



# Report of Staff Training on Integral Ecology



**Venue- MASHAL H.O.**

**Pataliputra, Patna**

**Resource Person- Sr. Jyotisha SND**

**Supported by- SND Congregational Fund**

**Feb  
2024**

In a world grappling with environmental degradation and social inequity, the need for holistic approaches to sustainability is more pressing than ever. Integral ecology, which incorporates environmental, social, and spiritual dimensions of sustainability, provides a framework for addressing these complex challenges. Recognizing the crucial role of field staff in driving grassroots-level change, MASHAL organized training in 3 batches: the 1st Batch from February 15th to 17th, the 2nd Batch from February 20th to 22nd, and the 3rd Batch from February 26th to 28th, 2024. The training aimed to enhance their capacity in integral ecology.

The three-day training is designed with the overarching objectives of cultivating spiritual and social consciousness and transforming relationships (empathetic society) to promote sustainable development. Through a series of interactive sessions and experiential learning activities, field staffs embark on a profound journey of self-discovery and empowerment, exploring key themes and concepts essential for fostering integral ecology. *Thought- It's our responsibility to empower our family and then society.*

# Integral Ecology Participants

## Participant's Details- Total 109 trained

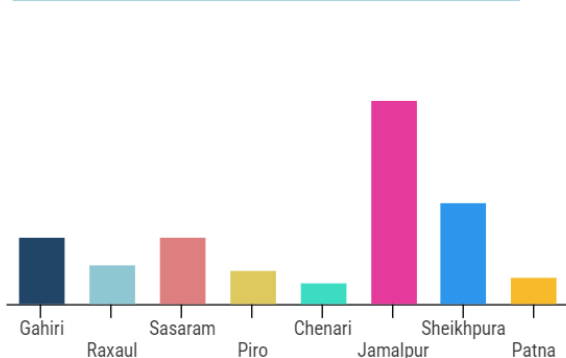


**46%**  
Total- 50

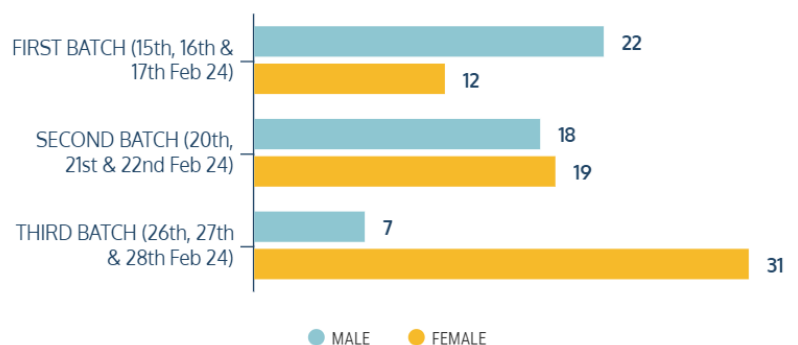


**54%**  
Total- 59

## Participant's Locations



## Batch Wise Participants Details



## MEDITATION- LOVING AND KINDNESS

All three day's training session began with a guided meditation led by a skilled facilitator- Sr. Jyotisha. Participants were invited to close their eyes and focus on generating feelings of peace and kindness towards themselves and others. Through gentle prompts and affirmations, the meditation aimed to cultivate a sense of interconnectedness, peace and empathy.

The objective of the meditation was to instil a sense of positivity and compassion among participants, with the intention of spreading this energy outward to contribute to a more harmonious global community.



### Key Takeaways:

**Inner Peace and Well-being:** Participants reported feeling a sense of inner peace and calmness following the meditation session. Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to pause and reflect on the importance of kindness and compassion in their lives.

**Positive Energy Cultivation:** The meditation served as a catalyst for generating positive energy within the group. Participants noted a shift in their mind-set, feeling more optimistic and open-hearted towards others.

**Global Impact:** The meditation emphasized the ripple effect of spreading positive energy. Participants were encouraged to carry the essence of loving-kindness with them beyond the training session, with the belief that small acts of kindness can have far-reaching effects.

## Day One: Cultivating Empathetic Relationships

On the inaugural day of training, participants commenced their journey with a simple yet effective icebreaker—an introduction session where each individual shared their name along with one positive attribute. This exercise not only broke the initial barriers but also set a positive tone for the rest of the sessions. As the day progressed, the trainer delivered thought-provoking discussions by posing fundamental questions such as **"Who is man?"**, **"What sets man apart from other living beings?"** and **"Are you a Spiritual Person?"** These inquiries served as a gateway to deeper exploration, fostering critical thinking and introspection among the participants. Through such engaging interactions, the training day laid a strong foundation for further learning and reflection, setting the stage for a fulfilling and enriching experience ahead.





## Key topics covered include:

**1. Building an empathetic society:** During the training session, participants engaged deeply with the concept of empathy and its pivotal role in nurturing both social cohesion and environmental stewardship. They explored various strategies aimed at fostering empathy within their communities and workplaces, acknowledging its fundamental importance in promoting cooperation and collective action. Emphasis was placed on the profound significance of living by values, fostering a deep connection with the divine amidst the prevalent negativity that often pervades our surroundings. The trainer underscored the necessity of acknowledging God as the ultimate source of positivity in our lives, despite the prevailing discourse often neglecting discussions on the soul. Through thought-provoking discussions and introspective activities including video presentations, participants were prompted to contemplate the importance of aligning their actions and principles with virtuous values. By embracing empathy, compassion, and integrity, individuals can cultivate spiritual harmony, enabling them to experience the presence of the divine in their daily lives.

**2. Resilience in the face of adversity:**

Drawing inspiration from nature, field staff learned about the concept of resilience and its relevance to sustainable development. They reflected on the resilience of ecosystems and indigenous communities, drawing lessons on adaptability and perseverance in the face of environmental challenges.



**3. Group exercise:** During training session, participants were engaged in a group

exercise aimed at exploring the vision of the future they desire to leave for the next generation. Divided into groups of nine, individuals deliberated on the question: ***"What kind of world do we want to leave to our children?"*** Through collaborative discussions, diverse perspectives emerged, highlighting various aspirations and concerns for the future. After thorough deliberation, each group compiled their points, capturing a wide array of ideas and values. The discussion highlighted key points including- ***Green world with zero pollution, Corruption-free world, World of non-violence, Society with gender equality, Equity and fraternity, Empathetic society.*** Subsequently, the trainer facilitated a collective review, where common themes and shared ideals were identified across the groups. This exercise not only encouraged teamwork and cooperation but also provided a platform for participants to articulate their hopes and aspirations for a better tomorrow. The compiled points served as a testament to the collective vision and commitment towards creating a world that is nurturing, sustainable, and prosperous for generations to come.

## Day Two: Restoring the Four-Fold Relationship

On the second day, the session focused on the profound concept of **Earth as our common home**, underscoring humanity's inherent responsibility to safeguard and nurture it as stewards of the five elements. Participants were able to understand the interconnectedness of human existence with Earth's elements—earth, water, air, fire, and ether—emphasizing our symbiotic relationship and shared destiny with the planet.



Further to the discussion the **"5 R" principle—Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Restore**, was highlighted by the Resource Person as a practical framework for sustainable living. Through insightful dialogue and reflection, attendees gained a deeper appreciation for their role in preserving the integrity of our planetary home, recognizing that by honouring the elements, we uphold our commitment to both present and future generations.

Moving forward, field staff was oriented on the concept of the four-fold relationship – with oneself, with others, with nature, and with the divine – and its importance for integral ecology. Through interactive workshops and contemplative practices, they explore the impact of broken relationships on both human societies and the environment.

### Key activities include:

**1. The Four Broken Relationships:** Throughout the session, the facilitator skilfully guided participants in unpacking 'The four broken relationships', fostering a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness

between these broken relationships. By shedding light on these issues, participants were empowered to recognize and address the underlying causes, paving the way for healing and restoration in their spiritual, personal, and communal lives.



Firstly, poverty of

spiritual intimacy was highlighted, characterized by a denial of God's existence and authority, leading to disconnect between individuals and their spiritual essence. Materialism was identified as a significant contributing factor, eclipsing the pursuit of deeper spiritual connections.

Secondly, poverty of stewardship was explored, where a loss of purpose was noted as detrimental to the relationship with oneself and one's role in the world. Participants engaged in discussions surrounding the importance of reclaiming a sense of purpose to mend this brokenness.

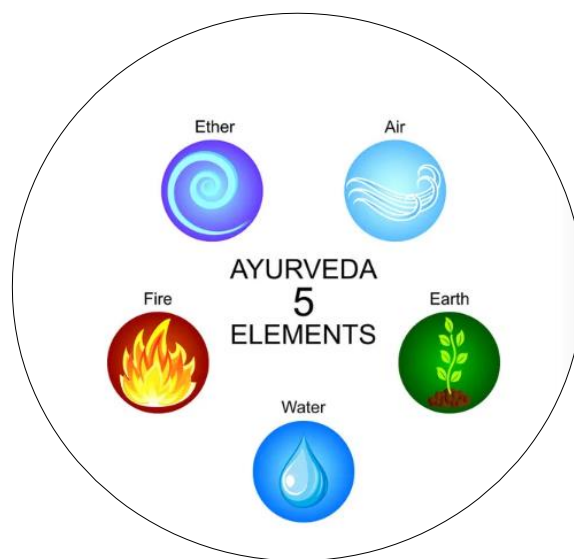
Thirdly, the poverty of community was examined, emphasizing the detrimental effects of self-centeredness and the exploitation and abuse of others. The facilitator led insightful conversations on the necessity of fostering genuine community bonds rooted in empathy, compassion, and mutual respect.

Lastly, poverty of being, characterized by low self-esteem, was discussed as a barrier to establishing healthy relationships with oneself and others. Participants explored strategies for cultivating self-worth and embracing one's inherent value.

**2. Integral ecology and integral human development:** Participants were able to understand the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and spiritual dimensions of human development, recognizing that true progress requires addressing all aspects of human well-being. They explored the principles of integral ecology and integral human development, envisioning a future where human flourishing is in harmony with the natural world.

### 3. The five elements and imbalance ecology:

During the training, the field staff were introduced to the traditional knowledge surrounding the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and ether. They explored how these elements intricately intertwine to sustain ecological harmony and support life as we know it. The facilitator explained the complex relationships between these elements, underscoring their essential roles in maintaining ecosystems and preserving biodiversity. Additionally, the session highlighted the adverse effects of human activities that disrupt this delicate equilibrium. By disturbing natural cycles and depleting environmental resources, such actions not only degrade ecosystems but also disrupt communities reliant on them for sustenance. This exploration enabled the field staff to grasp the profound interconnectedness between human actions and environmental health, fostering a more informed and responsible approach to stewardship of the natural world.



**4. Group Exercise:** The group exercise aimed to '*envision our Earth as we desire it to be in 10 years*'. The groups were engaged in a collaborative discussion to compile various points. The session fostered creativity and critical thinking as each member shared their aspirations for a better world. Through brainstorming and open dialogue, the groups explored ideas ranging from environmental sustainability and renewable energy to social equality and technological advancement. Such as, **collective desire for a pollution-free world, emphasizing the imperative for increased tree plantations and comprehensive water conservation measures.** Participants emphasized the importance of a **meaningful and sustainable use of Earth's resources, advocating for responsible stewardship and mindful**



**consumption practices.** Central to the group's vision was the ***promotion of greenery and biodiversity, recognizing their crucial roles in fostering ecological balance and resilience.*** The exercise encouraged teamwork and mutual respect, ensuring every voice was heard and considered. By pooling all the diverse perspectives and insights, a comprehensive vision of a more harmonious and prosperous Earth for the future was created at the end of the exercise.

### Day Three: Cultivating a Sensitive Heart

As the training program nears its conclusion, field staff focus on the importance of cultivating a sensitive heart as a prerequisite for effective environmental stewardship. Through mindfulness practices and contemplative exercises, they deepen their connection to the natural world and renew their commitment to nurturing the earth.

#### Key activities include:

- 1. Man's selfishness that destroys the world:** During the sessions the participants were oriented and made them realize the destructive impact of human greed and selfishness on the environment, recognizing that the pursuit of material wealth often comes at the expense of ecological integrity and social justice. They reflect on their own values and behaviours, exploring ways to cultivate a mind-set of abundance and generosity.
- 2. Renewing the face of the earth:** Drawing inspiration from spiritual teachings and indigenous wisdom, field staffs were explained about their role as stewards of the earth and agents of renewal. The key focus was on the following:
  - Discernment of the social reality
  - Identification of systems and structures of injustices.
  - Determination of the root cause of the problems affecting the world.
  - Concrete actions in favour of integral ecology and integral human development.
- 3. Moving towards Integral Ecology and Integral Human Development:** During the training session, participants were thoroughly briefed on the concept of moving towards integral ecology and integral human development, emphasizing the holistic development of the individual across four essential faculties: body, mind, heart, and soul. Integral ecology recognizes the interconnectedness between human beings and the environment, advocating for a balanced approach that considers social, economic, and environmental factors. Furthermore, integral human development underscores the importance of nurturing all facets of human existence, ensuring physical well-being, mental clarity, emotional intelligence, and spiritual fulfilment. Through this comprehensive approach, participants gained insights



into fostering sustainable practices that promote harmony within oneself and with the surrounding environment, laying the foundation for a more holistic and fulfilling life.

4. **Universal communion with fraternal love:** During the training session, participants were introduced to the concept of universal communion with fraternal love, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of fostering a sense of kinship and empathy towards others. The training highlighted the significance of transcending boundaries and embracing diversity to cultivate a global community founded on mutual respect and understanding. Through discussions and practical exercises, participants explored ways to promote inclusivity, compassion, and cooperation in their personal and professional lives. By internalizing the principles of universal communion, participants gained valuable insights into building harmonious relationships and contributing to the collective well-being of society as a whole.
5. **The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their linkage:** Participants were explained about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their relevance to integral ecology. They explored the interconnectedness of the SDGs, recognizing that progress towards one goal often depends on progress in others. Through group discussions and case studies, they identify opportunities for integrating the SDGs into their conservation efforts.
6. **Group Exercise:** During the group exercise session, participant's engaged in meaningful discussions surrounding two key questions: **1. What are the some of the action that you need to make in your life- personal, family and working place for caring and protecting our planet earth? 2. How do you help your communities to promote justice, peace and social friendship in caste, gender based, multi- cultural and multi religious country like India?** In response to the first question regarding personal, family, and workplace actions for Earth's conservation, several key strategies emerged. Individuals emphasized the significance of adopting sustainable practices such as reducing plastic usage, conserving energy, promotion of green energy (solar & wind), and advocating for eco-friendly alternatives. Family discussions revolved around fostering an environmentally conscious mind-set among members, encouraging recycling habits, and engaging in nature-centric activities together. In the workplace, suggestions included implementing green initiatives, towards reduction of carbon emissions, and supporting environmentally responsible suppliers.

Addressing the second question concerning community involvement in promoting justice, peace, and social friendship within India's diverse socio-cultural landscape, participants highlighted the importance of fostering inclusivity and understanding.

Strategies discussed encompassed organizing interfaith dialogues, cultural exchange programs, and educational initiatives to foster empathy and mutual respect among different caste, gender, and religious groups. Additionally, participants emphasized the need for advocating for policies that uphold equality and justice for all, as well as actively challenging discriminatory practices within their communities.

Then the facilitator consolidated the diverse perspectives and ideas shared during the discussion to offer a comprehensive overview for wider dissemination and comprehension. By spotlighting actionable steps for





both individual and collective engagement, the aim is to inspire others to contribute to ongoing endeavours towards environmental sustainability and social justice, not only within India but also on a global scale.

In conclusion, the three-day training program serves as a transformative journey for field staff, empowering them to embrace integral ecology as a guiding principle in their work. By cultivating spiritual and social consciousness and transforming relationships, they are equipped to promote sustainable development that honors the interconnectedness of all life forms. With renewed purpose and commitment, they embark on their mission to renew the face of the earth and create a more just and harmonious world for future generations.

### Sharing of learning and Reflection by the participants:

In the culminating session of the training program, each day participants showcased their assimilated knowledge and personal reflections through the creative mediums of poetry, reports, and songs. This innovative approach provided a platform for individuals to express their thoughts and insights in a manner that resonated with their unique perspectives and talents.



Through heartfelt verses, insightful reports, and melodious tunes, participants eloquently encapsulated the essence of their learning journey, touching upon key themes such as empathy, resilience, personal growth, conservation of environment and sustainable development. The atmosphere was filled with inspiration and solidarity as each presentation unfolded, fostering a sense of shared understanding and appreciation among the group. This creative exchange not only reinforced the day's lessons but also underscored the power of artistic expression in conveying profound messages and fostering meaningful connections.

### Session on Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA):

Acknowledging the importance, all staff members received training on Protection Against Sexual



Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), facilitated by Sr. Deepika. The training aimed to familiarize staff with the principles, policies, and procedures governing PSEA, ensuring a comprehensive understanding among participants.

The training session covered key aspects of Protection Against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), including its significance in humanitarian work, understanding exploitation dynamics, organizational

policies, reporting procedures and prevention strategies. Participants gained insights into core principles like dignity, respect, and zero tolerance, while also learning about recruitment protocols, codes of conduct, and disciplinary measures. Clear guidance on reporting suspected cases, confidentiality, and the importance of timely reporting was emphasized.

The staff training on PSEA proved to be a valuable opportunity for enhancing awareness and understanding among the team members. By equipping staff with the knowledge, tools, and resources to address PSEA effectively, the teams are positioned to uphold the organizational values and ensure the safety and dignity of all individuals that we serve.

Annexure:

**Batch wise Photos:**



**First Batch- (15, 16 & 17 Feb 2024)**





**Second Batch- (20, 21 & 22 Feb 2024)**



**Third Batch- (26, 27 & 28 Feb 2024)**