

July 2021



India's 2nd Wave of Covid-19 came drastically and suddenly without “proper” warning. In the midst of chaos and danger, the government gave orders to send all residential students back to their homes in May 2021. IREF took the matter of sending students to their homes seriously and in a few days the campus had gone from a place of constant sound and movement to a place of quiet stillness. During the lockdown, God still showed His faithfulness, provision and protection to the staff and nursing students still on campus.

As Covid case numbers have been slowly declining, conversations to resume final examinations from last semester began. Jr College (grades 11-12) examinations have been canceled - they all have been promoted to the next grade. College/Degree students will take their examinations in July. IREF has reopened its campus for college students. All students are required to bring negative Covid results with them (dated within 48 hours of returning to campus) before being allowed to be housed in the dorms.

As lockdown hours have reduced and permission to hold college-level classes given, the Nursing students have also resumed classes in the afternoons as well (they have had half-day classes during the months of May and June).

For IREF, we see this as a blessing to continue to provide education for these students from backgrounds of poverty and low, socio-economic statuses. And we are glad they are back on campus praying for the Holy Spirit to renew their spiritual life and walk with Christ Jesus. With so much time at home, surrounded and influenced by harsh conditions, please pray the Holy Spirit will bring a revitalization of hearts and minds being bent toward God.



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Prayer & Praise

- IREF Pastors, Evangelists and Bible ladies serve congregations in over 100 villages. They are working diligently to serve these communities and be a Light amongst the devastation. They have a never-ending list of people who need prayer and are facing exhaustion. As the virus passes from church members to each member in their families, the needs never seem to be fulfilled. Pray for God to be their strength in weakness!
- Please pray that the Indian church will boldly rise up. Pray that during these difficult days that their work is produced by faith, their labor is prompted by love, and their endurance is inspired by hope in Jesus Christ. Pray that the way in which they love during this crisis will be a model to all believers. Pray that the gospel will ring out from them throughout India and South Asia, and to the ends of the earth and that their faith will become known everywhere.
- Many students are returning to the IREF campus to finish their semester and final exams. Please pray for the Lord's protection upon the staff, students and the Rebba family.
- In the rural villages of India, millions and millions have little access to good medical care and no means to self-quarantine. Families live in very close quarters, sometimes living together in only one room. There are reports of whole villages being infected. Many of these rural peoples—approximately 65% of India's population—are poor and live day-to-day under normal circumstances. These lockdown restrictions on work and movement, along with sickness, make an already difficult life feel desperately hopeless. Please pray for God to pour out His great mercy on each and every village in the remotest parts of India. May the knowledge of the glory of the Lord cover India as the waters cover the sea (from Habakkuk 2:14).



Staff Testimonials - Meet Divya & Kejiya



While new on staff, they are familiar faces on IREF's campus. Both Kejiya (left) and Divya (right) enrolled in IREF's Nursing Program 4-years ago.

IREF is where they would become classmates and friends. They would cry together in sharing their family problems, struggles and personal matters with each other; they would share in each other's joy when the other would do well on an exam and or when good news concerned their families. IREF is where they learned to lift each other up in prayer, bonded as sisters and supported each other in their goal to finish the Nursing program. The last 4-years did come with its share of hardships. There were times where they thought it better to drop out of college and join their family in manual labor jobs to help their families financially. At times, family funds were so low they could not pay their needed academic fees but God provided. There were times where the effort of studying seemed hopeless and pointless but they kept pushing.

In the midst of discouragement there were also times of joy. Much of those times came when visiting teams would come to IREF.

The medical teams and pastoral teams that visited IREF instilled in them medical and spiritual knowledge that helped them in their growth as a student, a professional and a follower of Christ Jesus. Kejiya and Divya found great joy and happiness in serving alongside these visiting medical professionals. They knew that the training from these medical teams were God-given; they understood that these types of clinical nursing experiences were not available at other Nursing Colleges.

It was situations like these that made them determined to complete their Nursing training at IREF. Kejiya and Divya both came to realize it was not just about passing their exams and their courses - getting a Nursing Degree meant change. It meant taking hold of the training and the tools they learned at IREF to their homes, their communities and their futures in order to break the cycle of poverty (for themselves and their families).

The smiles on their faces in this photo were not there when they first enrolled at IREF. Stone-faced when they first stepped onto IREF's campus - radiance now exudes

from their faces and from their spirits. As God worked in their lives, the more joy He was able to give them over these years. The smiles you see are also testimony of God's love toward them.

Throughout the 4 years of their Nursing College training, IREF has become home for Kejiya and Divya. In February 2021, they both gave their farewell speeches at the Nursing College Farewell party for Senior students. As tears streamed down their faces, they knew their time at IREF was coming to an end; that the reality of what to do next would quickly set in. They would soon re-join the family problems, financial crisis and other temptations and struggles that awaited them at home. The fear of staying in poverty as if the last 4-years of obtaining a legitimate Nursing Degree did not matter was real.



Kejiya (far left) and Divya (far right) at their lamp lighting and capping ceremony led by Dee Rebba, who shared that it is always a joy to see new nurses pledging to care for those in need.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven." (NKJV) For Kejiya and Divya their season at IREF had come to a close. But God had different plans for them. Little did they know in February 2021 that God would be leading them back to IREF to become staff and tutors at the Nursing College. Everyday they are strict when they need but also show respect and an "older sister" type of love toward the Nursing students. Kejiya and Divya know the harsh conditions of which these students come from. It is because they have grown up in similar environments in rural India that they want their students to take hold of the life values, Christian teaching and education taught at IREF.

We know this is God's plan and His purpose for Kejiya and Divya to be here at IREF. Their presence is a blessing. We cannot be more thankful that God has answered prayer in bringing good people to serve this ministry.

Kejiya and Divya are examples of the impact and difference you are making at IREF. You all play a part of their story. Your support, help and prayers have contributed to their success at IREF. **Please pray for Kejiya and Divya as their season at IREF continues.**

July 2021
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