Auroville offers itself as a site of research and creative exploration, an embodiment of human unity.

Auroville will be a place of unending education, research and innovative learning.

Auroville's Charter

A Place of Unending Education, Research and Innovative Learning.
In excess of 13,000 individuals from all over India and the world are participating in innovative avenues for learning and education.

**Professional exchange and consultancy**
- Volunteer service work
- Higher education and university exchange

**Institutes and training programs** in a wide and diverse range of fields
- Child and youth oriented schooling for outraged/regional and internal rivalry

**Avenues for learning and education:**
- Learning to others who are interested in exchanging these processes.
- In each of these areas there has been a sustained research and practice gained over the past forty-three years. We can open up these fields of active systems and move into states of being and action that approach the universal.

**Practice in levels of consciousness** with Marramandari as a valuable presence and seel for pursuing this experience, which goes beyond belief and healing.

**Encouraging creativity and innovative thinking** in all areas (e.g., arts, organizational structures, economy and finances, environment, health,

**Integration of the human personality** on a basis of holistic perspectives of life – nature, man and the universe with structure and guidance.

**Patterns of education** in an ever-evolving learning society, geared towards the challenges that face present and future generations.

As we look at the pattern of experience available in Anuvolle, we can identify among many others these areas:
- Anuvolle aspire to be an ever-evolving learning society, geared towards the challenges that face present and future generations.
- Its vision and multi-cultural society make Anuvolle a unique place for research in lifelong education. Through its expanding educational facilities,
Vasudhaiva kutumbakam, said the ancient Indians: the world is one family. The ideal of human unity, which was already present at the dawn of civilisation, has never appeared so close to realisation, but paradoxically the closer we come to it, the more it seems to elude us. It is as if at the onset of the 21st century the need for human unity has never been so great, and yet quite often this very unity, seen as inevitable, is perceived as somewhat threatening.

The innovative experiment of Auroville, a 'Universal Township', founded in 1968 was made to give a concrete shape to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother to seek Human Unity for the future evolution of mankind. They foresaw, almost a hundred years back, that great changes were going to come upon man, almost in the sense of an evolutionary and civilizational crisis; that a time would come when existing political, social and economic systems would no longer be valid – and, in their place, experiments would be made to create new structures that were more 'holistic', global and inter-linked. There would be dramatically new findings at the frontier areas of social and scientific research leading to new possibilities. Another world would begin to take shape to which the 'collectivity of man' would be central. There would be new dimensions of psychological and spiritual growth both for the individual and for society. This is the ferment and seeking of Auroville. And, in this many-sided process, a backdrop is provided for a living laboratory for spiritual, social and material researches.

Sri Aurobindo and The Mother wished to create a ‘field’ – which Auroville represents – in which people from all over the world could live and experiment with such new structures in all areas and explore the possibilities that they might offer. There are about 2500 people from 45 countries who live together as an intentional community in Auroville and, in the close inter-action of their rich diversity, they explore along many paths. Such an attempt could only be made in the fertile, millennial-old soil of India which can assimilate the world’s diversity on a basis of unity. The experiment is set in a rural environment and this participation enriches the collective social fabric of man’s life.

Sri Aurobindo has offered a model for the development of human resources that responds to the idealism of the dream of social equality, as well as to the idealism of the
dream of personal freedom, showing a way towards fulfillment of the goals of liberty and equality – which till now have seemed to be mutually conflicting – by a path of individual self-development in the service of all, inspired by a profound sense of brotherhood that is born not merely from goodwill, but from a deeper experience of the oneness underlying all our enriching diversities.

This inspiring possibility was enthusiastically adopted by Mother India, and our Government has not only sponsored the project four times within UNESCO, but has also consistently supported the right of Auroville to develop according to the high ideals expressed in its Charter. Realizing the importance of Auroville to India and the World, Indira Ji and subsequently Rajiv Ji played a defining role in providing required protection to Auroville. Across party lines, support of nearly all major political parties of India, Parliamentarians, International institutions like UNESCO and industrialist like Shri J.R.D. Tata have been forthcoming in the times of need.

Over the last 40 years the experiment, the research, has been going on in this 'laboratory of evolution'. The outputs have been extraordinary, but cannot easily be measured by normally accepted academic standards, because, by its very nature, the attempt to live out the new model proposed by Sri Aurobindo steps outside the established measures of existing systems. The achievements of the social-sciences research of Auroville, to be fully appreciated, need to be measured not by the quantity of any theories, theses, studies and research papers that may have been produced – although these are not lacking – but by the quality of the life-changes that have been brought about in the process. Measuring the quality of life-changes by objective criteria is not very simple. Some of these criteria we list as below:

1. **Economy**

Auroville attempts Social Equity by adopting a fundamental principle of common or collective property. Everyone living in Auroville has no personal right over any property, business or institution. Everything is run in a spirit of stewardship or trusteeship for 'humanity as a whole'. People with creative capacities, representing among the best in their fields, have agreed to work towards building a cashless society. There are no salaries paid to the members of Auroville. Everyone is provided with sustenance depending upon the needs rather than the type of job being performed. This is a unique
and complex experiment in the field of 'Social Science Research', as well as in the fields of Scientific Research. The attempt is to create a new kind of society beyond barriers of culture, polity, creed, class and economy and is oriented towards a qualitative change of consciousness itself: where external binding factors are not the tools but an inner growth of man's being through education is the key process.

Long before Provision of Urban Utilities in Rural Areas ( PURA) became the buzzword, Auroville has been quietly manifesting this dream. Auroville, in its earlier years, was surrounded by impoverished villages. Over the years, the presence of Auroville has changed the economic fabric of the villages. Auroville directly employs 5,000 people from the local area and has indirectly contributed by enhancement of local skills of thousands more. Slowly these villages are transforming from rural to eco-urban. Since the past 30 years, the Village Action Group of Auroville has been working with 3000 women in programmes of Empowerment, Education and Savings through Self Help Groups. Several other expert groups have contributed to building local sustenance in area of Water Conservation, Organic Agriculture, Community Infrastructure, Environment and Rural habitats.

2. Education
Auroville Foundation has been recognized by the Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India for Higher Learning and accorded a special status for educational research. Its work has been evaluated with special parameters unlike any other formal researches carried out in the country. The line from the charter of Auroville, 'Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.', is the foundation of each and every activity of Auroville. Experimentation in every field of life provides ground for a living education which is open to be experienced by anyone who likes to come to Auroville. Nearly 1000 people, students, professionals and teachers from all over the world come every year to Auroville to experience and learn through dynamic knowledge sharing. The environment is like a contemporary gurukul. The schools within Auroville have a unique curriculum developed for an integral development through a discovery of spirit, mind, body and feelings. A culture of appreciating beauty through arts along with physical education are integrated with experiencing knowledge through experiments and apprenticeship.
Auroville also operates schools serving approx 2000 children from the surrounding villages. Along with the needs for the conventional educational curriculum, these schools try to bring aspects of the ethos of human growth. The students of these schools have been outperforming similar rural schools in other parts of Tamil Nadu, building a solid human resource base of an accelerated development of the surrounding rural population. A vocational training institute, recognized by the Tamil Nadu government has also been set up to provide skill upgrading after the school education.

3. Environment
The most striking impact of a visit to Auroville is its trees and the green environment. It was not the case when we began. Early pioneers who settled on a barren plateau had to deal with severe dust storms and wide open landscape. Over the years 10 million trees have been planted. Now Auroville has become a green oasis. The flora and fauna have returned. Auroville is becoming a delight of bird watchers. Several reptiles and animals find a safe home once again. This development is also taken to benefit the larger community around Auroville. Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF) was the name for the native species of forest. There is an extensive research in this field in our botanical gardens which being conducted and the findings are being shared with local state government and ministry of environment in New Delhi. Education programmes for local school kids to Phd students are available through several of our environmental groups in Auroville. A watershed programme to revive local rain water storage tanks has been successfully implemented in the surrounding villages. This has now become a template of a state policy for other regions in Tamil Nadu. The best possible knowledge resources are being channeled through Auroville for bringing benefits to the country. Collaboration with Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has successfully mapped the environmental and water resources of the region. A forestation programme for the coastal areas after tsunami was initiated to safeguard the impact of natural disasters. Since its inception Auroville farms have a policy to grow its produce organically. This was not easy to implement as we were dealing with a harsh environment. Over the years Auroville has established an expertise in this area and has developed a network of organic farmers in South India.
4. Health Care

A strong body is an essential tool for any evolutionary progress. In an effort towards building wellness, a holistic approach towards health services has been the benchmark of Auroville’s efforts. Contemporary health practices; encompassing all systems of health care are being experimented in Auroville. The so-called alternative streams like homeopathy, ayurveda/siddha are combined with several old forgotten or newly discovered therapies like bio resonance, watsu, hatha yoga, pranic healing etc. Auroville has documented local health practices by creating a network of traditional healers in the villages under the programme of revival of traditional health practices. A herbal garden and a seed museum has been created to train the students from other parts of the country.

There are 4 health centers run by Auroville, which are providing health care needs of the local villages. Apart from general health, a special focus area is dental care. Rural areas in India have one of the worst per capita availability of dentists. Auroville runs a mobile clinic to serve the local villages. Learning from the local Ayurveda/Siddha doctors and providing modern health care to village creates a rich ground of social and cultural exchange. Like other areas, students from all over the world come to assimilate and enhance the knowledge in this field too.

5. Sustainability

A unique experience of visit to Auroville is touching the past with long-lasting traditions of the local villages and living a future with people riding electric bikes and nearly 300 houses using solar energy. From sustainable habitations to new ways of generating energy, electric bikes to bio diesel run generators, solar rickshaws to efficient public transportation, cycle paths to mud stabilized roads, natural waste water treatment to water free toilets, litter free campaigns to waste segregation, discovering the joy of cycling and walking along with carrying your own shopping bag, Auroville is experimenting with nearly every aspect of sustainability. At a country scale, there is a campaign launched for litter free India and Mission Tejas to eradicate kerosene lighting lamps still used by 84 million households in India, with Solar lamps. One part of this is to build a need-based lifestyle rather than consumerist rat race. Using less is the first step to sustainability followed in every part of life. Energy efficiency is first step before we generate energy. Each house and public space uses energy efficient
bulbs. Buildings are designed airy and with adequate provision of day lighting. **Most of the houses use solar geysers instead of electric geysers.** Wind generators installed in the windy areas of South Tamil Nadu generate 100% electricity used within Auroville. This is a unique social experiment where people are open to the difficulties of trying something new and in process becoming a living example of sustainability in India.

6. **Culture**
Along with material care beauty of creative expression contributes to building a ‘Simple rich and beautiful life’. A multicultural environment along with an open environment makes Auroville a hotbed of artistic expression. Several potters and artists from Auroville are slowly becoming famous in the art circles. Musician and dramatist have been displaying their skills within and outside. Auroville International zone and the Indian Pavillion, Bharat Nivas has been host to several artist performances and workshops. Few years back an experiment of social drama was initiated with local talents from the villages. Now it has taken shape into a village drama and media company which is used by several local government and NGOs for delivering social messages in the surrounding villages.

7. **Enterprise**
The expression of the beauty and material care is also reflected in several products produced by the units in Auroville. The main aim of these units is to provide employment to people from local villages. The surplus generated by these units is used for maintenance of other social activities like education, health care, research, farms, environment and village development. **Like all other things these units also follow the principle of non-ownership.** There are no profits channeled to any private individuals running these enterprises. A joy of sharing and giving the abundance is the spirit which drives stewards running these units. These units have also trained and created a breed of local entrepreneurs who go out and open their own businesses. We at Auroville see it as a sign of success rather than as competition. We are actively helping in establishing technology, finance and market linkages to several of these local village entrepreneurs.

It remains a wonder how big a change can be affected if a small group of people from urban environments choose to commit and live in a rural environment. Auroville as a
social experiment has been slowly working to establish a template for the future development of India.

In this regard it's important to provide the necessary protection to enable us to continue this new experimentation and work and provide facilitative tax benefits to attract and continue to receive investments from private sectors to fuel the growth of Auroville in accordance with its Charter.