

Sustainable Development Action Plan for Poverty Alleviation in the Indo-Diaspora Ancestral Lands of Bihar/Uttar Pradesh

The ancestral lands of many of the global Indo-Diaspora can be traced to the Bihar/Uttar Pradesh region. Many have made the pilgrimage in search of their ancestral villages, only to observe the realities of the abject levels of poverty that confronts the general North India region, and the conditions that distant relatives survive within. A few such notable and documented expeditions were that of former Prime Ministers of Trinidad and Tobago, Basdeo Panday and Kamla Persad-Bissesar, respectively.

The bid to help the general Bihar/Uttar Pradesh region alleviate poverty and shift towards a sustainable path was undertaken by the Vihara Foundation since 2009, under the leadership of one Indo-Caribbean Diaspora Scientist, Trinidadian born Dennis Ramdahin. Ramdahin, who currently resides in New York City, was inspired to steer this work following his initial attempt in 2003 to trace his ancestral roots; here, the degree of poverty and underdevelopment was compelling to drive an action plan.

Designed (with the support of global experts including India's Natural Farming Scientist Subhash Palekar) Vihara Foundation is now a "business model for poverty alleviation" which complements the needs of the general homogenous agrarian region/economy. The intent is to restructure the arrangement of agricultural production (idle lands, random distribution of disorganized farming, and inefficient markets), along with the management of critical and at-risk natural resources (soil, water, biodiversity and human capital) all to unlock **wealth** that is inherently embedded (yet not harnessed) in the general poverty stricken region.

Five hundred (500) square kilometers in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh is earmarked for development undertaking where the order of magnitude of agricultural output will be sustainably increased (via natural farming), thereby increasing flow of wealth by the region, and hence, the ability to self-finance development of infrastructure and social services (that are critical to improving quality of life in the region).

This project aims to engage and train development practitioners from across India and internationally as this scientific and business development model can serve the cause of poverty alleviation, farmer's suicide and development across Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and potentially India-at-large.

More details at: www.viharafoundation.org/PageDetails.aspx?Page=TheViharProject

https://www.facebook.com/dennis.ramdahin/media_set?set=a.10210119330594586.1073741837.1077589925&type=3



Dennis Ramdahin is a Trinidadian born internationally respected scientist and sustainable development practitioner with 20 years of engagement in the field of sustainability planning and implementation. He specializes in the development of solutions for complex issues requiring sustainable thinking, including poverty alleviation and climate mitigation programs, both internationally and in the Caribbean, including Trinidad and Tobago. Ramdahin earned his BS and MS degrees in Environmental Management from the City University of New York. He specializes in sustainable development business planning, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and creative development financing.

Ramdahin is Founder and Lead Scientist of the Vihara Foundation (VF), a US based non-profit that is working to develop and implement a much coveted business model for poverty alleviation worldwide – The Vihar Project. The first focus of the VF is on the Bihar/Uttar Pradesh rural farming sector—one of the most poverty stricken regions of the world, and ancestral lands of many Indo-Indentures. Ramdahin is also USA Co-Chair, Resolutions Committee, Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC) and member of IDC outreach team. He is also a holder of People of Indian Origin (PIO) card and resided in India continuously for 3 years working on the Vihar Project.