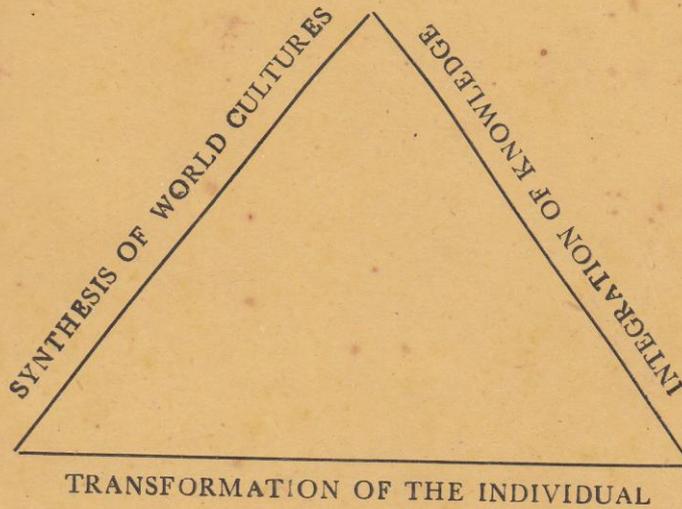


1968

ACADEMIC PLAN

PROPOSALS

FOR



The Auroville International University,

AUROVILLE

PONDICHERRY (INDIA)



28th February 1968

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BASIC STATEMENT

“That alone will be a true and living education which helps to bring out to full advantage, makes ready for the full purpose and scope of human life all that is in the individual man, and which at the same time helps him to enter into his right relation with the life, mind and soul of the people to which he belongs and with that great total life, mind and soul of humanity of which he himself is a unity and his people or nation a living, a separate and yet inseparable member.”

Sri Aurobindo

SYNOPSIS

This first draft proposal for the establishment of Auroville International University attempts to make a systematic presentation of its aims and objectives, its distinctive features and how it is likely to be developed; and envisages what should be the pattern of its growth and development, and to what extent national and international participation would be required during the proposed period of first twelve years of its growth.

In all there are ten sections and relevant appendices towards the end which give numerical data about various elements such as total students enrolments in different faculties both undergraduate and graduate, faculty strength and composition, construction costs, projected budget estimates etc. It is sincerely believed that (to achieve the aims and objective) the expenditure of money, effort, expected collaboration and participation are fully justified to achieve the proposed aims and objectives as we are aiming at an entirely new venture which will be unique by itself.

This first section gives the general background as an introduction, enunciating its distinctive feature, its aims and objectives and stresses on the need to attract faculty who not only possess highest academic qualifications and competency, but have a wideness of outlook and finesses of culture that an individual would have acquired by higher and deeper living. A spirit of dedication and service are indispensable to the faculty members who are aspiring to participate in this international venture.

Other sections follow this introduction with brief discussions on functions of the University, its organisation, its faculties, and its advanced centres of research, its physical facilities, its faculty composition, and its financial and international collaboration. The step by step plans to achieve these goals are outlined.

Several details are provided under physical facilities, like preparation of a master plan for the University, its academic buildings, institutional services, housing facilities for students and staff, physical education etc. One of the important features of this University is to treat every activity as a means to know the self and to reveal the truth. The great emphasis will be given to graduate education and collaborative research for the benefit of humanity. An important measure of the success of this University would depend upon the existence within the campus of a sizeable number of people who have infinite faith in the unity of mankind. The sponsors of this University are of the firm faith that these goals are within the means of realisation.

Ideal physical facilities for creative work will be provided in the shape of well equipped laboratories, libraries with world-wide collections and other appropriate supporting facilities.

The various faculty-courses for students of the University will begin with a meaningful two year common programme of integral education. Another distinctive feature will consist of an obligation on the part of the teachers to engage themselves in creative research, and, advanced international collaborative work based on world-wide needs. A third feature is the continued preparation of educational material for integral based on the inner and the outer needs of the students as well as on the yogic vision and experience of the teachers.

THE AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Introduction

Unity is the watchword of the modern world; the realisation of unity is its goal. All international movements, including those inspired and guided by the United Nations, strive to achieve this goal. It is in the context of this growing needs of a stronger and harmonious international life that the idea of an international university has been suggested and put forwards by the University of Utah. This idea was contained in the letter dated 18th January 1966 addressed to Dr. Radhakrishnan, President of India, requesting him to pursue it and to give it a concrete shape in order that the various departments of life can get a powerful instrument “to touch the soul of mankind and to build up a world community.”

This letter has had an official welcome in India and it is now proposed that an international university be established in India, and that it be located in a place with an international atmosphere.

It is fortunate that precisely at this hour an international city is being planned in South India whose purpose is to realise human unity. The project of this international city, named Auroville, has had a warm welcome at the UNESCO conference held in November 1966. A resolution has been passed calling upon all the nations of the world to support the construction of Auroville. This is indeed a happy inauguration of the great future that lies ahead of us.

It is appropriate that a new international university should find its natural location in this new international city. The INC for cooperation with UNESCO had through the Madras Government (South India) approached the organisers of Auroville to enquire whether the project of an international university could be incorporated in the all-embracing plan of the city. Fortunately, the answer has been in the affirmative and it is now to give a more definite and concrete shape to the project that an attempt is made to seek the collaboration and help of educationalists, scholars, thinkers, scientists, administrators, government and all forward- looking men and women of the world.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The very first question that may be raised is: what will be the distinctive features of this international university?

A new world of unity and the realisation of international ideals can truly be achieved by fulfilling three pressing needs of mankind:

1. To synthesise knowledge
2. To synthesise the cultures of the world
3. To synthesise the various elements in the individual and collective being of man.

For unity of mankind must be based not upon the compulsions of economic, social or political needs, but upon a sounder basis of the deeper psychological needs, but upon a sounder basis of the deeper psychological needs of man. For then alone can we hope to establish a lasting international society. The knowledge that is needed for the realisation of the psychological unity has been glimpsed at by some advanced minds, but we have as yet no solid and sound evidence regarding the psychology of human unity. An international university must address itself to the development of this new science.

Human unity implies the unity of knowledge. Today there is an explosion in the field of knowledge; and in that explosion the seeker of knowledge has got dazed. The specialisation in each field of knowledge has reached such a point of acuteness that the specialists feel overwhelmed by details. The Central throne of knowledge, it is felt, and one does not know how to discover or recover it. In the wake of the explosion of knowledge, the barriers between humanities, science, technology and fine arts have become rigid, and man who in search of a true and integral living, needs all these branches of knowledge, feels an irresistible urge to break these barriers and to encompass that central and essential knowledge which would verify all knowledge. A unity or

synthesis of knowledge is then an imperative need for a new education. In the formulation of this synthesis, we shall have to integrate useful contributions of the ancient systems of knowledge with the modern results of many-sided inquiry. We shall find, it is felt, that this will lead us to a seeking for a knowledge that is still in store for the future of mankind. The grasp and realisation of which would enable an easy sense of mastery over all aspects and details of knowledge.

The modern methods of knowledge which largely continued themselves to analysis and objective experimentation are now found wanting as the frontiers of modern knowledge extend from pre-occupation with physical sciences to a fresh enquiry into the psychological sciences. A new university must give a lead to modern research also in the field of methodology of knowledge. We shall find, it is felt, that a much more accurate and reliable knowledge is possible by the method of synthesis and attainable by the as yet inadequately developed or latent synthetic faculties of Man.

The modern man is said to be in search of himself. This search has just begun, but it promise to be a long and arduous adventure. Already, we have had several revolutions inaugurated by the depth psychology. Trend is already out of date. Jung is being overpassed. Psychical research is bringing to the fore the striking phenomena of telepathy, foreknowledge, etc. Even wild experiments are being launched upon to discover the mysteries that lie hidden behind Man. Already questions have been raised as to whether this inner search of Man will not produce even more dangerous results than what his external search has brought to him, notably on the production of the Atomic Bomb. A greater illumination, a greater guidance in this search of knowledge is an imperative need. We shall find, it is felt that such illuminations will come if Man is sincere in his search. The International University which is proposed will have a special institute of Research dedicated precisely and one pointedly to an enquiry into the latent psychological and synthetic faculties leading up to an integral illumination that might guide the world on its onward march towards the future.

In the past there have been attempts to study cultures and interactions of cultures upon each other. But this study has been largely historical and rarely psychological. The rise and fall of civilisations are still a mystery, and we still do not have the scientific and sound knowledge by which the two opposite needs of a growing civilisation can be reconciled, namely, the need for stability and the need for check and progress. And without this knowledge, let us assert, it is futile to expect to build up a new system of civilisation which would be at once progressive and lasting. The new International University must address itself to this urgent need and initiative not only an original research in this field but must prepare the world citizens of the future who imbibe in themselves the intellectual and inner capacities to be the members of that new system of civilisation.

UNITY OF KNOWLEDGE

An International University in search of a unity of knowledge, unity of world cultures, and an integration of the human personality, would include well established development of physical and natural sciences and technology. In fact this university should demonstrate that technology has to be perfected and fully utilised for the higher psychological fulfilment of mankind. It is quite likely that the faculty of Agricultural sciences and faculty of Technology would in fact be one of the first aspects that might grow and flourish, and make this university a centre not only of a deep learning but also of great practical achievement.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

There has recently been an intensive rethinking on the aims of education and on the methods that should be employed in the educational institutions to achieve the best results. A stress on freedom, development of an all-round personality and on a stimulating atmosphere so as to link education with life is the dominant trend in modern education thinking. The ancient Greek ideal of a harmonious development of the body, life and mind has also appeared with a redoubled vigour. At the same time, attempts are being made to revolutionise education by introducing the training in moral and spiritual values. All these movements we feel, point to a reconstruction of education but fall short in achieving it. Education must indeed be, a preparation for life, but this connection can securely be achieved only on the basis of a true science of living. A distinction must be made between moral values and spiritual values. Moral values and those put forward by institutional religions are, at their best, only a preparation for the spiritual values. A deep inquiry into the higher realms of values, it is felt, will show that spirituality with the inner soul of Man, or with, to use the modern psychological term "the deep integrating centre of Man". In the ancient system of education this truth of the spiritual values was to some extent recognised and therefore in these ancient systems of education there was something valuable which can still be preserved and reconstructed in the context of the modern conditions, but still spirituality has in the past been thought as something that rejects life and embodied existence here. This rejection of life is out of tune with the very spirit of the modern dynamism and affirmation. It is only a true spirituality which accepts and even transforms the life here in the physical world which will find an easier acceptance. The future education must stress this dynamic spirituality, this transforming spirituality, that is scientific, spirituality that transcends religion, spirituality that transforms life, will give a new base to education. It will also give a new orientation and deeper meaning to the modern of education which stress upon freedom and integral development of personality. The International University will be a centre to give shape to this new system of future education.

We may then summarise the aims and objective of the International University as follows.

1. To create conditions and facilities for students and teachers irrespectively of religion, nationality, race, sex, creed or belief, to come here from all parts of the world and to contribute to a progressive and harmonious international living;
2. To initiate, develop and perfect an enquiry into the synthesis of cultures, and integrations of human personality in general;
3. To remove the artificial barriers between humanities, science, technology and fine arts;
4. To prepare the students for a new future which is bound to present challenges much greater than those of the present day;
5. To stress the unity of the world and make it a dynamic ideal of all human endeavour;
6. To encourage new and challenging methods of knowledge and methods of imparting knowledge;
7. To be a centre of endeavour to give to the students the truths of all advance research in the varied fields of knowledge;
8. To prepare students from various countries for professional competence in various branches of human and to prepare for a life's work and to create awareness of international responsibility without losing the national identity;
9. To provide practical training programmes of different duration to meet the individual requirement and to serve the needs of the countries from which students are drawn;
10. To cooperate and collaborate with all international organisations which aim at world unity and world harmony.

IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

An important feature of the international university would be its faculty of languages. Since the students and teachers will be drawn from all parts of the world there will be a spontaneous and gradual growth of a multilingual community. There will be no imposition of any particular language, and stress will be laid upon an evolution of the natural influence of various languages upon each other. As the university develops and as more and more languages will come, to be represented in this international community, more and more provision even made to provide each student education through his own mother tongue. But even then there is bound to be an all pervasive internationality and therefore the natural influence of international languages.

A stress will always be laid upon internationality not merely through ideas, but much more concretely, through the concrete life expressions in various cultural fields and even through a reconstruction of natural scenery and architectural and other expressions. It is important to know that Auroville which will be international in all its respects will in addition have one entire sector assigned to permanent Cultural Pavilions, each representing the highest achievements of a given nation. The unity of the world will thus come to the students as a fact embodied in various aspects of life and it is through life itself, rather than through books and classroom environment that internationality will be taught.

TEACHERS

It is necessary to underline the paramount importance of the right type of persons on the teaching and other staff of the university. For it is men, rather than bricks that make the university. Even academic qualifications and teaching experience are not enough. What is more important is the wideness of outlook and fineness of culture that individual has acquired by an inner and deeper living. A spirit of dedication and service are indispensable to the worthy teachers, in order to give a concrete expression to this spirit in the very life of this community of teachers, it is proposed that the momentary gain shall not be the motive of appointment as teachers in this university. This university will provide to each one all the modest comforts of modern life and a minimum monetary allowance.

Our first concern will be with the quality and excellence rather than with the number of teachers and students (even though we recognise the need to grow and develop fast). The growth and expression of the university will depend on the gradual increase in the right type of personnel. Planning and overall vision of the future will be the guide of the development but actual execution will follow evolutionary rather than mechanical and rigid methods.

This blueprint is particularly addressed to those all over the world who by their qualifications and by their interest in the development of international consciousness, and above all by their spirit to dedicate to the great task of remarking the world would like to offer their work, and if fact, their life, to this new international university. This is to invite them all to join in this new adventure which we believe is one of the best means of promoting and realising an idea harmony in the world.