

SAIER Annual Report – Vidyamandir

Reporting period: 2024-25

This form is for reporting on the activities of a **SAIER Unit** over the last financial year. Please use as much space as you need for the report.

Please submit this report to SAIER by **April 30, 2025**. For any questions or clarifications, please write to saiier@auroville.org.in.

1. Name of unit: Vidyamandir

2. Unit executives: Deven and Radhika

3. Report writer: Deven

4. Introduction:

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

To offer learning programs based on Indian Knowledge Systems in the context of Integral Yoga and Auroville's intention of realizing unity in diversity. A goal for this year was to create transformative learning programs to go deeper into exploration of wisdom from Upanishads, Gita, Dhammapada etc. and its application in daily life.

5. Enrollment/beneficiaries:

For schools: number of students in each grade.

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

Over 100 participants attended our workshops/programs organized between April 2024 and March 2025.

6. Activities of the year:

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

This year we designed and facilitated a few new learning programs using the framework of श्रवण, मनन, निदिध्यासन, साक्षात्कार (Listening, Reflecting and Sharing, Embodying and Realizing through experiential understanding). The learners committed for a collective learning journey for periods ranging from 3 weeks to 6 weeks with participation every day in the morning from 5 am to 6 am along with suggested practices and reflection questions everyday to bring the learning in daily life. Here are some details of the programs:

Satsanga on Bhagavad Gita in everyday life

Why and What: Absorb all the 18 chapters of the Gita and hold space for individual and collective reflections, practices, experiments and above all - Divine Grace.

When: 18th March to 28th April (6 Weeks)

Time: 5 am to 6 am (Everyday)

Where: Online Zoom Call

Satsanga on Dhammapada in daily life

Why and What: Absorb all the 26 chapters of the Dhammapada and hold space for individual and collective reflections, practices, experiments and above all - Divine Grace.

When: 12th May (Sunday) to 8th June (4 Weeks)

Time: 5 am to 6 am (Everyday)

Where: Online Zoom Call

Satsanga on Living Loving Truth

What is Truth? What is Love? How can we live and grow together in loving truth?

To explore such questions deeply, we warmly invite you for a Satsanga to explore and embody the timeless wisdom of the Bhagavad Gita and Dhammapada in our daily life. The Sanskrit word सत्संग / Satsanga can have various interpretations, we refer to it in the context of "associating with Truth" or being in company of friends who are receptive to (Loving) Truth. Whether your heart is filled with devotion or the mind has several doubts and questions, you are welcome to join as we will be taking an approach that allows for a synthesis of spirituality and science.

When: Everyday from 4th August (Sunday) to 15th September

Time: 5 am to 6 am IST OR 8 pm to 9 pm IST

Where: Online Zoom Call

We also designed a program on **Isha Upanishad in Daily Life** which was facilitated in April 2025.

We also had various special programs ranging from chanting Sanskrit Mantras in the Mother's Flower Garden on different occasion and supporting a spontaneous gathering with Gaeia Sanskrit in collaboration with Aurelio from Svaram.

As part of the Auroville Festival in the birthday week of February 2025, in collaboration with the Arpanaa team we also hosted a 2-day workshop at Unity Pavilion conducted by Mandakini Trivedi and her student Aneri Sheth on Yantra Dances - Transcendental Performing Arts of India.

In addition to these key programs, we continued our regular programs ranging from holding weekly Sanskrit Mantra chanting at Matrimandir to our annual full Bhagavad Gita chanting on Gita Day which was at Savitri Bhavan this year on December 11, 2024.



7. Outcomes:

What was created; how did participants benefit?

We felt like this year was an important milestone in co-creating a format for a transformational learning program that involves reflections and practices in daily life which felt deeply enriching and meaningful for all involved. 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 few messages we received after completing the learning programs:

"The sessions are very inspiring. I love the listed practices for each day. the teachings do not stay as knowledge/gyan only, but I get clarity on implementation too. The journey / reflections shared by satsangis adds up to the clarities. It feels good to be in a non-judgemental space. It is heartening that the good-the bad, the successes-the failures of the spiritual journey shared during the reflections aren't judged..." – Pinky

"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." – Apurva

"The sessions were thought provoking and the question answer interactive sessions leave a thought getting provoked during the day... Made it easy for us to hold the practical view of Srimad Bhagavad-Gita in day-to-day life. Reminiscing the points does make a difference in accepting life as God's own will and live life fully without any regrets. Thank you dearest for all your positive efforts. May Almighty's grace guide us always Lots of love and prayers always." - Revathi

"The sessions were enlightening and contributed so much to my daily peace and wellness. The daily reflections, prompts which I still go back to every other day, keeps me on the path of awareness and clarity. I loved the personal insights shared by all the other participants, and the way you gently urged people to interact. I personally benefitted and started opening up more. This helped me stay with the Oneness - especially within me. Thank you so much for creating this beautiful space. I hope to attend more such. Deep gratitude." – Meera

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?

While we did make some attempts to bring a rigor of research including first person exploration approach suggested by Indian Psychology Institute, Pondicherry, we still need some more time and support to bring out a research-oriented publication.

9. Reflections:

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

We found out that even though there was no kind of “penalty” for not showing up to the sessions as we were sending summaries and prompts to everyone even if they didn’t show up in the session and allowed all to continue accessing the program content, every batch of learning programs had a set of consistent participants who showed up every single day from 5 am to 6 am and that has been an inspiring and motivating factor in facilitating collective learning journeys. Also we don’t charge any fees for our program, so there are no financial psychological biases at play e.g. No “sunk cost fallacy” - a cognitive bias leads which leads to people to continue investing resources (time, effort, or money) into something, even if it's no longer beneficial, simply because of the resources already invested. Yet, the set of consistent participants showed up every single day and participated in a deeply enriching manner which would happen only if they find value in participation. This discovery was both humbling and encouraging.

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 heart-felt donations that have come our way with Grace and Gratitude.

10. Conclusion:

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

All our programs are held with an intention to discover our inmost being and to realize unity. While the Auroville governance systems continue to undergo 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.

While at a subtler level, Psychic discovery and becoming better servitors of the Divine Consciousness has been at the core of all our work since the past few years, this year we seemed to have found a very good process and methodology for delivering transformational learning programs in an online setting which can be scaled wide. In the coming year we will experiment with further refining and developing this method to go broad as well as some experiments to go deep with an in-person immersive program with a small group of sadhaks committed to go deep within.

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.

Invitation messages and details of the following programs:

- Satsanga on Bhagavad Gita in Everyday Life: <https://tinyurl.com/gitasatsanga>
- Satsanga on Dhammapada in Daily Life: <https://bit.ly/dhammapada-satsanga>
- Satsanga on Living Loving Truth: <https://bit.ly/livinglovingtruth>
- Isha Upanishad in Daily Life: <http://bit.ly/Isha-Upanishad>

The spirit of gift in which we make all our offerings: <https://vidya.auroville.org/gift>

Video recording of Yantra Dances - Transcendental Performing Arts of India:

- Day 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46ENiLjTjc>
- Day 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmeVNFEbvUI>