

6

CHAPTER

Women's Education

S. Radhakrishnan (1888-1975)

➔ About the Author

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the second President of free India, was born in 1888. He was a great philosopher and statesman. He was also an effective speaker and a voluminous writer. He was appointed as Professor of Philosophy in Calcutta University. He also served as the Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University from 1939 to 1948. After it, he became an Indian Ambassador to U.S.S.R. He was elected as the President of India from 1962-67. Some of his famous books are — 'Indian Philosophy', 'Hindu View of Life', 'Eastern Relations and Western Thought' and 'Philosophy of Upanishads'. He died in 1975.



➔ About the Lesson

'Women's Education' has been selected from the book 'True Knowledge' which was published in 1970. It deals with the education of women in India. According to the author, the chief aim of education is to make human beings think highly and act nobly. Real education goes beyond the material world and helps men and women to understand the unknown mysteries of this life and life afterwards. It means that men's real education consists of man's understanding a new world, a world which lies beyond Space and Time. It instils in a man the qualities of concentration, self control and moral strength.



You are living in an age when there are great opportunities for women in social work, public life and administration. Society requires women of disciplined minds and restrained manners. Whatever line of work you undertake, you should bring to it an honest, disciplined mind. You will then succeed and have the joy of your work.

Actually in our country, education, so far as girls' education is concerned, is not widespread enough. So every institution which contributes to the education of girls is worthy of recognition and encouragement. But I am anxious that the kind of education that is imparted must not only be broad but should also be deep. We are lacking in depth. We may become learned and skilled, but if we do not have some kind of purpose in our life, our lives themselves become blind, blundering and bitter. The *Gita* says: *vyavasayatmika buddhir ekeha*. For a truly cultured mind, there is a single-mindedness, a dedication to single purpose. For the uncultured mind, the whole life is scattered in

many directions—*bahusakha hyanantastata*. Therefore it is essential that the education which you acquire in these institutions should give you not merely learning and skill but endow you with a definite purpose in life. What that purpose is, you have to define for yourselves. It is said that *vidya* gives you *viveka*, *vimarsarupini vidya* gives you a sense of what is right and helps you to avoid what is wrong. You must try, therefore, to find out what is required of you in this generation. A purpose which held good centuries ago may not hold good today in view of the rapidly changing conditions of our country and of the world. So the purpose which you adopt in your life, must be adapted to the relevant needs of the present generation.

Every time we start, we use our hymns and end with saying *santih, santih, santih*. The teacher and the pupils are expected to avoid hating each other.

Compassion, *daya*, is the quality which is more characteristic of women than of men. I read recently a book which speaks about the decline of womanhood, and says that this is so because there is a decline in compassion. In other words, the natural quality of women is compassion. If you do not have compassion, you are not human. It is therefore, essential for every human being to develop the quality of considerateness, kindness and compassion. Without these qualities, we are only human animals, *nara pasu*, not more than that.

There is a famous verse which tells us, *samsara visa vrksasya*. In this imperfect world, *sansara*, there are two fruits of inimitable quality. They are the study of our great classics and communion with great minds. These two are the things which mould men's minds and hearts. I am anxious that our great classics should be studied, the classics of all countries of which we are the inheritors. It is in a small dialogue in an *Upanisad* that a question is put: 'What constitutes the essence of good life?' The teacher replies: 'Didn't you hear the answer?' There was a thunderclap: *da da da*. Immediately the teacher explained that these were the essence of good life—*dama, dana, daya*. They constitute the essentials of the good life. You must have *dama* or self-control, restraint, which is the mark of a human being. In the *Ramayana* when Lakshmana sets out for the forest, his mother tells him: 'Look upon Rama as your father, Dasaratha: Look upon Sita as myself, as your mother: Look upon the forest as Ayodhya; go my dear.'

There are ever so many thrilling stories in our classics which will instil into us great moral strength, which will lay down for us, the lines on which we have to conduct ourselves.

Give us good women, we will have a great civilization.

Give us good mothers, we will have a great nation.

When you talk about education, you have several aims in view; give the people, those who are taught, knowledge of the world in which they live—Science, History and Geography enable you to get that knowledge; you also train the people to acquire some technical skill by which they can earn a livelihood. These are still accepted the world over as the objects of education: knowledge of the world in which you live and technical skill by which you can earn a livelihood. But what is there specific about the kind of

education imparted in the institutions of our country? We have heard that the chief purpose of education is not merely the acquiring of skill or information but the initiation into a higher life, initiation into a world which transcends the world of Space and Time, though the latter informs and animates the former. That has been the main purpose of education. For some centuries, we neglected our women folk. Our tradition, however, has been somewhat different :

*Purakalpesu narinam
mandira vandana niscitah
adhyapananca vedanam
gayatri vacanam taha.*

In ancient times; our women had the ceremony of *upanayana* performed for them. They were entitled to a study of *Vedas*. They were also entitled to the chanting of the *gayatri japa*. All these things were open to our women. But our civilization became arrested and one of the main signs of that decay of our civilization is the subjection of women.

After Independence, through the exertions of Mahatma Gandhi, a revolution has been effected in our country, and women are coming into their own.

||Glossary||

opportunity	— chance (अवसर)
requires	— needs (आवश्यक होना)
administration	— management (प्रशासन, प्रबन्धन)
restrained manners	— controlled behaviour (संयमित व्यवहार)
actually	— really (वास्तव में)
contributes	— gives (सहयोग प्रदान करती है, योगदान देती है)
worthy	— able (सक्षम)
anxious	— eager (उत्सुक)
imparted	— given (दी जाती है)
purpose	— aim (उद्देश्य)
blundering	— full of serious mistakes (गम्भीर त्रुटियों से भरा हुआ)
single mindedness	— concentration of mind at one point (एकाग्र-चित्ता)
dedication	— complete devotion (पूर्ण समर्पण)
acquire	— get (प्राप्त करना, जानना, सीखना, प्रेरित करना)
endow	— equip (सुसज्जित करना)
rapidly	— fast (तेज गति से)
relevant	— connected with the subject (विषय से सम्बद्ध)
scattered	— spread all over (चारों ओर बिखरी हुई)
adopt	— take up (गोद लेना, अपनाना)

avoid	— keep away (उपेक्षा करना, दूर रहना, मना करना)
decline	— decay (पतन, नीचे जाना)
compassion	— kindness (दया)
essential	— necessary (आवश्यक)
considerateness	— sympathetic concern for the rights and feelings of others (दूसरों की भावनाओं और अधिकार के प्रति सद्भावना रखना)
mould	— change (ढालना, आकृति)
inheritors	— successors (उत्तराधिकारी)
constitutes	— makes (बनाता है)
essence	— substance (सार, निष्कर्ष)
self control	— self discipline (आत्म अनुशासन)
thrilling	— exciting (उत्तेजित)
instil into	— put into someone's mind by a continuing effect (किसी के मस्तिष्क पर निरन्तर प्रभाव डालना)
enable	— make able (अधिकारयुक्त करना, सामर्थ्य देना)
imparted	— given (दी जाती है)
initiation	— introduction into the knowledge of some art or subject (किसी कला या विषय के ज्ञान के सम्बन्ध में प्रारम्भिक ज्ञान देना)
transcends	— rises above (श्रेष्ठता प्रदान करना)
neglected	— did not care for (उपेक्षित)
women folk	— society of women (महिला समाज, महिला जनसमूह)
traditions	— conventions (परम्परा)
arrested	— enslaved (बन्दीकृत)
decay	— decline, fall (गिरना)
exertions	— great efforts (महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रभाव)
chanting	— recitation (गाना या बोलना)
coming to their own	— regaining their status (अपनी सामाजिक स्थिति पुनः प्राप्त करना)

|| Exercise ||

➡ Passages for Explanation :

Explain with reference to the context of the following passages :

(a) Therefore it is essential that.....yourselves.

(b) A purpose which held generation.

Or You must try, therefore present generation.

(c) We have heard that education.

(d) But I am anxious and bitter.

(e) You are living.....joy of your work.

Or Society requires women disciplined mind.

(f) In ancient times.....into their own.

Or In ancient times subjection of women.

(g) Actually in our country.....blundering bitter.

(h) In this imperfect world we are the inheritors.

➡ **Short Answer Type Questions :**

Answer the following questions in not more than 30 words each :

(i) What are the opportunities available to women in our times?

(ii) What kind of women does the society need ?

Or What type of women does the society require?

(iii) What is real situation regarding women's education in India?

(iv) What is difference between the cultured and the uncultured mind ?

(v) Which particular quality distinguishes men from women ?

(vi) What qualities are essential for the development of human beings ?

(vii) What are the two important products of the tree of life ? What is their utility ?

(viii) What are three important qualities of a valuable life ?

Or What according to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan are the three important qualities of a valuable life?

(ix) State the chief purpose of education according to the author.

(x) What were the things women were entitled to in ancient India?

(xi) What constitutes the essence of life ?

(xii) Briefly describe the importance of the study of classics in shaping the personality of men and women in our society.

(xiii) What is one of the signs of the decline of our civilization?

(xiv) What advice does Radhakrishnan give to the Indian women to acquire perfect knowledge?

(xv) What is the key to success in life?

Or How should we aim to get success?

(xvi) What causes the decline of womanhood, according to S. Radhakrishnan?

(xvii) What kind of education does Radhakrishnan recommend and why?

➡ Vocabulary :

(a) *Below are some pairs of words. Use them in your own sentences to make the difference in their meanings :*

(i) continual, continuous, (ii) coast, cost, (iii) spacious, specious, (iv) die, dye.

(b) *Give the Antonyms of the following words :*

(i) honest, (ii) definite, (iii) right, (iv) perfect, (v) worthy, (vi) natural, (vii) deep, (viii) bitter.

(c) *Give the Synonyms of the following words :*

(i) requires, (ii) manners, (iii) anxious, (iv) purpose, (v) scattered, (vi) rapidly, (vii) adopt, (viii) compassion, (ix) essential, (x) mould.

(d) *Fill in the blanks with the suitable words given below :*

several, essence, still, decline, famous.

(i) I read recently a book which speaks about the of womanhood.

(ii) There is a verse.

(iii) What constitutes the of good life ?

(iv) These are accepted the world over as the subjects of education.

(v) When you talk about education, you have aims in view.

(e) *Fill in the blanks in the following sentences, selecting the most suitable words from those given within the brackets.*

(i) For some we neglected our women folk.

(Years, weeks, decades, centuries)

(ii) I am anxious that our great should be studied.

(scholars, classics, writers, poets)

(iii) You are living in an age when there are great for women in social work.

(problems, dangers, opportunities, profits)

(iv) Society requires women of disciplined mind and manners.

(contained, restrained, retained, constrained)

(v) The natural quality of women is

(beauty, glamour, compassion, selfishness)

(vi) If you do not have you are not human.

(power, compassion, health, money)

(vii) For some centuries, we our women folk.

(neglected, respected, befooled, insulted)

