CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), endowed with a rare vision and insight, revolutionised and revitalised the modern thinking on subjects important for both academics and non-academics. His monumental work, The Life Divine, is an excellent testimony to the view that philosophy in India is still alive and prosperous. It justifiably refutes the false notion that philosophy suffered an ignoble death by 16th century in India.

Sri Aurobindo combines in himself the excellence, characteristic of academics such as K.C. Bhattacharyya, Kalidas Bhattacharyya, and Radhakrishnan, and non-academics-cum-seers like Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi, and Tagore. While his thought reflects the vision, mysticism, and inspiration of the latter, it has as its characteristic stamp the erudition and intricacies of expression of the former. He also shares with academics a daring obligation to interpret in a novel fashion the text and context of Vedānta to suit the present context. He, thus, uniquely blends the philosophy of the former and the vision of the latter.
Sri Aurobindo, despite his apparent semblance of thought and substance with the above, is again strikingly different from all, considered so far. He stands out unique not only in suggesting new ideas, but also in opening up new shelves in methodology and style.

However, inspite of all suggestible uniqueness characterising Sri Aurobindo's work, they suffer from the drawback that his views on specific topics are not categorically arranged. They are strewn haphazardly. The same is true with regard to his treatment of epistemology as well. The researcher is thus faced with the unenviable task to collect the strewn ideas and compose them into a unified theory.

It is a fact that no research work has been done on Sri Aurobindo's epistemology even though a rigorous analysis has been done with reference to his ideas on ontology, yoga, poetry, and aesthetics. It is simply because as it appears to many, e.g., T.R.V. Murti, that there has been no epistemology in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy.1 With a view to justify his contention, T.R.V. Murti, compares Sri Aurobindo's position with that of Śaṅkara and then with that of Kashmir Saivism. The acute difference between Śaṅkara and Sri Aurobindo, Murti holds, stems from their different approaches. While Śaṅkara's
approach is epistemological and dialectical. Sri Aurobindo's concern is cosmological. He further says that the tantric philosophy of Kashmir critically developed its system from the basic epistemological fact of recognition (pratyabhijna), but no such basic epistemological analysis is discernible in the writings of Sri Aurobindo. So, according to T.R.V. Murti, it is the absence of epistemology in Sri Aurobindo's thought that is responsible for the absence of research work in Sri Aurobindo's epistemology. He hopes that the lacuna which is found in Sri Aurobindo's thought will be filled by the coming generations of thinkers accepting Sri Aurobindo's line of thought. The "lacuna" which Murti speaks about is not clear. Does it mean that there is no epistemology in Sri Aurobindo's thought and that scholars interested in Sri Aurobindo should develop his line of thought by providing an epistemological base therefore? Or, does it mean that scholars should develop the implicit epistemology in Sri Aurobindo's thought? Both the alternatives, it seems to me, are questionable. If there is no epistemology at all in Sri Aurobindo's philosophy how can a researcher supply it? Also, what is supplied by the researcher may not be the epistemology of Sri Aurobindo. Further, how can there be a metaphysical superstructure without an epistemological substructure? The second alternative too cannot be accepted for the simple reason that Sri Aurobindo particularly in his magnum opus, The Life
has dealt with epistemological issues. It must be borne in mind that Sri Aurobindo is neither an epistemologist nor a metaphysician in the conventional sense. This, however, does not mean that there is no enquiry into epistemological and metaphysical problems. He is one of the greatest mystics that the world has seen; and his mysticism is based on and supported by his vision as a seer and his integral yoga as a yogin. He has paid attention to both epistemology and metaphysics to the extent that they are needed for his integral philosophy. Consequently, one may find that there is no rigorous epistemology in the writings of a epistemologist. It is necessary on the part of the researcher to explicate and analyse the epistemology of Sri Aurobindo which forms the basis of his metaphysics as well as his mysticism. Hence, my focus in this thesis is on epistemology of Sri Aurobindo.

It is, therefore, surprising that Murti should speak about lacuna in Sri Aurobindo's thought. His suggestion that "the coming generations of thinkers accepting Sri Aurobindo's line of thought" should fill up the lacuna is ungrounded and uncalled for. I have endeavoured in this thesis to explicate and analyse the epistemology of Sri Aurobindo which forms the basis for his metaphysics as well as mysticism.
The *Upanisad* poses the most inquisitive question: "What is that by knowing which everything else is known?"² In providing an answer to such a question, we find that there is an enquiry into the means and objects of knowledge (*pramāṇa-prameya-vicāra*) and Sri Aurobindo is no exception to this.

Being in line with the ancient Vedāntic tradition, Sri Aurobindo, the neo-vedāntin, also is of the opinion that the highest object of knowledge is Brahman, the absolute reality, realizing which one frees oneself from bondage. But, how do we know? Here, there is a place for epistemological inquiry because if the *pramāṇa* method is ignored, the *prameya* would hardly be intelligible. After discussing about "Human Aspiration" and "Two Negations" in *The Life Divine*, Sri Aurobindo devotes a full chapter on "Methods of Vedāntic Knowledge" as a preliminary to his epistemological and metaphysical standpoint which is discussed in the later portion of his *The Life Divine*, and this itself is ample proof that there is an epistemological approach in Sri Aurobindo's thought. Much discussion on means of knowledge, objects of knowledge, status of knowledge, limitation of sense-knowledge, mental-knowledge, and intuitive knowledge is found in his philosophical works like *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga*, etc. The concept of "supramental consciousness", theory of "integral
"knowledge", and "the logic of the infinite" are his unique contribution to epistemology.

The main objective of my present research work is not only to show that there is an epistemological inquiry in Sri Aurobindo, but also to establish that it is integral to his metaphysics. Ultimately, I would like to label his epistemology as **mystic empiricism**.

The whole epistemology of Sri Aurobindo is based upon some basic presuppositions:

1. All experiences are real and worthy of philosophical interpretation.
2. All possible knowledge is knowledge within the power of humanity.
3. Knowledge must be integral.

In Chapter Two, both Western and Indian epistemological traditions are discussed as a background to Sri Aurobindo's epistemology. The Western epistemological tradition is discussed with reference to problems like (i) the nature of knowledge, (ii) the sources of knowledge, and (iii) the limitation of knowledge.

Under the first problem, we study different conditions of knowledge which are essential for any knowledge-claim. The central objective behind this analysis of knowledge is to evaluate the claims of the metaphysical
dogmatist and the epistemological skeptic. Epistemologists have formulated four conditions of knowledge. They are:

1. A truth condition,
2. An acceptance condition (which in turn includes belief condition),
3. A justification condition,
4. Justification without falsity.

The above conditions are discussed in order to examine in my later chapter the validity of the knowledge-claim of Sri Aurobindo, which is based upon his mystic experience. The limitations of these conditions are brought out in judging certain unique forms of knowledge-claims made by mystics in general and Sri Aurobindo in particular. Various theories of truth are also discussed in order to show which theory of truth can really be adopted in order to justify the mystic experiences of Sri Aurobindo.

The second problem deals with the valid means of knowledge. There has been much controversy among the epistemologists regarding the sources of knowledge; and this paved the way to different epistemological schools, viz., empiricism, rationalism, transcendentalism, and irrationalism. These prominent methods are discussed with a view to show the shortcomings of all these methods in the light of Sri Aurobindo's integral method of knowledge which overcomes these defects.
Issues like the possibility of knowledge, whether we have the knowledge of the past, of the future and of the unperceived present are studied under the third problem in order to show in my later chapter that there is no place for either skepticism or agnosticism in Sri Aurobindo's thought. According to Sri Aurobindo, all knowledge is within the power of humanity. According to him, unknown does not remain unknowable forever unless we choose to remain in ignorance.

The Indian epistemological tradition of Nyāya and Advaita is also discussed to bring out the role of reason and revelation in Indian thought and its relevance to Sri Aurobindo's epistemology, which is very much within the ancient Vedāntic tradition. The role of reason and sense experience has never been ignored in Indian epistemology. However, the highest and the ultimate pramāṇa has always been revelation which gives authentic knowledge of the reality paving the way for the immediate knowledge (apurkṣanubhūti). The justification of the pramāṇa theory as against Nāgārjuna's skepticism will be discussed with a view to consider Sri Aurobindo's epistemological stance in the light of the classical Indian epistemological tradition.

Chapter Three deals with a brief sketch of Sri Aurobindo's ontological standpoint since there are metaphysical presuppositions in Sri Aurobindo's
epistemology. Sri Aurobindo's metaphysics can be well understood in contrast to that of Śaṅkara's non-dualism. Śaṅkara, being an adherent of non-dualism, accepts Brahman as the only reality. If Brahman is the only reality, the world cannot be accepted as another reality since it will affect non-dualism. But, how does Śaṅkara account for the world which we experience? According to Śaṅkara, cause alone is real and effect is only an appearance. The world being an effect of Brahman is only an appearance and hence, has only empirical reality.

Sri Aurobindo challenges this view of Śaṅkara's. According to him, the Advaitic position can still be established after accepting the reality of the world. In agreement with the Upaniṣadic thought, Sri Aurobindo holds Brahman as the only reality. But, this non-dual principle is multi-dimensional in nature. It accommodates different opposites like one and many, finite and infinite, being and becoming, etc. It is integral and all-inclusive. To Sri Aurobindo, real monism or true Advaita is that which admits all things as one Brahman and does not seek to bisect its existence into two incompatible entities. Sri Aurobindo accounts for the existence of plurality and opposites, which appear to be contradictory to the essential nature of Brahman, by his theory of involution and evolution as well as the logic of the infinite. Sat-cit-ānanda, according to
Sri Aurobindo, takes plunge into ignorance in order to manifest the world by the process of self-concealment. Thus, the so-called ignorance is nothing but a self-limited and self-concentrated form of sat-cit-ānanda. It is not something opposed to knowledge. So, the principle of ignorance or avidya, being a self-limited and self-concentrated form of sat-cit-ānanda, cannot affect its unity. The consciousness-force of the absolute assumes the form of ignorance out of its own free will. Hence, the principle of ignorance cannot affect the Advaitic position of Sri Aurobindo.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the lower principles like mind, life, and matter are the subordinate forms of sat-cit-ānanda. In the course of evolution, according to him, mind can recover its divine light in the all-comprehending supermind. It is at the supermind level that man can attain the supramental consciousness and it is only in this highest consciousness that the nature and workings of the higher logic or the logic of the infinite can be realized. Human reason can have only a conceptual grasp of the nature and function of the logic of the infinite. By the logic of the infinite, Sri Aurobindo means that the divine acts are in accordance with its own law or reason. This logic of the infinite acts as a foundation of Sri Aurobindo's epistemology and metaphysics.
Epistemology of Sri Aurobindo has been taken for discussion in Fourth Chapter. In accordance with the Upaniṣadic thought, Sri Aurobindo speaks of two kinds of knowledge, lower and higher. The lower knowledge tries to understand the apparent phenomenon of existence externally by making use of the senses and the intellect. The higher knowledge aims at the knowledge of the truths of the existence in its source and reality. Here the approach is from within unlike the former. Though such a sharp distinction is made between these two forms of knowledge, they are, says Sri Aurobindo, two sides of seeking the one truth.

Ultimately, the highest object of knowledge, according to Sri Aurobindo, is that which is eternal, infinite, and absolute. It aims at a knowledge by which we can touch, enter and know by identity this eternal, infinite and absolute. But, since man is a mental creature, he must necessarily start from the knowledge of the world in which he lives by using ordinary instruments of knowledge. Man must necessarily go beyond the ordinary instruments and make use of suprasensuous and supramental means and faculties of knowledge since the ultimate object of knowledge is something which is suprasensuous and supramental. Here, Sri Aurobindo's view is in conformity with the Vedāntic thought. He says that our ways of knowing must be appropriate to that which is to be known.
The highest reality for Sri Aurobindo is integral in nature. In order to comprehend the integral reality, integral knowledge is required. The ultimate aim, for Sri Aurobindo, is to attain this integral knowledge.

By integral knowledge Sri Aurobindo means the knowledge of truth in all its modes of self-expression viz., the truth of the individual, the truth of the universe, and the truth of all that is beyond the universe. An integral spiritual consciousness must carry the knowledge of all the terms of being. It recognizes both the inconscient and the superconscient by perceiving the self-involvement of the absolute. Sri Aurobindo says that integral knowledge is not something to be acquired by the mind. It is not even knowledge gained through pure logical understanding or reasoning. On the other hand, it has to be uncovered, for it is veiled in our deeper consciousness. This knowledge is not sense-knowledge since no sense-knowledge can apprehend reality as an integral unity. It is an experience of inner realization. So, for Sri Aurobindo, it is the realization which forms the status of knowledge. It is the truth-experience or satya-darsana. For Sri Aurobindo, knowledge gained by sense experience and by intellectual conception is only knowledge by courtesy, but not knowledge in its essential nature. The contribution of sense experience and reason constitutes only a part of our total
knowledge. Knowledge is essentially and truly a kind of realization, which consists of three successive movements (i) internal vision, (ii) complete internal experience, and (iii) identity.

Sri Aurobindo chooses as his foundation the ancient Vedāntic theory of knowledge and tries to "rebuild" it in a new light with "new expression" suited to the present mentality. Following the ancient Vedāntic tradition, Sri Aurobindo takes experience in its widest possible sense and recognizes different aspects of experience. For him, "an integral knowledge demands an exploration, and unveiling of all the possible domains of consciousness and experience."³ Sri Aurobindo tries to explore, interpret, and integrate all such data, some of which he obtains from his spiritual experience supported by the accounts of similar experiences recorded in the Vedas, the Upanisads, the Bhagavad-gītā, and other spiritual classics of the East and the West.

According to Sri Aurobindo, most empiricists arbitrarily confine their philosophical investigations to ordinary waking experience. Empiricists hold that all knowledge can be traced back to sense-object contact. For Sri Aurobindo, this normal waking experience is really the middle part of our existence, which has a "subconscient" sphere below and a "superconscient" one above. He holds the
view that we have to take into account all the levels of experience, which help in gaining knowledge. Each level of experience reveals the knowledge of one specific aspect of reality. This view of Sri Aurobindo can be well understood in explaining the role of different instruments of knowledge corresponding to different means of knowledge.

Along the lines of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Sri Aurobindo accepts five external senses (*indriyas*), lower mind, (*manas*) and intellect (*buddhi*) as preliminary organs of human knowledge in a rising scale. He also discovers "supermind" as the highest organ of knowledge. Also, between the mind and supermind, he discovers intermediary instruments of knowledge like the higher mind, the illumined mind, the intuitive mind, and the overmind, which are in an ascending hierarchy. On the whole, Sri Aurobindo recognizes four means of knowledge.

Like Kant, Sri Aurobindo holds the view that sense-organs furnish us only with the raw materials of knowledge. He says that the sense experience has no meaning unless "it is translated into forms of sense-mind." The sense images are picked up by the sense-mind which interprets the received symbols and figures and arrives at a kind of understanding. Sri Aurobindo considers mind as the real sense underlying the five outer senses. The sense-mind in its sovereign state can directly perceive the inner
states and is aware of one's own existence. Moreover, the mind can develop other senses to know those things which are not grasped by the five senses.

However, Sri Aurobindo is not primarily interested in such extension of mind's power. He is interested in those truths which are beyond the perception of senses, but seizable by the perception of the reason. Inquiring into the nature of reason, he finds that it has two functions. In its mixed activity, it takes from sense experiences the data about the phenomenal world, then interprets and interrelates them, and draws inferences from them. In its pure aspect reason tries to go beyond the phenomenal world and forms the pure metaphysical principles. But, these metaphysical concepts only satisfy pure reason; they do not "fully satisfy the demands of our integral being." Ideas are mere promises if they are not fulfilled. Ideas about sensuous objects formed by reason through inferences are not fully accepted until they are verified by perception. Similarly, the non-sensuous ideas about the ultimate reality formed by reason are not fully accepted without some immediate, but non-sensuous experience. But, is such an experience possible? Sri Aurobindo says that the direct and non-sensuous experience about reality is not only possible, but also present in an obscure manner. It can be developed by yogic culture.
Though Sri Aurobindo recognizes the important role played by reason, he has not overlooked the limitations of reason in obtaining complete knowledge of the world, of ourselves, and also of the reality which is both immanent and transcendent in its nature. Knowledge gained through sense experience and reason remains "half-certain", half-dubious, indirect, and a mass of "significant images". In bringing out the limits of reason in comprehending the truth Sri Aurobindo thus puts in his Savitri:

She drags huge knowledge-bales through Matter's dust,
To reach utility immense bazar.
Apprentice she has grown to her old drudge;
An aided sense is her seeking's arbiter.
This now she uses as the assayer's stone.
And if she known not facts are husks of truth,
The husk she keeps, the kernel throws aside.5

Our mental knowledge is so narrow because ordinarily our mental consciousness remains at the surface level; and this makes a person enjoy egocentric individuality which, in turn, enables him to have subject-object differentiation and myself-otherself dualism. The separative ego-sense makes the individual suffer from sevenfold ignorance, viz. (i) the original ignorance, (ii) the cosmic ignorance, (iii) the egoistic ignorance, (iv) the temporal ignorance, (v) the psychological ignorance, (vi)
the constitutional ignorance, and (vii) the practical ignorance which appear in the mental level. Man must get rid of these sevenfold ignorance in order to obtain sevenfold knowledge.6

Sri Aurobindo is of the view that man is not destined to remain in the boundaries of ignorance. Man has the innate potentiality of opening himself into higher levels of consciousness, achieved either by natural evolutionary process or by the individual sadhana, following integral yoga. In this context Sri Aurobindo speaks of different minds representing different levels of consciousness. They are: (i) the higher mind, (ii) the illumined mind, (iii) the intuitive mind, (iv) the overmind, and (v) the supermind. These minds enable us to obtain different orders of knowledge in a hierarchy.

The higher mind is a mind of automatic spontaneous knowledge. It is a luminous thought-mind, a mind of spirit-born conceptual knowledge. The illumined mind gives access to a power of cognition far greater than that of the higher mind through the agencies of truth-sight and truth-light. The intuitive mind is revelatory in character followed by fourfold function - truth-seeking, truth-hearing, truth-seizing, and truth-correlation, which are based upon the meeting of the subject-consciousness with object-consciousness. Unlike other thinkers, Sri Aurobindo
does not regard intuition, as it is ordinarily understood, as the highest source of knowledge. Overmind consciousness is global in its cognition and can hold any number of seemingly fundamental differences together in a reconciling vision. The inherent defect of the overmind is that it cannot serve as the essential condition of the supreme truth consciousness, viz., full integrality. This calls for a still higher mind, which can act as the principle of total integration, i.e., supermind.

The supermind is nothing but the consciousness-force of sat-cit-ananda working according to some fixed truth, infinite principle or law. It is a selective and infinite faculty of knowledge. It shines in perfect knowledge and supreme light; hence, where mind fails, supermind succeeds. It has full and perfect knowledge of the "what" and "how" of things. The consciousness of individuality and separateness which we find in the mental level are merged altogether in an all-embracing and all-unifying vision of unity in the supermind level because of the emergence of the supramental consciousness resulting in a radical change in the working of mind. It uplifts the human instrumentality to a higher and qualitatively different dimension altogether. It is not abolished, but perfected; not surpassed, but fulfilled. According to Sri Aurobindo, gnostic consciousness is the source of knowledge.
in the level of supermind. To describe it accurately, Sri Aurobindo distinguishes viññāna from lower buddhi (intellectual knowledge), from higher buddhi (intuitive reason), and from caitanyaghana (consciousness of the infinite which is free from all ideations). Caitanyaghana is only one thread of the many-aspected movement of the consciousness. Gnosis is the immediate vision of the truth; it proceeds by identity. Knowledge of the gnosis is free from doubt, self-evident, self-existent, irrefragable, and absolute. It views things in itself unlike reason. In one view, it links the past and the present in relation to the totality. We are able to have integral knowledge only because of Viññāna. Viññāna which is a form of seer knowledge is much more authentic than thinking knowledge since a consciousness proceeding by sight has a more direct access to the truth of things than the consciousness relying on the truths of thought.

Sri Aurobindo identifies four kinds of knowledge. They are: (1) Knowledge by identity, (2) Knowledge by intimate direct contact, (3) Knowledge by separative direct contact, and (4) Wholly separative knowledge by indirect contact. Among these four forms of knowledge it is only knowledge by identity which gives us integral knowledge of the reality. The highest form of knowledge by identity is possible only by gnosis, the highest form of spiritual
experience which occurs in the supramental level of consciousness. Sri Aurobindo affirms that his theory of Brahman is ultimately based upon his mystic experience. But, is mystic experience an authentic source of knowledge or can a knowledge-claim be based on mystic experience? A deeper analysis is required to justify the knowledge-claims of the mystics in general and Sri Aurobindo in particular. The subject matter of my next chapter "Epistemology of Mysticism" deals with this issue.

In the Fifth Chapter I have tried to provide justification for the validity of mystic-claims from different angles. At the first instance two schools, viz., (i) perennialism and (ii) constructivism are taken into consideration in discussing the validity of mystic-claims. While the perennialists accept the validity of mystic-claims basically on the ground that there is a similarity in the core experience, constructivists deny the validity of mystic claims on the basis of diversity of mystic reports, which are again grounded upon the key premise that all our experience, essentially, are mediated by a form of life, a cultural situation, a set of social and historical relations. In this context, the views of both Thomas S. Kuhn and N. Hanson are brought out which come very close to Steven T. Katz's views.
Stephen H. Phillips comes forward with a third alternative. He is of the opinion that diversity in mystic experience cannot be the reason for invalidity of mystic experience. He holds that there can be diversity in the mystic experience themselves since the reality is so vast that each one can see the same truth from different angles.

Sometimes the critics of mysticism treat the mystic-claims invalid on the ground of ineffability. A few arguments are brought forth in support of this view. The main contention of ineffability theory is that for any kind of possible human knowledge, verifiability and communicability are interconnected in such a way that any knowledge which is verbally inexpressible falls outside the domain of knowledge. But the supporters of mystic-claims bring forth a few explanations in giving various reasons for ineffability in mystic-claims. Phillips sees the problem of ineffability from a different angle. He argues that mystic experiences do not always remain ineffable. Mystics, being human beings, share human form of life. The non-mystics can understand to some extent the mystic language since the mystics use general terms on the one hand, and figurative speech on the other, which basically forms the part of human language.

Many a time the basic knowledge-claims of the intuitionists, the mystics, and revelationists have been
forcefully questioned by the logical empiricists, analysts and positivists, either because they fall outside the standards prescribed therefor, or because they are not subject to any empirical verification. Sri Aurobindo claims that he has the right to be sure of his knowledge-claims though they are not based on any usual rational methods of knowledge. He is of the view that our ordinary standards of knowledge have to be replaced by novel standards. Sri Aurobindo argues at length in justifying the mystic-claims which are supramental in nature. But it does not mean that Sri Aurobindo wants us to accept the validity of any mystic experience without being critical. He emphatically says that all experience, in order to be held true, must be capable of verification by the same or similar experience: that is to say, others can verify it in their own experiences provided they acquire the capacity, or can follow the inner methods, by which that experience and verification are made possible. For Sri Aurobindo, ordinary conception of knowledge situation will have to be radically revised.

Sri Aurobindo justifies the veridicality of his mystic experience, which is parallel to that of sense experience. Phillips justifies this argument of Sri Aurobindo's by analysing from foundationalists point of view.
Sometimes the mystic-claims are rejected on the ground that they are unscientific. Sri Aurobindo opposes this view by showing that the method of yoga is as systematic and methodological, as any method adopted by science. Sri Aurobindo ultimately says that our ordinary consciousness must go beyond the usual level in order to appreciate the mystic position in general and his views in particular.

In my last chapter, I have tried to establish that Sri Aurobindo's epistemology is integral in nature, even though it may appear to many that it is too much of an overestimation of his thought. But a sympathetic and unprejudiced understanding of his epistemology reveals the fact that there is a harmonious blend and filling up of the gap among the various philosophical systems of spiritualism, idealism, realism, mysticism, pragmatism, etc. We find a kind of assimilation of different faculties of human experience in a comprehensive truth vision. Sri Aurobindo justifiably builds up an epistemology supporting his integral metaphysics.

Sri Aurobindo is aware of the partial views of existing epistemological traditions like rationalism, empiricism, transcendentalism, and even irrationalism. All these schools, according to him, are one-sided in their approach because they consider one of the means of knowledge
as the highest. He further holds that each source of knowledge enables us to have one specific aspect of the reality, and not reality in its totality. Sri Aurobindo does recognize the important role of the existing methods of knowledge; however, for him, though they are necessary, they are not sufficient in comprehending the multidimensional reality. In order to substantiate his standpoint, I have brought in Kant, Śaṅkara, and Rāmānuja. We find a kind of similarity between Kant and Sri Aurobindo in their approach to the mechanism of knowledge episode; but, while Kant stops his epistemological enterprise at the level of phenomena, Sri Aurobindo extends it even to noumena.

According to Sri Aurobindo, there is nothing like limitation of knowledge. In his system there is no place either for agnosticism or skepticism. He says that if reason is accepted as the highest source of knowledge, agnosticism or skepticism is the final conclusion. Unlike Śaṅkara, Sri Aurobindo does not say that all relational knowledge is ignorance. Again, unlike Rāmānuja, he does not hold that knowledge is necessarily relational and qualified. For him, knowledge is both relational and suprarelational; further he holds that ignorance does not imply non-knowledge, but only incomplete knowledge; and this position of Sri Aurobindo is in accordance with his metaphysics. Sri Aurobindo says that it is only by logic of the infinite we
can understand the complementary nature of both relational and suprarelational forms of knowledge. The nature and function of the logic of the infinite has been brought out in justifying integral epistemology. Sri Aurobindo's concept of integral knowledge stands as a good testimony to his integral epistemology. According to him, an integral knowledge demands an exploration and unveiling of all the possible domains of consciousness. He further says that integral knowledge carries in it a knowledge of all the terms of being; it links the highest to the lowest. For him, reality which is multidimensional in nature has to be realized only by gnostic consciousness which can embrace in itself all the terms of being without bringing in any kind of contradiction. So, for him, intuition as it is ordinarily understood is not the highest means of knowledge since it is only a few steps ahead of the mental consciousness. Sri Aurobindo logically justifies his integral knowledge on the basis of the logic of the infinite. By the term "logic of the infinite" Sri Aurobindo means the divine acts in accordance with its own law or reasons. Sri Aurobindo is of the view that our reason is not plastic enough to perceive the reality from different angles. But it does not mean that Sri Aurobindo does not give due credit to the finite logic. In this context, formal logic which makes use the law of identity,
the law of contradiction, and the law of excluded middle; transcendental logic of Kant, and dialectical logic of Hegel are brought out in showing the limits of finite logic; especially, the limitations of the law of contradiction have been brought out in showing the merit of the logic of the infinite.