In the driving seat of change!
Women take to novel occupations in Puducherry

Many changes are sweeping over the lives of women in general. Rising educational levels and economic necessities promote a willingness to try what has not been attempted before due to family and social restrictions. Though it still remains a man’s world, women are getting to play larger parts in it undoubtedly.

While we may be tempted to think that women achievers come from the upper echelons of our society, there is reason to believe that women from all social and economic classes are courting changes readily in one way or another, giving them a greater sense of self worth and independence. The increasing presence of women in the commercial sector – from shops and restaurants to cinema houses and petrol stations – is evidence of a coming of age in the general populace who can now take kindly to their social visibility in new areas of work and livelihood. Needless to say, many employers also began to see the economic merits of employing women over men in many sectors as they exhibited a greater sense of focus and commitment to work.

The spectacle of women drivers – of autorickshaws, taxis or vans – is a fairly recent one in India. Indian society, until recently, offered no encouragements to women who may have wanted to enter such exclusive areas of transportation services - of people and male preserves as driving public transportation vehicles - of people.

PU Celebrates Women’s Day

Puducherry: The International Women’s Day is an occasion when one can take stock of and reflect upon the changes that are happening in the world of women at large. The empowerment of women is something that is crucial for a healthy global society. Taking this actuality into consideration, women staff at various work places are enjoying the benefits of extra leave and creche for their toddlers. Institutions of learning are also given special attention towards making higher education more accessible to women students. Pondicherry University provides innumerable facilities such as free hostel accommodation and free transport from the town to the campus which has encouraged a good percentage of girl students, particularly from economically weaker sections, to seek admission here.

Our university celebrated Interna- tional Women’s Day on March 9 by conducting a Colloquium on ‘Women and Moral Policing.’ Dr. Usha V. T., Reader and Co-ordinator, Centre for Women’s Studies, during the welcome speech, commented upon the commercialization of Women’s Day. A presentation on the ‘Context of Women’s Day’ by Divya K., a research scholar of the centre, dealt with the history and origin of Women’s Day. The pub incident that happened in Karnataka was cited upon by Mr. S. Loganathan, Registrar of the university, in his inaugural address. He pointed out that freedom is one’s birth right and it is not some- thing that is to be given to a woman by her husband.

According to Dr. D. Sambandan, Dean, School Of Social Sciences and International Studies, reverence for women should not be confined to a particular day of a year but practiced, ideally, every moment. However, the sad reality is that our social and judicial systems along with our religions and religious texts do not do much to support women. Dr. K. Pan- chagam, a feminist theoretician, and Malathi Maithri, poet and social activist, spoke at the technical session held.

The panel discussion on ‘Women and Moral Policing’ held in the afternoon had panelists from various departments. It was felt that moral policing is based on one’s own sense of what is right but not on legal rights and duties. It follows the standard of behaviour considered acceptable by society. The subtle details of the complex subject of moral policing were discussed and thought provoking thoughts on how greater awareness can add to the quality of one’s inner life. Our Tamil pages brim with poems, musings and observations and the Campus page brings you a roundup of key happenings in the past month including workshops, seminars and other significant events conducted by various departments and bodies of the University.

We hope you enjoy this issue too. Please continue to write in to us at puinquirer@gmail.com with your contributions and comments.

Radhika Khanna
Editor

Snapshots

Exclusive gym for women students and faculty in the University. Inaugurated on March 9.
Foundation stone of mega mess for women also laid.

A senior citizen running the Auroville Marathon (page 8)
Dealing with economic recession

Puducherry: The Department of Management Studies conducted SYNAPSE 2009, its annual Industry-Institute Interface from Feb. 23-24. The objective of the interface was to connect students with the contemporary business environment through live interactions with industry personalities in order to understand, appreciate and the happenings in the world of management.

The theme of SYNAPSE ’09 was ‘Outsmarting the Economic Down-turn for Emerging India’. The event was held at the Convention cum Cultural Centre, Pondicherry University and inaugurated by Mr. Shankar, Vice President, and Edelweiss Capital. It consisted of four panel discussions that together represented the theme of the meet. These panel subjects were:

1) Outsmarting the Economic Downturn for Emerging India Inc.
2) David Vs Goliaths: Who Will Prevail and Thrive?
3) Widening the Radius of Trust for Corporate Restructuring
4) Actualising Entrepreneurial Spirit amidst Turbulence.

Rinoy Prabhakaran

Trends in Bioinformatics

Puducherry: The 26th National Seminar on ‘Current Trends in Bioinformatics Teaching and Research’ was organised by the Centre for Social Sciences and International Studies of Pondicherry University, from Feb. 16-18, at the Earth Sciences Seminar Hall. Prof. A. Gnanam, former Vice Chancellor, Pondicherry University and former Chairman, NAAC, Bangalore, gave the inaugural address and highlighted the growing role of bioinformatics in the fields of pharmacy and biotechnology. The participants were made familiar with various bioinformatics tools, guided by accomplished experts. The central purpose of this seminar was to popularise current techniques and processes in this field among students and researchers from related fields, and to make them aware of the new dimensions at the intersection of various fields of bioinformatics and chemical sciences. 15 eminent speakers elaborated upon topics in 6 sessions during the seminar.

According to Nishant Singh, a student of Bioinformatics, the basic agenda of the seminar was to communicate the latest trends in Bioinformatics. Students and participants had a great opportunity to become aware of, raise and clarify many a question in this rapidly emerging field of study.

Rinoy

Banquet and Workshop on Intellectual Property Rights

Puducherry: The Department of Banking Technology, Pondicherry University organised ‘Bancquest’, an industry-interface on March 12 at university’s Earth Science Seminar Hall. It also organised a workshop on “Awareness Programme on Intellectual Property Rights” on March 13 at the J. N. Auditorium of the university. Many industrialists, bankers and students participated in the events.

Rinoy

PU students win tournament

Puducherry: A tournament was organized by Annamalai University from Feb. 27 to March 1 Puducherry University performed well at this meet with students carrying away gold, silver and bronze medals for various events, which included shotput, javelin, triple jump, 100 mts., long jump, shotput, 4x400 mts relay, kho-kho and table tennis.

Sandesh

PU students win workshop on Intellectual Property Rights

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Check out THE INQUIRER in FULL COLOUR at www.ponduluni.edu.in

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Rinoy
Puducherry: Caliber 2009, the 7th International Conference organised by Pondicherry University and UGC INFLIBNET, Ahmedabad was held from Feb 25-27 at the Convention Hall of Pondicherry University. It was inaugurated by Dr. Gulshan Rai, Director General, CERT-In. Free access to e-resources in universities across the country has increased research output by 42% as compared to the last 10 years. Several new programmes are being introduced by UGC to enhance access to new tools, technologies and e-resources. The importance of incorporating e-books in children's learning was emphasised by Padmasri Prof. J. A. K. Tareen, Vice chancellor, Pondicherry University. The library would have a children's section in future. Priority is to be given to creating a user friendly atmosphere in the library. Dr. Gulshan Rai, in his inaugural address, said that we are an electronic generation who also ought to be aware of cyber security issues.

Prof. G. Sivakumar from Dept. of Computer Science & Engg. IIT, Bombay, discussed the concept of Web 2.0 and Library 2.0, pointing out that on-line resources enable one to access and publish. While speaking at the valedictory function Prof. Balasubramanian, Director, Culture and Cultural Relations, urged that every library should have online assistance. The UGC is also expected to take the initiative to make e-learning a smooth process through library e-access, said Dr. M. Koteswara Rao, the librarian, University of Hyderabad.

Micro Finance - Scope and Potential
Puducherry: An International Conference on Micro Finance was organised by the Department of Commerce from Jan 21-23, at the Convention Hall of Pondicherry University. Dr. K. G. Karmakar, managing director, NABARD, Mumbai gave the inaugural address.

More than 150 institutions participated in the conference, which had technical sessions and panel discussions. Delegates from various institutions spoke on the topics concerned. The topics for panel discussion included were: "Status of micro finance in Asian and African continents, corporate and self help group linkage as part of corporate social responsibility. Sustain Micro Finance through Scientific and Technology Intervention." Monalisha Jitendriya Saja

PUDICHERY UNIVERSITY

Pondicherry University is a central university with cutting edge facilities. It invites students from across the globe to study and research in a highly specialized environment. The University is located at R. V. Nagar, Kalapet, 10 km from Puducherry town, a bustling tourist centre known for its history and spiritual heritage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT THE UNIVERSITY'S WEBSITE www.pondiuni.edu.in

Demystifying Psychology

Puducherry: MindSPACE (Society for Psychological Assistance, Care and Empowerment) Students Association of the Department of Applied Psychology, Pondicherry University, was inaugurated on Jan 28 by Dr. Jeyachandran, a scientist and Professor of the department. The event focused on developing psychological assistance and support to the people who are in need of it through counselling and awareness camps in schools, colleges and surrounding communities. Mind SPACE also organized several Departmental activities for students that included quizzes, debates, seminars and screening of documentary films.

MindSPACE also organized a three-day film festival from Feb. 18-20 at the University's J.N. Auditorium. Before each screening, students gave a brief presentation on the psychological phenomena portrayed in the movie.
Sensing the infinite! The moving spirit of music without boundaries

On the Wings of the Muse

Painting on the palette of life!
Exploring the mind and art of Ongkie Tan

The first thing that strikes one about Ongkie’s paintings is their indefinability. They don’t fit into artistic categories, apart from what the viewer is predisposed to giving them. They are mystical to some, purposeless to a few and deeply moving to many. This mutable character of Ongkie’s paintings reflects his own fluid and dynamic view of life, which does not rest upon a fixed point. It is contemplative one season, aggressive in another, chaotic and tranquil respectively at other times. His art runs alongside his life and his experiences, some uplifting, some depressing but all worthy of consideration as they issue forth from the same source, he observes with a disarming lightness.

Ongkie is a natural painter as some would say. He began drawing at a very early age in his native village near Borneo in Indonesia and has had no formal training in art. Born into a relatively affluent middle-class agricultural family of Chinese origin, his tendency towards art was frowned upon. Painting was not recognized in these social circles as a vocation that guaranteed either respectability or prosperity.

He is a consummate travel bug, by his own description. He left Indonesia at the age of 26 for America. On arrival he began to paint for a living, selling his pictures on the streets of Los Angeles. Luck smiled upon him from the very start. People were attracted to an inherent appeal in his paintings and he began to sell well. He was noticed and approached by a gallery from the very start. People were surprised to learn that he viewed painting as just one aspect of his life, albeit an important one.

Ongkie is a man of many parts. On different occasions he has variously been a hairdresser, a movie set attendant and a farmer. He divides his time presently between travel and living in a Zen monastery. India, he confessed to us, exerted a strong pull on him. “As I get older, my Asian blood gets thicker” is how he charmingly put it. He is drawn to Auroville with its founding vision of shared communal life and human diversity and is keen to explore living here in the years to come.

For more information about Nadaka and contemporary Indian fusion music visit www.nadaka.org and www.shantakaram.com

The concert by fusion experimentalist musician Nadaka and his group at the Sri Aurobindo Auditorium on Feb 28, to mark Auroville’s 41st founding day, was a truly moving experience. Appropriately named “A Sense of the Infinite,” it generated a palpable sense of harmony ‘Global-spiritual’ would be the word closest to describing this music, which stands for a genre that looks beyond definable forms and types. It embraces a great variety of elements, from classical Indian music and chants to free jazz and folk improvisations, to endorse its diverse and free ranging spirit.

Cascading melodies, perfect percussion, resonating vocals and precise instrumental interplay were all present in large measure for the enjoyment of novice and aficionado alike. The ethereal strains of Nadaka’s “veena-guitar” complemented Gopika’s emotive voice, the soothing sibilance of Balasai’s flute, the rhythmic refrains of Mishko’s bass and the punctuated nuances of Suresh’s percussion and Ganesh’s tabla. Together it served up a sound feast that was singular and stirring at the same time.

We asked Ongkie to tell us a little about the famed “process of artistic creation”. He told us, in his characteristic light hearted way, that there was no mystery to it. Many times he would just sketch or doodle a painting into life, letting the unconscious processes guide him. We were surprised to learn that he viewed painting as just one aspect of his life, albeit an important one.

Ongkie has not been recognized in these social circles as a vocation that guaranteed either respectability or prosperity. He is a consummate travel bug, by his own description. He left Indonesia at the age of 26 for America. On arrival he began to paint for a living, selling his pictures on the streets of Los Angeles. Luck smiled upon him from the very start. People were attracted to an inherent appeal in his paintings and he began to sell well.

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Radhika Khanana (Faculty)
Tejas Joseph (Guest faculty)

Clockwise: Gopika and Nadaka, Suresh Bascara, Mishko M’ba, Balasai Basavaraj, Ganesh Basavaraj. Photos courtesy: Nadaka

Another Earth
Abito
Yin Yang
Towards the Light

For more information about Nadaka and contemporary Indian fusion music visit www.nadaka.org and www.shantakaram.com

Tejas Joseph (Guest faculty)
A sinking tradition: the fading art of hand made boat building

Situated at the mouth of the Chaliyar river in the Kozhikode district of northern Kerala, Beyapore is a busy port and fishing centre. However, few know that Beyapore was an ancient maritime centre that traded with Chinese, Arabs and later Europeans. Fewer still know that Beyapore also flourished as a centre for ship building for many centuries up until Indian independence. The boatyard at Beyapore is known for the construction of the ‘Uru’, a traditional sailing vessel used by Arabian merchants in the halcyon days of its trade with India. The tradition of ship construction in Beyapore is nearly 1500 years old. The Urus had a large market as with Chinese, Arabs and later Europeans. It is considered by many to be the queen of instruments. Its origin can be traced back to the ancient yatha, a stringed instrument similar to harp from ancient Greece. The design of the veena has evolved over the years, probably from the form seen in South Indian Medieval paintings and temple sculpture: a string instrument with two gourd resonators connected by a central shaft, possibly of bamboo.

The veena then went through several innovations and modifications. Presently, the veena is 1.5m long and is made from the wood of the jackfruit tree. Its design consists of a large resonator (kudam) carved and hollowed tapering hollow neck (dandi) is topped with 24 brass or bell-metal frets. The end of the veena’s neck is carved like the head of a dragon (yali). A small resonator is attached to the underside of the neck. A little table-like wooden bridge (kudurai)—about 2 x 2 ½ x 2 inches—is topped by a convex brass plate glued in place with resin. Two rosettes, formerly of ivory, now of plastic or horn, are on the top board (palaka) of the resonator. A piece of music is produced on four metal strings that run above the frets. These are stretched over a wide bridge that sits on the body of the veena.

Music is a part of all human beings. Human beings need music for peace and entertainment. There are different forms of music like classical, jazz, film and folk music. All these different forms of music can be expressed through instrumental and vocal mediums. The veena is one of the most ancient string instruments of India.

It is considered by many to be the “queen of instruments.” Its origin can be traced back to the ancient yatha, a stringed instrument similar to harp from ancient Greece. The design of the veena has evolved over the years, probably from the form seen in South Indian Medieval paintings and temple sculpture: a string instrument with two gourd resonators connected by a central shaft, possibly of bamboo.

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Three other strings run alongside the neck of the instrument. These are called the sympathetic or vibrating strings used for maintaining time and for playing the drone. All the seven strings are made of steel and two among the four strings are coiled with copper wire.

The South Indian veena has adapted itself to changing times and trends. Its singular and unique sound can be heard in numerous present day hit Tamil film scores and in various fusion experiments. It is likely to be one instrument that will defy time and retain its status as the queen of Indian instruments.
IF TREES STOP BREATHING, I STOP BREATHING

Oct 29, 2008 the World Wide Fund for Nature, along with Global Footprint Network and the Zoological Society of London came out with the "Living Planet Report 2008" (See illustration). The report highlighted the fact that if we continue with our consumption-based business as usual models of working as we have been doing, we would need one more planet by 2030. Currently, our consumption exceeds the biocapacity of the planet by approximately 36%.

We are touched by the succour of mother earth to make it possible for us to continue our way of life. Yet, the Johor’s (Malaysian peninsula state) is now announcing that it can no longer support the present rate of consumption and will need another planet by 2040. In this manner, we are essentially供应ing the "planet" to meet our needs. As a matter of fact, we are making this planet disappear. As warned by Professor William McDonough, "humanity is consuming the future, not living within the means of the present." To our knowledge, this is the first time the planet is being asked for the ability to support the present lifestyle of mankind.

Men who will stop the water

There are several ways to stop the flow of water. Three of these are: 1. An old mine in Quepem, Goa, which is immediately adjacent to Paikdev Zor, where the Karmayog activists have been exploring. 2. A deep well in Paikdev Zor. 3. 'Paikdev Zor', where this tribal deity bathes. The story goes that when this tribal deity bathes, mud comes out of the well. He is also said to reside in the well.The water from this well is believed to be of curative value, and it is said that the people of the region are blessed by it. As a matter of fact, the local people believe that if they drink the water from this well, they will be free from all diseases.

In addition to these, there are several other ways to stop the flow of water. Three of these are: 1. The old mine in Quepem, Goa, which is immediately adjacent to Paikdev Zor, where the Karmayog activists have been exploring. 2. A deep well in Paikdev Zor. 3. 'Paikdev Zor', where this tribal deity bathes. The story goes that when this tribal deity bathes, mud comes out of the well. He is also said to reside in the well. The water from this well is believed to be of curative value, and it is said that the people of the region are blessed by it. As a matter of fact, the local people believe that if they drink the water from this well, they will be free from all diseases.

The only reason you will need these receipts is to tally your transactions at the end of the month. But since electronic transfers are for the most part safe and error proof, there is no longer any need to have to painstakingly keep receipts to cross check bank statements at the end of the month. That much paper and time saved! 3. Support green initiatives and incorporate green features into your products/services. For example, you can distil feni, and as we skirt the last hill, we trudge the last hundred yards to a wearily laboring love of craft, laterite burnt a deep brown. At the summit we look out at a morning clear enough to plot the rain. In the distance, cloud-misted hills stretch towards Sulcorna to join the taller ghat, home to the Kushawati, directly below, sprawling with age, buried in the hill, and festooned with bright-green ferns and lichens, tiny sprigs of wild flower, creepers and vines form a thick web, through which we stumble and pick our way.

Our planet is a gift, and we are not its owners. We are merely custodians of it. As custodians, we have a responsibility to care for it and ensure that it is passed on to future generations in a better state than we received it. It is our collective responsibility to work towards a sustainable future, where we live in harmony with nature, and ensure that our actions do not harm the planet.

We can make a difference by making small changes in our daily lives. We can start by reducing our consumption, recycling, and using energy-efficient products. By doing so, we can significantly reduce our carbon footprint and help to protect our planet.

Reaching the Unreached: A technical institute with a difference

A considerable number of the country's population works in the unorganised sector, mainly because they are not educated and trained in any particular discipline. The deprived population of villages can be trained in vocational skills through offering qualitative general and technical education, which can help provide valuable employment opportunities. The Auroville Industrial School (AIS), located on the outskirts of the international township of Auroville near the legendary temple of Irumbai, is such a vocational training institute servicing the social and economic fabric of Puducherry and Auroville. In the near future, AIS plans to reach out to its audiences through community TV.

We spoke to some of the students at AIS for their impressions about the school and its courses and how they felt it could benefit them. They were all unanimous in claiming that the courses at the institute helped to widen their awareness at large and taught them vocational skills that added value to their futures. Many of them had difficulties with English in the beginning and found it hard to follow classes owing to this handicap. But with time they overcame this difficulty with dedicated inputs from their teachers. The institute places importance upon extracurricular activities like sport and yoga apart from the regular courses of study. This helps its students achieve a fuller perspective of life.

The staff and faculty of the institute are supportive and dedicated to their students and their needs. This, according to them, is what sets the Auroville Industrial School apart from others of its kind. This unique feature is what will continue to attract students.

Arathi Anbarasi Jiteshri

In the driving seat of change!

The liberalization of the Indian market resulted in a large variety of unconventional job profiles coming the way of women. Those who were ready took advantage of these opportunities. While women taxi and auto-rickshaw drivers gained quicker assimilation into the social and economic fabric of the large cities, enthusiasm was harder to come by in the smaller cities and towns of the country.

The Women's Welfare Society of Puducherry started offering drivers training in the late 1990s to women from the poorer sections of society. These introductory training tests for these occupational waterways were welcome to take the training to drive auto-rickshaws and mini transport vans. As a result of this initiative, Paducherry has quite a few women drivers today. Though their numbers ought to increase more substantially, I took the opportunity to talk to a few of these "pioneers". Selvi was the first one I met. She is married and has two sons. Her husband is an auto-rickshaw driver who found it hard to make ends meet with his meagre earnings. Though she wanted to augment the family's income in some way, the options were limited she realized, not having more than a high school certificate and no working experience what so ever. This is when she decided to take the driving course offered by the Puducherry Women's Welfare Society. On completion of the course she applied for a bank loan, only to be turned down. There was no precedent of women auto drivers in Puducherry and the bank manager was not sure if Selvi would be able to repay her loan. Selvi refused to give up and convinced him with her zeal and commitment. This was ten years ago. She looks back at all that happened since with a sense of pride and achievement.

Over this period she has been able to repay her loan with earnings from her auto-rickshaw, which is her own today. She remembered that there were about 15 women who trained along with her, only five of whom continued earning a living as auto-rickshaw drivers. Over time, however, more women came in and there are some 15 women auto-rickshaw drivers in Puducherry today, in addition to another 8 women small van drivers. This sets the Auroville Industrial School apart from others of its kind. Marie was the last woman driver I met. She was very short and this handicap seemed to be a difficult one for her to overcome. She was delayed her license on this ground even after completion of training. Being a fiery woman, she insisted that though short, she was as good as anyone else. Today she is a successful woman driver too. All these initiatives show that there are seismic changes happening in the world of women, across the spectrum of nationality, class, caste, and economic grouping. While we hear of more women CEOs and research scientists who make our news headlines and blur the gender divide with their achievements, let us not forget, on the occasion of the International Women's Day this year, these simple and ordinary women who took her license and has been driving for a van for three years now. Initially there were difficulties of a social nature, coming from that posed by male drivers who sensed competition of a sort that did not exist before. But before long they accepted her female colleagues and began to work harmoniously with them. Sumathy is a happy lady van driver today who earns enough money and respect to make her recommend driving to more women.

Jayanthi was the second one I met. Again, economic insufficiency was the main reason she took the auto-rickshaw driving training for women under the aegis of the Women's Welfare Society. Today, she is happy with this decision, which has helped supplement her family's income considerably as well as giving her a renewed sense of achievement and independence.

Sumathy, who is a small van driver unlike the others, used to be the head of a Self Help Group in Oulgaret municipality who had approached their SHG head office for job openings. Instead they were offered drivers' training, which was not as popular then. Many declined. Sumathy, however, wanted to train as a driver but faced some resistance from her husband initially. Her mother-in-law supported her desire and soon convinced her son of the benefits of this new initiative that his wife wanted to avail of. Soon thereafter she won a much needed sense of self and economic freedom.

Continued...

Photo: Radhika
**Thoughts and thought models** have a big influence over our lives. Many people are not aware of the effect they have. Thinking is something we do every day throughout the whole day. In fact, we never stop thinking. Even when we sleep we continue dreaming.

When you form your thoughts you produce feelings, attitudes, words and actions that make up the book or painting of your life. You are the artist and creator. Develop the wisdom that teaches you to produce the highest quality of thoughts whenever, however and wherever you wish. Getting out of the routine so that you are no longer influenced by the whirlwind of your thoughts and emotions, and by those created by others around you, depends on you.

As a result of the daily bombardment of information (television, telephones, work, the media and intense relationships), we have rendered our hearts insensitive and find it hard to control the flight and speed of our thoughts and to put them into practice. All this has distanced us from our true identity, of who is behind these masks, protective armor, attitudes and roles. We have come to believe that we are in fact these roles and we identify ourselves with them.

Be aware of the quality of your thoughts. You can live each moment of your life knowing how to choose beneficial and quality thoughts quite consciously, and learn to protect yourself from diverse negative influences. To improve the quality of your thoughts you must be aware of how you think, and recognise that each one of them creates our own thoughts, whether positive or useless and negative. From this you can lay the basis for real positive change in your life.

Look at your thoughts and how you feel. From here arises a natural desire to try and understand several things, why do I think and feel like this? Where do these thoughts come from? By looking into your inner self, or to put it another way, being introspective, in order to understand what creates these thoughts, you will probably come across a series of deeply-rooted habits within you. The only way of strengthening the power you have to choose and make it effective is through an inner voyage to understand and manage how your mind works in a better fashion. This is what meditation is all about.

Be aware of the influence your thoughts have over your quality of life. Be aware of the creative capacity you have in order to choose the kind of thoughts you want to create at any time.

Develop a more positive attitude towards life. Create positive thoughts and feelings towards situations, people and circumstances. Widen the understanding of your spiritual identity.

Learn meditation as a way of channelling the energy of your mind. Discover your potential abilities and powers.

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**The power of positive thinking**

A human idea and enterprise. Sometimes our thoughts (desires and wishes) are fulfilled. Many times they are not. Because we are able to think positively helps us deal with temporary setbacks. Every failure is an occasion to remind us that we have the power to overcome difficult situations. It is a power that lies within us. It is the power of appropriate thinking. Use this power consciously and diligently and witness the results of change for yourself.

S. Ugin Mary
Principal-in-Charge
Vasavi College of Education
Puducherry

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**Be Aware**

Dr. Miriam Subhmana, Ph.D.
Director of Yessaou, International Space of Creativity, Values and Coaching, Barcelona, Spain

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**Wellbeing**

Positive thinking influences positive actions. We can never interfere in the world in which we live to suit our genuine needs better through changing or manipulating our thought processes. Physical health, mental harmony and general happiness are influenced through positive thinking.

Our thinking is linked to our immune system, heart, hormonal and cholesterol levels. What we think affects how we feel. The quality of happiness we enjoy is directly connected to the way we think – about ourselves and our world. You are what you think!

Life is composed of many little steps. Each step takes us to the next and sets the stage for us to grow to new levels of understanding. None of us know what twists and turns await us. But if we can learn to think positively, we may manage to control the effects of our life to a large extent and retain our hold on happiness.

Thought is behind every action.

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**Running for unity-2nd Auroville Marathon**

Don your running shoes and shorts... Everybody Marathons have come to our town too. They are becoming regular events across the nation to endorse various events and publicise worthy causes from sports to AIDS. Puducherry is also getting firmly endorsed on the marathon map of the country.

The 2nd Auroville Marathon was held on Feb 15. It witnessed some 500 runners across all ages and coming from many places. Incidentally, the Chennai Marathon was also held on the same day.

The marathon event started at 6 a.m. There was a half marathon and a quarter marathon at 7 a.m, all originating from the Certitude play fields in Auroville. The paths were well marked with coloured arrows. Posts along the way offered water, juice, bananas, biscuits and, most importantly, encouragement. Volunteer cyclists accompanied the runners, as did photographers. A band of drummers near a turn cheered the runners. The early morning chill became bearable after a few hours and the suns rays pouring through the trees along with the extent greeneries along the track provided a sense of warmth and well being. Pilack calls greeted the runners and some were graced by their unexpected presence across a path.

The runners ranged from 12 years to senior citizens of 80 years. Breakfast was provided to all participants and volunteers after the run. Salt water foot baths were available to those who wanted this. Everyone was given a blue tee shirt with the marathon logo on it and certificates were given by the marathon organisers headed by Chandresh Patel. There was a general mood of jubilation after the run, with everyone feeling like a winner. It was indeed a victory for the human spirit!

Ketaki Chowkhani
M.A. English, Pondicherry University

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**REPORTS & FEATURES**

**S. Ugin Mary, Principal-in-Charge, Vasavi College of Education, Puducherry**

Your inaugural issue was good in content and get up. I hope more colour gets added over time. You may like to consider adding more columns in future like ‘Inspiring Thoughts’ and ‘Personality Development’. May your magazine grow bigger and more popular.

S. Vasudha Rao, IPS
IGP, Puducherry

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**MAIL BAG**

What our readers have to say...

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The Inquirer brought out by the Department of Mass Communication is survey, professional, informative and makes for an interesting read. The layout is attractive and diverse topics are covered. Kudos for your attempt. Keep it up. Cheers!

Ketaki Chowkhani
M.A. English, Pondicherry University

We can’t believe that it is your inaugural issue. The presentation and editing is appreciable.

S. Ugin Mary, Principal-in-Charge, Vasavi College of Education, Puducherry

Congratulations to all your team members on bringing out the inaugural issue of The Inquirer. This is an awesome beginning and the coverage and layout were indeed very professionally done. Looking forward to all future issues as well.

Dr. Uma Chandrasekaran
Dept. of Management Studies
Pondicherry University

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The Inquirer is a lab journal brought out by the students of Dept. of Mass Communication, Pondicherry University. Colour version is available at www.pondiuni.edu.in

Suggestions and inputs invited at puinquirer@gmail.com