

An eco-friendly Biogas unit for IDRF-tribal girls' hostel in Uttar Pradesh

IDRF's partner Shiksha Bharati's education complex comprises of a high school for 1,909 girls, a preschool for 145 children, an IDRF hostel for 66 tribal girls, a B. Ed college, herbal garden and *gaushala* (animal shelter) on a 20-acre campus, some 65 kilometers east of New Delhi. The trust was started in 1988 by local social workers and philanthropists to empower girls through value-based education.

IDRF got in touch with Dr. Emmanuel D'Silva (a World Bank retiree) and his business partner Narendra Jindal who have set up more than 70 biogas units across India on a pro bono basis. IDRF helped Shiksha Bharati to set up two, new biogas units: a-20 cubic meter digester close to the *gaushala* run on cow dung and an-8 cubic meter unit run on human waste from the girls' toilets. The biogas generated from the units meet most of the kitchen fuel needs of the girls' hostel.

The Shiksha Bharati management is happy with the new biogas unit that employs the latest technology. Unlike traditional dome-shaped cow-dung biogas plants made of bricks and cement, this one is made of synthetic material that looks like a balloon and rolls on the ground. The technology is sourced from Mexico, but fabricated in India. The new unit will save about four cylinders of LPG gas per month in winters and five cylinders in summers.

The biogas unit has already generated considerable interest locally. The state's Minister for Panchayats came on a visit to see the biogas plant and showed his appreciation for IDRF's eco-friendly vision. The project might inspire other semi-rural schools that have student hostels, gardens or cattle sheds to have biogas units too. IDRF is looking ahead to support the spread of this technology to two hospitals, in Uttarakhand and Maharashtra in the near future.



Tribal girls at the IDRF-hostel benefit from the new biogas plant on the campus



Clean Biogas fuels the hostel kitchen