SJIF Impact Factor (2024): 8.675| ISI I.F. Value: 1.241| Journal DOI: 10.36713/epra2016 ISSN: 2455-7838(Online)
EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)
Volume: 9 | Issue: 6 | June 2024 - Peer Reviewed Journal

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SRI AUROBINDO: A TRANSCENDENT VISION FOR HOLISTIC LEARNING

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Article DOI: https://doi.org/10.36713/epra17381
DOI No: 10.36713/epra17381

ABSTRACT
Sri Aurobindo was an idealistic person based on Vedantic and Upanishad, and his educational philosophy aimed to develop the skills of Indians for self-creation and eternal spirit. This study aimed to create a life sketch of Sri Aurobindo, analyze his philosophical perspectives, and explore the relevance of his philosophy for holistic learning. The investigator employed a qualitative research methodology to investigate secondary sources such as books, online journals, and documents. The study explored Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, which advocates for holistic learning that encompasses physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects. The philosophy is rooted in Sri Aurobindo's evolutionary worldview, aiming to nurture individuals who are intellectually competent, morally upright, and spiritually awakened. It also emphasizes personalized learning, respecting individuality and integrating spiritual values into the learning process. The study on Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy suggests a holistic approach, emphasizing mindfulness practices and spiritual values in teaching methods, rather than academic achievement. Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy transcends cultural, geographical, and temporal boundaries, promoting holistic learning and empowering individuals for a more enlightened future.
KEY WORDS: *Sri Aurobindo, Educational Philosophy, Holistic Learning, Integral Education*

INTRODUCTION
Sri Aurobindo, a 20th-century renaissance thinker, was born in Kolkata in 1872 and studied at Cambridge University. He was an idealistic person based on Vedantic and Upanishad, and his educational philosophy aimed to develop the skills of Indians for self-creation and eternal spirit. Aurobindo emphasized the importance of diverse types of education, focusing on human mind and spirit, and promoting divine life, nation, self, and people as national ideals. Maximum Western educators and educational philosophers have attempted to understand educational theories as a true structure and framework that offers useful guidelines for educational practice, rather than merely as abstract theories unrelated to real-world situations (Das, 2020). Educators are increasingly evaluating education theories as a structured framework that provides practical guidelines for practice, with many Western educators and philosophers aiming to understand these theories as more than mere theoretical concepts (Banerjee, 2016). Aurobindo's writings provide valuable insights into the landscape of actual education and his educational theories can help us understand the world of education.

Aurobindo Ghosh is one of them, who was not only a political philosopher but also had a great contribution in the field of education. Aurobindo Ghosh, who was formerly known as Sri Aurobindo, was named the first principal of the National College when it was first established on August 14, 1906 (Banerjee, 2016). His vision for Divine Life gave him a special status in the whole world. He suggested that the education should have five important aspects like- the physical, the mental, the vital, the psychic and the spiritual to which he calls as Integral Education. Integral Education as conceived by Aurobindo Ghosh, aims at developing total transformation of human life into the life divine (Sabar & Ratha, 2023).

Sri Aurobindo is a brilliant nationalist, philosopher, and advocate for education. He has made an extremely special contribution to the field of education. In real-world applications, he combines Western and Indian philosophy. We move from materialism to spiritualism with his life philosophy. In the field of Indian education, Sri Aurobindo's theories of philosophy are unique. This goal is to make Indian society prosperous and well-adjusted by fostering individual virtue via education (Mondal & Bag, 2023). "The divine truth is greater

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than any religion, creed, scripture, idea, or philosophy," states Aurobindo himself (Das, 2022). In his view, education needs to be flexible in order to adapt to the demands of the complicated world we live in today.

The second aim of education is to train all the senses namely hearing, speaking, listening, touching, smelling, flavoring. When the nerve, chitta, and manas are pure, all the senses can be taught completely. The improvement of mental abilities, such as memory, thinking, reasoning, imagination, and discrimination, is the third goal of education. The cultivation of morals is one of education's primary goals (Rani, 2017). We can create an integrated India and a global community by combining Sri Aurobindo's philosophy with national integration (Samanta & Bokshi, 2017).

Only selfless service to society, unceasing meditation, selfless devotion, and a sense of the unity of all things in God can lead to a fellowship with the Almighty. There is no fatalism in Sri Aurobindo. He thinks that each person shapes their own destiny. The past and present deeds of humanity influence environment and heredity as well. Because all existence is continuous, man does not always bear the full consequences of his own actions; occasionally, he also shares in others' actions' consequences. Between different births, there is continuity. The concept of karma is true overall. Even thoughts and feelings have corresponding effects, but since life is mostly made up of actions, action has the most effects. Furthermore, man has more control over his actions than over his thoughts and feelings (Maitreya & Aggarwal, 2017).

The person must receive guidance from birth and continue for a long time, flawlessly, at different stages of his life. "The physical, mental, vital, psychic, and spiritual aspects of the human being are the five principal activities that education must address in order to be complete." According to Sri Aurobindo, transformation makes integralism possible. Yoga transforms the human mind, life, and body by dividing the individual and bringing down the supermind (Behera, 2021).

The first rule of true teaching, in the words of Sri Aurobindo, is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is a helper and a guide, not an instructor or a task master. His job is to make recommendations, not demands. He merely demonstrates to the student how to refine his instruments of knowledge and assists and motivates him throughout the process; he does not genuinely train the student's mind. Instead of giving him knowledge, he demonstrates to him how to get knowledge on his own. He only reveals to him where the knowledge is hidden and how it can become conditioned to surface; he does not call forth the knowledge that is already within (Rao, 2019).

In present situation, we see everywhere the Increasing rate of violence, war, terrorism, lack of unity between people conflicts etc. That is why the new concept of peace education is emerged. The great peoples of our country who are shares his viewpoint on peace contributed on peace education Sri Aurobindo one of them. He was not only a philosopher but also an educationist, internationalist, and peace thinker. Throughout his life he emphasized on such topic like unity in diversity, humanity, harmony, international integration, national development integration of old values etc (Das & Bhattacharya, 2022). Modern education needs to give importance to the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo to develop education and teacher education (Sahu & Behera, 2022).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are as follows-

1. To draw a life sketch of Sri Aurobindo.
2. To examine the philosophical perspectives of Sri Aurobindo.
3. To investigate the relevance of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy for holistic learning.

METHOD OF THE STUDY

This study used historical research to analyze the relevance of past events in the current context. Sri Aurobindo, a historical thinker, believed that the past is the foundation of the National System of Education. For this investigation, the investigator has utilized a qualitative research methodology. The content analysis method is used to the current investigation. In this instance, the researcher examines a range of secondary sources, including books, online journals, and online documents (Mondal & Bag, 2023).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

- **Sketch of Sri Aurobindo's Life**

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, a renowned sage, poet, patriot, philosopher, and educationist, was a controversial figure. His first English biography was published in 1910, but many people ignored his advice to avoid academic traditions, leading to a chronological summary of his life.

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Birth and family background: Sri Aurobindo was born on August 15, 1872 in Kolkata. The ward 'Aurobindo' means 'Lotus' in Sanskrit The father of Sri Aurobindo, Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghosh, was completely Westernized in his outlook on life and morals. He earned a post-graduate medical degree from the West. However, Raj Narayan Bose, dubbed "the grandfather of Indian nationalism," was a great patriot and visionary, and the father of Sri Aurobindo's mother, Swarnalata Devi. The third son of Sri Aurobindo's family. Since Dr. K. D. Ghosh left his three sons—the eldest two being Beno Bhushan and Mon Mohon, respectively—at Loretta convent in Darjeeling in the company of European youngsters, neither the mother nor the grandpa had much chance to influence Sri Aurobindo's outlook. At that time, Sri Aurobindo was an elderly romantic. Two years later, in 1879, under the guidance of a core group of Latin scholars, Dr. Ghosh and Swarnalata Devi brought their children to England and departed Manchester. Mr. Drewtt. The three boys moved to London in 1884, and Mrs. Drewetta, a devoted Christian, was appointed as their guardian. There he learned about Greek, Latin, French, and German Spanish. He passed the He failed the 1890 Indian Civil Service Examination but was unable to take the HorseRiding Exam. Thus, he was not eligible for this duty. In 1893, he went back to India.

After making his way back to India in 1892, he quickly found work in a variety of professional and administrative positions in Varoda and Kolkata. Aurobindo was an active member of the Indian National Congress from 1902 until 1910, during this time he published his journals in the Bengali daily "Yugantar" to spread his revolutionary ideas and stir up a sense of nationalism among the Indian people. In May 1908, the British government put Aurobindo in Alipore prison because he was involved in the Alipore bomb case (Das & Bhattacharya, 2022).

Childhood and Academic Life: At the age of seven, he was sent to England in 1879 together with his two older brothers for schooling, and they stayed there for fourteen years. Originally from Manchester, he was raised in an English household before enrolling in St. Paul's School in London in 1884. There, for five years, he excelled academically and won every major medal in both literature and history.

Early Childhood Care and Education is being given much importance in the context of National Education Policy 1986, because it is the first and foremost foundational initiative drafted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in order to strengthen the school education. The development of modern educational system always depends upon its different educational policies drafted by Government (Sabar & Ratha, 2023). Sri Aurobindo Poetry brilliance started to blossom at this point, and virtually little of his writing from this time period has withstood the test of time. Dr. Ghosh, a renowned philanthropist at home, forgot to send his sons even the bare minimum of money they required, thus Mrs. Drewett soon abandoned them and the boys (Sri Aurobindo and his siblings) had to endure immense hardship. According to Sri Aurobindo, for a full year, the only nourishment consisted of two or three sandwich slices, bread, butter, and a cup of tea in the morning and an evening penny Saveloy. Sri Aurobindo attended Kings College, Cambridge, in 1889 thanks to a scholarship from St. Paul's.

In Greek and Latin, he almost won every award. In 1892, he completed the first section of the First Class's classical tripos. He completed his I.C.S. exam that year with success, but he failed the riding test and was so barred from the civil services. Unaware that Sri Aurobindo had purposefully secured his disqualification, his well-wishers attempted to convince the authorities to accept Sri Aurobindo into the civil service despite a technical shortcoming in his work. A senior fellow at Kings College named G. W. Prothero wrote to James Cotton, the brother of Sir Henry Cotton.

He honorably fulfilled his obligations to the College and, at the conclusion of his second year of residence, placed highly in the first class of the classical tripes, part one. In addition, he receives various college awards, demonstrating his proficiency in English and literacy, which is more than enough for the majority of undergrads. He also maintains his I. C. S. Work, demonstrating his extraordinary work ethic and ability in addition to his classical scholarship. He also wrote in English that was far better than that of most young Englishmen and demonstrated an understanding of English literature.

Professional Life of Sri Aurobindo: The I. C. S. Examination Government representatives would have likely viewed although they had already discovered that Sri Aurobindo was a member of the secret society known as the "Lotus and Dagger," they nevertheless saw the petition submitted on his behalf (and without his permission) as sympathetic which was committed to battle for the freedom of India. His remarks criticizing British rule in India at the Indian Majlis in Cambridge had also been reported. To Sri Aurobindo, The I. C. S. gently left him unclaimed, which was a relief. It goes without saying that he had no calling for that kind of work.Maharaja Sayaji Raothe Gaekwad of Baroda visited London and met with Sri Aurobindo. After his father's death, Sri Aurobindo returned to India and joined the Maharajah's College in Vadodara. He worked in various departments and served as Vice-Principal and Acting Principal. From 1893 to

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1906, Sri Aurobindo served in Baroda, working in the Revenue Department, Secretariat, and as a professor of English. He preserved the essence of Indian civilization by learning Sanskrit and other contemporary Indian languages.

Political Activity: He worked in politics for a large portion of his life. He had the chance to resign from the Baroda service and officially join the political movement in 1905, when the campaign against Bengal's participation began. In1906, he left Baroda to take a position as principal of the recently established Bengal National College in Kolkata. Sri Aurobindo's political activity covered the eight years between 1902 and 1910. He spent the first part of this period working behind the scenes with colleagues to lay the groundwork for the beginning of the Swadeshi movement, until the agitation in Bengal provided a platform for the public to express their desire for more direct and forward-thinking political action rather than the moderate reformism that had been the Indian National Congress's creed up until that point. In as opposed to the moderate optimism that colonial self-government would be accomplished at a later period outside the country through gradual reform progress, the newly formed Nationalist party stated that Swaraj was their goal. Years later, the Swaraj policy evolved and became a successful issue in Ireland. The new policy's guiding concept was self-help. boycotting British and foreign products and supporting Swadeshi businesses in their place, as well as boycotting government universities and colleges, British law courts, and the establishment of a nationwide network of institutions and schools. Young revolutionaries like Bagha Jatin, Jatin Banerjee, and Surendra Nath Tagore were motivated by him once he made contact with them while in Bengal. The anushilan Samiti was one of the youth clubs he helped start, among others. He took part in the 1906 national Congress annual session, which was presided over by Dadabhai Nauroji. Following orders from the Indian National Congress, he launched the daily journal Bande Mataram in 1907 and went on to become the principal of National College in Kolkata, which is now Jadavpur University. Despite the fact that their educational theories continue to have relevance in the modern era, none of them was interested in becoming known as the educationalists. Let us examine these in brief. (Banerjee, 2016).

Politics to Spiritualism: At the nationalist congress in Surat in 19707, two equal sides engaged in a violent clash that split the Congress in two.He was detained in May 1908 on suspicion of being involved in the Alipur bomb affair. After a year, in 1909, he was freed and began publishing Karmayogi in Bengali and Dharma in English. His perspective on life was drastically altered by spiritual experiences and realizations that he had while incarcerated in Alipur. He gradually came to the realization that he was not meant to lead the freedom struggle and he began to follow a mystical and philosophical way of life.

Practice of Yoga: In an attempt to start over, Aurobindo Ghosh relocated covertly to Pondicherry in April 1910. Sri Aurobindo embarked upon a journey of spiritual growth and development in Pondicherry, where he spent four years practicing solitary yoga, which he called "Integral yoga." In his view, spiritual practice plays a crucial role in a person's development into a divine being. However, he studied the Gita and other spiritual texts while incarcerated and dedicated most of his time to yoga meditation.

- **Sri Aurobindo's thoughts on Education**

Education was profound and holistic, emphasizing the integral development of the individual. His educational philosophy can be summarized through the following key points:

Integral Education*:* Sri Aurobindo believed in the development of all the physical, physiological, mental, psychic, and spiritual facets of the human being. Instruction

should not be limited to academic learning but should include the growth of character, personality, and inner consciousness. Education ought to assist the developing soul in bringing forth its finest qualities and preparing it for a worthy purpose (Deshmukh & Mishra, 2014). Building a universal learning infrastructure for the modern world can therefore be accomplished through the application of Sri Aurobindo's integrated education concept. (Mondal & Bag, 2023).

The Divine in Man*:* He saw education as a means to realize the divine potential within each individual. According to him, every person has a unique mission and purpose, and education should help in discovering and fulfilling this inner potential.

Freedom and Autonomy*:* He advocated for an educational system that respects the freedom of the child. Instead of imposing rigid curricula, education should allow for exploration and self-discovery. Teachers should act as guides, helping students to find their own path rather than dictating it.

Spiritual Foundation*:* Education should be grounded in a spiritual understanding of life. Sri Aurobindo emphasized the importance of spiritual development alongside intellectual and physical growth. This agency is acknowledged as one of the primary five principles of a complete integral education, correlating to the spiritual dimension of human life (Behera, 2021).

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***Synthesis of Cultures**:* He believed in the synthesis of Eastern and Western educational philosophies. While the West contributed scientific and technological advancements, the East offered profound spiritual and philosophical insights. An ideal education would integrate the strengths of both traditions.

***Practical Application**:* Sri Aurobindo stressed the importance of applying knowledge practically. Education should prepare individuals to face the challenges of life and contribute meaningfully to society.

***Progressive and Dynamic**:* He viewed education as an evolving process, constantly growing and adapting. It should respond to the changing needs of society and the individual.

Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy has been implemented in various institutions, notably the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Puducherry, India, where the principles of integral education are practiced.

- **An Overview of Aurobindo's Educational Philosophy**

Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy was based on several principles, including holistic development, spiritual evolution, individuality, harmony with nature, social responsibility, and integration of knowledge. He believed in the holistic development of individuals, encompassing physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions. He saw education as a means to facilitate spiritual evolution and self-discovery. Aurobindo also recognized the uniqueness of each individual and emphasized tailoring education to suit their needs, interests, and abilities. He advocated for an education that instilled respect and appreciation for the natural world, viewing environmental consciousness as integral to personal and societal well-being. Aurobindo emphasized the importance of education in cultivating ethical values, social responsibility, and a sense of service towards others. He also emphasized the integration of knowledge, viewing it as interconnected and holistic, transcending disciplinary boundaries. These principles guided Aurobindo's vision of education as a transformative process, aiming to awaken individuals to their highest potential and purpose.

Aurobindo's educational philosophy was rooted in his broader spiritual and philosophical vision, which emphasized the integral development of the individual. The core elements of his educational philosophy include:

***Integral Education**:* Aurobindo advocated for the development of all aspects of a person—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Education, in his view, should not be limited to intellectual growth but should nurture the whole being. A perfect educational system should provide opportunities for every one of these student faculties to grow to the fullest potential (Dey, 2021).

***Self-Realization and Self-Discovery**:* Education should help individuals realize their inner potential and discover their true self. This involves understanding one's innate abilities and inclinations, leading to a harmonious and fulfilling life.

***Spiritual Evolution**:* According to Aurobindo, education ought to support spiritual evolution of humanity. He viewed life as a continuous process of spiritual growth and education as a means to accelerate this process.
***Learner-Centric Approach**:* His philosophy emphasized the importance of recognizing and respecting the individuality of each learner. Education ought to be tailoredaccording to the requirements, interests, and abilities of each student rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

***Unity of Knowledge**:* Aurobindo stressed the interconnectedness of all fields of knowledge. He believed that true education integrates various disciplines, reflecting the unity of life and the universe. It is a unique project that aims at improving universal culture and education. It has been supported by the Government of India (Sabar & Ratha, 2023).

***Cultural and Ethical Values**:* Education should instill cultural and ethical values, fostering a sense of responsibility, compassion, and respect for others. Aurobindo saw education as a means to cultivate a higher moral and ethical consciousness. An attempt was made to achieve a cultural synthesis; students of various nationalities were put in different locations with their respective groupings in order to promote the development of international culture (Das & Bhattacharya, 2022).

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- **Relevance of Aurobindo's Educational philosophy for holistic learning**

Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy highlights the overall development of students, emphasizing their progress on the physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. This philosophy is relevant in today's educational landscape, where the importance of holistic education is increasingly recognized. Aurobindo promoted a system of instruction that integrates various aspects of human development, such asmental, spiritual, physiological, and vital. He thought that the uniqueness of each individual and the importance of personalized learning. He also stressed the importance of spiritual growth alongside intellectual development, which is increasingly recognized in today's diverse classrooms.

Aurobindo promoted experiential learning, where students learn through direct experience rather than passive reception of information. He emphasized the interconnectedness of all life and the importance of living in harmony with nature. In today's world, integrating eco-consciousness into education is essential. Aurobindo believed in the cultivation of moral and ethical values alongside intellectual growth, which resonates with modern calls for education to foster character development, empathy, and social responsibility.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, with its emphasis on integral education, holds significant relevance for the present educational system, especially in promoting the holistic development of learners. Integral education, as envisioned by Sri Aurobindo and the mother, focuses on the development of all aspects of the human being: physical, emotional, mental, psychic, and spiritual. This approach aligns well with contemporary educational goals that seek to foster well-rounded individuals capable of thriving in a complex, rapidly changing world.

Holistic Development: The text outlines the four main aspects of a holistic education: physical, emotional, mental, and psychic and spiritual. Physical education promotes physical well-being through sports and activities, while emotional education focuses on emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and positive relationships. Mental education emphasizes analytical reasoning, inventiveness, and problem-solving abilities, while psychic and spiritual education focuses on inner growth.

Learner-Centric Approach: Integral education is inherently personalized, respecting each learner's unique potential and pace of development. This approach encourages self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation, which are key components of modern educational practices.

Interdisciplinary Learning: Sri Aurobindo's philosophy advocates for an education that transcends traditional subject boundaries, encouraging an interdisciplinary approach that is increasingly valued in today's educational landscape. This can lead to a more integrated understanding of knowledge and its application in real-world contexts.

Value-Based Education: Emphasizing values such as empathy, respect, and ethical behavior, Sri Aurobindo's approach aligns with the growing emphasis on character education and the development of social and emotional skills in schools.

Innovative Teaching Methods: The philosophy supports experiential learning, project-based learning, and other innovative teaching methods that are gaining popularity for their effectiveness in engaging students and enhancing learning outcomes. love and sympathy and freedom of a child should be provided to the students (Debbarma, 2017).

Curriculum Design: Schools can integrate aspects of integral education into their curricula, promoting balanced development across physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions.

Teacher Training: Educators can be trained in holistic approaches, learning to support students' diverse needs and foster a nurturing learning environment.

School Environment: Creating a school culture that values holistic development, with facilities and programs that support a variety of activities beyond academics. There is competition in the school system and gives attention to the grade (Das, 2020).

Assessment Methods: Moving towards more comprehensive assessment methods that evaluate a range of student abilities and growth areas, not just academic performance.

Systemic Change: Implementing these principles requires systemic changes in educational policy, teacher training, and assessment practices.

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Resource Allocation: Holistic education often demands more resources, including time, training, and materials, which can be a challenge in resource-constrained settings.

Cultural Adaptation: Integrating spiritual and psychic development aspects must be done with sensitivity to cultural and individual beliefs.

Sri Aurobindo's philosophy provides a framework for modern education systems aiming to promote holistic development in learners. Mental education emphasizes analytical reasoning, inventiveness, and problem-solving abilities, while psychic and spiritual education focuses on inner growth. Although not all aspects of his philosophy can be directly applied to modern practices, the principles of integral education, personalized learning, and spiritual growth remain relevant. Integrating these principles into educational policies can create more nurturing learning environments.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy offers a valuable framework for modern education systems seeking to nurture holistic development in learners. By fostering balanced growth across all dimensions of human development, this approach can prepare students to lead happy purposeful lives and make a constructive contribution to society. A beacon of wisdom and guidance, Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy stands in a world of rapid change and complexity. Aspirations for a more holistic and transformative approach to education are deeply echoed by his emphasis on integral education, personalized learning, and spiritual evolution. We are reminded of the intricate connections that exist between the individual, society, and the universe when we consider Aurobindo's ideas on education. Through the adoption of Aurobindo's concepts of ecological awareness, social responsibility, and holistic development, we can strive for an educational model that develops the heart and soul in addition to the intellect. In this way, Aurobindo's ideas about education continue to motivate and shed light on the way towards a more civilized and enlightened future for all people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to pay our special thanks and gratitude to Dr. Deb Prasad Sikdar, Professor, Department of Education, University of Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal, for their proper guidance and valuable suggestions.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest: None.

Funding: None

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