

# SAIIR Annual Report – Vidyamandir

Reporting period: 2023-24

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**1. Name of sub-unit:** Vidyamandir

**2. Sub-unit executives:** Aravinda, Deven, Radhika

**3. Report writer:** Deven

**4. Introduction:**

A few sentences. Why does the sub-unit exist, what are its aims? Were there any special goals this year?

To offer learning programs based on Sanskrit and Indian Knowledge Systems in the context of Integral Yoga and Auroville's intention of realizing unity.

**5. Enrollment/beneficiaries:**

For schools: number of students in each grade.

For other sub-units: who were the beneficiaries and how many people participated?

Over 300 residents of Auroville and some from Pondicherry and bioregion attended our workshops/activities organized between April 2023 and March 2024.

**6. Activities of the year:**

In general and/or highlights. Who, what, when...

Here are a list of key programs we organized:

- A session with the Samskrita Bharati team on **Sanskrit, Science and Spirituality**  
Date: 15th April, 2023  
Venue: Unity Pavilion, Auroville  
Time: 10:30 am to 12:30 pm
- **संस्कृत सम्भाषणम् | Spoken Sanskrit Course** for 10 days with two batches in morning and evening everyday:  
Date: 5th to 14th May, 2023  
Venue: Progress Hall, Bharat Nivas, Auroville  
Time: 5 am to 7 am and/or 5 pm to 7 pm
- We also attended and informally supported the **12-day Sanskrit teachers training program** that was organized by the Samskritam Bharati team and Auroville Foundation team at Bharat Nivas.

- **Karma Kitchen**  
This unusual experiment to impart the spirit of Karmayoga and Nishkaama Seva (Selfless Service) in way that appeals to teenagers in a joyful way turned out to be a deeply enriching experience. A link to a blog post shared in the last section of this report gives many details.
- We organized a **7-day Health Camp on Nature Cure / स्वाधीन स्वास्थ्य महाविद्या** with Dr Arun Sharma in Auroville.  
Dates: 1-7 September, 2023  
Time: 7:30 am to 6 pm  
Venue: The Pavilion for Tibetan Culture in Auroville.
- **World Sanskrit Day celebration** with chanting of Bhagavad Gita chapter 12 on Bhaktiyoga.  
Date: 31 August, 2023  
Time: 6:30 am to 7:30 am  
Venue: Progress Hall, Bharat Nivas
- **Full Bhagavad Gita Chanting**  
On Gita Day we chanted the full Bhagavad Gita on with around 20 people participated in the full chanting and another 25-30 people participated for a part of the chanting. As a preparation, we also had daily chanting practices sessions for 10 days.  
Date: 22 December, 2023  
Time: 6:00 am to 10:00 am  
Venue: Savitri Bhavan
- We participated in and informally supported **International Sanskrit Computational Linguistics Symposium** organized by Sanskrit Research Institute, Auroville and **Sanskrit Literature Festival** organized by Auroville Foundation team, both in February 2024. In the same month, also offered chanting at various events like **International Spiritual Summit** at Unity Pavilion and celebration week at The **Mother's Flower Garden**. Also organized special events like **Kabir Satsanga** with Mandar and Dakshayani from Baithak Foundation, Pune.
- **Bhagavad Gita in everyday life**  
We organized various programs in a Satsanga format to support in integrating the teachings of Bhagavad Gita our day-to-day life.

First batch: 11-31 October, Everyday 5-6 am

Second batch: 25 December 2023 to 4 Feb 2024, Everyday 5-6 am

Third batch: 18 March to 28 April, 2024, Everyday 5-6 am

- **Ashta-Lakshmi**

We explored a framework based on Ashta-Lakshmi to approach a broader spectrum of wealth-generation and measurement in Auroville. The early experiments were encouraging and we intend to continue this exploration further.

- **Mantra Chanting at Matrimandir**

Every Sunday evening we chant mantras like Sri Aurobindo's Gayatri Mantra along with several others and also hold space for offering prayers in the spirit of unity.

## **7. Outcomes:**

What was created; how did participants benefit?

Participants are finding the process of learning very enriching. At a subtler level, Psychic discovery and becoming better servitors of the Divine Consciousness is at the core of all our work. The joy and peace we witness in the participants during and after attending our programs is the most precious outcome that keeps us going. Here are some example of what participants shared with us after we completed one of the 42-day Bhagavad Gita Satsanga:

"Thank you for conducting this deep sharing through Satsang on Gita. It has been enormously helpful for me. Can't thank you enough for creating the space for collective wisdom to emerge. I hope to stay connected with you all. I will strive to keep this burning fire of learning to continue with application in daily life."

"Thank you very much for the Satsanga that you organised and offered... It was a remarkable experience... You were very thorough in your work, extremely organised, and maintained time very well... You always started and ended on time and it provided a good structure for us to follow along... Your reflection prompts were also extremely thought provoking, and took us into spaces that we would not normally go into..."

"Thank you for taking us with you on this magnificent journey! If possible, I would like to be part of future Satsangs on the Gita."

"I am very much grateful for your dedication and determination towards these sessions."

"Thank you for facilitating a continuation of sessions for 6 weeks, I truly appreciate yours and your team's dedication. I take with me not just learnings of the Bhagvad Gita but also learnings from you all who are walking the talk in every which way that best becomes you. I wish for you and your team every joy, happiness and growth. I am grateful and would love to be of any assistance if you find me apt to help."

## **8. Research highlights:**

Please describe anything done in the last year which was especially research-oriented or innovative. What did you find out, and will you take it further?

We continued our engagement with the Satvic Movement team and also organized a 5-day intensive Nature Cure camp with Dr Arun Sarma (Founder of Institute for Mahayoga and Natural Hygiene - IMANAH) at the Tibetan Pavilion in Auroville along with collaboration from Martuvam Healing Forest. An MOU is being prepared for exploring a local IMANAH center to conduct ongoing research and healthcare services based on natural life sciences.

#### **9. Reflections:**

What was most meaningful this year? What was challenging and what was learned?

All our programs are held with an intention to discover our inmost being and to realize unity. While the Auroville governance systems are undergoing big changes, with its share of conflicts along the way, what is heartening to see is that in our programs participants with “opposing views” are able to sit in the same circle and learn and chant together and we do see sparks of a shift towards unity in those moments. The key learning is to witness the power in purity of intentions. Holding space full of Light and experiencing unity even during the atmosphere of intense conflicts has been one of the most meaningful gifts we have offered as well as received, dissolving the boundaries between givers and receivers, all as instruments of One Divine Consciousness.

In the last couple of years we have not asked for any funding from SAIER, PCG etc. and yet the work has continued organically and beautifully, mostly with a voluntary spirit and small donations that have come our way with Grace and Gratitude.

#### **10. Conclusion:**

Any final remarks, and/or intentions for next year.

The Satsanga on brining the wisdom of Bhagavad Gita in everyday life have been deeply enriching for all involved. In the coming year we will deepen and widen this program of brining the wisdom of Bhagavad Gita in everyday life and also include other words of wisdom like Dhammapada and Savitri.

#### **11. Links and attachments:**

Photos (please attach as separate files), links to videos and websites, any other supplementary material that you would like to share.

- Karma Kitchen experiment: <https://www.servicespace.org/blog/view.php?id=34651>
- Details of Bhagavad Gita Satsanga:  
<https://vidya.auroville.org/courses/shrimad-bhagwat-geeta/>  
<https://tinyurl.com/gitasatsanga>
- Ashta-Lakshmi Research Paper that we used for our exploration:  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/26314541221120311>
- The spirit in which we make all our offerings: <https://vidya.auroville.org/gift/>