

Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education: Practice of Physical and Spiritual in Auroville Schools

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Abstract – The present paper studies about the philosophical concept of Integral Education of Sri Aurobindo and its practice of physical and spiritual aspects in Auroville Schools i.e. Mother International and Mirambika situated at New Delhi. The main objective of this study is to investigate the practice of these two aspects of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education in these two Auroville Schools. In this context a total sample of 100 students from age group of 12 to 17 years (50 students of Mother International School and 50 students of Mirambika School) were selected by systematic random method. Critical Ratio was applied in order to study practice of physical and spiritual aspect in Auroville schools. It has been found that there is no significant difference between the Mother International School and Mirambika School in physical aspect and there is significant difference between spiritual aspects of integral education. However, in mean difference, the students of Mother International Schools are superior to Mirambika School in respect of physical aspect of Integral Education. The students of Mirambika School are superior to Mother International School in respect of spirituality aspect of Integral education. Physical and spiritual are two most important aspects of integral education and all schools should organise such activities in schools which encourage development of these two aspects besides mental, vital and psyche. We should impart knowledge according to Integral Education.

Keywords – Integral, Integral Education, Physical, Spiritual, Auroville School

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INTRODUCTION

Education nourishes personality by improving all aspects of life as physical, mental, spiritual, vital, emotional, social, and cultural. It removes darkness and enlightens a person's life. It helps him to eradicate poverty and misery from his life. Such a powerful, enlightened person becomes creative and he contributes in the development of his society as well as his country.

Sri Aurobindo assessed many inherent problems in teachings imparted in our schools and universities before independence. That education system was not creative rather it was degrading, impoverishing the mind, denationalising, spoiling the soul and character. He believed to ensure that we should march towards the truth and knowledge, to keep our selves fit for meeting the day to day challenges for it is essential that we keep our education system up to date and bring necessary changes from time to time.

As per modern life and spirit, for meeting this requirement of the society the mother and Sri Aurobindo advocated strongly an integral system of education and yoga. In integral education, he described union with the divine and integral

manifestation of divine into the physical, mental, and vital life.

Sri Aurobindo used to express his educational ideas in weekly magazine 'Karmayogin'. He was unhappy and sick of the prevailing educational system after independence but it has many deficits as it is not oriented towards the development of spiritual and mental needs of children and it does not meet the requirements of modern life and our nation. He advocated that our education system should be able to prepare our students for modern day challenges of life. He wrote

"Education to be true, must not be a machine made fabric; but true building or living evocation of power of the mind and spirit of human being."

INTEGRAL EDUCATION

Integral education is a complete system of education. It develops not only cognitive mind but it develops physical, vital, spiritual, and psyche aspects of personality also. Here the word 'Integral' means 'total'. It nourishes a sense of integrity, beauty and harmony in all aspects of humanity. With the help of innovative techniques of imparting

education and activity based learning, students are equipped with multi skills and abilities which can be applied and used in his life.

Integral education is not merely an idea but it is a complete and perfect system of education, According to Sri Aurobindo true education is not only limited to spiritual aspect of education but it also includes rational, physical and vital aspects of education, these all make it integral education. In the words of Mother, who was a closest collaborator of Sri Aurobindo, "To be complete education it must be five principle aspects relating to five principle activities of human being: the physical, the mental, the psyche, the vital and the spiritual. This education is complete, complimentary to each other and continued till the end of life." Sri Aurobindo used the sense of integral education in two dimensions. In the first dimension, integral means imparting five aspects (physical, mental, spiritual, vital and psyche) of individual being and in second sense of integral means education is not for evolution of individual but for nation and finally for humanity. In a broader sense integral means evolution of humanity and promoting the principle of unity in diversity.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

It is essential for human being to be aware of his surroundings and his environment. It has been regularly mentioned that the traditional methods of teaching has lost its relevance in the fast changing era. The developed Western countries have realised that providing full employment and other amenities are not able to provide peace of mind and real satisfaction. In these Western countries too much of importance is given to material progress, technological and mechanical developments without corresponding development of spirituality and inner growth. This lacuna has land human beings in present psychological and cultural crisis.

To obtain inner strength and enlightened mind, the educationists are advocating the necessity of integration of spiritual education. They know that bookish education is not significant. This cognitive knowledge should be replaced by integral knowledge for knowing the truth of being. So it has become imperative that a new system of education to be reached.

In this regarded guidelines of Sri Aurobindo and others are useful enough to reach the existing impasse. This new system of education is integral education because it deals a human being in totality and his whole life. A human being's personality is comprised of mental, physical, spiritual, vital and psyche. Unfortunately, the present system of education emphasize only on one aspect of personality, mental aspect. It totally neglects the other four aspects of personality viz. Psyche, spiritual, vital and physical.

It is integral education which brings out hidden potential in a person. A good education system must bring out great possibilities which are lying dormant in every person. Integral education awakens the great possibilities which are in dormant stage by systematic training. Human cognitive faculties can be expanded beyond the imaginations.

A person's conceptual and analytical powers can be enhanced beyond the ranges of intuition. Hence, the capacity of joyful and creative actions can be expanded beyond its normal limits with the harmony with one's inner nature. It requires the knowledge of human nature, and this knowledge is found in our preserved ancient system in numerous yogic traditions. According to Sri Aurobindo yoga is a practical psychology. He also synthesized tradition, ancient wisdom and threw light on it. Telo's model which is designed for integral development of human nature is also based on Sri Aurobindo's teachings. In his model Telo find out the possibilities to face the modern day challenges for a human being.

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Verma (2000), In "Comparative study of the educational thoughts of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo Gosh and their relevance in the context of National Policy of Education 1986, States that both the two great educationist emphasized the overall development of the child, who is our future.

Sanyal, Indrani and Ganguli Anirban (2011) in "Education Philosophy and Practice" state that Sri Aurobindo's integral education focus on the development of a child in different aspects into a comprehensive whole. Sri Aurobindo's integral education is based on the ethos of Upanishads. The chief aim of Upanishadic education was to transform an individual into a higher being by imparting education. Sri Aurobindo viewed the Upanishad's education as the only way for the real development of humanity.

In this research paper, it has been highlighted that integral education based on Upanishadic education is a true way to develop humanity. Human being is the noblest creation in this world. A man should continue for striving hard for the manifestation of totality in him.

Wexler, Judie Gaffin (2011): In "Evolving Dimensions of Integral Education" describes the concept of Integral education and discuss a case study of California Institute of Integral Studies which is based on ancient Indian education system of Upanishadic age at higher education level. In this case study, it has been highlighted that incorporation of spirit is essential for the development of a student and the faculty. With the statistical data, she proved that exercise of spirit

cannot be neglected as human being is facing a hectic change due to globalisation.

The paper describes the Integral education, which is essential for integrated growth of a student i.e., development of his spirit, psyche and mind for facing the complexities of the world. For solving the complexities of modern life, education system should be comprehensive as per ethos of integral education and directives of Upanishads. In life, only acquisition of objective knowledge based on exteriorized aspect of human life will not be enough. If man does not enlighten himself by inner wisdom then his acquisition of knowledge will be incomplete. That's why it is essential that an integral approach must be adopted for outer and inner development of human being.

Sharma (2012): Studied Swami Vivekanand educational thoughts. As per Swami the aim of life is not to acquire many degrees rather to know the people and serve the country. The main aim of education should be to awake human from ignorance and to enlighten him through knowledge. Swami's education theory incorporates equality, cooperation, love, peace and mutual understandings. Swami Vivekananda emphasized the rule of mentor and concentration in education.

Saha and Majhi (2013): They studied the educational philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. Aurobindo's integral education is a holistic approach comprised of developing moral, social values, philosophical, spiritual values in students. He was a firm believer in child centred approach i.e., education should be imparted according to the needs of the student by providing him full liberty. He advocated practice and observation.

T Pushpnathan (2013): He extensively studied the educational philosophy of Rabindra Nath Tagore. As per Tagore the main aim of education is self-realisation which means to recognise oneself the part of universe. The other aim of education is harmony between man and nature and universal brotherhood. His educational thoughts are based on Srimad Bhagwat Gita and Upanishads. Tagore emphasised on physical development, mental development and independence of an individual.

Rukhsana Akhtar (2014): She studied on, "Sri Aurobindo Ghosh: Pioneer of Integral Education". She applied historical and philosophical method for this research paper. If a learner studies through the principles of integral education, then he will be useful not only for self or family but the entire humanity. Such persons promote humanity and are forerunner for evolving humanity.

Sengupta (2014): Studied the educational thoughts of Vivekananda, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. He studied the influence of Upanishads

on the educational thoughts of these three renowned educationists. Sri Aurobindo discussed the importance of a teacher as facilitator; Swami Vivekananda emphasized the role of concentration for self-exploration. Svetasvata Upanishad emphasizes the role of pursuit of knowledge. These entire three great educationists were influenced by our Upanishads.

Deshmukh and Mishra (2014): They studied the educational philosophy of Sri Aurobindo which did not consider that the study to develop physical, mental and psychic aspect is enough but a student must enhance knowledge, love, power and beauty also. All these integrated elements are called integral education. First method is that mind of a student must be consulted for developing his personality and shaping growth. Second, student should be taught from known to unknown and learning is conditioned by his environment. Third, nothing can be taught to a student.

Akhter (2015): He studied Sri Aurobindo's integral education. According to Sri Aurobindo, main aim of integral education is holistic development of mind, body and soul. Aurobindo believes that education should inculcate in a student moral values, humanity and character building. Integral education transforms a man to superman and awakens his consciousness. He stated that yoga must be an integral part of education. Integral education enhances harmony, knowledge and will power in a human being.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main aim of the present study is to know the impact of Sri Aurobindo's 'Integral Education' on growth of physical and spiritual practice in Auroville Schools. The problem of this present research is as under:

Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education: Practice of Physical and Spiritual Aspects in Auroville Schools.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the concept of Integral Education as proposed by Sri Aurobindo.
2. To study the physical aspect and its practice in Auroville Schools.
3. To study the spiritual aspect and its practice in Auroville Schools.

HYPOTHESES

- H1 Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education is relevant in Indian Education system.

- H1 Growth of physical aspect of students in both schools is same.
- H1 Development of spiritual aspect of student in Mirambika School is higher than the Mother International School.

OPERATIONAL TERMS USED IN THE STUDY

Auroville

In the mid-1960s, The Mother personally guided the foundation of Auroville an international township endorsed by UNESCO to extend further humanity in Tamil Nadu near the Pondicherry border. It was to be a place "where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, politics and nationalities." It was inaugurated in 1968 in a ceremony in which representatives of 121 nations and all the states of India placed a handful of their soil in an urn near the centre of the city.

Auroville Schools

In Delhi there are two schools (Mother International and Mirambika) prominently which are directly setup by Sri Aurobindo society, based on Integral Education.

Integral

Integral means "total" and addresses the totality of the whole person. It develops a sense of integrity, harmony and beauty in all aspects of humanity. With an innovative combination of classroom and activity based learning, students will be taught a whole range of skills, aptitudes and abilities that will help to process information into knowledge that can be applied in life. When successful, such type of education allows children to become responsible and creative citizen who strive for excellence and are committed to the progress of themselves and their community.

Integral Education

Integral education is an educational process through which students are provided a dynamic group learning environment. It encourages conscious decision making, personal introduction, self-discovery, innovation and respect for individual differences and cultures. Educationist thought that to increase the effectiveness of education, it is important to choose a new educational model that seeks to develop responsible, creative, and conscious contributors to a global community. Integral education is a project-based model of education that encourages the joy of learning for its own sake.

Physical

"All education of the body should begin at birth and continue throughout out life. It is never too soon to begin, not too late to continue".

Physical education, three principle aspects:-

1. Control and discipline of the functioning of the body.
2. An integral methodical and harmonious development of all the parts and movements of the body and
3. Correction of any defects and deformities.

Spiritual

"A perfect self-expression of the spirit is the object of our terrestrial existence. This cannot be achieved if we have not grown conscious of the supreme reality; for it is only by the touch of the absolute that we can arrive at our own absolute".- Sri Aurobindo

Sample

Population of the present study is comprised of 650 students of two Auroville schools viz. Mirambika and Mother International School located on Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi. This population belongs to 12-15 years of adolescent age group. The population of Mother International School is comprised of 540 students, in which girls and boys are 302, 238 respectively. Whereas Mirambika School's population is comprised of 110 students in which girls and boys are 63 and 47 respectively.

Variables

In this study following variable are delineated

- a. **Dependents variable:** - Students of Mirambika and Mother International School.
- b. **Independent variables:-**
 1. Physical aspect of Integral Education.
 2. Spiritual aspect of Integral Education.

Tools Used

Q-Sorting techniques by Thurstone Method

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE USED

Critical Ratio applied to find the difference in school students of Mother International and Mirambika in

respect of two aspects of integral education (Physical and Spiritual).

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Physical aspect of Integral Education

Mother International	Mirambika
$\bar{X}_1 = 30$	$\bar{X}_2 = 29$
$(X_1 - \bar{X})^2 = 439$	$(X_1 - \bar{X})^2 = 358$
$N = 50$	$N = 50$
$\sigma_1 = \frac{\sqrt{439}}{50}$	$\sigma_2 = \frac{\sqrt{358}}{50}$
$= \sqrt{8.78}$	$= \sqrt{7.16}$
$\sigma_1 = 2.96$	$\sigma_2 = 2.67$
$\sigma^2_1 = 8.76$	$\sigma^2_2 = 7.13$

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \left| \frac{30-29}{\sqrt{8.76 + 7.13}} \right| = \frac{1}{\sqrt{15.89}} = \frac{1}{3.99} = 0.25 \\
 & CR = \frac{0.25}{0.05} = 0.50 \\
 & CR = 3.22
 \end{aligned}$$

Interpretation of physical aspect

The critical Ratio of 'Physical Aspect' of Integral Education is 3.22, which is not significant at 0.01 levels and 0.05 levels. The table value is 3.94 and 6.90. It means there is no significant difference between these two schools in respect of physical aspect.

On comparison, the mean of Mother International School is higher than the Mirambika School. It means that students of Mother International are better than Mirambika in physical aspect of integral education.

Spiritual aspect of Integral Education

Mother International	Mirambika
$\bar{X}_1 = 12$	$\bar{X}_2 = 13$
$(X_1 - \bar{X})^2 = 141$	$(X_1 - \bar{X})^2 = 107$
$N_1 = 50$	$N_2 = 50$
$\sigma_1 = \frac{\sqrt{141}}{50}$	$\sigma_2 = \frac{\sqrt{107}}{50}$
$= \sqrt{1.46}$	$= \sqrt{2.14}$
$\sigma_1 = 1.68$	$\sigma_2 = 1.46$
$\sigma^2_1 = 2.82$	$\sigma^2_2 = 2.13$

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \left| \frac{13-12}{\sqrt{2.82 + 2.13}} \right| = \frac{1}{\sqrt{4.95}} = \frac{1}{2.23} = 0.45 \\
 & CR = \frac{0.45}{0.05} = 0.09 \\
 & CR = 11.11
 \end{aligned}$$

Interpretation of Spiritual Aspect

The Critical Ratio of Spiritual aspect of Integral Education is 11.11 which are significant at 0.01 levels and 0.05 level. The table value is 3.94 and 6.90. It means that there is significant difference between these two schools in respect of 'Spiritual Aspect'. On comparison the mean of Mirambika School is higher than the Mother International School in Spirituality aspect of integral education. Students of Mirambika School are doing better.

CONCLUSION

In this study researcher finds out the philosophical concept of Integral Education of Sri Aurobindo and its two aspects of integral education i.e: Physical and Spiritual and its practice in Auroville schools. Both the schools are based on the philosophy of Integral education of Sri Aurobindo. The Mother International School is affiliated to CBSE for academic purpose but Mirambika School is not affiliated to any Board rather adopts its own curriculum. Through Critical Ratio, it has been found that there is no significant difference between the two schools in respect of physical aspect and in mean difference students of Mother

International Schools are doing better than students of Mirambika School. There is significant difference prevails between two schools in spiritual aspects of integral education. In mean difference also Mirambika School is doing better in spiritual aspect than Mother International School.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The educational implications of two aspects of integral education in Auroville Schools are given below:

1. More liberty and choice should be given to students in respect of learning methods, choice of subjects and friendly relations be developed between teacher and students.
2. Free mind learns more effectively than an environment of formal relation and fixed schedule.
3. Teaching by play way method is more effective and fruitful, result oriented than the classroom technology.
4. Educational institutes must understand that each individual comes in to life with an evolutionary purpose and unique potential, so education should be imparted as per that potential and interest of the student.
5. Now days, in competitive era, schools are concentrating only on Mental Aspect of Integral Education and forgetting the other four aspects of Integral Education viz. Physical, Vital, Psyche and Spirituality. A man cannot become human without including all the five aspects of Integral Education. So all the schools should prepare their curriculum and other extracurricular activities by incorporating the Integral Education.
6. It promotes learning by doing method instead of chalk and duster method.
7. Integral education is not marks oriented of students but they want to make a child a good human being.
8. It is a project based model of education to develop interest and creativity in the students.
9. It gives qualitative and skilled based education so that children will be skilled in their interest area. They will not face unemployment problem.
10. Integral education prepares students for forthcoming problems in life.

11. Integral education takes care of individual differences. It imparts education as per individual interest and potential. Here students acquire knowledge according to their pace, time, speed and individual speed.
12. It lessens the suicide cases among the students.
13. It develops original thinking, creativity and personality of the student.
14. Integral education do not believe in cramming rather emphasize on true knowledge.

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