



## INDIA DEVELOPMENT & RELIEF FUND, INC.

[Public Charity, Tax - Exempt Organization under U.S. Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(3)]

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*IDRF Motto: "Service to Humanity is the Service to God"*

### Recent Visit to Projects in India: A Must Read!

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Dear IDRf Donor/Supporter:

On behalf of thousands of beneficiaries in India – deprived of basic human needs, we express our deepest gratitude for your generosity and support to IDRf. It is our continued endeavor to personally visit the *sewa* projects and share our experience with you. Our most recent visit was in November/December 2007. You have reposed confidence in us regarding proper use of your hard-earned money, and we take this trust earnestly. This is an onerous obligation when corruption has become so rampant that many concerned citizens consider its elimination a day dream! Yet, over the past 30 years of my experience in *sewa* work, we have been fortunate to develop close working relationships with many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in India, whose commitment and integrity are beyond doubt. It is this ever-evolving partnership together with your trust, which has sustained us. We offer below a glimpse of what we saw.

#### **Sewa Dham Vidya Mandir (Delhi)**

This CBSE accredited senior higher secondary residential school provides free education to all the students, since they belong to socially backward and financially very weak families from 23 states of India. Yet, thanks to the outstanding management and dedicated teachers, these children have excelled in both academics and sports. For instance, overall 63% of Class XII students have passed in first division, 14 students were awarded Merit Scholarships by CBSE, and two secured even the National Merit Award. Among the alumni: now 14 are medical doctors, 52 are engineers and 60 have other advanced studies. Imagine! 85-90% among them are tribal and 10-15% are from slums. IDRf has been supporting this institution since its inception in 1988. *The full cost of annual support per child is now \$600.* We attended the school's Annual Function in which all the 325 **Boys** had participated. We watched their physical exercises, yoga, drama, and arts & crafts and science & technology exhibitions. We visited their computer & science labs, library, and dorms, and talked to the teachers as well as the students.

#### **Shiksha Bharati (Hapur, UP)**

Its multipurpose facilities are dedicated to **Girl's** self-empowerment through education. We are supporting its CBSE accredited senior higher secondary school, having science, commerce, and arts streams. 124 students had appeared in Class XII board exam, of which 93 passed in first division, and the top 3 girls scored above 88% and 23 girls secured distinctions (above 75% marks) in 4 or all 5 subjects in year 2007. Being cognizant of their super academic quality nicely blended with values and extracurricular activities, we had humbly suggested them to admit the tribal girls, besides the usual middle class. We committed to support the construction of a girls dorm, since they could not be day scholars. After all, it is the society's duty to enable poor tribal girls to have access to quality education so that they can also join the mainstream and become doctors, engineers, IAS officers, etc. We are immensely indebted to the school's management committee for acceding to our request. The dorm with all the usual facilities has been completed and only 30 tribal girls are now getting free education. *This dorm can accommodate up to 170 girls and many more girls are keen to avail the excellent facilities, but the full cost per child is \$600 per year. Please come forward if you can.*

#### **Maharishi Patanjali Vidya Mandir (Allahabad, UP)**

MPVM is an English medium CBSE accredited senior higher secondary school that runs the *Sarva Shiksha Prarambhik Vidyalaya* (school for street children generally working part-time as child labor), which was sponsored by IDRf 6 years ago. MPVM provides its building facilities, all education materials and a token honorarium to the teachers. We were thrilled to see the performance at their Annual Function – all-round development of students was projected through their spectacular performance, and was extensively covered by the local print media. The school has over 200 children from nursery to Class V. *It has created great enthusiasm in neighboring localities and many more kids are keen to attend the school, but unfortunately are denied admission due to the paucity of funds.*

### **Vanvasi Kalyan Kendra (Ranchi, Jharkhand)**

VKK is engaged in the overall development of tribal people of its region by providing educational and medical facilities. *IDRF has sponsored 100 Ekal Vidyalayas (one-teacher schools) at an annual cost of \$200 per school.* VKK serves the most deprived tribal population, which does not have access to modern facilities. The two schools we visited were only 15 miles away from the state capital, Ranchi, and yet we were altogether in a different world – a world of deprivation in every conceivable respect. *While recognizing that education is the key to social transformation, VKK has requested IDRF to finance the construction of dorms for BOYS and GIRLS, besides support for more Ekal Vidyalayas.*

### **Vikas Bharti (Bishunpur, Jharkhand)**

VBB is engaged in integrated rural development and empowerment of tribal people in Jharkhand. We have been supporting VBB over the past two decades. IDRF had sponsored a 3-year project in 2004: Integrated Development of Horticulture through Women Participation, aimed to devise a model of sustainable development for the marginal and small farming communities. We have personally visited the project twice, and have received an Evaluation Report prepared by an independent project evaluator. According to this report, “the project is a glaring example to exhibit how economic betterment could be achieved by making best use of barren and infertile land...” *The report has made a strong recommendation for an effective scaling up of the ongoing project activities so as to yield maximum return. Hence, VBB’s request for supporting the scaling up project is pending with us. In this context, your continued, and if possible, enhanced support is vital.*

### **Deendayal Research Institute (Chitrakoot, MP)**

DRI is engaged in the total transformation and development of rural society through the initiative, involvement and empowerment of the villagers. Its working area is 450-500 villages surrounding a 30-mile radius of Chitrakoot. It deploys *Samaj Shilpi Dampati (SSD)* – a well-educated young couple – who agrees to reside among the villagers for 5 consecutive years and work with people of nearby 5 villages. IDRF has sponsored 20 such couples in support of inculcating self-reliance and empowerment in 85 villages. We visited the *Arogyadham* (including OPD, Herbal Garden, Ayurvedic Pharmacy and Research Lab), cow research and development center, *Krishi Vigyan Kendras* (agriculture science centers), watershed management, tribal residential school, and women vocational training centers. Based on his recent visit to DRI, Dr. A. B. J. Abdul Kalam, President of India, addressing the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly in July 2006 said, “...The DRI is a unique institution developing and implementing a village development system, which is most suited for India...” *DRI would like IDRF to support more SSDs. The annual cost per SSD is \$1,300 only.*

### **Vivekananda Kendra International (Delhi)**

The story of VKI began on a small rock on December 25, 1892, when a young *sanyasi*, Swami Vivekananda swam across the confluence of the three seas at the southernmost tip of India. His eternal message of inter-civilizational harmony through dialogue and understanding is still reverberating in the minds of millions, inspiring generations, and evolving humanity. VKI *Bhavan* will provide an international platform for spreading this universal message. *IDRF’s motto: Service to Humanity is the Service to God* is Swamiji’s quote. IDRF had sponsored the Library and two Guest Rooms; our visit was fully satisfactory.

### **Arpana (Karnal, Haryana)**

*Arpana* means offering of Love. We have been in contact with them since 1993 when the World Health Organization had recognized their “innovative health practices.” IDRF had initially sponsored a mobile medical clinic, and followed it by a family planning project – aimed towards zero population growth in deprived villages of Karnal district. Arpana’s concerted efforts have resulted in dramatically reducing the birth rate from 31% (in 2004) to 23% (in 2007), thereby almost reaching the goal. This social service also includes spreading knowledge about better nutrition for better health, kitchen gardens, fostering a sisterhood of compassion & care, and formation of women’s self-help groups. We were amazed at their spirit of selfless service, effectively blended with modern management. *Thus, an annual commitment of \$10,000-15,000 can accomplish wonders!*

Vinod Prakash, President IDRF

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