

**Upanishadic Influence on Educational Thoughts of
Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo**

***A thesis submitted for the fulfilment of
Ph.D. Degree of
Department of Education, University of Kalyani***

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This thesis along with a hymn below is dedicated to the sweetest as well as never-ending memory of my mother, Kalyani Sengupta – although it was the saddest thing that she withdrew from her body and worldly life last year but with a glimmering of light that while crossing the bar with unnumbered remembering of the Divine her psychic being forthwith seemed to embark for a further voyage from the little life of mind and body to a larger possibility by unfolding her greater self through spiritual evolution – of which, according to Sri Aurobindo we have as yet only the first intimations :

Clinging to the Divine she faces everything cheerfully

Her living plasticity also makes her carefree undoubtedly.

Ceaseless consecration gives her more and more light

Even when giving birth to her only child.

Unflinching devotion makes her more awakened and poised

Without which her progress would have remained unavailed.

Made of an immortal substance as man is

An urge to set centripetal force he feels.

Although he knows that ego does 'nt usually spare

He keeps constant contact with the Transcendental power.

While his ego's centrifugal force moves him away

Unquestioned surrender alone shows him surely a way.

Regular awakening of the inner being is needed

Only then one's divine elements will be unveiled.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Date

It is a pleasure to certify that the thesis entitled **“Upanishadic Influence on Educational Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo”** in fulfillment of the requirement for the Ph.D. Degree of the University of Kalyani, Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal is a record of investigation carried out by Sanjiban Sengupta under my guidance and supervision and the researcher investigates the matter with immense sincerity with his original effort.

This thesis or its any part, thereof, has not been published or used for any other Degree from any other university.

(DR. DIBYENDU BHATTACHARYA)

Preface and Acknowledgement

At the time of submitting the thesis I have no hesitation to mention that the task of analysing the materials relating to the Upanishadic influence on the educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo is indeed a very tremendously vast job that has obscured and unfathomable depth as well. And as such, I do not exactly know how much satisfaction my examiners and readers will have from my work. However, I have tried hard to do it sincerely.

As the scientists of the modern world have been able to change the face of the world by the discovery of the subtler energies like atomic power which is still not discernable to the ordinary human mind similarly it may be pointed out here that the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic age discover that the exercise of the spirit can enable man to transform him and make him capable of utilizing his faculties with more and more perfection and make him vibrant with dynamic powers. During my study in respect of this topic it occurs to me that the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic age for generations together have been putting all sorts of man-making efforts in view of creating leading personages and scholars capable of guiding new generations in their turn by not only replenishing all the human faculties but also unleashing the latent higher light or consciousness in man. In the

process ancient India emerges as a land vibrating with creativity on the one hand and on the other as a powerful torch-bearer with effulgent light among the nations of the civilised world for centuries together.

During the renaissance in India like the galaxy of stars among the luminous personages Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo appear on the scene one after the other as great teachers as well and remind us that ‘Mother India is not a piece of earth, she is a power’ and for the rebirth of the people of this land all of them severally come forward with man-making programme keeping in view the light that was lit at the dawn of the Indian civilisation as a clarion call – of course, all of them severally approaches the problem and commences to frame educational ideas separately for experimenting.

All of the three great educators Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo have laid emphasis on helping the scholar – young or grown-up to find his deeper self within and give it a chance to come forward as the leader of the march for taking up most of the business of education towards realisation of the potentialities already in man. All these great teachers are aware that many of the outward features of the ancient system of instruction are not suited to modern requirements although many of the fervid lovers of the past have a demand for some such things. According to these three teachers the fundamental principles of teaching which the modern system of education cannot offer us are for all time

and the ancient discipline can only be replaced by introduction of a more advanced discipline of higher efficacy.

Like the ancient Rishis of the Upanishadic age Rabindranath looks upon the little learner as an ensouled being and he has a greater destiny that waits him in his front. He is in need of entering into a sacred life for which he must prepare himself right from the beginning of his life for the unfoldment of knowledge that lies in his deeper self within.

In his man-making educational programme Swami Vivekananda sticks to his idea that education is the manifestation of what is already in man. The mechanical ways of modern life have reduced man to the status of a machine and have undermined lofty and transcendental ideas of man. He feels that such evils ought to be eradicated through proper education. As awakening of man to his spiritual self can alone do a lot in this regard Swami Vivekananda is bent upon spreading spiritual education and surely his ideas are based on Brahmacharya and Upanishadic ideals.

To Sri Aurobindo the discovery of the deepest being which is hidden in human nature is the first necessity which develops the capacity of the psychological being of the scholar towards a positive realisation of his latent powers which cannot be had from the external routine method of the modern mechanical view of life. He has categorically said that he is not in favour of retaining the outward features of the ancient education system but with great

emphasis he observes that the fundamental ideas of the Upanishadic education system still holds good and it is for all time.

The cuckoo is called the harbinger of the spring and in the same way the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic age may as well be looked upon as the harbingers of a new humanity struggling to be born with a greater destiny out a self-centered life of pettiness and discord. The seer-teachers of the Upanishadic Education System perhaps for the first time here make the young learners capable of attaining the higher consciousness – greater in height and depth through the exercise of the deeper-self within that might enable them to exceed themselves and make them many times more powerful in their body, life and mind. Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo, well versed as they are in their study of the Upanishadic system of education equally come forward to give serious thinking on the issue and severally put efforts in their own light.

Considering the panoramic profundity of some such research-work without hesitation I may confess here that indeed I am no match for such a huge and significant theme, – what has been scribbled here is nothing but an unskilled attempt only with a view to drawing attention of talented scholars to take up the lofty task for doing proper justice to it and make all concerned enlightened on the issue from a pedestal of effulgent light.

In preparing the thesis it is my sincere pleasure to express my indebtedness to all my predecessors and I would also prefer to mention here that I have received inspiration and encouragement and assistance and cooperation from a number of revered persons and institutions.

Indeed, I deem it to be my proud privilege to carry on my thesis work under the supervision of Dr. Dibyendu Bhattacharya, Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal. But for his meaningful counseling and patient hearing and careful checking my work should not have been completed. No word is sufficient to express my deep respect to a teacher of his stature.

I also take the opportunity of paying respect to Dr. Shreekanth Gour, Head of Department, Department of Education and Prof Sumit Mukherjee, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal for their blessings and inspiration and giving permission for submitting the thesis.

I am indebted to all my revered teachers for their valuable teachings that inspired me throughout my academic career. Profound gratitude is due to all of them.

I am thankful to the authorities and staff of the Departmental Library, Education Department, University of Kalyani and Library of Govt. Teachers' Training College, Malda and Govt. Training College, Hooghly etc. for their help and cooperation.

I pay my respectful homage to my loving father, Sri Biswanath Sengupta, my friend, philosopher and guide, and my mother, Late Kalyani Sengupta and my uncle Sri Narendra Nath Sengupta who are constant sources of inspiration to me throughout my career. Soma, my wife also tried to assist me. Indeed, my little daughter Sohini is always a source of inspiration to my work.

Lastly, I am particularly grateful to my friend Prof. Somnath Manna, Associate Professor of Psychology, Institute of Education for Women Hastings House, Kolkata and Prof. Banamali Tripathi, Ex. Officer-in-Charge, Govt. Training College, Hooghly for their humble co-operation and inspiration from time to time.

Kolkata, the 21st February, 2014

(Sanjiban Sengupta)

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CHAPTER – I

Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The word 'education' has been derived from a Latin word '*educare*' which means bringing up children physically and mentally. Though education nowadays is regarded as school instruction only, it does not cover the whole programme as it does not exhaust the whole being of a man. As a part cannot be looked upon as the whole, the prevailing school education alone also does not mean a comprehensive scheme of training of a dynamic psychological being having latent subtler forces and light in his body, life, mind and soul. In fact, in the true sense of the term education is supposed to mean an attempt to unleash powers that lie hidden in all the faculties for bringing out a full-fledged man and as such one should have vital, mental, ethical training as well as the exercise of the spirit for discharging his responsibilities successfully as a human being.

The Upanishad which is chiefly a formidable part of the Vedas constructs the foundations of an education system that leads one to the resplendent growth of human life. It holds that a teacher should have faith in the inherent potentialities of each and every young learner. In fact, our early education system that prevails in the Upanishadic age stresses for meaningful self development.

Many of the leading educators of our times also have now been laying great stress on the aspect of self development in education.

The Vedic as well as Upanishadic system of education aims at the knowledge of the physical world (*bhur*), the vital world (*bhuv*), and the mental world (*swa*). It also aims at covering the knowledge of the fourth world (*maha*) which Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda & Sri Aurobindo make its right use in their respective scheme of education. Rabindranath very often tries to bring home to the students and inculcate in them the significance of the ideas of Gayatri Mantra & Brahmacharya whereas Swami Vivekananda has shown equal zeal for making the students interested in the exercise of Brahmacharya. And in the educational schemes of Sri Aurobindo we also come across the effulgent light of the Upanishadic ideas and he develops such ideas in the scheme of ‘Integral Education’. Here the researcher aims at throwing light on Upanishadic education and its influence on the educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda & Sri Aurobindo –

আধুনিক ভারতে যে মনীষীরা লুপ্ত ভারতীয় ঐতিহ্যের পুনরুজ্জীবনে সাহায্য করেছেন এবং এ দেশের শিক্ষার মধ্যে তা প্রতিফলিত করবার চেষ্টা করেছেন তাঁরা সকলেই প্রধান কয়েকটি উপনিষদ ও গীতার দ্বারা বিশেষভাবে প্রভাবিত। ... আমরা তিনজন শ্রেষ্ঠ শিক্ষানৈতার কথা আলোচনা করব :

বিবেকানন্দ, রবীন্দ্রনাথ ও শ্রীঅরবিন্দ। দেখা যাবে এই তিনজনের চিন্তার মূলভিত্তি ও কাঠামো উপনিষদের মধ্যে আছে। উপনিষদের প্রভাব এই তিনজনের উপরই যথেষ্ট প্রবল।^১

(Those men of genius of modern India that came forward to initiate reawakening of the obsolete Indian tradition in order to have its impact on education of this land, in fact, all of them had been especially influenced by some of the leading ideas of the Upanishads and Gita. ... Here we are going to hold a discussion on three such preceptors namely, Vivekananda, Rabindranath and Sri Aurobindo. It will be clear that the basic ground works and structures of the thoughts of all the three lie in the tenets of the Upanishads. And there is a predominating impact of the Upanishad on all of them.)

On the whole what occurs to us is that the time-old man-making spirit of the Upanishadic education system is a theme of fundamental importance to all the three great educators viz., Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. And the most striking feature of this trend is that a rearising force and light is found to be tremendously running and illumining the educational thoughts and works of all these three educationists all through. All of them are fully convinced that a greater humanity has been waiting in the elements of the little

1 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.73 (SS)

learners and if such young learners are offered a congenial as well as inspiring infrastructure or environment and on the other hand if they are also equally willing and able to do what is necessary on the occasion they are sure to come out with flying colours as many times more powerful human beings. Kireet Joshi, the great author writes –

The living influence of the Upanishads can be evidenced by the fact that the greatest leaders of Indian renaissance have attempted to study the Upanishads and have declared their contemporary relevance to the needs of developing modern India, and particularly in developing a new system of education in India. The writings of Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati, Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo have underlined the importance of the Upanishads, and have even advocated the redesigning of contemporary Indian system of education in the light of the Upanishads².

1.2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY :

The system of education that prevails now in the length and breadth of this land of ours has chiefly been constructed in such a way that as if it were a legacy of the colonial rule in British India. Sixty four years have elapsed since we

2 Joshi, Kireet (2009). Review of Education in the Taittiriya Upanishad, p.92 (SS)

attained our independence. The country needs a kind of education that is not yet being conceived in the real sense of the term – that can be proper to the Indian soul and at the same time fit to modern requirements³. Here people must be on their guard lest one should commit serious mistakes. Hence, education if it is to be, not a machine-made fabric⁴ its central aim must be building of the powers of the human mind and spirit – it is the evoking of the knowledge and will and the power to use knowledge, character and culture⁵. If India has to play a leading role in meeting the challenges of the contemporary civilization and crisis we have to redesign our education system right now.

1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The researcher has undertaken this research with some objectives which are enumerated here as under:

- ❖ To study the methods and practices of the Upanishadic education system which may still have some bearing even today.
- ❖ To bring into view the educational philosophies of these three educators viz. Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo along with the impact of the Upanishadic system of education on them.

3 Joshi, Kireet (2005) Good Teacher and the good pupil, p.39 (SS)

4 O'Connell, K.M. (2003) 'Rabindranath Tagore on Education, p.1 (SS)

5 The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol.VI, p. 38 (PS)

- ❖ To investigate how the three great educators are influenced by the educational ideas of the Upanishadic education in respect of creating their respective centres of education and their congenial environment.
- ❖ To evaluate how the three great educators are influenced by the educational ideas of the Upanishadic education in respect of the attitudes and the relationship of the teacher and the taught.
- ❖ To trace out the living influence of Brahmacharya of the Upanishadic education system on the educational ideas of these three great educators
- ❖ To find out the outlines of the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo for reconstructing of contemporary Indian system of education in the light of the Upanishads.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ❖ Why the methods & practices of the Upanishadic education may have some bearing even today?
- ❖ What are the educational philosophies of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo which have the bearing of the Upanishadic system of education?
- ❖ How the three great educators are influenced by the educational ideas of the Upanishadic education in respect of creating their respective centres of education and their congenial environment?

- ❖ How the three great educators are influenced by the Upanishadic education in respect of the roles of the teacher and the taught?
- ❖ How does the concept of Brahmacharya of the Upanishadic education system influence these three great educators?
- ❖ How these three great educators are influenced by Upanishadic education for reconstructing the contemporary Indian system of education?

1.5. EMERGENCE OF THE PROBLEM :

Lord Macaulay's statement reminds us that we have behind us a history of manifold greatness which has been transgressed very diplomatically for enslaving the race. His words ran thus:

I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and I have seen not a person who is a beggar, nor a thief, such wealth I have seen in this country, such moral high values. People of such calibre that I do not think we will ever conquer this country, unless we break the very back born of this nation which is her spiritual and cultural heritage and therefore, I propose that we replace her own ancient education system, her culture for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own and they will loose their self-stream and

*their native self-culture and they will become what we want them a truly dominated nation.*⁶

The atrocities of the colonial education policy haunt the researcher as to what is at the basis of the greatness of the masses of people in India? It is surely the ancient education system on the one hand and the time-old great literature of this land and the social & cultural fabric that move people to nobler ideas with colossal creativity. The educational system of our ancients that moves our people to lofty ideas and the vibrant as well as diverse creativity in India have inspired the researcher to take up the study of the Upanishadic education system and its influence on the educational thoughts of great educators like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo for rekindling the dormant luminous light and help awakening our future generations in the sunlit path that might lead us creating a new humanity.

1.6. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The researcher takes up the gauntlet and engages himself into a through study of the obstinate problem that has changed the scenario of the educated Indian mind. The object of some such study is surely to open an avenue for understanding the educational views of the Upanishads and their influence on the

6 Lord Macaulay, British Parliament, 1835, February, 2 (SS)

great educationists like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo. This is why the researcher undertakes the research work entitled “*Upanishadic Influence on Educational Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo*”.

1.7. SOURCES OF RESEARCH MATERIALS:

The researcher has prepared his thesis on the basis of data available in the books and journals. The data which are available in the form of the text have been treated as primary source. The relevant portions of the Upanishads and the original writings of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo in the form of articles, speeches etc. on education have been treated as the *Primary Source (PS)* and writings on the same texts or topics by great authors have been referred to as the *Secondary Source (SS)* here. The ideas of the great educationists as mentioned in our research are taken from their original books generally known as collected works or selected works etc. and the writings on their educational thoughts by great authors and scholars in the books, journals etc. have been treated as the *Secondary Source*.

1.7.1. PRIMARY SOURCES (PS)

To develop the research meaningfully the researcher goes through the original text as available today. For example :

- ❖ The original Upanishads viz.,
 - Brihadaranyaka Upanishad
 - Taittiriya Upanishad
 - Katha Upanishada
 - Chhāndogya Upanishad
 - Isa Upanishad etc.
- ❖ The original works of Rabindranath Tagore (রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর)
 - Published by Govt. of West Bengal
 - Viswabharati Publication
- ❖ The complete works of Swami Vivekananda,
- ❖ The original works of Sri Aurobindo
 - The S.A.B.C.L. (Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library)
 - The complete works of Sri Aurobindo (hard copy, digital version)

1.7.2. SECONDARY SOURCES (SS)

The researcher takes help from a number books and journals which require a long space for enumerating them. References will help a lot in this regard. To mention a few of those are :

- ❖ Books of various authors of national & international repute on education system of the Upanishads
- ❖ Educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore by distinguished authors
- ❖ Educational thoughts of Swami Vivekananda by distinguished authors
- ❖ Educational thoughts of Sri Aurobindo by distinguished authors

1.8. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The present study is historical in nature.
- ❖ Studying the Upanishadic texts on educational idea
- ❖ Searching the original educational thoughts and methodologies of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo reflected as primary source.
- ❖ Finding out the authentic writings of different authors regarding their relevant views on the proposed topic as Secondary Source.

1.9. DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY :

The researcher points out the following things as delimitation of the study :

- Although the edifice of the Upanishadic education system has been built upon the experiences of the Vedic era the researcher has not entered into the discussion of the Vedic education.

- The researcher here has tried to discuss on Rabindranath Tagore's fundamental thoughts on education in the light of educational thoughts Upanishads and his (Rabindranath Tagore) efforts towards their implementation in the Brahmacharyashram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan. But in this thesis the researcher has not made any attempt to discuss in respect of the development of some such thought and work.
- On education Swami Vivekananda lays emphasis on helping learners to manifest what is already in them by resorting to Brahmacharya and some such ideas of the Upanishads. The researcher has striven hard to focus on this point only and he has not spared time to discuss on any other thing. No attempt has been made here to enter into the discussion on the execution of Vivekananda's educational ideas.
- The researcher has brought under his purview Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education particularly showing the educational thoughts of Sri Aurobindo which coincide with that of the Upanishad. But the researcher has not brought any other thing for discussion. Nor any light has been thrown here on the aspect of its implementation.

CHAPTER : II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

CHAPTER : II

A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction :

A survey of available literature shows that quite a number of studies have been made on Upanishadic education & Rabindranath Tagore, Upanishadic education & Swami Vivekananda and Upanishadic education & Sri Aurobindo from which the present thesis has derived much guidance in respect of making constructions of its different aspects . To mention a few :

- 2.1.** Pushpanathan, T. (2013) in “*Rabindranath Tagore’s Philosophy of Education and its influence on Indian Education*”⁷ discusses about Rabindranath Tagore’s conception of education which bears clear imprint of Upanishadic philosophies. The aim of education is self-realization. As he is a poet and a saint his imagination and insight can feel the presence the universal soul in his himself and in the beings of all others. Hence, the goal of education according him is to enable the learners to draw out the subtler forces of the inner being for the purpose of developing them as a full-fledged human being.

⁷ International Journal of Current Research and academic Review, Vol.-1, No.-4, Nov.4, 2013,
ISSN 2347-3215

- 2.1.1. Background: Here the researcher finds education in the light of Rabindranath Tagore as envisaged in the Upanishadic system of education of ancient India where self-education, self-realization and leading towards perfection have been given immense importance and priority than passing exams., acquiring Degrees, achieving economic self-sufficiency through pursuing some professions etc. etc.
- 2.1.2. Methodology: Although this is a theoretical article but like a qualitative in nature it takes clues from the very essence of the man-making education of Rabindranath Tagore which is again replete with ideas of Upanishadic system of education in view of constructing a balanced academic discipline for future generations in that light.
- 2.1.3. Principal Question: The present paper attempts to study whether there is any necessity for self-education, self-realization and integral education in the matter of executing a man-making programme.
- 2.1.4. General Conclusion: As man has the potentialities of progressing towards the super human being the goal of education here is self-education, self-realization. All his problems can be removed by the balanced educational programme. And so to say, such a conception of education must bear some fundamental imprint of the Upanishadic system of education.

2.2. Singh, Ravi and Rawat, Singh Sohan (2013) in “*Rabindranath Tagore’s Contribution in Education*”⁸ discusses Rabindranath Tagore’s educational theory wherein Rabindranath believes that education attains at complete manhood so that all his powers may develop to the fullest extent towards his perfection.

2.2.1. Background: Here the researcher gives us to know that by education the great poet does not mean merely gaining some information but making our life in harmony with the surrounding world – in the absence of which India has been suffering in all the fields of life.

2.2.2. Methodology: It is a theoretical article and it is based on Rabindranath Tagore’s educational philosophy especially emphasizing and giving stress on all the aspect of human nature which has been the chief aim of education in the age of the Upanishads.

2.2.3. Principal Question: The present paper attempts to study what influences the great poet to frame his indigenous cum lofty system of education when sets up his Ashram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan.

2.2.4. General Conclusion: Rabindranath Tagore inspires us that all the faculties of human being should be cultivated in a good education system. Side by

8 VSRD International Journal of Technical & Non Technical Research, Vol.-IV, Issue VIII, August 2013 e-ISSN 0976-7967, p-ISSN 2319-2216

side with the advancement of the Western civilization on the basis of the scientific enquiry we have to recollect and reframe our system of education in the light of self-realization and spiritual knowledge which lead man to the highest pitch of perfection according to great poet Rabindranath Tagore.

2.3. Karlekar, Hiranmay (2012) in “*Rabindranath based his ideas of Humanism on the Upanishads*”⁹ discusses Rabindranath Tagore’s educational philosophy which is based on the teachings of the Upanishads. The author analyses Rabindranath’s philosophy of humanism in the light of the Upanishads. He traces out Rabindranath’s theory of man-making ideas based on teachings of different Upanishads viz., Mundaka Upanishad, Swetasvtara Upanishad, Chhāndogya Upanishad, Isha Upanishad and shows how his thoughts are closely related and influenced by the Upanishads.

2.3.1. Background: Rabindranath Tagore’s educational thoughts and the Upanishadic teachings on education.

⁹ The Daily Pioneer, New Delhi, Spiritual Meditations, The Philosophy of Harmony, d/7377, May 19th , 2012, New AgeIslam.com (<http://newageislam.com>)

2.3.2. Methodology: It is a theoretical article. It is based on the educational thoughts of Gurudev Rabindranath and the identical teachings of the Upanishads – this is the goal of the article.

2.3.3. Principal Question: The present paper attempts to study the education principles in different Upanishads and Gurudev Rabindranath’s educational thoughts especially when he sets up Ashram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan.

2.3.4. General Conclusion: Human being has to demolish the colonial attitude as well as arrogance that leads to violence. So education should play a vital role in reaching the highest goal. What the Upanishad teaches on education in reaching the lofty ideal Rabindranath Tagore also endorses the self-same aim in his different articles regarding the real development of man’s inner nature for attaining the highest object of knowledge.

2.4. O’Connell, Kathleen (2002) in “*Rabindranath Tagore : Envisioning Humanistic education at Santiniketan (1902-1922)*”¹⁰ discusses Rabindranath Tagore’s educational theory and practice and points out the significant development that evolves from Brahmacharyashram, based on

10 O’Connell, Kathleen (2002) “Rabindranath Tagore : The Poet as Educator” Calcutta, Viswa-Bharati, Ed.1st, 2002

the educational system of the ancient India especially of the Upanishadic age into Viswa-Bharati.

2.4.1. Background: Historical context within which Tagore formulates his educational vision as well as some of his formative influences and the historical origins of the Brahmachrayashram at Santiniketan.

2.4.2. Methodology: Basically it is a theoretical article. But the work may also be called as qualitative in nature.

2.4.3. Previous Studies: Das, Anathnath, Santiniketaner Ashramer Sikshadarsha, 1989; Ray, Satyen, Sikshacinta, 1988; Mukherjee, Himangshu, Education for Fullness, 1962.

2.4.4. Principal Question: The present paper attempts to study according to Rabindranath Tagore the whole being of man in its realization of different aspects of truth from diverse points of view and ideal through manifestation of the spirit which is chiefly based on the Upanishadic system of education in general.

2.4.5. General Conclusion: When Rabindranath Tagore likes to set up Ashram vidyālaya at Santiniketan he has a plan to open a model school of ancient resident guru-school type for training Brahmacharins and developing karma-yogis like Tilak and Paranjpe. The researcher here works on the ideals and thoughts of the great poet by which he is impressed and

influenced for that kind of education and discipline that our forefathers follow. One has to stay in the guru's house with hardship, rigid regulation and minimizing all aspects of self-importance.

2.5. Dasgupta, Uma and Ray, Anandarup (2009) in “*Rabindranath and His Contemporary Relevance*”¹¹ discusses how Rabindranath Tagore is greatly moved by the ancient Indian ‘Tapovan’ system of education which he acknowledges through his writings and letters. The author draws our attention that the great poet believes that the spirit of harmony and monistic aspects of truth should be encouraged during Brahmacharyashram, so to say in the formative period of the learner. Integrating the positive knowledge of the West with the self-reliance of a complete manhood of the Upanishadic educational system is the chief concern of Tagore's educational thought. The researcher here discusses all the aspects with apt references.

2.5.1. Background: World's continuing problems of religious, polarization, militarism etc. etc. have led the scholar think for the solution and finally Rabindranath's theory of integrity for natural development during the

11 Parabaas, August 7, 2009 @ Rabindranath Tagore, Viswa-Bharati, Kolkata, 2009

period of Brahmacharya in the lap of the nature, so to say in the ‘Tapovan’ inspires to take up this fundamental work.

2.5.2. Methodology: It is qualitative in nature. It guides the other scholars and thinkers to think seriously over the matter and resolute to initiate for the real development of forthcoming generations.

2.5.3. Principal Question: The present paper attempts to study whether ‘Brahmacharyashram’ in ‘Tapovan’ at Santiniketan gives any light to the Nations for rebuilding a new and comprehensive scheme education for full-fledged manhood in future.

2.5.4. General Conclusion: He has greatly emphasized the need for a congenial environment, as it obtained in the Tapovan -like place wherein the closest intimate community of the teachers and students as in the hermitage of the past establish an ideal and truth-finding academic discipline. This is why he sets up his school in the ‘Tapovan’ at Santiniketan with only five students including his own son Rathindranath and during his setting up his school he emphasizes the monistic aspect of truth and the idea of Brahmacharya which have been reflected in his essay ‘Tapovan’ in 1909 (in English translation ‘The Message of the Forest, 1919).

2.6. Murty, V. Kumar (2013) in “*Education According to Vivekananda*”¹²

discusses on Swami Vivekananda’s educational philosophy emphasizing ‘the role of the information in education’, ‘developing our talents’, ‘role of the teacher’ and ‘social implications’ in the light of Vedanta philosophy. He has analyzed how Vivekananda has laid great stress on the potentialities and limitations of the child as the role of education is to help a child in respect of discovering his potentialities and limitations. He shows how Vivekananda owes to the ancient Upanishadic education system when he (Vivekananda) focuses on the soul’s development and need of concentration and ultimately gives the utmost importance of the education of the real man within.

2.6.1. Background: Here the author discusses education in the light of Swami Vivekananda mostly through his (Vivekananda) lectures during 1890-1902.

2.6.2. Methodology: Basically it is a theoretical article based on Swami Vivekananda’s education philosophy with a view to making us concerned about the real goal of education which has to be obtained by attaining perfection of the latent faculties already lying with the children.

12 Vivekananda Review, Vol.-1, No.-1, Feb., 2013 ©Vedanta Society, Toronto

2.6.3. Previous Studies: Kripamayinand Swami (2013) Swami Vivekananda, Swami Vivekananda, The future of India.

2.6.4. Principal Question: The present paper attempts to study whether there is any human being alive who does not have latent faculties and skills within.

2.6.5. General Conclusion: We have to give our child proper education and try to make him a perfect instrument so that he can lead his life towards the light of the supreme which Upanishadic education system has already brought to our views. From this point of view concentration of mind helps him a lot as he (Vivekananda) himself suggests that ‘a child teaches itself’.

2.7. Nithiya, P. (2012) in “*Swami Vivekananda’s Views on Philosophy of Education*”¹³ discusses on Swami Vivekananda’s line of thought on education which is purely based on self-development and manifestation of what is already in man in the light of the Upanishadic system of education. He gives us to know that Vivekananda’s education lays stress on developing character, mental powers and intelligence by self-

13 Asian journal of Multidimensional Research, Vol.1, Issue 6, 2012, ISSN 2278-4853

confidence, self-reliance among the individuals and it is the only way to unfold the dynamic qualities already in the child.

2.7.1. Background: Here the researcher of the Department of Philosophy, Pondicherry University has shown interest in finding that Vivekananda like Gurudev Rabindranath recommends ancient Upanishadic method of the exercise of the spirit as the fundamental basis of education and he (Vivekananda) also is in favour of a comprehensive education under the guidance as well as intimate contact of the teacher.

2.7.2. Methodology: It is a theoretical study. It is on Swami Vivekananda's education philosophy. It covers means of education, aims of education, principles of education – physical education, medium of education, moral education, education of masses, man-making education, self-education etc.

2.7.3. Previous Studies: Singh, Y.K. Philosophical Foundation of Education, Johri, Pradeep Kumar, Educational Thought, Pani, S.P. and Pattnaik, S.K. Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi on Education, Singh, Y.K. Philosophical Foundation of Education.

2.7.4. Principal Question: The thesis referred to here prefers to study and find out the essence of Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy which is

originally a man-making theory along with an outline for its implementation.

2.7.5. General Conclusion: Education should develop character, mental powers, intelligence and inculcate self-confidence together with self-reliance; should develop the child's physical, mental and spiritual; should lay emphasis on Brahmacharya as well as concentration which is the key to all the knowledge.

2.8. Swami Prabhananda (2003) in "*Swami Vivekananda*"¹⁴ discusses on Vivekananda's educational philosophy as a training of the higher mind which helps developing the latent powers of human faculties for the growth of a deeper sense of the universal values that can be had under the able guidance of a true teacher. What the great thinker lays emphasis is the subject of the researcher. Training of the mind instead of accumulation facts is of great importance. What the Upanishad teaches in regard to education is of highest value. To be perfect in body and mind is the sole essence of education which has been discussed by the researcher with ample examples and cases.

14 Prospects, vol.XXXIII, No.2, June, 2003

- 2.8.1. Background: Here the researcher mentions education in the light of Swami Vivekananda with the theory of Israel Scheffler and Patanjali.
- 2.8.2. Methodology: Although it looks like a theoretical article but it is Qualitative in nature.
- 2.8.3. Previous Studies: Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, *Swami Vivekananda's Education* (1993); Israel Scheffler, *Of human potential*, Boston (1985); G.H. Bantock, *T.S. Eliot and education* (1970); Edgar Faure et al., *Learning to be* (1972); Will and Ariel Durant, *The lessons of history* (1968).
- 2.8.4. Principal Question: The thesis attempts to study whether Brahmacharya and concentration-based ancient Indian Vedantic education (Upanishadic) system has any impact on Swami Vivekananda's educational philosophy wherein man-making programme is of the highest importance than the idea of accumulation of facts.
- 2.8.5. General Conclusion: After a thorough discussion the researcher comes to the conclusion that education plays a vital role in curing the evils in society. In fact, he holds that without unfolding the latent forces it is hardly possible to help the future humanity to move towards a positive direction. Hence, in his opinion education should be integral and comprehensive so that it encompasses all the aspects of human life as

man is capable of manifesting what is already in him. The need of the hour is to give a congenial environment for real education.

2.9. Bhattacharya, Dr. Dibyendu & Barman Pranab (2012) in “*Vivekananda’s Thoughts on man-making through moral values and character development and its present relevancy in school education*”¹⁵ hold discussions on Vivekananda’s thought in education and point out that Vivekananda lays emphasis on attaining the ultimate goal of human life by dint of manifesting the divine power already in man and they are of opinion that Vivekananda’s educational programme aims at this idea on the basis of Vedantic (Upanishadic) philosophy. According to them Nation-building through man-making programme which means a harmonious development of the body, mind and soul is the key-note of Vivekananda’s education.

2.9.1. Background: Here both the researchers find education as the guiding principle that is capable of setting aside the crisis in regard to social injustice, disregard for others, conflicts and lack of morality that man has been facing in the contemporary world.

15 International Journal of Multidisciplinary educational Research, Vol.1, Issue 2, June 2012
ISSN 2277-7881

2.9.2. Methodology: It is a theoretical one and it is based on Swami Vivekananda's education philosophy for finding a way out from the crisis of humanity through a dynamic educational programme envisaged by Vivekananda which can motivate our students to think and perform in the right direction in the most crucial hour.

2.9.3. Previous Studies: Jyotirmayananda, Swami (2000), *Vivekananda: His Gospel of Man-Making with a garland of tributes and a chronicle of his life and times, with pictures* (4th Ed.), ISBN 81-85304-66-1; Brannon, D. (2008). Character education - a joint responsibility (2008); Britzman, M.J. (2005) Improving our moral landscape via character education: an opportunity for school counsellor leadership; Colgan, C. (2003). Making character education work; Lickona, T. (2004). Character matters, how to help our children develop good judgment, integrity, and other essential virtues, Viadero, O. (2007). Proof of positive effect found for only a few character education programs; Wood, J. (2012). Character Building Improves Quality of Education.

2.9.4. Principal Question: The present paper strives to study Vivekananda's thoughts and ideas on education which is purely Vedantic (Upanishadic) in respect of character-building, man-making, attaining human values etc. etc. and its relevance in the present day world.

2.9.5. General Conclusion: Education plays a vital role in developing character among students and it is not possible without proper educational framework to do away with the evils that have been damaging human values for long. So we are in need of a balanced educational programme for future generations in the light of concentration-based Vedantic (Upanishadic) philosophy.

2.10. Behera, Santosh Kumar (2012) in “*Educational Ideas of Swami Vivekananda: perception of the essential nature of a teacher, the taught, methods of teaching and the discipline*”¹⁶ discusses on Swami Vivekananda’s educational philosophy giving emphasis on the essence of true education, efforts to be made for manifesting the knowledge within, the role of concentration in man-making programmes, essential nature of methods of teaching, import of Gurukul system of education and Brahmacharya.

2.10.1. Background: Here the author studies education in the light of Swami Vivekananda’s thoughts on education, laying emphasis on the role of the teacher, role of the students, methods of teaching etc.

16 Samwaad : e-journal, Vol.-1, No.-1, 2012, ISSN : 2277-7490

- 2.10.2. Methodology: Although theoretical in nature this article is based on Swami Vivekananda's education philosophy with a view to making us concerned with the real goal of our life.
- 2.10.3. Previous Studies: Ganesan, V. Shanmuge (2007), Educational Ideas of Swami Vivekananda: Perception of the Essential Nature of a Teacher and the Taught.
- 2.10.4. Principal Question: The present paper raises a few questions as to what methodology to be followed regarding the role of the teacher, the role of the students and the type of the teaching.
- 2.10.5. General Conclusion: To disseminate ideals of the Vedanta (Upanishad) philosophy Swami Vivekananda likes to inspire the young generations for achieving higher goals of human life. He emphasizes on the inner discipline, control over the senses, concentration of mind and observance of Bramacharya. The researcher here takes clues from the principles of Vivekananda and gives suggestions for formulating the methods in real situations.

2.11. Sanyal, Indrani & Ganguly, Anirban (2011) in “*Education, philosophy and Practice*”¹⁷ focuss on the supreme aim of the new race, struggling to be born out of its chaos and confusion in Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Education. The Upanishadic model of education which has been pursued by Sri Aurobindo is viewed as the only way for the real development of the humanity. Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Education thus means an integration of different aspects into a comprehensive whole that the various aspects are integrated in such a way that the learner may be transformed into a higher being which has also been the chief aim of the education system of the Upanishads according to the two reseachers under discussion.

2.11.1. Background: Here the researchers find a chance for real development in the Sri Aurobindo’s ‘Integral Education’ system which helps integrated growth and its reflection in every sphere of human life which in their opinion may also build the foundation of solid culture in the minds of the learners for eradicating violence, indiscipline, corruption, lawlessness, parochialism etc. etc. that the world has now been facing.

17 Centre of Sri Aurobindo Studies, Jadavpur university, Kolkata-700032, Published by Decent Books, New Delhi, Ed.1st , 2011, ISBN:1081-86921-56-7

- 2.11.2. Methodology: Basically it is a theoretical thesis based on the ideas and thoughts of Sri Aurobindo and his Integral Education which is needed for the new humanity.
- 2.11.3. Previous Studies: Banerjee, Debasish (2011) “Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Education in contemporary higher education”, Das, Manoj (2008) “Education for a fiath in the Future”, Ganguly, Anirban (2011) “Nationalists’ Quest for Deeper Principles of Education”.
- 2.11.4. Principal Question: The present research paper attempts to study the innovative teaching-learning approach on educational thought of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother concerning the goal of integrating all the human faculties in view of transforming into a full-fledged human being.
- 2.11.5. General Conclusion: This research paper has thrown light on the Upanishadic model of education as well as the Integral Education of Sri Aurobindo for the real development of a human being as both the education philosophies believe that though man seems to be the highest among the created beings he is not the last word in the evolutionary process. A greater destiny waits him in his front if he wills. So he has to strive hard for the manifestation of the totality in him.

2.12. Wexler, Judie Gaffin (2011) in “*Evolving Dimensions of Integral Education*”¹⁸ discusses the concept of Integral Education and the experience of the California Institute of Integral Studies on the basis of the case study for intellectual and personal including spiritual growth which is originally based on ancient Indian system of education especially in the age of the Upanishads at higher education stage. The researcher here shows through the case study that incorporation of the exercise of the spirit which has a tradition in India since the age of the Upanishads is essentially needed for personal and subjective development for both the students and the faculty. On the basis of her statistical data she holds that one cannot really ignore the exercise of the spirit in one’s life as one has to face high complexity, rapidly changing environment and global interdependence etc. etc.

2.12.1. Background: Besides being the Academic Vice President, Dean and a member of CIIS for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine this researcher who is also a Ph.D. holder in Sociology has shown interest here in innovation in spiritual science in the light of the Upanishads and Sri Aurobindo in respect of finding its effectiveness in the field of higher education.

18 Interview Review, June 2011, Vol.7, No.1

- 2.12.2. Methodology: Analysis of a survey of California college students and graduates from 2001 to 2010 on the basis a Quantitative data shows that comprehensive and full-fledged education facilitate the integration of body, mind and spirit in a significant way (88.1%).
- 2.12.3. Previous Studies: AACU (2007), *College learning for the new global century*. Washington, DC: Association of American Colleges and Universities; Astin, A.W. (2004), Why spirituality deserves a central place in liberal education, *Liberal Education*, 90, 2; Chauduri, H. (1977). *The evolution of integral consciousness*. Wheaton, Ill: The Theosophical Publishing House.
- 2.12.4. Principal Question: The present research attempts to study how students can acquire knowledge in a better way with the help of the exercise of the spirit as well and particularly develop thinking in an integrated manner – keeping all the faculties active by maintaining holistic tradition also along with the critical view and creativity.
- 2.12.5. General Conclusion: This research discusses about the concept of integral education for enabling students to face complexity of modern life. Integral growth i.e. the integration of body, mind and spirit is significantly necessary. Like the ideas of the Upanishadic system of education and Integral Education of Sri Aurobindo respect and care for

the souls of the students is equally necessary for a comprehensive education system without which problems of the complexities of modern life cannot be solved. Mere acquisition of the objective knowledge regarding the exteriorized aspect of human life would not be sufficient. Man has to explore the light of wisdom in him and without which knowledge would remain incomplete. Hence, an integrated approach covering both the outer and inner trends has to be thought of.

2.13. Mohanty, Sunil Behari (2008) in “*Theory & Practice of Integral education*”¹⁹ based on the conviction that schooling is now too often a trivial pursuit or a mechanical exercise. This work advances arguments to the effect that the inherent value and substance of learning has been lost and it needs to be restored in the light of ancient Indian context i.e., Vedas & Upanishads.

2.13.1. Background: The aims and objectives and the quality of implementation through the management of an institution has much influence on the quality of the role of the teachers and taught as well as its curriculum. The institution for integral education has to be managed by people who are

19 “Indian National Education - Past and Present” (2008) & “Theory & Practice of Integral Education”, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry-605002, Edition-2nd, 2007, ISBN 978-81-904888-0-8

yogis and do not belong to any parochial ideas. They should be real seekers of truth. Only then can the institution grow up.

2.13.2. Methodology: The researcher started his studies in historical approach. But later he had to take his research in a different way which he finally described as Qualitative in nature.

2.13.3. Previous Studies: Delors, J. (Chairman) (1996) *Learning: The Treasure Within*. UNESCO, Paris, Pavitra (1976) *The Education and the Aim of Human Life*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, Purani, A. B. (1961) *Evening Talks*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

2.13.4. Principal Question: How to bring out all the wealth of the human life covering all the aspects with full advantage and proper integration is the principal question raised here.

2.13.5. General Conclusion: Acquiring of various kinds of information should not be the only aim and objective of education. Its central aim is to develop the powers of the body, vital, mind and spirit as it is found in the comprehensive education system of both the Upanishad system of education and Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education system of education. Education proper should always aim at evoking knowledge and will and power for an improved manhood.

2.14. Sean Esbjörn-Hargens (2007) in “*Integral Teacher, Integral Students, Integral Classroom: Applying Integral Theory to Education*”²⁰ discusses integral education in the context of educational theory & practice and gives thoughtful reflection on both conventional and alternative movements in education and points out how educators can integrate the best of the conventional and that of the alternative approaches to education integrally on scientific basis and formulate an effective synthesis of the education system of the Vedic as well as Upanishadic system of education of ancient India with the modern education system of the West.

2.14.1. Background: We come across a number of schools which not only lay emphasis on the perspectives of metaphysical philosophies enunciated by Rudolph Steiner, Alfred North Whitehead and like others but also on the exercise of the spirit envisaged by Jiddu Krishnamurti and Sri Aurobindo in consonance with the ancient Indian system of education.

2.14.2. Methodology: The work is basically theoretical in nature. It is a guideline for both conventional and alternative educational philosophies.

2.14.3. Previous Studies: Steiner, R. (1983). The essentials of education. Trans. J. Darrell. London, Rudolf Steiner Press; Steiner, R. (1997). The Roots of

20 ‘AQAL: Journal of Integral Theory and Practice’, 2007, 2 (2), 72-103

Education. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press; Krishnamurti (1975) Dialogue on Education, Ojai, CA: Ojai Press. The Mother, (1985). On Education. Pondicherry, India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

2.14.4. Principal Question: How can educators offer the best education system for the children of the posterity?

2.14.5. General Conclusion: The Integral approach provides important ways and means to transcend the prison of a life. Education in its conventional methodology cultivates on capabilities of thinking and perceiving on new lines. Thus, both conventional methods and integral approach offer the best for the tiny taught, so to say generations to come.

2.15. Joshi, Kireet (2005) in “*The Good Teacher and The Good Pupil*”²¹ discusses about the education theory of the Upanishadic age wherein the most fundamental object of education is to prepare the pupil to free himself from the limitations and attain that level of knowledge where he can dwell permanently in existent reality, in light, in immortality and wherein the teacher & pupil develop their modes and methods of exploring knowledge, discovering the aim and meaning of life, and practising disciplines like Brahmacharya for arriving at psychological

21 Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational research, Auroville, Ed.2nd, 2005

perfection and wherein true knowledge depends on the cultivation of powers of concentration on the one hand and on the other Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education wherein the manifestation of Spirit in Matter leads to an unprecedented perfection and wherein mankind has to take right choice of its destiny in his evolutionary crisis.

- 2.15.1. Background: In arbitrary, despotic, impatient, ill-tempered situation the great educator is searching a new avenue for the new generations in the light of Sri Aurobindo and that of the Upanishadic system of education.
- 2.15.2. Methodology: Basically it is a 'Qualitative' research programme for the future humanity in pursuance of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education in consonance with the theory of the educational system of the Upanishadic age.
- 2.15.3. Previous Studies: Joshi, Kireet (2005). 'The Aim of Life'; Joshi, Kireet, Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational research, Auroville, Ed.2nd; Joshi, Kireet (2009). 'Taittiriya Upanishad', Auroville Press, ISBN 978-81-8990-01-0.
- 2.15.4. Principal Question: The present research attempts to study the innovative teaching-learning approach on the educational thought of Sri Aurobindo whose theory is also identical to the Upanishadic educational ideas.

2.15.5. General Conclusion: The ancient Upanishadic system of education strives to control crudities of human nature and helps one towards the generous ideal of an accomplished humanity for refinement and harmonious growth of the powers of all its faculties for a lofty change. The life of the pupil begins with a resolve to impose upon himself the ideal and practice of Brahmacharya which means not only physical continence but also a constant burning aspiration for the acquisition of knowledge of the Supreme. The great educator discusses all the positive aspects of education pointing out one by one the role of the teacher and teaching, the role of the learners, the role of the ideal environment, the import of Brahmacharya, the ultimate aim of the academic discipline etc. etc. with burning examples that speak of the efficacy of the Upanishadic system of education on the one hand and on the other the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education in the modern context which envisages possibility of having a full-fledged integrated life in this world of ours that is capable of struggling successfully the crisisful complexities of the modern world with a discovery of a still more effective discipline, suited to modern requirements which European education does not offer.

Conclusion:

What the researcher has gathered from the studies discussed above suggests that it is his proud privilege to mention that the researcher has been immensely influenced by the writings of quite a number of authors and researchers in respect of developing an inclination for taking up research work of this sort and there is no denying that he has drawn much inspiration from some such writings and research-works.

Nevertheless, it may as well be pointed out that the researcher ventures on the selection of the topic viz., “*Upanishadic Influence on Educational Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo*” is his own as he has in his mind that all the three great educators like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo though severally thought and worked out in respective terms pave the way for reawakening India.

It may not be out of place if the researcher points out here that all these three great sentinels in the field of education are born one after the other at the same point of time in a very critical stage of national life when the prolific and inexhaustible vitality and creativity which make the nation vibrant for centuries after centuries have dwindled into insignificance. Like a bright constellation of stars all of them seem to have resolved independently that to bring back the original life-force of the nation by introducing the essence of the Upanishadic

system of education and as a consequence, all these three great educators are setting up centres of learning to give effect to their respective ideas in different venues with separate modus operandi suiting to the changed conditions of life through the passage of time.

In this thesis the researcher has made an humble attempt to submit a few words on the Upanishadic system of education at the very outset and thereafter he has tried to throw light on the impacts of the Upanishadic education on the educational theories and practices of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo severally one after the other.

CHAPTER : III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY

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3.1. Introduction

The Upanishad (उपनिषद्) comes from the term ‘उप-नि-सद्’ which implies sitting in close contact. And the underlying sense of the Upanishad is a pursuit of knowledge undertaken by the guru and his disciples as a disinterested joint venture to fathom the unknown for widening the horizon of wisdom and heightening one’s consciousness²².

The relationship between the teacher and the taught that has been suggested is of genuine respect and genuine love for each other for attaining the true Truths unhindered. Thus, the Upanishadic system of education may be looked upon as not only the ideal educational system of the earliest type that exists in ancient India but it also happens to be the most esteemed type of modus-operandi in respect of inspiration for direct knowledge.

3.2. Upanishadic System of Education :

By ‘Upa’ (‘उप’) we mean near, and the term ‘Ni’ (‘नि’) means closer and ‘sad’ (‘सद्’) means dwell. Hence, Upanishad is nothing but dwelling in the proximity to the secret knowledge. So, the governing idea of the Upanishadic

22 Taittiriya Upanishad, III.10 (PS)

system of education is to induce the pupil to be his own master in respect of growing in the harmony of the universal qualities, especially the qualities of the effulgent light with a view to attaining higher manhood through the flowering of the best elements in him. After attaining great heights in different fields of exploration some of the modern scientists have now been realizing after giving much thought that the role of self-knowledge, as envisaged by the ancient Indian educators of the Upanishadic age, has to be studied and explored with due regard, especially in the matter of gaining True knowledge.

Upanishads are replete with wonderful examples of galaxy of great teachers who are seers as well on the one hand and enlightened scholars of outstanding heights and depths on the other. Through dialogues the qualities of the illumined knowledge of the gurus and the sishyas have been spectacularly displayed throughout the volumes of the Upanishads.

The Upanishadic system of education affirms unambiguously that although knowledge of the Pure-Existent cannot be grasped ordinarily yet centuries of experiments have led the Rishis to arrive at a swift-revealing method that facilitates the higher self in man to exceed the sense-bound, reason-bound and ego-bound circling tracts of mental consciousness of a dwarf humanity. Through a regular application of such a profound as well as radical method the Rishis have paved the way for unfolding the Vidyā (विद्या) or True knowledge of Existence-in-

itself with its multiplicity. In the circumstances, one who devotedly, sincerely and regularly practices this method is now capable of looking at the reality or seizing it in its totality - the Multiple One as a direct knowledge or experience by exceeding the limitations of the ordinary mental inability. From all these it may also be admitted undeniably that the '*Atindriyam*' (अतिन्द्रियम्) can equally be made '*Buddhigrāhyam*' (बुद्धिग्राह्यम्) and the blinders that prevent man from seizing the self-luminous and imperishable Pure-Existent can equally be done away with. Perhaps the same spirit of enquiry as we find in the case of seer-teacher of the Upanishadic system of education haunts Sir Jadadish Chandra Bose, the great scientist who proves that a plant like all other living things has also the feeling of suffering and pain by resorting to a higher method of experiment which was still then not known to the other leading scientists of his time.

It may be reminded that such illumined seers having unruffled concentration and wisdom are the acknowledged teachers of the Upanishadic age and to some such revered Acharyas the tender-aged boys and girls surrender themselves to undergo training for comprehensive knowledge under their able guidance. In course of studies in the congenial surroundings of the Ashram the gurus and the sishtyas develop such an inscrutable tie of relationship and cohesion that they feel that they have no longer separate identities and as such, they are in a

position to explore the mysteries of the universe jointly²³ along with practising disciplines for more and more perfection of their experiments concerning the significance and meaning of human life. In the subsequent stage such a radical spirit of enquiry together with a positive, unprecedented and undivided passion for the sublime knowledge make the Upanishads what they seem to be – the fountainhead of Indian education system which again brings in its train wonderful flowering of art, literature, philosophy, spirituality etc. etc. The names of such great Acharyas that we find mentioned in the Upanishad and who are the chief architects of the Upanishadic system of education are *Nārada*, *Uddālaka Āruni*, *Janak*, *Saunaka*, *Mahidāsa Aitareya*, *Jajñabalka*, *Satyakāma Jabala*, *Pippalāda*, *Sukeshin Bharadvāja*, *Gārgi Vachaknavi*, *Maitreyi*, *Prevahana Jairali*.

In the harmony of universal qualities Upanishadic system of education lays much emphasis of self perfection for the purpose of arriving at the ideal manhood and as such, disciplines in this regard have been laid down so that flowering of the entire human nature may steadily take place along with the concomitant growth of all other faculties in addition to the moral aesthetic, intellectual, social etc. etc.

23 औं सह नाववतु,

सह नौ भुनक्तु,

सह वीर्यं करवावहे।

तेजस्मि नावधीतमस्तु,

माविद्धिषावहे॥ (केनोपनिषद्, शान्तिपाठः) (PS)

In fact, the ancient Upanishadic system of education is purely value-oriented. It declares - स एष सर्वेभ्यः पाप्मभ्य उदितः उदेति ह वै सर्वेभ्यः पाप्मभ्यो य एवं वेद।²⁴ Here the process of learning makes one free from all egoistic fervour that causes ambitions and sins. We have reasons to believe that such a type of value education which has nowadays been introduced in different courses viz., Management, B.Ed., M.Ed. and other teachers' training courses aims at instilling healthy and positive and man-making ideas among the trainees.

The man-making idea of the ancient Upanishadic system of education revolves round the concept - यथा सौम्यैकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृन्मयं विज्ञातं स्यात्।²⁵ The inner objective of such a system of education drives at an all round development of the disciples with an integrated approach under the guidance of the seer-poets or great educators like the Rishis for coming out of the man within.

The Taittiriya Upanishad declares – 'येनाक्षरं पुरुषं वेद सत्यं प्रोवाच तां तत्त्वतो ब्रह्मविद्याम्।' ²⁶ From this we know that India is a unique land which possesses an ancient heritage of education which is not only comprehensive, all-round and complete but also of a lofty kind. The suggestion is that Upanishads are for Brahnavidyā and the aim of education is to arrive at the true truth or eternal truth.

24 Chāndogaya Upanishad, 1.6.7 (PS)

25 Ibid. 6.1.4 (PS)

26 Mundaka Upanishad, 1.2.13 (PS)

Rishis of the Upanishads are seer poets. They are aware that man has a great future. According to them the contemporary man is not the complete man. He is only in the incipient stage. It occurs to them that a number of higher faculties wait in him. In course of time the unmanifested latent faculty will surely develop and it is expected that man through successive stages is supposed to attain higher and higher status. Therefore, the Rishis make a congenial environment in the ashram for the young learners so that such learners may know right from the very outset of their lives what is the goal of human life and how to reach the goal. Thus, the Rishis lead the scholars to walk along the difficult road to reach great height of light for having height, depth and width of life. As a matter of fact, the aim is to achieve the higher truths from their depth of their beings.

Upanishads constitute the last phase of the Vedic revelation. Indeed it becomes the basis of one of the unique traditions that the world has ever known. Ten hymns in Atharva Veda²⁷ on Brahmacharya signify the comprehensive education supposed to be received by a young person before he/she marries and leads the family life. The education includes not only the study of the various subjects but also the spiritual initiation which is called as a second birth for the student²⁸ for giving him tapas (तपः), vigour, and intelligence²⁹. A fundamental

27 Atharva Veda, 11.5.10 (PS)

28 Ibid. 11.5.10 (PS)

29 Ibid. 6.133.4 (PS)

principle of Upanishadic education is tapas. Control and concentration of mind and senses are considered the highest tapas. Concentration, however, is only one component in the training of the will. According to *Taittiriya Upanishad*³⁰ truth is all that needs to be cultivated. In fact, the entire thing is based on the secret knowledge of the process of concentration. Kireet Joshi holds the same view –

In those times the task of the teacher was to awaken more than to instruct.

*It was understood that true knowledge depended on the cultivation of powers of concentration*³¹.

That the Upanishadic system of education is fairly comprehensive is seen. In spite of his having knowledge of a number of sciences and texts related to vedas Narada (the pupil) and Sanatkumar (the teacher) in *Chāndogaya Upanishad*³² are in search of that knowledge by which sorrow can be removed. We find a distinction here between knowledge and ignorance (बिद्या and अबिद्या)³³.

In the *Isha Upanishad*³⁴ the aim of the Upanishadic education is to prepare the pupil to pursue the paths of that spiritual attainment by which immortality is attained. The Vedic based Upanishadic system of education is an integral system

30 *Taittiriya Upanishad*, XI (PS)

31 Joshi, Kireet, *The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil*, p.33 (SS)

32 *Chāndogaya Upanishad*, VII.1 (PS)

33 *Ibid.* I.II.4-5 (PS)

34 *Isopanishad*, 14 (PS)

of education; it covers the pursuit of sciences and arts and possession of a comprehensive knowledge. The learner has to discover everything for himself and realize knowledge ultimately in the proper sense of the term through a life-long process of education.

According to Katha Upanishad³⁵ an educated man who possesses supreme knowledge by concentration of mind, must have his senses under control, like spirited steeds controlled by a charioteer. From the Vedic age onwards, the central conception of education is that there is a source of resplendent light which gives us a correct lead in the various spheres of life.

Character building is the main objective of education. It is the responsibility of an ideal teacher. The best teachers are those who not only impart knowledge but also make their pupils developing noble virtues. Continuous learning and regular study are of great importance. Choice of books which purifies the senses and mind, enhances intellectual and spiritual power, and inspires a person to do noble deed. There is no end to learning. It is the duty of man to move ahead in quest of knowledge³⁶ & ³⁷.

35 Katha Upanishada, iii, 6 (PS)

36 Rg Veda, V.30.7 (PS)

37 Yajur Veda, 30.1 (PS)

In Katha³⁸ and other Upanishads we get some indication of the method of teaching and learning. Different methods of studies are found prevailing in the Upanishadic period. One of such methods of teaching is in the form of a dialogue in which series of questions and answers are made as a method of explaining a subject³⁹. Here in this method the Brahmacharins are found asking questions while the guru in his discourses imparting lessons on different topics referred to him. Illustrations⁴⁰, stories⁴¹ and parables⁴² are used as devices of oral teachings.

The distinctive and profound manner that Upanishad maintains all through in delineating spiritual ideas and lofty philosophies through very simple and fascinating narratives and anecdotes such as the saga of Ushasti & Mahavat or the saga of Indra & Virochan is simply a unique style of imparting education. Nor is this all. It is interesting to note that the Upanishads have also resorted to conversational method such as the dialogue of Narada & Sanatsujat or the dialogue of Shvetketu & Udalak for bringing the precepts concerning Brahmanvidyā (ब्रह्मविद्या) before the young learners in a very convincing manner.

The secret of learning lies in the power of concentration in thought. This secret of concentration can be seen in the much-quoted prayer of Vishwamitra (a

38 Katha Upanishad, Briguballi, I (PS)

39 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.112 (SS)

40 Prasna Upanishad, II (PS)

41 Katha Upanishad (PS)

42 Kena Upanishad, III (PS)

celebrated sage of the Vedic period), which helps developing the faculty of intelligence and thought by resorting to concentration on the highest object of Knowledge. In this connection Kireet Joshi's remark is very relevant –

*The Vedas and Upanishads as only the fountain-head of Indian philosophy and spirituality, of Indian art, poetry and literature, but also of Indian education and of the Indian tradition of teacher-pupils relationship*⁴³.

The young learners that gather round the āshrams of the Rishis during the Upanishadic age are required to practise Brahmacharya (ब्रह्मचर्यः). Through the practise of Brahmacharya (ब्रह्मचर्यः) they learn how to turn Retah (रेतः) to Tejah (तेजः). And in the next stage they are supposed to undergo transformation from Tejah (तेजः) to Ojah (ओजः). In the process of the *Brahmacharya* they are made capable of enhancing their power of the brain magnificently. In fact, the retaining power of the memory of such learners can be increased enormously and on the other hand they are in a position to make their power of comprehension escalated spectacularly. What to speak of their analytical power! One may wonder how potential the learners will become in respect of using their analytical tools when they reach the level of *Ojah*. To the ancient Indian sages and the seers education means a man-making programme. The system of *Brahmacharya* enables young

43 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.30 (SS)

learners not only to augment the powers of the brain it equally helps them to bring out the real man within. Thus, Kireet Joshi has rightly said –

The secret of learning lies in the power of concentration in thought. This secret of concentration was discovered and underlined in the Veda, and it can be seen in the celebrated prayer of Vishwamitra (a prominent sage of the Vedic period), which singles out the faculty of intelligence and of thought to be of supreme importance, and which enjoins that faculty of intelligence and thought to be concentrated on the highest Object of Knowledge⁴⁴.

3.3. Significance of the study :

The Rishis are aware of all about the past, present and future of mankind. They know that in the different stages of evolution the latent powers in man will be evolved. Rabindranath is also conscious of the trend of evolution and he strives hard to see that the young learners are inspired to have the latent power manifested in them comprehensively as far as possible during their span of life. An analogous instance may not be out of place in this connection : *Lenin knew that in his time Russia was an agrarian economy. But he did not wait for polarization and coming out of the army of the proletariat. He went forward to*

44 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.95 (SS)

reach his goal. We may point out here that Rabindranath is also not ready to wait for the slow movement of evolution like the step-jump he prefers the model of the Rishis of the Upanishads and makes sincere attempt for creating a congenial environment at Santiniketan Āshram wherein the young learners may set foot on a track leading to the fulfillment of full-fledged manhood capable of thinking from the depth of the truth fearlessly.

A comparative study of the three leading educators of modern India viz., Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo reveals that Rabindranath, of course, has outlined his thoughts on education in concrete terms. He has elaborately discussed his scheme of education in his articles and tomes. Bathed in the light of the Upanishads and charged with the mantras of the seer poets right from the early days through the direct impact of his father's mode of life he comes forward to implement his ideas in the practical field when sets up Āshram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan. By education he does not mean to form mental skill in the exteriorized life only. Taking a macro view of life it occurs to him that an individual learner is not a separate being segregated from the Transcendental Being – the source of all existence. From the teaching of the Upanishads he believes that while one is an individual one is also the part and parcel of the whole and one has everything that the supreme has. Hence, he is inseparable from the Supreme – if one keeps contact with the Transcendental

being his faculties are strengthened and divinized⁴⁵. Therefore, keeping contact with the Supreme through self-opening every individual learner should carry on practice of *Gayatri Mantra* regularly from the early stage of life. From this conviction Rabindranath, the great teacher introduces practice of *Gayatri Mantra* and meditation daily⁴⁶. Of course, he takes the trouble of encouraging and inspiring the little learners so that they may take interest and try for themselves devotedly in the matter of carrying on some such programmes.

To Swami Vivekananda also education means toiling from imperfection to perfection. He observes '*Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man*'⁴⁷. It occurred to him that the brutal elements in man must be removed by cultivation. He does not lay stress on acquisition of facts only. His emphasis is laid on developing inner consciousness of a learner through concentration which may accumulate tremendous power and enable man to focus light on the true Truth⁴⁸. 'To him the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts'⁴⁹. Swami Vivekananda believes that academic learning and acquisition of data or facts may enlighten and enrich one but unfoldment of the higher faculties of man is essentially necessary for the growth of a total man. He

45 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.548 (PS)

46 Ibid. p.547 (PS)

47 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, vol. IV, p. 358 (PS)

48 Ibid. p. 490 (PS)

49 Ibid. p. 38 (PS)

lays stress on manifesting the latent purified man or perfect man out of crude human materials. He says –

What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow⁵⁰.

So he is in favour of including some of the texts of the Upanishads in the curriculum for transformation of the total man⁵¹.

The dynamic attitude of Swami Vivekananda towards education that has been reflected in his writings and speeches reveals though graphically yet with tremendous effect. His attitude towards education has already been expressed symbolically. All that he suggests regarding education and learning are surely direct products of the Upanishads or the Vedanta philosophy.

Sri Aurobindo in his concept of Integral Education not only corroborates but lays emphasis on Psychic Education. Like the ancient seer poets of the Upanishads he also prefers to exceed the circling tracks of mind. He also attains the status of the seer poet and by virtue of his panoramic vision can envisage that a greater destiny waits man in his front. According to him what is needed is to involve the scholars to utilize psychic light with a resolute mind. He tries to

50 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. II, p. 15 (PS)

51 Nithiya P., Swami Vivekananda's Views on Philosophy of Education, AJMR Vol.1 Issue-6, Nov, 2012 (SS)

remind the scholars that they should not waste their time in respect of their little selves and petty things as they are destined to have higher consciousness and transcendental light in this house of flesh if they are really inclined to do what is necessary on the occasion.⁵² He observes that the scholars of this land of ours are born with the vibrations of the heart-stirring lofty ideas that spontaneously move them towards dynamic inspiration to go forward having been charged with swift-revealing⁵³ emotion and imagination. In fact, such scholars are gifted with invaluable insights of the head and heart. Sri Aurobindo points out that the Indian scholars⁵⁴ have free access to the direct knowledge latent in humanity that exceeds the periphery of the reasoning intelligence as well. He further says that only a handful of such mighty and gifted scholars have so far been privileged to carry forward the unique faculty of direct knowledge that can command any knowledge at their discretion with great perfection. The idea is that it is an imperative need to create centres of learning that can make the scholars capable of acquiring the art of direct knowledge and revolutionize the outlook of the future course of education for achieving more and more perfection in human thought and knowledge.

52 Sri Aurobindo, Savitri, Vol 34, Book IV: Canto III: page 370 (PS)

53 Ibid. (PS)

54 The Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-1, The Brain of India, p.365 (PS)

Sri Aurobindo has not only given us his thoughts on education clearly but he has also delineated how to employ his ideas in the practical way. He introduces Integral education covering all the aspects of a human material. His stress on Psychic education and the exercise of the spirit may as well be compared with the analogous concepts and ideas of the Upanishads. But we are to keep in mind that like the Rishis of the Upanishads he is also a seer poet ‘कवयः सत्यश्रुतः’. Like the ancient Rishis he is equally capable of seeing and listening to the truths of the universe. There is no denying that having being born in this holly land of India and being the son of the soil he is supposed to know the contents of the Upanishads and as such the influence of the Upanishads must also be on him.

3.4. Conclusion :

The ancient teachers of the Upanishads inspire their scholars to practise self-training through *Brahmacharya*. Rabindranath, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo all the three have one point in common for a comprehensive knowledge of a total man by unfolding the real man within in their views regarding education with a difference in the modus-operandi only. This can be summed up that man is already a mental being⁵⁵ and for further progress man has to move towards the supramental. We are aware that the Rishis of the Vedic and

55 The complete works of sri Aurobindo, Vol. 23, The Synthesis of Yoga, p.488 (PS)

Upanishadic ages have made experiments on supra-consciousness for instilling in the minds of the little learners. In fact, it is a step forward at a time when the reasoning intelligence of mankind has not even dawned upon most of the people of the rest of the world. The great educators like Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo have the privilege of coming in contact with the light of the Upanishadic education. As they are no ordinary educationists and as they are not only genius but they possess intuitive knowledge as well and as such, in their respective light they severally employed the lofty ideas of the Upanishadic education. And in successive chapters of this paper discussion has been made regarding the influence of the Upanishadic system of education on Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo part by part.

CHAPTER : IV

Upanishadic education and the Educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore

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Upanishadic education and the Educational thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore

4.1. Introduction :

Rabindranath sets up Āshramic Vidyāshram⁵⁶ at Santiniketan like the ancient Rishis on the lap of Nature to offer the tender-hearted boys and girls a congenial environment of Nature of the ancient type⁵⁷. Deeply moved by the spiritual inclination and sadhana of Maharshi, his father on one hand and the Upanishadic educational principles contained in the concept of *Tapovan* on the other he resolves to implement some such lofty ideas of the Upanishads taking Tapovan as a model for man-making education centre and in pursuance of this he sets up Āshram Vidyālaya so to say Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at Santiniken in 1901 when man-making programme is conspicuous by its absence in English schools scattered here and there throughout the country and run by the instructions of the British rulers. Here he is bent upon employing the ancient spiritually based Indian educational model particularly because such universal educational tenets of the Upanishads are compatible with his aims and objectives

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56 Kathleen M O'Connell , Rabindranath Tagore: The Poet as Educator (SS)

57 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santiniketan, p.31 (SS)

১৯০১ সালে যখন রবীন্দ্রনাথ শান্তিনিকেতন স্থাপন করেছিলেন তখন তিনি তাঁর ব্যক্তিগত অধ্যয়ন ও সাধনা। তার তপোবনের আদর্শ ও ঔপনিষদিক সংস্কৃতির ভাব ও ভাবনায় গভীরভাবে নিমগ্ন হয়েছিলেন। উপনিষদের শিক্ষার নিজস্ব ও সার্বিকরূপই তাঁর উদ্দেশ্যের পক্ষে অনুকূল হয়েছিল।⁵⁸

(While Rabindranath set up a centre of learning at Santiniketan he had been deeply absorbed in his personal study and inclination towards the ideals of the Tapovan of the Upanishadic age as the comprehensive idea contained in the Upanishadic education served the purpose.)

Since his childhood Rabindranath has been brought up in an environment of the Upanishads and he is found to have close contact with the details of the Upanishads –

প্রাচীনকালের ভারতবর্ষের শিক্ষাপ্রণালী রবীন্দ্রনাথের মনকে বিশেষ করে আকৃষ্ট করেছিল।⁵⁹

(Rabindranath was immensely drawn towards the pedagogic system that is found to have prevailed in the tapovan or the education centre of the Upanishadic age.)

Rabindranath himself mentions that right from his adolescence he has been familiar with the slokas of the Upanishads as he has been in the habit of chanting them again and again. In his family as well as social life the impact of the Upanishads on him comes from all directions. Before him Maharshi

58 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.100 (SS)

59 Das, Sri Sudhiranjan, Amader Gurudev, p.17 (SS)

Debendranath, his father himself is a living illustration of the messages of the Upanishads⁶⁰.

Thus, from the early days of his life Upanishads shed light on him immensely like the spontaneous gifts of Nature. “वृक्ष इव स्तब्धो दिवि तिष्ठत्येकः” - this Upanishadic mantra creates in his mind a great resonance⁶¹. Later, he explains this message of the Upanishads magnificently and he is found accustomed to citing such Upanishadic slokas – ‘सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः’, ‘यस्मिन् लोकाः निहिताः’, ‘सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति’, ‘सर्वभूतगुहाशयः’ – many such messages of the Upanishads have similarly been used by him.⁶² In the initial stage his educational thought begins with the project of *Brahmacharyāshram* at Bolpur and in course of time there is the advent of *Shriniketan* with multipurpose streams in Santiniketan which further develops and gives birth to the University of Viswabharati.⁶³ The objective of this centre of learning is to create channels or avenues for manifesting and bringing out innumerable streams out of the spring contained in the infinite resources of humanity in all possible ways. This Upanishadic ideal of the unity in diversity finds here a new dimension in the awakening of humanism. Citing the following

60 Dasgupta, Sri Sasibhushan, Upanishader Patabhumikaye Rabindramanas, p.2 (SS)

61 Ibid. p.10 (SS)

62 Ibid. p.66 (SS)

63 Ibid. p.107 (SS)

mantra from the Upanishads in his famous tome ‘Santiniketane’ (‘শান্তিনিকেতনে’)

Rabindranath writes saying –

‘শান্তিনিকেতনে’ রবীন্দ্রনাথ উপনিষদের এষাস্য পরমা গতিঃ এষাস্য পরমা সম্পদঃ, এষোঃস্য পরমো
লোক এষোঃস্য পরম আনন্দঃ বাণীটি উদ্ধৃতি করিয়া সৃষ্টির মধ্যে শুদ্ধ একের মধ্যে অমরতার সন্ধান
লাভ করিতে হইবে - বলিয়াছেন।⁶⁴

*(We are to find out the inhaustible and motionless element of the One that
pervades on all over the creative world – এষাস্য পরমা গতিঃ এষাস্য পরমা সম্পদঃ,
এষোঃস্য পরমো লোক এষোঃস্য পরম আনন্দঃ)*

Rabindranath himself admits his inheritance from the Upanishad. He is drawn towards lofty ideas of the Upanishadic system of academic learning. How much helpful and congenial the environment of the āshramic centre of education of the Upanishadic age is! As Rabindranath, the great world poet comes to know the details of the environment created for the seats of learning by the seer poets of the Upanishads it occurs to him what a tremendous impact on the minds of young learners, full of exuberant enthusiasm and unmixed feelings must be when they are allowed to live and communicate their simple ideas and receive genuine light from their teachers living in the same premises for years together since their early days. How essential it is to maintain simple living particularly in the formative

64 Dasgupta, Sri Sasibhushan, Upanishader Patabhumikaye Rabindramanas, p.121 (SS)

part of life – these questions and some such things as are envisaged in the āshramic schools of the Upanishadic age exerts enormous influence on the mind of the great poet surely when he sets up a centre of education at *Santiniketan* –

আশ্রমশিক্ষার পরিবেশ, জীবনধারা, গুরুশিষ্যের পরস্পরের প্রতি মনোভাব ইত্যাদি বিষয় রবীন্দ্রনাথ জেনেছিলেন ... কয়েকটি উপনিষদের আরম্ভে ও শেষে শিষ্য-আবাহন শিক্ষারম্ভ শান্তিপাঠ প্রভৃতির মধ্যে অন্তরঙ্গ সহযোগিতার মধ্যে দিয়ে উচ্চতম আদর্শ ও ব্রত উদযাপনের যে ভাবগুলি ফুটে উঠেছে তাই থেকে।^{৬৫}

(Regarding the educational environment of a seat of learning in the hermitage, its mode of life, its reciprocal amity of feelings in teacher-taught relationship etc. Rabindranath came to know all these things from the ideas that had developed out of the loftiest ideals and fulfilment of vows in times of intimate cooperation on the occasions of invocation as well as convocation addresses contained in the Upanishads at the opening and concluding sessions.)

Rabindranath himself says –

It (Upanishad) has followed the current of my temperament from early days until it suddenly flashed into my consciousness with a direct vision⁶⁶.

65 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana (SS)

66 Tagore, Rabindranath, The Religion of Man, p-7 (PS)

According to the great world poet the highest education is that which does not merely give us information only but makes our life in harmony with all existence around us⁶⁷. As he is intent upon awakening the real man within⁶⁸ Rabindranath thinks that it is the duty of all concerned of the Āshram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan to lead the learners to the light and perfection right from the beginning. He further thinks that the learners should also make efforts to strengthen their faculties and instincts in the right direction under the able guidance of their teachers as they have to attain manhood with positive and broader view of life –

আমাদের বিদ্যালয়ে সকল কর্মে সকল ইন্দ্রিয়মনের তৎপরতা প্রথমহতেই অনুশীলিত হোক, এটা শিক্ষাসাধনার গুরুতর কর্তব্য বলে মনে করতে হবে।^{৬৯}

(In our centre of learning the adroitness of all the sense-organs including the mind must be practised in all its activities and this should be considered as a serious duty of the arduous training.)

When we read the following lines in Sunil Chandra Sarkar's book entitled 'Rabindranather Sikshadarshana O Sadhana' we feel how much Rabindranath owes to Upanishads in the matter of constructing educational programmes chiefly on the basis of self-development in his Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at Santiniketan–

67 O'Connell, K. M. (2003) 'Rabindranath Tagore on education', (SS)

68 Where the words came out from the depths of truth... - "Gitanjali", 1912 (PS)

69 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha), p.416 (PS)

লৌকিক জীবনের সমস্ত আত্মসংগঠন, আত্মোন্নতি চেষ্টার ব্যাপারে উপনিষদ ও গীতার প্রভাব অস্বীকার করা অসম্ভব। ভারতের শিক্ষা-ইতিহাসের অনিখিত অধ্যায়গুলির সমস্ত প্রয়াসকে যে কয়েকটি উপনিষদের বিচিত্র আদর্শ বরাবর প্রভাবিত করেছে সে সম্বন্ধে সাক্ষ্যপ্রমাণ না থাকলেও তা মেনে নেওয়া অসংগত হবে না।^{৭০}

(The impact of the Upanishads as well as that of the Gita in the matter of all sorts of individual efforts and self-advancement in public life can hardly be denied. Although there might not be any testimony to account for this still it would not also be untenable to accept all those endeavours belonging to the unwritten chapters in the history of Indian education system that have all along been influenced by the various ideals of some of the Upanishads.)

4.2. Philosophy of Education

Rabindranath, the world poet makes sincere and careful attempt to awaken and develop the innate cognitive disposition of the learner. Never does he load the unwilling mental frame since genuine thirst for knowledge alone leads to the real growth of knowledge. In Svetasvata Upanishad⁷¹ the self-same idea has been expressed. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar says –

70 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.72 (SS)

71 Svetasvata Upanishad, II (PS)

প্রত্যেক ছাত্রের মানসিক বিকাশ যাতে পরিপূর্ণরূপে ঘটে তাই চেয়েছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। ছাত্রের এই জ্ঞানগত অন্তর্নিহিত স্বভাব বা স্পৃহা (innate cognitive disposition) -কে রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্বয়ং প্রবুদ্ধ ও পরিপুষ্ট করতে সচেষ্ট ছিলেন। মানব মনের বিকাশ স্তরে স্তরে ঘটে। তার আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠা (self-assertion) ও তেমনি কয়েকটি সুনির্দিষ্ট পথ অনুসরণ করে চলে। শ্বেতাস্বতর উপনিষদের মতে জ্ঞান পিপাসাই জ্ঞানদানের প্রকৃষ্ট অবসর।^{৭২}

(Rabindranath was bent upon that which might enable a learner to have total flowering of his inner being. He (the great teacher) was vigilant and meticulous in inducing the learner to develop his innate cognitive disposition or inclination in respect of attaining knowledge. The manifestation of human mind takes place in phases. His self-assertion and such other things follow certain definite tracks. According to Swetaswatara Upanishad one's thirst for knowledge happens to be the most opportune moment for imparting lessons to one.)

Here Rabindranath endorses the educational ideals of the Upanishadic education in a large measure. The curiosity that arises out of inquisitiveness in the mind of the students has to be satisfied by providing him with the right knowledge.

72 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.29 (SS)

To him the chief aim of education should be not merely education of the instincts or acquisition of knowledge but should be bringing out universal truth consciousness from the depth of one's being - the cultivation of which can be found in the premises of the *Tapovan*. The suggestion is that provision for attaining knowledge of the higher mind has to be made in our school education. What Upanishad has pointed out has been executed in the *Tapovan*. This ideal has been reiterated again and again by the great teachers of this land of ours. Rabindranath's views in this connection may be noted here :

ভারতবাসীর শিক্ষার প্রধান লক্ষ্য হওয়া উচিত, কেবল ইন্দ্রিয়ের শিক্ষা নয়, কেবল জ্ঞানের শিক্ষা নয়, বোধের শিক্ষাকে আমাদের বিদ্যালয়ে স্থান দিতে হবে। সেই সত্য ভারতবর্ষের তপোবনে সাধিত হয়েছে। উপনিষদে উচ্চারিত হয়েছে। পরবর্তী মহাপুরুষগণ সেই সত্যকে প্রকাশ করে গেছেন।^{৭৩}

(It is not the training of the sense-organs only nor the exercise of the intellect alone but we have to give priority to the flowering of the wisdom in our school curriculum for the intended chief aim is illumining light to the Indians. The ancient Indian Tapovan accomplished such a truth and it is the Upanishad that articulated it. Later in the successive periods the luminous personages equally expressed some such Truth.)

73 Rabindranath Tagore, *Tapovaner Siksha* (PS)

To make it effective Rabindranath has offered a variety of creative things before the mind of the students in the following ways –

শিক্ষাতত্ত্বের সূত্র ও ইঙ্গিত রবীন্দ্রনাথ শুধু তার প্রবন্ধে নয়, তাঁর অনেক গানে, নাটকের চরিত্রে ও সংলাপে, শান্তিনিকেতনে প্রবর্তিত অনেক রীতিনীতি-ব্যবহারের মধ্যে জীবন্তরূপ পেয়েছে।^{৭৪}

(Rabindranath has portrayed vivid living pictures of aphorisms and hints relating to his educational philosophy not only in a number of articles, but also in many of his composition of songs, presentation of characters along with their dialogues and course of conducts introduced in Santiniketan.)

From Sunil Chandra Sarkar, the author of ‘*Gurudeber Santiniketan*’ we come to know that at the time of setting up Āshram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan Rabindranath is found immensely absorbed in the ideals of Tapovan and the Upanishadic culture⁷⁵

As there is a spark of the Transcendental in the individual learner’s being he is required to keep constant contact with the source without which unfolding of his being by degrees cannot be expected and from this standpoint the Upanishad says ‘तदुरे तदन्तिके’⁷⁶

74 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.83 (SS)

75 Ibid. p.100 (SS)

76 ईशापनिषत्, ৪ (PS)

Let us see what Rabindranath has said in this connection –

ঝুঁকি হয়ে চলতে গিয়ে প্রতি মানুষকে ভারাকর্ষণের বিরুদ্ধে মান বাঁচিয়ে চলতে হয়। পশুর মতো চলতে গেলে তা করতে হত না। মনুষ্যত্ব বাঁচিয়ে চলাতেও তার নিয়ত চেষ্টা, পদে পদেই নীচে পড়বার শঙ্কা। এই মনুষ্যত্ব বাঁচানোর দ্বন্দ্ব মানবধর্মের সঙ্গে পশুধর্মের দ্বন্দ্ব। মানবধর্মের দিকে তপস্যা করা ... এদিকে ব্যক্তিগত সীমায় আর একদিকে বিরাটে। এই দুয়ের কোনটাকেই উপেক্ষা করে চলে না। মানুষ জানে ‘তদ্ব্যুৎ তদন্তিকে’ সে দূরেও বটে সে আবার অন্তিকেও। উপনিষদ সকলের মধ্যে এই এককে জানাই বলেন - ‘প্রতিবোধবিদিতমম্’।^{৭৭}

(To walk unbent every man has to strike a balance against gravitation for carrying on his forward movement along with his own weight. He would not have in need of it had he moved like a beast. Having his humanity maintained he makes constant effort in respect of continuing his journey on foot – apprehending a fall at every step. And this is a conflict between human quality and animality for rescuing humanity from danger. Make austere endeavours to excel in humanity – on one side, there is the periphery of the individual life and on the other the limitless omnipotent. Neither of the two is ignorable. Man knows that ‘তদ্ব্যুৎ তদন্তিকে’ – he is in the infinity as well as in the proximity. Regarding the awareness of the presence of the Transcendental One in every finite thing of the universe the Upanishad says – ‘প্রতিবোধবিদিতমম্’।)

77 Tagore, Rabindranath, Manusher Dharma, p.27 (PS)

The message of the Upanishads has a penetrating effect on the mind and thought of Rabindranath. He categorically points out that the true source of all our ideal of education of this land comes from the Upanishads –

আমাদের ঋতে সত্যে তপস্যায় ধর্মে কর্মে সেই বৃহত মানবকে আমরা আত্মবিস্ময়কৃত করি। এই
কথাকেই উপনিষদ আর এক রকম করে বলেছেন - ‘एषास्य परमा गतिः एषास्य परमा सम्पत्,
एषोऽस्य परमो लोकः एषोऽस्य परम आनन्दः’।⁷⁸

(In quest of true truth whether in austere endeavour or for faith pure and simple or in performing duties we are inclined to adore the Supramental Being for having bliss in our lives.)

The concept of self-opening as well as self-realization of the Upanishads through the contact with the supreme has a special appeal to Rabindranath and he resolves to make use of it in his man-making programme and incorporates the idea in his curriculum meant for the students in his āshram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan⁷⁹ –

অন্তরমারে তুমি শুধু একা একাকী,
তুমি অন্তরবাসিনী।
জগতের মাঝে কত বিচিত্র তুমি হে,
তুমি বিচিত্ররূপিনী।।

78 Tagore, Rabindranath, Manusher Dharma, p.38 (PS)

79 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.73 (SS)

In the core of my heart

Thou art a lone figure

In the depth of the being – simply unaccompanied

Thou art the only resident there.

In the wide world how multitudinous

Thou art appear to be, a diversity incarnate!

Precisely this is a message of Rabindranath's teaching. In fact, this concept of education belongs to the Upanishads. This is nothing but the impact of the teaching of the Veda and the Vedanta from which does Rabindranath, the seer-poet and the seer-teacher receive the comprehensive idea of the inner being and the unification of all its shades? Surely he has not expressed some such ideas under the influence of the western ideas. This unique element in teaching makes him not only a great teacher of *Santiniketan* but also accepts him as a great world teacher, *gurudev*.⁸⁰

Sri Sudhiranjan Das, the author of '*Amader Gurudev*' is of opinion that the basic principles of Rabindranath's *Viswabharati* retain the real message of the Upanishads. He writes –

ভারতের যে বাণী উপনিষদের গুরুদেবের বিশ্বভারতীর আদি মর্মকথা।^{৮১}

80 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.8 (SS)

81 Das, Sri Sudhiranjan, Amader Gurudev, pp.51-52 (SS)

(As the source of the message of India is the Upanishad so also the fundamental essence of the preceptor's (Rabindranath's) Viswabharati may be ascribed to the Upanishad.)

We are already aware that the great educators of the Upanishadic age are the Rishis. In Rabindranath we also find both the seer poet and the great educator. According to Rabindranath education not only accomplishes unfoldment it equally helps self-realization as it paves the way for beginning to evolve one's eternal truth out of one's depth of the being. Thus, he is led to believe that education means manifestation of truth of one's being in the light of the Universal Truth. This idea has been endorsed by another distinguished author Prafulla Kumar Sarkar in his 'Gurudeber Santiniketan' –

মনুষ্যত্বের লক্ষ্য সাধনেই তিনি প্রবৃত্ত। এই তপস্যার গতিমান ধারায় শিষ্যের চিত্তকে গতিশীল করে
তোলা তাঁর আপন সাধনারই অঙ্গ।^{৮২}

(He, (the teacher is engaged in the arduous endeavour to accomplish the aim of humanity. To make the higher mind of his disciple supple by dint of his dynamic course of austere endeavour happens to be an essential part of his devoted effort.)

82 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santiniketan, p.31 (SS)

The Upanishadic system of education requires the dedication of the entire human life. Of course, the process of education starts in the early part of life and continues for a period of twelve years in the first phase. The concept of Brahmacharya⁸³ embraces not merely the preparatory phase of life only but the entire life.

The importance of the Bhahmachayāshram in the Upanishadic age has again been brought before our notice by Rabindranath. In the following words he mentions how he himself makes attempts to come in close contact to the students to make his lessons very simple to them in the beginning –

আমি পাঁচ ছয়টি ছেলে নিয়ে জামগাছতলায় তাদের পড়াতাম। ছেলেকয়েকটিকে নিয়ে রস দিয়ে ভাব দিয়ে পড়িয়েছি, হাসিয়েছি, ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে তাদের সঙ্গে যুক্ত হয়ে তাদের মানুষ করেছি।^{৮৪}

(Collecting five or six boys under a rose-apple tree I used to impart lessons to them. While teaching I would infuse them with lofty ideas, suit them with flavour, make them laugh and coming in close contact with them – in this way I would bring them up.)

In the following lines Sri Sudhiranjan Das, one of Rabindranath's disciples also gives us to know that after prayer and meditation on every Wednesday

83 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.102 (SS)

84 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.31 (SS)

Gurudev himself in his own sweet voice takes part in chanting one of the Upanishads and subsequently explains the deeper idea contained in it –

প্রতি বুধবার মন্দিরে উপাসনা হইত । উদ্বোধন সঙ্গীতের পর গুরুদেব উপাসনার প্রারম্ভে সুলোলিত স্বরে মন্ত্রপাঠ করতেন ‘ওঁ য়ো দেবোঽন্যৌ য়ো অস্ম’ আরাধনার পর এক এক বুধবার তিনি উপনিষদের এক একটি মন্ত্র ব্যাখ্যা করতেন ও শেষে উপদেশ দিতেন। আজ পর্যন্ত তা ভুলিনি। আমাদের অপরিণত মনে তা যে আমাদের অন্তরে গভীরে গোপনে নীরবে কাজ করে গেছে, ব্যর্থ হয় নি একটুও - একথা আজ জোর করেই বলতে পারি। ব্রহ্মচার্যাশ্রমের শিক্ষাপদ্ধতির এইটাই ছিল বৈশিষ্ট্য।^{৮৫}

A congregational prayer used to be held on every Wednesday. Soon after an opening song our preceptor would in a melodious voice recite mantra – ‘ওঁ য়ো দেবোঽন্যৌ য়ো অস্ম’. After the prayer on some of the Wednesdays he would explain certain mantras of the Upanishad and at the end gave his advice. Till this day we have not forgotten it. Such a thing has penetrated and reached the depth of our beings in the tender age unmarkedly and has been at work in silence – we can now declare with much emphasis that not even a little of it has gone in vain and here lies the distinction of the educational methodology of the Brahmacharyashram (followed at the first stage of life).

4.3. Environment – the centre of learning

When Rabindranath sets up *Bramachayāshram Vidyālaya* at Santiniketan he does not copy *Tapovan* from end to end although he looks upon *Tapovan* as his model of man-making centre of learning. The world-poet assimilates the principles of man-making education that is found to obtain in the *Tapovan*, the ancient centre of learning. In fact, these principles, ideals and objectives of the Upanishadic age form the fundamental part and parcel of Rabindranath's *Bramachayāshram Vidyālaya* at Santiniketan –

রবীন্দ্রনাথের উপরে উপনিষদের প্রভাব সর্বজনবিদিত।^{৮৬} রবীন্দ্রনাথ নিজেও এই প্রভাব স্বীকার করেন
সগর্বে নিজের পরিচয় দিয়েছেন বৈদিক ঋষিকবিদের উত্তরাধিকারী বলে।^{৮৭}

(The impact of the Upanishads on Rabindranath is universally known. Rabindranath himself has admitted this fact and with great pride he has introduced his own self as one of the inheritors of the Vedic Rishis or seer-poets).

The message noted below is what Rabindranath says on the occasion of inauguration of Viswabharati. That he has been greatly influenced by the Upanishadic ideas (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*) can be clearly noticed from the following lines –

86 Dasgupta, Sri Sasibhushan, Upanishader Patabhumikaye Rabindramanas, p.14 (SS)

87 Ibid. p.9 (SS)

উপনিষদের কালেও ভারতবর্ষে এইরকম বিদ্যাকেন্দ্রের সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল। শতপথব্রাহ্মণের বৃহদারণ্যকে আরুণিপুত্র শ্বেতকেতু পাঞ্চালদেশের পরিষদে জৈবালি প্রবাহণের কাছে এসেছিলেন। সেখানেও বড় বড় জ্ঞানীদের সমবায়ে আশ্রমরূপে পরিষদ রচিত হত।^{৮৮}

(Even in the age of the Upanishads such centres of learning came into existence elsewhere. It has a reference in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad of Satapatha Brahmana that Swetaketu, son of Āruni had been to Jaibāli Prabahan of the Pānchal state council and there also existed such a centre of learning at the hermitage in collaboration with highly advanced and dedicated scholars.)

From his own words we may know how deeply Rabindranath is moved by the modus-operandi of the education system that prevails in the Tapovan of the Upanishadic age. Like the ancient Rishis Rabindranath also looks upon the little learners as ensouled beings and a greater destiny waits them in their fronts. In the circumstances, for unfoldment of knowledge that lies within the learners need entering into a sacred life for which they must again prepare themselves right from the primary stage of their lives. Rabindranath's view in this context has been expressed in the following words –

আমাদের পূর্বপুরুষেরা কিরূপ শিক্ষা ও ব্রত অবলম্বন করিতেন? তাঁরা বাল্যকালে গৃহ ছেড়ে নির্জনে গুরুর বাড়িতে যেতেন। সেখানে খুব কঠিন নিয়মে নিজেকে সংযত করে রাখতে হত। শরীর মনকে

88 Rabindracharita, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha), p.406 (PS)

একেবারে পবিত্র রাখতে হবে। তাদের শরীরে মনে কোনরকম দোষ স্পর্শ করত না। কঠীন বিচিনায় শুভেন। সমস্ত মনের সমস্ত চেষ্টা কেবল শিক্ষা লাভে, কেবল সত্যের সন্ধানে, কেবল নিজের দুঃপ্রবৃত্তিদমনে নিজের ভালগুণকে ফুটিয়ে তুলতে নিযুক্ত থাকত। তোমাদের সেই রকম কষ্ট স্বীকার করে সেই কঠীন নিয়মে সকলপ্রকার বড়মানুষি তুচ্ছ করে দিয়ে এখানে গুরুগৃহে বাস করতে হবে।^{৮৯}

(What sort of education and discipline did our ancestors resort to? In their childhood they (the learners) would put up at their residence of their Guru (teacher) in seclusion of their respective homes. There they had to lead an austere way of living – keeping thorough sanctity in body and mind. No weak-point could touch their characters. They were accustomed to lie on hard-bed. And they engaged themselves severally with an all-out effort towards receiving and attaining truth by doing away with mischievous leanings for the ultimate purpose of excelling in their saner qualities respectively. Now you are to live in the house of the Guru similarly accepting the hardship of following the strict discipline by disregarding ostentatious display of wealthiness.)

Similarly, the Upanishad⁹⁰ says that the Brahmacharin who aspires after the highest knowledge should be plastic, calm and unperturbed in mind (স্থান্ধঃ)⁹¹. He

89 Tagore, Rabindranath, Tapovaner Siksha (PS)

90 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, IV.4.23 (PS)

must also be self-restrained (दान्तः), self-denying (उपरतः), patient (तिथिष्णुः) and collected (समाहितः)⁹² with purity in nature (सत्यशुद्धिः)⁹³. The Upanishadic education also means application of the mystical doctrine throughout the life in all its aspects and it is not meant for the early stage of life only as it is also spread in the entire span of life i.e., it must continue in the stage of a house-holder on his return from his āshramic part of education⁹⁴ – of which we know from the dialogues of Svetaketu Aruneya & Goutama in Chhāndogya Upanishad⁹⁵ and Yajnavalka & Mattreyi in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad⁹⁶.

In the following lines of ‘*Rabindranather Sikshadarshana O Sadhana*’ Sunil Chandra Sarkar points out that in the early part of his life the world poet himself bathes in the fresh thoughts of the Upanishads and now after growing in years he is found very much interested to see that the little learners of the Āshram schools taking dips in the same fresh streams of thoughts of the Upanishads –

91 Katha Upanishad, II.24 (PS), Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.13, (PS), Svetasvata Upanishad, IV.22 (PS) & Maitra Upanishad, IV.29 (PS)

92 Katha Upanishad, I.b (PS)

93 Chāndogaya Upanishad, VII.26.2 (PS) & Mundaka Upanishad, III.2.6 (PS)

94 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.94 (SS)

95 Chāndogaya Upanishad, VI.1-6 (PS)

96 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, II.4/ IV.1. 3-4/ III.8.2.13 (PS)

পরবর্তী জীবনে যেসব শিক্ষানীতি তিনি বিবৃত করেছেন ও শান্তিনিকেতনের সাধনার প্রয়োগ করেছেন তার সবই তিনি আত্মশিক্ষার দিনে স্বাধীনভাবে শুধু আবিস্কারই করেন নি, নিজের জীবনে পোহন করেছেন।^{৯৭}

(The principles of education that he has stated and the austere endeavours that has been employed at Santiniketan at his later life were mostly not only created freely in the days of his self-training that he had undergone in his own life.)

Regarding Rabindranath's view on the concept of complete man Sunilbabu further adds -

পূর্ণাঙ্গ শিক্ষা, পূর্ণমানবতার শিক্ষা, Integral Education, Education of the whole man - এইসব উপাদানকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ গ্রহণ করে ... তাদেরই অনাবৃত রশ্মিতে মানবপ্রকৃতির সমস্ত দিকগুলিকে উদ্ভাসিত করলেন।^{৯৮}

(Accepting the principles like integral education, education of the whole man Rabindranath reveals all the aspects of human nature in the unhindered bright rays of some such tenets.)

Let us also see what Sunil Chandra Sarkar says in regard to Rabindranath's ideals and experiences that have been successfully employed at Santiniketan-

97 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.4 (SS)

98 Ibid. p.7 (SS)

শান্তিনিকেতনে দেখিয়েছেন কেমন করে এই সব সম্ভাবনা সত্য করে তোলা যায়, জীবন্ত অভিজ্ঞতার এই প্রবাহগুলিকে কেমন করে একটি সমাজে, পুরানো তপোবনের আদর্শে রচিত একটি আশ্রমে, সহজ ও স্বাভাবিক করে তোলা যায়। ব্যক্তিগত সম্পর্কস্থাপন, অন্তঃদৃষ্টিজাগরণের জন্য সহযোগিতা ও সেবাকর্মের মধ্যে অগ্রসর - আশ্রমবাসীদের শিক্ষাপ্রবাহ।^{৯৯}

(At Santiniketan he has shown how by dint of streams of living experiences a promise may turn a truth; how by following the basis of the ideal principles of the ancient Tapovan (a centre of learning in the hermitage) a society may turn a simple and spontaneous hermitage. In view of developing ties of man-to-man relationship with feelings of affinity in order to awaken insight for moving forward with a sense of co-operation and service is essential in the process of learning for the ashramites.)

4.4. The Teacher & The Taught

The latent creative force lies hidden in the being of the child and its utility can be had by its unfoldment – it is said in the Upanishads “तत्त्वोऽपि हि जीवन्ति, जीवन्ति मृगयक्षिणः, स जीवति मनो यस्य, मननेन जीवति।” The idea contained in these words has been truly reflected in the educational ideal of the world poet¹⁰⁰.

99 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.34 (SS)

100 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.16 (SS)

Rabindranath marks the significant efforts of the Rishis of the Upanishads in respect of creating a congenial environmental infrastructure in the heart of Nature, -- offered to the young learners full of enthusiasm and seekers of the Truth and not victims of unhealthy habits and abuses. Kireet Joshi remarks in this regard –

The goals of education are the attainment of self-realisation, and cultivation of the capacity for truth and righteousness requires the synthesis of the powers of harmony, vastness, and austerity through the instrumentality of the illumined mind and the power of the expression of the soul¹⁰¹.

To the great poet such an environment at the early days of human life is essential for positive growth of human faculties. To him it is also a unique instance and the essence of this idea is fruitfully used by the poet at Santiniketan for bringing out the natural development of the finer elements in the little ones – as suggested by Sunilbabu¹⁰².

The importance of an educator or a teacher in the real sense of the term can hardly be comprehended properly. In fact, he is a friend, philosopher and guide, nay; the leader of the march. His presence is supposed to speak and hence, such a

101 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.97 (SS)

102 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.72 (SS)

man cannot be looked upon as an ordinary being. He is not a task-master. He must be a luminous person having magnetic personality and integrity.

Rabindranath says :

জ্ঞানশিক্ষার আশ্রম স্থাপন করিতে হইলে গুরুর প্রয়োজন।^{১০৩}

(For purposes of setting up a hermitage to facilitate imparting lessons essentially we are in need of a preceptor.)

The prime role of the teacher must also be to help the student to enlarge, develop and attain height, width and depth of the mental faculties on the one hand and on the other study child psychology with a view to help the student to attain the height and width of the layers of their mind. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar says –

রবীন্দ্রশিক্ষায় একদিকে ছাত্রকেই প্রাধান্য দেওয়া হয়েছে। তারই তাগিদে জ্ঞানদানের ব্যবস্থা, তারই প্রয়োজনে শিক্ষক নিয়োজিত। শান্তিনিকেতনের শিক্ষাব্যবস্থায় ছাত্রের মনে যে জিজ্ঞাসা জাগছে তা জ্ঞানের দ্বারা নিবৃত্ত করা, চিন্তের নিত্যপ্রসার্য পরিবর্তনে সাহায্য করা ও সর্বোপরি শিশুমনের রক্ষণাবেক্ষণ ও তত্ত্বাবধান করা প্রণালীতে শিক্ষকের মুখ্য উদ্দেশ্য। ছাত্রের সুপ্তচরিত্র যে ভাবে ক্রমশঃ বিকশিত হচ্ছে তা যাতে স্বয়ংসম্পূর্ণরূপে পরিগ্রহ করতে পারে সে দিকেই শিক্ষকের লক্ষ্য থাকে। ... ছাত্রের জীবনসাধনার সঙ্গে তাঁর জীবনও ওতোপ্রোতভাবে জড়িত থাকবে, নিজেকে তিনি অসংকোচে ছাত্রের সঙ্গে মিলিয়ে দেবেন। রবীন্দ্রনাথের শিক্ষায়তনে (ছাত্র-শিক্ষক) ও দুই পক্ষের মধ্যে তখন

103 Siksha, Rabindranath Tagore, p.49 (PS)

স্থাপিত হত এক নিবিড় আত্মীয়তার সম্বন্ধ; স্নেহ ও সহানুভূতি নিয়ে শিক্ষকগণ তাই পাঠদান করতেন।^{১০৪}

(In Rabindranath's system of education stress has been laid chiefly on the role of the learner. It is the learner's urge that demands proper arrangements for imparting lessons and it is also to satisfy his need that the teacher is engaged. The key aim of the teacher in the system of education obtaining at Santiniketan is to satisfy the learner's inquisitiveness by involving him to acquire knowledge, help him to develop the ever expanding mind and above all to act as a custodian to take care of the psychology of the child. The teacher is supposed to keep vigilance on the manner in which the learner's latent character gradually has been blooming so that the learner might take the shape of a self-sufficient one. His (teacher's) life would now be mixed inseparably with the mode of life of the learner and without hesitation he would also become inextricably one with the learner. In the circumstances, there would be an intimate tie of kinship between the two sides – the teacher and the taught at Rabindranath's centre of learning. Hence, the teacher also used to impart lesson with affectionate as well as sympathetic feelings.)

104 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santiniketan, p.31 (SS)

The teacher-taught relationship in the Upanishadic age is remarkably an ideal one¹⁰⁵. The guru or the preceptor is looked upon as father of a family while the Brahmacharins are his children. The guru and his disciples are so close and integrated that as the day dawns a common aspiration and aim of preserving and propagating the sacred learning starts vibrating and creating an atmosphere showing its worth in their lives and conducts with the chanting of the mantra. Here runs the mantra -

ओं सह नाववतु, सह नौ भुनक्तु, सह वीर्यं कर्त्तावहे।

तेजस्मि नावधीतमस्तु, माविद्विषावहे॥¹⁰⁶

This is a common prayer which invokes Almighty God to give protection to both the teacher and the taught and to give more and more powers in their beings and to embolden both of them and see that they always remain as an integrated whole and never develop enmity amongst them. In this context Kireet Joshi observes –

Prayer in the Upanishad was regarded as a process by which the individual is facilitated in connecting himself or herself with the objects that are to be attained. The prayer in the Upanishad was a process by which consciousness is psychologically awakened and put into an

105 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.101 (SS)

106 केनोपनिषद्, शान्तिपाठः (PS)

operation by which the individual and the object of realisation can be linked. The linking process, when effectively accomplished, brings about the state of peace¹⁰⁷.

In such an environment Antevasins are found residing in the house of the teacher and are also permitted to continue further studies to acquire the qualities of seer-teachers.¹⁰⁸ In the long run such seer-teachers become capable of running independently the centres of learning – old and new and impart lessons to the young learners and some such centres of learning may be looked upon as ancient counterparts of our Teachers’ Training Institutes. Kireet Joshi further adds –

Without good teachers and good pupils there can be no good educational system. Today’s educators, therefore, need to work on all three fronts simultaneously; the teacher, the pupil and the system..... If we are teachers, we should strive to become good teachers; if we are pupils, we should strive to become good pupils; and if we are in charge of the educational system, we should set about creating new conditions in the system as to encourage and foster good teachers and good pupil¹⁰⁹.

107 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.80 (SS)

108 Chāndogaya Upanishad, II.23.2 (PS)

109 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.20 (SS)

Rabindranath is so much absorbed in the educational thoughts and ideals of the Upanishads that it seems he cannot do away with the role of the Rishis as educators from his mind. So when he thinks in terms of placing one as the teacher of the Brahmacharyāshram he gives serious thought to it and says –

দেখছি মনে মনে তপোবনের কেন্দ্রস্থলে গুরুকে, যিনি যন্ত্র নন, তিনি মানুষ, কেননা তিনি মনুষ্যত্বের
লক্ষ্য সাধনেই তিনি প্রবৃত্ত। (আশ্রমশিক্ষা)^{১১০}

(In the flashes of my mind I find the seer-teacher seated at the centre of a Tapovan and does'nt seem to be an image of a machine – out and out he appears to be a perfect human being, since he has undertaken the responsibility of fulfilling the purposes of humanity.)

He (Rabindranath) is of opinion that the teacher himself must at least be a man of lofty character otherwise the aims and objectives of Brahmacharyāshram will ultimately go in vain. Below we will find his own statement in this regard –

নিজেরা ত্যাগ ও সংযম অভ্যাস না করিলে ছাত্রদের নিকট তাঁহাদের সমস্ত উপদেশ নিষফল হইবে
এবং ব্রহ্মচার্যশ্রমের উজ্জ্বলতা স্ফলান হইয়া যাইতে তাকিবে।^{১১১}

(If the teachers themselves do not resort to self-sacrifice and self-restraint all their functions of counselling and teaching would be ineffectual and the glory of Brahmacharyashram would be tarnished.)

110 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.31 (SS)

111 Ibid. (SS)

According to the Upanishads the first criterion of a teacher is that he must without fail always cling to the truth and speak the truth - ऋतं वदिष्यामि। सत्यं वदिष्यामि।¹¹². The role of the teacher in the Upanishadic age is indeed very significant. Right from the Vedic period the tradition of Rishis as great educators continues. As the teachers are the seer-poets they always move along the sunlit path and never budge an inch from the true Truth. They are quite aware that the tender-aged pupils are in the habit of imitating them. Hence, whatever they say or do directly prevails on the pupils. The teachers' responsibility to the disciples and to the society is very great and fortunately here as the Rishis are the teachers they quite realize the gravity of the question. Never do they indulge in lying or committing a sin. The teacher of the Upanishadic age is out and out a conscientious person and he is equally on the alert so that no abuse can damage a learner's life and ultimately damage the whole social fabric. Kireet Joshi says –

*The ancient Indian tradition gave too much importance to reverence to the teacher. What truth lies behind it? The Indian education system recognised that the real teacher is seated within oneself, and sooner rather than later, the seeker must discover the inner teacher and the inner guide*¹¹³.

112 Taittiriya Upanishad, 1.1 (PS)

113 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.34 (SS)

Kireet Joshi further says –

Knowing that the real teacher is seated within the pupil, he hands over the task of guidance to that inner guide as soon as possible. Until then, he devotes all his energies to one single aim, the flowering of the pupil's faculties and the awakening of the inner guide seated within the pupil's heart. It is to such a teacher that the ancient tradition of India assigned highest reverence¹¹⁴.

According to the Upanishads a teacher must have a vision of the future. He is the chief architect of the society. So to say, he is a friend, philosopher and a guide of his disciple who in turn is supposed to be the torch-bearer of the rest of the people. The duty of a teacher nay, his great responsibility is to emerge as a man of integrity, purity, honesty and unperturbed leader of the march. Through a series of challenging performances he has to prove his worth. In the circumstances, he is looked upon as a burning example before the taught. And most of the business of education is required to be accomplished by him smoothly and positively and without a fuss.

Nor is this all. The profile of the teacher has been portrayed on a very large canvas in the Upanishadic period. In fact, here a seer-poet or Rishi plays the role of an educator. The teacher, according to the Upanishads is not only a man of

114 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.35 (SS)

vision but also a pure and luminous soul engaged in a joint venture with his disciples in seeking the Light and Truth and for the greater good and welfare of the entire society nay, humanity.

In the next place, the Upanishadic education enables the learner to communicate with the Transcendental Force. Through prayers both the seer-teacher and his disciple pray - तन्मामवतु। तद्वक्तारमवतु। अवतु माम्। अवतु वक्तारम्।¹¹⁵ Thus the pupil learns how to bring down the Transcendental power for the safety and well-being of all concerned. Through such joint prayers not only the safety of the individual pupil is achieved but also a regular guidance of the lofty preceptor who is capable of moulding tender-aged learner honesty and tolerance and perseverance are attained effectively by the learner.

Prof. Bhabatosh Dutta has mentioned among other things that the simple and unsophisticated life style of Brahmacharyāshram at Shantiniketan especially of the little learners living in close contact with their teachers remind us of the ideals of the ancient India's Tapovan –

ব্রহ্মচার্যশ্রমের জীবনযাত্রা ছিল প্রাচীন ভারতীয় তপোবনের আদর্শে। গুরুশিষ্যের সাহচর্যে সরল
অনাড়ম্বর জীবনযাত্রা।^{১১৬}

115 Taittiriya Upanishad, 1.1 (PS)

116 Dutta, Sri Bhabatosh, Rabindra-Parichaya, p.72 (SS)

(The mode of life in the Brahmacharyashram maintained the ideal of the ancient Indian Tapovan. It was a simple and ostentatious sort of living that developed through the coordination of the teacher and the taught.)

Sri Bijan Bihari Bhattacharya, an eminent educationist also points out that ancient tapovan happens to be a residential house of the teacher and there the students are allowed to live like his own children with the *Guru* and other inmates of his house—

একদিন তপোবনে ভারতবর্ষের গুরুগৃহ ছিল। এই সকল আশ্রমে যাঁহারা বাস করিতেন তাঁহারা গৃহী ছিলেন এবং শিষ্যগণ সন্তানের মত তাঁহাদের নিকট বিদ্যাগ্রহণ করিতেন।^{১১৭}

(Once, Tapovan was meant for the residence of the Indian preceptor as well. Those who lived in the ashram (hermitage) were family members of the preceptor and his disciples who would receive education as children of the same family.)

The entire system of education has been pitched in such a manner that the learner has the sufficient scope for rising above all sorts of pettiness and egotistic fervours, which in turn as a consequence may again give effect to the flowering of their higher selves to facilitate devoting their energies to the greater cause of the society and humanity in greater perspectives. The emphasis on the reverence for

117 Bhattacharya, Bijan Bihari, Sikshacharya Vivekananda O Rabindranath, Chintanayak-Vivekananda, p.830 (SS)

the teacher is laid in the system for creating a sense of reverence towards all other superiors in the family as well as that of the society. To this effect Taittiriya Upanishad states –

मातृदेवो भव। पितृदेवो भव।
आचार्यदेवो भव। अतिथिदेवो भव।¹¹⁸

In the circumstances, the seer-teacher has hardly any time to take rest as he constantly has to carry on his efforts for more and more knowledge like the Brahmacharins. Here is another reference from Taittiriya Upanishad–

आ मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
वि मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
प्र मा यन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
दमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।
शमायन्तु ब्रह्मचारिणः स्वाहा।¹¹⁹

In fact, a true teacher always feels that he has been appointed from above and like a trustee his responsibility is to awaken and hand over his work to the omnipotent guide having his living presence in the heart-centre of the learner. This system of education indeed makes the role of the teacher very significant and the interweaving of both the lives of the teacher and the taught comes to such a pass that the teacher does not have a separate identity; his aspirations and prayers

118 Taittiriya Upanishad, 1.11 (PS)

119 Ibid. 1.4 (PS)

are not meant for himself only. Regarding such feeling of togetherness one may find its portrayal in the Santipatha of Taittiriya Upanishad¹²⁰.

The teacher is all the while found making joint ventures with his pupils in respect of speaking and seeking truth ceaselessly with a view to attaining the highest Truth; extending the horizon of light by gaining more and more knowledge from the inconscient physical plane to the highest plane of effulgent light; performing duties in all spheres of life for the welfare of all concerned.

Let us come back to our discussion on the education system of ancient India particularly in the age of Upanishads. In the Upanishadic age the Tapovan of the Rishis emerges as the heart centre of learning, meditation and sadhana. Prafulla Kumar Sarkar says –

চিরদিন উদার বিশ্বপ্রকৃতির ঘনিষ্ঠ সংস্রবে থাকিয়াই ভারতবর্ষের মন গড়িয়া উঠিয়াছে। জগতের জড় উদ্ভিদ, চেতনের সঙ্গে নিজেকে একান্তভাবে ব্যাপ্ত করিয়া দেওয়া ভারতবর্ষের স্বভাবসিদ্ধ হইয়াছে। তাই বালকদের হৃদয় যখন সজীব এবং সমুদয় ইন্দ্রিয়শক্তি যখন সতেজ তখনই তাহাদিগকে মেঘ ও রৌদ্রের লীলাভূমি অব্যবহিত আকাশতলে খেলা করিতে দাও, তাহাদিগকে ভুমার আলিঙ্গন হইতে বঞ্চিত করিয়া রাখিও না। শিশুর পেলব কোমল মনে প্রকৃতি তার স্নেহের পরশ নিবিড়ভাবে দিক। ছয় ঋতুর বিচিত্র রূপ তার চোখে অব্যবহিত থাকুক। আমাদের যথার্থ শিক্ষা তপোবনে প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে নিলিত হয়ে, তপস্যার দ্বারা পবিত্র হয়ে।^{১২১}

120 केनोपनिषद्, शान्तिपाठः (PS)

121 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.13 (SS)

(The Indian mind has been formed living all along in close contact with the wide world and its nature. Pervading all the animate plant and inanimate things of the world and having been identified with them intimately India maintains her own innate spontaneous nature. In the circumstances, it is better to let the boys play under the open sky particularly when it becomes a field of activities of the sunshine and the cloud and the centres of emotions of the boys are vivacious and all the powers of the sense organs are full of vigour do not please deprive them from embracing the sublime Omnipresent. Let Nature give her affectionate touch deeply on the soft-hearted and delicate mind of the child. Let all the six seasons display their appearances full of diversities before its eyes unhindered. We receive education proper at Tapovan when we are in harmony with Nature and when we become sanctified by practising self-discipline.)

It occurs to Rabindranath, the great educator that in the silence of Nature *Tapovan* offers such a fresh and congenial environment to the little learner that its impact goes deep into the subconscious layer of his mind and the accumulated feelings becomes more powerful than that of the surface consciousness. As a matter of fact such a system helps one to attain self-realization as well by

repelling the blind inclination of the instinctive mind. Let us listen to what Rabindranath says in this regard –

Children have their active sub-conscious mind which, like the 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 method, building appliance, class-teaching and text-books. The earth has her mass of substance in her land and water. But, if I may be allowed figurative language, she finds her inspiration of freedom, the stimulation of her life, from her atmosphere I tried to create an atmosphere in my institution, giving it the principal place in our programme of teaching (A Poet's School)¹²².

The macro view of the seer poet has again been reflected in the following words –

বাহিরে জগৎ এবং আমার অন্তরে ধী, এ দুইই একই শক্তির বিকাশ, ইহা জানিলে জগতের সহিত আমার চিন্তের এবং আমার চিন্তের সহিত সেই সচ্চিদানন্দের ঘনিষ্ঠ যোগ অনুভব করিয়া সংকীর্ণতা হইতে, ভয় হইতে, বিষাদ হইতে মুক্তি লাভ করি।^{১২৩}

(The world around and the wisdom within – both of them are manifestations of the same omnipotent source. When I come to take notice of my relation with the wide world as well as the ever-blissful Omniscient

122 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santinikatan, p.18 (SS)

123 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.591 (PS)

I feel deeply a genuine bond and I also find an opportunity for making myself free from narrowness, fear and grief.)

Rabindranath is equally aware that the phenomenal world always undergoes changes progressively whereas the spiritual entity is eternal –

আধ্যাত্মিকতাই মানুষের সকল শক্তির কেন্দ্রগত, কেননা তাহা আত্মারই শক্তি। পরিপূর্ণতাই তাহার স্বভাব।^{১২৪}

(Spirituality is the source of all human faculties for it belongs to the soul.

The state of being replete is its original nature.)

He points out that the dynamic force of the spirit has to be practised right from the tender age of man for it awakens man and helps him to cling to the true truth. The system of education that Rabindranath strives to introduce at Santiniketan is to give opportunity to the young learners to grow in the pure light of higher consciousness of the spirit and attain knowledge along the swift-revealing steps. Rabindranath, the great seer-poet realizes that the system of education that prevails in the Rishis's Tapovan is a unique system of education and without which the desired result cannot be had. When one receives wealth of true knowledge from Rishis or a saintly character seated in the heart of a wonderful environment of Nature and especially when through a close tie of relationship between the teacher and the taught education not only becomes

124 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santiniketan, p.21 (SS)

meaningful but it also gains momentum. Such a system equally helps to promote the urge for learning in the minds of the young learners. Regarding the thirst for learning the Upanishads also hold the same view. In this connection Kireet Joshi remarks –

The natural setting of the Āshrams and Gurukulas in the open forest, where nature could be an intimate friend and companion, necessitated the cultivation of the powers of inner communion, imagination and natural delight¹²⁵.

Rabindranath, the seer-teacher is aware that the Rishis of the Upanishads who set up *Tapovan* for imparting lessons to the young learners have a broader and comprehensive view of human life and as they are found to inspire to attain the inner truths of the evolving beings they try not only to help retaining the subtler and higher faculties of the learners but also pave the way for their positive growth and preserve all such things from debasing and perversion and decay. The great poet is highly impressed and becomes drawn towards the concept of totality and the relevant measures to be taken at the very outset of life's journey and to him it is an essential thing to be accomplished at the right moment. Of course, Rabindranath is on the alert. To him it is clear through the passage of time that the mental frame of man has undergone a dynamic change and in the

125 Joshi, Kireet, *The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil*, p.32 (SS)

circumstances the *Tapovan* (hermitage) type of centre of learning may not be acceptable to the contemporary man. Our poet is not a poet of the ordinary sense. He is a world poet and he is capable of feeling the throb of the heart centre of the mankind. So he does not totally copy the ancient type of *Tapovan* when he sets up a centre of learning at *Santiniketan*. But the importance of the fundamental object of the Rishis for the furtherance of the human consciousness among the young learners has been kept in his view all through along with thwarting the lower instincts that usually debase higher values of life. The poet is a worshipper of the true truth. So the fundamental idea contained in the Upanishadic system of education cannot be set aside by our poet. To the world poet every bit of positive idea that might help the manifestation of the higher faculties of man whether it belongs to the ancient school or to the modern whether in this country or abroad he becomes at once interested in it and tries to make use of it without any hesitation.

The spirit of Tapovan in the purity of its original shape would be a fantastic anachronism in the present age. Therefore in order to be real, it must find its reincarnation under modern conditions of life and be the same in truth, not merely identical in fact¹²⁶.

¹²⁶ A Poet's school (PS)

Hence, the model used at Santiniketan by Rabindranath regarding the type of the environment of the school bears testimony to the fact that it has on it great impact of the *Tapovan* of the Upanishads. Another feature of the education system that prevailed in the *Tapovans* in the age of the Upanishads makes Rabindranath also interested tremendously. It is on the stress of meditation which enables every learner to have contact with the transcendental source regularly. The poet realizes that the advantage of such a system is that if it is carried on unceasingly it opens before the learner a channel of psychic light that elevates him to a level of a higher consciousness through self opening. As the world teacher is greatly moved by the system of meditation that was practised by the learners in the *Tapovan* with great enthusiasm he introduces *Dhyana* or meditation in the curriculum of the school programme of his time –

এই বিশ্বলোকের মধ্যে সেই বিশ্বলোকেশ্বরের যে শক্তি প্রত্যক্ষ, তাকেই ধ্যান করি। একবার
উপলব্ধি করি বিপুল বিশ্বজগৎ একসঙ্গে এই মুহূর্তে এবং প্রতিমুহূর্তেই তাঁহা হইতে আবিষ্কৃত
হইতেছে।^{১২৭}

*(We meditate upon that power of the Supreme Being which is evident in
the world of creation. We have to realise once that from the same source*

127 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.590 (PS)

the huge universe is being radiated this moment as well as every moment at the same time.)

4.5. Brahmacharya (ब्रह्मचर्यः) (Privation in education)

Rabindranath strongly approves of privation in education. A learner has to face sufferings and uncertainties of various kinds – he should always remember that he has to strive hard and proceed by removing problems after problems. He must be ready to believe ‘come foul come storm, must I go’. He will have to undertake a long journey and cross many a hurdle and reach a position of seeing truths through experience. The world poet reminds: ‘नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्य’. He means that the learner through the sufferings and ordeals has to attain purity.

Regarding self-restraint and discipline Rabindranath refers to the ideas of the ancient system of Brahmacharya –

বালকদিগের অধ্যয়নের কাল একটি ব্রতযাপনের কাল। মনুষ্যত্বলাভ স্বার্থ নহে, পরমার্থ, ইহা আমাদের পিতামহেরা জানিতেন। এই মনুষ্যত্বলাভের ভিত্তি যে শিক্ষা তাহাকে তাঁহারা ব্রহ্মচর্যব্রত বলিতেন। ব্রহ্মচর্যব্রতে ছাত্রদিগকে কাঠিন্য অভ্যাস করিতে হইবে।

(The period of time meant for the boys undergoing academic courses is also the time for practising austere endeavours to observe and fulfil vow.

The act of attaining humanity is surely not meant for satisfaction of one's own individual's interest only – it is also for realising the greatest reality

of which our fore-fathers were aware of. The course of training which happens to be the basis of attaining humanity was termed Brahmacharyabrata by them. The trainees had to practise severe austerities.)

Here Rabindranath has used the term ‘পিতামহেরা’. Surely by ‘পিতামহেরা’ he does not mean our forefathers of two three generations before, there is no doubt in it that he refers to the ancient Rishis of the Upanishadic age who set up Tapovan and carried on the man-making mission through the system of Brahmacharya and other disciplines in this land of ours.

Almost all the Upanishads have laid emphasis on practising Tapas in every stage of human life. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad¹²⁸ says that the learner is required to practice *Tapas* by increasing privations of an ascetic life and only then¹²⁹ he can attain perfect knowledge. Kireet Joshi in his “Taittiriya Upanishad” reviews –

The process of concentration is a psychological process; it involves no rituals or ceremonies, and it is free from any doctrines of religion. The cultivation of the powers of concentration is independent of any religious activity necessitating faith, belief or religious prescriptions. The process

128 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, II.4 (PS)

129 Chāndogaya Upanishad, IV.10 (PS), Taittiriya Upanishad, I.9, (PS),
Prasna Upanishad, I.10 (PS) & Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.11 (PS)

of concentration can be scientifically experimented with, and if the Object of Knowledge on which concentration is employed is that which transcends the body, life and mind and purely by a process of concentration, ending in knowledge and illumination¹³⁰.

The world poet realizes that to keep human nature transparent and positive the little learner is in need of overcoming perversion¹³¹. In support of this view Sunil Chandra Sarkar has pointed out that the basis of such a view of Gurudev has been taken from the similar ideas of the Upanishads –

শিক্ষাচিন্তার প্রাচীনতম নিদর্শন খুঁজতে হলে অবশ্যই চলে যেতে হয় উপনিষদে মানুষের ব্যক্তিত্বের সমস্ত দিক, এসবকিছুই তাকে হিসাবের মধ্যে রাখতে হবে।^{১৩২}

(With a view to trace the oldest instance of educational thoughts one is have to go back to the Upanishads ... one will have to take into account of all the aspects of personality of the individual man.)

Sri Prafulla Chandra Sarkar's view in this regard has been stated below –

কেননা তিনি জানতেন মানুষের সকল শিক্ষারই মূলে সংযমের শিক্ষাসাধনা।^{১৩৩}

130 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.96 (PS)

131 Elmhirst, L.K., Pioneer in Education Pioneer in Education – Rabindranath Tagore (SS)

132 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.1 (SS)

133 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudev Santinikatan, p.41 (SS)

(For he was aware that self-disciplined austere endeavour is at the root of all type of education.)

In the following words Sri Prafulla Chandra Sarkar in his tome ‘*Gurudeveb Santiniketan*’ once again refers to the discipline of the Brahmacharya system of ancient India and categorically says that it is the only basis of attaining humanity and it ought to be practised at Santiniketan as well¹³⁴.

Rabindranath believes that one can acquire inner qualities of one’s being by getting in touch with one’s inner light for which the practice of Brahmacharya can help him a lot –

প্রবৃত্তি সংযত না হইলে চিত্তের সাম্য থাকে না, সুতরাং বোধ বিকৃত হয়ে যায়। এজন্য ব্রহ্মচার্যের সংযমের দ্বারা বোধশক্তিকে বাধামুক্ত করবার শিক্ষা দেওয়া আবশ্যিক।^{১৩৫}

(If the inclinations and desires cannot be brought under control equilibrium of mind cannot also be achieved. So perversion arises in perception. For this one must undergo a training of austere endeavour of the Brahmacharya discipline.)

The seer poet Rabindranath again and again reiterates the aims and objectives of Brahmacharya which is essential for the young learners for keeping them free from artificialities, luxuries and all that –

134 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, *Gurudever Santiniketan*, p.41 (SS)

135 Rabindrarachanabali, *Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha)*, p.360 (PS)

জীবনের আরম্ভকালে বিকৃতির সমস্ত কৃত্রিম কারণ হইতে স্বভাবকে প্রকৃতস্থ রাখা নিতান্তই আবশ্যিক। প্রকৃতির অকালবোধন এবং বিনাসিতার উগ্র উত্তেজনা হইতে মনুষ্যত্বের নবোদগমের আবস্থাকে স্নিদ্ধ করাই ব্রহ্মচার্যপালনের উদ্দেশ্য।^{১৩৬}

(Right from the outset of one's life it is essentially necessary to keep one's nature in the normal state by thwarting all sorts of perversions. Brahmacharya aims at keeping the newly growing stage of humanity calm by doing away with the untimely performances of one's nature as well as indulging in violent excitements.)

Preparation for keeping the mind and instincts pure from the beginning of the academic career as it is found in the cases of disciples of the ancient Tapovan is of great importance to the great educator, Rabindranath. He says –

আমাদের বিদ্যালয়ে সকল কর্মে সকল ইন্দ্রিয়মনের তৎপরতা প্রথমহতেই অনুশীলিত হোক, এটা শিক্ষাসাধনার গুরুতর কর্তব্য বলে মনে করতে হবে।^{১৩৭}

(In our centre of learning the adroitness of all the sense-organs including the mind must be practised in all its activities and this should be considered as a serious duty of the arduous training.)

136 Rabindrarachanabali, Dwadaskhanda, p.300 (PS)

137 Ibid. Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha), p.416 (PS)

To the poet ethics is no substitute for Brahmacharya. He points out –

ব্রহ্মচর্যপালনের পরিবর্তে আজকাল নীতিপাঠের প্রাদুর্ভাব হইয়াছে। নৈতিক জ্যাটামি সুবুদ্ধির
স্বাভাবিকতা ও সৌকুমার্য নষ্ট করে।^{১৩৮}

*(Nowadays there has been unnecessary outbreak of moral instructions
instead of Brahmacharya. Ethical impertinence spoils prudence and
tender feelings of the innate normal qualities.)*

Without practising Brahmacharya, nay; without meditation intuitive knowledge
and the knowledge of the higher mind cannot be had. That is why Rabindranath
states –

বোধের তপস্যার বাধা হচ্ছে রিপূর বাধা। এজন্য ব্রহ্মচর্যের সংযমের দ্বারা বোধশক্তিকে বাধামুক্ত
করবার শিক্ষা দেওয়া আবশ্যিক।^{১৩৯}

*(The impediments caused by passion stand on the way to austere
endeavour for higher consciousness. In view of this self-discipline of the
Brahmacharya training is needed to make one's consciousness free from
the hindrances.)*

In this context the poet also reminds us –

মানুষের মধ্যে বৈচিত্র্যের সীমা নাই। সে তালগাছের মত। ঋজুরেখায় আকাশের দিকে ওঠে না, সে
বটগাছের মত অসংখ্য ডালপালায় বিস্তীর্ণ করে দেয়।^{১৪০}

138 Siksha, Rabindranath Tagore, p.43 (PS)

139 Ibid. p.96 (PS)

(The diversity in man knows no bounds. He does not erect himself straight towards the haven like a fan-palm tree, on the other hand, he spread him in unnumbered branches as it is found in the case of a banyan tree.)

Considering the problems that the young learners have to face Sri Bijan Bihari Bhattacharya gives us to know that –

... সুতরাং ব্রহ্মচর্যপালন করার প্রাচীনপদ্ধতিকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ পুনঃপ্রবর্তন করিয়া অগ্রসর হইলেন।.....
চাই ব্রহ্মচর্য।^{১৪১}

... Hence, having the ancient practice regarding the observance of Brahmacharya re-installed Rabindranath moved forward ... to him Brahmacharya was an imperative.

Sri Bijan Bihari Bhattacharya further says –

রবীন্দ্রনাথ এতখানি আকৃষ্ট হন যে নিজেই একটি আদর্শ তপোবন বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন।^{১৪২}

(Rabindranth is so much drawn towards the ideals of Tapovan that he himself resolves to set up Tapovan type of Vidyālay at Santiniketan.)

In ancient India Gurukul happens to be the centre of learning and here every intending pupil right from his tender age has to live with a guru or a teacher for a

140 Siksha, Rabindranath Tagore, p.96 (PS)

141 Bhattacharya, Bijan Bihari, Sikshacharya Vivekananda O Rabindranath, Chintanayak-Vivekananda, p.830 (SS)

142 Ibid. p.401 (SS)

considerable or reasonable period of time to undergo training and practise Brahmacharya (ब्रह्मचर्यः) or observe celibacy along with hard labour and physical, intellectual and moral exercise with a view to attaining pure knowledge and true truth. As Satyakama (सत्यकामः)¹⁴³ appears before the seer-teacher Rishi Goutam the latter customarily wants to know all about the candidate's heritage - ब्रह्मचर्यं भवति वित्स्यामि किं गोत्रो न्वहमस्मीति¹⁴⁴. Satyakama (सत्यकामः) makes a clean breast of himself and he gives the Rishi to know all about his family background. He points out that he knows nothing about his father, nor does his mother know anything regarding the antecedents of his father. He relates that his mother is a maid-servant and she has to serve different families regularly. He also points out boldly and unhesitatingly that to him his mother is an incarnation of truth – pure and simple and regarding his inclination in respect of such a venture on his part he has derived inspiration all along from his mother Jabala. However in the next place, Satyakama (सत्यकामः) surrenders to Rishi Goutam and humbly expresses his whole-hearted inclination for undergoing the training course under his (Rishi Goutam) guidance. He further adds that he is quite aware that the gurukula system demands staying with the guru and practising Brahmacharya or celibacy and the question of comfort or relaxation during the course of training is never

143 Chhândogya Upanishad, 4.4.1 (PS)

144 Ibid. (PS)

taken into consideration. In the circumstances, once again he with a resolute mind submits his candidature as he sincerely prefers to opt for the training under the great guru. Although the statement made by Satyakama (सत्यकामः) does not bear any testimony or proof that he is a Brahmin by birth Rishi Goutam still accepts his candidature as he has been fully satisfied with the straightforwardness and innocence of Satyakama (सत्यकामः). By the grace of the Almighty Satyakama (सत्यकामः) also attains Brahnavidyā with flying colours after carrying on a rigorous training sincerely under the able guidance of his great guru.

Among other things the disciples of the Tapovan are used to chant Gayatri Mantra along with the practice of Brahmacharya and it happens to be a regular feature with them. Rabindranath also tries to bring home to the students the ideals contained in the Gayatri mantra and Brahmacharya and inculcate the essence of these ideas in them¹⁴⁵.

For a comprehensive growth of the young learners in his Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at Santiniketan Rabindranath lays stress not only on the regular exercise of body and mind but also the exercise of the spirit through Dhyana or meditation. He says –

145 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.590 (PS)

সিদ্ধিলাভের উপায় শরীর ও মনের নিয়মতালিকার কতকগুলি দৈনিক নিত্যকৃত্য ও অনুষ্ঠানেরও উল্লেখ করেছিলেন, আর তা ছাড়া চেয়েছিলেন ‘ভূৰ্ভুবঃ স্বঃ’ এই গায়ত্রীমন্ত্র অবলম্বন করে ধ্যান।^{১৪৬}

(With a view to attaining success as well as power of the body and mind he laid stress on performing some of the scheduled daily-duties. Besides, he preferred the practice of meditation on Gayatri Mantra ‘भूर्भुवः स्वः’ - Vedic incantation at prayer)

Kireet Joshi in his “Taittiriya Upanishad” discusses about the relevance of Gayatri in this formative stage of life –

Prayer of Vishwamitra is the famous Gayatri mantra which is based on the secret knowledge of the process of concentration and the methods by which concentration can be achieved on the object of knowledge in order that the contents, powers and states of knowledge concerning that object become manifest and can be possessed or realised by the seeker¹⁴⁷.

As Rabindranath pays immense importance to one’s making contact with the Transcendental force with great conviction he himself comes forward to explain and convey the idea contained in the *Gayatri* mantra to the students a number of times and this is why he asks some of the teachers of Santiniketan to see that the

146 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Pabandha, Dharma), p.590 (PS)

147 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.95 (SS)

pupils of this centre of education carry on exercise of the *Gayatri* mantra meticulously, sincerely and devotedly.

For this he prefers to build a close and intimate tie of relationship between the teacher & the taught and in leisurely hours he advises the teachers to chant *Gayatri* mantra before Students & hold discussion with them regarding the inner significance of the mantra –

ছাত্রদিগকে গায়ত্রীমন্ত্র মুখস্ত করাইয়া বুঝাইয়া দেওয়া হইয়া থাকে।

(After having the learners inspired to get by heart Gayatri Mantra - Vedic incantation at prayer, its significance is also made clear to them by dint of explanation.)

Kireet Joshi further opines that –

It is on account of the method of concentration which has been emphasised in the Upanishad as a process of education that today, when we are looking for methods of spiritual education, which are free from various prescriptions of religious practices, the relevance of the Upanishads becomes more direct¹⁴⁸.

148 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.96 (PS)

In the Upanishadic system of education¹⁴⁹ the guru offers the degrees to the students and in his convocation address points out the essence of the guiding principles that may lead them to attain higher life such as –

- One must always speak the truth and one has to take the right path and one has to always maintain justified attitude in one's life and maintain the same regarding others. While carrying on studies one must not idle away time – सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर। स्वाध्यायान् मा प्रमदः¹⁵⁰
- One has to look upon his teachers, parents, and guests as gods – मातृदेवो भव। पितृदेवो भव। आचार्यदेवो भव। अतिथिदेवो भव।¹⁵¹.
- The learner is required to perform actions that are compatible with real knowledge and wealfare of the society. One must not take part in those actions which oppose the fundamental principles of one's learning – यान्यनवद्यानि कर्माणि। तानि सेवितव्यानि। नो इतराणि¹⁵².
- The learner must practise good conduct. The learner has also to pay respect and homage to a true teacher and should always honour him by offering a

149 Taittiriya Upanishad, 1.11 (PS)

150 Ibid. (PS)

151 Ibid. (PS)

152 Ibid. (PS)

seat – यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि तानि त्वयोपास्यानि। नो इतराणि। ये के चास्मत्क्षेत्र्यांसो ब्राह्मणाः। तेषां त्वयासनेन प्रश्वंसितव्यम्¹⁵³.

- The learner has to accept such advices and treat them as final commands and fundamental teachings. The learner has now to go back and observe the instructions and lead life accordingly – एषः आदेशः। एषः उपदेशः। एतदनुशासनम्। एवमुपासितव्यम्।¹⁵⁴.
- By Aksharabrahma we mean nothing but satyam and without any change whatsoever it continues its existence with all its forms and characteristics – सत्यं ज्ञानम्। अनन्तं ब्रह्म¹⁵⁵.
- Every bit of thing in the universe which remains alive and sustained issues forth from the blissful Paramatma and it loses its separate existence when it flows back to the blissful Paramatma – आनन्दाद्ध्येव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते। आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति। आनन्दं प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्तीति।¹⁵⁶.

Rabindranath Tagore also takes into account the essences of these instructions of the Upanishadic education in his own light and he recommends them for implementation by the students of the Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at

153 Taittiriya Upanishad, 1.11 (PS)

154 Ibid. (PS)

155 Taittiriya Upanishad, 2.1 (PS)

156 Ibid. 3.6 (PS)

Santiniketan maintaining regularity all through in their daily life with all sincerity of purpose and not turning it to a mechanical drilling –

- During celibacy pupil has to do away with attachment to affluence and all that and go through the life process practising simplicity, and innocence even if it is rigorous and problematic –

ব্রহ্মচর্যব্রতে ছাত্রদিগের কাঠিন্য অভ্যাস করিতে হইবে। বিলাস ও ধনাভিমান পরিত্যাগ করিতে হইবে।^{১৫৭}

(While observing Brahmacharya-Brata severity or firmness has to be practiced and hoppishness as well as insolence from wealth must be done away with.)

- It is also diserable that such a student is required to develop certain subtler qualities and human values that reflect in their behavioural life for their own transparency in thoughts and customs as well as their attitudes towards others in the society –

দ্বিতীয়ত নিষ্ঠা। উঠা, বসা, পড়া, খেলা, স্নান, আহার ও সকল প্রকার পরিচ্ছন্নতা ও শুচিতা সম্বন্ধে সমস্ত নিয়ম একান্ত দৃঢ়তার সহিত পালনীয়।^{১৫৮}

(Secondly, comes the question of the zealous observance of self-discipline. All kinds of the rules of conduct concerning cleanliness and

157 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.548 (PS)

158 Ibid. (PS)

sanctity have to be essentially followed with all earnestness and firmness whether it is standing up or sitting down or participating in games or taking bath or partaking of meals.)

- Especially it is expected that the relationship between the teacher and the taught is maintained all through with mutual regard, devotion and respect for each other and their courteous behaviour ultimately develop into an ideal thing for all concerned –

তৃতীয়ত ভক্তি। অধ্যাপকদের প্রতি ছাত্রদের নির্বিচারে ভক্তি থাকা চাই। ... ছাত্রগণ অধ্যাপকদিগকে প্রত্যহ প্রণাম করিবে। অধ্যাপকগণ পরস্পরকে নমস্কার করিবেন। পরস্পরের প্রতি শিষ্টাচার ছাত্রদের নিকট যেন আদর্শস্বরূপ বিদ্যমান থাকে।^{১৫৯}

(And thirdly, it is to follow with profound admiration as well as devotion. The learners are supposed to have unquestioned reverential disposition of mind towards their teachers. It is desirable that the learners pay due respects to their teachers by offering salutation to them everyday with profound admiration. It is expected that the teachers equally exchange their wishes with each other. It is also desirable that such polite reciprocal courtesies remain alive as an ideal before the taught.)

159 Rabindrarachanabali, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Dharma), p.548 (PS)

4.6. Conclusion :

Thus, we find an attempt is being made by the poet to introduce both outward features as well as features of the central being from the *Tapovan* school of the age of the Upanishad – of course, making some changes here and there for incorporating them in the contemporary world. There is no denying that the influence of the seer poets of the Upanishads on Rabindranath in the matter of making programme of the education system at Santiniketan is surely a thing of great significance but the seer poet in Rabindranath executes some such programmes in his own style suiting to the conditions of the time and place.

CHAPTER : V

Upanishadic Education and the Educational thoughts of Swami Vivekananda

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Upanishadic education and the Educational thoughts of Swami Vivekananda

5.1. Introduction :

Since Vivekananda has been fully drenched in the pure and fresh ideas of the direct knowledge attained by the Rishis or seer-poets of the Upanishads in their revelation he is fully convinced that some such pure ideas will be sufficient for the man-making educational programme needed for the revival, nay, renaissance out of the distressed condition of the nation. The scattered educational ideas viz., the inspiring writings, powerful utterances etc. that are found here and there may be looked upon as the most valuable gems although Vivekananda, the great educator does not construct any systematic theory of education as such. His educational ideas represent a synthesis of the educational thought of the Upanishads and the modern ideas of the west. Like the seer poet of the Upanishads he views education as the manifestation of perfection already in man. A versatile genius as he is, he not only masters the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bible, the Koran etc. but also the western thoughts from Plato to Spensor. Nevertheless, his chief stress is on the educational ideas of the Upanishads for he says,

*Before flooding India with sociological ideas first deluge the land with spiritual ideas*¹⁶⁰.

He views education as the most powerful means of social change. Since he is bent upon social and cultural emancipation of India his emphasis lies on spiritual ideas which alone can lead men to self-realisation – without which one is not capable of discharging selfless service. According to him the most important task of education is to remove selfishness, superstition, weakness etc. of the people of this land on the one hand and preserve the human values by man-making programme on the other. To him progress is nothing if it is not accompanied by inner change. For the survival of Indian people he says -

*....the ideal for India, therefore, is that we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual or secular in our own hands and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as possible*¹⁶¹.

Vivekananda, believes that every child is a product of heredity and environment and as such every individual student has his own peculiarities as each race of the world has a peculiar mission to fulfil in this world. The great educator observes –

160 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol- III, 1973, p. 221 (PS)

161 Ibid. Vol- II, 1971, p. 362 (PS)

An individual's life is marked out for him by the infinite past life, - by all his past Karma¹⁶².

He further points out that within the learner there is all knowledge, - the teacher has to help awakening it and in this regard the role of concentration is indeed very great. In this connection once again Vivekananda refers to the ancient ideals of the Upanishads. He says –

If you have assimilated five ideas and made your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a library¹⁶³.

According to Mundaka Upanishad¹⁶⁴ mere acquisition of information or self-study through mental exercise will offer only surface knowledge. This can give one only material knowledge. To remove one's ignorance one has to integrate one's knowledge by receiving education in the true sense of the term. Conventional education fails to educate one's whole being. Through the exercise of the spirit light of true knowledge enters into one's whole being. And in such a state alone an integrated outlook develops and man becomes *Pranga* (प्राङ्गः) as he enters into the kingdom of wisdom¹⁶⁵.

162 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol- III, p.108 (PS)

163 Ibid. p.302 (PS)

164 Mundaka Upanishad, III.2.3 (PS)

165 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.89 (SS)

5.2. Philosophy of Education

Vivekananda gives serious thought to the tremendously crisisful situation of the day which has reduced man to the status of a machine. The mechanical ways of modern life have undermined lofty and transcendental ideas of man. He feels that such evils ought to be eradicated through proper education. As awakening of man to his spiritual self can alone do a lot in this regard Swami Vivekananda is bent upon spreading spiritual education and surely his ideas are based on Brahmacharya and Upanishadic ideals. Through spiritual education he wants to solve social as well as other evils when disregard for human values since old fashion has been the go of the day¹⁶⁶. Some such idea of Swamiji is analogues to Isopanishad which declares –

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति योऽविद्यामुपासते।

ततो भुयः इव ये तमो यो विद्यायाम् स्ताः॥¹⁶⁷

According to the Upanishads the real knowledge or the knowledge proper cannot be had only by resorting to the acquisition of information from different sources. In the educational programme of the Upanishads the main stress has been laid on the *Para Vidyā* (परा विद्या) which is also called the real subject matter of the

166 Roy, Dr. Sudipa Dutta (2001). Education in the vision of Swami Vivekananda, Prabuddha Bharata, July 2001 (SS)

167 ईशोपनिषत्, ९ (PS)

Upanishads¹⁶⁸. Regarding *Para Vidyā* (परा विद्या) it is said that it is the supreme knowledge or the guiding principle of human life that enables man to see the problems of human life with a higher consciousness which acts like an effulgent light that removes all shades of darkness¹⁶⁹. It is also stated that the knowledge of the Atma cannot be attained by the exercise of the reasoning intelligence only nor by obtaining knowledge from books, - nor by the Veda¹⁷⁰. It is quite different from *Apara Vidyā* (अपरा विद्या) or the material knowledge of the worldly life.

Swamiji recommends spiritual education on the basis of Brahmacharya and aims at preventing the very birth of evil from the beginning of the journey of human life. He says -

Man in every country is on the one hand producing the brutal children and on the other hand multiplying the police force to keep the brutes down – the question is not how to destroy evil that way but to prevent the very birth of evil¹⁷¹.

Swami Vivekananda believes that a human being whether a child or a grown up man belongs to the Transcendental Force. Hence, perfection is already in man

168 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.110 (SS)

169 Mandukya Upanishad I.1.4/I.1.2/I.1.5 (PS)

170 Katha Upanishad, I.2.23 (PS)

171 Selection from the Complete of Swami Vivekananda, p-256 (SS)

and as such, he possesses immense potentialities which are latent in him waiting for manifestation under congenial circumstances.

*Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.*¹⁷²

In fact, the question of ‘Manifestation’ comes only when something exists already hidden in the learner which can come out of him under certain favourable conditions¹⁷³. While explaining the term ‘manifestation’ Swami Vivekananda refers to ‘ततः क्षेत्रिकवत्’¹⁷⁴. The suggestion is that as soon as a farmer removes the barrier placed on the flow of water the self-same water runs by its own momentum and helps irrigating the arable land, so also the latent power of the young learner hidden in him comes out when the teacher removes the hindrances and impediments that stand on the way of surging out from within. As in the case of Newton who discovers the law of gravitation the teacher has to inspire the little learner to discover knowledge from within. We have already learnt that Swami Vivekananda, the great educator has observed saying –

*What a man ‘learns’ is really what he ‘discovers’, by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.*¹⁷⁵

172 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, vol. IV, p. 358 (PS)

173 Profiles of famous educators, Prospects, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, June 2003, p235 (SS)

174 पतञ्जलि, ४.३ (PS)

175 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol.I, p. 28 (PS)

Here Swamiji means to say that an individual learner is born with some potentialities which lie dormant in him¹⁷⁶. In other words Swami Vivekananda's indication is that the child is born in the infinitude i.e., born with numberless possibilities. So there is the ample scope for his awakening which helps bringing out his capabilities and latent talents, - of course, obscurities within him must again be done away with by the teacher. In the similar way the Rishis of the Tapovan also inspire the disciples to remove their hurdles and acquire their knowledge in the light of their souls.

Israel Scheffler¹⁷⁷, an outstanding educationist of the West also mentions three aspects of some such idea, viz., (a) *the capacity* to acquire a specific Characteristic, (b) *the propensity* – an attribute which indicates what a person is likely to do when the opportunity comes. (c) *the capability* – i.e. a person's motivation and efficiency in working towards an intended outcome. Thus, these three concepts – capacity, propensity and capability – emphasize three aspects of education, respectively.

Another thing of relevance is that the Greek word '*Teleics*' means 'perfect', which suggests striving for actualizing the sublime potentialities in man. Thus, Swami Vivekananda says-

176 Hebbar, Dr. Neria H. Swami Vivekananda: The Man and His omes only when Mission (SS)

177 Israel Scheffler, Of human potential, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul (SS)

*It is like a lamp in a cask of iron, no gleam of light can shine through. Gradually, by purity and unselfishness, we can make the obscuring medium less and less dense, until at last it becomes transparent as glass.*¹⁷⁸

To Swami Vivekananda education does not mean acquisition and compiling of some data. To him education in the true sense of the term is a process which gives one a thorough and comprehensive training to evolve one's life in the right direction of illumination. According to him it is not a piecemeal thing to be acquired but to assimilate the synthetic idea contained in it. Let us see what he has said in this connection –

*Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there undigested, all your life.*¹⁷⁹

From the ancient records it is learnt that the seer-educators of the Vedas and Upanishads aim at leading learners to a higher and sublime manhood through perfection and development in the harmony of broad universal powers and forces on the one hand and removal of limitations and obscurity of human consciousness on the other. This idea is contained in the saying - सा विद्या या विमुक्तये. The methodology to make this idea practical is unique. It is a method of direct

178 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol. VII, p. 21 (PS)

179 Ibid. (PS)

knowledge which helps one to enlarge, purify and revolutionize psychological faculties.

In the Upanishadic age while a young learner joins an education centre in the heart of the forest surcharged with a congenial surroundings in the presence of the mighty and revered seer-teacher and some other disciples of the Gurukula, practising disciplines vigorously he cannot but feel of his own an urge and inclination for self-knowledge through the practice of Brahmacharya (ब्रह्मचर्यः) that can enable him to exceed pettiness and littleness of his personal life and inspire him to embark upon pursuit of harmony, truth, justice, modesty, intelligence, wisdom, courage, love, ahimsa and many other lofty qualities for flowering of his total higher nature that alone can make him Shrestha (श्रेष्ठः).

Similarly Swami Vivekananda has said education must be thorough. It has no meaning if it is one-sided. Outward fulfillment does not exhaust the whole being of a man. It may at best add glamour to it. But if the inner nature of man remains untouched the surface culture of a man is not education proper. Swamiji always points out that education in the proper sense of the term means a man-making programme culminating in the perfection of the full-fledged man. Here Vivekananda strictly holds the view of the complete man including the real man within of the Upanishads in this regard. Listen to what he says -

*What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow*¹⁸⁰

The same sort of idea has been expressed by S.P. Pani and S.K. Pattanaik in their book ‘*Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi on Education*’. The following lines will speak in its support -

*It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want*¹⁸¹

Swamiji fully endorses the views of education that we find in the Upanishads. Every child carries a light in him according to Upanishads and that light has to be evoked. This is what the Upanishad says. So we hardly find any difference between the educational ideas of Swami Vivekananda and that of the Upanishads. In fact, the influence of the Upanishads in some such matters on Swami Vivekananda is irrevocable. Santilal Mukhopadhyay in his essay ‘*Swami Vivekananda Sikshachinta*’ holds the same opinion with us -

কেউ কাউকে কিছু শেখাতে পারে না। এই ধারণা স্বামীজীর জীবনে বেদবেদান্তপ্রসূত। বেদান্ত
আনুসারে জ্ঞান মানুষের অন্তর্নিহিত। সুতরাং শিক্ষা উপলব্ধি বা জাগরণ ছাড়া আর কিছু নয়।^{১৮২}

180 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol. II, p. 15 (PS)

181 Pani, S.P.& Pattnaik, S.K. Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Gandhi on Education, pp.59-60(SS)

182 Mukhopadhyay, Santilal (1996). Swami Vivekananda, p.432 (SS)

(No one can teach anything to anybody. Swamiji had some such impression or vision which he had attained out of the Vedas and Vedanta. According to the Vedanta wisdom lies within. Hence, education is nothing but realisation or awakening.)

Nithiya, a leading scholar in his essay 'Swami Vivekananda's views on Philosophy of Education' expresses the self-same view while discussing the educational thought of swami Vivekananda. An excerpts of his essay is shown below :

Education is a life-long process towards the fullest development of human personality, self-discovery, self-perfection, self-awareness and self-manifestation.... He emphasizes that the child should practice Brahmacharya which fosters development of mental, moral and spiritual powers leading to purity of thought, words and deeds.¹⁸³

Nithiya further gives us to know that Vivekananda's philosophy of education is chiefly based on the philosophy of Vedanta and Upanishads. He writes as under -

183 Nithiya P. Swami Vivekananda's views on Philosophy of Education, Asian Journal of Multidimensional Research Vol.1 Issue 6, Nov 2012, P-42 (SS)

Indian spiritualism was the basic foundations for his (Swami Vivekananda) philosophy of education and the philosophy of Vedanta and Upanishads¹⁸⁴.

He further adds –

Upanishads are the most important curriculum for education. It is not only individual's development but also for the transformation of total man¹⁸⁵.

Dr. V.K.Maheswari in her 'Vivekananda – concept of personality' writes

Vivekananda's concept of development of personality coming through proper education of the child is very much influenced by the Upanishads which are the richest sources of ancient Indian thought.¹⁸⁶

Dr. Sudipta Roy in his 'Education in the vision of Swami Vivekananda' states -

According to Swamiji, the culture values of the country should form an integral part of the curriculum of education. The culture of India has its roots in her spiritual values. The time-tested values are to be imbibed in the thoughts and lives of the students through the study of Vedas and

184 Nithiya, p. Swami Vivekananda Views on Philosophy of Education, AJMR Vol.1 Issue 6, Nov. 2012, p.43 (SS)

185 Ibid. (SS)

186 Maheswari, Dr. V.K., Vivekananda – concept of personality, Philosophical commentary on issues of today, 2011 (SS)

*Upanishads. This will keep the perennial flow of our spiritual values into the world culture.*¹⁸⁷

Swami Vivekananda now confirms all such views in the following words. Here he also gives stress on the concentration, detachment from consumerism and communion with nature along with Brahmacharya which happen to be the fundamental basis of the Upanishadic education -

ভারতের পক্ষে যা প্রয়োজন তা হ'ল বেদান্ত ও বিজ্ঞানের সমন্বয়; মূলপ্রেরণার ব্রহ্মচর্য, শ্রদ্ধা এবং আত্মবিশ্বাস। এছাড়াও আপার অভিনিবেশ (Concentration), ভোগবাসনাশূন্যতা (detachment), প্রকৃতির সঙ্গে যোগাযোগস্থাপন (communion with nature)¹⁸⁸

(Right from the young age concentration, detachment and communion with nature which are essential, for India is now in need of a synthesis of vedantic culture and modern science, of course, the fundamental source of their inspiration lies in the discipline of Brahmacharya which instils self-confidence and respect.)

Keeping eyes on the modern trend of scientific advancement he encourages the learners to make use of the modern technology and science but the working

187 Roy, Dr. Sudipa, Education in The Vision of Swami Vivekananda, Prabuddha Bharata, e-samskriti, the Indian culture, www.esamskriti.com, July 2001 (SS)

188 The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-V, Ed.8th , 1964, p-366 (PS)

hypothesis of life must always be in his opinion based on the truths of the Vedanta. He says -

*What we want are western science coupled with Vedanta*¹⁸⁹

Perhaps Vivekananda has been greatly shocked to note that the contemporary people of this land mostly have miserably failed to give the proper importance of the concept of self-discipline that prevailed in ancient times as an essential element of the Upanishadic system of education in this land of ours. Let us see what Nirvedanandaji says regarding this -

*The greatest misfortune of the Indian nation today is that large numbers of people have not realized that the importance of self discipline as an essential aspect of educational process.*¹⁹⁰

While pointing out the views of Swami Vivekananda Dr. V. Sukumaran Nair has said that the modern system of education that prevails now in this land should also be supplemented by the aspect of the exercise of the spirit as it is found in the ancient system of education in the Upanishadic age which alone can help students harnessing human values in them otherwise only academic learning would be futile in the long run.¹⁹¹

189 Nirvedananda, Swami Vivikananda on India and her problem, p.41 (SS)

190 Ranganathan Swami, The message of the Upanishads, p.302 (SS)

191 V. Sukumaran Nair, Swami Vivekananda, the Educator, p.84 (SS)

5.3. The Teacher and The Taught :

Swami Vivekananda has said with much emphasis that education is the manifestation of perfection already in man. Hence, according to him learning means unfolding the truths or knowledge that lie hidden in man. The little learner has to be inspired and offered congenial surroundings to enable him to find his own truths and unlock the store-house of knowledge within his own self. Moreover, the learner possesses a powerful light in him and like the Rishis of the Upanishads Vivekananda suggests to make proper use of such a light in the discovery of knowledge. Let us see what Swami Vivekananda states in this regard—

*Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind, suggestion is the friction which brings it out.*¹⁹²

The above statement has again been confirmed by the statement of Swami Vivekananda shown below. He points out that the seer poets of the Upanishads are sure that the knowledge cannot be had from outside as it is already in one's possession. What the learner has to do is to find out that from within and one is not in need of looking for elsewhere. Here is the statement of Swami Vivekananda referred to above —

192 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-I, p.28 (PS)

No one was ever really taught by another; each of us has to be teacher himself¹⁹³

The role of the guru or teacher like the Rishis of the Upanishads is the role of a leader of the march – he only suggests and inspires and leads his pupil to unearth the wealth in his possession by the light in him. What Swami Vivekananda means is that there is a profoundly learned as well as an able teacher within him who is capable of opening the door of the store-house of wisdom already in one's self.

As nothing can be imposed from without the role of the teacher is to give the momentum and allow the natural and innate knowledge of a child to find its way from within just like a growth of a plant. If the plant is supplied with water, air and manure in the right moment it grows from within. So is the case of a human child. What the teacher has to do is to see that the learner develops his knowledge spontaneously in a congenial atmosphere. At best the teacher's task is to invoke the spirit of enquiry in him and remove the obstacles on the way so that the child can manifest its knowledge unhampered. Let us see what Vivekananda has said in this context -

Thus Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge even in a boy it is so and it requires only an awakening and that much is the work of a teacher.

193 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-I, p.93 (PS)

According to Vivekananda student must come in close contact with their Guru without which proper flowering in the learning process can hardly be had. The guru is the living example and all sorts of his movements have great significance to them. In fact, the great educator in so many words lays emphasis on the importance of the Upanishadic concept of the Gura, Gurusishya relationship and Gurugriha for imbibing human values in the life of the little learners. Here he says -

*Without the personal life of the teacher there would be no education.*¹⁹⁴

The great educator further says -

*Words, even thoughts, contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression, the man, two-thirds.*¹⁹⁵

Once again Vivekananda gives us to know that the little ones need a burning example before them to move in the positive direction and attain human values in life. He says -

একটা জ্বলন্ত ‘Character’ এর কাছে ছেলেবেলা থেকেই থাকা চাই, জ্বলন্ত দৃষ্টান্ত দেখা চাই।^{১৯৬}

(Right from the early days one has to live in intimate contact with a burning character and to witness burning instances.)

194 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-V, 1970, p.224 (PS)

195 Ibid. Vol. II, p. 14 (PS)

196 Bani O Rachana (Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Bengali), Vol.IX, pp.262-63 (PS)

In the Upanishadic system, education in the ultimate analysis is the attainment of '*Brahmavarchasa*' which means knowledge of the Absolute. It enables one to have uniformity of mental attitude, development of intelligence and capability of perfecting the people. It also makes poised, unbiased and self-restrained and by virtue of being the best physician for himself¹⁹⁷. Hence, for education proper, the necessity of a *guru*¹⁹⁸ who entirely dwells in *Brahma*¹⁹⁹ is essential as well as indispensable to knowledge²⁰⁰. And as such, the teacher, who as the leader of the march not only helps the learner to walk on the road of learning but also goads him to genuine success. In order to understand this, the learner has to take fuel and approach a guru who is a seer-teacher as well²⁰¹.

It is gathered²⁰² that the gurus or the seer-teachers are of the highest moral and spiritual stature.²⁰³ The duty of the teacher of the Upanishadic age is to help the truth-seeking Brahmacharin to find truth for himself exactly as much as he

197 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.89 (SS)

198 Chāndogaya Upanishad, IV.14.1-2 (PS)

199 Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.3 (PS)

200 Katha Upanishad, II.8 (PS)

201 Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.3 (PS)

202 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.101 (SS)

203 Katha Upanishad, I.2.8 (PS)

(guru) knows it.²⁰⁴ According Prasna Upanishad²⁰⁵ & Taittiriya Aranyaka²⁰⁶ the guru has to carry on his teaching with all his heart and soul.

Biman Bihari Bhattacharya mentions that Swamiji equally appreciates the importance of the direct contact with the teacher as it obtains in the Gurugriha in the Upanishadic age -

স্বামীজী মনে করতেন প্রাচীনভারতবর্ষে (উপনিষদ) গুরুর সাক্ষাৎ সংস্পর্শে আসিবার সুযোগ পাইত,
চরিত্রগঠনের পক্ষে তাহার উপযোগিতা ছিল অপরিমেয়।^{২০৭}

(It occurred to Swamiji that in ancient India (in the Upanishadic age) since the learner had the privilege of coming in direct and intimate touch with the preceptor his deservingness in respect of forming his character was beyond measure.)

In course of Swami Vivekananda's concept of teacher-taught relationship Swami Nirvedananda also points out that true teaching cannot be imparted without an intimate tie of relationship between the teacher and the taught –

গুরুকুলপদ্ধতির মূলকথা গুরুর সঙ্গে একত্র বাস। তিনি (স্বামী বিবেকানন্দ) বলেছেন শিক্ষকের
ব্যক্তিগত জীবনের সঙ্গে ঘনিষ্ঠতা ব্যতীত প্রকৃতশিক্ষা সম্ভব নয়।^{২০৮}

204 Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.13 (PS)

205 Prasna Upanishad, VII.1 (PS)

206 Taittiriya Aranyaka, VII.4 (PS)

207 Bhattacharya, Bijan Bihari, Sikshacharya Vivekananda O Rabindranath, Chintanayak-Vivekananda, p.829 (SS)

(The essence of the system of Gurukul is to live in company with the preceptor. He (Swami Vivekananda) observes that without having intimacy with personal life of the teacher it is hardly possible to derive education in the proper sense of the term.)

Vivekananda adds that teaching from without does not help at all. Here are the words of his warning -

*No one can teach anybody. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching.*²⁰⁹

Regarding the role of the teacher Vivekananda has reiterated that the teacher has to bring home to the students that through regular and sincere practice of Brahmacharya they will have to take the help of the divine light in them for a thorough change by unfolding hidden powers in their individual life and character. V. Sukumar Nair observes –

*In his (Swami Vivekananda) opinion the ideal teacher is one who can initiate his students to practice the essential virtue of Bramacharya and help them to attain or experience the divinity in them.*²¹⁰

208 Swami Nirvedananda, Swami Vivekananda on India and her problems, pp. 45-46 (SS)

209 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol- V, 1970, p.366 (PS)

210 Nair, V. Sukumaran, Swami Vivekananda, the Educator, p.65 (SS)

Swami Vivekananda believes that teacher in the modern system as well should be very intimate with the student. In fact, he has to come very close to the level of the student and his role should be so significant that his soul and the soul of the student should be the one and the same and they will understand each other with clarity of thought. To him an ideal teacher is one who like the Rishis of the Upanishads is capable of reading the young learners through their eyes, ears, appearances and their mental frames and is quite capable to make them work in the proper way. Here are the words of Swami Vivekananda -

*The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through the student's eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else.*²¹¹

What a wonderful teacher-taught relationship that is also maintained in the Upanishadic age! The teacher is looked upon not only as the guru or Acharya to the young learners he is also deva - thus the teacher is the Acharya deva to his disciples or students – ‘*Acharyadevo bhava*’ according to the Upanishads.²¹² Here we find a reverential element that makes the usual respect more and more deep-rooted and Swami Vivekananda advocates some such tie of relationship which is

211 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol. IV, p. 183 (PS)

212 Taittiriya Upanishad 1.11.2 (PS)

based on great respect and mutual confidence. Kireet Joshi advocates the Upanishadic education as an ideal one –

The ancient Indian teacher-pupil relationship came to be determined by the profound and even inscrutable ways by which the teachers and the pupils, Gurus and Shishyas, developed their modes and methods of exploring knowledge, discovering the aim and meaning of life and practising disciplines for arriving at psychological perfection²¹³.

Another very interesting feature of the Upanishadic system of education is that Swami Vivekananda also prefers that the significant and meaningful congregational prayer of the Acharyadeva and the learners which makes all concerned equally benefited.²¹⁴

औं सह नावतु, सह नौ भुनक्तु, सह वीर्यं करवावहे।

तेजस्मि नावधीतमस्तु, माविद्विषावहे।।²¹⁵

Once again Swami Vivekananda looks back at the gurus of the Gurugrihas and categorically points out that the personal life of the guru or the teacher, his out-look and manners, his gestures and postures, all his movements have great influence on the taught particularly when the learner is a young one and is in the

213 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.29 (SS)

214 Swami Prabhananda, Swami Vivekananda, Prospects, vol. XXXIII, no. 2, June 2003, p-239

215 केनोपनिषद्, शान्तिपाठः (PS)

habit of imitating his '*Acharyadeva*' who is no more an ordinary human being to him but one of the divine incarnates. Here are the relevant words -

*Without the personal life of the teacher there would be no education*²¹⁶

In this connection Vivekananda also reminds us that the teacher of an ancient centre of learning in the age of the Upanishads imparted lessons to his students without fees, - of course, wealthy families come forward and do what is necessary on the occasion. Swamiji says, without the *Tyagis* there is no ideal type of relationship between the teacher and the taught. He also appreciates the efficacy of the *Brahmacharya* system that prevailed in the centre of learning in the Upanishadic age and asks the modern teacher to look upon the ancient guru of the *Tapovan* as a model. Once again, Swamiji refers to the Upanishads and says that education should unveil the divinity in man which unfolds all the hidden powers in man which will ultimately lead one to creativity, originality, excellence, humility etc. etc. According to him such ancient ideas of the Upanishads will give one visions by taking the animal man out of one's sense life²¹⁷. The great educator further says that such education will not only make one dutiful but also inspire one to work without expectation for reward. It will also promote qualities like patriotism, discipline, leadership etc.

216 Complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol-V, 1970, p.224 (PS)

217 Nair,V. Sukumaran, Swami Vivekananda, the Educator, pp.42-43 (SS)

Vivekananda also wants to bring about levelling of the degenerated caste system by giving out the ancient cultures of the Vedas and Upanishads to those men and women and especially the poverty-stricken masses of people who form the bulk of the population of the country and who are not properly acquainted with such a valuable ancient culture of this land. Here he reminds us of Maitreyi and Gargi²¹⁸ and the like of the Upanishadic age who attain the status of the Rishis through their wonderful attainments and eruditions.²¹⁹

By creating a tradition of customs, conventions, rules and other means the system of education has given predominance of higher self, society and humanity by subordinating the demands of the ego. The concept of the reverence has been encouraged all along so that right from the tender age a pupil is habitually accustomed to it and regularly carry on its practices, and look upon the teacher, father, mother and such other seniors – requiting them with the supreme absolute being. Here is a common Sanskrit verse where the guru is supposed to get a very high position –

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुविष्णु गुरुदेवो महेश्वरः।

गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरुवे नमः॥

The guru of the Upanishadic school part from his scholastic attainments and profundity of worldly knowledge is much advanced in spiritual realization

218 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, II.4.3 (PS)

219 Nair, V. Sukumaran, Swami Vivekananda, the Educator, pp.43-45 (SS)

and this is why he is quite capable of satisfying fully the young pupil approaching him with unquenchable thirst for knowledge. One has to remember as well in this connection that the pupil belonging to this system is not only a candidate for intellectual training only he is a Brahmacharin and he essentially seeks after spiritual training. As this search for a genuine spiritual knowledge happens to be an arduous task beset with hazards of various kinds it needs proper guidance for the simple reason that a young pupil having no such experience can hardly accomplish some such queer endeavour without help of the guru who alone has attained such a knowledge and a man of effulgent light only is competent to transmit it effectively. Kireet Joshi remarks in this connection –

According to the secret processes of expansion of faculties and attainment of the goal, one should not be centred on oneself but should impart the gains of one's efforts with pupils and with humanity²²⁰.

Another thing to be noted here that the tender-aged Brahmacharin must also be a devoted sishya who is capable of surrendering to the guru and is always in readiness to obey him as he (sishya) is aware that without a seer-teacher he cannot accomplish the spiritual search successfully. Thus the Rishi has to be doubly revered and he also deserves it both for his scholastic guidance concerning worldly affairs and his psychological operations leading to spiritual realizations.

220 Joshi, Kireet, Taaittiriya Upanishad, p.91 (PS)

Thus reverence here is not an imposition on the young learner by the guru, rather for his unique spiritual knowledge, discoveries and guidance he is assigned high reverence. By awakening the true self of the Brahmacharin for blossoming all the his (sishya) faculties through his (guru) able guidance the guru represents the Supreme Brahma, the real teacher within him (pupil) and thus induces the sishya to discover for himself the inner teacher seated within. Again the reverence due to the Transcendental Being i.e. the inner teacher goes in favour of the guru of the worldly life who happens to be the pupil's friend, philosopher and guide in all respect. Kireet Joshi also finds this in the Upanishadic system of education –

For the purpose of education for spiritual development in ancient India, this was considered to be the qualification of the teacher. The pupils contact with the teacher who is seated so high, who has aspired so high in his life was a part of spiritual education. Not merely through any scriptures²²¹.

He further adds –

The teacher should possess the necessary qualifications of various attainments or at least the aspiration for the highest attainments²²².

221 Joshi, Kireet, Taaittiriya Upanishad, p.88 (SS)

222 Ibid. p.90 (SS)

Considering his position as well as the function the guru always discharges his duties, conscientiously as a divine assignment till arrival of the direct guidance to the sishyas from above.

5.4. Brahmacharya - Privation in education :

Education is a process which urges the learner to toil from imperfection to perfection. In fact, such a process aims at unfolding the inner self which contains the light of perfection. By degrees it helps one to set aside or remove the egoistic element as well as obscurities that hamper to proceed. Swami Vivekananda this way or that very often refers to this view which is chiefly constructed on the basis of the Upanishadic dictum – ‘असतो मा सद्गमय तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय मृत्योर्मातृ गमय।’

And he is of opinion that a scholar has to resort to concentration based meditation on the one hand for keeping contact with the light of the self and on the other keep his body, life and mind supple for attaining purity through physical and mental exercises. The suggestion is that the young learner has to train his body, life and mind as the light in him cannot be realized if he is physically, mentally and vitally weak. This is why he refers again and again to the dictum of the Upanishad ‘नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्य’. For this also the Upanishadic modus operandi of Brahmacharya vidyā is essentially needed according to Swamiji.

Swami Vivekananda says –

*The education which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion – is it worth the name?*²²³

Swami Vivekananda has also shown equal zeal for making the students interested in the exercise of Brahmacharya - চাই ব্রহ্মচর্য।^{২২৪} He further says -

.....সবদেশে ব্রহ্মচর্য শ্রেষ্ঠরূপে পরিগণিত। অপবিত্র হইলে এবং ব্রহ্মচর্যের অভাবে চরিত্রবল ও মানসিকতেজ সবই চলিয়া যায়।কায়মনবাক্যে পূর্ণ ব্রহ্মচর্যপালন করা নিতান্তই কর্তব্য।^{২২৫}

Vivekananda thinks that without Brahmacharya education in the true sense of the term cannot be had. He believes that the Brahmacharya of the Upanishadic age is a part and parcel and the bedrock of a true system of education. As it helps to control the mental powers on the one hand and on the other paves the way for concentration and meditation without which the real man within cannot come out of the shackles and cannot receive from the brain what is necessary for flowering. He says -

*Every pupil should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya*²²⁶

223 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda. Vol. VII, pp. 147–148 (PS)

224 Bhattacharya, Bijan Bihari, Sikshacharya Vivekananda O Rabindranath, Chintanayak-Vivekananda, p.401 (SS)

225 Bani O Rachana, Vol.1, Ed.5th, pp.262-63 (PS)

226 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-V, p.369 (PS)

In support of this V. Sukumaran Nayar points out -

*He is convinced of the fact that all knowledge is in the human mind and that the same can be experienced by practicing concentration and meditation.*²²⁷

Vivekananda has laid much importance to concentration which is, so to say, the guiding principle of Brahmacharya. He says –

*If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment and then with a perfect instrument collect facts at will.*²²⁸

And Brahmacharya which chiefly means practice of self-control also brings about harmony of the impulses. Brahmacharya cannot be properly observed without concentration and meditation. To him education is a comprehensive training for life and not a mere acquisition of facts only. He says –

*To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts*²²⁹

Swami Vivekananda further says –

*The very essence of education is concentration of mind.*²³⁰

227 Nair, V. Sukumaran, Swami Vivekananda, the Educator, p.64 (SS)

228 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, vol. IV, p. 490 (PS)

229 Ibid. vol. VI, p. 38 (PS)

In the age of the Upanishads concentration of mind is regarded as the highest rank in regard to the academic discipline especially in the formative part of the human. Kireet Josh, an eminent scholar describes how it plays a vital role in the process of learning and perfecting one's knowledge –

Meditation or concentration in thought is itself the Eternal and that it is by concentration in thought that the knowledge of the Eternal can be attained. The pupil continues the process of concentration from stage to stage and he discovers, successively, that breath or life-force is the Eternal, that mind is the Eternal, that the supermind is the Eternal and that bliss is the Eternal. At the end of the culmination of his discovery, the teacher asks his pupil to pursue the Self which, when discovered to be the bliss, brings about the perfection and one attains to the very heart of immortality²³¹.

On another occasion Swamiji says –

The world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow comes through concentration²³².

230 The Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-IV, p.38 (PS)

231 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.94 (SS)

232 Sarkar, Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadrashan O Sadhana, p.78 (SS)

The span of human life is usually very short and in the formative period how to make the best use of the life force has to be attained by the learners and see that the valuable human energy is not flittered away. For this one must be on one's guard and learn how to control the impulses for proper utilization of one's faculties. Concentration enables the mind to organize the entire function of the learning process. When the mind is disengaged unnecessarily by unwanted impulses concentration regularizes the mind by setting aside such unnecessary things and rightly focuses on the particular subject in view. Hence, concentration helps one to perform a job or study a thing accurately and satisfactorily. Swamiji points out –

*How to check these impulses and bring the mind under control is the whole subject to study.*²³³

As a matter of fact, concentration cannot be separated from Brahmacharya and as such, the idea of concentration of the mind is a legacy of the Upanishadic system of education. For all these reasons the Rishis of the Upanishads lay so much emphasis on concentration.

In short, concentration leads one to attain perfection by preventing one from doing wrongs. Swamiji's illustration in this regard is cited below –

233 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-II, 1971, p.490 (PS)

A convex lens gathers sunlight and focuses it on one point to burn a piece of paper. Will-power is necessary not only to conduct the learning process, but also to strengthen one's character.

Kireet Joshi opines that –

Indian literature has described various methods by which concentration can be attained. Speaking of the application of the powers of concentration in the processes of education, Swami Vivekananda once said that if he knew early enough the secret of concentration, he would have first attempted to master concentration rather than to read a number of books, since, by the employment of concentration, knowledge can be gained more easily and readily²³⁴.

Swamiji believes that education must make one on one's own feet and make him self-sufficient in all respects. By education he means not only enhancement of the mental faculty and the sharpening of the intellect he also means the formation of character as well. When he turns to the so-called educated people of modern India he is aggrieved and utters the following words -

234 Joshi, Kireet, Taaittiriya Upanishad, p.96 (SS)

*A few hundred, modernized, half-educated, and denationalized men are all that there is to show of modern English India – nothing else.*²³⁵

In the next place, Swami Vivekananda turns the attention of the learners on cultivating will power. Regarding will power Vivekananda says,

*The current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful*²³⁶.

It is also one of the important features of the Upanishadic system of education. The essence of learning propounded by the seer-poets of the Upanishads is concentration-based education on the one hand and observing Brahmacharya all through for self-control on the other. Swami Vivekananda fully endorses this view although he does not frame any separate theory of education. What he really wants is to see the bringing out manifesting the real man within through the process of learning.

In fact, the infrastructure of the Upanishadic system of education in due course induces the young Brahmacharins, charged with inclination of spiritual seeking so effectively that sooner or later he imposes self-discipline upon himself by endearingly practising Brahmacharya while carrying on in his heart of hearts an ardent aspiration for the sublime knowledge. As all his inclinations and

235 The complete works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. VIII, p. 476 (PS)

236 Ibid. Vol. IV, p. 490 (PS)

feelings revolve round his urge for self-knowledge all his physical, vital and mental energies lead him to a unified concentrating effort and he by degrees is uplifted towards self-mastery and as a consequence on the one hand his pursuit of truth, harmony and love also start within him and on the other grow his inclination for renunciation of covetousness, personal hankerings for possessions etc. etc. Nor is this all. The gurukul as it usually stands in the heart of the woods enables the Brahmacharins to be very intimate with the fresh features of Nature, that again brings in his spontaneous feelings, imaginations etc. which also subsequently helps him in developing powers of the higher mind. When he is engrossed in his Swadhyaya in the natural surroundings of the Āshram all his inner powers of memory, comprehension, imagination etc. along with subtler spiritual knowledge and lofty philosophical ideas flash on the canvas of his inner self and float all along unhindered.

Having been guided by insight as well as experience the teacher depends more on awakening than on instruction and as such he lays stress on concentration and quattitude of mind by doing away with impatience and excitement for the sake of carrying on the pursuit of truth and simultaneously striving to make free choice of a discipline, between Shreyas (श्रेयः) and Preyas (प्रेयः) – good and pleasant with full dedication and devotion. In the Upanishadic system of education freedom of choice and spiritual freedom are of fundamental

importance and they seem to be blended together. Without spiritual freedom the question of free choice does not work, for free choice does not mean unrestrained preference caused by personal egoistic indulgence.

The Upanishads invoke *Brahma* as the source of the real knowledge since every bit of thing in the creative world issues forth from Him and without Him nothing can exist in the universe. Although infinitesimally small he is, man is a part and parcel of the Transcendental Being. Here lies the whole essence of the Vedanta - प्रज्ञानं ब्रह्म²³⁷ From the seer-teacher or Rishi the tender-aged pupil also learns how to draw and utilize the higher conscious Force that essentially belongs to the source or the Transcendental Power and Light for attaining the elevated and sublime stature of humanity by excelling and exceeding his crude instincts himself.

One must not confuse Satyam of the Upanishadic education with the concept of value education on which much stress is laid in the teaching method in recent times. The methodology that is adopted in the Upanishadic school is quite different from that of the one engaged in imparting value education of the ethical type today. The former leads his pupil from darkness to Light – असतो मा सद्गमय तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय मृत्योर्मा मृतं गमय। – in the search for true truth which enables one to arrive at the real knowledge through a process of purification by degrees and

237 Aitareya Upanishad, 3.3 (PS)

elimination of falsity in the ultimate analysis. In fact, the Upanishadic education does not neglect value education, on the other hand it rather helps one to take cognigence of the values of the physical and mental world as well from within and to cling to it for good. The Aitareya Upanishad says – यदेतद् हृदयं मनश्चैतत् सर्वाण्येतानि प्रज्ञानस्य नामधेयानि भवन्ति²³⁸

In Taaittareya Upanishad one learns -

ऋतं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च। सत्यं च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च।

तपश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च। दमश्च स्वाध्यायप्रवचने च।²³⁹

Thus the Upanishadic system of education not only paves the way for one's all round progress and upliftment but also makes one quite capable of discharging one's duty towards all other members of the society conscientiously. On the other hand in the absence of a comprehensive education both the individual and the entire society suffer from degradation. Hence every one has to undergo an integrated course of training for an all-round development of oneself as well as the society.

It occurs that although the Upanishadic system of education has been deeply spiritual all through at the same time it brings within its purview all the exteriorized aspects of human life and as such, fortunately the comprehensive system induces the young pupil to practise self-discipline in such a manner that

238 Aitareya Upanishad, 3.2 (PS)

239 Taaittireeya Upanishad, 1.17 (PS)

both his inner being and the exteriorized aspect grow hand and hand. Right from his seeking after the sublime to the social obligations of all kinds as son, father, friend etc. etc. he equally has to be faithful in the discharge of his sacred duties. He must be rational, firm, patient, tolerant, in all intricate situations etc. etc. His individual attainments and capacities must also be utilized in the greater interest of the society he belongs to. It is interesting to note that the system does not in any form neglect the affairs of the worldly life rather it aims at turning the young Brahmacharins to develop as a complete man – of course, the inner being of the individual pupil has to take the entire charge of both the inner and the exteriorized aspects of his being.

5.5. Conclusion :

The impact of the Upanishads on Swami Vivekananda is really very deep-rooted and the ideas of the seer-poets or Rishis are of great importance to this great educator. He is fully convinced that the young learners of this land of ours are privileged as they have the Upanishadic truths before them and such truths which are products of direct knowledge have been attained by our seer-poets and they (the truths) are of eternal values and do not however belong to acquisition of surface knowledge only which undergo changes through the passage of time. His stress is on the spiritual heritage and the cultural synthesis as it has been

continuing before all of us throughout the ages. Regarding the Upanishads which serves as a great mine of strength he says -

*The truths of the Upanishads are before you. Take them up, live up to them...*²⁴⁰.

240 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-III, p.225 (PS)

CHAPTER : VI

Upanishadic education and the Educational thoughts of Sri Aurobindo

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Upanishadic education and the Educational thoughts of Sri Aurobindo

6.1. Introduction :

After a thorough study of all our ancient scriptures like the Veda, Upanishads and Gita etc. Sri Aurobindo is of opinion that we may derive from them things of immense value that may as well be delivered to future humanity and there is undoubtedly a fundamental eternal Truth for which all have been striving hard and by the significance of which all other truths owe their right meaning in the scheme of knowledge. Nevertheless Sri Aurobindo says that one must be of one's own guard lest there might be a serious mistake on one's part. He also reminds us that even if the method of attaining the truth is so valuable it cannot again be looked upon as a single trenchant rule for ever. With the passage of time and in the changed set of circumstances factors responsible for such changes must also be taken into account and relevant changes in the method of attaining knowledge, if necessary, must also be made, – of course, keeping in view the fundamental eternal Truth as the aim. This is why Sri Aurobindo in the changed circumstances has been inclined to introduce integral method of education to enable the scholars to attain higher stage of life under the guidance of the effulgent light of the psychic consciousness. What he has said regarding the method of the Upanishad etc. is shown below —

It may therefore be useful in approaching an ancient Scripture, such as the Veda, Upanishads or Gita, to indicate precisely the spirit in which we approach it and what exactly we think we may derive from it that is of value to humanity and its future. First of all, there is undoubtedly a Truth one and eternal which we are seeking, from which all other truth derives, by the light of which all other truth finds its right place, explanation and relation to the scheme of knowledge. But precisely for that reason it cannot be shut up in a single trenchant formula, it is not likely to be found in its entirety or in all its bearings in any single philosophy or scripture or uttered altogether and for ever by any one teacher, thinker.²⁴¹

Although Sri Aurobindo has received academic training and knowledge right from his early days to the University level out and out in the western system and has bathed for years together in the deep-sea water of the western culture and learning ultimately he emerges as a modern seer-poet and educator – the counterpart of the ancient seer-educators (Rishis) of the Upanishadic age. Through self-knowledge he occupies a unique position in respect of forming a macro view of life that alone can give us a vision of a comprehensive man-making ideal for the present-day humanity and of the posterity. From the writings of Sri Aurobindo we come to know that with great devotion he goes through the Upanishads and clings

241 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.15, Essays on the Gita, p.4 (PS)

to the Truth that he receives from the Upanishads and looks upon the eternal Truths as the bed-rock of human knowledge and on the basis of which he erects the edifice of his system of education popularly known as Integral Education covering both the world-knowledge and self-knowledge. Here lies his cryptic remark on the Upanishads —

*The Upanishads are epic hymns of self-knowledge and world-knowledge*²⁴²

In fact, Sri Aurobindo forms his educational philosophy by the study of the Upanishads and other Indian scriptures and he makes serious attempts to realize the truths contained in them by applying the methods of the Rishis as he cannot satisfy himself with the philosophical ideas alone that come through intellectual exercise only. Surely at the outset there is no denying that the Upanishadic truths become an important source of knowledge to him but the methodology of attaining self-knowledge becomes an ideal of his educational philosophy which becomes fully developed only when knowledge spontaneously flows to him from higher consciousness as he devotes himself to meditation like the Rishis. It is better that we listen to the words of Sri Aurobindo himself in this regard —

242 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.20, The Renaissance in India with A Defence of Indian Culture p.332 (PS)

*My philosophy was formed first by study of the Upanishads and the Gita; the Veda came later. They were the basis of my first practice of Yoga; I tried to realise what I read in my spiritual experience and succeeded; in fact I was never satisfied till experience came and it was on this experience that later on I founded my philosophy ... The other source of my philosophy was the knowledge that flowed from above when I sat in meditation, especially from the level of the Higher Mind when I reached that level.*²⁴³

As a great seer-teacher the import of the Upanishads is indeed very great to Sri Aurobindo. He looks upon the Upanishads as a store-house of knowledge, nay, a store-house of jnana and as such, in his macro view of the educational programme the modus operandi of attaining the truths of the Upanishads has a great role to play and in his Integral Education side by side with his recommendations for the training of the exteriorized aspects of man his emphasis on practice of the psychic consciousness has been made significantly important especially, by showing it as the leader of the march. In this connection let us glance over a few words of Sri Aurobindo —

243 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.36, Autobiographical Notes, p.113 (PS)

*The Upanishads are Vedanta, a book of knowledge in a higher degree even than the Vedas, but knowledge in the profounder Indian sense of the word, Jnana.*²⁴⁴

Sri Aurobindo has thoroughly studied the Upanishads and has become conversant with the applications of the educational system of that period. He says —

*...in the jail I had the Gita and the Upanishads with me, practised the yoga of the Gita and meditated with the help of the Upanishads; these were the only books from which I found guidance.*²⁴⁵

Again he says —

*The first Indian writings that took hold of me were the Upanishads and these raised in me a strong enthusiasm.*²⁴⁶

Sri Aurobindo, the seer-poet always calls a spade a spade. Here lie the words that clearly state how deeply he is moved by the visions of Vedas and Upanishads—

*One might almost say that ancient India was created by the Veda and Upanishads and that the visions of inspired seers made a people.*²⁴⁷

244 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.20, The Renaissance in India with A Defence of Indian Culture p.331 (PS)

245 Ibid. Vol.36, Autobiographical Notes, p.98 (PS)

246 Ibid. p.113 (PS)

247 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.26, The Future Poetry, p.264 (PS)

In his auto-biographical notes Sri Aurobindo observes —

*My philosophy was formed first by the study of the Upanishads.*²⁴⁸

The importance and significance of this observation is indeed very great and far-reaching. As he is a Yogi what he thinks and says bear testimony to a penetrating light to its entire works and makes them resplendent with effulgent light. A man of his height and depth looks at things as an integrated whole and there is hardly any inconsistency or piecemeal dealing of facts. And as such the light that comes out from the depth of his truth finds reflected in all his creative work. Whatever he has said regarding the Upanishads in the formation of his philosophy is true not only in all other fields of work but also equally true in respect of his ideas and activities in the field of education.

One should be on one's guard, lest he might commit a fundamental mistake. In this connection one must go through another relevant statement for having a glimpse of his inner light exceeding the periphery of the intellect —

I founded my philosophy, not on ideas by themselves. I owed nothing in my philosophy to intellectual abstractions, ratiocination or dialectics; when I have used these means it was simply to explain my philosophy and justify it to the intellect of others. The other source of my philosophy was

248 The Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-36, Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest, p.113 (PS)

*the knowledge that flowed from above when I sat in meditation, especially from the plane of the Higher Mind when I reached that level; they [the ideas from the Higher Mind] came down in a mighty flood which swelled into a sea of direct Knowledge always translating itself into experience, or they were intuitions starting from experience and leading to other intuitions and a corresponding experience.*²⁴⁹

One should remember here that after all, Sri Aurobindo is capable of x-raying thoughts and ideas of others by the experience of the floodlight of his own Higher Mind and he himself also points out that the other source of his philosophy is the knowledge that flows from above when he sits in meditation. He has categorically stated in these lines that he owes nothing in his philosophy to intellectual abstractions and he has founded his philosophy not on ideas by themselves but the light from his higher mind that comes to him as a direct knowledge. He further adds what he has said in this regard is simply to explain and justify it to the intelligence of others.

In clear terms Sri Aurobindo divulges his frame of mind to all concerned that he has thoroughly gone through the Upanishads and prefers to re-explain them to the young generations and bring home to them the profundity and

249 The Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-36, Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest, p.113 (PS)

sublimity of such a store-house of knowledge. Nor is this all. He further resolves to give effect to social changes and spread some such ideas by his literary works, speech and practice. And in this way he has a mission to educate people on the basis of his philosophy founded on the bed-rock of the Upanishads. Of course, he has also mentions that he has a mind to add to the ancient ideas the revelations he has already been experiencing through meditation and yoga. Sri Aurobindo's words to this effect are shown below —

*I may say briefly that I have been given a ... mission, to re-explain the Veda & Vedanta (Upanishads) in the ancient sense which I have recovered by actual experience... which has been revealed to me & which, as I progress, I am imparting to the young men staying with me & to others in Pondicherry; I have also to spread certain ideas by literary work, speech & practice, to try & bring about certain social changes & finally, to do a certain work for my country, in particular, as soon as the means are put in my hands.*²⁵⁰

Sri Aurobindo talks of his new theory of ideal life based on the Upanishadic foundations towards which humanity must move. A great yogi, as he is, in his vision he has no difficulty to see the future mankind and this is why he

250 The Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-36, Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest, p.174 (PS)

confidently declares that his theory of ideal life on the basis of vedantic philosophy is going to lead the future humanity. Here, there is also his link with the Upanishads whether in the ancient sense or in the sense of one brought before us through his revelations and the source stands as a perennial one. And how can it be reckoned as to what a mega type of Educator Sri Aurobindo is, particularly when he says that the humanity must undergo a radical change if man follows it properly. Here are his words in reference —

*My new theory of the Veda will appear as also a translation and explanation of the Upanishads ... a book of Vedantic philosophy giving the Upanishadic foundations of my theory of the ideal life towards which humanity must move.*²⁵¹

Sushmita Bhowmik in her article “Sri Aurobindo’s views on Education and its relevance” in the tome, entitled ‘Education: Philosophy & Practice’ says –

The primary aim of Sri Aurobindo was to make the youths of the nation conscious of their own culture and heritage and develop them as self-reliant human beings. Sri Aurobindo discussed about the fundamental aim and significance of true education. ... Education should help him to become an ideal member of the nation who may gradually unite with the

251 The Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-36, Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest, p.209 (PS)

*entire humanity. Thus, true education should bring harmony between the man, the nation or people and the universal humanity*²⁵².

6.2. Educational Philosophy :

Sri Aurobindo, the great seer-educator and the formulator of Integral Education – the first of its kind, a unique postulation in the sense that its schemes cover all the faculties and aspects of human life looks upon the Upanishads as the bed-rock of his man-making theories for the posterity. He points out that the Upanishads give the foundations of his theory of the ideal life towards which humanity must move. Below is shown its relevance —

*... a book of Vedantic philosophy (not Shankara's but Vedic Vedanta) giving the Upanishadic foundations of my theory of the ideal life towards which humanity must move.*²⁵³

As individual man happens to be one of the sparks of the divine mere objective knowledge does not exhaust the whole of his being and as such according to Upanishads education means to him a modus operandi in his self-fulfilment. Hence, in the ultimate analysis the Upanishadic teaching views an

252 Bhowmik Sushmita, Sri Aurobindo's views on Education and its relevance, Education: Philosophy & Practice, p.32 (SS)

253 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.36, Autobiographical Notes, p.209 (PS)

individual man from a greater and total perspective in the context of his potentialities and growth and transformation and consequently stress has been laid on the inner than the outer piecemeal aspects of the individual life²⁵⁴. Thus, in the pursuit of knowledge the chief concern of the Upanishadic education is to grow in the effulgent light of the Atma along with acquisition of objective knowledge²⁵⁵.

What a deep regard the great educator has for the Upanishadic ideas in respect of leading the young learners towards a great future may be clearly marked in the following lines of Sri Aurobindo —

*I regarded the Upanishads as the most ancient source of Indian thought
... the true Veda, the first Book of Knowledge.*²⁵⁶

The great educator as he is a seer as well, has no difficulty to realize and see for himself with his insight that man surely has to undergo a radical change through the passage of time since the evolutionary thrust will not spare him from equipping him with the psychic faculty in due course. Sri Aurobindo once again points out here that a higher self has been waiting behind the mental being to be evolved and that is also impending. In the circumstances, Sri Aurobindo adds that

254 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.xxiii (SS)

255 Ibid. p.158 (SS)

256 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.15, The Secret of the Veda, p.36 (PS)

man must get ready for the preparation of manifesting the higher faculties latent in him and must receive necessary training to rise to the occasion, lest he will be a misfit to the posterity. In all probability it occurs to the great educator that the ancient Rishis of the Upanishadic age are aware of this possibility and promise in man and they have already made attempts to unfold higher consciousness through the training centres of Brahmacharyāshram and this is why they have led the scholars to make serious exercise of the spirit as Brahmacharins side by side with their training in the worldly life. What Sri Aurobindo says in this regard is cited below —

*The Upanishad replies that there is such a greater existence behind, which is to the mind and its instruments, to the life-force and its workings what they are to the material world. Matter does not know Mind, Mind knows Matter; it is only when the creature embodied in Matter develops mind, becomes the mental being that he can know his mental self and know by that self Matter also in its reality to Mind.*²⁵⁷

In the Upanishadic system of education the learning and attaining knowledge are not one and the same; there is a marked distinction between the two. In this respect there is an illustrious dialogue. Having asked by the great

257 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, vol. 18, Kena and other Upanishads, p.15 (PS)

preceptor Sanatkumar in the Chhāndogya Upanishad Narada²⁵⁸ gives him to know that he has already learnt quite a number disciplines and he also jubilantly tries to enumerate them one by one. The great educator forthwith points out that mere acquisition or learning does not necessarily mean gaining true knowledge. As true knowledge is always luminous and transparent one must be seriously inclined for a genuine urge for Transcendental knowledge and at the same time must have the patience and courage to make oneself free from all intricacies of superficialities of learning.

In the Chhāndogya Upanishad again through another dialogue which is used as a method of teaching in the Upanishadic period, it has been convincingly shown how teaching can be made not only penetrating but also very effective. Here is a dialogue between a father and a son. In course of a conversation Shwetaketu's father Āruni asks his son to tell him what is the thing by knowing which all can be known. The simple answer is '*Tat Tvam Asi*' (तत्त्वमसि)²⁵⁹ and Āruni points out that the quintessence of the entire phenomenal world which is also the inner unifying force transcends all and at the same time causes manifestation of all the multiplicity of phenomena.

258 Chandogya Upanishad, VII.1 (PS)

259 Ibid. 6.8.7 (PS)

In the Katha Upanishad²⁶⁰ in course of a dialogue Yama marks the qualities of patience, sincerity, steadfastness and unquenchable quest of knowledge in the young Brahmacharin Nachiketa. Yama is also highly satisfied with the courage he has shown in respect of rejecting Yama's offer of immense wealth, progeny and spectacular success in life. Finally, he allows him what he asks for. However, when Nachiketa's choice falls on aspiration for secret knowledge it makes him all the more worthy to Yama.

In the story of Narada-Sanatsujat it occurs that Narada completely surrenders to Sanatsujat saying – अचीहि भगवः²⁶¹ Narada entreats Sanatsujat to allow him to be his disciple so that he may attain genuine knowledge under his guidance and training. Being asked Sanatsujat says – यद् वेत्स्य तेन मोक्षसीद ततस्त वक्ष्यामीति।²⁶² Now the guru wants to know from Narada all about his acquisition in the field of knowledge and only then he will be in a position to decide as to which part of knowledge has to be imparted to the latter. In his reply Narada produces an exhaustive list viz., the four Vedas, history, mathematics, grammar, reasoning, ethics, the ideas of devas, the art of archery, astrology, the knowledge of the snake, the knowledge of the gandharvas and the science of medicine (ayurveda) etc. Forthwith Sanatsujat points out that Narada has gone through them only

260 Katha Upanishad, I.1.4 (PS)

261 Chāndogaya Upanishad, 7.1.1 (PS)

262 Ibid. (PS)

superficially and he is only familiar with the nomenclature of the scriptures - नामैवैतद्²⁶³, नाम ब्रह्मम्²⁶⁴, वाचं ब्रह्मम्²⁶⁵, मनो ब्रह्मम्²⁶⁶, संकल्पं ब्रह्मम्²⁶⁷ चित्तं ब्रह्मम्²⁶⁸. Thereafter the guru commences imparting fundamental lessons to him saying - ऋग्वेदं भगवोऽध्येमि यजुर्वेदं सामवेदमाथर्वणं चतुर्थमितिहासपुराणं पञ्चमं वेदानां वेदं पित्र्यं राशिं दैवं निधिं वाकोवाक्यमेकायनं देवविद्यां ब्रह्मविद्यां भूतविद्यां क्षत्रविद्यां नक्षत्रविद्यां सर्पदेवजनविद्यामेतद्भगवोऽध्येमि²⁶⁹ The underlying meaning of this is Brahma is every thing - सर्वे खल्विदं ब्रह्म। The lesson is that without having formal education Sanatsujat has mastered true Truth of immense height, unfathomable depth and in spite of having a wide range of surface knowledge i.e. scholastic attainments in as many as 64 sciences of Narada the light in him remains sealed in him and cannot come out of the cover. In the circumstances, fortunately he receives proper guidance from Sanatsujat and ultimately the effulgent light of his being leads him to self-knowledge and illumination.

In Chhāndogya Upanishad²⁷⁰ again we find a story wherein Rishi Goutam is very much pleased with the honesty and truth-clinging attitude of Satyakama

263 Chāndogaya Upanishad, 7.1.14 (PS)

264 Ibid. 7.1.5 (PS)

265 Ibid. 7.2.2 (PS)

266 Ibid. 7.3.2 (PS)

267 Ibid. 7.4.3 (PS)

268 Ibid. 7.5.3 (PS)

269 Ibid. 7.1.2 (PS)

270 Ibid. IV.4 (PS)

when he is asked about his family background. Finally his truth-seeking attitude leads him to receive real knowledge at the instance of Rishi Goutam.

What the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic age say in respect of bringing out the inner light through education has been confirmed by the words coming out from the depth of Sri Aurobindo being, of course, having some changes here and there regarding its implementation but the fundamental message seems to remain the same all through.

A seer-teacher as Sri Aurobindo is, he has before him the promise in man that is latent in him. Naturally when Sri Aurobindo thinks in terms of education he focuses on the future of mankind as well. He thinks as an educator he must also take into consideration how the latent traits of higher consciousness can be fruitfully organized for having them properly manifested in man. Here his thinking is analogous to the thoughts of the great educators, nay, the Rishis of the Upanishadic age viz., Āruni, Shwetaketu's father and teacher of Chhāndogya Upanishad²⁷¹; Yama, teacher of Nachiketa of Katha Upanishad²⁷²; Sanatsujat, teacher of Narada of Chhāndogya Upanishad²⁷³; Rishi Goutam, teacher of Satyakama of Chhāndogya Upanishad²⁷⁴.

271 Chāndogya Upanishad, 6.8.7 (PS)

272 Katha Upanishad, I.1.4 (PS)

273 Chandogya Upanishad, VII.1 (PS)

274 Ibid. IV.4 (PS)

In fact, the Rishis belong to a higher stage of existence that precedes long long before the age of an incomplete, outward and superficial stage of knowledge. What Sri Aurobindo realizes in the modern context had already occurred to the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic age. The Rishis also involved the learners to make exercise of the spirit right from the young age but their method of exercise was based on old conventional type. Sri Aurobindo equally feels the necessity of the exercise of the spirit to deal effectively the problems of human life. It also occurs to him that a more aspiring aim of human endeavour cannot be had in the absence of spiritual knowledge as it leads to integral perfection for attaining highest height as well broadest broadness.

Both the Rishis and Sri Aurobindo are found to lay great importance to the exercise of the spirit for leading the learners from the outward surface consciousness to the inmost truth of the spirit for the benefit of both the individual being and his communal existence. Regarding the Indian line of thinking Sri Aurobindo himself has said —

Ancient Indian spirituality recognised that man lives in the Ignorance and has to be led through its imperfect indications to a highest inmost knowledge. Our life moves between two worlds, the depths upon depths of our inward being and the surface field of our outward nature. The majority of men put the whole emphasis of life on the outward and live

*very strongly in their surface consciousness and very little in the inward existence... A mere intellectual, ethical and aesthetic culture does not go back to the inmost truth of the spirit; it is still an Ignorance, an incomplete, outward and superficial knowledge. To have made the discovery of our deepest being and hidden spiritual nature is the first necessity and to have erected the living of an inmost spiritual life into the aim of existence is the characteristic sign of a spiritual culture.*²⁷⁵

Kireet Joshi takes clues from the Upanishadic education and observes Sri Aurobindo's Integral education as the right way for the future generation, saying—

*During the Upanishadic periods, there was an emphasis on the pursuit of an integral aim of life, which determined the discipline of integral education. Both the material and spiritual poles of being had their place in this system*²⁷⁶.

Aparna Banerjee in her article “Sri Aurobindo and his Philosophy of Education” as it is found in the tome, entitled ‘Education: Philosophy & Practice’ expresses her views in this regard —

275 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.1, Early Cultural Writings, p.419 (SS) / SABCL: Vol.17, Education and Art, p.192 (PS)

276 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.36 (SS)

*The word “integration” means a unity of parts into a whole in such a way that the parts themselves are blended and transformed into a new character.*²⁷⁷

Professor Indrani Sanyal, Jadavpur University in the introduction of the book entitled ‘Education: Philosophy & Practice’ expresses her views in this regard —

*According to Sri Aurobindo a true education is one that integrates man, nation and spirit. Sri Aurobindo sees in man, the individual, a soul, a portion of the divinity enwrapped in mind and body. Though man is the highest of the created beings, he is not the last word in the evolutionary process. A great possibility awaits man.*²⁷⁸

Further she says —

*.....the Upanishadic model of education, which had been pursued by Sri Aurobindo, may be viewed as a way for the development of the human.*²⁷⁹

As Sri Aurobindo is also a seer he is equally competent to see eye to eye with the ancient Rishi-teachers and their findings and truths contained in the Upanishads. Here Sri Aurobindo refers to the mantras from some of the Upanishads and intimates that by getting the knowledge (Vijnana) and possessing

277 Banerjee, Aparna, Education: Philosophy & Practice, p.12 (SS)

278 Sanyal, Indrani & Ganguly Arindam, Education: philosophy & Practice Introduction, p.14(SS)

279 Ibid. p.16(SS)

the delight of oneness as envisaged in the Upanishads one is capable of realizing that One dwells in the delight of Truth which is free from all bewilderments and delusions. In Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education he has also laid much stress on psychic exercise which enables the learners to attain the effulgent light of the psychic consciousness already latent in him and step into the successive stages of higher consciousness on the one hand and to reject all that is a hindrance to his escalation. Let us see what Sri Aurobindo has said in this connection —

When we have this realisation, when we dwell in it securely and permanently, all possibilities of grief and sin, fear, delusion, internal strife and pain are driven puissant from our being. We realise in our experience the truth of the Upanishads, आनन्दं ब्रह्मणो विद्वान् न बिभेति कतश्चन।
“He who possesses the delight of the Brahman has no fear from anything in the world,” and that other in the Isha Upanishad,

यस्मिन् सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मैवाभूद् विजानतः।

तत्र को मोहः कः शोक एकत्वमनुपश्यतः॥²⁸⁰

When all created things become one with a man's self by his getting the knowledge (विज्ञानः), thereafter what bewilderment can he have or what grief, when in all things he sees their oneness?” The whole world then

280 ईशोपनिषद्, ७ (PS)

*appears to us in a changed aspect, as an ocean of beauty, good, light, bliss, exultant movement on a basis of eternal strength and peace.*²⁸¹

He further says –

*The Upanishads give their clue to the psychological and philosophical ideas of the earlier Rishis and hand down to us their method of spiritual experience and intuition.*²⁸²

Sri Aurobindo takes into account of the fact that the Indian seer-teachers mostly Rishis resort to some unconventional methods and discover truths by intuition and revelation etc. Such truths of the Vedas and the Upanishads have later been systematized by the philosophers and made clear to the reasoning intelligence which has enabled man to acquire the sublime knowledge regarding man and the world. In his educational system Sri Aurobindo takes cognizance of some such facts and by dint of his own revelations and intuitions constructs the methodology of Integral Education for facility of attaining knowledge that may lead young learners to unfold all the latent diviner elements in their beings. He says —

The work of the philosophers was to systematise and justify to the reasoning intelligence the truths of the self and man and the world

281 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, vol. 13, Essays in Philosophy and Yoga, p.77 (PS)

282 Ibid. Vol.15, The Secret of the Veda, p.33 (PS)

*already discovered by intuition, revelation ... and embodied in the Veda and the Upanishads, and at the same time to indicate and systematise methods of discipline founded upon this knowledge by which man might effectuate the highest aim of his existence.*²⁸³

It occurs to Sri Aurobindo that since man is a mental being and by dint of his spirit of scientific enquiry pari passu his reasoning intelligence he has been able to fulfill his mission of the mental sphere; and he has now to exceed the periphery of his mind for he cannot be satisfied with what he has already attained. The higher self in man always drives him towards further progress and like Tennyson's Ulysses his inner voice goads him with a strong urge for exceeding himself as his very nature does not know of what is called rest. Sri Aurobindo also does not stop here. The great seer-teacher believes that there is a strong creator within human being and such a being is not meant for a changeless littleness as he is destined to fit his acts to a transcendent scheme with the help of his sublime powers that are shut in Nature's cell. Taking notice of the Upanishadic system of education and realizing the import of such a system Sri Aurobindo proceeds further and on the basis on the fundamental tenets of the earlier system in the light of his own revelations he rebuilds the model of his Integral Education laying stress on the

283 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.20, The Renaissance in India with A Defence of Indian Culture p.343 (PS)

exercise of the psychic faculty in the modern context of the contemporary world. Only when a learner attains a higher state of consciousness during his formative period of life by the exercise of the spirit can he rise above sin and virtue or good and evil and in such a state of equality alone it becomes possible on his part to give a better look and understanding in the worldly affairs and bring a desired change for solving the problems of individual as well as social life and work for peace and progress for humanity. Since both the seer-teachers of the Upanishads and their modern counterpart, Sri Aurobindo hold that without spiritual knowledge it is not possible on anyone's part to get over the limitations and the selfish as well as the parochial outlook of the conventional life and attain height and depth of selflessness which is surely the destiny of the posterity. And this accounts for the inclusion of exercise of the spirit in the Upanishadic system of education all along and subsequently Sri Aurobindo also includes spiritual education in his 'Integral Education' programme. Of course, much emphasis has been laid on psychic education in the modern context and let us have a glimpse of Sri Aurobindo's comment in this regard —

*Undoubtedly... the Upanishads teach the equality which rises above sin and virtue, beyond good and evil... for the man who is on the path and advanced enough to fulfil the supreme rule.*²⁸⁴

In the realm of the Upanishadic teaching morality or ethics has to be attained from the depth of the truth of the being and when the source of morality and ethics is spiritual knowledge it permeates throughout the whole being and as such it is not a piecemeal knowledge and does not know distinction whatever in respect of time and space. Morality in terms of Upanishadic education can be had only with the constant contact of the soul as it enables one to implement knowledge whether in the field of morality or ethics or in other fields, – it works effectively in all the levels of consciousness. Although it is attained through concentration and meditation and the exercise of the spirit of the individual it has great impact on the social level to the world of plurality as well²⁸⁵.

In the episode of Narada-Sanat Kumar²⁸⁶ we are given to know that Narada even after studying an imposing list of the leading sciences approaches Sanat Kumar for a higher light of knowledge which alone is capable of leading him

284 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.15, Essays on the Gita, p.34 **(PS)**

285 Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.13 **(PS)**

286 Chandogya Upanishad, VII.1 **(PS)**

to infinite knowledge and Bliss. For real fulfillment and real light we also hear the voice of Sanatkumar declaring – यो वै भूमा तत् सुकम्, नाल्पे सुकम् अस्ति, भूमैव सुकम्²⁸⁷

The Infinite is Bliss and there is hardly any Bliss in anything small. The Infinite alone leads to the Bliss.

The entire teaching of the Upanishads focuses on the realization of the Divine Truth by getting rid of ignorance and by dissolution of ego and attachment – whether Maitreyi of Brhadaranyaka Upanishad²⁸⁸ or Nachiketa of Katha Upanishad²⁸⁹ all aim at Divine knowledge and rise above all limitations and enter from the earthly and physical consciousness into a realm of sublime consciousness of the Absolute.

Does not Sri Aurobindo express almost the same idea regarding the fundamental basis of True education when he says -

It is not yet realised that the true secret, whether with child or man, is to help him to find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within. That, if we ever give it a chance to come forward, and still more if we call it into the foreground as “the leader of the march set in our front”, will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards a realisation of

287 Chandogya Upanishad, VII.23.1 (PS)

288 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, II.4.3 (PS)

289 Katha Upanishad, I.1.4 (PS)

its potentialities of which our present mechanical view of life and man and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience or forming any conception²⁹⁰.

The author, Sri Biswanath Sengupta in his book entitled ‘A New Vision of Education in the light of Sri Aurobindo’ points out -

Frankly speaking man is still a half animal. At the most, we may call him a reasoning animal with the faculties of mind and intellect. Even after great achievements in the fields of philosophy, science and technology he has still been treading the circling tracks of mind. He does not know even at this stage of progress around him that his success is chiefly confined to material advancement only. He is not also aware that his actions will one day emerge as swift revealing steps for he is not body and mind and life only. In fact, he is made of an indestructible substance for Transcendental powers are shut in human nature’s cell. He has really a bright future. A greater destiny waits him in his front. If he wills he can make his life many times more powerful.

This is high time to explore his being’s hidden realms. Surely he cannot remain satisfied with surface acts in establishing supremacy in the physical world. Nature in him has also now kindled the fire of exceeding

290 Sri Aurobindo, The Human Cycle, p.33 (PS)

the periphery of mind which is always stirred by the impulse of life. Now this is the hour of taking the concealed light in him in wider fields²⁹¹.

So, in spite of wide experience in illumined knowledge the great seer-teacher of the Upanishadic age can never segregate himself from the search for truth and he is found making joint venture with the young Brahmacharin for more and more illumination and self-knowledge. Never does he neglect he feel tied in putting efforts for the search of the sublime. Never does he neglect his dedication in the study and acquisition of knowledge. Never does he neglect his duty of imparting knowledge to his sishya. Never is he negligent of welfare and throbbing of the sishya. Never does he neglect to keep his physical frame sound. In fact, he stands before his sishya as a burning example of Truth incarnate. He carries on his intense research for spiritual perfection in secret knowledge in the pursuit of discovering the highest Light in the darkest caves of the Retas. The seer-teacher of the Upanishadic school also retains much of the conception of the Vedic life and he lays great emphasis on an integrated approach to both material and spiritual aspects of human life in the educational programmes. But later the original impulse has been lost and its consequences are inconceivable. Before completion of the integrated macro approach to the possibilities of the transformation of the physical life in the effulgent light of spiritual knowledge a

291 Sengupta, Biswanath, A New Vision of Education in the Light of Sri Aurobindo, p.102 (SS)

trend of exclusivism develops into such a degree that it has no longer been possible to preserve the original dynamic movement of the Indian life and Indian education.

It is by the revered one like the seer-teacher's living example that lessons may have impact infinitely better than holding theoretical discussions and outstanding instructions. When the young one finds his guru whom he looks upon as the leader of the march acting in accordance with lofty ideals all the while and does what he says sooner or later all such things of the guru start silently reflecting in the attitude and performances of the sishyas. In this way the revered guru happens to be the demigod to the tender-aged pupil and in his turn he of his own accord begins to imitate the guru's straightforwardness, selflessness, sincerity, courage and many such outstanding qualities such as perseverance, self-control etc. etc. Following the guru the young learner has gradually been able to do away with little by little his defects like want of self-control, weaknesses, arbitrary impulses, impatience, ill-tempered nature and the like. The very presence of the guru for whom his (Sishya) reverence knows no bounds has a dynamic impact on his inner and outer life – he seems to be in all readiness to do any sacrifice in the hour of the guru's need. Taking account of all these things it may be pointed out here that to make education of the young ones effective and meaningful and spontaneous bonds of trust with discerning affection, which alone

can make the task easy-going, has to be created and in this respect the Upanishadic system of education has throughout been spectacularly successful.

6.3. Teacher-Taught-Environment

Thus, the ancient Indian system of education emerges in the age of the Upanishads as the fountain head of our education and create a tradition of guru-shishya relationship. Like great scientists and experimenters the illumined seer-educators discover ways and means i.e. methods that help the learner to exceed himself and be free from limitations for facility of fresh quest in the infinitude.

In the Āshram or gurukula the teacher who is also the seer along with his wife who also at times is a seer usually live with the pupils and as such, both of them look upon the young disciples as their children. In the circumstances, the tender-aged learners are brought up with love and care. Although the guru is possessed with illumined wisdom and wide experience he does not act as an instructor or task-master. The profundity of knowledge and the light in him prompts him to awaken the learners in such a manner that they may depend more on their own efforts of concentration and proceed by voluntary choice with patience, on the basis of a distinction between Shreyas (श्रेयः) and Preyas (प्रेयः).

Kireet Joshi says –

The pupil is treated as a closed bud of the lotus of knowledge, which can unfold petal by petal, under the uplifting influence of the teacher. And while the pupil is expected to manifest inner enthusiasm to learn, the teacher is seen only as an aid in providing the necessary elements by means of which the lotus of knowledge which is enclosed in the bud can flower into its fullness²⁹².

Sri Aurobindo has categorically outlined the teacher-taught relationship in clear terms and analyzed its salient features one by one, detailing out a complete view of the role of the teacher as well as that of the learner, and it is interesting to note that the Upanishads have also maintained some such views, of course, in their own style and mode of expressions. Here one may find the text of what Sri Aurobindo has said in this regard —

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master, he is a helper and guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose. He does not actually train the pupil's mind, he only shows him how to perfect his instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process. He does not impart knowledge to him, he shows him how to acquire knowledge for

292 Joshi, Kireet, Taaittiriya Upanishad, p.81 (SS)

*himself. He does not call forth the knowledge that is within; he only shows him where it lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface.*²⁹³

In the Upanishadic period also nothing is imposed by the guru. He is just like a helper, a coordinator. He inspires the pupil to make contact with the depth of his truth for spontaneous manifestation.

Upanishadic education has laid stress on self-concentration, meditation as well as self-scarifying asceticism in respect of attaining higher knowledge through the exercise of human spirit²⁹⁴. The teacher of the Upanishadic school is always on his guard. And his chief aim is to see that the pupil makes progress in the matter of attaining higher knowledge by dint of his own persistent hard endeavour²⁹⁵. In fact, the seer-teacher of the Upanishadic age has no mind to intervene²⁹⁶ and impart education to his pupil as he wants his pupil to grow in the effulgent light of higher consciousness himself and without help from outside²⁹⁷. Sri Aurobindo holds the same view in this respect. His view that ‘*Nothing can be taught*’ has been mentioned in the same light as we find in the views of the seer-

293 The Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-1, On Education, p. 184 (PS)

294 Mukherjee, Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.116 (SS)

295 Chāndogaya Upanishad, VI.2 (PS)

296 Ibid. VIII.8.4 (PS)

297 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, VI.2.6 (PS)

teachers of the Upanishadic features. He wants that the latent power of the young learners has to be attained by themselves through their own efforts and the teacher has to keep vigilance on them without the least intervention and help – at best what the teacher can do is to inspire the learners in all possible ways. In this connection Kireet Joshi observes –

In his book 'The Synthesis of Yoga', Sri Aurobindo lays central importance on concentration and speaks of four principal methods by which concentration can be attained, namely, meditation, contemplation, witnessing the passage of thoughts as they pass through the mind, and quieting and silencing the mind. There are also dynamic methods of meditation, in which the light of higher knowledge is introduced into lower states of consciousness and even of impulses and vibrations of desires, so that the latter can be enlightened and transformed²⁹⁸.

Mention may here also be made that there are Charakas or the wandering scholars from whom there is ample scope for gathering knowledge in the Upanishadic age²⁹⁹.

According to the Chhāndogya Upanishad the guru or the teacher is aware that every individual student has within him a store-house of knowledge and it

298 Joshi, Kireet, Taittiriya Upanishad, p.96 (SS)

299 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, XI.3.1 / 7.1 (PS)

lies dormant in him but whenever he concentrates deeply with a background of a regular and sincere contact with the central consciousness of his being the knowledge within him will have a chance of opening itself through his thoughts and illuminations³⁰⁰.

Sri Aurobindo further points out —

*The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition. It is he himself who must be induced to expand in accordance with his own nature ... The task is to find it, develop it, use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.*³⁰¹

Here the suggestion is that every individual learner should be allowed to develop himself spontaneously his urge for a working hypothesis in accordance with his own nature and draw out the best in him unhindered and go forward to utilise the chance perfectly. Keeping an eye on the learner's own inclination the teacher has to induce him to take initiative in the matter of being involved in a particular discipline and take up other disciplines one by one if he so desires in accordance

300 Chāndogaya Upanishad, IV.9.2 (PS)

301 The Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-1, On Education, p. 184 (PS)

with his own priority. Here it may be pointed out that Chhāndogya Upanishad, Brihadaranyaka Upanishad³⁰² have also stated some such things regarding the role of the teacher and much emphasis has been laid on it. It may again be mentioned here that in the Upanishadic age a pupil has the privilege of opting for a vidyā freely out of a number of such vidyās as per the learner's mental frame, inclination and willingness. And the question of any sort of imposition on the part of the teacher does not arise at all.

The Upanishadic system of education while allows freedom of choice in the matter of learning it equally allows the disciples to ask questions – ‘परिग्रहेन सेवया’. In quite a number of respects also the Upanishadic system is flexible and free from rigidities. To each and every learner individual attention is a must. For each learner the method that suits him best for his growth has to be devised and high efforts according to one's capability is the norm here. For all these things the teacher is looked upon as the supreme absolute being. It is not authoritarianism on the part of the teacher that prompts the learner to see his guru to be seated on the highest pedestal and reverence. One who quenches the intense thirst of knowledge must surely have a high place of respect. The guru is equally looked upon as a surgeon who has to undertake operation for the patient, so is the role of

302 Chāndogaya Upanishad, IV.2 (PS)/ Brihadaranyak Upanishad, VI.2.6 (PS)/ Chāndogaya Upanishad, VIII.8.4 (PS)

the teacher. Here the teacher surely deserves respect and reverence. Such a seer-teacher at times also appears in the heart-centre of the learner as his inner teacher and the leader of the march. There is reason to believe that the āshram life is rigorous to the young learners, nevertheless it is not without mirth and joy as well as charm and beauty.

Once again Sri Aurobindo points out -

The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be. The basis of a man's nature is almost always, in addition to his soul's past, his heredity, his surroundings, his nationality, his country, the soil from which he draws sustenance, the air which he breathes, the sights, sounds, habits to which he is accustomed. They mould him not the less powerfully because insensibly. From that then we must begin. We must not take up the nature by the roots from the earth in which it must grow or surround the mind with images and ideas of a life which is alien to that in which it must physically move. If anything has to be brought in from outside, it must be offered, not forced on the mind. A free and natural growth is the condition of genuine development. There are souls which naturally revolt from their surroundings and seem to belong to another age and clime. Let them be free to follow their bent; but the majority languish, become empty,

*become artificial, if artificially moulded into an alien form. It is God's arrangement for mankind that they should belong to a particular nation, age, society, that they should be children of the past, possessors of the present, creators of the future. 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.*³⁰³

In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad³⁰⁴ mention has been made of three processes of education viz., *Sravana, Manana and Nididhyasana*. *Sravana* means listening what is taught. Only broad hints are given by the preceptor usually. The teacher now asks the pupil to think out for himself. Here lies the scope for introspection and contemplation on the part of the pupil. *Manana* or cognition is a step for convincing oneself of the truth of what has been referred to. Kireet Joshi argues—

*The process of realisation of the Object of Knowledge consists of four steps: śravana, hearing the word that discloses the Object of Knowledge, manana, cogitation and reflection on the Object of Knowledge, nididhyāsana, dwelling in concentration on the Object of Knowledge, and sākāṅkārā, realisation of the Object of Knowledge*³⁰⁵.

303 The Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-1, On Education, p. 184 (PS)

304 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, II.4 (PS)

305 Joshi, Kireet, Taaittiriya Upanishad, p.95 (SS)

A very interesting instance of some such teaching has been mentioned in the Taittiriya Upanishad³⁰⁶. Here Varuna instructs his son Bhrigu and after listening (*Sravana*) he hints five times Bhrigu is in a position to comprehend the Absolute. There is another very interesting instance in Chhāndogya Upanishad³⁰⁷. Here Svetaketu's³⁰⁸ father has shown how psychological conditions are linked up with the physiological conditions. He has amply illustrated how mind and its faculties depend upon the energy of the body. Svetaketu after taking fast for fifteen days to his utter surprise finds that he does not possess an iota of knowledge in him but as soon as he takes food and drink knowledge begins to dawn upon his mind. Hence, this experiment illustrates that the truth of the mind or *Manana* has to depend upon the food or *Anna*. In the same way Vak also depends upon *Tejah* or energy. These illustrations make it crystal clear that education in the highest knowledge aims at achieving a direct perception of truth by one's own experiments and discoveries through constant contemplation of the One Reality. This process is called *Manana*. The next process of the Upanishadic education is *Nididhyasana* which is nothing but the concentrated contemplation of the truth and its realization. In fine, it may be concluded that through his own efforts education is attained by the pupil and the teacher only presides over the process.

306 Taittiriya Aranyaka, III (PS)

307 Chāndogya Upanishad, V-VI (PS)

308 Ibid. V.3-10 (PS)

Sri Aurobindo also holds the same idea when he says as the first principle of true teaching - ‘...nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or task-master, he is a helper and guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose’. His second principle of true teaching is that ‘the mind has to be consulted in its own growth’. His third principle of true teaching is ‘from that which is to that which shall be’. So here Sri Aurobindo fully endorses the views of the Upanishadic teachers in respect of teaching and the role of the learners.

The teaching may contain prayers and advices but they are chiefly inspirations and not admonitions. In course of a discussion on the codes and conducts in Taittiriya Upanishad³⁰⁹ some broad ideas are only brought before the disciples viz., ‘एतद् उच्यम्’ (it should be worshipped), ‘एव वेदोपनियत्’ (the secret teaching of the veda), तम्, सत्यम् and धर्म³¹⁰. Here some modes of disciplines and orderliness have been mentioned so that the tender-aged ones may know their responsibility to the divine and society, pointing out how to maintain right relationship with others, how to cling to the truth, how to have the right way to living, how to show respect for the guru, elders and guest etc. etc. for achieving amity of feelings in the society³¹¹.

309 Taittiriya Upanishad, I.I.6 (PS)

310 Taittiriya Upanishad, I.9 & 11 (PS)

311 Ibid. I.10 & III.10 (PS)

In the age of the Upanishads, as one is already aware that centres of education are mostly run by the Rishis, the seer-teachers and when they impart lessons to the learners who live with their teachers in the same premises and eventually come so close to the Rishis that they seem to belong to the same family as children of the Rishis and the Rishis on the other hand also make them totally identified with all the young learners of the Āshram. The relevant words of Professor Indrani Sanyal may as well be referred in the following lines –

The Acharya of the Upanishad delivers knowledge as inspired by the spiritual energy. The acharya is regarded as the Sakta, i.e., one who is capable of bringing about the strength in those who are being educated by him. In order to strengthen with Sakti, i.e., power or energy, the teacher or preceptor must be capable of placing himself at the level of Prajnanam, i.e., transcendental energy. The pupil is Sikshamana i.e., one who is being educated. The preceptor energises the pupil, the pupil accepts. There are passages at the very beginning in the Tattiriya Upanishad and also in some other places, where we find that prayers are offered jointly by the teachers and the students.

The student-teacher relationship reaches its height through the close bond between the teacher and the student. The following prayers of the Acharya are important in this connection.

तं त्वा भग प्रविशानि स्वाहा।

स मा भग प्रविश स्वाहा।

*The acharya and the pupil are not poles apart where the acharya teacher and students are taught.*³¹²

6.4. Brahmacharya on Education :

At the basis of the old Aryan system is the all-important discipline of Brahmacharya³¹³. The first necessity for the building up of a great intellectual superstructure is to provide a foundation strong enough to bear it. Those systems of education which start from an insufficient knowledge of human faculty, think they have provided a satisfactory foundation when they have supplied the student with a large or well-selected mass of information on the various subjects which comprise the best part of human culture at the time. The school gives the materials, it is for the student to use them,—this is the formula. But the error here is fundamental. Information cannot be the foundation of intelligence, it can only be part of the material out of which the knower builds knowledge, the starting-point, the nucleus of fresh discovery and enlarged creation. An education that confines itself to imparting knowledge, is no education. The various faculties of

312 Sanyal, I. & Ganguly, A., Education: philosophy & Practice Introduction, p.19 (SS)

313 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.1, Early Cultural Writings, p.370 (PS)

memory, judgment, imagination, perception, reasoning, which build the edifice of thought and knowledge for the knower, must not only be equipped with their fit and sufficient tools and materials, but train scholars to bring fresh materials and use more skilfully those of which they are in possession of. And the foundation of the structure they have to build, can only be had with the provision of a fund of energy sufficient to bear the demands of a continually growing activity of the memory, judgment and creative power.

The Upanishadic education although is an ancient Indian system it contains a unique and unparallel feature of Brahmacharya, never conceived or experienced by any other nation of the world, causes unlike the piecemeal training of the physical, mental and intellectual education prevailing all over the world an all-pervading and comprehensive transformation from the physical unit 'रेतः' to 'तेजः' and from 'तेजः' to 'ओजः' right from the formative age of the learner. The Rishis or the seer-poets of the Upanishadic age are well aware that dynamic changes can be caused through the channels of the inner nature that automatically have great impacts on exteriorized aspects of human faculties. Thus after receiving education through Brahmacharya a learner undergoes a radical change though silent yet revolutionary in the body, life and mind as well by degrees wears a new vision of life and becomes quite fit for performing the working hypothesis of life without difficulty.

Kireet Joshi is also of opinion that –

In the Indian system of education, there was a great deal of emphasis on discipline. The life of the pupil began with a resolve to impose upon himself the ideal and practise of Brahmacharya, which mean not only physical continence, but a constant burning aspiration for the knowledge – Vratam charishyami³¹⁴.

In the story of ‘Shvetketu-Āruni’³¹⁵ of Chhāndogya Upanishad the dialogue that chiefly explains the secret cause of creation in its entirety is of a father and a son. The theme referred to here is - यथा सोम्यैकेन मृत्पिण्डेन सर्वं मृन्मयं विज्ञानं स्यात्³¹⁶ – the suggestion is that before worshipping an image of earthly material the worshipper usually infuses the earthly image into an incarnation of a supreme image with the help of the dynamic and subtler power of the mantra. The man-making programme of the Upanishadic system of education strives to give shape to a full-fledged and integrated human being with the pulsation of an effulgent Light monitoring every movement of thought and action. The system of education of the Upanishadic age is known as the Gurukul system. Under the gurukul system the tender-aged young learner is required to observe Brahmacharya or celibacy

314 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.31 (SS)

315 Chāndogaya Upanishad, 6.1.1 (PS)

316 Ibid. 6.1.4 (PS)

and stay in the residential house or the Āshram of the guru for undergoing an all-round and integrated course of training that aims at physical, intellectual and moral development in the light of Brahmacharya (ब्रह्मचर्यः) through the exercise of the spirit which ultimately makes communion with the Transcendental Being - तत्त्वमसि³¹⁷ It transpires that Shvetketu is highly impressed by the role of knowledge of Brahmavidyā.

The methodology for imparting knowledge to the young disciples in the Upanishadic age may not be the same as that of Sri Aurobindo's thought of education and surely there is a marked difference between the two methodologies viz, Brahmacharya-based education and Integral Education but the fundamental objective of both the schools seems to be one and the same with some degrees of changes of some terms and all that for when the Upanishadic teachers lay emphasis of self-knowledge Sri Aurobindo equally gives stress on psychic light in view of attaining a higher stage of life. In the following lines Sri Aurobindo has outlined how the Rishi-teachers of the Upanishads have given the guideline for seizing higher knowledge by marshalling the rays of knowledge along with accumulating and arranging the store in the steady or '*Dhira*' mind and the right application of thoughts and intuitions through elimination of extensions and misapplication of false thoughts created by hasty mind —

317 Chāndogaya Upanishad, 6.8.7 (PS)

*We must give time for the viveka to seize on our thoughts & intuitions, arrange them, separate their intellectual from their vijñanamaya elements, correct their false extensions, false limitations, misapplications & assign them their right application, right extension, right limitation, make, in the image of the Upanishads, the vyūha or just marshalling of the rays of the sun of knowledge, सूर्यस्य रसमयः. Knowledge is not for the hasty mind but only for the dhira, who can sit long accumulating & arranging his store and does not rush away with fragments like a crow darting off with the first morsel of food on which it can seize.*³¹⁸

It occurs to us that the fundamental truth contained in the Upanishadic system of education has struck his mind so deeply that he is laid to believe that genuine advancement through educational programmes has to be made on the basis of such truths that the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic age have offered to the mankind for further progress. Modern education system all over the world as it prevails in our contemporary world is simply piecemeal imitation of the European academic world. At best it imparts education on the basis of some psychological leanings of the human mind. But Sri Aurobindo as a seer-teacher is convinced with his intuitive knowledge that the conventional mechanical type of European education is not capable of serving the demand of the present day man

318 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, vol. 21, The Life Divine, p.517 (PS)

as well as the future man and in view of constructing educational methodology requires ways and means for harnessing deeper consciousness of the young learners. Sri Aurobindo says that in the circumstances many lovers of the past system may come with the proposal of introducing the Upanishadic system of education at the present moment as they are of opinion that it is high time to resort to this for surely it would meet the demand of the day. But Sri Aurobindo differs with them. He points out that the fundamental principles of the Upanishadic system of education must surely be retained but the *modus operandi* or the method has to be discovered to suit to the changed conditions of life. Here are the findings of Sri Aurobindo in this context —

*It is not our contention that the actual system of ancient instruction should be restored in its outward features, - a demand often made by fervid lovers of the past. Many of them are not suited to modern requirements. But its fundamental principles are for all time and its discipline can only be replaced by the discovery of a still more effective discipline, such as European education does not offer us.*³¹⁹

319 Sri Aurobindo, Vol.1, Early Cultural writings, p.378 (PS) / SABCL, Vol-3 (The Brain of India), p.340 (PS)

In this connection Sri Aurobindo also says-

*...each human being is a self-developing soul and that the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to 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 form like an inert plastic material.*³²⁰

6.5. Psychic and Spiritual Education :

In ancient India the great teachers have been well aware that education means manifestation of what is already in man. Hence, they set up centres of learning for imparting thorough and comprehensive education. For some such full-fledged education they stress on the exercise of the spirit for having light that might illumine physical, mental, vital and all aspects of human existence. The learners are processed right from the early days of life for being fit to face all problems of human life courageously, competently with a truth-seeking attitude in their light of their spirits. Sri Aurobindo studies all the Upanishadic ideals and their practices and in the light of his own intuition and revelation builds up the edifies of Integral Education wherein the aims and principles of the Upanishadic seer-

320 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.25, The Human Cycle The Ideal of Human Unity War and Self-Determination, p.33 (PS)

teachers have been retained all through, of course, with the change of the modus operandi only in the field of application. The prevailing system of education which is concerned chiefly with the mental and intellectual exercise only can at best offer degrees through professional and some such academic disciplines is neither in a position to draw out the inner light and reflect them on the outer faculties nor is it capable of offering a thorough knowledge on the basis of man-making programmes. Sri Aurobindo in one of his articles says -

*The Indian University system has confined itself entirely to this (the intellectual part of education) branch ... 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. ... it is a fundamental & deplorable error by which we in this country have confused education with the acquisition of knowledge and interpreted knowledge itself in a singularly narrow & illiberal sense. To give the student knowledge is necessary, but it is still more necessary to build up in him the power of using his knowledge.*³²¹

There is frame of psychic light in every child. It is usually concealed within the being. For the awakening of the psychic entity the teacher, father and specially the mother of the child may play an important role in the awakening the

321 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.1, Early Cultural Writings, p.359 (PS)

psychic entity in the child. As the child is the man in the process of formation he must also be given congenial environment and guidance to find his own psychic light. In the psychic light the child has the chance to feel and know spontaneously in a much more direct and luminous way and the psychic exercise helps one to have a macro view of life. Sri Aurobindo says —

*... there is a secret psychic being, a divine element in our depths that is concealed even more than garbed by the mind, body and life.*³²²

Sri Aurobindo further adds in this context —

*....it (the psychic).....can truly come forward and impose its power on the outer members.*³²³

It is by the exercise of the psychic in one's nature that one comes in contact with one's central being. And the psychic element is also a spark of the divine —

*...the psychic entity manifests itself as the central being which upholds mind and life and body and supports all the other powers and functions of the Spirit.*³²⁴

It must be kept in mind that the mind is not the seat of knowledge and truth but the psychic element is the original seat within of the truth and knowledge. In fact,

322 Sri Aurobindo, Essays Divine And Human, p.369 (PS)

323 Ibid. The Synthesis of Yoga, p.155 (PS)

324 Ibid. The Life Divine, p.941 (PS)

man's success till now is chiefly confined to the material advancement only. As a greater destiny waits him in his front and he has the chance of making his life many times more powerful by the swift revealing steps of the psychic entity the need for awakening the psychic entity in the learner through psychic education is an urgent necessity. Let us listen to Sri Aurobindo's words in this connection —

*...the evocation of this real man within is the right object of education...*³²⁵

Children are the under the influence of the psychic light and this may be called a precious possession. In pursuance of Sri Aurobindo's 'Integral Education' The Mother says —

*Every human being carries hidden within him the possibility of a greater consciousness ... what the human mental consciousness does not know and can not do, this consciousness knows and does. It is like a light that shines at the centre of the being, radiating through the thick coverings of the external consciousness.*³²⁶

Sri Aurobindo points out that the psychic entity or the deeper self within the learner has to be awakened making it as the leader of the march to take up most of the business of education out of our hands. Sri Aurobindo further mentions that as

325 Sri Aurobindo, The Human Cycle, p.33 (PS)

326 The Mother, On Education, p.30 (PS)

the leader of the march the psychic entity will surely develop the capacity of the psychological being towards the realization of its potentialities of which the external routine methods cannot accomplish it.

The knowledge of the Atma can only be had by attaining real knowledge³²⁷. In fact, without meditation highest knowledge cannot be attained³²⁸. The effulgent light that the learner gains through the self-identity with the Atma enables him to have the highest knowledge³²⁹. Upanishads have laid much emphasis on the system of concentration as well as meditation for developing the inner self as part of the educational programme³³⁰. Discussions on the practice of some such systems are found in the Katha Upanishad³³¹, Svetasvata Upanishad³³² and Maitra Upanishad³³³. Kireet Joshi also admits the same view. He says –

There was a secret knowledge that the highest light is contained in the darkest caves of the physical or the inconscient, and that one must descend into the depths of darkness to recover that highest light. I n the

327 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.115 (SS)

328 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, I.5.23 (PS)

329 Chāndogaya Upanishad, VIII.15 (PS)

330 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.115 (SS)

331 Katha Upanishad, III & IV (PS)

332 Svetasvata Upanishad, II (PS)

333 Maitra Upanishad, VI (PS)

practical terms, this implied not rejection of physical and material life but an intensive cultivation and transformation of that life³³⁴.

As we have already stated Sri Aurobindo at a stage reminds us that the fundamental principles of the Upanishadic system of education are for all time and they need to be retained by any means but the methodology for the implementation of such principles by the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic age should not be restored as they do not fit with the changed conditions of the present contemporary world. He further says that its discipline can only be replaced by the discovery of a still more effective discipline, such as European education does not offer us. Sri Aurobindo himself has discovered a more effective discipline to suit the modern requirements. But there is even in identity a difference. It means that the education that develops in the Tapovan under the guidance of the seer-teachers or Rishis of the Upanishadic age, laying emphasis on the education of the spirit (spiritual education) and the Integral Education of Sri Aurobindo in the modern world giving stress on psychic education though identical in their nature has some difference, especially, in respect of implementation and all that. Let us see what Sri Aurobindo says in this regard —

It is not yet realised ... that the true secret, whether with child or man, is to help him to find his deeper self, the real psychic entity within. That, if

334 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.36 (SS)

*we ever give it a chance to come forward, and still more if we call it into the foreground as “the leader of the march set in our front”, will itself take up most of the business of education out of our hands and develop the capacity of the psychological being towards a realisation of its potentialities of which our present mechanical view of life and man and external routine methods of dealing with them prevent us from having any experience or forming any conception.*³³⁵

Truly speaking man is still a half animal and at the most we may call him a reasoning animal with the faculties of mind and intellect. Even after great achievements and spectacular successes one after the other in the field of philosophy, science, technology etc. pari pasu his ventures in respect of riding the heavens and reaching the stars he is still a petty adventurer and prisoner of a dwarf humanity treading the circling tracks of mind around his little self and petty things. And surely he is not meant for such a one sided surface life only. As the psychic light stares through the curtains of the mind’s windows he has the possibility of unfolding the higher light in him and face the veilless Truth. The life he leads conceals the Light in him. According to Sri Aurobindo man is destined to cross the dangerous spaces of his inner self. The great educator further adds – *if sense could wake in tissue, nerve and cell, if in the crowded dumb*

335 Sri Aurobindo, The Human Cycle, p.33 (PS)

*vibrations thought fumbled what then hinder the psychic light, hidden behind the curtains stealing in?*³³⁶ As man is the deputy of the aspiring world he has to manifest himself and carry on his journey along the sunlit path and he has to push forward in foreseeing depths of his being which would enable him to stand awake in the effulgent light of the psychic. In spite of wrestling with unseen powers and emerging as the master of a huge environment around him he is still now a progressing human being among his brute compeers. Something higher and nobler constantly waits and surrounds him towards which man moves to exceed himself from the preceding stage and uncover his being as his imperfection as well as ignorance toils towards perfection. In view of this Sri Aurobindo is bent upon introducing psychic education which will unfold latent transcendental powers that are shut in Nature's cells since he has been already close to the Truth of the psychic light. With much emphasis Sri Aurobindo states that the resultant effect of psychic education is a thing decreed, inevitable, irresistible and irrevocable. Once again Sri Aurobindo points out that education proper to the Indian soul that people of this land are quest of cannot be confined to the past efforts made by the Upanishadic Rishis but their principles must be carried forward to the future need, to the greatness of its self-creation, to its eternal spirit.

336 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.33 & 34, Savitri, p.648 (PS)

Sri Aurobindo says —

*... 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.*³³⁷

In fact, Sri Aurobindo occupies a unique position in respect of his attainments chiefly derived from the studies of the monumental achievements of the Rishis belonging to the Vedic and Upanishadic fund of knowledge and on the other hand, from that of the Western education primarily based on intellectual exercise, besides his own spiritual advancements. In the next place, he is also a seer of outstanding height and depth and as such, he is above all parochial ideas. Open-minded and truth-seeking as he is, when he comes forward to appreciate greatly the utility of the reasoning intelligence in the modern world he reminds the people of this land of ours equally of the unparallel spiritual education of the Upanishadic period that has not only heightened the human existence but also paved the way for the manifestation of the developing soul through the ancient system of education. Hence, he is not ready to compromise with any system of education which does not make provision for the coming out of the developing

337 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.1, Early Cultural Writings, p.419(PS) /

SABCL: Vol.17, Education and Art, p.192 (PS)

soul with effulgent light. Of course, he is equally ready to accommodate with the attainments of the modern world and in view of this he has offered us a scheme of Integral Education. Here lies his recommendation for blending and harmony in respect of principles of Upanishadic education and the modern methodology based on reasoning intelligence. Let us listen to what Sri Aurobindo says —

*... education which starting with the past and making full use of the present builds up a great nation. Whoever wishes to cut off the nation from its past, is no friend of our national growth. Whoever fails to take advantage of the present is losing us the battle of life. We must therefore save for India all that she has stored up of knowledge, character and noble thought in her immemorial past. We must acquire for her the best knowledge that Europe can give her and assimilate it to her own peculiar type of national temperament. We must introduce the best methods of teaching humanity has developed, whether modern or ancient. And all these we must harmonise into a system which will be impregnated with the spirit of self-reliance so as to build up men and not machines*³³⁸

338 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol. 6 & 7, Vande Mataram, p.895 (PS)

Aparna Banerjee in her article “Sri Aurobindo and his philosophy of Education” as it is found in the tome, entitled ‘Education: Philosophy & Practice’ expresses her views in this regard —

*In spite of his nationalist zeal he wanted to introduce the best methods of teaching that as a whole humanity had. He wanted to harmonise it all into a system which would be characterised by a spirit of self-reliance.*³³⁹

An educator without an insight of a seer will surely fail to have a full view of the latent forces in the learner and it is our proud privilege that we are having a discussion of no less a person than Sri Aurobindo who is not only a great educator but also a seer-teacher of unfathomable depth. Sri Aurobindo looks upon the learner not merely as a homosapien but a human being with a developing soul. To Sri Aurobindo the learner is not a force-compelled earth-born being only trading solely along the circling tracks of his mind around his little things and he is not meant for changeless littleness. If he wills he can be awake with spirit’s air and can be the author of high change. So Sri Aurobindo is not satisfied with the acquisition of the surface knowledge only he wants that the learners are inspired to take exercise of their higher consciousness. Hence, so far as the aims and objectives are concerned Sri Aurobindo with the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic

339 Banerjee Aparna, Education: Philosophy & Practice, p.16 (PS)

age is in favour of bringing out the powers and the light of the soul for making such things perfect for noble use. Here are the words of Sri Aurobindo in this regard —

*The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.*³⁴⁰

Kireet Joshi in his “The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil” observes –

*Sri Aurobindo undertook a programme of research involving the discovery of new knowledge In the light of which a new synthesis relevant to the needs of today and tomorrow can be created. The secret of that synthesis is the manifestation of Spirit in Matter, leading to an unprecedented perfection. Sri Aurobindo’s discovery of possibility of full operation in physical life may be regarded as the most significant gift of nascent India to humanity’s effort to overcome its crisis*³⁴¹.

6.6. Conclusion :

Thus, in the educational schemes of Sri Aurobindo we also come across the effulgent light of the Upanishadic ideas and he develops such ideas in the scheme of ‘Integral Education’. Sri Aurobindo points out that the ancients of this land had

340 The complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol.1, Early Cultural Writings, p.384 (PS)

341 Joshi, Kireet, The Good Teacher and the Good Pupil, p.39 (SS)

the view that all knowledge is within and has to be evoked by education rather than instilled from outside. In the Upanishadic age the famous educational framework of ancient India was surely built upon the discipline of '*Brahmacharya*' which happens to be the secret of ancient India's pivotal discipline of the head & heart. In Integral Education Sri Aurobindo carefully retains the fundamental principles envisaged in the discipline of Brahmacharya. He has introduced Integral Education on the basis of this ancient goal of self-knowledge with the modern goal of world-knowledge. Both of these goals are admirable, and the two of them must go hand-in-hand in any educational system that is integral. To him education is a life-long learning process that makes it possible for anyone to manifest the full potential from their inner-most being and to create opportunities for living a better life.

CHAPTER : VII
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

CHAPTER : VII

CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

7.1. Introduction :

It may not be out of place if it is pointed out here that the import of the present topic namely “*Upanishadic Influence on Educational Thoughts of Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo*”, is indeed immensely significant as it is intended to highlight the very genesis of the fundamental aims and principles of the ancient Indian man-making parameters of the Upanishadic age that are responsible for India’s inexhaustible and untiring vitality and prolific creativeness for many thousand years. And during this period India witnesses her superabundant energy and plethora of many sided activities, such as philosophies, sciences, political and administrative systems, craft, industries, trade etc. including Yoga. Her messages of the Upanishads and other spiritual ideas, the epics, arts, painting are found crossing her borders and the oceans spreading from the Archipelago in the far East and to Rome, Egypt etc. in the West after deluging with creativeness in the length and breadth of this land of ours. The stupendous vitality of the Indian people is not confined to the creation of the colossal literature and philosophies only it embraces the entire universe whether it is astronomy or medicine.

And the great educators Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo who are seers as well of the contemporary world are sure that the genesis of the prodigious research work and intellectual creativeness right from the ancient period well upto the Muslim rule in India, having no parallel in the world history, lies in the continued efforts of the seer-teachers or the Rishis that enable the young learners – generations after generations to utilize the hidden potentialities of the spirit in man in order to make human life many times more powerful and attain further progress in all the fields of life.

Blessed we are that among the leading architects of modern Indian life and culture Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo – the three outstanding sentinels of the Indian life and spirit appear on the scene almost in the same period one after the other when national vitality is likely to perish and when particularly there is dwindling of the luxuriant fire of her life and India suffers from stagnation. It is also a disastrous period of titanic decline, a nadir or evening time of the setting energy which paves the way for making adventure of the super-imposed European culture on the Indian mind.

In the circumstances, the need of reawakening or a new birth of the nation becomes imperative. Nevertheless, all the three great educators and seer-teachers as they are, do not look upon India as an ordinary nation and as they are quite aware that the people of this land has a great past and as such India has all along

been awake she also maintains a living continuity with the past even in the stage of decline.

The ancient Indian vitality as well as her wisdom which has been consolidated and further developed in the age of the Upanishads and which is also our destiny, nay, the destiny of all other nations as well in future has not only been revived by the efforts of these three seer-teachers of our time in their attempts of constructing educational parameters as well as *modus operandis* on the basis of the aims and principles of the Upanishadic educational systems for finding a rearising impulse of self-expressed creative spirit in the hearts of the young generations to rebuild and reshape the powers of the national vitality after a considerable period of eclipsing European impact but also they have been successful in keeping their centres of learning carrying on the implementing their tasks of imparting fruitful training to the young learners chiefly on the basis of Upanishadic truths restated for generations together.

Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo – the great Indian educators are also equally well-read and well-versed in European thoughts and culture but unlike many other educated people of this land they are neither ready to imitate the Western thinkers nor to accept the views of such scholars when they say that Indians are escapists and back-dated and unpractical, – instead

they look with discerning eye at the Upanishadic system of education framed by the Rishis of the Upanishadic age.

Nor is this all. They also have discovered that the master key of human progress, in the ultimate analysis lies in the exercise of the spirit and the psychic and as such, they have again come forward to incorporate the unique idea of attaining spiritual powers severally in their respective educational programmes along with their practical methods of implementation in phases unhesitatingly, of course, in the context of changed condition of life and spirit through the passage of time.

All of them are fully convinced that the efficacy of the unique educational system of the Upanishadic age which makes a learner capable of attaining the latent supra-sensible powers of intuition and revelation that enables one to exceed oneself with the splendours of the transcendental light within man shut in Nature's cells, of which, the modern man is still unaware even after great advancement in reasoning intelligence and scientific knowledge. As they are no ordinary men and as they happen to be luminous sentinels their insight leads them to realize with penetrating ideas that the complexities of life can neither be faced nor explained with studies of the physical sciences and material laws of the externalities of the universe and some such intellectual knowledge since there are

more and more latent powers and forces behind each of them as it is also found within a human being.

With this impression they severally have appreciated the aims and objectives of the Upanishadic education and have developed their respective system – keeping in view of the capital importance of the exercise of the spirit – which enables the learner to solve all sorts of problems of worldly life more effectively by the conscious applications of the laws of life in the light of supra-physical insight with the conviction that the supra-sensible always surrounds the sensible.

Studying the Upanishads from various points of views it may be observed that the Upanishads appear to be store-houses of knowledge and is extremely relevant to any educational researcher since their basis is of verifiable knowledge and the concepts, methods and goals used in the Upanishads are not based on any dogma. Even today the method and practices of the Upanishadic discipline may be useful to those who want to serve the highest interest of educational innovations.

Rabindranath, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo – the three leading educationists in their respective way give serious thinking over this concept of self-opening and self-realization. All of them are found trying to put efforts for

making use of the exercise of the spirit by the young learners with a view to bringing out the wealth of the inner being³⁴².

7.2. Research Findings (Chapter-wise):

- 7.2.1.** While Rabindranath sets up a centre of learning at Santiniketan he has been deeply absorbed in his personal study and inclination towards the ideals of the Tapovan of the Upanishadic age as the comprehensive idea contained in the Upanishadic education serves the purpose. (4.1)
- 7.2.2.** Rabindranath is immensely drawn towards the pedagogic system that is found to have prevailed in the Tapovan or the education centre of the Upanishadic age. (4.1)
- 7.2.3.** As Rabindranath, the great world poet comes to know the details of the environment created for the seats of learning by the seer poets of the Upanishads it occurs to him what a tremendous impact on the minds of young learners, full of exuberant enthusiasm and unmixed feelings must be when they are allowed to live and communicate their simple thoughts and ideas and receive genuine light from their teachers living in the same premises for years together since their early days. (4.1)
- 7.2.4.** Rabindranath makes sincere attempt to awaken and develop the innate cognitive disposition of the learner than he loads the unwilling mental

342 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadarshan O Sadhana, pp.77-78 (SS)

frame like Svetasvata Upanishad³⁴³ since genuine thirst for knowledge alone leads to the real growth of knowledge³⁴⁴. (4.2)

7.2.5. On the occasion of inauguration of Viswabharati Rabindranath has been greatly influenced by the Upanishadic ideas (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad)³⁴⁵. (4.3)

7.2.6. The guru or the teacher is looked upon as father of a family while the learners are his children and their relations are very close and integrated showing its worth in their lives and conducts – this teaching is being learnt by our great teacher Rabindranath from the Upanishad औँ सह नाववतु, सह नौ भुनक्तु, सह वीर्यं करवावहै। तेजस्मि नावधीतमस्तु, माविद्विषावहै।।³⁴⁶ (4.4)

7.2.7. Rabindranath brings back the ancient Upanishadic system of Brahmacharya in his Brahmacharya Vidyālaya at Santiniketan... we need

343 Svetasvata Upanishad, II (PS)

344 Sarkar, Prafulla Kumar, Gurudever Santiniketan, p.29 (SS)

প্রত্যেক ছাত্রের মানসিক বিকাশ যাতে পরিপূর্ণরূপে ঘটে তাই চেয়েছিলেন রবীন্দ্রনাথ। ছাত্রের এই জ্ঞানগত অন্তর্নিহিত স্বভাব বা স্পৃহা (innate cognitive disposition) -কে রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্বয়ং প্রবুদ্ধ ও পরিপুষ্ট করতে সচেষ্ট ছিলেন। মানব মনের বিকাশ স্তরে স্তরে ঘটে। তার আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠা (self-assertion) ও তেমনি কয়েকটি সুনির্দিষ্ট পথ অনুসরণ করে চলে। শ্রেতাশ্রিতর উপনিষদে মতে জ্ঞান পিপাসাই জ্ঞানদানের প্রকৃষ্ট অবসর।

345 Rabindracharāṇaṁ, Chaturdaskhanda (Prabandha, Siksha), p.406 (PS)

উপনিষদের কালেও ভারতবর্ষে এইরকম বিদ্যাকেন্দ্রের সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল। শতপথব্রাহ্মণের বৃহদারণ্যকে আরুণিপুর শ্রোতকেতু পাঞ্চালদেশের পরিষদে জৈবালি প্রবাহনের কাছে এসেছিলেন। সেখানেও বড় বড় জ্ঞানীদের সমবায়ে আশ্রমরূপে পরিষদ রচিত হত।

346 केनोपनिषद्, शान्तिपाठः (PS)

Brahmacharya³⁴⁷ as without practising Brahmacharya, nay; without meditation intuitive knowledge and the knowledge of the higher mind cannot be had³⁴⁸. (4.4)

7.2.8. According to Vivekananda an individual learner is born with some potentialities and possibilities which lie dormant in him. So they need to be awakened for bringing out his capabilities and latent talents and this has already been pointed out in the Upanishads – सा विद्या या विमुक्तये & ‘असतो मा सद्गमय तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय मृत्योर्मा मृतं गमय।’.(5.2)

7.2.9. The duty of the teacher of the Upanishadic age³⁴⁹ is to help the truth-seeking learner to find truth for himself exactly as much as the guru knows. Vivekananda believes that without the personal life of the teacher there would be no education³⁵⁰ and the little ones need a burning example before them to move in the positive direction and attain human values in life³⁵¹ (5.3)

347 Bhattacharya, Bijan Bihari, Sikshacharya Vivekananda O Rabindranath, Chintanayak-Vivekananda, p.830 (SS)

348 Siksha, Rabindranath Tagore, p.96 (PS)

বোধের তপস্যার বাধা হচ্ছে রিপূর বাধা। এজন্য ব্রহ্মচর্যের সংযমের দ্বারা বোধশক্তিকে বাধামুক্ত করবার শিক্ষা দেওয়া আবশ্যিক।

349 Mundaka Upanishad, I.2.13 (PS)

350 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-V, 1970, p.224 (PS)

351 Bani O Rachana, Vol.IX, Ed. 4th, pp.262-63 (PS)

একটা জ্বলন্ত ‘Character’ এর কাছে ছেলেবেলা থেকেই থাকা চাই, জ্বলন্ত দৃষ্টান্ত দেখা চাই।

- 7.2.10.** Vivekananda thinks that Brahmacharya education helps to control the mental powers on the one hand and on the other paves the way for concentration and meditation without which the real man within cannot come out of the shackles and cannot receive from the brain what is necessary for flowering – *Every pupil should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya*”³⁵² (5.4)
- 7.2.11.** Vivekananda stresses on the spiritual heritage and the cultural synthesis as it has been continuing before all of us throughout the ages as the Upanishads serves as a great mine of strength – *The truths of the Upanishads are before you. Take them up, live up to them...*³⁵³. (5.5).
- 7.2.12.** Sri Aurobindo has a mission to educate people on the basis of his philosophy founded on the bed-rock of the Upanishads.³⁵⁴ (6.1).
- 7.2.13.** The idea that the latent traits of higher consciousness can be fruitfully organized for having them properly manifested in man of Sri Aurobindo is analogous to the thoughts of the Rishis of the Upanishadic age viz.,

352 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-V, p.369 (PS)

353 Complete works of Swami Vivikananda, Vol-III, p.225 (PS)

354 The Complete works of Sri Aurobindo, Vol-36, Autobiographical Notes and Other Writings of Historical Interest, p.174 (PS)

I have been given a ... mission, to re-explain the Vedanta (Upanishads), I am imparting to the young men staying with me & to others in Pondicherry; by literary work, speech & practice, to try & bring about certain social changes &, finally, to do a certain work for my country, in particular, as soon as the means are put in my hands.

Narada even after studying an imposing list of the leading 64 sciences approaches Sanatkumar for a higher light of knowledge –यो वै भूमा तत् सुकम्, नाल्पे सुकम् अस्ति, भूमैव सुकम्³⁵⁵. (6.2)

7.2.14. Sri Aurobindo has categorically outlined that the teacher only shows him how to perfect learner's instruments of knowledge and helps and encourages him in the process and he must be induced to expand in accordance with learner's own nature like the Upanishads where the teacher wants³⁵⁶ his pupil to grow in the effulgent light of higher consciousness himself and without help from outside³⁵⁷ (6.3)

7.2.15. Sri Aurobindo through his own intuition and revelation builds up the edifies of Integral Education wherein the aims and principles of the Upanishadic seer-teachers have been retained all through, of course, with the change of the modus operandi only in the field of application. (6.4)

7.2.16. Upanishads have laid much emphasis on the system of concentration as well as meditation³⁵⁸ for developing the inner self as part of the educational programme³⁵⁹ and Sri Aurobindo emphasizes on psychic

355 Chāndogaya Upanishad, VII.23.1 (PS)

356 Ibid. VIII.8.4 (PS)

357 Brihadaranyak Upanishad, VI.2.6 (PS)

358 Ibid. I.5.23 (PS)

359 Mukherjee Radha Kumud, Ancient Indian Education, p.115 (SS)

exercise for reshaping the fundamental principle of Brahmacharya for future generations.(6.5)

7.3. Researcher Findings (Final) :

7.3.1. Unfolding the real man within : As the Upanishadic system of education lays much stress on unfolding of the higher light of the real man within and character-building etc. by perfecting mind, body and life along with their sense-organs and instincts.

7.3.1.1. **Rabindranath** also like the seer-teachers of the Upanishadic age sets up Āshram Vidyālaya at Santiniketan to create congenial surroundings and favourable conditions in view of inspiring the learners to grow in the light of higher consciousness by practising ‘Brahmacharya-Vrata’.

7.3.1.2. And in **Vivekananda**’s educational ideas also we find the direct impact of the Upanishadic education system especially when he categorically says that education is the manifestation of perfection already in man.

7.3.1.3. And **Sri Aurobindo**’s concept of education is nothing but the modern counterpart of the Upanishadic system of education as he also recommends for the awakening of the inner man and grow as an integrated being in the light that is peeping behind the curtain of his mind.

7.3.2 Intimate ties of cohesion and togetherness : All these three contemporary educators give enormous stress on teacher-taught relationship that obtains in the Upanishadic system of education, particularly focusing on the intimate ties of cohesion and identification and togetherness of the teacher and the taught in respect of attaining comprehensive knowledge.

7.3.3 Qualities and responsibilities of the teacher : In the educational programmes of all these three educators the Upanishadic concept of the qualities and responsibilities of the teacher who must be a truth-seeking man of integrity (ऋतं वदिष्यामि। सत्यं वदिष्यामि³⁶⁰), honesty, purity etc. etc. has been fully endorsed.

7.3.3.1 For instance, **Rabindranath** says that a teacher is not an ordinary person that imparts lessons as a routine-work; he must be a preceptor or guru in the real sense of the term and he must also stand for the genuine growth of the pupils;

7.3.3.2 **Swami Vivekananda** again looks upon the teacher as the burning example that has the capability of unfolding the real man within the disciples;

360 Taittireeya Upanishad, 1.1 (PS)

7.3.3.3 Citing the ideas of the Upanishadic system of education **Sri Aurobindo** points out that the role of the guru is to help the disciple in everyway for his real growth and in his principles of true teaching he emphatically says that the teacher is one who shows him where the knowledge lies and how it can be habituated to rise to the surface – the teacher is the helper and a guide only and not a task-master.

7.3.4. Duties and functions of the learners : All the three great educators also endorse the duties and functions of the learners that have been stressed by the Upanishadic system with little changes here and there.

7.3.4.1. Following the ideals of the Upanishadic Tapovan **Rabindranath** wants to see that the learners also lead a simple and unsophisticated and restrained life all along for their total individual growth.

7.3.4.2. **Swami Vivekananda** similarly prefers to make the learner a perfect instrument for developing the real man within.

7.3.4.3. **Sri Aurobindo** on the other hand, proposes that the learner makes such efforts that may help him to make him advanced for the impending evolutionary stage.

7.3.5. Concept of Brahmacharya : The Upanishadic concept of Brahmacharya that transforms Retas (रेतः) to Tejas (तेजः) and from Tejas (तेजः) to Ojas (ओजः) and thus collects fund of energy and higher power for the learner has been fully endorsed by Rabindranath and Swami Vivekananda all through in their respective educational programmes and schemes for having multiplier effects on all the faculties of the learner's body, mind and life.

7.3.5.1. While setting up Āshram Vidyālaya **Rabindranath** gives much emphasis on the practice of Brahmacharya and

7.3.5.2. **Swami Vivekananda** equally stresses on the Brahmacharya along with concentration and meditation.

7.3.5.3. **Sri Aurobindo**, on the other hand, points out that the fundamental principles of the ancient system of education of the Upanishadic age are for all times. Nevertheless, he replaces its discipline. Keeping such fundamental principles of the Upanishadic education Sri Aurobindo introduces 'Integral Education' system and the practice of the psychic exercise on the basis of concentration making the psychic light as the leader of the march in respect of guiding all the faculties of the learners with the effulgent light of the higher consciousness.

7.4. Suggestion for future study :

- 7.4.1. Without an all-pervasive as well as comprehensive academic discipline tremendously obstinate and multifaceted problems that we are facing nowadays cannot be expected to be solved.
- 7.4.2. What is needed on the occasion is a man-making programme in the truest sense of the term.
- 7.4.3. It is now clear that for making an all pervasive academic discipline these three great architects of educational philosophy viz., Rabindranath Tagore, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo severally and independently derive the essence of the educational aspects of the Upanishads and as such their aims & objectives in this regard may be looked upon as a strong guideline for the future foundation which has been supported by men of the contemporary period like Sunil Chandra Sarkar³⁶¹ & Probodh Chandra Sen and many others.

7.5. Conclusion :

The capital significance of the Upanishadic system of education is that it ties to offer the learners chances of flowering their latent faculties not only for quenching their thirst and quest for the knowledge but also develop their diviner

361 Sarkar, Sri Sunil Chandra, Rabindranather Sikshadarshan O Sadhana, pp.73, 83, 84 (SS)

qualities to emerge full-fledged men and women in the effulgent light of their spirit. And in the educational thoughts of Rabindranath, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo the fundamental truths and the ideas contained in the Upanishad have been pronouncedly marked since these three great educators equally are found inclined to re-awakened men and women with higher consciousness.

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