

## Tu Zinda Hai..... *Aravinda, AID-Mumbai*

Strains of this rousing song sung by the new recruits of *Reva ki Yuva*, and the long term activists and village elders rang in the air long into the night of Sep 17, the concluding date of the *Nav Nirman Satyagraha* held in Domkhedi and Jalsindhi, the lowest villages in Maharashtra and MP, respectively, that are affected by the Sardar Sarovar dam project (SSP). These youths from the tribal region of the Narmada Valley have pledged the next year of their lives for the Narmada Bachao Andolan. The Satyagrahis, the Samarpit Dal, the valley and indeed the voice of justice has lived to fight another year.. *Tu Zinda Hai ... agar kahi hai maunt to tu maunt ko takrata ja* (You are alive ... if anywhere there is death, challenge that death and destruction).

This year, many new villages joined the movement, although they are not directly affected by the submergence. These include island-affected villages that will not submerge but will lose access routes., compensatory afforestation affected villages where government officers are entering in the name of 'tree planting', about 104 sanctuary affected villages in Gujarat which have been declared as Shulpaneshwar

sanctuary to compensate for the forest to be submerged by reservoir and who stand to lose rights to forest and movement, some more villages in Gujarat on periphery of the submergence zone, and villages whose process of being given land rights has been stalled for decades so as to make land acquisition for SSP submergence and resettlement easier for the government. Clear messages from this year's satyagraha are : 1) Domkhedi , Jalsindhi and other villages are not just "dubkshetra" or "submergence zones", but rather they are living, growing villages, trying out new things, and planning for the future through initiatives like developing syllabus and textbooks in the local languages, generating electricity locally, getting involved in savings groups, watershed management, etc. 2) The scale of impacts from the SSP is much beyond the scope of anything yet calculated by the governments. 3) People's knowledge of geography, natural resources, and development, has to form the basis of planning -- preferably local planning. Even central planning needs to consult local people not because they are "affected" by the project and therefore "vulnerable", but because they are more intelligent and experienced about the goals sought in such projects.

## On a summer "holiday" ---- *John Mathias, AID-Ann Arbor*

I have recently returned from a month and a half long visit to India, documenting in video the progress of ten AID-funded projects scattered across the country. In West Bengal, Mr. Sinha, who shelved his Princeton PhD in chemistry for a career in integrated rural development, taught me more in a few days than I could have learned in a semester of coursework. Visiting the cyclone affected villages with members of Adhikar was a sobering experience to say the least, but it was lightened by the enthusiasm I saw in the paralegal workers defending the affected people's rights. In Andhra Pradesh, Ms. Susila introduced me to a confident, intelligent and cheerful young woman who was the leader for of the Bhagavatula Charitable Trust handicapped children's center. The short time I spent with Balaji (AID Fellow) and Kalpana was more valuable to my education than either of them knew. It was refreshing to meet so many people my age working in the Tamil Nadu Science Forum. In the Narmada river

valley, people are living on the edge of a rising river. I learnt from Ravi and Aravinda that this protest provides an opportunity for innovations such as the pedal power electric generator, which adapts modern technology to the tribal people's rural lifestyle. The videos will be available for all AID chapters in early January.



*John Mathias with the children of migrant laborers in Jagriti school in Kanbur.*

## ***News and Notes:***

### **AID Columbia welcomes new volunteers**

AID Columbia welcomed its new volunteers on Sept 1, at the Swearingen College of Engineering. The meeting had a successful turnout of old AID members and prospective volunteers. The meeting was held to welcome the newcomers and introduce them to AID. Badri was the MC for the proceedings. Balaji gave a general description of AID, its policies and its activities in U.S and in other parts of the world.. Sreesa spoke about the various activities of AID Columbia over the past two years, and its plans for future projects. Deeptha, Chandru, Raghavendra, Sarat, Prabhu and Nalin spoke on various aspects of AID, the past activities, experiences and responsibilities involved. " Real involvement is more important than just the thought to do something for the country" was emphasized. --Sreesa Akella, Columbia

### **India Beckoned in College Park, MD**

AID-Maryland and Student Council of India (SCI) held India Beckons 2000, a culture-fest at College Park on Saturday, September 23. The function was very successful and attracted more than 250 people including several new volunteers. The fun-filled day started around 1 PM and went into the wee hours of Sunday morning. The program included India Quiz, Antakshari, Dumb-Charades and a skit on the Narmada Valley authored by Aravinda. The highlights of the function included Dhandiya and Gharba in the night. The program also brought back some nostalgic memories of India Beckons 1996.

-- Srinivas Krovvidy, College Park

### **Dr. Datye speaks to AID-MD**

Dr. K. R. Datye, a prime mover in India towards equitable development using environmentally sustainable technology and processes, spoke to AID Maryland volunteers in September. Dr. Datye estimates that a typical household needs energy equivalent to 5 tons of coal per year in order to satisfy its basic needs, all of which could be generated from solar energy or bio-mass through low-cost technology, and a scientific and participatory approach to land improvement and micro-watershed management. The key to understanding this is to view end products like houses, farm equipment, etc., in addition to gas and electricity, as energy. Hence, he stressed that the emphasis should be on the use of low cost and environmentally sustainable structural materials like bamboo. --Karthik, Maryland

## ***From our video desk:***

Please check out the following new additions to our video library in AID-Bay Area:

*Outsider as an enemy: The Politics of Rewriting History* - A talk by Prof. K.N. Panikkar, Center for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, on Sept 9th, 2000, at the Stanford University Auditorium. The subject of the talk is Emergence of Communalism in India.

*'Health and Development' - Why consider Gender?* - A talk by Jane Maxwell, Women's Health Editor, Hesperian Foundation, on July 25th, 2000, at the Indo-American Community Service Center, Santa Clara, CA. An extremely educational and informational talk in light of AID's efforts with the 100 Block Plan and the Peoples Health Campaign.

For other titles, please check out our website: <http://www.aidindia.org/sfbay> and click on Documentaries. Further details on how to get the video for your chapter; please contact Savita Kini at [savitakini@yahoo.com](mailto:savitakini@yahoo.com) -- Savita Kini, Bay-Area

## ***Mark Your Calendar:***

1) AID Columbia is screening the movie "Bugaboo", in October. The movie is produced by Natak Films. It is a feature film in English directed by Sujit Saraf. The movie gives a hilarious insight into the lives of Indian working professionals in the Silicon Valley. Please read the daily AID e-news for details on the date, venue, and time. The movie will be screened on 21 October (Saturday) at 4 p.m. at the University of South Carolina Russell House theater.

2) AID-Ann Arbor is sponsoring an evening of Sangam, an Asian-Indian light music band, on November 11, to raise funds in support of the AID 100 Blocks plan. Sangam is a group of talented, young musicians from Columbus, Ohio who have been performing since 1992. The venue will be announced shortly in AID news

**The websites of Tamil Nadu Science Forum (TNSF), All India People's Science Network (AIPSN), and the People's Health Assembly (PHA)**

**are now active.** You can visit them at <http://www.tnsf.org> (TNSF), <http://www.tnsf.org/pha> (PHA), and <http://www.tnsf.org/aipsn> (AIPSN).

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