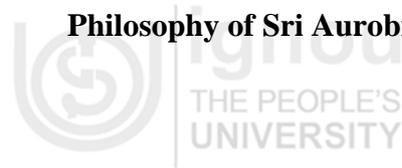


Indira Gandhi National Open University

MPYE – 016

School of Interdisciplinary and

Trans-disciplinary Studies



**Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo**

**Block 2**



**INTEGRAL VISION OF REALITY**



**UNIT 1**

**Basic Unity of Reality**



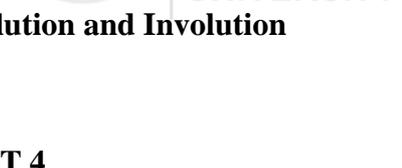
**UNIT 2**

**Synthesis of Spirit and Matter**



**UNIT 3**

**Evolution and Involution**



**UNIT 4**

**Integral Vedanta**



## Expert Committee

Prof. Gracious Thomas  
Director, School of  
Social Work, IGNOU

Dr. Jose Kuruvachira  
Salesian College &  
IGNOU Study Centre  
Dimapur, Nagaland

Prof. Renu Bharadwaj  
School of Humanities  
IGNOU

Prof. George  
Panthanmackel,  
Senior Consultant,  
IGNOU

Dr. Sathya Sundar  
Sethy  
Dept of Humanities  
IIT, Chennai.

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Govt. College for  
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St. Joseph's College  
Jeppu, Mangalore – 2

Dr. Kuruvila  
Pandikattu  
Jnana-deepa  
Vidyapeeth  
Ramwadi, Pune

Dr. Jaswinder Kaur  
Dhillon  
147, Kabir park  
Opp. GND University  
Amristar – 143 002

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CBCI Centre  
New Delhi

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College of Fine Arts,  
Manasagangotri  
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Aligarh Muslim  
University, Aligarh

Dr. Bhuvaneshwari  
Lavanya Flats  
Gangai Amman Koil  
Thiruvannamiyur  
Chennai – 600 041

Dr. Alok Nag  
Vishwa Jyoti Gurukul  
Varanasi

## **Block Preparation**

Units 1-4

Dr. Thomas Padiyath

Good Shepherd Seminary,  
Kunnoth, Kannur, Kerala.

## **Content Editor**

Dr. V. John Peter

St. Joseph's Philosophical College,

Kotagiri, Nilgiris – 643 217.

## **Format Editor**

Prof. Gracious Thomas

IGNOU, New Delhi.

## **Programme Coordinator**

Prof. Gracious Thomas

IGNOU, New Delhi.

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## BLOCK INTRODUCTION

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The adjective 'integral' was first used in a spiritual context by Sri Aurobindo from 1914 onward to describe his own spiritual teachings, which he referred to as *Purna Yoga*. Sri Aurobindo's work has been described as Integral Vedanta. Integral thinkers Teilhard De Chardin, drew inspiration from the work of Sri Aurobindo. Aurobindo's realism with regard to the nature of reality would further mean the acceptance of Reality having two poles: Matter and Spirit. For Aurobindo, Matter expresses itself as the formulation of some unknown Force. It is the ground for the reality of the world. Aurobindo maintains, that the reception of both spirit and matter and the thesis that matter as also Brahman can be unacceptable to a rational mind unless we admit a series of ascending terms (Life, Mind, Supermind, and the grades that link mind to Supermind) between Spirit and Matter.

**Unit 1** discusses elaborately the problem of one and many in Indian philosophy, initiating a serious discussion of this crucial issue in philosophical discourse. We discuss basic unity of existence as advocated by Aurobindo as a solution offered to the above said philosophical issue. The condition of possibility for such an understanding is the realization that the ultimate source of the world is a single reality, namely Brahman. Absolute manifests itself in multiplicity, in matter and form, as the basic substratum of existence.

**Unit 2** briefly explains Aurobindo's philosophical position on basic unity between the finite and the Infinite, matter and Spirit. The unit has a detailed analysis of the unity of Matter and Spirit. How the two constitute a synthetic whole. Aurobindo synthesizes both matter and spirit by transcending the partial views of both the materialist and the idealist in his integral Advaita. A pre-requisite for appreciating the reality of both Spirit and Matter is a correct understanding of the relation between the two.

**Unit 3** speaks of the concepts of Involution and evolution which are not new to Indian philosophy. However the merit of Aurobindo is that he has rediscovered these concepts and presented it also in the light of contemporary understanding of evolution. Moreover, by doing so he has succeeded in finding a viable solution for the problem of matter and spirit and established his realism on a strong rational foundation. In his theory of the involution of the Absolute into the material world we also have Aurobindo's novel response to the problem of the one and the many. In and through these two concepts Aurobindo makes it clear that the world is real (not mere illusion), and the nature of this world is becoming and this becoming is also true in the case of the Absolute.

**Unit 4** is to introduce the integral vision of life and reality by Aurobindo, with a discussion on the fundamental presuppositions of Aurobindo's Philosophy and how the name Integral Advaita is applied to it. One cannot discuss the question of one and many in Indian philosophy in isolation of Vedanta; it calls us to delve into the genius of the masters of Vedanta philosophy. His system is known as integral Vedanta as different from Absolute monism of Sankara,

Absolute dualism of Madhva and Qualified monism of Ramanuja. Though he is rooted in Vedantic tradition he presented his thought applying western categories and thus making it intelligible for people from other philosophical tradition.

