

M.A Education

MODERN EDUCATIONAL THINKERS

Paper-XI

Author

S. P. Pani & N. R. Dash



**D.D.C.E.
Education For All**

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE & CONTINUING EDUCATION
UTKAL UNIVERSITY, BHUBANESWAR-751007**

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(S.P. Pani)
DIRECTOR

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UNIT - I

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M.K Gandhi : Basic tenets of Basic education

A Brief Life-sketch

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1949) was born on October 2, 1869 at Porbandar on the Western coast of India. He was the sixth and youngest child of his parents. His family belonged to the Baina or trader caste and its members were originally grocers, but his grandfather Uttamchand Gandhi and father Karamchand Gandhi occupied the high office of the diwan (Chief Minister) in the Kathiwar princely state. *Karamchand Gandhi, also known as Kaba Gandhi*, was courageous, truthful, generous but keen practical wisdom. Thought a Vaishnava, he had great reverence for Jainism and other sects of Hinduism. He also had many Muslim and Sufi friends also. Mohandas, thus, grew up in an eclectic atmosphere. The strongest formative influence on young Mohandas, however, was that of his mother Putlibai. She was deeply religious and orthodox in temperament. She would not take any food until she said her prayers, and she used to visit temples regularly. She was very scrupulous in the observance of rituals like vows and fasts. "Once in a cloudy weather, she vowed not to eat till she saw the sun. the children watched for the sun to appear and rushed into tell her when it did. By the time she got outside to look, it had vanished again. 'It does not matter', she said, 'God does not want me to eat today.'" She was, on the other hand a sparkling Conversationalist and a welcome guest at the princess' courts. Her children adored her. "In her moral guidance she at least tried to be positive rather than prohibitive. She taught Mohan the importance of telling the truth and sticking to his undertakings."

Young Mohandas was first admitted to the pathshala or primary school at Porbandar. When he was seven he accompanied his father to Rajkot and there he attended, first, a pathshala and then a school and at. The age of twelve he was admitted into the High School III the town. "He was a mediocre student shy and slow to mix. Every day he walked to school and ran home, trying to be exactly punctual, neither early nor late." However, progress reports of school never contained any unfavourable comments about him. He would do his best to prepare his lessons and never told lies to his fellow pupils or to his teachers. Mohandas, once, read a drama book named Shrivana Pitribhakti (Shrivana's devotion to his father) and greatly enjoyed reading it. He thought of emulating Shrivana's filial devotion. As a child he used to act out the role of Harishchandra to himself for "times without number". The idea of truth as supreme good was thus early implanted in him and appears to have grown naturally in him as a tree or a flower. His love for nursing the sick and compassionate attitude towards poor and down-trodden section of the society, might have been the result of Mohandas's long experience of attending to his sick father.

Like most growing children, Mohandas also passed through a rebellious phase. In his adolescence he tried meat eating, smoking and petty pilfering; but he not only confessed his chicanery before his parents immediately but also resolutely refrained from repeating such practices, having once discovered the pitfalls. His father was also loving and gentle when Mohandas most needed him in a crisis of conscience.

Mohandas was married at the age of thirteen to Kasturbai, the daughter of Gokuldas Makanji, a merchant Porbandar. The marriage had been settled six or seven years back by the two families, the bridegroom and the bride having had no say in the matter. Kasturbai and Mohandas were of the same age. They settled down in the family home at Rajkot. Being motivated by the vow of life-long fidelity to each other,

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Mohandas in traditional Indian way always expected Kasturbai to seek his permission for her every movement. He would read pamphlets giving advice on happy marriage and applied the bits that appealed to him. Full of ideals, he expected Kasturbai to be as faithful to him as he was to her. No doubt she was. But his perfectionism at this point, took the form of infantile jealousy. He resented her going anywhere without him, even to the temple or on visit to friends. Sometimes his restrictions imposed on her were arbitrary and Kasturbai in her own quiet and passive way resisted them. Later, Gandhi recollected the situation and felt that the lessons of non-violence and passive resistance were learnt by him from her quiet practice of submission to suffering.

At eighteen Mohandas passed the matriculation examination and got admitted to Samaldas College at Bhavnagar. There he could not intelligently follow the lectures delivered by the professors and that is why he did not find any interest in his studies, and felt worried about his future. A family adviser suggested that obtaining a Barrister's title from England was easier as well as more lucrative, compared to the rigors of earning a B.A. degree in India. After a great deal of discussion it was agreed that Mohandas would go to England for three years to earn the barrister's title. His mother was at first hesitant because she had heard that young men going to England went astray, ate meat and drank wine and committed many such indiscretions. However, Mohandas obtained mother's Consent after taking vows that he would not touch meat, women and wine. To raise the necessary funds, his brother sold some of the family land and his wife sold most of her jewelry. When he was about to depart, the community decreed that anyone who crossed the seas, or anyone who assisted someone in the crossing of the seas, would be an outcast. Mohandas tried to plead with them, but to no avail. Finally, with the help of a third party and at the risk of being an outcast, he succeeded in getting the funds released and buying the ticket. Thus he left India in September 1888 at the age of 18.

The voyage proved an ordeal. His experiences during the voyage were symbolic of those he was to undergo in the next three years. He was still affected with the crippling shyness, which had marked his childhood, a sense now compounded by his poor English. Most of the passengers in the ship were English and he found it almost impossible to understand them or converse with them. However, on arrival in London, a family friend gave him sound advice on how to behave politely in England, and also helped him find accommodation.

In London, Gandhi had to deal not only with his limited diet and shyness, but also with tremendous cultural shock. He tried to overcome all these by throwing himself into an overt strategy of westernization, attempting to learn all the skills and graces he thought befitted an English gentleman. He started out on lessons in French, dancing, violin and elocution. Even, new suits were ordered from the most fashionable tailors in London. However, this proved a passing phase. Gandhi soon gave up the unequal struggle with music and dancing, abandoned elocution and began to think seriously about legal study. There was a rebound from extreme extravagance to meticulous economy. At the same time he learned to walk everywhere within London wherever possible. This habit saved him money on fare and also toughened his physique. Another habit which he acquired in London and which later stood him in good stead as a public man handling considerable public funds was that of keeping regular accounts. He used to keep daily account of every farthing he spent in London.

Vegetarianism, practiced out of deference to his parents, though an inconvenient obligation in London, became a mission for Gandhi, the starting point of a unique discipline of body and mind, which transformed his life and personality. In fact Henrys

Salt's book *Plea for Vegetarianism* opened to him a whole new world of thought, linking diet with morality, religion and science. He began to ponder on the relations between men and animals, on the role of food as strictly a means of life rather than an enjoyable experience. He also became the convener and the secretary of a vegetarian club in Bayswater and acquired the first and fundamental lessons of establishing and managing an organization.

During the three years of his stay in England, Gandhi witnessed the Anarchist, the Feminist, the Theosophical movements that shook the foundations of the old world. "England was a liberating experience for the nineteen year old youth. In his three years in London, he confronted for the first time the social and revolutionary theories prevalent in Europe, an impressive body of Western literature, and Western people interested in Indian religious tradition." His first reading of the Bhagavad Gita in 1889 was Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, *The Song Celestial*. The Gita seemed to him even at that early age to be 'of priceless worth, but it was only, some years later that it came part of his daily reading. He writes in his *Auto biography*: "The book struck me as one of priceless worth. The impression has ever since been growing on me with the result that I regard it today as the book of par excellence or the knowledge of truth." During the same period he read *The Light of Asia*, another book of Sir Edwin Arnold on Buddha and Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy and the Bible*. He was highly impressed by the 'Sermon on the Mount' with its message of supreme forgiveness and non-violence. His young mind tried to unify the teachings of the Gita, *The Light of Asia* and the Sermon on the Mount. The themes of compassion, non-violence and self renunciation from various religious sources began to combine in his estimation as the highest manifestations of religion. He later declared, "Renunciation was the highest form of religion appealed to me greatly."

Gandhi passed the bar examination with ease and returned to India and his family in 1891. Homecoming was not the joyous or triumphant experience for which he might have hoped. He was already anxious about his ability to practice law, uneasy about his caste's likely attitude to him, but the bitter blow, which awaited him was the shocking news of the sad demise of his mother. The family had kept it secret from him while he was abroad. In India, Gandhi briefly attempted to practice law but in his professional life he experienced nothing but setbacks. Seeing no promise for a career in India, he accepted an offer of appointment as a legal counselor of a big firm in South Africa and so, in May 1893, at the age of 23 he left India for South Africa.

After six weeks of voyage Gandhi landed at Durban. Within a few days of his arrival in South Africa Gandhi had his first experience of racial discrimination while traveling from Durban to Johannesburg, a journey of 24 hours by train and horse buggies. Although Gandhi had a first class ticket, he was asked by the conductor to move to the coach, because the South African Railway did not allow coloured people to travel first class. Gandhi refused to move and was eventually thrown out of the train at night, at a small station named Maritz burg, during the peak of winter. That incident greatly awakened him. Until that time he had been deeply engrossed in his personal matters, his own career, his own finances, his own family, etc. But that incident compelled him to think of the plight of others, especially of those who were less privileged than him. During that long, dark and cold night, Gandhi resolved to do his best to eliminate discrimination. The following passage describes Gandhi's mind: "The iron entered his soul. In retrospect, this incident seemed to him as one of the most creative experiences of his life. From that hour, he refused to accept injustice as a part of the natural or unnatural - order in South Africa. He would reason, he

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would plead; he would appeal to the better judgment and the latent humanity of the ruling race; he would resist, but he would never be a willing victim of racial arrogance. It was not so much a question of redeeming his own self-respect as that of his community, his country, even of humanity." Gandhi spent that whole night on the dark platform, alone, and shivering in the cold. The next morning he filed a protest but was ignored. He took the next available train and somehow managed to reach his destination.

Soon after reaching his destination, Gandhi convened a meeting of the Indian residents of Pretoria. He began studying their situation and representing their rights for fair treatment in the courts. Throughout that year Gandhi worked equally hard on two fronts: fighting the authorities on legal grounds for the elimination of discrimination, and educating the Indians to become better citizens. In the meantime he also devoted a good deal of his time working on the case, for which he had been engaged and succeeded in negotiating a mediated settlement.

As Gandhi was about to leave South Africa in 1894 having completed the legal assignment, he noticed in the paper a reference to a bill before the Natal Assembly to dis-enfranchise the Indian voters. When the implication of the bill was pointed out, the compatriots, i.e. the Indian merchants pleaded with him to stay on in Natal to take up the fight on their behalf. Gandhi then decided to stay there as long as it took to keep fighting. He remained in South Africa for the coming 21 years that is till 1914, except for brief visits to India. He enrolled himself as an advocate in the Natal courts and sought greater civil rights for Indians in South Africa. He wrote petitions, letters to the editors, letters to the legislators and collected thousands of signatures. He organized a political party called Natal Indian Congress and educated the Indians to be law-abiding citizens and also insisted on fair and just treatments. During his stay in South Africa Gandhi led numerous passive resistance movements, called them Satyagraha and under his leadership large number of Indian indentured labourers and petty traders courted arrest during the agitation. Gandhi fought numerous cases on legal grounds and although he won many, the net change in the status of the conditions of the Indians was minimal, because the government kept on introducing and passing new bills, which effectively annulled every victory. He published in 1896 the famous Green pamphlet titled *The Grievances of the British Indians in South Africa*.

In 1903, after having lived and worked in South Africa for 10 years, Gandhi started a weekly newspaper, *The Indian Opinion* in which he published accurate information about the living condition of the Indians for the purpose of educating the general public. The weekly writing for his papers exerted profound influence on him. It became a training ground for him in self-restraint and a means for the study of human nature in all its casts and shades. Writing for the paper also helped him to clarify his own ideas and visions, to stay on track, to be consistent and to assume full accountability for his actions and words. At the same time Gandhi was undergoing some personal changes in his life. After reading John Ruskin's *Unto this Last* he resolved to simplify his life. He gave up all luxuries and moved to a farm where he tried to grow his own food and live by the land. He tried to replace all machine _ power with manual power. He continued with his experiments in dietics, health care and education. Around the same time he also took a vow of celibacy.

Between 1906 and 1914 Gandhi refined his technique of Satyagraha, trained his followers in its use, cultivated an exceptionally high level of his own moral character and influenced all his followers to strengthen theirs at the same time. "Satyagraha in Gandhi's hands was not just a matter of courageously breaking the law at issue; it was also an occasion for a range of symbolic acts which would enhance the

community's self-awareness, increase its internal cohesion, and shame the opponent." It was purely on the strength of their moral character series of non violent civil disobedience movements were launched and finally Gandhi and General Smuts came to an agreement in 1913 and the Indian Relief Act was consequently introduced in 1914.

Gandhi's manifesto, Hind Swaraj (Indian Home Rule) was written during his return voyage from London to South Africa. The book Hind Swaraj expressed Gandhi's theoretical framework for the freedom struggle of India. It was an exposition of his theoretical basis for the future socio-political and economic activities. He outlined his views on society, politics, non-violence, modern civilization and the place of religion in human life. He wrote: "We shall get nothing by asking; we shall have to take what we want, and we need the requisite strength for the effort, and that strength will be available to him only who acts thus." This statement was followed up with eighteen points of desired change for the Indians and for the country as a whole. If India was to change, each Indian had to change first. The method of change was self-rule, one's ability to rule oneself and non-violence and he believed that the change was to come from within. Through Hind Swaraj he dedicated his life to India's freedom struggle and entered into the scene of National Freedom struggle as a revolutionary leader.

Gandhi received a grand welcome when he landed at the Apoilo Bunder on January 9, 1915. He became a political associate of Gokhale, the leading moderate leader and accepted him as his political mentor. Gandhi initially believed that the British Empire was good for the welfare of the people of India and therefore supported the government with all the powers within his means. He even campaigned to recruit soldiers to Join the British army during World War I. But the Jellihanwala Bagh massacre of 1919 shattered Gandhi's belief in the British sense of justice. He decided to sever his allegiance to the British Empire immediately and also resolved to fight for the independence of India Gandhi led the Khilafat movement and subsequently the non-cooperation movement and by traveling far and wide in various parts of India acquired first-hand knowledge of common folk. The death of the foremost leaders like Gokhale, Firoz Shah Mehta and Tilak and virtual withdrawal of Aurobindo Ghose and Bipin Chandra Pal from active political scene made Gandhi the undisputed leader of the Congress party.

Gandhi was elected president of the All-India Home Rule League in 1920 and pledged to achieve Swaraj. Subsequently through the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, Quit India Movement of 1942 and several other agitations, Satyagrahas, fast unto death social work establishment of Savarmati Ashram, Harijan uplift programmes, experiments on basic education and such other activities Gandhi carried through the freedom struggle till India got independence on 15 August 1947 Of course besides Gandhi, there were many India leaders and numerous other movements outside the fold of Congress and outside his sphere of influence which immensely contributed to India's Nationalist Movement. On January 30, 1948, in the seventy-eighth year of his life when he was walking to an evening prayer meeting at Birla House in Delhi, Gandhi was shot dead by Nathuram Vinayak Godse, a young ultra-nationalist Hindu.

Mental Make-up :

The political biography of Mahatma Gandhi provide only fleeting clues to his mental makeup. He is one of the most complex personalities that students of history encounter. He was essentially an experimental personality. He recognized this aspect in his autobiography titled The Story of My Experiments with Truth. Vegetarianism,

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Passive resistance, Satyagraha, Brahmacharya (Celibacy), Aparigraha (non-possession), Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), Anashakti (non-attachment), Osteopathy, Hydropathy, Dietetics, Fasting, Penance were all experiments that he carried out in his life time. In the introduction to his autobiography he observed, "I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truth, and as my life consists of nothing but those experiments, it is true that the story will take shape of an autobiography." In contrast to Aurobindo and Vivekananda, his experiments were hardly esoteric. All these experiments were known and shared. A general outline of his thought would follow this biographical sketch. However, the same is quite well known. Morality was the most persistent concern of Gandhi. If he was experimental he was also ethical and a moralist. Though not a voracious reader, he was still well read. Of the numerous books that influenced Gandhi, the most important ones included Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within you*, *What is Art?*, *The Slavery of Our Times*, *The first Step*, *How Shall We Escape*, *Letters to a Hindoo*; Sherard's *The White Slaves of England*, *Carpenter's Civilization, Its cause and Cure*; Taylor's *The Fallacy of Speed*, Blount's *A New Crusade*, Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, *A Joy for Ever*; Naoroji's *Poverty and un-British Rule in India*; Dutt's *Economic History of India and Maine's Village Communities*. Besides these books, some other books, which greatly influenced him included Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*, Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*, *The Sermon on the Mount* from the New Testament etc. of Indian scriptures Gandhi was familiar with the Bhagavad Gita only. He had never read the Vedas, Upanishads or any other Indian metaphysical literature, though he was well conversant with the fables, parables and myths of the great epics like *The Mahabharata*, and *The Ramayan*, and few other Puranas. Gandhi's relations with these books were unique in more than one way. He read into them his own philosophy. For example, Gandhi held that Bhagavad Gita advocates non-violence, However, no ordinary reader of average intelligence could agree with him.

Gandhi had no spiritual experience or realization and was categorical in starting so. It is another matter that people revered him as God. Though he had no God realization, he was extremely God fearing and God-loving from early childhood to his last days. Gandhi was not religious in the traditional sense of the term. He was never ritualistic, he never believed in exclusiveness, never considered one religion to be superior to another and never considered one religion to be true alone. He was, in fact, religious in the true sense of the term, in the sense that he lived for others and believed that every religion is true in its own way. Though he had no God realization, he was an eternal and ardent seeker of God and had unweaving faith in God. He was always resolute in his beliefs, decisions and plan of actions.

Philosophy of Gandhi :

The complexity of Gandhian thought is best expressed in Gandhi's own words. He says "Men say I am a saint losing myself in politics. The fact is I am a politician in trying my hardest to be a saint". "The politician in me never dominated a single decision of mine." In other words, Gandhi was a politician and as such was concerned with practical questions of politics and not with metaphysical or theoretical questions like questions of God, state, individual and society with which politician or metaphysical thinkers are always concerned. The practical question of politics before Gandhi was of course that of India's independence and building a vibrant India. Notwithstanding this, he was an ethical, God-fearing person and no single action of him was motivated by narrow political consideration and he was guided by the highest ideals of metaphysics and political ethics and as such he remained

philosophical. In other words, though Gandhi had set out to live with practical politics only, he could not divorce himself from philosophical and ethical issues. Here an attempt is being made to identify and assess the philosophical consideration that shaped Gandhian action. Being a prolific writer, being a Mahatma for thousands, Gandhi was forced to touch upon all aspects of life. Though Gandhi was not a system builder, a comprehensive philosophy emerges out of his life and writing. An attempt is being made to present this general trend as a prelude to consideration of his educational philosophy.

In Gandhian philosophy 'Truth' occupies a central position. In fact, truth is the pole star of his life and philosophy. 'There is no greater law than truth' (Satyam masti paramodharmah) is a common aphorism in the Hindu tradition. Gandhi carried on this tradition not only in public protest but also through experimentation in daily life. He dedicated his life to the searching quest of truth in its various aspects in his own life as well as in that of his nation. The method of his researches is the usual scientific method of observation, hypothesis and experiments. He says, "For me truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle that is god." In his early life Gandhi worked with the notion 'God is Truth', but later reversed it to "Truth is God" as he thought, besides truth, God is many other things also. "Gandhi did not claim the realization of truth in any absolute sense, for he repeatedly said that he was but a searcher after truth. Likewise, the truth norm that became integral to his thought grew more ethical and relative as he relied upon it as a principle of judgment and activity." And as he had not realized truth in any absolute sense, he held that "That relative truth must meanwhile be my beacon, my shield, my buckler"

According to Gandhi, every man has the right and the capacity to determine truth for himself and it is this essential virtue, viz., the ability to determine truth for himself, which separates man from brute". Truth rules out prejudice, evasion, secrecy and deception as well as exaggeration, suppression or modification of reality. It requires that we should never be afraid of confessing our mistakes or retracing our steps. Truth also implies mutual toleration and avoidance of dogmatism and bitterness; for truth as discerned by man is always relative and fragmentary."

Gandhi was a great believer in ancient Indian axiom "Non-violence is the highest law" (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah). In fact, many leaders of thought and founders of great religions of the world have taught that violence cannot be overcome by violence and evil cannot be overcome by evil. Hindu ethics since the time of the Upanishads have always laid stress on the virtue of Ahimsa or non-injury to all living beings. Non-violence is the leading tenet of Buddhist and Jaina philosophy too. Gandhi relied heavily upon the Indian traditions and western scriptures to confirm his own formulation of Ahimsa. He says, " ... though my views on ahimsa are a result of my study of most of the faiths of the world, they are now no longer dependent upon the authority of these works. They are a part of my life, and if I suddenly discovered that the religious books read by me bore a different interpretation from the one I had learned to give them, I should still hold to the view of ahimsa. "

Gandhi's non-violence meant the blending of morality with politics; rather it would be better to say that morality was the guiding star for politics in Gandhi's non-violence. Non-violence means absence of killing, but to Gandhi it was not injuring anything in this world in action, word or even thought. Non-violence or Ahimsa, to Gandhi, is the soul-force in human life. He felt that non-violence was the only realistic force in life. If non-violence is to be successfully used, there should be faith in God

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and abundance of love for others. "Ahimsa is a positive doctrine where love is central to the whole concept." Gandhi believed that unless one has a living faith in God and in soul force, he cannot follow non-violence whole-heartedly, with entire confidence and to the best advantage. Non-violence apart from God is without any potency. To Gandhi, therefore, "The first and the last shield and buckler of the non-violent person will be his unwavering faith in God." According to Gandhi unless one pursues the path of goodness, one cannot realize God. The path of goodness can bring about the realization of God the highest aspiration which one can cherish. Belief in non-violence is, thus, directly related to faith in God. Without realizing this association it is not possible to be non-violent. By Ahimsa or non-violence Gandhi meant the largest love, love even for the evil-doer. It does not however mean that one should meekly submit to the Will of the evil-doer. Gandhi would never tolerate cowardice and weakness. He never recommended that a weak person should choose non-violence out of necessity. His concept of non-violence is fearlessness. One will never be able to sacrifice unless he is fearless. The feelings of fearlessness that was infused by Vivekananda in the Indian masses was carried further by Gandhi through non-violence where there is relationship between God and truth due to which one doesn't not fear anybody, least to the one who perpetuates injustice on him.

Religion, according to Gandhi, is belief in the ordered moral governance of the world and as he believed in truth and non-violence he accepted the creative force of religion in human history. Gandhi had no narrow sectarian outlook as he was above the bounds of creed, cults, rituals and ceremonies. He does not mind how one defines God for he is conscious that "There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable." However, true religion according to him is emphasis on the moral values of man as spirit. As soon as the moral basis was lost one ceased to be religious. "All religions are founded on the same moral laws. My ethical religion is made up of laws, which bind men all over the world." He believed in the essential unity of all religions and religion according to him is not merely a means for personal purification but it was an immensely powerful social bond. Psychological cleansing of the moral structure of the society is necessary to eliminate superstitions and meaningless rituals and customs, which have usurped the place of true religion. And then only, religion, in the sense of philanthropy, forbearance, justice, fraternity, peace and all-embracing love would prevail.

The non-violent techniques that Gandhi evolved during more than half a century of his public life have shown the world that now even unarmed nations can make war - of course non-violent wars 3/4 to win freedom. With the weapons of Satyagraha, non-cooperation, boycott and civil disobedience Gandhi fought with one of the mightiest empires of the world and ultimately liberated India from three hundred years of foreign domination.

The coinage of the word, Satyagraha, came from the Gujrati Agraaha, which means firmness but it went far beyond this meaning. Gandhi translated Satyagraha as truth force and it is a technique for acting socially and humanely. "Satyagraha is based on the fundamental truths that the soul remains unconquered and unconquerable even by the mightiest physical force, and that every human being, however, degraded has in him the divine spark, i.e., limitless potentiality for growth and is capable of responding to kind, generous treatment." The idea and practice of Satyagraha constitute the heart and soul of Gandhi's belief in non-violence. It was used by him in his non-violent campaign in South Africa and later on in India. Satyagraha, according to him is the most important means to educate and enlighten people. It means truth

force, love-force or soul-force. It tries to correct the opponent's error by self-suffering. Satyagraha depends for its success not on the mildness of the adversary but on the capacity of the Satyagrahi to suffer until the opponent comes round. It tries to impress upon the mind of the opponent a sense of justice without harbouring any ill-will towards the opposing party. In order to convert the oppressor, the Satyagrahi has to be ready to embrace cheerfully even death.

According to Gandhi, "Satyagraha is an inherent birthright of a person." It is not merely a sacred right but it can also be a sacred duty. If a government does not respect the will of the people and supports dishonesty and terrorism then it should be disobeyed. In addition to conflicts, Satyagraha is applicable to all other activities of life. Thus it can be used by individuals in their daily life in relation to parents, children and friends and even criminals. Gandhi says "It is a force that may be used by individual as well as communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. .. for me, the law of Satyagraha, the law of love is an eternal principle. I co-operate with all that is good. I desire to non co-operate with all that is evil, whether it is associated with my wife, son or myself."

Gandhi laid out certain pre-conditions for the success of Satyagraha movement and certain characteristics for being a Satyagrahi. Gandhi wanted that a Satyagrahi must have a living faith in God and he must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and therefore, have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature. A Satyagrahi should lead a chaste life and be ready and willing, for the sake of his cause, to give up his life and his possessions. Humility and honesty were also pre-condition for Satyagrahis and Satyagraha must not be a mere political method for Satyagrahis, but it should become an attitude of mind. Gandhi further wanted a Satyagrahi to be a teetotaler and be free from the use of other intoxicants in order that his reason may be always unclouded and his mind constant. A Satyagrahi must not hanker after wealth and fame, should strengthen his body by physical exercises, should practice Brahmacharya and be absolutely fearless and firm in his resolve. "He must have patience, single-minded purposefulness and must not be swayed from the path of duty by anger or any other passion."

There are different techniques of Satyagraha and non-co-operation is one of them. Gandhi believes that governments are neither infallible, nor do they have any absolute right to misgovern. The mainstay of a government is neither force at its command, nor merely the passive consent of the people but their active cooperation. Withdrawal of co-operation and support by the people, therefore, means complete paralysis and the end of the political system. Gandhi says, "Even the most despotic Government cannot stand except for the consent of the governed which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot." If the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, its power is gone. According to Gandhi, ordinarily people should be law-abiding and government should also look after the interests of the people and respect their wishes and sentiments too. But if the government rides roughshod over popular feelings, if its ways are immoral and unjust, it becomes the right as well as the duty of the people to non-cooperate with the government. Gandhi says, ". .. it is a right recognized from time immemorial of the subjects to refuse to assist a ruler who misrules."

Gandhi toyed with the idea of non-co-operation movement as early as 1905. He took the lessons from the Russian example " ... there is much similarity between; he Governance of India and that of Russia ... we too can resort to Russian remedy against the tyranny." Non-co-operation should be always non-violent and peaceful. It

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has to start, of course, with self-purification. First the individual has to rid himself of all that is evil and has to equip himself with basic courage. Then it will become impossible for the opposite party to perpetuate its acts of suppression. Gandhi's non-co-operation, however, had its root not in hatred but in love. He says, "Although non-operation is one of the main weapons in the armoury of a Satyagraha, it should not be forgotten that it is after all only a means to secure the co-operation of the opponent consistently with truth and justice. The essence of non-violent technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists themselves. " Avoidance of all relationship with the opposing power, therefore, can never be a Satyagrahi's object, but transformation or purification of that relationship. "

Non-cooperation can also be resorted to in several ways. It could be done by boycott, by the method of hartal and picketing etc. Even though Gandhi was opposed to the extremist ideologies and most of their political methods he supported the boycott. He clearly understood the implication and effectiveness of boycott movement. However, he realized that the success of the movement depended on the preparedness of the people, willingness of the merchants to suffer and maintenance of unity. Gandhi supported boycott for the cause of Swadeshi so that foreign commodities which are of universal use in a country must be locally produced. Foreign cloth was one such commodity, the boycott of which was essential to encourage local product. Or even boycott of schools, colleges, and courts, foreign liquor, invitation to government officials to resign were very intense, widespread and effective. Hartal or bringing to a dead stop all business is another expression of non-cooperation. It will attract the attention of the government, the organization, or the institution involved in malpractices or other sorts of injustices, which are being opposed. However, Gandhi cautioned that hartals should not be frequent because its frequent repetition will cause immunity towards it and render it ineffective. Picketing, another form of non-co-operation, when employed as a non-violent technique, should be only persuasive and never coercive. No violence is to be used, no discourtesy, no intimidation and no burning or burying of effigies. Gandhi was against hunger strikes and modern dharnas, which have a tendency to assume the form of a violent coercion rather than a peaceful demonstration.

Civil disobedience of the laws of the government is a strong and extreme form of non-cooperation. Gandhi calls it "a complete, effective and bloodless substitute of armed revolt." Civil disobedience to Gandhi was to be the last and drastic remedy against evils and injustice. "Civil disobedience is really a synthesis of civility and disobedience, i.e., non-violence and resistance. Resistance to bad laws is essential for man's moral growth, while civility is the demand of a stable social order without which man's life and growths are not possible." Gandhi laid more emphasis upon the word civil than on disobedience. It was to be courteous, civilized, well-mannered disobedience of all the laws, which were against the welfare of the people. First of all, only a few laws, which are very severe in its nature should be selected for opposition and then the others. The law selected should also be such that the largest number of people can participate in civil disobedience. Gandhi's choice of the salt law for civil disobedience movement of 1930-34 was an ideal choice. There can be individual as well as mass civil disobedience. The latter means spontaneous action by masses. In the beginning masses have to be rigorously trained for action. Gradually they will learn's art. Gandhi stressed adequate discipline as the prerequisite of mass civil disobedience. In the absence of adequate discipline there is a great risk of disobedience coming violent. Gandhi says, "Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle, must not be capricious and, above all, must have no ill-will or hatred behind it."

Gandhi's concept of Swaraj had wider connotations. He says, "Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen ... I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange 'king log for king stork.'" The first facet of Gandhi's concept of Swaraj is the development of capacity in everyone to rule himself. Gandhi's political concept of freedom did not imply the expulsion of English people but it meant the expulsion of English civilization from India. India must be true to have her own spirit and civilization and as such should reject the western model of life. Explaining further the concept of self-rule, Gandhi says that it is contrary to one's manhood and religion to obey oppressive laws, which are opposed to one's conscience. Gandhi notes, "If man will only realize that it is unmanly to obey laws that are unjust, no man's tyranny will enslave him. This is the key to self-rule or Home rule.". In other words, Swaraj was a wider concept for Gandhi than the principle of self determination. It had a positive aspect of creating among the people a power to resist an unjust government, whether indigenous or foreign.

According to Gandhi freedom is a part of truth; unless a nation is free it cannot worship truth. Freedom of a country is essential not only for its own progress but also for that of the others. Freedom and equality will not only characterize the international status of the Satyagrahi state but also determine its internal life. The states will be democratic, for masses accepting non-violence as the way of life will control political power. Gandhi says, "Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen." India's Swaraj signifies to him "The vesting of the ultimate authority in the peasant and the labourer and not the mere transference of power from the white bureaucrat to the brown bureaucrat." For the success of Swaraj, Gandhi wanted self-purification or moral regeneration of the individual. "The root meaning of Swaraj is self-rule. Swaraj may, therefore, be rendered as disciplined rule from within . . . The word Swaraj is a sacred word, a Vedic word, meaning self-rule and self-restraint, and not freedom from all restraint which independence often means."

Gandhi accepted the concept of economic equality. All persons should be supplied with the necessaries to satisfy their natural needs. He was not in favour of class struggle and the extermination of haves by have-nots. Rather he wanted class-collaboration and class co-ordination as the first step towards the classless democracy in which every one will perform some form of productive physical labour and there will be no exploiters. Gandhi desired that men should possess only those things, which are necessary. One should reduce his wants. Gandhi held the rich to be the trustees of the property of the poor. He would permit the rich to have only as much as was necessary. They should be ready to part with their superfluous wealth. Property should be owned only within certain limits. The principle of trusteeship was the formula invented by Gandhi to overcome inequality in the society. To avoid exploitation of man, all property should be held as a trust. He says, "Economic equality is the master key to non-violent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour.

It means the leveling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the leveling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and hungry million persists."

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To conclude, Gandhism is not merely a political creed, it is a message. It is a philosophy of life. Gandhi had an invincible faith in the mobility of human nature. He dreamt of a society based on truth and non-violence. The key to Gandhian thought and concept of man can be expressed in one word: Sarvodaya. It literally means the uplift of all. The goal is to lift man both spiritually and socially to new levels of life and experience.

Educational Thought of Gandhi :

A holistic system and thought of education can be gleaned from the writings of Gandhi. He was not a system builder, most of his writings are drawn from his speeches and he was responding to the contemporary issues most of the time. Notwithstanding this nature, Gandhi was quite consistent and faithful to the central principles he had enunciated. The general principles have been discussed in the preceding paragraphs. The present discussion is devoted to the general principles of education that Gandhi developed. This shall be followed by a discussion on practical aspects.

Gandhi accepted the Upanishadic dictum Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye - education is that which liberates - one of the most important aims of education. He says, "The ancient aphorism, education is that which liberates, is as true today as it was before. Education here does not mean mere spiritual knowledge nor does liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life. Servitude is of two kinds: Slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs. The knowledge acquired in the pursuit of this ideal alone constitutes true study". The Indians for generations held that the highest goal of education is God realization and liberation from the chain of births. Gandhi accepted this eternal philosophy but read new meanings into the words also. He did not limit himself to the liberation of the soul from the chain of rebirth; he ascribed modern and contemporary meanings. Liberation of the country from foreign rule and from various other forms of bondage was equally important. He wanted Indian students to be free from western domination. He found the contemporary system of education to be quite de-nationalizing and even partly a de-Indianising process. Thus the highest goal of education for him was to inculcate the sense of nationalism amongst the Indians to follow the Indian methods of pedagogy without losing sight of the highest principle that is education for God realization. Gandhi asserts that spiritual liberation or attainment of moksha should be the highest end of human effort. He says, "That is true education which leads to freedom that education which delays our freedom is to be shunned, it is satanic, it is sinful." Thus, the foundation of Gandhi's nationalistic philosophy of education is based on the eternal Indian principles of education.

Gandhi was opposed to the pagan ideal that man of letters should be free from the burden of mundane life and leisure is the true foundation of arts and science. As discussed earlier, he had accepted the 'Bread Labour' theory of Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin and T.M. Bondaref. He found echoes of such philosophy from Indian sources also. The theory of karmayoga was quite handy. He recognized the value of manual labour. He writes, "Useful manual labour, intelligently performed, is the means par excellence for developing the intellect. One may develop a sharp intellect otherwise too. But then it will not be a balanced growth but an unbalanced, distorted abortion."

Besides recognizing the role of labour to develop intellect, Gandhi also recognized the necessity of education for baking bread. The modern psycho-physiological principles of education recognize the importance of motor development as a necessary precondition for the development of the intellect. The role of physical education and activity for retaining intellectual ability is recognized as a necessity for adults. It is doubtful whether Gandhi was cognizant of such development in education and psychology. At least he did advance the 'Bread Labour' theory on psycho-physical educational principles. He advocated the 'Bread Labour' theory partly out of his own experience and partly out of nationalistic considerations. He says, "You have to start with the conviction that looking to the needs of the villages of India our rural education ought to be made self supporting of it is to be compulsory." In other words, Gandhi realized that though in his own time students reaching to the portals of educational institutions aspired mostly for white-collared jobs, in those days even school education was a sure passport to the world of Babudom. Gandhi realized that such a situation would not last. He did not accept such aspiration to be ethical or in tune with the needs of the country. Creating wealth in the villages through agriculture and craft was the only tool of bringing prosperity to the country. Education must prepare the country for creating wealth and hence preparing the vast majority for agricultural development. It was a legitimate goal that Gandhi aspired.

Character building, modification of behaviour, refinement and development of personality were important aims of education accepted by Gandhi. He greatly emphasized the need for bringing senses under subjection and making ethics the true foundation of education. The word 'educate' in English means training of the mind and character. It also means acquiring skill and developing knowledge. Gandhi being fairly exposed to the best of English education in England accepted these as valid goals of education. This is not to suggest that Gandhi by recognizing terrestrial goals of education was denying metaphysical goals. Emphasizing the Importance of character building he says ". . . real education consists not in packing the brain with so many facts and figures, not in passing examinations by reading numerous books but in developing character." His concept of character building included a solid foundation in truth and purity and integral development of mind, body and spirit and a robust fearlessness for the cause of truth. Unity in thought, speech and deed are necessary preconditions for perfection 'according to Gandhi. He recognized the correlation of body, mind and spirit and as such education must aim at development and perfection in all three. Gandhi based his ideal of personality on the Bhagvad Gita and advocated imbibing the personality of a Sthitaprajna. Sthitaprajna means equanimity in both favourable and adverse conditions but Gandhi went beyond this standard meaning and for him the ideal personality is of one who has developed body, mind and spirit with equanimity.

Gandhi's aim of education also included social aspects. According to him the aim of education is both social and individual. Any system of education that ignores this vital aspect is incomplete, ineffective and incapable of creating conditions of a good society. He opines that education must enrich human personality and integrate individuals as integral members of society. Thus, his aim was not only individual perfection but he wanted to bring about a new social order based on Truth and Non-

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violence. Training of proper citizens through a good system of education is essential so that such citizens will be able to repay in terms of some useful services what they owe to society as members of an organized, civilized community. He observes: "There is something radically wrong in the system of education that fails to arm boys and girls against social or other evils. That education alone is of value, which draws out the faculties of a student so as to enable him or her to solve correctly the problems of life in every department. Therefore, Gandhi advocates a scheme of education that fits in the future citizen for playing his role effectively in the society. In Gandhian system of education a harmonious balance is reached between the individual and the social aim of education.

Gandhi had great regard for cultural aspects of education. In one of his speeches to the students. Gandhi observed : "I attach more importance to the cultural aspect of education than to the literary. Culture is the foundation, the primary thing, which the girls ought to get from here. It should show in the smallest detail of your conduct and personal behaviour, how you sit, how you talk, how you dress, etc., so that anybody might be able to see at a glance that you are the product of this institution. Inner culture must be reflected in your speech, the way in which you treat your visitors and behave towards one another and your teachers in class.

Gandhi's aim was at the self-supporting aspect of education. He advocated knowledge through work. He believes that the student must be trained to become an earning unit after the completion of his studies. Education is to be need based so that the problem of unemployment could be eradicated at the earliest opportunity. This introduction of craft in education was an extension of his theory of 'Bread and Labour'. In fact, he desired to teach children the dignity of labour and imbibe in them the feeling to regard it as an integral part and a means of their intellectual growth. They should realize that it was patriotic to pay for their training through their labour. Real education to Gandhi means economic self-sufficiency. Gandhi suggested that in our country where eighty-five percent of the population is agrarian every student should have practical knowledge of agriculture and hand weaving. A student who is equipped with the knowledge of agriculture or craft will never feel helpless in battling with the world and never go without employment. A knowledge of the laws of hygiene and sanitation as well as art of rearing children should also form a part of education.

Gandhi envisaged an educational system for India, which should be truly national in character. Education should aim at national integration and to make our life worth living; we should use education as an instrument for bringing about a healthy and permanent understanding among the various cultural and ethnic groups living in our country. Education is basic to the total national development. It is important not only for the preservation and transmission of culture but also a vital instrument for accelerating development in all spheres political, economic and social. Education should aim at the growth of nationalism in the heart of the students. He says, "Education is just a means. It is not accompanied by truthfulness, firmness, patience and other virtues, it remains sterile, and sometimes does harm instead of good. The object of education is not to be able to earn money, but to improve oneself and to serve the country. If this object is not realized, it must be taken that the money spent on education has been wasted." Gandhi regarded the English system of education, prevalent in India during his time to be of mere clerk-manufacturing education. He opines that such education has emasculated the Indians; it has put a severe strain upon the Indian students' nervous energy, and has made us imitators. He believes that no country can become a nation by producing a race of imitators. The process

of displacing the vernaculars has caused a lot of harm to Indian education. All sound education is meant to fit one generation to take up the burden of the previous and to keep up the life of the community without breach or disaster. But the present educational system has broken up the continuity of our existence. The ancient educational system in India certainly maintained a long tradition of pride and service. However the modern, foreign, non-national education has made the young people unfit for any useful function in life. According to him, "So long as education in the country is not imparted by persons of integrity and conditions are not created in which highest knowledge will be available to the poorest of Indians, so long as a perfect confluence of education and dharma has not taken place and education has not been brought into relation with conditions in India, so long as the intolerable burden imposed on the minds of the young by imparting education through a foreign medium has not been lifted, so long will there be no upsurge of national life; there is no denying this."

Gandhi recognized the following aims and objectives of education.

- Self-realization or God realization remained the highest ideal of education for Gandhi. This was in tune with the Indian perception.
- Gandhi emphasized the terrestrial goals of education.
- These included training of body and mind, respect for labour, ability to earn bread, accepting social responsibilities, knowledge of hygiene and sanitation etc.
- Gandhi aimed at a system of education, which would inculcate nationalist spirit and remove the servile and colonial mentality.

These aims of education are being followed with other major issues of Gandhian system of education. Medium of instruction and place of English vis-a-vis vernaculars was debated as early as Macaulay's minute. For Gandhi the issue was still lively. He always favoured that education is to be imparted through mother-tongue. He averred that no one indifferent to his mother tongue could claim to be lover of his country. His love for his mother tongue is exhibited from the statement: "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." Gandhi regarded instruction in alien medium as a national tragedy of first importance. He was of the opinion that instruction in a tongue other than their own deprived the children of their birthright and put undue strain upon them. He comments: "The foreign medium has caused brain fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them for filtrating their learning to the family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land." Among the many evils of foreign rule the imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country is one of the greatest. He writes, "It has sapped the energy of the nation, it has shortened the lives of the pupils, it has estranged them from the masses, it has made education unnecessarily expensive. If this process is still persisted in, it bids fair to rob the nation of its soul. The sooner therefore educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium the better it would be for them and the people." That was why he always encouraged education only through the vernaculars. He emphasized the vernacular in place of English as the medium of instruction in schools and colleges. Of course, Gandhi had no bias against English. He was a lover of the language. He was aware of its rich literary treasure and acceptability as a world language. He says, "I regard English as the language of international commerce and diplomacy and

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therefore consider its knowledge on the part of some of us essential. As it contains some of the richest treasures of thought and literature, I would certainly encourage its careful study among them who have linguistic talents and expect them to translate those treasures for the nation in its literature." However, he would accord English at best a second optional language, not in the school but in the university course.

Religion was a dominant issue for Gandhi and his times. Assertion of religious identity, communal division and riots, all needed to be addressed and there was no better instrument than education. Further, the question of secular foundation for education and avoidance of all scriptural components particularly in West was equally a vital aspect of the debate. Gandhi was extremely religious yet not at all ritualistic. The essence of religion for him was to live for others, sacrifice and self-denial was the highest model. The apparent theological differences did not interest Gandhi and he reconciled all religions on the unity of ethics. For Gandhi, religious education never meant knowledge of religious books rather observance of fundamental ethics which is common to all religions. He pleaded for appreciation of other's religion. Noting his Views on state, religion and ethics he writes:

If India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youth must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction. It is true that knowledge of religious books is no equivalent of that of religion. But if we cannot have religion, we must be satisfied with providing our boys and girls with what is next best ... I do not believe that the state can concern itself or cope with religious education. I believe that religious education must be the sole concern of religious associations. Do not mix up religion and ethics. I believe that fundamental ethics is common to all religions. Teaching of fundamental ethics is undoubtedly a function of the state. By religion I have not in mind fundamental ethics but what goes by the name of denominationalism. We have suffered enough from state-aided religion and a state church. A society or a group, which depends partly or wholly on state aid for the existence of its religion, does not deserve, or better, still, does not have any religion worth the name.

Being concerned with moral issues throughout his life Gandhi lays great stress on religious education. Religious education for him forms a crucial segment of moral instruction in educational institutions. He strongly recommends prayer and reading or recitation of Holy Scriptures for inclusion in a programme of moral education. To Hindu students he recommends the daily reading of the Gita, for the Muslims the Quran and the Bible for the Christian students. He argues that a curriculum of religious instruction should include a study of the tenets of faiths other than one's own. For this purpose the students should be trained to cultivate the habit of understanding and appreciating the doctrines of various great religions of the world in a spirit of reverence and broad-minded tolerance. If adequately done, the study of other religions would give the student a reassurance in his own tradition and a better appreciation for it. Gandhi equates religion with truth and ahimsa and anything that promotes these eternal virtues is considered as a potent means for imparting religious education to students. "To me religion means truth and ahimsa or rather truth alone, because truths include ahimsa, ahimsa being the necessary and indispensable means for its discovery. Therefore, anything that promotes the practice of these virtues is a means for imparting religious education and the best way to do this, in my opinion, is for the teachers rigorously to practice these virtues in their own person." In Gandhian concept religious education is the cultivation of universal love and brotherhood and for him there is no difference between religion and morality because the development of one meant the inclusion of the other.

The following extracts from Gandhi's writings reflect his views on religious education.

"A liberal education to all should include, as I have put it, a reverent study of other faiths, but I do not want to labour this point, nor have I the time to do so."

"Just as preservation of one's own culture does not mean contempt for that of others, but requires assimilation of the best that there may be in all other cultures, even so should be the case with religion."

"Teachers who teach under a common administrative system have no right to impart religious instruction according to their own viewpoint."

"It is true that we lack religious education in the country. Religious instruction can only be imparted through the practice of religion, not by exhibiting mere learning."

Gandhi's views on women's education were well spelt out in many of his speeches. Reserving an analysis of his view-points the essentials are being presented here. He recognized that education of women is grossly neglected. He realized that if nearly half of the human races do not receive proper education mankind could hardly benefit. He writes, "In all countries where people live a decent life, there is no disparity in the condition of men and women. It is easy to see how much the real wealth of India would be attenuated, if one half of her human beings remained ignorant and existed only as playthings of the others." Generally speaking, Gandhi wanted women to be respected and not to be considered as instrument of pleasure. He blamed the conservative Sanskrit sayings and Dohas, which equated women with objects. He wrote, "women must cease to be our servants and objects of enjoyment as they are at present, and become, instead, our life companions, equal partners in the battle of life, sharers in our happiness and unhappiness. All our efforts seem utterly futile as long as this is not accomplished." Gandhi was committed to the upliftment of women and had drawn a large number of Women to freedom movement. Not with standing these views. Gandhi did not want to copy the western and industrialized model regarding position and education of women. Accepting equality of status Gandhi did not concede man and woman have equal role in all aspects of life. He cautioned the persons responsible for drawing up plans for women's education to remember that "man rules the outer circle or the life of a married pair. Therefore he must have the greater knowledge of all those activities of life, which constitute his sphere. The woman, on the other hand, is dominant in the inner or domestic circle of their life. She must have special knowledge of the management of the home, care of children, their education etc." Therefore a proper training should be given to them, so that they can discharge their responsibilities well. As regards curriculum for girls' education, Gandhi said, "Women must learn as part of elementary education at least their own mother tongue. Hindi if it is not their mother-tongue, enough Sanskrit to be able to understand the drift of the Bhagavad Gita, elementary arithmetic, elementary composition, elementary music and child care. Along with this, they should know well the process up to the weaving from cotton. When a woman receives this education she should have an environment that will shape her character and enable her to see clearly the evils in society and to avoid them."

Gandhi, thus, pleaded for slightly different from of education for women. He says, "we shall accept equality of rights for women, but I think their education should differ from men's as their nature and functions do. In progressive countries, women receive the very highest education but, after it is over, they do not have to perform the same duties as men and in our country women have never to compete with men for a livelihood."

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Gandhi found that the educated women did not understand the problem of illiterate rural women and women from lower rungs of society. He wanted the situation to change. Of course, Gandhi recognized that men have also such problem. He says, "Educated women have no contact with those not educated; Often, they don't welcome such contacts. This disease must be cured."

Early marriage of girls, felt Gandhi to be chief reason for their exclusion from portals of secondary and higher education and as such men have a great responsibility of educating them. "From girls they change into house-wives at one stroke. As long as this wicked custom continues, the only alternative is that men must learn to act as teachers to women." Expanding this further he writes:

And this education, which men will give to women, will not be merely literacy; it will be extended to cover social reform and politics. Literacy must be only a preliminary to the teaching of the other subjects mentioned above. These may be taught even without it. A man who undertakes to teach his wife in this manner will have to change his attitude towards her. A man will himself be a student with his wife and will observe complete celibacy in his relation with her until she attains maturity. In no case will he subject a girl of twelve to fifteen years of age to the agony of bearing children to him. One ought to shudder at the very thought of it. If this is done we will not be crushed under the weight of inertia as we are at present.

On the issue of co-education Gandhi had an open mind. Though he generally advocated separate schools for girls, he was prepared to experiment with co-education. In his own educational experiments, he has made no distinction between man and woman even though the results were not encouraging. He tentatively laid down that there should be co-education up to the age of eight, that as possible, boys and girls should be taught together up to the age of sixteen and that after the sixteenth year they should decide for themselves, whether or not they should study together. Even while great experts in education and psychologists are not agreed and have not been able to arrive at a definite conclusion on the important issue of co-education, it is no wonder then, that Gandhi has not given his ultimate views on co-education.

Guru-Shisya Parampara is an important component of Indian educational heritage. Written texts appeared in India much later than most other civilizations. Paucity of such texts remained till the advent of modern times. And as such the knowledge passed from one generation to the other mostly through teachers. Thus the Indians had developed great reverence for teachers. Gandhi had also such reverence for teachers. The teacher in the Gandhian concept of education has been described as a "lamp-post, a sign-board, a dissolvent, a processor, one who saves pupil from tyranny of words." For Gandhi, an ideal teacher should be truthful and non-violent. He should have devotion to duty, to the students and to God. He says, "I ask teachers to cultivate their hearts and establish with the students heart-contact. I have felt that the teacher's work lies more outside than inside the lecture room ... unless the teachers are prepared to give all their time outside the classroom to their students, not much can be done. Let them fashion their hearts rather than their brains. Let them help them to erase every word out of their dictionary, which means disappointment and despair." Gandhi advises the teachers to develop motherly love towards students. He or she has to play role of a mother. One who cannot take the place of a mother cannot be a teacher. He argues, "A teacher is a mother. She who cannot take the place of a mother can never become a teacher. A child should not feel that it is receiving education."

Following the ancient ideals of Guru-shisya relationship Gandhi desired that Guru should be the epitome of devotion in order to elicit devotion from the students. According to him "education of heart could only be done, through the living touch of the teachers." Gandhi was against corporal punishment to students. Rather he desired that there should be good rapport between the teacher and the taught. He says, "A teacher who establishes rapport with the taught, becomes one with them, learns more from them than he teaches them. He who learns nothing from his disciples is in my opinion; worthless.... a true teacher regards himself as a student of his students." Gandhi wanted that teachers should use all resources to be constructive and creative. He writes, "What we need is educationists with originality, fired with true zeal, who will think out from day to day what they are going to teach their pupils. The teacher cannot get this knowledge through dusty volumes. He has to use his own faculties of observation and thinking and impart his knowledge to the children through his lips, with the help of a craft.' A teacher, thus, occupies a very important place in Gandhian scheme of education.

Gandhi advocated teaching sans punishment. By his opposition to corporal punishment he stresses the importance of ahimsa in education. He says, "I am quite clear that you must not inflict corporal or other punishment on your children or pupils." Once Gandhi had beaten a boy at Tolstoy Farm, for his misconduct but Gandhi had severe repentance later on for this act of violence. In his efforts to give spiritual training to the boys and girls under his charge, he believed that the power of the spirit is a better method of correcting the students involved in cases of misconduct. He rejected the traditional method of punishment in schools because it affected the cordial relationship between the teacher and the taught. He believed that it is wrong to inflict punishment on the boys in any form whatsoever. The old system of punishing students in order to teach them is fast disappearing in modern education methods. His conviction was that as a general rule, non-violence and punishment cannot go together.

Gandhi was in favour of a national language for India. He rejected English, as it did not satisfy any of the conditions of a national language, the most important being that it was not the speech of the majority of inhabitants in India. In the opinion of Gandhi, Hindi satisfied all the necessary conditions and therefore, it alone could become a national language. English, according to him is spoken by few educated Indians only but Hindustani is spoken by the largest number of India's country men. Without a knowledge of Hindustani it would be impossible for the people to go to the other states of India. Therefore, Gandhi advised everyone to learn Hindustani in his leisure hours. He agreed to differ with others when they talked of the inadequacy of Hindi. He says, "you talk of the poverty of Hindi. Literature - you talk of the poverty of the poverty of today's Hindi, but if you dive deep into the pages of Tulsidas, probably you will share my opinion that there is no other book that stands equal to it in the literature of the world in modern languages. That one book has given me faith and hope, which no other book has given. I think that is a book, which can stand any criticism and any scrutiny, alike in literary grace, in metaphor and in religious fervour." A fear had been expressed, observed Gandhi that the propagation of a national language would prove inimical to the provincial languages. He declared that such a fear is rooted only in ignorance. He did not wish that the national language should replace all the regional languages of India. He rather held the view that provincial languages provided the sure foundation on which the edifice of the national language should rest. The two were intended to complement, not supplant each other.

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Gandhi also advocated the need for a common script in the interest of national unity. He opines that only by adopting a common script the great hindrance in the way of realizing the dream of having a common language can be removed. He writes, "If we are to make good our claim as one nation, we must have several things in common. We have a common culture running through a variety of creeds and sub-creeds. We have common disabilities. I am endeavouring to show that a common material for our dress is not only desirable but necessary. We need also a common language not in suppression of the vernaculars, but in addition to them ... it is possible to adopt a common script, we should remove a great hindrance in the way of realizing the dream, which at present it is, of having a common language." Gandhi was aware of the fact that a common script for all India was a distant ideal. It could have been possible if those who speak the Indo-Sanskrit languages, including the southern stock would shed their provincialism. He had a firm conviction that there should be one script for all the Indian languages, and that Script can only be Devanagari, the deciding factor being that it was the script known to the largest part of India.

Gandhi was greatly concerned with the question of adult education. For Gandhi, mass illiteracy is India's sin and shame and must be liquidated. Adult education is the best method to promote the spread of literacy and impart useful knowledge. He wanted to drive out illiteracy and ignorance from the masses by selected teachers and selected syllabus. He says, "Adult education should have an intensive programme of driving out ignorance through carefully selected teachers with an equally carefully selected syllabus according to which they would educate the adult villagers' mind." However, literacy campaign, for Gandhi, must not begin and end with a knowledge of the alphabet. It must go hand in hand with the spread of useful knowledge. Complete adult education must touch the life of the villagers at all points - the economic, the hygienic, the social and the political.

For Gandhi, the end of all education should surely be service and according to him, if a student gets an opportunity of rendering service, he should consider it as a rare opportunity. It should not be treated as a suspension of education but rather its complement. Gandhi writes, "Studies should be undertaken only with the aim of equipping oneself for service. Since, however, service of others gives one the highest joy, one may say that studies are for joy. I have not heard of anyone, however, who found unbroken Joy in life through literary pursuits alone without devoting himself to service."

Gandhi desired that instruction in sexual science should form: a part of the educational system in India. According to him, sexual Science is of two kinds, that which is used for .controlling or, overcoming the sexual passion and that which is used to stimulate and feed it. He regards instruction in the former as a necessary part of child's education and the latter to be harmful and dangerous to be rejected. Sex education is necessary for each and every individual because he cannot properly control or conquer the sexual passion by turning a blind eye to it. He says, "I am strongly in favour of teaching young boys and girls the significance and right use of their generative organs ... But the sex education that I stand for must have for its object the conquest and sublimation of the sex passion." Thus, Gandhi had a desire for the conquest of the sex drive as the highest endeavour of man's or woman's existence. In his opinion, man cannot hope to rule over his self without overcoming lust. He would, however, recommend only qualified teachers - those possessing self-control and mastery over self to undertake the responsibility of teaching sexual Science. Gandhi's views on sex and its place in education are thus, in line with the modern trend in educational thought.

According to Gandhi national education is viable not only for the young but also for higher education as well, He wanted to relate education to Indian social economic and political life and it is to be relevant in case of higher education too. He comments, "I would revolutionise college education and relate it to national necessity."⁸¹ He wanted that technical training of specialized nature like Engineering should be the responsibility of different industries and they should finance for the training of the graduates whom they would need. Similarly medical colleges are to be attached to certified hospitals and since they are popular among moneyed people, they might be expected by voluntary contribution to support medical colleges. In his opinion, agricultural colleges should also be self-supporting. For Gandhi, the vast amount of the so-called education especially in arts, given in colleges is sheer waste and has resulted in un-employment among the educated classes. "The medium of a foreign language through which higher education has been imparted in India has caused incalculable intellectual and moral injury to the nation." Higher education, according to him, should not be under government control and colleges and universities should be left to private enterprises. Under his scheme there would be more and better libraries, more and better laboratories, more and better research institutes. And there would be an army of chemists, engineers and other experts who will be real servants of the notable and they will speak not a foreign language but the language of the people. He wanted to reorient university life and relate it fully to Indian life. In fact, he saw university education as a natural extension of his basic education plan. He wanted to overhaul and scrap the prevailing system and remodel it on new lines with national requirements as the ideal. The aim of university education, according to him, should be to turn out true servants of the people, who would live and die for the country's freedom.

Gandhi's Early Educational Experiments :

In the initial days of his stay in South Africa Gandhi was primarily faced with the problem of educating his own children. He had always strongly favoured education through mother tongue and as there was no Gujarati School, Gandhi himself took up the task of imparting education to his children. He did not send them back to India because he believed that young children should not be separated from their parents. He was of the opinion that a well-ordered house imparts better disciplinary value of a good education than that of a regular school. He observes: "The education that children naturally imbibe in a well-ordered household is impossible to obtain in hostels. I therefore kept my children with me." All his children, except the eldest son who broke way from him to join a High school in Ahmedabad for some time, received education from him. They never joined a private school though some kind of regular schooling they got in an improvised school, which Gandhi set up for the children of Satyagrahi parents in South Africa. In fact, Gandhi disliked the type of education, which was purely literary and thereby academic, with no practical bias. In his view, children should receive good discipline and training only at the school of experience or from constant touch with the parents. He had no regret for not having given his children formal education in public schools either in England or in South Africa. He says, "I am of the opinion that, if I had insisted on their being educated somehow at public schools, they would have been deprived of the training that can be had only at

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the school of experience, or from constant contact with the parents, I should never have been free, as I am today, from anxiety on their score, and the artificial education that they could have had in England or South Africa, torn from me, would never have taught them the simplicity and the spirit of service that they show in their lives today." In the preceding paragraphs references have been made to a few of the different kinds of general educational experiments of Gandhi, which were not in, any way systematic.

The Phoenix Settlement :

Although Gandhi began to teach his wife, Kasturbai, and his four sons individually, as soon as he settled in South Africa, his basic educational ideals started taking shape with the founding of the Phoenix Settlement in 1904. It was originally meant for running the "Indian Opinion", a publication of which Gandhi was the editor. But gradually a number of Satyagrahis swarmed up to Gandhi's cottage with their families to live a life along the ideals of Gandhi. Naturally Gandhi had to arrange education for their children, which numbered about thirty. He imparted to the children not only literary training but also practical instruction on agriculture and printing. The children of Phoenix Settlement apart from living in a clean environment used to spend the whole day in their studies and physical labour - engaging themselves either in cooking, gardening or in some other constructive work. Thus, Phoenix Settlement was the first experiment in community education of Gandhi, which proved to be an ideal school cum-workshop where both theory and practice of learning could go hand in hand.

The Tolstoy Farm :

In 1910 with the help of Herman Kallenbach, a German, Gandhi founded the Tolstoy Farm. People belonging to various religions like Hindu, Muslim, Parsi and Christian lived together as a corporate body. As the Tolstoy Farm grew in course of time, Gandhi found it necessary to make provision for the education of its boys and girls. He had no faith in the existing system of education and he would not import teachers from outside also. He believed that true education could be imparted only by the parents. Thus, Classes were formed with Gandhi, Kallenbach and Pragji Desai as the principal teachers and a new experimentation in education began. In fact, it proved to be an ideal laboratory for his educational experiments. The Tolstoy Farm became an autonomous and self-sustaining community with every activity and service necessary for life done on its own premises. Gandhi decided to live amongst them all the twenty-four hours of the day as their father. He believed that character building is the proper foundation of the education of the children and if the foundation was firmly laid the children could learn other things themselves or with the assistance of friends.

Gandhi appreciated the necessity of literary training too and therefore started some classes with the help of Kallenbach and others. He attached importance to physical culture of the children also and they got it in course of their daily routine. As there were no servants in the farm all kinds of work from cooking down to scavenging had to be done by the inmates. There were many fruit trees to be looked after and enough gardening to be done. The children had the lion's share of this work, like digging pits, felling timber and lifting loads, which gave them ample exercise and they naturally built up fine physiques. Besides culture of the heart and body, the youngsters in the Tolstoy Farm were taught some useful and manual vocation like shoe making, carpentry and cooking etc. Mr. Kallenbach even went to a Trappist monastery and returned having learnt shoe making. Gandhi learnt it from him and taught the children. The teachers in the Tolstoy Farm were expected to set an example to others by their

own conduct, prepared to co-operate with the students so that learning could become a joyous adventure. Gandhi said, "On Tolstoy Farm we made it a rule that the youngsters should not be asked to do what the teachers did not do, and therefore, when they were asked to do any work, there was always a teacher co-operating and actually working with them. Hence, whatever the youngsters learnt, they learnt cheerfully. "

At Tolstoy Farm three periods at the most were given for literary training. Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati were taught and tuition was given through the vernaculars of the children. English also formed a part of curriculum and subjects like elementary history, geography and arithmetic were taught as well. Hindu children were given a little dose of Sanskrit too. In spite of many limitations the experiment at the farm continued. Gandhi observes: "Such was the capital with which I had to carry on. In poverty of literary equipment my colleagues went one better than I. But by love for the languages of my country, my confidence in my capacity as a teacher, as also the ignorance of my pupils, and more than that, their generosity, stood me in good stead." Lack of text book was not a hindrance for the education of the children. In fact, Gandhi was opposed to the concept of loading the minds of the pupils with textbooks. He says, "Of text-books, about which we hear so much, I never felt the want. I do not even remember having made much use of the books that were available. I did not find it at all necessary to load the boys with quantities of books. I have always felt that the true text book for the pupil is his teacher. I remember very little that my teachers taught me from books, but I have even now a clear recollection of the things they taught me independently of books".

Apart from literary, physical and vocational training Gandhi considered spiritual training to be a very essential part of the education of the children in his charge. According to him non-violence and God-realization should be the ultimate aim of education. He desired that every student should be acquainted with the elements of his own religion and one should have a general knowledge of his own scriptures. Teachers imparting spiritual training should be absolutely perfect and ideal in their conduct and character. He realized the futility of books in the training of the spirit. He observes: "It was not through books that one could impart training of the spirit. Just as physical training was to be imparted through physical exercise, the intellectual through intellectual exercise, even so the training of the spirit was possible only through the exercise of the spirit." In spite of his best efforts Gandhi found it difficult to bring up and educate the boys and girls under his custody in the right way. After the release of some of the Satyagrahis from jail, Tolstoy Farm was almost denuded of its inmates. The few that remained mostly belonged to Phoenix and so he removed them there. Due to his pressing political engagements, Gandhi had finally to disband the colony after the political settlement was reached and returned to India.

The Satyagraha Ashrama :

In May 1915, Gandhi began his first Indian Ashrama at Kochrab and then shortly after across the Sabarmati river from Ahmedabad. Gandhi led the Congress Party and the freedom movement of India from these ashramas. He thought it necessary to frame a code of rules and regulations for the conduct of the ashramites. A draft was accordingly prepared and the following observance were considered essential: Truth; Non-violence or Love; Chastity; Control of the palate; Non-stealing; Non-

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possession; Physical labour; Swadeshi; Fearlessness; Removal of Untouchability and Tolerance. In order to help fulfillment of these observances, the following activities were carried out in the Ashrama: Worship; Sanitary service; Sacrificial spinning; Agriculture; Dairy, Tannery; and National Education.

The Satyagraha Ashram proved to be a unique experiment in social education wherein differences of caste, creed and religion were completely forgotten and life was lived on terms of equality. The education that was imparted was conducive to national welfare. Apart from character building, spiritual, intellectual and physical development of the students were given due emphasis. Women were given special attention with a view to improving their status and they were accorded the same opportunities for self-culture as the men. "Women in the Ashram are not subject to any restraint which is not imposed on the men as well. They are placed on a footing of absolute equality with the men in all activities." The language of the province was adopted as the medium of instruction. Languages other than Gujrati were taught by direct method. The fundamental principles of the Ashram were the same as those of the Gujrat Vidyapith, which was founded by Gandhi; himself. Gandhi's experiment at the Satyagraha Ashrama thus proved to be a wonderful attempt in National Education.

Sabarmati Ashram :

Gandhi had to shift the ashram of Kochrab to a safe place because of the outbreak of plague in the village. His ideal was to have the ashram at a safe distance from town and village and yet at a manageable distance from either. Finally, a place very near the Sabarmati central jail was selected. It became famous as Sabarmati Ashram. The Ashram was Gandhi's home for the next twenty-five years. All the principles of education which he publicly advocated in the formal Wardha Scheme were first experimented with at the Sabarmati Ashram and received their first articulation in early years of the ashram, namely, character formation, teachers as example of truth and ahimsa, education conducive to the welfare of the villages, and the inclusion of manual training with intellectual growth.

The last ashram Gandhi established was at Sevagram near Wardha in the year 1932. It was from this ashram that Gandhi advanced his national plan for basic education. It became the centre in which national conferences were held on education. Thus, for Gandhi, all these ashrams were laboratories for experimentation in education to evolve a systematic policy for National Education. This has been dealt separately.

Wardha Scheme on Basic National Education :

After many years of experimentation in education, Gandhi finally launched the Wardha Scheme in 1937, a national programme in basic education. Wardha Scheme was a culmination of Gandhi's experiences in education within his family and four ashrams before it was formulated and announced to the country. It was first propounded in the columns of the Harijan. He had to face a storm of protests from many quarters because his ideas on education ran contrary to the established norm. Some thought it to be reactionary. Some others viewed it as medieval and a few others even thought it to be unpractical. In spite of these criticisms Gandhi placed the salient features of his scheme of education in the All India Education Conference

convened at Wardha on the 22nd and 23rd October, 1937. He was the President of the Conference. It was attended by Education Ministers of seven provinces and eminent educationists like Dr. Zakir Hussain, Prof. K.T. Shah, Acharya Binoba Bhave, Kaka Kalekar, Shri Mahadev Desai and others. In the inaugural address, Gandhi dealt with the important features of his educational philosophy. After the first day's proceedings the conference converted itself into a committee to express its opinion on the following propositions originally formulated by Gandhi:

1. The present system of education does not meet the requirements of the country in any shape or form. English, having been made the medium of instruction in all the higher branches of learning has created a permanent bar between the highly educated few and the uneducated many. It has prevented knowledge from percolating to the masses. This excessive importance to English, has cast upon the educated class a burden, which has maimed them mentally for life and made them strangers in their own land. The absence of vocational training has made the educated class almost unfit for productive work and has harmed them physically. Money spent on primary education is a waste of expenditure, in as much as what little is taught is soon forgotten and has little or no value in terms of the village or cities. Such advantage as is gained by the existing system of education is not gained by the chief tax payer, his children getting the least.
2. The course of primary education should be extended at least to seven years and should include general knowledge gained up to the matriculation standard less English and plus a vocation.
3. For the all-round development of boys and girls, all training should so far as possible be given through a profit-yielding vocation. Or, in other words, vocations should serve a double purpose - to enable the pupil to pay for his tuition through the products of his labour, and the same time to develop the whole man or woman in him or her through the vocation learnt at school This primary education should equip the boys and girls to earn their bread by the state guaranteeing employment in the vocations learnt or by buying their manufactures at prices fixed by the state.
4. The higher education should be left to private enterprise and for meeting the national requirements whether in the various industries, technical arts, belles - letters or the fine arts. The state universities should be purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees charged for the examinations.

On the next day the draft resolutions of the committee were discussed and ultimately passed:

1. That in the opinion of this conference free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.
2. That the medium of instruction be mother-tongue.
3. That the conference endorses the proposal made by Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education throughout this period should centre round some form of manual and productive work, and that all the other abilities to be developed or training to be given, should as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child.
4. That this conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

To prepare a detailed syllabus, a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hussain which submitted its report on 2nd December,

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1937. This report contained detailed syllabus and made suggestion about several aspects like training of teachers, supervision examination, administration etc. This report is known as Wardha Scheme on Basic National Education.

What urged Gandhi to introduce a scheme on basic National Education was an abhorrence of the British system of education prevalent in India. Gandhi considered it an "unmitigated evil's. He considered British system of education as an imposition upon the people of India and it was impractical and destructive of the Indian imagination. It has ignored everything India had discovered in its educational experience, such as strong pupil teacher relationship, appreciation of Indian culture, integration of children with environment etc. A new English speaking caste has emerged who felt themselves superior to others. They are isolated from the masses and their education was of no practical use whatsoever to the people. Already the British rule had brought about the destruction of ancient village economy by dumping foreign goods and thereby disorganizing village life and driving the villagers into poverty, unemployment and despair. Therefore, he wanted to revive village economy by relating education to it. Literacy in itself, according to Gandhi, is no education. He called for a broader basis in education and not just training in literature and literacy. His primary emphasis was on the three H's (Head, Heart and Hand) rather than the 3 R's (Reading, writing and Arithmetic) Gandhi says "Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. 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." The Wardha Scheme on basic education aims to introduce a true national education based on truth and non-violence and in conformity with Indian tradition and culture. The basic scheme of education has the following important features:

Free and Compulsory Education :

Gandhi advocated that within the age group of 7 to 14, there should be free, compulsory and universal education. He evolved a scheme of education, which would be in harmony with the genius of the Indian people and solve the problem of mass education in a practical way and within as short a time as possible. Thus, he desired to obtain universal minimum education by introducing free and compulsory education through Basic National Education.

Education Through Craft :

According to Gandhi literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. He was therefore in favour of beginning child's education by teaching it useful handicraft and enabling to produce from the moment it begins its learning. The idea was not simply to introduce handicraft as a compulsory school subject, but to make the learning of a craft the centerpiece of the entire teaching programme. The Zakir Hussain Committee remarks "Modern educational thought is practically unanimous in commending the idea of educating children through some suitable form of production work. This method is considered to be the most effective approach to the problem of providing an integral all-sided education."

Gandhi favoured education through craft fundamentally to meet the problem of unemployment. Even during his time India was quite populous and he feared that industrialization would not be able to create jobs for this vast majority. Further, he did not want to uproot a large population from their villages and vocations based on agriculture and handicrafts. He held that most of the boys were lost to the parents and to the occupations to which they were born. These boys were affected by urban

ways and were not educated in the true sense of the term. "The remedy, he thought, lay in educating them by means of vocational or manual training."

Gandhi strongly believed that teaching by doing is always better than teaching by mere words. "Gandhi was proposing a new method of tuition embodying Rousseau's maxim "Do as much as possible of your teaching by doing, and fall back on words only when doing is out of question." In Gandhian system of education craft is the unifying and integrating factor because its goal is to combine the intellectual, the scientific and the physical growth of students. Such training and emphasis creates the psychology of dignity of manual labour among the students at various levels including the university stage. However, Gandhi was of the opinion that craft selected be rich in educational opportunities and easily co-related with daily life. Local conditions and marketability of the produce is to be taken into consideration while selecting a craft. For the first seven years at school Gandhi recommended crafts like spinning, carpentry, gardening and agriculture. For the students beyond fourteenth year, he suggested more sophisticated crafts like mechanics, electricity, medicine, commerce, printing and the domestic arts etc. Gandhi never intended craft education to be a substitute for book education; rather he wanted to make it a crucial adjunct to it. For him, craft centered education is not necessarily production, the goal is not training of craftsmen but the utilization of craft activity for educative purpose. In latter years the Kothari Commission too recommended work experience in education. It says, "We recommend that work experience should be introduced as an integral part of all-India education-general and vocational. We define work experience as participation in productive work in schools, in the home, in a work-shop, on a firm, in a factory or in any other productive situation."

Gandhi argued that craft education at the schools level would not necessarily produce skilled labour at the lower rung but also it shall never exclude the possibility of deserving students from acquiring highly professional and skill based degrees in medicine, engineering, law etc. He considered the introduction of craft his unique contribution to education for he believed,

Our education has got to be revolutionized. The brain must be educated through hand ... why should you think that the mind is everything and the hands and feet nothing. Those who do not train their hands who go through ordinary rout of education, lack 'music' in their life. All their faculties are not trained. Mere book knowledge does not interest the child so as to hold his attention fully. The brain gets weary of mere words, and the child's mind began to wander. The hand does the things it ought not to do, they eyes sees the things it ought not to see, the ear hears the things it ought not to hear, and they do not do, see or hear, respectively, what they ought to. They are not taught to make the right choice and their education often proves their ruin.

Self Supporting Aspect of the Scheme :

Gandhi proposed the introduction of productive crafts into the school system to make the schools self-supporting as far as possible. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, a poor society such as India simply could not afford to provide education for all children unless the schools could generate resources from within. Secondly the more financially independent the schools were, the more politically independent they could be. Gandhi also believed that if the craft chosen was taught efficiently and

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thoroughly, it should enable the schools to pay towards the cost of its teaching staff. Above all else, Gandhi valued self-sufficiency and autonomy. These were vital for his vision of an independent India made up of autonomous village communities to survive. It was the combination of Swarj and Swadeshi related to the education system.

Gandhi advocated education through craft because he believed that the student must be trained to become a e earning unit after the completion of his studies. He wanted that the products turned out by the students should have economic value. Qualitative excellence must be maintained State should ma.ke us of goods produced by students b; providing marketing facilities at and when necessary. Gandhi thus, advocated a system of education which is based on the assumption that students are not a burden on. the society rather they play a major role in augmenting the material and non-material resources of the country. His attempt was to accord dignity of labour and ensure modest and honest livelihood for students after learning school. His attempt was to stimulate intellect through the process of craft education. He says:

It is likely that you do not correlate the manual work with the intellectual training, which is given exclusively through reading and writing. I must confess that all I have up to now said is that manual training must be given side by side with intellectual training, and that it should have a principal place in national education. But now I say that the principal means of stimulating the intellect should be manual training. I have come to this conclusion because the intellect of our boys is being wasted. Our boys do not know what to do on leaving schools. True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, the intellectual and physical faculties of the children. This education ought to be for them a kind of insurance against unemployment.

In view of limited resources, self-supporting system of education is also vital for the spread of compulsory education. Gandhi asserts: "you have to start with the conviction that looking to the needs of the villages our rural education ought to be made self-supporting if it is to be compulsory".

Mother Tongue as Medium of Instruction :

The All-India National Education Conference at Wardha adopted that education must be imparted through the mother tongue. Gandhi had strongly recommended the need for imparting education through the mother tongue in the context of large number of regional languages in different areas of the country. He said, "India has to flourish in her own climate, and scenery, and her own literature, even though all the three may be inferior to the British climate, scenery and literature. We and our children must build on our own heritage. If we borrow another we impoverish our own." The Zakir Hussain Committee agreed with the views of Gandhi and it observed:

The proper teaching of the mother tongue is the foundation of all education. Without the capacity to speak effectively and to read and to write correctly and lucidly, no one can develop precision of thought or clarity of ideas. Moreover, it is a means of introducing the child to the rich heritage of his people's ideas, emotions and aspirations and can therefore, be made a valuable means of social education whilst also instilling right ethical and moral values. Also it is a natural outlet for the expression of the child's aesthetic sense and appreciation and if the proper approach is adopted, the study of life nature becomes a source of joy and creative appreciation.

The recommendation of the Zakir Hussain Committee was placed before the Indian National Congress at its Haripura Session in February 1938, and received approval. An educational association, Hindustani Talimi Sangh, was established in

1939, to begin experimental schools and teacher training centres. Within a year schools began to spring up in Bombay, Bihar, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. However, the plan received an early setback with the outbreak of World War II. The Congress Ministries relinquished office and naturally the progress of the Wardha Scheme had to be slow, even though experiments were going on in some places. Between 1940 and 1950, five All India Educational Conferences were called to discuss, modify and advance the Wardha Scheme. The launching of Quit India Movement diverted the attention of the national workers from the field of basic education and naturally the pace of progress slowed down. On the release of Gandhi from jail, he came out with a new vision of Nai Talim or New Education.

According to Gandhi's Nai Talim or New Education, education begins from the moment a child is conceived in the mother's womb to the moment of death. Thus, education is a life long process. It covers the whole of life leaving no aspect of life untouched. Thus, education is both for and through life. "Education covers the entire field of life" Gandhi said, "There is nothing in life, however small, which is not the concern of education." This New Education is not different from basic education. It is just an evolution of Gandhi's educational ideas. He simply extended the scope of basic education in order to include the education of everybody at every stage of life. The basic education system was meant for children from 7 to 14 years of age. But the Nai Talim is life long education. The third all India Basic Education Conference was held at Sevagram in 1945 to assess the progress of basic education during the preceding five years and to plan a programme in the light of the discussion on the enlarged scope of the movement. In this conference Gandhi put before the country his entire scheme of pre-basic, basic, post-basic and adult education. In the following paragraph these four stages of education corresponding to four stages of life is discussed.

First Stage :

The first stage of Nai Talim begins with the parents and community. At this stage the programme of education is extended to the community as a whole and all the members for a self-reliant, happy, clean and healthy life. Men and women in all stages of life are to be educated. It includes the care and education of the expectant mother, while the baby is yet dependent on her.

Second Stage :

This is the stage of pre-basic education or the education of children under seven years of age. Education at this stage aims at the development of all the faculties of the child before he undergoes a formal schooling. It is to be conducted by the school teachers in cooperation with the parents and the community in schools, in the town and in the villages.

Third Stage :

This stage of education is the eight years programme of basic education for both boys and girls between seven to fifteen years. It is rightly called the period of basic education. It has been emphasized in the basic scheme that education should centre round some form of manual and productive work, all other activities to be developed or training to be imparted should as far as possible be integrally related to the central craft chosen. It is also to be self-supporting to the extent of covering teacher's pay. Children are to pick up knowledge through self-activity. 'Learning by doing' is the guiding principle.

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Fourth Stage :

The fourth stage is the period of post-basic education or education of the adolescents who have completed basic education. It is keenly felt that village life must be stabilized and modernized. Therefore the development of the rural secondary education is essential. This post-basic education is to be conceived as the educational nurture of adolescent youth from the fifteenth to the eighteenth year of life. While basic education may be described as 'education for self-sufficiency', post-basic education should be planned as 'education through self-sufficiency'. The school at this stage is to be residential and is to provide opportunities for a wide range of productive activities. The main programme of post-basic students schools is to be the rural reconstruction through crafts like agriculture, dairy farming, carpentry and weaving etc.

In view of the decisions at the conference four committees were appointed to prepare and revise schemes of education suiting the four stages of life. Sevagram was chosen as the first field for work on a complete programme of Nai Talim. A pre-basic school was opened and steps were taken to work out a programme of adult education, which would aim at educating the village adults to lead a better, fuller and richer life both as individuals and as social units.

To conclude this chapter a few general observations on Gandhi may be made here. Gandhi was undoubtedly the most influential thinker and political activist in India's struggle for freedom. A man of firm conviction, ever ready to experiment and the one who practiced what he taught, Gandhi was a class by himself. Historians have termed the phase of freedom struggle between 1920-1947 to be the Gandhian era. All the ideas and all actions of Gandhi were tested on the anvil of truth, non-violence and a deep humanism. Gandhi had a clear vision of a post-independent India and it included education in no small measure. His ideas on education were not merely philosophical they were also practical and all encompassing. Gandhi enjoyed a position of primacy as a freedom fighter and also as an educator of the 20th century.



UNIT -II

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Vivekananda : Man Making Education

A Brief Life-Sketch

Swami Vivekananda originally christened Narendranath Dutta was born on 12 January 1863 in Calcutta in an affluent middle class family. Biswanath Dutta, his father, was an eminent lawyer of Calcutta High Court. Bhubaneswari Devi, his mother, was an ardent devotee of Lord Shiva and was known for her charity, religious temperament and keen memory.

As a child, Narendranath was full of activity and vitality. He exhibited from very early days a keen spiritual and religious inclination partly due to family influence. His paternal grandfather had become a sanyasi. He was also fascinated by the wandering monks who were welcome guests for the family. As he reports later, he had two recurrent dreams as a child. In one, he found himself a very powerful and wealthy man of the world and in the other a penniless sanyasi moving in the street with a begging bowl in his hand. These two dreams in a way reflect his work in later life.

The young Narendranath's mental makeup was shaped by three main factors i.e. his innate spiritual tendency; the influence of his family and of his studies; and finally Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual impact on him. Bhubaneswari Devi, his mother, instilled in Narendranath noble feelings, high thinking and urged him for right actions. It was through his mother that Narendranath acquired not only an acquaintance of the epics--the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, but also deep understanding of these. Like many Indian mothers of those bygone days, Bhubaneswari Devi read aloud the epics in the twilight. Biswanath Dutta gave to his son his broad-mindedness, his manliness and instilled a respect and pride for India's national tradition.

In 1871, Narendranath was admitted to the Metropolitan Institution from where he passed the Entrance Examination in 1879. He then entered the Presidency College and later the General Assembly's Institution. He passed the First Arts Examination from the University of Calcutta in 1881 and graduated from the same University in 1884.

Narendranath was gifted with a robust body. The youth added to this gift by regular physical culture. Narendra also took a keen interest in music and flowered out as a melodious singer. He took lessons in music from Bani Gupta and Ahmed Khan. Studies, physical exercise and music made Narendra a more complete man. In college, he attracted the attention of both Indian and English professors who recognized his ambitious mind and the latent powers of his personality. Principal W.W. Hastie said, "Narendranath is really a genius. I have travelled far and wide, but I have never yet come across a lad of his talents and possibilities, even in German Universities amongst philosophical students. He is bound to make his mark in life."

To gain further perspective of Naren's personality and the early stage of mental development, it would be well to quote the observations of one of his fellow students, Dr. Brogendranath Seal, who was one of the leading intellectuals of India. He says in an article written for the Prabuddha Bharata in 1907:

When I first met Vivekananda in 1881, we were fellow students of Principal William Hastie, scholar, metaphysician and poet, at the General Assembly's college. He was my senior in age, though I was his senior in the college, by one year. Undeniably a gifted youth, sociable, free and unconventional in manners, a sweet singer, the soul of social circles, a billionth conversationalist, somewhat bitter and caustic, pierci.ng

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with the shafts of a keen wit the shows and mummeries of the world sitting in the scorner's chair but hiding the tenderest of hearts under the garb of cynicism; altogether an inspired Bohemian but possessing what Bohemians lack, an iron will; somewhat peremptory and absolute, speaking with accounts of authority and withal possessing a strange power of the eye which could hold his listeners in thrall.

As a collegiate student, he became well acquainted with the writings of Green, Gibbon, Mill, Spencer, Shakespeare Kalidas and many other philosophers. However textual knowledge was unable to satiate his spiritual quest. He was drawn to important personalities of Bengal renaissance like Devendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen and Sivnath Sastri. He also became for the time being an ardent Sadharan Brahma Samajist, but all these could not satisfy him. Narendra had a passion to realize God or at least have clear-cut proof of God's existence. Books of philosophy did not satisfy him. He sought direct experience and vision. Having failed to satiate his enquiring mind with rational knowledge, Narendranath turned increasingly towards men of spiritual and religious inclination. The youth was weary with intellectual tempest. Still he did not give in. Vehemently he was on the search for the solution.

Narendra was advised by family friends to go to Sri Ramkrishna Paramhansa, a saint and a sage at Dakshineswar in the outskirts of Calcutta. In fact, Narendra had met him for the first time at the house of a devotee of his named Surendranath Mitra in November 1881. But he went again and the outcome of the new contact was phenomenal. At the very first meeting the sage behaved with the young man as if with a man of very old acquaintance; but the visitor was skeptical in the beginning. However, he found himself very quickly won over by this God-man. Sri Ramkrishna - an unsophisticated man without the three R's disarmed the young intellectual by his simple and direct answer - "yes my son, I have seen God. I do see him just as I see you before me. But I see the Lord in a much intense sense, and I can show Him to you". Narendranath, the iconoclast, stood face to face with the saint of the orthodox Hindu tradition whom he was to accept as his Guru.

In the early part of 1884 Biswanath Dutta his father suddenly died, leaving the entire burden of supporting a family without sufficient funds. For a family, which was dependent on the lawyer's earnings without any income from landed property the time was quite trying. Narendranath, being the eldest male member, was woken up from his youthful dreams and was face to face with poverty, starvation and misery. Being already in contact with Ramkrishna, he increasingly turned to the master for solace.

After the death of his father, Narendranath frequented Ramkrishna. The master had already awakened the intuitive faculty of Narendranath. However, Narendranath had not yet been completely won over to the side of divinity and showed signs of robust doubts of an atheist. Ramkrishna had trying times with him. And all of a sudden the master gave his disciple the experience of Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Contentless consciousness). This gave him the realization and the perfect understanding of the world and God. Narendranath emerged from this experience a different person and a realized soul and free from all mental conflict. He was finally won over, finally convinced and had no emotional worries about himself or his family. In a way, he surrendered himself to the God through Ramkrishna and worldly worries ceased to

bother him. In the words of Romain Rolland, Vivekananda "Of all modern men achieved the highest equilibrium between the diverse forces of thought and was one of the first to sign a treaty of peace between the two forces eternally working within us: the forces of reason and faith." This realization was not granted for individual salvation, it was to fulfill the mission that Ramkrishna had set for the young man. Having taken to the life of a monk, Narendra was christened Vivekananda. In fact, he changed the name several times till the name Vivekananda struck to him from 1893 onwards.

Not long after, Sri Ramkrishna, the master passed away on 6 August 1886 at a garden in Cossipore, having passed the mantle unto the hands of Narendranath. He, along with other disciples formed a team, rented a reputedly haunted and dilapidated house at Baranagore in Calcutta with the financial help of a lay disciple of the master. They decided to live together and carry on their spiritual sadhana.

Soon afterwards Vivekananda in keeping with the best traditions of ancient sanyasis and Rishis of India took to the life of a pariurajaka. He embarked upon a Bharat-yatra by foot. Since he was gifted with a charming personality and was a compulsive conversationalist people of all walks of life from the rajas and maharajas to the untouchables and the pariahs were attracted towards him. The bounties of nature, the grinding poverty of the people, the towering monuments of bygone era spoke in mute language and Vivekananda in all these discovered the soul of India. The Himalayas gave him the experience of the infinite. Being an extremely sensible man, Vivekananda could not close his eyes to the hard realities of India and could never be swept away by the spiritual experiences he had. The humanist Vivekananda was born and shaped during this travel. He developed a keen concern for the down-trodden degraded poor of India. With a heart laden with these heavy concerns, he sat on a rock at Kanya kumari the southernmost point of India. There he took the vow to occupy himself with the task of the spiritual regeneration of mankind and the uplift of India and her people from the great Tamas and misery. As Swami Ranganathananda puts it: "Like a Buddha emerging from the seclusion of Buddha Gaya, Swami Vivekananda emerged from his meditation at Kanyakumari with the same determination which impelled Buddha 2500 years ago to preach his great gospel, for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many (bahujana - hitdya, bahujana - sukhdya)."

At Kanyakumari Vivekananda felt that he should go to the West. Round about this time, by the end of 1892 he also heard of the Parliament of Religions which was going to be held in Chicago in the following year. His young devotees in Madras and his disciple the Raja of Khetri urged him to join the Parliament as a representative of Hinduism and provided him with necessary funds. Vivekananda agreed because he felt that he had received 'Divine Command' and on May 31, 1893 sailed for America, quite an unknown monk without any credential to join the Parliament.

The Parliament of Religions began its session on Monday, 12 September 1893. The electrifying and dramatic impact of Vivekananda is too well known a story to be recalled here. It would be better to restrict to the finer points. Hinduism was like an exotic plant from the antipodean region in the new world. Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Islam, all originated in one region and have a common base. The religions of the east, more so Hinduism propounds a new setup of tenets. The Hindu concept of sin, the Hindu theory of knowledge, the Hindu concept of evil and its synthetic and tolerant

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attitude were all new to the Americans. The Hindu believed himself to be a spark of the Divine, a manifestation of the Divine Himself who is on a sojourn here and one who has forgotten his own self. What was needed for him was to rediscover his true self and to live in the knowledge of his divinity. Evil for him is not a fundamental force. The source of the evil is his ignorance, and knowledge shall drive out evils. The Hindu mind is essentially spiritual and not ethical. Vivekananda said that a Christian was not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the other and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth. He suggested that on the banner of each religion there should be written - "Help and not Fight, Assimilation and not Destruction, Harmony and Peace and not Dissention." It would be out of place in the discussion of life of Vivekananda to go into the details of distinctive features of Hinduism. It is sufficient to note that the simplistic explanation of Hinduism by Vivekananda has a lasting impact on the minds of Westerners. Vivekananda emerged from the conference as the chief exponent. of Hinduism and jolted the whole Western world from Its preconceived ideas on Hinduism.

Vivekananda spent about three years in America where he met and made friends with eminent persons like Prof. John H. Wright, William James, Ella Wheeler, Josiah Royce and many others. He toured almost the entire United States and delivered lectures in various kinds of assemblies. He tried to present a correct idea of Hinduism and a true picture of his motherland.

From America Vivekananda went to England twice, first in 1895 and the next time in 1896. In England also he lectured and took classes and met with immediate success. He was highly appreciated by people of different walks of life. England also offered him the greatest of his disciples Margaret E Noble - afterwards sister Nivedita - who played a vital role in the Indian Nationalist Movement in the early twentieth century.

Vivekananda left London on 18 December 1896 and on 15 January 1897, he landed in Colombo. His return excited much interest all over India. He was greeted by thousands with tumultuous joy and applause. Vivekananda saw. in it the .early signs of the awakening of a sleeping nation. He stirred the soul of the country with his fiery speeches and passionate appeals. "My India, arise! Where is your vital force? It is a man-making religion that we want ... It is a man-making education that we want. It is man-making theories that we want". He called upon the youth, they would be patriots to be bold and brave, to be selfless, and sacrifice their lives for the regeneration of the country. These words had tremendous impact on Indian mind. The speeches he made during those days have been published under the title "Lectures from Colombo to Almora". Many of his educational ideas can be gleaned from these lectures. Swami Ranganathananda says about these lectures thus: "From Colombo in the south to distant Almora in the Himalayas, his movement was one of triumphal procession any in a series of brilliant lectures, he expounded his philosophy of the Indian national awakening, the ways it has to be worked out, the various difficulties ahead and what part an awakened India is to play in the coming world events. He upheld the glory of our ancient heritage, the greatness of the Vedanta Philosophy and emphasized the need for making spirituality the basis of all national programmes." C. Rajagopalachari was of the view that Swami Vivekananda saved Hinduism and saved India. But for him we would have lost our religion and would not have gained our freedom.

On 1 May 1897, he summoned a meeting of the lay and sanyasin disciples of Sri Ramkrishna and in consultation with them took a resolution for establishing Ramkrishna Mission. This Mission was to train monastic workers to live up to and propagate the Vedantic religion in the light of Ramkrishna's life and teachings, establish fellowship among the followers of different religions and serve suffering humanity without making any distinction of caste, creed and community. Among the aims and objectives of the Ramkrishna Mission many were educational in nature. Some of these are:

- To impart and promote the study of arts, science and industries;
- To train teachers in all branches of knowledge abovementioned and enable them to reach the masses;
- To carry educational work among the masses;
- To establish, maintain, carry on and assist schools, colleges, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, houses for the infirm, the invalid and the afflicted, famine relief work, and other educational and charitable works, and institutions of a like nature?

On 20 June 1899, Vivekananda set out for America for the second time. He delivered many lectures and took classes to consolidate his work there and founded the Shanti Ashrama in California. In 1900, he was at the Paris Peace Congress. In his address to the Congress he disproved the theory of Greek influence over Indian arts and sciences, dispelled strange and misleading notions about Shiva-Linga and Shalagrama-Shila and established the priority of the Mahabharata over Buddhism.

By the time Vivekananda returned to India, his health had broken down. He preferred a life of seclusion and almost retired from public life. He, however, made short trips to Mayavati, East Bengal and Assam, Both Gaya and Varanasi. In his last days Vivekananda hardly went outside the monastery of Belur though he received visits and communications from all quarters. There on 4 July 1902, Vivekananda passed away at the age of 39.

Philosophical stand :

Vivekananda was a keen interpreter of Hinduism. He wanted to counter the criticism of the missionaries and wanted to expound the Hindu philosophy in Western format for the English reading population of India and abroad. Vivekananda was a student of philosophy in the college and as such was fairly exposed to the logic and philosophy of the West. Many scholars hold the view that he was influenced by Aristotle, Kant, Schopenhauer, Mill, Spencer and Spinoza. While the extent of influence can be debated Vivekananda's exposure to the writing of these thinkers may be conceded without debate. Further, Vivekananda's philosophical concepts were deeply rooted in India. In the best of Vedantic traditions he was a monist. He carried forward the traditions of Badarayana and Sankara. He followed the orthodox Vedantic epistemological analysis. For him all knowledge we receive from outside is not a mathematical addition, but simply the occasion for removal of obstacles so that the innate pure consciousness may shine forth in all its resplendence and luminosity. Sachchidananda the absolute Reality, Brahman, for Vivekananda is one without a second, but to arrive at the point one has to pass through stages of dualism and modified monism. Just as Sankara, the great exponent of monism authored hymns in praise of Lord Siva, Lord Jagannath and Mother Goddess, Vivekananda also praised Mahakali. Like a true Hindu he did not see any contradiction between a metaphysical monism and ardent image worship. As noted earlier Bhakti and Jnana paths converged in to a unity. The following extracts bring forth his synthetic mind.

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"The very question why the infinite became the finite is an impossible one, for it is self contradictory."

"In the Advaita philosophy, the whole universe is one in self, which is called Brahman. That self when it appears behind the universe is called God. The same self when it appears behind the little universe, the body, is the soul

Universal self, which is beyond the universal modifications of Prakriti, is what is called Isvara, the Supreme Ruler, God."

Vivekananda like many other contemporary Indian thinkers argued that the Vedas and Upanishads reflect great scientific truths arrived at intuitively by the great sages. For example he wrote, 'the dissolution of the atom into electro-magnetic energy only proves the Vedantic contention that not infinite physical atoms but subtle energy can be the ground work of the cosmos. Here as in many things, science proves the contention of Vedanta."

Though Vivekananda was no system builder yet from his prolific writings his views on many aspects of life can be gleaned. He did feel that the existing caste division amongst Indians cannot be justified even though he argued that originally the division was based on principles. He talked of the principle of equality. He condemned caste division and untouchability. He had a burning enthusiasm for redemption of poverty and oppression:

Let each one of us "pray day and night for the down-trodden millions in India, who are held fast by poverty, priest craft and tyranny - pray day and night for them I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. I am poor. I love the poor Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken forever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? .. Who will bring light to them? Let these people be your God Him I call a Mahatma whose hearts bleeds for the poor . . . so long as millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them !.

This acute concern for the down-trodden was the hallmark of his philosophy of action. Lofty metaphysical concepts never made him ignore the stark reality of life around him.

Vivekananda was not a political philosopher. The questions of western political philosophy did not concern him. However he was a great patriot and was fired with unmixed spirit of nationalism. The following extracts bring out his emphatic stand:

We must grow according to our nature. Vain is to attempt the lines of action that foreign societies have engrafted upon us; it is impossible. Glory unto God that is impossible, that we cannot be twisted and tortured into the shape of other nations. I do not condemn the institutions of other races; they are good for them, but not for us. With other sciences, other institutions, and other traditions behind them, they have got their present system. We, with our traditions with thousands of years of karma behind us, naturally can only follow our bent; run in our own grooves, and that we shall have to do. We cannot become Westerners; therefore imitating the Westerner is useless. Suppose you can imitate the Westerner, that moment you will die, you will have no more life in you. A stream is taking its rise, away beyond where time began, flowing through millions of ages of human history; do you mean to get hold of that

stream, and push it back to its source, to a Himalayan glacier! Even if that were practicable it would not be possible for you to be Europeanized. If you find it is impossible for the European to throw off the few centuries of old culture, which there is in the West, do you think it is possible for you to throw off the culture of shining scores of centuries? It cannot be. To Europeanize India is, therefore, an impossible and foolish task.

"To advance towards freedom, physical, mental and spiritual, and help others to do so is the supreme prize of man. Those social rules, which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom, are injurious, and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily. Those institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the path of freedom "

"All hail to thee, thou Lord of Light!

A welcome new to thee, today,
O Sun! Today thou shadiest Liberty!

Move on, a Lord, in thy resistless path !
Till thy high moon overspread, thy world,
Till every land reflects thy light,
Till men and women, with uplifted head,
Behold their shackles broken, and
Know, in springing Joy, their life renewed!"

"Once more awake !
For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes, for visions
Daring yet. The world in need awaits, a Truth!
No death for thee!
Resume thy march,
With gentle feet that would not break the
Peaceful rest, even of the roadside dust
That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
Blissful, bold and free. Awakener, ever
Forward ! Speak thy stirring words.

Then start afresh
From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted
Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,
For working wonders new. The heavenly
River tune thy voice to her own immortal song:
Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.
And all above,
Himala's daughter Vma, gentle, pure,
The Mother that resides in all as Power
And Life, who works all works and
Makes of One the world, whose mercy
Open the gate to Truth and shows
The One in All, give thee untiring
Strength, which is Infinite Love"

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"No, I have not. But, of course, something is better than nothing, and it is good to push the sleeping nation from all sides to wake it up. Can you tell me what congress had been doing for the masses? Do you think merely passing a few resolutions will bring you freedom? I have no faith in that. The masses must be awakened first. Let them have full meals, and they will work out their own salvation. If congress does anything for them, it has my sympathy."

Definition and Aim of Education :

Identification of aim of education advocated by a thinker is central to the study of his educational thought. Vivekananda defines education "as the manifestation of perfection already in man. There are two sides to the understanding of this definition and aim of education as advocated by Vivekananda. On one hand, through his metaphysical outlook Vivekananda shaped his concept of education and on the other, one has to appreciate the socio-political condition of India and how Vivekananda reacted to it or how he wanted to change it.

Vivekananda's definition of education 'as the manifestation of perfection already in man' is an extension of his metaphysical stand. He rejected will as the cause of everything as advocated by Schopenhauer. He related will with motor action. For Vivekananda, the only will is the will of the divine to manifest for the sake of Ananda or bliss. He believed that religion ought to raise the brute unto man and man unto God. He wanted men to transcend their brutal qualities and rise to divinity, to Godhead with virtue and righteousness as the key. He accepted the general stand of Sachchidananda to be the true concept of the absolute. According to him truth, realization and knowledge and bliss were the ultimate purpose of human life. For him every man is the manifestation of this Sachchidananda. Everyman is Godhead and as such is capable of complete perfection and absolute knowledge. Men, as they are, are not conscious of their true nature and true self. In other words they do not recognize themselves as the Godhead due to sheer ignorance. Education as a process, Vivekananda holds, must aim at the removal of that ignorance. Once this ignorance is removed man can be as perfect, as absolute and as knowledgeable as the God.

As man is Godhead, he knows everything for God knows everything. Thus the key-note of Vivekananda's educational ideas follows: "knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man "knows", should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'. What a man 'learns' is really what he 'discovers' by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.

According to Vivekananda, we are in possession of a boundless mine of knowledge. This infinite source of knowledge is in every individual, in every person. We, as individuals, are not poor, but rich, even the richest in knowledge, because we are the owners of infinite library of knowledge. This infinite library or mine of knowledge is, according to Vivekananda, the individual soul itself, which is ultimately divine in nature. The soul is divine as well as infinite, because it is an integral and organic part of the Brahman or God Himself.

"All knowledge and all powers are within. What we call powers, secrets of Nature, and force are all within. All knowledge comes from the human soul. Man manifests knowledge, discovers it within himself, which is pre-existing through eternity." Thus, according to Vivekananda, all knowledge is within, nothing in the name of knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. This is in very brief, the substance of his theory of the origin of knowledge. He gives a very appropriate example to illustrate his point."

He gives the example of Newton discovering the law of gravitation. Unlike others, he believes that Newton did not actually discover a new principle of nature. Vivekananda argues that Newton rediscovered the principle, for it was already known to his mind. He would argue that the human mind knows all, for it is divine in its origin and existence. Newton discovered the law of gravitation, which was already in operation in nature and known latently in human minds. In simple words, Vivekananda, in tune with Indian philosophical theory of knowledge, believes that nothing can be taught. He totally rejects the modern theory of psychology and all its details, like the theory of stimuli and response. Thus education is neither a process of acquiring more and more information nor a process of learning through stimuli. Education, for Vivekananda, is thus a process of self-discovery, self-perfection, self awareness and self-manifestation.

Education is a life-long process towards the fullest development of human personality. All education is, in ultimate analysis, self-education. The pupil is to develop his inherent knowledge. His helpers are his teachers as well as nature in which he lives, moves and has his being.

For Vivekananda, education is a process in which the young minds will receive strength, energy and vigorous character. Under this process they will mould themselves in such a way in which weakness has no part to play. Thus the larger and nobler aim of education would be 'life- building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas'. The entire educational method and programme should keep this high objective in view.

He also denounces the prevalent notion of education: "Getting by heart the thought of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated. Is this education? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfill this want? The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion - is it worth the name?"

Vivekananda wanted this type of all-round education which in no way can be considered poor, because it is replete with national feelings and sentiments, aims to development of heart and mind, strengthen character and national consciousness, help in the cultivation of strength and energy, nurture the brain and intellect and finally stir feelings of kindness and sympathy. He emphatically said:

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet. What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries. So that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day. The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The training, by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face. It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.

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"There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration." From the nursery stage to the university stage we shall have to provide appropriate methods of value-education. In this respect the method of concentration as envisaged by Vivekananda is of immense value. Concentration is to be based on the principle of Raja-Yoga; concentration of the mind is the source of all knowledge. "The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge that is acquired. Even the lowest shoemaker, if he gives more concentration, will make shoes better. The cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done."

The science of Raja-Yoga proposes to put before humanity a practical and scientifically worked out method of realizing the truth. Every science has its own method of investigation. As Vivekananda used to say, if you want to become an astronomer and sit down and cry 'Astronomy! Astronomy!' you will never become one. If you want to be an astronomer, you must go to an observatory, take a telescope, study the stars and planets and then you may become an astronomer. From our childhood we have been directing the mind to external things; now it is necessary to turn the mind inward. What is of utmost importance is the study of mind by the mind itself. The power of the mind should be concentrated and turned back upon itself, and as the darkest places reveal their secrets before the penetrating rays of the sun so will this concentrated mind penetrate its own innermost secrets.

Without any cut and dried principle, we may achieve tangible results if we help a student concentrate on the pursuit of study for which the person has a genome and natural aptitude. Thus, a student who has a natural aptitude for any particular branch of fine arts will gain considerably if the person concentrates on that particular object of study. Nevertheless, students at all stages of education be able to concentrate effectively if they follow certain rules which may certainly be modified according to the specific needs of a particular stage and student behaviour.

Vivekananda emphatically referred to the two concepts of man-making and character-building so any times: while explaining the aims and objects of education. According to him the main purpose of education should be the development of character, and the refinement of personality through the formation of good character. The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. As pleasure and pain pass before his soul they leave upon it different pictures, and the result of these combined impressions is what is called man's character.

In the rapidly changing societies, the function of education is being forgotten and often-transient purposes are glorified. As a result we have people labeled 'Educated' but behaving almost like savages and brutes in a frenzied state of excitement.

Character according to dictionary, is a quality, nature, personal appearance, aggregate of peculiar qualities which constitute personal or national individuality, especially in moral qualities, a reputation of possessing these. This dictionary definition illustrates the mind. It defies precise definition. It is the result of several qualities of head and heart. It is concerned with how a human being think, indeed, acts. It involves behaviour. It is the outcome of his beliefs and faiths. It is the result of his sense of judgment, of his concept of truth and justice and his attitude to life It implies unselfishness, spirit of service concern for the well being of the less fortunate and, above all, a high sense of responsibility and the will and skill and ability to do one's duty.

Through the ages man has been trying to fashion his young sons and daughters on lines of right or good character according to his values. With the advance of human civilization, education of the young has been gradually institutionalized and the responsibility is being increasingly taken over by the state. Institutionalisation of education though convenient for administrative purposes, has undermined the unique potentialities of an individual boy or girl and has merged the individual student into a herd.

Throughout the world, educationists are interested to shift the focus of their attention from the individual to the group. But the fact is that a group is a congregation of individuals and the progress of the group depends upon the character of each individual in the group. Some educationists realize this but are helpless in a situation in which the state is looking for mere uniformity and ease of administration. Moreover, the obsession with the secular character of education is too strong to admit any change. The stress of modern life and the inadequate know how of the parents have rendered the family as a link in the educational chain.

Vivekananda suggests that good and evil have equal role in forming character. And sometimes, it is misery, which is the strongest instrument in moulding character. According to him:

In some cases misery is a great teacher than happiness in studying the great characters the world has produced; I dare say, In the vast majority of cases, it would be found that it was misery that taught more than wealth, and it was blows that brought out their inner fire more than praise. Brought up in the lap of luxury, lying on a bed of roses and never shedding a tear, who has become great? When there comes affection in the heart, when the storm of sorrow blows all round, and it seems as if light will be seen no more, when hope and courage are almost gone, it is then, in the midst of this great spiritual tempests, that the light within gleams.

To suggest that the actions of the individual have indelible effects upon the making of character, Vivekananda compares the mind to a lake where there are waves and ripples. Like the waves in the lake, there are motives and desires in the human mind. As every wave rises in the water of the lake, so every desire rises on the surface of the mind. Desire never dies away. Even when it subsides, it leaves its imprint on the mind, so that it may rise once again in future. Thus every work that a man performs, every movement of his body, every thought that he thinks, always leaves impressions upon the mind and though these impressions do not seem to be obvious on the surface, they are still strong enough to work beneath the surface subconsciously. What the man is at every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on his mind, and equally, the character of every man is determined by the sum total of these very impressions. If there are good impressions, the character becomes good; if bad, the character becomes bad.

Vivekananda also emphasizes the role of habit, which is closely connected with character. According to him, habit is not only the second nature of man but it is the first nature and even the whole of the human nature. "A habit is formed, psychologically, out of the coalescence of the diverse warring impressions upon the mind. The character is formed out of repeated habits. If one's character becomes bad, it can be corrected through repeated habits. Habits may be good or bad. But there is always human possibility to correct bad habit through good one."

Vivekananda held that becoming self-reliant and self confident are important aspects of character building. He noted, "We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's feet."

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Thus, character formation being a major aim of duration it is necessary that this objective is clearly kept in view by all the teachers in a school. It should be the guiding light or force for the educational progress of the schools.

The efforts of the schools should be the key to the development of character. But the efforts of the schools are likely to be unsuccessful, if they are not reinforced by parental and community support. The schools should keep a living contact with the parents through parent-teachers association and through contact with the homes of the children. Social organizations like those that work for the amelioration of the poor can provide good support. Their leader may acquaint the students with the problems relating to hunger, poverty, illiteracy and sanitation. The young should be taught to foster a sense of a purpose in life. They should be provided with a fair education, which shall foster in them a sense of responsibility and an ideal for selfless service. Such service is the surest way of achieving inner happiness.

Another element that falls rightly within the domain of the aims and objectives of education envisaged by Vivekananda is the development of personality. Personality is a precious ornament in the individual rightly produced by education. By personality of an individual we generally mean a set of qualities expressed in the process of his activities, in the process of his treating others, in the manner of speaking, writing and moving.

Sometimes personality is misunderstood as good appearance or good looks. Had this been true, the world would have unjustly excluded from its account that rare group of men who really possessed the fine qualities of personality, but unfortunately were lacking in handsome appearance. So what it really means? It is a combination of many qualities, which results in a tremendous power of influence. Courage, firmness, strength, ability to inspire people, to trust and follow them are some of the qualities common to all men and women of outstanding personality. According to Woodworth and Marquis, personality is "the total quality of an individual's behaviour, as it is revealed in his habits of thought and expression, attitudes and interests, his manner of acting, and his personal philosophy of life."

Vivekananda interprets personality in terms of capacity to influence others. He suggests that the force of influencing others comes, in different proportions, from two sources. One-third of it comes from the words and thoughts of the individual and the remaining two-thirds come from the individual himself. By the 'individual himself' he may mean either the inner growth and constitution, or the biological qualities and the constitution of the individual as a whole. He says in his own language: "You see what is happening all around us. The world is one of influence. Part of our energy is used in the preservation of our own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is day and night being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our intellect and our spirituality, all these are continuously influencing others. So conversely, we are being influenced by them. This is going on all around us."

To make the conception of personality more clear, Vivekananda uses a concrete illustration. He says: "A man comes, you know he is very learned, his language is beautiful and he speaks to you by the hour-but he does not make any impression. Another man comes, and he speaks a few words, not well arranged, ungrammatical perhaps; all the same, he makes an immense impression. Many of you have seen that words alone cannot produce an impression. Words, even thoughts, contribute only one-third of the influence, in making an impression, the man, two-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism of the man - that is what goes out and impresses you."

There are no clear-cut guidelines by which personality can be developed. Psychologists point out that heredity and environment play a vital role in shaping one's personality: But it is to be remembered that personality is not determined by the innate heredity factors alone; it is also determined by the factors in the early experience of the infant. Society and cultural atmosphere at home also play a significant role in the development of personality. Sometimes the consciousness of a particular responsibility at home-environment determines the size of one's personality. General experience stands by the fact that the quality and size of a man's personality depend, to a great extent, upon the interaction between the factors of environment coming from the family structure and one's own inner tempo of life.

According to Vivekananda, the development of personality is capable of being effected through the pursuit of different principles in life, through regular mental exercises, and through spiritual activities. The philosophy of Yoga in India has formulated different laws by following which one can develop his personality. These laws are not rigid and exclusive in nature. These laws have a universal application. They express themselves through various channels of activity, love, self-control, and knowledge. Thus they easily apply to the householders, to the poor and the rich to the wise, to the man of business and to the man of spirituality. They are the great sources of developing and strengthening of personality.

So far we have dealt with the question of aims and objectives of education from the metaphysical angle. Now we turn to the contemporary socio-political turmoil that India was passing through during his life time and how he considered the question of aims and objectives of education against this background.

Vivekananda was pouring forth his teachings on education when India as a nation was engaged in a combat against Western political and cultural domination. India was in search of her identity, of understanding her distinct cultural traits and establishing these against the attacks of Anglo-Indians and Britishers. Further, the very motive of official education was questioned. It was said, "the British established schools and colleges in India with the object of strengthening their hold over the country, of laying firm the foundation of their power, of consolidating their dominion so that the risks to which a foreign ruler is always exposed may be reduced to minimum."

Vivekananda was not convinced about the suitability of Western system of education as imparted in the official institutions. He believed that India must develop a system of education based on her religion, tradition and culture of centuries. He writes, "The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place' it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education."

Vivekananda wanted Indians to be bolder, to stand on their own feet, to be strong and vibrant. "Make your nerves strong. What we want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long enough. No more weeping but stand on your feet and be men. It is a man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want". And he adds further, "And here is the test of truth - anything that makes you weak, physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject, as poison; There is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all knowledge; truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating."

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Vivekananda's ideas on education had a democratic angle. He expressed deep concern for the mass, "The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion - is it worth the name? Real Education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs. The education that you are receiving now in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence."

In other words, Vivekananda's aim of education had strong nationalist bias. He was not critical of Western system of education rather, he questioned the suitability of Western model in India. His advocacy of a system of education in India, based on Indian foundation, was supported with the broader argument that every nation must develop a system of education based on her own nature, history and civilization.

Having pointed out the futility of copying West, he instilled a deep love for India. And with this there was the appeal for strength and action. He called:

Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian and proudly proclaim, 'I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother' say, 'the ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother'. Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice, 'the Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God, India's society is the cradle of infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age. Say, brother, 'the soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good, and repeat and pray day and night, 'O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou Mother of the universe, vouch safe manliness unto me'. O Thou Mother of strength, take away my weakness, take my unmanliness, and make me a Man." While he warned the West of excess Tamas "We are great. we are great! Nonsense! We are imbeciles; that is what we are !", so critical were his words. Thus he continued, "The essence of my religion is strength. The religion that does not infuse strength into the heart, is no religion to me, be it of the Upanishads, the Gita or the Bhagavatam. Strength is greater than religion and nothing is greater than strength". The weakness of India, he attributed to the degrading status it awarded to women, its refusal to learn and develop from others on the plea of a false superiority and calling the rest of the world 'Mlechha'. It is the mass that appealed to him, "This is the only God that is awake our own race - everywhere his hands, everywhere his feet, everywhere his ears, he covers everything". To do away with these crippling views and weakness what did he plan? I do not believe in reform, I believe in growth: He ridiculed the reform attempts, 'traveling through places of India these last ten years, observed the country full of social reform associations. But I do not find one association for them by sucking those blood the people known as gentlemen has become and continue to be gentlemen'. Again, "Meddle not with the so called social reform for there cannot be any reform without spiritual reform". If reforms were not very successful, Vivekananda had another solution, man-making through education. "The ideal of all education, all training sh0'lld be man-making ... what we want are western science coupled with Vedanta ... education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. I look upon religion as the innermost core of education". And this education "must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practice.

Vivekananda recognized that many mistake education with information gathering without assimilation, understanding and synthesis. He wrote, "If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and encyclopedias are the Rishis. The ideal, therefore, is that we must have the whole education of our

country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practical. "

Further he adds - "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character, making assimilation of ideas."

Emphasizing understanding, Vivekananda held that mastering the mind must precede mastering of facts. He noted, "The present system of education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. Control of the mind should be taught first. If I had my education to get over again and had any voice in the matter, I would learn to master mind first, and then gather facts if I wanted them."

Reserving the summary of this chapter to the concluding part, a resume of the preceding discussion may be offered. Vivekananda held that education must fulfill the highest demands of man as a divine being. And thus, men must rediscover their selves. Vivekananda wants education also to be secular, practical and nationalist. It must help them to earn their bread. It must compel them to discharge their duty to humanity at large and Indians in particular to have the added responsibility of rescuing their motherland. In simple terms there are metaphysical, national and secular elements in Vivekananda's concept of education.

Teacher and the Taught :

From the discussion in the preceding chapter, we know that Vivekananda was an idealist and that nothing can be taught remained his cardinal principle. Notwithstanding this basic premise he concedes a unique position to teacher-taught relation. For him, this was not inconsistent with the cardinal principle noted above. Vivekananda recognized the long tradition of Guru-Shisya Parampara in India. Spiritual Seekers in India had been assisted by their masters. Vivekananda himself attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi with the grace of his master Ramakrishna. He had established Ramakrishna Mission and devoted his entire life for the fulfillment of the cherished vision of his master. Vivekananda was not only a great disciple; he himself was a great teacher. His fine band of disciple carried forward his dream. In fact, he was a teacher for his own generation and for generations to come in India and elsewhere. In this sub-section, an attempt is being made to explore Vivekananda's views on the desirable qualities in teachers and students and on their inter-relationship.

For Vivekananda the primary role of the teacher is to arouse interest. He must be able to touch the souls of the student and that alone can result in true education. Taking a philosophical view he writes, "No one was ever really taught by another; each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion, which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. Then things will be made clearer to us by own power of perception and thought, and we shall realize them in our own souls; and that realization will grow into the intense power of will."

Vivekananda was confronted with two divergent traditions of teacher-taught relationship. In India, the teacher was highly revered, given the status of Godhood along with parents, demanding total surrender and to an extent even an unquestioning attitude. He was conscious that considering the teacher to be infallible had resulted in stagnation; lack of creativity, and in turn decadence in science and technology. In contrast, he encountered a materialistic relationship of give and take between the teacher and the taught in the West. "The teacher has become a mere lecturer, the teacher expecting his five dollars and the person taught expecting his brain to be filled with the teacher's words and going his own way after this much is done." He

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was afraid that the disease might spread to India. He makes a passionate plea that each nation must retain its good tradition and the psychic and spiritual relation between the teacher and taught must not be lost sight of by the Indians. He articulated himself as follows: "The Guru, however, is a different idea. It is the relation between the transmitter and the receiver of force, psychic power and knowledge. Each nation is a type, physically and mentally. Each is constantly receiving ideas from others only to work them out into its type that is along the national lines. The time has not come for the destruction of types. All education from any source is compatible with the idea in every country; only they must be nationalized i.e. fall in line with the rest of the type manifestation."

Recognising the soul power he holds that the teacher must have the same without which no transmission of knowledge takes place. The teacher must be a willing giver and the student must be an eager, receptive recipient. "The soul from which impulse comes is called the Guru, the teacher; and the soul to which the impulse is conveyed is called the disciple, the student. In order to convey this impulse, in the first place, the soul from which it comes must possess the power of transmitting it, as it were, to another; and in the second place, the object to which it is transmitted must be fit to receive it."

Vivekananda recognized in modern lines the need for being national. He was not opposed to modern science and technology. For him "The first test of true teaching must be that the teaching should not contradict reason."

The chief role of a teacher is to remove obstacles and create learning opportunities for the students. He never took away the focus from the learner. "Each of us is naturally growing and developing according to his own nature; each will-in-time come to know the highest truth, for after all, men must teach themselves. Do you think you can teach even a child? You cannot. The child teaches himself. Your duty is to afford opportunities and to remove obstacles."

Echoing the ancient Indian thought he writes "the teacher whose wisdom and truth shine like the light of the sun are the very greatest the world has known, and they are worshipped as God by the major portion of mankind."

A teacher must teach simply out of pure love for the student and for mankind at large. For him, money, name and fame must not be the motivating factor. A teacher who is not moved by the high ideals of selfless motive and pure love would be dangerous. "When you see that in your teacher these conditions are all fulfilled, you are safe; if they are not, it is unsafe to allow yourself to be taught by him, for there is the great danger that, if he can not convey goodness to your heart, he may convey wickedness."

Vivekananda also gave us an ideal conception of a true teacher: "The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of students and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else."

To be a successful teacher, one must be well trained in the process of instruction. Mere possession of academic degree should not be the only condition for becoming a teacher. It is true that in some cases there are born teacher, but this not a general rule or principle.

The highest Indian tradition demand that teacher should act as a lighting candle or a matchstick not as the lamp itself. Long ago the great Buddha had advised, 'each one to be light unto oneself (Atma pradip). Echoing this great tradition, Vivekananda recognizes that the most important job of a teacher is to awaken the student, to act as a matchstick for the lamp, which lies in every soul, to act as a catalytic agent for arousal of self-consciousness. He writes, "The teacher is not a man who comes just to teach me, and I pay him so much, and there it ends. In India it is really like an adoption. The teacher is more than my own father, and I am truly his child, his son in every respect. I owe him obedience and reverence first, before my own father even; because they say the father gave me his body, but he showed me the way to salvation, he is greater than father. And we carry this love, this respect for our teacher all our lives."

The traditional qualification requisites of a teacher in India were that of great learning, devotion to duty, being sinless and consideration of teaching as a sacred trust. Vivekananda accepted all these traditional qualities as essential. He was not prepared to accept that under the Indian system the teacher was necessarily authoritarian and considered himself the repository of all know ledge. He cited numerous examples in course of his lectures as to how great Rishis of hoary past had asked their disciples to seek God from other competent teachers. In the absence of written literatures in ancient India for a long period the teacher had the unique responsibility of transmitting great works of metaphysics, secular sciences and literature through generation. A worthy learned person without a worthier student was afraid of failing in his duty of transmitting knowledge from one generation to another. He wanted Indians to be cognizant of this great tradition.

Basing his ideas on Patanjali's Yogasutras (11;36) Vivekananda demands qualities of self restraint, charity, compassion, respect and truthfulness in a teacher. An immoral and non-spiritual teacher was never acceptable to Vivekananda, as for him; character building and man-making were the other principal goals of education.

A true teacher must not be lost in words, syntax, etymology and philology. The true spirit in every literature and scripture must be realized by the teacher. He writes, "It is the knowledge of the spirit of the scripture alone that constitutes the true teacher."

Purity of heart and soul was no less important for Vevekananda. He says "the sine qua non of acquiring truth for oneself, or for imparting to others, is purity of heart and soul. He must be perfectly pure and then only comes the value of his words. The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something and not one of mere stimulation of existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore, the teacher must be pure."In simple word's Vivekananda demanded that every teacher should be a good man.

Vivekananda reflects a few modern ideas though his theory of education was based on metaphysical foundation and not behavioural foundation. Yet, he recognized that a teacher must know about child psychology, mental age of the student and intelligent quotient etc.

In a nutshell Vivekananda desires the following qualities in a teacher.

A teacher must be a person of high character, sinless, selfless, spiritual and truthful. He should possess qualities of purity of heart and soul, self-restraint, charity, compassion, creativity and power of transmission.

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Having identified qualities of teachers, the scholar now attempts to identify qualities of students that Vivekananda considered to be important. Vivekananda shares the traditional idea that a student should be a celibate. In the conventional sense, these are four Ashramas, Brahmacharya being the first after childhood. It is not that he was opposed to family life. However, a student ought to be single in his learning days. He says "the Sanskrit name for a student, Brahmacharin, is synonymous with the Sanskrit word Kamajit (one who has complete control over his passion). Our goal of life is Moksha; how can that be ever attained without Brahmacharya or absolute continence? Hence, it is imposed upon our boys and youth as an indispensable condition during their studentship."

A corollary to brahmacharya was purity, thirst for knowledge and perseverance. "The conditions necessary for the taught are purity, a real thirst after knowledge and perseverance. The success sometimes may come immediately, but we must be ready to wait patiently even for what may look like an infinite length of time. The student who sets out with such a spirit of perseverance will surely find success."

The students should also possess some of the qualities in order to be successful recipients of knowledge from the teachers. The first of the qualities is that the student must throw off the selfish motives as he devotes himself to the process of acquiring truth. The selfish motive never helps men in attaining truth; it rather takes them away from the path of truth. It is poverty, but not prosperity, which stimulate the man to realize the nature of truth. So long as there is in the heart the least desire for the world, truth will not come. Therefore, the disciple must try all along to be unselfish.

To become an ideal student, one must develop the power of self control. One must be able enough to control the internal and external senses. This is because the sense organs provide false knowledge of the world; they are addicted to the sensuous and sensual joy and pleasure, which always take the man down to the level of animal life. To rise from this lowest stage of animality to the stage of perfection, to ignore the attraction of the earthly joy and pleasure and to believe that there is still higher life, the student must learn the secret of self-control, which opens to him the door of the knowledge of higher truth.

The student must also possess the power of endurance. Life is a combination of pain and pleasures. One must be prepared to face any eventuality in life: "Bear all evil and misery without one murmur or hurt, without one thought of unhappiness, resistance, remedy or retaliation, that is true endurance." The student must not lose hope in the midst of dangers and difficulties. They must learn to endure pain and sufferings because these provide the chance of realizing the highest truth of life.

Another quality a student must possess is to conceive an extreme desire to be free. They must free themselves from the attachment to worldly pleasures. The supreme aim of a student is to be spiritual. The desires of the body bring in only momentary satisfaction and endless suffering. Yet our mind is continually searching for ways and means to satisfy the hunger of the stomach and sex. It is like drinking from a cup of which the surface layer is nectar, while underneath all is poison. Therefore, to be spiritual, students must throwaway the matter, the body and the senses, which are enemies to the attainment of spiritual highness.

The next quality is that the student must have purity - purity in thought, speech and action. They must also have real thirst for knowledge. However, a student should bear in mind that education is not just acquisition of information but assimilation of various ideas. According to Vivekananda it is better to assimilate a few ideas than to

memorize all the information stored up in the books of a big library. So unless a student has genuine thirst for knowledge, all other conditions will be of no avail.

These are, according to Vivekananda some of the essential qualities of the students who want to know truth and the true meaning of life. Without fulfilling these conditions it will be difficult for a student to come in contact with a true Guru. And even if he is fortunate enough to find him, the power transmitted by the Guru may not bring the desired result within him. "With the fulfillment of these conditions the lotus of the disciple's heart will open and the bee shall come. Then the disciple knows that the Guru was within himself. He opens out. He realizes. He crosses the ocean of life, goes beyond, and in mercy, without a thought of gain or praise, he in his turn helps others to cross."

It is sometimes found in the present system that an attempt is made to exact submission from the pupils by coercion. It should be done in a way free from any sort of application of force. Vivekananda has warned us against the use of force and told that knowledge of psychology will not allow the use of force while instructing. It is practically found that such coercive method sometimes produces the opposite results. As he said "That system which aims at educating our boys in the same manner as that of man who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse, should be abolished."

In ancient days the students had to perform various kind of activities, mostly domestic, at the house of their Guru. These activities were never perceived as exploitation. These activities were given to the students as a means of their moral improvement, but never for the economic advantage of the teacher. The modern students like the ancient ones must respect the teachers as their fathers. They will never fail to show faith, humility, submission and veneration towards the teachers. They ought to be obedient in all respects to the teachers.

However, too much faith in personality has a tendency to produce weakness and idolatry. The students must not follow the teacher blindly. They will take everything through self-understanding and self-analysis. If anything coming from the lips of the teachers does not stand to reason they will immediately reject it. This act of rational rejection will never be an act of disobedience to the teachers.

Thus, to make the education meaningful, all the above stated criteria are to be strictly observed, otherwise education will be nothing but, as given by some American journal, "The mysterious process whereby information passes from the notes of the professor to the note-book of the student through his pen without entering the mind of either of them".

Women's Education :

The problem of women was an important issue for Vivekananda. The West was critical of the low position of women in Indian society. In fact, before the industrial revolution, women were subordinated to men all over the world including Europe. Though in each society including India, there were brilliant exceptions mostly drawn from higher echelons of the society, generally speaking, women had no right to education and higher positions. The difference between the position of women in the Continent and in India was mostly due to the fact that the Continent had been industrialized and modernized. Vivekananda and the other thinkers of Indian renaissance did not envisage for the Indian women, the kind of mere materialistic progress, which the women in the West had achieved. They rather wanted the Indian women to retain their spiritual identity even as they competed for an equal space

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with men in the field of economy and polity. Further, the nationalists realized that women should also participate in the nationalist movement. Isolation of half of the race from the freedom struggle did not augur well. In the introduction, the scholar has hinted how thinkers like Raja Rammohun Roy, Dayananda Saraswati and others were concerned with the question of women, their emancipation and education. It was quite natural for Vivekananda to carry on the legacy of the earlier nationalists.

Vivekananda was fairly well travelled both in the new world and in the Continent and had seen for himself how women were striving to enjoy equal status with men: how they breathed in an atmosphere of freedom and the self confidence. In India itself he was in touch with Ma Sharada Devi, the consort of Sri Ramkrishna and had a first-hand experience of her tremendous spiritual progress. Sister Nivedita, Annie Besant and other leading women of India were in constant touch with Vivekananda. What struck him most was the sense of resignation, weakness and helplessness that Indian women generally reflected in his time. Hence, the prime concern for Vivekananda was to remove these shackles. And he writes "They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others, and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger. Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence."

Vivekananda being a keen observer could distinguish the difference in perception about the status of women in the West and in India. "The ideal woman in India is the mother, the mother first, and the mother last. The word woman calls up to the mind of the Hindu, motherhood; and God is called mother." From the above it is apparent that the vision of Vivekananda was not to westernize the Indian women. Retaining his general stand of synthesizing the best of the West with India, he wanted Indian women to be educated, self confident and to excel in all professional field without sacrificing their primary role in home management and child rearing. He felt that it may not be always possible to have super women and as such he thought of dividing the role between two groups. "Studying the present needs of the age, it seems imperative to train me women up in the ideal of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of life long virginity, fired with the strength of that virtue of chastity which is innate in their life blood from hoary antiquity. Along with that they should be taught sciences and other things, which would be of benefit not only to them but to others as well, and knowing this they would easily learn these things and feel pleasure in doing so. Our motherland requires for her well-being some of her children to become such pure-souled Brahmacharins and Brahmacharinis." It is doubtful whether such a division can be traced to the Vedantic age. One may even question the so-called high position women enjoyed during the Vedic period. A Gargi, a Maitreyi, a Lilavati or even a Rani of Jhansi does not necessarily reflect the status of women in their own time. Not only Vivekananda but others also cited such example defence of India against the onslaught of Christian missionaries. The changing position of women is to be related with modernization and industrial revolution.

The scriptures of Christianity may grant lower status to women as Eve was created out of a bone from Adam. Though under Hinduism, women enjoyed a lower status in society, the scriptures always granted an equal status and even a higher status. Each God has his consort in Hinduism and the female part is always considered to be more powerful. Vivekananda and other followers of Ramakrishna Paramhansa were avowed worshippers of Mahakali and other manifestations of mother Goddesses. Vivekananda constantly pointed out how our scriptures have given equal status to

women. The degrading position was for him, a result of social degradation, even a product of Muslim rule over India. He says "A good share of the philosophy and laws of the land is the work of women during the ancient times, before barbarians started to rule the land.

Without getting into a debate on the impact of Islam on the position of women, which is outside the focus of the present thesis, it can be safely conceded that Vivekananda by advocating a higher position of women, which had scriptural sanction, touched the right chord in the Indian mind. In other words, he could easily convince the Indians that keeping in tune with the scriptures, we should improve the position of women in India. And the best tool for the same was women's education. He says, "Our religion does not prevent a woman being educated at all. In this way, the girl should be educated; even thus she should be trained and in the old books we find that the universities were equally resorted to by both girls and boys, but later the education of the whole nation was neglected."

Vivekananda was not prepared to accept that men are the best judges of women's issues. Self-help was the best help for him. "No man shall dictate to a woman; nor a woman to a man. Each one is independent. What bondage there may be is only that of love. Women will work out their own destinies - much better, too, than man can ever do for them. All the mischief to women has come because men undertook to shape the destiny of women". He further adds, "Educate your women first and leave them to themselves, than they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them."

He felt that every woman should have the ability to earn for a living if there is a need. In the changing circumstances one may suggest examples other than suggested by Vivekananda. But the basic principle that women should earn cannot be contested. He writes, "Teach your girls fruit-modeling with hardened nick. Give them artistic cooking and sewing. Let them learn painting, photography, the cutting of designs in paper, and gold and silver filigree and embroidery. See that everyone knows something by which she can earn a living in case of need."

For Vivekananda, Sita was the highest model for Indian women. He says "Sita is unique; that character was depicted once and for all. There may have been several Ramas, perhaps, but never more than one Sita! She is the very type of the true Indian woman, For all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sit a' and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman and child throughout the length and breadth of the land of Aryavarta." Many of course, would hold a different view. We shall consider the other view in conclusion.

Like many feminists, Vivekananda was not interested in creating a discord between men and women. Each had their role. "Woman is as courageous as man. Each is equally good in his or her way. What man can bring up a child with such patience, endurance, and love as the woman can? The one has developed the power of doing; the other, the power of suffering. If woman cannot act, neither can man suffer. The whole universe is one of perfect balance."

Vivekananda eulogised the role of Indian women. He observed. "In India alone the sight of feminine modesty and reserve soothes the eye! With such materials of great promise, you could not, alas, workout their uplift! You did not try to infuse the light of knowledge into them. If they get right sort of education, they may well turn out to be the ideal women in the world." He adds, "In the West it found its ideal in the wife, in India in the mother. In India the mother is the centre of family and our highest ideal. She is to us the representative of God, as God is the mother of the universe."

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Vivekananda held that it is imperative for every society to accord a high position to women for achieving greatness. He says, "All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. The country and the nation, which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future. The principal reason why your race has so much degenerated is that you have no respect for these living images of Shakti."

For Vivekananda, God realization remains the highest ideal for women education. "If a man can be a knower of Brahman, why cannot a woman attain to the same knowledge? Therefore I was saying that if even one amongst the women becomes a knower of Brahman, then by the radiance of her personality thousands of women would be inspired and awakened. to truth, and great well being of the country and society would ensue."

He pleaded for opening of girl's schools and emphasized character building. Alluding to the service aspect, he noted, "Spirituality, sacrifice, and self control will be the motto of the pupils and service or Seva - Dharma the vow of their life. In view of such ideal lives, who will not have respect and faith in them?" Vivekananda also never lost sight of religious aspect. He noted, "Now female education is to be spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be secondary to religion. Religious training, the formation of character and observance of the vow of celibacy - these should be attended to." By educating mothers we educate a new generation. He says, "If the women are raised, then their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country - then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in this land."

Vivekananda desired that Indian women should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In a letter to Sister Nevedita he wrote - "I want a veritable lioness for India" "Muscles of iron and nerves of steel and a heart that is made of thunderbolt", He had full faith in the positive role that women can play in national work. He said "With hundred men conquest of the world may take fifty years, with as many women not more than a few weeks". Such was his faith in women.

Vivekananda developed a whole scheme for women education. The scheme can be elaborated in the following manner.

A women's Math, or a monastic order should be the central institution. Its role and importance were elaborated by Vivekananda himself in the following terms:

"Studying the present needs of the age, it seems imperative to train some of them (the girls) up in the ideals of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of life long virginity, fired with the strength of that virtue of chastity, which is innate in their blood from hoary antiquity. Our mother land requires for her well-being some of her children to become pure souled Brahmacharins and Brahmacharinis."

Under such a Math these should be residential institutions - day scholars might also be admitted.

The Brahmacharinis must open centres of education in villages and town and strive for the spread of women's education.

Regarding teachers Vivekananda was of the view that the celibate men will be teachers and the preachers. Through them real education will spread in the country.

Following is the broad outline of the curriculum for women's education as prescribed by Vivekananda (developed further by Sister Nivedita):

"Religion, arts, science, house-keeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene, the simple essential points of these subjects ought to be taught to our women. It is not good to let them touch novels and frictions But only teaching rites of worship won't do; their education must be an eye-opener in all matters. Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with a devotion for lofty ideals of selflessness. The noble examples of Sit a, Savitri, Damayanti, Lilavbati and Mira should be brought home to their minds, and they should be inspired to mould their lives after them." He further said: "History and the puranas, house-keeping and the arts, the duties of home life and the principles that make for the development of an ideal character, have to be taught with the help of modern science and lady students must be trained up in ethical and spiritual life. We must see to their growing up as ideal matrons of home in time."

In short, Vivekananda laid emphasis on Religion, History, Puranas, Sanskrit, Bengali and English languages, Mathematics, Science, domestic science including house-keeping and the duties of home life, sewing and culinary arts, upbringing of children, physical training, service to animals and the poor and vocational training.

The entire syllabus seems to be designed in such a way that it can cater to a comprehensive training of brain, mind and body. Serious caution should be taken while selecting books on literature and compiling textbooks on history. Good books on literature and history always inspire the boys and girls to love, and to have faith in their own cultural ideals.

Education of the Masses :

As an educationist, Vivekananda was not a mere elitist and spiritualist, he was greatly concerned with social dimension of education. He considered mass education to be an important tool of social change, which can ensure a re-awakened India. Generally speaking, education in India in the past had the highest goal of God-realisation and as such was heavily individual centred. Like in most other societies, in the pre-industrialised and pre-modern period, education in India was limited to a small elite class and to specific skill required for carrying out hereditary profession. Vivekananda was amongst a select group of religio-spiritual preacher who pleaded for mass education. He generally confirmed the social objective of education, to help individuals to live a fuller and richer life in adjustment to the constantly changing environment, to develop the best elements of their culture and to promote social and economic development so as to enable them to take their rightful place in the modern world and to live in peace. Literacy, health, sanitation, recreation etc. were all recognized by Vivekananda as social dimensions of education. Education was the panacea for almost all ills from which the Indian society suffered.

The subhuman condition of the vast majority of Indians moved him. He felt that the educated elite and the rich class have the solemn responsibility of uplifting the vast multitude from the subhuman condition. He writes:

My heart aches to think of the condition of the poor, the low in India. They sink lower and lower everyday. They feel the blow showered upon them by a cruel society, but they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. My heart is too full to express my feelings. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold very man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them. Our great national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is the cause of our downfall. No amount of politics would be in any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated well fed and well cared for.

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Vivekananda realized that need for intellectual development is universal. He believed that it is a practical want of intellectual education about life on this earth they suffer from. They must have a better piece of bread and a better piece of rag on their bodies. The great question is how to get a better bread and a better rag for these sunken millions. So besides taking care of literacy, adequate measures should be adopted for the solution of economic problem of the masses.

Vivekananda wanted that "the only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their individuality. They are to be given ideas. Their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas - that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature.'

Vivekananda demands a true feeling and sympathy for the down-trodden part of humanity. If we read the situation with true heart, and become determined and resolute to solve the problem, the solution, we are sure, must come. Vivekananda wants that we should love this down-trodden section of humanity because love opens the most impossible gates. He wants to make us aware of their sufferings and misery and therefore he questions:

Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleep less? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with the one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the very first step.

He, further says:

You may feel then; but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstruction? If the whole world stands against you, sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right? If your wives and children are against you, if your name dies, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it? Would you still pursue it and go on steadily towards your own goal?.

The religious workers, with their devotion and zeal, can play an important role in social education. Vivekananda desired that the "wandering monks" should move from door to door as torch bearers and dispel the darkness of ignorance as early as possible. Vivekananda says that: "suppose you open a free school in every village, still it would do not good, for the poverty in India is such that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields or otherwise try to make a living than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him."

Vivekananda further says that centuries of oppression has made them totally helpless and engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge, they have worked so long like machines and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour. However,

with the march of time the lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this. The upper classes will not longer be able to repress the lower. "The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights."

Therefore, Vivekananda says that "Set yourself to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, 'you are our brothers, a part and parcel of our bodies'. If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold."

Vivekananda was a great idealist of the Indian hue. Trained in western metaphysics, blessed with God-realisation through spiritual experience and endowed with a deep understanding of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy, he was one of the most complete philosophers that modern India has produced. Widely traveled both inside and abroad sensitive to all contemporary events Vivekananda is a rare example of a fiery personality who touched the lives of many and still inspires Indians and others to lead a meaningful, spiritual and social life. He established a mission named after his master Sri Ramkrishna, which continues to hold the torch that Vivekananda had lighted. He offered the western audience a true understanding of the Hinduism and dispelled the typical obnoxious image about Hinduism built by unsympathetic missionaries and ignorant Orientalists. More important than this was Vivekananda's commitment to modernity and to rid India of social ills and evils.



UNIT - III

RABINDRANATH TAGORE (1861-1941)

A Brief Life-Sketch

Rabindranath Tagore was born on May 7, 1861 in Calcutta. Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the great Brahmo leader, was his father. Rabindranath Tagore was the youngest of his six brothers. He began to compose verses when he was only eight years old. His education had been very desultory. He had his education mostly at home through tutors and private reading. On his death in 1941, the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta thus placed on records his services to India:

"Through him India has given her message to mankind and his unique achievement in the fields of literature, philosophy, education and art have won imperishable fame for himself, and have raised the status of India in the estimation of the world"

The world recognized merit of Tagore by awarding him the Nobel prize for literature in 1913 for the English version of his *Gitanjali*. The University of Calcutta honoured him with the honorary degree of D.Lit. in December, 1913. The Government of India made him a Knight in 1915.

Tagore is a philosopher, poet, novelist, dramatist, actor, composer, educators, painter and prophet. By his writings he has enriched not only Bengali literature, but also English. Besides being a poet and artist of the highest order, he is also a prophet of humanity. Love of man is the very heart of his religion. Man, the divine, is the measure of all things to him. His love of humanity is the outcome of his spirituality. Throughout his work Tagore mirrors the ancient wisdom of India, though restated according to the needs of modern life.

But Tagore was not satisfied only with restating the sagacious message of the ancient India. He tried to lead the life of the poet prophets of old and wanted to create a community around him with the spirit of the ancient Ashramas. With this aim in view he established a school at Shantiniketan at great personal sacrifice, when he was almost forty years old. Here he surrounded himself with children to teach them to live in harmony with nature. He has described his educational experiment in this school and his educational ideologies into numerous articles. But before we come to understand his educational philosophy it is necessary to understand his philosophy in general, because it is from his philosophy that his educational ideas have originated.

Tagore has a philosophy :

Some people think that Tagore was a poet and an artist but not a philosopher. But we cannot agree with this point of view. Radhakrishnan says about Tagore's book entitled *Sadhana* that, "We feel that the atmosphere is charged with a particular vision of reality". Dr. S.N. Das Gupta says:

"Although Rabindranath is no metaphysician, his property has gained in flesh and blood on account of his philosophic experience. Anyone who has read the works of Pringle Pattison, Bosanquet and Bergson will find striking similarities between many of the ideas of Rabindranath and those of the above mentioned authors."

In fact, no defence is necessary in writing about the philosophy of Tagore. The Indian tradition has been such that there is no incongruity in thinking about a poet's philosophy. We would in fact hesitate to call one a poet if he has no philosophy. Tagore had a vision. The Indian word for philosophy is Darshana or vision (of truth). Tagore certainly had a Darshana. The poetic and philosophic aspects of Tagore are not contradictory but complementary to each other. It is true that Tagore does not give us a finished clear-cut theory of his philosophy but on the basis of his writing a theistic philosophy can be built up.

The General Nature of His Philosophy :

Tagore has always depended upon personal experiences for arriving at a truth. He does not believe in a wholly impersonal method of looking at fundamental problems, because this method ignores the emotional side of human nature. Another essential feature of the philosophy has been his desire to reconcile all extremes and harmonize all contradictions. In his views about God and the relation of God to Man and Nature he has sought a reconciliation between, the extremes of Transcendence and Immanence, Humanism and Prapatti (self-surrender), and one-sided Naturalism and extreme Spiritualism. In ethics, too, Tagore shows the same attitude. He condemns hedonism without losing his faith in the joy of life. He has tried to synthesize the one-sided tendencies of individualism and universalism in social life. He has shown the necessity of both freedom and determinism in human life. He is against both asceticism and egoistic ideal. He has shown a common ground between romanticism and realism. He has noted the proper limits of ugliness and beauty.

In his entire philosophic attitude Tagore has shown an attitude of softening the edges of intellectual preconceptions. He has tried to smoothen out the sectarian limits of thoughts. He has endeavoured to preserve the essential truths of each theory but has never accepted anyone in its totality. Thus Tagore has always sought a 'golden mean'. This search is clear in his poems. Any example of this search is evident in these lines from Purabi :

"In my heart is a stream of Darkness,
But a stream of light is in my eyes.
My song rises up to the Heavens,
But my dance is On this mortal Earth.
On my left, and on my right,
Are the two streams of Joy and Sorrow.
In the Ocean of Rest
The Wave of Movement doth merge."
His views Regarding God

"I have never looked at God, Man and Nature as problems which can be considered in isolation from each other. I could never conceive of their occupying watertight compartments."

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Therefore his philosophy presents an integral picture of God, Man and Nature. He says:

"My mind is used to look at reality as an integral whole, it being understood, of course, that I am referring to the wholeness of spirit, and not to material unity."

Tagore regards God as a postulate, an axiomatic reality. Therefore, he has not considered necessary to give any traditional proof for the existence of God. He says, "We must feel God as we feel light. He believes that the ceaseless activity going on in the universe cannot be accounted in the absence of an Infinite. "World movements are not then blind movements, they are related to the will of God".

Man cannot feel satisfied merely by having his needs fulfilled. He often feels an unconscious recognition that there is something which he lacks. So he feels incomplete by himself. He wants to remedy this incompleteness by communion with Nature. But he does not get complete satisfaction.

"Our satisfaction in Nature, though real, is still incomplete. It is a satisfaction only of our empirical ego. But we have our higher self which finds contentment in the Infinite."

Tagore says that :

"In this large life of social communion man feels the mystery of unity. From the sense of unity men come to their sense of God."

Thus we find that like Kant, Tagore believed in the moral argument for the existence of God.

As regards the nature of God Tagore does not believe in the impersonal Absolute of Samskara- Vedanta, because he thinks that it does not meet the moral, religious or aesthetic requirements of mankind. So he accepts a God who is close to man. He does not like a God who is not interested in man's actions and thoughts. In fact, he believes that there can be some personal relation between God and man. No wonder then that he says:

"Dualistic philosophy in India has sought to supplement the idea of an impersonal Brahman by that of its personal Iswara."

However, he does not speak of the personality of God. He generally refers to a 'personal God'. By personality he does not mean a finite God. He regards God as the perfect person, whereas man is personal in an imperfect manner.

To Tagore the relation between God and man must be that of Love and Joy. He does not want to be devoted to a God to whom nothing can be attributed except that He exists. He does not like the impersonal existence of God, because he thinks that to do so is not to demand the existence of God but of the Indeterminate. He believes that the energy of the immortal Purusa urges us to be ethical. He thinks that God must have a personality, otherwise we cannot account for our pursuit of the God.

However, it must be noted that Tagore does not overrule altogether the impersonal aspect of God. He has never stated that the idea of Personality of God exhausts His nature. Therefore, he does not dogmatically reject Advaita Vedanta. He regards Personality only an aspect of Reality, though the most important aspect. He says, "It will not do to reject the impersonal aspect of truth altogether". In one of his lectures at Shantiniketan he says:

"Dualistic philosophy in India proclaims a God who has his qualities and forms. Man's deliverance depends upon the fulfillment of his knowledge, love and strength. Such a fulfillment is precluded by a Nirguna Brahma."

Thus we find that Tagore is naturally inclined towards the Vaisnava view of Saguna Brahma.

Tagore regards self as an independent reality. To him the independence of the self is necessary for Reality as a whole. In *Gitanjali*, Tagore describes God and man as two separate realities "floating at will". It is true that the human self derives its contents from its affinity with the Infinite. But this affinity does not imply that it is not free to have its own individual experiences. Therefore, Tagore does not like to undermine the independence of the self by making it entirely subsequent to the Will of God. He believes that the self has the power to work on its own initiative as well. He says:

"The self must have complete freedom. Only a free entity can have relations with another entity. God has made this understanding with us. He has told us Come to me as a free-self. Nothing that is bound can truly approach me.

This freedom is necessary for union of self with God. It is because of this freedom that the human self has purpose and greatness. Even in the highest stage of realisation the self must remain distinct from God. He does not think that the finite is lost in the absolute. Man may approach God, but he never merges into God. He believes that in his relation to God man finds himself more completely. In no way he loses himself. Tagore says:

"The difference between Atma and Brahma must always be there. He has become what we are ever striving to be. The difference is between 'being' and 'becoming.' God is the Infinite ideal of 'perfection' and man 'the eternal process of its realisation'."

It is worth noting that Tagore strikes a balance between the two extremes of utter Dualism and absolute Monism. He recognises the existence of the 'many' and believes that this manyness does not affect the organic unity and coherence of the whole. According to him duality and unity are demands of creation. But a duality of unrelated realities is not acceptable to him. He believes that the separation and re-union should go hand in hand. He says:

"The universal is never seeking its consummation in the unique. The desire we have to keep our uniqueness intact is really the desire of the Universe acting in us.

"In our physical existence, there is both separation and meeting between us and the world of things. The consciousness of this relationship takes a deeper line in our mental life where there is continual separation and reunion between the individual mind and the universal world of reason ... It widens when there is separation and combination between the individual will and the universal world of personality."

"This I shall accept-How the One could become Two, I can not understand .

We have seen that Tagore has been an exponent of theism, but he has never chosen to refute the Maya-theory. All through his writings he has tried to establish the reality of the world and to preserve the essential truth of the doctrine of Maya.

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He cannot accept an absolute separateness of Nature from God, nor can he agree with an utter identity of God with the world. We have already indicated above that he strikes a compromise between Transcendence and Immanence between Deism and Pantheism. This clearly means that he believes in the interdependence of God and the world and of God and the Self. He seems to adopt an extraordinary tolerant attitude towards the most extreme forms of the doctrine of Maya when he says:

"The world as an art is 'Maya'. It 'is' and 'is' 'not'. Its sole explanation is that it seems to be what it is. The ingredients are elusive; call them Maya, even disbelieve them, the Great Artist, the 'Mayavin' is not hurt." .

Man and Nature :

Tagore recognises a kinship between Man and Nature. He says: -

"When a man does not realise his kinship with the world of nature, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him."

To Tagore Man and Nature are indispensable elements of the Reality. Both Man and Nature need each other in the same way as God and Man need each other. Nature and Spirit are complementary to each other. Nature derives its meaning from Spirit and Spirit express itself through Nature. According to Tagore whatever Nature possesses is not only, a storehouse of powers but a habitation of man's spirit as well'. In a poem addressing Nature Tagore says:

In me, night and day, have your flowers bloomed

In me your seeds sprouted.

For me do your trees shower their

Perfume and foliage.

It is the human mind that gives expression to the meaning of nature, by itself Nature is dumb. But this dependence of Nature on man is not one-sided. Spirit too needs Nature in the same manner. Man will lose his balance if he were to, "leave his resting place in universal nature and walk upon the single rope of humanity.

Tagore goes further than saying that Man and Nature are independent. He suggests certain point where these two come in closer contact. He thinks that Man and Nature both possess 'Jivan Shakti', i.e., 'Energy of Life'. It is because of this common possession that the Union between the two becomes inevitable. Tagore finds a harmonious order in the phenomena of Nature in the same way as he finds it in the human life. To him both Nature and Man have "the rhythm of cosmic motion". He believes that both Man and Nature are "held together in God". They are only spheres of the manifestation of the same God.

Tagore's Humanism :

Thus we see that Tagore emphasises Man's intimate connection with Nature. But this emphasis must not lead one to think that he fails to see the advance of Spirit over nature. He admits the place of pride that Man occupies in the universe. He gives such a high status to man that he has declared that God himself may be considered in terms of humanity. He says, "Reality is human" and "Truth is human".

Thus we can call Tagore a humanist par excellence because he gives man the highest place within the phenomena of the world, and he bestows even God with humanness and he depicts ultimate Reality in human terms. But this does not imply that he means to dethrone the Infinite and to glorify the finite man as 'finite'. He wants that man must outgrow himself and that the ideas of the "Human God must be supplemented by that of the divine Man".

Tagore accepts the idea of "degrees" in truth and reality. For example, to him both Man and Nature are real, but the former is more real than the latter. He says:

"The flower that has failed to bloom, the river that has lost its course in the desert, even these are not altogether devoid of meaning."

Thus to him the ultimate reality of an object is never lost. He believes that the Absolute is manifested in every object of creation, but

"Of all His manifestations, man is incomparable. The human self is unique, because in it God reveals himself in a special manner."

In sadhana, Tagore is more explicit. He says:

"The revelation of the infinite is to be seen most fully not in the starry heavens, but in the soul of man."

"God has many strings to his 'sitar' (musical instrument), some are made of iron, others of copper and yet others are made of gold. Humanity is the golden string of God's lute."

To Tagore man is superior to nature. But in what does his superiority lie ? It exists in his sense of freedom, magnificence and ethical and aesthetic consciousness which Nature lacks. In Nature there is Determinism. There is a certain internality in man due to which he "turns his vision inwards, and upsets Nature's scheme of balance". Nature does not have this internality. Because of the freedom that man enjoys he becomes a creative being and looks beyond his minimum needs of survival. Man is not satisfied with the minimum. He wants more. "He is restless, he has a thirst for the distant and the far away". There is no limit to man's progress. However great he becomes, he always aspires for higher goals.

Tagore's Views on Aesthetics :

Tagore distinguishes the Beautiful from the Ugly, but he has not given us an exact definition of beauty. However, he has tried to state his concept of the beautiful. He does not regard anything as absolute evil. To him both good and evil are only aspects of the moral principle. In the same way, there is nothing like absolute death; life and death are only aspects of the life-principle. Similarly, Tagore believes that ugliness and beauty are aspects of the principle of beauty. Therefore, he does not want to exclude the ugly from art altogether. To him to do so would be:

"To admit that our sense of beauty creates a dissension in our universe, and sets up a wall of hindrance across the highway of communication."

But it must be noted that he has never given an independent reality to ugliness. Tagore believes that:

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"The principle object of Art is the expression of personality, and that is why it uses the language of picture and music."

He further says that :

"Works of art are the signatures of beauty, in which the mingling of the personal touch leaves it memorial."

Thus he emphasises the personal element in art, because to him the art is personal and "personality is at the root of existence itself. For Tagore reality starts from a personal God and finds its ultimate significance in the relation that lies between this personal God and the personal self of man. To reveal the ties of beauty and love that make up this relation, is the real function of art. Tagore thinks that man creates beauty under diving inspiration, because man himself is God's art-work. He says:

"Our creations are only variations upon God's great theme of the universe.... Our freedom as creators finds its joy in contributing its own voice to the concrete of the world-music."

But from this one must not construe that Tagore brings in determinism in art and brings down the free creative activity of man, because his major stress is on human personality and even in his estimate of the divine and the human in art he obeys the principle of harmony and proportion. He says:

"The world of art even extends its frontiers to unexplored regions. Art is signaling man's conquest of the world by its symbols of beauty, springing up in spots which were barren of all voice and colour ... Art is supplying man with his banners, under which he marches on to fight against the inane and the inert ... The encroachment of man's personality has no limit ... The one effort of man's personality is to transform everything with which he has any true concern into the human. And art is like the spread of vegetation, to show how far man has reclaimed the desert for his own."

Thus Tagore regards art as one of the unmistakable symbols of human progress. In art man 'transcends his finitude'.

Disinterested pleasure is the keynote of Tagore's aesthetics. To him utility may be an outcome of art, but it can never be its aim. The sole aim of art is delight. If the emphasis in the creation of art placed on utility the artist will be diverted from the complete man to the merely useful man, and then the element of utility will be an Impediment to the revelation of beauty. However, from this we must not infer that Tagore wants to maintain that art is purposeless. He believes that the excellence that the artist creates must have social worth for the common man. Thus he extends the boundaries of art. He does not regard as an escape from reality. He says:

"Art evokes in our mind the deep, rich sense of reality."

In his ethical doctrines Tagore desires to harmonise all extremes which have been noted in his metaphysical notions. To him the highest ethical ideal must satisfy the whole of human nature. Therefore, he regards moral discrimination as an essential part of human nature. He says:

"The life of an animal is unmoral, for it is aware only of an immediate present. The life of a man can be immoral but it cannot be unmoral; it must have a moral basis."

Tagore believes that moral ideas must have influenced the civilization. That IS why there is always a conflict in man with regard to "what is desired and what should be desired". For his existence man depends upon the world of nature, but for his humanity he has to rely on the moral world. Because of this:

"Entry into the moral world, the dualism of the animal life and the moral makes us conscious of our personality as man."

Tagore believes that the moral nature of man will never permit an extreme form of egoism. Goodness of man demands that a must look beyond his own interests. Tagore says, "To live the r of goodness is to live the life of all". Therefore he does not belie that "virtue is power", and "justice is the interest of the stronger. Anything that glorifies forces of violence is unacceptable to hi moral temperament. Unlike Vietzche, Tagore believes that "that' not the power but love which is key to ethical value". To him "love is not weakness but strength, egoism not strength but the weakness of the moral self." Therefore to him God is God of love and tenderness.

Tagore says that egoism contradicts man's infinite ideal.

"The man who aims at his own aggrandizement underrates everything else. Thus in order to be conscious of the reality of all, man has to be free from bond of personal desires."

Thus an egoist cannot understand reality. He cannot even understand his self.

"The soul can only find its truth by unifying itself with others and only then it has its joy."

Thus according to Tagore, there must be some degree of altruism in thought and action of man. The man is aware of this altruism, therefore, he occupies the supreme position in creation.

Tagore does not accept hedonism as a basis of morality. He says :

"In sin we lust after pleasure not because they are truly desirable but because the red light of our passion makes them appear desirable."

Thus hedonistic ethics or pleasure depends upon the gratification of desires. The search after pleasure makes man fierce and aggressive of desire. Pleasure is intimately connected with that part of man which is related with Nature. Man has to transcend Nature, therefore, the gratification of pleasure can never be the ideal of man. Tagore does not reject pleasure, but he does mean that it must regulated by the higher spiritual nature of man. He says:

"In human nature, sexual passion is fiercely individual and destructive, but dominated by the ideal of love, it has been made to flow into a perfection of beauty."

Thus seeking of pleasure can never be the ideal of man, because it will degenerate him to the lowest level.

Tagore believes that man has the capacity to rise above utilitarian considerations. If man were to occupy himself only in the pursuit of utility, he would lose all charm and joy of life. Therefore, Tagore is opposed to utilitarianism. He says:

"There are sentiments in us which are creative, which do not clamour for gain, but overflow in gifts, in spontaneous generosity."

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Hence Tagore is against the utilitarian tendencies of the modern age. He thinks that utilitarianism makes men mere "walking stomachs and brains."

Tagore's views on hedonism and utilitarianism do not imply that he believes in rigorous asceticism. Therefore to him worldly life is not necessarily dangerous for the moral self. He does not regard body as the prison on the soul, or like Kant does he think that sensibility is necessarily irrational. He is against the overdose of asceticism contained in the ethics of Sankaracharya. He says:

"Our knowledge in its vain endeavour to look at Absolute Reality in isolation from the world of things, has hardened like a stone. Our heart, in its effort to enjoy God by imprisoning Him within its feelings, faints of its own excess."

He further says :

"Heaven is here, in my body, my love and joy and sorrow. What greater fortune can there be than to have been born a human being.

Therefore Tagore has been regarded as a Sadhaka (a striver) and not an ascetic. He regards both acquisition and renunciation as the two real aspects of human life. To him both these aspect contribute equally to the dignity of man.

Thus Tagore accepts the worldly values. Since he wants to live on amongst man, he believes in a life of action, and he wants to act In order to enjoy life and to transcend himself beyond worldly wants. The action that Tagore stands for is that which emerges from the fountain of spiritual joy. He says:

"Joy without the play of joy is no joy at tall, play without activity is no play. Activity is the play of joy."

Thus we see that Tagore does advise us to retire from the "fever and the fret" of active life.

Tagore does not think that Freedom is altogether opposed to Law or Restraint. To him freedom and restraint are mutually related parts of the Moral Order and they are complementary to each other. He says:

"Truth has freedom on one side and restraint on the other. Its one aspect declares: 'By fear to him fire burns'. Its other aspect proclaims: 'From joy are all things born'. To reject the law on the one side is to deny the possibility of making use of the freedom which is on the other side. The Absolute Himself is both free and not-free. He is bound by his Truth, and he is free in virtue of his joy. We too can gain the enjoyment of freedom fully only if we accept the bounds of truth."

Thus freedom from all restraint cannot be Tagore's ideal. He does not recognise anything as absolute freedom. He finds even "God bound in the very process of creating the world."

It is from Tagore's idea of freedom that we can infer what he means by immortality. He thinks that only that can be immortal, deathless and eternal who is free. The perishable or the mortal is bound. Thus we find that Tagore connects immortality with freedom.

Tagore recognises the boundless worth of the human individual. To him the highest conception of human progress is the fullest development of each human personality. Therefore, he recognises if as the highest human reality.

Tagore says :

"Man's moral history is the history of his journey to the unknown in quest of the realisation of his immortal self his Soul... Man is marching from epoch to epoch towards the fullest realisation of his Self, the Self that is greater than the things he accumulates, the deeds he accomplishes, the theories he builds ... the soul whose onward course is never checked by death of dissolution."

This onward course of the soul is full of difficulties. Hence at times there is stagnation which again is followed by periods of great moral effort. Tagore is conscious of the wholeness of the moral ideal. Therefore to him progress means the development of all the sides of human nature.

"Man must realise the wholeness of his existence ... He must know that hard as he may strive he can never create his honey within the cells of a single hive, for the perennial supply is outside."

This emphasis on 'wholeness' indicates Tagore's loyalty to the traditions of Indian philosophy. Therefore, he pleads that moral development must not exclude intellectual development. True spirituality means a correlation of the within and the without. To him this type of wholeness is the criterion of morality.

Tagore's Educational Philosophy :

'Harmony with all things' is the basic principle of Tagore's philosophy. He interprets this harmony in three contexts-with nature, with human surroundings and with international relations. To him the real education is that which teaches one to live in harmony with all that exists around him. During early childhood he left his school and rebelled against the prevailing system of education, because he found that it did not teach harmony with existing things. According to Tagore the primary object of an educational institution should be to bring the educated in perfect tune with the symphony of response between life and world. Tagore realized this idea in his Bolpur school which has now been developed in Visva Bharati. We find four fundamentals in Tagore's educational philosophy: Naturalism, Humanism, Internationalism and Idealism.

Tagore's Naturalism**Nature in Indian Civilization :**

Indian civilization was born in forest near which the early Aryans made their abode. The forest supplied them with all their necessities. This feature in the beginning gave the civilization a distinct character. It was surrounded by nature on all sides, it was clothed and fed by her and had the most intimate intercourse with her varying aspects. This distinctive feature of Indian civilization is of great importance in Tagore's thinking. Tagore says, "All the modern civilization have their cradles of brick and mortar." This feature of modern civilization creates a barrier between the two. But in India civilization has its roots in nature. So there grew a relationship between man and his natural environment. Tagore gives expression to his experience with nature in the following words:

"Some shadow-haunted living reminiscence in me seemed to ache for the pre-natal cradle and playground it once shared with the primal life in the illimitable magic of land, water and air. The thin shrill cry of the high flying kite in the blazing sun of a

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dazed Indian midday sent to a solitary boy the signal of a dumb distant kinship. The few coconut palms growing by the boundary wall of our house. Like some war captives from an older army of invaders of this earth, spoke to me of the eternal companionship which the great brotherhood of trees has ever offered to man. They made my heart wistful with the invitation of the forest."

In his conception of natural life Tagore includes the idea of living in the natural surroundings, because he believes he believes in the unity of all creation. That is why he was immensely interested in the searches of Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose. He says:

"Life lies invisible in some hidden recess in the depths of matter. The hope that the researches of Jagdish would some day place this truth on a scientific foundation intoxicated me with joyful anticipations, for I had from childhood been familiar with the teaching of our Rishis : All these which are the process of creation flow. from and are vibrant with life of that all-pervading vibration science was becoming more and more cognisant, but it had not been able to gather into its storehouses of fact any proofs of its identity with Life. So when the experiments of Jagadish began to disclose the life-like responses of matter, I felt that the day of the recognition of this truth by science could not be far distant."

Natural Life and Education :

Tagore carries the principle of natural life in education and gives us his first impression of his school in the following words:

"All of a sudden I found my world vanishing from around me, giving place to wooden benches and straight walls staring at me with the blank stare at the blind."

Tagore elaborates his ideas again in the answer to a question put in Moscow as to how his school combined its life work with its surroundings:

"I have my natural love for life, for nature, and for my surroundings where I have in dear ones; and to be snatched away from these natural surroundings with which I had all my inner deeper life of relationship, and to send me an exile to the school, to the class with its bare white walls, its stare of dead eyes, frightened the everyday. When I was once inside these walls, I did not feel natural. I was absolutely a fragment torn away from life and this gave me intense misery because I was uprooted from my own world and sent to surroundings which were dead and unsympathetic, disharmonious and monotonously dull."

Thus, Tagore tells us as to how the children should grow into knowledge. He does not want that the children should acquire knowledge by conquering nature. In fact, the question of conquest of nature must not arise, because according to Tagore our attitude to the world should be that of acceptance. He does not want that the child's life should be gradually weaned away from nature in such a way as to form in him certain fixed habits which bring him in opposition to the world. Tagore says:

"We rob the child of his earth to teach him geography, of language to teach him grammar. His hunger is for the Epic, but he is supplied with chronicles of facts and dates."

Thus Tagore wants that the child's life should be surrounded with things of nature and he must be kept away from the Sophistication of the so-called modern civilization.

After nature Tagore wants the child to pass through the stream of Social behaviour. The child must be socialized. Hence the necessary opportunities should be given to him for promoting his socialization. Co-operative activities will help him in this respect, and such activities should find an important place in all the educational activities carried out in the school. In such co-operative activities the child will enjoy freedom, because whatever restraint he will have to abide by will be an outcome of self-restraint and not from an imposition placed from without.

To Tagore education must provide for creative self-expression on the part of the child. This expression may be promoted through various forms of handiworks and through music and arts because these are a spontaneous outflow of our deeper nature and spiritual self. Tagore compares the growth of the child with that of a tree. Thus he shows the relation between childhood and Nature. He says:

"Children have their active subconscious mind which like a tree, has the power to gather its food from the surrounding atmosphere. For them the atmosphere is a great deal more important than rules and methods, buildings, appliances, class-teachings and textbooks.

Tagore wants a communion between Man and Nature, because he regards nature as a great co-coordinating factor.

"For the young child, nature will become an unconscious symbol of super-personal growth and evolution, something that need background for its dreams and its play. For the adolescents. Nature will become an object of either scientific or lyrical curiosity; and both these aspects were always encouraged by Rabindranath. The adult who was passed through all these stages will see in the soil on which his country and his people grow, the cultural and economic background of human existence."

Thus Tagore regards Nature as the focus where the aspirations of human beings meet. But he wants that knowledge of nature should be acquired not in the laboratories alone, but by living nature.

To the field of education Tagore seems to bring the concept of joy, freedom, play, creative self-expression, the activity-principle, the integration and co-ordination of all knowledge. Aronson says that like Froebel, Tagore recognises stages through which the child passes for reaching maturity. He says:

"First the emotional adaptation to his environment, then the learning and training of intelligence and lastly the fruitful co-operation among human beings based upon the awareness of ones own individual separateness and of one's responsibility towards the society in which one happens to live and towards all the other societies that constitute humanity.

Tie Child's Love for Nature :

The child wants a personal experience of things. He can have no hesitation to accept the world naked and simple. He desires to be natural with nature. Tagore believes that children's personal experiences of nature help them to obtain useful knowledge. He says:

"The boys of my school have acquired instinctive knowledge of the physiognomy of the tree. By the least touch they know where they can find a foothold upon an apparently inhospitable trunk; they know how far they can take liberty with the

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branches; how to distribute their bodies weight so as to make themselves least burdensome to branchlets. My boys are able to make the best possible use of the tree in the matter of gathering fruits, taking rest and hiding from undesirable pursuers. I myself was brought up in a cultured home in a town, and as far as my personal behaviour goes. I have been obliged to act all through my life as if I were born in a world where there are no trees. Therefore, I consider it as a part of education of my boys to let them fully realise that they are in a scheme of existence where trees are a substantial fact."

Thus Tagore wants that the children should be brought into direct contact with nature, because by doing so, they will appreciate the 'scientific' facts about nature with great interest. This indicates that the teaching of natural sciences in most of our schools is not natural.

Tagore wants that "Men should have some limited period of their life specially reserved for the life of the primitive man". He further says that "for our perfection we have to be vitally savage and mentally civilized". Even a young child has to grow under imposed social conventions and he loses the freshness and naturalness of his life. Tagore recognises the place of social conventions in life, but he believes that they have a place during the course of a man's career and not at the beginning and at the end of it, during childhood and old age. Therefore, he stands for complete freedom for the child. The child should not be subjected to "the necessity of specialization onto the narrow bounds of social and professional conventionalism". He must not be forced to form any habit. His life should not be dissociated from nature. Tagore does not like to equip his school with the paraphernalia of modern furnitures, because they keep the children away from reality. He wants that the children be brought into naked contact with the dust. It is in the responding to the naked nature that they should live their life at first, because their physical and mental powers will be by their spontaneous activities which are free from artificial stimulations. Children love natural life. Therefore, they should be encouraged to acquire knowledge through their love of natural life, then they will devote their lives to gain knowledge. After gaining knowledge they will realise their lives with ripened wisdom.

Education in Co-operation with Nature :

Tagore believes that the school which is generally based on the conventions of society does not allow the free development of the mind of the child. The society tries to fashion the mind of the child through the instrumentality of the school. The arrangements of the schools are too inconducive to communication with nature. So Tagore wants to conduct the education of the child close to nature. This is clear from the following account that he gives about the education of his own son:

"This is why when I had to face the problem of my own sons education I was at a loss to give it a practical solution. The first thing that I did was to take him away from the town surroundings into a village and allow him the freedom of primeval nature as far as it is available in modern days. He had a river noted for its danger, where he swam and rowed without check from anxiety of his elders. He spent his time in the fields and on the trackless sandbanks coming late for his meals without being questioned. He had none of the luxuries that are not only customary but are held as proper for boys of his circumstance. For which privations, I am sure, he was pitied and his parents blamed by the people for whom society has blotted out

the whole world. But I was certain that luxuries are a burden to boys. They are the burdens of other people's habits, the burdens of the vicarious pride and pleasure which parents enjoy through their children."

Thus, Tagore stands for education through, "an institution where the first great lesson in the perfect union of man and not only through love but through active communication had unobstructed." He wants to take away the children from artificial life of the adults. He writes that in his school:

"Much to the disgust of people of expensive habits, I had to provide for this great teacher, the barrenness of furniture materials, not because it is poverty, but because it leads to personal experience of the world."

Tagore regards the atmosphere more important in its effect and results than rules and methods, buildings, textbooks, instruments and class-teachings. He says:

"The earth has her mass of substance in her hand and water. But, if I may be allowed figurative language, she finds her inspiration of freedom, the stipulation of her life, from her atmosphere. It is, as it were, the envelopment of her perpetual education. It brings from her depth responses in colour and perfume, music and movement, her incessant self-revelation, continual wonders of the unexpected."

No wonder then that Tagore's Shantiniketan is surrounded by natural settings. There classes are held in the open in the groves and under the trees as far as possible. The natural beauty of the atmosphere leads the students to love all that is peaceful and beautiful. Tagore believes that natural atmosphere of his school will enable the children "to respond to the deeper call of reality" and so to be "weaned away from the lure of the fictitious value of things". About the influence of nature he speaks to his students thus:

"We must not, however, forget the part that the environment played in our life. The surrounding Nature was a greater teacher to us. She moulded our daily life in the spirit of beauty and delight, harmony and colour, and caused us to meditate upon our inner being. It was nature that inspired me to write songs, dramas and poem dedicated to her. We had our dances and seasonal festivals and the whole place actually rang with the students' happy voices and music. Surely Nature helped them and us in forming our outlook and creating an atmosphere.

We have noted above that Tagore finds a fundamental unity between man and nature. Therefore, he wants that "the child's education must be organized in natural surroundings". He believes that education given in natural surroundings develops intimacy with the world. Because of this intimacy the child may develop on his own accord the power of communication with it. Tagore says:

"Children with the freshness of their senses come directly to intimacy of this world. This is the first gift they have. They must never again lose their power of immediate communication with it."

Therefore, Tagore does not want that the natural senses of children should be debased in urban atmosphere. He is in full accord with the Gurukula Ashrama idea of ancient India. He is of the opinion that the Ashrama idea of ancient India did not imply one-sided development. The moral life of the forest civilization aimed at "bridging the chasm between man and nature and helped us to obtain a more balanced view of life."

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Like a naturalist Tagore was very much influenced by Robinson Crusoe. He writes:

"I shall believe that it is the best book for boys that has ever been written. There was a longing in me, when young, to run away by myself and be one with everything in nature."

He further says :

"I believe that children be surrounded with the things of Nature which have their own educational value. Their minds should be allowed to stumble on and be surprised at everything that happens in the life of today. The new tomorrow will stimulate their attention with new facts of life. This is the best method for the child. But what happens in school is, that everyday, at the same hour, the same book is brought and poured out for him. His attention is never hit by the chance surprises which come from learning from Nature."

It is remarkable that Tagore's naturalism paves the way to spiritualism. He finds music as an aid to the development of spiritualism. He emphatically states that while starting the school in the natural surrounding of Bolpur his principal object was to give spiritual culture to the students.

Like a naturalist Tagore is a staunch advocate of individualism. So he puts more faith in an individual than in any institution. He supports individualism in education. He does not want that the child should be crushed by the heavy traditional methods of instruction. The individual child is more important to him than the books, methods and the teacher. Self-realisation, self-salvation, self-perfection and self-expression—all these are individual problems and these can be achieved through individual efforts alone. Hence the individual is of supreme importance in any scheme of education. Tagore believes that it is the inalienable right of the individual to carve out his own destiny. So he stands for maximum freedom to the child in education. Freedom of mind becomes the object of education to him.

We have already seen that Tagore's naturalism stands for love and harmony with all that exists in nature. Therefore his naturalism is different from that of Rousseau's. His naturalism stands for a kinship with the world. To him, "When a man does not realise his kinship with the world, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him". The city life will not develop this kinship in the child. Therefore, the child's education should be carried on in natural surroundings. The freshness, beauty of form and colours existing in nature attract the child and develop in him a love for freedom. This freedom fosters self-activity in the child and suggests to him the idea of union between Man and Nature through love and active communication. Quite naturally then Tagore, like a true naturalist, regards nature as a great educational agency. The natural surroundings of the Visva Bharati are a testimony to this.

Tagore believes that the subconscious mind of children is more effective than their conscious intelligence. Therefore children learn many things through their subconscious mind without feeling any fatigue. Tagore regards this subconscious faculty of knowledge as completely one with one's life. In order to enable children to learn things through their subconscious mind, it is necessary to maintain an educative atmosphere, and an atmosphere where children are not compelled to learn things

from textbooks, but from natural surroundings, which are most educative. Like Rousseau, Tagore thinks that books come between children and their world. So during the early period of education children should receive their lessons through natural processes-directly through persons and things; and they must not depend upon books. Tagore was so convinced of this point of view that he tried to create an atmosphere of ideas in his school. He made this school his home and lived there. In order to make it an atmosphere of ideas he decided to carry on his literary activities there. He composed most of his songs there and latter-day dramas were also written there and were enacted by the children of the school. It was there that he established his international university, Visva Bharati, where he tried to encourage the study of the cultures of all Asian countries in order to reveal the Eastern mind to the world and promote a mutual understanding between the East and the West.

Tagore's Humanism :

While discussing Tagore's philosophy we have seen that because of his humanism Tagore has immense faith in man. When his faith in European civilization was shattered because of the Second World War he did not lose his faith in humanity as he remarks:

"I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in man. I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his history, after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises."

Thus to Tagore man is the measure of everything. Throughout his whole life he has been striving to make the people of the world conscious of this supreme truth. So according to him all values and virtues are to be realised through man.

He believes that "The decay and fall of a civilization is due to the causes which produce callousness of heart and lead to the cheapening of man's worth." It is this love for man that stimulated Tagore to turn to the education of children and he founded a school at Bolpur. Because of his humanism, he has great love for children and he advises the teacher to be like children and not to think himself their superior.

Two prominent trends may be sensed in Tagore's humanism. In the first place, he seems to emphasise the creative activity of man through art and secondly, he lays stress on the ideal that man must achieve a unity higher than ever before.

The Ideal of Creative Activity and a Higher Unity :

Tagore was quite conscious of the spiritual culture under which the forest schools of ancient India were nurtured and he had such a great reverence for the same that he tried his best to bring in the same culture in his Shantiniketan. But at the same time it is quite remarkable that he was very much alive to all that is best and noble in the ideals that govern the modern society. This feeling led him to the ideal action of creative-activity. He is of the conviction that man must realise himself in action also and not only in thought.

Tagore believes that it is man's right to feel the joy of the universe and of life. So he makes this one of the important features of the students' life at his school:

"Where they are bidden to realise man's world as God's kingdom to whose citizenship they have aspire; where the sunrise and sunset and the silent glory of stars

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are not daily ignored; where nature's festivities of flowers and fruits and their Joyous burst receive recognition from man." expressions of life as manifested in art which he considered as fundamental to human life. He endeavoured to promote this idea children of his school. Consequently, Shantiniketan is not only home of spiritual culture, a place of intellectual advancement, it is also a centre of art and aesthetic development. Therefore antiniketan grew up as a revolt against the prevailing educational system which had reduced education to "a mere mechanical ntrivance to spread literacy or a commercial invstment in the name of enlightenment." Tagore wanted to stimulate the human spirit in all essentials and he never liked to insist upon the clockwork precision of efficiency. Therefore he says:

"I had made provision not only for academic; course of teaching but also for other elements of culture; music and art and dancing, seasonal festivities and opportunities of helping the neighbouring villages."

Tagore believed in the fundamental unity of mankind. Therefore, he used to say to his students at Shantiniketan to:

"Make friends with strangers and offer your hearts to one another.... You come here with the mission of realising the fundamental unity of humanity through co-operation and love."

He tells his students about the great welcome that he received from people in Sweden when he went there to receive the Nobel Prize. He was told by the people there that the reason of that welcome was because they realised that he did not belong to a particular country but to the whole world. Tagore comments on this fact thus:

"When I received human kindness from such strangers, I said to myself that I would throw open my doors to all, let my Ashrama become the guest-house of India, a centre of culture and maitri (friendship)."

Tagore remarks that science has removed the geographical barrier which in the past separated people of one land with those of another, but he feels sad that now artificial barriers of national politics and diplomacies exclude one race from another. He regards this moral disunity as alarming. So he writes:

"The mentality of the world has to be changed in order to meet to new environment of the modern age. To accept the truth of our own age it will be necessary to establish a new education on the basis, not nationalism, but of a wider relationship of humanity."

Needless to say that the Visva Bharati is an illustration of the 'new education' that Tagore has expressed here. In his own words the aim of Vis va Bharati:

"Lies in imparting life-breath to the complete man, who is intellectual as well as economic, bound by social bonds, but aspiring towards spiritual freedom and final perfections."

We can clearly sense that in this endeavour towards perfection there is a humanistic emphasis. Thus, we note that there are two outstanding trends in Tagore's humanism, namely: (1) the emphasis on the creative activity of man as displayed in works of art, and (2) the emphasis on the ideal that "mankind must realise a unity, wider in range, deeper in sentiment, stronger in power than ever before."

For the fulfillment of the first ideal he allows in Shantiniketan free scope for the manifestation of creative faculty in various forms. For the second ideal he suggests three ways. The first is to give full freedom for the expression of the creative aspect of the Indian mind, because he is of the conviction that:

"India ... has its own mind, which has deeply thought and felt and tried to solve according to its light the problems of human existence."

The second desire :

"To extend by degrees the scope of this university on simple lines until it comprehends the whole range of Eastern cultures-the Aryan, Semitic, Mongolian and others."

So that it may be able to express the Eastern mind to the world. And the third is for the East to enrich itself judiciously from the essentials of the European culture. Tagore remarks that in doing so the East must see that it does not:

"Allow her priceless inheritance to crumble into dust, and trying to replace its clumsiness with feeble invitations of the West, make herself superfluous, cheap and ludicrous."

Thus Tagore wants that the East must not lose its individuality. Therefore, we find in the realm of education the highest humanistic thought of India in the objectives of the Visva Bharati which are thus stated:

- To study the Mind of Man in its realisation of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view.
- To bring into more intimate relation with one another, through patient study and research, the different cultures of the East on the basis of their underlying unity.
- To approach the West from the standpoint of such a unity of the life and thought of Asia.
- To seek to realise in a common fellowship of study the meeting of the East and the West, and thus ultimately to strengthen the fundamental conditions of world peace through establishment of free communication of ideas between the two hemispheres.

Tagore's Internationalism :

Tagore's humanism knows no bound. He is an ardent prophet of World unity. All through his strenuous life he has worked for a closer contact between the East and the West. He wanted that the East should give its best to the West and in turn it should assimilate the best that the West had to offer. He felt indebted to both the East and the West and believed that the problem of the world could be solved only if a judicious synthesis was attained between the contributions of the East and the West. He wanted to achieve this synthesis in his Visva Bharati as we have already indicated above.

Tagore's Idealism :

Tagore's education theories are idealistic in conception. Therefore, in his various educational writings and pronouncements an idealistic note is always present. We can easily sense this note when we study his views on education in different contexts.

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Tagore's Homesickness and Quest for Harmony :

Tagore felt the lack of harmony in the world and the individual. He found the spirit of man at cross-purposes by being engrossed in material thing. Tagore regards man a finite-infinite being who combines in himself nature and spirit. "Man is earth's child but heaven's heir. At one end of his being man is one with stocks and stones but at the other he is separate from all ". Hence there is a restlessness and yearning in his spirit for the things that exceed his grasp:

"I am restless, I am athirst for far-away things,

My Soul goes out in a longing to touch the skirt of the dim distance.

O Great Beyond. O the keen call of they flute.

I forget, I ever forget, that I have no wings to fly, that

I am bound in this spot evermore."

Thus Tagore finds himself an exile in the world, and he feels restless and homesick. So he sets out to find his home. This was not far to find out. Firstly, there was before him the tradition of ancient Gurukul of India (the forest colonies of the ancient teachers in India). Secondly, his father, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, in the Course of his efforts to realise God had established an Ashrama which he called Shantiniketan or the Abode of Peace. This modern revival of the ancient tradition caught the imagination of Tagore. He says:

"I India we still cherish in our memory the tradition of the forest colonies of great teachers. These places were neither schools nor Montessories in the modern sense of the word. They consisted of homes where with their families lived-men whose purpose was to see the world in God and to, realise their own life in Him. Though they lived outside Society, yet they were to society, what the sun is to planets, the centre from which it received its life and light. And here boys grew up in an intimate vision of eternal life before they were thought fit to enter the state of the householder."

Quite naturally, homesick as he was, it was a home-coming to him and to the children he gathered around him when he started schools the old tradition at his father's Ashrama. At this school the souls of men would find the harmony that was absent in the world outside. Thus Tagore's school had the background of a forest as the ancient Ashrama used to have. This forest occupied an Important role in one's life and education:

"The forest, unlike the desert or rock or sea, is living;, it gives shelter and nourishment to life. In such surroundings the ancient forest dwellers of India realised the spirit of harmony with the universe and emphasised in their minds the monistic aspect of truth. They sought the realisation of their soul through union with all .

Harmony with the Universe Necessary for Self-realisation :

Harmony with the Universe Necessary for Self-realisation Tagore regards realisation of the self as the end and harmony with the universe the means. In his school he endeavoured to produce this harmony by living a life in the forest, in the open air. He says:

"The young mind should be saturated with the idea that it has been born in a human world which is in harmony with the world around it.

He further remarks that the ordinary school does not at all care or such a harmony; on the other hand it:

"Forcibly snatches away children from a world full mystery of God's own handwork, full of the suggestiveness of personality."

In ancient India the greatest teachers aimed "To grow in sympathy with all creation and in communion with the Supreme Being". Therefore, Tagore too, in his Ashram school (at Shantlmketan) endeavoured to realise the ideal of securing a harmony between man and nature and so realising one's self in God. He thinks that nature has soul which helps man towards a union of his soul with God. India and the ancient forest school have a special mission in this respect:

"India's climate has brought to us the invitation of the open air; the language of her mighty rivers is solemn in their chants; the limitless expanse of her plains encircles our homes with the silence of the world beyond; there the sun rises from the margin of the green earth like an offering of the unseen to the altar of the Unknown, and it goes down to the west and the end of the day like a gorgeous ceremony of nature's salutation of the Eternal. In India the shades of the trees are hospitable, the dust of the earth stretches its brown arms to us the air with its embraces clothes us with warmth. These' are the unchanging facts that even carry their suggestions to our minds, and therefore, we feel it is India's mission to realise the truth of the human soul in the Supreme Soul through its union with the soul of the world. This mission had taken its natural form in the forest schools in the ancient time."

Harmony and Love between Man and Nature :

Tagore feels a need for harmony between man and nature. This relation between man and nature is, "That of personal love and not that of mechanical law of causation." Tagore finds nature plays the role of mother. Just as the mother nurtures the child, similarly III nature one may find complete nourishment both for the body and for the soul. The individual finds the emotional moral and spiritual nourishment from the world. Thus the relationship between man and the world around him is characterized by love. It is not merely the mechanical law of causation that governs this relationship.

A Love of Spiritual Culture :

Tagore is not prepared to tolerate the neglect of the spiritual development of the child. He is very much pained at the over-emphasis placed on the intellectual and physical development in schools at the cost of the spiritual. Earlier, when the life was simple, the various aspects of development of the individual could be easily harmonised. But today human life has become so complex that the physical, intellectual and spiritual developments of the individual become so isolated that in attending to one the other is excluded. It is the spiritual life which is neglected most. It was the realisation of this singular defect that encouraged Tagore to start his new school.

"To give spiritual culture to our boys was my principal object in starting my school in Shantiniketan."

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To Tagore the man whose mental and physical strength outgrows his spiritual force is like:

"An exaggerated giraffe whose head has suddenly shot up miles away from the rest of him, making normal communication difficult to establish."

Harmony and Love between Man and Nature :

It is noteworthy that Tagore's spiritual world belongs to this world of ours. "With the breath we draw we must always feel this truth that we are living in God." Thus Tagore finds spiritual significance in natural elements. If man penetrates deep beyond the externals of natural phenomena he will have spiritual vision or example, he will realise that water does not merely cleans his body but purifies his heart as well, because it touches his soul; the earth does not merely support the body, but it also makes the mind happy because its contact is more than physical-it is that of a living presence. In this way man will realize the eternal spirit in all objects and will ultimately find the perfect truth. So the man must find himself in the closest relation with all the things around him and he should regard the sun, the moon, water, earth as the manifestations of the same living truth that holds them together. Thus Tagore has an intense belief in the immanence of the infinite in nature. This conviction leads him to stand for :

"Life in nature and in the open air is the best means of spiritual progress, for in nature the religious eye will see the infinite lying stretched, in silent smiling repose."

The child to have full Measure of Life :

Tagore believes that, "Man's introduction to this world is his Introduction to his final truth in a simple form". He is born into a world where he is conscious of others and others are conscious about him. He enjoys the attention and care of others. Gradually, he begins to doubt his personal relations with others. He finds himself caught in a "civil war between his personality and his outer world", Again in order to realise the truth of his life he has to unite himself with all in an infinite bond of love. Therefore, Tagore believes that a child should be allowed to have the full measure of life's draught. He thinks that the child has an endless thirst for leading his full life. So he vehemently criticises the current schools which snatch away children from the natural surroundings and rear them up. In an atmosphere which is full of artificialities and sophistications of the civilized society. The individuality of the child is totally ignored in these schools which try to produce uniform individuals as a machine produces uniform pins.

Tagore deploras that the education that is given to the youth in India is not that of the whole man. The modern school is a factory, "Specially designed for grinding out uniform results", Tagore feels sad that Indian children are forgetting their own past and are unable to understand their own nature. He regards the Indian educated youth, "as barriers choking the stream that flows from the mountain, peak of their ancient history", and therefore, India's future will not get the nourishing water "that has made her culture with richness of beauty and strength." Therefore, Tagore wants that the ancient ideal of Indian education should come back in its essence, though not in its entirety. He says:

"The object of education is to give man the unity of truth. Formerly, when life was simple, all the different elements of man were in complete harmony. But when there came the separation of the intellect from the spiritual and the physical, the school education put entire emphasis on intellect and the physical side of man. We devote our sole attention to giving children information, not knowing that by this emphasis we are accentuating a break between the intellectual, physical and the spiritual life.."

But can this spiritual life be cultivated? Tagore says that it can be done by allowing the souls to express themselves freely and spontaneously. He believes in the instinct of the student and the atmosphere of the Ashrama for developing spiritual life. He says:

" ... With the breath we draw, we always feel this truth that we are living in God...."

In his school at Bolpur Tagore strives towards this soul culture. The ideal school, Tagore says:

"Must be an Ashrama where man have gathered together for the highest end of life, in the peace of nature; where life is not merely meditative but fully awake in its activities, where boys' minds are not perpetually drilled into believing that the ideal of the self-idolatry of the nation is the truest ideal for them to accept, where they are bidden to realise; man's world as God's kingdom to whose citizenship they have to aspire; where the sunrise and sunset and the silent glory of the stars are not daily ignored; where nature's festivities of powers and fruit have their joyous recognition from man; and where the young and the old, the teacher and the student, sit at the same table to partake of their daily food and the food of their eternal life ..."

Tagore does not believe in an average individual. To him child has a unique personality and he should be treated as such. He believes that, "God's intention as to how children should grow into knowledge", is being neglected in the modern schools.

Tagore believed that highest education is that which not only gives knowledge, but which makes the individual live in harmony with all existence. Thus there is a need of this education of sympathy in the modern schools.

Education to be a part of Life :

Since Tagore wants to give to the child full measure of life, he is of the conviction that, Education should be a part of life itself and must not be detached from it and be made into something abstract." He develops this idea further in the following words:

"Or education should be in full touch with our complete life, economic, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual; and our educational institutions should be in the very heart of our society:-connected with it by the living bonds of varied cooperations. For, true education is to realise at every step how our training and knowledge have organic connection without surroundings .

Thus in Tagore we find an idealist who never ignores the hard realities of life. According to him:

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"The school must be a laboratory not merely for absorbing knowledge. or for producing sheltered hot houses growth, but for giving cut, for adventure into the realm of practical economics and self-government, of self-discipline and self-government, of self-expression in the world of spiritual abstraction and human welfare

Evidently, Tagore wants to acquaint the child with the world of human life at large. Education which cuts off the children from currents of life is meaningless. If education is to be meaningful, the children must be given the experience o every phase of adult life.

Realisation of the Essential Unity :

To Tagore, the idealist, education must promote the fullest growth and freedom of the soul. He finds an essential unity in the whole universe. So the objective of education should be the realisation of s unity. This unity cannot be realised unless the different elements man are harmonised with each other. The physical, the intellectual spiritual are connected with each other. So in any scheme of education all these three must be attended to adequately. The neglect of any will hamper the growth of the personality and will check the realisation of the pervading unity in the universe. Tagore feels d that the prevalent system of education does not meet this demand and it enters only to the intellectual aspect of a man's growth, and the physical, moral and spiritual are neglected. Therefore, the curriculum must be enriched in order to foster the growth of all the aspects of an individual's personality. Tagore's emphasis on an all-round development led him to make his school train both the hand and heart of the child. For the training of the hand he included some compulsory handwork for the students of his Bolpur school and for the spiritual development, religion. But Tagore thought that religion could not be taught life a school subject.

"It cannot be doled out in regulated measure, not administered through the academic machinery of education. It must come immediately from the burning flame of spiritual life, in surroundings suitable for such life..."

The Ancient Indian Ideal :

Tagore regarded the Tapovana Ashrama (forest school based on rigorous discipline) of the ancient India as the ideal for solving the educational problem of the country. "The simple living and high inking" motto of the ancient Ashrama appealed to him very much it provided the right atmosphere for the development of life in purity. He thinks that:

"It is idle to try to educate the children in the midst of that tend to lead the learners away from the path of truth. There the field is full of struggles for the self and thoughts centre round the self, and human nature purifies and looks for enjoyment in artificial ways ... They must, therefore, be removed from the field where men struggle for the satisfaction of the baser propensities, and should be placed where conditions are favourable for their vast possibilities to develop, where their lives

could move peacefully along the path of accumulated human experience, and where for them waits ready garnered man's spiritual heritage ..."

Here, too, we find that Tagore believed in the ancient Indian educational ideals and practices. He has so much regard for Brahmacharya that he considered education as a Brahmacharyaa Vrata (a vow of celibacy), a Dharma- Vrata (a vow of religion). To him education is not information, nor does it consist in passing examinations. He regards education as a preparation for a living in the world with a view to seek communion with the Divine Power, He thinks that education can fulfil this task only if the schools follow the cardinal educational ideals of the ancient Indian Gurukul.

On Freedom and Discipline :

"The fullest freedom to satisfy the fertile imagining of his brain imaginings which like the tender plants call so easily be crushed and mutilated, revolting against the bonds of what seems so often an unreasoned disciplines ..."

Thus freedom is the very nature of the child, but he would accept restrictions of discipline if these are coloured with sympathy and love. Tagore has great sympathy for the child. So he does not want that the child should be suppressed by an authority. He thus defends the child that has been scolded:

"Why are those tears in your eyes, my child? How horrid of them to be always scolding you for nothing! You have stained your fingers and face with ink while writing-Is that why they call you dirty? O lie! would they dare to call the lull moon dirty because it has smudged its face with ink?"

Tagore has a capacity to understand the child and he says that the child regards the school studies as a interference with his freedom. He himself had to suffer from such an interference as a boy, So he has developed an insight to find out a solution of the conflict:

"In talking of his own school days, Rabindranath Tagore spoke with the feeling of a man who had suffered much and needlessly in his own boyish experience, and had sought a cure for so deterrent and mortifying a discipline in the case and for the sake of others. To some it may seem that the trouble which we recognise in our schools is due in part to the obstinate great ailment of youth itself. To him it seemed possible to find a more natural way of education, by going back to instinct and going on to a new understanding of the imaginative and the humane needs of the growing boy ..."

Hence Tagore decided to give the maximum amount of freedom to children in his school. He deliberately made the environment of the school such as to permit maximum amount of physical and mental freedom, He says:

"I know that the mind has its hunger for the ministrations of nature, mother nature, and, so I selected this spot where the sky is unobstructed to the verge of the

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horizon. There the mind could have its fearless freedom to create its own dreams and the seasons could come with all their colours and movement and beauty into the very heart of the human dwelling ..."

Tagore is convinced that :

"The object of education is the freedom of mind which can only be achieved through the path of freedom-though freedom -though freedom has its risk and responsibility as life has...."

About the nature of school, he says :

"It is not a school which is imposed upon the boys by authorities. I always try, to Impress upon their minds that it their own world, upon which their life ought fully and freely to react ..."

Accordingly, he gave much freedom to children in his school. He tried to arouse their interest in the various aspects of the universe in a natural manner, and not only through class teaching. The teacher is present only to stimulate and guide but it is the child who is to choose and react according to his natural inclinations.

Tagore is against the so called traditional school-discipline because It does not take into account the individual interests and abilities. About the traditional school, he says:

"It is a factory specially designed for grinding out uniform results. It follows all imaginary straight line of the average in digging its channel of education. But life's line is not the straight line .."

Therefore social traditions must not be imposed upon children, because they interfere with their natural freedom. Once an experienced and successful disciplinarian headmaster visited Tagore's school and expressed his disapproval when he saw a boy climb a tree for choosing a fork of the branches for setting down to his studies. In explanation Tagore told him that:

"Childhood is the only period of life when a civilized man can exercise his choice between the branches of a tree and his drawing-room chair, and should I deprive this boy of that privilege because I, as a grown-up man, am barred from it ?"

Tagore regrets that the adults generally ignore the natural inclination of the imaginative power in the child. They want to make the child a practical person. So they crush the imagination of the child. Tagore reminds us that we owe our present progress to the fertile imagination of dreamers. He says:

"Steering by the light of an anarchic discontent, man has explored and is still, exploring every sea of human knowledge, driven forward by the breezes of his fertile imagination. But with the child we insist that he shall not start out his voyage until he has learnt off by heart the chart we have drawn for him out of our own experience whilst his little ship of life, anchored within the school-room, wallows in the untroubled calm of the conventional, the artificial and unimaginative ..."

Quite naturally then, Tagore disapproves school curriculums which do not give full freedom to the child for the exercise of his imagination.

Tagore believes in a self-imposed discipline. Therefore, in Shantiniketan a provision has been made for the boys' own court of justice which deals with all the branches of conduct on the part of the boys. It is only the serious cases that teachers themselves have to deal with. Thus Shantiniketan is, "not a school which is imposed upon the boys by autocratic authorities ... "

Tagore says the purpose of education is the freedom of soul, "For that ultimate truth which emancipates us from the bondage of the dust and gives us the wealth, out of things but of inner light, not to power but of love." In the educational activities of Shantiniketan we find two aspects of the higher freedom. One aspect equips the child with all the skills that he needs for earning a livelihood. After this he would widen his sympathies. Thus he becomes an efficient and useful citizen and he also finds opportunities for creative expression of his various natural capacities and at the same time discovers, "The best means of self-preservation as an individual, as a citizen and a creative agent, and to experience daily the delights and difficulties of perpetual growth-this is true freedom ... "

According to Tagore other aspect is related to the world of emotion and of abstraction.

"Having attained self-confidence as to his power to subsist by the labour of his own hands and thus to survive within the human family, both adult and child are free to pass into this other religion where there is no grammar except that who the adventurer rules for his own convenience, nor any rules or regulations ..."

Almost all children share this world of emotion, and in this realm they have no ulterior motive to fulfil. Therefore, adventure into this realm must be encouraged, but they must never be imposed. The children must be given complete freedom in this matter. "This spirit childhood, like the gift of imagination, bloweth where it listeth, and like the wind it comes and goes, and knows no man-made law". Shantiniketan is an excellent example of this freedom in the world of emotion and abstraction. The entire educational effort of the school is to lead children towards this freedom.

On Religious Education :

We have seen that Tagore was God-conscious. He believed in the imminences of the infinite in nature. Therefore, he had a deep feeling of adoration for the universe. Everywhere in the universe he found his object of worship. To him knowledge and devotion the intellectual and the spiritual-are only two aspects of reaching truth. In Shantiniketan he has provided opportunities for both these aspects. But we must note that he has provided very little formal religion in Shantiniketan, because:

"According to him, the best way to derive divine inspiration is to lose oneself in the contemplation of nature. In silence and in solitude we have to enjoy the presence of the divine in nature.."

Tagore believes that religious feeling and piety will usher in if the environment is pure and noble. He says:

"We do not want now-a-days temples of worship and outward rites and ceremonies. What we really want is an Ashrama. We want a place here the beauty

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of nature and the noblest pursuits of man are in a sweet harmony. Our temple of worship is there where outward nature and human soul meet in union."

Thus Tagore relies almost entirely on the atmosphere of the of learning for religious education. He believed in the ideal f depending upon the natural instinct of each boy for the development of his spiritual side of nature.

Tagore has great faith in the efficacy of meditation and prayer an exercise for spiritual consciousness. In Shantiniketan fifteen minutes are usually given both in the morning and evening for prayers. He regards meditation as a method of reaching truth which is opposite to methods such as observation and reasoning, etc. He says:

"There are things that we get from outside and take to ourselves as possessions. But with meditation, it is just the opposite. It is entering into the very midst of some great truth, so that, in the end, we are possessed by it ..."

Tagore is convinced that the highest kind of truth can be realised by this method of meditation, that is, merging one's consciousness in the truth.

But we must note that Tagore does not want to attach undue importance to contemplation. He thus points out the danger in it.

"Our partiality is for the internal world. We would cast aside with contumely the field of power and of extension. We would realise Brahrrul in meditation only in his aspect of completeness, we have determined not to see him in the commerce of the universe in his aspect of evolution. That is why in our seekers we so often find the intoxication of the spirit and its consequent degradation ..."

Thus Tagore's emphasis is on the world of action. Therefore, he provides for ample opportunities in Shantiniketan for social service of various kinds in the execution of which the students and teachers find innumerable occasions for "self-sacrificing good works". If this attitude of Tagore appears to be m humanitarianism than religion, let us remember that in the materialistic and self-speaking world of ours this attitude' inestimable value and in no way less important than rites and ceremonies and worship as parts of religion.

On Individual and Social Aims :

Tagore believes that the child should grow amidst community life. To him self-realisation can be achieved in communion with others and not in isolation. He wants that the individual must be conscious of the universe of which he is only a part. Without this consciousness, no self-realisation is possible. Tagore says, "When we become merely man, not man-in-the-universe, we create bewildering problems". Therefore, he regards society as a means of self-realisation. He further remarks:

"It is best for the commerce of the spirit that people differently situated should bring their different products into the market of humanity, each of which is complementary and necessary to the others ..."

At the same time Tagore is not at all prepared to lose his individuality, that is to him the individual is separate from all. He observes:

"There I have broken through the cordon of equality and stand alone as an individual. I am absolutely unique, I am I, I am incomparable. The whole weight of

the universe cannot crush out this individuality of mine. I maintain it in spite of the tremendous gravitation of all things. It is small in appearance but great in reality. For it holds its own against the forces that would rob it of its distinction and make it one with the dust ... "

Thus Tagore considers individuality of supreme importance and the most precious possession of man who must uphold and preserve it against all odds. In preserving it man will be acting according to the plan and purpose of the universe. Tagore says:

"If this individuality he demolished, then though no material be lost, not an atom destroyed, the creative joy which was crystallised therein is gone. We are absolutely bankrupt if we are deprived of this speciality, this individuality, which is the only thing we can call our own and which, if lost, is also a loss to the whole world. It is most valuable, because it is not universal. And, therefore, only through it can we gain the universe more truly than if we were lying within its breast unconscious of our distinctiveness. The universal is ever seeking its consummation in the unique. And the desire we have to keep our uniqueness intact is really the desire of the universe acting in us. It is our joy of the infinite in us that gives us our joy in ourselves ..."

But from the above it will be wrong to infer that self is all and it has its complete meaning in itself. By its very nature the self tries to transcend its limits, and if we try to make the self as the end of life, we shall be obstructing it from revealing itself. It must be remembered that it is in revealing itself that the true value of the self lies. Its revelation is dependent upon the existence of other objects in society. Self and society are thus so closely bound up that a line of demarcation can hardly be drawn between the two. Hence there is a need of reconciliation and harmony between the two. Tagore says:

"He who is wise tries to harmonise the wishes that seek for self-gratification with the wish for the social good, and only thus can we realise his higher self.

In its finite aspect the self is conscious of its separateness, and there it is ruthless in its attempt to have more distinction than all others. But in its infinite aspect its wish is to gain that harmony which leads to its perfection and not its mere aggrandisement .. "

Thus Tagore stands for a harmony between the individual and the society. And it is the ideal which guides the various activities at Shantiniketan as is clear from his own words when he speaks about the prevailing atmosphere of his school, thus:

"The spirit of sacrifice and comradeship, the disinterested desire to help others, which these boys have developed are rare even in children who have had better opportunities... The logic of acts showed to them the reality of moral principles in life, and now they feel astonished at instances when other boys do not understand ..."

Just as an individual can attain his full self only in society, similarly a nation must grow among the nations of the world. Narrow nationalism of the individualistic type had no place in Tagore's thinking. Therefore, he had an intense desire to make his school at Shantiniketan an international centre of learning. In the year 1913 he wrote thus:

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"All our vagueness will disappear if we can place our institution in the light of the whole world. If we confine our institution within the local limits of the time and space of our country, it will lose its parity. The development of a complete manhood is our object, and we must not aim at anything less than this ..."

The above international outlook of Tagore has certainly been a new note to his countrymen, and it made Shantiniketan a place where came scholars and professors from various countries of the world fulfilling his idea for his school, viz.

"Visva Bharati represents India where she has her wealth of mind which is for all. Visva Bharati acknowledges India's obligations to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture and India's right to accept from others their best ..."

Thus Tagore has established at Shantiniketan a school for the whole world with the purpose of promoting individual development and social service, especially in the area of cultural life. Hence the motto of the school that here "The whole world finds its shelter ..."

On the Duty of a Teacher

Like a staunch idealist, Tagore says :

"A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame. The teacher who has come to an end of his subject, who has no living traffic with his knowledge, but merely repeats his lessons to his students, can only load their minds, he cannot quicken them. Truth not only, must inform but also inspire. If the inspiration dies out, and the information only accumulates, then truth loses its infinity. The greater part of our learning in the schools has been wasted because, for most of our teachers, their subjects are like dead specimens of one liking things, with which they have a learned acquaintance, but no communication of life and love ..."

Thus Tagore wants that the teacher should try to understand the relationship between their subjects and human life and the same should be brought home to the students as well. This can be possible only when the teacher continues learning and does not stop his growth by stuffing their minds with dead matter. Thus Tagore makes the duty of the teacher and class procedures clear.

Tagore's Visva Bharati :

To Tagore a university should not be a mechanical organization, for collecting and distributing knowledge. A university should be a medium of enabling people to offer their wealth of mind to others. The conception of his Visva Bharati is in accordance with his notion of Greater India where the humanity will strive to reach a reconciliation of different races with different religions and civilizations. Tagore believes that this Greater India or New India will not belong to this race or that race, this religion or that religion, but to humanity. His Visva Bharati is a symbol of his passionate faith in the brotherhood of nations. In the year 1934 while responding to Professor Gulbert Marry's invitation to help in bridging the gulf between various nations through international cooperation of thinkers in all countries, Tagore wrote:

"Willingly, therefore, I harness myself in my advanced age the arduous responsibility of creating in our educational cola at Shantiniketan a spirit of genuine international collaboration based on a definite pursuit of knowledge, a pursuit carried in an atmosphere of friendly community life, harmonized with Nature and offering freedom of individual self-expression."

This is the ideal on which Tagore has based his Visva Bharati. Tagore had three main purposes in establishing the Visva Bharati. He has described them as follows:

1. To teach the different cultures of the East, specially, those that originated in India or found shelter within her shores.
2. To establish 'The institute of Rural Reconstruction' in order to lay the foundation of a happy, contented and humane life in the villages, and lastly.
3. To seek to establish a living relationship between East and West, to promote inter-cultural, inter-racial amity and understanding, and fulfil the highest mission of the present age the unification of mankind.

"And with such ideas in view to provide at Shantiniketan aforesaid a centre of culture where research into the study of religion, literature, history, science and art of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic, Sikh, Christian and other civilizations may be pursued along with the culture of the West, with that simplicity in externals which is necessary for true spiritual realisation, in amity, a good-fellowship and co-operation between the thinkers and scholars of both Eastern and Western countries, free from all antagonism of race, nationality, creed or caste and in the name of One Supreme Being. Who is Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam ..."

The Visva Bharati has been now recognised as a full-fledged central university by the Government of India by a special Act passed by the Indian Parliament. Vidya Bhavan (School of Research); Siksha Bhavan (College); Patha Bhavan (School); Kala Bhavan (School of Music and Dancing); Sri Niketan (Institute of Rural Reconstructions); Shilpa Bhavan (School of Industries); Vinaya Bhavan (Teachers' College), China Bhavan, Hindi Bhavan, the Islamic Research Section are the various constituent departments of the Visva Bharati. . .

Many of the classes at the Visva Bharati are held in the open air. The development of individuality in all its aspects is the aim of this unique institution. Every student is free to give expression to tastes and aptitudes. The curriculum is so broad as to provide for the various aptitudes of the students. The social side of the students is not ignored. The institution tries to keep itself in touch with the poor, unhappy and downtrodden masses of the neighbourhood. Thus Tagore has tried to make the Visva Bharati a centre of Indian renaissance. He has made it a centre of international learning. He also made it a place from where solid work may be done for social and economic reform of the nation. Above all, he made it a place from where India may give the message of humanity to the whole world. Tagore is no more, but his personality still pervades the Visva Bharati.



Aurobindo : Integral education, its basic Premises ; stages of development

A Brief Life-Sketch

Aurobindo (1872-1950) was "a professor, a scholar, a poet, a political leader, a journalist, a philosopher, a dramatist, an Indologist, a psychologist, a literary critic a translator, and an original interpreter of the Veda the Upanishads, and the Gita." Attempting a brief life sketch of such a multi-faceted personality is indeed a difficult task. ? Of course, he is most famous as a yogi and a philosopher even If he himself has told many times that he was first a poet and a politician, not a Yogi or philosopher.

His life falls into four broad divisions, each with a different locale, viz., England, Baroda, Calcutta and Pondicherry. Each shift in the field of his activity is marked by some inner progress or for that matter each phase of his life prepares him to leap to the next.

He was born around 5.00 A.M. on 15 August 1872 in the house of Barrister Manmohan Ghose in Calcutta. He was the third son of the six children born to his parents Dr. Krishnadhan Ghose and Swarnalata. Between 1872 and 1877 Aurobindo lived with his parents at Rangpur without knowing Bengali, his mother tongue. In his father's house only English and Hindusthani were spoken and his father decided to give his children an entirely European type of education and upbringing.

In 1877, Dr. Ghose sent his three sons, Benoybhusan, Manmohan and Aurobindo to Loreto convent school at Darjeeling, a school for children of European officials in India. In 1879, Dr. Ghose and his wife took the three elder sons to Eangland. The most formative years of Aurobindo's life i.e. 1879-1892, were spent in England. Initially Aurobindo lived with William H. Drewett, a congregational minister of the Stockport Road Church. Dr. Kishnadhan left strict instructions with the Drewetts that the boys should not be allowed to make acquaintance of any Indian or undergo any Indian influence. It was expected that under the fostering care of the Drewetts the children would grow up into typical products of Western Culture. While Aurobindo's two elder brothers were sent to the Manchester Grammar school, Aurobindo himself was educated privately by the Drewetts. He was taught Latin, English, French, History, Geography and Arithmetic.

Aurobindo was admitted to St. Paul's School in September 1884 and remained there till December 1889. He grew up in England in entire ignorance of India, yet developed no attachment to England as a country. But he was attracted to Greek, English and European thoughts without being convfnced of the value of Western Civilization. Despite a hard life there, for his father failed to send money regularly even to meet essential needs, he was absorbed in his studies, especially of English poetry, literature and fiction, French literature and the history of medieval and modern Europe. He possessed a strong penchant for learning new languages. Rev. Drewett taught him Latin and Dr. Walker, the headmaster of St. Paul's, Greek and Aurobindo had considerable proficiency in both these classical languages. He also learnt French and Italian, some German and a little Spanish. He started writing verses for Fox's Weekly even when he was studying at home. This continued when he was at St. Paul's and at Cambridge. Aurobindo passed the first part of the classical tripos

examination in the first class at the end of his second year at Cambridge. On passing this first part, the degree of B.A. is usually conferred if the examination is taken in the third year; but Aurobindo had only two years at his disposal. He did not even care to apply for the degree.

Dr. Ghosh seems to have changed his pro-British stance during the last years of his life. He used to send Aurobindo the newspaper *The Bengalee* with passages marked describing cases of maltreatment of Indians by Englishmen. This helped to create an awareness in him about the sad state of affairs in India. Gradually he started taking intelligent interest in contemporary public questions and formed his independent opinion. During his Cambridge days, "Indian Majlis", a political association of Indian students, was formed. Aurobindo was its secretary for some time and made some revolutionary speeches, in the Majlis advocating the cause of Indian freedom. He was also a member of "Lotus and Dagger", a secret society in which the members took a vow to work for the liberation of India.

He passed the LC.S. test of 1890 obtaining eleventh place and securing very high marks in classics. But he did not appear at the riding test and got himself disqualified to be appointed to Indian Civil Service. Actually he had no interest in the ICS career "on account of his preoccupation with the idea of Indian independence." Once Aurobindo told: "I appeared for the LC.S. because my father wanted it and I was too young to understand. Later, I found out what sort of work it is and I had a disgust for an administrator's life and I had no interest in administrative work. My interest was in poetry and literature and study of languages and patriotic action."

At the time when Aurobindo was disqualified from the LC.S., the Gaekwar of Baroda was in London. Aurobindo was introduced to him by Sir Henry Cotton's brother and as a result of this introduction he obtained an appointment in the service of the Gaekwar. He left England in January 1893 to return to India to take up this appointment. He had a clear impression that western culture was not to be the source of his future inspiration.

Aurobindo, the Freedom Fighter :

Aurobindo's involvement in the idea of freedom of India dates back to his England days. His participation in the activities of "Indian Majlis" and in "Lotus and Dagger" holds ample proof. Besides, his deliberate absentions from the riding test which forms a part of LC.S. examination may be the result of his pre-occupation with the freedom of India. His active participation in the matter of Indian independence started after his return to Baroda where he wrote a series of articles under the challenging caption "New Lamps for Old" published in *Indu Prakash*. In these articles he pleaded for giving up the policy of mendicancy and appeal adopted by moderate Indian leaders. In addition, the way he attempted to unravel the cultural glory and spiritual wisdom of India through his writings and interpretations, helped to generate a new confidence among the contemporary young minds. This, in a way can be regarded as a significant contribution to the process of freedom struggle as it established a new identity of India. Even if Aurobindo was seriously engaged in his studies and teaching activities at Baroda, he tried to keep contact with the secret revolutionary groups in Bengal. Even he sent one Jatindranath Banerjee from Baroda to Bengal with a clear-cut programme of revolutionary work. Aurobindo's aim was to unite these revolutionary groups and to wage an effective guerilla warfare.

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His direct involvement in Indian politics started with the announcement of partition of Bengal on 20 July 1905. He wrote to the revolutionary workers in Calcutta, "This is a fine opportunity. Carry on the anti-partition agitation carefully. We will get many workers for the movement." It was around this time Sri Aurobindo wrote the famous revolutionary booklet 'Bhawani Mandir' in which he defines a nation and its Shakti. He wrote:

For what is a nation? What is our mother country? It is not a piece of earth, or a figure of speech, nor a fiction of the mind. It is a mighty shakti, composed of the shaktis of all the millions of units that make up the nation, just as Bhawani Mahisha Mardini sprang into being from the shaktis of all the millions of gods assembled in one mass of force and welded into unity. The shakti as we call India, Bhawani Bharati, is the living unity of the Shaktis of three hundred million people; but she is inactive, imprisoned in the magic circle of Tamas, the self-indulgent inertia and ignorance of her sons. To get rid of Tamas we have but to wake the Brahma within.

In August 1906, the National College at Calcutta was established. Aurobindo resigned his job at Baroda and joined this institution as its principal. Though his stay at Calcutta was brief i.e. from August 1906 to February 1910, his contribution to Indian nationalist movement was significant and many sided. To Sri Aurobindo the freedom of India was not a game of politics but was the first step for establishing "God's kingdom on earth." His writings in 'Vande Mataram', and 'Jugantar' had deep and far reaching impact on the psyche of thinking and young Indians. In the congress session of 1906 held at Calcutta a resolution laying down independence as the goal of the congress was passed for the first time. The nationalist leaders like Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Khaparde attended the session. It was mainly due to Aurobindo's efforts in the reception committee and working committee that the resolution was passed. To the main resolution demanding Swaraj, others were added, namely Swadeshi, Boycott and National education. The difference that this resolution resulted among the nationalist leaders led to the breach at Surat at 1907. After this independence became the accepted goal of the Congress. Sri Aurobindo's involvement in the freedom struggle was, thus final. It is also evident in his letter of 30 August 1905 to his wife "While others look upon their country as an inert piece of matter, a few meadows and fields, forests and hills and rivers. I look upon my country as the mother. What would a son do if a demon sat on his mother's breast and started sucking her blood? Would he quietly sit down to his dinners, amuse himself with his wife and children, or would he rush out to deliver his mother? I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race This feeling is not new in me, it is not of today, I was born with it, it is in my very marrow."

Aurobindo, along with Bipin Chandra Pal toured extensively in the districts of Bengal and their speeches created a zeal among the Bengalee youth to take part in freedom struggle. But his political activities stopped abruptly when he was arrested on 2 May 1908 because of his suspected involvement in the murder of Kingsford. He was then kept as an under trial prisoner in Alipore jail from 2 May 1908 to 5 May 1909. His life in jail brought a sea change in his activities. From the freedom struggle of his country, it shifted to world-wide work embracing the future of humanity. After his acquittal on 6 May 1909, Aurobindo continued his political activities for some time and also conducted the two papers - Dharma and Karma yogin. In the meantime repression by British government was in full swing. It was very difficult

for Aurobindo to carry out his ideas. To preempt his arrest Sri Aurobindo published "An open letter to my countrymen" outlining the course of action to be followed on his arrest. He was aware of the British design to arrest him. In 1910, he left for Chandernagore, a French territory, on the 'Adesha' of his inner voice. Soon after he left for Pondichery from Chandernagore. It is difficult to verify the claim of the order of the inner voice. However, it can be conceded that Aurobindo had clear yogic inclination, he had the vacant infinite realization during a trip to Kashmir in early nineties, had the sarba ghate Narayan realization in jail had begun to practice pranayam from Baroda days and had argued for the need for spiritual power to achieve political goal. Thus his departure for Pondichery to lead a yogic life was a natural turn of events.

Aurobindo, the Yogi :

The moment Aurobindo touched the Indian soil on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, he experienced a vast calm and the experience remained with him for quite some time. This experience came to him unsought. He wrote about this experience: "... Since I set foot on the Indian soil on the Apollo Bunder in Bombay, I began to have spiritual experiences, but these were not divorced from this world but had an inner and infinite bearing in it such as a feeling of the infinite pervading material space and the Immanent inhabiting material objects and bodies. At the same time I found myself entering supra-physical worlds and planes with influences and an effect from them upon the material plane ... ".

Shortly after, he joined the Baroda service and continued there for thirteen years. During this period, Aurobindo actually started restructuring his intellect, which had developed in England without any contact with Indian culture, literature and spiritual wisdom. He only had got the opportunity to read Max Muller's translation in the "Sacred Books of the East" series and came across the idea of self or Atman. The idea fascinated him and he felt that Vedanta have something that is to be realized in life. At Baroda, he plunged himself deeply in a sort of Gyana yajna traversing through the Indian classics like The Ramayana, The Mahabharata, the writings of Kalidasa Bhavabhuti and Bhatihari, and the Vedas and the Upanishads - the perennial source of Indian wisdom. In the process, he discovered the glorious cultural identity of India and its essential spiritual wisdom.

During these days Aurobindo had some spiritual experiences, which also came to him unasked. Once, while going from the camp road towards the city an accident was narrowly averted. Just at the moment there appeared a beam of light in him who became the master of the situation and controlled the event. This experience came before the beginning of Sadhana and has been expressed in the poem "The Godhead". While he was on tour in Kashmir, he visited the "Takht-i-suleman" or "Hill of Shankaracharya". There he experienced the vacant Infinite in a very tangible way, which is the inspiration for the poem "Adwaita". Another time Aurobindo visited one of the temples of Kali on the bank of the Narmada. When he went to the temple he found a presence in the image. Though he was averse to image worship at that time, he got a direct proof that truth can be behind image worship. This experience he presented in the poem "The Stone Goddess."

During the year 1904, he began yoga somewhat seriously but at the same time he thought of using yogic power to liberate his country. It was the time of "country first, humanity afterwards and the rest nowhere". In consultation with engineer Devdhar, he practised pranayama at Baroda. Aurobindo described the result of his practice of pranayama as follows:

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My own experience is that the brain becomes Prakashmaya - full of light. When I was practicing pranayama at Baroda, I used to do it for five to six hours in the day, three hours in the morning, and two in the evening. The mind worked with great illumination and power. At that time I used to write poetry. Usually I wrote five to eight or ten lines per day, about two hundred lines in a month. After the pranayama I could write two hundred lines within half an hour. Formerly my memory was dull, but afterwards when the inspiration came, I could remember the lines in their order and write them down conveniently at any time. Along with this enhanced mental activity I could see an electric energy all around the brain.

During the initial days of Sadhana he used to see things on the subtle planes. In his day-to-day life he also showed yogi discipline and simplicity. At home, he used plain white dhoti and chadar, never slept on soft bed, had total absence of love for money and was confined to his room, fully absorbed in reading. In a letter to his wife on August 1905, he writes, "... By whatever means I must have the direct vision of God. Religion these days means repeating the name of God at any odd hour, praying in public, showing off how pious one is. I want nothing of this. If God exists, there must be some way to experience his existence, to meet him face to face. However arduous this path is, I have made up my mind to follow it".

While at Surat on 5 December 1907 Aurobindo met a Maharashtrian yogi Sakhare Baba who was deeply interested in Indian independence. He felt that his own Sadhana was becoming very irregular and asked Barin to arrange a meeting with someone who will help him in his Sadhana. As a result a meeting was arranged with Vishnu Bhaskar Lele and Aurobindo stayed with him for three days in a small room on the top floor of Sardar Majumdar's wad a in Baroda. Lele asked him to make his mind blank and he did it. He himself describes the experience: "In three days - really in one - my mind became full of an eternal silence, it is still there." He experienced the working of some inner voice while addressing the national union in Bombay. Lele advised him to pray and make namaskar to the audience as Narayan. Then some voice would speak. Aurobindo did exactly as Lele told him. Thus, he got the clue to the practicality of yoga and to its dynamism. He gained significant spiritual experiences in the dark and narrow cell of Aliporejail. He turned the cell into a cave of Tapasya and absorbed himself in the study of the Gita and in meditation. During these meditations he heard the voice of Vivekananda speaking to him for a fortnight. Here he learnt to do yoga in the midst of noise and clamour. Here the jail he experienced the all-pervasive presence of God. He describes his experience in the historic Uttarpara speech:

I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. This was the first use of the deeper vision He gave me. I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers, and as I looked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies

Thereafter his life became a field of the Divine and he became an instrument to fulfill His will. After his release he continued his political activities for some time.

While in the office of Karmayogin in early part of 1910 he heard a voice from above instructing him to go to Chandernagore. Again, he heard, after sometime a distinct Adesh (command) to go to Pondicherry and reached there on 4 April 1910.

His yoga in Pondicherry is mostly in the interior but the remarkable change was that his intense concern for his country had changed into his concern for the humanity. His vision was the establishment of divine life on earth as a complete transformation of human nature. At Pondicherry, he started the publication of 'The Arya', which serializes many of his philosophical writings. The culmination of his yoga came on 24 November 1926, famous as the "Day of Siddhi". This day is remarkable as the day of descent of the overmind consciousness or Krishna consciousness in the atmosphere of the earth. This may be the moment of the beginning of a new life on earth, a life that manifests integrally the Divine.

After the descent of 24 November 1926, Aurobindo retired from the physical atmosphere " in order to bring about the descent of what he called supermind." But his direct contact with his disciples continued through darshan, which was limited to three occasions and through correspondence on Sadhana and related matters. His Letter on Yoga is the result of such writings. He was also not unaware of the current world situation and of the development in the freedom struggle of India. The period of his retirement was also a time of intense literary activity. He wrote many short poems and the epic Savitri began to assume its massive proportions. He also made a thorough recasting of his philosophical magnum opus The Life Divine. He also revised some other writings. But his most significant literary endeavour between 1940 and 1950 was Savitri. Sometime in 1948 and 1949 he developed symptoms of prostatic enlargement. By November 1950 he developed a kidney infection and was suffering from uraemia. At 1.26 A.M on 5 December 1950 Aurobindo breathed his last.

Mental Make-up :

Although Aurobindo was a multifaceted personality, he is universally acclaimed as a poet, philosopher and yogi. This makes our task of making an assessment about his mental make-up much more difficult because the poets, philosophers and yogis "do not live in their external life." Further Aurobindo asserts that his life "has not been on the surface for men to see", still then we find him steadily growing into a visionary, a seer, a poet of the overmind experiences and a transformer of human consciousness. Besides his extra-ordinary intellectual centre, powerful psychic experiences contributed significantly to his inner growth. "The life of Aurobindo Ghosh is a saga of psychic experiences and what these experiences do to a man and where they take him. " Some such experiences - the lifting of an enveloping darkness while he was coming back to India, a deep sense of inner peace that descended on him as soon as he put his foot on the soil of India, the experience of the vacant infinite in Kashmir, the experience of a presence and a power in the image of goddess Kali in a temple on the bank of the Narmada, the experience of finding thoughts entering him from outside and flowing out as speech after the Surat Congress in 1907, the vision of Vasudeva everywhere and in everyone in Alipore jail and the epoch making realization in 1926 are the turning points in his life. All these point to the fact that Aurobindo lived a life deeply inner, if not secretive. Though the present generation sees him as a philosopher, he remains a poet first and a poet last. Poetry was his life-long passion besides spiritual seeking. His life-long engagement in the composition of his magnum opus Savitri stands a bright testimony. In a way some of his poems reveal his thought process better than his philosophy does. In a letter to Dilip Kumar Roy Aurobindo writes, "I never, never, never was a philosopher - although I have written philosophy

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which is another story altogether." All his philosophical writings were published in *The Arya* and these writings were undertaken in deference to the request of Paul Richards. In these writings he tried to express yogic experiences in terms of intellect. "But that is not being a philosopher", he says. However, Aurobindo remains a combination of a poet and a philosopher.

It is very difficult to say if Aurobindo was impressed by any book that became a major source of inspiration. But the impact of *The Vedas*, *The Upanishads* and *The Gita*, in shaping his mind and personality cannot be ruled out. Though he was a voracious reader, he cannot be said to be bookish. He hardly refers to books in his evening talks. His long exposure to western thoughts and literature did not influence him much. Before his departure for India, he writes in a poem:

Mine is not Byron's lightning spear,
Nor Wordsworth's lucid strain
Nor Shelly's lyric pain,
Nor Keat's, the poet without peer.
I by the Indian waters vast
Did glimpse the magic of the past,
And on the oaten-pipe I play
Wraped echoes of an earlier day.

But his acquaintance with great works of different European literature and western thoughts contributed in a subtle way for the development of a great synthesizing mind that he was.

Aurobindo was never an indulgent man. At the same time he cannot be pictured as a world-negating ascetic. He was never otherworldly either in his living or in his writings. He was more in tune with the ancient Rishis and seers of India. He was intense seeker of truth and God through an inner search. His spiritual seeking was not diverse from this world. Rather it had a significant and inner relevance for the world. He had also a strong sense of humour, which could even, be marked in the midst of great political crisis and financial strains. Aurobindo leaves behind very little record relating to his personal life from which we can get some hints about his mental make-up. In a letter to his wife he writes:

I have three madnnesses. The first one is this. I firmly believe that the accomplishments, genius, higher education and learning and wealth that God has given me are His. I have a right to spend for my own purposes only what is needed for the maintenance of the family and is otherwise absolutely essential. The rest must be returned to God ... What does giving to God mean? It means to spend on good works.

My second madness has only recently seized me. It is this by whatever means I must have the direct vision of God. Religion these days means repeating the name of god at any odd hour, praying in public, showing off how pious one is. I want nothing of this. If God exists, there must be some way to experience. His existence, to meet Him face to face. However arduous this path is. I have made up my mind to follow it ...

My third madness is that while others look upon their country as an inert piece of matter - a few meadows and fields, forests and hills and rivers. I look upon my country as the mother. I adore Her, I worship Her as the mother. What would a son

do if a demon sat on his mother's breast and started sucking her blood? Would he quietly sit down to his dinner, amuse himself with his wife and children, or would he rush out to deliver his mother. I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race. It is not physical strength - I am not going to fight with sword or gun but the strength of knowledge

From this letter it can be concluded that his heart was full of compassion for the suffering human beings. He had an intense yearning for God centre or through spiritual awakening and Yoga. His love for his motherland was intense and he adored the motherland as the mother not as an "inert piece of matter." Further, his Uttarpara speech reveals that his life became a field of the divine and he himself became an instrument in the hands of God.

The preceding biographical note and the above facts help us make few generalizations. He was essentially a man of action both in politics and in his Yoga. He intended to make full life a yoga. Being a man of intense feelings he had the "habit of devoting his energies whole heartedly to the causes he undertook." In his spiritual seeking he was like ancient Indian rishis. He believed in living his life for God and for the mankind. Being poetic in his attitude he did not have dogmatic faith in logic. A deep love for his motherland which, to him, is a living spiritual entity, an intense spiritual seeking with a goal to make life a field of the divine and an aspiration to transform the mankind through the change of consciousness may be considered the uppermost engagements in his mind. Knowledge, for him, was a powerful instrument. It is really a difficult task to construct his mental make-up. In this light, this modest attempt is of some help in understanding Aurobindo, the thinker.

An Outline of Aurobindo's Philosophy :

The *'Life Divine'* is the philosophical magnum opus of Aurobindo. This was originally serialized in the *Arya* from August 1914 to January 1919. Aurobindo revised it and published in a book form in 1939 and 1940. The main objective of Aurobindo was to present the Indian metaphysical heritage in the English language to the western elite in the western format. The first publication was prior to his highest spiritual realization or Siddhi in 1926. However, the revised version came after the Siddhi. An attempt is made here to present his metaphysical stand. As his educational philosophy was corollary to his metaphysical position it is necessary to present the same. However, the attempt of the scholar may appear to be an over simplification of the complex and comprehensive philosophy of Aurobindo. Aurobindo does not claim to have propagated a metaphysical position different from the eternal philosophy of India. Each chapter of the *Life Divine* carries an extract from an Indian scripture like Vedas, Upanishads or Bhagvad Gita as a header. In fact, the chapter is an explanation of the extract. Notwithstanding, the scholar finds freshness in Aurobindo's presentation of Indian metaphysics.

Aurobindo showed in his *The Synthesis of Yoga* how all the systems of yoga combine and converge on the path to supermind. In his *The Secrets of the Vedas*, *The Essays on the Gita* and writings on Upanishads he opened up new and epochmaking ways of studying the ancient Indian texts throwing new light on philosophy and reducing both anthropology and anthropomorphology to their proper place in a balanced scheme of knowledge. He offered an illuminating interpretation of Indian culture down the centuries in his *The Foundation of Indian Culture*.

As a whole, Aurobindo was a synthetic Advaita Vedantist who reconciles both dualism and monism. Sachchidananda or the principle of existence-conscious force-

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bliss remains central to his metaphysical stand. Sachchidananda was not conceived by him as triple or amalgamation of three independent principles. The three principles were three aspects of the one and the Indivisible Brahman. The absolute was both static and active. To admit the force aspect, the motion aspect and the mutability, Aurobindo took refuge in the idea of supermind and the overmind. The supermind and the overmind were conceived as the creative force of the Absolute. The mind normally remains oblivious of the supermind and the overmind. The grand conflict of admitting evil, ignorance and even the devil to the all creative divine and spiritual reality was thus sought by Aurobindo. In other words, evil was a subordinate principle created due to ignorance of the mind. If the mind ascends to overmind and the supermind, ignorance shall be removed and existence shall be with knowledge and realization. For Aurobindo, removal of ignorance, acquisition of knowledge, and the knowledge of the absolute reality were the essential objects of life. In other words knowledge or education is the tool. The principle of overmind and supermind were partly drawn from his own spiritual realization. Though many would, hold the, view that these concepts were gift of Aurobindo to Indian metaphysics, Aurobindo himself claims to have draw it from Indian scriptures and spiritual experiences, of Indian rishis, If there was a newness it was his emphasis and presentation,

Integralism, besides a comprehensive theory of real it was Aurobindo's other major contribution to metaphysic. Sat or existence manifested as matter; Chit or conscious force is manifested as life and Ananda or delight manifested as the psychic including surface ego. And the supermind throug, overmind acted as the creative agent of Sachchidananda. The mind is manifested as mind. In other words, there are four principles i.e. matter, life, psychic and mind and the evolution must not stop there. It ought to ascend through overmind to the supermind. For Aurobindo, one principle Sanyasis he did not agrgue that the body is not Brahman of absolute Brahman. For him, the limitation of matter,life, psychic and mind are all to be overcome. Each needs to be completely divinized;each needs to exist with full knowledge. All limitations like birth and death, disease and evil and layers of ignorance is to be removed. Integralism and integral education aims at such perfection.

Aurobindo sees negation of matter and negation of spirit to be opposite pulls of the same error. For him the ascetic has to, admit matter and the materialist has to admit spirit, Like Vivekananda he argued that we progress not from error to truth but from partial truth to more complete truth. The concept of transformation is also part of these essential thoughts. He maintains that it is possible for human beings to evolve continuously as spiritual beings just as science has shown that humans evolved genetically from simpler to more complex organism. He firmly believed that death is not a necessary step to traverse higher existence. The transformation of consciousness is a necessary step to evolve beyond personal ego, greed and appetites, And such transformation is not limited to individual holy man, the spiritual adept or the exceptional great soul. He insisted that it is open to all humanity. Failure of human race in this process of transformation would necessarily lead to arrival of more perfect enter being just as in past men arrived surpassing other species.

He formulated new approach to sociology in his book *The Human Cycle* and showed through a searching analysis of past and current systems of social and political till ought how a truly spiritual attitude is essential as a foundation of a new and lasting social order. He extended the application of this very approach to the sphere of international politics in his *The Ideal of Human Unity*.

There are many other aspects of Aurobindo's metaphysics including a theory of evolution and practical guidance to synthetic Yoga, but in order to retain the focus on education such details are not attempted here.

Socio-Political Philosophy :

Aurobindo was not a political thinker in the conventional sense of the term. His political philosophy can be gleaned from his writings in response to the contemporary events relating to India's struggle for freedom and the world events which included notably both the world wars, rise of socialism, totalitarianism and nationalism. He did not deal with conventional issues of political thought like origin of state, functions of state, rights and duties etc. In his early writings, he reflected exhaustively on the question of Indian nationalism. His stand can be summarized as follows:

Nationalism is a feeling or an idea or a thought distinctiveness and belongingness of a community.

Nationalism is based on the pillars of liberty, freedom and geographical compactness.

The creation of nation state is a logical step in the evolution of human development like other institutions as class, community etc.

The variations of nations are based on varied national characters, which are the expression of variety of the Universal Spirit for the sake of its own bliss.

The plea for Indian nationalism is not based on oppression or bad government but on the right of every people to self-government.

Nationalism in India is God himself the time-spirit, a manifestation of God.

The force of nationalism is thus impersonal and the Leaders of the movement are instruments of the above mentioned Impersonal force.

The Indian nationalism is a Shakti, Divine mother herself as the nation is motherland.

As India is predominantly a nation of Hindus, it is natural that the Sources of Inspirations are Hindu religion and philosophy.

He welcomed the rise of Islam and hoped that they would Join hands in driving out the English from India and build a united India.

It is only a God-sent leader who would lead the nation to freedom.

India's freedom is a part of wider resurgence of Asia and future of the world and a necessity in the way for fulfilment of her spiritual mission in united world.

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Aurobindo's concept of Swaraj was a harmonious extension of his concept of nationalism. The same philosophical and religious base remained. Swaraj was a means of fulfilling the legitimate role each nation has to play in the life of humanity and universe. By Swaraj Aurobindo meant complete independence and he was on an all out effort to popularize the ideal. He wanted the national interest to transcend the interest of smaller units. He found attempts of building up a single united India from her history. He wanted villages to be the bulwark of Swaraj but at no stage isolated. The whole nation was to become self-sufficient and conscious of her identity. Swaraj was to be lived and not just attained. Aurobindo advocated both passive resistance and boycott as methods of nationalist struggle. Passive resistance was advocated in view of the circumstances of servitude in Indians. He was prepared to accept even blood bath if it was necessary. The only alternative to passive resistance was embracing liberty over a heap of corpses. The school of politics, which Aurobindo along with Tilak and his followers advocated was not based upon abstractions, formulas and dogmas, but on practical necessities and the teaching of political experience, common sense and the world's history. They did not have the slightest wish to put forward passive resistance as an inelastic dogma. They preached defensive resistance mainly passive in its methods as a tactical necessity for their time but active whenever active resistance was needed. For Aurobindo, Swadeshi and Boycott were to a great extent linked up with passive resistance, ideal of Swaraj and nationalism. They were not an end by themselves but means to higher end. Aurobindo exhibits good understanding of economic aspects, limitations and conditions of success. He attached no moral dimension in the working of the two and would not even rule out violence or hatred? As he maintained that the whole working of nationalism was that of God, there was no need to attach moral points of order and all were equally divine for him. National Education was the other important instrument advocated by Aurobindo.

In the ideal of human unity, Aurobindo outlined his vision for future of mankind. He envisaged that nations would live in peace and unity free from national ego, strife and wars. In the human cycle he envisaged the social transformation of the human race.

Aurobindo-The Teacher :

In the preceding pages the scholar has attempted to bring out many facets of Aurobindo's life and work. In fact Aurobindo is well known as a philosopher, a poet, a yogi, a freedom fighter and a nationalist thinker. Besides all these, he was also a unique teacher. He had joined in the administrative wing of Baroda Maharaja's service. Though he acted with great efficiency, he had no fascination for administration. At his own request he was shifted initially as professor of French literature and later on he taught English literature and became the vice-principal of the college. He had also acted as the principal of the college for some time. He Joined the National College at Calcutta when it was opened in 1906 as its first principal. During his life time a school was opened at Sri Aurobinod Ashram which was subsequently known as Sri Aurobindo International. Centre for Education. Having been educated under the British liberal tradition in Cambridge, he had the opportunity to compare and contrast the Indian and western system. Referring to this Aurobindo writes "what was surprising

to me was that students used to take down everything verbatim and mug it up. This sort of thing could have never happened in England." In India Aurobindo felt there was no demand from the students' point of view. He never emphasized as a teacher on the notes and commentaries. He advised the students to let their mind and sensibility to come into direct contact with the spirit of the original writing. A distinguished student recollecting his style of teaching says: " ... In the beginning he used to give a series of introductory lectures in order to initiate the students into the subject matter of the text. After that he used to read the text, stopping where necessary to explain the meaning of difficult words and sentences. He ended by giving general lectures bearing on the various aspects of the subject matter of the text."

Aurobindo's role was not confined to classroom alone. He was the Chairman of the Baroda College Union and Debating society, and this brought him into contact with the entire student community. He introduced visiting lecturers to the union and conducted the activities of the Debating society with great impact. Recollecting the experience R.N. Patkar, a student, writes recapitulating the scene: "He was never an orator, but a speaker of a very high order, and when he rose to speak there was pin-drop silence and the audience used to listen to him with rapt attention. Without any gestures or the movement of the limbs, he stood and the language used to flow like a stream from his lips with a natural ease and melody that kept his audience spell-bound."

Reflecting on his experience in Cambridge and Baroda, Aurobindo writes :

A college student goes up from the restricted life of his home and school and finds himself in surroundings which with astonishing rapidity expand his intellect, strength on his character, develop his social faculties, force out all his abilities and turn him in three years from a boy into a man. His mind ripens in the contact with minds which meet from all parts of the country and have been brought up in many various kinds of trainings, his unwholesome eccentricities wear away and the unsocial, egoistic elements of character are to a large extent discouraged. He moves along ancient and venerable buildings, the mere age and beauty of which are in themselves an education. He has the union, which has trained so many great orators and debaters, has been the first trial ground of so many intellects. He has; too, the athletics clubs organized with a perfection unparalleled elsewhere, in which, if he has the physique and the desire for them, he may find pursuits which are also in themselves an education. The result is that he who entered the university a raw student, comes out of it a man and a gentleman, accustomed to think of great affairs and fit to move in cultivated society, and he remembers his college and University with affection, and in after days if he meets with those who have studied with him, he feels attracted towards them as to men with whom he has a natural brotherhood. This is the social effect I should like the college and universities of India also to exercise, to educate by social influences as well as those which are merely academics and to create the feeling among their pupils that they belong to the community, that they are children of one Mother

He hastened to remind that university cannot be expected to do everything: "But the university cannot and does not pretend to complete a man's education; it merely gives some materials to his hand or points out certain paths he may tread, and

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it says to him. Here are the materials I have given into your hands, it is for you to make of them what you can or these are the paths I have equipped you to travel; it is yours to tread them to the end, and by your success in them justify me before the world." He also observed that the average Indian university student does not care for physical culture. Had no joy in the art of robust and healthy living and normally grows to be a bookworm with excessive intellectual inbreeding. Using severe words Aurobindo writes: "The cultured Bengali begins life with a physical temperament already delicate and high strung. He has the literary constitution with its femininity and acute nervousness. Subject this to a cruel strain when it is tenderest and needs the most careful rearing to the wicked and wantonly cruel strain of instruction through a foreign tongue put it under the very worst system of training; add enormous academical labour, immense official drudgery in an unhealthy climate and constant mental application.

The superficial observer saw no more than the externals of Aurobindo's life: the professor who wore white drill suits, who kept a horse and a carriage, who ordered quantities of books who made visits to the palace, but those who come into close direct contact with him, at least some of them, were conscious also of the power behind the person, the fire that seemed to burn within, the light that shone in the eyes. The late Dr. C.R. Reddy, who succeeded Aurobindo as vice principal of the Baroda College has recorded as follows:

I had the honour of knowing him ... We had a number of friends in common, Mr. A.B. Clark, the principal of the Baroda College, remarked to me, "so you met Aurobindo Ghose. Did you notice his eyes? There is mystic fire and light in them. They penetrate into the beyond". And he added, if Joan of Arc heard heavenly voices, Aurobindo probably sees heavenly visions. Clark was a materialist of materialists. I have never been able to understand how the worldly but delightful person could have glimpsed the truth, then latent, about Aurobindo. But, then, does not the lightning's blinding flash which lasts but a moment, leap forth from the dark black bosom of the cloud ?

As the Principal of the National College. Aurobindo was placed in a different milieu. As he was deeply involved in the political movements and secret societies, he had very little time to interact with the students. However, he pondered over the question of National Education. and wrote extensively on it. In a subsequent chapter his Ideas are being dealt. As a nationalist activist also he had a different role as a teacher. He had to create, train educate and refine a band of nationalist revolutionary supporters. At a later life as a recluse at Pondicherry, particularly after his Siddhi in 1926, he emerged as a teacher of different hue. A large number of yogic disciples sought his help in their yogic advancement and Aurobindo lent a helping hand. In other words, he was like an ancient rishi submerged in sublime divine consciousness and as a guru had the onerous responsibility of helping his fellow disciples in their search for God realization.

To sum up, Aurobindo was not an armchair philosopher of education. He was directly involved with the question of education at various stages of life. He had been educated in England in the best of their institutions. He was a teacher by choice in India during his early career. As a nationalist, he acted as a teacher for the nation at

large and more specifically for the band of revolutionary supporters. As a recluse and a yogi, he became the spiritual guide for numerous disciples. Having established an Ashram he founded a school for experimenting his ideas of education. The discussion and analysis of his educational philosophy, which is being taken up, must be viewed against this background.

National Education :

Aurobindo's influence on the Indian National Congress, in the first decade of the century, made the organisation include Swadeshi, Boycott and National Education in its programme. He wrote editorial in the *Bande Mataram*, more than once, urging the party to give sufficient attention to education. In fact, as early as 1893-94, in a revolutionary article published in *Indu Prakash*, Aurobindo had castigated the existing education in India and had given hints of an educational reform. He had no faith in the British system of education as he found it to be "disgusting ... it tended dull and impoverish and tie up the naturally quick and brilliant and supple Indian intelligence, to teach it bad intellectual habits and spoil by narrow information and mechanical instruction its originality and productivity."

"The cup of bitterness and humiliation which a subject people have ever to drink at the proud hands of their conquerors had thus become brimful during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon. It overflowed when the partition of Bengal a measure of wanton outrage upon the popular feelings and sentiments was carried into effect in the teeth of the fierce, determined and unanimous opposition of the whole Bengalee speaking community." The measure for partition of Bengal was passed into law on 16 October 1905. And on 22 October the Carlyle circular was issued against students' participation in politics. As a response to this repressive policy the National Education was born. The first step was taken on 7 August Town Hall Meeting of Calcutta where the Boycott Resolution was passed. On 8 November 1905 the first Nationalist School came up at Rangpur. The first move for a National College was taken on 9 November 1905. The National Council of Education came into being on 11 March 1906.

And on 14 August 1906 the National College of Calcutta opened with Aurobindo Ghosh as the Principal. For the next four years he devoted a major part of his writings to National Education in the columns of *Bande Mataram* and *Karmayogin*. In these articles he discussed the problems of education in a rather greater detail and almost outlined a philosophy of National education for India.

For Aurobindo, the clash of the oriental and the occidental mind in India and the supreme control of education by foreigners in India necessitated a National Education for greater synthesis and a freer choice on the part of Indians. Pointing to the general agreement he wrote, "All that appears to be almost unanimously agreed on is that teaching given in the existing schools and universities has been bad in kind and in addition denationalizing, degrading and impoverishing to the national mind, soul and character because it is overshadowed by a foreign hand and foreign in aim, methods, substance and spirit." Even Lord Curzon echoed a similar judgment. He noted, "We teach you in your Indian college and examine you in the Indian Universities upon subjects not merely conveyed to you in a foreign language, but representing foreign ideas and modes of thought. They are like an aerolite discharged into space from a distant planet, or like exotic plants imported from some antipodean clime."

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Aurobindo considered modern Indian education an absurd copy and vulgarization of British model. Changes are to be brought in the present system by reviving as far as might be possible, the authentic in our ancient education. He says:

What was secret of that gigantic intellectuality, spirituality and super human moral force which we see pulsating in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, in the ancient philosophy, in the supreme poetry, art, sculpture and architecture of India? What was at the basis of the incomparable public works and engineering achievements, the opulent and exquisite industries the great triumphs of science, scholarship, jurisprudence, logic, metaphysics, the unique social structure? What supported the heroism and self-abandonment of the Kshatriya, the Sikh and the Rajput, the unconquerable national vitality and endurance? What was it that stood behind that civilization second to none, in the massiveness of its outlines or the perfection of its details? Without a great and a unique discipline involving a perfect education of soul and mind, a result so immense and persistent would have been impossible.

Aurobindo did not agree with the common opinion that the root of the ill was linking of education with jobs. He wrote "this I believe to be a great mistake. A degree is necessary for service and therefore people try to get a degree. Good! Let it remain so. But in order for a student to get a degree let us make it absolutely necessary that he shall have a good education". He further added, "As practical men we must recognize that pure enthusiasm of knowledge for knowledge's sake operates only in exceptional minds or in exceptional eras."

And if this was not the source of evil, what was it? The error was for him the confusion of education to be a mere collection of information or gathering knowledge. What was necessary was to build the power of knowledge. The ill of the system was that it reduced the students to cramming machines and did not build up any faculty of the mind save memory. The system, noted Aurobindo "trains the memory and provides the student with a store of facts and second hand ideas." Further, Aurobindo found the system fit to produce only mediocres and for excellence one has to get to Europe. He observed: "The graduates from our colleges may be a good clerk, a decent vakil or a tolerable medical practitioner but unless he is an exceptional genius he will never be a great administrator or a great lawyer or an eminent medical specialist. These eminences have to be filled up mainly by the Europeans. If an Indian wishes to rise to them he has to travel thousands of miles over the sea in order to breathe an atmosphere of liberal knowledge, original science and sound culture". He found the students of Indian Universities wanting in the power of , reasoning, comparison, differentiation and expression'.

The supreme fault of the system was its denationalising effect. Denationalisation was the last blow. "Much we have lost as a nation, we have always preserved our intellectual alertness, quickness and originality, but even this last gift is threatened by our university system, and if it goes, it will be the beginning of irretrievable degradation and final extinction." Aurobindo considered the acceptance of the western system of education to be almost suicidal:

"The scientific, rationalistic, industrial, pseudo-democratic civilization of the West is now in the process of dissolution and it would be lunatic absurdity for us at this moment. To build blindly on that sinking foundation."

Aurobindo did not accept the argument that education should be the same everywhere and therefore; he thought that there was no need for India to accept the western pattern as it is. For him education must make man as an individual, as a member of a society and a nation and finally man as a member of humanity. In the name of universality the individual differences and national differences must not be neglected. He noted, "Within the universal mind and soul of humanity is the mind and soul of the individual with its infinite variations, its commonness and its uniqueness, and between them there stands an intermediate power, the mind of a nation, the soul of a people. And all these three education must take account."

What is National Education?

By National Education different people meant different things. For some it was a mere corollary of boycott, some pointed to the national control of the system only and still for others a national and an Indian character was the prime need. Aurobindo, noting the differences wrote "National Education is regarded by one school as an educational experiment to be carried on side by side with Government education by the other as a great national cause, the progress of which is to culminate in a truly national system replacing or absorbing the Government schools and colleges." Coming to his own point of view he wrote, "We may describe it tentatively as the education which starting with the past and making full use of the present builds up a great nation." Thus National Education to him meant making India a great nation by using the past and the present and the east and west. The aim of National Education was to make India "once more a people of heroes, patriots, originators, so shall it become a nation and no longer a disorganized mass of men." Aurobindo visualized a National education where not just the label "National" but the reality of the power and the glory evoked by the word should be realized, not merely change of curriculum or half-hearted change in the content and mode of education but a new perception of the ends, not merely a vocational bias or a practical turn but patriotism itself as the vocation and service of the mother as the decisive turn in life is to be pursued. Advising the students of National College he said: "when we established this college and left other occupations, other chances of life, to devote our lives to this institution, we did so because we hoped to see in it the foundation, the nucleus of a nation, of the new India which is to begin its career after this night of sorrow and trouble, on that day of glory and greatness when India will work for the world. What we want here is not merely to give you a little information, not merely to open to you careers for earning a livelihood, but to build up sons for the motherland, to work and suffer for her." He adds, "there are times in a nation's history when providence places before it one work, one aim, to which everything else, however high and noble in itself, has to be sacrificed. Such a time has now arrived for our motherland when nothing is dearer than her service, when everything else is to be directed to that end." Such type of education should be under national control and not under a foreign government. It was not to be just a rearrangement of the present system nor a return to the past. A reversion to the past would be a sterile and impossible effort hopelessly inadequate to the pressing demands of the present and the far greater demands of our future."

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Aurobindo did not limit the scope of National Education to national control. If a change of control was all that was required, Aurobindo could see no need for such a loud pother about nationalizing education. For Aurobindo it is something "more profound, great and searching that we have in mind ... it is an education proper to the Indian soul and need and temperament and culture that we are in quest of, not indeed something faithful merely to the past but to the developing soul of India, to her future need, to the greatness of her coming self-creation to her eternal spirit."

Aurobindo was not against science and technology on the plea that they are an importation. He noted, "After all we live in the twentieth century and cannot revive the India of Chandragupta or Akbar ... our education must be therefore up to date in form and substance and modern in life and spirit." Likewise he was for the use of both Sanskrit and English. Sanskrit was to help in understanding the past and Imbibing the Spirit of India, while English was to help the students to awaken to the world around.

An Indian National Education was to be founded on Indian culture. For Aurobindo, India has developed as a living being and he warns the leaders against confusing the soul of India with national ego. He believes that India has not looked at man as a mere reasoning animal or as a political, social or economic being as the West had done. India, for him considered the individual as a conscious Portion and manifestation of the universal self and spirit. Similarly, he pointed out that by a nation India means a "great communal soul and life that has appeared in the whole and has manifested a nature of its own and a law of that nature, a Swabhava and Swadharma" And by humanity he meant "the universal manifesting in the human race, evolving through life and mind but with a high ultimate spiritual aim." Thus real education was the work of the national spirit. A profound knowledge of human psychology was the foundation of ancient Indian education. The ancient Aryan considered the individual man to be an adhara (base) of the supreme energy, Prakriti, Maya or Shakti. Spiritual energy was considered by him be the source of physical energy and the basis of intelligence. Further, knowledge is hidden within the self and an illumination can help the individual to know what he already knows. Thus self-help was the best help; education was not to be a process of gathering information but a rediscovery of the self. For Aurobindo, National education was not a return to the past system but a revival of the past spirit and a reapplication of the past Indian principles to the needs of the present and demands of the future.

Aurobindo evolved a theory and a system of National Education through a series of articles during 1909-10 in the Karmayogin. Aurobindo's ideas are best presented in these articles. A summary is attempted here to understand the theory and system of National Education as envisaged by him.

i) The Human Mind :

"The true basis of education is the study of human mind." And a mind is an infinitely subtle and sensitive organism and is so varied that it is not subject to any flat rule. A good education must recognize this nature of the human mind.

The first principle of education for Aurobindo was that "nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task master, he is a helper and a guide." The explanation was that, "Every one has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a sphere which God offers him

to take or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it." Thus knowledge is inherent and the teacher is only to help the student in retrieving what he wants to retrieve. The second principle followed from the first; mind must be consulted in its own growth. Aurobindo was against the practice of predetermining the future of the child either by parents or by teacher. The third principle of National Education was to move from near to far, from that which is to that which shall be. It was to move from the individual to nation and to humanity at large. He concluded, "The past is our foundation, the present our material, the future our aim and summit. Each must have its due and natural place in a national system of education."

ii) **The Powers of the Mind :**

To explain how all knowledge is inherent in human mind, Aurobindo divides the mind into four layers. The first layer is the passive mind, chitta, a store house of memory. But it is only a store house, an inactive mind, a dark room where everything is stored. The active mind, the active memory selects whatever it wants. The process of education is the process of the selection of the active mind. The source remains the all-inclusive passive mind. The second layer is the mind or manas, distinct from the five senses. It is the co-ordinating part of the mind, which translates the sense impressions into mental thoughts. The third layer is the intellect or buddhi. To it belongs the power of judgment, comparison, reasoning, generalization, inference, conclusion, observation, comprehension, command, memory and even manipulation. The fourth and not yet developed layer of the mind is the intuitive part. For him, the final power of mind is intuitive perception of truth and a direct vision of knowledge or even revelation. Aurobindo held that the first three layers have been developed to a large extent and it is time that intuition receives proper attention.

iii) **The Moral Nature :**

Aurobindo points out the difficulty of imparting moral education. He did not accept that teaching morality through religious books is possible for heart not mind. The problem for him was three dimensional the emotions, the formed habits and the nature of the man. It is very difficult to control the emotions or the nature of the man. He rightly observed that though it is possible to control formed habits in school and college days, the student returns to his nature as an adult. By these, he was not suggesting that moral and religious education has no value but he was pointing to the limitations of it. The best way for him was that the teacher must be a 'wise friend, guide, helper and not a task master or a policeman'. The solution was that, "Religion has to be lived, not learned as a creed." Thus for him only by personal example, a teacher can influence morally. However, he thought that a good company could also be helpful. Though religion was not to be taught as a creed "the essence of religion, to live for God, for humanity, for country, for others and for oneself in these, must be made the ideal in every school which calls itself national.

iv) **Simultaneous and Successive Teaching :**

Aurobindo pointed out a fundamental difference between the old and new system. For him, while the old system taught one subject at a time, the new taught many subjects simultaneously. The defect of the old successive teaching was that the learner is likely to forget what he had learnt earlier while the fault of simultaneous teaching was that the learner is ill-equipped in too many subjects. The problem for Aurobindo was not to choose between the two systems but to ensure interest in the students. "Interest is, after all the basis of concentration". "To lead him on step by step interesting

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absorbing him in each as it comes until he has mastered his subjects is the true art of teaching. The foremost requirement of maintaining interest for Aurobindo was education through the mother tongue. "The mother tongue is the proper medium of education and therefore the first energies of the child should be directed to the thorough mastering of the medium." Aurobindo emphasised the laying of foundation for different disciples at an early stage. A child was to be encouraged to observe, compare, and reason out things around him and this would provide the base for sciences. Similarly the foundation for history and literature can be laid through narration; poetry and stories. Further for Aurobindo "Every child has the gift of imitation and a touch of imaginative power." And if one provides circumstances for the growth of these the creative faculty would blossom. He concluded "the first work is the interest the child in life, work and knowledge, to develop his instruments of knowledge with utmost thoroughness, to give him mastery of the medium he must use."

v) **The Training of the Sense :**

There are six senses for Aurobindo sight, smell, hearing, touch and taste and the mind, which translates the first five sense impressions to thoughts and conclusions. The need for him was that the student must acquire perfect accuracy and sensitiveness in the use of these senses. He noted that defects in the use of them may be due to physical reasons or may be due to the defect of the mind itself. The physical defect may be cured by medical sciences while for the cure of the mind Aurobindo suggested nadi sudhi or nerve purification. The foremost necessity for this purification was the calming down of the mind. For Aurobindo the mind not only receives thought waves from the five senses but also from outside the human body. He pointed to the sixth sense of the man and emphasized the need for perfecting the use of this gift. He observed "The development of sixth sense has never formed part of human training. In a future age, it will undoubtedly take a place in the necessary preliminary training of the human instrument. Meanwhile there is no reason why the mind should not be trained to give a correct report to the intellect so that our thought may start with absolutely correct if not with full impressions."

vi) **Sense Improvement by Practice :**

Aurobindo observed a two-way inefficiency in the use of sense power. Lack of proper attention on the part of different senses leading to improper or half learning; many a time one listens but does not listen carefully or one sees a thing without a proper vision. To avoid this Aurobindo prescribes: "The student ought to be accustomed to catch the sights, sounds etc, around him, distinguish them, mark their nature, properties and source and fix them in the chitta so that they may be always ready to respond when called for by the memory." The second defect was the incapacity to use more than one sense at a time. In other words, while one sees a thing he does not listen to sounds around him or is not conscious about smells around him. Aurobindo feels that it is possible to use all the senses simultaneously and thus he emphasised the need for multiple attentions. He believed that imitation can be of some help in developing attention.

vii) **The Training of Mental Faculties :**

To develop the power of the mind, the power and habit of observation is to be increased and perfected. The students must be accustomed to concentrate their attention. However, this minute observation must not be done as a task but as an

object of interest. The child must learn to derive pleasure by observing things. Further by a skillful questioning the child can be taught to observe things in details. Memory and judgment are the qualities to be developed next. Aurobindo was against mechanical cramming. He believed that repeated observation can be of help in developing the power of memory. The power of judgment, discretion and comparison must also be developed along with the above faculties. The teacher must also encourage the child to compare his observation with that of the others and he must also facilitate analogy and imagination.

viii) The Training of the Logical Faculty :

The training of logical faculty must follow the training of other faculties. The logical faculty was to include induction, deduction, and inference. Aurobindo did not subscribe to the opinion that formal teaching of logic is a must to develop these powers. The more important thing for him was to develop in the child the habit of observation, inference from observations, deductions thereof, reasoning out things for himself and learning to trace cause and effect of things happening around him.

In conclusion we shall limit ourselves to three questions viz. What was the distinct feature of Aurobindian thought?, What claims he has to a system?, and What was the relation of these ideals to his latter ideals of Education? The distinctness of Aurobindo was his positive attitude. For him National Education was not a reaction against the West nor a narrow nationalism, nor was it a return to the age of tols of Bengal. It was not a rejection of science and technology. The foundation was that education must take into account the individual man, the man as a member of a nation and a society and finally man as part of the universal mankind. The underlying spirit was more important. This every nation must develop its own system of education taking these into consideration. Therefore the Indian National Education was to be based on her past and was to keep its eyes wide open to the present and was to be capable of fulfilling the demands of a future India. Thus he stood for a perfect synthesis of past and future and West and East. As to the claim of Aurobindo as a system builder there can be little doubt. The whole discussion points out how he was among the few Indians who devoted his attention to provide a psychological, philosophical or, in a word, a theoretical basis for National Education. Lastly, one ponders, what was the relation of these earlier thoughts to the later conclusions of Aurobindo. There is no denying that he developed a complete system of education and a theory of knowledge known as Integral Education but this was essentially on a much wider scale in tune with his vision of future mankind. However, Aurobindo did not refute his original stands, that nothing can be taught, that knowledge is inherent that the process of education is to draw out the potentialities of the individual, that mother tongue is the best medium of instruction, that mind can be divided into layers and so on. Such are the ideas of Aurobindo as regards the philosophy of National Education in India.

Philosophy of Education :

Aurobindo developed a more comprehensive philosophy of education during his stay at Pondicherry and education was an important component of the same. The emphasis now shifted from limited issues of national education to wider questions of education.

The concept of man is central to Aurobindo's philosophy of education. Man is an intermediary being for him. In the process of evolution matter, life and mind have manifested in man. And till date man is the highest manifestation of the supreme

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being. Much more important than this was the fact that man has the potentiality of a perfect perfection and of complete manifestation of the supreme divine. Aurobindo writes, "Therefore man's importance in the world is that, he gives" to it that development of consciousness in which its transfiguration by perfect self discovery becomes possible." Brahman is integral and unifies many, states of consciousness at a time; we (men) also manifesting the nature of Brahman should become integral and all embracing." "We can attain the highest without blotting ourselves to the cosmic extension." In other words, Aurobindo argues that man attains perfection in mind, life and body in the cosmos or in the world. For Aurobindo, "He (Man) is the greatest living being because he is the most discontented because he feels most the pressure of limitations. He alone, perhaps, is capable of being seized by the divine frenzy for a remote ideal." Defining the aim of life he says "We aspire therefore to a divine life, we can not attain it by any other way than by unveiling this veiled self in us, by mounting from our present status in the false self or mental ego to a higher status in the true self, the Atman, by entering into that unity with divine consciousness. Which something super coincident in us always enjoy, otherwise we could not exist but which our conscious mentality forfeited." In other words, Aurobindo holds the view that the mental man must become a spiritual man. In case man does not spiritualise himself, he was afraid that a new gnostic being or superman would appear. He writes, "Either man must fulfill himself by satisfying the divine within him or he must produce out of himself a new and greater being who will be more capable of satisfying it. He must either himself become a divine humanity or give place to superman. The highest aim of education of Aurobindo is to usher in the life divine.

In the Human Cycle identifying the spiritual orientation of education and society, he writes " ... the coming of a spiritual age must be preceded by the appearance of an increasing number of individuals who are no longer satisfied with the normal intellectual, vital and physical existence of man, but perceive that a greater evolution is the real goal of humanity and attempt to effect it in themselves to lead others to it, and to make it the recognized goal of the race. Both society and education should provide the condition for all men to travel towards divine perfection and to express the power, harmony, the beauty and joy of self-realization. Education must be instrument for this real working of the spirit in the mind and body of the individual and the nation. A total spiritual orientation needs to be given to education and life. As an integralist, as discussed earlier, Aurobindo did not negate matter life mind or spirit and believed in spiritualization of all. Artha, Dharma Kama, and Moksha, terrestrial and extra-terrestrial goals of life were all accepted by Aurobindo. However all needed to be spiritualised and all needed to be attuned to perfect perfection.

i) Education and Aim of Life :

Aurobindo like most educators insisted that aims of education and aims of human life are one and inseparable. Life may relate to the individual or the community he lives in and the entire humanity at large. Aurobindo writes: "That alone will be a true and living education which helps to bring out full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life and all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member."

Aurobindo identifies three aims of life supported by three concepts of reality. One concept of reality which conceives the absolute as pure being makes Nirvana the final goal of life. The second theory of reality, which conceives the cosmic and terrestrial concept of existence, makes becoming the highest principle. Those who recognize the cosmic aspect only demand that man should become a willing and conscious instrument of divine self and energy. These who recognize the terrestrial aspect only, limit the aims of human life to the needs of body, life and mind. The third view considers the reality to be true alone and considers the manifested world as Maya and thus makes the transition from the illusory world to the real world beyond the aim of human life.

Aurobindo finds all three above views on aims of human life to be inadequate. As he recognized in his concept of reality all these aspects of reality, he does not believe in anyone set of aim to be the whole of truth. In other words, he recognizes the being, the becoming, the cosmic, the terrestrial aims of life and also the need to transform the present state of humanity. However, he does not support these aims of life on the same grounds the different schools of reality had supported them. That would have naturally made his position untenable. While he pleads for transcendence, he does not agree that the world is illusion. We have already noted his justification of the theory of evolution. As he admits the absolute as both being and becoming, there is no difficulty for him in accepting both the supra-cosmic and cosmic and terrestrial aims of human life. Thus, the highest aim of life and education is to discover the true nature of one's self and existence. And Aurobindo holds Sachchidananda to be the ultimate reality, which is manifested in all forms in the world. In other words, the highest aim of life is to recognize this concept of our reality. However, he does not stop at that but goes further than a mere recognition. He insists that as the Sachchidananda is involved in the creation and is evolving to a conscious existence of the finites; simultaneously every individual as well as community and humanity must fulfill the aims of evolution. As bliss is the sole motive of Sachchidananda in his game of creation, so also bliss is the highest aim of human life. To attain this bliss and to live in this bliss both as an individual and also as a community and humanity, Aurobindo demands that man must rise above the mind to acquire true knowledge of existence, man must transcend his nature of the senses to enjoy the power of joy of the absolute and he must also rise above the limitation of his body to become divine. It includes self-discovery, an all round perfection and carrying forward the evolutionary process. These aims of human life is further illustrated in the following discussion on theory of evolution.

ii) **Spiritual Theory of Evolution :**

The second half of 19th century and the first half of 20th century can be treated as a period of evolutionists in philosophical writing. In India theories of evolution are very old and can be traced back to the concept of four Yugas. Similarly, in West one may trace the theory of evolution to Aurobindo's concept of infinite possibility of matter. In the above-mentioned period a number of philosophers like Whitehead, Bergson, Alexander and Teilhard gave their ideas on evolution. In contrast to these thinkers, Aurobindo's theory of evolution was principally based on Indian scriptures though he also synthesized some of the leading ideas of west.

In this sub-chapter a brief outline of Aurobindo's theory of evolution is being attempted.

Aurobindo's theory of evolution is termed as a theory of spiritual evolution. It is spiritual, for according to him, it is the consciousness or the spirit or the truth of

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knowledge that evolves. The process begins by involution of Sachchidananda and is complete only with acquisition of true knowledge and unveiling of the consciousness, which is covered by ignorance or illusion. In other words, the whole process of evolution can be described as a grand process of the finites acquiring knowledge of their infiniteness and divine nature.

This evolution is also called integral for Aurobindo insists that in the process of evolution of higher principles, the lower principles are not abandoned but carried forward with transformation. The whole process of evolution may be described as a travel from ignorance to knowledge or from inconscience to superconscience. Knowledge is the true foundation of life divine. In this sense Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution is an essential part of his educational ideas and theory of knowledge.

It may be naturally asked, what kind of knowledge Aurobindo wanted human beings to acquire. He wanted man to realize the integral reality of absolute Sachchidananda. He wanted man to recognize all facts of reality like its oneness and manyness, its material form and spiritual dimensions, its mind and supermind etc. He also wanted man to recognize the process of evolution, that the absolute is carrying in the cosmos. He writes, "An integral spiritual consciousness carries in it a knowledge of all the terms of being; it links the highest to the lowest through all the meditating terms and achieves an invisible whole. At the highest summit of things it opens to the reality, ineffable because super-conscious to all but its own self-awareness, of the Absolute. At the lowest end of our being it perceives the Inconscience from which our evolution begins; but at the same it is aware of the one and all self involved in those depths, it unveils the secret Consciousness in the Inconscience." Thus knowledge becomes the foundation and the condition for the final leap to life divine.

True knowledge can be achieved by man when he travels beyond his physical mind and personal mind. He writes, "An integral knowledge demands an exploration, an unveiling of all possible domains of consciousness and experience ... the supra physical is as real as physical, to know it, is a part of complete knowledge." The ignorance of the super physical and the refusal to admit the supra physical leads to seven fold not of ignorance. According to Aurobindo, it leads to the ignorance of the absolute as the source of all beings, which he calls cosmic ignorance. This leads to man's ignorance of the universal self and leads him to believe that his ownself rather his own ego is all. Aurobindo terms it the egoistic ignorance. Man is ignorant of the eternal time and takes the present to be all. This Aurobindo calls temporal ignorance. Man takes the over mental experience to be all which Aurobindo calls the psychological ignorance. Man considers the body, life and mind to be the whole of him and this Aurobindo terms as constitutional ignorance. All these lead to last practical ignorance, of which Aurobindo writes". As a result of all these ignorances, we miss the true knowledge, government and enjoyment of our life in the world; we are ignorant in our thought, will, sensation, actions, return wrong or imperfect responses at every point to the questioning of the world, wander in a maze of errors and desires, struggles and failures, pain and pleasure, sin and stumbling, follow a crooked road, grope blindly for a changing goal that is the seventh, the practical ignorance." True knowledge, Aurobindo holds, demands the dismissal of the seven fold ignorance. A mere intellectual knowledge of the integral reality is not enough. He insists that the knowledge must be a living experience. It involves nothing less than a transformation of man as a key to life divine. So far in the evolution, matter, life and mind have manifested in clear-cut terms. Now time has come for manifestation of the spirit and the bliss, which is the final principle of

absolute reality. Man's search for perfection can only be fulfilled with the coming of this spiritualization. Man must assent to the supramental. He of course does not envisage that the whole of making would be supramentalised at once. However, Aurobindo feels that a beginning is to be made by a small group or even by an individual. Man must become conscious of higher phases of his mind. Man must transcend his ego, must discover the universal, must unravel the mystery of the universe and must rise to the life divine. In other words, Aurobindo feels that spiritual persons can only transform the present status of human beings.

Aurobindo speaks of triple transformation as the passage to life divine. First, the soul in the man must come to the forefront and take command over the personality of man, the soul must be in direct communication with reality and ego must be effaced to allow the absolute to have his free will. These, Aurobindo feels, are possible by an ascent of consciousness into the ranges of overmind and supramental. This is the first transformation. The second stage is to break the limitation of the human body and mind and to make immortality and self-awareness a living experience. In other words, the second stage demands a change from the seven-fold ignorance to a living experience of true knowledge. The last stage is a direct, conscious and unveiled intervention from the above by the absolute necessary to finally transform man and bring the life divine in the cosmos.

Some may legitimately question the need for outlining Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution in an essay concerning education. The link between the two is of course clear. Education basically concerns knowledge and Aurobindo's theory of spiritual evolution clarifies the kind of knowledge that he wanted education to impart.

iii) Education and Society :

The interrelation between education and society is indeed very close. Education and society serve each other and universal knowledge is that man is a social being. Thus education is a process of interaction between man and society, in which he lives. Even if the argument that society corrupts the individual is accepted, it must be admitted that man is inseparable from society. Basically, two schools of thought have emerged on the possible ideal relationship between the individual and society. One is the mechanistic and individualistic theory and the other is organic and collective theory. Aurobindo seems to recognize the essence of both the theories and makes harmony of the individual and the society, the highest goal of nature and evolution. He categorically recognizes the individual and the society and the humanity as the three distinct formations of the nature and does not envisage the weathering away of anyone of these formations in future. A true perfection would demand a perfect harmony of these three. Aurobindo makes the psychological stages of human development the foundation of his theory of development. He finds Lamprecht's theory of social development to be nearer to truth than any other theory. According to Lamprecht, the psychological states of human development were symbolic, typical, conventional, individualistic and subjective. Lamprecht holds that the first stage of human development was symbolic marked by fancy and imagination. In the second stage, the types (like feudal division, castes etc.) developed, the third conventional stage was marked by a perpetuation of the types (at times without the spirit behind the form) when political rulers and urban centres dominated. The fourth stage was that of individualism coinciding with great intellectual upheaval, and renaissance, reformation, rationalism and utilitarianism were its chief features. The fifth stage was the age of

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romantic revolt against reason. This he calls the subjective age where egos of nationalities became more dominant. He writes: "the perfect society will be that which most entirely favours the perfection of individual, the perfection of the individual will be incomplete if it does not help towards the perfect state of the social aggregate to which he belongs and eventually to that of the largest possible human aggregate, the whole of united humanity." Aurobindo recognizes education as a social process of achieving this perfect harmony of the individual man and their aggregates. He also recognizes that education can be an instrument of social change. In tune with his theory of spiritual evolution. Aurobindo also envisages the growth of a spiritualised society. He believes education must work towards the advent of this spiritualised society. In this sub chapter an attempt is being made to briefly outline his concept of spiritualised society and his theory of social development.

The present, for Lamprecht, was an age of anxiety without any dominant ideal. Aurobindo, though recognizes the inadequacy of Lamprecht's periodisation of social development yet he attempts to explain the social development of mankind on similar lines. He does not agree with the assessment of present stage and he goes beyond this periodisation by placing before us a definite future of a spiritualised society. As each individual must seek perfection through transformation each society must also discover its true nature and aim at perfection. A society can be perfect by discovering its true relationship with humanity at large, which is competitive but co-operative. Just like that an individual should discover that his free development is not opposed to the development of the society but is possible only by the development of the society. This must not be a logical position to be understood but a living experience to be lived. Man must go beyond seeking vital pleasures through economic pursuit, must go beyond the mental stage or the stage of dominance of rationality, beyond the ethical ideals of right and wrong and beyond the dogmatic religion to achieve a spiritualised society as a precondition for life divine. Describing such a society Aurobindo writes:

A spiritualised society would treat in its sociology the individual ... as souls growing and to be encouraged to grow. The aim of its economics would be ... to give to men the joy of work according to their own nature and free leisure to grow inwardly, as well as a simply rich and beautiful life for all. In its politics it would not regard the nations ... as enormous state machines ... it would regard the people as group souls, the Divinity concealed and to be self discovered in its human collectivities, group souls meant like the individual to grow according to their own nature and by that growth to help each other; to help the whole race in the one common work of humanity for it is into the divine within each people that the man and the nation have to grow.

A spiritualised society would recognize the law of freedom and unity alike. Aurobindo also recognized the tendency of humanity towards internationalism. He was sure that the internationalism that spiritualism would achieve shall not destroy either the individual or the society. It would be based on the recognition of dual principle of individuality and unity of freedom and harmony. Education is to attempt towards the evolution of such a spiritualised society and spiritual unity of mankind.

iv) Psychology and Concept of Mind :

Theories and methods of education are increasingly based on experimental psychology in this century. We have noted, Aurobindo's theory of education is basically derived from his philosophical outlook. However, he also recognizes psychology as an important aspect of educational forces. Psychology also receives a distinct treatment under him as all other aspects of education do. Aurobindo defines psychology as the "Science of consciousness and its States and operation in Nature and, if that can be glimpsed or experienced, its States and operations beyond what we know as Nature."

The analysis of this above definition would explain the stand of Aurobindo. Psychology for him is not essentially a mere study of mind and human behaviour. It is more profound as it is the study of consciousness known to the mind and unknown to the mind. Consciousness or Chit as noted earlier is an aspect of the reality both finite and infinite. And this consciousness is further not a mere power of awareness but is also a will, a force and the ultimate catalyst of all actions. This consciousness in individual being's and in the societal forms is organized in many states or layers. An individual or a society is not fully conscious. Aurobindo distinguishes the mind from consciousness though it is usually identified with mind. The consciousness identified with mind is termed as mental consciousness. And unlike psycho-analysts he refused to recognize sexual desire as the chief component of the sub-consciousness. Further, going beyond the psycho-analysts Aurobindo asserts that there are states above the surface consciousness. Going beyond the identification of the consciousness of mind he asserts the universal consciousness being one and indifferent from individual consciousness. He believes that the inness of ego is only a transitory phase and is born out of the ignorance of the universal nature of consciousness. True knowledge would establish the true universal nature of consciousness and lead to a higher life. Further Aurobindo asserts that all things are inhabited by this consciousness, even things that seems to us inconscient Aurobindo recognizes as domains of consciousness.

Aurobindo considers mind to be different from brain or for him mind is not basically physiological. Mind is a process of consciousness; it is in fact the counter part of supermind. Aurobindo recognizes several planes, namely the ordinary mind, the higher mind, the illumined mind, the intuitive mind, the overmind and the supermind. He thinks that the mind proper is divided into three parts-thinking mind, dynamic mind, centre mind the former concerned with ideals and knowledge in their own right, the second with the putting out of mental forces for the realization of the idea, the third with expression of them in life. In other words he recognized the physical mind, the vital mind and the thinking mind. The physical mind concerned with physical things, the vital mind is the instrument of desire and passions and the thinking mind is the rational aspect of mind. Beyond these ordinary minds, Aurobindo recognizes other layers of mentality. For him, there is a psychic mind deep behind the surface of ordinary mind, which gives man the sense of his being something other than body, life and mind. In other words, it leads to the first recognition of the universal absolute conscious force. The layers beyond the psychic mind are termed as spiritual by him, where one is increasingly aware of the self, one understands the nature of the self,

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and understands its relation with manifestation or as a mind in full knowledge. Higher mind for him brings down the true knowledge to a being by an illumined mind. Man gets a vision of reality. An intuitive mind provides knowledge of reality by identity; the overmind makes one realize the global consciousness and finally the supermind, which is the creative principle of the supreme is realized. Man is none other than the Sachchidananda without reaching or discovering the supermind and without living with the supermind man's tryst with destiny would not be complete.

Thus, Aurobindo goes beyond behavioural psychology and physiological concept of mind. Of course, he admitted that the various layers of mind, which he discovered were through yogic exercises. For him, education cannot limit itself to the surface consciousness or the surface mind. If the ultimate aim of education is to arrive at true knowledge than it must explore beyond the surface mind and surface consciousness.

v) **Concept of Development :**

In modern times education is increasingly considered to be the journey of an individual from childhood to adulthood. The psychological basis naturally promotes a developmental concept in education. Every individual is of course recognized as a person by modern psychology and it emphasizes development of various facets of personality. As many as 18 aspects of personality development have been identified. Further, the democratization of education including introduction of uniform national pattern of education demands that every individual must conform to a norm set up by the society. In Aurobindo's own times the worst kind of regimentalisation was being tried out by various collectivists like Nazis and Communists alike. Aurobindo recognised various aspects of personality emphasized by modern psychology. Yet he gives them a different kind of emphasis. The cardinal principle on which his concept of development of personality rests is that every individual is a soul having his own life and distinctions. God has created individuals not for the sake of multiplication of numbers but for variety, which is a part of his blissful game. Thus, for Aurobindo both the inviolable individual aspect of personality and the essential spiritual component of personality must form the nucleus of individual development. He was of the view that each human being is a self developing soul and that the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and help the child to educate himself to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacities and to grow freely as an organic being not to be kneaded and pressured into a form like an inert plastic material. Along with emphasizing the individual aspect of every personality, Aurobindo recognized that man belongs to a society, a nation and to humanity at large. Thus, he wrote "that alone will be a true and loving education which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life, all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unit and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member."

Aurobindo does not see any need for conflict between the individual and the society. He asserts that individual is not an ego but is a soul and every individual is a

manifestation of the one reality, Sachchidananda. Once this is realized, the true relationship between the individual, the nation and the humanity can be realized. In view of this, education should train an individual to transcend his ego. The only identity man must recognize is his spiritual identity. And the ultimate aim of education is of course the establishment of life divine on earth.

vi) Physical Education :

Physical education was generally emphasized by all thinkers during Aurobindo's life time. The old misconception about physical education like that is opposed to mental development was no longer holding ground. Respect for labour was generally accepted. Physical education had all along been emphasized by European educators. However, Aurobindo gave a new dimension to the need for physical education. According to his theory of evolution, the body must change to complete the process of spiritualization of mankind. He was not emphasizing the need for physical education only on the grounds that a good body is essential for good mind or mental development is impossible without physical development. He accepted this but goes beyond this. He believed that the perfection of the body as great a perfection as we can bring about by the means as or disposal, must be the aim of physical culture. Perfection IS the true aim of all culture, the spiritual and psychic, the mental, the vital and it must be the aim of our physical culture also.

Of all the parts of a human being, the body is to Aurobindo, the least conscious. Just as the vital, psychic of a human being are to be made conscious of a divine life so also the physical body must also be made conscious. As a first step towards achieving the consciousness of physique, Aurobindo says that the mind must take control of the body as a prelude to the soul becoming the master of the body. Further, the body must be transformed and pass beyond its limitations to become a proper vehicle for the introduction of superman in the present world. The highest aim of Aurobindo was even the conquest of death. Physical education is necessary for preparing a divine body to fulfill the dreams of a divine life on earth. He writes: "in this progression, the body also may reach a more perfect form and highest range of its expressive powers, become a more and more perfect vessel of divinity the body itself might acquire new means and communication with other bodies; new process of acquiring knowledge, a new synthesis, a new potentialities of manipulation of itself and objects. .. these and other numerous potentialities might appear and the body become an instrument, immeasurable superior to what we can now imagine as possible." In other words, Aurobindo had great vision of a changed human body free from its limitations of disease and death and a conscious instrument of divine will.

vii) Vital Education :

The vital is the seat of all desires, passions, impulses, reactions, depressions, and it holds within itself power, energy, enthusiasm and effective dynamism. It is the seat of power and life energy. Aurobindo was against any suppression of vital to achieve anything spiritual. He wanted instead that the vital must become a willing instrument in man's progress towards spiritualisation. He was against dragging it

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forcibly along the path of evolution. Aurobindo emphasized the need for sense training as a pre-condition for vital education. In our chapter of national education we have dealt to an extent and hence the same is not being repeated here. Besides the sense training, Aurobindo emphasized the need for developing aesthetic sense in the individual. More important than sense training and aesthetic sense was of course the transformation of human character. Human character or personality of an individual for him is the outward manifestation of the inner person that which is behind every man. As the inner person is divine and is capable of spiritualisation, the outer manifestation is equally potential. The vital aspect of human being must be properly developed, utilized and transformed and not suppressed. Aurobindo had great faith in the sureness of the capacity of human character to change. Training and purification of senses, development of aesthetic sense are step towards transformation of human vital which enshrines the human ego greatly and must become the seat of divinity. Once this is done literature, art, and all other fine activities of man would become divine.

viii) Education for Transformation :

Transformation of mankind and the onset of a supramental being on earth was the summum bonum of Aurobindo's philosophy of life divine. Education for Aurobindo was only complementary to this ultimate aim. Thus the highest aim of education is transformation of mankind and achievement of integral perfection. For this, the body, the vital and mind must be spiritualised and education as a process must work towards spiritualisation. This is the central theme of Aurobindo's theory of education. The three stages of transformation are the psychic transformation, the spiritual transformation, and the supermental transformation of human personality. The first requires the replacement of the ego by the recognition of divine presence in human being and a submission to divine will. For Aurobindo the second meant the coming forward of the soul to the forefront and its taking the ranges of human activity. It also meant, an intense seeking on everyone's part to be one with the infinite and external. The third and the last stage meant, the ascent to the supramental and the descent of the supramental. By this supramentalisation, man not only becomes conscious of the Sachchidananda but becomes one with it and lives in it. The difference between man and God vanishes. Man lives fully as a pure conscious being perfectly perfect and by this the life divine is established on earth. The highest aim of education is, thus, to work towards this perfection.



UNIT - V

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Gijubhai Badheka (1885 -1939)

A Brief Life sketch

Girijashanker Badheka, generally known as Gijubhai, the most outstanding personality in the field of pre-primary education, was born on 15 November 1885 at Gujrat. He had his early education at a primary school at Vala and later passed the Matriculation from Bhavnagar around 1905.

He joined the Shamlals College, but had to leave his studies incomplete and go to East Africa in 1907 to earn a livelihood. On his return in 1910 he studied law in Bombay. He started practice in 1911 as a District Pleader and in 1912 he enrolled himself as High Court Pleader. He, married twice, first Sm. Hiraben (1902) and after her death as Sm. Jadiben (1906).

Gijubhai's maternal uncle Hargovind Pandya had a great influence in moulding his mind and character. Another strong influence was that of S. P. Stevens, a solicitor for whom Gijubhai worked in East Africa, who taught him self-help and reliance.

Solicitude for the education of his first son, Narendrabhai (February 1913), led Gijubhai to see the child education classes conducted under the guidance of Motibhai Amin at Vaso, Gujarat, where he was presented a Gujarati book describing the Montessori method of education. That first attracted him to organize child education on similar lines. In 1915 he assisted in drafting the construction of the Dakshinamurti, then started as a hostel at Bhavnagar. In 1916 he left legal practice and joined the Dakshinamurti as Assistant Superintendent. He drew the attention of the Superintendent, Nanabhai Bhatt, to the fact that the boarders had to study in old-fashioned schools.

To remove this anomaly the Dakshinamurti was converted into a teaching institution with Gijubhai as the Acharya (Principal). Simultaneously Gijubhai trained his son according to the Montessori system. This convinced him about the need to begin at the very beginning, and the Dakshinamurti Balmandir, a pre-primary school, came into being August 1920. Gijubhai's contribution was evolution of a system of child education suitable to Indian environment, training teachers and creation of suitable literature for children, . teachers and parents Gijubhai's system liberally borrowed from the educational philosophies of Montessori, Froebel, Dalton and others and oriented the admixture to fit Indian requirements. Freedom and love were the twin principles around which the system revolved. With the introduction of equipment for sensory development, coupled with the use of music, dance, travel, story-telling and play-ground as instantly acquired popularity with children and parents.

In 1925 the first Pre-Primary Teachers Training College (Adhyapak Mandir) was started at Dakshinamurti to meet the need for qualified teachers. Gijubhai also turned his attention to children's literature and wrote simple short stories, nursery rhymes and tales of travel and adventure. He produced more than 100 works which still retain their importance and many of them have been rendered into several other Indian languages.

In 1925 Gijubhai, along with Sm. Taraben Modak, started editing a Gujarati monthly, the Shikshan Patrika. His frank and fearless criticism of the existing methods of education created a sensation in Gujrat. For the propagation of the new system of child education among the masses, conferences were organized in 1925 at Bhavnagar and in 1928 at Ahmedabad.

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Gijubhai was partly responsible for the entry of Harijans into the Dakshinamurti. He also assisted in making arrangements for the farmer families who were abandoning their homes during the Bardoli Satyagraha. He initiated the concept of the 'Vanarsena', a battalion of children satyagrahis who made life impossible for the Government officials in the 1930 Movement. Under Gijubhai, Nanabhai and Harbhai, the Dakshinamurti, located in the territory of sympathetic princes, came to be regarded as the training-centre for dedicated freedom-fighters. Gijubhai also conducted Adult Education Campaign in 1930.

In 1936 Gijubhai left the Dakshinamurti due to a difference of opinion and started the Adhyapak Mandir at Rajkot. Constant overwork had ruined his health, and he died on 23 June 1939. Proverbial affection for the children earned him the title 'Maochhali Ma' meaning mother with whiskers.

Uncomplicated Eloquence :

The power of his thoughts lies in the simple description of the situation and the action he takes to address the problem faced in that situation. He stands as an example of a reflective teacher with a very spontaneous commonsense to react and act in the situations of primary classes in Indian context. His style of writing is as if he is talking to someone and one feels that as these are their own words and thoughts only that someone has dare to put in this form and bring in the solution too. Many of us would have done the same or would love to do what Gijubhai found as solution to the problem. His simplicity is in the conviction with which he writes and also practicability of what he is doing.

Another very important point that one finds to call his thoughts as practical, is that the jargon of theoretical and philosophical standpoints or terms has been missing in his reflective and analytical accounts that we come across in his works, making him easy to relate to everyday challenges of a primary teacher. Most of us as teachers find it relatively difficult to remember any theory and almost impossible to find its implication. Works like that of his are complete practical accounts and ready reckon for any primary teacher to try out in her/his classroom.

But the weaving of all the implications of theory and philosophy is equally there. His thoughts have genesis in 'child-centered' education and he cites several examples of the same in his classroom experience with children. Gijubhai therefore can be called as reflective teacher whose theory is simple and based on experimentation.

Real Education :

His works Divaswapna, Mata Pita Se, and others solidifies his thoughts on Education that what does he expect from us as he takes us towards to the real nature of education he has been demanding. His works reminds us of not only goodness of the child, nature of real learning but also critical role and responsibility of adults as parents and teachers to educate the child. His experiment of teaching children in meaningful manner begins with the conflict between theory and practice. He wishes to have the 'first-hand experience' of the classroom.

Real purpose of education that teacher should understand is that children should love their school and teachers. If the children want to come to the school since they are treated with respect and there are enough meaningful learning opportunities, he feels no children would deny coming to the school. Gijubhai cites several of useful

learning activities like story telling, drama, games and paper folding to name a few that could serve many objectives of teaching-learning at primary level and make it relevant for children. However, teacher's intuition to link all these methods to curriculum is the real challenge and must. Real learning is also learning where children learn by doing and hence are independent with their learning and do not depend on textbook or teacher as source of information alone. In words of Gijubhai in Divaswapna what he thinks games are

Games are real education. Great powers are born on the playground. Games means character building.

His ideas on imparting value education to children as against religious indoctrination could be observed in his words "...we should try to live religion. Parents must try and teachers must try. We could tell children stories from the Puranas, and the Upanishadas, whenever there is a reference to these in their textbooks. Let us tell them stories of saints just as we tell them stories of historical personages.let us not make our children memorise and recite holy verses! Let us not teach religious dogmas and scriptures and the like in the name of moral instruction."

This way he tries to argue for meaningful education for children in different areas-History, Language or preparing for exams or school function. He argues that underlying assumptions of methods we follow have flaws hence a need to re-look at it. This will make alternative methods or use of the same method in more effective and correct manner. He believes that for any topic teacher should figure out the underlying concept and then help children identify that through activities.

Experimentation - Key To Change :

He put a firm faith in alternatives he wishes to try with children and make change possible. We as teachers have stopped to argue for changes and alternatives on arguments say, these are not possible or too idealistic or on several other similar arguments. Gijubhai makes it possible by saying that 'experimentation' is the key to bring the change. A teacher with an untiring spirit to learn, to question the existing system, methods and even failure of individual teacher or student, can try several things that will make 'real' learning takes place and which is not only for exams and some outward reward alone. However, outward rewards of praise, applause and good marks are also achieved by him in his experiment of education.

It is honest since his trysts are met with failures, doubts and also criticism of fellow teachers' complains of their responsibilities of family, securing job and oppression of bureaucracy. All this is the reality of a common human as well and also of a job in a system. The system seems aversive to change and our individual needs and also social expectations of stability, survival which is both economic as well as social in nature. All of us find it challenging to meet the demands of system, job and our own personal needs. But Gijubhai answered this by saying the key lies within. Once we start questioning the system and recognise that it is even our personal need to do our job of teaching in efficient manner. Good teaching is the real satisfaction and key of change.

The first step of experimentation is 'failure' and that is what Gijubhai's tryst or experiment begins with. His first day of teaching made him realise that his plans may not work the way he has planned, as he describes in the first chapter of Divaswapna. Students in his class did not respond to his plans of silence, concentration and discussion

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as he had planned. Our experiments not working, is something that all the primary teachers will agree to. But he with his experimentation could figure out methods of stories and games to make students interested in real concepts and not mere rote memorisation. One can say that he could figure out at least that much success rate of his new experiments that he kept on going while most of us are likely to be belittled by failures. He could also not bring many changes due to social or bureaucratic demands but yet many of the changes he cites are positive signs. Say children might need to prepare for exams but let them continue to read and play and not only focus on paper-pencil tasks alone.

His writing of Divaswapna is especially the weaving of such new ideas, failures, disgrace and solutions. It makes reader feel very normal and humane that job of primary teachers might be all this but bit of real success is also possible.

A very novel experiment by him was to divide the day into activities, games, and stories and not go by strict authority of time table. He happens to use his own instinct to organise his days with the children. Several other features of good and useful teaching practices one can see and find in his works.

Gijubhai, a pioneer of pre-primary education in India was born on 15th November 1885 in Gujarat. He became a pleader in the district court. He left this profession and joined Dakshin Murti Vidarthi Bhavan as a rector and later became the headmaster of the 'Vinay Mandir' (High School). During this time, he observed students and teachers closely but it was the world of little children that was beginning to intrigue and allure him. He finally resigned from the High School to start Bal Mandirs.

Gijubhai's experiment in the area of child education was influenced by the writings of Madame Montessori who was working in the same field, about the same time. However Gijubhai had to discover his own Idiom. Gijubhai finally managed to convince a few parents to send their children to him. In those days, when children would be kept at home till they were seven or eight, it seemed a mad idea to imagine a school for three-year-olds.

Bases of Philosophy: Concept of the Learner: World of Children

Gijubhai had an intense love for children. His philosophy is based on the following observations made by him.

1. Heaven is in the happiness of the child
2. Heaven is in the health of the child.
3. Heaven is in the pleasure of the child.
4. Heaven is in the playful innocence of the child.
5. Heaven is in the songs and humming of the child. .

Gijubhai further said: "A child is a complete person who has intellect, emotions mind and understanding, has strengths and weaknesses-and has likes and dislikes ... let us understand the emotions of the child".

Essence of Bal Mandir :

The word Mandir has specific connotation of child worship

Gijubhai coined the Slogan Baladev Bhava meaning worship of the child.

Educational Principles: Child-Centred Education

1. Education should be child/learner-centred.
2. Child's sanctity should be kept intact.
3. Healthy environment should be provided to the learner.
4. There should be maximum involvement of the child in the teaching learning process.
5. Child should learn in an environment which is full of love and understanding of the child.
6. Child should learn by 'living'.
7. Child should learn by 'doing'.

Environment of the Bal Mandir (Children's School or Children's temple or Children's World)

Bal Mandir in the real sense provided an environment which was very healthful and playful. It was full of happiness for the child. It provided interesting songs. It gave maximum freedom to the child to develop his potential. The teachers showed real concern for the development of the child.

Following were the chief characteristics of the Bal Mandir of Dakshinamurti School of Bhavnagar in Gujarat. Other schools established by him and his associates also made all possible efforts to follow this.

1. Mutual Understanding and Cooperation: Here in the school a 'world' is created where children learn from each other. Older children help the smaller ones to climb up the stairs; fill their own cup with water; find their rickshaws while remembering lines of songs and answers or riddles. Children also spend nights here-so that they can together see and understand the sunset and rise, the moon and stars in the sky and also peel potatoes for the collective dinner. The overnight stay of tiny tots might cause anxiety to parents who drop in to see their children, but the latter are happy to be on their own.
2. Locally made Inexpensive Learning Material. Initially, he implemented the use of tools and methods envisaged by Montessori, but later moved away into thinking of ways that were more inexpensive and he used material which was easily available locally.
3. Sharing Activity with Children. As he was a man who could play with toys, children could overcome their fear of a strange adult and play with him. He could also tell stories, not only of kings and queens, but of animals, plants and naughty children-and the stories invariably ended in small plays, in which he also acted. Mian Tuski and a King in the Rat's Tale are roles which his contemporaries recollect with glee and amusement.
4. Understanding Teacher. To be a good teacher one must listen carefully to what a child has to say-and observe him (her) attentively-but without intruding on the child's effort to do things all by herself (himself).
5. Observing Nature. There was also emphasis on observing nature and walks and outings were a regular feature of the school. Here emphasis was not on tools and techniques of teaching the alphabets or numbers, but on giving the children an atmosphere where they would feel free to express themselves.

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6. Use of the Word Mandir for School: School a sacred place. Evidently, this approach excludes examinations and gradation in the conventional sense. Children have to pass one phase of development before the other. The very fact that labels like 'primary', 'middle' and 'high school' are not used speaks of the attitude of the founders. Instead words like 'Sal Mandir', 'Kishore Mandir' and 'Vinay Mandir' have been preferred; 'Mandir' having specific connotations of worship of the child.
7. Freedom Without Fear. There was no place for punishment to the child. The child was not insulted or jeered. His personality received the utmost respect and care:

Publications :

Gijubhai wrote more than 200 books - 180 books for children and 20 for parents and teachers.

His important publications for teachers and parents are :

1. Prathmik school mein shiksha (Education in Primary School)
2. Mata-Pita se prashna (Questions to Parents)
3. Divaswapna (Day-dreams)

Divaswapana (Day-dreams) is an Educator's Reverie. It was first published in Gujarati in 1931. It established Gijubhai as a luminary in the field of education. It was translated in English in 1989.

Divaswapana is the imaginary story of a teacher who rejects the orthodox concept of the teaching-learning process. The teacher conducted several experiments in a primary school against heavy odds-Cynical teachers, naughty students, indifferent parents. He was able to get the approval of the Department of Education to conduct experiments. He neglected the traditions of teaching from prescribed books. The teacher with untiring patience was successful.

Prof. Krishna Kumar describes the richness of the experiments contained in Divaswapana in these words: "As a reader of 'Divaswapana', one is blown off in gust of joy and curiosity, leaving behind the sadness borne out of one's knowledge of India's colourless, dust-wrapped primary schools. One starts to paint the picture of the future in which the talent imprisoned in the nation's schools will break forth and children will enjoy the pleasure of taking stock of the world round the classroom with their teacher".

Gijubhai is considered as one of the most important writers of children's literature in Gujarati. He wrote books for children keeping in view their aptitudes, feelings and interests. He discarded the traditional approach of writing stories and poems which gave moral sermons. He was keen to give ethical message to children indirectly. He was convinced that children's work should be so forceful that it spontaneously attracts children. They should get joy and pleasure. Ethical message should come to them indirectly.

His books have been translated into several Indian languages. Following are the important books translated and published in Hindi.

1. Nani Ke Ghar Jane De
2. Tad Tad Tadak

3. Bhut Ka Bhai
4. Nayee Aur Poonch Kata Bagh
5. Kani Gauraya
6. Budhia
7. Mendak Ki Shadi
8. Billi Ke Gale Mein Haddia
9. Unt Ke Pair Sade
10. Moorkh Brahman

In his magazine entitled Sikshan Patrika, Gijubhai highlighted the 'World of Children' by writing about the nature of the children and teaching-learning of children.

Diwa Swapna :

Gijubhai's 'Diwa Swapna' written in 1931 in Gujarati, attracted the attention of educators throughout India. Its translations were published in 1934 and 1962. It is a kind of criticism of a primary school. It presents the glimpse of the beautiful and happy nature of school of the future. The whole books are written in the form of a story. The points and events, which have become the theme of this book, are a kind of day-dream for the teachers. In his Bal Mandir, Gijubhai experimented upon principles of psychology and principles of teaching children. How could these principles be made practicable in primary schools was explained in his book 'Diwa Swapna' Gijubhai acknowledge that the teacher of our primary school is ignorant, servant, greedy, money-maker and he does not have self-confidence. By reading this book the teacher may repent, feel sorry and visualize the daydream by raising his level of aspiration.

Learning Method :

Gijubhai was a man who could play with toys; children could overcome their fear a strange adult and play with him. He could also tell stories, not only of kings and queens, but of animals plants and naughty children-and the stories invariably ended in small plays, in which he also acted. "Mian Tush" and A King. In The Rat's Tale are roles which his contemporaries recollect with glee and amusement. There was also emphasis on observing nature and walks and outings were a regular feature of the school. Here emphasis was not on tools and techniques of teaching the alphabets or numbers, but on giving the children an atmosphere where they would feel free to express themselves. To be a good teacher one had to listen carefully to what a child had to say and observe him (her) attentively but without intruding on the child's effort to do things all by herself (himself).

No Examination :

Evidently, this approach excludes examinations and gradation in the conventional sense. Children have to pass one phase of development to the other, The very fact that labels like 'primary', 'middle' and 'high school' are not used speaks of the attitude of the founders. Instead words like 'Ba1 Mandir', 'Kishore Mandir' and 'Vinay Mandir' have been preferred; 'Mandir' having specific connotations of worship of the child. This would at least be a place, where the child would not be beaten; insulted or jeered at.

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No Didacticism :

In this, talking down to a child or didacticism had no place. When Mahatma Gandhi wrote a 'Bal Pothi', laying down the norms of behaviour for children - Gijubhai rejected it as a book meant for children. It is believed that Gandhiji accepted the criticism and prevented further circulation of the book. He also wrote, "Who am I to write about Gijubhai? his enthusiasm and devotion has baffled me. His work is sure to grow." This was in 1939, when Gijubhai died.

Games :

Gijubhai stressed the usefulness of games for providing joy and pleasures to students. He was not in favour of competitions.

Teaching Of Language And Other Subjects :

One book of Gijubhai is about teaching language in a Primary School. He discusses the method of teaching different aspects of language to the children. The salient features of language teaching advocated by Gijubhai are the following:

1. Reading should precede writing.
2. Writing should start with drawing lines.
3. Child should be taught how to hold the pen with fingers, how to turn it, how to control it and how to reach the shape of a letter through drawing absurd shapes.
4. Dictation helps to acquire speed and accuracy of writing after hearing.
5. Poetry Teaching should start with teaching of folk songs. The poems should be simple, descriptive and based on stories. No rote-learning is needed in poetry. The thrill characteristic of the poem should be stressed. There is no need of word meaning in poetry teaching.
6. Grammar is a part of language and should not be taught separately. In his book on day-dreams the teacher Lakshmi Shankar teaches noun, verb, pronoun, adjective etc. through play. Children recognise them by playing with words.
7. History is to be taught by telling stories.
8. Geography is to be taught by using globe.
9. Montessori method is used for teaching mathematics.
10. Drawing should be taught by asking the students to draw the shape of things like table, mango, guava etc.
11. Children's books should contain the life-sketch of religious persons. The principles of religion may be postponed at this stage.
12. Gijubhai emphasized games. He said that children should be allowed to play freely and enjoy the play. There is no question of winning and losing in the games.

Critical Evaluation :

1. Gijubhai's work was recognised by Mahatma Gandhi who said that Gijubhai's devotion and work always attracted him.
2. Kaka Kalelkar appreciated the network of Bal Mandirs established by Gijubhai, He said that by teaching parents about worship of children. Gijubhai stood for child-freedom and child-welfare.
3. Tara Ben compared Gijubhai with fire she said that wherever he went he kindled the light.
4. Madam Maria Montessori was sad for not being acquainted with Gijubhai who stood for child-freedom and child-happiness.
5. Kishori Lal Mashruwala saw a kind of non-violent revolution in education in the work of Gijubhai.

Impact of Gijubhai :

Shri Badheka was greatly inspired by the environment of freedom under which children were trained in the Montessori system. He was encouraged by his co-worker Shri Nanabhai Bhatt who was the Director of Shri Dakshinamurti Bhawan. The work of Shri Gijubhai inspired many persons in Gujrat, Maharashtra and other States. He also greatly influenced ladies like Smt. Tarabai Modak who was also working for the promotion of Montessori system in India.

An important feature of Dakshinamurti Balmandirs is that children in these schools belong to tribal areas also.



Gokhale, Gopal Krishna (1866-1915)

G. K. Gokhale was born on 9 May 1866 at Katluk in Chiplun taluka in Ratnagiri district of the Bombay Presidency (in present Day Maharashtra) in a poor Chitpavan Brahmin family. His father's name was Krishnarao Shridhar and mother's Satyabhama. The economic position of the family was so bad that on Gokhale's father's death, Gokhale could continue his educational career only because of his elder brother's sacrifice of his own education.

After completing his elementary education at Kagal, Gokhale went to Kolhapur (1876). He passed his matriculation examination in 1881, at the early age of 15. He had his University education in the Rajaram College (Kolhapur), the Deccan college (Kolhapur), the Deccan College (Poona) and the Elphinstone college (Bombay). He took his B. A. degree in 1884 and joined the Law College in Bombay, but could complete the LL. B. course.

Gokhale was influenced by Ranade, whom he regarded as his master in political and public life, by G.V. Joshi of Sholapur, a brilliant economist, by Dadabhai Naoroji, who was his hero, and by Pherozeshah Mehta.

Immediately after his graduation, Gokhale joined the Deccan Education Society, Poona, as a Life Member. When the Fergusson College was opened in 1885, he was called upon to lecture to college classes on English Literature and mathematics. He retired in 1902 specifically to devote himself to public life. He wrote a school textbook on Arithmetic.

In 1889 he became a member of the Indian National Congress. In 1890 he was elected Honorary Secretary of the Sarvajanic Sabha, Poona, of which Ranade was the most influential member. In 1893 he became the Secretary of the Bombay Provincial Conference. In 1895 he became Joint Secretary of the Indian National Congress along with Tilak. In the same year he was made a Fellow of the University of Bombay.

In 1896 he became a member of the Deccan Sabha, Poona, founded by Ranade. In 1897 he was appointed the Deccan representative to the Royal Commission known as the Welby Commission. In 1899 Gokhale was elected a member of the Bombay Legislative Council. In 1902 he was elected to the Imperial Legislative Council. In 1904 he was made a C. I. E. In 1905 he was elected President of the Poona Municipality. In 1908 he gave evidence before the Decentralization Commission as the principle non-official.

In 1912 he was appointed a Member of the Public Service Commission. In 1914 he was offered the K. C. I. E. but refused it. In 1905 Gokhale founded the Servants of India Society with the object of training men to devote themselves to the

service of India as national missionaries and to promote by all constitutional means the national interest of the Indian people. In 1908 he founded the Ranade Institute of Economics.

Gokhale's mode of life suggested deep spirituality. He was a front rank Reformer; he deprecated the caste-system and untouchability, pleaded for the emancipation of women and championed the cause of female education. He was also a dedicated social worker and rendered great services in the Plague relief operations at Poona in 1897-98.

In Gokhale's opinion, the introduction of Western education in India, with its liberalising influence, was great blessing to the people. He was a firm believer in the theory that mass education was a prerequisite to national political consciousness. He advocated that primary education should be free in all schools throughout India at once. He held pronounced views on the use of vernaculars and favoured the creation of a separate Vernacular University with English and Sanskrit as compulsory languages.

As for Gokhale's ideas on nationalism and the conduct of the nationalist movement, he sought greater autonomy for Indians who would co-operate with the Government in reforms and obtain through constitutional means and by persuasion an advance over the reforms granted until, finally, India became a self-governing Dominion within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

He was an upholder of national dignity and severely criticized the treatment of Indians in South Africa. While appreciating the benefits of British rule in general, he never failed to criticize unjust policies and highhanded actions of the Government. He characterized the scheme of the Partition of Bengal by Curzon as a complete illustration of the worst features of the system of bureaucratic rule.

In his opinion, the economic results of British rule in India were absolutely disastrous, resulting in a frightful poverty. He bitterly criticized England for introducing Free Trade in India, for it destroyed such small industries as had existed in the country.

According to him, the greatest need of the hour in India was industrial education, and he deplored the fact that there was not a single decent technical institute in the whole country. He, therefore, pleaded for utmost efforts for the promotion of higher scientific and technical instruction.

In his opinion, those who organize funds for sending Indians to foreign countries for acquiring industrial or scientific education or those who proceed to foreign countries of such education and try to start new industries on their return, are noble workers in the cause of 'Swadeshism' which he staunchly preached. In agriculture, he pleaded that old methods should be changed as much as possible. There was a crying need to introduce agricultural science and improved agricultural implements.

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The agriculturist was hampered in his progress by several factors, not the least being chronic indebtedness. He opined that Co-operative-Credit Societies ought to be established to meet the difficulties of the farmer. These Societies should be allowed to have Savings Banks of their own. They would serve a double purpose: the rural classes would have facilities of the deposit of their little savings, thus encouraging thrift; and the Credit Societies would have a new source of financial aid placed within their reach on a commercial and safe basis.

Regarding the textile industry, Gokhale acknowledged that the handloom was doing good work and had some future before it, yet the main work would have to be done by machinery. Only thus, he said, could we stand the competition from the outside world. Since the available capital was small, Gokhale favoured the joint stock enterprise.

In the early part of his life, Gokhale took to journalism. From 1886 to 1888 he contributed articles to the Mahratta, a weekly publication edited by Tilak and devoted to the cause of reform, chiefly political and social, in India. In 1888 Agarkar started the Sudharak, an Anglo -Marathi weekly, and found in Gokhale a willing collaborator.

Gokhale edited the English columns of the paper for four years. From 1887 to 1896, under the inspiration of Ranade, Gokhale took up the Editorship of the Quarterly, a journal of the Poona 'Savajanik Sabha'. In 1895, due to the irritating opposition of the extremist section led by Tilak, Gokhale started a new journal, the Rashtra Sabha Samachar, of which he became the Editor. He made extensive use of the public platform for communicating his ideas on social, economic and political reforms. His first public speech was at Kolhapur in 1886 on 'India under British Rule'. He was only 20 year of age at the time.

Among his famous public speeches on the 'Reduction of Salt Duty' at the Calcutta congress, 1890; the speech on the 'Unemployment of Indian in the Public Services' at the Allahabad Congress, 1892; the Presidential Address at the Benares Congress, 1905; the speech at the National Liberal Club (London) on 15 November 1905 on 'England's Duty to India'; the speech at the Dharwar Social Conference (27 April 1908) on 'The Elevation of the Depressed Classes'; and the speech on 'The Swadeshi Movement', the second of a series, delivered on 9 February 1907, at Lucknow. He made several other speeches from the Congress platform where he was acknowledged as a cogent and forceful speaker. Gokhale made some of his memorable speeches in the Imperial Legislative Council, specially on the Annual Budgets from 1902 to 1908. In his first Budget speech (26 March 1902) he criticized the Government's financial policy regarding Currency Surpluses, high level of taxation, Salt Duty and Army Expenditure. In his next Budget speech (25 March 1903), he advocated reduction of Salt Duty, abolition of Excise Duty on cotton goods, Indianisation of the Services, and increased effort for the spread of education.

In his Third Budget speech (30 March 1904), besides speaking on the subjects he had covered earlier, Gokhale also proposed the lowering of the land-revenue. Speaking on the Budget of 1905, he pleaded for relief to agriculturists. In 1906 he spoke against the surpluses being utilized for the construction of Railways, and pleaded for the promotion of industrial and technical education, the spread of primary education and sanitary improvement.

In his Budget speech of 1907 he urged the total abolition of Salt Duty, advocated free Primary Education and demanded Constitutional reforms. In 1908 he made a fervent plea that a large portion of the revenues be devoted to objects on which the moral and material well-being of the mass of the people ultimately depended. Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, who was Finance Member from 1908 to 1913, said that the one man he frankly feared was Gokhale, the Gladstone of India. He characterized Gokhale, "The Leader of the Opposition".

Gokhale paid frequent visits to England. His first visit (1897) was in connection with the Welby Commission. His evidence was noted for his analysis of the leading facts in the history of Indian Finance, his examination of the constitution and expenditure of the Indian Army and his emphasis on the subordination of the interests of the taxpayers to those of the European services and the exclusion of Indians from the higher branches of public service.

In 1905 he went to England as a delegate from Bombay, in accordance with the resolution of the Congress of 1904, to enlighten British public opinion on the situation in India on the eve of the general election in Britain. His next visit (1906) was to interview the Members of Parliament on both sides and to plead with them for reforms in the administration of India. His fourth visit (1908) was in connection with the proposed Morley-Minto Reforms. His fifth (1912), sixth (1913) and seventh (1914) visits to England were in connection with the Public Services Commission.

In 1906 he came into very close contact with Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India. Morley had a liking for Gokhale and even high personal regard. It was a political friendship to start with, but it developed into a genuine relationship later. Gokhale had great faith in Morley's friendship for India.

Among the early figures in the Indian National Congress Gokhale's position was very high. He was feared by the Government and respected by the people. In politics he belonged to the moderate group opposed to the extremist school led by Tilak. He, however, placed equal emphasis on social reforms as on political progress. For nearly three decades Gokhale dedicated his rare qualities to the exclusive service of his country and his people in a way which few could lay claim to.

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Gokhale's Resolution, 1910 :

As a member of the Legislative Council Gokhale put forward a proposal for compulsory primary education in 1910. The proposal was as follows- "A beginning should be made in the direction of making elementary education free and compulsory throughout the country, and that a mixed commission of officials and non officials be appointed at an early date to frame definite proposal." Following were the important points of the resolution :

- Primary education should be made free and compulsory in the area where 35% of boys were receiving education.
- This provision should apply to the age group of 6-10 years.
- The cost of compulsory primary education should be shared by the provincial Government and the Local Bodies in the ration of 2 : 1.
- A separate Department of education shall be opened under the Central Government to draw up a scheme for the expansion of primary education.
- A secretary should be appointed to organise, supervise and look after the primary education.

Reaction of the Resolution :

As a reaction to Gokhale's resolution, the Government assured him that the subject would receive careful consideration. Consequently Gokhale withdraw his resolution. Later on, the Government accepted only the last three resolutions of Gokhale. A department of Education was established under the Central Government and the secretary was also appointed. The record of the progress of primary education also started to be published by the Government. But the main issue of making primary education free and compulsory remained neglected and unattended by the Government

Gokhale's Bill Of 1911 :

We have already discussed the resolution of 1910 put forward by Gokhale for making primary education compulsory in our country and also with the reaction of the Government shown towards these resolutions. Now we will discuss the major clauses of Gokhale's Bill of 1911. Gokhale was aware of the intention of the Government. He made further attempt to draw the attention of the people of India as well as in England towards the condition of education. On 16th March of 1911, Gokhale presented a Bill in the Legislative Council to make a stronger fight against the Government. The Bill, however, was more liberal and humble than the resolutions placed before and the main objective of the bill was to make primary education free and compulsory in a phased manner. The Bill was basically based on the compulsory Education Acts of England of 1870 and 1876. Important clauses of the Bill may be placed below-

- Compulsory primary education should be introduced in those areas where a certain percentage of boys and girls of school-age (6-10) was already receiving instructions.
- The percentage of attendance should be fixed by the Governor General in Council.
- It should be left to the discretion of local bodies whether to apply the Act to certain areas under their jurisdiction or not.
- Local bodies should be given the right to levy educational cess to meet the cost of compulsory primary education.
- Expenditure on education was to be shared by the local bodies and Provincial Government in the ratio of 1:2.
- For the introduction of compulsion, the previous sanction of the Viceroy and the Governor respectively were necessary.
- Compulsory primary education is intended to apply in the first instance only to boys, though later on a local body may extend it to girls also.
- Guardians whose income is less than Rs. 10/- per month should not be asked to pay any fee for their wards.

Government Reaction towards the Bill :

Gokhale's Bill of 1911 was referred to a select committee of 15 members for examination. The Bill was also sent to the state Governments the Universities and local education authorities for inviting opinion on it. The Bill was taken up for discussion in legislative council on 17 March, 1912. The Bill was debated for two days (March 18 & 19, 1912). Gokhale had raised powerful arguments in support of the Bill. But the Government was not ready to accept the Bill and it was put to vote and was defeated by 35 votes to 13. This did not come as a surprise to Gokhale. He had anticipated the result correctly and earlier in the debate had already expressed the result of the voting in the following majestic words :

My lord, I know that my bill will be thrown out before the day closes. I make no complaint. I shall not even feel depressed. I know too well the story of the preliminary efforts that were required even in England, before the ACI of 1870 was passed. either to complain or to feel depressed. Moreover, I have always felt and have often said that, we of the present generation in India, can only hope to serve our country by our failures. The men and women who will be privileged to serve her by their successes will come later... This bill thrown out today, will come back again and again till on the stepping stones of its dead selves, a measure ultimately rises which will spread the light of knowledge throughout the land.

Thus the Bill, though defeated, but it was a heroic defeat.

Reasons for Rejection of the Bill :

The Government put forth several arguments and they are the following-

- There was no popular demand for introducing compulsory primary education in the country.
- As such, the people of the country were not prepared to accept compulsion.
- The local Governments were not in favour of it.
- The local bodies were not willing to levy educational cess.
- A section of the educated Indians were not supporting the Bill.

There was still scope for extension of primary education on voluntary lines based on the system of grants-in-aid.

Impact Of Gokhale's Bill On Primary Education :

Gokhale's Bill, the first ever attempt to introduce free and compulsory primary education in our country, is a landmark in the history of education in India. Although the Bill was rejected, it focused the attention of the entire country on education. The Government could not entirely ignore the growing popular demand for the spread of mass education. Fortunately, king George V came to India in 1912 and declared a donation of 50 lakh rupees for the development of education in India. When he came to know about Gokhale's Bill, he expressed his dissatisfaction for rejecting the Bill. As a result the Government had to modify the previous policy and declared a new policy with several reforms. Gokhale's Bill created a flutter in the British Parliament also. In the course of the discussion on the Indian budget, the Under Secretary of State for India admitted the need for paying more attention to Indian education. The Government of India passed the resolution on educational policy on February 21, 1913. Between 1910 and 1917 there was an unprecedented expansion of primary education on a voluntary basis .

The outbreak of the First World War, however, delayed the development planned in the resolution. It brought in its train many disasters, but also a promise of political reform culminating in the Government of India Act of 1919 which incidentally stimulated interest in education. Before that some administrative changes in the policy of the Government had been accepted. In 1917 the policy of autonomous administration was declared by the secretary of states for India, Edwin Montague. The Provincial Government formed in different states had felt the necessity of primary education. In 1918 Bethal Bhai Patel had for the first time raised a Bill for making primary education compulsory in the province of Bombay and the bill passed to an Act. Similar Acts were passed in Bengal, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa. Madras and Central Province passed their Acts in 1920. In Assam compulsory Primary Education Act was passed in 1926.

Thus, all these were the outcome of Gokhale's attempt to make primary education compulsory in India. His struggle for compulsion formed an important part of the country's struggle of independence during the British Rule.

While rejecting Gokhale's bill of 1911, the Government promised to extend recurring and non-recurring grants to primary education as it could not ignore the growing popular demand for the spread of primary education. The education department had declared the new policy in the form of Government of India Resolution on February 21, 1913 covering primary, secondary, higher and women education. The major provisions of the Resolution for primary education may be summarised below-

Primary Education :

- There should be sufficient expansion of lower primary schools, where along with instruction in the three R's children should be taught drawing, knowledge of the village map, nature study and physical exercises.
- Simultaneously, upper primary schools should be opened at the proper places and if necessary, lower primary schools should be raised to the status of upper primary schools.
- Local Boards schools should be established in place of private aided schools.
- Moktabs and Pathsalsas should be adequately subsidised.
- The inspection and management of private schools should be made more efficient.
- In most parts of India, it may not be practicable to prescribe a separate curricula for rural and urban, but in the urban schools there is sufficient scope for teaching geography and organising school excursions etc.
- The teacher should have passed vernacular middle examination and received one years' training.
- Provision be made for refresher courses for the teachers of primary education during vacations.
- A trained teacher should get a salary not less than Rs. 12 per month.
- The number of students under one teacher should generally range between 30 and 40.
- Improvement should be made in the condition of middle and secondary vernacular schools and their number should be increased.
- Schools should be housed in sanitary, spacious but in inexpensive buildings

The Patel Act of 1918: The work of Gokhale was taken up by Shri Vithalbhai Patel. As early as 1916, he moved a resolution in the Bombay Legislative Council

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recommending the appointment of a committee of officials and non-officials to frame and submit definite proposals for making elementary education free and compulsory within the municipal districts, with the ultimate object of introducing it throughout the Province. The resolution was lost. But Vithalbai renewed his efforts with greater vigour and, in 1917, moved a bill for the introduction of compulsory elementary education in the municipal districts of the province. Although there was some opposition even now, the Bill was ultimately passed with some modifications and became the first law on compulsory education in India.

In the Next 12 years, eleven more Acts of compulsory education were passed and by 1930, every Province of British India had a compulsory law on its Statute Book.

Later Developments (1930-1961): It will be seen that all the Indian Provinces-which became Part A States under the Constitution of India in 1950-had already passed compulsory education laws by 1930. In the subsequent period of 30 years, most of these were amended from time to time, in the light of experience gained. The details of these amendments need not, however, be considered here.

The erstwhile princely states-most of which became Part B and C States under the Constitution in 1956-did not have such legislation in all cases. As stated earlier, Baroda had a compulsory education law since 1893; Kolhapur passed one in 1917; Kaslunir in 1930; Mysore in 1931; Travancore in 1945; and Hyderabad in 1952. Some other states like Bhopal, Bikaner, or Gondal also had compulsory education laws, although full details about them are not readily available, But even in 1960, there were several areas belonging to the erstwhile princely states in which there was no legislation for compulsory education, a matter on which early action seems to be called for.

In 1960, exactly 50 years after Gokhale had moved his resolution on compulsory education in the Central Legislature, Dr. K. L. Shrimali, the Union Minister of Education, moved the Delhi Primary Education Bill in the Parliament. Its immediate objective was to provide a compulsory education law for the Delhi Union Territory; but it also included up-to-date provisions regarding enforcement of compulsory attendance, which could be taken as a model by the states for amending their compulsory education laws. The Bill became law on the 2nd of October, 1960.

The state Governments have since initiated action to amend their compulsory education laws on the model of the Delhi Primary Education Act, 1960. So far, such legislation has been passed in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Mysore Andhra Pradesh and Assam.

Enforcement of Compulsory Education Laws: The passing of compulsory education laws is the first and the simplest step in a programme of compulsory education. What is of greater importance is their enforcement in practice. In this respect, however,

the progress shown was limited and out of proportion to the great enthusiasm with which these laws were enacted. In 1921, when eight laws for compulsory education had already been passed, compulsion had been introduced only in seven municipal areas, five in Bombay, two in the Punjab and one in Bihar and Orissa. Fifteen years later, in 1936-37, the number of municipal and rural areas under compulsion rose only to 167 and 13,062 respectively and only 0.6 per cent of the urban areas and 1.9 per cent of the rural areas were covered by the programme. Even in 1947, there were only 155 urban and 7,824 rural areas under compulsion. (The apparent decrease was due to partition.) In the post independence period, much better progress was evinced; but even in 1958-59, the latest year for which the statistics are available, the areas under compulsion were 1,198 urban and 56,976 rural and the number of pupils attending schools in compulsory areas was only 7.2 million or 29 per cent of the total enrolment. As compared to the total magnitude of the problem, this progress cannot be regarded as satisfactory.

One of the important sectors in which further work is needed, therefore, is to evaluate existing programmes of compulsory education, to determine the factors which impede a successful implementation of compulsory attendance and to take suitable measures to make the programme effective. This is a fruitful field for research and experimentation by the State Education Departments.

Thus, all these were the outcome of Gokhale's attempt to make primary education compulsory in India. His struggle for compulsion formed an important part of the country's struggle of independence during the British Rule.



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