



# SHRI AUROBINDO'S THOUGHT ON EDUCATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ROLE OF A TEACHER

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## ABSTRACT

All most all educationists think for the behavioural change of the child. But, very few among them highlight the importance of an ideal teacher which is the base of child's education. Among them, Shri Aurobindo's contribution is the best and every education system must follow if possible. Shri Aurobindo says that a teacher has to be a 'sadhaka' (a self controlled man). If a teacher controls himself/herself, he can help a child in educational growth.

The present paper will highlight the importance of the role of a teacher in education as told by Sri Aurobindo. It also highlights the significance of Shri Aurobindo's educational philosophy with different components like principles of teaching, aims of education, discipline, relationship of teachers with students and principles to be a successful teacher.

**Index Terms**-Shri Aurobindo, Teacher, Education, child, teaching, physical, mental, vital, ideal teacher, and successful teacher.

## INTRODUCTION

There was the time in Indian Vedic Education system where a teacher was a yogi, a sadhaka (a self controlled man) who proved to have the multi dimensional experiences to deal with the children of the Gurukula (ancient school) and create them as great. Modern education lacks that spiritual manifestation in education. In 20<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of a great yogi, Shri Aurobindo enlightened the thought and principles of education in a different way. He not only combined the ancient vedantic and modern principles of education but also gave a spiritual awakening to education system.

Shri Aurobindo (1872-1950) took birth in Kolkata and was educated at Cambridge University. As an Idealistic person he studied Vedantic philosophy and Upanishad. Though, initially a freedom fighter, he spent much of his time as a yogi for spiritual sadhana. Mother Mirra Alfassa has elucidated thoughts and philosophy of Shri Aurobindo in her writings on education. So, what mother has

described in her writings is nothing but the manifestation of the thoughts of Shri Aurobindo. Shri Aurobindo is in the opinion that education should be for the growth of human mind and spirit. He thinks for a divine man who is an asset for not only himself/herself but also for the nation and the world. He gives a clear cut role of a teacher and explains the principles for an ideal teacher which will be the central idea of this study.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Education system everywhere gives importance to the behavioural change of a child. Every educationist wanted change in education through child but very few wanted change from the above, from a teacher. Yogi Sri Aurobindo wanted a change in the behaviour and principle of teaching of a teacher. A teacher helps a child to build the foundation of a child. Sufficient research has not been made to understand the educational philosophy of Shri Aurobindo particularly on the role of a teacher. Modern education needs to give importance to the thoughts of Shri Aurobindo to develop education and teacher education.

Present study is based on both psychological and spiritual aspect of teacher education this is the study covers the topics like ideal teacher, philosophy of Shri Aurobindo, educational principles to be a successful teacher, relationship between teacher and students, etc. The study also emphasizes the spiritual education. Shri Aurobindo says that the true bases of education are to study the human mind and growth of the soul. Now, it is very essential to understand the spiritual aspect of Educational Philosophy of Shri Aurobindo regarding a teacher's role in education.

Now a days modern education has improved a lot but spiritual education should also be improved. Here the study will combine both modern and spiritual education that Shri Aurobindo has given importance. The study will highlight the teacher student relationship which will be both psychological and spiritual to help each other to beat the education to the new level which will be understood by the modern education system and work is needed to be done more and more. Here, I have critically understood and tried to analyse the Educational Philosophy of Shri Aurobindo especially the role of a teacher in education to help a child to bring out the best within him or her and to build holistic education in this world. For this study, I have taken the help of both the original and secondary literary sources of Shri Aurobindo to reach to this destination.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The following points are the objectives of my study.

1. To recognise various domains of education that Shri Aurobindo has given importance to build a Holistic education system.
2. To comprehend the principles of relationship between teacher and students in teaching and outside the teaching.
3. To analyse the principles of becoming a successful teacher.
4. To synthesise different ideas and thoughts of Shri Aurobindo to become an ideal teacher that plays a very important role to help a child for the growth and development.

### **CHIEF AIM OF EDUCATION**

According to Sri Aurobindo, "The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use."

Here, Shri Aurobindo has the Spiritual aim behind education. Every human being has a soul. Soul is having super power, the possibility of greatest power in this world. Everything is within a soul. The work of the education is to draw out best possibilities which are already in human being and to perfect it for the noble use. It is the teacher's responsibility to help the child to find and draw out this possibilities and to perfect it for the noble cause of society nation and world.

## **DOMAINS OF EDUCATION**

Shri Aurobindo is very famous for his educational philosophy as Integral Education. This system of education highlights mainly the following domains of human being.

### **Physical Education**

According to Shri Aurobindo, “Of all the domains of human consciousness, the physical is the one most completely governed by method, order, discipline, process”. Our body has the lack of plasticity and receptivity which have to be replaced by a systematic organisation through practice and comprehension. We must understand the interdependence of all domains of the being while physical organisation. Physical practice must be regular rigorous and detailed. A teacher must help a child in every aspect in his or her physical growth.

Physical culture is the process of infusing consciousness into the cells of the body. One may or may not know it, but it is a fact.

### **Vital Education**

Shri Aurobindo says that there are two principal aspects of vital education, both equally important and very different in their aims and methods. The 1st one is related to the development and use of the sense organs. The 2nd one is the continuous awareness and control of the character, culminating in its transformation.

The only essential thing is to help the children to know themselves and choose their own destiny, the path they will follow; to teach them to look at themselves, understand themselves and to will what they want to be. Very important is to create love among the children to love learning and to learn always and everywhere.

The primary rule of moral preparation is to propose and welcome, not order or force. The best technique for idea is by personal example, daily converse and the books read from one day to another.

Incredible consideration should be taken that unformed excellencies are not dismissed as deficiencies. The ferocity and wildness of numerous youthful qualities are only the overflowing of an excessive strength, greatness and nobility. They ought to be cleansed, not discouraged.

### **Mental Education**

Rational education implies essentially three things, **first**, to show men how to observe and know properly current realities on which they need to shape a judgment; **secondly**, to prepare them to think productively and sufficiently; **thirdly**, to fit them to utilize their insight and their thinking successfully for their own and the benefit of everyone. Capacity of perception and information, capacity of knowledge and judgment, capacity of activity and high character are expected for the citizenship of a reasonable society; a lack of overall in any of these troublesome necessities is a certain wellspring of disappointment.

According to Shri Aurobindo, “whatever you may want to do in life, one thing is absolutely indispensable and at the basis of everything, the capacity of concentrating the attention. If you are able to gather together the rays of attention and consciousness on one point and can maintain this concentration with a persistent will, nothing can resist it – whatever it may be, from the most material physical development to the highest spiritual one. But this discipline must be followed in a constant and, it may be said, imperturbable way”.

In teaching, reason is very essential. This is the first thing that is to be taught to every human being as soon as he is capable of thinking. This is a kind of super-instinct of the species. The elementary education which should be given to every child is that he is created to become a mental being, and if he is to manifest his human nature, reason must govern his life and not vital impulses.

As said by Shri Aurobindo, “The reign of reason should not end until the coming of the psychi-crow which manifests the Divine Will”.

## **WHO IS AN IDEAL TEACHER ?**

### **1. Help the Child**

Shri Aurobindo has given the new aim of education that is to help the child to develop his intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, moral, spiritual being. The old education system was only emphasizing to pack stereotyped knowledge into the child's brain and impose a stereotyped instruction of conduct on his struggling and dominated impulses. Here, teacher is a guide and helper to a child in every need for the development of the being. So the need of the hour is to prepare the teachers first before seeing the growth and development of the children.

### **2. Nothing can be taught**

Shri Aurobindo is explaining the principles of true teaching. According to him, "The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught". The teacher has to play the role of a helper and guide not as an instructor or task-master. His work is to suggest the child and not to impose on him/her. Teacher does not actually train the child's mind, he only guide him the ways how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the whole process. He only shows him/her where the knowledge lies and how they can be continuously practiced.

### **3. Not to Force the Soul**

The very important point is Shri Aurobindo's second principle. According to him, "the mind has to be consulted in its own growth". The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition. This is a blunder for the parents or teachers to arrange for a child to develop a set of particular qualities, capacities, ideas, virtues, or be prepared for a prearranged career. Shri Aurobindo says, "To force the nature to abandon its own *DHARMA* is to do it permanent harm, mutilate its growth and deface its perfection. It is a selfish tyranny over a human soul and a wound to the nation".

### **4. Find and develop the possibilities**

Everyone has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. And a teacher's role is simply to help the child in finding this truth within him/her.

### **5. Teaching from near to far**

According to Shri Aurobindo, "the third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be". The basis of a man's life and nature is his heredity, his surroundings, his nationality, his country, the soil where he is living, the air which he breaths, the sights, sounds, habits to which he is habituated. So education should start from the known to unknown. It must be connected to the source which connects the child presently where he is. Outside or foreign things can be offered, not forced on the mind. A genuine development needs a free and natural situation of education.

## **TEACHER- STUDENT RELATIONSHIP**

Shri Aurobindo's literature tells about the principles of teacher student relationship. Teacher is a friend, a guide and a philosopher. The following are the important points.

- To learn, children have everything. If they really get this concept, they will prepare themselves for a useful and productive life. And this is the work of the teacher to make them know and realize.
- As they grow up, the teacher must see that children must discover in themselves the thing or things which interest them most and which they are confident of doing well. There are latent faculties to be developed and discovered.
- Teacher must teach the children to like to overcome any difficulties, which add special skill and value to life; when any one knows how to do it, it destroys all boredom forever and gets an altogether new interest to life.
- They must be taught that they are on earth to progress and they have everything to learn.
- They should be taught to take interest in what they are doing – that is not the same thing as interesting the students! They must be aroused in them the desire for knowledge and progress. Anything can be the interest area– in sweeping a room, for example – if one does it with concentration, in order to gain an experience, to make a progress, to become more conscious....
- Now a days, good students are most wanted by teachers. Good students according to most teachers are those who are studious and attentive, who understand and know many things, who can answer well, etc. everything is spoiled by this thinking. Studious students during their study, reading, writing, makes friendship with books and talks to others and they lose contact with the superconscious part which receives knowledge by intuition. This contact often exists in small child but it is lost in the course of his education.
- The teacher must stress on the growth of the understanding much more than that of memory. One knows well only what one has understood. What is understood is never forgotten but the things learnt by heart, mechanically, fade away little by little and finally disappear. The teacher must never refuse to explain to a child the how and the why of things.
- Patience should be must to teach the young children. A teacher must be ready to repeat the same thing to them several times, explaining it to them in various ways. By this process, gradually that it enters their mind.
- Among the children, intelligence and capacity of understanding are surely more important than regularity in work. Steadiness may be acquired later on.
- Assessing children is not an easy task. In assessing the possibilities of a child, ordinary moral notions are not of much use. Children having natures like rebellious, undisciplined, obstinate, often conceal qualities that no one has known how to use. Indolent natures may also have a great potential for calm and patience.
- A teacher should not always think of the easy solution of any child issue. He/she must be even more hard-working than the student in order to learn how to discern and make the best possible use of different characters.

### **WHO IS A SUCCESSFUL TEACHER**

All teachers are not successful. Those who work hard with themselves and prepare them as teacher can be successful. According to Shri Aurobindo the following are the principles to be a successful teacher.

- The teacher should have complete self-control not only to the extent of not showing any anger, but remaining absolutely quiet and undisturbed under all circumstances.
- The teacher himself must always progress if he wants his students to progress, must not remain satisfied either with what he is or with what he knows.
- The teacher must not have any sense of essential superiority over his students, nor preference or attachment whatsoever for one or another.
- The teacher must know that all are equal spiritually and instead of mere tolerance must have a global comprehension or understanding.
- The teacher should always be punctual and come to the class a few minutes before it begins.
- The teacher should always properly dressed.
- The teacher must never lie himself; if he wants his students should never lie.
- The teacher should never lose his temper with students so that his students will never lose their

temper. The teacher can be in psychological control of the children only when he is in control of his own nature.

- The teacher should know thoroughly what he has to teach. He should try to get a good understanding of his students and their particular needs.
- The teacher should be very calm and very patient, never get angry; one must be master of oneself in order to be a master of others.
- The teacher must keep in mind that the children must be educated in an atmosphere of love and gentleness. There should not be any violence, any scolding in teaching.
- The teacher must be always a gentle and kind man and the living example of the virtues the child must acquire.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, children must be happy to go to school, happy to learn, and the teacher must be their best friend who gives them the example of the qualities they must acquire. Shri Aurobindo inspires the teachers a lot to be the ideal teachers, to be the successful teachers which is the base of the education system to help in the growth and development of the children in education system. If we want a changing education system, we have to change the minds of the teachers first. The brave, pure, honest, self controlled, spiritual teachers will really help the education of the human being. Education is all that depends exclusively on the teacher. What he does and how he behaves that have the constant impact on the children. Shri Aurobindo rightly said, "Never demand from a child an effort of discipline that you do not make yourself".

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