

Ethics and Values
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Lecture – 9
Charity and Serving Society

Hello everyone!

In the previous lecture we spoke about helping the needy and in today's lecture we will talk about how to help the needy. Actually, from my first lecture onwards I have been discussing about various ways of helping others, and one amongst them include reducing wastages. Well, our help towards others is also dependent on their requirement or what kind of help they need and also our ability, time, energy and dedication to do the same. We can help others by feeding them, creating jobs for them, by educating and training them and making them able to sustain on their own, we can even campaign, protest, talk and write for ensuring their security, respect and safety, we can be more sensible while electing our leaders and we can even simply sit and listen to them. You know most of the people fall into depression because they have nobody to listen to their thoughts.

So, let's understand the meaning of charity. Most of the organized religions all over the world have advocated charity as a great virtue which their followers must possess. You can take Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or Zoroastrianism, let it be any religion, they unequivocally advocate the virtue of charity. Charity is a form of voluntary action which can be practiced directly or indirectly to help or provide service to people individually or collectively out of their feeling of compassion to assist others, especially those who are the victims of poverty, ill-health, idleness, illiteracy, suppression, oppression, abuse, exploitation, etc.

Voluntary action is mainly characterized by the following features which include:

- 1) An innate urge to help others and promote their well-being in all possible ways-not necessarily monetarily.
- 2) Absence of any kind of expectation for any material gains in lieu of the help given
- 3) Sense of social concern and orientation of helping others in need.
- 4) Faith in the highest virtue of service to humanity.
- 5) Belief in the primacy of one's duty over one's rights

However, there also exists another side of human nature. Human beings by their nature can be self-seeking also. In the present age of individualism, materialism and hedonism, this self-serving, tendency has also increased. This has adversely affected the voluntarism and voluntary action.

People today want to know at the very outset as to whether they will be benefitted or in what way they will be benefitted if they take part in any programme or activity. But despite all of this there are people who provide voluntary help. You might have heard of and even

participated in National Service Schemes and National Cadet Corps where educated youth are trained and rewarded for their contribution towards society. They are trained to help, support and work thereby inculcating the very essence of charity into their personality. I myself was an active member of NSS during my college days, where we did fundraising for constructing a house for our friend and we also helped panchayats in conducting a socio-economic survey.

Ok friends, now it's time for a reflection spot.

What is GREENPEACE? Have you heard of it? What do you think it does? Is it some form of charitable organization?

Well, with the name itself you would have understood that GREENPEACE is an International NGO or non-governmental organization with offices in over 55 countries and involved in making this planet greener, peaceful and survivable. Hence, it is an environmental charitable organization which focuses on ways to promote preservation, appreciation, and sustainable development for the environment. The two primary subgroups for this type of charity are: Environmental Conservation & Protection & Parks and Nature Centers. Similarly, there are other examples of charities like animal charities which include Wildlife Conservation Organizations, Pet and Animal Welfare Organizations, Hunting & Fishing Conservation Groups, Zoos and Aquariums. We have organizations like WWF (Worldwide fund for Nature), and animal Equality as examples for animal charities. NGOs (Non-Governmental organizations) are typically charities that are headquartered in one country but work in other countries. In some cases they overlap with other types of charities. They also fall into categories like International Development NGOs, Disaster Relief & Humanitarian NGOs, Peace & Human Rights NGOs, Conservation NGOs, Child Sponsorship Organizations. Prajwala is a pioneering anti-trafficking organization working on the issue of sex trafficking and sex crime. Similarly, we have other NGOs like HelpAge India Foundation for caring disadvantaged elderly senior citizens and CRY, which works amongst underprivileged children. Apart from them, there are also art and culture charities which help preserve artistic and cultural heritage as well as celebrate the arts and our history. SPICMACAY (Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth) promotes the Indian cultural heritage by promoting Indian classical music, classical dance folk music and dance, yoga, crafts etc. There are also health and education charities. Health charities support and treat the sick and disabled, working on cures for diseases, and promoting public awareness of specific health risks. As example we have, Mind, an organization which is actively involved in addressing the mental health issues of people. Education charities, serve students from every age group, pre-school to graduate school and beyond. Some serve as the educational institutions while focus on making education more accessible and effective. For example, we have scholarship foundations like FAEA (Foundation for Academic Excellence and Access), which emphasizes equality of education and opportunity of disadvantaged students.

Before we end this lecture, try to answer this question, the name Rainbow Warrior is associated with which NGO?

Have you ever heard of it? If no, then you must be aware of this symbolic icon which represents unabashed love and dedication towards nature. Synonymous with breaking boundaries and fearless campaigning, Greenpeace has sailed with the name Rainbow Warrior since 1978. It supported number of anti-whaling, anti – seal hunting, anti-nuclear testing and anti-nuclear waste dumping campaigns during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1985, French secret service agents planted two bombs and sank the ship. One crew member was killed. But nothing could stop the Rainbow warrior from coming back. Greenpeace replaced her with a new vessel, and for 22 years, the second

Rainbow Warrior has campaigned for a green and peaceful future. This was an example of endurance, resilience and perseverance which are some of the qualities that form a good leader.

Now why did I say that? Yes friends! Our next lecture will be on the leaders of past and present.

Till then, bye and take care.