

## INTRODUCTION

It has been said that to be a true Aurovilian, *'The first necessity is the inner discovery by which one learns who one really is behind the social, moral, cultural, racial and hereditary appearances. At our inmost centre there is a free being, wide and knowing, who awaits our discovery and who ought to become the acting centre of our being and our life in Auroville.'*

Since the inception of Auroville, when we first arrived here to find a completely barren and lifeless soil and began to plant trees, it was apparent to all that Auroville was continually evolving into ever widening complexity. Although Auroville has a long history of challenges and sometimes overwhelming difficulties, Aurovilians have always placed in the forefront of whatever activity they happen to be engaged with, a deep and personal inner relationship with the Mother.

It may be that for many decades Auroville has been fully focused on building Her material body, which included massive reforestation, land reclamation, schools, centres of health and healing, housing, research and commercial units to ensure that Auroville develops self sufficient economy, as such Auroville is a township and reflects all the elements of contemporary life, and all its problems. Therefore it is difficult to evaluate Auroville's progress in common terms of success or failure as Auroville is meant to be and in fact is, an experiment in forging an 'actual human unity'.

This is by its nature an inclusive process which sometimes means that aspects of self becoming that seems completely contradictorily to our goals. Yet, despite outward appearances even this is a reflection of the Divine in action, of the Mother's force breaking and remoulding us, compelling us to bring to light everything, even things most hidden, to be transformed into a more perfect expression of her Divine Will. It is not an easy process and can not be fully understood by outward observation alone. This process of inner self revaluation is the most intimate experience of all Aurovilians and has been our focus since our inception and remains our challenge and our collective '*sadhana*'.

To paraphrase someone far wiser than ourselves, Auroville is not some unhappy accident but a compelling expression of a decisive Divine Action on Earth.

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## AUROVILLE FOUNDATION

### The Governing Board

The Governing Board consists of seven members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons, who have,

- rendered valuable service to Auroville;
- dedicated themselves to the ideals of life-long education, synthesis of material and spiritual researches or human unity;
- contributed significantly in activities that are being pursued or are envisaged to be promoted in Auroville, including activities relating to the environment, afforestation, arts and crafts, industry, agriculture, humanities, sciences and integral yoga and of two representatives of the Central Government.

The term of the members of Governing Board including Chairman shall be, for a period of 4 years. The Governing Board meets at least twice a year in Auroville.

The general superintendence, direction and management of the affairs of the Foundation is vested in the Governing Board. Its task is to promote the ideals of Auroville, to review and approve basic policies and programs, to secure the proper management of all properties, to prepare the master plan and co-ordinate fund-raising. Most of these functions are executed in consultation with the Residents' Assembly.

### The present members

By a notification of the Government of India, the following persons have been nominated to the Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation for a period of four years :

1. **Dr. Karan Singh** (MP, Rajya Sabha), Chairman;
  2. **Dr. D.P. Chattopadhyaya**, Member;
  3. **Shri Ajoy Bagchi**, Member;
  4. **Dr. (Smt.) Aster Mira Patel** (Resident of Auroville), Member
  5. **Mr. Roger Anger** (Resident of Auroville), Member
  6. **Ms. Malini Parthasarthy**, Member;
  7. **Ms. Mallika Sarabhai**, Member;
  8. **Shri S.K. Ray**, JS & FA, Ex-Officio Member;
  9. **Shri C. Balakrishnan**, JS (Plg.) Ex-Officio Member
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### **The International Advisory Council (IAC)**

The International Advisory Council of the Auroville Foundation consists of not more than five members, nominated by the Government of India from persons who in its opinion are devoted to the ideals of human unity, peace and progress. The members of the International Advisory Council meet once a year in Auroville.

The powers of the International Advisory Council are advisory only. When giving advice to the Governing Board, the Council endeavors to ensure that the ideals for which Auroville has been established are encouraged, and that the residents of Auroville are allowed the freedom to grow and develop activities and institutions which further the aspirations and programs envisaged in the Charter of Auroville.

In November 2004 the following persons were nominated for a period of four years :

1. **Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne**, leader of the Sri Lankan 'Sarvodaya' (Universal Awakening) movement (re-nomination);
2. **Sir Mark Tully**, British Indian-based journalist and commentator, born in Calcutta, has been BBC's India correspondent for 22 years, and awarded a knighthood in the British Queen's New Year's honours list in 2001;
3. **Prof. Diana Eck**, Professor of Comparative Religion and Indian Studies at Harvard University;
4. **Mr. Doudou Diène**, special rapporteur to the U.N. on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and director of intercultural, inter-religious dialogue and peace culture at UNESCO;
5. **Dr. Marc Luyckx Ghisi**, a theologian, researcher in global cultural transformation; previously advisor to the presidents Delors and Santer at the European Commission.

Former members of the International Advisory Council are :

**Ms. Mary E. King**, President Global Action, Inc., Washington;

**Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne**, President Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, Sri Lanka;

**Prof. Kireet Joshi**, former special advisor to Govt. of India

**Prof. Norman Myers**, CMG, environmentalist;

**Prof. Amartya Sen**, Indian Nobel laureate and economist;

**Mr. Maurice Strong**, former Secretary-General UNCED;

**Dr. Ervin Laszlo**, Director World Future;

**Late Shri. J.R.D. Tata**, the foremost Indian industrialist;

**Snr. Federico Mayor**, Director General of UNESCO;

**Mr. Bertrand Schneider**, Secretary General of the Club of Rome;

**Mrs. Hanne Strong**, President Manitou Foundation;

**Late Shri.Nani Palkhivala**, eminent Indian lawyer.

## **The Secretary**

For the day-to-day management of the Foundation, the Central Government appoints a Secretary who functions under the Chairman of the Governing Board. The Secretary is a senior level officer from the Indian Administrative Service or a similar services. The Secretary lives in Auroville. The present Secretary is Shri S.R. Sharma, I.A.S. (Retd.) who was posted as Chief Secretary of Pondicherry during 1996-98 and joined the AV Foundation on August 2nd, 2003.

Previous Secretaries were Shri L.K. Tripathy, I.A.S., Dr. S.C. De, I.P.S., and Shri N. Bala Baskar, I.A.S.

## **MATRIMANDIR**

The year 2004-05 has seen an acceleration for planning and activities towards the expected completion of Matrimandir in 2006. The acceleration continued and, towards the end of 2004-2005, the monthly expenditure had doubled from what it was in October 2003. This means a tripling of the monthly development expenditure. This renewed dynamism and striking increase in work output has changed the atmosphere at Matrimandir for the better. Completion of all structures is now scheduled for 2006 and completion of all gardens on the future Matrimandir Island soon after.

## **Progress of the Work**

- **Matrimandir's outer face**

All golden discs had been manufactured and 80% were in place when it became clear that the water proofing membrane was not sticking anymore to the structure and that it had to be entirely re-done – at the expenses of the German manufacturer who acknowledged that it was his mistake. This implies a tremendous work of removing all discs, re-doing the water-proofing and putting back all discs. All this requires a lot of scaffolding movement and will take two full years. Towards the end of the year, half of the work was complete. As this work started on the north side, it was decided to complete first the north entrance.

- **Inside Matrimandir**

The main work here consists of making and installing an inner skin inside the entire spherical structure. It consists of a fabric (made of glass fibres) stretched on large triangles made of aluminium profiles. This work is progressing steadily, but the final installation has to wait for the end of all dust-producing work and for the completion of the waterproofing.

Marble work progressed well and preparation work for the completion of the twin spiral ramps got over at the end of the year and the work on the ramps themselves is about to start.

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Preparatory work for the modification of the Chamber's ceiling got completed and in March 2005; since then the Chamber is closed to all and work started in it. It will take at least 6 months. This work includes modification work on top of Matrimandir, where a new crane (to be used for maintenance tasks) will also be installed.

Two new AC plants were ordered to replace the existing ones, which had become outdated. Towards the end of the year, work started to remove the old AC plants.

- **Area below Matrimandir**

This year witness a lot of work in this area, which is now almost complete except for the cladding with marble petals of the 'lotus pond' and one radial pathway (out of 8).

- **Twelve large, petals and their meditation rooms**

A first meditation room ("Peace") has been completed, and work in all others has progressed steadily. Very little work remained in the eleven other meditation rooms.

- **Twelve small petals**

The twelfth and last petal has been built.

- **Gardens within the future Matrimandir Island**

Almost all temporary facilities which were located within the future island and its gardens were shifted out to make space for the Gardens. The architect had invited proposals for the design of all Gardens. Several were received and full-scale experiments have started in three of the twelve gardens as well as in the Garden of Unity. Studies for the infrastructure have been completed and the construction of all pathways is well underway.

- **Lake and Parks outside the future Oval Island**

Studies for the Lake are still underway and are progressing steadily. The intention is to take up its construction only after completing all structures on the future island. In all likelihood the Lake will be implemented in a step-by-step approach, and its final size of the lake will depend on the capacity of the Aurovilians to solve the major technical problems which need to be tackled in such an endeavour.

- **New Access Policy**

In March 2005, the Inner Chamber had to be closed to all to allow for renovation work. It is not yet absolutely sure when it will be re-opened for visitor's access, as other inner work like ramps has to be completed.

In the meantime, Matrimandir's 'Access and Usage Group' is receiving all visitors and providing them with all necessary information.

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## THE CITY – CITY OF THE FUTURE

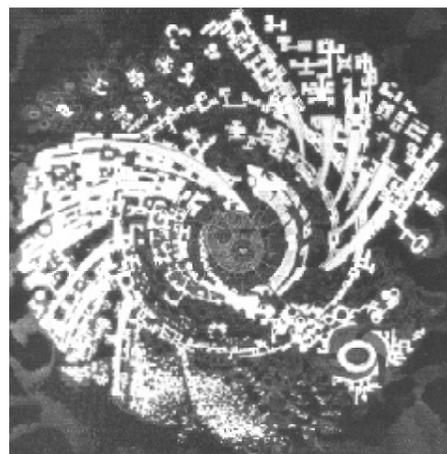
In terms of physical development, Auroville aims at becoming a model of the 'city of the future' or 'the city the earth needs'. It wants to show the world that future realisations in all fields of work will build beautiful cities where people sincerely looking towards a more harmonious future will want to live.

The Mother gave clear parameters for a number of things, while for other things she gave a free hand to Mr. Roger Anger, the French architect she had appointed to oversee the township's physical development.

Through its Master Plan, Auroville wants to break new ground in settlement-planning in such a way as to help other cities, both in India and abroad, which are experiencing high urbanisation trends. Auroville also hopes to demonstrate how 'urban' & 'rural' areas can complementarily develop in an integral and holistic way for their mutual benefit and well-being.

Auroville's approach and its perspective Master Plan is to establish that the economic and human intellectual resources, which normally gravitate to urban areas, can be effectively used to spread development more evenly, and to create an equitable and economically sound society.

Auroville's concept is to build a city that will economise on land needs by introducing development approaches with an optimum mix of densities and appealing urban forms and amenities, while the surrounding Green Belt will be a fertile zone for applied research in the sectors of food production, forestry, soil conservation, water management, waste management, and other areas which assist sustainable development. The results of such innovative methods will be available for application in both rural and urban areas everywhere in support of their development.



In her 1965 sketch of Auroville, the Mother laid down the basic concept for the town. This sketch delineated all the important activity areas that would fulfil the vision of making it a universal township. The concept was as much practical as it was visionary and the way

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in which it is fitting in with today's international, national and local way of seeing things is quite striking.

Much has changed since then. As the land for the construction of Bharat Nivas, the Pavilion of India, could not be bought, Mother approved of the shifting of the zones.

The international zone was relocated towards the west, the residential zone to the south, the cultural zone to the east and the industrial zone moved to the north. Mother also approved the creation of the Auromodèle and Aspiration communities near the village of Kuilapalayam. Around them other communities came into existence. They not only became residential areas, but also came to house small handicrafts units. Thus, a kind of double city gradually developed. One part, located around Kuilapalayam, is now separated from the main city by a large area of village owned land. Some units that settled around Kuilapalayam eventually moved to the Industrial Zone, but many have chosen to stay, a development which has led to two or even three industrial, or rather, economic zones.

## **AUROVILLE'S FUTURE**

### **Auroville Town Planning Office & Centre for Urban Research**

#### **A) PLANNING, ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING & RESEARCH :**

1. Planning activities under the guidance of the Chief Architect, Mr. Roger Anger :
  - City Centre : Conceptual Drawings designed. Album with concept, guidelines, proposals prepared.
  - Road Map : Study of the traffic and roads of Auroville and guidelines.
  - CIRHU : Study proposal.
  - Study for the planning of Kottakkarai Village.
  - Consolidation of lands plans.
2. Training of International and Indian Students :
  - Student of Engineering from Washington University for 3 months on Management of Biological Waste Water Treatment units.
  - Student of Planning & Architecture from Norway for 3 months on city landscaping.
  - Student of Architecture from Manipal University for 4 months on architecture.
  - Student of Architecture from Ahmedabad University for 1 month on management of construction projects.

#### **B) TRAINING WORKSHOPS :**

1. A training programme was conducted by Auroville's Future from 18th to 20th October 2004 by Auroville's Future for ASEM – GTZ and the Central Pollution Control Board. The 3 day workshop was centred around 'Eco-cities in the making'. It allowed the 26 participants coming from municipalities of South India to share
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experiences of the towns where Eco-city project has been taken up by the CPCB and get exposed to the live examples of best practices in Auroville. Therefore, the theoretical presentations were followed by visits to demonstration sites in Auroville in the afternoons.

2. A 2 day training programme was conducted by Auroville's Future in association with Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development & Finance Corporation, KUIDFC & City Managers' Association, Karnataka, CMAK – Bangalore on "Issues and Practices in Integrated Development: Lessons from Auroville".

#### **C) CONFERENCES-TALKS :**

1. 1 October 2004 : Auroville's Future invited the Confederation of Indian Industry to hold their Regional Council Meeting at the Conference Hall of ACUR
2. 17-18 October 2004 : A conference on the archaeological site of Arikamedu near Pondicherry, that had some links with Roman Trade, was organized by the Italian Embassy in New Delhi and the Government of Pondicherry in collaboration with Auroville Centre for Urban Research and the Italian Pavilion.
3. 21-28 February 2005 : Auroville's Future played an important role in the organisation of the International Youth Conference with focus on South Asia countries on the theme 'Youth for Human Unity : Exploration for new values through intercultural and inter-religious dialogue'. The Conference was sponsored by UNESCO, the Indian Council of International Relations and Stichting de Zaaier.
4. 8-9 March 2005 : with the support of the Asia Urbs Programme of European Commission (EC), the Perak State Government (Malaysia) in association with Glasgow City Council and Cornwall County Council (UK); City of Ancona (Italy) and City of Helsinki (Finland) hosted the International Conference "Achieving Innovation and Best Practices in Urban Management" (INNOBP-Urban) at Syuen Hotel, Ipoh City, in the state of Perak, Malaysia.

#### **B) GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (G.I.S.) :**

##### **Completed work :**

- Auroville's Farms: Data collection, analysis and GIS mapping completed.

##### **Ongoing work :**

- Transfer of AutoCad layers into GIS format (total 400 + layers) work completed 10%.
- Cadastral mapping - Superimposing building attributes into GIS mapping.

##### **Training activities :**

- GIS seminars are being offered by the coordinators of GIS in order to build the capacity of Auroville GIS members.
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## **Auroville Planning and Development Council (APDC)**

### **Introduction**

The Auroville Planning and Development Council (APDC) has been dealing with a wide range of issues and topics concerning planning and development of Auroville. The APDC has come up with an outline of the scope of work for the five year development plan containing the parameters and broad lines required for drafting a 5-year or 3000 population plan. Four zonal groups (representing the International Zone, the Residential Zone, the Industrial Zone and the Cultural Zone) as well as the Green Group representing the Green Belt, assist the APDC in its work.

### **Roads**

The tarred access roads to Auroville are narrow and used by an increasingly heavy traffic. Also, an ever larger number of tourists visit Auroville. The increased traffic causes danger to cyclists and motorcyclists. An upgrade of these roads is required.

The dirt roads within Auroville equally pose a problem as traffic is on the increase. The roads are narrow and dusty. Speed breakers have been installed to reduce speed and a new experiment with paver blocks for road surfacing has been approved.

### **Water**

The water situation in the Auroville area is under stress. Auroville has about 250 wells, but their output is decreasing. An international seminar on water in Auroville was held in September 2004. The conference, which received a recommendation from the President of India as well as from UNESCO, dealt with topics such as sharing of information with the public, water issues linked to the bioregion, solutions for sufficient water supply for the Matrimandir Lake, the integration of the larger area with the township.

Further to this seminar the APDC approved a pre-feasibility study on integrated water management for Auroville and its surrounding villages. It will be executed by Aurovilians with the help of Dutch, German, French and Israeli specialists. The focus of this project is how to develop an Integrated Sustainable Water Management for this region with particular focus on :

- setting up a 'modern' integrated water management taking into account ground and surface water resources; storm water and rainwater harvesting techniques; reuse of locally generated waste water as well as waste water originating from nearby Pondicherry; and seawater desalination;
  - an energy and environment-friendly approach;
  - small-scale (rainwater harvesting) as well as large-scale systems (check dams, studying the feasibility of centralised water supply to Auroville settlements and the villages);
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- the difficult environment (farmers using water as if it were an unlimited resource) in order to develop a model approach for the never-ending discussion between drinking water authorities and irrigation/agricultural authorities.
- developing a participatory approach to gain farmers' co-operation (water use friendly irrigation techniques) and people's support for the scheme as a whole;
- Auroville's vast experience in erosion control and forestation as a model.

### **Housing projects**

A survey on collective housing was undertaken by the APDC to analyze the various factors involved in developing collective housing projects

### **Village Development**

The APDC organized a seminar on the development of the neighbouring villages to establish a contact between various bodies interacting with village issues, and to gather data and coordinate future planning. A sanitation project prepared by Harvest for Kottakarai Village was approved by the APDC.

## **FUNDS AND ASSETS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### **1. Introduction**

The Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC) is functioning since 1996 and it is now covered by the rules of Auroville Foundation 1997. The FAMC has taken up several functions related to the management of funds and assets of the Auroville Foundation.

More specifically, the FAMC has, on behalf of the Residents' Assembly, become Auroville's nodal body to :

- a) Recommend the creation and closure of Trusts and Units or other corporate bodies under the Auroville Foundation;
  - b) Recommend the appointment, resignation and removal of Trustees and Executives of Trusts and Units under the Auroville Foundation;
  - c) Define and oversee the functioning of Trusts and Units under the Auroville Foundation;
  - d) Assess the financial viability of Trusts and Units under the Auroville Foundation;
  - e) Address and resolve problems arising with respect to the management of Trusts and Units or the allocation of assets.
  - f) Assess and oversee the financial viability of collective housing and public building projects;
  - g) To manage and allocate housing through the agency of its sub-group, the Housing Service;
  - h) To recommend the sale or exchange of land;
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- i) Approve requests for loans above Rs 5 lakhs;
- j) To formulate policies relating to the use of funds and assets for ratification by the Resident's Assembly;
- k) To create groups and sub-groups to facilitate the FAMC in fulfilling the above functions.

During the Year 2004-2005 the FAMC has discussed and made recommendations on the following issues :

#### **Issues Related to Units and Trusts**

**Unit Trust Agreement & Delegation of Financial Responsibilities:** As the document defining the relationship between the Trusts and the Units under the Trusts has been previously passed and approved by the FAMC and the Governing Board, it was proposed that the Trusts begin to implement it from 01.04.05. However it was also understood that the UTA could not replace the process of applying for Office Orders until such time that this would be approved by the Governing Board.

In the meantime the FAMC received additional feedback on this document and the annexure to this document, which outlines the delegation of financial responsibilities from the Trustees to the Executives of the units, from the newly reconstituted Auroville Board of Commerce.

**CAG Inspection Report :** The latest CAG Inspection Report for the year 2003-2004 was tabled. The number of points raised for the year were far fewer than in previous years. It was observed that this reflected all the effort and progress made by all concerned.

**Replies to CAG Audit Points :** The replies to the audit points were given to the Finance and Administrative Officer to forward to the CAG on behalf of the Auroville Foundation. The points raised will be addressed by the units in the accounts of 2004-05.

**Consolidated Balance Sheet of the Auroville Foundation :** Discussion has been going on with our consultants and Chartered Accountants regarding the format of the consolidated balance sheet. It is felt that the format needs to be adjusted to obtain a clearer picture of the consolidated income and expenditure of the Trusts and Units under the Foundation. The Accounts Coordination Group is taking up the issue of revising the format of the Trust balance sheets to more clearly reflect that all the income of the Trusts is income of the Auroville Foundation.

#### **Issues related to Economy**

**New Economy Group :** A new Economy Group was convened with nine members. The mandate of the Economy Group was approved by the FAMC and will be reviewed in one year's time.

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**Tsunami Relief Coordination Groups :** The FAMC responded to a proposal to formalize the two groups working on project implementation and financial management of tsunami relief donations. FAMC took the responsibility to formally appoint the Auroville Beach Relief group, who are allocating funds for personal maintenance, community infrastructure, house repairs, business losses and personal losses. The second group which, by resolution of Auroville Village Action Trust (dated 30th December 2004), is monitoring relief efforts for the coastal villages in collaboration with local government authorities and NGOs has been established as an activity under the Trust called the Auroville Tsunami Relief Project.

#### **The Development Fund :**

The policy for contributions for non-residential development was decided upon as follows :

- A maximum contribution of 7.5% is to be made on all non-residential building projects:
- 2% to Auroville Fund (when the funds are passing through Auroville Fund),
- 1% to Auroville Planning and Development Council,
- 2% to the Infrastructure Development Fund,
- 2% to Land Fund,
- 0.5% to Archaeology Service (for buildings in the Industrial and International Zones).

The Auroville Planning and Development Council may decide to exempt a project holder from paying a contribution or decide that a lesser contribution can be paid.

#### **Issues Related to Housing**

**Guest House Policy :** This year the Guest Facilities Coordination Group has formulated a policy on issues of accounts and guidelines and will be undertaking a survey of all Auroville guest facilities with an eye to comparing standards. According to the policy all Guest Houses are to channel all income through the Central Fund and receive a budget from which to cover all expenses. The policy was approved.

#### **Issues Related to Community Projects**

**New Pour Tous :** The project holders of the new Pour Tous building coming up next to the Solar Kitchen requested the FAMC to formulate management and policy guidelines for this new community facility. The new facility may be completed by July 2005.

### **VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

#### **Auroville Village Action Trust-Introduction and Background**

The Auroville Village Action Trust was registered in 2000, to oversee several activities pertaining to Auroville's relationship with its surrounding villages. The Trust gives legal form to the informal organisation known as the Auroville Village Action Group, which has been meeting and carrying out activities since 1983.

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The Mother has said in the Auroville Charter that Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual human unity. Auroville Village Action takes this to mean that the relationship to the local villagers is of paramount importance, not only from a humanitarian or expeditious point of view, but as part of our highest goal. Auroville Village Action's programme has been pragmatic and aimed at the villagers themselves : setting up educational programmes for village children and young people, and carrying out development programmes for women, youth, men and the village communities. These programmes have been supported largely by grants from international aid agencies, especially the Department for International Development UK, the European Union, and Rudolf Steiner Foundation USA.

### **Village Action Group**

#### **Community Organisation and Development in the Villages around Auroville**

The Women's Clubs continued to save and repay their loans, and although a few dropped out during the fracas, new clubs have formed and the Savings and Credit programme continues strong, and as well the training programmes and community service projects have picked up. Men's Clubs have continued to carry out community service projects. The supplementary education in village schools was not continued, but the local teachers remain adamant that it should be revived.

The other activities under the Trust were not adversely affected by the difficulties in VAG :

#### **Life Education Centre :**

##### **Vocational Training School for Young Women**

The Life Education Centre project is a 2 year training programme for village teenage girls who have dropped out of school, giving them training in functional skills like Maths, English and Tamil, vocational skills like tailoring, crochet, typing and computers, and social awareness and human interactive skills.

During this year 20 girls attended classes 5 days a week, learning tailoring, computer, stitching and embroidery, in a context of character building sessions in English, Sanskrit, and group discussions about the challenges facing them as young women in a rapidly changing society.

#### **Lively :**

##### **Boutique, Tailoring Workshop and Vocational Training Centre**

In its third year now, Lively provides the possibility for young women from the surrounding villages to get a two year training as saleswomen and at the same time an advanced training in tailoring and English. The surplus profit goes to other women's projects within the AVA Trust.

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**Isai Ambalam :****Research School in Educational Methods and Materials for First Generation Literates.**

Isai Ambalam, which means "place of harmony", develops games and materials for learning, while carrying on a day school for children of the nearby villages from the ages 2-14. In addition to running a daily kindergarten, they involve the parents of pre-school children in teaching them to recognise words in both Tamil and English.

**Mohanam & Svaram :****Community Cultural Centre & Vocational Training**

The youth group which runs the village cultural centre in Sanjeevinagar under the direction of an Aurovilian, this year conducted a kindergarten for 33 children in addition to the evening programmes for village children. The teachers received a one month training from a professional from Mumbai and participated in a three weeks seminar with Regina, a Kindergarten trainer from Austria. A Cultural Heritage Festival involved all the local craftsmen and performers in two days of display which was well attended by local and Pondicherry dignitaries

**Auroville Industrial School :****Vocational Training in Computer and Electronics**

In this year, the Auroville Industrial School, a vocational training centre for computer related skills, has come up on the AVAG campus. Funded by a German ministry grant, a six room new building has been constructed and equipped with computers and electronics materials. Classes began in October 2004, with 25 students from the inland villages and 30 from the tsunami affected.

**AUROVILLE TSUNAMI RELIEF AND REHABILITATION****Livelihood, Eco-Restoration, Shelter, Community Organisation, Communication and Networking**

The relief and rehabilitation activities following the tsunami, with Auroville's immediate response was followed by the consolidation of Auroville's many skills in architecture, settlement planning, eco-restoration, livelihood training, micro-enterprise development, and community organisation under an Auroville Tsunami Relief and Rehabilitation Project, which was subsumed under the Auroville Village Action Trust. The skills of the Village Action Group were immediately put to work in surveying the damages and providing immediately relief, and have continued into the rehabilitation stage, with the establishment of "Paalams" or village reconstruction committees. Temporary shelters have been built. Vocational training for the fisher youth has been provided through the Auroville Industrial School, and women have been trained and engaged in making "Tsunamika" a tiny doll who has become the internationally known mascot of the project. Seedlings of indigenous trees have been grown for village communities to plant in designated plots along the coast. A

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Knowledge Centre has kept Auroville in constant connection with other relief efforts up and down the coast of Tamil Nadu, created a website and supplied GIS mapping of the coast, enabling the government to be informed by their fact-finding and experiences among the fisher-people themselves. Auroville has been a nodal agency for NGO coordination in Villupuram District.

## **ARULVAZHI EDUCATION CENTRE**

### **Part 1 : School Statistics :**

The school is in 4 sections :-

- A kindergarten group (4 to 5 yrs) of 25 children in the mornings.
- A body awareness and cultural expression group (6 to 12 yrs) of 40 children in the evenings.
- Morning Yoga group(6 to 16 yrs) of 20 children.
- Puduulagam of 20 children in the night.(age group 12-16 yrs).
- The total numbers of beneficiaries are 105.

### **Part 2 : About the Activities :**

#### **1. Our Aim/Mission :-**

Arulvazhi means in Tamil "Way of Grace". This Education Centre situated in the Auroville community of Promesse, is basically an experiment providing for the growth of children in the age group 4 to 16 years in the light of the teachings of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

#### **1st Group Kindergarten (4-5 years)**

For the first group, importance is given to the development and use of the sense organs. Along with this is added the cultivation of discrimination and of aesthetic sense, the capacity to choose what is beautiful, harmonious, simple, healthy and pure.

#### **2nd Group (6-12 years)**

For the second group apart from free hand exercises, sports and games, special emphasis is laid on asanas. The children are encouraged to practice and develop the indigenous forms of art, folk songs, stage plays etc.

Computer education is started for the children from the age of 9 years onwards.

#### **Puduulagam**

Puduulagam : The Puduulagam children attend games, academic and computer education classes from 5pm to 8.30PM.

#### **Yoga**

Yoga asana classes are conducted from 6 AM to 7:30 AM, in which many children (6 to 18 yrs) participate. Girls are given equal importance as boys in all respects.

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There is a leadership training programmed for youth (18 to 21 years), who help in the Centre's programmes. They are encouraged and given facilities to improve their academic and other qualifications.

## 2. Highlights :-

- Arulvazhi Education Centre is primarily catering to the need of the rural population.
- "India can best develop herself and serve humanity by being herself and following the law of her own nature. This does not mean, as some narrowly and blindly suppose, the rejection of everything new that comes to us in the stream of Time or happens to have been first developed or powerfully expressed by the West. Such an attitude would be intellectually absurd, physically impossible and, above all, unspiritual; true spirituality rejects no new light, no added means or materials of our human self-development. It means simply to keep our centre, our essential way of being, our inborn nature and assimilate to it all we receive, and evolve out of it all we do and create." (Sri Aurobindo in "The Renaissance in India") As the Mother has said in one of her messages. "The division between 'ordinary life' and 'spiritual life' is an outdated antiquity." (The Mother).
- The captains are continuing "The English through Savitri" classes by Shraddhvan and also improving their knowledge of computer science applications.
- Festivals like Pongal, Tamil New Year's day, Navarathri, Deepavali, Christmas are celebrated. The children are made aware of the inner and outer significance of these festivals.
- A Tamil Book, 'Annaiyin Arulasigal' which is a collection of talks by five Aurovilians about their interaction with the Mother, which is of great guidance value, is brought out this year.

## Other Highlights :

- The teachers and captains went on an educational tour to the temple city of Madurai, and land's end of Kanyakumari. Another group went on tour to Tiruvannamalai and Gingee hills on an environmental exploration.
  - Arulvazhi participated in the Independence Day programme in Bharat Nivas by performing an invocatory dance to the Goddess of Learning.
  - Ganesh Chaturthi was celebrated. .Ganesh is the bringer of prosperity, chasing away the impediments. In Tamilnadu also this is celebrated in a grand manner. In cooperation with the village, a celebration was held in Arulvazhi also.
  - In October, 2004, the 20th anniversary of Arulvazhi school was celebrated, with the Secretary of the Auroville Foundation, being the chief guest. Demonstration of difficult yoga asanas, dance programmes by students were highlights of the day.
  - On Republic Day, the children performed at Bharat Nivas a dance to the famous Annamacharya song extolling the glory of the Feet of the Lord.
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- The students and captains visited the Bird Sanctuary and Vedanthangal and saw the migrated Siberian birds. In Chennai, among other things, they visited the Birla Planetarium and viewed the night sky in Chennai with reference to Jupiter. They also saw a scientific demonstration showing how a man can lie down on a bed of nails without hurting himself, how a leaf turns stone hard that even a hammer cannot break it, and other interesting experiments, with corresponding scientific laws explaining the phenomena.

The bigger children performed a programme with appropriate physical movements and costumes "Four aspects of the Mother" by Sri Aurobindo read by the Mother. This programme was performed before the village collective at the time of the village temple festival. The deeper layers of the public were touched and they viewed the programme with rapt attention and in silence. This was an indication to us that the deeper layer of India is manifestly raising to the awareness of the Universal Mother slowly but surely.

#### **Pudulagam :**

A part of Arulvazhi school activities, 20 students studying from 6th to 10th standard in outside schools are availing the facility from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

Extra curricular activities like, games, art expressions, general knowledge quiz are encouraged. The students learn about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and other national leaders. They visited the house in Pondicherry where Sri Aurobindo stayed incognito when he first came to Pondicherry. Puduulagam and Arulvazhi children participate in many combined programmes and tours.

Arulvazhi School is in existence from 1985 and many present students are the children of our former students. Arulvazhi has been a silent catalyst in human unity between the village and Auroville, the international city, which is reflected in the overall growth of the village.

### **ILAIgnARKAL EDUCATION CENTRE**

#### **1. Publication :**

- 12 issues of monthly Tamil news letter published regularly. Well received by a wider circle of readers. Most articles are on Culture, History, Sri Aurobindo, The Mother and Auroville, bilingual language programme, literary letters and alike.

#### **2. Lecture :**

- 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th April every Friday Chevalier. Dr. Mrs. Madhanakalyani, Tamil, French scholar, Pondicherry gave lectures on relationship between French and Tamil literature, culture and heritage in SAWCHU building. Our school students, Aurovilians and guests benefitted.
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**Extension work – Tsunami :**

17th Jan-2005 Youth group counselling in Ilaignarkal New campus, old student Kumar + 15 youths from Chinnamudaliyar chavadi - (Tsunami Victims) from fishing community kuppam, came for sharing their grief and plan an action programme. We have reported on Tsunami victims to SAIER.

**Overcome :**

1. Financial difficulties - remain same but pinched strongly.
2. Building construction mostly done. Minor improvement is happening. Less noise and less dust. But more financial assistance is required to make the space beautiful, harmonious and improve the utility side.

**Our important goals :**

- Goal** : To publish research materials into booklets to disseminate.  
**Comments** : Achieved.
- Goal** : To complete the new school campus  
**Comments** : Got the completed physical structure but yet to do the finishing touches.
- Goal** : To organize vocational training programmes i.e., computer training, tailoring, gardening, painting-achieved with utilization of available space and equipment.  
**Comments** : we could create space and materials for vocational training to some extent but we need more expertise in the relevant subjects – for which we need more funds for maintenance and salaries.

**PALMYRA - RURAL DEVELOPMENT****Women Self Help Groups (SHGs)**

As of now 90 SHGs comprising of 1679 women were formed within a period of 4 years. The process of formation of new SHGs is also continuing. As of March 2005, these 80 SHGs have a total savings to the tune of Rs. 55 Lakhs. Based on the strength of savings, repayment performance and reputation of SHGs, line departments have sanctioned a total sum of Rs.114 lakhs as first and second credit linkages and 97 lakhs disbursed so far to different SHGs in different stages. 90% SHGs are very prompt in their repayment. It is highly appreciable to note that the SHGs are repaying the subsidy portion of the loan also duly considering the suggestion of Palmyra for enhancing their future savings to a large extent in a short period.

**Health Program**

General health check up program organized by Federation with the help of Palmyra to Pondicherry Institute of Medical Science (PIMS) hospital from 13 to 15 September 2004 and 9, 10, 11 – March 2005. There were 203 women participated in the camp.

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### **Micro Finance**

Based on the performance of federation in upgrading the SHGs in all respects of their growth, a regional bank has sanctioned a loan amount of Rs. 10 Lakhs to the federation which is being used for lending to its SHGs. The 3% difference in the interest rate between the bank to federation and federation to SHGs may help the federation to a little extent to meet out its organizational expenses.

### **Construction of New Building for SHGs under ICEF Project**

The ongoing Palmyra – ICEF project provides Rs.5 lakhs for the construction of a building for the occupation of federation and its activities. The federation has readily consented to bear the land cost for the building (which may be in the order of Rs. 1 Lakh) with a decision to provide the same from the major unclaimed fund of women's self security scheme available with them.

### **Women's Own Bank**

The federation has an idea on formation of rural women's own bank in the year 2005. After seeing the SEWA organization in Gujarat, the federation members are interested to form women's own bank. SHGs are paying 5% of their savings amount to their federation. The federation has mobilized Rs. 3 Lakhs within a period of 3 months as of April 2005. The mobilization is continuing with their own target of Rs. 4.5 lakhs which is 10% of their savings of Rs. 45 lakhs.

### **Women Pattadar Groups**

The 19 WPGs comprising of 355 members functioning in 13 tank commands covering an area of 556.46 acres of wet land and 686.14 acres of dry land. The land holdings of the above 19 WPGs are located in all the reaches namely, head, middle & tail with the proportion of 30%, 45% and 35% respectively.

### **Other Activities**

- Contribution for Kuilapalayam Well Repair.
- Bed-sheets have been provided to leprosy handicapped poor needy patients from different villages through Hemaric Rural Centre.
- Regular art class for village youngsters.
- Awareness Theater Play on Tsunami by Yatra School of Arts.
- Thailapuram Health Centre - van charges for polio vaccine distribution.
- Construction of toilet for SWEET Organisation, Veedur.

### **Health Service in the Village**

In this year we have shifted our health services from Thenkodipakkam to Kilkoopathakkam village near Kilianur. Presently there are between 30 to 35 patients treated

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per day. Out of this 5 to 10 cases are usually somewhat serious while the rest are minor accidents. The age of patients varies between 6 months to 80 years, coming from different social backgrounds.

Here also we are continuing our nutrition programme. Its beneficiaries are children and ailing patients which are coming to the Centre for treatment. The food consists mostly of indigenous nutritious grains such as ragi, kambu, dried fruits, palm sugar and ayurvedic food supplements. This goes a long way in supporting the healing and general health conditions of the people who need it most.

### **CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The Centre for Development of Physical Education held a basketball coaching camp for 2 weeks from 1st December till 15 December 2004 at New Creation and Aspiration basketball grounds. There were approximately 60 participants, boys and girls who attended morning and evening sessions. In connection with this camp the following material was purchased :

- Basketballs
- Basketball nets
- Basketball shoes
- Uniforms

Some minor repairs were done on both grounds to enable the conduct of the activities.

A coaching camp allowance was given to some of the younger participants. An all-Auroville league was then held at Certitude basketball ground between the 16th December till 28th December 2004. About 100 boys & girls, men & women participated.

The high level of some of our students enabled 5 of our boys and 8 of our girls to get selected to represent Pondicherry State in Ludhyana, Punjab, for the Senior National Basketball Championship held between 22nd December 2004 and 4th January 2005.

The Centre for Development of Physical Education also held a Volley-ball coaching camp at New Creation Playground from 1st November till 10th November 2004 for about 24 participants purchasing the sports goods required for the same.

### **HEALTH ACTIVITIES**

#### **Auroville Health Centre**

In Auroville, the first and primary health care institution is the Auroville Health Centre, which runs a programme of basic curative, preventive and rehabilitative services. Recognised as a Mini Health Centre by the Tamil Nadu State Government, it is equipped with basic medical facilities and staffed by an international team. It serves the Auroville community as well as about 200 patients daily from the villages at its headquarters near Aspiration and its seven sub-centres. A team of 30 local women trained as village health workers serve supportively in 17 villages, giving first aid, home cures and basic health education.

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The Auroville Health Centre also runs a 10-bed in-patient facility handicapped children's day-care centre, a medical lab, an X-ray facility, a pharmacy and a small medicinal plant garden, and offers several preventive health programmes to village women and children.

The Auroville Health Centre traces its humble beginnings to 1969, when the Mother allocated Rs. 5,000 to start a dispensary in a thatched hut in the area now known as Douceur. The community of Aspiration was not yet built. There were hardly any Aurovilians living in the area at that time, and the dispensary was created mainly to serve the villagers from nearby Kulapalayam. The dispensary expanded rapidly. By the end of 1973 a permanent structure, designed by Piero, had been built with donations from a Parsi lady (Ms. Wadia), the Government of India and Auroville.

### **Sub-Centres in the Bio-Region**

Gradually the Health Centre extended its activities to other villages. Today, there are six sub-centres where daily wound dressing is done and where once a week a doctor from the Health Centre gives consultations. In 16 other villages, health workers trained in the Health Centres provide first aid, calling on the Health Centre in emergency cases. The Health Centre is also active in providing education. It makes high-quality documentary video films that inform the villagers on issues such as hygiene, waste disposal, AIDS and alcoholism, and stages plays under its programme 'Health Education through Drama'.

### **Team of Doctors and Nurses**

Many people have helped to develop the Health Centre, but four doctors deserve special mention: the late Dr. Satyabratha B. Sen, Dr. Kamla Tewari, Dr. Lucas and Dr. Assumpta. While Dr. Sen originally started the Centre, the latter three took, over the years, not only charge of the running of the Centre with the help of a sturdy team of well trained Western and Indian Aurovilian nurses, but also raised funds to expand its activities and extend the building. They also built the Health Centre staff quarters, and gradually a community health programme took shape.

## **AUROVILLE HEALTH SERVICES – HEALTH RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

### **Introduction :**

This unit began its fourth year of operations for health resources management in Auroville. The following is the overview of its activities at a glance.

The work can be categorized broadly as drinking water safety, food safety through hygiene, community health awareness, fund-raising for health and administrative office to co-ordinate, evaluate and report on the activities.

The field of work for the unit remains in particular to the township of Auroville carried out by a team of seven workers from the local areas with on-the-job training.

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The paradigm remains learning by doing, and all the workers are given maintenance or stipend with constant capacity building exercises.

The work categories are health management, public relations, graphic design, laboratory screening, health instruction in the bi-lingual mode, office assistance, data entry, research analysis, fundraising, nursing assistance, info-database management and health infrastructure development.

### **Drinking Water Safety :**

Completion of the Good Drinking Water for the Community of Auroville towards prevention of water-borne diseases with installation of 24 water purifier cum bio-dynamizer units (by the time the accounts are audited) at 24 community points including AV Bakery, AV Dental Center, AV Health Centre, Kottakarai consumers complex, Unity Pavilion, Ilaignarkal School, Sangam Community, Life Education School. The systems were maintained and upgraded with Reverse Osmosis where the tds quality for drinking was not within acceptable limits as well as ozonization of the storage chambers to improve the prevention of microbial growth. Monthly tests were carried out to monitor the drinking water quality. Reports and water use instructions were prepared in bi-lingual mode. Slide-shows were offered to school children when asked by science teachers at Town Hall. Background research database for standards of drinking water continues to be updated for use. A survey in the water consumption for drinking by Aurovilians was carried out.

### **Food Safety through Hygiene Instruction :**

More than forty food facilities in Auroville participated in the Sante Pour Tous organized food safety through hygiene instruction program in our living classrooms series. This was year two after introducing the concepts of hygiene in the first year through a designed program of surveys coupled with twenty steps of hygiene and nutrition in relation to food safety for prevention of food-borne diseases. A liaison was established with the HACCP movement of WHO and FDA to follow optimal proforma for food safety in the tropics. A proposal was submitted for funding to create a health safety mobile to take the movement to the village through a mobile exhibit and audio-video.

Totally around three hundred people saw the slide show - Let Us Do It - companioned by a booklet.

Surveys were done with in situ demonstrations of correct methods and ideal processes.

### **Community Health Awareness**

7th APRIL was observed as Road Safety Day in alliance with WHO when 5000 leaflets on road safety instructions in bi-lingual mode prepared, printed and distributed by AVHS team on the East Coast Road.

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MAY was preparation for community health awareness programs with VCRC and Dept of Public Health, Pondicherry with participation in a seminar on management of filarial complications.

A translation of a First Aid Book was undertaken with the help of Mr. Shankar from Last School.

JUNE was preparation for a mass exercise in organic farming awareness with an exhibition.

JULY two weeks at the Pitanga Hall, exhibition on the book set for organic farming.

AUGUST with Ahumcaara a talk on health and organic farming in Chennai with release of the book for organic farming - Moments of Magic, From the treasure Garden.

SEPTEMBER 16th was observed as the World Ozone Day with the IT Power contest for school children with three boys from the primary section of New Creation school who won the face painting competition for best messages on ozone preservation in Pondicherry.

Along with a concept of KIDSAVE movement in all the schools of Auroville to link health activities at an early age with environmental awareness.

DECEMBER and JANUARY was outreach for tsunami for drinking water safety in the affected villages in relation to Auroville.

FEBRUARY was preparation for Chennai exhibition on Nature in Auroville - promoting awareness of environment for health with art exhibits contributed by Auroville artists.

MARCH with the exhibition at Amethyst Hall in Chennai.

Two community presentations were offered at the Town Hall for better public participation.

Preventive Medical Services at the Multi-Purpose Health Centre as a sample epidemiologic data base for clinical correlations with environmental causation and nutrition in the area.

### **Fund-raising for Health**

The following activities were completed to support fund-raising for health - compilation of a 'health in auroville' presentation which aspires to present the whole view of all the health activities in Auroville; exhibitions; public talks with PowerPoint presentations; global outreach through mail; nationwide appeal to donors; preparation of Hundis; preparation of letter appeals through cds.

### **Co-ordination**

A full four system Local Area Network with printers, scanners, fax and easy international dialing for fundraising; seven computer literate human resources for data entry, dissemination of information to the community on health matters as and when asked for; support to the

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formation of Auroville Health Board, an administrative decision -making tool for health matters in Auroville; donor data base; info data base management for research and studies in health and life sciences; accounting cost-management practices for services development; improving capacity skills in health education materials preparation and dissemination.

### **Community health programmes in the surrounding villages.**

Apart from basic health care services, the Health Centre team is overseeing the following activities, or has been instrumental in starting them off :

- training village women as Village Health Workers and supervising their work;
- carrying out surveys on problems like filariasis and following up with treatment programmes;
- carrying out water surveys and pushing for the necessary remedial action on wells and tanks;
- working with the schools on health education and carrying out health checks on Auroville and village children via the schools;
- producing health educational videos and arranging health education dramas in the nearby villages;
- overseeing rehabilitative care of polio-affected children in 20 villages;
- organising the construction of public toilets and water supply facilities in the villages;
- maintaining the 10-bed in-patient facility plus a physio-ergotherapy gymnasium for handicapped children.

### **At present**

At present the Health Centre treats over 30,000 patients a year, 10% of whom are Aurovilians. It has become a major task to raise the funds to run it. Last year, we opened four beautiful nursing rooms for Aurovilians and villagers. We have a laboratory with all facilities, an X-ray machine and a small operating theatre. There are qualified doctors available during working hours and a nurse on duty around the clock.

### **AUROVILLE DENTAL CENTRE**

For more than 20 years, the Auroville Dental Centre has provided oral health care service for more than 25,000 people living in the surrounding rural area of Auroville.

The originality and efficiency of this Centre is based on a new universal Concept applied in dentistry – the "Zero(Ø) Concept" – a human-centered Concept or Health-oriented Concept.

The 3 basic keys are the following :

- **Zero Concept**

Zero (Ø) represents symbolically Health. Ø Health is absence of need for care.

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- **Proprioception**

Proprioception is the instinctive logical response of the body to perform an act in open space. It is common to all human beings.

- Global terms are used for easy and precise communication :
  - break linguistic barriers
  - short the time reaction of brain
  - less risk of errors

In short, this method is universal and applicable everywhere in the world, - even in the most primary conditions - a real breakthrough in acquiring dental skills.

The facilities of the Dental Centre consist of :

- A modern clinic in Protection, with the appropriate Japanese equipment for 3 dentists and 1 hygienist who treat Aurovilians and visitors patients from outside the Auroville area.
- A training Centre on Ø Concept .
- An additional Dental Clinic at the Aspiration Health Centre serving the surrounding village population.
- 12 sub-centres in the bioregion of Auroville

Thanks to the financial support of foreign donations and NGOs, the Auroville Dental Centre has also developed in collaboration with the Auroville Health Centre a network of 18 village women trained as dental hygienists working in 12 sub-centres to promote hygiene, education, prevention, and to provide basic dental care and medical dressings. These health workers provide "Art technique" (Atraumatic Restoration Treatment).

This painless and simple manual technique is at the disposal of non-professionals in the most basic conditions (even with no electricity, no running water).

Recommended by the WHO, this method is used in more than 90 developing countries with more and more positive results. Stopping early caries will avoid more costly dental care in a clinic, this being unaffordable to most of the poor populations, as well as the related health problems due to a lack of hygiene and to malnutrition: digestive and intestinal troubles (parasites), low resistance to infections, etc...

Other current and planned activities of the Dental Centre include :

- Check for early detection of caries: aimed at the children attending all the local schools which included annual check-ups and regular treatments at low cost price (each Rs. 10 only) as well as AV school children supported by the Central Fund.
  - Curative treatments beyond the capacities of Health Workers are referred to the dental clinic of the Health Centre and patients are brought in with the Dental Centre van.
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- Oral health education.
- Welcoming for dentists and specialists.
- Progressive implementation of Dental insurance for the surrounding population

Through the knowledge and the field experience gained over the years by its staff, the initiatives of the Auroville Dental Centre have the potential to become an example in India and across the world :

What could be done in rural and disadvantaged areas in relation with oral and general health to observe at medium and long term a reduction of the cost of health, especially for the children who carry the future?

#### **Rural Dental Action in India**

- Project holder AV Dental Centre
- Objective To continue and expand the ongoing pilot project with 18 local women as dental/medical nurses in 12 surrounding subcentres promoting education, prevention and basic treatment of all the bioregion of Auroville covering 25,000 villages as an example to be duplicated.

#### **Dental Training/Research Centre in India**

- Project holder Auroville Dental Centre
- Objective To Create an International Dental Training/Research Centre to spread out throughout India the Zero Concept in dentistry for rural population by building a training-cum-accommodation facilities for students and trainers.

### **AUROVILLE CENTRE FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND AURORE TRUST.**

#### **Auroville Water Seminar**

In September 2004, Auroville Centre for Scientific Research and Auroville Water Harvest hosted an International Seminar on Sustainable Water Management for the bioregion. The seminar received the endorsement of UNESCO under the HELP (Hydrology for Environment, Life and Policy) Basin Program and received support through an encouragement letter and a visit from the President of India,, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

The Kaluvelly-Pondicherry coastal sedimentary basin, has been accepted as one of the new catchments of the UNESCO HELP Basin Program. Under this program, coordinated jointly with a team of French scientists, the basin is used as a pilot area to create a comparable framework for integrated water management with a focus on studying the relatively unknown processes and dynamics of aquifer salinisation in this basin and ways of remediation with involvement of all the stakeholders.

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### **Visit to Pondicherry and Auroville from the President of India**

On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the merger of Pondicherry with the Indian Union, on 1st November 2004, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India visited Auroville. A special report on the water situation in the bioregion was presented. His main interest was the area of research on seawater intrusion into the main aquifers and the remedial actions done through several Auroville's units.

The President, during his talk to the Pondicherry Parliament, gave full support to Auroville's work and emphasized the need to complete the work carried out so far.

"I understand that in Auroville, a UNESCO endorsed International Seminar brought out the problem of seawater ingress into fresh water aquifers in Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu. It is essential to formulate a 20-year Integrated Water Management Plan based on further detailed studies, and then implement the Plan, in an integrated manner."

With a renewed interest among regional stakeholders, the acceptance of Kaluvelly-Pondicherry coastal sedimentary basin under the UNESCO HELP Basin Project and Presidential support, the vision for an Integrated Water Management Programme within the bioregion can look forward towards implementation.

### **Ashden Award for Aurore**

Aurore, the commercial trust linked with Centre for Scientific Research has won one of this year's five Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy, which highlights and reward outstanding renewable energy projects around the world.

Of the total of 5 major awards, four are reserved for overseas projects, and one for a UK-based project. The former are intended for community-level renewable energy projects in rural areas of the developing world, and aim to identify outstanding projects that are helping to alleviate poverty, improve quality of life and protect the environment, while remaining fully responsive to existing cultural values. The winning projects have to have an exemplary value that can encourage the use of sustainable sources of energy in similar contexts, and demonstrate the potential for dissemination. By winning one of these awards, which received wide press, BBC-radio and TV coverage, Auroville has not only gained international recognition for its work in the field of sustainable energy practices and renewable energy development, but has also at the same time brought kudos to India, its host nation.

### **Background to the award : the work of Aurore**

As rural communities in the developing world face an increasingly difficult battle against climate change, deforestation and pollution, the case for renewable energy – especially in areas that have no electricity supplies – becomes ever stronger.

Traditionally, poverty-alleviation has been linked to schemes offering food, clothing and shelter. There is a growing understanding, however, that poverty can also be alleviated

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or even eradicated by providing better and more dependable energy, specifically energy provided from renewable sources. Renewable energy (RE) systems in India tend to be expensive, not widely available, and, where basic maintenance is neglected, often unreliable.

The promoters passionately believed that renewable energy represents the future. Over the years the team and its collaborators came to understand that one of the best ways of disseminating RE more widely was for them to become an Energy Service Provider which promotes and networks with locally-based RE enterprises. One of the advantages of local energy production over traditional centralized power generation is that it provides employment to people from the local community while being sensitive to their specific needs for power.

Specifically, Aurore has developed expertise in procuring RE systems and optimizing their integration, promoting and incubating new enterprises and obtaining subsidies, credit and soft loans for end-users at both micro-credit and institutional levels. All this has been made possible with the support of the Ministry for Non-renewable Energy Sources (MNES) and the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA).

The projects it has been involved with, either directly or in a support capacity, include the installation of over 1,025 solar PV pumping systems in 11 States of India working with network partners Sahjeevan and SELCO and suppliers like Tata-BP and BHEL; project coordination for distribution of 8,700 solar home systems; the distribution of 6,000 solar lanterns in Ladakh for Tata-BP Solar, a leading solar company in India; and the hiring out of solar-powered lanterns to small trades-people with Sunmin, an enterprise promoted on Chennai beach. The trades-people benefit because they pay less for their power now, because it is more reliable and the better quality of light provided attracts more customers.

Another project where an innovative approach has brought the benefits of RE systems to the disadvantaged is based in rural Gujarat. Here people living in scattered communities have had to pay up to Rs.150 a month just to obtain drinking water, while the local farmers were barely able to eke out a living. Working with a local NGO, Sahjeevan, Aurore helped to provide technical and management support and obtain the financing to install solar PV street lights, home-lighting kits and pumps. The solar pumps were hired out to the farmers at less than 30% of the annual cost they incurred for running their diesel pump-sets. The result is that the community now has an assured supply of good drinking water, small farming has become viable again because of the saving in costs, and better home lighting has resulted in extended working hours leading to a richer cultural life and increased income opportunities.

## **AUROVILLE OUTREACH MEDIA**

### **Overview of activities April 2004 – May 2005**

The Auroville OutreachMedia team comprises various long-time Aurovilians and has recently been extended. The team now consists of : Ann Riquier (France), Auroasha Pouyet

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(France), Fabienne Marechal (future coordinator of the team, – France), HyunSook (Korea), Mauna van der Vlugt (outgoing coordinator of the team, – the Netherlands), A. Kodandaraman (Raman, India), Tapas Bhatt (India) and Tim Wrey (U.K.). The team provided the following services between April 2004 and April 2005.

Services of information, accompaniment, co-production and follow-up for journalists, photographers, film & video crews.

Most professional press folk approach the AV OutreachMedia team well beforehand via its (new) email address outreachmedia@auroville.org.in, which is published in AV's publications and websites. After submitting due credentials, synopses and other relevant details of their proposed films/reportings/documentaries on Auroville, and when the OutreachMedia team has been duly convinced of the bona fide credentials and intentions of the applicants, an official request for filming permission is made both to the Auroville Foundation via Auroville the Outreach Media team as well as to the official Indian authority in the country from which the application originates. Once authorisation from there and from Delhi has been given, scenarios are being worked out with the help of the team (oftentimes via email and phone) and contact is made with key persons of the fields of interest concerned.

Once the press folk arrive in the township, a good deal of the production details for the article/film/reportage has already been formulated out and efficient working can take place. Copies of subsequent film reportages on video and of magazines carrying articles are received in due time and handed over to the Auroville Archives.

#### **Main services rendered in 2004-2005 :**

- TV documentary on Sri Aurobindo, - Sri Anjan Bose for Doordarshan, India
- TV documentary on Auroville, - Rossija, Russian State Television
- Reportage on Auroville, - Ananda Vikathan, Deepavali Special issue, Tamil Nadu
- Reportage on Auroville, - Daily Telegraph Magazine, U.K.
- Reportage on Auroville, - Casa Bruta, Japan
- Radio programmes on Matrimandir, English and Tamil versions, - All India Radio
- Short TV documentary on Auroville, - 'Un oeil sur la planète', France2
- Short TV documentary on Auroville, - German TV, ZDF

Please know that news reporters arriving for Auroville's Tsunami Relief & Rehabilitation work, have been taken care of by the Auroville Tsunami team itself.

#### **Pre-visits**

Apart from these major publications, the team has also catered to a good number of individuals who are/were here for a pre-visit in order to orient themselves, which may or may not result in future documentaries for non-public purposes, articles in magazines,

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guides or university papers etc. Auroville OutreachMedia may also send (via hard copy or email) photos requested by Indian or foreign publications, after due investigation of the material they are to illustrate.

### **Auroville Outreach Newsletter**

This publication, produced on a quarterly basis since its start in 1999, aims to summarise the 'good news' arising from within Auroville. It is now sent to some 1,300 addressees, including AVI Centres; Central, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry government officials; local officials; Governing Board and International Advisory Council members; NGOs; funding organisations; certain Embassies & Consulates in Delhi, Mumbai & Chennai; and various donors and friends of Auroville in India and abroad.

### **Outreach via Auroville Visitors Centre**

A member of the Outreach team is a regular contributor at the AV Visitors Centre, interacting with the many hundreds of daily visitors from around India and abroad, introducing the Auroville project to them by way of a video, answering questions, guiding and helping people as required. He has recently also joined the Matrimandir reception team.

### **General Information**

As the previously established outreach@auroville.org.in address is published as a general info address in several of the Auroville publications, serves as a quite established, general resource address for the Auroville International Centres and Sri Aurobindo centres abroad, it will continue to answer innumerable questions on Auroville from all over the world, or forward them to key people in the fields concerned. Via this ID, small write-ups for schools, thesis, encyclopedia or other such places can be provided. Once the new outreachmedia@auroville.org.in ID has been duly established everywhere, the outreach@ ID will cease to exist.

### **Auroville Outreach Media office**

During the coming season the OutreachMedia team intends to move into a small office in the Multi – Media Centre adjacent to the Town Hall annexe.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES**

### **Farm Group report**

Since the earliest times in Auroville the farms have been central to the vision, that we as a community should grow our own food was taken as a fact. However in recent years and with the increasing urbanisation of Auroville the farms have not been able to fulfil this vision, increasingly in competition with cheap food from outside Auroville the farm's have, and continue to struggle to survive.

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It was decided in 2003, with the support and funding from Stichtin de Zaaire, to undertake a thorough assessment of farming in Auroville, to evaluate its viability. To assessment was in three parts; an historical survey, market research and farm report, the latter based on a detailed farm by farm assessment.

The early part of 2004 was taken up with the completion of the farm reports. These were published in September and followed by a series of workshops resulting in the adoption of a strategic plan which it is hoped over the next five years will result in the farms being better able to serve the community. Several key areas were identified and strategies evolved. Copies of the Assessment report and the Strategic Plan are available on the Auroville web site.

The challenge now is to implement the plan. A start has been made; a new accounting system has been put in place with the aim of helping the farmer identify the strengths and weaknesses of his farm as well as improving transparency. Additionally a resource centre is being set up as an extension of the functioning of the farm office. Organic farming is knowledge heavy and farmers need support in finding solutions to disease as well as being kept aware of current research and practice.

Production from the farms in 2004 -05 has continued to improve, with total value of farm produce increasing from 35 to 42 laks in the year. Supplies to the Solar Kitchen have increased from 7.4 to 9.3 laks. Additionally the value of free food supplied to the Solar Kitchen, as part of the Maroma funded scheme has risen from 1.8 to 2.85 Laks over the same period.

It would be nice to see the year 2004 - 2005 as a turning point in the evolution of farming in Auroville towards a more central role in the community, providing all the basic foods that we can within the constraints of climate as economically as possible

### **Forest Group Work**

#### **Forest Protection :**

The Forest Group manages approximately 1100 acres of greenbelt land for Auroville, this land being divided up into 37 stewardship areas of various size plots. Each plot is managed by an Aurovillian land steward whose work is to protect and develop appropriately the forest. The protection against livestock grazing, land encroachment and firewood/ timber extractors is an ongoing work and is carried out with the help of 63 employed watchmen.

#### **Afforestation :**

The ongoing work of re-introducing the indigenous flora designated as the 'Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest' into the auroville greenbelt continued this season with the planting of 40,000 seedlings. These plants were made up of 150 different species of trees, shrubs and lianas and were planted in 27 different locations. The seedling were all grown by forest

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group members in the Auroville nurseries. This work was partially funded by a grant from Stichting De Zaaier.

**Soil and Water Conservation :**

The land stewards maintained the existing contour bunding grids and carried out the necessary maintenance of earth dams and check dams.

**Forest Maintenance and Aftercare :**

This year much time was spent carrying out general forest maintenance. The removal of dead exotic pioneer species, the control of certain straggler and thorn species in planted areas and basic mulching of young planted seedlings were some of the main tasks executed. In some plantation areas with harsh conditions the previous years seedlings were also irrigated. The land stewards utilised their watchmen for these tasks but extra temporary man power was employed.

**Ongoing Forest Projects :**

The "Restoration of the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest" project funded by the European Commission entered its third and final year. The project was managed by some forest group members and was operated from Pitchandikulam Bio Resource Center.

**Some of the main outputs of the project this year includes :-**

- The creation of Nadukuppam Environmental Education Training Center in the bio-region.
- The creation of education material.
- Bio-regional research and education on the TDEF, its plants and their uses.
- The creation of a website on the TDEF for dissemination of information collated over the past ten years.
- Sharing of information on ecological restoration in the light of post-Tsunami related projects.

**Finance**

All the activities mentioned except the ongoing forest project section have been funded by a combination of Auroville Central Fund, monies created by the sale of forest produce (e.g timber, firewood, cashew etc.) and private donations

**Green Group activities**

Green Group consists of members of Farm Group (presently 2) and Forest Group (presently 4) and co-opted member environmentalists (presently 1). We have, in agreement with Farm and Forest Group, the following as our mandate :

- (1) To deal with all issues of land use, stewardship and development within the Green Belt or on Farm or Forest Group lands.
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- (2) To represent the views of the Farm and Forest Groups to the broader community, and to liaise between other working groups and the Farm/Forest Groups.
- (3) To work on developing a long term plan of the Green Belt.

We had regular meetings approximately twice a month, in total 18 meetings, with documentation of discussed topics and conclusions.

#### **Auroville Water Service - "Harvest"**

The Auroville Water Service (AWS) is a service under the Auroville Foundation, started in 1986 to ensure water supply and a sustainable water future.

Since 1995, degradation and fast depletion of the ground water was monitored in the coastal aquifers, due to over-pumping of ground water and the decay of the monsoon harvesting tanks. However, these physical causes are deep rooted in the way water is perceived and handled by individuals and society. The environmental, social, technical and economic challenges are all interconnected, hence "Harvest", an integrated development project was launched on 15th August 1996.

Auroville Water Service – Harvest has been steadfast in its activities of fighting water degradation in the coastal area since the past 8 years through diversified modes of water resources management. With the view of the current alarming situation of groundwater in the region, Harvest has launched its full-fledged efforts to solve the problem. There are 35 dynamic and efficient staffs from various fields who work in harmony to attain the goal of the organization through rainwater harvesting, tank rehabilitation, water resources investigation, environmental awareness & education, community mobilization, social extension, sustainable agriculture, eco-friendly solutions to the industries etc. The conservation of surplus rainwater plays a significant role in stabilizing the agricultural production of rain fed areas. Moisture conservation, run-off water management, life saving irrigation through water harvesting structures and community participation are some of the prime activities under our water conservation projects.

#### **The house is divided into teams as follows :**

- Water Resource Investigation/GIS Team
- Tank Rehabilitation/Engineering Team
- Social Team
- GPS Survey Team

These teams pursue various projects with regard to their natures and type of work as applicable, and work also in close collaboration on the overall development of the activities. The various projects executed during the past year are as follows:

#### **Major Activities during the year :**

- i) Organisation of an International Seminar, in collaboration with Auroville CSR, on the topic "Sustainable Water Management for Auroville's Bioregion".
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- ii) Impact assessment of the Tsunami on ground water resources and other related work
- iii) Rehabilitation & revitalization of water bodies such as minor irrigation tanks, ponds etc of the region in Co-ordination with the Government and Non-Governmental Agencies.
- iv) Social mobilization
- v) Water Resource Investigation Auroville bioregion, including GIS integration and modelling.
- vi) Pre-feasibility study on integrated water management for Auroville
- vii) Topographic Survey using Differential GPS equipments
- viii) Wastewater management
- ix) Provision of Student Research and Internship programs.

#### **"Sustainable Water Management for Auroville's Bioregion"**

In September of this year, jointly with CSR, Harvest hosted an International Seminar on Sustainable Water Management for the bioregion. This seminar endorsed by UNESCO under the HELP (Hydrology for Environment, Life and Policy) Basin Program but also supported by His Excellency, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India. As well, Harvest's area of operations and investigations, the Kaluvelly-Pondicherry coastal sedimentary basin, has been accepted as one of the new catchments of the UNESCO HELP Basin Program. Under this program, jointly coordinated with a team of French scientists, the basin is used as a pilot area to create a collaborative framework for integrated water management with a focus on studying the relatively unknown processes and dynamics of aquifer salinization in this basin and ways of remediation, as well as stakeholders participation (for more information see the Ground and Surface Water page). On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the merger of Pondicherry with the Indian Union, the 1st of November this year, His Excellency, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, President of India passed by Auroville to hear about our investigations into the water issue's of our area and our plans to tackle them. Specifically, he wanted to hear about the research on seawater intrusion into the main aquifers done through one of Harvest's major collaborative programs. The President, during his talk to the Pondicherry Parliament, gave full support to our work and emphasized the need to complete the work carried out so far.

Following the 'Tsunami' catastrophe coastal India has to face due to the Tsunami, Harvest has mobilised its own resources to conduct a detailed assessment of Tsunami impact on the groundwater resources along the coastal line. Harvest is also included in various network at state and regional level dealing with the post Tsunami situation in regards to water and sanitation. Advocacy, concept paper and on site analyses is part of our on going activities.

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**Tank Rehabilitation Project of Pondicherry**

The Project Management Unit, Tank rehabilitation Project - Pondicherry, Government of Pondicherry in co-ordination with the European Union has started a project for rehabilitation of tanks in the Pondicherry region in 1998. The wider objective of the project is for a long-term increase in agricultural income from irrigated crop production in Pondicherry region by restoring the full potential of the existing 84 irrigation tanks in the region. In that way reliance on groundwater will be reduced, thus halting the process of salinisation of the aquifers. About 13,500 farming families (approximately 70,000 people) benefit from the project. Harvest is part of the project since the pilot phase. We are this year entrusted with the program of Community Organisation in 27 Water Users Associations covering 31 irrigation tanks as part of TRPP Community mobilisation, awareness creation, creation and organisation of tank associations ensuring participation of people in the entire process of rehabilitation of tanks, data collection and preparation of reports on community organisation work. One of the important aspects of this project is to build people's stake right from planning to execution of the project and taking over the operation, maintenance and management of tank systems by Tank Associations for their effective sustainability.

**Water Resource Studies**

Since its creation, Harvest has consistently worked on gathering and studying relevant information on water issues to develop a consolidated understanding of the water situation and its future in the actual trend of evolution. An ongoing partnership launched in 1999 with a group of highly qualified French scientists allows us to build-up our knowledge but also to come to consolidated scientific assessment on the same. The information gathered and evaluated through this partnership is continuously improved and shared with various resource persons and organization from India and abroad. Moreover, Harvest started in January, jointly with a team of Aurovilians and International experts, a pre-feasibility study on Integrated Water Management for Auroville. This study aims at defining the best ways Auroville can develop in regards to water issues, taking care as well of the neighbouring population. Harvest ultimate goal in this area is to create, in combination with GIS tool, a highly effective tool for water management and planning both at city and bioregion level.

**Geographical Information System**

Since 1998, Harvest is involved in GIS activities. In the light of the ISRO promoting different schemes for India's natural resources utilization, conservation, restoration and educational outreach programmes, a proposal was born to create a GIS office and training facility at Auroville as a collaborative effort between ISRO and Auroville. The GIS project is being executed under the direct authority of the Auroville Foundation with expertise support from ISRO. The project commenced from January 2000 and Harvest is part of the Auroville GIS group since that time. Harvest is concentrating on the water and land use applications in this project. Data (spatial and non-spatial) integration, specific development and reporting is well underway, and helps already greatly to improve our understanding

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but also our communication capacity. Lately and in partnership with TDEF program, a specific effort was started to process the available satellite image for land use pattern and time evolution.

### **Excavators**

The two excavators donated by TATA are being engaged in water harvesting works. The excavators are involved in the physical part of "TANK REHABILITATION PROJECT PONDICHERRY" as contractor for the water users associations, and also works for other water programs over Tamil Nadu and neighbouring states.

### **Topographical survey**

To conduct our various project works and studies, as well as consultant, we have procured one Differential Global Positioning System (LEICA GPS -SR 530), a hi-tech survey equipment, which can achieve 2cm accuracy. During this year, this instrument was used for various tanks survey, general topographic assessment, bench marking, but also several road surveys.

### **Wastewater Treatment**

As the availability of water becoming more scarce HARVEST is working in partnership with CSR on wastewater. Fifteen Wastewater treatment system has been designed, both for domestic or industrial effluent, for Auroville but also for other areas like Nepal, with project sizing from household level up to 2500 users for a factory.

### **The Students & Volunteers Program (SVP)**

Started in 1997, the Auroville Water Service "Harvest" Students & Volunteers Program facilitates the intervention of students and volunteers on project and research studies. The contribution of students brings a focused and efficient intervention in specific fields of investigation that the regular staff does not have either the skills or the time to explore and is therefore extremely valuable.

#### **For the year 2004-05 :**

<b>Students &amp; Volunteers</b>	<b>Qualification &amp; Origin</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Duration Months</b>
Sara Albee	Student – Geop-common Program and coming from the University of Oregon	Kottakarai village integrated sanitation project concept. Web site development	9
Aude Vincent	University of Paris 6 – Pierre et Marie CURIE – France	Hydrology of the Pondicherry-Kaluvelly Basin, PhD thesis	6

### **Centre for Ecological Land-Use**

The Palmyra Centre for Ecological Land use, Water Management and Rural Development was founded in 1990 and is situated in Aurobrindavan, Auroville in the Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu, India. Its objectives are to promote ecological concepts of land use as well as rural development programmes.

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Below are short notes on projects, which are ongoing at the Palmyra Center.

### **ICEF Tank Rehabilitation Project**

#### **Physical Achievements & Implementation :**

Under the Tank rehabilitation project, work was carried out in 15 tanks. Activities like tank bed desilting, supply channel desilting, construction of lining channel, cleaning distribution channel and various other repair works at sluice weir etc. at 16 Villages.

#### **Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP)**

During first year of the project period 2002 -2003, Watershed Associations and Committees, User groups and Self Help Groups were formed in all 9 Micro Watersheds of Marakanam and Vanur blocks of Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu.

Many awareness programmes and trainings were organized for watershed beneficiaries about aims and objectives of the project. PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) exercises and Entry Point Activities were completed in all the project villages with the people's participation.

The information regarding natural resources, land use and cropping patterns, social structures and other issues were collected from villagers and 5 year Watershed Development plan were prepared with the watershed beneficiaries. These plans were approved by the District Watershed Development Committee chaired by the District Collector and physical works have been carried out with the cost of Rs.15.00 lakhs in the first year.

#### **Activities :**

##### **Community Organization :**

1. Medicinal Plant Demonstration Garden cum Commercial Nursery have been established in Alangkuppam village, Alangkuppam Watershed with the Cost of Rs. 1.00 lakh by the Minnal Self Help Group Alangkuppam. This nursery is aiming to produce seedlings for Afforestation in Watershed areas and also promote floriculture as income generating activity.
2. Awareness Exhibition cum procession on IWDP activities was organized with Uppuvelore and Pudukuppam eco-club students. Group of 50 students were participated in the procession in 8 different villages.
3. Fruit seedlings of Mango and Coconut has been distributed to 800 Self Help Group members, two seedlings per member for their home gardens in Watershed areas.

##### **Training Component :**

1. 5 days training on Watershed Management was organized in Central Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Institute, Udthagamandalam, Tamil Nadu for Watershed Secretaries and Volunteers.
  2. Training on Medicinal plant cultivation and alternative crops in dry land farming were given for two batches of 50 User Group members.
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3. Accounts and Record maintenance and Leadership trainings were given to Self Help Groups members
4. Training on Poultry farming, Dairy farming, Sheep and Goat rearing and pasture development was organized for the User Group members in Kayalmedu village.

## **CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

### **HALL OF CULTURE - Kalamitra-Kalakhoj**

Under the Development Scheme Funds received from the HRD Ministry, Government of India, the Kalamitra and Kalakhoj Bodies – one of the recipients of grants under Hall of Culture, has its objectives described below, along with the justified activities held during the year 2004-2005 are: Objectives – Development and Promotion of the Arts Under the Development Scheme, the idea is to create & develop with the funds provided those activities that pertain to the education/appreciation of art & culture, an essential tool also to shape the aesthetic, harmonious and beautiful aspects of the mind, spirit and body – an exercise as part of our Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo. The role is also to promote the international understanding of each other's cultures through such a variety of artistic subjects such as dance, music, theatre, cinema, visual & performing arts, literature, photography & ceramics etc. Essentially the key aim is Auroville's search for its own cultural and creative language to find a base for the manifestation of the Inner realities of our life.

### **Kalamitra and Kala Khoj**

Kalamitra's annual budget being small, the Development Scheme funds are a positive complimentary fund - although limited, to organize the cultural activities. Kala Khoj, is an international artists exchange network, through which guest artists and experts come to Auroville for short & long-term research projects. The potential for creative artistic growth is tremendous in Auroville, given the kind of International environment of human resources and excellent infrastructure. The two main categories that create the positive dynamics in Auroville's artistic life through a permanent interactive dialogues are :

- 1) the local artists of Auroville engaged in the teaching, learning & creative productions, exhibitions and workshops
- 2) the visiting artists as guests, experts or professors offering performances, workshops, lectures etc. on a short-term or long-term basis depending on the nature of the art project.

### **The Bharat Nivas – Pavilion of India :**

All public spaces of Auroville are utilized for holding events. For Bharat Nivas, other grants help to facilitate and fund programs of Indian Art and Culture and to open a window on its contemporary evolution and youth programs. The Center also encourages new directions and experiments both from the rest of the country and from Auroville that contribute towards the "rebirth" of the Indian soul in new forms and visions - these activities

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mainly find manifestation in the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium, Center for Indian Studies, Kala Kendra, Center of Indian Culture and Sri Aurobindo World Center for Human Unity, situated in the Bharat Nivas complex. It offers the largest public spaces to host local, national and international cultural and educational events, seminars, conferences, lectures, exhibitions and workshops for the community at large.

### **Program of activities**

The year 2004-2005 has witnessed a tremendous increase in the awareness and interest undertaken by local and visiting artistes. The budget of (Rupees one lakh fiftysix thousand only.) allocated was successfully utilized. The details are described below:

**Annual Dance Festival :** A two-day performance: Work in progress: offered by students, young & old of different dance schools at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium, Bharat Nivas.

The body languages through Bharat Natyam, Odissi, Kathak, Gujarati Folk Dance, Classical western ballet, Jazz, modern and creative dance, Flamenco, Balkan Dance, Aerobics, piano & guitar concert. Children from Outreach Village schools also joined in to give a successful show.

**Brazilian Dance workshop and performance :** The capoeira dance is a form of martial art that is very popular in Brazil. Sri Aurobindo Auditorium, Bharat Nivas.

**Carnatic concert :** followed by lecture & demonstration, by Sri Krishna Kumar, a well known vocalist and dancer gave a moving recital with the support of six instrumentalists invited from Chennai and Pondicherry in Sri Aurobindo World Center for Human Unity, Bharat Nivas.

**Rabindra Sangeet Recital :** A Group Concert from Shantiniketan, West Bengal : musicians and singers gave a moving experience of Rabindra Sangeet, music composed by Rabindranath Tagore. This was to mark the visit of Tagore to Pondicherry in 1928, his meeting with Sri Aurobindo. The Government of Pondicherry also took part in this celebration. Sri Lakshminarayan, Minister of Culture attended the concert in Bharat Nivas.

**Tamil New Year Celebration :** brought together new energies and participation from many Tamil families wishing to share their knowledge with the community at large, to learn the local folk art forms: dance, kolams, music, painting, theatre, cinema & costumes and food at Bharat Nivas.

**Photography Exhibition** on the Health & Child Welfare by Germana Dini, an Italian guest artist from Florence at Foyer Art Gallery, Bharat Nivas. The photographs were on the sub-health centers of surrounding villages and on children of the world. painting exhibition by Berguitta Volz from Germany. She took prints of Auroville tree trunks on a special textile creating different images and characters of the trees. Venue : Foyer Art Gallery, Bharat Nivas.

**Exhibition** by Sarah Bowyer, a British painter on the Chemistry of Colour, a long-term guest. The show was concluded by a small slide show with an interactive dialogue.

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Exhibition by Randy Williams, a visual artist from New York. His lecture supported by slides on the contemporary arts situation in New York was excellent.

Exhibition followed by slide show/interactive dialogue by Rachael Peachey and Emily Robinson, visiting visual artists from Sydney, Australia. Charcol work on craft paper and photography, & textiles - a multi-media work describing their inner perception of Indian journey through their art called "Unthreaded Circumstances."

Slide Show and Talk by Donve Langhan, South African visual artist. A two month residency. She gave an overview on the situation of the arts in South Africa, the post Apartheid period and did research on publishing of books on AIDS in India with a South African NGO.

**Kalaripayat Martial Art** : Lecture & Demonstration : by Thomas from Kerala, Bharat Nivas Foyer Garden complex.

**Sitar and vocal recital** by Tapabrata, Lakshmi and Deepshika to mark the Birth Anniversary of Sri Aurobindo 15th August and also to mark the Independence of India. Sarod Recital by Sri Debiprasad and Tabla by Manosh and Rashmi Bhatt. Chanting by Deepshika. Carnatic Concert on flute and Veena by Gordon and David Reck from USA, accompanied by local musicians. Santoor: Hindustani Classical instrumental music by Sri Tarun Bhattacharya to in the context of the Seminar on Integral Psychology. A visiting reputed guest artist from Kolkata. In Tibetan Pavilion. All India Artists' Camp for Tsunami Relief Fund, organized by Art World and Club Sante, Pondicherry: an interactive dialogue with Indian visual artists coming from different parts of India in Bharat Nivas: on the theme of the situation of the contemporary artists of India in the globalised world.

**Celebration of the Republic Day of India:** Music and Dance show offered by Outreach School students at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium, Bharat Nivas. Carnatic vocal recital by Sri Prince Rama Varma of Trivandrum and his musicians from Chennai at Bharat Nivas.

**Interactive Dialogue with Mallika Sarabhai, Dancer & GB Member** of the Auroville Foundation around the theme : Mahabharata – a play staged by Peter Brook in which Mallika played the role of Draupadi.

**Hindustani Vocal Classical** concert by Sri Shantanu & Smt. Durba Bhattacharya from Kolkatta. Odissi and Japanese dance performance by Kumari Masako from Japan. A guest resident Oddissi dancer from Bhubaneshwar. Sri Aurobindo Auditorium

The physical work of the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium is still an ongoing process. While work goes on to complete it, other unfinished buildings need urgent attention mentioned above. This auditorium has been one of the focal centers of Bharat Nivas It provides an excellent forum and space to host professional cultural programs/exhibitions for the visiting artistes coming from within the country and abroad, Regular cultural activities such as Indian and Western classical/contemporary dance and theatre classes, workshops take place. The same space is also utilized for regular art film shows, video, and slide projections.

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## BHARAT NIVAS - ACTIVITIES

### *A brief account of the National Conference on 'Integral Psychology..& Transformation' held at Bharat Nivas, Auroville on January 11-13, 2005.*

Thanks to the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi who have given a grant to organise this Conference and are happy to present a short account of the event.

There is specific purpose in choosing this theme as was outlined in a Working Paper that was presented when we made a request for the grant. We attach a copy of the same for a fresh reference.

There is a growing attraction, around the world, to the psychological work of Sri Aurobindo – and the theme of '**Transformation of Man**' is becoming the focus of our attention. We, therefore, wished to explore these areas in depth and to enrich our understanding as a collective body of contemporary beings. We wished to arrive at the mind's understanding of the subject but also, and even more, to attempt an experience, in the total range of our being, of the deeper truths present therein. This atmosphere pervaded the days of the Conference and was tangibly felt by all the participants and the audience present.... to explore, to know and to make a concrete experience in our consciousness at its many levels, so as to be able to move firmly on a path of practice. The aim of organising this Conference was clear before us - and gave to the entire event a quality all its own.

A three-days' sessions was set up in which the participants made their presentations - either extempore or they read out written papers 5 on a great richness of themes. Besides these individual presentations, we had group-interactions each day, as also panel presentations, and a collective rounding-up of the Conference by all the participants together. There were three multi-media presentations which were specially created for the Conference by some of the participants. These CDs are also being sent. The sessions opened each day with an invocation and recitation set to music, which was symbolic of the theme of the day.

A few art exhibitions were also organised during the days of the Conference -

1. A lay-out of flower arrangements, with the spiritual significance of each flower, as given by The Mother: "A Pathway to Beauty"
2. An exhibitions of enlargements of sketches done by The Mother herself of some disciples - a selection of 45 such sketches: "The Script of the Soul"
3. A range of pottery by an artist from Auroville, who had created forms which seemed to come from another 'world': "Form and the Formless"
4. A programme of Aikido - as movements of the body towards its own perfection
5. Concerts of classical music and chanting in Sanskrit of ancient hymns

The California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, which was started by Dr. Haridas Chaudhuri in the 1950s, was holding, at that time, a study camp for some of their students in Auroville. Thus these students and the professors accompanying them were able to participate in the Conference.

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The proceedings were recorded on a CD and this is being sent. As some of the presentations were made extempore, we are awaiting the papers from those speakers. As soon as the entire set is with us, we will send them to you in a bound form.

The Conference introduced all of us to new dimensions in the organisation of such events. The possibilities of learning were greatly enriched. In fact, we are already looking ahead to the next one, which we would like to hold in January, 2006 on the theme -

### **"Integral Yoga..**

#### **Life itself the Field..."**

The Conference, having received a grant from the Indian Council of Philosophical Research, New Delhi, was sponsored by the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research, Auroville and organised by The Centre of Indian Studies, Bharat Nivas, Auroville.

### **SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH (S.A.I.I.E.R.)**

#### **A REPORT FOR THE YEAR**

The Institute aims to give concrete forms to the new concepts, methodologies and programmes which have been envisaged for the progressive realization of creating in the world a new consciousness in humanity conducive to durable peace, world harmony, international understanding and human unity. This is a long - term project, and can be described in various ways, such as, project of "unending education", and "youth that never ages", "new education for new humanity", "life -long education and learning society" and "learning to be and to be integrally", etc.

This project has already taken some concrete form as a result of sustained effort extending from the year 1971 to the present day and is seen in a three fold way :

1. Research in education for human unity.
2. Research in education for the development of integral personality.
3. Research in value -oriented education.

The work of the Institute is divided into small teams which pursue special projects in diverse fields of educational research. The following is a brief account of the work of some of these teams.

#### **RESEARCH IN EDUCATION AT SCHOOL LEVEL**

Auroville has a number of units of research in school education both within Auroville to cater to an International group of children and in the neighbouring villages. In the field of school education, apart from the ongoing work to develop a new way to approach school education in all its aspects, the following special research projects were carried out :

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### **1. PAINTING WITH CHILDREN**

An experiment in teaching painting to the children by the method of Arno Stern was taken up this year. An expert had come to Auroville to teach this method to those interested. The project in Auroville aims to observe those signs in the paintings of children and to carry further the work of Arno Stern and to confirm some of the observations also.

### **2. DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DRAMA**

Drama as a tool for learning was another Project that was taken up. Drama can be taught as a subject which leads to performance. It can also be used as a context for learning and the children learn experientially through the drama. The workshop on drama led by a professional from the UK, Tracy Walsh, focussed on development of the following facets of an individual,

### **3. METAMORPHOSIS**

Two projects in environmental education were carried out in the Auroville schools. One called the Metamorphosis Project was carried out with young students from the neighbouring village between the ages of 14-19 years old.

The second project of life sciences was to study the wild life in the Auroville region. The students studied venomous and non-venomous snakes in Auroville, lizards, tortoises and turtles and fish. The project ended with an exhibition of many varieties of the above species.

### **4. LIFE EDUCATION**

In the outreach programs on education a research project has been carried out to find ways of continuing education for village teenage girls who have dropped out of school for financial reasons. These girls are given a stipend so that the pressure from their families for earning is reduced and they are given training in :

- i) Functional skills like Maths, English and Tamil
- ii) Vocational skills like tailoring, crochet, typing and computers
- iii) Social awareness and human interactive skills. This project has had very successful results and a new curriculum should be ready for a wider dissemination to all interested.

### **5. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

A workshop was held for teachers on the philosophy of education. Selected texts from Philosophers of education like John Dewey, Krishnamurthy, White head and Sri Aurobindo were taken up and discussed amongst the participants in detail..

## **CENTRE OF INDIAN CULTURE**

### **1. THE STORY OF INDIA**

The Centre of Indian Culture which is a unit of SAIER offered many talks, seminars and workshops. The first of this was series of talks by Shri Manoj Das from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The title of the series was "The story of India-Exploring the sub-continent's psyche through myths, legend & folklore". Shri Manoj Das gave an outline of the history of different streams of literature in India which contained stories that helped to illustrate and to explain

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to the people of the sub-continent at different levels of intellectual attainment, the great truths that the Indian seers had envisioned.

## **2. INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGY AND TRANSFORMATION**

There is a growing attraction, around the world, to the psychological work of Sri Aurobindo - and the theme of "Transformation of Man" is becoming the focus of our attention. We, therefore, wished to explore these areas in depth and to enrich our understanding as a collective body of contemporary beings.

A major work of Center of Indian Culture was the thematic structuring, organization and hosting of a National Conference on "Integral Psychology and Transformation" from January 11-13, 2005.

There were participants from the country consisting of eminent scholars, from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. Several Faculty members of the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, with about 30 students were here for a study camp, and they participated in the Conference.

## **3. THE HISTORY OF THE FUTURE**

A series of talks by Shri Kittu Reddy were organized at the Centre of Indian Culture. The theme that was taken up was entitled "The History of the future" - India Shaping her Destiny.

## **SAVITRI BHAVAN**

SAVITRI BHAVAN is another unit of SAIER dedicated to research on the epic poem of Sri Aurobindo "SAVITRI". The following is an account of some of the work carried out there .

### **1. REFERENCES TO SAVITRI IN THE MOTHER'S AGENDA**

One product of this research, the second part of a study of the Mother's translations of portions of Sri Aurobindo's epic into her own native language, French, was published in the 23rd number of our Study Notes on Savitri, "Invocation", in March 2005, following up on a first part published in August 2003:

### **2. SAVITRI BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The first and second sections of this planned complete bibliography were brought up to date during the year. The second section - a list of all known Savitri translations -was included in the latest issue of our Study Notes series "Invocation" no. 23.

### **3. STUDENTS' COMPANION TO THE FUTURE POETRY**

Good progress was made on this project during the year. The list of authors mentioned by Sri Aurobindo in his study of English poetry was completed, along with a brief biography of each of them. The original references we had compiled had to be revised to correspond to the new standard edition of the book, in the Collected Works of Sri Aurobindo series. It is intended to supplement this information about the writers he discusses with some representative samples of their works. This will be particularly valuable since we shall be

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able to provide texts of works discussed by Sri Aurobindo that are now very difficult to access : from Stephen Phillips, Edward Carpenter and others. Compiling these texts in digital form has been started. A summary of the main points in each chapter is also in preparation. It is planned to complete a draft version of the Students' Companion during 2005-2006, for trial use in Auroville schools.

#### **4. VEDIC IMAGERY IN SRI AUROBINDO'S SAVITRI**

Considerable progress was made during the last year. All major hymns from the Rig Veda dedicated to Dawn (more than 20) and Night (more than a dozen) were selected and translated, building up a database for deeper research in this field. More than a dozen hymns of Creation from Vedic and Vedantic literature relevant to studies of Savitri have been translated and presented with commentaries and notes.

#### **AURO FILM**

A unit of SAIER apart from showing weekly films, has held a number of film festivals dedicated to eminent film makers.

There was also a production of a film entitled "ALWAYS" which is based on a script written in French by Aron, a young Aurovilian, it has been shot in video with a group of children and adults.

#### **LABORATORY OF EVOLUTION (LOE)**

The LOE another unit of SAIER has been holding the following programmes: It has conducted a workshop on "Integral Evolution and Cellular Consciousness". It has also been in touch with A.R.E. an organisation founded by Edgar Cayce, who is a contemporary of Sri Aurobindo and Mother and has many interesting common points with the vision of evolution as expressed by Sri Aurobindo and Mother.

#### **CONSTRUCTIONS**

SAIER successfully completed a number of buildings, making a significant contribution to the growing township of Auroville.

#### **INFORMATION CENTRE**

A big exhibition hall and an Audio-visual hall for the Information Centre of Auroville have been constructed this year. This will house an exhibition which will be available for view to the hundreds and thousands of visitors presently coming to Auroville. At the Audio-visual hall will be seen videos that give information about Auroville. It is hoped that a new vision of life will be communicated to all our visitors with the help of this complex.

#### **YOUTH TRAINING HOSTEL**

A youth hostel has been successfully completed this year with 50 beds. The purpose of this building is to host young people from all over the world who come with an Aspiration to learn and work in Auroville.

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## AUROVILLE LANGUAGE LABORATORY

### NANDANAM

The first phase of an experimental School building for small children has been constructed and successfully completed this year.

The past year has seen the Auroville Language Laboratory grow and establish itself as a unique adult facility where language is shared and studied. Auroville's multi-cultural, multi-linguistic atmosphere allows and necessitates the dissemination of language. The Auroville Language Lab has emerged as the ideal structure for Aurovilians, guests and those from the surrounding community to learn, teach and explore the world of language.

### Students

For the period of April 1st 2004-March 31st 2005, 268 students were registered with the Auroville Language Laboratory. Of these 88, or 33%, were from village communities surrounding Auroville, including many first generation learners, women and those employed in various Auroville Units.

### Teaching Opportunities

Auroville Language Laboratory has emerged as a learning institution that not only provides opportunities for students, but as a place where a love and passion for teaching others is able to unfold and be cultivated. Over the past one-year, numerous guests and Aurovilians have discovered the joy of teaching at the Language Lab. Students benefited greatly from having enthusiastic, native speakers of various languages teaching, in many instances, for the first time and in the process discovering, what a wonderful and rewarding experience teaching can be.

### Learning Resources

The resources of the Auroville Language Laboratory include a médiathèque and a multi-language library. The médiathèque is a network of computers, each equipped with headphones and microphones, that

Language	Total Number of Students	Number of Students from villages surrounding Auroville
English	108	49
French	61	17
Tamil	42	-
Sanskrit	4	-
Hindi	22	15
German	10	3
Italian	5	2
Spanish	16	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>88</b>

gives access to a wide variety of very high-quality films, video and audio materials as well as interactive language learning software in many different languages. Thus students have the option of pursuing an independent self-study program through the Lab, which is open six days a week, all day.

### **Tomatis Ear Re-Education Therapy**

One of the most important developments of the year was the commencement of the world renown Tomatis Ear Re-Education Therapy for both language learning as well as therapeutic applications, for the very first time in India. The Centre d'Oreille located at the Language Lab Annex at Center Field was one of the final projects sanctioned by Dr. Tomatis before he passed away. Applications of the Tomatis Method in order to Re-Educate the ear and facilitate language learning is one of the critical aspects of this project and already students have benefited from this program in English and French.

Research is being undertaken to extend to include Indian languages to the Tomatis Method and it is hoped that Tamil, Sanskrit and Hindi will be available in the year to come.

At a therapeutic level, the Tomatis Method helps people with depression, low self-esteem, lack of motivation, low energy, hyper-activity etc. It can also be used by stage artists, teachers etc to help to improve voice control. It also helps children and adults with learning disorders such as dyslexia.

### **Certificate Courses**

In response to the need of students to participate in a more objective course, ALL conducted a Intensive Basic English Course during the summer that was enthusiastically made up of students of different nationalities who braved the hot weather to go through a intensive one month course that covered aspects of English Grammar, Vocabulary, Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing and Pronunciation.

A Spoken Tamil Course that similarly covered through a 12 module program, the basics of conversational Tamil, was similarly well-received. Repetition and interaction were key elements to these sessions.

### **Material Development**

The Tamil Alphabet Software developed by the Lab was refined and ready for distribution. The software takes though each letter of the Tamil script, allowing a student to hear the sound of each letter, see it used in a word and see it set logically against the entire alphabet. All this with the beautiful use of color as well. Similarly, the Fun With Tamil Book, born out of interactive classes conducted at the Lab was made available for distribution as well.

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## INCOME GENERATING UNITS

Auroville has around 128 active commercial units, which are under 32 trusts involved in the fields of handicrafts, clothing and fashion, weaving and dyeing, renewable energy, food processing and catering, printing and publishing, architecture and construction, computers and software, electronics and engineering, organic farming, pottery, shops and boutiques, media and entertainment, gems and jewellery, travel and tourism, etc. The ownership of all these units is vested in the Auroville Foundation. Details of income generated by various trusts and their contribution to the actual development of the city being built and its maintenance is reflected in the Annual Accounts 2004-2005 separately.

### **Employment Generation :**

Apart from the Aurovilians, who work on a voluntary basis for a maintenance allowance, Auroville employs over 5,000 people from the local villages, whose work typically covers anything from agriculture to engineering, cleaning, gardening, tailoring, driving, accounting, teaching, commerce and supervising.

### **Auroville Board of Commerce :**

The commercial units meet together through the Auroville Board of Commerce (ABC), which comprises executives of all Auroville commercial units, who appoint a Working Group to take care of the day-to-day activities. The Working Group of the Board meets regularly to initially evaluate and recommends the opening of new units, handle applications for business credits, co-ordinate yearly auditing of accounts, and advise units regarding accounts, finance, marketing, management, etc.

### **Work Ethics :**

The work done and the goods produced in Auroville reflect high standards of quality since the units of Auroville endeavour to reach material perfection. The high standards are also put into practice in all the services and business practices of Auroville units. The aim of commercial units in Auroville is to do business in a different way, which is reflected in the importance placed on the relationship with the workers and clients. The aim is to express through the products, created and produced in an environmentally friendly way, a certain class of beauty and perfection. These products are living symbols of Auroville's quest towards India and to the World at large.

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