

India Project Report

Submitted by Rick Watson

1. **Trip dates:** September 26 – October 5, 2009
2. **Country visited:** India
3. **Trip's main objective:** Assist in development projects Dokrah Jhara (DJ) village
4. **Secondary objectives:**
 - a. Build positive reputation of Project Manager (Sushil Marandi) in DJ village to facilitate his work there
 - b. Provide an informative encounter with India, poverty and development issues for team members
5. **Group/ people traveling with you:**
 - a. Rick Watson – Team Leader
 - b. Sushil Marandi – local GHNI Project Manager



- c. Jeff Power – GHNI staff
- d. Jessica Marchand – GHNI staff
- e. Laura Watson – CT, wife of Rick, Stanwich Church member
- f. Greg Burton – NY, Stanwich Church member
- g. Jesse Silver – CT, Stanwich Church member
- h. Tracy Kirk – UK, previous GHNI team member
- i. Raoul Flemming – UK, fiance of Tracy
- j. Brandon Ragan – Orlando, FL; considering GHNI internship in India
- k. Paige Ragan – Orlando, FL; previous GHNI team member; considering GHNI internship in India
- l. Jason Ubay – Honolulu, HA; aio group designated traveler

6. Schedule:

Dates	Location	Objectives
9/24	Arrive Calcutta late at night	
9/25	Calcutta	Rest Day

9/26	Calcutta	Meet with Sushil for planning; Team members arrive late at night
9/27	Calcutta	Team rest day; Calcutta church option; Calcutta walking tour option; Team dinner
9/28	Calcutta to Dumka road trip	Orientation & observation; long drive to Dumka
9/29	Dumka, DJ village	Village orientation; walking tour of village and project sight; Q&A with Sushil; games with village children
9/30	DJ village	Assist in irrigation project with village men
10/1	Dumka, DJ village	Visit Computer training center and hear history and vision from John; Video broadcast test run at irrigation project site
10/2	DJ village	Live video broadcast (failed due to technical difficulties); work on irrigation project with villagers; TCD vision discussion with Sushil; watch village sports day as guests of honor
10/3	Dumka	Free morning; walking tour of Dumka town in afternoon; Computer center available; dinner at local dignitary's home – he is advocate of GHNI development work in villages
10/4	Dumka/ Road trip	Church at John's home (Rick preached about the importance of joining God on his "mission team"); Long road trip back to Calcutta; Celebration dinner
10/5	Calcutta	Visit Mother Teresa's ministry; New Market for shopping; departure

7. Partners/ Project planning

- Desired outcomes:
 - a. Help villagers start excavating an irrigation pond that will allow nearby farm plots to produce a second crop.
 - b. Engage villagers personally in order to build trust and relationships that will facilitate future development work.
 - c. Teach team members about poverty and development issues in developing countries in general and in India specifically.

- Planned steps:
 - a. Begin digging an irrigation pond along with villagers;
 - b. Help put on and participate in a village sports & games day at which local leaders will encourage the villagers to work with Sushil and GHNI as they attempt to bring about positive change
 - c. Conduct informative walks and talks in and around the village to observe and teach about relevant issues.

- Actual outcome:
 - a. We did help start the irrigation project. The project may take a month to complete and will need to be finished by the villagers. We donated \$1000 US, collected from team member fees (\$100 each), to pay provide wages to villagers for completing the project (at below market wages: 80 Rp/ 100 cft of earth).



- b. We sang songs and played games with children at the village sports gatherings. It turned out well but with all students out of school for the holiday, we had no opportunity to interact with kids at the school. We contributed \$145 US for prizes (goats and ducks) at the sports event day. We also got to introduce ourselves to the entire village (about 2000 people) through a translator at the main event.





- c. Through various team gatherings and observations, the team did in fact come away with a deeper understanding of poverty and its related issues as well as issues specific to India.



8. Post Trip Report

- Major victories/ accomplishments:
 - a. GHNI was well received by villagers and encouraged to continue its work there, thus laying a foundation for good news as well as good works in the future



- b. The team encountered the “real” India as opposed to the “tourist” version, saw its poverty up close and came to a deeper understanding of the obstacles and possible approaches to address it. They also understood the importance of good news being practical as well as hopeful.
- c. Some Team members desire to have further involvement in village while others were moved to have a greater kingdom impact elsewhere.

- Other things to share.
 - a. The reality of the demonic world is apparent in India and makes the need for prayer in working there obvious



- b. Sushil and his family are wonderful hosts!



- c. Our team cook was extraordinary!
- d. Our drivers were talented and served us well!
- e. Only one person got sick and only for a day or so!
- f. We learned that wet earth is much heavier than dry earth!
- g. We found an excellent and affordable hotel in Calcutta (Camac Plaza)!
- h. We found an excellent end of trip restaurant to celebrate together in Calcutta! (Charcoal Grill)
- i. Our time at Mother Teresa's was very moving.
- j. It would probably be better to come later in the year next time as late September is still the rainy season
- k. Staying in the village at least one night would ease the burden of the rough commute to and from Dumka.
- l. Avoid the local holidays when school is not in session and roads become jammed with rowdy parades.
- m. Future teams could come with supplies (ie arts and crafts) to enhance the time with children
- n. Simple health lessons and supplies for families is also a possible activity for a future team

- Human interest stories (for newsletters, publication, to be shared with others):

- a. Two of our team members – Tracy and Raoul - took a side trip to the Taj Mahal at which they became engaged to be married!
 - b. Two other team members – Paige and Brandon – were using their India experience as a listening and discerning trip during which they were considering a longer term call to full time ministry or development work, possibly in India or even perhaps as interns with GHNI!
 - c. One Team member – Laura – whose husband was the team leader, came away with a deeper understanding and appreciation for what a staff member does at GHNI, even exclaiming at one point, “This is really hard!”
 - d. Some of the women on the team lead an impromptu game of Duck-Duck-Goose with some of the village children which generated perhaps one of the game’s largest audiences in history. As nothing else was really happening at the time, several hundred villagers gathered joyfully to watch the foreign women running around a circle of children and sliding to the ground!
 - e. The village men were amazed and amused at the enthusiasm with which some of the foreign women got down on their knees in the thick mud to fill baskets of earth for the irrigation pond excavation. Did all foreign women work in such a way?
 - f. The villagers could not understand why all the foreigners were so interested in seeing the chickens killed for the lunch. Hadn’t they ever decapitated a chicken before? What were they, vegetarians?
 - g. The drivers were confused at the terrified looks on their passengers’ faces when they began to drive the wrong way head on into traffic on a four lane highway. How else were they supposed to get around the traffic jam?
- Items for follow-up (action steps):
 - a. Rick, Mike (GHNI Field Director) and Sushil (GHNI Project Manager) to discuss next steps:
 - i. Completion of current projects
 - ii. Initiation of next projects
 - iii. Need for additional project management
 - iv. Plan for future team visits