

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION: LIFE AND FAITH

AT

THE INTEGRAL EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE MAHARAJA SAYAJIRAO UNIVERSITY OF BARODA
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY STUDIES

SUBMITTED BY

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VADODRA

INDIA

DECEMBER 2013

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Human Development and Education: Life and Faith at Integral Education Institutions**” submitted by Ms Harpreet Kaur Jass for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Human Development and Family Studies, is to the best of my knowledge and belief her original work and has been completed under my supervision. This work has not been submitted, in part or full, to this or other university for the award of any degree or diploma and may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Main akela hi chala tha janibe manzil magar log milte gaye aur karwan banta gaya!

(I treaded on the unknown path alone, however co-travelers joined me and now we are a tavern!)

The task of this research work was no less than a journey of the unknown and I owe my gratitude to several individuals. I take this opportunity to share about their contribution and thank them. My first sincere thanks, *pranam* and reverence to the Masters Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for their words and for places like the Ashram and Auroville which make the whole experience of living meaningful. I don't want to imagine what life would have been without them.

Keeping with the tradition, the disciples are after the Masters, I thank them next. My gratitude to all the Sadhaks, Aurovillians, visitors, volunteers, teachers and children of the three schools for allowing (or even restraining) me to be part of their life and experiences. They taught me that acceptance and denial are equally useful in gaining knowledge and removing of ignorance. A special mention of Bikash da (who passed away waiting to see my PhD in physical form)! His motivation and that of Kalyan da is the real force behind this manuscript.

My thanks to my Guru Nisha Mahajan for her freedom and trust in me. I thank you for unveiling the principles of Yoga for physical discipline in life to accomplish anything and telling me that to 'act' is the best service to the Divine.

My thanks to my guide Prof Sriram who gave me full freedom and did not compromise on the quality. I also thank the faculty, office staff (Mukesh Bhai, Gohil Bhai, Chandrakant Bhai) and students of Department of HDFs for their help and suggestions.

My gratitude to Jamia Millia Islamia for granting the study leave and my colleagues at the Department of Educational Studies for their empathy during my personal and professional crisis. I thank my colleague, Dr Arshad Ikram Ahmad for his valuable comments on initial drafts.

Family is the unseen force behind these personal endeavors. I thank my parents for being my best friends, critics and support. Thanks to my grandmother and brother whose veiled presence is stronger than their physical absence. Special thanks to the officers, jawans, friends and family members of 1st Parachute Regiment (Special Forces), Indian Army; your true fighting Army spirit keeps us alive.

My wise friends: Jyoti, Shiva and Kanchan whose critical attitude was a major help at all the stages of research. Prof Ajay Kumar for checking my drafts, his invaluable time and comments; Sneha Kapur, Ayan Chatterjee, and Aditi Das who worked hard on my manuscript as much as I did.

Special thanks to the Gnostic Centre, Ameeta didi, Anuradha didi and all other members for the physical and spiritual environment. The journey inceptioned there.

My gratitude to Praveen Bhai (PK), Wing Commander Sucharu Rai and his wife Supreet for food and abode at Pondichéry.

To all whose names are not mentioned but they know they are with me on my journey.

ABSTRACT

The research aims to strengthen the relationship of Human Development and Education with the worldview of Integral Yoga and Education as conceptualized by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. 'Faith' is central feature to the path of Integral Yoga. The 'Masters' explained faith as significant human virtue for 'self-development; self-unveiling, progressively self-perfecting' (Sri Aurobindo Trust, 1999 p. 887) processes of Integral Yoga. Integral Yoga entails a progressive view of human existence, which is 'self' based. The view also aims to bring transformation in the forms of societies. Two pioneer experiments of collective practice of the Integral Yoga view are: the Ashram and Auroville, both are situated in Tamil Nadu. Many participants especially teachers practice Integral Yoga and the ideas are woven in to their life, structure of social reality which included schools, families, curriculum and in the most overt sense their own opinions and actions. Rationale of undertaking the research is to unravel the untangled aspects of the relationship between Human Development and Education by questioning 'what develops?' The study first elaborates the basic ideas of this relationship with reference to prevalent indicators in Developmental Psychology and Education- domains, norms and (biological) age and learning as traits of individuals. Society or Culture recently has found widespread acknowledgement in Human Development. The indicators are also reflected in Integral Education which also believes in freedom and education of an individual soul ensuring true development of individuals. The theoretical model cognizes the relation between education and development as dialectical and proximal and dynamic, since it is development that informs (the method of) education and it is education that can bring about the individual development. The role education plays in development is more than mere instrumentality, which present views in Human Development could not address. However, Integral Education and Integral Yoga view elaborate the complexity of relationship with a comprehensive and detail process based model of Human Development.

The fieldwork in schools of the Ashram and Auroville used methods like: participant observation, ashram records, field notes about episodes, interactions, interviews, objects, records-time table, text books, sports, notices on notice boards and to some extent 'facebook' a social networking website. Special care was taken to capture the individual opinion of the

participants in terms of their identification with Integral view, the Ashram or Auroville and the way of life at the two places.

Schools were nested in vast spaces; structures like classrooms were consciously and aesthetically designed. Participants' interactions with the space, freedom to move around and learn during the day was mainly in three settings these are, the classrooms, the sports ground and often the community. Schools had an alternative 'way of life' erected on faith of the participants; from different backgrounds. Rituals and practices like *pranams*, experiencing silence, *Darshan* or March Past had substantial individual and collective participants' involvement. Teachers reflected on the 'growth' and 'learning' of an individual child and dealt with conflicting situations and challenges of living in the innovative institutions. The teachers organized various 'learning opportunities' of different languages, mathematics, science and other relevant areas like arts, cooking, solar energy and others. The opportunities to learn were numerous and spread in the community like: visiting departments, helping at home, a discussion on crossroads or using axe to wedge the tree. The role of community in education of children is akin to the mainstream educational approach of contextual learning. Games and physical education give special relevance to learning through body and experiences of self while participating in challenges of collective and individual games. The participants' effort to practice might 'appear' to fall short of the ideals but at the same time several other relevant practices emerged which the worldview might have not visualized. Alternatively, in the case of Integral Worldview, it has left scope in the form of freedom for individuals to participate and create.

CHAPTER 1st

INTRODUCTION

Human Development and Education are conceptual buzzwords in contemporary international documents, policies, and academic discourse. This chapter elaborates the same along with the philosophical analysis offered in contemporary times. The chapter then explains alternative ideology of Integral Education, to study whose practices is central focus of the study. The terms: development and education are broad having their own disciplinary assumptions but they need to be studied because of the instrumental value they have in schools for education of children and also in academics to understand the relation well. Winch (1998) and Walsh (1993) in their respective treatise on philosophy of education argue for the need for greater clarity of the relationship of Human Development and Education. They see the impact of the word ‘development’ in both guiding and ‘not’ guiding education and its practices properly. While Olson and Torrance (1996) take into account the new issues of human development in terms of researches about children’s learning, thinking, socio-economic factors, disabilities to name a few that educational process in schools should address.

Education is not synonymous with schooling, yet society acknowledges schooling as modern, widespread educational system or learning environment for a critical time span of human development, namely childhood. The chapter looks at both the words education and schooling, as the present research identifies the difference between two. World Conference on Education For All (1990) (henceforth: EFA) and Dakar framework (Forum for World Education, 2000), while declaring the universal importance of education also state that education is a process that may not merely belong to schools. However, it is implied that schooling ensures safety, health and education of children. ‘Schooling’ could be a best option for education since it will ensure some uniformity of quality for children from different socio-economic and cultural strata. Schooling gathers more importance and becomes an inevitable structure when states declare education as law. Right to Education (The Gazette of India, Aug 2010) is recent attempt of government of India to universalize elementary education for the age group of 6-14 years old.

Universal Role of Education in Human Development

The World Education Conference held in 1990, states that agenda for universalization of education should be sensitive to psychological needs of the child, keep in mind the need of poor and disadvantaged and other factors like gender, race, caste, special needs to name a few. Millennium Development Goals summit held in 2000, puts education as one of the important goals to be achieved by 2015 for the population of world which has not accessed education yet. Other UN bodies also elucidate education as an important variable for human existence, empowerment and up gradation especially of poor, women and children. For example, The World Bank (2000) Report on EFA seminar declares about the role of education in development that

“...higher levels of education are associated with a wide-range of indicators of well-being including health, ...education is good in itself, a basic human right, freeing from the chains of ignorance.” (p.1)

Education according to these documents is the most critical instrument that can bring the transformation of present challenges of human civilization. Dakar Framework for action (World Education Forum, 2000) also states that the education needs to be carefully looked in terms of learning experiences, subject matter, facilities provided to children in schools and be gender sensitive. *‘...to support new investment in basic education the very foundation, of human development.’* Background document, World Conference on EFA conference (1990, p. 1).

Two important points reflected in these documents are- first, existential global and socio-economic crisis of human civilization need to be addressed and second, education with a more comprehensive view is most likely to be instrumental to solve this crisis of disparity humans undergo among the different parts of the world. (International Commission on Education for 21st century (1996) (known as Learning the Treasure Within) states the crisis in terms of a global phenomenon largely economical but is also social; addressing of the crisis need to be futuristic, where education focusing on ‘within’ development can be an instrument to deal with the same. This document puts high and promising hopes on education to address the issues and challenges of ‘human development and existence’ in the present and in the future. The document highlights important conflicts or challenges to human development in the wake of changes and suggests that how existing education and a new kind of education is likely to be one very important solution.

At the same time there is an effort to define education from a developmental psychology's perspective (in World conference on EFA document, 1990 pp 41-49). There is larger social aspect of development of human (read human society) and the aspect of developmental psychology to be referred during the delivery of educational programs in the educational institutes. To quote:

*“**Human Development** refers to the concept which views the general wellbeing of human as the focus and purpose of development action; it involves the application to improve quality of life.*

***Human resources Development** is a narrower term, referring to the development and conservation of the individuals' capacities to contribute to economic and social developments.”*

(EFA, 1990, p. ix, emphasis mine)

Human Development addresses two aspects of a human- one individualistic, psychological and skill based. At another level it is instrumental in development of society and economy. The aspect of development of society in terms of industrialization, and economic gains has also been widely studied as development. It is a queer fact that the two disciplines of psychology and sociology view development separately and hence the individual and social development appears divergent. Delving deep into this aspect from different theoretical points is beyond the scope of this chapter as it needs special focus and needs to cover various ongoing debates. The issue of human development when addressed as a development program or project has faced a setback (what refers to the second definition of human resource development), since developmental programs missed out on comprehensive view of the individual development. Gardner & Lewis (1996) argues against the bane of meaningless and rampant development, which is threatening the cultural ethos and ethics of human civilization. Relation between the two aspects of human development needs proper addressing. For the same purpose, the next section first put forth that how developmental psychology has construed individual development and educational practices.

Three Pointers of Human Development in Education

This section looks at the traits and concepts Developmental Psychology offers to Education for individual development. Developmental Psychology conceptualizes mainly three concepts about the humans, which are, a) developmental domains, b) age and norms and c) learning that is the focus in education. Historical analysis of Developmental Psychology as a discipline explained the ubiquity and universality of three pointers. Domains and norms are

the first concepts to develop or gain popularity through the application of developmental psychology in education. Aspects of life span and culture are relatively contemporary concepts. Sheldon H. White in Cole (1996) states that children have been understood from several perspectives ‘philosophically, pedagogically, medically, politically, autobiographically, statistically, didactically, sentimentally, apocalyptically.’ (p. ix) but contemporary need of the discipline is ‘cultural-historical psychology as a cooperative human enterprise’ (p. xiii) to understand human development. Culture has emerged as a relevant parameter to look at the two pointers- norms and domains from the Interpretivist paradigm and the discourse of post-colonialism applied to the field of Developmental Psychology (Viruru, 2001). Developmental Psychology has started looking into how the actors or recipients - parents, teachers and children understand norms and domains of their development.

Education has addressed primarily to the three pointers. However, as culture is in Developmental Psychology, sociological perspective on individual’s life also has been an important area in Education. The sub-section explains that role these three pointers of Human Development play in Education. At face value, the study of Human Development and its mentioned pointers are likely to make ‘education’ precise, logical and what is called, developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). NCF, 2005 published by NCERT and Viruru (2001) also mention of linking development and learning. Understanding of norms, domains and learning (theories) gives structure to educational practices. This section elaborates on these pointers, their application in education, and the limitation they bring to understanding of Human Development.

Domains and divided individual

Developmental Psychology has classified the study of human development in to certain areas known as domains. Various domains are meant classifies and organizes individual ‘development’. Various relevant texts of Developmental Psychology Berk, (2009); Feldman, (1998); Levine & Munsch, (2011); Papillia, Olds & Feldman, (1998) identify the developmental **domains**: physical, socio-emotional, and mental or cognitive domain; these are not exclusive and individual development shows an underlying continuity and integration across the domains. Physical ability, growth and maturation (Hurlock, 1981) enables or facilitates development of other areas. For example, ability to use tongue along with hearing

enables to learn language which is a very important area of the mental domain. Another example of overlapping in explaining development is that cognitive development has been looking at neurological basis of development in development of skills like counting, symbolism or creativity. Concept of ‘critical period’ especially in case of language learning explains physiological changes in brain that facilitates language development in early childhood.

Various domains therefore identify and categorize development, but there always arises a need to look at overlapping between domains and development as a whole or of the entire human being. These divisions have a functional purpose of ensuring the ‘all round development’ of an individual. These are important for the development of norms but overemphasize on them may limit the understanding of development as process and a phenomenon. There is centrality of a human’s experience both as a child and as an adult that goes amiss when development caters to domains alone. The aspect of ‘whole’ human (Marshak, 1997) is similar to a Rogerian approach or alternatives views of Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Tagore raised with varying concerns for human growth and methods to bring it about. Centrality of human experiences is also the underlying assumption in studies on ‘self’ of the individual. Education needs to account for development of a whole individual with a ‘self’. To quote Davies in Davies, Gregory & McGuinn (2006) who argue for the relevance of education as area of study while analyzing the history of education

“Experiential learning, the hidden curriculum and making education relevant, often to the whole person rather than just the brain, became the driving force for some people from the 1960s onwards.” (p xxii)

There is an expectation from Education to address all the domains of development, their overlapping and the whole individual in its teaching learning program.

Norms and politics of normalcy

As said in the beginning of this section that Developmental Psychology makes education precise. Norms brings that precision based on the knowledge of individual development with reference to mainly age and domains. Norms explains the normative aspect of development. They are close to the legal view. The discipline of Human Development or Developmental Psychology can be looked at as an authority here to monitor and regulate development through norms. There are different forms of norms, the most widely used are various standardized tests to measure the development in a particular area. Apart from domain

specific norms, there are broader developmental principles which Hurlock (1981) mentions facts of developmentⁱ. These are considered universal and basis of individual development by experts both in education and in human development. These broader facts and domain specific issues act as norms, mainly to guide formal educational practices in schools as well as for developmental practitioners. Domain specific issues in classroom emerge mainly with reference to cognitive skills. These are the norms of language learning or specific skills in subjects like Mathematics. Minimum levels of learning or MLLs stated in clause 3.7, p. 6 in National Policy of Education (GOI, 1986) conceptualized by NCERT in India is another example of subject wise and age wise norms of learning.

What appear as naive benchmarks, norms subjugate an alternative way of looking at development and render it as anomaly. As a result it would not cognize the individual differences. Norms are mostly unconsciously and pointedly account for development of young children. Norms are used to set pace of development as ‘fast’, ‘delayed’, ‘slow’ or ‘retarded’. Along with ‘critical period’ norms make it imperative that education and environment ensures achievement of the said development in the corresponding age group. ‘Timely’ achievement of certain skills ensures life-long development, which most developmental psychologist experts emphasize to teachers and parents. Linking achievement of developmental skill with age (as an indicator of time) results in overview of development as ‘iterative’ and bound to the domains.

Norms whether official (which are written) or unofficial (which are oral) become standards and give rise to what one says is ‘normal’ or correct development of individual in respective domains. For an example, one of the broader norms is that Education should account for development as per age and class level caters to the different developmental needs of individual at that stage. Winch (1998) calls the same phenomenon as ‘normative aspect’ of human learning and development and is not learning really. Norms are closely associated with ‘age’, they are the yardsticks to ensure that development is taking place or achieved by the child. Individual difference is accounted for (Berk, 2009; Feldman, 1998; Levine & Munsch, 2011; Papillia, Olds & Feldman, 1998) but wide digression hits the agreed upon principle of ‘normalcy’ of an individual. Norms when gave rise to the phenomenon of ‘normalcy’ which is result of growth in the phenomenon of studying children in nineteenth century buttressed with population studies and large statistical data (Turmel, 2008). So we

have children who are 'normal' since they are able to 'achieve' norms and others who are left behind. Turmel (2008) argues that one gets a visual- graphical or model, step wise, stage based picture of development and the child (or individual) is not whole and is dissected with domains and norms. This has serious implications since with standardized tests like IQ test, since these tests categorize the children has 'haves' of abilities defined as intelligence or 'have nots'.

In average classrooms impact of Developmental psychology ensures about educational methods and processes to achieve these norms. 'Stimulation' and 'intervention' from adults, in the environment is important to ensure that development takes place. Development was exteriorized rather than recognizing individual's role in his/her own development. The exteriorization also gave amiss to the 'inner' or holistic consciousness or self approach of development. Developmental Psychology enjoys considerable role in Education since it answers the basic question of '*what develops?*' and '*who develops?*' But in a contrived manner, since it is the human life is divided in age and norms with reference to age and domains. This phenomenon also regulates and is associated with the question of 'how' development can be brought about. 'How' part of development is the regulation of learning practices. The next section on learning elaborates on phenomenon of human learning and its relation to individual development.

Learning: A dynamic trait

'Learning' a consistent and ever growing trait of human existence (Walsh, 1993) can be seen central to the process of education and human development. Various learning theories and theories of human development facilitate understanding of child's thinking and learning. Piaget's theory of Genetic Epistemology and Behaviorist learning have a different view, that how learning takes place and make different implications for learner and learning. Learning theories answer the basic question of what develops in human with learning as central process. It could be cognitive and processed by humans or it could be about development of skills in an individual. Views which acknowledge the human experience conceptualize learning as experiential and for deep understanding and more than the facts or information an individual receives (Leithwood, McAdie, Bascia &Rodrigue, 2006). As one fathoms more about humans' subjectivity there is no easy and limiting definition of human learning. One moves towards conception of human being with different ways of learning and individual

learning styles'. Various learning theories about act as tools to explain and also aid individual's learning process (Illeris,2005).

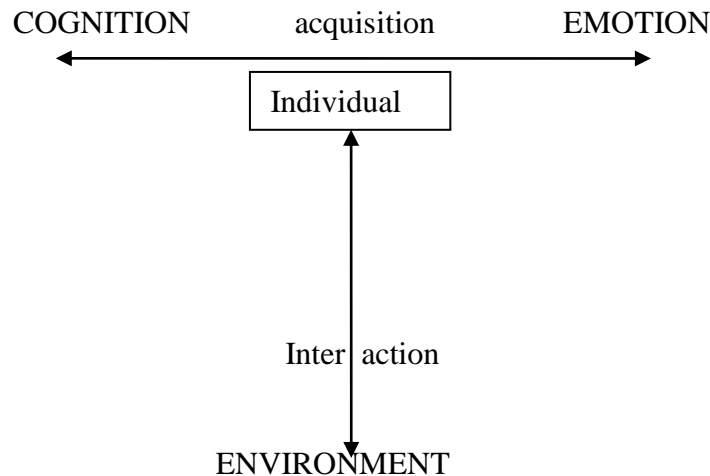


Fig 1.1 The Fundamental Process of Learning (Illeris, 2005 p no 90)

Illeris (2005) makes this point (as shown in the fig 1.1) that how human learning could be seen under the lens of all the possible theories. Therefore new conceptualization has to view learning as comprehensive and inclusive of all paradigms of learning. Attempts like these are move towards an integrated understanding of human development with learning as an example in this case. It poses challenge to the theory of set of norms and encourages multiple norms to look at, emerged out of individual pattern of development and learning.

Learning emerges as an existential and to great extent metaphysical traitⁱⁱ of humans (McGuinn, 2006). Human Learning in practice is far more complex than the norms (Winch, 1998 & Jarvis, 2005). These integrated viewpoints are essential since overt and sole pressure on norms has resulted in 'learning' as monotonous task. Policy documents like Learning without Burden (GOI, 1993) have based their argument of curriculum load as making learning not meaningful and joyful for the students, which hinders in the natural and independent ability to learn in children in schools in India.

Learning is a relevant trait for explaining Human Development. If we render Schools as modern institutions of development and learning, then Classrooms turn out to be the smallest formal unit of organized learning that mostly accounts for age specific learning and also for learning to learn which address individual difference. Relevance of learning or ability to acquire knowledge and information and render it useful holds different meaning at different

stages of life. Paradigms of Lifelong learning, learning trajectories and human meaning making paradigms with reference to life span development, traces the development through various episodes of life rather only through 'norms'. 'Act' of learning in relation to learner's context and different stages of life uncovers the layer of the complexity and vastness of what happens to the learner in and outside the classroom. The issues of informal learning need to be addressed as wider aspects of education (Walsh, 1993). This might also be case for the comprehensive and holistic individual (-collective) development. Foregoing discussion brings us to the complexity of human learning and development, rising from the pointers of norms, domains and learning.

Human Development and Education: Three Fold Relationship

The relation of Human Development and Education is dialectical, proximal and dynamic. The disciplinary areas of Human Development and Education affect each other. The relationship is strongly bi-directional and hence not causative. As much as 'education' that is brought about by the virtue of knowledge of Human Development, is also responsible for development of all facets of human being. Therefore, development becomes continuous because of education as educability or learning as an intrinsic ability. That is, education for development (a norms & domains) and 'development' (as process) of education or learning abilities of individual which are mentioned in the last section is also an indicator life span development (Hurlock, 1981) and Life Long learning (Elder,1998). Due to this Development and Education appears inseparable at time.

'Learning' of an individual is central to focus of any developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). The overarching aspect of culture makes it imperative for individual development and learning to be in dialogue with one's collective aspect. 'Dialogue' could be a process that allows interaction of norms with culture or cultural norms to be incorporated for the development of the individual. It also appears as a tool that is likely to result in understanding of individual and collective development.

Another example through the lens of 'dialogue' of human development and education is nesting of 'learning to learn'. It is an idea of developmentally sensitive education which highlights that the relationship between Human Development and its agents Education (or could be health) that bring about the development, is dynamic and not *de facto*. Dynamism of relationship is due to two factors, one extrinsic in the culture and society. Another factor is

‘within’ the individual to become educable or develop that educative ability independent of the educational institution. Education is an active process coupled with several factors- individuals’ capacity (teacher and student), motivation, quality of instruction in the program, culture and socialization factors around an individual. Influences of study of human development is less likely to guide what is valuable to be taught than how one should be taughtⁱⁱⁱ and therefore should be important (read: knowledge of what develops in human) to be part of educational program. Education along with questions of knowledge, which takes into concern the basic needs of human development, is therefore likely to be relevant education. The dynamic and complex relation therefore, is also held together by several other factors of individual and cultural differences set across the time and space in a lifetime. The norms and domains alone cannot explain the development of a skill, new learning or its effect on human being; they may only help to gauge the same to an extent. That skill is tied with several other factors to understand the reality of human learning and development. What develops would be more than a mere learning of the skill in a domain with respect to the norm.

Few features can be summarized from the above discussion that both education and human development need to widen the understanding of learning and instruction with respect to human being’s dynamic reality.

- Different developmental domains should interact in designing educational programmes for children and adults.
- Educability as human trait can be studied through human learning. It is relevant to the study of human development since education is critical to ‘be’ human and their development.
- Human learning is complex, consistent, ubiquitous and dynamic variable of our existence.
- A good Educational Programme should consider individual traits and its human setting to maximize individual development. (next chapter elaborates this through various researches)
- The role of individual choice and need of self-growth and ‘*conscientization*’ is relevant point for understanding nature of learning.

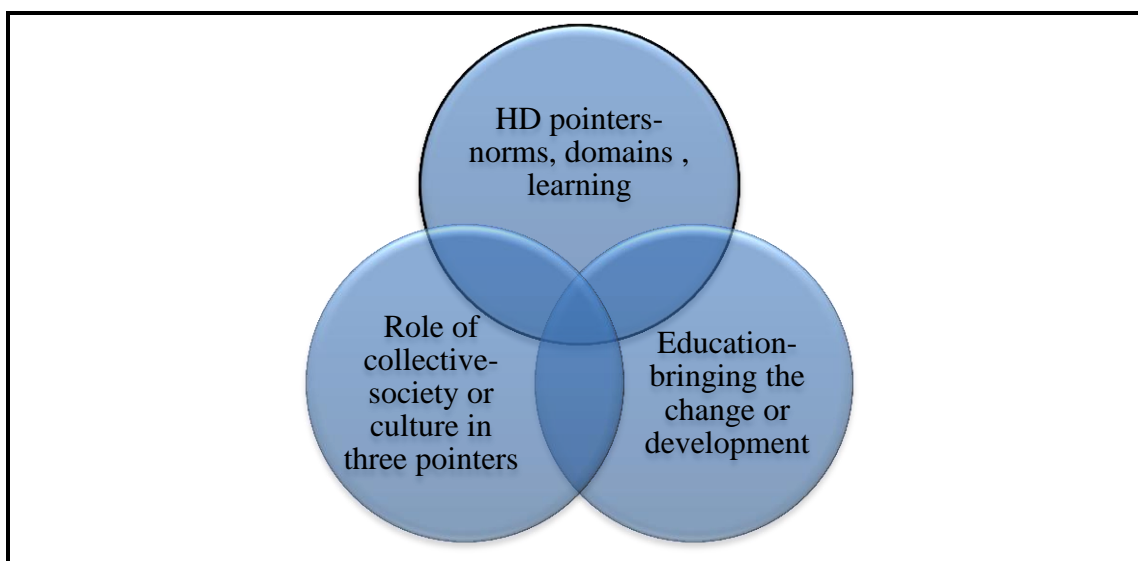


Fig 1.2 Developmental Psychology, Education and Culture- The Overlap & Dynamism

As a caveat to recall, rampant and unjustified usage of norms and domains in schools due to effort of states to regularize education has resulted in one of the challenges which is to 'reclaim' education from the schools (read: state) (Tooley, 2000 in Davies, Gregory & McGuinn, 2006). If this is not done, the cultural aspects of knowledge and learning, inner development of individual and joy of learning are likely to succumb to marks and degrees. To break this vicious circle the relation needs to be more than unilateral and study new approaches.

Education for Liberation: A Contemporary Approach

'Human development' paradigm proposed by Mahbub-ul-haq and Amartya Sen in 1990s indicates 'education' as important indicator of Human Development Index (HDI). The stress on education in the paradigm should be for the 'future' of humankind. Haq (2009) highlights that human development paradigm has shaken the existing premises of human development and its simplistic variables; hence the emphasis is on global search of 'new paradigms'. Uncovering the layers of the relationship (human development and education) and its processes in question cannot be left to policymakers while schools and teachers are left in isolation away from the debates of future directions of any society. According to the Human Development paradigm (Haq, 2009 & Sen, 1999) a good, egalitarian educational program is likely to raise further the 'choice' and 'capacity' of the individuals. This aspect could be a new direction for the policy makers who plan for educational processes that how education

means bringing out the potentialities in the child and raising the choices to thrive in society.

Quoting from Development as Freedom:

*"Expansion of freedom is viewed as, in this approach, both as the primary end and as the principal means of development. Development consists of the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency. The removal of the substantial unfreedoms, it is argued here, is **constitutive** of development."*

(Sen, 1999, p xii, emphasis original)

The need of new is existential to human society and behavior that can be seen from the recent documents, new paradigms and new conceptualization in academics. The key to development is 'within' the human beings, a facet of human learning and development addressed by several theorists across the world. Singh in Learning the Treasure within (International Commission on Education, 1996) mentions the Indian perspective of human existence towards 'oneness' stands opposite to the western understanding of domain based understanding or what would be education with an understanding of development guided by self-awareness, consciousness towards perfection and growth?

The study in affirmation with argument favoring innovative paradigms (Olson and Torrance, 1996 & Haq, 2009) believes in strong need to look for new conceptualization of human development and formulation of processes of education in the light of the same. Argument also is likely to draw support from the role of thinkers and alternative, indigenous views on education (looked in detail in chapter two); hence the view of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, where education has been instrumental for manifestation of their new ideas, views and explanations on HD, including its pointers, and on individual and collective human development.

Integral Education for the Soul- A Deeper Psychological Pursuit

Integral Education views existence of man on five planes of beings externally and indicates other deeper and higher planes of psychological being. Integral Education corresponds to these planes of being and environment of learning need to correspond to these. Integral Education identifies five aspects of Human Development these are: Physical, Vital, Mental, Psychic and Spiritual (The Mother, In volume on Education, 1950; 1951/2002). However the development of being does not stop with these domains it goes 'within'. Going within is the movement of the one's consciousness and it is part of the concepts of development:

‘evolution’ and ‘involution’ (Sri Aurobindo in Gupta 2011 p 66). These two concepts have been linked with ascend and descend of the consciousness as represented in the symbol of Sri Aurobindo (See: Annexure 1.1).

The Mother says that the basis of evolution of consciousness is through human. It involves progress, perfection and hence, evolution. The formation of the ‘inner being’ is an important concept of individual development and the prevalent view of human development needs to cognize it. It is also referred as *psychicisation*^{iv} and the formation of true being called upon as the psychic-

"we give the name "psychic" to the psychological centre of our being, the seat within us of the truth of our existence, that which can know this and set it in movement."
(The Mother, 1950/2002, p.4)

The concept of ‘Living within’ is a dynamic process that an individual would undertake and make an effort to see events in life through inner being or self.

Possible processes and themes of Human Development to bring out perfection and progress could be Silence, Harmony, Self, Inwardising or to mention more precisely the twelve qualities of the Mother (see: Annexure 1.2) arguing for a more comprehensive view of individual development. The basis of these qualities or virtues is Divine possibility in human existence in the form of soul and not mere morality or ‘goodness’. Aspects of life Divine^v and human evolution to be Divine in human form with focus on all the domains of individual development is not the main purview of this research. Therefore, research does not establish, understand or research it overtly but nonetheless that is interwoven within the theory of IE and IY development and even in the field. As a result, it cannot be ruled out.

The soul is maintained as the Divine quality of an individual being. Divine is seen as power and force which is all encompassing. All encompassing, omnipresent (Divine) become the qualities rather than authoritative nature of Divine as God or as a disjoint entity or phenomenon. There is a qualitative difference in achieving the Divine being within, whereas living within are the preliminary processes for the same. However a demarcation with purpose of hierarchy in Divine life and ordinary life has been generally avoided, the major difference being that the former is result of awakened consciousness

Before this awakening of consciousness can begin, education for both students and teachers should be of perfection of one’s own being and centration of self around psychic (the

psychological centre of one's being) details of **Psychic education** will be taken later in the chapter. In this process of perfection, observation, patience and will power of individual have an important role to play. One finds these as basic assumptions or expectation of a certain group of parents (Jass, 2006) or individuals towards education and life who come to these schools and institutions to study. It comes close to and is very similar to art education and Indian *guru shishyaparampara* of learning fine arts where sacrifice and patience on part of both teacher and students are very important to learn the chosen art form. However many individuals part of the *parampara* or tradition report that journey of learning the art and self-knowledge gets spiritual; many just finds it delightful and deeper to their existence. Noticeable point is that of 'living within' is indeed spiritual and individual's consciousness is very important to experience the same.

Approaches to perfection and progress and aim of life

The Mother discusses simple step-by-step exercises of perfection and progress in the volume on education indicating at discipline of outer life. The exercises like silencing and widening of mind, concentration, consciousness, have an intrinsic value and are important to inwardise and reach 'within'. The Mother (1950/2002) in her first article 'Science of Living' in the volume on education, gives a prelude to four austerities and four liberations. In this article she introduces the term 'Integral Education'. The Mother mentions about an 'aim' in life. The article though talks aim of individual life but it also refers more about a direction or purpose to human existence. The nature of aim is explicated as a goal as wider, higher and is useful to one's own self and others too. This is a metaphysical or deeper philosophical dialogue with life which an individual is supposed to take. The meaning and purpose of life is what humans search between the two margins that is, life and death. Science of living is an article which takes a complete 180 degree turn to phenomenology of human existence. If as human one wishes to make considerable difference to one's own life or feel a gap or incapability of not making difference or change in one's life, these words are to be taken as beacons of experience of someone who delved deeply into these and has taken a futuristic approach to individual development. These words have great significant value in lives of those individuals, who try to reflect on their own life in the light of these words.

The Mother suggests 'Consciousness' about one's own nature and detail 'Observation' of the same. Therefore the methodology largely is to observe oneself, as one indulges in different

actions, behavior and reactions. It is ‘assiduous’ the Mother says, since human being is likely to analyze and justify what he or she is doing. Once own self becomes an instrument of study, it implies that one is carrying out a research on - observation and changing oneself. The growth is signified as perfection, perfection towards ‘truth’ of one’s being. She refers to the ideas of ‘truth’, ‘perfection’ and ‘consciousness’ as the explanation of human existence. It might require a longtime preparation of lifetime to find the implication of these words in one’s life and take development as a process of consciousness, Inwardising, perfection and progress on one’s own self. The article also raises the qualitative aspect of conceptualizing development with certain qualities of power, love, beauty and harmony (apart from the twelve qualities of the Mother mentioned in the last section). These qualities or virtues correspond to the five- fold education (a popular reference of Integral Education). She gives importance to individual choice and suitability for method to bring out perfection. General overview of Integral education rooted in Integral view of life should be taken as assumptions to read this section. For example, the idea is to bring about more perfection, harmony, and consciousness in one’s being. Another idea is to look at the instrumental aspect of human existence that is, perfection in an individual is relevant for the collective.

Fivefold Education

The Mother declares in preface of Volume on education that Integral Education is preparation for Integral Yoga. This division of being into five folds for educational purpose is easier for a layman who is in favor of perfection of being and discipline of outer life. For each fold (or domain) the Mother identifies the nature of that domain of being; explains the reason for that particular nature and then suggests what it should be. She details the method and offers different techniques to achieve the perfection. Following sections explain these with examples for each domain.

Physical Education

The ideal nature of the physical that is, the human body is to symbolize harmony and beauty. Education of body includes habits like regularization and more conscious nature for sleep and food. The aim of us should be to

“.....make our body strong and supple enough to become a fit instrument in the material world for the truth-force which wants to manifest through us...”
(The Mother, 1953/202 p. 50)

She describes the present nature of the physical, as we understand it, which is not the true nature. The nature of human body is suppleness and adaptive-

The body has a wonderful capacity of adaptation and endurance. It is able to do so many more things than one usually imagines...In fact, the body must not rule, it must obey. By its very nature it is a docile and faithful servant.
(The Mother, 1950/2002, p 7)

The Mother also hints at a very scientific process of involution that is death of the cells (in Hurlock, 1981) that goes on in the body, and which will no longer be there once body realizes the harmony

“As soon as the body has learnt to follow this movement of progressive harmony, it will be possible for it to escape, through a continuous process of transformation, from the necessity of disintegration and destruction. Thus the irrevocable law of death will no longer have any reason to exist.”
(The Mother, 1950/2002 p. 8)

She also mentions the effect of our mind and emotions (vitals) in understanding the body and its needs.

Unfortunately, it rarely has the capacity of discernment it ought to have with regard to its masters, the mind and the vital. It obeys them blindly, at the cost of its own well-being.....It must be freed from this tyranny.
(The Mother, 1950/2002, p. 7)

She contrasts this with the true or the psychic nature of the body

and this can be done only through a constant union with the psychic centre of the being... it is ruled by the central truth of the being.... Calm and quiet, strong and poised...at every minute it will be able to put forth the effort that is demanded of it...
(The Mother, 1950/2002, p. 7)

Physical education has three principal aspects:

(1) control and discipline of the functioning of the body, (2) an integral, methodical and harmonious development of all the parts and movements of the body and (3) correction of any defects and deformities.
(The Mother, 1951/2002 p. 12)

The Mother emphasizes critical period of physical development, but initially she also states it is never late to start. The body needs rhythm, discipline in food, sleep, rest, evacuation, which one should teach the body as early as possible. As a result there is emphasis on a detail physical education program, she does not outline this program in the article, but she personally gave rise to the same with help of *Sadhaks* at the Ashram (to be discussed in detail in results section). The Mother also says that in physical education program one can rely on

several new ideas being researched in this area, in order to know the body both physical and medical aspects.

Vital Education

The Mother begins her essay with a caution that vital that is, the area of human emotions is the most confused subject and hence clears two myths. One to be happy does not mean to be hedonistic and second that one can change one's nature, behavior or rather emotional disposition which is believed otherwise. Likewise in other domains she reiterates the importance of highest Truth in governing the being, that is to experience Delight (what is Indian concept of *Ananda*) and not just fulfill desires and get what one wants. It is deeper psychological principle of a persistent effort to be happy in the circumstances of one's life. This requires considerable effort and also involves the second aspect to be able to change one's nature. The usual tendency is what the Mother has warned that one cannot change oneself, the alternative she suggests one can, by being self-observant, aware and conscious

“the indispensable starting point is a detailed and discernible observation of the character to be transformed.....”

(The Mother 1951/2002 p.19)

She mentions one should be aware that what qualities one possess; as per her all humans have possibility of doing extreme of the same quality- courage- coward; kind-cruel; control-uncontrolled. This should not surprise an individual to find the counterpart of an emotion one thinks one has.

it is that everyone possesses in a large measure, and the exceptional individual in an increasing degree of precision, two opposite tendencies of character, in almost equal proportions, which are like the light and shadow of the same thing.....”

(The Mother 1951/2002, p.19)

She insists on critical period for development of vital education that should begin early, since habits to observe one's tendencies, preferences are formed earlier and become part of one's education. The role of aesthetics and beauty in environment both the physical and emotional would inculcate in child to choose beautiful emotions and qualities.

She also relates vital education with sense-education, the perception to the accuracy of our senses should be encouraged in the children, there should not be an exaggeration of the perception through one's sense or and one should take care that there is not an improper recording of the same. Sri Aurobindo has also insisted on proper sense education and in fact

for accurate perception he insists on *cittashuddhi* and *nadishuddhi* (Sri Aurobindo, 1924/1956). There is effect of mind-mental ideas on perception. The example he cites that a horse mistakes a rope for snakes and so do humans since the mental idea of fear pre dominates our sensory processing of information.

The approach to bring about clarity and change the imprecision is however based on individual's awareness and not on the elimination, coercion, suppression of one's traits. It is important to know the basis of that emotional vice and remove it. Constant observation and will power to be what one wishes to be, is what is basis of Integral Education This would involve accepting the individual oneself and as a teacher accept the student unconditionally and not to impose any suppression, coercion of habits but to introduce them to good habits.

Mental Education

Mental Education is that aspect which schools widely undertake in the form of curriculum and subject areas they follow. The school learning as the Mother mentions is mostly cramming and various other skills that do not make the brain supple. She identifies each skill and subject area as some kind of 'mental gymnastics' that is useful for the brain. However she identifies several gaps which exist in formulation of ideas and other methods that would be useful for brain to make it a good instrument (of Truth). The phases which she describes are-

“ 1) power of concentration 2) capacities of widening, expansion, complexity, and richness. 3) Organization of one's idea around a central idea 4) Thought control and rejection of undesirable thoughts 5) Mental Silence, perfect calm, receptivity for inspiration.”

(The Mother, 1951/2002, p24-25)

Instructions for children are drawn in view of the conception and descriptions of human nature and consciousness. Young children may have too many things on mind and lack attention but an effort on part of teacher to make them enjoy what they are learning is the best gift a teacher can give to the student. The Mother mentions use of any method to hold child's attention at initial stages, reinforces the same with an idea that learning becomes universal in all the 'circumstances'. Among the mental skills that the child needs training is for 'observation', 'correct recording' and recall from memory. Children should be encouraged to know through different sources, they need to be independent eventually with these methods to know, rather to look up to adult (or make knowledge resource specific).

Teacher has to select activities for the same and keep in focus the need to raise child's 'curiosity' and 'imagination'. The teacher should ensure that a child looks for information from different sources rather than a source alone (for flexibility of brains). Activities should also aim at learning by doing, the Mother does not give specific examples here, but in the volume people discuss the methods she used with them. As it is important to widen and learn different subjects, it is equally important that one learns to organize the information around a central theme. Re organization of thought is a constant process and is the process of receiving new information and re locating, discarding or replacing old information.

A usual mainstream education controlled by authority of different kinds (knowledge, adult) and objects (textbook, blackboard) allows no freedom to the child. IE is in clear contrast to education which is based 'only' on text book, teachers authority and testing the child. IE is important to be seen freeing the education from the adult's authority over knowledge, making the child independent of adult's authority on knowledge. All these are impediments for an individual's Integral development which is the basis of this development. Therefore, even if mental education is widely practiced in schools, the mother talks of 'gaps' in the mainstream education which need to be corrected. These gaps still exist in Indian education system where marks and passing the exam to gain degrees are the only focus. The real issue is the way knowledge is offered to the child.

Psychic and Spiritual Education^{vi}

This is the education focused on deeper or hidden aspect in the individual. According to Mother individual development does not stop with three domains of the outer being, one needs to probe further. Psychic and Spiritual are relevant for certain individuals, who seek for the deeper aspects of human existence and wish to develop those in outer life, thoughts and actions. The awareness of this 'higher' or 'wider' reality^{vii} of individual development has skewed distribution. It is not same as the religious or philosophical pursuit of truth. The Mother views human with innate goodness. opposed to the adult who is likely to be maligned by the society. One has to realize the latent higher possibility in oneself, which is the soul of an individual. The basis of discovery of higher aspect in the lives of individual is freedom and individual consciousness. Correction of the flaws in the nature of three aspects that is, physical, vital and mental is also to enable the individual to live ideal of higher reality. Ideal

is to be aware of the Higher reality (or the Divine principle) latent in us, governing outer existence.

Pointers of Human Development and Integral Education

Outer existence of learning and how learning takes place has been quite insightful however there is a need to link this with deeper aspect of human development through the processes of self development. Integral Education or the Learning the Treasure within (International commission on Education, 1996) emphasize that the inner being or self of an individual does influence the outer existence. Integral Education takes a different meaning of individual's perfection and goal directed development than from the perspective of domains alone. The Mother talks about five aspects of education in the article 'On Education', three of which are important in any educational program. The articles by the Mother on Education make 'perfection' as the basis of learning in respective domains. This perfection is domain specific and domains have mutual effect on individual development. For example, how vitals effect mental. Illeris (2005) mentions integration of various learning theories but there is need to see the domain overlaps which the Mother explains.

Integral education begins in the womb of the (biological) mother, and goes on till the end of the life. The Mother states the importance of lifelong aspect of Integral Education. This understanding or consciousness of perfection in developmental domains implies for a 'progress' based understanding of human, an adult and a child. The whole being is not dissected primarily in domains or lifetime and therefore 'human' progresses each moment of their life. The lifelong education is initially the responsibility of parents and teachers when the child is young but is ultimately the responsibility has to be taken up by the individual after a particular age of 14 years till the end of one's life. In IE, the stages and domains are not redundant. The Mother refers to the stages of human life that is pre-natal, child hood and adulthood to refer to an individual's development.

Three important points can be concluded: first, Developmental Appropriateness of education is essential for all the domains (pages 10 and 11 of the volume xii, the Mother on Education, 2002). Second, there is insistence on 'Spiral curriculum', that is if adults make effort they can teach anything to the children. Third, The learning and progress of two individuals that is, teacher and student becomes dyadic. The responsibility is on adult to teach with care and

empathy, the articles throws light on adult's responsibility to be a continuous learner in these circumstances.

The development of certain skills in each domain are relevant, so is development of others qualities which are independent of domains (for example, will power, freedom, continuous working upon qualities like these) which is an essential feature of Integral Education.

However there is no restriction on using classification of development into domains and their norms in order to make wider understanding of human development and answer '*what develops?*' as domains and also beyond domains.

Scheme of the chapters

After explaining the relation of Human Development through the relevant policies, framework and also the idea of Integral Education for the soul, chapter 2 explains the relation of themes in alternative and mainstream schooling. Research questions and rationale of the study follow the discussion of various researches on mainstream and alternative education.

Chapter 3 explains the relevance of ethnographic method followed in this research.

Implications of Integral Yoga views on the Method are also discussed. The field is introduced in chapter 3 along with the scheme of rest of the chapters.

Endnotes

ⁱ The ten developmental facts that Hurlock (1981) discusses in her chapter are as following- 1. Early Foundation are Critical. 2. Role of Maturation and Learning in Development. 3. Development follows a definite and Predictable pattern. 4. All Individuals are different. 5. Each Phase of Development has characteristic behavior. 6. Each phase of development has hazards. 7. Development is aided by stimulation. 8. Development is affected by Cultural Changes. 9. Social Expectations for Every Stage of Development. 10. Traditional beliefs about people of all ages.

ⁱⁱ Davies, Gregory & McGuinn (2006) highlights in his work that if ultimate aim of education is knowledge than learning is the tool for enhancement of knowledge. Learning is basic trait on which civilizations thrive.

ⁱⁱⁱ The idea of what is to be taught or what is worth teaching is a different debate. Human Development does not delve deep into this issue more than the basics. The domains do this basic description that there should be sensitivity to all domains referring to mind, body, emotions. So there should be science and math for subjects; languages enchanted psychologist more than the subjects. There should be enough stimulation so body develop at early stages, hygiene and food continues to be more critical throughout the stages. Personality of the child, emotions relevant to the culture to behavioral expectations, problems were always of importance to Human Development. The discipline brings light to the classroom and therefore more of processes that how one should be taught. Developmental Psychology is not completely indifferent to what should be taught, but what should be taught is a deeper epistemological issue with which philosophers of education struggle with. in the light of thoughts of Dearden in Galton (1990) , Winch ,Walsh education is not always development oriented. It guides what to teach and how to teach. The question of knowledge, whose Knowledge and how should it be given are more basic questions of education.

^{iv} Adding of *-isation* in English language means naming the process after the verb for example- nationalization, institutionalization to name a few.

^v Life- Divine is the detail philosophical treatise by Sri Aurobindo detailing the whole process towards awakened consciousness and Divine Life.

^{vi} The Mother differentiates the two. For convenience the research takes the two together. In the field the two were often addressed together.

^{vii} When we say higher or wider a normal reaction could be puzzling since we bind ourselves in world of categories, classification and numbers especially in academics. It could also be relaxing to look at the life in the world since the world we live in has dynamism, which is ‘beyond’ the categories or boundaries. To be free from categories and feel higher and wider is one aspect of our reality which we need experience or might have already experienced. The challenge is to see the world of categories and yet see a world higher and beyond them.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In the last chapter, we discussed the theoretical framework for our study, which explained the relationship between Human Development and Education along with Integral Education and its implications on Human Development. Integral Education stands as an alternative view to the mainstream educational view. It addresses ‘deeper issues’ of human development as well issues of norms, domains, and learning that mainstream discourse highlights. Main method of discussions in this study, as seen in the last chapter, is ‘dialogue’ between concepts, views across the disciplines. In the light of this statement, here in this chapter, we are going to have an overview of ‘alternative or innovative education’ and mainstream education in an attempt to enrich understanding of relation between ‘education’ and ‘schooling’. It would highlight main points from various studies on alternative and mainstream education in order to understand individual development with focus on culture or a community, which are analyzed in terms of ‘individual-collective’ development. From the theoretical framework and discussions following it (in the last chapter), ‘learning’ emerged as central to individual development in relation to various knowledge forms. The aim of our review is to highlight the importance of individual learning in relation to their communities. Studies on schools establish schooling as a social activity and shed light on the link of school, community and learning of individual dived by variables such as: individual and social perception of the ‘act’ of schooling, learning opportunities, learner’s identity, history of schooling, faith, learning processes or methods which schools offer.

The main premise of the review is that both Mainstream and Innovative education are not mutually exclusive social phenomenon. The examples of innovations as new ideas in mainstream education are: Amy Stambach (2000) convent schools in traditional Muslim or Christian, agrarian, tribal areas and Nita Kumar’s (2000) British Education in pre-independent Benares, or S B Heath’s (1983) development of a language program which is sensitive to the community’s idea of language learning. All these are good examples of innovations in mainstream education in particular historical timeline of that community’s (or culture’s) development. These programs offer alternative views since these have different political status, which emphasizes education for ‘development’ of both society and an individual. It draws a parallel discourse with reference to the normative idea of human

development. Kumar's (2000) school is more similar to Stambach's (2000) school in terms of representing colonial or missionary legacy. However, Kumar (2000) adds another element that is, the variations in schools as learning options available to students of different classes in the city of Benares and construes it as a product of individual's choices embedded in the history of that culture. RadhikaViruru's (2001) *shishuvan* in Hyderabad is an example of innovative preschool in the mainstream with mixture of innovative and drill practices of learning, born out of effort, love, commitment and care of a few urban women.

In contrast there are schools which are guided by a central idea of an innovation or an ideology. These are: Thapan's study of (1991) Rishi Valley based on the ideas and vision of Krishnamurthy and; Sibia's (2006) study of *Mirambika*, and Prapanna Smith's (2010) study of SAICE, which are based on the idea of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. For many individuals adherence to a 'vision' involves some belief or reverence. In many cases it is a choice of innovative or alternative ways of life and schooling that individuals make for themselves and for their children (Jass, 2006 & Thapan, 1991). The study of these schools emphasizes the relationship between theory and practice of a 'worldview' at individual and at the collective level of development.

School's identity in terms of ideas or a worldview, practices and participants' perception emerges out of deep study of schools in these works. Our study construes 'faith' as an important factor to understand school's identity at Integral Education Institutes. Therefore, this chapter lastly discusses role of 'faith' in Human Development- educational and other individual developmental programmes. Our review delineates studies on faith based developmental programs and role of faith in an innovation. Faith is seen as an adherence to an alternative or innovative view, which a group or a cohort follows. Finally, our discussion in the chapter outlines characteristics of faith both as human quality as 'the Mother' describes it and also a means to study collective behavior of a group.

Alternative versus Mainstream Education

Education is not equivalent to schooling (as discussed in chapter 1st). In our times, schooling is a contemporary essentiality to impart education mostly restricted to children. Schools have become a more formal aspect of education. They are deemed to be useful for societies because they cater to the developmental needs of human through a formally organized program. However according to many critiques, any society needs to explore beyond 'school'

as an essentiality but also as an instrument of the state. For example, *Bharat GyanVigyanSamiti's* (1999) Hindi publication *Khatra School*, narrates illustratively the capitalist agenda of schools that kills the original creativity of the child and make them as products for the market. Illich (1970) raises the point of the hidden agenda of schooling by the state. He argues in his seminal work titled as 'Deschooling Society' that real education can only be brought about when society is stripped of idea of 'schooling'. Several other authors have highlighted limitations of schooling that schooling, as it is today, does not fully understand human learning and realization of true potential of individuals. Adams (2006) defines traditional or mainstream education as Greco-Roman model of thinking and Industrialization, which focuses on honing certain mental abilities of individual like: observation, reasoning, categorizing, classifying only. Education in contemporary form of schooling sees human as end product to be utilized in the market mainly for job and to earn money. Kumar(2011) states that contemporary educational institutions(schools) create among children a fear of authority through examinations and punishment. They control the mind of the children with the idea of 'state' and 'market' which drives them towards jobs. Mehrotra (1998) who argues for urgent need to understand pristine area of alternative schooling, before the mainstream schooling damages the developmental process a child naturally undergoes.

Despite the arguments against schooling yet it is not formidable in contemporary times. This is clear from the point that most of the educationists like Dewey, Tagore, Montessori to name a few in modern times who challenged their contemporary systems of schooling, but created different types of schools; which also inspired others to open 'alternative schools' and insisted to bring the change in existing system of schooling. The impact of their ideas could be seen in various schools even today.

Alternative schooling based on individual philosophical ideas of thinkers or new conceptual ideas can be addressed as a dispersed movement to counter the centralized schooling by the state across the world. It is an alternative in terms of ideas or educational practices or could be both (Vitachi, Raghavan& Raj, 2007). Deepa (2006) finds out 'Alternative schooling' a step towards quality education for children in a relaxed environment, and the example she provides is an alternative school in Rajasthan, India.

Innovative schooling or any innovation in a mainstream school has its complexities of translating theory and practice. Doyle & Everhart(1980) state that ‘Educational Innovation’ is also a ‘phenomenon’ which the participants create. It is not only implementation of an idea. An innovation has extension in the meaning of words or actions which participants carry. Authors refer to innovations like new policy or programs with objectives run by several stakeholders in society. However, in an innovative programs (for example, this research and others in the review) individual participants such as, parents, teachers, students, and their families most likely have been developing meaning out of their relation, theory and practice with the ‘world-view’.

“To the degree that innovations convey meanings that differ from their ostensible purpose, the innovations have a symbolic aspect. The meaning of a symbol is not inherent in the fact, object, or behavior, but is derived from the understanding by a group as to what the fact, object, or behavior represents.....”

(Doyle and Everhart, 1980, p. 67)

What participants describe in their words have patterns that can be evolved by research and as a result a ‘slogan’ (Apple, McClellan & Komisar in Doyle & Everhart, 1980) for that innovation evolves-

“A slogan then is a prescriptive statement based upon beliefs and meaning whereas a proposition is a descriptive statement based upon facts. Slogans make inferences about how present reality might or should be; propositions are grounded in present reality.”

(Doyle and Everhart, 1980, p. 69)

Slogans (or symbols) serve many functions and purpose. For example, arousing feelings, making participants connected with the practice, and in some cases staying connected with and experiencing the idea. Slogans or interpretation of different participants in the setting is likely to understand the relation of individuals with an ideology and its innovative set up. However, it would also be important in any innovation to highlight the change and development in the ideas of participants since the time of its inception.

Innovations apart from bringing changes, raising slogans, and creating a relaxed environment to learn, are also theoretically valuable. The ideas in ideologies given by thinkers become innovations and draw attention to the aspects of human reality with reference to education which researches in mainstream academics are believed to miss (also seen in the last chapter section on domains, norms of Human Development and Integral Education). Relevance of

the ideologies and innovations is immense. The basic purpose of ideology like Krishnamurthy's philosophy (or philosophy of Integral Education) is to work on individual perfection and bring change in the society (Gouldner in Thapan, 1991). Innovative practices play an important role in bringing out ideas of future to improve quality and idea of schooling. Now, we move onto the next section in the light of the last argument about relevance of innovations, which looks into what researches of alternative education and schools highlight: theoretically and methodologically.

Alternatives and innovations in Human Development

Often thinkers, philosophers, mystics or revered gurus propose a view of individual's development and progress which according to them 'ordinary circumstances of life marginalize'. Their ideas assert for inevitable structural and ideological changes in schools to bring about their view of human development. These schooling systems or structures then recreate the meaning of the process of learning and add to the notion of school's role in the life of individuals, apart from knowledge forms that any mainstream school claims to impart to the child.

Monica Gupta (2011) has studied the ideas of Sri Aurobindo's discourse on Human Development from the 'metapsychological' perspective to delineate a 'new agenda' for it. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is a worldview and hence reference to academic discourse of Psychology is imperative for her study. The work brings forth arguments that goal of human development to evolve to divine being through 'perfection'. Her theoretical work argues for Psychology as a subjective Science with a need to have metaphysical basis for the same. Sanskrit terms such as, *Sachchidanadna*, *Brahman*, *Maya* etc are used to describe Integral human development. She also argues for the need of both individual and social development of humankind. She also finds that Integral Education along with 'conscious parenting, work as means of Self-development, towards new forms of (human) relation and psychological healing as applications of 'new agenda' of Human Development. Research suggests that the concepts of Human development as per Integral Worldview need to find its space and application in Education.

Kumar (2011) has based his work with a critique of mainstream schooling and has argued for consciousness approach to resolve debates of Education; the area he has chosen is 'curriculum'. Research is theoretical in nature but incorporates the self of the researcher. He

found the relevance of meditative listening, observing and seeing the ‘curriculum’ in relation to ‘self’, which offers ample subjective freedom to the individuals. He further offers ‘meditative enquiry’ (as in the approach of Kirshnamurthy and Macdonald) to solve this existential crisis of curriculum by choosing to look at curriculum with deeper (or transformative) aspect of human consciousness which is ‘meditation’.

Smith(2010)conducted a study on Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education (SAICE) with the belief that ‘meaning’ is central to life of individuals. Importance of meaning in Human Development (p.3) is relevant across life span and response of school leaders is critical in meaning-making. His research used “*working definitions of personal meaning, life purpose, and personal agency by Reker and Wong’s (1988) triadic structural component model of the personal meaning system (PMS).*” (p.4) these definitions argue that ‘Learning environment’ creates an apt psychological climate by which the learner discovers the ‘personal agency’. Research is a mixed method approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007cited in Smith, 2010). It is multi-disciplinary that has drawn from social ecology, critical constructivist, social cognitive, humanistic, existential, and positive psychological theory along. He also reviews researches on Learning environment Research (LER); Existential Meaning Research (EMR), positive psychology research(PPR). Four research questions namely 1) students perception on psychosocial environment of their schools, satisfaction with life (& education) and meaning of personal meaning, life purpose, and personal agency; 2) difference between two schools- SAICE &Future School, Calcutta; 3)Effect of Personal Agentive Meaning in relation student’s satisfaction with life and satisfaction with educationand; 4) how school leaders namely teachers create the environment. He has used online questionnaires on learning environment, personal meaning making filled by the students and focused group discussion with teachers on the same.

Study utilized standard tools 1) What is Happening in the Class (WIHIC) (Fraser Fisher &McRobbie, 1996); 2) three sub scales from Life Attitude Profile, Revised (LAP-R) (Reker, 1992) and; 3) Satisfaction with Life Survey (SWLS)(Denier, Larsen, Emmons &Griffen, 1985). The study explained positive scores in life attitude profile, satisfaction with life with description of classroom atmosphere and life at SAICE. Life in classrooms and SAICE indicated enough time to indulge in discussions on life, interaction with larger Ashram community, appropriate teacher-student ratio, and trust among teachers-students which

explains the positive scores of participants. Teachers and students are task oriented and their involvement in the tasks is high. Their personal meaning making involves preparation for quest in life, being aware of one's weak points and 'joy of learning'. The school has a belief system of life and student and teachers engage with the same.

Adams (2006) study is based on idea of Integral of Sri Aurobindo (né Aurobindo Ghosh), meaning physical, vital, mental and spiritual. She has also referred to Laszlo's Integral framework in order to make a model of Integral Education. Her study argues for a new model of education for future, in which she has aimed to delineate activities for each domain. Her research draws from different frameworks of education which she puts under the umbrella term of Integral: (1) Sri Atmananda 2) Krishnamurti 3) Montessori 4) Fox (Quaker Schools) 5) Sri Aurobindo 6) Gandhi 7) Yogananda (The Living wisdom School) and 8) Waldorf school (founder of Steiner Schools). Her main theoretical assumption is to study human being holistically through the entire human cycle. She emphasizes to study the young adults who have just passed from the institutions (SAICE and Schoolsat Auroville).

She defines the aspects of Integral as Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual:

- Physical implies at flexible and resilient body. Body is a conscious instrument to learn.
- Emotional refers to feelings, moods, complex reactions that are both mental and emotional. Complexity of human emotions communicates about an individual and if suppressed can even lead to an illness (Meyer et al, 2001; Goleman, 1995; Epstein, 1994; & Agnes, 2001)
- Mental implies to concepts, intelligence, ideas and it is the central organizing principle of all other components if seen from the perspective of defining systems.
- Spiritual refers to an aspect of connectedness with all others on the earth. Research accounts for world religion traditionⁱ but not in the dogmatic sense. Among the several definitions she takes Sri Aurobindo's definition which implies awakening of an inner reality, soul or spirit.

Her method is based on qualitative paradigm and brings in implications of Integral and constructivist research approaches. Her research has used narrative approach of interviews with nine students and their parents. The sample is gender balanced and diverse background.

Her methodological tools include interviews, curriculum data collection, program observations, and conversations with educators in school settings. Four specific points of result are 1) a theoretical framework based on different definitions of *'integral and its relationships to holistic when referring to education.'* (p v) 2) portrait of an individual studied in the schools; 3) extensive examples of all domains of intelligence; 4) a model for a systemic, integral educational approach. An extensive analysis of her data reveals themes of IE- *"1)changing paradigms and philosophical frameworks; 2) reinventing of self; 3) evolution of consciousness; 4) identity creation and; 5) facilitating transformative learning."* (p.152). The definitions of intelligence, development and other aspects are supported by a narrative enquiry of data gathered from the schools that she has undertaken. Sibia (2006) provides a case study of *'Mirambika'* – A free progress school, which is situated in the premises of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi Branch. *Mirambika* has been functioning for more than a decade when the study was undertaken. It started as an alternative teacher education program of four years duration. The objective of the study was to explicate the pedagogic processes taking place in the classroom at *Mirambika* to see the influence of Integral Education philosophy on school organization, teaching- learning processes and student outcomes. The study elaborates about the school culture and ethos which are outcome of certain processes as part of schooling at *Mirambika*. The method she adopted includes observations, informal interactions with individuals, and study individuals' perceptions and their activities with a case study approach.

Her results are organized under the following themes: background and inception of school, its physical organization and resources; organizational structure focusing on roles and responsibilities of participants and decision-making in school; organization of teaching-learning, strategies evolved, activities, nature and type of evaluation, teacher-student interactions and its effect on learning of students. All this culminates into what she calls *'school culture'* consisting of all norms and values in the school. Her study also presents an analytical understanding of teachers' profile and students' life who passed out of the school. Teachers are selected after a long interview with speculation about their life goals and ability to take an alternative view of life and live through the same. The teachers do not get regular income as other school teachers, but their basic needs- food, house is taken care by the Ashram. Admission process of children involves talking with the parents and then children

are allowed to be part of the school where they are observed by the teachers. The parents should have a strong conviction for the alternative system of education for the child.

The school building is designed taking special care of child's needs. It has hexagon shape structure; the rooms have walls two sides; the entrance does not have full wall, it is a semi open structure. The opposite side wall has windows.

The curriculum is subjects based like Languages, Mathematics, Science, Social Science followed in India education system but with a project based approach or activity based learning. Text-books by NCERT are referred along with many other resources, since exams are not focus completion of syllabus is not an issue. The school has a resource center for different games and activities.

Thapan(1991) carried out research in Rishi Valley school (RVS) which is based on the ideas of Krishnamurthy, an Indian thinker. Purpose of her study is to understand the relation between ideology and its practice. She argues for the importance of 'experience of participation in the process' of schooling at the chosen site. She describes role of the school of the teachers and the students in carrying out the process of schooling In order to understand the 'school culture', she spent time in the school for observations, interviews, and informal interactions.

She suggests two ways to study Krishnamurthy's ideology that is, inward and outward.

'Inward' refers to reflective reading of texts by Krishnamurthy, which is an individualistic process and which one engages with reference to self-development. Individuals- student, teacher and other individuals create meaning of ideology actively in their lives. The outward process is to study the practice of his ideas at the RVS, which he started. RVS is an alternative, child-centered model of schooling though affiliated to State Boards at secondary and senior secondary level

RVS's organization reveals active participation of the teachers and hierarchy in their roles. All teachers play five roles- of a games teacher, teaching, housekeeping activity, teaching and administrative task. Researcher believes that the multi-tasking implies lot of stress on teachers. One gets to become the teacher through a severe recruitment process where teachers who have read Krishnamurthy and teachers who are for innovative teacher methodologies compete for the posts through the process of interview. Different teachers both ideologues

and pedagogues identify in varying manner to ideology, some attempt to understand and apply, some become indifferent, others may not find it very useful.

Duty allocation reveals the organizational structure of the school. 'internal orders' implies the demands ideology have on them or they perceive to have. In its managerial structures RVS has a trust, board with members in order to carry out everyday activities; hence 'external orders' are also part of teachers' duty to run the school. The teachers have authority to take decision and even give feedback to the managerial committee. The school with presence of interpretation of ideology develops a 'school culture' with role and meaning of respective participants- teachers, students, conflicts they face and how they resolve the same. She finds the teachers could be divided as 'ideologues' and 'pedagogues', the former believes that Krishnamurthy's ideas should be more relevant or taught to the children and latter believes in a good teaching methodology is important over the Krishnamurthy's words. The teachers' demarcations do not happen in neat dichotomies and there is pressure on both to be the 'other'. That is, an ideologue searches for avenues to be a pedagogue, to be a teacher, which teaches with efficient methods, while a teacher who has joined the school in the wake of good pedagogy, faces the need to comply to Kirshnamurthy's ideals, somewhat in a ritualistic manner.

“while the professional teacher's role is externally defined and controlled largely by the local order and educational discourse, and the school's intentions of meeting the requirements of that discourse, the ideologue teachers experience an external control on their conduct and activities primarily through the medium of ideological discourse and the transcendental order.”
(p.90)

This often leads to differences with the management and result is

“....compromise between the role-taking process and simple conformity between behavior demanded by organizational prescriptions.” -(p. 75)

Sethi(1998) studied the Integral Personality in the works of Sri Aurobindo. Her study reiterates that Integral is not hierarchical in nature and each facet has its equal relevance for individual development. Her work elaborates on theoretical underpinnings of Integral Education and Yoga as the Mother and Sri Aurobindo stated. Research stressed on 'Supramental Education'ⁱⁱ as ultimate aspect of knowledge. Supramental Education addresses new aspects of teaching and learning. She stated *Sadhna* as yogic practice for teachers or

individuals who want to understand ‘true’ purpose of Education. The theoretical work concluded that Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy of education is ‘scientifically tenable, metaphysical consistent, empirically satisfying and respecting individual.’ A special mention is given to ‘reflexivity’ⁱⁱⁱ as method of knowing.

Patel(1986) conducted a study on Free Progress System of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education with reference to psychological principles and goals of Integral Psychology. He concentrated on idea of evolution of human mind and personality. The evolution paradigm explains layers of Integral personality and it is put to practice in the Ashram School at Pondichéry. His research is in two parts; one, on theoretical ideas of Integral Education and Psychology (Bhattacharya, 1968; Dowsett, 1977; Pavitra, 1976; Prasad Narayan, 1976; Amita, 1975; Das, Dec/Jan 1978; Indrasen, Aug, 1981; Iyengar, 1968; Prapatti, 1980) and second, empirical work of field visits, interviews and administration of questionnaires. The study understood the process of education through theoretical analysis and then appraised the same.

His study provided with rich experience of field with exhaustive delineation of psychological principles and goals of evolutionary basis of human personality based on the five domains to Supramental. He interestingly found the avenues of implementation for all the domains in the field in his observations and in questionnaire administered on teachers of SAICE. However, he reported that he met with strong opposition from the Registrar and many teachers for the administration of the questionnaires. He could not explain that why testing of concepts like psychic, spiritual and Supramental cannot be subjected to the tests.

At the time of his study ‘free progress’^{iv} was followed at all the levels. His study therefore is one of the rich accounts of not only Integral thought explained fully, but also of the field experiences at SAICE. This could be relevant resource for further studies to be carried out in the field.

Concluding from the studies on innovative schooling one can say that all the researchers found the alternative ideas, mainly Integral of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother or Jiddu Krishnamurthy relevant to study human behavior in the educational set ups. Each research figured out relevant theoretical themes mostly rooted in Integral Philosophy- Physical, Vital, Mental, Psychic, Spiritual Education and Supramental Education. The nature of Integral is studied widely from the themes relevant to main stream academics as mentioned in Smith’s

study and also studied with themes unique to the alternative thought as in the works of Patel and Adams. Thapan's (1991) and Sibia's (2006) studies gave a more holistic view of school's functioning. While Smith (2010) argued for certain psychological variables of individual wellbeing. The studies show relevant effect on life of individuals' participants: parents, teachers, and students.

Our research argues for more studies on alternative schools with critical view that Thapan's study exhibited; however, we do not intend to judge and appraise the experience at field. like Patel or to some extent even Thapan did. There is a logical and epistemological need to accept the 'dynamism' of the field and focus on what forms, practices any innovative schooling has created with conceptual issues such as, faith which are one of the key factors in Human Development as Integral worldview substantiates it.

Tracing 'Innovations' in Mainstream Education

The chapter began with the argument that differentiation between alternative and mainstream has never really been seen through the commonalities they share and as a result projected as two extremes. The researcher feels at pragmatic level it is about schooling which involves teachers, students, learning, and challenges of human nature by virtue of which alternative and (state run) mainstream schooling are bound to cross their respective categories and therefore share some similarities. Schooling is a complex process as this chapter would also unfold. This section reviews the complexities involved in a mainstream schooling. Another argument is that alternative and mainstream have their respective identities but they also have their trysts with innovation in unique ways. Innovations can have central ideology as in the studies above or there is an implied ideology as would be evident in the studies here. It is relevant to understand both in order to argue for comprehensive understanding of Human Development and Education.

Sarangapani (2003) did an ethnographic research on learning and knowledge construction in school in an (urban) Indian village. Her work highlighted and explained the shabby condition of Indian public school system, its continuous downfall and status of learner (or the child). Her data found that the schooling reflected learning as rote memorization, drill, and indoctrination. Teachers failed the children with respect to the 'success' as defined by the school. The socio-economic and political status of the locality rendered the state run school as invaluable. School was seen as instrument for upward mobility with respect to the

developing modern society of India. Parents and children were in agreement with the same though students but used their discretion between schooling forms. Existing structures in the classroom tend to differentiate between the quality of life, learning, existence a student brings in the class and what teachers as individual enjoyed; which was a picture of complete authority over the child.

Her work has been seminal in questioning the role, practices of mainstream schooling. The work clearly indicated that the participants actively constructed their social reality of being socio-politically and economically marginalized and so was their status as learner. Research substantiated the need to review the assumptions that schools have. The schools also have greater probability to pass onto these assumptions to the first generational learners. Larger social reality along with the school's impact influences the learner's identity.

Viruru (2001) in her study highlights that how children are viewed in community and in a pre-school where they study. Hers is an ethnography focusing on the complexity of nursery schooling in the capital of Andhra Pradesh in India. The study captured voices of the children, as she observed them engaging in activities and the adult-child relation. Her data revealed that schools and families show a complex understanding of children's everyday life; which is more relevant than what the disciplinary understanding of Child Development offers. Child Development constructs an understanding of the discipline through the theories of Erikson, Piaget and several other theorists for the students, scholars and teachers of Human Development. But in reality, DAPs and science of child-development appear far off from the real world of the child; in order to strengthen her argument she cites Walkerdine (1998) Burman(1994) Kessen (1981) and Nsamenang(1991)who have argued for the relevance to study the real context of a child's life. The science of child development claims to be child-centered therefore, disrespects the voice of the child.

Children showed cohesive understanding of the world around; while adults around them tried to teach them by adapting the western practices of teaching learning in a culturally relevant manner. For example, the content was poems, rhymes taught in manner where children can 'enjoy' but the method of teaching is memorizing, repeating and drill (Srangapani, 2003 and Kumar,1998). Despite adult's authority in controlling the learning of children, they negotiated through the adult's world at their home and in the school. They learnt, ate, played

and often conflicted with each other. The work brings forth the complexities of the child's world.

Kumar(2000) studied the History of Education in Benares which she placed in the socio-political history of education in India. She raised the unquestioned assumptions about history of education and issues of social reproduction in pre- and post-independent India.

She described existing social scenarios at Benares and prevalent educational systems.

Actions of various participants on the available resources have shaped these structures.

Kumar found it intriguing that how different classes maintained their traditional educational system and reacted to the sudden intervention of a colonial education system of British in 19th century. To quote, “...*learnt not only how to construct their vocations but also to live up to their identities a certain 'kind of people.'*”-(p.14)

In tracing the educational history of Benares she found that the traditional knowledge of Sanskrit has been preserved, as a language associated with ancient scriptures and knowledge in India. According to her the onset of the modern education system is the most prominent intrusion on the other educational institutes, various state run schools, missionary run schools or Sanskrit *vidyalayas*. She referred British Education system as a ‘presence of alternative power-knowledge.’ She highlighted the strange fact that how the local forms of education did not get transform into the education system; since the aim of the British program would have been to encompass the local culture and knowledge which the program was unable to do. Or contrary to it Benares remained non-reactive to the words of Indian thinkers. Benares did not react the way Bengal affirmed to Tagore. She identified the processes of resistance by the masses through her ‘historical research’, which involved looking at the archival data and at the same time being in the field and experiencing the issues of education with certain classes. According to her history is created by these participants and they have been living the same. The sample was partly the artisans (weavers) of Benares and mainly other working classes like professionals, merchants, service people, intellectuals, local social leaders. The class in Indian society is referred as ‘middle’ class:

“.... *Progressive in thought but conservative in action—becomes relevant because of the interpretive problem that goes with status.*”(p 21).

She analyzed the colonizing power of education has symbolic power in Bourdieu's ideas.

Since the British education system acted as ‘cultural capital’ for the participants over the

generations; the system challenged the indigenous ways of learning and their survival. She described that the participant's view has been 'counter-narrative' and process of resistance to deal with the narrative of colonial powers establishing their system to transform.

"to attempt to answer in History what is explicitly unresolved in Philosophy and everyday life is to undertake the impossible and unnecessary."(p.22).

Stambach (2000) studied the process of 'schooling' as an act of education and agenda of cultural transformation in Tanzania. Schools as per the study envisaged the complexities, changes and dynamism a society is undergoing.

"They help us understand the connections people make between textbooks and the wider society, and they illustrate that the meaning and scope of schooling is often different from what is detailed in curricula and policies." (p.2)

She identified schooling in her field, first as agenda of 'state' with a vision to change society; second she argued for a different role of schooling from the narratives of participants that is, parents, teachers, children whose children are part of the schooling process. The central question asked in her field was 'what schooling is to an individual?' the answer to which is multi-faceted and linked to several issues or concepts. For example, Stambach found participants questioning *"the symbolism of local foods, the meaning of lineage, inheritance, and marriage, and the significance of circumcision and initiation."* (p 4) these were unrelated to her study of schooling initially. Her fieldwork traced different and often conflicting narratives about schooling. She found that in 'Chagga' society schooling questioned norms of social and economic life of individuals. Questioning of norms implied non-conformity, which to some individuals meant undermining the values of their culture. For example, the community did not approve talking with the adults. However, many individuals felt it was a sign of 'social progress' - as it has helped people 'talk to the world'. To quote one of the positive and changed view by the participant: *"Schooling in their views was a desirable institution, one through which "modern families" could be created, nurtured, and reproduced."*(p 3)

The new ratiocinative education created a new class of individuals in terms of dresses, food preferences, jobs and migration who were at conflict with their banana rearing society. Banana grove was central in the communities to the existence of the people in terms of food, work, and values. Researcher observed that how gender was related to three, there

were different varieties of banana for men and women, the work in the groove and family was divided like wise and so were the values of cooperation and coexistence. The grooves were passed to the males, showing the patrilineal aspect of the society, whereas women as result of education were migrating for jobs and were adding new dimension to their roles. The study referred 'school to the rescue models'. However the research found from the field that it was not always true of what theory of modernization claimed, the policies of education which draws from modernization (read: development of society) and curriculum aimed to implement or transform the individuals by the knowledge involved. It created new hierarchies in the society. The schools were identified more by the class of people who throng the schools than who don't. As a result, the lands and finances were born by private sources, which underplay the missionary statement of the school. The claim of ministry and policy to give 'practical education' to the students, also led to vital financial support by local people. She supported her argument by citing that rate of enrollment has been on rise in the schools. In some cases parents sold or rented the grooves in order to have money for children's education.

The field was spread over many sites; she stayed with the families in order to understand the difference between 'traditional' and 'modern' life (was due to the presence of schools). She observed the interactions or events around; conducted informal interviews with families over the issues observed, looked at the policies, the syllabus. She met people who are not related to education at an immediate level like older adults or priests.

Heath (1983) identified the problem regarding English language learning of children with her students, which they faced as teachers. Teachers (who were students at university with Heath) felt different socialization of student as perceived impediment to the reading-writing skill of children. The main objective of her study was first to identify the differences in the community and the school; second to make curricular material for teaching English which could bridge the gap between school and community. In order to do so researcher spent time at the working place of the parents, homes and classrooms, took down field notes with reference to the identified language structures. The research tracked down the history of two communities from which children come and formed the main sample of the study. The detailed about the participants beliefs about men, women, schooling and their expectations from their children.

She tried to look for spaces where the socialization patterns could be incorporated to facilitate learning of language of children. She identified the difference in learning of language structures required in home, job setting and at preschool. The differences helped to track the cognitive gap faced by the learners and teachers, but attributing failure to the learner. The values and ways of life affected the bringing up of the children and the method by which language was taught to them. The methods and processes of child rearing, play, talking to the child, segregating them had underlying language teaching techniques particular to each community. Use of techniques like repetition, variation and participation that included 'baby talk' by the mothers signified the language learning processes which the children received.

In order to conclude for our study, the studies in this section highlight that schooling needs to be understood as multi-layered phenomenon where community (teachers, students, parents) are intricately involved; sometimes in conflicts and sometimes in agreement. Mainstream schools brought in change in the existing practices and ideas of the community. Participants interpreted the idea or change which they found agreeable to them in case of Sarangapani(2003), and Stambach (2000) studied schooling where it is a means to an upward mobility. The agreement is not unanimous. There are individuals who conflict the new change of schooling and view it as threat to community's life. The ideas of schooling in these researches are studied mainly through pedagogical practices, knowledge areas (subjects or learning opportunities) or ideas of participants and also symbolically as local eating, dressing and other habits that might change as a result of schooling. Changes a school brings are historically established in society, it takes decades for the change like school to become a norm but not always fully acceptable.

Lessons from Innovation and Mainstream Education

Culture of schooling emerges as relevant phenomenon in the researches reviewed. Most of the researches conceptualized culture of schooling in forthright manner like Stambach (2000), Heath (1983), Viruru (2001) while others just mention it Sibia (2006), Thapan(1991) and Smith (2010). Researches highlighted the complex reality of human beings such as, pedagogical practices, adult-child relation, modern schooling, role of faith in ideology to name a few. The central argument from the discussion of last two sections is that all schools have environment that has rich symbolism: in the forms of knowledge, ideas and rituals or

practices which forms part of school culture since the practices have meaning linked to the central ideology or cultural ideology (traditional or innovative). Present study also draws from the methodological innovation of these studies, primarily to argue for importance of Ethnography or in-depth study to understand importance of schooling in a community. All studies highlight the complexity of practices but the studies on innovative schools also argue for the practices of innovative ideas such as, psychosocial wellbeing, a facilitating environment to 'be', positive personality traits developed in the individuals. These traits help 'healthy' development in all the domains and the strong sense of 'self' of an individual. Innovative schools need to be studied as a unit and their 'stories' need to be traced like any other 'school'. The studies of schools should help understand the desired view of human development and educational program based on the view. Now the next section of the chapter defines the ideas of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo called Integral Yoga and Integral Education. It is stated as a 'worldview' as the other researchers (Thapan, 1991; Adams, 2006 and Gupta, 2011) addressed it so for the academic purposes.

Integral Worldview

The 'worldview' approach given by Reason & Bradbury(2001) in Adams(2006) states that how different world views place our experiences and reality with respect to the range of experiences of the world^v. Integral way of addressing 'reality' encompasses the views of different disciplines; as in the physics, the chemistry and the other disciplines that views the world as a place of continuous and unending change and becoming, so is the individual which also shares the same qualities of a 'becoming' (Gupta, 2011) or dynamic world. In order to explain 'Integral view', Adams (2006) delineates the words and concepts similar to the same, such as, 'System', 'Integral, Integrative- Integration', 'Intelligence', and 'Development'. She also explained the words associated with holistic and integrating development of individual that is, Physical, Emotional, Mental, and Spiritual. She drew from the idea of Agnes (2001) and Capra (1996) and defined 'system' as a set of related, interconnected, and interrelated ideas. The four aspects act as a system and not as separated domains^{vi}. She construes 'Integral' as further extension of system approach and it can be best understood as holistic; however there is another dimension of the 'evolutionary aspect' of development and learning, highlighted by thinkers like Ghose (Sri Aurobindo, 1992), Wilber (2001; 2006) & Beck (2002; 2005) . 'Integrative' explains when different pedagogic aspects

are used in 'collective' manner, while 'Integration' means to think with all the parameters one can take in scope, while 'Integrating' means joining, collating and putting all parts together. Evolutionary aspect of development and learning would be different from these three. In my opinion 'Integral' or an effort to work under the principles of this worldview would give scope to new structures, methods and learning trajectories.

Integral worldview and the Indian view

An important point about Integral Yoga and Integral Education of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother is its genesis in Indian (indigenous) thought; especially Sri Aurobindo's ideas on Education which mostly he voiced against the British or Western system of education in Pre-independent India. Sibia (2006) reviews the idea of other Indian thinkers on education and that of Sri Aurobindo (and of the Mother). Her research also reviews that focus of learning has been changing in India. She quotes the work of Altekar that in Indian system the view of learning has been changing from the time of classics like Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita. Adams (2006) also quoted Indian educationists, thinkers and their programs to make a case of education based on 'Indian' system and values. The thinkers like, Tagore, Gandhi, Krishnamurthy and Sri Aurobindo criticized the western or colonial system based on primacy of syllabus and teacher's authority.

The thoughts of these thinkers despite rooted in Indian values also question the adult child relation in traditional Indian social set up which declares the age difference in adults and children and adults' unquestioned authority over the children, even when they grow up. Sibia (2006) quotes Kakar, an Indian psychoanalyst stating about the hierarchy in the adult-child relationship in Indian society which effect the child-centered education.

There was an attempt by the British to transform the pedagogy but how far they were successful in light of the traditional ethos is a question that several authors raised like Kumar (1996). Shotton in Sibia (2006) comments on Indian education system that teaching in present times is still in continuation with imperial system something that is elitist and autocratic. Review makes a case for education system-

"....aim at Curriculum which has roots in Indian tradition, ...seek alternative in curriculum, teaching, learning for measuring success, involve children in the process of learning and focus on learning from the another and not form an authorative pedagogue.", (Sibia, 2006, p.10)

Kumar (2000) raises the issue that even if Colonial powers have gone but nationalist ideas in free India which adopted the coloniser's system to evolve and strengthen their own movements of education have failed. These movements which focused on indigenous education like Dayanand Saraswati and Ishwar Chand Vidya Sagar could not bring about what they intend at. She attributed the failure of reform by the colonizer's school and as well to the reformist's schools since both of them never took into account that how the system would be taken by the children belonging to different divisions of society in India and how they would respond to these innovative ideas. Children have been taken for granted and as passive receptors, in this sense it makes the system(s) till date attempting to colonise the learning experience of children. Different classes have their own mechanisms having a complex relation with Indian traditional values of family, kinship, adult-child relation, work and property.

Kumar's this argument and others draws implication to our research that studies the practice of the works of Sri Aurobindo (and the Mother) as his ideas also addressed educational reform in pre-independent India. I also wish to add that the treatment or relevance of these thoughts in mainstream has been only in the margins not understood with reference to certain relevant concepts. It draws me to conceptualize 'faith', which people have in these national, or spiritual leaders; even if the mainstream was unable to understand them or knit them in education system of India. The system of education on these alternative ideas of national thinkers or leaders proliferated.

Role of Faith in Innovative Education

This section attempts to explicate the identity of innovation (in this case) with the idea of 'faith'. Issues of faith-mysticism or one's belief are not the main focus of any researches reviewed in the last two sections. Issues of faith to some extent are described in the works of Sibia (2006) and Patel(1986) since these took into account the views of community about schooling. Faith is a relevant area to study since 'Innovations and Innovative ideas' invoke mysticism or belief which might result in a psycho-social reality of 'faith'. However faith and mysticism are considered to be psycho-social concepts and variables interacting with life of Individuals, as clear from the works of Marshak(1997), and Learning the Treasure within (International Commission on Education, 1996),. Mysticism^{vii} is not the central area of concern of our research but a more observable psycho-social reality of faith.

Marshak (1997) writes about parenting and educating children from his experience of understanding three different alternative views of human nature namely: Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo and Inayat Ali Khan. He stated a deep theoretical understanding of three views buttressed with his practical experiences at the respective schools in different parts of the world.

He builds the underlying common thread among three visions, which as per him guides to 'coevolution'. The ideas may have certain differences but their basic idea of universe is similar. The works of theorists like Piaget, Erikson further validates the claim of these three thinkers. These three thinkers view the holistic development of individual along the domains of physical, life-force, mental and spiritual being. Unfolding of inner capacities, to develop 'inner teacher'(p.10), individual differences are important in this regular, consistent and age based development. The section on a day in a school states various narratives of teachers who are in charge of different sections of schools- Kindergarten, Flower room, Future section, and Knowledge. The experiences are life span narratives of arrival at the Ashram, growing up, life and educational experiences. Marshak's work in all the three settings (SAICE, Waldorf and Sufi schools) mainly argued for 'faith' and belief of parents and teachers to raise the child in special and sensitive manner. Building on his argument of faith as a quality or a virtue that forms the basis of the field in our study (SAICE and schools at Auroville), our research widens the question of schooling along with active faith and belief of participants to give a theoretically enriched view.

Development of faith in the 'collective' identification of individuals

Faith has two connotations one as a religious belief and another as human 'quality' with a deep trust, unquestioned belief and to be without doubt. Faith has been studied likewise by the individual thinkers, but in academics faith is studied as religion or religious views or belief of people including the Development studies^{viii} (Dollahite, 2002; Tarakeshwar, Paragament & Stanton, 2003).

Studies on Faith, Development and Education in the West especially have looked upon influence of Religious or Secular thoughts on life of individuals with reference to education. Kemper (2006) highlights the recent interest of anthropologists in faith based organization (henceforth: FBOs) unlike the consistent interest and interaction of participants with religious symbolism. Intrusion of FBOs is a political way of rationalizing the work in certain sectors

that includes education. Neo-liberalism explains FBOs as another instrument of government to seek funds from the masses with intrusion of religion in the welfare areas of society that is, education and health. Faith therefore, has social, political, and philanthropic implications. Hefferan and Fogart(2010) reported the inherited problem in use of ‘faith’ as against religion or secular attempts; there are variations in studying the Christian faith and other secular efforts in America, Latin America and Africa. Authors argued for influence of such organizations in areas such as, health, psychotherapy which are community based. They also mentioned the role of anthropologist as: a ‘researcher, evaluator, mediator, facilitator, and a participant’ (p. 9) From anthropological perspective faith based organizations need to be studied at the level of community and its far reaching effects across the local community to international networking.

Stambach (2010) elaborates effects of Evangelical Christian faith with reference to schooling in East African nations around Mount Kilimanjaro: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. She found the impact of faith based schooling. Participants reported that at the schools, the pedagogy and faith intertwines. Faith is also understood and learnt like any other knowledge form at school and influence social action. Faith impacts gender roles, community life and changing views of participant on schooling mainly due to practices symbolizing ‘faith’ as religion.

Integral view of faith: A ‘developmental’ quality

The Mother (1929/2003) has explained ‘faith’ mostly as a personal virtue^{ix} that is an aid in Yoga- *sadhna*^x an individual takes up and also as religion (p. 17-18). Religion as per the Mother does not give the true conception of Divine or Spirituality, for that one has to see beyond individual and religious perception of the Divine. Faith is in the Divine and the goodness (Love, Protection, Will) associated with it. It is the sole key to do ‘Yoga’ and not to rely on existing ideas of religion, identity or culture. The Mother (1929/2003) elaborated that how one has to give up personal pretensions, preferences of religion and country and find one’s ‘true’ nature. She elaborates that in contemporary times where religion, culture and identification with an ideology give rise to difference of opinions and also turns out to be issues of conflict among different sects and within a sect; an individual can take up to solve these conflicts by finding one’s true nature identified with a country, religion, race or an idea. An individual’s resolution^{xi} ‘within’ to discover the ‘true’ nature and not identifying only with these opinion based conflicts will lead to harmony outside. Therefore, individuals

are ‘key’ to collective development. (It is an alternative way of looking at the relation of individual and collective development.) Integral worldview hints at the relational aspect of ‘individualism and collectivism’. It gives individual precedence to initiate the process of development, which would have direct correspondence to society. An individual has to self-reflect in order to, progress and to discover one’s ‘true’ nature. Faith is an instrument to allow one’s true nature to emerge in all the circumstances: it transforms or changes other individual, situations and even one’s own nature.

The Mother elaborates on faith mostly as she answers to the question of an individual that how can one overcome adverse forces, or situations which are impediment in the ‘good’ to be done. She mentions other important qualities as sincerity, aspiration, absolute calm, and above all an individual’s faith as help in the circumstances when contrary^{xii} happens. Contradiction to what an individual expects or it ‘seems to be contradiction’ for the individual who identifies with either viewpoint. Faith is relevant in these paradoxical situations.

Faith’s intensity and its level are behind creation of all the things, situations and actions around us. The Mother in her description of faith as human quality or virtue often stresses on relying on imagination than on mind to step into the realm of ‘Integral faith^{xiii}’. She gives example of faith that can cure illness and death. This needs ‘integral’ faith in all part of the beings- physical, vital, mental and deep in sub conscious. Faith can help cure of adversaries and illness, but only one has to imagine and not think from the mind alone. Integral faith needs to be established in thoughts, body, emotions, and finally in the cells of the body. Faith in good and healthy body along with ‘undisturbed repose and cheerfulness’ (the Collected Works of the Mother, vol iii 2003, p.89) act as protection against diseases. As a result of deep faith in the body, it can even overcome death. In the Mother’s view death as a psychological phenomenon implies challenge or impediment to physical and mental existence of human. Faith therefore, plays an important role in ‘evolution’ of human species. One can develop faith, which is perfect and without any doubt, if it is doubt it is not faith. This could be evident in our daily actions. If one searches for actions or thoughts which one does in life with perfect faith, it would be evident in what is created out of those actions and thoughts (based on deep faith); For example, trying out a new idea, a painting, sharing of view point out of faith, a pure faith without thought and opinions. A similar example one gets

in academics, Halpin (2001) argues for absolute hope in education and act of teaching. Faith could also be approached with virtues like hope, trust, confidence, belief.

The Mother also mentions faith as an independent force that exists and aids individuals in establishing what is divine or truth. The Mother (1929/2003) says that one shall be sure of the result that the Divine will give it,

“...The very intensity of your faith means that Divine has already chosen that the thing it points to shall be done. An unshakable faith is a sign of the presence of the Divine Will, an evidence of that shall be.”(in CWM vol iii. p. 97)

It is inevitable to have strong foothold on faith before taking up the challenges of ‘*sadhna*’.

The faith is always working, dynamic and an individuals’ awareness, consciousness is important to develop it and utilize it for one’s own development. That is part of the work one needs to do. Faith therefore, appears to be major factor or step in *Sadhna*. One feels the sudden faith, without any doubt in people and one needs to be in the same state of feeling in order to really abide by what their ‘inner’ faith told them initially. Faith is pure and firm as it stands not by mind alone but something from inner being. It may be shaken when the mind doubts. From the Yogic perspective the Mother mentions the importance to believe in the Masters and let the faith be in their ‘will’ for the individual development of human.

Extending the understanding of learning as unique human trait from the last chapter, Integral Yoga worldview highlighted individual’s role in navigating their development with ‘faith’ as the central quality. Even if an individual’s development is primacy in Integral Yoga view, the collective development relies on individual’s effort of development in bringing out collective development. The task of present research relies on the fact that collective development comes through individual development and vice-versa in Integral Education Schools.

Statement of the Research

Our research attempts to study Integral Education Institutions in two different environment (Ashram and Auroville) and the three schools. It aims to examine the ideas of individual development observed in the educational program followed at the schools. Our research studies various parameters as mentioned in the specific research questions below; it focuses on the experiences of ‘culture’ that is, life, ideals, goals, practices, conflicts or harmony of ideas to name a few, and how the participants of the Ashram and Auroville also accounted in their Integral education schooling programs. Central interest of this research is: the way in which the two institutes share their human development (individual and collective) ideas

with their respective schools and community around. The schooling and community life is also an avenue of developmental processes across the life span. The topic of Human Development through the dynamic process of education represented in 'schooling' and 'faith' of individuals is relevant interactive area. It observes the interaction of individual factor of faith (lived collectively) and individual development, which takes place in collective set up of 'schooling'

As a caveat it could be muddling task to raise the assumptions of a discipline (Human Development or Education) upfront, but with a 'worldview' like Integral Yoga as a reference point it is the foremost thing to do. This would influence the method of the study as well.

Rationale of the Study

Present research is based on the assumption that as an alternative ideology on human development the words, works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and practice of thought have implications on developmental basis of education which can be best understood by the study of conceptual underpinnings, practice of the idea and relating with the academic discourse. Integral Education is likely to strengthen the definition of individual development, as one has seen that there is a need of new models announced in *fin de siècle*. In present time human existence and development both individual and social, have surprised and overwhelmed indicating the need of substantive decisions that need to be made for the future. It becomes important to turn toward the settings where they claim to practice in some way the words and ideology of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

The research takes a 'dialogue' based approach in between disciplines like Human Development and Education, between ideas like Integral Yoga view and Human Behavior and theory and practice. It therefore, would enrich the discourse of the disciplines of Human Development and Education respectively especially at policy frameworks where these two meet often as conjoint variables. The research at its outset is interdisciplinary, which is need of the hour to draw our understandings beyond disciplines. The reality needs to be understood as a 'holistic, relational and towards oneness' that is, disciplines may aid each other rather than draw boundaries of subject and methods^{xiv}(interdisciplinary research). A clear understanding is more valuable from academic perspective of understanding the relation and for the practitioners to develop the insight. Reading of theoretical and policy

level arguments (as mentioned in chapter 1st) motivates the research to probe the relationship with the perspective of alternative ideology in the field. Fieldwork is likely to make some important inputs to how the individuals in a particular innovative setting around a novel idea live life and adopt processes, which are critical to their development.

Personal Quest

There is a deeper personal quest and conviction (faith) like all researchers have and implications for researcher's personal understanding of the research area. First was the growing dissatisfaction with the present status of education, reported in seminars, dialogue with fellow educationists which resulted in focus (or could be hype?) over the alternatives in education. Second was a feeling that humans have different needs both existential and phenomenological than what the life in a city, in a university or in a family has been offering. A glance at human existence in various cultures and societies made learning and education very promising and creative but that does not gel with principles of learning in the mainstream schools. This feeling of relational 'self' contrasted by the poor state of affairs, could be most likely due to changing needs of human existence and civilization, reported in the International Commission on Education (1996).

Conceptualization of the research: A journey

The idea of ethnography of an alternative ideological educational institute came much later, first it was just 're looking' the relationship by contrasting observations from education system in India with words of IE or theories of development. However there were very little signposts as the journey started, but somewhere there were deep discussions, exposure to the settings and the groups of individuals who have been re looking at the relationship. These discussions were spread unevenly like talk over a cup of tea, sometimes in workshops, gatherings on self-development. Insights were also there in the seminars in academics, which elaborated about the existence of human kind, which is 'promising', 'positive', 'beyond few variables' but need to be studied as an important trait of human behavior^{xv}.

The individuals in these settings or groups, described their life experiences (as parents, about relations, work, and problems of nation) in detail, analyzing the situation, and questioning it. There was stress to develop 'will power' to look for answers to the problems- personal or collective. The narratives led to emergence of a phenomenon and viewpoint, which would not fit either in the general way we discuss about life or in academic discourses. As a result, I

attempted for more exposure with the individuals who talk of life and human existence in probing, holistic manner, and seeking meaning in abstraction or alternatives than mere mundane reality of life. As these talks and discussions went on, 'will to learn' and to 'discuss' emerged as important human trait but equally and evidently important in different roles: parent, teacher, children to name a few to make sense of one's life with reference to events of the world and its conceptualization.

The perspective of research was eventually formulated to study a group with a vision and some qualitative changes they were trying to make in the daily events of their lives. The research is carried out with this conviction of searching the events, episodes, and issues in the life of individuals who wish to look at education and life in an alternative sense.

Main Research Question

Primary focus of research drawing from Anthropological perspective on education is to ask "What kind of schooling happens in the Integral schools?" One of the ways to understand schooling, which is centered on the participants' faith in the ideology of Integral Yoga, is to study it in relation to its parent organizations namely, the Ashram and Auroville. These two organizations stand as an exemplary of the practice of ideology or in case of these two as 'laboratories'^{xvi} for carrying out the experiment which is the view in 'practice' by the participants. Schools are set up with idea that the ideas laid by the Masters would see the light of practice in the future. The participants: teachers, students and parents would willfully engage in the practice of the ideas.

Participants' willful engagement would result in 'multiple manifestations' of various ideas: learning, schooling, rituals, human relations, important stages of life of these individuals whether they choose to remain there or move away from the settings. Eventually an alternative and pragmatic view of life is likely to emerge; it challenges the idea that divorces ideology and its effects on different stages or aspects of human life. the main research questions is that 'what happens in the Integral Schools which act as 'multiple' manifestation of the worldview?'

Specific Research Questions

Following questions exhibit the relation aspect of HD and Education reflected in these areas-

1. What is 'structure' of schooling that is spatial, knowledge forms or learning opportunities knitted in 'frame' of time?

- How are participants placed in relation with this structure of schooling? What is School spatial and temporal organization vis-à-vis learning that is- physical spaces, organization of learning over the spaces and time?
 - What is the relation of participants with the spaces and time during the learning processes?
2. How do the schools address the issues of 'faith' and in which forms in relation to larger organizations of Ashram & Auroville over the spaces and different human relations? What are the 'rituals' and 'practices' of school?
 - Understanding faith of the individuals, What is the nature of relations- between individuals (in terms of family): and with their parent organizations, &
 - What meaning they hold for the choice of life, practices they are involved in and their belief in the way of life?
 3. What are the learning practices and opportunities in the classrooms and otherwise, the 'nature of learning' involved in the classrooms in the schools?
 - How the learning opportunities are organized domain and age wise? What are the scope of various domains across the age? What are norms for these two domains? Who create the norms?
 4. What is the relation of innovative world, its 'boundary' with outside world- visitors, parents, volunteers, performers & people who decide to live independently?
- (*Questions four analyzes the data and themes across all the three questions?)

Endnotes

ⁱ Mainly found in the efforts of Inter-faith dialogue and works of Houston, Smith (2001) in his work Why Religion Matters?

ⁱⁱ "...the Supramental education will progress from above downwards, its influence spreading from one state of being to another until at last the physical is reached. This is last transformation will only occur visibly when the inner states of being have already been considerably transformed. It is therefore quite unreasonable to try to recognize the presence of the Supramental by physical appearances." (The Mother (1952/2002) On Education, p. 38)

ⁱⁱⁱ Kumar (2011) (mentioned earlier in the same sub section) used similar method of reflexivity as involved in 'meditation' to study the concept of curriculum in education through the writings of Jiddu Krishnamurthy and Macdonald.

^{iv} "Progress guided by the soul and not subject to habits, conventions, or preconceived ideas." The Mother on Education (1963/2002) p. 171

^v Thapan (1991) also addresses Krishnamurthy's ideology as world-view and way of life while addressing it initially as ideology. Gupta (2011) also addresses Integral view of human development as worldview while choosing to work out a metapsychological perspective in her research. It explains the existential reality of

individual with reference to the world's reality and research here tries to draw from different paradigms and explains their ranges of being wide in explaining the reality of the world- traditional, modern, post-modern and integral way of reality. As per Adam's research each world-view is able to capture a certain aspect of our reality with reference to the world's reality.

^{vi} This strengthens the discussion in the last chapter where domains are part of system of individual's development- a view Integral Education put forth as against the domain based developmental view which disintegrates identity of individual.

^{vii} Issues of faith are much deeply intertwined or engraved in the life of humans sharing a quote from a fellow anthropologist Peter Van der Werf, dated October 11, 2012- "SYMBOLS AND MYSTERY *First we learn language, calculation, graphs, religious representations, artistic expressions, scientific classifications and other symbols that are developed by our ancestors to manage life a bit easier. Meanwhile we may keep pondering about questions of life, death and other such mysteries, and like to learn giving up words, classifications and other symbol systems in order to get more understanding of those mysteries. Rational focus can help our earthly survival. Letting go can make us familiar with deep mysteries. But letting go may endanger our earthly survival and rational focus may frustrate our mysteries calling. Perhaps the art of living is to adequately move between rationality and letting go.*"

^{viii} Religion, Faith and Spirituality has been used interchangeably in these researches. This research wishes to highlight the difference between three and values these three symbolize. These may overlap in an individual but the terms have different connotation. During a personal communication with Prof Dollahite in 2005 at MS University of Baroda the researcher discusses this viewpoint that spirituality and faith has to be seen 'free' from any religion.

^{ix} Mention of faith as religion in the words of the Masters is rare.

^x *Sadhna* could be succinctly described as the life-long consciousness approach that individual takes up for evolutionary perspective with a subject. In Indian spirituality or art forms the learning is often referred as *sadhna* or *tapasya*. In case of Integral Yoga of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo the very purpose is to change the usual human responses to challenges, problems or conflicts towards a harmonious ideal. It is an ongoing process of deep individual development that takes an individual through many paths, difficulties and is step towards perfection. Sethi (1998) mentions it as one of the key process for Supramental education- a key idea of Integral Education.

^{xi} The resolution within should come with acknowledgement of 'descend' of a force leading to evolution of humanity. Descend implies "Each time that something of the Divine Truth and Divine Force comes down to manifest upon earth, some change is affected in the Earth's atmosphere. In the descend, those who are receptive are awakened to some inspiration from it, some touch, some beginning of site." The Mother (1929/2003) CWM vol iii, p.79.

^{xii} Contrary is with reference to personal growth and now with reference to what I want as an egoistic desire or need. Adverse forces are forces of sub conscious a part of mind that desires, want and is full of vices or doubts. It needs a detail elaboration from a Yogic perspective.

^{xiii} "...faith is the movement of the soul whose knowledge is spontaneous and direct....even if the whole world denies and brings forward a thousand proofs to the contrary, still it knows by an inner knowledge, a direct perception that can stand against everything, a perception by identity. The knowledge of the psychic which is concrete and tangible, a solid mass. You can also bring it into your mental, into your vital, into your physical and then you have an integral faith." (The Mother (1930/2003) CWM, vol iii, p 152)

^{xiv} <http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/> is one forum where inter-disciplinary researches are form the basis of contemporary times.

^{xv} ref: NAOP, 2007 session on 'Indian Psychology'. Panelists: A Pranjape; Cornelissen, M; Varma, S.

^{xvi} The Mother uses this term for the Ashram, but often the experimental nature of Auroville also makes it fall in the category of lab inclined towards the experimental nature of the practice. Same usage of the word lab is my own usage and not that of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. See: Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust (2000) for the explanation by Sri Aurobindo 'the Character of the Ashram: A Laboratory of Yoga' p 9

Chapter 3rd

METHODOLOGY

Two thoughts influenced the entire process of data collection and engagement with data; first is Ethnography, which is the research design to observe the practice of Integral view in schools at the Ashram at Pondichéry and other two schools at Auroville. Ethnography highlighted the multi-layered reality instead of generalizations of findings from the field. Second is Integral Yoga's view of reality, knowledge and methods to experience the reality to analyze the issues emerging from the data. Ethnography holds certain epistemological, ontological standpoints and so does Integral Yoga. Research Design weaved both in order to seek answers to the research questions. It is relevant to mention epistemology and ontology according to Integral (Yoga) worldview (Gupta, 2011; Thapan, 2000 & Adams, 2006). Since, Integral view is also a paradigm that construes the issues of individuality, reality, knowledge and identifies processes of 'knowing' reality. The view has been an 'alive' thought at the field practiced affirmatively by the participants while the researches engaged in ethnography to collect data. It is also relevant since Integral Yoga is the chosen (world) view of life by the participants and they tend to practice at varying level. The view of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo is the declared 'reality' of the field.

First section of the chapter describes field and schools in it. Next section of chapter builds the argument of 'Ethnography' developing over its use in contemporary times and elaborates on its relevance for present research. The contemporary view of ethnography allows elaborating on culture of the field as confluence of different factors. The culture of this field is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual since the participants are individuals of different cultural backgrounds. It is in relation to Integral Yoga worldview and gives rise to 'collective' practices. Schooling is the main and important collective practice, which the participants engage in. Rest of the chapter details outsteps of the field, method, data collection techniques, analysis of data, and ethical considerations required in the field.

Description of the Field

The field comprises of three schools, one is from Sri Aurobindo Ashram and two from Auroville at Pondichéryⁱ. Pondichéry is a union territory, and French colony situated in Tamil Nadu in South India (see: Annexure 3.1b). It has often been referred as 'sleepy town'ⁱⁱ. Pondichéry has Tamils as native population but Indian and Western individuals and their

cultures cannot be overlooked. The French left Pondichéry amicably in 1970 unlike the British who left India after a freedom struggle in 1947. There are many signs of French legacy, which persists in Pondichéry. Among the most conspicuous are the names of the roads written in French '*Rue...*', the uniform of policemen, names of restaurants, and the statue of Dupleix on seaside. Among the official symbols are French Institute called in French as *L'institut Francais*, schools like, *Lycee, Calvé*, which has French as its medium, French certificate upon passing from these schools and the institute for French soldiers known as *Foyer Soldat*. Many Tamil individuals also have dual citizenship of India and France, and they still take part in democratic process of France.

Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville are multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, since they attract visitors and residents at Pondichéry from all over India and rest of the world. 'Ashram' as it is colloquially referred to, is officially Sri Aurobindo Ashram. It was officially started in 1926 when several followers of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo started living there. Auroville is an international township (intentional community) with vision of human unity. Auroville was formed in 1970 by the Mother and its inception was marked with a ceremony in which people of different nationalities put handful of soil of their respective countries in an earthen urn, as the symbol of international unity. The institutions at the outset declared values of Integral Yoga of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as their central aim of all the activities of life. The two institutions have one of the visions to be part of 'evolutionary' process to attain Supramental consciousness (Annexure 3.2 (a & b): for goals of the Ashram and Auroville). Ashram and Auroville are intentional communities and therefore, 'restricted' institutions. Joining any program depends upon an individual's commitment to the vision, to its principles and to the practices. Individual's commitment is not totalitarian. Since, the institutions' vision has component of individual freedom and choice to work, to be there and chart their individual journey or path of 'progress' and 'perfection'.

The Ashram and Auroville have several units of works or departments (see: Annexure 3.3). Out of all other departments or units, the school came out as one of the significant and vast department of Ashram and Auroville. Jass (2004) highlighted the critical link of SAICE with the Ashram and Ashram connected individuals. In everyday usage of addressing the life at the Ashram, participants often referred, with respect to what is 'not' Ashram's way of life (also in Auroville) as 'outside'. The demarcation was done for the life, the ideas, actions and

participants contextualized these as something happening ‘here’ - “*it happens here....., we think here....., oh! The outside world...*” The Ashram and Auroville maintain its interface with the flux and ways of ‘outside’ world through various other departments however, the school being an intense stage among all other department. The intensity was highlighted since at SAICE many ex-students came back to the school for their children’s admission to the same school and relived the issues of faith in the schooling, and culture around the school.

Schools

There are three schools, which I chose for the study these are, first is ‘Ashram school’, its official name is Sri Aurobindo International Centre for Education (henceforth: SAICE). It started with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo as guides. The Ashram school is located just opposite the *Samadhi* of the two masters or *gurus*. The main school building with its office is just opposite the *Samadhi*, which is held as ‘symbol’ of deep devotion for most of the *Ashramites* (Ashram inmates) and devotees (individuals who have reverence for the Masters or the Ashram).

The Mother recognized ‘education’ as a very important part of Integral Yoga facing even few challenges. The school was initially meant for few students but gradually the number of students expanded. The conception of school has a popular anecdote that the Mother decided to have children as part of the Ashram when people insisted on being there in the year 1942, however the formal opening was in December, 1943ⁱⁱⁱ. The school started with informal teaching and learning of certain languages and other skill based works, it maintained its informal character for long time and was formally registered as SAICE in December 1951. The anniversary of the school is celebrated on December 2nd considering the school’s inception from 1943. During the fieldwork the school had approximately 450:150 student-teacher ratio.

The second school Light Bearer (Henceforth: LB) is relatively a new school situated in Auroville and has started approximately twelve years back. Present team has been managing it for the last seven years. An ex-student of SAICE was one of the team leaders. LB calls itself ‘free progress’ school, a concept given by the Mother and elaborated by *Tanmayda* (as he is referred by the *Ashramites*) in practice and writing^{iv}. ‘Free Progress’ is education for the soul, where the freedom given to the child leads to getting in touch with his/her soul and find

his or her true nature. It is the most challenging concept of Integral Education and several times reinvented and put to practice at SAICE as well. The school had 60:15 student: teacher approximately.

The Third school 'The AID' was located at Auroville. It was the first school for the children from various villages of Auroville; currently there were few more schools. Auroville had villages surrounding it, which did not form its part. Parents of many children who were studying at the Aid were from these villages. They had been dependent for their livelihood on Auroville and Aurovillians. The Aid was first of the initiatives of the Ashram for 'community welfare' at Auroville. During fieldwork there were around 100 students, thirty teachers and other help for manual work in the school. The school is recognized by Tamil board and children take exams to get a certificate from the board.

The oldest of three schools was SAICE, then the Aid and then the Light Bearer. Light Bearer is the youngest of three. Since it was managed by an ex-student of SAICE, the school children and teacher visited the Ashram, ex-students of SAICE and the Ashram trustees as part of the annual organized by Auroville visited LB. It was valuable to have LB since the relation or comparison as examples of Integral Education institutes was easier. As a researcher I did not search for the reference points of Integral Education and what an Integral Education institute should have; they were openly talked about or compared from the theory given by the Masters or what happened at the Ashram school as an exemplary.

Participants

The participants were students; teachers and parents at the schools and at the Ashram and Auroville. The Ashram and Auroville have further categorized them. Categorization or classification was colloquial but often registered or recorded by the Ashram or Auroville. It helped these institutes to organize entry and distribution of services to various kinds of participants.

Students: Many *students* at SAICE are related to the Ashram inmates or most likely their parents studied or are settled at Pondichéry. Students in schools have familial relations with the adults in Ashram and Auroville. Students at LB were categorized as Auroville children, children of guests or children of friends of Auroville. LB came up with a classification of children, where children were of Aurovillians or born at Auroville and of volunteers or of guests. The children of latter formed an 'initiation' group at the School. Initiation group

children were the most challenging and interesting group since they had wide range of age and mostly did not know enough English or French to communicate with the rest of the group. Initiation group class had six or seven students. It centered on learning language, some individual time spent with a teacher or volunteers in the school and interactions also involved on playing games. However, in the meetings at LB, we always questioned that why are we erecting categories like ‘outside’ world, but nonetheless it was important to deal with the Auroville school board to give the categories of students, because of the differential fee that a child has to pay as per their category.

Children at the AID came from the nearby villages or few were children of Aurovillians who were Tamil. But the latter was very small in number and the classes I observed during my fieldwork none of the child was from Auroville. There was only one child from European family who came to the school, as I observed the parents dropping and picking the child. I was told that the parents want the child to learn Tamil so they sent the child to the AID. It also had children of labors who had migrated to work at Auroville. Among them were families from Nepal known as ‘*bahadurs*’ or ‘*Gorkhas*’ in India. The children knew Hindi, picked up Tamil and adjusted with rest of the group.

Teachers: at SAICE were mainly Ashram inmates and volunteers, the former found a bigger chunk of teacher population; however, volunteers always found their way into the system and were welcomed for assistance. Volunteers were mainly parents or ex-students or individual devotees or visitors like me. All the teachers were on non-payment basis but got food and medical facilities at the Ashram.

Teachers at LB were mainly Aurovillians, and volunteers who had come to experience lifestyle at Auroville. Many parents as ‘newcomer’ to Auroville joined the LB as volunteer. Many ex-students of LB and SAICE volunteered as teachers or some administrative help at the schools. However, at LB to get remuneration charges for them was not possible. The Aid had many *Aurovillians* as teachers but there were also teachers who were not *Aurovillians* and were paid^v. At the Aid I interacted more with *Aurovillians* and volunteers; not much with the teachers who were of Tamil and came from adjoining towns. They were not part of the classes I observed and also came from town which was not linked to the Ashram or Auroville.

Parents or Familial Relations: of the participants was a conspicuous feature and way of introduction that the participants reported. For example, introduction of oneself begin with I am someone's daughter/son, grandson/daughter, niece, siblings and even grandniece/nephew. A good number of the students have familial links with the Ashram inmates at SAICE giving it a unique cohort and sub-cohorts of families to study. At LB mainly parents volunteered part-time or were full time teachers. Many parents or grandparents of children at the Aid worked for Auroville as technicians, workers and as manual help at the school. The study focused more on students and teachers, opinion of teachers and sometimes of other participants like visitors, but not of servants *chinnamma* or simply *ammās* (as 'help' in school), the latter were not addressed directly^{vi}.

Ethnography

Ethnography entails freedom of different methodological inclusion in the research design. Wide array of methods under the umbrella term of ethnography makes it a comprehensive research design (Park Ethnography Program, n.d.) and as a design it is open to the use of different techniques (Dalal, 2011). Main method of Ethnography has been Participant observation. Participant observation or Field work is identifying feature of any ethnographic work. The idea is to know the field as an 'insider' well and to experience what the people in the field are doing. Participant Observation means to participate in the everyday activities in the field and become as the participants are—

"The reality we attempt to explicate requires that we put ourselves in a position to interact closely with our informants, for as long as possible, in as many social contexts as possible."

(Smith, 1992, p. 194)

Ethnographic studies are also very important insight into conceptualization and identifying various problems of Human Development. The problems are mainly due to reasons such as, upsurge of post-positivism, history and philosophy of science which has changed the view of looking at scientific concepts; subjectivity of individuals that gets lost in the relation of two variables; and internal debate of discipline (of Human Development) over epistemological issues and indiscriminate application of 'objectivity of Science' to research in the discipline (Jessor, 1996). On the other hand, anthropologists who study human behavior (including developmental issues) primarily focus to paint the picture of reality with its fineness and details as 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973).

Ethnography analyzes the detail observations with reference to theoretical framework (Willis, 2000) which could answer several questions left unanswered by research designs and methods inspired by positivism. At the level of everyday practice developmentalists, educationists, and teachers need to be able to bring in changes and not see things merely as cause and effect since causes are largely out of their hands owing to the complexity of context. Many times ‘meaning’ is central concern of adopting ethnography against the standard quantitative method of developmental sciences (Shweder in Modell, 1996). Meaning is how individuals define, act and interpret different actions and settings in school or in any social system. Ethnography involves the techniques to think, imagine, and visualize the relation of these causes.

Ethnography in Changing Times

Ethnography as a method (or design)^{vii} in area of social sciences aligns with several schools of thoughts of social reality or human behavior. Harrington (1982) states the parameters and relevant paradigms ethnographers have been studying and the same have undergone many changes over the years. The present study draws from the works of Eisenhart (2001), Marcus (1995) and Ogbu (1981) for understanding ethnography. Eisenhart(2001) mentions ‘ethnography of conflicts’ that implies to highlight the disagreements that one sees and it is not only important to look at patterns of reality in a field. She raises the question that the work of ethnography is to describe the field with neat categories or is it to highlight the misfit of descriptions and opinions due to presence of so many views in and around the field? In case of educational ethnography culture is not cohesive, comprehensive states Eisenhart (2001) and cites authors like Ray McDermott (McDermott &Gospodinoff, 1979), John Ogbu (1974, 1978), and the sociologist Hugh Mehan (Mehan,1979; Mehan, Hertweck, &Meihls, 1986) to elucidate ‘that political and economic factors, as well as culture’, were sources of conflict between students and teachers in school. Apple (cited in Smith, 1992) argued that the confluence of child’s culture and culture of schooling results in conflict. Heath (1996) cited in Eisenhart refers to trouble of changing living patterns, effect of capitalism and industrialization on studying a culture; it becomes difficult to describe culture as monolithic whole especially where there is cultural, political and economic confluence in contemporary times. Marcus (1995) acknowledges the role of ethnography in changing times in terms of displacement of cultures, upcoming technologies and relevant existential issues of human,

and many other issues that upsurge in the field. However, being true to any classic ethnography, this research also unfolds its own journey and methods apart from following the contemporary view of ethnography especially about describing culture. Fisher(2009) argues that it is important to mention that how any methodology unfolds and it is not to identify only with classical Anthropology that focuses on intricacies of field work, notes taking and romanticism alone.

Emerging sites and changing levels

Our research relies on certain views that enlarge education from the purview of schooling as an activity carried out in closed boundary of classrooms in a school. Eisenhart (2001) cites the work of Nespor highlighting the networks and intersections of different culture- school, home and other factors like market and society in order to describe the schools they were studying-

“:... Instead of treating the school as a container filled with teacher cultures, student subgroups, classroom instruction, and administrative micropolitics.... (schooling is) extensive in space and time, fluid in form and content; as intersections of multiple networks shaping cities, communities, schools, pedagogies, and teacher and student practices...- (1997, p. xiii)”

(Nespor’s in ‘Tangled up Spaces’ cited in Eisenhart, 2001, p 23)

Ogbu(1981) presents *macro ethnography* and *multi-level* ethnography to widen the view of education and link it with other institutions in a social set up; this applies well to study the field. The field in our study also does not remain fixed at one or two sites; it tries to find the linkages between different sites and the idea running behind it. To quote,

George Marcus (1995, 1998) calls "multi-sited ethnography." ... designed around chains paths threads, conjunctions or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographers establishes some form of literal physical presence with an explicit posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (1995 p . 105)

(Eisenhart, 2001, p 22)

The main feature in this research is to study schooling with respect to various age group (mainly of children), and their respective learning activities within the boundary walls of schools and classrooms. However participant observation with an openness to explore ideas and to ‘be’ in the field allowed to widen the schooling from walls of classrooms to the cross roads, families, events and other religious and cultural functions participants thronged together like: Christmas celebrations, *garba*, Aug-15 etc. Each of the three schools in the

study has its own rituals and practices to do the same. With reference to schooling the obvious sites may seem to be classrooms alone but the sites where schooling spread were homes, streets, playground, the Ashram, restaurants or researcher's house or even a market place in Delhi where the symbols or products were associated with the Ashram or Auroville. Choice of methods happened with relevance to the fact that the field had a central vision in its actions, intellect and emotions, the data draws from the actions, meaning practices, products or objects which have relevant symbolism in the lives of the participants.

There were discussions on educational issues over a long walk or while working for a collective activity or on dining table or while in the kitchen helping in the cooking. The discussions would be about a particular student's behavior and background and other relevant issues. Since the schools had been part of the larger institutions, the Ashram and Auroville with its innovative structure and life, it was imperative to throng different places physically and intellectually during the fieldwork. Our research believes that these schools function with other challenges of a normal schooling as discussed in the last chapter that construes the phenomenon of schooling while the belief of Integral as relevant worldview effect the existential issues at the field.

Emergence of various sites and issues over there is closely connected with the complexity of reality and concepts that is, macro, micro formal or micro substantive^{viii}. The present study in field is 'macro substantive' which expands on life of two institutions the Ashram and Auroville in relation to schooling these two have, the communities around it and its various facets. Even micro facets of everyday life were seen through the lens of 'macro' concept like Faith with reference to the present indicators of relation of human development and education that is, domains, norms, age specificity with reference to learning activity. These had been explored in dynamism of individual meaning and culture of the Ashram and of Auroville. However our research moved along the three levels: Micro-formal aspect of field was relevant since the focus was life of participants linked with 'schooling' of two Integral worldview institutions^{ix}. Research could have chosen to be micro formal only since most of the data unfolds about the everyday life, action, spaces, opinions, discussions, arguments, learning of individuals across the life span. It shares the vantage point of micro-substantive since the researcher lived like any adult who throng the field and be part of many processes like volunteer services, eating at community dining areas, participating in the programmes,

availing services, attending study circles to name a few offered to other adults on staying at Auroville or Ashram^x.

The present study acknowledges in the concept of ‘multi-site ethnography’ by summarizing in the following ways-

- Relevance of macro-theoretical concepts like Faith in present study, along with domains, norms (which are widely applied concepts of Human Development) is main focus of field study. The broader conceptual ideas and the disciplinary assumptions find manifestation in the field at several levels which the research studied.
- Mobility to go to places and choose different sites, different ideas, levels, disciplines (cross- disciplinary) and meet different people to answer questions. Traveling was imperative where sites were separated by physical distance, new spaces in the sites and the factors emerged within the larger site give clear picture of manifestation and ‘interplay’ of concepts in the field.
- Participant Observation focused on different or similar application of the same idea in the similar time but different spaces that is three schools and other places even beyond Pondichéry. The research answers the questions that how participants (parents, teachers and students) address the ideology in different alternative schools in contemporary times.
- Methodology is a recursive ‘pedagogical process’, it originates as an idea and need to be probed through use of existing or newly defined techniques. In the present purview of the research, therefore, to study alternative institutions and their processes and products is journey of unfolding of methods to embark upon.
- A very important feature was reading the various writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. An active engagement of the researcher with the writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in self-study mode or in discussion with various experts^{xi} was a constant feature before, during and even after the data collection. This activity helped understand the reality of the lives in field more deeply and participate with them. Reading of the works with the Ashram inmates coupled with participation in kind of activities available for volunteers (in various departments of the Ashram or at various sections in Auroville) who come to the institution both formally and informally added to naturalistic way of knowing the way of life.

Culture at the Field

The immediate cultural currents in field can be identified as multicultural and multi ethnic due to presence of individuals from different parts of the world. Broader cultural factor is the Integral Yoga worldview on which the institutions are based; which results in a 'discourse' of education and human development indicating at new paradigms, new concerns, issues or concepts at national and international level. In the field there were various institutes' regional and at international level which were trying to popularize or spread or work upon the vision through publications, workshops, lectures and seminars. I did not study them directly however these often came across as individuals shared about these or through email or in the newsletters.

The field and its experiments give an outlook of relevant 'innovative' schooling practices to make sense of. Exceptionality of the field is owing to several factors like, Pondichéry is unique due to its history and presence of the Ashram (Exhibition on Sep 15-30, 2012 of Cartier Bresson's pictures of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondichéry at New Delhi) and even Auroville.

Culture in present study will also be 'schooling culture' as identified as sociologically meaningful phenomenon around certain 'rituals and practices' (Thapan, 1996 & Stambach, 2001) 'meaning making' of activities (schooling, education and its various components, and life in (and around) school and life outside by teachers, students, parents and other participants of research. For present research culture at the field is existence of multiple views, confluence of life within (generational changes) at Ashram and Auroville and between; life referred as 'outside' world- changing social and economic conditions at Pondichéry.

Culture of the field also signifies economic, social and even emotional element of the participants' feeling and their 'negotiations' on being part of this 'experiment' of humankind. Their monetary, social and other faith or non-faith based reasons to be part of the experimental 'way of life'. Studying culture of confluence with wide variety in life would also mean to me the relation of respective individual cultures and the space they share with each other.

Epistemology in the Integral Worldview

After defining the various factors of culture of the field, it is important to draw on the epistemological basis of Integral Worldview. The research kept in reference the Integral framework of approaching knowledge. The view highlighted what coming together of languages, individuals at one place indicated. Integral view of knowledge and reality allowed looking at reality of participants' life beyond patterns, categories, and classification of Reality as different languages, ethnicity, and opinions. The view allowed experiencing the different views not as conflicts but as dynamic reality of the life at field both at Ashram and Auroville which share characteristics of an 'intentional' community. The conflicts among views would only be an appearance that can be synthesized to emerge a new view.

Synthesis is possible since each view has its place in the 'whole' reality. Construction of knowledge in Integral View is seen as 'Being' and 'Becoming' (Sri Aurobindo in Gupta, 2011) rather some static fundamentals, principles or hypothesis. Therefore same phenomenon in the field is likely to have multiple manifestations and layers of reality of a theme. The layers have to be seen as part of 'whole' or moving towards some holistic sense indicating 'oneness' in the understanding. The 'one' thought therefore, becomes 'many' in several forms of interpretations of individuals (there is a possibility of error in some understandings that cannot be ruled out. Since the research at first place is not judgmental that is to find the errors was not the main objective). The understanding about the field and research questions emanate from different identified sources of information, perception and views (see: annexure 3.5). Research views that a phenomenon in the field finds its manifestation in views, objects, texts, and their placement also matters.

Steps in the Fieldwork

- ***Establishing relations*** is the most critical part of any ethnography. I used personal acquaintance as the method to gain entry. Then as the practice at the Ashram and Auroville, I was left to find entry at respective levels: school, individuals, community, and work. 'Volunteer work' was a useful method to gain entry and establish relations than just observations or interviews at the outset. From an ethnographic perspective this was the most natural way to gain entry. Due to following the regular method of entry, I was accepted and participants felt less suspicious of my entry into their classrooms. Making friends while working was easy and to start working with anyone

was equally possible. (Both the sites had welcoming attitude and curiosity over new presences and especially that of the researcher.) Yet I was looked as a spy of outside world, which I decided to incorporate sometimes as ‘respect’ towards or other times ‘objectivity’ or ‘neutrality’ from the *Sadhaks’ Sadhna*.

I could visit different departments depending on availability of time and permission granted. I choose to work and to observe at the same time. My main work at the Ashram was at the ‘Corner House’ (mess for students and teachers) to help in the kitchen. I used to observe classes and to help sometimes at *L’avenier* (Lower primary section of SAICE: introduced in next chapter). Apart from this I was a part time volunteer at LB where I used to teach. The time at AID was spent during initial fieldwork. The acquaintance was made with one of the caretakers of the school during a seminar in Delhi on Auroville.

Initial field work gave a feel of the space which is important to move, manage time and also record observations. This was done through field visits and observation of the practices and discussion and interviews with teachers, parents and students there before the conceptualization of research proposal.

- ***Erecting boundaries-*** Field work in ethnography means to identify a physical space with reference to certain idea of research questions in mind of researcher. Borzak (1981) says that field never exists out there but is created by the researcher. And in case of an institution, at an obvious level it involves the challenges of gaining entry, building rapport and complex position of researcher vis-à-vis the field. In case of school it may seem that school is a closed boundary, but the researcher when follows the participants, break the boundaries and create new sites other than classrooms. And each form of new data in a different setting was looked with curiosity and serendipity that how participants related it with lifestyle and education. For example, riding as pillion on an ex-student’s bike and discussing his memories of ‘multi ability classrooms’ and issues of age was considered relevant from the perspective of a particular theme and also in general how schooling and its memories held the students back to the field.
- ***Timing the field work-*** One of the characteristic feature of Ethnography is long association with the field, ideas, and people to draw certain statements about phenomenon under study, which becomes very costly on time and money. Why the

time spent by the researcher has to be long in school? It allowed my access to different sites of school and events which were not possible in short time or stay (Geoff and Tormon in Jeffery & Tormon, 2004). The present field work started in June 2009 for a month, December 2009, October, 2010 and intensive field work was taken from December 2010 to March 2012.

Techniques

Hymes (1977) raises the view that ethnography means trying to answer the questions that arise in understanding schooling and its culture by use of different methodological tools. Researcher used techniques like Interviews, Conversations and Dialogues, Discussions, Actions, field notes.

- ***Conversations*** are most important aspect of ethnographic data apart from observation since it gives an opportunity to researcher to co-construct (Jeffery in Jeffery & Tormon, 2004) the reality together. I remember when I used to take interviews during my first fieldwork at the Ashram School, I would rather break into conversations talking about education at the Ashram as an alternative set up and what usually happens in schools outside. These were the points where interviews or simple conversations broke into 'dialogue'. There were several such incidents especially in LB where the researcher and the teachers' co constructed the reality of schooling. Since there my participation was more as a teacher, the reflection was more. Interactions were largely informal, with an individual or with a group; with children and various adults of field. It is very important to understand various processes involved in ethnographic study to establish dialogue or identify opportunities to dialogue with various participants.
- ***Conflicts (cultural dilemmas) and action***- From discussions and dialogues flow conflicts during daily transactions, which a present culture or a community experienced. The researcher's point of view on those issues mattered. For example, in present research, conflicts were common like, how to understand the child's behavior, difference of opinion for an action, problem with construction at school to name a few and so were discussions regarding a particular student or what to teach or react to response of children to what they were taught (ref chapter 6 for details).
- ***Caveat***- However, one has to draw a thin line between information in these discussions and gossip (Thapan, 1991). A discussion might also end in difference of opinion or

conflict and sometimes supported by some action not unanimous. In such cases it was found relevant to follow the discussions in relation to its criticality to education and opinion of both the sides mattered.

- **Interviews**-were a different forum of conversation for ‘formal’ validation of data. Development of a closed ended and open-ended interview schedule (See : Annexure 3.4) as survey of participant profiles for specific issues of faith and rituals or names of individuals or names of houses. The areas addressed in the interview schedule were Individual’s relation with the Ashram, Auroville (vision and practice) – as indicator of personal belief; Relation through work, faith, family members; Linguistic development as a feature of multi-lingualism; Status of family members and their link with the Ashram. Open ended questions were introduced or posed when respondents wanted to talk about an issue from their experience of life for example, physical education, experience with any teacher to name a few. Formal interviews were also means to reach out to individuals who were not part of the field work on daily basis but I met them at different places of field. Interviews were conducted in the houses of Ashram inmates, in classroom, dining hall, or at eating joints outside where the younger generation love to visit. Interviews were last technique of data collection, after that any conversation with students or teachers, if required for a theme. Conversations were also done after analysis with theoretical and reflective viewpoint was done and also once again when the draft of thesis was getting ready. It was made clear to the respondent that this conversation or information was to validate what I had been observing and discussing with them. Since questionnaires and interviews were not part of culture or ideology of Integral school of thought as the participants often insisted upon, the researcher took care not to offend but administer the questionnaire in relaxed and ‘conscious’ manner^{xii}. I also informed the respondents about what research is concluding. Eventually it was also enjoyment I had, to interview individuals who wanted to be involved, since others were interviewed and they were curious to be interviewed as well. Or sometime with friends with whom close friendship was enjoyed, I made my dinner as their responsibility, this can be described in the Ashram lingo ‘*researcher bullied them!*’
- **Recording Field Notes**- Observations, Discussions and Conversations mainly form part of field notes, which is a record book of everything of what happens in the field (Sanjek,

1990). The first forms of field notes were typed on computer. And then in between, due to demands of field I chose to write on small scrolls or cards (which I got from Ashram as the waste paper to be reused). Field notes even spread to dairies, note books, and small-chit of papers. For the sake of safety most of them were scanned and saved as 'soft copy' on the computer. Field notes were mainly descriptive. Personal Reflections were about the researcher in the field; it is important to keep personal or reflective and descriptive field notes as separate (Sanjek, 1990). 'Theoretical reflections' about the observations initially formed part of descriptive field notes in the same text. These were discontinued since it was important to allow the data to flow freely only as descriptions and any other theoretical or personal reflections were recorded separately.

- ***Video, Audio Recording, Photographs and Other objects*** - Photography or video recording was prohibited in the Ashram and Auroville because of ethical reasons. Where ever allowed and possible photos were taken to gather visible document of phenomenon. Photographs were good for pictorial memory and record. Sometimes photographs by the schools were also used.

Other objects of particular relevance were plants, food products like *kaju* (cashew nut) toffees, Christmas cakes, brochures, printed articles, clothes, out of which list was generated of products that are perishable and non-perishable and relevant themes associated with these objects.

Organization of the Data: Sources and Nature

Foremost source of data were field notes, at first the researcher noted down all what was observed or talked about, which was more 'general'. Second source of data was more focused observations of classrooms and teaching experience and observation of other events at the field. This is what is further divided into primary and secondary. I call **primary source** of data, in which I also include magazines- journals (of the time I was there), text books, formal meetings, photos, video or audio recordings done by me. It also included objects from the fields organized as **perishable** item like *kaju* toffees, cakes, bread, soup, puffed rice all of which formed part of everyday living at the field. Some of the items were strongly and overtly connected with the Ashram or Auroville like incense sticks, *kaju* toffees or Christmas cake mainly with the Ashram; clothes, perfumes, soaps with Auroville.

Secondary source of data is the data when I was not present at the event like the anecdotes about rituals and practices, incidents about the Masters or about other individual collected through informal discussions with the participants. These discussions were recounting of an incident either in the past by some ex-student or a practice that ex-students used to indulge in, but he/she might no longer do the same. Incidents about oneself were given more preference than incident about other individuals; since latter could be a gossip and was likely to have ethical considerations since it is the third party which was being discussed. Care was taken when it was a negative or condescend^{xiii} piece of information about an individual or incident or place. Secondary data also included experience of a student of what happened in his class during the field work, because I was not there in the class.

Relevance of ‘records’ that is, the publications of the Ashram cropped up during the fieldwork. First, one of a very senior teacher (and who had studied there from the time of the Mother) suggested me to look at one of the journals, *Vers L’avenir* which was maintained by the students but had been discontinued. Second occasion was when participants made reference to their photographs in the bulletin, articles, and other journals related to the Ashram or Auroville. Photographs in these journals involved memories or connection with the institutes. It became imperative to refer them and find traces of data for certain themes. Lastly, I added **semi-structured interview**, which is administered on forty ex-students of the Ashram on aspects drawn from the participant observation. Research associate and I used laptop to fill in the responses.

Data Analysis

A major work of ethnographer is to read the data and look for patterns and themes (Thapan, 1991 and Willis, 2000). Eisenhart(2001) describes the analysis of ethnographic data in widespread manner-

“Ordinarily, one researcher works alone to collect the data, analyze the results, and write up the findings. Analysis of the data focuses on the identification of regular patterns of action and talk that characterize a group of people (Spradley, 1979, 1980; Wolcott, 1999).” (p. 18)

An important and critical dimension to idea of categories and classification of knowledge in present research is the Integral (Yoga) worldview (as elaborated by Sri Aurobindo) which sees knowledge based on the processes of synthesis and beyond synthesis (Gupta, 2011). For the purpose of developing a comprehensive view of data, wherever possible categories have

come up, but these are not water tight compartments and traits of one category not exclusive to it. A relevant example was categories of children at LB, participants questioned the unjustified use of it by fellow participants. Categories of children were to help organize learning but not to differentiate between the children in order to experience life of Auroville, which mainly included visit to various departments and places of relevance. All children who were part of LB can participate everywhere.

Analysis purported to paint an 'overview' of the field and data as indicative of some central features of the whole cohort.

Steps in Analysis

The ethnographic data undergoes steps of analysis which could be identified for the present research as-

1. Familiarizing with data required to read the data in order to know what kind of broad themes has emerged from the field. After the first few readings of data, organization of the notes was done chronologically- each episode of observation, (interactions, or discussions) are organized and codified date wise. So each date as code has set of episodes. For example, **Obs no/26 nov10/page no**
2. Then the data was reread (Maxwell, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994) in view of the research questions using the process of 'axial coding' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), entries were codified in to sub themes of research questions. For example, for the first research questions the spaces of schooling was categorized as, Spatial Arrangement of the three schools. Several sub-themes of research questions were further delineated or categorized for example, Spatial arrangement of the schools, objects in the classrooms, learning with the objects to name a few. There were themes that emerged out of the process of 'open coding' that did not directly relate to research questions and kept aside. And several themes (like world of *sadhaks*, relations between different institutions, breaking rules in institutions) were dropped in accordance with the research questions than in general about life. for a detail organization of data sources with respect to the research questions (see Annexure 3.5)
3. A visually identifiable cue like colors was very helpful for the organization of data episodes with respect to themes. The researcher found the use of the same in analyzing the themes in unstructured qualitative interviews by Adams (2006).

However, Adams did the same on word document, while I found the use of cards very useful and used small mark of color to identify the category. The researcher then made entry of codified data that is, date and page number of the original record in the small card; to segregate for schools the same color code for respective theme was used, however the number of cue was added that is, if small red circle means 'faith' based category, the two circles would indicate another school or three circles would mean third school. The cue's color and shape remained the same, only numbers were added (see: annexure 3.6).

4. Next step in codification was done indicating the episode shared as observations, interaction or participation. observation acronym used 'obs'; for an interaction acronym used is 'int'; or participation acronym used 'part' or if it is combination of activities, it is mentioned likewise. Next is the month and year of the episode (exact dates were avoided to hide identity of the participants) then the place is mentioned out of the various settings; followed by naming the activity and last by the participants.

Episode/month year/place/ activity/participants for example,

Obs/int Dec 2010 /Golconde (a dormitory of ashram)/ - working for Christmas. participants-ashram inmates and outsiders/ volunteers like me.

This code is put at the end of the data shared to act as cue for the reader to understand the episode better; since the data out of three main schools and various sub sites, if not mentioned may confuse the reader.

5. Then the next step is to look at data closely through the lens of research questions, however linking data with research questions is a reiterative process that happens alongside the data collection. Usually this kind of linkage was done in the reflective dairy, where link with theory is established or a category is made. For example, researcher finds the episodes of school sports activities discussed by people at many different sites other than sports grounds, which made research look more deeply into the concept of physical education. As a result, the research question of learning and knowledge forms was looked thematically strengthened by view of 'physical education' as program and as in the lives of the participants.
6. Interviews were analyzed separately using descriptive statistics that is bar graphs and pie charts.

7. Member checks or Expert checks- Informal discussions were carried out with the participants as about the themes generated initially. Discussions were part of data collection, analysis, chapter writing and before final drafts of chapters were made. Once the final draft was ready, various members from the field (who volunteered) read it to validate the themes. Their suggestions after the discussion or correction of factual information were incorporated.
8. A very important aspect of ethnographic data is to validate it with theory (Atkinson, 1983; Willis, 2000) ethnographer work is of imaging the field and its responses with theory and therefore to draw theories and researches from other disciplines becomes imperative. Reading of various theoretical ideas was done once themes were formed after the initial analysis. For example, work of Zerubavel (1991) for sociology of time was found relevant to describe the schools' conception of time and learning (refer chapter 4 for details). Conception of categories and themes was kept independent of relevant theories or research in the field, since initially a comparison between the field and research emerges, which affects the data collection and formation of themes.

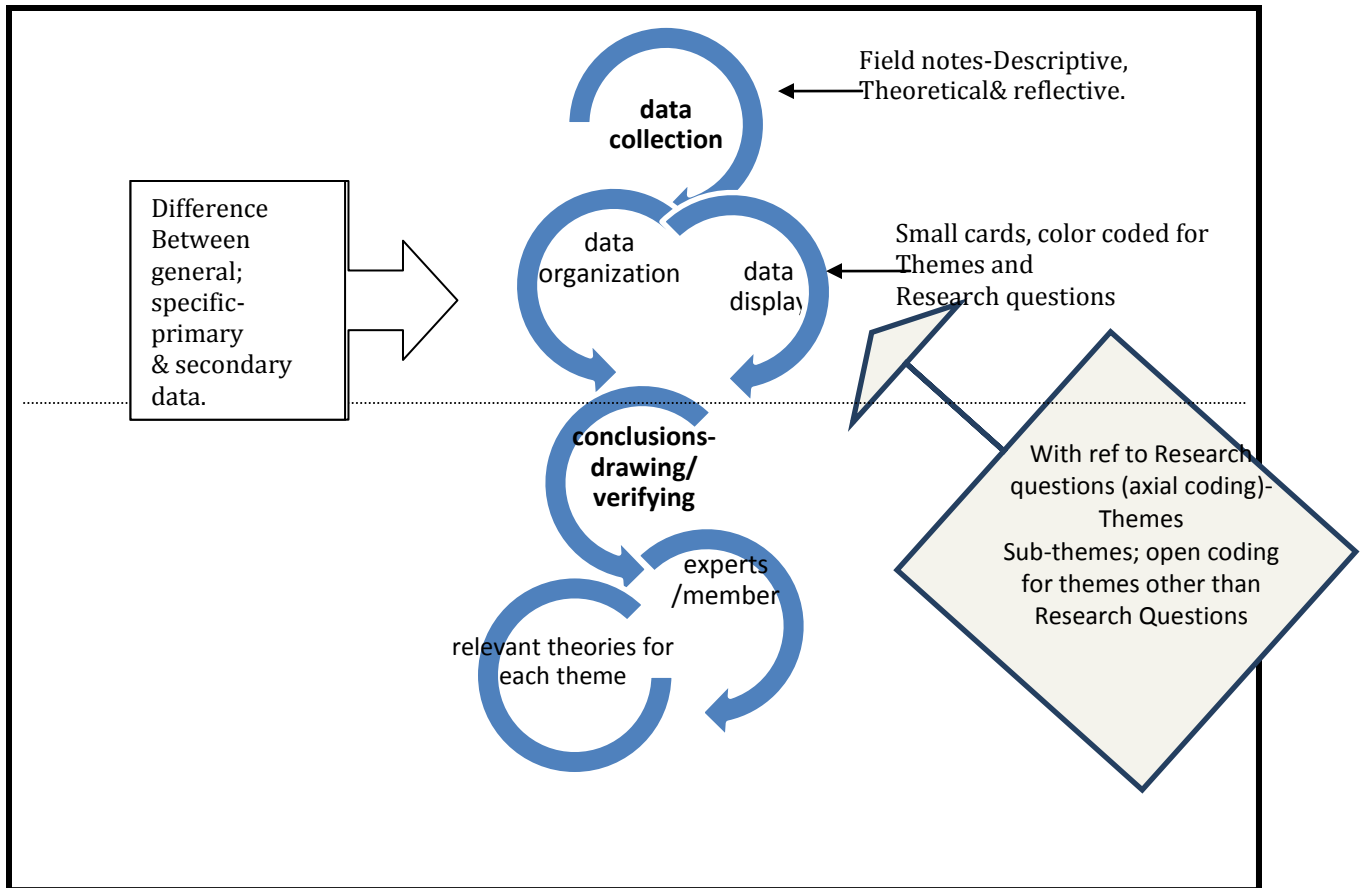


Fig 3.1 Summary of the Steps in Data Analysis

Challenges of the Design

Ethnography is often criticized for methodological drawback it carries intrinsically

".....is loosely designed, opportunistically conducted, magically analyzed, and notoriously unreliable persists in some quarters....many excuses for this (e.g., the threat to an existing academic elite, some anthropologists' position that Ethnography cannot or should not be systematized ...)

(Eisenhart, 2001 p no 19)

It may sound loosely designed with reference to the standardized data collection and analysis methods but it can always compensate the same with 'rigor'and being 'conscious' with data throughout the research.

Another threat is that the ethnography relies predominantly on researcher's imagination at all levels. Modell(1996) talks about establishing the importance of ethnography in Human Development while he begins with interesting caution,

"Interdisciplinary courtship is a sweetly and dangerously ambiguous game: some seductions, some small deceits, some small misdirections are inevitable and

necessary if curiosity is to lead to understanding by bringing the disciplines onto one another's home ground." (p. 480)

Present research draws on the principles of qualitative research and applies it to the ethnographic data. Research uses the argument for 'apparent validity' and 'theoretical validity' (Kirk & Miller, 1986) which are both high for ethnographic researches as the researches are always present there and theoretical framework is one of the main peg for the field notes, hence a systematic attempt is made to link the analyzed data with relevant researches and theories.

Relations in the field: 'consciousness', 'gratitude' and 'goodwill'

"The tension between protecting those studied and reporting details in ways that compel deeper understanding has been a persistent one. The tension is exacerbated when multiple and diverse perspectives (or "voices") must be represented.
(Eisenhart 2001 p no 19)

These lines state the predicament of an ethnographer. A researcher is an outsider participants are curious to know about and many are keen to talk to. There are times when researcher found controversial information that someone might share out of the friendly relation that had developed. I personally tried to use only information, which would not harm the integrity of a person or place, instead used the same to widen my overview. I made sure not to use it as a 'case' to elucidate any theme. The names, gender and identity of participants have been carefully guarded (as clear in the coding described above).

Some times researcher may have disagreement with the participants and another ethical challenge for researcher is to resolve conflicts with participants if any. As a researcher, I found it important to be conscious of or observe my emotions and relations rather to severe or suppress. In case of sharing an opinion, which was in conflict with a participant, it was important to state it and 'step back' rather to get in an argument.

Ethical dilemmas could be dealt with consciousness keeping in mind the integrity of research, place and generation of knowledge. A question which often fellow researchers asked are, 'How much one can be personal with friends, one make during fieldwork?; Especially in (culture like) India where friendliness, warmth is important and one talks less of research as academic pursuit since one is almost right in the mid of activities and personal lives of individuals.' The old or young people I came across I preferred to help them in my own way as sense of 'gratitude' to their presence, help and the 'good will' they showed to

talk to me. Helping in the field is another form of taking ethical responsibility and to do things for participants as sign of gratitude towards them and to the knowledge they shared. It would make things mutual, when one is not only taking the data but shares a mutual bond by fulfilling the role of what participants would do for each other.

The Scheme of Results' Section

The results of the study are presented in four major chapters. The first chapter addresses main themes of – spaces and time, various daily activities, knowledge to understand basic structure of schools in relation to the learner and teachers; second, explores faith issues of the participants; third looks at view of the child, knowledge areas and teaching; fourth chapter looks at physical education and body as instrument to learn.

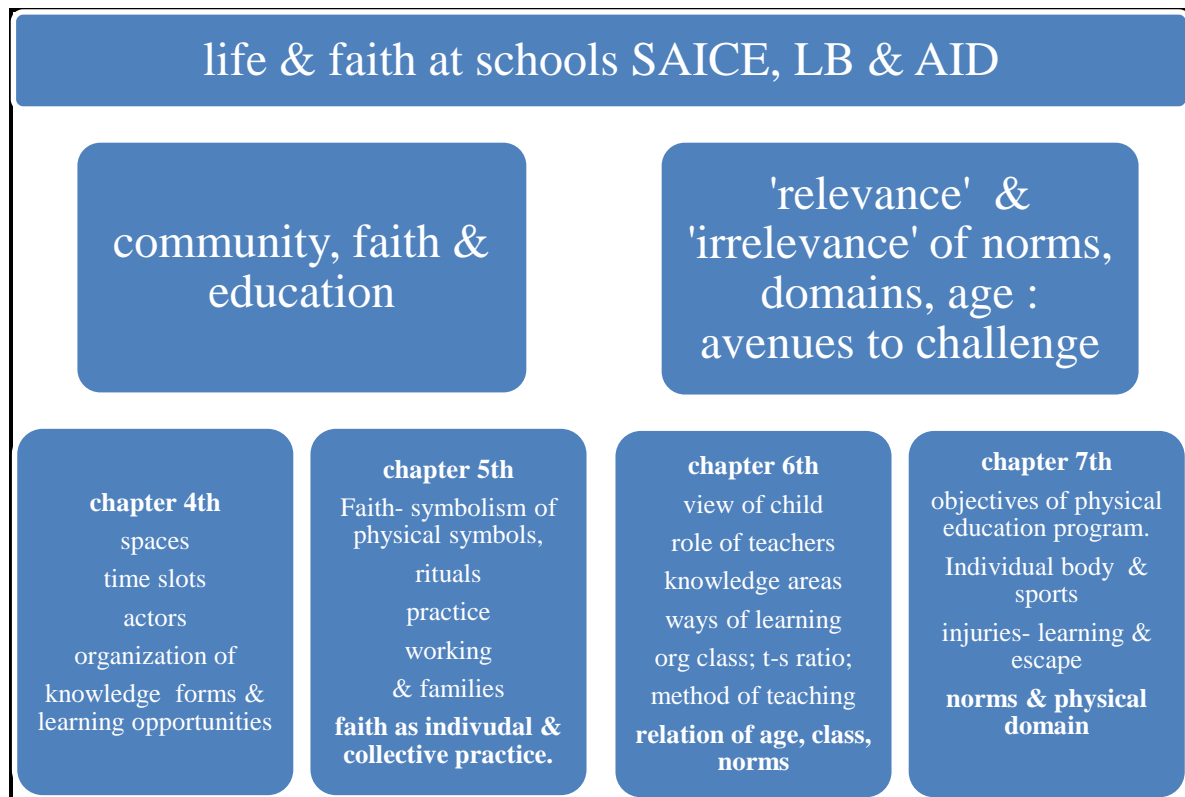


Fig 3.2 Scheme of the Results' chapters

In the above scheme, relevant themes are generally presented in the form of description to let the reader experience the field. However, both the views have been presented: one that supported and another that challenged a theme to show the 'dynamism' in the life of the participants. The two central boxes show the central concern- that the themes in respective

chapters support. The two central boxes focus on central views of Human Development in the educational programs at the schools. The central views of Human Development from the schools were also analyzed with respect to ‘norms, domains and age specifications of participants undergoing various learning experiences’ along with issues of faith and community.

Endnotes

ⁱPondichéry was renamed as Puducherry but throughout the dissertation word ‘Pondichéry’ is used since the participants used it unless otherwise.

ⁱⁱ Bresson in his diary notes of 1950 about the Ashram mentions Pondichéry as the sleepy town. The notes were displayed as part of the Exhibition of his works in Alliance Française de Delhi September, 2012.

ⁱⁱⁱ (source: <http://www.sriarobindoashram.org/ashram/saice/index.php>)

^{iv} Refer to series on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education (1992) ‘A new Education for a New Consciousness’ Puducherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram.

^v*Aurovillians* are given a fixed amount of money as maintenance for the minimum number of hours they spent at any department or unit of working

^{vi} Not to have servants or help included in the study is major limitation of the study. *Ammas* were ubiquitous in study. There were in schools carrying out many important activities of school. Since they form particular class and were mostly Tamils they are missed in the whole study. However I found my personal interactions useful with them either at my home or at the schools.

^{vii} Whichever is applicable since the research at this juncture cannot differentiate between two, but for present research ethnography is a design, it’s a school of thought that trains researchers to carry out research with certain broad parameters. It is the creativity or imagination or subjectivity of researcher to create methods- tools and techniques to gather data.

^{viii} Phenomenon in a field could be at different levels as Hammerslay and Atkinson, 1983 put Ethnography in three categories- Macro substantive for example, Radcliffe Brown, Sahlins and Service, Harris; Micro-formal for example Goffman ‘total institutions’ and Micro-substantive for example on becoming a Marijuana user by Becker.

^{ix} Since the two institutions were not completely totalistic (which is an important feature of micro-formal ethnography) in their view and functioning because the structure allows the two worldviews that is, institutional and rest of the world to mingle over several spaces and in some cases rather function together. There is however a categorical reference made to life lived at the institutions- Ashram and Auroville as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. The ‘inside-outside’ world divide and its relation is also relevant theme that runs across the analysis in the result section.

^x Most of the adults had been part of the processes to become ‘ the Ashram or Auroville’ inmates. Individuals who come to the Ashram and Auroville by identification with virtue of their faith, others are called in as ‘chance’ in their life allows or opportunity to be there.

^{xi} I used the facilities at the Gnostic Centre and The Academy of the Future, which gave a platform for regular meditative and reflective studies of the various works of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

^{xii} I have not started taking interviews and my fieldwork was going on, I met my teacher a beautiful mentor and companion who told me, “Harpreet you need to create an environment in which you can interview.” I could not really understand what she meant, but her words echoed whenever I was lost in field to act. After reading and re-reading my data and talks with many youngsters and ex-students from SAICE, who have been interacting with me about my dissertation, I decided to take the plunge to make them and many other ex-students comfortable to talk formally as part of interviews. I found it opening up of a ‘new world’.

^{xiii} What is condescend or negative can also be data to look at. That is what the participants consider as negative but it was avoided due to ethical reasons and in order to delimit the world.

Chapter 4th

SCHOOLING: SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL ASPECTS

Sibia(2010) in her study of *Mirambika*, an Integral Education School in Delhi, reported the unique design of the school's physical space and 'consciousness' the participants held for it. The spatial organization of school is known as 'school plant'. The school's space has been understood for its purpose, scope and the programs it has to carry out. Opinion of an educator is important in designing the same (Theodore et al, 2010). Table 4.1 in this chapter gives comprehensive view of relevant factors of school plants observed in the field.

For this research schooling space is not merely a plant but is a place where individuals act in order to, organize various learning opportunities and slot it in time. This chapter first explains about buildings of the three schools with special mention of aesthetics and multipurpose use of the spaces. There was significant interaction of participants with the objects arranged for learning. The chapter then explains organization of time with reference to areas of knowledge and individual action in various spaces. The factors of Individual, Space and Time portrayed in the fig 4.1 interact together to form the physical manifestation of schooling.

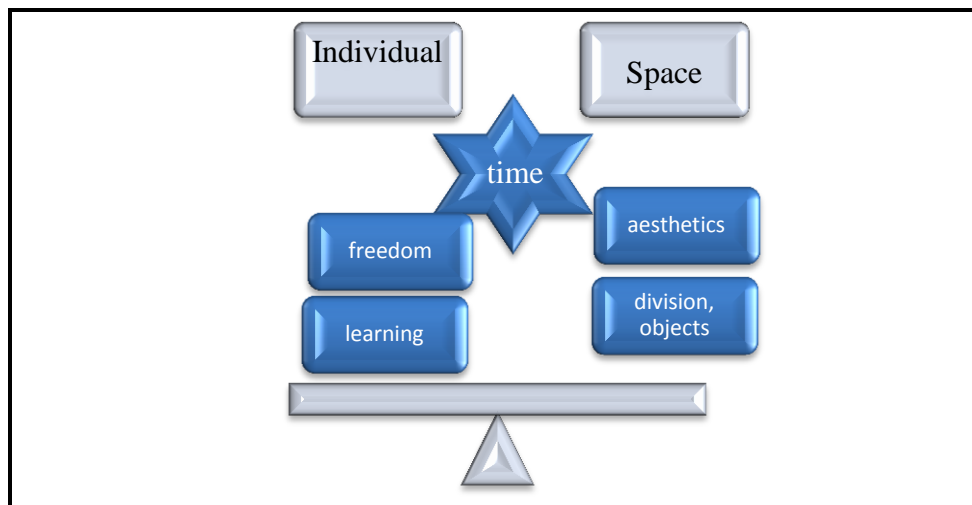


Fig 4.1 The Individual Space Interaction at the Schools: Key Themes

The Ashram Schooling Spaces- Crossing the Boundaries

The distribution of space at SAICE is over a few kilometers with different buildings at different locations. These school areas are distributed over a few kilometers, situated in and around Eastern Pondicherry referred as 'white town' since the time it was a French colony.

The school areas has expanded with more number of buildings, that the Ashram bought, as and when the finances were available. The buildings and property were bought mainly in Eastern Pondichéry but in other parts as well. The school could be divided into four main buildings where classes from kindergarten level to the college (graduation level) were held [view page no table no 4.2 for class, building and age organization]. Mostly school buildings of SAICE were in French designs because earlier these were French houses with huge rooms and windows most likely for families to stay. The changes had been made in the buildings to make them more suitable for the schools. School buildings mainly held teaching learning activities of different sections of classes. The building held enough space for teaching learning material to be stored and children to move around.

The Kindergarten section of SAICE was situated on the ground floor of an old building. It also housed a family of the Ashram inmatesⁱ on the first floor; the entrance for the latter was separate. The section had a small door to enter; upon entering, it opened into a small courtyard, which was concrete floor, after that rest of the area was the garden. On the left side of the main entrance was a shoe rack that had been cut into the wall. On the right was a room where classes were held for the first year kids, from there as one moved towards left, one room opens into another. There was a kitchen, toilet and a washing area. There were few more rooms (with one opening into another). At the end of the rooms towards the westernⁱⁱ side, there was a courtyard, which is covered from three sides. Redesigning of the building had been done for the utilization of it for school's purpose. In the open area under the huge old trees there was a sand pit and swings for children to play.

*Delafon*ⁱⁱⁱ is the name of a huge building meant for six to nine year old children studying at SAICE. It also nested many other important work areas and is also a residential area. As one entered through the huge door, the staircase on left were prominent, an *amma*- lingo for maid or help at school was often employed to survey people who were entering the school. The left side from entrance on the ground floor had a toilet at the entrance, followed by a carpentry lab, a classroom, a computer lab, then another classroom and then a covered verandah, which had two sections, and then two more rooms towards the end. The ground floor housed students of second year of *Delafon* and first floor housed first and third years. There were three rooms for the third year students and two rooms for the second year students; first and third years shared one room for remedial teaching of the students or similar activities; there

was a covered terrace area which had provision to hang the bags students carried and also facility for water to drink. After crossing the small terrace, there was another room on the right that was used for dance, music or theater. The ground floor had arrangement of fresh flower distribution for the Ashram inmates and departments; therefore, the entire building complex was popularly known as ‘Flower Room’. Often children were known as ‘flower room kids’. On the left side where flower distribution room was, there were two more rooms: one for clay work and another for music, there was also video room for the children.

The building also had residential area for the Ashram inmates on first floor, a studio of an artist below the rooms and a stock room of old items to be reused. A teacher (an ashram inmate) managed it. There was a small garden, with a small pond. The space was enough for children to play during the recess.

The participants put *Delafon* and Kindergarten to the ‘multipurpose’ usage. The building was open very early morning for flower distribution. In the evening senior women of Ashram used one of the rooms to do their routine exercise. Classes were also held in the artists’ studio for the students and later in evening for adults. The storeroom had visitors who came there to take or to donate something. The Kindergarten was used for the physical education program of 3-6 years in the evening and after that on some days the participants in the late adulthood used it for their exercises other than the stipulated one (chapter 7 describes this component)

The main school building had the main school office, where the Registrar and other office staff functioned. The staff took care of fees, admissions and all other formalities. The school had a big courtyard with an open stage and a small garden. Students aging from ten year olds to eighteen year olds had most of their classes in this building. Appropriately, this building had the maximum number of rooms. The Indian cork tree, known as the *Aspiration* tree in the Ashram’s ‘lingua franca’ (since this name is the spiritual significance of the flower given by the Mother who also gave spiritual significances to other trees and flowers^{iv}) was uprooted in the cyclone in December 2011. Other prominent trees in the main school building were Indian laburnum, known as the ‘Imagination’ tree and another *Mimusops* known as the ‘*Patience*’ tree.

There was a beautiful pond in the school. Lilies grew in it; and beautiful creepers of Buttercup flowers (*Victory*) grew around it. There was a prominent lotus sculpture in the pond, which one of the Ashram inmates and a teacher had designed. There was a place to sit

around the pond. One could see children around during their recreation enjoying the lilies or guppy, or with their teacher studying the pond eco system. The Main Building also housed the 'Aquarium Section', one of the sections that was open for display for the visitors^v. The school had a 'video room' on the northern side, a large hall called the 'Hall of Harmony' on the southern side, which was used for programs, talks and presentations.

The building of Higher Course known as 'Knowledge' was close to the Kindergarten building. It was a three-storied building facing the sea. The main hall on the third floor held classes of students' talks by the visitors and the students on regular days as well as cultural programs at the end of the academic year. The cupboards were aligned against the walls; it also had the pictures of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. The furniture was arranged for classes in groups and after the classes, the chairs were stacked on the table and put aside.

SAICE had lab section for subjects like Chemistry and Biology lab housed in a separate building, where children went for their classes and lab work. Prominent and senior *Sadhaks* of the Ashram made the lab, under the guidance of the Mother. There were objects from the initial days in the lab, which symbolized reminiscences of the past. One of them was a huge skull of an elephant that really stood out, when one entered the building^{vi}. The chemistry lab was on the first floor of the building.

Mess for the students was in a separate building, where many students and teachers had their food. The SAICE main school building covered one 'block'(as the participants referred to a rectangular portion of the street which was 50 m or so; a street had crossing after that). The pottery and carpentry sections and the boarding for students were situated in one building. It was known as '*Amba Bhikshu*' and was located within the distance of 700m from the main building of the school.

'Multipurpose' use of space was prominent especially at the 'main building'. The parents, the Ashramites and various visitors were invited for the shows, talks, screening of video or occasional events like special performances by the artists from the 'outside' world in its premises after and during the schooling hours. Schooling spaces became open to the visitors, the Ashram inmates who otherwise did not throng these places. The physical education program also invited the visitors and audience was a special and regular group in my view other than the children and the teachers.

Linking the several boundaries

The lifeline of these separated building sections was ‘movement’ of students and teachers, and the spirits these ‘movements’ held. It added to the life of school at SAICE and to life of Pondichéry in this part of the town around the Ashram. Whether it was parents moving with children, or children moving alone or children moving with teachers, the movement acted as ‘lifeline’ connecting the various buildings. It gave children leeway to interact with adults that is, Ashram inmates, visitors who thronged the Ashram.

Several relevant phenomenon occurred during these movements such as, exchanging pleasantries, meeting people who would pass at particular time, exchange information or gossip, sharing of news to name a few. Separation in the spaces allowed a form of commuting like, cycle, scooters or walking. One of the favorite activities among the children of the schools was to ask for a lift from cycles or scooters from teachers to reach at their next destination. While movements and interactions linked these buildings (or islands) while the outside life traversed in between. The participants, who were part of a ‘protected world’ both physically and spiritually, also came across issues like eve-teasing, police, traffic nuisance and meeting strangers during their movement from one space to another. There were both pleasant and unpleasant aspects associated as the participants negotiated their movements from one space to another.

Expanding School Structures at Auroville

SAICE space structure stand in several buildings many of them were heritage and linking with each other. Aurovillians on the other hand have afforested the land. Therefore, rich vegetation surrounded it. Paths paved way through the trees, which are mainly acacias, palms, cashews and other local varieties as well. These paths were not tarred; at the most these were cobbled or left naturally. In the latter case sometimes, the mud hardened or was mostly soft due to red sand. Participants referred to the paths as ‘mud roads’ or ‘cobbled roads’^{vii}. There was only one tar road or ‘crown road’ that circled around Auroville (see: Annexure 3.1a) and was means to enter it through the outside town.

Auroville is a place to experiment and innovate in ideas, which also includes civil structures. The buildings and architecture at the schools has been made with special consideration about the needs of children (height of furniture, building, open spaces to name a few) and special focus has been on aesthetics. The buildings of LB and the AID had been growing, expanding

and tried to address the feedback of the participants. For example, geese at LB used to roam freely in the school campus. Few children and visitors were scared of them; therefore, there was a debate, “whether the geese should be left free or put in an enclosure?” It was decided it would be better if they could be given a space. The children decided to make a boundary for them where the geese could be put in a safe and spacious enclosure. The teachers and children designed the space and helped to dig and cut the material like wired mesh for the boundary wall with other adults (See: Annexure 4.1)

Participants also adjusted with the challenges or flaws if structure had any. For example, the amphitheater at LB developed a crack in the floor, which was likely to interfere in walking or dancing as someone could trip due to the crack. It also echoed leading to the interference in acoustics during the performances.

A professional architect has designed LB and as explained during the fieldwork the school underwent expansion as and when the needs arose. There were permanent architectural structures like classrooms made with concrete and roofs of different materials. There were temporary structures like a tree house made with bamboo and other materials than concrete. The building at LB had rooms spread in two sections that is, set of three classrooms in a continuation but not in a row. The central area, which connected these two sets of three rooms each, was open with no walls around. The area had pillars, tiled floor, and it was used for morning assembly and then for several other activities during the day. Above the central tiled floor was the library, which had few computers for children’s activities. The school also had an amphitheater and partly covered stage. The seats were in ‘triangular prism’ arranged in steps for the audience to climb on them and to sit. LB also had two rooms and kitchen for the caretaker of the school, who stayed there with the family.

‘Multipurpose’ usage of schooling space was observed here as well. For example, at the same time in the library there could be children usually reading a book during their free time and other group of children doing activities on computer, which was usually with the teacher. There could also be a child undergoing individual reading session with another teacher. The AID has huge campus. The school building roughly divided in three sections that is, classes for lower primary were held in one set of rooms, class three to fifth in the ‘new building’ and rest of the classes in set of double story rooms. Some new set of rooms were

also under construction. It also had an amphitheater, open area for sports and couple of rooms for the staff members of the school.

The schools followed an organization of classes as per the level of age. Structurally also classes were spread with respect to division of age groups. As one entered the school premise through the main gate, the youngest children were in a hall, as classes for them were not made during initial time of the fieldwork. Near the stage there were classes for older age groups then a distance of 100 meters to walk, there was the 'new building' where classes for four to six years old were being held. The AID had open field area with arrangement of sports activity for students within the school premises. There was room of caretaker of the school and few more rooms for the teachers or volunteers to reside. Two of the teachers along with the caretaker were living in the school premises. There was a common kitchen to make food for them.

Most of the observations at the AID in Auroville were made at the upper primary school building which we all addressed as the 'new school building' because of its recent construction and alternative architecture. It had three rooms, one hall for morning concentration or other free time activities and for individual instruction if to be given by volunteers for the students. The architecture was unique and attracted many visitors. It was made out of red bricks and plastered at some places but rest of it was bricked wall. The classrooms had windows with shutters (that could be opened) and had natural light and ventilation. The building had a pond and one of the classrooms had passage through the stones in the pond. There were washing area, drinking water and a library as well.

These two schools had instances of students' involvement in the school buildings. The AID underwent major expansion of classrooms and came up with two floors of classrooms so that children could have their classrooms. The LB on the other hand came up with two main additions: a teacher's room, Life Sciences room, two small structures that is, one snake pit and another enclosure with pond for geese the students suggested and even helped to make. Another major instance of students' involvement (at LB and SAICE) with the physical space of school was the cyclone of 2011. It damaged some of the rooms like crafts and pottery section at LB; and the Tree House, the space under which mainly a shade was used for various Construction or carpentry. The students and teachers decided to redo the tree house. Subsequently, among other relevant developments at LB were installation of solar lamps at

the path, moving out of horse stable (and horses), and a new dish washing area in dining room for children and teachers. LB also has new fence on the backside of the land, since a new path was made from there to reach another place at Auroville. In order to navigate the visitors to the new venue fence would help them not to get astray in the school premises. One can conclude that the self-fulfilling structures of all the three schools were maintained neatly and were ecologically balanced. As were the buildings, so were the arrangement of classrooms with different materials and role of materials in teaching learning activity.

Spatial Organization of Sports Program

Sports program requires spaces: mainly grounds, open fields or tracks with ‘standard’ measurements. LB and SAICE have the standardized spaces for physical education program which are separate from the school campus. The schools symbolized spaces where classes were held and was a part of the school campus at LB and the AID or several buildings in case of SAICE. Spaces for sports activities were extension of schooling in case of SAICE and LB. At LB the program was carried out at *Dehashakti* and at SAICE it was carried out mainly at three different places that is, ‘Sports ground’ ‘Play Ground’ and ‘Tennis Ground’. At the AID open fields, which were within the campus were used for sports. Therefore most of the sports activities happened within the school but students (classes III, IV and V) went to ‘*La piscine*’ (the swimming pool at Auroville) for swimming (Ashram and Auroville have one swimming pool each).

Other than the specified spaces as mentioned above, different places around the town/state were also used to organize sports’ activities or recreational events. For example, students at all the three schools also used the opportunity to go for camping or picnics around Pondichéry. In case of the Ashram school, the longer races for Athletics, referred as ‘road-races’, were organized at the ‘Lake’ property of the Ashram or around Auroville.

Spatial arrangement of the sports at SAICE

It was held mainly into three places a) Playground, b) Sports ground and c) Tennis ground. However, for the children of ‘Kindergarten’, the physical activities were not organized ‘sports’ at these three grounds. There were only some activities for body awareness and control, which were held in the Kindergarten itself.

The Playground

The Playground is located at *Rue Law de Lauriston*, it's a building in the corner and two 'blocks' (a distance measure often used in Pondichéry's *white town* apart from the streets' names or house number) away from sea shore. The Playground has its entrance from two sides. One is referred as the main entrance, which is from the *Rue Law de Lauriston* towards the sea shore and another in front of the PED office known as the 'Guest House' side in the Ashram's nomenclature (it was mentioned so in the notices while directing the entry of the Ashram inmates and visitors on important days.) One big wooden door at main entrance leads to the ground; this huge door had polish falling off at some places mostly due to excessive usage and two huge brass handles somewhat hexagonal. The high walls completely hide from the eyes of passersby 'what happens inside!' Like most of the Ashram complexes, this structure also had 'multipurpose' usage apart from being used for physical education program. There was an office, which looked into the management of the Playground. This ground is also used for movies on Saturday evenings, and for collective meditations on Thursdays and Sundays in the evenings.

There was always a gatekeeper at the door as the entry was highly restricted. Individuals other than Ashram inmates require pass to enter the gate. As one entered the gate, one could see the wide stairs in front. On the right side was office, which had with wooden benches aligned against the wall of the office. Old people often used the benches to sit and watch if something was happening in the ground.

The Playground also has a gymnasium for gymnastics and equipment for gymnastics' exercises. It has two sets of parallel bars (one of which was also used as uneven bars), one pommeled horse, one high bar and one low bar, one uneven bars, three beams, three rings, and lots of bags for agility-floor exercise. Along the western wall there are wooden bars, and ropes for exercises. The Gymnasium has a high roof and windows for ventilation. On the first floor there is a rhythmic hall, on the second floor there is a covered terrace, which was used for marching by few members and for doing *asanas*. The third floor is only an open terrace. Continuing on the western side there are a few rooms for residential purpose and a room on the first floor in which Sri Aurobindo had stayed before this space became a Playground. Wooden stairs (few places had these) led to this small room, I visited the room once after the

meditation on a Darshan days, I found people bowing down in front of the picture of Sri Aurobindo, decorated with simple vases and flowers.

On the eastern side, there is a Body building gymnasium. A Projector room is also on the eastern side, to project movies from there on to the eastern wall. Above the 'Body Building Gymnasium', there is a covered terrace used for various purposes. Next to Body Building Gym there is a small room, decorated with flowers, outside which people usually stood or peeped after the meditation (Thursdays and Sundays) to look at the water color drawing on the floor, made by a very senior Ashram inmates^{viii}. The room has big metal vases and flowers in those. Outside the room on the wall that faced the north is India's map, the undivided unified India (See: Annexure 4.2). The physical map is on a white wall and was painted green, while the paint peels off from the wall at some places. The presence of the map is not fundamentalist but invoked an eschatological feeling in one's being, of certain mysticism of existence of India's unity and being an Indian (Being Indian is not political feeling but more to do with feeling of oneness in several variations and vice-versa). On the occasion of the event of 'the March Past', and the 'collective meditations' in the evening on (Thursdays and Sundays) the Mother's chair is brought and put in front of the map. Next to the wall with the map was small door, which opens into small corridor, which led to an area where toilets and drinking water facilities was available. There is an open terrace, on which 'the Ashram band' played during the March Past on the special Darshan days.

Area in the center, in between the western and the eastern walls, the floor is filled with sand. It was open that is, it had no roof and was meant for various sports activities mainly (but was also used for meditation and as an open-air theater).

The Sports ground

Sports ground is on the East Coast road, and is some 1.5 km away from SAICE. It's a huge piece of closed land divided in two portions, one towards the western side that is, the East Coast road and another on the eastern direction opening deeper into the town. There is a small lane, which divided the two grounds. On the western side, there is one small ground used for discus throws, just opposite to it, was a 360 m long tracks and the space in center is a football field, which is also used for javelin throws. Beside the football field, there are 2 pits for high jump, 2 pits for long jump (triple jump), shot put ring and a pole vault pit. There is also another shot put ring adjacent to which there was a room for storing sports'

equipment. Around it, there was a parking area for two wheelers and cycles. There are other storerooms in the ground as well.

Further down, there were two basketball synthetic courts and a sand court for basketball practice. The Sports ground also had a swimming pool and gallery to sit and watch the swimming or athletics. The huge clock tower stands above. There is a small room for sound system. There are the galleries for the audience facing the football field and tracks. Next to the swimming pool were two volleyball courts. A few rooms for residence of the Ashram inmates are adjacent to the volleyball courts.

Other part of the Sports ground is known as '*Annexe*'. It is on the western side. It is a huge area used to play hockey and football. The same ground is also used for playing softball. There is another volleyball court. The latter is near the eastern side entrance of '*Annexe*'.

The Tennis ground

The Tennis Ground was undergoing renovation during the fieldwork. It has a court for martial arts and a ring for boxing. There is wall practice area for tennis, two tennis synthetic courts, three basketball sand courts, one volleyball court, a wrestling pit, athletics and long jump track for children (6-8 years old) and a long sandy stretch for walking and running.

Spatial Arrangement at LB

LB's sports education program is part of sports education program for Auroville children known as *Dehashakti*. It is located near the forest area (see: Annexure 3.1a). One found the way through green trees on one's both the sides that opened into the community '*Dana*'. Outside the main grounds, there was a parking area. At the small entrance, there is a symbol of the Mother (see: Annexure 4.3) on a slab that welcomed the visitors. There was a small narrow path, which opened into a big ground surrounded by trees. There is a small room where all the sports equipment is kept and one could see the schedules for various sports activities displayed outside these rooms. There is a synthetic tennis court, basketball court and another court all in row on left side. The other side has the track little less than 400 m, which was not under use. There is room for floor exercises of gymnastics. Other equipment of gymnastics is also available.

Spatial arrangement at the AID

At the AID students used to play in the ground around new building, each day was kept for an activity like running, basketball, volleyball or martial arts. Most of the activities were

monitored by the teachers and not by separate coaches. However, (during the fieldwork) an expert for martial arts would visit once a week, which was discontinued later. The AID children did not go to *Dehashakti*. However, Auroville had one swimming pool that LB, *Dehashakti* and the AID used. Once a week the children would go in bus to the swimming pool as part of the scheduled sports activity.

Sports were compulsory somewhat like LB but not like SAICE. Many children at the AID went back in bus, which came around 5 pm, therefore sports was obvious choice to spend the time.

Classroom Setting, Objects and Usage

The classrooms most conspicuous objects were furniture and other teaching learning materials like puzzles, games, books, worksheets, toys, vases, objects to name a few that students or teachers used. Each object had a particular place and students were encouraged to respect that place; it was used carefully and put back in its appropriate place after it had been used. This was a regular phenomenon and was important part of the classes' routine. It implied that they devoted considerable time for seating arrangements and organization of objects in the classrooms. In classrooms participants also used various objects with responsibility and methodically.

The classrooms were flexible in terms of seating arrangement and furniture was moved back to the place after every time the use was over. It involved bringing chairs, tables, books, pencils or crayons, arranging them, subsequently dismantling the whole arrangement after the instruction or work was over. The students especially six years onwards helped the teachers in this. However, there were places, which remains fixed to do certain special activities like Music in *Delafon*, clay work or 'play of painting' at Auroville. The practice added to the discipline and respect of space, use of objects among the children. Participants' interaction with classroom and its objects could almost be addressed as a ritual, which was to be practiced consciously and earnestly as much as possible.

Spatial arrangement in the classrooms

The arrangement of furniture was not fixed to particular spots and could be moved around to suit any teaching-learning activity in the classes. Tables and chairs were light enough to be easily removed or arranged at different places when needed. The chairs were small suitable to the size of students and mostly the teachers used the same chairs as the students; there was

no separate chair for the teachers. This practice was relevant to understand ‘role’ of teacher since teachers’ chair is significant symbol of authority in most of the classrooms which was absent here. Most of the teaching was done without any furniture. Sometimes the teachers sat on the floor with the children, or moved around with them wherever the learning activity was going on.

There was a very active use of the space by the participants. Structures such as classrooms, buildings had fixed usage of spaces with proper arrangements and yet there were places where rearrangements were possible. In order to establish this practice as ‘ritual’ of the schools in which all participants indulged in as per the need of that space, activity and objects involved, I share an observation of a special practice to lay tables, mats for the soup time.

The same open space could be meant for physical activity of children few minutes back while at this particular time of the day (9.30 am) it became the dining area. In order to make it ready for snacks, teachers along with ammas put the long tables (height of the tables was at the waist of average three years and six years old.) mats were spread parallel to the table so that one can sit on the mat and use table to keep the snacks. The area was cleaned after children and teachers finished eating. the long benches were nicely stacked one above another and put aside. The space was again ready for some other use by the students or teachers.

Obs/ SAICE-KG/ june 2009/Researcher, teachers and 3-5 years old

This was interesting to see how the space was utilized for point of view of ‘convenience’.

Making use of the objects

The classes at *Delafon* and Kindergarten (two sections which were observed in detail) were full of various objects such as, display boards, blackboard, huge cupboard where the material such as, notebooks, books, colors, plastic sheets to put on table, puzzles were there. There was abundance of material but not a splurge. Each object was put to its proper use. A closer look revealed how meticulously the teachers engaged in making the objects useful for classroom. Any old object like in the following episode was most likely to be precariously decorated while old tin biscuit or chocolates boxes were used for storing colors, brushes and old paper was used to make teaching aids.

An example,

In a classroom, I spot the carton of a famous brand of eau de toilette with beautiful flowers printed on it. The teacher had decorated it with sparkles and colors. The carton is strong enough to hold the brushes that children used for painting. The carton is placed on a mettle that catches the attention.

Obs/ june09/ KG SAICE/students, teachers and various objects

Objects of different shapes and sizes had their place in the daily routine^{ix} of teaching and learning both inside and outside the classroom. There were objects that could not be taken outside like puzzles, games and hence were static. Another example of a static object was piano in Kindergarten, which was used for music classes. It remained there, it was uncovered to play, a stool was placed for the artist and then covered back again after the use. Few objects also came inside the classrooms,

Today children at the kindergarten made a 'château' with blocks and then for decorations they used colored glass pebbles, some brought few leaves from outside and other objects like pebbles to decorate it.

Obs June/09/KG/SAICE/ children, teachers

The observation signified children's liberty to use the material available in the environment as tool for learning. There was therefore, wide range of objects that a child at an average would engage with.

Learning with the objects

Children had access to some of the cupboards, while the teachers exclusively had excess to few cupboards. Children always lend help in passing on various objects (chairs, tables, mats, pencils, boxes to name a few), whatever was in their physical capability to help the teachers in arranging or dismantling the learning set up. Learning to deal with the objects available in the class, or in the school was an important discipline. Teachers gave short instructions for the children to follow; in fact, most of the time went in arranging the objects before children could arrive to the main learning task of that particular day. This also became a method, by which the children learnt French in the Kindergarten,

Sitting outside in the courtyard with three years old, they have just arrived in the school. They know their mother tongue not any other language. The child was crying, irritated but saw the teacher as she pulled out a game set with clay and its tools. The first phrases a very senior ashram teacher was teaching three years old were ‘ donne moi le couteau, donne moi le cle, donne moi l’argile ’(trans: give me knife, give me key, give me clay)

Obs/Dec09/KG/SAICE/teachers, students

The teacher said it with love and persistence and gave the respective objects to the child only when the child consciously repeated what the teacher was telling him. Since the main purpose of KG is to provide intensive program on French and Sanskrit to non-Sanskrit and non-French speaking children it was a relevant interaction for the learner.

Painting class with 5 years old were held in French, the teacher asked each child to bring a brush, some color, paper, sheets on which paper (all was said in French) was to be kept so that the paint did not stain the desk and a piece of cloth to clean the same. Each child went to the cupboard, brought the necessary things and completed the work.

Obs/ June 09/ KG/SAICE/ teacher, students

Teachers involved the children to deal with objects at different occasions in and outside the classroom. It was evident that learning how to handle various objects was important. This practice was conspicuously stated in ‘play of painting^x’ at Auroville:

The teacher told me that this was a special room, it was a quiet and spotless room with all white bare walls. Where children entered and mounted their charts at their height level on the wall. each step with each object- paper, pins, colors, brush, cloth, water was important. The colors and the brushes were put in the center on the table. The children were supposed to pick up the brush dip it in color and clean the extra color so that it did not drip and was ready to paint. Teacher insisted that each step was done with full attention/ concentration to avoid errors and add to the proper use of objects. No spilling was allowed. The children finished their painting and put everything back after the brush were washed, aprons hung while paintings were left to dry. As I entered, the class had finished their paintings and the children were finishing the rearranging of various objects. Teacher reminded them gently

that how the brush needed to be cleaned against the neck of the bottle with extra color. No mixing of the brush with other colors was allowed.

The teacher insisted that the idea was to teach respect of the objects and increase the duration to use the material objects.

Obs/ june2009/ the Aid/ the teacher and students

Learning to use the space and engage in behavior appropriate to that place and with the objects of that place was part of what the children learnt. The overt training part in the classroom in the episodes discussed till now showed the learning by the child. However, an overt mention by the teacher to respect the objects in a particular case was met with the students' disagreement with the idea.

In a class when a student hits the table the teacher said firmly, "aeyi! Don't you think it (the table) gets hurt when you do like this?" the ten years old immediately responded (giggling) "no it doesn't, it is non-living." There was pause for two seconds, and then teacher asserted (politely) that there is a life in the table, and that's why one needs to treat (inanimate) objects with respect too.

Obs/mar2011 SAICE/ teachers and 10 years old

In this case, the child's scientific knowledge about living and non-living objects came in conflict with the idea of 'consciousness of the matter'. I could observe another episode in a science class, which put science and consciousness ideas at conflict. The teacher was explaining about trees to the students. After explaining the scientific information, he added that he felt that many Ashramites could not think scientifically and started mumbling to inanimate objects including trees. This was another example where Science was in conflict with ideas of life in matter.

Beauty in the environment

Aesthetics was part of the surrounding where children moved, it was important input both in the environment and through art education. It was the onus of teachers along with students to maintain the beautiful environment and harmonious environment in the class. Aesthetics apart from beautiful objects implies an important aspect of matter consciousness, to believe that matter has life and treat it with respect. Most of the students learnt it as part of the

instruction, way of learning and habit. The idea of ‘consciousness and physical matter’ (an Integral view concept) was implied and for them to grasp.

Similarly, older students at SAICE participated in beautifying the school by taking small project of painting on the walls with few teachers; the building department did the major work. Apart from their deployment in helping to maintain the building, students on some occasions were also engaged with the building’s planning and its maintenance. After the cyclone during the holidays, a few teachers have taken up the project of planting fresh grass sapling in the lawn of the main school building. Gardening was also one of the projects even at LB, by which the children were involved in defining the beauty of the gardens.

One of the common and central features of three schools was ‘pond’ with fish and water lilies in it. This was the relevant feature of the schools’ aesthetics. It was an important place for many children to spend time and explore it. The children and teachers never out grew spending time around the pond. The ponds in the three schools held special place for children for their experiments and recreation; in which even the adults participated. The little guppy (fish) was common in the ponds, and the children enjoyed catching and leaving them back. They also put their feet in the water and allowed the fish to nibble away the dead flesh:

<i>I was initiated into this that is to put the feet in the pond and sit at the edge of the pond by the children at The (AID) school. The children told me that the act required to just put my feet in the pond and then be still, the fish would come and bite the flesh or dead skin softly. Like a slight tickling feeling on the feet, the feet relaxed. and I used to do it whenever I was in school even at LB.</i>
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<i>However, owing to dust in the pond and regular cleaning it required we decided not to put our feet inside.</i>

Obs/ June 2009/The Aid/ children and researcher

Tress also added to the beauty of the campus with their flowers and shades. The children also interacted with these. The Aid and The LB had more trees in the main school campus than SAICE. Climbing of trees was not allowed but often part of activity of the children at three schools; they liked it and found free time and liberty to do the same. Aesthetics in case of ponds and trees were more proximal in the students’ interactions during free time outside the classrooms.

Other objects of significance

Other significant objects were – notice boards, pictures of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, and the flower arrangement. The notices or display board or objects on the wall displayed relevant or interesting information in the classrooms and in corridors. The photographs of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo donned almost every classroom. At LB and the AID there were other gods and goddesses (mostly Hindu deities) that formed part of the display (See: Annexure 4.4). Incense sticks and flower arrangement around the photographs were important too. At *Delafon*, as one entered the first floor, there were display boards that displayed the work of third year students, below which was a small wooden desk. On the desk there was a bowl, a small pot or a vase in which the flower was put (depending on the size of the flower). In front of the flower there was small wooden plank to hold a three inch by one-inch thin card approximately. The card always had the spiritual significance of the flower in French, as given by the Mother.

The main school building (at SAICE) had several ‘Notice boards’. The one on a small wall from the back door entrance often had prayers and meditation of the Mother in French. The notices at *Delafon* and Kindergarten always displayed the works by the students or something displayed by the teachers as well, which teachers wanted to share with the students. At *Progrès* classroom in the main school building the display board changed thrice during the visits in three months, it had displayed the important monuments of India, fighter planes of India and prayers the children wrote to Sri Aurobindo on his birthday. The first two display contents were peep in the ‘outside’ world mainly, about India for the children and latter was a relevant theme to study development of faith in the children.

Relevance of Schooling Spaces

The physical space that the school occupies is important first as a pure physical spatial aspect, second from the point of view of being ‘child-centered’, and third that the spatial reality has relevance to aesthetics and meaning participants’ active engagement with spaces and objects in it, signified.

A purely physical aspect of school plant was highlighted in academics during early 20th century often addressed under different heads School Building (Holy, Arnold & Anderson, 1932), school architecture (Davis, 1905) or School plant (Wilson, 1948; Herrick & Conrad, 1952). Schools have their own pedagogical needs, which effects how building should be

planned. The articles and review of school building in academics mainly came with reference to two points: one was the growing demand of schools and need of space for it. Second were the new psychological and philosophical aspects like child-centered education, learning by doing, all round development of children in schools (Miller, 1942). The needs of planning school building recently have been on rise due to these two reasons. School buildings need to be multi-purpose (Herrick & Conrad, 1952) with growing demand of space for schools. Indian Education Commission (1964-66) recommends ‘school plant’ to provide better infrastructural facilities to school. A School building as a result of this work became joint effort of engineers, architects, school teachers, students and educationists (Joyal, 1948); this was common feature at the three schools in the field where the interactions between school teachers, students and architect was possible to improve the school building. Nelly (2008) considers characteristics of school plants and facilities as important foundation for successful schools. The table below looks into a comprehensive view of school building based on review of relevant issues of a school plant reviewed in detail by Pierce (1929) and other points in the evolving area of schooling spaces. The purpose of the table is to put all the points of school plant and present a comprehensive picture of three schools with reference to its infrastructural capacities.

4.1 Table Representing Features of School Plants and Various Facilities in the Schools

Points for the school plant	Name of the school	LB	SAICE	AID
<u>School building</u>		Single complex and use of other community spaces	Spread at several places.	Single complex and use of other community spaces
Single/ Multi storey		Single; only library was on first floor	Double story; multi storey	New building- single. Rest multi storey
Architects		Mona	NA	Several architects
Over all area Placement of Site Surrounding		In international township AV	In main town Pondichéry	In international township AV
Use of architectural material		Modern- concrete Experimentation with concrete	Heritage- limestone and Modern	Modern- concrete/ experimentation with concrete
Flexibility for future use		Open space	Less than other two schools (old buildings, less open space)	Open space

Cost of construction/ maintenance	High	Mostly Low but sometimes high since buildings required heritage	High
	LB	SAICE	AID
Aesthetics	Imp factor	Imp factor	Imp factor
Classroom Size	Same for all the rooms and apt for no of children	Varied	Same for all the rooms and apt for no of children
Paint of classroom Walls	White- students took a project to paint the walls and do curtains.	White	Red bricked walls
Windows/Ventilation	Huge windows natural ventilation	French windows Natural ventilation	Small Shutters Natural ventilation
Org of classroom	Flexible; utility based	Flexible; utility based	Flexible; utility based
<u>Objects in classroom</u> Furniture Appropriateness of furniture- size, comfortmovement Innovation (any*)	Locally designed Optimum Chairs and desks	Locally designed Optimum Chairs & Desks	Locally designed Optimum Seating on floor on mats with desks
<u>Electronic connections</u> Plugs Fan Notices/ display	Available √ √ √	Available √ √ √	Available √ na √
Visual comfort	Optimum in all seasons	Optimum in all seasons	Optimum in all seasons
Natural lightening	Sufficient in all the seasons	Sufficient in all the seasons	Sufficient in all the seasons
Artificial illumination	Available	Available	Available
Acoustical level Smell <u>Provision of</u> Water facilities Toilet Kitchen Dining area	Silent surroundings No unpleasant smell Clean & hygienic Clean & Enough √ √	Noise from outside Smells from outside Clean & Hygienic Clean & Enough X √	Silent Surroundings No unpleasant smell Locally available Clean & Enough √ √
<u>Env of school</u> Gardens Use of energy level	Maintained by students &gardener Battery, state supply & solar	√ State supply & solar	Open space and plants State supply

Open space around	Ample with possibility of further construction	sufficient Practice of permaculture	Ample with possibility of further construction
<u>Ecological responsive design</u> Light Water Gardening	Adoption of permaculture Mainly Natural Natural Water conservation Chillies, rosella, tomatoes (products)	Farms and gardens for self sufficiency Mainly Natural Water conservation project Banana, mango, lemon, groundnut (products)	Gardening projects Mainly Natural Natural water conservation
	LB	SAICE	AID
Electricity generation Water source <i>Sustainability</i> Use of cycles Alternative form of energy (mention) Use of material Recycling/ reducing/ reusing Garbage disposal	Attempt for solar State State Cycles / Buses √ Adoption of project Garbology by RibhuVohra(TED)	Attempt for solar State State Cycles/ Buses √ (quite High) Attempt at garbage segregation; recycle	NA State State Cycles/ Buses Not observed Garbage segregation
	LB	SAICE	AID
Safety Road Environmental hazards	Closed environment Natural- insects etc. (chapter 7)	An issue- attempt at cycle test for safety. Traffic and Natural (chapter 7)	Closed environment. Natural
<u>other spaces for teaching</u> Library Science Labs Computer lab <u>Crafts</u> Pottery Carpentry <u>Playgrounds</u> Medical facilities Theater Others (mention) Free area for children	√ Life Sciences Available √ √ √ √ √ Open spaces	√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ Open space	√ --- √ Play of Painting X √ √ √ Open spaces
Use of the spaces mentioned above	Regular	Regular	Regular
Teaching aids Modern/ Traditional	Ample Both	Ample Both	Ample Both

Use of tools/ equipment Tools/ equipment storage area Sufficiency of tools Utilization of tools by teachers Students	As per the activity Proper utilization and storage √ Both used them.	As per the activity Proper utilization and storage √ Both used them.	As per the activity Proper utilization and storage √ Both used them.
Maintenance Cost effectiveness	By the central Auroville board	By building department and students.	By the central Auroville board
<u>use of school plant</u> for children- community- other-	√ On occasions for parents or AV not regular	√ At time open to the visitors; regular use by community	√ On occasions for parents or AV not regular
<u>Safety of building</u> Fire fighting Any other calamity (mention)	X No attempt for cyclone or earthquake resistance	X No attempt for cyclone or earthquake resistance	X No attempt for cyclone or earthquake resistance
	LB	SAICE	AID

Concluding about the relevant feature of schools building one must also take into account that these school buildings were made for a small number of children. School buildings at Auroville expanded faster as per the need in comparison to SAICE. LB and The AID were expanding during the fieldwork for need of more infrastructural facilities within the school. Schools could be rated high on certain factors like architecture, aesthetics, child-friendly, multipurpose to name a few. Dopeau (1983) argues that a well-organized school plant is going to facilitate learning, which is true for the three schools. The schools were planned as per the local and innovative needs especially when they follow the needs of children and curriculum. At times, it did not fulfill the criterion and it needed to be worked upon. For example, even if the literature suggests for the use of local material in making the school plant (Miller, 1942) which was not in wide practice in the field. The natural material would be rooftops with palm leaves, which were occasionally used. Many people in the Ashram or Auroville voiced their objection to the use of concrete and other ecological harmful material. As a school plant the schools also fared well on several aspects as small schools. However, had more artistic touch which could be described in following line,

“At the highest level aesthetic education Invites beauty to enter Into every part of (Lie school community: the building itself, its decorated classrooms, the choice of materials, the work of the children and the very way the teachers teach.”
(Coodkin, 2003, p no. na)

The schools invited the aesthetic abilities of individuals and focused on human behavior with the material and different objects in the classroom which was true to the vision of Integral Education (The Mother, 1953/2002)

Organization of Classes and Learning

SAICE and Light Bearer followed their own organization of classes and learning for children. In absence of recognition with any board, SAICE has a letter of recommendation of Ministry of Home Affairs clause recognizing its higher education course as equivalent to undergraduate pass course (See: Annexure 4.5). While LB came under SAIER: Sri Aurobindo Institute of Educational Research, a department that takes care of Education at Auroville. It also followed no examination policy and offered a simple letter stating the presence of child in terms of time spent in the school. The Aid is recognized by Tamil Nadu board, and hence has class organization like mainstream schools. However, was flexible about age group in the respective class. Class organization at SAICE had been a level organization following for couple of years and the Mother gave the names to these levels or age groups, as told by an old *Ashramite*:

Table 4.2 Class, Age, Building and Knowledge Organization at SAICE

Class name	Age groups	Building	Subject or knowledge areas offered
Kindergarten-petits, moyen, grands	3-6	Kindergarten	Oral aural skills-French & Sanskrit through play, music, watching videos
L'avenir- premier, deuxieme, triosieme annes	7-10	Flower room, Delafon	Mathematics, languages, craft, clay, music, some scientific skill in second year
Progrès- un, deux, trois	10-12	Main school building	Progrès- (Annex-x)
EAVP- un-six	13-18	Main school building	e.g. (Annex- x)
Knowledge	18 plus	Knowledge building	Time tables / Languages, Sri Aurobindo and the mother's work, engineering, psychology.

Table 4.3 Class and Knowledge Organization at LB

Name of the class	Age group	Subjects	Other areas and subject
Dragon fighters	6	Language, Maths, projects, craft, pottery, designing, gardening, science.	Exhibition, visit to AV departments, other schools open house, Pondichéry school, sea diving, bamboo center, archaeology.
Gold fish	7	Same as above + Tamil, French	
Silver cats	8	Same as above	

Table 4.4 Class and Knowledge Organization at the AID (new building)

Class and age group (as per the board) ^{xi}	Knowledge Organization
4 (9 +/- 1 or 2 year)	Projects, Social Sciences (was the only different sub not offered at other two schools), Science, Maths, Tamil, French, English, & Co curricular activities & Sports
5 (10 +/- 1 or 2 year)	Same as above
6 (11 +/- 1 or 2 year)	Same as above

What a school considers worth teaching students is an important aspect for education and development of individuals in a stipulated time (Kumar,1992). Schools segregate the subject areas that is what type of subjects are taught on day-to-day basis to children and on how these opportunities change for different age groups, different persons, and different spaces. Teachers in the schools had freedom to choose within all subjects: various skills, concepts, and teaching method. Teachers referred various textbooks and designed methods to teach the chosen content to the students. The system became relatively free of centrality of exams, competitions to compare the students. At the outset schools declared not to teach for a job or money but it focused on the joy of learning. Chapter 6 would deal with the details of Knowledge Organization.

Organization of knowledge with reference to the physical spaces is very crucial for any school. It means that what are the spaces where learning takes place? Normally students are made to enter a physical space and they remain there to carry out all the learning. However, in the schools, delivery of knowledge area had important connotation with the space. There

was variation in spaces when a particular knowledge form was delivered. Sometimes an individual child had option in choosing the spaces for learning especially after an age. An example of this was SAICE to your own time-table at sixteen years of age (see: Annexure 4.6), while at LB around 14 years a child could choose to apprentice with someone in the community.

Unfolding of Time: Annual and Quotidian

SAICE began at 7.30 am but respective teacher could begin a class earlier than this time (especially in the main school). The school functioned till 11.30 am with 'soup time' (break for snacks) at 9.30am in between. It recommenced at 1.30 at *Delafon*. It functioned till 4.00 pm and after that children went for their respective physical education program. SAICE has vacations during the month of November and the new session begins on December 16.

Students and teachers referred that the Mother scheduled the annual calendar, '*this is from the time of the Mother*' (reference often made to other practices too). The school also had its holidays on *Darshan* days and the first of every month. It also had to close down when there were 'strikes' due to political reasons or Election Day to avoid violence interrupting the normal functioning of the school. Any kind of leave for personal reasons was discouraged. Exceptions have been made for medical reasons or any family members' illness or death. In such cases, the parents informed the authority before they got the consent for their leave. Physical education program functioned even during the vacations or other days when school had to close down unless it was a law and order situation.

LB started at 8.00 am with the morning assembly. There was break time at 9.30 am. A brass bell (usually the one used in temples by the priest) was rung to announce the passing of hour in the school but for the assembly. The lunchtime was at 1.00 pm and the teachers ate after the children finished at 1.30. The classes recommenced at 2.30 pm and eventually the children left for the sports as per the schedule. The sports program was not held on Sundays, during the vacations, on holidays and during heavy rains. At LB, the new session started in the second week of July and functioned until the vacations in October and reopened in September till it had to break again before Christmas and reopened after the New Year. The school board of Auroville regulated the holidays; which were mainly the state holidays or local festivals. LB's team at time questioned the holidays and wanted to work on those days. It sometimes even re commenced earlier the school than the scheduled vacations.

The morning assembly at the AID was held at 8.30 am followed by classes until lunchtime around 12 noon. There was a snacks time at 10 am. The children who came early were also served breakfast at the school.^{xii} Therefore, children could be in the school earlier or later than the scheduled timings. The timings did not imply being in the classrooms only but children had freedom to be present in the school premises and to utilize the same. After the lunch, classes or afternoon activities were held; this was followed by another break of small snacks and getting ready for the sports program. The AID like LB commenced its Annual program in June/July, but it observed holidays for local Tamil festivals unlike LB where celebrations for Tamil festivals especially *Pongal* took place in the school and the holiday was not observed.

Students at The AID and LB took leave during the year due to personal reasons. These two schools considered the need of the community or an individual child. Therefore, the school's timetable was not an authority or benchmark for child's learning. However all children loved to come to the school due to freedom given to them which reflected in their regular attendance in all the three schools. The teachers felt that the children should spent most of their time in school related activities, which was generally agreed upon by the parents. However, in conflicts or challenges with any of the decision, the next step was 'dialogue'. One such example of discussion was finding time to do 'Home assignment' at LB and in many cases their parents felt they were doing too many things since, the schools hours were longer including the sports program. It left a little time for their individual hobbies. Another challenge at SAICE was that its timetable always required an adult to pick up a child under 12 and to drop at the school or sports ground again in the late afternoon. With the small town getting crowded the movement of students was curtailed and adult supervision or guardians became imperative. Timetables therefore brought about a change in life style of parents which all of them made as their willful choice. It also meant that the parents chose some work for economic sustenance, in order to keep themselves engaged while their children studied in the schools. Few parents found some vocation at the Ashram and Auroville as chapter 5 would explain.

Timing the Learning

Time is one of the organizational features of human behavior, which systematize human activities. It also is a means of communication since we share the conception of time.

Zerubavel (1991) explains that temporality has strong effect on human activities. ‘Time’ orders, controls and regulates the activities of our lives; I add the factor of ‘in and out’ of various spaces in case of the three schools. The organization of our activities around time and status of authority of time, reflects the view on learning and cognition.

The study found two striking aspects of time; first allocation of child into a class as per their biological age (See: chapter 6). Time as age is a variable of what a child can learn at that age. This is a category of ‘biological temporality’ as per Zerubavel (1991). This is biological determinism affecting learning and it is an aspect of social reality of humans. Second striking aspect, is regulation of various subjects or learning opportunities and time spent on them. Learning activities of relevant subject at schools was distributed over the entire day and over entire year like any other school. All three schools had vacations for different occasions, times and reasons. The annual and daily schedules of the schools were meant for each one of them, and followed their own protocol. Movements and transition from one spatial temporality to another for learning and time involved in these was acceptable. Amount of time spent on learning of each subject or skill by a student indicated relevance of different types of learning.

Pacing and *Un*pacing with the time

Educational Policy and Educational Organization views time as an indicator of efficient organization of teaching and instruction to ensure quality in schools. Orellana & Thorne (1998) argue for ‘politics of time’ in schools that governs the students learning and hence quality teaching, since time is an indicator of school authorities’. Power over children and their families in their observation of timetables in few US schools, they commented

“.... Quantitative and utilitarian view of time units, with each unit as interchangeable, with each minute equal to another minute, without regard to qualitative experience or context of placement. This approach also assumes a view of learning as a process that can be measured, quantified, and divided into equal discrete units to be administered at any time with equal effect.”

(p. no 458)

The time was a regulatory factor but not an absolute especially during the school. The wide range of knowledge areas the schools were able to accommodate highlights the quality of learning forms, a child could get while overlooking at the requirement of age relatively. The schools organized activities in time schedule and followed it as rhythm but there was possibility to accommodate several other things. At SAICE other things would mean a

student could finish one's work on or before time, or also free time for students to choose an activity, some program by a visitor or visit to other place. The learning was not fundamentally co related with content in the form of a syllabus. This was largely possible since the teachers organized the curriculum and it did not come from some higher up authority. Teachers at *Delafon* had stepwise learning objectives but followed a multi-level and multi method approach in the class (ref: chapter 6), the objectives were not time bound and time as a monolithic variable gauging the students' learning.

Spaces, time and learning 'sans' adults

A school which sees free movement of teachers and students in enclosed space and outside it, is more likely to be sensitive to the role of 'freedom' in an individual's growth. Dopemu (1983) considers there should be free space for students where they can be without the presence of adults. This instills in the children to learn independently and to have the time with their peer group. The children indulge in organized, collective or solitary play. After the children finished their snacks with the teachers; children ran out to play in the sand pit, inside the class, or on swings. There was no restriction on the movement but the discipline to use the objects and to keep them back was insisted to children at that young age. Even when the child finished the individual task, he or she usually picked up any activity, which they liked for example, puzzles, storybooks or blocks/ some construction material being favorite of most of the children. At *Delafon* and Kindergarten apart from the set periods to sit and learn reading, writing and mathematics, there was also ample free time given to the children.

The children are enjoying a new card game to learn names of animals in French which teachers have made for them. The children were supposed to pick up cards randomly from the stack put upside down so that the animal and it's offspring is not visible. The child should match the animal with their young ones. They have to hold cards like in a card game, once the little one was matched correctly they put it aside. If it was wrong then both the cards went into pile in the center and any one of the child re shuffled these.

Obs/Sept 2011/Delafon/ SAICE/researcher and children eight years old

This along with other games of puzzles was an apt example where children interacted freely with objects and learnt without the supervision of the teachers. Games were the best example,

where children learn rules, categories, and concepts on their own. These are essential for the development of ‘problem solving skills’ among students.

The AID also had puzzles and games in the class, apart from that the children demanded for playing with ball and hence they needed access to the sports material. Teachers allowed the access and in the free time, children could play with balls and skipping ropes. Many children also used the hall (in new building) to play blocks, games like, snakes and ladders, Ludo, chess.

LB also had the same pattern for free time, during which children had access to learning material. However, LB stated clearly that it aimed to follow ‘free progress’ as stated by the Mother. the children as early as six years onwards had the freedom in the afternoon to choose from the learning activities like, pottery, crafts, Capoeira, dance, piano, singing, computers to name a few. Free time resulted in free play for the children or playing games like the other two schools.

Another activity was climbing trees, which children managed even if they were not allowed to do the same initially at LB. Free time also meant that children learnt to manage their learning, there were other students who wanted to finish their tasks, and they were left to be on their own. an example of the same-

On one such afternoon, when children are free to do what they wish to, I find a young 7 year old busy all alone in crafts room, he is trying to finish his knitting piece which he has started. I requested him to take photography to which he readily agreed.^{xiii}

Obs/Sep12/LB/ researcher and eight years old child

Learning without Adults was a relevant phenomenon in all the schools. Some had more, others less due to their policy and less leeway to experiment in the curriculum. Various learning activities paced with time that is, followed the time and *unpaced* with it on daily basis. *Unpacing* implied it did not take the authority of time as ultimate to judge individual learning and relied more on the pace of individual learning. At first attempt what would look as riot of activities *unpaced* with regular time slots; but eventually it had an underlying unique pattern of individual in interaction with different spaces over the time.

Regularity in the sports

The time changed its meaning drastically in sports. At SAICE the regular sports program is compulsory for all the children and the Ashram inmates round the year. The children were

not supposed to leave the station without prior permission except in extreme cases, one of the reasons being physical education was compulsory during the session. The program continued while there was a month and a half break from the school. The Physical Education program was ubiquitously perennial with the time at the Ashram and SAICE. The students who stayed back participated in it. Each day had a stipulated activity for each group chapter 7 would elaborate on it.

At LB and the AID physical education took place on the days when school was functioning. When school was off for a day or due to vacations or sometimes due to rain the sports was off. The presence of physical education activities other than *Dehashakti* added more and new options to the physical education of the child. Parents also mentioned sending their children to Yoga or Swimming classes. As a result what appeared from the responses that the time allocation to child's sports activities was mainly discretion of the parents, child and coach; This difference of time management and 'regularity' of students as essentiality resulted in quite stark views of the Ashram school's ex-students who visited *Dehashakti* or joined Auroville. Impressed by the PED and its consistent (almost army like) program they were critical of laissez-faire attitude of parents, coaches, children and teachers towards physical education. However, the parents and children of Auroville argued that there were several ways to approach physical education and why a program should be coerced on their children. In a way indicating just because the Ashram had been following a program, should Auroville follow the same?

Parents questioned the compulsion of child's 'regularity' at the program and suggested that instead of a week's program a child could attend it for three days. Rest of the days a child could participate in other activities other than the Sports Program at *Dehashakti*. The questioning of regularity implied mainly the questioning of the content for Physical Education. There was no consensus found in the responses of the participants. Time strongly associated with content and space especially in a Physical Education program, which was unlike in the rest of the educational program.

Conclusion: Essentiality of the Space, Time and Movements

Schools spaces and time organization gives schools its identity and platform where culture and other relevant themes could 'play' and 'flow'. Innovations visualize creation of different path for the humankind to follow therefore, the conception of spaces and time and their

utilization to regulate their social phenomenon like schooling and life become relevant to study. This chapter then sets the stage for rest of the research questions of this study to be answered. It explicated the details and meaning of spaces held by the participants from a macro perspective of school as whole, its various divisions that is, various buildings, classrooms, crossing over the spaces; while from the micro perspective it meant various objects in a macro space in relation to the participants and their oscillating conception of time.

This research found the individual in the field were not caged in the spaces but acted upon and created the spaces and crossed the set boundaries. This was more what Lefebvre in Simonsen (2005) describes as dialectical nature of individual body with the spaces. The boundaries were of space (physical), time and knowledge forms (both abstract) and individual's action on the same. It becomes a learning form from the perspective of an educationist and a behavior that was to be instilled in the learners. Hence, to me it was not only schooling that was happening in these buildings but also a change of human behavior with a conscious approach.

Endnotes

ⁱ The study does not focus on families of Ashram inmates, but look into it from the perspective of students in the next chapter. Many senior Ashram inmates and few young inmates lived with their families. An exceptional phenomenon with respect to what an Ashram is originally demanded as a condition in Indian tradition that is, to leave one's family.

ⁱⁱ Directions were reference to tell the destination one wishes to reach or parts of a building; a method of knowing the spaces, which I have to learn.

ⁱⁱⁱ The name of the level is L'avenier. One of the teachers and old Sadhak told me that the Building is most likely named after the French gentleman on whose name this house must have been.

^{iv} See Sri Aurobindo Ashram (1992) *Flower and their Messages the Mother*. Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

^v Entry of visitors was strictly prohibited or restricted.

^{vi} During the fieldwork, I spent time with another senior *Sadhak* who also worked in establishing the lab. Though we usually talked about the content, there were people who wanted to talk about the anecdotes and publish them, there was an effort by the office to do the same.

^{vii} Cobbled roads as they were called were covered by a tessellation of a cemented thick tiles. Pondichéry also underwent this experiment during fieldwork and roads in old town were cobbled. This was to ensure rain water harvesting.

^{viii} He narrated the story of making the drawing with water or poster colors on the floor, the Mother supervised it and told him once for one his sketches that this is not correct and sketched it for him. He told he never kept the paper of what the mother sketched for him (indicating his wish that he would have kept it). the design has significance for individual's faith.

^{ix} One can link this whole phenomenon of rituals and practices with the issue of Faith dealt in next chapter. Faith is seen as personal virtue but is even reflected in daily and regular activities of participants.

^x For details of 'play of painning' see annexure 4.7

^{xi} There were no class records checked for age group. But the teacher reported that first criterion for class is age but children are allowed to be in the class and then try out their settlement in terms of performance, temperament and group.

^{xii} I was offered the same by the school caretaker when I was living on the school premises as a volunteer.

CHAPTER 5TH

EXPLORATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ASPECTS OF FAITH

In order to study 'faith' of individuals, our study construed it with two main connotations. First, faith is an undoubting, deep psychological personal characteristic in the ideals or words of the Masters. Faith of an individual plays a key role in her or his own development that is, 'change and perfection' one wants to bring about in oneself. Second, faith is 'reflected' in engagements with rituals or practices performed by a social group or by an individual. Faith is a personal and inner quality of an individual but manifested in the outer action rituals, practices and various ideas like prayers, display of pictures, quoting from the words of the Masters. The chapter navigates through the most conspicuous examples of faith observed in the field: starting with the names of houses and individuals to more abstract expressions such as rituals.

Various practices were prevalent in the schools, which indicated deepest aspirations and beliefs of the participants. For example Higher ideals behind the physical symbols like *the Samadhi*, *Matrimandir*, photos of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, symbols of Masters (see: Annexure 1.2) and practices like recitation of the prayers, mediating with the music, quotations from the works of the Masters to name a few.

Participants' involvement in the practices and their connotation was at times critical.

Participants reflected on their own views about and over their relation with the Ashram or moving out to Aurovillian their interviews. Data also indicated that the collective forms of 'life' emerged out of individual 'faith', which reflected in their family patterns and volunteering in the Ashram or Auroville; which was a 'glimpse' to faith as personal quality reflected in their choices of life. Eventually, all themes discussed in the chapter act as 'imagery' of faith in action both individual and collective.

Naming the Houses and Communities

Naming is a unique human behavior associated closely with language and symbolism of the meaning behind the name. The act of naming reflected the linguistic symbolism of Faith ideals and the meaning behind those names. Faith in values of Integral Yoga led individuals to find ways to name their houses and name their children; Names were those qualities, which Integral Yoga view ascertained as the basis of human growth. The act of Naming

signifies the adherence to and belief of individuals to those qualities and therefore, the worldview.

Names of the houses and the communities became important to study since the houses associated with the Ashram or Auroville stood out against the general naming pattern of houses and streets at Pondichéry. A closer look at the houses one could differentiate many Ashram related houses with other houses because of the names the slabs outside the houses. The names of the streets in Pondichéry bear the names of the French consulates during the colonization period. Others bear the name of important people of Pondichéry, *Ranagapillai*, to even Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Nation (Indian state). The architecture of the houses on the eastern side of the canal is mainly French now slowly taking its modern shape, with new constructions. There are also houses with traditional Tamil architecture, which are mostly old and dilapidated. On the western side, the houses are largely of traditional Tamil architecture but the new urban multiplexes style is also overpowering in many reconstructions. Most of the people who are related with the Ashram for long and deal with people ‘connected’ⁱ with the Ashram, walked down the lanes and could identify which house belonged to the Ashram or to the Ashram connected people mainly because of the names they had instead of the name of an individual.

Moving in the lanes especially in the ‘white’ or eastern part of the town one came across houses which had names like *felicité*, *serenité*, *quietude*, *à toi*ⁱⁱ etc. The names bestowed upon the house represent the qualities the Mother often described in her writings for individuals to cultivate in them. The practice was a legacy of what the Mother used to do. She used to give names to certain houses, several other properties and even individuals (the participants shared several anecdotal references for this). Some of the house had slabs outside the walls, which bear the name in the facsimile of the Mother’s handwriting. There were individuals who had chosen the names in the facsimile handwriting of the Mother on their own. When I asked an ex-student, that if the Mother had given the name of their house, which I read on the slab on the outside wall of their house, s/he replied:

“...*Oh! the Mother did not give the name but we have chosen it, in her (facsimile) writing.*”

At Auroville the houses in cohorts have names which are the quality they identified with in Sanskrit, French, English or even other languages. For example, *Courage*, *Yantra*, *Dehashakti*, *Arc-en-ciel*, *Aspiration*, *Mir* to name a few. The address of an individual would

usually be the community he/she lived in. There would be two three families or individuals residing in that community. One had to just enter the community and asked for the person by his/ her name to whom one wanted to meet. There were no house numbers only names! Naming the community was a sign of identification of the houses with higher aspiration or quality reflected in the name. My personal visit to the two communities and stay at one of the houses in *Yantra* community, revealed the values of living in these communities. To quote an episode from the Adventure community:

I entered the small and quiet and forested community with my friend who is also from Auroville. The place was green and a little away from the main tar road. We went there to meet our friend, who had recently been blessed a baby girl. A small house made with bricks welcomed me (she had earlier shared pictures of her house with me), it was full of plants and trees, and in a corner a windmill was running quietly pulling out water from the well.

We met the couple and their little daughter, they had just finished lunch. The baby was lying spread on a simple rug with a few toys, the house had bare minimum furniture and utensils in the kitchen. The husband and the wife broke into a discussion that if we need electricity to survive and how much we need. (this was in contrast to life lived in the cities) the wife commented that she did not need so much but only those who needed their laptops. She looked at her husband and smiled. She told me that her house was yogic with not much of the technology hassles. She asked me where I was living. I told her Pondichery, she lamented that how I survive in the pee pee (she intended that Pondichery town is full of noise and pollution). (We talked about other things).....

Int/Obs Dec 2010/ Adventure/ researcher and other Aurovillians

The episode highlights the views of the residents who demarcate from the world ‘outside’ based on choices of lifestyle. Another visit to the same community was at night, to be part of a bonfire party, where the participants interacted about the experiments in the community.

This was my second visit to the community but to another house, it was night we (I and another Ashram inmate) reached there without any lights and a boy and girl navigated through the dark path, with dogs. It was a little colder than Pondichery due to the tress. (on the way had been told that there used to be several small bylanes to reach Auroville two decades back and not so many houses as they had come along the highway now).

I got down and met the owner of the house, the conversation began with the owner of the house about his experiment of making the house entirely on solar energy that is, solar water heater, using bamboo for scaffolds and another alternative material to make the house instead of concrete and iron, and other experiments in the community.

Int/ObsFeb2011/Adventure, Auroville/ Several ex-students of SAICE.

The name and the aspiration of the persons who had chosen to build the house in this community matched in these two cases. In case of these communities, the idea was ‘adventure’ of an alternative lifestyle to live with the bare minimum, ecologically sound objects and material in the community.

Names of the individuals (or even shops, organizations like publications, printing press, and study circles to name a few) were insights about the individual’s relation with values of the worldview.

Naming Individuals

Individuals often wanted to share the story or meaning of their names. They told that the Mother used to name the individuals and often individuals mainly the inmates of the Ashram requested for a new name from the Mother. However, in two separate incidents two individuals shared that their stories of not accepting the names by the Mother.

After narrating the story of his journey from his native place to this, The Ashram inmate added- “when I came here, the Mother suggested a name for me(other than this present name). I had a dream where the Mother addressed me with ‘the name she has given me’ ,- “But I never liked that name. I kept my name what it is.”

The interaction went on about the life at the Ashram, stating the decision the individual accepted the place and values but not the name the Mother gave.

Int/March 2011/ On a Walk with Ashram Inmate

The participants shared incidents and anecdotes about each other, on one such occasion a teacher narrated a story that how and his friend wanted to change the name but decided otherwise.

Sagar wanted to change his name as everyone used to tease him because of it. So he went one day to the Mother, realizing that she was giving new names to individuals. He stood in the queue only to realize that he did not like the names being given and decided to quietly go away from that place. He is still known with his name Sagar.

Int/June 2011/ Ashram School, Researcher and other Ashram Inmates

These two episodes indicated that to give new names was part of the culture, which may not be in continuation in the same form today. However, children at SAICE and a few at Auroville had names, which were unique and reflected association with the Masters. Naming the child was not the focus of the study but the practice of naming the children with prefix or suffix of 'Auro' or joining it to their surname (or the family name) made it imperative to study the practice of 'naming'. Researcher interviewed three individuals: two boys and one girl who had the word 'Auro' (either in name or surname). We asked that 'who named them?' and 'what does their name mean?' the responses revealed a deeper link with *Sadhaks* and the individuals. Sometimes *Sadhaks* were in their family relations, but not in all the cases. In many cases *Sadhaks*ⁱⁱⁱ were involved in giving such names upon meditation or impromptu, which the parents accepted. It reflected the interactions and proximity of relations between the *Sadhaks*, school and families. The children also had names after the characters in Sri Aurobindo's play or the titles of his poems- *Ahana*, *Savitri*, *Satyavaan*, or Sanskratized names *Divij*, *Ritarpan*. In one of the cases, it was a sheer resemblance with the name of a person, whom the brother liked and named his sibling after that person. In general names mostly had origin in Sanskrit or Regional Indian languages- Oriya, Bengali, Gujarati to name a few.

Sometimes naming was effect of the multicultural life style at Auroville than an issue of faith. At LB the names of children were *Indianized* or *Americanized*. 'Satyamayi', 'Tara', 'Narayan', 'Pooja' were names of a few children who were not Indians but had been living at Auroville and had Indian names. Not everyone changed his or her names; therefore, one could conclude that this was not an absolute rule or tradition. It was a personal choice of individuals or their families and sometimes more for convenience.

At the AID children had traditional Tamil names for example: *Indumathi*, *Parthipan*. In terms of names, the children there carried or preserved their regional identities to the schools. As a result, for volunteers from Europe at The AID it was a challenge to pronounce their Indian names, with their accent, which often left children laughing, or gave them an opportunity to crack a joke on the pronunciations of the Western teachers.

Naming and changing of names was a creative aspect in linguistics as per one of the experts^{iv} in Indian languages. There is no research in the mainstream academia on this in India especially with reference to child development that researcher could come across. Data indicated that in the field, names as a linguistic form were the first conspicuous symbolism of faith. It indicated that the individuals belonged to a group or a culture. The words of explanations of belief about their names came later on.

Concluding from both the sections on naming we can say that it was a conscious attempt to render the individual and the abode with some meaning, which was likely an ‘aspiration’. After explaining a practice of naming, which is individualistic, we now move on to discuss the practices, which are more collectivist.

Defining School Culture: Rituals and Practices

Thapan (1991), Sibia (2006) and Stambach (2010) studied the school culture in their respective fields and their rituals and practices. All three highlighted the role and involvement of participants with the rituals and its importance to understand the ‘school culture’^v. Rituals had standard patterns and were regular in time and space. Standardization involved regularization of a practice and would mean nearly same steps of practice for all individuals. In this strict sense, the ‘March Past’ was a ritual in the field; but there were other rituals, which had flexibility to an extent for an individual to reciprocate and practice it. Rituals are those practices that are likely to involve ‘the collective’ in an outright and upfront manner. Rituals especially in case of innovative or faith based schools were signs of collectivity and passing on the ideas or values of the world-view over the generations. They also symbolized the tradition and vision of the school. Rituals of the schools helped study that how ‘immortality’ of values was sought in the schools. Rituals do not mean that they are religious in nature and not meaningless repeated actions by the participants. Rather for the present study, rituals are the ways by which the participants share their identity of the schooling process (an idea, vision or truth implied behind the same). The practice of the

rituals made schooling more than what happened in classrooms and teaching-learning process.

The three schools in the study had well formulated and also new formulating practices or rituals that reflected values of the schools. Few rituals had history while others were on the path of making history and were in the process to be formalized.

It was noteworthy to see the similarity of a few rituals and practices across the three schools and formulation of new or opposite of existing rituals sometimes. Oldest practices were most likely to be those that were started in initial years of the Ashram by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo or during their presence by certain individuals. For example, (going to picnics and excursions at SAICE being one such and the urn fire meditation on *Darshan* days at Auroville is another example. While new practices were, which the students or individuals of the Ashram or Auroville were starting in harmony with the spirit and values of the Integral Worldview. The two examples of upcoming practices were- annual visit of students who are passing out from SAICE to Auroville (which was yet to pick be regularized and involve all the students) and another was the participation in the ‘Golden Chain’^{vi} activities- which was formed by a group of ex-students of SAICE.

In terms of participation, rituals and practices had certain restriction and freedom that allowed certain individuals and barred the rest. Many of the rituals were open to public and anyone could take part in the same. There were practices like March Past which were restricted to the participants who were the Ashramites, Ashram students, and non-members (who were almost like an Ashramite or an Ashramite but not part of his age group), while spectators participated in the special sense and added meaning to the act of March Past.

Samadhi – Silence, Surrender and Prayer

The Samadhi of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo is where they are laid to rest after they left their physical bodies. It is situated in the main building of the Ashram where the Masters spent the last years of their lives. The main building, where the Samadhi is, also housed many Ashram inmates and offices. There was usually a gatekeeper (a local Tamil man in his middle adulthood) at the brown wooden door, guiding or restricting the visitors, and as one entered there were Ashram inmates or more volunteers to guide and instruct- “switch off the mobile” (softly hushed in Hindi, English and Tamil) usually indicated with gestures to switch off mobiles. The small wooden gate had the symbol of the Mother displayed above the gate

(this was quite popular for visitors to stand and get photographed, most likely as a souvenir that they have been to Pondichéry).

Upon entering the gate, there were steps with rockery (exhibited with huge cactus, other plants and lilies) on either side. The steps led to the building, which housed a bookstore on the ground floor. The path in between the rockery and the Ashram building is mainly used for exit. The concrete path in between the outer boundary of the building and the rockery led towards the Samadhi. A public convenience was on the left side, the entrance to which was managed by flowerpots. Beautiful flowerpots were also displayed against the walls. These were changed regularly. As one turned right, in front one could see the Samadhi. A huge copper pod tree, referred as the Service tree (significance given by the Mother), grew close to the Samadhi, with its branches spread over the Samadhi.

Silence was a virtue in the Ashram. Most actions around the Samadhi were managed with Silence. One could observe and experience Silence and its effect on the self, even when one was around the Ashram. A small white placard hung on one of the pillars around the Samadhi, in the Mother's facsimile handwriting in blue 'Silence' (which is spelt almost similar in English and French). The place and activities (practices) associated with the same held importance not only for individuals from the Ashram but for all the individuals connected with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

Pranam: bowing down to the Masters

"Offering *pranam*" (to the Masters) or offering one's respect implies surrendering oneself at *Samadhi* was essential for most of the children. There was no time or indication from the school to go to *Samadhi* but it became part of a student's everyday life. These were times early in the morning, or when school or physical education program known as Group finished, or most likely late night for older children. Parents or caretakers accompanied young children, but as they grew old, they became independent in their visit to the *Samadhi* and offering their *pranam*.

The teachers, the students, the parents, and many visitors went to the *Samadhi* at different times of the day. They bowed down on Samadhi with knees bent and head on the Samadhi, some folded hands, others just looked at, it was a thread that tied each of them, while they were all connected to the Samadhi in their meditations, prayers, reflections or might be

something else. During the fieldwork, I never found any teacher or family insisting upon the same, but sometimes it was suggestive:

The two students Sujay and Raghav were new to the school, they joined SAICE last year. They and two senior students of SAICE are interacting with me. Sujay said that he had been to the center at his native place, (that implies where devotees form a group to do various activities and readings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo) he told us that he went to the Samadhi daily, while he mentioned that his friend Raghav was not going. I was with another senior student, who happen to knew Raghav's family. The senior student suggested to Raghav that he should go the Samadhi. He did not react and just listened.

On later occasions we just asked the Raghav whether he had gone to the Samadhi or not. but since this was a personal choice to practice and he was a teenager, asking further seemed contradicting his freedom. This was not the subject further in the meetings I was part of.

During the fieldwork Raghav used to visit the Samadhi with his friends. On another occasion I saw him passing on a bicycle, slowing down to stop in front of the Ashram, he looked at the Ashram (may be the Mother's room) and closed his eyes. This was a change that happened in him.

IntObsMar2011/Corner House/ researcher, one senior student & two new students at SAICE
There were different ways of exhibiting reverence around the Samadhi and different opinion about the ways. For example, people looked up at the room of the Mother, touched their hand on forehead and throat, a gesture of seeking pardon or giving respect. The first time I observed these individual gestures keenly and asked a friend about these practices.

A friend who had recently become an Aurovillian, had been associated with the Integral thought since her childhood, I told her with surprise when I observed that many individuals offered pranam to the Mother's room or offered incense's smoke as gesture of Aarti. and asked her, "do you also do all this?" She replied, "No I never do that!" (she visited the Samadhi whenever she went to Pondichéry from Auroville) but she said, "to each one his own, if that (action) gives them something so it is for him or her to perform". But personally she did not believe in the same (Since in her view the Mother and Sri Aurobindo never encouraged the same). We concluded 'to each his own way of reverence.' And we smiled with some deep understanding as she spoke and I listened in agreement with her.

Disc/Int/ Oct 2009/ AV/ Researcher and Aurovillian

A possibility of challenging aspect for human mind is to comprehend this place. As there is nothing codified and individuals held critical and many times contrary view of any practice.

Life around the Samadhi

The observations sketched the view of the Samadhi. There were other activities coupled with the space around the Samadhi in the main Ashram building. Few of the activities were conspicuous and two of them, which I could observe were open to participation of others apart from *pranam*. These were: burning of the incense sticks around the Samadhi and meditation in the evening (except on Sundays and Thursdays). Early morning and in the evening there was distribution of the incense sticks for those who visited the Samadhi, a nice metal stand was kept with flame inside and each person (who wanted to light the incense) would go take an incense stick, light it and place it in on a huge vertical stand. The ritual of *pranam*, lighting incense happened in the atmosphere of silence, while several other routine activities happened around as well. The Bulletin^{vii} office was open, where often free Bulletins were distributed or one could go and read them there. The visitors came and went away during the visiting hours. They were told politely: to form queues, not to sit around Samadhi, to switch off the cellphones; crows were chased away sometimes with a catapult, the floor was cleaned off falling leaves or birds' excreta. The gardeners worked around the Samadhi to arrange flowerpots or took care of the Service tree: providing support, cleaning it from any infections or parasites etc.

On the left was the display area of information. Many notices remained the same or were permanent. Few notices were regularly changed. These were the ones about competitions, cultural programs by visiting artists or professors, medical check-ups, about Auroville visits, instructions to PED members^{viii}. Children from the school and others like me came to see the notices especially on Saturdays to check the movie notice^{ix} or during the 'competition seasons' to check the information about teams and events.

Life around the Samadhi brought the atmosphere of silence, reverence or love for the Mother and Sri Aurobindo amidst the other activities carried around quietly. Students experienced a deeper inner discipline of observing or experiencing the silence. Outer intrusions of noise were there even at the Samadhi as Ashram's scattered plan (refer chapter 4) led to outside activities to cross paths with Ashram activities. At times even some late night concert would be blaring full volume on, and the noise would reach the Ashram but the activities of the

individuals remained undisturbed. *Pranams, agarbattis*, sitting quietly, smiles or peace on the faces remained the same.

The Matrimandir –Beauty, Meditations and Aspirations

Many visitors referred to the Matrimandir as the ‘Golden globe’ or the ‘Golden Earth’. Its history of origin and conception hold much of its symbolic and instrumental value (See Annexure 5.1). This has much restricted access for the outsiders, visitors at Auroville new comers and even to Aurovillians, than the Ashram. It had enough visitors, which was beyond the limit of what volunteers could handle. Matrimandir official staff asked a question to the visitors, ‘*Do you really want to go there?*’ As a question, it challenged the understanding of visitors who thought that places like these should have free access for the public. Among many of them, there might have just been the curiosity to visit this great piece of architecture but there were also individuals who had an ardent desire to experience it and meditate inside it. To share an example, I used to take the bus^x that took visitors from Pondichéry to Matrimandir. Sometimes, the visitors going to Auroville or to the Ashram for the first time had curious enquiries. For example:

On one such visit to Auroville early morning, a European woman in her late adulthood was enquiring her co passengers about the Matrimandir. She wanted to know if she could go inside. I listened to her interaction and then spoke to her. She told me she had planned this trip from Europe and had been checking the website. She added that she was suggested through email to do the booking for ‘inside chamber’ to meditate after she would arrived at Auroville; which was not able to do. She had a few days to be here and was really concerned that if they (Matrimandir staff) would allow her to meditate there. I explained the process and told her if she could tell the volunteers there, they would allow her for an inside meditation^{xi}. She was very concerned but a deep silence and calm enveloped her in her desire to go inside and meditate.

Int Sept2011/Bus going to Auroville/ Researcher, an old woman from Europe and a third person connected with Auroville.

Rules to gain the entry to Matrimandir and its geographical distance from the place of residence and place of work of many Aurovillians, made it challenging for most of them and the researcher to visit it daily. An Aurovillian insisted upon going to Matrimandir daily. But during the fieldwork, the limited group of friends from Auroville were not a regular visitor unlike the Samadhi at the Ashram, except the individuals who worked at the Matrimandir.

Many friends from Auroville reported an inclination to visit the Samadhi at the Ashram than to visit the Matrimandir. An Aurovillian shared similar insight:

Mahi exclaimed looking at me, “so you are here!” - (that is Pondichéry),. She enquired that where I am staying, I smiled and said here (that means Pondichéry). She pointed towards the Ashram and remarked this is our center. Then she narrated a very personal incident she had with one of the very senior Sadhaks at the Ashram from the time of Sri Aurobindo.^{xii} She told that in her initial days at Auroville she would rush every day from there to be at the Samadhi and spend hours here. Once the senior Sadhak who would often go to the Matrimandir was with her and commented that how he wished to be at this beautiful place referring to the Matrimandir (he himself used to live in the Ashram premises). She told me that the Sadhak’s comment changed her view and made her feel how special she was to be at the Matrimandir.

She left me smiling with the sweet feeling and retrospect on the relation many individuals share with the Ashram and the Samadhi- a fact shared by another Auroville friend who said that he still tried to be at the Samadhi every day.

Int Mar 2011/in front of the Ashram/M an old Aurovillian and researcher

Learning Environment at the Matrimandir

Teachers at the AID reported to take the children there but it did not happen during the fieldwork. At LB, the teachers used the environment at the Matrimandir in a creative manner. The teacher undertook the project during 2011 and reported the details in an interaction with the researcher later.

One of the teachers at LB working with eight years old shared her project with me. She took the children to the Matrimandir to look into the vital education of children that is emotions. She told that the project was experiential and based on individual experience of the same feeling. As per her Matrimandir gave silent atmosphere where the children could look at emotions and observe them quietly.

Int/September 2012/ LB/ teacher and the researcher

Matrimandir for younger children was not therefore a mere place to visit as part of a ritual. They experienced silence in order to look into a theme in relation with the ‘self’.

Once even, I took the children from LB to Matrimandir. Visit to the Matrimandir to relate the verses of *Kabeer (the Indian saint)* with inner experiences of Divine feeling and experience at Matrimandir-

This was the oldest group of children at LB, and during a language class, the group discussed Kabeer and his mystic poetry, students reported to feel the same at the Matrimandir; so for some similar mystique experience, the children suggested to visit the Matrimandir.

The Matrimandir staff added that there were students from other schools of Auroville, to help them maintain the activities or to observe the gardens and have other valuable experiences there. They suggested if we would like to take this up as well.

Int/ Aug2011/Matrimandir/ Researcher & Students of LB

In both the projects, Matrimandir acted as relevant and conducive environment to elicit a certain experience in the students. ‘Volunteer work’ was another concrete value, which was a relevant feature of children’s life at the Ashram and Auroville (to be discussed later in the chapter).

Visiting the Masters’ Rooms

Darshan means to have a vision or glimpse of the Truth. It also means that one has a glimpse of or sights of the Truth or the Brahman in the revered individuals. The practice of ‘*Darshan*’ started during the time of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. It implied visiting the Masters on important days of the Ashram (see: Annexure 5.2) and it is still continues on these days.

In present times, one needed a special permission to visit the room on *Darshan* days and on the individual’s birthday. An authorized person was responsible to issue the permit card for the visit, with the person’s name on it. Visit to the Master’s room implied to have the *Darshan* of the Master or pay one’s reverence to them. *Darshan* therefore gained importance other than the stipulated *Darshan* days. On certain occasions when children were supposed to go to Sri Aurobindo’s room other than *Darshan* and individual birthdays. These were the days for example, when they recovered from long illness, or a family member died. If there was some special program or some excursion, the group went to Sri Aurobindo’s room.

In all the visits, they went upstairs (as Sri Aurobindo’s room is on first floor in the Ashram building), sat silently for around 10 to 15 min, took the packet of blessings^{xiii} and bunch of flowers available in the local environment. In case of young students, the teachers simply

expected them to visit Sri Aurobindo's room especially on their birthdays. In the case of children till *Delafon* they were to be accompanied by elders.

The parent of a child could not turn up to accompany the child to the Ashram for her birthday. The teacher was perplexed that how could the parents forget her birthday. She was more concerned that the child should make in time. She reminded others and suggested that one of them should take the child. Others agreed and she offered it to other teachers to take her to room since it was an opportunity to go to Sri Aurobindo's room.(other) Teachers insisted that she should take the child and she told me that she had to rush with the child to the Ashram to make in time for her visit to Sri Aurobindo's room. Before leaving she added that she had to ask others since it was a chance even for an adult to visit the Master's room with the child.

Obs-Int/Jun 2011/Delafon/Children and teachers.

The incident reflected the concern of the teachers over the importance of visiting Sri Aurobindo's room on birthdays^{xiv}. This was never part of the said or written order, but an unsaid expectation and a more important aspect of the school's culture. Students grew up with the relevance of the practice of *Darshan*.

For some Darshan days at the Ashram, there was huge number of visitors and the students volunteered as per their available free time and choice, to manage the crowds. Another important day was the New Year in the Ashram, when visitors and devotees came in large numbers to visit the Ashram (not the room). To share an episode:

I can't recall how but I was drawn to help in managing (the crowd in between 50s and 100s of number) with two students of the school, this was my first close interaction with the students at an informal session, the two young girls in their late teens, helped me give directions to the crowd. There was a long queue of visitors to the Ashram in the balcony street (presently Rue Saint Gilles) like a snake's coiled movement with four or five bends. We were supposed to manage the crowd by giving them directions to turn the queue, asking them to be silent, and switch off their mobiles- in English and in Tamil. The visitors were full of reverence and in deep silence. Just then a visitor after finishing his pranam inside the Ashram came to us, as were guiding them find directions as they made the exit.. she had smile on the face, eyes bright, was full of gratitude and said, "Thank you for creating such a beautiful environment for us.", to one of the students who was working with me. She reciprocated with silence and sweet smile.

Obs/Int Jan2011/Ashram Balcony lane/ Researcher & Other school students of SAICE

Not only the Master's room but even a visit in the Ashram premises for bowing down at the Samadhi held importance for visitors as it is evident this episode. Individuals experienced a delight and bliss.

The students from Auroville schools also made visits on Darshan days to the Masters' room or on their birthdays. They did not mention it like the children from SAICE but many of the students interacted during the fieldwork at LB that they had been for Darshan to the Ashram. The parents also acknowledged that going to the Samadhi and for Darshan was important for them and introducing the same to their children. While Darshan visits held special importance among the individuals who held faith and reverence for the Masters, as an urgency, an attachment, a binding, or may be just a practice to be done. However, it had a different meaning for the schools in the three places. The difference was most likely because of the physical, historical and ideological proximity the three shared with this practice.

SAICE was closest in all three aspects that is, physically it was part of the Ashram; and the value of the practice that had been going on, and it had an immediate bearing on the Ashram and SAICE but not on Auroville. It carried the historical significance of the practice, which individuals from other places as devotees liked to participate.

The participants shared their views on these visits and the views reflected 'detaching', 'denouncing' and 'rephrasing' of the practice among the participants. To share an example of apparent who has just settled at Auroville

Ashima is the mother of two children who study at AV school, she makes it a point to go to the Samadhi on Darshan or other important days. If the children wants to come she would take them, arrange for the vehicle or passes. Since children were teenager she left it to them to explore.

Int-Obs/ Nov 2012/Auroville: a parents' house/ researcher & parent

As an individual parent reported, it was a matter of belief to go and visit the Masters, while for the children it only acted as guidance. A parent's detached view of the practices was relevant to facilitate the child's growth and freedom. The Auroville Schools did not observe any celebrations or holidays on the four Darshan or other important days. Therefore, there was no expectation to go and visit the room of Sri Aurobindo or the Mother.

Exploration of the practice by the individuals who had 'migrated' in last few years to this place resulted in different usage of the terms 'Darshan' than official announcement of the

days by Ashram. Therefore, going to the Masters' room became 'Darshan' in sync with the traditional meaning of the term- that is to pay reverence to the Master (mostly Sri Aurobindo's room).

One of the teachers mentioned that she would like to go for Darshan, I enquired that what do Darshan means. She told that there were four important days on which the Mother and Sri Aurobindo used to give Darshan (and) they are known as the Darshan days, rest of the days were important days (I shared the facts and history from the Ashram website). The teacher then added that for Indians Darshan means going and visiting the master. I agreed with her and we realized to each one his/her own.

Int/Dec 2012/Place- Office room, LB/Participants- teachers & staff, LB & researcher.

This was a clear example that how over time participants rephrased Darshan and it had become generic in the understanding of the participants who joined later. Or it could be that a more colloquial understanding of Darshan- as in visiting the Masters to have a glimpse and offer respect.

However, there were incidents like the following episode where a participant questioned its relevance:

I told my friend that I wanted to go to Sri Aurobindo's room for the Darshan. He replied that you are interested in these chakram (a word referring to religious visit or circumambulation). He added, "I have stopped doing this" (he was inquisitive and purposely questioning the importance of the practice.) I replied, "You had done all this and it is time for us to outgrow it". (as a student he has been doing all this)

Int/April 2011/AV/Participants- A friend Aurovillian(an ex-student) and researcher

Interaction was rhetoric from a friend indicating at the values of these practices. At the same time, there was a deeper implication in the remark questioning the importance and relevance of rituals like visiting the Master's room. Interaction hinted at denouncing the whole practice leading to detachment with the practice by the participants. While on other occasions, the same participant talked of its importance to the others. In the personal development of faith, there were various processes that an individual participant might undergo, but might not do the same practice over the time. The data revealed the same about several other participants in different contexts.

Reminiscences of the Masters: Living in their presence

The faith in the Ashram had its foundation on the phrase that ‘the Masters are there’. It is an often argued upon issue was that how people continued their *sadhna* when the masters were not physically there. The faith was ‘rock solid’ that participant tried to do everything being conscious of their ‘presence’. There were anecdotes which indicated that participants adherence and belief in the idea. The idea was also indicated while offering to the Masters, “a student was asked by the teacher *to offer his/ her performance to the Mother*; a coach told the children the same after the group activity, the food many ate was offered to the Mother and they told *the Mother to take care.*”

Apart from the dynamic role of the rituals, there were several other ways in daily life, which were signs of the Masters’ presence. For example, one was recounting the anecdotes, the display of the photographs; remembrance in the form of prayers written by them (if not for them- which were songs or prayers written for them by the devotees and were often recited by the participants. This section mentions only the prayers written by the Mother); the strongest, organized and most regulated one was the March Past. Photographs of the Mother were central to any of the schools or buildings. The local restaurants and shops adorned the photographs of the Masters with the local Hindu deities. Many of the participants recounted or narrated anecdotes about the Mother with love, this phenomenon formed part of the Ashram and the Auroville environment. There were primary sources, the *Sadhaks*, or individuals who witnessed the episode (which has become anecdote now) and there were secondary sources people who heard from those *Sadhaks* or individuals who has witnesses it.

March Past

March Past at SAICE is a major and one of the oldest rituals with a much ‘deeper’ symbolism and significance of collective identification. It was an event, that took place at the Play Ground for Darshan (and other important days) and at the Sports Ground for competition seasons and on December 2nd-Physical Demonstration Program held annually at SAICE. The act was regularized by rule that the individuals who would participate in the competition seasons or for the annual program on 2nd December would participate in the March Past at the Sports Ground. Therefore, it was not open to all the students or the Ashram inmates especially during competition seasons. The March Past implied certain symbols of collectivity for example, uniforms, groups, marching, the captains and flags.

Students decked in their white shirts and group shorts (neatly ironed) with PT shoes arrived in the ground. Other Ashram inmates also assembled at the Playground or the Sports ground. Many of the captains were busy in checking the badges (symbol of the Mother) of the students. Before the signal (a whistle was blown) for march past to begin, everyone was talking, interacting, and seemed to be socializing (I could only watch it from a distance), after the whistle everyone assembled in their groups, it appeared as if all the shorts of similar color would start assembling. The captains wore the military green uniform and assembled in a group in front of all the other groups. The groups arranged with their flag bearers (each group had its flag in a different color with the Mother's symbol) and captains in front of each group. March Past at Playground on important days of the Ashram did not have flags of respective groups in the lead.

The March Past began and everyone in the spectator wing would stand as a mark of respect. The band would play in the center in Sports Ground and on a terrace in Play Ground. The Ashram inmates who played band were in white uniform. The Mother's chair was put at SG on a platform (that platform is always marked with a placard that reads 'please do not stand here') and in front of the undivided map of India. the March Past groups passed in front of the chair, the captains saluting (a conscious surrender) with right hand on the chest and then diagonal up with the face might lifted up towards the left towards the Mother's chair. The captains gave the commands while passing in front of the chair to turn towards the chair as a mark of respect. After the march past finished, the groups found their placement in the ground to facing the Mother's chair.

The flags during the competition season were placed on a wall above the seating gallery... while the crowd observed in deep silence almost holding the breath.

Obs/ 2nd, Jan 2011, April 2011, August, 2011, Sep, 2011, Nov, 2011, Dec 2011^{xv}/SAICE-Ashram Inmates & Students at SAICE

The idea one got is that, "*the Mother was there, she was present.*" Each time placing her chair at the Play Ground in front of India's map or at the Sports Ground for the March past, it was marked with the reverence for the Mother and indicating '*she was watching*'. Ashramites not only shared the act of March past at present times but also shared its description from the old time or meeting of the Mother at the playground as anecdotes, when she in person took the salute of the March Past.

To conclude, the Ashram inmates shared memories of their meetings with the Mother at Playground in the evening after the sports programs for various groups were finished or the enthusiasm and the sheer joy they experienced in these meetings. Ashramites also recounted happily that the Mother used to hold the ribbon for them to finish the race (or some time recounted what the senior Ashramites had told younger generation of Ashramites.) The legacy continued with strong vibrations, which was strong enough to engulf the individuals who joined the Ashram recently. To quote:

And in present times the one who joined the Ashram recently mentioned that it was a great joy for him/her to perform in front of the Mother or say ‘Victoire à la Douce Mère!’.

Int/Dec2011/ Sports Ground/ a recent entry as Ashram inmates & researcher

The confidence the person held for saying the slogan, (trans. Victory to the Sweet Mother), summarized the substantial essence of her faith and meaning of the same to her existence.

Role of the prayers

Praying and ‘offering’ were two values that held the faith of individuals. The participants recited the Prayers, which the Mother or Sri Aurobindo wrote. Prayers were also a simple invocation recited on various occasions: in the classroom, a program presentation on certain days in the school or in the class. During one of the function of a (children’s) boarding at the Ashram, children recited the prayers, which their teachers wrote. Students were also supposed to remember few prayers: *la prière du Samadhi, prière pour les enfants* (Annexure 5.3)

A few students who passed out few years back from Ashram school recollected-All of them were sent by a particular teacher (I never knew the teacher, but students recalled the same) to go to the Samadhi and write down the prayer and remember it by heart. All the students found it good exercise to build the memory; the students never shared though that they still recite it or not. The prayer had an immense importance for them.

Int/Jan2011/Researchers’ house/Ex-students of SAICE & Researcher

Even I was drawn into learning the prayers and realized their importance for the participants.

To quote:

When I started learning French with one of the senior Ashram inmates, I was told by the teacher to remember the prayers of the Mother by heart. Since I was working on education I was told to remember the prayers which appeared on the notebooks of SAICE. I was corrected and often reprimanded for my intonation, pronunciation, rise and fall of sounds in the beginning and of the sentences.

Int/ Pers Exp-ref/Feb Mar2011/ Sadhak's house/ researcher & old Sadhak

Prayer therefore, was the first initiation for me and for many individuals those who came to the Ashram for the first time in the world of faith. Prayers symbolized- devotion, connection, and a deep existential meaning of connection with the community, with the Masters and with the Divine^{xvi}.

Prayers, invocation, and music

Use of music for morning assembly was common in all the three schools. Schools held morning assembly in small groups of each class or groups of classes in a building with the use of music, which was mainly 'the New Year's music'^{xvii} of Sunil da (the Composer as he is referred in the community) or the organ music by the Mother^{xviii}.

Apart from these, at LB other classical music pieces (Indian and Western) were also played. The playing of music meant that all the individuals became 'quiet' and experienced it. The idea was to relax and calm down body/ mind and concentrate. The children were not told daily by anyone to do the same but they observed and learnt this. This a phenomenon Sibia (2006) also reported at *Mirambika*. To quote an observation:

At early morning in the kindergarten the teachers just sat quietly and allowed the children to be 'quiet'. I was also supposed to join them. the incense was burnt and the room was filled with fragrance. The silence was deep and soothing, something the children got used to and learned to function with. Even amid noises from outside: honking, screaming, motor bikes or pungent smell of garbage etc the silence within that atmosphere was deeply and strongly held.

Obs/ Dec 2009/ KG/ children and teachers

Prayers also travelled like a legacy to Auroville schools but the schools also formed their own variations. The children at the AID broke into *Prière des enfants* after the morning meditation with music, while at LB there was practice of chanting Sanskrit *shlokas*.

Learning Sanskrit only with shlokas was practiced at SAICE in days when the Sanskrit Curriculum was not as in its present form, reported an old Sadhak. He added that a book by Poojalalji (one of the Ashram Sadhak) of Sanskrit shlokas was the example of same. He added, “we never had Sanskrit the way it is now taught in the schools.” (Now there are textbooks and games with focus on aural and oral skill of the language)

Int Oct 2011/ Sadhak’s house/ Sadhak and Researcher.

While at LB another Aurovillian came to practice chanting with the students.

After the morning music was played, a person came to chant shlokas with the students at LB. Students were from different parts of the world and yet most of them knew the sholkas, they closed the eyes and chanted after the person recited and stressed on voice intonations. Few new students were not able to follow, the person told, “if you don’t want to please don’t disturb others and go in another room.” The student did not respond. The person asked another student politely if the student can understand English. The person added that if the student who was not responding could not understand, the student might leave if he/she does not want to be here. The student did not move, nor recited and the chanting continued. It was not clear whether the student understood the same or not. It was also not clear whether student was interested in reciting the shlokas. But the decision was of the student.

Obs Oct 2010/ LB Morning Assembly- teachers, students and researcher

Prayers were an important part of learning in all the three schools; at SAICE it was a form of training that all the students recalled undergoing or many were undergoing. At LB and the AID it was also part of learning, an extension of the same practice at SAICE. However, new students at all the three schools might have accepted or rejected this. Alternatively, even if could not reject it, they had choice to express their obscurity about it, like the description in the last episode. The student had the freedom to walk out. It could mean a teacher’s disapproval but this was not seen in any of the episodes. Most of the teachers accepted in case a child did not like to recite a prayer.

Concluding from our discussion about rituals and practices, we can say that overt practices that were ritualistic implied that they were performed at a particular time and space like physical demonstration on December 2nd and march past, and these were followed with a deep silence and consciousness. An individual could hold a deep reverence and love while performing the rituals. It was not so easy to analyze or probe upon the participants due to the esoteric nature of experiences but it was easy to ‘identify’ with the descriptions and experiences of individuals.

Growth of the Faith

Apart from the standard practices, each classroom and teacher developed their own ways for the children to identify or simply saying ‘introducing to’ or relate with the Masters. These were the ways teachers mostly identified with the Master and passed on the relation to the students. Young children imagined to talk to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo in a very simple manner without any authority conveyed by the teachers.

A teacher shared that there is no punishment but at times it was simple ‘time out’ and would often mean going and sitting in front of the picture of the Masters. The teacher laughed and told me that 4 to 6 years old often talk to them. In one case, she observed the saying, “Sri Aurobindo, I have not done anything” Indicating for which he has been punished.

Int/Jun2009/KG-SAICE/ teacher & researcher

Apart from that there were presentation of programs on the birthdays of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo by each section, as an offering. There was a display of interactions of children with the Masters. The students learned to write their prayers to the Mother asking for various ‘qualities’ and values.

On August 15, children were asked to write messages to Sri Aurobindo; as I entered the classroom the following week, I saw the display with cards, on closer look I realized these were written by the ten year olds as prayers or messages to Sri Aurobindo on his birthday. Most of them were personal prayers more than messages to grant them a quality: grace, peace, get rid of mischief or some concrete gift on the special occasion.

Obs Aug15, 2011/Delafor/ Progres 1

Writing to the Mother or in many cases to Sri Aurobindo had been a practice at the Ashram^{xix}. ‘Imagination’ of teachers and the children played a key role in developing a living

relation with the Masters. Imagination could appear to be extremely irrational, but during the observations nothing of irrationality or of blind faith was reported, since the children did all the things as had been going on, the young children never objected to what the teachers told and continued to do the same. The older children offered their vehement denial (may be to an outsider like me) for certain practices but without questioning the essential values and the faith they held for the Ashram and the Masters:

Today the crowd(students, teachers, the ashram inmates and visitors like me) was gathered in the Hall of Harmony, it was one of those times when visitors or Ashram-related people could join the program at the school. One of the senior Ashram Sadhaks recounted the importance of Sri Aurobindo's and then the Mother's coming to Pondichéry. The talk lasted for 30 minutes. The students sat there, youngest ones in front and oldest and adults like me in the last. While the adults maintained a silence to listen, a few of the older students fretted, or were restless. No effort was made to hush them, apart from the individuals who sat next to them. However, as I shared glances, few adolescent students reported that how these talks made them feel inundated with information and, but all of them were steadfast believer of the Masters and the life of the Ashram.

Obs/April 2011/ SAICE- hall of Harmony/ SAICE students, teachers, few visitors.

These talks were organized and were helpful to people who came to the Ashram for the first time. One never discussed the relevance of these talks for the students. The students who had been studying here since childhood reported it was of no use for them since they had been undergoing this on several occasions. Nevertheless, the critical view never affected their belief in the way of life and values. A safe interpretation could be that the students criticized the practice but not the values.

Faith in Collective Living and Development

One of the important aspects of community life was volunteer work symbolizing self-less work, joy of work and learning while doing the job. Rituals and practices also involved community participation and collective work. Research views the symbolic aspect of different volunteer practices, which reflected these values and connoted them as faith of individuals in the lifestyle at the two places. These values were the feature of certain regular practices. Following episodes throw light on student's involvement and meaning- making of the whole act of packing cakes at Bakery section of Ashram for Christmas celebrations.

While it was learning for students it was also an act of teamwork, fun and memories to cherish being part of it.

I entered the small gate of the bakery, I thronged often there, the smell of bread or fermenting dough usually welcomed you, today it was different, it was the laughter of children, lot of action, as I made my way with another senior Ashram inmate, I settled in between the rows of children of different age groups. I was asked to make bows of ribbon (crepe paper strips) and then to give it to other children who were sticking it into the rubber band that tied the cake in a neat plastic bag. The icing was already over, the children talked loudly and discussed their work, teachers and at the same time worked with pace in order to finish and get some more work. There were remarks, jokes and laughter. I am with S (the ashram inmate), he told a student (intended joke), “aeyi! You are not working, go away from here” the student replied to the joke as if armed with reply, “heyi! You go away, you have not been working properly”. Students entered and left, especially elders who left if they had a class, and returned and worked when they had time. The younger children were brought by their teachers to the bakery, and they left the bakery with their teachers after they helped. Each age group had work ensuring the individual and their age capacity, like older boys and girls could pack and shift the boxes packed with the cakes, while younger lot and even younger would just pack it neatly in butter paper bags, stick them with cello tapes, slip them in a transparent plastic bag, tie them with rubber bands and stick a ribbon paper bow in between the rubber band. While segregation was there, it involved a lot of mixed age group work on the same activity. So the age range roughly varied from 10 to 60 year olds doing any one of the steps of packing the cakes.

Obs/ Part[Dec 2010]; ashram bakery; /children, teachers, ashram inmates, Bakery workers.

Cake making, icing and packing was a ritual, which the participants had been going practicing for many years. It could be a practice but since it had a history to the inception of Christmas^{xx} celebrations and had sustained even after several years, it qualified as a ritual. It had broadly remained the same except the rules for children's involvement changing every year- in terms of time, leaving the classes and going back.

Rituals or practices like these could be simple or complex; linked with Ashram or Auroville or could have originated at the school. One of the very simple exercises at the AID was to

clean the school on one particular day that is, to pick up all the plastic and other stuff strewn over the ground in classes.

Wednesday afternoon before the sports activities, the teachers and students went around the school. The teacher told me that they had to clean the building's premises with plastic bags, wrappers and papers strewn in the school campus. As teachers led others including me with a bucket to collect the waste, students followed them. The teachers also participated as they guided the children. Most of the children did not like it, there were complaints, running or hiding away to avoid the task but there were handful who participated in it. I helped clean the strewn plastic stuff along with the teacher and other students. The teacher simply and politely mentioned to those who did not want to do it that we have to do it and continued with the act without getting much bothered or reacting to the students who were not doing. It was over in ten minutes and we got ready for sports.

Obs/ Jun 2009/ the Aid; teachers, students at new building

This was one ritual that was particular to the AID, I did not find it as a regular activity in the other two schools. However, there were other practices of similar nature; especially during the cyclone of 2011 and 2012, the other two schools were also part of such cleaning activities on a large scale. Children made teams to clear the fallen trees, damaged objects and clean the school premises. Doing team work for the community was common to three schools, these kinds of rituals originated as and when required during the year. This was the insight into the communities' conceptualization of various rituals. The participants created and sustained rituals and practices in many cases, reflecting about the social learning aspect in a community. A community, which identified with the cognitive aspect of certain acts and could think collectively, created rituals centered on certain ideas and values.

Rituals did not become regular or come in practice so easily; they took their time, conviction and unanimity to a considerable extent before they regularized in time and space. The regularization was also beyond the usual time and space, in case of 'diffusion' to another school. As a result, the values remained free of time and space the participants at other two schools adapted the form of a practice (example: role of uniforms and commands chapter 7).

Networking: Over Generations, Work and Lifestyles

Relations and networking among the participants were important for collective identification. Networking was with the individuals, Spaces and the Ashram and Auroville. This section

explains networking of individuals as family members and explicates that how individuals related with the two institutions.

Family relations, near or distant, were an important part of the conversations, especially when the participants used to introduce himself/ herself, or a third person from the Ashram. The participants as part of their introduction mentioned their relation with other Ashramites or Ashram related persons, or mentioned their houses or shops around (assuming that I may know the same). It gave the Ashram and 'Ashram related' spaces, buildings, shops, houses its geographical boundary, which did not exist otherwise and gave the Ashram appearance of a 'cohort'. Auroville also stood out from the rest of the villages in term of lifestyle and nature of work. However, the villages and Auroville like the Ashram and the Pondichéry town co-existed.

Networking or relations are an important aspect of any community life and is crucial to sustenance of any community. It is relevant for a community, which views the human development as perfection, progress since the individuals choose to come here and grow with this idea. Volunteer work becomes an opportunity to participate in such activities.

Longer the stay of individual in the field, networking among them formed a pattern.

Individuals at the Ashram and Auroville discovered about various places, by word of mouth, they usually had a story about their arrival, migration and final settlement. Gradually family members and other acquaintances arrived, if a participant was the first to come; else joined the family members who had been residing before him/her.

I narrate here a story of one such arrival. A mother who was married to an ex-student and her daughter was studying at SAICE. I knew her daughter, but we conversed in the adult education class that we both were attending. She narrated about herself and experience of life here:

She told me she had settled at Pondichéry with her husband. She had never heard about the Ashram and grew up all over India, since her father had a touring job. It was the decision of her husband to be here for the education of their daughter. She was the only daughter and she sounded satisfied as a mother that her daughter was happy here. I validated the fact, since I had been with the child and found her happy. Her husband worked and they had a house in Pondichéry. She used to work but then had to give up since she felt she could not take care of the child. She told me, “you know children here have to attend so many classes, and move to different places,” so she felt she needed to be there for the child. She worked from home now. She liked being here and was thrilled by the happiness her child received, but could not take the difference of this world and the ‘outside’ world in which she grew up.

She mentioned, “yahan sab kuch achcha hai, par sab kuch achcha hurdam achcha nahinhota! Aap to janati hain aapbahar se aayi hain” she found everything and everyone nice here or rather happy, which she liked for the child but yet perplexed for thinking is it real? Or would her child be able to cope when she grows up?

Int May2011/ near Ashram/ researcher and the mother of a student

The mother liked the fact that her child was happy here. She had to give up her job in order to take care of the child. However, she shared her doubt of being in a protected environment like the Ashram, where everything was good and everyone was happy, as per her this was not the story ‘otherwise’; of the world without the Ashram.

Volunteering

Migration and volunteering took place hand-in-hand for individual parents that they migrated and started voluntary work. In case of the Ashram the networking/ connection of individuals with the Ashram was more based on family than volunteer work. In case of Auroville, it was work, lifestyle, or faith that the participants experienced and that ‘called’ them to be at Auroville. The field thrived on networking (connection or sharing) of ideas and volunteer work, there was substantial data for this, and therefore in order to study the same, the research interviewed the participants on few simple questions. Few of them are analyzed here

- Do you volunteer in the Ashram or society (Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondichéry) or Auroville?
- The reason for joining or serving at the Ashram as volunteer – or the reason of NOT joining or giving any service to the Ashram?

There were 23 responses to each question. The participants include the students who studied at SAICE.

- **Do you volunteer in the Ashram or society or Auroville?**

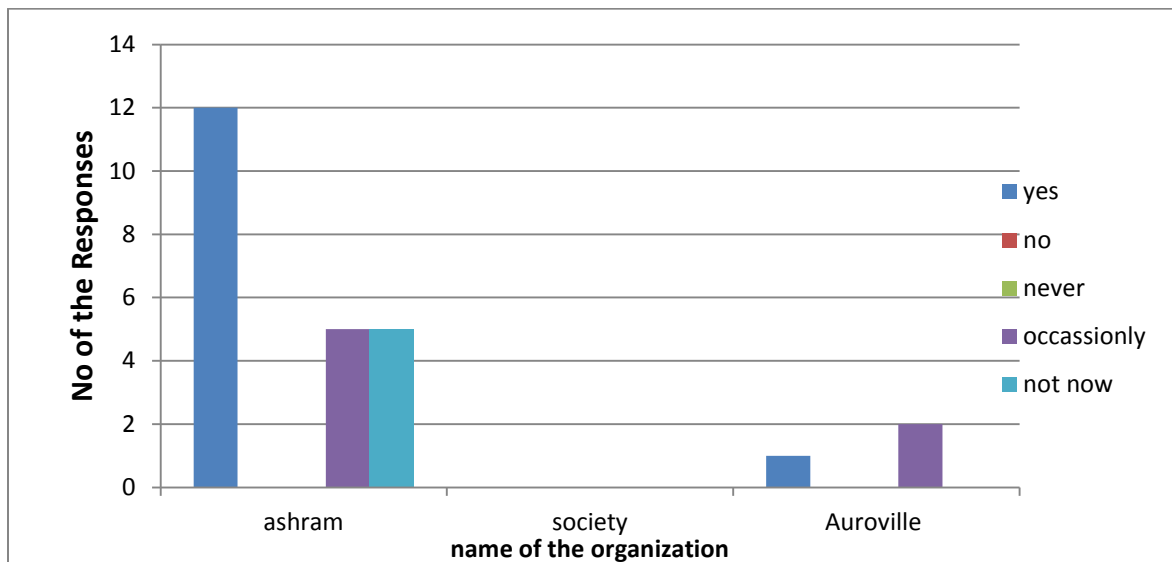


Fig- 5.1 Volunteer Work N= 23 note : multiple responses

Volunteer work was an important part of both the institutions. The volunteers or full time inmates gave all these services and worked without money, except in the case of an Aurovillian where Auroville committee gave a minimal maintenance amount. The table shows responses of ex-students, which include the Ashram inmates and Aurovillians.

Everyone **in the sample** who had studied at the Ashram school but had also volunteered in any of the organizations. However, this included population at Pondichéry, the individuals who emigrated might have a different story to tell. Twelve out of twenty three gave regular services in the Ashram- six served for full time for six hours as the Ashram inmates and others (who were not the Ashram inmates) as part time for three hours. Two of them also occasionally helped in Auroville, and one was a full time Aurovillian. Five individuals did not volunteer at the time of the interview but had volunteered earlier. They also reported to volunteer whenever they had chance. Sometimes on special days like Darshan to manage the crowd. The data also include individuals who did not like to mention about the occasional

help they offered, since it was part of their everyday life and to mention was true to the spirit of service they were giving. The nature of volunteer activity varied from manual labor like cleaning, serving, to provide professional help in teaching and in the research department at Ashram.

- **The reason for joining or serving at the ashram as volunteer or the reason of NOT joining or giving any service to the Ashram?**

The section uses two tables, first reason for joining the Ashram or Auroville, second reason for **choosing the outside world**. Since this was open ended interview item, the responses were precise to narrative and in few cases were left empty as well. The crux of the response in case of long narrative responses was taken as central and clubbed with other similar responses.



Fig 5.2 Joining the Ashram N= 6 (both male & females) note- multiple responses

Fig 5.2 shows that six individuals who were inmates of the Ashram gave different reasons for joining the Ashram. One individual reported that he knew it was choice of lifestyle to be here, where he could be what he wanted to or give maximum of his self. He added that he knew that he had to come back to the Ashram even when he went out to work for a short time. This was supported by another female as full time Ashram inmate, who said, *“if there is life it is here.”* Two Ashram inmates reported that it was a spiritual reason that motivated them to join the Ashram, while they wanted to serve the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. Three individuals asked to leave it empty since it is spiritual therefore it could not be discussed or explained. There was an acceptance, dedication and commitment of the participants in such a

decision explanation of which could be difficult in words. (The research is a humble attempt to get the glimpse of the world and experiences of participants and it is not an attempt to judge or analyze these experiences.)

These responses were helpful in two ways, even if they were only on the surface of the deep reality, choice and logic behind the choices of individuals, which the questions were able to scratch. First, the responses defined development in life-long perspective in the institutions like Auroville and the Ashram, which followed a world-view of human development and nature of our existence. Second, it argued for the ideals of life available directly or indirectly to the students who were studying here. This was a formal way of asking them these choices, but on informal occasions, the adolescent also asked similar questions. To quote:

Student- Your parents never asked you to get married.

Ashram Inmate- Yes! My mother did... she did 'haaaan...hunnnnn' (indicating mother's disapproval of the fact that son wanted to join the Ashram) but then she would have grumbled on her daughter-in-law (tongue in cheek). It's good that she is not doing so (he smiled). My father was all right, he never had problem. Then my uncle is an Ashram inmate, I have my family here. so it is ok.

Int Sept2011/ SG/ Researcher, Ashram Inmate and Ashram School Student

The Ashram inmates and their interaction with students offer an estuary of School and Ashram life. The student's query was the most natural an individual would have to face before joining the Ashram.

In addition, most students in the recent times were likely to choose the life other than Ashram. Fig 5.3 shows report of 17 individuals who did not join Ashram and one can say choose the 'outside' world or the 'other' world.

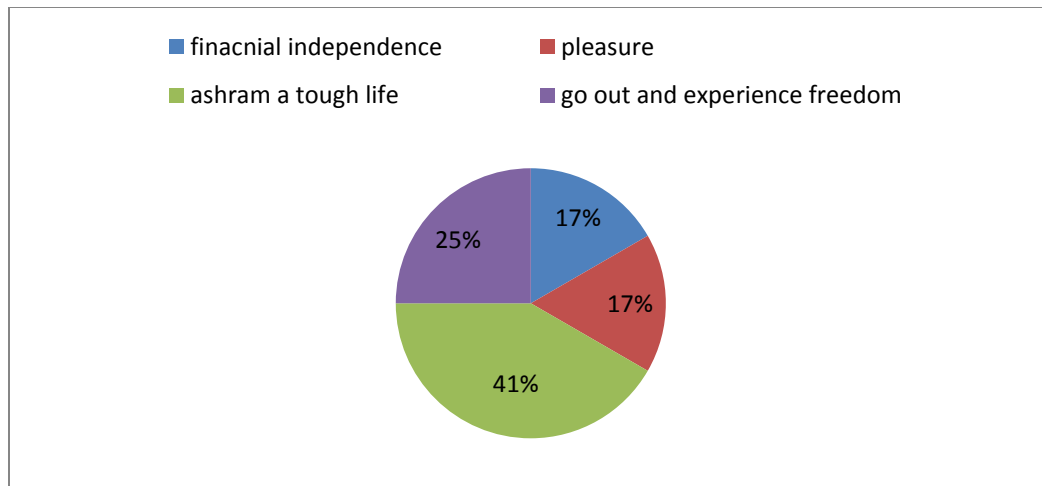


Fig 5.3 Choosing the 'Outside' World N= 17.

Most of them went to study further or took a job, but in and around Pondichéry. Two of them reported financial independence as the main reason that they chose instead of life at the Ashram where one had to serve without money (and the Ashram took care of their basic needs). Seven responses mostly of youngsters felt the Ashram life was tough and did not give those pleasures like sex, money and party, which they wanted. Few individuals said that they wanted to experience the 'outside world'. The question was to know the reason for not joining or serving at the Ashram, which viewed in the field as the choice of the 'outside world'. Individuals had not chosen the Ashram but were residing at Pondichéry at the time of the interview.

Three ex-students, who studied at the Ashram school but joined Auroville, were clear that they wanted to be near the Ashram but wanted a more challenging life of Auroville. In one case, one of the Ashram teachers inspired the student to join Auroville. The ex-student was married and lived with his family. One of the students, who had not married but had his mother and cousins residing at the Ashram; a cousin was an Ashram inmate. He decided to join Auroville, after he finished his schooling at SAICE because he found a job and he felt he was also near to his family.

Responses in the pie charts also show the challenge of existential conflict or complexity that these individuals lived through, yet most of them would like to serve if given a choice or have the time to do so. An example of this was that most of the ex-students of the Ashram had their ex-student passes^{xxi} which allowed them to be at certain places mostly Sports

Ground or visits to the Masters' rooms on Special days, since the Ashram was a restricted place not meant for public.

Family Patterns

In order to explain the macro-substantive nature of the field we highlight family relations of two ex-students who are living at Pondichéry. Family patterns give a view about organization of the participants. Central node of the family was the parents who had studied here. Their children were studying at the schools during the fieldwork or had finished their schooling. The parents were directly interviewed or through their children. I state the two families' profiles here

- Family C where both the parents studied at SAICE and had two children, one just finished SAICE and another was finishing. It was the choice of the family to be near the Ashram at Pondichéry. Both the parents gave volunteer service at the Ashram, they replied it was an act of giving back, what they got from the Ashram.
- Another family G, both the parents studied at SAICE but moved from Pondichéry to Delhi. They were not permanently settled there and both their sons studied here. One of the sons had joined the Ashram and another was working. The parents also had distant relatives settled here at the Ashram.

In case of LB and AID, not such proximal involvement in terms of volunteer work due to one's faith was observed, but there was another kind of networking. The AID school had one of the grandmothers working as *chinamma*- as help to keep the school clean. Parents of a few children also worked with Auroville as paid laborers. However, parents were invited to visit the schools on open houses and could access the school otherwise as well. Few parents had shops running near the temple or around Auroville.

Parents at the AID were involved with Auroville is clear from this interaction-

I came across a couple who told me that they lived near the school X in Auroville. when they were selling incense sticks, the brand name caught my attention and we started talking, I-Where have you come from?

Parent: Auroville.

I- where exactly?

Parent- father- Near X school (for village children) we live near to it.

I- What do you know about the school?

Parent/ father- I worked in the school. My children studied there. I have a guesthouse there. I worked with the school and then from there went to the Ashram to learn how to make incense for thirty years, now I make my own and sell. (the Ashram has units that make incense sticks)

I-(curious) what are your children doing now? (I shared that I have been to Auroville).

Parent- All are married. I have a guesthouse near the school. You can stay there, when you come next.

I parted with buying few incense sticks from the man, while his wife smiled back.

Int/ Sep 2010/ Delhi, during crafts fair / Researcher & Parents of children who studied at AID

In the LB school, parents related with school at different levels, the classification could be: Parents who worked there full time and were Aurovillians, others were volunteers-guests, friends or Aurovillians. Some parents who were not directly involved in teaching at a regular basis but had offered their knowledge sometimes by conducting workshop at the school.

One of the parents offered to work with a group of children on film making for one week. After the request was followed up in a meeting, with the teacher ; and then the teacher followed up with the students, the 8 and 9 years old who were ready for the workshop.

Obs/ Sep 2011/ LB/Filmmaking workshop with children, teacher & parent as resource person, researcher as participant

The other such instances were, where the parents , the French natives offered French teaching learning programs for adults and children in the school; and another was when parents came up with the idea of implementing Permaculture in the school. A parent volunteered to make a

plan for Permaculture in the school where the rest of the teachers and students could be involved in different activities.

Conclusion: A Faith System

We can summarize that the two aspects of faith as an inner quality of personal belief and as a growth and individual's relation with rituals and practices are an extension of the self into the collective. The inner aspect also has its reliance on or need of outer physical symbols or rituals and practices. Research sees the two aspects as interactive. Existence of faith as an individual quality and identification by an individual with symbolism can be addressed as a 'faith system' in the most acceptable manner. A system would be organized, systematized but not with rigid rules and fundamentalism. A faith-system has certain identifiable patterns due to the presence of physical symbols, life styles, certain rules and individual experiences all these patterns. Participants in the 'faith system' formed a social group or cohort, popularly referred as 'family' around the Ashram. Auroville formed its cohort with different labels (guests, new comers, friends) for those who were linked with it primarily for work, were the residents and considered to be fully involved as *Aurovillians*. The social groups had several imageries of collective identification of individuals with faith ideals manifested in rituals or practices and family relations. An individual's movement to the Ashram or Auroville would mean involvement of the family members.

One of the important aspects is that faith in our study is different from the way faith is studied in researches in the West (Kemper & Robert, 2006; Hefferan & Fogarty, 2010) Our field shares a few important aspects with the FBOs of the West such as, philanthropic work, networking and working for the community. In present case it is a relatively closed community both the Ashram and Auroville do not work for people *en masse* but mainly focus on the work as perfection or raise the consciousness of *raison d'être* of an individual. The latter happens when an individual begins to observe his/her behavior or thoughts. Data revealed a very personal aspect of faith reflected in individuals mainly in the adults' choice of the place, work and devotion in rituals or practices.

Children were part of most of the rituals and were put in relation to the Masters and their words in an interactive manner by the adults. Many visitors also learnt the ways of the Ashram and Auroville as they tried to be part of this system and culture. There difference of opinions especially on ideas were likely as the next two chapters would reveal. Faith does not

stop here with the words or physical symbols or rituals and practices, it continues in every day actions and ideas like designing a learning program.

Endnotes

ⁱ A colloquial term used in Ashram lingo- he is Ashram connected. These were the individuals who volunteered in the Ashram but were not *Sadhaks* or the Ashram inmates.

ⁱⁱ Translation: Felicity, Serenity, Quietness, To Thee

ⁱⁱⁱ The *Sadhaks*, individuals reported were no longer alive, therefore the phenomenon is secondary data and could not be observed any one at present naming their children in consultation with *Sadhaks*.

^{iv} personal communication and referencing with Dr Arshad Ikram Ahmad, 2012- a language expert and sociologist.

^v School Management and Organization also considered rituals as important part of schooling culture. Nelly (2008) describes school culture as what were the daily lives of participants in schools and what were the rituals as part of school culture that brought students together, this could be dress, morning assembly, ceremonies, songs.

^{vi} For details please visit Golden Chain website- <http://www.goldenchain.in/saice/>

^{vii} Bulletin is the Ashram's publication on four important Darshan days for the Ashram inmates. It has been one of the longest publications of the Ashram, focusing on readings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, and the activities of Physical Education incorporating the School.

^{viii} Notice on one of the Ashram inmate being expelled from the PED of Ashram, banning sea swimming signed, importance of uniform, parking of vehicles to name a few by *Pranab* da, director of PED, Ashram were the notices dated few years back but were still displayed there.

^{ix} The Ashram had facility of screening movie on each Saturday especially for the students, the Ashram inmates since going to theater to watch a movie was not allowed to Ashram inmates especially children.

^x The bus is an effort by Auroville transport committee to connect people for the Ashram and Auroville. People used the bus for reaching to either of the place, it has its fixed timings, which are displayed in Auroville news and notes or could be reached on telephone.

^{xi} Exception to the rules is made in some cases and despite the strict rules, we were told to try and state the need, if it happened it was good enough!

^{xii} This is a reference of time that is made often in the Ashram that how long an individual and his family has been living here, from the time of the Mother or from the time of Sri Aurobindo.

^{xiii} A small packet with the Mother's photo on it, inside the packet are dried flower petals which are most likely from the room of the Mother or Sri Aurobindo

^{xiv} Birthdays have special significance, which the Mother has mentioned to several *Sadhaks* and is often quoted.

^{xv} I make the sense of this practice over several observations where I have quietly observed the crowd before the march past, during the practice and then afterwards. Ashram *Sadhaks* also made a reference to the same.

^{xvi} In the words of Sri Aurobindo one finds the relevance of prayer that was held in the field

'A Prayer, a master act, a king idea.

Can link man to transcendent Force. ' Savitri, p 20

^{xvii} The composer Sunil da as he is fondly remembered used to compose Music every Jan 1st and the Ashram inmates and the visitors meditated on that music.

^{xviii} The music played by the Mother and music composed by Sunil (music composer in the Ashram) are two music productions that are widely used in Ashram and most of the other centers or places for meditation. These are not for sale but passed on personally.

^{xix} See The Mother on Education (2002) page 339-445 for correspondence and conversations of the Mother with various participants. See: the Publishers Note on Letters on Yoga Vol 28, 2012 elaborates on the nature of correspondences Sri Aurobindo had with the disciples.

^{xx} Christmas was an occasion in which the Ashram required children's help since the celebrations attracted participation of huge number of visitors. A family 'connected' with the Ashram started the Christmas celebrations at the Ashram when the Mother was there.

^{xxi} In order to ensure some regulations for entering the Ashram and visiting its complexes, Ashram authority issues passes for the students who had finished their course from SAICE.

CHAPTER 6TH

LEARNING PROGRAMS FOR MIND AND BODY

Curriculum studies in education primarily identify schooling (which plays key role in child development) with learning mainly of, mathematics, science or languages or the skills these subjects focus on (Galton & Patrick, 1990). However, the Mother emphasizes the idea of Integral Education for convenience of common understanding and provides five broad domains namely: Physical, Vital, Mental, Psychic and Spiritual. Mental Education refers to the teaching learning or different ways by which a teacher introduces thoughts, concepts, and skills to the child. Education for body is relevant due to two reasons; one is to work towards the ‘perfection’ of material life and another is to understand the ‘self’ both through mind and emotions involved with the body. The present chapter and the next chapter focus mainly on ‘learning’ of mind and body; which even though separate have underlying continuity.

A ‘teacher’ plays an important role in designing set of activities or deciding relevant knowledge to be taught to the child (for mind, body and their underlying continuity). Integral Education also values teaching-learning process that children undergo but ultimate value of various learning opportunities (mind or body) is about ‘self-understanding’ of child (and that of teacher).

Under the backdrop of this understanding, the researcher observed few classrooms, assisted the teachers, talked with them and attended workshops or meetings (formal and informal) at the three schools. The observations focused on everyday activities that happened in the classrooms and elaborated upon ‘micro-processes’ of schooling which involved teachers and children in the daily practices of the schooling.

This chapter focuses on two important features of classrooms that is teacher student ratio, ‘multi-ability’ classrooms that allowed the individual teacher to organize learning opportunities in the school. The chapter then delineates the role of teacher in understanding the child, enabling them to choose appropriate content and method for the child. The data collected for this (and next chapter) recount various ‘learning opportunities’ available in the field in formal spaces like classrooms, sports grounds and the pedagogic aims these opportunities have. The Schools over the years had developed not only curriculum but various ‘knowledge forms’ relying on different (in case of SAICE at least two generations of)

teachers' abilities and skills. Each school had freedom to utilize the individual's skills of their permanent residents or visitors, which resulted in unique forms of curriculum organization. This chapter discusses the relation between various learning opportunities for an individual's mind and body (domains) and role of 'norms'.

Teacher Learner Ratio

Individual learning is the focus of Integral Education and teachers always gave prominence to this principle in the classrooms. One of the factors facilitating teacher's focus on individual child was the classroom strength, which was minimum seven to maximum eighteen children in the classes observed. During the teaching sessions, teachers split the entire class into small groups as per the 'ability' of the children. The teachers divided the children for differential learning inputs. The students in smaller groups or sometimes an individual child then changed the classroom (spaces) with the teachers for the stipulated learning activity. Hence the number of students in a group were small that is, four to five students per teacher. In many cases with the help of volunteer teacher (or even a regular teacher mostly as in the case of SAICE & LB) T-L ratio was 1:1 when instruction took place. Smaller T-L ratio implies that teacher is likely to give more time to the student in terms of imparting instructions, identifying behavioral or learning difficulties, and making a more individualized instruction plan (discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter). This is one of the factors that would enable the teachers to enrich the learning process. Field observations confirmed the efforts of teacher to enrich child's learning experience along with other issues like choice of the student to choose an activity, the individual physical and mental space given to the child.

Organizing levels and abilities of the learners

Multi-level classroom implies that within a classroom there are students of different learning levels. It also means acknowledging that children have different abilities within similar age groups. This sub-section describes the issue of division of children in a classroom as per the learning levels. I choose not to give episodes of differential learning across the division but explain that how this phenomenon was experienced in different schools. Each school had varying teacher-student ratio (within the limits of five to eighteen as mentioned above) and different ways to divide students in the class. Each school allowed the teachers to divide children based on their learning ability in each 'knowledge area'. Within one class, children

were divided on the basis of their ‘comprehension’ and ‘performance’ that is how much they responded to the instructions given by the teacher and how they solved the problems which teachers gave them. Teachers however could move a child from one group (level of learning) to another over the year. Usually the division of children was in the groups but in some cases there was provision for remedial teaching for individual child as well, where a child needed to work upon specific skills- reading, writing or mathematical. This division of children into groups had implications, first on the class the child should be in (as per age), second on child’s learning of certain concepts which was cumulative.

At *Delafon* (SAICE) the main idea of division among students was on capacity or level of the child to learn, which the teachers decided after observing the child. The classes were divided into at least two or sometimes three levels apart from individual instruction the child needs. The children in Division A comprehended and responded quickly and were referred as fast or those who respond or understand quickly than the rest. The children in subsequent division (B or C) might learn the same material in longer time; the children were not instructed at the same pace for the same concepts because the child needed to master the skills before learning the material of Division A. Division for ‘higher ability’ also meant students doing more or different concepts as well.

At the AID individual classes for reading in English were in practice while rest of the students read the textbook or did worksheet as per their age level, few children needed to master the basic skills of reading. Hence those children sat with volunteers like me to read a book in English or to do a phonetic drill prepared for them by one of the teachers.

The teachers at SAICE reasoned that students did not feel bad about being segregated into groups of different levels of learning since in another area they would be in different level of learning. However children were free to differentiate with the teacher’s views(read an episode on page no 182).

The ‘division system’ was followed in sports as well. In sports, the children had different forms of grouping. Therefore, the students interacted across the age groups, learnt and made friends. This was reflected in the friendship of ex-students of SAICE, where they related to an individual as fellow students since they were together in a group mainly sports while they were in the different classes in the school.

At LB, the division of students was not followed in all the classrooms but was there for languages. At LB multi-level ability was a challenge since students came from different parts of the world and had not studied at Auroville. Teachers often mentioned this.

the teacher mentions that how Delafon at the Ashram school managed such well-organized instruction and group division. I told her that they have been doing it from long time and they had good number of teachers to do that. The teacher added that children in this school come from so many different schools within and around Auroville and different parts of the world (during the field work the children were from South Asian and European nations). Most of the children do not know English and it becomes difficult to maintain the groups in the classroom.

Int Nov2011; LB; Participants- researcher and school teacher

The school had come with new group for children who did not know English at all as ‘initiation group’ (mentioned in chapter 3) while there were several children who could be adjusted in regular classes as per the age level however their level of learning was not the same. A similar interaction over classroom teaching happened like the last one with the same teacher, this time she shared the entire problem of dividing the children in different levels and added

“ how to document what children do in class or different groups in the same class ? Since this would substitute for the fact that all children do not learn the same thing at same pace. Then how do we know what the child has learnt?” the teacher added, “children leave or join the school in between. We love to give them freedom but then it becomes difficult to re assign them a class or a group every time!”

Int/ Sep 2012/ LB/ researcher and school teacher

The freedom to join or leave in between the session of the school was initially an asset for the child and their freedom. Subsequently it was challenge for teachers to gauge or at least navigate the child further with her or his learning. It also meant that teachers had to undergo the task of observing the child all over again. The interaction is also an example that how the Ashram school and its practices were ‘benchmark’ and requirement of an organized learning program required consistent participation of children in the schools.

At AID the children were divided for language teaching but not so strictly for Mathematics, Science and Social Science. In latter knowledge areas, the teachers were aware of low ability

of certain students. However, towards the end of the fieldwork, the classes suspended program of division based on ability. The teacher reported that when the child joined the school, the allocation of classes was still (March 2012) based on level of comprehension and performance of the child and not only age. The method was now that the child participated in the class for trial and then was decided (in consultation with the teachers) that which class level he or she would go.

It was difficult to find the genesis of this idea and it looked as if it was always there.

However, one possible link was with the French textbooksⁱ at SAICE, which stated different levels of learning of students in a class. The phenomenon of multi-ability of students was often discussed in the field.

‘Developmentally’ it might help the child only when teachers are able to take appropriate measures after identifying the level of the child. Another issue was that there were no standardized tests against which the children were judged. The decisions of grouping the children in different levels of learning relied on detailed and reflective observations of children by the teachers, which the next section explains.

Knowing and Understanding the Child

Three aspects of Integral Education namely, physical, vital, mental are deeply rooted in individual ‘nature and behavior’ⁱⁱ further leading to inner development of the child. For example, vital education has to do mainly with individual’s understanding of one’s nature and emotions example: anger, excitement, jealousy, boredom, to name a few. Observation of teacher’s reflection revealed that children’s behavior and reactions formed important part of discussion among them. Teachers addressed each child’s behavior and made reference to the same in their interactions with each other and many times with the researcher as well.

Referencing of individual behavior happened at different times and places such as, in meetings, at dining area, outside the class, in the classroom during the school hours or could be when teachers met after the school. The discussion about a child happened in presence or even in absence of the child. Below, we share five observations from three schools that states teacher’s observation of the child and his/her nature. The observations suggested that to know a child and explain his behavior was important for the teachers. The children referred to in these observations belong to different age groups. The small community naturally

facilitated people to know each other and often references were made to an individual's behavior, which at times might turn into gossipⁱⁱⁱ.

We begin with an episode to highlight that how observation of an individual behavior was important:

A student Shiva has not been coming to the (physical education program) group. The interactions begin that the student has been playing truant, ... not coming on time.....or not coming at all.....(punctuality and regularity matters a lot in the whole program, there is an award at the end of the year for being punctual and regular) or of strange replies on being queried for the behavior (absence) .the teacher feels that the school will tell him not to continue in the school.

Shiva's classmates and other students, cropped up the topic. "so what happened to Shiva's case, will she continue?" Ashram inmate, the teacher, "seems (she is) not interested and has been not coming to the school. And if you don't do physical education program, you are not allowed in the school."

the teacher commented about the family background and added, "choice of Shiva to be at school was of the family, most likely not her!"

I probed further after initial conversation, "in case of adolescent and young adults who decides that the 'child'/ 'student' will come to the school or not?" teacher told me, "if the child-young or old does not come he or she is asked to leave the school. Since he or she does not fit into the school and its environment.

Obs/int Dec 2010 place/Golconde- a dormitory of the Ashram/ working for Christmas/Ashram inmates and outsiders/ several volunteers like me.

The Ashram or Auroville or all the three school had their environment, which was created by its rules, rituals, practices and objects. Students or individuals might not identify with all but had to identify with few or the essential rules like participation in the physical education group at the Ashram, so that they are part of collective behavior of schooling. (Refer chapter 5 for more details on rituals and practices.)

Charu is a young teenager has not been doing very well discipline wise, but is otherwise a very bright child. Initially she did not want to study in any school (but made to this school). Due to the child's behavior of disturbing other students and teachers, other teachers think the child does not fit into the school. Over several meetings and discussions we (teachers) decide we would give chance to the student(to decide). So teachers felt if we 'confront' the child (over the behavioral problem).

One of the teachers and I approach the child near the school entrance, the teacher confront the behavior, and told what we think, " you can still make to be in the school, you are very bright and intelligent, but it is up to you to be here or to go out" the child nodded in affirmation. There was no rebuking and with suggestive authority, the child was confronted, in order to know what did the child want. C looks down, is dressed in shorts and t shirt, and continuously moves his foot in the sand. I ask politely to the child to look up. And answer the teacher. The teacher tells "I think there is something in you which tells you to do all which nobody likes, and wants to break everything and not to come to the school, or to be anywhere. (the child keeps on nodding) Do you think you can control that, tell yourself not to do that, and you can try to be here, if you want. I think you can.(a long pause)" the teacher added, " Do you want to be here or outside somewhere, wherever you want(pointing towards the entrance of school)?" Charu replies, "here!" teacher says, "If you are clear. I trust you, (you) can. "

Int/ Par/ July 2011 / LB/ teacher, researcher & student

The above two observations were at two different places but the teachers identified some unacceptable action in the behavior or attitude of the child. In both the cases it was felt the child did not fit in the schools. In the first interaction the child was going to be told that s/he should stop coming to the school. In the second observation in a different school attempted to give freedom to the child and talked with him/her like an adult in one to one interaction. However, this case and several others were example of predicament of giving freedom to the children and the role of adults. In second case it was at the stage where the child needed adult's faith and trust to control that 'part' (rebel or unmanageable) of one's self and change it.

However, not all children's behavior was challenging or problematic. In some cases, it was problematic for parents but teachers tried to understand it and accept the child.

During the lunch time a child stops me and tells me, "I am eating more and more these days." He showed me his plate and said, "I have finished all I have taken today. And then he pulled his up sleeves to show me his muscles (a gesture we often indulge in India to show that we are growing stronger). Just then his teacher joined us and appreciates him that he has been eating well. The child has smile on his face.

Later, I shared my experience with the teacher (since I was new in the school and learning appropriate behavior at that time) teacher immediately broke into the detail observation of the child, "he is sweet child and likes to eat but faces pressure to eat more and be strong from the home." She added that she made him comfortable and gave him company since he liked to talk about other things over the lunch. His classmates finished fast and left him.

[Over the time one of us made sure to be with the child concerned and ensure that he finishes his food^{iv} or we just tried to be there to listen to the child.]

Obs- Int /Oct 2010/ dining area/ class teacher, children- 6 to 10 years, researcher

Listening to the child's opinion was an important feature and in some cases it was difficult for the teacher to give answers or arguments to the children. However, school as a policy believed in listening to the child and facilitating, if need be; but not to snub the child. Often during my field work I also made an effort to sit with the child (in this observation) and listen to him.

Teacher's intervention in this case was to give more acquiescence to the child's condition. It appeared time consuming but for teachers it was important that child should feel positive about oneself. Schools especially like LB gave ample time to the children and sometime to their parents to talk and express.

At the AID where children came from local villages, the teachers had seldom time to discuss with parents, but as teachers individual referencing of behavior of each child was very important to understand the child.

Sumanlata is supposed to sit and read an English book with me. She cannot read a passage in an English book properly, she suddenly breaks down and is rather angry, frustrated. It seems not with the teacher but with something, it seems to me what she has been discussing in Tamil with other students is the case of her being disturbed, I felt if the other students have teased her. I try to ask but no one answers, I try to console her, but she runs away crying loudly.

I later discussed with the teacher, the teacher told that there are lot of unresolved things may be due to her home or within her, that she has to resolve emotionally. Teacher added about her that she is mostly a happy child, laughing, helpful, but in some cases the child cannot deal and has to be facilitated, She advised me, I don't have to give up or judge the same behavior.

Obs/ Int July 2009/the Aid /researcher, teacher and the 10 years old child

In this case I was caught unaware of my reaction to deal with the child. However, the teacher knew the problem but did not feel that counseling or intervention could help. She explained me that the school's aim was to provide positive environment so that children feel positive and not to highlight the problem. Acceptance was primal and therefore, in the last two cases children were not confronted about the same.

However, in few cases like the next one, teacher made an effort to put it across a child's strength and weakness.

Malay is a student with whom I have been interacting for several days during the fieldwork. I am observing him in a class. The teacher who teaches French told me, "he is hardworking student, he .took the choice of learning French, he had choice between Tamil and French, but decided to take French. He was weak (initially) but progressed well." Teacher added that he also has a weak body...

During this discussion (with the teacher) the test for the language was going on. It was almost break time and the refreshment banana and lemon juice for the children was served there. Malay could not get since it finished, he felt exhausted, and he needed it. The teacher immediately arranged for the same, and she discussed with me that what food items could help him strengthen the body, since he is exceptionally good. The teacher meant the child needs to work on it (strength of the body).

During this discussion the child was present there and was doing the test. In between he smiled back at us to acknowledge the fact that he knew, we were talking about him.

Obs-int/July 09/ the Aid/ researcher, teacher & students

The above five descriptions discussed about the individual nature of child of different age group/ gender/ SES background and reflected that a child's individuality was very important

for the teachers. These discussions and similar kind of interactions were mostly about the children (if need be, many times with them) every day. These consultations were mostly about the children who were studying and rarely about children who had passed from the school or left it.

These discussions as evident were firstly to describe child's behavior for example, in case of the child who was not coming to school and then aimed to find reasons for the behavior; in the first case as per the teacher the child did not fit in the school system. Similar issue was with another child, in second case, which was disturbing and troubling other students and teachers. Consequently, he/she was unpopular among rest of the school. The approach in these cases was also 'problem-solving' that is, how the issue in case of a particular child could be solved whether it was behavioral, emotional turmoil or physical to deal with body (as in the last case).

These interactions became little windows to glimpse the way children peep into their self. In the second observation, the idea to confront the child was over the challenge that the child was posing to rest of the school and to address it. The child was old enough and teachers could tell him/her to make the choice, be clear and guide the child to decide. The discursive practice of identity was to guide the child to be 'oneself' and was established with unique individual personal traits. It was meant to be a continuous process. The child was expected to improve the traits, if the child agreed or to make the choices like in the first two cases shared above.

An important aspect intended through these discussions in interaction with the children was knowledge of various aspects of the self that is, emotional, physical and an ability to observe all these. It intended to develop within the child an ability of self-observation. Gradually, children would be able to look for the problem from perspective of self and improve them. 'Within or inner' development was an implied process and one never found the teachers preaching or dictating the inner or individual aspects of development.

'Knowing the child' was first step towards accepting the child. The interactions showed 'acceptance' of child's nature and their choices. It was also important with reference to the problems teachers or students had been facing with a particular child or simply to know the choice of the student or explain his/her behavior. Teachers' attempted to have a microscopic

view of the ‘whole child’ which magnified traits, behavior, choices and actions exhibited by the students.

This phenomenon sometimes could lead to gossip, when the discussion either by a teacher or any other adult like parents were meant just to analyze the child without any purpose. In that case, it might not necessarily mean a quick solution or an action in favor of the child. It then had the fear of running into gossip mainly if someone other than teacher used information about the child without any purpose. One of the schools came across such a problem, the child was analyzed in extremity in front of other children, which resulted in non cordial relation of few classmates with that child. The episode is given below:

A teacher brought to notice of other teachers that Ashraf’s particular learning traits in a subject have been used to tease him. The teacher (however) added (commented) that it was interesting to see how the child sustained the pressure (due to this criticism) with smile and silence. Other teachers present there added that the child was exceptionally good in sports and mathematics

The child had problem in comprehending how to develop particular skills, the (child’s) family was also distraught by conflicts (economical, personal). The school in charge discussed this (information) with other teachers and me. All the teachers suggested that how they could help the child and to bring back harmony in the class.

Int/LB march2011/ various teachers

In this case, the approach was to empathize with the child. At the same time the teachers were observant enough to see that child was doing well in all other areas except one and was dealing with this problem with a poise, confidence and non-reaction.

Role of teachers was critical in analyzing the child. Teachers took responsibility to be analytical but with care to protect the child as well. Similar attitude of acceptance and protection was reflected in listening to the child who was concerned over his health and eating habits (episode 3 in this sub-section); or in arranging refreshment for the child who needed to eat something (episode 4 in this sub-section). The next section shares more examples from observation and interaction where a teacher’s role and reflection mainly with reference to children becomes clear.

Teacher's Role and Reflection

Teachers played various roles as an individual other than teaching even in the administrative works of the schools or some other jobs at the institutions. They were not restricted to their role in the classrooms. The schools had mixed set of regular and volunteer teachers (even the researcher). The regular teachers were the Ashram inmates, or Aurovillians or people associated on long term basis with the two. The schools also welcomed volunteers, Indian and Foreign nationals for remedial classes, workshops, presentations and other curricular areas like gardening, martial arts, dance to name a few.

Teachers did not undergo training or produce certificates of their training. Apart from two teachers at Auroville schools who were trained at *Mirambika*^v, Delhi, rest of the teachers had studied at the Ashram or Auroville or had done their formal schooling or graduation from recognized by the 'states' of different nationalities. They studied, did various jobs like business, artists, administrative work at office other than Auroville or Ashram, and at the time of the fieldwork reported that they had settled here to teach. Teachers made the choice and volunteered to teach. The idea was to have teachers who wanted to learn and shared their passion of subject, skill or concept with the students.

Role of a teacher was considerable as they enjoyed relevant freedom to design the curriculum in absence of affiliation (or in case of the AID absence of strict adherence) to any School or University board of Examination and Certification. The freedom entailed hard work and responsibility to choose the content of knowledge areas and organize relevant teaching learning material. Most of the teachers in all the three schools apart from their teaching time spent considerable time in the preparation for the classes. Preparation for 'new' learning opportunities was relatively less at SAICE, its long history had led to lot of organized course work; teachers had experience of teaching in the same section for nearly three decades and relevant materials available for teachers to choose. However, many teachers at SAICE still formulated new learning opportunities.

At LB and the AID these opportunities were also immense but more in interaction with the community and freedom to welcome others. LB being the youngest of three and the AID had new set of teachers. Relevant themes for the role of teachers will emerge in sections below where learning opportunities and focus of these have been explained. Teachers (reflections

and their background in terms of engagement with various issues of life and learning opportunities) had been the basis of what and how had been taught in the class.

Reflective practitioners

Teaching in an Integral School is instrumental to reach one's inner self, to know oneself and ultimately to get in touch with one's soul^{vi} (Patel, 1986; Adams, 2006 Smith, 2010). The education that looks into individual's choices aims at self-development of the teachers' and of the child. This section brings forth observations and interactions with the teachers about the experiences of the different classrooms at the three schools. Episodes in this section primarily highlight how teachers reflected about the process of teaching and learning. These observations would also indicate how teachers dealt with issues of child's nature, problems they faced with children and how they organized nature of teaching and learning opportunities.

This is an arts class, where ten years old have been send to explore their interest in arts and crafts, so that they can choose this work later on. The teacher shares with me his observation and reflection about the group, (he commented) the group is little aggressive (throw things on each other or fight or argue), does not follow instructions hence (there are) constant disruptions. However he does not lose patience or get frustrated, instead there are constant, polite and sometimes firm reminders (from his side)- "keep that from where you pick up. you don't do it this way. Hey stand properly, don't move, don't argue." the teacher devises mechanisms to involve them in small games, in which concentration could be developed. The students do not know this (teacher's intention), they continue to do what they are told, but sometimes they did not follow, but the teacher continued to engage them in games, activities or other chores in the class. (These observations happened over the time of two classes and detail interaction with the teacher.)

Obs/ Int March2011/ classroom/ teachers, group of ten years old, and researcher

The teacher in this episode observed and reflected about the behavior of children (which otherwise would be a 'difficult' class) and devised techniques to deal with them. The reflection involved identification of the problem and specific steps to change their current aggressive behavior to the behavior where they could learn amicably. The teacher did not show anger, frustration or complained over the children's behavior. Longer association the

teacher had with children and the freedom he had to deal with them allowed him to do what was appropriate (also the sheer faith, trust or courage of the teacher to do such things in class, where other young teachers were found to be in conflict over the same). Children enjoyed the games while they learnt to take instructions and later on participated in collective assignment which teacher gave them. As a result, of the teacher's effort there was constructive learning that the children engaged in.

A similar episode of a teacher's reflection of six years old:

A very senior teacher shares with me about her pedagogy and observation of children. She said, "I allow the children to express freely over a theme or topic from the story, then notes down their expression, choose the best one and give them situation or theme to enact.....it is important to look at response of the group. " She added, " this year it is slow. Last year children responded well. But it is all right as long as children are learning (and) making progress."

Int/July 2009/SAICE/teacher and researcher

The interaction^{vii} indicated two important aspects of the pedagogy one was her method of observing the children with respect to theme based learning which she followed with the children and another a comparative 'norm' about child's development; which according to the teacher was, children's pace of learning, which was different that year from the previous year. This comparison indicated understanding of norm that the teacher did not detail out or write off somewhere in the certificate or report, but carried in her mind as result of her years of experience.

The oral creation and understanding of norms can have advantages and disadvantages; here I share the advantages that teacher reflect in order to form the norms. The teachers are free to build their norms. There were no frequent or regular meetings to discuss these issues with the parents. The teachers continued to address various issues with the children and assigned them the required activity.

The only seemingly disadvantage oral norms might have: first, it makes learning, individuals, classrooms quite dynamic and variable. The dynamism might look unorganized, non-iterative and inconsistent. But the teachers might find it useful to give freedom to all the children, in the words of the teacher who makes sense of this dynamism:

Bobby is a volunteer teacher at LB has been working with the school and has been in Auroville for more than an year. Bobby is a foreign national. She is supposed to take the classes on French, which is her native language. [later on I observe the class she took on her native language] We introduce ourselves and she invites me to her class. She adds, “class here (at the school) are different each day, one has to enter and see what the class demands and hence introduce the lesson or activity.” She told me, “ so each day is different.” Later on talk with Bobby revealed that this group of children needed continuous attention. She said, “it’s like you start from the beginning of the class, else they will lose it. She said that she felt exhausted at the end of the class. She also mentioned, “This is not like outside schools that you plan and teach... here you come in the class feel it, like you check the temperature and you adapt....”

Int/ Oct 2010 / LB/ teacher and researcher

Teachers’ reflection of her classroom, children’s learning and behavior revealed that learning environment, individual child’s behavior and group dynamics varied each day; as a result children’s pace of learning, attending to information, grasping it and responding to the same could vary each day. This was not temperamental but more expressive for the children. The ‘environment’ of the class varied and mattered each day. A flexible understanding of norms, which emerged from the teachers’ reflections were also relevant for the classroom environment. Therefore, norms were ‘flexible benchmarks’ which gave a learner ‘freedom to be’^{viii} and respond ‘relatively’ in free manner, which is not bound to set behavior. Another example:

Soumya has been teaching at the Ashram School for three decades teaches different age group. In his first meeting with me he speaks about ‘on loving’ and listening to the children. In subsequent meeting he shares his experience with the six years old at the Ashram school. Another day, when he talked to me it was his class with seven years old, with all delight he told me that he found one child telling another child about his factory which is collection of stones in the garden. T smiles and breaks into laughter, his eyes full of spark, while he spoke that children are so innocent, as they grow up they may never know what treasure they cherished and had.

Int/may2011/ SAICE/teacher and researcher

The teacher made this observation during his class while he was teaching them about plants in the garden. The teacher paused, took time to observe and appreciate what children were doing. That was his valuable sharing from the class that day with me. The teacher similarly shared many such anecdotes from his teaching experience that formed his idea of how children learn and react.

To conclude the teachers would always start with an anecdote; described the details of a child's behavior and their understanding about their learning or personality. If needed drew the generalization about child's nature. Teachers also considered the 'group dynamics' in a class, through the year and each day. Variability of child's level and behavior each day may give puzzling feeling at first go, but observations had firm creation of patterns of 'individual-group' and 'specific-general' features of child nature, if understood empathetically.

Challenges of an Integral teacher

Teaching was often a serendipitous process that all teachers had to pass through, in the light of the principles of Integral Education. Many teachers at LB and the AID said that teaching was rather a difficult and challenging process that they had taken up (and they were conscious^{ix} of their choice). Absence of written norms made teaching a dynamic and challenging process. A teacher was answerable to oneself, to the child, responsible for positive change in her/his own nature, contents and method of teaching. There was no external monitoring or generalized reward one expected for (pay rise or awards). This process demanded substantial reflection from the teachers.

A general notion of innovation is that it is a panacea and hence, there would not be any problem. Observations and interactions rather revealed another perspective that innovations at Integral Education meant. It meant facing challenges consciously and questioning some popular conceptions like the hierarchical role of an adult in a child's life, accept the choices of children and learn from a child.

Schools were places where both teachers and students thrived, made effort to learn, utilized objects, participated in the activities and learnt from teaching learning content and activities. There were occasions where teachers and students participated together to learn something; these were the instances when there was a third resource person involved and both teacher and student were learning. This section discusses different observations and interactions highlighting the varied challenges of being an Integral Education teacher. Following episode

offers a contrary image to the popular conception of adult-child relation that implies adult as giver and child as receiver of knowledge.

The teachers had started a project of making musical instruments with the students. The teacher and students went to the musical instrument department at Auroville to learn to make chimes and other musical instruments. I found the teachers were tying pieces of leaves and barks; they told me they were finishing making the chimes, they added that their students started it gladly but then left in the end, that is, after the major work they did not finish all the chimes they had started making, so the teachers were finishing it. Teachers felt that the students had learnt what they wished to, but it is their choice to finish it.

Obs/ IntNov2011.LB classroom of 7 years/ teachers and researchers.

The teachers and students in this episode went to the department other than the school to learn a skill from an expert in music. The students seemed to have 'lost their interest' or in the teachers' opinion, "*they learnt what they wished to*", while teachers decided to continue because they wanted to finish what they and students had initiated. Many similar learning experiences were possibilities for a joint exercise of adults and children.

Students initiated different projects and also got platform to share their work or learning with the teachers. As a mark of acceptance to child's work, there were opportunities to learn from them or thank them. One such incident where I also participated:

The children have got rings of different sizes (may be part of ATB^x program) and in any free time the rings (hoola-hoop) are taken out and few children start playing with it, mainly to move it around their waist. This is what not all the students know and no teachers know. During break time, I stand with another teacher and a student, eight years old, is moving the ring catches our attention. We observe her, discuss her style of moving the ring and approach her while she is moving the ring. The two (teachers) of us try to learn it. My colleague is able to learn it, while I have to start with smaller ring and then might do the movement with a bigger ring. I learnt to manage few rounds with the ring while my body lost the momentum and the ring went down. The student suggested me to move my body in certain manner and sustain the movement throughout the body so that ring can maintain the momentum.

The student very confidently explained to us to use the ring and guided me so that I could do it. Another teacher was a quick learner due to his participation in sports while I took time to learn the same.

Obs-int Oct 2011/ LB/ near the pond/ teacher, student, & researcher

Teachers also showed their gratitude when children performed or shared their finished products mainly from garden etc. LB and the AID had garden where children grew plants. At LB, as part of gardening project, children liked to grow rosella, chilies, tomatoes and few other vegetables.

Today at the dining area at the serving area, ripe and fresh chilies are also kept. The teacher who serves the food tells me that this is what their children (at the school) have grown. "You may like to have some!" The children also told me that this is from their garden and if I would like to try some. All the teachers thanked the children as they took chilies to savor with their lunch.

Obs/ March 2011/ Dining area/ Students and teachers

On other occasions, children liked to cook something special and shared it with rest of the children and teachers.

However, the idea to let the child 'be' or to offer gratitude to children was not same in all the situations. In few cases, teachers felt their traditional role of adult to guide and children should obey them at least in the classroom was questioned. Teacher faced more challenges with older children to take decision and overt 'negotiations' took place between teachers and students. The teachers' task often meant 'negotiation' with themselves, among each other (teachers) or with the child's reality and needs. It was a predicament for the teachers. they voiced "*what they should do or how to keep the divide between a child's choices and an adult's decision based on experience.*" Discussions happened to address this often in meetings and each teacher was supposed to find out the answer of challenges faced in a classroom as an adult.

The issue of discipline among students remained a consistent topic of discussion at the AID and at LB. Teachers raised problems at different times more with the older children. I share an interaction with the teachers who shared her own predicament over the conflict she faced in dealing with a group of children.

The teacher(A) reported that she had one of the most challenging groups of children to manage; the children were under constant arguments or conflict with her. the teacher's concern was supported by another teacher who teaches the same class. The two teachers discussed with the third teacher and me that how one student's remark just offended the teacher A , but the teacher A does not feel it is all right to lose temper or dictate the child. The insight of teacher was based on quote of the Mother that all the problems 'outside' have root inside the person. The teacher said she believed that the Mother guides her and she was right in not losing the temper on the child, and she shouldn't even not to be offended by child's remark but then she is perplexed how to guide and be polite.

Int /July 2011/ LB/ three teachers & the researcher.

In this episode, the teacher was unhappy that she did get frustrate even if she was not angry. The insight in her predicament in her opinion came from the Mother's statement that she summarized as "*root of all the problems outside is within an individual.*" Teacher also reported to bring this quote true in her life that is, solve her inner predicaments about her role in the life of children. Older children more often questioned the teachers. They wanted to exercise their choices, which challenged the teacher or the time-table.

Another episode where a teacher realized and acknowledged her mistake:

This was my first entry in the class and the teachers, after the break, were trying to look for set of cards to start an activity, but they could not find it anywhere and one of the teachers was very upset and started asking the children since they might have thrown it somewhere (while playing) or might have hidden it. The children denied politely and sat quietly. It was unusual to reach the class for the first time and acknowledge the rift. I felt out of the place, others were comfortable with my presence and started to trace the cards. It was more than ten minutes and activity could not be started without the cards. The teacher was upset with the students, asking them to tell where the cards were. But students were quiet. The other two teachers searched quietly (that is without blaming the children). One of the teachers finally found the cards, somewhere and commented it must be squirrel or crows; the teacher who was doubting the students, turned apologetic with a laugh for losing temper on children. the class finally began and returned to normal.

Obs/ Feb2011/Delafon, SAICE/ children, teachers and researcher

In the last two observations, teachers' responses and reflection indicated a challenge to the expected roles of an adult, which is to authorize and guide. Integral education advocates the idea that learning is mutual and reciprocal between teacher and student as individuals; the two could be categorized by their external age. The idea of teachers who learn struck the researcher in the field when at The AID the two boards were hung and displayed the words of the Mother on ideal child and ideal teacher^{xi}. As a result, I as a researcher also learnt with the teachers at SAICE.

Researcher's growth and learning

As a researcher apart from learning the ways of life at the field, one of the learning experiences, for a young apprentice at *Delafon* who just managed with basic French, was to learn the language with children. A teacher suggested me to read children's books. She mentioned that few of which have been written by children (not *Delafon*) and were interesting to read. She commented on my learning that several years back she had also learnt French, this way. She told me that she did a formal course but learnt to speak in French during her apprenticeship at *Delafon*.

I discovered my own learning capacity to speak in French while observing and apprenticing with the children. Interesting part in learning to speak a language is to know the contextual validity of a word that one can learn only through interaction. To quote:

In my first tasks of apprenticeship at Delafon I was supposed to assist the teacher in helping children color a lotus flower. Initially children were supposed to paste paper which were cut like petals of lotus and some were cut like leaves on a square shaped paper, color the leaves and write the name of the child and it was done. I wanted to remind the students to 'color well, color slowly' and I landed up saying 'fais les couleurs'. Quelle couleur? et colorizer doucement.....Most of the time I used gestures to help the children understand. They followed well despite my confusion over how to give them instructions.

.....Everything else was fine except that 'coloriet doucement' was meant to be colourier lentement. Both the adjectives have same meaning but 'doucement' cannot be used here. I checked with my French teacher who has studied here and he corrected me. I managed with telegraphic sentences, one mistake and speaking with actions which children followed well.

Obs April 2011/Delafon SAICE/ children, researcher

Experience of learning a foreign language and interacting with other Indian languages formed part of my growth as a teacher. I also learnt that learning can be outer that is learning skills like language etc. and it can be inner when reflection is about one's 'self' - cognitive, emotional or physical. The outer and inner growth was complementary. I underwent several such experiences in the field and learnt to reflect on the self is the best teacher preparation. Teachers also reported their reflection when designing the curriculum and pedagogical experience and many times sought his or her growth too. Next section mentions learning opportunities, their focus and content which were effort of teachers.

Nature of Learning Opportunities

'Nature' of a subject or discipline means its aims, the way it is taught and who teaches it. The schools dealt in their respective ways about issues of appropriate 'knowledge' and various suitable methods to teach it. I choose not to call availability of 'knowledge areas' as 'subjects' since subjects^{xii} are drawn in relation to a discipline. These can be suitably called 'learning opportunities'^{xiii} instead of subjects mainly for three reasons. First, the teachers focused on skills and method of learning, instead on learning information as concepts and contents. A child's pace of learning various skills was primary over the 'amount' of content and concepts. Second, the schools had variations in knowledge forms which cannot be classified as subjects. There were various learning opportunities available in the schools for individual development. For example, workshops or classes on 'film making', 'body-awareness', 'life sciences section', 'play of painting' to name a few. The variations in knowledge forms were due to the teachers' efforts and not merely teaching of concepts and syllabus made in the light existing discipline. Third, teachers adopted new 'learning opportunities' and discontinued others in each class (within divisions and across). Teaching of 'learning opportunity' at a level (or class) depended on the availability of teacher, teacher's capability to teach, resources available to organize the learning experience and often students' choice or interest.

'Learning opportunities' are also categorized as formal and informal. 'Formal learning opportunities' taught in the class were closer to the existing disciplines, evaluated with the help of test. However, it is important to note that to qualify a test was not a criterion for any learning opportunities in all the three schools. A complete focus of 'delinking' of jobs with

education was focus at all the levels that is, upper primary, secondary and even undergraduate level^{xiv}.

‘Informal learning opportunities’ were mainly teachers’ effort to organize the existing forms of knowledge available in the community like expertise of a person in any area, departments etc. These areas might or might not be coupled with existing discipline. These were completely free from tests and were taught outside the classrooms or in the community setting. Nature of ‘informal’ learning opportunity which were slightly more organized and consistent. For example, Capoeira^{xv} in LB or Aquarium section at SAICE had no tests or practical exams that students need to appear.

Learning Opportunity and a Knowledge Area

The schools introduced Languages, Mathematics, and Sciences from initial classes and then Social Sciences at subsequent level. Schools followed broadly an organized and subject based pattern. This meant that arrangement of information and concepts were from simple to complex keeping in mind the learning ability of the child. Teaching in these schools did not completely do away with form of identified subjects and learning opportunities. It is important to mention that LB and SAICE did not offer social sciences to students, while the AID did teach as part of the curriculum followed due to affiliation with Tamil Nadu board. This attempt of SAICE and LB made them more as a social structure separate from the word ‘outside’. Schools had their own rules and social challenges to deal with.

The key factors of formation of a ‘knowledge area’ could be summarized as, teacher-student interaction, community and in relation with the school ethos. For example, Aquarium Section at SAICE with flora and fauna of sea and Solar Sciences was one such example. It was center of attraction for tourists and children. Students did not ascertained it ‘formal learning opportunity’ as clear from a student’s comment *‘Now they (SAICE) give prize for Aquarium Section’*, indicating it is not something formal to give ‘prize’^{xvi}.

The Aquarium section held and indicated aspirations (interest, engagement) of human learning and organization of that learning into a knowledge form. Its description around following points delineates this aspect:

- Location- Situated in the main building at SAICE it was effort of the teachers and the students couple of years back. Huge Aquariums which were made at the school by teachers and students were placed and named.

- Age group of children involved were 10 to 21 years old.
- Skills required- making aquariums, maintaining them with flora, fauna, water, electricity, cleaning and feeding various sea-creatures. The older Students also taught the younger students about the aquariums (cleaning, maintaining, about the animals) and guided the visitors who came there. Sea-diving to get the organisms- turtle, lobsters, fish, crabs, anemones to name a few.
- A small room adjacent to Aquariums had all the literature available to take care of sea animals. It also stored material that was used for the maintenance of the section. I saw net meshes from filters of an RO machine. On enquiring I was told that these could be used as filters for the new aquariums.
- Literature evolved- with the help of one of the visitors at the Ashram and the teachers at the section had done a research to document all the shells found around Pondichéry shoreline. The research was published as a book later on with the help of grant from a Government body. Evolving of literature is a sign of formalizing.
- Link with Further Studies- Two older students were apprenticing (during the field work) even after finishing the main course of study program. They had chosen course related to the marine life sciences for their further studies.
- Diffusion of idea- LB at Auroville also took up the idea of developing the aquarium section as the life sciences section. There was snake pit, geese corner to make it into a full life sciences section. Different group of children from LB visited the Aquarium Section at SAICE.

Explanation of Aquarium section along these parameters is a clear example that how a learning opportunity evolved to a 'knowledge form'. However, it had the scope to be in 'dialogue' with existing discipline. It shows the dynamism of knowledge that these centers are capable of originating.

Several examples of new learning opportunities came with new teachers joining LB and the AID. LB's new teachers experimented with non-renewable energy sources. The teachers with the help of resource persons and material from Auroville community carried out projects on solar energy or windmill for electricity generation with the older age group.

I conclude this subsection with the observation that cites the growth of a new school in Auroville and example of its content. On three occasions, I interacted about the curricular

component of the school. I share my last interaction with one of the teachers of the new school.

While talking to a new school in Auroville which focuses on community based learning, one of the prominent resource person and a teacher explained to me that they had no building and no one place or space to function. they move around- at gardens, nursery or to any community (in order to learn from an individual)...he added that however children learnt some math, gymnastics, languages theater. for this they went to one assigned place, which was shared with another school. The school basically has no building.

Int/jan 2010/ le terrace above solar kitchen, Auroville/ researcher & teacher.

By the time I was finishing my fieldwork I was informed the school has found some two rooms to study and keep books, more or less the classes were still movable.

To conclude the three schools in the field had been undergoing changes in terms of organization of learning. The organization is with respect to age but the schools had made it flexible for different age groups to learn the age appropriate content. The program for learning of mind was navigated by several opportunities that remained relatively free from the burden of concepts of subjects or disciplines. The child might specialize in a knowledge area later or not at all. Learning opportunities became opening for learners for exposure to wide variety of content and skills.

Foci of content and method

Focus implies aims or objective of any teaching learning activity with reference to content, learner, information to be learnt, and method. These aspects were aims instead of course completion especially pertaining to formal learning opportunities. Teachers taught the content with wide range of activities that focused on number of skills and concepts. I choose few examples from each school to highlight that how content, learner, information and method varied. However, there were several such activities observed, indulged in (and even created by the researcher).

The examples have been taken from Mathematics from SAICE, Languages (English) from the AID and French Language and Sciences from LB.

One of the teachers sits at the back of the classroom and she is noting down something in a thin booklet. Rest of the class is divided in groups and children are working with respective teachers. I sat near the teacher who was managing some cards and noting down in the booklet. I saw the names of the students were written in the cards and across that was number of cards. I picked up the cards after asking the teacher. The cards had exercises of mathematics concepts which children were doing simultaneously in the class as group. Each student was supposed to take the cards home and do them in their notebook.

Some of the examples of exercises that were there on the cards

Quel est le chiffre suivant? (What is the next number?)

9.....; 12.....;

Quel est le chiffre manquant? (What is the missing number?)

Quel est le chiffre précédent? (What is the previous number?)

...9;...8;...10

Compte à rebours (Count in the reverse order.)

26, 25

Quel chiffre vaut plus? (Which number has a greater value ?)

32 ou 28

35 53 ou 45

Quel chiffre vaut moins? (Which number has a lesser value ?)

Quel est le chiffre plus petit? (Which number is the smallest ?)

Fais l'addition? (Do the addition)

Quel est le total? (What is the total)

Quel chiffre faut-il mettre dans le carré vide?(Which number should be in the empty square?)

Dizaine et unité? (Units and Tens : Place Value)

3d+2d=

Range ces nombres du plus petit au plus grand?(Arrange these numbers from the smallest to the biggest.)

Soustraction et Addition (Subtraction and addition)

After around 50 cards there was no title on the cards but only exercises that grow in complexity. The children were supposed to do the same thing with one digit and then subsequently the number of the digits increased.

Anl-Obs/May2011/ Delafon/ teachers of 6 years old students

This was an example of how teachers organized Mathematics teaching and learning of 6 years old. The focus was revision of the concepts they had been doing in the class. The idea was that the children should be able to do this independently. This example also indicated that focus was not only to learn Mathematical concepts but also to learn French. This was one of the ways by which teachers ensured the possibilities of speaking French. Most importantly, it also indicated that Mathematics did not mean just doing certain concepts or following algorithm but teachers tried to give the same concept in different forms so that the child formed the logic aptly.

I could also observe how the teachers taught few exercises as they explained the pedagogy.

I sit at the back of the classroom; six children of Div A (that is the children with higher ability) are sitting in front of the blackboard. Teacher start writing on the blackboard

6+7+ 4+8=.....

The children respond and teacher give them more numbers which she chooses randomly (teacher explained this to me later). Then as she gives them the assignment to work and comes at the back of the class to plan for their homework... she tells me, "you see children have got this concept. It is only I am making them revise so that they can do the carry over problems." The teacher has introduced units and tens, simple borrow over with single digit and single unit in two digit number, now they will gradually move on to carry over in both the places.

As the children finish the addition and subtraction, they come with their notebook one by one to the teacher. The teacher explain the mistake if any to the student and asked them to re do the same. The children quietly go back to do the same after having understood it.

Obs/May 2011/ Delafon/ teacher & 6 years old

This example highlighted that teacher's technique in 'revision' of certain Mathematical skills by the children needed for particular problem. Due to small number of students, teachers corrected their mistakes. There was ample time with a teacher to identify the pattern of mistake, explain the logic to the child and then ask them to correct the same. There was no time limit even in the class, if one child took time he or she stayed back to finish it while others moved on to next activity or the child could choose to finish an activity later.

I quote another example from LB of 'Science education' in order to explain the variation in content, method and pedagogy.

The teacher had decided to talk about Indian cobra in the classroom. Since he had found it hiding somewhere in his garden at his home. As he entered the class he announced his idea. Children were filled with excitement, “oooo cobra” “will it bite?” “No! It doesn’t bite,!” “is it poisonous?” “you are scared!” “I want to hold it” “will we get to touch it?” the teacher replied each question and told them to calm down, since their behavior could affect the mood of the snake. He carried the snake in sack to the ‘life sciences’ room and asked the children to stand at a safe distance. And as they held their breath, teacher with full concentration emptied the sac in the glass box around 1 m long. The children were silent. The snake slithered away in the box and was lazy, hence the hood was missing. The teacher highlighted this fact and told the children not to provoke the snake.

Children asked questions about the cobra which teacher answered and then it was teacher’s turn to ask the questions. The teacher asked them to guess the length of the snake. Students guessed and then teacher told them that they could get a hint from the length of the box.

Children quickly asked the length of the box, to which teacher asked them to get the scale.

Children went to the office and got the ruler. I was told by the teacher to help them measure the box. I divided six of them in team of three each, so that if two students measured the length, the third could check the reading and note it. similarly the next group of three students can repeat the activity.

As the group did this activity the snake went into hiding, teacher explained since it was cold and snakes don’t like to be out in cold weather and search for corner to hide and keep them warm. I also suggested the children to make set of questions which the teacher can answer for them.

**the class was followed by video on Snakes by Whitaker (snake expert) and browsing through his book. The children were given a set of questionnaire to answer based on the video. Snakes remained in the lab throughout that session and various levels of children (if liked) came and observed it.*

Obs & part/ Feb 2011/ LB/teacher, researcher and 9-10 year old students

In the activity mentioned here the focus was to study an important local snake found in the environment. The focus was to make children feel comfortable emotionally with the idea of poisonous snake and also to be aware about all the necessary information required to deal

with the organism. Researcher made the set of questions (Annexure 6.1) for the children, which were based on scientific and linguistic information in the video.

I now mention the activities to learn English at the AID. Since it was school for children from the adjoining villages, language policy of the school that they should be taught in 'English' and the reason was that this would help them in further education and most of them needed the same. However, the students preferred to talk in Tamil and were not really affected by the policy of the school that they should talk in 'English'. Efforts to make them learn English were one of the prime focuses. The school followed 'Non-Detention Policy' as per the state's rule and no child was 'failed' or stopped from promotion. Children who needed to work on their reading and writing skills, used to sit with individual volunteer. An example of the same,

I went with the children to pick up the book they would like to read. I was told by the teacher that if they pick up an easier book for their level, let them to do that and I should gradually increase their level. The girls picked up a big fairytale book 'Thumbelina'. I made them read one by one. As one student read word by word I asked another to listen. One of the students could read fast and other was quite slow in reading. But both of them got confused with correct pronunciation of words. As a teacher like rest of the teachers, I also had to devise my own technique or just made them repeat the sounds. When students found difficult words they did not wish to continue reading at that time. I wrote the sounds they were confused in and instead of repeating the same word I tried to show them different examples

'eat' read as 'it' or left

Wheat, Neat, Meat, Beat, Cheat, (ALSO) Feet

Talk could not be read

Talk, stalk, walk

Stack could not be read

Stack, sack, pack, back, black

Int-part/ Dec 2009/ the Aid/ researcher and two children of 10 years age

Over the period of a month, I sat with each child to improve their reading abilities and correct the mistakes or help them read. I devised my own way to help them. The teacher was comfortable with this. It cannot be said that what effect I could make in the limited period.

This is another example of a strategy focusing on content and skills in this case French at LB.

A teacher Nana's class is learning the conjugation (verb forms) in French. In the class, there are four children, and the class begins with the introduction Je suis, Je m'appelle. And moved to another lesson. It took me few minutes to realize that she is doing 'future simple' (tr Simple Future tense) danser....(tr. dance)

Je danserai (tr. I will dance)

Tu danseras (tr. You will dance)

Il/ Elle/on dansera (tr. He/she will dance)

Nous danserons (tr. We will dance)

Vous danserez (tr. You all will dance)

Ils danseront (tr. They all will dance)

With lots of repetition and drill. [as teacher wrote on the black board she made each child to repeat what she was writing for the pronunciation and made them write in their notebook, again with repetition. Entire class lasted for forty minutes, Nana moved around to look at the notebooks of students and help them correct if required.

Obs-Int/Oct 2010/ LB/ Researcher, six 10 years old children, teacher

This episode indicated that how drill and practice was important to learn a language with focus on each child to practice the sound. The other half of the class was doing advance learning in French.

All the six examples looked at various skills imparted to the learner. Apart from the regular teaching, teachers decided to bring in a new change, which could be visit to a place or visit by a person. In the example at LB it was a snake and the teacher organized a class around the same.

Co-curricular learning opportunities

Each school had its respective ways that is, infrastructure, choice and teachers to organize co-curricular activities. These activities were given substantial time with respect to other knowledge areas. Children always liked to participate in co-curricular activities and did it most diligently. This was also a chance for them to experiment with their skills, interests, creativity and freedom other than the curricular areas mentioned above.

At The AID there were other activities apart from making Mandalas, Marbling and paper folding that children did.

As soon as 'Mandala'(activity) was announced children knew from where to pull out the table, get the colors and paper, to sit and start making it. On my first confrontation with mandala I asked what is it? And the teacher explained to me that since she believed that mandala drawings would help children concentrate, harmonize the self and express their creativity, she had been doing with them in the class. These activities gave children a chance to be quiet and work alone on circles known as mandala. Children did not show these to the teachers for approval or suggestions but sometimes for appreciation or just for sharing. I don't know how it started but during the field work children already knew about it. The teacher also requested me draw the mandala as she herself started to make one. Children set out with crayons and pencil and on one side used sheets they made a big circle (using the objects available in the environment), there were patterns, motifs, flowers, leaves to decorate the circle, as each child was left free to imagine and express. Teacher felt it help all of us harmonize and concentrate.

Obs June 2010/ the Aid/ teacher, researcher and eight years old/ co-curricular activity (see: annexure 6.2)

Another activity that I observed was Marbling,

One quiet afternoon, as the class set for afternoon games and activities, Class five and teacher has decided to do marbling. Oil paints, a broad rectangular plastic tray to hold water say four to five inches, one side used A4 size sheets. The afternoon was quiet as teacher helped by the students set the table, put the wide trays with two inches of height. The water was put in the trays. The teacher put the paint over the water in three four trays and oil colors formed a thick slick and patterns on the water. then he brought the paper and with almost holding the breath put one side of the paper on the tray for few seconds. as the patterns of oil paint got stuck to the paper, it was gently lifted, and precariously put on the sandy ground to try. In between students suggested which color they want, or waited for the pattern to emerge. I also participated making a marbling pattern.

Obs/ june 2010/ the Aid/ teacher and ten years old

Another teacher had self-developed skill of paper folding which inspired the students:

During the tiffin break at the school I found Sukumar, one of the teachers of class V and an Aurovillian busy with paper folding, the children jumped with joy, seemed they had been doing this and would love to do it with the teacher once again. The teacher told that a group of children would be visiting their community, and their method of learning was to learn from the skills a community could offer as a group or as an individual. The teacher had been doing paper folding, and he had been trying a design from the book, which had been difficult to make. Sukumar told me he was self-taught. He had been doing it for several years and had done it with different age groups. Children observed him fiddling with new toy of paper folding and they insisted him to start with them as well. After the children insisted he re started this project with them.

And during the following month children could be seen (those who had interest) to patiently learning to get the toy right from looking at the book.

Obs/June 2009/The Aid, Open Dining Area/ teacher and students

At LB there was less divide between curricular and co-curricular areas. Somehow there were more opportunities for children to indulge in co-curricular activities. Co-curricular area could be used in mainstream teaching as well. ‘Cooking’ (especially at LB) described in chapter 7 is an example of the same. The students were also involved in ‘cooking’ as part of their interest, which they wanted to explore. Sports is explained separately and not under co-curricular activities in chapter 7.

Co-existence among the learning opportunities

This section discusses the relationship between different curricular areas^{xvii}. Teachers never compared the importance of one knowledge form with another especially at primary level. They mostly insisted on relevance of all the knowledge forms. A relevant feature to do away with the hierarchy in subjects completely owes to several factors like equal allocation of time to different activities, individual freedom to choose, and no compulsion on following syllabus and no examination or certification policy. But schooling process to some extent reflected hierarchy either due to their policies and way of teaching, another due to the conceptions individual parent or child had.

Language policy of schools was one example that resulted in different capacities in different languages children learnt at three schools. At SAICE, French was the medium of instruction

for teaching and learning for Mathematics and Science and the mother tongue was introduced last to the students at the age of 7. Due to the status of French in the school and more exposure to English at home and other places, the teachers reported that the students learnt French and English efficiently than their mother tongue. A student had spent 4 years with Sanskrit and French in the classrooms before he/she officially learnt the mother tongue. During Interviews with ex-students at SAICE, they reported to make effort to improve their Mother Tongue later if it was not possible at the school. Few students also ‘regretted’ for not taking it seriously. To quote, a response, a 36 years old ex-student shares with me about her proficiency of her mother tongue

“Reading and writing is quite poor. I feel very sad about it....I Feel embarrassed of not doing it, would like to master one Indian language which is preferably my mother tongue.”

She added that she has done the mother tongue till her school at SAICE and at graduate program ‘Knowledge’ once a week but she was not serious.”(because of the freedom school gave them)

Other students reported to be more acceptable about the fact that they did not do well in their mother tongue. Especially languages like, Sindhi or Punjabi for which teachers were rare, students could not develop proficiency beyond listening and rarely speaking the mother tongue. Nonetheless, the students reported to have basic proficiency in two to three Indian languages, at least one foreign language and English^{xviii}. Mother Tongue shared an unclear status in the development of Individual. There were sufficient opportunities to learn including organized efforts but it was an individual’s choice to use them.

Differential treatment was also reflected when students highlighted their choice of a knowledge form over another. They felt that some subjects were good and more important to perform than others. The teachers in discussion with the teacher however, did not conflict with the students but offered their viewpoint.

One such conversation indicating the same is cited here-

As we sat after finishing the dinner, the topic went on to importance of learning pottery with the teachers. Why pottery is not a subject to study like science and math?

Teacher: you do well at pottery? Do you wish to take it up later on?

Student: yes but it is important to be good at math and science? Not pottery! This I do just like that.

I- why?(I was bit surprised to see that artistic education which is meant for inner growth is rendered not a knowledge or subject area.)

Student- because these are good subjects, pottery is not a subject? Science and maths are important to do job.

I- why do you think there is no science or math in pottery?

Student was bit puzzled.

Teacher(supported my argument): one of the science teacher who is a scientist too, mentioned (who is not present in our discussion) to me that one could learn science through pottery. He said, he wished he learned pottery through Science.

The student was listening to the conversation and left with a thought.

I: why students have this kind of opinion over knowledge and subjects.

Teacher: they bring it from their homes. We were never raised like that here.

The teacher has studied at the Ashram school. He seems not to be affected much by the opinion of the students and wish to work, believe as he has been taught.

Obs/ May 2011/ Corner house, SAICE/ researcher, a student of SAICE, two senior ashram inmates who are teachers

This episode is also an example of such discussion happening between teachers and older students. And it was an example where ideology was not forced but brought about in discussion with the children. It is also a challenge for the teacher since the child could not be convinced of the same and yet has to be accepted.

Features of an ‘alternative inside’ world

Till now the chapter has explained the alternative organization of content, of classrooms and methods which are strong features of these schools. Participants also reported to comment on ‘overview’ or features of alternative world. For example, numerous learning opportunities resulted in less focus on content information of each learning opportunity^{xix}. At SAICE most

parents and teachers were aware that level of learning of the content was not at par with the standards in any other school. Most of them preferred the method, environment and faith over mastery of content. A Grandparent has just admitted the grandson in SAICE.

Grandparent- Oh! He is very good with Math, they do so much 'outside'. Here it is slow. I heard silently and then asked, "it does not bother you that your grandson is learning less?"
Grandparent- No! Not much But it is good as long as he is here in this environment.

Int July 2011/ Corner House SAICE/ Grandparent and researcher

At LB during one such discussion, where teachers also felt the school was not at par with schools outside for the content they taught.

I - Do you think it is justified to do that?(not giving the same content of subjects as in other mainstream schools)

Teacher- no since we are doing different activities here, we have different approach of learning and knowledge.

the teacher added, "I wonder people 'outside' are ever prepared to deal with inner crisis as we are here. Its ok we don't do the subjects and degrees as they do."

**By inner crisis the teacher meant existential issues of life- pain, death, sorrow, failure*

Int/ Aug 2011/ LB/Teachers and researcher

However, at LB parents raised the issues 'were children learning enough and was it too many activities?' Few parents questioned relevance of content at LB and amount of freedom children enjoyed. (At SAICE and AID there was no such scope and so parents never asked openly about what happened at school in order to monitor the progress of their children.)

'The children have too much freedom, too many activities and are not really learning anything!' This came as a reaction to one of the girls from Europe, who was not put in higher-class level where she wished to be. Also as per her parents she should be in that class since that was the content she should be doing as per her age. A lower class level meant too much of freedom and not appropriate content. The class she was put in, the parents complained that it was much below her level. The school especially the teachers justified since her language skills (especially in English) needed some improvement before she could move with another group.

Int/Jan 2012/ LB/ researcher and other teachers

Eventually the parents opinion on what children learnt mattered considerably in case of LB, since there were new visitors from different parts of the worlds and at times their comparison with the schooling their children had been undergoing in cities and with LB met with conflict.

The discussions and arguments that issues of curriculum underwent were likely to make it difficult for the outsider like me to conclude and interpret it. The caveat was put forth in the field especially by teachers at SAICE-

The teacher was not keen that I should come to his class for the observations. While he was all right if I want to do something with students, I asked him what his discomfort about?

T- You would think that nothing is happening in the class.

I- And why would you think so? (I thought maybe he thinks I am there to judge him or the class)

T- Because we function in a different way. There is freedom and students have their way.(he meant which is not like the schools outside)And you may think nothing happens here.

I-(after a pause) if you could leave that to me and trust me that I would find out what is happening in your class!

He agreed to what I said and allowed me to come in his classes.

Int/ SAICE/ Young ashram inmate, a teacher & researcher

I went to observe his classes and even sat to analyze the lessons he was taking in order to see that how instruction and content was organized for the learners.

Relevance of age, learning and content appropriateness

The last section highlighted that how teachers, students and parents were aware that the functioning of the innovative set up might not be at par with the mainstream in terms of content with respect to a age group. This section highlights that issue of norms and age specificity is complicated in the field. ‘Was learning the focus or it struggled with age appropriateness of the learner?’ For example, the age group flexibility in a class was usually one or two years and rarely three to four years. The movement within the multi-groups in a classroom was flexible in some case and strict in others. There was movement of children within classes at LB especially at older age group. The movement was dependent on their performance in each learning area. However, at SAICE children when reported the movement from lower division within one class to an upper division,

Swami, a 12 year old boy one day came rushing to me, and shared with me that he has been promoted to 2nd division, he told me that it was lot of work now for him, earlier in third division there was hardly any work. He asked me with surprise and pride that did I know how many pages he had to write. And then added, “three pages man! And I have to wake up at 5 in the morning to do it!” He looked pleased and satisfied that he has been promoted.

Int/ Mar 2011/ CH-SAICE/ Researcher- 12 years student

This episode is an evidence of relevance of oral norms of age appropriate learning.

Therefore, the teachers in their attempt to defocus from age and focus on learning, chose the norms (age specific) available and then adjusted those to the individual level by considering the ability of the child.

Initially in choosing the norm in form of textbook or content, there was also compliance with ‘age’ and could not be ‘completely’ done away with. A complete doing away with age would mean focus entirely on content and individual and the age would not matter. To quote:

The meeting proceeded with various issues that concern the school, it ended with one of the teacher, who has studied at Auroville that should not we completely do away with age groups and do ‘ability’ grouping. Since free progress should mean that biological age does not matter, and therefore an adult can also be with an adolescent or a child to learn something. This would mean wider difference in age groups.

Principal, “no. since there are age group differences in learning abilities, one cannot have adults or a very wider age group difference in a class.”

The teacher insisted that if it is free progress and by soul, it should not matter what is the age. Teacher’s view was not acceptable to the group but also not denied fully.

When I was asked, I added two points that one I agree with the principal that learning and curriculum is organized and delivered age wise. The textbooks are like that and at practical level there could be a difference to manage the learning in classroom. But I added my opinion based on interaction with one of the ex-students of SAICE who passed out three decades back, that back then, flexible grouping was there and some individuals in late adult hood (mainly ashram inmates) may find way into the classroom of young adults.

Int-disc march/2012/dining area, the LB school/- six teachers of few classes of LB, the team leader of the school, & researcher.

The nature of interaction at many forums is not to make decision or prove right or wrong but it is only to mention the different viewpoints and then the decision would follow when required.

Conclusion: Learner and the Knowledge Forms

Through the lens of individual and collective development, one can explain the themes that individual teachers, students interacted with different knowledge forms. These three proliferated dynamically in the field leading to wide variety of age specific learning opportunities. While the outside world ushered inside in form of norms reflected in the curricular materials like textbooks, puzzle games and other learning material, which were re the teachers re organized.

Several models raise the thoughts on relevance of different disciplines, knowledge forms^{xx}, subject organization and learning in schools. It won't be in the purview of research to review them or make case for them however they all contribute to the understanding of organizing knowledge for learning in their respective capacities. Classrooms evidently deal with what is to be taught for individual development and learning. However, it is evident from review and observations in this chapter that the origin and application of knowledge is not the classroom alone. The origin and application both are in link with larger ethos of the schools, ideas schools are part of, individuals carrying it out and the larger world. The schools also maintained their link with each other due to the link between individuals and exchanged curriculum. The overall curriculum was different due to enough individual freedom and needs of each school.

Curriculum in these schools is similar to curriculum of 'small schools' (Galton & Patrick, 1990). Small schools have small number of students in the class and in the school as well. Due to this teachers could arrange good range of learning opportunities for students. In fact, it is relevant to view learning opportunities as differentiated from 'standard' subjects and discipline. This gives freedom to the learner and teacher to engage with the subject. As a result, a school culture forms its own norms as learning expectations from students about different tasks like it happened in our schools. One cannot say there was integration of skills in various learning opportunities an argument Galton in Galton & Patrick (1990) gives with reference to learning in small schools in UK. But there was focus on development of 'general

skills'. Relational aspects of various skills in different learning opportunities might need separate study to know the opinion of students on various learning opportunities.

Galton in Patrick & Galton (1990) offers three views of knowledge organization, namely conservative approach where knowledge is bound by educational ideologies, second is the romantic view where learning should be 'child-centered' inspired by Piaget. And third view of Lawton (1983) and Skillbeck (1976) '*reconstructionism which sees education as means of improving society.*' (p. 49, Galton, 1990). These Schools show a mix of these three views as there was presence of subjects in the light of disciplines, second, there was ample effort to understand the pace of learning of the child. Thirdly, there was ample reconstruction of knowledge forms since teachers focused on 'learning opportunities' and development skills. This becomes a means to defocus the authority of discipline-based learning and hence create a society, which is relatively free from this.

It is relevant to mention that the issues of knowledge forms have not been judiciously discussed by developmental psychology, rather discussion is through the learning patterns of individual. Case (1996) discusses three forms of learning (and views of knowledge)-

- Empiricist tradition which has roots in British thought.
- Rationalist tradition that gives ample scope to human mind.
- Socio-historic tradition where link with the community is imperative along with the cultural forces.

He also insists on 'dialogue' (p.93) between these three approaches. As per me these are forms of acquisition of knowledge but not 'view of Knowledge' as Case claims. Not that two are completely divorced that view of knowledge and ways of acquiring knowledge but the former can be better understood with views of Apple (1976) which aims at political agenda and ideologies behind the 'knowledge forms'. Developmental psychology has to still cognize the latter view. In the light of discussion in first two chapters and the arguments presented here, these schools offer a strong platform for 'dialogue' between various forms of knowledge and ways of acquiring the same.

This help us conclude even about the view of learner, learning and individual development in the field, since observations of learning are strongly tied with 'view of learner' (Olson & Torrance, 1996). Learner in these schools even if living in group (family, classroom), following a form of curriculum was largely individualistic whose learning experiences were

related to his/her individual nature. This is detailed in the first few sections of the chapter, which elaborated the challenges of teacher to accept and understand the child.

The relation of teacher-student or adult-child has implications on learning. There are very few thoughts stating this transition from traditional or hierarchical roles to ‘self-reflective’ roles.

Endnotes

ⁱ Fontaine & Tomasino (1987) in The book *Chimie 2e*. mentioned in their introduction

“Un livre a deux vitesses: Le cours comporte deux vitesses

- *Le Premiere vitesse constitue la charpente du livre; elle correspond au savoir de base que tout eleve de seconde doit acquerir.*
- *Lea deuxieme vitesse apporte un plus au savoir de base, sans jamais sortir des limites du programme. Les eleves, notamment ceux qui desirent poursuivre leurs etudes dans un secteur scientifique, trouvent la matiere et idees pour satisfaire leur curiosite’*

Translation

A book for two speeds: the course comprise of two speeds:

The First Speed comprise of the outline of the book; it corresponds to the basic knowledge that every student of ‘de seconde’ (level of classroom in the French Education System) should acquire.

The second speed brings more to the basic knowledge, without ever crossing the limits of the program. The students, mainly those who wish to pursue their studies in the scientific sector find the material and the ideas for satisfying their curiosity.

It gives an idea on the view of learner and its motivation. That few learners have more curiosity and interest and only they should be made to the activities of one higher level. It implies for the division of the curriculum and also segregation of the individuals. This thought needs more probing.

ⁱⁱ These are not theoretical terms but used widely in the field and can refer to the temperament, choices or individual behavior of the child. Words like personality have been avoided since they have theoretical connotations, which may not be same in the field.

ⁱⁱⁱ Living in small community has two aspects- first most of the people know each other and the families, their problems and second many of It lead to gossip as well. There were several times when I found a piece of information completely twisted from what I knew from the person about whom information was spread around. It was strange to discuss individuals and their issues as if one is analyzing oneself. It was not only about someone’s behavior but about particular skills- language, sports, acting. The feedback or rather critical feedback was instant like fast food! For details refer chapter 3 methodology p.no

^{iv} Viruru,(2001) mentions in her work that first thing she found in the school was that to parents it really mattered that they really finished their food. An observation that surprised the teachers and principal since they knew this was important but never acknowledged the same. Eating was not relevant in the same manner for schools as Viruru mentions but held as relevant for healthy eating and source of learning refer chapter 7 for details.

^v Refer Sibia (2006) for qualitative study of Mirambika an Integral Education School.

^{vi} An aspect the present research did not overtly studies or mentions. But surely it is somewhere very strongly in the environment. The outer responses of the teachers also have somewhere link with the inner aspect- a movement towards the soul. As mentioned in the last endnote, endnote vi.

^{vii} Interaction with very experienced teachers is a practice at SAICE. Many earlier researchers report the same- Patel (1986) Adam (2010) And Marshak, (1997). it establishes one of the practices at the school, for the visitors who have interest in education and views innovation as some benchmark to understand. By benchmark I mean which is taken as the participants report, but not looked at critically or try to raise some argument.

^{viii} International Commission on Education (1996) states one of the four pillars of education as learning to be.

^{ix} Being conscious in more that being aware- it is do a task with full and wide knowledge of their likes, dislike, preferences, avoidances and see how they play with the teaching learning process.

^x Refer Marti, Aloka (2006) *Awareness Through the Body: A Way To Enhance Concentration, Relaxation and Self-Knowledge in Children*. Auroville, Auroville Printing Press.

^{xi} Ideal teacher & Ideal child are set of instructions, expected behavior often quoted in the discussion on Integral Education. the source quoted is the Mother, any further reference could not be found.

^{xii} in the field there was mention of this word by the teachers and students in English language and in French *le sujet* sing. Or *les sujets* pl. indicating that these are treated like 'subjects like in most of the schools.

^{xiii} As per background document on 'World conference on EFA' (1990) '*Learning opportunities*' refer to wide range of educational activities organized with intent to promote or facilitate learning.' p. xi

^{xiv} The study does not analyze the data about knowledge linked with middle and secondary sections where tests would be more frequent. Most of the students worked after they completed studies or went for further education after completing school. In all the three schools the students had different questions with respect to choice of discipline, jobs they would take up..

However, It reminds me of question pose to a young child in middle class families, "*bade ho ke kya banoge?*" (what will you become when you grow up?). The children at LB especially refuted such questions and no one at SAICE asked them especially in and around the school spaces.

^{xv} A Brazilian tribal dance with tribal songs and music.

^{xvi} Students got prize (token of excellence) at SAICE mostly in the subjects like English, French, Mother Tongue, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology to name a few; as suggested by the respective teachers at SAICE. LB even developed an aquarium section on similar lines along with ecosystem for some other local animals.

^{xvii} Different curricular areas highlight different domains of individual learning which need to be worked out rather to be missed in the holistic development of the individual child.

^{xviii} English is considered as second language as per India's policy however for Pondichéry English definitely would be Foreign language and French being taught as second Language other than Tamil. The fact is strengthened in description of a person who grew up in Pondichéry. He reminisced that how local Tamils even the vendors, policemen and auto drivers in the streets spoke in French. This was definitely not the Pondichéry now when fieldwork was done. Traces of French was among the groups who spoke or some signboards with a French word indicating the French-Tamil connection.

^{xix} 'Completion of Syllabus' in a semester or year as we understand in colloquial terms was never an issue. There was no syllabus just content with focus on thinking or skills to be engaged with.

^{xx} Apple (1979) uses the term 'knowledge form' in his introductory chapter on Ideology and curriculum. Or Dearden (1976) cited in Galton & Patrick (1990) calls it 'forms of knowledge'

Chapter 7

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR BODY AND MIND

Integral Education makes a strong case for a well formulated and disciplined physical education program. Since chapter four has described the arrangement and management of space and time of physical education activities in three schools. This chapter primarily traces the relevance and unique aims of Physical Education program; which are a) it is established research based area ,b) act as reference for other institutions and, c) relevance of ‘learning from body’ that participants mentioned. The Mother has detailed the philosophy of the program in her volume on Education (1950/2002). She had also personally supervised the development of the present program at the Ashram in its initial phases. The program since its inception is for the inmates and the children at SAICE, while LB and AID were developing an centralized and organized program.

All three schools have a regular physical education program; Physical Education Department (henceforth: PED) at the Ashram is the oldest, centralized and compulsory program unlike in the other two schools.

The Physical Education program had various conspicuous norms and adherence to time and spaces. This was a shift from the freedom to learn, to choose, to argue and to move in different spaces over the time for the teachers and students to a more space-time specificity. The chapter therefore, at the outset explains aims of physical education program as reflected in the program as ‘official and published’ sources and the unofficial sources as the interpretation of the practices by the participants. It then explains the concept of ‘groups’ for division of participants to organize them. The organization in the sports was similar to how classrooms were divided as chapter six explained it. Subsequently the chapter explains few unique features of the program. The focus is not only to master the various sports activities but to develop ‘body awareness’ and consciousness of the body.

The chapter takes into account ‘meaning’ of these physical activities for the students, the teachers, and the challenges faced by them. This information was part of the natural occurring conversations. Individuals mentioned the activities they participated in or watched others doing it. They also described the events during sports to each other and even to the researcher. The reflections were also during the interviews (of ex-students), if any participant

mentioned specially about their experience of physical education program, which they considered as ‘unique’ feature of their education at the Ashram.

The Two Programs: PED and *Dehashakti*

PED’s Program has well organized components of the program. Several mentions have been made about the program. Bressonⁱ mentioned in his dairy, when he visited the Ashram about the Ashram inmates doing gymnastics and dressed in uniform for their sports activities. He describes that a Gymnastics program in India was a remarkable achievement even in pre-independent times. The same is true for India in contemporary times. Reading the lines from Bresson’s diary indicated that the department had maintained its status as the Ashram program invoked the same feeling in me at the first sight in 2003. Children and adults are ready in their uniforms for the sports program and on move to reach their respective venues. This is a regular feature of life at Pondichéry for more than seven decades.

There was stipulated and organized timetable of various sports activities for a year. (See Annexure 7.1) PED has a special ‘research’ wing with main aim to study the health and physical activity of individuals. The research was mainly meant for the department’s growth and was not shared with larger audience or as the field addressed ‘outside’ world.

The students at SAICE shared their awareness of PED as one of the best programs and with well-maintained and organized infrastructure. A student who was studying at SAICE mentioned, when I appreciated the Gym and its equipment:

“...this was supposed to be the best gym of India, when it was made.”
the gym was flawlessly maintained, the condition of instruments was good even if the gym does not have AC. the instruments were in good working condition and neatly kept. I observed various individuals of different age groups using different instruments.

Into bs/ Sep2012/ Gymnasium at the Playground/ student of graduate program

Dehashakti (ref: Annexure 7.2) also draws on the aim of physical education that the Mother has stipulated which even the Ashram follows. The rationale behind *Dehashakti* is to ‘work’ (that is, to improve) on the body for its perfection and growth, which is also the central aim of Integral Yoga. The practical aspect is also to ‘organize’ the activities for the body. The program is mainly for the children and participation of adult is only as the sports coaches. Many similarities could be observed in the two programs for example, importance of food for the body, division of groups etc. The common point of contention was the regularity and

essentiality of a physical education program. This argument enriches the debate on the education of body and relation of body and mind, as the subsequent sections would highlight.

Division of Groups: Basis, Rationale and Practices

The children were divided into group primarily age wise but group division also involved the ‘capability’ and ‘performance’ of the individual. The groups at the Ashram have been alphabetically arranged and addressed likewise or at times addressed by the color of shorts assigned to each group.

- Group A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5- three years to 11 years [green shorts]
- Group B1, B2- 11 to 18 years [red shorts]
- Group C- 18 years plus girls [Grey shorts]
- Group D- 18 years plus males [Grey shorts]
- Group E- 21 years plus females till 50 (the Ashram inmates) [Khaki shorts]
- Group F- 21 years plus males till 50 (the Ashram inmates) [Khaki shorts]
- Group G- old females [white shorts]
- Group H- all old males [Dark blue shorts]

Each group had captains. Captains are individuals those who have outstanding performance in sports and can act as leaders. They have olive green color uniforms. They led their group during March Past (discussed in chapter 5).

Group allocation followed one stipulated norm of age and two other norms. These were, ‘group strength’ that is, number of individuals in a group and ‘individual’s physical strength.’ Interactions with two senior captains and several students revealed the latter two norms about which the publications are silent. These norms were trends which were equally strong as the written policy. These trends also tend to contradict the central idea of grouping as indicated in the opinion of two captains. One of the captains suggested changing the practice of following the number strength in a group while grouping the students. This would help follow the ideals of grouping effectively. Another captain opined

<i>“it is (grouping fixed as per number) an impediment but most of the other captains seemed to function like this.”</i>
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Int/ Sep 2012/ SAICE/ group captain & researcher
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General opinion revealed that groups in Physical Education were not formed on a logical argument of physical strength and performance of the students, which ideally should be the criterion of division. As a result some division in the group could not be justified. However, there was no resentment for the system or individuals, added the captain, “*here you can’t change anyone, and everyone is free to do what they want to. But one can try and should try (to suggest the changes).*” However, the concepts like division to organize individuals facilitated and sometimes acted as impediment in the school. Many participants like this captain and students felt that there is a need to revisit these concepts and need not follow it the way it had been.

Each group was further divided into division as the last chapter showed based on performance of the participant. These divisions at PED were relevant during the competition seasons.

Coaches at *Dehashakti* also followed age wise and capability wise division of students. As a result each group had children of same age group from other schools of Auroville too.

Capability of a child was a criterion to re-group the child in higher or lower group. However, the group formation and their attendance were not strict like PED. The adults were not part of the groups at any point not even the older group as in case of groups C and D at the Ashram. However on other platforms and organized sports events of Auroville, adults and adolescents interacted together; for example, team sports like Frisbee and Auroville Marathon which in an international event.

At the AID it was a class of similar age group that used to play together rather division across the age. The age group 9, 10 and 11 years I observed that the boys and girls played together. The concept of division on basis of ability was not so overt here most likely due to different objective of the program and not being part of a centralized program. The annual sports event at the AID put children, teachers, and volunteers together in various games like tug-of war, races to name a few. For the other two schools the interaction of different age groups was during the competition season, which would be discussed in subsequent section.

Virtues of commands and uniforms

At *Dehashakti*, the group’s identification was the color of the jacket that they wore on their t-shirts. Organizing team at *Dehashakti* had also developed following commands in Sanskrit with an ex-student, who is now an *Aurovillian*,

Ekta- at ease

*Poornata-*attention and

Shakti- ready for

PED had developed commands in French since its initial days. While the AID was free from this symbolism.

Before a group's activity begins or dispersed after the activity was over, there was a minute's silence called as 'concentration'ⁱⁱ, the children, coached and even the audience stood in complete silence. The captains blew the whistle and the group members collected at one place and stood in complete silence. This was the practice at the Ashram and at LB.

The practices of 'uniform' and 'commands' were idea borrowed from Army. However, the practices were much relaxed than an Army's regimented discipline. 'Discipline' and 'regularity' are essential qualities to train the body and were initiated with uniforms and commands. The notice at the main Ashram premises (where the Samadhi is) about the uniforms stated to respect the uniform and do not move in public places with the uniform. The practices were basically to inculcate discipline and regularity for the physical development only; as there was no uniform in the schools.

The competitions

Excelling was also the virtue which was an expectation for group activity all the year round and more conspicuously during the 'competition season'-

"...the yearly schedule is divided into four seasons during the first three, there is a period of training followed by competitions."

(The Mother on Education, 2002, p. 255)

The Mother used to give messages for the competitions (the Mother on Education, 2002, p.273 & 274). Any one of these messages was written on the board during each competition seasons at the Sports Ground.

PED, The AID, and LB had a unique program that made it compulsory for everyone to participate in range of activities and at the same time 'excel' in each one of it. As we would see that competitions and records mostly in case of PED were examples that implied each individual to 'excel'.

Various Aims of the Programs

The vision of the programs is rooted in the philosophy of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo but aims and objectives have evolved with program in course of time with its participants. The

objectives could be seen from mainly three perspectives. First are the words or works of the Masters as theoretical principles, the written objectives, and the presentations/ performances. These reveal both 'said' or 'official', and 'unsaid' or 'unofficial' objectives of the program. Third is the participants' experience or discussions about the program

Physical Education program at SAICE has a long history. 'History' implies its genesis, evolution of physical spaces, objects, activities, literature, and formulation of various norms general and specific to each sports' activity to refer to. Centralization of physical education as compulsory area added to life of the school and resulted in the individuals engagements, awareness exploration of 'body' and training for the same.

LB formed part of the centralized effort to organize sports of Auroville while the AID followed its own program. These two schools were relatively new and had few coaches, less resources at one place in order to run an organized sports program like PED at the Ashram. Therefore, Schools in Auroville might not have come up with a centralized department with a compulsory program for everyone and records or publications as PED. A relevant point here is that the choices of various physical education activities available to an Individual were more at Auroville (Annexure 7.3). Only these were not 'centralized' and 'regularized' as compulsory set of activities for all the Aurovillians. The features of two programs with similar vision and wide range of activities acted as relevant example of two accepted manifestation of the same vision.

The 'official' aims

In the physical demonstration program (on December 2nd, 2012) presented the history of PED's establishment. The program highlighted the individuals and their efforts involved, the time each activity was started and stories involved with it. Its long history and number of individuals associated with it has resulted in publications about the program, literature, records and a department for research. The publications reveal three major aspects and indicated at the ideas of: physical fitness, overall health and character building (Bhattacharya, 1992). To quote the expectation from a Physical Educator:

"A Physical Educator must have a high Ideal....put his Ideal in actual practice, be guided by it at every step, and must be able to infuse this Ideal into his students."
(Bhattacharya, n.d p.1)

Other Publications by the department describe the components of physical education program that is, tests, exercises, and the words of the Masters on the importance, care and role of body by the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. To Quote,

“Do not forget that to succeed in our yoga one must have strong and healthy body. For this, the body must do exercise, have an active and regular life, work physically, eat well, and sleep well.”

(The Mother, 1971/2004, p. 136)

“The basic programme will be to build a body, beautiful in form, harmonious in posture, supple and agile in its movements, powerful activities and resistant in its health and organic functions.”

(The Mother, 1953/2002, p.50)

The publications on tests and fitness (Annexure-7.4) are important indications of official and notified norms expected from the human body in the Ashram as per the age and sex. Other publications from the Ashram Press especially the bulletinⁱⁱⁱ and ‘sports magazine’ (the Sports Spirit) were circulated mainly in the centers (based on the ideas of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo). Therefore, research wing and reference to the functioning and program of PED were mutual. The circulation was among the group and also outside the group.

The norms of body’s fitness and being able to carry out certain activities in particular way and time find their place in the expectations held by the participants in unfolding of events in everyday life. For example, one was expected to know about (yoga) *Asanas* group or visit a masseur, certain exercises or video to strengthen the body or recover from the injury. As a result, participants also suggested me to join the group of women for yoga *Asanas* to keep the body fit. Or there were other suggestions to visit a particular departments or individuals for advice to cure any injury. The exercises, individual expertise and the departments were ‘norms’ of fitness that an average individual should consult whenever the requirement was there, in case of general fitness or in case of an injury.

Norms: recorded, notified, and analyzed

Norms held a different relevance in PE program. These were more specific, measured in standard form and displayed giving it the status of ‘official’. The meaning of norms is drawn here from three kinds of observations in the field namely: records, display of information on the notice boards and published papers. These formed part of official records while what students discussed, conflicts or changes that came up were part of ‘unofficial’ norms. Both

are norms since these were standards through which individual development of physical was viewed. Unofficial had more scope of critically analyzing the records or norms and hence render it 'dynamic'

Record means capturing, marking and preserving certain activity. It implies evidence of one's performance acting as flagship for others. Records are of different nature-

- displaying 'results' of current events,
- indicating records of Ashram (colloquially known as Ashram records) which included the best players in an event, especially individual events like athletics and swimming or winning teams in games and, third
- indicating the individual performance in games like basketball

Apart from records were the results of 'standardized medical or physiotherapy tests' and various other programs to study 'health' of Ashram inmates, students, and non-members. Few examples of the tests were: routine health checkup that is anthropometric, height, body weight, teeth, BMI test, and eyes. While adults underwent through a detailed and specialized health check-up required as per their age and gender.

The Notice Boards at Corner House, the mess for the students, displayed information for the students. The themes mostly displayed some information about food, health and exercise to take care of different body parts. These were recent addition at Corner House as per the inmates. The information signified researches on human body, food, wellbeing, and care tailored to provide information to the participants and invoke a sense of responsibility on their lifestyle.

The Main or the conspicuous (western) wall of the Corner House adorned two windows from which one can see the room where food was served. In between the two windows the space was painted black, one was used as Notice for information like, movies, PE program, matches to be watched during live telecast or recoding of some games and matches to name a few, and other had the message from the Mother or Sri Aurobindo written with the nice colored chalk (see: Annexure 7.5). Many participants and visitors reported to eagerly wait for the message. The message symbolized their reverence for the words and faith held in the self-emancipatory goal of the worldview.

Few researches at the Ashram also made a statement on the national norms of health fitness of young children. For example, a study was carried out on obesity level of children at

SAICE with respect to the different food eating habits due to regional affiliation was in order to make comment of 'growth' pattern of children in India. The research studied BMI and EC inferences as dependent variable indicating obesity. Independent variable was food along with confounding variables of regional background of different students. The study's attempt to develop a norm of the physical growth pattern was possible due to children of different regions in India studying at SAICE. There were similar studies that used different methods like 'cohort' analysis on developmental patterns of physical growth of group members of PED (Virani, 2005).

Many institutions and schools attempted to understand and implement the physical education program. During fieldwork, many individuals visited Corner House as part of their visit to the PED. One of the schools from northern part of India had brought its teachers and students to experience the physical education program, one of the PED in charges told me that they were planning to work out a course for the children and teachers. On another occasion, teachers from a school in Mumbai had come specifically to observe the PE program. During their visit, they visited all the three grounds, ate at the corner house (the mess for the PED members) and interacted about the program.

However, the program was of interest mainly to those who wanted to establish this kind of program at their institutions. These individuals could get an overview of the program mainly through observations and interactions if not participation. Participation in the program was severed for outsiders; as it requires special skills and awareness of unique aims which everyone may not be aware of (as the subsequent sections would explore). In rare instances, there was 'participation' of the experts to discuss techniques or international standards of different games.

In order to conclude the discussion till now about the program at the Ashram and to some extent LB or the AID, one can say that at the level of individual development the program offered a very structured and organized physical education that targeted both body's as well as mind's learning through the body (subsequently explained in the chapter). The body underwent the mechanical training, with participants' individual interpretations, reflections of records, literature, and publications. Medical Tests added to the information and awareness of the participants purely at the physiological level. The program was compulsory and coupled with other aspects of health. There were less probability of an individual student

(or an adult) missing it all together especially at PED. There were also other strong features of the program that emerged, which are described herein.

Participation of various age groups

The group division at PED allowed adults of wide age group to play together. During ‘the competition seasons’ four times in a year, there was an interesting feature of observation when the Ashram inmates including teachers competed with the older age group of SAICE. It was C group and older women in competitions and similarly D group (boys- as they were referred) and older men in competition. It was a rare event to watch participation of wide age group, and teacher-student relationship during the events.

At Auroville similar interaction were possible but not at *Dehashakti*. This was an example of ever ‘learning ability’ reflected at sports program at PED, ‘juggling’ and ‘Frisbee’ at LB at Auroville. The Ashram inmates, who joined as adults, were also keen to learn the techniques of various sports and also participate in the competitions. Males and females in their late thirties or forties spared extra time to get coaching in athletics and participate in the ‘competitions’ with D and C group students.

As mentioned earlier that the main motivation was to compete and perform their best rather to be in the best division and set records. C group captain and a friend also mentioned the idea to learn at a later age. During observation of a volleyball match when I asked her about hitting the ball and said, “*I don’t think I would be able to learn ever, to which she added that all the ashram inmates who join late, learn, so can I.*” On another occasion [in September 2012] I was told by a woman who joined Ashram in later stages, (when I was observing them during their competitions) that

<p><i>“...come” (gesture to call me) and join them on the tracks. She motivated me to come and run with them. She was similar age of mine. I told them that I am not allowed on the tracks since I am not an Ashramite, to be part of athletics competition.</i></p>
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<p>Int/sep2012/Sports Ground/ thirty year old Ashram inmates & researcher</p>

There was also vibrancy and ‘awe’ with which many participants and audience reacted especially when older age group outshone the youngsters.

One of the teachers commented

The good thing about this place is that when in day we sit and teach these students, in evening we guide them for sports. We eat here (at corner house) and discuss other things with them. there is another challenge that in the evening we sometimes compete with them. it gives us a unique relation.

Int/ May 2011/ Corner House-SAICE/ researcher and middle aged teacher

Teacher and student spent time at different occasions and spaces to learn but sports events brought them closer. As an extension of this unique adult-child interaction, there was interaction among wide range of age group of adults during the competitions.

Physical Education program: Compulsion or discipline?

At SAICE the inmates of the Ashram and students participated in the program all-round the year with exception for the students during the vacations. While at the other two sites the Aid and LB, the coaches faced major challenge to convince the students to play all the games and not just choose one. Centralization of sports and its being a compulsory area is also an issue that Auroville debates about. For example, 'do students need to be at one place and do compulsory sports or can they do what they like in Sports?' The coaches at LB not only had problem convincing students but often the parents questioned that if the physical education was important to be followed in a compulsory regime. The issue was constantly in debate at LB and contested during the fieldwork.

These **two reasons** that is, a defined physical education program and history of PED were discussed extensively at *Dehashakti* (where LB students went for the physical education program). Team member of *Dehashakti* felt that, "*the way physical education program is (compulsory and range of the activities) at the Ashram, it is essential feature of Integral Education and must be same at Auroville as well.*" The parents however held different view and at times were in conflict in the need and strong adherence in following of physical education program like PED. There were parents who were in favor of the argument of *Dehashakti* team members to follow a compulsory and organized program. The nature, content and essentiality of the sports program for physical education remained contestable as the issues discussed in chapter four under 'regularity of the sports'.

On the contrary away from all debates the children at AID slipped into their uniforms after the school around 3 pm and played without any interference from homes. As researcher

participated with them at the field, there were issues interpersonal, of physical strength and emotional they were resolving among each other rather interference from their homes.

Body and Sports: the Relationship

The episodes of descriptions were about an aspect of body by the individual for his/her or another body, their emotions during the game and skills or technique of the game. The description of body was with respect to sports activity, aesthetics and injury. Integral View's development of 'Body Consciousness' was also different from what an athlete or sportsperson would have, insisted teachers and some ex-students

-----he told how here their bodies have suppleness, which bodies 'outside' do not have. He said we have something about in our bodies here due to the physical education program...he said he can't find a word for it, (he meant suppleness). For spiritual development all is required -do this, do that. Every bit of all the things, the Mother has created that system. He told me that there happen to come a world class gymnast here, despite sports we(Ashramites) are much below their (gymnasts) standard but he said the way he(gymnast) ran was unusual, his body was not in correct posture or style of running.

Int/ May 2011/ Corner house SAICE/ researcher and sports captain

It is evident from the statement from this interaction that the program rendered their bodies a unique form and energy what could be vaguely termed as 'suppleness'. It's a rather complicated perspective to understand that focus of the program is 'body' and at the same time excelling in different activities. The latter is a means to an end and not an end in itself. Therefore if one excelled and worked on body awareness and consciousness it involved at the same time on one's emotions and thoughts. Excelling in physical sports was coupled with control of emotions and playing in fair manner. That was a major point stressed at SAICE and mentioned as strength of the program.

However, students and other inmates had to struggle with their emotions while playing. An observation of the same:

During one of the basketball match which was crucial between Div I (best) players of Group D, I sat among audience with one of the ex-student to watch the match. Her son Avinash was playing the game/ (I was always happy to have someone since I liked that someone explained to me what was happening in term of technicality of the game.) The students were playing a crucial match. It was tough and strong competition from both the sides, as we enjoyed the good shots or baskets from both the sides. The student who was maintaining the score board here has to stand up faster than the score keeper in the adjacent court.

Five fouls in basketball game means the player is out of the game, as we watched the game we saw the Avinash, who is a good player but due to fouls (his anger) during a crucial point he was out of the match. The team which was about to win suddenly had one less player and there was a possibility that team would lose the match. We were critical of Avinash's behavior who being a good player landed up doing fouls and was out of the match. The ex-student, a mother was critical of the behavior of young boy and I could empathise with her opinion.

Ob-Int Sep2011/ Basket Ball court/ Sports Ground/the players, spectators, researcher in conversation with ex-student who is a mother and her child is playing.

The ex-students also referred to nostalgic moments of holding the ball, playing, and reporting of yearning to be part of it the whole event again. Losing temper and getting hostile was something that player often reported and wanted to work upon.

Sudha who just finished her course is sitting next to me in the volley ball court. She said that she would love to play the game and added, "I wish I don't scream or hit anyone". She is nostalgic as for a moment as she hold the ball, when the ball came out of the court and she has to throw it back. She shared her reminiscences of playing games in this field and was sad that she could not play now.

Obs-int/ sep 2011/ Sports Ground, the Ashram/ ex-student and researcher

Playing games, the techniques, records, and controlling their emotions during the games were part of the memories of many students. Most of the students were eager to play games if given a chance out of their busy schedules.

In order to deal with their emotional reaction of the players, the jokes were part of the interactions and observations. I cite a referee (sports coach and captain) who cracked a joke on one of the players. Since the player, an Ashram inmate had not been able to control anger during the game

“oh! That’s another sadhana to play the game in the same manner for past thirty years! ‘L’ has scared the referee away with her anger... due to her screams and accusations. I am sure the referee (another ashram inmate) won’t turn up again.”

Int/ sep 2011/SG/ ex-student & researcher

The joke was tongue-in-cheek over the fellow playmate who often lost temper in field, which was definitely not an acceptable behavior in the game.

The last two observations indicated that how organized game(s) involved playing in fair manner with self-control. The real purpose of sports is also achieved, when an individual is conscious about the weak point as a player and it is not only the skill which one needs to play the game technically but emotion that controls the player during the game. The emotion motivated them to play and acted as an impediment as well.

These remarks of participants need to be understood in the expectations of PE program at SAICE. PE program at SAICE has objective of perfection of body, expanding one’s capacity/ ability, improvement in skills and a fair play. The program and captains were strict about inmates playing it in a fair manner and expected individuals to challenge their own or other’s records.

In many cases it was not the choice of the individual to excel in comparison with others but to improve his/her own standards, this was in sync with the objective of the program.

However since competitions were also part of the program, many individuals interpreted the purpose was to motivate rest of the students to excel others.

In interaction with two of the D group boys who tried to perform in all the required competition yet did not hold any record or position.

Boys remarked they were happy that they did well from what they did last time. An adult remarked that they were not competing as per their best level, to which the boys clearly asserted (in discussion with me) that competitions are for their own improvement and not mainly to compete with others. The boys avoided saying so to that adult that this is not the goal of the program here.

Int/June 2011/ SG the Ashram/ students 18 years old and researcher

One of the students in an interview mentioned on the issue of breaking the Ashram records in sports “...*I knew my strength and I never went that ahead...*”(and getting seriously injured) These responses reflect that there could be expectations from the participants to excel while they formed their own opinion. These responses are only glimpse of several other views that might be there in the field and need to be studied.

Response to injuries or an illness

Injuries were common either due to sports at all the sites or sometimes due to nature because of certain varieties of caterpillar, scorpions. Both were part of school culture, and so was medicine, exercises as per the nature of injury. This section describes nature of injuries with reference to different age groups of people and how they dealt with it. Injuries due to sports were most common at SAICE, these were also there at LB and the AID. LB as school also had injuries due to caterpillars, snakes or scorpions; none of them was fatal till the fieldwork continued.

Injuries due to sports as mentioned above were the most common, and discussions and treatment for these were found many times at the most informal places. For example, there were interactions outside the corner house, when the group activities at the Play Ground had finished; or when the school finished or during or after the lunch in the corner house. During one such meeting we sat in the corner house after finishing the meals, and one senior teacher, an Ashram inmate member of Group E comes and asks a coach (who is an ex-student too).

“There is injury in the foot” reports the teacher. The coach asks, “how did it happen? Where is it hurting?”, and then immediately suggests her, “to heal it first before you go for the physical activity.” Further suggestion is to stretch it so the pull occurs where the injury is and it cures it. The basic stretch at foot is meant to cure the pull in the muscle.

The coach is not trained in physiotherapy in formal sense, but has his own method because of his experience to heal, and is popular among students and teachers to heal the injuries.

Obs/March 2011/corner house SAICE/ Coach and students

This was the first time when the injury, its healing and its presence in everyday life at SAICE was striking. After that there were often discussions about injury and healing it. Not all injuries were alike, some required immediate medical aid, on one occasion there was a discussion that if the child was hurt during group hour and require medical aid, where the child should go?as dispensary closed at 4.30. After two days a notice was put on Ashram

notice board section meant for PE notices that in case of injury during group hours one can contact the doctors at (the Ashram's) nursing home.

Another form of injury to the body was because of the various fauna in the natural environment. The insect bites at LB were quite common, itchy caterpillar^{iv} would often crawl on a child's skin and they would rush to the office. Most of them were now scared of itchy caterpillar. The injury from the hairs of the caterpillar was quite itchy and the skin would get rashes. The remedy for itchy caterpillar was to apply *Apis* a homeopathy ointment or local treatment to apply salt and bear the pain. Children also tried to use cello tape to use as strip on skin to pull out the hair of caterpillar. This never stopped the children from exploring other insects and holding them from *birbahutis* to colorful lady birds and other local varieties of insects (which were not harmful). The children would often carry these insects on their hands or to the class, would appreciate the color and will keep on holding it for the sheer joy. However, on another occasion children needed to face the fear:

....a scorpion has stung a young girl, she was crying and other children equally concerned brought her to the office. The office and teachers were relaxed since scorpion bite is not fatal and there was some medicine in the office for the same. The teacher attended to her with calm and poise and told her there is nothing to worry.

Int/ Nov 2011/ LB/ 7 years old child & researcher

The girl though is strong about injury at sports otherwise, on another occasion I saw her lying on the ground.

I- Why don't you go and eat your food Mausami (M)?

M- No! I don't feel like eating, my stomach hurts (she is little low, but in control of herself)

I- Are you sure? Eating will help you, may be you have not eaten anything?

M- No its not that. I hurt here (pointing towards her stomach) yesterday at sports. So I don't feel like eating.

I- OK. Do you think you need a doctor?

M- No, I think I will be all right. (she moves and climbs up the tree, sulking a bit)

She loves animals especially the geese and dogs and is not scared of them, which many children are since geese sometimes have tendency to run after a human to attack.

Int/ August 2011/ LB/ eight years old child & researcher

In all the observations, the fear because of injury was discouraged or not addressed to. Some individuals were naturally calm and more prepared to deal with the injuries and others learnt it as part of the culture.

Injury: Healing or escaping?

Illness or Injury often meant for children off from the group activities at SAICE, escape from group or to go to nursing home. These were rare occasions at SAICE but discussed widely. Two of the coaches complained that these days 'hospital group', (where children went when they were injured while group activities were scheduled) is good escape for children and they are happy being there. *"in our days it was shame to be in dada's group or hospital group. But these days children are proud to be there."* there did not have any solution, but were sharing their opinion on being part of *dada's* or hospital group. There were often discussion for weaker bodies and contemporary times, the reason was often the affluence that had come in the community and brought change in dietary intake, availability of television, video games and internet.

However, there were responses contrary to this view about injury and healing. A student shared his/ her opinion in an interview on being part of *dada's* group's:

A student could not take part in the competition and had to go to 'hospital group'. he realized that how being at hospital group and doing different exercises with apparatus or follow a program helped him discover strength in various body parts which was not possible by being part of regular sports activities.

Scaffolding this observation is another episode at the gymnasium

<i>After the students assembled and did the concentration for two min; the captain of the group asked each student to do exercises meant for that individual to strengthen the required body part. The student went to do the desired activity for a particular body part and then came back to take more suggestions from the coach. The coach explained this was the time when many children paused and took interest in their own physical development.</i>
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Obs/ Sep 2012/ SAICE gymnasium/ students of age groups 14-20+

This turned out to be positive for many students as they confirmed with me the coach's opinion. Students found it useful and important learning about their body. However, the participants also said that the body learns through compulsion, and observing it. These are challenging areas of human development where mind plays a role to understand the body and its behavior. Experiments like these how so ever contentious in terms of their departure from

the mainstream, these are fruitful to enlarge our view about certain concepts like, in this case it is body and its learning.

Food: Spaces, Occasions and Relevance

Food was an identifying feature of life at these institutions and relevant theme for physical development. There were centralized arrangements of providing food both at the Ashram and Auroville. Dining room and Corner house at the Ashram served food to all the inmates. All the *Ashramites* were provided with three meals breakfast, lunch and dinner. Breakfast included bread, milk or curds and *dalia*, sometimes sprouts, cheese or butter, bananas. In lunch and dinner, it was boiled vegetables and dal, sometimes-special chick peas or *khichdi*. The food was meant for *Sadhaks* and was not meant to be eaten for taste. There were occasions when sweets were distributed or someone offered packets of dates or raisins or cashews.

The Mother started the corner house for students. It is a huge building at the corner of *rue Law de Lauriston*. (see: Annexure 3.1) This place provided food to teachers, students and PED members. It also served non-vegetarian food items mainly chicken or mutton, which was prepared occasionally. Egg was provided every day in the breakfast, along with milk (or curds sometimes). However, it was optional for the participants to take non-vegetarian items. Apart from this students also ate at home, but they were not allowed to visit any restaurants outside. This was a much debated point and questioned by older students. They were allowed to go in two restaurants run by Ashram: the Cottage and Ganesh. These two did not serve non veg and few other items which are available in the market. However, Pondichéry being a tourist town offers multi-cuisines options like, Italian, French, south Indian, Chinese, Organic some of which is really authentic and nice preparation. This was one of the rules which implied disciplinary action for the students and few students often flouted it or discussed it as an ‘unfair’ treatment met out to them. The various arguments that students gave:

*“Oh! The crowd is better than what is there at the two restaurants of the Ashram.
The food is even better and service!
We have to go with our parents, families and friends.
When we can go in the same restaurants during vacations why not during the time school is on.
I can get a free home delivery and still eat the same food”*

Various places& time at SAICE/ students of age group 14+

During the fieldwork, I found numerous occasions when children ate food outside and rare occasions when there was any action taken for the same. However, for several other rules strict action was taken, such as for not attending the physical education group. This debate could not be resolved. A simple issue of food and rule associated with it for the discipline of physical health became complicated.

Similarly, Auroville has ‘solar kitchen’ which gave two meals to *Aurovillians* and also to visitors on some payment. The experience of food at the solar kitchen and restaurants of Auroville was an opportunity to experience multi-ethnic, organic cuisines. The solar kitchen also provided food to the schools. The AID and the LB both did not like the food and hence, there were experiments.

The cooking experiments

The school LB also had scope for experiments of cooking, which were insightful about food as cultural concept at Auroville, about children’s like and dislike.

I started my English class with 11 and 12 years old, with a lesson on Avial, a dish from Kerala. We decided we will cook. Since recipe was difficult to follow, we kept on postponing it. However often other teachers and classes will cook something and it would be available, mostly dishes from Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Andhra or Bengali. Once with Dragons (the oldest age group) we decided to cook khichdi after reading a story Birbal’s khichdi. A South Indian version of North Indian khichdi is salted Pongal, but still we as the class decided to go with the experiment, we cooked moong dal khichdi. I found the children two Tamilians and one mix French and Italian were motivated to learn mainly because of two reasons- first most of the children never liked the food given at school, they wanted change. And second to cook something from North India was a new experience for them, Initially they just wanted to cook a small portion, then later on they decided they would like to share it with everyone in the school and not only teachers.

Cooking on other similar occasions was welcomed by all the children and the school. I could observe that children who otherwise appeared so reluctant to be in the class or to eat food, just liked new experiments. One of the experiment taken by another teacher was to make salad

Ob/ Part/ July 2011/ LB/ researcher and 12 years old

At the AID traditional Tamil food was served; the meals were cooked in the school for the teachers, students and all the help at the school. The children rejected the food that came from the solar kitchen. They wanted their traditional South Indian meal with rice, curds, salad, *rasam*, *sambhar* or *appalam*. The food was spicy to the taste of all children, gradually teachers from other parts of country or world have to develop this taste or move out from the space to eat somewhere else.

Sophiya a European woman, who was an Aurovillian and class teacher used to eat at school the traditional food. I enquired that how she manages this food, to which she said she has adjusted. Over some time she developed some loss of interest and we two decided to go to solar kitchen to eat the food.

Obs/ June 2009/ AID/ researcher &Aurovillian

Similarly, the parents of the only European child who studied at The AID had to go to solar kitchen for food since the food was too spicy for the child to eat.

The individual's taste and adjustment with the food was another challenge that one has to undergo. There were learning, adjustment, and conflicts over this. The Mother explains that training one's food habits is important part of physical education. The provisions for food at the field aimed to be simplistic in the form of centralized distribution of healthy food.

Participants however due to multiplicity of cultures and individual preferences did not rely on this function. Different experiences originated with reference to food, which indicated at complexity of individual's development of food habits. Collective cultural practices were more overpowering than the effort to make it simple and for the individual to be simplistic as well.

Conclusion: The Mind-Body Dynamics

The body and its education is more than a program for training for sports. Observations from the fieldwork reflected upon body as very important instrument and point of reference in 'life' in and around these institutions. The fieldwork was not drawn on any pre conceived idea of physical education or body narratives but tried to understand it the way it appeared in field of the participants. As mentioned in the publications, in physical training the role of teacher, will power and setting of goal was important. Forcing it on the student to excel with respect to fellow student was not part of the system, yet winning were important for many of them. The performance though objectively measured but the process or education relied on

the individual teacher and students' capability. The practice of the program gave rise to subjective world built around the practices.

Overlap of the domains

The idea discussed in this chapter also reflects overlap of domains that is, physical, vital and mental. It requires a wider understanding of human body to understand human nature and existence. It has important implications to human development and 'what develops'? The development in these programs is with reference to the body in terms of body consciousness and subjective experience of body about its capacity and capability. This view is different from the present view of Human Development that understands studies the body through 'maturation', 'growth' and studies the progress through biological basis. The concepts of maturity and growth of body facilitates development of language and intelligence is an often quoted example of interaction of domains. The overlap signifies that the growth of body is linked with the mind and mind is not separate from the body. Mind is involved in observing the body and its learning. this overlap of domain needs more elaboration through the experiences from the field.

Mind body unity

The body has always been subject to many interpretations especially in arts- body movement and non-verbal behavior even though mainstream psychology has not studied the complexity of physical development and learning through body. There are other interpretation of body that Urbancic, (n.d) brings to draw and argues for the relevance of human body to human's existence-

"....how the body acts as narrating agent through nonverbal communication, even in literary texts;becomes a historically fundamental narrative,may explain political events;is itself narrated by its socio-cultural environment." (P. na)

Theologians like Ladd (n.d.) studied the view of Mind body dualism and critically studied the New Testament view of Human body. Ladd questions the effect of Greek and Socratic view of man on theological (and psychological description) of what is it to 'be', a human. One can trace Cartesian dualism with the New Testament truth summarized in his famous line 'I think therefore I am.' Not only the body is subjugated but mind is held higher over the former. One can see that the mainstream education systems voice this dualism where learning through body is not of prime importance or divided extremely. Similar view of the mind body duality is voiced by Brinsmead (n.d.) and he reviews it's implication to the basic question of 'what

does it mean to be human?' He argues that the duality in theology sees human as soul which is 'related' to God, its religion, and social existence. The real value of man is in relation to his self which is possible when an individual studies 'self' in relation to the body.

The essence of learning opportunities for the body

The programs of physical education refuted the view of dualism by giving ample time and space to body. A compulsory Physical education program in these innovative programs firstly is based on importance and relevance of learning through the body. Secondly, it is not only healthy body and healthy mind, but it unearthed relation that exists between human body and mind and emotions. Health and fitness is important but field experiences extended human learning to getting involved with the body. A compulsory education program and daily consciousness of health and body control adds different dimension to the personality of individuals. There are several ways to do the same: Games, Athletics, Gymnastics, Gymnasium to correct the imperfections, heal the injuries, dance, body awareness programs and other form of exercises. These experiences have strong repercussions to the understanding of human beings since all humans live through this, till the time humans denounce the body through death^v.

Organized games in form of sports, athletics, and individual display in marks another dimension of human existence- team work, collective effort towards a common goal, and to excel. It has implications over discipline and control over the body in movement. And also control over emotions involved during the movements.

The nature of organized sports in modern times which is found in the Ashram (with its own ethos though) is meant for perfect the body, for competition and for simply pleasure. Von Karl Weule in Blanchard & Smith (1995) mentioned that sports have underlying element of pleasure for individuals who are playing. This element of pleasure was quite upfront at SAICE and AID to great extent at *Dehashakti*. The sports was not an activity that participants performed over there at particular space and time, but they discussed the body and its action on other forums both formally and informally at different time, spaces and also with participants that included the outsiders like me. The subjective experiences then formed unique aspect of 'learning through body' in these two worlds.

Endnotes

ⁱ Excerpts from the diary of Henri Cartier Bresson, the famous French photographer when he came to the Ashram in April 1950. the excerpts were displayed at an exhibition in Delhi in September 2012 at Alliance Francaise de Delhi.

ⁱⁱ The term in French was *rassemblement* meaning ‘gathering together’.

ⁱⁱⁱ Publication of Bulletin from the JSAS four times a year (on four main Darshan days Aug 15, Feb 21, Nov 24, April 24) were like report of events during that period. There were writings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo on various issues.

^{iv} A variety of LT Lepidoptera.

^v The present study limits the idea to these programs and do not share the details about experiences of old age, disease, illness or death as experienced in the field.

Chapter 8th

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this study was to bring forth the richness of ‘life’ based on an Innovative idea. Integral worldview of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, the two institutions the Ashram and Auroville (situated at Pondichéry, India) based on their ideas; and the three schools, which were part of the Ashram and Auroville are the main focus of the study. The research studied the schools with reference to the three pointers of the relation of Human Development and Education namely: domains, age, norms and learning. This resulted in theoretical enrichment of the primary objective of the study.

We mostly understand the Innovations as a departure or a separation from the mainstream. Birth of an alternative idea, establishment of institution and life forms (every day practices, rituals, formation of spaces and individual experiences) need to be understood, re understood over the time in order to formulate a ‘dialogue’ with the mainstream academic discourse. The research focused at the estuaries or borders where the two world of alternative, ‘inside’ and the mainstream, ‘outside’ world run into each other, separate and meet again; all at the same time.

The study used various ethnographic methods to collect data. Implications for the design were drawn from ‘multi-site’ and ‘multi-level’ ethnography. The method, which was initially observation and conversation only, became participation in various activities or events, informal/ formal conversations. The researcher also referred various publications by the Ashram and Auroville, distinctive items available in the field, and eventually conducted interviews to validate certain themes. The research design acknowledged the dynamism of life at the field and epistemological principles of Integral Yoga worldview, one of which is the synthesis of the reality. Therefore, analysis of data required special attention; that is, to view the various themes at these special experiments as indicators of an emergent viewpoint of Human Development and its relation with Education. The evolving viewpoint is a flag post of the ‘journey’¹ of these alternative institutions and relevant views for discourse on Human Development and Education.

Longer stay at the field at first allowed observing the annual rhythm of school, a whole cycle that schools and children underwent in a year. It was valuable to observe children graduating from one class to another. For example, I could see the advancement and growth children

made in terms learning language like French or their performance in sports over the period; it supported the developmental principle that development progresses from simple to complex. Issues like these helped me make further connection with the discourse on Human Development and Education. Other positive aspects were namely, access to information, trust and long-term association with the participants which might not have been possible during a shorter time.

Issues of Faith and Praxis: Three Experiments of Integral Education

The Integral Yoga worldview, its ramifications in the form of Integral Education and the lifestyle at the Ashram and Auroville are inspiration for many individuals and a conviction to regulate their lives as well. The individuals are part of the two institutions and visitors who belong to the world over. The different views of mainly teachers, students and parents had resulted in schools and their respective cultures. Schools held some common and few distinctive practices. In a way, the unique character of each school was preserved yet drawn from the basic model of Integral worldview and Education. The last two points once again strengthen two views: Individual freedom and multiple manifestations emanating from ‘oneness’ of reality as worldview of Integral Yoga indicates.

Chapter four reflected on the theme of schooling spaces and concept of time to organize learning experiences. Each school had its unique journey or story of acquisition, design and utilization of the school spaces. It made a strong case for value of ‘matter’ and ‘aesthetics’ which is stated in Integral Yoga worldview and schools adopted the educative aspect of the same. I do not conclude that all children or adults acquired the same values or were instilled with; the environment of class and schools were beautiful and individuals explored their relation individually. This research found that individuals in the field were not caged in the spaces but acted and created the spaces and crossed the set boundaries. This was more what Lefebvre in Simonsen (2005) describes as dialectical nature of individual body with the spaces. The boundaries were of space (physical), time and knowledge forms (both abstract) and individual’s action on the same. It becomes a learning being an educationist that how the students learnt a human behavior. By the time, I ended my fieldwork in 2012 the children at all the three schools had moved out from one schooling space to another. Movement of the children from these buildings conveyed qualitative changes for children in terms of various curricular and developmental experiences of thought, freedom and choices. Hence, to me it

was not only schooling that was happening in these buildings but also a change of human behavior with a conscious approach.

Chapter five highlighted the importance of rituals and practices that showed an individual in relation with the symbolism and values of the practices. However, most of these like *pranams*, Darshan visits etc had no strict pattern. Strict pattern in practices like the March Past held adherence to place, precision of act or movement and time. Participants were critical of the practices and were free to interpret their significance or relevance in their own growth. Few participants gave into the unquestioned essentiality of the practices; most of them followed their own relevant logic. For example, an old Ashram inmate commented that, he found the importance of Sri Aurobindo's presence at his Samadhi he asserted his belief as Sri Aurobindo has been laid to rest for 60 years. Each person like him had considerable freedom to imagine, express and practice. The collective 'self' was also evident in family patterns and the participants' volunteer work in the institutions. The identification with values mainly through voluntary work was through the lifetime. The adherence was both for those who joined the Ashram and for those who did not.

Chapter six and seven indicated that alternative implied organization of knowledge forms and norms of learning with reference to domains mainly mental and physical. The Vital and Psychic were implied and not stated overtly. Norms as expected learning outcomes took mainly two forms: written and oral. Physical Education and games had stricter adherence to written norms than practices in the classrooms.

The curricular practices implied organization of various learning opportunities without overt focus on disciplines; as a result the boundaries of knowledge areas and authority of 'disciplines' were naturally questioned. These were not completely done away with and some form (of Mathematics, Sciences and Languages teaching) was maintained. Teachers continuously organized field visits, talks and projects that made curriculum non-centric on 'discipline'. 'Integration' of curricular and non-curricular learning opportunities happened but not always with continuation of skills or knowledge in two activities. The continuation was implied and possible for children to grasp; especially in 'new' and 'contextual' knowledge areas like 'Aquarium section' and 'life sciences section' at LB.

In resonance with the basic model of Integral Education, 'physical education' found prominence in all three schools with essential debates about an ideal program of physical

education. It reflects a relevant and disputed theme of Human Development mind-body dissonance or the mind body unity. The research found support for the latter viewpoint and strong awareness in the whole cohort to use body as means of learning.

The child's individuality was more in focus in classrooms than in the sports. The sports program did not have choices as against the classrooms where the teachers accepted, analyzed and facilitated the child. However, in both the cases the teacher-student relation had important implication on traditional hierarchical role of adult-child. The teachers' authority was not unquestionable in classrooms but acceptable in the sports. However, in the sports the young or the old proved their mettle in competitions.

Porous boundaries of the two worlds

The two institutions the Ashram and Auroville are the departures from the 'mainstream' world, which the participants often referred as the 'outside' world. Howsoever 'firmness' the boundaries of the alternatives implied, in terms of gaining entry or becoming an Ashram or Auroville inmate. There were also exceptions to enter these worlds, to relate with the worldview, discover it with faith and get involved in the work. Substantial number of individuals came from the world to volunteer in various departments. Because of erection of the boundaries both physical and the rules, there were various categories of the participants. There were first level of category was of the Ashram inmates or Ashramites, Aurovillians, both were physically close to the institutes; next were aspirants, new comers, and lastly were devotees, guests or friends. Each category or individuals formed their association as they found entry into the 'enclosed' or 'inside' world of these two institutes. Individual's interest, capability to work or even destiny as they narrated in their stories affected their type of entry into the institutes including the schools.

Apart from these there was a category of individuals who formed their own 'world' around the Ashram or Auroville. For example, the visit to *Ambashankar*, a piece of land, I met an old gentleman by the same name as the land; dressed in his shorts with bare chest. His white hair formed the crest over his head and eyes were small but light within them oozed out without any aberration. He shared his teaching experiences when he used to teach at the Ashram school. At the time of the visit, he used to camp at various parts of India or at his piece of land at the beach across Auroville. Sometimes students or adolescents from Auroville came and helped me at his piece of land. He offered me some sweet tea with the

Ashram bread. The tea and bread were symbols of life forms at the Ashram available at this place, despite the land is physically away from the Ashram. There were similar examples of other individuals who explored and lived with their own set up around the Ashram and Auroville. Many such examples strongly added to the vitality and multiplicity of the phenomenon. Therefore, the field has layers of reality, but this fieldwork could uncover only certain of them. Individuals like cited in this example carried their own existential, physical and phenomenological world.

The outside world further interspersed the enclosure of the alternative worlds through large number of visitors or devotees, who visited for the spiritual retreats. The ‘trespassing’ was penetrating, when visitors or devotees shared their ideas in talks, exhibitions etc. At LB and the AID, there were workshops and presentations on storytelling, healing, dramas and dance programs. At SAICE, the number of the visitors was the largest. These were professors from Indian or Foreign universities or independent researchers, who shared their work. There were presentations by music maestros at both the Ashram and Auroville from the world over.

Therefore, in my interpretation these two esoteric worlds held their special character in almost all the forms, were quite restrictive at some places yet the boundaries were flimsy. In my opinion, this was the strength of these systems. Even though these two institutes were occupied and focused with the vision of the Masters, because of which they were often left out on the forum of mainstream discussionⁱⁱ on education in India. Still the alternatives in this field had given two major inputs. First, these boundaries which enclosed spaces and carried out their experiments allowed the ‘outsiders’ to participate at various levels. Second, they had formed ‘network’ of individuals, which formed a fraternity of individuals mainly students, friends and even the centers based on the Integral Yoga principles. As a result, there were affiliations, friendships, which formed a strong ‘networking’ of organizations and individuals. The networking facilitated exchange of various ideas and activities like art forms, pedagogy through study circles, discussions. Individuals then practice the ideas learnt or came out with publications. The collective ‘self’ due to Faith therefore, requires more elaboration and organized study.

Evolving Views for Human Development and Education

The views that emerge from the fieldwork are for an integrated, relational aspect of the Human Development and Education and even their respective conceptualization. Alternatives

protect and at the same time nurture the capability of individuals. I would say that the schools relied on domains, norms, age specificity to organize learning of individual child or even adult but this dependence was not in monolithic and exclusive manner.

- As elaborated in the review chapter, that the domains have more justified discussion in the works of the Mother. The data showed that all the domains were addressed in all three schools.
 - All domains are important for individual development. Overlapping of domains is important feature that should be the focus of study and not a single domain. Overlapping of domains can be linked to various researches in academics; mainly those, which study the affective aspect of cognition. This has been mainly studied as ‘motivation’ in learning. But it needs better conceptual analysis as the works of the Mother provides and also with better episodes.
 - The most innovative practice at the two institutions was linking of physical with mind and emotions. Researches and philosophy had especially discussed about it but it was commendable to find the idea in practice so simply and naturally at the two institutes.
- Norms about each domain of the outside world were in the form of textbooks, content of learning or rules in sports. The participants implemented these only after adaptation. The teachers made these norms suitable to the goals of learning of these two institutions. In some areas, norms were under reformulation. The case of *Dehashakti* and emerging possibilities of learning for body was clear example of this. The school at Auroville struggled whether they could redo the program of PED at the Ashram or the program would find its own ways in the choices of individuals. Individual, norms and collective formed a relational triad to understand the development.
- Students followed these activities at their own pace. This can be associated with the French Education system where focus is on the pace of learning of individual child. The policy also states that pace of the learning of a child is the decisive factor for his/her level or class or ‘cycle’ rather than the biological age.

- Learning was largely individualistic with many choices available to an individual child. The choices were more as children grew older. Age was an accepted and essential but not an absolute norm.
- The practices questioned the social norm of adult-child hierarchy. Most of the data showed adults especially the teachers analyzed their accepted roles as adults to guide the child.
- Children could move around, opine and made choices. Students made their individual timetable at SAICE in 'free progress' was clear example of this. At LB choosing the afternoon activity or older students chose to spend time at the high school in order to make choice for their future education program supported the argument that freedom as necessary for individual development.
- Individuals reported certain pressure of the small, closed, and experimental features of the two institutions. These were, managing linguistic ability in different languages, performance especially in the sports, and feeling incomprehensive and unsure about the 'outside' world. This raises certain doubts about what does development with reference to an institution imply as it might become totalistic if the individuals are not sufficiently conscious of the ideas behind it.
- Relevance of *Sadhna* as mentioned in Indian scriptures was a crucial indicator for individual development. *Sadhna* is an intricate and esoteric process which has helped many seers in different areas to give relevant knowledge about human existence. Where knowledge of various concepts or domains and existential issues almost go hand-in-hand. The idea has relevance for many individuals (even outside these two institutions) in regulating their learning and life. Places like the Ashram and the Auroville to great extent have achieved the application of *Sadhna* in real life issues and serious work on this could help the area of Human Development
 - Researcher in this context spent time with *Sadhaks* especially at the Ashram and even at Auroville. I found their life trajectories and work they did indicative of their understanding of life, self and education. An objective study of the lives and experiences of *Sadhaks* focusing on *sadhna* could be relevant.

- This might be more relevant with auto-ethnographic method where the difference between ‘self’ and the ‘experience’ of the phenomenon is less and would not flow through the ‘otherness’. The experience of other *Sadhaks* is useful only when even the researcher experiences his/her *Sadhna* and identify with *Sadhaks*.

Future thought and researches

Faith based or related organizations or missions multiply and erect ubiquitously. The researches quoted in chapter two are from the West and study mainly Christianity. However, in India not only we have many religions but also we have secular religions and spiritual movements like Integral Yoga and Integral Education. Each mission or religion could be understood better in the light of its vision before embarking upon the political, social and economic implications of the programs they have. A conjoint effort to understand an ideology or worldview in the light of its ideals and other variables of academics would be more relevant rather an study based entirely on the ideals or a study that bring in only variables of the academic discourse.

Future researches need to study the community outlook in detail with economic and human relations aspect of the community. The study found relevant data on management of funds, individuals issue with money and ‘no money’ policy of Auroville. All these would throw more light on collective aspects of human development in an experimental lifestyle. The study also found relevant friendship patterns, man and woman relations and even adult-child relation, which needed more in-depth study. A research completely from the view of children would be quite useful in answering how ‘child-centered’ innovation appears and how much it is in the child’s view.

A Final Thought: An Oasis in the Desert

In order to conclude about the various effects of Innovation drawn from the field work we would say that Innovations are thoughts, ideas, and theories formulated into practices, structures, and institutions initiated or mentored by the Masters and carried forward by the participants’ faith. Innovations and their special character is necessary since there is a place where one is relatively free from the current and over rising debates of hierarchy of economic, society and politics. These factors have valuable influence on curriculum as Apple (1976) has highlighted in his major work on Curriculum and Ideology. The individual or

material referred however, may not be completely free from these socio-economic and political undercurrents. Yet it might be still away from the ‘direct’ influence of the political and economic agenda of life. The visits from the experts from ‘outside’ and the participant’s zeal to change acted as conductors to lessen the error of hierarchy of any dominant view whether individualistic or collectivist in these experiments. However, in my view a debate or discussion within an individual with the process of *conscientization* or even among the individuals could be useful for: a) further growth of the new ideas, b) which are germinating, or c) others, which are thriving.

This research was a trail with faith about the practice of a worldview. The study is quite relevant for the ‘future’ and for the mainstream discussion about these experiments, their view of life, of human existence, of action, and of learning. The participants’ effort to practice might fall short of the ideals or as I would like to say they might ‘appear’ to fall short; but at the same time several other relevant practices emerged which the world view might have not visualized. Alternatively, in the case of Integral Worldview, which has left scope in the form of freedom for individuals to participate and create.

The future direction has strong elements of continuity of several ideals as faith and curricular related rituals and practices. It has scope of uprising of several new practices or thoughts as knowledge forms, several other centers and strong aspiration of better and new forms of such ideas. However, a ‘dialogue’ within and with the ‘outside’ world is essentiality of the contemporary times.

Endnotes

ⁱ An often shared view by the participants were that they (participants) were still ‘far away’ from the aims of Integral Yoga and yet to achieve them. Therefore, any research would be incomplete reporting with reference to the truth.

ⁱⁱ I felt this first time at the Inaugural address of an International Conference in India where stress was on Indian thinkers on education mainly Gandhi, Tagore and Krishnamurthy while Sri Aurobindo was not mentioned and nor were his Integral Schools.

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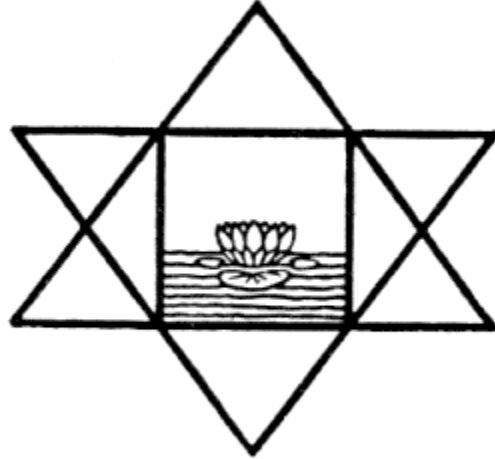
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ANNEXURE 1.1

Sri Aurobindo's Symbol



The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love.

The function of both - the central square - is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme - the lotus.

The water - inside the square - represents the multiplicity, the creation.



The descending triangle represents Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The ascending triangle represents the aspiring answer from matter under the form of life, light and love.

The junction of both— the central square— is the perfect manifestation having at its centre the Avatar of the Supreme— the lotus.

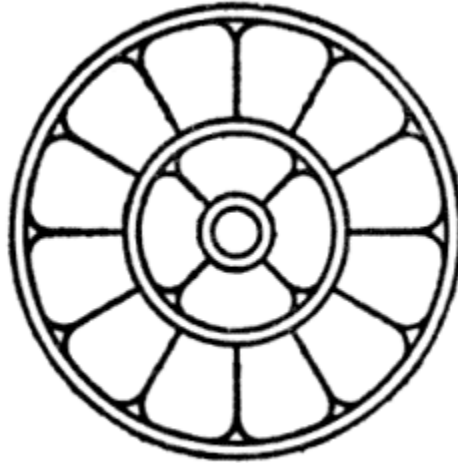
The water— inside the square— represents the multiplicity, the creation.

- The Mother

Source: <http://www.sriaurobindoashram.org/ashram/mother/symbol.php>

ANNEXURE 1.2

The Mother's Symbol



The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness.

The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother.

The twelve petals represent the twelve powers of the Mother manifested for Her work.

A stylized signature or flourish.

The central circle represents the Divine Consciousness.

The four petals represent the four powers of the Mother.

The twelve petals represent the twelve powers of the Mother manifested for Her work.

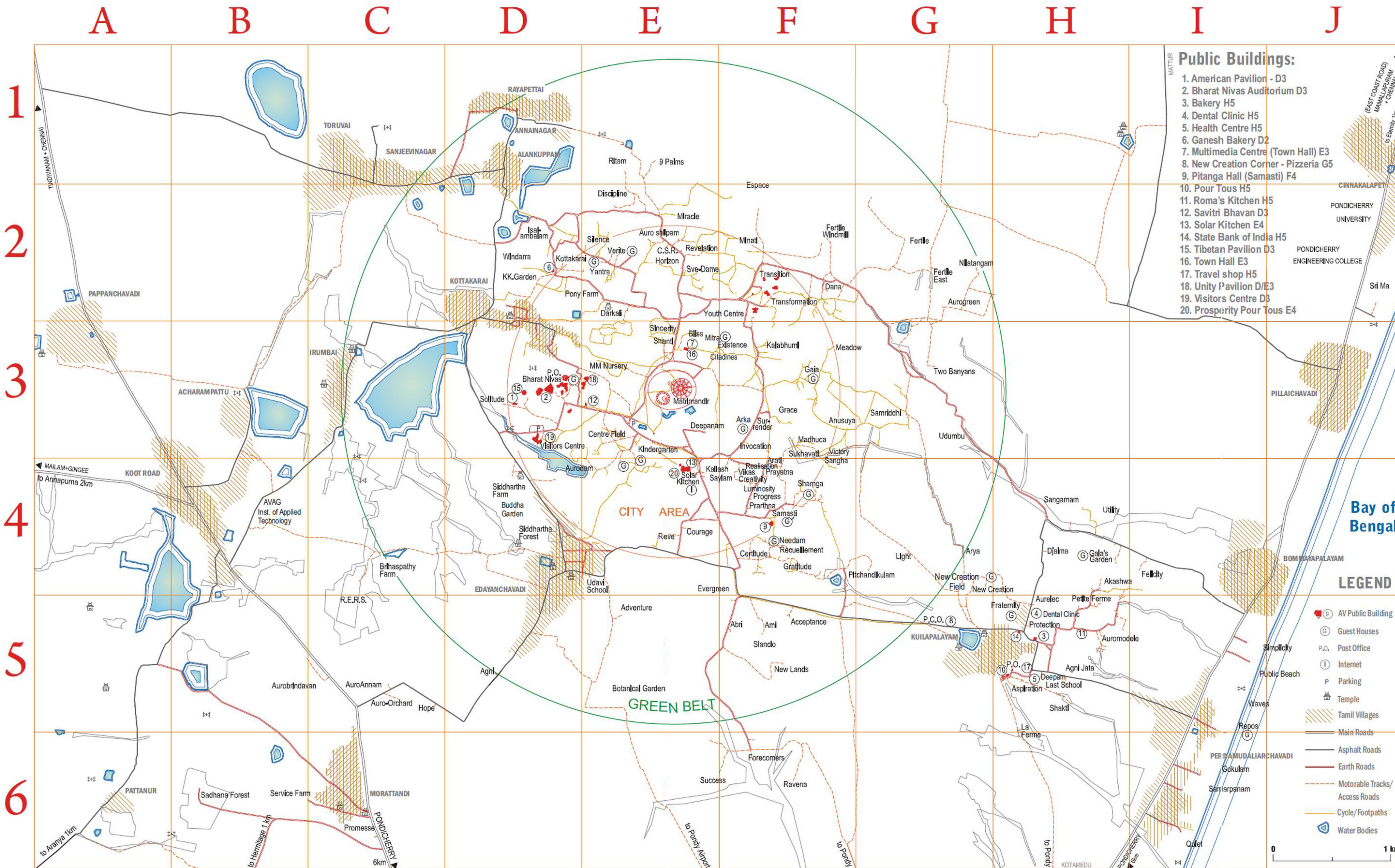
- The Mother

Source: <http://www.sriaurobindoashram.org/ashram/mother/symbol.php>

The Twelve Qualities of the Mother

Sincerity, Humility, Gratitude, Perseverance, Aspiration, Receptivity, Progress, Courage, Goodness, Generosity, Equality, and Peace

Map of Auroville Area



ANNEXURE 3.2 (a)

SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM

Founded in 1926, the Sri Aurobindo Ashram has grown, under the Mother's guidance, from a small group of two dozen disciples into a large diversified community with almost 1200 members. Counting the 400 students of the Centre of Education and the hundreds of devotees who live nearby, the larger ashram community consists of more than 2000 people.

Situated in a busy city of over 700,000 people, the Ashram is not a quiet place of retreat but a vibrant centre of life in a modern urban setting. The dynamic character of the community reflects the life-affirming aim of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. Work as an offering to the Divine is an essential aspect of the Yoga, and all Ashramites do a certain amount of productive work each day in one or another of the Ashram's departments.

In the sadhana or spiritual discipline at the Ashram, there are no obligatory practices, no rituals, no compulsory meditations or systematic instructions in Yoga. Sadhaks are left free to determine the course and pace of their sadhana in accordance with their own natures. But the general principle of the sadhana is the same for all: there must be a surrender to the Divine and an opening to the Divine Force so that it may work to transform one's being.

The Ashram is located in the eastern part of Pondicherry. Ashramites live and work in a large number of buildings spread throughout the area. The focus of community life is the Ashram main building, usually called simply "the Ashram", which consists of an interconnected block of houses, including those in which Sri Aurobindo and the Mother lived for most of their lives. At its centre, in a tree-shaded courtyard, lies the Samadhi, a white-marble shrine where their bodies are laid to rest.

The Ashram provides its members with all they need for a decent and healthy life. Various departments have been organised to look after the basic requirements of food, clothing and shelter, as well as medical care. There are also libraries for study and facilities for a variety of cultural pursuits. The Ashram is administered by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

Source:

<http://www.sriarobindoashram.org/ashram/saa/index.php>

ANNEXURE 3.2 (b)

Goals of Auroville



**Humanity is not the last rung of the terrestrial creation.
Evolution continues and man will be surpassed.**

Source: <http://www.auroville.org/vision.htm>

Auroville charter

1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville, one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

2. Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.

3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.

4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.

Source: <http://www.auroville.org/vision/charter.htm>

Dream

There should be somewhere upon earth a place that no nation could claim as its sole property, a place where all human beings of goodwill, sincere in their aspiration, could live freely as citizens of the world, obeying one single authority, that of the supreme Truth; a place of peace, concord, harmony, where all the fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his suffering and misery, to surmount his weakness and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities; a place where the needs of the

spirit and the care for progress would get precedence over the satisfaction of desires and passions, the seeking for pleasures and material enjoyments.

In this place, children would be able to grow and develop integrally without losing contact with their soul. Education would be given, not with a view to passing examinations and getting certificates and posts, but for enriching the existing faculties and bringing forth new ones. In this place titles and positions would be supplanted by opportunities to serve and organize. The needs of the body will be provided for equally in the case of each and everyone. In the general organisation intellectual, moral and spiritual superiority will find expression not in the enhancement of the pleasures and powers of life but in the increase of duties and responsibilities.

Artistic beauty in all forms, painting, sculpture, music, literature, will be available equally to all, the opportunity to share in the joys they bring being limited solely by each one's capacities and not by social or financial position.

For in this ideal place money would be no more the sovereign lord. Individual merit will have a greater importance than the value due to material wealth and social position. Work would not be there as the means of gaining one's livelihood, it would be the means whereby to express oneself, develop one's capacities and possibilities, while doing at the same time service to the whole group, which on its side would provide for each one's subsistence and for the field of his work.

In brief, it would be a place where the relations among human beings, usually based almost exclusively upon competition and strife, would be replaced by relations of emulation for doing better, for collaboration, relations of real brotherhood.

Source: <http://www.auroville.org/vision/adream.htm>

For further information visit

<http://www.auroville.org/vision.htm>

ANNEXURE 3.3

DEPARTMENTS OF THE ASHRAM

The Ashram consists of over 80 departments, which include farms, gardens, healthcare, guesthouses and engineering units among many others. Most of these departments have emerged spontaneously, sometimes because of a need for a product or service that wasn't available, often because the Mother encouraged a sadhak to pursue his art. Under Her personal guidance and care, these small units soon grew up into well-established departments.

While externally they help sustain the Ashram, the real purpose of these units is to serve as a field for sadhana, the spiritual discipline. Work in the Ashram is to be done unselfishly, in the spirit of service and as a means of offering oneself to the Divine.

1. **Art Gallery (The Studio)**
2. **Ashram Library**
3. **Bureau Central**
4. **Photo Section**
5. **Publication Department**

Source: <http://www.sriaurobindoashram.org/ashram/saa/departments.php>

*Similarly, Auroville also had units of clothing, food items, necessities, music, dance, office to maintain the functioning to name a few where an individual can work or students of any age could go and learn.

ANNEXURE 3.4

Interview Schedule for the ex-students of SAICE

Basic information

1. Name-
2. Age-
3. Gender-
4. Marital status-
5. Year of passing out-
6. Level or class you completed-
7. In which class did you join the school
KG(year) –
Delafon
Acceleret
Progres
EAVP
8. mother tongue-
9. Information about languages you know

(Where did you study it? Which skills of a language you have- Listening, Reading, Speaking and Writing- LSRW)

Indian	Place you learnt from	L,S,R,W
• Hindi		
• English (ESL??)		
• Oriya		
• Gujarati		
• Bengali		
• Sanskrit		
• Tamil		
•		
Foreign		
• French		
any other		
•		
•		
•		

10. further studies (if any,
 - name of the course(s);
 - mode of study &-
 - university/ institution)-

- Present Status

Ashramite/ Non Ashramite/ Volunteer/ -

If an ashramite, What is your main service in ashram?

Or, if a non-ashramite, your present occupation? –

Do you volunteer in the Ashram or society or Auroville?

11. place of residence in Pondichery- (full address, if possible) –

12. If not staying in Pondicherry, do you visit Pondichery?

On joining the ashram (*Optional)

13. the reason for joining or serving at the ashram as volunteer –

or the reason of NOT joining or giving any service to the Ashram?

14. Do you go for darshans or your birthdays to the Ashram? (when did you go last)

Information about family & parents

15. Did your parents or any of your relations study here or are studying here? If yes, when did they pass out?

16. Is any of them at Pondichéry?

If yes, who all are here?

If no, then when did they visited Pondichéry last?

If parents or any relations live at Pondichéry, then do the parents or relatives work in ashram department?

OR, what is occupation of your parents or any relations living, if at Pondichéry?

17. Do you see programs or attend classes at ashram?

Classes-

The program you attended last at ashram- (the program you attended the last)

18. Services- .

****Only question 13 & 15 are analyzed for this research.***

ANNEXURE 3.5

Table Data Sources and Data Questions

<u>Research Question-1</u> What is School spatial and temporal organization vis-à-vis learning that is- structural and learning areas?	Suggestive Themes	Sources	Specific age group (if applicable- all in years)
	Schools	Observation, school maps	NA
	Physical structure	Check list, school maps	NA
	Knowledge areas	Participation, observation, time tables.	For all age groups in school LB-6-12+ The AID-8,9,10+ SAICE-3-21
<u>Research Question 2</u> What is the nature of relations- between individuals in terms of family (or friendship) relations they share with individual and organizations (& relevance/ meaning they hold for the choice of life & faith?)	Suggestive Themes	Sources	Specific age group (if applicable- all in years)
	Name of the houses/ individuals	List / Interviews.	NA/ 21+ years
	Rituals and practices- The Samadhi The Matrimandir Visits to the room or Darshan	Observation, experiencing. xi	3+ to adults of young, middle and late.













	Reminiscences of the Masters: an innovating tradition Opening or turning to the faith Issues of faith : rituals and values	Participation, Observations, interactions during day-to-day life and in programs, presentations (pictures, recordings)	3+ to 21 years for children and adults of young, middle and late.
	Networking with institutes: over generations	Interviews of ex-students at Ashram and Auroville.	21+ to 50 years
<u>Research Question 3</u> What are the learning practices and opportunities in classroom and otherwise, the nature of learning involving these aspects of learning?	Suggestive Themes	Sources	Specific age group (if applicable- all in years)
	Knowing and understanding the child Teacher's role and reflection Challenges of an Integral teacher; of community and visitors	Observation (and teaching) of classes, physical education program, interaction, meetings or discussions.	3+ to 21+ at SAICE and other adults. 6+ to 12 at LB. 8-10+ at the AID.
			3+ to 6+

	Enlisting the subject areas Integral as referral paradigm	Time tables, observations; Attending talks and reports of senior sec students; school notices, writing of prayers and words of the masters.	17+ age group.
	Method of teaching	Observations of classes Interaction with teachers.	3+ to 6+/10/ 8-10 Of young, middle and late adulthood
	Knowing different languages in class and society	Interviews, observations, text books, language lab at Auroville.	8+ to 10+/ 21+
	PHYSICAL EDUCATION Program Physical spaces for	Description based on observations	Competition at SAICE 6, 12- 18+ boys and girls; <i>Dehashakti</i> - 6+ to 18; the AID-

	<p>sports at SAICE/ LB/ at the AID</p> <p>PE- ideals, commands, uniforms, grouping.</p> <p>Responses of injury, illness, sleep, and food.</p> <p>Body of the researcher/ weight and fitness issues</p>	<p>and interactions with PED in charges and captains, coaches. Documents, magazines, words of the mother and other relevant articles and programs- DEC 2nd Observation, interaction with students, look into nutritional program and injury help group.</p> <p>Researcher as object of research for the field, collection of responses in the field.</p>	<p>8-10+</p> <p>6+ to late adulthood.</p>
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ANNEXURE 3. 6

Table 3. Some of the Initial Research Themes and Color Codes

Themes	Symbol & Color code for SAICE; LB;AID
Faith <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rituals • anecdotes • innovating rituals 	 ;   ;    Obs/Date/page no/
Knowledge, Curriculum and Pedagogy- KCP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of punishment/ exams • Freedom to the child • Role of teachers • 	 ;   ;   
Inside and outside world <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World of <i>sadhaks</i> • Changing times 	Orange(same pattern of no of circles)
Historical reference to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time • Anecdotes • Records 	Black (same pattern of no of circles)
Human relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community • Individuals • Family • Among institutions 	Grey (same pattern of no of circles)
Personal reflections	Blue (same pattern of no of circles)
Theoretical reflections	Green (same pattern of no of circles)

ANNEXURE 4.1
Helping out in the construction

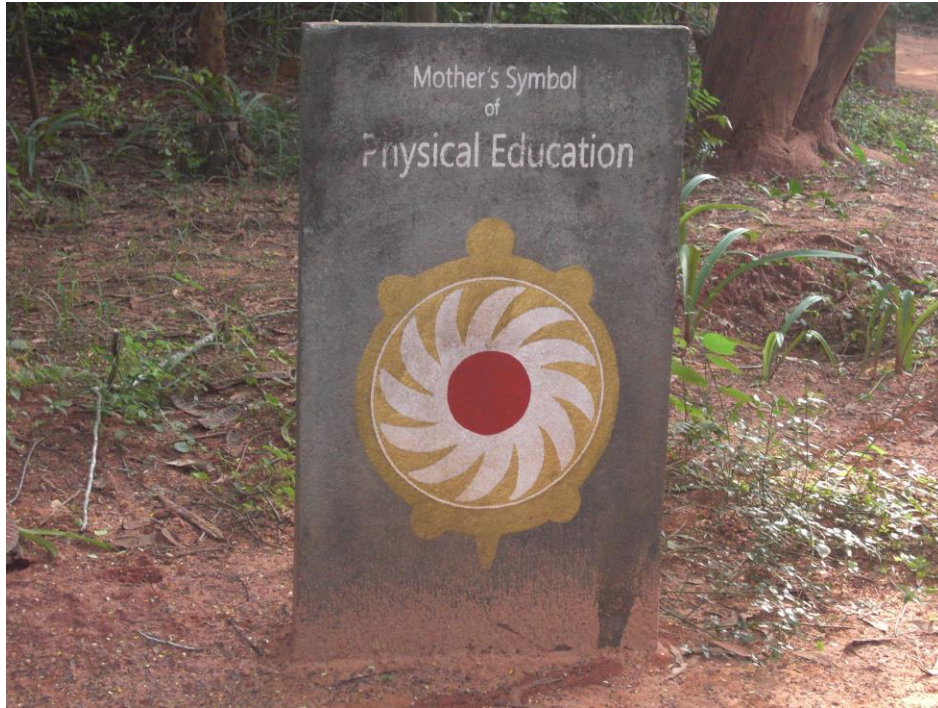


ANNEXURE 4.2
The Spiritual Map of India



ANNEXURE 4.3

Symbol of the Physical Education given by the Mother



At Dehashakti Sports Ground

ANNEXURE 4.4
Displaying Photographs of the Masters



Small *Ganesha* idol on display

ANNEXURE 4.5
Declaration of the Ministry for SAICE

N° 6/3/68 - Ests (D)
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

New Delhi - 1, the 16th April, 1969
26 Chaitra, 1891

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Recognition of Higher Secondary Course of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, as equivalent to Higher Secondary Examination of a recognised University or Board for purposes of employment under the Central Government.

The undersigned is directed to say that the Government of India have decided, in consultation with the Union Public Service Commission to recognise Higher Secondary Course of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry, as equivalent to Higher Secondary Examination of a recognised University or Board, for purposes of employment under the Central Government.

2. In so far appointment under the I.A. and A.D. is concerned, these orders have been issued in consultation with Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

Sd./- (Harish Chandra)
UNDER SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Authorised for issue
Sd/ (S.L. Sehgal)
Section Officer

To
All Ministries of the Government of India etc. (including all Attached and Subordinate Offices under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Commissioner for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, Commissioner for Linguistic Minority Affairs, and Zonal Council.)
2. Union Territory Governments/Administrations.
3. All Sections of Ministry of Home Affairs.

1. Copy forwarded for information to the Secretary, Union Public Service Commission (10 spare copies) with reference to their letter No.F.1/10/68-RR dated 1.8.1968.
2. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India with reference to their U.O. No. 418-NGE II 63-68 dated 13.3.1969.
3. The Press Information Officer of the Ministry of Home Affairs for giving publicity to the decision contained in the Office Memorandum.

Sd./-
(Harish Chandra)
UNDER SECRETARY TO THE GOVT. OF INDIA

Certified True Copy


Registrar,
Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education
PONDICHERRY - 605 002

REGISTRAR
SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE OF EDUCATION
SRI AUROBINDO ASHRAM
PONDICHERRY - 605 002

ANNEXURE 4.6

Time Table of a SAICE Student

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Lundi	*	*	English (School)	Singing (Sohini)	*	Bengali (Library)	Pottery (Amba Bhikshu)
Mardi	*	French (School)	French (School)	*	Sitar (Music Room)	Maths (School)	Geography (School)
Mercredi	English (School)	*	Chemistry (Lab)	Chemistry (Lab)	*	*	Bengali (School)
Jeudi	*	English (School)	French (School)	*	*	Physics (Lab)	Physics (Lab)
Vendredi	*	*	Biology (Knowledge)	Biology (Knowledge)	*	Bengali (Library)	*
Samedi	Ecology (Lake)	Ecology (Lake)	Ecology (Lake)	*	*	*	Embroidery (An Ashram inmate's house near Atelier)

*These periods were used to study Maths in a *rendezvous* basis; i.e. the teacher and student mutually decided to meet during any of these periods as per their convenience and availability.

The Play of Painting

For the past few years about 250 people a week, most of them children, have been participating in a research project which uses painting as a means of self-discovery. Now the Sri Aurobindo Institute for Educational Research (SAIER) has published a book by Claire Le Touzé, *Looking at Children's Paintings in a New Light* (there is also a French version) which documents this fascinating work. *Auroville Today* spoke to Claire about the project.

Sri Aurobindo and Mother were very clear about what constitutes true 'education'. "Each human being is a self-developing soul and the business of both parent and teacher is to enable and to help the child educate himself, to develop his own intellectual, moral, aesthetic and practical capacity and to grow freely as an organic being..." wrote Sri Aurobindo in *The Human Cycle*. "True education must reveal what is already present in the developing beings and make it blossom", wrote Mother.

From the early days of education in Auroville, attempts have been made to put this profound approach into practice in Auroville schools. Some of the early attempts were too 'stratospheric', out of touch, with the reality of that pioneering period. Today, things are changing. In spite of the pressure of exams and alien syllabuses which vitiate the child-centred approach in some schools, more and more educational initiatives based upon the "self-developing soul" are beginning to be widely adopted.

One example is the Awareness through the Body programme, run by Aloka and Joan. Another is The Learning Community experiment, featured in our last issue. And yet another is the 'Play of Painting', which uses painting as a means of self-discovery and expression.

Claire who, along with Sandrine and Nathalie, comprises the core team, had been teaching painting to children for many years. One of the things she noticed was that when children were free to choose their own subjects, certain images and figures recurred. She couldn't understand why this happened or what they meant until, in 2003, she met Petrouchka who recognised these images as signs of 'The Formulation'.

The Formulation

'The Formulation' is a set of universal patterns in children's paintings discovered by Arno Stern. Stern, who was self-educated, discovered through 50 years of work with



Mahana painting

The archaic manifestations or first traces made by a little child are not, Stern emphasised, clumsy or 'unfinished': "they come from the organic memory of the child." He explains that the body has an 'organic' memory of its development in the womb and is expressing it through these figures. The next stage, the 'primary figures', is also born out of an inner necessity. Later, the child notices a similarity between those figures and certain objects in his or her environment. So the third phase begins with 'picture-objects', born from the intention of representing 'real' things. However, traces of the primary figures remain in the 'picture-objects'. The final phase, the 'essential figures', is reached by older children or adults. "The essential figures," explains Stern, "are a pure ema-



Claire at the 'table palette'



Chandradev expressing himself

children exactly what Claire had also noted: that certain images tend to recur. What he also observed in the paintings of thousand of people of different ages, nationalities and cultures is that these recurring images tend to evolve through four phases or stages. These he labelled 'archaic manifestations', 'primary figures', 'picture-objects' and 'essential figures'.

nation of the organism. Through the possibility of this manifestation, the human being reaches a new dimension."

Throughout the process, the child is free to experiment. He or she can add many sheets of paper if the child wants to make huge paintings. This freedom to discover endless possibilities in oneself also increases

self-confidence.

Play of Painting is not 'art'

"Play of Painting is not 'art'," Claire emphasises, "because there is no intention to present something to somebody else. The process of expressing the organic memory of the body is transformative. It brings great joy and a sense of expansion of the being, which Stern called 'plusêtre' ('being more')."

Claire describes her own experience in an Auroville studio. "I'd been painting since I was a child. In the first sessions of the Play of Painting I drew in my own style, but at a certain point I couldn't anymore. Something else came through me that I had never done before and it was so joyful, so liberating, like surrender to the natural flow of life. Now I feel I can be more myself and I can allow an inner guidance to manifest. So then I understood why the children are so happy and concentrated when they are doing the Play of Painting."

Conditions for organic expression

Claire stresses that this doesn't 'just happen': that Stern specified that certain conditions have to be in place for the full 'organic expression' to take place, conditions which are not yet completely fulfilled in the Auroville ateliers. "The three essential conditions are a fully trained practitioner who can recognize the universal signs and different stages of The Formulation; a closed space where outside influences are eliminated or minimised, with the 'table-palette' [a long table on which 18 different paint colours are arranged] at the centre; and a group of people of mixed ages." Why the mixture? "The group dynamic is very important. The small children who are doing the archaic figures or primary figures pour them out naturally, and this gives a lot of inspiration to the older ones who may be a little more blocked. On the other hand, the older children and adults will be much more skilled on the technical side and this will be a very good example for the small ones."

What, then, is the role of the trained practitioner or 'guide', as Claire terms it, in this process? The guide's essential role is to support in every way the child's inner and outer explorations, as a servant. The guide knows the Formulation and is careful not to judge the child's work in any way. A negative statement can make

the child fearful of failure, but even praise is to be avoided as this may cause the child to try to please rather than to 'be' herself. For the same reason, the child's work is not put on public display or taken home. Instead, the guide will keep all of it in a special folder for research and archives.

The role of the parents

The guide's role is also to reassure the parents, "opening a small secret door and introducing a new way of 'seeing' in order for them to

So these workshops are mini-laboratories where the children experience weekly this balance between the individual and the collective without rivalry and competition. These are very powerful ways of living our ideals of human unity and unity in diversity.

"Moreover, in Auroville freedom and joy are considered the two necessary elements not only for individual growth but also for the development of a collective consciousness leading to 'effective human unity'. And freedom and joy are the essence of these workshops."

Future research

Claire's research project, which was funded by the Sri Aurobindo Institute of Educational Research, has now concluded with the publication of the book. What are her plans? "It's not yet clear where our funding will come from in the future. But my wish is to be able to continue to offer this service free to Aurovilian children and adults. We have three ateliers now, at the Kindergarten, Nandanam and Udavi School. For the first time in the history of the Play of Painting a building has been designed specifically for that purpose by Nathalie and Francois in Udavi School and this is three-quarters completed.

"My work so far has been mainly with younger children – this was the focus of the research project – but now I have sessions which bring together younger and older children and adults, as Stern advises. This will be a whole new area of discovery. So, in the future, Sandrine and I would like to have a work space outside schools where everyone, adults and children, can freely come to enjoy this wonderful activity.



Nathalie (right) and student at work

become respectful accomplices." So, once a year, the parents are invited to see their child's paintings without the child being present, but only with the child's permission if he or she is more than seven years old. Many parents are astonished by what they see.

Stern emphasised that the Play of Painting is not a therapy, but that it can prevent the need for therapy later in life. But how does this work relate to the larger purpose of Auroville? "In two ways," says Claire. "Firstly, through the Play of Painting the children begin to feel that behind all the outer differences there is the same inner being; that they belong together because these universal signs appear in everybody's work. So they are more willing to accept the other as he or she is. At the same time, they find their own unique way of being. For example, one child may be very precise and take a lot of time to do one painting, while another child may complete 4-5 paintings in one session.

"The other area of research described in the book, which is different from the 'Play of Painting' as created by Arno Stern, is 'Painting through Concentration'. This was inspired by Marguerite Smithwhite, who was connected with Auroville and the Ashram for many years. Each concentration has a particular purpose in awakening and sensitizing the child to subtle aspects of its being, particularly the inner soul or 'psychic being'. Now I want to more deeply explore this part of the work."

Alan

Looking at children's paintings in a new light by Claire Le Touzé. Published by SAIER, 2009. For info: aurovillepress@auroville.org.in

For more information about the Play of Painting, see Arno Stern's website: www.arnostern.com or contact jeudepeindre@auroville.org.in

ANNEXURE 5.1
Matrimandir and its Significance



The Mother's Shrine

The Matrimandir wants to be the
symbol of the Universal Mother according
to Sri Aurobindo's teaching

Source: http://www.auroville.org/thecity/matrimandir/mm_conception.htm

ANNEXURE 5.2

List of Important days in the Ashram

"Darshan" in Sanskrit means "seeing". It refers here to seeing Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and to receive their blessings. After Sri Aurobindo retired from daily contact with his disciples, he saw them only a few times a year on what came to be known as the [Darshan days](#).

During Sri Aurobindo's lifetime, messages were given out only occasionally on the Darshan days; afterwards, they were issued regularly. Some of these were written expressly for the occasion, others were passages chosen from the works of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

That tradition still continues today. The day starts with a meditation around the samadhi. During the day, sadhaks and devotees are allowed to visit either Sri Aurobindo's or the Mother's room, depending on the occasion. Message cards containing passages from their works are distributed to all who attend the Darshan.

Day	Occasion
01 January	New Year's day
21 February	The Mother's birthday
29 February	The Supramental Manifestation day
24 April	The Mother's final arrival in Pondicherry
15 August	Sri Aurobindo's birthday
17 November	The Mother's Mahasamadhi day
24 November	Siddhi day
05 December	Sri Aurobindo's Mahasamadhi day

Source: <http://www.sriurobindoashram.org/darshan/index.php>

ANNEXURE 5.3

List of Prayers

First in English and then in French

Samadhi Prayer

December 9 1950,

To Thee who hast been the material envelope of our Master, to Thee our infinite gratitude. Before Thee who hast done so much for us, who hast worked, struggled, suffered, hoped, endured so much, before Thee who hast willed all, attempted all, prepared, achieved all for us, before Thee we bow down and implore that we may never forget, even for a moment, all we owe to Thee.

- The Mother

Source: <http://www.sriaurobindoashram.com/Content.aspx?ContentURL=StaticContent/Sriaurobindoashram/-03%20The%20Ashram/Samadhi/samadhi.htm>

Prière du Samâdhi

9 décembre 1950

A Toi, qui fût le revêtement matériel de notre Maître, à Toi notre infinie gratitude. Devant Toi, qui as tant fais pour nous, Toi qui as tant travaillé, lutté, souffert, espéré, enduré, Toi qui as tout voulu, tout tenté, tout préparé, tout accompli pour nous, devant Toi nous nous inclinons en implorant afin que nous n'oublions jamais, même pour un moment, tout ce que nous Te devons.

- La Mère

Students' Prayer

Make of us the hero warriors we aspire to become. May we fight successfully the great battle of the future that is to be born, against the past that seeks to endure; so that the new things may manifest and we be ready to receive them.

- The Mother

Prière des élèves

Fais the nous les guerriers héroïques que nous aspirons à devenir, pour livrer avec succès la grande bataille de l'avenir qui doit naître contre le passé qui veut durer ; afin que les choses nouvelles puissent se manifester et que nous soyons prêts à les recevoir.

- La Mère

ANNEXURE 6.1

The Worksheet

Questions based on movie

Name of the movie

Date shown on-

1. In which part of India mention state (s) is the movie filmed?
2. What is the type of jungles where the movie has been shot? Choose one.

Pine Forests- are found in Hilly regions, mostly with very cold winters and snow. The trees are mainly conifers which gets pine cones along with other varieties.

Temperate Deciduous Forests- Forests which have mild summers, autumn, and spring, rainfalls with cold winter. They are found in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa in India.

Rainforests- Forests which have high rainfall between 1750 and 2000 mm, there is short season of no rainfall. The temperature remains in between 34 degrees Celsius and 20 degree Celsius. These are found in eastern Indian and some parts of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andaman.

3. Can snakes see colors?
4. How do snakes use their tongue to sense the things around?
5. How Cobra does attack its prey before eating?
6. How long does Cobra grow in a year before it is fully grown?
7. What is the length of fully grown Cobra?
8. How often a young growing Cobra would molt or shed of their skin?
9. How long do snakes have to live in hiding when they molt or shed their skin?
10. A rat snake is 7 feet long and how long is Cobra- longer or shorter than rat snake?
11. How does venom helps in the digestion of prey?
12. How long does the male-female dance for mating can last?
13. How long does female cobra takes to lay eggs after mating with male?
14. Does female cobra make nest? What is it made of?
15. Do other snakes make nest?
16. How long do eggs take to hatch? Do all eggs hatch?
17. Which animals can attack a juvenile King Cobra?
18. Do Juvenile Cobras have venom and can they swim?
19. Please tell what happens in the war dance between two snakes? And what does the snake who loses have to do?
20. What is the speed at which Cobra swims in water?
21. What does cobra do when he is trapped with the stick by Whittaker in the movie?
22. How are the eggs of Cobra- soft or hard shelled?
23. What is the size of juvenile Cobra and how much does he grow in a year?
24. Can Cobra climb tree?
25. Does Father Cobra take care of the eggs or Juveniles?
26. Does Mother Cobra take care of the juveniles after they hatch? If not what does she do when eggs are about to hatch?

ANNEXURE 6.2

Making Mandalas



ANNEXURE 7.1
Sports Activities at Sri Aurobindo Ashram

	A5 (6 & 7)	A4 (8-9)	A3 (10-11)	A2 (12-13)	A1 (14-15)	B2 (15-16)	B1 (16-17)	C (Girls 18-21)	D (boys 18-21)	E (Women 21- 35)	F (Men 21 to 40)	G (wom en above 35)	H (men above 40)
Su n	Gymnast ics	swimmi ng	relays	combati ve	gymnasti cs	Minor games	Major games	Gymnast ics	Swimmi ng	Athletics	Swimmin g Minor/ma jor games	Minor games	Gymnast ics Marchin g
Mo n	Music	Athletics	Gymnast ics	Gymnast ics	Combati ve	Athletics	Gymnast ics	Swimmi ng	Major games	Swimmin g keep fit minor games			
Tu e	Lessons	Games	Music	Major game	swimmi ng	Gymnast ics	Athletics	Minor games	Gymnast ics	Major games keep fit			
We d	Swimmi ng	Relays	Swimmi ng	Gymnast ics	Major games	Combati ve	Minor games	Gymnast ics	Athletics	Minor games keep-fit parade & mass exercise			
Thr u	Relays	Gymnast ics	Athletics	Minor games	Gymnast ics	Swimmi ng	Combati ve	Athletics	Minor/ major games	Gymnasti cs			
Fri	Games	Music	Lessons	Swimmi ng	Athletics	Major games	Gymnast ics	Combati ve minor games	Gymnast ics	Minor games			
Sat	Athletics	Lessons	Games	Athletics	Minor games	Gymnast ics	Swimmi ng	Major games	Combati ve/ minor games	Gymnasti cs; keep fit			

Source: PED, Sri Aurobindo Ashram. (Highlighted groups were more intensely observed)

ANNEXURE 7.2

Dehashakti Sports' Program



Vision

The aim of Dehashakti Sports Program is to provide, through systematic training and planned activities, an all-round physical education program to students of Auroville. In the context of education in Auroville, physical education is as important as the mental and the vital aspects. Just as we study various subjects in school for a broader mental development, similarly at Dehashakti, we offer diverse physical subjects to develop the student more integrally; movement, mobility, control, health, fitness, strength, stamina, and various other qualities of the physical being to name a few. It is essential to note that sports and physical activities find their justification, not in themselves, but as a tool and a support that they can bring to the students in the course of their physical education development. All the activities are done according to the requirements and possibilities of different age groups. To keep the interest of the children alive, we switch between moderation and intensity.

Program

The Dehashakti physical education campus serves students from 1st standard up to the secondary level, from many different Auroville schools and so has a wide range of physical education activities to suit various age groups; Athletics, Gymnastics, Swimming, Soft Martial arts, and large number of team & individual games to mention a few.

To provide a variety in terms of activities offered by Dehashakti Sports Program, leisurely outings such as trips to the beach to have a fun swim in the sea or a casual cycle ride of an hour in the spirit of picnicking are also occasionally organized.

Approach

We aim at inculcating in them the drive for a continuous and ever-growing progress through congenial and joyful exercises and training in the field, track and court disciplines that we can presently offer. The pleasure of being together, the impetus to excel, to do one's best, to strive always towards a greater perfection, are legitimate inclinations and motivating forces in cultivating in oneself the qualities of true sportsmanship.

Sports and physical education has always been an integral and essential part of the curriculum offered to the children. Dehashakti means "the full power and perfection of the body" therefore we offer a comprehensive programme for physical development, providing activities that incorporate and develop movement, mobility, control, health, fitness, strength, stamina, challenge, and body skills. Emphasis is given to developing team spirit, fairness in play, the right attitude during competitions and games, and to encouraging weaker children to actively participate.

The following four fields of sports activities enable Dehashakti Sports to incorporate most of the above-mentioned aspects: individual (athletics, swimming and gymnastics), aesthetic (gymnastics), inter-individual (combative games, tennis & table-tennis), and collective (softball, basketball, volleyball, cricket, futsal and football). The Dehashakti Sports programme is constantly evolving in response to changing circumstances and to the needs of the pupils.

Source: <http://www.edu.aurovilleportal.org/centers/item/119-dehashakti-sports-program>

ANNEXURE 7.3

Various Activities for Physical Education at Auroville Body Awareness Programmes at Auroville

TAI CHI CHUAN WORKSHOPS

Taught by Marco, the workshops are directed towards:

Mastery of the body through breathing and muscular relaxation.

Improvement of movement through balance and coordination.

Learning to mobilize Chi. First perceiving it, then guiding it in one's body with the use of three factors: will, imagination and muscular activity.

One week intensive workshops for beginners:

These workshops are from 7.30am to 10.30am and will cover Chi basics, a few Chi Qong exercises, a few of the Brocades and the beginning of the 24 form.

Three week intensive workshop for beginners:

This workshop is from 7.30am to 10.30am from Mondays through Saturdays and will teach the mobilization of the Chi, the whole 24 form, 11 Chinese Chi Qong exercises and 8 Brocades.



Regular classes:

Tuesday 7.30 - 8.30am Chi; 8.30 - 9.30am 24-form

Wednesday 7.30 - 8.30am 24-form

Thursday - Saturday 7.30 - 8.30am 108-form

These classes are suspended during workshops and vacations (Jan 10 – Jan 15, Jan 31 – Feb 19)

Source: http://www.auroville.org/art&culture/martial_arts/t%27aichi.htm

Kalarippayattu



The most ancient martial art of Kerala

Kalarippayattu is the most ancient martial art, born in Kerala State, India. One form of it is practiced in Auroville by a few of the residents.

Legend

According to the legend, Bodhidharma went to China in 5th century A.D. and taught

Buddhism and Kalarippayattu for self-defense.

Even now, we can see ancient images depicted on the walls of the Shaolin Temple of Indian masters teaching the Chinese hermits both Kalarippayattu and massage.

Swiftness and concentration



Kalarippayattu develops swiftness and concentration and leads to rightness of action.

Bridge

Recognising that the Body is the bridge between Spirit and Matter, it is important to strengthen and develop physical consciousness.

As the Mother says:

*"We want to come in contact with the supreme consciousness, the universal consciousness; we want to bring it down in ourselves and to manifest it. But for that we must have a very solid base; our base is our physical being, our body. Therefore we have to build up a **body solid, healthy, enduring, skilful, agile and strong**, ready for everything. There is no better way to prepare the body than physical exercise: sports, athletics, gymnastics, and all games are the best means to develop and strengthen the body."*

The Kalari

There are 3 types of Kalarippayattu in Kerala: Northern, Southern, and Mid-Kerala. They all work from a 'Kalari' (gymnasium, dojo), which has traditional measurements of 42 feet long by 21 feet wide. It must be built in the direction from East to West, with the entrance from the East. The prayer-place, consisting of 7 steps, is in the southwest corner. Before starting the classes, every student is required to bow and pray.

Five stages

There are five stages in Kalarippayattu's northern style, which is practiced in Auroville. The first three cover extensive body fitness training, stick training and weapon training. The fourth gets into bare-hand training, and only those who have thoroughly studied and practiced the previous stages will be taught this 4th lesson, since it is the most secret part of the Kalarippayattu training. A student must be very obedient, trustworthy, good-tempered and master of himself to move to this stage.

The fifth stage deals with Ayurvedic treatment for body and mind. After successfully completing the first four stages, a student will get plenty of exercises and will have a good physical condition. He will then obtain the ability to treat others physically and mentally.

Source: http://www.auroville.org/art&culture/martial_arts/kalari.htm

Physical Education at Auroville



The perfection of the body, as great a perfection we can bring about by the means at our disposal, must be the ultimate aim of physical culture.

- Sri Aurobindo

The new work of transformation

At this day and age the unity of mind and body is a widely recognised and accepted fact and the totality of life is universally emphasised. It has become commonplace to say that we have to live a healthy life and that, without health, we cannot achieve or retain anything accomplished. If we are to build bodies that are ready to become fitter instruments for the new work of transformation, health should not merely be defined as just the absence of disease or infirmity. It should be a powerful tool that gives us the ability to sustain adaptive effort ('adaptive' in the sense of a progressive overloading of the system) and use it to imply body power, vitality and ability to resist fatigue.

All levels of the being

It is now a known fact within the scientific community worldwide - and also in the world of coaching - that even if one wishes to develop only one aspect of any formation, one cannot ignore the whole. So it is with the body: it is like an orchestra, each part integrating and working in unison with the other parts. The Integral Yoga emphasises the need for integral development of all levels of the being. Our aim should be to develop our physical capacities and attributes to their perfection through a consciously chosen programme. The notion of perfection implies a harmonious and complete development. Just as we train the young mind through studies of various subjects (e.g. language, mathematics, arts, history, science etc.), so also the body needs development and training in a comprehensive, varied programme that covers all different parts of the physical being.

Comprehensive programme

Auroville's aim is the development of this comprehensive programme for physical education, providing activities which incorporate and develop movement, mobility, control, health, fitness, strength, stamina, challenge, and body skills.

Source: http://www.auroville.org/education/physical_edu/phy_edu.htm

ANNEXURE 7.4

Tests of Fitness

	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5	Test 6	Test 7	Test 8
GROUPS	SPEED & AGILITY	BALANCE, COORDINATION & AGILITY	PUSHING STRENGTH	LEG STRENGTH & ENDURANCE	PULLING STRENGTH	ABDOMINAL STRENGTH & SPINAL FLEXIBILITY	BACK STRENGTH & SPINAL FLEXIBILITY	ENDURANCE, TIMING & COORDINATION
CHILDREN 14-15 YEARS (Group A1)	Squat-thrust 25 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand against a wall	Push-through (Dund) 2 × 15 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 30 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 15 reps.	Overhead-roll 15 reps. Sit-up 15 reps.	Hyper-extension on floor 20 reps.	Rope Skipping 250 steps
BOYS & GIRLS 15-16 YEARS (Group B2)	Squat-thrust 30 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand landing on feet	Push-through (Dund) 25 reps. Straight Dip 12 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 50 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 25 reps.	Overhead-roll 20 reps. Sit-up 20 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 20 reps.	Rope Skipping 500 steps
BOYS & GIRLS 16-17 YEARS (Group B1)	Squat-thrust 30 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand landing on feet	Rising on Parallel Bars 5 reps. & Push-through (Dund) 30 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 60 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 25 reps. Chinning the Bar 3 reps.	Overhead-roll 25 reps. Sit-up 25 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 25 reps.	Rope Skipping 600 steps
SENIOR GIRLS 18-25 YEARS (Groups C & E)	Squat-thrust 30 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand landing on feet	Rising on Parallel Bars 5 reps. & Push-through (Dund) 30 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 60 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 25 reps. Chinning the Bar 3 reps.	Overhead-roll 25 reps. Sit-up 25 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 20 reps.	Rope Skipping 600 steps
SENIOR BOYS 18-25 YEARS (Groups D & F)	Squat-thrust 32 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand balance for a few seconds	Rising on Parallel Bars 2 × 15 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 100 reps.	Chinning the Bar 2 × 8 reps.	On Inclined Board Overhead-roll 20 reps. Sit-up 20 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 25 reps.	Rope Skipping 1000 steps

	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5	Test 6	Test 7	Test 8
GROUPS	SPEED & AGILITY	BALANCE, COORDINATION & AGILITY	PUSHING STRENGTH	LEG STRENGTH & ENDURANCE	PULLING STRENGTH	ABDOMINAL STRENGTH & SPINAL FLEXIBILITY	BACK STRENGTH & SPINAL FLEXIBILITY	ENDURANCE, TIMING & COORDINATION
WOMEN 26-40 YEARS (Group E)	Squat-thrust 25 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand landing on feet	Push-through (Dund) 2 × 20 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 50 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 20 reps.	Overhead-roll 30 reps. Sit-up 30 reps.	Hyper-extension on floor 20 reps.	Rope Skipping 400 steps
MEN 26-40 YEARS (Group F)	Squat-thrust 30 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand balance for a few seconds	Rising on Parallel Bars 2 × 10 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 75 reps.	Chinning the Bar 2 × 6 reps.	On Inclined Board Overhead-roll 25 reps. Sit-up 25 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 25 reps.	Rope Skipping 500 steps
WOMEN OVER 40 YEARS (Group G)	Squat-thrust 20 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand against a wall	Push-through (Dund) 2 × 15 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 30 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 15 reps.	Overhead-roll 20 reps. Sit-up 20 reps.	Hyper-extension on floor 15 reps.	Rope Skipping 250 steps
MEN OVER 40 YEARS (Group H)	Squat-thrust 25 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand against a wall	Straight Dip 2 × 12 reps.	Squat (Baithak) 2 × 50 reps.	Chinning the Bar 2 × 3 reps.	Overhead-roll 20 reps. Sit-up 20 reps.	Hyper-extension on floor 15 reps.	Rope Skipping 350 steps
PROFICIENCY AIM	Squat-thrust	Handstand	Rising on Parallel Bars	Squat (Baithak)	Chinning the Bar	On Inclined Board Overhead-roll & Sit-up	Hyper-extension on bench	Rope Skipping
MEN	48 in 1 min.	for 1 min.	3 × 25 reps.	2 × 250 reps.	3 × 15 reps.	50 reps.	50 reps.	5000 steps
WOMEN	42 in 1 min.	for 1 min.	3 × 15 reps.	2 × 200 reps.	3 × 10 reps.	40 reps.	40 reps.	4000 steps

Effective from December 1998.

Before attempting the tests, go through the instructions given on the previous page carefully.

Source: PED, Sri Aurobindo Ashram

ANNEXURE 7.4

Example of Tests of Fitness

	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5	Test 6	Test 7	Test 8
GROUPS	SPEED & AGILITY	BALANCE, COORDINATION & AGILITY	PUSHING STRENGTH	LEG STRENGTH & ENDURANCE	PULLING STRENGTH	ABDOMINAL STRENGTH & SPINAL FLEXIBILITY	BACK STRENGTH & SPINAL FLEXIBILITY	ENDURANCE, TIMING & COORDINATION
CHILDREN 14-15 YEARS (Group A1)	Squat-thrust 25 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand against a wall	Push-through (Dund) 2 × 15 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 30 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 15 reps.	Overhead-roll 15 reps. Sit-up 15 reps.	Hyper-extension on floor 20 reps.	Rope Skipping 250 steps
BOYS & GIRLS 15-16 YEARS (Group B2)	Squat-thrust 30 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand landing on feet	Push-through (Dund) 25 reps. Straight Dip 12 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 50 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 25 reps.	Overhead-roll 20 reps. Sit-up 20 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 20 reps.	Rope Skipping 500 steps
BOYS & GIRLS 16-17 YEARS (Group B1)	Squat-thrust 30 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand landing on feet	Rising on Parallel Bars 5 reps. & Push-through (Dund) 30 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 60 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 25 reps. Chinning the Bar 3 reps.	Overhead-roll 25 reps. Sit-up 25 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 25 reps.	Rope Skipping 600 steps
SENIOR GIRLS 18-25 YEARS (Groups C & E)	Squat-thrust 30 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand landing on feet	Rising on Parallel Bars 5 reps. & Push-through (Dund) 30 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 60 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 25 reps. Chinning the Bar 3 reps.	Overhead-roll 25 reps. Sit-up 25 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 20 reps.	Rope Skipping 600 steps
SENIOR BOYS 18-25 YEARS (Groups D & F)	Squat-thrust 32 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand balance for a few seconds	Rising on Parallel Bars 2 × 15 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 100 reps.	Chinning the Bar 2 × 8 reps.	On Inclined Board Overhead-roll 20 reps. Sit-up 20 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 25 reps.	Rope Skipping 1000 steps

	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5	Test 6	Test 7	Test 8
GROUPS	SPEED & AGILITY	BALANCE, COORDINATION & AGILITY	PUSHING STRENGTH	LEG STRENGTH & ENDURANCE	PULLING STRENGTH	ABDOMINAL STRENGTH & SPINAL FLEXIBILITY	BACK STRENGTH & SPINAL FLEXIBILITY	ENDURANCE, TIMING & COORDINATION
WOMEN 26-40 YEARS (Group E)	Squat-thrust 25 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand landing on feet	Push-through (Dund) 2 × 20 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 50 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 20 reps.	Overhead-roll 30 reps. Sit-up 30 reps.	Hyper-extension on floor 20 reps.	Rope Skipping 400 steps
MEN 26-40 YEARS (Group F)	Squat-thrust 30 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand balance for a few seconds	Rising on Parallel Bars 2 × 10 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 75 reps.	Chinning the Bar 2 × 6 reps.	On Inclined Board Overhead-roll 25 reps. Sit-up 25 reps.	Hyper-extension on bench 25 reps.	Rope Skipping 500 steps
WOMEN OVER 40 YEARS (Group G)	Squat-thrust 20 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand against a wall	Push-through (Dund) 2 × 15 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 30 reps.	Modified Chinning 2 × 15 reps.	Overhead-roll 20 reps. Sit-up 20 reps.	Hyper-extension on floor 15 reps.	Rope Skipping 250 steps
MEN OVER 40 YEARS (Group H)	Squat-thrust 25 in 1 min.	Kick up to handstand against a wall	Straight Dip 2 × 12 reps.	Squat (Bailthak) 2 × 50 reps.	Chinning the Bar 2 × 3 reps.	Overhead-roll 20 reps. Sit-up 20 reps.	Hyper-extension on floor 15 reps.	Rope Skipping 350 steps
PROFICIENCY AIM	Squat-thrust	Handstand	Rising on Parallel Bars	Squat (Bailthak)	Chinning the Bar	On Inclined Board Overhead-roll & Sit-up	Hyper-extension on bench	Rope Skipping
MEN	48 in 1 min.	for 1 min.	3 × 25 reps.	2 × 250 reps.	3 × 15 reps.	50 reps.	50 reps.	5000 steps
WOMEN	42 in 1 min.	for 1 min.	3 × 15 reps.	2 × 200 reps.	3 × 10 reps.	40 reps.	40 reps.	4000 steps

Effective from December 1998.

Before attempting the tests, go through the instructions given on the previous page carefully.

ANNEXURE 7.5
Picture of Message at the Corner House

