The Evolution of Mother’s Vision on Economy

by Gilles
Early days in the Ashram

One had to give all that one owned.

Four [social] rules had to be observed: No sex, no alcohol…

One had to work 6 hrs/day for the Ashram.

One’s simple needs were met.

People working in business units are maintained like others.

One should not keep anything one was given by friends.

One had to cut all links with one’s family.

Children were not allowed in the Ashram.

Visitors had to ask for permission before visiting the Ashram.
Relaxation of the Ashram rules

Mother gives back their money to some disciples. Some disciples are allowed to live at their own expenses while working for the Ashram. Some of them give their house to the Ashram but continue to live in it. Some get Dining Room food.

Some disciples are part of the Ashram life but manage their own family business in or near Pondy and contribute financially to the Ashram.

From December 1943 onwards, children are allowed in the Ashram.

A growing number of disciples wish to gravitate around the Ashram.
Navajata’s Township

Mid August 1964, the SAS decides to “develop a township near Pondicherry, with all the amenities and facilities for residence and work for those who want to prepare for a better life.”

It is clearly destined to people who want to gravitate around the Ashram without having to meet its strict conditions.

At first Mother does not show any interest but approves the project.

The SAS starts raising money for the new township, buying land for it and offering possession of plots against a financial contribution.
Original conditions for residence

“The township and all its property will belong to the SAS – unless exceptions are made in special cases.” (The mention of this possibility will later be removed).

Those who contribute for a plot of developed land (250, 500 or 1,000sqm) are granted possession for their lifetime and their children after them if Mother accepts them. One may build on 28% of the plot’s area.

No other condition is stated as yet. One guesses that, as is the case elsewhere, one will have to at least pay for one’s upkeep and pay some taxes to finance the maintenance of the infrastructure and municipal services.
Mother’s “Ideal City”: 1965-68

Mother speaks of a “slightly more ideal way of life.”
Money will circulate within Auroville “as long as human habits are such.”
The 1st psychological rules are made in June 1967. Material rules are announced but not yet formulated.

December end 1967: “AV will be a self-supporting township.”

Mother gives “Aurofood Pvt. Ltd.” as an example of an AV business unit – thus giving the impression that there will be private businesses in Auroville.

“It’s a kind of an adaptation of the communist system…”

Every resident and business (farm?) will contribute according to his/its possibilities. (AV was to enjoy some extra territorial status)

The township will feed all its inhabitants. (Gurukul tradition)

“Everyone’s material need should be met, not according to notions of right and equality, but on the basis of the most elementary necessities.”
1969, things change completely

Was it because settlers are starting to arrive? Or because the consciousness of the superman has started to descend?

From then onwards, Mother will say that the Aurovilians won’t have money and that money won’t circulate within AV.

It is clearly said that all businesses will belong to AV.

Mother also says that there won’t be any employees in AV (but it is neither published, nor put into practice.)

In terms of social rules, things are still less constraining than in the Ashram but, no private property and no circulation of money make things far more constraining than they are for people gravitating around the Ashram and living at their own expenses.
“Auroville is not meant for the satisfaction of desires…”; 1968

“Auroville is the ideal place for those who want to know the joy and liberation of not having personal possession any more.”; 1969

“Those [interested in starting industries in Auroville] who wish to donate only part of their profits to the Central Fund, could start their industries anywhere in the world.”; 1969

“The Aurovilians should lose the sense of possession.”; 1970

“At Auroville, nothing belongs to anyone in particular. All is collective property. To be utilised with my blessings for the welfare of all.”; 1970

“The ideal of the Aurovilians must be to become egoless…”; 1971

“One does not live in AV to be comfortable…”; 1971
“As long as they have desires, they are not Aurovilians…” 1972

“Everyone should work at least five hours a day including Sundays. Working for oneself is not working for the community. Each member of the community should have an activity that corresponds to the needs of Auroville.” Notice 1972

“Auroville is created to realise the ideal of Sri Aurobindo who taught us the Karma Yoga. Auroville is for those who want to do the yoga of the work. To live in Auroville means to do the yoga of work. So all Aurovilians must take up work and do it as Yoga.” 1973