

Educational Practices Based On Mother's Philosophy

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Abstract: Sri Aurobindo started spiritual practices called Integral Yoga and Integral Education for the evolution of Superman from man or human life into life divine. Mirra Alfassa was a great follower, disciple and spiritual collaborator of Sri Aurobindo. 'Mother' name was given by Sri Aurobindo to Mirra . She followed all the ideology and philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. The real message of Sri Aurobindo about education has been explained by his great disciple 'The Mother' and dream of Integral Education came into existence in Sri Aurobindo International School At Pondicherry.

Integral Education is the vision of Sri Aurobindo as to him the pattern of education should be liberal enough and student have full freedom to choose whatever she/he likes .The main aim of integral education is that a student will be guided by his/her psychic being .A teacher's duty is to inculcate these qualities in the students .

In this paper attempt has been made to present the Educational ideology of Mother. Mother supported the five fold development of an educand without any pressure of examination system. The paper also provide comprehensive outlook about practices which has been presented through various dimensions of education.

Key words: Psychic , Spiritual , Manifestation, Vital, Mental, Theory and Practices.

Introduction

The great Indian Philosopher, poet, guru, yogi and experimentalist Sri Aurobindo a remarkable figure among Indian Educationist .He wrote extensively on different aspects of philosophy , religion , culture , education as well. His idea of full spiritual mystical and realist tempered thoughts. His statwart and great devotee Mirra Alfassa famous as Sri Maa presented stupendous exposition of his thoughts on education and make it possible to convert in practices. Her penchant converted the deep sutras in the form of edifice of quintessential educational institute to materialize agenda of transforming human being to Superhuman.

Sri Aurobindo developed his comprehensive yogic spiritual practices integrating almost all available and rechristened Integral Yoga. This Integral Yoga is uncomparable contribution to philosophy of education and spiritual upliftment of human being. This Integral Yoga is the foundation of Integral Education. This intrinsic relation has been revealed by Sri Maa and she explored this hidden pleasure to humanity and cultivated educational practices. The whole road map from theory to practical exercises is her unprecedented contribution to field of education. Integral Education is practiced in India at Sri Aurobindo International School which is role model for others who want to develop their potential growth upto Supermental.

Sri Maa And Sri Aurobindo

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was an great Indian philosopher. He studied for Indian civil services at King's college, Cambridge, England. After returning he joined the civil service and work under the Maharaja of Princely sate of Baroda, after some time he involved in national politics . During political movement –when he was in the jail he had mystical and spiritual experiences, and his view of life was radically changed and he leave politics for spiritual work. He believed in a spiritual realization that not only liberated man but transformed his nature , enabling a divine life on earth.

The Mother Mirra Alfassa is a close spiritual collaborator of Sri Aurobindo. She was born in Paris, was a French lady . She studied occultism with Max Theon and she came to Pondicherry with his husband Paul Richard and meet to Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo considered her as spiritually equal collaborator. Mother the name given by Sri Aurobindo to Mirra is a great follower and disciple of Sri Aurobindo . She also known as Sri Maa. She followed all the ideology and philosophical theory of Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo develop a spiritual practice known as Integral Yoga . After a major spiritual realization Sri Aurobindo withdraw from the Ashram's work and handed over all the responsibility to his spiritual collaborator Mirra Alfassa The Mother.

Mother's Thought On Integral Education

The aim of education according to mother is the integral development of the educand. The education and educand together with the multisided school, formed the integral pattern of education. In the integral scheme the educand, the educator and the school each has been given its suitable place , none has been devalued. Integral education begins with the root meaning of the latter word educere, to draw forth within.

Integral education perceive human being as complex system that integrate a physical domain, an emotional domain , a domain of soul and spirit . So quality of integral education isto build an interrelated nature of human system .The physical body ,the heart, the mind and the soul each unfold and grow as the child grow.

The mother supported the five fold system of education which aims as the development of the Physical , Vital ,Mental , Spiritual and Psychic being .

Aspect of Integral Education

Education to be complete must have five principle aspect corresponding to the five principle activities of the human being ,the physical ,the vital ,the mental, the physic and the spiritual .

- ❖ Physical Education of the body should begin at birth and continue throughout life. It is never too soon to begin nor too late to continue. It had three principle aspects—Control and discipline of the functioning of the body, an integral methodical and harmonious development of all parts and movements of the body, correction of any defects and deformities.
- ❖ The vital is a main nature, its vital which holds power, energy, enthusiasm, effective dynamism, many have feeling of respect for it and always try to please it. Vital in the life nature made up of desires, sensations, feeling, passions, energy of action, will of desires and others related instinct, anger, fear, greed and lust.

The Education of vital has two principle aspects:

- The first concerns the development and use of the sense organs.
- The second is progressing awareness and control of the character, culminating in its transformation.
- ❖ Mental education is the most widely known and used. A true mental education which will prepare man for a higher life has five principle phases. Normally these phases follow one another, but some time that may alternate or even proceed simultaneously. These five phases are:
 1. Development of the power of concentration, the capacity of attention.
 2. Development of the capacities of expansion, widening, complexity and richness.
 3. Organization of one's ideas around a central idea, a higher idea.
 4. Thought control, rejection of undesirable thoughts,
 5. Development of mental silence, perfect calm, inspirations coming from the higher regions of being.
- ❖ Psychic means belonging to soul or psyche. The aim of psychic education is a higher realization upon Earth. Indian philosophers have unanimously called soul as an eternal position of Supreme Divine.

According to the *Upanishad* the individual-self and supreme-self reside in the same heart in the same body like darkness and light. The darkness is called the *Jiva* and the light is called the Inner Self. *Jiva* suffers lots of pain and pressure but Self is beyond all these, but both are without beginning and end. Self has been defined as God whereas *Jiva* has been defined as *Anandmaya*, it is full of bliss. The psychic is never depressed, it is source of happiness.

- ❖ The aim of spiritual education has been liberation in the sense of escape from the cycle of re-birth. Its escape from all earthly manifestation. It is a return of unmanifest. Philosopher called it *jivanmukti*, liberation while living as distinguished from *Videh Mukti* or liberation after death. The mother has pointed out to the effective means of realizing the spiritual ideas of the liberation are as follow:

- a. Total Self Divine—It is most effective starting point. It brings immediate joy. It leads to perfections. It leads to an experience of bliss, in comparable with any other experiences.
- b. Aspiration for Identification—Identification of God and self has always been considered as the most effective method of achieving liberation. Identification is a natural result of self-surrender. It leads to the total fusion of the individual with the Universe.

According to Aurobindo spiritual position can be attained only through the yoga—*Karmayoga* and *Dhyan yoga*.

Educational Practices Implies In Mother's Thought

Education system are very restricted to their syllabus, coursework, curriculum and examination. It is a time bound process. Students have to abide by these rules carefully otherwise they are dropped as disqualified in the race.

But in the Integral Education system students are the teacher of their own. They are guided by their psychic being and also they are free from examination pressure and other regulations. It deals with the development of physical, mental and psychic aspect of life. It does not reach every parent or educationist because it is the choice of crazy parents.

Mirambika is a school of small children from the class—Nursery to VIII, whereas Mother International School is the school from nursery to class XII. It started with 57 children and today at least two decades of students are there. It is a school which is based on the integral philosophy of Sri Aurobindo & Mother.

The ideology of mother is totally based upon the Aurobindo's ideology or they want to which is no boundations related to time, completion of curriculum, examination, working hours, dress and many more. It is run on child's own pace.

The need for such radical changes in education was being felt by many teachers, parents, educationist, planners and thinkers. Here researcher explained some education practices based on analysis and empirical evidences obtained from institution following their ideology. Some of them are being practiced and other may be implied by thoughts and teaching of Sri Maa.

i) Physical Education

The methodical and harmonious development of all parts of body, control over the function of body parts and remove the difficulty if any one. So the learner learns efficiently that food is necessary for bodily development and it satisfies his greed and controls the function of all parts of body. All the work like exercises, sleep, rest, work out and walking etc. are necessary for the harmonious development of body. These all activities should be cultivated in the children very early.

Her ideology about the physical development is true and student in this institution and other institutions follow these points and they all are aware about it. Parents also try to develop the habit of cleanliness and hygiene. They know the importance of physical work, food, cleanliness, hygienic habits, rest, sleep etc. because they all do the harmonious development of our body & mind. Children are taught that if they fall ill, it is not a sign of to gain sympathy but it's a sign of failing in physical health.

ii) Thevital Education

Vital means the aim of life is to be happy and man is born with certain characters and it is impossible to change them. For the vital development, Mother said the first to develop and utilize the sense organs and second is to become conscious and gradually become master of one's character and is the end to achieve its transformation. These are six senses which provide knowledge—sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste.

Students learn through senses such as a topic on 'Tree' includes the following activities reflectively planned by teacher with different learning style for children:

1. Identify the leaves by their shape. **Visual**

2. Identify leaves by listening of difference in their rustling sound. **Auditory**
3. Identify difference in barks by rubbing the trunk. **Touch**
4. Identify the fragrance of different leaves. **Smell**
5. Identify the taste of different leaves. **Taste**

Children learn more through their senses and if cultivated properly their senses. They can learn more easily. The aim is to utilize the different senses to learn in a natural style and enhance the process of learning.

Vital education is also provided to student by the discipline –self-discipline –discipline comes from inner and yogic activities. Such activities give right direction for the development of body and senses and make a character.

iii) **The Mental Education**

Mother ideology is to provide a education to children which develop its concentration power, capacity of attention, logical power, imaginative power, creative power, power of expansion of ideas and power to co-operate with others.

For the development of attention student must be keen observer of all the things and some student are sincere whereas they all not observe the things in a fine mode. Expansion in ideas is developed through reading of different types of books and playing different type of games and develop the ability to talk about any point and have knowledge in every field.

For the rejection of undesirable thought mother explained that to concentrate on any one thought or think something else. So the undesirable thought would not come or you can do some creative work such writing or reading, it is the easiest way to control on undesired thought.

Nowadays school starts experiments for the development of power of observation & logical mathematics, reading, creative work recreational work etc. which make the student a logical thinker and develop good observation skill and they take interest in various programs organized in the institution.

iv) **The Psychic and Spiritual Education**

Mother ideology is to know one self or feeling of self-realization. In the development of psychic the student feel some thing from the inner. For example if they understand the feeling of cleanliness, it is come from their inner side, they follow the rules of cleanliness at every place, in group, in school, in any party etc means feelings comes from inner side and students acts like this. Some other example are feeling of Anand—Cheerfulness, Appreciation of beauty, Silence in mind etc.

And for the spiritual development Mother proposed for the yogic activities like Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharan, Dhyan etc. that means to follow the rules for oneness with God. In Mirambika they perform regular yogic activities and meditative sessions for the practice of attainment of God.

vi) **Teacher**

According to mother a good teacher has quality to abolish all egoism of one self. She always have self-control upon him in any circumstances, she is the master of her subject and always disciplined and follow the rules of institution, when she teaches English she must know English and she has the power of discriminating the children on psychological ground. She should be as a guide and facilitator to the children in the field of education.

Nowadays the teachers who are appointed in the school have good academic knowledge as well as some curricular activity knowledge too. They behave as role model to their student as they are punctual for their time, discipline and master of their subject.

The administration cell impose discipline upon the teacher too so some teachers who are not punctual or disciplined are also following the rules and regulations of the institute. At the time of recruitment of teachers they appoint only those teachers in the institution who have much more knowledge for general as well as specific subject. Mother thinks that a teacher should be a guide, helper, friend and create atmosphere for learning and they are the devotee of Aurobindo's ideology.

Present system of education is a Child Centered Education and in this system of Education both child and teacher have equal importance, child have power to show or tell their views and ideas. Now a days teachers play a role of guide helper and friend and they also provide proper learning atmosphere for the students.

In Mirambika school teacher are known as Diya. The word Diya in a Hindu tradition has a religious equivalent to a lamp which can light up a temple and can also be seen as a symbol of transition from ignorance to knowledge. In the Mirambika school teacher is like a lamp who is herself burning and acts as a guiding light in the life of others. The statements find coherence with Aurobindo's principle of the teaching as **'Teacher behave as an Instrument of Knowledge'**.

These Diyas are appointed in this institutions are the highly qualified means at least graduate and B.Ed. and they also have interest and devotion towards the institution. Some of the are residential where as some are not. They gave their full life to the Ashram or school. They are not paid teachers but administration fulfill their all needs. There is not any promotion criteria, all are in the same or equal level, so they have no feeling of superiority.

In this institution and other institutions which are run on this ideology, the teacher student ratio as 1:6 means on 6 students there is one teacher.

vii) **Teaching Methods**

Mother suggested some ways and methods for teaching. The main teaching methods are—Learning by Doing, Learning through Heuristic Method, Experimental Method, Laboratory Method, Learning through Experience, Learning through play-way Method, Learning through Project Method, Learning through Physical Activities means Yoga, Games and Aerobics and Learning through Observation. She gave more emphasis upon the Project Method.

Project Method is practiced with graduate students. But Mother says **"We are here to do what others can not do because they do not have the idea that it can be done."**

Before starting any project the Diyas make a proper plan for education through Project. First of all they find the need of the student, sometime new project is decided by the facilitator alone or by the learners or by both doing effort. While working with learner teacher observe some needs of children. The need of work on one's anger, depression, will power, sincerity, need to work on widening and expanding one's own

mind, need to express clearly and with conviction, the need can be to work on how children learn, child psychology study about the Evolution of Life and the Progress of Mankind.

Facilitator role is very crucial for selecting a project. The facilitator tries to feel and understand Why the child wants to do a certain project? What is the motivational force of working behind, Is the project taking the child genuine interest or it is because of some superficial reasons like friends, attraction or pressure, parents influences etc?

When a Facilitator is satisfied with the reasons and the project is selected, then the Child and Facilitator plan out the aims, activities and define and limitations of the content area which is very important .In the Mirambika institution Diyas impart the knowledge in the learner through project work. In which they all make a plan about what they do and Diyas asksome questions whose answers are unique, original and simple. **‘Extensive Project Work ‘**forms the base of teaching learning process in Mirambika.

For different subjects and concept student take up collective or individual projects based on their interest or inquisitiveness. Through these projects students discover and construct their own knowledge and reach to observe self -interpreted conclusions. Thus an attempt is being made to enhance the process of self- constructivism or creation of one’s own knowledge.

viii) Evaluation Of The Student

Evaluation means to a certain the growth and changes, taking place in pupils as a result of teaching learning experiences. To evaluate means of characterized the work or value of something. It is a method of determining the talent extent to which established goals or objectives have been achieved.

According to Mother’s ideology she did not believe in any type of examination, test or providing grade or marks to the student. Her main aim was to develop all the five aspects in the learner. She was completely rejecting so called mental tests, she believes in the subjective evaluation of a student. Mother said that –**“I find tests an absolute and ineffective way of knowing if the students are intelligent, willing and attentive. A silly mechanical mind can very well answer a test if the meaning is good, but this is certainly not a quality required for a man for future.”**

Motherstarted “ Free Progress System of education” in the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of education, Pondicherry. In this education system students are the teacher of their own. They are guided by their psychic being and also free from examination pressure and other regulations of system. In this system the pattern of education should be liberal enough and students have full freedom to choose whatever she/he likes. A teacher’s duty is to inculcate these quality in the student. Examination system will not put any pressure on the students, depression never comes to student’s mind.

The teacher has a diary in which they write daily the behavior of the students. They write all the things in reflecting mode, they regularly evaluate the students on subjective form. The teacher makes the child’s profile covering all area of learning (physical, psychic, mental, vital and spiritual) .No marks or grade are given, the progress is measured against the child’s own record and not with others in group. Mother told the teacher that at the end of the year you will give notes to the students not based on the written test papers, but on their behavior, concentration, their regularity, their promptness to understand and their openness of intelligence.

This ideology is also practiced in Mirambika school which is situated in Delhi, Mirambika does not conduct conventional tests or exams at any stage. The child is not an object to be labeled and graded, but a living soul to be guided and this calls for sensitive assessment both by the child , the parents and those of working with the child so as to give meaningful and responsible feedback.

Twice a year the progress and the growth of the child in all respects of his/her being and in the group context is sent to the parents and the parents are then invited for detailed discussion.

Evaluation is treated as feedback and is meaningful only when followed up by concrete action by child, parents and facilitators. Therefore feedback is two way, parents to facilitator, facilitator to parents. In higher groups children undergo self-evaluation, peer evaluation on completion of a topic or activity for which schedules are prepared by the teachers.

ix) Discipline

Discipline is the ability to control yourself or other people even in difficult situations or Discipline is the practice of making people obey rules or standards of behavior and punishing them when they do not.

Discipline is necessary to progress, Mother and Aurobindo both believes that discipline is related to the emotions and it is a teacher’s duty to treat the children with affection and sympathy. Stricktness, scolding and to give punishment do not create any type of discipline in the student. Mother has believes that impressionistic discipline is effective. Impressionistic discipline means a type of discipline in which teacher should represent as an ideal behavior in front of students and children imitate by the teacher’s and follow it as the teacher do, after some time its merged in his behavior and they do all the good thing as it is his duty, that means true discipline comes from their inner self.

x) School System

a. Dress

A school uniform is a uniform worn by students primarily for a school. They are common in primary and secondary school in various countries. There is a great difference between dress code and uniform. A uniform

- i. Serve as a Group Emblem
- ii. Certifies an Institution’s legitimacy
- iii. Suppress Individuality

A dress code on the other hand is much less restrictive and focuses on promoting modesty and would be not be allowing ripped clothing no logos or limiting the amount of skin that can be shown.Originally the concept of school uniform wasintroduced to hide social difference between students, using standard uniform can also save money needed to buy extra clothes as fashion to impress other people at school. Uniform can reduce the conspicuous consumption of rich people, which show how much wealth they have than other people.

According to Mother’s ideology there is no proper dress or uniform for the school. She believes that the clothes that are selected by the children are only for to their comfort, it is comfortable and provides satisfaction to the child.Mother says that the if we prescribe any dress to student then it will create a feeling of boundationin their mind, and in the **Free Progress System ofEducation** there should not be any type of boundation for a particular dress. The childrens feel they all in the same plane and they wear clothes according to their interest and comfort.But in the controversial point of view if the dress is not provided to the students after some time it can make an inferiority complex in poor students,

they are unable to afford too many dresses. School uniform also provide a type of safety to the student because it is a mark of identifying that a particular school. In Mirambika schools situated at Delhi there is not any prescribed dress or uniform for the students. They wear clothes according to their need and comfort, but clothes must be provides satisfaction to the children. According to Mother's ideology the clothes which are worn by the students must provide comfort and relaxation to them.

b. Fee

Mother's ideology for the fee does that she is not want to take any type of fee from the students, but for the progress of school and smooth running of all the activities school management take fees from the students. In that fees charges include students study, breakfast, lunch and provide lot of things which are essential for the development of child in the free mode. They provide a lots of equipments of games which make students to understand easily because the concept of teaching is not providing knowledge in abstract form but to develop learning through experiences.

Conclusion

The Mother's ideology of education developed more out of practical experiences. To achieve the education principles outlined by Sri Aurobindo Mother developed a new model for the realization of these aims. The fundamental principles underlying the model was freedom, because freedom is the only essential spiritual principle working anywhere. She made important discoveries in the field of child psychology, teaching methods, methods of evaluation, methods of discipline, curriculum, school management and almost all the activities concerning education. She made important suggestions concerning teaching of various subjects to the children. She gave valuable guidance for the moral education of children.

The scheme for total development of human being proposed by Mother is very practical and reflects sound preaching of Sri Aurobindo transformation of human and superhuman. This materialize Sarvang Yoga into Practical Educational Acts to be possible for normal human being. This array of Physical, Vital, Mental, Psychic and Spiritual encompasses whole aspect of development of human potential and lead to develop him as Super Human.

Now a days various proofs of Mother's ideology about various aspects of development are implemented in the Aurobindo International University, Sri Aurobindo Society, International City Auroville, Aurobindo Ashram, Mother International School and Mirambika school. She guided and presided over a dozen of associations and institutions around Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

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