

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF INDIAN STUDIES

As described in its certificate of incorporation, the basic philosophy and primary goal of the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS) is to support the advancement of knowledge and understanding of India. The principal methods by which the AIIS achieves its goal are providing financial and logistical support to American scholars for research in India. The Institute handles matters of research clearance for approximately 200 American academics visiting India each year. It provides language instruction in India to an average of 55 American graduate students each year and fellowship assistance for study and research in India to an average of 34 doctoral and post-doctoral scholars from all fields of academic inquiry focusing on aspects of India. In addition, it provides substantial in-country support (e.g., travel arrangements, access to archives, introductions to pertinent scholars) to scores of American scholars each year, that is, scholars who are not fellows of the Institute.

The AIIS, incorporated in 1961, is a consortium of 51 American universities and colleges in which scholars actively engage in teaching and research about India. The scholars from these institutions who serve the Institute as Trustees, Officers and Committee members are recognized as the most respected scholars in the fields of South Asian Studies. They serve as principal officers of the Institute and provide direction to the professional paid staff.

The U.S. administrative office of the Institute is run by one full-time staff person, and is located on the campus of the University of Chicago in space donated to the Institute by the University. In India, the Institute employs approximately forty full and part-time employees, most of whom are located in Delhi (the national headquarters and locus of the Institute's two research centers), some of whom are at the Regional Centers in Kolkata, Chennai, and Pune and some elsewhere at Language Program Centers.

The American Institute of Indian Studies programs in India promote mutual respect and cultural awareness between the United States and the Indian subcontinent. As Norman Brown, the Institute's first President said: "The Institute contributes to building up a favorable image of the United States in India, an image which brings the United States a reputation of academic respect for the culture of India, and illustrates the concern which the United States feels for India's welfare and underlines the desire which the United States has to cultivate knowledge about India. Investing in the future of the AIIS makes excellent use of U.S. taxpayer dollars."

The Institute seeks United States Department of Education funding to maintain services and to enhance the in-country support that the Institute is able to deliver to its fellows and other scholars working in India--services nowhere else available yet ones that will significantly aid the research of these scholars. We also seek funding to enhance our successful language programs in India and to fund conferences that will promote exchange among scholars, including a seminar for all junior fellows in India (i.e., Ph.D. candidates) that is intended to do much to facilitate their research and build a sense of community among the new generation of scholars, as well as a workshop exploring topics in the field of Islam in South Asia.