



EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO GHOSH

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ABSTRACT

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), the great educationist of India, has set forth his philosophy in the life Divine. He bases his philosophy on the original Vedanta of the Upanishadas. Sri Aurobindo believes that earlier Vedanta represent an integral or balanced view of life. It implies healthy integration of God and the man or world, renunciation and enjoyment, freedom of the soul and action of nature, being and becoming, the one and many, Vidya and Avidya, knowledge and works, and birth and release.

Sri Aurobindo believes that man is the maker of his own destiny and education is a big tool to achieve the target. He believed that the best thing in man is his spirituality. He was an intellectual who intensely analyzed human and social evolution. According to Sri Aurobindo, the education must emphasize on the whole aspects of human life such as physical, psychic, mental, beauty, power, knowledge and love etc. Integral Education is basically the cultivation of these aspects in human being.

The present paper focuses the philosophical contributions of Shri Aurobindo Ghosh towards Education. It relates the importance of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education with different components of education: principles of teaching, aims of education, curriculum, transaction, school, relationship of teacher and pupil, discipline etc.

Keywords : Sri Aurobindo, Integral Education, Educational Philosophy, Curriculum, Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was an Idealistic to the core. His Idealistic philosophy of life was based upon Vedantic philosophy of Upanishad. He maintains that the kind of education, we need in our country, is an education "proper to the Indian soul and need and temperament and culture that we are in quest of, not indeed something faithful merely to the past, but to the developing soul of India, to her future need, to the greatness of her coming self creation, to her eternal spirit." Sri Aurobindo's (1956) concept of education is not only acquiring information, but the acquiring of various kinds of information. He points out, "...is only one and not the chief of the means and necessities of education: its central aim is the building of the powers of the human mind and spirit".

It implies healthy integration of God and the man or world, renunciation and enjoyment, freedom of the soul and action of nature, being and becoming, the one and many, Vidya and Avidya, knowledge and works, and birth and release. He says that fellowship between God and man generates 'man' an idea of new birth and a new ideal of work. The fellowship with God can be achieved only by disinterested action in society, by never ending meditation, by self forgetting devotion and by feeling a kind of unity of all things in God. Sri Aurobindo is not a fatalist. He believes that man is the maker of his own destiny. Even heredity and environment are determined by the present and past actions of man.



Man reaps the consequences not of his actions alone, but sometimes he shares the results of the action, of others and vice versa, because all existence is continuous. There is continuity between deferent births. On the whole the doctrine of karma is valid. Even the thoughts and feelings have their corresponding results, though action has the greatest amount of result, as life consists more of actions. Moreover it is on actions that man exercises more control than on thoughts and feelings. To Aurobindo, Education of values was the most important. He believed that the best thing in man in his spirituality.

OBJECTIVE

The present paper focuses the philosophical contributions of Shri Aurobindo Ghosh towards Education. It relates the importance of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education with different components of education: principles of teaching, aims of education, curriculum, transaction, school, relationship of teacher and pupil, discipline etc.

GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO GHOSH

Sri Aurobindo believed that the highest truths, the truth contained of science and religion were already contained in Vedas. The Gita and the Upanishads are nothing but a logical continuation of the Vedas. He believes in traditional concept of man and accepts the classical views about the union of individual soul with supreme soul. Integralism is possible through transformation, according to Sri Aurobindo. Yoga divides the whole man bringing down the super mind to transform the human mind, life and body. The moment this aims get fulfilled man becomes a superman. Sri Aurobindo aimed at gradual spiritualization of the society. He welcomed an age of super mind where the realization of good freedom and unity will predominate in all social groups. We can achieve the unity will predominate in all social groups. We can achieve the unity of human race through integral living and through development of integral personality. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is based on an experienced integralism. It is a synthesis of idealism, realism, pragmatism and spiritualism.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO GHOSH

The guiding principle of Sri Aurobindo's Educational Philosophy was the awakening of the individual as a spiritual being. It should be related to life truth and self mastery by the child. Sri Aurobindo made a five-fold classification of human nature i.e. the physical, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual, corresponding to five aspects of education – physical education, vital education, mental education, psychic education and spiritual or supermental education. Physical education includes control over physical functions, harmonious development of physical movements, over powering physical limitations and the awareness of body consciousness. Sri Aurobindo lays stress upon games and sports because he felt that these were essential for renewing energy. Vital education was the most important point in integral education. Sri Aurobindo called the vital being of man – the life nature made up of desires, sensations, feelings, passions, reaction of the desire – soul in man and of all that play a possessive and other related instincts, anger, fear, speed etc. that belong to this field of nature. Mental education included cognition, ideas and intelligence. The unique contribution of Sri Aurobindo regarding mental education was that ideas should be continually organized around a central thought. Psychic education was the special contribution of Sri Aurobindo to education systems. The key to an integral personality was the discovery of man's psychic nature. The educational theory of Sri Aurobindo aimed at the development of the latent powers of the child, training of six senses, training of logical faculties, physical education, principle of freedom, moral and religious education and above all, training for the spiritualization of the individual.

CONCEPT OF INTEGRAL EDUCATION

According to Sri Aurobindo, the education must emphasis the following aspects in addition to the physical, psychic and mental aspects as denoted by the matter and spirit respectively. The cultivation of



these aspects (a) beauty, (b) power, (c) knowledge and (d) love is what he called as integral education. Beauty is the realization through physical culture. Power is to be related to the control of sensations. Knowledge helps in developing the mental make up of an alert mind. Love is the formation of desirable feelings and emotions, which should be directed towards others and the Commission with the Divine.

Sri Aurobindo says "If education is to bring out to full advantage all that is in the individual child we should first guarantee a safe custody of all that is in individual. Nothing is to be lost or damaged, twisted or crushed. 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. That Divinity in man is not to be insulted, that chance of perfection is not to be lost that spark of strength is not to be extinguished. The task of a teacher is to help the child to feel that touch of divinity to find that 'something' to develop it, and use it. Education should help that growing soul to draw out the best that is within and make it perfect for a noble cause."

SRI AUROBINDO'S AIMS OF EDUCATION

Shri Aurobindo emphasized that education should be in accordance with the needs of our real modern life. In other words, education should create dynamic citizen so that they are able to meet the needs of modern complex life. According to him, physical development and holiness are the chief aims of education. As such, he not only emphasized mere physical development, but physical purity also without which no spiritual development is possible. In this sense physical development and purification are the two bases on which the spiritual development is built. The second important aim of education is to train all the senses hearing, speaking, listening, touching, smelling and tasting. According to him these senses can be fully trained when nerve, chitta and manas are pure. Hence, through education purity of senses is to be achieved before any development is possible. The third aim of education is to achieve mental development of the child. This mental development means the enhancement of all mental faculties namely memory, thinking, reasoning, imagination, and discrimination etc. education should develop them fully and harmoniously. Another important aim of education is the development of morality. Sri Aurobindo has emphasized that without moral and emotional development only, mental development becomes harmful to human process. Heart of a child should be so developed as to show extreme love, sympathy and consideration for all living beings. This is real moral development. Thus, the teacher should be a role model to his children that mere imitation can enable them to reach higher and higher stages of development. Development of conscience is another important aim of education that needs to develop by the help of teacher. Conscience has four level chitta, manas, intelligence, and knowledge. According to him every human being has some fragment of divine existence within himself and education can scan it from each individual with its full extent.

SRI AUROBINDO'S PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING

Sri Aurobindo suggested activity method, observation, self discovery, discussion method, learning by doing, learning by self experience during teaching learning process. Sri Aurobindo enumerated three principles of teaching.

- (a) **Nothing Can Be Taught:** The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task master he is a helper and guide. The teacher's work is to suggest and not to impose on the mind of the student but helps him to perfect his mind, the instrument of knowledge and encourages him every way in this process. Thus it does not import knowledge, but shows the way he knowledge can be acquired. Knowledge is within the pupil and the pupil has to must help himself to bring it out, but he needs help. Somebody must tell him where it is and how it can be 'habituated to rise to the surface.' The teacher alone can do this work.



- (b) **Mind Has to be Consulted In Its Growth:** The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its growth. "The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition."
- (c) **To Work from the Known to the Unknown:** The third principle of teaching is to work from the near to the far, from the known to the unknown. Man's nature is mold by his soul's past his heredity and his environment. The past is the foundation, the present is the material and future is the aim – and each must find its due and natural place in any national system of education.

TEACHER- PUPIL RELATIONSHIP ACCORDING TO SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo enunciates certain sound principles of good teaching, which have to be kept in mind when actually engaged in the process of learning. According to Sri Aurobindo, the first principle of true teaching is "that nothing can be taught." He explains that the knowledge is already dormant within the child and for this reason. The teacher is not an instructor or taskmaster; "he is a helper and a guide." The role of the teacher "is to suggest and not to impose". He does not actually train the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect the instruments of knowledge and helps him and encourages him in the process. 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 habituated to rise to the surface.

ROLE OF TEACHER ACCORDING TO SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo has given a very respectable and very a responsible job for the teacher because in his system, activity more on the part of the people was needed. So the teacher should be careful enough to observe the working of the student minutely so that he could guide those students who were going on wrong track. Sri Aurobindo suggested the he should not teach but suggest, organize their work and show them the direction to responsibility, and to help them to find out inner guidance. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. 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. Sri Aurobindo discarded the punishment and the stimulation of fear.

CURRICULUM ACCORDING TO SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo prescribed free environment for the child to develop all his latent faculties to the maximum and suggested all those subjects and activities should possess elements of creativity and educational expression. He wished to infuse a new life and spirit into each subject and activity through which the development of super human being could becomes possible. He laid down the following principle for curriculum.

"Curriculum should be in such a way which child find as interesting. It should include those entire subjects which promote mental and spiritual development. It should motivate children towards the attainment of knowledge of the whole world. It should contain creativity of life and constructive capacities."

Aurobindo describes curriculum for different stages of education-

At Primary Stage - Mother tongue, English, French, Literature, National History, Art, Painting, General Science, Social Studies and Arithmetic.

At Secondary Stage - Mother tongue, English, French, Literature, Arithmetic, Art, Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Physiology, Health Education, Social Studies.

At University Level - Indian and Western Philosophy, History of Civilization, English Literature,



French, Sociology, Psychology, History, Chemistry, Physics, Botany.
At Vocational Level - Art, Painting, Photography, Sculptural, Drawing, Type, Cottage Industries, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Nursing etc.

SRI AUROBINDO'S SCHOOL

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education aims at modifying the school curricula, maximizing the learning modalities, helping the child to achieve his potentiality at his own pace and level and devote his time to discover himself. This kind of schooling is seen as an antithesis of an imposed uniformity of prescribed courses and teaching which the traditional schools purport to do and can be linked to what was taught in schools under the colonial rule. The type of schooling visualised by Sri Aurobindo is seen as aiming to bridge the gap between the child's life at school and that at home. In contrast to the educational ideas of Sri Aurobindo, the present day education system in India is purely an instruction of information enterprise, supported by a subjecttimebound curriculum, which neither relates to the needs or abilities of the learner nor takes into consideration the way children learn successfully. Instead of being Childoriented it is subjectoriented. The schools focus on competition with others, mastery of subject matter for getting better marks or grades than on learning in cooperation with and from one another for personal growth and for welfare of others. This is not exclusive to Indian phenomenon, rather all over the world education is largely reductionist, materialist, ego enforcing, and devoid of the joys of the spirit. It is in this context that there is a need to examine initiatives which are rooted in Indian tradition, seek alternatives in curriculum teaching and learning for measuring success, involve children in the process of learning and focus on learning from the another and notfrom an authoritative pedagogue.

DISCIPLINE ACCORDING TO SRI AUROBINDO

Children should be provided with a free environment so that they are able to gain more and more knowledge by their own efforts. According to him any retrained and imposed environment stunt the growth and natural development. Sri Aurobindo propagated the concept of self discipline which was the cure of impressionistic discipline.

CONCLUSION

Sri Aurobindo's Educational Philosophy is student oriented philosophy which recommends focusing on integral development of student covering the whole aspects of education such as psychic and mental, spiritual, physical, vital by cultivating the beauty, power, knowledge and love. Sri Aurobindo's desires free environment for student so that he can surface out his the hidden expertise and innovation. According to the Educational Philosophy of Sri Aurovindo Ghosh, everyman has divinity by some extent in the form of some special ability which should be identified and allowed to grow by the teacher. Thus Sri Aurobindo desires to have such an education system through which a student can be allowed to grow his mind completely in his own way and subsequently he can be converted into a healthy, knowledgeable, and spiritual as well as wise man that is capable to make the Earth a perfect place live like a heaven i.e. full of divine. This study is helpful to guide the teacher to choose the correct form of teaching and provide inspiration and facilities to students for the complete growth of mind.

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