*Aurobindo and His Contemporaries*
CHAPTER VII

AUROBINDO AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

In the preceding chapter an attempt was made to study the educational implications of integral yoga. Integral yoga, it was observed, had led to the concept of integral education, a complete development of all the aspects of a man's personality, physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual. This concern for a total or harmonious development of human personality is a significant trend in the history of educational thought in India since ancient times. Indian educationists have always regarded education as "essentially a process of drawing out what is implicit in the individual. It develops his latent potentialities till they become actualities." This trend is clearly visible in the educational philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and his contemporaries.

An attempt was also made to prove that Sri Aurobindo had continued, to a great extent, the tradition of Indian educational philosophy. There are marked differences, points of divergence in his ideas as compared to those who came before him, yet one could safely conclude that his basic and lasting principles of education are no different from those enunciated by any of his immediate predecessors or, to use a more appropriate term, contemporaries. It will be useless to look for a rigid uniformity of ideas but there are certain similarities of values and ideals in their thinking which can be broadly identified as the Indian approach to education. It is this 'Indian-ness' that binds them together although...

1. Humayun Kabir, Indian Philosophy of Education, p. 183
there are differences in their philosophical thought and background of experience.

The contribution of an educationist can best be judged by undertaking a comparative study of his ideas with those of his contemporaries. A man's stature can be judged only with reference to his fellow-beings. The contribution of three modern Indian educationists will be analysed hereafter so as to measure the greatness and originality of Sri Aurobindo's educational ideas. The three educationists included for this purpose are: Tagore, Gandhi and Radhakrishnan. Each one of them belongs to a different field of activity. Tagore was an eminent poet, Gandhi was an outstanding political leader and Radhakrishnan was a distinguished teacher. But these labels do no justice to these many-splendoured personalities. Take for example, the case of Tagore. He was a poet, dramatist, novelist, essayist, musician, painter, social reformer and educationist all in one. Incidentally none of them is a professional educationist, a teacher of school or college who made education as his career. They are all thinkers and workers in the field of mind who were not concerned with institutional teaching but with the deeper issues of human life and man's destiny.

The golden thread that runs through the teachings of these thinkers according to T.K.R. Mahadevan, is Advaita. Mahatma Gandhi accepts Advaita whole-heartedly though he does

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2. Contemporary Indian Philosophy, p.58
not go into detail. Tagore adopted the poetic approach to Advaita, for him, poetry and philosophy lived in a joint family. Sri Aurobindo introduced the concept of evolution in Advaita. According to K. Jaiyidain the golden thread (or the silver thread as he prefers to call it) that runs through the educational philosophies of all these thinkers is humanism; they attach the highest value to man and all that pertains to him. The student of Indian educational thought comes across these and many other similarities in their ideas for they belonged to the same era and were confronted with the same problems. But there are dissimilarities in their approach, divergence of beliefs which make them stand apart. Each one of them is an authority to reckon with in the field of education.

Tagore and Gandhi have already been referred to briefly, as a part of the tradition that Aurobindo also shared. Their educational philosophies along with that of Radhakrishnan will now be studied from an angle that will show the contribution of Sri Aurobindo in a proper perspective.

Aurobindo and Tagore:

Aurobindo and Tagore were both the gifts of Bengal to the nation. Both of them were staunch nationalists who later adopted the creed of internationalism. Both of them were poets who wrote monumental works of poetry - Aurobindo in English and Tagore in his mother tongue, Bengali. Both of them founded educational institutions which later won

3. The Humanist Tradition in Indian Educational Thought, p.202
international recognition as seats of learning. Tagore had
great admiration for Aurobindo and he wrote a poem on his
praise which opens with the line, "Rabindranath, O Aurobindo,
bows to thee". Tagore, like Aurobindo did not write a
systematic treatise on education but unlike Aurobindo he
wrote profusely on educational matters.

Tagore believed that education should aim at the
development and flowering of all aspects of human personality.
He pleaded for a free, joyous and spontaneous life of
impulses of young children. Education should help them to
live in harmony with the physical environment and with
their fellow-beings. It should help the power within them
to attain its complete development. "The highest education
is that, "he said, " which makes our life in harmony with
all existence". All the faculties of an individual should
be developed to the highest level of perfection in order to
achieve this harmony with existence. It implies that
education should enable the child to attain full manhood.

Tagore attached great importance to the healthy
physical development of children. The early years of their
lives should be devoted to free, spontaneous movements and
play in natural surroundings, even at the cost of their
studies. He was greatly influenced by Rousseau's ideas on
education through the direct contact of nature. The
beneficent influence of nature would help the young child

4. Personality, p.116
bloom and blossom in mind and body alike. With Aurobindo, the perfection of the body was also a fundamental belief. But the emphasis in his case was that on games and sports. He wanted children to participate in them for the qualities of character they develop. The body is to be perfected not for mundane activities of the world but for a higher purpose, to serve as a receptacle of spirit. A divine spirit in a divine body that is the ideal for him.

Tagore wanted religion and morality to be an essential ingredient of the personality of a student. He condemned the modern view of education that aimed at economic self-sufficiency and ignored the nobler aspect of life. He believed that God manifests himself in human beings and in order to serve God we should serve our fellow-beings. His religion was the religion of man. For the development of moral and spiritual values he pleaded for a life of simplicity, a reduction of all unnecessary materials of luxury. Man should crave not for the material but for the eternal. He considered discipline to be an important aspect of moral education. But discipline does not mean blind obedience to an external authority; the ideal before him is that of self-discipline.

Tagore was essentially a poet and an artist and he wanted to develop among children an aesthetic sensitiveness as a part of spiritual education. For him whatever was truthful was also true and good, in life and art. The manifold beauties of nature should be allowed
to exert their influence on tender minds through direct perception and subtle suggestions. Pupils should be given opportunities for creative self-expression through arts and crafts.

Aurobindo included the two aims of education - moral and aesthetic - in his concept of vital development. He places a greater emphasis on moral and religious education than Tagore does, and a slightly lesser emphasis on the aesthetic development of the child. He wants to raise men to divine possibilities. Moral and religious education is necessary to put him on the right road to perfection. The teaching of different arts, dance, music and painting are also undertaken with the same aim. The concept of vital development is a peculiar feature of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of education. Education of the vital is considered by him to be of utmost importance for the building up of character. For vital development the teacher should awaken in the child the will to overcome his weaknesses and eliminate his defects. He can be shown that this will can be developed by practice, beginning with very easy tasks.

The cultivation of intellect, according to Tagore is one of the important aims of education. "The power of acquiring ideas through independent effort, of critically appraising them and of assimilating them was regarded by Tagore as the most fundamental aim of intellectual education."

5, H.B. Mukherjee, Education for Fulness, p. 251
The child should acquire the ability to learn directly from life and nature. He should be able to use what he learns and not simply carry a load of words and figures in his mind. Cultivation of intellect is an important factor for the attainment of full manhood. Aurobindo expounded the old Indian theory of mind with some modifications of his own to show how a man's mind can reach out, gather facts, assimilate new ideas and make judgments of his own. He emphasised the role of the intuitive power of mind and wanted it to be the main task of the teacher. He believed that beyond the mental stage there is another stage that man is destined to reach — the supramental stage.

Tagore was an outstanding believer in the concept of 'universal man'. He believed in the unity among the diverse manifestations of the human spirit, the unity between the East and the West. Explaining the genesis of the idea of Vishwabharti, now a world-famous university he said:

I had all along experienced the want of an institution in India which should be a true centre for all the different Eastern cultures concentrating in one spot the varied ideals of art and civilisation which have been contributed to the world by the varied countries of Asia. This institution will invite students from the West to study the different systems of Indian philosophy, literature, art and music in their proper environment.
Compare this with what Mother has to say regarding Aurobindo International Centre of Education:

Sri Aurobindo conceived the scheme of his International Centre of Education, so that the elite of humanity may be made ready who would be able to work for the progressive unification of the race and who at the same time would be prepared to embody the new force descending upon earth to transform it. For education should aim at international understanding and world peace; Aurobindo had a higher purpose in mind.

Dr. Mukherjee has analysed the various aims of education propounded by Tagore and has come to the conclusion that all these aims can be subsumed under one aim that includes them all and that is: "the development of all the innate faculties of an individual leading to an all-round, harmonious development of his personality." If a similar attempt is made in case of Aurobindo the one single aim that includes all others will be: "to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use."

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7. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education, p. 162
8. Education for Fulness, p. 265
9. Sri Aurobindo, A Scheme of Education
Curriculum and Method

As education, according to Tagore, aimed at an all-round harmonious development of personality, the curriculum envisaged by him referred to all aspects of human life physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual as well as individual and social. All academic subjects are accommodated in his Curriculum. But "Tagore interpreted curriculum not in terms of certain subjects to be learnt but in terms of certain activities to be undertaken." 10

At Shantiniketan, in addition to subjects like History, Science, Nature-study, Geography, Literature etc., a variety of related practical activities like drama, excursion, gardening, regional study, laboratory work, drawing, collections for museum were also included. A large number of other activities like games, social service projects, student self-government were also a regular feature of the institution.

Tagore was averse to bookish knowledge. The existing text-books, he pointed out, did not reflect the need and interests of the pupils, or the aspirations of the society. He believed that the curriculum should be related to the everyday life of the pupils. Education should lead to a satisfactory knowledge of the country and its people, and at the same time be internationalistic in its scope. He also wanted to strike a balance between the education of Nature and education of men. For our

10. Mukherjee, op. cit. p.350
perfection we should be vitally savage and mentally
civilised. During the first few years of his life the
child should be left entirely in the hands of Nature;
once Nature has played its role, the child should be
adapted to the civilised society.

A passionate champion of the mother-tongue as
the medium of instruction, Tagore also recognised the
importance of English as a foreign language. Tagore was
a great admirer of science and wanted it to be taught
on a mass scale, and not remain confined, as it was
then, to a few pupils. He was a keen student of history
for history acquaints people with their country. He
wanted pupils to be engaged in activities relating to
Art, music and dancing as these activities were essential
for their aesthetic development.

Aurobindo also advocated a comprehensive
curriculum which catered to the principal activities
of the human being. He wanted a true synthesis of
humanities and science in school curriculum. The great
master-pieces of literature and fine arts are important
landmarks of the spirit. Games and sports should be
organized not only for the development of body but also
for the development of character. He is against the
policy of teaching by snippets; let the child master two
or three subjects well before going over to others. What
matters is not the factual knowledge at the command of
the pupils but the ability to learn that he must acquire.
The child should be free to make his choice of subjects and activities and also set the pace of learning. The technique of work-sheets developed by the followers of Sri Aurobindo provides the necessary freedom in this field. Tagore did not work out any full-fledged method of his own. His method of teaching while walking is an adaptation of the old Parapatetic method.

**Freedom and Discipline**

Tagore was opposed to any form of rigid and harsh discipline; freedom and joy are central to his concept of education. He used strong words against teachers who gave corporal punishment to pupils. They should better be "jail-wardens or drill-sergeants," rather than teachers. The teacher who lacks this quality is unfit for taking the charge of bringing up children.

Tagore wanted to grant complete freedom to the child. Children are by nature restless. To crush this restlessness would be unhealthy and disastrous. The negation of freedom was, to his mind, the negation of life and growth. He made a strong plea in favour of the naughtiness of children as it was the child's way of learning through mischief and adventure. He was not in favour of enforcing discipline from without. True discipline, according to him, is the discipline that grows from within. He was a passionate supporter of self-discipline. "In fine, Tagore's conception of discipline was fully in line with the modern concept
of free discipline. In fact, few modern educators would
dare to go as far as he did in this direction both in
thought and practice.\textsuperscript{12}

Aurobindo is also in favour of giving complete
freedom to child; freedom even to err and stumble. He
is against all types of coercion, threat or punishment.
What cannot be done by coercion can be done by love and
sympathy. The problem of indiscipline disappears when
there is a bond of mutual trust and respect, between the
teacher and the pupil. The teacher must awaken the Master
within, the voice of conscience, the moral sense of right
and wrong among his pupils that will ultimately lead to
responsible action and self-discipline which is necessary
for inner peace and an ordered collective life. Thus,
both Tagore and Aurobindo have similar views on freedom
and discipline but their motives differ.

It must go to the credit of Tagore that he devoted
years of his life in experimenting with ideas relating to
education. "Part of Tagore's greatness as an educationist",
according to K.G. Saiyadain\textsuperscript{13} "lies in the fact, that he
actually translated many of his ideas into practice. In
fact, it would be true to say that most of them really
emerged from his practice and experiments and not vice-
versa\textsuperscript{2}. Tagore was closer to the practice of education
than any other modern Indian educationist. This is what

\textsuperscript{13} op. cit, p.42
gives his ideas a stamp of authenticity.

AUROBINDO AND GANDHI:

Gandhi came on the Indian scene when Aurobindo had already retired from active politics and settled in Pondicherry. Although Gandhi and Tagore have many ideas in common, as far as education is concerned, the kindred feeling in the realm of educational ideas that Aurobindo seems to have for Tagore is not present in case of Gandhi. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that both Aurobindo and Tagore adopted a poetic approach to educational issues while Gandhi was prosaic, down-to-earth. Gandhi was a curious combination of a traditionalist and innovator who would not hesitate to accept new ideas even in the teeth of opposition.

Saiyidain14 has pointed out the special technique that Gandhi employed when he started any new movement particularly educational. He looked at the problem without any professional prejudices or pre-conceived notions. He was not afraid of radical ideas, his concepts were not drawn from books but from the realities of life and in particular from the needs and aspirations of the vast inarticulate rural population. Once he was convinced of the practicability of his ideas, he put them with all the force of his personality and sincerity of conviction before the public in simple and clear language. This is what he did in 1937 when he inaugurated an All India

14. op. cit, pp 96-97
Educational Conference in Wardha. He put his ideas so forcefully that they hit the imagination of people, shocked the experts in education out of their self-complacency and compelled them to think and argue and assess. It was out of this conference that his scheme of Basic Education was evolved.

Aims of Education

Gandhi believed that education should aim at an all-round harmonious development of the child. Literacy is not education; not even an essential means of education. He was a leading advocate of free and compulsory education. "By education", he said, "I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man body, mind and spirit." It implies that education should aim at the total development of the child. It is a life-long process that takes into account the three aspects of the life of an individual body, mind and spirit, in that order.

Gandhi wanted education to be an insurance against unemployment. Every child should be able to be gainfully employed after receiving formal education. In fact, he was of the view that every child should become a producer, a wage-earner, the day he enters the School. He wants him "to learn while he earns and to earn while he learns."16

15. The Problems of Education, p. 263
16. M.S. Patel, Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, pp. 30
Character building is another important aim of education. The end of all education, Gandhi believed should be the development of 'character'. He did not ignore the cultural aim of education. Being practical to the core, he pointed out that the culture of a person is revealed even in the smallest detail of his conduct, the way he sits, walks and talks. He did not underrate the building up of body and the development of the intellect. Body, mind and soul, as pointed out earlier, are all essential. "A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education." 17

Aurobindo and Gandhi have both stressed upon the synthesis of the individual and social aims of education. Both of them have aimed at an all-round harmonious development of the child. Gandhi emphasises the vocational aim of education while Aurobindo lays great emphasis on the spiritual development. Both aim at the development of body but Gandhi as a supporter of this aim on the ground that it will enable the child to do his daily chores in a more efficient way, but Aurobindo wants to make the body a fit receptacle of the Divine.

Curriculum and Method:

In his scheme of Education that Gandhi in 1937 placed before the eminent educationists of the day, he advocated a free and compulsory education for all boys

17. Ibid, p. 35
and girls, between the ages of 7 and 14, given in the mother tongue and through a selected basic craft in which all, or almost all academic learning will be correlated with productive work. The Committee which was constituted to prepare a detailed syllabus on the basis of ideas expounded by Gandhi recommended among other subjects, General Sciences, Social Studies, Mother Tongue and Hindustani as a link language. It was believed that during the seven years of his education the child will acquire the essential medium of social and civic training.

Gandhi was a severe critic of the foreign medium through which education was being imparted to students. He said that English has made Indians practically foreigners in their own land. If he had the power of a despot, he said, he would stop the use of English immediately in schools and colleges. He expressed his love for the mother-tongue in these words:

"I must cling to my mother tongue as to my mother's breast in spite of its shortcomings.
It alone can give me the life-giving milk."18

Education should be imparted in the mother-tongue of the child and through a productive craft. The craft should be chosen keeping in mind the local conditions and the educative value. The emphasis is not on making good craftsmen of children but on their intellectual, moral and social development. He said:

"I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling...

18. Towards New Education, p.66
it to produce from the moment it begins its training. I hold that highest development of the mind and soul is possible under such a system.\(^{19}\)

Gandhi's method of teaching was akin to the Project Method except that the craft chosen by him is productive and socially useful.

Gandhi was alive to the problems of religious education in India. He knew that in a country like ours where most of the religions of the world are practised, it was difficult to make provisions for religious education. At the same time he was convinced that the neglect of religious education would undermine the moral fibre of society. He said, "India will never be godless. Rank atheism cannot flourish in this land".\(^{20}\) Yet in his scheme of education, religion does not find any place. He admitted that his head began to turn whenever he thought of the problem of religious education.

Gandhi felt strongly for the emancipation of women. He fought valiantly for their rights and met with considerable success. He wanted to educate them keeping in mind the particular demands made on them by society. "Men and Women are of equal rank", he said, "but they are not identical".\(^{21}\) He said the women should be trained

\(^{20}\) Ibid., p.54
\(^{21}\) Ibid, p.85
in domestic affairs in the upbringing and education of children. It does not mean that any branch of knowledge should be closed to them. In fact, in the Wardha scheme there was hardly any distinction between boys and girls in respect of curriculum.

Aurobindo's curriculum and methodology of teaching do not come so very down to earth. He was mainly interested in the education of the elite though he was not opposed to universalisation of education. His curriculum and method are characterised not by manual work, but by spiritual uplift and freedom. Like Gandhi, Aurobindo did not get himself entangled in controversies. His withdrawal from active politics and complete absorption in yogic sadhana deprived his countrymen of the benefits of an astute and seasoned mind who left to others the details of his creative and original ideas in education.

**Freedom and Discipline**

Gandhi wanted individual freedom to be preserved but at the same time reminded others of their social responsibility. He believed that if we take care of the individual, society will take care of itself. Individuality lies at the root of all progress, material or spiritual. "Gandhi is confident that if individuals are rightly educated, one need not worry about the society of which they are constituents". 22 He dreamed of a society in which

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22. Patel, op. cit., p. 52
all individuals play their part for the good of the whole without losing their individual character.

Gandhi advised students to be obedient to parents but pointed out that the voice of conscience is more important than the wishes of the parents. In order to enjoy the fruits of freedom they should be thoroughly disciplined. "The highest form of freedom", he said, "carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility." Real freedom comes from discipline and humility; unbridled licence is a sign of vulgarity and cannot be be permitted.

Gandhi extolled the virtues of Brahmacharya. He preferred to call students brahmacharis "Vidyarthi is a coined word and a poor equivalent of brahmachari." He wanted to transform schools into communities where individuality is not stifled but developed through social contracts and opportunity of service. Purity of personal life, according to him, is an indispensable condition for building a sound education. He was against corporal punishment and suggested a non-violent method of correcting the delinquent behaviour of the students. He advised teachers to undertake fasts whenever they came across an act of indiscipline. But this does not apply in cases where the pupils have no respect for their teachers.

Thus Gandhi valued individual freedom but he did not

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23. Towards New Education, p.37
24. Ibid, p.38
forget to remind us that man is essentially a social being. M.S. Patel sums up the Gandhian approach in these words:

The essence of Gandhi's philosophy is, therefore, that individuality develops only in a social atmosphere where it can feed out common interests. He insists that individuality shall have free scope, within the common life, to grow its own way, and that it shall not be warped from its ideal bent by forces "heavy as frost and deep almost as life".25

Like Aurobindo, Gandhi attempted a synthesis of freedom and discipline but unlike him the emphasis was more on discipline than on freedom.

AUROBINDO AND RADHAKRISHNAN.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was a distinguished teacher and philosopher. In his life he exemplified the traditional belief that great philosophers are great teachers. He is known all over the world for his brilliant exposition of Indian Philosophy. He is in the true line of descent from the ancient Hindu philosophers; he looks back to the ancient sages of India but the present world with its complexities and problems is never out of his sight. Like Tagore, Gandhi and Aurobindo, he was not a conformist, though he had a deep reverence for tradition. Like them all he was a liberal and broad-minded person with an open mind and an open heart, not shadowed by the dark forces of narrowness and fanaticism.

25. op. cit., p. 57
Dr. Radhakrishnan had a dual contact with education. At the practical level he was an eminent professor of philosophy, functioned as Vice-Chancellor and was closely associated with important educational commissions and committees. On the level of theory, he brought "his profound and extensive knowledge of philosophy to bear on the discussions of the ends and purposes of education and the ideals and values which gave it abiding meaning". This dual contact gave him a unique insight into the educational situation in the country.

**Aims of Education**

Radhakrishnan believes that the primary purpose of education is to inculcate all that is good in man and eradicate all that is evil. A training of mere intellect will not be sufficient; education should bring grace and compassion in the heart of man. In the modern world, where the mode of thinking and living has drastically changed, education must assume, according to him, greater responsibility and "fight against the enemy within and without superstition, greed, fanaticism, selfishness, ignorance on the one hand, and poverty, unemployment and disease on the other." This is a great challenge for an underdeveloped country like India.

The comparative importance of the material and

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26. Saiyidain, op. cit., p. 152
27. Ibid., p. 154
spiritual in the life of man is a recurrent theme in the philosophy of Dr. Radhakrishnan. Power and wealth, he maintains, are great assets as well as a source of great danger. They become impediments in the elevation of spirit. The conquest of self is more important than the conquest of countries. "Once upon a time, civilisations were destroyed by the barbarians from without; in our age, they are likely to be destroyed by the barbarians within, whom we breed." The essence of civilisation consists not in its external appurtenances but in its moral and intellectual qualities, which may be very old but not outmoded. Education must impart the values of the spirit, of course, not to the neglect of material progress. For this purpose we must respect the wisdom of the past. Like Aurobindo, he believed that "a society without the knowledge of the past which has made it, would be lacking in depth and dignity." Education, therefore, should help man in realizing his true inwardsness. The ultimate goal of education is self-realization.

In addition to knowledge and skills, education should, according to Radhakrishnan, train men and women in the art of living, in understanding human relationship and working with people. It should encourage independent thinking and responsible criticism. These qualities are

29. Report of University Education Commission, p. 86
essential for the working of a successful democracy which concedes equal rights and equal freedom. Like Aurobindo he was a great protagonist of the democratic ideal.

Like Aurobindo again Radhakrishnan believed that it is the business of the educators to act as 'bridges' between the East and the West. "To regard one's own country as the centre of the universe is to view all things solely in relationship to this fixed point. It is primitive and outmoded." He pointed out that the Indian genius has worked in two contradictory directions - a jealous pride in India's tradition and a desire to profit from the examples of the West. He also pleaded for the development of the quality of creativity among students for creativity brings them closer to the creator and they can participate with Him in the process of creative evolution. Thus in respect of the aims of education, Radhakrishnan is in broad agreement with Aurobindo though in the ultimate goal of education he falls short of the Aurobindonian concept of a Divine Life on earth.

Curriculum and Method:

For the construction of the curriculum, Radhakrishnan wants us to draw inspiration from men of letters and men of science, poets and artists, discoverers and inventors. But he recognises the "great significance of the poet over the politician and the philosopher over the technologist."
He pleads for a study of classics, of great books and ideas which widen the mental horizon of the students and fires their imagination. With this stress on humanities the curriculum should not ignore the study of Science. "Science is one of the greatest creations of the human spirit. It provides the material basis of the human spirit." But in the modern world, he complains, science has been prostituted for many unworthy and immoral ends.

Religion occupies a place of crucial importance in the educational thought of Radhakrishnan. He does not find any antagonism between them, both are engaged in the quest of truth and the quest of truth is the quest of God. But religion does not mean the worship of dead customs and superstition. He is not in favour of the religion of the fanatics. He advocated a comparative study of the teachings of great religions in a spirit of reverence. He warns that the students are not to be handed over to the theologians of different religions. The teacher charged with the responsibility of imparting religious education should be a person imbued with the qualities of character and the breadth of vision that can transform the lives of the pupils.

Radhakrishnan did not work out in full his concepts of curriculum and method except in so far as it is reflected in the Report of the University Education Commission of which he was the Chairman. But he provided the directions, the concept which to a large extent is
in broad agreement with what Aurobindo says in this regard. In the words of K.G. Saifidain:

If the accent in education is right - in other words, if it is inspired by the right spirit - the battle of methods and curricula have meaning and they might be won in favour of a creative and humane education, otherwise, they may have no significance than the professional antics of a mock wrestler. 33

The accent is there but the battle is yet to be won.

FREEDOM AND DISCIPLINE:

Radhakrishnan believed in the sacredness of human personality, "The Human person", he said, "has a claim to be treated as an end in himself and is therefore entitled to the rights of life, freedom and security". 34 He believes that educational system should be so organised that it does not restrict freedom of the individual. In educational institutions, intellectual freedom is the quality that must be seriously guarded and encouraged. While studying, students can question fundamental beliefs and find fault with things as they are. It is essential that they do not lose their intellectual vigour for if that happens the future of civilization is indeed bleak. Intellectual freedom and honest criticism can thrive only in an atmosphere of freedom.

In a democracy intellectual freedom should be accompanied by responsible criticism. Freedom of one should not come in conflict with the freedom of many. 35, Eastern Religion and Western Thought, p. 37
Individual and society should not work at cross purposes. "Each individual is a member of a community where he shares his work with others; but he is also an individual with his sense and emotions, desires and affections, interests and ideals." The individual should not be sacrificed at the altar of society. No organisation of state should try to suppress the individual. The state exists for the individual, not the individual for the State. Democracy is the only way that can strike balance between the needs of the individuals and the needs of the society. It is therefore essential, Radhakrishnan seems to imply, that education should be thoroughly democrazised.

Radhakrishnan emphasised the need for self-discipline. He pointed out that it is "easier to win the battle of the world but difficult to win the battles of inward life." By a steady process of austerity, discipline and self-purification we can raise our moral stature. Technical skill or intellectual ability does not make a society great; what we need is a class of disciplined and dedicated workers. Once again it must be admitted here that Radhakrishnan did not work out the ideas of freedom and discipline in the school situation. Had he tried, the basic ideas of intellectual freedom and self-discipline would not have changed. He would have then

agreed with Aurobindo to a great extent except in the sense that Aurobindo's concept of freedom is not restricted to the field of intellectual freedom; it is a wider concept encompassing a totality of freedom.

Tagore, Gandhi and Radhakrishnan, the three leading modern Indian educationists have been so far discussed rather briefly and an attempt has been made to compare their educational ideas to those of Sri Aurobindo. With the avowed purpose of making a proper assessment of his contribution a more ambitious and leisurely study would have taken into account the educational thought of more of his contemporaries particularly Swami Vivekananda and Dr. Muhammad Iqbal and Zahir Husain. A still more ambitious work could have encompassed his counterparts in the Western world including John Dewey, A.N. Whitehead and Bertrand Russell.

All comparisons are odious, particularly when we are dealing with the great men of recent times. History has yet to pass their final judgment on them. Many more assessments of their work are to be made and in the process some will be forgiven and other forgotten. To glorify Aurobindo and belittle others is not the purpose of the present study. And yet the truth, as the present investigator perceives it, must be stated. Sri Aurobindo is a towering figure among the educationists of modern India. His educational ideas are of far-reaching
consequences and stand well above in comparison to those of his contemporaries. He had a breadth of vision, a comprehensiveness of approach, a total world-view, uncommon even in the best of minds. He was far ahead of his times and only in the generations to come a real and complete assessment of this Titanic figure in the world of education can ever be made.