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Introduction
CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 MERITS OF THE STUDY

"Education" writes Thomas F. W., one of the most distinguished Indologists, "is no exotic in India. There is no country where the love of learning had so early an origin or has exercised so lasting and powerful influence".¹ No doubt countries like China, Egypt and Babylonia rank with India as being the cradles of ancient civilization, but no other country has left behind such enduring marks of heritage as India. Her art and literature, which survive to the present day, bear eloquent testimony to her cultural institutions of ancient days. These institutions with the hallmark of the hoary past have lived through the ages on account of their system of education, which is acknowledged to be extra-ordinarily sound.

Indian civilization is one of the oldest in the world. India has been famous from the earliest times for her educational system, her culture and her philosophy. Certain valuable and abiding elements have survived in the Indian educational system. These have proved to be the sole foundation of Indian culture. The strength and stamina of the objectives of Indian education are thus obvious. The mansion of Indian heritage and moral values rests securely on these.

In ancient India religion was the main spring of one's activities. It was all-absorbing interest and embraced not only prayer and worship but everything—philosophy, morality, law and government. The entire life of an Indian sprang from
religion. In China and Greece, arts and philosophy, no doubt, originated from religion but still were largely independent of it. Religion saturated educational ideals too. In the days of yore the aim of education was to develop various aspects of life and also to ensure social service. At the end of seventh century B.C. the Vedic ritual and learning became more and more complex. Moreover education was mostly confined to the Brahmanas. Religion was reduced to a complicated ritual to be performed by Brahmanic priests in Sanskrit language which was very difficult to be followed by common people. This Brahmanic system was mainly responsible for the birth of two new religions, viz., Buddhism and Jainism.

It should also be noted that both these religions did not recognise the authority of the Vedas and challenged the exclusive claims of the Brahmanas to the priesthood. Buddha and Mahaveera who were the founders of Buddhism and Jainism taught through Pali language which during those days was the common language of the people. Moreover they imparted education to all people, irrespective of caste, creed or sex. Buddhism is one of the several religions born in India. It had spread all over India by about 600 A.D. It had grown as a 'Sangha' and spread through 'Viharas'. The Buddhist Viharas were the centres of education. Buddhist monks were engaged in teaching. They also supervised and controlled the entire educational system. Monastic system of education was introduced by Buddhism. It is very interesting to note that Monasteries which were attached to Buddhist temples served the double purpose of imparting education and of training persons for the priesthood. During those days the two monasteries namely Nalanda and Taxila, had acquired an international reputation. It is heartening, to note that
Indian culture was at its zenith during those days. Numerous foreign scholars and pilgrims came to this country to drink deep at the fount of her culture. But very soon Hinduism absorbed the best elements of Buddhism, which disappeared from India with the advent of the Muslims.

Several parts of India were under the Muslims in the Middle Ages, therefore meant Islamic education. Muslim rulers too gave importance to education. The reason is that the Holy Kuran says that providing education is an important duty of an individual. Prophet Mohammed has said: "It is more important to give education to one's children than to give gold." Muslim rulers did not interfere with the education of the Hindus and Muslim education was confined mostly to the followers of Islam. They had set up two types of educational institutions, viz, the Makhtabs (Primary Schools) the Madrassahs (schools for higher learning). The primary education was brought within easy reach of the people as every mosque had a Maktab attached to it, whereas the Madrassahs were established in important towns. The credit for organising education on a systematic basis goes to Akbar the Great, the famous contemporary of Queen Elizabeth I. After the death of Aurangzeb, the last great Moghul, the Moghul Empire collapsed like a house cards and the whole country was over-run by war-lords. Education naturally received a set back and was at its lowest ebb during the period. 

Another note worthy feature of ancient Indian education, It 'spread downwards; it was not built up from below. Indian civilization was a product of the country not of the town, of the forest, not of the city'. It should be noted that the forest was the fountain head of our civilization. It not only nurtured our Vedic and Buddhistic institutions but also it used to bring students
into direct contact with nature and was calculated to develop a most receptive frame of mind. In this regard Tagore has remarked, "The current of civilization that flowed from its forests inundated the whole of India".4

The British came to India in 1600 to develop trade. Hindu and Muslim primary schools were functioning in India at the time. But soon the British flag followed British trade and those came to buy and sell stayed to rule. For a long time after it entered India the East India Company had ignored the educational system. We took our educational system to America and lost our colonies there. Let us not repeat the mistake in India. Such was the prevailing British view. Because of this sentiment the East India Company ignored education in India. But the Christian missionaries who came to convert Indians opened several schools all over the country by 1989. The company then realised the value of the educational mission of the missionaries. It extended financial help for some time and itself undertook the propagation of education.

The present education system of the country is the result of Mucaulay's Minute and Woods Despatch. These two documents were inspired by the then utilitarian philosophy, a sense of superiority of the West and the administrative requirements of the British India. About two centuries have elapsed since the present system of education was introduced in this country. It has no doubt succeeded in producing an army of clerks, petty officials and public men, but it had failed to meet India's needs. Hence a feeling of discontent with the existing system of education prevails in the country. The Indians of that time were fully conscious that the present educational system should be radically overhauled, if it is to serve the needs of the future generation.
Among such Indian thinkers most remarkable and notable were G. K. Gokhale, Gurudas Banerjee, Ras Behari Ghosh and Rabindranath Tagore who formed plans for the propagation of national education. Apart from these Mahatma Gandhi pleaded for basic education. Maharshi Aurobindo started Ashram School and Rabindranath Tagore established "Shantiniketan" School. The contributions of these great personalities to education is magnanimous and stupendous.

This study concentrates on the philosophical and educational ideas and thoughts expressed by the trio-philosophers of India namely Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, who were the contemporaries, and who belonged to British India. According to Taneja V.R. the names of Mahatma Gandhi, Maharshi Aurobindo and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan need special attention among those who have made important contributions in the construction of modern India. These great thinkers have much impressed Indian education with their stupendous and magnanimous ideas, views and thoughts. That is why in the firmament of Indian Education these four master minds will remain outstanding. It is an admitted fact that they were not only theorists but also practitioners. They were successful in bringing Indians together on the binding basis of all that is essential in our civilization and then showed the right path not only to Indians but also to the whole world.

Great men are not all alike. Some great men are made by the age in which they live; others make the age what it is. These three great men whose lives and teachings and whose impact on the Indian educational scene is the
subject of this study. They have helped to make modern India what it is and what it promises to evolve into.

It is but natural that one could find more commonalities in the educational ideas and thoughts of the educational philosophers of India who are selected for this study, namely Maharshi Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan and Rabindranath Tagore, as they were idealists, naturalists, humanists, spiritualists, nationalists, internationalists and patriots etc. Moreover the most glaring similarity among these trio-philosophers is that they tried their utmost and contributed much for the Indianization of education. The term 'Indianization' implies to accept whatever is good in India and to enrich it further with the help of better elements found else where. The foreign elements may be accepted if they are good. These trio philosophers have endeavoured to bring education nearer to the cultural soil of India i.e. Indianization. Vishwa-Bharati of Rabindranath Tagore and Ashram School of Maharshi Aurobindo are the glaring examples of Indianization of education.

During British rule these educational institutions continued their struggle for life in the hope of a better future atmosphere and started developing after the country achieved freedom. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has expressed his views pertaining to Indianization of education while discussing the role of university. These trio educational philosophers of India have wielded great influence on the education of their times, particularly during the British period. They were of the firm opinion that in the modern man there is no harmony between the outer life of action and in the inner life of emotions. Naturally there arises a crisis of character owing to the deterioration of values in
personal, social, spiritual, moral and religious spheres of man. Hence they
gave much importance to the values of life. They were of the firm opinion that
the present system of education should be based on the values of life. In
short they upheld the value education. Hence their comparative study is well-
merited, as they were synchronized spiritual visionaries of India.

1.2 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The history of education is the history of life and experiments of great
educational philosophers whose germs of ideas continue to inspire educational
thoughts and practice across the world. The last two hundred and fifty years
will go down in the history as the most formative year of modern education.
Education as we see it today owes much to the wisdom of East as well as
of the West. To put the same in clear fashion both East and West have
contributed in the past to the educational ideas, ideals and ideologies. The
super structure of present day education rests on the firm foundation they
have laid by their great contributions. Rousseau, Froebel, Montessory,
Pestolozzi, Cald Well Cook, Dewey, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekanand,
Rabindranath Tagore, Maharshi Aurobindo, Annie Besant, Swami Dayanand
have done much to shape the future course of educational practice at home
and abroad. There is no dearth of literature on the theory and practice of their
educational ideas.

Among the Indian educators the most noble and notable are Maharshi
Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan.
These great thinkers have not only gave us theories of education based on
all that is essential in Indian civilization and culture but also their scheme in actual practice. It is an admitted fact that they took keen interest in philosophising education.

Education in India during British period was not properly imparted. It was mainly organised to help the British rulers serve their objective or maintaining their hold on India. Hence it was vehemently criticised by many educationists of India. In this regard Nurrulah and Naik said, "So long as British held the political power in India, almost all educational controversies had a political bias." Indian experts opined that modern education in India especially during the British period had failed to solve national problems and that its few blessings could hardly be held to compensate for the evils of political slavery or economic exploitation. The reasons for this are umpteen in number. The most important ones are (a) failure to secure the required human sources, (b) failure to establish the place of India in the comity of nations, (c) failure to evolve synthesis of East and West, (d) failure to develop India, socially, politically and economically etc.

The dawn of the 20th century shall ever remain memorable in the history of Indian education. It was a time when a strong wave of national awakening had over whelmed the masses. At the same time a keen sense of patriotism arose in the hearts of the people of India. Apart from these a keen consciousness and love for their culture, civilization and literature had been engendered in the minds of the great Indian people. This awakening favourably influenced the educational system of the country. The Indians
began to realise that their education should be of national character. These trio philosophers also strongly pleaded that education should be based on national character. At the same time they had in their minds an idea about education for world civilization, which they had expressed on many occasions. According to them, education should be designed in such a manner that it should produce global minded, socially alert and purposeful scholars, thinkers and educators. The germs of education for world civilization are to be found in the institutions established by Maharshi Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore, namely Ashram school and Shantiniketan, respectively. Now these two institutions have been turned into international centres of education and world university centres. These two institutions no doubt add a new dimensions to UNESCO'S activities for the promotion of international co-operation and understanding and well-being. They are the universities of world culture and civilization. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan has expressed his views about education for world civilization, especially while discussing the role and function of University. Hence the need and significance of this comparative study lies in these main factors.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To compare the idealistic philosophies of the contemporary philosophers of India, namely, Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, in order to find out the relevance of their ideas in the present day context. Hence the problem is restated as "A Comparative Study of Education and Philosophical thoughts of Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan with reference to values of life."
1.4 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the present study are as follows-

1) To explain the educational views which reflect the values of life cherished by these trio-philosophers such as personal, moral, social, spiritual, cultural and aesthetic.

2) To compare and contrast critically the educational ideas and views of these trio-philosophers of India.

3) To study in detail the educational and philosophical thoughts of these trio-philosophers belonging to the British India, namely Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, in order to find out the relevance of their ideas in the present day context.

4) To explain these trio-philosophers as the prophets of humanism, idealism and spiritualism etc.

5) To acquire knowledge about Maharshi Aurobindo's Integral Education, Rabindranath Tagore's Education for Fullness and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan's Religious Education.

6) To evaluate their work as the educationists and to say in what line did they make an advance over the past educators.

7) To compare the educational implications and thoughts of these trio philosophers with the thoughts of other modern thinkers of India.

8) To trace the influence of these eminent philosophers on modern educational thought and practice.

9) To discuss the merits and demerits of the educational and philosophical thoughts of these trio-educational philosophers.
1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In the modern world where blessings of education must be endowed upon each and every individual, it is necessary to evolve a right type of education based upon the fundamental and eternal truths and values of life. Now-a-days human society is marching ahead in a bid to reconstruct itself. In the process of this reconstruction, the role of present education comes in. The education itself is being reconstructed by adapting itself to the fast changing socio-economic environments and also to the changing human values in accordance with the needs of the day. Keeping these in their minds Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan have discussed the educational problems and views and thoughts. They have also discussed educational problems from the point of view of values and norms of our country. They advocated that education should be according to the realities of life. According to them any education cut away from life is useless.

To study these trio educational philosophers is to study the finer sensibilities and nobler visions of life from diverse perspectives. It is a study unique and unparalleled, thrilling and pulsating, vibrant and poignant. Love, freedom, joy, devotion, soul consciousness and spirituality all these find a crystallized and marvellous world of revelation in their creative contributions. Their views, ideas and thoughts pertaining to education have been reflected in different areas of education.

Hence the scope of this study covers the general philosophy, educational ideas, aims of education, concept of education, views about curriculum, methods of teaching, discipline, the role of the teacher and their educational contributions of these trio-philosophers.
1.6 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

In pursuance of above stated objectives, the assumptions of the study are formulated as follows-

1) It will throw light on the spiritual excellence of Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and to conclude that they were the synchronised spiritual visionaries of India.

2) It will enable to find out their philosophical and educational thoughts which reflect their naturalism, idealism, individualism, humanism etc.

3) It will help to bring about how far their educational ideals have been incorporated in the educational institutions established at Bolapur and Pondicherry by Rabindranath Tagore and Maharshi Aurobindo respectively.

4) It will help to find out in which philosophical and educational thoughts and views do they have commonalities.

5) It will help to find out where do they differ in their educational ideas.

6) It will enable to discuss the place of "Auroville" and "Vishwabharati" in the national system of education.

7) It will assist to evaluate their contributions to educational field.

8) It will assist to compare and contrast the educational contributions of them, with reference to their aims, content, methods, curriculum of education etc.

9) It will help to assess their contributions to educational thought and practice of India.
1.7 HYPOTHESIS (INTERROGATIVE)

In what way there is a significant difference amongst the educational philosophies, ideas, thoughts and views expressed by the trio-philosophers namely Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan?

1.8 TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY

The following tools are used for data collection-

1) Auto-biographies.
2) Writings and Speeches.
3) Relevant Literature.
4) Visit to places.
5) Web-site and Internet.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is subject to the following limitations.

1) The study is not exhaustive in nature.

2) It is based only on the philosophical and educational thoughts of these trio-philosophers.

3) It is restricted only to the thoughts which are related to the values of life cherished by them such as personal, moral, spiritual and cultural.

4) It is limited to the comparison of the idealistic philosophies of them in order to find out the relevance of their ideas in the present day context.
5) As the study of philosophical and educational views, thoughts and ideas of these three great thinkers constitute a vast area of investigation so the study cannot cover up fully this vast area of investigation.

6) Apart from primary sources of data for the investigation the secondary sources present a formidable range of investigation.

7) As there are umpteen number of articles, monographs, internet, website, appraisals, books written by a host of eminent writers and scholars so an exhaustive tapping of this vast range of sources is very difficult.

8) The study is restricted to descriptive, analytical and comparative methods.

1.10 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

As the study is merely descriptive in nature the investigator has made an honest attempt to study the various relevant books on the educational ideas of the trio-philosophers namely Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and those published on them and their thoughts and views. The investigator has tried his utmost to make the study as objective as possible by employing two types of resources.

The first type of resource that has been employed in this study is primary resource and the second one is secondary resource.

Primary Sources

Under primary sources philosophical methods are to be used such as induction, deduction, analysis, synthesis and dialectic. In this study descriptive,
comparative, analytical and philosophical methods have been employed profitably.

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources which have been made use of in this study are auto-biographies, commentaries, books, articles published in various periodicals, journals, newspapers, magazines, encyclopedias and other allied publications.

1.11 DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The investigator has designed the study in nine chapters. The first chapter contains introduction, need and significance of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, scope, assumptions, hypothesis, definitions of some important terms, limitations, methodology and design of the study. In the second chapter review of related literature is discussed. The third chapter deals with a brief life and works of the trio-philosophers namely Maharshi Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. It provides their biographies in a nutshell. The fourth chapter explains the beliefs held by trio-philosophers, which throws light on the stages of their development into educationists, humanists, idealists, naturalists and spiritualists which have been compared and contrasted. The fourth chapter explains the beliefs held by these trio-philosophers. They have been analysed, compared and contrasted. The fifth chapter deals with the values of life cherished by these trio philosophers. The major values of life cherished by them such as Personal values, Moral values, Social Values, Spiritual values,
Cultural Values and Aesthetic Values. These values cherished by them have been also compared and contrasted. In the sixth chapter the educational and philosophical thoughts of them have been discussed and analysed by explaining their philosophy of life and philosophy of education. A brief comparative perspective has been provided at the end. The seventh chapter explains their contributions to educational thought and practice of India. At the end of each, analysis and comparative viewpoints of them have been provided. In the eighth chapter the data has been analysed and interpreted. The ninth chapter contains the summary and main findings of the study. It also contains suggestions for the improvement of education and suggestions for further research.
References


