

**Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Thiru Banwarilal Purohit participated as Chief Guest at the launch of "Digital Sakhi Programme" organised by Sri Aurobindo Society – SARVAM and L&T Financial Services**

Thiru. Banwarilal Purohit, Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu participated as Chief Guest at the launch of "Digital Sakhi Programme" organised by Sri Aurobindo Society – SARVAM and L&T Financial Services at Hotel Ramada Plaza "Vendhar Hall", Guindy, Chennai today (04.06.2019) and addressed the gathering.

Hon'ble Governor said, "It gives me great happiness to be here for the launch of "Digital Sakhi Programme" being organised by the Sri Aurobindo Society and L&T Financial Services.

I am informed that this programme is covered under the SARVAM project of the society and is an initiative aimed at Integral Development of villages, the primary objective being the inclusive and sustainable, development of rural areas.

Starting with two villages in Poothurai and Perambai, in Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu, SARVAM has now extended its operations to cover nearly 30,000 people living mostly in villages in and around Puducherry and Villupuram.

SARVAM stands for Sri Aurobindo Rural & Village Action & Movement. As the name suggests, it reaches out to each and every individual in the community irrespective of his or her caste, religion, age, economic and social status. Activities such as evening tuition classes, scholarships for higher education programmes meant for empowerment of women, medical camps and livelihood activities are being pursued under the SARVAM project.

The Digital Sakhi programme, under the project combines women empowerment and digital financial literacy. It has been inspired by the desire to make use of the transformative nature of technology for empowering women particularly in the low income groups. It seeks to build on the base created by the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and Aadhaar under which access for banking and finance have been enabled for crores of underprivileged people at the bottom of the pyramid.

For this Digital Financial Literacy programme, 50 Digital Sakhis and 50 Digital Champions have been selected from the villages of Villupuram district. The Digital Sakhis are being trained in fields such as digital literacy, financial literacy, leadership development and communication skills by the digital champions who are college

students, who have been trained in the various technical aspects of online banking and IT enabled financial applications.

A total of 30 villages are proposed to be covered. Digital Sakhis and Digital Champions are to adopt door to door teaching methods in 20 primary villages and in the remaining 10 villages mass camps will be organised to educate people in digital financial literacy. The Aurobindo Society is being assisted in this noble mission by the L & T financial Services who have developed the teaching modules for training the Digital Champions and Sakhis.

The Training given under the programme will greatly benefit those women who are already part of Self Help Groups.

The Self Help Group scheme in Tamil Nadu has been an eminently successful programme in the economic sphere.

Under the Scheme, women in the age group of 18 to 60 years residing in a locality form "Self Help Groups" in groups of 12 to 20 members with the objective of promoting savings and economic activity. Internal lending among the members inculcates in them the practice of collective and democratic decision making. The training for the Self Help Groups in book keeping and for Liaisoning with the banks is being successfully provided by the Government.

There are nearly a crore women enrolled as members in the 6 ½ lakh Self Help Groups in the state and they have availed a cumulative credit of Rs.42,000 crores from the banks.

The Digital Financial Literacy Programme, if extended to all parts of the state is sure to raise the level of credit availed by Self Help Groups at least 2 to 3 times more.

In India, we believe in the concept of Nari Shakthi or Women Power. The concept of Durga as the protector of the human race is embodied in the celebrations of Navarathri, on which day we narrate hymns on her victory over the evil forces. Navarathri is celebrated all over India and in Nagpur from where I hail, the celebrations of Vijayadasami the tenth day of victory, are organized on a grand scale.

By tapping the huge resource of women power the Sri Aurobindo Society has shown the way. The name of Sri Aurobindo stirs up memories of an intellectual born in a noble family who rose like a lion against the oppressive British rule of the times. He spent the later part of his life in Pondicherry engrossed in deep philosophical

thought. He developed a method of spiritual practice called Integral Yoga. The central theme of his vision was the evolution of human life into a life divine. He believed in a spiritual realization that not only liberated man but transformed his nature, enabling a divine life on earth.

The concepts of Integral Yoga and Synthesis of Yoga which Sri Aurobindo propounded form the bedrock for the Aurobindo Ashram and the Sri Aurobindo Society. It comes as no surprise therefore that the SARVAM project also revolves around the concept of integral education.

The fact that institutions based on spirituality such as the Sri Aurobindo Society are gaining prominence in training and education gives me the hope that the road ahead is going to be bright and sunny. This thought is encapsulated by Swami Vivekananda who said, "India will be raised, not with the power of flesh, but with the power of the spirit, not with the flag of destruction but with the flag of peace and love. Love is the strongest and yet the subtlest force of mankind".

This spirit of harmonious co-existence is enhanced when we resolve to serve our brethren, especially those who are underprivileged.

A Sanskrit verse gives the essence of such merit in two simple words, 'Paropakaaraha Punyaaya...' (परोपकारह पुण्याय).

Empowerment of people for achieving economic prosperity is bound to succeed particularly when it has spirituality as its foundation and culture as its embellishment. I am sure that the Digital Sakhi programme will be a roaring success and serve as a model for development for the whole of India.

I wish the Sri Aurobindo Society success in all its endeavours and appreciate them for having put into practice, various innovations that have transformed life in the rural areas. I extend my best wishes and greetings to all the villages who are working with the Sri Aurobindo Society to achieve greater economic development and prosperity in the state".

On this occasion, Thiru. N. Vijay, Chairman, SARVAM – Sri Aurobindo Society, Thiru. Sunil Prabhune, Chief Executive, L&T Financial Services, Dr. G. Natchiar, Director, SARVAM, Thiru. Manoj Shenoy, Group Head – CSR, L&T Financial Services and other dignitaries participated.

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Raj Bhavan, Chennai -22

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Joint Director (PR)