Dr KARAN SINGH
CHAIRMAN, AUROVILLE FOUNDATION

PREFACE

Today, humanity stands at a critical crossroads in its long and tumultuous journey through the tortuous corridors of time. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother realized that the crisis humanity faces today turns on a deeper spiritual plane because it is a crisis in humanity’s evolutionary march towards a higher consciousness. They recognised that the crisis is possible of resolution only through the manifestation of human unity at a supramental plane. Against this perspective, the Mother envisioned a new City of Dawn, ‘Auroville’, as a living crucible for experiments in the ideal of human unity based on Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy of ‘Integral Yoga’. She founded Auroville on February 28, 1968 as an international cultural township where “all human beings of goodwill, sincere in their aspiration could live freely as citizens of the world”, and join in the exciting adventure of ushering in a new paradigm of life style that will ultimately “triumph over [man’s] limitations and incapacities”.

When in 1965 the Mother started speaking of her vision and intention of building Auroville, she spoke of a “park of unity” that will be at the town’s centre with a pavilion within it that she ultimately named “Matrimandir”. She shared with Roger Anger, Auroville’s chief architect, her vision of Matrimandir’s ‘Inner Chamber’. Roger presented her with the model of Inner Chamber as well as five models of Matrimandir. She selected the slightly flattened golden sphere that stands today resplendent next to the lone Banyan Tree that marks Auroville’s geographical centre. When I took over as the first Chairman of Auroville Foundation in 1991, I had the satisfaction of seeing to the Inner Chamber’s completion. Again, during my term as the fourth Chairman (September 2004 to September 2008), the entire Matrimandir was completed and, on 28th February 2008, the 40th anniversary of the founding of Auroville, was thrown open for meditation.

Now that Matrimandir is complete, we must bend our energies to build the township that the Mother envisaged as a galaxy divided into four zones – residential, cultural, industrial and international – to house a population of 50,000. Auroville Master Plan area is in the form of a circle with smaller ‘city area’ nestling within the larger ‘greenbelt area’. When Auroville was founded in 1968, the
entire area was an arid expanse of land that the early settlers, with their bare hands and hard work, have turned into lush green and biodiversity rich area.

Auroville’s Master Plan area is a mosaic of land holdings with Auroville Foundation owning only about 42 percent of the total land area spread over slightly less than 20 square kilometres. Since its beginning, Auroville has been consolidating its holdings by filling in the gaps principally through outright purchase and exchange with land outside the Master Plan area. It is becoming increasingly difficult because of speculative tendencies in real estate sector all over the country. The longer these holdings remain in private hands the possibility of their owners being lured to sell their holdings to speculative buyer increases many fold. There is no denying that unregulated and haphazard developments by private builders within the Master Plan area will totally destroy the vision and the purpose that underpin the experiment in human unity epitomised by Auroville.

In today’s conflict-ridden world, Auroville is a unique institution that is totally devoting itself, as a ‘living laboratory’, to evolving a paradigm of living and development that, in the long run, will point humanity towards not only a sustainable world but also towards universal understanding and human unity. Keeping the ground realities in view, it is imperative that the international community join hands with the people of India to protect Auroville’s physical existence from being overwhelmed by increasing threats to it. Let us hope that the nations of the world will realise, before it is too late, that Auroville is not just another town but a pulsating city of future that the world needs.

15th August 2009
New Delhi
1. PROLOGUE

- THE MOTHER & AUROVILLE

The Mother, the spiritual collaborator of Sri Aurobindo, spoke in 1965 of her vision of a city of the dawn, “Auroville” that she intended to build in the proximity of Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry. On 8th September 1965, she said,

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

- THE FOUNDING OF AUROVILLE & ITS CHARTER

Auroville’s foundation was laid on 28th February 1968 and the ceremony took place around a lotus-shaped urn near the Banyan Tree that the Mother had decided will be its geographic centre. Today, that urn is the focus of a large amphitheatre. At the ceremony, the Charter that the Mother gave to Auroville was read out. It reads as follows:

AUROVILLE CHARTER

1. Auroville belongs to nobody in particular. Auroville belongs to humanity as a whole. But to live in Auroville, one must be the willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness.

2. Auroville will be the place of an unending education, of constant progress, and a youth that never ages.

3. Auroville wants to be the bridge between the past and the future. Taking advantage of all discoveries from without and from within, Auroville will boldly spring towards future realisations.

4. Auroville will be a site of material and spiritual researches for a living embodiment of an actual Human Unity.

Today, Auroville is recognised as the only internationally endorsed living experiment in human unity and transformation of human consciousness. It is also a
centre for applied research in environmentally sustainable living practices and for evolving humankind’s social, cultural and spiritual underpinnings of a new social order that the strife-torn world acutely needs.

2. **AUROVILLE FOUNDATION**

In accordance with the provisions of Section 6 (i) of the Auroville Foundation Act 1988, the Government of India notified the constitution of Auroville Foundation on 29 January 1991 (vide Notification No.27-33/88-UU) as a statutory body under the Government of India in Ministry of Human Resource Development. With the issuance of the notification, all the undertakings of Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry (then known as Pondicherry) relatable to Auroville with all its assets, etc., stood transferred to and vested in the Foundation.

The Foundation consists of three authorities namely

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

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

**THE ORGANISATIONAL CHART OF AUROVILLE FOUNDATION**

(A) **THE GOVERNING BOARD**

The Governing Board consists of nine members nominated by the Central Government. The previous Governing Board, constituted on 6th September 2004, completed its 4-year term on 5th September 2008. The present Board was constituted on 29th October 2008 by Ministry of Human Resource Development, vide Notification No.F.27-9/2008-UU dated 29.10.2008, with the following members:. 
Dr. Karan Singh
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) &
President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Shri Ajoy Bagchi
Member
Executive Director, The People’s Commission
on Environment & Development India, New Delhi

Ms. Ameeta Mehra
Director, The Gnostic Centre, Gurgaon

Dr. (Ms.) Aster Mira Patel
Member, Residents’Assembly
Auroville Foundation, Auroville

Shri Balkrishna V.Doshi
Member
Founder-Director, Vastu Shilpa Foundation, Ahmedabad

Dr. (Ms.) Malini Parthasarthy
Member
Executive Editor, “The Hindu “
Chennai

Dr. (Ms.) Mallika Sarabhai
Member
Director, Darpana Academy of Performing Arts
Ahmedabad

Shri S.K. Ray
Ex-Officio
Member
Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser,
Ministry of Human Resource Development
New Delhi

Shri Amit Khare
Ex-Officio
Member
Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Human Resource Development
New Delhi

The Governing Board had decided to meet a minimum of twice in a year with one of its meetings being held in Auroville. During the period, 1st April - 5th September
2008, the Governing Board met once on 26th July 2008. The present Governing Board was not able to meet during the period 29th October 2008 - 31st March 2009.

Since its inception in September 2004, the present Governing Board, under the leadership of its Chairman, Dr Karan Singh, has been exploring the ways and means of enlarging, within the framework of the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988, the role of the Residents’ Assembly, through its Working Committee, in the growth and development of Auroville. Inter alia, the Governing Board decided to entrust the Working Committee of the Residents’ Assembly with the responsibility for initiating project proposals for developing Auroville’s infrastructure that are to be funded by the Central Government’s Five Year Plan grants.

Chairman and the Governing Board had also decided to install a statue of Sri Aurobindo within Auroville Township as well as within the campus of UNESCO’s headquarters at Paris. A more than life-size and imposing statue was sculpted by a group of sculptors coordinated by the Puducherry-based art connoisseur, Shri Lalit Verma. It was installed within the campus of Savitri Bhavan on 28th February 2008, the 40th anniversary of the founding of Auroville. The statue in Paris is likely to be installed in near future.

(B) INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Auroville International Advisory Council comprises 5 members nominated by the Central Government. The Central Government, vide Ministry of Human Resource Development Notification No. F.27-18/2008-UU dated 19.01.2009, constituted the present Council on 18th January 2009 with the following members:

(1) Sir Mark Tully (UK): Author, Journalist and Commentator on Contemporary Affairs; former head of the BBC’s India operations.

(2) Dr Doudou Diène (Senegal): Special Rapporteur to U.N. on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; Director, Intercultural and Inter-Religious Dialogue and Peace Culture, UNESCO;

(3) Dr Vishakha N. Desai (US): President, Asia Society of New York, NY

(4) Dr Marc Luyckx Ghisi (Belgium): Theologian & Researcher; Former Advisor to Presidents of the European Commission.

(5) Mr Julian Lines (US): Chairman, Auroville International Association, New York, NY

The International Advisory Council decided to meet at least twice a year at Auroville during the same period when the Governing Board meets. The previous Advisory Council met only once at Auroville during the period 1st April – 26th October 2008. During the period 19th January 2009 – 31st March 2009, the present Council did not meet as no meeting of the Governing Board was held during the period.
The Advisory Council has placed on record its deep appreciation of the exceptional character of the involvement of the people and the government of India in nursing Auroville as a crucible of an important experiment in human unity through a unique coming together of cultural and geographic diversity. It believes that Auroville’s universality and its achievements in the fields of education and sustainable lifestyles have important implications for India and the world.

The Council has encouraged the strengthening of Auroville’s internal institutions through more effective communication, enhanced transparency and appropriate devolution of power. The Council also holds the view that decision-making at appropriate levels empowers a community and leads to its governance becoming more effective and sustainable in the long run.

(C) THE RESIDENTS’ ASSEMBLY

The Residents’ Assembly comprises all those adults, male and female, whose names are entered in the Register of Residents maintained by Secretary to the Foundation. During the year, there were 1,636 adult residents on the rolls of the Foundation. The Residents’ Assembly interfaces with the Governing Board and the International Advisory Council through the 7-member “Working Committee of the Residents’ Assembly”, a statutory body, constituted by it for a term is 2 years.

(D) THE WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE RESIDENTS’ ASSEMBLY

The Residents’ Assembly appointed the Working Committee that started functioning from April 1, 2007 for a period of 2 years. Its members were as follows:

1. Shri Sanjeev Agarwal (India)
2. Shri L Dhanapal (India)
3. Ms Heidi d’Hiedt (Netherlands)
4. Shri A Kothandaraman (India)
5. Shri Hemant Lamba (India)
6. Ms Pierangela Raccagni (Italy)
7. Shri Carel Thieme (Netherlands)

During its tenure the Working Committee was active in dealing with a wide variety of issues that affected the activities of the Foundation. It held periodic meetings with the Governing Board and the International Advisory Council during the year.

Among the prominent issues the Working Committee dealt with related to the Foundation being exempted from income tax under different sections of the Income Tax Act, 1961. It worked in close cooperation with the Foundation’s secretariat in pursuing the matter with the Central Government. It was also active in sorting out the matters related to grant and/or extension of visa to the residents holding foreign nationality.
An issue of major concern to the residents was a scurrilous and biased news item on Auroville broadcast by the BBC World Service during the month of May 2008. The Working Committee lodged an immediate and strong protest first with the Editorial Complaints Unit of the BBC and followed it up with a complaint with the OFCOM, the independent regulatory authority of the communications industries in the United Kingdom. The result of the latter’s investigation is awaited.

The Working Committee was also involved in organising, along with the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, the celebrations in Paris on 10 October 2008 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the founding of Auroville.

(E) FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Auroville Foundation Rules, 1997, provides for a Finance Committee to assist the Governing Board with the Foundation’s financial management. The Governing Board constituted the Finance Committee on 21st January 2009 with the following composition:

Chairman: Shri S K Ray
Additional Secretary & Financial Adviser, Ministry of Human Resource Development & Ex-Officio Member, Governing Board, Auroville Foundation

Members:

1. Shri Ajoy Bagchi
   Member, Governing Board
   Auroville Foundation

2. Ms. Ameeta Mehra
   Member, Governing Board
   Auroville Foundation

3. Shri Amit Khare
   Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education
   Ministry of Human Resource Development & Member Ex-Officio, Governing Board
   Auroville Foundation

4. Shri M. Ramaswmay
   Secretary, Auroville Foundation

The Finance Committee met twice in New Delhi during 2008-09.

(F) THE FOUNDATION’S SECRETARIAT
For administering the Foundation on a day-to-day basis, the Central Government appoints a Secretary, with headquarters in Auroville, to exercise such powers and perform such duties as Chairman of the Governing Board may decide from time to time. The Secretary is an officer of the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India and selected by the Central Government. The present Secretary is Shri M. Ramaswamy, a serving Indian Administrative Service officer of 1982 batch belonging to Maharashtra cadre.

Secretary is assisted by one Finance & Administration Officer (F&AO), in the grade equivalent to Group B of the Central Government’s establishment, appointed by the Governing Board. The present FAO is Shri P R Srinivasamurty. The Foundation’s other establishment comprises officials numbering 13 in grades equivalent to that of the Groups C & D of the Central Government.

The Foundation’s secretariat functions from its new building called “Auroville Foundation Bhavan” constructed in the Administrative Area of Auroville at a cost of around Rs 1.215 Crore (12.15 million). Chairman, Dr Karan Singh inaugurated the building on 30th March 2008.

(G) GOVERNMENT’S GRANTS

The Foundation receives from the Central Government annual grants for two purposes; the “Plan Grants” for the projects under the Five Year Plan and “Non-Plan Grants for establishment and maintenance.

THE PLAN GRANTS: During the year 2008-09, the Central Government gave a grant of Rs. 570 lakhs (57 million) to the following groups for their projects under the Five Year Plan:

1. SAIIER: Rs. 282 lakhs (28.2 million) for (1) research activities; (2) equipments; (3) construction of infrastructure; and (2) establishment costs. Out of this grant, SAIIER spent Rs. 182.01 lakhs (18.201 million) on building infrastructure including the accommodation for kindergarten teacher, computer lab for Transition School, Transport Workshop and Caretaker’s residence, Nandanam School building, gymnasium of Dehashakti Sports, main building of Isai Ambalam School, rehearsal hall of CRIPA and the class room for Last School.

2. BHARAT NIVAS: Rs 41, 40 lakhs (4.14 million) for: (1) Repair & Renovation of Sri Aurobindo Auditorium (Rs 20 lakhs); (2) Campus Master Plan & Equipment: Rs 5.75 lakhs (5.75, 000); Research & Cultural Activities- Centre for Indian Studies, Tamil Heritage Centre, Kalakendra and Sri Aurobindo Auditorium: Rs 13.50 lakhs (1.35 million); and (4) Site development of Tamil Heritage Centre: Rs. 2.15 lakhs (2.15, 000).

3. TOWN PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Rs. 82.93 lakhs (8. 239 million) for: (1) Roads: Rs 54.32 lakhs 5.432 million; and (2) Solar Pumps & Street Lightings: Rs. 28.61 lakhs (2.861 million)
4. **40**th **ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION:** Rs. 4.47 lakhs (447,000) for the events at Auroville, New Delhi and Paris (France).

5. **PUBLICITY & PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Rs. 6.65 lakhs (665,000)

**THE NON-PLAN GRANTS:** During the year 2008-09, the Central Government gave a sum of Rs.127.00 lakhs (1.27 million) as ‘Non-Plan’ grant, which was spent to meet the expenses on the following heads.

1. Salary & Allowances
2. Management & Administration
3. Fixed Assets Purchase
4. Maintenance of Public Buildings

**(H) AUROVILLE’S VISITORS**

Besides the regular flow of tourists that appears to be increasing from year to year, Auroville was privileged to receive some very distinguished visitors during the year 2008-09. The University Grants Commission’s Visiting Committee visited, besides Matrimandir, some of Auroville’s educational units in May 2008. The other distinguished visitors were: (1) Hon’ble Justice Markandey Katju, Judge of the Supreme Court of India, New Delhi; (2) Hon’ble Justice B N Agarwal, Judge of the Supreme Court of India, New Delhi; (3) Hon’ble Chief Justice N L Gokhale, Chief Justice of Madras High Court, Chennai; (4) Dr Najma Haptullah, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and Chair, Parliament’s Committee on Subordinate Legislation, New Delhi; (5) His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, McLeodsganj; (6) His Excellency Robert Toscam, Ambassador of Italy, New Delhi; (7) His Excellency Mr Jerome Bonnafont, Ambassador of France, New Delhi; (8) Mr A Parasuraman, Secretary to UNESCO Executive Board, Paris; (9) Mr Mahendra Pal Chaudhry, Former Prime Minister of Fiji, Suva, Fiji; and (10) Dr Anshu Vaish, Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi

**(I) THE EVENTS AT UNESCO**

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the founding of Auroville on 28th February 2008, UNESCO’s Executive Board passed a resolution inviting its Director-General to take all appropriate steps to reinforce the association of UNESCO, and in particular it’s Culture Sector, with Auroville.

UNESCO, in collaboration with the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, organised a Roundtable on the theme of “Auroville, An Emerging World: Its Future Horizons” at UNESCO headquarters in Paris on 10th October 2008 to mark the 40th anniversary of the founding of Auroville. Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General, UNESCO, Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan, India’s nominee on UNESCO Executive Board, Ms. Bhawati Mukherjee, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to UNESCO, Mr Olabiyi Babalola Joseph Yaï, Chairman, UNESCO Executive Board, Ms. Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director General (Culture) UNESCO were among the eminent speakers. Distinguished gathering
comprising members of the resident diplomatic corps, members of Parisian society and some members of the Auroville Residents’ Assembly were present at the event. A cultural performance by Auroville’s musical group, “Nadaka” followed the seminar.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWNSHIP

MATRIMANDIR

In June 1965, the Mother started speaking of her vision of 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”.. She chose a place north of Puducherry (then Pondicherry) for the “city of future” with a lone Banyan Tree that would be its geographic centre.

The Mother envisioned the Inner Chamber of a pavilion at the town’s centre that she ultimately named “Matrimandir”. In March 1970, Auroville’s chief architect, Roger Anger presented to her a model of the Inner Chamber with five different models for Matrimandir. She selected the slightly flattened golden sphere and said that it is “the soul of Auroville…. and the living symbol of Auroville’s aspiration for the Divine’.

Matrimandir’s foundation was laid and the excavation work started on 21st February 1971. The spherical building is 29 metres high and 36 metres wide with its foundation going 10 metres below ground level. The outer skin of the building is studded with 1416 discs that have 4cm x 4 cm tiles with 24-carat gold leaf fused inside glass at very high temperature.

The diameter of the Inner Chamber, completed in 1991, is 24 metres and 15.20 metres high at its centre. A 70-centimetres diameter solid crystal sphere is so positioned at the centre of the Chamber that it receives a ray of sun and glows. A heliostat synchronised with the movement of the sun directs the ray of sun to it during the day. Surrounding the building are 12 stone petals that are 6.5 metres high with the radius extending to 49-metre. These have meditation chambers within and are ringed by 12 gardens that were individually named by the Mother and a lake around the gardens. While the structure and petals are complete, the gardens are in making. The body of water that will ultimately surround Matrimandir is at planning stage.

Matrimandir was declared complete on 28th February 2008. With the main structure complete, only the items of follow-up work remain. The strength of the labour force has been reduced and the focus is now on maintenance of the main structure.

A large stainless-steel hydraulic crane, positioned on top of the structure, was commissioned and is currently used for maintaining the golden discs on
Matrimandir’s outer skin. Other works taken up and/or completed were: (1) improving the waterproofing of the structure; (2) intensive design work on the twelve main gardens; (3) completion of a mini amphitheatre; refurbishing of solar panels and batteries, and (4) garden exhibition for the Auroville community with interactive dialogue facility.

The major new phase of work at Matrimandir involves creating 12 gardens that the Mother spoke of. This work will take several years and will require a large number of special plants that will be supplied, among others, by the Matrimandir Nursery. The work has started on: (1) the “Garden of Unity” adjacent to the Banyan tree, marking the centre of Auroville; and (2) the pathways, benches, pergola, central pool and fountains. It is expected to be completed in the coming year.

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

During the year, the Governing Board officially constituted a committee for planning and developing the township. It was named as “L’Avenir d’Auroville”, the name that the Mother gave to a similar body. The Governing Board also formed a 6-member ‘Advisory Committee’ to advise L’Avenir in the matter of township’s planning and development.

L’Avenir’s core group of Coordinators made an assessment of Auroville from environmental and development perspectives, and have shared it with the Residents’ Assembly. Among Auroville’s diverse needs, housing appears to be the pressing need and must be given the top priority. The prevailing grave housing shortage is impeding Auroville’s growth. After wide-ranging consultations with the residents, the experts and the others, it proposed to develop a prototype model of nodes of ‘compact urban living environment’ that will include community facilities, open space network, pedestrian and cycle paths, etc. Thus these nodes will not be limited to only houses.

Seven collective housing projects are currently under construction that will provide 110 flats housing 160-170 people. The extension of two existing settlements will provide another 18 houses (30 people).

A proposal for a common waste water treatment facility, for the new projects in the Residential zone, has been prepared. A site has been approved for a multipurpose building, where the new Auroville Library & Archives building is planned.

Almost the entire Crown Road has been marked and cleared, and made accessible for vehicles on the East side and for bicycles on the West side. The landownership (private or village) and settlements within Auroville are the factors that are hindering its completion. Meanwhile, construction of 450-meter long Crown Road from Solar Kitchen to Arka has begun. Deepanam School road is also under construction. The symbolic opening of the Crown Road was celebrated on 28th February 2009 by ‘Crown Cycle and Eco-friendly Vehicle Rally’.
Auroville is increasingly confronted with possibly irreversible outside developments on land by commercial developers. Recently a new road has been laid through the Greenbelt to the borderline between the city and the green belt.

4. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

(A) INTERNAL AUDITORS

In November 2005, the Governing Board, keeping in view the complexity of financial management scenario of the Foundation, decided to introduce the system of “internal auditors” to help it with the management of its finances and accounts. On the recommendations of the Finance Committee, it appointed the Institute of Public Auditors of India (Chennai Chapter) as the Foundation’s internal auditors. The Institute of Public Auditors of India (IPAI) is a non-governmental body set up by a number of very senior officers who superannuated from the office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India. Its members have considerable experience in the matters of accounting and auditing of government accounts.

During 2008-09, the internal auditors audited the accounts of the trusts and units under Auroville Foundation, and reviewed their book-keeping practices. The emphasis was on presentation of financial performance of all activity centres in a manner that will assist the Governing Board in facile monitoring of their progress and achievements. The internal auditors have also streamlined the existing system and devised a ‘common format’ of accounts’, which is being followed now for preparing the Foundation’s consolidated balance sheet. The Governing Board places on record its appreciation of the work done by the Institute of Public Auditors of India (Chennai Chapter) in streamlining the Foundation’s finance and accounts system.

(B) FUNDS AND ASSETS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The membership of the Funds & Assets Management Committee (FAMC) comprises one representative each drawn from the following units:

- Auroville Unity Fund
- Auroville Planning and Development
- Auroville Board of Commerce
- Housing Service
- Land Consolidation Committee
- SAIIER
- Working Committee
- Secretary of the Auroville Foundation
- Financial Advisor

The FAMC's functions include:
1. Units and the Trusts – Appointment/Resignation of Trustees/Executives; Creation/Closure of Units/Trusts
2. Monitoring of Commercial Units.
3. Taxation Matters.
4. Land purchasing/selling and allotment to stewardships of land.
5. Auroville Unity Fund / Budget Coordination Committee/ Housing
6. Financial approval for large projects.
7. Planning and Development.

(C) UNITS AND TRUSTS

The FAMC is assisted in managing trusts and units by a subgroup constituted by it. During the year, 2 new Trusts were formed, 7 new Units were created and 3 Units were closed. Changes in the Trustees of 3 Trusts and the Executives of 12 Units were approved.

(D) AUROVILLE UNITY FUND

The regulations for operating the Fund are being finalized and will be placed before the Governing Board for approval. The regulations stipulate periodic reports to the FAMC and Secretary, Auroville Foundation. The FAMC reviewed and approved the Fund’s capital investments. It also approved the loans above Rs.5 lakhs (0.5 million) in value and ‘common format of accounts’.

(E) LAND USE

The FAMC has created a sub-committee to advise it, in consultation with the stewards looking after the lands, on alternative possibilities for land use that could result in achieving higher returns. Various proposals are under study.

(F) INCOME TAX EXEMPTION

The Foundation has renewed its application to the Central Board of Direct Taxes for exemption from payment of income tax under Sec 10(23 C) (iv)of the Income Tax Act, 1961. The FAMC has studied the implications of the changes in the Income Tax Act, 1961. The Working Committee of the Residents’ Assembly has also obtained professional opinion, which indicates that the changes may not adversely impact the manufacturing units.

5. LAND, HOUSING AND OTHER RESOURCES

(A) LAND RESOURCE

The Land Consolidation Committee (LCC) and the Land & Resources Management Committee (LRM) are responsible for protecting the land within Auroville Master Plan Area from market forces and unplanned and incongruous developments. In this it attempts to secure the cooperation of the landowners, the neighbouring population, the donors and the concerned administrative departments
at the local, state and central level. This activity complements the attempts at appropriate development of the Auroville bio-region.

**LAND CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE**

During the year, Auroville purchased 2.99 ha (7.40 acres) of land while 2.40 ha (5.91 acres) were secured within Auroville through exchange with land outside the Master Plan area. Of the 5.38 ha (13.31 acres), 4.80 ha (11.86 acres) are in the Green Belt area and 0.59 ha (1.45 acres) in the City area. Rs. 46,73,000 were received as donations from the friends of Auroville and the Residents for purchasing land.

**LAND & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The year under report saw regular activities such as fencing, bunding, planting, wood cutting/selling and leasing of cashew fields, etc. After the last year’s cyclone a cooperative known as “Wood Coop” was formed for the gathering, processing and selling the surplus wood. Its income is deposited in Auroville Unity Fund.

Concerted efforts were made to identify the outlying lands that belong to the Foundation but are being used, without authority, by people from adjacent villages. The efforts are on to protect these valuable assets from being encroached upon.

**LAND RECORDS**

The documents, numbering 1,784, relating to the lands purchased and exchanged in several villages were with the Land Resources Management Committee (formerly known as Land & Estates Management Committee) Since October 2007, the Foundation has appointed, on contract basis, a superannuated officer of the Tamil Nadu State Revenue Department as Special Officer (Lands) for verifying and maintaining the land records in its office. As all the land vests in the Foundation, the Land Consolidation Committee (LCC) and Land & Resource Management Committee (LRM) have been instructed to hand over all land related documents to him for record.

Till 31st March 2009, the Special Officer (Lands) has collected 900 documents, out of 1,784, from the LRM, verified them and kept them in his custody in the Foundation’s office. He is also attending to the task related to the transfer of land title in the name of Auroville Foundation in the land title deeds (“patta”). The mutation in the State’s land records as also in 188 pattas have been done till 31st March 2009.

**(B) HOUSING FOR RESIDENTS**
During 2008-09, the Housing Service’s workload has significantly increased because of the successful launching of a number of new housing projects. There are 9 ongoing projects. The number of new housing units that these projects are offering is upwards of 120. The new development has generated more donations to provide housing for the newcomers and the residents who wish to shift to new or better locations. As a result, Housing Service has shown a steady growth in the number of requests for information, evaluations and housing asset transfers from all over Auroville, as well as loan and grant requests.

**DEVELOPMENT**: 15 new “apartment style” housing units are under construction in the “Inspiration” project with the help from the Government grant. Three units for housing newcomers are being built in two other housing projects with funds of the Housing Service. A new youth project that comprises 6 “flat style” units has been started.

**MAINTENANCE**: During the year, Rs.10.25 lakhs (1.025 million) was spent on maintenance of residential structures that benefited 71 residents.

**(C) OTHER RESOURCES**

**AUROVILLE FARM GROUP**

Auroville Farm Group is promoting organic farming. It farms a total of 108.27 ha (268 acres) of land of which 34.34 ha (85 acres) have irrigation facility. The remaining land has forest, plantation (cashew), dry land cropping and buildings. The Farm Group’s assets are valued at Rs. 1.1492 crore (11.492 million) and has 75 employees. Its goals are: Increased production through capacity building and targeted investment; improved distribution and transparent accounts/data management. The experts in tropical farming and animal husbandry have carried out studies and their findings form the basis of its activities.

Despite severe weather conditions, the production of organically grown food had increased by nearly 8% over the previous year’s output. During the year, it produced 53 metric tons (mt) of fruits, 41 mt of vegetables, 21 mt of field crops, 1, 00, 000 litres of milk and 1, 52, 000 eggs. The entire produce was valued at around Rs. 52.40 lakhs (5.240 million) The value of farm processed goods increased from Rs 7.86 lakhs (0.786 million) to Rs. 8.34 lakhs (0.834 million) during the year. Food distributing unit, “Foodlink”, extended its activities to include the distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables. The total goods distributed were valued at slightly more than Rs. 2. 50 lakhs (0.250 million). The investment during the year amounted to Rs. 19 lakhs (1.9 million).

It continued to refine its accounting system and all farms are now maintaining the required books of accounts. A web-based open source was designed, capable of maintaining full field and crop agronomic and financial records. The software program is now producing detailed reporting of the cost of all inputs including labour and crop margins.
• **Annapurana Farm**: A bore-well and electrical connections were installed at Annapurna Farm to enable it to have a second irrigated crop. The farm is also upgrading its milling and cheese-making facilities.

• **Service Farm**: invested in fencing, land clearance and irrigation to secure the farm and increase its productivity. 1.212 hectares (3 acres) of extra land were brought under cultivation (peanuts, watermelon).

• **Ayarpadi Farm**: Water supply was improved; fencing and crop-drying facilities were provided. The latter facility will be used by other Auroville farms in the area.

• **AuroOrchard**: A poultry farm was set up to increase poultry stock by 600 birds that will be housed in three other farms.

• **Buddha Gardens**: This farm expanded and improved its agricultural education and research facilities, and increased the number of courses on sustainable farming. Rs. 50,000 was spent on its expansion.

**AUROVILLE FOREST GROUP**

The Forest Group’s activities include all aspects of forestry, soil and water conservation, growing seedlings, plantation work and forest development with diversification of species. Its secretariat keeps accounts of the group’s finances, facilitates monthly meetings and reports activities to the community.

The group manages approximately 545.4 ha (1350 acres) of land in the Greenbelt and City area, divided into 45 stewardships of various sizes. Each plot is managed by a resident land steward whose responsibility is to protect and develop the forest area. These stewards are helped by 64 permanent employees. Apart from the income from the sale of dead trees (timber), the maintenance work does not produce much income and is very labour intensive.

Due to a severe cyclonic storm during the year under report, a large number of trees were uprooted. Working with other community members and extra hired labour, many plots, roads and paths were cleared as efficiently and quickly as possible.

New bunds (embankments) and an earth dam were built in Ravena Forest, and water harvesting system was extensively improved in Sadhana Forest. Given the harsh weather conditions, the previous year’s seedlings were intensively irrigated to ensure their survival.

During the year 28,000 saplings of around 140 different species of trees, shrubs and lianas, grown by the Forest Group members in their own nurseries, were planted in 25 different locations. The donations for it came from the Stichting De Zaaier, the Auroville Carbon Neutral initiative and the Forest Fund, a group fund created with 10% of forest income and personal donations.
AUROVILLE GREEN GROUP

The Green Group oversees all greening work done by the farm and forest groups within Auroville. A coordinator assisted by a secretary manages the tasks of the group that includes providing environment related inputs to the township’s development. It also helps to integrate green initiatives within various projects. An important aspect of its work is creating awareness about environmental conservation. For this purpose, it runs a series of training programmes for youth and others. These groups are increasingly facing problems relating to their development and economy.

The Green Group is developing models for conflict resolution between workers, communities and institutions as also improving the conditions of workers and providing them social protection. It also helps the farm and forest groups in mobilising resources. Through its website, it disseminates the information about the work done by individuals and green communities that helps to create a reference site for information. It also encourages every resident to get involved in greening work.

THE PALMYRA CENTRE

The Palmyra Centre for Ecological Land-use, Water Management and Rural Development was founded in 1990 and comes within the purview of Auroville Green Group. However, as its projects are mainly focused on promotion of sustainable land use and developments in rural area, these are discussed in Section 8 on “Rural Development Activities”.

The Union Ministry of Water Resources has awarded the Palmyra Centre the National Award for Water and Ground Water Augmentation for 2008 because of its innovative practices of ground water augmentation. The Prime Minister will give away the award in 2009.

AUROVILLE WATER HARVEST

Auroville Water Harvest unit (under Centre for Scientific Research Trust) focuses on water research and implements water projects. Its objective is to understand the correlation of water users’ behaviour patterns with that of the availability of water. It also promotes economy in water use, re-use of water and improving water quality in order to ensure sustainable availability of safe drinking water in future. Some of its activities include rainfall monitoring, water run-off analysis, water percolation tests, and water recharge studies, groundwater modelling and water quality tests in the Auroville bio-region. Its activities are mostly village-centred and are discussed in Section 8 “Rural Development Activities”.

6. AUROVILLE’S RESIDENTS
(A) AUROVILLE ENTRY SERVICE

The Entry Service (ES) helps the newcomers to Auroville to settle down and take on tasks of their choice. In December 2006, the Residents Assembly elected a 7-member team comprising French (2), Indian (3), American (1) and German (1) residents to run the ES. Its main problem is the lack of adequate housing for Newcomers as well as placement facilities for them in service and commercial units. There is also the lack of active response from the resident community. In December 2008 several of its members resigned. The Residents’ Assembly was called upon to sort out the problem.

(B) RESIDENTS’ SERVICE

The task of Residents Service (RS) is to (1) register new Residents for visa ‘X’; (2) help non-Indian residents for renewal of their visa; applications for the renewal of their visa; (3) update the list of all the residents; and (4) coordinates the compilation of necessary documents of the guest houses in Auroville for transmission to the immigration authorities. It also issues certificates of residence and provides information about Visa renewal and related matters. During the year under report, a Residents data base is under creation.

As on 31st March 2009, Auroville’s total population is 2095 persons from 43 nations. Of these, 858 are adult males and 778 are adult females together with 459 minors (below 18 years of age). The details of residents including minors are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>ALGERIA</td>
<td>ALGERIAN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>AMERICAN</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>ARGENTANIA</td>
<td>ARGENTINIAN</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>AUSTRALIAN</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>AUSTRIA</td>
<td>AUSTRIAN</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>BELGIUM</td>
<td>BELGIAN</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>BELORUSSIA</td>
<td>BELORUSIANS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>BRAZILIAN</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td>BRITISH</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>BULGARIA</td>
<td>BULGARIAN</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>CANADIAN</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>CHINESE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>COMLOMBO</td>
<td>COLOMBIAN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>DENMARK</td>
<td>DANISH</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>HOLAND</td>
<td>DUTCH</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>ETHIOPIA</td>
<td>ETHIOPIAN</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td>FRENCH</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>GERMAN</td>
<td>GERMAN</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>HUNGARY</td>
<td>HUNGARIAN</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>ICELAND</td>
<td>ICELANDISH</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>INDIA</td>
<td>INDIAN</td>
<td>897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>IRELAND</td>
<td>IRISH</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>ISRAEL</td>
<td>ISRAELI</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>ITALY</td>
<td>ITALIAN</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>JAPAN</td>
<td>JAPANESE</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>KAZAKHSTAN</td>
<td>KAZAK</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>KOREA</td>
<td>KOREAN</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>LATVIA</td>
<td>LATVIAN</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>LITHUANIA</td>
<td>LITHUANIAN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>MOLDOVA</td>
<td>MOLDOVIAN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>NEPAL</td>
<td>NEPALI</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>NEW ZEALAND</td>
<td>NEW ZEALANDER</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>NORWAY</td>
<td>NORWEGIAN</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>RUSSIA</td>
<td>RUSSIAN</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>SLOVEN</td>
<td>SLOVENE</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>SOUTH AFRICA</td>
<td>SOUTH AFRICAN</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>SPAIN</td>
<td>SPANISH</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>SRI LANKA</td>
<td>SRI LANKAN</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>SWEDEN</td>
<td>SWEDISH</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>SWITZERLAND</td>
<td>SWISS</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>THAILAND</td>
<td>THAI</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>TIBETAN</td>
<td>TIBETAN</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>UKRAIN</td>
<td>UKRAINIAN</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>2095</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Among the major thrust areas of Auroville’s activities is educational research and development, which is under overall direction and coordination of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER). SAIIER uses its educational institutions within Auroville as a living laboratory for researching and developing a new paradigm of education that will underpin the new world order that will help to realise the ideal of human unity based on Integral Yoga

(A) SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Sri Aurobindo International Institute for Educational Research (SAIIER) coordinates educational activities and undertakes educational research to give practical shape to the vision of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. Currently there are some 190 researchers working in autonomous research units on new forms of education, fine arts, village work, sports and research in Indian Culture.

SAIIER runs two different types of educational institutions. One comprises those institutions that act as its outreach in Auroville’s hinterland to provide educational facilities to those who are economically challenged. These “Outreach Schools” shape the contents of their educational offerings to suit the socio-cultural matrix and economic profile of the target rural population. The activities of these schools are discussed in Section 8 “Rural Development Activities”. The other type of institutions acts as living laboratories for the ongoing experiment in evolving a new paradigm of education. The activities of these schools are discussed hereinafter.

- **The Future School**: A new inter-disciplinary course was offered to eight students on religion and spirituality, tourism and economics, history and geography, and statistics.

- **The Last School**: A group of students and teachers went trekking in the high reaches of the Himalayas. Students of 5-year standing did a project expressing their perceptions of five years they have spent in the school.

- **The Transition School** (age group: 6-15)) has now about 170 students from about 24 different countries, with 15 to 20 children in each group. The lessons range from arts to computer skills, with an emphasis on “Awareness through the Body”.

- **Deepanam School** (age group: 7 to14). They are grouped according to their age and maturity with a welcome group for the new guest students. This year it followed a US program that promotes cultural understanding. Excursions were organised within and around Auroville to familiarised students with rural setting. They were encouraged to manage vegetable gardens and rear domestic animals.

- **Kindergarten** (age group: 4-6), divided in two groups had special weeks with a ‘building’ project. The children were brought in contact with natural materials, given tools to express their creativity.
- **Nandanam Kindergarten** (age group: 5-6) children worked on a vegetable garden and did a circus performance, increasing their capacity for working together.

- **Auroville Pre-Crèche** (age group: 1-2) explored physical activities and spent more time with nature. The Baby’s Group (up to 1 year) gathered twice a week.

- **Asset Centre** held an exhibition on the theme of “Transport: Evolution & New Discoveries”.

### (B) CENTRE OF STUDIES IN SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

#### 1. SAVITRI BHAVAN:

Savitri Bhavan has been created as a centre of education offering all kinds of activities and materials which help to develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of “Savitri”, Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem.

- **Outreach Programmes** comprise regular activities, special events, exhibitions, and assistance to researchers. These programmes have been enriched with the addition of several new courses: Savitri Study in Tamil, The Mother’s Recorded Talks, as well as a Sanskrit Grammar class.

- **Learning Materials Preparation and Acquisition:** (1) More than 300 hours of audio recording, and 60 video films have been prepared and added to the collection during 2008-09. 142 books and issues of 24 journals were added to our specialist collection; (2) Two issues of Invocation: Study Notes on Savitri in English and Three issues of Prarthana, in Tamil had been published and distributed; (3) Updated and enlarged edition of pamphlet “Towards a Bibliography of Sri Aurobindo’s Savitri” was brought out; and (4) Reprint of the English version of the pamphlet “Auroville, Integral Yoga and the Future of Mankind” by Sraddhalu Ranade was also produced.

- **Research Projects & Researchers:** The major research projects pursued during the year were: (1) preparing a comprehensive bibliography of Sri Aurobindo’s Savitri; (2) Cultivating Concentration; (3) Vedic Hymns Translation and Hymns to the Mystic Fire; (4) English and German translations of Rig-Veda X.10; (5) The Colloquy of the Divine Twins, Yami and Yama and Rig Veda X.17.1-2; and (6) The Descent of the Divine Word into the Inconscient Darkness for the Evolution of Consciousness.

Three Indian researchers from Gujarat, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu were provided assistance in their research on Savitri to fulfil their requirements for Ph D degree. They were supplied appropriate publications, as well as the material available in Savitri Bhavan, and the details of resource persons competent to provide guidance.

- **Publications:** The English language journal “Invocation: Study Notes on Savitri” has a mailing list of 2,000 addresses in 46 countries. The journal in Tamil,
“Prarthana” has a mailing list of 800 addresses covering the entire State. Besides these journals, the Savitri Bhavan brings out other publications.

2. **HOUSE OF MOTHER’S AGENDA:**

Sources and corresponding recordings have been identified for about half of the English texts in the “Notebook on Evolution”, and a text based on transcriptions of the recordings has been prepared. These texts give a picture of the Mother’s *sadhana* over her last 16 years in the body. The aim is to make them more accessible in the form of audio recordings and accompanying booklets to aid a deeper understanding of the vision and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

200 pages of material have been collected from *Savitri*, other works of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother, as well as relevant literature in yogic and Vedantic knowledge. A differentiation of terms denoting joy, *ananda*, pleasure etc. has been written, as well as a definition of the place of joy in a philosophical and practical system of life.

(C) **LABORATORY OF EVOLUTION:**

This unit carried out researches mainly on the following three projects during the year.

- **Unending Education**: It is research on integral development and spiritual education. Workshops on “To live the Integral Evolution” and “An Integral Approach of the Being” have been conducted. An article on "An education to applied wisdom" has been published.

- **Yoga, Consciousness in Matter and Evolution**: This research work has been done with groups of children at Deepanam School in Auroville. Courses on Yoga, Consciousness in Matter and Evolution have been conducted. Stories for children were created for visualisation. Educational materials for children, parents and teachers on spiritual education were published.

- **Auroville Agenda**: This is a long-term project. Two volumes, totalling 650 pages, have been prepared and are available in Auroville Archives. Others have been interviewed and the third volume is in the making.

Two books have been published: (1) “The Adventure of the Nine”: Children’s questions on life and death are answered through 10 animated stories; and (2) “Travel of the Psychic Being”: Journey of the psychic being in different incarnations is presented through 12 small pictorial stories.

(D) **CENTRE OF EAST, WEST AND HUMAN UNITY**

- **Unity Pavilion**: The Unity Pavilion functions as a meeting place for the Pavilion groups, the International Zone group, the University of Human Unity and
other Auroville working groups. It also provides office space to some Pavilion groups, Auroville International, CIRHU (Centre for International Research in Human Unity) and AVIS (Auroville Volunteer, Internship and Study) programs. The Russian bells are housed in Unity Pavilion and twice a week Bell sessions are held. Construction has started on the Hall of Peace.

- **Mitra Students Hostel**: The hostel provides housing primarily for students undergoing a course of study in Auroville in any of the centres of SAIIER or other centres of study recognised by SAIIER. It hosts students and volunteers from a wide range of countries and states, thus helping to maintain Auroville’s international characters.

- **Kailash Residency**: Kailash is an educational residency for Auroville youth from the age of 16 to 21 who undergo skills development under the guidance and supervision of a teacher. At the end of last year 4 residents went abroad to finish their studies. Only one new member applied to join. Because of the acute shortage of accommodation in Auroville, it was decided to accommodate an adult German civil servant in Kailash as a special case.

(E) **CENTRE FOR ART, CRAFTS & TECHNOLOGY**

The activities of the units under this Centre, which mainly relate to performing and fine arts, etc., are discussed under Section 8 Arts & Cultural Activities. One unit, ‘Blue Light’ deals with computers services including training and is discussed here under.

- **Blue Light**: Its aim is to provide Auroville with a safe computer environment based on Open Source software solutions and to build a support team. 45 services and working groups were interviewed to obtain current computer related details and the overview of the future needs. Approximately 218 hours of training were provided with educational materials used in Internet classes, workshops in shell scripting and networking, and seminars in the use of Auroville Wikipedia. It helped to increase computer literacy for 118 residents. Research including investigation and testing have been done in backup solutions, thin client networks, and groupware options. Assessment of 6 services ready to migrate from proprietary software over to Open Source installations has been done. Migration of 1 service has been completed and 3 services are in process.

(F) **CENTRE OF MAN, NATURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

- **Auroville Botanical Garden**: Auroville Botanical Garden team is engaged in environmental education to raise children’s awareness of the environment around them and to develop their aspiration to help solve environmental problems like biodiversity conservation, global warming, recycling, and deforestation.
Groups of school children are invited to visit the Botanical Garden for a day-long programme. The programme packages are designed for different groups to awaken their interest in a range of environmental issues including local flora and fauna.

Slide shows, video shows, puppet shows, drama, art, storytelling, nature walk, group discussion, project method and different hands-on activities were used to generate a ‘clean and green consciousness’ among students. Awareness programmes were launched for school children to address the issues of biodiversity conservation and local environmental issues.

2800 students have participated in Environment Education Programme during the year. As a result many children have started using the cloth bags instead of plastic bags for shopping. More and more students have joined in Eco Clubs and got involved in open-orientation programs in schools and public areas.

Botanical Garden established 9 gardens at local student’s homes in Edyanchavady Village last year. The inputs and ideas were given to the students for maintaining the gardens this year. The gardens contain a range of medicinal plants and herbs. This project inspired local people to revive the traditional knowledge on medicinal plants and to lead a healthy lifestyle.

A 3-day Young Healers Training Programme was conducted at Edyanchavady for the Eco Club students. 24 students participated and learned the importance of the medicinal plants in local villages, identification of the plants. All the students had hands on experience on preparation of medicine for cough, cold, fever, health drink.

Approximately 250 people have benefited from eight 1-day workshops on “global warming” to create awareness among the federations of women’s groups and men’s groups. The teachers of teachers training colleges in Puducherry and Villupuram district (Tamil Nadu) also benefited from these workshops.

The activities like discussion, question-and-answer sessions, issues-oriented group discussions, PowerPoint presentations and film shows on global warming (“An Inconvenient Truth”), and feedback sessions were conducted from time to time during the year. As a result the participants became motivated to protect the Mother Earth by simplifying their style of living. Some of the teachers became Green teachers in their schools and initiated plantation programme, formed Eco Clubs, organized awareness programme and competitions on global warming issue among their school children and teachers.

(G) CENTRE OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- ‘Dehashakti’ School of Physical Education: It is an overall physical education program for Auroville students from the age 7 up to 18 years. The school year is divided into four phases with emphasis on different skills and training. In Phase 1: the focus is on general fitness and development of basic skills in team sports and gymnastics. Phase 2 includes Athletics. In this phase the athletes train for
individual activities and culminate with Athletics-Aurolympics which includes a series of athletics competition. Phase 3 comprises Team Aurolympics. All children are evaluated on the basis of their ability to participate in their teams and motivate each other to help the team. Phase 4 consists of team coaching camps: It is held towards the end of the school year where children are given the opportunity to choose activities like basketball, football, softball, gymnastics, table tennis and volleyball.

- **Auroville Sports Resource Centre**: The overall goal of this centre is to motivate adult population to participate in games and sports activities. The sports activities organised include Badminton, Basketball, Kabaddi and Volleyball. All these sports proved very successful in providing opportunities to take to such sports activities.

The tournaments were organized in both league and knock-out formats at the Centre. There were 44 participating teams in these tournaments. A Volleyball tournament was organized at New Creation Sports Ground in the month of February 2009.

The Centre’s outputs included a DVD produced on the Kabaddi Tournament, Auroville Mini and Youth teams’ performance in Puducherry School Basketball Tournament, a basketball exhibition match between Auroville girls’ team and Villupuram District Girls Sports College team and Auroville basketball league tournament. ‘About 700’ people participated in the 3-week badminton coaching program and a 1-week volleyball coaching program.

- **Pitanga**: Pitanga’s activities are directed to developing physical education and culture activities in the light of The Mother’s and Sri Aurobindo’s Yoga. Up to 65 classes per week and 11 different therapies were offered as regular program by 30 Residents who form the team of regular teachers and therapists. Its activities are as below:

  Its activities include regular weekly sessions on *yogic asanas* for different age groups and others, and teaching of *pranayama* (art of breathing technique). Odissi Dance for children, teenagers and adults, Ballet Dance for children; Feldenkreis Exercises; Aikido for beginners, advanced, children; Tai Chi Circle are part of the regular activities. Classes are attended by 10-20 participants each.

  Workshops aim at teaching the students in a short but intensive period of time an exercise or technique, allowing him/her to progress much faster than in the rhythm of classroom. It also allows a much deeper mastering of techniques. During the year, 20 workshops were conducted on *Pranayama*, Theatre, Yoga Practice for Teachers, Yoga, Family Constellation, Health Therapy, Sacred Sounds, Therapeutic, Intensive Yoga Teachers’ Training; *Kundalini Yoga*, Tai Chi Qi Gong, and on “Exploration of *Pancha Tatvas*, the five elements” through asanas, *pranayama*, relaxation, meditation and body awareness. Each workshop was attended by 10 – 35 participants.

  Health care activities included AUM Massage, Breema® Bodywork, Crystal & *Pranic* Healing, Inner Body Exploration, Physiotherapy, Psychotherapy with Tarot,
Reflexology, Reiki, Swedish Massage, Thai Yoga Massage, Therapeutic sessions. 11 different therapeutic facilities were offered. A Homeopathic Dispensary Service was also made available.

Cultural Education was regularly provided to children and adults in Japanese Art & Calligraphy; Choir Singing; Playing of piano and other musical instruments; Dancing and Theatre. 11 music classes; 3 theatre classes, 2 art classes, various regular dance rehearsals for children and adults were held during the year. 9 evening performances and 8 exhibitions were also organised in addition to the above.

(H) AUROVILLE LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

The Charter given to Auroville by the Mother says that it will be a “place of unending education”. Therefore, what Auroville aims to evolve into is a “knowledge society”. In such a set up, a library with an eclectic collection of books from all over the world on a diversity of subjects should be developed as a prime resource centre. The Auroville Library was set up in 1975 with that aim in view. And, since then, it has been striving to contribute to the realisation of Auroville’s aims. At present, it has a collection of 26,692 volumes and documents in 8 languages including Indian languages on subjects ranging from philosophy, spirituality, religion, languages, arts, literature, history, etc. On an average it adds around 2,500 books every year to its collection. However, it is severely handicapped in fully serving the community and meeting its needs as its existing resources and facilities need radical improvement. Its first requirement is a proper building to house and preserve its valuable collection of volumes. Keeping this need in view, the Governing Board, on the recommendations of the Working Committee, had recommended to the Central Government a proposal to construct, with the assistance from the Government’s Plan funds, a modern and modular building to house the Library as well as the Archives. The Central Government having approved the project, the preliminary work on it has started.

Auroville Archives was established in 1992 to collect and preserve for posterity the documents relating to the growth and development of Auroville. During 2008-09, 6000 paper documents relating to planning of Auroville at the early stages were scanned and catalogued on DVDs and. 20 Umatic tapes (video) were converted onto DVD tapes. The scanned documents and converted video recordings are in digital form.

(I) AUROVILLE LANGUAGE LABORATORY

Auroville Language Laboratory including the Tomatis Research Centre promotes the teaching of various languages by means of attracting teachers and offering improved learning methods.

During the year under report, 340 students comprising Residents and Newcomers (110), guests (184), Auroville workers and local students attended its programmes. These students were from about 18 countries and attended the sessions on English, French, Sanskrit, Tamil, Hindi, German, Japanese, Spanish, and Italian languages.
Besides, private classes in various languages were also organised. It offered multiple intensive 2-week courses in English and Tamil. A specialized database was created to follow students more closely. Much progress was made in streamlining the Mediatheque computer networks, digital audio editing, internet research, etc. In the technical realm, it completed the work on a software game program to help students learn Tamil alphabets. The Mediatheque now offers 26 Indian and world languages.

At the Tomatis Research Centre, 34 people attended the programs out of which 12 people followed language programs and 22 took therapeutic programs. New materials were created for a language integration program in Brazilian Portuguese and the Centre is now capable of making similar programmes for any language, particularly in Tamil. The Centre participated in the World Tomatis Congress in Belgium in 2007. Thereafter, it took the initiative to network with global Tomatis practitioners and the centres elsewhere in the world and the networking process continues to the benefit of the Centre.

The Tomatis Research Centre rented a building on a five year lease and renovated it to make it suitable for the special needs of its programs such as the night therapy programs for autistic children and others with disabilities. Persons with many different problems have started coming from different parts of the country to benefit from the Centre’s Tomatis Listening Program. Within Auroville, also the work with Residents on therapeutic programs for self-development and opening potential has been very interesting and rewarding.

Auroville Language Laboratory and its adjunct, the Tomatis Research Centre, are gravely handicapped in their activities because of the lack of suitable accommodation. Its specialised offerings have special needs in terms of infrastructure without which the maximum potential of the learning offerings cannot be realised. With proper building and equipment, Auroville Language Laboratory has the potential of becoming the ‘centre of excellence’ in the field of language teaching and improving skills of those who are challenged by different disabilities. The Central Government needs to focus on building upon the available expertise of Auroville Language Laboratory for the benefit of those are challenged by disabilities and tend to remain a burden on the society.

8. RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Auroville is an island surrounded by on all sides by villages populated by families that are mostly landless labour, largely illiterate or semi-literate and poverty-stricken. Auroville’s residents are deeply concerned over the social and economic deprivation that afflicts the people of the surrounding villages. Many units under the Foundation have undertaken various projects aimed at improving the villagers’ lots. The major thrust areas of action are: (1) education; (2) girl child education and women’s empowerment; (3) agricultural development; (4) soil and water conservation; (5) provision of safe drinking water; and (6) public health and health care. The following paragraphs outline the village centred activities in brief:
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

OUTREACH SCHOOLS: SAIIER’s outreach to the surrounding villages in providing educational facilities for village children, youth and women are through the Outreach Schools and Centres. Their activities are discussed below,

- **New Era Secondary School** teachers of science, economics, history and English worked closely on interdisciplinary projects in January and February 2008 with a visiting graduate student from the University of Washington.

- **New Creation Bilingual School** has more than 200 children of all ages. They visited historical places in India in connection with their projects. They also worked in their newly created organic vegetable gardens. 13 outgoing children of 8th grade, who took Tamil Nadu State Board examination, passed with 60% or more marks.

- **Tamil Ulagam Evening Schools**: Eleven Tamil Ulagam Evening Schools are a joint collaborative project of the Secours Populaire France, Les Enfants De Pondy Patch and Auroville Outreach Schools of SAIIER. This project is a village oriented educational project. It has a student magazine edited by students themselves and circulated to all the students of Tamil Ulagam schools and the nearby government schools. It has inspired many schools to start their own school newsletters. All the students visited the Children’s Book Fair and the Puppet Show at Kalakendra and Multimedia Centre. Clay and crafts work, *yogasanas*, kitchen garden work are part of their regular activities. A students’ study circle has been started this year.

- **Isai Ambalam School**: During the year, different learning programmes for each of the 126 students were prepared and implemented. These programmes contained (1) basic knowledge appropriate to the age and level of understanding, (2) knowledge or skills for which child had inclination, aptitude or special talent, (3) basic psychological life skills, (4) other skills or knowledge the child wants to acquire. The teachers are increasingly acquiring proficiency the art of teaching. The school’s faculty has been experimenting with various learning evaluation formats to determine the most appropriate one.

  A campaign was launched in January 2009 to impart a vocabulary of a minimum of 1000 English words to preschool and primary students. This effort first focused on enabling them to learn the meaning of those words and then on reading them. This effort was pursued using a comprehensive and thematic approach. Students evinced great interest in learning the words and 20 children had learnt the meaning of 300 English words in 6 months.

- **Auroville Child Development Social Research Centre**: It provides boarding, lodging, integral education and vocational training to under-privileged children from neighbouring villages whose parents are unable to provide minimum facilities to them for their growth. Its all-round education programme helped the children to becoming good and responsible human beings. The Centre is also working as a welfare centre establishing cordial relations with local communities and mainstreaming the under-privileged children.
- **Arulvazhi Education Centre**: An atmosphere of simplicity, beauty, joy and harmony is being created at this centre and freedom is given to children to grow naturally. A summer camp was organized in May 2008 for 45 children on the theme “From Near to Far - A learning process”. In June 2008, the children went on educational tours to various places of historic interest. The group of 50 children took daily classes in yogic asanas.

- **Ilaignarkal Education Centre**: It serves as a bridge between Auroville Township and its neighbourhood through educational programmes. A monthly Tamil newsletter ‘Auroville Grama Seydhi Madal’ is published and circulated regularly. Nialamutram, moonlight monthly gatherings were conducted inviting academicians, social workers, community organisers and writers at different places. A cultural exchange group from Taipei (Taiwan) visited the school and had a session on Indian culture. The staff and students organised a 1-day workshop for National Children’s Festival at Bharat Nivas in collaboration with the Tamil Heritage Centre, Auroville Foundation and SAIIER. 1500 children from different states of India participated in the festival.

The Centre conducted personality development course for taxi drivers and household women workers of Auroville during July and November 2008 respectively. Sacred cooking recipes were tested, displayed and distributed.

**(B) GIRL CHILD EDUCATION & WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

- **Life Education Centre**: Its aim is to provide access to value-oriented education and vocational training for disadvantaged village teenage girls, and to improve their socio-economic conditions through capacity building and personal empowerment. It consists of a 2-year training programme for teenage girls, who have dropped out of school. They are trained in functional skills like Mathematics, English and Tamil, and vocational skills like tailoring, crochet knitting, typing and the use of computers, and social awareness and human interactive skills using group discussions, personal counselling, diary writing, study tours, and culture-related open sessions.

- **Children with Special Needs**: During the year, it had extended its activities to include part-time students along with regular students. These include children with special needs as part-time students, girls who need to come for 3-4 months during the year between their regular education, the old students and the mothers of old students.

- **Core-Quality Empowerment and Mothers & Daughters Project**: In poor, rural south Indian society, young women have very little control over their lives or their future. Mothers raise their children to believe that sexes are not equal because that is what society has taught them. It often leads to many forms of abuse of women by women. First, the students of Life Education Centre participate in group discussions about their relationships with their mothers. After such interactions, mothers and daughters meet to discuss subjects like education, home life, and such deeper topics as gender discrimination and abuse.
• **Counselling Sessions**: More than 250 individual counselling sessions were held. This year more old students had come back to the Centre for receiving counselling. Often it relates to the problem created by alcoholic husbands or other marital problems. Besides these counselling sessions, more than 40 counselling sessions were held for old students and the mothers of old students.

(C) **RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES**

The units overseen by the Auroville Green Group, Auroville Farm Group, Auroville Forest Group and Auroville Health Service focus their projects and activities mostly on the villages surrounding Auroville. Their areas of activities include wasteland development, organic farming, irrigation systems, safe drinking water supply, village women’s empowerment, etc.

**THE PALMYRA CENTRE**

Palmyra Centre for Ecological Land-use, Water Management and Rural Development was founded in 1990. Its objectives are to promote sustainable land use as well as rural development. It achieves its objectives through the use of local resources and traditional knowledge as well as through judicious use of new technologies. It is active mostly in the Kalivelli/Auroville Bioregion and networks with different sections and groups of local people including those in Auroville.

Currently, the Palmyra Centre is executing the following projects:

• **Integrated Wasteland Development Programme** (since March 2002) with the Government of India grant of Rs. 208 lakhs (20.8 million); (1) runs 31 training programs on various aspects, from agriculture to cattle raising, covering 2316 beneficiaries; and (2) organised ten exposure visits for 335 beneficiaries to watershed areas in India. It completed infrastructure improvement at a cost of Rs. 7.20 lakhs (0.72 million)

• **Farmers Participatory Action Research Programme** (since Nov. 2007) with a grant of Rs. 30 lakhs (3 million) from the Central Government for improving irrigation (sprinkler/drip) system and increasing crop yield using eco-friendly fertilisers. It has resulted in 37% of water saving with 30% increase in crop yield.

• **Irrigation & Women’s Project**: A combined project for irrigation and women groups (since June 2008) with a grant of Rs. 23.25 lakhs (2.325 million) from Canadian High Commission in India is being implemented in Koyalamedu village in Vanur Taluk (Tamil Nadu).

• **Educational Support Project**: A project started in 1995, with an average funding of Rs.20 lakhs (2 million) per year from DIK/OIK in Germany, supports educational institutions and sports/health services in the villages.

• **Safe Drinking Water Project** was started in 2005 with Rs 16 lakhs (1.6 million) annual grant from Avalokita of Netherlands to prevent water contamination.
• **Women’s Self-Help Group:** Every member of the Palmyra Women SHG (Self Help Groups) Federation, spread out in different villages, has contributed Rs.1000 to the corpus of their respective SHG, which has led to improving their financial health.

**AUROVILLE WATER HARVESTING**

AWH has induced more than 200 farmers to change from the conventional ways of agriculture (one crop a year, chemical fertilizer/pesticides and intensive water usage) to organic ways (more crops, use of organic fertilizers/pesticides and less water usage). The associations of women and farmers are supporting this exercise.

Pond rehabilitation is important for harvesting rainwater and distributing it. Three ponds were rebuilt during the period under report and a few canals were constructed. An important side effect of this is fish cultivation. Recharge ponds were constructed in areas with heavy groundwater exploitation to off-set the depletion of aquifers.

During 2008-09, AWH installed drinking water systems in two villages. In Sanjeevnagar, overhead tanks were built with water being treated on the spot and distributed. In Kottakarai, piped water distribution system was laid along its main streets. The local women are managing both the systems and the beneficiaries are paying for the water.

It has set up solid waste management system in most of the villages around Auroville. The women’s’ associations collect solid waste, separate and process it into usable substances or compost. Ecosan (ecologically sanitary) toilets have been installed for efficient water use and compost productions.

**AUROVILLE HEALTH SERVICES**

During 2008-09, Auroville Health Services provided hygiene and food education/monitoring in over forty Auroville schools, food processing units, restaurants and guest houses. It gave health and hygiene education in schools and introduced a new low-cost water filter through women’s groups in ten villages, providing awareness about water quality and illnesses from drinking unsafe water. It produced an information brochure on the importance of clean water and sanitation. It conducted a survey, with the help of students of The New Era School, on treatment of drinking water, sanitation and related health issues in Edayanchavady village.

A primary health care program started in 1992 is implemented through female village health worker selected from each village. After training, they are made responsible for 400 to 500 families each. The components of this program are:

1. Antenatal clinics in twelve villages with free laboratory tests, medication, diet advice and immunization for babies.
2. Clinics in seven villages with weekly doctors' consultations, basic lab tests and afternoon wound dressing.
3. Free medicines for the patients treated at all the sub-centres.
4. First aid and wound dressing in each village and 24 hour ambulance on call.
5. Health education and child-to-child programs in sixteen primary schools, where children are taught, through charts and games, to examine each other for common diseases and think of preventive measures. A yearly medical check of the children is also done in these schools.

AUROVILLE DENTAL CENTRE

Auroville Dental Centre with a budget of Rs. 8.42 lakhs (0.842 million) runs a rural action aimed at reducing the need for dental care in Auroville and its surrounding bio-region, with a population of 25,000. Its team of four, supplemented by sixteen non-residents, is located at a clinic in the Auroville Health Centre. Its subunit - Dental Rural Programme - treats patients in the surrounding villages and promotes awareness, prevention and basic dental care in rural areas.

This clinic treats 2,225 patients yearly and provides check-ups, basic treatment and education at government and private schools for 2,800 children. It runs eleven sub-centres in the surrounding villages with a staff of fourteen. House visits by health workers are carried out to motivate the population to participate in dental health insurance.

In 2003, each checked child had on an average 4 caries in his/her teeth. In 2008 the ratio has gone down to 1.2 caries. Village leaders and women groups react positively to its efforts to improve the quality of their lives.

9. ART & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

(A) BHARAT NIVAS: THE PAVILION OF INDIA

Bharat Nivas or the Pavilion of India has four subunits, viz., Sri Aurobindo Auditorium, Centre for Indian Studies, Kalakendra and Tamil Heritage Centre.

1. SRI AUROBINDO AUDITORIUM

During the year, the group ‘Kalai’ has been coordinating and hosting a series of cultural performances at the Auditorium primarily by artistes from outside. The performances included classical Indian music and Indian instrumental music, Western music and music concert, etc. A major event was the 3-day “Kabir Festival” organised by a Bangaluru-based NGO, “Shrishti” under the aegis of its Kabir Project. The festival comprised screening of 4 films on Kabir and 3 live concerts by top Sufi and folk artistes of the country.

2. KALA KENDRA - CENTRE FOR ARTS

Kala Kendra’s main objectives are to promote study and research in various forms of arts, to discover contemporary artistic expressions and to create an ambience for its growth within and around Auroville community. It provides artists/groups with space and platform for exhibiting their artistic works. During the year eight shows of
paintings, photos and sculptures, plus one media show mostly by artists from Auroville and Puducherry were organised. Kala Kendra has gathered together a community of artists in and around Auroville. The interactive platform has helped to project diversity of viewpoints in a positive and creative spirit, and creating a neutral space for individual and collective expression.

It also hosts presentations, interactive sessions, workshops and seminars on Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy. There were twelve interactive discussions and art/culture presentations by guest lecturers. Educational sessions were conducted under a series called “Prangan: Creative Encounters”. As platform for the interaction on artistic aspects of community building, culture and town planning/design, it organised twelve such events ranging from travel presentations to lectures by town planners and designers.

3. CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN INDIAN CULTURE

The Centre promotes Indian culture through conferences, seminars and publications. During the year, the Centre had its annual 3-day conference on the theme: “The Presence of Supermind in a Changing World”. The speakers were drawn from Sri Aurobindo Ashram and elsewhere. It saw a larger number of residents sharing their experiences. The event concluded with an open-air concert of chants and mantras by two performing groups, Nadaka and Gopika.

With the help of the Visiting Fellow, D Suneet Verma from Delhi University, the following manuscripts were readied for publication: (1) Integral Psychology by Dr Indra Sen; (2) The Integral Human Existence (texts of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother); and (3) Selected Conference Papers of the events of the past six years.

4. TAMIL HERITAGE CENTRE

The Tamil Heritage Centre bridges Auroville with its ancient neighbourhood, and brings together the lovers of Tamil language and culture through seminars, workshops, exhibitions, performances, etc. Among its major activities during the year were: (1) Children’s Book Fair; (2) National Children’s Festival; (3) Commemoration of Arrival of Sri Aurobindo in Pondicherry; (4) Symposium on ‘Future of Poetry’ based on Sri Aurobindo’s works; (5) publication of a seminar souvenir on “The One World Concept in Tamil”; (6) publication on the 12 gardens and flowers of Matrimandir with the Mother’s significances; and (7) publication of Tamil translation of Sri Aurobindo’s Uttarpara Speech delivered on 30th May 1909.

(B) THE PAVILION OF TIBETAN CULTURE

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama inaugurated the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture on 20th January 2009 by lighting a 1-metre high candle embellished by eight sacred Tibetan icons. The candle was specially crafted for the occasion by “Maroma”, an income-generating unit under the Foundation that is known for its high quality products like aromatic candles, incense material, etc. The Pavilion is the second one to come up in
the International Zone of Auroville Universal Township, the first one being the Pavilion of India, “Bharat Nivas”. His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama had laid the foundation stone of the Pavilion on 24th December 1993.

Constructed on a plot of land measuring about 0.404 hectares (1 acre), the Pavilion with 929 square metres (10,000 square feet) of floor space on two floors was designed and planned by a group of architects from Auromode Architects under Andre Hababou’s supervision and the over-all guidance of the late Roger Anger, then Chief Architect of Auroville. The building incorporates the technical inputs provided by Aurosatprem of the Auroville Earth Institute. His Holiness the 14 Dalai Lama blessed the final model of the building before the construction began. Auroville Building Centre, a unit of Auroville’s Centre of Scientific Research that has specialised in appropriate building technologies, constructed the Pavilion at a cost of about Rs. 49.85 lakhs (4.985 million), all of it received as voluntary donations from India and abroad. In 1996, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama blessed the project with a ‘seed money’ donation of Rs. 1, 00, 000 and subsequent donations amounting to a total of Rs 12 lakhs (1.2 million)

The Pavilion will function as a centre of Tibetan culture and strive to embody the words of the Mother, “…the cultures of the different regions of the earth will be represented here in such a way as to be accessible to all, not merely intellectually, in ideas, theories, principles and languages, but also vitally, in habits and customs, in art under all forms - painting, sculpture, music, architecture, decoration – and physically too through natural scenery, dress, games, sport, industries and food."

(C) CENTRE OF ARTS, CRAFTS AND TECHNOLOGY

1. AUROFILM:

During the year, it organised screening of 35 mm films every week at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium. An average of 250-300 people of mixed nationalities and cultures attended these regular film shows. A total of 57 films were screened during the year 2008-09.

Aurofilm has contacted organisations and institutions like the National Film Archive of India (NFAI, Pune) and Directorate of Film Festivals of India and Embassy of France from whom they borrowed and screened films with English subtitles.

Two Film Festivals were organized in Auroville: a. Alain Resnais Film Festival and Panorama of Indian Contemporary Cinema. Each festival was for a period of three days. Aurofilm team attended the International Film Festival (39th IFFI) at Panaji, Goa.

2. KALABHUMI:

Music Studio - In addition to providing a space for the Residents to practice music, both as individuals and in groups, one of the important parts of this studio is to
provide support for young people learning and wishing to develop their talents in music. This year it included a large variety of instrumental classes like piano, guitar, drums, tabla, saxophone, and singing as well as classes in composition, music recording and music appreciation.

The highlight of the year was the creation of a young music group called the 'Brand New Band'. The second half of the year saw a number of children, adolescents, adults and experienced musicians involved in the creating and working of a new music group. This culminated in a performance at Kalabhumi.

**Art Studio** - Its objective is to explore expression through art in a well equipped art studio, with guided courses and to enable the participants to express themselves through art and to be able to interpret art more conscientiously. The studio is now equipped for maximum of six students at a time with all the material for the different painting techniques. A wide range of watercolours, acrylic, oil and tools are available. With these a lot of techniques can be explored. We are going through guided classes of technique, composition, art history and free expression.

**Music Projects**: Hindustani Classical Music: Opportunities are offered to the community to understand better this art form in the multicultural setting of Auroville and to have a glimpse of its psyche. The proficiency of students who are continuing to study this music for a longer period is growing. A concert by all the music students is presented to the community occasionally.

**Theatre Group**: The Group organised a workshop focused on physical and emotional worlds of individual self revealed by the natural body. This process was helped and amplified by the use of “Neutral Mask”. It was addressed to every person wishing to experience a journey of self-discovery through the healing power of laughter. Its approach integrated Physical Theatre with Gestalt Therapy, Bioenergetics, Taoist Martial Arts (Wu Tao) and Process Work.

**White Peacock**: It is a ceramic studio for children and adults. The objective is to create an open space for exploring creativity and beauty while working with one of the most natural and archaic materials. The team has conducted workshops and regular classes on ceramics for children and adults. They have made their own colour glazes with materials available in India. This research process is currently ongoing. About 50 students (30 children from different Auroville schools and 20 adults) attend the classes which are held six times a week – an average of 5 to 10 students per class.

10 **HEALTH SERVICE ACTIVITIES**

(A) **AUROVILLE HEALTH SERVICES**

Auroville Health Services (AVHS), with a team of 7 members, is a non-profit unit that was founded in 2001 with the aim to improve preventative health care and
environmental conditions through increased access to holistic healthcare services for the residents and villagers in the bio-region.

In collaboration with a US student, it organized the collection, at thirteen different locations in and around Auroville, of suspended particulate matter (SPM) that tends to damage human lungs. The particles were analyzed in the USA to determine the nature of appropriate solutions.

AVHS also improved medical waste management within Auroville and supervised the repair its incinerator. It conducted a survey among 140 senior residents to find out the special needs of senior citizens. Committees were formed to address the problems related to the services like transport, senior citizens’ home and home healthcare. It developed an International Peace Handbook for Teachers and Social Workers aimed at preventing violence and promoting awareness in this field.

AVHS gave away Hygiene Awards to Auroville units that met its criteria. These awards help to foster pride and excellence for food safety and hygiene. It educated over 500 people, mostly villagers in healthcare and personal hygiene. A new holistic health clinic, “Kailash”, was opened in July, 2009. Rs 2 lakhs were collected for its medical equipment and supplies.

(B) AUROVILLE HEALTH CENTRE

The Auroville Health Centre (AHC) was established in 1972 as a primary health care unit. Since then it has undergone considerable expansion and many changes. It has a staff of 32, including executives, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, drivers, cleaning/cooking ammas (women) and watchmen. The value of its buildings and all movable equipment is approximately Rupees 13 lakhs.

Its services, during the year, included: (1) a clinic (for Auroville and its bio-region) with medical consultation available on six days a week; (2) a pharmacy providing homoeopathic and Ayurvedic medicines; (3) an in-patients facility with four beds and food provided; an X-ray unit and medical laboratory; (4) an operation theatre for minor procedures; and (5) an on-call ambulance service available 24 hours. It also facilitates a primary health care program in 20 villages (population approx. 28,000), with sub-centres in another 7 villages. It also provides: (1) financial help for treatment including surgery for poor patients and handicapped children; (2) free yearly medical checkups for students of 16 governments. Primary schools in the surrounding area; and (3) health education for school children by staging dramas and video shows. It also runs a project for destitute and sick old people in villages providing them a place for rest, medication and proper nutrition.

(C) DENTAL SERVICES

Since 2008, the dental care services within Auroville are provided through Auroville Dental Centre (ADC) and its adjunct, the Auroville Dental Centre Education Research Program-Rural Action (ADCERRA)
The dental care is based on the so-called “O Concept” for reducing the need for it in Auroville. This new concept involves manual skill based on self-awareness of the body’s balance allowing easiest movement with minimum tension and maximum effectiveness. The Dental Centre team comprising four residents and three from outside Auroville work in its dental clinic. Its International Dental Training & Research Centre has budgeted Rs 68.2 lakhs (6.82 million) for expanding dental care facilities in Auroville’s neighbouring villages by building/equipping a training centre.

During 2008-09 the clinic provided prevention and basic care, treatment and prosthesis to 1,391 patients in 2,546 sessions (1,502 treatments and 152 prosthesis work). Annual checkups are done at Auroville schools on 345 children with added education on oral health and nutrition. It proposes to introduce international standards of dentistry, including specialties like orthodontics and paradontology together with mainly conservative treatment and prosthesis. The clinic invites dentists and specialists to provide dental care to the people in its set-up.

11. THE FURTHERANCE ACTIVITIES

Auroville Foundation has about 228 units grouped under 31 trusts which are involved in various commercial, service and research activities. There are around 221 active commercial units, which are under 30 trusts involved in handicrafts, clothing and fashion, weaving and dyeing, renewable energy, food processing and catering, printing and publishing, architecture and construction, computers and software, electronics and engineering, organic farming, pottery, shops and boutiques, media and entertainment, gems and jewellery, travel and tourism, etc. The ownership of all these units is vested in the Auroville Foundation. Details of the income generated by various trusts and their contribution to the actual development of the city being built and its maintenance are reflected in the Annual Accounts for 2008-2009.

Employment Generation: Apart from the residents, who are paid a monthly maintenance allowance, Auroville employs over 5,000 people drawn from surrounding villages, whose work covers a wide range from agriculture to engineering, cleaning, gardening, tailoring, driving, accounting, teaching, commerce and supervising.

Work Ethics: The work done and the goods produced in Auroville reflect high standards of quality and creativity since the units endeavour to reach material perfection. The aim of Auroville’s commercial units is to do business in a different way, which is reflected in the importance placed on the relationship with both the workers and the clients, as well as to create and produce quality products in an environmental-friendly manner.

Coordination: The commercial units meet under the umbrella of Auroville Board of Commerce (ABC), which comprises the executives of all Auroville commercial units. A working group has been constituted to take care of the day-to-day
activities and it meets regularly to evaluate and recommend the proposals for new units, handle applications for business credits, co-ordinate yearly auditing of accounts, and advise units regarding accounts, finance, marketing, management, etc.

**CENTRE FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**
**AUROVILLE RENEWABLE ENERGY TRUST**

Centre for Scientific Research (CSR) and Auroville Renewable Energy Trust (AuroRE) are involved in research, development and marketing of sustainable energy and water technologies.

In terms of buildings, CSR finished the construction of the Pavilion of Tibetan Culture in Auroville, which was inaugurated on January 21, 2009 by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama.

Ecological product improvements were made on a large variety of solar and wind energy products. An ETC based solar still for desalinization was developed. A solar scooter prototype was developed, tested and a social and cost benefit analysis done. Other research/development in this sector include: a low temperature sterling engine for solar power, modifications for Brayton engines, battery operated vehicles, a solar hybrid car and testing of 3 oxy-hydrogen generators for welding and cooking purposes. Other projects concerned: refrigeration, a prototype dehumidifier, a DC compressor for refrigeration, a pedal powered refrigerator, use of algae for treating waste water and producing bio-fuel. Field initiatives include: affordable lighting for households without electricity in Gujarat and Madurai.

Socio-economic surveys to assess fossil fuel consumption patterns in rural areas without electricity together with a project to develop alternative lighting to non-electrified areas were undertaken during the year under report.

Educational campaigns: an environmental exhibition at Auroville Visitor’s Centre to promote sustainable way of life and reduce ecological footprint. Consulting services were undertaken in Karnataka for voluntary carbon verification (carbon trading). Eco Footprint Labelling was undertaken to help producers and customers to become more conscious of criteria to market/use green goods and services.

Among the many water projects, 3000 bore wells were surveyed for a data base on bioregional water table fluctuations. Hydro-geological studies were conducted for mapping coastal watershed and aquifers. UNICEF-program in water management in Tamil Nadu’s Krishnagiri District was executed and training programmes for solid waste management in Cuddalore and other districts were conducted. Waste water treatment systems were designed for clients in Pune, Coimbatore, Puducherry and Delhi.

A short movie was made on the subject of solid waste management in cities. The CSR participated in a number of seminars, committees and workshops all over India. AuroRE Trust worked on software development for Auroville’s township as well as
executing outsourced work for clients around the globe. It is also involved in manufacturing and servicing electric two-wheelers.

**AUROVILLE EARTH INSTITUTE**

This unit is researching, developing, promoting and transferring earth-based technologies, which are environment-friendly, energy-efficient and cost-effective. Its widely promoted technology is “compressed stabilised earth blocks” that it developed after extensive research. It disseminates its technologies through training courses, seminars, workshops, printed material and consultancy.

It is the Asia representative of UNESCO’s Chair on “Earthen Architecture, Construction Culture and Sustainable Development”, which aims to promote earthen architecture as one of the instruments of sustainable development. It is also a partner of: (1) the world-wide network of the International Centre for Earth Construction, and has an agreement with the School of Architecture, Grenoble (France) for conducting training programs for their students; and (2) BASIN South Asia – Regional Knowledge Platform, and provides information and guidance in the areas of its specialisations. Auroville Earth Institute has won 11 national awards and 1 international award since 1989 for its work on various aspects of sustainable building materials and cost-effective construction methods.

As a part of its training activities, the Earth Institute offers: (1) post-graduate diploma course in "Specialisation in Earth Architecture" to architects and engineers; and (2) Diploma course on “Bare-foot Earth Architect” to the self-employed and other entrepreneurs. During the year, a total of 477 trainees were trained - 429 from India, 35 from Nepal and 13 from Libya - showing an increase of 13% from the previous year. Apart from training courses, it organised symposiums, seminars, lectures, consultancy and other national and international events from time to time around the country and about 2,000 persons participated in them. More than 380 persons from within the country and abroad visited the Institute during the year.

The institute runs demonstration projects and sites at Janata Nagar (Nepal), Community Centre, Kadapakkam (Tamil Nadu) and Auroville. Its workshop manufacturing “Aurum” equipment for earth construction sold 44 “Aurum”: presses during the year. Of these, 16 were sold within India and the rest in 16 different countries ranging from the developing countries of Africa to the United States.

**PROJECT COORDINATION GROUP**

The Project Coordination Group was created in 1986 to interact with the Foundation for World Education (FWE - USA) and Stichting De Zaaier (SDZ - Holland) for their yearly funding of Auroville projects and programs. There are currently nine members in the group, roughly representing: rural development, agriculture/food, environment, development, health and education. The group meets about six times a year and publishes an annual report.
The FWE has been supporting Auroville since 1985. In the year under report, approximately Rs. 9.7 lakhs (0.97 million) was allocated for projects in the fields of: education, human resources, sports, culture, health, ecological transport and outreach. It helped to pay for the final instalment for a new bus to transport children to the various education centres.

SDZ has been supporting Auroville’s activities since 1987. During 2008-09, an amount of approximately Rs. 37.9 lakhs (3.79 million) was granted for projects in the fields of: ecology and conservation, ecological transport, arts and culture, educational and social research, outreach and micro-projects in the fields of informal education and women’s development.

Because of the grants from FWE and SDZ for Auroville’s annual management training programs, during 2008-09 the Project Coordination Group offered training, research and educational opportunities to 28 residents. This program supports the residents in attending seminars, workshops, conferences, training courses etc. related to their fields of work in Auroville.

12. AUROVILLE’S OUTREACH

AUROVILLE OUTREACH MEDIA

Auroville Outreach Media is an Auroville service for media relations with members from multi-cultural (-lingual) and media backgrounds. Outreach Media facilitates the visits of journalists from print and electronic media and filmmakers acting as a liaison between Auroville and the outside world. It tries to ensure that the ideals of Auroville are respected by the visiting media; since the Mother clearly said that there should be no promotional publicity for this unique experiment. It intends to broaden its activities to provide factual, accurate and updated information. It has collaborated in publications issued by Auroville, as well as in video productions. Currently the core team consists of seven Residents of various nationalities.

In the past year its team collaborated on filmed documentaries by programmers from India (2), France, Canada, Korea, Sweden, Italy and Belgium. It co-produced eight articles for international magazines and photo-reportage for an educational project.

Apart from its ongoing work, the team finalized its mandate and policy, to outline a procedure that seeks to ensure that the rights of Residents are protected and the sensitivities of the bio-region are respected. The Outreach Media paid close attention to ties with the local press, leading to a more fluent cooperation.

VISITORS’ CENTRE AND INFORMATION SERVICE

The Visitors’ Centre and the Information Service receive visitors and guests to Auroville and Matrimandir, and familiarises them with the aims, ideals and life of Auroville, informing them about the different areas of work and research, presents to
them the diversity of products produced in Auroville, and facilitates a quiet and informed access to Matrimandir.

The Visitors Centre has information service, exhibitions, video facilities, a guest service, the Matrimandir Information (exhibitions and videos), three handicraft boutiques, a bookshop, a cafeteria and a multipurpose kiosk with STD facility. It receives on average 1,500 visitors a day and employs around seventy workers. Twenty Residents work at the Visitors Centre in various capacities.

To exhibit the ever growing variety of Auroville products, the centre has extended one of its handicraft shops by 120 square metres and its restaurant kitchen by 20 square metres. The visitors’ circulation has improved with the building of a back staircase in the main building.

Further investment was made in photovoltaic electrical systems. The Information Service, video room and main exhibition hall are now powered by solar energy, with a mains backup, and the cafeteria and the kiosk were provided with solar energy means for lights, fans, freezers and cookers.

Information leaflets on various aspects of work within Auroville were translated into French language. The brochure on Auroville, “A Dream takes shape”, was translated into Spanish and Portuguese languages.

The year 2008-09 saw the extension of the Open Air Environmental Exhibition to create awareness among visitors of alternative development models and practices within Auroville. Through eight bilingual panels (Tamil/English) the exhibition features achievements in sustainable development, focusing on land regeneration, water use, energy, waste management, farming and non polluting transportation. The permanent exhibition showcases among others: solar cookers, solar panels, a charging station for electric cycles and a pedal power charger.

13. EPILOGUE

Auroville is involved in various pioneering activities like integral education, preventive health and healing programmes, innovative, cost-effective and appropriate construction technologies, restoration and conservation of the environment, village welfare programmes, inter-cultural integration and relations among various nations, researching on architecture, textile designing and textile dyeing, organic agriculture and farming. There are influx of students and aspirants from all over India and abroad to learn various skills from various units of Auroville in the midst of its natural environment. A futuristic approach to human development and a new paradigm of income generating activities are an integral part of Auroville’s growth plans. Though a lot has been done, yet much more remains to be done insofar as infrastructure, housing and other areas of development are concerned before Auroville can claim the status of the City of the Dawn.
Auroville Foundation’s Governing Board along with the International Advisory Council and the Residents’ Assembly places on record their deep appreciation of the steadfast support that Auroville has received from the Government and the people of India, UNESCO and the friends of Auroville worldwide over the years.