CHAPTER : I

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Sri Aurobindo occupies a unique place of honour and reverence not only in the political history of India but also throughout the world. For his spiritual message of general welfare of the mankind as a whole, he belongs to all nations and all ages. Inspite of a European upbringing and ignorance of the Indian languages and culture, Sri Aurobindo could not remain uninfluenced by the noble ideals of patriotism and service to the mankind.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

India has produced many spiritual luminaries who have shown light and right path to the world. Sri Aurobindo was one of such luminaries who has shown a new light – the light of human unity to the world. His is not a religion but a path according to which men should live to elevate their lives. With such elevation, each man can be easily united with other individuals to create the bond of human unity. Sri Aurobindo's nationalism never descended into narrow chauvinism or obscurantist revivalism. It was constantly placed in a broader international context. He never lost sight of his ideal of human unity which far transcended local problems and had the goal of reconciliation of all conflicts in a syncretic spiritual development.

The unity of human society is being dissipated by acute differences and animosities based upon the differences of class, colour, religion, language or power blocks. The creative power of mankind is being gradually lost under the pressure of technology.
Man's progress in culture has not kept pace with his progress in technology. The progress of a modern man is full of contradictions. Side by side with a revival of religious and ethical values, one finds a widely prevalent scientific irreligion, abstract dead philosophies, imperialism, urbanization, racism, international rivalries and neocolonialism in the name of globalisation. The routine life of a man is overburdened. Creative thinking has disappeared under the pressure of manufactured information of newspapers and magazines. Man suffers from what Sri Aurobindo has aptly called "thinkophobia". The spiritual aspect of human life is fast dying under the pressure of material aspect.

Sri Aurobindo's attempt to integrate the materialistic philosophy of the West and the spiritualistic philosophy of the East has brought a new revolution in the intellectual and philosophical horizon. Intellectual and cosmic outlook of the west could be integrated with the spiritual and individualistic standpoint of India. He aimed at a spiritual change leading towards the achievement of total liberation of soul, mind, heart and action. He condemns the machine civilization which has eaten into the vitals of human life. It has destroyed all peace and simplicity. In the words of Sri Aurobindo "we do not even know if the bodies are really ours - the petty machine has eaten everything".

Sri Aurobindo has laid down a new social order based on truth, non-violence, love and peace. He has been able to bring down the supramental energy to the earth. He cautioned that every one cannot
hold it unless he has prepared his body and mind for it. He was of the view that energy can dawn on every man and woman of the whole world, provided they have prepared their body, mind and soul for it. Sri Aurobindo was not a narrow-minded bigot. His ideas prove the Upanishadic ideology "VASUDEV KUTUMBAKAM" meaning the whole world is a family.

Various theories have been advanced concerning an ascending evolution in Nature which goes from the stone to the plant, from the plant to the animal, from the animal to man.

In the opinion of Sri Aurobindo, the imperfection of man is not the last word of Nature and his perfection too is not the last peak of the Spirit. For him, man is not the end, he is a transitional being on the move towards the superman. He is not the last, he will be surpassed. Though Nietzsche also said the same thing, yet his superman was only a colossalisation of the human being with a manifestation of human egoism.

Sri Aurobindo said that man is living in a mental consciousness and his latent faculties are beyond mind and intuition – the Truth – Consciousness, the Supermind. Even though in the natural course of evolution, the supermind will evolve, yet that will take thousands of years. This evolution, however, can be expedited here and now. "Then life on earth will change; the mind of man will become a mind of light in which all knowledge will be self-possessed and even the physical body will undergo a transformation, becoming a body of light. Everything on earth will change. The Life Divine will become a
palpable fact. The true significance of this will come home to all after the integral transformation has taken place and even the body has changed. Today only a few can visualize it."

The future will hail Sri Aurobindo as an "avatar" who ushered in the supramental Age. The Mother has said in this connection, "Sri Aurobindo incarnated in the human body the supramental consciousness and has not only revealed to us the nature of the path to follow and the method of following it so as to arrive at the goal, but has also by his own personal realization given us the example; he has provided us with the proof that the thing can be done and the time is now to do it." As an 'avatar' who came to lead the earth to a supramental transformation, he naturally had to bear the brunt of battle with the forces of Nature. In his epic poem 'Savitri' Sri Aurobindo expresses this in the following lines:

"But when God's messenger comes to help the world
And lead the soul of earth to higher things,
He must carry the yoke to come to unloose,
He too must bear the pangs that he would heal."

Sri Aurobindo's advent on the earth has been specifically for this purpose. His whole earthly life was a continuous effort to create certain conditions and manifest the Supermind. His early childhood in Darjeeling and England gave him a perfect command over English. For this reason, when he wrote his prose and poetry from overhead inspirations, charged with spiritual force he expressed himself through the English language. It has the same 'mantric power', as the ancient celebrities in India expressed themselves through Sanskrit. His writings have the power to uplift a man who can find the means
towards his inner realization. If Sri Aurobindo had not acquired this
mastery of English, he could not have expressed himself in such a
forceful way as he has done. He could not also have communicated
his experiences directly to the English-speaking world.

The role which Sri Aurobindo played for India's independence
was also a prelude to the establishment of the Divine's kingdom on
earth. He looked upon India's emancipation as only an essential
vantage point from which she could fulfill her destiny as the spiritual
guide of humanity. He had the firm belief that India had a mighty role
to play in the spiritual regeneration of the human race. He claimed
that the liberation movement of India was a divinely inspired and
divinely guided movement through which India would be able to fulfil
her divine mission on earth. When Sri Aurobindo finally settled down
at Pondicherry, he made a direct attempt not only to scale
supramental heights but also to bring down the supramental light,
knowledge and power into the mental, vital and physical planes and
effect their transformation. He has himself stated, "I am not doing
anything for myself, as I have no personal need of anything, neither of
salvation, nor of supramentalisation. If I am seeking after
supramentalisation, it is because it is a thing that has to be done for
the earth consciousness".4

Sri Aurobindo wished India to take her rightful place among the
nations of the world and to provide solutions to various soluable
problems which beset humanity and to bring about a new synthesis of
spiritual and material life. In his own words "our call is to young
India. It is the young who will be the builders of the new world - not those who accept competitive individualism, the capitalism or the materialistic communism of the west as India's future ideal, not those who are enslaved to old religious formulas and cannot believe in the acceptance and transformation of life by the spirit, but all who are free in mind and heart to accept a completer truth and labour for a greater idea.  

From this, it is evident that Sri Aurobindo wanted to avoid the two extremes of materialism of the west and also the religious superstitions of the east. He had great faith that the youth have enough energy to build modern India. The youth would have a vital role in bringing back the lost glory of India. Sri Aurobindo realized the need of a band of men who can give up everything for their country. For the salvation of the motherland such type of devoted workers are needed who will ask for no reward, no ease, no superfluities, but only their bare maintenance and a roof over their heads to enable them to work for her. This attitude of utter self-abandonment is the first condition of success. Every difficulty that presents itself would help further that end. For those who call themselves nationalists, the test will be severer than before. In the words of Sri Aurobindo "Indian civilization has been the form and expression of a culture as great as any in the historic civilization of mankind, great in philosophy, great in science, great in religion, great in thought of many kinds, great in literature, art and poetry, great in the organisation of the society and politics, great in craft and trade and commerce."
Sri Aurobindo had the conviction that India must arise and awake and take her right place among the family of nations. Whatever may be the difficulties, India must overcome them and become great as she was in the past.

"The ancient Indian culture attached quite as much value to the soundness, growth and strength of the mind, life and body as the old Hellenic or the modern scientific thought, although for a different end and a greater motive."7

With this writing, the difference between the spiritual and purely material view of existence is to be made clear. According to the spiritual view the mind, life and body are the means of man and not his end. Through these means, the ultimate end of the realization of God would be possible. In his integral Yoga, Sri Aurobindo emphasizes the harmonious development of body, mind and soul.

Democracy and secularism are the two issues which have currently come to be widely discussed by the Press, the people and the parliament. Sri Aurobindo had written considerably decades before India attained independence on both these issues. His penetrating insights on both issues have a living relevance for the present and future of the political life of India and of the world. These can also serve as a "guiding star" to the politicians, statesmen, administrators and decision-makers of any country of the world. He said, "the first necessary element of democratic politics is difference of opinion, robust, frank, avowed, firmly and passionately held, and the first test of political capacity in a democratic nation is to bear these differences
of opinion, however strong and even vehement, without disruption. In a monarchy differences of opinion are either stifled by an all-powerful absolute will or subordinated and kept in check by the supreme kingly arbiter; in an aristocracy the jealousy of a close body discourages free opinion and its free expression; in a bureaucracy stereotyped habits of action and method lead to a fixed and inelastic way of thinking and difference of opinion, when tolerated, is kept by the exigencies of administration private and largely ineffective. It is democracy alone that demands free divergence of opinion in politics and open propagandism and debate as the very breath of nostrils.⁸

Thus, Sri Aurobindo realized that the tendency to democracy creates freedom of speech and thought and these in their turn hasten the advent of democracy. Realising the relationship of socialism with democracy, he said, “Without Socialism, democracy would remain a tendency that never reached its fulfilment, a rule of the masses by a small aristocratic or moneyed class with the consent and votes of the masses, or a tyranny of the artisan classes over the rest. Socialistic democracy is the only true democracy, for without it we cannot get the equalized and harmonized distribution of functions, each part of the community existing for the good of all and not struggling for its own separate interests, which will give humanity as a whole the necessary conditions in which it can turn its best energies to its higher development.”⁹

Sri Aurobindo was convinced that the foreign rule can never be for the good of a nation. It never works for the true progress of the
country. Putting emphasis on 'Swaraj', he said it is "the organisation of the independent life of the country into centers of strength which grow out of its conditions and answer to its needs, so as to make a single and organic whole. When a nation is in a natural condition, growing from within the existing form within and in its own strength, then it develops its own centers and correlates them according to its own needs."  

Aurobindo's concept of democracy is to be built from the grassroots and not to be imposed from above. He believed that the self-dependent and self-sufficient village organism worked as the foundation of Indian life and there lied the secret of Indian vitality. He said "The village is the cell of the national body and the cell-life must be healthy and developed. Swaraj begins from the village." This visualization of Sri Aurobindo has similarity with Gandhiji who used to say "Ram Rajya is nothing but Gramrajya". Sri Aurobindo wanted the organisation of villages as an indispensable work for the realization of local-self government at the rural level. As parts of a national unity, these villages are to be cooperative at every turn first with the district, secondly the province and finally the nation. Instead of a centralized parliamentary democracy in which political power is concentrated in a few centers at the top, Sri Aurobindo preferred for a decentralized and participatory democracy in which the power is to be diffused with a fundamental equality to all the sections of society.
Sri Aurobindo clearly recognized the role of the masses in bringing and also in sustaining Swaraj in our country. Democracy is impossible without a 'demos' i.e., the people who are to be politically awake and active. He observed, “Another essential condition of Swaraj is that we should awaken the political sense of the masses. x x x x The organisation of the modern nation depends on the awakening of the political sense in the mass. This is the age of the people, the millions, the democracy. If any nation wishes to survive in the modern struggle, if it wishes to recover or maintain Swaraj, it must awaken the people and bring them into the conscious life of the nation, so that every man may feel that in the nation he lives, with the prosperity of the nation he prospers, in the freedom of the nation he is free.”

The Panchayati Raj, the Gram Sabha, the Lok Adalats being planned and set up today in our country are the patterns of democracy suggested by Sri Aurobindo. He realized the need of the village Samiti as an indispensable instrument. The village Samiti is not to be a mere council for deliberation, but a strong organ of executive work. It is to set up village schools in which children of the village would grow up as good citizens. The village Samiti has to take up the work of arbitration by which the control of the administration of justice would be recovered. When the Samiti will take up the responsibilities of village sanitation, small local public works, medical relief, famine relief, water supply and of healing our family feuds and individual discords, the life of the village again would be self-reliant and self-sufficient. In the words of Sri Aurobindo, “Self-help and self-
dependence, the first condition of Swaraj, depend for their organisation on the village Samiti. The work of the village Samiti will be to make the masses feel Swaraj in the village, Swaraj in the group of villages, Swaraj in the district, Swaraj in the nation. The village Samiti is the first condition of a better state of things. It will destroy the aloofness, the separateness of our lives and bring us back the sense of community, the habit of mutual assistance and mutual beneficence. It will give justice, it will give protection and when all are thus working for the good of all, the old unity of our lives will be restored, the basis of Swaraj will have been laid in the tie which binds together the hearts of our people."

Sri Aurobindo has highlighted the mutual contributions of religion, humanism and progress of humanity as a whole. Outwardly it appears that humanism insists on the earthly well-being and progress of man in his present life and rejects the other-worldly religious life. While religion emphasises individual salvation, humanism gives a strong motive to the human will to strive for collective perfection of mankind. But when the phenomenon of religion and humanism are viewed in a deeper and holistic perspective, it appears that the religious and spiritual values do not oppose the values of humanism, rather complement it. The secular ideals and values unleashed a great and positive creative force for the benefit and progress of the entire humanity. The philosophy of secularism brought the ideal of freedom not only to the economic, social and political life but also to the religious and cultural life. The secular
thought brought the idea of religious freedoms which means the freedom of each individual to practise the religion of his choice. Secularism is not atheism or anti-religion but neutrality of the State to the religious beliefs of the people and equal respect for all religion. In the secular culture each idea, religious or non-religious has to compete with other ideas on its own worth and strength to gain the acceptance of the people. The state authority should neither patronise, nor suppress any religious belief or idea.

Sri Aurobindo realized that religion and spirituality are giving importance to the spiritual dimension in man and the "salvation of the soul" as the highest aim in life. The spiritual is the true self in him. So long as this inner self in him remains unfulfilled, no amount of secular effort for the well-being of the individual or for the collective whole can bring any lasting fulfilment. Sri Aurobindo said, "This erring race of human beings dreams always of perfecting their environment by the machinery of government and society; but it is only by perfecting the soul within that the outer environment can be perfected."14

So the secular effort of humanity along with the economic, social and political values of humanism and the creative force of science put stress on the earthly well-being progress and perfection of humanity. But this cannot be realized by the limited power of the mind and its intellectual, rational, emotional, moral or aesthetic faculties. It has to take the guidance of the suprarational wisdom of the spiritual adepts who have gone beyond the rational mind to a higher level of
consciousness. Thus, Sri Aurobindo put stress on the need of a conscious and enlightened co-operation between the spiritual and secular efforts of humanity for the realization of the destiny of mankind through their collective life.

Sri Aurobindo's highest vision of human unity leads to some form of internationalism. It can be named after the modern terminology of "globalism". Here, an economic, social and political unity of mankind can be realized through the marvels of Science and Technology—especially through the information—communication technology and "Management". The highest secular vision of the triple ideals of the French Revolution are liberty, equality and fraternity in the economic, political, social and legal sphere. These can be realized through the equitable distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment. But the modern spiritual thought has pinpointed the limitations of this secular vision to the problem of collective perfection. It has been emphasized that inner perfection must be the basis of outer perfection. Whatever ideals are to be realized in the outer life of man, they have to become concrete realities in his consciousness and reveal the deepest spiritual truth and significance.

Sri Aurobindo believed that instead of the competitive self-interest of individuals and groups, the ideal of fraternity and the organisation of fraternity are to be the principles of a future society. He points out, "One thing seems to me clear that the future will deny that principle of individual selfishness and collective self-interest on which European society has hitherto been based and our renovated
system will be based on the renunciation of individual selfishness and the organisation of brotherhood, - principles common to Christianity, Mohamedanism and Hinduism."15

But the problem with most of the organised religions is that their gospel of fraternity is a sectarian brotherhood based on cult-ego. But the brotherhood which Sri Aurobindo mentions in the passage quoted above is not this phony sectarian brotherhood, but an inner universal brotherhood which includes the entire humanity. A progressive moral psychological and spiritual evolution of humanity only can lead towards the realization of inner spiritual fraternity. It can bring the social transformation as dreamed by the secular thought and a perfect reconciliation of the ideals of individual liberty, collective well being and equality which is the dream of all political philosophies. Sri Aurobindo envisages this new ideal of the future in a spiritual religion of humanity. With his all embracing vision, he offered the spiritual synthesis of the ideals of religion, humanism, and secularism to the world.

This spiritual synthesis is to be formulated in a new ideal which can embrace the spiritual and secular aspirations of humanity and give it a unified direction to a single goal. Sri Aurobindo envisages this new ideal of the future in a spiritual religion of humanity. He said "A religion of humanity means the growing realization that there is a secret spirit, a divine reality, in which we are all one, that humanity is its highest present vehicle on earth, that the human race
and the human beings are the means by which it will progressively reveal itself here.”

Sri Aurobindo hoped that when the kingdom of this divine spirit will be established, oneness with our fellow-men will became the leading principle of all our life. Instead of a mere principle of cooperation, a deeper brotherhood and a real sense of unity will be established. He hoped “A spiritualised society can alone bring about a reign of individual harmony and communal happiness; or in words which, though liable to abuse by the reason and the passions, are still the most expressive. We can find, a new kind of theocracy, the kingdom of God upon earth, a theocracy which shall be the government of mankind by the divine in the hearts and minds of man”.

Aurobindonian literature proves the great command of the Author over the English language. As far as the variety of subjects covered is concerned he proved his theory that a yogi can turn his hand to anything. His writings are a constant inspiration, whether on matters political or spiritual, in prose or in verse. He himself admitted that a yogi who writes is not a literary man as he writes only what the inner Will and Word want him to express. The yogic experience, knowledge and inspiration are reflected in his writings. His early political writings and speeches are characterized by his insistence on complete independence for India. These were characterized by a clear and true vision of the great past of India and a faith in its greater future. The ideas expressed in his writings are as true and as inspiring to day as they were in 1906. He wrote on
March 28, 1908, "we are Hindus and naturally spiritual in our temperament, because the work which we have to do for humanity is a work which no other nation can accomplish, the spiritualization of the race..." His works on spiritual philosophy are the result of his studies and meditations. They present a comprehensive view of the problems faced by human beings and foresee the future possibilities. They provide concrete guidance on spiritual development, on the evolution of a spiritualised society and a realization of human unity in diversity.

He had appreciated the present trend of mankind towards a closer unification and shown what is wanting in them in order that real human unity may be achieved. He dreamed a world-union which can form the outer basis of a fairer, brighter and nobler life for all mankind. He expected India to play a prominent part here in the unification process of the human world and for this India has to develop larger and matured statesmanship.

In this book "The Foundations of Indian Culture", Sri Aurobindo touches on the soul of India behind its religion, art, architecture, sculpture, education, polity etc. He shows how the culture of India is an expression of its spirit and ends by saying "We cannot be ourselves alone in any narrow formal sense, because we must necessarily take account of the modern world around us and get free knowledge of it, otherwise we cannot live."

Sri Aurobindo was not only a prolific writer, but a literary critic also. He had made illuminating observations on a number of eminent
literary figures such as Goethe, Shakespeare, Homer, Wordsworth, Valmiki, Dante, Kalidasa, Aeschylus, Virgil, Milton, Sophocles, Vyasa, etc.

The Mother founded a universal township called "Auroville" which is named after Sri Aurobindo. The foundation of Auroville, which intends to be a living embodiment of the ideals of Sri Aurobindo, was laid on 28th February 1968. On that occasion, the mother expressed greetings to all men of good nature and invited to Auroville all those who want progress and aspire for a higher and truer life. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular; rather it belongs to humanity as a whole. In this universal cultural township men and women of all countries are able to live in harmony, above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities. It provides a design for integrated living — a way towards recognition and transformation of life in all its aspects. It is a place where people from all parts of the world can live freely as citizens of the world in peace, concord and harmony. It is to be a place where all the fighting instincts of man is to be used to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weakness and ignorance and also to overcome his limitations and incapacities. Instead of competition and strife, there will be cooperation and brotherhood among the people.

Permanent cultural pavilions of different countries as well as of the states of India reflecting their own culture, planned to be established in Auroville. Living there, one will have close contact with the cultures of the world and learn to appreciate unity in diversity.
Auroville has been unanimously supported by the General Assembly of UNESCO in Paris. In a Resolution of it in 1968, the General Conference invited member-states and international non-governmental organizations to participate in the development of Auroville as an international cultural township. This resolution has recognized Auroville as a design to bring together the values of different cultures and civilizations in a harmonious environment with integrated living standards which correspond to man’s physical and spiritual needs.

As an awakened soul, Sri Aurobindo attempted to awaken the dim soul of others. As a Guru, with his teachings, examples and experience, he helped the growth of Truth and increase of harmony. If people all over the world follow Sri Aurobindo's sermons, peace and goodwill will prevail in the world. Domination and exploitation, in one name or the other, will disappear permanently.

METHODOLOGY

Research means a search for knowledge. It can also be defined as “a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic.” Redman and Mory define research as a “systematized effort to gain new knowledge”.19 We all have within us a curiosity to know the unknown from the known. Therefore research can be called as a voyage of discovery. Hence the selection of proper method or methods is of considerable importance while undertaking research. In this study, the following methods have been used :-
The Historical Method

History is a record of the past. Sri Aurobindo's life covers the period from August 15, 1872 to 5th December 1950 which was a period of great turmoil in Indian history. At that time the freedom movement was going on in India against the British rulers for their oppression and exploitation of the Indians. His father, Krishna Dhan Ghose was a physician under the British Government in India after completing his medical education in England. Aurobindo was educated in a convent school in Darjeeling from 1877 to 1879. He did not know Bengalee, his mother tongue. Not much is known about his early life till he went to England for higher studies.

In England Aurobindo learnt the classical languages like Greek and Latin. He also learnt Italian, German and Spanish, besides English. He read in St.Paul's School in London and won distinction and prizes. He also "spent most of his spare time in general reading, especially English poetry, literature and fiction, French literature and the history of ancient, mediaeval and modern Europe". In England he joined the "Lotus and Dagger" secret society which aimed at carrying on revolutionary activities. He delivered many revolutionary speeches in Indian Majlis of Cambridge. He appeared in the Indian Civil Service but was disqualified in the riding test.

It was in England that he came in contact with the Gaekward of Baroda who was impressed by the profundity of his knowledge and mastery in European languages. He invited Aurobindo to serve in his estate. Aurobindo came to India in 1893 after long 14 years. He
served in the estate of Gaekward in various capacities. He was a patriot and revolutionary. He was moved by pain at the British persecution of the Indians and man’s cruelty to man. He drafted the \textit{personal} letters of the Gaekward of Baroda. While at Baroda he visited Bengal several times in order to activate the revolutionaries there but he did not take active part in politics as he was still in the service of the Gaekward. He had taken a vow along with the other revolutionaries to liberate India from her bondage. This can be found in the pages of the \textit{“Bande Mataram”} and \textit{“Karmayogin”} in which he wrote later on. He also came in to contact with the Maharashtrian revolutionaries.

He did not like the moderates’ policy of prayer, petition and non-severance of connection with British rule. He came into contact with Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and other extremists. He appreciated Tilak’s conception of Swaraj. It is held by some that he was inspired by Swadeshi, Parnellism and Sinn Fein Movement. He was in full praise for mazzini who brought about Italian unification. In India he learnt the Vedas, Upanishads, Geeta and Indian scriptures. He also learnt Sanskrit and Hindi and his mother tongue Bengalee and became acquainted with the greatness of India’s culture. In 1906 Aurobindo joined the National College of Calcutta as its first Principal with a salary of Rs.150/- per month. In Bengal he came in contact with P.Mitter, C.R.Das, Sister Nivedita, Jatin Banerjee and Surendranath Tagore – all devoted to the freedom of India.
In Bengal he found that the people were lazy and apathetic. He formed secret societies and in 1905 Curzon partitioned Bengal and there was violent reaction against it not only in Bengal but also all over India. In the mean time there happened an ontoward incident which is known as the Alipore bombing case. Aurobindo was imprisoned for one year for conspiracy in the case, Deshabandhu C.R. Das pleaded for Aurobindo and Aurobindo was acquitted.

Before this in every session of the congress Aurobindo advocated freedom of the motherland. He was for swaraj, passive resistance, boycott of British goods and violent action, if necessary. So, it is not correct to say that he was a pacifist. After his release from Alipore jail he heard an inner voice to leave for Chandanagar and Pondicherry which were then under French occupation. The British sent many spies and applied many tricks to catch hold of him but Aurobindo escaped by the grace of providence.

Aurobindo had learnt yoga from a saint named Lele who could not fulfil his inner aspiration. At last he left him to pray to the divine as Totapuri had left Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to the benediction of mother Kali. At Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo's next phase of life began. He began meditation. The mother also joined him and she was of great help in his meditation. The Ashrama was established. At last Sri Aurobindo attained Siddhi on 24th November, 1926.

Except on two occasions Sri Aurobindo did not look back to politics. In 1942 when Germany continued its march of victory against the Allied powers and was about to attack England, he thought
that in case of German victory, there will be havoc in the world. He meditated silently and Germany was defeated. Similarly when Japan went ahead on its conquest, he also prayed and brought about Japan's defeat. Sri Aurobindo brought about the supra-mental power to earth. He gave public darshan on 21st February, 24th November and 15th August and a special darshan on 24th March every year. He breathed his last on 5th December, 1950.

By using the historical method we have been immensely benefited because thereby we get a glimpse into the life and activities of Sri Aurobindo and also of the situation of erstwhile India. From his life sketch we can know how he was a revolutionary in his early life and later became a yogi whom millions adore all over the world. Again one cannot but be astonished to know how by his spiritual power he could bring about the defeat of the Axis powers because he thought that the victory of the Axis powers would bring about disaster and devastation to the world. Thus the historical method has enabled us to deduce those inferences about Sri Aurobindo.

**Comparative Method**

The comparative method was used in politics by Aristotle, montesquieu, De Tocqueville, Bryce and others. As Garner says "...[I]ts aims through the study of existing politics or those which have existed in the past to assemble a definite body of material from which the investigator by selection, comparison, and elimination may discover the ideal types and progressive forces of political history."21 Those states which are contemporary and which have a common
historical, political and social institutions are fit for comparison. By comparison we discover their similarities and dissimilarities and bring out an ideal type. Not only present institutions but also their comparison with past institutions of different states may serve the purpose. Personalities may also be compared to find out what are the similarities and dissimilarities in their ideas. Hence comparative method has a wide scope.

In the present study we find that Sri Aurobindo's life is contemporaneous with the freedom movement in India. From his childhood, he had an aversion against British rule and their persecution and exploitation of the Indians. He was also influenced by the Irish freedom struggle and Mazzini's struggle for the unification of Italy. So while in London, he joined the 'Lotus and Dagger' society and delivered fiery revolutionary speeches in 'Indian Majlis' a secret society founded by some Indian students. In England he took a vow along with others for the emancipation of India.

After returning from England when he served in the Gaekward's Estate in Baroda he used to visit Calcutta on some pretext or other. But his real purpose was to see how the revolutionary movement was working in Bengal. He was overwhelmed with grief to see the apathetic attitude of the youth in Bengal towards the freedom movement. He infused a new spirit among them and helped form many secret societies. In Maharashtra he was inspired by Lokamanya Tilak's advocacy for swaraj. He did not agree with the moderates policy of prayer, petition and protest, when he returned to Calcutta to
join the National College of Calcutta as its first Principal, he got an opportunity to give a phillip to the freedom movement. There he was associated with such personalities as Bipin Chandra Pal, P. Mitter, C.R. Das, Sister Nivedita, Jatin Banerjee and Surendranath Tagore etc. who were all dedicated to the freedom movement of India.

Unfortunately, he was involved in the Alipore bombing case and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. After his release from prison he felt it to be unsafe to remain in Calcutta and went to Chandanagar and from there to Pondicherry where a new phase of his life began. The mother joined him and helped him to carry on his spiritual Sadhana. Ultimately he attained Siddhi on 24th November, 1926 by bringing to earth the supramental energy.

In this study an attempt has been made to compare Sri Aurobindo's activities and ideas with those of Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Jawaharlal Nehru and Rabindra Nath Tagore. Like Gandhi he championed the ideas of Swaraj, passive resistance and boycott but he differed from Gandhi in such matters as khadi, bread, labour, trusteeship, end and means relationship Satyagraha and complete non-violence. Sri Aurobindo believed in violence and aggressive nationalism. Like Vivekananda he believed in India as the priest people of humanity, nationalism and international peace, though he differed from him with regard to the means to be adopted to attain them. After his departure to Pondicherry, he became a yogi and held that unity of mankind can be possible through 'supramental consciousness' Nehru was educated in England, became a disciple of
Mahatma Gandhi, took part in the freedom struggle, believed in nationalism and internationalism and the establishment of a world organisation like the United Nations. He was a practical politician and ruled India as her first Prime-Minister for about 18 years. He advocated the Panchasheela principles for the establishment of world peace, planning for the development of the country and the three language formula. Sri Aurobindo was a patriot in his early life, believed in nationalism and internationalism, but as a spiritualist as he was he has not said anything about planning. Instead of the United Nations, he advocated a world-union. He abhorred the United Nations as it was based on diplomacy, force and fraud. His signal contribution to mankind is Human Unity through the spiritual development of man. Rabindra Nath Tagore was a poet, an artist, a musician and saw beauty in man and nature. Tagore was also an internationalist. Like Sri Aurobindo he wanted the country's freedom and was against racialism and imperialism. But their differences lies in the fact that Sri Aurobindo believed in the integration of life, body and mind and was a humanist.

The comparative method used in this study covers a wide canvas and makes us acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's attainment of 'Siddhi' in Pondicherry and comparison of his philosophy with that of Gandhi, Vivekananda, Nehru and Rabindra Nath Tagore.

**The Philosophical Method**

Philosophy is a synthesizer of knowledge "Existence is a multiform mystery - a riddle and a puzzlement. It offers to the
intellect an assorted as well as a graded opportunity for exploration and discovery of its nature. Philosophy is one such way of formulating intellectually the structure and significance of existence and its relation to Reality.\textsuperscript{22} It is expected to throw light on the nature of our existence, on the principles governing our thought, our relation with the world around us and with God, and finally, with our destiny.\textsuperscript{23} It is speculative and apriori in nature and is concerned with certain norms or values. This method has been advocated by Plato, Rousseau, Hegel, Kant, Bradley, Bosanquet, J.S.Mill and Sidgwick.\textsuperscript{24} In this method we start with certain self-evident propositions and determine which institutions should best realise them.

In this work Sri Aurobindo starts with the creation of the universe. He says that the universe was created from matter which was a solid mass and was in darkness. Gradually it unfolded itself and then as a result of evolution the human beings came into existence. The Sun, the planets and other creatures had already been created before. Thus there was light and darkness. Sri Aurobindo speaks of involution and evolution, governable by a supreme energy or spirit.

Sri Aurobindo writes that human beings passed through different struggles till they were civilized. He speaks of different civilizations in the long history of mankind. Thus there were the Egyptian civilization, the Sumerian civilization, the Babylonian civilization, the Chinese civilization, the Greek and Roman civilization and the Indus valley civilization. Each civilization was noted for some uniqueness or
excellence. The Vedas and Upanishadas are the unique creation of Indian civilization, democratic rule of Greek civilization, Law of the Roman civilization etc. Sri Aurobindo gives a development of civilization including those of the renaissance, geographical discoveries reformation movements, feudal system and the industrial revolution etc.

The West became materialist while the East became spiritualist. Veda is the unique creation of the Indian mind. Veda means knowledge. It was handed down from generation to generation and was known as sruti-vedanta was the interpretation of the veda. The Vedas contained hymns to Gods, hymns to nature and hymns for the welfare of mankind. 'Vasudeva Kutumbakam' – the world is a family was its essence.

Sri Aurobindo then speaks of yoga. In his epic poem 'savitri' he describes the yoga of Aswapati and Savitri and thereby shows that the 'Divine' can be invoked through yoga. He speaks of prayers, pranayam and meditation. He opines that every one has the capacity contained in him through yoga. He says that at the physical level human evolution has come to an end and he has to evolve mentally. Everything, philosophy, poetry, art, music and religion can be developed through yoga. One of his finest explanations is that it is the higher which explains the lower and not vice versa. The infinite can explain the finite.

Science seeks to arrive at the truth on the physical plane but it has its limitations and difficulties. It can arrive at the supra-physical
or supra-psychical but not at the supramental. The 'supramental consciousness' can be reached only by yoga. Sri Aurobindo speaks of Integral Yoga which means the integration of body, life and mind. Sri Aurobindo was able to hold the 'supramental consciousness'. He says that education can train the children in the welding of body, life and mind. Education should not be imposed upon the children; rather they should be taught to know what they want. There should not be any cramming or rote-writing. Emphasis should be given on games and sports and the development of fine intellectual pursuits. This is what he called integral education.

To him India is the priest people of humanity. Through 'supramental consciousness' the universal can be realized by all and sundry. This can then bring about human unity. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy transcends the limitations of religion, caste and creed. Sri Aurobindo was a great humanist. He was against groupism, regionalism, slavery, imperialism and torture of human beings in any part of the world. All these we can know by employing the philosophical method.

Philosophical Method is an abstract method. Hence it should be supplemented by the Historical and Comparative Methods to get an insight into a subject matter.
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is very difficult to write about Sri Aurobindo's life as it was not lived on the surface for man to see. But what little has been on the surface for man to see is itself overwhelming. Humble attempts have been made by numerous writers to throw light on the life, action and idealism of Sri Aurobindo. He was a versatile genius. He was in one a political philosopher, a great patriot, a great revolutionary, an extremist, an eminent spiritual writer, a deep thinker, a reputed yogi and above all a humanist. Transcending all physical and political boundaries, Sri Aurobindo could rise upto the level of spiritual awakening and thereby thought of the rebirth of India through her spiritual liberation.

The many sided personality of Sri Aurobindo "has created difficulties for his biographers and for others who have written about his life. Those interested primarily in his spiritual experiences and teachings have played down his revolutionary activities. Those interested solely in his political thought and action have dismissed his life after 1910 in a few sentences. Those interested chiefly in his philosophy or poetry have given passing notice to his political career and spiritual development but gone on to treat him almost exclusively in intellectual terms. No one has tried to deal evenly with all the different aspects of his life: domestic, scholastic, literary, political, revolutionary, philosophical, spiritual."

Some two dozen biographies of Sri Aurobindo have been published in half a dozen languages. M.P.Pandit in his book titled
“Sri Aurobindo” narrates the life of Sri Aurobindo in broad five parts such as - Introductory Education (England), Preparation (Baroda), Political (Calcutta) and Yoga (Pondicherry). In this biography, Sri Pandit traces the evolution of Sri Aurobindo, the man and the saint, through his childhood, his education in England, service in the State of Baroda, political activities and finally his dedication to “spiritual sadhana”.

Peter Heehs, in his book “Sri Aurobindo: A Brief Biography” have attempted to give adequate attention to each and every aspect of Aurobindo’s life. He has balanced the conflicting claims of two different classes of readers: students of History and other social sciences and spiritual aspirants require a work of scholarship with well-researched, documented and objective approach making no unwarranted assumptions or unverifiable claims. On the other hand, spiritually aspirant readers are looking for spiritual guidance and uplift. They are interested mainly in anecdotes and examples, not facts and interpretation. Believing the needs of both types of readers as legitimate, Peter Heehs tries to give justice to both groups. Since forty five of Aurobindo’s seventy-eight years were engaged in the practice of Yoga, the writer has not ignored his spiritual life. He has divided the book into two parts - the first part which covers the years 1872-1910, deals in chronological fashion with Sri Aurobindo’s outer life, giving priority to his political career. The second part covering the years 1908-50, deals chiefly with his intellectual and spiritual development.
Among the other biographies of Sri Aurobindo, A.B.Purani's "Life of Sri Aurobindo", and "Sri Aurobindo in England", K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar's "Sri Aurobindo", Navajata's "Sri Aurobindo", Girijashankar Roychaudhuri's "Sriarabinda O Banglay Svadeshi Yug" (Bengali), P.B.Kulkarni's Marathi work "Yogi Aravind Ghosh" are significant. In case of most of these writers, a bias in favour of Sri Aurobindo is clearly visible. This is not surprising as most of them are disciples or devoted admirers of Sri Aurobindo. Most of these authors have tried to reproduce as far as possible Sri Aurobindo's own words, so that the readers may appreciate them according to his own level of consciousness and benefit from the spiritual power all his writings carry.

Several of Sri Aurobindo's disciples kept written records of his talks which were subsequently published in edited versions of these records. Nirodbaran's "Twelve years with Sri Aurobindo", "Correspondence with Sri Aurobindo" and also his edited book "Talks with Sri Aurobindo", A.B.Purani's edited book "Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo" Dilip Kumar Roy's "Sri Aurobindo came to Me" are such books which throw some light on Sri Aurobindo's views on various social, political and cultural aspects of human life.

Some authors have attempted to make an analytical study of Sri Aurobindo's philosophical ideas. M.P.Pandit, in his book "Commentaries on Sri Aurobindo's Thought", has highlighted the fact that, Aurobindo's philosophy is not limited to the then situation only, rather it has relevance to the pressing questions and solutions of
today's world V.P.Varma's "The Political Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo" is also an attempt in the same direction.

Joan Price in his book "An Introduction to Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy", believes that Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is a result of his own inner experience. We may try to label it as idealism, pragmatism, mysticism, realism or any of the "isms". But all such attempts will be futile to provide a complete analysis of his comprehensive philosophy. The author emphasizes the fact that Aurobindo's philosophy is not limited to the ancient systems, rather he is contemporary in his outlook to pressing questions and solutions in today's world. He forges ahead into the expansive potentialities of the future evolution. Though the book begins with Sri Aurobindo's life and work, yet the rest of the chapters are devoted primarily to discuss his philosophy.

S.P.Banerjee in his book "Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo" analyses how Aurobindo had an intellectual depth that surpassed many of his contemporaries. He delved deep into religion, mysticism and philosophy and imbibed the best of many cultures and religious thoughts to formulate his own. The author declares that his book is a distillation of the philosophy of Aurobindo.

Some P. Ranchan's book entitled, "Sri Aurobindo : A Myriad Minded Genius" has made an attempt to interpret Sri Aurobindo as a yogi, philosopher, original psychologist, political thinker, aestheteiclan, as an original critic and as a poet. Ranchan's argument is that Sri Aurobindo's critical categories lend themselves to a full-fledged
approach which deserves to be explored and applied by teachers and students of literature. With an inter-disciplinary study, the author attempts to serve the interest of Aurobindonians, students, scholars of literature and critical theory.

The book "On the way to supermanhood", translated from French by Marie Pontacq and Michel Danino deals with the spiritual realization and philosophical perception of Sri Aurobindo.

Karan Singh's book "Prophet of Indian Nationalism" deals with the political thought of Sri Aurobindo covering the period from 1893 - when he returned to India at the age of 21 after fourteen years in England - to 1910 when he abruptly left Calcutta for Chandernagore and later proceeded to Pondicherry. In this book, the author points out his basic conviction that in the task of building a new India, the dynamic spiritual nationalism of Sri Aurobindo has tremendous relevance. This book captures the flaming idealism of Sri Aurobindo from a critical point of view.

Sri Aurobindo emphatically stated that only he could write truly about himself; but he never wrote any comprehensive or systematic account of his life. In his correspondence with his disciples and others, he explained certain points with reference to some events in his own life. He corrected misleading statements concerning him published on a few occasions in some journals and books. He also gave notes about some points in his life to three of his biographers who had submitted their manuscripts to him for verification. All these materials are published in "Part-One" of the book "On Himself". The
"Part-Two" of it deals with some letters which Sri Aurobindo has written jointly about himself and the Mother after she joined him in his spiritual work. This book helps the Aurobindonians, the students, the scholars in getting some clarification of Sri Aurobindo's ideas and messages.

Sri Aurobindo's book "Indian's Rebirth" presents his vision of India as it grew from his return from England in 1893 to his political days in the first decade of the century. What he said or wrote on India, is by no means integral, but it offers a wide view of the lines of development Sri Aurobindo wished India to follow. These were considered necessary if India desired to overcome the deep-rooted obstacles standing in the way of her rebirth.

The book "The Human Cycle, The Ideal of Human Unity, War and Self-Determination" deals with Sri Aurobindo's social and political thought. Different chapters of the book were written in a serial form in the pages of the monthly review "Arya". These are reflecting the rapidly changing phases of ideas, facts and possibilities which emerged in the course of the European conflict. The main contentions as advanced in the pages of this book is the inevitability of the unification of the life of humanity. Sri Aurobindo appreciated such tendencies and pointed out what is wanting in them.

The book "The Integral Yoga : Sri Aurobindo's Teaching and Method of Practice" is a compilation of the few selected letters of Sri Aurobindo on various aspects of his spiritual teaching and method of yogic practice. Sri Aurobindo called his system as the "Integral Yoga"
as it proposed a union (yoga) in all parts our being – body, mind and soul with the Divine and a consequent transmutation of all their vow jarring elements into the harmony of a higher divine consciousness and existence.

Some other books of Sri Aurobindo like "The Foundations of Indian Culture", "The Renaissance in India", "The Brain of India", "Ideals and Progress" etc. highlight the significance of India's glorious heritage, her soul, her destiny and her future evolution as the "spiritual guru" of the world. He had shown how the future society can be and will be a spiritualised society. His social philosophy is a part of his spiritual philosophy.

Articles by Sri Aurobindo in the weekly "Bande Mataram" (1907-1908) and Karmayogin (1909-1910) are published by Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library in two volumes. Volume 1 entitled as "Bande Mataram : Early Political Writings – I" and Volume 2 as "Karmayogin : Early Political Writings – II", are of immense value in the study of the political thought of Sri Aurobindo. These articles were written in the very midst of the political controversy in the Bengal. The students and scholars having interest on Sri Aurobindo will get enough of his early political ideals in the context of India's liberation movement.

Sisir Kumar Mitra's two books such as "Sri Aurobindo and Indian Freedom" and "The Liberator" along with the Hemendra Prasad Ghose's book "Aurobindo – The Prophet of Patriotism" point out the deep nationalism of Sri Aurobindo and his short, but influential role in the liberation movement of India.
OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Sri Aurobindo is one of the brightest stars in the firmament of India. He was a myriad facted personality: a scholar, a poet, a patriot, a spiritual man, an eminent philosopher, a mystic, a yogi, a nationalist, an internationalist, a man who desired human unity, a democrat and the like. He was against human torture, slavery, racialism and imperialism. He wanted to establish a world order in which men will live in perfect brotherhood and harmony in obedience to a higher cosmic consciousness. In the present work an attempt has been made to highlight these qualities in his life. He was much above the ordinary man and attained divinity.

It is better to start with Sri Aurobindo as a great scholar. Sri Aurobindo in the early years of his life was educated in the Loreto Convent School in Darjeeling as his father wanted him to receive English education. Hence not much is known about his childhood except that he was a precocious student. Then in 1879 his father along with his brothers sent him to England. In London he learnt Greek, Latin, French, Italian, German and Spanish in a short time. He read in St. Paul's School in London. At St. Paul's he spent his time in reading English poetry, literature and fiction. He also spent his time in 'in writing poetry'. In King's College he won many distinctions and prizes. It is worthwhile to mention that he had little acquaintance with Indian culture. As Sri Aurobindo writes in his book 'On Himself' in London "(He) grew up in entire ignorance of India, her people, her religion and her culture." He passed the First Part of the Degree of
B.A. in Cambridge: Due to his profound erudition he qualified in the Written Test in the I.C.S., the most coveted service of that time but he managed to disqualify himself for the riding test. "Two years after the Indian Civil Service Examination he graduated from King's College with a First Class in Classical Tripos".  

Sri Aurobindo as a Scholar

He learnt Hindi, Sanskrit and Bengalee after return to India. He drafted personal letters of the Gaekwasrd of Baroda. In England he was delivering speech in the Indian Majalis and the Lotus and Dagger Society. He also wrote articles in the Indu Prakash, Karmayogi and took of the editorship of Bande Mataram. His two great works poetries are the 'Savitri' and the 'Life Divine'. He also wrote the 'Secrets of the Veda' and reviewed some articles in philosophy. This shows the extraordinary scholarship of Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo as a Patriot

This study also highlights Sri Aurobindo's patriotism. From his early stay in England, it is evident that he had hatred against British rule and wanted to emancipate his country from British occupation. With this end in view he joined the 'Indian Majlis' and the 'Lotus and Dagger Society'. He delivered many revolutionary speeches in them.

While in the service of the State of Gaekward of Baroda, he came into contact with Lokamanya Tilak and was deeply moved by his concept of Swaraj. He believed that the British Government had no right to rule over India as it had usurped power from the Indians. He dislike 'the moderates' pet attitude towards the British rulers. The
moderates regarded British rule in India as providential. They had faith in the British sense of justice. But the constitutional methodology adopted by the British was not effective. "Till 1918, despite petitions, memorandums, prayers and deputations, the British Government did not show any real interest towards the legitimate demands of the Indians."30

Sri Aurobindo sided with the Extremists like, Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai. Along with them he formed the Nationalist Party and advocated Swadeshi, aggressive nationalism and boycott. Even when he was in Gaekward's service, he used to go to Calcutta and galvanized the masses. He was pained to see the apathy of the masses. He wanted to turn the Congress into a party of the masses.

When he came to Calcutta and joined the Nationalist College as its Principal he got an opportunity to form secret societies. What grieved him was the misery and apathy of the masses. He wrote revolutionary articles in 'Indu Prakash', 'Karma Yogi' and 'Bande Mataram'. Unfortunately, he was involved in the Alipore Bombing case and was sentenced to one year's imprisonment. Then he got a call from within to go to Chandanagore and Pondicherry to escape the eyes of the British Government. In Pondicherry he started his yoga and attained Siddhi on 24th November 1926. Then he utilized his spiritual power to bring about the defeat of the Axis forces. Their victory might have endangered world peace and security.
Sri Aurobindo as a Poet

Sri Aurobindo was also a poet of eminence. In England he had acquired mastery over the classical languages and English literature. He had written many poems in English in St. Paul's School and won many prizes for that. This was the beginning of his literary career when he came to the State of Gaekward of Baroda, he read Sanskrit and the India scriptures like the Veda, the Upanishads, the Indian scriptures and the 'Geeta'. It was not difficult for him to understand Sanskrit as he had already been acquainted with the classical languages of Europe. His immortal poetic works are the 'Savitri' and many other poems which are too abstract to understand and digest.

Sri Aurobindo as a spiritual man

He was a spiritual man. That arose from his yoga. He did not wear a saffron cloth or went to preach somewhere, as the modern spiritual persons do. He used to discuss many religious and spiritual questions in the Ashram. He had brought about the descent of the 'supramental energy'. He was deeply influenced by Indian scriptures and mythology. To give an example, his epic poem 'Savitri' is based on an episode from the 'Mahabharat' but he had tried to show the divinity in man in Aswapathy and Savitri's yoga.

Sri Aurobindo as a Philosopher

He appears to an ordinary man, as a philosopher but he himself denies that he was a philosopher. Rather he says that his philosophy arose from his 'Yoga'. He writes in one of the books that once one of his friends gave him to edit a philosophical writing and disappeared.
Sri Aurobindo was at a fix since he had not done any philosophical work. But his mastery of 'Yoga' did not make it difficult from him to edit it. Later he also edited many philosophical literature philosophy probes into the secrets of the universe and man's relation with it. Sri Aurobindo has given a picture of God, the absolute, the creation of various Godheads, plants and animals and man. He says that man develops through evolution. He has very subtly and clearly described science, art, literature, music and points out that they cannot give us an idea of the 'absolute' or supreme reality. He has spoken about the mind, overmind and supremind and says that each stage is higher than the one preceding it. From this we may infer that if he were not a philosopher, what he was? In answer Sri Aurobindo says that all his philosophy and all his ideas come out of his 'yoga'.

**Sri Aurobindo as a mystic**

Next, Sri Aurobindo was a mystic. He makes a distinction between a mystic and a Yogi. The difference between them is "that a mystic has experience of the occult and the spiritual involuntarily while the Yogi following a way and a method has definite experience." Sri Aurobindo started as a mystic. The mystical experiences occurred to him without his seeking them. His mystical experiences began when he reached the Apollo Bunder in Bombay. There "he explained the divine as all-pervading, as immanent, as supraphysical planes acting upon the material planes." This Sri Aurobindo puts as follows: since I set foot on the Indian soil on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, I began to have spiritual experiences but
these were not divorced from this world but had an inner and infinite pervading material space and the immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies. At the same time I found myself entering supraphysical world and planes with influence and an effect from them upon the material plane."

These mystical quests to some extent have been described by Sri Aurobindo in his 'Savitri'. There he shows how Aswapathy and Savitri in the initial stages are undergoing askesis in search of the 'Divine' and ultimately succeed in their penance. There are also other experiences by Sri Aurobindo of the mystic. Here we may give two examples. The first is how he saw Kali coming to him alive in the form of an idol. The second is how he was saved from an accident once by the intervention of a divine being. These mystical experiences led Aurobindo to be initiated into yoga by a Maharashtrian yogi Lele who taught him how to empty "the mind by throwing out any thought form arising from within or coming from without". By this Sri Aurobindo could achieve stillness of mind at will. But Lele was not satisfied. So he left Aurobindo to the divine as his destiny was meant for a different end. Much before Aurobindo could hear voices from within e.g. his going to Chandanagore and Pondicherry by an inner call.

**Sri Aurobindo as a Yogi**

Next Sri Aurobindo was a yogi. Aurobindo, believed that "behind the appearances of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one and eternal. All beings are united and in that One Self and Spirit but divided by a certain
separativity of consciousness, an ignorance of their true Self and Reality in the mind, life and body.\textsuperscript{35} He further said that it is possible to remove that ignorance and become "aware of the true Self, the Divinity within us and all."\textsuperscript{36} The self is moving towards a greater and greater perfection by evolution. It is moving towards a greater mind or a supramental.

Aurobindo, as he says, started his yoga in 1904 and 1908 but these were not so developed. He had learnt from a friend 'pranayam' and meditation and practised it. It was while he was in Alipore jail that Swami Vivekananda used to give him some tips about meditation and yoga, but he dedicated completely to yoga in Pondicherry and was successful. As Sri Aurobindo says: "you have apparently a call and may be fit for Yoga; but there are different paths and each has a different aim and end before it. It is common to all the paths to conquer the desires to put aside the ordinary relations of life, and to try to pass from uncertainty to everlasting certitude. One may also try to conquer dream and sleep, thirst and hunger, etc. But it is no part of my Yoga to have nothing to do with the world or with life or to kill the senses or entirely inhibit their action. It is the object of my yoga to transform life by bringing down into it the Light, Power and Bliss of the Divine Truth and its dynamic certitudes. This Yoga is not a Yoga of world-shunning asceticism, but of divine life."\textsuperscript{37} Absolute is an absolute truth and free from maya. He is concerned with the discovery of Brahman, the Absolute Supreme Reality. His Yoga is concerned with the development of the life, body and mind and
therefore can be called Integral Yoga. In order to achieve it one has to conquer the forces of ignorance, darkness, obscurity, falsehood, death and suffering.

In Savitri he tries to build a bridge between the material, the psychic and the spiritual. Aurobindo says that this bridging is new in Indian Yoga and different from Traditional Yoga. Sri Aurobindo further says that Yoga brings stillness of mind and from this stillness comes 'philosophy, poetry, and immense psychological creativity. According to Sri Aurobindo: "The stress of the spirit is not to free us from the material, from the world, but to transform the inner theatre and its properties and underpinnings for greater and richer conjunctions till Sat-Chit-Ananda and its powers of supraconsciousness and sovereign will accomplishing things in a trice become available, enabling experiences in every day life in the not too distant future. So Sri Aurobindo envisages for yoga a role and a scope undreamt of before."38

Sri Aurobindo as a Psychologist

Sri Aurobindo was a psychologist but he was not a psychologist like Freud, Alder and Jung, to name three pioneers of western psychology. He had no degree and training in psychology as they had. He did not speak of Freud's id, ego or superego. But in so far as he was involved, to begin with intellectually, and later through Yoga whose experiences he expressed philosophically, and creatively, and in so far as he functioned as a guide and psychopomp to his disciples, directly from 1910 to 1926 and indirectly later through the Mother of
Pondicherry from 1926 to 1950, he becomes both - a psychologist and psychotherapist."39

In his system of consciousness he speaks of two hemispheres - an upper hemisphere of the overmind and the supermind and the lower hemisphere of the physical, vital, and mental, and these two, hemispheres are not in communication, Ego is the Lord of the lower hemisphere while self is the Lord of the upper hemisphere. "Like Jung Sri Aurobindo is interested in bringing the influence and the workings of the self into life. But while Jung does through Analytical Psychology, Sri Aurobindo does that through what is now called Integral Yoga."40

While Jung gives the primary place to ego, dream work and active imagination, Sri Aurobindo assigns a low place to ego. He says that ego is the organizer of the 'physical, vital, mental experiences, and centralises them for outer living'. But he wants to get rid of the ego at the earliest possible opportunity with the help of 'psychic consciousness'. He is of the view that one's psychic personality is one's "deeper subliminal personality. It has access to one's entire terrestrial development from previous life times to the present."41 In his opinion this psychic personality is an Indian formulation, Sri Aurobindo "makes the psychic personality the Alpha of his Integral Consciousness process."42 Som P. Ranchan says that "What Sri Aurobindo calls the psychic personality is none other than the self which is arrived at through years of individuation."43
Sri Aurobindo as a Nationalist

Sri Aurobindo was a great nationalist. His nationalism is based on his deep study of Indian heritage and culture. He says that man has reached his present stage but that is not the final evolution of man. Man has to develop by involution and evolution. Nationalism implies intense love for the nation. Modern nationalism evolved with the renaissance. It took shape in the American war of independence and the French Revolution. After that there was the struggle of the countries under European imperialism to liberate themselves. There was also the unification of Italy and Germany in the later part of the nineteenth century. The countries of Asia and Africa also struggled for freedom. This was given an impetus by the Russo-Japanese war in 1905 in which a tiny state like Japan defeated a mighty power like Russia.

Aurobindo bases his nationalism on spiritualism. India is a country noted for its spiritual development. The saints and seers of ancient India created the Vedas, the Upanishadas, the scriptures and the Geeta. In the Geeta Lord Krishna advises Arjun, a warrior who was non-plussed to see his own relatives in the battlefield to give up his attachment and fight because as a Kshatriya, it was his swadharma to fight.

Sri Aurobindo speaks of the Absolute, the one without a second, the indefinable. He against emphasises the relationship between matter and spirit. On this basis he also advocates his nationalism. His condemnation of the moderates and the championing of the
extremists with its shibboleths of swadeshi, violence and boycott show what a deep sense of nationalism he had. He wanted to expel the Britishers from India.

His English education in England and study of the English liberal ideas and literature may be taken as another factor of his nationalism. When India got independence on 15th August 1947, he was at Pondicherry after having attained Siddhi, the supramental consciousness. He did not take part in politics. So we may say that on 15th August 1947 India got two gifts - the observance of the birthday of Sri Aurobindo and that of free India, what a great coincidence it is! This, in short sums up Sri Aurobindo nationalism.

Sri Aurobindo and his concept of internationalism and human unity:

Next we may draw our attention to Sri Aurobindo's concept of internationalism and human unity. It is also based on spiritualism as developed by ancient sages sitting on the banks of the river ‘Saraswati’ which has lost its appearance now and which is said to be flowing underneath. In Prayag, a holy place, there is a confluence of Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati.

Sri Aurobindo did not close his eyes to the development of modern science in the fields of transport, communication, trade and commerce, which have made the world a small place to live in. In other words, it has shrunk the size of the Globe.

Sri Aurobindo bases his internationalism on the relationship between matter and spirit. He is of the view that the human mind
is always in quest for new knowledge; he is filled with a curiosity to know the unknown with the help of science. But science can take us to the acme of the physical world but it cannot solve the riddles of the universe. For that spiritualism is necessary. He says that by spiritualism man can go beyond what science has achieved. In order to bring this about he advocated regular pranayam, meditation and yoga. He used to practise meditation five to six hours a day. He succeeded in holding the 'supramental consciousness'. If it permeates every human being in every part of the world, it will unite mankind and he was sure that every man is more or less capable of developing divinity in him.

He was in favour of the triple of the French Revolution – liberty, equality and fraternity. Though liberty and equality may appear to be in conflict with each other to some, yet this conflict is more apparent than real. It is fraternity or brotherhood which can establish a sense of oneness among mankind. Sri Aurobindo was in favour of what he called a world-union. He deprecated an international organisation like the United Nations which is legal and based on force and fraud. In this way this study aims at studying Sri auroindo is vision of human unity.

Sri Aurobindo's view of democracy and secularism

Sri Aurobindo was a democrat and secularist. He regarded democracy as self-government which is the best government. There is the rule of the people in a democracy. As A.Appadarai defines i.e. “Democracy may be described as a system of government under which
the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by themselves. Democracy is different from monarchy and aristocracy. In monarchy one man's fiat runs while in aristocracy a few men exercise power. In democracy there are freedom of speech and expression, equality, opposition, tolerance and the like but the one defect of democracy is that people are free during elections. Once elections are over, the representatives forget the electorate and return to them at the time of the next election. Sri Aurobindo also condemns totalitarianism as it stifles freedom and encroaches into the private spheres of life of the citizens.

Sri Aurobindo admires the ancient village republics in which the grama sabha decided everything relating to the villagers. It was followed by the district units, provincial units and the state respectively. But Sri Aurobindo says that though there is the need of the Grama Sabha at present, it should be followed by the district units and provincial units and not by the state. The village Panchayats in the present time serve this purpose. The village republics of ancient India were admired by Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian nation. Sri Aurobindo also supports swaraj, agriculture, trade and commerce so that the villages will be self-sufficient. However he condemned vehemently the chauvinistic rule of persons like Hitler and Mussolini.

Sri Aurobindo was also secular in his view and outlook. He appreciated western secularism in which the state does not interfere in the religion of the peoples and allows them to believe in and
practise their own religions. With the renaissance there was emphasis on humanism in which man became the centre of thought. Sri Aurobindo was of the view that the early secularism in India was universal as it was meant for a nobler purpose. It put emphasis on this spirit and was therefore lofty. But during the next two imperialisms it was meant for crushing Hinduism. The present secularism in India has provided to the people the freedom to profess, practise and propagate any religion. Sri Aurobindo's view of secularism was not akin to the view of religion as the opium of the people as held by the communists. He hated such concept. As G.P.Gupta and M.S.Srinivasan remark: "only a progressive moral psychological and spiritual evolution of humanity leading towards the realization of its own spiritual fraternity can bring about the ultimate millennium dreamed by the religions, the social transformation dreamed by the secular thought and the perfect reconciliation of the ideals of individual liberty, collective well being and equality which is the dream of all political philosophies."45

Sri Aurobindo's contribution to mankind

Last but not the least object of the significance of the work is what contribution Sri Aurobindo made to mankind. It is not easy to evaluate Sri Aurobindo but this much can be said about him is that what contribution he made to mankind is eternal, i.e., perennial and will inspire mankind for years to come.
He said that a perfect life is possible on earth by following his concept of integral yoga which will integrate life, body and mind together.

He said that a perfect life would be made more perfect and mankind would be in a position to attain divinity. The means he prescribed for it is integral education. His education is different from traditional education in that it would not encourage memory work and rote-writing. A child should be taught what he wants to know and nothing should be imposed upon him. He put stress on games and sports for the children on the platonic line. His education would promote originality and creativity.

Sri Aurobindo's teaching is of utmost teaching to the crisis-ridden world of the present day. Now we find ego, ignorance, violence, falsehood in every part of the Globe with the invention of nuclear, thermo-nuclear weapons, inter-continental Ballistic missiles there has been a threat to world peace and security. Besides there is cross-border terrorism which is the greatest danger to the world. Countries are at war with each other which takes a heavy toll of life and property. We can get rid of these dangers by following Sri Aurobindo's teachings. We can realise love, brotherhood, peace and bliss through it and also the divinity within us. By it we can lead a divine life on earth.

Sri Aurobindo stated the aims and ideals of his sadhana. These are to attain freedom maintain international peace and security, end slavery and torture of human beings in any part of the world and end
racialism and imperialism. Now when we are living in the era of privatization and globalisation, when there is free flow of capital and goods and the boundaries of the countries have disappeared, there is increasing need in the world of national identity of peace, non-violence and truth and of avoidance of war; Sri Aurobindo's teachings are very significant. We may end with the words of Sri Aurobindo: "It is essential to keep constantly in view the fundamental powers and realities of life if we are not to be betrayed by arbitrary rule of the logical reason and its attachment to the rigorous and limiting idea into experiments which, however convenient in practice and however captivating to a unitarian and symmetrical thought, may well destroy the vigour and impoverish the roots of life." 

Sri Aurobindo's view about the progress of the world and evolution of humanity:

Sri Aurobindo is of the view that the world is preparing for a new progress and a new revolution. Whichever race or country can seize this opportunity will lead humanity. In the 'Arya', he states his message and the method of yoga by which it can be achieved. His message is as follows: "The message ... has three parts: (1) for each man as an individual to change himself into the future type of divine humanity, the man of the new Satyayuga which is striving to be born (2) to evolve a race of such men to lead humanity and (3) to call all humanity to the path under the lead of these pioneers and this chosen race."
The teaching of Sri Aurobindo

Again Sri Aurobindo gives his teaching. "The teaching of Sri Aurobindo starts from that of the ancient sages of India that behind the appearance of the universe there is the Reality of a Being and Consciousness, a Self of all things, one Self and Spirit but divided into a certain separativity of consciousness, an ignorance of their true self and reality in the mind, life and body. It is possible by a certain psychological discipline to remove this veil of separatative consciousness and become aware of the true self, the Divinity within us and all".

Human Unity

Then Sri Aurobindo says that the one aim of His Yoga is to enable the individual to "discover the one self in all" and "evolve a higher consciousness than the mental, a spiritual and supramental consciousness which will transform and divinise human nature." Speaking of human unity Sri Aurobindo states as follows: "The ideal of human unity would be no longer an unfulfilled ideal but an accomplished fact and its preservation given into the hands of the united human peoples. Its future destiny would lie on the knees of the gods and, if gods have use for continued existence of race, may be left to life there safe."

Conclusion

The conclude in Sri Aurobindo's words: "We Indians should begin to think seriously what part Indian thought, Indian intellect, Indian nationhood, Indian culture have to fulfil in the general life of
humanity ... I am convinced and have long been convinced that a spiritual awakening, a reawakening of the true self of a nation is the most important condition of our greatness. The Supreme Indian idea of the oneness of all men in God and its realization inwardly and outwardly, increasingly even in social relations and the structure of society is destined, I believe to govern the progress of human race. India, if it chooses can guide the world." Thus, the idea of human unity would be possible under the guidance of India, the priest people of humanity.
References


3. Quoted by Navajata in *Sri Aurobindo* Ibid, P.X.

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