

A Comparative Analysis of Educational Philosophy Of Sri Aurobindo And J. Krishnamurty & Its Implications

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ABSTRACT

Philosophy and Education both are incomplete without each other. Education is the practical side of philosophy or conversely philosophy is the theory of education. A philosophy of education is a set of beliefs about education as to what should be done in education and what the outcome of education should be. Anyone who wishes to make educational decisions ought to have a philosophy of education. As Fitzgibbons notes, educational philosophy usually contains two distinct kinds of beliefs, namely (i) Empirical beliefs (ii) Philosophical beliefs. Indian education system as such it is practiced so far is mainly based on western philosophy. However, in our own country quite a number of enlightened people have given vent to their thoughts with respect to the type of education system that suits India. Among them the prominent thinkers include Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhiji, Annie Besent and J. Krishnamurti. Almost all of them had a holistic view of education which suited the Indian condition. So here an attempt has been made to compare the Educational Philosophy of Aurobindo and J.Krishnamurty to present their views, philosophy, and principles of teaching, aims of education and its implications.

Key Words: *Education, Philosophy of Education, Empirical beliefs,*

INTRODUCTION

Education, like all conscious and deliberate action, seeks for a basis of demonstrated principles so that it can make sound decisions. In this quest for certainty man turns to philosophy. Philosophy is the mother of all sciences whether natural or social. Philosophy is related to education in the usual way in which branches of knowledge are related to their practical application. In other words, education is the practical side of philosophy or conversely philosophy is the theory of education.

A philosophy of education is a set of beliefs about education as to what should be done in education and what the outcome of education should be. Anyone who wishes to make educational decisions ought to have a philosophy of education. As Fitzgibbons notes, educational philosophy usually contains two distinct kinds of beliefs, namely (i) Empirical beliefs (ii) Philosophical beliefs. In the Indian context, education system as such it is practiced today is mainly based on western philosophy. However, in our own country quite a number of enlightened people have given vent to their thoughts with respect to the type of education system that suits India.

Among them the prominent thinkers include Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhiji, Annie Besent and J. Krishnamurti. Almost all of them had a holistic view of education which suited the Indian condition.

So here an attempt has been made to compare the Educational Philosophy of Aurobindo and J.Krishnamurty to present their views, philosophy and its implications.

Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo :

Aurobindo was born on 15th August 1872 in Konnagar, west Bengal. He extensively wrote about journalistic and creative writings, drama, epic romances, long narrative or short philosophical poetry and political essays.

Aurobindo considered that philosophy is a quest for the truth of things by the human intellect, the endeavour to realize the truth in the inner self and in outer life as 'Dharma'. Instead of seeing conflict or finding inconsistencies between the East and the West, he evolved a synthesis of both. He also evolved a synthesis of spirit and matter, of science and Vedanta. According to Sri Aurobindo, everyone has inside him something divine, something his own, a

chance of perfection and strength in however small a measure. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. Aurobindo considers all forms in the universe as multiple cells of One Consciousness and Yoga as the means through which one can come in contact with the true self and unite the separate parts of oneself and also see the same divine in others. His Yoga is of the ordinary man, not that of 'Sanyasi' who turns away from life in order to turn towards God. The seeker must experience the 'Ananda', love, consciousness and energy of the 'Supreme'. He also said that work done in full concentration and in the Spirit of surrender takes one's consciousness nearer to the Divine. The most important thing is to have an inner urge for the Divine. As Sri Aurobindo says one who chooses the Divine is chosen by the Divine. As the call for the Divine grows more intense, so does his help come more readily. Aurobindo says that we must aim not only at an inner realization but an outer realization also- the establishment of the kingdom of God not only within the heart but also in the world of human affairs – in economics and politics. He assures us that this is possible.

Sri Aurobindo was concerned with the total education, the full development of man. His educational thoughts and his system were

imbibed with his life philosophy. Man was his supreme consideration. His life philosophy was humanistic, whereby man was perfected through the mind and growth in human psychology. He said that there are three things that education must take into account (1) The man (2) The nation and (3) Universal Humanity. A true and living education 'helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with the great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member'.

Also, Aurobindo recognize, 'Education is the Discovery of Soul'. He said that each human being is a self-developing soul and that the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child to educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being, not to be kneaded and pressured into form like an inert plastic material. Our major concern is to help child to find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within.

Aurobindo's Concept of Integral Education:

Education to be complete must have five principal aspects relating to the five principal activities of the human being- the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual. Usually, these phases of education succeed each other in a chronological order following the growth of the individual. This, however, does not mean that one should replace another but that all must continue, completing each other, till the end of life.

Integral education would not only aim at the integral development of personality, but it would also embrace all knowledge in its scope. It would pursue physical and psychical sciences, not merely to know the world and nature in her processes and to use them for material human needs, but to know through them the spirit in the world and the ways of the spirit in its appearances. An important characteristic of integral education is its insistence on simultaneous development of knowledge, will, harmony and skill as also various parts of the being to the extent possible from the earliest stages of education. And since each individual child is unique in the composition of its qualities and characteristics, its capacities and propensities, integral education in its

practice tends to become increasingly individualized. Again, for this very reason, the method of education become increasingly dynamic, involving active participation of the child in its own growth.

Principles of Teaching:

Sri Aurobindo enumerated three principles of teaching.

1. 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 students. He does not actually train the mind of his student but helps him to perfect his mind, the instrument of knowledge and encourages him every way in this process. Thus he does not impart knowledge, but shows the way how knowledge can be acquired. Knowledge is within the pupil and the pupil has to help himself to bring it out, but he needs help. The duty of teacher is to tell them where it is and how it can be 'habituated to rise to the surface'.
2. 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.

3. The third principle of teaching is to work from the near to the far, from the known to the unknown. Man's nature is moulded 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.

Aurobindo's three domains of Education:

A constant insistence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother has been on detailed perfection of the human mind, life and body. We may, therefore, turn to the three domains of mental education, vital education and physical education.

1. **Mental Education:** In regard to mental education, the processes and methods can best be determined by understanding the mind. Mind is concerned largely with the activities of understanding, and all understanding is a discovery of a centre around which the ideas or things in question are held together. Mental education is a process of

training the mind of students to arrive at such central conceptions around which the widest and most complex and subtle ideas can be assimilated and integrated. Multiplicity of ideas, richness of ideas, totality of view – these should be made to grow by a developed power of observation and concentration and by a wideness of interest. Care should be taken to see that the central ideas are not imposed upon the growing mind – that would be the dogmatic method, which tends to atrophy the mind. The mind should grow towards central ideas which should come as a discovery of the mind made through rigorous exercise of the rational faculty. Thinkers alone can produce thinkers and unless teachers are constantly in the process of building up great thoughts and ideas, it is futile to expect a sound or vigorous mental education.

2. **Vital Education:** Vital education aims at training the life-force (that normally vibrates in emotions, desire and impulses) in three directions: to discover its real function and to replace its egoistic and ignorant tendency so as to become the master

by willingness and capacity to serve higher principles of the psychological constitution. A great lesson in vital education is to develop the will of the individual and to encourage the exercise of the will in which what is valued most is not the result but application and doing one's best.

- 3. Physical Education:** Of all the domains of human consciousness, the physical is the one most completely governed by method, order, discipline, process. The lack of plasticity and receptivity in matter has to be replaced by a detailed organization that is both precise and comprehensive. In this organisation, one must not forget the interdependence and interpenetration of all the domains of the being. However, even a mental or vital impulse, to express itself physically, must submit to an exact process. That is why all education of the body, if it is to be effective, must be rigorous and detailed, far-sighted and methodical. This will be translated into habits; the body is a being of habits. But these habits should be controlled and disciplined, while remaining flexible enough to adapt

themselves to circumstances and to the needs of the growth and development of the being. All education of the body should begin at birth and continue throughout life. It is never too soon to begin nor too late to continue. Physical education has three principal 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.

The Aims of Education:

Aurobindo was perfectionist, pragmatist, naturalist and humanist. He therefore suggested his integral yoga as a solution to all problems. It also led to aims of education,

1. To grow into fullness of physical and vital energy and utmost breadth, depth and height of emotional, intellectual and spiritual being.
2. Sri Aurobindo searches for harmony in individual and community and aims at its realization through education. The harmony of individual can be achieved by the

growth and evolution of his different aspect such as physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual. He also seeks harmony among different individuals living in the community.

3. Sri Aurobindo aims at nothing less than supramental education. This goes with his theory of evolution, he says, is spiral and will continue.
4. He said, every child, is born with certain innate powers of the mind, the body, the vital and the spirit. The aim of education is therefore, to develop these powers to their full potential.
5. Education should be provided through mother tongue so that children can develop power to think clearly and in a better manner.
6. The aim of education should not be merely to pass the exam.

Philosophy of J. Krishnamurti:

Jiddu Krishnamurti endearingly called Krishnaji in his inner circle and J.K. by the wider public was an original thinker, renowned philosopher and the greatest world teacher of twentieth century. He was born on 11th may 1895 in a Brahmin family of Madanapalle town, in Andhra Pradesh.

Education had been closer to Krishnamurti than anything else. His concept of education was different from the generally accepted ones. The role of education in any society has been to transmit its culture, which includes the rituals, knowledge and values from one generation to another and thus perpetuate tradition. He said, ‘the function of education is not to help the young conform to this rotten society, but to be free of its influences so that they may create a new society, a different world. Thus, in his view education has nothing to do with information but rather with transformation. He clearly points out, ‘schools exist primarily to bring about a profound transformation in human being’.

The education system now exists, teaches the students to answer and not how to question. Knowledge is given to the student but not a method for adding to it or revising it. Thus, each generation more or less conform to the past generation. He observes that to be really educated means not to conform, not to imitate, and not to do what millions and millions are doing. He expresses this idea in these words, ‘This fear of life, this fear of struggle and of new experience kills in us the spirit of adventure, our whole upbringing and education have made us afraid to be different from our

neighbor, afraid to think contrary to the established pattern of society, falsely respectful of authority and tradition. 'As long as education is based on cut and dried principles, it can turn out men and women who are efficient, but it cannot produce creative human beings.' Thus by emphasizing on knowledge and information we merely instruct the student to become a businessman, an engineer, a lawyer or a politician. This is just one aspect of education and education according to Krishnamurti is concerned with the total development of human being and not just accumulating knowledge. Thus, for him education is not limited to academic excellence. It is more than that. He does admit that career and profession are important. But same time he worries that we lay too much emphasis on career and have completely neglected the total cultivation of human being. He preferred the word 'flowering' to mean the cultivation of the total human being. By flowering he meant the total enfoldment and cultivation of our minds, our hearts and our physical well being.

Thus, according to Krishnamurti, 'Education is not merely the acquisition of technical knowledge but the understanding, with sensitivity and intelligence, of the whole

problem of living-in which is included death, love, sex, meditation, relationship and also conflict, anger, brutality and all the rest of it – that is the whole structure of human existence.' Education is not only learning from books, memorizing some facts, but also learning how to look, how to listen to what the books are saying, whether they are saying something true or false. All that is part of education. Education is not just to pass examinations, take a degree and a job, get married and settle down, but also to be able to listen to the birds, to see the sky, to see the extraordinary beauty of a tree and the shape of the hills and to feel with them, to be really directly in touch with them.

Krishnamurti also talked about balanced development of children. He said, we will cultivate not only the technological side but also uncover the deeper layers, the deeper fields of the human mind. Because technology alone cannot produce a perfect or good society. It may produce a great society, where there is no poverty, where there is material equality, luxury and so on. A great society is not necessarily a good society. A good society implies order. Order means order within himself. So, 'Education in the true sense is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered. Finally,

we can depict Krishnamurti's concept of education in these words: 'Education is not merely acquiring knowledge, gathering and correlating facts, it is to see the significance of life as a whole.'

The Aims of Education:

Since education in school is a conscious and deliberate process, it should have some aims and objectives. Krishnamurti established schools both in India and abroad. The chief aims of these **schools** are as follows:

- To educate the total human being.
- To inculcate love for nature and respect for all forms of life.
- To create an atmosphere of love, order and freedom without either fear or license.
- Not to condition the child strongly in any particular belief, either religious, political or social, so that his mind may be free to ask fundamental questions, inquire and learn.
- To teach without the motive of reward, punishment or comparison.

Aims of education given by Krishnamurti are;

1. Education for the Flowering of an Individual: By flowering he meant

the total unfoldment and cultivation of our minds, our hearts and physical well-being. That is, to live in complete harmony in which there is not opposition or contradiction between them. He said, 'When the mind, the heart, and the body are in complete harmony, then the flowering comes naturally, easily and in excellence.' Thus, the flowering of goodness does not lie in knowing mathematics and biology or in passing examinations and having a successful career. It exists outside these and when there is flowering, career and other necessary activities are touched by its beauty.

2. Education for the Physical Development:

Almost all the educationist, from Plato to Russell has accepted that, sound health is the first step towards successful education. Krishnamurti rightly pointed out, 'We are concerned not only with the mind and emotional sensitivities, but also with the well-being of the body and must give considerate thought to it.' 'To have a harmonious personality, the body must be highly sensitive, not gross, not over indulging in eating and drinking..... the body should be

healthy, taking the right food and having sufficient sleep.’

3. Education for the Awakening of

Intelligence: He considered the awakening of intelligence as the beginning and end of education. ‘Education is not only the acquisition of knowledge but what is far more important – the awakening of intelligence which will then utilize knowledge. It is never the other way round. The awakening of intelligence is our concern.’ Krishnamurti had totally different perception about intelligence. According to him, ‘Intelligence is the capacity to think clearly, objectively, sanely, healthily. It is a state in which, there is no personal emotion involved, no personal opinion, prejudice or inclination. Intelligence is the quality of the mind that is very sensitive, very alert, very aware.’

4. Education for Self-Knowledge:

According to him, true education is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole of existence is gathered. He says, ‘Self-Knowledge alone can bring tranquility and happiness to many, self-knowledge is the beginning of intelligence and integration.’

5. Education for Cultivation of Responsibility:

He felt that education is not merely the teaching of various academic subjects, but the cultivation of total responsibility and this total responsibility is love for all mankind. Responsibility to the earth, to nature and to each other is thus an important part of education.

He also talks about other aims of education such as unraveling of the conditioned mind, elimination of fear, inculcating love for nature, creating a global outlook, creation of a new generation.

The Role of a Teacher: He considers teaching as the greatest profession because upon the teacher lies the responsibility of bringing about a new generation. He further says that, ‘The teacher is the most important person in a school, for on her or him depends the future welfare of mankind...only when the teacher himself feels the dignity and the respect implicit in his work. He will be aware that teaching is the highest calling, greater than that of politician, greater than the princes’ of the world.’ He said that there are three things a teacher is concerned with, the insight or the intelligence, the detailed behavior i.e. telling what to do and what not to do and finally

academic learning. He further adds that the concern of teacher should be to teach all the three things in such a way that they make a whole. The other roles that a teacher has to perform are; transformation of human beings, bringing about psychological freedom and unconditioning of mind.

To perform the role assigned to a teacher, it is obvious that teachers should have certain unique qualities like,

- Honesty and Humility
- Self-knowledge
- Passion
- Patience and Love
- Diligence
- Integrated Personality

So, here we came across various dimensions of Krishnamurti's philosophy and personality. He was not only an original and creative thinker but also a revolutionary. Although he was against all the established patterns of life and society his ideas seems to be quite true and relevant for the present time. His insistence on providing technological proficiency of the highest kind reveals his ultramodern approach to life while his emphasis on learning from nature through pure observation reveals his down to earth approach to living. Another point worth noting regarding Krishnamurti's

philosophy of education is his idea of imparting religious education through meditation. This non-sectarian approach for attaining spiritual development is worth implementing in a world fragmented on the basis of various beliefs and ideologies.

Comparative Aspects:

We can find many similarities in philosophy, views, aims of education and type of education of Sri Aurobindo and J. Krishnamurti.

- Both Krishnamurti and Aurobindo gave due importance to complete and integrated development of children. i.e. each aspect like physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and aesthetic are fully developed in children. By doing so we can produce good, harmonize society in which we can enjoy peaceful, progressive atmosphere.
- Aurobindo talked about, 'Discipline & Liberty', in which he suggests perfect liberty for the child. He said nothing should be imposed upon children. Krishnamurti, same way discuss about 'Freedom and Order'. He said child should grow in freedom and at the same time develop a deep sense of inner order.

Order is the very root of freedom. Freedom, to him, has no terminal point but is renewed from moment to moment in the very act of living.

- Aurobindo's concept of 'Universal Humanity' and Krishnamurti's concept of 'Global Outlook' ultimately means the same. Their aim was to create 'feeling of oneness' in students. Feeling of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam' needs to be generated.
- Physical education is a very important part of Krishnamurti's scheme of education. Aurobindo also believed that physical education is as important as other things. The body is the means of fulfillment of dharma. So, body must be healthy, as healthy mind lives in healthy body.
- Aurobindo gave utmost important to 'YOGA'. He believed that 'Divine Life' can be realized through Integral Yoga. Knowledge, work, devotion and meditation are all in his Yoga. One of the main objectives of education according to J.K. is the best way of achieving this objective. Krishnamurti recommends Yoga for both physical and spiritual development. According to him

meditation means spontaneous flow of attention without any distraction.

- Aurobindo evolved synthesis of east and west. While Krishnamurti told to attain technological proficiency and same time advised to learn from nature through pure observation. Apart from these common points they talked about many things, they present their views on almost every area of life which ultimately made their philosophy comprehensive and give us holistic picture.

Implications:

The following implications can be drawn from their concept of education.

- Education in school should not be solely concerned with learning from books and storing information.
- Education in school should not be understood as a passport for future career. In other words examination and certification should not be its sole purpose.
- Education should not be used as a means of conditioning the future generations with its knowledge and traditions.
- Education should not burden the child with unwanted information so that his

mind can be free to think clearly and be creative.

- Education should produce integrated and intelligent individuals who are not caught in the wrong ways of society.
- Education should enable an individual to understand the whole problem of life. In other words education should enable an Individual to understand the whole structure of human existence.

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