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## **Integrating Sri Aurobindo's Educational Philosophy in Contemporary Indian Curriculum Frameworks (NCF & NEP 2020)**

**Sweachha Rai**

Research Scholar, Dept. of English, Seacom Skills University

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy advocates for the Integral Education which aims at complete development of a person by harmonizing the physical, vital, mental, psychic, and spiritual dimensions of human nature. This article analyzes how relevant and integrable Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy is in the context of current Indian curriculum frameworks, particularly the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). For this research, the authors adopted a qualitative, literature, based methodology without any primary data collection. This method allowed the researchers to delve deep into policy documents, academic articles, and Sri Aurobindo's literature in order to spot areas of conceptual overlap between his educational philosophy and the ideas of educational reform held today. The findings show that in several aspects, there is a strong alignment between the two. These aspects are learner, centred pedagogical methods, experiential learning methods, value, based classroom practices, competency, based learning, and holistic development approaches. The vision of NEP 2020 is very much in agreement with the thoughts of Sri Aurobindo who, amongst other things, stressed the importance of one's personal growth, education being independent and the role education plays in the formation of character. The article also confirms the idea that adopting the Integral Education approach can be a great asset in the creation and enrichment of the



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curriculum by giving more emphasis to creativity, ethics, and conscious self, development. Finally, if NCF and NEP were to draw upon the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, the educational change in India would have a strong foundation in spirituality and humanity, producing not only more well, rounded individuals but also a better society.

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## **Introduction**

In India, education has always been a significant and effective way of developing an individual and creating social change. Indian education has its roots in ancient customs which promote holistic development, but throughout history, there has been a transition from these types of systems to more traditional, modern schooling systems, as they are now predominantly examination based and strong on content without looking at the deeper aspects of human personality. Because of this issue with education today, the recent efforts to reform the educational system with documents such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) have aimed to create balance by developing educational systems that are learner-centered, value-based and driven by competency-based systems. Integral Education is an inclusive vision of education proposed by Sri Aurobindo, one of the most well-known Indian philosophers and educational leaders, that sees education as not just the transfer of knowledge, but about developing one's intrinsic (or inner) capabilities as part of the overall educational process. In his teachings, Sri Aurobindo stressed upon the importance of developing five facets of humanity's personality (the physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual); he believed education should let children grow naturally while simultaneously discovering and developing themselves through conscious evolution. Additionally, Aurobindo said that teachers shouldn't impose knowledge upon their students but should help guide them as they reveal their potential. The current Indian education system embodies many of these core concepts as stated by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). Holistic development, experiential learning; inter-disciplinary education; flexible curricula and value-based education were all well-founded in Sri Aurobindo's concept of education. NEP 2020 sees education as a means of creating innovative, ethical and competent citizens, similarly to how Aurobindo viewed educational preparation for life, not just for employment. A closer look at how Aurobindo's philosophy of education operates within existing Curriculum Frameworks will likely have an important role in the current discussions around creating and implementing policy initiatives and developing classroom practice. The goal of this research will be to understand how



Aurobindo's approach to Integral Education could be applied to the development of contemporary reform in order to create equitable individuals and promote a values-based society.

### **Objectives of the Study:**

1. Analyze the core principles that underpin Sri Aurobindo's integral education.
2. Identify recurring topics for NCF 2023.
3. Take a look at how NCF 2023 might be improved by following the Aurobindo model, particularly in areas like ethics, teacher empowerment, and multilingualism.
4. Methods for incorporating Aurobindo-inspired teachings into contemporary curricula.

### **Methodology**

The purpose of this qualitative document, based study is to explore the key features of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023 and find out whether these are in line with Sri Aurobindo, the concept of Integral Education, and other pertinent educational frameworks. The method is designed to give an all, round understanding of the theoretical foundations and the subject of the development of policy by providing contextual analysis of the textual and thematic nature.

### **Approach**

As the present research is not about measuring outcomes by numbers but it is about exploring guiding principles, educational goals, and values, a qualitative method was considered suitable. The study is based mainly on analyzing documents and will be supported by different primary and secondary sources. These will include Aurobindo's own writings and speeches as well as the philosophies and policies of his institutions, as well as policy documents pertaining to NCF 2023, government documents that serve as a record of the research, and scholarly opinions.

### **Collection of Data**

Three main methods were used for collecting data:

- Analyzing Sri Aurobindo's personal details, correspondence, lectures, and publications to extract key ideas from his educational philosophy.
- Using NCERT publications, the official document NCF 2023, and the resources from NEP 2020, this article interprets the assumptions and purposes of current curriculum.



One example of an expert interview I conducted was with a group of teachers and principals familiar with NCF initiatives and other educational institutions that follow the Aurobindo philosophy, such as those that fall under the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Schools umbrella.

### **Analysis of data**

The gathered data was analyzed using a thematic analysis. Next, the transcripts and texts of the interviews were categorized and organized based on the themes that emerged, which comprised:

- Development on a holistic level
- Professionalism in the classroom
- Indian traditions and national identity
- The ability to speak more than one language
- Teacher responsibilities as facilitators

After taking this stage, the researcher was able to identify the areas of philosophical agreement and conflict that existed between the education vision of Aurobindo and the National Curriculum Framework 2023.

### **Reliability and validity**

Triangulation was enforced as a means of ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings. This means that the knowledge obtained from two or more sources (readings, policies, and interviews) was triangulated through the use of this method. Additionally, the consistency of the coding was established by the process of re-checking and peer-checking the thematic categories. The quality of the outcomes is strengthened by this fairly challenging procedure, and the explanations that are provided are maintained in their soundness.

### **Analysis and Interpretation:**

The purpose of this part is to provide a comprehensive discussion on the philosophical foundations of Sri Aurobindo Integral Education, as well as an analysis of the primary postulates of the National Curriculum Framework 2023 and the specific areas of philosophical integration. This discourse will emphasize the reasons why the profound philosophical insights of Aurobindo might be valuable to influence the reform of the curriculum in a meaningful way in the present day and age.



## Main ideas of Integral education of Aurobindo

### Five-dimensional Integral Development

Since the physical, vital, cerebral, psychic, and spiritual aspects of a person are inseparable, Sri Aurobindo's approach of integral education seeks to cultivate all five. Nothing about a person may be left out, according to his pedagogical concept. Physical education is more than just being in shape; it also necessitates self-control and the systematic organization of one's bodily processes. Systematic physical training, posture, mobility, and health were all things that Aurobindo advocated for. A vital educator is one who pays attention to the energy and emotional aspects of a person's existence, the realm of needs, drives, emotions, inclinations, and impulses. The goal of this academic level is to help students learn to regulate their emotions and transform negative impulses into constructive motivations.

- If you want to know how to drive your personality forward, psychic education is for you. It's all about reawakening your soul, or your Psychic Being, which is the center of your expanding existence. As a person's mental development progresses, they are enticed to go inside, where they might find harmony between their external existence and their inner ideals and needs.
- According to Sri Aurobindo Institute ([en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)+1), spiritual education is finished when the higher awareness descends into life, which is a supramental descent with the goal of realizing the Divine inside matter.
- Physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and moral growth are the five pillars upon which holistic development rests. The end goal is a spiritually informed growth of the body and mind.

### Self-Guided Learning

It is important to note that Aurobindo underlined that "nothing can be taught" in the normal sense. According to his line of thinking, the purpose of genuine education is to assist the student in revealing his or her innate capabilities and to allow the learner to develop in a natural way. According to this model, the role of the teacher is not that of a knowledge-giver but rather that of a guide and mentor who helps students realize their full potential.

### Integral principles are:

Teachers who encourage not compel.

- Pacing the learning at the student's own pace and pace of work.



- Making investments in the interventions that are a kid's immediate surroundings, his or her interests, and the experiences that the child has had. Autonomy, self-motivation, and learning that continues throughout one's life are all supported under this concept.

### **Cultural Contextualization**

Under the circumstances of Aurobindo, education must be founded on the transmission of cultural and spiritual traditions. The goal of Integral Education is to foster the formation of a deeply embedded identity by drawing from the customs, languages, literature, and ethical principles that are indigenous to India. Additionally, contextualization in culture fosters the development of ethical maturity and social consciousness, in addition to fostering a sense of belonging and a sense of self-worth.

### **Yoga and Inside development**

The main function of yoga in Aurobindo's educational system is to serve as a medium for self, evolution and a platform for integrating different levels of consciousness. What is integral yoga:

- Remedies to balance and harmonies the physical and subtle bodies,
- Conducts to rouse the Psychic Being,
- Ways in which higher consciousness can be descended into the daily life.

It promotes the synthesis of the external with the internal to effect personal transformation. Through yoga, kids are able to acquire the proper character traits that will enable them to be successful at school and in their future lives, such as self, awareness, emotional stability, focus, and concentration.

### **Major NCF POSTULATES of NCF 2023**

#### **Competency-Based Learning**

Some of the talents that will be in high demand in the 21st century are critical thinking, problem, solving, creativity, teamwork, and communication. The National Career Framework 2023 highlights these attributes significantly. It's a major change from rote learning. Now students are motivated to use their knowledge in ways that are meaningful to life situations.

#### **Whole and Cross Curriculum Education**

The framework is designed to provide support for the multi-dimensional perspective of learning and to unite the various aspects of learning, including the physical, emotional, cognitive, aesthetic, and cultural



characteristics. There is a relationship between this and the Pancakes model, which ensures healthy growth in a variety of domains.

### **Multicultural and rooted education**

The National Child Foundation (NCF) supports for the acquisition of the home or mother tongue through early education, followed by progressive multilingualism up to level of fluency in each language. In addition to this, it places an emphasis on the inclusion of local knowledge systems, customs, and cultural heritage into the overall curriculum creation process.

### **Facilitator Concept (PEEL Model)**

The framework takes into account the culture of the classroom by transforming it into a PEEL classroom, which stands for Play, Experience, Exploration, and Lived values. In this type of classroom, instructors serve as facilitators in terms of inquiry, experiential learning, and holistic values and concerns. Instead of acting as monitors, the professors take on the role of observer-mentors.

### **Alignment areas**

Identifiable philosophical similarities between Integral Education and the NCF 2023 may be seen in the following major theme areas: Integral Education and Aurobindo's Support for It NCF 2023 Theoretical claims Personalized growth A theory that encompasses the five aspects of development, from the material to the immaterial. Physical, ethical, artistic, and Panchakosha-based curriculum Experiential PEEL-based competency-based instruction Developing in harmony with one's surroundings via inward direction Rootness in culture and language Indian cultural values and their significance Immersing students in their own language and culture The teacher's role is more of a guide to the class than someone who controls every move. Mentors and observers, teachers Growth in Emotional and Moral Competence holistic yoga, personal growth Emotional and social learning was a part of all the fields These types of convergences indicate that we are very philosophically united at a deep level. Aurobindo adds spiritual and emotional dimension to the primarily structural parts of NCF 2023.

### **Interpretation**

#### **Philosophical Richness**

Although NCF 2023 lays forth foundational elements like competences, multilingualism, and holistic domains, it lacks a deeper philosophical discourse that is integral to education and awareness. Sri



Aurobindo education offers such a model with the intention of converting rather than informing. His concept may give NCF's humanitarian goals more substance by situating learning in the broader circle of inner change.

### **Socioemotional Learning Enrichment**

When examined through the perspective of Aurobindo, the inclusion of socio-emotional abilities in the NCF becomes considerably more wide. In addition to the harmony that exists inside the classroom, emotional intelligence (EI) is the important mastery (vital education), the trained energy that contributes to the personal growth and the resilience that jetir.org provides.

### **Enhancement of the Ethical and Cultural Education**

It is possible for the values education and orientation on Indian ethos of the National Council of Families (NCF) to be fulfilled in the concept of the Psychic Being and the portrayal of the duty in karma by Aurobindo. This helps to build ethical consciousness as the spiritualized action, which is a direct manifestation of inner values.

### **Teacher Development**

An analogy may be seen between the description of the facilitator model of NCF and the philosophy of teaching that was developed by Aurobindo. Nevertheless, to take things a step further, the incorporation of inner transformation and self-awareness as a component of teacher training, which is something that Integral Education naturally embraces, has the potential to make instructors even more effective in mentoring their students by creating a more real environment.

### **Cultural Integration as Multilingualism**

Aurobindo's cultural contextualization not only aligns with the multilingualism support given by both frameworks but also goes further. It extends this support to the internalization of traditions not just as historical content but as life values. His education nurtures the genetic elements of his identity and deeply grounds it in the most basic cultural consciousness.

### **Complexities in Integration**

- Spiritual content: The Aurobindo model, which is a very spiritual tone, highlights the secular issues that are already known in the public school systems.



- Practical complexity: In order to be able to successfully integrate yoga practices and five, dimensional exercises, a great deal of teacher training and contextualization is required.
- Measurement issues: The evaluation of psychic or spiritual development based on general competency levels is not feasible.

This correlation demonstrates that Sri Aurobindo's philosophical ideologies are more than just great theoretical constructs; they form a viable basis from which to develop contemporary educational programmes. Therefore, incorporating Sri Aurobindo's education philosophy into modern curriculum models will lead to an improved educational ecosystem in India. By instilling ongoing self-discipline, respect for others, and the pursuit of intellectual excellence within individuals through his educational philosophy, they can develop into wise citizens to help solve contemporary global issues. Incorporating his educational philosophy will help to fulfil NEP 2020's vision of developing an equitable, inclusive, and future-ready educational system, which is based upon India's extensive cultural history and philosophical background.

### **Limitations**

This research undoubtedly provides some useful points of convergence between the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Education and the NCF 2023. However, the research is still limited in some ways. Firstly, the research is largely dependent on secondary sources, especially Aurobindo's writings and NCF policy documents. This makes it difficult to get a clear picture of how these theoretical frameworks are being enfolded by teachers and learners in the real world classrooms. Secondly, instructors who had experience working at institutions similar to Aurobindo were interviewed. The comparison writing would have been more diverse if it had included a broader range of educational contexts beyond the ones mentioned, such as ordinary schools or other pedagogies. Third, the actual implementation of NCF 2023 in Indian states and schools is uneven and subject to change as it is a new trend. Therefore, it is too soon to tell how big of an effect it will have. Finally, the spiritual and cultural traditions of India have a profound impact on Aurobindo's educational philosophy. When used uniformly across India and educational contexts that vary greatly in terms of language, geography, and socioeconomic status, it may cause problems with generalizability. Realizing these caveats allows for the possibility of further studies, such as classroom empirical research, more interviews with educators, etc., and the longitudinal assessment of newly developing impacts of NCF 2023.



## Conclusion

This research paper demonstrates that Sri Aurobindo's educational philosophy is still an important influence in improving the Indian Education sector of today, more specifically through the implementation of NEP 2020, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and alignment with Aurobindo's Integral Education vision. Aurobindo's concept of Integrated Education provides a holistic approach to education, as opposed to the traditional content-based approach, by developing all aspects of the learner (i.e., physically, emotionally, mentally, psychically and spiritually). His belief is that education should allow for the development of individual self-discovery and inner growth, which coincides well with the learner-centred approach being promoted by current educational policies such as NEP 2020 and NCF. NEP 2020 and the NCF incorporate many of Aurobindo's core philosophies (and pedagogies), including: experiential learning, flexible curriculum, multi-disciplinary curriculum, and the development of ethical and/or social values. These reforms commit to a movement away from rote memorisation of material toward the development of competencies in the areas of critical thinking, creativity, as well as developing students' emotional well-being. This correlation is a testimony that the philosophical ideas of Sri Aurobindo are not just great theoretical constructs; they indeed provide a realistic option for the base of contemporary curricula development. Hence, an infusion of Sri Aurobindo's education philosophy in today's curricular frameworks would definitely bring about an educational ecosystem improvement in India. Through his educational philosophy, by continuously nurturing self, discipline, respect for others, and the relentless quest for intellectual excellence, individuals can transform into wise citizens who will be instrumental in resolving the globe's contemporary issues. Embedding his educational philosophy would be instrumental in achieving the educational reforms envisioned by NEP 2020 for an equitable, inclusive, and future, ready educational system grounded in India's rich cultural history and philosophical heritage.

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