
Auroville Tomorrow

We do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future

Ushus: 2

Sri Aurobindo

Kiran: 2

Auroville's newsletter, rooted in the present, focused on the future

24th May 2026

Individual Soul, Collective Future



The individualistic age is a necessary passage in the progress of humanity; it is a stage in which the individual, after having been lost in the mass and subordinated to the needs and standards of the collective life, reasserts his right to exist and develops his own personality as a centre of thought, will, and action. This is the age of the discovery of the individual and the assertion of his worth and importance.

— Sri Aurobindo, *The Human Cycle, The Age of Individualism and Reason*

Anarchy in The Divine

One of the subtlest misunderstandings about the concept of "Anarchy in the Divine" is to imagine it merely as a poetic ideal or a spiritual dream of freedom without structure. Yet what Sri Aurobindo and The Mother were speaking of was not the glorification of disorder, but the most difficult form of order possible: an order that is no longer imposed from the outside, but must arise from within the human being. And this is precisely where the real issue begins. For anarchy in the divine, before being a social structure, is an inner responsibility; before it concerns society, it concerns the quality of one's consciousness.

Ultimately, the question returns to something far more difficult: are we truly engaged in inner work, or have we merely learned the language of spirituality while the ego continues to remain hidden within the deeper layers of the mind and identity? In the ordinary world, structures of power are often created to prevent chaos. Law, hierarchy, supervision, and authority are all built upon the assumption that human beings are not yet conscious enough to live freely and harmoniously. But Sri Aurobindo envisioned another possibility: a human being who, through the transformation of consciousness, could arrive at a living order without external compulsion. Such a possibility becomes tangible only when the individual accepts full responsibility for their inner condition; without projection, without hiding behind ideology or position, and without absolute certainty in one's own correctness. For the moment one withdraws from confronting one's own shadow, hidden structures of power slowly begin to reappear, even in spaces that outwardly claim to be founded upon awareness and freedom.

This is the difficult paradox of freedom itself: the less external authority there is, the greater the need for inner discipline becomes. In most ordinary systems, law and external control carry the responsibility of containing human chaos. But within a space that seeks to live through consciousness, responsibility can no longer be delegated to structures. The individual must become both the observer and the guardian of their own inner movement. This is why freedom, in its deepest sense, can never simply mean the absence of limitation. Freedom without self-awareness can easily turn into fragmentation: a condition in which each person mistakes their own desires, interpretations, and personal impulses for truth itself.



This is why "Divine Anarchy" remains such a rare and difficult concept, because it does not merely ask the human being to rebel against outer authority, but compels one to confront the chaos within oneself, and this confrontation is often far more difficult than opposing any political or social structure.

One of the most complex challenges within every collective spiritual project is the subtle presence of the ego within the language of awareness itself. The ego does not always reveal itself openly; at times, it appears through certainty, through the role of guidance, or through the feeling of being responsible for protecting the truth. And this raises a sensitive yet necessary question: how can a balance be maintained between the necessity of collective decision-making and the danger of crystallized power, without damaging the living spirit of the experiment?

Auroville was never meant to be merely a different society; it was meant to be a laboratory for the evolution of consciousness. Yet one of the most difficult realities of every collective experiment is that even the sincerest spaces can gradually become vulnerable to rigidity. Every human structure, even when born from aspiration, slowly develops a tendency toward stabilization, a collective identity forms, a shared memory is created, and alongside it emerges an unconscious need to protect stability. And it is precisely at this point that fear slowly enters: fear of chaos, fear of collapse, fear of mistakes, fear of losing collective identity, and sometimes fear of the unknown itself. These fears are entirely human. Yet if they remain unseen, they can slowly transform a living space into a defensive structure, and what was once a "living experiment" may gradually become a system more concerned with preserving itself than with movement and discovery.

This is why so many spiritual or idealistic movements eventually face the danger of institutionalization, not necessarily because of bad intentions, but because the human psyche, when confronted with uncertainty, often moves toward safer and more stable forms. But living consciousness is, by its very nature, impossible to fully stabilize. Life is always in movement, and the Divine, if truly alive, cannot be entirely confined within any fixed structure. The moment absolute certainty replaces living inquiry, the danger of inner movement coming to a halt begins.

This is why the Mother repeatedly emphasized the importance of young forces; not merely because of age, but because of a quality of consciousness that has not yet been entirely exhausted by fear, habit, and rigid structures. Youth, in its deepest sense, is not simply a stage of life, but a capacity for movement, risk, and remaining open to the unknown. The presence of new forces, not as a replacement for experience but as a possibility for renewal and re-examination, is essential for keeping any collective experiment alive.



For experience itself, when not accompanied by openness, can gradually turn into an unconscious form of certainty; and certainty, even when expressed through spiritual language, can still limit consciousness.

Power becomes complicated precisely here. Power does not always operate in obvious or violent ways; sometimes it appears through responsibility, care, or even the protection of a vision. And for this very reason, recognizing the moment when power shifts from service toward control becomes extraordinarily difficult. The essential issue is not the existence or absence of power itself, but the quality of consciousness carrying it. Because even the best structures, if they become inwardly rigid, can slowly lose their connection to the living flow of aspiration.

And it is exactly here that sincerity becomes fundamentally important. Not sincerity as a spiritual image, but sincerity as the continuous capacity to question oneself; the capacity to see whether we are still truly listening, or merely defending what we have grown accustomed to. Whether there is still inner space for transformation, or whether collective identity has gradually replaced living consciousness.

"Anarchy in the Divine" is, more than anything else, an invitation to preserve this openness: the ability to remain in movement without clinging to absolute certainty. For the Divine, unlike rigid human structures, is inherently alive, dynamic, and impossible to possess. No individual, group, or institution can claim complete representation of it. And this is precisely why the concept remains so radically challenging, because it questions not only outer authority, but also the hidden authority of the ego itself. It does not ask us, "Who should govern?" but rather, "Are we truly prepared to live without domination?"

The answer to this question reveals itself not in theory, but in the quality of everyday life: in our honesty with ourselves, in our ability to see the shadow, in the capacity to listen to the other, in letting go of the need to always be right, and in the willingness to surrender to something greater than the ego.

One of the greatest misunderstandings about spirituality is the belief that awareness frees us from confronting the darkness within, while in truth, the opposite may be the case. The more real the aspiration becomes, the deeper the inner responsibility grows. And if Auroville still wishes to remain faithful to its original dream, it requires, more than anything else, a return to sincerity; not performative sincerity, but that raw and honest quality that compels the human being to look first at their own inner structure before criticizing the outer one.

The future of "Divine Anarchy" will not be determined by slogans, but by the quality of consciousness of those who live it. And perhaps the most important question facing Auroville today is not "Who should decide?" but rather, "What kind of consciousness is doing the deciding?"

And perhaps the most valuable aspect of this question is not arriving at a final answer, but keeping the question itself alive.

— Anita Kamali, Writer and Editor of Auroville Tomorrow Newsletter



Where the Ganga Still Flows Within

Nearly a decade ago, I sat upon the banks of the Ganga in Kashi, an hour before dawn, during the beautiful Subah-e-Banaras programme held every morning at Assi Ghat.

For years now, this sacred cultural offering has welcomed the sunrise with Vedic chanting, classical music, yoga, prayer, and devotion — a living celebration of the spirit of Banaras that begins before daybreak on the banks of Ma Ganga.

**— Dr. Jayanti Ravi,
Secretary Auroville Foundation, IAS**



That morning, beside me lay a few scattered notes tracing the contours of Revathi Raga. In the profound stillness between night and dawn, I began gently exploring a spontaneous Thaanam, allowing the music to emerge naturally from the atmosphere around me. Slowly, the improvisation flowed into a meditative rendition of “Baso Shambhu,” Swami Dayananda Saraswati’s deeply evocative composition on Lord Shiva — Vishwanatha of Kashi, the eternal witness seated upon the banks of time itself.

As the music unfolded, the horizon too seemed to prepare for awakening. At first, the sun appeared hesitant to arrive. There was only the faintest shimmer of gold and pale pink upon the edge of the sky, almost like a whispered announcement. Gradually, the light gathered confidence, spreading across the waters and ancient skyline of Kashi until the river itself began to glow with a soft radiance.

And through all this, the Ganga simply continued to flow.

She had been there before the previous sunset, through the silence of the night, and now beneath the newborn dawn. The waters moved ceaselessly, reflecting the changing colours of the sky while remaining deeply, mysteriously constant. Watching her then, I felt something profound: an extraordinary solidity within movement itself. The river was dynamic yet eternal, flowing yet rooted in an ancient stillness. It no longer felt like merely a river; it felt like a presence — compassionate, luminous, alive.

Perhaps that is why the image of Gangadhara Shiva suddenly felt so deeply real — Shiva receiving the mighty descent of Ganga upon his matted locks so that her force could become nourishment for the Earth. In that moment, one could understand why our civilisation has never seen Ganga merely as geography. She is consciousness in motion, divinity flowing through the veins of the land and through the inner life of humanity itself.

As we celebrate Ganga Dussehra — the sacred descent of Ma Ganga upon Earth — that dawn returns vividly to my heart. More than a memory, it has become a reflection on life itself. For what does Ganga teach us?

Despite carrying the burdens, impurities, and refuse of the world, she never ceases to flow. She does not stagnate in bitterness. She does not withhold herself because she is misunderstood, praised, worshipped, neglected, or wounded. With astonishing steadfastness, she continues her dharma — nourishing, cleansing, moving forward with compassion, dynamism, forgiveness, and renewal.

In this, Ganga becomes the very embodiment of Karma Yoga.

She teaches us how to continue our work with dedication despite challenges, insults, accolades, anger, hatred, praise, or adulation. She reminds us that true strength lies not in rigidity, but in luminous perseverance; not in standing still, but in flowing onward with trust and surrender.

One cannot help but wonder what vision must have filled King Bhagiratha's heart when he performed his tremendous tapas to bring Ganga down to Earth. Perhaps he foresaw not merely a river, but a living stream of consciousness that would inspire humanity for millennia.

These thoughts are beautifully echoed in Sri Aurobindo's poem To the Ganges:

"By her heart of quick emotion, by her brain of living fire,

By her vibrant speech and great,

She shall lead them, they shall see their destiny in her warm desire

Opening all the doors of Fate."

May we, too, drawing inspiration from Ma Ganga, learn to invoke these qualities into our own lives — purity amidst turbulence, movement without stagnation, compassion without exhaustion, and surrender without fear.

And today, as I think once again of the sacred waters of the Ganga, I relive those splendid moments by her banks in Kashi. I find myself longing once more to sit in her presence — to touch her waters, to feel them flowing through my hands, to bathe in her embrace on Ganga Dussehra. And as these memories and reflections return in waves, they seem almost to rock me gently within, to carry me inwardly, and to suffuse my being with a rare and tender divinity — as though Ma Ganga herself continues to flow quietly through the inner landscape of one's consciousness, calling, cleansing, nurturing, and awakening something eternal within us.





In the spirit of truth-seeking and responsible examination, Auroville Tomorrow is publishing this important official response from the Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly and several statutory bodies of Auroville.

This letter responds to recent public statements issued by former members of the International Advisory Council (IAC) concerning a series of incidents and ongoing challenges within our community. The document presents a detailed counter-narrative based on documented events, institutional records, and the sustained efforts to implement the Master Plan in accordance with the Mother's vision.

This statement raises important questions about truth, authority, collective responsibility, and the real obstacles to realizing Auroville as "the City the Earth Needs." In times of internal division and polarization, transparency and direct access to the voices of those bearing administrative responsibility are essential.

We invite our readers to engage with this text thoughtfully, moving beyond polarized narratives, and to reflect on what genuine collaboration, discipline, and practical fidelity to the Mother's vision truly mean in practice.

Dear Former Members of the International Advisory Council,

and in particular Mr. Doudou Diène, whom many of us remember warmly,

We, the undersigned members of various statutory working groups and services of Auroville, write in response to your public statement dated 18 May 2026 regarding the current situation in Auroville.

We do so with deep disappointment, not because concerns were raised — concerns can and should always be discussed sincerely — but because your statement reproduces, almost verbatim, a narrative that has for years been systematically circulated by a small but highly organized faction opposed to the present functioning of the Auroville Foundation and the implementation of the approved Master Plan. The statement presents allegations as established truths, omits material facts, ignores the long history of obstruction and aggression faced by the working groups, and ultimately lends the moral authority of former IAC members to a sustained campaign of misinformation, institutional destabilization, and defamation directed against Auroville itself.

For over five years, the functioning statutory bodies of Auroville have faced relentless obstruction: blockades of approved development works, organized intimidation campaigns, coordinated media defamation, harassment of officials, anonymous propaganda networks, parallel unauthorized bodies falsely claiming legitimacy, politically motivated litigation, repeated attempts to internationalize internal disputes through misleading representations, and increasingly aggressive physical confrontations. Yet your statement makes no acknowledgement whatsoever of this sustained context.

Instead, those attempting to uphold the Auroville Foundation Act, implement the Master Plan approved by the Mother, and restore administrative functionality are portrayed as aggressors, while those who have repeatedly obstructed, threatened, defamed, occupied, and disrupted institutional functioning are implicitly legitimized.

This inversion of reality is deeply troubling.

With regard to the incidents specifically cited in your statement:

1. Afsanah Guest House (October 2025)

The transition at Afsanah did not arise arbitrarily. The interim executives, who on record have mismanaged the funds of the guest house, were repeatedly requested over several months by the competent authorities to hand over management and records to the newly constituted team. Those communications were met not with cooperation, but with abusive responses and categorical refusal to comply with administrative decisions. Only after prolonged non-compliance, repeated warnings, and complete institutional deadlock were the premises entered in the presence of Security personnel. Despite sensational allegations subsequently circulated internationally, there exists clear video documentation showing that no violent assault or “brutal takeover” occurred.

Yet fabricated narratives of “martial arts attacks” and “violent seizure” were immediately amplified through activist networks and sympathetic media channels. What was brutal and violent was the resistance to methodical and lawful action.

2. Youth Centre Clearing (20 March 2026)

Your statement describes the dismantling of the Youth Centre as “brutal” and “unprovoked.” This characterization is both inaccurate and profoundly one-sided.

The issue of the Youth Centre cannot be divorced from the decades-long obstruction of the Crown Road and associated HT cable corridor — a critical element of the approved Galaxy Plan, envisioned by the Mother herself and recognized since 1970 as a priority development after the Matrimandir. For over twenty years, a small group repeatedly blocked implementation while claiming moral authority in the name of “community.” The so-called Youth Centre site became, in practice, a political blockade point.

Numerous concerns had been raised over a prolonged period regarding unauthorized activities, including repeated late-night parties, substance abuse complaints, unauthorized monetization, unrestricted outsider access, security complaints from residents and parents, including allegations of prostitution and complaints of rape, not to mention a complete refusal to comply with the minimum administrative norms. Importantly, this was never the officially designated site for a Youth Centre, the original approval having been temporary and next to the current occupation area, and alternative locations had been offered multiple times. Notably, not one of the buildings in the Youth Center took permission and NOC from the statutory ATDC, not even retrospectively.

The reality is that the structure had become a symbol of organized resistance to the implementation of the Master Plan, defiance of the processes and procedures for permission applicable to all, as per the statutory Master Plan, rather than a genuinely inclusive educational or youth institution serving the broader community.

What is especially shocking is the selective outrage expressed in your statement. On the same day, multiple working group members and Aurovilians were physically attacked, threatened, and assaulted. There are recorded instances of point-blank death threats, violent conduct, and assault of Sindhuja, a woman, who was attacked by Dingbawi, and a direct physical attack against Joel, who sustained blood injuries. Even worse, fabricated and counterblast complaints against the victims were filed in an attempt to neutralize or nullify the effect of the complaint lodged against the actual trespassers and attackers.

Yet your statement condemns only the administration and remains entirely silent about the violence perpetrated against those carrying out authorized work on behalf of the Foundation. Such selective moral concern is difficult to reconcile with fairness or impartiality.

3. Town Hall / Common Meeting Room Incident (13 May 2026)

The Town Hall is an institutional workspace intended for the functioning of officially constituted working groups and services. Over time, however, certain dissolved, unrecognized, or unauthorized parallel groups continued occupying common spaces and using them as operational centers for political mobilization, adverse litigation planning, media propaganda coordination, and obstruction campaigns against statutory bodies. These actions cannot and will not be authorized.

The 13 May incident arose from a scheduling conflict concerning a room already booked for official use. Yet what followed was immediately reframed publicly as another example of "authoritarian aggression."

Particularly concerning is the attempt to portray certain individuals as innocent victims while omitting their own repeated misconduct. One such individual, Mr. Arun Ambathy, who has been declared persona non grata by the Competent Authority following repeated and documented engagement in provocative and abusive conduct towards working group members, interference with authorized development works, continuous distasteful slander of Auroville, its officers, and members of groups on media and social media, and participation in organized obstruction of Master Plan implementation. During the incident in question, he physically assaulted a group of working people, captured neatly on camera, including the dragging of a woman's phone and her hair, using criminal force when she resisted, snatching the mobile phones of others. Yet again, your statement ignores these facts entirely while focusing exclusively on the temporary confiscation of a phone by Antim, who did so after due warning during an escalating confrontation.

Whether Antim, in his role as an office bearer, had the authority to be in that meeting room while Ambathy himself was trespassing by law, creating a nuisance to others, including women who protested being recorded, was right in his confiscation of the phone, which was promptly handed over over to the police 15 minutes later, is a matter of judicial scrutiny and shall be settled at the correct time forums. But Ambathy's assault on Sindhuja needs no expert to tell us whether it was right or wrong - It is plain for all to see, and it is beyond disgraceful that such esteemed people as yourselves have refused to even acknowledge this fact.

This deliberate omission creates a fundamentally distorted picture and informs us clearly of where your loyalties currently lie.



Antim, Joel, Muriel and team, office bearers at the Admissions & Terminations desk

4. Land Exchanges

Your remarks on land exchanges are particularly disappointing because several among you are fully aware of the immense efforts previously undertaken under the leadership of Dr. Karan Singh to enable the consolidation of Master Plan lands through exchanges. Those efforts were repeatedly obstructed by precisely the same organized faction that now presents itself internationally as the authentic voice of the Residents' Assembly.

Many will remember Dr. Karan Singh's own deeply anguished communication to the community after those earlier efforts were sabotaged. He appealed to Aurovilians not to sacrifice the future of the city to narrow interests and personal attachment. Those appeals went unheeded.

The present land exchanges did not emerge casually or secretly. They underwent extensive scrutiny and required approvals at multiple levels of Government, including examination by several Ministries. Many of the allegations subsequently made against these exchanges have already been tested before courts and have failed to withstand scrutiny. Yet despite this, the same narratives continue to be repeated internationally as unquestioned truth.

What is even more concerning is the fact that you have conveniently ignored the fact that these issues have been agitated before courts of law - not once but thrice - and has been dismissed entirely and well settled up to the Supreme Court that the Governing Board is entirely in the right, due consultation was indeed completed, and that the allegations of loss to Auroville had no basis nor validity. When something is litigated and settled, it is not up to any of us to speculate and restate it as an open question - even doing so is contemptuous and dishonouring the laws of India.

We would have expected better of you, learned people, to exercise more caution and be more informed.

To portray land exchange as inherently illegitimate while ignoring the court verdicts and statutory mandate to consolidate Master Plan lands is intellectually dishonest and deeply unfair to those trying to realize the city physically after decades of paralysis.

5. Visas

Your statement on visas repeats allegations without acknowledging either the sovereign authority of the Government of India in immigration matters, or the actual conduct records involved in several cases.

The reality is that between July 2021 and September 2025, approximately 2,601 visa and extension applications were processed, with an overwhelming majority recommended positively. Only a very small percentage involved restrictions or adverse recommendations, often connected to serious and repeated issues involving non-cooperation, institutional misconduct, illegal activities, or actions directly undermining the functioning and stability of Auroville.

To casually imply that all visa issues arise merely from "dissent" is irresponsible and misleading. Such statements erase the distinction between legitimate disagreement and organized campaigns of obstruction, intimidation, misinformation, and destabilization.

Finally, we must express our sadness that former members of the IAC — individuals who once carried the responsibility of guiding Auroville towards unity and higher consciousness — have chosen to publicly reinforce one-sided narratives without first engaging seriously with those currently carrying the burden of administration, planning, legal defense, development implementation, and institutional restoration.

The present administration and working groups did not create the divisions in Auroville. The divisions existed long before this administration came in, the battle lines were drawn years ago, and the foothold of these entrenched opposing forces is not a new phenomenon. The new administration inherited years of paralysis, entrenched obstruction, financial opacity, administrative dysfunction, and growing hostility towards any attempt to implement the Master Plan or uphold statutory governance.



Obstruction of public works,
Punishable by law

The outburst of visible conflict was absolutely unavoidable, and the perpetrators of these outbursts are not those working with the administration today but those who have resisted since time immemorial the manifestation of Her project, the city, the Earth Needs, attempting to swap it for their own personal preferences and ideas. Manifesting this City in all its aspects - from the most material Yantric form given by Her to what animates it - would have an enormous impact on the trajectory and unfolding of the evolution of the entire earth.

Despite relentless attacks, defamation, legal harassment, social boycotts, and physical intimidation, the working groups continue to serve with dedication towards the realization of the Mother's vision: the implementation of the Galaxy Plan, the restoration of institutional functioning, the consolidation of Master Plan lands, the development of infrastructure, and the protection of Auroville's future as an actual city — not merely an abstract ideal invoked selectively to resist all change.

We are not easily deterred, even in spite of your extremely disproportionate and weak stance, siding with the true aggressors. We therefore urge you, respectfully but firmly, to reconsider the manner in which your moral authority is being used by a narrow faction engaged in sustained campaigns against the Auroville Foundation and its functioning institutions. Such a reconsideration would benefit you - The Mother does not need anyone to agree with the Truth for it to become so.

True service to Auroville today requires helping restore collaboration, discipline, truthfulness, and collective responsibility — not legitimizing narratives rooted in division, obstruction, and propaganda.

We remain committed to the Mother's work, to Sri Aurobindo's vision, and to the realization of Auroville through sincerity, unity, discipline, and collective effort. And we will continue to fight this battle, relentlessly, for we are on the ground, watching every second of the Lila, and have no confusion about the difference between what is Truth and what is Falsehood.



violence and physical obstruction of
public works, implicitly approved by
former IAC members in their
communication

If you are truly interested in knowing more about any of the incidents, you may contact us, and we will be available to clarify.

May Her Will be Done. Satyameva Jayate.

In the words of The Mother:

"...Lying down in front of a train to prevent it from passing is a moral violence which can create more disturbances than physical violence [...] That is a good example: you should make them understand that lying down in front of a train to prevent it from passing is as great a violence...

even greater than attacking it with weapons..."

"When you have nothing pleasant to say about something or somebody in the Ashram, keep silent."

"You must know that this silence is faithfulness to the Divine's work."

22 October 1965, CWM - Words of the Mother, Relations with Persons Outside the Ashram, p. 145

Best Regards,

The Working Committee of the Residents' Assembly

Ms. Anu Legrand

Mr. Arun Selvam

Mr. Joseba Martinez

Mr. Selvaraj Damotharan

Mr. Parthasarathy Krishnan

Auroville Town Development Council

Ms. Jaya Berggreen-Clausen

Ms. Shindhuja Jagadeesh

Mr. Toby Neuman

Mr. Jothi Prasad Rajan

Mr. Ponnusamy Murugesan

Funds and Assets Management Committee

Mr. Chandresh

Mr. Kalia

Admissions & Terminations Scrutinizing Committee

Mr. Antim Singhi

Ms. Muriel Ghion

Admission & Termination Registry

Mr. Joel Van Lierde

Ms. Ravindra Solanki

Mr. William Anthony Raj

Auroville Security & Emergency Service

Mr. Giacomo



The Evolution of Consciousness

Some voices speak from knowledge. Others speak from experience. And sometimes, rarely, a voice carries both.

We are honoured to welcome Dr. Alok Pandey, psychiatrist, author, and long-time practitioner of Integral Yoga, whose work over decades has explored the meeting point between psychology, consciousness, spirituality, death, transformation, and the evolutionary future envisioned by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

We offer our heartfelt gratitude to him for accepting this conversation and sharing with Auroville Tomorrow reflections born not only from study, but from inner practice, service, and a lifelong search for deeper truth.



1. You served for many years as a psychiatrist in the Indian Air Force. What profound gap did you perceive between your clinical experience in the military and the teachings of Sri Aurobindo that ultimately led you to completely transform the direction of your life?

Modern Psychiatry, in fact, the entire field of Modern Medicine is built on a solely material model of man. Man, in this view, is a machine. It operates by purely material processes that are the result of a long and complex evolution. Hence, the main treatment is focused on the chemicals that drive the machine. This working model has slowly dehumanised the once noble medical profession. While it does sometimes provide quick fixes to the apparent immediate problem, symptoms as we call it, it leaves the deeper problem, the real psychological difficulty, the deeper spiritual questions untouched.

Sri Aurobindo gives us a consciousness-based understanding, opening doors to new possibilities of psychological and spiritual interventions. He does not discard the role of physical mechanisms in health and healing, but he brings an integral perspective that completes the missing pieces of the enigma called man.

My turning towards the integral yoga was, however, not in search of a truer and complete model of psychiatry. It was in quest of understanding man himself and his destiny. Everything else that I had read until then, including philosophical and spiritual literature, seemed inadequate. It did not answer my query. Sri Aurobindo gave me the complete answers to my seeking, and once my mind accepted the truths of his teachings, it naturally turned towards discovering what I had read and reproducing it in my life. By the time psychiatry came, I was already well into the integral yoga, having had my own experiences. Hence, it was not difficult to see the grossly inadequate picture provided by modern psychiatry and the complete understanding provided by Sri Aurobindo.

2. You often speak of death as a process of transformation. Was there any personal or clinical experience that deeply changed your understanding of death?

As to experiences, I have had plenty of them and of all kinds. Some of my clients also narrated the experiences with their departed ones.

One of the striking experiences with regard to death was the premonitory dream that a lady had. She saw four of her young children, all in their twenties, floating on a river as dead bodies float a few days before their death. They lived in different cities, and hence the chances were rarest of rare that such a thing could happen, especially as none of them lived near any river. She somehow forgot about it. A few days later, all four children met in a city just to spend some time together. They went to play near a river, and suddenly the water swelled up unexpectedly, drowning all of them as none knew how to swim. It was deeply traumatic for the parents. But strangely, their youngest son had made their travel arrangements for Pondicherry just a few days before he, along with the others, died. They were naturally shattered when they came, more to honour the dead boy's wish. That is when I met them. However, by the time they returned, their life had changed completely. They spent the rest of their life engaging fully in the service of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. I have had quite a few firsthand encounters with the departed, but that would simply stretch into long narrations.

3. How would you personally describe your book, *Death, Dying, and Beyond*? What gave birth to this book, and what inner necessity led you to write it?

The book has done exceptionally well, I am told. Many have benefited from it, and it has already been translated into quite a few Indian and foreign languages. It was written at the behest of Vijay bhai, Secretary of Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, so that a comprehensive understanding could be provided in a single book on the different aspects of Death. I had never thought of writing books, though I would often write under the stress of inspiration. It happened to be the first book, though many have been printed after that, such as *Veda of the Body*, *Writings on Savitri*, *Parables and Legends*, *Mother India*, *Eternal Feminine*, and several others. All that I can say is that The Mother simply used me as Her instrument for Her own incalculable purposes.

4. How tangible and experiential is the concept of the Psychic Being in everyday life and practice? How can one distinguish the voice of the Psychic Being from the voices of the mind, emotions, or ego?

The experience of the Psychic Being and, in fact, all other experiences, subjective and objective, such as visions and voices, as well as states of consciousness, are not only tangible but sometimes leave a lasting impact. The experience of the Psychic Being brings a surge in love and bhakti with the sole purpose of self-giving. It gives to faith an unshakable quality, to the mind a clear intuitive discernment, fills the heart with a sacred love and joy, brings great compassion and enthusiasm in the Divine service, opens doors to the free play of intuition through the heart, purifies the mind and thoughts uplifting them towards the Divine effortlessly, weakens, eventually diminishes and conquers the lower vital propensities, removes all selfishness and egoism from nature opening the whole field to the Divine working, frees one completely from fear, gives the intuitive sense of immortality making death seem so unreal. One also gets flashes of past lives. The dark and tormenting emotions, such as hate, jealousy, revolt against the Divine, depression, and doubt, become impossible, and there grows a constant sense of inner peace, love, and joy that begins to flow in the heart. One develops a constant inner nearness to the Divine, a deepest intimacy with the Divine Mother, a constant sense of Her Presence within and around, and a deep, deep gratitude towards Her. There are other things, too, in fact, many other things as we get rooted in the psychic being.

5. Sri Aurobindo spoke about “Hostile Forces” on the path of Yoga. In your own experience, how do these forces most commonly manifest in today’s world?

The hostile forces operate characteristically by pressing upon the vital ego with the result, either of megalomania and feelings of superiority, or else abnormal depression, uncontrollable crying spells, loss of faith and hope, and sometimes strong suicidal ideations pushing the person over the brink. They can conjure experiences that mislead, visions and voices that flatter and deceive, hostility towards the Divine and the Guru and His Work.



They readily enter where there is a lack of faith, a fundamental insincerity and vanity, especially strong sexual excesses, and excessive ambition.

The one great remedy is to recover the lost faith, to cultivate sincerity, and see what is opening the doors to the dark forces. Most clients, however, are too overpowered to do anything. They need some medication to provide some relief from the symptoms by closing the doors in the brain to the intrusions. From the vantage point gained, they are then open to the needed inner change.

Calling the Divine Name is a powerful way to keep the hostile forces away and to repel their attacks. That is why perhaps, one of the first things that these forces attack is faith, inflicting serious doubts upon the Divine Grace.

6. What role has The Mother played in your life and work? Have you had any personal inner experiences or contact with Her that remain alive and guiding within you today?

Everything. When I look back at my life, I see her all over, not only at every crucial step but all along the way. I have felt the sense of being protected and carried by Her always. Even when there were shattering storms outside, she held me within through it all. I have had several instances of concrete protection physically. How can I speak of one experience that remains alive and guides when my entire life itself is Hers? There is nothing other than Hers, all is Her gift, Her glory, Her Grace. In fact, I have no separate existence other than Her. But if you still ask for one experience out of the countless moments of Her ever-living Presence, I would say that I feel Her most intensely in and through Her Service. And in this regard, the most intense experiences with Her were when I had the greatest opportunity to serve Her in Patiala and Bangalore centres. But it is a story too long to be told. Suffice it to say, I have experienced Her living interventions in real dangers, in inner difficulties, in intense moments of aspiration, and in the joy of Her service.

7. Dr. Alok, as Iran and much of the world face growing loss, conflict, and uncertainty, how should we understand death from Sri Aurobindo's perspective? And what can help people preserve inner peace and hope through grief?

Death is a transition, not an end. The soul of man and life itself continue to evolve and progress through the process of death. Death is not just a change of body but also of situations and circumstances. It is one of the processes of an evolutionary change. Destruction is a preparation for a New Creation. Nothing is lost forever except for the body and physical appearances.

It returns, often in better conditions and happier circumstances. Those who have endured the struggle come back and share the victory as well. Even failed actions leave seeds of the future that spring when the season is right.

Besides, all this has been foreseen. Sri Aurobindo has revealed it in Savitri. What is needed first and foremost is a living faith in the Divine Grace. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have spoken of this turbulence as The Hour of God, when the old bases get shaken to prepare the way for the new to come. **Sri Aurobindo reveals the deeper truths behind this dance of destruction in Savitri.**

'Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break
A dead resistance in the mortal's heart,
His slow inertia as a living stone.
If the heart were not forced to want and weep,
His soul would have lain down content, at ease,
And never thought to exceed the human start
And never learned to climb towards the Sun.
This earth is full of labour, packed with pain;
Throes of an endless birth coerce her still;
The centuries end, the ages vainly pass
And yet the Godhead in her is not born.
The ancient Mother faces all with joy,
Calls for the ardent pang, the grandiose thrill;
For with pain and labour all creation comes.
This earth is full of the anguish of the gods;
Ever they travail driven by Time's goad,
And strive to work out the eternal Will
And shape the life divine in mortal forms.
His will must be worked out in human breasts
Against the Evil that rises from the gulfs,
Against the world's Ignorance and its obstinate strength,
Against the stumblings of man's pervert will,
Against the deep folly of his human mind,
Against the blind reluctance of his heart.
The spirit is doomed to pain till man is free.
There is a clamour of battle, a tramp, a march:
A cry arises like a moaning sea,
A desperate laughter under the blows of death,
A doom of blood and sweat and toil and tears.
Men die that man may live, and God be born.'

The Mother who personally witnessed the First World War and even worked to help the victims reveals the truth behind it all.

'All depends on the clarity with which the divine Will can be manifested upon earth; if it has been able in time to prepare for itself instruments which are sufficiently receptive and pure, instruments which are consciously immersed in its Essence while maintaining an effective contact with the active nervous power, then this monstrous and sublime outpouring of unbridled energies will yield its utmost results for the transformation of earth and man.'

She has shown us the way to navigate through these forces of destruction. Most importantly, to look beyond and work towards the new creation that alone will make wars impossible. Auroville is one such Divine Action whose occult effect is destined to pull mankind out of its tendency for wars and blind destruction by harnessing the forces of a new creation, which will make wars unnecessary for the needed change.

8. As an Iranian, there are moments when it feels as though death moves more powerfully through the world than life itself. How can one live with this awareness without falling into fear, despair, or meaninglessness?

The Mother reminds us that 'we are living in an exceptional time at an exceptional turning point of the world's history. Never before, perhaps, did mankind pass through such a dark period of hatred, bloodshed, and confusion. And, at the same time, never had such a strong, such an ardent hope awakened in the hearts of the people. Indeed, if we listen to our heart's voice, we immediately perceive that we are, more or less consciously, waiting for a new reign of justice, of beauty, of harmonious goodwill and fraternity. And this seems in complete contradiction with the actual state of the world. But we all know that never is the night so dark as before the dawn. May not this darkness, then, be the sign of an approaching dawn? And as never was night so complete, so terrifying, maybe never will dawn have been so bright, so pure, so illuminating as the coming one.... After the bad dreams of the night, the world will awaken to a new consciousness.

The civilisation which is ending now in such a dramatic way was based on the power of the mind, mind dealing with matter and life. What it has been to the world, we have not to discuss here. But a new reign is coming, that of the Spirit: after the human, the divine.

Yet, if we have been fortunate enough to live on earth at such a stupendous, a unique time as this one, is it sufficient to stand and watch the unfolding events? All those who feel that their heart extends further than the limits of their own person and family, that their thought embraces more than small personal interests and local conventions, all those, in short, who realise that they belong not to themselves, or to their family, or even to their country, but to God who manifests Himself in all countries, through mankind, these, indeed, know that they must rise and set to work for the sake of humanity, for the advent of the Dawn.'

In other words, we can lament about the past losses or taking the lead put ourselves completely on the side of the future and work to build a better tomorrow for the earth, a future secure against such man-made catastrophes that wars bring. It is this new future that can be realised through the change of consciousness. Otherwise, all the sacrifices simply go to waste and repeat themselves.

We can also pray and spare a few moments in prayer for those who have departed, so that they may be surrounded in a mantle of Peace as they depart and be protected in their sojourn through the other worlds. While we may not always be able to stop the dance of death, we can surely provide as much succour as possible to those left behind and involved in the struggle. We can reach out to them through our hearts and thoughts if not physically possible.

9. From Sri Aurobindo's perspective, how can we distinguish conscious sacrifice from unconscious self-destruction while remaining courageous and aware in times of transformation?

Conscious sacrifice fills the heart with an ecstasy even in the midst of extreme pain. There are several examples of mystics as well as warriors, as Sri Aurobindo narrates in his poem Baji Prabhou, where people embraced death, consciously flinging themselves headlong into the battle. Essentially, it happens when the cause for which the sacrifice is being made is much greater in the eyes of the martyr. But the surest remedy is flinging oneself in the arms of the Divine, turning danger and death into the soul's opportunity. Sri Aurobindo's Tales of Prison Life is very sobering and humbling in this respect.

10. If Sri Aurobindo were alive today, what do you think would be his most important criticism of the modern world, particularly in relation to science, education, and contemporary psychology?

I think that the greatest criticism of contemporary education, science, and philosophy is the divorce between the spiritual and material aspects of existence. It is this gulf that Sri Aurobindo worked to bridge and to build a synthesis between these two extreme and apparently opposing world views, the material and the spiritual. It is the linking of everything with the deepest spiritual truth, turning all life into a constant yoga and with it, the possibility of an integral union with the Divine, that is among the greatest contributions of Sri Aurobindo.

What does prosperity actually mean now?

On restructuring how we sustain ourselves together

When the Mother spoke of prosperity in Auroville, she did not mean comfort for some. She meant the conditions under which human beings could grow — materially secure enough to be free for inner work, collectively resourced enough to hold each other's dignity.

We have not achieved this yet. But we are trying to see it clearly.

For years, our prosperity system has been fragmented. People contributing in different ways — through units, through BCC, individually — without knowing what they were actually paying for, or why. No one could see the whole. No one could say: this is what it costs to live here, together, at this level of service. That invisibility breeds resentment. It breeds the feeling that one is subsidising someone else's comfort, or being subsidised without knowing it.

We are changing that now. What we need is two pronged approaches, one from the governance aspect of the Prosperity service rollout and the other from the administrative. An accountable, transparent, and scalable structure is necessary for the administrative side, and an independent review and course corrections modalities for governance to bring participation from residents, units & services. Clear guidelines to help the collective transition towards Prosperity need to be rolled out in a phased manner to fulfill and progressively add other collective services in the prosperity-supported systems. This requires that the economy grows and full participation of all the residents is forthcoming.

What is actually fixed

Let us be dispassionate about this. Housing costs money. The 1,800 assets in Auroville — homes, community buildings, land — deteriorate. They need repair. Water systems need maintenance. Electricity infrastructure exists because someone built it and someone pays to keep it running. Health services exist because people are trained and available. These are not optional.

The Mother said prosperity means everyone has access to essential services. Not luxury. Essential. Food, shelter, water, energy, basic health, and education. These are the infrastructure of a human life. And they have a cost.

That cost should be transparent. It should be just. It should be shared according to capacity. And it should not be mysterious.



We are moving toward a fixed component — a monthly amount that every resident contributes toward these essentials. Housing maintenance: approximately 800 rupees per person per month. Water: around 200-300. Energy: 1400-1600 (we are still verifying). Health: 1200, consideration of moving to group insurance with comprehensive coverage at a lower fixed rate per adult & child. Communication: 1000. These numbers come from looking at what we actually spend, divided by how many of us there are.

These are not new expenses. It is money already leaving Auroville, now named clearly, openly.

Why this matters

For years, prosperity has been a word without definition. People would give what they could, when they could. Services would be provided. No one knew if the system was sustainable or if it was just generous people carrying others. That works for a time. It does not work at scale. It does not build accountability. It does not allow for economic budgeting and planning for growth.

This redesign is an act of maturity. It says: we are staying here long-term. We need to know what we owe each other. We need systems that do not depend on the goodwill of individuals, but on clarity about collective needs. A collective support system wherein all have an individual stake, bringing sustainability for the whole.

It is also an act of honesty about what prosperity actually requires. The Mother did not imagine we could do this without resources. She dreamt we could do it without greed. That is different.

What we are still working out

We are not finished. We are in the hard part. We do not yet know the exact cost of energy — Varuna has been providing it as a service at their discretion. Now we need to ask: what is reasonable energy consumption for a person, a family? What does it mean to have "your energy needs met" in Auroville? Is an air conditioner part of that? Is the streetlight? We have to answer these questions, not impose them.

Similarly with health. Right now, we are spending on senior care, ambulance services, home visits, plus what people access individually outside. We have to understand what we collectively choose to provide before we price it. That conversation has to happen with the health services themselves — not imposed, negotiated.

And we have newcomers joining, people in different statuses. We have to be honest: what is the fixed component for someone who has just arrived? What is the transition? We cannot say everyone pays the same when everyone is not in the same place. But we also cannot leave it so loose that it becomes unfair.

These are not accounting problems. These are questions about what kind of collective we are choosing to be.





Who needs to step in

We cannot do this alone in FAMC. We need people who know these services — the ones running them, the ones using them. We need clarity on what housing actually requires to maintain 1,800 units. We need the services to sit with us and say: "This is what it costs, this is what is reasonable. We need the services — all of them — to come together and tell us what they are providing and what it costs. This is accountability becoming visible.

If you work in any of these services, or you care about them, we need you in the next round of meetings. If you are someone who has been wanting to understand how Auroville actually works — not in theory, but in money, in systems, in who pays for what — now is the time to listen and ask.

And if you are a resident wondering why this matters to you: because the next person who arrives in Auroville should not have to wonder if they are being treated fairly. They should know what they owe, and what they can count on in return. That clarity is a form of love.

True prosperity is found only in Unity. In Harmony. In Collaboration. She did not mean everyone pretending to be the same. She meant everyone is clear about what binds them, what they choose to hold together, and what that choice costs.

We are learning, slowly, what that means in practice.

— Chandresh, Member of FAMC, has been involved in restructuring Auroville's prosperity system.



Spiritual Gift of India to the World

Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the Mahayogis of the 20th century, saw India as the spiritual battlefield of the world where the final victory over the forces of ignorance and darkness would be achieved. A closer look at the broad cultural shifts happening in the world today reveals two possibilities: a) masses of humanity moving toward a consumerist-materialistic culture sold aggressively by multinational corporations and financial institutions, with a smattering of 'diversity' provided as extra topping to slightly 'season' the bland mono-culture; b) a vehement rejection of this universalising secular tendency and building of a narrow, separate identity based on a credal religion and rigid religious instinct – which in its worst possible extreme, tends to impose itself forcibly and violently on all as the only alternative to the other possibility which rejects religion altogether.

Sri Aurobindo anticipated both these possibilities and cautioned against them. That is why he brought forth in his writings – based on his cosmic vision of human history and yogic insight into human psychology – the essential spiritual values of Indian culture, which are timeless and relevant for the future age, and indispensable to the conception of a perfect human culture. But Sri Aurobindo is no revivalist, nor a proud nationalist singing past glories. Recognising the distortions and rigidities that inevitably make their way into any culture over the long course of time, he says that completeness or finality cannot be “alleged of no past or present cultural idea or system”.

Highlighting the distinct streams of humanity's quest as reflected in the different emphases given by different civilisations, Sri Aurobindo speaks of a need for divergent lines of advance until humanity can raise its head into “that infinity of the spirit in which there is a light broad enough to draw together and reconcile all highest ways of thinking, feeling and living”. For example, behind the brutal face of European colonialism, particularly of India, Sri Aurobindo, in his rishi-drishti, could see Nature's means to synthesise two distinct streams of humanity's eternal seeking – perfection in the field of matter and of spirit.

His cosmic and comprehensive seer-vision points the way to a new creation, one that would necessitate a new world culture, which must base itself on Spirit as the centre and build its forms the way a spiritual culture would do. But this does not automatically imply that everything that Indian civilisation came up with was perfect, and nothing useful can be assimilated from others.



“Each [civilisation] has achieved something of special value for humanity in the midst of its general work of culture, brought out in a high degree some potentiality of our nature and given a first large standing-ground for its future perfection”.

From the view of the evolutionary future, both the Western and Indian civilisations at their best have only been “half achievements, infant dawns pointing to the mature sunlight that is to come”. If the living aim of culture is “the realisation on earth of the kingdom of heaven”, the real and perfect culture or civilisation yet waits to be discovered; “for the life of mankind is still nine tenths of barbarism to one tenth of culture”.

If all human cultures are imperfect, why, it may be asked, did Sri Aurobindo take so much trouble to lay bare the foundations of Indian culture? The answer: because in its very core, Indian culture stands for a great truth, an indispensable truth of human life and its perfection. The innermost sense of Indian culture – both in spirit and the forms through which the spirit expressed itself – was based on a sound principle of the many-sided evolution of human nature.

“By taking up in itself the whole of life and of human nature, by encouraging the growth of intellect and never opposing it or putting bounds to its freedom, but rather calling it in to the aid of the spiritual seeking”, Indian culture prevented the conflict between religious instinct and pure materialism. Where the Western mentality, through its undue predominance on ‘evolution of forms,’ ended up restricting and drying up the innate religious instinct and plunged itself into pure materialism and secularism, the Indian mentality, because of its essential grounding in a religio-spiritual method of a plastic and universal kind, accepted the ‘evolution of consciousness’ as fundamental to progress. Indian religious mind admitted but aspired to exceed all creeds and forms and allowed every kind of element, resulting in a culture with “unexampled multitudinous richness and a more than millennial persistence and impregnable durability, generality, universality, height, subtlety and many-sided wideness of spiritual attainment and seeking and endeavour”.

The present evolutionary crisis of humanity can only be addressed through the kind of catholicity and plasticity Indian cultural spirit has to offer. Mere political, economic, social, or other external changes cannot fully address the current challenges, which are inherently the result of a fragmented consciousness. A wider, deeper, higher, and unitary consciousness is the need of the hour. The change required is psychological, an inner change, far more radical than merely embodying ethical values. Living up to ethical values and ideals can be an important step or stage in the direction of the required change. But the radical transformation of human nature can come only by placing Spirit at the centre of all human activities.



Sri Aurobindo points our attention to India's constant insistence on founding and organising all life with the Divine as the centre. And this truth, in effect, must be the foundation for renewal and globalisation – in the real sense of the word – of the spirit of Indian culture.

For Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, the world today is an obscure and perverted expression of the divine creation it is meant to be. It is not yet the expression of the divine consciousness and will, but it is meant to become that. It has been created to develop into a perfect manifestation of the Divine under all His forms and aspects—Light and Knowledge, Power, Love, and Beauty. A gradual unfolding of the Truth marks the essential movement behind humanity's march toward its ultimate destiny– to transform earthly life into a divine life, to bring down the kingdom of God on earth, to establish the true Ram-rajya, the true reign of dharma. All these are different conceptions given to the same aspiration hidden deep in the heart of humanity – that of perfecting Life and World.

The march of Western civilisation through the centuries has led to a modern mentality that is moved by a “vehement secular activism”, and such a mind will never arrive at man's highest perfection. The future progress of humanity requires a re-awakening of the old “spiritual practicality” and a large and profound vision of life and progress, which were at the core of the Indian view of human existence. This spiritual truth of India, when infused with the light of a greater power of organisation, which is the strength of the European/Western dominant temperament, will yield new forms of action, force and influence which can help humanity advance further.

The future lies in this great coming together of the best of the East, particularly of India, and the best of the West. The life-affirming Indian “spiritual practicality” would insist on a change of consciousness and involve a gradual progression or a shift away from the mind's natural tendency to create binaries and divisions toward a more harmonising tendency of the inmost part of our being, known as the psychic being in Integral Yoga, chaitya purusha or the soul in Evolution. This is the spiritual gift of India to the world – a true understanding of Yoga and its practice, which will help humanity evolve to a higher consciousness, and from there address the complex problems of life and world.

— **Beloo Mehra, Director, BhāratShakti, Sri Aurobindo Society**



Democratizing Technology and India's Informal Economy

The dominant narrative of technology in India centers on gleaming software campuses, fintech breakthroughs, and AI ambitions. But this image illuminates only a narrow slice of the country. The far larger and more consequential landscape is the informal economy — the street vendors, delivery workers, mechanics, domestic workers, repair shop owners, artisans, autorickshaw drivers, and waste pickers who constitute the true ground of Indian economic life.

This is not a pre-technological India waiting to be upgraded. It is a parallel technological civilization: improvisational, distributed, and deeply sophisticated in its own logic.



Technology has not arrived here as a single transforming force. It has seeped in unevenly, colliding with existing systems, bending them and being bent in return. The result is not a clean transformation but layered reality — adaptation without permission, innovation without recognition, and an opportunity that expands alongside deepening vulnerability.

The Informal Economy Is Not "Pre-Technological"

The assumption that the informal economy is pre-technological reflects a category error: the confusion of formalization with technological sophistication. In practice, informal economic systems operate as high-density environments of applied, context-specific knowledge. A roadside mechanic employs a multimodal diagnostic framework — integrating auditory, tactile, and thermal signals — that is functionally analogous to heuristic-based fault detection in machine diagnostics, though without instrumentation.

A street vendor dynamically adjusts prices based on spoilage risk, demand spikes, and local income cycles, while maintaining relational credit networks that function as non-digitized but structured databases of trust, updated through repeated transactions.

Informal transport networks approximate distributed optimization problems solved through human agents rather than computational nodes; construction workers perform material estimation through embodied expertise and iterative error correction. These are analog computational systems in the precise cognitive-science sense — structured, goal-directed information processing performed through neurons and social rules rather than silicon and software.

The introduction of digital technologies does not, therefore, introduce computation into a previously non-computational space. It introduces a competing computational layer.

Systems such as digital payment infrastructures convert relational exchanges into traceable, machine-readable records, producing gains in speed and transparency in some contexts while fundamentally altering the structure of trust, credit, and autonomy in others. What is occurring is not a transition from non-technology to technology, but a gradual interaction between two technologically distinct regimes: one based on distributed human cognition and relational computation, and another based on formal digital encoding and algorithmic processing. The interface between these regimes is where contemporary economic transformation is most actively unfolding.

The Smartphone as Infrastructure and the Reorganization of Trust

In the contemporary informal economy, the smartphone can no longer be understood as a consumer device. It functions as a condensed infrastructure layer through which multiple essential economic and social systems are simultaneously accessed, coordinated, and recorded. For delivery riders, street vendors, small traders, and gig workers, it operates as a banking interface, workplace terminal, logistics coordinator, navigation instrument, identity proxy, and gateway to state-linked digital services. It is not optional equipment but a dependency structure embedded in the conditions of participation itself. Workers unable to access smartphone interfaces are often excluded not only from digital services but from the economic networks those services now mediate.

A parallel transformation has reshaped state-citizen interaction. Welfare delivery, identity verification, and financial inclusion mechanisms increasingly rely on digitally mediated authentication, making the smartphone a functional extension of administrative infrastructure. The widespread adoption of unified payment interfaces has significantly altered the microstructure of commerce. Cash-based informal exchanges historically operated with low institutional visibility; their conversion to digital payments introduces persistent transactional traceability, producing structured financial histories for previously excluded actors and facilitating access to micro-credit. At the same time, income flows that were once ephemeral become continuously recorded, reducing the degree of opacity that historically characterized informal economic activity. This creates a dual outcome: enhanced inclusion within formal financial systems alongside increased exposure to institutional monitoring and algorithmic classification. The informal economy is therefore not external to digital infrastructure — it is increasingly mediated through it, with significant consequences for both opportunity and vulnerability.

Platformization, Digital Dependency, and the Hidden Architecture of Informal Work

The rise of digital platforms has not merely introduced new tools for work; it has reorganized the structure of labor itself. Ride-hailing, food delivery, logistics, and on-demand services are now mediated by computational intermediaries that sit between workers and customers. Workers are designated as "partners" or "independent contractors," a terminology that decouples control from formal employment obligations while still exercising operational authority through software. Task allocation, performance evaluation, and income flows are governed by algorithmic systems rather than direct supervision — the manager becomes structurally invisible, while control is embedded in the platform's code. The result is a labor regime characterized by the simultaneous intensification of monitoring and weakening of institutional protection, where workers operate under continuous evaluation without access to stable employment safeguards, formal grievance mechanisms, or predictable income structures.

Large segments of this population experience what can be described as constrained digital agency: limited literacy in interface design, reliance on shared or low-end devices, unstable connectivity, and linguistic barriers in application ecosystems optimized for urban or English-dominant users. Despite these constraints, essential services increasingly assume uninterrupted digital participation. This produces system-level fragility: a biometric authentication failure can interrupt welfare entitlements; a platform suspension can eliminate a worker's primary income without immediate recourse.

Compounding this is the persistent burden of continuous adaptation — workers must repeatedly learn new payment interfaces, update compliance behaviors, and respond to evolving platform policies. This adaptive effort constitutes a form of labor in itself, though it is rarely recognized as such. The costs of technological transition are thus disproportionately borne by those with the least capacity to absorb them.

These dynamics fall harder on women. Many women participate in economic activity through home-based production, online resale, food preparation, and social commerce, but often within structurally constrained conditions: restricted mobility, shared or controlled device access, household surveillance, and unequal access to digital literacy. A biometric failure or platform suspension can eliminate income, yet women face additional barriers — a husband's phone may be the only available device, verification messages may go unseen, and grievance redressal requires time and mobility they frequently lack. Technology's promise of inclusion thus becomes, for many women, inclusion into a system that extracts adaptation without providing autonomy. Recognizing this requires not a separate analytical category but a persistent gender lens across every layer of informal-tech analysis, from platform design to grievance mechanisms to connectivity infrastructure.

Technology, Informality, and the Limits of "Inclusion"

A recurring assumption in discussions of technological change is that informality is a transitional condition that will gradually disappear as digital systems mature. Empirically, however, what is occurring is not elimination but reorganization. In platform-mediated labor, economic coordination has become increasingly digital while core conditions of work remain structurally unstable. Workers are continuously tracked and algorithmically evaluated, yet still experience persistent precarity — lacking stable wages, employment-linked insurance, collective bargaining power, and predictable schedules. Informality does not disappear under digital coordination; it is re-engineered into a computationally managed system. The organization of work becomes more formal in its data structure while remaining informal in its distribution of risk.

The dominant discourse around technology frequently relies on the language of "inclusion" — into banking systems, digital identity frameworks, and formal financial networks. Yet inclusion as a technical process is not equivalent to empowerment or protection. It describes entry into a system, not the terms under which that system operates. The critical questions extend beyond access: inclusion into what institutional architecture, under whose operational control, with what legal and social protections, and with what rights when algorithmic systems fail? Technology in the informal economy is ultimately about the reconfiguration of power relations — how visibility is produced, how labor is organized, how survival is mediated, and how risk is distributed.

A different technological architecture is imaginable. Digital systems could be designed to preserve relational trust rather than replace it — for instance, payment interfaces that record transaction histories without mandating real-time traceability for every exchange, allowing vendors to maintain informal credit networks while optionally surfacing reputation data. Worker-centric platform governance would include transparent, appealable algorithms, collective data rights, and portability of performance ratings across platforms. Connectivity infrastructure could be extended through lightweight, store-and-forward protocols for off-grid or intermittent contexts. These are not technical impossibilities; they are design choices. Moving from critique to constructive intervention means asking not only who is included, but who designs the rules of inclusion. Informality is not a bug in India's technology story. It may well be its operating system.

— Dr. Mrityunjay Guha Majumdar, Assistant Professor at Amrita and Adjunct Professor at NIAS Bengaluru

Where Vision Meets Strategy

Last month, Auroville became the setting for something quietly significant, a two-day strategic seminar that brought together senior leaders from the Gujarat Health Sector in a remarkable convergence of vision and purpose. These were not routine meetings. They were the kind of gatherings that remind us why sitting in the same room, wrestling with the same questions, and being honest about the same challenges still matters, perhaps now more than ever.

At the heart of the seminar was a commitment to clarity. Through deep SWOT analyses, participants examined what their institutions were truly made of, uncovering hidden opportunities, mapping out a clear path toward integrated growth, and confronting the structural gaps that, if left unaddressed, quietly widen over time. Real transformation, after all, does not begin with grand announcements. It begins in the honest, sometimes uncomfortable space where organizations dare to look at themselves clearly.

Day one was devoted to internal alignment, aligning each unit with Auroville's core values of sustainability and integrity. It is the foundational work that makes everything else possible, demanding not just agreement in principle but a shared understanding of what those values require in practice.

Day two expanded the circle. Auroville Foundation staff, Gujarat Health officers, and unit leads came together around a powerful "Gaps and Bridges" strategy, built to identify developmental hurdles, construct collaborative infrastructure, and close the gap between today's challenges and tomorrow's potential.

What this seminar ultimately demonstrated is something worth holding onto: that monitoring, analysis, and structured dialogue are not administrative formalities. They are acts of care. When transparency met cross-sector collaboration last month in Auroville, the result was not just better planning, it was the beginning of genuine transformation.

Bridging visions. Building futures.



Ganga Avataran (Descent of Ganga)

The Mother said, "In truth, the entire form of Savitri has descended en masse" from the highest region, and Shri Aurobindo, with his genius, only arranged the lines in a superb and magnificent style. Sometimes, entire lines were revealed, and he has left them intact; he worked hard, untiringly, so that inspiration could come from the highest possible summit. And what a work he has created! Yes, it is a true creation in itself ----(Shristi, not Nirman!).

This is like the descent of Ganga from her heavenly abode through the "being" of King Rishi Bhagirath, pure, immaculate, incessant in flow, for creating a unique spiritual civilization upon earth. From "Satya Yuga" to "Kali Yuga," inspiration is flowing through the Tapasya of Rishis. What Bhagirath did was for the "avataran", the physical descent of Ganga was a reality. What Sri Aurobindo has done is convert that "avataran" into a flow of inspired poetry.

"A world's desire compelled her mortal birth".

"At last, the traveller in the paths of Time.

Arrives on the frontiers of eternity.

In the transient symbol of humanity draped.

He feels his substance of undying self.

And loses his kinship to mortality."

This is the issue of an inspired revealed poetry, transcendent in flow and birth of "Savitri", "The Mother", the descent of the creatrix for transfiguration of earth consciousness and transformation of earthly life to Life Divine. The chosen land is "Bharat," Aryabhumi. Rabindranath, in one of his songs to hail this land, penned, "Janhavi Jamuna, bigolito Karuna," meaning mother rivers like Janhavi (Ganga) and Jamuna (Yamuna) flow with liquid divine compassion (bigolito Karuna) to nurture and nourish human consciousness. This land has a crown of snowcapped mountains (shubhro tushar kiritini).

Words fall short to really manifest what is revealed in the sky of consciousness. The epic "Savitri" is not just an epic to be read and re-read, contemplated upon, meditated upon, chanted like a mantra, but to be perpetually, constantly, incessantly lived in every moment. It is "Amrit" for life, living existence across Time, Space, Circumstance.

—Dr. Archana Choudhary



From Life to Kindness, Real Stories from India

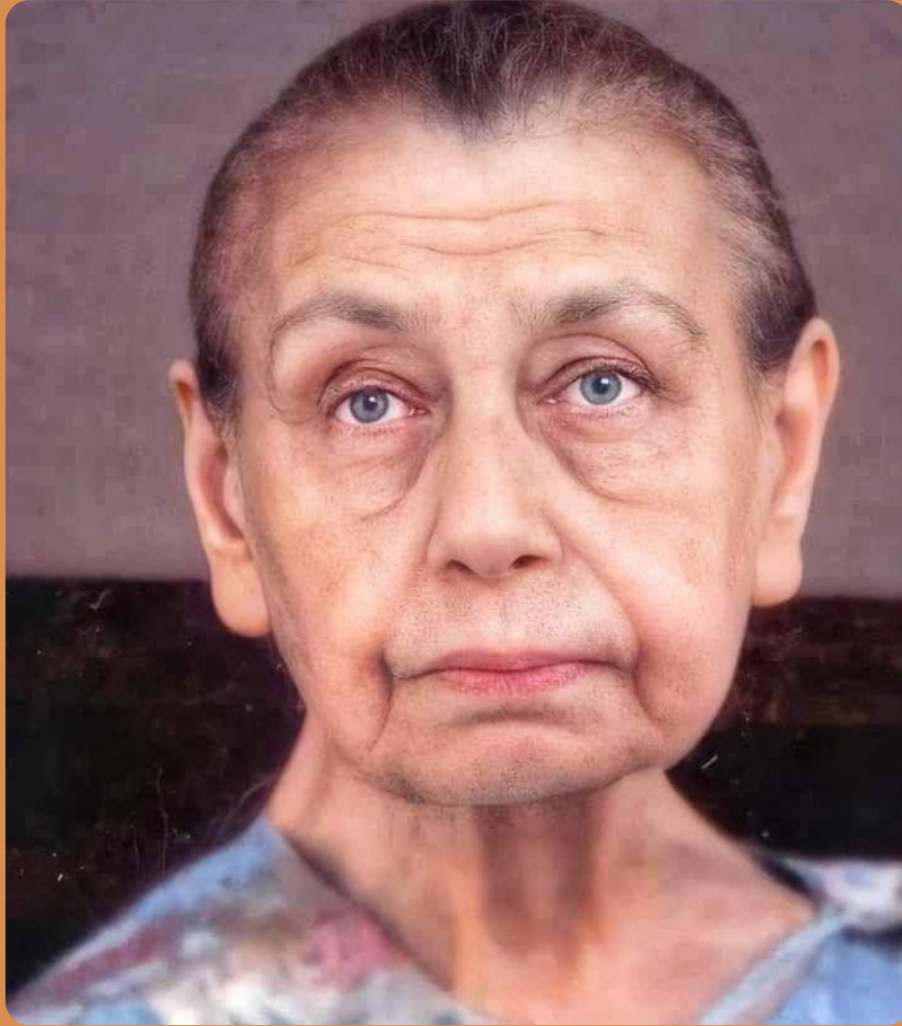
Learning Beyond the Classroom

What if a child's best lesson happened in a garden, or while listening to music with eyes closed, drawing the shapes the notes made? Across India, a quiet revolution in education has been unfolding — one that refuses to measure a child's worth by exam scores alone. From Delhi to Mumbai to Auroville, schools like Mirambika, Tridha, Shishuvan, and Isai Ambalam are asking a different question: not what should children learn, but how, and at what pace, and through which senses. Inspired by the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo, Rudolf Steiner, and child-led learning, these schools weave art, music, gardening, and democratic participation into the fabric of everyday education. In Auroville's own Isai Ambalam — the Hall of Harmony — kindergarteners listen to music and paint what they feel, not what they see. In a world where creativity and emotional resilience matter as much as academic performance, perhaps the real question was always this: should education prepare children only for exams, or for life itself?



One Child at a Time

In 1988, a two-year-old boy was left behind in a Delhi slum — holding his three-day-old sister in his arms. That child was Devendra Kumar, and what began as abandonment became, decades later, the origin story of one of India's most powerful grassroots movements. Pushed into child labour at eight, he found an unlikely refuge in community volunteering — and discovered something he had never known before: belonging. In 2010, after fighting to protect his sister from child marriage, he founded Ladli Foundation, dedicated to education, dignity, and opportunity for vulnerable girls. Today, Ladli has impacted over 2.7 million lives — setting up computer labs where children had never touched a keyboard, and introducing AI-enabled washrooms to address the hygiene crisis quietly driving girls out of school. One of those girls, Kamini, is today a trustee of the foundation at 26. "If every home takes responsibility for one marginalised girl," Devendra says, "a revolution can happen."



Do not fear. It is fear that helps that thing (adverse forces) to come. Do not doubt. It is doubt that helps it to come. Do not expect it in any way. It is expectation that helps it to come. Concentrate only on me and on the certitude of the coming Victory. It is the most powerful arms to chase it for ever. Keep courage and faith, I am with you.

— *The Mother*

Scan for Info



@aurovilleofficial



@aurovilleofficial



@aurovillemediainterface



@AurovilleMedia

*He who lives to serve
the Truth is not affected
by outward circumstances.*