CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Life-Sketch

Answering letters and notes in the third person in the book `On Himself' Sri Aurobindo said, ``It would be only myself who could speak of things in my past giving them their true form and significance. You have persisted in giving a biography - is it really necessary or useful? The attempt is bound to fail because neither you nor anyone knows anything of all my life; it has not been on the surface for men to see.''

Later in a letter to Nirodbaran on June 3, 1935 he again said ``I may be son of my father or mother in certain respects but most of me is as foreign to them as if I had been born in New York or Paraguay'.'
On 15th August 1872 Sri Aurobindo was born at the house number 8 Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata. His father Dr Kristo Dhone Ghose was an anglophile. Sri Aurobindo was Dr Ghose’s third son, the other two being Benoybhushan and Manomohan. Dr Ghose’s daughter Sarojini and another son Barindra Kumar was born in 1877 and 1880.

Dr Ghose named Sri Aurobindo as Aravinda Ackroyd Ghose and decided on keeping Sri Aurobindo away from every Indian influence. At Sri Aurobindo’s name-giving ceremony one Miss Annette Ackroyd, a friend of Dr Ghose was present. Dr Krishto Dhone with his liking for all things English probably decided on adding Ackroyd to Sri Aurobindo’s name.

Dr Ghose engaged Miss Pagett, an English nurse to look after his three children. They easily picked up English but could not speak Bengali. The only Indian influence on them was learning of a bit of Hindustani from the house butler. In 1877 when Sri Aurobindo was five years old, he, along with his elder brothers Benoybhushan and Manomohan were sent to Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling for studies. The school was run by Irish nuns. In 1879 Dr Krishto Dhone and his wife Swarnalata took Sri Aurobindo, his two brothers and sister to England. There Sri Aurobindo grew up under the guidance of
Reverend William Drewett, a congregational minister and his wife Mrs Drewett.

They stayed at 84 Shakespeare Street, Manchester. Dr Krishto Dhone left instructions with the Drewett that his sons and daughter should not be allowed to make any acquaintance with anything Indian or undergo any Indian influence.

While Sri Auroindo’s elder brothers were sent to Manchester Grammar School, the Drewetts privately taught him. Mr Drewett was an accomplished scholar. He taught Sri Aurobindo Latin and made him proficient in English and well grounded in History. Mrs Drewett taught him geography, arithmetic and French. Sri Aurobindo read Keats, Shelley and Shakespeare and the Bible on his own. He also wrote some verse for the local journal Fox’s Weekly.

Sri Aurobindo was admitted to St Paul’s School London in September 1884 and studied there till 1889. Sri Aurobindo’s profound knowledge of Latin gave him the opportunity to study Greek and pursue higher class studies. At St Paul’s he undertook extensive studies in classical and modern European literature. He won the Butterworth 2nd Prize in Literature and found an Honourable Mention in the Bedford History Prize. During this period he also taught himself Italian,
German, Spanish and history of ancient, mediaeval and modern Europe.

In December 1889, he ranked first at the scholarship examination of King's College, Cambridge University excelling in Greek and Latin. He received a 'record' 557 marks out of 600 marks in Greek and standing second in Latin.

Sri Aurobindo was made a member of the very prestigious 'King's Elite' group, the only Indian to achieve such a distinction until then. On being a member of the group and a scholar in classical studies, Sri Aurobindo received a) free tuition, b) a gown to wear and c) an annual scholarship of 80 pounds. He also picked up high marks in mathematics, political economy, English history and English Literature. His English and French compositions were outstanding.

At Cambridge, Sri Aurobindo proved himself an outstanding scholar and was named the joint winner of the prestigious Rawley Prize for the best composition in Greek Iambics and Latin Hexameter for two consecutive years, a rare recognition achieved by any Indian in the history of King's College.

In the important University examination he won higher distinctions securing a 1st Class in Classical Tripos, Part I, 1892
He, however, did not bother to take the degree as he felt it was necessary only for those interested in pursuing an academic career in England. He was more interested on returning to India and take up the cause of freeing his motherland India from British rule.

Sri Aurobindo came to Cambridge to study for the Indian Civil Service (ICS) examination and sat for the open examination in June 1889. He ranked 11 out of 250 candidates. Like other probationers Sri Aurobindo too was granted an allowance of 300 pounds, half of which would be given in two instalments after the periodic examination and other half after the final. There he found teachers like John Neyville Keynes, father of John Maynard Keynes and others like Oscar Browning. At Cambridge, he had contemporaries whose names figured in the 'New Oxford Book of English Verse'. He studied ICS for two years but decided not to present himself for the horse riding examination in order to get disqualified from the service. Because of his brilliant academic career and marvellous performing records in ICS, he was offered two opportunities to present himself for the test.
He roamed the streets of London and decided not to appear for the riding test. Later Sri Aurobindo said, "being ICS is not brilliant" and at that point he found it to be a scavenger’s job as it only involved `fixing criminals and writing reports’ for the government.

A polyglot and a polymath, Sri Aurobindo left England without taking the Classical Tripos degree from King’s College Cambridge and also the ICS certificate. Sri Aurobindo had a bigger purpose to serve. To serve India, his motherland.

After leaving England Sri Aurobindo joined the services of Baroda’s Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwar. He joined the revenue department and in the secretariat work of the Maharaja. Afterwards, he was appointed Professor of English and finally Vice Principal of Baroda College.

At Baroda, Sri Aurobindo learnt Sanskrit and several modern Indian languages. He was eager to assimilate the spirit of Indian civilization and its forms past and present. While living in Baroda, Sri Aurobindo indulged in literary and political activity.
He wrote a series of seven articles under the subtitle ‘New Lamps for the Old’ in *Induprakash*, a nationalist journal published from Mumbai, from 16th July to 27th August 1894.

In those articles Sri Aurobindo justified and advocated French and Irish styles of guerrilla warfare and open revolution by sword and fire to drive out the British from India. In the articles Sri Aurobindo denounced the Congress policy of prayer, petition and protest and called upon the masses to extend their activities beyond the circle of the bourgeois or middle class.

In Sri Aurobindo’s opinion the leaders of the Indian National Congress (established in December 1885) were representatives of the Indian bourgeoisie and their position and attitude did not reflect on the real aspirations of the masses, especially the workers and peasants of India. The colonial rulers threatened to prosecute the paper and its writer and forced the editor, K Y Deshpande, Sri Aurobindo’s friend at Cambridge, to stop publishing such articles or face the wrath of the British government.
Between 1893 and 1906, Sri Aurobindo spent most time in silent political activity working from behind for the liberation of India. He involved himself with a number of secret societies operating from Western India and started sending emissaries to Bengal to conduct guerrilla action and wage war against the colonial state.

Sri Aurobindo, however, was careful that such an open revolution against the state can only become a reality if there were a mass awakening. In Sri Aurobindo’s opinion the field preparation for the open revolution might occupy a period of thirty years.

When the political movement opposing the Government’s proposal to partition the Bengal presidency broke out in Bengal, Sri Aurobindo took the opportunity to leave Baroda service and return to Bengal.

In 1906, he joined as the Principal of the newly-founded Bengal National College (the parent body of the present Jadavpur University) only to quit it a year after he was prosecuted and inflicted with the charge of sedition for printing an anonymous letter - ‘Politics for Indians’ in Bande Mataram, a nationalist daily paper.
Sri Aurobindo was the key person behind the paper but never held any official post. This came to be known as the famous 'Bande Mataram' case. Sri Aurobindo, however, was acquitted as nothing seditious could be proved against him or the paper.

During this period Sri Aurobindo also accepted his younger brother Barindra Kumar's suggestion of starting a Bengali newspaper 'Yugantar'. The paper propagated absolute denial of British rule and preached open revolt.

After the Bande Mataram case Sri Aurobindo shot into prominence and became the principal leader of the Congress nationalists, who were opposed to the moderate section of the Congress led by Surendranath Banerjee and Dadabhai Naoroji.

His main idea was to lead the country and the Congress party to action against British rule on the model of Sinn Fein movement in Ireland. Sri Aurobindo wanted to capture and convert the Congress into an instrument of revolutionary action instead of making the party a centre of timid constitutional agitation.
Till 1906, Sri Aurobindo took part in politics from behind the scenes as he was with Baroda service and had not decided to leave it. His active involvement started when Raja Subhodh Mullick, one of Sri Aurobindo’s comrades in the secret societies, contributed Rs one lakh to set up the Bengal National College.

Leaving Baroda service Sri Aurobindo joined as it’s first Principal on a monthly salary of Rs 150 as against the Rs 500 he received in Baroda. In his own words ‘I remained active in politics between 1902 – 1910’. Till 1906, when he came to Bengal permanently Sri Aurobindo was mostly unseen. He worked from behind. In Bengal he was thrice prosecuted of which two were on charges of sedition in Bande Mataram (1907) and Karmayogin (1910) cases and one an act of war against the state in the Alipore Bomb case (1908).

In May 1908, he was arrested in the Alipore Bomb Case and was incarcerated for one year in solitary confinement at Alipore jail. After being acquitted at the District Sessions Court at Alipore, on grounds of insufficient evidence, Sri Aurobindo came out of jail and
started publishing two more journals, *Karmayogin* in English and *Dharma* in Bengali. Sri Aurobindo was also acquitted by the Calcutta High Court.

In effect, Sri Aurobindo remained in active politics for only two and half years. Out of his four years of active politics in Bengal, he spent one year in jail. In jail, Sri Aurobindo himself admitted to having paranormal experiences that had long-lasting effects on his future life.

He underwent a radical spiritual transformation. After arriving from Baroda, for the first six months, he was mostly involved in household matters and often fell sick. However, in two and half years of active politics, the impact he left in the minds of colonial rulers was massive and debilitating.

Documents available from 'Morley Papers' between April 14 and May 26, 1910 show that after the Secretary of State for India, Lord Morley had ruled out deportation of Sri Aurobindo, the then Viceroy Lord Minto wrote to Morley, "Aurobindo Ghose is the most dangerous man that British India has to reckon with'"
Therefore the imperial government made all arrangements to ensure that Sri Aurobindo never sets foot on British Indian soil. To keep him away the colonial masters took every step possible including constantly pressing for his deportation with appropriate government authorities so that Sri Aurobindo could never return to British India.

On hearing that he would be deported and once again tried and prosecuted for writing a seditious article, `To my Countrymen' in Karmayogin he departed from Bengal on March 3, 1910 and arrived via Chandennagore to the French enclave of Pondicherry on April 4, 1910. He lived underground at Chandennagore in Hooghly for one and half months before finally fleeing the colonial police on March 31, 1910. From records available with Sri Aurobindo Ashram Archives, Pondicherry, it is found that the Zamindars of Kodiyalam in Tamilnadu belonging to the Iyengars were keeping close watch on Sri Aurobindo's activities during the Alipore Bomb Trial and had located many similarities with the prophecies of their Guru one Nagai Japtha. The Guru had said that a yogi whom he termed as `Uthara Yogi' would come and settle there.
In 1908 K V Rangaswami Iyengar, elder brother of Sri Aurobindo’s biographer, K V Srinivasa Iyengar was almost sure that Sri Aurobindo was the same person that their guru had prophecied almost four decades ago. It is still not known when exactly did the Iyengar’s set up contact with Sri Aurobindo. As per Ashram Archive records, the contact person could have been one Sri Sharma of Mavoor, a devotee of Kali and living in Kolkata who rendered Sri Aurobindo with financial assistance to move to Pondicherry from Chandennagore.

Until now, the issue appears conflicting as there are also documents to prove as if Rangaswami Iyengar was not aware of Sri Aurobindo’s arrival to Pondicherry and had no role to play in it.

Sri Aurobindo had planned a return to Bengal from Pondicherry within three months but finally did not do so, even after he was acquitted for the third time by the Calcutta High Court. The acquittal
came in November 1910, almost nine months after he arrived in Pondicherry in April 1910. Then there were long debates in the British Parliament led by Ramsay Macdonald and Keir Hardie who lambasted the Conservative government in U.K. for failing to protect and honour men of such high calibre and intellect like Sri Aurobindo. Macdonald read most of Sri Aurobindo's articles in Karmayogin and said `there was nothing terrorist or extremist. On contrary the articles de-justify use of terror or extreme force to win India's freedom'.

Meanwhile, a series of communication were sent from the British government to bring Sri Aurobindo back. Indian luminaries like Rabindranath Tagore, Motilal Nehru, Chittaranjan Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, Subhas Chandra Bose and even Mahatma Gandhi tried to persuade him to return and lead India's struggle for freedom. He turned down all requests and lived in Pondicherry for forty years until he passed away on 5 December 1950. During this period he interpreted politics, society, spirituality, history and literature through a synthetic approach in the journal Arya between 1914 and 1921. He gave
suggestions and engaged himself in most political events across the
globe and in India, but never got involved in it.

During this period he also evolved a new system of yoga and
named it as 'Integral Yoga'\textsuperscript{11} and also wrote the metaphysical epic

poem, \textit{Savitri} \textsuperscript{12} consisting of 23,813 lines. It is considered as

one of the longest poems in the history of English literature.

Sri Aurobindo is considered one of India's best

visionaries and political mind who voluntarily chose to lead a life in

seclusion in Pondicherry.

Interestingly Sri Aurobindo's was neither a power hungry

politician nor a yogi of the traditional type. He was a free - thinker

and remained to be so throughout his life. However, the interesting

questions is whether he arrived in Pondicherry as a Yogi or a

political refugee.
The Setting

The following passage is a third person account of Sri Aurobindo written to Motilal Roy, \textsuperscript{13} `enough had been done to change the whole face of Indian politics and the whole spirit of the Indian people to make Independence its aim. His own personal intervention in politics would therefore no longer be indispensable. His retirement from political activity was complete, just as was his personal retirement into solitude. But this did not mean, as most people supposed, that he had retired into some height of spiritual experience devoid of any further interest in the world or in the fate of India. Even in his retirement Sri Aurobindo kept close watch on all that was happening in the world and in India and actively intervened whenever necessary, but solely with a `spiritual force and silent spiritual action', \textsuperscript{14}

Sri Aurobindo ceased connection with Motilal Roy from 1922 but was intimately related to him between 1910 and 1922. During this period, `for some years he kept up some private communication with the
revolutionary forces he once he had led through one or two
individuals.

These letters were subject to interceptions from the
police. Motilal could not write openly about revolutionary matters.

In an article `A veteran writer recalls a few glimpses’ published
in the journal Free India, V Ramaraswamy Iyengar wrote `Aurobindo
was informed every now and then about the activities of these pre-
Gandhian movements (politics of bombs and revolvers) from all over
India, especially from Bengal and Punjab. We would all be hearing the
stories. There was no secrecy. No oath of secrecy was administered to
us and this is a very remarkable trait in Sri Aurobindo’s character.
He trusted our honour and sense of patriotism, not to divulge such
things even to our nearest and dearest’. During the early periods
Sri Aurobindo was in close touch with V V S Aiyar, A B Kohlatkar
already charged with sedition for writing against British rule in his
magazine `Desh Sewak’. Aiyar was a key person in the anarchist
conspiracy in London and Paris in 1910 and was close to Vinayak
Damodar Savarkar, one of the propounders of the concept of Hindutva in India. Kohlatkar maintained close contacts with Madame Cama and was also planning an escape to England. Cama had sent him Rs 300 to flee to England. There are innumerable instances in British police records to prove that seditious literature was flowing into Pondicherry and Sri Aurobindo was aware of them.

During this time Savarkar’s book on Indian Mutiny (1857) addressed to Nagaswami Aiyer, brother-in-law of Subramaniam Bharati, the great Tamil poet and close associate of Sri Aurobindo was intercepted by the British intelligence, in addition to copies of *Free Hindustan, Talwar and Bande Mataram*. These copies were preserved in the houses of accomplices of Sri Aurobindo like S Srinivasa Chari.

Sri Aurobindo developed codes like ‘tantra’ which meant revolutionary activity and things connected with tantra like ‘yogini kriyas’, ‘tantric books’ as revolutionary implements like guns. This thesis do not seek on giving a biography. Two dozen attempts have already been made. An attempt has been made here to project how politics became Sri Aurobindo’s first love while
spirituality remained on the surface for ordinary men to see. Sri Aurobindo’s politics is beyond convention and therefore neither power-driven nor desire-driven. It is unique, mental, idealistic, and is certainly not for the uninitiated. To most people it might sound an utopia. The ideas are close to those advocated in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. Sri Aurobindo views politics as an ensemble of social relations similar to the concept of `dharma` upheld in Mahabharata. In `Bharat Savitri` of the great epic Mahabharata it is said, `dharma` is determined through one’s behaviour with another. Sri Aurobindo therefore rejects the traditional concept of identifying `dharma` as religion and accepts the idea given in Mahabharata. He, therefore continues to pursue `dharma` while living in Pondicherry. To him `dharma` is conduct and therefore he felt that getting engaged in politics is a type of `dharma` and it is essential to have it. However, he strongly believed that it is only through `niskama karma` propounded in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita that dharma can be established across humanity and in India.
The thesis highlights a number of occasions where Sri Aurobindo is found getting engaged in most social and political events taking place around him while remaining detached from them.
Review of Literature

There are almost a dozen biographies of Sri Aurobindo. The prominent among them were written by A B Purani: Sri Aurobindo, A life, K V Srinivasa Iyengar: Sri Aurobindo, Rishabchand : Sri Aurobindo, a Life Unique and Reminiscences of Sri Aurobindo by Gabriel Monod Herzen. This thesis considers most of them as hagiographies deliberately attempting to project Sri Aurobindo as some one `beyond man’.

In 2008, historian Peter Heehs and an inmate of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry wrote a biography `The Many Lives of Sri Aurobindo’ published by the University of Columbia Press. Till date, it is considered as an objective biography of Sri Aurobindo. Although, Heehs loves to see Sri Aurobindo in the material envelope, based on available evidences and documents, he also places him on a pedestal that could be quite unachievable by a common man. He accepts that he is a practitioner of Sri Aurobindo’s integral yoga and yet separates himself from the Ashram by pointing out that the views
in the book are his own. The book created a long controversy for almost three years flooded with a number of court cases lodged by devotees and disciples of Sri Aurobindo.

Majority of the biographies approach Sri Aurobindo as a godman or avataar (incarnation of god) or some `supreme being’ with supernatural powers to offer divine grace.

This thesis seeks to project Sri Aurobindo as a creative author, social critic and a political visionary. He is a person of high intellect and calibre possessing the mental strength to get detached from all worldly events yet remaining engaged with it for all times.

As Robert Mcdermott one his biographers points out in his book, Sri Aurobindo, "his abilities to synthesize were created by the highly diverse strains in his personal life’’.

Sri Aurobindo was one of India’s first thinker to merge the concept of matter with spirit, intellect of the West with the spirituality of the East. In this way he took the pleasure of remaining attached to all socio - political events that took place around him and yet he never tried to influence them by force or get personally involved in them.
This thesis aims to show how desperately Sri Aurobindo tried to 'spiritualize politics' in India by remaining engaged and not involved in it. These words were used to qualify and address Sri Aurobindo by Sir Ramsay Macdonald in a long debate in British Parliament on April 29, 1910.

According to this thesis, hagiographic approaches have either mistreated or misread the great scholar in Sri Aurobindo or covered it up with the concept of 'avataarhood (incarnation of god, a Hindu doctrine. Sri Aurobindo had been painted as a 'supreme being' possessing qualities that are much higher than normal human beings.

Literature available on him seeks to see him as a great spiritualist and yogi, though most of the time failing to understand that his yoga does not take one away from the earth, rather prescribes to remain in it.

Sri Aurobindo's thinking was based on his seven quartets of becoming or Saptachatustaya Yoga \(^{23}\) which he named as Integral Yoga and is commonly known called 'Purna or Complete Yoga'. He also
formulated a new system of philosophy which came to be known as 'Purnadvaitavad' (or complete monism). Classical Indian philosophers and thinkers however loathe to accept it. According to them, complete monism is vague and without a base, a figment of Sri Aurobindo’s imagination.

He based his thoughts and action on five (5) pillars. They are 1) re-interpreting of Indological texts and tradition of India in Western light 2) develop a metaphysics based on Indian spirit and nature 3) unveil the secrets and principles of yoga 4) apply yoga in social and political life 5) make yoga the basis for spiritualizing art and literature

Sri Aurobindo started writing articles for the journal Arya published with the active help of yet another mystic and occultist Paul Richard and his wife Mira, who later became the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Arya continued publishing from August 1914 till January 1921.
Sri Aurobindo wrote over four thousand pages of Indology, reinterpreting texts like the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita. These articles were later compiled into twenty-one books. Of these, nine were devoted to reinterpreting the Vedas on psychosymbolic and mystical lines; another nine on the Upanishads; and three poems. Finally, all of these interpretations were incorporated in Savitri, the metaphysical epic poem, composed by Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo had started writing 'Savitri' from his Baroda days. But 'Baroda Savitri' went untraceable. In Sri Aurobindo's words, "most of all that has disappeared into the unknown in the whirlpools and turmoil of my political career". The earliest version of Savitri was written sometime in August 1916. Savitri is almost equal in length to that Mahabharata that is free of interpolations.

Sri Aurobindo was influenced by Mahabharata and claimed that 'Vyasa was the most masculine of all writers that he had ever read'. Like the five pillars of his thought, the prospectus of Arya was based on four principles. They are: a) synthetic study of a speculative philosophy. To Sri Aurobindo, Indian philosophy was
greatly speculative but carried immense value in leading humanity
towards peace, harmony and eternity, b) translation, commentaries and
narrating of Indology and Indian scriptures and texts, c) study of
comparative religion; d) practical methods to develop inner
discipline, culture and attitude of the self. Sri Aurobindo wrote and
edited for the Arya for almost seven years without a stop. It carried
most of his literature. In Arya he reinterpreted Indian scriptures and
oriental texts in his very own and esoteric ways, for which he had
been criticized and praised. Interestingly, he never bothered to reply
to such praise or criticism. His ways were free of any discussion and
ratiocinations. It was mostly prescriptive and the way he felt.

Eminent Sri Aurobindo scholar and educationist, Professor
Dr Debiprasad Chattopadhyay, compares Sri Aurobindo to the logician
Marx', positioning him opposite to Bertrand Russell and Karl Popper.

He calls Sri Aurobindo a creative author and not an analyzer of
matters, things, issues and developments.
To Sri Aurobindo, `every man is a yogi, only that he is not conscious about it’. Through the awakening of this consciousness can a person relate himself to world of politics and social well being. To understand politics one needs to open his mind. He felt, politics is only for those who would realize pūrṇa yoga and purnadvaitavad. He remained a narrator of politics and society using his integral and spiritual ways of thinking. His way of spirituality was that of matter and not of spirits as was the Indian tradition.

Sri Aurobindo said, everything evolves from matter, leading to life and mind and finally to light, which again forms a different and higher form of matter. 25 – A

Sri Aurobindo never claimed that he was a `philosopher’. He rather said, `I was never never a philosopher and I cannot write philosophy to order’. There are no evidences to show that Sri Aurobindo had read or was acquainted with the dialects of `vedanta’ or the six systems(sadadarshan) 26 of Indian philosophy but only used it in a very general way. This thesis attempts to review most of his
written literature and those orally relating to world events social, political and economic. While other scholars sought to review Sri Aurobindo's literature holding him to be a man with an immense spiritual value, power and thinking, the present researcher finds him as a marvellous narrator of socio-political and economic events somewhat remaining non attached and in seclusion.

His dialects are wonderful to read. It is full of insight and also critically constructive in outlook. His analysis of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas and the Upanishads is in new light but very unIndian in nature and outlook. He also rejected his own writings. He interpreted the Secret of the Vedas as a psychospiritual text. But later concluded to revise the book and said 'we have no clue as to what they actually meant at that time'. He never found time. The book was published in 1956, six years after he passed away.

Sri Aurobindo is criticized for not working out any concrete plan to link his integral yoga to real life and society. His socio political obligations were also not reflected in life changing patterns of individuals and society. It is true that he held an optimistic view of mankind's progress and evolution. However, only
accepting as `he ought to be' could be a type of utopia. Political thinkers have always analyzed man as `he is'.

Moreover, Sri Aurobindo also failed to appreciate that socio-political changes are not only results of gain. They could be losses as well. Sri Aurobindo had imagined of a high levels of political and spiritual sensitivity. It is not known how it could be achieved. Sri Aurobindo also did not say how to attain such levels.

According to the political scientist, V R Mehta, Sri Aurobindo also couched his thoughts in obscure english language totally unknown to the Indian mind.

Another political scientist, Kenneth L Deutsch points out, `like all political enthusiasts in history, they exalt the individual’s unique experiences in a collective will of mankind or superhumanity without the benefit of rational forms’.

These could be the reasons behind Sri Aurobindo remaining excommunicated from the larger Indian population, until today. According to historian Ramchandra Guha, Sri Aurobindo, Vivekananda or Sarvepelli Radhakrishnan had only remained restricted to the English speaking
middle class of India. However, in this thesis Sri Aurobindo is shown as socio-political narrator and interpreter. To all these criticisms the normal answer could only be something very prosaic and pedestrian. According to Deutsch, "Sri Aurobindo's vision is based on what he had seen and is beyond conventional modes of political analysis. One can accept the Divine Reality intuitively as Aurobindo and Chardin see it, one can deny it completely on empirical scientific grounds or one can be intellectually drawn to its all-encompassing quality without fully accepting or rejecting it." Deutsch found similarity in the views of Sri Aurobindo and Teilhard de Chardin. The present researcher therefore undertake a scholastic scrutiny of most socio-political literature available on Sri Aurobindo and departs from the normal practice of viewing Sri Aurobindo as an 'ultra human' who possess the capacity to negate the concept of 'original sin' as inherent in human condition
Research Gap

Most studies have sought to prove Sri Aurobindo as a yogi, seer, literary revolutionary, prophet, avatar and poet. Researchers have also not analyzed the context to his escape from Bengal to Pondicherry. Before Sri Aurobindo escaped from Bengal in March 1910 to live in a French enclave from April 4, 1910, he was editing two socio-political journals Karmayogin and Dharma. After coming out of jail if he had lost interest in politics why would he do that?

Intellectually, it is also possible to have a different reading of this great mind. French savant Romain Rolland considered him as of India’s most noble mind and a ‘secret sun’ \(^33\). In this thesis, an attempt has been made to disprove the common notions of viewing Sri Aurobindo as a super-man or an ‘ultra man’ solely devoted to the search of the descent of Supermind \(^34\) and building a race of gnostic beings \(^35\) with raised levels of consciousness ending in the triumph of humanity.
Sri Aurobindo’s quest for creating a race of gnostic beings began when he was in Alipore jail in 1908, accused of waging war against the state. In his own words, "I saw narayana (vasudeva) in misused bodies and darkened souls. The inmates put me to such compassion that finally humanity triumphed."  

Sri Aurobindo is a man of flesh and blood and as much practical and human. He neither possessed any supernatural power nor did he ever claim of having it. However, he was gifted with an extreme sense of balance or equanimity almost similar to Krishna who calculates moves to pull the war in favour of the Pandavas, despite also being related to the Kauravas as his son Samba marries Lakshmana, the daughter of Duryodhana.

However, Sri Aurobindo is not Krishna. It is just Krishna’s sense of balance that Sri Aurobindo adheres to and dubs him as
Most scholars consider Sri Aurobindo as 'Puruhsottamvadi' as he had analyzed Srimad Bhagavad Gita in his book 'Essays on Gita' on lines laid down in Canto 15 of the sacred text. In Gita, Canto 15 is 'purushottam yoga'. Previous researchers have missed out that Sri Aurobindo's quitting of politics was also a form of strategy. While in jail he underwent a deep spiritual jerk being thrown into isolation for one year. He wanted to be free and also not remain bound within the known realms of practical politics. Coming out of jail he said that the socio-political conditions were no longer congenial for his ways of politics. But, he, also made it clear that he did not quit politics out of frustration.

He offers a painful and fearsome description of his life in the Alipore jail in his book, 'Tales of Prison Life'. He was released from jail in May 1909. Nine months later in February 1910, he went
underground and after that he fled from the colonial police to the French enclave of Pondicherry in April 1910. For that moment, he did it only to escape the conspiracy that was hatched against him by the British police to deport him to distant lands.

It seems Sri Aurobindo was not ready to face the fearsome experience he had in jail for the second time. Therefore he desperately wanted to avoid deportation. Quite unjustifiably he was twice indicted and then acquitted under the court of law. The first time he surrendered on his own. On the second occasion he was arrested on a search warrant and not on a body warrant.

The British empire had decided to harass him for the third time. He claimed, "in jail I found God". If that be so, why didn’t he take the second opportunity of facing his God. Actually, by then he had already shaped his concept of god, which is something very unique and esoteric.

Searching this god for the remaining forty years of his life in Pondicherry became his pleasure object. He linked it to politics, society, individual, community and humanity and of course, India’s Independence.
He had already announced 'nationalism is not a doctrine. It is the voice of God that had come from above'.

After coming out of jail in May 1909, for nine months, Sri Aurobindo edited two socio-political journals, Karmayogin and Dharma. It, however, is true that in Karmayogin he was providing hints of his fast losing of interest in the existing ways of practical politics. He was offering hints that India would soon be free and that his piece of practical political work was over.

Later, in Pondicherry he told his brother Barindra Kumar Ghosh "my ways of politics are now different".

But, it would only be unnatural to believe that he had decided to quit politics forever. However, his recent biographer Peter Heehs points out in his book 'Lives of Sri Aurobindo' that he was planning to purchase land to set up an Ashram in Bengal. There is, however, no such supporting document.

Sri Aurobindo voluntarily withdrew from practical politics. He did it deliberately despite receiving repeated offers of rejoining regular politics. Then what could have been the compulsion?
Diligently going through the documents and socio-political writings and observations of Sri Aurobindo, the present researcher has come to the conclusion, that this great mind had found meaning for a bigger realm of politics that could be quite imaginatively linked to spirituality and progress of humanity.

To the common mind it could only be a type of euphoric utopia, if not a type of ecstasy and a prejudiced pleasure.

Whatever, it might be, for the moment Sri Aurobindo had found great solace and was completely devoted to his new form of 'evolutionary mysticism' and had therefore rejected all proposals, ideas and olive branches extended to him for coming back to British India from Pondicherry. He remained in politics, undisturbed by the British, his arch rival and of course comrades who surrounded him but against whom he would never open his mouth, however dislike he might possess against them.

V R Mehta observed Sri Aurobindo's writings are only a reflection of the experiences he had in his life.
In Pondicherry Sri Aurobindo had transformed into an internationalist and therefore wanted to engage in the politics of liberating humanity from the clutches of closed and bordered thinking found within individuals in every nation. Sri Aurobindo’s analysed individual, society and politics in the context of borderless states and stateless nations. Though unique, it could only be imagined but can never be translated into reality.

The Purushottam Yoga focusses on detachment while being in this world and not running away from it. Sri Aurobindo might have been somewhat obsessioned in achieving the mortally unachievable. He engaged himself in politics and yet did not get involved in it. Since 1910 there are innumerable instances to show Sri Aurobindo getting engaged in domestic, local, regional and international political issues and yet not getting involved in practical politics.

The concept of an upside down banyan tree and oak tree whose roots and stems can grow from above and beneath laid the foundation of Sri Aurobindo’s later day ‘Integral Yoga’ with which he conceived of building and spiritualising world society and Indian political life.
Sri Aurobindo observed 'Politics is Spirituality'. But his spirituality could be in the form of 'divine materialism' the highest form of matter.

This is because he decided to live in an intellectual world of his own experimenting and trying things which he had in mind for humanity and the world. Sri Aurobindo had always been a man of thought and not a person of action.

To him Pondicherry was a 'laboratory for experiment' and later he wanted to transform it into a new spiritual colony.

Margaret Noble better known as Sister Nivedita, an Irish disciple of Swami Vivekananda had already instilled in Sri Aurobindo’s mind that the British rulers would never allow him to go ahead with his 'experiments' from British India.

He gathered similar feedbacks from other sources, which he never disclosed. One such was Ramaswami Iyengar. Accordingly, Nivedita informed Sri Aurobindo that he should withdraw or escape from British India to pursue his own goals.
On the first opportunity Sri Aurobindo withdrew from British India. Sri Aurobindo termed it as an `adesh' (divine command) which he received twice, `from above' once in Kolkata to go to Chandennagore and the next at Chandennagore to go to Pondicherry.

Interestingly, his places of consecutive withdrawal were French enclaves and was not any part of British India.

In this thesis it is shown that the `adesh' that Sri Aurobindo spoke of was a type of an `auto suggestion' from the brain. Until today such suggestions are not revealed. In every individual such suggestions remain submerged in the undefined and infinite unconscious and only surfaces at the conscious level when there is a need or crisis or a stimulus. A suitable example of it is crossing a road during heavy traffic.

The brain activity suggests to the person whether to cross over or return back to the original position when the traffic suddenly starts moving while a person is the middle of the road.

An incomplete write up found on `An Early Memory' on his `Life in England, 1879 – 1893' Sri Aurobindo himself said, `I
believe the practical methods and evidence for the success of psycho-
analysis are made up mostly of suggestions and auto-suggestions; for
suggestion and auto-suggestion can do almost everything and make you
believe in anything and everything. Many of these suggestions seem to
me quite artificial’’.

He said, ‘‘the great Sigismund 58 must have had it, I

suppose and remembered that blissful period and felt a long beatific
return and I suppose others must have had it unless its acceptance is
only a general acceptance of the papal infallibility of Sigismund in
psycho-analytical matters about which few people have direct reliable
knowledge or can form a truly independent conviction based on truly
independent conviction’’.

After he returned to India from England and felt that the
‘‘darkness that had descended on him while he was studying in
Darjeeling had finally left him’’.

That might have been the onset of an undefined euphoria. So
also, he might have heaved a sigh of relief or felt immense pleasure
when he arrived in Pondicherry beyond the clutches of British masters.
Later he said, "six British officers had decided to make my life hell."\(^5\)\(^9\) Sri Aurobindo never held a position in the Congress party or any other political forums.

Moreover, it would only be wrong to accept that he got transformed only in jail. The change began the day he returned from England and touched Indian soil.

Most of Sri Aurobindo’s biographers believe that he was adept at 'faith healing'. Strangely Sri Aurobindo’s silence only helped them spin imaginary stories about him, ignoring his contributory intellect.

This thesis shows Sri Aurobindo as a thinking person, a visionary of social change. He neither subscribed to the supremacy of the spirit nor the domination of matter.

In the book *Life Divine* he reveals the ascetic and materialist in their fanatic forms. With Sri Aurobindo’s passing away most of his masterly and dense interpretations of Indian scriptures and other texts, poetry lost base in the majority of the prosaic Indian mind. His writings never reached the masses and quite rightly never became a
`Lokayata' or a mass document like those spoken and written about yet another Indian yogi Swami Vivekananda.

It is true Sri Aurobindo never encouraged such `lokayata' documents, pointing out that his types are of esoteric in nature.

But again it is also true that his intellectual prowess is parallel to none or might even be above many known contemporary thinkers that made persons like Subhas Chandra Bose call him `not only his (Bose’s) spiritual guru but also the guru of mankind’ provided he returns to ordinary life. Rabindranath Tagore called him the `Indian Saraswati'.

Most of the earlier biographies have identified Sri Aurobindo as an `avataar’ which he himself calls a superfluous freak. By doing so, Sri Aurobindo, the intellectual man, the creative author, the critic and a master politico – social analyst is lost in the process.

In Pondicherry he found space for thinking freely and therefore stayed back. Sri Aurobindo never claimed that his position
on understanding Indian spirituality and mixing it with politics was final.

Speaking on yoga he said, ‘I never sought truth as there is no final truth. I sought ananda (delight) and that is why I am a tantrik’, 63 - A

His eclectic models of thinking were ill-conceived by many and misunderstood by others. Different from other scholars, this thesis attempts to prove that Sri Aurobindo was not a spiritual person for twenty four hours. Observing him in such a way is more than a partial view of him.

While in Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo divided his time with lighter moments of laughter and discussion with accomplices. For him, Indian spirituality was a major tool that could be used in approaching humanity. Between 1893 and 1910 he used it against the colonial masters thereby trying to whip up the fallen Indian psyche through his writings in the journals and newspapers like Induprakash, Bandemataram, Karmayogin, Dharma and Jugantar. He felt India had forgotten its past and therefore sought to drive out the cultural amnesia that had set in with the help of the spiritual sword.
The thesis shows how he was at ease in dealing with Indian spirituality in his very own esoteric and odd ways. Sri Aurobindo's life time quest remained on finding out the 'secret god' in man. He defined the 'unconscious' in man as the 'secret god'.

Likewise, this thesis attempts to show that Sri Aurobindo's 'secret god' was politics. Sri Aurobindo's love for politics helped him adhere to his Tantrik ways of thinking and derive Ananda (bliss).

This form of bliss could well be equated to 'the will to pleasure'. He balanced it with the 'reality principle' in somebody's life. He never forgot politics, neither did he abandon it. He only wanted to interpret it in his very own ways, however weird or schizophrenic it might sound to the critic. Previous researchers have either tried to be too objective with him or too devoted. The thesis attempts to avoid both. In Sri Aurobindo's words 'be a sceptic but never be a non believer'. While going through Sri Aurobindo's literary corpus, the present researcher has found nothing to justify that Sri Aurobindo ever believed in anything supernormal, supernatural or other worldly. He understood, how paranormal experiences happen and therefore never felt that such experiences can be relied on.
On the contrary, the motto of his life was, 'nihil humani alienum' (nothing human is alien to me).

His equivocality on supernatural aspects however is intriguing. This thesis attempts to deal on the issue in a different way. All through his revolutionary days, Sri Aurobindo never supported personal annihilation and yet never objected to it. He said, ``who knows if something good comes out of it''. Historian Leonard Gordon points out, ``After consulting all available sources, including Home Department files, histories of the Bengal revolutionary movement and memoirs and biographies of Aurobindo, I think it is evident Aurobindo never directly participated in any revolutionary act''.

As a political being Sri Aurobindo always remained equivocal both before and during his Pondicherry days. Most earlier researchers have failed to realize that his love for politics started from the time he quit Indian Civil Service (I.C.S) and did not bother to accept the degree from Cambridge University. He only wanted to overcome the loneliness that gripped him while he lived in England for fourteen
years along with his two brothers. Sri Aurobindo was desperate to come back to India and avoid the fearsome loneliness. It could be that his love for the country had its roots in the lonely situation he faced in England. Somehow, he wanted to bypass the situation.

He used two weapons to justify his return to India. They were the Western model of politics and Indian spirituality. From 1893, both became a play thing for him. As a nationalist he used them against the British for seventeen years from 1893 to 1910.

From 1910 to 1950, Sri Aurobindo had evolved into a new person and got radically transformed. He went out of the colonial frame and projected himself as a post colonial subject. During this period he started preaching internationalism and the common religion of man known as humanity.

Most researchers are swayed by what Sri Aurobindo himself had said about his political life. In third person he said, "at Pondicherry he dropped all participation in any public political activity, refused more than one request to preside at sessions of the restored Indian National Congress and made a rule of abstention from any public utterance of any kind not connected with his spiritual
activities or any contribution of writings or articles except what he wrote afterwards in the Arya....His own personal intervention in politics was no longer indispensable. Even when he intervened in politics twice afterwards the intervention was purely personal and the Ashram was not concerned in it.

The British and numbers of people could not believe that Sri Aurobindo had ceased from all political action and it was supposed by them that he was secretly participating in revolutionary activities and even creating a secret organisation in security of French India. But all this was pure imagination and rumour and there was nothing of the kind. His retirement from political activity was complete, just as his personal retirement into solitude in 1910''

During his pre-Pondicherry revolutionary days Sri Aurobindo was never an active political worker. There are no personal or or third person accounts where he had spoken about his political activities except once when he supported Balgangadhar Tilak to engineer a split in the Congress party at its Surat session in 1907. He also submitted a political survey report after visiting parts of
East Bengal. He always worked from behind. In the later chapters, the thesis shows how he himself had admitted to it. Previous biographers and researchers have misread him as they kept a singular definition of politics in mind while analyzing Sri Aurobindo.

Sri Aurobindo never linked politics to power, administration, government control and authority. A student of Greek and Latin, Sri Aurobindo’s concept of politics was somewhat mental and very similar to those advocated by Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle.

According to Oxford Dictionary of Politics, "politics in the Aristotelian sense is about analysis of human nature and human flourishing and is close to Nicomachean Ethics’’. Sri Aurobindo’s idea of politics, which we shall deal in the later chapters consists of three components viz: flourishing of human nature and analysis, spirituality and ethics.

Sri Aurobindo had merged the concept of politics into a politico-ethico-spiritual triune. Previous researchers have looked at it only from the first component of politics and has therefore lost
track as to how Sri Aurobindo remained in politics throughout his life.

During his Pondicherry days Sri Aurobindo used Western politics and Indian spirituality to uphold the cause of humanity and sought to give birth to a new race of gnostic beings. His dreams have remained unfulfilled but his followers claim that the work to build a new race of gnostic beings continues in India and across the globe in the form of different human potential movements in countries like Bulgaria, Romania, France, Germany, Britain and United States of America.
Research Questions

The principal research question is to find out whether Sri Aurobindo’s first love was politics or spirituality? Did he escape to Pondicherry to practice spirituality or theoretical politics? It is only normal to think and believe that he could have practiced and interpreted spirituality from British India. But it seems he had other intention. Therefore, the British colonial masters were not ready to trust him. Between 1910 and 1914 the British officers had a number of correspondences. It shows they were desperate to stop Sri Aurobindo from entering British India.

As per British police records, H.A. Stuart, Chief Secretary of the Government of India, wrote to his counterpart F C Daly, Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal, ``I would not hesitate to deport Aurobindo if he cannot be silenced in any other way. If he is allowed to go on he will very soon have the country in a blaze again. We would certainly have deported him last December along
with Krishna Kumar Mitra and Subodh Mullick, if he had not been in jail then. During the same time, Lord Minto, the Viceroy wrote to Lord Morley, the Secretary of State, "Aurobindo is again on the warpath. I only hope he will commit himself sufficiently for us to be able to prosecute.",

It is therefore clear from British police records that Sri Aurobindo did not come out of jail as a solely spiritualized and transformed person. To British rule in India, he was a potential threat. The British empire feared him.

Therefore the pertinent research questions are

A) In Pondicherry, how does Sri Aurobindo get engaged in politics without being involved? Through research it is found that out of almost sixty world and Indian political events in forty years between 1910 and 1950, Sri Aurobindo offers his views and suggestions. Most of these suggestions are either rejected or set aside on the ground that it had come from a person who had gone out of practice in politics. Yet Sri Aurobindo would not stop offering his comments. The question remains why?
B) In Pondicherry what was Sri Aurobindo’s first love – politics or spirituality? It is found that he built his spiritual edifice on a political base. He believed politics is spirituality and said that only by becoming great and free in heart can we become politically great and free.

C) How is Sri Aurobindo’s concept of politics and yoga different from others? Sri Aurobindo does not link politics to power, administration and governing of any state or institutional body. Rather his focus is on the Aristotelian form of personal politics, where human relations are more important than states and institutions. His yoga is non-conventional by nature and does not seek liberation from the world. It is linked to individual and his surroundings and is practiced with a view to developing a perfect society.

D) Which are the prominent political events that Sri Aurobindo engages himself and offers observations and suggestions? Sri Aurobindo said, while living in Pondicherry twice he had directly intervened in political matters. On the remaining occasions, he gave his suggestions and observations.
E) Who are the persons with whom Sri Aurobindo interacts on political issues? In the early stages of his Pondicherry days Sri Aurobindo maintained some contacts with his revolutionary friends. Gradually he lost connection with them. Later a coterie of men surrounded him. He discussed most political issues with them offering comments and observations when necessary. In the following stages he answered political queries raised by devotees and disciples at private discussions and evening talks at the Ashram.

F) How does Sri Aurobindo enjoy discussing politics more than spirituality with Sadhaks and devotees in the Ashram? He gave long and wonderful answers to his disciples and devotees. However, answers to spiritual queries were short and monosyllables. Sometimes he even snubbed the person asking questions on spirituality. Sri Aurobindo always felt that spirituality was something integral and therefore was a matter of individual realization.

G) Why did Sri Aurobindo choose Pondicherry as his venue? In this thesis it is shown that Sri Aurobindo was looking out for a place
H) of peace and tranquility. He said, the British government had decided to make his life hell. So, he was desperately on the look out for a place of permanent retreat. He therefore admitted that Pondicherry was his place of retreat and `cave of tapasya' where he had embarked on `an experiment of his own kind'.

Certainly the experiment was to find a new definition of politics linked to yoga in the cause of humanity.

I) How does Sri Aurobindo mix politics with yoga and spirituality.

To a rationalist such a concept could not be too far from an abstract utopia. In India yoga and spirituality are only expressions of national prejudice. Sri Aurobindo was also not beyond such prejudice. Although his form of yoga was different from the conventional forms, in essence it was similar. Like the traditional yogis he also believed that yoga can control the undefined cosmos. He linked into politics by saying, `my yoga does not take anybody away from earth. Rather it teaches him to remain in it',. He also said, `I had an Europeanized mind and never believed in a god in the distant heavens',.
J) How does Sri Aurobindo use, `krishna consciousness’ in the Srimad Bhagavad Gita to interpret society and politics. Krishna consciousness is a form of detachment and spirituo-material evolution. Krishna got Arjuna, the unwilling Pandava warrior to take part in the war of Kurukshetra by detaching him from all his relatives and surroundings. He ensured that Arjuna evolves into a new person free from all known attachments and yet remaining engaged with those attractions. It is Sri Aurobindo’s favourite `attachment and detachment theory. He never explained it as he believed to be the main theme of Karmashastra or doctrine of action in the Bhagavad Gita. The present researcher names it as Sri Aurobindo’s `a-d’ theory which is based on Bhagavad Gita’s theory of `nishkama karma’ or desire - free action, not desireless action as is commonly called.
Research Methodology

The research method used here is mostly analytical. Materials available in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust Archives, Pondicherry and National Archives, New Delhi have been consulted. The researcher received the rare opportunity of visiting and working in the work room of the Pondicherry Ashram Archives `Cold Storage’, treated as one of the most secret and guarded places of the Ashram, because of its immense Archival value.

This storage scientifically preserves lakhs of manuscripts on Sri Aurobindo and The Mother of the Ashram since 1872 to 1973 and further in a steel chamber regulated through a scientific temperature mechanism so that the manuscripts could be preserved for years altogether.

Primary and secondary source materials available at Sri Aurobindo Bhavan Research Section and its library have been used.
Large numbers of documents had also been seen gathered from the Chandennagore Sub-Divisional Library, earlier known as Nityagopal Smriti Mandi and Uttarpara Joykrishna library have been consulted. These documents mostly relate to pre-Pondicherry days of Sri Aurobindo and were used as support material. Till today many of Sri Aurobindo’s political involvements have remained in closed quarters and families of individuals who worked with him. Most of these people who were close to Sri Aurobindo have either gone without a trace or have preferred to remain silent on his and their pre-Independence activities.

Some publishers and authors have made limited efforts to find out memoirs of people who were close to Sri Aurobindo. They have published a few books like Sri Aurobindo O Tar Boloy (Sri Aurobindo and his annulus) and Antaranga (The Intimate).

Such books were also consulted. Interestingly, it is through these faceless people, who had gone without a trace that Sri Aurobindo maintained regular political contacts while in Pondicherry. They are Saurindranath Basu (brother of Sri Aurobindo’s wife Mrinalini), Upendranath Banerjee, Hrishikesh Kanjilal, Motilal
Roy, Bejoy Krishna Chatterjee, Srish Chandra Ghosh, Amarendra Chatterjee, Charu Chandra Datta, Abinash Bhattacharya, Bejoy Nag, Suresh Chakravarty (Moni), Nolini Kanto Gupta, Jatindranath Mukherjee and Babu Rajendranath Mukherjee, the man who had paid money for his escape to Pondicherry from the clutches of the colonial police.

Without knowing these people Sri Aurobindo is only less than half read. Barring a few, most of them considered him as their friend and guide, but never a spiritual guru or a god man.

Some like Hem Chandra Kanungo, the first bomb maker in the Swadeshi movement of 1905 – 1906 and a close confidante of Sri Aurobindo had sulked on his leaving active politics.

Hem’s book ‘Banglay Biplob Prochesta’ (Revolutionary Efforts in Bengal, Kamala Book Depot, Calcutta 1928) is a rare document and very important piece of information. It holds Sri Aurobindo in a different light.

Hem tried to justify that Sri Aurobindo had deviated from the actual path of revolution for cause of his Yoga, which he felt was only meaningless in those hours of revolutionary crisis. It is quite natural to believe that Hem seriously lacked the intellectual
sharpness and depth of Sri Aurobindo and therefore only behaved like a local village Bengali boy with lots of emotion that English rule would be thrown off overnight and a revolution would come through under the leadership of Sri Aurobindo.

However, he kept calling Sri Aurobindo a 'Sage' of the highest order with due reverence and was one of the the first to claim that Sri Aurobindo was not involved in the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy. The researcher had also used another very controversial book 'Sri Aurobindo O Banglay Swadeshi Yug,( Sri Aurobindo and the Swadeshi Era in Bengal) by Girijashankar Raychaudhuri, Nababharat Publishers, 1956.'

The researcher used these two controversial books to trace the foundation of Sri Aurobindo’s spiritual transformation. The researcher came to the conclusion the transformation had material grounds deeper than spiritual moorings. Any one is free to disagree with Hemchandra, Girijashankar and of course the present researcher. Sri Aurobindo’s secretary Nolini Kanta Gupta had sent rejoinders to many of Girijashankar’s observations as factual errors.
What Hem wanted to justify was finally dejustified when Sri Aurobindo refused all immunity from the British government and did not return to British India as he was not ready to sacrifice his ‘politics of yoga’ for humanity and international human society. Sri Aurobindo never countered the rebukes of Hem.

After April 1910, many of Sri Aurobindo’s swadeshi comrades visited him in Pondicherry. Some stayed back. Later many revolutionaries joined him after completing their terms at Andaman’s Cellular Jail at Port Blair (Andaman). The British rulers said that Pondicherry was turning out to be a rehabilitation ground for ‘revolutionary criminals’.  

Sri Aurobindo was accused of giving them shelter and also instigating further violence in British India from Pondicherry. A number of personal anecdotes and some private observations of these unknown and faceless ‘comrades’ are available in both Uttarpara and Chandennagore libraries and documents of Prabartak Sangha. They have been used in this thesis.
Endnotes (Chapter - I)

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3. Purani A B: Evening Talks, 28 June 1926

4. Cambridge University Calendar for the Year 1892-93, Peter Heehs, The Lives of Sri Aurobindo

5. Irish revolutionary group and their model of operation

6. Morley Papers, India Office Records, Morley to Minto, July 7 1909

7. In this trial Sri Aurobindo was accused of waging war against the state and was imprisoned for one year from 5 May 1908 to 6 May 1909

8. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust Archives, A brief history of Sri Vasudeva Iyengar, scion of Nagai Japtha, Uthara Yogi

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13. Roy gave shelter to Sri Aurobindo at his home in Chandennagore for 1½ months while escaping the British police Chandennagore for one and half months

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taking place in Bengal and across the country

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33 Ibid, the negative aspects of human conditions mostly pertaining to pain and suffering

33 – A. Rolland Romain, Prophets of New India, Albert and Charles Boni, New York, 1930

34 The highest level in the spectrum of mind created by Sri Aurobindo based on the Vedic concept of truth consciousness

35 A imaginary race of human being with elevated levels of global consciousness seeking human harmony across the world

36 The god head of Vishnu holding the earth

37 Aurobindo Sri, Tales of Prison Life

38 A Yadava King in charge of Vishnu clan and a key player in the epic Mahabharata

39 The victors in the Mahabharata war

40 The Kuru prince who denied the rightful throne to his Pandava brothers and which resulted in the Mahabharata war

41 Lord Krishna – the Supreme Being
42 Sri Aurobindo interpreted Gita basing his arguments on the 15th Canto and was thereby held as Purushottamvadi

43 Hindu scripture consisting of 700 slokas as the song o Lord Krishna consisting just before the start of the war of Mahabharata

44 Canto 15 of Srimad Bhagavad Gita

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50 Unreasonable happiness bordering on ecstasy

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Experiments on transforming body and soul to reach higher levels of consciousness

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79 Formed by Sri Aurobindo’s comrade Motilal Roy in Chandennagore on the vision laid down by Sri Aurobindo. It is a treasure house of valuable literature on Sri Aurobindo during his revolutionary days in Bengal between 1906 – 1910 and then again between 1910 – 1922