



Sri Aurobindo Society
SVARNIM

PUDUCHERRY
TOWARDS THE GOLDEN FUTURE

AURO FOOTPRINTS

A Monthly Newsletter



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SVARNIM@AUROSOCIETY.ORG

"Love is the keynote, Joy is the music, Knowledge is the performer,
the Infinite All is the composer and audience."

— Sri Aurobindo

Dear Reader,

Hello and welcome to the eight edition of Svarnim Puducherry's monthly publication. With Sri Aurobindo and the Mother's solidarity, Svarnim Puducherry has increased its responsibilities in social and environmental aspects, which we think embodies their ideal of how nature and society should interact. Your comments and reviews would be very appreciated in this endeavour as they would enable us to progress more effectively as a team. I appreciate your presence, everyone.

ORC - OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHILDREN

Education

"The habits we form from childhood make no small difference, but rather they make all the difference." — Aristotle

The ORC programme is a unique effort that concentrates on the mental health of children enrolled in government schools and employs a rigorous approach to identify the children who need assistance.



According to ORC, a person's ability to enjoy life and concentrate on many different life skills, such as decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, and stress management, are all examples of mental health.

Through the use of **IKMSS (I Know My Student Solution)** cards, the mental health status of 2416 students from 15 schools was evaluated in August 2023. One of the main advantages of the three-day **Smart-40 camp** is that the ORC team organised the chance to meet the students in a novel environment, placing students in an excellent condition for establishing friends and forming lifelong ties with others. Children will regularly interact with their classmates and counsellors throughout the camp, giving them the chance to sharpen their social skills in a friendly setting that fosters both intellectual and social development.



The squad of ORC organized **Smart-40 camps** in seven government schools in the Puducherry region. Out of 300 students, there were 146 girls and 134 boys were participated actively.

300 STUDENTS

134 BOYS

146 GIRLS



One-day **follow-up camps** were held in **five schools**. Three involved high school students, and two involved higher secondary children. The one day camps helped in recalling the lifeskills that the children had covered in the earlier 3 day camps and thus every child cherished the moments very much, each of them opening up and expressing their views beautifully. Participating in the follow-up camps were about 280 students.

Since 2018, a total of **23267** children have had their mental health assessed, and **713** teachers have received mental health education. A total of **56 Smart-40 camps** and **37 Follow-up camps** were held. 2302 students straightaway benefited from the Smart-40 sessions, while 1317 students directly benefited from the Follow-up camp. 795 students benefited from a project to raise awareness about mental health. To address their psychological issues, **125 students** are undergoing individual therapy at the moment.



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BRIDGE EDUCATION

The bridge education course was established two years ago with the intention of supporting students who experienced learning gaps as a result of inconsistency in their academic preparation. Following COVID, it became evident that children from the most disadvantaged backgrounds are at a definite disadvantage when compared to other socioeconomic groups and would continue to have learning difficulties that might force them to drop out of school.



In August of '23, the teaching staff from all the learning centres attended a combined workshop assisted by the Bridge Education team to review the educational plan that the Svarnim Puducherry team had created. At the time of the meeting, there were 15 teaching staff members present. The training programme looked at the performance of the various centres and how children were faring in their studies. This was followed up with one more review cum training meeting where specific learning outcomes/skills were focused and also to devise strategies to improve children's attention for sustained learning. The centres were also given life skills books in order to support them in their academic endeavours.



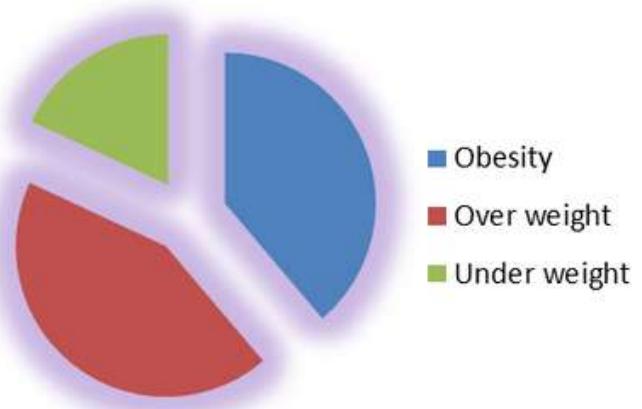


“A HEALTHY BODY IS A GUEST-CHAMBER FOR THE SOUL; A SICK BODY IS A PRISON.”

~ FRANCIS BACON

This programme within our health and wellness strategy focuses on nutrition, physical health, for middle to upper-secondary government school students. This method works well for figuring out whether your weight is healthy for your height. Knowing your BMI will help you identify any potential health issues you may be experiencing if it is over or below the suggested range.

With a total of 1521 students, baseline BMI evaluation was conducted across 10 schools. Overall 468 students (29.8% of total,) were classified as having abnormal BMI of whom 172 are obese, 191 are overweight and 80 are underweight



Pre-Assessment Survey for General Health

The pre-assessment health survey was conducted by SHARP team in eight schools. To ensure that the children understand the value of health in their lives, it is important to discuss their diet plans and nutritious diet. The rest of the schools will be taken up in subsequent months. This will be followed by targetted intervention for respective groups.





Parental counseling

In August, the members of the Sharp Team organised three interactive parental counselling sessions in three schools -Lawspet, Kalapet and Keezhpakkalpet. More than 50 parents attended the sessions to equip themselves in the areas related to better utilization of after-school hours including playing, daily routines, related to food, study, sleep, reducing screen time etc. The parents opened up freely and interacted with the Health counselors on their practical issues and discussed ways and means to overcome them.



Kitchen garden

The school's kitchen gardens, a very experiential and hands-on learning method, are progressing well. This activity is meant to assist the children in learning not only the processes involved in growing food but also how to determine their nutritional requirements and choose plants that will fulfil those demands. Moreover it also instils a respect for the farmers who grow our food toiling in the fields.



See <https://svarnim.aurosociety.org> for latest updates of our activities.



Kitchen gardens for the current academic year 2023–2024 were completed in four schools in the month of August 2023. Follow-up was conducted in all the four schools, and overall 18 traditional vegetable seed varieties were planted.

In tune with the traditional Aadi Pattam festival which is important for agriculture, seeds were sown on the land. The importance of traditional seeds and the need for a seed-bank was explained to children, and the children participated in the entire process from land preparation to sowing with much interest. Additionally, information regarding pest control treatment using traditional methods and formation of student committee was done in each school's kitchen garden.

<u>SEEDS NAMES</u>		
TAMIL SEEDS NAME	IN ENGLISH	BOTANICAL NAME
1. Kothavarai siriya kothu	Cluster Beans	Cyamopsis tetragonoloba
2. Pulicha keerai	Gongura (sorel leaves)	Hibiscus sabdariffa
3. Sivapu poo thandu keerai	Red amaranthus	Amaranthus cruentus
4. Vellai amaanakku	White castor	Ricinus communis
5. Makka sollam (Yellow)	Corn, maize	Zea mays
6. sivapu poo pulicha keerai	Red Gongura	Hibiscus sabdariffa
7. Makka sollam (Red)	Red Corn, Red maize	Joro Zea mays
8. Aanai Thanda vendai	Elephant Tusk Okra	Abelmoschus esculentus
9. Pachai uruttu vendai	Green Okra	Abelmoschus esculentus
10. Sivapu uruttu vendai	Red Okra	Abelmoschus esculentus
11. Kathari	Brinjal	Solanum melongena
12. Milagai	Chilli	Capsicum (genus)
13. Thakkalli	Tomato	Solanum lycopersicum
14. Climbing beans (C)	Climbing beans	Phaseolus coccineus
15. Mookuthi avarai (C)	Clove beans Green	Ipomoea muricata
16. Neetu porial Karamani (C)	Yardlong Beans	Sesquipedalis
17. Siragu avarai	Winged beans	Psophocarpus tetragonolobus
18. Kasthuri vendai	Musk mallow okra	Abelmoschus moschatus
19. Thenni Mura vendai	Tree Okra	Abelmoschus esculentus
20. Marathuvvarai	Pigeon pea	Cajanus cajan
21. Parangikai (C)	Pumpkin	Cucurbita pepo
22. Surya Ganthi	Sun Flower	Helianthus
23. Bonnidi nela vendai	Bonnidi long okra	Abelmoschus esculentus
24. Maa inji	Mango Ginger	Curcuma amada Roxb.

Breastfeeding Awareness

Every year the first week of August (1st to 7th) is celebrated as World Breastfeeding Awareness Week. The SHARP team in collaboration with the respective PHCs organized special awareness meetings at schools to address the fact that all mothers should be urged to exclusively breastfeed their infants until they are six months old. The health, development, and growth of infants are greatly aided by breastfeeding which also has advantages for the mother. To properly feed their newborns, women might need assistance. All of these topics were discussed during the sessions. It was also stressed the importance of nutritious food to mothers to enhance healthy breast-feeding.

This image depicts the kitchen gardens for the current academic year 2023–2024, where various kinds of seedlings were sown in four schools in Puducherry district to help students realise the value of agriculture. It aids in the development of a healthy lifestyle, environmental awareness, and a sense of community in students, to get connected with nature.



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The awareness session took place at Health Sub-Centre in Ganapathichettikulam on 4th August, 2023. and was organized by Svarnim Puducherry and Anganwadi Centre.

Dr. Vinothini, Medical officer, and staff nurse, Mrs. Neelavathy discussed myths related to breastfeeding and guidelines during the event. The topic of nutrition for breastfeeding mothers was given by the SHARP Project team.

PROJECT SPORTA



SPORTS

"TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS INTO CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS"

"Dedication, hard work all the time, and belief"
- Cristiano Ronaldo

Project SPORTA is a component of the school health project, where children are encouraged to take part in sports and games and where in Svarnim team brings in dedicated trainers in the participating government schools to identify talents among government school children. Every athletic activity requires a specific level of physical fitness.

One of the main goals of sports training is to enhance various aspects of physical fitness and skill-related fitness, such as strength, speed, coordination, endurance, and flexibility. In addition to this, engaging in sports also imparts other life-skills such as team-work, capacity to accept failure and learn from that and above all the unique quality of sportsmanship.



The sports component started off in the schools with initial orientation of teachers and students as well as mandatory procuring of consent from the parents whose children want to participate in the sports programme. Meetings were held with the heads of schools, the Physical education teachers as well as with children during the month of August 2023.



As for later comparative studies, the SHARP/SPORTA team members also collected baseline data covering basic anthropometric measurements including height, weight, age of children to arrive at Body Mass Index and compare it with the standard age-specific BMI values.

NATIONAL SPORTS WEEK CELEBRATIONS

National Sports Day which falls on 29th of August, in honour of **Major Dhyan Chand**, a legendary hockey player, was celebrated in all the SHARP schools as sports awareness week. A variety of sports and fitness events were held to inspire students to get active.



STEM RESOURCE CENTRE

"Art is the tree of life. Science is the tree of death."
– William Blake

STEM Resources Centre caters to students from middle, high, and higher secondary schools as a centre of excellence for hands-on learning in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as arts and humanities. STEM educators travel with their mobile labs to rural schools and conduct experiential learning sessions on demand.



Throughout the months of July and August, the STEM team held sessions on scientific concepts for **1733** students at eight government schools. For the schools, **41** batches that includes 15 different science modules have been held. The seminars were attended by middle school students in classes six to ten.

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

ROBOTICS/DYNAMIC TOYS PROJECT

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THROUGH BASIC ELECTRONICS



National Council for Science and Technology Communication(NCSTC),

Department of Science and Technology, Government of India has supported a project on robotics and dynamic toys to be implemented in 15 government schools of Puducherry district. The objective to take advancements in electronics and robotics to government school children and expose them to innovative concepts.



The sessions started in the schools where children were initially introduced to basic concepts of electronics components and their functions and various components make simple circuits. Bread-board based kits are given to children and they do the experiments on their own and explore themselves guided by SP trainers. Children do experiments starting from basics to advance to more complex concepts and ideas.

The students also received workbooks to be used as reference materials. Once the basic circuits and their functioning is understood by children, it is envisaged that children with proper mentoring would be able to design their own electronic projects by the end of the academic year.

Children would be exhibiting their innovative ideas and projects in school and inter-school based exhibitions planned by the end of the academic year.



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AHAR : AGRO- HOMEOPATHY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

"The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals and crops are treated." -MAHATMA GANDHI

In order to determine whether physiological plant activity may be promoted to sustainably boost yield without harming the ecology, Svarnim Puducherry is conducting this innovative agricultural research project.

In the month of August, **21 farmers** in the localities of Bahour, Soriyankuppam, Kuruvinatham, Manapet, and Sulliyankuppam received the best-performing homeo-medicine treatment to test in their paddy fields alongside conventional farming in order to compare the yields of homoeopathy and chemical fertiliser-based farming.



Out of two farmers who had harvested in August 2023, it was found that while one farmer had comparable yield with the NPK field, the other farmer Mr.Pasupathi had higher yeild in agrohomeopathy field while the cost of cultivation was half of that of conventional rice crop.



NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOR EXPERIENCE SHARING 25 & 26 September 2023

On **September 25 and 26, 2023**, Sri Aurobindo Society would be hosting a **National Dissemination Workshop on Agro Homeopathy at SAS** in Puducherry.

The objective of this national workshop is to spread the results of our elaborate scientific research on the use of homeopathy in agriculture- with paddy, brinjal, and bhendi for the past five years to farmers from other states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Telengana etc.



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Children who are in sync with nature can benefit from both physical and mental health spheres. Children may diminish restlessness, boost happiness, and develop physically when they are given the freedom to move around, play, climb, and engage in other physical activities.

**TDEF Nursery****Seed bank of traditional vegetables**

By the month of August, Aurowanam had developed **60 different traditional vegetable** varieties, and the seeds had been planted. This was also the time annual seed collection trips are held where the team scouts for seeds from Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF) species and initiate a nursery for whoever wants to take up afforestation using local TDEF tree saplings.

AUTOMATIC WEATHER STATION

AuroVanam will also soon have its own Automatic Weather Station (AWS) installed where children see dynamic monitoring of weather parameters captured and displayed by the AWS. The AWS will be installed by end of next month - September 2023.



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ATTENTION
PLEASE!

Svarnim Puducherry

Be a part of this inclusive initiative and let's together build a model state which aims to initiate and take forward a new course of growth in Puducherry.



We are pleased to let you know that Svarnim Puducherry has a web-presence of its own and you can now follow all the activities of Svarnim team from the same.

Do visit our website and please share your valuable inputs/suggestions for improvement by writing to us at svarnim@aurosociey.org.

You are also requested to share your valuable ideas /opinion as to how we can increase our footprints and what do you think that Svarnim Puducherry team should be doing to transform Puducherry into a beautiful place.

Do visit us at <https://svarnim.aurosociey.org> page. If you have a great idea to make Puducherry better, join us and help us to create a wonderful Puducherry by working together.



Contact Info

Call Us: +91-413-2332232
Email Us: svarnim@aurosociey.org

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