

# NEWSLETTER



Sri Aurobindo Society

ACPN

AURO CENTRE FOR PUBLIC NUTRITION  
PUBLIC HEALTH & PUBLIC POLICY

KNOWLEDGE | ACTION | PUBLIC GOOD

WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER

Newsletter - Volume - 1 (October - December 2023)

## Auro Centre for Public Nutrition, Public Health and Public Policy (ACPN)

a vertical of Sri Aurobindo Society (SAS) Pondicherry.  
ACPN was established in November 2021.

Sri Aurobindo Society was started by the Mother on  
19th September 1960 and is one of the most renowned  
charities in India and internationally.



*We believe in working among the most deprived sections of society,  
and the most backward areas of the country.*

### MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

“ACPN is a pioneering effort that bridges a crucial gap in our society. It not only creates awareness on the issue of public nutrition with various stakeholders but also develops sustainable models to enable access to quality nutrition among the not-so-privileged sections of society.”

### MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

“Public nutrition is an invisible determinant of the physical and cognitive power of our human capital, and of public health. However, even today, it stubbornly continues to be a major development deficit among a large section of our people, particularly in the most backward areas of our country. These areas are our first priority.”



## Our Mission

To develop and promote activities for providing education, awareness and information to various target groups, such as students, community organizations, panchayats, and women self-help groups regarding the inter-sectoral aspects of public nutrition, public health, and its impact on education and public policy.

To participate in government initiatives in the above subjects, and motivate and assist any other government or non-government bodies, supporting government policies.

To undertake and affiliate with various organizations for undertaking academic and field research on the above subjects, and to support such research.

To spread awareness regarding public nutrition, health, education and public

policy including developing and disseminating educational content on specific topics to the grass roots, women Self Help Groups (SHGs) and to educational institutions.

To work closely with NGOs and government agencies in initiatives targeting under-privileged rural and urban children, adolescents and associate with schools to bring inter-sectoral awareness programmes on public nutrition and public health.

Within a short period of less than 2 years, we have taken up awareness programmes among Women SHGs, set up micro-food processing units in remote villages, and are piloting some pioneering work on HortiNutrition in the Aspirational District of Yadgir.

### LEADERSHIP

**Shri Vijay Poddar**  
Chairman

**Dr R Sankar**  
Advisor Eminent Public Health/Nutrition  
Expert

**Dr Kush Verma, IAS (Retd.)**  
Advisor Public Policy

**Ms Rina Ray, IAS (Retd.)**  
Advisor Education

**Dr Ajit Sabnis**  
Director, SAS,

**Shri Kaushal Sharma**  
CFO, SAS



### TEAM

**Ms Veena S Rao, IAS (Retd.)**  
Director

**Shri M K Nanjunda**  
Financial Advisor

**Ms Harshita M Chinnaswamy**  
Project & Research Assistant

**Ms Arti**  
Finance Assistant

**Ms Kanchana Prasad**  
Marketing Consultant

# OUR WORK

## Two Micro Production Units set up in remote villages

Micro production units were set-up at Yelavatti village in Gadag District of Karnataka (supported by Infosys Foundation) and Vannur in Villipuram District of Tamil Nadu, (supported by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition-GAIN)

SHG women were trained to produce AuroPoshan, an affordable nutritive protective food, made from local agricultural produce, such as, whole wheat, soya, millets and pulses which provide abundant energy, protein, calcium, iron and fibre to all age groups.

Prior to setting up of the micro production unit, the SHG women were trained and educated about the product and its health benefits. After free distribution for two months, the beneficiaries unanimously agreed that everyone in the family had a better sense of wellness – children were more active, adolescents and adults had more energy and lesser illness and the older family members had better health.



## Mega Pilot Project “Establishing SHG/FPO enterprises to address malnutrition and provide rural livelihoods in Yadgir District, Karnataka”

Supported by:  
Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India

Project Partners:  
Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology (KSCST),  
Centre for Sustainable Technology (CST)

Field Partner:  
Bharatiya Agro Industries Foundation (BAIF)

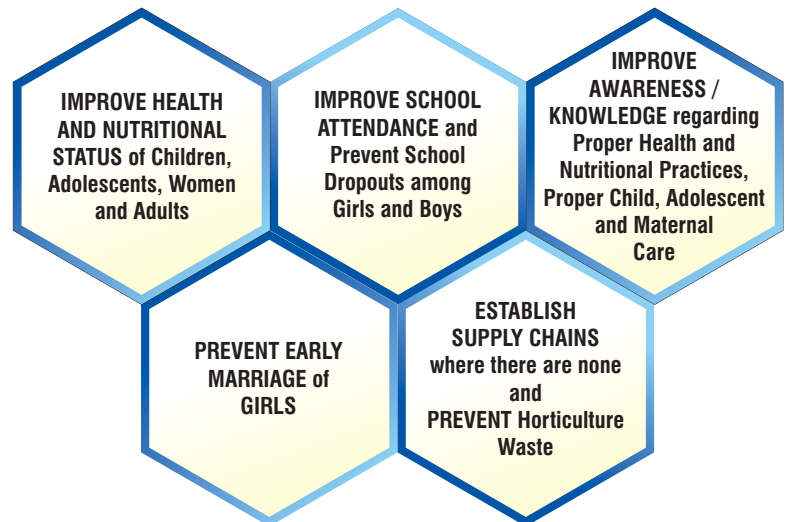
This is a unique, holistic, multi-sectoral, development programme covering Horticulture, Women's Empowerment, Nutrition and Education.

## The first Industrial Unit in the Aspirational District of Yadgir is being set up under this project

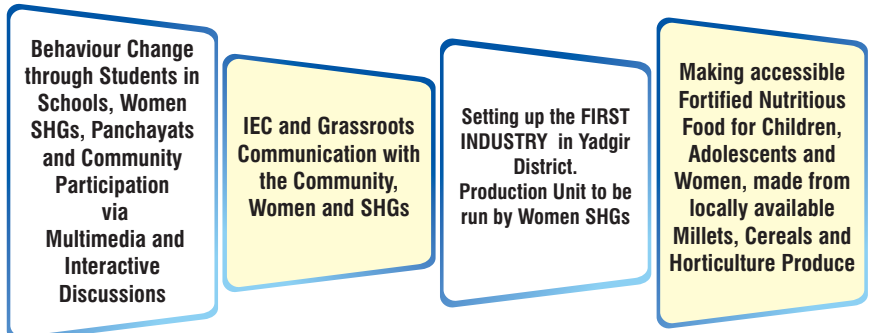
### PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Prevent wastage of fruits and vegetables, reduce losses during glut season, arrest distress sales and reduce market risks, through building capacity of FPOs/SHGs.
- Address malnutrition in the community, provide nutrition security and improve nutritional status of the rural poor.
- Provide livelihoods to SHGs/FPOs through innovative farm based enterprises.
- Improve quality of life of women through value added income generation by marketing of nutritive horticultural products.

### THE CHANGE WE ENVISAGE



### HOW WILL WE BRING ABOUT THE CHANGE?



# “Establishing SHG/FPO enterprises to address malnutrition and provide rural livelihood in Yadgir District, Karnataka”

## Progress

**Baseline Survey in Yadgir District** has been completed. Data shows extremely worrisome indicators.\*

**Product Development** of Fortified Foods for Children, Adolescents, Adults, and Family has been completed by the Research Faculty, Home Science, Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru.

**Food Processing Unit** is being set up in Yadgir by Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology (KSCST).

**Marketing Training** and preparatory marketing activities have been planned.

**IEC Programmes** have been going on continuously.

After continuous interaction with the community, women SHGs and local leaders, it was seen that the students were the most aspirational group and were keen to achieve higher education and better quality of life, and hence, are the most critical agents of change.

We have been conducting awareness programmes in schools regarding proper nutritional, health and hygiene practices, and through them reaching families, mothers and fathers to improve their nutritional intake by including locally available vegetables and fruits, avoiding junk foods and eating a meal before coming to school.

40 high school and 20 middle schools have been covered so far and 6 high schools and 27 middle schools are further programmed.

The school staff and local representatives have appreciated the programmes greatly, especially the films produced for the high schools and middle schools.

Impact assessment indicates that the programme has been very successful in bringing about positive behaviour change within families.

Please see the reports at <https://publicnutrition.aurosociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/27-4-Impact-Assessment.pdf>

<https://publicnutrition.aurosociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Impact-Assessment-Middle-School.pdf>



Children below 3 years	20% infants did not consume any complementary food until they were about 2 years
Children 3-5 years	About 72.79 % are either stunted or wasted or underweight
Adolescent Girls	17.5% illiterate NO girl interviewed had passed Class 10 47.39% severely underweight 27.96% moderately underweight
Adolescent Boys	7.5% illiterate Only 20% had passed class 10 52.9% severely underweight & 30.77% moderately underweight

\*Data from the Baseline Survey in Yadgir District

<https://publicnutrition.aurosociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Baseline-and-Social-Survey-Yadgir.pdf>

## Short Films in Kannada :

- Children's Future : Play, Learn and Eat Healthy
- Healthy Successful Students, Strong Nation
- Complementary food for Infants, Foundation for Life
- Power of Education, Freedom from Poverty

The films can be viewed at

<https://publicnutrition.aurosociety.org/gallery/>

## Posters which created impact :

- Preventing school dropouts
- Preventing early marriage among girls
- Intergeneration cycle of malnutrition
- Addressing anaemia among women and children
- Importance of exclusive breast feeding for children till 6 months
- Importance of complementary feeding for children after 6 months
- Care of adolescent girls
- Pregnancy care
- Importance of a balanced diet

Posters can be viewed at

<https://publicnutrition.aurosociety.org/village-shg-programme/> and

<https://publicnutrition.aurosociety.org/establishing-shg-fpo-enterprises/>



# SOCIAL PRACTICES WE ARE ADDRESSING URGENTLY

## Extremely high school dropout rate

Supported by the DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

**POWER OF EDUCATION  
FREEDOM FROM POVERTY**

Child Going To School

Better Quality of Life

Adolescents Going To College

Higher Employment

**DON'T DROPOUT FROM SCHOOL**

Empowering Women Self Help Groups to Strengthen Families, Communities & Society.

## Early marriage of girls

Supported by the DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

**Let our village take an oath that we will not get our daughters married before the age of 18 years!!**

Do you know what will happen if your daughter marries before 18 years?  
Do you know your daughter is still growing till 18 years?

Isn't it better for our daughters to have their own home. That is our custom. If we delay, we will miss out on a good match. What will everyone say? We will be put to shame in our community.

What will happen?

What are you talking? We have already given our word to Maternal Uncle, We cannot break it.

If she marries before 18 years, her health will suffer, her growth will suffer further.  
If she starts a family, her health will suffer. She may get anemia and get weak and the child will also suffer.

**"Education First - Marriage Later"**

Empowering Women Self Help Groups to Strengthen Families, Communities & Society.

## Lack of adequate complementary feeding for infants after 6 months

Supported by the DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

**COMPLEMENTARY FEEDING  
A MUST FOR INFANTS AFTER 6 MONTHS**

**You must give your infant complementary food after 6 months.**

Only mother's milk is not enough for the child's mental and physical growth after 6 months.  
**If you do not, their physical growth will suffer.**

**SEE THE DIFFERENCE IN THE BRAIN OF A MALNOURISHED CHILD AND A NORMAL CHILD**

Maximum brain growth takes place before 3 years. Their brain will also not develop as it should.

**MALNOURISHED BRAIN**      **NORMAL BRAIN**

IMAGE SOURCE: El-Sherif et al (2012) Cranial Magnetic Resonance Imaging (f-MRI)

**MALNOURISHED CHILD**      **HEALTHY CHILD**

**HOW IT AFFECTS LATER IN LIFE**

- Because brain has not fully developed, child may not be able to study well
- Learning and earning capacity may be affected
- Because body has not developed well, child may get tired early, get ill often
- The poverty cycle will continue

**What should the child be given after 6 months?**

We can give the child Kichdi, mashed fruits & vegetables, anganwadi food. This project will also be producing special nutritious food for children - VitaPoshan

Empowering Women Self Help Groups to Strengthen Families, Communities & Society.

## CONNECT WITH US

We believe that partnerships can create sustainable impact for India's most backward communities.

To know more about our projects or to partner with us, write to us at

**E-mail : [acpn@aurosociety.org](mailto:acpn@aurosociety.org)**

**in** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/auro-centre-for-public-nutrition-public-health-and-public-policy/>

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