

Spiritual Ecology and Sustainability: Practice and Confluence. Prem Kumari Srivastava, Pratibha Rai & Saumya Shukla. New Delhi: AuthorsPress, 2017, p. 256

Anjali Sharma

Department of Sociology, Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi

The book *Spiritual Ecology and Sustainability: Practice and Confluence* is an Edited Volume, Edited by Dr. Prem Kumari Srivastava, Dr. Pratibha Rai and Ms. Saumya Shukla of Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi. The book is compiled as a series of research articles and essays, 11 in number, which are meticulously written by prudent individuals that bring forth the multidimensional aspects of mankind's relationship with Nature. Beginning with an introduction to spiritual ecology and the prevailing challenges in nature conservation and sustainability, the book gradually develops into a collection of essays that present the religious as well as historical factors associated with nature and environment.

The Foreword of the book, by Prof. Pami Dua, Chairperson, Research Council & Dean, Academic Activities & Projects of the University of Delhi (DU), provides useful insights on the subject. It also highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the book and informs to the readers about the role of the DU Innovation Project which further led to the compilation of this Edited Volume. The Introduction of the book, by Dr. Prem Kumari Srivastava and Dr. Pratibha Rai elaborates on the aforementioned DU Innovations Project and also provides a summary of the research articles and essays included in this book. The authors have also shared notes from their research work, as Memorabilia, towards the latter end of the book.

Duly titled, *Spiritual Ecology and Sustainability: Practices and Confluence*, the book embodies the amalgamation of Earthly entities with transcendent unearthly prevalence. The reader plummets in the deep

depths of contemplation as the existence of ecological connections with mystical powers, shines vibrantly against the dark monotony of materialistic life. The relationship between the ecological system and spirituality, in different spheres of life is exhibited by all the writers in the most eloquent and prompting manner, that any layman would have had a hard time envisioning. The objective of cherishing ancient roots along with preventing future generations from suffering the utmost loss of resources shows the imperativeness of sustainability.

The multifarious essays combine to give out one message, that human beings at fundamental level can protect and prevent the ecological system from disintegrating into nothingness. The concept of shared common future and the importance of sustainability prominently rattle the minds of the readers as epiphany, to contribute their bit, dawns upon them. The very first chapter of the book is a critical analysis of the shortcomings of sustainable development and myths regarding spiritual ecology. The link between spiritual ecology and environmental knowledge is aptly established in subsequent chapters. The Chapter titled, *Ecological Dimensions of Ahimsa: A Historical Peep into Buddhist and Jaina Ethics* is a reflection on coexistence of living organisms and the cultural values embedded in these religions and upholds the idea of respecting life in every form. The relationship between Spirituality and Hinduism is also brought forward in other Chapters. A detailed study of *Dyalbagh Eco-Village* (Uttar Pradesh, India), Tattoo art and spiritual management are some other interesting aspects of the book. The book also provides a meaningful lesson for the corporate sector through the inclusion of the Chapter titled, *Spiritual Ecology and Corporate Practices*.

Email for correspondence: anjalisharmaa16@gmail.com

The Chapter on *Sustaining Spiritual Connect through Education on Wheels* shares the frank and honest insights of the author into the reservations and outcomes of the ambitious *Gyanodaya* Project of the University of Delhi. The role of travelling for breaking the barrier between *outsiders* and *insiders* in culturally diverse India has been written many times before. However, reading this in the light of an exploratory research project further highlights how meaningful and enlightening it can be. The philosophical aspect of nature, and how ecology relates to

spirituality, ultimately leading to self-actualization and striking consciousness is relayed several times in the book. Conclusively, the ubiquity of nature and its strong presence in historical texts broadly bring about the connection between ecology and spirituality. The philosophical perspective enlightens the reader about the indispensable need to protect our roots, not just ecologically but even culturally. The book is a good first pick for readers and researchers planning further research in the realm of spiritual ecology.