
SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY YOUTH CAMPS UNDER ONGC SPONSORSHIP (2010–11)

Youth Camps for Self Development

For more than 25 years Sri Aurobindo Society has been conducting regular All India Youth Camps in Puducherry. From last year this youth camp is being carried out at State levels as well by its branches and centres. The main objectives of these Camps are to:

- ❖ inspire the youth to discover their aim in life and help them in realising it;
- ❖ awaken the youth to their great future and prepare them to play their true role in all aspects of life;
- ❖ make the youth conscious of the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of India and work for a united and awakened India.

Last year's camps both in Puducherry as well as at the State level were sponsored by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), New Delhi. Here is a brief report of the national youth camp in Puducherry and the State level youth camps held at the different centres and branches of Sri Aurobindo Society around the country.

Organised by:



Sponsored by:



Youth Camps – At a glance

So far, under the sponsorship of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited, New Delhi, the following youth camps have been conducted **as on 1st June 2011***:

Sr. No	Place	Dates	No. of participants
1.	Puducherry, U.T.	3 rd -11 th January 2011	45
2.	Dhar, Madhya Pradesh	2 nd -3 rd October 2010	23
3.	Jaipur, Rajasthan	25 th -26 th January 2011	52
4.	Noida, Uttar Pradesh	29 th January 2011	35
5.	Guntur, Andhra Pradesh	11 th -13 th February 2011	22
6.	Paigamberpur, Uttar Pradesh	20 th -23 rd February 2011	30
7.	Rudrapur, Uttarakhand	24 th -25 th February 2011	230
8.	Panjim, Goa	26 th -27 th February 2011	34
9.	Mathura, Uttar Pradesh	26 th -27 th March 2011	108
10.	Ratlam, Madhya Pradesh	3 rd -5 th April 2011	30
11.	Noida, Uttar Pradesh	14 th -15 th May 2011	30
		Total	639

* Please note that more youth camps are underway and some are to commence shortly. Their details will be provided once they are complete, in the form of an addendum to this report.

National Level Youth Camp in Puducherry

3 – 11 January 2011: Aspiration 2011

This year's annual All India Youth Camp in Puducherry, titled Aspiration 2011, was held at the Society House from 3 to 11 January. Sponsored by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), New Delhi, this year as well, the camp saw the participation of 45 youths - 28 girls and 17 boys in the age group of 18 to 25 years. They were from New Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Mizoram, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. The camp was coordinated by Shivakumar and a team of members from Puducherry, under the guidance of Shri Vijay, Executive Member, Admin. & Finance and Shri Kaivalya Smart, Member, Executive Committee.

The main objectives of the Camp were to:

- ❖ Help youth to develop themselves – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.
- ❖ Inspire them to discover their aim in life and assist them in realising it.
- ❖ Make them conscious of their great heritage, of the present problems of the Nation and their role in building a new and vibrant India.
- ❖ Awaken the youth to their great future and prepare them, spiritually and materially, to play their role in all aspects of the collective life.

The programme for the Camp was primarily designed to provide an integral training for the overall development of their physical, mental and vital faculties as well as to awaken an essential sense of spirituality. Talks, discussions, individual and group activities were the means used to achieve these aims. Regular sessions on physical education, project work, collective singing, learning the beauty of Sanskrit, nature outings, etc. were all part of the programme

The camp started on 3rd January afternoon with a self-introduction session led by Sushanto to help participants become familiar with each other. They were also given a question for introspection so as to become familiar with themselves as well. Participants were then officially welcomed by Shri Kaivalyabhai, the camp director and Shivakumar, who also thanked the sponsors and introduced the resource team. He also outlined the guidelines of conduct so that the camp could be a rejuvenating and inspiring experience for all.



A group photo of the participants and organisers

The next day began with Shri Kaivalyabhai taking a series of sessions on self-development, emphasising that the present is the most imperative and crucial moment of life, and how by consciously making the best use of this moment, we become our own biographers. He pointed out that Life has a purpose, a plan, and is not a chance or accident and we as its conscious drivers should aspire to exceed ourselves to make life an exceptional journey. He also explained the importance of prayer and relationship with God for a more meaningful life. We should be, he continued, in control of the three managers - the physical being, the mental being and the vital being - governing our lives with their respective functions. Shri Kaivalyabhai's stressed that youth, with the right attitude and will to change and become always better and better, are an indication of eternal progress, leading every one of the participants to think more deeply about the aim and purpose of their life and their participation in the evolution of the continuous upward movement. Shri Vijaybhai in his introductory session spoke about youth, its meaning and the ways to aspire, prepare and change oneself for a life of purpose. He emphasised that a joyous progress is the secret of youth.

At the last session for the day, 'Body is the Foundation', led by Shivakumar, participants explored the body-consciousness that is the fundamental fort of the physical being. They were made to understand the different, yet unexplored, unimagined possibilities and remarkable functions of the body by becoming more conscious of it. He emphasised the fact that for the body to have a strong foundation the quality of food, sleep and breathing must be improved. It is through these that the life energy is assimilated by the body so it can become more supple and energetic and expansive, leading even to a calmer and more settled mind.



Exercises for physical culture by Shivakumar

On the 5th Shri Kaivalyabhai continued his session of the previous day while the afternoon's session was conducted by three resource persons - Abhipsa, Saikat and Sampad. These and Shri Kaivalyabhai's sessions were carried on in the afternoons on the following three days. Abhipsa started the session with her 'Touch of Beauty', where she stressed on the need for aspects of beauty to be inculcated in all our life and day-to-day activities. She pointed out the importance

of learning to aspire for beauty as an integral part of life, and to feel and appreciate it at every moment. Participants were given a questionnaire to ponder over and discuss their opinions and thoughts on the topic of beauty and how they can apply it in their lives to make it much more beautiful. She also conducted a series of group activities, followed by a video and audio presentation on the appreciation of the splendour of nature, its hues and colours and various other aspects.

Sampad, in his session on 'The Art of Right Living', raised some fundamental questions - what are we; who are we; what is it that is expected of us and what is it that we expect from this world; how can we be perfect; how can we react to situations in the right manner; what should be the right attitude for doing work; what is the right action and what is not; etc. Participants were then asked to contemplate on the questions directly related to their own lives, both outer and inner. The approach was to find as many possible ways of seeking solutions to the inner and outer problems discussed and not to be confined to any one standpoint in answering these questions. Sampad led the discussions in the light of the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and a few important ancient scriptures like the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita.



Sampad bhai with the participants

Saikat's session on 'Power of Self Awareness', discussed the so-called 'normal' life and its many problems and limitations. All of us, he pointed out, are perhaps living on the fringe and surfaces of our being, which is less than ten percent of our total self, which means at the lowest level of our potential. We are perhaps pushed and moved like puppets by innumerable impulses and forces of which we are not aware and which are usually harmful to our wellbeing and progress. This state of unconsciousness, slavery and diminished potential is what we call 'normal' life. So if we want to regain our true and total being, function at our total and highest potential and become the master of our own self, the first step is to become more and more aware of our real self. With the help of a questionnaire, discussions, sharing of real life examples, and activities, participants were led to a better understanding of the powers, potentials and faculties within them, which when expressed in the outer life, leads to personal growth as well as professional success.

The first session on the 6th was led by Shivakumar and Maitreyee. Shivakumar, speaking on 'Training the Mind', stressed the importance of gaining control over it rather than the mind controlling the person. Admitting that conscious control of thought is a difficult process, he initiated a series of different activities to instil in them the principle that through constant practice mastery can be gained of this maverick of a mind. The participants eagerly learnt how

this many-sided faculty could be made to do awe-inspiring things, through various steadfast exercises. Maitreyee's session on 'Aim of life', was interactive with various activities such as self introspection, group discussion and sharing insights on the topic. She was followed by Surabhi who taught participants the meaning of the national song Vande Mataram and to sing it with spirit and patriotic fervour. Participants were thoroughly delighted and responded with zeal.

The last session of the day, 'Glimpses of Indian Art', conducted by Sushanto followed the continuation of the previous day's 'Triple session' by Abhipsa, Saikat and Sampad. His discourse gave participants an in-depth knowledge of the forgotten glory and grandeur of Indian art and architecture, especially the enchanting celestial beauty of the time-frozen sculptures and paintings of temples and other structures around the country. This was the time when men listened silently and the rocks spoke. He also explained the intricate and complex patterns involved in the making of the ancient temple cities in various parts of the country. His presentation revealed the aesthetic artisanship, ingenuity and integrity of the people who produced these ancient yet sublime and epoch-making inestimable masterpieces.



Sushanto taking a session at Sharanam site

The 7th morning saw an expedition to the Botanical Gardens, one of the oldest such gardens of South India, in order to awaken a sense of communion with Nature. Several activities were conducted to help bring the young people closer to Nature, with Richard and Krishna pointing out and explaining to them about the innumerable assortment of flowers, plants and trees around. They also took participants for a 'sunset viewing' as a conclusion to the interaction with Nature.

On the 8th morning some of the previous day's sessions were continued while the afternoon started with a lively session by Harvinder who conducted a series of fun-filled learning activities. She weaved through different activities the awareness and feelings of the

body and mind and how through observation and empathy one can connect to all around one. After the usual tea-break, Jateen in his session, 'All our Earth', expressed his concerns on the depletion and deterioration of the natural sources of not only India but around the world due to the many reckless and irresponsible activities of human beings. He attempted to create awareness among the participants on the consequences of such destruction, the chain reactions leading to an impoverishment of the natural resources of the world and its effects on human beings.

The day started early, 5.45 am, on the 9th as participants took to bicycles for the 'On Wheels - Cycle Expedition to Lakeland', towards the Society's Lakeland to spend the entire day with Nature. Here Maitreyee initiated a 'Treasure hunt', meant to awaken kinship and intimacy with Nature. Participants were given maps and clues within the area of the garden and asked to use their imagination, sense of logical analysis, along with the sense of touch, smell and sensitivity to find their treasure. This was followed by a meditation where everyone attempted to commune with Nature in complete silence.

After a sumptuous lunch, participants were divided into two groups. One group was taken to the community hall belonging to the Society where Maitreyee and Rathi conducted a general quiz on the natural resources of India. The other group went to 'Sharanam', an ongoing project of the Society on sustainable development where the project designers, Jateen and Trupti, took a session. After tea and some restful time, all cycled back to Puducherry. The day ended contentedly with everyone - organisers and participants - having a delicious dinner back in Society House.

The 10th morning too was spent visiting, getting introduced to the Ashram and its departments and activities to get a feel of their system and the collective working set-up. In the afternoon several skills oriented games aimed at developing different faculties and qualities such as vigilance, flexibility, agility, co-ordination, team spirit and concentration, were introduced by Abhipsa. The young people participated eagerly and enthusiastically despite a few set-backs in their efforts to do full justice to the demands made on their abilities.



Skill games session

The camp's final day, the 11th, concluded with a session on feedback from participants and the valedictory talk delivered by Kaivalyabhai, where he summed up some of the important points presented during the nine days, i.e. the values for the will to progress, the attitude that

the present moment is the most precious moment, and the true aim and purpose of our life. This was followed by a pleasant sharing session between the resource persons and the participants, led by Shivakumar.

An integral part of the camp was the chanting and yogic exercises each morning at 6.15. The participants were divided into two groups – each alternately attending either one of the sessions. While one group attended the chanting sessions of simple Sanskrit shlokas and mantras with Sampad - these were an invocation and offering rendered to nature and her infinite forms – the other group attended the yogic exercise sessions with Shivakumar. Here they learnt the art of focusing on the body with controlled motion, steady balance and concentrated energy, so as to become more receptive to the natural, intrinsic flow of vibrations in and around the body.

Over all, with all these varied and extraordinary activities, the camp was an experience to be lived and perceived as a beginning to one's development and growth.

State Level Youth Camps

Dhar (Madhya Pradesh) 2-3 Oct 2010

The Dhar Branch of the Sri Aurobindo Society successfully organised a two day youth camp on 2nd and 3rd October. Dhar is amongst the increasing number of state branches to carry out this series of state youth camps initiated by SAS Pondicherry with sponsorship from ONGC, New Delhi, to encourage a sense of national integrity amongst youths. The camp proved to be a productive programme with active, encouraging participation from the eager youths and inspiring guidance from the invited guests, Shri Kaivalya Smart from Surat, Shri Manoj Sharma from Bhopal and Shri Swami from Ujjain. They moderated the event perfectly, their appreciable knowledge and apt experience proving to be the best resource for the camp.

The event was formally started with the Mother's flag march and the Vande Mataram on the 2nd in the presence of all the participants, local members and invited guests. This was followed by an introductory session amongst the 23 participants - three from Bhopal, Indore and Khandwa respectively and the rest from Dhar itself. More participation was expected but enforced curtailment of movement in anticipation of any unpleasant response to the Ayodhya judgement from the High Court just two days before the camp was a reason for the lower numbers. Still satisfactory participation was registered from within the city and the camp's proceedings took place smoothly.

This report contains a brief description along with a few captioned pictures of the events that took place during the youth camp at Sri Aurobindo Society Dhar Branch.



The Mother's flag being carried by participants for the opening ceremony

After this introductory session an interactive session with Kaivalya bhai on Sri Aurobindo's ideal of India was the first activity of the day. He also explained the physical definition of youthfulness, extending it to the state of continuous learning, being active and joyful always. Participants were really overwhelmed by his eloquent description of youth.

The session after the lunch and mid-day break was also taken by Kaivalya bhai who continued his interesting and rejuvenating talk, re-energising and waking the young people

from the stupor induced by the delicious lunch. Manoj bhai, who took over from Kailvalya bhai, began his session with some beautiful and apt stories which further pepped them up.

The day's sessions ended with a walk around the Dhar Ashram campus, which is surrounded by immense natural beauty, and to nearby places. Everyone was happy to be in the midst of such natural wealth and felt close to Nature. Dinner was followed by a cultural programme, making for a very pleasant ending to the first day's activities.

Day two started early at around 6:30 am with a practice of Yogasanas under the guidance of Shri Swami, a perfect start to a perfect day as well as a good appetizer for the well-balanced breakfast that followed. Meditation near the shrine and recitation of Durga Stotra in the garden was performed before the sessions began, as a sign of gratitude to the Mother and asking for Her Grace to give them knowledge and enlightenment.



Participants sharing their camp experiences

Shri Swami took the first session after the prayer, sharing his valuable knowledge and experiences with the young minds. After this Kaivalya bhai continued his enthusiastic interaction with the participants until the lunch break. Everyone gathered at 3 O'clock after lunch and rest for the final session, the most interesting session of the two-day camp, where participants shared their experience freely and a lot of interesting views were heard. The young people expressed their gratitude for making such a rare experience available to them and requested local branch members to organize more such events. Most of them found this experience to be invaluable and felt it was a great learning curve for them.

The two day programme came to an end with a prayer to the Mother and distribution of prasad. The invited speakers were presented with mementos by Shri Sudhir Vyas of Dhar branch as a token of gratitude for their participation and ONGC as the sponsors of the event were also officially thanked for their assistance in this worthy venture.

Jaipur (Rajasthan) 25 & 26 January 2011

The ONGC sponsored state level youth camp for Rajasthan, held in Jaipur, was attended by 52 participants, coordinated and mostly conducted by Shri Kaivalya Smart. The participants, between the ages of 16 – 25 years, came from various educational institutions in the state. The whole programme for the camp was designed to provide an integral education for the body, life and mind through talks, discussions and group activities. Several sessions were held on the different subjects to make them aware of the strengths one possess within and the way to unite with that power so as to have a settled peace and enthusiasm in life.

The camp began with a self-introduction where participants got to know and interact with each other and the organisers. Then Shri Kaivalyabhai officially welcomed participants and thanked the sponsors, Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd., New Delhi, for sponsoring the entire camp. He also outlined the guidelines of conduct so that the camp could be result oriented and be a happy experience for all those involved. The first session started with an interactive presentation on 'Why this youth camp' and 'What is youth'. The students were asked their reasons and aims for wishing to join the camp. Many interesting replies were received but the essence was that most of the youths wanted to know about themselves and the aim of life. This was duly explained by Kaivalyabhai in his talk, 'Know Thyself', where he said that youth is synonyms with progress, zeal and enthusiasm. He elaborated on the subject beautifully, citing various stories and inspirational examples. During the second session on 'Aim of Life', participants were asked to name the various virtues and skills of life and these were outlined and explained in a most interesting manner. This was followed by group discussions where the entire group was split into five groups and different topics chosen by each group. Later presentations on the discussions were made by the leader of each group.



Kaivalya Bhai addressing the gathering



Participants of the Youth Camp

Since the second day of the camp was Republic Day, the day started with the singing of the 'Vande Mataram'. The session that followed was on 'Self Introspection for self mastery', followed by 'How to concentrate'. Shri Kaivalyabhai, who took both sessions, educated the participants about the role of body, mind, life and psychic being in life and how it can work in an integral way through synthesis and better coordination. He followed this up with teaching methods and techniques of concentration and explained the role of the inner self seated deep within us. All the presentations were carried out in a very interactive manner so as to encourage questions and interaction from the participants. The concluding session on the terms 'happiness' and 'success' and their value was also explained in the same way.

At the end of the day when the students were asked for their feedback, the response was very spirited and positive. All of them found the camp to be very useful, interesting and enjoyable generally and specifically in terms of inner understanding and learning. The students within the age group of 16 to 18 were the most enthusiastic, raising several questions concerning success, what life is all about, why there is so much of competition for survival and how they could seek a way out of all the muddle to lead a worthy life. Finally a vote of thanks was given by a senior student who expressed gratitude on behalf of all the participants. A few relevant books and certificates of attendance were distributed to all participants at the end of the camp.

Noida (Uttar Pradesh) 29 January 2011

The Sri Aurobindo Society's Noida Branch organised a one-day youth camp on 'Self Mastery' on 29th January, sponsored by ONGC, New Delhi. The main objectives of the Camp, as set out by the Branch were:

- Inspire the youth to discover their aim in life and help them in realizing it.
- Awaken the youth to their great future and prepare them to play their true role in all aspects of life.
- Help the youth to develop themselves – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

Thirty-five youths from various communities attended the Camp which began at 9.30 am and continued until 5.30 pm. Motivational talks, discussions, work offerings, etc. were held on the following topics:

- (i) 'Youth and the Powers Within' by Shri Arun Naik
- (ii) 'Youth and India' by Shri K. Pawan
- (iii) 'Youth and Sri Aurobindo' by Shri K. Pawan
- (iv) 'Youth and Spiritual Dimensions of Life' by Shri Arun Naik

Shri V.K. Sharma, Chairman of the Noida Branch welcomed the participants and distinguished guests and made a brief introduction to the camp. Shri Arun Naik and Shri K. Pawan, who took two sessions each, enlightened participants about the development of personality, character and mental education for the development of the mind through their presentations on the above topics. Participants responded enthusiastically and were active with questions and their thoughts. They felt that such camps helps them very much and desired that they be held regularly so that more and more young people benefit from them. This in turn will help the Society as such positive development of youth – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually - is considered a must for the growth of the Society and the nation. The camp ended with a speech of gratitude to the speakers and the sponsors, ONGC, for their assistance.



Participants of Noida Youth Camp



Shri Arun Naik, interacting with the participants

Guntur (Andhra Pradesh) 11 – 13 February, 2011

The state level three-day youth camp for the young people of Andhra Pradesh was held in Guntur from 11 to 13 February. Twenty-two students currently doing their B.Tech, B.Ed, degree courses and P.G. courses participated in the camp, staying at the Sri Aurobindo Society's Guntur branch hall itself.

The camp began on 11th evening with the registration, followed by self introduction of participants and resource persons. This was followed with an introduction to the Sri Aurobindo Society and its activities and the purpose of the camp by Shri P.C. Swaroop, from the Eluru Centre. A film on the life of Sri Aurobindo and Auroville was also shown the same evening.

The camp proper began the second day with some physical exercises, simple methods of pranayama and chanting of Sanskrit shlokas. The sessions, after a brief meditation with Mother's music, began with a talk and interactive activities on career development, aim of life, and spirituality in daily life, led by Shri Swaroop. This was followed by a talk, 'Pattern and language formation and greatness of Sanskrit in Indian life', by Shri Harsha Vardhan. 'Great events and great personalities of the past for inspiration', a talk by Shri K.R.L. Narasimha Rao was the last session of the day. In the evening a 'Shrama-daan' or work offering was done by the participants with the planting of about 30 plants in the premises. Games for senses development, methods for development of concentration, etc., were also a regular part of the camp's activities.



Shri K.R.L. Narasimha Rao, interacting with the participants



Shrama-daan for the participants!

On the 13th, the last day of the camp, participants were taken on an outing to Amaravathi, the historical Buddhist site and archaeological museum on the banks of the River Krishna. At the concluding session participants were asked for their feedback on the camp and to share their experiences and thoughts on their future and aims. Copies of some of the materials used in the camp - 'Towards Tomorrow'; and 'Vidyarthi Kardeepika' or 'Light for Students', as well as booklets on the life of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and pamphlets containing relevant

messages were distributed to the participants. The camp coordinator, Shri Harsha Vardhan, also expressed the Centre's gratitude to ONGC, New Delhi for sponsoring the camp; Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry and Hyderabad Branch; and the resource persons who had contributed towards the success of the camp, by the Grace of the Mother.

Paigamberpur (Uttar Pradesh) 20 – 23 February 2011

The Paigamberpur Centre's three-day youth camp from 20th to 23rd February was organised to coincide with the Mother's birth anniversary and was part of the celebrations. On 20th February the Camp was officially inaugurated by Dr. Suman Kochar of the Indore Centre and Smt. Kirti Adhikari of Paigamberpur Centre by invoking the Mother's Presence. Of the 30 youths who participated in the camp 17 were from nearby villages. Staying arrangements were made for these 17 youth in Paigamberpur while the meals provided for all the participants and volunteers were cooked by the village women in the kitchen set up for the purpose.

Dr. Suman Kochar conducted the entire camp. Apart from sessions on self-development, she explained the purpose of the youth camp and also introduced Sri Aurobindo Society, its vision, mission and the work being done by it.

The response to the camp was very positive. Not only the participants, but their teachers and parents were also very happy and expressed the need to have more such programmes towards a more integral development of the village youngsters.



Early morning Meditation Session



Group Activity in progress

Rudrapur (Uttarakhand) 24 & 25 February 2011

A two-day youth camp was organised by the Rudrapur branch of the Sri Aurobindo Society on 24th and 25th February. The camp, which was as usual sponsored by ONGC, New Delhi, was inaugurated on the 24th with the invocation of the Mother which was held on the 25th also before beginning the sessions for the day.

The first session was conducted by Dr Suman Kochar who introduced the various yogic practices such as yogasana, pranayama, yoganidra, yoga through play and hasyasana. She also spoke on prayer, meditation and concentration, surya and gayatri mantras, patriotic and spiritual songs, bhajans, etc. She ended the session with some reminiscences of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo.

Glimpses from the Ratlam Youth Camp:





The next session, a power point presentation and explanation on a healthy lifestyle and food, was carried out together by Dr Suman Kochar and Shri Manoj Kiyawat. A special discussion was also held on 'attitude towards food in the eyes of the Mother', followed by a very active Questions & Answer session. The first day's sessions ended with prayer and meditation. About 150 students participated in these sessions.

The second day began with a session on handicrafts when Chitra Chauhan and Vaibhav Neema taught participants how to make various paper products such as paper toys, envelopes, gift boxes, gifts packs, paper bags, etc. They were also introduced to more patriotic songs and bhajans and ended the session with prayers and meditation.

From the later part of the morning onwards camp participants were joined for the day by about 80 students of M.B.A. from the Saraswati Institute of Management and Technology. A special PowerPoint presentation on "the Role of Consciousness in Life" was held for them, after which Dr Suman Kochar and Shri Manoj Kiyawat spoke on the subject. This was followed by a Question & Answer session as the participants showed keen interest on the topic.

At the closing ceremony of the camp Shri Ravikantj Khandelwal expressed gratitude towards the sponsors, ONGC, for their assistance as well as to all those who worked to make the camp a success, particularly R.K. Agrawal, Omprakash Singhla, Madhavi Khandelwal, Rashmi Singhla, Vikas Sharma, Rajiv Pandey and Pushpa Negi. Two booklets - "Seeds of Light" and "Light Endless Light" were presented to participants and some other booklets were also displayed for free distribution to those who wished to avail themselves of the gifts.

Panjim (Goa) 26 & 27 February 2011

The Maharashtra State Youth Camp was held from 26th to 27th February, at the Panjim Branch and attended by 34 youths, 23 of whom were from Goa itself. Shri Kaivalya Smart and Ms Maitreyee from Pondicherry and Smt. Surekha Dixit from Goa conducted the camp. The following topics - 'What is youth'; 'How to concentrate'; 'What is success'; 'Key to self-mastery'; 'How to overcome fear'; and 'Opening to flowers' - were taken up at this intense two-day camp.

Both mornings began with Surya Namaskar led by Hetal Kamadar after which participants assembled at the Goa Branch's Centre for the workshop proper. The first day's sessions began with an invocation and mediation, after which Shri Deepak D'Souza, Secretary of Goa Branch, welcomed the participants. This was followed by a self-introduction exercise after which the rest of the morning was spent on the session, 'What is Youth', an interactive activity led by Shri Kaivalyabhai. The session continued into the first half of the afternoon as well and was then followed by the most important session of the Camp, 'Key to Self Mastery'. The final session of

the day on 'How to overcome Fear' was conducted by Maitreyee. The day concluded with mediation and contemplation.

The second day's sessions started with Shri Kaivalyabhai continuing the topic 'Key to Self Mastery, after which he also took the session on 'How to concentrate'. The afternoon began with an activity based session, 'Opening to flowers', led by Maitreyee. This was followed by another interactive session led by Smt. Surekha Dixit on the different qualities of life. The final session of the camp was on 'What is success', as explained by Shri Kaivalyabhai. The Chairman of the Goa Branch, Shri Anil Khaunte and Shri Deepak D'Souza concluded the camp with their closing remarks, after which participants were presented with certificates of attendance. The camp was officially closed with a collective meditation. Special mention must be made of Shri Deepak D'Souza's tremendous efforts to ensure the success of the event.



Kaivalya bhai with the participants



Maitreyee taking session on Sense Development

Mathura (Uttar Pradesh) 26 & 27 March 2011

A two-day youth camp was organised by the Mathura Centre of Sri Aurobindo Society on 26th and 27th March at the Amarnath Vidya Ashram. The camp, which was sponsored by ONGC, New Delhi, was attended by 108 participants (47 ladies and 61 gents), mostly in the age group of 25 to 30 years. It was inaugurated by Shri Govindanand Tirth Ji Maharaj, renowned saint of Vrindavan and a scholar of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, and presided over by Smt. Shrutkirti. The main conveners who conducted the camp were Dr. Nirankar Agrawal of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi, and Shri Arvind Maheswari of the Puducherry Ashram.

The programme for the two days was a mix of various topics and techniques – talks, activities walks in the midst of nature, and health tips on eating healthy food, hair care, and caring and treatment of the eyes, which was provided by the Pondicherry Ashram's School for Perfect Sight. Two documentary films – 'Sri Arvind Ek Divya Jeevan' and Sri Aurobindo and his Ashram' were also shown to the participants. The first day was mostly devoted to talks related to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother – Sri Maa, Sri Aurobindo and his Ashram; Towards perfection; India – a vision of Sri Aurobindo; Importance of physical health; How to meditate; and How to sleep well. The second day was more on practical subjects – Importance of yogasanas and pranayama; We and nature; Youth of India; Illness and its cause; We and our food; Karma – a new vision; and Money – a new vision. Speakers were Shri Govindanand Tirth Ji Maharaj; Dr. Nirankar Agrawal; Shri Arvind Maheswari; Dr. S.C. Tyagi; Shri Ganga Prasad Rawat; Shri Goverdhan Lal Sharma; Dr. S.D. Singh.

Prasad and a number of books and booklets on and by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother were distributed to participants and guests at the end of the camp. The efforts of the main organisers and coordinators of the camp - Smt Renu Vajpeyi, and Shri Pushpraj Sharrma, and assisted by Shri K.K. Dixit, Smt Meeta Vajpeyi and Shri Radha Krishan Panday – were a big contributing factor to the success of the camp and was greatly appreciated.



Yogasanas session



Participants and chief guests

Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh) 3 – 5 April 2011

A three-day camp for 30 young people from the rural areas surrounding Ratlam city was organised by the Ratlam Branch of the Sri Aurobindo Society from 3rd to 5th April. Held at the Auro Ashram in Ratlam, it was sponsored by ONGC, New Delhi.

Yogasanas, breathing exercises and jogging were regular early morning activities for participants during their stay in the campus. This was followed by some audio-visual programmes on natural cures using the sun's rays, soil and water.

After breakfast the sessions proper were held which included talks, creative arts and singing. Talks were delivered on topics such as 'Introduction to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo'; 'Youth and their Role'; 'Aim of life'; 'India's role in the world'; 'Integral Education'; and 'Know Yourself'. Collective discussions and symposiums were also held on the topics, 'Our preparation as youth for the future work' and 'To work for Mother India'.

Songs including Vandemataram were also taught and dancing and marching to some songs were taken up as a part of the singing sessions. Creativity sessions consisted of making gift boxes and envelopes of different shapes and sizes, and beautifying them with sequins and powdered gilt. Participants also learnt the art of origami and calligraphy on paper by embossing letters with nails. The session on making 'Subhashitam' was very much enjoyed by them. They also enjoyed the story session a lot. Participants enjoyed the sessions on work offering and games they did not want to leave the playground even after it became dark.

The recorded film of a stage play on Savitri and a film on Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Puducherry were also shown to them, filling them with a spirit of new and enlightened inspiration. Organisation of the camp was coordinated by Shri Ramesh Pathak and many of the sessions were conducted by Dr. Suman Kocher.



Pictures from Ratlam Youth Camp

Noida (Uttar Pradesh) 14 & 15 May 2011

The Sri Aurobindo Society's Noida Branch organised a two-day Youth Camp on Self-Mastery on 14th and 15th May for youths between the ages of 15 and 30 years. This is part of the Society's on-going nationwide Youth Camps sponsored by the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), New Delhi.

The main objectives of the Camp were to:

- Inspire youth to discover their aim in life and help them in realizing it.

- Awaken them to their great future and prepare them for their true role in all aspects of life.
- Help them to develop themselves physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.



Shri Kaivalyabhai, conducting the camp



A view of the participants

Thirty young people from various backgrounds attended the Camp. The programme for the two days included motivational talks, discussions, work offerings etc. on the following topics:

- (i) Why this Youth Camp; What is Youth; and other such relevant questions
- (ii) Self-introspection for Self-Mastery
- (iii) How to Concentrate
- (iv) What is Success?



One of the participants, Ms Prerana Tyagi, sharing her experience of the Youth Camp

Shri V.K. Sharma, Chairman of the Noida Branch welcomed the participants and distinguished guests and gave a brief introduction to the camp. He also informed that the Camp was being sponsored by ONGC and thanked them for their support. Shri Kaivalya Smart, Executive Committee Member, Sri Aurobindo Society, Puducherry, took various sessions, enlightening participants on the development of personality and character; and mental education for the development of the mind. The participants showed keen interest in the topics and participated enthusiastically. They found the camp to be very helpful and desired that more such camps be held regularly so that more and more youths would benefit from them, which in turn will help the Society in its efforts in the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual development of today's young people.
