

IDRC in India

India has enjoyed impressive economic growth over the last two decades and as a result, its political influence on the world stage is increasing. But a widening gap exists between those benefiting from economic development and the 300 million Indians still living in poverty — a gap that contributes to rising discontent. Rapid development is putting pressure on already stressed water supplies and power systems, while pollution threatens the environment and human health.

IDRC supports research that addresses these and many other challenges facing India.

The Centre's past support has brought the benefits of technology to rural villages, prepared coastal villages to mitigate and cope with natural disasters, identified the reasons for sex-selective abortion, and diminished the occupational health hazards of the growing urban stone-quarrying and pottery industries.

Developing Digital Capabilities

In 1997, the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, with funding from IDRC, introduced rural telecentres — community centres offering access to the Internet, computers, and other technologies — to India. The centres helped spawn a mass movement that brings the benefits of such technologies to villages across the country.

Today, India aims to have 100,000 telecentres by 2010. Villagers use information obtained through the telecentres to improve their health, access fish and agricultural markets, better understand climate change and ways



Many of the telecentre managers that IDRC helps to train are women.

to adapt, and find income-earning opportunities.

IDRC support is helping telecentre managers improve their management skills and make the centres self-sustaining.

India's "Missing" Daughters

Since the early 1990s, 10 million girls have gone "missing" in India. Many observers point to the illegal practice of sex-selective abortions. IDRC-funded researchers with ActionAid India have identified additional factors — such as denying girls and women equal access to nutrition and health care — that can explain the higher ratio of boys to girls. Although research continues, ActionAid India is already recommending that policymakers redress the preference for sons through measures that increase the economic worth of women, such as improved employment opportunities.

Total IDRC support

442 activities
worth CA\$92 million
since 1974

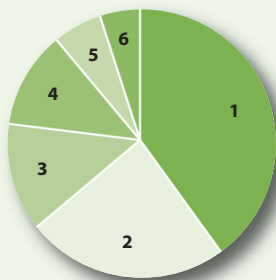
IDRC support is helping:

- Rural Indians gain access to the Internet
- Poor Kerala residents access health care
- Residents near Chennai avoid waterborne diseases
- Victims of abuse obtain redress
- Informal employees improve working conditions

Pratap Bhanu Mehta, President of the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi, is a member of IDRC's Board of Governors.

Current IDRC support

64 activities
worth CA\$20 million



1. Innovation and technology

CA\$8,258,232 • 21 activities

2. Agriculture and environment

CA\$4,812,104 • 10 activities

3. Health

CA\$2,589,880 • 10 activities

4. Economy and development

CA\$2,538,390 • 9 activities

5. Women's rights

CA\$1,311,040 • 12 activities

6. Peacebuilding

CA\$921,100 • 2 activities

Some activities are regional in scope.

Some current activities

IDRC support in India aims to bolster the capacity to reduce poverty, inequality, and conflict; combat emerging infectious diseases; adapt to climate change; tackle crucial issues that the country holds in common with China; and harness new technologies in the service of the poor.

■ Access to health care

Funding: CA\$245,600

Other donor: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Duration: 2005–2010

Grantee: Centre for Development Studies, India

Despite a relatively strong health system, important segments of the population in the state of Kerala cannot afford health care. Researchers in Kerala and the Centre Hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal, Canada, are testing micro health-insurance schemes and a system in which communities monitor access to health services.



The boundaries and names shown on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IDRC.

■ Simple technology for cleaner water

Funding: CA\$332,336

Duration: 2009–2012

Grantee: India Institute of Technology, India

Millions of Indians live in poor neighbourhoods, where access to clean water is scarce and waterborne infections are common. To improve water quality, researchers are developing a simple, inexpensive water filtration system using sari cloth, plant-derived coagulants, and other locally available material. After lab testing, residents of a peri-urban community outside of Chennai will pilot the technology.

■ Informal employment in India and China

Funding: CA\$222,000

Duration: 2009–2011

Grantees: Gujarat Institute of Development Research; Institute of Rural Management, India

Informal employment — without contracts, benefits, or legal protection — accounts for most of the jobs available in India and, increasingly, China. This comparative study examines informal employment's role in reducing poverty and generating economic growth. It aims to increase workers' earnings and basic protection.

■ Dialogue to end impunity

Funding: CA\$518,300

Duration: 2007–2012

Grantee: South Asia Forum for Human Rights, Hong Kong

Indian researchers are documenting the violence of the state and other actors in four regions — Kashmir, Punjab, the Northeast, and Gujarat — and the shortcomings of existing

laws and institutions that prevent victims from obtaining redress. The research team is opening a dialogue on impunity and the need for a just framework for the victims of abuse of power to claim their right to truth, justice, and reparation.

■ Mobile technology to sustain future growth

As part of the International Research Chairs Initiative — a joint initiative of IDRC and the Canada Research Chairs Program — researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology and the University of British Columbia, Canada, are tackling some of the most pressing problems in wireless communications system design. The research is helping to develop better, more affordable products in a sector that is vital to India's economy.

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For more information visit the Regional Office for South Asia and China website: www.idrc.ca/saro/.
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In 2008–2009, IDRC hosted **The India Lectures** series. Hear eminent thinkers' thoughts on an evolving India:
www.idrc.ca/indialectures.

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