Introduction

Sri Aurobindo Ghose was born in August 15, 1872 in Calcutta. His father Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose, a civil surgeon was a completely anglicized Bengali and lover of western culture. Sri Aurobindo’s mother was the daughter of Rishi Rajnarayan Bose who was the President of the Calcutta Brammo Samaj. Shri Aurobindo Ghose has two elder brothers and a younger brother and sister. In 1877, when Aurobindo was only five years old, his father Dr. Krishan Shan Ghose got his admitted in Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling. Two years later in 1879 Aurobindo Ghose with his brothers and sister was taken to England for their education.

Sri Aurobindo Ghose, Indian nationalist leader and mystic philosopher lived for 14 years for completing his education at Cambridge. He returned to India where he plunged into the study of Indian language and culture. The agitation against the partition (1905) of Bengal drew him into the nationalist movement and for several years he acted as leader of a secret revolutionary organization becoming well known through his eloquent patriotic writings.

He was eventually jailed for subverting British rule and while in prison experienced visions that completely altered his outlook. After his release from Jail he announced his withdrawal from active political life. He was then migrated to Pondicherry (South India) where he met Mira, specified revolutionary quest and tried to bring down the spiritual force for transformation of humanity. In Pondicherry he devoted himself to the practice of Yoga as well as to the writings. In almost all the writings he used English language. He formulated the metaphysics and system of spiritual discipline that he called Integral Yoga. His philosophy was based on the principle of the descent of divine force and consciousness into both the individual and the universal processes nature and history, after rejecting the traditional ideal of world renunciation and negation of physical existence.

The plays of Sri Aurobindo belong to the early and middle part of his career as a poet. *The Witch of Illi*, the poet's earliest attempt at drama, was written in October 1891, and Vasavadutta's final play to 1916 together with *Achals and Eramaddon, The Witch* belongs 'to Sri Aurobindo's student days in London'. *The Maid in the Mill* and *The House of Brut* belong to his early Baroda period. *The Viziers of Bassora*, his first complete play, is also one of the earlier works', written in Baroda'. Perseus are Deliverer belong to the middle of the Baroda period; it was written 'somewhere between the end of the nineties and the first years of the following decade. *Rodoaune* (1906) belongs to the end of the Baroda period. *Prince of Edur* (1907) belongs to the Calcutta period. *Eric*, like *Vasavadutta*, is a Pondicherry play written in 1912 or 1913.

The plays of Sri Aurobindo are influenced by the English theatre of the late Victorian era which was dominated by Robert Bridges and Stephen Phillips. Sri Aurobindo inherited and carried forward the tradition of British poetic drama revived by these dramatists. That is why his dramatic models are sometimes Greek and sometimes Elizabethan, and go to myths (Greek and Indian), legends, (Persian, Arabian and Indian) and to history. (Greek, Scandinavian, Indian, Celtic) for his plots. His handling of the story in the plays is as bold as Phillips's: he takes similar liberties with the sequence of events, names of characters, and the qualities associated with historical and legendary figures. He, too, revises or rewrites the plays of older masters. His use of prose and conversational dialogue resembles, at times, seven improves upon, Phillips's.

*The Witch of Illi* is Elizabethan through and through. For instance, it takes sustenance from *Romeo and Juliet*, *As You Like It*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*, while trying to unfold the story of Alaciel: the Witch of Illi and the effect of her sorcery on 'Melander: sylvan poet'. *The Maid in the Mill* seeks to combine the effect of such various plays of Shakespeare as The Merchant of Venice, *As You Like It*, Twelfth Night, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Winter's Tale*. A peculiarity of this incomplete play is that it is also an imitation of Goldsmith's comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*. The House of Brut recalls Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. *Achals and Erhaddon* and *The Birth of Sin* are based on the Bible. The influence of Shakespeare is felt even in the *Prince of Edur* which deals with Bappa Raval, the legendary Rajput hero of medieval India and his love for Comol Cumary, and which bears traces of the influence of Kalidasa.
These unfinished plays complete Sri Aurobindo's apprenticeship as a playwright. Benefiting from his experiments, he goes on to write complete plays, thereby continuing his development as a playwright. The Viziers of Bassora is set in ninth-century Iraq. The Syria of Greek mythology is the scene in Perseus the Deliverer. Rodogune is set in the Syria of ancient Greek history. Eric recreates ancient Norway. The action of Vasavadutta takes place in India nearby a century after the Mahabharata War. Four of the complete plays of Sri Aurobindo are comedies and only one, Rodogune, is a tragedy. In all the five, the playwright combines this instinctive love of romance with his encyclopedia knowledge of world history and culture.

*The Viziers of Bassora* goes to *The Arabian Nights* for its theme. Sri Aurobindo has considerably modified the source and added a few sub-plots of his own invention. The main incidents of the story take place in the ninth-century Muslim city of Bassora. The plot hinges on the Vizer's love for his children which contraries with their dislike of each other and on the development of love between Anice and Nuredcene. The lovers face a number of difficulties including separation from each other. At the end, however, they are reunited and Nureddene is appointed as the king of Bassora.

In *Perseus the Deliverer*, Sri Aurobindo dramatizes the ancient Greek legend of Perseus. The legend, however, has been divested of its original character of a heroic myth and is made the nucleus round which there could grow the scenes of a romantic story human temperament and life impulses on the Elizabethan model, the country in which the action is located. Sri Aurobindo wrote *Perseus the Deliverer* in order to give his own version of the philosophy of creative evolution which was attracting the attention of philosophers and playwrights in Europe at the turn of the century. In his hands, the Greek legend undergoes a considerable change. Here, Aurobindo's sources are numerous, and range from ancient Greek poets through Ovid and Corneille to Kingsley.

Aurobindo's Rodogune is a modified version of a tragedy of some name written by Corneille. The French play is based on an account of the wars of Syria given by Appian of Alexandria. As a playwright, however, Corneille's has taken liberties with history and adopted Appian's account in his own purpose. Corneille's play is full of horror and violence. On account of the violent nature of its theme critics have found it rather crude, though its author preferred it to another of his plays. Sri Aurobindo seems to agree with the criticism. He
removes from the story of Cleopatra not only the crudities found in Appian but also the violence introduced by Corneille. As a tragic play, Rodogune is serious from beginning to end with no mixture of laughter. The play takes sustenance from Shakespearean and Jacobean tragedies. It is also indebted to the revival of Elizabethan tragedy in the late Victorian era as exemplified in the plays of Stephen Phillips.

Eric, the first of the two Pondicherry plays of Sri Aurobindo, deals with ancient Scandinavia and brings out the distinctive qualities of the Viking culture of the Nordic race. The play dramatizes the story of a brave, young, Viking warrior, Eric who, in three years, has conquered nearly the whole of Norway. Eric would have been, in respect of me unities, what The Tempest is among Shakespeare's plays if the playwright had so desired. In its present form, it remains Sri Aurobindo's nearest approach to the classical form of drama.

The theme of Vasavadutta is the development of love between Prince Udayan and Princess Vasavadutta. The playwright borrows the story from S. Oamadeva Kathasaritsagara one of the most popular Sanskrit classics. But his play does not owe anything to Bhasa. It is the finest product of Aurobindo's dramatic genius, as it brings out the nature and extent of the influence of Elizabethan romanticism on him. The fact that Sri Aurobindo stopped taking interest in drama after he wrote Vasouaduttaseems to indicate that according to him, his dramatic sensibility had reached perfection in it.

In the plays of Sri Aurobindo, story, incident and situation are properly related to character. In all his plays in general and especially in Rodogune, Eric and Vasavadutta, he creates extremely interesting men and women by developing the psychological element which endows his plays with inexhaustible human interest and significance. The plot also with its well-defined critical situation is full of movement and the characters are of the massive and relatively simple kind. The element of dialogue shows the same pattern of development as in Shakespeare. Sri Aurobindo gives the soliloquies and asides particularly to those characters who are either more complex or engaged in internal conflict. In the case of Anice, Eric and Vasavadutta he follows Shakespeare's practice of revealing very early in the play those qualities of character on which the plot turns. But in the case of the soliloquies in the fragments he generally fails to exhibit similar judiciousness.
The purpose of the present study is to observe how for the vast abundance of material, profundity of thought, sublimity of expression, and for glory and majesty of its soul, vision, Sri Aurobindo's contribution remains unequalled in the history of human creative effort in both the East and the West. It would reveal how his poetic dramas, Shakespearean in manner and language, have a unifying vision that makes them 'the poet's vision of some part of the world act in the life of the human soul'. The attempt would be made to show that his are really dramas of life and love, of conflict and change .......... and like the poems the dramas too were a part of Sri Aurobindo's life, the outer projections of the richer quintessential part of his life--the imponderables of his inner life. In short, the study would endeavor to dig out the hitherto undiscovered details of Sri Aurobindo's remarkably stageworthy closet dramas.

1.3 Importance of the Study

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh was a revolutionary personality. Not only that but also Indian nationalist freedom fighter, philosopher, yogi, guru and poet. He was most important leaders in the Indian movement for freedom from British rule and for a duration became one of its. He spent his whole life behind his own vision of human progress and spiritual evolution. It is inevitable because it is at once the intention of the inner spirit and the logic of nature’s process. Thus, Aurobindo had produced a dialectic mode of solution not only for the individual but for all mankind and for whole universe. Sri Aurobindo was an extremist and radical in his political views. He favoured violence as a means of achieving the goal of freedom. In 1902, during the day of partition of Bengal, he went there to organize a secret revolutionary society. For enlisting support for his revolutionary ideas, Sri Aurobindo made extensive tours.

In the early days, the Parsi troupes were performing Urdu plays either of the Inder Sabha type, spectacular shows, or translations of Shakespeare's plays. Plays abounding in action could hold the attention if one did not follow the language; plays with eye-filling spectacle could also evoke similar response. This fact encouraged the Parsi companies to travel over the length and breadth of India and, wherever they went, they left the audience with a deep craving for such shows. The development of the professional theatre was influenced by the existence or otherwise of playhouses. In cities like Bombay and Calcutta, there were playhouses and a professional company of the Parsi type was not so
necessary. And wherever play houses existed, dramatic groups could flourish. This happened in Calcutta and also in Bombay. The plays, as a rule, did not claim the authorship of any recognized writer. Since almost all the companies were performing the same plays, it was easier for an actor to desert one and join another to his advantage.

**Scope and Limitation of the Study**

It is a commonly known fact that the earliest literature all over the world was written in verse. Likewise, the dramatic literature of the ancient world was also written in verse. One of the primary reasons for this dominance of verse seems to be that both Eastern and Western dramas were essentially idealistic and religious in character. E.W. Chandler writes:-

"The older serious drama was religious in origin both in Pagan and Christian terms. In the main, therefore, it was dignified in spirit and concerned in dealing with either the gods or the heroic men. As it grew more secular it continued still to exhibit princes and nobles, those removed from the common lot and therefore from common speech, so ancient drama too had been lyrical in its origin and the song element persisted in it of right."

Marjorie Boulton too holds a similar view on the matter. She writes – "For historical and psychological reasons, the most primitive literature of a culture generally seems to take the form of verse, and most early British drama was written in some kind of verse."

The Mystery cycles, the Miracle Plays and the Moralities, constituting almost the entire bulk of English Religious drama, are mostly written in verse. But soon British drama drifted away from its idealistic and heroic temper and started becoming realistic. In this process it gradually began to adopt prose as its medium of expression. However, till the early seventeenth century, verse remained the primary medium of expression for the British drama. Sri Aurobindo has immense contribution in the field of literature and he had given his supreme excellence in writing and try to writing on all the parts and facts of this world in his highly philosophical sense. So here I have chosen to analyze several and major contribution of Sri Aurobindo.