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
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

IMPROVE HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS of Children, Adolescents, Women and Adults

IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE and Prevent School Dropouts among Girls and Boys

IMPROVE AWARENESS / KNOWLEDGE regarding Proper Health and Nutritional Practices, Proper Child, Adolescent and Maternal Care

PREVENT EARLY MARRIAGE of GIRLS

ESTABLISH SUPPLY CHAINS where there are none and PREVENT Horticulture Waste

HOW WILL WE BRING ABOUT THE CHANGE?

Behaviour Change through Students in Schools, Women SHGs, Panchayats and Community Participation via Multimedia and Interactive Discussions

IEC and Grassroots Communication with the Community, Women and SHGs

Setting up the FIRST INDUSTRY in Yadgir District. Production Unit to be run by Women SHGs

Making accessible Fortified Nutritious Food for Children, Adolescents and Women, made from locally available Millets, Cereals and Horticulture Produce
Impact assessment indicates that the programme has been very successful in bringing about positive behaviour change within families.

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:

---

**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:

---

**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
- Lack of adequate complementary feeding for infants after 6 months
- Early marriage of girls

**POWER OF EDUCATION: FREEDOM FROM POVERTY**

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

**How it affects later in life**
- Because brain has not fully developed, child may not be able to study well
- Because body has not developed well, child may get tired easily, fall ill often
- Maximum brain growth takes place before 3 years. Their brain will also not develop as it should.
- Learning and earning capacity may be affected
- The poverty cycle will continue

**What should the child be given after 6 months?**
- We can give the child Khichdi, mashed fruits & vegetables, and nutritious food. This will also be producing special nutritious food for children - VitaKhan.

**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


**AURO CENTRE FOR PUBLIC NUTRITION, PUBLIC HEALTH AND PUBLIC POLICY**

305, Blue Cross Chambers, No.11, Infantry Cross Road, Bengaluru - 560001.

**SRI AUROBINDO SOCIETY**

Society House, No. 11, St. Martin Street, Puducherry - 605 001, India.

**www.publicnutrition.aurosociety.org**