



# Fall 2019 Updates on the Work

## INDIA'S WATER CRISIS: TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE

Our families in Khajuraho have been suffering without easy access to water for cooking, drinking and bathing. India's groundwater provides 40% of the country's water supply. Scientists predict that the groundwater will run out in twenty-one of India's cities by 2020. The rest of the country's water supply comes from the annual monsoons that fill up the country's reservoirs and the village wells. Over the past few years the monsoon season has come weeks later than normal and the situation has been made more dire by deadly heat waves.



*TIG members visiting families in Khajuraho always draws a curious crowd*

Khajuraho has been particularly hard hit. Our families there report that they have to line up at 3AM for their family water allocation; two pots of water that trickle out of the village's well spout. In previous years The India Group allocated funds for them to purchase water from stores that service community members who have the financial resources to obtain their water that way. When we heard the desperate situation from our Khajuraho families in July, we made the decision to allocate emergency water funds again.

Access to clean water falls under The India Group mission to insure the health of the families we serve. As India's water crisis worsens, lasts longer and spreads beyond Khajuraho, The India Group will be monitoring the impact on our families and responding with assistance.

The water crisis is an example of how TIG funding is used to provide emergency relief for our families. Low caste Indian families in extreme poverty are regularly confronted with difficult living conditions. Our families call or text us when they need help. That's how we found out about the water situation in Khajuraho. Each request for financial help is weighed against our mission statement. Does the request fall within our parameters of providing education for the children and healthcare for the families? TIG's governing body has turned down requests from our family members that would have improved their lives, but didn't fall within our mission statement.



*Assi Ghat flooded*

On September 18th, the monsoon caused the Ganges to pass the danger mark of 71.26 meters (234 feet) and flood Assi Ghat in Varanasi. The river is now closed, adversely affecting TIG's families, all of whom earn their living from the boat business on the Ganges.

The India Group takes our stewardship of your donations seriously whether its using your assistance to pay school tuition for a child or buying water for an entire family during times of drought. Our annual fundraiser is approaching, we hope you'll consider donating.



*Gungun's flooded house in Varanasi*

# SPOTLIGHT

## Hanote Family & Mt. Zion School

### MEET ONE OF TIG'S KHAJURAHO FAMILIES

For Reverend HB and Sushila Hanote their dream came true in 2013 when they opened their own school, Mt. Zion English School. TIG had come to know the Hanotes in the early years of our work in Khajuraho, probably no later than 2011. Though our parents desperately want a better life for their children through education, they themselves are illiterate or at best semi-literate. School is a new experience not only for their children but also for them: The idea that the children have to go to school everyday even when it's raining or they don't feel like it; the idea that just getting something called a report card isn't necessarily something to be proud of if the grades on that report card are failing—this school world was/is a new world for our families. The Hanotes helped TIG translate our school expectations to our families and helped us to understand the conceptions and misconceptions of our families about education.

Because, as implied above, our parents have little or no education, your donations pay for all our students to have tutors. It's often hard to find a good tutor, but in Khajuraho the Hanotes were recommended to us. Mrs. Hanote was running an after-school tutoring program. When we met her, we knew that she was by far one of the most accomplished people we had met in Khajuraho. The Hanotes are also "other": They are by Indian standards middle-class living in a much, much lower socio-economic community; they have much more education than most of those around them; and they are evangelical Christians in Hindustan

Khajuraho. Mr. Hanote is a pastor with a flock of about 8 people, but they feel "the Lord" has sent them to Khajuraho, so there they are.

TIG didn't (and doesn't) have a lot of money, so we are always trying to get as much as we can for as little as possible. We bartered with the Hanotes: If they would tutor our students for free, we would pay for their son to go to the Catholic Convent School where our then 4 students were going because their families thought it was the best school in the village and also because having a child in that school brought prestige to a family, especially to a low-caste family.



Rev. & Mrs. Hanote with TIG members



A classroom in Mt. Zion School





*Rev. Hanote in Mt. Zion School's rooftop classroom*

Over the years, we came to know the Hanotes well because of their relationship with our students as tutor and then teacher. Also, Mrs. Hanote served as a literal and educational interpreter for us. She helped us as well as our parents to understand what those Hindi characters on the report cards and school notes said, and what those numbers on the report cards meant. How well was a student doing if she got a 50? Was a 50 bad as it would be in the United States, was it average, or was it good? Mrs. Hanote understood and willingly shared her knowledge with us.



*A chalkboard made of plywood*

From the beginning the Hanotes said they felt “called” to open a school, but they didn’t have the financial resources. Could TIG help? We couldn’t. We had very limited finances ourselves and didn’t see TIG’s mission moving in the direction of running a school or being a part of running one. Somehow—the Hanotes would say “with God’s help”—they found a building and opened Mt. Zion in 2013. Initially the school had only the lower grades, but it has grown by leaps and bounds and now has grades Nursery through 8. The school is bursting at the seams with approximately 135 students, 2 of whom are TIG-supported learners. If there were more room, there would be more students because the Hanotes charge very little for the education they provide. Indeed, they are serving some of the poorest of the poor who would be relegated to the mostly inadequate (to say the least) government schools. The Hanotes are hoping to do more: They are praying for land so they can build a school that will see students through grade 12. It wouldn’t surprise us if one day this dream comes true too. The Hanotes are definitely on the side of the angels.