

the ascent



CFIL's Newsletter | March 2026



Ascent: An opening upwards, the ascent into the Light and Consciousness.

"The ascent or the upward movement takes place when there is a sufficient aspiration from the being, i.e., from the various mental, vital and physical planes."

-Sri Aurobindo



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Lavlesh Bhanot
Editor



Tanya Ganguly
Graphic Designer

We are delighted to bring you the March issue of *The Ascent*, marking the eighth step in what we're building together.

March is the consolidation time for us. Even as we begin to wind up the current academic year, we have our eyes and ears to what we would like to see unfold in the coming months. Perhaps at no time in the history we are witnessing the play of forces at multiple levels, each impacting our life as it were. We are suddenly pushed to think about alternate source of energy that is utilized in our kitchen to our vehicles, AI based applications are becoming more complex and willing to do 'most' of the things for us, we just need to get trained on prompts. With overpowering changes happening around us, it is time we set back and reflect on things that matter. This issue will particularly direct us towards a wider and deeper reflection of what is happening around and within us.

The first article 'Play of construction and deconstruction' invites you into a deep journey of self-inquiry (atma-chintan)—questioning identity, conditioning, and the true nature of the 'I'. It explores the process of inner observation and deconstruction, revealing how personality is built through layers of experiences and unconscious forces. Ultimately, it points toward a deeper discovery of the true self beyond conditioning, awakening a lifelong quest for inner knowing.

In India that is Bharat Series (Extract from Sri Aurobindo's writings) reflects on India's unique potential to revive and apply its ancient spiritual wisdom to modern global challenges. It suggests a moment of renewal and correction, where past limitations can be transcended for a broader, freer expression of its ideals. Ultimately, it raises a powerful question: will India rise to shape humanity's future, or miss this pivotal opportunity?

In the Symbolism series, we take Mahakali—the force of action symbolising creation and destruction, a force that protects what I divine and annihilate forces that oppose divine functioning.

At The Integral school is a monthly update on what our children have been up to.

Invitation to notice brings our attention to patterns, happenings around us to enable us to deeply think in terms of where we are heading and how these happening impact us. In this issue we explore as to how 'Data' is exceeding human processing limits and what now becomes truly valuable to us.

In Reflection and Trends we focus on AI trends. As AI reshapes engineering and replaces routine roles, the future will demand higher-order thinking and adaptability over ordinary skills. The focus must shift from rigid career paths to helping children discover meaning, individuality, and authentic self-expression in an AI-driven world.

April brings us to the close of the current academic year. We have an exciting parents' trip planned to the foothills of the Himalayas in the North, and we look forward to sharing insights from this journey in the next issue. We also hope to strengthen the Integral Commune further and encourage greater participation in such trips.

—Editor

The Play of Construction and Deconstruction



There is nothing more intriguing and fulfilling than an inner exploration.

An inner view—of what makes me, of what constitutes my being. Why do I behave the way I do? What interests me? What repels me? My deeper, secret orientations — are there any deeper layers of my being? Do I sense that there is a deeper layer than what is apparent to me and to those around me? How do I know? Am I to conclude that what I am is a result of the DNA and heredity that I carry? Am I one amongst the many that co-exist around me? Do I belong to a particular race, creed, or religion? Am I really the one that I believe I am? What is the source of my way of being, of my attitude and thinking? Do I really think? Am I a thought? How do I become aware of the layers of my personality? What really is the 'I' that I keep referring to? Is there an 'I' that is aware of the apparent 'I'? I can become aware of only that which I am not — then what am I not? This self-inquiry, referred to as '*atma-chintan*', should then lead to '*atma-bodha*' (knowing the real me).

This inner quest — that is, the turning of attention or the gaze from the 'outer' world to my 'inner worlds' — has been with me ever since I was a child. This journey has been a single-minded pursuit during my waking hours, and it is to this effect that I tend not to engage with people and the world outside, the only exception being when I have to work or engage for administrative reasons.

Is there really an outer and an inner? The world did amaze me, and it still does. However, this inner quest—the inner worlds, as it were—amaze me even more. Living a life and perpetuating the personality that one becomes without any noticeable change is profoundly frustrating, to say the least. Where is this push coming from? What is this push? How is it that most of us are not aware of it? The answer will then define the broad spectrum of this writing: to put this forth for consideration to anyone who cares, to anyone who feels the same as I do..

Just like any other child, I enjoyed constructing the Lego blocks (Lego is a line of plastic construction toys that are manufactured by The Lego Group, a privately held company based in Billund, Denmark). The company's flagship product, Lego, consists of variously coloured interlocking plastic bricks accompanied by an array of gears, figurines called minifigures, and various other parts.

The construction of blocks was a spontaneous activity for me, without an end in mind (usually). Whatever one constructed would be the result of a momentary "play" of the mind in synchronous coordination with hand movements. One would not 'know' what one was constructing until it was constructed — at least, such was the case with me most of the time, if not all the time. Occasionally, I would have an end goal — for example, I would want to construct an airship.

Having constructed it, one would wonder, do a quick appraisal, and feel a sense of deep satisfaction somewhere deep down – and in that very moment, forget about it.

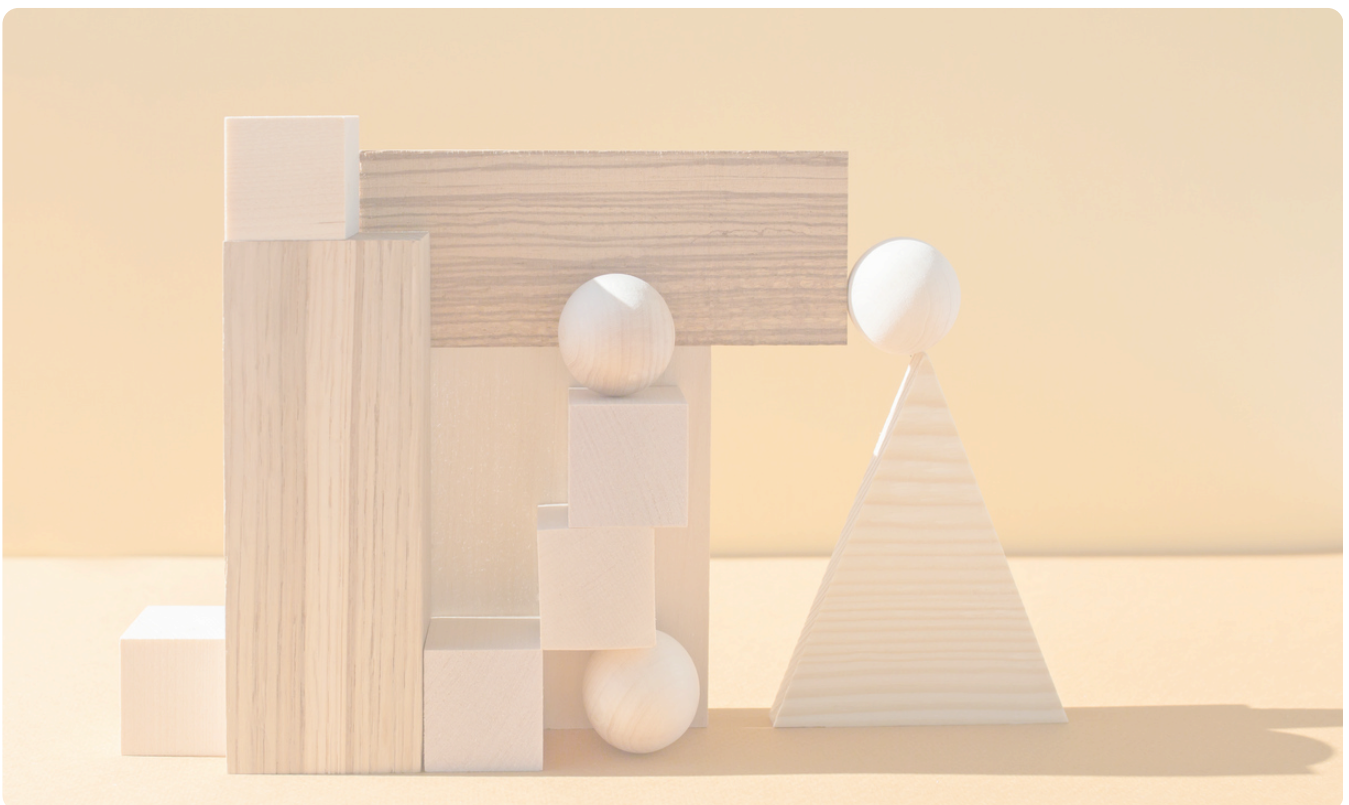
Ever since childhood, I was in the habit of destroying what I constructed. Somehow, an empty mind gave me peace. However fascinating the construction may have looked, I was then equally, and perhaps with a tad more enthusiasm, interested in deconstructing what I had constructed. Block by block, I would consciously dismantle every piece, layer by layer – making sure it was not done in a haze or impetuously, but with the same synchronicity with which I had built it. It was fulfilling. I, a child then, had no idea what was happening. Why did I enjoy this construction–deconstruction play? Why did the mind experience peace whilst deeply involved in this play?

I am now an ‘adult’, yet I equally enjoy the construction–deconstruction play. However, the Lego that I once engaged with has now been replaced with the human – that is, me. The ‘I’ – name, form, and quality (*nama, rupa, guna*) – is the construction. The question is: what hands constructed me?

The inner gazing—or the inner turn—is not an intellectual process. It is simply a looking, a witnessing, of all that happens ‘inside’ you – in your mind. Looking at the processes of the mind itself, becoming aware of all the drama that takes place moment to moment. This is the deconstruction – the constructed persona getting dismantled, strand by strand. Just an inner gaze resulting in the breaking down of all that the mind has built, accumulated over lifetimes.

When you look inside, at first, you see the construction – the web or fabric that has been woven meticulously over time. A mass of thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and every little experience that one has had. The Lego stands constructed – every block presenting or putting out an influence (*prabhava*), an impression or a collection of impressions, a particular way of being – of reacting, speaking, and even thinking. A manifestation of *prabhava* resulting in a *vyakti* (*vyakt-i* – that which manifests).

The personality – derived from the term *persona*, which refers to what is revealed and what is concealed – is now presented for your observation. What do I put out? My deepest fears? My desires? The mental or vital (seat of emotions) knots are not yet resolved? My pushes and my pulls? My tastes and preferences?





A serious and relentless investigation (just an inner look — no philosophy involved) brings out layers of my personality. If you keep looking inward, you can link your personality to your upbringing, culture, and education.

I haven't yet found myself. Why do I get angry? Why do I lie? Why do I hide things? Why do I behave in a particular way? Why do I get along well with some people, and why do I not get along well with others? This topic is fascinating. The more I dig, the more interested I become. From the psychological layer of my personality, I travel deeper into subliminal ranges of my being.

Even as I further my inner gaze and investigation, I see a network — of sorts — of forces and events, of impressions, of people. I can clearly perceive a movement that I want to identify as forces, which have been concealed and camouflaged within the entirety of my personality complex; these forces operate at a rapid pace, influencing, pushing, and sometimes sabotaging my reactions and responses, of which I remain profoundly unaware.

Diving deeper, there appears to be a sudden realisation. After having penetrated layers and layers of my personality, I begin to know—perhaps for the first time—why I had the kind of experiences I had. The 'why' of all that happened begins to reveal itself. Why this particular family? Why does this approach work? What might be the reasons for my difficulty in getting along with certain people and circumstances? It begins to make sense — at least rudimentarily.

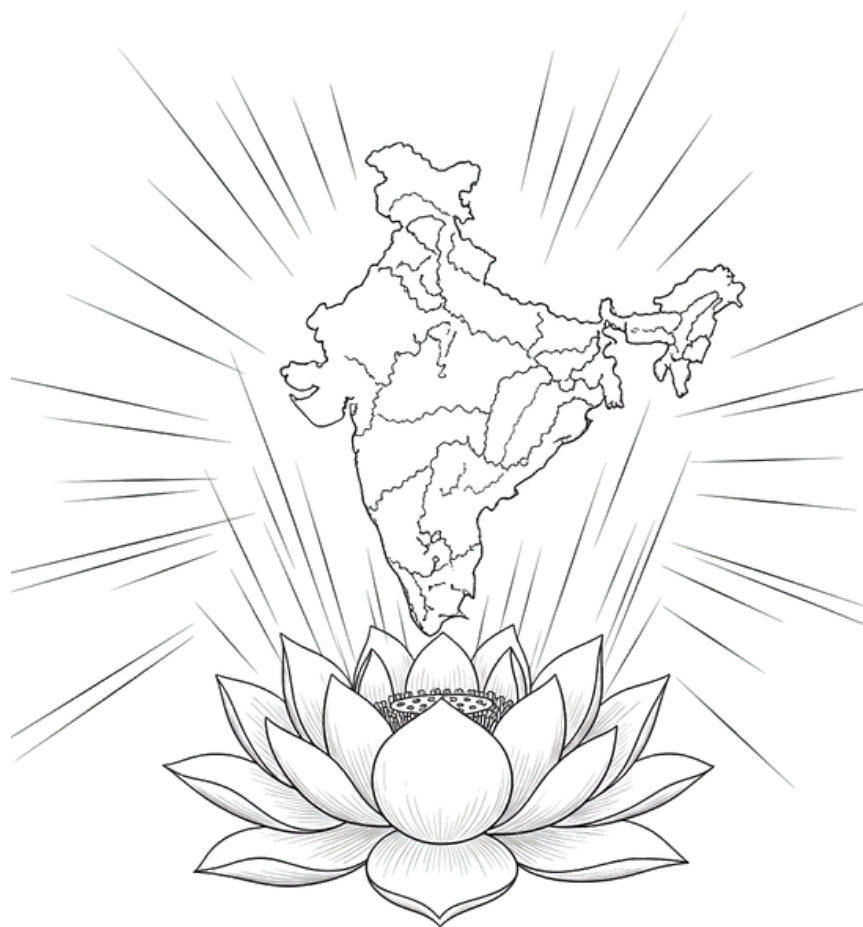
Having delved so deeply into this journey, I perceive that there are still unexplored and unexperienced ranges, and that is the quest I currently pursue. Ranges are not constructed by anything in the world. Ranges of personality that are not woven by any fabric, such as those that reflect my true self beyond societal expectations and personal conditioning. I do not belong to any *prabhava*, for I cannot be my conditioning. There is something waiting to come out—to hold the reins of my life, to be a governor. Is that the psychic being, the *chaitya purusha* that Sri Aurobindo speaks of?

The quest for inner knowing has given birth to a love for learning.

Let us begin the journey, from within to without.

-Editor

India, that is Bharat - It's Spirit and Mission

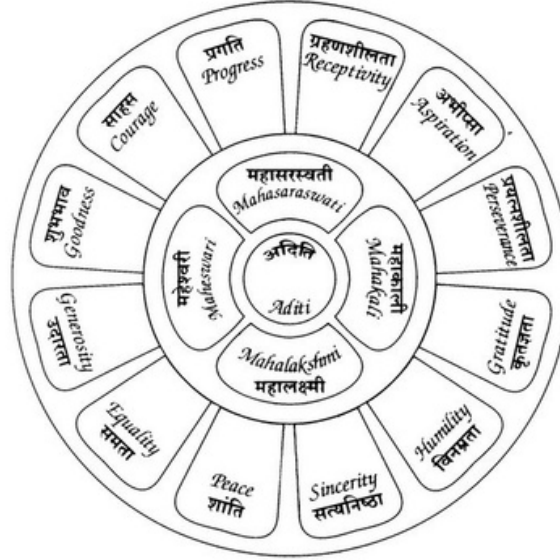


"India has the key to the knowledge and conscious application of the ideal; what was dark to her before in its applications, she can now, with a new light, illumine; what was wrong and wry in her old methods she can now rectify; the fence which she created to protect the outer growth of the spiritual ideal and which afterwards became barriers to its expansion and farther application, she can now break down and give her spirit a

freer field and an ampler flight: she can, if she will, give a new and decisive turn to the problems over which all mankind is labouring and stumbling, for the clue to their solution is there in her ancient knowledge. Whether she will rise or not to the height of her opportunity in the renaissance which is coming upon her, is the question of her destiny. "

Symbolism

The Mother's Symbol



श्री माताजीका प्रतीक

Mahakali

Mahakali is of another nature. Not wideness but height, not wisdom but force and strength are her peculiar power. There is in her an overwhelming intensity, a mighty passion of force to achieve, a divine violence rushing to shatter every limit and obstacle. She is swift, straight and terrible in her action, impatient of imperfection, she is the warrior of the worlds who never shrinks from the battle. Intolerant of falsehood and hypocrisy and ill-will, she deals with them with a pitiless severity; she is not moved by tears or prayers, but strikes at once and without hesitation. Her wrath is immediate and terrible against treachery, falsehood and all that is hostile to the Divine. But to those who are sincere, she is a protecting and helping Mother, full of a fierce love and a strong, swift grace. She has a deep and passionate kindness which can endure no delay in bringing the seeker to perfection. Her very blows are meant to hasten and purify; her anger is a divine instrument for transformation.

There is a supreme intensity in her which makes her the most powerful for progress, the quickest in action, the most effective in the destruction of obstacles.

If she is opposed and thwarted, she becomes terrible; for she is the power of the Divine for action and battle, and none can resist her force. If she is displeased, her displeasure is a mighty chastisement. But her chastisement is meant only to correct and to make straight; her anger is a form of her love.

For she cannot bear falsehood, weakness, cowardice, meanness, hesitation, pretence, self-deception, and all that makes man unfit for the Divine. Against all this she wages war without truce. But for the sincere and the faithful she is a strong and faithful friend and protector, leading them through all dangers and difficulties.

-Editor

At The Integral School

Here's a glimpse of what our children at The Integral School explored, learned and loved in the month of January.



Progress group spent the month building physical strength, stamina, and joyful engagement through hands-on learning. With access to open spaces, the children explored the school environment freely, moving, playing, and developing a natural sense of ease and confidence.

Daily routines included physical activities such as running rounds, catch ball, dodgeball, blindfold games, and kabaddi—supporting coordination, balance, and teamwork.

In English, children were introduced to phonetics through word games, recognising letter sounds and practising oral pronunciation. In Mathematics, counting was explored using natural materials like stones, seeds, geometric shapes, and straws, making learning tactile, relatable and lots of fun!

Creative expression found space through art and craft—stitching mats, weaving bags, clay modelling, painting paper cups, creating photo frames with sticks, and building models like swimming pools and mountains.

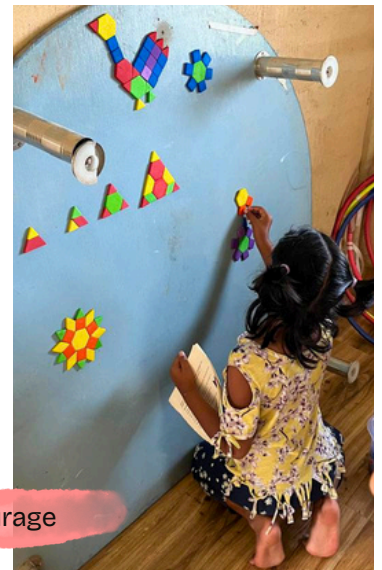
The month unfolded with lots of movement, creativity, and exploration.

Courage group moved through the month with a combination of play, creativity, and gentle learning. The days began with art, craft, and games—creating an engaging space that supported their growing capacity for focus, imagination, and involvement. Sandpit play became a joyful and regular rhythm, where children explored building and breaking, strengthening both fine motor skills and creative expression. Mathematical concepts of addition and subtraction were revisited through playful, game-based activities, allowing learning to unfold with ease and participation.

Post-lunch time offered moments of quiet engagement through dot book activities, supporting relaxation, concentration, and coordination. Storytelling continued to be a shared space of connection—children listened, imagined, and also co-created stories, adding one sentence at a time.

Memory and observation games further enriched their learning experience.

The month held a balance of movement, rest, and joyful discovery.



Courage



As the academic year gently draws to a close, Aspiration group deepened their learning through practice, creativity, and reflection. In English, daily “word of the day” exercises enriched vocabulary, while structured prompts encouraged imaginative story writing. Grammar worksheets revisited key concepts, supporting integration of learning.

In Mathematics, children explored the concept of time—understanding seconds, minutes, and hours through their own daily rhythms. They also began working with division of two-digit numbers, alongside engaging mental maths practices that built both speed and confidence.

Language sessions nurtured expression in their mother tongue—Telugu speakers explored storytelling and poetry, while Tamil learners strengthened foundational reading and letter combinations.

The community helpers project brought learning into the soil, as children planted saplings, prepared garden beds, and engaged in mindful farming. Creative expression flowed through craft—pen stands, wall hangings, glass painting, and handmade clocks—blending skill, imagination, whilst having lots of fun!

Gratitude group experienced a rich and fulfilling month, woven with celebration, creativity, and exploration. The festivities began with Holi—a joyful coming together of colours, water, and shared laughter, bringing a sense of connection among the children.

Their journey through the Solar System culminated in a beautiful integration of learning and expression. The children created a 3D hanging model with the Sun at its centre and brought the planets to life through a play, each embodying and sharing unique planetary qualities. Their imagination expanded further as they designed their own planets, exploring form, scale, and possibility.

In Mathematics, the focus on shapes deepened understanding through hands-on projects and creative applications, including polygon crafts and an abstract fish wall artwork.

Language learning continued with care, as children created bilingual Telugu-English picture cards.

The month unfolded as a space of joyful, embodied learning



Gratitude



Humility group moved through the month with a sense of completion, collaboration, and reflection. The celebrations began with Holi, bringing joy and togetherness. As the academic year draws to a close, the children focused on bringing their projects together for the exhibition—revisiting work across the Indus Valley Civilisation, farming, pottery, and artistic depictions of the map of India and the solar system.

Farming became a shared responsibility, as they prepared the land, sowed vegetable seeds, and experienced cultivation firsthand. A nature walk offered moments of exploration and play, as children collected leaves and flowers while also enjoying climbing trees and harvesting fruits.

In Geography, they deepened their understanding of longitude, time, and cause-and-effect relationships, alongside locating major mountain peaks. Creative and reflective writing exercises invited imagination and introspection.

The month held space for integration—of learning, effort, and the many experiences that shaped their year.



Humility

Goodness group engaged in a month of focused creation, skill-building, and thoughtful preparation.

Their exploration of Warli art continued with depictions from the Mahabharat, as they illustrated scenes leading toward the culmination of Kurukshetra - weaving storytelling with traditional art forms.

In farming, the children chose their own spaces, preparing the land with care. They raised beds, layered with red soil and pot mix, are now nurturing growing seedlings—an experience rooted in patience and responsibility. They also revisited carpentry, reconnecting with skills explored in the previous academic year.

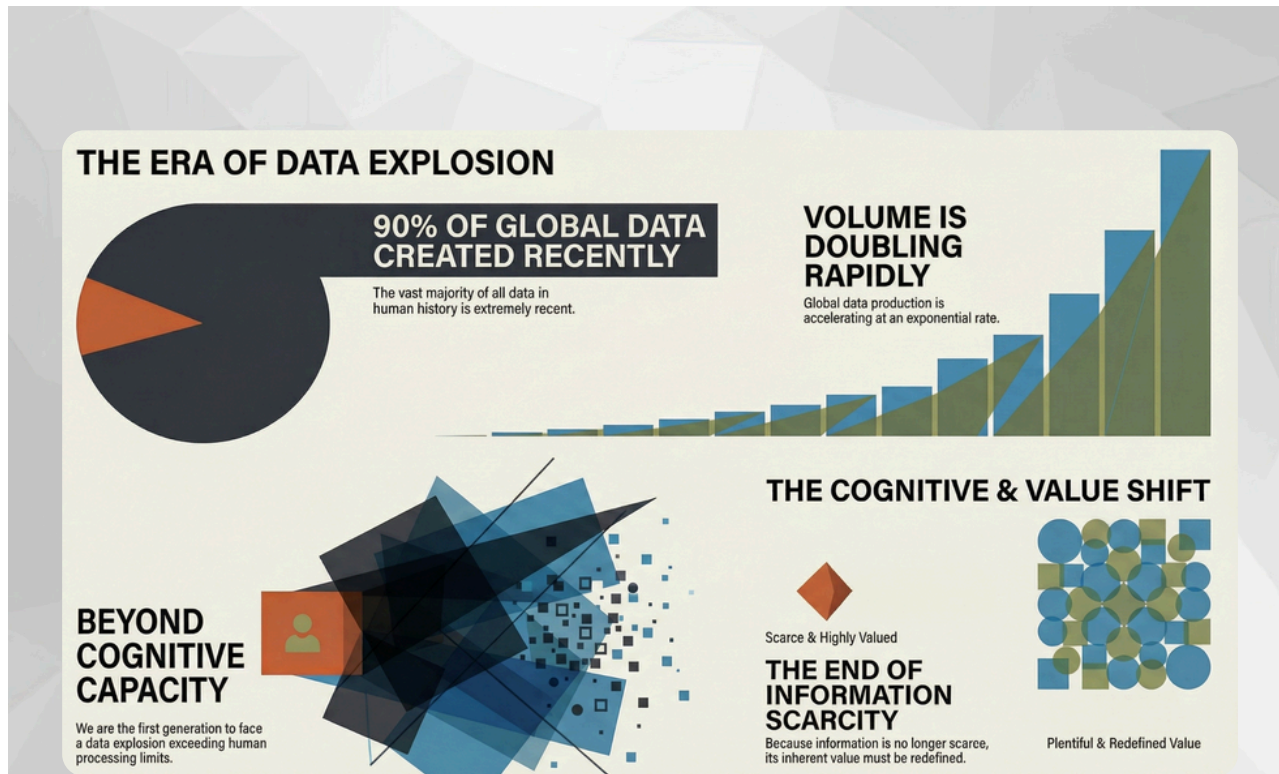
Bringing their work together for the exhibition, the children began curating and preparing their displays. In Geography, they worked on replicating the physical map of India on canvas boards, while in Science, they built models of the excretory, circulatory, and digestive systems.

Language sessions focused on creating customised laminated words on paper with their meanings.



Goodness

Invitations to notice



“ If information is no longer scarce, what becomes truly valuable? ”

Reflections and Trends



Source: <https://www.staffingindustry.com/news/global-daily-news/automation-may-require-375-million-reskill-2030-mckinsey-report-says#:~:text=Main%20content,care%20%2D%20could%20see%20less%20automation>

About 63%+ organisations use AI in the engineering process to boost efficiency and desire fewer but better engineers. "Ordinary" engineers can be quickly and readily replaced. Here, "ordinary" refers to someone who is weak in higher-order cognitive ability or who conducts mundane, repetitive tasks. To navigate AI, in whatever form it takes, one would need a higher level of intelligence.

In the future, what are our kids going to do? This question isn't meant to imply anything about how they'll make money, though that's certainly a big concern; rather, it raises questions about what they will need to thrive in a world dominated by AI. What's more pressing is the matter of how our kids will express themselves and discover meaning in their lives.

We are rapidly approaching a singularity, in which "AI" will perform the vast majority of human labour. Our children must not be imposed on a "laid-out mainstream pathway", but rather given the freedom to discover who they are, what they're good at, and how they should grow intellectually and physically, all the while being encouraged to express themselves authentically.

Editor

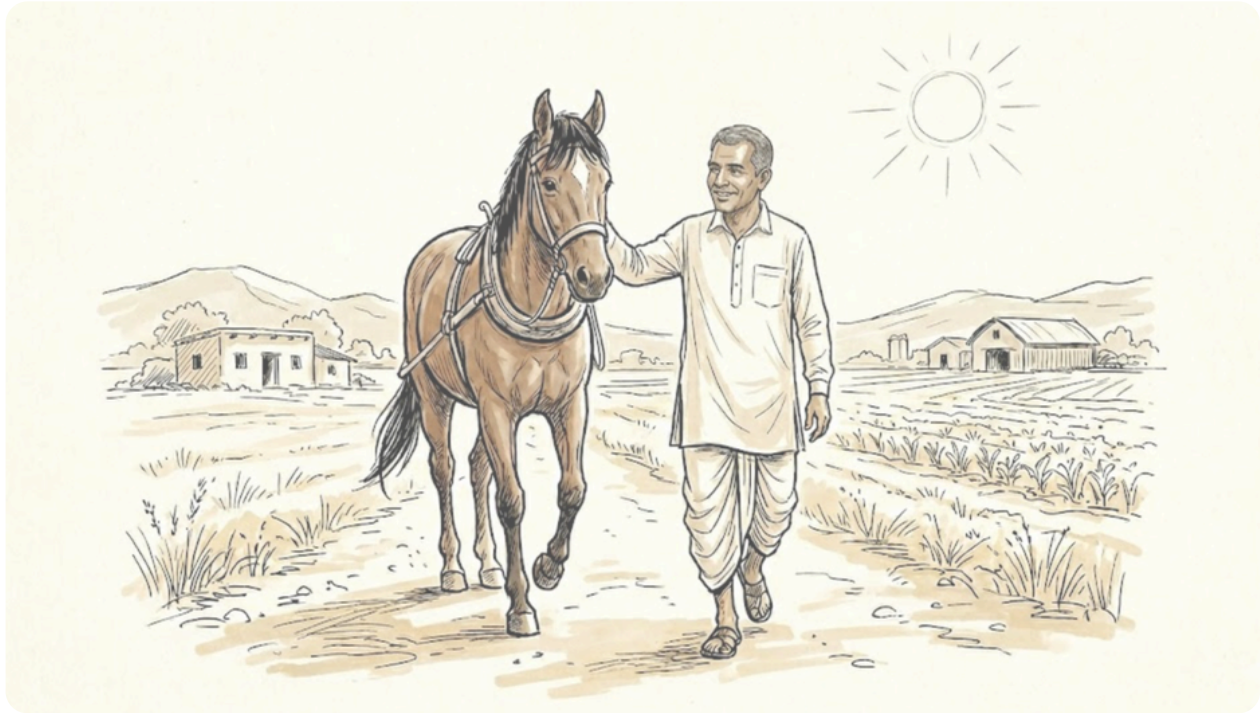
Imagination

ima·gi·nation

Noun

The forming of mental images; the power of creating thoughts and images.

A Parable



There is a story of a farmer whose horse ran away. That evening the neighbors gathered to commiserate with him since this was such bad luck.

He said, "*May be.*"

The next day the horse returned, but brought with it six wild horses, and the neighbors came exclaiming at his good fortune.

He said, "*May be.*"

And then, the following day, his son tried to saddle and ride one of the wild horses, was thrown, and broke his leg. Again the neighbors came to offer their sympathy for the misfortune.

He said, "*May be.*"

The day after that, conscription officers came to the village to seize young men for the army, but because of the broken leg the farmer's son was rejected.

When the neighbors came to say how fortunately everything had turned out, he said, "*May be.*"



Centre for Integral Learning

Survey No. 47AA, Muppa Greens, near WIPRO SEZ, Vattinagulapally,
Hyderabad, Telangana 500 075. Tel. No.: +91 77020 60123

CFIL's Expressions:



The
Integral School



The
Integral Commune



the ascent[®]

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