

COMPARATIVE STUDY ON EDUCATION OF ARVINDO AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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Abstract: *Swami Vivekananda's perspective on education is rooted in the idea that education should serve as a means for individuals to realize the inherent perfection within themselves. He believed that the existing educational system, which primarily focused on imparting information, fell short in enabling individuals to develop self-confidence, self-respect, and the ability to stand on their own feet. For Vivekananda, education was not just about accumulating knowledge but rather about shaping individuals into virtuous, self-reliant, and noble beings. He emphasized the importance of education in molding character, giving life meaning, and contributing to the process of man-making, Sri Aurobindo viewed education as more than just the acquisition of information. While recognizing the value of knowledge, Aurobindo stressed that the primary aim of education should be the development of the human mind and spirit. He argued that education should focus on building the inner faculties and powers of individuals, with a central emphasis on spiritual growth. Aurobindo believed that every human being possesses a divine essence within themselves, and education should facilitate the discovery and nurturing of this divine potential in each individual.*

In essence, both Vivekananda and Aurobindo advocated for an education system that goes beyond the mere transmission of facts and figures. They emphasized the transformative power of education in fostering spiritual development, character-building, and the realization of one's inherent perfection. By promoting the assimilation of noble ideas and the cultivation of the human spirit, they sought to elevate education to a higher purpose, enabling individuals to fulfill their highest potential and contribute meaningfully to society.

Keywords: *Consciousness evolution, Integral education, Cultural dialogue, Spiritual development, Global integration*

1. Introduction

Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo shared profound insights into the nature and purpose of education, emphasizing its transformative potential beyond the mere accumulation of knowledge. Vivekananda saw education as the manifestation of the innate perfection already present within individuals. He criticized the existing educational system for failing to instill self-confidence, self-respect, and the ability to stand independently. Instead, he advocated for an education that not only imparts information but also shapes individuals into virtuous, self-reliant, and noble beings. Vivekananda believed that education should be focused on character-building, making individuals capable of leading fulfilling lives and contributing positively to society. He viewed education as a process of assimilating noble ideas and principles. Similarly, Sri Aurobindo echoed these sentiments, presenting education as a means to develop the inherent powers of the human mind and spirit. He emphasized that education should transcend the mere acquisition of facts and data. While recognizing the importance of various types of information, Aurobindo emphasized that the central aim of education is to promote spiritual growth. He believed that every individual possesses a divine essence within themselves, and education should facilitate the realization and nurturing of this divine potential. Aurobindo viewed education as a process of uncovering and expanding the inherent spiritual dimension within each person.

In summary, both Vivekananda and Aurobindo envisioned education as a holistic endeavor aimed at nurturing the complete development of individuals. They emphasized the importance of character-building, self-realization, and spiritual growth as essential components of education. By promoting these ideals, they sought to transform education into a powerful force for personal and societal upliftment, enabling individuals to tap into their full potential and contribute meaningfully to the world.

2. Objective:

The objective of this discussion is to explore and analyze the educational philosophies of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. By examining their views on education, we aim to gain insights into their beliefs, principles, and approaches towards the process of learning and human development. Through a comparative analysis, we seek to understand the key similarities and differences between their educational philosophies, as well as their implications for contemporary educational practices.

3. Methodology:

This study employs a literature review approach to examine the educational philosophies of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. The methodology involves a systematic review of relevant scholarly sources, including books, articles, essays, and primary texts authored by Vivekananda and Aurobindo themselves. The literature review is conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding of their educational beliefs, principles, and practices.

4. Result and Discussion

Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy emphasizes the holistic development of individuals, aiming not merely to impart knowledge but to cultivate character and self-confidence. He believed that education should not be confined to the accumulation of information but should be transformative, instilling noble values and ideals. Vivekananda saw education as the means to manifest the inherent perfection within individuals, enabling them to realize their full potential.

In Vivekananda's view, the existing educational system often fails to nurture self-confidence and self-respect in individuals. He advocated for an education system that is life-giving, character-building, and man-making. Vivekananda's emphasis on positive education stems from his belief that negative thoughts weaken individuals, and he stressed the importance of encouragement and constructive criticism in fostering improvement. Vivekananda observed the transformative power of positive education

through a poignant example of Irish immigrants in New York. He noted how their self-confidence was restored upon receiving positive affirmation, highlighting the profound impact of education on one's self-perception and societal role. Central to Vivekananda's philosophy is the idea that education should have a clear goal, which he defined as man-making. Drawing from Vedantic principles, he viewed education as the manifestation of the perfection already inherent in individuals. For Vivekananda, true education goes beyond the intellect to encompass moral and spiritual development, leading to the realization of one's divine nature. Furthermore, Vivekananda stressed the importance of physical health and mental discipline in education. He advocated for a harmonious development of the body, mind, and soul, promoting practices such as meditation, concentration, and ethical purity. Vivekananda believed that education should equip individuals with the strength of character and intellectual acumen to navigate life's challenges independently.

In summary, Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy emphasizes the transformative power of education in nurturing individuals' holistic development. His vision extends beyond academic learning to encompass moral, spiritual, and physical growth, aiming to empower individuals to realize their innate potential and contribute positively to society. Swami Vivekananda, a prominent philosopher of India, not only popularized Indian religion worldwide but also significantly influenced educational philosophy in the country. His comprehensive vision of education, encompassing various aspects of life, aims to foster holistic development and societal progress. Vivekananda recognized the importance of science and technology in addressing the challenges faced by developing nations like India. Contrary to viewing science as incompatible with spirituality, he saw them as complementary endeavors in the pursuit of truth. One of Vivekananda's primary objectives in education was character-building and moral development. He redefined morality as rooted in selflessness

and service to others, emphasizing the worship of the divine within every individual. According to him, education should instill values of compassion, empathy, and altruism, making individuals aware of their intrinsic worth and responsibility towards society. For Vivekananda, the ultimate goal of education is the complete development of human personality, nurturing dormant capacities into full fruition. Drawing inspiration from Vedanta philosophy, particularly Advaita Vedanta, Vivekananda believed in the inherent divinity of every being. He viewed education as a means to awaken individuals to their divine nature, guiding them towards self-realization and spiritual evolution. In his philosophy, the pursuit of perfection and divinity is central, with education serving as the vehicle for this transformative journey.

Vivekananda's educational philosophy underscores the vital role of education in national progress and individual empowerment. He emphasized the need for practical education that equips individuals with the skills and strength of character to navigate life's challenges effectively. According to him, education should foster qualities such as resilience, philanthropy, and moral courage, enabling individuals to contribute meaningfully to society. In essence, Vivekananda's philosophy of education encapsulates the holistic development of individuals, combining intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. His vision resonates with the timeless principles of Vedanta, advocating for the realization of human potential and the promotion of social welfare. Vivekananda's enduring legacy lies in his profound insights into the transformative power of education, inspiring generations to strive for excellence and embody the ideals of selflessness and service.

Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy was deeply rooted in his vision of revitalizing Indian culture through the empowerment of its masses. He emphasized the pivotal role of education in national development, asserting that a nation's progress is directly proportional to the spread of education and intelligence among its people. For



Vivekananda, the essence of national advancement lay in the goodness and greatness of its individuals, attributes largely shaped by education. Central to Vivekananda's educational vision was the concept of "total human development," achieved through the refinement and harnessing of eternal human energies. He believed that education should not only impart intellectual knowledge but also instill humanistic values and character strength. Vivekananda advocated for a holistic approach to education, blending intellectual and moral development to produce individuals who are intellectually sharp, morally upright, and socially responsible. Vivekananda's humanistic perspective on education stemmed from his profound spirituality and his recognition of the divine potential within each individual. He envisioned education as a means to awaken and unfold the humanistic and divine possibilities latent within people, elevating their consciousness to effectively engage with their external, natural, and social environments. Despite his spiritual inclinations, Vivekananda was pragmatic about the role of education in national development. He emphasized the importance of education in strengthening democracy and fostering citizenship. He believed that a vibrant democracy relied on the education of its citizens to be informed, responsible, and patriotic participants in the governance process. Vivekananda advocated for an ethical foundation in democratic politics, stressing the need for education to cultivate democratic tolerance and a sense of true freedom among the populace. He viewed education as a tool for creating enlightened democratic citizens who are not only politically aware but also deeply committed to the welfare of their nation.

In Vivekananda's educational philosophy, individual and social aims were intertwined, each complementing the other. He advocated for the holistic development of individuals, encompassing physical, mental, social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. At the same time, he emphasized the importance of education for citizenship, national integration, and societal strengthening, viewing

education as a cornerstone of nation-building. Ultimately, Vivekananda's educational philosophy aimed to create individuals who not only achieved personal excellence but also contributed meaningfully to the betterment of society. His vision of education transcended mere academic knowledge, emphasizing the cultivation of character, values, and a sense of social responsibility. Vivekananda's synthesis of individual and social aims in education reflects his profound understanding of the interconnectedness between personal development and societal progress.

5. Aurobindo's Educational Philosophy

Aurobindo Ghosh, a prominent philosopher of the 20th century, envisioned an educational philosophy deeply rooted in the essence of Indian culture and the evolving needs of its people. His philosophy, influenced by Vedantic principles, emphasized the holistic development of the human mind and spirit rather than mere accumulation of information. Aurobindo rejected the notion of blindly imitating Western educational models and instead advocated for an education that resonated with the Indian soul and culture. He believed that education should not be confined to rote learning or adherence to past traditions but should evolve with the changing needs of society and the individual. According to him, the central aim of education should be the cultivation of the powers of the human mind and spirit, transcending mere acquisition of knowledge.

In his work "A National System of Education," Aurobindo challenged the dichotomy between modernism and antiquity, arguing instead for a harmonious integration of indigenous wisdom with contemporary knowledge. He emphasized the importance of nurturing India's innate potentialities and fostering a sense of continuity between its past, present, and future. For Aurobindo, the goal of education was not merely to impart scientific knowledge or language proficiency but to instill a deep understanding of India's cultural heritage and its relevance in the modern world. Aurobindo emphasized the need for a balanced approach to education, one that

incorporates both indigenous wisdom and modern advancements. He recognized the value of learning from other cultures while also preserving and revitalizing India's own rich traditions. He advocated for a curriculum that seamlessly integrates scientific knowledge with the spiritual insights of ancient texts, fostering a holistic understanding of the world. Central to Aurobindo's educational philosophy was the idea of self-discovery and self-realization. He believed that education should enable individuals to explore their inner potential and discover their true purpose in life. This emphasis on inner growth and spiritual development distinguished Aurobindo's philosophy from conventional educational approaches, which often prioritize external achievements over inner transformation. Aurobindo's vision of education extended beyond academic excellence to encompass the cultivation of character, values, and a sense of purpose. He viewed education as a means of personal and collective transformation, empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to society while remaining grounded in their cultural roots. In essence, Aurobindo's educational philosophy emphasized the holistic development of individuals, rooted in the timeless wisdom of Indian culture and adapted to the needs of a rapidly changing world. His vision continues to inspire educators and scholars, highlighting the importance of education in fostering not only intellectual growth but also spiritual and moral development. Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy revolves around the interconnectedness of the universal mind, the individual soul, and the national spirit within the framework of a national system of education. He believed that education should not be a rigid structure but a dynamic process that nurtures the unique potential of each individual while fostering a sense of collective identity and purpose. Central to Aurobindo's concept of education is the idea of providing a free environment for children to develop their latent faculties to the fullest. He emphasized the importance of creativity and educational expression in all subjects and

activities, aiming to infuse them with a new life and spirit conducive to the development of a "superhuman being." Aurobindo outlined several principles for curriculum development, emphasizing the need for engaging and relevant content that promotes both mental and spiritual growth. He advocated for a curriculum that motivates children to explore knowledge from diverse perspectives and encourages creativity and constructive capacities. At different stages of education, Aurobindo prescribed a comprehensive curriculum that includes subjects ranging from language and literature to science and vocational skills. His vision encompassed a holistic approach to learning, integrating academic subjects with practical skills and artistic expression. In addition to curriculum design, Aurobindo articulated principles of good teaching that focus on guiding and supporting students in their quest for knowledge rather than simply imparting information. He viewed the teacher as a facilitator and guide, whose role is to inspire and encourage students to explore their innate potential and acquire knowledge for themselves. Aurobindo's philosophy of education emphasizes the need for schools to adopt a learner-centered approach that respects the individuality of each student and allows them to discover themselves at their own pace. He criticized the imposition of uniformity and prescribed courses in traditional schooling, advocating instead for a more flexible and personalized learning experience. Overall, Aurobindo's educational philosophy seeks to create a harmonious balance between the individual and collective aspects of education, empowering students to realize their full potential while fostering a sense of belonging and connection to their cultural heritage and national identity. His vision of education as a transformative journey towards self-discovery and self-realization continues to inspire educators worldwide.

The passage critiques the traditional educational paradigm prevalent globally, emphasizing its shortcomings and advocating for a shift towards a more holistic and learner-centric approach. It

argues that conventional education systems primarily focus on the transmission of information rather than catering to the needs and abilities of individual learners. Instead of fostering cooperation and personal growth, schools prioritize competition and the attainment of grades. This critique is not limited to India but extends to educational systems worldwide, which are described as reductionist, materialistic, and lacking spiritual enrichment. In response to these deficiencies, the passage suggests exploring alternative educational initiatives rooted in Indian tradition, which prioritize collaboration, student engagement, and personal development. Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy is highlighted as offering insights into addressing these issues. He advocated for creating a free and nurturing environment for children to explore and learn at their own pace, emphasizing the importance of self-discipline over imposed rules. Aurobindo's approach sought to integrate Western scientific rationalism with Eastern metaphysics, providing a holistic framework for understanding reality and human evolution. Central to Aurobindo's philosophy is the concept of Integral Yoga, which encompasses both personal spiritual growth and collective social evolution. This approach emphasizes the interconnectedness of physical, social, and metaphysical dimensions, aiming to foster a deeper understanding of oneself and one's role in society. Furthermore, the passage discusses Aurobindo's post-independence endeavors, where he devoted himself to advancing Integral Yoga and promoting human unity and global evolution alongside his collaborator, Mirra Alfassa, known as "the Mother." Their efforts aimed to transcend national boundaries and foster a sense of planetary consciousness, highlighting the importance of collective responsibility in addressing contemporary global challenges. In summary, the passage critiques traditional educational paradigms for their limitations and advocates for a more holistic and learner-centric approach rooted in Indian tradition. It highlights Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy as offering valuable insights into addressing these shortcomings and

fostering personal and collective growth in alignment with the evolving needs of society.

6. Conclusion

The conclusion reflects on the profound connection between education and culture as elucidated by Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. Vivekananda emphasized the evolution of consciousness beyond the mind, reaching higher levels such as truth consciousness or super consciousness. This expansive view of consciousness paved the way for the evolution of humanity towards a higher state, often termed as the emergence of the superman. In contrast, Aurobindo's conception of man emphasized the integral development of various aspects of personality, encompassing the psychic, mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions. Integral education, according to Aurobindo, should address all these facets, acknowledging the interplay between matter and spirit in human existence. Despite both being influenced by Western thought and Christian ideas, Vivekananda and Aurobindo responded differently to these influences. Vivekananda's perspective, while influential, may not offer the most conducive basis for dialogue between Hinduism and Christianity due to its distinctiveness. On the other hand, Aurobindo's teachings provide a more suitable starting point for such interfaith dialogue, as they offer a broader and more inclusive framework that resonates with both Eastern and Western perspectives.

Although Aurobindo's ideas may have been less influential in the Western world compared to Vivekananda's, they offer a more nuanced and adaptable approach to addressing the influences of Western education and thought. Aurobindo's teachings provide a fertile ground for fostering dialogue and mutual understanding between different cultures and religions, emphasizing the unity of humanity amidst diversity. In essence, while both Vivekananda and Aurobindo contributed significantly to the discourse on education and culture, Aurobindo's approach appears more conducive to fostering dialogue and reconciliation between different worldviews. His

holistic and integrative vision offers valuable insights for navigating the complexities of a rapidly changing globalized world, promoting harmony and understanding across diverse cultural and religious traditions.

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