## Chapter VIII

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Chapter VIII

ANALYTICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL OUTLOOKS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SRI AUROBINDO

The kingpin of any research work is a robust analysis of data procured through proper analytical supports that allow all the different levels of investigation. The data procured do not serve any worthwhile purpose unless it is carefully edited, systematically classified and tabulated, scientifically analyzed, intelligently interpreted and rationally concluded. “Analysis of data could be conceived as a dialogue that takes place between the description and interpretation of data; or a mutually interdependent process where analysis informs interpretation and vice versa” (Burton.2008, p.78).

Analysis and Interpretation of data are important to any research more so when one is dealing with perceptions of ideas. For, it is in this chapter that one compares, criticises, explains and
deeply studies the data that has been collected so far. It is through this process that the core conclusions are reached. According to Lokesh Kaoul, “Analysis of data means studying the organized material in order to discover inherent facts. The data are studied from as many angles as possible to explore new facts. Analysis requires an alert, flexible and open mind. It is worthwhile to have a plan of analysis before the actual collection of data” (Kaoul. 1997, p.30).

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. There are certain ideological contexts which paved way for the culmination of the ideological trends and subsequently influenced Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. When a comparison is done of the philosophies of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, it can be seen that there are a number of common factors. The first one is that they were contemporaries. Being contemporaries, they would have been subjected to similar experiences. The most important common factor is that both of
them were Sanyasis. Both of them saw spirituality and religion as the soul of the nation. Yet, both of them were recorded in history as social reformers rather than mere spiritualists. That they viewed education as the main tool for social change is the fundamental similarity in their philosophies. It was the Vedic philosophy that influenced their thoughts. Though both of them had acquired Western education, they were dead set against Western colonialism. Being uncompromising patriots, both of them sought to spread the culture of the nation at home and abroad. Both of them believed that spread of national education should precede political freedom. In a nutshell, the main factors of influence which worked on them are the following:

- They were contemporaries
- They were Sanyasis
- Both of them believed that the soul of India rested on spiritualism
- They were social reformers
They viewed education as an instrument for social change

* Both were rooted in the philosophy of India and they were proud of India’s Vedic culture

* Both obtained Western education

* Both lived in a period of conflict brought about by the struggle for Independence

* They dreamed of spreading Indian culture throughout the world and through that they wanted a new sublime world order

* Both of them were uncompromising nationalists

* They dreamed of the sovereignty and independence of India

* Both believed that the prevalent educational system during their period was meant to serve the interest of the colonial masters and were harmful to the Indian Nation. All the above factors made it imperative that these two individuals had similar visionary perceptions, innovative mindsets,
and ideological identities and were engaged in similar activities.

Despite these similarities of their ideology on education there are certain differences in their outlooks and in their actions. Even though they held similar viewpoints on many issues, they had their differences too. First of all, Swami Vivekananda was someone who had acquired spiritual education at the feet of a Guru in the traditions of ancient India. On the other hand, Aurobindo had no such experience. Swami Vivekananda chose a celibate sanyasa life from the very young age; Aurobindo had a short phase of ‘Grihasthasrama. Vivekananda had education in India while Sri Aurobindo had most of his education in the West. Swami Vivekananda’s spiritual outlook was ‘Advaita’, on the other hand Aurobindo’s spirituality had certain original philosophical ideas that were entirely his own which he called ‘Poorna Advaitam’. Vivekananda had not taken active part in the independence movement and instead given it moral support. On the other hand, Aurobindo was an active revolutionary in the struggle for freedom.
Vivekananda made his ideas known to the world through his oratory skills while Aurobindo used his pen to convey his thoughts. While Arobindo talked about the gradual evolution of an individual into a supramental being, Swamiji talked about human beings getting enlightened to achieve ‘Sakshathkara’.

In brief, these differences can be explained as follows:

- **Swami Vivekananda was very much influenced by his Guru Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Aurobindo had no such ‘Guru’**.

- **Swami Vivekananda was someone who had taken up sanyasa in a traditional manner at a very young age. Aurobindo was someone who had metamorphosed from a revolutionary into a spiritualist.**

- **While swami Vivekananda chose a celibate sanyasa life from the very beginning, Aurobindo had a short phase of ‘Grihasthasrama’ from which he later on evolved into a Sanyasi.**
Vivekananda had his complete education in India. Aurobindo had most of his education in the West. So he could closely understand Western cultures and the Western social situations.

Swami Vivekananda’s spiritual outlook is India’s age old ‘Advaida’ concept. But, Aurobindos’ spirituality included certain original philosophical ideas that were entirely his own. This is known as ‘Poorna Advaitam’.

Vivekananda had given his moral support to the independence movement. He did not taken active part in it. On the other hand Aurobindo, before he withdrew in pursuit of his spiritual endeavour, was an active revolutionary in the struggle for freedom.

Vivekananda used his oratory skills to put forth his ideas while Aurobindo depended more upon his writings.

Aurobindo believed that man would further evolve into a supramental being. But Vivekananda did not have such a
notion about the evolution of man. According to him, emancipation is the ultimate aim of every human being.

Here we see the similarities and dissimilarities between the two individuals, in their ideas, and thought process. These similarities and dissimilarities have inspired their educational vision.

8.1 The Prime Determinants of the Vision on Education of Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda’s educational ideas have been influenced by five major factors:

1. Extreme devotion for his Master Sri Ramakrishna.
2. Knowledge of traditional educational system in India.
3. Love for the Nation
4. Personal convictions
5. The belief that a social revolution was possible through universal education.
8.2 **Intense Devotion for His Master Sri Ramakrishna**

Sri Ramakrishna was the grand ideal of Vivekananda’s life. His only mission was to preach the gospel of this Guru, who made him what he was. While Sri Ramakrishna had preached his sermons in great simplicity through stories and parables, Vivekananda expounded them with the eloquence of a religious teacher in a more modern and logical way. “*He verified the truth of his Master’s message with a firm conviction born of his own realization. He presented before the world the precious lessons he had learnt at the feet of Ramakrishna*” (Swami Vivekananda. 1940, p.174).

Vivekananda saw in his great Guru the embodiment of religion, the whole of the Upanishads and the Vedas. He says, “*Sri Ramakrishna was the living commentary on the Vedas and their aim*” (Eastern and Western Disciples. 1949, p. 52). He could experience the real power of the inner man, the ‘Atma’, by a single touch of his master, which electrified him and made him God
conscious throughout his life. So, naturally, in all his utterances there is a strong note of spirituality which has its roots in the heart of India.

Selfless service was his ‘life principle’. He has given the correct vision of the ‘Gita’ which says that the Absolute could be known by the path of Karma-Yoga. He says that selfless devotion to duty is the theme of the Gita. When Arjuna was in a dilemma, Krishna gave His vision and it was enough for Arjuna to act. Similarly, Sri Ramakrishna wanted Vivekananda to carry out his mission and he did it in a selfless manner. Sister Nivedita says, “Ramakrishna as I think, provided basis and sanction for what was to be predominant thought with his great disbelief” (Nivedita. 1972, p. 227). Vivekananda was a real Karma-Yogi and was not a mere ascetic following the path of Jnana-Yoga. He was dedicated to his work with a sense of renunciation thereby setting a new example in the orders of Sanyasis in modern India.
Vivekananda found in Sri Ramakrishna the proper answer to every question regarding idol worship, incarnation, monism, dualism and the like. Vivekananda alone knew the manifold and varied excellences of his Guru. In the personality of Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda believes, one can find a glowing and tangible demonstration of India’s spirituality and Indian history. In the words of Romaine Rolland, “Sri Ramakrishna was the consummation of two thousand years of spirituality of three hundred million people” (Rolland. 1974, p.14)

Thus, being greatly influenced by his Guru, Vivekananda said that the path of spirituality lay in the material and social uplift of the masses. To this end he was able to make out of the Vedanta a social philosophy which could be made to work in India through a man making education. While he felt proud of India’s past glory and rich spiritual heritage, he was deeply moved to see her in poverty, tyranny and oppression during his life time.
8.3 Knowledge of Traditional Educational System in India

Swami Vivekananda was someone who believed that India had evolved an indigenous educational system since time immemorial. As proof to this belief, he cited the presence of the Vedas and the Upanishads. He held steadfast to the ancient argument that the greatest gift was the gift of knowledge. That the knowledgeable people should have empathy with the ignorant and that the knowledgeable one should be ready to forsake his body for even something as insignificant as an ant, because of his knowledge of the ancient texts. He saw the Gurukula education as an exalted form of education. He believed that only through a close association with the Guru and a life of close proximity with him at the Gurukula, could the acquisition of knowledge be a reality. He saw the ancient Indian education as a path towards the emancipation of the soul. Swamiji has this to say about the subject:

“According to the Advaita Philosophy, there is only one thing
real in the universe, which it calls Brahman; everything else is unreal, manifested and manufactured out of Brahman by the power of Maya. To reach back to that Brahma is our goal. We are, each one of us, that Brahma, that Reality, plus this Maya. If we can get rid of this Maya or ignorance, then we become what we really are” [Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 2, p. 254].

The aim of ancient education was knowledge of the ultimate truth. It is from this point of view that the Swamiji viewed modern education. In the Gurukula form of education, the guru was unselfish and pure. His aim of imparting education came through a deep love of humanity and this love led him to release them from the dark world of ignorance and take them towards a world of knowledge. In this process, there was no relevance for money or fame. Swamiji has this to say about these traditional teachers who had imbibed Godly qualities: “The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive - for money, name, or fame; his work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be
transmitted is love. Any selfish motive, such as desire for gain or for name, will immediately distort this conveying medium. God is love, and only he who has known God as love can be a teacher of godliness and God to man” [Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.3, p. 51]. Swami Vivekananda’s ideas were formed by such ‘Arsha’ ideas on education. In ancient Indian educational tradition, the role of the unselfish ‘guru’ is very important. Swamiji believed that only a guru who set an example of himself through a value based life could impart moral values. Swamiji was very particular that the educational philosophy of modern India should be based on traditional educational concepts of the nation.

8.4 Love for the Nation

Like Hegel, Vivekananda believed that there must be one dominating principle manifesting itself in the life of every nation. To him, religion had been the guiding principle of everything in Indian history. He was a passionate advocate of the religious theory of nationalism because he thought that religion should be
the backbone of Indian national life. He believed the future greatness of a nation could be built only on the foundation of its glorious past.

Vivekananda was against the subject-centered British system of education in India which ignored the fundamental aspirations of the country. He emphasized time and again that all educational reforms should be based on India’s cultural heritage and national ideals. The same view is held by Nun when he observes, “Educational ideas are correlative to the ideals of life” (Nun Percy. 1948, P.9).

In the complete works of Swami Vivekananda, one can find his vision of a new India in which the spirit of equality, social awareness and practical efficiency of the ‘Modern West’ would get happily blended with the nature of gentleness and tolerance of Indian tradition. His great message of Nation-building is chiefly based on spirituality. He warns that if India gives up her spirituality and her age old ways of life, she would perish. He
says, “The basis of all systems, social or political, rests upon the goodness of men” (Swami Vivekananda 1970, Vol. 5, p.192). The goodness in man is a reflection of his cultural tradition. Swami Vivekananda’s ideas on education were those which imparted this cultural tradition.

There is a strong belief in Vivekananda that tremendous powers are placed in the hands of man but they are to be guided by the powers of his heart through a moral and spiritual discipline. Indian thought recognizes no compartments and divisions in the human personality leading to mutual exclusion. Man loses his life’s battle when he fails to find out his divine nature. The awareness of the inner-self is the priceless contribution of India to the world and the future of India largely depends upon continuing this great contribution to humanity.

India’s mission to the world is to instil in the minds of the people the spirit of tolerance and love. This can be possible only by the resurrection of values of human life based on the Vedantic
ideals which existed in ancient times. This would gradually lead to a spiritual upheaval. So it is on the strength of the *Vedantic* ideals that Vivekananda wants a new system of education for India.

### 8.5 Personal Convictions

Vivekananda believed, “*All soul-elevating ideas and the different branches of knowledge that exist in the world are found, on proper investigation, to have their roots in India*” (Swami Vivekananda.1970, Vol. 5, p. 369). To him, a nation that has no history of its own has nothing in this world. The history of India is the history of great seers of the past. India is a land of religion and her message to the world is religious tolerance.

As a widely travelled teacher through India and a large part of the Western world, Vivekananda could gain firsthand knowledge and experience about the miseries of the masses and deterioration of values of human life. In India, he found the upper classes exploiting the weaker sections in the name of racial purity. The entire society was saturated with superstition and caste distinctions. Education was considered the privilege of a few who
never wanted to consider the common masses. They were fascinated mainly by the commercial fetishes of the West and were least bothered about national integration or economic equality.

In the West, Swamiji noted that the people were prepared to undertake any hard task for national advancement and economic progress. They had great faith in themselves and so they could create history. They worked for a just and equitable distribution of wealth. They liked to preserve political independence and national character as sacred ideals. In matters of wealth and health, the West appeared far superior to the East. But he strongly felt that the West had much to learn from the East in matters of spirituality.

Vivekananda was an ardent patriot and was an embodiment of courage and freedom. He had identified himself with the country and its historic ideals. At the same time, he had no hesitation in adopting anything from the West that would be of real use to India. He never entertained the idea of a narrow nationalist or narrow sectarian outlook. He had a catholic and tolerant mind and
discovered the fundamental unity behind all the nations of the world. Nehru says, “This was a kind of nationalism which was part of internationalism” (Nehru. 1976, p.12).

In Swamiji’s view, renunciation and service must continue to be important ideals of India and the educational system must essentially possess three major faculties 1) Heart 2) Will 3) Love of Truth. To him, the present system requires thorough overhauling, and due attention must be paid to physical strength, practical aptitudes, economic efficiency, cultural integrity and training of the will and emotions. In the light of these influential factors in Swamiji’s life a further interpretation of his educational ideas can be attempted.

**8.6 The Belief that Social Change Can be Brought About Through Universal Education**

Swami Vivekananda saw education as a medium for social change. He believed that the underlying reason for the limitations and the weaknesses of humanity was ignorance. The reason for all the maladies like casteism, communalism, poverty, unemployment
and superstition, was this ignorance. Swami Vivekananda believed that the reason for a country like India, so rich in culture and knowledge, to become a slave of another nation, was the denial of education to the masses. And so he exhorted the educated elite to devote their time for educating the masses and to save the nation.

“If there are holes in this national ship, this society of ours, we are its children. Let us go and stop the holes. Let us gladly do it with our hearts’ bloods; and if we cannot, then let us die. We will make a plug of our brains and put them into the ship, but condemn it never. Say not one harsh word against this society. I love it for its past greatness. I love you all because you are the children of gods, and because you are the children of the glorious forefathers. How then can I curse you! Never. All blessings are upon you! I have come to you, my children, to tell you all my plans. If you hear them I am ready to work with you. But if you will not listen to them, and even kick me out of India, I will come back and tell you that we are all sinking! I have come now to sit in your midst, and if we are to sink, let us all sink
together, but never let curses rise to our lips ” [Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p. 227]. Swamiji understood that the ordinary people might reject those who upheld the concept of education for social benefit. Even then, he was of the opinion that those who sought to pursue this task should continue with this endeavour as a national task and approach the people with patience.

Swamiji had said that liberation could be achieved only through education. He argued that not only the freedom of the individual but also that of the nation was dependent on this education. It is because of his realisation that the liberation of a nation of ignorant people was impossible, that he asked the educated youth to take the message of education to the huts, the fields and the slums. “Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p. 307).
8.7 **The Prime Determinants of the Vision on Education of Sri Aurobindo**

There are certain important beliefs which influence Sri Aurobindo’s thoughts and vision.

- *India’s struggle for freedom and its social context.*
- *The belief that there would be a spiritual revolution.*
- *The belief that this spiritual revolution would lead to the creation of a cultural society.*
- *The firm patriotic belief that India has a great mission for the whole world.*

8.8 **India’s Struggle for Freedom and its Social context.**

Aurobindo’s views on education were greatly influenced by India’s struggle for freedom and the social context of that struggle. Aurobindo was born barely 15 years after the British brutally
suppressed the glorious freedom struggle of 1857. It was a time when the whole nation was going through a brutal system of oppression. The nation was going through a phase of depression and lack of confidence. By this time, a system of education designed to make Indians servants of the colonial power was in place. A new generation was being created, a generation which looked down upon anything Indian and who were enamoured of everything that came from the West. Even Aurobindo was denied any knowledge of India’s culture or languages as his father sent him to England for studies. He understood the condition in India through newspapers and thus his understanding of the situation led him to study and identify with his nation. He was inspired by the stories of the sacrifices made by the patriots for the nation, and thus he refused to complete the ICS exam and instead came over to India to wholeheartedly participate in the struggle for independence. Aurobindo shared swami Vivekananda’s idea that in order to create a love for freedom among the illiterate masses, it was necessary to educate them first. He saw education as a
medicine for all ills and thus after he became a spiritualist, he prescribed a system of education based on spirituality.

8.9 The Belief in the ‘Spiritual Revolution’

Sri Aurobindo believed that the ultimate reality of the universe was the soul. Hence he believed in the importance of spirituality in life. He said, “Today I am convinced of the belief that the basis of life and ‘Karma is spirituality’” (Parameswaran, 1977, p. 116). Aurobindo was totally a materialist and yet he metamorphosed into a spiritual being. Aurobindo, who had the lion’s share of his education in the West, understandably become a proponent of Western culture. But, when he arrived in India after completing his education, he underwent a rapid internal change. He directed his attention to ‘Yoga Sadhana.’

Aurobindo’s solitary confinement in the jail, which he had to endure for one year, made him a different person. He used to refer to Alippur Jail as Alippur ashram after his experience there. Aurobindo considered the jail as a centre for meditative effort.
Aurobindo used this occasion to study the Bhagavat Gita and the Upanishads. It is in this jail that Aurobindo reached his pinnacle of spiritual experiences through his experience, ‘Vasudeva sarvamiti’ (Everything is Vasudeva), and it become a turning point in his life. He said, “We foresee a spiritual revolution in the future. The materialistic revolution is but a shadow and reflection of the spiritual one” (Parameswaran. 1977, P.116). He believed that this would be followed by a social revolution. The stages of the spiritual revolution would be as follows:

The spiritual revolution should take root first in the individual. It has certain specific stages. ‘Chetana’ has seven levels: ‘Sat’, ‘Chit’, ‘Aananda’ are the three higher levels. And ‘Mind’, ‘Life’ and ‘Material,’ which represent the three lower levels; in between these two there is the Supermind. Aurobindo calls this Supermind the truth consciousness as well as the ‘Real Mind’. It is through this Supermind that the essence of divinity expresses itself as the material world. There should be an
involution which should coincide with the process of evolution in the world, as per Aurobindo. The involution of the ‘Sachidananda’ takes place through the Supermind. This descends down to Mind, ‘Prana’ and Matter. The regression of the descend of ‘Sachidananda’ is evolution. This can be called the descend of the Supermind. Aurobindo says, humanity is facing a crisis. Man’s own inventions have become a millstone around his neck. Aurobindo suggests that the only way out of this crisis would be for the Man to evolve into a superamental being. Aurobindo says, “…At last a new step in the style of evolution – the elevation of consciousness into a much more sublime level, a level at which one can dream of the completeness of the human being and a cultured society” (Parameswaran.1977,p.131). Aurobindo’s revolution is sought to be accomplished by the descend of the Super- mind and consequently the uplifts of the society.
8.10 The Belief in the Creation of a Cultured Society.

“Every fundamental change is internal”, (Parameswaran. 1977, p. 131) is what Aurobindo has to say. The internal evolution of the individual will create a social change. Just as the spiritual being, i.e., the sublime state of the individual, would shed the ego-consciousness and embrace the spiritual consciousness, the spiritual society would throw away its social ego and accept the social soul, as per Aurobindo. He says, “There cannot be a society, sans individual. The reverse is also true. Just like the individual, the society too grows, expands and achieves self-realisation. The Society cannot sacrifice the individual, nor can the individual, out of some selfish motive, sacrifice the society” (Nair.2000, p. 86). Aurobindo sees the society as an organic entity. Hence, the society too should have a growth and expansion similar to the individual.

Aurobindo continues: “For the individual and society to achieve competence ‘they should rise above the level of rational
thought to a higher plane of spiritual consciousness” (Nair. 2000, p. 92). Aurobindo believed that such a society which rose above to the spiritual level would become a cultured society.

8.11 The Patriotic Belief that India had a Great Mission for the Whole World.

Aurobindo was an individual who worshipped this nation as manifestation of the Goddess. His pride in the nation’s tradition and culture can be understood from his words given below.

“No scheme of society or politics has helped it to escape from the necessity of sorrow, poverty, strife, and dissatisfaction from which it strives for an outlet; for whoever is trying to find one by material means must invariably fail. The East alone has some knowledge of the truth, the East alone can teach the West, the East alone can save mankind. Through all these ages Asia has been seeking for a light within, and whenever she has been blessed with a glimpse of what she seeks, a great religion has been born, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity,
Aurobindo believed that India was the spiritual light which led the whole world. He repeatedly refers to a unitary and undivided entity that is the Indian nation. He had a dream about gathering and unifying the scattered and unfocussed strength of the Indian people. He said, “When once we have succeeded in organising our present scattered forces, the spirit of progress, once awake, will work for us and through us giving us greater and greater following and strength till the work of building of the nation becomes so evidently ours that the whole country will range itself under our standard. Then and only then will that
unity become possible which can create a nation” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972, Vol.I, p. 869).

The price of patriotism will be paid by self-sacrifice. Only when the love for the nation evolves from a theoretical concept into an emotion, will a person become willing to sacrifice himself for the nation. Aurobindo wanted an educational system that would help this transformation of patriotism to an emotional love for the nation. His words reflect his intense and deep conviction of his patriotic sense: “The genius of self-sacrifice is not common to all nations and to all individuals; it is rare and precious, it is the flowering of mankind’s ethical growth, the evidence of our gradual rise from the self-regarding animal to the selfless divinity. A man capable of self-sacrifice, whatever his other sins, has left the animal behind him; he has the stuff in him of a future and higher humanity. A nation capable of a national act of self-sacrifice ensures its future” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972, Vol. 2,
p. 107). As one may observe, Aurobindo’s concept of education is based on the love for the motherland and pride in it.

8.12 The Concluding Remarks on the Similarities and Dissimilarities between the Fundamental Factors which Influenced the Vision of Swami Vivekananda and Aurobindo

As cited earlier, Swami Vivekananda’s ‘Guru’ exerted an overwhelming influence in his thought and action. But, Aurobindo had no such ‘Guru’. Aurobindo’s thoughts were influenced, instead, by the long line of ancient seers of India. Aurobindo did not get the opportunity to grow in the environment of India’s culture, as his earliest years were spent in the West. His father, Sri Krishna Dhan Ghosh, had sent him to the West, with the express aim of making him a lover of Western culture. It was after Aurobindo completed his studies that he arrived in India and subsequently become a devotee of this nation’s culture. Because of this, he approached our culture with a deep amazement and respect.
On the question of love for the nation, both Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo hold similar views. Both consider the nation as the ‘Guru’ of the entire world. For them, India is never just a geographical entity consisting of sand and stone. It is an organic, spiritual reality. Both considered education as a tool to promote nationalism; but while Aurobindo, fired by his nationalism, jumped into the thick of the independence movement, Swami Vivekananda confined himself to providing the theoretical justification for the freedom struggle.

Vivekananda, who had travelled throughout the entire length and breadth of the nation, was aware more than anyone else about the social reality of India. He believed that to liberate the people mired in superstition and social evils, there was no other better tool than education. Swamiji believed that India had much to learn from the West. He believed that the spiritual gains of India could be useful to the west as much as the Western scientific knowledge would be useful to India.
Just like Aurobindo, Swami Vivekananda too gave much importance to spirituality. Like Aurobindo, Swamiji believed that a spiritual revolution would take place in the country. Yet, Aurobindo’s ‘theory of evolution’ (into a supramental being) was his own unique contribution. Aurobindo also believed that before the evolution, an involution would take effect inside the human being.

Both Swamiji and Aurobindo believed that India has a worldwide spiritual mission. To make it short, there are more similarities than differences in the viewpoints which form the background of their educational vision.

**8.13 Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo - A Concise Illustration**

The philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo had many similarities but also included slight variations. Both of them believed that spirituality was the inner most core of education. Vivekananda felt that modern education all over the
world has so far concentrated on the ‘learning to do’ aspect and not on the ‘learning to be’ faculties of education. In projecting this view he seems to have been influenced by Sri Sankara’s thought that education meant transmission of knowledge from the Guru to the disciple so that the disciple in turn might impart that knowledge to future generations. “For, only when knowledge is firmly grasped that it conduces to one’s own good and is capable of transmission” (Swami Jagadananda. 1943, p.3).

8.14 Vivekananda’s Educational Philosophy

Swami Vivekananda’s philosophy is Sri Sankara’s advaita itself. The core belief of advaita is that the Jeevatma and Paramatma are one and the same. Vivekananda has made this advaita vision as the fundamental tenet of his educational vision. It is when the Jeevatma joins with the paramathma that its limited knowledge becomes infinite. For this union, Swamiji suggests four paths – The Jnana Yoga, Bhakthi Yoga, Karma yoga and the Raja Yoga. According to him, man travels from a condition of lesser
knowledge to a higher one, and not from untruth to truth. By this, he seeks to refute the western idea that man travels from untruth to truth. “*Man is not travelling from error to truth, but climbing up from truth to truth, from truth that is lower to truth that is higher*” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005. Vol. I, p. 12).

His other outlook is that no knowledge emanates from the outside. Each soul is a complete representation of the Godly self and by itself it hides the holistic knowledge within itself. The perfect Guru helps the student to understand this hidden flame of knowledge. He says that knowledge hides within the mind as a ball of flame within dry wood. “*Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out*” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. I, p. 28).

Swamiji’s another strong argument is that no one can teach anyone else anything new. His theory is that the Guru, who resides within the self, starts to function with the help of the external Guru. “*It is hard to understand everything at once. The explanation of everything is after all in yourself. No one was ever really taught*
by another; each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. Then things will be made clearer to us by our own power of perception and thought, and we shall realise them in our own souls; and that realisation will grow into the intense power of will’’ (Swami Vivekananda. Vol. I, p. 93).

Like all exponents of Vedanta, Swamiji believed that the soul by itself was pure and all-knowing. But, through wrong actions the soul loses its transparency and is covered by the darkness of ignorance. Through correct actions, the soul moves towards self-awareness (Athma Bodha) and acquires the ultimate knowledge (Jnana sakshathkara). “All these Vedanta philosophers admit that this Jiva is by its own nature pure. But ignorance covers its real nature, they say. As by evil deeds it has covered itself with ignorance, so by good deeds it becomes conscious of its own nature again. Just as it is eternal, so its nature is pure. The nature of every being is pure” (Swami Vivekananda. Vol. I, p. 397).
Swamiji believed that education is not just collection of information. The aim of education is to mould the life of a person, which should lead to man-making and also to consolidation of relevant facts. Swamiji was opposed to today’s system of education wherein the brain is stuffed with disjointed facts. Man making happens through the expansion of the heart, according to the Swamiji. He said: “Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there ... We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol.3, p. 302).

The change in the level consciousness with evolution of the species is very clear. The species at the higher end of the evolutionary process have a different method of acquiring knowledge as compared to the lower species. At the same time, even those with human forms tend to acquire knowledge as done
by lower level species. Humanism and godliness are acquired when the level of consciousness increases. Animals and lower species have an instinctive method of acquiring knowledge. At a higher level of consciousness, along with acquiring knowledge there develops power of reasoning and logic. The next level of acquiring knowledge is inspiration. According to the Indian belief, at the highest level of consciousness, knowledge is acquired, sans medium, by a process of intuition. Indian sages had reached this exalted level of consciousness. Swamiji had this to say about those who had reached this level. “There is such a thing as instinct in us, which we have in common with the animals, a reflex mechanical movement of the body. There is again a higher form of guidance, which we call reason, when the intellect obtains facts and then generalises them. There is a still higher form of knowledge which we call inspiration, which does not reason, but knows things by flashes. That is the highest form of knowledge” (Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 4, p. 58). Vivekananda’s philosophy of education is based on universal principles of
morality and ethics of the value of education. Vivekananda says that without education no self-realisation is possible. It keeps the soul in the environment in which it would develop well. It initiates the citizen into the spiritual life of the nation. It is the means by which the principle of justice is maintained.

In suggesting a philosophy of education for India, Vivekananda follows the inspiring doctrine of Buddha that man must find the divine in himself. Idealist education from the days of Socrates has recognised that education must be directed towards the development of character and personality. Plato’s philosophy of education was built on the four pillars of worth, wisdom, service and leadership. Vivekananda also based his educational system on those foundations. But it is typical of Plato that “he makes no provision for the education of the lowest classes” (Wayper. 1979, p. 30).

Vivekananda uses the term Brahman or Atma to mean Truth or Reality. Brahman is synonymous with God. To him, self-realisation is the ultimate aim of life and of education. This is
possible through a living faith in the great message of the Vedas. To him, morality implies conscious, deliberate action for the good of humanity. His doctrine of ‘karma’ implies freedom of action. So his educational philosophy is a combination of knowledge and action. In Vivekananda’s educational philosophy, the general and special aims of education have a single function of enriching the pupil’s personality. Mere book learning is of little use in real life. One must read books, but along with that, ideas are to be properly assimilated in a scientific manner. Here he agrees with the opinion of Erasmus that “it should lead man towards knowledge, honesty and independent judgment” (Robert. 1976, p. 144).

In answer to the present problems of India he pleads for the creation of a philosophy which gives equal importance to the claims of spirit and matter. To him, diversity is as real as unity. Matter is only ‘veiled spirit’. Thus he creates a metaphysical synthesis reconciling the claims of spirit and matter and makes it one of the chief bases of his philosophy of education.
8.15 The Ideal Teacher

In his eyes, the ideal teacher is one who can initiate his students to practice the essential virtues of ‘Brahmacharya’ and ‘Shradha’ and help them to attain or experience the divinity in them. The teacher is like a father to them and is accorded ever more respect than the earthly father for “he gives the pupil his spiritual birth and shows him the way to eternal life” (Swami Nikhilananda. 1974, p. 40). In ancient and medieval India teachers were normally man of renunciation.

8.16 Transmission of Knowledge

To Vivekananda all teaching implies giving and taking; the teacher gives and the taught receives. Here he suggests the need for effective participation in the teaching – learning process. In spiritual sciences the teacher takes the role of the transmitter with immense energy like that of Sri Ramakrishna.

8.17 Aurobindo’s Educational Philosophy

Aurobindo’s philosophy comes under the category of idealism. Like Vivekananda, Aurobindo believed that the
innermost truth was the *Soul*. Aurobindo too believed that the ultimate aim of education is the emancipation of the soul. But, the idea that ‘humanity would evolve into an ideal society' was his unique contribution. His educational system was meant to create this ideal society. Aurobindo’s philosophy is not based on the ‘*Kevala Advaita*’ as Swami Vivekananda’s philosophy is; Vivekananda’s philosophy of Advaita has its source in Sri Sankara. Aurobindo’s philosophy is not just a philosophy based on God and his manifestation; it is actually ‘*Poorna Advaita*’ (Integral Dualism). The philosophy that recognises, matter, soul, the ‘*Nirguna Bhrahman*’ and the ‘*Saguna Bhrahman*’ is called Integral theory. Aurobindo’s education policy is based on this integral philosophy.

**8.18 The Descending and Ascending of the Soul**

The idea of the soul ascending and descending is unique to Aurobindo philosophy. The descend of the soul into the manifested material world and the reverse action i.e., the ascend of the material manifestation into the realm of the soul. The ascending
action can occur only following the descending process. Therefore before ‘evolution’ there would be an ‘involution’. This indicates that the process of creation includes the duality of evolution and involution. The different stages in the evolution of the universe can be tabulated as matter, life, psyche and mind. For the mind to evolve and ascend into the divine ‘Sachidananda’ it is to pass through different levels. These steps are as follows- Higher Mind, Illuminated Mind, Intuition, Over Mind and Super Mind. Starting from the ‘Sachidananda’ it descends first to Supermind, then descends to the Over Mind, Intuition, Illuminated Mind, and finally Higher Mind and then enters into the human being. The core of Aurobindo’s system of education is to evolve the human mind into the supermind. Aurobindo’s ideas tally well with the modern ideas of psychology.

According to Aurobindo, the evolution of man has reached the level of the mind - ready to ascend by itself into the next level. There should be an intermediate link or level which lends to bridge the two levels. This link is the Supermind.
Aurobindo’s ideas on knowledge and ignorance are not too far from Vivekanda’s ideas. The absence of knowledge is perceived as ignorance. But, as per Aurobindo’s view, ignorance is not the absence of knowledge. For him, ignorance itself is a form of knowledge. That is an incomplete, partial knowledge. Aurobindo believed that, in order to reach the ultimate truth, a supramental change is essential. Aurobindo calls knowledge as the union with the holistic ‘chethana’. This is how he explains this idea: “Knowledge is the consciousness of unity with the One; and in relation with the many different beings and existences of the universe it must show itself by an equal oneness with all” [Sri Aurobindo. 1972. Vol. 13, p.p.179-180].

It is the comprehensive change that takes the human mind to its ultimate state i.e., to the Supermind. A person who has undergone this complete and comprehensive change and is illuminated by the light of pure knowledge, is called ‘Jnani’, or man of knowledge or ‘Gnostic being,’ as per Aurobindo.
At the highest level of consciousness, the knower, the knowledge and the known become one. This is the level of sublime realisation (sakshathkara). This experience is beyond the scope of words. This level of sublime realisation is described by Aurobindo in this manner: “For the final absolution of the intellect can only be at a point where the Knower, Knowledge, and the Known become one, Knowledge being there infinite, direct and without media. And where there is this infinite and flawless knowledge, there must be, one thinks, infinite and flawless existence and bliss. But by the very conditions of this stage, we can only say of it that it is, we cannot define it in words, precisely because we cannot realise it with the intellect. The Self can be realised only with the Self; there is no other instrument of realisation” (Sri Aurobindo. 1972, Vol. 12, p. 14).

8.19 Arobindo’s Concept of Effective Teaching through the Medium of a Model Teacher

Like Vivekananda, Aurobindo believe that no one can teach someone else, something that is totally new. A teacher can only
bring out the knowledge that is dormant in the student’s mind. According to Aurobindo, the teacher is only a guide who helps the student recognise the dormant knowledge within the student. Aurobindo established that education was just a process of revealing. According to The Mother: “Do not aim at success. Our aim is perfection” (Mother, 2001, p.12). These words expose the contemporary teaching methods, which are meant only to secure academic victory. The teacher’s effort, instead, should be directed towards perfection.

According to Arobindo’s idea of education, mere intellectual training does not cover the entire scope of educational experience. Physical education should also be a mandatory part. For effective training, it is essential that the student should have a strong mind also. A strong mind can only reside in a strong body and hence the need for physical training. This was Arobindo’s logic. Sita Ram Jayaswal describes Aurobindo’s idea in this manner: “The human has to be developed and trained in a manner that he becomes a fit and effective instrument of all activities. It has been rightly
said that a healthy body is needed for a healthy mind. Health and perfection of the body lead to the health and perfection of the mind and vice versa. The body affects the mind and the mind affects the body. Both act and interact upon each other. That is why in Hathayoga great emphasis laid on making the body supple and free from all tamasic tendencies” [Jayaswal. 1997. p. 50].

Ultimately, Aurobindo’s educational aim was the achievement of self-realisation. The person who achieves this self-realisation does not detach himself from the society. Instead, he is firmly rooted to the soil but continues to work to impart education to others.

8.20 The Similarities in the Educational Vision of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo

The similarities in the educational vision of Vivekananda and Aurobindo are as obtained:

- Both give much importance to spirituality in education
- Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo use the term ‘Brahman’ or ‘Atman’ to mean Truth or reality.
Self – realisation is the ultimate aim of life and education.

They believed that the contemporary educational system would cause much damage to the nation and a ‘Bharateeya’ system was essential.

They believed that nobody could teach anybody else anything new and that through education one only realises what is within oneself.

Both considered the ‘emancipation’ of soul as the ultimate aim of education.

They believed that ignorance too was a form of knowledge … a kind of partial knowledge.

8.21 The Differences in the Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo

While Vivekananda’s vision was based on the concept of Advaita, Aurobindo’s thought was rooted in ‘Poorna Advaita’ (Integral Dualism).

Aurobindo believed that before the ascending phase of the soul, it had descended. This is a core idea of his
philosophy. However, Vivekananda has not made this a main theme of his philosophy.

- The idea of the evolution of human into a supramental being was solely the ‘original and unique idea of Sri Aurobindo’.

- Aurobindo’s vision predicted a process of involution before evolution.

- Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo had obviously differing views on the different levels of mental development. These are unique to Aurobindo’s thought.

8.22 The Spiritual and Cultural Background of Swami Vivekananda’s and Sri Aurobindo’s Educational Thoughts

In India, spirituality is not just a ritual. It is something that can be experienced. Spirituality in India has only one meaning. It is realisation of the eternal. The dominant idea of the Indian race is freedom of the soul. The core belief of Indian philosophy is the idea that there is God is every living and non- living entity of the
universe. Indian spirituality is the reflection of this nation’s culture. Here spirituality and culture are inseparably inter-linked.

8.23 Vision of Swami Vivekananda about the Spiritual and Cultural Background of Education.

According to Swami Vivekananda, spirituality is the inner-most core of education. Spirituality is the treasure house of eternal truths and these truths have been realised by the ancient Rishis of India. Vivekananda sees spirituality as a person’s strength. His idea is that weakness is a sin. He says that the path to the human heart is spirituality. The language of the human heart can reach out to zones where rationality and intellect do not have access. The real knowledge is the knowledge of the Self. This is the realisation that the Self and the almighty are one. This is Advaita. But the instruments of the intellect and the rational thought are found wanting when one seeks to reach this level of knowledge, according to Vivekananda. It is here that the spirituality has relevance.
In Swamiji’s opinion, spirituality is the nation’s soul. He considered spirituality as the factor which helped transcend the diversities of culture. Vivekananda dreamed of a man-making education. In this process, Swamiji gave spirituality and culture a pre-eminent role. Spirituality was needed for the growth and expansion of an individual’s personality. This, Swamiji felt, would make him free. According to Swami Vivekananda, “Liberty is the first condition of growth” (Swami Vivekananda. 1932, Vol.3, p. 246).

The ultimate goal of mankind and the ultimate aim of all religion is but one, the re-union with the divinity which is the true nature of this universe. Both the goal and the methods employed for reaching it are called ‘Yoga’. There are various such yogas or methods of union, but the chief ones are Karma- Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Raja –Yoga and Jnana- Yoga. These different forms of Yoga are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of man. In education we find the direct application of ‘Jnana Yoga’. This is a
process by which a person realises his innermost Self using the instrument of knowledge.

_Ekagratha_ is an important factor in the path of spirituality. As per Vivekananda, the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. Ideas are more important than facts. Concentration is the only key to the treasure house of knowledge. All success in any line of work is the result of concentration.

There is a strong bond between spirituality and _yoga_. His idea was that ‘_Rajayoga_’ is helpful for spiritual development as well as education. In this, control of the mind is the most important criteria. _Raja Yoga_ is effective for maintaining a strong and healthy body. The yoga way is to keep the body pure and strong by doing ‘_pranayama_’, which consists of a series of simple breathing exercises.

Meditation is a process which leads the mind towards the realisation of the Self. Self-realisation was considered by Swamiji as the prime aim of education. To reach this realisation, the mind
should be calm and concentrated. Meditation is an instrument to
reach this state of mind.

There is close connection between meditation and education.
This is because, education required sharp concentration. At the
height of concentration, one slips into a meditative state. This is
stated in the science of Yoga. These words of Swamiji reveal how
meditation becomes imperative in the process of education:

“Meditation again is a constant remembrance (of the thing
meditated upon) flowing like an unbroken stream of oil poured
out from one vessel to another. When this kind of remembering
has been attained (in relation to God) all bondages break”
(Swami Vivekananda. 2005, Vol. 3, p. 34)

Rather than teaching spirituality, the correct process is to
impart it. The teacher who has acquired the ultimate knowledge
imparts this experience to the student. It is not the case that
someone takes certain ideas, and opens it up to the student. The
right spirituality is the love for life and all the accompanying
beings. Imbibing this attitude is what Swamiji calls spiritual
education. Through spiritual education, the student is expected to develop concentration directed towards his soul rather than that directed outwards towards external objects. This is because, that which is to be known resides inside and not outside the student. In short, internal discipline and control are important parts of spiritual education.

8.24 Impact of Cultural Aspects on Education

The foundation on which this nation exists is its ancient culture. Only when our educational system succeeds in imparting this ancient culture to its students, will it become meaningful. Our culture, handed down by the ‘Rishi’ s has always been instrumental in ensuring tranquillity and peace. Swamiji believed that this concept of our culture was essential to impart humanitarian values. He believed that this was required for character formation and personality developments.

The Vedic Culture projects the tradition of ‘Yajna’. This calls for sacrifice in Indian culture. The ‘Guru’ is not just an individual.
He is God. In this way Swami Vivekananda’s concept of education is one which imparts cultural and spiritual knowledge.

8.25 Visionary Version of Sri Aurobindo about the Spiritual and Cultural Background of Education

Sri Aurobindo firmly believed that the soul of India resides in spirituality. He believed that the culture and spirituality of the nation are interconnected. Aurobindo’s concept of education has its foundation on spirituality. Aurobindo considered self-realisation as the ultimate aim of education. This is a level of spiritual experience. It is a level of experience rather than a theory. In Aurobindo’s opinion, God is ‘Sachidananda’. That is, He is the truth, the power, and the love. It is when we realise that the ‘Jeevatma’ and the ‘Paramatma’ are one, that we really comprehend the Self. He dreamed about a ‘Satvik’, spiritual man. It is only through a faultless educational system that such a man will be realised. This ‘spiritual man’ is the same as the ‘Gnostic being’ or ‘supramental man’ referred to in Aurobindo’s
philosophy. This transformation is achieved through an internal evolution.

According to Aurobindo, for education to be complete it 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 during the growth of the individual. This, however, does not mean that one should replace the other, but that all must continue insuccession, completing each other, till the end of life. According to Aurobindo, the education process should touch the physical, mental, psychic and spiritual faculties of an individual. This educational vision of Aurobindo is known as ‘integral Education’. In this, Aurobindo gave maximum importance to physical and spiritual education. ‘Psychic means ‘belonging to be soul’, or psyche’. The psychic being is a conscious form of the divine growing as part of the evolution process.
8.26 Spiritual and Cultural Background of Education: The Similarities of Vivekananda and Aurobindo.

- Both of them believed that spirituality is India’s culture.
- Spirituality, according to them, is self-realisation.
- Their belief was that spirituality is the innermost core of education.
- Both considered Yoga as an instrument for spiritual development.
- Both believed that the basis of the nation is its ancient culture.
- Both of them believed that true education is meant to improve cultural values.

8.27 Spiritual and Cultural Background of Education - The Difference in the View Point of Aurobindo and Vivekananda

- Aurobindo’s belief that a ‘Savitri’ and ‘Spiritual man’ would come into existence, was his own idea.
The idea of integral education is also unique to Aurobindo’s thought.

8.28 The Empowered Practice of Education in National Integration according to Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo

Both of these visionaries believed that education was the ideal tool to strengthen national integration. In a nation as vast and diverse as India, education could be an integrating force. If it does not serve to integrate, then it is the fault of the educational system. Despite there being much diversity, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo believed that there was a cultural factor unifying the nation. Both of them believed that by imparting this unifying concept through the process of education, national integration would automatically emerge.

8.29 Educational Vision of Swami Vivekananda and the Concept of National Integration

Swamiji believed that only through an educational system that gave importance to cultural nationalism, would it be possible to
strengthen national integration. He believed that, for the nation to become free from colonial rule, it was necessary first to nationalise our educational system. He said, “weakness leads to slavery. \( \textbf{Weakness leads to all kinds of misery, and mental weakness is death} \)” (Swami Vivekananda. 1932, p.2). Swamiji believed that the main hurdle to national integration was our own weakness. Knowledge is power. He exhorted us to acquire education and thus to vanquish our weakness. Only if we nationalised education, will there be a new generation of nationalists. Vivekananda believed that nationalism should precede National integration. Swamiji believed that those who had been alienated from the national mainstream due to poverty or any other backwardness should be brought back before any national integration was possible. He also believed that mass-based education system was essential for national integration. He asked others to see God in the starving millions. If poor students have no access to educational institutions then, according to Vivekananda, the institutions should go to the students.
Today, the elite minority which enjoyed the fruits of labour of the millions, have turned their back to the whole society. Swamiji calls these people ‘Traitors’. He said that an education system which does not take into consideration the poor, does not serve the cause of national integration. He says, “Remember that the nation lives in the cottage” (Swami Vivekananda. 1932. Vol.5, p. 25).

Vivekananda argues that it is possible to achieve national integration through a process of emotional unity. A curriculum, appropriate to achieve this objective should be prepared. Swamiji says that it is important that the teachers should be first convinced of the idea of national integration. He remarks, a system of education stressing on the unity of the mind should be adopted.

8.30 Educational Vision of Sri Aurobindo and National Integration.

Aurobindo was an ardent patriot. He was a person who deeply contemplated national integration. For him, National Education was a vehicle of reform meant to nationalise our contemporary system which he considered distorted and savaged by the British.
Like Vivekananda, Aurobindo too had a dream of unifying the diverse elements of the nation. If the heroic and glorious history of the nation is presented before the student who is eager to learn, it will help strengthen national integration. For Aurobindo, the nation was not just a geographical entity consisting of sand and stone. It was the physical manifestation of the ‘Parashakti’. For him, the nation is a Goddess. It is for this reason that nationalism was an emotion for Aurobindo. When Aurobindo exhorted to make efforts to strengthen and fight for national integration, he also wanted to make use of education as an instrument in this struggle. For Aurobindo, Nationalism was a religion. This is a natural consequence of accepting the nation as a Goddess. Aurobindo believed that the bedrock of national unity and culture is India’s ‘Sanatana Dharma’.

He knew that national integration could be achieved only through cultural education. Aurobindo and Vivekananda shared similar views insofar as the issue of bringing back those who have been alienated from the economic and social platforms of the
nation was concerned. Aurobindo’s idea was National integration through national education.

8.31 National Integration-The Similarities and the Differences between the Views of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo.

Similarities are:

- Both considered education as the best option to strengthen national integration.

- An education system which sought to create cultural unity would be instrumental for national integration.

- The belief that India is an organic entity.

- The attitude of viewing the nation as a Goddess.

- The belief that there should be an assimilation of strength of the whole nation for national integration.

- The argument that education should be comprehensively national and the belief that the curriculum should be suited for this purpose.
The argument that for national Integration to become a reality, those who have been excluded from the societal mainstream should be brought back and the education system be tailor made for the same.

The education system should be suited to bring about national integration.

Dissimilarities are :

It was Sri Aurobindo who put forward the idea of National Education which is a unique concept.

The argument that nationalism is a religion is also Sri Aurobindo’s alone.

8.32 The Relevance of Patriotic View Points in the Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo.

Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo were intensely patriotic and Nationalistic. When the nation was being dominated by the colonial rulers, and the whole nation was engaged in a struggle for independence, it was only natural for these two
individuals to have similar views about several contemporary issues. Their idea of nationalism was different from that of the concept of politicians. Both of them were ardent nationalists who viewed the nation as a Goddess. Their nationalism was spiritual rather than political. It can be expressed as ‘devotion’ for the nation rather than just ‘love’ for it.

8.33 Patriotic View Points of Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda believed that, for a growing nation, an educational system which did not help to inculcate nationalism was useless. A real educational system should be able to inject a sense of pride in the nation’s history, culture and its ancestors. It is from this sense of pride that true nationalism begins to flower. Even though we had a glorious past, Swami Vivekananda laments, we could not impart this true sense of history to our new generation of students. The reason for this is that, until now, we have not been able to Indianise our educational system. Even today, we have been faithfully following a system designed by the British during their colonial rule. Swamiji dreamt of an educational system
which could impart the lessons of our glorious history and the knowledge about our culture to the students. He believed that there were certain pre-requisites for the sense of patriotism to become a dominant reality. They are:

- Love for the Mothercountry.
- Strong will to resist evil.
- Steadfastness in achieving the desired goal.

Nationalism is not just the love for a geographical entity. It is the love for the millions residing in that nation; it is the love for the traditions of that nation. Looking from the perspective of an overwhelming love for the nation, it can be safely stated that there is no nationalist who can be compared to Swami Vivekananda. Swami Vivekananda exhorted the literate elite to go to the illiterate masses and engage in educating them. Swamiji’s patriotism was not confined to a love for a geographical entity. His nationalism was a love for the ordinary people within the geographical entity. By patriotism he meant not just a tendency to sympathise with their poverty and depravation but a zeal to actively engage in
uplifting them from their sorry state. Swamiji said that only when the poverty and illiteracy of the masses made one uncomfortable, then could it be said that he was a nationalist. For the Swamiji, the greatest patriotic act was to elevate the illiterate to the level of literacy and to impart knowledge to the ignorant. Swamiji’s nationalism involves viewing the nation as the motherland and to be willing to make any sacrifice for the motherland. He desired that this feeling should be imparted through the medium of education.

8.34 Patriotic Viewpoints of Sri Aurobindo

According to Aurobindo, patriotism is the unadulterated love and devotion for the motherland. Aurobindo, an ardent nationalist, had certain dreams about the nation. These were - the formation of an independent, unified nation; the revitalisation of the Asian subcontinent; a better life for humanity; and imparting the fruits of Indian philosophy to the whole world. His dreams are a clear indication of his nationalist aspirations. His dreams reveal how his nationalist outlook was never narrow or jingoistic. Aurobindo
dreamed of a nationalism which moved towards universal humanism.

Aurobindo believed that the educational system should be capable of infusing nationalism in the new generation. It is for this that he put forward the concept of ‘National Education’. While talking about ‘National Education’ Aurobindo comments about indigenous (swadesi) education. He knew that for the growth of patriotism a swadesi concept was inevitable.

Aurobindo saw patriotism as a ‘panacea’ for all the ills brought about by the foreign colonial rule. According to Aurobindo, patriotism is essential for the healthy growth of a nation. Patriotism is considered to be a cultured emotion of respect and love an individual felt for a geographical entity, the people residing within that entity, its culture, traditions and its valiant patriots. The educational system of that land should be able to impart this refined, cultured emotion of nationalism to its future generation. As with other concepts, Aurobindo traces the origin of patriotism to spirituality. He argues that the educational system
must encourage the natural growth of patriotism in the learners and that such a system was inevitable.

8.35 Similarities in the Patriotic View Points of the Educational Vision of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo.

- **Both of them believed that an education system which did not include patriotism was useless.**

- **Even though we have such a glorious past appropriate for inculcating nationalism, failure of the new educational system to arouse the feeling of nationalism, can be deemed as its failure.**

- **The opinion that education should be Indianised.**

- **The belief that patriotism is not just an affinity for a geographical entity, but the love for the people within the entity.**

- **Both of them considered patriotism as the idea of viewing the nation as the motherland and the willingness to sacrifice anything and everything for the same.**
8.36 The Difference in the Patriotic View Points in the Outlooks of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo with regard to Education.

- According to the Swamiji, patriotism is not just sympathising with the poor and deprived masses, but activity taking part in raising their level of existence. Aurobindo was more theoretical in his approach.

- Aurobindo’s patriotism is closer to devotion than love for the nation because his idea of nationalism is a spiritual one.

- Swami Vivekananda’s patriotic ideas are emotional and at the same time, based on pragmatism.

- On the other hand, Aurobindo’s patriotic ideas are more theoretical and visionary.


Vivekananda believed that the educational system should be structured to instil moral values and ‘Dhamic’ concepts among the pupils. For the educational system to become a vehicle for
character formation, it should be designed to impart a moral value system to its recipients. For the emancipation of soul, which is a primary objective of education system, to take place, a spiritual discipline is imperative. For spiritual discipline to be possible, the student should be a firm believer in morals and values.

**8.38 The Emphasis on Morals and Values is the Educational Viewpoint of Swami Vivekananda.**

There are two opinions about the role of values in education – one which states that value education should be a part of mainstream education, and the other, stating that value education itself is the mainstream education. However, a system which does not instil value based and morality based education is not a real educational system. This is the opinion expressed in National Policy of Education brought out in 1986.

With a well designed curriculum, it is possible to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of desirable ethical, spiritual and social values. Values are the guiding principles of life which are conducive to all-round development.
The role of education in character formation is decisive. To Swami Vivekananda, without humility and character, there is no education. Character is nothing but a bundle of habits. When a desire, thought or act is constantly repeated, it becomes a habit. Right thoughts and right actions will lead to right habits and these habits will evolve as character traits of a person. Moral education is meant to cultivate right thoughts and right action in an individual. Swamiji sees development of personality as an important aim of education. Personality is linked to individual character. The role of morals and values in character formation is central. Swamiji had contemplated an education system which is capable of man-making and character building. He was of the opinion that in the endeavour of ‘man-making’ the education system should not confine itself to stuffing facts into the student’s brain. It is here that he points out the importance of teaching eternal values to the students.

Vivekanandna suggested that education should give proper emphasis to creativity, originality and excellence. To him, good
education is only that which unfolds all the hidden powers in man. Real education requires the cultivation of a sense of humility. The sense of humility is the basis of a man’s character and the true time-mark of a balanced personality. By teaching morals and values, Vivekananda thought, the creation of a balanced personally could be a reality. Moral education would lead to the eradication of all individual and societal evils. He did not consider moral education as a superficial tool of purification. Instead, it was for him a deep-rooted and irreversible process of reformation. According to Swamiji, the children are to be encouraged to have positive thoughts. He believed that negative thoughts would make us weak. He believed that spirituality and moral education are symbiotic and complementary.

8.39 The Importance of Morals and Values in the Worldview of Sri Aurobindo

According to Sri Aurobindo, it is the basic function of any education system to inculcate morals and eternal values in its recipients. A generation which grows up without morals and ethical values is a force for disruption and a potential threat to the
society as a whole. Today, one of the main problems confronting the world is a total collapse of moral values. Aurobindo believed that the reformation of the nation is dependent solely upon youths with character and courage. He desires them to be truthful, pure at heart, and have a strong conviction. This shows how vital, according to Aurobindo values are to the societal framework. Sri Aurobindo argued that music, painting and poetry should be given specific importance in the curriculum. This he believed, because today’s education is often confined to technicalities and hence fails to include humanism. Aurobindo recognised the contribution of music, poetry and fine arts towards the development of the human minds. It is from his understanding of the role of fine arts in purifying the human mind that Sri Aurobindo insisted that they be a part of the curriculum. Aurobindo insisted that to acquire morals it is necessary to abandon false ego. In Aurobindo’s view of education, the concept of Bhrahmacharya (Celibacy) has great importance. In his concept, in Brahmacharya resides all the manifestation of moral values. Aurobindo’s vision on education is
fundamentally spiritual. Spirituality evolves from the distillation of all morals and values. When Aurobindo says that the purpose of education is the evolution of a ‘satvic’ entity, it is to be emphasised that this satvic quality is the distilled output of a moral and value based development. An effective system of education is one which leads an individual from a ‘Tamobhava’ to a ‘Satvic’ state of existence.

The evolution to a moral dimension is a part of the evolution to a satvic state. According to Aurobindo, the true purpose of education is to help an individual transcend the ‘Tamasic’ and ‘Rajasic’ level to reach the ‘satvic’ level. For this to happen, there should be elements of moral and dharmic content in the individual’s life. It is due to this requirement that Brahmacharya and, hence, moral values are stressed as inevitable to a student’s life. According to Aurobindo’s educational vision, a person achieves perfection when he undergoes internal evolution and becomes a spiritual man. Aurobindo considered this evolution into
a ‘spiritual man’ as the logical conclusion of the moral education process.

8.40 The Similarities and Dissimilarities about Morals and Value Education between the Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo

Similarities are:

- Both of them believed that education is meant to instil morality and dharmic values in the society.
- They believed that character formation is possible only through moral education.
- Both of them believed that Moral education is essential for personality development.
- The belief that spirituality is the core of personality development, and the belief that spirituality and moral education complemented each other.
- Both gave much importance to the concept of ‘Brahmacharya’.
Dissimilarities are:

- Aurobindo’s idea that music, poetry and fine arts should be part of the curriculum and that it helps instil humanist values in the hearts of the individual is a slight variation of Swami Vivekananda’s ideas on education.

- Aurobindo’s idea that the purpose of moral education is an evolution of the individual from the ‘Tamasic’ to the ‘Rajasic’ and, later, to the ‘satvic’ level is in variation of Swami Vivekananda’s philosophy.

- Aurobindo’s other uniqueness is his idea that there will be an evolution from the individual into a spiritual man.

8.41 The Relevance of the Vision on Education of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo

The influence of the thought of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo in modern India is very significant. Vivekananda’s words were an inspiration even to Mahatma Gandhi during the independence struggle. It was Vivekananda’s words that awakened a nation slumbering under a thousand year foreign rule.
It was Aurobindo who motivated this nation into the realm of action. There are a lot of similarities in their lives and their mission in life. Both of them desired the nation’s total independence. When all others were clamouring for political independence these two individuals understood that the real independence was a concept which transcended the traditional idea of independence. They believed that India would achieve political independence in the course of time. They did not believe that political independence was the end in all. They understood that real independence was a mental and ideological independence. For colonising the Indian mind, the Whiteman had destroyed the traditional educational system and replaced this with their Western model.

Aurobindo believed that for the millions of people in the nation to be given an education, it was necessary to do so using their own methods and traditions. The education should be based on Bharateeya culture and tradition and the medium of education should be the Indian language. Aurobindo’s ideas on ‘National
Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo are the proponents of a vibrant nationalism. They believed that the vehicle of education should be used to impart nationalism to future generations.

8.42 Contemporary Crisis of the Present Educational Scenario.

The current addiction to anything that is Western and the widespread moral degradation are the direct impacts of our flawed educational system. Those who acquire higher technical education are not prepared to serve the motherland. They are inclined to sell their skills to foreign countries for a price. In this era of globalisation, a generation which considers nationalism and love for the nation as notions to be frowned upon is on the anvil.

These students who are not prepared to render service to their nation, at least as a repayment of the wealth that went into their education, are displaying a callous disregard for the nation. Coupled with this, there is ignorance of local languages as well as
cultural illiteracy, which is seen to flourish among the so-called literates. All these are the results of the distortions inherent in our post-independence educational policy. The panacea for all these ills is the adoption of the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo into our present educational curriculum. We can observe that the leaders of the separatist movements in our nation, which are on the rise, are drawn from the so-called ‘educated’ elite. Those who work behind and lead regional, linguistic and communal outfits also come from this class.

8.43 Paradigms as a Solution to the Present Dilemma

The only solution to the unhealthy practices prevalent in the field of our educational system is the implementation of a refined scheme, meant to inculcate love for the nation, the concept of national integration, pride in our culture and tradition, and the belief in ‘Dharmic’ and moral values. The investigator found out that the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo are the ideal solution to the present-day crisis prevalent in the society.
According to Aurobindo, each person can contribute to his nation based on his beliefs, valour or any of his instinctive strengths. For every child born in the womb of an Indian mother, there needs to be a mind which becomes emotional for the nation, a mind which is preoccupied with the methods to achieve the nation’s glory, a tongue which sings the motherland’s praise, a hand capable of fighting her wars. The new nationalism is the reincarnation of the Kshathriya. That which produces a mind which becomes emotional when thinking about nation, an intellect which is pre-occupied with nation, a tongue that sings the praise of the nation, a hand capable of fighting for the nation, that is what the educational system should seek to create. For this to happen, a system of education which implements Swamiji’s and Aurobindo’s vision of education should be implemented. In their vision lies the solution to most of the crisis facing contemporary India.
8.44 Certain Pragmatic Suggestions based on the Educational Vision of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo

- To remould the present Indian education in tune with the ancient Indian educational philosophy.

- Reform the curriculum so as to re-inculcate Indian culture and spirituality in the Indian student to the appropriate level. Include cultural and spiritual, value oriented education as part of not only humanities, but also professional curriculum.

- Include subjects which promote national integration at appropriate levels from the lower classes. Include subjects that promote love and respect for the nation in all classes. Include activities which inculcate respect for national heroes and promote celebration of national festivals and make this part of the curricular and co-curricular activities. Conduct seminar, symposium, brainstorming sessions, and conferences aimed at promoting national integration. Role
plays, creative drama, documentaries and multimedia presentations all of which form co-curricular activities may be included. The curriculum should imbibe respect for regional peculiarities and languages and encourage them.

- Lessons which emphasise the need for a life based on moral values among students should be included in the curriculum. The students should be made familiar with models of the aforesaid values.

Thus, if the national educational policy is modified as per the educational vision of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, the problems that the nation is confronted with today can be solved to an extent.
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