

# *Auroville*

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TOWNSHIP PROJECT  
FIRST PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT 1968-1973

# AUROVILLE

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### FIRST PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT – 1968-1973

**INTRODUCTION:** A few miles north of Pondicherry the township of Auroville will cover an area of about 26 sq. Miles [= 67 km<sup>2</sup> = an area with a 9.2 km diameter]. This will be located in the Tindivanam Taluq, South Arcot District of Madras State.

The General conference of Unesco in their resolution contained in the Document No. 14-C/DR has unanimously commended this truly international cultural township project, expressing the belief that the project will contribute to international understanding and promotion of peace.

Since the resolution was passed by the Unesco in November 1966 considerable progress has been made on all fronts regarding the implementation of the Project. If Auroville is to develop in the manner envisaged by us, it will require the active support of state Governments as well as the active support of the Government of India. It is also necessary for this Project to be commended by the Government of India to the various Foundations like the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, Asia Foundation, U.S. AID authorities, etc., for financial assistance in specific sectors in which they are interested. Unesco may also be requested to consider this Project for assistance under the Special Fund Programme. For a project of this magnitude, it may take considerable time for us to prepare a full Project Report covering all the phases of development. However, at this stage while keeping in view the ultimate objectives which this Project is aiming at in the various spheres, we have been able to work out on a rough estimation of costs, the programme for the development of the Project over the first phase extending over five years. It is expected that the completion of the full Project covering 26 sq. miles may take 10 to 15 years. We expect to complete it within 10 years if we are able to get cooperation from all quarters. Otherwise the completion of the Project may take 15 years.

**FIRST PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT 1968-1973:** During the first phase of development the main areas of work will be as follows: –

**1. Land:** The total area required for the township is 17,000 acres [6,800 ha]. We have already applied to the Madras Government to acquire these lands for us since our efforts to purchase the lands by negotiations from private parties on payment of reasonable prices has yielded very unsatisfactory results. We have been able to purchase so far only about a thousand acres in all and since the Project has received wide publicity in the press and on the platform, many speculators have entered the field with the result that the land prices have suddenly risen by as much as 100%. The Madras Government have started the land acquisition proceedings and the preliminary on-the-spot enquiry by the sub-collector has been fixed for the 30<sup>th</sup> of August. The estimates of the cost of land given in the annexure are purely on a rough average and are likely to change depending upon the actual compensation to be paid as decided by Government. It is also expected that the area of acquisition being large, the period for incurring this expenditure may also be spread out over a couple of years.

**2. Land Development:** While the total lands required are 17,000 acres for the main township, it is proposed development of only one-third of the total in the first phase to take up the area on the following basis: –

1) In the First Circle	2,100 acres
2) Harijan Welfare Programme (a model village with provision for 100 families)	150 acres
3) Sea-side Resort:	1,500 acres
4) Industrial Estate and other allied activities	1,000 acres
5) Agricultural model village with polytechnic attached	1,000 acres
6) International sector	<u>1,000 acres</u>
<u>Total: 6,750 acres [2,700 ha]</u>	

**3. Preparation of Master Plan:** A detailed scheme for the preparation of the Master Plan has been prepared on the basis of the approved scheme of the Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development. The budget for this has also been drawn up on the same basis. It is expected to cost us about 5 lacs of rupees, the entire work taking over 2 to 3 years for execution. The scheme has also been drawn up in consultation with the Department of Rural Development and Local Administration and the Director of Town Planning, Madras, as also the Country and Town Planning Organisation, New Delhi. Formal applications both to the Madras Government as also to the Country and Town Planning Organisation, New Delhi, have already been sent and are under consideration of the Government.

**4. Sanctuary of Truth or Matri Mandir:** The Sanctuary of Truth by its form and position will be the heart of the town, the dominating point of Auroville, equally accessible to all parts of the town. It is proposed to have a Park of Unity formed by a crown of gardens overhanging the lake which surrounds the Sanctuary of Truth with the Matri Mandir. This is estimated to cost Rs. 10 lacs.

**5. International Sector and Cultural Pavilions:** This is the most important sector in the township. It is expected that as many nations as possible will participate in this sector by putting up cultural pavilions. The Indian National Commission has addressed 143 National Commissions commending the project and seeking their participation. The Education Secretary in the Ministry of Education, Government of India, has addressed a personal letter to all the Ambassadors of our country abroad to give this Project adequate publicity among the government and non-government organisations in the respective countries to which they are accredited and to also enlist popular support for this Project. Another circular has also been sent by the Ministry of Education to all the Embassies and High commissions in New Delhi bringing this Project to their notice and seeking the support of the Embassies and the High Commissions in obtaining their countries' participation in the Project. This sector will reflect the cultures of different regions of the earth. It is expected that each nation will participate in Auroville by setting up its permanent cultural pavilion on a model which most displays the habits of the country it represents. The architecture, decor, cuisine, etc. of the pavilion would be such as would create the atmosphere of the country and is expected to contain the following: –

1. A residential house for students, citizens of the participating country and permanent residents and visitors.
2. A garden with plants, flowers, vegetables and fruits from that country as can adapt themselves to the soil and climate of Auroville and if possible, replicas of natural beauty spots of the country.
3. A museum or an art gallery showing works of art such as painting and sculpture in original or its reproduction. It can also exhibit handicrafts and the nation's most representative products – natural as well as industrial.
4. A library of books, recorded music, photographs and films as well as other items which may best bring out the various aspects of the county and its cultural heritage.
5. Other objects which most express its intellectual, scientific and artistic genius, spiritual tendencies and national characteristics and emphasise the unity of man.

It will, therefore, be seen that the cultures of different regions of the earth will be represented in Auroville in a concrete and living manner, accessible to all not merely intellectually in ideas, theories, principles and languages; but also in habits and customs; art in all forms – painting, sculpture, music, architecture, etc.; as well as physically through natural scenery, dress, games, sports and diet.

In the financial estimates provision has been made only for land development as we expect that each participating nation will spend its own money in putting up its pavilion.

**6. Auroville International University:** The need for a truly International University has been felt by various peoples in various countries. We are happy that the Indian National commission referred

this project which has been under correspondence by the Indian National commission with Unesco, to us for implementation. A full project report is under preparation. It is, however, expected that during the first phase covering the years 1968-1973, our expenditure on this would be limited to land development and starting a few experimental institutions which will ultimately develop and evolve into the various faculties of a full University later. Provision in the financial estimates has, therefore, been limited to land development plus a lumpsum provision of Rs. 15 lacs for the various experimental institutions that we may be starting.

**7. Sea-side Tourist Resort:** It will be evident from the above that with the development of the International Sector and cultural pavilions and the growth of the Auroville International University, there will be tremendous scope for international tourist traffic in this township. We have drawn up a detailed project report for a Sea-side Resort. This Sea-side Resort will be located a few miles north of Pondicherry. Pondicherry with its rail-road connection and Madras with its Airport provide adequate easy accessibility for both the Indian and foreign tourists (an airport for Auroville is also being planned). The approach to the sea-side Resort is along an easily accessible State High way running parallel to the beach. This High Way has also been included by the Madras Government under its east coast road for development purposes.

It is proposed to organise in this Sea-side Resort all activities of special interest to the tourists. The Sea-side Resort will be on the edge of the Auroville site.

The financial estimates for this Project have been prepared on the basis of the Department of tourism's approved scheme in the Plan. The project report has already been sent to the Department of Tourism. It would be worthwhile mentioning here that the Government of Madras in their letter No. 39385 E9/66-2 Education dated 16<sup>th</sup> July 1966 addressed to the Director General of Tourism, New Delhi, have already recommended the proposed project for being considered as a scheme under Part I of the Tourist Development Plan. The project is now under the consideration of the Director General of Tourism, New, Delhi. The entire project is expected to cost Rs. 1,05,00,000.

**8. Administrative buildings (first phase):** Rs. 5 lacs.

**9. Housing:** It is expected that during the first phase of development accommodation will have to be provided for a population of about 5,000.

Provision has, therefore, been made for 600 family residential quarters at 150 sq. yds. Per family, calculated at Rs. 300 per sq.yd. provision has also been made for 1,000 apartments for bachelors and couples without children calculated at 60 sq. yds. per apartment at Rs. 300 per sq.yd.

**10. Integrated Social Welfare Services:** It is proposed to provide for an integrated social welfare project for a population of 5000. During the first phase of development it is expected that a workhouse for beggars an Infirmary for the old and infirm, welfare services for the handicapped, special socio-economic projects for the under-privileged will be taken up for implementation. A lumpsum provision of Rs. 10 lacs is made for the entire social welfare services, which will also include Health and Family Planning.

**11. Harijan Welfare:** A project report has already been prepared for a model village housing 100 Harijan families. It is proposed to provide for them not only houses and land for agricultural purposes but also to give them training in various skills to improve their earning capacities. The scheme is being sent to the Department of social welfare, Government of India, through the Government of Madras for assistance under its usual programme of assistance for such schemes.

**12. Industrial zone:** Industries and handicrafts primarily necessary for the life of Auroville will be grouped in this zone. It is proposed to plan during the first phase for an industrial estate which will have provision for about 25 units of each industry-large, medium and small-scale with a total expected investment of Rs. 2,000 lacs.

**13. Labour Housing:** It is proposed to provide also at least 2,000 family quarters for industrial labour and to seek from the concerned Ministry of Housing the usual subsidy and loan assistance available for such schemes.

**14. Industrial Training Institute:** A scheme for training skilled workers has been prepared and the scheme has been sent already to the Director of Employment and Training, Madras to sanction an I.T.I. to be located in Auroville. The I.T.I. will offer instructions in nine trades, eight of these being building trades and one stenography. The estimates for this have been prepared on the basis of the approved schemes of the Department of Employment and Training, Madras.

**15. Agricultural Model Village with Polytechnic:** In the township a vast agricultural complex is being planned. During the first phase we expect to take up a large-scale farm of 1,000 acres and a model village on the periphery in the zone of isolation. Here we propose not only to demonstrate rapid increase in agricultural production by maximum utilisation of available resources and adaptation of the latest methods in farming and agriculture but also to make available the fruits of our research in agriculture to as many workers in the field as possible. From our experience in this direction we believe that what is required immediately is training of skilled, working and middle level technicians in agriculture for the supporting services needed by the farmer, for assisting in extension work for many trades and industries based on agricultural products, as also in the service trades. We, therefore, propose to start along with the agricultural farm an agricultural polytechnic which will serve as a multi-purpose institute providing a wide range of training in specialised courses relating to animal husbandry, horticulture, processing, forestry, crop protection, farm managing, agro-based industry, etc. It shall also be our endeavour to provide certain craftsmen courses for those who have less than Matriculation qualifications. A detailed project report for this has already been prepared and sent to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

Our aim is to synthesise workers, land, and technical assistance from the view of optimum output, and a model integrated life.

**16. Land Reclamation Programme:** Development of Kazhuvveli swamps extending over 21,000 acres [8,400 ha] is an extremely challenging task that has been included by us in our Project. The Government of Madras had very kindly permitted us to carry out the initial tests and submit a preliminary report of utilisation before they could pass orders agreeing to lease out these lands to us on a long term basis at a nominal cost. The preliminary report has already been prepared and sent to the Madras Government for their consideration. This is expected to cost us at least about Rs. 150lacs. This is an area of work in which it should be possible for us to obtain financial assistance from the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the U.S. AID authorities. Efforts are also being made in this direction. The above estimation of costs has been prepared on a very rough basis and it is likely that estimates may have to be modified depending on the actualities at the time of implementation.

**CONCLUSION:** The very nature of the work we have undertaken casts upon us an obligation to see that the highest possible international standards are maintained and pursued. We have no doubt that in this we are in a uniquely happy position since we have amidst us experts in the various fields of life from all over the world who have joined the project in a spirit of dedication.

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. Auroville will be a town of fraternity. The purpose of Auroville is to allow for the gathering of men from all parts of the world, who are ready to live according to the ideals of Sri Aurobindo. Auroville will be a town of beauty, of culture and research, where everyone will be able to live freely. "A place where all human beings of good will, sincere in their aspiration, could live freely as citizens of the world... A place of peace, concord, harmony, where all the fighting instincts of man would be used exclusively to conquer the causes of his sufferings and miseries, to surmount his weakness and ignorance, to triumph over his limitations and incapacities... A place where the relations among human beings, usually based almost exclusively upon competition and strife, would be replaced by relations of emulation for doing better, for collaboration, for relations of real brotherhood."

**FINANCIAL ESTIMATES FOR FIRST PHASE OF DEVELOPMENT  
1968-1973**

1. Cost of Land Acquisition of 17,000 acres @ Rs. 2,000 per acre	Rs. 3,40,00,000
2. Development cost of land during the first phase L 6,750 acres X Rs. 15,000	Rs. 10,12,50,000
3. Preparation of Master Plan	Rs. 5,00,000
4. Sanctuary of Truth or Matri Mandir	Rs. 10,00,000
5. International University (First Phase)	Rs. 15,00,000
6. Seaside Resort	Rs. 1,05,00,000
7. Administrative Buildings (First Phase)	Rs. 5,00,000
8. Housing: –	
(i) 600 family residential quarters at 150 sq. yds. per family at Rs. 300/- per sq. yd.	Rs. 2,70,00,000
(ii) 1000 apartments for bachelors and childless couples at 60 sq. yds per apartment @ Rs. 300 Per sq. yd.	Rs. 1,80,00,000
9. Integrated social services, including Harijan Welfare, Health, Family Planning	Rs. 10,00,000
10. Industrial Estate (Expected Investment)	Rs. 20,00,00,000
11. Industrial Training Institute	Rs. 10,00,000
12. Agricultural Model Village with Polytechnic	Rs. 60,00,000
13. Kazhaveli Swamps Reclamation	<u>Rs. 1,50,00,000</u>
	Rs. 41,72,50,000