Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research
Auroville
Nothing can be taught to the mind which is not already concealed as potential knowledge in the unfolding soul of the creature. So also all perfection of which the outer man is capable, is only a realising of the eternal perfection of the Spirit within him. We know the Divine and become the Divine, because we are That already in our secret nature. All teaching is a revealing, all becoming is an unfolding. Self-attainment is the secret; self-knowledge and an increasing consciousness are the means and the process.

Sri Aurobindo

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught. The teacher is not an instructor or taskmaster, he is a helper and a guide. His business is to suggest and not to impose...

The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth. The idea of hammering the child into the shape desired by the parent or teacher is a barbarous and ignorant superstition...

The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be...

Sri Aurobindo
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*Cover photo: Chess players, Deepanam School*
History

The Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research was founded on 28th February 1984, to coordinate and further develop educational research in Auroville through many experimental fields.

The work of the Institute forms an integral whole with the experiment of Auroville, which was founded by The Mother on February 28th, 1968. The experiment itself is an attempt to work out, give content and practical shape to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on the future evolution of man.

Sri Aurobindo foresaw that great changes were coming upon humanity -- changes of an evolutionary nature. On the one hand, the development and exercise of the mind, the mental faculty, would lead to great discoveries in science and result in increased technology. On the other hand, man would progressively find himself unable to effectively deal with, let alone master, the gigantic structure of civilization and life that would thus get built up. When times of crisis arose, such as we have been living through of late, he simply would not know how to proceed further.

Sri Aurobindo perceived this crisis to be a crisis of evolution itself, heralding a further step to be taken in mankind's growth. As out of matter life has emerged, and from life mind has taken birth, so also, as the development of mind reaches an extreme point, it must pave the way for the emergence of newer and greater possibilities of consciousness.

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, far ahead of their
times, foresaw the need to create a laboratory where "an actual human unity" could be manifested. This laboratory is Auroville. The agenda set for Auroville by The Mother, embracing the vision of Sri Aurobindo, is based on a deep vision of the goals of human existence, the processes at work that go to make human life, the forces at play that affect it, and the present thrust of these forces. In Auroville we aspire to materialize this vision. One of the key elements of the vision is that no lasting change can be effected in human affairs unless there is a change in consciousness. Humanity's present consciousness is at best a mental consciousness, which can only conceive of things in parts; the whole eludes its grasp. It is necessary that human consciousness be centred in the inner psychic and spiritual parts of our being if we are to realize a lasting peace and harmony in human affairs. "Education for Human Unity" is our long-term project. Included in this theme are many sub-themes essential to the main one - perceiving education as an unending process, education of the integral personality, perceiving each being as unique, and giving the freedom and opportunity to each person to pursue his or her own path of growth and progress.

The Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research, being located in the international township of Auroville and situated adjacent to several villages, possesses unique potential for research and experimentation in education. The very special characteristic of all the research teams is that they are volunteers from different countries and cultural backgrounds.

In the year 2000, sixteen years after its founding, there are now 140 researchers working under the Institute umbrella, organized in research teams around the following themes:

- experiments in objectives, content and methods of a new system of education.
- experiments in fine arts.
- experiments in village extension work.
- experiments in physical education.
- research on special themes such as Indian Culture, Evolution and Sri Aurobindo's epic poem, Savitri.

The Institute is composed of a number of research units, each of which is quite autonomous in its functioning, and follows a democratic style of internal organization where decisions are made as a team. Groups of units like the Auroville School Board meet monthly to attend to issues that concern all of them, and an all-SAIIER meeting is held twice a year. The administrative work of the Institute is currently being coordinated from a central office located at the Indian national pavilion, Bharat Nivas.

This is the situation today. However, a proposal is presently under consideration whereby the scope of activities and research programmes would be substantially enlarged, and the work currently being done would be divided under eight faculties. A Centre for International Research in Human Unity would also be established.

An account follows of the work of the following units: Kindergarten, Transition School, Deepanam School, New Creation School, Last School, French Language Laboratory, Dehashakti Sports, CRCP, CIRHU, Arulvazhi School, Ilaignarkal School, Isaiambalam School, Tamil Ulagam Evening Schools, Udavi School, Savitri Bhavan, Centre for Indian Culture, Laboratory of Evolution, Art Youth Atelier, Auroville Library, Aurofilm, Kailash and Auroville Transport.
When you begin with very small children, it's wonderful! With them there is so little you have to do: you just have to BE. Never make a mistake. Never get angry. Always understand and see clearly why this movement took place, why that impulse, what the child's inner constitution is, which point needs to be strengthened and brought to the fore. That's all you have to do, and then leave them: leave them free to blossom, just give them the opportunity to see many things, touch many things, do as many things as possible. It's great fun. And above all, do not try to impose on them something which you think you know. Never scold, always understand, and, if a child is capable, explain. If he isn't capable to receive an explanation, replace the false vibration with a true one [if you are yourself capable of it]. But that... that's asking of the teachers a perfection they rarely have. But it would be very interesting to draw up a programme for the teachers, and the real programme for study, starting with the very small ones - they are so plastic, and anything leaves such a deep imprint on them! If they were given a few drops of truth when they are very small, they would blossom out quite naturally as their being grows. That would be a lovely work to do.

From: Mother's Agenda [vol. VIII, April 5th, 1967]
music, Sanskrit song, swimming and body awareness. The Kindergarten has the advantage of being located just outside the Matrimandir Gardens, by Centre Field, and enjoys the benefit of a small swimming pool.

In the rhythm of the day, the Kindergarten alternates between rigorous activity and quiet activity, directed activity and free choice activity. The aim is to develop the whole child, to develop concentration and each of the senses, while at the same time keeping a balance between meeting the needs of each child and meeting the needs of the group. Children have opportunities for self-expression and the exploration of their own interests, but at the same time they are expected to be considerate toward others, to respect the environment, to participate and to share. The children learn in English, but all children are also taught Tamil and French plus songs in Sanskrit.

The pressure created by an increasing number of children has forced the coordinators to include the building of a new Creche in their plans. This was completed in December 1999, and came into use at the start of the new millennium, with capacity for up to 15 children.
Transition School

Transition School, which opened in 1981, is located in the north west area of the Cultural Zone on the edge of the Green Belt forest. In 1981 it consisted of just five small classrooms, with toilets, an outside dining area and staff quarters, set in a beautiful park. A few years later a common hall was built, which also housed a small library. This space was used for weekly meetings between teachers and students, and for dance, theatre and music classes. Later, a building for arts and crafts with a video room and a science lab was also added.

In 1996 the school had to expand due to its growing student body. The new complex consists of three senior grade classrooms, a French language room, a computer lab, and a large library and teachers' room. With this extra infrastructure the school has been able to extend its programme to keep the students for another two years, meanwhile freeing the original classrooms for special tuition, dyslexia work and language labs. Two years later funding was received to build three new classrooms, bathrooms and a teachers' room for the four lower grades. This made it possible for the first time to experiment with a multi-age classroom (1st and 2nd grades). In the year 2000 construction of a dining room and a body awareness hall was also completed.
Currently the school has capacity for up to 160 students, in 7 classes, ranging from 6 to 14 years of age. There are some 15 different nationalities represented by the students and staff.

An international team runs the school. The staff is normally made up of 15 full time teachers and about 7 part time teachers. All school-related issues are discussed, and decisions made affecting the school, in weekly teachers' meetings. This system, evolved over the years, gives a feeling of trust, support and understanding among the members of the team. Ideas are also exchanged and workshops organised with visiting experts in many fields of education.
The school programme

Transition's programme is based on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother and is geared towards the integral development of each child. The teachers work together to foster a learning environment which offers the children opportunities to discover and develop their natural abilities. They also always try to express through their work what is expressed in the Charter of Auroville.

After experimenting with forming groups according to mother tongue, it was decided that one language was needed to foster the spirit of unity within the school's cultural diversity. English became the language of instruction, with Tamil and French also being taught as both mother tongue and second languages.

Mathematics, reading, writing, languages, arts, science, music, body awareness and social studies are all considered essential for the healthy development of the child. No grades are given, but the child is encouraged to evaluate his/her personal progress and to strive towards self-improvement. As the groups are quite small, the teacher is able to combine individual with group activities and adjust to the specific needs of the individual within the group. This helps to foster a group spirit of cooperation rather than competition. Extra tuition in all subjects and classes for dyslexic students are offered where needed. There is also a 'welcome group' to help integrate new students on their arrival in Auroville.

Over the years Transition has understood that while it is important to allow the children the freedom to express themselves, this freedom must be within a well defined structure, and with basic guidelines.
The Deepanam School started in May 2000, when a group of people interested in and experienced in education took over the premises of the former Mirramukhi School. After some changes, the school began operating in July 2000.

Deepanam School is currently working with around 40 children from 2 to 12 years of age, who are divided into 4 groups. Whenever needed, children are given personalized attention.

As part of the educational approach, the school places special emphasis on artistic education, in addition to the usual formal curriculum. Subjects such as painting, music, dance, singing, drama and gardening are considered as important as any other daily activities.

It is Deepanam's aim to have the four key languages mentioned by The Mother fully implemented at all levels. The bigger children are already studying Tamil, Sanskrit, English and French, and the smaller ones are exposed to the same languages, though they are too small to have regular classes.

The present team includes 8 permanent full time teachers, and several others who come for specific classes. According to its needs, this team is expected to grow along with the number of students. The team, being new in a new school, is presently working on quarterly programmes, observing the children and searching out answers to their different needs.

There is a lot of goodwill among the members of the team, which, combined with support received from outside the school, should ensure that Deepanam becomes a place where both children and adults can grow and progress to the best of their inner and outer capacities.
New Creation School

The school forms part of the New Creation community, and is situated just off the main road in the eastern sector of Auroville, adjacent to the village of Kuilapalayam, where the majority of the pupils live.

The school had its beginnings in the late 1970s. Although it began in a very small way, today it is a 'school' for 240 children, both boys and girls, between the ages of 3 and 15 years. There is a kindergarten/creche plus 12 classes. During the year 2000 an extra class was added to enable the children to study up to eighth standard, thus giving them an opportunity to study for a School Leaving Certificate at another Auroville educational establishment called After School.

New Creation school teaches all the normal subjects, but in addition has a strong emphasis on art and vocational training. In the latter context, a number of options are offered i.e. clay work, wood work, traditional Indian dance, art, singing, tailoring and computer studies.

For a village school, there is a very good teacher/pupil ratio. The 240 children have 27 regular teachers, all Indian, including some part timers. Occasionally European student teachers also work at the school.
Future plans

It has always been the purpose of the school to expand out from a purely academic curriculum into the field of industrial training i.e. carpentry, mechanics, electronics, metalwork, etc. This is a very long term project, but there is a great need for trained people in these fields, because Auroville itself, as it develops, is going to need more and more skilled workers. A large area of land is available in the centre of the school complex for this expansion, and funds are being raised to build a Vocational Training Centre.

In addition to the above, for many years now a new kindergarten building has been required. This has been completed in the year 2000, thanks in part to a grant from the European Community, which made it possible to purchase the needed land.
Last School

General information

Last School, located near Aspiration community, is a middle/high school which has existed in Auroville since the year 1985. Students are in the age group of 12 (sometimes younger) to 18 years and above. The school day begins at 8.00 am and goes on till 3.15 pm (5.30 pm including sports). School is open 5 days a week from Monday to Friday, during which students are asked to maintain a full timetable. They are also expected to follow some physical education activity after class on all school days.

Educational method

Last School is based on the method that the Mother has called 'Free Progress'. The spirit of this approach demands that the school organisation and programmes be as diverse and supple as possible to remain plastic enough to respond to each student's line of progress. The main object of this education is to help the adolescent find that part of himself that can then take up his own education. Last School's educational process wants to develop the student's faculties of the mind, the powers of the will, the refinement of the aesthetic and emotional
being, and build all of this upon a strong and balanced physical being. There is an attempt to address each of these elements of the youth's psychological nature as consciously as possible in given circumstances. The teacher's task is to suggest, not to impose, and a broad process of consultation is fundamental to the school's approach. The participation of the youth in their own growth and development is encouraged as much as possible while preparing the school programme and timetable.

The activities are worked out for each student individually with the choice of subjects and teachers. If the student has a wish to learn something specific or to be involved in the community of Auroville, that can also be arranged. Meanwhile the students are encouraged by the teachers to achieve the goals that they have set for themselves at the beginning of the term.

The students need to be self motivated, and can - if they wish - be involved in the decision-making process and changes affecting the school.

In the class the opinion and feedback of the students is very much respected, and they are helped to build their own view of the world. A lot of classes use the ideas of Mother and Sri Aurobindo, according to the level of interest.

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**The school programme and subjects**

The programme available covers languages (the 4 mentioned by Mother to Auroville, plus others); literature and poetry; the pure sciences and mathematics; the social sciences (history, geography, economics, philosophy); the arts - on which there is a special insistence and considerable interest among the students. Subjects, including the discovery of Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's works, are 'offered' separately, but in the reality of classroom life they are often combined.

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**French Language Laboratory**

The Laboratory has been started with the twin aim of expanding use of the French language in Auroville, and to prepare students to study French independently. The programme offered at present is based on the video series "French in action", for which all the audio visual equipment is available at the laboratory and related texts are made available to the students.
Dehashakti Sports & Physical Education

The perfection of the body, as great a perfection as we can bring about by the means at our disposal, must be the ultimate aim of physical culture. Perfection is the true aim of all culture, the spiritual and psychic, the mental, the vital, and it must be the aim of our physical culture also. If our seeking is for a total perfection of the being, the physical part of it cannot be left aside; for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use. Shariram khalu dharmasādhanaṁ, says the old Sanskrit adage, - the body is the means of fulfilment of dharma, and dharma means every ideal which we can propose to ourselves and the law of its working out and its action. A total perfection is the ultimate aim which we set before us, for our ideal is the Divine Life which we wish to create here, the life of the Spirit fulfilled on earth, life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation even here on earth in the conditions of the material universe. That cannot be unless the body too undergoes a transformation, unless its action and functioning attain to a supreme capacity and the perfection which is possible to it or which can be made possible.

Sri Aurobindo
Sports and physical education have always been an integral and essential part of the curriculum offered to the children. The aim of Dehashakti Sports (Dehashakti means "the full power and perfection of the body") is to offer a comprehensive programme for physical development, providing activities that incorporate and develop movement, mobility, control, health, fitness, strength, stamina, challenge and body skills. Emphasis is given on developing team spirit, fairness in play, the right attitude during competitions and games, and encouraging weaker children to actively participate.

The following four fields of sports activities enable Dehashakti Sports to incorporate most of the above-mentioned aspects: individual (athletics and gymnastics), aesthetic (gymnastics and acro-gymnastics), inter-individual (combative games) and collective (softball, basketball, volleyball, cricket and football).

The Dehashakti Sports programme is constantly evolving in response to changing circumstances and to the needs of the pupils.

School sports is offered to 131 children by 9 full-time instructors and 6 part-time instructors Monday through Friday between 4:00 and 5:15 p.m. The children, aged 6-18, are divided into 6 groups and are coached in athletics, gymnastics, combative games and team sports. Twice a year, all the children participate in a week-long sports event involving athletics and team games called Aurolympics.

**Auroville School Sports Complex**

The School Sports Complex is the initial phase of an overall plan to create a full-fledged sports complex and stadium in the Cultural Zone of Auroville. Future phases will include a 400-metre running track with athletics facilities enclosing an international-size football and hockey field, extra basketball courts, tennis and volleyball courts, games, combative and martial arts areas, a dance studio, swimming pool with diving facilities, and a research centre (for sports medicine, physiotherapy, performance laboratory, video and computer room, nutrition, etc).

The School Sports Complex is located in the Cultural Zone, close to existing and future schools in Auroville. Phase I of the construction is complete and Phase II is partially complete. At present there is a 300 m running track (with additional lanes for 50 and 75 metre races) enclosing a football field and athletics facilities, a concrete gymnastics area, 2 volleyball courts, a basketball court, a handball field, and a playground for younger children. Besides the above, there is a small storeroom, and an overhead and underground water tank.
The CRCP, located in the sub-community of Fraternity, has been functioning for some ten years now. Variously known as the 'flying saucer' or 'hamburger' building because of its special ferrocement shape, as its full name indicates the work accomplished at the building relates particularly to publications, but also to communication through such media as slide-shows and exhibitions.

The CRCP has made significant contributions towards the realisation of SAIER's major publications, such as 'The Aim of Life' (both in English and Hindi), 'The Good Teacher and The Good Pupil' (English) and quite a few smaller publications, typeset and printed in close cooperation with Auroville Press. The main stock of these publications is carefully kept at the CRCP itself.

The cooperation with Auroville Press has increased in recent years to produce several artistic publications in the collection Vande Mataram (English and French), and to prepare two exhibitions and two slide-shows which have been presented at the India International Centre at New Delhi in 1997 and 1998. The slide-shows were subsequently presented in many colleges and schools in the Delhi area and elsewhere. Apart from that, CRCP has also prepared the typesetting for many books later printed at the Press.

The aspect of research with which CRCP is mostly involved concerns new ways and methods of communicating Sri Aurobindo's and Mother's message, particularly in India, as it is considered that one of the important, even essential tasks of Auroville is to contribute to the dissemination of their unique message for the future of humanity. Already today, thousands of visitors, mostly from India but many also from other countries, are coming to Auroville. This is why the Centre's latest exhibition 'The genius of India', based on extracts from 'The Renaissance in India' by Sri Aurobindo, has been on long term display at the Visitors Centre. CRCP also hopes to be able to present video versions of the slide-shows in the near future, at the same place.

As participants in the Auroville Publication Group, the members of the CRCP are also actively involved in the preparation and publication of a variety of leaflets concerning Auroville.
Centre for International Research in Human Unity (C.I.R.H.U)

CIRHU, which is to be located in the International Zone close to the Matrimandir, will be an interdisciplinary Centre, in the sense that its principal objects will be nurtured by whatever streams of knowledge flow from research institutions in India and abroad, as well as from the faculties of SAIER.

Objectives

The objectives of CIRHU are as follows:

- To seek international collaboration and promote the establishment of an assembly of scholars belonging to different countries and cultures, in order to conduct and encourage research in the theme of human unity and in related themes of synthesis of knowledge and culture.

- To promote the research and development of new education for human unity at the local, national and international levels.

- To contribute to giving a concrete shape to the ideal of human unity and related values in all fields of life, as well as to a progressive synthetic organization of a spiritualized society.

- To underline human unity as a pre-condition for the next evolutionary step of humanity, and promote a larger interdisciplinary theme of evolution.

- To participate in the establishment of cultural pavilions representing different cultures of the nations of the world, with special emphasis on provisions that would transmit to the students, teachers and scholars the unique qualities of these cultures in a living, creative and experiential manner.

- To evolve experiential and experimental methods of research; to develop learning/teaching materials and allied themes pertaining to human unity; to conduct experiments that can be applied in India and elsewhere in the world.

- To design training and research programmes for child-centred and value-oriented education.

- To document, promote and communicate the processes and results of research conducted at the Centre.

- To stimulate research programmes and to assimilate and promote results of research in Auroville.

Themes of research

CIRHU will be focusing on the following interconnected themes of research:

(a) Evolution
(b) Human unity
(c) Next species
(d) Synthesis of knowledge
(e) Synthesis of culture.
Arulvazhi means "Way of Grace" in Tamil. This educational centre, situated in the Promesse community of Auroville, has been catering since 1985 to the educational and cultural needs of children aged 4 to 16 years from the nearby village of Morattandichavadi in the light of the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The aim is to provide value-oriented education in an atmosphere of simplicity, beauty, joy and harmony wherein the children can develop naturally.

Arulvazhi has five areas of activity: (1) a kindergarten group for 25 children aged 4 to 6 years, (2) a body awareness and cultural expression group for about 80 children in the evenings, aged 6 to 16 years, (3) a training programme for drop-out girls aged 16 to 18 years, (4) a Pudu Ulagam group of 25 children attending middle and high schools in the neighbourhood, aged 11 to 18 years, and (5) an unending education programme with the participation of Promesse community children and elders.

Considering the proximity of the international community of Auroville, the village children get practical exposure to the fact of human unity and unity in diversity in the bioregion of Auroville. This educational centre works in close collaboration with the existing government educational structure. Excursions to places of great cultural, educational and spiritual interest are arranged. The children are encouraged to practice and develop indigenous forms of art, folk song, stage plays, etc. The self-improvement programme for girls trains them in various activities like child care, sports, and crafts like tailoring, typewriting, etc.

A special feature of Arulvazhi is that most of the teachers, who are long time Aurovilian residents of Promesse, had the personal darshan of The Mother, and this goes a long way towards providing the proper atmosphere.

Future goals

For the kindergarten it is planned to take advantage of the research done within Auroville and outside to evolve methods which can be replicated for the development of children in a rural environment. Regarding the 6 to 16 years age group children, who spend a major part of the day outside the Auroville environment, and who are available only in the evenings and on holidays, the centre wants to evolve suitable models and practices which will provide for their integral growth.
Ilaignarkal School

Objectives

Ilaignarkal School has been in operation for 24 years now in the field of educational and vocational training. From its inception, the school has been helping village workers and their children to learn and enhance their basic skills and knowledge base. The school has been reaching out to the most difficult cases in society, such as school drop-outs, slow learners and illiterate village workers forced to go out and earn early in life due to economic pressures during childhood. The school has already touched the lives of 3,000 students since its inception, by giving an appropriate space to improve basic skills in language, maths and the arts, plus simple skills like typewriting etc, leading to a qualitative improvement in their lives.

This project aims to construct a new building for the school, better equipped with appropriate tools of education to reach out to all the surrounding 13 villages. The target population being reached is living in circumstances of high illiteracy, with rates as high as 40%, and earning capacity of only INR 500 to 1,500 per month (EUR 12.2 to 36.6 per month). Most of the workers who have benefited from the school’s day and evening programmes are wage labourers, women workers and school dropouts among the youth, and difficult children for the day school.
**Style of education**

The school’s free-progress customized style of education has been designed to fit the special requirements of its students. The school has only two full time staff, and most of the teachers and office workers are voluntary workers from neighbouring schools, ex-students, and other specialists in their field and profession.

**Student and infrastructure status**

(a) **Student profile**

The school takes up worker’s children, school drop-outs from village schools, slow learners and village workers wanting to upgrade their skill levels. In the economic scenario of the villages many students are forced to abandon formal education before starting high school, in order to start earning a livelihood. Ilaignarkal School has been providing a space for such youngsters to come back to school.

(b) **School infrastructure**

The present school building consists of a basic shelter with approximately 60 square metres of asbestos roof cover. The covered space is used partly for storing materials, but also for office space, a small library and a simple kitchen. All the rest of the activities, such as classes, are held outside in the open areas, usually under trees. As the school has been growing dramatically of late, a new school building is now urgently needed to continue the activities for a greater number of villagers.

**Equipment**

The school has very basic equipment in the form of a television and video for educational programmes, a small tape recorder, one computer and some library books. The equipment has been limited due to financial constraints.

**Beneficiaries of expanded programme**

The main beneficiaries of the school programme will continue to be the workers in Auroville who hail from nearby villages, in all a total of about 4-5,000 people. They have the freedom to come any time of the day and at any season of the year to join the school. Approximately 50-100 persons go through the training each year to improve their skills. They also develop leadership qualities, which help them participate in local development activities in their own villages. Special beneficiaries of the project will be women workers and working children from the nearby villages, together with school drop-outs and special children from the local area.

**Future growth plans**

Ilaignarkal School is planning a programme of concrete growth to improve the reach of its activities throughout the surrounding 13 villages. For the 5 year growth plan, resources are needed in the area of infrastructure funding, in particular for the new building. Once this is completed, the school’s activities will then shift from the present location.
Isaiambalam School

Introduction

Isaiambalam School is located on the northern periphery of Auroville. Most of its students come from five nearby villages. Initially Isaiambalam was catering to the learning needs of young adults in the age group 8 to 15 years, who were considered drop-outs from other learning establishments and came from the villages in the Auroville area. In the course of time the school has evolved, and now comprises pre-school, primary and young adult sections. Altogether there are now 115 students and 12 teachers in the school, which is making provisions for the students to receive education up to 10th standard level. For the last 4 years the school has been successfully specialising in conducting experiments in education by adopting innovative and comprehensive educational methods to make learning easier, faster, more joyous and context-oriented. All these methods conform very well to the 3 cardinal principles of education enunciated by Sri Aurobindo, and all are based on joy, freedom, learning by doing and self-learning. Further, many of them have been effectively and successfully used elsewhere, both in India and outside.
Glenn Doman Method

Creative and playway activities are daily given to the preschool children. Apart from these activities, the teachers apply the Glenn Doman Method for imparting reading skills in Tamil and English and general knowledge, and find that the children respond well to this way of learning. The staff also teach the parents to apply this method to the children at home in a fruitful manner, thus shortening their learning time.

Rishi Valley Method

For young adults, the school is aiming to impart all the skills needed for their self-directed learning. As one of its steps the school has trans-created in Tamil the educational method discovered and successfully used by the Rishi Valley Rural Schools in Andhra Pradesh. This method consists of a number of study cards in Tamil, mathematics and environmental science which are arranged in a graded manner and can be used by the primary level students to learn most of the subject matter by themselves. Creative and playway activities are in-built in the study cards. A regular primary section was opened in June 1999 where this method is used.

Education By Design Method

For older young adults who wish to continue their studies, E.B.D. Method is used, with an appropriate classroom environment. In this method, as part of their learning process the young adults are given challenges or problems to be tackled which involve the study of their subject matter. The teachers create the challenges or problems from the subject matter to be learned, such as staging a play, enacting important events in the Indian Independence Movement, or preparing a chart with appropriate illustrations to teach simple prepositions in English. Much of the work is done in groups.

Need-based English learning

English is learned by all the students and teachers. A need-based approach is practised for this learning. That is, all those who wish to learn to speak English are taught the spoken language, and all those who wish to read and write and pursue higher studies in English are taught to list out the details of this learning, and then to learn them using appropriate methods. An Audio Tape Method combined with language games is used for the young adults. Teachers use Basic Sentence Structure Method and a 400-hour intensive English Course developed by CIEFL, Hyderabad.

Training capacity developing

The school is gradually becoming a resource base with reference to the removal of the difficulties in learning encountered by the first generation school-going children, in particular the removal of the difficulties that stand in the way of acquiring language and maths skills and pursuing higher studies. The school is also slowly developing the capacity to train people from outside in the methods used by the school; in removing the difficulties in learning experienced by the children; and in organising teaching/learning activities in a manner suited to the learning needs of the children.

Access to Grace

An effort is being made to create conditions in the school under which students can become aware of the Grace acting all over Auroville, and can invoke it. For instance, when difficulties or hurdles arise in the context of their studies, they are taught to keep their mind silent and to concentrate so as to find a way for their removal. Alternatively, they may pray for their removal. The students are taught and encouraged to do both these things.

Conclusion

The students learn in the afternoon art-related skills in drawing, music and classical dance together with vocational skills like tailoring and typewriting. Towards the end of the school day physical exercises and sports activities take place. Thus learning occurs in the school in an integral manner involving not only the mental, but also the vital, physical and psychic parts of the being.
Tamil Ulagam Evening Schools

Tamil Ulagam Evening Schools (after work schools) are joint ventures involving Secours Populaire of France (SPF), SAIIER and the villages committed to educational activities.

Ten village night schools, which have been functioning since 1980, have been included under the outreach educational programmes of SAIIER since 1992. The following villages have night school buildings donated by SPF in collaboration with the local people:
1. Ambetkar Nagar (Kottakarai)
2. Annai Nagar (Alankuppam)
3. Aravindapuram (Rayapudupakkam)
4. Bommayarpalayam
5. Gandhi Nagar (Bommayarpalayam)
6. Irumbai Chittur (Irumbai village)
7. Kuilapalayam
8. Rayapettai
9. Thiruvai
10. Kotakarai main village
11. Rayapudupakkam main village

Objectives

These night schools were mainly started to help disadvantaged working children who didn’t get any opportunity to attend regular school in the daytime. Originally they were meant for the drop-outs, stay-outs, pulled-outs and pushed-outs, but there was also a great need to give tutorial guidance for school-going children who hailed from multi-purpose educational centres, in response to local needs and requests from parents.

The teachers at each school are volunteers from the native village. They maintain the building, and take care of the children in the evenings. Between 6.00 and 8.30 p.m. every day, they conduct special classes during examinations, and organize cultural programmes, study tours and visits, work camps and other such co-curricular activities. Artistic talent (in music, dance, painting, theatre, writing, kolam drawing and hobbies) is encouraged, and sports activities are also conducted. Special get-togethers with other night schools through work camps, summer camps and student exchange programmes are arranged wherever possible, to bring unity and understanding and to enhance appreciation among the rural children.

Teachers

Teachers of Tamil Ulagam night schools are all long time associates of Auroville, most of them working in units of Auroville. They are not teachers by profession, but get regular training to impart knowledge to their wards. On the first Sunday of every month all the teachers and volunteers of the night schools meet in Auroville and share their experiences and thoughts. They work together to prepare new educational materials, and meet specialists and resource persons to learn joyful new ways of teaching. In this process it is found that new innovative methods evolve.

Future plans

SPF, in collaboration with SAIIER, wants to build a guest house with multi-purpose hall for Tamil Ulagam to earn funds to run the above mentioned schools more efficiently.
No, there will be a primary class problem for the whole population... for Auroville. And that will be an interesting problem: how can we prepare the children, children taken from anywhere, who have no way of learning at home, whose parents are ignorant, who have no possibility of having any means to learn, nothing, nothing, nothing but the raw material, like that - how can we teach them to live? That will be an interesting problem.

The Mother

Located adjacent to the village of Edayanchavadi, Udavi School is a recent addition to SAIER's list of units. The school itself has a long history going back to the early 1970s, but it got caught up in a labour dispute affecting a factory where it was located, with the result that it had to close. Thanks to negotiations in 1999, it became possible to dissociate the school from the dispute affecting the factory, and SAIER was approached with a view to taking over the management. This was agreed to for an initial period of 3 years, commencing June 1999.

Udavi Gentilesse Matriculation School, as it is officially known today, is trying to follow the guidelines on education laid down by The Mother and Sri Aurobindo, while taking the children up from 1st to 10th standard in preparation for their Government-held
Matriculation examination at around the age of 17-18 years.

The school today, which is divided into 11 classes limited to a maximum of 30 children per class, is attended by a total of 250 children, of whom 70-75 are in the kindergarten, with a combined faculty of 25 teachers.

**Curriculum**

The school starts each day with a short period of prayer and meditation. This helps calm the children physically and mentally before the day's teaching programme starts, while also providing an opportunity for them to become aware of their inner self and develop powers of concentration.

The subjects taught are the same as those taught in other Indian schools, but the way they are taught is different. At Udavi School there is an awareness that children have many facets to their personality, and that in order to develop them all each child has to be given an appropriate range of opportunities. For example, the energetic and creative side of a child's personality can be developed by teaching music, painting, drama and various handicrafts. The mental side can best be dealt with by encouraging the children to think for themselves and develop their own intuitive nature by concentration. Wherever possible they are encouraged to find answers to questions through their own effort, though the teachers are always there to guide and help them as and when required.

To develop children's full potential they must also have a strong and supple body. With this object in view, the school has introduced physical culture into the curriculum. Children do athletics and yoga, and play games like volleyball, handball, football, cricket, badminton, table tennis and kabbadi.

On the academic front, to date 4 groups of students have sat for their public Matriculation exams, and on each occasion there has been a 100% pass rate, with very good results, many in the first division.

**Summary**

The children who have attended Udavi School to date have amply demonstrated that, given a chance, they are capable of rising above the poor material circumstances of their background and local environment to turn in first class results in exams and other fields of endeavour.

For SAIIEER, the school poses the challenge of working with children who are first generation learners, preparing for a Board exam, and yet being nurtured to develop an all-rounded personality in the light of Mother and Sri Aurobindo's guidance.
Savitri Bhavan

Savitri is Sri Aurobindo's immortal epic poem. The Mother has called it "The supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo's vision".

Savitri Bhavan, located in the International Zone of Auroville between Bharat Nivas and the Matrimandir, has been born from a dream of an environment in Auroville that would be an inspiring centre for Savitri studies, welcoming Savitri lovers from all over the world, and housing all kinds of material and activities that can help to enrich understanding and enjoyment of Sri Aurobindo's revelatory epic.

For this purpose, a complex of about 650 square metres has been designed to provide a library, a multi-purpose hall, exhibition space, audio-visual facilities, study-areas, and a small outdoor stage along with service and administrative facilities. The foundation stone was laid by Dr. Nirodharan of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Sri Aurobindo's scribe for his work on Savitri, on 24th November 1995.

The involvement of a committed team of Aurovilians, and the support of many well-wishers worldwide, enabled initial development of the land allocated, with a garden, water and electricity connections, and later construction of a temporary shelter to house the growing activities of the Bhavan. Then in December 1998 work was started...
on a first phase of the complex, to provide a multi-purpose hall, office and library-cum-storage area as a base for the work until the rest of the facilities can be completed. This first phase was inaugurated by Dr. Nirodharan on 8th August 1999 and has become a vibrant centre for a wide range of educational, research and publishing activities.

From 1998 onwards a grant under the Auroville Development Scheme has supported an ever-expanding range of activities. These include:

- regular weekly group study sessions of Savitri.
- monthly discourses by invited speakers.
- a wide variety of on-going background courses.
- publication of a quarterly magazine ‘Invocation’ - study notes and Newsletter’, which is distributed free on request.
- special events such as exhibitions and audio-visual presentations.

Savitri Bhavan events are open to all interested people, whether Aurovilian, guests or members of the public.

Over the last year, the focus of development has been on furnishing, equipping and using the new building for maximum utilisation of all the valuable Savitri-related materials that have been donated or acquired. Now the Bhavan looks forward to planning, designing and building the next phase of the complex: a hostel to accommodate students, researchers and teachers, voluntary workers and guests. At the same time, the Bhavan is focussing on building up its library and resource materials for the support of Savitri studies at every level.
Centre for Indian Culture (CIC)

The Centre for Research in Indian Culture was set up in 1984 in one of the unfinished pavilions of Bharat Nivas, the Pavilion of India, situated in the International Zone of Auroville. Its main purpose was to focalize the work that Bharat Nivas, when completed, would undertake in a fuller manner.

Aims
The specific aims of CIC were three-fold:

(a) In pursuance of the spiritual work done by Sri Aurobindo and the The Mother, to carry out research into the newer dimensions of being and of life with a view to discovering the possibilities of the future; ways of re-moulding life itself to re-create the human being in a supramental form; and visualising new processes of growth and experimenting with them. All this while recovering the essential truth of the processes known in the past.

(b) To explore afresh - with the consciousness of the modern age - the ancient truths of the Indian experience of reality, and to learn to discern and to identify the processes of life and action that flow from those truths. Having done so, to then apply them, concretely and repeatedly, to the issues and situations of contemporary life, for which ample opportunity is offered by the diverse collective life of Auroville itself. Also to note and observe how far these ancient processes prove effective even today, and how far they can renew themselves and move into further dimensions. For example, do they yield happier results than those obtained by following processes emerging from other roots of experience? It might be added briefly that this area of research, pursued over many years, has proved most fruitful, with the result that a sense of confidence has been gained, insights arrived at and concrete results accumulated.

(c) To create a physical space, within the experiment of Auroville, where the characteristic “feel”, “vibration” and “dynamics” of the Indian experience of life and reality could be made tangible and pervasive; that space to further generate varied activities, involving individuals and groups.

Facilities
The Centre offers the following facilities:

(a) a small but specialized library of books on Indian culture - English translations of ancient texts, treatises and literary works; encyclopaedias; books on Indian art, modern Indian literature; etc. Also a collection of Sanskrit texts and some Indian journals.

(b) a collection of music, both Carnatic and Hindustani.

(c) a video room.

Activities
The Centre is involved in a number of activities, both within Auroville and also outside, such as:

(a) Within Auroville - there are workshops, publications, numerous exhibitions of art by Aurovillians, as also artists coming from outside. Creative programmes of dance, music and theatre are also presented - some by Aurovillians, others by eminent personalities from around India. Classes are offered in Sanskrit, Indian dance and music to the international community of Auroville.

(b) Outside Auroville - the Centre is occasionally invited to send delegates to national and international conferences in India, hosted by some of the major institutions and universities. Papers
reflecting the experience gained by the Centre have been presented and published.

**Initiatives by the Centre**

Several initiatives in new areas of work have been undertaken by the Centre. To name the most significant:

(a) In collaboration with others, a UNESCO sponsored international seminar was organised on the theme "Humanity at the crossroads: evolution of Consciousness". A compilation was also brought out.

(b) A group known as "Auroville in India" has been formed, for the purpose of sharing the experiment of Auroville more widely within the country - specially with the youth.

(c) The 125th birth anniversay of Sri Aurobindo in 1997 was taken up in an extensive manner, and publications, exhibitions and presentations through art and videos formed part of a major programme which is still ongoing.

(d) A major area of work undertaken by the Centre has been the progressive completion of the campus of Bharat Nivas. This work has gathered momentum in the last three years, coordinated by a group known as the "Bharat Nivas Group".

The Centre, in its growth, seems to stand on a threshold, and is poised to move into the greater dimension of the work it is meant to do.
"Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations."

Auroville Charter

Creation and purpose of the unit

The research unit known as the "Laboratory of Evolution" was started in 1984 in one of the available spaces at Bharat Nivas, as a temporary location. In 1985, the LOE has become the LOE/CHU, thanks to the addition of a twin research unit, the Centre for Human Unity. The overall purpose of the joint unit is to be a centre of documentation and a dynamic focus for stimulating research done in Auroville and elsewhere concerning further evolution of the human species, which Sri Aurobindo and The Mother have not only announced, but have opened the way for. Through the unit’s name, people also have a constant reminder that the whole earth is a "laboratory of evolution".

Present development

The unit’s most visible aspect until now has been its specialised library, covering the numerous topics related to the study of evolution, past and future, seen both from a scientific and a spiritual point of view in the light of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother’s evolutionary vision and work. The unit is welcoming people new to Auroville...
(especially students), who come with many questions about Auroville itself and about Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. In the LOE/CHU they can find the complete works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, plus Satprem and many other "disciples". They can also find all the books written by Aurovilians themselves, and many other books and documents about Auroville. Besides what concerns those specific topics, Aurovilians, Newcomers and guests can find in the LOE/CHU library a whole range of books, magazines and cassettes in many languages about evolution, with the possibility of obtaining further information and advice if requested.

The research aspect of the unit has developed steadily over the years, and the various expressions of that research are now starting to attract more and more interest, from outsiders as well as from Aurovilians. On an ongoing basis the unit is engaged in the following research work:

- Integral Yoga and its confluence with the emerging new scientific paradigms in physics, biology, medicine, history, etc.
- an Index of "Mother's Agenda", the 13 volume record of Mother's pioneering steps towards a conscious and transformed body, the future body which evolution is already now preparing for a transformed human species.
- The secret consciousness in our body cells and how to awaken and develop it (a book is currently being written on this topic, and a number of workshops have been held).
- Messages and other texts by The Mother about Auroville. These have all been put together into one large compilation, which individuals or working groups in Auroville can photocopy for their own use. Others just ask orally for what they need.
- Development since many years of an innovative board game, "Gayatri": evolution played as "the adventure of consciousness and joy" (Sri Aurobindo, "Savitri").
- Flowers and consciousness.
- Awakening of body consciousness through hatha yoga and martial arts.
- Research on chakras.

One important area of research envisioned from the start needs to be added to what is already being done: the kind of scientific research which a "laboratory of evolution" ought also to do. For example, to experiment with the diverse biofeedback instruments which show the physiological effects that the various states of consciousness have on the human body. With the help of such devices, even children could learn (to a certain extent) how to be, at will, in a specific state of consciousness, and how to communicate more consciously with their body. Sri Aurobindo and Mother underlined how helpful it would be to add the scientific approach to the purely inner, spiritual approach in our evaluative endeavour: this would be one way to follow their advice on this point.

Not long ago the unit put up an exhibition on the ancient idealistic city created more than 3,000 years ago in Egypt by the Pharaoh Akhenaton on the present site of Amarna. The exhibition was based on research done by one of the members of LOE/CHU. This research, which is to be published soon in a small book, showed a deep similarity on many points between that city and Auroville.

**Plans for future development**

LOE/CHU will be integrated in the future campus of CIRHU (Centre for International Research in Human Unity). CIRHU itself will be part of the future Auroville University and research centres. There are plans to have a new circular building with 12 rooms to house the LOE/CHU near the CIRHU resource centre on the border of the International zone, not far from Matrimandir.
Art Youth Atelier (AYA)

Art Youth Atelier is an experiment in the realm of education, involving a fairly wide cross section of Auroville’s youth.

Art: this vast territory has been chosen by the youth because of its unlimited opportunities for expression, because of its unlimited creative possibilities; and just because of the challenge it represents all the time. The majority of the group wants to become professionals in their field (music, painting, culture, video, stage setting, photography, sound, glass work, etc, in fact anything and everything involving creativity).

Youth: participants are young and want to express themselves through a contemporary mode. The A.Y.A. is an open experiment open to all young people “in tune” with the aims of the centre.

For the moment, according to the situation on site, where there is still no completed place of work (the building is under construction), it is difficult for the group to extend its activities. In the future, with better conditions, it is expected that other young people will naturally be attracted to the centre and join.

Atelier: the workshop, in art, has always been the place where creativity can find expression in matter. It’s a place to learn by doing; in concrete terms. In fact, it is a training centre. For example, to stage a performance requires a lot of different skills, not only artistic. It’s a huge enterprise, and needs a global organisation. The Auroville youth wants to do - or learn to do - as much as possible by themselves. This doesn’t mean that there will be no teachers; it simply means that when they realise they don’t have the abilities needed to accomplish a particular aim, they will call in teachers or specialists as contributors. These specialists will have a well-defined mission - usually to give some classes on a particular subject within a well defined time. That’s why there are no permanent teachers in the A.Y.A. as in classical schools.

Most of the young people involved are already going to school, as A.Y.A. is an extra-curricular activity; but they agree upon the principle of one major artistic event per year and, according to various constraints and possibilities, several smaller artistic happenings.
Auroville Library

The Auroville Library, currently located in the Bharat Nivas complex, has been in operation for over 25 years now, housing and lending out a wide selection of books. Today it contains some 18,000 volumes in seven languages - English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch and Russian. By 2001 it is hoped to add a further 1,000 volumes in Tamil. All the books are divided up by subject matter into approximately 60 different sections, including a section specially for children.

The Library opens every weekday morning 9 to 12.30, and on Wednesday and Friday afternoons 2 to 4.30 pm. Eventually it's planned to open other afternoons also, but this is dependent on recruitment of more regular full time staff. Meanwhile the Library meets the needs of some 450 regular and 250 irregular book borrowers within Auroville, plus a number of guests, the latter being permitted to borrow on presentation of a Guest Card. With the addition of the Tamil section, these numbers will obviously increase. On average, at present around 1,300 books are loaned out each month.

In addition to the books, most of which have been donated over the years, or purchased using a relatively small budget which rarely allows for more than 200 new works a year, the Library also maintains a number of subscriptions to weekly and monthly Indian and international journals. The latter are laid out for reading in a separate area of the library.

Future plans for the Library include moving it to new and more spacious premises in the projected Auroville Plaza, and the introduction of a computerised programme for listing and keeping track of the books.
Aurofilm

**History & activities**

Aurofilm, the cinematic film department of Auroville, was started in 1981 (being one of the earlier SAIIER activities for education, research and culture in Auroville) and since its beginning has been dedicated to the promotion of cinema in its artistic, cultural and educational sense. This is done in a spirit of research, study and information made accessible to Aurovilians and visitors, and is materialized mainly through three branches of activity:

- regular film shows for the community of Auroville.
- running of film workshops to prepare the basis for a future Film Institute in Auroville, including a film production unit.
- other related activities.

**Film shows**

From the start, Aurofilm was registered as a Film Society affiliated to the Federation of Film Societies of India (FFSI). At that time, films were received from this organization, together with films from cultural centres of foreign embassies and from Government film libraries. Today, thanks to the use of 35mm equipment, selection possibilities are much wider.

The weekly film projections are held in the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium (800+ seats) in Bharat Nivas - the Pavilion of India - where there is a projection room for both 16mm and 35mm film gauges. Every effort is made to present a wide selection of films, from many different countries, both recent and "old", chosen for their cinematic and cultural qualities. From time to time 'film festivals' are organised based on a particular theme or filmmaker, with special emphasis on the new Indian cinema.

**Film workshops**

Film workshops are aimed at developing learning centres for studying cinema in general, as well as all the jobs required to make a film, and for eventually establishing in Auroville a film production unit able to fully handle the making of films. For the time being, the workshops run whenever there is a project for making a film (documentary or fiction) or on student demand relating to some particular field of study. Equally, the workshops function whenever general training sessions are organised.

For the activities of the workshop, Aurofilm makes use of certain basic equipment in Auroville, but also uses the facilities of film laboratories, sound recording/mixing and editing studios in Chennai whenever funds are available.

The plan is to organise more of these activities and experiments for the benefit of interested Auroville students and friends of Auroville - of all ages - throughout the year.

**Other activities**

Whenever possible, personalities from the film world are invited to give talks or present films in Auroville. Such an event was organized in April 1998, when Mr. S.T. Baskaran, Historian of Cinema, gave a lecture on Tamil Cinema and presented a classic Tamil movie. Mrs. Lygia Matthews, director of "Light on the Water", an award-winning documentary on the Snake Boats of Kerala, was invited in April 1999. In January 2000, Mr. P.K Nair, former Director-cum-Curator of the National Film Archives in Pune, came to animate 4 sessions on the Indian Cinema, illustrated by documentaries and 2 classic films. And in September 2000 Mr. Adoor Gopalakrishnan spent 2 days in Auroville attending a 4-day festival of his films.

Meanwhile, as much as possible, Aurofilm's management tries to attend International Film Festivals in India to keep themselves updated on recent films. On such occasions it is also possible to meet certain film directors and distributors for the purpose of organising rental of films, or for inviting the directors to share their work and research in Auroville.
Since October 1998, Aurofilm has published a monthly newsletter on cinema called AUROFILM INFO (usually available in English & French) which is distributed at the beginning of the month to the audiences. This aims at informing people about different film director’s work, gives details on particular films, brings news from the Indian cinema or cinema in general, updates readers on the unit’s work and research, and gives the programme of film shows for the coming month.

A next step for Aurofilm and Auroville will be the foundation of a Film Institute, which includes the building of a proper movie hall so that projections, retrospectives, festivals and film studies for schools or anybody in Auroville can be proposed at any time.

Kailash

Kailash is a residency for youth from the age of 14 to 21. There are 14 rooms (12 single and 2 double) for Aurovillian and non-Aurovillian youth, fitting the criteria that they have to be in an educational process – meaning in school, in an apprenticeship, or at work. Kailash offers a place to live for those who want to experience a collective life, but it also answers a fundamental need of all young Aurovilians who, for material, personal, or relationship reasons, want to leave their family home. It is in a secure environment which, thanks to peers and the help of some adults, enables each participant to build a positive image of him/herself, while leading a way of life consistent with their deeper personality and true aspirations.

There are 3 adults supervising the project. They act as mediators in the collective life within the group, with the school, the work place or family, according to the needs, and also act as individual counsellors when required.
Auroville Transport

The transport unit was started in 1985-86 with one van, one Jeep, and a small load carrier. At that time the main purpose of the unit was to transport Auroville school children to their schools and back home, to bring children to sports and back home, to bring lunch to schools from the common kitchen, to do field trips for schools, and to meet any other need arising in relation to the schools. This continues, but the unit has also committed itself to helping the village children as well. Small children attending Kuilapalayam School, for example, are now being transported by the unit from Edayanchavadi village to their school and back.

Presently the service has 2 buses, 1 van, one carrier, one Jeep and two motorized rickshaws. It also manages the maintenance and running of a bus belonging to Udavi School, one van belonging to the office of the Secretary to the Auroville Foundation, and one van donated for the children going to the Lycee in Pondicherry. Since 1997 the service has enlarged its scope of operation and now also offers collective transport for adult Aurovilians, making trips to Pondicherry three times a week and transporting some of the older people to their workplace and back.
home. The load carrier is used for transporting goods from Pondicherry to the Solar Kitchen, and transporting film boxes from Pondicherry railway station to Bharat Nivas Auditorium and back to Pondicherry. Special trips are also made to Pondicherry on Darshan Days.

On an experimental basis, a shuttle service was started within Auroville to reduce the need for personal motorized transport. However, it was found that the need for collective transport was not sufficiently developed at the time. A monthly trip to Chennai was also started for Aurovilians, but there again the need was not sufficient to warrant continuation. Now the unit is in the process of acquiring a battery powered van for running within Auroville. If this proves successful, it is hoped that all the unit's vehicles can be replaced with battery powered ones in a phased manner.

Future plans for the unit include finding a bigger place with more parking space so that the workshop facility can be improved, and getting more vehicles to serve the community better.