

TOWARDS SELF RELIANCE

Written by Subir Banerji



UK charities and visitors have helped established a dental facility in one of the poorest areas of India, which is now on the way to self reliance, as Subir Banerji reports

The Deendayal Research Institute is set up in one of the poorest regions in India, Chitrakoot on the Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh border. It is the brainchild of the late Nanaji Deshmukh, an iconic figure who devoted his life to the 'uplifting of the poor' as noted by the ex-Indian president Abdul Kalam. The philosophy of the research institute was simple yet profound, 'Campaign for self reliance'.

Within the institute Dr Naresh Sharma, a specialist from Heckmondwike near Leeds, set up a dental facility to serve the poor from the nearby villages almost 20 years ago. The dental facility has developed from a single surgery to four surgeries and a mobile clinic. The clinics are set up to UK standards with help and support from various organisations including King's College London Dental Institute, The London Dental Education Centre (LonDec), Coltene, Prestige and the AOG organisation.

LOCAL TREATMENTS

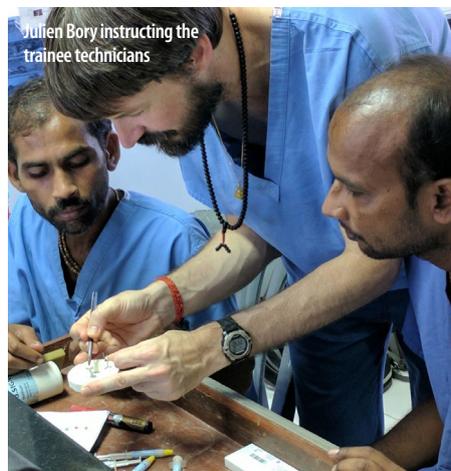
Patients present to the clinics, often having walked for over a day, with a variety of dental and facial issues and are either treated at the centre or referred to specialist centres to the nearby facilities available in the larger cities. A team of oral surgeons from the UK visit regularly to train local dentists and oral surgeons in the treatment and management of cleft lip and palate patients, as well as burn victims. Training for the resident dentists in prosthodontics, endodontic and restorative dentistry is also provided by experts visiting from the UK and the local team is very ably led by Dr Varun Gupta the in-house head of the department.

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The Deendayal Research Complex set up in Chitrakoot



Julien Bory instructing the trainee technicians

has a fully functional dental laboratory. Built in 2008 under the guidance of Bill Sharpling, the laboratory now is able to provide crowns, dentures and other fixed and removable dental prosthesis. Most importantly - and maintaining the philosophy originally coined by Nanaji Deshmukh - local villagers are taken on and trained to a high standard by Julien Bory and his team. This provides the local community with the opportunity for learning a skill leading to self-reliance.

OPPORTUNITIES

During my visit in August 2017 to the dental department of the research institute, I witnessed and experienced at first hand a unique training and educational environment where, in one of the most remotest areas of India, local villagers were being trained in dental technology by a leading dental technician from Canada and his team from France. The patient's cases were being

TRAINING

Julien Bory, a master dental technician originally from France but now living in Canada, brings a team of dental technicians on a regular basis to the dental facility which

PRIVATE LIFE



Patient being treated for full dentures. Patient had been without teeth for several years and had walked for a day and a half to reach the clinic. Overnight accommodation during appointments was under the shade of a nearby tree. Denture constructed in four days

discussed with the clinician and technician next to each other and adjustments, measurements were undertaken immediately in the laboratory next door. The technical and clinical aspects, complexities and



challenges were discussed to optimise the clinical outcome, the patient care provided was exemplary and world standard. Routinely several young individuals are selected from the surrounding villages and given the

opportunity to train as dental technicians under the expert guidance and teaching of Julien and his team.

In 1947 when India gained its independence, around 80% of the country's GDP was from agriculture and about 75% of the population lived in the villages; now it is estimated that only 30% of the nation's GDP is from agriculture but the rural population has remained at around 70%. Coupled with the fact that 51% of the population is under 25 years old and 66% under 35, this means that about 500 million jobs need to be created from somewhere for those coming off agriculture.

Along with several other projects aimed towards developing skills for the local men and women from the surrounding villages, the philosophy of the research institute is setting standards by example. ●

MORE INFORMATION

Read more about the Deendayal Research Institute's (DRI), Chitrakoot Project at the website.
WEBSITE: www.Chitrakoot.org

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