



# EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND CONTRIBUTION OF SHRI AUROBINDO TO THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

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## **Abstract:**

The education field always needs someone to enrich the field of education for learning in a better manner. Several Indian educationists contributed in it. Shri Aurobindo also contributed a lot for bringing changes so that the future generation can gain better system and ideas in education. It has been mentioned in this paper that it deals with his involvement in which his philosophy of life and social psychology influence spiritual education. It also has been dealt with the principles of educational philosophy on Mind, Knowledge, Intelligence and Consciousness that is a very essential part of spiritual education.

He agrees believes that man is the maker of his own destiny and education is a big tool to achieve the target. This present paper tells about the philosophical contribution of Shri Aurobindo Ghosh in the education field of Education that relates the significance of Shri Aurobindo's philosophy of education with different components like principles of teaching, aims of education, discipline, a relationship of teachers, curriculum, transaction, school and pupil, etc.

**Index Terms - Shri Aurobindo, Teaching, Philosophy, Curriculum and Education.**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Shri Aurobindo (1872 – 1950) can be viewed as a 20<sup>th</sup>-century renaissance person who thought and brought many unique principles of education. Shri Aurobindo studied at Cambridge University to get special education. He was born in Kolkata. He was could analyze human and social evolution. He was an Idealistic person whose life was based on Vedantic and Upanishad. Shri Aurobindo maintained such educational philosophy which was proper for the Indian people, not something merely following the past but to the developing the skills of Indians which leads to self-creation and her eternal spirit.

His concept of education is not only getting a simple knowledge but getting different types of knowledge that he points the necessities of education: it is the main objective of making the powers of the human mind and spirit.

He told that the knowledge that will be provided to learners will lead to the divine life, for the nation, for oneself and the people and it should be the ideal of each institution which calls itself a national.

Here, I would like to see the educational theories and Aurobindo whose writings will assist all of us to comprehend the scenery of actual education. Maximum Western educators and Philosophers of education tried to comprehend educational theories not just as simple theories less concern with actual practice, but as a true structure and framework that provide practical guidelines for the educational practice.

## **2. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is essential for the human being to be aware of his surroundings and his environment. It has been regularly mentioned that the traditional methods of teaching have lost its relevance in the fast-changing era. All of us have understood that by making available all facilities, we can not have peace in our mind and actual happiness. Sufficient researches have not been developed to know more about education with respect to Shri Aurobindo's Philosophy in India and its contribution to the education sector. This study has the psychological aspect of education of being related to society. This study covers the psychological aspect of education, for example, actual progress and growth of the students, learning, motivation, personality development and adjustment, etc. Besides other education, spiritual education also plays a vital role in Indian society. Shri- Aurobindo feels that the true basis of education is the study of the human mind. Many of the scholars understood that spirituality gradually disappears and it will have no impact on the Indian educational system. India is a developing country where development is required in every sphere of human life. Nowadays spiritual education is being implemented more and the concept of the aligning of 'Science and Spirituality' is very important for the Indian Education system.

Without aligning spirituality and inner growth, so much importance is given to earthly and technological and mechanical development in Western countries. Here, I would like to put effort to understand, analyze, synthesize, evaluate, critically examine and recognize and also

the factors required for making the spiritual education strong in Shri Aurobindo's Philosophy. In order to have inner happiness and enlightened mind, all the educationists are giving importance to the necessity of integrating spiritual education. It is known that simple theories are not so much important. The knowledge should be replaced by integrated education to know the actual truth. That is why has become very much important to adopt a new system of education that is to be achieved. In the provided guidelines of him and others are also very much important to accomplish the existing impasse. The latest education system is a holistic one as it addresses the total development of a human being.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:

- 3.1. To recognize factors responsible for strengthening various dimensions of education in Shri- Aurobindo's philosophy
- 3.2. To comprehend the principles of teaching aims of education, transaction, school, curriculum, a relationship between teacher and pupil, discipline etc.

### 4. SHRI AUROBINDO'S VIEWS ON EDUCATION

Shri Aurobindo always thought about the education matter in India. He received quite good knowledge from Cambridge, and he also works as a professor in the Bengal National College from 1897 to 1906. So he came to know the need in the education field and its depth. And he had hopes in the young who can bring great changes in this area. He trusted that youth can give their good contribution to rebuilding the nation. He gave his brief definition for it. :

Any nation that uses simple previous experiences and makes use of the present has a better nation. If any nation does not use the past knowledge has no friend for the national development. By forgetting the present, we can win the present battle of life. So it is necessary to save for India that it has kept knowledge, noble thought and good character in its immemorial past. We must acquire for her best knowledge and should have better teaching methodology to develop humanity. All these should have integrated with the good self-reliance spirit to make up a human and not a lifeless machine.

He likes the British education system a bit in India that he used to call it a mercenary and soulless system which is sufficient for making incapable the Indian brain. All Indian students have so much potentiality which is not cared due to lack of an appropriate system of education. He wanted to courageously make a good path in India.

By birth maximum, rich Indians can have better knowledge and mankind is waiting with the previous knowledge and extending their present and the potentiality of the future which can be accomplished by the National Education system. It can be accomplished by the lifeless routine and its narrow and sightless spirit and mechanical methods. It can only be developed by the light and hop of its resurgence.

Maximum young Indians are isolated from their deeper roots and cut off from their rightful heritage. He has often found himself in the curious position of explaining to some of them the symbolic meaning of an ancient Indian myth, for instance, or worse, of having to narrate the myth itself. Again, a French or English child will be given at least some impression of cultural identity, whatever its worth, but here, in this country which not long ago had the most living culture in the world. Here, all children are given only hodgepodge cooked in other countries and pickled in India. It means, there is much irrelevant principle. Shri Aurobindo put it: Ancient India's culture, attacked by European modernism, overpowered in the material field, betrayed by the indifference of her children, may perish forever along with the soul of the nation that holds it in its keeping.

### 5. CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

*"Man can not rest permanently until he reaches some highest good."*

*"To fulfil god in life is man's manhood." - Shri Aurobindo*

Here, spiritual education should teach the learners to identify the connection of spirit and the matter so that they can see both material and spiritual life rationally. A Spiritual education would prepare the student to face life armed with greater faith and face with an outlook which is integral. His recognition of the problems of life will not depend totally on their appearances. One will be able to grow spiritually through a tracking system.

He has been greatly appreciated as a modern philosopher and a Vedic scholar. The first National College of Education of Calcutta was facilitated by Shri Aurobindo and written much more on the subject of education. He suggested to a unique concept 'Integral education.' The integration of spirit, mind and body are taken and given importance. The psychological aspects of education had been dealing with and also been put in practice on all these approaches at Shri Aurobindo educational programme and in Auroville and around the country.

"Nothing can be taught to learners is the first principle" and the statement of Shri Aurobindo emphasizes on whole theories of education and better form of pedagogy near to the integral teaching-learning approach which a self-propelling and self-starting approach. It states the role of the teacher as a facilitator and a guide for them. It is quite a profound statement in teaching which has large validity." - Shri Aurobindo

### 6. INTEGRAL EDUCATION FOR THE GROWTH OF THE SOUL

Shri Aurobindo involved for around 45years out of 75year from Yoga period. From the spiritual point of view, he developed affirmation and affirming the reality of the world for the ultimate point and socio-political action.

He was sovereignty aware of the significance of variations in the concept of man, his life and destiny, of the nation and humanity and the life of the human race, which get reflected in the respective philosophies of education, and developed his scheme on the holistic system of education that led in progressing soul, self-creation and future need. He saw in man as an individual soul and aware mind in nature as self and spirit. As per Shri Aurobindo's Philosophy, the individual in his commonness, the man and his uniqueness, universal humanity should be given importance.

## 7. ROLE OF TEACHER

As per Shri Aurobindo, teachers should be respected and they have a very responsible job. The different tasks of the learners should be sincerely seen so that he could guide. He told that a teacher should show the learners the appropriate path, and show the ways to achieve that and find out the self-guidance. And also told not to impose any knowledge instead he shows them how to get different skills.

## 8. CURRICULUM TRANSACTION

Shri Aurobindo advised for appropriate learning venue for the learners to acquire all potentialities to the fullest and also prescribed to use all the subjects and activities that help them to learn creativity and expression. He wished to impart a new spirit and life into all subjects and activities through which they can develop superhuman. The principles of the curriculum are-

- The curriculum should foster the interest of a child.
- It should include those subjects that promote mental and spiritual development.
- It should motivate children towards the attainment of knowledge of the world.
- It should contain creativity of life and constructive capacities.
- Shri Aurobindo describes the curriculum for different stages of education like - National history, France, Mother tongue, general science, arithmetic; English, literature, art, painting, and social studies should be taught at a primary stage.
- English, Mother tongue, social studies, health education, physiology, botany, physics, chemistry, art, arithmetic, literature and French at the secondary stage.
- Indian and western philosophy, history of civilization, English literature, French, sociology, psychology, history, chemistry, physics, botany at the university level. Nursing, electrical engineering, mechanical, cottage-industries, typing, drawing, sculptural photography, painting and art at vocational level.

## 9. PRINCIPLE OF TEACHER-TAUGHT RELATIONSHIP

### 9.1. PRINCIPLE OF NOTHING CAN BE TAUGHT

Shri Aurobindo says about a few principles of teaching and learning and also need to keep in mind when engaged. 'Nothing can be taught to learners' says Sri Aurobindo. The learners should not be imposed as they have potentiality and a teacher should facilitate the learners. The students are shown a path where they have to reach and get perfection. Knowledge should not be imparted; he should assist the learners to gain various skills for himself. He does not impart knowledge to him; he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be familiarized to rise to the surface.

### 9.2. MIND HAS TO BE CONSULTED FOR THE GROWTH

According to him, the mind has to be consulted in its growth. Often parents pressurize to teach their children which are not an appropriate practice. They should be provided with the developmentally appropriate teaching methods so that naturally they can cope up and gain skills.

### 9.3. TO WORK FROM THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN

The next principle is to work from the near to the far, from the known to the unknown. The nature of a child is nurtured by his soul's past his heredity and his environment. The past experiences are the foundation, the present is the material and future is the aim and each must find it and natural place in any national system of education.

## 10. SCHOOL

Shri Aurobindo's educational Philosophy aims to give his time to explore himself, accomplish according to his own pace and level, helping the children to learn and increasing learning and making the school curricula better. This kind of schooling is seen as an anti-thesis of an imposed uniformity of prescribed courses and teaching which the traditional schools claim to do and can be linked to what was taught in schools under the colonial rule. He was aiming to make the gap of both child's life and home. The present education system is an instruction of enterprise which does not fulfil the needs of the learners. There is competition in the school system and gives attention to the grade.

## 11. DISCIPLINE

Children should be provided with a better environment in a school so that they can gain more knowledge themselves. According to Aurobindo, any imposed environment stunt the growth and natural development of children. Shri Aurobindo promoted the concept of self-discipline that was the healing of proper discipline. In his theory of education, Shri Aurobindo concentrated wholly upon the development of life, mind and soul of the students. His educational system is integral because it aims the better life, soul factor of learners and mind and also he talks about several pieces of training for the learners.

## 12. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

In this training programme of the physical part of the student, the bodily growth and development take place. As per the words of Shri Aurobindo-'If, the children's body works as an instrument, the body is the material thing, and want to have total perfection of the children.' The body is made of a material base and for the upliftment of whole student life, the advancement of the body should also be considered. And for this so-desired bodily development, there is a necessity of proper games and sports. Sports and physical training programme is given in childhood and early youth would be very much helpful in bringing out the fullest potentialities of a student.

## 13. VITAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Shri Aurobindo gave very much importance on making capable of all the vital organs that are the sense-organs. The training of sense-organs constitutes important aspects of education. These senses constitute of skin, ears, nose and eyes, and palate etc external sense organs and also the internal sense organ named Citta/manas. There exists the root of different feelings, desires, sentiments, impulses, and emotions - the determining factors of his own character. The importance of vital education of the students are two-folds - (1) it helps to

develop, as the Mother said, the sense-organs; (2) through it, one can gradually gain mastery over his character which will lead towards his transformation. According to the Mother, the proper nourishment of the senses will help to generate generosity and nobility factors within children.

#### 14. MENTAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

One of the important parts of the human development system is to develop the mind, as in Shri Aurobindo's view, the Antahkarana is known to be one of the instruments in the hands of the educationists. In this regard, the mental training procedure Shri Aurobindo gave importance to the role played by the tutor as he is the main person who can nurture the mental faculties of his students. In this training of mental faculty, a student's memory power, powers of judgments and imagination has to be boosted. However, the logical faculty has also to be sharpened by training in logic and else. The student has to grow in his own way. His mind can not be shaped or trained in a way in which he or she grows under any external pressure.

#### 15. PSYCHIC TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Shri Aurobindo's educational approach does not end with the training of the intellect. It aims to comprehend the real motive of human life and the reason for one's existence on this earth. For this unique realization, we have to go through the psychic training programme. The eternal object is the Psychic being or commonly known to be the Soul. The soul came from God and there is a need for training of the soul.

#### 16. SUPRAMENTAL TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Supramental training is the unique highest limit of such educational training procedure as per Shri Aurobindo. He even thought the possibility of educational training through the supramental. The actual objective is to show the difficult destination of the ascent of the human race towards the Satchidananda. The supramental education programme is necessary for the fulfilment of spiritual aims.

#### 17. INTEGRAL EDUCATION OF SHRI AUROBINDO

Hence it could be seen that Shri Aurobindo aimed at the whole transformation of student life through his Integral education theory. But an integral education has three central aims to be fulfilled –

- for an individual, to outgrow the fullest possibilities of his soul;
- for the nation, to strengthen and enrich its national-soul, to focus on its dharma;
- for the advancement of both the individual and the nation in such a way that it can grow into the ascending powers of mind and soul of humanity. All these aims on the Shri Aurobindo's most desired awakening of Spiritual Being.

In this context, we have to go through his three principles of integral education.

**I.** Nothing can be taught is the first principle of true teaching that is when receiving knowledge; they should not be given overpressure. The learners have lots of potentialities and we have to inspire them.

**II.** The second principle is that the child has to grow in his natural growth process. Nothing should be imposed upon him as an external factor. Having an expectation of qualities, capacity, virtues and ideas from the child at the beginning of life is a great error.

**III.** The third principle is that 'to work from near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be. According to him, man's nature is dependent upon his heredity, atmospheric circumstances, nationality, love for his country along with the soil, the air, the water etc.

#### 18. INTEGRAL EDUCATION TOWARDS DIVINE LIFE

As per the view of Sri Aurobindo's approach, education is the gateway by which we can go towards attaining the ultimate spiritual satisfaction. According to critics, Shri Aurobindo's educational approach, the psychic and spiritual are the type of education which beyond the limit of comprehension of the people. But from the perspective of his social and political thought, these psychic and spiritual kinds of education make us prepare to achieve the road of Life Divine. It is the goal set by Shri Aurobindo is purely metaphysical in nature and education works as mandatory tools here. As per the thesis of Shri Aurobindo, the present education has to move towards the four-fold austerities and four-fold liberations to reach to the ultimate end of Life of Divine.

The four austerities are as follows –

- Tapasya of Love
- Tapasya of Power
- Tapasya of Knowledge
- Tapasya of Beauty

The four liberations are as follows –

- Emotional Liberation
- Mental Liberation
- Vital Liberation
- Physical Liberation

As per the doctrine of four austerities of Shri Aurobindo, Tapasya of Love is considered as the gateway of it. The difficulty is that here the word 'love' is not used in the sense of any narrow human love; rather it is the divine love. This divine love has two inner movements hidden within

-the supreme power of attraction

-the irresistible need of complete self-surrender

Hence if we want to go through the path of Life Divine then we have to follow the advice of The Mother - "If therefore you want to be like the Divine, love Him alone. One must be a communion of love with the Divine can alone know how feeble, dull, insipid, and dull all other love is, in comparison of others".

## 19. AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY IN GLOBAL CONTEXT

'Globalization' has been seen from the beginning of the 20th century. The idea is that the world is evolving into an interconnected social system. Therefore, humankind now has a communal responsibility to facilitate evolutionary movement toward global social integration, the construction of a new social reality and to cultivate planetary collective consciousness.

Shri Aurobindo Ghosh put so much effort to philosophically merge both Eastern transcendent metaphysics with Western scientific rationalism into a holistic one. His academic interest was interdisciplinary in scope: political science, education, sociology, psychology and philosophy. He was deeply inspired by Western thought, most significantly, French intellectual Henri Bergson's philosophy of cognitive evolution and Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory. The ideas of awaiting human evolution and global futurism became the foundation of his spiritual philosophy, sociological theories, political ideology and educational thought. His approach to yoga is an integration of physical social behaviour with the metaphysical level as a holistic system of inner-self meditation and outer-social action:

- knowing (seeking objective rational knowledge),
- behaviour and contemplation

## 20. CONCLUSION

Hence, Shri Aurobindo saw education as a tool for the real working of the spirit of the mind, a body of the nation and individual. According to the Educational Philosophy of him, everyone has spiritual consciousness by some extent in the form of some special ability which should be recognized and allowed to progress by the teacher. He involved all to uplift man from the present state to a brighter future. He thought of such education that is for an individual that will make it's one central object the growth of the soul, its powers and possibilities. During the time of sadhana at Pondicherry, he actively involved in strengthening his vision for mankind. Lastly, he extended his philosophy into the sphere of education at the Ashram with the setting up of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education. This has been acting as a veritable laboratory for applying the principles of his philosophy in education.

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