facilities properly. He was very friendly towards his fellow professors. Thus he tried his level best to increase the standard and maintain the prestige of Andhra University. When he was working as a Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University, he was still a visiting Professor of Philosophy at Calcutta University. For his work he was made the Life-Member of Calcutta University in 1931.

In 1936 he was appointed as the Professor of Eastern Relations and Ethics by Oxford University. Dr. Radhakrishnan was the first learned professor of India who had been appointed on this respectable post.

In 1939 he became the Vice-Chancellor of Banaras University, but he was still visiting to Calcutta for teaching. He received the British Academy Fellowship and the Fellowship of Allsohas.

Dr. Radhakrishnan was awarded LL.D. with honour by Calcutta University for his dedicated and matchless educational work.

He was granted with reverence the Honorary Fellowship of Calcutta University in 1946.

From 1939 to 1949 he worked as the Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu Vidyapeeth. During this time he faced many problems successfully and increased the merit and fame of the University. In 1943 the Martial Law was going to be enforced in the University campus, but he under his own power gave stay to it. He issued the students their caution money and sent them safely to their homes.

In 1939, in praise of him the famous Pope of Canterbury said that Banaras would become the Centre for the world for philosophy.⁹

He went to Paris in 1946 as the Indian Representative for the meeting of UNESCO.

For some years he worked as the Vice-President of Sahitya Akademi.

Thus Dr. S. Radhakrishnan worked on various posts in the field of education for forty years of his life i.e. from 1909 to 1948. His scholarship and vast experience in the field of education were taken into consideration and the Government of India appointed him as the Chairman of the University Education Commission which was set up immediately after Independence in 1948. The Commission had made the educational survey and made valuable recommendations about the policy and development of education. The University Grants Commission was established under the direction of these recommendations. The Commission had suggested so many developments and helped to establish old universities as well as to open new universities and to co-ordinate them. This Commission is also popularly known as Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission of Education after his Chairmanship.

II.5 DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN'S OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS :

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was not only an educationist but also a world reputed scholar, philosopher, orientalist

and statesman. He had been revered for his versatile work and was awarded with many honourable degrees, including 'Bharataratna', 'M.A.', 'D.Litt.', 'LL.D.', 'D.C.L.', 'F.B.A.' and 'Orde-pour-le-Merite' by the Indian as well as the world's various renowned universities and institutions.¹⁰

In 1948, he was appointed as the Indian representative in the Executive Council of UNESCO.

He worked as the Leader of Indian Delegation to UNESCO from 1946 to 1952 and strongly advocated for world-peace and world-community. He had worked as the President of UNESCO General Conference from 1952 to 1954 and in 1958, and turned every stone to maintain the world-peace and to build the world into one family.¹¹

He had been appointed as India's Ambassador to USSR, from 1949 to 1952. India's relations with U.S.S.R. were made close and friendly by him. Marshal Stalin, who was very strong and firm in his opinions, also felt the necessity to see Professor Radhakrishnan. cf. "चौवीस तास अध्ययन करणा-या त्या भारतीय प्रोफेसराला मला भेटायचे आहे. १२

Dr. Radhakrishnan had worked as a member for the Committee of Indian Constitution.

He had also worked as the Vice-President of International P.E.N. as well as the Chairman of Indian P.E.N.

Then he became the first Vice-President of India in 1950 and was continued upto 1962. Afterwards he became the President of India in 1962 and was continued upto 13th May, 1967. Thus, Plato's dream of 'Philosopher-King' came to be true. The famous British thinker Bertrand Russell heartily congratulated Dr. Radhakrishnan and stated that philosophy was revered by his selection of. * तत्त्वज्ञान सम्मानित झाले आहे. समस्त विश्वातील शांतिप्रिय व विवेकशील समाज या निवडीचे स्वागतच करील. *१३

The then President Dr. Rajendra Prasad was also pleased by his selection and said that Plato's dream of 'Philosopher-King' became true.¹⁴

For his tremendous and versatile work he was awarded the most valuable award the 'Bharataratna' by the President of India in 1954.

'Golden Star' the most valuable Victorian award of Watkin City was conferred on him by Vith Pope-Paul in 1964.

'Doctor of Laws' was awarded to him by New York University in 1964.³

After his tour of U.S.A. he went to Great Britain, where the Queen of England awarded him the 'Order of Merit' and honoured him.

He had been awarded the most honourable prize of Templeton Foundation in 1974.

From 1967 to 1975, he spent his life calm and quietly in reading, thinking and meditating.

He breathed his last on 16th April, 1975. A great thinker, philosopher, educationist, politician and humanitarian is no more but he is still remembered and is made immortal by his outstanding work and contribution to all fields of life in general and to the field of education in particular.

II.6 DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN'S LITERARY WORK :

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had written nearabout forty three valuable books on philosophy, religion, peace, ethics, culture, civilization, Hinduism, history and education. His educational thoughts are scattered and spread and are found in various books and in speeches delivered by him on various occasions. The most important source of his educational ideas, ideals and thoughts is the Report of University Education Commission (1948-49) of which he was the Chairman.

The books which contain his ideas about education can be enumerated as follows :

- 1) 'Kalki or The Future of Civilization', London : Kegan Paul, 1934.
- 2) 'An Idealist's View of Life' (Ed.2), London : G.A.& U., 1937.
- 3) 'Education, Politics and War', Poona : International Book Service, 1944.
- 4) 'Occasional Speeches and Writings Oct. 1952 - Jan. 1956', Delhi : Director, Publication Division, 1956.
- 5) 'Occasional Speeches and Writings Feb. 1956 - Feb. 1957', Delhi : Director, Publication Division, 1957.
- 6) 'Speeches and writings - May 1962 - May 1964', New Delhi : Publication Division, 1965.
- 7) 'Religion and Culture', Delhi : Hind Pocket Books, 1968.
- 8) 'Towards A New World', Delhi : Vision Books, 1980.

Besides the above mentioned books, he had also written a number of books on the subjects like, sociology, history, ethics, philosophy, religion, peace, culture and civilization. (An exposive list of his work is given in Appendix-II).

II.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS :

The foregoing paragraphs discuss Dr. Radhakrishnan's childhood, his educational career, his academic achievements, his other achievements and his literary work. The life sketch given here may throw some light on the development of his educational thoughts. This chapter highlights mainly those aspects of his life which are significant from the view point of the development of his educational thoughts.

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प्रकाशन, पुणे, १९८६, प्रकरण २, पा. १७.
- 6) Ibid, Ch. 4, p. 21.
- 7) Ibid, Ch.8, p. 55.
- 8) Ibid, Ch. 8, p. 57.
- 9) Ibid, Ch. 10, p. 76.
- 10) Sahitya Academy, New Delhi - "Who's Who of Indian Writers",
Author, 1961, p.266.
- 11) Ibid.
- 12) फणवडेकर, राजा - "डॉ. सर्वपल्ली राधाकृष्णन्" (चरित्र), प्रतिमा
प्रकाशन, पुणे, १९८६, प्रकरण १, पा. ८.
- 13) Ibid, Ch. 15, pp. 99-100.
- 14) Ibid, Ch. 15, p. 100.