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Village Clinic near Vandavasi

Questions

Who is the most important person in this photograph? How can you tell? What kind of thing do you think they might be doing?

Why are village clinics like these important?

Background

The Diocese of Vellore has a maternity hospital in the town of Vandavasi where women come for checkups when they are pregnant and where they return to have their babies and for follow-up help.

Many poor villagers are unable to come to the hospital. They do not have any transport, and perhaps they are too unwell to walk the long distance to the hospital. Perhaps they are very poor and afraid that the doctor will prescribe expensive medicine that they cannot afford. Perhaps they need to carry on working to earn money for the family and they cannot afford to take a day off work to go to the hospital. How can families like this get the help they need?

In the photograph you can see the doctor in charge of Vandavasi hospital sitting at the table. She and her nurses have driven out to one of the poor villages and a table has been set up for her in the shelter of someone's front porch. Her car driver has gone around the village with a loudspeaker calling out to people that the doctor is in the village and anyone with illnesses of any kind can come and see her. You can see the queue of women and children waiting for their turn while the doctor talks to a young man. Further down the porch, out of the picture, the nurses are giving patients their prescriptions and doing things like changing people's bandages.

This is not the only village that the doctor visits regularly – the hospital team goes out several times a month on evening trips to villages like these. The villagers would not get any medical help at all if the team did not run these clinics.



