

# Encyclopedia of Hinduism Launched at Manav Seva Mandir

BY A STAFF WRITER

— BENSENVILLE, ILL.

The Encyclopedia of Hinduism was officially released at an event held July 27 at the Manav Seva Mandir here. It was launched by Swami Chidanand Saraswati, in the presence of approximately 400 scholars and priests, representatives of various social and religious organizations and followers of Sanatan Dharma, the popular term for Hinduism, a press release issued by the temple said. The Encyclopedia is considered one of the most unique books on Hinduism and was 25 years in the making organizers said. It is published by India Heritage Research Foundation. The Encyclopedia contains contributions from more than 1,000 scholars from around the world, with approximately 7,000 entries in 11 volumes, the release said.

This is the first time that the depth and breadth of India's great spiritual culture has been made available in academic form, D.P. Prajapati of the Manav Seva Mandir said in the release. The publication is a "great boon to the second and third generations of Indians living abroad to learn and



Swami Chidananda Saraswati, sixth from left, launches the Encyclopedia of Hinduism at the Manav Seva Mandir in Bensenville, Ill. July 27. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati can be seen fourth from right.

understand the true meaning of Hinduism," Prajapati added.

Swami Chidanand Saraswati in his speech launching the Encyclopedia, invited leaders of various organizations on the stage and blessed them, the release said. Earlier, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, in her speech, explained the meaning of religion.

An American graduate of Stanford University who has spent the last 17 years living in India, studying and serving under Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati is the managing editor of the Encyclopedia. According to her the publication is not limited to Hinduism as a religion, but rather provides all

inclusive treatment of India's spiritual culture, including in-depth coverage of Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism, and aspects from Islamic and Christian traditions in India.

The Encyclopedia was earlier previewed and blessed at a massive ceremony in India by Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama and

hundreds of India's spiritual, social and national leaders, the release said. The launch was preceded by a Yagya as part of the two-day celebrations of the Manav Seva Mandir Patotsav.

The MSM library will house all the 11 volumes of the Encyclopedia which is free for the public to use, the release said.

## Volunteers for a Better India Ask Americans to Join Global Movement

BY ANDRIA SMITH

— CHICAGO, ILL.

Volunteers for a Better India, an organization that believes in "good governance" and is blessed

by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, plans to tour North America. Led by chief architect of VBI, Darshak Hathi, the U.S. tour is to educate everyone of interest on how they can help India become a corrupt free nation. The goal is to inspire millions of Indians to give at least one hour a day for their mother nation.

The basic philosophy of the VBI movement has no political bearings but preaches that the masses are capable of major changes within India. Rather than blaming one person, group or organization and depend solely on the government or outside sources for help, people should come together and create the changes they wish to see.

The group has already made large waves in India. On Feb. 3 in New Delhi, the VBI movement was inaugurated by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar at Ramlila Maidan where over 100,000 youths from all over India participated and

took oath to VBI. Now the movement has reached out to over 50,000 villages in India and trained over 200,000 youths. As a result, numerous projects across India are being implemented and percolated down to NRI youth. "UN agencies, Indian medical

associations, and [non-for-profit] organizations have joined hands with VBI to become a party to transform India," according to Hathi.

Overseas Volunteers for a Better India, a branch of the movement started by NRI and PIO youths in May this year, was

formed to evoke passion and bring aboard Indians around the world. OVBI currently has over 1800 youths joined. "We found to our utmost happiness that being Indian goes beyond the geographical boundaries of the country and there are many overseas Indians who want to be part of re-building and strengthening India... we still get affected by the current situation in the country of birth be it the news on corruption and scams, terrorist strikes, women's issues, suicide by farmers, the continuing water shortage, power cuts, or calamities and disasters..."

Hathi said.

Hathi has lectured in over 25 cities across the U.S. and brainstormed with community leaders on issues such as supporting projects related to rebuilding India, the need to organize and mobilize the NRI community, effectively highlight issues that concern the NRI's in USA in the day to day life, rectify the incorrect projection of India and her people in the mainstream, and the need to voice the issues of India in the U.S.

To learn more about and join Volunteers for a Better India, visit their website at [www.vfabi.org](http://www.vfabi.org)

