

# Sri Aurobindo's Principles, Philosophy, Nationalism And Education: A Critique

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## ABSTRACT:

Sri Aurobindo is a great educationist, philosopher and nationalist. He has made an extremely special contribution to the subject of education. In real-world applications, he combines Western and Indian philosophy. We move from materialism to spiritualism with his life philosophy. In the sphere of Indian education, Sri Aurobindo's philosophical ideas are unique. By fostering individual virtue through education, he hopes to make Indian society just and content. In this article, Sri Aurobindo's principles, philosophy, nationalism and education has been discussed.

Keywords: Principles, Philosophy, Nationalism, Education.

## INTRODUCTION:

On August 15, 1872, Aurobindo Ghosh was born in Konnagar, Calcutta, in the Indian region of Bengal. His mother was Swarnalata Devi, and his father was Krishnadhan Ghosh. Dr. Ghosh, his father, wished to instill in him the values of western society. As a result, he received his elementary education at the Irish Christian School in Darjeeling. In order to protect Aurobindo from any Indian influence, his father took him to England when he was seven years old. He spent fourteen years in England, attending Cambridge, Manchester, and London for his education, until 1893. He became a member of the student organisation Indian Majlis while attending Cambridge. To support the advancement of his homeland, he founded a covert organisation known as "Lotus and Dagger." Aurobindo participated in the I.C.S. competition in 1890, placing first but losing the riding festival. He returned to India in 1893 and began working for the state of Baroda as an English professor at Baroda College. He began serving as the principal of

the National College in Kolkata in 1906, but he left the position in 1907 to become involved in the National Freedom Movement. He surrounded himself with journals and magazines such as "Jugantar," "Bande Mataram," and "Karmayogi," which allowed him to preach the doctrine of militant nationalism while harshly criticising British imperialism. He established himself as one of the radical leaders of the early 1900s who did not limit Indian nationalism to a small group of dowager politicians and petty freedom warriors but rather made it into a powerful mass movement. A lengthy trial resulted in his acquittal in 1909, despite his arrest in 1908 on charges related to the Alipore bomb conspiracy. He stopped being involved in politics in 1910 and lived as a Yogi in Pondicherry until his death on December 5, 1950. Among his significant works are *The Life Divine*, *Savitri*, *The Ideal of Human Unity*, *Essay on the Gita*, and *Defence of Indian Culture*.

In addition to being a highly respected idealistic philosopher, poet, guru, and educationalist, Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was also a remarkable philosopher. Real education, in Sri Aurobindo's opinion, gives children a free and creative atmosphere in which they can develop their cerebral, moral, and artistic faculties as well as their inner creativity and interest, all of which contribute to the eventual development of their spiritual potential. "The divine truth is greater than any religion, creed, scripture, idea, or philosophy," states Aurobindo himself. In his view, education needs to be flexible in order to adapt to the demands of the complicated world we live in today. Building the power of the human mind and spirit is its main goal.

#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

According to Pramila Malik and Suman (2021), is an attempt to understand the general and educational philosophy of eminent philosopher Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. Historical and philosophical methods were applied in this work. The primary sources of information include Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's books, talks, essays, newspapers, the internet, and more. According to Aurobindo, education is nothing more than the awakening and development of one's latent potentialities; it is about integrating oneself with oneself and living in harmony with society, one's country, and mankind in order to become a whole person or integrated human being. He thought that the goal of education should be to build

character, personality, and values rather than just memorizing facts and information, since this will help people achieve their goals in life in the short term. In order for the child to advance in the future, he or she must be able to comprehend their past and make connections with the present, which can be achieved through an indigenous education and language. Although he had nothing against western education, he thought we should take note of their advances in knowledge. According to him, the main goal of education is to help people discover their own divinity. Yoga and meditation are two ways to achieve this. He listed the development of the body, soul, mind, and spirit as the five secondary goals of education, which he eventually dubbed "integral education." He defined education as the process of a person's physical, vital, spiritual, mental, and psychic components developing. He believed that since instruction corrupts a child's mind, the function of the instructor in the teaching-learning process should be very small. Therefore, he thought that the child should be allowed to explore the world around them and develop based on their natural abilities. He was adamant that instructors had a duty to inform pupils about the unique values, culture, and history of every nation and to help them develop in accordance with those values, principles, and traditions.

Subhankar Samanta and Reshmi Bokshi (2017) explored that the Sadhna in nature is a liberation process. One person who used Sadhna to create a connection between the tangible world and nature is Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo, an internationalist, developed a novel theory of world peace that allows people to be free from ignorance, ego, and blindness. He has unwavering trust in humanity. Today's world is roiling with threats to humanity, such as terrorism, conflict, national pride, economic disparity, and selfishness. If we look at every nation in detail, we have to see the issue of cooperation and adaptation. While the rate of literacy is rising quickly, national cohesion is collapsing faster than a landslide in the Himalayas. In addition to being a brilliant patriot and freedom warrior, he was also a brilliant educator and philosopher. The educational theories of Sri Aurobindo are a harmonious blend of socialism, realism, individualism, naturalism, and idealism. He incorporates traditional beliefs in an attempt to modernize schooling in India. He asserts that the five pillars of human activity—physical, vital, mental, spiritual, and intellectual—must

be included in education. His life's work in politics is to advance not just our nation but also global human togetherness. After the extreme material progress in European culture, he encourages the Indians to assume responsibility for the spiritual development of humans. Sri Aurobindo defines liberty as spiritual and individual freedom as a metaphysician. Although it is based on Eastern philosophy, Western philosophy is where the idea of social and political philosophy first emerged. He makes an effort to combine Western and Eastern thinking. Sri Aurobindo's political and spiritual theory constantly centres on the person. The researcher aims to investigate the applicability of Sri Aurobindo's ideas on integral yoga and national integration in the twenty-first century for cultivating civic virtue and world peace. Integral yoga is referred to as a creative and harmonious living art. It emphasises how important it is for a person's personality to develop in a healthy way in order to fully realize their potential and place them in service of humanity and loftier ideals like justice, truth, freedom, and progress. India needs to integrate all of our power if it is to be established and developed as a nation. We may build a world union or world nation if each of us builds our nation as an integrative unit and later as an integration of all integrative nations.

Aurobindo Ghosh (1872–1950) was a brilliant philosopher and educationalist, according to Chanda Rani (2017). He can be considered a Renaissance man of the twentieth century. He received his education in England after being born in Kolkata, India. He constructed the renowned "Aurobindo Ashram," which is known worldwide. He derived his life philosophy from the Vedas and Upanishads. He underlined that education needs to be in line with what our modern lives require. This paper focuses on Aurobindo's philosophical contributions to education. This essay focuses on the concept of education, its goals, curricula, teaching strategies, the teacher-student connection, discipline, and, lastly, how Aurobindo's educational philosophy is applied in the contemporary day.

In the first section of this essay, Debashish Banerji (2013) examined Sri Aurobindo's nationalism and placed it in the context of colonial-national exchange as well as contemporary nationalism. The attempt by Hindutva to reductively take Sri Aurobindo's pluralistic and developmental nationalism is then problematic. The Uttarpara

Speech, a well-known nationalist speech of Sri Aurobindo, is closely read in the second section in order to highlight the significance of his concepts of the "nation soul." In the third section, the consequences of this nationalism are examined in relation to Sri Aurobindo's social theories, which are focused on communities and nations in their postmodern and modern transitions. In the final section of the study, examples of spiritual communities that represent the social setting of Integral Yoga in Sri Aurobindo's global vision of the future are discussed, including Auroville and the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

According to Richa Tiwari et al. (2013), Sri Aurobindo was a yogin, a scholar, a poet, a mystic, an evolutionary philosopher, and a revolutionary nationalist. Following a brief stint in politics, he rose to prominence as a leader of the initial movement to free India from British domination and as one of the first to announce and pursue the goal of Swarajya. His audacious and potent articles for *Karma Yogi* and *Bande Mataram* electrified the country and shocked the populace, finally bringing about the nation's freedom. Thus, it was noteworthy that India's independence occurred on August 15, which is also Sri Aurobindo's birthday, in 1947. This essay traces the evolution of a nation-unit and the ensuing infusion of awareness of oneness in an effort to investigate and evaluate the applicability of Sri Aurobindo's nationalism and internationalism theories. There has been extensive research into Sri Aurobindo's social law of evolution. He emphasises the need to uphold the international law of diversity while also respecting the sanctity of individuality, and he suggests that inner oneness be fostered rather than imposed from the outside.

Gitanjalee Bora and Desh Raj Sirswal (2011) found that India has always been wealthy in the development of educational institutions, dating back to the Vedic era, when the earliest educational theories were discovered in Ashrams and Gurukuls, and later in the illustrious universities of Nalanda and Taxila. The word "education" is typically used in a technical sense and is restricted to the setting in which teachers instruct students. Numerous disciplines, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, science, and history, are available for teachers to use. According to Sri Aurobindo, the real goal and tenet of national education is to use our tradition as a basis while acknowledging and valuing

contemporary knowledge and truth. Through education, everyone can reach their divine perfection and experience the strength, harmony, beauty, and joy of self-realization. This method allows us to examine his theories regarding the nature of education, its goals, its fundamentals, how student curricula are created, teaching techniques, etc. In addition, we can examine the role that students play in their education and the duty that teachers have towards their students. Because, in his view, the instructor only serves as a guide, helping and motivating the students as they work to refine their instruments of knowledge. Rather than transferring knowledge, he demonstrates how to learn for oneself. To comprehend students' difficulties, inspire them to find solutions, and aid in the formation of successful lives, a teacher must first be a student.

Sri Aurobindo was one of the most influential and creative people in the history of Indian nationalism and the Indian Renaissance, based on Siddhartha Dash (2008). He was considered by Romain Rolland to be the "Prince among the Indian thinkers" and the pinnacle of East and West genius. For Dr. Radhakrishnan, Aurobindo was 'the most accomplished of modern Indian philosophers'. The 'Messiah of Indian culture and civilization' was how Tagore portrayed him. As the "poet of patriotism, the prophet of nationalism, and the lover of humanity," C.R. Das referred to Aurobindo. Undoubtedly, Aurobindo was a multifaceted talent who excelled as a poet, scholar, metaphysician, seer, and passionate nationalist. His writings carry a spiritual message for humanity and symbolize the crystallization of India's emerging, new soul.

#### **PRINCIPLES:**

Sri Aurobindo uses his heavenly existence and supermind drive to critically evaluate his nation's philosophy. According to him, the human mind derives from the supermind and is a power of the supermind. Based on men and their minds, he builds his national philosophy. The mind is a small portion of the supermind. According to Sri Aurobindo, matter is the foundation of life, and life is the union of the soul and the mind. The unity of the soul and mind becomes disconnected with the death of the body. Because the body provides the mind with mental strength, the body and matter are equally significant. Sri Aurobindo maintains that

spirituality has the qualities of dynamic change and expansion in addition to being static, unchangeable, and immortal. Matter is the foundation of the soul; hence, matter and soul are the same. The emergence of global and biological consciousness in matter, life, and the mind can be traced back to the evolution of order.

Sri Aurobindo's foundation for his creation of political and historical thought is his original factor, spiritual reality, the supermind, and the process of men's mind in cumulative upgrading. French nationalism and Indian nationalist sentiment support Sri Aurobindo's historical thesis of divine determination. He explains that divine determination is the natural result of the Indian Nationalist Demographic Movement and the nationalist demographic consciousness of Indian politics. The idea that God is the ultimate authority in political governance and the principle of divine determination in history are criticized as fundamental beliefs of Hindu philosophy.

The extreme maxim of Sri Aurobindo regarding human beings is "divinization of the human entity." He believes that political freedom will follow inner spiritual freedom and places a higher value on the spiritual soul than the physical agglomeration of humans. He believes that India's greatness, freedom, and unity are now essential to the entire world. He asserts that the three godheads of the soul—freedom, equality, and brotherhood—cannot be truly attained by man or by the external social apparatus as long as he exists exclusively in the individual and collective ego. Ego declares equality when it asserts liberty. It begins with conflict, moves on to an attempt to ignore nature's variations, and in order to do so successfully, it creates a civilization that is artificial and manufactured by machines. A society that prioritizes equality will have to give up certain liberties.

Sri Aurobindo stated that the curriculum for integrated education shall be built around the pupils' unrestricted growth. Self-learning, or independent learning on the part of the student, is essential to integrated learning. Instructors must keep in mind that pupils cannot learn through coercion. The pupil must acquire knowledge on his own. It is the responsibility of the instructor to give the pupils the proper assistance so that they are motivated to learn independently. The second integral education principle put forth

by Sri Aurobindo boils down to the idea that the teaching approach should be tailored to the individual needs of the student. According to Sri Aurobindo, a teacher must rely on each student's unique mental qualities in order to effectively instruct them. Sri Aurobindo highlights how important a student's current situation is to learning in the third Integral Education principle. When choosing instructional tactics and instructional resources, the instructor must take the students' present cultural experiences into account. By concentrating on real-world events that are closely connected to the environment, students will learn new information. In other words, learning will come from experience.

Aurobindo made significant contributions to the boycott and the ideology of passive resistance. "To make British administration impossible by an organised refusal to do anything which shall help the growth of British trade and commerce resulting in the exploitation of the country," according to Aurobindo, is the stated goal of passive resistance. Aurobindo made it apparent that if the ruler suppresses the passive resistance in a dishonest way, it could become violent. It was not the same as Gandhiji's method of nonviolent resistance in this regard. Aurobindo saw that a boycott of British goods in all industries was necessary for his theory of passive resistance to succeed. In addition to his economic boycott theory, he also advanced his opinions on national education.

In addition to the legal boycott, he stressed the need to establish national arbitration courts. In addition, he called for a social boycott of Indians who disapproved of the idea of not collaborating with the British.

Aurobindo's ultimate contribution was his concept of human oneness and his perception of India's elevated position in international affairs. Aurobindo had the vision to see India as a free country and her role in the global community during a period when British dominion over the country was solidly established. He believed that the world's population desperately needed India's spiritual message. He firmly believed that for India to achieve her full potential in the global arena, she needed to be free. He promoted the idea that all people are one. For the benefit of all of humanity, he begged India to become an independent nation.



**PHILOSOPHY:**

In this regard, the philosophical ideas and educational precepts of Sri Aurobindo are crucial for anyone hoping to live in harmony and peace. His theory is still very relevant today in order to establish and preserve world peace. The elevation of the human person from materialism to spirituality is imperative. "Peace is the first condition, without which nothing else can be stable," stated Sri Aurobindo. Humans are currently looking for peace and happiness, but according to Sri Aurobindo, "true happiness lies in the finding and maintenance of natural harmony of spirit, mind, and body." The emphasis on yoga has increased since Sri Aurobindo's time. "The purpose of the yoga we practice is not for ourselves alone, but for the Divine in the world, to bring down the physical nature and life of humanity and to effect a spiritual transformation," the speaker stated. Additionally, he stated, "Yoga is a general term for any practice that aims to help one transcend the boundaries of their everyday mental awareness and enter a higher spiritual consciousness. Additionally, he placed a strong focus on value education and national and international integration, both of which advance global character development and international brotherhood.

Numerous revolutionaries have come to India to fight for freedom. The carbineer revolution of Italy and the nihilist evolution of Russia provided the western countries with the revolutionary principles that Sri Aurobindo, the father of Bengali revolutionaries against the British, used. First and foremost, he seeks to bring about a revolution in Bengali through covert samity. In order to oppose the British with composure, Sri Aurobindo performs three crucial actions: (1) leading the revolution; (2) serving as the newspaper's secretary; and (3) serving as the movement's spiritual mentor and professor at the national college. In the second level, he becomes an intellectual god in this way. His two defining personality traits—patience and certainty—make him the ideal revolutionary. He believes that the revolutionaries' dread of dying is insurmountable due to the failure of the secret samity in Eastern Bengal. According to him, the only truly ideal principles of revolution are those based on religion and revolutionaries. They will then overcome their dread of dying. According to him, the Indian heart continues to beat slowly and without full strength. Both the Indian and the power have departed from each other. The primary goal of Sri

Aurobindo's revolutionary writings was the eradication of repressive Indian rule. Upon observing and experiencing the principles and works of the Indian National Congress, he came to the conclusion that the organisation's goal is to isolate and dominate the middle class. For all intents and purposes, the proletariat was still off the game when he acquired Congress. The Indian people are fated, unconscious, and nothing more than expressions of power. Sri Aurobindo declared at that time in his now-famous speech about revolution that wallowing, repressive, and oppressive people upgraded to their own positions by the country's patriots would be the first to commit obligations. However, they possess tremendous power within. He will be the head of India in the future, a country that will deeply understand this power.

Aurobindo's conception of spiritual nationalism and the divinity of the homeland formed the foundation of his political thought. Aurobindo gave nationalism a spiritualist component. It is useful to summarize Sri Aurobindo's contribution to contemporary Indian political philosophy. The author presents several ideas, including spiritual nationalism, the divinity of the motherland, and the ideal of total freedom from foreign rule, boycott theory, passive resistance, and India's high role in world affairs. Additionally, the author espouses the idea of human unity.

#### **NATIONALISM:**

The concept and emotion of nationalism had already become ingrained in the minds and spirits of the throngs of Indians. However, Sri Aurobindo's brilliant ideas deeply stirred within them the genuine meaning of nationalism, which could only be fully satisfied when Purna Swaraj's objective was fulfilled in its purest form. The moderates declared their support for British ideas of fairness, education, and the advantages of having a foreign administration in India. They referred to the nationalist ideology as unrealistic and extreme. There was subsequently a group of people who disagreed with the servile doctrine but were unable to support nationalism due to their intellectual subjugation by the British. Sri Aurobindo emphasised that there would be no reason to question the idea of racial, religious, and linguistic unity. He believes that while the aforementioned components aid in the rise of nationalism, they fall short of being essential. He skillfully

brought up the Roman Empire, pointing out that despite the creation of a similar language, religion, and way of life, as well as their best efforts to eradicate ethnic differences by the imposition of a uniform system, they were unable to unite into a single, great nation. When describing his philosophy of Indian nationalism, which is also a philosophy of patriotism, Sri Aurobindo went beyond the typical meaning that the term nationalism usually has. The phrase's ultimate meaning is generally limited to love for one's native land. However, Sri Aurobindo's vision exceeds and outshines the traditional perspective on nationalism that has existed up to this point. He proposes a whole new form of nationalism that not only declares love for one's country, Janmabhumi, but also affirms that nationalism is based on love for its people. This new brand of nationalism is significantly more comprehensive and holistic. Additionally, he discusses the love of the native culture, which transmits the crucial element of individuality and instills in each person the sense of unity that comes with bearing a unique cultural identity. Sri Aurobindo was adamant that all nations, like human people, are made of souls that serve as a bridge between the universal soul and the human soul. Sri Aurobindo led the national education movement in the first decade of the twentieth century. He therefore wished to create a national education system that is consistent with Indian customs and culture. According to him, the education we seek must be suited to the needs, nature, and culture of the Indian soul. It must not only have faith in the past but also in the evolving Indian soul, its future needs, the magnificence of his self-creation, and his eternal soul.

**EDUCATION:**

Sri Aurobindo disapproved of the current educational system. He was adamant that education needed to be tailored to meet the needs of the contemporary world. Sri. Education "must not be a machine-made fabric but a true building or living evocation of the power of mind and spirit of a human being," according to Aurobindo himself. Training all the senses—hearing, speaking, listening, touching, smelling, and tasting—is the second goal of education. When nerves, chittas, and manas are pure, all senses can be taught to their full potential. The improvement of mental abilities, such as memory, thinking, reasoning, imagination, and discrimination, is the third goal of education. The formation of

morals is one of education's primary goals. Sri Aurobindo has highlighted that mental development is detrimental to human processes in the absence of moral and emotional growth. A child's overall development depends on the growth of their conscience (Chitta, manas, intelligence, and knowledge) and their spirituality.

Sri Aurobindo recommended a free-flowing, creative atmosphere for children and placed a strong emphasis on an integrated curriculum that brings together a variety of courses, activities, and real-world experiences into a cohesive whole. He emphasised that all courses that support a child's mental and spiritual development and are relevant to his needs and interests should be included in the curriculum. It needs to be full of vitality and productive abilities. He offered a variety of suggestions based on the child's varying ability levels. The curriculum should, however, primarily cover topics that are extremely pertinent to society, such as literature, a variety of foreign languages, history, social science, chemistry, physics, history, mother tongue, English, and numerous practical courses. He stressed the inclusion of yoga, arts and crafts, and music in the regular curriculum in addition to the aforementioned disciplines.

Sri Aurobindo proposed a number of teaching strategies, including self-discovery, activity-based learning, teaching with compassion and love, learning by doing, discussion-based learning, learning from one's own experience, teaching in one's mother tongue, and learning with cooperation during the teaching-learning process.

### **CONCLUSION:**

According to Aurobindo, the nationalist movement in India was a component of the early 20th-century global movement, wherein nations were perceived to be searching for their origin. The cause of this phenomenon is that, in contrast to the powerful nations that tended to stifle or absorb individuality, these nations needed more to sense their uniqueness from others in order to assert and defend it. Sri Aurobindo received his education in Britain. He talked about the distinctions between Western and Indian cultures. The British are a nation that follows certain laws and guidelines. One may argue that those laws are infused into their DNA. Because it binds people together and establishes its own laws and regulations, it is crucial to national integration. According to Sri

Aurobindo, caste lacks any common laws or norms that would allow them to merge into India, a multireligious country. India is a country with many castes, cultures, and aspirations. According to Aurobindo, education is nothing more than the awakening and development of one's latent potentialities; it is about integrating oneself with oneself and living in harmony with society, one's country, and mankind in order to become a whole person or integrated human being. He thought that the goal of education should be to build character, personality, and values rather than just memorizing facts and information, since this will help people achieve their goals in life in the short term. In order for the child to advance in the future, he or she must be able to comprehend their past and make connections with the present, which can be achieved through an indigenous education and language. Although he had nothing against western education, he thought we should take note of their advances in knowledge. According to him, the main goal of education is to help people discover their own divinity.

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