INTEGRAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
“The village is the cell of the national body and the cell-life must be healthy and developed for the national body to be healthy and developed…. we must begin at the bottom and work up to the apex.”

~ Sri Aurobindo
The Village Situation in India
An Overview
The Challenges When We Started in 2005

- Dilapidated housing
- People living in unsanitary conditions
- Government apathy towards old & invalid
- Illiteracy and huge dropout rates
- Lack of public facilities
- Insufficient or no healthcare
Nearly **700 million** people live in about **650,000 villages**—mostly below the poverty line.

Rural agriculture and allied services contribution to the GDP of the nation has reduced drastically from **51.88% in 1950** to **13.94%** in 2013.

Almost three-fourths of the rural households in India live with a monthly income of less than **Rs. 5000** (approx. USD 70 or GBP 55).
Most **houses** are made of mud, with thatched roofs, without openings for light or ventilation, no potable water, and with no toilets or sewage facilities.

- The cooking is done with **firewood**.

- 90% children attend government schools, with concentration only on rote learning.

- The **dropout rate**, especially among the girl-students, is very high due to economic and social conditions.

- The nearest **hospital** may be at a distance of 15–20 km, with no means of transport.

- The **health center** is usually unhygienic, without a qualified doctor and errant paramedic staff.
Only about 58% males and 30.5% females are literate up to middle level of education (equivalent of Grade 5).

At primary level, expenditure per student in urban areas is approx. Rs. 10,000 (USD 142.5; GBP 112.5/annum), more than four times than that in rural areas, pegged at Rs. 2,811 (USD 39.75; GBP 31/annum) at government schools.
The Project—An Endeavour
Tamil Nadu is a state in southern India.

In Villupuram, the largest district in Tamil Nadu, lie 20 villages (at a distance of about 15 km from Pondicherry) with a huge population of scheduled castes and people living below poverty level in great need of developmental support and help.

Total no. of people benefiting through project in 2017–18 is 20,000, belonging to 4,000 families.
INTEGRAL RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Our Approach and Activities
❖ Total no. of villages: **20 villages**

❖ Total no. of people benefiting through project: **20,000 people**

❖ Community members who started livelihood activities: **900 people**

❖ Trained community members: **1,972 people**
- Number of vulnerable and marginalized people benefitting: **750 people**
- Household income levels have gone up by **20–40%**
- Drop out rate was **90%** for students of Grade 12. Now it has come down to **10%**
- **0% dropout** in students of Grade 10
Education

❖ **Children’s Corner:** Providing extra-classes, skill and proficiency training and cultural activities for **1,750 children**.

❖ **Rural Computer Education:** for **1,500 schoolchildren** in software and hardware in 3 computer centres.

❖ **Scholarship Assistance:** For children of destitute and single parents. Around **70 students** got scholarships worth **Rs. 4 lakhs** in 2017–18.

No. of children benefitting in the project: **2,000**
❖ English Access Microscholarship Program: Sponsored by the US Embassy where 250 students have successfully completed learning English since 2015. The current batch has 100 more students.

❖ Extra-tuitions for Board Examinations: Attended by nearly 1,800 children from Grades X and XII in subjects such as Maths, Science, English, etc. For the last 5 years, the villages have seen 100% pass results.
❖ Number of Children in Children’s Corner (weekend classes): **1750**
❖ Number of students in Daily Supplementary Education: **2,000**
❖ Number of Children in Annual Camps: **1,000**
❖ Value Education for Children: **30** Programmes, covering **1,500** students
❖ Communication Skills Workshops: **11**, covering **800** students
❖ Behavioral Training Workshops: **20** programmes, covering **1,250** students
Women Empowerment & Livelihood

- **Employment and skill training programmes:** 2,000 women being trained in 20 farming and non-farming income-generation occupations, such as tailoring, handicrafts, dairy farming, organic farming, paper products, sales of local merchandise, etc.

- **Leadership and Team Building Workshops:** In association with professionals for progressive and informed women leaders and team members.

No. of women benefitting through SARVAM: **2000**
Loans and Financial Assistance: Through Pudhia Udhayam Community Revolving Fund. More than 100 savings groups with 2,150 women formed, and the Fund now has a corpus of Rs. 3 lakhs, to finance their personal and professional needs.
In 2017–18, more than 800 women are being educated as a part of the adult literacy programme.

295 members have obtained group loans; besides 500 others have been already linked up with banks.

Nearly 50% of the members have been linked to local commercial banks.

Through banks, more than Rs. 10 million has been disbursed as loans, with almost no defaulters.
Digital and Financial Literacy

- Regular trainings being provided in digital bank transaction, operation of debit cards, importance of health and life insurance and online government schemes.

- 25 types of small business commenced in the project villages (more 10 new start-ups + 15 existing business expanded)

- 225 women are being trained in computers in the 3 computer centres of the village.
Vulnerable & Marginalized

The elderly, orphans, widows, abandoned women and children, terminally ill and other marginalized members are most vulnerable to suffering because of social exclusion and domestic violence.

❖ Athletic Meets: Sporting activities for middle-aged and elderly to encourage social equality and communal unity.

No of vulnerable & marginalized people benefiting from the project: 750
❖ **Festival Celebrations:** During regional festivals, such as Pongal, Diwali and Masi Magam, SARVAM organizes special activities and events to make connect and be supportive to each other **without any discrimination of caste, race, language, religion and social status.**

❖ **Financial Assistance:** Sums of Rs. 5,000 and above are regularly provided for extremely poor, marginalized individuals/families to start livelihood activities.

❖ **More than 15 free health camps** are organized every year for eyes, heart, ears, diabetes, orthopaedic, reproductive health and geriatric care in general.
YOUTH

❖ **Skill Training:** Skill training such as basic computers operation, radio programme management, paper products, etc., are regularly given to young boys and girls.

❖ **Spoken English:** Spoken English classes conducted for 100 youth.

❖ **Continuation of Higher Education:** 25 youngsters who had dropped out from their schools, encouraged to complete and now studying are community colleges.
- **Awareness Workshops:** Discontinued the abuse of alcohol and drugs after attending regular awareness workshops on the devastation of their own bodies and families.

- **Regulating Lives:** After attending the awareness programmes, many youngsters are going to the jobs.
Health and Sanitation

❖ **Health**: SARVAM organizes workshop and training programmes wherein school-going children are taught to eat nutritious food with resources that are available in their households.

❖ **Hygiene**: Various programmes and projects to provide safe drinking water; sewage, excreta and garbage disposal; domestic and community sanitation, etc., covering 18 villages.
Sub-Health Centre

- Full-fledged, cleaner and better-stocked health centres are now running in most villages
- An MOU has been signed between the government (under the aegis of District Rural Development Agency) and SARVAM for constructing 350 toilets in the villages; 200 toilets are constructed, and 111 under progress.
❖ 4 school toilets constructed.
❖ 2 Public toilets renovated.
❖ 20 Sanitation awareness programs conducted.
❖ Workshops being conducted on the importance of constructing toilets and hygiene for the benefit of health.
Media: Community Radio & Journal

- **Community Journal**—*Grama Pudiya Udhayam* featuring the activities of the villages, local news, government welfare schemes, important events and suggestions and feedback are also featured.

- **Community Radio Station**—‘Pudiya Udhayam’
  In 2015, SARVAM’s Community Radio Station in Tamil—‘Pudiya Udhayam’ (meaning ‘New Dawn’; 91.2 FM)—was launched.

  - The radio channel reaches **50,000 people** in **30** villages of Puducherry & Tamil Nadu and broadcasts programmes that educate, inform and entertain.
  - At least **60% of the content is produced with direct involvement of the local community**.
  - The community youth are being provided the basic technical training of broadcasting.
Natural Calamities

Being located on the coast, the SARVAM villages experience a few cyclones and storms every year and have suffered some colossal natural disasters such as a *Indian Ocean tsunami* in 2004, *Cyclone Thane* in 2011, and massive floods in December 2015, resulting in huge losses of life and property.

- In such circumstances, the SARVAM team works day and night to bring **immediate relief** to the affected people.
- In 2015, **immediate relief materials worth lakhs were distributed**, including cooked meals, milk, bread, clothes, blankets, tarpaulin and rope for temporary shelters.
Coordination with Panchayat leaders to take injured to hospitals, provide emergency relief medicines, first aid and insect repellents.

Dispensed chlorine tablets to purify water.

Set up temporary shelters.

Relief Operations During Various Natural Disasters
## RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME—TOTAL OUTLAY 2019–20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>BROAD FIELDS</th>
<th>APPROX. NO OF BENEFICIARIES</th>
<th>TOTAL COST IN INR</th>
<th>PER BENEFICIARY COST IN INR</th>
<th>TOTAL COST IN £</th>
<th>PER PERSON COST IN £</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION</td>
<td>Books, Snacks &amp; Scholarships</td>
<td>2,000 students</td>
<td>15,352,000</td>
<td>7,676</td>
<td>166,870</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEALTH &amp; SANITATION</td>
<td>Awareness &amp; Medical Camps</td>
<td>500 people</td>
<td>1,850,000</td>
<td>3,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>WOMEN</td>
<td>Awareness, Skill Training</td>
<td>2,000 women</td>
<td>3,300,000</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>35,870</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>VULNERABLE &amp; MARGINALIZED</td>
<td>Medical, Clothing &amp; Livelihood</td>
<td>750 people</td>
<td>6,062,500</td>
<td>8,084</td>
<td>65,870</td>
<td>88</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOUTH</td>
<td>Skill Training &amp; Sports</td>
<td>1,000 youth</td>
<td>1,250,000</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>13,587</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOUSING</td>
<td>Renovation</td>
<td>100 houses</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>54,348</td>
<td>109</td>
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<td>COMMUNICATION</td>
<td>Community Radio &amp; Journal</td>
<td>10,000 people</td>
<td>850,000</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>9,239</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADMINISTRATION</td>
<td>Salary &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3,366,450</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>36,592</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>37,030,950</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,211</strong></td>
<td><strong>402,510</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SARVAM** is an integral rural development programme, working in 20 villages and providing benefit to more than 20,000 people, belonging to 4,000 families in Puducherry and Tamil Nadu (figures from 2017–18).

One £ has been taken at the rate of Rupees ninety-two.
Volunteer Opportunities

- **IN MAY JUNE**
  - **Teaching**
    Elocution, History of Art, English, Basic Computer Skills, Story Telling, Drama, Practical Science, etc.
  - **Extra Curricular Activities**
    Craft, Motivation, Art, Yoga, Model Making, Nature Study, Dance, Sports, Papercraft, Pottery and many more
  - **Skill Development**
    Photography, Sewing/Stitching, Embroidery, Cycle Repairing, Agriculture, Astronomy,

- **ALL YEAR ROUND (morning & evening)**
  - **Coaching classes**
    in subjects related to Maths, English, Science, Reading, Writing, Other Languages, etc., at Students' Corner.
  - **Doctors** and specialists can organize Health Camps for General Check-ups, Nutrition, Dental Hygiene, Gynaecological Health, Cataract, Health Awareness, First Aid and related areas.

For more details to volunteer for the project, kindly visit our website thesarvamtrust.org
The SARVAM village programme has been initiated and is being implemented by Sri Aurobindo Society.

The Society is

- An international, spiritual, educational, cultural, not-for-profit NGO
- Recognized by the Government of India as a Charitable Organization, a Research Institute and an Institution of Importance Throughout India
Main fields of activity

- Education
- Rural Development
- Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy
- Health
- Leadership & Management
- Indian Culture
- Palliative Care
- Children with Special Needs
- Youth and Women
- Media, Arts & Communication
- Social & Economic Development
- Research & Training
- Workshops, Seminars, Conferences, Exhibitions
- Books, Audio-visuals, Magazines and E-journals
We welcome you all to join us in the challenging task of creating a new and more beautiful tomorrow!

For further information,

Visit our Website: www.aurosociety.org
Visit our Facebook page: www.fb.com/aurosociety
Subscribe to our monthly eNewsletter: https://eservices.aurosociety.org/an/
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Thank You!