

Gandhi & Aurbindo's Role in Upliftment Of Education System In Indian Economy - A Comparative Study

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Abstract

To the outside world, India is symbolised in the field of philosophy by the two personalities- Gandhi and Aurbindo. In a country where all the aspirations and hopes are centered around the individuals and where personalities make history. It is logical that the hopes and the aspirations of the people, their national will and ideals should be represented by each of the two eminent sons of India. If Gandhi ji was one of the most powerful and magnetic personalities of his times, being a man of mission and having an eventful life full of actins, the other (Sri Aurbindo) was a synthesis of the genius of Asia and the greatest living yogi of India. Therefore, it is really very difficult to make a comparison between these two enlightened souls of India. Both were the devotees of Indian culture and philosophy and they dedicated their lives for the all round uplift of the Indian economy.

Key words:- *Role, Education, Development, Economy.*

Introduction

What can be more fascinating study to us in the present age than that of a comparision between the educational philosophies of Gandhi ji- the great soul, the Mahatma and Sri Aurbindo- the genius, the great yogi. If the approach of the former is moral and practical, that of the latter is essentially spiritual and inward. Their ecomic .political, social and educational philosophies are essentially the manifestations of their respective approach. With the essential result that through their educational philosophies have much in common, yet they differ markedly in certain respects. The facts is that the goal of their educational

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philosophies are almost the same, the difference lies only in their approach, that is, they employ different means to attain the same common educational ends. To sum up the aims of education as propounded by Gandhi ji are more realistic and practical having an earthly touch where as the aims of education laid down by Sri Aurbindo are some what vague and utopian in character.

Aims of Education :

The ultimate aim of education, according to Gandhi and Aurbindo, is the all round development and harmonious development of man's personality. Gandhi ji was of the view that mere liberal education cannot develop the personality of the child. Education must have vocational touch. Rather education must have vocational base. Gandhi ji said that education must make a man self-supporting. It must make him stand on his own feet. Gandhi ji seems to have no faith in the doctrine of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. He thought that an education which cannot fill the empty stomach of the man is not worth its name. therefore he made craft as the centre of his educational system. But Gandhi ji did not neglect liberal education altogether. Rather he wanted vocational and liberal education to go together. But enabling an individual to earn his living is not only the aim of education, it must also make him a social and moral being. The individual must adopt moral and social values in his life. Moral aims of education should be given an important place in any system of education. Education must make the man to follow the universal principles of love, truth and non-violence. The individual should practice these truths in his actual life. But the application of these fundamental principles should not be confined to the four walls of the nation, it should also touch the internationalism. Education should create a sense of brother-hood in the man. It must make him realize that he is an important member of the world family. Therefore, he is under obligation to contribute according to the best of his abilities and capacity to the welfare of mankind. In fact, Gandhi ji's system of education attempts to produce a man who is true satyagrahi having deep faith in the fundamental principles of love, truth and non-violence and practice them in his actual life; is a true patriot and nationalist having faith in internationalism and who is ready to sacrifice

his individual interests for the sake of national interests and national interests for the sake of international interests.

To Sri Aurbindo the true aim of education should be to develop one's latent powers and enable him to enter into right relation with life, mind and soul of his nation as well as with the total life, super mind and soul of humanity. Sri Aurbindo gives comparatively less importance to the bread earning aim of education. According to him, true education has higher goals to attain. Education should lead the man to the attainment of higher goals of life. Vocational aims of education are the bi-product of education, they are of secondary importance. Education should aim at building the power of mind and spirit of human being. Education should aim at enabling the individual to find super mind in himself. It must make him aware of the divine element that exists inside him. In other words, education should not only touch the outer man but inner man also which is more important. During his political days, Aurbindo's educational thought attempted to produce true nationalists which could emancipate the motherland from alien rule. Nationalism was not a political programme to him, but a religion, and this religion should be taught to the children through education. However in the later years of life when he resigned from politics, he started giving more importance to internationalism which includes whole mankind. His nationalism was replaced by internationalism and he started considering himself as a member of the world family. His contributions would no longer be confined to a particular nation i.e. India but the whole world would be benefitted by them. Therefore, through education, he also wanted the people to create an international outlook in them and accept the principle of universal brother hood. Education should make one realize that he is an important member of the larger world body. Therefore he must contribute to the welfare of the entire human race. According to Sri Aurbindo nationalism and internationalism are not two contradictory terms, rather they are helpful to each other in the sense that they supplement the work of each other. Therefore, education us develop an international outlook and a sense of fellow being in the individual. In fact, through education Aurbindo wants to develop the internal as well as external personality of the man. He wants education to produce

a nationalist with an international outlook who has a strong urge to follow moral principles and to find a divine element in him. The development of consciousness of this super mind and utilization of this mind for the development of an integrated human personality is the true aim of education and thus ultimately aiming at making the individual's life divine.

Content of Education :

The content of education, according to Gandhi ji, must be related to the attainment of educational objectives as laid down by society. The content is the mean if the objectives are the end. If we want to attain a good objective, our mean should be equally good and pure. Since Gandhi ji made education as the craft centered, the craft occupies an important place in his curriculum. He introduced craft in education because he wanted the child to be self supporting. He was of the firm view that political awakening among masses could never come unless they are self-supporting. Involvement in the political life pre-conceives some standard of living. The introduction of craft in education will certainly bring economic well being and then political awakening among the common masses will be possible. In other words, he emphasized vocational education. Sri Aurbindo on the other hand, gave only subsidiary importance to vocational education. But like Gandhi ji he certainly gave importance to direct experience as a means of learning. Knowledge gained through experience is the real knowledge. That is why he recommended educational tours and trips to natural places. But Gandhi ji gave more importance to the practical study by living in the thick of life and does not want to introduce anything in education which is beyond life. But Aurbindo essentially attempts to introduce those things in education which lie beyond immediate life. Content of education must have a divine touch. Both Gandhi ji and Sri Aurbindo wanted to introduce prayer in the curriculum. It should be a sincere prayer and there should be no demand behind it. They were of the view that prayer made in a proper way essentially gives internal enjoyment. Prayer has nothing to do with material enjoyment. Therefore, they wanted the child to enjoy this eternal enjoyment. Similarly both wanted religious and moral education to be an important part of education. Gandhi ji said that education divorced from

religion and morality is not worth its name. but he did not want to teach some particular religion to children but a universal religion which includes the fundamental truths of all religions or which is a synthesis of all religious. Similarly, Aurbindo believed that an intellectual education divorced from perfections of the moral and emotional nature checks the individual and national progress. Religious education, according to Gandhi ji, will purify the hearts of the children. While to Sri Aurbindo moral and religious education will help one to realize the higher mind that resides within him, it will also make him true nationalist. Along with moral education Aurbindo also gave an important place to physical education as compared to Gandhi ji. If the educational scheme of Gandhi ji is economic based, that of Aurbindo is physical based. Unlike Aurbindo Gandhi ji did not advocate special physical and gymnastic exercises for the children, rather he was of the view that physical education is involved in the craft centered education. Aurbindo was of the view that sensory training should be a part of curriculum as knowledge is gained through them. Gandhi ji attached more importance to the work done by hands. Training of the mental and logical standards or facilities is also given an important places in educational scheme of Sri Aurbindo. He was of the view that in order o awaken mental faculty. Physical base is a must. But Gandhi ji did not give direct importance to the development of these faculties, rather these should be out come of the practical work performed by the students.

Methods of Education :

Methods of education occupy an important place in any scheme of education. To a great extent the success or failure depends upon the type of methods we employ for the attainment of results. Gandhi ji attached much importance to the methods of education. He was of the view that only pure methods can bring pure results. Therefore he wanted his methods of education to be based on the fundamental principles of love, truth etc. he wanted to impart any type of knowledge to the child through practical work. And that is why he gave an important place to craft in curriculum & also made craft as the sole method of education. The handicraft is not to be the necessary commitment of the existing methods of imparting education, but it is to be the centre of all education. All

training will be principally through the medium of craft. The use of printed material and lectures will be reduced to the minimum. Sri Aurbindo too have similar views about the methods of education. He also wants the child to learn through experience. But he does not make craft as the method of education. He wants the child to get knowledge through his own experience and self-study. He considers educational tours, trips and excursions to the natural places as an important part and means of education. Whereas Gandhi ji recommends ancient Indian crafts like Charkhas etc. In education, Aurbindo also recognizes the importance of machinery in education and it is chiefly because of the influence of the west upon him. In place of craft, Sri Aurbindo gives more importance to painting and drawing in education because these have a direct affect on the inner man that resides with in.

Role of teacher :

Though the child has been made the centre of education in Gandhi's scheme of education yet the role of the teacher is not ignored. He has given a dignified and responsible position to the teacher. Gandhi ji's idealistic aims exalt the position of the teacher but his democratic concepts serve as a check on teacher's authoritarian role. He wants the teacher to be an inspiring friend, philosopher & a guide to the educand. He should have deep faith in the fundamental principles of love, truth, ahims and others. He should practice them in actual life. The work of the teacher is not of purely academic nature, it is more practical in nature. Besides abstract teaching, he wants teacher to do things with his own hands also. He is not allotted some particular duty, rather he has to perform a number of functions including manual ones. Gandhi ji wants the teacher to be an example before the children whom they are to follow. Gandhi ji also admit that the role of teacher in education cannot be replaced by anything else. On the other hand, the role of the teacher according to Sri Aurbindo is based on the assumption that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor, he is helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. Like Gandhi ji, Aurbindo too was not in the favour of imposing something on the child because both of them were strong supporters of freedom. To Aurbindo, the teacher does

not impart knowledge to the pupil; but he shows him how to acquire knowledge for himself. The teacher in Gandhi's scheme is more concerned with the practical work. He is to look for both external & internal development of the child. In Aurbindo's scheme, it is the inner personality which is the chief concern of the teacher. Thus Gandhian teacher is more practical as compared to that of the latter. The teacher is assigned an important role in both the cases and he has the same goal to attain i.e. development of child's personality but through different means. If in Gandhi ji scheme of education the teacher is to help the child to develop his personality through practical work, in Aurbindo's scheme, the teacher is to help the child to develop his personality through realizing the divine element i.e. super mind in him.

Freedom and discipline :

So far as the concept of freedom and discipline is concerned, both gave similar views. Both being democrat and strong supporters of freedom want to impart education through democratic means. They are against the methods of education based on fear, suppression and teacher's domination. The child should be free from all restrictions and teacher's domination and impositions. But it does not mean making the child indisciplined. Gandhi ji and Sri Aurbindo do not regard freedom and discipline contradictory, rather they are helpful to each other. They must go side by side. If they want child's life to be free from all restrictions, they also consider an indisciplined life not worth living. A free life is always a disciplined life. But by discipline they do not mean outer discipline, as is the view of a common man, but the inner discipline which aims at controlling the inner actions by the individual himself i.e. controlling his undesirable feelings, emotions and thoughts. Education should make the individual to lead a free as well as disciplined life. Gandhi ji wanted the freedom for the child because in a free environment, the all round development of child's personality is possible. But Sri Aurbindo wanted freedom for the child because he believed that the freedom is a must for realizing the divine element that exists in man. Freedom is a must for realizing the super mind. He taught that once the individual has realised the 'higher being in him, his personality will automatically be developed.

Thus the main urge that made these two great personalities the champion individual freedom, is all round development of man's personality.

TO CONCLUDE :

The productivity of the craft and the social consequence thereof have been well brought out by Gandhi ji in his scheme of education. There is a definite pursuance of a socio-economic plan based on truth and non-violence. Education has a mission behind it. The mission is practical and therefore, his schme is free from the charge of vagueness of unrelated generality and escapism. But education, according to Sri Aurbindo is the process through which mind can grow and reach out of itself and establish a yoga. The approach of Gandhi ji is that of a Karan yogi. He evolved a philosophy of action suite to the needs and abilities of a common man. But the approach of Sri Aurbindo is that of a Gian Yogi and his philosophy centres around a higher purpose in life, the purpose being the realization of super mind. What he wanted was to indianite education. Education should produce true nationalists with an international outlook. Their feet should remain in their country, but their eyes should survey the whole world. Thus his educational philosophy is integral and all inclusive. If we have a look at Pondicherry Ashram of of Sri Aurbindo, we find that it is very near to the modern educational institutions, but it has roots in the old Indian philosophy based on integral yoge. If Gandhi ji's educational philosophy is craft centered, Aurbindo's is yoga centered. However it is believed that Sri Aurbindo's educational philosophy meeds Gandhian touch in order to make itself more vigorous, more influencing on social life and to save itself from the charges of vagueness and social inconsequence.

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