

SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN’S APPROACH TO EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
<p>The socio-philosophical foundations of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan’s concept of social justice hold significant importance in the relationship between the state and the citizen. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was not only a philosopher but also a statesman. In his philosophical, socio-political, and moral-educational views, he drew upon Indian philosophical teachings as well as rational contemplation. This article scientifically analyzes the thinker’s views on education, his attitude towards Indian education and the ideas in his philosophy, his theories, moral perspectives, and socio-political opinions, with particular emphasis on relevant materials.</p>	<p>Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, education, science, empirical, East and West, integration, perception.</p>

Introduction

Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan is one of the Indian scholars who made a significant contribution to the Indian education system. He was among the first Indian Thinkers to raise related to the mechanism of education, and his ideas were later widely recognized by many prominent scholars.

Radhakrishnan was a visionary. In a world becoming increasingly unmanageable and inhospitable due to scientific and technological changes, he sought to open new possibilities for human existence. The application of scientific knowledge in the process of the development led to imbalances in socio-economic structures and resulted in the alienation of individuals on various levels. These processes of alienation of estrangement from humanity became a major concern for sensitive individuals. People no longer knew how to stop the devaluation of value systems or how to restore both human individuality and social order. Radhakrishnan had a profound understanding of the forces that materially unified the world. He gradually developed a worldview for Indian society and humanity at large, grounded in the Vedic concept of universal perception and supported by scientific and technological advancements. One of the ancient philosophical maxims that most captivated him was “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” – meaning “The world is one family”. He frequently emphasized this idea in his speeches and writings.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research methodology. This article employs a variety of scientific methods, including comparative analysis, retrospective analysis, a systematic approach, creative inquiry, as well as dialectical, hermeneutic, and synergetic methods of scientific cognition.

Literature analysis. In the article, the scientific works of Russian, English, Indian, and other foreign scholars were effectively utilized to study the scholarly legacy and socio-philosophical view of Sarvepalli Radhakrishna. Among the key sources used is Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Physical Education, published by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry, which provides insight into the broader Indian educational philosophy. Amrik Singh's *On Being a Teacher* (1990) and Julian Huxley's *Essays of a Humanist* (1966) were consulted to contextualize Radhakrishnan's educational ideals within a global framework. Furthermore, *Radhakrishnan Reader: An Anthology*, edited by P. Nagaraja Rao and others (1988), served as a comprehensive resource on Radhakrishnan's philosophical views. Russian-language materials, such as *Radhakrishnan's Indian Philosophy* (1956) and N.P. Anikeyev's *Philosophical and Social Views of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan* (1984), offered in-depth analysis of his ideas from a Soviet scholarly perspective. The 1956 publication *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, released in London, also provided valuable insights into the international reception of his thought.

RESULTS

In the process of restoring national spirit through education, Radhakrishnan emphasized: "Nations have a history and a geography. They live and grow not by the forces of wind, rain, sun, and stars, but by the passions and ideas that move them." Regarding the concept of an ideal university, he asserted that it "must awaken interested in the sources our civilization – its art and thought, its language and literature, its philosophy and religion" [Kishore Gandhi, *Issues and Choices in Higher Education: A Sociological Analysis*, B.R. Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1977]. Anyone who studies and reflects upon the ancient classical texts of the country acknowledges their unique grandeur, their ability to generate new meanings, and their enduring relevance to contemporary life.

This clearly indicates that Radhakrishnan did not advocate for a mere return to antiquity; rather, he promoted a synthesis of tradition and modernity, encouraging continuous transformation through lifelong learning. The thinker had a deep understanding of the scientific advancements achieved in Europe following the Renaissance of the 15th and 16th centuries.

The necessity of accelerating development through the application of scientific and technological knowledge should hold the highest priority in our educational objectives. However, this must not come at the cost of neglecting cultural influences, as such an approach may lead to spiritual collapse. Universities should go beyond the mere transmission of information to students; they must also strive to cultivate a scientific temperament within them. Students should be encouraged to develop the ability to distinguish between knowledge, thought, and theory." The spirit of research," Radhakrishnan emphasized, "must aim to foster an environment within the student community that encourages free inquiry and rational analysis."

DISCUSSION

Radhakrishnan was deeply impressed by the nature of ancient universities, where teachers and students lived and worked together in complete harmony, jointly striving to expand the boundaries of knowledge. These institutions, he believed, were responsible for nurturing “the highest consciousness of the nation, its creativity, and its ideas.” The philosopher emphasized that “the process of teaching and learning is simultaneously a process of growth, exploration, transformation, and renewal. It is a complex and delicate activity that cannot be reduced to a simple formula or computerized methodology.” He regarded it as both an art and a discipline. The quality of classroom instruction, in fact, depends on multiple interrelated factors: the learning environment and the broader university community, the teacher’s psychological attributes and academic achievements, the interactive potential between teacher and student, educational policy and decision-making structures, curriculum content and assessment methods, and the academic community’s commitment to professional ethics and social change.

Radhakrishnan consistently sought to enhance and maximize the possibilities for interaction between teachers and students. He emphasized building bridges of mutual understanding and trust between them. Such efforts prevent the forces that lead to depersonalization in education and the alienation of humanity, eliminating the disconnection between the student and the teaching-learning environment [Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, Picador, 1978]. An indifferent or impersonal approach to teaching, he argued, leads to numerous problems, disrupting a healthy educational atmosphere, which instead must be transformed into a dynamic and meaningful activity. Radhakrishnan associated student activism and dissatisfaction in colleges and universities with flaws in teaching methodologies and a decline in the academic community’s commitment to the teaching-learning process. He firmly believed that education can only become a meaningful endeavor with an environment of genuine and profound interaction between teachers and students. The student, the teacher, and the discipline each influence one another. If this interaction is successful, each relationship requires the capacity for independent growth. Such a healthy environment stimulates interest in education and enhances both teachers’ and students’ knowledge, as well as deepens their understanding of academic strengths, interests, and perspectives.

Although the educational process offers numerous opportunities for interpersonal relationships, the potential for meaningful interaction can be maximized through specific means such as seminars, access to libraries, laboratory facilities, and a diversity of courses. Radhakrishnan emphasized the need to develop a national education system that provides students with the maximum opportunities to realize their hidden and yet-to-be discovered potential—whether physical, intellectual, professional, aesthetic, moral, or spiritual. His focus was directed toward the spiritual orientation of both education and society. He believed that “the great evolution – the true purpose of humanity” – can be achieved through the establishment of an evolutionary system of education. He repeatedly stated that “education must create the conditions for all individuals to unlock the infinite possibilities of the future and to express the power, harmony, beauty, and joy of self-realization.”

Rejecting mechanistic and long-inefficient educational theories, Radhakrishnan emphasized the necessity of constructing a theory of knowledge and a new epistemology. This new approach should aim to promote a creative flow of life that aligns with the rich and diverse manifestations of life and the naturally unfolding processes of existence. The philosopher asserted that “education—true education—must serve as a vehicle in the consciousness and body of the individual, as well as in the

consciousness and body of the nation” [Kishore Gandhi, *Issues and Choices in Higher Education: A Sociological Analysis*, B.R Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1977]. The core direction of his educational philosophy was to awaken a new

consciousness in each individual and to help them discover a new light through which they could shape their destiny from a fresh perspective. Radhakrishnan held that the educational process must have a spiritual orientation in order to bring about transformative changes both in personal lifestyles and in the life of the nation.

Recognizing the uniqueness of human consciousness, Radhakrishnan placed special emphasis on the study of intellectual faculties and mental processes within education the education system. He believed that educational processes must take into account “the consciousness of the individual, the people, the nation and the universe.” All educational efforts, in his view, should be directed toward “the cultivation of human consciousness and the power of the spirit,” which ultimately serves the purpose of nurturing healthy and pure individuals. What Radhakrishnan sought to achieve through his educational philosophy was to assist human beings in establishing a proper relationship with the consciousness and spirit of humanity [Kishore Gandhi, *Issues and Choices in Higher Education: A Sociological Analysis*, B.R Publishing Corporation, Delhi, 1977].

Radhakrishnan’s theory of education was born out of his deep devotion to yoga and the rich philosophical heritage of his country. The principles and methods underlying his educational views were drawn from the core tenets of yoga. When critically and creatively examined, the foundations of his educational theory center around the forces, principles, and processes of self-realization; patience and determined effort in personal growth and transformation; the role and influence of the teacher as a model; and the mediating role of time – all of which constitute the essential core of his pedagogical philosophy.

To express this more precisely: true education - in both its form and spirit – begins with self-realization on its purest sense. That is, through “knowing the various parts of oneself and mastering the self. “It is only by understanding the motives behind one’s actions and reactions that one can grasp “why and how everything is happening within oneself.” The process of self-knowledge can be achieved through methods of observation and by cultivating the entire intellectual, moral, and emotional complexity of the individual. The primary focus is on direct observation aimed at understanding both the inner and outer world. Indeed, it is through observation and self-awareness that attention and perception must be developed with clarity, sensitivity, and breadth.

In Radhakrishnan’s educational theory, both physical consciousness and the spiritual development of human personality hold significant importance. By cultivating the physical strength of the individual, it becomes possible to strengthen and awaken the inner power and higher consciousness of students.

It becomes necessary to briefly examine Shri Aurobindo Ghosh’s educational theory, as Radhakrishnan was deeply influenced by Aurobindo in the development of his own philosophical system and theory of education. Shri Aurobindo Ghosh’s approach to education can be viewed as a fourfold process, in which each component functions independently yet interdependently, encompassing the physical, mental, and spiritual qualities of the individual. These qualities aim to cultivate strength, beauty, knowledge, and love within the human personality. In fact, the philosopher derived many components of his educational ideals and principles from Ghosh’s educational theory. Interestingly, Ghosh developed a comprehensive theory spiritual education designed to transform the structure of human

consciousness and prepare it for a new adventure of awareness. However, there still remains a long journey ahead to fully understand and practically implement Ghosh's educational vision.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, when assessing the current state of the education system, it is necessary to raise several critical questions aimed at identifying the factors that limit its functional stability and hinder the integrated development of both individuals and society. In the absence of empirical research, there has been a tendency to underestimate the strategic importance of education in national development. This perspective, rooted in periodic and short-term considerations, significantly reduces the overall effectiveness of education. Hence, education must rediscover its true purpose and meaning. A crucial concern lies in the fact that India's education reformers and policymakers have often lacked conceptual clarity. However, a renewed interest in Radhakrishnan's educational philosophy may assist in building an interconnected, value-based educational system. While such a system must be modern in terms of experimental and innovative approaches, it should also aim to restore the country's lost wisdom and cultural heritage. This envisioned system would be creative, value-driven, digital, and integrative – one that embraces the advancements of cybernetics without sacrificing the integrity of the human personality. Computers will not be eliminated, but rather oriented toward life. In this model, the learner is not only a researcher but also a critical thinker.

The educational curriculum will become more responsive and adaptable to new learners and the diverse experiences of individuals. Students and teachers will collaborate and function as creative thinkers. The new education system will provide exciting opportunities not only in specific disciplines but also for multidisciplinary students to engage in innovation and experimentation. This system will be open, experiential, multi-layered, multidimensional, and ecological. It will incorporate the ethics of ecological awareness and self-realization.

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