

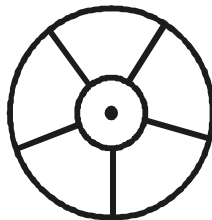
AUROVILLE FOUNDATION



AUROVILLE
TAMIL NADU

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ANNUAL REPORT
2006-2007



AUROVILLE
TAMIL NADU

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PREFACE

The century that has just passed into human history was, undoubtedly, a period full of strife, destruction and annihilation. There is no denying that, despite scientific and technological advances, humanity today stands at a critical crossroads in its long complex journey through the corridors of Time. We are facing a crisis of such intricate dimensions that it seems to defy solution. Prima facie, it appears as a crisis of material dimension, of endemic poverty, environmental degradation and unending conflicts. Essentially, the crisis is spiritual in nature and our survival on this planet today turns on a deeper plane of spiritual awakening amongst us. It is evident that the naturalism of humanity, stifled by ignorance, greed and animosity towards fellow humans, can only effloresce through a fundamental change in human consciousness that will lead us on to the sunlit uplands where humanity comes into its own unfettered by bonds that divide human beings on the basis of caste, or creed, nationality or gender.

This is the context in which Auroville, the city of dawn, was conceptualised by Sri Aurobindo and materialised by the Mother as a challenge to the gathering crises that seem to envelop us today like a miasma. The Mother had presciently observed that *“This birth of Auroville wasn’t preceded by any thought; as always, it was simply a Force acting like a sort of absolute manifesting, and it was so strong that I could have told people, “Even if you don’t believe in it, even if all circumstances appear to be quite unfavourable, I know that Auroville will be. It may be in a hundred years, it may be in thousand years, I do not know, but Auroville will be because it has been decreed.”*

The task that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have entrusted to us is immense in proportion to our limited intellectual and other resources. Yet we have accepted it with humility and are determined to press forward. Our progress may be slow but we ceaselessly press towards the fulfilment of the promise of that new world on Earth that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother had envisioned

For Auroville to be truly relevant, it will have to realise within itself the answers to some of the pressing questions that humanity faces today. In the context of Auroville, the two of the most pressing ones are: How to realise the city that humanity really needs and how to give a collective manifestation to the ideal of human unity? Auroville is an attempt at evolving into the matrix for, what Sri Aurobindo has described as, *“one secure base of unification of human life”*.

I have pleasure in presenting the report on the myriad activities that Auroville was engaged in during the year 2006-2007.



(Karan Singh)

Chairman
Auroville Foundation

Auroville
15 August 2007

1. INTRODUCTION



“Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities. The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity.”

The Mother

Auroville Charter

- 1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville, one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.***
- 2. Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.***
- 3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.***
- 4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.***

The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity in diversity. Today Auroville is recognised as an internationally endorsed ongoing experiment in human unity and transformation of consciousness. It is also a centre of applied research into sustainable living practices and cultural, environmental, social and spiritual needs of humankind in a new world order.

This report provides a glimpse of the activities in Auroville during the year 2006-2007.

2. AUROVILLE FOUNDATION

The Government of India notified the Auroville Foundation on 29 January 1991 as a statutory body under the Auroville Foundation Act 1988. With the issuance of the said Notification, all the undertakings of Sri Aurobindo Society relating to Auroville with all its assets, etc., stood transferred to and vested in the Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has been functioning as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The Foundation comprises three authorities namely

- (a) the Governing Board;
- (b) the Resident's Assembly; and
- (c) Auroville International Advisory Council.

The Act vests the Governing Board with responsibility and power for the general superintendence, direction, control and management of the affairs of the Foundation.

The Governing Board (GB)

The Governing Board consists of nine members nominated by the Central Government. The present Board was constituted by Ministry of HRD vide its Notification No. F-27-50/2002-UU dated 6th September 2004 with the following members for a period of 4 years,

Dr. Karan Singh (MP, Rajya Sabha)	Chairman
Dr. D.P. Chattopadhyaya	Member
Shri Ajoy Bagchi	Member
Dr. (Ms.) Aster Mira Patel (Resident of Auroville)	Member
Mr. Roger Anger (Resident of Auroville)	Member
Ms. Malini Parthasarthy	Member
Dr. (Ms.) Mallika Sarabhai	Member
Shri S.K. Ray , (JS & FA, HRD Ministry)	Ex-Officio Member
Shri Keshav Desiraju (JA, HRD Ministry)	Ex-Officio Member

During the year, the 32nd Meeting of the Governing Board was held on 30 September 2006 at Auroville. Among the issues discussed were the matter of land for Auroville in its Master Plan Area, the strengthening of the financial management, the events connected with the celebration of Auroville's 40th Anniversary and the completion and opening of Matrimandir.

The International Advisory Council (IAC)

The International Advisory Council comprises five members nominated by the Central Government. The Central Government, vide HRD Ministry Notification

No. F.27-25/2001-UU dated 27th Oct.2004 and Notification No. F.27-25/2001-UU dated 17th July 2006, constituted the present Council with the following members:

- (1) **Sir Mark Tully** (UK): India-based journalist and commentator; was BBC's India correspondent for 22 years; conferred Knighthood in 2001;
- (2) **Dr. Doudou Diène** (Senegal): Special Rapporteur to the U.N. on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; Director of Intercultural and Inter-religious dialogue and Peace Culture, UNESCO;
- (3) **Dr. Marc Luyckx Ghisi** (Belgium): Theologian; Researcher in global cultural transformation; Former Advisor to Presidents of European Commission.
- (4) **Dr. Vishakha N. Desai** (US): President, Asia Society of New York; Former Senior Vice President, Asia Society; Director of the Museum and Cultural Programs, Asia Society
- (5) **Prof. Michael Murphy** (US): Co-Founder & Chairman of the Board, Esalen Institute; Author of *Golf in the Kingdom*, *The Kingdom of Shiva's Irons*, *Jacob Atabet*, and *An End to Ordinary History*.

The 12th & 13th meetings of the International Advisory Council were held in September 2006 and February 2007 in which the focus of discussions, among other things, was on education, financial and management matters, strengthening Auroville's relations with surrounding rural population, enhancing Auroville's international image, construction of international pavilions, development of the township and fund raising.

The Secretary

For administering the Foundation on a day-to-day basis, the Central Government appoints a Secretary, with headquarters in Auroville, to exercise such powers and performs such duties as Chairman of the Governing Board may decide from time to time. The Secretary is an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India and selected by the Central Government from the superior Civil Services under the Union and other organizations under the Government. The present Secretary is Shri.M. Ramaswamy (IAS; 1982, Maharastra Cadre).

Finance Committee

The Auroville Foundation Rules, 1997 provides for a Finance Committee to assist the Governing Board with financial management of the Foundation. The Governing Board constituted the Finance Committee on 20.02.2005 with the following composition:

Chairman: Shri S K Ray, FA, HRD Ministry & Ex-Officio Member
Governing Board.

Members:

1. Shri Ajoy Bagchi, Member, Governing Board;
2. Shri Keshav Desiraju, JS, HRD Ministry & Member, Governing Board; and
3. Secretary, Auroville Foundation

The 13 & 14th Meeting of the Finance Committee were held in Delhi in June and September 2006 to consider financial issues relating to Auroville Foundation.

Website

The Foundation launched its own website www.aurovillefoundation.org, which provides all the relevant information relating to Auroville Foundation.

The Organisational Chart of Auroville Foundation



3. MATRIMANDIR

The year saw a surge in the construction of Matrimandir. There was a 24% increase in expenditure from Rs.363 lakhs in 2005-06 to Rs.450 lakhs in 2006-07.

On 21st February 2007 a major milestone in Matrimandir's completion was crossed when the Inner Chamber was re-opened for meditation after having been closed for installing the glass parapet on the first access ramp.

On that day, the Mother's birthday, many areas inside the structure were unveiled for the first time as protective coverings were removed. The exquisite marble work at the first and second levels and a large portion of the inner skin became visible for the first time. The visitors were also able to meditate in the completed Inner Chamber and visit the 12 meditation rooms, one inside each petal, and view the softly cascading waterfall in the marble lotus pond under the structure.

The major tasks completed during the year were as follows:

Light Beam: Reconditioning and final fixing of heliostat system which tracks the sun and directs a beam of sunlight onto the crystal at the centre of the Inner Chamber; manufacture and fixing of LED lighting array which provides the beam of light when there is no sunlight

Inner Skin: Manufacture and fixing of inner skin in the structure's upper half; fixing of inner skin in the lower half has to await the completion of all dust creating works inside the building .

Lighting: Completing the design and manufacture (in an Auroville unit) of LED lighting system installed behind the inner skin. Controlled by a computerised system, light intensity and colour of each of its 1350 lighting modules can be individually controlled to produce the exact shade of salmon pink colour specified by The Mother.

Ramps: Completing structural works on both spiral ramps; fitting glass parapet on one ramp to allow access to the Inner Chamber; the second ramp will be soon fitted with glass parapet, handrails and carpets.

Decorative Work: All the decorative marble work from the entrances up to the second level was completed and cleaned.

Maintenance Crane: A custom made maintenance crane was donated to Matrimandir and was delivered on site. All preparatory works to install it on top of Matrimandir are now almost complete. By the end of August 2007 it should be up and all scaffolding removed.

Entrance Doors: The structures of all four doors are now being completed. One is already equipped with its power-operated opening mechanism and controls. The other doors would be in place by the end of August 2007 and all should be operational by February 2008.

Golden Discs: All golden discs on the outer skin have been re-installed except those which will be re-installed only after the crane work is over and those which will be re-installed after the decoration above the four entrances is complete.

Golden Tiles: All golden tiles are produced and donated to Matrimandir by one of its major donors. Matrimandir team only fixes them on 4 entrance doors, on 4-meter diameter 'flower' discs above each entrance and on large panels above and below each entrance door. By the end of August 2007 at least one entrance should be complete and all four will be complete by February 2008.

Lotus Pond: was unveiled in February 2007 and covered again because of ongoing works in its vicinity. The water circulation system is yet to be completed but will be operational by August 2007

Twelve Large 'Petals': The pointing of all joints between Agra stones are being re-done and water repellent applied. All twelve 'petals' will be complete in August 2007.

Meditation Rooms: Construction work in all the 12 meditation rooms is complete and all rooms are painted. The custom designed air conditioning plants are being completed and installed.

The Garden Area:

Paved pathways. All the main pathways on the future Matrimandir Island are complete.

Irrigation system. The computerised irrigation system is almost complete and will be fully complete by August 2007. The main electrical infrastructure has also been laid.

Twelve Gardens. The final contouring of all 12 gardens is now almost complete. Two compost mixing machines have been manufactured to help meet the large requirement of prepared soil and compost which will be required for the gardens given the barren and denuded land on which Matrimandir is located.

Lawns are being laid in all areas where the lawns are specified. The different varieties of grass have been obtained and large areas of each have been planted to evaluate their suitability considering ease of propagation, minimum maintenance and water requirements.

The Garden Reflection Group has continued its work with several prototype gardens realised during the year. The architect will present a 'Garden Panel' to the community later in the year which will have the task to guide the realisation process of the gardens.

Lake around the Oval Island: Studies are underway on how to realise the future Lake and keep it full, and on its possible integration in the township's water system

Access to Matrimandir

The Matrimandir Access Group has been active in enabling tourists to view Matrimandir from the Amphitheatre, in receiving the increasing stream of VIP visitors, and in making it possible for some 3,000 visitors, besides the residents of Auroville, to meditate in the Inner Chamber every month. The Group is striving to further improve the service. A short introductory talk is now provided to all those who come to meditate in the Chamber for the first time.



4. THE CITY - AUROVILLE's TOWN PLANNING

Auroville's Town Planning Office, Centre for Urban Research and Auroville's Future carry out various activities under the guidance of the Chief Architect, Mr. Roger Anger. A brief summary of activities during the past year is provided hereunder:

Survey of the Master Plan Area:

- A. Green Belt : 773 Acres of land & 6 Km of roads;
 - B. Auromodele & Aspiration : 4.5 Km. of Roads
 - C. Routing of new HT line in Residential Zone and re-aligning the fences.
 - D. Co-relating & updating the foot-prints work is on-going and should be available to GIS (Geographical Information System) Department by end July 2007.
- (i) Bio-Regional Data Base has been compiled.
- a) *Cadastral update for Auroville and Bio-Region for 7 Panchayats namely, Irumbai, Bommaiypalayam, Mathur, Rayapudupakkam, Kottakuppam, Thiruchitrambalam, Pattanur, Alankuppam (Puducherry) were conducted.*
 - b) *utilities viz. Sewage, Solar Panels, Wind Mills and Bore Wells locations in Auroville & Bio-Region updated.*
 - c) *Development Requirement of villages around Auroville Mapped based on studies conducted by Harvest.*
 - d) *Demography & Amenities details of Vanur Block Mapped.*
- (ii) Auroville Data Base
- a) *Mapping of existing features on projected concept, contours, land ownership, proposed roads, topography, infrastructure for all 4 zones, were conducted.*
 - b) *Update of civil utility maps up to October 2006 covering electricity & telecom for city area, were done.*
 - c) *Spatial study was made for 12 lines of force with series of maps.*
 - d) *Overlay on Google satellite image of Auroville Township & Region of spatial features to study the land cover.*
 - e) *Detailed studies were conducted in terms of land use, ownership and environment aspects for the proposed model village project.*
 - f) *Proposed built-up and path areas have been calculated for the buildings in City Centre, International Zone, Cultural Zone and Sector 1 and 2 of Residential Zone, to assess scope for rain water harvesting and*
 - g) *Preparation of studies for road levels , crown & service roads, were carried out.*

Planning Architecture

- i) *Urban Design Study for Administrative & Habitat Area.*
- ii) *Urban Design Study of City Centre relating to Crown in particular.*
- iii) *Architectural Concept & Design with Model for proposed Town Hall.*
- iv) *Architectural Concepts for Habitat : Work prepared by 4 Aurovilian Architects.*
- v) *Landscape Studies of Green Corridor.*
- vi) *Architectural Conceptual Studies of Lines of Force, were completed.*

Research

- a) Study on energy efficient technologies and materials in the context of United States Green Building Council (LEEDS) and The Energy & Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi including case studies in India & abroad were done, which include:
 - *Different types of building envelopes*
 - *Site planning*
 - *Orientation*
 - *Improved quality of construction*
 - *Energy Efficiency*
 - *Sustainable Building Material availability in India*
- b) Study on present housing facilities in collaboration with Housing Finance – work in progress.
- c) Study on various eco-friendly developments in various aspects of Auroville for production of hand-book on Eco-city practices, were done.

Training

The following courses/workshops were conducted during the year:

- *Course in Architecture for Indian students from Indian Institutes*
- *Course in Architecture for students from German Universities*
- *Course in Landscaping for a student from Sweden*
- *Course in Architectural Programme for a student from Auroville*
- *Course in GIS for local students.*

International Outreach

- o Participation in formation of International Federation of Green Regions sponsored by City of Lausanne, Switzerland.

5. RESIDENTS / CENSUS

On March 31, 2007 total of 1440 residents of Auroville (*aged eighteen years and above*) coming from 41 nations were living in Auroville. There were 769 male residents and 671 female residents. There were also 440 minors (*aged below eighteen years*) living in Auroville. Total -1880.

Country-wise details of residents including minors is as follows:

Sl.No.	Nationality	Nos.	Sl.No.	Nationality	Nos.
1	INDIAN	764	22	SRI LANKAN	4
2	FRENCH	287	23	BRAZILIAN	3
3	GERMAN	232	24	DANISH	3
4	ITALIAN	91	25	HUNGARIAN	3
5	DUTCH	79	26	BULGARIAN	2
6	AMERICAN	64	27	ETHIOPIAN	2
7	SWISS	54	28	LATVIAN	2
8	BRITISH	51	29	LITHUANIAN	2
9	RUSSIAN	41	30	SLOVENE	2
10	SPANISH	32	31	SOUTH AFRICAN	2
11	CANADIAN	23	32	ALGERIAN	1
12	KOREAN	23	33	BELORUSSIAN	1
13	ISRAELI	20	34	COLOMBIAN	1
14	BELGIAN	19	35	FINNISH	1
15	UKRAINIAN	16	36	ICELAND	1
16	SWEDISH	13	37	IRISH	1
17	AUSTRALIAN	11	38	KAZAKH	1
18	ARGENTINIAN	8	39	NEPALI	1
19	AUSTRIAN	7	40	NEW ZEALANDER	1
20	TIBETAN	6	41	THAI	1
21	JAPANESE	4	TOTAL		1880

Auroville's Entry Services

Entry Service Functioning:

In December 2006 The Residents Assembly elected a 7-member team to the Entry Service. According to the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988, the admission or termination of registration of persons from the Register of Residents in Auroville has to be in accordance with the regulation drafted for the purpose by the Governing Board, and approved and notified by the Central Government. The drafting of the regulation is in progress and is likely to be completed soon.

6. LAND

Auroville has been conceived as a Universal Township for 50,000 people from across the world. The broad guidelines of the township such as four zone - residential, cultural, industrial, international and the central area called “Peace” with the inspiring Matrimandir at its centre, the 12 Gardens surrounded by water bodies, and the vision of self-sufficiency by way of farms, dairies, agriculture, – what is now called the Green Belt – are all integral to the Mother’s vision of a city of the future. The project as a whole is meant to be model, a source of inspiration to India and the world for a new way of living.

“It was very interesting. It remained the whole time, for more than an hour, such a strong and clear vision, as if suddenly everything became clear. I often used to wonder about it (not “wonder,” but there was a tension to understand why things, here in India, have become such a chaos, with such sordid difficulties, and all of it piling up), and instantly, everything became clear, like that. It was really interesting. And immediately there was: “Here is why you have made Auroville.”

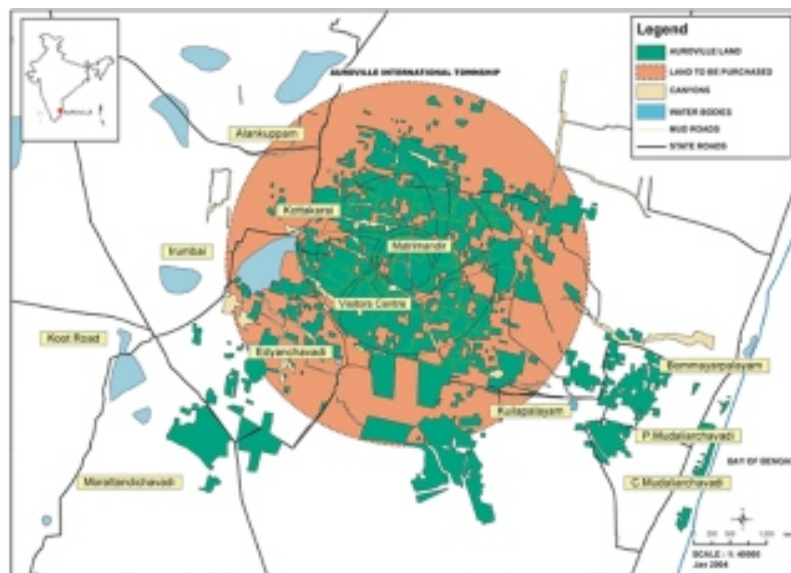
“And the clear vision: the same thing which in the history of the universe made the earth the symbolic representation of the universe so as to concentrate the work on one point, the same phenomenon is now taking place: India is the representation of all human difficulties on earth, and it is in India that the ... cure will be found. And then, that is why - THAT IS WHY I was made to start Auroville.”

(The Mother’s Agenda Vol. 9, Date: 3rd February 1968)

To safeguard Auroville’s territorial integrity from the vagaries of market forces and unplanned and incongruous development so that it could develop into humankind’s first unique Universal Township with the mission and the potential to foster unity and integral progress of India and humanity, Auroville’s Master Plan aims for Auroville’s appropriate and unified development together with the development of the surrounding population and localities.

Land Report : The total geographical area of Auroville Universal Township is 1662 hectares (4110 acres). Of this, as on 31 March 2007, Auroville Foundation owns 824.6 hectares (2045 acres). This excludes the land bought outside the planned township area before Auroville’s founding in 1968 when the exact location of the township was not decided. This area totalling 416 hectares (1029 acres), often referred to as key whole areas, is today the site of a number of projects, communities and much of Auroville’s outreach work in the bioregion.

Land Consolidation Committee (LCC): The Governing Board constituted the LCC with 11 members on 14th March 2006. Of these, 6 members were appointed by the Resident Assembly and 5 by the Governing Board. The Committee includes Secretary to the Auroville Foundation as a member. During the year under review, 31.8 acres of the land were secured out of which 18.2 by way of negotiated purchase, and 13.6 acres by way of land exchange with the unutilized lands outside the township area. Also, 9 acres of unutilized lands outside the township area were sold for raising resources for the land within the planned township area.



7. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

Funds and Assets Management Committee (FAMC)

In accordance with the Auroville Foundation Rules, 1997, the Governing Board constituted the 11-member FAMC on 9th February 2007. Financial Advisor, HRD Ministry and Secretary, Auroville Foundation are its two ex-officio members. The rest were nominated by the Residents Assembly.

Financial Management

Renewal of 10(23c)(iv) Tax Exempt Status: Application for renewal has been filed for the years 2006-07 and 2008-09, while the previous years 2004-05 and 2005-06 are still under consideration. The Income Tax authorities have affirmed that the Foundation as a whole enjoys the tax-exempt status and not its constituent units. Its implications are being studied

Renewal of 80G Tax Exemptions: The tax exemption under Sec. 80G on donations received has been granted up to the year 2010.

Renewal of Department of Scientific and Industrial Research Recognition: Auroville has received the tax exempt status under Sec. 35(1)(ii) and 35(1)(iii) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 upto 31.03.2006. The renewal beyond 31.03.2006 is still awaited.

Financial Systems: The Institute of Public Auditors India-Chennai Chapter has been retained as consultants for streamlining the Foundation's financial systems. Its office-bearers have been holding discussions with the FAMC regarding financial control and management of various units under the Foundation. A system of Internal Audit, approved by the Finance Committee, is being implemented under supervision of the consultants.

8. EDUCATIONAL & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES :

I BHARAT NIVAS

1. CENTRE FOR INDIAN STUDIES

Some of the more significant of the activities of the Centre are presented here. The normal activities pursued within the community life of Auroville continued as usual.

1. Invited to give an endowment lecture at the **Sri Aurobindo Bhavan**, Kolkata on the theme – **‘India.. is the World’s Future’**
2. A week’s Seminar was organized in ‘Tapogiri’, the oldest Sri Aurobindo Centre in the Himalayas on the theme – **‘The Presence of Supermind’**
3. A tour of the U.S. which focused on the following – Participation in the Conference on **‘Integral Psychology’**, which had its first session at the New York Open Centre in New York and subsequent ones in upstate New York. The inaugural talk was on: **‘Integral Yoga: The Key Science of the Future’**; Also in the annual AUM (All U.S. Meeting) meeting held in Menla Retreat, upstate New York on the theme – **‘Inner and Outer Action’**; these Conferences were followed by a visit to the **‘Sri Aurobindo Centres’** on the West Coast – San Francisco, San Jose, Lodi, Los Angeles – with talks and meetings at each of them.
4. Prof. Ranjan Mitter, of the faculty of the Indian Institute of Management, Kolkata and Director of the Sri Aurobindo Centre there, visited Auroville and gave several workshops on how Sri Aurobindo’s vision can be presented in these professional courses.
5. A series of Workshops with people from the surrounding areas were organized on the theme – **“Towards a deeper understanding of Auroville”**
6. Organised a Conference in Jan 2007 on the theme: **The Collective Yoga of Man: A World in Process** - Among the participants were interesting personalities visiting here at the time, senior members of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry and of the California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco. The Conference brought out a brochure presenting the theme, with some texts from Sri Aurobindo and The Mother and a detailed list of specific themes. There was a major covering theme for each day. In the mornings, we had individual presentations. The afternoons were given to a collective exploration of the same theme. And, in the evenings, there was an art or theatre programme illustrating the theme. The specific themes for the three days were: Is there a New Mind in Emergence in the changing Patterns of our Technology? Are New Life-Styles taking shape and Transformative Processes? Is Matter Revealing its Hidden Secrets. With the Spirit in its Core?

7. Two publications were brought out – A compilation of texts, in the original, from _____ by Sri Aurobindo – to serve as an introduction to the major volume; a series entitled **Bharat Nivas Chronicles I** was started, with its first volume, consisting of a selection of writings and graphics – _____ by Dr. Aster Mira Patel
8. A lecturer in History at the Madras Christian College and now a fellow of the University Grants Commission, Shri Surendran Purushotham, has been working here for over a year to work on a Ph.D. thesis. The title is _____
9. Michael Murphy, member of the International Advisory Council, and Founder of the renowned Esalen Institute that pioneered the ‘human potential’ movement in the U.S. gave us two talks – _____ . and _____
10. The Centre of Indian Studies in collaboration with Auroville Foundation and the India International Centre, New Delhi organized two events for Prof. Michael Murphy at the India International Centre, New Delhi: *A talk on, _____ , under the presidency of Dr. Karan Singh; a Seminar on _____ with the participation of Dr. (Smt.) Kapila Vatsyayan, India’s representative to Unesco’s Executive Board and Dr. P.N. Tandon, eminent neuro-scientist.*

II **SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (S.A.I.I.E.R.)**

(a) SAVITRI BHAVAN

It is one of the unit of the SAIER. The are doing the following works.

Glossary of allusions found in *Savitri* - Establishment of a database allowing collection of many different types of allusions as they are identified in the poem.

Savitri Bibliography - Listing of all *Savitri*-related materials for the assistance of students and researchers.

Savitri Study Circle - Deepening understanding of the poem.

Students’ Companion to *The Future Poetry* - Provision of a study-aid for college-level students of English literature.

The Mother’s “Notes on the Way” - Compilation of audio-recordings with accompanying bi-lingual texts of some of the Mother’s most important talks.

Vedic Hymns Translation - Translation into German and English of selected Vedic texts, based on Sri Aurobindo’s interpretation of the Veda.

Foundations of Indian Culture - To study Sri Aurobindo's comparative analysis of Indian and western cultures.

The Synthesis of Yoga - Study of Sri Aurobindo's major work on the practice of yoga.

Guest Speakers - Competent speakers in English or Tamil share their insights on *Savitri*-related topics.

Special Events - Provision of musical performances, films, exhibitions, etc.

Orientation Programmes - To provide information about the vision and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and the aims and ideals of Auroville for groups of guests, visiting students and newcomers to Auroville.

Activities and Outcomes

Art Gallery and Core Building

The most striking development at Savitri Bhavan during this period has been the completion of the first module of the main Core Building of the Savitri Bhavan complex. This handsome new building was officially inaugurated on September 29 by Dr. Karan Singh, the Chairman of the Auroville Foundation. The first module provides a spacious entrance and reception area, which is also used as a multi-purpose hall, and a large administrative office, as well as connections to the Library Building and the rest of the Core Building.

As soon as this Module 1 was completed in June 2006, construction work was started on the first stage of Module 2 of the Core Building. This is a larger module on two floors. When completed (by March 2008) it will provide the long-awaited Art Gallery to allow permanent display of all the 474 paintings of the Meditations on Savitri series prepared in the 1960s by Ms. Huta D. Hindocha, under the detailed guidance of the Mother. Also on the upper floor of the Core Building will be 4 spacious rooms for classes and research. On the lower floor are a storage area and laboratory for the care of the entire Huta. D. Hindocha collection – a great treasure which has been entrusted to the care of Savitri Bhavan. Also an audio-visual studio and all the supporting services for the entire building, and an outdoor amphitheatre with stage complete the Core building.

Funding for the Core Building is being provided by the Government of India under the SAILER Development Scheme.

House of Mother's Agenda

The increased working space provided by the completion of Module 1 allowed us to fulfill a long-held intention: that the House of Mother's Agenda, housed in Aspiration since 1989, could be incorporated into the Savitri Bhavan complex. In August the team of 3 Aurovilians, Gangalakshmi, Franca and Martin S., shifted all their materials to the First Phase building, where they are now available alongside the Savitri Bhavan Reading Room collection. When Module 2 of the Core Building becomes functional in the spring of 2008, the House of Mother's Agenda will have a separate room there.

Meditations on Savitri Collection

During the year we were able to show four more films in the new 'Meditations on Savitri' series, which is being created by Manohar from new digital photographs of Huta's beautiful paintings – at her request. Two films were completed and shown during 2005-06. These six films together cover the whole of Book One of Savitri – The Book of Beginnings. Six more films will complete the series.

Meanwhile Giorgio Molinari, the photographer who prepared the new photographs of the paintings, is working to provide very high archival and exhibition-quality prints in actual size of all the 474 paintings in The Meditations on Savitri collection. During 2006-07, 186 reproductions were made, covering Book Two, Canto 6 to the end of Book Seven. These reproductions are being shown as a rotating exhibition, until completion of the Art Gallery allows all the pictures to be permanently displayed in sequence, according to the Mother's wish.

At the same time all the accompanying materials entrusted to us by Huta - a very large number of sketches and original letters of the Mother relating to the painting work – are being scanned and reproduced, so that the materials may eventually be made available for research, while the priceless originals are kept safely.

Research Projects and Publications

During the year six research projects were taken up with the assistance of a Government Grant. These were:

- Preparation of a second Bibliographical publication listing Savitri-related materials for the assistance of students and researchers. This publication includes updates to Interim Publication no. 1, as well as three new sections, namely: Editions, Unpublished Works (Translations and Studies), and Recordings.
- Preparation of a database to act as a framework for the on-going collection of various kinds of allusions as they are identified in Sri Aurobindo's Savitri, along with explanatory materials for the assistance of readers.
- Compilation of all references to Savitri in the published works of K.D. Sethna (Amal Kiran) – one of the foremost experts on the poem. All Amal Kiran's published notes on many different aspects of Savitri were located and digitised. It now remains to arrange them in a suitable order for publication in book form.
- Continuation of the on-going project of preparing a Students' Companion to Sri Aurobindo's The Future Poetry. To complement the biographical studies compiled last year of the main poets discussed by Sri Aurobindo, it was wished to provide a representative anthology of their works. This work could be only

partially completed, and will continue in 2007-08, with the aim of creating a draft for testing out in Auroville schools by the end of the year.

- Creating supporting materials for study of the Mother's "Notes on the Way". These texts were selected by the Mother from her 'Agenda' materials, for publication in the Ashram 'Bulletin'. and are notations of some of the most significant of her experiences in her transformation work on her body. They were transcribed from recordings made by Satprem. It was wished to play the recordings, and to provide bi-lingual texts to accompany them, as we have been doing for several years with earlier recordings of the Mother's talks. Preparation of these recordings and accompanying leaflets has been a big task that was successfully completed during the year.
- Translation of selected Vedic Hymns, according to the psychological interpretation given by Sri Aurobindo, into German and English. A first sample publication of the work being done by Nishtha, assisted by Vladimir, was brought out, and a larger one is planned for 2007.

Issues Nos 25 and 26 of our occasional publication Invocation : study notes on Savitri were brought out in the course of the year. While no. 25 gave texts of three guest lectures held at Savitri Bhavan in 2005-06, no. 26 focussed particularly on the research into Vedic symbolism in the poem that Vladimir has been conducting over the last three years.

Two issues of our Tamil publication Prarthana were also prepared with the assistance of Mrs.S. Sundaravalli. This publication is very much appreciated by Sri Aurobindo's devotees all over the State.

Organisational Developments :

Completion within the coming months of the new facilities provided by the Core Building presents us with the prospect of a corresponding big expansion in activities, and in the complexity of the work of the Savitri Bhavan team. To prepare ourselves to face these new challenges and opportunities, we have initiated two important organisational changes. The first is internal : the growing number of facilities and activities have been organised into departments, covering eight "services" and currently supporting 20 projects. Each department has its own team, which can be expanded to meet the growing needs. Instead of a single project coordinator, administration is to be handled by a Management Team, initially consisting of 4 senior staff members, each with their own specialisation. To provide advice and guidance as the project grows in complexity, we have requested trusted and highly experienced friends to form an Advisory Group.

III EDUCATION

1. TRANSITION SCHOOL

Goals and Objectives

The aim of Transition School is to help our children develop integrally to their full potential, to impart a solid academic grounding, and to foster human values, so that Auroville children may become responsible individuals, dedicated to human unity.

Transition School is a school for the children of Aurovilians and Newcomers. Students, who range in age from 6-15, come from about 24 different countries and many states of India. Many of the students were born in Auroville and have spent their lives in India. The school uses a holistic approach which perceives each being as unique and aims to guide each individual in the quest for self-knowledge. Sri Aurobindo and Mother are the guides and the ideals of the Charter of Auroville are reflected in the methodology and the materials that are used in the classes

There are nine groups at Transition School with fifteen to twenty children in each group. Classes and activities are offered to the children in different ways: project work, outings, cooperative learning groups, individual work, interdisciplinary subjects and single subject classes. Every subject of study is seen as a tool for self-discovery and an instrument to aid the children to learn to express themselves and to gain knowledge. The emphasis on the development of the whole being allows children to learn not only traditional academics, but to learn to be responsible for their own progress, development and emotions. They also learn to work together, developing team building and conflict resolution skills. We are constantly striving to create an atmosphere and awareness that encourages each individual to strive to reach his/her potential and that promotes human unity.

The teachers have been active as a team in the planning and execution of the buildings, in raising funds, in the development of the curriculum and in the setting of the goals of the school. Each development has been the result of a group decision that is conducive to learning, harmonious with the environment, and aims to fulfill the needs of Auroville.

Activities

Languages and Human Unity.

Aim: As a community aspiring toward human unity, Transition School endeavours to develop our children's capacities to learn languages and understand cultures. English is the medium of instruction at Transition School. Our children also learn French and Tamil, as well as Sanskrit in the form of song. This year we also encouraged parents to use the school facilities to offer their language to children.

Learning a foreign language is a key element of cross cultural communication, cultural understanding and, ultimately, human unity and according to Sri Aurobindo, language is very important in the development of mental faculties. Since then a number of studies in bilingual education also seem to lead to the conclusion that foreign language study can aid and even accelerate the cognitive development of the brain. Bilingual subjects in various tests have outperformed similar monolingual subjects on verbal and nonverbal tests of intelligence.

Outcomes:

Teachers reported that the children progress through the years, learning the vocabulary and structure of the languages. Research and reading comprehension skills improve. There is more awareness and appreciation for cultures as they study different texts and do research on project topics. Children are interested in the cultures of the languages that they study. Communication skills improve. Study skills improve.

Holistic Assessment

Aim: Development of comprehensive student portfolios and other forms of assessment that help the student progress through authentic feedback promotes the meaningful involvement of the students and gives a more complete picture of the student than more traditional forms of assessment.

Strategies: *Portfolio*

Teachers of grades 1 and 8 decided to improve the format of the existing student portfolio with the intention of teaching the other classes in the following year. Children choose work that will be included in the portfolio and set their own goals. Teachers guide the children to include certain work. The children themselves assess each piece that has been chosen. At the end of each term the children do a term review that will be included in the portfolio. At that time they were encouraged to include a report, picture or drawing that represents activities that they are interested in outside of school. The students shared their portfolios with their parents. The older students were asked to lead a portfolio conference with their parents.

Other forms of assessment

Pre- and Post- assessment of skills/understanding. – an intake form at the beginning and end of a new project, asking what the child knows and what they want to learn on a particular topic. And how that changes from the beginning to the end of a project work; tests without marks, with corrections made by the children, following and participating in the correction process at the board, so that they could then immediately see what they had not understood and review and learn at the same time; regular student conferences; Observation and Intuitive assessment by the teacher who would perceive moments of strength or weakness of the child and try to model the activities accordingly; tests with marks; manipulative tasks - developing hypotheses, planning and carrying out experiments, measuring, writing up results; self assessment by students of work and progress; written progress reports sent to parents; exhibitions-demonstrations, projects, presentations.

Outcomes:

Collaboration rather than competition is fostered as children realize that they are learning for their own progress; teamwork becomes important and more efficient; children grow in self-confidence and self-esteem as they share their portfolios with their parents; they grow in self-confidence through presentation of the work that they have done. Finding joy in learning, children appreciate the work of others and develop study skills as they realize that they need to study to learn. Also parents are interested and participate in various forms of assessment.

Organizational statistics 2006-2007

Number of students enrolled: 144

Number of new students enrolled: 29 from Kindergarten, 10 Newcomers from other schools

Number of students graduated: 16

Number which left for other reasons: 5

Number of full time teachers: 16 ; Number of part time teachers: 15

Secretariat: 2; Librarian: 1; Teacher Training: 1; Trainees: 3; Tutors: 2

Buildings or other new construction completed

A new Arts and Crafts building has been completed. Phase two of Transition Expansion has begun.

Teacher Development

At the beginning of the school year the teachers of Transition School decided on a topic for an internal study day for teachers. The book “Working Toward Solutions” was chosen as a guide for our teachers’ development day. This book stresses the importance of finding solutions rather than problems.

At the end of the school year, evaluating their “work” and the progress achieved, for the children it was clear that this year had been a year of self-discoveries, and they knew that although we worked very hard, it was very enjoyable because everyone felt good, safe and wanted. Some children expressed their happiness in being able to control their temper and mood under stressful situations. Others expressed how much more thoughtful and careful they were in relation to others, with both words and actions. And still some others described how good it felt to be part of a group that works together.

A period in which it was a pleasure going to school each morning, knowing that even on days when the work was demanding, academic or otherwise, we were working together towards a goal greater than just the individual. A collaborative and friendly class is definitely a class in which progress happens.

2. FUTURE SCHOOL

Goals and Objectives

The overall vision of Future School is to develop integral educational environment for adolescents in which Aurovilian students between the ages of 14-20 reach their own unique potential through a balanced development of body, mind, emotion, and spirit. Underlying this integral approach is the development of faculties that will allow the students to pursue the unfolding of their inner truth in harmony with the material world, and also a collective aspiration toward human unity. Toward this, the aim is for our students to appreciate and respect the truth behind our diverse cultural, ethnic, and individual heritage.

It offers educational programs that emphasize quality, practical skills, group dynamics, and awareness of all the planes of the being (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual); maintains the international character of AV; encourages students to adopt a value-oriented approach to life in which they have an understanding of personal, community, and global responsibility.; teach students how to set and reach challenging goals; encourages students to become self-motivated, self-aware, and self-controlled; creates opportunities for the continued growth of students; expose students to new experiences and different approaches to learning and understanding; Providing educational programs that open a wide range of opportunities for students upon 'graduation' from the school, it conducts educational research related to values, integral development, and human unity.

Activities

The learning environment of Future school where most teachers and students are Aurovilians, provides the basis for the promotion of international understanding, peace and human unity, with its international character maintained by bringing together students from many different nationalities, with their varied cultural and ethnic backgrounds, in an atmosphere of protected freedom and harmony. Some teachers having spent the better part of their life in AV, they are truly dedicated to the ideals of AV and the Charter of AV and this influences the way they approach their work and sets the framework for the relationships amongst the students and the teachers.

Program

Future School is currently offering a high school equivalent education. This past year there were 53 adolescents/young adults from 14 nationalities enrolled in the school. The program is built around core subject areas chosen to reflect and build upon their Auroville backgrounds. Students are generally expected to stay in the program for 4-5 years, which allows ample time each year for students to complete their core courses and explore many elective subjects.

The school incorporates many different teaching/learning methods and environments: projects, tutorials, independent research, traditional lectures; small groups, large groups, one-on-one approach, peer teaching and self-study. In this way we hope to meet the needs of each individual, and we feel that the combination of required areas of study with choice of particular subjects gives the students the chance to get in touch with new areas of knowledge and at the same time to explore their interests.

Evaluation:

The students are actively involved in assessment and evaluation, of both their own progress and the effectiveness of the teachers and the school as a whole. As the Auroville schools do not give conventional grades or report cards, methods used for evaluation of students at Future School include: written progress reports at the end of each term (3 per year); mentor program; student-teacher conferences (as often as needed); parent-teacher conferences (normally twice a year); end-of-year individual conferences (student/parents/mentor/coordinator); internal tests and assignments; project work with presentations, either internal or public

Community Service Program aims to encourage students to learn more about themselves and the world around them by enabling them to experience different realities in Auroville and gain a behind-the-scenes understanding of a range of services and work places within the community. Also, to increase the direct interaction with, and participation in, community activities.

For two terms (July – December) the first year students were asked to rotate through 6 different service units. The students were given a list of available services and chose 6, or proposed alternatives. They spent one morning a week for a month in each service. In the first trial of this program this past school year there were 10 service options available, including the Matrimandir Gardens, the Kindergartens, the Solar Kitchen, the Electrical Service, and others. Next school year the number of possibilities will increase to 17, adding two Auroville farms, Savitri Bhavan, 2 Auroville restaurants and AV Radio to the list.

Students became more aware of their own interests and capacities. For example, one student who spent time in the Tailoring Section of the Free Store discovered a passion for tailoring and is subsequently spending her summer working in Upasana, an Auroville garments unit; there was an increased interaction between the Auroville community and its youth, resulting in greater appreciation and understanding on many levels; there is now a greater awareness of the variety of work that goes on within the community; the students expressed a much greater appreciation of and understanding for the work of others in the community. This pilot program was generally seen by all participants, students and adults in the services, to be a rewarding and positive experience, which is reflected in the sample of student comments below, regarding positive learning experiences.

School Self-Assessment

This past year there was felt to be a strong need for self evaluation and assessment within the school since it is still growing and evolving on all levels. Therefore, several activities took place to meet this need:

1. Dr. Heidi Watts, PhD, (Professor Emeritus, Antioch New England Graduate School) again gave her invaluable assistance in various ways, but primarily, this year, by guiding a professional development session for 10 Future School staff members using SWOT Analysis..

2. Brain-storming on “What is the aim of education in Auroville?” in order to develop a mission statement for the Auroville Schools.

Future School Investment Group

A year and a half ago, the school received a grant of Rs. 10 lakhs to be used by the school to fund prospective projects in Auroville that satisfied pre-defined criteria. A small group of students showed interest and formed a group which came to be called the Future School Investment Group, or FSIG for short. They met once a week for the past 3-4 semesters and have since completed the allocation of the entire grant amount with the guidance of the donor.

3. LAST SCHOOL/ SUPER SCHOOL

Goals and Objectives

The aim is to offer a rich educational environment and create the space for a growing self-determination in the students, in reference to Sri Aurobindo’s vision and Auroville’s ideals.

The method of supporting the students in building up their own educational program has been proven very positive in terms of commitment, of team spirit and of personality development. The academic component has been rich and the school has become something like a community of learners or a shared learning experience.

Activities

- i) *Languages: French, Tamil, Sanskrit, Spanish besides English.*
- ii) *Science: Math, Natural Sciences and Ecology as a new subject.*
- iii) *Philosophy: that covers Sri Aurobindo, Bertrand Russell, Vedantic knowledge*
- iv) *Indian Culture: covering the lives of the Buddha, Sri Aurobindo, Vishwamitra and Vasishta; Tantra; Dharma; The Bhagavat Gita; The Ramayana; The Mahabharata – Epics; Sikhism; Current Events; Climate Change, and the general the degradation of our environment; the issue of Women and Children; the issue of Prejudice/discrimination – whether in race, religion, gender, class.*
- v) *Art - integrated as a powerful means to cultivate qualities (harmonisation, perfection) and refine the emotional being through the esthetical mind. In addition to the activities of drawing, painting, sculpture and crafts, three workshops were given in: Ikebana flower arrangement, Pop Art and Animation.*
- vi) *Sports -The students participate in the daily Dehashakti Program.*

4. KINDERGARTEN

Activities

Yellow Group :

Every year the children of the Yellow Group (the youngest group of the Kindergarten aged between 2 and 3) are of different nationalities. This year there were 13 children: Indian 9 (Tamilian 8 and Gujarati1), Israeli 1, Italian 1, Tibetan 1, and 1 child of mixed parentage (Canadian mother and Indian father).

For most of these children, English was a new language. Only after a few months did they start to understand and communicate a little in English. The first 4 months they were told simple stories, for not more than 15 minutes, choosing stories with pictures; after the child's vocabulary had increased considerably in 6 months, books from the Kindergarten library were used; they were all eagerly awaiting their regular Story-Time and always wanting more!.

This year the children were encouraged to bring books from their homes, which a teacher would read to all the children. The coming school year the Yellow Group will also have its own small library. Once the children have learnt how to take care of the books, they can borrow books and take them home.

Orange Group :

The orange group (3 1/2 years old when arriving) hosted 14 children this year, 6 girls and 8 boys. A new girl arrived a few weeks before the end, which didn't disturb the group dynamic, on the contrary.

In the first 2 to 3 months, the main focus was specifically put on making the children feel comfortable in this new environment (places and teachers). This includes all about eating, toilet, play areas, etc. The other activities like painting, singing, individual sessions, swimming pool, body-awareness, crafts started only when we felt the children were ready for it. This strategy helped to build a trust in the place and teachers.

This year's batch had a few particularities - Most of the children had a very good hand-eye and body coordination, which made them very comfortable in the class with drawing, cutting, pasting as well as on the playground with jumping, running, and climbing. They had also an unusual ability to concentrate and by the end of the year could sit quietly in the morning circle for more than half an hour, meditation and activities included.

The bench-mark for this year was the visits to children and teachers' houses. From January onwards, all the students visited 2 houses on Monday mornings. These visits seemed to improve a lot the atmosphere of the class, to enhance the trust and closeness between

each other and provided many topics for meaningful conversations. New friendships were found, the children started to visit each other's houses after school, and got to know their physical environment better. It also helped the teachers to understand each child better and to connect their classes more directly to what was known to them. The parents felt more at ease in their home to talk about their situations, which helped in developing an overall atmosphere of trust.

Green Group

This group had 13 children: 2 German; 1 Tibetan; 1 Spanish/French; 1 English/French; 1 Gujarati; 1 Oriya and 6 local Tamil children. There were 10 boys and only 3 girls. This boy /girl ratio was inadequate.

One of the main challenges of this group was their tendency to talk very loud. We did not develop any systematic strategy beyond reminding them repeatedly that had to speak more quietly. It took long and a lot of patience but now they can talk softly.

The academic work skills such as reading writing and numbers progressed steadily. But some of them are still weak in comparison to the level of the group. These children found it difficult to focus/concentrate on their work and needed adult attention to be able to do so.

Swimming, craft- work was popular. everyone speaks English, but with a lot of grammatical errors and some with strong foreign accents. They have developed a good sense of community among themselves and are able to, and generally do include everyone in their games.

Blue Group

The blue group, age 5, had 6 Tamilians and 5 French-speaking children; in the classroom you could often hear only the teachers speaking English! The children had to be reminded to use English as a common language.

At the beginning of the year, they tended to play mainly with children of the same mother tongue, and that worried the teachers a little, and they tried to separate the group for different activities. Then, during the year, the patterns of free play changed, the children mixed more, they were more open to others, and it came naturally, without much enforcement from the teachers.

From August until end of March, a young visiting Swiss teacher who has just finished her studies came to work with the main teacher. She brought her competence, her sense of order and neatness, a lot of new songs and her guitar, her patience and her kindness, which benefited all the children.

Training With Arno Stern

Arno Stern, the leading practitioner of creative education in Paris (France), with his son Andre, technical assistant and living example of this particular education - 40 Aurovilians took part, mainly teachers (from Kindergarten, Nandanam, Deepanam, Transition, the

Pyramids, New Creation, Udavi and Deepam) and two guests. this training gave not only a new and objective knowledge of children's and adult's drawing and painting, but also a more respectful non-judgmental attitude towards the children in daily work.

Mixed ages for painting

Upon the recommendations of Arno Stern, on the mixing of age groups of children for painting sessions, the teachers were ready to try this new experience and it resulted in two mixed age groups with 13 children between the ages of 4 to 10 and one adult in each group. The adult and the older children are able to concentrate longer; the younger children have spontaneity and freshness of expression; so they naturally influence each other positively. The mixing of ages "develops the need for self-affirmation and relationships with others in a perfect equilibrium that avoids all competition."

Playroom for individual sessions with children has been built in place of the old sandpit and laundry room behind the kitchen. This activity "play sessions for children who need individual attention" has been happening since 3 years and is based on play, and has similarities with the "play therapy" research of Virginia Axline - a method that is nowadays used all over the world. However we find that "serving the play of a child" suits better to our work. The child is the one who leads the play. This activity is aimed especially at children who show certain particularities in the context of the classroom. difficulty to get along with other children, to speak, violent behaviour, agitation, inability to concentrate, day-dreaming, etc. The children who ask for it may come even for a single session. Sometimes, a child, might need individual attention and knows it. This year around 10 children came regularly and 10 came occasionally.

Building a Brick and Clay House with the 6 Year Olds, to develop a cooperative spirit in work, through the concrete objective of building a brick and clay house and to give children a real life experience through the physical contact with earth/mud, spread over 10 weeks, and finally resulted in – a house to play, visit of the parents and children of other classes at its completion, exhibition of pictures of the process of construction for the earth-day week.

Children felt proud as individuals and as a group. It builds up their self-confidence in putting theory into practice. The children feel that when they can build this house, they are "big". Children feel happy to play with mud and to be constructively active with their body.

Early Childhood Development through Contact with Water, helps young children to feel safe in water and to enjoy it, teach children to float and move in and under water, and also gives the opportunity to children to learn swimming eventually. The teacher is in the swimming pool with the children. He observes the children and plays with them. He is there to encourage the children to progress towards the set objectives (going under water, breathing, floating, moving horizontally, etc.). Some activities are conducted on land (e.g. singing, and running games), some in the water, some under the shower; around 40 children feel at ease in the water, and most can put their head under water; 15 of them can swim and all of them.

5. DEEPANAM

Goals and Objectives

Towards Free Progress and Integral Education

In order to move towards a Free Progress way of education, Mother said that the first thing to be done is to create a psychic atmosphere, so that the soul qualities can come forward and guide the progress of the mind, vital and physical parts and finally come to a full awakening!

This year Deepanam's endeavour has been first of all an attempt towards an increasing understanding, openness and devotion towards Mother and Sri Aurobindo, so as to come to a warm and trustful atmosphere where big and small can progress steadily and truthfully upon their methodology of education. Also creating and maintaining an increasing harmony and beauty in the physical surroundings which is the base for greater progress.

Feeling that if children are happy and healthy they will learn everything they need to learn, this is a big change in the mindset for many parents and teachers which we are gradually exploring, debating and applying. In our schedule we have been very flexible in order to accommodate as much as possible, the needs of the moment of children and teachers. At the same time striving to keep a safe and structured atmosphere! We feel that children were happy and open to learning in these flexible conditions.

Organising the Week with the Children :

Every morning starting with a 10 minute concentration with all the children together with some elevating music, helps every child to concentrate and focus within!

The children are divided in 3 groups depending on their age or mastery of the English language. For each group a schedule is made, by teachers and children together! Progressively children are encouraged to take up more initiative in making their schedules. Several activities happen in mixed age groups as well, like French, handicrafts, fieldtrips and so on. Children are also involved in the daily life at school; this includes arranging the room, cleaning up, working in the garden, cooking etc.

Once a week an assembly takes place where issues are discussed together with all the students and teachers. Children are encouraged to raise issues and resolve conflicts within themselves as well. This is an intensive way to open the children to being more responsible and conscious about themselves and their surrounding.

Project Related Activities :

Auroville Project: Children were regularly taken out by cycle to different places, communities and interacted with several Aurovilians who spoke to them about their works. Great focus was given to knowing more about Matrimandir – the Soul of Auroville. These

excursions mostly by cycles became the most awaited activity. These outings have brought joy to the children and a feeling of togetherness, adventure, confidence, and knowledge of their living place and its people.

Animal Project: The importance of conserving our natural surrounding became the focus of this project; it also provided them with a direct program that would enhance their interest and respect for animals and their ecology.

Exploring the surrounding rich biodiversity of fauna & flora in Auroville, observing the tremendous concern and affection that the students show for animals in general, having a teacher bring harmless snakes at school and noting the children's interest in knowing about them, we have also started keeping fresh water aquarium fish and the participation from the children is very positive. To enlarge this project we have started fund raising to build a place on the school campus. This space would be the centre for keeping various sorts of live animals and preserving materials and equipments found from Nature – children's natural science museum!

Stone Carving, Clay Works and Crafts :

Children can choose stone-carving, clay works and crafts in the afternoons. These were other ways of getting them to be responsible and committed by letting them make their choices.

Sandbox :

Sandbox was another favourite program where children were given the opportunity to tune in their creativity; for this a silent-quiet room was reserved where sandbox activities are having a place in an innovative way with a teacher only offering support when asked. The role of the teacher here is more to create a harmonious and concentrated atmosphere so that the children who choose to be there can benefit fully by it.

Teacher Support :

Several workshops and interactions with various prominent educationalists were organized to encourage teachers at Deepanam to comprehend better the principles of education. These were one of the effective ways of brainstorming within the team the focus and the vast possibilities of what Free Progress Education could bring for the School.

6. NANDANAM

Starting with the understanding that “The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught” and that “The teacher is not an instructor or a task master, he is a helper and a guide”, the children are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and develop their individual personality, as well as become conscious of the group and be in harmony with it. This year a special effort was made to work through contextual learning, deinstitutionalizing the school by trying to bridge the gap between parents, teachers and the community as a whole.

To work towards this long term goal, Nandanam focused on specific objectives this year: to involve parents and home environment in the school's program by visiting children's homes and parents work places; to use the larger Auroville community as a learning field, making field trips within the community of Auroville and also inviting community members to come and share their skills at school; making parents aware of the school processes, having more frequent parent- teacher meetings, improved 'Open Days' and fundraising for the school was done by parents and teachers together.

Fifty five children participated, but all the people involved, young and old felt enriched by this process. The children got a cohesive and contextual learning environment. Parents understood and therefore could support the school processes better. School's environment was enriched by the parents and community's input. More of community's resources were utilized. Supported by all, teachers felt inspired and motivated to be original and creative, having more resources to play with.

Jalam (age two and half to four and half)

The crèche is a first introduction to school for the children. Many are in a large group for the first time and often do not know each other well. It is here that the group is formed which will stay together for years to come.

The over all aim of the crèche therefore is to create a harmonious atmosphere where children feel at ease with each other, the teachers and the school atmosphere in general. To work towards this and to bridge the gap between home and school, children's homes were visited in turns, where the families were introduced and children came to know each other more intimately, in a very informal atmosphere.

To develop an awareness towards the group, teachers invented simple animal stories that the children loved, which helped them to be and to do things collectively.

Prithivi (age three and half to four and half)

The teachers felt a strong need to interact with the parents and actively involve them in the development of their children. One tool was to let the parents experience a day in Nandanam School. All the parents were invited to one day, to come and participate in the day's activities in school along with the children; to help them understand the process of the school and know how teachers relate to the children. The children were very proud and happy, feeling that the school really belonged to them. By this interactive method the teachers received the full trust of the parents and also an opening for further dialogue. In fact, after this, the parents did ask for one to one parent - teacher meetings to discuss their children and to see how they could, along with the teachers, actively support them. The teachers could really see the difference it made in the development of the child when the parents involved themselves consciously.

Vaya (age four and half to five and half)

The main effort has been towards creating an environment for contextual learning by involving the parents and tapping on the resources of the community; thus turning the whole of Auroville into a platform for the children's education.

Towards the beginning of the year, the story of "Three Little Pigs" was narrated to the children. This led to the idea of doing a theatre with it. As props were prepared children started making various houses with different material, as in the story. They counted, measured and compared all the different sizes and shapes, getting a rudimentary idea of numbers, sizes and shapes in a real context. As the theatre was prepared, language was touched upon. It also developed in children self confidence and the capacity to work in a group.

Field trips were made accordingly within the community of Auroville and parents and community members were also invited to school to share their skills. When children felt a strong need to inform the others about their town, a journalist from "Auroville Today" a monthly magazine was invited to school. Children told her all they wanted about the town and a touching article with some wonderful photos of children's paintings was published in the next month's magazine.

Agni (age five and half to six and half)

One of the main aims of the teachers this year has been to develop a group sense amongst the children, because they felt that to be a particular requirement of the class. Thus they focused a lot on social skills. To work towards this they proceeded in three different ways: Giving plenty of 'Free play' time where the children had all the space to interact with each other spontaneously; learning to share and play together in harmony by dealing themselves with whatever situation came up. This developed a strong bond between them all; doing activities together, in circles, such as playing games, holding discussions and sharing treasures that they would often bring from home. This helped them to develop the capacity to listen to each other while respecting their turns, and understand the need of the group; doing collective crafts where they enjoyed being creative together, learning to think and coordinate in group.

By the year end, the fellow feeling between the children was so strong that often during 'Free play' time, they would make beautiful gifts for each other, having a kind word for all. Towards the end of the school year, the children prepared a play for parents and friends. Full of enthusiasm, spontaneously, each child created his own character and together, very smoothly, they wove a story around these characters, each child proposing his part. Thus, they made their own dialogues and in no time the play was ready. The whole process was joyful and spontaneous that as the teachers happily watched the play, they could really see the outcome of the full years work.

7. PRE CRECHE

The pre crèche opened in 2000 with about 10 children. It was meant to welcome babies from a few months old, up to two and a half years old, accompanied or not by one parent, up to five mornings a week. The aim is to offer the parents, especially the isolated ones, a place to meet and share their experiences about raising their children. The pre crèche provides a useful meeting point, a place that can help young parents to get to know each other in ever growing community of Auroville.

After 7 years of existence, the pre crèche is still evolving as different parents join its activities, sharing their various points of view on raising children. The growth since the beginning has been very much according to the needs expressed by the community for childcare. Each year has seen more improvements, and each year have had a higher intake of infants and toddlers

Toddler's Group :

This group had 20 children between one and a half and two and a half years old. This is a group of children who stay without their parents. The first 3 months work is to help them settle in, getting used to the team, and slowly learn to be separated, in a harmonious way, from their parents.

Baby's Group :

This year, it had an average of 17 children from 8 months old to one and a half years old with their parents, of many different nationalities. The numbers vary in this group, since not all the children come everyday. The infants get involved in various activities of daily life, including collective sharing, cleanliness, etc. They come in the morning with their parents and start with a circle where the child learns concentration. A candle is repeatedly lit, which each child blows out in turn and after this, they are guided towards an activity, or free to explore their own field of interest. Sometimes, parents have got more involved in organizing various activities of their choice to encourage greater togetherness and fun for their children.

Santa Claus :

At the end of the second term, a Christmas party was organized with all the parents and a Santa Claus. Some of the parents with various units within Auroville, generously contributed in kind and cash for the children's presents. Other parents contributed in organizing and baking. It was a fun morning with bright balloons and decorations everywhere. The children sang a few songs and were very excited to see Santa Claus who called them all by their names to come up and receive their gifts.

Improved infrastructure :

During the summer time, building and repairing the infrastructure took place according to the number of children expected for the new school year. Extending the toddlers room, building a store room, and adding some new climbing structures in the playground in order to improve the range of physical activities for our children.

8. DEHASHAKTI SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The aim and mission of the Dehashakti School is to provide an all-round educative program to our students through systematic training and planned activities, with a hope that this experience will inspire them to strive for an integral awareness (i.e. of their mental and vital beings as much as of their physical) while working for a conscious control over their growing bodies. Aiming at inculcating in them the drive for a continuous and ever-growing progress through congenial and joyful exercises and training in those disciplines of the field, track, and court which is available in our present circumstances, we see that the pleasure of being together, the impetus to excel, to do one's best, to strive always towards a greater perfection, are legitimate inclinations and motivating forces in cultivating in oneself the qualities of true sportsmanship.

Aurolympics is a yearly sports competition event to facilitate a concentrated development of the individual child in a secure environment of the team that engenders discipline, commitment, encouragement and enthusiasm. The event enhances the mission of the program by developing leaders from among the students, providing a vehicle for care for all students, encouraging personal responsibility amongst pupils, generating healthy rivalry in friendly games, building team skills, leadership skills and co-operation.

With the introduction of "Houses" some years ago, regardless of their varying capacities and degrees of participation, the children have found an increasing quantum of coordination and harmony within their House. They have obtained a firm moral support within the precincts of their team and acquired a sense of purpose as well as physical and psychological growth. And the team itself finds more and more its sense of dependence on the individual member and of its fulfilment through him. Aurolympic events are competitions between teams, hence the contribution of every member adds or subtracts from the total points chalked up by the team. It is an excellent illustration of the motto "one for all and all for one". This year for the first time swimming was added as part of the competitions in Aurolympics. In this way all the activities (i.e. gymnastics, athletics, swimming, fitness exercises, and games) have gained equally in their importance to the integral physical development of our students. In all these

activities stress is on the invaluable contribution made by the observance of regularity and discipline.

The Enduro Race :

The Endurance Race was run over distances of 150, 225 and 300 meters. The duration was 3, 6 and 12 minutes respectively for the junior, intermediate and senior categories. Students of each of the four Houses (which comprise of children of all age-groups) trained enthusiastically for increasing their stamina by running systematically for a whole month before the event. This year the focus was changed from individual merit to the team's overall performance. The team with the highest average of laps was awarded the prize!

Athletics Aurolympics :

This year unfortunately many children fell sick with the viral attack of chikungunya. This affected the whole training and the athletics competition so much that the competitions were postponed by two weeks. These competitions are the most challenging as all the children in various age-groups are challenged individually to participate in sprints, middle & long distances, long, high and triple jumps and throws! The 800m and 1500m walks this year were very impressive as the children made great effort to do their best in this very gruelling event.

9. ISAI AMBALAM SCHOOL

Goals and Objectives

To become a model school by creating an appropriate learning environment with the help of various innovative alternate educational methods including spiritual methods, and with the main emphasis on self-learning by the students. In this environment the students can learn easily and with joy, acquire all the competencies appropriate to their level and more, become aware of themselves in depth, use that knowledge for their inner and outer progress, and imbibe the ideals of Auroville in a natural manner. To provide training to those who wish to have it in the use of Innovative and Effective Alternate Educational Methods and in preparing appropriate Teaching/ Learning Materials for the use of these methods.

Activities

In this year separate learning programme for each of the 104 students was written and implemented. Learning programme for each of the students contained (1) Essential knowledge content appropriate to his/her age and level, (2) Other knowledge or skill content for which he/she had inclination, aptitude or special talent, (3) Essential psychological life skills, (4) Further skills or knowledge he/she wanted to acquire.

(Preschool level, 3+ and 4+ years): 53 children (24 boys and 29 girls) - learning programmes for these children contained activities for the 8 kinds of development at the preschool level. Among them for the Cognitive development Glenn Doman method was used. For the other developments weekly or fortnightly thematic projects were used.

(Primary level – 1st standard to 4th standard): 44 students (27 boys and 17 Girls) - for implementing the learning programmes, teachers of this Group used ABL (Activities-Based Learning) Cards with its ladder system, Phonics Method for Reading, computer educational CDs, puppet play, banking activities, field trips, project works, and allocating a specific period of 30 minutes for practising spoken English skills.

Outputs

Parent-Teacher Meetings - 5 of them with the parents of preschool children and 3 of them with the parents of the primary students. All the parents expressed happiness by the quantity and quality of the learning of their children and appreciated the care given by the teachers to each of their children. 13 parents participated in the Metric Mela (Math Festival) which was organised and celebrated by the primary and middle level students.

Research and Improvement in Educational Methods - Continuing the research on designing and implementing separate Learning Programmes for all the students, it was found that students at the 4th, 5th and 6th standard, with whom it has given good results, acquired a focus in their learning and a sense of responsibility in pursuing their learning. Teachers acquired a capacity to design learning programmes containing all its 4 aspects. They also acquired a certain expertise for implementing them. Both of these have resulted in enabling them to view and assess the students' learning in a broad-based manner.

Research in Phonics Method for Reading English by using the Teaching/ Learning Materials (TLMs) prepared by the staff also continued. This year the use of the TLMs for the 4th Stage of this method, that is, learning of alternate spellings for all the 44 phonemes, was more focussed. It was effective with 2nd and 3rd standard students.

Teacher-Trainings

7 teachers participated in the workshop on English Phonemics conducted at the school by Heidi Watts of Antioch University and 3 school teachers. All the teachers participated in six -day workshops on Paragraph Writing, English essay and sentence writing, respectively.

Trainings Given

A 6-day training in the use of all the Alternate Educational Methods of Isai Ambalam School was given to 8 teachers of PADI organisation belonging to the NGO Valored of Mangalore in Karnataka.

72 teachers from in and around Auroville participated in the Workshop conducted by Heidi Watts on Phonemics and by Isai Ambalam School teachers on Phonics Method for

Reading.

2 Teachers conducted a workshop on Spoken English, in Latheri taluk of Vellore district in Tamil Nadu. 37 primary school teachers and headmasters participated in the workshop.

One teacher conducted a workshop on the use of Project Works method at the primary level in a workshop in Chennai.

Alankuppam headmaster sought the assistance of Isai Ambalam School teachers for using our methods to improve the English language skills of his students.

36000 Government Primary Schools in Tamil Nadu are going to use Activity-Based Learning Card System from June 2007 for the learning of primary level students. Isai Ambalam School has been using this system from the year 1999 onwards.

A Metric Mela (Math Festival) organised by the students and their parents was attended by 400 students from Alankuppam Government High School, Pavendar English Medium School, Vidyanjali School, Life Education Centre, and Tamil Ulagam Schools visited the Festival, participated in all the events and enjoyed them.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Number of students enrolled: 104 (60 boys & 44 girls)

Number of new students enrolled: 37 (18 boys & 19 girls) (Preschool 34 and primary 3)

Number of students graduated: None

Number which left for other reasons: 22 (17 boys & 5 girls)

Number of full time teachers: 8; Number of part time teachers: 1

10. ILAIGNARKAL EDUCATION CENTER

Goals and Objectives

To provide increased educational opportunities for each age group, mainly youth (15 and above) appropriate their specific needs, and increase training facilities to gain a greater range of vocational skills, communication skills and improve income generating capacities.

To carry on research in Tamil (the language of this bio-region as well as one of the four languages for Auroville as suggested by the Mother) trial develop teaching methods and materials particularly suited to first generation learners in collaboration with local, national educational institution such as CIIL (Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore), Gadhigram Rural University, Kasturbakanya Gurukulam, Vedaranyam and disseminate the materials in order to increase the skills of existing teachers in non-formal schools and thereby contribute to raising standards in the bio-region and alternative schools.