# **SAIIER Annual Report - Project**

**Reporting period: 2015-2016**

This form is for reporting on a **Project** (in contrast to a **SAIIER Sub-unit**) which was supported by SAIIER over the last financial year. Please use as much space as you need for the report.

Please submit this report to SAIIER by **May 7, 2016**. For any questions or clarifications, please send an email to saiier@auroville.org.in.

**1. Title of project:** Savitri Bhavan – Research Activities

**2. Project holder:** Savitri Bhavan Management Team(Antim Singhi, D. Murugan, G. Dhanalakshmi, Shraddhavan)

**3. Report writer:** Shraddhavan

**4. Introduction:** The Research Activities undertaken at Savitri Bhavan aim to support the Bhavan’s central objective, which is to foster the values on which a true and lasting human unity can be founded by making available materials, facilities and assistance to aid a deeper and more widespread understanding of the vision and teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, which underlie the aims and ideals of Auroville.

**5. Description of project:** The Research Activities of Savitri Bhavan cover three main aspects: **Outreach Activities**, **Learning Materials**, and **Research Projects**. Each of these aspects contributes to the central purpose, focussing principally on Sri Aurobindo’s epic poem *Savitri – a legend and a symbol*, which the Mother has referred to as “the supreme revelation of Sri Aurobindo’s Vision”, but also on his major philosophical work *The Life Divine* and other writings, as well as the Mother’s *Entretiens* and her *Agenda.* While Research Projects lead to the production of learning materials and study aids which can be used for Outreach Activities, the regular classes and courses which form part of the Outreach programme lead to deeper understandings which are then incorporated in new study aids and research articles or reports. The Outcomes of these three aspects are outlined separately below:

**6. Outcomes:**

**A: Research Projects :** During 2015-16, seven main research projects were undertaken. Five of these relate to *Savitri*, the other two to the Mother’s teachings, as follows:

1. **Savitri Study Circle:** This is the central on-going research project around which all the other activities of Savitri Bhavan have developed over the last 20 years, since its inception in November 1994. About 35 people met on Sunday mornings from 10.30 am to noon for a detailed reading and study of the poem. It is gratifying that increasing numbers of Aurovilians are participating regularly in this study, along with members of the Ashram and visitors from all over India and abroad, some of whom come once or twice, as long as they are in the area, while others attend regularly, or join the group for several months at a time during annual visits to Auroville and Pondicherry. In the first session of April 2015 the reading of Book Five, The Book of Love was completed. The following week Book Six, The Book of Fate, was taken up, and in July, Book Seven, The Book of Yoga, which occupied the group up to the beginning of February 2016. Reading of Book Eight, and the first Canto of Book Nine occupied the sessions up to the end of March 2016.
2. **Towards a Bibliography of Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri*:** This too is an on-going project, aiming to provide a comprehensive bibliography of a wide range of Savitri-related materials for the assistance of readers, students and researchers, by maintaining up-to-date listings of all editions, translations and recordings of Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri*, as well as *Savitri* studies, published and un-published, in book and non-book form, as well as other *Savitri*-related materials. The list of all known Savitri-related materials available has been maintained up to 31 March 2016.
3. ***My Savitri Work with the Mother*, by Huta:** Huta was the artist chosen by the Mother to illustrate selected passages from Savitri. At the time of her passing in 2011, Huta was collecting material for a book on her 18-year long collaboration with the Mother. During 2015-16, this valuable material has been carefully edited and made ready for publication in book form.
4. **The Earliest Known Draft of Sri Aurobindo’s *Savitri*:** The earliest-known version of Sri Aurobindo's mantric epic dates from the autumn of 1916, while the final version dates from just a few days before he left his body in 1950. Sri Aurobindo is known to have worked on the poem intensively over the intervening years. The aim of this research project was to make a line by line comparison of the two versions for differences and correspondences. The findings of this study have been published in two instalments in the Bhavan’s journal *Invocation*, in issues no. 43 of November 2015 and no. 44 of April 2016.
5. ***Book Three of Savitri – The Book of the Divine Mother*:** From April to December 2015, transcripts of classes held at Savitri Bhavan from December 2012 to June 2013 on this section of Sri Aurobindo’s epic were intensively revised and expanded, then prepared for publication in book form. The resulting volume was released on February 19, 2016, as the second in the *English of Savitri* series.
6. **The Spiritual Significances of Flowers:** Apart from these *Savitri*-related projects, two more on-going studies were pursued in the course of the year. The first is connected with the spiritual names and significances given by the Mother to flowers presented to her by disciples. Many such flowers are growing in the gardens around Savitri Bhavan, and during 2015-16, for the second year running, a photograph of one such flower was chosen each month for publication as the ‘Flower of the Month’ on the Savitri Bhavan website, along with the Mother’s comments and details about the plant. The photographs were taken by a young Aurovilian member of our team, Suresh Nagamani, the texts were researched by Dhanalakshmi and edited for publication by Shraddhavan.
7. ***La Science de Vivre***: French newcomer Beatrice Baldacchino has taken up this study of the Mother's *Entretiens*, During 2015-16 she carefully went through Volume Three of the Mother’s Collected Works, which contains the talks given by the Mother to a group of Ashramites from 1929-31, and noted down the passages which contain the Mother's advice on various aspects of 'How to Live'. She found that these fall into two main categories: practical matters, such as eating, sleeping, dreaming, studying and so on; and more psychological indications about the planes and parts of the being and how to harmonise them and become more aware of the inner being. The passages collected could form the basis for two sets or series of compilations for the assistance of seekers as well as young people. Beatrice intends to continue her study with further volumes of the *Entretiens*.

**B: Learning Materials:** the preparation, collection, and conservation of study aids to support the Outreach Activities and Research Projects of the Bhavan, and to assist students and researchers elsewhere on request. The Bhavan maintains five distinct collections of Learning Materials, which are outlined separately below.

1. **The Reading Room Collection:** this is a reference collection of book and non-book materials created to support study and understanding of the life and work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, their vision and teachings and the knowledge underlying the aims and ideals of Auroville. It is open to the general interested public from 9 to 5 daily Monday to Saturday throughout the year. During 2015-16, 155 new volumes were added to the collection, while 8 journals of 60 issues were received and perused for *Savitri-*related articles to be added to the bibliographical list mentioned above.
2. **The Digital Library** is a collection of audio and video recordings relating to *Savitri*, the lives, work and vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, and to Auroville, for computer access by individuals. The collection was steadily added to throughout the year, and utilised by interested visitors and Aurovilians.
3. **The Huta D. Hindocha Collection:** the core of this unique collection is the series of 472 oil paintings created by the Mother with her young disciple Huta from 1961 to 1967, illustrating selected passages from Sri Aurobindo’s epic, and named by the Mother *Meditations on Savitri*, which were entrusted to Savitri Bhavan by the artist in 2001 along with a mass of related materials. During the year of 2015-16, 2 exhibitions of paintings from this series where held, as well as one of 45 Visionary Paintings made by Huta during her 18-year collaboration by the Mother, with the titles and comments on them given by the Mother. Conservation work was continued on the many documents and additional paintings which make up the collection, and assistance was given to the Havyavahana Trust – established by Huta to publish the treasures which she received from the Mother – in preparing four books by Huta for publication.
4. **Savitri Bhavan Archive:** This is the centralised collection where digital records of all the activities of Savitri Bhavan are gathered, in the form of documents, Excel files, photo files and audio and video recordings. It is administered by Dhanalakshmi, who supplies relevant materials for use in publications, or as otherwise required. This will be Savitri Bhavan’s point of contact with the National Knowledge Network, to which we hope to be connected in the course of 2016.
5. **The Audio-visual Archive** is an extensive collection of music and film recordings for use by individuals and groups, managed by Margrit Mala.

***The House of Mother’s Agenda****,**housed**at Savitri Bhavan since 2006, is another collection of Learning Materials housed at Savitri Bhavan and run by Ganga Lakshmi , who will supply a separate report on this project.*

**C: Outreach:** The on-going Outreach Activities of Savitri Bhavan continued throughout the year, with 15 weekly classes and courses and a weekly film-show, as well as a monthly Full Moon Gathering, all open to the interested general public. In addition special events such as 3 guest lectures, 6 musical offerings and performances of various kinds, 2 special film shows and 8 exhibitions were held. 28 Workshops and Orientation Sessions were offered to visiting groups, and 19 visits of student groups were received, 14 of architecture students, and 5 from other educational institutions. From January 14 to February 20 the University of Human Unity also held 14 sessions at Savitri Bhavan. Throughout the year, the Information Desk, open from 9-5 daily except Sundays, responded to queries about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and Auroville, and received a wide variety of visitors, many of whom wrote appreciative comments in the Visitors’ Book. *For more details about the varied Outreach Activities of the Bhavan, please see the attached Annexure following page 3.*

**8. Conclusion:** This on-going and ever expanding programme of activities s made possible by the dedicated efforts of a team of 14 Aurovilians and 7 employees, supported by Aurovilian, Newcomer and visiting volunteers from time to time as needed. The goodwill and support of increasing numbers of participants in the various activities on offer contribute to the liveliness of this centre of spiritual education in the service of human unity.

**9. Links and attachments:** Please see the annexure below for a summary of Outreach Activities with numbers of participants. Outputs of some activities can be viewed at [www.savitribhavan.org](http://www.savitribhavan.org). Some photographs have been attached to the sub-unit report.

**Annexure : Summary of Outreach Activities 2015-16**

**A) Regular classes and courses, mostly of 1 hour each**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| S.No. | Class | Led by | Timings | Number of sessions  | Average participants |
| 1 | Savitri Study Circle | Shraddhavan | Sundays 10.30-12.00 | 52 | 30 |
| 2 | Integral Yoga in Savitri (Apr.- Sept.2015) | Dr. Ananda Reddy | Mondays 5-6pm | 17 | 25 |
| 3 | Isha Upanishad (Sept. 2015-Mar.2016) | Dr. Ananda Reddy | Mondays 5-6pm | 18 | 25 |
| 4 | Yoga and the Evolution of Man | Dr. Jai Singh | Tues. Thurs. Sat.3-4pm on request | 100 | 5 |
| 5 | OM Choir | Narad | Tues. 5.45 – 7.30pm | 43 | 60 |
| 6 | Savitri Study in Tamila) at Savitri Bhavanb )at Arul Vazhi School | Buvana and Sudarshen | Tuesdays 5-6pmSaturdays 5-6pm | 2852 | 1020 |
| 7 | Let us learn Savitri together in Tamil (from Jan.2016 onwards) | Buvana and Sudarshen | Tuesdays 5-6pm | 11 | 10 |
| 8 | Mother’s recorded talks | Gangalakshmi | Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays 4-5pm | 150 | 5 |
| 9 | Reading *The Life Divine* | Shraddhavan | Wed. 5.30-6.30pm | 52 | 30 |
| 10 | The English of *Savitri* | Shraddhavan | Thurs. 4-5pm | 53 | 20 |
| 11 | Satsang | Ashesh Joshi | Saturdays 5-6.30 | 51 | 5 |
| 12 | Meditation *on Hymns to Mystic Fire* (from May 2015) | Nishtha | Fridays 5.30-6.30 | 33 | 5 |
| 13 | Sanskrit Hymns chanting |  | Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 7-8 am | 104 | 10 |
| 14 | Integral Yoga Sharing Circle(from July 11, 2015) | Manoj P. | Saturdays 3-5 pm | 37 | 5 |
| 15 | Film shows | Margrit | Mondays 6.30 pm | 52 | 20 |
| 16 | Introduction to Integral Yoga Workshops | Ashesh Joshi | Tuesdays 9-12.30 | 43 | 15 |

**B) Other Outreach events hosted at Savitri Bhavan:**

1. WORKSHOPS: **10**

April 15, October 15, November 23 and December 16 : four programmes for Newcomers organized by the Entry Service

May 2 : *Spoken English* by Alice

May 25 : *Introduction to Integral Yoga* by Ashesh, filmed by NDTV for World Yoga Day.

May 30 : *Integral Healing* by Dr.Geeta Auropremi

June 21 : World Yoga Day Celebrations : *Integral Yoga* by Ashesh with asanas by Monica.

August 29 : *Smart Water Management* by Vikram Devatha, Auroville Consulting

October 1 : *Guided Meditation* by JV.

October 12 : *Introduction to Integral Yoga* by Ashesh for Nandanam Kindergarten teachers.

November 23, February 1,February 17 and March 21 : four programmes for volunteers organized by Savi.

February 22 : *Guided Meditation for Human Unity* by JV

February 7 : *Mudra Chi* by Anandi

March 6 : *Mudra Chi* by Anandi

1. ORIENTATION SESSIONS for visiting groups - **22**

**By Ashesh - 5**

March 24 : Italian Yoga group

December 12 :14 participants from Hongkong

January 13 : 21 participants from North Indian centres

January 18 : 25 participants organized by Matilde,

February 11 : Group of visitors from Belarus

**By Helmut – 3**

July 9 : 60 students and professors from Bhubaneswar

September 17 : 6 architecture students,

February 3 : 20 architecture students, arranged by Auroville Consultants

**By Shraddhavan – 3**

May 13 : On Integral Education for 9 teachers from Jaipuria School, Lucknow

September 10 : On the International Zone for 25 participants of the Korean Pavilion Group

March 8 : On Sri Aurobindo and the Mother for 25 Sacred Groves volunteers

**By Dhanalakshmi – 4**

April 14 : 40 participants from Sivakasi Sri Aurobindo Centre with Varadharajan

May 21 : 18 children from Arulvazhi school as a part of their summer camp

September 26 : 16 participants from Sri Aurobindo Society, Chenglepet

October 28 : 8 Bio-region yoga students of Thamarai

**By Rama Narayana** – **8** (approximate no. of participants 20 at each session)

September 12 : 2-hour session in Oriya for groups attending courses at the Sustainable Living Institute.

September 15 : ditto

January 2 : ditto

February 15 : ditto

February 22 : ditto

March 1 : ditto

March 11 : ditto

March 26 : ditto

1. PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES: **3 + 30**

October 22 : *Buddhist Building Traditions for sustainable living in the ancient city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka* : presentation and lecture by Dr. Satyajit Ghosh.

February 19 : *Surrender in* *Savitri -* The 6th Dr. M.V. Nadkarni Memorial Lecture, given by Mr. Jamshed Mavalwalla

February 28 : *The Day of the Lord: February 29, 1956*, by Dr. Alok Pandey

**January 14 to February 20 : University of Human Unity Programme : 30 sessions**

January 14 , 21, 28 and February 4, 11,18 : Six lectures on *The Philosophy of Consciousness-Hegel and Sri Aurobindo* by Rod Hemsell

January 14, 21, 28 and February 4, 11,18 : Six presentations on *The Goddess Saraswati in the Rg Veda* by Nishtha Mueller

January 16, 23, 30, and February 6, 13, 20 : Six presentations on *Savitri and the philosophy of consciousness* by Vladimir Yatsenko

January 16, 23, 30, and February 6, 13, 20 : Six lectures on *The Integral Paradigm of Knowledge* by Rod Hemsell

January 16, 23, 30, and February 6, 13, 20 : Six presentations on *The Being of Music* by Ladislav Brozman

1. EXHIBITIONS**: 6**

April : *Meditations on Savitri Books 8 to 12* in the Picture Gallery

April -May : *Transformation* by Adil Writer

April onwards: *Sri Aurobindo: a Life-Sketch in Photographs*

July 1 onwards: *Meditations on Savitri Book 1, The Book of Beginnings* in the Picture Gallery

August 1 onwards: *Glimpses of the Mother* – photos and texts in the Hall

January 18-31 : *From Some Invisible Fire* – paintings by Priti Ghosh in the Hall

February 15 to March 3 : *Adventures of a Soul and other Visionary Paintings* by Huta

March 7 onwards : Paintings by Roza Tuh

1. MUSICAL OFFERINGS : **3**

January 21 : Performance by Kees van Boxtel on Bansuri, Soundarya Seraphina on Veena with Jan on guitar

February 27: Solo violin performance by Ladislav Brozman

March 24 : *Bhakti Poetry, Music and Dance* with Gordon Korstange playing South Indian Flute, Joel Eisenkramer on Hindustani Slide Guitar and Dancer Madhumita Padnaik

1. OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS: **10**

August 17 : *Love and Death*, a film by Manohar of paintings by Priti Gosh inspired by passages from Sri Aurobindo’s poem of the same name, read by Cristof Pitoeff with music by Sunil.

September 29 : Visit of 7 MLAs from Odisha Assembly, guided by Devasmita

November 24 : First brick ceremony to inaugurate construction of the Sangam Hall, a long-planned addition to the Savitri Bhavan complex

January 17 : Opening of the exhibition *From Some Invisible Fire* in the presence of the artist Priti Ghosh and friends.

February 14 : opening of the exhibition *Adventures of the Soul and other Visionary Paintings* by Huta, with a private view for trustees of the Havyavahana Trust.

February 21 : The Mother’s Birthday was celebrating by a showing of the film *The One whom we adore as the Mother.*

February 28 : Auroville’s Birthday was celebrated with a mime performance by Drupad based on Sri Aurobindo’s Poem *Silence is All*.

February 29 : The Mother’s Chair was place in the Hall for silent concentration on the Golden Day of the Lord.

February 29 : *Douze Prières et Méditations de la Mère* : on the same day in the evening Cèline Devaux presented a dramatised recitation in French of 23 prayers of the Mother.

March 30 : This performance was repeated to commemorate the Mother’s first arrival in Pondicherry and meeting with Sri Aurobindo.

1. VISITS OF STUDENT GROUPS - **18**

A) Architecture Student Groups - 13

1. April 7 : 40 students from Hindustan College of Engineering, Chennai.
2. April 9 : 40 students from Hindustan College of Engineering, Chennai.
3. June 8 : 5 students from Dept. of Architecture, Manipal University, Jaipur
4. July 7 : 17 students from Noida, UP
5. July 24 : 5 students from Dept. of Architecture, Manipal University, Jaipur
6. August 18 : 45 students from Vadodara
7. November 3 : 30 students from Pune
8. November 25 : 80 students from Coimbatore
9. November 26 : 60 students from D.Y. Patil College of Architecture, Pune
10. December 12 : 8 students from SPJ Management School, Mumbai.
11. January 16 : 20 students from Kochin
12. January 25 : 28 students from NRM School of Architecture, Kollam
13. February 17 : 30 students from Jaipur and Delhi

B) Other Groups - 5

1. April 7 : students from New Era Secondary School, Auroville
2. September 5 : 60 students from Pondicherry University for Tourism study
3. September 5 : 8 architects from Hyderabad
4. December 29 : 40 students from Delhi Ashram School
5. January 4 : 48 students from Delhi Ashram School

In total 581 students visited Savitri Bhavan in groups during the year.

**Estimated total number of beneficiaries of Savitri Bhavan’s organised Outreach Activities in 2015-16: at least 2000. (**This does not include casual visitors who have had the opportunity to view the exhibitions on display and the information materials provided in the entrance area.)