

MOBILIZING PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE

Manav Lok, Ambajogai, Maharashtra
Years supported: 14 Total Funding: \$36200

Manavlok has been in the forefront of sustainable rural development in the Marathwada area. Watershed development, sustainable agriculture, women's self help groups, and vocational training have been their major strengths. Recently, IFA has been supporting an awareness campaign whereby Manavlok workers facilitate the villagers access to the various government benefit schemes. The project was visited last year by Shreenivas Mate who provided this update.



Shreenivas with the Lohiya couple and other workers

Last year's IFA funding covered honorarium to four workers and traveling expenses for 10 workers. The activities undertaken were:

1. Health camps for rural women and others
2. Diagnostic camp for animals
3. Public hearing on health problems
4. Training of new SHGs and other workers
5. 8th March rally of women
6. Establishment of a help line - *Jansahyog*.

For this year, in addition, they are planning a workshop for adolescent girls and general workshops on "Right to Water", "Right to Work" and "Right to Information". There will be a summer camp for child laborers and a rally of 1000 destitute women is planned for later in the year.

These programs help disseminate information about the various government scheme. Rallies create awareness of women's rights and increase their self confidence. As an example, women have organized anti liquor movements in several villages where the selling and consumption of liquor has been banned.

Since 2001, India Government's Ministry of Rural Development has selected Manavlok to monitor their welfare schemes in five districts of

Maharashtra. In Gujarat, they have been asked to help choose villages for the "*Nirmal Gram Puruskar (Clean Village Award)*." This is part of the nationwide '*Total Sanitation Campaign*' under which an award of Rs. two to five hundred thousand is to be given to the most hygienic village.

CAPART, Delhi and the GOI Family Planning Department have designated Manavlok as the Lead NGO in the area. Their responsibilities include creating awareness on Reproductive Child Health and training the government workers in watershed development. The National Legal Advisory Board has provided funds to create awareness on Women's Law and Regulation. Manavlok has conducted many camps to fulfill this object.

Under the IFA supported MPI, Manav Lok has started *Jansahyog*. Its aim is to help, guide and give support to the poor in their efforts to benefit from the various welfare schemes. Their complaints are collected and submitted to the appropriate offices. In the absence of a required response *Jansahyog* launches demonstrations, *satyagrah* etc. As a result of these actions many abuses have been corrected.

Since 1991, Helpage India has sponsored 150 senior citizens in this area. These are typically poor and destitute people. Manavlok helps them with food grains, clothing and basic health treatment.



Manavlok General Secretary Dr. Lohiya and his wife, Mrs. Shaila Lohiya have lifelong commitment to social work. Dr. Lohiya has been appointed as the vice chairman of *Bharat Nirman (Nation Building)* Program for the *Beed* District. He has also been chosen for over a dozen committees of the District administration. These include those dealing with:

- Farmers suicides
- Non conventional energy development
- Watershed Development
- Child labor
- Water and sanitation
- Afforestation

Shreenivas strongly recommended continuing support of this highly effective and well recognized NGO in this relatively poorer part of Maharashtra.