

Environment & Ecology

Situated on nearly 12 acres of farmland, in rural Tamil Nadu, Marudam Farm school is surrounded by a working farm consisting of animals(cows, dogs, cats, chickens, ducks), indigenous trees, rice and millet crops and organic fruit and vegetables. The students partake in some of the farm activities on a daily level. The wild animals in the farm have gradually grown with increasing green cover in the campus and the creation of hedges and corners. We are hoping that the place we call our home is home to many other non-human species too.

Educational Philosophy

The emphasis is on each individual child rather than the passing of exams. The needs of each child are recognised and nurtured so the child's potential can unfold. We encourage unity and an awareness of who we are as human beings. A large importance is placed on the ability to socialise across cultural and economic backgrounds.

At the heart of our ethos is the teaching of life skills. This includes gardening, farm based activities, cooking, sewing and crafts, building, music and song. We endeavour to make learning fun, and there is equal emphasis on living and working together, arts and crafts and the more formal teaching of subjects to provide a structured and balanced education.

There is an attempt to use nature and landscapes around us to foster learning through experiential and embodied learning experiences. Every child in the school spends half a day in nature, mostly on the Arunachala hill. In recent times we have widened the region we access for our nature outing and learning.

At the core of our work is ecological restoration, and students have participated in this work whenever possible. There has been an increase in teachers and parents participation in recent times.

Pedagogy & Curriculum

In the early years, age 3 and a half to 6 years, the learning is of a more informal style, where the kindergarten uses activities, songs and stories to build a foundation of knowledge and practical skills; the children entering the upper elementary school use this as a basis to support a more focused learning of Tamil, English, Maths, Geography, History and the Sciences. In Marudam the school curriculum is explored through project based, hands-on learning, where we find different ways of applying what has been learnt into a practical application.

In Marudam we value different knowledge systems and try to integrate them into our learning experiences. Many knowledge systems may not have literary expression but that doesn't lessen their value in any way. In fact we often find this knowledge has greater value as it is embodied in the way of living and thinking. Examples of this would be the ecological knowledge of forest dwelling tribes, fisherfolk, traditional farmers etc. We recognize written knowledge as one way of learning but would like students to experience different ways of knowing.

Embodied Learning & Well-being

In this context the body is a very important learning medium to be aware of our own selves as embodied beings, to explore the complexity of our being and finding ways to integrate and relate with the different landscapes and climatic conditions and with non-humans. Learning through the body helps children develop their capacity for attention, concentration and relaxation, while enhancing their ability for self awareness and their sense of responsibility.

Communication through Tamil and English create equal opportunities for everyone to work together and understand each other.

In higher classes students have various options for exams – they have the national open school exams (NIOS), State government exams for private students, the international Cambridge exams (IGCSE) etc and students choose based on many factors.

Community & Culture

Marudam Farm school runs as a small community, where we eat, grow and prepare food together and learn in an environment of harmony, inquiry, passion and wonder. A number of our teachers live on the farm land itself, and some have children who attend the school.

Eight families live on the campus and there are always a number of long term and short term volunteers living on the campus. We also run a small girls hostel. There are a minimum of forty people living on the campus at any time.

Parent Involvement

The parent is seen as a key person in the children's involvement with Marudam Farm School. We invite parents to share their knowledge and skills and participate if possible in festival events and the daily running of the School. Parents have participated as resource people in baking, craft skills, tree planting, farm activities and academic teaching. We would like to see a thriving parent support community grow which is nurturing to all concerned.

Local Economy & Sustainability

We have run a store for the past ten years on the campus. This store has procured grains, pulses and vegetables from small farmers around us, at a rate which is fair by them and not by market driven rates which can often be cruel to the farmers. We have encouraged farmers to move towards being organic gradually.

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By running this store we have helped the farmers step out of the hegemony of the market system, avoid plastic packaging, reduce food miles, reduce processing and be farmer friendly overall. This is an example of a micro-economy at work locally.

We are just completing a new store building which has been built in the past year.

Outreach & Social Responsibility

As a part of the educational outreach of Marudam, we have undertaken providing educational support to a Gypsy rehabilitation colony situated close to our school for the past three years. This project was funded by the Wipro foundation. They have extended their support for three more years now and have included an additional colony to our responsibility. This is a completely different line of work and very challenging. This is a continuous learning process and we are trying different methods to engage with the children of the community.

Budget for Asha Houston - 2025-26

SNO	Budget Item	Explanation	Amount	Comments
1	Teacher Salaries	There are 12 permanent and regular teachers who play the key role of class teachers, which means they will hold and keep eye on parental interface emotional and physical well-being of the students. The average salary of these teachers is around 15000 per month.	192620*12 = 2311440	
2	Educational Materials	Note books, books, art materials etc	100000	
3	Education Trips	We conduct educational trips for all of our children. Starting from overnight trips to nearby places to children below 10 years of age, we gradually increase the duration of the trips till it becomes a 21 day trip for 17/18 year olds. For the 12 plus age category we go to a rainforest plant conservation place in Wayanad, Kerala. It is the main trip for the students. We immerse ourselves in a deep ecological learning experience and learn about trees, birds, insects, weather and climate.	100000*2=200 000	We pay around Rs.500 per day per student in the place we stay for the food and stay. It works out to Rs.7500 per day for a group of 15. We stay 15 to 20 days. A minimum group cost would be one lakh per trip.
4	Craft materials		50000	

The total Given proposal = Rs.26,61,440/-

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