

The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught.

-- Sri Aurobindo Society

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the tenth 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. 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!

WORKSHOPS

Empowering Communities – The Kudumbashree Journey

A talk on rights-based interventions for deepening deliberative democracy



Dr.Manjula highlighted the status of women in decision-making, hegemony, governmentality, and the difference between women and citizens. She also highlighted the high mental health issues faced by women in Kerala and the potential impact on other states. The discussion covered topics such as rights-based interventions for deepening deliberative democracy, local governance poverty alleviation and women empowerment, gendering governance, the Kerala model of development, challenges to women's growth, poverty alleviation programs with a difference, and the mission of Kudumbashree. Dr.Manjula engaged around **50 participants** in the event with informative PPT presentations and stories.

A professor from TISS Mumbai discussed the Kudumbashree Journey, a women-centric poverty alleviation program in Kerala. **Dr.Manjula Bharathy, former Chief Operating Officer**, shared a story about women rowing to power, exposing participants to the initiative's connection to local self-governments.



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Orientation Program at IIT-M-20th of October '23

The three-year training program for middle school students in rural areas is part of the DEL (Device Engineering Lab) initiative. The DEL project trains rural middle school students over three years. In the first year, students learn basic product mechanisms and 3D printing basics. In the second year, they handle advanced products like fans. In the third year, they learn about 3D printing technology, enhancing their entrepreneurial skills.



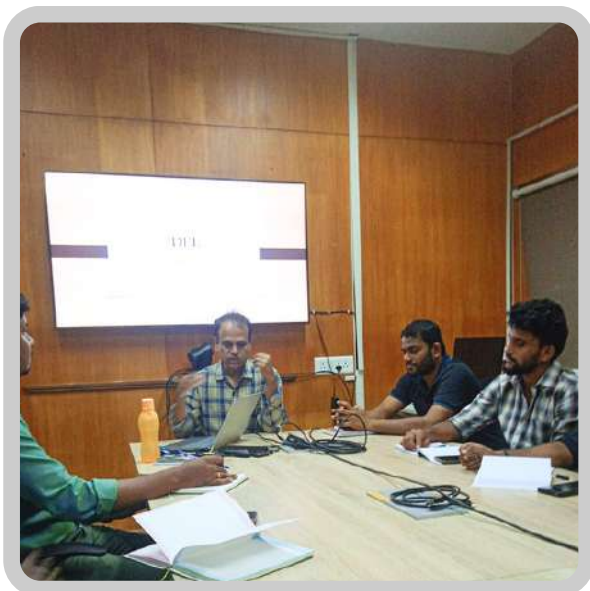
The DEL project aims to equip rural students with entrepreneurial skills and technical knowledge after completing the 12th standard. Overall, Four schools in the Puducherry region, will be implementing the 1st year curriculum, including day-to-day devices and 3D printing basics, from 1st week of November to March 2024. The goal is to equip students with the necessary skills for the future.



Discussion with Dr. Pijush Ghosh's team in the Mechatronics Dept, IIT-M, on DEL (Device Engineering Lab) Class Environment

The SP Team discussed the implementation of the Digital Learning Environment (DEL) in Tamil Nadu government schools and its potential for Puducherry. DEL aims to expose students to hands-on learning on daily-used devices and 3D printing manufacturing. IIT Madras has developed content for selected devices and a 3-year curriculum for Class VI to IX students.

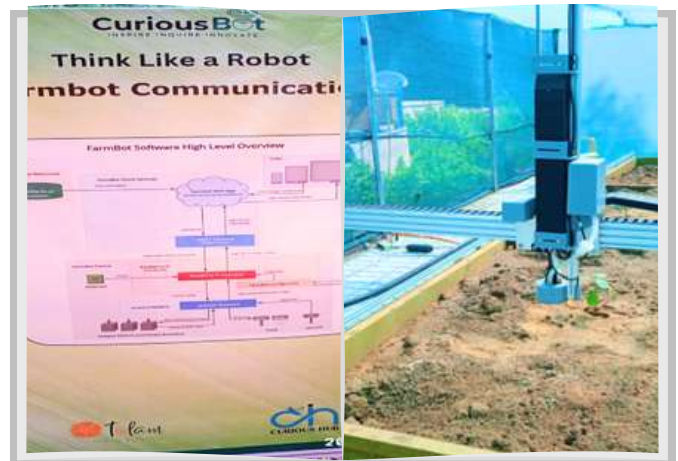
In the first year, students will learn about technology behind simple daily life products and make simple 3D-printed objects. In the second year, around **50 students** will receive hands-on training on complex devices and make simple toys. By the third year, **15 to 20 students** will work on advanced devices and create working models or complex toys.



Workshop on “Think Like a Robot” conducted by CuriousBot Inspire Innovation

The STEM and robotics teams attended a workshop, which covered robot explanations, electrical and electronic components like stepper motors, rotary encoders, and tangible instances, and a session on the MQTT (Message Queuing Telemetry Transport) Server. (<https://mqtt.org/>).

The presentation on a special server outlined the methodology for remote land cultivation monitoring using mobile phones. It examined how BMW integrated MQTT into their operations, demonstrating its practical relevance in real-world applications.



FOREST VISIT

ARANYA FOREST

In October, the Svarnim crew went to the Aranya and Sadhana Forests in Auroville to explore the forest's advantages. There are 100 acres of woodland in the Aranya area, and 63 acres are yet to be planted in the upcoming years. Saravanan and Sagar, who were responsible for the forest, gave insightful explanations of its significance. The speaker covered the Chola era, human settlement, medicinal structures, and Asia's first South Asian integrated tropical dry evergreen forest (TDEF). He emphasized the significance of Pterocarpus marsupium, which has five families in the forest and contributed to the formation of biodiversity in the region.

Mr.Saravanan emphasized the need of cultivating trees for products used in the chair, pickle, and pharmaceutical sectors, such as vanilla, calamus rotang, maahaali kizhangu, and red sandalwood. He also emphasized the 29-year-old Indian forest, which stops soil erosion and grows fruit using the taproot of the sapota plant. After all, with the aid of a PowerPoint, the group learned plenty of information about the kinds and creatures that live in the forest.



DID YOU KNOW?

The science behind fear: How does your brain react when you're afraid?

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SADHANA FOREST

A Beacon of Sustainable Living and Ecological Revival

Sadhana Forest, a project involving permaculture courses, workshops, and training foresters, has successfully reforested 70 acres of degraded land with an indigenous Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest, attracting over 1000 volunteers annually from 50 countries. The extraordinary transformation happening in Sadhana Forest results from the visionary initiative that was started on December 19, 2003, by Yorit and Aviram Rozin.



The history and growth of Sadhana Forest were briefly presented in a PowerPoint presentation that we attended. Sadhana Forest is a non-profit ecological project that offers a pure vegan diet, excluding animal products. We discussed water conservation initiatives, tree planting, solar systems, and houses made from local natural, repurposed materials and composted toilets. They may also have a complimentary vegan dinner and vegan tea and visit the Goshala (cow shed) and the children's playground made of recycled tyres. In the end, the Svarnim team participated in the non-talent show, which the Sadhana Forest team members organized.

BRIDGE EDUCATION

In October, the Sri Aurobindo Society conducted training sessions in Bahour commune to improve Tamil literacy among **43 government schoolchildren in grades 3–11**. The sessions were led by Savarimuthu, a B.Ed. coordinator, and Jancy, a twenty-year-experienced teacher at St. Mary's High School, LIFT.



In order to broaden the students' vocabulary in the Tamil language, the teacher-educators conducted the two days session for students to learn and distinguish the Tamil letters for kuril and nedil. They instructed them to assemble a Tamil alphabet table using tokens to foster learning and communication. The training aimed to increase vocabulary, creative thinking, communication skills, and reading speed through interactive exercises and Tamil short stories. After learning to distinguish between Kuril and Nedil, the children were able to write correctly and emphasize the meanings of Tamil words.

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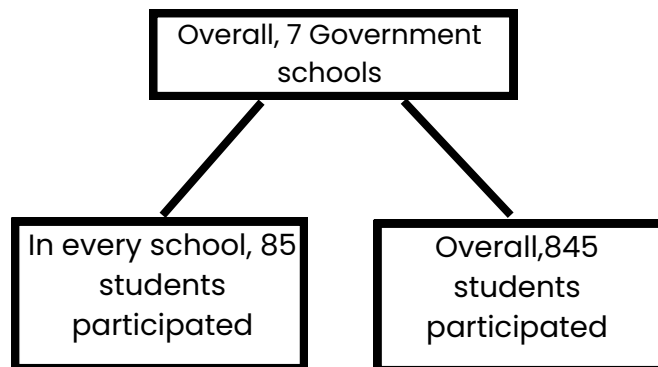


STEM – EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING OF SCIENCE CONCEPTS

“Science is not only a disciple of reason but, also, one of romance and passion.”
-- Stephen Hawking

The STEM Resource Centre is a leading institution that provides hands-on learning experiences in various fields, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics, arts, and humanities. It uses mobile labs to conduct experiential learning sessions in rural government schools, fostering children's curiosity and motivation to learn.

In the month of October, the STEM and robotics team at Sellipet Rural Government School is coordinating with **85 students** from class VI to class IX to provide technical guidance, project selection, and preparation for their school science exhibition.



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THROUGH BASIC ELECTRONICS / DYNAMIC TOYS

The project is a transformative training program aimed at empowering individuals and communities with knowledge, skills, and innovative approaches rooted in education and holistic development, fostering positive change and growth in young students' minds.

This project is underway in 15 Puducherry government schools, aiming to improve students' skills in electrical and electronics. A pre-assessment exam revealed that less than 10% of 1334 assessed students could read English, 10-15% had some knowledge of these concepts, and less than 30% could handle a laptop. Each school provides 90 students with 25 modules covering basic electronics, scratch programming, individual projects, and dynamic toys.



In nine schools, Basic Electronics sessions are in progress.

In five schools, scratch programming sessions are in progress.

In the first school, the Dynamic Toys session started.



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.



"Mental health problems don't define who you are. They are something you experience.
You walk in the rain and you feel the rain, but you are not the rain." — Matt Haig

Our Responsibility to Children is a mental health initiative for children. At the same time, Smart-40 camps focus on promoting life skills in students through group activities, focusing on self-awareness, problem-solving, critical thinking, decision-making, communication, interpersonal connections, and stress management.

Smart-40 Camp



Smart-40 Camp

In October, overall, 191 students from four government schools participated in the Smart-40 camp.

The ORC team held a Smart 40 camp in four government schools in Puducherry during October. The session was attended by 49 students from Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Govt Boys High School in Muthialpet, 42 students from Sekkizhar Govt High School in Thattanchavady, 50 students from Government High School Pillaiyarkuppam, and 50 students from Jeevanandam Government Boys Hr. Sec. School.

One Day follow-up Camp

One Day follow-up Camp

A total of 25 high school students from Government High School, Kodathur, participated.

A total of 50 girls from Annai Sivagami GGHSS participated.



General Awareness Programme

The ORC team visited several government schools in the Puducherry region in the month of October to conduct a general awareness programme. The participants included 81 female students from SCSVGHS, Veerampattinam, Savarayalu Nayakar GGHS, and Pondicherry; 57 parents from Satya Special School; 140 higher secondary students from Maraimalai Adigal GHSS; and 43 college students with bachelor's degrees in social work from Kasthurba College for Women.



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Individual counseling

The orc crew provided individual counseling to 32 students from seven different government schools in the Puducherry region. The orc crew provided individual counselling to 32 students from seven government schools in the Puducherry region, including GHS Mangalam, GHS Kombakkam, Kasthuriba GGHSS Bahour, RBGHS Maducarai, GHS Ariyankuppam, Calve College, and Pandit Duraisamy GHS Pethuchettipet.

IKMSS Teachers Training

At Kamban GHSS, Nettapakkam, eleven high school teachers received IKMSS training in the month of October.

SCHOOL HEALTH ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT – SHARP

Health

“The groundwork for all happiness is health.” – Leigh Hunt

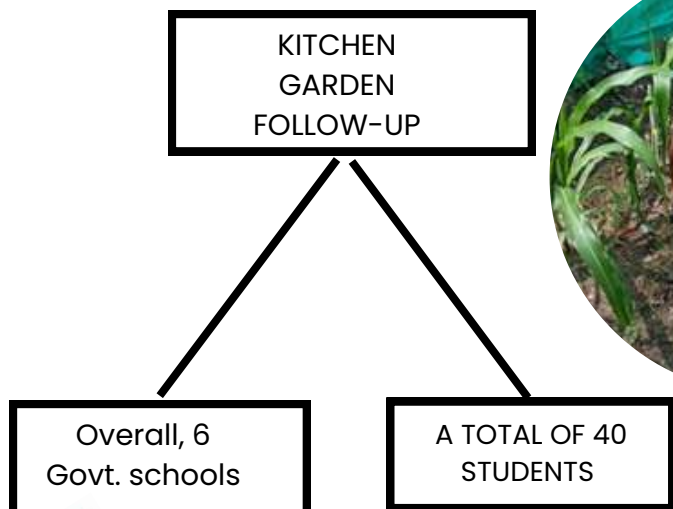
The health and wellness initiative focuses on nutrition, physical fitness, and health in secondary government schools. It aims to educate children and parents on balanced diets, healthy behaviours, and physical exercise through group discussions, audio-visuals, and hands-on activities. The School Health Action Research Project, led by the Svarnim Puducherry team of the Sri Aurobindo Society, organized a one-day intervention camp to educate 6-8th grade STD students on general health, hygiene, sanitation, food, nutrition, and sexual and reproductive health.

ONE-DAY INTERVENTION CAMP

CHEVALIAR SELLANE GHSS,KALAPET	Overall , 59 students participated
GHS, KALAMANDAPAM	Overall, 199 students participated
SEKKIZHAR GHS, THATTANCHAVADY	Overall , 154 students participated
SCSV GHS, VEERAMPATTINAM	Overall, 79 students participated



KITCHEN GARDEN FOLLOW-UP



PROJECT SPORTA

“Transforming Government Schools Into Centre Of Excellence In Sports”

In Project SPORTA, a part of the school health initiative, the students are encouraged to participate in sports and games, and the Svarnim Puducherry team sends professional trainers to the participating government schools to find out the inbuilt talents among the students.

The team conducted training sessions for 10 Puducherry government schools in various sports, including football, cricket, handball, athletics, volleyball, kabaddi, badminton, and kho kho. A total of **509 students** participated in the sessions. Apart from that, the sports team offered a drug awareness program at Thillaiyadi Valliammai GHS in Kadirkamam, Puducherry, and 150 students benefited from the program



AUROVANAM

Aurovanam is a programme that seeks to promote compassion for all living things and the natural components that sustain life on Earth. Through experiential learning, Aurovanam aims to establish a deeper connection between children and the environment, emphasising its interconnectivity.

In October, the Aurovanam constructed the kitchen garden and finished setting up a sapling nursery to protect traditional seeds and endangered species.



AHAR

AGRO- HOMEOPATHY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

This is an innovative agricultural research programme conducted by Svarnim Puducherry to ascertain whether physiological plant activity can be triggered to improve productivity sustainably without affecting the ecosystem.

During October, the Ahar team began monitoring the growth of chemical and homeopathic treatments in the vegetable tag methods. The five farmers in the commune of Bahour were chosen by the team to determine the precise outcome.

