
Book Reviews

Integral Education: A Foundation for the Future

by Partho

Published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry
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Price Rs. 525. Pages 306.

Integral Education — A Foundation for the Future is a book with a difference. It is far from the rut and presents a deep understanding and crystal clear insight into the theory and practice of integral education. Partho, the author and a 'seeker of the self' has raised many pertinent questions and answered them in the book in a predefined Aurobindonian framework. The book has thirteen chapters. Each chapter gives a jolt to the established pedagogy and compels the reader to research his thoughts and beliefs.

There are two seminal ideas that are the mainstay of this book. First, the idea that man is a transitional being and must evolve to the Superman or the Divine Godhead. Second, this idea can be transformed into a living creative force by a new kind of education that would consciously go beyond the mundane aims of schooling and create a growth-oriented, evolutionary culture amongst the human from its pettiness to vastness, from selfishness to oneness, from discord, difference and conflict to harmony, love and compassion, from arrogance to a true nobility of the human spirit and to touch again the depths, to rediscover the mystic and the sacred. As per the author "the central purpose of such education would not be to repeat what others have done or doing, but to attempt something that may never have been attempted before on the planet — to create conditions for the emergence of a new way of being on earth." In other words to 'divinise' human life progressively would be the guiding belief of an evolutionary, integral education.

Since the book is based on the author's own practice of integral education it has reached brilliance in its explanation of integral learning, integral teacher and the concept of integral education itself. The book is a must for every teacher and teacher educator to grasp the real intent of education in the emerging knowledge age.

Integral education believes in awakening the Psychic, perfection of the vital, perfection of the mind and perfection of the body. Best part of the book is its description of 'the integral environment' which is a critical factor in the building of an integral school. While designing a school building we are so enamoured by its grandeur, imposing architecture and space economy that we totally forget the basic principle namely "a happy, child-friendly environment creates happy children, confident and expansive, whereas, an imposing somber, intimidating environment forces children to shrink. Openness, freedom, warmth, friendliness, a certain lightness and playfulness of character, and alongwith these, a certain degree of order, safety and comfort would be the dominant psychological needs. Warmth in cold weather and coolness in warm weather, spaces for utility and play, greenery and natural beauty, order and organisation, cleanliness and easy accessibility, convenience and comfort would be the important physical needs.

The book therefore can be termed as a milky way in the galaxy of routine books on education. Its coherent and crisp presentation leads the reader straight away to the issue and authentically deals with all its aspects. However, Aurobindonian framework brings in some subtle concepts and constructs which may require deeper knowledge and insight into the vision and works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Finally, it is a welcome addition to the world of books on education and needs to be read by teachers, teacher educators and students of education at whatever level they operate.

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Learning Achievement of Class V Students — A Baseline Study

By Dalip Singh

Response Books, New Delhi, Rs. 320.00 pages 235

The report of the Baseline Study is a voluminous publication of NCERT comprising 795 pages. It presents survey of learning achievement of Class V students. In the past, NCERT had conducted achievement surveys to assess qualitative change in pupil's achievement in basic