

**"There is no greater pride and glory than to be a perfect instrument of the Master."**

**— Sri Aurobindo**

## Dear Reader,

Welcome to the fourteenth edition of Svarnim Puducherry's monthly newsletter. With the blessings of Sri Aurobindo and the mother, Svarnim tries to take on the roles of social and environmental responsibility in a way that reflects their vision of nature and social relations ought to be. In this endeavour, we would be very grateful to receive your feedback and reviews, as that would help us move forward together. Thank you for being with us!

### SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY WATER LITERACY PROJECT

#### WATER FEST '24

The goal of the Svarnim Puducherry initiative's School and Community Water Literacy Project is to raise awareness regarding the ways that water affects livelihoods, nutrition, health, and other relevant areas. Through inclusive, responsible, and participatory efforts, the project also aims to build ecologically sound campaigns for the conservation of water resources by including children and their local communities.



The Sri Aurobindo Society is organizing a workshop on water hyacinth handicrafts in Kalanjiyam, Bahour, as part of a livelihood training program for women. The workshop, scheduled from February 27 to March 22, 2024, aims to empower women and support conservation efforts by providing a livelihood source from invasive plants. The opening ceremony for the workshop on water hyacinth handicrafts at Kalanjiyam, Bahour, under the umbrella of the Sri Aurobindo Society, was arranged by the Svarnim Puducherry as part of a livelihood training program for women. The inaugural event drew 150 participants from diverse backgrounds, including women of different age groups at Bahour. Mr R. Senthilkumar, MLA of Bahour commune, was invited as a chief guest and as a key speaker for the event.



### ECO CAMPUS: GOING GREEN TOGETHER

The Echo Campus endeavour seeks to transform schools into sustainable safe havens by integrating rooftop rainwater collection, kitchen gardens, and greywater recycling. The program intends to empower students, build a sustainable future, and enhance communities by transforming schools into centers for learning, collaboration, and environmental awareness. The project involves replacing the existing gutters, installing a first flush system to divert trash, and connecting the downspout to the rainwater tank with a "rainy filter" to collect rainwater. The rainwater tank will be installed on a base that has proper drainage and overflow protection. An internally constructed greywater recycling system will have a prepared base. The property will be ready, gated, and provided with drip irrigation in addition to the planting of the kitchen and herb garden.



[See https://svarnim.aurosociety.org for late updates of our activities.](https://svarnim.aurosociety.org)





## WINGS OVER OUR WETLAND

The Wings Over Our Wetland is an initiative under the direction of Svarnim Puducherry. It aims to address the community's commitment to environmental awareness and biodiversity conservation in wetlands in the Puducherry Bioregion. The project will demonstrate how community commitment and action for wetland conservation can benefit both people and nature.

Svarnim Puducherry's team hosted the dragonfly awareness session for government school students from the villages of Pandasozhanallur and Panaydikuppam. After learning about the vital role that dragonflies play in the natural world, students visited Karayamputhur Lake to conduct research on the insects and get insight into their life cycles and preferable habitats. In an initial lesson, students from Pandasozhanallur learned about the migratory patterns of dragonflies and odonates. A total of 125 students benefited from the session.



## STEM – EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OF SCIENCE CONCEPTS

## Education

The STEM Resource Center is an outstanding environment for hands-on learning in several disciplines, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, the arts, and the humanities. Utilizing mobile labs to enhance practical learning, the Stem resource person visited rural government schools. The goal of the science outreach program is to stimulate students' natural curiosity and feelings of wonder about the world to motivate them to seek out knowledge.

In February 2024, The Stem team carried out a scientific outreach initiative in four government schools in the Puducherry region which included TVGHSS KATHIRKAMAM, GHS DHARMAPURI, VSRGGHSS MADUCARAI, GHS KOMBAKKAM. The subjects of the instruction included sound waves, acids and bases, and chemical reactions. Through practical exercises, experiments, and demonstrations, the program sought to improve students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The program aimed to ignite students' interest in science and build foundations for future studies. A total of 372 students benefited from the session.



**Do you want to hold a STEM session in your school? Write to us with details of your school : [svarnim@aurosociety.org](mailto:svarnim@aurosociety.org) with Subject: STEM Education.**

In addition, the team conducted an awareness session about adolescence at VSR Girls Higher Secondary School in Maducarai. The program's objectives were to raise students' awareness of significant issues and provide them with knowledge about many facets of the adolescence stage. The lesson enlightened the students about essential knowledge as well as fostered the confidence to move through this crucial phase of the student's life. In total, 97 students participated in the tutorial.



### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THROUGH BASIC ELECTRONICS/DYNAMIC TOYS

## Education

In 15 government schools in the Puducherry district, the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) of India has supported a robotics and dynamic toy project. The objective is to acquaint the children with the latest developments in robotics and electronics, opening their minds to creative ideas.



In February 2024, a robot exhibit was planned by the robotics team for all 15 government schools in the Puducherry region. The team selected the best competitors from each of the fifteen schools and presented them with prizes as a small expression of appreciation.

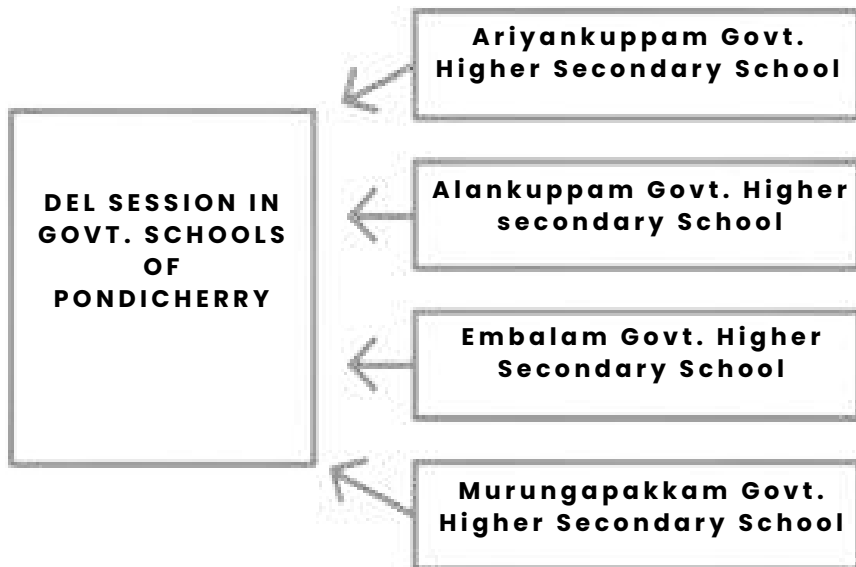




## DEL (DEVICE ENGINEERING LAB)

## Education

The DEL initiative is a three-year training program for rural middle government school students in Puducherry, focusing on product mechanisms, 3D printing basics, advanced product handling, and 3D printing technology. The program aims to equip students with innovative thinking and technical knowledge for the student's future.



DEL sessions on bicycle bells, whistles, loudspeakers, and binoculars concluded in February 2024 at the government schools in Alankuppam and Ariyankuppam and commenced in GHSS Murungapakkam and GHSS Embalam.

## OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHILDREN (ORC)

## Education

The ORC program is an innovative endeavour that focuses on the mental health of children enrolled in government schools and uses a rigorous assessment method to identify children who need assistance. As per ORC, mental health encompasses a person's capacity to cope with life's challenges and focus on various life skills like problem-solving, creativity, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationships, self-awareness, empathy, and stress management.



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## SMART-40 CAMP

The ORC team conducted a three-day Smart-40 camp in February 2024, involving 50 high school girls from Annai Sivagami GGHSS, Mudaliarpet. The camp allowed the team to establish close relationships with the children and foster social skills. The camp provided a welcoming environment for intellectual, emotional, and social growth, allowing the students to engage in regular social interactions with counsellors and fellow campers.



## GENERAL AWARENESS PROGRAM

For the benefit of the students, the ORC team from Svarnim Puducherry conducted three general awareness programs at various government schools. Overall, 212 government school students benefited from the general awareness program, which comprised Venkata Subba Reddiar Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Maducarai, GHS Panithittu, and RGHS, Maducarai.

## INDIVIDUAL COUNSELLING

The orc crew provided individual counselling to 15 Government students from five different government schools in the Puducherry region which included GHS-Mangalam, Thillaiyadi Valliammai GHS - Kadirkamam, Perunthalaivar Kamarajar GHSS -Muthialpet, GHS - Kombakkam.

The ORC team headed to Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, under the direction of Svarnim Puducherry, to seek out therapy and counselling approaches that could be helpful for the team to commence several counselling approaches in the Puducherry government school for the upcoming ORC program. Dr. T. V. Anil Kumar, a professor of child psychiatry at Thiruvananthapuram Medical College and an expert in child psychiatry, led the team about various child therapies, parent integration in SFBT (solution-focused brief therapy), and interventions at the Child Development Centre in Thiruvananthapuram. In addition, the team visited the psychiatric ward at Govt Medical College Hospital, Eranakulam, where they gathered various case histories of the children and learned about child therapy and counselling techniques.





The health and wellness program focuses on nutrition and physical health for middle- to upper-secondary government school students. It helps to identify potential health issues based on BMI, promoting balanced diets, healthy behaviours, and physical exercise through group discussions, audio-visuals, and hands-on activities. The program aims to educate children and parents on balanced diets, healthy behaviours, and physical exercise.

### **FOOD FESTIVAL**

The Sharp team, under the Svarnim Puducherry umbrella, organized a food festival program titled "Food for Fitness" from January 29 to February 9, 2024. The festival aimed to raise awareness of traditional foods and promote healthy eating habits. The event took place at seven government schools in the Puducherry region, including CRN GMS-Lawspet, Perunthalaivar Kamaraj PKBGHSS-Muthialpet, GMS-Manapet, SEKKIZHAR GHS-THATTANCHAVADY, Maraimalai Adigal GHS-Embalam, GHS-Kalmandapam, and (SCSV) GHS-Veerampattinam. A total of 364 government school students participated. The team selected the best competitors from all seven schools, awarded them prizes, and offered a gift to each participant as a token of gratitude.



### **POST ASSESSMENT SURVEY**

A post-assessment survey targeting students categorized as underweight, overweight, or obese based on their body mass index (BMI) was carried out in seven schools to evaluate the efficacy of the SHARP initiative. This study, which included 302 children, was carried out in February 2024 with the goals of assessing the value of therapy sessions and figuring out how much the kids' parents were implementing the suggested physical activities and exercises.



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## **BRIDGE EDUCATION**

In February, various activities were conducted, including academic, co-curricular, and guidance and counselling classes for students preparing for the tenth and twelfth board examinations. Students engaged in learning fractions through activities such as exploring fraction discs and analyzing equivalent fractions. Peer learning and working with mixed-grade groups facilitated positive learning. The Kamaraj Study Center at Kuruvinatham Village hosted guidance and counselling sessions, organized by the in-charge teacher and retired Headmaster, Mr. Jagadeesan. The event addressed students and provided guidance and counselling for the examinations. At the end, students were distributed stationary items sponsored by a volunteer, Mr. Thamizhselvan, from the village. These events aimed to enhance students' understanding and preparation for the examinations.



## **AURO VANAM**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

The goal of the Aurovanam program is to spread compassion for all living beings, including the natural elements that support life on Earth. Aurovanam emphasizes the interconnection of the environment and seeks to foster a stronger bond between children and it via experiential learning.

The Aurovanam team had gathered traditional seed kinds that were in danger of going extinct today. Aurovanam completed the kitchen garden and a sapling nursery to safeguard traditional seeds and endangered species. In addition, the aurovanam team organized and executed a traditional vegetable exhibit at GMS-Manapet, Puducherry, as a component of the food festival, under the guidance of Svarnim Puducherry. The program helped a hundred children in all, and the Aurovanam staff taught them about the fifty various vegetables. The team emphasized to the students the value of consuming traditional foods and leading healthy lives.

