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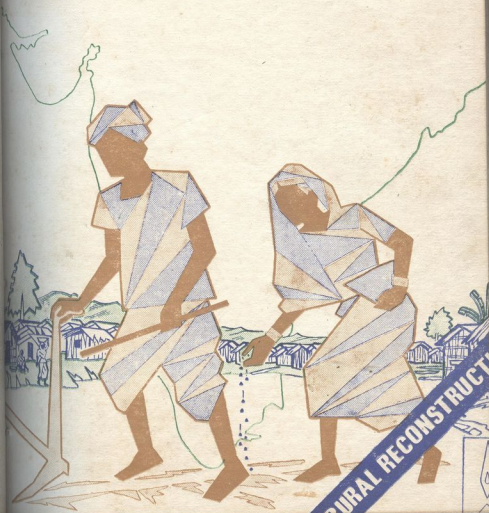
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journal of deendayal research institute

SPECIAL
1980





"The measure of economic progress and of the success of economic planning is provided not by the man at the higher rungs of society but by one who is at the bottom. There are crores in the country today, who are denied the most elementary rights of man. For us, however, these lowly, unlettered, ignorant masses are gods, worthy of worship. Their worship is our Dharma. We look forward to the day when we shall be able to give them decent pucca dwelling houses, when we can impart education and a higher culture to their children and womenfolk, when we can provide soothing balm for their sorrows, and when by instructing them in arts and crafts, we can help raise their standards of living. That will mark the fulfilment of our brotherly ties with these mute millions. The nation cannot be vitalised until we are able to carry a message of hope and faith to the countryside, where even today time stands still, and parents are unable to give any direction to the future of their children. The focal point of our faith, the object of our dedication and worship, the instrument of our exertion and efforts, and the measure of our achievements is the individual who is literally 'aniketa' (without home) and 'aparigrahi' (without property)."

Deendayal Upadhyaya

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Project Conducted by Deendayal Research Institute

Rural Development Project in Gonda District

1. Centre for rural development training & research at Jaya Prabha Gram.
2. Development of ground water potential & multi-crop motivation programme
3. Rural marketing service centres in seven blocks.
4. Multi-vocational training centre at Gonda.
5. TRYSEM Scheme at Gonda & at Jaya Prabha Gram.
6. Model villages development project.
7. Model school development project.
8. Well renovation for drinking water project.
9. Dairy development project.
10. Poultry farms project.
11. Fisheries development & training centre at Jaya Prabha Gram.
12. Block level studies planning unit.
13. Forticulture and tree plantations development project.
14. Antyodaya programmes.
15. Food-for-work-programme.

Medical Mission Projects

1. Medical relief programmes in the event of natural calamities.
2. Eye care camps programme in and around Delhi.
3. Rural eye care programme in Gonda district (U.P.)
4. Rural eye care programme in Sundergarh district Orissa.
5. Medicine Bank.
6. Programme of voluntary blood donation.
7. Medical and family health research projects.
8. Health education programmes.
9. Community based distribution of contraceptives in the rural areas of India and propogation of family planning education project.
10. Appropriate medical instructional natural development project.
11. Information, communication and education unit for health and family planning.
12. Urban slum mobile medical van programme in Delhi.
13. Appropriate Medical Man force development project.

Academic Division

1. Manthan, Quarterly (Hindi-English)
2. Publication of Books and Reports.
3. Social Science Research Projects.
4. Seminars, lectures, work shops.
5. Deendayal Vichar Manch.
6. Library.

Other Projects

1. Integrated Child Development Project, Nagpur and Bangalore
2. Integrated Mahila Vikas Project, Lucknow.
3. Bal Jagat Project, Bombay.
4. Edible Oil from Rice Bran Project.
5. Deendayalpuram Project.
6. Andhra Pradesh Rural Artisans and Marketing Services Development Studies Project in 12 blocks of Assam, Manipur Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

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WHY THIS SPECIAL ISSUE ?

RURAL Reconstruction Special Number of Manthan is in your hands. A question arises as to why it was necessary to bring out such an issue. The problem of Rural Reconstruction is nothing new. Even during the time of freedom struggle many a patriot was moved by the miserable plight of our villages. Men like Dada Bhai Naoroji and Ramesh Chandra Dutt brought out as a result of their research lot of material regarding the exploitation of villages by the British. Even before the entry of Gandhiji into Indian politics, at the time of anti-Bengal partition movement, the idea of going and setting down in villages, entered the minds of many youngmen. While he was in South Africa, in the year 1908, Gandhiji published the book 'Hind Swarajya', focussing attention on the evil effects of western, industrial and urban-based civilization. According to him, rural life is the only means of real peace and human happiness. After coming to India in 1915, he gave priority to the question of rural reconstruction when he assumed the leadership of Indian Independence Movement. For every Congress worker, participation in constructive activity was made indispensable and rural reconstruction was the crux of such activities. Taking an integral view, Gandhiji made rural life the central point of the country's economic, educational, social and political reconstruction. Taking inspiration from him,



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learned men like J. C. Kumarappa, Bharatam Kumarappa etc. produced a rich crop of literature, stressing the importance of rural reconstruction and projected Ruralism as an alternative to western concepts like industrialism, socialism etc. Really speaking Gandhiji could be called the father of the 'Return to the Villages' movement.

Gandhiji propounded the picture of an ideal village and he had only one ambition namely to set up at least one such model village which will translate his vision into actuality. With this objective in view he selected Sevagram in Wardha District for his Ashram. In his own life time he set up many institutions like Gramodaya Parishad. Imbued with the spirit of Gandhiji, many a brilliant worker took up rural reconstruction as his life's mission. This work of rural reconstruction, which was initiated by Gandhiji is now completing nearly 60 years; workers like Dhirendra Bhai, who dedicated their entire life for this work have died working for this cause. Many organisations, associated with the name of Mahatmaji are still active in the field of rural reconstruction. Lok Nayak Jayaprakash took sanyas from day today politics to engage himself in rural reconstruction. Mushhary block in Bihar was selected by him as his field of experiment. Proceeding further, through the movement for Total Revolution, he tried to focus the attention of the younger generation on the total and all-round development of villages. But, with all these efforts, could we erect even one model village according to Gandhiji's conception? If not, why it could not be done? Was there any defect in Gandhiji's thinking? Was his evaluation of modern Western civilization wrong? Is that civilization the real and natural direction of human progress? Is any attempt to go contrary to that direction, impractical, vain?

When we turn our eyes towards the crisis of the existing civilization in the affluent countries and the debate that is going on regarding the same, we are compelled to accept that the enlightened modern Western thinkers and sociologists are today coming face to face with the very same defects and evil consequences of their civilization about which Gandhiji has warned us in the early days of this century. The gloomy thoughts that sadden the Western mind are related to urbanisation, energy crisis, pollution, the rapid exhaustion of natural resources, mechanisation, the emptiness experienced in life in spite of the ever growing use of consumer goods, and absence of peace and happiness. Eminent men like Schumacher, Missan Galbriath etc. are the products

of this kind of thinking. A number of intellectuals and scientists are on the look out for a new and simple style of life, away from the urban civilization, somewhere in the lap of Mother Nature. Seeing this turn of events and listening to this debate, one feels convinced that Gandhiji's thoughts and experiments were in the right direction. In fact, he was looking far ahead of his times.

But the question arises as to why India could not erect even a single model of an ideal village? Even at this moment, thousands of efforts, governmental and semi-governmental are going on with a view to reconstruct the villages. Crores and crores of rupees—both foreign and native - are being sunk in the name of rural reconstruction. Thousands of books are available in the market, concerning Indian villages, their problems and solutions. But, what is the net result of all these? What is the direction of all these efforts? What are the experiences?

For some time past, Deendayal Research Institute also has been playing its humble role in these efforts. There was only one objective for all the activities of this Institute founded in the sacred memory of Deendayal Upadhyaya who was a burning patriot and an original thinker, namely the integral life structure, giving concrete shape to the abstract Indian life values in individual and social life, should be searched on intellectual and practical plane. It has been our firm belief that mere intellectual discussions are not by themselves sufficient for the purpose. They should be provided the foundations of actual practice and experimental knowledge. Therefore, Deendayal Research Institute has selected Gonda, a backward district in U. P. as the field of its experiment. At present, it is in a stage of infancy. It is true that in the field of irrigation etc., some appreciable progress has been registered, but it is only a beginning; much more remains to be done. We are quite new to this field. We have to learn a lot from those workers who are in this field for quite a long time. Therefore, there arose a desire to bring together through this medium of 'Manthan' the experiences of similar attempts made in the field, while trying to understand, the theoretical background of rural reconstruction. To us it looked rather strange that in spite of the fact that a number of individuals and organisations are dedicatedly working in this field, still they are totally unaware of the experiences of each other. There is no medium for the exchange of ideas among them. Therefore it was felt desirable to bring together as many of these experiences as possible so that all the constructive workers could benefit from

them. Keeping these two objectives in view, this Special issue has been planned. Many organisations shared with us their rich and varied experiences in this field, at our request. But when the entire material for the Special issue were gathered together, it struck us that the subject is extremely vast and all the material could not be included within the limited scope of the issue. Therefore, in this Special number only such material has been presented which clarify the theoretical background of Rural Reconstruction. Only a bird's eye view has been taken of the field work that is going on in the country. A few experiments have been included to show the perspective and inspiration that motivate them. We intend very soon to make attempts to present to the readers the experiences of various organisations that have come to us. Even some of those materials which have been included in order to clarify the theoretical background of Rural Reconstruction have also been gathered from different sources. Due to want of time we could not collect sufficient number of original articles. In fact, this Special number should be considered only as a humble beginning of ours in this direction. This Special Number is a clear declaration that 'Manthan' will give equal importance to practical experiments as much as it does to philosophical prepositions in the matter of national reconstruction. In the end, we consider it our duty to express our gratitude to the various writers and publications who have contributed to enrich this Special Number. In spite of their contribution, we are aware that there are many limitations and draw-backs in the issue for which we alone are responsible.

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(NANA DESHMUKH)

Manthan

CRISIS OF
CIVILIZATION

AND

SEARCH FOR
BETTER FUTURE

Gandhi had foreseen

"Modern civilization is a civilization only in name. Under it, the nations of Europe are becoming degraded and ruined day by day...The people of Europe today live in better-built houses than they did a hundred years ago. This is considered an emblem of civilization, and this is also a matter to promote bodily happiness...

"Formerly, in Europe, people ploughed their lands mainly by manual labour. Now, one man can plough a vast tract by means of steam engines and can thus amass great wealth. This is called a sign of civilization. Formerly, only a few men wrote valuable books. Now, anybody writes and prints anything he likes and poisons people's minds. Formerly, men travelled in waggons. Now, they fly through the air in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day. This is considered the height of civilization. It has been stated that, as men progress, they shall be able to travel in airships and reach any part of the world in a few hours...

"Men will not need the use of their hands and feet. They will press a button, and they will have their clothing by their side. They will press another button, and they will have their newspaper. A third, and a motor-car will be in waiting for them. They will have a variety of delicately dished up food. Everything will be done by machinery"

"This civilization takes note neither of morality nor of religion...This civilization is irreligious, and it has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half-made...This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed.- According to the teaching of Mohammed, this would be considered a Satanic Civilization. Hinduism calls it the Black Age...."

—Indian Home Rule (Published in 1908)

THE HUMAN PROSPECT

By Robert L. Heilbroner

A noted economist here takes a pessimistic view of mankind's chances for civilized survival. He calls attention to the dangers that unlimited industrial growth poses both for the physical environment and the social order. And he asks whether democratic societies will have to become authoritarian in order to impose an unpopular system of minimal economic growth. Such an outcome, he answers, is likely unless we act in time to simplify the industrial order and to restore traditional communal values.

Robert Heilbroner is professor of economics at the New York School for Social Research in New York. His books include *The Worldly Philosophers* (on economic thinkers), *The Great Ascent* (on economic development) and most recently *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect* (published by W.W. Norton), from which the present article has been excerpted.



Is there hope for man?

In another era such a question might have raised thoughts of man's ultimate salvation or damnation. But today the brooding doubts that it arouses have to do with life on earth, now and for the relatively few generations that constitute the limit of our capacity to imagine the future. I think we can find three main sources, or perhaps three levels of explanation for the pall that has fallen over our spirits.

The first of these I will call topical, to refer to a barrage of confidence-shaking events that has filled us with a sense of unease and foreboding during the past decade or so. These events range from the Vietnam war to race riots, bizarre

airplane hijackings and shocking assassinations, bringing home with a terrible impact the recognition of a barbarism hidden behind the amenities or modern life.

Why pessimism?

A second source of our present pessimism is a series of attitudinal changes. We suffer from a loss of assurance about the course of social events. There was a time in the recent past when one spoke of social problems as so many exercises applied rationality; when economists seriously discussed the "Fine tuning" of the economy; when the repair of the misery of a billion human beings was expected in a decade of development with the aid of a few billion dollars of foreign

assistance, some technical advice, and a corps of youthful volunteers; when "growth" seemed to offer a setting in which many formerly recalcitrant problems would lose their capacity for social mischief.

Today that sense of assurance and control has vanished, or is vanishing rapidly. We have become aware that rationality has its limits for engineering social change, and that those limits are much narrower than we had thought.

One aspect of this new awareness is a fear that we will be unable to sustain the trend of economic growth for very much longer. The current oil shortage has given rise to talk of an economic "catastrophe". The shortage is probably of limited duration, and if catastrophe comes, it will only be the result of inadequate planning. Nonetheless, the energy crisis alerts us to a hitherto unimaginable prospect—a ceiling on industrial production. Such a possibility brings the troubling consideration of how we would manage the direction of events if economic expansion were to come to an end.

Deteriorating of quality of life

But this prospect is fundamentally less troubling than another recently recognized state of affairs; the stunning discovery that economic growth carries side effects whose cumulative impact may be mere deleterious than the undoubted benefits that growth brings. In the last few years we have become aware of a visible decline of the quality of the air and water, in a series of man-made disasters of ecological imbalance.

Perhaps the combination of these top-

ical and attitudinal elements is enough to account for the dark mood of our time. But still a third reason flickers, so to speak, in our consciousness. It is a civilizational malaise.

For some time, observers skeptical of the panacea of growth have wondered why their contemporaries, who were three or five times richer than their grandparents, or great-grandparents, or distant forebears, did not seem to be three or five or ten times happier or more content or more richly developed as human beings. The values of an industrial civilization, which has for two centuries given us not only material advance but also a sense of clan and purpose, now seem to be losing their self-evident justification.

It must be clear that I do not pose the question—"Is there hope for man?", as a mere rhetorical flourish, a straw figure to be dismantled as we proceed to more "service" matters. The outlook for man, I believe, is painful, difficult, perhaps desperate, and the hope that can be held out for his future prospect seems very slim indeed.

The external challenges

What is needed now is a summing up of the prospects ahead of us. We are entering a period in which rapid population growth, the presence of obliterative weapons, and dwindling resources will bring international tensions to dangerous levels for an extended period. Indeed, there seems no reason for these levels of danger to subside unless population equilibrium is achieved and some rough measure of equity reached in the distribution of wealth among nations.

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Whether such an equitable arrange-
 ment can be reached—at least within the
 next several generations—is open to seri-
 ous doubt. Resource transfers of ade-
 quate magnitude to foster equity imply
 a willingness to redistribute income in-
 ternationally on a more generous scale
 than the advanced nations have evi-
 denced even at home. The required increases
 in output in the backward regions would
 necessitate gargantuan application of
 energy merely to extract the needed re-
 sources. It is uncertain whether the requi-
 site energy-producing technology exists.
 And it is possible that its application
 would bring us to the threshold of an
 irreversible change in climate, as a con-
 sequence of the enormous addition of
 man-made heat to the atmosphere. Even
 the existing pace of industrial growth,
 with no allowance for increased indus-
 trialization to repair global poverty,
 holds out the risk of humanity entering
 the danger zone of climatic change in as
 little as three or four generations.

At a 4 per cent rate of growth, the
 postwar worldwide average, energy use
 will double roughly every eighteen years.
 This would allow us to proceed along
 our present course for about 150 years
 before the atmosphere would begin to
 warm up appreciably—that is, by about 3
 degrees. At this point, however, the enor-
 mous multiplicative effects of further
 exponential growth would suddenly de-
 scend upon us. For beyond that threshold,
 extinction beckons if exponential growth
 continues for another generation or two.

Can we retreat?

Industrial growth will then have to
 come to an immediate halt, for another

generation or two of growth along that
 path would literally consume human,
 perhaps all, life. That terrifying outcome
 can be postponed only to the extent that
 the wastage of heat can be reduced, or
 that technologies that do not add to the
 atmospheric heat burden—for example,
 solar energy transformers—can be put to
 use. The outlook can also be mitigated
 by redirecting output away from heat-
 creating material outputs into the produc-
 tion of "services" that add only trivially
 to heat.

All these considerations make the
 designation of a timetable for industrial
 declaration difficult to construct. Yet,
 under any and all assumptions, one irrefu-
 table conclusion remains. The indus-
 trial growth process, so central to the
 economic and social life of capitalism
 and Western socialism alike, will be forced
 to slow down, in all likelihood within
 a generation or two, and will probably
 have to give way to decline thereafter.

Whether we are unable to sustain growth
 or unable to tolerate it, the long era of
 industrial expansion is now entering its
 final stages, and we must anticipate the
 commencement of a new era of stationary
 total output and (if population growth
 continues or an equitable sharing among
 nations has not yet been attained) declin-
 ing material output per capita in the
 advanced nations.

The future pattern

What sort of society might eventually
 emerge? I believe the long-term solution
 requires nothing less than the gradual
 abandonment of the lethal techniques, the
 uncongenial ways of life, and the danger-
 ous mentality of industrial civilization

Urbanisation : Why and Whither ?

E. F. Schumacher

E. F. Schumacher, the famous author of 'Small is Beautiful' and 'A Guide for the Perplexed' was a German born, and first came to England in the 1930s as a Rhodes Scholar to study Economics at New College, Oxford and later taught economics at Columbia University, New York. He served as Economic Adviser, with the British Central Commission in Germany from 1946 to 1950 and was Economic Adviser of the National Coal Board from 1950 to 1970. In his later years he became a bitter critic of the modern large-scale-production technology and its resultant industrialisation and urbanisation. He was an ardent exponent of the concept of Intermediate Technology and rural life-pattern. He was actively associated with some experiments in alternative communal living such as Linlithgow in U.S.A. His advice on rural development was sought by many overseas government. In 1974, he was awarded the C.B.E.

Dr. Schumacher died in 1977. The extracts given here are taken from his last book "Good Work" published posthumously in 1979.

ANOTHER consequence of the short period of cheap and plentiful oil, of course, is the monster cities of today. We say to ourselves, well man needs a city, culture cannot arise out of subsistence farming; there has to be a sort of critical density of people to make mutual fertilization possible and produce the flowering of the human spirit. Cities have existed for five or six thousand years; but they could never grow beyond a very modest size. Why not? Because a big city doesn't live on itself, it lives on the land, it lives off the land. An inland city lives off the circle of land around it to be provisioned; and in the past that circle couldn't be very large, because the only transport energy was animal and man. Of course, a city situated by the sea could use one other

transport energy, namely wind power, and therefore the biggest cities grew up on the seashore, where they could be provisioned by ships. And so we know of no city, until about a hundred years ago, that grew beyond something like two hundred or three hundred thousand people.

Why rush to cities?

Then this bottleneck of how to provision a city was broken by man exploiting fossil fuels, first coal, then oil, and developing a transport technology to use them, so that big cities could be provisioned from all over the world; the hinterland, as it were, of the city became the world. There was one limit to the growth of cities: if it takes eighty peopl

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to feed a hundred, then 80 per cent of the people must stay on the land and only 20 per cent can live in the cities. But, if there is a tremendous increase in the productivity per man—and in this context “man” embraces “woman”—so that five people can feed a hundred, then 95 per cent of the people can live in cities and only 5 per cent have to stay on the land. So the second precondition was the immense increase in the productivity per man in agriculture, which made the modern city possible.

City eats oil

The city itself is a huge machine which for its very breathing requires a constant, continuous input of energy, namely oil. What is to become of these cities? Even the fourfold increase of fuel prices is making city life more and more onerous and burdensome than it has ever been before. There is no use in referring cities to what we now have learned to call “income energies”, like solar power, wind power, etc., because, while you can heat a house with solar energy very comfortably, you can't heat Rockefeller Center. In fact, solar energy plus wind power would not push the lifts up and down. And most of the accommodation in Rockefeller Center is inaccessible if there are no lifts: fancy someone climbing thirty for fifty floors. That is what I mean by life becoming more and more burdensome.

So one has to foresee people leaving the cities and wanting to make a livelihood outside of the cities. Who can receive them? What economic systems are there into which they can escape? They can drop out of the cities, but what can they drop into?

Role of Technology leads

What has been the effect of modern technology upon the pattern of human settlement? This is a very interesting subject which has received hardly any attention. The UN and the World Bank produce indices of urbanization, showing the percentage of the population of different countries living in urban areas (above a certain size). The interesting point is that these indices entirely miss the interesting point. Not the degree but the pattern of urbanization is the crux of the matter. Human life, to be fully human, needs the city; but it also needs food and other raw materials gained from the country. Everybody needs ready access to both countryside and city. It follows that the aim must be a pattern of urbanization so that every rural area has a nearby city, near enough so that people can visit it and be back the same day. No other pattern makes human sense.

Actual developments during the last hundred years or so, however, have been in the exactly opposite direction: the rural areas have been increasingly deprived of access to worthwhile cities. There has been a monstrous and highly pathological polarization of the pattern of settlements. The French planners fight against France becoming “Paris surrounded by a desert,” in the United States they have coined the term “megapolis” to describe the vast conurbations which have arisen while the life has been seeping out of small and medium-sized country towns. There is Boswash extending from Boston to Washington, D.C.; there is Chicpitts, a conurbation stretching from Chicago to Pittsburgh; and there is Sansan, from San Francisco to San Diego. Even in the United

Kingdom, often referred to as a tightly packed little island, the pattern of settlement is extraordinarily lopsided, with more than half the area grossly underpopulated, and large parts of the other half madly congested.

Progress in opposite direction

Do you remember this socialist demand, formulated more than one hundred years ago?

Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country by a more equitable distribution of the population over the country. (Communist Manifesto).

And what has happened during these more than one hundred years? Of course, the exact opposite. And what is expected to happen during the next twenty-five years, to the end of the century? Again the exact opposite, with a vengeance. Not urbanization but, to use a word as dreadful as the phenomenon it denotes, megalopolitanization, a movement that produces, as we know only too well, utterly insoluble political, social, moral, psychological, and economic problems.

World Bank Report

A paper issued by the World Bank speaks of

the despondency surrounding the task of ameliorating urban conditions in the developing countries (which) arises primarily from the speed of urban growth and shortage of resources, human as well as financial... Urban administration is welfully lacking in capacity to deal with the problems...

Yet within less than twenty years the present populations and areas of

urban centres will account for less than a third of the total.

The paper asks whether there is a possibility "of accelerating the development of small and medium-size towns of creating new urban centres." But it loses little time in dismissing this possibility;

Most small urban centres... lack the basic infrastructure of transport and services... Management and professional staff are unwilling to move from the major cities.

This tells the whole story: Management and staff are unwilling to move from the major cities. The proposition evidently, is to transplant into a small place the technology which has been developed in such a way that it fits to a very large place. The people in the small place cannot cope with it; management and staff have to be imported from the "major cities", no one wants to come because the proposition does not make economic sense. The technology is inappropriate and that means the whole project is uneconomic.

Why is the trend of the last hundred years toward bigger and bigger units? Nobody, except a few monomaniac tycoons, likes them. Why do we have to have them? The invariable answer is: Because of technological progress.

What we have to do now is not abandon technology, but become conscious of somewhere having taken a wrong turn. Under the influence of fossil fuel at throwaway prices, technology has taken the wrong turn...

(Extracts from "Good Work", published by Gonathan Cape 30, Bedford Square London in association with B.I. Publications, New Delhi. (1979) □

The Energy Crisis and Civilization

By M. V. Kamath*

ACCORDING to all indications not only India, but the entire world is heading inexorably towards a major energy crisis, the nature of which has not been even dimly perceived in many centres of power.

Consider the following :

- * Our petroleum import bill this year will soar to Rs. 3,000/- crores amounting to 40 per cent of our total export earnings.

- * Our petroleum import bill for 1980-81 will be Rs. 5,000/- crores amounting to 65 per cent of our export earnings.

- * Progressively in the next five years all our export earnings will be wiped off just for importing petrol from OPEC countries.

- * On a world scale, crude oil production will peak around 1990.

- * The conservative 2.5 per cent annual consumption growth rates project that, between 2015 and 2025, the entire estimated range of recoverable oil resources will be exhausted.

- * If an historical growth rate of 7 per cent is assumed, exhaustion of oil will occur some time between 2000 and 2005, that is a bare 20 to 25 years from now. If the unrealistic, but more optimistic, case of no increase in consumption is to be taken, then oil exhaustion will occur not later than 2070.

Exhaustion will occur at different times in different countries. In Iran by 1985, in Saudi Arabia by 2025 and in other oil-producing countries in years in between.

- * Canada's domestic oil production is levelling off and is on the decline.

- * Half of the United States' billion barrels of oil has already been consumed and at the 1970 rate of oil consumption, it would be completely depleted in another ten years—by 1990.

- * By 1985, America's oil imports will amount to 10 million dollars an hour.

- * OPEC members are now pumping 31 million barrels of crude out of the ground each day but still it is 2 million barrels less than what nations offer to buy.

- * Petrol prices may go up to twenty dollars a barrel from 14.54 dollars a barrel now. This means siphoning off an additional eighty billion dollars a year from major industrial nations.

- * Developing countries have piled up some 250 billion dollars in foreign debts in importing petrol alone.

- * In the US, oil output has been declining by about 700,000 barrels a day and this decline is continuing.

Do those facts make any sense to us?
Consider some more facts :

* Shri Kamath is the Acting Editor of Illustrated weekly of India, Bombay.

* In 1975 America wasted more fuel than was used by two-thirds of the world's population.

* America annually consumes more than twice as much fuel as is needed to maintain its standard of living.

* Over a four-day Labour Day weekend Americans spend more oil just in receiving friends and holiday traveling than is used in all of Maharashtra for its industry.

* One new US weapons system, the B-1 Bomber, will require between 300 million and one billion gallons of fuel per year. In 1974, all the buses in all the towns and cities of America consumed only 320 million gallons of fuel.

* American food production being energy intensive as it is, today the US uses several times as much energy as fuel in produce, process, retail and prepare food as the food itself contains :

* The average American farm uses almost as much energy in the form of fertilizer as it uses to operate all its tractors. In fact, corn producers uses more energy per acre in fertiliser (940,800 kilocalories) than in gasoline (797,000 kilocalories).

* The electricity used in manufacturing unnecessary cement alone amounts to 20 billion kilowatt hours a year—roughly the amount electricity consumed directly by three million families.

All these facts, it is obvious, deal

with just one industrially developed nation: the US. Imagine what problems other OECD countries face when confronted by a world depleted by oil. A nation like Japan which has no energy resources of any kind whatsoever will be brought to its knees if no alternate sources of power are, meantime, discovered and developed.

Even the United States which still pumps out about 10 million barrels a day of oil will be in grievous trouble considering that its demand for oil by 1985 would range from 20.5 million barrels a day to 29.7 million barrels. What would happen if the Arab countries decide not to supply America with oil for political or just plain economic reasons. One expert, James E. Alkens, former US State Department energy expert, said, "I don't know. Nobody knows." He said the choices would be (a) accept the sudden oil cutoff "which would cause something like economic collapse" in the United States; (b) go to war against the Arabs; and (c) accede to Arab demands. "All three are absolutely intolerable," Alkens continued, "not one could be used by the United States."

Their Predicament

If this is America's predicament, the situation is worse for other developed countries, mostly in Europe, which depend upon oil to fuel their industry and thus their trade and commerce; cut Europe off from oil and down falls its standards of living and ultimately its political power. In cities lifts will not operate on the highways cars will not run; in giant industries the wheels will not move. The world will go back to the

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The West has been increasingly a factor in agriculture. Cooking, refrigeration and food shopping about 30 per cent expenditure on as farming. More electricity spent on homes! And it has been a wild food-related even have been called. And around the delivers more in America predigested. blem of dep world is inc sources but a success. On clear power.

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mid-nineteenth century, or about 1850 when 90 per cent of the fuel burned was wood with coal accounting for the remaining 10 per cent.

The West has been spoiled. Energy has increasingly become the limiting factor in agricultural productivity. Cooking, refrigeration, home freezers and food shopping by car account for about 30 per cent of the total energy expenditure on food, 3-1/2 times as much as farming. More than half the total electricity spent on food is spent in homes! And in recent years there has been a wildfire growth in the sales of food-related electrical appliances. They even have can-openers operated electrically. And a vast infrastructure, built around the food-processing industry, delivers more than three-fourths of food in America pre-washed, pre-cooked and predigested. In order to face the problem of depleted energy, the Western world is increasingly looking for other sources but as yet with no meaningful success. One answer, of course, is nuclear power.

Dangers of nuclear energy

How safe is nuclear power? Can nuclear power really replace oil, say, in cars? Let this be clearly understood: Nuclear energy is unsafe at any price. And right now, the price is too high.

At one time experts were saying that by the year 2000, the United States would have 1,000 nuclear plants. Now on more than two hundred plants are expected to be in operation by then, and this largely out of fear that oil may not be available by then.

Actually there are in the US today only 72 nuclear plants in operation. Over the past five years, utilities have cancelled more than thirty contracts for nuclear plants. Annual reactor orders which reached a peak of 36 in 1973 declined to 27 in 1974 and plummeted to 4 in 1975. Why?

* We all know what happened in April 1979 to the Three Mile Island Power Plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in the United States. There was a breakdown and the radioactive system spread over an area upto 20 miles from the plant. An estimated 50,000 to 60,000 people headed away. The plant was fitted with multiple fail-safe protective system. They didn't work.

Other close calls:

January 1961: An experimental reactor exploded at the government's Idaho Falls test site killing three technicians.

October 1966: The core of the experimental Enrico Fermi Breeder Reactor near Detroit partially melted and there was talk of evacuating the city's 1.5 million people. Radiation was so intensive that workers could not explore the damage for a month. Fermi was finally closed permanently.

June 1970: A malfunction shut down Commonwealth Edison's Dresden II Reactor.

March 1975: TVA's Brown Ferry Reactor in Alabama had a major fire.

November 1977: Hanford Reactor at Richmond, Washington, had to be shut

down after 60,000 gallons of contaminated water leaked.

January 1978 : Fort St. Vrain Nuclear Power Plant near Denver, Colorado, was in trouble when radioactive helium escaped—200 workers had to be evacuated. According to Nobel Prize winner George Wald, "Every dose of radiation is an overdose."

Apart from these isolated instances which when seen in perspective really show how dangerous it is to have nuclear plants, look at the spiralling costs of putting them up—and later of closing them down. Nuclear construction costs have risen to about 1,000 dollars a kilowatt from one hundred dollars in 1960.

Another point : The average nuclear power plant produces less than 60 per cent of its idealized full capacity. The average cost of power actually produced is accordingly much higher than the installed capacity figures suggest. It is well to remember that cost estimates for the small Clinch River Breeder Reactor in the US have grown from an original figure of 700 million dollars to a current guess of 2.3 billion dollars ! In Japan, in 1976, according to the *Japan Times*, "on an average one half of the reactors have been shut down every day for some reason or other during the last six months". The situation is still the same now.

Nuclear plants do not last for ever. Their average life is 50 years. And when they are "dead", they just cannot be dismantled like any other plant. They have to be buried—and guarded for ever. And the cost of decommissioning a commer-

cial fuel-reprocessing plant is about 600 million dollars, dismantling a single reactor could cost as much as 40 million dollars. Guarding long-lived toxic radioactive waste will require not just the sworn vigilance of centuries. Since the nuclear wastes now being created will remain toxic for 100 times longer than all recorded human history we have to think twice in India before committing ourselves to nuclear power.

The volume of low-level waste scheduled to be produced in the US alone by the year 2000 will, according to the US Environmental Protection Agency, be about one billion cubic feet—enough to cover a 4-lane coast-to-coast highway from New York to San Francisco one foot deep.

Until 1970, the US government purchased all the plutonium produced in US reactors. In 1970 the purchases ceased and private companies began stockpiling the material. If reliance on nuclear power grows at the rate commonly projected, far more plutonium will be produced in commercial reactors in the next couple of decades than is now contained in all the nuclear bombs in the world. One nuclear expert estimates that, by 2000, enough fissile material will be in transit to manufacture 250,000 bombs. As it is, it is said, it requires 350 years to defuse existing bombs.

In transit if there is a one per cent loss of bomb material, by the year 2000 there could be enough loss to manufacture 400,000 nuclear bombs.

If nuclear energy is not the answer to our energy problems, what is the answer ?

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Coal to come back

Unless scientists and technologists come up with something better coal will probably be the centre-piece of the post-petroleum energy budgets of most countries, except that if the developed world uses coal the reckless way it has accustomed itself to use oil, the world may be in greater trouble than is presently appreciated.

Carbon dioxide produced when any fossil fuel is burnt will raise the temperature by slowing down the escape of heat into space. Called the Carbon Dioxide Green-house Effect, the result could be disastrous as noted in a January 1978 article in the prestigious British science journal *Nature*.

"If the Carbon Dioxide Green-house Effect, is magnified in high latitudes, as now seems likely, deglaciation of West Antarctica would probably be the first disastrous result of continued fossil fuel consumption. A disquieting thought is that if the present highly simplified climatic models are even approximately correct, this deglaciation (and the consequent five-metre rise in sea level) may be part of the price that must be paid in order to buy time for industrial civilisation to make the changeover from fossil fuel to other sources of energy. If so, major displacements in coastal cities and submergence of low-lying areas such as much of Florida and the Netherlands lie ahead."

Sun and wind

There are, of course, alternate sources

of energy. Solar heating, for example. About 10,000 Cypriot houses, 30,000 Americans homes and 250,000 Israeli homes, not to mention two million Japanese homes, even now have solar water heaters. In remote parts of northern Australia, solar water heaters are required by law in all new buildings.

Wind turbines, it is well to remember, once provided significant amounts of electricity. In 1916 Denmark had more than 1,300 operating wind generators. By 1940 the United States had built about six million! Before the American rural electrification programme, wind turbines were the only source of electricity available to much of rural America. The World Meteorological Organisation estimates that 20 million megawatts of wind power can be commercially tapped. By comparison, the current total world electrical generating capacity is about one and a half million megawatts. What is needed is an imaginative approach towards the utilisation of all available forms of energy-producing systems. There are several of them: Coal gasification, coal liquefaction, geothermal energy, ocean energy, biomass conversion, fuel cells, oil shale tar sands, hydrogen and, in a very limited sense, timber. There are over 30,000 small biogas plants in south Korea. claims to have about two million biogas plants in operation. And in the United States, a plant in Massachusetts burns garbage from twelve towns producing of fuel oil per day. That is no small achievement and it can be duplicated in many cities all over the world.

Courtesy: The Illustrated Weekly of India



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Technology Creates System

PEOPLE say to me : Before you can make headway with your intermediate technology you must first change the system, do away with capitalism and the profit motive, dissolve the multinationals, abolish all bureaucracies, and reform education. All I can reply is : I know of no better way of changing the "system" than by putting into the world a new type of technology-technologies by which small people can make themselves productive and relatively independent.

FEW people deny that technological change has political consequences; yet equally few people seem to realize that the present "system," in the widest sense, is the product of technology and cannot be significantly changed unless technology is changed.

I never cease to be astonished at the docility with which people—even those who call themselves Socialists or Marxists—accept technology uncritically, as if technology were a part of natural law. As an example of this "docility" we may take the Prime Minister of Iran, who is reported to have said in a recent interview (To the point International, January 12, 1976) :

There are many aspects of the West that we particularly wish to avoid in the industrialization of Iran. We seek the West's technology only, not its ideology. What we wish to avoid is an ideological transplant.

can have a technological transplant without getting at the same time an ideological transplant; that technology is ideologically neutral; that you can acquire the hardware without the software that lies behind it, has made the hardware possible, and keeps it moving. Is this not a bit like saying : I want to import eggs for hatching, but I don't want chicks from them but mice or kangaroos ?

PEOPLE still, say : It is not the technology; it is the "system." Maybe a particular "system" gave birth to this technology; but now it stares us in the face that the system we have is the product, the inevitable product, of the technology. As I compare the societies which appear to have different "system," the evidence seems to be overwhelming that where they employ the same technology they act very much the same and become more alike every day. Mindless work in office or factory is equally mindless under any system.

I suggest therefore that those who want to promote a better society, achieve a better system, must not confine their activities to attempts to change the "super-structure"—laws, rules, agreements, taxes, welfare, education, health services, etc. The expenditure incurred in trying to buy a better society can be like pouring money in to a bottomless pit. If there is no change in the base—which is technology—there is unlikely to be any real change in the superstructure.

E.F. SCHUMACHER
IN "GOOD WORK" PAGE NO-42, 43

The implicit assumption is that you

Capitalism, Socialism or Villagism ?

Dr Bharatan Kumarappa

Late Dr Bharatan Kumarappa, born in 1896 in an orthodox Christian family of Madurai in Tamilnadu, educated at Madras, Hartford, Edinburgh & London; was Professor of Philosophy in Madras Christian College. Like his elder brother J. C. Kumarappa came under the spell of Mahatma Gandhi, both brothers dedicated their lives to the cause of freedom movement and village reconstruction under the leadership of Gandhiji. Dr Bharatan Kumarappa was Assistant Secretary of the All India Village Industries Association for nearly 10 years. He served the United Nations as India's representative on the Social Commission, wrote a large number of books on Swadeshi & village movement. Some extracts from his famous book 'Capitalism, Socialism or Villagism,' which was first published in 1946, are given below.

Keeping then self-development of the individual or human wellbeing as our goal, we must seek to formulate the principles on which we may build our economic system. Whatever this system may or may not secure for us, it must not be said of it that it cannot lead to human well being or the development of even the humblest. At the same time that it leads to his development, it must lead also to the development of his neighbours. The individual and the society, to which he belongs, must thus find their good in each other, the individual losing himself for the good of the group, to discover that thus he has found himself and the group seeking the good of even the least of its members, and only in this finding the justification of its existence.

If this is also the ideal of the socialist, then Villagism is nothing but Socialism—Socialism decentralised and freed from violence; for only thus, it would seem that the socialist's ideal of 'each for all and all for each' can really be attained. It is only in small groups, as we have

said, that the family tie of the individual to the group and of the group to the individual can develop, not in the huge nationwide groups brought about through centralised large-scale production. So Villagism is no more than Socialism made realisable through decentralisation and non-violence.

Socialism and Capitalism

The trouble with capitalism was that it allowed full freedom to the individual to pursue his ends, never mind what happened to others, with the result that it led to selfishness, greed and social injustice. Socialism, on the other hand, was eager to secure the good of all, but in the process, owing to its clinging to large scale production, it tended to sacrifice the freedom of the individual for the good of the group. We err, therefore, if we seek the good of the individual apart from the group, or the good of the group apart from the individual. For this reason Villagism bases itself on the via media between these two extremes. And if Hegel is right on

claiming that truth lies neither in the thesis nor in the antithesis, but in the synthesis which holds together within itself the partial truths of the thesis and the antithesis, then we may claim that our solution is valid. To use the language of the socialist's Dialectic, we move here from the thesis of Capitalism (uncontrolled individual freedom, unmindful of social good) and the antithesis of Socialism (complete social control, unmindful of individual freedom) to the synthesis of Villagism of individual freedom, which finds its good only in the good of all.

Perhaps this synthetic outlook, which we have inherited as the result of a civilisation made mature through centuries of experience of diverse peoples and institutions, provides just the corrective needed to check the youthful follies of the inexperienced West, which inclines to swing from one extreme to another, from Capitalism with its uncontrolled individual freedom to Socialism, which is out to destroy Capitalism completely and to establish itself in its place. Villagism, on the other hand, which seeks to do justice to the soul of goodness both in Capitalism and in Socialism, thus accepting what is good in both of them, is synthetic, and therefore, from this point of view also, true to our own genius. And, what is more, this synthetic attitude, which refuses to condemn and destroy wholesale but is glad to welcome and retain after modification, is the only one consistent with non-violence. India had discovered from her experience with the several races and tribes, which lived within her borders, that the only way by which she could hold them together and prevent endless internecine feud and bloodshed, was through inculcating in them the spirit of 'live

and let live', the spirit, in the last analysis of non-violence, which unwilling to aggravate and perpetuate conflicting elements, seeks to reconcile and synthesise them. Villagism may, from this point of view, be regarded as nothing but an expression, in the economic realm, of the non-violent soul of India. It is the solution which India has to offer today out of her rich heritage to a world torn by strife and violence and eagerly groping for a way out of the desperate situation in which it finds itself.

Ancient economic organisation

As for the lines along which we should proceed in order to attain the ideal which Villagism sets before itself, we obtain guidance from the principles which we found to underlie our own ancient economic organisation. We saw that in those days individuals were free to carry on their enterprise as best they could, but only within the limitations set for them by society. Neither private enterprise, it would seem, is evil in itself, nor social control. It is only when private enterprise exceeds its limits and works to the detriment of others that it is evil. Similarly, social control is not evil in itself. It is only when social control exceeds its limits and deprives the individual of initiative that it becomes evil. That being so, our solution should be one which has room in it both for private enterprise and for social control. If we would preserve the liberty of the individual, which Socialism tends to take away, and at the same time see that the interests of the community are not sacrificed, as happens under Capitalism it would seem that the individual should be allowed to think and plan production as best he can, though at the same time he is curbed,

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in the interests of the group, from mis-using his liberty. This double purpose requires to be kept constantly in mind, and can be served by a two-fold method, which we may call (A) Decentralisation in production, and (B) Swadeshi in consumption.

(A) Decentralisation in Production

We have already said that it will not do blindly to copy other nations. Our economic organisation must be suited to our peculiar genius, and to the special features of life in our country. A plant which thrives and blooms under certain conditions of soil and climate, may altogether wither and die when sought to be grown elsewhere. It is necessary therefore to consider our special capacity, and the conditions prevailing in our country today, before we adopt methods of production merely because they have been successful in other countries.

Judging from our past, our genius, or traditional mode of behaviour as a people, seems to be along lines of decentralisation. We have seen this to be true of our ancient economic organisation, where the village was the ultimate unit of production. In political life also each village was self-contained, being governed by its own Panchayats or Village Councils. Similarly, Hinduism, the religion of the vast majority of our people, has never believed in centralising faith. On the other hand, it has left the individual free to believe whatever appeals to him in regard to ultimate problems, provided his action is not anti-social. Hence it is that there has never been in Hinduism any attempt to convert people to one standardised creed, as happens for example in other great faiths like Christianity or Islam. . .

Not that we lacked organising power, which is necessary for centralisation, but that whatever organisation we had—for example the joint family, caste, or self-sufficient village economy—was directed to safeguarding and protecting the average run of individuals against the activities of selfish or wicked person. The organisation which we associate with large scale production, on the other hand, is not of this kind, but aims at collecting large numbers of people together, not for protection but for aggression, not for guarding the weak against the strong but for making the strong stronger and more efficient. From this, it must not be concluded that we can never develop capacity for centralisation, or the West capacity for decentralisation. Human nature is after all essentially the same the world over. Only, owing to our past traditions, decentralisation would appear to be what is best suited to us, and it is as we align ourselves with our own genius and cultural past that we can make for progress and advancement. We cannot break with our past, for it is the past that along with other factors has contributed to the present, which in its turn will flow into the future.

(B) Swadeshi in consumption

One of the best ways of preventing manufacture of goods without limit, then dumping them on other people upsetting economic equilibrium and producing unemployment among them, is to inculcate in people the ideal of Swadeshi, i.e. their duty to purchase goods produced by their immediate neighbours rather than goods imported from elsewhere. This means that in economic reconstruction, the aim should be to make the

village or a group of four or five villages, self-sufficient for their primary requirements so that all the fundamental wants of the people can be adequately met by the group itself.

Swadeshi suited to Indian Conditions

Our land is eminently suited to putting into effect this principle of Swadeshi in consumption, as Swadeshi is only an expression of the spirit of Hinduism in the economic sphere.

Besides, group loyalty and group control, in which it rests, have been instilled into us, as have already seen, by social organisations such as the joint family, caste and village unity. Home life and family attachments are perhaps

stronger in our country than in the West, where with the growth of industrialism they are gradually breaking up and giving place to extreme individualism. In so far as home life is but the application in a small sphere, of the principle of Swadeshi, or loyalty first to one's nearest, the principle of Swadeshi will be readily understood and practised by our people.

When production is decentralised and carried on by individuals to cater to the needs of only the immediate neighbourhood, the whole basis of the economic system will change. The ultimate economic unit will be the village or a small group of villages. □

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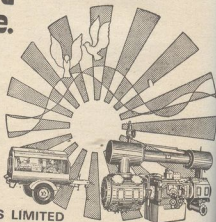
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Clues to a Viable Future

□ William Irwin Thompson*

*A romanticism prevails in the United States today—a belief in a national life so decentralized that the result is a “post-industrial pastoral society”. Such “Pastoralists” were originally a tiny avant-garde minority, but they have grown in number and influence in recent years. Practically a new life-style built on small and “appropriate technology”, they have founded many experimental communities as pilot projects for “living lightly on the earth”. One of the most famous of these is Lindisfarne (named for a monastic enclave that kept alive a torch of faith and learning in Europe’s Dark Ages). Lindisfarne was established a decade ago by a group of prominent Americans from a variety of professions. Led by historian William Irwin Thompson (author of the article beginning on this page), the founders of Lindisfarne included biologist Jonas Salk, anthropologist Gregory Bateson, physicist Fritjof Capra, the late economist E. F. Schumacher (author of *Small is Beautiful*) and astronaut Russell Schweikart. The people at Lindisfarne use solar and biomass energy to power their community. They are pioneering a new “planetary culture”—a way of life they believe will give clues to a viable future for all mankind. Like many similar new communities in America, Lindisfarne is also dedicated to a renewal of spiritual values in what it sees as an age of materialism.*



Before his full-time involvement in Lindisfarne, William Irwin Thompson taught history at Cornell University and was a professor of humanities at the Massachusetts Institutes of Technology. He has written several books and articles on the movement in general and Lindisfarne in particular. The following article is abridged from Quest magazine.

THE mythology that underpins the industrial and post-industrial city is a very ancient one, only just beginning to disintegrate. In fact, it is a way of experiencing human culture that goes all the way back to the urban revolution in

Mesopotamia. If one examines the rise of cities of ancient Sumer and considers the idea of civilisation, one can see in this precedent a dramatic shift in the whole cultural imaging of time and space.

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In hunting and gathering societies people live in what anthropologists call "the seasonal round". The tribal band is delicately adjusted to nature; it moves through space with the flow of time: When the Salmon are running, it comes to the stream; when the wild grasses must be gathered, the band moves on again. It circulates through space in the rhythm of the seasons each year. The circle is not broken into a line; the tribe does not stay in one place altering nature to suit the needs of the human settlement.

In domesticating plants and animals, managing the flow of rivers, and restructuring society to stay in one place, urban man has exchanged a movement around the circumference of the seasonal round for a constrained life within a circular boundary, the radius of which marks out the distance between the centre and the periphery.

The basic structure of civilisation is a dialectical tension between centre and periphery. In terms of the energy grid that supports a nucleated settlement, the resources come from the periphery and are controlled at the centre, whether the energy is the water coming from upstream on the Nile or Tigris, or the oil coming from Alaska. The elite at the centre dominate the informational mysteries through which resources can be controlled, manipulated and managed, for they have writing, whether it is the cuneiform on stone tablets marking the amount of grain contributed to the temple granary, or the geometry of land surveys marking out the area inundated by the Nile. What makes the city possible is its ability to store enormous amounts of personally unintegrated information. In tribal, oral culture the

knowledge is integrated in the folkways of life: There are no "facts", there are only experiences and rituals. It is when we come to write on stone tablets and have cadres of scribes that we get facts—so many jars of grain, so many flasks of wine. The knowledge is disconnected from the mind and body and is stored in an institution.

The landscape of the city is a celebration of power; its monuments celebrate kings, its stelae celebrate the conquest of armies. The city breaks up the tribal community and makes possible the rise of an individual ego—an ego now gone wild, I believe, and expressing itself in a culture and economy through which it threatens to destroy the planet.

Any way we care to look at post-industrial culture—from its supporting energy grid or from its mores its informational systems—we can see that it has reached its limit. The rush to an end of the age has probably attained too critical a mass and speed in its most energy-addicted urban centres. It is unlikely they will be able to change course before the whole system they depend on blacks out.

The Meta-Industrial Culture

But in tiny outposts—in Vermont, New Zealand, Scotland and Canada's Prince Edward Island—there are signs that something new is stirring, and that it prefigures a new constellation of archetypes, a mythology that allays us a viable future. It amounts to the beginning of a shift from post-industrial to what I call "meta-industrial" culture—from the Greek word meaning "beyond".

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It is a shift from capital-intensive economies of scale, which are net-energy inflationary, to labour-intensive economies in regional modes of decentralized production. It resources are rare, and if every metal is a precious metal, then goods must become very good indeed. The world of built-in obsolescence will have to give way to an economy in which a power saw is built in a craft guild workshop to last a hundred years. To produce such an instrument, we will not need an army of industrial proletarians but a workshop of contemplatives crafting with Zen-like mindfulness.

This is also a shift toward making the community, not the nuclear family, the basic unit of consumption; a move toward cooperative approaches to food raising and distribution; a move toward the collectivization of the tools and technologies necessary to a localized economy. The electric toothbrush and the electric knife may soon be missing, but the tools for a rich culture will be at hand.

Horizons of wind and sun

The energy grid for this meta-industrial culture begins to abandon fossil fuels, moving instead toward the flow of wind and sun, a flow in which the centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. The culture of fossil fuels literally feeds off the past off the world of the dinosaurs. But the culture of solar energy feeds off light. The shift from the subterranean world of coal mine and oil well to open horizons of wind and sun amounts to a shift in the architecture of the collective unconscious.

Before taking a closer, more analyti-

cal look at the mythology of this future now in embryo, I should mention that there is a rival vision being prompted by certain "futurologists". This group, typified in Herman Kahn, refuses to imagine anything but greater and greater expansions of the world industrial system. To the extent that they factor solar energy into their calculations, for example, they can only dream of expensive solar collectors in space or huge solar farms in New Mexico or of a Promethean seizure of the power of the sun in thermonuclear fusion.

There is no such science as futurology. To speak of the future is simply to discuss the implications of the present when everyone else is looking at the present but seeing the past. To look at the present and describe what I see as going on is not an exercise in prophecy, but simply looking, feeling, thinking and meditating. The four activities come together in the unity of intuition. Out of that intuition, I would disagree with the multifold trends Herman Kahn says is leading to a twenty-first century in which 20,000 million earthlings will each happily consume \$ 20,000 a year.

Forces transforming contemporary culture

There are four archetypal forces at work today in the transformation of contemporary culture. One of them, the *planarization of nations*, was first observed by the French-philosopher Teilhard de Chardin in the 1940s. In his essay on the atom bomb, Chardin noted that the more the nations build armaments to separate themselves and maintain their sovereign independence, the more these very armaments forced them to come together in a new international system, a planetary system.

The second societal force at work is the *decentralization of cities*. The second modern flow of information through satellites and electronic media means the end of the kind of cities we have known through the history of urban civilization. The polarity between centre and periphery can be overcome in a new culture which returns us to nature—not to what Karl Marx called “the idiocy of rural life”, but to the meta-industrial village. Like the biosphere or the oceans or a superconductor, culture is becoming a complex, circulating electrical fluid, a liquid crystal. In what the British philosopher Alfred North Whitehead called “the prehensive unification of space,” every point is involved with every other point, and a tiny community can be as important for cultural evolution as a giant London or New York. Again, the center is everywhere, and there is no single elite dominating it.

Hearing the trees again

The third societal force at work is the *miniaturization of technology*. I believed that this shift in the scale of man to machine has profound implications for cultural evolution. If the machines are small and you can once again hear the trees, then the relationship between culture and nature changes dramatically. The miniaturization of technology enables us to reduce the impact of industrialization on the biosphere. In a shift from hardware to information, from capital-intensive economies of scale to communal forms of regional production, from consumer values to contemplative values, the industrial maladjustment to nature is reduced and the neurotic compulsions of modern society are eased. The opposite of miniaturization is ex-

ponential growth, bureaucracy, and the technologizing of human beings in a culture so totally mechanized that all things natural are looked upon as atavisms incompletely evolved.

The fourth societal force is the *interiorization of consciousness*. The emergence of the modern industrial world has meant a shift from the inward orientation of medieval Christendom to a centrifugal expansiveness now epitomized in the exploration of space and in the promotion of space colonies. These expansionists believe that the next frontier contains the solution to all the disappointments of the last. We sense the beginning of the end of this rough-riding expansiveness.

The interiorization of consciousness is a change in values in which we begin to look for the source of the good life within rather than without. The planet, not the nation-state, becomes the larger symbolic envelope. But the way in which the planet is experienced is through the meta-industrial village. The basic orientation of these planetary villagers is not industrial and consumptive, but contemplative.

Although the meta-industrial village is the expression of these archetypal forces, it is not an inevitability; it is a choice. Each of the four societal forces has its equal and opposite force. If we don't achieve the planetization of nations, we invite thermonuclear war. If we don't achieve the decentralization of cities, we doom London, Paris, New York and Calcutta to a similar fate. If we don't achieve the miniaturization of technology, we will experience the technologizing of man under authoritarian bureaucracies and scientific elites.

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And if we don't achieve the interioriza-
tion of consciousness in our culture, we
will continue to externalize our sickness
by disrupting the biosphere with lethal
industrial and nuclear wastes.

The significance of the emerging
meta-industrial experiments is that they
represent a choice being made while
there is still time. But I believe that in
the years immediately ahead, the rush
of events will make that choice our only
viable direction.

We can see how unnatural post-
industrial civilization is if we look back
at a few historical statistics. In 1800,
93 per cent of the American population
lived in rural areas; even as late 1880,
two-thirds of the people lived in the
country. But by 1950 roughly 60 per
cent of the people lives in cities, a
dramatic move from the country to the
city. Well, if a culture can move in one
direction, it can move in the other. I
believe that by the year 2000 half of our
population will live in rural areas. I
see the return to the country as the crea-
tion of a new meta-industrial culture
and not a return to pre-industrial agra-
rian society.

Moving out of the cities

From 1900 to 1972, America experi-
enced a shift in population from agri-
culture and industrial production to
services, and this shift, supported by
massive injections of oil, is what post-
industrial civilisation is all about. In
America, the most highly populated
profession is teaching, and so it is fair
to say that we live in a world of infor-
mation, not of farms or factories.

I am assuming that by the year 2000

the electronic decentralization of infor-
mation and the miniaturization of
technology will enable people to move
from big cities to live in rural areas. I
am assuming that the production of good
small tools will enable communities to
produce goods and services in small
workshops rather than in large factories.
I am also assuming that as human beings
begin to move out of cities to live with
trees, the consciousness of the individual
will undergo a profound animism. If
you want to be more poetic than demo-
graphic, you can identify meta-industrial
culture as one in which the trees, the
very blood cells of the biosphere, are
counted in a census of the members of
the community.

Evolution occurs in small popula-
tions, or demes, in which a mutation has
taken place. The meta-industrial village
is just such an evolutionary deme; it is a
place in which the four archetypal cultu-
ral forces are completely expressed. It
also recapitulates the four economies of
human history—hunting and gathering,
agriculture, industry and cybernetics—
within a single deme. We will look
back to where we have been in history,
gather up all the old economies, and
then turn on the spiral in a new direc-
tion.

The hunting and gathering economy
is interestingly reflected in the research of
the New Alchemy Institute, centered in
Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The pion-
eering work of these scientists can be seen
as an experiment toward creating a food
and energy base for a small, tribal band
of people living in isolated circumstances.
The latter-day hunting and gathering
includes harnessing wind and sun. New
Alchemy is not a civilized strategy; it is
not going to feed the huddled urban

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Ecologically sophisticated gardening

The agricultural economy of the meta-industrial village will focus on organic gardening and the replacement of fossil fuel agribusiness with natural cycles in the food chain. Since the shift from gardening to field village with the plow originally displaced women from food production, the return to ecologically sophisticated gardening enables women to again take up significant roles in the economy of the village, and thus to overcome the artificial sexual divisions that are characteristic of industrial society.

The third economy of the community will be industrial, and this is where I part company with many critics of contemporary culture. The new communities will not be anti-industrial and Luddite; there will be industry and technology, but they will be brought down to scale as workshop in converted barns. Or the village could produce bicycles, clothing, and well-crafted durable instruments. In a return to the mystery of the craft guild, particular communities would focus on particular crafts and industries. Whatever the industry chosen, the scale of the operation would be small in harmony with the ecosystem of the region, the devoted more to a local market than to an international one.

The community as a college

The fourth economy of the community will be cybernetic. The characteristic feature of a post-industrial economy is the emphasis on research and education. Since the entire village would

be a contemplative, educational community, the adventure of consciousness would be more basic to the way of life than patterns of consumption. Everyone living in the community would be involved in an experiential approach to education, from birth to death. And at the various stages of life in between, the entire community would function as a college in which children and adults worked together in gardening, construction, crafts, and classes in all fields of knowledge.

The educational communities already exist in more traditional ashrams, like Auroville in India. A uniquely Celtic embodiment of such a community is to be found in Cluny Hill College (Findhorn, Scotland). Here endeavors in the performing arts, crafts, and the fabulous communal gardens attract visitors from all parts of the world. In the college itself, dedicated as it is to restoring the sacredness of food, we begin to see the face a future in which all community institutions are intimately involved with the economic and ecological microcosm that sustains them.

The importance of miniaturizing the four classical economies within a single deme is that such compression makes human history visible in a new way, and thus allows a new collective consciousness to overlie the whole. Cultural evolution, made conscious, moves on to a different level of consciousness. The four economies exist on the planet, and the planet from an evolutionary point of view is a single deme. By making the community into a microcosm of the planetary deme the community itself becomes an object of contemplation for insight into universal processes of evolution and transformation.

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"Growing" a House

A transformation of consciousness is now beginning to express itself in the field of theoretical architecture. Since architecture is the collective unconscious made visible, the architect himself does not always understand the full cultural implications of his own work. What is beginning to happen in architecture that is of interest to cultural historians like myself is the shift from post-industrial constructions of the Bauhaus International style to a symbiotic architecture. The new form is not a celebration of power over new materials, as was the case with aluminium and glass, but a celebration of cooperation with ecosystems, as is the case with the New Alchemy Ark in Prince Edward Island, Canada, designed by Solsearch. In the still-theoretical structure, the "Bioshelter" of Day Charoudhi and Seal Wellesley-Miller, an attempt is being made to create a house that is "a domestication of an ecosystem." The relationship between culture and nature is changed, for the architect does not simply stick a house in the ground. Instead, after the fashion of the ancient science of geomancy or Sheng-fui, he spends a full year studying the land, the seasonal flow of its subtle energies, its flora and fauna, and then, slowly, he grows a house, the way he would grow a garden.

The earth as a single living cell

In northern climates the thrust of architecture has been to lock out nature with an iron wall. But in the new architecture there is a shift from the iron wall to a light-permeable membrane. The structure is surrounded with a membrane insulated with a cloud gel

within the membrane that lets in light and stores heat. Across this membrane, as across the membrane of a living cell, information can pass. But it is information that respects the integrity of the living cell house, and now the ramifications of this biological consciousness are being expressed in architecture.

In the community we started at Lindisfarne, the project with which I am most intimately involved, we are trying to move away from the growth-and-development ethos by working with old and used resources. We have tried to see what could be done with intensive gardening in an 11-acre piece of land. At Fishcove, Long Island, in New York State, we found an old run-down inn that had been built in the Depression and had been running downhill ever since. In the days of the inn, the five-acre field as used for golf practice and barbecues; now it houses the vegetable garden, a small orchard and a volleyball court. In the future we plan to build a meditation house, a greenhouse, a chicken coop, a goat pen, and a small craft studio. The orchard will be enlarged, beehives will be introduced, and a small inlet will be caged off for fish farming. Lindisfarne is not a full-fledged meta-industrial village, but rather a small, hamlet-sized step in that direction.

These steps toward a meta-industrial community are not alternatives to apocalypse. Bombs, nuclear wastes and air pollution can easily snuff them out. They are not an escape from anything, but a step toward something—an alternative to post-industrial civilization. We assume that the next quarter century will bring a lowering of consumption

and some hard times, in which communities of caring and sharing will be more than hippie fantasies. If we are wrong, pollutants in the atmosphere and nuclear wastes will be destroying life on earth for the next 25, 000 years.

Risks to take or not to take

Risks taking is what evolution is all about. Some people prefer to take risks with cultural evolution by gambling on nuclear power; other prefer to take risks with their own way of life. By 1984 we should be at the fork in the road. Then everyone should be able to see clearly the choice to be made. One road will lead toward nuclear power, strip mining, and authoritarian governments than can underwrite the workers' pension funds and protect society from revolution and terrorism. The other road will lead toward a religious awakening on the level of the great universal religions that have marked the evolving history of humanity. This path will be marked by a change of heart and of mind, wedding of nature and culture, a new kind of community that expresses the sacredness of Earth.

The meta-industrial village, the deme

that achieves miniaturization of all four classical economies, does not yet exist. The Findhorn community is working on the spiritual group consciousness and the gardening, but not on the science. New Alchemy is working on the science, but New Alchemy is not a community. Lindisfarne is working on the philosophical and educational aspects, but it does not have the size and power of Findhorn or the science and appropriate technology of New Alchemy. What is needed for the meta-industrial village is a community where the achievements of Findhorn, New Alchemy and Lindisfarne are brought together.

From the viewpoint of economic realism, many of these projects do not have the mortgage money for the land, or the building materials, or the food for the community workers. They are going ahead anyway. Waiting to do something until you have the resources in a bank only affirms the reality of banks. Waiting cancels the kind of energy that magnetizes resources into the electric field of your own activity. The first step in creating a new economy for a new world is to take the first step.



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RURAL RECONSTRUCTION IN INDIA

—PERSPECTIVES

So Said Vivekanand . . .

You merge yourselves in the void and disappear, and let New India arise in your place. Let her arise—out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough, out of the huts of the fisherman, the cobbler, and the sweeper. Let her spring from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller. Let her emanate from the factory, from marts and from markets. Let her emerge from the groves and forests, from hills and mountains. These common people have suffered oppression for thousands of years—suffered it without murmur, and as a result have got wonderful fortitude. They have suffered eternal misery, which has given them unflinching vitality. Living on handful of oatmeal they can convulse the world; give them only half a piece of bread, and the whole world will not be big enough to contain their energy; they are endowed with the inexhaustible vitality of a *Raktabija*. And, besides, they have got the wonderful strength that comes of a pure and moral life, which is not to be found anywhere else in the world. Such peacefulness, such contentment, such love, such power of silent and incessant work, and such manifestation of lion's strength in times of action—where else will you find these! Skeletons of the past, there, before you, are your successors, the India that is to be. Throw those treasure-chests of yours and those jewelled rings among them—as soon as you can; and you—vanish into air; and be seen no more—only keep your eyes open: No sooner will you disappear than you will hear the inaugural shout of Renaissance India—ringing with the voice of a million thunders and reverberation throughout the universe—"Wah Guru Ki Fateh—Victory to the Guru."

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Village In Ancient India

What is a Village?

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स्वदेशाभिधायकं वमनेन वा निवेशयेत् ।
शूद्रकर्मकं ग्रामं कुलशतावरं पंचशतकुलपरं
ग्रामं क्रोशद्विक्रोश सोमानमन्योम्यारक्षं निवेशयेत् ।

Either by inducing outsiders to immigrate or by causing the thickly populated centres of his own kingdom to send forth the excessive population, the king may construct villages either on new sites or on old ruins. Villages consisting of each of not less than a hundred families and of not more than five hundred families of agricultural people of artisans and agriculturists, with boundaries extending as far as a *krosha* or two and capable of protecting each other shall be formed.

Kautilya Arthashastra, Book II. Ch. I.

भवेत्क्रोशात्मकोग्रामो रुप्यकर्म सहस्रकः ।
ग्रामार्थकं पल्लि संज्ञं पत्यर्थं कुंभसंज्ञकम् ॥

A Grama is that piece of land whose area is a *krosha* (2250 yds) and whose yield is 1000 silver *krasa*. The half of a village is called *Palli*, the half of a *Palli* is known as *Kumbha*.

Shukraniti, Ch. I, Verse 192.

तथा शूद्रजनं प्रायाः सुसमृद्धं कृषीवलाः ।
क्षेत्रोपयोग्यं भूमध्ये वसतिग्रामं संज्ञिताः ॥

Where artisans, labourers and farmers live, whose prosperity depends upon agriculture and all round which cultivable land exists, such a human habitation is called Village.

Markandey Puranam, Ch. 49, Verse 47

Village to Rashtra

अष्टशतग्राम्या मध्ये स्थानीयं, चतुश्शतग्राम्या
द्रोणमुखं, द्विशतग्राम्या
सार्बदिकं दशग्रामीसंग्रहेण संग्रहणं स्थापयेत् ।

In the midst of (a group of) eight hundred villages a *Sthaniya* should be established, among four hundred villages, a *Dronamukh*, for two hundred villages a *Kharvatika*, and for a group of 10 villages a *Sangrahana* should be established.

Kautilya Arthashastra, BK. II, Ch. I.

ग्रामस्याधिपतिं कुर्याद्दश ग्रामपतिं तथा ॥
विंशतीशंशतेन च सहस्रपतिमेव च ॥ (7. 115)

The king shall appoint a headman of each village, a headman over ten villages, a headman over twenty villages, a headman over hundred villages and a headman over a thousand villages.

ग्रामदोषान्मुत्पन्नान् ग्रामिकः शनकैः स्वयं ।
शंसे द्ग्रामदशायां दशेशो विंशतीशिनम् । (7. 116)
विंशतीशस्तु तत्सर्वं शतेशाय निवेदयेत् ।
शंसे ग्राम शतेशस्तु तत्सर्वपत्ये स्वयं ॥ (7. 117)

The evils emerging in a village should be reported by the *Gramik* (Head of the Village) himself to the Head of the ten villages, who should report that to the Head of twenty villages who in turn should report to the Head of hundred villages and the Head of hundred villages should himself report to the Head of thousand villages.

Manu Smriti Ch. VI

धनुः शतं परीहारी ग्रामस्य स्वास्तमन्ततः ।
ग्राम्यापातास्त्रयो वापि त्रिगुणो नगरस्य तु ॥

A strip of land to the extent of four hundred cubits should be set apart around the village for pasturage; while a strip three times in measure should be kept reserved for this purpose at the outskirts of a town or city.

Munu Smṛiti, Ch. III, Verse 237

Importance of Agriculture

... कश्चित् तुष्टाः कृषीवलाः ॥ 77

कश्चिद् राष्ट्रे तडागानि पूर्णानि च बृहन्ति च ।

भागशो विनिविष्टानि न कृषिर्वमात्का ॥ 78

कश्चिन्न भवत्तं बीजं च कर्त्तव्यस्यावसीदति ।

प्रत्येकं च शतं वृद्धया ददास्युणमनुग्रहम् ॥ 79

कश्चित् स्वनुष्ठिता तात धातौ ते साधुभिर्जनैः

वार्तायां स्थितस्तात लोकोऽयं सुखमेधते ॥ 80

Narada asks Yudhishtira.

"Are the agriculturists in thy kingdom contented? Are large tanks and ponds established all over thy kingdom at proper distances, so that agriculture is not entirely dependent upon the rains only? Are the foodgrains and seeds belonging to the farmers not allowed to be destroyed? (In that case) do you generously advance them loans on a minimum interest of one hundredth per measure?

O Child, are the three professions of agriculture, cattle rearing and trade (the three are covered by Varta) managed by honest persons? Upon these, O Monarch, depends the happiness of thy people?

Mahabharat, Sabha Parva, Ch. 8, Verses 77-80

Village Panchayat and Elders

या ग्रामदेशसंघानां कृत्वा सत्येन संबिदम् ।

विसंवेदनरो लोभात्तं राष्ट्रद्विप्रवासयेत् ॥

All the people of a village or a territory should take collective decisions on oath for the common good. But if any individual for self-interest tries to violate any of such compacts, he should be banished from the realm by the king.

Manu Smṛiti, Ch. VIII, Verse 219

क्षेत्रविवादं सामन्तग्रामवृद्धाः कुर्युः ॥

Any dispute regarding the boundaries of fields may be settled by the village elders.

Kautilya Arthashastra, BK. 3, Ch. IV, Varta 16

बालद्वयं ग्रामवृद्धा वर्षयुयुर्द्वयवहार ।

प्रापणात् देवद्वयं च ।

Village elders will look after the property of a minor child who has lost his parents till he becomes major. Similarly, religious property will also be looked after by village elders.

Kautilya BK, II, Ch. 1, Varta 32-33

त्येजेदेकं कुलस्यार्थं, ग्रामस्यार्थं कुलं त्यजेत् ।

ग्रामं च जनपदस्यार्थं आत्मायै पृथिवीं त्यजेत् ॥

Individual interest should be sacrificed for family interest, family interest should be sacrificed in favour of village interest, village interest may have to be sacrificed for the sake of Janapada interest, and everything should be sacrificed for the sake of universal self.

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The Village and The Nation*

Sri Aurobindo



WE wrote yesterday of the necessity of going back to the land if the Bengali Hindu is to keep his place in the country and escape the fate of those who divorce themselves from the root of life, the soil. But there is another aspect of the question which is also of immense importance. The old organization of the Indian village was self-sufficient, self-centred, autonomous and exclusive. These little units of life existed to themselves, each a miniature world of its own petty interests and activities, like a system of planets united to each other indeed by an unconscious force but each absorbed in its own life and careless of the other. It was a life beautifully simple, healthy, rounded and perfect, a delight to the poet and the lover of humanity. If perfect simplicity of life, freedom from economic evils, from moral degradation, from the strife, faction and fury of town populations, from revolution and turmoil, from vice and crime on a large scale are the objects of social organization, than the village communities of India were ideal forms of social organization. Many look back to them with regret and even British administrators who were instrumental in destroying them have wished that they

could be revived. So valuable indeed were the elements of social welfare which they secured to the nation, that they have persisted through all changes and revolutions as they were thousands of years ago, when the Aryans first occupied the land. Nor can it be denied that they have kept the nation alive. Whatever social evils or political diseases might corrupt the body politic, these little cells of national life supplied a constant source of soundness and purity which helped to prevent final disintegration. But if we owe national permanence to these village organization, it cannot be denied that they have stood in the way of national unity. Ancient India could not build itself into a single united nation, not because of caste or social difference as the European writers assert, caste and class have existed in nations which achieved a faultless national unity but because the old polity of the Hindus allowed the village to live to itself, the clan to live to itself, the province or smaller race-unit to live to itself, The village, sufficient to itself, took no interest in the great wars and revolutions which affected only the ruling clans of the kingdom including it in its territorial jurisdiction. The Kshatriya clans fought

* Excerpts from an editorial in *Bandematram* Weekly, Edition, March 8, 1908.

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and married and made peace among themselves, and were the only political units out of which a nation might have been built. But the clan too was so attached to its separate existence that it was not till the clans were destroyed on the battlefield of Kurukshetra that larger national units could be built out of their ruins. Small kingdoms took their place based on provincial or racial divisions and until the onrush of foreign peoples an attempt was in progress to build them into one nation by the superimposition of a single imperial authority. Many causes prevented the success of the attempt, and the provincial unit has always remained the highest expression of the nation-building tendencies in India. One cause perhaps more than any other contributed to the failure of the centripetal tendency to attain self-fulfilment, and that was the persistence of the village community which prevented the people, the real nation, from taking any part in the great struggles out of which a nation should have emerged.

In other countries the people had to take part in the triumphs, disasters, and failures of their rulers either as citizens or at least as soldiers, but in India they were left to their little isolated republics with no farther interest than the payment of a settled tax in return for protection by the supreme power. This was the true cause of the failure of India to achieve a distinct, organized and self-conscious Nationality. It is worthy of notice that the Indian race in which the national idea attained its most conscious expression and most nearly attained realization, was the Mahratta people who drew their strength from the village democracies and brought them to interest themselves in the struggle for

national independence. If the Mahrattas had been able to rise above the provincial or racial separateness, they would have established a permanent empire and neither of the Wellesleys could have broken their power by diplomacy or in the field. The British, historians have told us, conquered India in a fit of absence of mind. In a fit of absence of mind also they destroyed the separate life of our village communities, and by thus removing the greatest obstacle in the way of national development, prepared the irresistible movement toward national unity which now fills them with dismay. The provinces have been brought together, the village has been destroyed. It only remains for the people to fulfil their destiny.

We are now turning our eyes again to the village under the stress of an instinct of self-preservation and part of our programme is to recreate village organization. In doing so we must always remember that the village can be so organised as to prove a serious obstacle to national cohesion. One or two of our leading publicists have sometime expressed themselves as if our salvation lay in the village and not in the large organization of the nation. Swaraj has been sometimes interpreted as a return to the old conditions of self-sufficient village life, leaving the imperial authority to itself, to tax and pass laws as it pleased—ignored, because it is too strong to be destroyed. Even those who see the futility of ignoring Government which seeks to destroy every centre of strength, however minute, except itself, sometimes insist on the village as the secret of our life and ask us to give up our ambitious strivings after national Swaraj and realize it first in the village.

Manthan

Such counsel is dangerous, even if it were possible to follow it. Nothing should be allowed to distract us from the mighty ideal of Swaraj, National and Pan-Indian. This is no alien or exotic ideal, it is merely the conscious attempt to fulfil the great centripetal tendency which has pervaded the grandiose millenia of her history, to complete the work which Srikrishna began, which Chandragupta and Ashoka and the Gupta kings continued, which Akbar almost brought to realization, for which Shivaji was born and Bajirao fought and planned.

The organization of our villages is an indispensable work to which we must

immediately set our hands, but we must be careful so to organize them as so make them feel that they are imperfect parts of a single national unity, and dependent at every turn on the co-operation, first of the district, secondly of the province, and finally of the nation. The day of the independent village or group of villages has gone and must not be revived; the nation demands its hour of fulfilment and seeks to gather the village life of its rural population into a mighty single and compact democratic nationality. We must make the nation what the village community was of old—self-sufficient, self-centred, autonomous and exclusive the ideal of national Swaraj.

Why should industrial society fail? Why should the spiritual evils it produces lead to worldly failure? From a severely practical point of view, I should say this:

1. It has disrupted, and continues to disrupt, certain organic relationships in such a manner that world population is growing, apparently irresistibly, beyond the means of subsistence.

2. It is disrupting certain other organic relationships in such a manner as to threaten those means of subsistence themselves, spreading poison, adulterating food, etc.

3. It is rapidly depleting the earth's nonrenewable stocks of scarce mineral resources—mainly fuels and metals.

4. It is degrading the moral and intellectual qualities of man while further developing a highly complicated way of life the smooth continuance of which requires ever-increasing moral and intellectual qualities.

5. It breeds violence—a violence against nature which at any moment can turn into violence against one's fellow men, when there are weapons around which make nonviolence a condition of survival.

It is no longer possible to believe that any political or economic reform, or scientific advance, or technological progress could solve the life-and-death problems of industrial society.

E.F. SCHUMACHER

In 'Good Work' (p. 35-36)

Documents

Gandhi-Nehru correspondence on

VILLAGISM Vs INDUSTRIALISM

FROM MAHATMA GANDHI

(Original in Hindi)

October 5, 1946

My dear Jawaharlal

I have been desirous of writing to you for many days but have not been able to do so before today. The question of whether I should write to you in English or Hindustani was also in my mind. I have at length preferred to write to you in Hindustani.

The first thing I want to write about is the difference of outlook between us. If the difference is fundamental then I feel the public should also be made aware of it. It would be detrimental to our work for Swaraj to keep them in the dark. I have said that I still stand by the system of Government envisaged in *Hind Swaraj*. These are not mere words. All the experience gained by me since 1908 when I wrote the booklet has confirmed the truth of my belief. Therefore if I am left alone in it I shall not mind, for I can only bear witness to the truth as I see it. I have not *Hind Swaraj* before me as I write. It is really better for me to draw the picture anew in my own words. And whether it is the same as I drew in *Hind Swaraj* or not is immaterial for both you and me. It is not necessary to prove the rightness of what I said then. It is essential only to know what I feel today I am convinced that if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also, then sooner or later the fact must be recognised that people will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to both violence and untruth. I hold that without truth and non-violence there can be nothing but destruction for humanity. We can realise truth and non-violence only in the simplicity of village life and this simplicity can best be found in the Charkha and all that the Charkha connotes. I must not fear if the world today is going the wrong way. It may be that India too will go that way and like the proverbial moth burn itself eventually in the flame round which it dances more furiously. But it is my bounden duty up to my last breath to try to protect India and through India the entire world from such a doom. The essence of what I have said is that man should rest content with what are his real needs and become self-sufficient. If he does not have this control he cannot save himself. After all the world is made up of individuals just as it is the drops that constitute the ocean. I have said nothing new. This is a well-known truth.

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But I do not think I have stated this in *Hind Swaraj*. While I admire modern science, I find that it is the old looked at in the true light of modern science which should be reclothed and refashioned aright. You must not imagine that I am envisaging our village life as it is today. The village of my dreams is still in my mind. After all every man lives in the world of his dreams. My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against any one in the world. There will be neither plague nor cholera nor small pox; no one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour. I do not want to draw a large scale picture in detail. It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph offices etc. For me it is material to obtain the real article and the rest will fit into the picture afterwards. If I let go the real thing, all else goes.

On the last day of the Working Committee it was decided that this matter should be fully discussed and the position clarified after a two or three days session. I should like this. But whether the Working Committee sits or not I want our position vis-a-vis each other to be clearly understood by us for two reasons. Firstly, the bond that unites us is not only political work. It is immeasurably deeper and quite unbreakable. Therefore it is that I earnestly desire that in the political field also we should understand each other clearly. Secondly neither of us thinks himself useless. We both live for the cause of India's freedom and we would both gladly die for it. We are not in need of the world's praise. Whether we get praise or blame is immaterial to us. There is no room for praise in service. I want to live to 125 for the service of India but I must admit that I am now an old man. You are much younger in comparison and I have therefore named you as my heir. I must, however, understand my heir and my heir should understand me. Then alone shall I be content.....

Blessing from
BAPU

(2)

FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Anand Bhawan, Allahabad

October 9, 1945

My dear Bapu

I have received today, on return from Lucknow, your letter of the 5th October. I am glad you have written to me fully and I shall try to reply at some length but I hope you will forgive me if there is some delay in this, as I am at present tied up with close-fitting engagements. I am only here now for a day and a half. It is really better to have informal talks but just at present I do not know when to fit this in. I shall try.

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Briefly put, my view is that the question before us is not one of truth versus untruth, or non-violence versus violence. One assumes as one must that true co-operation and peaceful methods must be aimed at and a society which encourages these must be our objective. The whole question is how to achieve this society and what its content should be. I do not understand why a village should necessarily embody truth and non-violence. A village, normally speaking, is backward, intellectually and culturally and no progress can be made from a backward environment. Narrow-minded people are much more likely to be untruthful and violent.

Then again we have to put down certain objectives like a sufficiency of food, clothing, housing, education, sanitation etc., which should be the minimum requirements for the country and for every one. It is with these objectives in view that we must find out specifically how to attain them speedily. Again it seems to me inevitable that modern means of transport as well as many other modern developments must continue and be developed. There is no way out of it except to have them. If that is so inevitable a measure of heavy industry exists. How far that will fit in with a purely village society? Personally I hope that heavy or light industries should all be decentralised as far as possible and this is feasible now because of the development of electric power. If two types of economy exist in the country there should be either conflict between the two or one will overwhelm the other.

The question of independence and protection from foreign aggression, both political and economic, has also to be considered in this context. I do not think it is possible for India to be really independent unless she is a technically advanced country. I am not thinking for the moment in terms of just armies but rather of scientific growth. In the present context of the world we cannot even advance culturally without a strong background of scientific research in every department. There is today in the world a tremendous acquisitive tendency both in individuals and groups and nations, which leads to conflicts and wars. Our entire society is based on this more or less. That basis must go and be transformed into one of cooperation, not of isolation which is impossible. If this is admitted and is found feasible then attempts should be made to realise it not in terms of an economy, which is cut off from the rest of the world, but rather one which cooperates. From the economic or political point of view an isolated India may well be a kind of vacuum which increases the acquisitive tendencies of others and thus creates conflicts.

There is no question of palaces for millions of people. But there seems to be no reason why millions should not have comfortable up-to-date homes where they can lead a cultured existence. Many of the present overgrown cities have developed evils which are deplorable. Probably we have to discourage this overgrowth and at the same time encourage the village to approximate more to the culture of the town.

It is many years ago since I read *Hind Swaraj* and I have only a vague picture in my mind. But even when I read it 20 or more years ago it seemed to me com-

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pletely unreal. In your writings and speeches since then I have found much that seemed to me an advance on that old position and an appreciation of modern trends. I was therefore surprised when you told us that the old picture still remains intact in your mind. As you know, the Congress has never considered that picture, much less adopted it. You yourself have never asked it to adopt it except for certain relatively minor aspects of it. How far it is desirable for the Congress to consider these fundamental questions, involving varying philosophies of life, it is for you to judge. I should imagine that a body like the Congress should not lose itself in arguments over such matters which can only produce great confusion in people's minds resulting in inability to act in the present. This may also result in creating barriers between the Congress and others in the country. Ultimately of course this and other questions will have to be decided by representatives of free India. I have a feeling that most of these questions are thought of and discussed in terms of long ago, ignoring the vast changes that have taken place all over the world during the last generation or more. It is 38 years since *Hind Swaraj* was written. The world has completely changed since then, possibly in a wrong direction. In any event any consideration of these questions must keep present facts, forces and the human material we have today in view, otherwise it will be divorced from reality. You are right in saying that the world, or a large part of it, appears to be bent on committing suicide. That may be an inevitable development of an evil seed in civilisation that has grown. I think it is so. How to get rid of this evil, and yet how to keep the good in the present as in the past is our problem. Obviously there is good too in the present.

These are some random thoughts hurriedly written down and I fear they do injustice to the grave import of the questions raised. You will forgive me, I hope, for this jumbled presentation. Later I shall try to write more clearly on the subject.

Yours affectionately
JAWAHARLAL

Mahatma Gandhi
Nature Cure Clinic*
6, Todiwala Road
Poona

(3)

FROM MAHATMA GANDHI
(Original in Hindi)

Poona

November 13 1945

My dear Jawaharlal

Our talk of yesterday's made me glad. I am sorry it could not be longer. I feel it cannot be finished in a single sitting, but will necessitate frequent meetings

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between us. I am so constituted that, if only I were physically fit to run about, I would myself overtake you, wherever you might be, and return after a couple of days heart-to-heart talk with you. I have done so before. It is necessary that we understand each other well and that others also should clearly understand where we stand. It would not matter if ultimately we might have to agree to differ so long as we remained one at heart as we are today. The impression that I have gathered from our yesterday's talk is that there is not much difference in our outlook. To test this I put down below the gist of what I have understood. Please correct me if there is any discrepancy.

(1) The real question, according to you, is how to bring about man's highest intellectual, economic, political and moral development. I agree entirely.

(2) In this there should be an equal right and opportunity for all.

(3) In other words, there should be equality between the town-dwellers and the villagers in the standard of food and drink, clothing and other living conditions. In order to achieve this equality today people should be able to produce for themselves the necessities of life i.e. clothing, foodstuffs, dwellings and lighting and water.

(4) Man is not born to live in isolation but is essentially a social animal independent and interdependent. No one can or should ride on another's back. If we try to work out the necessary conditions for such a life, we are forced to the conclusion that the unit of society should be a village, or call it a small and manageable group of people who would, in the ideal, be self-sufficient (in the matter of their vital requirements) as a unit and bound together in bonds of mutual cooperation and inter-dependence.

If I find that so far I have understood you correctly, I shall take up consideration of the second part of the question in my next.

I had got Rajkumari to translate into English my first letter to you. It is still lying with me. I am enclosing for you an English translation of this. It will serve a double purpose. An English translation might enable me to explain myself more fully and clearly to you. Further, it will enable me to find out precisely if I have fully and correctly understood you.

Blessings for Indu.

Blessings from
BAPU

□

My Experiments in Rural Reconstruction

Rabindranath Tagore



WHEN I first bought this house I had no special plans. I was occupied with Santiniketan which was far away from crowded life, and while it helped its students to pass examinations, it gave them something more than the ration stipulated by the Education Department.

But even in the midst of my Santiniketan work another current flowed in my mind. Living in the villages of Sheldah and Patisar I had made my first direct contact with rural life. Zamindari was then my calling. The tenants came to me with their tales of joy and sorrow, complaints and requests, through which the village discovered itself to me. On the one hand was the external scene of rivers, meadows, rice-fields, and mud huts sheltered under trees; on the other was the inner story of the people. I came to understand their troubles in the course of my work.

First touch with the village

I am an urban creature, city-born. My forefathers were among the earliest inhabitants of Calcutta and my childhood years felt no touch of the village. When I started to look after our estates, I feared that my duties would be irksome. I was not used to such work—keeping accounts, collecting revenue, credit and debit—and my ignorance lay heavy

on my mind. I could not imagine that, tied down to figures and accounts, I might yet remain human and natural.

As I entered into the work, it took hold of me. It is my nature that, whenever I undertake any responsibility I lose myself in it and try to do my utmost. When I once had to teach, I put my whole heart into it and it was a great pleasure. Setting myself to unravel the complexities of Zamindari work I earned a reputation for the new methods I evolved: as a matter of fact, neighbouring landlords began to send their men to me to learn my methods.

The old men on my staff grew alarmed. They used to maintain records in a way that I could never have grasped. Their idea was that I should understand nothing more than what they chose to explain. A change of method would create confusion, so they said. They pointed out that on anything becoming a subject matter of litigation, the court would be doubtful about the new way the records were kept. I persisted though changing thing from top to bottom, and the result proved to be satisfactory.

The tenants often came to see me. Morning, noon, evening or night my door was always open to them. Sometimes I had to spend the whole day listening to their representations, and meal-

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times would slip by. I did all this work with enthusiasm and joy. I had lived in seclusion since boyhood and here was my first experience of the village. I was filled with the pleasure of blazing new trails.

Acquaintance with village problems

I was anxious to see village life in the minutest detail. My duties took me from village to village over long distances by rivers, large and small, and across heels, thus giving me a chance to see all aspects of village life and to satisfy my eager curiosity about the daily tasks of village-folk and the varied cycle of their work. Slowly the poverty and misery of the people grew vivid before my eyes and made me restless and I began to wish that I could do something for them. I was struck with shame that I was a zamindar, impelled by the money motive absorbed in revenue returns. With that realisation I awoke to the task of trying to stir the minds of the people, so that they could shoulder their own responsibilities.

Experiments begin

To try to help villagers from outside could do no good. How to kindle a spark of life in them—that was my problem. It was so difficult to help them because the people had so little respect for themselves. "We are curse", they would say; "only the whip can keep us straight."

One day a fire broke out in a village nearby. The people were so utterly dazed that they could do nothing. Then the men from a neighbouring Muslim village came rushing and fought the fire. There was no water and the thatched roofs had

to be pulled down to prevent the fire from spreading. The stricken ones had to be beaten up before they would let this be done. Afterwards they came and told me how fortunate it was, "our roofs were dismantled—that is how we have been saved." They were happy that the beating benefited them; but I filled myself with shame.

I planned to put up a small building for them at the centre of the village, where at the day's end they could get together, read newspapers, listen to recitations from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—it would be a sort of a club. For, I had been unhappy, thinking of their cheerless evenings, as cheerless as if the same tedious line of a verse was erected. But, then it was never used. I engaged a teacher, but pupils kept away on all kinds of excuses.

In contrast, the Muslims from the other village came to me and said, "Will you give us a teacher? We are ready to bear the expenses." I agreed and a school was set up in the village and probably it is still there. In my village, nothing could be done, its inhabitants had lost all faith in themselves.

Lack of self-confidence

The habit of dependence has come down to us from time immemorial. In the olden days one rich man used to be the mainstay of the village and its guide. Health, education and all else were his responsibility. In this way an indirect tax was levied in Indian society upon the wealthy and they submitted to it because in India the individual could not use the whole of his wealth according to his whims. There was a time when I bestowed much praise on that system,

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to prevent the fire-stricken ones had to let them do this as they came and told it was, "our roofs that is how we have been happy that they were; but I filled my-

up a small building in the village, and they could get help, listen to recitations of the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita. It would be a sort of a happy, thinking place, as cheerless as a line of a verse it was never used, but pupils kept coming.

Muslims from the village came and said, "Teacher? We are here." I agreed to let them in the village. In my opinion, it is inhuman to do, its inhuman to themselves.

ence has come to me. In my opinion, it is inhuman to do, its inhuman to themselves.

but it is also true that because of it the common man's capacity for self-reliance was enfeebled.

In my estate the river was far away and lack of water was a serious problem. I said to my tenants, "If you dig wells, I shall have the masonry work done." They replied, "You want to fry a fish in its own oil! We shall dig the wells and you will go to heaven through the merit of having provided water for the thirsty, all by our labour!" The idea, obviously, was that an account of all such deeds was kept by the gods and while I, having earned great merit, could go to the seventh heaven, the village people would simply get some water. I had to withdraw my proposal.

Let me give another example. I had built a road from our estate office up to Kushtia. I told the villagers who lived close to the road, "The upkeep of this road is your responsibility. You can easily get together and repair the ruts." It was, in fact, their ox-cart wheels that damaged the road and put it out of use during the rains. They replied, "Must we look after the road as that gentleman from Kushtia can come and go with ease?" They could not bear the thought that others should also enjoy the fruits of their labour. Rather than let that happen, they would put up with any inconvenience themselves.

Doles and insults

The poor in our villages have borne many insults, the powerful have done many wrongs. At the same time, the powerful have had to do all the welfare work. Caught between tyranny and charity, the village people have been emptied of self-respect. They ascribe their miseries to sins committed in previous

births, and believe that to have a better life, they must be reborn with a greater fund of merit. The conviction that there is no escape from sufferings makes them helpless.

Once upon a time the rich regarded it as an act of merit to provide water and education. Through their goodwill the villages were well off. But when the rich started to move away to towns, the water supply ceased, malaria and cholera struck her, and the springs of happiness dried up in village after village. It is hard to imagine a life as cheerless as that in our rural areas.

I could see no way out. It is far from easy to do something for people who have cultivated weakness for centuries and do not know what self-help means. Still I had to make a start. In those days my only helper was Kalimohan. Fever used to grip him morning and evening. With my medicine box I treated him, and never thought that I could get him to survive.

Real Work

The Shastras say: Shradhdhaya deyam —if you give, then give with care and respect. This is how I set to work. From my office building I had often watched the farmers going afield with their bullocks and ploughs. Their land was in small strips and each man tilled his own holding. That, I know, was a great waste of energy. So I sent for the men and said, "Plough all your land jointly. Pool the strength and resources of all. Then you can even use tractors. If you all work together, small differences in personal holdings will not matter, whatever the profit, you will share it equitably. Store all the produce of the village at

one place and you will get a fair price from the middlemen." They listened and said, "The idea is good, but how are we to work it out?" If I had the knowledge and the training, I would have said, "I will take the responsibility." They all know me. But one cannot do good simply by wanting to; there is nothing so dangerous as ignorant help. Young men from town once went to a village to help the people. The young men know neither the language of the villagers nor the workings of their mind. No wonder the people cried jeering. "Look, there come the quarter-rupee gentlemen!"

But something had to be done. I sent my son and Santosh abroad to learn agriculture and dairy farming. And in several other ways I started to work and to think.

It was about this time that I bought this house. I thought I would continue here the work I had begun at Shelaiddah. The tumbledown house was supposed to be haunted! I had to spend a lot of money on its repair. Then, for a while, I sat still. Andrews said, "Sell off the house." But I thought to myself, "Since I have acquired it, maybe there is some significance. Maybe one of my two objects in life will be fulfilled here." I had no idea, though of how and when.

My friend Elmhirst helped me a great deal. It was in his hands that this place grew into an independent field of work and made steady progress. It would not have been right to lump it with Santiniketan.

The Self-Help Factor

I have one more work for you. We must see that a force from within the

people starts functioning. When I was writing Swadeshi Samaj the same idea had struck me. What I wanted to say then was that we did not have to think of the whole country; we could make a start with one or two villages. If we could free even one village from the shackles of helplessness and ignorance, an ideal for the whole of India would be established. That is what occurred to me then and that is what I still think. Let a few villages be rebuilt in this way, and I shall say they are my India. That is the way to discover the true India.

Work in Festive Spirit

I am glad to read the report on the progress of your work. Your efforts will have attained their final success only when the habit of engaging one's abilities in works of common welfare becomes ingrained in every individual. It is my firm belief that once this happens at one place it will spread from village to village.

I would like to emphasise one point here. With our work we must also bring in a spirit of joy. Our villages have become utterly joyless. The drought must be removed from their lives. The welfare activities should as far as possible be given a festive look. You should observe one day in the year as a tree-planting festival. It will be suitable to choose some day towards the end of Vaisakh. It will be a holiday for the schools so that the boys can join in the replanting festival and you can take them out for a picnic. If the building of a road and such other welfare activities started with some festival-like ceremony they would acquire in the eyes of the people something of the character of our tradition, socio-religious duties.

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Building Up From The Village*

Jayaprakash Narayan

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EVERY institution of society grows out of its own peculiar soil and is nourished and nurtured by its own unique climate and environment. While borrowing has been a common means of social development, no borrowed institution can thrive unless it is properly acclimatised and integrated. During India's long history her institutions have acquired a certain character which is uniquely Indian. A way of life has developed which, in some subtle manner, is cast in an Indian mould. An attitude of mind has grown which again operates in a peculiarly Indian framework.

The evolution of India's social institutions has had a chequered history. Foreign invasions and administrations have turned and twisted the native currents of development. But the hidden springs of Indian life have been powerful enough to assert themselves and pierce through the overlain layers of foreign institutions and ways of life. The "age of saints" (Sant-yuga) represented just such a reassertion during the period of Muslim domination. Nanak, Kabir, Tulsī, Tukaram, Ramdas and other saints of that time endeavoured to dig up buried treasures from under the debris of a

shattered civilisation. Likewise, during the British period, the line of spiritual teachers from Raja Rammohan Roy to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi represented the rebirth of India and reassertion of her vital springs of life.

The present political and administrative institutions are foreign transplantations. In planting these (or their precursors) on Indian soil, the British paid no regard whatsoever to India's own political patterns, ancient or contemporary. After the end of British rule, the fathers of the Indian Constitution, including the politicians and experts, again paid no heed to the traditions and deep-flowing springs of Indian life. The result, to say the least, has not been happy.

Spring of British Democracy

British democracy is relatively of recent development. *When the East India Company was chartered, there was no democracy in the British Isles. Democracy there began with the conflict between prince and peers. Later, the conflict broadened into one between commercial and landed interests, broadening British democracy further. The industrial revolution stimulated this develop-

* Talk on All India Radio, April, 1950.

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ment as the new middle-class fought and gained a share in political power. The rise of the working class movement led to further extension of the frontiers of British democracy and the establishment of adult franchise and full representative government.

Present Indian democracy is the product of the conflict of politically and economically conscious elements in Indian society with British imperialism.

The Indian people, particularly the masses, did not struggle to establish the existing institutions of democracy though they did take part in the movement for national independence. Adult franchise for instance, is not the result of the struggle of the masses for the precious right to vote. Vast numbers of them do not appreciate the value of that right nor understand how to use it. This makes democracy based on adult franchise unreal and unsubstantial.

Was, or is, there any alternative? I am sure there is. And the extraordinary thing is that Gandhiji, the architect of our freedom, had taken special pains to point out that alternative. But just as Indian history was neglected, so was Gandhiji's clarion voice.

Ancient Village Communities

Everyone has heard of the ancient village communities of India. True, there is not much known about them, but much more is known than the anthropologists' jawbone or femur from which he constructs the whole creature and even speculates about the culture that it might have created. Indian and foreign historians have discovered enough informa-

tion about ancient Indian villages for us to know how they constituted the most stable foundations of Indian society which withstood all upheavals in the country. Dynasties rose and fell, wars were lost and won, invaders came and went away, but through every political turmoil the village community stood like a rock, carrying on its life and running its affairs in its appointed manner. Much that has remained in India of lasting value and merit is attributed by historians to this stability of Indian society provided by the ancient village organisations.

At different times and in different areas there were small federations of these self-governing communities which functioned for several centuries. North of this ancient city of Patna, where this talk is being recorded, was the famous republic of the Lichhavis of which the Buddha spoke and of which even the powerful Magadh empire had to be careful. These republics, no doubt, had the character of clans, but they were democratic and conducted their business according to accepted laws and rules of procedure.

Ancient republics

The self-governing village communities were the foundation stone of ancient Indian polity. Their strength came from within and not from without. Their authority rested not on rights and powers granted by a central authority, but on the willing consent of the families which constituted them. The powers they wielded and the functions they performed were far wider than those of today's village panchayats, which are mere empty shells as compared with their ancient predecessors. Professor Altekar in his

Indian villages for us constituted the most basic units of Indian society. Through all upheavals in the centuries, invaders came and went, empires rose and fell, wars were fought, but through every political change, the village community stood like a rock, its life and running unbroken in an appointed manner. It was the backbone of India of last centuries. It is attributed by historians to the vitality of Indian society that the ancient village organi-

and in different forms, small federations of villages, communities which have existed for centuries. North of Patna, where this was the famous battle, the basis of which the village of which even the name had to be care- no doubt, had the fact that they were demo- their business accord- rules of proce-

village communi- stone of ancient times. Its strength came from within. Their rights and powers were in the hands of authority, but on the families which they wielded. They performed those of today's are mere empty shells. Their ancient Altekari in his

State and Government in Ancient India sums up the powers and functions of the ancient village communities in the following words :

"They (village communities) made effective arrangements for the defence of the community, collected the taxes of the central government and levied their own, settled village disputes, organised works of public utility and recreation, functioned as trustees and bankers, raised public loans to mitigate the miseries of famines, organised schools, college and poor houses and arranged for their funds, and supervised the manifold religious and cultural activities of the temples. There can be no doubt that they exercised greater powers than those that are at present enjoyed by the local bodies in most countries, both of the East and of the West. They played an important and creditable part in defending the interests of the villagers and in promoting their material, moral and intellectual progress."

Indian village today

When we look at the atomised, backward, listless villages of today, it seems incredible that there should have existed at one time such powerful village communities. This ancient tradition of democracy should have provided us with a far surer basis than anything we could borrow from elsewhere. Even that we borrowed could be fitted properly into the body politic of the country only if it is built around the ancient tradition. It is true that our Constitution emphasised the programme of establishing village panchayats as the lowest units of local self-government. It is also true that in

recent years state governments, with the support and guidance of the centre, have taken active steps to speed up this programme. But, these newly-formed panchayats are like empty shells. Whatever authority they have has come from above so that they represent more the intrusion of centralised power into the village than the flowering of Gandhiji's gram rajya.

How the atomised village of today, which has no collective will of its own, can be integrated into a real self-governing community and make a stable foundation of Indian polity is the most important question of national reconstruction. To fulfil this task a revolution is needed in our thinking both about the village and the nature of human society.

Future of Indian village

It is possible to discern three different views of the future of the Indian village. One regards it as an outdated institution condemned to eventual extinction. The second also regards it as outdated, but realises that (a) agriculture must be carried on and (b) urbanisation, no matter how rapid, cannot find room for everyone in the town. Therefore, according to this view the village has to be preserved in order that food and certain essential raw materials for industry may be produced. This view is even generous enough to advocate the "development" of the village. However, in this view the village continues to remain a junior partner and poor helper of the town which represents civilisation, progress, modernity, science.

Human jungles called cities

There is the third view which regards the village as the natural and sensible

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habitat of man and the primary unit of social organisation. Man is a social animal and it is necessary for the full development of human nature that the primary community in which he lives is such that he is able to establish personal relationship and live his life in meaningful association with other members of the community. The key towns and cities are human jungles where impersonal relationships govern the life of the individual, who is compelled to quench his thirst for "society" by forming such artificial things as clubs and other associations. In the city, neighbour does not know neighbour and there is no living together. Life is divided into compartments and like passengers on a railway train, men are thrown together with different men into different compartments of activity one after another: now into the factory, now into the big apartment house, now into the theatre and so on. This is not living together. This is not human society.

There is another vital consideration which needs to be stressed in this connection. There are certain values of life which civilised man upholds and desires to make the basis of individual and social behaviour. Because man must live in society, it is reasonable to demand that at least the primary community in which he lives is such that it facilitates the practice of those values. Take the value of cooperation for instance. It is universally agreed that in this age when the means of destruction have acquired such overwhelming power, man must cooperate together in order to survive and enjoy the fruits of science. Even Russia and America are forced to think in terms of cooperation.

Village—the only way

If the human race has to develop

cooperation within itself, it is necessary for man to learn to live cooperatively in the community in which he lives. This is much more possible in the small community than in the human jungles which are the large towns and cities. True there are all manner of cooperative societies in the cities of Europe and America. They again make compartments of life and now the individual cooperates as a consumer and now as a producer. It also impersonalises it. The joy of cooperation is in the human relationship which is established between those who cooperate, rather than in the economic advantages it offers to members.

True cooperative living is possible only in a small community where lifelong personal relationships can be formed.

In Indian religious tradition there are two types of worship or devotion. One is called sagun and the other nirgun. The first may be translated as the manifest God and the second as the unmanifest. Religious teachers have said worship of the sagun God is easier than that of the nirgun. Likewise, cooperation in the abstract with individuals whom one does not know is far more difficult and requires much more powers of intellectual perception than cooperation with persons whom one knows and with whom one lives together. It may be urged that even in the big cities such cooperation can be possible, but it will be cooperation of the compartmental type.

The small organic community is a far better nursery for man than the large agglomerations of inorganic individual men. There is one set of human values which can obviously be practised far more meaningfully in a small community

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than in a large one—values of democracy. There can be true people's democracy only in such a community. It is time that the small democratic communities will have to be integrated into the larger democracy of the nation, and eventually into the international democratic Community. But the true foundation of democratic life can be established only in small primary the community.

How to check urbanisation

A serious objection may be raised to this way of thinking. The obvious trend all over the world is towards urbanisation and the extinction of the small community. In India the urban population is growing at present at the rate of 35 lakhs every year. But I do not conceive of man as a helpless victim of fate or the so-called forces of history. Man is endowed with reason and intelligence and he can order his life as he likes. There is nothing inherent in science which drives man to huddle together in huge, monstrous inhabitations. The drive towards cities has certain economic, social and political causes. These are not eternal and can be changed by conscious human effort.

There is no doubt that if the village remains as it is today, the trend of urbanisation cannot be checked. But if it is accepted that human society must be constructed on the foundation of small primary communities, the villages of today can be converted into habitations attractive enough from every point of view. When Gandhiji said that if the Indian villages died, India would; he was not thinking of preserving them as they are at present. They have indeed to be changed radically, and yet retain the

characteristics of a small community I have tried to describe before.

Life both in the city and village is at present unbalanced and unsatisfying. For a proper balance, agriculture and industry must be carried on together in an interdependent and complementary manner. There may be exceptions but the predominant character of the primary communities must become agro-industrial. The present hiatus between town and village must go and an entirely new type of community must be created. The virtue of the Indian village is that it is a readymade basis for the construction of agro-industrial communities of the future.

There need be no limit to the use of science in agro-industrial communities, except the limits placed by the accepted human values. Science is often represented as an independent force of nature to which man must adjust himself. This appears to be wholly wrong. It is not man who has to adjust himself to science, but science which has to be adjusted to human ends. Indeed, this is what is exactly happening, but the human ends are usually the unworthy ones. What I am pleading for is the application of science to worthy human ends.

Village pyramid

The concept of state that we have adopted in our country is what Salvador de Madariaga, the Spanish political philosopher, has variously described as arithmetical, mineral or inorganic. The state is conceived of as an "arithmetical sum of individuals". Every adult citizen has his individual vote and the arithmetic of these votes, sometimes very complicated by electoral laws and party sys-

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tems, governs the functioning of the state. This is contrary to the nature of human society and the social nature of man.

According to this view the state is an integration of political institutions. The primary political institution is naturally the primary community, the village, with its appropriate political organs, including a council. The village council would deal with all local matters and would possess the maximum power and initiative in regard to them.

It would be natural for a number of these villages or municipal councils to be integrated together in an area council covering a large or small area as the circumstances might dictate. These area councils will be concerned with the local problems of their area and will be fully competent to deal with them. These may again be integrated in a district council and so on till we reach the national parliament, which will be the integration of

state assemblies.

It would be wrong to think that this view of the democratic structure merely replaces the present system of direct elections with indirect elections. It is not a question of a system of election. It is rather a question of the conception human life and society. It is only this conception which explains why we must build up from the village, why the village itself should undergo a radical transformation if it has to be made the foundation of our democracy, and why not individual voters but living communities and their upward integration should constitute the state.

I am convinced that if the present structure is maintained, not only would the village wither away and become even more shadowy, but our democracy too would remain suspended in the air without roots in the soil and the life of the people. □

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Ideology, Technology and Decentralisation

Deendayal Upadhyaya

THE economic theories of the past few centuries and the structure of society based on these theories, have resulted in a thorough devaluation of the human being. His personality is altogether irrelevant to the economic set-up. Capitalist economy recognises only an "economic man", whose all decisions are based entirely on calculations of gain and loss, in terms of material wealth.... Even as regards the consumer's needs, the capitalist is guided not by the necessities and desires of the consumer, but by his purchasing power. The needs of the wealthy and the well-fed are attended to rather than those of the poor and the hungry. As a result where countless varieties of goods are produced for the needs of the wealthy, even the basic necessities of life for the poor become scarce. The centralization and monopolization of production totally undermine the influence of the consumer.....

Socialism arose as a reaction to capitalism. But even socialism failed to establish the importance of the human being. Socialists contented themselves by merely transferring the ownership of capital in the hands of the state.... Both these systems, capitalist as well as

communist, have failed to take account of the Integral Man, his true and complete personality and his aspirations. One considers him a mere selfish being lingering after money, having only one law, the law of fierce competition, in essence the law of the jungle; whereas the other has viewed him as a feeble lifeless cog in the whole scheme of things, regulated by rigid rules, and incapable of any good unless directed. The centralization of power, economic and political is implied in both. Both, therefore, result in dehumanisation of man.

Man, the highest creation of God, is losing his own identity. We must re-establish him in his rightful position, bring him the realisation of his greatness, reawaken his abilities and encourage him to exert for attaining divine heights of his latent personality. This is possible only through a decentralised economy.... These are a few general directions which we must bear in mind while developing our economy. "Swadeshi" and "Decentralisation" are the two words which can briefly summarise the economic policy suitable for the present circumstances.

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Technology and decentralisation

Large-scale Western technology and decentralisation (of the economy) cannot go together. Many confuse decentralisation with the dispersal (of the means of production). They feel that the (economic) problems (facing the country) can be solved once the mills of Bombay and Allahabad are relocated in the villages.

Socialists will be content with the dispersal of political power and their creed will thrive on the four-tier State apparatus consisting of the village, the district, the province and the centre. However, in such a scheme of things, economic power will remain vested with these four constituent units of the State and the technology for the means of production will be western in concept.

Followers of the Sarvodaya ideology are opposed to the application of present-day technology, but in their scheme of Gram Rajya, agriculture is to be carried on under the aegis of the Gram Panchayats with all land in the village deemed as one single holding and other economic activities will be overseered by the Gram Panchayat.

Manthan

Such a system in the long run will be found to be worse than the collective farms of Russia since it neither envisages the application of today's technology in productive activities nor does it permit individual freedom in this field.

Socialists, of whichever hue, have implicit faith in the efficacy of western technology. Their struggle is not against machines, but their owner. They are content with vesting the State with the ownership of the machines.

Sarvodaya people, on the other hand, would like to banish the machine because of its ills. At the same time, they also pledge to banish individual ownership for its drawbacks. They shun the all-pervading powers of the mighty, Socialist State and propose to bestow to the village panchayats all powers in a society with no governmental apparatus. Not only is this an impracticable proposition, but it will also fail to achieve the purpose of doing away with the ills it seeks to remove. In such a system, the remedy will be worse than the disease.

What a travesty of (the concept of) decentralisation ? ☐

Pandit Nehru wants for industrialization, because he thinks that if it is socialized, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialism, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them.

Mahatma Gandhi

Harijan, (29-9-1940, p. 299)

Quest for a New "Integral Civilization"

□ P. Parameswaran*

INTEREST in a rural civilization has become a universal phenomenon these days. It is not confined to the underdeveloped, third world countries whose rural life is pathetically backward, but is also actively visible in the materially advanced, developed countries, who have no real rural life to speak of. 'Ruralism', if we may coin a new phrase, has become almost a passion with sections of population in both these—developed and underdeveloped—countries.

Challenge of poverty

Motivations for ruralism in underdeveloped countries are understandably different from those in developed countries. There it is a sheer, physical necessity for the very act of man's survival. In the third world countries, which are predominantly rural, the only lever that can lift human life above its present subhuman level, is rural development. Rural life in such countries have been stagnating for centuries on end. Nothing worthwhile had been done to ameliorate the conditions of the rural population, which is only slightly different from that of their quadrupet counterparts. Ignorance, ill health and poverty have become synonyms of rural life in the undeveloped and underdeveloped countries. But the worst tragedy, is that the concerned human population have taken this state of affairs for granted, as something unalterable, something for which there is no remedy. Every ray of hope has gone out of their lives. In such countries, rural development is the sine qua non of any material or non-material advance-

ment. As such, enlightened sections in all such countries have been taking ever-growing interest in the question of rural development.

During freedom struggle

This was also part of the legacy of their freedom struggle. In countries like India, it is well known that attempts at rural development were an inseparable part of the independence movement. Leaders like Gandhiji realized quite well that Real India lived in her stagnating villages. Cities, which were mostly the products of western colonialism were just artificial showpieces. Even there, there were two worlds. The posh areas, where the affluent few, mostly the products and custodians of imperial interest lived, were little islands engulfed by the vast ocean of squalor and dirt, represented by the vast majority of people. Cities were by no means unknown to India, but in ancient India, they were integral parts, organically related to the rest of the country and society. But modern cities are exotic centres of commercial and industrial exploitation. Cities in ancient India were flowers of cultural and artistic excellence of the nation; modern cities are just parasites, preying on and debilitating the country. Hence Gandhiji started the "Go to Village Movement", which alone, according to him, could bring freedom to India and sustain it. Rural development had the pride of place in his strategy for the nation's freedom. Thus, it had its origin in the freedom struggle. Through varying phases of waning and

* Director, Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi.

waxing, patronage and neglect, rural development programmes have been going on in India.

Ruralism in the West

In the advanced countries, interest in rural life has altogether different motivations. There it is the outcome of their utter disillusionment with the artificialities of urban life.

The thorough alienation from Mother Nature—which according to modern scientific thinking is only meant to be exploited—the vain artificiality of life, the total neglect of human values and relationships, the frightening picture of a resource—repleted future, the shock and dismay at the annihilative potentialities of scientific inventions, the hollow meaninglessness of life as it is lived, the incapacity to visualise any worthwhile goal towards which life could be directed—all these have brought the materially advanced countries to the brink of a precipice, perching where, it is seeking for a new style of life, a new civilization, that would redeem them. 'Ruralism' for them is the quest for a new civilization, for a new set of values.

So, whether in the East or in the West, in the materially advanced countries or in the backward countries, the focus has been slowly but steadily shifting towards the village life.

What is rural reconstruction ?

When we, in the underdeveloped countries, are trying to concentrate all our efforts in a big way on rural development, we should be wise enough to learn from and be guided by the experiences of advanced countries. No doubt, the problems they are suffering from, are a

far cry as far as we are concerned, but we should take care to see that we do not set in motion those very trends and forces that inevitably lead us to those very problems, to those very blind alleys. While laying the foundations of development, we should wisely choose, so that, later on, the day of repentance will not dawn on us also. We should be clear in our minds, as men like Gandhiji and Deendayalji were, that attempts at rural development are not just exercises in building up material welfare, but they are essentially efforts to build up a civilization based on the undying 'Culture of the Spirit.' For the West, it may be a quest for something long-lost and forgotten, to be acquired afresh and anew, but for us, that culture is near at hand, never really lost, though sometimes neglected. Those eternal values we have to preserve through new institutional forms, and structures. They will be best preserved in the rural India, rather than in the cities, because the cities, with their 'five star hotels' and 'night clubs' have become the glamorous shopping centres of Western material civilization. Rural India is still fortunately away and aloof from such contamination. It still retains some of the characteristics of the temple of Bharat Mata. It is there that we have to build. It is there that mother India still has to rise.

Problem of technology

Does it mean that the new rural India of our dream will adopt none of the benefits of modern scientific advancement? Does it mean that we will not utilise modern technology of any variety? Does it mean that we will have only the India of earthen lamp and cow dung? There are some who would wel-

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come such a return to the past. Even Mahatmaji thought so, during the early period of his life. But later on, he showed a willingness to adapt technology in such a way that life will be made less monotonous and more livable. Only he was uncompromising on the question of spiritual and ethical values. Technology has to be so adapted that it will uphold and not undermine, our cherished values. Deendayal Upadhyaya also meant the same thing when he said that we must have a Bharathiya technology—a technology that will suit Bharathiya conditions, including its cultural and spiritual ethos. Western intellectuals also are veering round to this concept, when thinkers like F.F. Schumacher advocates, 'technology with a human face' or when he sings poetically of "small is beautiful."

Shutting out the influence of science and technology is neither advisable nor practicable. The 'One World' that politicians and statesmen not less than poets and visionaries wish to bring about is not carved out that way. The benefits of technology will have to be harnessed in such a way that the tedium of life will be eliminated, keeping 'man' as the cen-

tral figure in all developmental efforts, enabling him to grow into his divine heights.

Technology will be so utilised as to make rural life cleaner, healthier, more prosperous, more humane and more dynamic.

Ruralism—a philosophy of life

Socialism, Communism and Capitalism, are all urban offshoots: Ruralism alone stands apart. To be precise, the controversy between urbanism and ruralism is the controversy between two lifestyles, two sets of values, two civilizations. Rural life is simple, natural, humane, non-violent and conducive to the integral development and man's brotherhood whereas urban life is complex, artificial, unhuman, violent lopsided and competitive. If humanity is to survive, it has to progressively adopt ruralism as its motive. It is heartening to find that the sober fringe of humanity is slowly but surely settling in favour of an enlightened rural order. Hence all this stress on rural development.



FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE

Suppose some disinterested sannyasins bent on doing good to others, go from village to village, disseminating education, and seeking in various ways to better the condition of all down to the chandala, through oral teaching, and by means of maps, cameras, globes and such other accessories—can't that bring forth good in time? If the mountain does not come to Mohamet, Mohamet must go to the mountain. The poor are too poor to come to schools and pathshalas.

—Swami Vivekanand



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Will our Scientists accept the challenge ?

□ Devendra Kumar*

ECONOMIC development of our country can proceed if and only if both production and distributive justice are simultaneously enhanced, especially in our vast number of villages. It is paradoxical that with its abundant labour and unutilised resources our country and people continue to be poor. Gandhiji after his experience in three continents—Asia, Europe and Africa—came to the conclusion that it is through low capital, labour-intensive, decentralised industries that we could produce a self-reliant and regionally inter-dependent society as would bring a comparative and peaceful world into being. The experiments in village industries, he got initiated, were meant not only to improve the existing crafts in the rural areas, but also to introduce new techniques on the basis of the latest scientific knowledge which could improve rural economy. Efforts so far have fallen far short of expectations of Gandhi. To the scientists of India, he said on 13.2.27 :

"I would like you to be men, who stand up before the world firm in your convictions. Let your zeal for the dumb millions be not stifled in the search for wealth. I tell you, you can devise a far greater wireless instrument which does not require external research but internal—and all research will be useless if it is not allied to internal research—which can link your hearts with those of the millions. Unless all the discoveries that you make have the welfare of the poor as the end in

view, all your workshops will be really no better than Satan's workshops."

If the benefits of science are to be brought to the people of the country, we will have to check the poverty and hunger that prevails in the land. Lord Buddha asked his disciples to arrange for a bowl of rice to the hungry before anything else could be given to them. So also if a temper of science which flowers in objective reasoning, experimental conclusions and unquenchable thirst for knowledge is to be revived we will have to begin with first strengthening the weakest link in the economic chain of the land.

Why villages suffer ?

With 80 per cent of our people living in the villages, half of them at a level which is below subsistence, there could be no greater challenge than to work for removing the poverty that prevails. That this has not been done despite the tall talks and plans of the last three decades is quite clear. Could there be any other fact more convincing about the neglect of the villages than that nine-fifths of them numbering one lakh have not got even the basic amenity of drinking water? It only proves that political decisions are made due to political compulsions which the villages lack and hence their voice is not heard.

It is a pity that whatever technological innovations trickle down the rural

* Director, Centre of Science for Villages, Wardha.

economic scene, they invariably assist only the upper stratum and the long-cherished theory that percolation of wealth will take once the upper classes have been strengthened proves to be basically wrong. Though inputs of science and technology have helped in creation of more wealth in society, this has simultaneously created greater gaps between the rich and the poor in the villages, between the cities and the villages, and between industrialised and less industrialised countries of the world. It is this aspect of the application of science which has to be rectified. Technology could not be an instrument to exploit man by man and nature by man. This is possible only when you have a spiritual base. Science and spiritualists, therefore, will need to be spread together to solve the problems of the world.

Myth and reality

Another great fallacy that prevails amongst the comparatively economically successful is that those who lag behind are less industrious, less intelligent and less willing to undertake new modes of production. The deeper study of the situation, however, reveals that the oppressed, the exploited and the deprived are no less endowed than their exploiters. The reason of their apathy is elsewhere. They do not lag the potentials but their will is sucked away due to repeated failures when they see that the dice is loaded against them and all their efforts lead to a losing game and after a period of time lose all interest in making efforts. Our rural economy has suffered much as those who have little or no land as well as no other source of occupation except what land could provide them after having gone through this experience of failures generation after

generation, have developed a psychology of defeat. What is required therefore is to guide them out of this psychology to a psychology of confidence. A scientific social engineering is necessary to provide them with such tools and talents which would give them an opportunity to move onward little by little and giving them confidence to take bigger and bigger steps. It is this challenging field which requires all the ingenuity of scientists to be applied in. Once the confidence is gained by the poor that they can change their situation, the untapped reservoirs of skills and energy will push them forth to higher and higher altitudes.

What do we do?

The basic pattern of rural India, however, is very dark. Take the average population of over 550 thousand villages. It will come to round about 150 to 160 households per village and as a rough average about 300 adults will be available for productive work. But their productivity is being utilised at a very low level. Out of 365 days at least for 300 days work should be available to them. But the situation is that the work is hardly available for 150 to 200 days in a year, thus leaving a big gap of 100 days without any work in a society which is suffering from chronic poverty. If you compute even at the rate of Rs. 5/- per manday this leads to a loss of one and half lakh of rupees per village per year and for all the villages put together in wages alone the loss is not less than Rs. 10,000 crores.

Thus the employment potential of rural India, if properly harnessed, will not only provide the wages or round about 10 thousand crores per year but add to the present GNP of Rs. 650

thousand to one a process that will base of the economy to indigenous culture.

The challenge of modes of production no doubt occupations for employment and efforts and this has gone which do not which will convert into finished products in our villages. The culture and industry. We have taken urban sector and dry in region.

The new science technology, which is the result of the work to give the new techniques evolved by the science interaction exists where people with high intelligence and modernising the technology, the poor, the industries which can poorest.

The Role of

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The challenge, therefore, is to find modes of production and productive occupations for the rural sector. Irrigation no doubt will bring more employment and efforts to improve agriculture and this has got to go on but industries which do not depend upon land and which will convert the basic raw materials into finished goods must develop in our villages. These villagers need agriculture and industry to go hand in hand. We have taken away the industries to urban sector and left the villages high and dry in regard to industrial employment.

The new stage demands appropriate technology, where small would be efficient. Thus for our villages we need such work to give them employment through new techniques and trades as has been evolved by the latest knowledge of science interacting with the conditions that exists where our toiling masses live. People with knowledge and skill, intelligence and motivation must help in moving the technology that will help the poor, the deprived and the lost. Our industries will therefore be of a kind which can be taken up even by the poorest.

The Role of Technologists

Whereas at the turn of this century, the percentage of people in the villages which had occupations other than agriculture to support then to supplement their income was 40% I by the middle of the century it had come down to 10% only and after another 25 years it can

still lower to only 2%. This is because of the constant inroads in rural employment made by centralised heavy industries which were highly capital intensive. The 1971 figures tell that there were round about 80,000 factories employing a capital of 5000 crores of rupees and giving work to hardly 63 lakh people. Thus per work person requiring an investment of nearly Rs. 10,000. What we need is low investment sources of employment as could be multiplied in lakhs of villages. The C.S.I.R. has been giving attention to the techniques will as assist rural development had listed hundred fifty or more such techniques. However, when we analyse these techniques we find that most of them are fit only for the bigger villages which are only one in fifteen. The situation of the poor demands that very simple devices are given to them to absorb their idle time. Even seasonal work should be found out.

New techniques

Every technique that we evolve for being converted into rural occupation has to have a high degree of multipliability. A technique of processing egg to make powered dry food requiring half a million rupees and a large area to supply the raw material will have necessarily to be centralised and so can have a very low multipliability. The technique of making leaf cups used in food taking which can be made better by pressing the leaves at a slightly high temperature in a mould which will require no twigs to be used for sewing or a method of spraying a simple solution of bitumen kerosene on mud-walls which will make the wall non-erodable against ruin for 4-5 years are such techniques where it could be multiplied by many lakhs. Thus the quotient of multipliability of a tech-

nique is a good criterion to judge its use as a remover of poverty.

Let us all work to give a flooring to the economy of a country and this is that none will live below the poverty line. As we do that we will find that the ceiling will automatically come down and the disparity tend to decrease. The plan specifically is that to provide work to the millions of idle hands in the 5.5 lakh villages wherein 300 people require work for 100 days. Let us find occupations which may on the average give work of 2-3 people in each village. Thus for each village will have to be founded with 100 new techniques. As all the villages could not have the same conditions, at least 10 sets of such 100 techniques *i.e.*, 1000 techniques of low capital low energy low sophistication should be found out in the next ten years and their adaptation, acceptance and extension sought before the turn of the century. This should be the time bound plan of the scientific community of the country.

A 100 techniques for the poor in the villages every year should be the target. In the process of doing this such a thorough interaction will take place between the deep culture and talents of the land and modern scientific knowledge. It will have many by-products and spinoffs in the field of other than economic, of culture, education and civilization as well.

We look forward to the flowering of humans where they will be able to express themselves fully in close proximity with mother nature and brother man. The villages are the places which provide us with both. Urbanization takes us away

from the natural surroundings and makes us aliens to the community in which we live. Could India provide the matrix on which the future civilization could be built? If this is to happen the scientific community has to come forth and take up the challenge.

Challenge to our Scientists

Our scientific community—which in numbers is quoted as second only to the two big world powers—the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.—has not been able to give a good account of itself in terms of changing the rural *i.e.*, real economy of the country. There may be various reasons for this and it is futile to blame the factors that are responsible for the same. However, it is clear that our developmental science and technology has not kept in view the needs of the common people. The time, however, has come that the new orientation takes place. The models of the West are not only inappropriate for us but even for them as time is proving, they are wrong. The scientists of India if they plunge themselves deeper and closer to the people of the soil will be able to evolve models which will be of universal help. For the next two decades—the last of this century—we should give ourselves a time-bound programme by which we could banish poverty from the Third World and India with its favourable situation of having scientific personnel and experience of a century of industrialization should be able to play a pioneering role. The husbanding of natural resources where non-renewal deposits—fossil fuels and other minerals is drastically limited. Animal and vegetable kingdoms properly husbanded and the soil and other environmentals well looked after. □

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Basics in Rural Development Planning

□ Dr S. V. Patwardhan*

THE first major effort in the field of planned rural development was launching of block development schemes in 1952. National Extension Service was created to achieve effective implementation of the scheme. It was basically an extension of governmental infrastructure. However, the results achieved were far below the expectations, because, perhaps, the multi-approach programme was too broad-based. This led to a change in emphasis. Efforts were concentrated in a few selected fields in suitable areas. One of the fields chosen was agriculture. Large investments were made to make available the necessary inputs. This certainly resulted in increased agriculture output. But it was soon revealed that it basically benefited rural rich units and the incentives offered resulted in the increased number of urban-based farmers, the range of disparity widened and the number of landless increased. The urban per capita income went up from Rs. 350 to Rs. 830 but the rural per capita income went down from Rs. 215 to Rs. 198. It was the effect of inflation, and if disproportionate rise in the cost of secondary products and services is taken into account the disparity gap will swell further. This led to another shift in the approach. To reach this target population, that is the landless, marginal and small farmers, rural poor and weaker sections, variety of special schemes like SFDA, Try Cem, Food for Work Programme etc., have been launched, Special subsidies and low interest loans are also being made avail-

able to these sections. It will be too early to comment on the success of these schemes. But uptill now it has not created desired response. It is also doubtful whether the governmental infrastructure can effectively interact with the target population. It is felt that misuse and corruption is showing its ugly head. Will large allocation of sums, incentives and subsidies bring about the desired effect? Perhaps the experience strongly indicates that a thorough review of the approach and methodology of planning is called for.

Planning Prerequisites

For any Programme to be effective or successful the prerequisite is to have a crystal clear picture of what is to be achieved. Does this clarity of objective exists? To assess this, author posed a few questions to some important personnel from governmental, semi-governmental and voluntary organisations engaged in planning and implementation of rural development programmes. Some of the questions posed were:

1. What characteristics bring out the difference between a rural and urban sector?
2. If all amenities, usually available at urban centre, including that of organised employment are arranged at the rural sector will you term it as rural development or rural urbanization? What really differentiates the two concepts?

* Professor and Head, Centre for Rural Development and Appropriate Technology, I.I.T., New Delhi.

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3. The rural people are very poor and therefore they must be helped, in the same way as we extend help to the handicapped. Thus in your opinion is charity the basis of rural development ?

4. Is there something like rural soul ? What are the desirable characteristics of rural life which need to be reestablished or safeguarded during development process ?

5. The references indicate that as late as 1750 A.D., the rural areas were self-managed and self-controlled. A school existed for every 400 population and percentage of literacy was quite high. Do you feel that basics of the villages in 1750 A.D. need to be analysed and the reasons why and how the conditions got deteriorated need to be studied ? Do the ideas propagated by Gandhiji have any relevance today ?

The views expressed during the discussions represented a large spectrum of diverse opinions. Instead of imparting clarity they create more confusion. This has tempted the author to put before the interested readers some ideas that may help in identifying the basics in planning for rural development.

The Rural Soul

If rural soul is to be identified and understood it is necessary to search for the desirable characteristics that are or were the main sources of happiness and

indicators of a happy community,

1. Self-employed society of primary producers.

An urban society mainly provides organised employment in the fields of secondary production and service rendering activities. Organised employment usually creates feeling of exploitation, monotony and frustration, as the employee is not involved in decision-making or shares the benefits as a producer. On the other hand, the rural society is mainly self-employed in creative activity. It takes its own decisions. Even the labour or artisans enjoy certain degree of freedom and are actively involved in creative activity. Creative activity, involvement in decision making, full freedom of action give more satisfaction and are necessary inputs for building a happy and healthy society.

2. Proximity with nature

Urban people spend most of their time within four walls and in artificial surroundings. At many places they have to struggle for fresh air. The time hangs on their head and the fast movement creates tensions. On the other hand, the villagers work in open fields in sun and rain. Most of the time he is in the close company of animals, birds and trees. The time passes rather unnoticed. A swim in clean running water is much more enjoyable than a hurried bath in a close-door congested bathroom. The peace and tranquillity perhaps contributes to the simple and straightforward nature.

3. Community living

In Bombay, a friend asked me for a place where he can exchange views un-

noticed and unheard by the others. I replied, "in a crowded street." In an urban atmosphere a person feels lonely though he is surrounded by men. If he gets crushed under the fast-moving traffic he knows that nobody will pay any heed. A queue is a routine process but he is always scared of persons behind him and has to care for his purse all the time. In the rural sector houses are scattered, you may meet very few people during the day but you have a feeling of belonging. You are a part and parcel of the community. A certain relationship exists between men, animals, birds and trees. There is a certain system of life. Does this characteristic add to the happiness? If so the planning for development have to reestablish or safeguard it.

4. Family environment and size

In rural sector even today one finds a family slightly larger than the nucleus consisting only of husband wife and their kids. A nucleus family is a common phenomenon in an urban area. Do parents, unmarried sisters, brothers, dependents and handicaps have any place in our family? Do they add to our happiness and stability? Do they help to release tensions and should the earning younger generation respect elders and look after them? Do they contribute in transferring the age-old experiences, traditions and educate the kids? Does this shrinking size of the family represents a healthy compromise between individual freedom and social security? Is it preferable to accept the Western concept of 'old homes', 'baby homes', 'hospitals', 'nursing homes', etc.? Can this country afford such expensive alternatives? In an urban area, it is nearly impossible to afford

or accommodate a large size family. A deeper thinking and study is perhaps needed to study the social and cultural implications of this situation. In the rural sector for a creative activity a slightly larger size of family has also an economical significance. The activity needs more hands and alternative arrangements. Should our laws be directed to forcibly break the family structure or should the planning encourage the needed and desired size of the family?

Planning for Development

Once the rural soul has been identified, it becomes necessary to know where are we at present and where do we wish to go. The majority of rural sector is still without basic amenities. A large portion of the population is unemployed or underemployed. The job opportunities are mainly concentrated in large urban centres. The rate of exodus from villages to cities is assuming alarming proportions. In turn it has affected the stability of rural life. It has accelerated the process of disintegration of social cultural and economical life. On the urban scene also the exodus is creating enormous problems. Every addition raises the cost of living, the depletion of per capita facilities thus making life miserable. Insecurity, accidents are on the increase. Slums, a dark aspect on humanity, are also growing. Effective planning methodology and a approach, optimum utilization of resources effective involvement of people, constant monitoring and evaluation can be well said than done.

Stronger Basic Producer

Looking to the population and resources, internal background and the

vast experience, the community has gathered in last thousands of years one of the important basics seems to be to give topmost priority to strengthen the basic producer. The country will have its foundation safe and stable if the basic producer is made the strongest. The approach is not that of charity but of social and national stability. Most of our ills, including the political, seem to have roots in the weaker basic producer. He has to be made economically strong. Once it is done he will support the nation and nation has not to support him. It means in precise terms that his per capita level of income has to cross the level of Rs. 1000 from the present Rs. 198. A relentless action in controlling the urban growth specially the larger cities is urgently called for and for diverting all available resources for this achievement. It calls for a change in approach and understanding. It is a task of building stable dynamic and progressive society with a stronger soul.

Role of Science and Technology

It is no magic. Neither the slogans can achieve it. It is a challenge to the scientific and technological talents. Some important breakthroughs are needed so that a basic producer can earn six times more from the small piece of land and other resources that he has. It needs motivation of our scientist and technologists to accept this challenge. What have we done about it? How much priority and significance it has gained, or it still gets only lip sympathy? More concrete steps and inputs are called for.

Mere allocations are not productive. If a indepth study is made of the pre-

sent mode of open chain subsidies, it is likely to reveal their negative impact on progress and transfer of technology. A macrolevel approach has failed to achieve results. A detailed microplanning approach and closed cycle planning incorporating inputs, training, sales, management, monitored efficiency and feedback has to be preferred to a macro-level open chain planning with evaluation only by output targets and block inputs. Not mere its poverty but ability to use the resources should be the criteria for input service. Parameters will have to be evolved to assess ability. An integrated approach to development and monitoring needs has to be evolved. A project approach for preparation and implementation of development programme is the need of the hour.

People's participation

The rural and urban sector needs are complementary. Their coexistence in a suitable interwoven social fabric needs to be visualised. The government infrastructure cannot reach the target population. The vast money spent on it is not productive. Instead there is an urgent need to organise voluntary organizations comprising scientists, technologists, administrators, primary and secondary producers from rural and urban communities. To achieve continuity and financial viability these organisations should be involved in planning commercial activity. Most of the inputs should pass through them and they should be held responsible for the targets to be achieved. The focal centres of these voluntary organisations can be technical institutions, educational institutions and research bodies.

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Schumacher's Philosophy for Appropriate Technology

□ T. S. Ananthu*

THE term 'appropriate technology' is now becoming popular, and its usage is becoming widespread. This is good in a way, but also bad in a way. It is good because more and more people are waking up to the fact that bigger and more expensive industries are not always the ideal, that 'sophisticated' technology is not always to be hankered after, that 'economies of scale' can be extremely deceptive. It is bad because as the usage of the term becomes more widespread, its original and correct meaning tends to get corrupted, until finally it may be altogether lost.

How come even magnificent concepts like 'satyagraha' lose their real meaning and significance gradually, and how can we prevent 'appropriate technology' from meeting a similar fate? To understand the answer to this question, we have to realize that every new idea that has caught on—even if it has significantly changed the destiny of mankind has, nevertheless, gone through four phases: (1) lack of interest (2) resistance (3) acceptance and (4) universalisation.

When E.F. Schumacher first suggested this concept in the early 1960s, he was pooh-poohed: that was phase I. When his book *Small Is Beautiful* became a bestseller, his ideas could no longer be ignored by established economists and scientists, so many among them took up cudgels against him in the early 1970s: that was phase II. Now we are entering

phase III. But phase III can be sustained only if there are new idea-makers who can make original contributions to give the idea more strength and a wider base: as Lenin and Mao did to Marxism. Unfortunately, the kind of courage and vision that mark such men (or women) does not seem to be evident among present adherents of appropriate technology. Perhaps this is attributable to the comparative ease with which phases I and II were accomplished.

"Small Is Beautiful"

Anyhow, whatever be the reason, there certainly seems to be a lack of dynamism and originality in the appropriate technology movement today (I am speaking here with particular reference to the Indian context). Unless this situation is rectified soon, phase IV will set in prematurely, and 'appropriate technology' will very soon become just like 'satyagraha': a new word for the same old way of functioning. Already, I can see signs of this happening. For example, the *Statesman* dated November 1, 1979, carried a feature article under the bold headlines 'SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL'. Upon reading the article, one realizes it is meant to sing praises of the lottery system promoted by the Post Office Savings Bank! Similarly, the cover story carried by the June 30, 1980, issue of *Newsweek* is all about the revolution in computers and integrated circuits brought about by the tiny silicon chips. This revolution, says

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Newsweek will soon result in "gee whiz suhc as an oven that "knows the menu" every night or a kitchen robot that can automatically mix a "mean Martini". And what are the words with which *Newsweek* heralds the grand revolution being brought about by "tiny silicon chips half the size of a fingernail"? "Small is Beautiful", of course ! Similarly, play on the word 'appropriate' is also being widely used to justify technologies that would have horrified Schumacher.

All this goes to show that the idea is different from the words that convey the idea. Neither the words 'Small is Beautiful' nor the words 'appropriate technology' constitute a safe criterion for judging whether a technology is appropriate or not. Then how do we make the judgement? For that, we will have to go to the root, the essence, of the concept. It is indeed a great pity that many of those who are involved in appropriate technology today have not grasped the essence of Schumacher's ideas. Schumacher did not create this concept in isolation. It was part of his overall approach to life, and this approach is contained in his book 'A Guide for the Perplexed'. It is tragic that most people, even those who have read 'Small Is Beautiful' thoroughly and enjoyed it, are not even aware of the existence of 'A Guide for the Perplexed'.

'A Guide for the Perplexed'

If we read 'A Guide for the Perplexed' and digest it, we will realize that the concept of intermediate or appropriate technology was a *derivation* from an overall view of life and its purpose. Hence, *appropriate technology has no meaning*

unless viewed in the context of this purpose. This overall view of life and the way the appropriate technology concept was derived from this view may be summarized as follows:

1. A soul is given a human birth in order to give it an opportunity to develop its 'higher' potentials. By higher potentials are meant those qualities that make us more human : love, compassion, selflessness, smypathy, etc.
2. Our current education processes teach us everything except how to become more human. Our schools and colleges impart knowledge regarding how to become a better engineer, a better economist, a better statistician or a better historian, but not a better human being. Schumacher had learnt, acquainting himself with Buddhist Vipassana school of meditation, that educational processes by which we can become better humam beings *do exist*. He had also learnt that the teachings of the Buddhist Vipassana schools, as well as similar schools in the Indian, Chinese, Sufi and Christian traditions, imparted knowledge that was consistent with the highest and noblest aims of science. As he explained it, "Applied science in the sense understood in yoga means a science that finds its material for study not in the appearances of other beings, but in the inner world of the scientist himself". It is the study of this science that has been neglected in modern education. Schumacher wanted to see our eduction processes and our life-styles modified so as to allow for the inclusion of this science, which would lead to a grand revolution in the very nature of man.

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3. But including this extremely useful science in our education process and our life-style is not possible as long as we hanker after 'modern technology'. This is because modern technology, the way it has developed, demands that we give *exclusive* attention to increasing our 'standard of living'—to becoming, as Descartes put it, 'masters and possessors of nature'—with no time at all for becoming better human beings. Any society which opts for the 'latest' in technology cannot afford to allow its people to improve their human qualities, for then it will have to fall back in the rat race which modern technology demands. Hence we witness the strange phenomenon that those societies which have invested the maximum in labour-saving devices have the least leisure! What is the way out of this? Schumacher suggests that the only way out of this is for us to voluntarily drop out of the rat race, and it is in this context that he comes up with the idea of appropriate technology. Thus, *appropriate technology is that technology which will provide opportunity, culture and environment conducive to the task of becoming better human beings, rather than to just surviving or increasing our comforts.*

Appropriate : What and When?

So now, we have a definition by which we can judge whether or not a technology is appropriate. Let us apply this definition to, say, the 'silicon chip revolution' that *Newsweek* had talked about. To have a pre-programmed oven or a kitchen robot does not merely by virtue of being complex and sophisticated technology, contravene the requirements of app-

ropriate technology. What does, however, go contrary to these requirements is the *effect* that these gadgets would have on society. As *Newsweek* itself points out, these gadgets would result not in increased leisure but in a new \$ 500 billion-a-year rat race in which giant companies would attempt to gobble up all the silicon chips as fast as they are produced, with those falling behind in this race becoming the newest victims of the 'survival of the fittest' principle. All involved in the race will employ the basest of techniques to keep alive, and so both victors and losers will end up becoming worse human beings. Even those who do manage to obtain any leisure in such a society will use it not for improving their human qualities but for taking to narcotics, drugs and assorted stimulants : as another report in the same issue of *Newsweek* demonstrates. It is for these reasons, rather than because computers are huge machines or because kitchen robots will lessen manual work, that silicon chips must be classified, as of now, as inappropriate technology. This also demonstrates that no technology is appropriate or inappropriate *per se* : it depends upon the context. What is important is to constantly bear in mind that these judgments have to be made keeping in view the true aim of appropriate technology : to produce better (*i.e.*, more loving, more compassionate, more human) beings. The crucial consideration in determining the appropriateness of a technology is not economic benefits but the effect it has on the quality of life, as human beings, of those engaged in it. Thus, it is absolutely essential that protagonists of appropriate technology must demonstrate this quality of life in their daily lives. For achieving this, the education processes that Schumacher recommended are a very valuable tool. □

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Agencies for Rural Reconstruction

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A Call by Dr Rajendra Prasad...

India mostly lives in her villages. Although, these days, the urban population is increasing by leaps and bounds, yet it still holds good that India mostly lives in villages. Therefore, whatever is done for the development of the villages and the villagers should not only be welcomed, but should be given all possible encouragement by the Government and the people. That is why Gandhiji used to lay much emphasis on rural development

Efforts in this field will be crowned with success only when there is mutual cooperation among the government machinery, leadership of the voluntary organisations and peoples' enthusiasm. Development activities in the fields of agriculture, education, health, sanitation, animal husbandry and eradication of unemployment will have to be initiated simultaneously

This work should be taken up with full enthusiasm, considering it an act of immense social service. Mahatma Gandhi considered all types of social welfare programmes as acts of Yojana. We have to take up and accomplish this task with the same spirit of oblation. It is hoped that the Government as well as the people will wholeheartedly cooperate with each other to serve this noble cause.

The task that we have assigned unto ourselves is no doubt difficult, but, if done wholeheartedly the tiny seed being sown today would bloom into a mighty tree. Therefore, I appeal to all to contribute their maximum towards making this effort a success. The beneficiaries covered by these projects should consider themselves to be fortunate, at the same time they should realise their responsibilities since their future depends upon the success of these programmes.

From the speech delivered by President of India on the occasion of the Inauguration of Community Development Programme on October 2, 1952.

Government Plans for Rural Development Approaches and Phases

By Dr. R. L. Patni*

AMONG the developing countries, India can claim with pride to be a pioneer for the socio-economic development of her people. As early as in 1938, the then political leaders of the country recognised planning as a powerful instrument for economic and social transformation of the Indian society. Soon after India became free in 1947, the National Government decided to take up planning as a principal policy for developing the national economy. Since 1950-51, when the first Five-Year Plan was introduced, the country has implemented five Five Year Plans and three Annual Plans and the Sixth Five-Year Plan has been in force since 1979.

Rural development programmes have always formed an integral part of socio-economic planning in India. Since the inception of organised planning in the country, there have been consistent efforts on the part of the government as well as non-government organisations to improve the lot of the rural millions of the country. A study of the six Five-Year Plans and three Annual Plans leaves no one in doubt that a number of programmes have been taken up for rural development with a view to improving the socio-economic conditions of the rural India. Broadly speaking, various programmes introduced so far for the rural population in India may be grouped into

two main categories as follows:

1. SECTORAL PROGRAMMES : Community Development Programme

On October 2, 1952, a beginning was made with the launching of Community Development Programme in the country. The basic objective of the Programme was to bring about overall development of rural India covering the resources as well as cultural and economic aspects of the community life. This was sought to be secured through fullest possible exploitation of human and material resources on an area basis and thereby raise the rural community to higher levels of living with the active participation and on the initiative of the people themselves. Initially, the Community Development Programme was introduced in the form of 55 selected projects in 165 different area units called community development blocks, each block covering an area of 1,300 sq. km. with about 300 villages and a population of about 2 lakhs. The life of a project was fixed to be three years.

Under the Community Development Programme, the highest priority was proposed to be accorded to agriculture since the shortage of food and other agricultural products was posing an acute problem in the country. Emphasis was also to be laid on the development of cottage and

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1. Report of the National Commission on Agriculture, 1976, Part XIV, Planning, Statistics and Administration, p.1. Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, New Delhi.

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small-scale industries to generate employment opportunities for the under-employed and unemployed villagers in the non-agricultural sector. To bring about all-round development of the rural people, measures were also to be taken to provide housing facilities to improve health and sanitation, to promote educational and other social welfare activities and to develop means of transport and communications in the rural areas. Arrangements were also planned to be made to impart training to the agriculturists, rural artisans and other sections of the rural community. But most important of all was to bring about a change in the mental outlook of the rural people, to prepare them to take active part in self-help programmes and to imbibe in them the ambition for higher standard of life. This was a challenging task and required strenuous efforts for a pretty long time.

National Extension Service

To accelerate the development activities and to make the various sectoral schemes, the Government decided to reduce the scale of the Community Development Programme and introduced another programme known as National Extension Service on October 2, 1953 as per the recommendation of the Grow More Food Committee, 1972. This Committee observed that "All aspects of rural life were interrelated" and that while particular problems might call for special attention, "the Plans for them should form part of and be integrated with those for achieving the wider aims". It was felt that if investment in man formed the main objective of the

Community Development Programme, an Integrated Extension Service should act as the principal means to that end and that scientific knowledge and techniques should be taken to the people through the Extension Agency. This new approach was stated in the First Five-Year Plan in the following words:²

"Community Development Programme is the method and rural extension the agency through which the Five-Year Plan seeks to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages."

With the inauguration of the National Extension Service, the life of a community project was extended from 3 to 4 years. The new areas of development were taken up initially as National Extension Service (NES) blocks for three years and were then upgraded to a community development block, in case the people were enthusiastic and eager about the continuation of the development activities in the block and were willing to make adequate contributions. After another three years, the block flowed over to the post-intensive stage *i.e.* to the permanent pattern of NES organisation. The number of NES blocks to be taken up for intensive development depended on the availability of resources and on the support and cooperation extended by the people. However on the recommendations of the Fifth Development Commissioners' Conference held in May, 1957, it was decided to cover up the entire countries by NES Blocks with intensive development blocks covering half the country by the end of the Second Five-

2. Evaluation of Community Development Programme in India, 1978 p. 98, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Community Development and Cooperation) New Delhi.

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Year Plan i.e. by March, 1961. (It may be noted here that all the villagers were covered by NES Blocks by 1963-64).

Another landmark in the history of the Community Development Programme was the appointment of the Committee on Plan Projects. The Study Team (Balwant Rai Mehta Committee) set up by the Committee in 1957 made recommendations which changed the pattern of the Community Development programme. According to the revised pattern, a community development block generally covered 100 villages with an area of about 400-500 sq. km. and a population of about 60,000 to 70,000. So long a block was divided into three phases (i) NES stage, (ii) intensive development stage and (iii) post-intensive development stage. Thinking it unrealistic, the Committee recommended the abolition of the existing pattern of stages and suggested to introduce two phases, each phase of 6 years. However, it was finally decided to have two active stages of operating for 5 years at a stretch. Besides, a one-year pre-extension phase preceding stage I was introduced. At the end of the period of ten years, a block entered post-stage II. It was hoped that, after the expiry of one year pre-extension phase and ten years in stage I and stage II phases, the peoples' institutions in the post-stage II phase would be able to build up sufficient strength and resources to take over the responsibility of independent planning and execution of development programmes in the block.

Panchayati Raj

The next step taken to make the Community Development Programme a success was an attempt to provide democratic

leadership to economic development in the rural areas. This objective followed again in consequence of the acceptance of the recommendations of the Study Team of the Committee on Plan Projects (Balwant Raj Mehta Committee). A three-tier Panchayati Raj system with some modifications in different states was introduced in the country on October 2, 1959, thus setting the pattern of local development administration in the rural sectors at three levels—(i) at the level of a village or a group of villages (ii) at the level of a block or a group of blocks and (iii) at district level. Through the Panchayat Raj institutions viz. Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad set up at the village, block and district levels respectively, it was envisaged to lay a network of rural local self-government agencies for discharging certain selected functions pertaining to rural development.

These institutions sought to democratise administration from the village to the district level, provide opportunities to the representatives of the people for active participation in the formulation and execution of development programmes.

Intensification of Agriculture

To meet the food crisis in the country around 1960, a new strategy for intensification of agriculture was evolved and the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) popularly known as 'package programme' was taken up on a pilot basis in 1961 in seven selected districts and subsequently extended to some other districts covering 37 districts by 1970. In 1965, the High Yielding Varieties Programme (HYVP) was conceived and intro-

duced as a district strategy for increasing agricultural production. These programmes had, by their nature, to be concentrated in areas of quick response. This was followed by the Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP) which also adopted the strategy of IADP, but in a less intensive manner. By 1966, 117 districts and by 1970, 150 districts were covered under this programme.

While advocating the IADP, the HYVP and the IAAP for intensive cultivation, efforts were made to impart knowledge of improved agricultural practices to the farmers. Inputs like fertilizers, quality seeds and irrigation facilities were provided to the maximum extent. Besides, production programmes for commodities like cotton, sugarcane, jute were also evolved to supplement these projects.

Sectional and Regional Disparities

In the process of intensive agricultural programmes, vast areas with poor endowments and infrastructural facilities lagged behind. Similarly, the small and marginal farmers, too, did not benefit much from the breakthrough in agricultural technology. The resultant disparities called for remedies taken in the Fourth and Fifth Five-Year Plan Period. These remedies included a number of special programmes for the underprivileged target groups and low productivity areas. Some of these programmes led to the setting up of Small Farmers' Development Agencies (SFDA), Marginal Farmers' and Agricultural Labourers' Development Agencies (MFAL), the Command Area Development Programmes (CADP) and the Integrated Tribal Development Programmes (ITDP).

The Small Farmers' Development Agencies and the Marginal Farmers' and Agricultural Labourers' Development Agencies were initiated by the Government of India to improve the economic conditions and generate better self-employment opportunities for the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, share-croppers, etc. To achieve this objective, these Agencies seek to tackle the problems of the weaker sections through special programmes made for the purpose. During the Fourth Five-Year Plan, 46 Small Farmers Development Agencies projects and 41 Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers' Development Agencies projects were undertaken for the benefit of the rural population in agricultural sector. During the Fifth Five-Year Plan period, all the SFDA and MFAL projects were made composite and each Agency was to operate in the area allotted to it. Each new Agency is expected to cover 50,000 beneficiaries while the Agencies with their birth during the Fourth Five-Year Plan period, extended coverage upto 30,000 beneficiaries during the period of extension i.e. 1976-77 to 1978-79.

For the purpose of the operation of the above Agencies, a cultivator with a land holding of 5 acres or below is a small farmer. Where a farmer has Class I irrigated land, as defined in the State Land Ceilings Legislation with 2.5 acres or less will also be considered as a small farmer. Where the land is irrigated but not of the Class I variety, a suitable conversion ratio may be adopted by the State Governments with a ceiling of 5 acres. A marginal farmer is defined as one having a land holding of 2.5 acres or below. In the case of Class I irrigated land, the ceiling is 1.25 acres. A person who is

without any land and derives most of his income from agricultural labour, a labourer is a person who receives 200 per month from wage earnings, partly from agricultural sources and at least 50 per cent from non-agricultural sources. A person who has a homestead in the village is

Similarly, the Programme of Extension, development of water, livestock, etc. in the area covered by various critical districts including drought, low rainfall and low irrigation. During the Plan period, under this relating to irrigation afforestation. During the Programme development, sources, dry agriculture, ment, sheep afforestation culture, etc.

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without any land but has a homestead and derives more than 50 per cent of his income from agricultural wages, is an agricultural labourer. A non-agricultural labourer is a person whose total income from wage earning does not exceed Rs. 200 per month. This category also includes the persons who derive their income partly from agriculture and partly from other sources, provided they earn at least 50 per cent of their income from non-agricultural sources. They may not have a homestead but must be residents of the village in which they are identified.

Similarly, the Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) aims at conservation, development and utilization of land, water, livestock and human resources in area covered by 74 districts in 13 States. Various criteria for selection of these districts include high periodicity of drought, low and erratic distribution of rainfall and low extent of assured irrigation. During the Fourth Five-Year Plan period, the schemes undertaken under this Programme included those relating to irrigation, soil conservation, afforestation and rural communications. During the Fifth Five-year Plan period, the Programme covered integrated area development and management of irrigation sources, dry land development, irrigated agriculture, cattle and dairy development, sheep and pasture development, afforestation, horticulture, fisheries, sericulture, etc.

To realise faster and optimum utilization of the irrigation potential development in the country, the Command Area Development Programme was introduced in December, 1974 to lay more stress on the improvement of water conveyance and drainage systems. The Programme

also lays emphasis on various on-farm development activities with special emphasis on the weaker sections to enable them to take full part therein.

The Tribal Development Agency Programme launched in 1971-72 aimed at the development of six selected tribal areas in four states.

Critical Analysis

Taken together, the Community Development Programme, the National Extension Service and the Panchayati Raj were forward looking attempts, aiming at not only the development of rural situations in a narrow economic sense but also the balanced social and economic development of rural areas with the active participation of the rural people in planning, formulation and implementation of development schemes, with special emphasis on the optimum utilization of local natural and human resources and a wider distribution of the benefits from that development. But, in actual practice, the programmes and schemes implemented did not come up to the expectations. Why it happened so is analysed in the following paragraphs:

Inadequate Funds

Rural development is a part of the accepted policy of the Government of India and has always received an effusive commendation from the leaders. But, in actual practice, allocation of funds is in the reverse. As indicated in Table I, the percentage of outlay on the Community Development Programme, the National Extension Service, the Panchayati Raj Institutions and other local development works (taken together) to the total outlay on agriculture and allied sectors including CDP, NES, PRI and other

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TABLE 1

(i) Agriculture and Allied Sectors
Outlay on (ii) Community Development Programme (CDP).
National Extension Service (NES) and
Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI)

(Rs. Crores)

Sector	1951-52 to 1955-56 1st Plan	1956-57 to 1960-61 2nd Plan	1961-62 to 1965-66 3rd Plan	1966-67 to 1968-69 Three Annual Plans	1969-70 to 1973-74 4th Plan	1974-75 to 1978-79 5th Plan
1. Agriculture and Allied Sectors	357.00	568.00	1,090.21	1,166.60	2,728.20	3,109.00
1.1 C.D.P., N.E.S. and P.R.I.	142.00	244.00	322.47	99.40	115.50	127.00
1.1 as % of I	39.77	42.96	29.58	8.52	4.23	4.08

works was only 39.77 in the First Five-Year Plan, 42.96 in the Second Five-Year Plan, 29.58 in the Third Five-Year Plan, 8.52 in the Three Annual Plans, 4.23 in the Fourth Five-Year Plan and 4.08 in the Fifth Five-Year Plan. On the other hand, outlay on agriculture and allied sectors increased almost nine times over the said Plan period. Whether we talk in absolute terms or relative terms, the allocation was utterly inadequate to make any impact on the rural economy. Similarly, taking into consideration the vastness of our country and the multiplicity of schemes that were sought to be taken up under the Community Development Programme, the funds sanctioned were too inadequate.

Further, even the funds sanctioned for various schemes under the Community Development Programme were not properly utilized for the benefits of the people. Various committees appointed by the Government of India from time to time to evaluate a number of schemes have pointed out innumerable instances of wastages and uneconomic and irregular expenditure.

In many cases, even the funds allocated for various development schemes remained unconsumed. For example, Out of a total provision of Rs. 90 crores for Community Development Projects in the First Five-Year Plan, actual expenditure incurred was about Rs. 46 crores.

The budgeting for the Community Development Programme and the National Extension Service was defective, otherwise, too. According to the Study Team (Balwant Raj Mehta Committee) set up by the Committee on Plan Projects in 1957, the system (which continues

till today) under which heavy amounts were available over a short period, preceded and followed by the periods of inadequate sources, led two-fold waste and frustration, on account of the non-availability of resources during the pre-intensive and post-intensive stages and availability of money in the intensive stage with a hurry to spend it before the close of the period.

The operation of the Community Development Programme on block-level in five-year stages, through the National Extension Service welded together with the three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions and provided with tapering financial assistance was based on the assumption that, by the end of the initial ten-year period, the local institutions would be able to mobilize resources enough to continue their activities and other Plan funds would channel in sufficient quantities so as to make any separate provision of funds thereafter for the blocks unnecessary. It was further assumed that the Community Development Programme would then no longer be assisted and schematic but would be self-sustained and locally-rooted. Unluckily, all these assumptions were frustrated and for all practical purposes, the Programme continued to be dependent on Government initiative and lived on Government funds. Wherever and whenever funds stopped pouring in or were lacking, the activities languished or even came to a standstill. In majority of the cases, local finance played an insignificant role.

Oppressive Socio-Economic and Political Structure

By analysing concrete village situations existing in the country, it is seen

how the very structure of the Indian society particularly at village level is responsible for poverty and injustice and thus for low socio-economic status of the rural people. Rural people are poor not because they are anti-development, ignorant, conservative or resistant to change but because of the negative influence of oppressive socio-economic and political structure of the Indian society.

In developing countries like India, 'development' has been so far understood as 'economic development' alone where the main emphasis has been on increasing production and income. According to this definition, the main objective of 'development' is to increase GNP without bothering to see who is benefiting from the increase. In India, this is the kind of development that has been going on for the last so many years. As a result of this emphasis, production has indeed increased due to 'green revolution' or some industrialization. But the benefits of this development have not accrued to everyone equitably. Most benefits have gone to the already better-off people, the so-called 'progressive people' because they have better 'receiving mechanism'. The big fish have gobbled up all the aid programmes and in the same bite have swallowed the small fish as well.

The result of all this process is that the rich have grown richer and the poor have either remained where they were or at times have even become poorer. Thus inequalities have multiplied. Instead of 'trickle down' theory which assumes that the benefits accruing to progressive sections of the society will automatically trickle down to the less well-off people,

the 'evaporation theory' seems to have worked. As a result of 'development' whatever little the poor had, has evaporated and reached the higher ups or better-offs.

The problem may be studied from one more angle. Tendency in the past years has been to give importance to the welfare activities more than the economic development activities. This is because of the fact that the former gain popularity sooner, are easier to be achieved, are more eye-catching and impress the casual observer more than the latter do. An uneducated Indian villager who does not understand even the meaning of 'Community Development Programme' and 'National Extension Service' feels obliged to the people who have arranged these amenities for him and expresses every praise and gratitude for them. In short, the socio-economic and political structure of the Indian society as a whole and of the rural community in particular, has proved very oppressive to the weaker sections of the rural population who have reached the stage from where they cannot rise without help from outside.

Fatalistic Attitude of Rural Population

The weaker sections of the rural population are mostly from the socially and economically backward and depressed sections of the village community. Because of their illiteracy and financial difficulty, they are not readily willing to change their work habits and adopt modern technology. Being sure about the traditional methods, they are reluctant to take to improved equipment and techniques which require some time to

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After holding a number of group meetings with rural people belonging to different vocations and spread over the entire country, we can safely say that few persons in the villages are eager for training to improve upon their traditional and hereditary techniques of working. Despite the fact that better training can prove very beneficial to them in earning just the double of what they are getting now, most of them are not at all receptive to the idea of learning something to improve their lot.

Lack of People's Participation

The direction of development planning in India has been so far up-bottom. It means that in most of the plans the people for whom they were ostensibly meant were not involved in the planning and implementation process. To planners, participation of people meant their participation in programmes chalked out and planned for them. There was no attempt made by the planners to involve the people at any stage of planning and decision-making. Moreover, the community development projects were not an organic growth and the officials failed to initiate the process of developments and to develop attitudes of self-help and progress in the people.

In any programme of rural development, the target people and its leaders should be fully involved in the process of programme planning, its execution and evaluation. Efforts should be made to find out what people really want, what their needs are and what type of activities they would be interested in.

Without fully associating the people, their leaders and various groups in the communities, realistic programme planning is not possible.

2. AREA AND/OR BENEFICIARY APPROACH

Deteriorating socio-economic conditions of the rural people in general and of the weaker sections of the rural community in particular have led to serious reconsideration of the earlier assumption that mass uplift would follow as a natural consequence of general economic development and that mass poverty is not amenable to a direct attack. The Sixth Five-year Plan supports and reaffirms this questioning and has come forth with an alternate strategy involving a direct attack on the problem of mass poverty of the rural people.⁴ Pleading for a re-orientation of overall growth strategy in favour of the rural millions, it insists that the key components that affect the dynamics of the rural system be identified in order to bring about the necessary change. Most important is the recognition of interdependence of the three major sectors that are concerned in the development of the rural economy:

- i) agricultural economy
- ii) human resources
- iii) non-agricultural production and services.

To put in other words, the Plan concedes that rural development is a multi-sectoral process which must, in time, encompass all sectors of social and economic activity. It expresses be-

4. Joshi, P. C., "Organising the Rural Poor: Reflections on Some Basic Issues" Paper, 1978 presented at the National Seminar, People's Action for Development, New Delhi.

lief that effective planning and the introduction of changes in the existing system will result in higher and more equitable levels of living for all rural families.⁵

Integrated Rural Development

The above approach envisages a comprehensive strategy termed as "Integrated Rural Development" (IRD). It is a concept of planning aimed at the economic and social development of the majority of the rural population, particularly of the rural poor and involves integration of measures designed to expand agricultural production, to mobilize human resources and to broaden the base of the rural economy through introduction of non-agricultural activities and services.

Area Planning

Area development is a necessary component of IRD and incorporates intensive planning and implementation within selected areas. This helps to identify the basic relationships among the various components of IRD and to evolve strategies that can be effectively replicated. Area development projects can also become instrumental in establishing the cross-functional framework linking microlevel village planning with macro target setting and planning. The most suitable areal unit for comprehensive planning is a community development block. Various reasons can be given for having a community block as the area unit for planning:

(a) A national or a state plan is necessarily macro and general in character and cannot be a substitute for a micro plan for a given compact area like a community development block. Each

compact area unit varies from another in terms of resources available, activities being carried on by the people and the problems confronting them, etc., and thus requires planning most suited to its local conditions. Such an area unit does not require planning in generalised form but in a specific form based on the detailed and intimate knowledge of local conditions prevailing in the area and the requirements of its people.

(b) Similarly, each Community Development Block has its own potentialities in terms of agriculture, rural industries and allied sectors which can be developed through intensive and extensive efforts based on intimate knowledge of the local resource situation. A block level plan is the best instrument to achieve the objective.

(c) Otherwise, too, a national or a state plan with a specific objective (say growth of rural industries) requires detailed planning for relevant households constituting the target groups. Even in such a case, block level planning can serve far better.

(d) The Community Development Block is an area unit sufficiently small in terms of area and population and provides best opportunities to the planners, the persons responsible for implementation of the plan and the target groups to develop close contact and faster understanding with one another so necessary for planning. Such an area unit can bring the planners and the executive officials and workers closer to the beneficiaries, work in closer proximity to them, appreciate their problems, discuss with them and motivate them for their active

5. Planning Commission, Draft Sixth Five-Year Plan, 1978-83, pp. 1-5.

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and lively participation in planning and execution to solve their own problems. Thus block-level planning is helpful in the following ways :

i) It enables the planners to understand more clearly the felt-needs and the problems of the target groups and factors responsible for their backwardness.

ii) It helps the executive officials and workers in implementation of the plans in its true spirit.

iii) It helps the planners and others to determine, assess and evaluate the potentialities of the block and undertake planning to develop them for proper utilization ;

iv) It facilitates to examine the constraints obstructing the uplift of the weaker sections of the community.

v) It opens venues to the beneficiary groups to participate in preparing and implementing plan for their own benefit.

IRD Programmes Vs. Special Programmes

The IRD Programme and the SFDA Programme are similar in the sense that either of them envisages identification of the beneficiaries and formulation and implementation of schemes to improve their economic status. But the two Programmes vary in terms of contents, coverage and emphasis as follows :

(i) The SFDA Programme has a limited coverage in the sense that it is confined to agricultural sector. On the other hand, the IRD Programme has a wider coverage as it also includes non-

agricultural sector *viz.*, industrial and tertiary sectors.

(ii) The IRD Programme emphasises on providing not only some kind of assistance to substantial number of beneficiaries but also impressive assistance to the identified beneficiaries so as to increase their income to the extent that they cross once for all at least the poverty line. The 'poverty line' is based on the assumption that an income of Rs. 300 to Rs. 350 per month should accrue to a family of 5 to 6 members *i.e.*, about Rs. 60/- per person per month.

(iii) Under the SFDA Programme the beneficiaries with relatively larger land holdings get the maximum benefits. On the other hand, with the Antyodaya approach, the IRD Programme gives benefit to the poorest of the poor first.

(iv) The IRD Programme provides for monitoring of additional income generated in the case of each participant.

(v) Under the IRD Programme, family is the basic unit of planning development and economic programmes are to be formulated for the family as a whole.

(vi) The IRD Programme envisages assistance covering the whole package of services necessary to enable the family to cross the 'poverty line' and not only stray item like distribution of seed, supply of implements.

The IRD Programmes differ from the special Programmes of SFDA, DPA-PA and CADA in one more way. Amongst the three latter Programmes, there are considerable variations not only in

the case of ingredients that qualify beneficiaries for assistance but also in the scale of subsidy. But no variations occur in respect of the blocks taken up for integrated rural development. Corollarily speaking, the schemes, taken up in the blocks selected under IRD Programme are of uniform character whether that they (blocks) are located in SFDA, DPAP or CADA areas or in the areas covered by no programme at present.

Various schemes undertaken/implemented under the on-going IRD Programmes may be classified into three broad categories :

- (i) Schemes for individual beneficiaries
- (ii) Schemes to develop infrastructure and
- (iii) Support to institutions.

However, considering the two-fold objective of generating employment opportunities and improving the economic status of the identified beneficiaries falling in the target group, maximum emphasis is given to the schemes for individual beneficiaries.

Agency for implementation

The IRD Programmes are implemented in the areas covered by the special programmes of SFDA, DPAPA and CADA as well as in the areas not covered by them. The implementation of the IRD Programmes in the special programmes areas has been entrusted to the existing SFDA, DPAPA and CADA. The SFDA and DPAPA operate at the district level and through the block agencies at the block level. The Com-

mand Area Development Agencies (CADA's) have a number of other functions and their jurisdiction often exceeds the limits of a revenue district. Therefore, it has been considered necessary to create the necessary organisational structure to formulate and implement the IRD Programmes at the district level in the blocks lying in the non-special programme areas as well as in the blocks lying in the jurisdiction of the CADA.

In some states where SFDA Programmes are being implemented by the SFDA at the district level and the IRD Programmes are being executed through the Development Department in the blocks at block level, the implementation of the IRD Programmes has been entrusted to a single agency. Similarly, at the state level, all special programmes being implemented by the SFDA, the DPAPA and the IRD at present may be dealt with by a single common department.

The Panacea

The task of rural development in a country like India with a vast territory and large population is quite complex. Its success depends not only on sound structures and efficient organisations but also on the quality of the bureaucracy and the change-agents connected with them. Honest, sincere and dedicated as the officials and the change agents should be, they should identify themselves with the rural people for whom they want to work. Only then, they can know them, assess their needs and adopt suitable measures to improve their lot. The only bottleneck inhibiting the uplift of the rural people is the absence of devoted, upright and scrupulous officials and change agents who can work with them quite selflessly and without any ulterior

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motive. The panacea of all the maladies of the agriculture and other rural vocations lies in the establishment of a block-level organisation which has a team of officials to think, act and evaluate.

The deliberative wing of the organisation at block-level should consist of members from all important sectors, various rural vocations, rural development agencies, experts and the representatives of the rural communities. Most of the development plans do not produce desired and anticipated results because the persons for whom they are meant are not at all involved in the planning and implementation process. If by the goal of development, we mean human development and not just development of material things, we must see that the people participate in the process of programme planning, its execution

and evaluation. Without fully associating the target people, their leaders and various groups in the rural community, realistic programme planning is not possible. And even if such a plan is introduced, it would not be a complete success.

The officials and the change agents should have a common understanding of the aims, objectives and ideology behind the tasks in hand and develop a team spirit among themselves. Only then they can elicit participation of the rural communities. The official should not suffer from authoritarianism and rigidity of an over-powering personality. They should work like a social laboratory and a real community, which educes people's participation, decentralises decision-making, practises co-operative ways of living and suffers least from salary differentials. □

That is the human challenge today. If I use the word science and technology in the sense of Physical science and physical technology, then this never-ending mutual chasing of organic cravings and organic satisfactions will result in reducing the human situation into a tragically 'short nasfy, and brutish', condition, to use the famous words of Thomas Hobbes. We see the phenomenal increase of crime decade after decade. Behind all the crime and drug and sex explosions currently rocking our civilisation, there is unsatisfied craving, and dissatisfactions arising from unchecked cravings, and the absence of a seeking for higher values. This is the reason why so many criminals come out of the educated and the well-to-do sections of society. Really, people poor in pocket are not so criminal, not so physically distorted, as people poor in heart. One is the poor and the other is the poverty-stricken. Many virtues and graces, and the quality of humanness itself, missing in the latter, are found in the former. Poet-king Bhartrhari's famous words in his Vairāgya-satakam illumine the current tragic situation (verse 53) :

'He indeed is daridra, poverty-stricken, whose sensecravings are vast, endless; but when the mind is happily contented, who is the rich one, who the poor ?

Swami Ranganathanand

Our Intellectuals and Village Realities

By Bunker Roy*

WE are using statistics in rural development like a drunk man uses the lamp post: more for support than for illuminatory. As of now, the number of loans we have dished out, the number of villages we have electrified, of farmers we have helped with seeds, fertilisers, insecticides and pump sets reads like a Ripley's 'Believe it or Not'. But has anyone stopped to think of what is happening in the rural areas? Is this type of development doing any good? Is it; for instance, changing people for the better?

Who is fooling whom?

Crucial questions. Important issues, all of them. To my mind we are being swayed by unscrupulous, selfish, ignorant people who have pretension of being the spokesmen for the rural poor. This includes a galaxy of bureaucrats, self-styled experts and members of the rural oligarchy, the dominant minority who are least interested in the rural poor and their development. They are only interested in themselves and since there is no dearth of gullible people influential or otherwise, and with all the financial resources at our disposal, in effect, we are being taken for a massive ride. Willingly. With great style we are showing what fools we can be. Who cares for reports, who cares for surveys, who cares for bankable schemes? In the ultimate analysis they mean nothing to the 300 million people who live below the

poverty line (if there is such a thing) who earn less than Rs 1,000 a year, who still face fundamental problems like where they are going to get their next meal from, who is going to beat them up next while the magistrate and the police watch the fun on the side?

We take great pains in balancing budgets and coming up with watertight schemes which look terribly impressive—reams and reams of data and statistics going for thousands and thousands of pages all for what? So the small and marginal farmer becomes, a landless labourer? So that 99% of the budget of a primary school is spent on the salary of an indifferent couldn't—careless teacher and what is left is supposed to be spent on books, teaching aids, training, renovation of school and educational tours?

We arrange for so-called experts in rural development costing us the earth to draw up some ludicrous plan costing us lakhs and lakhs ostensibly designed to help rural artisans; we think plastics as a small-scale industry is the last word in progress and development; we are all for power looms in villages because they are likely to generate employment and make cloth cheaper.

But are they served?

And the repercussions of all this? It is too bad that Gandhiji's last man has to migrate to the cities to live in unspeakable

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kable poverty and destitution because as a potter, as a leather tanner, as a weaver, his livelihood has been taken away from him: this is progress by Indian standards. It is too bad that the knowledge, the skill the experience of centuries has to die in the slums of Delhi and all this master craftsman can look forward to is to become daily wage labourer on some construction site: it is not possible to fight against this inevitable process. Why? Because we do not have the courage to stand up and say that this is wrong, it is cruel, we must stop it. We are willing to swim with the tide. We are willing to be guided by bullies. We are not willing to take a stand and expose ourselves to explanations. So, whoever shouts the loudest, whoever shrieks the most must be right, why question it at all. Whoever express the most concern must be feared because he must be the most committed.

Rural development means subsidy

Rural public opinion—the money lender, the landlord, the rich farmer—says that rural development is electricity, it is pump sets, it is tractors, it is good seeds and fertilisers and mechanised farming. And the bureaucrat, the responsible person who doles out the funds nod with as much wisdom as he is capable of and says, yes. Rural development, it is subsidies, it is free service because the rural population is on the verge of starvation: the bureaucrat agrees. Not a been in protest out of any of them. Not a word in favour of the rural poor—the impoverished rural carpenter, potter, leather tanner, weaver, blacksmith, scheduled caste and harijan. And if there is a word in favour which includes making the right noises when it comes to action, fighting these people, mobilising the

depressed sections of rural society to get their rights back, no one is willing to fling the first stone.

Gutless intelligentsia

What has happened to all of us? Where are all our motivated and committed Marxists who talk nineteen to the dozen away from the action, the risks, the dangers? Gutless, all of them, with nothing to show, with no scars to reveal yet in writing papers and in post mortem exercises they have no peers. When, if ever, will they go into the countryside to practise what they preach? When are they going to gather up some courage, some convictions and some conscience and set out to do what they profess to believe in and see what it takes. What does it matter if they are proved wrong? The intelligentsia is not likely to lose their virginity if they come running back to safer ground with their tails between their legs—so long as they know what it is like to live and work and suffer in the rural areas with them. Then at least they will stop pontificating as if they know the answers to all the questions.

Marxism without risk

Tragically enough, the cause of the rural poor is being defeated by these very people who call themselves social scientists. They study the rural poor from a distance like specimens in a zoo instead of treating them like human beings, instead of throwing in their lot with them and taking all the knocks, the beatings and the uncertainties. No, for that our social scientists have not time. The ultimate result our intellectuals wish for should be in the form of a book or a report. What happens after the data has been collected, what happens

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after the lives have been studied, what follows after hours of pointless advice has been given, is really not the responsibility of the intellectual at all, whatever be his political leanings. He may find that as a result of this interference the agricultural labourer loses his job or has to go without daily wages for a week as punishment for revealing all; the rural artisan may have lost his village market; the scheduled caste man loses his access to the only credit he has ever received from the money lender: the Harijan's house is just casually burnt down.

What does the social scientist care ? He is impotent in these matters. In India he is basically a coward. He will talk about Marxism, he will start frothing from the mouth about mobilising the rural poor and starting an agitation to get their rights back. But he will do so from a safe distance. He will see that he himself is not involved. Since he does not have the courage of his convictions the peasant, the agricultural labourer and the Harijan are really pawns and puppets whose minds and lives he thinks he can fiddle around with—but only from a distance. Witness the bits of sensational information that comes out of studies and reports which is taken as an indication of indepth research. We go into ecstasies over such observations. But that is about all we are capable of.

Planning in airconditioned rooms

What is terribly frightening is the fact that rural development strategies are in the hands of these few dangerously incompetent and impractical people, intellectuals all. All of them belonging to established urban-based institutions

with degrees a mile long next to their name but no practical experience in the rural areas to call their own. That is if you do not rate their brief encounters with their dhoti or sweeper as rural experience.

It is obvious that we have a forum in the urban areas championing the cause of the rural poor, but it is equally evident that no such attempt has been made to establish such a voice in the rural areas where the action is. Where have they all gone? What has happened to all of us that we should speak so emotionally about the injustices and the unbelievable horrors the scheduled castes and Harijans have to live through every day and no one, literally no one, has the guts to do something practical about it? We are all so fond of sitting in air-conditioned offices expressing what should be done, what can be done, what may be done but never what we are going to do ourselves.

This is the natural outcome of blinkered intellectuals who have absolutely no idea of the real life problems people face. What is preventing them from living and working in the rural areas? What stops them from taking a house, but in a village and seeing for themselves what it is like to live under such oppressive conditions? They will see how a magistrate in the lower courts can be bought or influenced by the vested interest so that justice is denied. They will see how the police is used to browbeat the rural poor till their back is broken and it remains broken; how the patwari fiddles with the land records; how the cooperative society run by the higher castes swindles the government of funds or disperses funds to fictitious

scheduled castes and there is no agency that can probe into these affairs; how the government health officials use medicines to carry on private practice.

Know the village realities

There is no end to all the hanky-panky that goes on. But we intellectuals must live through this experience, must feel what it is like to be powerless, impotent and completely helpless with everything going on right under our noses. Just reading about it is not the same as being involved in it. In the ultimate analysis, the development of the rural areas is not going to take place without this sort of personal involvement and exchange of experiences. The patwari, the primary school teacher, the gram sevak and the thanedar know that the district collector comes to their village once in a blue moon. If and when he does come, it is only for half a day during which time it is their responsibility to see that only small problems are discussed, the visit is kept free from controversies and sensitive issues are avoided. Once the DC leaves, the field is open to them to do what they like, because the person most feared who is capable of terrorising to the extreme, is not the DC but someone like the forest guard, for instance. He is a law in the area. He is invincible. No one not, even the Minister let alone the Commissioner, wields more power and can scare the hell out of the rural poor as effectively as this forest guard can.

Seminar Culture

We can sit in seminars and make fundamental changes, we can say all the

right and nice things that should be done and include them in the recommendations, but at the village level the situation never changes. For all the mighty laws we make, for all circulars and directives we pass from the clouds to the village level the attitude never changes: let us take this for a fact. Let bureaucrats claim otherwise but they themselves do not know how flippantly these orders are treated, how much they are a source of amusement and derision. Perhaps because they suspect their lack of credibility, they do not come as often to the rural areas. They would rather do the planning, the fiddling with numbers and the minor adjustments that promise the world but which have no hope of being implemented in the proper manner. But we have institutionalised this process of deception so completely that it is not possible to discontinue it.

The planner may be a man from Harvard or Yale or Cambridge but the implementor is supposed to be a BDO (Block Development Officer) or an agricultural extension man risen from the ranks: Can there be a situation more tragic for the rural poor than this? The formulator of the integrated plan sits in the Indian Institute of Management: the implementor is supposed to be of equal mental calibre, is supposed to make practical sense out of much nonsense and then get clobbered for it if it does not produce the desired results. What is written by an agricultural economist hailing from some high powered university abroad (rural experience= nil) is expected to be translated into practice by an agricultural extension man in the village who got the job in any case with a bit of 'sifarish', certainly not for his brains.

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But, of course, our ingenious policy makers have thought out a way out of this one: send them for training, they say. Where to? To the IITs of course based in metropolitan areas because they do not have the time to go to the rural areas. In any case there are no facilities there for training. In other words, if the gram sevak, the agricultural extension officer, the BDO and the like have not been bowled over yet by the complications in the plan, the idea is to do so in the training programme. They are taught irrelevant things, they are lectured on insignificant topics of little or no importance and then sent back to tackle the practical problems on their own. To suggest that the trainers should go through an unlearning process themselves is of course being impertinent.

Statistics speak

What chance for any programme planned and implemented in this manner where there is such a vast difference between concept and practice? And rural development: at what expense? We talk of agricultural development in the same breath as rural development—but for whom? The rural poor? They think of fundamental problems like food to eat, a house/hovel to live in, clothes to wear for wife and children and a life of peace. We cannot even ensure this. After three decades of planning, after building such a colossal infrastructure, such an amazing delivery system we are not in a position to guarantee this.

Instead, according to official statistics more than 100 million families survive on less than Rs 500 a year; a third of the 575,000 villages have inadequate water to drink; more than half the rural

households live in temporary houses made of grass and mud; one out of every four persons sick in suffering unnecessarily; nearly 5 million die every year due to exposure, poor nutrition, non-immunisation and lack of proper medical attention; currently, one out of every four Indians in an agricultural labourer: more than 20 million people are unemployed in the country: there are 161 million illiterates in India today. Such fundamental problems and we still persist in talking of seeds (high-yielding varieties), fertilisers, pump sets, tractors and the like—for whom, may I ask? Who is likely to benefit if not the richer farmer? Even where there is electricity in a village, who actually benefits? In fact who else but the higher and richer castes can afford it? Is this the sort of rural development we have in mind?

Keep the rural areas away from these misguided people. Save us from these impractical experts who have no idea of the misery and suffering that the rural people have to undergo. Rural development in their hands is about the worst disaster that could happen to the rural poor. If nothing else they are going to be destroyed with the kindness our urban based wizards are about to shower in the rural areas as patronage.

Credit for what?

Credit the magic word for the socio-economic transformation of the rural areas. In rural development, regrettably, credit is the password for tongues to wag irresponsibly. Everyone with pretensions to being a big shot talks of credit at the drop of a hat and what needs to be done; how much the development of rural areas depends on it; how it must

reach the common man, the underprivileged family and help out. All the right noises. The dispersal of loans is rural development. Once it has been given the problems are all solved. By everyone's reckoning—the plans say so; it has been calculated by experts: the economists are convinced; even the World Bank is satisfied—that once a loan has been given the scheduled caste family from a no-body become a yesbody: they have claims to being citizens. They will rise in social status. They will no longer be harassed by the money-lender. Their wives will no longer be exposed to the dangers of rape. They will cease to be bonded labour. A loan will immediately ensure proper education for this Harijan's children, adequate medical attention when he needs it desperately and it will guarantee that his house will not be burnt down as and when some debauched landlord fancies it.

All this a loan is supposed to achieve. The Harijan's life has been planned out on paper by those who know all about it. The high-powered London and Harvard returned whiz kid knows what it is like to be a small and marginal farmer, a rural artisan, a scheduled caste, a Harijan and an agricultural labourer just by reading about them. He then starts talking about them as if he knows them

like the palm of his hand. Easy. No problem. Give that chap there a couple of goats: in two years he has got it made. An that chap 20 head of sheep an open well a pump set and his problems are tikki-to-boo. If he does not make it in two years he is not worth saving.

What can one expect out of an illiterate, you tell me. What does he do for the two years, how does he eat? What happens if someone falls sick, or there is a wedding in the family and customs have to be observed? That is not the expert's problem: the human problem is absolutely insignificant to him. His problem is to make an ARC (Agricultural Refinance Corporation) Scheme for minor irrigation, i.e. the digging of open wells a viable proposition, a bankable scheme.

After wading through unreadable muck full of meaningless statistics and God knows what else that only the writer can fathom, we are told that so many lakhs of rupees will be spent to instal so many hundreds of pump sets and construction of wells, so many thousand acres will be brought under cultivation and that's it gentlemen. That's rural development for you.

(Courtesy: 'Seminar')

NATION LIVES IN COTTAGE

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But alas nobody ever did anything for them. Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lost their inner spiritual nature? Can you become an Occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, working energy and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it.

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Role of Commercial Banks in Rural Development

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If rural development in India is to be a success, then besides the basic inputs for agricultural activity and allied rural industries, the infrastructural problems must not be lost sight of. The timely provision of adequate inputs which are accessible to most farmers at reasonable prices, is essential in an agriculture-dominated economy. Besides arranging for tapping groundwater potential and provision of irrigation facilities, transportation and marketing outlets are also to be provided, in order to ensure adequate returns to the small farmer. If he is to maximise his outputs, availability of hybrid and high quality seeds, fertilisers, electricity, etc., has to be ensured. Also, support prices have to be assured. Unemployment, for the major part of the year for the landless labourers and for the marginal and small farmers during the summer, has to be taken care of. In our country, family planning, education and health also assume crucial importance.

The role of credit which is a major input in rural reconstruction is a vital one. Without adequate credit, the chain of agricultural operations cannot be unravelled. Farmers need credit not only for capital construction but also to meet their day-to-day cash expenses during the winter harvest period. Credit has been a major mechanism in the hands of the rural rich for extracting surplus from the poor peasants and this is evident from the very high share of rural credit supplied by non-institutional agencies. In 1951-52, it was estimated that out of the estimated credit requirement of Rs.

750 crores, more than 90 per cent was provided by non-institutional agencies. In the 50s and 60s, though there has been a marginal increase in the percentage of credit supplied by institutional agencies, money-lenders and such rural financing agencies, continue to play a leading role in the rural credit market.

Banking Sector

Banking in India has witnessed several triumphs. The number of bank branches has increased from 8,000 to 25,000. The population per branch has decreased to 18,000. Bank deposits increased from Rs. 4646 crores to Rs. 15,036 crores. Per capita deposits increased from Rs. 188 to Rs. 247. The per capita credit increased from Rs. 68 to Rs. 168 and deposits as percentage of national income increased from 15.3 to 22.2. The credit deposit ratio is around 67 per cent. But this in fact is non-uniform. The rural sector has not benefited substantially and only small fraction of total bank lending is available for it. Though 50 per cent of GNP comes from the farm sector, commercial banks meet only 9.4 per cent of the rural credit. Thus, the role of commercial banks in rural development has to be viewed in the perspective of past achievement, the monitoring ongoing schemes and future growth areas.

India's past roots have been strongly set in her agricultural achievements. But the present has to ensure that future priorities are clearly spelt out, so that

appropriate action can be taken, in due course. Agricultural operations will continue to be the backbone of the country's economy, but the future lies in rural industrialisation. Thus, even though the commercial bank's share in the advances to the rural sector is still minimal, with the rapid increase in bank branches, and change from security oriented system of lending to productivity based lending and with finance available at cheaper rates than is provided for by the non-institutional agencies, financing of rural development by commercial banks will not be a far-fetched idea. But banking is an evolutionary process and all changes have to be assimilated into the banking system.

Problem of Repayment

But to what extent can rural development be financed by banks? Commercial banks owe a duty to their depositors to invest their funds safely so that returns (by way of interest) are secured. The politicalization of writing off overdue cooperative loans from small farmers in several states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh etc., is bound to boomerang on the resources portion of the states concerned. This creates a psychosis amongst the institutional borrowers that much funds need not be repaid. In Tamil Nadu, the Agriculturists Association which is a powerful farmers' lobby has already demanded postponement in repaying loans from nationalised banks. This demand if acceded to, will induce other borrowers who regularly repay their dues, to be wayward about returning amounts borrowed. In cases of genuine difficulties only, staggering repayment over 5-10 years could be done and fresh loaning for agricultural operations allowed.

The increase in the number of wilful defaulters is alarming, and Dr Datey has rightly diagnosed the ills in cooperative sector as due to wilful defaulters aided by political interference. This sickness should be isolated and not allowed to spread to the commercial banking sector.

A great disadvantage is that the aims of the SDO's and the bank managers are at variance. The target-oriented lending and identification of potential borrowers cannot be acceptable to the rural branch managers since they must take adequate and necessary precautions to safeguard loans. Sanction of loans without ensuring its productive use and ability to generate profits to meet consumption needs and pay off the loans along with the interest, would be suicidal. Also, commercial banks cannot avail of the enforcement machinery available to the cooperative institutions, due to the reluctance of most states to make changes as recommended in the Talwar Committee Report. Having set out the major problems confronting the financing of agricultural operations by commercial banks we shall now study what types of credit facilities are offered by the commercial banks to the agricultural sector, both by way of direct as well as indirect finance.

Financing of the Agricultural Sector

Commercial banks provide direct finance to the agricultural sector through a variety of credit schemes. The five major purposals are (i) crop loans (ii) minor irrigation (iii) tractors (iv) dairying and (v) poultry. Besides there are location-specific schemes (or area schemes) as well as world-Bank

Special 1980

assisted projects like Small Farmers' Development Agencies (SFDA), Agricultural Land Development and Drought Prone Area Development (DPAD), in schemes of various types and schemes for rural Finance, commercial bank area-approach, per the guidelines, eligible for banks. Thus, banks through direct and development direct finance

Indirect Reserve Bank

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assisted projects, special programmes like Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Agencies (MFAL) and Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAD), integrated area-approach schemes of various state governments and schemes formulated by the Agricultural Finance Corporation for the commercial banks. The schemes under area-approach which are formulated as per the guidelines of the ARDC, are eligible for refinance for commercial banks. Thus schemes of commercial banks through which credit is provided directly to agriculturist for production and development needs, are classified as direct finance credit schemes.

Indirect finance, as classified by the Reserve Bank are :

- (i) Credit for financing distribution of fertilisers, pesticides and seeds;
- (ii) Loans to Electricity Boards for providing electricity to individual farms for irrigation of wells;
- (iii) Loans to farmers through primary agricultural credit societies (PACS);
- (iv) Finance for hire-purchase schemes for distribution of agricultural machinery and equipment;
- (v) Loans for construction of storage facilities like warehouses and godowns;
- (vi) Loans for spraying operation undertakers;
- (vii) Loans to cooperative marketing societies;
- (viii) Loans to cooperative banks;
- (ix) Financing of farmers indirectly through cooperative system;
- (x) Loans to Agro-Industries Co-operation;
- (xi) Loans to State sponsored Agricultural Credit Cooperation;
- (xii) Advances to Agricultural Finance cooperation.

Lead Bank Scheme

In order to involve the banks more closely in the task of rural development, the Lead Bank Scheme was formulated in 1969. In all 350 districts in the country have been allotted to both public sector and private sector banks which will act as the lead Bank and in conjunction with the Branches of commercial banks operating in the district and various Government agencies, be responsible for the development of the district. Based on District Survey Reports, a District Credit Plan involving all financial agencies operating in the District and including cooperative institutions, is drawn up. The first plan ended in 1979 and the results are yet to be assessed. However, a coordinated and planned effort which is monitored, by the Reserve Bank, has achieved some measure of success. The second District Credit Plan in 1980-82 is under implementation and targets for each bank are fixed both for the agricultural sector and the rural industries sector. However, the non-availability of dependable data

on technical and economic aspects, the lack of sufficient expertise, ineffective supervision, lack of appreciation of the importance of the scheme are mainly due to inadequate involvement and the total lack of meaningful coordination between commercial and cooperative banks operating in the region. Also, the support functions which are to be provided by Government agencies, leave a lot to be desired.

One of the major difficulties, is the identification of suitable borrowers. Government agencies which are expected to help the banks adopt a target-oriented approach and do not help in the recovery of loan amounts when overdue. Double financing both by commercial and cooperative banks is rather common and sometimes borrowers are untraceable at the provided. The District Consultative Committee meetings supposed to be held at quarterly intervals, are not only non-functional they have little relevance to the many down-to-earth aspects of the schemes. Maintenance of proper land-revenue records is also to be taken up immediately in right earnest.

Shortcomings of credit schemes

The important shortcomings of many of the credit schemes relating to direct financing have been pinpointed in a Reserve Bank study:

- (i) Perfunctory attention to the nature of support available from infrastructural facilities and complementary activities to the purposes covered by the credit schemes.
- (ii) Unrealistic assumptions in working out the economic viability and repayment schedule of loans and not taking into account local factors.
- (iii) Excessive caution in defining the universe of eligible borrowers and in the specifications of security-oriented loan documents and other formalities.
- (iv) Lack of attention to assessing the scope of lending to different categories of borrowers especially low-income groups.
- (v) Almost exclusive concern with individual in sanctions of loans while joint-ownership of assets prevails in rural areas.
- (vi) Non-dovetailing of credit schemes for direct finance with those for indirect finance.

Because of these shortcomings, many credit schemes are meant for standard, conventional purposes with stereotyped content and do not reflect area-specific realities. These shortcomings are due to inadequate importance given by the commercial banks to the tasks of scheme formulation and appraisal and various limitations of the modalities, followed in scheme formulation. However, the blame for these shortcomings are not to be apportioned to the banks alone. Their difficulties, arising from lack of experience in agricultural finance, have been further compounded by the non-existence of micro-level operational plans of development activities from which credit schemes could be readily derived.

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The area-planning approach which is now sought to be implemented since the Lead Bank scheme was introduced in 1969, has been endorsed by the Balwant Desai Committee which went into various aspects of the agricultural financing operations of commercial banks. The extension of banking facilities to unbanked centres has brought down the average population per branch. Besides each taluka local-quarters is to have a bank branch. However, branch expansion in relatively backward districts has been slower compared to that in advanced districts. There is definitely, a causal relationship between the level of economic development and level of banking development in various districts. Actual credit requirements of backward districts, are rarely met.

Village adoption scheme

Village adoption schemes are another important innovation in the sphere of rural development. As at the end of December 1979; 55,070 villages had been adopted. The total volume of credit extended to these villages is Rs. 295 crores and the number of borrowers accounts entertained by banks per village is hardly 28. Thus the advances per adopted village works out to only Rs. 53,000 and the number of borrowers accounts is insignificant. A cursory glance at state-level data reveals that more villages are adopted in the progressive states than in the less developed ones. Thus more thrust has to be given to the area-intensive programmes if banks are to avoid scattered lending and inadequate follow-up in far-flung areas. The ideal before commercial banks will be when banks can prepare farm plans for all the farm families in the adopted villages and try to ensure that all credit

requirement of the villages are met by a single financial agency.

Motivation and training

Trained field staff is necessary if banks are to take up development work seriously. Government agencies have failed to deliver the goods as far as developmental activity is concerned. Voluntary agencies can arouse the necessary enthusiasm amongst the villages selected and provide volunteers so that there is no communication gap. It is the duty of the commercial banks and other financial agencies, to provide credit and expert advice on crops and other agricultural operations and monitor the utilization advances effectively. Through coordination with other agencies, banks have to accelerate the pace of economic change in the adopted villages.

To ensure that resources mobilised by the bank in rural areas are deployed in the area of operations and not siphoned off to service the commercial sector, the Government stipulation relating to credit operations requires banks attain a minimum credit deposit ratio of 60 per cent in the rural/semi-urban sector. This stipulation indirectly benefits backward areas as invariably, the credit-deposit ratios in these areas are less than 30 to 40 per cent. Another stipulation relating to advances is that 40 per cent of the advances under DIR are to be extended to Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes in the rural areas. Besides, advances to the priority sectors (including agriculture) should constitute 33 per cent of the total advances. However, no directive insists that banks extend a larger volume of credit to the backward districts. All these stipulations do affect the profitability.

lity of banks to some extent. However, since these are social obligations of the banking industry, commercial banks must lend whole-hearted support to the Government in seeking to uplift society.

To a shrewd observer, it would seem that the multiplicity of financial institutions operating in the rural sector would create complications due to non-delimitation of zones or areas of operation. There are commercial banks in competition with one another, primary agricultural credit societies, branches of Regional Rural Banks (co-sponsored by the commercial banks). Cooperative banks, various state-sponsored development co-operations etc. Hitherto, coordinated effort has not been possible. And the volume of credit for the rural sector is increasing.

An Apex Bank for Rural Development.

Between 1973 and 1985, credit needs of the agricultural sector is expected to increase from Rs. 1,537 crores to Rs. 9,400 crores. And in January 1980, a reorganised Integrated Rural Development Programme has been taken up for implementation, by the Centre and the states. This programme envisages development of agriculture and animal husbandry, setting up of village, cottage and agro-industries and improvement of rural schemes. The Sivaraman Committee which was formed to develop guidelines for rural development, recommended the establishment of NABARD. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, for overseeing the mobili-

sation and use of resources needed. This is not only to be a national apex bank for agriculture but should concern itself with all aspects of rural improvement. It will also provide refinance for crops rural banks and rural branches of commercial banks. Success of the rural development programme depends upon how the financial agencies go about this business. Overlapping of roles should be avoided and demarcation of area of activity be based on not only one overall competence but on ability to tackle specific credit challenges in villages. The concept of Regional Rural Banks has to be studied once again since rural banks have been unable to compete with rural branches of commercial banks for deposit mobilisation and most regional rural banks have not come up to expectation because of the ambivalent attitude of State Governments who are not willing to have the sick cooperatives replaced by rural banks. There may be a case for scrapping these Regional Rural Banks after the formation of NABARD.

The role of agriculture in rural development has been discussed at length but rural development will not be really possible unless rural industries are also developed. As the trend towards mechanisation continues, with increased returns from agricultural operations (Punjab, Western UP, etc., are good examples), the employment of surplus labourers who do not own, own small pieces of land, have to be taken up. An integrated rural development approach cannot afford to neglect this aspect.



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Voluntary Organisations in Rural Development

□ K. K. Mukherjee*

VOLUNTARY efforts for rural development were initiated mostly by great individuals and organisations including Christian missionaries and other religious bodies from the middle of the nineteenth century. Quite a few organisations for rural reconstruction, embodying important principles and approaches to community development, were in existence by the end of the forties of the present century in almost all parts of the country. Notable among these efforts was the work around Sriniketan by Rabindranath Tagore in collaboration with Elmhirst of Britain, and at Sevagram by Mahatma Gandhi. Original work was also done by Dr. Spencer Match at Marthandam in Madras, by F. L. Brayne in Gurgaon, by V. T. Krishnamachari in the erstwhile State of Borada, etc. All these represented systematic attempts to develop life and society in specific rural communities and made consciously to apply technological knowledge.

Voluntary organisations have continued to play a role after Independence in the field of rural development through the organisation of various rural reconstruction programmes, carrying out experiments in the formulation and implementation of development programmes and methods and techniques of successful action, and in making available this experience to others. This has been possible largely because of their understanding of local needs, problems and resources; their capacity to involve local people and secure their cooperation and participation; and their desire to experi-

ment with new programmes, strategies and approaches for rural development without incurring large expenditures.

This paper attempts to analyse the history, nature, programmes, methodologies of worker, leadership, beneficiaries, resource mobilisation and problems of voluntary organisations engaged in rural development. The analysis covers about 1,850 organisations, whose territorial distribution is given in Table I. Other aspects have been studied on the basis of information available from about 360 organisations.

The information was gathered through documentary resources, questionnaires, visits and interview schedules over a period of five years. The findings are only of an indicative nature.

History of Development

The development of voluntary organisations has not been uniform whether chronologically or geographically. There was slow development up to the Second World War. This picked up during the period 1945-55, but was followed by a decline and another spurt after 1965. About 70 per cent of the organisations were formed during the two action periods. The spurt during 1945-55 is mainly because of the motivation provided by Gandhi and Vinoba and the people's desire to free the country from bondage through rural reconstruction. A change in the attitude of young people due to a gradual realisation that rural development cannot be achieved solely

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by government action, JP's movement, and the easy availability of resources have more recently given a boost to the formation of organisations after 1965.

The Government's new rural development thrust, with the involvement and collaboration of voluntary organisations, has opened up a new era of mutual trust and cooperation and prompted many individuals and organisations to take up comprehensive and integrated rural development programmes in a big way.

The year 1930-45 and 1955-65 particularly mark periods of lull in the history of voluntary organisation. While the World War and post-War recovery might have been the limiting factors during the former period, the introduction of the community development programme slowed down the growth of voluntary organisations during the latter period by instilling a feeling in the minds of people that rural development is primarily a governmental responsibility.

The territorial development of voluntary organisations has also not followed a uniform pattern. The eastern and western regions have a large number of voluntary organisations, accounting for about 60 per cent of the total. The western region ranks first. A probable reason for this trend might be the social reform and independence movements which were organised first in the western and eastern regions and then spread to other regions. These movements exposed the people of western and eastern India to the outside world and instilled in them a desire to organise rural reconstruction programmes for the upliftment of the downtrodden masses.

The number of voluntary organi-

sations is more in comparatively developed districts. This has resulted in concentration in certain areas and a paucity of voluntary action in under-developed districts where they might have been more needed. Chronically drought-hit or flood-hit districts have relatively fewer organisations. For instance, Ana-

Table I
Distribution of the Organisations

(States & Territory wise)

S. No.	State	No. of organisations
1	Andhra Pradesh	104
2	Assam	79
3	Bihar	169
4	Gujarat	148
5	Haryana	31
6	Himachal Pradesh	35
7	Jammu & Kashmir	17
8	Karnataka	65
9	Kerala	133
10	Madhya Pradesh	91
11	Maharashtra	127
12	Meghalaya	34
13	Manipur	4
14	Nagaland	4
15	Orissa	70
16	Punjab	27
17	Rajasthan	216
18	Sikkim	nil
19	Tamilnadu	81
20	Tripura	10
21	Uttar Pradesh	125
22	West Bengal	101
Total		1,671

Union Territories

1	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	nil
2	Arunachal Pradesh	11
3	Chandigarh	4
4	Delhi	65
5	Goa, Daman & Diu	74
6	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	3
7	Lakshadweep	nil
8	Mizoram	18
9	Pondicherry	2
		177
Grand total 1,671 + 177		= 1,848

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ndapur, Mahboobnagar and Cuddapah in Andhra Pradesh ; Mirzapur and Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh ; Panchmahals and Banaskantha in Gujarat ; Purulia in West Bengal ; and Nowgong and Cachar in Assam have fewer organisations in comparison with other districts in those States. Various factors have made for concentration in economically developed districts, the most important of these being the availability of facilities and resources.

The development of the organisations has no link with the size of the State or its population. For example, Uttar Pradesh, the biggest State in India, having the largest population has only 125 organisations, whereas smaller states like Gujarat and Kerala have 148 and 133 organisations respectively. Differences in literacy levels combined with the social consciousness of the people and the socio-political situation have greatly contributed to this difference.

The concentration of voluntary organisations is more apparent in the districts in which State capitals are located mainly due to proximity to the centre of power, reliance on the Government, and other facilities. For example, Hyderabad district alone accounts for one fourth of the total organisations in Andhra Pradesh. Lucknow District also has the largest number of voluntary organisations in UP. The same trend may be observed in Rajasthan, Arunachal, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Mizoram and Pondicherry.

Organisation and Area of Operation.

Most organisations are registered as

societies, trusts or cooperatives. They work mainly on non-profit and non-political lines, even though, in many cases, individuals associated with these organisations have political affiliations.

Many organisations tend to revolve around individual personalities, i.e. the sponsors or the founders who have been motivated by men like Tagore, Gandhi, Vinoba and JP.

Excluding about five per cent which function at the national or regional level, bulk are mainly village level organisations even though some of them have activities in urban areas. The coverage of these grassroots organisations vary widely according to the resources in hand and the degree of cooperation available from the people. Some 13 per cent of all organisations work in less than 10 villages, 12 per cent in 10-20 villages, 40 per cent in 20-50 villages, 27 per cent in 50-100 villages and eight per cent in more than 100 villages.

There has been a recent tendency to widen both the geographical and population coverage. Organisations which were working in five or 10 villages even five years ago have started taking up programmes for watersheds covering about 40 villages, sometimes even for a block. Easy availability of funds, mainly from international donors, and the Government's desire to involve voluntary organisations in rural development have largely contributed to the situation. In determining coverage, organisations mostly take into consideration the accessibility of the area, the needs of the locality, the resources locally, available and local cooperation besides their own resources and objectives.

Programmes

Voluntary organisations can be classified into five broad programme categories: education, irrigation and agriculture, khadi and village industries, livestock development, and health and social welfare.

Those engaged in agriculture and irrigation constitute the largest number. They account for about 40 per cent of the total. Next come organisations working for educational development, representing about 36 per cent of the total. Khadi and village industries account for about 15 per cent and the rest comprise organisations working mainly in the field of livestock development and health and social welfare.

The programmes of almost all organisations aim at economic development of the people and the area. Social development programmes have not received proper attention. About 50 per cent of all organisations do not have programmes for social development primarily because of a desire to change the economic condition of the people first and then take up long-term social development programmes which need persuasion and a change of attitude among the people.

Experimentation is common among all organisations. For instance Kishore Bharati and the Friends Rural Centre are carrying on experiments in science education; the Social Work and Research Centre, Tilenia, on groundwater development, and Anand Niketan and the Samanwaya Ashram on life education. Agrindus is trying to create a bond of barefoot technicians, besides creating irrigation facilities through small dams,

and Seva Bharati on economic development programmes.

Programmes are mostly based on the needs of the people, the resources available in the area and the objectives of the organisations, and they have been developed on the basis of identification of needs and the fixing of priorities.

Methodology of Work

Organisations engaged in rural development have failed to evolve common strategies mainly because of lack of communication between and within organisations. Absence of coordination may be another factor. The methodology of work of organisations differs on the basis of their workers, situations and objectives. Leadership greatly determines methodologies.

Multiple methods are used in the organisation of the programmes. The formulation and implementation of the programme is done in stages like identification of needs, creating of opinion towards solution of the needs, formulation and evaluation of the programme, and in all these stages methodologies of work differ even though meetings and discussion are common to all stages, and at various levels, namely individual, group and community.

Workers

Voluntary organisations have both paid and unpaid workers, although paid workers are more numerous. The proportion of paid to unpaid workers has been estimated at about 2:1. With regard to the strength of workers the range of variation is 1:100.

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Workers mostly function as multipurpose workers, mainly because of lack of trained staff and inadequate resources. Consequently workers are sometimes found doing work unrelated to their educational background and training. According to one organiser "we cannot afford to have a number of workers. Obviously we prefer someone who can double both as a field and office worker."

Recruitment and selection of workers done through various means: personal contact, camps or work projects; friendly sources, and advertisements. Recruitment through advertisement is done by a very few organisations like Seva Mandir and the Xavier Institute of Social Service. Most organisations prefer to recruit workers either through personal contact or friendly sources because these generally enable them to get suitable workers. While recruiting paid workers, the organisations give first priority to their own voluntary workers, the interests and motivation of workers are given due importance, besides their understanding of village problems, education and training.

Securing employment appears to be the main motivation for the vast majority of the workers. Others join voluntary organisations mainly because of their desire to serve the country and the people, bring about socio-economic changes, satisfy altruistic and creative urges, experiment and do something new independently of government. Of these, the first four are the most common.

The workers in the organisations sampled are predominantly Hindus. Muslim and Christian workers are very few. Only about five per cent of the total

workers belong to minority communities. Of the total number of workers, about 90 per cent are males. This vast preponderance of male workers over female workers is primarily because voluntary organisations provide fewer opportunities for women. The hazardous nature of work and absence of proper facilities in terms of accommodation, etc., also limits the entry of women.

The workers in many cases do not belong to the regions where they work. About 50 per cent of them are drawn from urban areas. They mostly belong to the middle level socio-economic groups. The majority (about 70 per cent) are within the age group 30-35 years, the average age being about 37 years.

The educational background of the workers varies widely, but the general level of education and training is comparatively poor. Excepting a few organisations like Agrindus, Kishore Bharati and Seva Mandir which have qualified and trained workers in spite of modest salary scales, others have failed to draw trained and experienced workers largely for want of resources.

The leadership of the organisations with certain exceptions is mostly in the hands of elderly persons and exhibits a combination of authoritarian and democratic leadership. The comparatively young leaders are found to be more democratic than elder leaders. Even within these younger elements, those who have just started out are more democratic. In the words of the head of an organisation in Uttar Pradesh, which has just started working, "I cannot afford to be authoritarian. Firstly I do not have a sufficient number of workers with

Table II

Agency	Budget of a Recent Year (BR) or Total Expenditure so far (TE)	Sources of Finance	Comments
1	2	3	4
1.	Rs 50 lakhs (TE) 5 years	People's contribution (free labour or, cash) 15%; Govt. 50%; donor voluntary agencies 35%.	Seed money also comes from the same source in the same proportion. Industrial units have provided a job per Rs 1,900 of investment.
2.	Rs 150 lakhs (TE) in 5 years	Foreign donors; beneficiaries contribution.	An average of 20,000 employed during 1972-73 on food-for-work programmes.
3.	Rs 80 lakhs (BR)	Government, foreign donors, foreign governments.	
4.	Rs 6 lakhs as a loan from KVIC	State Governments and KVIC, also donations.	Self-generating industrial units have an investment of Rs 4 lakhs. Approximately one job is created for every Rs 2,000 of investment. These units have shown a surplus.
5.	Rs 6.66 lakhs (TE) in 9 years	Government.	
6.	Rs 70,000 (BR) Head Office	Foreign donors and KVIC.	Some of the activities generate a small surplus for the agency.
7.	Rs 25 lakhs (TE) for 5 years	Foreign donors.	
8.	Rs 70,000	Foreign donors, service charges on members.	
9.	Rs 15 lakhs approximately (BR) including Rs 2 lakhs for overheads	Foreign donors, Indian donors, institutional beneficiaries also contribute.	Income-generating units not started as that would hamper the spirit of the service.
10.	Rs 50,000 (BR)	Foreign and Indian donors, institutional finance, people's contribution.	No income-yielding projects as yet.
11.	Rs 20,000 (BR)	Public contributions and foreign donors.	The Agency's local fund raising campaign has been a notable feature, accounting for the bulk of its resources.
12.	Rs 2.5 lakhs (BR)	Foreign donors, Indian donors and KVIC.	A little contribution comes from people by voluntary labour.

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An average of 20,000 employed during 1972-73 on food-for-work programmes.

Self-generating industrial units have an investment of Rs 4 lakhs. Approximately one job created for every Rs 1,000 of investment. These units have shown surplus.

Some of the activities generate a small surplus for the agency.

Some-generating units started as that would temper the spirit of the vice.

Income-yielding projects as yet.

Agency's local funding campaign has been a notable feature, counting for the bulk of its resources.

Little contribution comes from people by voluntary labour.

me; and secondly I have just started and have to learn many things I can command other".

Almost all the voluntary organisations studied lack a secondline of leadership. In fact, this has come to be recognised as a common problem. Lack of proper delegation of work, and lack of incentives and recognition from the established leader of the organisation have contributed to this problem. The attitude of established leaders also often stands in the way of developing a healthy secondline of leadership. Leaders of some organisations, it has been found, consider leadership a matter of prestige and, therefore, consciously or unconsciously try to avert the emergence of a secondline of leaders. The problem of secondline leadership is more acute in those organisations where leadership is in the hands of very elderly persons. An elderly leader of a renowned organisation said, "I ask my workers to listen and do what I want them to do."

Interlocking leadership is another feature, even though it results in lack of supervision. A study of voluntary organisations in Rajasthan has revealed

that the office of president and secretary of various organisations mostly revolve around a few persons who are comparatively both known and have some influence in the government and over the people. As a result, the president of an organisation is found to function as the secretary of a second organisation and the treasurer of a third.

Mobilisation of Resources

Local contributions are gradually shrinking due to various reasons, such as the increase of poverty and changes in their expectations. Nowadays people expect service without contributing anything towards that service. The welfare-charity approach has largely contributed to the easy availability of funds from international donors and the Government which has in turn reduced the pressure to raise local resources. Organisations are becoming dependent on grants from international donor agencies, the Government and banks. Due to this, some of the them have started ad hoc programmes, which in many cases do not relate to local needs.

The Table II regarding the finances of 12 organisations tells its own story.



We have to make a choice between India of the villages that are as ancient as herself and India of the cities which are a creation of foreign domination. Today the cities dominate and drain the villages so that they are crumbling to ruin.

Mahatma Gandhi.

Harijan, 20-1-40

Women's Participation in Rural Development

□ Sutapa Mukherjee*

EVEN though there has been an increase in the activities and involvement of voluntary organisations in the field of rural development, it has remained a man's domain. While women constitute about 50 per cent of the total population of the country, only a negligible number of them are participating in these organisations. Such a situation came to light when efforts were made to analyse:

1. Background of the workers engaged in rural development, and
2. Participants of the national conferences seminars workshops on rural development held during the year 1977-79.

While the former reveals that only about 10 per cent of the total workers of the voluntary organisations are women, the latter show that only 5 per cent of the total participants were women.

The situation relating to women's representation in the governing bodies of the organisations, is still worse excepting for a few organisations like Bharatiya Gramin Mahila Sangh, Kasturba Gandhi Memorial Trust etc., which extensively work for women. As per available information, about 50 per cent of the total organisations do not have any women representation at all.

The women's involvement either as a field worker or as an authority organising the programme has accordingly remained at a very low ebb and their

participation in the decision-making is almost insignificant. This is the situation even for the organisations wherein it has been made a policy to have one or two women representatives on its governing body. The women representative rarely plays any significant role. In the words of women, who has been made a Chairman of a voluntary organisation, "I have been made a Chairman because that suits the organisation. But I do what other members expect me to do."

It is worth mentioning that, while women's involvement in general, has been found to be at a low ebb, their numerical participation differs on the basis of difference in the area of operation of the organisation and on the recognition of the organisation. This aside, it has been noted that voluntary organisations functioning at a national or regional level have comparatively greater number of women than the organisations working at the village level. Organisations, which have been able to establish themselves and have some recognition are in a better position to draw women to organise their programme.

Obstacles

The reasons for the lack of women's participation in the voluntary efforts can be attributed mainly to their own unwilling nature and also to the prevailing social customs, attitudes and practices of a male-dominated society.

* Research Associate, Gram Niyojan Kendra, Gaziabad.

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Impressions/GSP/3

The unwillingness of women to get involved in any activity outside their own houses or families shows a lack of confidence in themselves, carrying apprehensions in their mind about working in village environment with persons little or not known. They become afraid of many things including attitude of men. And these prevent them from taking up work which may force them to go to villages where there may be no other women workers.

The spirit of adventure and mobility is comparatively low among women. They also cannot take up to very hard and rough life. Rural development work, at the initial phase at least, is nothing but hard and rough.

Disapproval of the society, prevailing social customs, attitudes and norms etc., all together or separately work stumbling blocks against women taking up untraditional responsibility like working in a village for upliftment of the conditions of the downtrodden population. In the words of a woman organiser, it can be said that "from my childhood I was interested in social work with the people. But my parents wanted me to take either teaching or medicine. When I took up my present job as an organiser of the rural development programme and was required to go from village to village, my parents felt that I have tarnished their image and brought degradation to the family." Another woman worker of a well-known organisation said "when I came to work and went to live in a village, the villagers felt there must be something wrong either in my personality or in character. A few of them made some remarks also. But when they found I was serious and I

really meant business they stopped making adverse comments.

In addition to the above-mentioned problems, there are others which also limit women's participation, and these include :

A. Failure of the voluntary organisations to provide the women some basic facilities, like accommodation, which may not be a must for male workers. Even though this is mainly due to lack of resources available at the disposal of the organisation. No doubt this to a great extent, prevents women to join voluntary organisation.

B. Uncertainty about the programmes and activities of the organisations: There are a good number of organisations which run their programmes on ad hoc basis and fail to provide any assurance of continuity. Women who want to work as workers, usually prefer to have a securer job and therefore, hesitate to take up any such work assignments which does not provide continuity and permanence.

C. Lack of proper incentives: Due to lack of proper resources the organisations fail to provide attractive salary sometimes even the minimum wages. Women who want to work only for their economic necessities consider the salaries offered by the organisations too unattractive and therefore, refrain from taking up any work assignments unless family condition force them.

D. Unglamorous nature of work: Village work does not provide any special status, glamour or publicity. As a result, in the preference list of jobs of

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the young educated women, rural development work stands at a very low position.

Profile of the Women Participants

Not only the women's participation is very low, the participants are also not drawn from all the strata of the society. The two different categories of participants, namely the workers and the authorities organising the programmes are from two distinct socio-economic categories, namely the middle socio-economic and the higher socio-economic groups.

The women workers involved in the actual implementation of the programme come mostly from the middle socio-economic group of the society. Almost all of them, as per available information, are Hindus (more than 96% of the total women workers have been found to be Hindus). About 10 per cent of them are from scheduled castes or tribes. They

mainly belong to the age groups 25-40 years and their educational standard is poor. About 80 per cent of them are either matriculates or have studied up to that standard. In many cases they are either unmarried, or widowed or deserted. They are in the organisation because of their economic necessities.

The organisers, on the other hand, are mostly from the affluent higher strata of the society, even though they are predominantly Hindus and are rarely from scheduled castes or tribes. They are better educated, a few of them are highly trained and are comparatively from higher age groups than the women workers. The majority of them are married. To many of them, their husband's position has contributed to their social position. In majority of the cases their motivation for involvement in the organisations is coupled with their desire to serve the community and satisfy their own aspirations in the life. □

The more I penetrate the villages, the greater is the shock delivered as I perceive the blank stare in the eyes of the villagers I meet. Having nothing else to do but to work as labourers side by side with their bullocks, they have become almost like them. It is a tragedy of the first magnitude that millions have ceased to use their hands as hands. Nature is revenging herself upon us with terrible effect for this criminal waste of the gift she has bestowed upon us human beings. We refuse to make full use of the gift. And it is the exquisite mechanism of the hands that among a few other things separates us from the beast. Millions of us use them merely as feet. The result is that she starves both the body and the mind.

The spinning wheel alone can stop this reckless waste. It can do that now and without any extraordinary outlay of money or intelligence. Owing to this waste, we are living in a state almost of suspended animation. It can be revived if only every home is again turned into a spinning mill and every village into a weaving mill. With it will at once revive the ancient rustic art and the rustic song. A semistarved nation can have neither religion nor art nor organisation.

MAHATMA GANDHI

Young India, 17-2-1927, p. 52

FOCUS ON PROBLEMS

★ *Agriculture*

★ *Technology*

★ *Population*

★ *Education*

Sardar Patel's Vision

What will be the village of Swarajya like ?

In the model village, the farmer will accumulate and prepare manures in pits, the excreta of cattles will also be disposed there and by putting sleepers on the pits, he will construct latrines and won't waste valuable manure....

In the model village, the courtyard of the villagers would be sprinkled with water and their womenfolk would raise rose nurseries there. Nowadays their children defecate there. Flies sit on the excreta and the same flies roam in their rooms and houses....

How beautiful will be the children of these villages ? Their eyes, nose and face would neither be unclean nor their clothes dirty. Their cheeks would shine like roses.

In this model village, villagers will respect their womenfolk, will love them and they will be considered partners in the household. Today, the villager does not even know how to behave with women. Take it to your heart that a woman ultimately becomes mother and she is worthy of being revered. The rod is not for her....

The Charkha will become as natural as agriculture in this village. I don't call him a peasant who raises cotton and still brings clothes from outside....

The wells in the model village will not be like as they are. It is difficult to stand near your wells. There is so much mud and flies nearby.

In the village of Swarajya, the womenfolk of peasants won't have to tumble in the dark. By organising villages, lanterns will be purchased, rich villagers will provide oil for them, youngmen and womenfolk will clean and light them regularly....

But when will this Swarajya be established ? When there is no trace of fighting in the village, when all sections of the village understand their responsibility and fulfil them.

From the speech delivered at village *Ena* in Palsana Tehsil, (Gujarat) on December 18, 1928.

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Panchayats the Cornerstone

M. S. Golwalkar



GRAM Panchayats have been the cornerstone of our socio-economic system. It is these Panchayats which, through widening circles of elections, finally elected the Ashta Pradhan Samitis, the eight-member cabinet which acted as the advisory council to the king. These Panchayats were functional in their character. Of course, in those days life was not so complicated as at present. There were mainly four functional groups at that time. The first group comprised those devoted to study and teaching of material and spiritual sciences; the second, those entrusted with the running of administration. The third were the traders, and the fourth, those engaged in agriculture and allied handicrafts. There was a fifth group also residing in forests and living on hunting and forest produce. This fifth group was called the Nishada. Representatives of all these five together were taken so as to represent the interests of the society as a whole.

These days the slogan of Panchayat Raj is often heard. But the whole system has become perverted. Groupism and casteism have displaced the functional scheme. Notori-

ous goondas often get elected to the Panchayats. Appeal to casteism, lure of money, threats, physical assaults have become the deciding factors; functional expertise has been thrown to winds. However, these distortions will have to be corrected. Well-meaning and socially conscious persons in each field should be encouraged to come together and exert their influence so as to give a clean and effective rural base to the entire national edifice. Stipulating that elections to Panchayats shall be unanimous, or that there shall be no elections at all would be a very useful step in this direction. Electoral rolls and rules of elections may be suitably modified so as to ensure such a healthy and purposeful structure at the base. If needbe, the constitution also may be suitably amended. This could help foster a spirit of greater cooperation among the various groups and harmonise their needs and interests. Of course, this approach is not all smooth-sailing and does entail several obstacles. But this is an experiment worth trying and is likely to yield beneficial results and minimise the harmful effects of the present system.

□

Agriculture Without Mechanisation

□ Deendayal Upadhyaya

AGRICULTURAL development can be achieved through a two-fold programme—technical and institutional. The first concerns with the systems of cultivation, the inputs and their quantum. In the second, we have to bring a change in the system of (सुधार) landholding and set up institutions for supplying inputs and for marketing the produce. In other words, we have to adopt an integrated approach for agricultural development. A similar approach has to be adopted for industries too.

Reforms in the Systems of Farming

Indian farmers have evolved their own farming system tuned to the needs of the times. We should not abruptly give up the time-honoured practices in favour of these which have not been adequately tried under prevailing Indian conditions. The Indian farmer is conversant with rotation of crops, application of green manure and bio-fertilisers, contour bunding for prevention of soil erosion, afforestation and many other agricultural practices. They have maintained the fertility of the soil for centuries. It is true, however, that he has not been able to apply his knowledge fully in the recent past.

Indian agriculture is very much dependent on the *Indradevata* (The rain god). The rainfall chart in effect is the cardiograph of the Indian farmer. Although the monsoon months are fixed, no one can yet predict either the quantum or the distributional pattern of the rainfall for any given place or area. Even if it does become possible to predict these,

it will be difficult to provide relief in case of either deficit or excess rainfall. As such, the administration in the country from the very beginning, has made provision for irrigation. The Shastras have enjoined us not to treat agriculture as a matter of chance.

Minor Irrigation Schemes

Although India has adopted the American model by taking up construction of large-sized irrigation projects, small schemes are more beneficial to this country in the long run.

Large dams are capital-intensive. The outlay on the three large projects of Bhakra Nangal, Damodar Valley and the Hirakud have been steadily rising. On the other hand, their contribution towards increasing foodgrain production has not been as much as that of the minor schemes as will be evident from the following.

The greatest drawback of large projects is that the waterlevel in their vicinity rises soon after they are implemented thus harming cultivated land and the populated areas. Land becomes saline and hence unproductive, and drinking water becomes unsuitable. Because of the dams forming a barrier to the natural flow of rainwater, and the land saturated with moisture losing its power of absorption, even light showers cause flood situation. The problem of waterlogging is becoming acute in the Bhatinda, Ferozepur, Amritsar and Gurdaspur areas of Punjab and the Muzaffarnagar, Mirzapur and Ghazipur districts of Uttar Pradesh. In many areas, this impounded

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water is being pumped back into the canals, (to relive waterlogging) and it is also being proposed to line the canals with concrete to obviate this problem. Both the remedies are very expensive. As such, only small projects would be appropriate for our country because—

1. They are within means because of the low cost;
2. They are least dependent upon imports of equipment and machinery of experts;
3. They can be completed quickly and hence start giving returns on investment early;
4. They do not involve submersion of large areas of cultivated land like the large projects do;
5. While the utilisation of water from large projects is of the order of only 55 per cent, as much as 95 per cent utilisation is possible from small schemes; and
6. Small irrigation projects can make the maximum use of local efforts and cooperation.

Although the Government has been compelled to pay due attention to minor irrigation schemes after the experience with large projects, it has not yet taken up these on an extensive scale in a coordinated manner.

We will also have to think about repair and renovation of old wells and tanks along with constructing new ones, because it has been found that while new wells and tanks are being dug, the old ones fall into decay and disuse. Some renovation of old sources of irrigation did take place for a year or two, largely

for propaganda purposes, but they were given up later.

There are about 25 lakh wells in the country. With some efforts, the number can easily be taken to one crore. Tube-wells too can prove to be quite useful. Small water courses can be of benefit in the hilly areas and attention has to be paid to them.

Plough or the Tractor?

The farmer needs, in addition to irrigation, improved agricultural implements, bullocks, manures and fertilisers and also quality seeds. Some people obsessed with mechanisation are in favour of deploying tractors for tilling as in the West. But tractors are not suitable under Indian conditions.

For, in the first place, the size of our holdings are small and hence unsuitable for tractors. It is often suggested that the size of the holdings should be enlarged and collective farming adopted for tractors to be economic. But collective farming is totally unsuitable for India in view of the land-population ratio, democratic set-up, eradication of unemployment, improbability of designing the standard measures for agriculture per acre productivity, the attachment the kisan has for his land, and our value system. However, even if we leave for the moment the question of the usefulness or otherwise of the collective farming system, we cannot maintain large farms because of the climatic conditions which cause soil erosion. Moreover, neither the tractors are manufactured in the country, nor the fuel required for running them available here in plenty. It is not possible to train speedily drivers and maintenance mechanics on a large scale.

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Providing spare parts and setting up repair workshops in villages or at least in some central places is also a formidable task. Besides, even if all these problems are solved, the question of the utilisation of our cattle wealth will arise. The number of the progeny of the cow in the country at present is 15.89 crores and that of the buffalo, 3.51 crores. Bullocks and he-buffaloes number 6.42 crores and 63 lakhs respectively. The cows and she-buffaloes can be useful to us for milk, but the bullocks and he-buffaloes will become an economic burden if they cannot be deployed for agricultural purposes. People in the West are beefeaters and can consume surplus cattle, but that is against India's tradition and its ethos. Cattle cannot be slaughtered on the plea of their being an uneconomic burden. Rather they should be made to strengthen the economy. The bullock is the king-pin of our agriculture which tractors will demolish.

Nevertheless, the plough and other implements which are quite suitable to Indian conditions, can be improved upon by minor modifications.

The Agriculture Commission had written in this connection: "In India, agricultural implements by and large are quite suitable to local conditions. Commensurate with the hauling capacity of the bullocks, they are light, cheap, easily manoeuvrable and easily made. Besides, what is most important, they are easily available." However, the ploughs no longer remained cheap once the price of steel went up and their manufacture slipped away from the hands of the carpenters and ironsmiths to the factories. We will have to look after this problem too.

Fertilisers and Manures

Fertilisers are necessary for increasing foodgrains production and maintaining soil fertility. However, manures and fertilisers of the right type should be applied in requisite quantities only after proper soil testing, and taking into account the crop to be grown, the pattern of production and the availability of irrigation. Use of fertilisers has been widely propagated during the last decade and the utilisation of ammonium sulphate too has increased manifold during this period. But it is indisputable fact that sustained use of chemical fertilizers reduces soil fertility instead of enhancing it. As such their use should be made in conjunction with cowdung and farm-yard manures and in limited quantities.

We cannot also be very sure about the quantity of ammonium sulphate which was distributed and even forcibly dumped with the farmers actually used in the fields. It has been reported that ammonium sulphate has been used in many places where prohibition is in vogue for distilling illicit liquor.

Farm-yard manure is a very good source of fertiliser. It is estimated that half of the 8,000 lakh tonnes of cowdung available in the country (every year) is made into cakes to be burnt as fuel. But nothing has been done to divert this quantity for manurial purposes by providing alternate fuels. India is deficient in fuel woods trees. The new forestry laws prevent kisans from collecting twigs and other types of fuelwoods from the forests. Some experiments about production of gobar gas have taken place recently. The gas produced can be used as fuel and for lighting purposes and the residual slurry as manure. The govern-

ment should take up survey regarding the feasibility of its large scale installation for productive use.

Crop rotation can restore fertility to soils. Kisans should be taught crop rotation, technology in respect of several new crops grown these days.

Our National Requirements

The programme of improved seeds drawn up by the government has not been properly implemented. Administra-

tive laxity and red tapism prevents the availability of those seeds at proper time. It is also necessary to take steps to prevent crop diseases.

All these are programmes for which there is no scope for difference in opinion. We can certainly profit from experiences of other countries, but we cannot imitate them. We should apply imported technology only after proper experimentation about their suitability to Indian conditions.



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Appropriate Technology : What and Why ?

□ Y. C. Sharma*

INDIA has two faces, one of comparative higher scientific technological advancements, and life with modern amenities represented by the cities, and the other of backwardness and life of privation and desolation represented by the villages. The latter, though more dominant and relevant, one may accept it or not, is not being duly taken note of. The backwardness of the villages in general can directly be attributed to the lack of application of science and technology to solve the socio-economic problems of the rural areas. There is now an universal desire for richer and better life, and the rural populace has not remained untouched by it. The wind of change is blowing fast over the rural areas, and the rural people too are developing new aspirations to secure a better deal. If this is to be achieved, the rural masses would have to be enabled to fully exploit their potentials by providing them more productive tools and techniques.

What is Appropriate Technology ?

It is neither desirable nor advisable to transfer wholesale the modern technology, which may better be called Western technology, to rural India. For the Western technology, as it stands, has been developed only to subserve the ends of centralised large scale industries and urbanised society only. As such, it has brought into existence an economy based on exploitation of one class, sector or nation by other, and ever-widening gulf between the haves and have-nots in different spheres. What India requires is the technology, which will suit its distinctive requirements, and be in tune with socio-

economic factors prevailing in the country. In this context only, it would be necessary to understand the concept of appropriate technology in all its aspects.

Appropriate technology can be described as the technology, which is suitable to solve the existing problems in a reasonable manner and which is relevant to various socio-economic factors prevailing in the society or a part of it, at a given point of time. What is proper will have to be determined by the goals which are proposed to be achieved by the society. However, the goals to be achieved, as well as the problems which may have to be encountered differ not only from country to country, but also from region to region, industry to industry and even unit to unit. Therefore, it would neither be possible nor desirable to have, what may be called 'appropriate technology' for the country or region or industry on the whole. Nevertheless, it should be for any country to lay down some guiding principles, which would normally decide what sort of technology may be considered suitable to its socio-economic conditions.

Unemployment and Poverty

India has mainly two goals to achieve viz.,

(1) to provide productive employment to its people (2) to ensure substantial rise in the standard of living of the people. In short, top priority is to be given to solve the twin gigantic problems of unemployment and poverty. However,

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these goals have to be achieved within the limitations of our country.

According to a recent estimate, the unemployed and severely underemployed persons in India numbered to one crore and 2 crores respectively, and the working force was expanding by about 60 lakhs per year. In this background, the employment provided by the large scale manufacturing sector at about 66 lakhs in the year 1977-78, despite the total investment of Rs. 19,027 crores in these industries over a period of about 125 years or so, did not give much hope of solving gigantic unemployment problem in an appreciable degree by the large scale industries employing sophisticated labour saving technology. We would have to adopt a labour intensive technology to generate mass employment, if India is to be saved from an unprecedented socio-political upheaval.

According to a recent statement of the Minister of Planning at the Centre, persons below the poverty line in this country are as many as 50% of total population. The average income per capita at the current price level is estimated at Rs. 1,450/- (real income per capita is Rs. 263/- with 1950-51 as base). However, the average income per capita in rural areas, particularly of people below poverty line will be much lower than the national average. Further, the total value of assets of 51.4% of the rural households (in case of artisans the corresponding percentage was 89%) was only up to Rs. 5,000/-. However, on the other hand the amount of debt per rural household as above was from Rs. 651/- to Rs. 1,225/- (highest amount i.e. Rs. 1,225/- in case of artisans).

Capital Intensive Technology

Under these circumstances, it will be almost next to impossible, for majority of the rural people to go in for capital-intensive sophisticated technology requiring huge investment. Even if it was desired, keeping aside some other important issues, to provide employment to all the unemployed and severely underemployed people in the large scale industries only, it will be well-nigh impossible for India to find out the necessary capital inputs for achieving this goal. According to a recent estimate, the average capital investment per worker employed in the large scale factories financed by a few big financing institutions was about Rs. 1,09,000/-. Calculated on this basis, India would require about Rs. 3,25,000/- crores by way of direct investment, in large scale units for providing employment to 3 crores of unemployed and severely underemployed people. The country cannot even dream of finding out such fantastic amount of capital in foreseeable future at least. The appropriate technology for the rural areas will by and large have to be such, which would be within the reach of people with small means, say a few hundreds or on higher side a few thousands of rupees of investment per person.

Problem of Energy

It is taken for granted that the improved technology aiming at higher productivity of man as well as machine must necessarily depend upon the use of power, and from this angle, the supply of energy from large scale power plants, hydel and thermal, has got to be ensured to reap the benefits of modern technology. However, in this sphere too, India is not in a very happy position. Despite

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investment of Rs. 16,064 crores on power generation from 1951-52 to 1978-79, we have been in a position to reach only about 2 lakhs of the villages, and about 60% of the villages in India are still without electricity. However, a hard reality in this context is that even though major part of rural India continues to be outside the zone of power supply, the country is in the grip of almost perpetual power crisis with the result that even the existing units, requiring power, are not in a position to get regular and adequate power supply resulting in lower production. On the other hand, the demand for power continues to rise at about 8% per annum, which means ever-growing gap between the demand for and supply of power. No doubt, the Government have been giving a high priority to power generation schemes in all the Five-Year Plans, yet the supply is not in a position to cope up with ever-increasing hunger for power.

As is well known, generation of hydel power depends in India on monsoon, and many a time the power supply goes out of gear owing to failure of monsoon. But generation of thermal power is even in greater disarray owing to inadequate production of coal and to a greater degree dislocation of transport system. Over and above these short-term factors, which are likely to continue for quite some time, the coal stocks of the country, though estimated in a large quantity, are after all exhaustible and should therefore, be consumed cautiously. Yet, another source of energy is petroleum, in which our country is far from self-sufficient, and consequently has to import petroleum products in huge quantities to meet steeply-rising demand, resulting in heavy drain on precious foreign exchange resources (more than Rs. 3,000 crores per

year). During last three years or so, there has been a tendency to use more and more diesel oil in privately owned motors and generator sets, as there were severe cuts in the supply of electricity. But even for the supply of a few litres of diesel, people have to wait in queue for days, which amply proves that it too is not a reliable substitute of electricity.

Alternative Energy Sources

From the facts mentioned above, the conclusion seems unavoidable that in order to successfully adopt appropriate technology in the manufacturing processes or even raising agriculture produce, more and more use will have to be made of 'unconventional sources of energy' such as bio-gas, solar energy, wind power, etc. It is ironic that in a country like India, where sunshine is available in plenty, not much efforts have been made to utilise the solar energy (which is the biggest source of energy for this world for productive uses) while many developing countries having vast resources of hydel and thermal power have been successfully utilising solar energy for a number of purposes. Even efforts to popularise bio-gas, more popularly known as 'Gobar gas' pioneered by Khadi and Village Industries Commission were pooh-poohed by all and sundry for about a quarter century from 1950 onwards. Thanks to the energy crisis, increasing importance is now being attached to the programme of installing Gobar gas plants, in the country, which are proving to be not only reliable source of energy, but also of rich organic manure so badly needed by our agriculture. It is to be appreciated that for the success of appropriate technology designed to improve the productivity, decentralised production of power also is a

must, and sooner the country realises this, better it would be. In this context another interesting phenomenon, which is to be remembered is that there is as much as 40 % loss of energy in the transmission stage, when electricity is transmitted from big generators to the places of consumption. By adopting appropriate technology in the field of power generation, and producing energy on decentralised basis will result in saving huge transmission losses of energy too.

Idle Manpower

While the need for appropriate technology in order to increase productivity in all walks of life is obvious, in our zeal for improved technology we should not forget this important aspect of the national economic scene that India is a vast country having widely varying geographical as well as socio-economic conditions. In this context, there will always remain the need and scope for different levels of technology in this country, for the main thrust of our programmes has to be on utilisation of the vast human resources also. It would be wiser to utilise whatever idle man power is available in the country and put it to productive use rather than allowing it to remain only a consuming force. To utilise 3 crores of idle human beings would itself mean generation of huge energy, which is otherwise lost for ever. In this context, scientists and technologists will have to pay attention to develop appropriate technology depending on the utilisation of manual power also. Country will have to devise suitable economic structure, wherein the appropriate technologies based on the use of electric power as well as manpower will coexist. Various sectors of economy depending on the use of technologies of varying

type or admixture thereof will have to be made complementary to each other rather than competitive.

Rural industries forming the backbone of non-farm sector in India, have been the victim of long neglect by the elite, particularly the technologists and scientists, who did not consider it worthwhile to pay attention to the requirements and problems of these small industries. Science and technology, unfortunately as yet, have been handmaids of the big business, for it alone could give the scientists and technologists name, fame and wealth, while the decentralised sector, a domain of people with small means, had nothing to offer to this class of intelligentsia. However, it is a happy augury that the scientific world is now becoming increasingly aware of the need to make efforts to solve the problems of small scale and tiny sectors. A number of scientific bodies, big laboratories and even individual scientists are now coming forward to contribute their mite for improving the lot of poor artisans.

Technology for Agriculture

Economic activities in the rural areas can be divided broadly into two categories (i) farm activities and (ii) non-farm activities mainly consisting of rural industries. Utmost emphasis will have to be laid on developing appropriate technology for these two sectors, if it is desired to have any meaningful impact of appropriate technology, for more than 70% of people are depending on these two sectors, and they contribute nearly half of the GNP. In the last two decades or so, we have been hearing much about technological breakthrough in agriculture, which has been responsible for so-called

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'green revolution' However, the benefit of this revolution has touched the field of agriculture only marginally, for while hardly 1/3 of the sown area in the country is irrigated, and only 20% of the sown area produces more than one crop, the green revolution techniques depending on heavy inputs are mostly suited to irrigated areas alone. It will be only logical that much more attention is paid to develop the appropriate technology for increasing productivity of land and agricultural labour engaged in dry farming, which continues to be the main story in India. Similarly, there is an urgent need for developing appropriate technology for soil conservation and optimum utilisation of the available water resources. Development of post-harvest technology aiming at proper utilisation of agricultural waste, and developing efficient techniques of storage and transportation, etc., of the agricultural produce are also important for it is estimated that about 10% of the total foodgrains equally produced is lost to the country because of wasteful and obsolete methods of storage and transportation.

Closely linked with the agriculture is animal husbandry, which provides avenues of full-time as well as part-time auxiliary engagement to the agriculturists as well as others. No doubt, some progress has been made to increase our milk production under 'operation flood' as a part of 'white revolution', trying to popularise cross-breeding the local cows with Western bullocks. It is felt that appropriate technology will have to be developed suited to the indigenous conditions keeping the main characteristics of local breeds in order not only to increase the milk production but also to maintain the traction power of the bullocks, for they are the key factor in

agriculture as well as transport system in India. Other important aspects of animal husbandry, piggery, poultry, etc.; will also have to be organised on the basis of modern high productivity techniques.

Education And Liaison

It is also important to note that the concept of 'appropriate technology' is an integrated one, and with the development of labour intensive and capital saving technology alone, it would be absolutely necessary to usher in such structural and psychological changes also as would be necessary to make the improved appropriate technology work effectively. In this context, it would be relevant to point out that the percentage of the literate people in this country according to the 1971 census was 29.5% only. Even today more than 40 crores of people are illiterate, many of whom might be lacking even the necessary aspirations for better life. Massive programme of education and technical training will have to be launched in order to train people in improved tools and techniques of production and thoroughly convince them of the superiority of the new machines and methods to give them higher wages through better and higher production. Further, due thought will also have to be given to provide where-withals to the poor villagers to enable them to make use of the improved technology, for it is their financial helplessness, which proves to be the greatest hindrance in the way of technological transformation. Suitable extension machinery, manned with personnel devoted to the cause of rural uplift will have to be created to establish liaison between the common man and the technologists responsible for developing the appropriate technology. □

Taking Technology to the Village

Policy and Other Implications

□ L. C. JAIN*

WHAT is the occasion for us to talk of taking technology to the villages? Villages are not devoid of techniques of production—in fact abound in them. Is it then, that we find that there is need and scope for (a) modifying or replacing the existing traditional techniques of production, and (b) introducing altogether new production and services for which technology is unknown to the villages. Whichever of these two (or both) we may wish to do, what is our aim, our goal which we expect the chosen technology to promote?

The overall perspective in which we ought to discuss 'technology for villages' is the mounting unemployment, poverty and destitution embracing 340 million human beings. The techniques of production on which we have bestowed the bulk of Rs. 80,000 crores (cumulative) planned investment, have not made a dent on employment/poverty problem—whatever else be their proud achievement. In the past ten years, the organised sector has absorbed a total of 1 lakh persons only, out of an estimated 40 lakh persons entering the labour force each year.

The view is gaining ground that if the unemployment problem is to be solved in the short run also—that is before death overtakes the poor—then our limited capital should be deployed on modes of production which employ

substantially large numbers.

The magnitude of the employment and poverty problem facing the nation today is not such that can be met by merely taking some technology to the villages. We need to make discerning technology choices at all levels on the national scene and not merely at the village level. The challenge is not one of merely producing the requisite quantity of goods and services but of inventing the means of doing so in a manner that millions of idle hands become productive. If it were just a question of providing the requisite goods to our people, we could theoretically do it through imports—paid or gifted. But that would generate employment and purchasing power only in the supplying countries.

So if the modern techniques of production adopted hitherto as well as the import route are not relevant to our situation, then we must knock at some appropriate (technology) door to help us deliver work, wages and minimum welfare needs of the population especially the mass below the poverty line. Unless we look at 'technology for the villages' in this wider perspective we would neither be able to evolve policy, nor identify constraints, nor know the criteria by which to determine which technology is 'appropriate' and worth taking to the villages.

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Policy

The Draft Sixth Plan (1978-83) clearly admitted that even if by a stroke of luck were to double the anticipated rate of industrial growth, the organised sector would still not be able to absorb more than 20 per cent of the entrants to the labour force. It therefore advocated the policy of giving a prior place to high-labour and low-capital using technology for selected consumer goods industries. It, in fact, identified eight such industries (e.g., textiles, sugar, edible oil, shoes, etc.) where further increases in production were to be obtained by utilising idle manpower.

This policy implied that *what could be made* by labour-intensive techniques will not be made by capital-intensive techniques (Note 'what could be made'—not anything or everything but only that which *could* be made by labour-intensive techniques). For India, this is the only sensible policy. It is nonsense to dub this policy as 'turning the clock backwards or preventing the country from having heavy industries. Far from it, this slogan-mongering or sloganised-thinking is the most serious obstacle to our making sensible technology choices and adopting policies which enable us to do so.

But the Government has, meanwhile, decided to abandon the Draft Sixth Plan. We have to await the new plan to know what the Policy will be. However, the recent Industrial Policy Statement gives priority to utilisation of not the idle manpower but idle *machine* capacity. This amounts to saying that what can be made by machines will not be allowed to be made by hand. Indeed, many industries have been authorised automa-

tise 5 per cent annual increase in production. One can predict that all such industries will pay more attention to increasing their installed capacity as usual far beyond licensed limits, and continue to cry about their suffering from underutilisation of capacity. What can also be predicted—and with greater certainty—is that they will continue deliberately to produce less than capacity in order to maintain scarcity and maximise profits.

In the context of such an industrial policy, it will be purposeless and indeed foolish to waste talent and resources on developing appropriate labour-intensive technology; and more so in taking it to villages where they will be soon stormed out of existence by machinemade goods from cities.

Those interested in promoting appropriate technology in villages ought, therefore, first to promote appropriate policy in the capital of India. A policy for employment technology (and not merely indigenous *Vs.* imported technology) is a condition precedent to our helping solve the rural employment problem. Remember also, that the rural employment problem is basically a problem of under-employment—that is most men/women have some days (about 150) of almost full employment and equal number of days of unemployment. Idle days in a year vary between 100 to 200.

The removal of this idle period requires not so much the shrinkage of numbers engaged in farming and their migration to cities but generation of work opportunities close to where they are—and they happen to be dispersed not by choice but by destiny over

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500,000 villages. Of our situation city-based machine work which hampers where they are technology choices—promising in requirement for and wide dispersal 'fit' is the challenge.

By what yardstick, whether the factory/acceptance criteria is that amount of production of same product, one that offers and uses minimum transport per unit, or on the type also to determine sacrifice would in terms of cost and with the aim of profit.

At present such that there are such a criteria industrial licensing mechanisms. Each office has its really for the formulate not but also implement safeguards.

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500,000 villages. This is another facet of our situation which is not solvable by city-based machines taking away the work which hands can do. But hands, where they are, can do it provided the technology chosen by us for employment—promising industries fit such a requirement *i.e.*, labour maximisation and wide dispersal. To produce this 'fit' is the challenge for the technicians.

By what yardstick shall we judge whether the fit is appropriate/satisfactory/acceptable. The suggested criteria is that among the various techniques of production available for making the same product, we should opt for the one that offers maximum employment and uses minimum capital energy and transport per unit of output. Depending on the type of product, we may have also to determine the extent to which sacrifice would have to be made in terms of cost and quality commensurate with the aim of maximising employment.

At present the order of things is such that there is no system of applying such a criteria and enforcing it through industrial licensing and other regulatory mechanisms. Each ministry and often each office has wide discretion. But it is really for the Planning Commission to formulate not merely the general plan but also implementation strategies and safeguards.

Institutional Support

Another bottleneck is that there is no institutional backing for development of appropriate technology which fits the criteria discussed above. A few institutions in the country are attempting to do some work in this field entirely on

their own and in an isolated manner and not on behalf of the plan. Their efforts have little prospects of being applied widely. The answer lies in the Planning Commission itself setting up an Appropriate Technology Foundation which would: (a) identify whether existing technological options available for the production of a particular product are limited and do not offer sufficient scope for increasing labour absorption per unit of output; or use too much capital/energy/transport per unit of output;

- (b) having identified such areas, to invite any institution or individual in the country having the necessary interest and capability to develop appropriate technology in the selected fields and to provide them with all the backing. More minds put to work on a problem the better. There ought not to be too much concern with duplication;
- (c) the answer produced by technologists should be subjected to independent appraisal;
- (d) whatever is appraised satisfactory must then be extensively applied in the field aided by suitable policies, protection, reservation or subsidy as needed.

Regardless of what the government may or may not do, all institutions interested and engaged in developing appropriate technology with unemployment eradication as their focus, ought to come together on a formal or informal platform—a consortium—to give

strength to each other, share each other's experiences, ideas and resources. One of the aims of such a group should be to lobby for the adoption of national policies and strategies for development and field application of appropriate technology.

In terms of practical contribution such institutions can make, let us revert to the starting para of this paper which classifies the action front in two parts (a) modifying or replacing the existing traditional techniques of production and (b) introducing altogether new production and services for which technology is unknown to the villages.

As a first step, existing techniques used by agriculturists, village artisans/industries and by rural population in village housing, transport and other aspects of life should be thoroughly documented in all their technical, economic, social and cultural aspects. These should then be analysed systematical-

ly and the necessity/and scope for modification or replacement of existing techniques or the need for altogether new technology, where felt, spelt out. The positive and negative consequences of such changes on existing employment income, capital cost, problems of repair and maintenance, must be considered and quantified. We must also remember what women's movement has been pointing out in recent months that employment must be seen not in abstraction but in terms of men and women. Because women, given their other responsibilities of home and childcare, can participate in income-generating activities only under certain set of conditions, namely work being available either at home or close to it and process of production being such that it can be started and discontinued.

These are some of the dimensions of the challenge confronting our scientific and technological community. □

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Village Panchayats : Handmaids of Vote Politics

□ Prabal Maitra*

MAY, 1980. About one thousand members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) were expelled from the Party by its West Bengal Party secretariat on charges ranging from 'corruption' to 'misappropriation of funds'. Of course, some of them were alleged to have indulged in the omnipotent vice of 'nepotism' also. All these expelled members were Panchayat functionaries endowed with the responsibility of strengthening 'democracy at the grassroots'. The Party leadership washed its own hands of the affair by saying that all these people—these one thousand 'revolutionary' members of the 'Party of the Working Class' were actually 'opportunists' who had flocked to the Party' i.e. CPI(M), when it came into power in the state, got party mandate for contesting Panchayat elections and after getting elected, misused their positions in the Panchayats to promote their own financial interests as well to enhance the interests of their kith and kin etc. Accounts of the funds supplied by the Central and State Governments for flood-relief, drought-relief, and food for work programmes also were not kept in a proper manner. Keeping in view the membership rules of the CPI(M), it is difficult to accept the argument of the Party leadership that all these thousand members were actually opportunists, who had suddenly become 'Marxists' and then retired to their old 'ism'. What might have happened, and it will be a useful exercise for the Party to confirm,

that even the 'revolution-oriented' members of the party could not restrain themselves from getting entrapped in the widespread net of corruption and nepotism which has become a regular and accepted feature of our body politic, and is based on the theory 'scratch me and I will scratch thee' followed in the name of distribution and decentralization of political power. A cursory glance at the functioning of individual Panchayats will show that thousands of Tulmohan Ram cases are repeated everyday, certainly at a smaller scale, throughout the country through these institutions. This is one aspect of the functioning of Panchayats which were originally visualised as institutions responsible for strengthening 'democracy at the grassroots'.

Panchayat Politics Breeds Violence

To elucidate the other aspect we will quote reports from West Bengal itself. During 1978-79, there was a spate of group clashes in the state, mostly in villages, resulting sometimes in murder and arson. Contrary to earlier incidents of clashes between jotedars (landowners) and Bargadars (sharecroppers) as well as khetmajurs (agricultural labourers), these recent clashes took place between two groups of a village owing their allegiance to two different political parties. The groups were mostly led by Panchayat functionaries. At some places the clashes were between the

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supporters of the Cong. (I) and some other party belonging to the Left Front. But there were numerous cases, and they were in majority, where the parties involved were CPI(M), Forward Block (FB), and Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), all members of the Left Front sharing power with each other at the State level. The bone of contention between these parties, all of them declaring to represent the working class, was the wish to gain or retain dominance in the Panchayats so that they can be used as a means of ensuring votes for the Party in elections. No clashes were reported where the dispute was over any programme aimed at liberating the villages from the glut of poverty, economic deprivation etc.

These examples were not cited to malign a particular state or a particular party, but just to illustrate the mess these institutions are in and the style of functioning they have acquired over these years. The effort to strengthen democracy at the grassroots level *i.e.* the village level, is in the same condition everywhere in the country irrespective of their structural differences. The report of the 'Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions' (headed by Sri Asoka Mehta) tried to find out the reasons behind this sad state and one of the reasons they could find out was "the lukewarm attitude of the political elite at higher levels towards strengthening of the democratic process at the grassroots was generally the crux of the matter. Of particular significance in this connection is the cooling off of enthusiasm of MPs and MLAs in some states towards Panchayati Raj, because they would perceive a threat in emerging PR leadership to their positions in their respective constituencies."

Instruments of Vote Politics

If the Committee would have delved a little deeper into the matter, it would have easily found that the attitude of the political elite is not lukewarm always but its effort is to create an area of political influence for itself (and vote-bank as a subsidiary to it) by rendering the grassroots institutions ineffective, by turning them into grazing land for politician of different hue. As a result what has happened is the complete change in the approach to and understanding of democracy. Democracy has been reduced to a five-year ritual of casting votes, which it is actually not. Democracy means effective participation of every citizen in decision-making and national reconstruction. What has happened through all these years is that the process of national reconstruction at all levels has been driven at the backgrounds and similarly the decision-making powers have also been drastically curtailed. These institutions were supposed to provide a medium of involving people in their own welfare as well as national reconstruction in a democratic state. It was also visualized that civic and economic activities for a village community would be one of the functions of the Panchayats. To attain this goal, the method used was the same as in electing representatives for the legislatures in the states and the Parliament of India, *i.e.* adult franchise. As has been indicated earlier, the wish to use these as a lever to maintain themselves in power by some individual politicians and political leaders turned these institutions into a sort of appendage to the parties operating on the state level.

Panchayat Elections or Family Feuds?

In the early years the party leaders preferred influential persons, usually

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landlords, and landowners, as their candidates for Panchayat elections because due to the feudal structure prevailing in rural India in those days, it was easy for them to get elected and also to ensure votes for the Party in assembly and Parliament elections. In villages, where there were two or three such persons (families), different parties vied with each other to hook them and it usually resulted in dividing the village into factions fighting not only an electoral battle, which should subside after the results are declared, but beginning of a new series of family feuds engulfing the whole village because the rest of the villagers were dependent on these persons and families for their living. The heat generated during these elections persisted for years, the winning faction grabbing itself all the official assistance meant for the total village, and the defeated faction indulged in 'non-cooperation' in all matters pertaining even to the welfare of the whole village. After the spread of political consciousness in other strata, the situation became more complex and the working environment of PRIs as well as the villages were vitiated by political factionalism, rendering development trusts either warped or diluted. Corruption, inefficiency, parochial loyalties, motivated actions, power concentration

instead of service consciousness—all these have seriously limited the utility of PRIs. Instead of planning and action, implementing economic and civic activities for the whole village community, they are now only appendages of the state governments, dependent wholly on them even for their survival. With one super-session order from the State capital, all the 'activities' come to a halt.

The most important reason for this state seems to be the neglect of the planned effort for village reconstruction and too much emphasis on election in the name of completing the democratic process. It must be understood that only those persons can effectively utilise their democratic rights of decision-making, be it at a five-year interval, who have attained economic self-sufficiency also, so that they cannot be cowed down by threats or lured by petty interests. The same applies to the village, the primary unit of rural India. And since 80 per cent population of the country lives in villages and earns its livelihood there itself, it is necessary that the work of national reconstruction through rural reconstruction is taken up before we expect them to use their rights of adult franchise with a free mind—free from the anxiety of bread, clothing and roof along with an opportunity to work. □

Why must India become industrialise in the Western sense? The Western civilization is urban. Small countries like England or Italy may afford to urbanize their systems. A big country like America with a very sparse population, perhaps, cannot do otherwise. But one would think that a big country, with a teeming population with an ancient rural tradition which has hitherto answered its purpose, need not, must not copy the Western model. What is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good enough for another differently situated. One man's food is often another man's poison. Physical geography of a country has a predominant share in determining its culture. A furcoat may be a necessity for the dweller in the polar regions, it will smother those living in the equatorial regions.

MAHATMA GANDHI

YOUNG INDIA, 25-7-1929, p. 244

Population and Rural Development

□ Dr. J. K. Jain*

NEXT to China, India is the most populous country in the world. Our estimated population is around 647 million at present with the birth-rate of 32.9 per thousand and death rate of 14.7 per thousand, the annual growth rate was about 1.8 per cent in 1977. At present, the population is increasing at the rate of 32,300 a day and about 12 million a year. If the current annual growth rate continues, India should be touching the 1 billion mark at the turn of the century. India has more than 15 per cent of the world's population although its land area is less than 2½ per cent of the world's total land area. The average density of population in India now approximates 200 persons per square km which may be compared with the world average of 30 per km. The All-India figure of infant mortality rate is 139 per thousand but it is higher (150 per thousand) in rural areas. Eighty per cent people live in villages and more than 2/3rd of India's population is estimated to be living below the poverty line.

Development and Family Planning

It is now widely recognised that birth-control should be the part of the any economic plan of a developing country. Rapid population growth can outstrip even the best developmental efforts. It has a bearing on per capita income. It accentuates the inequalities of income and slows down the rate of saving and investments in the means of production. The high population growth is the major causative factor for the unemployment situation prevalent in developing coun-

tries like India as the resultant slow economic development is not able to absorb the increasing man power. Besides these facts which emanate from the calculation of numbers and the developmental considerations like cost effectiveness, there are more basic issues which must not be ignored any more. The effects of repeated childbirth both healthwise and economy-wise on the majority of women of the world living in rural areas must also be looked into. Allowing these rural women to undergo the sufferings and agonies of repeated pregnancies in absence of any worthwhile maternal care service which are evident from the high maternal mortality and morbidity, is a social crime. The repeated pregnancies not only become exercises in futility, many a time as is evident from the high infant mortality rates but also add to the exploitation and miseries of the poor and sick women by keeping them out of the labour force and money-earning activities. Therefore, any serious attempts aimed at improving the quality of life of the poorer or disadvantaged citizens of the world have to include the birthcontrol programmes on a high priority basis.

India's Population Policy and Programmes

India was the first country in the world to adopt an official family planning policy in 1952. Since then, investments into the programme (Budget allocations) have increased from Rs. 6.05 million in the First Five Year Plan to Rs. 7650 millions

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in the Sixth Five-Year Plan. As a result, the birthrate has come down from 41.1 per thousand in the sixties to around 33 in 1978. The Government aims to bring the birth-rate down to 30 per thousand by 1983 and this would involve an increase in the proportion of eligible couples projected from 24 per cent to 36 per cent.

There has been no dearth of financial, technical or policy support to the family planning programme in India from the national government and the international agencies. But the country has never been able to achieve the demographic objectives which were set by the planners and the policy makers, in spite of the fact that these were lowered at several times under the plea that the revised targets were realistic and achievable. So much so that the political leadership of central and state level governments have now come to believe especially in the past few years that people of India do not want birthcontrol.

Causes of Failure

It is not difficult to appreciate that most of the population control efforts so far have had an urban orientation and a clinic-based approach. The reasons for this trend are also obvious. The policy makers, programme administrators and physicians working in the field of population control must have realised that preventing a birth in a densely populated and accessible urban area is far less expensive than doing it in the scattered and inaccessible rural areas. Moreover, with the given administrative structure, the urbanised clinic based programmes are relatively easy to organise. The lack of literacy transportation, communication, housing and such other infrastructural

facilities in rural areas have been deterrents to the programme. Besides, the expenditure on these items has further reduced the cost-effectiveness of any rural project and thus put it into a position of disfavour.

Other reasons for the failure of family planning programme in rural area may be mentioned as follows:

- (i) In the value system of the rural society, addition of more children in the family is equated to acquisition of wealth and is welcomed as a gift from God.
- (ii) The prevalence of high infant mortality rates—150 per thousand in rural areas and resultant insecurity of lives of existing children, does not encourage people to accept sterilizations.
- (iii) Literacy rates among women in India are generally poor (only twenty-two per cent). In villages 90 to 98% women are illiterate.
- (iv) Long years of neglect and deprivation have resulted into a worst form of endemic civic inertia.
- (v) So far, the entire thrust of the family planning programme in India has been mainly sterilization oriented and dependent on clinic and hospital based approach.
- (vi) The availability of clinics and hospital services in the villages continues to be poor.

By concentrating on urban areas, the benefits of most of the programmes are

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passed on to the urban population who already have had more income and knew savings, resulting in their faster growth in comparison to already poor villagers. Thus income disparities between urban and rural people became further accentuated, revealing that contemporary clinic based and urban-oriented programmes are not only highly inadequate in terms of maximising the general welfare of a society, but have also distorted income distribution in developing countries even beyond the existing levels.

An urban-based development strategy with urban investment policy results in skewed income distribution and should be considered as a catastrophe or at best a middle class solution as far as development is concerned, while a rural investment policy results in the equitable income distribution and an assured future.

Community-Based Approach

The failure and deficiencies of the clinic-based approach even in providing primary medical care have been fully appreciated by now. A resolve to depart from this approach forms the basis of Alma Ata Declarations. One does not see even the very existence of many clinics in rural areas. If at all they exist, they have poor coverage and deficient functioning due to want of physicians and various other inputs.

A successful family planning programme requires the acceptance of a small family norm in the value system of the society and by its individual members. The task of bringing about this social change is further invariably influenced and complexed by local, cultural, political, religious and economic factors. The practice of contraception shall become

popular only when citizens appreciate its need and the resultant advantage. The same cannot be achieved without the active participation of the local community in the programme. Voluntary organisations can certainly do it better, they being nearer to the people than the Government apparatus. Although appropriate educational and motivational campaigns need to be evolved, the inter-personal communication or a word of mouth at the local level preferably through women community workers, they being the sufferers of unregulated fertility, is likely to be more effective. The women community workers could further be channelised for provision of supply of services *i.e.* distribution of contraceptives *e.g.* condoms and oral pills, after they have undergone as appropriate and suitable training programme.

Wrong Direction of Population Planning

The whole population planning in India, so far has been done from the top to the bottom. Based on the demographic objectives as laid down by the planners and policy makers, the targets with regard to sterilizations, IUDs., and other contraceptives are decided at Nirman Bhawan, the national headquarters of the Ministry of Family Planning, and then passed on to the often reluctant and unwilling State level directorates for achieving the results. Neither the state force, nor the various packages containing incentives, and disincentives have succeeded so far in creating hopeful trends. Most benefits of the programme have gone to the already better off people living in cities, and thus inequalities have been further multiplied. Instead of "trickle down" theory which assumes that the benefits accruing to the progressive sections of the society and

the various inputs provided at the top will automatically trickle down to the less well off people and to the rural areas, the "evaporation" theory seems to have worked resulting into a situation that poor people living in villages have almost not been touched by the various ongoing programmes. To treat this anomalous situation, the direction of entire population planning process will have to be changed, and the planning for population will have to be done from bottom to top.

This process of planning from bottom to top shall have to be done with people's active participation. To planners, participation of people meant their participation in programmes chalked out and planned out for them. But the target people and their leaders will have to be involved in decision-making in the process of programme planning, its execution and evaluation.

The socio-economic and political structure of Indian society in general and of rural communities in particular has proved very oppressive to the weaker sections who have reached the stage where they cannot rise without help from the outside. This much-needed help should reach them directly, ensuring that it is not gobbled by individuals and institutions having better receiving mechanisms. The process of giving help should not turn into a relief operation but should help in releasing the human potential for development and stimulate their desire for improving the quality of their life. This is possible only when instead of providing free services to them they should be motivated to come forward to ask for and buy the services.

Block Level Population Planning

Community development block in India is an arbitrarily decided administrative sub-district unit, consisting of about eighty to one hundred villages and having a population of about one lakh (100,000) people. Each block has a primary health centre with the provision of a separate medical officer and a whole staff for family planning activities. We believe that formulation of family planning programmes including the target setting, action plan as well as their evaluation etc. should be done at block level.

Various reasons can be given for having a community development block as the most suitable areal unit for comprehensive planning.

□ A national or a state level plan is necessary macro and general in nature and cannot be substitute for a specific, realistic, achievable micro plan for a given compact area like a community development block.

□ Each area has its own potentialities and problems in terms of cultural, religious, ethnic, economic, educational and other social considerations. The intimate knowledge about these factors and considerations of the same while determining the strategy will certainly result into a better plan.

□ Otherwise, too, a national or a state plan with specific demographic objectives requires detail planning for the number of acceptors in regard to each method of contraception and thus

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block level plans will only complement and supplement the realization of state or national objectives.

The community development block is an areal unit sufficiently manageable in terms of area and population and provides best opportunities to the planners, the persons responsible for implementation and the target groups to develop close contact and faster understanding with one another which is necessary for achieving success. Thus block level planning for population control will be helpful in the following ways:

1. It will enable the planners to understand more clearly the felt-needs and the problems of the target groups and in identifying the factors preventing the popularization of "small family norm".
2. It will help the planners and programme officers to determine, assess and evaluate and potentialities of each contraceptive method and various delivery systems in that particular situation.
3. It will open venues to the beneficiaries to participate in preparing and implementing plan for their own improvement and thus make the programme more acceptable.

Though the block level plans will have to be made eventually for each of the 5000 blocks that India has, we may initiate a phased programme taking the concept to those 2000 blocks which have been identified for integrated rural development by the government. Synchronising population planning with other

efforts involving plans of infrastructural development of road, communication, etc., and other works aiming to improve the quality of life of villagers and bound to yield better results.

Integrated Rural Development Approach

The Government of India has laid a lot of emphasis on the strategy of integrated rural development plan so that the benefits could reach the poorer and larger segments of population. We find it an opportune time for the addition of the family planning component to the overall rural development efforts covering economic, health, educational and other infrastructural facilities of communication, transport, housing etc. While on one hand, it can help in taking the much-needed programme to the rural areas, on the other hand, it can bring about a really positive improvement in the quality of life of village families.

The justification for an overall integrated approach also lies in the fact that innovations and the developing of new attitudes in various fields are best disseminated through coordinated efforts. If an individual adopts one new idea, be it the boring of a tubewell for his crops, he is likely to be receptive to others also. Combining family planning innovations with such projects could promote greater acceptance, than spearheading them through isolated efforts. It is generally seen in the rural settings at least in India that people like to receive counsel and guidance on all aspects of their life from someone whom they start considering their well-wisher and benefactor. Community leaders at the local level are more likely to support an integrated rural development programme than their individual components. □

Role of Multi-level Planning In Rural Development

□ K. V. SUNDARAN*

OVER the last two decades, there has clearly been a change in the concept, philosophy, objectives and strategies in development planning. Initially, the emphasis in development planning was on the achievement of high growth rates of total GDP or National Income. This fostered a centralised policy with concentration efforts on the "high growth" modern sectors of the economy (e.g. Public sector investments), in the hope that increased growth *per se* would ultimately benefit all sections of the population through eventual spread effects. As this 'top down approach', however, did not result in any percolation of benefits, but only accelerated the existing disparities in income or levels of living among people in the developing countries, distributional equity became an important issue in development planning. Simultaneously, case studies and other historical and contemporary evidence relating to the effects of development planning in developing countries revealed that this process had led to serious marginalisation of the rural poor. It is now agreed that if development is to have any impact in the developing countries, it must directly attack the problems of poverty at its grassroots level. That is, the households of the poorer sections of society should constitute that target groups in development. With this realisation, certain other dimensions in development planning have also appeared on the horizon. Employment has been recognised as a structural

problem, which in most cases, cannot be solved by high GDP growth rates. Other aspects which cannot be ignored are: the income distribution, the quality of life, the basic minimum needs of the rural population and decentralised planning with its emphasis on 'bottom-up' approaches.

The top-down approach to planning not only tended to bypass the rural poor and some social groups, but also some 'areas' within a country which had their own unique resource endowments, characteristics and problems. It tended to impose a uniform set of development programme everywhere without due regard to the variety of conditions existing within a country. It has now increasingly been recognised that spatial justice is as important as social justice in planning and that no country can be planned as a single-level entity. The importance of multi-level planning has been appreciated in several countries.

For geographically large countries like India, the issue is not simply whether development should be organised from above or below or in combinations. Here the planning function must also recognise the existence of other intermediate layers or spatial levels inherent in the federal system of government. Thus a 'multi-level planning' approach becomes necessary. This calls for a highly complicated decentralised planning process involving some basic changes or

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adaptations in the country's administrative and political structure. The critical issue in this multi-level planning process is that decisions should be taken as close as possible to the point where the effects—the benefits and costs—are to the greatest advantage. In the total national economic planning context, the basic advantage of multi-level planning is that of "function-sharing" among the different spatial levels. Thus functions which are nation-wide in scope and where the effects of a decision would be felt throughout the nation, will best be taken at the centre. On the other hand, functions or decisions producing only local effects would be best performed or undertaken at the local level. Thus for various functions or decisions, the geographical scope or 'spatial closure' could be determined. Planning undertaken on these lines will have the advantage of of maximum collaborative sharing and minimum conflicts or overlapping of efforts.

The Experience of Decentralised Planning

Multi-level planning is basically an exercise in the decentralisation of the planning process. Although multi-level planning and the problems associated with it have come to be discussed and subjected to some examination only in recent times, the idea of decentralisation itself has figured quite prominently in the Indian plans and in the literature on Indian planning for a long time. Even the First Five Year Plan was seized of the necessity for some measure of decentralised planning. But in those formative years of planning, there was neither clear appreciation of the principles of multi-level planning nor awareness on the part of the government as to the manner in which powers and responsibilities should

be divided among the different territorial levels and how the activities of the different levels should be coordinated. In this, as in many other things, experience has been the best teacher. The Community Development Programme, for instance, must be viewed as a grand experiment in decentralisation. In this experiment, however, planning from the centre went straight down to the village level, bypassing the intermediate layers of the State, the district and the taluka. In those days, there was no clear definition of the rules to be played by the different spatial/administrative levels, in planning e.g. the States *vis-a-vis* Centre. The States were also not quite mature both politically and technically to press for their legitimate role in the planning process, with the result that a highly centralised form of planning emerged. As we look at the Community Development Programme in retrospect today, it seems that at least one of the reasons which doomed the failure of this movement was the lack of appreciation of the principles of multi-level planning.

The Second Plan emphasised two measures of decentralisation *viz.* the creation of District Development Councils and Village Production Plans. The District Development Council was no doubt a good idea, but operationally it proved to be a failure, because it was also conceived in isolation. No attempt was made at achieving an integrated framework of planning in which the functions of all the levels in the planning process had been precisely defined and coordinated. The District Development Councils appeared to have been created to fulfil a formality and not necessarily as a commitment to decentralisation. The District Development Councils possessed few powers and fewer still were

used. They remained mere advisory bodies. They provided no real expertise. They were not taken into account intentionally, often in the absence of any machinery for planning. The technology proved to be inadequate in planning under the existing situation. The Second Plan envisaged a Democratic Decentralisation of Powers. The years that followed when Panchayats were created have seen many failures in these grassroot organisations of the Panchayat Raj. The States show that decentralisation *viz.* Mahatma's vision of these institutions to have some efficiency and the fullest potential of the country, in operation at once.

Notwithstanding the Panchayat Raj, the country, considered made by the different levels to effect some decentralisation of decision-making and budgetary control. The process has been slow and the extent of decentralisation is limited.

1. V.K. Nataraj, Mysore, June, 1978.
2. In Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Pradesh and Rajasthan; but in the latter the lack of democratic decentralisation in the District Development Councils are in operation. The District Development Councils to receive approval for operation with

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different territorial activities of the be coordinated. In things, experience er. The Community ame, for instance, and experiment in this experiment, om the centre went village level, by- ate layers of the d the taluka. In no clear definition ed by the different levels, in planning Centre. The States nature both politi to press for their planning process, highly centralised ged. As we look Development Pro- today, it seems the reasons which this movement was in of the principles

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used. They remained essentially advisory bodies. They possessed little technical expertise. They become, perhaps unintentionally, official and bureaucratic bodies.¹ The village production plans, in the absence of an integrated machinery for planning and sound methodology proved to be mere paper exercises in planning unrelated to the realities of the situation. The latter half period of the Second Plan saw the movement of Democratic Decentralisation and the creation of Panchayati Raj institutions. The years that have elapsed since 1959 when Panchayati Raj was inaugurated have seen many a vicissitude of fortune in these grassroots institutions. A review of the Panchayati Raj programme by States shows that excepting in two States viz. Maharashtra and Gujarat, where these institutions are in operation with some efficiency (even though not to its fullest potential), in many other States of the country, it is either functioning in operation at one or two tiers only².

Notwithstanding the deficiencies in the Panchayati Raj structure in the country, considerable efforts have been made by the different State Governments to effect some degree of decentralisation of decision-making, planning administration and budgeting to the lower levels. The process however is still incomplete and the extent of decentralisation achiev-

ed is quite uneven among the various States. In some States like Maharashtra, some attempts have made to recognise the degree of interdependency mix and function-sharing among the various sub-national levels e.g. State, district. Certain other States e.g. Karnataka, U.P. are also trying to imitate this model. Thus, by way of illustration, it may be mentioned that for purposes of planning, the district sector and State sector schemes have been separately visualised and the responsibilities of the respective levels for the planning implementation of programmes have been foreseen as follows :-

State Sector Schemes

Generation and distribution of power
Major and Medium Irrigation Projects.

Investment in Corporate bodies.

University Education.

Professional and Technical Education.

Research and Training.

State and National Highways.

Ayacut Development under Major and Medium Projects.

Ports and Inland Waterways.

1. V.K. Nataraj : Decentralisation of Planning in India—Institute of Development Studies, Mysore, June, 1974.

2. In Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, Panchayati Raj is working in name only. In Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, Panchayati Raj is probably working tolerably at village and block levels; but the institutions have lost dynamism in the absence of elections over a long period and the lack of democratic authority at district level. In Kerala, village Panchayats are in operation, the District Development Councils are now being constituted. In Karnataka, village Panchayats are in operation. Taluka Panchayats stand under suspension. The Zilla Parishad Bill has failed to receive approval of legislature. In Tamil Nadu, Village Panchayats and Block Panchayats are in operation with reasonable efficiency. There is Zilla Parishad.

District Sector Schemes

Agricultural Production.
Soil conservation.
Forests.
Fisheries.
Animal Husbandry.
Marketing.
Minor Irrigation.
Ayacut Development under Minor Irrigation Projects.
Primary and Secondary Education.
District and Village Roads.
Health
Water Supply and Sanitation.
Urban Developments.
Welfare of Backward Classes.
Social Welfare.

Since 1978, the idea of local (block) level planning has crystallised in our country and the following rural development activities have been considered as particularly falling within the purview of local level planning³ :-

- (i) Agriculture and allied activities.
- (ii) Minor irrigation.
- (iii) Soil conservation and water management.
- (iv) Animal husbandry and poultry.
- (v) Fisheries.
- (vi) Forestry.
- (vii) Processing of agricultural produce.
- (viii) Organising input supply, credit and marketing.
- (ix) Cottage and small industries.

(x) Local infrastructure.

- (xi) Social Services.
- (a) Drinking water supply
 - (b) Health and nutrition
 - (c) Education
 - (d) Housing
 - (e) Sanitation
 - (f) Local Transport
 - (g) Welfare Programmes

(xii) Training of local youth and up grading of skills of local population.

So far as rural development is concerned, all recent thinking on the subject has emphasised the "integrated" nature of rural development, with its multiple objectives of "more production, more employment and more equitable distribution of incomes". In the multi-level planning structure for any country, most of the crucial aspects of rural development seem to fall within the local level. Thus it may be seen that local level planning holds the key for any successful rural development effect. Effective local planning would depend upon effective "decentralisation", which would mean the assigning of both powers and responsibilities to the lower territorial levels and rendering them fully accountable for their activities. If a substantial measure of decentralisation to the local levels is to be achieved, it would necessitate considerable adjustments (i.e. administrative adaptations), the most important among which would be the strengthening of local level governments and other developmental institutions at the grass roots level. It should be emphasised in this context that unless the func-

3. Planning Commission : Report of the Working Group on Block Level 1978.

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tional aspects of rural development projects are completely delegated to the lower levels of Government, problem would arise with regard to the overlapping functions of central, State and local government departments.

The Changing Concepts

Rural development as a concept has undergone considerable changes in our country during the last three decades. Several approaches and emphases have been proposed from time to time as described in Table no. I.

Thus, it may be seen that the emerging trends in rural development are in favour of planning for the target groups *i.e.* the rural poor, and the major shift in planning today is towards "poverty and employment focussed strategies". Thus, the present rural development is focussed on the poor people of an area and the principal aims are alleviating their poverty conditions and bringing employment opportunities to them. At the spatial level, the unit area of planning conceived for this purpose must be such that the people become recognisable entities and not lost as masses without identification. This would mean that besides the "local area", the individual household must also be recognised as an important unit in the planning for rural development.

Traditionally in India, the district has been the administrative unit, which has at least some of the basic requisites needed for local-level planning; but the district has an average area of 9,000 sq. km. and a population of 1.5 million which are too large for this purpose. More recently, at the sub-district level, the development block with an average area of 600 sq. km. and population 100,000 has been advocated as a suitable unit for local planning and methodologies for local level planning with the block as the basic unit is evolving in different parts of the country. Effective rural development is basically one of recognising the different spatial levels and defining the scope of planning functions which could be best performed at these levels. The essential questions in this context is: what should be the design for decentralisation in a country like India? This question has to be specifically examined from the standpoint of the ability of the areal units chosen for meeting the technical or technological requisites of rural development.

The Design for Decentralisation

For various reasons, the district must continue as the key planning unit for evolving the overall strategies resource allocation including credit and the delineation of the different types of projects. Since, however, the district is a large

4. The Somangalam Rural Development project in Tamil Nadu is an example of a successful experiment. The objective of the project was to bring about overall development in selected 11 villages by concentrating activities of the various development departments and by associating the constructive voluntary agencies and by mobilising the institutional finance to the required extent. There were 2240 families in the project area of which at the initial stage, 644 families had a monthly income below Rs. 100/- each 59 families had above Rs. 400/- a month. At the end of three years (1976-79), only 36 families had an income below Rs. 100/- and 644 families had an income above Rs. 400/-. This was possible by realising the growth potential of the area by providing gainful economic occupation and by diversifying the economic occupation.

unit, the block must invariably receive attention for area-based development. With the emphasis on 'target group' and the individual family approach to rural development, even the block becomes an unmanageable unit for organising rural credit and delivery of agricultural inputs. It is in this context that we have to consider a sub-block unit comprising a cluster of villages as a dynamic vehicle of socio-cultural transformation in our countryside. Some successful rural development experiments in our country e.g. the Somangalam experience in Tamil Nadu⁴ have demonstrated the usefulness of the village cluster approach. The Asoka Mehta Committee had also recognised two levels of decentralisation below

the State level—the district and the Mandal (i.e. village cluster) levels. Below the sub-block unit, the village and the farm will constitute planning units in their own right.

Incorporating the above ideas, the following five-tier approach is advocated for organising a multi-level planning process for rural development in the Indian context. The scope of planning functions appropriate to the different levels has also been indicated. (Table no. 2)

In conclusion, we may note that the changing concepts in rural development have implied an increase in number of

Table 1

<i>Approach</i>	<i>Emphasis</i>
(i) Rural reconstruction	Village centred movement based on principles of voluntary effort.
(ii) Community development	Rural development based on ideas of motivation, self-help and self-reliance.
(iii) Target Sector	Intensive development of selected sector or sectors of activity with emphasis on concentrating in areas of comparative advantage.
(iv) Target groups	Growth with social justice for the weaker sections of population.
(v) Growth Centres	Spatial planning and development.
(vi) Backward area development	Reduction of regional imbalances in development.
(vii) Minimum needs	Equalisation of social consumption.
(viii) Area planning with full employment	Rural development in an area frame with removal of unemployment (poverty) as an important aim.

location-specific action levels. Pragmatism would tie in recognising these implications and organising the planning process in the country accordingly. It appears that the success of rural development programmes depends largely upon the extent to which power is vested in the rural poor and their institutions.

It would be therefore important to develop these institutions appropriate to different geographic levels. Without such multi-level institutional planning and development, improvements of living conditions in rural areas are likely to be not only marginal but even reversible.

Table 2

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Plan components</i>	<i>Planning tasks (illustrations)</i>
(i) Farm	Farm planning including planning for farm-based activities.	Determination of (a) crop pattern, and (b) crop rotation. Planning for (a) farm infrastructure and equipment, and (b) farm inputs.
(ii) Village	(a) Village reconstruction planning.	Planning for (a) leadership, (b) public utilities (power & communications, transport and hire equipment), (c) housing, public buildings, local roads and sanitation.
	(b) Village productivity planning.	Planning for (a) farm production, (b) water supply system, (c) community health, and (d) small industry and local business and commercial activities.
	(c) Human Resource planning.	(a) Basic education and literacy programme. (b) Functional training for employable skills including farmer and artisan training.
(iii) Sub-block	(a) Agricultural extension planning.	Demonstration, Farmer's training.
	(b) Common Economic Services Planning.	Planning for agri-support services.
	(c) Transport Planning.	Planning for inter-village roads.
	(d) Planning for basic minimum needs.	Planning for water supply, nutrition, health, rural electrification,

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Plan components</i>	<i>Planning tasks (illustrations)</i>
		education, housing and other community and tertiary services.
(iv) Block	(e) Planning for special target groups.	Family-based planning for income viability.
	(a) Land-use planning.	Natural resources inventory; preparation of block plans.
	(b) Full employment Planning.	Survey of employment status and identification of skills.
	(c) Locational planning services.	Survey of basic minimum needs.
	(d) Credit planning	Assessment of credit needs and formulation of bankable project.
(v) District	(a) Perspective planning	Resources inventory, target setting and prognostication; programming and phasing. Evolving overall strategies.
	(b) Annual Programming.	Resource allocation including credit project formulation; co-ordination of block-level plans into district plan in the light of the district perspective plan and the State Annual Plan.
	(c) Manpower budgeting.	Planning for full employment.

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(Our) Village Today

□ Dr Lakshmi Narayan Lal*

I WAS just about to add 'our' to the above heading, that my pen stopped abruptly. Where is 'ours' in it? Why? What has become of the village today? Whom does it belong to?

Today's village symbolises only the ruins of our ancient society. Today, towns and cities are the 'factories' or the 'mills', that create the modern society. Or, one can say that the old society lives in the village and the modern one (?) in the city. Perhaps, that is how the gradual evolution of the village and the city has taken place—symbolic of the march of the wheel of times or of man's journey towards progress. Before taking to agriculture man used to wander in nomadic groups from place to place. But when agriculture gradually developed, he started a collective living in huts near his farms situated along the bank of rivers and ponds. This is how the very natural birth of the village took place. Speaking in terms of sociology, the village presents a natural scenerio, while that of the city is man-made.

Village is a place where natural environment has not been interfered with. In the city, the interference is total. In fact, city is nothing but another name of this interference. (with Nature)

In our villages, i.e. in our ancient society, the status of an individual or a family depended upon the relationship they had with other individuals or families. Then every one was known

or related to everyone else and one's status was not measured in terms of one's wealth, but on relationship one had with other individuals.

On the other hand, a man's standing in today's city, i.e. the modern society, is measured by his affluence and his luxurious life-style. Unfortunately, the values cherished in a rural society are on the wane, and that is why people are rushing towards the cities by disposing of all they have in the villages. It is because today man's status is based upon not his life in the village but by his life in the city, howsoever penurious or humiliating that city life might prove to be for him. During our school life, a popular topic for school used to be that whether urban life was better or rural life. But after attainment of Independence, this topic seems to have lost its relevance, as if it has finally been proved, irrefutably concluded that village is ugly and useless place to live in, that village is the synonym for poverty, superstition and backwardness. And the city? Well for them, the city is the last word for modernism, affluence, progress and development. In the city one does not have to bother about the mutual harmonious relationship and the spirit of accomodateness one has to maintain in villages as well as about the inconveniences and responsibilities that are involved in such close personal relationship with all typical of a rural society. While the urban society is impersonal and individualistic, the society in village is based on kinship among the residents. It is

* Noted Hindi Dramatist and Litterateur.

a big family. There is no familial affinity in an urban society, it is only a conglomeration of citizens each one of whom is worried about his personal rights and privileges. All relationships in the city are impersonal, ethereal and selfish, without any social commitment.

A village encompasses a single community group, while the city is made up of several such groups. There is a collective community life in villages, where everyone's joys and sorrows. The city populace is divided into a large number of small community groups. And the quickening process of capitalist civilization and indiscriminate industrialisation is tearing man apart from society, his family, his country and even from his own self, getting more and more confined in an isolated unit of his own individual ego as if this 'ego' is his community, or his class. The village even today stands on the opposite extreme.

There is an uniformity and continuity in the life style of the village people. That's why a city-dweller finds life in villages so boring, so devoid of variety. The "society" still exists in villages howsoever diffused and fragmented it may appear to be superficially. While in a city, the society has died—only the self, the individual, is alive. Why today's village has degenerated to such an extent? Why no educated person wants to live there? The answer is in the "Permanent settlements" of 1792 and 1862, which in one stroke destroyed our 'rural society' and the economic structure. There was no individual ownership of land in the village before this arrangement was imposed. The key to the understanding of the real India, lay

in the village system in which at the bottom stood the remnants of the eternal integralism of rural society—which Marx has defined as primitive Communism—and at the top existed an oligarchical state whose functions extended from indulging in civil war, fighting and plundering to undertake the construction of means of irrigation and other works for public welfare.

A very accurate and authentic description of our village system and society has been presented by Karl Marx in his *Das Capital*—"Those small and extremely ancient Indian communities, some of which have confined down to this day, are based on possession in common of the land, on the blending of agriculture and handicrafts and on an unalterable division of labour, . . . The chief part of the products is destined for direct use by the community itself, and does not take the term of a marketable commodity. . . . The simplicity of the organisation for production in these self-sufficing communities, that constantly reproduce themselves in the same form. . . ."

This was our village, with its traditional society and economy which foreign capitalism, appearing in the form of British rule, destroyed from their very roots.

In this context, however, the triumph of foreign capitalism in India was different from that in Europe. Here, the process of destruction didn't allow the emergence of new forces with it simultaneously, and because of that of the hardships faced by Indian people under the British rule were compounded by a

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"peculiar type of sadness" as "his old world had disappeared but the new one was nowhere in sight".

These small, ancient settlements of India innumerable in number—but despondent and torn from their moorings—they are the villages of today. It is our village—a prisoner of itself and torn as under within itself.

If there is any process of change in today's village, it is in its more and more fragmentation, in its withdrawal within the narrow shells of traditional castes and new classes and groups which the election-oriented political culture has created.

The village is the corner stone of our economy, our society, our religion, our polity and our national ethos. This is the foundation upon which the superstructure of independent India can be rebuilt. National leaders like Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi had realised this truth in the depth of their hearts. Gandhiji, in fact, equated India's Swaraj with Gram-Swaraj only. Why?

Because he knew that true democracy could not be established in the country by a score of people sitting in the capital of the country. Democracy has to grow from the grassroots in the villages. In the Gram-Swaraj of Gandhiji's concept, a village has to be a decentralised political constituent enjoying all authority. That's why in his well-known "Last Testament", Gandhiji said: "India has won political freedom but she was yet to secure social, economic and moral freedom for the villages. . . ."

The Gram-Swaraj of Gandhiji's concept revolves round the man but western economy is wealth-oriented. While the former stands for an economic system which gives life to the villages, the latter, in the Indian context, spells their doom. This is what has actually happened in the last three decades that all the money grants based programmes for rural development have only prepared ground for the doom of rural society.

Rural development programmes today are being implemented by the rural elite who took upon the villages as sources of cheap domestic servants and labourers and which can provide them milk and its products at low prices. The most glaring example of this is a certain advertisement over the All India Radio's commercial services which presents an individual who severed his links with his native village once he partook a certain brand of "pure ghee" manufactured in his town.

Today's rural development programme means mere allotment of more and more funds by the Centre every year. However, when at the end of the year it becomes known that the funds have not been reached the village and that the politicians, bureaucrats and the new generation of ex landowners and users masquerading as social workers have already usurped them on the way then the ritual of appointing an Enquiry Commission gone through to investigate as to why the amount of crores of rupees earmarked for the rural development did not reach the villages at all.

It is, however, futile to expect that such commissions can ever unearth the scandal. For, the commissions them-

selves are constituted by these very elements *i.e.*, politicians, bureaucrats for whom village is not of subject matter of heart but of intellect only.

It has to be realised that in the village the family is still a self-sustaining integrated unit. An individual forms part of the rural society only through the institution of the family. It is the family, and not the individual, which is given recognition by the society and is responsible to it. This all pervading presence of the family makes the functioning of the society not only smooth but also regulates it.

But the city-based politician, the minister, bureaucrat and his whole paraphernalia still believe in the British legacy where the individual has no use for the integrated family or the social fabric, where every individual treats his subordinates as inferior beings and exploits them as a matter of right. The urban elite and urban power centres seems to have convinced themselves that village is inferior than a city, that the village dwellers, whether Kurmi, Ahir, Harijan, Muslim or Christian etc., have no entity except as a "block voter" and that in the interest of politics it is necessary to pit them against each other. If that be the attitude then why not let the villages remain as and when they are? But no, it also does not suit them because it has become a compulsion for them to launch expensive plans and programmes in the name of rural development in order to gobble the crores allocated for it.

The individual and not the family is prospering in the city. This urban man no longer takes part in productive activities. He is not prepared to do anything other than what fulfills his own needs. Productive work and useless (?) virtues such as hard labour, moral life, honesty, courage and patriotism etc., have been surrendered by the urban man in favour of his rural counterparts.

However, these urbanites should not lose sight of the fact that today's village, for whatever reasons is very much politically conscious. If the city manipulates the forces of development and change, the village strengthens the social fabric, and keeps alive for ever the creative urge and awareness. As such the city and the village in spite of their contradictory natures are interdependent and not independent of each other. The fundamental task and duty of social engineers today is to bridge the hiatus between the village and the town. Failure to do so would result in the disintegration of the entire country and the society. The millions of city-dwellers and the crores of village people both would face ruin if they cannot live in harmony and cooperation bound by the same age-old social ties.

The urban population in particular cannot live in security any longer by ignoring and exploiting the rural masses because the initiative for political change has now passed into the hands of the villages.

Urbanisation of Villages Or Ruralisation of Cities ?

□ Dr Rajendra Prasad*

RURAL Development has become quite a fashionable phrase to talk about. Hectic activity by thousands of government departments and non-governmental agencies appears to be going on all over the country in the name of rural development. But that do they really mean by it ? It seems that like those six proverbial blind men describing an elephant, rural development has also come to mean different things to different persons.

But if you peep a little deeper into these activities and programmes, you will find only one thing common in all of them and that is an all-pervading colonial attitude towards rural areas and problems. The basic approach behind all these efforts is that the urban sector, which is the developed one, has to carry the burden of developing the rural sector, which is the undeveloped one. But why ? Is it out of a philanthropic desire to help the villages or is it out of self-interest to serve themselves ? Sometimes one feels that under the cover of rural development a big conspiracy is going on for exploitation of the rural masses and resources to serve the interest of a small section of urban elite sitting comfortably at the top. In fact, the whole pattern of development and the social setup is at present wholly biased in favour of the cities and the rich. Rural masses, particularly the rural poor, can hope to come up only when there is a complete overhauling of this system. But what do we

mean by overhauling of the system ? Does it mean urbanization of the villages or ruralization of the cities ?

Urbanization Vs. Ruralization

Urbanisation of villages is neither possible nor desirable. It is not possible because the cities are mostly based on non-renewable resources which are so scarce that even at present when hardly 20 per cent of the population lives in cities, the consumption rate has gone so high that some of the resources are not going to last more than a few decades. One cannot expect anything other than a total catastrophe if urbanisation is allowed to expand further. It is not desirable also because the villages, which are still free of industrial and other pollutions, can provide an environment where one can at least breathe fresh air, can feel closer to nature and enjoy its beauty. Apparently the cities are overcrowded and full of activity, but there one does not know even his next-door neighbour and hence everybody suffers a feeling of loneliness. He finds none to share his sorrows and happiness. The villages, at least, do provide opportunity for a community living which vibrates with a feeling of fraternity and homeliness.

I do not think that there can be anything like ruralisation of cities. Cities are a must but only to the extent that

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such centres are required to carry out certain specific functions such as sale, purchase and distribution of commodities from one place to another to accommodate offices of the central administration, defence installations and heavy industries etc. Some urban establishments may develop around such centres but their growth must not be allowed to cross the size which may be necessary to fulfil the functions they are meant for. The growth of cities today has been totally uninhibited, unplanned and unnatural. They have grown to a size which is becoming a challenge to themselves. Slums are growing. Crimes are on the increase. Unemployment is alarming. Dwelling space is nowhere available. Prices are soaring high and inflation knows no bound. Corruption is rampant. Traffic is heavy and fast leading to too many road accidents. Pollution is rising. Nothing is available unadulterated. No security, no help, no sympathy from any corner. Man is worse than a machine. He is overburdened, overloaded. He wants to escape but cannot. Gheraos, strikes, stabbings, murders are common. What a life? But for what! Why should a man be made to suffer this hell-like life in the big cities to enjoy the luxuries of cars, cinemas, hotels, night clubs etc

It is clear that to bring about a real rural development, there has to be a fundamental change in our outlook towards life. Rural development is not merely a question of removal of regional disparities and class inequalities but it is rooted in the basic question that whether we want to create small islands of urban prosperity in the midst of a vast ocean of rural poverty, islands which will consume major share of the world resources, particularly the non-renewable ones, and will continue to exploit the masses

for the benefit of a few or do we want to create a rural society based on renewable resources and maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature, involving the masses in production and distributing the fruits based on social justice and social needs.

Without delving deep into the philosophical aspects of life, one can see many evidences in the day-to-day real life which prove that it is not simply by acquiring more and more wealth and physical comforts that one can make himself happy. Otherwise how do we explain that most of the cases of suicide, eccentricity or mental disorders are reported only from well-to-do families and that the most affluent countries like U.S.A., Japan, and Germany top in the number of cases of suicides, mental disorders, drugs consumption, crimes, youth unrest etc.?

Hence it is obvious that the question of Rural Development is, in fact, a question of change in cultural attitudes.

Maladies of Rural Life

The rural life is suffering from dual maladies. On one hand, it is backward in the sense that there is severe casteism, superstitions, untouchability, unrealistic, unpractical and illogical traditions like child marriages. Purdah for women, prohibiting remarrying by widows, male chauvinism, sense of false prestige etc. There is a huge illiteracy and large drop-outs. The methods of production used and the technology involved is of very primitive type and there is hardly any system developed to improve upon it. The mode of transport is extremely slow and inefficient. In the villages also there are the rich few and a poor majority

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which suffers in its silence. The poor are not united and hence are exploited by the big landlords. Most of what goes in the name of rural development is either pocketed away by the bureaucracy or benefits only the rich few in the villages. They are almost cut off from the mainstream and their participation is negligible in national planning and implementation of the development programmes.

On the other hand, the rural life is undergoing severe tensions resulting from the fast process of urbanisation and modernisation going on unabated for the last few centuries. The cities are becoming the major centres of activities and the villages are acting only as their satellites to fulfil the demands of cities at any cost. Cities are drawing their raw materials and manpower from villages processing them into finished products in big industries using modern technology based on high energy consumption and huge capital investments. This has totally uprooted the artisans in the rural areas as they are unable to compete with the products of big industries. They are running towards cities in search of jobs but generally end up in joining the big queue of unemployed or become under-employed, and thus add to the population in slums. Modern education system is also such that it is uprooting the youth from the villages. An educated rural youth finds himself a stranger in his own village. He tries to knock at the doors of each and every possibility in cities to get a job there but cannot compete with the urban youths who have been educated in public schools etc., and are expert in urban *mannerism* which is necessary to qualify for the urban requirements. Consequently, the rural educated youth meets great disappointment in

his life and all the colourful dreams that modern education had given him fades away. He finds himself unable to face the realities of life. He is suitable for nothing, neither for the village nor for the city. This frustration may drive him to do anything even something which is anti-social. Even in agriculture which forms the major profession in the rural life and forms the backbone of rural economy, the technology introduced is such that machine replacing the labour, creating more unemployment, making the poor poorer and the rich richer since these machines can be owned only by the rich increasing his capacity to hold more land and as a result the land is passing from the small farmers to the big landlords. The improved high-yielding variety seeds and the modern fertilizers introduced also can only be afforded by the rich as these would require good irrigation facilities which the poor generally do not possess. Thus all subsidies available on tractors, tubewells, seeds, fertilizers etc., generally benefit only the big landlords.

The village industry sector is the worst affected. Lot of efforts are being made to reestablish it, but in vain, as these efforts are isolated and cut off from the mainstream of development. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Handicrafts Board, the Handloom Board etc., have been working since long but if their products are able to get some market, it is only because they are supported by heavy government subsidies, and in certain cases these products are exclusively reserved for purchase by the Government departments etc. Still it is difficult to trace their effect on the rural life except in a few pockets here and there and that too only marginal.

Rural Technology for Whom

Much is talked about these days of Appropriate Technology and Rural Technology. These terms are perhaps creating more confusion rather than helping in anyway towards rural development. Everything under the sun is being included under these terms depending upon the convenience of the people involved. But to take an example which is most generally accepted as the Appropriate Technology is the 'Biogas'. Government also seems to be keen to spread its use in the villages. Is it being accepted? Will it really help? How is the poor going to be benefited by it? Well, the experience of the persons working in the field says that it is not being accepted in general. Firstly, a poorman cannot spend five to six thousand rupees for such a thing, even if he does, what will be the receipt to get the gas for fuel which return, he can get by burning the gobar directly. Also, the supply of gas is not uniform, it goes down markedly during winter. Lot of operations are involved, making the slurry, finding it into the tank, handling the effluents, drying and transporting into it to the field etc. Why should one go for it? Only someone with enough money to spend, with five to six cattle in the house and who wants a change from a gobar and wood burning *chullah* to a gas-*chullah* in the kitchen may opt for it. That only a rich landlord can do and that is what is actually happening.

It does not mean that there is something wrong with the technology itself. Of course, there is always a scope for further improvement and research but even in its present stage technology can help to improve the lot of the poor in rural areas. That is possible only when technology or for that matter, any

measure of development is applied not in isolation but in a proper perspective and takes a holistic approach to the situation. One has to identify properly whether the problem is technological, social, economic etc., and the priorities have to be correctly defined. We have a large force of educated youth, scientific manpower, administrative infrastructure and an industrial base in the country. All these resources need to be properly deployed with a time-bound programme and concrete guidelines for work in rural areas.

The Only Way Out

The whole thing has to be planned very well. It would be good to start with the educational institutions. Each institution should take charge of at least one district aiming at its overall development. The students should work at the grassroots level and acquaint themselves with the real problems of the people.

Here, professional institutions like technological, medical, agricultural institutes, universities and colleges can play a pivotal role. Along with taking the responsibility of one district each, they should also spare their manpower to work along with other institutions to provide for the expertise in their specific subjects. An inter-institutional mode of working may have to be evolved in due course of time. This is definitely going to bring about a fundamental attitudinal change in these institutions. Today they are almost unaware of the indigenous system of approach to the people's problems. When they come in physical contact with the masses, then only they will be able to understand where the shoe pinches and what can be its practi-

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cal solution. Then they will know that there is definitely an indigenous system existing in all fields, say technology, medicines, agriculture and others. These systems have a long historical background and thus do have something to teach. These must be thoroughly understood before rejecting, accepting or improving upon them. Without that anything in the name of research, innovation etc., will be an imposition and a misfit in the local system. The hot debate going on today about Appropriate Technology, various systems of medicines, new developments in agriculture etc., will automatically move towards a consensus, once this debate faces the real life situations and is made to apply

itself to find solution to them. This would also give an opportunity to search for talent from amongst the masses. In due course of time these institutions will be able to absorb talented people from their area of work even without fulfilling the complex formalities of today. People will have better understanding of these institutions and those who possess any talent for a particular field will have a better chance to join them. This would thus make them real people's institutions working in different fields to fulfil the aspirations of the people themselves and getting a feedback for their real life problems. This would be nothing less than a total revolution.

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Rural Oriented Education Planning

□ Dr Prabhu Dayal Agnihotri*

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BY rural-oriented system of education we mean a system which helps in channelising rural manpower and resources for the betterment of the villages and which can pave the way for their reconstruction and proper development. Our present-day educational system has been tailored on the model of industrially-advanced or developing nations and is consequently urban-oriented. This system has been borrowed from countries where regional, linguistic, cultural and economic disparities are minimal. As a result of our existing educational system the rural talent and manpower is getting drained towards the cities. Consequently, whereas the villages are becoming poorer and poorer, the cities are getting confronted with the problems of over-population and increasing unemployment. Its monstrosity came into focus particularly during the last 10-15 years. This blueprint of Rural-oriented Educational System is a search for a solution to the problem.

Before discussing any plan pertaining to our villages, two things must be borne in mind :

- (i) What shape we propose to give to our villages in the years ahead. Do we want them to develop into self-reliant and independent units or wish to reduce them into poor satellites of big cities? The entire rural economy and administrative as well as political setup will depend upon the answers to these questions. If we wish to develop our villages into self-reliant units,

as visualised by Gandhiji, then the educational system and professional training programmes will have to be restructured in a manner that liberates them from their dependence on cities. These educational institutions should either be self-sufficient or at the most dependent upon the village or a cluster of village units. Villagers should be imparted training in such professions whose products can be marketed locally. Simultaneously, the political and administrative setup of these units should be autonomous and self-reliant. But if the villages are to be developed on the pattern of cities, then it would not be much of a problem. Only a miniature city plan will do. The only difference would be that whereas the means of livelihood in cities are industries, in villages it would be agriculture which too would gradually be relegated to a secondary position. These issues must seriously be pondered over, if education is to be linked with our national life, which it must. In that case, it will have to be framed in accordance with the future national development plans and its economic and political setup. One of the major drawbacks of our educational system is its inability to manifest itself as an integral part of our national development plans and people's aspirations. It is not in consonance with country of our dreams.

* Ex Vice-chancellor, Jabalpur University.

- (ii) The second important question to be considered is that of villager's direct participation in planning processes. These plans should be prepared in the villages itself. One of the main reasons of total or near-total failure of our plans is that they are prepared by the urban elite sitting in air-conditioned apartments. Gandhiji's rural-oriented system of education was conceived in a rural setting but was forced to commit Harakiri because its implementation was left at the mercy of bureaucracy.

Problems and Requirements of Rural Life

Agriculture is and will continue to be the main occupation of villagers. Though agriculture will now onwards become more and more mechanised, still the immediate and long-range need of the villages would be controlling the soil erosion, levelling the fields, converting fallow lands into cultivable ones, planting trees and providing pastures. There is hardly a village which is not afflicted by one or the other problem. Experts in soil chemistry, engineering and forestry will be needed for their solution. Another problem related to agriculture is that of irrigation which cannot be solved by sitting in cosy central offices. The water in the wells, tanks, nullahs and rivers waiting for water lifting or pucca rivulets can be harnessed with the help of machines. Hence every village needs educated persons well-versed in irrigation techniques.

Cattle are an inseparable part of agriculture. Robust bullocks, he-buffaloes and camels are required for ploughing the fields. Cows, she-buffaloes and sheep are needed for milk. Specialists will be required to look after them.

Villages also need regular facilities for the manufacture and repairs of ploughs and other implements needed for sowing, harvesting etc. Pumping-sets, tractors etc., also so often go out of order. To keep them in trim condition, every village would require engineers and small workshops. Seeds production, plant-protection, storage, marketing etc., too demand expertise in the related subject. The problem of transportation is also quite complex. Manufacturing, repairing and qualitative modification in bullock carts is one of very important necessities of our country.

Bullock-carts for transport are different from the carriages. A workshop in every village becomes necessary for them. In the absence of roads, which connect villages among themselves and with the cities, it becomes very difficult to transport the rural products. Road, need not necessarily be pucca ones, will have to be constructed. At present they are insufficient and in a miserable condition. This is all about agriculture for which qualified and trained personnel in almost all branches of agriculture will be required for every village.

Let us now consider the village artisans. If all the requirements of the villages are satisfied there itself, then the peasants will usefully utilise their spare time. This will also provide employment for all the educated people of the villages. Sufficient money from our villages is funnelled out to cities for purchasing fruits, vegetables, furniture, carpets, baskets, chappals, shoes, utensils, knives, metalwares, earthen pots etc. Manned by rural man power, if all the industries, handlooms and masonry work included, are established in a planned manner, the very character



of the villages can be met by this, competent hands.

We have discussed the importance of the relation between the department and the villages. Industries, Health and Education of the states. The traditional system is present in every workin union. In every 1000, a middle class and a higher socio

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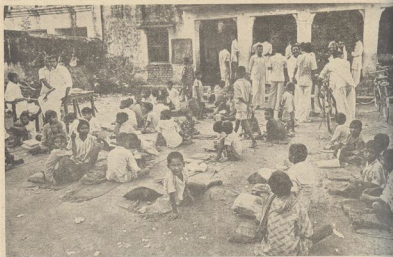
A light in the dark.

of the villages can be changed. For this, competent hands are needed.

We have discussed all this to emphasise the importance of mutual coordination between the Planning Commission department and public works departments, Industries, Commerce, Agriculture, Health and Social Departments of the states. The success of any educational system is possible only if they all work in unison. A primary school for every 1000, a middle school for every 2500 and a higher secondary school for every

10,000 people will have to be established. Similarly a professional training school for every 10,000 people and a multi-purpose industrial training school for every 20,000 people will have to be founded.

Agriculture should be made compulsory in higher secondary schools; alternatively the urban students can be taught town-planning, industrial planning etc. Practical farming includes knowledge of fruit and vegetable farming. These schools need not necessarily have their own farms because the village itself will pro-



Schooling in the village.

vide ample fieldwork facilities. Therefore, at this stage only theoretical education for the village students would suffice. They can utilise this theoretical education in their respective farms. Thus, the teaching of this subject will require hardly any additional investments. The craft which has been taught at secondary stage, can be taught as an alternative to agriculture at the advanced level. Under this scheme each school will specialise in one branch of knowledge.

Training in improved technology, of blacksmithy, carpentry, pottery, cart manufacturing, electronics etc., to be imparted in workshops should be sustained by local resources. The advance multipurpose schools will, of course, depend upon aids.

Along with these crafts, training in packing, storage, marketing etc. may be given in commercial schools. Rural

economics should be taught as an alternative to industrial economics. In the medical colleges, an integrated diploma course, including Indian medicine, should be taught. The diploma courses in commerce, engineering, medicine, and veterinary sciences, based on rural needs should be taught in colleges meant for this purpose. But it is necessary that there should be separate institutes for training of all the subjects in every district; especially in those districts which have no separate colleges for them.

This is about education in occupational and allied subjects. Education in language, history and culture, politics, geography, music, dancing, science etc. is also important. The mother-tongue i.e., the language of the child should be taught up to higher secondary stage, besides its being the medium of instruction.

Intimate knowledge of local culture should be part of our education. In villages which do not have schools today Indian village superstitions and customs should be taught. The aim of education should be to free them from this ignorance, to stand on the foundation of community, respect for women, all religions. The education should be to remove social order devoid of economic disparities. It should be to a tolerant, democratic life style. The purpose of education in India should be to emancipate the rural purdah system, to





A long way to go.

Intimate knowledge of Indian culture should be an important part of our education. Indian culture is rooted in villages which depends on agriculture. Today Indian villagers are immersed in superstitions and unjust social relationships. The aim of education is to liberate them from this glut and to make them stand on the foundations of human dignity, respect for woman and respect for all religions. The aim of rural-oriented education should be to create a new social order devoid of present-day economic disparities. It should be wedded to a tolerant, duty conscious and democratic life style. The success of democracy in India depends on its villages. The purpose of teaching humanities should be emancipation from casteism, purdah system, dowry etc., and inculca-

tion of loyalty to the motherland. The arts should be for the society; not that the society should be for arts. We should not feel shy of our folk-arts. It should be helpful in preserving the fundamental aspects of our rural culture. The same applies to science. The syllabus of science, maths including, will be an integrated syllabus for the villages, as in economics, which would include bio-sciences—chemistry, physics, maths and statistics—in proportion to their respective utility.

It is obvious that children in the villages would also like to go for higher administrative posts or for higher education in universities. For such students, whether they are from rural or from urban areas, a competitive examination

should be arranged, but its syllabus should satisfy and appeal to the genius and environment of both. A poor country like India cannot afford education as a luxury; nor the youth from 18 to 25 years can be allowed to wander about in the streets and to indulge in acts of destruction. The portals of higher education should be open only for the talented students. Every youth should be engaged in some job after higher secondary education and the enormous amount, which is today being spent on general education, should be spent on professional training schools. Universities, which are engaged in exa-

mination-oriented education only, are just of no use. The earlier degrees and certificates cease to be the visas for entering employment, the better it would be.

But primary condition for the success of this type of education is to create an urge among the rural people that they must be active participants in their own development. Countless excellent plans, which could have transformed the country, have gone awry because of bureaucratic red-tapism and political hypocrisy. We have to guard ourselves against these. Can we ? □

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THE phenomenon of materialism has a long history in the twentieth century. In the eighties and nineties it has been able to adjust itself to changing times, and is finding itself in a new environment. The phenomenon is in him. He is not only for employment opportunities day-to-day routine passing high school he has no option for higher education pursue professional faced with entrance Rural student hostel in some hostel great change style but his behavior also radically he used to go and would enjoy defecation in the hostel he started at 6 a.m. instead of 8 a.m. thus this rural student's traditional early to rise.

There was his village life of new friendliness and behaviour and materialism and influence of

Rural Youth In Urban Setting

□ Sunil Mann

THE phenomenon of rat race for scientific advancement and mirage of materialism has attained new dimensions in the twentieth century, more so in the eighties and has brought the entire world on crossroads. Though urbanites have been able to adjust themselves with the changing times, the educated rural youth is finding itself misfit in the urban environment. There is an ambivalence in him. He is forced to migrate to cities not only for higher education and employment opportunities but also for day-to-day routine jobs. Generally after passing high school examination in village he has no option but to go to cities for higher education in university or to pursue professional courses. Here, he is faced with entirely new circumstances. Rural student has to seek accommodation in some hostel in the city. That brings a great change not only in his daily life style but his behaviour and thinking are also radically changed. In the village he used to get up early in the morning and would enjoy a long walk for morning defecation etc. But now in the urban hostel he starts getting up at 8.00 or 9.00 a.m. instead of earlier 5.00 a.m. And thus this rural youth completely forgets his traditional dictum of "early to bed early to rise."

There was no place for formalities in his village life but now in the company of new friends in the city, his total behaviour and conversation smacks of formalism and artificiality. Under the influence of the atmosphere around him

he also makes unsuccessful efforts to display his modernism by *repeating parrot like* most common and meaningless English idioms and phrases. In short, the rural youth, after coming to the city, undergoes a strange transformation right from his dress to his thinking process.

It would have been all right if this change and transformation had been limited up to thinking only. But what happens is that this 'city-retained youth' out of his craze to look 'modern' concentrates all his energies on copying the urban fashions only. Clad in Jean jacket, ear-long hair and Hindi burdened with English words—is all that the rural youth brings back with him to the village.

Unfortunately for him modernisation has come to mean a blind copy of urban life style and dress fashions. Under the influence of this modernism, he starts hating 'manual labour'. That is why instead of availing the opportunities of earning more through manual labour in his own village, he is keen to run to the city in search of some job in an office where he may be required to do some desk work, although at a much lower remuneration than what he would have otherwise earned. Thus it is clear that urbanisation of thinking is not at all good because urbanism has become synonym with 'modernism'. It so happens that after coming to city the rural youth loses his basic rural values and imbibes many evil qualities inherent in urban environment such as falsehood

chicanery, crookedness, etc. Such youth, instead of infusing higher inspirations, only poison the rural society. It is not that the educated rural youth is able to surpass his urban counterparts in the field of the of these evil qualities. On the contrary, he always finds himself a loser against urbanites in the 'cut-throat' competition of today because he cannot completely wash of his inherent rural "Samskaras." As whole system of today is urban-oriented, rural youth in spite of best of desire and efforts is not able to merge his identity completely in this system. On one hand, he is not able to create a niche for himself in this urban-oriented system while on the other hand by blind aping of the urban civilization he gets uprooted from his rural soil as well. Consequently, he finds himself in the condition of a tree without roots. Thus the fate of 'Trishanku' waits for the city-retained rural educated youth who has lost touch with his native, soil and foundations.

Now, when materialism has touched its high watermark and has become all-

pervading, higher and basic human values are fast disappearing from the society. Fundamental characteristics of Indian society are now breathing their last in the urban civilization. Disintegration of joint family system, loosening of human relationship—these are symptoms of the urban civilization. Naturally, the rural youth, after coming in contact the city life, cannot escape the impact of all these evils which have become essential part of the fast-moving city life. Simultaneously he cannot completely forget the warmth of intimate family and human relationships that are the basic characteristics of the rural life. Torn between these opposite pulls, the rural youth passes through a serious inner struggle. He develops a complex of purposelessness and pessimism in himself. It is a common experience that the city-based youth who has attachment to the village is neglected, on one hand, by his own parents and close relatives while on the other hand, the urban society also treats him as a second-rate citizen. Thus, he is not able to establish himself anywhere. □

My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world. There will be neither plague, nor cholera, nor smallpox; no one will be idle, no one will wallow in luxury. Everyone will have to contribute his quota of manual labour.....It is possible to envisage railways, post and telegraph..... and the like.....

MAHATMA GANDHI

Bunch of Old Letters, (1948)

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**SOME
EXPERIMENTS
IN
RURAL
RECONSTRUCTION**

Gandhiji's quest for a model village

I know that the work (of shaping the ideal village) is as difficult as to make of India an ideal country. . . . But if one can produce one ideal village, he will have provided a pattern not only for the whole country but perhaps for the whole world. More than this a seeker may not aspire after.

Towards New Horizons, (1959), p. 99

"Why not make large collections and spread your work over a large area?"

"No, I do not believe in collecting more than I need."

"But supposing you constructed twenty, even ten, model villages?"

"If it is such an easy thing you might do so with your money. But I know it is not easy. You cannot bring a model village into being by the magic wand of money."

Harijan, 30-11-'35

To model such a village may be the work of a life time. Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he will find good results. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicineman and school master all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning.

Harijan, 26-7-1942, p. 238



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Deendayalpuram : Rebirth of a village



The cyclone that hit the coastal district of Andhra Pradesh on that fateful day of November 19, 1977, exposed man's utter helplessness against the fury of nature. In Divi Seema alone, nearly ten thousand precious lives were lost, sixtyone villages washed off and a few villages totally wiped out of existence and depopulated. The loss to livestock ran into hundreds of thousands.

In the wake of this large trail of devastation, humanity rose to the occasion to accept this challenge to humanity. Man did his best to mitigate the misery of Man! Reconstruction was soon on hand.

Within a week from the date of occurrence of the calamity, thousands of swayamsevaks were mobilised for collection work throughout the State and the country. Hundreds offered their readiness to work for the people in the tide-affected places. Relief in cash and kind began to pour in from all over the country. Relief camps were opened at many places.

A team of 12 doctors of the Medical Mission Force in the Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi, arrived on November 28, 1977 and worked in the advance base at Parrachivara village for 12 days. Batches of doctors from Kurnool, Hyderabad, Kakinada, Hubli and some other places also took part in this holy task.

Sava Sena at Work

In the wake of the slashing tide, one

could see whole villages uprooted and thousands of men, women and children were squeezed into the jaws of death. Corpses lay scattered emitting foul smell, under the debris of the houses, beneath the uprooted trees, in the canals, on the roads, in the thorny bushes...why? here, there, everywhere! There was every possibility of their getting putrified and very soon proving to be a health hazard. It was feared that cholera might break out. But who should remove these stinking corpses and cremate them?

The problem attracted the attention of one and all and the R S S had rightly seized of it. Swayamsevaks formed a corpse lifting band known as Sava Sena.

This Sava Sena activity which started on the November 26, continued right upto the 3rd week of December. From the advance operation base at Kaduru, about 13 kilometres from Avanigadda, more than 12 villages were covered and nearly 650 bodies were cremated. The camp at Parrachivara, in another interior part of the Divi Seema, consisting of the R S S workers and the Medical Mission team of the DRI New Delhi, recorded about 400 bodies.

Deendayalpuram

But all this was only a temporary relief work. Something more was needed to meet this challenge of devastation.

"Man cannot conquer Nature; but he can certainly conquer destruction by construction as the inauguration of this village symbolises," said Sri Atal

Behari Vajpayee on 14-7-78, at the time of the inauguration of Deendayalpuram, the first village constructed for the tide-affected fishermen in Divi Seema. It was taken up and completed in a record time of three months by the R S S in collaboration with the Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi.

This is how it all began.....

It was December 1977, Shri Bala Saheb Deoras, Sar Sangh Chalak of the R S S came to see the devastation caused by the cruel cyclone. *Inter alia*, he suggested that permanent construction activities be taken up.....He wanted a phased programme to be taken up... relief reconstruction, rehabilitation and permanent protection.

The Cyclone Relief Committee, of the R S S was by then very active in organising relief programme. Their work earned for them great admiration of the people. With admiration came the money, material and man. The R S S workers were overwhelmed with the help that was pouring in. They took up the rehabilitation programme. They built 65 kutirs, in Avanigadda and Parachivara villages including a colony of 25 kutire named Durgaprasadapuram, and 135 kutirs in Sriramnagar of Anakapalli and other places. It was January 78 by the time of R S S should complete this second phase.

Dr J.K. Jain, Secretary of the Deendyal Research Institute, New Delhi came to Divi Seema in December along with Sri S. Somaiah, Prant Pracharak and came into contact with the people of Mulapalem. The village was one of the most affected. More than one-third of the population—168 human lives—were swallowed by the wave. Not a single

head of cattle survived. The houses were totally swept off leaving not a trace behind. The site of the village looked bare and desolate. More than the physical loss, the shock to the mind and spirit of the survivors was most heart-rending. It was then that they decided to select the village for total reconstruction. Mulapalem was destined to be reborn as Deendayalpuram.

How the task was done ?

The Bhoomipuja for the construction was held on the January 26, 78 and the construction of the houses was completed by the first week of May 78—hardly three months and odd. On all hands, this was a record performance—a house, a day. How this wonder could be achieved?

The man on the field, Sri K. Vidwan Reddi, a supervisor in the Public Works Department who applied for leave and devoted his whole time for the job from the very beginning, and Sri K.G. Parande, a junior engineer of Nagpur who left his job for this service to the people, worked untiringly for the speedy and effective execution of the work. Swayamsevak of all cadres came and worked in batches after batches braving the cold and the heat and the swarming dust of the open plain. Their devotion and simplicity left its mark on the uprooted people. They too considered the whole work their own and worked in batches everyday. They were ready to do any job any time, day or night.

This concerted effort on all hands was chiefly responsible for this wonder achievement. The village is now a cluster of 96 pucca concrete houses.



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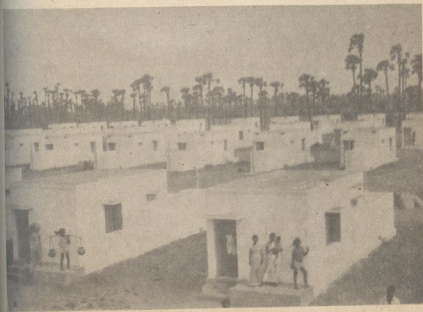
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Sava Sena Volunteers at work



Bird's eye view of Deendayalpuram

A Model Village

Deendayalpuram has been planned to be a model village for Rural Reconstruction, Shri Nanaji Deshmukh, M P and the Chairman, Deendayal Research Institute, visited the village thrice along with Dr J.K. Jain, the Secretary of the Institute. He gave valuable suggestions and guidance in the planning of the construction project. In one of his visits, Nanaji was accompanied by Sri R.V. Pandit, a journalist who had wide experience of tours abroad and now attached to the Institute as an adviser and they studied the economic conditions of the people in order to be able to formulate some means of improving their economic status also.

Sh. R.V. Pandit stayed in the village for three days for a detailed survey of the problems of the fishermen who formed the entire population of the village. He was working on a long-term scheme for the economic betterment of the fishermen and the other weaker sections of the society.

Even while the reconstruction of the entire village of Mulapalem was in the offing, a committee of two experts from the Matsya Pravartaka Sangham of Kerala consisting of Shri Sankaranarayanan and Sri Krishnan, visited the area in January 78, on the invitation of the Cyclone Relief Committee. They assessed the prevailing circumstances and gave their recommendations for the betterment of the fishermen's lives in this area. They had suggested short-term as well as so long-term objectives for their development.

As a result of these studies and consultations in addition to the project for

the construction of houses in an entire village, the following schemes were also taken up simultaneously. . . 'The Kisan Seva Pathakam'. The Jana Seva Pathakam. "The Bharatee Seva Sadan", and "The Vaidya Seva Pathakam".

The Kisan Seva Pathakam

The farmer was twice hit in the cyclone havoc—the crop has been lost and the prospects of cultivation bleak due to the submerging of the lands under the saline sheet of water. The comprehensive plans for the successful cultivation of the inundated fields had to be drawn up. The Committee announced this Pathakam as part of an integrated plan of sustained development. Two villages in Divi Seema—Deendayalpuram and Pittalalanka—were selected for intensive work of development.

(1) Soil testing and desilting operations were conducted on nearly 300 acres in both the villages. Most of these were Harijan and fishermen farmers with less than an acre and a half each.

(2) This was followed up by Intensive ploughing both dry and wet, in order to make soil fit for plantation.

(3) In Pittalalanka village, 120 kg. of chillis seeds, were given out of which 50 kg. were given on subsidy basis only.

In Deendayalpuram, paddy, seeds and seedlings were supplied free for plantation in the fields.

(4) Fertilizers were supplied to all the farmers according to their needs.

(5) Sprayers and dusters were given to the farmers in Pittalalanka village in Divi and Pinapadu and Emani villagers in Tenati Taluk, for community use.

(6) With the cooperation of Farmers Development, Andhra Pradesh Bureau, procured for the farmers of cattle, bullocks, etc., under the sponsorship

(7) The farmers were given loans from the Cyclone Relief Committee, sponsoring Agency, for these loans under the scheme. Thus the farmers got loans irrespective of whether their lands or non-paddy

(8) Technical assistance was made available to conduct their farm activities on a scientific basis.

The Jana Seva Pathakam

The most peculiar devastation was the loss of people affected by the cyclone. The people of the society lost their sickles, and barbers' and not spared. They could only provide again on the terrace conducted in the adoption and in the avoid misuse or was chalked out for families as possible of the Committee

In the form of first priority was the sons—the lame, and deaf. The kit, the washer, carpenter his to keepers and fa

(6) With the cooperation of the Small Farmers Development Agency and the Andhra Pradesh Bank Ltd., loans were procured for the farmers for the purchase of cattle, bullocks, buffaloes, carts, etc. under the sponsoring scheme.

(7) The farmers were also provided with loans from banks for which the Cyclone Relief Committee as the Sponsoring Agency, bears the interest on these loans under a Special Deposit. Thus the farmers get interest-free loans irrespective of whether they held patta lands or non-patta lands.

(8) Technical aid and advice also was made available so that they could conduct their farming operations on a scientific basis.

The Jana Seva Pathakam

The most peculiar feature of the tidal devastation was that almost all these affected people belonged to the lowest rungs of the society. Farm labourers lost their sickles, the fishermen their nets and barbers' and washermen's kits were not spared. The vast influx of relief could only provide the sufferer his feet again on the terra firma. A survey was conducted in the places selected for our adoption and intensive help in order to avoid misuse or duplication and a plan was chalked out to rehabilitate as many families as possible within the capacity of the Committee.

In the formulation of preferences; first priority was given to disabled persons—the lame, the mute and the blind and deaf. The barber now got his rajorkit, the washerman his iron and the carpenter his tools. Tailors, petty shopkeepers and farm labour also were sup-

plied their tool requirements.

The Bharatee Seva Sadan

Even in the first week of December 77, "Educate an Orphan" project was announced and the Committee was ready to accept 200 affected. The call was generously responded to and several offers to donate for as well as to adopt orphaned children were received by the Committee in a short time.

Encouraged with this tremendous response, a detailed survey was taken up in Divi and Bandar Taluks. Arrangements were made for starting a Home. A clearcut institution in the name of "Bharatee Seva Sadan" was inaugurated with poor children in Machilipatnam. The Sadan is being continued with the inmates now housed in Deendayalpuram. Arrangements for their education were also made.

Vaidya Seva Pathakam

Immediately after the cyclone and tide, the first Medical Relief Centre was opened by the RSS workers in Avani-gadda, on November 21, 77.

Dr P. Subramanya Sastri, M.B.B.S of Kurnool who offered his services from the beginning of the relief activities, has been put in charge of this centre. Later the centre was shifted to the camp residence at the site of construction of the village, Deendayalpuram. Meanwhile, a medical van has been donated by DRI with full furnishings for use at Deendayalpuram. It is intended to serve not only as an ambulance but also as a mobile medical unit. The hospital is at present housed in one of the quarters constructed at Deendayalpuram with a doctor and an assistant. It is being

maintained under the Vaidya Seva Pathakam.

New Life-Pattern

This reconstruction work did not remain confined to their economic rehabilitation only, rather, it gave them an opportunity to live a new social life in a new setting.

The residents of Mulapalem in the long company of a few workers during the construction phase had imbibed new moral values.

Most of the residents who were previously addicted to liquor forgot all about and now they are quite happy to be away from it. This is another wonder achievement as we can discern—a basic change in the living pattern of rustic life.

Grihapravesham took place at an auspicious moment early in the morning with collecting Satyanarayan Vratam.

Every recipient of a kutir was also given a box containing all minimum necessary household articles including clothes to wear.

Not only this. Every house was decorated with the photographic image of "Bharat Mata" in whose names the organisation has been striving to help them and instil the spirit of love to their motherland.

On April 30, 78, a scheme of group marriages was implemented in the village Mulapalem (under reconstruction as Deendayalpuram) by arranging 15 marriages at the same time. Each couple

or family were given Rs. 250/- for sundry expenses in addition to new clothes for them.

Deendayalpuram is now a living and growing colony. The Andhra Pradesh Road Transport Corporation has extended bus services to the place from Machilipatnam, the district headquarters, and Vijayawada, the commercial headquarters. There is now a post office and public telephone. A hospital has been running in one of quarters and another house has been set apart for housing the Bharatee Seva Sadan for the present.

The Community Hall is not simply a cyclone shelter. It is intended to serve as a centre for social and community gatherings and functions not only for the residents of village, but for those of the surrounding villages as well. It is the concrete realisation of the suggestion of P.P. Bala Saheb Deoras for the construction of a pucca hall in every village.

An adult Education Centre was opened and the villagers evince keen interest in learning not only alphabet but improving their knowledge of the world and the people. They hold weekly bhajans and other recreational activities.

In short, Deendayalpuram is going to be a model to the country itself. The dream of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya are taking concrete shape in this village.

Who says that destruction does not contain the seeds of regeneration in its womb? Rebirth of Mulapalem in Deendayalpuram is the answer. □

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Ramakrishna Mission in Rural Development

I. A Call from tribals to Ramakrishna Mission

□ Swami Gautamanand*

THE rural people in this country had been neglected so much that the prophet-saint Swami Vivekananda described them as having become mere hewers of wood and drawers of water; "they, the descendants of Rishis had become next-door neighbours to brutes."

The great Swami said that our villages should be made to live, think and express themselves like dignified members of our society, our nation to which they belong. In his words, "They are to be given back their lost individuality. They are to be educated." For this restoration of lost individuality he advocated more 'education,' than spoon-feeding them with money, "All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves." He wanted them to be given ideas—secular, scientific and spiritual. "Education is the panacea for all our ills," he often said.

Swami Vivekananda wanted to flood the country with spiritual ideas first and along with that spread the education that gave them ideas about better food production, hygiene, self-government. All this has to be done without injuring their 'religion,' for therein lay the vitality of the nation. Religion to Swami Vivekananda, we should point out here, was the manifestation of the Divinity in each individual. He put the whole of his teachings in a nutshell to Sister Nive-

ditia, "To preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every movement of life."

The beginning

With this philosophy of Swami Vivekananda on rural development, the R. K. Mission started working in the rural areas of India from 1897. The very first centre to be opened was the Famine Relief Centre in Murshidabad, West Bengal, in 1897. 'Swamiji' as Swami Vivekananda is lovingly called had just reached India after his triumphal preaching in West. It's interesting to note the details regarding beginning of the first philanthropic work by the Ramakrishna Mission. Swami Akhandanandaji, a brother disciple of Swami Vivekananda, was on a visit to the historic place of Plassey, in Murshidabad District, West Bengal. While returning from there he spent a night unknowingly in a famine-stricken village called 'Mahula'. He got up in the morning to leave the village but he felt unable to do so. His conscience told him that he had a great work to do there. An adamant resolve came upon him, "I shall rather die with these starving people, than flee them in distress."

Thus started the maiden famine relief work which slowly developed into an orphanage first and then into a complex of educational—cultural work compri-

*Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, Along (Siang District), Arunachal Pradesh.

sing thirteen educational centres—high schools, junior basic schools, teachers' training schools, libraries, hostels, etc.

Relief activities of any kind have only a temporary benefit and the permanent help can come only through proper education. Hence the Ramakrishna Mission has always laid stress on education of the needy and the neglected though never underrating the need for relief works. The next phase started with the opening of several such educational cultural centres, of which many were in tribal belts of North Eastern India, Assam and Bihar. Tribal Welfare work on a smaller scale was taken up in West Bengal, Orissa and Kerala also.

Work among tribals

The earliest tribal work of the R. K. Mission is, perhaps, the one in Meghalaya, barring of course the service to probably tribals in the relief works mentioned at the outset.

Ramakrishna Mission entered Meghalaya in 1922. But the Welsh Missionaries were already there, they had entered this place as early as in 1940. The local people were under the spell of the foreign missionaries. They were reluctant to offer even a piece of land to R. K. Mission to start educational work. But the indomitable *sanyasin*, Swami Prabhavanandaji, somehow tempted them out of a piece of land. A primary school started working on this land. Very soon people were impressed with the sincerity and the sound standards of teaching by the R. K. Mission workers. The school then developed into a middle school, then into a high school. This happened to be the first high school within a radius

of 50 km. from Cherrapunji where the Welsh and other missionaries were working ostensibly and educating the people for the last 90 years. Other branch schools soon came to be started and by the 1970s, there were about 45 schools imparting secular, technical as well as spiritual education to the Khasis, Garos and Jaintias of Meghalaya.

In Meghalaya, when the British Raj disappeared, the missionaries felt very helpless. Their helplessness gave vent to jealousy of Ramakrishna Mission's growing influence. One well-known doctor, a missionary mouthpiece, went about propagating in the Christian circles, "Unless Ramakrishna Mission is driven out of Meghalaya, they will drive our Christianity out." The poor man did not want to understand though he had certainly seen that the Ramakrishna missionaries are great lovers of Christ as well as of Buddha or Mohammad.

Monastics of Ramakrishna mission visited the erstwhile NEFA (North Eastern Frontier Agency) which is aptly called the Africa of India, on account of its thick forests and abundant animal wealth, inaccessible valleys and torrential rivers. The people of NEFA, one of the oldest Hill Tribes (or Girijans) of India, wanted a good school to teach them 'English.' That was in early sixties. One may ask, "how did such a demand suddenly come to the tribal mind?"

It was a 'Bharat Darshan' (Tourist) party of tribal leaders from NEFA that had arrived at Delhi and was subsequently invited by the President of India to a dinner. The tribals from NEFA felt offended at the President not speaking to them even once while he went on

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English medium

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chatting freely to other groups of people around, of course, in English. How could they know that the President did not know enough Hindi to talk to them? This all the same hurt their feelings and made the leaders 'demand' an English medium school, as that only could enable them to talk to anyone anywhere in the world.

English medium school in Arunachal

The wise administration now arranged with the Ramakrishna mission to open the required English school, obviously for the mission's nonsectarian outlook, their sincere promotion of the harmony of religions and their assiduous sincerity in educating the masses and class in the best ideals of the National Education. The Mission selected 'ALONG,' the headquarters of Siang District for its work and started a primary school with about 35 tribal students in 1966. English naturally was the medium, but Hindi was added as the second language instead of any other vernacular with a view to integrate the isolated people with the main national current. Presently the school which is affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi imparts training, along with the curriculum, in agriculture, poultry, dairy, tailoring, typewriting, Indian music, drawing, and painting. It runs a mobile dispensary for the interior villages with an audio-visual unit, too.

The Christian Tirade

The recent enactment of the 'Freedom of Religions Bill' by the State Assembly, occasioned violent reaction by some vested interests not only against the bill which was understandable but against

the Ramakrishna Mission too as a proselytising 'Hindi mission.' But the tribals of Arunachal have come to know too well to swallow such baits some leaders remarked with amusement "We haven't found a single student sent to Ramakrishna Mission since last thirteen years, even abandoning his/her tribal religion whereas almost everyone who was sent to Christian mission schools disowned their religion after taking 'Baptis' (Baptism)."

Even today, the anti-Ramakrishna Mission tirade continues to try to undermine the discipline of the Ramakrishna Mission Schools by instigating the innocent students that they should get this privilege, that freedom, etc. At times the innocents do behave oddly under such instigations and suffer the displeasure of their mentors. 'Why should not the tribal students be given BEEF' is one of frequent slogans raised by these circles against the Ramakrishna Mission. Time and again the Mission has clarified that due to various tribes practising various taboos in eating it had to switch over to the common items of food only as the general menu and beef is a taboo for many tribes in Arunachal Pradesh.

Irrespective of the tirade, the success of the Along Centre inspired the leaders of the tribals in Tirap district and consequently one Residential Girls Secondary school by the 'Sarada Mission' has come up there and is working gloriously.

Donyi Polo, The Supreme God

The five districts, from west to east, namely Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap have varying climates and colours. While the Kameng tribals called 'MONPAS' are Buddhists, those of

Subansiri are Nishis, Apatanis and Tagins professing a set of rites and rituals peculiar to their tribes. Tribals of Siang mainly called Minyions, Gal-longs (together called AADI meaning a hillman) practise a set of rituals called their 'Niyom' and propitiate their supreme God 'Donyi Polo,' Donyi meaning Sun and Polo meaning Moon. It should be remembered here that Polo (Moon) is the father god the Donyi (Sun) is the mother goddess.

Tribals of Meghalaya still follow the system of matriarchy. Among the Khasis, Garos and Jaintias, the mother and her daughter are the holders of the family property. The son-in-law leaves his home and settles down with his wife and the children always get the surname of the mother. A daughter moves about with a money bag right from her girlhood and that gives her a superior feeling over her brothers who always feel inferior. One can see Adam-teasing schools literally with a vengeance. Once we saw a primary school with shortage of some benches. All the girls occupied the limited number of benches and the boys automatically sat on the floor.

There are interesting incidents regarding the attires of Arunachal. The womenfolk in Siang district wear Gales (resembling a lungi). When plainmen, cleanshaven, go with lungis on, these women really are surprised to see such womenfolk. Tribal men, of course, move about in a manly way, i.e. with just a Kaupin on. They are also surprised why the menfolk of plains cover themselves with so much clothing as their womenfolk do. When the first Swamis of the Ramakrishna Mission went to start the 'English School' as mentioned above, the

local people felt a bit disappointed at these 'Hamis' (Swamis) clad in women's dresses. One of their intelligent leaders understood their thought and explained that these 'hamis' belonged to God, the Donyi Polo and hence could wear such dresses as they like. That perhaps brought back their confidence in the 'Hamis' a little.

Brave people

Arunachal is a vast area, as big as Assam, about 85,000 square kilometres but with only a little more than 5 lakh population. Naturally, vast lands of woods and shrubs abound and lot of wild birds and beasts too. Menfolk would always move outdoor with a big knife called DAO for safety. People—even children—are fearless beyond imagination. Killing of snakes is a daily affair by small kids. Walking in the dark through jungles two to three kilometres is an ordinary affair for even small boys.

Their physical stamina is something that should evoke wonder. A group of school boys of age fourteen to fifteen were to be trained by a coach who was a youngman from the plains. When he saw the trainee boys running faster than him, throwing the shots longer than him, he simply had to leave the place and the idea itself. The javelin throw, the different funning events and playing football come to them as naturally as swimming to a fish. Girls of age thirteen or fourteen running 1,000 metres race smiling all the while is a memorable scene any one can never forget.

Long walking carrying loads is singularly another natural habit. One of the school boys—a thirteen-year old—track-

ed his way back kilometres away one mound of boulders would not carry him not into it.

Healthy and Int

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ed his way back to his village thirty-five kilometres away by hill path with about one mound of beddings on his back. He would not avail of a bus saying that it would carry him only near his village, not into it.

Healthy and Intelligent

The people are by and large healthy and lack no simple food and shelter. There is weaving prevailing as a home industry. It gives some clothing to the villagers though not adequate. The tribals of Arunachal know crude methods of cultivation by hand, along the slopes of hills and mountains. Selling wood from forests, hunting and fishing are other occupations that help the people eke out their living.

Perhaps owing to the hunting habits, meat forms their main protein source and that gives them good health and good brains too. The tribal children are decidedly more intelligent than their counterparts in the plains societies. With a little grooming up they excel in academic studies also. The marks list from class I to X of our school reveals the tribals scoring highest marks in the classes I to III and trailing just behind the best boys from non-tribals in the other classes too. One tribal girl of our class V and another tribal boy of class VI scored highest marks in the 'All India General Knowledge Test' conducted by the 'United Schools Organisation of India,' Delhi (affiliated to the UNESCO) in two consecutive years.

Extraordinary self-dependence

One finds the tribal children—even at five years—very self-dependent. Parents would leave their five-year olds

with you in the hostel and go away. Most children just remain calm with his other friends; at the departure of parents—not a cry nor a sigh. But at the same time he is ever ready to run home if there is a couple of holidays at a stretch of the school.

Another interesting episode of their self-dependence can be told here. When small boys of seven or eight years were given a mosquito net each, they, boys as well as the nets, were found missing late in a night. On searching they were all found fishing in the nearby river, at 10 in the night. They had obviously mistaken the mosquito-net for the fishing-net and of course the temptation of the fish was the one behind the mischief.

Sense of patriotism

The last but not the least is the great responsibility on the students of these tribal young men in holding the burdens of their motherland against her enemies beyond Tibet which can never be underestimated. With proper education—I repeat again 'proper'—they should discharge their onerous responsibility well and also join hands with the rest of the country in its march to greater and fuller prosperity.

Well-concieved but ill-executed

A word regarding the work by the Government in these areas. A methodical and realistic approach seems to be lacking in the various projects being executed so far. For example, all departments want to start all developmental projects simultaneously. The Department of Agriculture wants to eradicate Jhumming to introduce terrace and wet cultivation, as also to cultivate fruit,

coffee, tea, etc. They bring in a whole battalion of officers, from the district level to the field level. Spacious quarters are constructed for these officers, most of whom are from plains, and then for their offices thus a huge establishment comes to town with very little work on the field—either of cultivation or of orcharding. Multiply the same story by the Engineering Department (CPWD), the Department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary, the Forest Department, the Fishery Department, Industries Department, etc. Vast town areas are brizzling with baboos dressed in drizzling dresses and long hairs and side by side we see the eager-looking half-clad local tribals wondering "Is all this township meant for *our* or *their* welfare?"... very naturally. One observes not even five per cent of the above officers knowing the local dialects and talking to the locals in their mother tongue.

Need for a new approach

Government would do well to start

small projects with few offices and buildings and after achieving success therein to expand in the same line until the *projects* spread bringing tangible results before people. Let there be more participation by the local people in these projects. Thus and never otherwise, the terrible repercussions, signs of which have already sprouted, can be eschewed. If one of these repercussions start, these may overthrow the negligible progress made during these years together with great damage to faith, hopes and aspirations of the innocent tribal folk in the educated plains people.

In a nutshell we want self-sacrificing men with muscles of iron and nerves of steel, with a heart of oceanic feelings for the amelioration of the sufferings of these poor, helpless children of our mother country. We want Bhagiraths and Nalas and Neelas to watch the lands and bridge the rivers and bring Ram Rajya, the ideal state where property and peace reach into the remotest corners of rural areas. □

HIM I CALL A TRAITOR

My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves. Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing light to them? Let the people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a mahatman whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a duratman. Let us unite our wills in continued prayer for their good. We may die unknown, unpitied, unbewailed, without accomplishing anything—but not one thought will be lost. It will take effect sooner or later. My heart is too full to express my feeling; you know it, you can imagine it. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them; I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those.....millions who are now no better than hungry savages: Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart even secular knowledge through religion.

—Swami Vivekanand

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*Shri Chak Ashrama,

II. Narendrapur Project, West Bengal

□ By Shivsankar Chakravarty

PEOPLE at large are nowadays well aware of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission through its beautiful schools, colleges, hospitals and relief work at times of natural calamities, but not many people know about the sustained rural welfare programmes which are being quietly conducted in the remote villages.

Principle and Approaches

(i) From the beginning, the Institute of Narendrapur emphasised on training of indigenous rural leaders in different fields of rural development.

We feel that unless a new cadre of rural workers are created it would be well-nigh impossible to promote integrated rural development. The Institute trains over 1,000 young people every year in different fields of rural development.

(ii) From the beginning we felt that the problems of the rural poor cannot be solved in isolation. Though we started with adult education and child care programmes, we always looked beyond these programmes and tried to relate the activities to the overall rural scene. We try to take an integrated view of the rural situation and effort is directed towards that goal.

(iii) We further realised that to bring

about a lasting change in the rural communities we should try to institutionalise community efforts by helping the rural people to develop their own institutions. While building such institutions we try to emphasise on the two factors:

(a) On the emergence of youth leadership and;

(b) On increasing the involvement of the rural poor.

Our goal was to help building up self-sustaining community institutions involving the two above basic elements.

(iv) From our experience of last 23 years we have realised that no real change can be brought about in rural areas by implementing programme planned by outsiders. For the successful implementation of a development programme, participation of the rural poor is a must—right from the planning stage to the point of implementation. Therefore, we have tried to organise beneficiaries' groups in the village through whom programmes are planned and implemented.

(v) While planning the developmental activities we have come to realise that for the successful implementation of all programmes at micro-level it is desirable to start by using the local resources, both

*Shri Chakravarty is the Director of the Lokasiksha Parishad of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur, West Bengal.

human and material. There is no point in trying to implement sophisticated programmes depending on outside materials and talents. There is a lot of hidden resources in rural communities which can be mobilised for the furtherance of rural development.

Methods of Communication

Besides the personal contact between the senior staff members of the Parishad and workers of the local institutions, the following institutional arrangements are also provided to maintain the communication between the headquarters and the field organisations:

(i) Regular visits by our field staff to each centre, at least once a month.

(ii) Different types of training programmes held at the headquarters.

(iii) Training programme provided by the Mobile Squad, called 'Chalaman Bahini'. This unit consists of one community organiser, one physical instructor and one music teacher.

(iv) To have a better coordination and feed-back an association or cluster of organisations has been formed consisting of five to ten units in a specific area.

(v) Regular zonal and annual conferences are held to review existing programmes and to draw up further action plans.

(vi) Publication of Bengali monthly magazine 'Samaj Shiksha', devoted discussions on rural problems. Important

activities of each centre are reported in it every month.

(vii) The organisation of exhibitions, annual fairs, visits by distinguished persons to respective centres are the other methods to maintain the communication and strengthen the relationship between associated organisations and the Parishad.

Programme Coverage

We are working approximately in about 200 villages in the districts of Midnapur, 24-Parganas, Bankura and Purulia of West Bengal. Primarily, these activities are organised through 86 rural development centres. The different aspects of integrated rural development programmes are indicated as follows:

Adult Education

Adult education activities comprise the following:

(i) Running of 198 adult education and non-formal education centres. (ii) Material production for adult education activities. We have so far published 23 books suitable for literacy classes and follow-up materials. (iii) 173 mobile library units meeting the requirements of neo-literates and school drop-outs. (iv) Training of adult education instructors in literacy methods. (v) Organising film-shows in the villages. About 150 shows are arranged every year including screening of feature films. (vi) Organising cultural fairs including folk festivals in the villages. (vii) Running night adult high school at Narendrapur. There are about 200 students in this school who work in the day time in

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Child Care

We have earlier pointed out that child care is an important part of our rural development programmes. In fact this programme is one of the methods of our entry into the community. We feel that since children and mothers are the most vulnerable sections in rural societies they should get priority in any programme of rural development. Secondly, by promoting programmes for children one can win the confidence of larger community, which in turn, help in promoting the integrated rural development programmes at a later stage.

Youth Activities

We have earlier indicated that youth power is our major instrument of change in the programme of rural development. To involve the youth we are required to initiate some programmes for them. These programmes are as follows :

- (i) Training of youth workers ; Rural leadership ; Poultry and dairy management ; Use, care and maintenance of agricultural equipment ; Crop husbandry ; Applied nutrition ; Methods of adult literacy ; Various rural industries like, bee-keeping, tile-making, weaving tailoring and embroidery, umbrella-making, coir industry, etc. (ii) Implementation of self-employment oriented schemes, (iii) Textbook bank. (iv) Tutorial classes, (v) Youth exchange programmes and study tours, (vi) Training programme for higher officials in the field of youth activities.

Having achieved some results in the



Students participating in school construction project

field of youth programmes the Government of India has entrusted to us the responsibility of organising training programmes for higher officials like Coordinators of Nehru Yuvak Kendras and Agricultural Research Scientists of Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Our Institution is recognised by the Government of India as Information Development and Resource Agency for youth work in the eastern states. This has given us a wider scope for drawing out experiences from different areas and enrich our programmes. We hope that these training programmes will not only benefit these officials coming to us for training but we will also be immensely benefited from their experiences, which, in turn, could be reflected in our rural development programmes.

Economic Development Programme

We have already indicated that one of our main objectives is to alleviate poverty in the rural areas. Naturally,

therefore, we have to have comprehensive economic development projects behind our rural planning. But we feel that to achieve this goal, the community should be prepared through programme of adult education, child care and youth activities. Therefore, in the initial stages we emphasised on these programmes, whereby we have been able to create a proper climate for comprehensive rural development. After achieving some results in the above areas we have now entered into the field of economic development projects. The economic development projects comprise various activities stated below :

- (i) Total development in some villages including achieving the goal of full employment in some of our project areas.
- (ii) Agro-service Centre.
- (iii) Promoting Dairy and Poultry Units.
- (iv) Promoting Cottage Industries: Umbrella making units ; Weaving ; Tailoring and embroidery; Cane and bamboo units;



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ture; Ampoule making units; Car-
pentry; Hobbylooms; Tile-making; Coir
industry units; Bee-keeping; Palm-goor.

Research and Evaluation

For the successful implementation of
rural development programmes it is
necessary that we have continuous ongo-
ing evaluation of our activities and for
this purpose we have established a small
evaluation cell at our Institute. Al-
ready the following studies have been
undertaken :

(i) Nutritional status of village
children from 8 project villages—report
is under preparation.

(ii) Knowledge, attitude and practice
of rural mothers towards family plann-
ing—report is ready.

(iii) Impact study of rural develop-
ment programmes of six centres have been
completed and report is under prepara-
tion

(iv) Evolution of commercial varie-
ties of chilly as a second crop in the
Sundarban areas of 24-Parganas—Re-
port is under preparation.

(v) Evolution of suitable cultivation
practices of high-yielding varieties of
rice during the kharif season—on-going
project.

Lesson of the Experiment

We have listed various programmes
and indicated in what direction we are
trying to move in the field of rural
development. Herein, we indicate some
of the lessons which we learnt during
the course of the last 23 years of imple-
menting rural development programmes:

1. We are of the firm opinion that money is not the major constraint in rural development. Primary factor is the man-making education which Swami Vivekananda so much emphasised in his suggestions for the solution of problems obtaining in our rural areas.

2. Next to the programme of education we should think about strategy and approach. In our approach we find that both adult education activities and child care programmes are the most suitable strategy for implementing rural development programmes.

3. From our experience we have found that to eradicate poverty it is better to rely on the poor than the rich of the village. Often poor men remain silent. This is not because they are not aware about the situation and do not know the solution, but because the situations around them are so hostile that they prefer to remain silent than to react. For the successful implementation of integrated rural development programme it is necessary to gain their confidence and initiate programmes on their suggestions.

4. Often we initiate rural development by making big noise and spend a lot of money in the initial stages. We are of the opinion that the beginning should be done in such a way that nobody will take cognizance of it. If we make a lot of fanfare it is the rural elite who takes advantage of the whole situation. To avoid such a situation one should begin in a very humble way, so

that we can directly reach the rural poor.

5. To start with we should take up one or two small programmes but all the time we should have a comprehensive view of the total situation. Otherwise, it is very likely that we will be stuck at the level of a particular programme and then the totality of the situation will be lost sight of.

6. There should be a continuous emphasis on the training and retraining of the rural workers. It should be remembered that integrated rural development calls for a new pattern of leadership in the villages. This also includes new cultural style for the village folk. To have a deeper understanding of such a situation it is necessary that our workers are exposed to training to learn and unlearn many things related to rural development.

We have tried to indicate the methods and programmes of rural development sponsored by the Loka Shiksha Parishad (Institute of Social Education & Recreation) of Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Narendrapur. It is not a foolproof experiment but we feel that it is better to start with something than do nothing. We have an open mind and we will always welcome any constructive criticism about our programmes and approaches so that we can continuously improve upon our present experience.

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Social Services as an Entry Point

(THE RATNAGIRI CASE STUDY)

□ Prof. Christopher C. Benninger*

RATNAGIRI is a district characterised by (a) the highest out-migration amongst the districts of the state; (b) the lowest per cent of population living in urban areas of any district in the state; (c) only 26 per cent of the geographic area being under cultivation, versus 52 per cent for the state; (d) a high dependency ratio of 0.96; (e) being the only district in the state without rail connection and (f) having one of the lowest levels of industrial development in the state.

The district has a high literacy rate, a strong voluntary movement, potentials for fisheries, artificial shrimp cultivation, forest development, horticultural development and cattle development. It has the largest bovine population of any district in the state.

The district runs along the coast for about 320 miles and is about 35 miles wide. In the short distance of 35 miles the Sahyadri mountains fall 3,000 feet to the sea. Thus the district is divided into a ghat region, the middle hilly portion (patti) and the coast into which 13 small rivers flow. The area is undulating and the soil is of laterite. While rainfall is very high the water seeps quickly through the laterite and drains off at a low level granite shelf to the sea.

In 1978 a group of voluntary workers in the district urged the government to initiate an Integrated Area Development approach in the district.

The Development Corporation of Konkarn Limited took up the challenge of preparing a proposal to government which would integrate social and economic inputs. The Centre for Development Studies and Activities (Poona) was requested to assist in the programme design and in organizing workshops and field training. UNICEF, through its Western India Office, played an active role in supporting the programme which the Government of Maharashtra assumed a new approach for development at the district level.

It was envisioned that economic and social inputs would develop in a mutually supportive manner. But past efforts had shown that economic inputs had been dominated by the richer sections of society and that they had not been successful as catalysts for organizing the poor. The Ratnagiri programme therefore attempted to find another entry point wherein the poor, who were demographically dominated by women and children, could begin to organize around areas of concern to them.

Transfer of Power

Development, in the Ratnagiri programme, is defined as a process of transfer of power into the hands of institutions which are controlled by the beneficiaries of economic and social activities. Beneficiaries were defined as the vulnerable sections of society: those whose consumer per capita expenditure falls under the poverty line; the landless, the

* Director, Centre for Development Studies and Activities, Poona.

infirm, families without living household heads, and small artisans. The main attempt of the programme is to organize people in spatial units which are small enough to be responsive to individual families but large enough to support its own management and basic services. The Panchakroshi, which is a historical, cultural and often geographical unit in the area, was chosen as the unit in which micro level development activities could be initiated. Criteria for selection of Panchakroshis were discussed and decided upon at a district workshop wherein voluntary workers, M.L.A.s, M.P.s, B.D.O.s, district officials, representatives of state departments and of research institutions were present. The Workshop also defined 'beneficiaries,' the role of voluntary workers, the role of government, stated the need for a district apex body which could raise funds and hire appropriate management and it reviewed schemes which would be appropriate. It was decided that each Panchakroshi should have core (basic services) schemes which would act as catalysts and that the Panchakroshi, working under its own Mandal, would choose from a 'cafeteria' of schemes and even generate its new schemes. It would be supported by a project officer and a local voluntary organization in preparing its own Panchakroshi plan.

A detailed study was made of the 65 registered voluntary societies in the district and seven were chosen to work in two or three Panchakroshis each. Others were selected to work on district wide activities like training or development support communications.

The Ratnagiri Development Foundation was formed to (a) co-ordinate government, voluntary and United

Nations Children's Fund inputs; (b) to raise funds from diverse sources; (c) to initiate training for (i) skill development, (ii) for functionality (iii) for diast and midwives and (iv) for local maintenance of inputs; and (d) for the preparation of new schemes and projects in a form which could be funded and on the suggestion of local mandals.

Resource generating tool

The programme then is an *enabling tool* and not a comprehensive plan. It creates the possibility for local bodies to organize and to initiate their own plans and schemes. As a support to the programme studies of the lead sectors in the district (dairy, horticulture, fisheries and agriculture) were carried out and suggestions were made to the District Planning and Development Council on how these could be systematically developed, linking in the Panchakroshis to larger economic activities. The realization of these links is dependent on the development of effective demands at the panchakroshi level and an objective Response from the district planning machinery.

The programme then, as envisaged in the project proposal for IADP Ratnagiri, is a tool to enable the initiation of development processes through institutional development, appropriate training, feedback and monitoring, core schemes which act as imageable catalysts and a 'cafeteria' of schemes which creates a framework in which local level institutions can choose their own activities for development. The programme is *not* (a) a solution to any specific problem, (b) categorical and rigid in its structure or (c) a complete finished product. It is a *tool* which generates resources at the local

level and to work for the poor, who have become so life.

The Inter-Programme

Ratnagiri allocations for the project in the district over the years, the about Rs. 20 lakhs from lead from lead Nations O the program for training and improve

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level and gives a broad structural frame-work for their utilization by beneficia-ries, who by organizing themselves can become self-sufficient and lead a better life.

The Integrated Area Development Programme :

Ratnagiri is funded out of existing allocations of the Zilla Parishad. Of the projected budget of Rs. 40 crores in the district budget over the next three years, the programme only assumes about Rs. 1.8 crores. An additional Rs. 20 lakhs will be brought forward from lead bank sources and the United Nations Children's Fund is supporting the programme with about Rs. 80 lakhs for training, enhancing basic services and improved nutrition.

Major Schemes

The major schemes in the programme are as follows. The Core Schemes focus on capacity building among existing village health workers, Balsheviks, teachers and gramsevikas. Skill development for economic activities relevant to the panchakroshis is also a component. Facilities for basic services will be built where they do not exist. One project officer for each block is imparted training in panchakroshi planning, community organization and project preparation. Mandals and the Foundation are formed. A social worker, sanchalikas and Balsheviks will be appointed and trained. These workers will be appointed from the local population.

The cafeteria schemes allow each mandal to initiate schemes based on their

own constraints and potentials. They include cattle development, fodder development, horticulture, fisheries, shrimp cultivation, small-scale resource based units, canning, food processing, and forestry. Lead Bank funds will be made available for rolling capital and equipment will be made available to co-operatives through the Foundation. The Development Corporation of the Konkan Limited is actively involved in promoting this aspect of the project.

Assets, such as hybrid cows, which will be placed in the possession of poor families will legally belong to the Mandal. Part of the production of these assets will be 'paid' to the mandal for local nutrition programmes.

The programme will be extended to other Panchakroshis in the district by the Ratnagiri Foundation. It will work closely with the State Empowered Committee and the Block Implementing Committees. The Foundation is headed by a Programme Coordinator who has a post-graduate planning qualification and rural development field experience. He directly supervises the project officers, who are attached to the local voluntary agencies. The Foundation will promote new schemes on behalf of Panchakroshi mandals, preparing project proposals where needed on their behalf. It will monitor progress from the district and it will co-ordinate inputs from the Zilla Parishad.

The most important parts of the Integrated Area Development Programme Ratnagiri area :

(a) The creation of a management and coordinating capacity at the district level ;

(b) The creation of a system of development institutions which extend and persist through the micro-level ;

(c) The control of micro-level institutions by the participants, especially the vulnerable section of society;

(d) The involvement of voluntary agencies who are a local resource and potential for rural development ;

(e) The use of skill development, functional education and other training inputs ;

(f) The inclusion of a feed-back, monitoring and evaluation system ;

(g) The integration of social and economic inputs and the division of inputs into 'core' and 'cafeteria' inputs. The linking of local economic inputs with major development networks having external markets and high potentials ;

(h) A built-in mechanism for extending, enhancing and restructuring the programme over time, and

(i) The district Development Foundation which combines the potentials of the district implementing machinery with the independence of an autonomous body.

□

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9, Rabindra Sarani, CALCUTTA-73

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Here Man Makes Himself

□ Laxman T. Joshi*

IF I am asked to describe Baba Amte's work in one sentence, I would say 'It's man's reconstruction and rural reconstruction put together. It is a model of pattern of rural reconstruction—an integrated development project.

It is very unfortunate that Baba's work is misunderstood or rather less understood. Most of the people know him as a leprosy worker, some know him as a poet, some as a literary personality, a leprosy worker, and an agricultural scientist too. He is a man possessing unlimited talents. He uses all his qualities for his ultimate goal i.e. man's reconstruction and rural reconstruction. He sees poverty, hunger and ignorance of his people and becomes restless. Tears roll down his cheeks. He says, he tries to seek his soul but his soul cannot see him, then he tries to seek his God and his God eludes him but when he tries to seek his brother he finds all the three. Baba's brother is poor, deserted leprosy patient. Baba wonders that "Man seeks sublime, inspiration from the ruins of old churches and temples but he seeks none from the ruins of man." He is not only worried about the leprosy patients who have unsound body but sound mind in it, he is more worried about the people who might have sound body but unsound mind. That's why he started his work from Anandwan and now it has reached upto Hemalkasa, headquarters of his latest tribal development project, "Lokbiradari" (people's brotherhood). One can't and should not evaluate Baba by his leprosy work at

Anandwan in isolation. Serving the lepers is not his only object. He has something more in his mind. One must take into account his agricultural development work at Somnath and Ashokwan and the tribal development work at Hemalkasa and a few more work centres. Anandwan is a link in a long interconnected chain. Anandwan gives a ray of hope to a man who is discarded by his relatives and society. Anandwan gives him shelter, medical help but not as a charity. There he gets a chance to prove his ability to work. He takes training, gets back his self-confidence and goes to Somnath, Ashokwan, Hemalkasa and other work centres. There he shares the work with other workers. Now that the sound mind has no barriers of disease, this reconstructed man tries to reconstruct this area which is almost cut off from the rest of the world for nearly seven months in a year. This area is populated by primitive people who have no knowledge about food, shelter and clothing. Civilization is far away from them. That's why I say that Baba's work is man's reconstruction and rural reconstruction together. Unfortunately, Baba's admirers are not aware of this integrated approach. It's a great injustice to his cause.

Gangotri of service

Baba Amte started his pioneering work of integrated development years back in 1951 at "Anandwan" which is situated on the outskirts of Warora, a tahsil town about 110 km. from Nagpur

* Chief Reporter, Tarun Bharat Daily, Nagpur.

This place is the "GANGOTRI" of Baba's work. He started his work there with a meagre amount of Rs. 14/- and had six patients to serve in a humble way. The idea struck to Baba when he saw a leper in a very bad condition in front of Warora Municipal Committee, of which he was then the Vice-President. He saw in him his nearest and dearest relative for a while and was terribly moved. But Baba was a brave man. He conquered the fear complex and decided to start work for lepers. His wife Smt. Sadhana, a girl from orthodox family, joined him.

Leprosy patients started pouring in but Baba never said "No", to anybody. He approached the Government and got a piece of land near Warora which was a barren forest land full of thorny trees and hard rock. Baba accepted the challenge of the land and with the hard work of the leprosy patients he cleared the dense forest, dug a well and started cultivation. The work of treating the leprosy patients and constructing small brick houses by them was going on simultaneously. All this was done with the available men and material on the spot. Nothing was brought from outside. Bricks were manufactured indigenously by the patients themselves, so also the doors, windows etc. Now Anandwan is having 1100 indoor leprosy patients, 100 blinds and 60 physically handicapped. Besides that there are 1000 outdoor patients who live in Anandwan and work. It is a self-sufficient village of about 2500 men and women who are treated by the society a untouchables but Baba Amte aroused their self-respect and motivated them for constructive work. Now, they not only learn for themselves but for others also. Anandniketan College (Arts, Commerce and Agriculture and Science) is the sym-

bol of their gratitude towards the rest of the society. The buildings of these college complex have been built with the blood and sweat of the discarded men of the society, the lepers.

A new Somnath?

Story does not stop here. Somnath is yet another dream of Baba Amte that has become the reality. It is a forest complex 100 km. away from Anandwan, Baba sought this 1300 acres forest land for manpower training centre. Many patients from Anandwan came here. They reclaimed about 500 acres land, constructed series of percolation tanks and started their experiments on paddy cultivation. In summer, youth from all over the country and particularly from Maharashtra came here, stay for a month and work with the patients. Here is a colony of cured and married leprosy couples called Shantisadan. Shankar Dada a cured leprosy patient and a confidant of Baba is incharge of this project. He spreads the message of development given by Baba. Although he is not an agriculture graduate he does not lag behind any agricultural scientist in latest farm development technics. Out of the 1300 acres of land at Somnath, 600 acres have been brought under cultivation. 3500 quintals of Paddy, 16 thousand litres of milk, 1000 quintals of vegetables are produced here annually by the workers, patients and tribals at Anandwan, Hemalkasa and other growth centres.

Ashokwan about 20 km from Nagpur on Nagpur-Wardha Road is yet another centre of Baba's work. Here about 100 patients stay and work in 120 acres of land and produce 300 quintals of paddy, 5000 litres of milk and 500 quintals of vegetables.



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Dr. Vikas Amte, elder son of Baba Amte at work at Memalkasa.

Baba, Sadhanatai and other workers also pay regular visits to these centres of work.

Exploitation of tribals

The Ganges of Baba Amte's work which started from Anandwan, the Gangotri in 1951 has reached the tribal belt of Bhamragad (Chandrapur District) in the form of Lok Biradari. (People's brotherhood) project in 1972. When he was just 14 year old, Baba Amte had visited this dense forest on the borders Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra. It is inhabited by Maria-gond tribals who have no knowledge of any civilization. They are the sons of nature, wholly depending upon forest produce. The area cut off from the rest of the world from June to January. Even during the months from January to June one has to walk miles and miles to reach Alapalli which is the last important village, in

these forests. But this village has turned into an "Exploiters Centre". Forest guards, school teachers forest contractors patwaris, police and small growers are the exploiters class who continuously exploit the tribals. The outdated barter system still exists there. Common salt is their prime need for which the exploiters demand 2 kg of paddy in exchange of 1 kg. of salt. They are also threatened by the exploiters who snatch money from them. Baba Amte irked by this inhuman exploitation decided to start the Lok Biradari Project.

Sons in the service

Hemalkasa is the headquarters of the Lok Biradari Project, 225 miles from Chandrapur, the district headquarters. Before starting the project Baba with some 25 workers undertook an expedition in the remote areas of this region to study the life of tribals. It was a hair-

raising experience. From that experience the project Lok Biradari took shape. Baba's two sons Dr Vikas and Prakash came forward and decided to stay there. Some educated youths, Godbole, Dixit joined them, so also the cured leprosy patients from Anandwan. They had to work in very difficult conditions. Barriers of language, manners and lifestyle were there, but eternal flow of love, dedication was stronger than these barriers. They started a clinic in a small hut. Examination table was made out of bamboos. They also reclaimed the forest land by cutting trees and starting paddy cultivation. Patients from the distant places started coming to Hemalkasa. While taking medicines in the clinic they were also carrying the messages of development. Their sons and daughters learning in the Ashram school at Hemalkasa are now the torch-bearers of Baba's message. In 1976 about 20 kg of Paddy was distributed. It reached upto 479 kg in 1979. Baba does not sell the seeds but demands the same quantity back and to the surprise of all the recovery is 100 per cent.

Lok Biradari Project is not confined to lepers only. All types of patients are treated there. The proportion of burn cases is more because the tribals sleep by the side of fire (shekoti). Malaria is rampant here. Maternity facility is also provided. Dr Mrs Manda, wife of Dr Prakash Amte takes care of the pregnant women. She chose Prakash as her life companion even when she had prior knowledge of the hardships Prakash had decided to accept. Today about 150 boys are taking education both formal and non-formal at Hemalkasa. The project has treated more than one lakh patients since its inception. 20 acres of land at Hemalkasa and 10 acres

at Negepally have been brought under cultivation. About 225 quintals of paddy, 7500 litres of milk, 150 quintals of vegetables and 2000 eggs are produced here annually. These farms, dairies and poultry farms are pilot projects for the tribals. The tribals come here, see the paddy fields, ask for seeds and try to follow the pattern.

Self-generating system

It is usual experience that when some constructive work is taken up, a society is formed, constitution is drafted, donations are collected and Government and other financial agencies are approached for grant in aids and subsidies. For his work Baba Amte also founded one society, namely "Maharogi Seva Samiti" with office-bearers and a constitution. But, Baba avoided to be a slave of the formalities. He straightway started the work without caring much for the funds and grants. It is noteworthy that Baba's work never suffered for want of funds. He has created a system which does not require them to depend on outside help. The system is self-generating. He has given full scope to the ideas of workers. These workers produce what is needed. Food, grains, milk, vegetables, eggs, bricks, furniture, cots, chairs, gaddie, flowers, everything is produced in Anandwan. However, salt, sugar and kerosene are not produced. Baba has purposefully developed this self-generating technology. People from outside come and donate. Donors also have the confidence about the utilization of their money. Some years back Arthur Tarmowski, a polio patient came to Anandwan as a part of his world expedition. He was so impressed by the work that he donated about Rs. 1,50,000/-. Out of this amount Baba established a "Sandhi Niketan" adding

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BABA AMTE : THE MAN

MURLIDHAR DEVIDAS AMTE was born in 1914 in a wealthy landlord family of Central India. He studied Law and followed a successful career, which led to his involvement in cooperatives and civic affairs. He was, however, deeply disturbed by the poverty and deprivation, all around him. The most horrifying spectacle was that of leprosy Patients rotting to slow death, uncared and unwanted. He was convinced that they could be resettled in gainful occupations. His lifelong belief was that the handicapped do not want charity but need work so to lead their lives with dignity. So, he went to the school of tropical medicine, Calcutta to learn about leprosy. On his return, he persuaded the State Government to give him land. He established a Rehabilitation Centre there, "THE ANANDVAN". After that Somnath, Ashokwan, Lok Biradari etc., His wife Smt. Sadhanatai, sons, Dr Vikas and Dr Prakash, their wives, a number of young volunteers are his active partners.

Now, Baba is 66, physically ailing, his spirit, however, is as buoyant as ever.

He is recipient of **PADMASHREE** by Government of India in 1971, "**RASHTRA BHUSHAN**" in 1978, **BAJAJ AWARD** by Jamanalal Bajaj Foundation India in 1979 and Honorary D. Lit, of Nagpur University in 1980.



Baba Amte (right) Supervising the Medical Centre at Hemalkasa.

company story



Electronic Business Machines



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of the century, just a small clothing company. In time, it has reached its peak in annual sales. Today one of the industrial empires of India. The company enjoys a clear leadership in many of its varied fields. Its performance in the various fields is a measure of its ability to hold its own in the world's best.

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lepers sweat in it. This project gives an opportunity to the lepers physically handicapped and mentally retarded. It is a unique place where all outcasted souls work together to create something new. Swiss aid also came in a big way to help Baba's projects.

It is the system, Baba developed, in which workers like Narayan, Shankar Dada come forward and work as efficiently as the leaders. In this age everybody expects that Shivaji should be born but he never expects Shivaji to be born in his family. Baba is an exception to this. Baba wants his sons also to do this noble work. He inspired Vikas and Prakash but not forced them. Now, things have so shaped that not only Vikas and Prakash but their young wives also accepted the challenge and setting aside the comforts of city life, they have thrown themselves in the services of tribal brethren.

Spirit behind work

How could Baba Amte do this? It is his immense love, affection and sympathy for the downtrodden. He took inspiration from Christian missionaries. When missionaries could come from places, thousands of miles away to serve the poor why the Indians could not do

it? This was his question. His love for nature, compassion for the lowest of the low, passionate zeal to correct the wrongs done do the downtrodden and his faith in the scientific development of the society inspired not only the leprosy patients but also the youths. His co-worker Shri Madhubhai Pandit, a well-known constructive worker mentions the secret of Baba's success in these words— "When Baba goes from one project to another, he achieves new heights, friends often doubt if the old project can be sustained in his absence but doubts have always been belied. He would say "even in social service one must maintain the spirit of enterprise. When you plan a project, let your vision be wide-ranging but your feet firmly planted on the ground. When you implement it you must get involved in the project and go all out to make it a success." For the cause of leprosy, Baba taught his patients to run their own institutions with meticulous efficiency. Every paisa saved and every waste is taken care of. All receipts and payments are regularly accounted for. Production activity moves in a disciplined way. Responsibilities are shared with in-built checks and counterchecks. This is the secret of Baba's success. Yet he gives much credit to his patients." □

Go to Villages

Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting about idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, O ye brothers, all arise! Awake'. Awake'. How much longer would you remain asleep!" Go and advise them how to improve their own condition, and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the shastras by presenting them in a lucid and popular way...also instruct them in simple words, about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture etc.

SWAMI VIVEKANAND

● A Case Study

Gram Bharati, Simultala (Bihar)

□ Devdutt*

The Legend

At the age of 45 one who has been rendered prematurely dark and dilapidated, and cheerless and passive, Baleshwar of Tatua Deeh (a village two kms across a stream from block HQ in Jhajha, Monghyr stood by the side of a *Kucha* well being built near his field. He looked longingly at the well and said, "if our village gets four more wells for irrigation, it will become Kashmir."

"What do you mean?"

"We will be able to reduce our hunger from 8 months in a year to six months in a year."

The reply put us off guard, like an electric shock. What a yardstick of prosperity? The rate of growth in terms of reduction of hungry days.

We recovered and asked. "And how much does a well cost?"

The social worker, accompanying us, said, "About Rs. 10,000. Four wells, Rs. 40,000."

We wondered. This village—two kms from block HQ could not get Rs. 40,000 in 30 years to build four wells!

(I)

The Catchment Area

It is in this kind of hungry area

operates Gram Bharati, a rural development agency which draws inspiration from Gandhi's seminal ideas and which had its genesis in 1962 in the Bhoodan Movement under Vinoba Bhave in Bihar.

What to talk of finances, even other sources of development available in this area—time, space and labour—too remain underutilized and unexploited.

No economic activity, nay, no outdoor activity is possible after the sunset. Men, women and children and hens, rabbits and small cats and dogs and buffaloes and cows all retire into the mud huts for the next 12 hours waiting for the dawn to break over this rain-shadow region which is a 8 km to 15 km wide strip of *Rajmahal* range of hills stretching from Bhagalpur to Hazaribagh. In the vast stretches of bare, rocky and craggy, sandy and grassless land lie patches of undulating landscapes of lush green rice fields and meadows, rivers and rivulets, streams and ponds where you can see men and women transplanting paddy, grazing their cattle, ploughing their fields under a deep blue sky spotted with either silvery or steel grey monsoon clouds which yield on an average 700 to 1300 mm of rain.

Here is a region in the Monghyr District (Bihar), where out of every eight units of land only one unit is being brought under cultivation, and yet for

* Editor, "Point of View" New Delhi.

every five units of land cultivated, two units are cultivable but barren. Out of every 25 units of land only one unit is irrigated. (see Table I)

As regards human material, out of every eight people only one is literate; for every 7 persons who are employed (as cultivator, landless labourers and

artisans) five are totally unemployed. While in the rest of Bihar, 65% live under poverty line, in this area out of every 100 persons 85 live under poverty line; the average holding of land in this region is 0.05 hectare which is one-third of the average in Bihar, for every seven persons employed in farming five are totally unemployed.

TABLE-I
Statement Showing Land Resources in Jhajha, Sono and Chakai Blocks
in Monghyr District (Bihar)

	Jhajha	Sono	Chakai	Total
I. Land				
Area (in Acres)	1,04,968	96,336	1,90,165	3,91,469
Forests (,,)	50,259	31,214	65,977	14,745
Barren Land (,,)	2,714	14,910	14,030	31,654
Pastures (,,)	1,120	485	4,948	6,553
Orchard (,,)	1,389	171	94	1,655
Non-Agricultural Land	16,373	6,814	8,551	31,738
Cultivable Land	13,690	13,088	25,327	52,105
Cultivable Arid	3,303	6,168	10,684	20,155
Available uncultivated	10,562	14,134	39,487	64,183
Other ,,	5,568	9,347	21,057	35,972
Total Area Irrigated	3,018	8,084	1,624	12,724
„ Area more than on				
Total	23,941	13,284	24,226	61,451
II. Irrigation Facilities :				
(a) By Canal	986	—	—	986
(b) By Well	1,527	1,326	12	2,865
(c) Other methods	272	5,605	381	8,258
(d) Pump etc.,	234	1,153	1,231	2,618
Total (a+b+c) above	3,018	8,084	1,624	12,726
III. Villages				
No. of Revenue villages	197	250	600	1,047
„ „ Panchayats	20	16	25	61
„ „ Gram Sabha's	115	110	250	475

(Source : Records of Gram Bharati, Simultala)

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TABLE-II
Population, Employment and Literacy in the Three Blocks
(Jhajha, Sono and Chakai) in Monghyr

Demographic	Jhajha Block	Sono Block	Chakai Block	Total Block
Population	1,10,846	86,103	1,53,086	3,50,035
Scheduled Castes	13,389	14,198	15,060	42,647
Scheduled Tribes	6,757	4,516	20,009	31,282
Professional Groups				
Kisans	14,281	14,451	19,039	47,781
Agricultural Labour	8,386	7,871	6,951	21,108
Cottage Industry				
Workers	5,155	3,809	1,184	10,148
Other Industries	9,171	2,256	1,487	12,914
Unemployed	25,416	18,993	22,230	66,839
Literacy				
Literacy (Male)	16,422	8,165	10,180	34,767
„ (Female)	3,691	1,027	1,503	6,221
„ (Total)	20,113	9,192	11,683	40,988

(Source : Record of Gram Bharati, Simultala)

The total population of four lakhs in three blocks—Jhajha, Sono, Chakai is supported by only 92 thousand employed persons, i.e. nearly one employed person supports four persons by working on an infertile land or on small industries. (Table II)

The under utilization of resources of time, space and labour in the three blocks—Jhajha, Sono and Chakai of Monghyr district in Bihar determines the material conditions in which people are condemned to eke out a living for survival.

The less said the better about the quality of manpower : backward and steeped in tradition, almost isolated (and

whatever little is the exposure to modern ideas, it is a source of corruption of consciousness of the native people). Only 8% males are literate and only 1% females are literate.

The 'catchment area' of Gram Bharati, with its headquarters at Simultala (on the main railway line from Patna to Howrah) resembles a horse-shoe eight km to fifteen km wide strip in 30-40 km wide *Rajmahal* range of hills. It covers an area of 391 lakh acres inhabited by 4 lakh people.

(II)

Activities and Programmes

Gram Bharati was formally registered on July 9, 1977 and its object, as stated

in the memorandum of association, is "to conduct and promote in the area, the manifold constructive activities with which Mahatma Gandhi was associated and all such activities required in furtherance of the ideal of truth and non-violence". In the memorandum eight such areas of work have been specifically mentioned, of which the programmatic content is : khadi and village industries, agriculture, horticulture, irrigation, animal husbandry, poultry, adult education, rural health and hygiene, removal of rural indebtedness.

As regards the beneficiaries of these programmes the memorandum refers to "children, youth, farmers, labouring classes, backward and downtrodden members of society such as Adiviasis, Harijans and others."

The ultimate purpose of these programmes is stated to be, "to promote social and economic equality, and fraternity amongst the communities living in its area of work viz., JHAJHA, CHAKAI,

LAKSHMIPUR, KHAIRA, JUMUI AND SONO BLOCKS in MONGHYR district in Bihar.

At present the activities of Gram Bharati are confined to : (i) Minor irrigation works, i.e., construction of wells, *Ahars, Bunds* and life irrigation, (ii) land development, (iii) promotion of better farming techniques—specifically promotion of the use of better seeds and fertilisers, (iv) adult education, (v) to provide financial assistance by way of loans to farmers to buy bullocks, better seeds and fertilisers, (vi) provision of certain services and facilities for the rural people in regard to sale of rural or forest products, such as *saal* leaves and handicrafts, (vii) distribution of supplementary among women and children, (viii) higher education within the present system. (ix) relief work in drought.

Earlier during 1969-77, the programmes of Gram Bharati also included poultry, piggery, dairy, fishery, carpentry, *Ambar Charkha* etc.

TABLE III

Programme	Year of initiative	No. of Villages covered	Final Allocation
Agriculture & Irrigation	1969	300	60%
Livestock	1975	11	10%
Dairy	1975	24	5%
Fishery	1970	6	1%
Cottage Industry	1975	4	
Clay pipe	1975	4	2%
Kankar lime	—	10	4%
Ambar Charkha	1976	10	10%
Bone fertiliser	1976	20	
Carpentry & Technical Education	1977	5	1%

(Source : 'How' dated November 1979 New Delhi)

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The Table III gives some indication of the importance given to these programmes during the period 1969-77.

It is clear that in 1969, 40% of the allocation was for non-irrigational programmes. But these programmes have now been dropped due to "scarcity of funds".

In other words, now the sole emphasis is on development in the context of relief work, i.e., to create elementary infrastructure of development and that too minor irrigational facilities in barren cultivable areas, in course of providing relief work during drought.

It is reported that construction activity relating to irrigational facilities and development worth 18 lakhs on 176 wells and ahars and bunds have been undertaken by Gram Bharati during 1977-80.

Resistance to Local Injustice

In the light of these programmes Gram Bharati would have been reduced to a relief agency—pure and simple had its Sanchalak not concentrated a small part of the energies of its workers and its resources on the task of Lok Shikshan and Lok Jagaran i.e., to organise the village people with a view to make them self-confident, and be conscious of their rights and duties.

Gram Bharati implements its main programmes through *Gram Sabha* and *Gram Dan* organizational framework created during the period 1962-1969 in the course of Vinoba's Bhoodan Movement in Bihar. It offers relief and irrigational projects in those villages only, where there are Gram Sabhas. It also

tries to make people use these village organizations to fight local injustices and social evils with respect to bureaucracy and vested interests.

The fieldworkers of Gram Bharati, in course of their relief work in the village, keep an eye on cases of injustice or irregularities from which the weaker sections have to suffer. They cooperate with the leadership of Gram Sabha in getting these wrongs redressed, preferably by peaceful negotiations, in the first instance, and otherwise through organized resistance and action.

In fact, this sort of action constituted the main programme of Gram Bharati under the leadership of Shivanand Bhai in the sixties and relief work was secondary.

The forest guards and rangers and petty officials used to exploit the Adivasis. They extracted out of them hospitality during their official tours in the area. They exploited their womenfolk. They appropriated their standing crops, anti-socials like *Baski* terrorized them.

According to Shivanand Bhai, Gram Bharati has been involved in sources of such local resistance programmes against the anti-social elements, bureaucracy, economic vested interests in this area in regard to land, corruption and social evils.

In August 1979, the SDO was gheraoed by 15000 people who demonstrated to have the area declared as drought-prone, since it fulfilled all the criteria. After a stiff resistance, the administration had to yield.

Final Allocation

60%
10%
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2%
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The organization actively participated in JP's Bihar Movement and 25000 men and 600 women went to jail during Emergency, along with the Sanchalak (according to Shivanand Bhai).

(III)

RESOURCES

Gram Bharati has agricultural lands covering 65.50 acres of which a major part is purchased; some are *bhodaan* lands and some have been donated by individuals. These lands are used for raising "model farms" to demonstrate modern methods of farming and for *goshalas*, & orchards etc.

There are in all 1400 villages in the three blocks; out of these, according to Shivanand Bhai, 600 villagers have pledged *Sulabh* gram dan; 450 are active as *Gram Dan* village and 175 have been registered as *Gram Dan* villages in official records.

The delay, it is said, in registration of remaining *Gram Dan* villages is due to the slackness on the part of the official machinery.

It has its own residential buildings and storage godowns and office accommodation at the six centres.

It owns a truck, a car, a motor cycle, a tractor, a fleet of cycles, four gobar gas plants and a workshop to manufacture simple agriculture tools. It will own, in course of time, a Rs. 2.5 lakh factory for carcass disposal, for which buildings have already been set up.

According to responsible officials of Gram Bharati, the normal annual budget is Rs. 20 to 25 lakhs. But in 1980-81 they have started some new schemes involving capital investment.

According to Shivanand Bhai, the Director, additional financial resource commitments of Gram Bharati for this year are there in Table IV.

The foodgrains available under food for work programmes of the government are the main source of construction activities of Gram Bharati in the three blocks in Monghyr district. This year, it has to receive 2500 quintals of foodgrains under the food for work programme. It is said that Gram Bharati distributes 1000 quintals of food per day at the rate of

TABLE IV

	Rupees
1. Carcass disposal Centre, Simultala	2.50 lakhs
2. Adult Education grants for 90 centres	00.96 lakhs
3. Food For Work allotment of foodgrains for 2500 quintals	25.00 lakhs
4. Saal leaf purchase & fertilisers capital fund	20.00 lakhs
5. Seed & fertilisers funds	5.00 lakhs
6. Hastala capital fund	10.00 lakhs
7. Gobar Gas Manufacture Capital fund	4.00 lakhs
8. Khadi etc. from Khadi commission	5.32 lakhs
9. Gram Kosh	5.00 lakhs
Grand Total Rs.	77.78 lakhs



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5.00 lakhs
7.78 lakhs



The outer view of the carcass disposal centre under construction.

3 kg. of grains per head. It also distributes 105 gms. of rapeseed oil per month per man day.

It receives funds from foreign voluntary & philanthropic agencies bread for the world in Germany and OXFAM in USA. Some national voluntary agencies—Christian Relief Service, CASA, Serva Seva Sangh, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi too provide funds as and when required. The Khadi Village Industries Commission also has given loans and grants.

The Irrigation Department, (Government of Bihar) sometimes requests the Gram Bharati to supervise the construction of some of its minor irrigational projects.

The Central Government gives grants for adult education programmes.

The philosophy of Shivanand Bhai, regarding foreign funds is that they should be accepted as catalysts to be used for initiating development activities.

However, it will be noted that for the entire programme, Gram Bharati relies on the Government in this respect.

(IV)

Organizational Frame

The rural development work in Jhajha, Sono and Chakai is conducted through two parallel organizations which have three-tier structures.

The first organization is called Gram Bharati, and the second organization comprises people's committees at different levels. Further, Gram Bharati itself is a member of a larger federal organization called, *Bihar Gram Swaraj Saghan Kshetra Saman Vava Samiti*, which comprises 54 other non-governmental agencies engaged in rural development in Bihar.

Gram Bharati

The Gram Bharati has a general body, the Sanchalak, M. Mandal, and field-

workers. While the general body (comprising several categories of members) is meant to be a kind of legislative body, the Sanchalak Mandal is supposed to be responsible for management of the affairs of Gram Bharati.

There are three categories of members (ordinary members, life members and founder members) which constitute the general body.

The membership fee of ordinary members is Rs. 3.65 per annum. Their exact number could not be certified. But according to the Director (Sanchalak) of Gram Bharati, there are five hundred members and one hundred fifty "Sarvodaya friends". There are eleven founder members and three life members. It has been laid down in the constitution that the Sanchalak Mandal should consist of not less than nine members, i.e., Chairman, Sanchalak, Treasurer, three life members and three founder members.

Mr Shankar Lal Jain, Mr. Shivanand Jha and Smt Sarla Devi (wife of Mr Bha) have been admitted as life members and shall hold "office membership" for life. The Sanchalak Mandal has "all powers which may be necessary or expedient for the purpose of proper management and administration of the Gram Bharati, of course, "Subject to the general control and direction of the general body.

Although the areas of operation of Gram Bharati has a mixed population of Hindus, Muslims and Harijans and Adivasis engaged in agricultural and related vocations, the composition of the Sanchalak Mandal is preponderantly Hindu and non-agricultural. It has 79% caste

Hindus, and there are no Harijans and Adivasis.

We are not in favour of any kind of proportional representation, but an organization like Gram Bharati which is committed to the welfare of the lowliest should ensure that its organizational structure, particularly at the decision-making level, has a more participatory character.

Of course, unlike Sanchalak Mandal, the fieldworkers include 8.33% Muslim and 16.33% Adivasis. The Gram Bharati has about 55 fieldworkers, who get salary ranging between Rs. 150 and Rs. 400. They also get certain other facilities and concessions for example, edible oil and foodgrains at prices lower than the prevailing market prices, cheap messing in kitchen and free accommodation, wherever possible. Besides this, there is another incentive and advantage. Since a large number of fieldworkers belong to the local area in which Gram Bharati operates, and since these workers can retain their links with their families and their ancestral professions (which generally is farming), they can afford to work on a small salary.

A large number of the fieldworkers, particularly the middle rung key-workers, are those who had participated in Bhodan work or khadi-work in the fifties and sixties or later. We met some workers whom in their childhood, were deeply influenced by some senior Gandhian leaders. A few of them are children of some senior Gandhian workers. We also came across a worker, who had a background of criminal activities. But he, under the influence of Shivanand Bhai, the director of



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A congregation of village youths assembled to attend lectures on "Planning for the three blocks, Sono, Chakai & Jhajha" in GRAM BHARATI Ashram.

Gram Bharati, got himself weaned away from crime and decided to join social work. It is an interesting case of character transformation.

Although it is said that the basis of recruitment of fieldworkers is '*vichar*' and '*tyag bhawana*', the main criteria of recruitment of workers is "personal" contact.

But, as it normally happens, the kingpin of Gram Bharati also is an individual, the Sanchalak, whose dedication, experience, personality, resources and managerial skills and overall perspective places him head and shoulders above his carefully selected colleagues in the Sanchalak Mandal. The entire work of Gram Bharati has got centred around him a fact which he himself regrets.

Shivanand Bhai is a softspoken Maithili Brahman who aspired to be a doctor. But he was drawn into Sarvodaya movement in early fifties when he began as a personal assistant of the veteran Sarvodaya thinker, Shri Dhirendra Majumdar in khadigram in Bihar.

Shivanand is a specimen of new genre of Gandhian leaders who grew under the influence of Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash Nayan, but it also assimilated certain other values and attitudes permeating the non-Gandhian political and cultural environment in India. Consequently, he is least inhibited with perfectionist or meticulous ideological proclivities, and hence he betrays greater "practicality" and flexibility. For instance, Shivanand has no sensitive qualms about the means to be adopted for the success of his programmes. He is not

fastidious about foreign aid and collaboration. He is willing to cooperate with an oppressive state apparatus, as easily as he can decide to launch struggle against it. He is a Gandhian, but he has eight children—no brahmcharya as Gandhi saw it. He is a Gandhian, but he would not mind if an anti-social person, who gives lots of trouble to village women, is killed. He is Gandhian, but there are no regular prayers in the Ashram he maintains and manages. He can be utterly harsh and relentless if his objective demands and yet be magnanimous and compassionate. He can correlate struggle and constructive work. He can reconcile intensive fieldwork at ground level with that at Bihar level. He has outgrown his "Jholemarka" approach or highly micro-approach to constructive work and operates like a politician lobbying for causes which have little to do with Gram Bharati.

Shivanand is totally integrated with his work. Except for his "sleeping hours", he is at work even while he is shaving, taking his bath, having his tooth brush, eating his food. His is an open house and his organization has acquired the characteristics of a family but at the same time it remains implicitly patriarchal-based on almost personality cult.

Fieldwork

The fieldwork is organized blockwise. There are six centres in three blocks, the apex organizational unit is located at Simultala.

The mode of communication between various workers in the field is (a) informal meeting with the Sanchalak, who is always on the move, (b) regular monthly meeting of fieldworkers, (c)

monthly newsletter and circulars. There are also quarterly and half-yearly and annual meetings of workers.

A three-tier peoples' organization, Prakhanda Gaon Shabha, has been created. The entire programme of Gram Bharati is conducted through these Gram Sabhas which decide the priorities of work and the need of the village. The Gram Bharati provides services and facilities to these Gaon Sabhas.

The procedure normally adopted is as follows: Gram Sabha meets and passes a formal resolution regarding a particular service or facility required of Gram Bharati in that village—be it loan for purchasing oxen or seeds or a well. Then Gram Bharati, according to its resources tries to meet the request. If the village has no Gram Sabha but it wants Gram Bharati's services then it is asked first to set up a gram Sabha in order to get its services.

Each of these Gram Sabhas maintains a village fund (gram kosh) and a granary (anna-bhandar) which is meant to enable the villagers to be free from the exploitation of the local *Sahukar* and *bania* from where they had traditionally taken loans at various rates. This is a part of a programme called "*Mahajan Mukti*" and "*Adalat Mukti*."

(V)

Critique of Gram Bharati

One of the following four criteria could be adopted for an assessment of the work of Gram Bharati in rural areas of Monghyr District:—

1. Rural development as a process or movement involving structural



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Digging of a well with the help of tribals, in drought area.

changes in the style of living and of society.

2. Rural development as a programme of action within the existing framework of values and attitudes.
3. The objectives sought to be achieved by Gram Bharati.
4. The irrelevance of Gram Bharati programmes in the objective conditions prevailing in Monghyr.

First Criteria

In a fundamental sense, rural development involves structural changes leading to creation of new structures and new relations leading to redistribution of political, economic, social and cultural power on a permanent basis so that, as Gandhi, put it, village life in India gets "a new content and wider horizon." It is a movement to discover and to achieve what constitutes a good civilisation or a

good rural civilisation rooted in an integrated view of life, society and universe. It is a search for new units of cooperative or collective life in tune with nature and advanced technology.

It would be unfair to judge the work of Gram Bharati by this standard. Except for the concept of community development projects in mid-fifties, India has not so far known of any rural development programme which involves basic structural innovations and changes.

All the rural development programmes are based on the acceptance of the status quo, and these aim at rural development within it. These programmes are also conceived as a package of services rendered to the rural people and which also involves certain capital investment in rural areas to enhance productivity and production, and hence raising standard of living. Consequently, this kind of rural development work completely ignores human factors and all that it

means, and is solely dependent on governmental resources and support.

This approach has got crystallized in such a way into a series of projects and schemes that it not only accepts status quo but also strengthens it.

Second Criteria

Rural development, in a limited sense, is a strategy designed to 'improve the economic and social life of the rural poor by extending to them, certain benefit of developments through various schemes, projects, programmes and institutions (such as SFDA, Community Development, IADP, IAA, DRAP etc.) both governmental and voluntary.

This development needs combination of a series of schemes of development in various fields like economic, social, educational and health, religious and cultural and, others called integrated rural development.

So far in India most of the rural development programmes have been imposed from the top, primarily through governmental agencies, and they fall into the above-mentioned pattern. And in view of the character of the state and its bureaucracy, and in view of political and technological compulsions, it is the affluent and the well-informed sections of rural society that have reaped maximum benefits from programmes described as Rural Development.

Moreover, agricultural development is accepted as the first step to rural development, which "depends upon (1) physical factors—land, water, soil, climate, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides,

animals, power equipment; (2) economic factors—finance, storage, processing, marketing; (3) human factors—labour force, family size, density; (4) technological factor; (5) social factors—internal divisions, patronage, etc.; (6) institutional factors—local councils, cooperative agencies; (7) knowledge factor; (8) organizational factors—land, tenure, farm size, etc.

The efficiency of these factors is subject to certain constraints and limitations, of which one is the lack of effort and means to organize the rural poor so that they gain confidence, dignity and self-reliance.

The technological, structural and institutional factors mentioned above can be effective only in an environment in which the rural poor contribute time and labour and even money and their resources, rather than the resources being provided by outsiders.

Though some other elements of programmes have been incorporated in its plans of cooperation, the objectives of Gram Bharati and the activities through which it seeks to realize this objective broadly conform to the pattern mentioned above. Its activities have been divided under four heads:

- (a) organizational work which relates to gram sabhas, labour organization, organisation of artisan and youth.
- (b) education and training which includes technical, industrial and adult education.
- (c) constructive work covers irrigation, survey, forestry, dairy,

village and drinking water bonded labour family welfare

- (d) Struggle by... tions and r... for problem... resolved th...

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village and cottage industries, drinking water, rural indebtedness, bonded labour, sanitation health, family welfare.

- (d) Struggle by means of demonstrations and non-violent satyagraha for problems which cannot be resolved through panchayats.

Gram Bharati has touched many of the activities mentioned under the four heads above.

As per Table III, it is clear that during the period 1969-77 the resources of Gram Bharati had been expended in villages on fishery, dairy industry, charkha, carpentry, livestock, drinking water etc. Irrigation got a major part of its resources. But of late, Gram Bharati has been concentrating on; (1) relief work through agricultural projects, and that too minor irrigational facilities and, (2) adult education.

It has built 673 wells and spent Rs. 1.86 lakh on providing loans and sales services in regard to fertilisers and bullocks.

It is said, about 500 families have been benefited directly or indirectly. In economic terms at best 100 acres would have been brought under cultivation and at best 3000 maunds of foodgrains must have been increased per annum.

There is one aspect of Gram Bharati's work in the field of rural development which needs special comment.

Its interest in minor irrigation projects by involving local population in the construction work is commendable. Major large-scale irrigation projects have proved to be costly, wasteful and eco-

logically risky. Minor irrigation projects, as compared to major irrigation projects are free from ecological hazards and involve less investments. It has been found that they have a greater potential to promote social justice. These projects also offer large scope for participation of local people in developmental processes. The experience of association of voluntary agencies for Rural Development in Musahari and Vaishali in Bihar has illustrated this point. Minor irrigation projects undertaken with the direct involvement of people are specially valuable for a hungry and backward area like Monghyr.

But one gets an impression that the Gram Bharati has not been able to exploit reasonably well and consciously the potentialities of minor irrigational projects for social justice and involvement of youth.

Third Criteria

Gram Bharati's genesis lies in Bhoodan and Gramdan Movement in 1962, its inspiration is claimed to be derived from Gandhi's ideals; its leader has had intensive association with Gramdan Movements and Sarvodaya leaders; its workers are drawn mostly from institutions connected with Bhoodan and Khadi work.

But for certain marginal elements and attitudes, on the whole, the management technique and organizational emphasis and the accent of the programme and projects of Gram Bharati is ideological, if not anti-ideology.

This view is also shared by some senior workers in Gram Bharati. Even the Sanchalak Shivanand is too prag-

matic and does not take Gandhian concepts too piously. Of course, he has to reconcile ideals with reality and in the process, the later naturally gets more weightage.

Firstly, in the early years of its existence its resources were used for a greater variety of programmes which bore the stamp of ideology in one sense. But with the passage of time its main preoccupation has been with agriculture and adult education which are concentrated and implemented through a purely practical and a ideological approach. Secondly, even within the agricultural field, it confines itself to providing for seeds, fertilizers and some other inputs needed for farming including context of food-for-work programme and this programme is the main source of support which is governmental and hence not in conformity with Gandhian approach.

This un-Gandhian concern with sources of funds is also reflected in the fact that Gram Bharati leadership does not mind drawing freely an foreign agencies funds. It is noteworthy that some of the major sources of capital investments and assets are foreign funds. Further, foreign funds have been a primary source of renewal of rejuvenation of Gram Bharati in crisis. For example, in 1967-73 when it was almost dilapidated, it was the Oxfam money with which Ghormu Centre was revived in 1977.

Fourthly, the character of Gram Bharati has been undergoing other qualitative changes over years. In the earlier stages, it had no assets. It provided for services and rendered services through individual workers and peoples' organization. Now its resources are used for

launching commercial enterprises; for example Carcass Disposal Centre, the Saal leaf sale Purchase Centre, the Kutir Shilp Udyog, the J.P. Higher Secondary School, publication of books etc. No doubt, these projects may have been conceived in the context of one or the other need of the rural people and may be justified, but there is no denying the fact that in the process, Gram Bharati has undergone a characterological change. Now it owns assets and properties, which conditions thinking of its leaders and also of its workers. It is likely to reduce the will to struggle and it is bound to encourage politicking too. More than that, due to a decreasing commitment to ideology in day-to-day working, it has been slipshod adopting capitalist processes, viz., it employs, like any other capitalist enterprise, casual labour on its terms in its weaving centre in Ghormu, where weavers come and work and get wages. For, it is only in a capitalist system that labour is bought and sold like a commodity and the workers do not own factors of production. It is not known why this Gandhian institute has not tried even at a pilot scale, the principle of trusteeship.

It is also interesting that in their choice of commercial enterprises, it has not occurred to them to do something to save rural people from the exploitation of bidi manufacturing trade, which is one of the source of maximum exploitation of the rural poor, since it is the only mainstay of their life in lean period of the year.

We are told, the bidi manufacturers have arranged for having bidi made in the houses of the rural poor. They distribute bidi leaves in the houses and

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pay 3.00 per 1000 bidis. But the final product which costs them Rs. 9.50 per 1000 is sold at Rs 20 per thousand.

It must be conceded that Gram Bharati variety of capitalist enterprises are soft, human, honest and flexible. There is a kind of informality and filial dimension to the relations between the management and the workers. The Gram Bharati's commercial enterprises in spite of the fact that these are called Ashramas expose it to criticism even from its own senior workers about its integrity. Whether it is justified or not, it does cast a shadow of misunderstanding.

There is one more aspect of the growing inroads of ideological approach to the work of Gram Bharati. There is little follow-up action in areas where its projects have been completed. For example, in 1967-70, a very good lift irrigation project was completed in Dormaro Adivasi village. This scheme has increased agricultural production and the villagers are well-disposed towards Gram Bharati.

But our visit revealed that since 1970 no other project aimed at social and cultural transformation has been taken up in that village, which has been left to evolve its own growth pattern. It is only with the help of ideological approach that long-term programming and planning, so essential for social change in particular direction, is possible.

Finally, there is lack of programmes for intensive inservice ideological orientation of Gram Bharati. Even in the adult education programmes, where there is

clear scope for such orientation, this is not done. The supervisor of adult education programme conducting 60 centres is completely a ideological person. There is an unusual concern for having things "done" or "get things going", without sensitive concern for even elementary concern for Gandhi's ideology and value.

Consequently, greater importance is given to extensive and impact-generating methods of work, rather than to result-oriented approaches with which ideology is also reconciled to the extent possible.

In addition to concrete economic benefits, there are certain valuable side-effects of the work of Gram Bharati in this area. It is a medium of introducing elementary process of modernization into the life of rural people in remote area. For instance, when the rural people visit Gram Bharati centres (called Ashram) they meet its workers, and they learn elementary facts of modern village—technical knowledge, banking procedures, general information about administration, democratic procedures etc., facts about new goods and services etc. This process is deepened and broadened particularly through the programme of adult education which is one of the most useful programmes it has taken up. If the management and leaders of Gram Bharati become aware of their responsibility with regard to the modernizing role they are playing in rural areas, their style of work will change.

Fourth Criteria

The assessment of the work of any social action agency should also be made

in relation to the "felt needs." Abstract or absolute standards and ideologicistic programmes are valid only with reference to the "felt needs". Otherwise they too become more source of hinderance than of help. What are the "felt-needs" of Monghyr district? What is the perception of the people of their felt-needs?

1. Any project which restores their self-respect and dignity.
2. Any project which reduces insecurity in psychological terms and makes them feel free.
3. Any project which reduces hunger and deprivation.

It will be noted that the content of "development" in a backward area of the type of Monghyr (see first two pages) differ from that in other areas. In Monghyr the rate of reduction of deprivation—both psychic and material—itself is growth. Development here needs advance from the state of almost complete deprivation to a tolerable state of deprivation. It is like moving upward from below sea level to the sea level of existence to reduce deprivation and not to increase happiness.

Therefore, not "revolution" not "development" but relief service of some sort of first aid device to help people recover the sense of dignity so that they are put on the road to human and social convalescence is said to be the felt-need of Monghyr. Since Gram Bharati aims at bringing about development through its relief projects in drought prone areas, it is mainly concerned with setting up minor irrigational facilities through food-for-work programme.

Antyodaya here means identification of the lowest common denominator of the needs of the area and fulfilling it.

Gram Bharati has, therefore, adopted service, organisation and promotion of peoples' consciousness as its credo of action. It in theory concedes that relief as such is not the end of Gram Bharati efforts. It is a means of enlarging the consciousness of the people which finds expression in the growth of peoples' organisation. Gram Bharati does provide relief with its means. But so far little success has been achieved both in terms of organization and promoting consciousness. It has not shown creativity or innovativeness sufficient to show results, viz., reconciling relief with change.

Concluding Remarks

Of course, Gram Bharati is up against serious hurdles. There is scarcity of resources and right type of personnel management techniques to match the dynamism of its leaders and the challenging problems of the area.

We enumerate the following factors, which we were told, hinder smooth working of Gram Bharati.

- (1) Illiteracy hinders easy acceptance of new ideas.
- (2) The rural people are interested in immediate gains. Food is urgent. Therefore, they prefer to accept "bidi" work which fetches cash return (Rs. 3.00 at the end of a day) to the work on Gram Bharati projects where they get foodgrains for work by building wells etc. Therefore,

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Consequently, work on projects
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time.

- (3) Administrative delays due to
corruption are a big hurdle. For
instance, in one village, a well
was dug by the people, but due
to corruption in the department,
electricity connection has not
been given for 3 years.
- (4) There are some legal hurdles
also.
- (5) The slothfulness of the villagers.
- (6) Political parties play politics and
create an environment in which
the villagers do not cooperate
enthusiastically.

- (7) These parties join with the village
Sahukar or *Mukhiya* who are
apprehensive that their influence
will vanish if the villagers became
enlightened.

- (8) Society is too weak in the region
to stand the overwhelming
superiority of a corrupt adminis-
tration and the local power
elite.

Consequently, it is not easy for Gram
Bharati to face this challenge single-
handed. For 18 years, it has carried on
the battle. It needs the support of
similar agencies elsewhere. And
unless rural development does not acquire
the character of a movement this is not
possible.

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An Approach to Integrated Rural Development

□ B. Rudramoorthy*

It is being increasingly realised that socio-economic development of the rural poor holds the key for not only rural development, but even of national development. Hence the first phase in the Mafatlal strategy for rural development concentrates on getting the rural poor out of poverty.

The Planning Commission has estimated that in 1977-78, 48% of the rural population in India were below the poverty line. What is worse, this number has been on the increase over the years. Thirty years of planned development in the country does not seem to have had any significant impact on rural poverty... The Planning Commission has defined the poverty line at the level of per capita monthly consumption expenditure of Rs 61.80 at 1977-78 price level for rural areas. This would imply that a family of five persons should have a net income of Rs 3,708 per year to come out of poverty. After providing for escalation of prices and small savings, the minimum income of a rural family should be about Rs 4,000 per year if they are to be freed from poverty. Helping the rural families to get them involved in productive occupations and activities capable of generating this minimum income is our main concern today. Policies and programmes should be so formulated as to facilitate this process. Infrastructural development in rural areas should be related to these programmes and processes.

Mafatlal Companies have been able to formulate and put into practice a complete programme which enables the rural poor to earn the minimum annual income through productive and gainful self-employment. The programme essentially includes a package of technologies relevant to the needs of the rural poor, supported by the motivational and management inputs. Traditional and cultural values are added with the socio-economic needs. Families of the rural poor are helped to make the best use of the resources and to develop their potential to be able to contribute to the making of rural life richer and happier. This approach and programme are now under implementation, on pilot basis, in five states with the support of the Government of India and the concerned state governments.

Rehabilitation of this large number of rural families through village industries, cottage industries, and even small-scale industries is extremely difficult and time-consuming affair, as our experience during the last thirty years has clearly shown. Moreover when the large extent of land is remaining unutilised it is necessary to develop a suitable technology which fits into this type of uncultivable land and helps the family to raise the necessary income to come out of poverty line in 3 to 5 years period. This is the approach of the Mafatlal Companies in developing the model for the rural poor.

* Adviser (Rural Development), Mafatlal Industries, Ltd., Bombay.

The essence of developing rural local resources, traditional and not in culture or the natural resource livestock and land way that can be restored and maintained.

The organisation developed through a cluster of villages of a block of company and district or state disciplinary development model provided of the rural people management agencies. The rural development Mafatlal Companies in development concerned.

One acre of fallow land, which is taken up by biological mode owned by the adoption of the labour is waste land basis with the have any right land but only A small farm (17½ × 17½ × this one acre beneficiary himself labour input pond is completed Work Programme with

The essence in this approach is developing rural areas based on the local resources, capabilities and potential and not in the image of the urban culture or the Western model. The natural resources of human beings—water, livestock and land are used in such a way that ecological equilibrium is restored and maintained.

The organisational structure developed through registered societies for a cluster of villages, system of management of a block of villages by a business company and a corporation for a district or state for providing the multi-disciplinary approach to economic development through this technological model provides for active participation of the rural people, voluntary agencies, management people and government agencies. Thus the strategy of integrated rural development formulated by Mafatlal Companies involves partnership in development of all the agencies concerned.

One acre of land, even uncultivable fallow land, whether levelled or undulating, is taken as the base in this technological model. If the land is already owned by the farmer it is utilised for adoption of the technology. If landless, the labour is provided with one acre of waste land from government on lease basis with the condition that he will not have any right to the ownership of the land but only to the usufruct of the land. A small farm pond of 5,000 gals. capacity ($17\frac{1}{2} \times 17\frac{1}{2} \times 5'$) is constructed within this one acre by the efforts of the beneficiary himself and his family. The labour input which goes into the farm pond is compensated under Food for Work Programme or any other programme within the framework of SFDA

DPAP, ITDP or Tribal Sub Plan or IRD. This farm pond is arranged to be filled up once a week at least by a central agency such as a registered society or the corporation or even a government agency from a central source of water, which may be a tubewell, a dug well or a check dam or a lift irrigation scheme or whatever may be feasible in that particular area. The farmer need not pay water charges for a period of three to five years till such time he starts earning from his land use. Hereafter he is charged the commercial rate for the water uses in the same way water is charged under a lift irrigation scheme elsewhere.

4,500 plants of nutrient fodder variety of Kubabul (*Leucena loucocephala*) are planted in rows 10' apart and one foot between the plants in the row or at $3' \times 3'$ distance. This fodder variety is drought resistant and comes up reasonably well under saline conditions and produces a minimum of 3 to 5 tonnes per year even under normal rainfall conditions in drought-prone areas. The production goes up with increase of water supply even up to 40 to 50 tonnes per acre. About 250 fruit plants such as papaya, guava etc. are planted on this one acre of land either as border plants or between the Kubabul plants. Kubabul is allowed to grow to a height of one metre from the ground level and then pruned to facilitate fresh shoots coming up from the sides and this facilitate easy harvesting periodically. Two to three rows of border plants as sisam plants or some other economically beneficial plants are planted which will also provide a fence and protection to the land. The fibre from these plants provide supplemental industry and income. During rainy season a short-term crop of fodder-

cum-grain varieties such as jowar or bajra or maize can be taken. The space between the two rows of Kubabul can also be utilised in planting high value crops such as medicinal plants, acromatic plants etc. which will also facilitate village industries through distillation of alkaloids. A few beehive boxes are kept on one acre of land and looked after by the farmer. Watering of the plants by the family labour is taken recourse to from farm ponds which are filled up at least once a week or often if he is in a position to make the payment for the water. The local cow owned by the farmer is cross-bred with the cross-breeding services made available to the farmer which will help to produce and rear a cross-bred cow. The green fodder harvested from Kubabul and which is between 22 to 26 per cent protein rich is enough to feed one cross-bred cow, in addition to the dry fodder harvested from the short term crop raised on the

land as mentioned above. The enterprises on one acre of land are enough to involve the entire family throughout the year and enable them to earn an income of at least Rs 4,000 to 4,500 net per year. With this the family is out of poverty. Thereafter it is the initiative and enterprise of the family members which will help them to increase the production and income through raising and rearing more number of cross-bred cows, through conversion of cows milk into milk products and even sweets, installation of gobar gas plants and production and use of gobar gas for generation of electricity, use of organic wastes including weeds and rubbish with the slurry for producing compost, which will, in turn, enrich the fertility of the land. When once the family is free from poverty they are automatically free from exploitation and both these develop their initiative and ability to prosper. □

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IN 1948, when the success of the violent demonstration who had been under the patronage and social welfare and in consultation with Shankar Shul and Shri R.K. alias who had participated in the posting in Jaipur amongst tribes, this cause became a whole.

In 1952 Moru Bhai became the centre of action dedicated since inception and respectively.

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Banvasi Kalyan Ashram: Genesis and Growth

□ P. D. Sapre*



Bala Saheb Deshpande with intimates of a hostel

IN 1948, when the princely state of Jashpur decided for its merger in Indian Union, the successionist elements in the hilly region of Chhota Nagpur staged extremely violent demonstrations under instigation from foreign Christian missionaries, who had been carrying on their proselytising activities for long in this region under the patronage of British rulers. It was then that the veteran Gandhian and social worker Thakkar Bapa diverted his attention to this problematic region and in consultation with the then Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla chalked out a plan of action to meet this challenge. Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla, for implementation of this plan, selected a Government official Shri R.K. alias Bala Saheb Deshpande, a RSS swyam sevak since his childhood and who had participated in 1942 Quit India Movement as well. Sh. Deshpande after his posting in Jashpur area as Area Organiser (AO) tried to organise welfare activities amongst tribals for about four years. But after having realised that he could serve this cause better in a non-official capacity, resigned his government job in 1952 and became a wholtime missionary for the cause of tribal welfare.

In 1952, Bala Saheb Deshpande and another RSS worker Sh. M.R. alias Moru Bhai Ketkar jointly organised Banvasi Kalyan Ashram with Jashpur as its centre of activities. The organisation got formally registered in 1956. These two dedicated souls have been the guiding spirit of Banvasi Kalyan Ashram since its inception and even today continue to be its President and Vice-President respectively.

With Jashpur as centre, Kalyan Ashram made its modest beginnings by starting a school and a hostel for tribal children, which initially had only twelve students. To meet the medical needs of the areas, first Ayurvedic dispensary was started in 1965 which was later on converted into an Allopathic one. With these modest

* Secretary, Banavasi Kalyan Ashram

beginnings Banvasi Kalyan Ashram has now grown into a big banyan tree with its branches spreading in every walk of life. It is at present running 12 cotton industry projects and 14 agricultural trade centres. Its principal achievements however are in the field of education, medical and residential facilities to school going children. It is running 54 hostels, 47 schools, 176 adult literacy centres, 56 medical aid centres and 300 devotional music groups. It is running 85 grain collection centres as well.

In its Silver Jubilee year i.e., 1977, Banvasi Kalyan Ashram decided to acquire all India character and to extend its welfare activities in tribal areas scattered in all the states. Consequently, wholetime organising secretaries were deputed in various states. Today more than 150 wholetime and parttime unpaid workers are busy in organising various types of welfare activities in tribal areas. A large number of tribal workers have joined this band of missionaries. 8 women workers have also dedicated themselves to this cause. 4 to 5 sanyasis have also joined this team of workers.

With this short span of time Banvasi Kalyan Ashram, with its branches and activities spread all over India right from Assam to Gujrat, and Kashmir to Kerala, can claim to have become a real representative of the hopes and aspirations of tribal India. □

Purity, patience and perseverance are the three essentials to success,
and above all—love.

—Swami Vivekananda

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Banvasis are our Blood Brothers

□ Bala Saheb Deshpande*

FIVE crores of Indians, equivalent to France's total population are leading a life of extreme hardship and misery in India's jungles. They do not even get two square meals a day. Clothes to cover their bodies are out of question. They are cut off from India's emotional mainstream. Independence has meant nothing to them and the benefits of science for a better living have just not reached them. Even today they till and cultivate land with centuries-old tools. Benefits of medicine have been denied to them and they have remained helpless victims of diseases. Education remains something unheard of. They are generally leading a life of illiteracy, illhealth, superstition and unfulfilled wants. The towns people have so exploited them that they are mortally afraid of them. They have no faith in them. Thirty-three years after independence their condition remains what it ever has been.

The net result has been that their ignorance, innocence has exposed them to heartless exploitation of every possible kind. Foreign vested interests cleverly buy these hapless innocents with medicine, food and education into conversion of faith. It is true that religion is a matter of personal faith. One is free to worship Ram, Rahim or Jesus. This is the individual's personal decision. But it is undesirable to use religion as a political weapon. Christian missionaries are running various social projects among the tribals and elsewhere with crores from abroad. They provide medicine to the sick, education to children and operate several such projects, but

the motivating factor, true intent behind it all is conversion. It would perhaps be all right if it stopped at conversion. But they do not stop there. They go on to incite them into a pernicious anti-Indianism. What is happening in India's north-east today bears eloquent testimony to these sinister designs. The converted Indians in that region are openly secessionist today and are using violence, plunder and arson as weapons to achieve this end.

Gandhiji's Inspiration

What Gandhiji did for the Harijans is common knowledge but perhaps few know that he felt equally concerned about the lot of the Indian tribals. It was with Gandhiji's inspiration that his disciple Thakkar Bappa started work in the Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh in the service of the tribals. Thakkar Bappa was convinced that the tribals nursed bitter feelings towards city people. Generally they are afraid of them. Reasons are many. Not a minor one has been their colossal exploitation at the hands of traders and businessmen. Natural that the tribals fear them. It is hence a must to win over their confidence if any work is to be undertaken amongst them. This winning of confidence cannot be achieved through sermons. Through selfless, service oriented projects alone can one enter their mental and emotional life. This entry gained once, change and improvement in their lives can be brought about.

Thakkar Bapa attracted me first into this difficult and reflected field of service.

* Founder—President, Banvasi Kalyan Ashram

In fact, it was Thakkar Bapa's inspiration which brought Banwasi Kalyan Ashram into being in 1952. Since then Banwasi Kalyan Ashram is doing a very fundamental work. It is a two-pronged effort to serve the neglected tribal cause and to bring them into Indian emotional mainstream. Selfless service, renunciation, total surrender to a cause on the qualities which can create a feeling of oneness and emotional rapport with these who have lost faith in us. Only thus can a people as cut off as the tribals be made to accept new values and new parameters of development.

Government's Responsibility

The total tribal area is very large and so is their population. For anything to be done for their material uplift large resources are needed. In this regard the Government has a great responsibility. The concerned state governments are also trying to do something. A new scheme named "Integrated Tribal Development Project" is being implemented. The various developmental schemes concerning the tribals are all to be implemented under this integrated scheme. This scheme is to oversee things as varied as construction of roads, waterpools, canals, agricultural and cottage industry development, cooperatives, forestry, building schools, handing out of loans, seeds etc.

Coordination between various Govt. agencies is thus taken care of under the supervisory umbrella of this project. This project can be operative at both district and Tehsil level. A council constituted to supervise the project comprises different departments and people's representatives. This Council is the

sole authority to regulate and implement various schemes but unfortunately all Government machinery has its limitations.

Bureaucratic bottlenecks and "pay-packet" attitude seriously limit the scope of these schemes and adversely affect the benefits meant to reach the vast numbers. Less said about corruption and wasteful expenditure, the better. In this context, voluntary organisations alone, being free of such faults and inspired by an urge to serve, offer themselves as significant alternatives.

Education

Long association with tribals convinced us that only the spread of education could reduce the exploitation. Moreover education alone could instil sense of self-confidence and self reliance in the tribal youth. Through education new generations of tribals could be brought in the national mainstream and a mental framework to accept a new mode of life could be created. Hence, Banwasi Kalyan Ashram decided to concentrate all its energies on the spread of education amongst tribals. But to impart education in tribal areas is not an easy job. One great difficulty is that teachers are not willing to serve in tribal area as these areas can't offer them comforts and entertainments which are available elsewhere. Hence, teachers, if posted by the government or these areas are not inclined to stay there for long and instead of establishing rapport with the tribal people, they are always trying to get transferred to some other area. Surprise visits by us to government-run schools revealed that teachers absented from schools for weeks together. This problem can be solved only when either

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the teacher is inspired by a sense of mission or emerges from amongst the tribals themselves. Banvasi Kalyan Ashram has tried both these experiments and found them to be successful.

Another difficulty is that child is considered an earning unit by the tribals. Moreover, paucity of clothings to cover the body also acts as a disincentive to send children to the school. Banvasi Kalyan Ashram has tried to solve this difficulty also through persuasion as well as supply of clothes and midday meals in the schools.

Economic exploitation

Although cultivable land is available to almost 65 per cent of the tribal populace, yet per family holding is very small. Maximum, a family, is known to have, is half an acre and eight or ten people have to be fed from the yield. Old methods are still used in cultivation. Bullocks are owned by very few. Seeds too are a problem. For these things money-lenders are approached and the resultant debts remain uncleared over generations. Reading, writing and calculation are beyond their ability and that further complicates matters for them.

How much was borrowed, how much interest paid and how much entered in those dreadful books of the money-lenders nothing is known to them. To meet the common needs of salt, oil, cloth etc., the tribal sells his grain or anything else in the market, but never knows if he is being paid a fair price for his produce. As a rule he is cheated and fleeced. In weighing too he gets cheated. At every step the trader cheats and exploits him. In lieu of interest on debts he is forced to offer himself as bonded labour, year

after year he toils and yet, even the interest remains unpaid. There are days when even a single meal eludes him. On such days only wild jungle offerings are his to eat.

The cloth on the tribal's body is for namesake only. Many have nothing on. Males only have a strip of cloth among the loins. Females have to make do with a dhoti, often shared by several in the family. At home women remain naked. During winter one blanket has to take five heads under its cover at night. It is not possible to gauge the extent of their misery without direct exposure to their plight. The 35 per cent landless prefer to stay in the village itself. Some go to work on tea estates.

With the cooperation of Khadi Gramodyog, training centres of imparting instruction cottage industry have been set up and Ashram also proposes to set up handlooms and oil straining machines at a later stage. Finished products from these ventures, it is hoped, shall be of significant service to the tribals' economic cause. We are seriously engaged in the effort.

Apart from running specialised schemes, Kalyan Ashram workers also ensure that the tribals do not get cheated in the markets and should get fair price for their wares. The tribals' marketable produce is also provided storage facilities at various places by the Ashram. Should the tribal have to stay overnight in the market, arrangements for cheap meals are made for him. Kalyan Ashram also feels concerned that tribals seeking employment get fair wages and are not forced to sell their labour cheap.

In all, Kalyan Ashram is running 12 cottage industry projects and 14 agricul-

tural trade centres. Its principal achievements, however, lie in the field of education, medical aid and residential facilities to schoolgoing children. It is running 54 hostels, 47 schools, 176 adult literacy centres, 56 medical aid centres and 300 devotional music groups. It is running 85 grain centres as well. These various schemes and centres are being run by 150 fulltime volunteers. Several part-time volunteers are also contributing their mite.

Take Less Give More

Purity of intent, genuine urge for ser-

vice, surrender to an adopted cause are the only tools with which we generate confidence among the tribals. The volunteers work with the attitude of taking minimum and giving maximum. They suffer hardships and work in extremely uncomfortable conditions. This wins them the local's affection and acceptance. Our tribal brothers regard Kalyan Ashram as their own home. Tribals come from far-off villages and without reservations enter our porch, sit and sat with us and explain to us their problems in complete confidence, with this faith that we shall spare no effort to help them out. □

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Harijan Uplift : A True Success Story

□ Arun Gandhi

SELF-styled do not practise what they preach. They are concerned more with moral and spiritual issue than with trying to set right their muddled priorities. Ironically, Gandhiji's teaching seems to have impressed those who opposed him during his life-time more than those who danced attendance on him. Sevagram, for instance, could have been the nucleus of work that was dearest to Gandhiji, the upliftment of the Harijans. But it isn't. It is just a lifeless museum.

Who is a true Gandhian? One who lived with him the longest? One who read all that he wrote? One who wears khadi and lives frugally? Or is it one who puts aside the worship of Gandhiji and starts working in earnest in the field that needs the most urgent attention? And why anyone should clamour to be identified as a Gandhian, unless, of course, one seeks to exploit the association?

In Mhaisal village of Sangli district, there is a true, blue-eyed Chitpavan Brahmin working among the Harijans. He has no pretensions of being a Gandhian. In fact, after passing out of college he had joined the Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh (RSS). That was several decades ago. His association with Gandhiji, if any, may have been as part of the faceless congregations that turned up at his various meetings.

Triambak Mahadev Dewal was a landlord of Mhaisal village. When after his education, he went back to look after his ancestral property, he was overwhelmed by the poverty of the Harijans.

They needed help and he decided to give it. Not because Gandhiji said he should work for the Harijans but because he obeyed his inner voice.

Humble Contribution

The Mhaisal project is his humble contribution to alleviating the miseries of the untouchables. Mhaisal is a small village about 10 km from Miraj. Since 1958, several cooperative sugar factories have come up in the area. The consequent affluence, not surprisingly, has bypassed the Harijans.

A survey in 1962 showed that almost every Harijan family in the area was forced to skip meals three to four days a week. They lived in hovels, their lands were mortgaged, their bodies were barely covered.

The people clearly needed organisation, a sense of direction and proper guidance. Mr Dewal stepped in to provide these. He organised them into a cooperative and through discussions with them tried to discover what would be the most suitable and profitable supplementary occupation for these landless labourers.

They settled for a dairy project. A cooperative was formed and the members were asked to buy buffaloes. But the government would not advance them loans without proper security. The dairy cooperative stood guarantor for every loan given to individual Harijan. Ninety Harijan families took advantage of this

and got themselves buffaloes. Then there was the problem of fodder. For a while, the Harijans who worked on the farms of caste Hindus forsook part of their midday meals in exchange for fodder. Obviously, this could not go on for long lest both should die of under-nourishment.

A Vision Takes Shape

The project had to acquire land. Mr Dewal made enquiries and found that in 1952 the government had allotted about 15 hectares of riverbed land to the Harijans which, predictably, had been usurped by local politicians and landlords. Further inquiries revealed that the Harijans once owned about 40 hectares of watan land which had been mortgaged to 17 different moneylenders several decades ago.

Means had to be found to get them back. Persuasion worked. The moneylenders agreed to release the land if money could be found. They had to be paid Rs. 1,50,000. An appeal was made to the public for returnable deposits. The response was good and soon the dairy cooperative had Rs. 1,25,000 in deposits Rs. 25,000 as donations.

The land and borrowed capital formed the nucleus around which the Shri Vithal Samyukta Sahakari Sheti Society Ltd. was formed in 1969. The return of the land made it possible for the Harijans to diversify their activities from dairying to agriculture.

The society bought about 30 hectares of irrigated land through their own labour. They now grew wheat and Thompson seedless grapes, apart from having sufficient pasture land for the buffaloes. Their total earnings have

shot up from a mere Rs. 44,400 in 1969 to more than Rs. 4,00,000 today.

Unassuming

The soft-spoken unassuming Mr Dewal says: "Economic progress very often adversely affects a community unless it is accompanied by educational and social reform."

Modest beginnings have been made in these fields as well; yet Mr Dewal feels: "We have solved only half of our problems. We still cannot guarantee work all the year round to the members and their families. Indeed, it is impossible for a forty hectare farm to provide continuous employment to 450 people."

He has some ambitious plans and he has confidence to make them work. He gives priority to better housing, which will improve health and hygiene, and to small and cottage industries. With the aid of some local experts, he has drawn up plans for an ideal home. It has two rooms, a kitchen, a stable for the cattle, a latrine and a gobar gas plant. Each unit is estimated to cost Rs. 13,000.

The present hovels in which the Harijans live are hardly fit for human habitation. Health and hygiene suffer as do the children, the people and the whole neighbourhood. The Harijans do not have the wherewithal to build these homes for themselves. Mr Dewal is hopeful that he will find a philanthropist who will advance the money required for the project. And, just as they paid back the entire deposit the dairy project had received he expects to pay back every paisa of the housing loan within a few days.

Having a bio-gas plant attached to each house would serve several purpose, Mr Dewal explains. Apart from consuming the dung, it would also use up the human waste from the latrines and the garbage from the household. It will provide fuel in the kitchen and manufacture manure which the cooperative society will purchase from each house.

In 15 years, Mhaisal village has been transformed unbelievably. Despair and despondency have given way to courage and confidence. The people are justifiably proud of their achievement.

Inspiration Radiates

On every Ambedkar Jayanti, the Mhaisal society invites Harijans from nearby villages to participate in a seminar. The people of Mhaisal talk of

their progress and show their visitors how they achieved it. The visitors talk of their difficulties and seek guidance. As a result, seven villages in the neighbourhood have started the process of forming cooperative societies. In his own quiet, selfless way, Mr Dewal is trying to bring about a total revolution among the Harijans in his area. The essence is to make them work for themselves," he says. They must never feel that everything will be dished out on a platter. A human being will value something only if he has worked for it.

Wouldn't Mhaisal be a true monument to Mahatma Gandhi, and if we must have a tribe known as the Gandhians, wouldn't Mr Dewal qualify as the genuine article?

From 'Times of India' New Delhi.
December 2, 1977

"If you want to work in the villages you must leave off all idea that it will be done very soon. It is a very laborious work. It can't be done by lecturing. Political agitation has its own law—solid work has its own law. Our people mix up these two things. Political agitation requires you to put up a new idea before the public, then you go on hammering out that idea, wait till it catches the public's imagination and gets connected with its vital interest. Then you wait for the psychological movement when you can get your objective. It is useful in a nation's life."

"How do you expect villagers to trust every young irresponsible man who claims to do good to them? If you go on working for years then you may get into their confidence and may be able to achieve something. All these ideas of theatrical success and lighting flash-like work are most impracticable. You have to stick on to your work through all difficulties, It requires patience."

Sri Aurobindo
22.2.1926

An Experiment by DRI in Rural Reconstruction

Gramodaya Project, Gonda (U.P.)

□ Yadavrao *

"THE whole county will look at the Gramodaya Project of Gonda district with keen interest. This all-embracing Project aims at bringing an era of prosperity for the villagers. . . . I am confident that devoted, selfless workers under the stewardship of well-experienced, enthusiastic and dedicated soul, Nanaji Deshmukh, will succeed in bringing a new era of happiness and prosperity in Gonda district. I have no doubt that this movement will be carried to other parts of the country and a new sun of peace and prosperity will dawn there as well."

These prophetic words were uttered on November 25, 1978 by the President of India, Dr Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, who had travelled a long distance to reach a small hamlet of 21 houses; this hamlet in itself being a part of a small village Jankinagar, consisting of 150 houses in a very backward district, Gonda, situated on the northern borders of India, in U.P. This small hamlet, earlier known as Maharaja Ganj, has now been rechristened by its residents as Jayaprabha Gram as a token of their homage to the memory of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and his devoted wife Smt. Prabha Devi—both embodiments of renunciation. Here at Jayaprabha Gram, is situated on a 25 acre plot, the Gramodaya Centre of the Deendayal Research Institute, which has pioneered this unique experiment in Rural Reconstruction. Jayaprabha Gram is not only

the nerve-centre of this experiment but has also become a symbol of the beginning of a new era in our country; not because this small, neglected and unknown hamlet has been able to create a place for itself on the communication (with telephone, telegram, post office etc.) map of India, but also because it was here that—perhaps for the first time, the highest in the country i.e., the President of India sat on the ground by the side of poor villagers and dined together the same simple food in the same type of traditional leaf plates, thus heralding the beginning of a new era of social and economic equality. But every new experiment for its fruition must have a visionary, an instrument and a laboratory.

Visionary and Instrument

It was March 1977, when the invisible hands of destiny threw Nana Deshmukh, a lifelong social worker and a front-rank leader of JP's movement of Total Revolution, straight from a prison-house to an election battle in Gonda District much against his will. It was destiny again which inspired the newly-elected Lok Sabha member Nana Deshmukh to turn down the offer of a much coveted berth in the Central Cabinet and dedicated himself to the unique experiment of all-round rural reconstruction in the backward Gonda District. On April 21, 1978 he issued a public appeal to all politicians above 60 years of age to retire

* Editor, Yug Virek weekly, Lucknow and Gen. Secretary, U.P. Hindi Samacharpatra Sammelan.

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Achievements in Gonda District (as on 31st July, 1980)

Minor Irrigation Project

1. Borings completed	27,516
2. Diesel pump sets installed	14,393
3. Electric tubewells commissioned	481
4. Irrigated area (Acres)	2,24,002
5. Area under multiple cropping	1,99,684
6. Area under two crops per year	1,58,353
7. Area under three crops per year	41,331
8. Families benefited	92,355
9. Villages saturated in irrigation	839

Antyodaya

10. Families benefited	1,439
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Tarunodaya (Youth Development Centres)

11. Programmes held	867
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Afforestation

12. Trees planted	2,23,000
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Road Construction (under Food-for-Work Programme)

13. Length of roads (km.)	1,152
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Facilities for Drinking Water

14. New wells	1,318
15. Wells repaired/renovated	3,330
16. Handpumps	1,470

Small Scale & Cottage Industries

17. Persons benefited	512
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Animal Husbandry

18. Cattle	2,272
19. Sheep & goats	403
20. Poultry	275
21. Fisheries	130
22. Piggeries	103
23. Gobar gas plants	123

Gonda—a View in 1977

1. Population	23,02,029
2. Density of population per sq. km.	314
3. Rural population	21,71,913
4. Scheduled Castes and Tribes	3,88,663
5. Number of Villages	2,814
6. Nyaya Panchayats	267
7. Development Blocks	25
8. Literacy	14.04%
9. " Urban	40.2%
10. " Rural	12.2%
11. " Female	4.7%
12. Working farmers	8,05,691
13. Landless labour	5,71,062
14. Other occupations	1,52,095
15. Total Cultivated land (hectare)	700,100
16. Total Irrigated Land	146,170
17. Veterinary Hospitals	30
18. Artificial Insemination Centres	18

Pension

24. Old persons benefited	253
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Education

25. Centres set-up	11
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Training of Rural Youths for Self employment (TRYSEM)

26. Centres	2
27. Vocations	8
28. Trainees	204

Rural Marketing and Service

Centres	
29. Centres	7
30. Artisans benefited	155

Miscellaneous

31. Families helped in different ways	403
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The highest and the poorest dine together

from politics of power and to dedicate themselves to constructive work. True to his words, Nana Deshmukh announced on 8th October, 1978 at Patna, in the benign presence of Jayaprakash Narayan, his own resolve to withdraw from active party politics and not to contest any election in future.

While on one hand, destiny was withdrawing Nana Deshmukh from partisan election politics, his mind was busy working out the outlines of a model of all-round developmental process based upon great Indian values of life and resulting in socio-economic equality and prosperity. It was this urge which had made him an instrument in founding the Deendayal Research Institute (DRI) at New Delhi in 1972 in order to translate

the philosophy of Integral Humanism, propounded by Late Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, into thought and action. Obviously, DRI was destined to be an effective instrument of this experiment in Rural Reconstruction. Thus, Nana Deshmukh the visionary, DRI the instrument and Gonda District the laboratory were brought together not by human planning but by the inscrutable ways of destiny.

Himself born in poverty, Nanaji as a whole-time RSS worker since 1940 and as a campaigner in JP's movement, had developed intimate contacts with hundreds of interiormost villages in east U.P. and Bihar and had seen face to face the realities of Indian village life. He was convinced that the basic problems afflicting our villages are poverty, under-



'Water to every field': diesel pumpset at work

employment, and unemployment, diseases, ignorance and civic inertia. To a considerable extent these problems are inter-related and the successful solution of one depends upon the successful solution of the others. Therefore, under his leadership the Institute evolved an integrated four-fold programme of rural reconstruction consisting of :

(a) *Economic Development* : To combat poverty and unemployment through improved agricultural and livestock production, harnessing the cattle wealth by dairy development, developing village industries improving flow of credit purchasing and marketing facilities etc.

(b) *Health* : To combat diseases through health education, environmental sanitation, community based delivery of health care, immunization, control of unwanted childbirths, maternal and child care and nutrition.

(c) *Education* : To combat ignorance through literacy classes, non-formal education ; developing recreational, folk and cultural activities.

(d) *Motivation* : To rouse social awareness and responsibility through community organisations and citizenship training, evolution of grass-roots leadership among men, women and youth for taking up the task of development and self government.

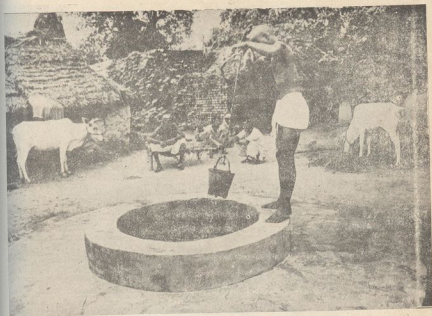
In short, it is a programme of Total Transformation through Total Development with peoples' initiative and participation.

Gonda District—the Laboratory

For the implementation of this integrated four-fold programme, the backward Gonda District with a population of 23 lakhs, (according to 1971 census) of which 94 per cent is rural and only 6 per cent urban, could be an ideal labo-



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Village well with a new look

ratory. About 35 per cent of the population is economically active of which 89 per cent is engaged in agriculture. Most of those engaged in agriculture are either landless labourers (1.52 lakhs) or small and marginal farmers. About 70 per cent of the farmers have holdings of less than one hectare, 16 per cent between one to less than two hectares and 6.6 per cent between two to less than three hectares. Thus, about 93 per cent of the farmers have holdings of less than three hectares, claiming only 61 per cent of the area. More than 75 per cent cultivated land was starving without irrigation facilities. The average income of 90 per cent of its families is one rupee a day *i.e.* less than Rs. 400 a year.

Only 14.04 per cent of its population is literate, literacy amongst women comes to only 4.7 per cent.

It was this backward Gonda District with its 2814 villages, which DRI decided to adopt in May 1978, with an aim to develop it into a model district in the country. On economic front DRI resolved that over a period of five years no family in Gonda district will remain below the income level of Rs. 2,500 per annum. To achieve this target Nanaji gave a slogan to the field workers, "Water to every field, work to every hand."

But how to translate this slogan into a reality?

Irrigation and Agriculture

It was clear that 89 per cent popula-



Shoe-making at Gramodaya workshop

tion being dependent on agriculture, its economic condition could be improved only by increase in agricultural production, which in turn is dependent on easy availability of inputs such as irrigation, improved seeds, fertilisers and implements etc. Without ample irrigation facilities, it is impossible to increase production and to create proper atmosphere for industrialisation.

The ground water surveys conducted in this region revealed the availability of a large ground water source in at least 20 out of 25 blocks of Gonda District. This ground water, if fully tapped, could be a great source for irrigating fields. Hence, DRI prepared a detailed plan for installation of 20,000 tubewells to provide irrigation facilities for the fields belonging to a large number

of small and marginal farmers by October 1980.

It was estimated that an iron pipe boring would cost about Rs1000 to Rs. 1,500, installation of the diesel pumpset would cost about Rs. 7 to 8 thousands, while the installation of electric tubewells, although not costing much higher, could be feasible only where electricity was available. From where could the poor farmers mobilise such vast financial resources? Nanaji had already made it clear, "Charity finds no place in GRAMODAYA PROJECT. We consider nobody a beggar, we work to see them self-reliant and self-respecting." The DRI approach from the beginning has been that the beneficiaries will be required to bear the cost of the services and facilities enjoyed by them, thus inculcating in

them a spirit of self-respect and responsibility. Hence it was arranged that the small marginal farmers, who were to own these tubewells either as individuals or in groups, would receive subsidy ranging from 25 per cent to 50 per cent from the Central Ministry of Agriculture. DRI would help the farmers in getting the remaining amount as loans from Land Development Banks and other commercial banks. But all this loan would have to be paid back in six monthly instalments, after a year of getting it.

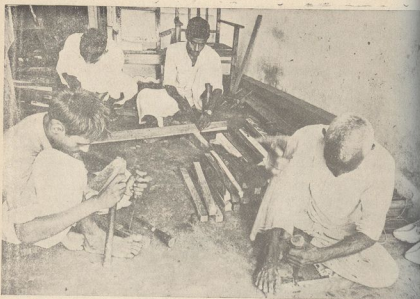
As a first step towards realising this end, Deendayal Research Institute started its first boring operations on May 26, 1978. On that day Nanaji Deshmukh inaugurated three borings in the presence of important official of the central, state and district administration as well as some top bank executives of the national level. Fifty wholetime educated and trained workers designated as Gram Sanyojaks were deployed *i.e.* two in each block in order to motivate and help the villagers for joining this scheme of tubewell installation. But gradually DRI discovered that it was not possible for a small farmer (owning a farm of 2.5 acre or less area) or a marginal farmer (owning a farm of less than 1.5 acre) to pay back the loan raised for installation of diesel pumpset in an iron pipe boring. So, how to solve their problem?

New Formulas of Phenomenal success

DRI discovered that one diesel pump set could irrigate about 20 acre land. Hence DRI thought that such small farms could be clustered together and boring could be provided in any one of many adjoining small farms. And from this boring only one diesel pumpset

could serve all these farms. The owner of the boring would charge a nominal rent from other farmers. It was also discovered that bamboo boring instead of full iron pipe boring, would reduce the cost to less than half *i.e.* to Rs. 500 only. It was also found that a variety of bamboos suitable for such borings was locally available in plenty in Gonda District. Hence DRI started encouraging small and marginal farmers to go in for such bamboo borings on one hand and on the other to motivate some unemployed youth and other people to purchase diesel pumpsets which could be rented out to needy farmers. For this purpose, facility of loan from commercial banks to unemployed youth either singly or in groups was also arranged.

All these formulas worked well. The progress in installation of borings and pumpsets has been phenomenal and beyond expectation; On March 31, 1979 *i.e.* after ten months of the inauguration of this programme 7048 borings, 4003 diesel pumpsets and 165 electric tubewells had already been installed all over the district. In May 1980 this number rose to 23,653 borings, 12,553 diesel pump sets, and 372 electric tubewells. The latest figures on July 31, 1980 are: borings completed 27,516, diesel pumpsets 14,393, Electric tubewells commissioned 481. About 7,000 diesel pumpsets are available on hire to small and marginal farmers. This unique success of Irrigation Project has resulted in bringing 2,24,002 acres of new agricultural land under irrigation. 839 out of 2814 villages in Gonda District have become saturated in terms of irrigation, 1,99,684 acres are under double or triple cropping and 91,230 families have benefited from this one programme.



"Work to every hand"

But how could this miracle of achieving the targets much ahead of deadline happen in this country, where targets are never to be achieved due to corruption, lethargy and red-tapism prevailing all-around? Of course, this could not be possible without peoples' initiative and participation in this project, but their motivation was not an easy job. It required imagination and search of pragmatic solutions by DRI Planning cell on one hand and practical demonstration of these solutions in 25 acre model farm created under Gramodaya Project on Gonda Balrampur Road on the other. But it also needed continuous efforts and sweet persuasion by a band of 50 Gram Sanyojaks and a large number of local youth to carry these solutions from door to door. Nature also helped in

breaking the psychological resistance in farmers by putting Gonda district to test during the miserable days of drought and by demonstrating that minor irrigation alone could save them of this misery.

But it does not mean that the end of success has been reached. All this minor Irrigation Project depends upon the easy and continuous availability of diesel and electricity. In view of the enveloping shortage, who can guarantee this availability? Hence, a solution has to be found out and DRI's mind is already seized of this problem.

No doubt, irrigation is the basic input required for agricultural development, but availability of other inputs such as fertilizers, seeds, implements and

Manthan



A view on carpet weaving at Jayaprabha Gram.

bullocks etc., are equally needed. Although, DRI is aware of the problem and has prepared a scheme of establishing custom services and supply centres in different blocks so that the beneficiaries get their requirements in time and at easily accessible places, nothing substantial could be done so far in this direction. Multiplicity of cropping is being popularised but cropping pattern has to be regulated so that the fertility of the soil is not impaired. For this purpose, it has to be linked with cattle rearing also. This has not been done so far.

Industrialization

Gramodaya Project, while concentra-

ting on "water to every field" within a limited span of two years, has launched a four-fold programme for rural industrialisation in order to achieve its second objective of providing "work to every hand."

(1) In order to identify traditional crafts and artisans and the locally available inputs for these crafts, DRI organised, with the help of All India Handicraft Board, a detailed survey of rural artisans in seven blocks of Gonda District namely Karnalganj, Shriduttganj, Utraula, Tulsipur, Itiathok, Mahmoodnagar and Belsar.

(2) To solve the multi-faceted prob-

lems of the traditional artisans in the rural areas of Gonda district, DRI has set up multifunctional rural marketing and service centres at seven different places spread over the district. Local artisans can get raw material at reasonable price from these centres and can sell their surplus unsold products through these centres. The village industries served by these centres include carpentry, blacksmithy, shoe-making, pottery, manufacturing of oil, bamboo cane goods making, 'dal' milling, mat-making. Recently, ten 'Ban' production centres have been set up at different places. Managed by the local artisans they are working quite successfully to their benefit. The organisers of these centres are confident that in near future no artisan will remain without job and will earn not less than Rs. 200 per month.

(3) DRI is running a multi-vocational training centre in Gonda under the supervision of a seasoned social worker Shri Baij Nath, which has adequate arrangements to impart 3 to 4 months training to a batch of 240 rural youths (boys and girls) in nine different vocations at a time. One such batch of youth, duly trained under TRYSEM SCHEME of the Government is now engaged in self-employment sector. The vocations in which training is being given include tailoring, knitting, carpet-weaving, bamboo/cane goods manufacturing, mat-making, repairing of radio and transistors, soap making, 'ban' manufacturing etc.

With the help and cooperation of Central Government a carpet-weaving training centre was started in October 1978. About fifty rural youths have been trained in carpet-weaving. Even the Rashtrapatiiji was impressed to see the

craftsmanship of these trainees.

(4) To rehabilitate many poor artisan families, they were provided rickshaws, ekkas, dunlop carts, sewing machines, rice-shellors and mechanised oil expellers on loan or through donations.

Animal Husbandry

DRI has been giving much emphasis on development of fisheries, poultry farming and animal husbandry.

Livestock, a major source of high quality food as well as of income can play a vital role in improving the economy of small farmers. The district has nearly half a million cows and buffaloes. However, their contribution is much less presently due to the poor quality of animals, improper feeding and inadequate veterinary services. The average daily milk-yield of a cow is 0.75 litres and that of a buffalo 1.50 litre. According to Nanaji's announcement on November 25, 1978, "DRI is determined to make available to the district more than a lakh of cows and buffaloes of improved breed each capable of yielding 10 to 15 litres of milk. There are more than 5000 ponds in this district. With the help of modern techniques we shall develop them into fisheries on a large scale." The project aims at improving the quality of cattle through crossbreeding, adequate veterinary services, improving the quality of fodder through distribution of improved seeds and building up of marketing system for dairy products. A bull from Saiwal has been brought to DRI's farm at Jayaprabha Gram, to cross-breed the local cows for improving their breed and yield of milk. This service is given free of cost to the farmers.

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To highlight the importance of animal husbandry in the plans of Gramodaya Project, selected local villagers were given high quality cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, hen and fish by Rashtrapatiji on November 25, 1978.

In order to create a model fishery complex, DRI acquired in March 1978, approximately 5.8 acres of land which is situated behind the Gramodaya Kendra in Jayaprabha Gram. Besides fishery, this complex includes a poultry farm, duck farm and a piggery. It serves a dual purpose—(1) as a model in each of the four fields and (2) as a source of entertainment and relaxation for the local people.

Dairy Farms

Under Dairy Scheme, to begin with, more than hundred cooperative societies of cows and buffalo owners have been organised in three blocks. Faizabad Dairy has assured to purchase total quantity of milk from these blocks through these cooperatives. A seasoned worker Shri Ram Prasad Dwivedi is making an indepth study of all the aspects of dairy scheme. He is confident that within a span of three years, this district may usher in a white revolution, following the present green revolution.

Besides these major schemes for multi-dimensional economic development, DRI has tried to take up in its hand under food-for-work programme, the construction of approach roads and dams. It has been trying to help the retired old men in fixation and delivery of their pensions as well as to provide means of subsistence to the weakest families under Antyodaya Scheme.

Social and Moral Development

If DRI has given top priority to eco-

nomic development in its scheme of things it does not mean that DRI takes it to be the end all and be all of development. Nanaji has been announcing again and again that Gramodaya project does not mean mere economic development. Its ultimate goal is to bring about Total Transformation through Total Development with people's initiative and participation. Then only JP's vision of Total Revolution resulting in a society free of social and economic inequalities could be fulfilled. Of course, economic development is the first step, but not the last. Along with economic development, we have to ensure social justice, spread education, improve health and inculcate sense of social responsibility in the local people.

To fulfil all these objectives, DRI has established a Perna Kendra (Motivation Centre) at Jayaprabha Gram, which was inaugurated by Shri Bala Saheb Deoras, the RSS Chief on November 25, 1978. Through this Perna Kendra, DRI has been trying to mobilise local youth between 16 and 40 years of age. This youth mobilisation programme has been named as Tarunodaya. Under Tarunodaya Scheme, youth conventions and youth clubs are organised upto every Nyaya Panchayat level. These programmes have brought new awakening in the local youth and they are getting involved in larger numbers in all the developmental projects launched by DRI. In fact, they form the backbone of this huge structure.

Human and Financial Resources

Under the leadership of Nanaji, a team of dedicated and experienced workers has been instrumental in the successful implementation of this project. This team includes Dr. J. K. Jain as

Secretary and Dr. R.L. Patni, as Project Officer, both stationed at New Delhi; Shri Sharda Prasad as Project Director, Capt. Chakrabarti as Project Manager, both stationed at Jayaprabha Gram, Shri Baij Nath as incharge of Multivocational Training Centre at Gonda, Shri Ram Prasad Dwivedi incharge of Dairy Scheme at Balrampur.

With this apex leadership, the next rung of leadership consists of 50 Gram Sanyojaks in all the 25 blocks. The basic units of the organisation consists of one Tarunodaya Mandal for 16 to 30 years age group and one Gramodaya Mandal for 31 and above years age group in each of the 269 Nyaya Panchayats. All the convenors of these Mandals constitute the General Council of the Gramodaya Project.

Implementation of all these developmental schemes and the creation of organisational infra-structure for it needed huge financial resources. But DRI had no funds of its own to fall back upon. Nanaji in his speech on November 25, 1978 had made the position clear. He said, "I want to make it clear that financial position of the Gramodaya Kendra is no different from poor brothers of Gonda district. It has no bank balance of its own. The governments have been spending crores of rupees for the poor farmers and farm labourers. But that amount has always been evaporating at the top. It never reached the persons it was meant for."

What DRI had to do, was to act as a *honest* bridge between the Government welfare Schemes and their target-groups. All the grants given under Trysem Scheme or by the Handicrafts Boards were properly utilised. DRI at the very outset declared not to accept any foreign aid directly and so it stuck to its decision of accepting such aids only through the government controlled PADI.

Only for creating basic infrastructure, DRI has been accepting private and company donations under 35 cc (a) Certificate as well as government grants. Nanaji's appeal for "one rupee contribution from each man" got wonderful response from all over the country and was indicative of people's expectations from this Project.

DRI is trying to build a self-generating economy, in which every project is either to be self-reliant or to be fed by the beneficiaries themselves. With this end in view, DRI has given utmost importance to creation of cooperative sector and self-employment sector where the beneficiaries are required to pool their own resources and to stand on their own feet. As explained earlier DRI is very particular to inculcate an attitude of self-respect and self-reliance and not of begging. This approach has its own limitations and difficulties. DRI is interested not in immediate results, but in stable foundations on which the socio-economic superstructure of a model district could be built and sustained.

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MISSIONARIES OF TOMORROW

—Challenge and opportunity



Sri Gurujī's Clarion Call

Many workers appear to take a delight in blaming others for all ills. Some may put blame on the political perversities, others on the aggressive activities of the Christians or Muslims and such other faiths. Let our workers keep their minds free from such tendencies and work for our people and our dharma in the right spirit, lend a helping hand to all our brethren who need help and should strive to relieve distress wherever we see it. . .

It is now up to us to go to those neglected brethren of our society and strive our utmost to better their living conditions. We will have to work out plans by which their primary physical needs and comforts could be satisfied. We will have to open schools, hostels and training courses to equip them to benefit from these schemes. . .

See how the foreign missionaries are working in these areas. What a tremendous amount of effort and perseverance they display. What an amount of trouble they cheerfully undergo. They come from far-off land and go and settle in deep jungles. They live there in small houses just like the local people. They mix with them, learn their languages and become one with the local habits and customs. They behave with sweetness and sympathy. Can we not take a leaf out of their experience and do something for our own brethren. . .

In this service no distinction should be made between man and man. We have to serve all, be he a Christian or a Muslim or a human being of any other persuasion, for, calamities, distress and misfortunes make no such distinction but afflict all alike. And in serving to relieve the suffering of man let it not be in a spirit of condescension or mere compassion but as devoted worship of the Lord abiding in the heart of all beings, in the true spirit of our dharma of surrendering our all in the humble service of Him who is Father, Mother, Brother, Friend and everything to us all.

Bunch of Thoughts (Second Edition p. 472-476)

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Gandhiji's Call to Youth

WE are inheritors of a rural civilization. The vastness of our country, the vastness of the population, the situation and the climate of the country have, in my opinion, destined it for a rural civilization. Its defects are well known, but not one of them is irremediable. To uproot it and substitute for it an urban civilization seems to me an impossibility, unless we are prepared by some drastic means to reduce the population from three hundred million to three or say even thirty. I can, therefore, suggest remedies on the assumption that we must perpetuate the present rural civilization and endeavour to rid it of its acknowledged defects. This can only be done if the youth of the country will settle down to village life. And if they will do this, they must reconstruct their life and pass everyday of their vacation in the villages surrounding their colleges or high schools, and those who have finished their education or are not receiving any should think of settling down in villages.

Young India, 7-11-1929, p. 364.

ASK you (youngmen) to go to the villages and bury yourselves there, not as their masters or benefactors but as their humble servants. Let them know what to do and how to change their modes of living from your daily conduct and way of living. Only feeling will be of no use, just like steam which by itself is of no account unless it is kept under proper control when it becomes a mighty force. I ask you to go forth as messengers of God carrying balm for the wounded soul of India.

Young India, 29-12-1929, p. 443.

GROWN-up students and therefore all college students should begin village work even whilst they are studying. Here is a scheme for such part-time workers.

The students should devote the whole of their vacation to village service. To this end, instead of taking their walks along beaten paths, they should walk to the village within easy reach of their institutions and study the condition of the villagefolk and befriend them. This habit will bring them in contact with the villagers who, when the student actually go to stay in their midst, will by reason of the previous occasional contact receive them as friends rather than as strangers to be looked upon with suspicion. During the long vacation the students will stay in the villages and offer to conduct classes for adults and to teach the rules of sanitation to the villagers and attend to the ordinary cases of illness. They will also introduce the spinning wheel amongst them and teach them the use of every spare minute. In order that his may be done, students and teachers will have to revise their ideas of the use of vacation. Often do thoughtless teachers prescribe lessons to be done during the vacation. This in my opinion is in any case a vicious habit. Vacation is just the period when students' minds should be free from their routine work and be left free for self-help and original development. The village work I have mentioned is easily the best form of recreation and light instruction. It is obviously the best preparation for dedication to exclusive village service after finishing the studies.

Young India, 26-12-1929

WE must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their clothes and pots and in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call.

Young India, 11-9-1924, p. 300.

WORKERS must not without considerable experience, interfere with the old tools, old methods and old patterns. They will be safe if they think of improvements, retaining intact the old existing background. They will find that it is true economy.

Harijan, 29-3-'35

MANY workers are so frightened of village life that they fear that if they are not paid by some agency they

will not be able to earn their living by labouring in villages, especially if they are married and have a family to support. In my opinion this is a demoralizing belief. No doubt, if a person goes to a village with a city mentality and wants to live in villages the city life, he will never earn enough unless he, like the city people, exploits the villagers. But if a person settles in a village and tries to live like the villagers, he should have no difficulty in making a living by the sweat of his brow. He should have confidence that if the villagers who are prepared to toil all the year round in the traditional unintelligent manner can earn their living, he must also earn at least as much as the average villager. This he will do without displacing a single villager, for he will go to a village as a producer, not as a parasite.

Harijan, 23-11-'35



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Youth and Rural Reconstruction in India

□ P. C. Mahapatra*

INDIA lives in her 500,000 villages with 82 per cent of her total population. The bulk of youth population live in rural areas. Out of the total youth population the rural youth constitute 72.9 per cent. It may thus be seen that the rural youth are now emerging as a big force. Like the urban student-youth they have to play an important and wide role in 'Integrated Rural Development Programme.'

Poverty and Illiteracy

There are two basic problems which are to be overcome viz., poverty and illiteracy. Between 40 to 60 per cent of the population is still below the poverty line which in terms of number means about 250 millions of people (221 millions in rural and 20 millions in urban). So also the magnitude of illiteracy in the country as a whole is high being 63.55 per cent and in terms of number it comes to 307 millions.

These situations are more depressing in rural areas specially in case of women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Unemployment and under-employment among the people are steadily increasing. With the increasing urbanisation and the drift from the rural areas to towns and cities, problems of urban unemployment and of uneducated unemployment have come to the fore, while disguised unemployment and under-employment continue unabated in the rural areas. Constant rapid population expansion continues to upset much of

the progress made in food production, job creation, educational development and economic growth.

It is increasingly being realized that rural development in an integrated process which should be stimulated by the combined effort of a large number of interrelated factors. Seeing that 3/4th of the population live in rural areas and nearly 70 to 80 per cent of such population are engaged in agriculture and allied occupations, it is expected that the major employment potential should rest with the agricultural sector.

The recent breakthrough in agriculture heralding the "Green Revolution" while Revolution has brightened the prospect of developing agriculture as a modern and viable sector of country. These revolutionary achievements of agricultural research, viz., the discovery of high-yielding and fast-maturing varieties of seeds, use of chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides, effective water management have added new dimensions to the prospects of agriculture.

Further to ameliorate the condition of the farmers, tribal people small farmers development agencies, integrated rural development agencies, tribal development agencies, and Integrated Tribal Development Project have been implemented, suitable land reforms vesting ownership with the actual tiller, debt redemption laws to eradicate subtenancy and enabling the cultivator of land to

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avail himself and banking subsidies from already been of knowledge science and strides. But population trends and their field of

In rural areas are mostly seen either under unemployment that those employment in agriculture on an average disguised unemployment are being stimulated the income of the rural labour appreciably.

The wine not reach to fully aware of the fruit of economic be commensurate of material rate they are motivated. tion for mass mic develop

Health people in rural areas is usually wrought by sin and on population essential to

avail himself credit from cooperatives and banking institution with necessary subsidies from the different projects have already been implemented. The frontiers of knowledge are constantly expanding, science and technology are taking rapid strides. But the majority of the rural population are ignorant of these new trends and how to utilise these ideas in their field of activities.

In rural areas employment prospects are mostly seasonal and the problem is either under-employment or disguised unemployment. It has been estimated that those who have fulltime employment in agricultural work in India get employment only for 125 days in a year on an average. In consideration of the disguised unemployment or under-employment prevalent in rural areas, efforts are being made by these agencies to stimulate the tertiary sector so that the income of those fully dependent agricultural labour could be supplemented appreciably.

The wind of change however does not reach the rural folk as they are not fully aware of these developments. The fruit of economic development will not be commensurate with the investment of material inputs. Further, being illiterate they are conservative and hard to be motivated. Thus literacy is a precondition for massive and widespread economic development.

Health consciousness among the people in India is low; it is more so in rural areas where the incidence of disease is usually looked upon as retribution wrought by super-natural forces, acts of sin and omission and the growth of population as blessings of God. It is essential to raise the level of knowledge

of the rural populace regarding health and diseases, their causes, prevention and cure.

Economic development is an aspect of social development, for social development we have to remove superstitions, prejudice, and help in spreading interpretations of traditional values and for economic development we have to enthuse readiness on the part of the masses to take to new ways of production and not to be bound by traditional types and traditional ways of production. For these, literacy is the only instrument and precondition for allround development.

Army of Volunteers

To achieve these aims and to remove the above-mentioned bottlenecks in the path of rural development, we require a vast army of volunteers. The youth of the country are well suited to play an important role in mobilising resources and transferring new technology to the rural areas for integrated development. Unless these fundamental responsibilities are recognised, accepted, and implemented by the youth, there is no hope of the eradication of the major problems in the near future.

Thus the association of the youth with the developmental programmes, will enable them to know the various aspects of the plans/sub-plans and the schemes. They will also come in contact with the village people to whom they will be an effective fountain of information and will work as catalysts. The duties of the youth in this respect are of three-fold (i) detecting the problems, (ii) prescribing remedial schemes thereof and, (iii) pursuing the implementa-

tion of these schemes to its logical ends by drawing the attention of the concerned authorities.

So far most of the rural areas in the states have not been surveyed properly, no land records have been prepared and no books of accounts are being kept, because of which banks and other leading organisations find it difficult to advance credit to rural masses. Therefore, the youth can be associated to help the authorities as well as the villagers in socio-economic surveys, land survey, settlement and Preparation of records of rights and in maintenance of the books of accounts. This will be conducive to extending credit facilities and also establishing various other infrastructure facilities necessary for development in the field of agricultural and ancillaries.

Youth can only motivate the youth.

They are the present and future of the country and are endowed with the potentialities to fight against the evils of casteism, regionalism, communalism, dowry system, and untouchability etc. which have much weakened our country.

Our country is a mass production centre for population Growth. The growth of population per year in our country is equivalent to that of Australia and per five years to that of USSR. The youth can take up this challenging task of streamlining this over-production through mass campaign. Further mass campaign like Youth Against Famine, Youth Against Dirt and Disease, Youth for Tree Plantation and Afforestation, Youth for Disaster Prevention can be organised by them so that their energies will be properly utilised.



NSS has a Role to play

THE colleges and universities have to function as a focal point of the "Conscience of the Nation". They have to discard the ivory tower attitude. The university must aim at making an impact on the quality of social thinking, endeavour and help moulding the values of our developing society and integrating them into the fabric of national life and ideals.

It was to fulfil these objectives that the National Service Scheme (NSS) was introduced by the Government of India in 1969-70 in selected universities in the country. During the period of 1969-80 the NSS has expanded rapidly

to cover practically all the universities in the country. Apart from 131 medical colleges, IITs and all the schools of Social Work, the NSS units and working 117 universities in the country. In all about 4,75,000 students are on enrolled as NSS members in 3,080 colleges scattered all over the country. This year in four states the NSS has been introduced at the +2 stage in Higher Secondary School. More than 5,000 teachers are involved and are part of the organisation as programme Officers or programme Coordinators. According to NSS guidelines every NSS member is expected to spend minimum 120 hours

per year in his or her camping project expected to (regular) or days during autumn or spends about regular and a year for run

With such huge resources all the potential instruments, if handled

In fact the sense of socialisation of discipline and to help shape personality". his personality accepted that be "Project of

It is now NSS unit village or a school and should stimulate development through involvement teachers in the

In fact the "Youth for a special college is required group of village economic upliftment of Villages fully understood is all the more

per year in social work in addition to his or her participation in the special camping programme. Under this special camping programme every NSS unit is expected to organise twenty-four hours (regular) or day camp of minimum ten days during long vacations—summer, autumn and winter. The Centre spends about 5 crores of rupees as of regular and special camping grants every year for running NSS.

With such a vast infrastructure and huge resources at its disposal NSS has all the potentialities to become a powerful instrument of national reconstruction, if handled properly.

In fact the declared aims of NSS is to promote national consciousness and sense of social responsibility, inculcation of discipline and dignity of labour and to help student to develop his total personality". For this development of his personality it is now being generally accepted that NSS programme has to be "Project Oriented" or "Action-Oriented".

It is now being emphasised that every NSS unit should adopt either a village or a slum area on long-term basis and should strive for its allround development through regular and continuous involvement of college students and teachers in that adopted area.

In fact under the new theme of "Youth for Rural Reconstruction" for a special camping programmes, each college is required to adopt a village or group of villages for intensive socio-economic uplift. However, the "Adoption of Village" concept is not adequately understood and its implementation is all the more difficult and hazardous.

What is the exact meaning of village adoption? It can hardly mean that the college NSS Unit will henceforth be responsible for the fate of the village. Neither does it mean that the government, Central or State is going to set aside some money to be used specifically for development purposes in these villages. It does not mean that whatever programme of development the NSS Unit propose for the village will be given special consideration by the Government. Village adoption purely means that the members of NSS identify themselves with the villagers and work with them for a better social economic life. Even the mere association with the village can spark the enthusiasm in both students and village folk. The members of NSS can help the people in identifying their needs, setting up priorities and giving some voice to their problems. With the knowledge and information of the plans at their command and their familiarity with the administrative structure they can draw the attention of the appropriate departments. In cooperation with the government agencies and expert bodies, the NSS can help the villagers to help themselves in solving their problems. The NSS can mobilize local human as well as material or monetary resources for meeting the needs of the village.

Adopting a village further means that the NSS will have a more or less permanent relationship with the village leading to continuity and integrated development of the people and the area.

Thus the NSS has opened new vistas and has offered unique opportunities for the educational institutions to become instruments of change and development.

ABVP For Rural Reconstruction

GANDHI JAYANTI (October 2) of the year 1977 will be remembered as a landmark in the history of the student movement in India. On this day Akhil Bharatiya Vichagarth Parishad, (ABVP) admittedly the largest and the strongest student organisation in the country, decided to channelize student power on constructive lines and formally launched a unique project "Students for Rural Reconstruction." Soon after, in June 1978, ABVP at its Bangalore session announced its decision to withdraw from competitive politics of students union and to concentrate major part of its energies in constructive work.

These decisions one after the other came as a surprise to many. ABVP workers had already proved their metal both in agitational and election politics. They had been in the first rank of JP's movement for Total Revolution and had made a major contribution in the long struggle against emergency dictatorship. Soon after the lifting of Emergency, ABVP had swept the polls in more than 75% student unions in universities and colleges all over the country. It had a vast organisational infrastructure spread over more than 1,000 places in the country involving about 3,000 institutions of higher education and a very large number of student and teacher activists. Therefore this sudden withdrawal from election politics and dedication to constructive work by ABVP while it was at the peak of its popularity and power, became an enigma to most observers. But to these, who knew the genesis and growth of ABVP since its birth in 1949, these decisions came as a natural expression of its inner urges.

In fact ABVP was born in 1949 to involve student power in the huge task of national reconstruction of independent India and the first programme it undertook was named as 'Bharatyakaran Udyog, i.e., walk of life. But afterwards ABVP was drawn into the whirlpool of agitational and election politics dominating country's public life. For many years, ABVP leadership has been oscillating between these two opposite pulls, i.e., its inner urge for constructive role and the opposite pull of agitational and election politics. It seems that ultimately the inner urges of ABVP have prevailed upon the environmental pulls. In the first round of three to five years of the project of "Students for Rural Reconstruction" it was planned to launch it at nearly 250 centres covering nearly all the states and involvement and participation. Before this, efforts were made to do the preparatory work for launching the project of approximately 10,000 students and teachers. All India workshop was held in Ahmedabad in 1971 to consider various sides of the constructive role of student power in social participation and since then Parishad workers have been working at various centres in some tribal areas and slums. The project "Students for Rural Reconstruction" was formally launched on October 2, 1977. Since then many zonal and state level orientation-camps have been held, specially in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Maharashtra and Karnataka and many areas have been adopted for intensive work in almost all parts of the country.

A three-day camp was organised on September 8th 9th and 10th 1977 in Delhi to draw the guidelines and frame-

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The National V for Rural Recons Jaipur on June 4 1978. Except T representatives participated. The for finance S Aggarwal, Sarvoda Bhai Bhatt and J of Banbasi Ka

work of the projects. Shri Nanaji Deshmukh, who later resigned from the party-politics and started working for Rural Reconstruction, eminent educationist Prof. J.P. Nayak, well-known economist Prof. J.D. Sethi, noted Gandhian Shri Krishna Swami and Thinker Shri Bapurao Moghe participated in the discussions to give the idea a shape with the experienced minds. It was decided that initially students should be encouraged in order that they think properly and that instead of running away from the problems of villages, they boldly face these challenges.

Three more camps were organised at different places in Bihar to promote the discussions. About one hundred workers from 22 districts took part in these workshops. On November 4th, 5th & 6th 1977 the All India Convention of ABVP was held in Varanasi. Shri Sidhraj Dhadha, the President of Sarva Seva Sangh was invited to inspire the workers in the task of rural reconstruction.

To take blessings and inspiration the workers of ABVP met Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan on May 2, 1978, and apprised him of the Project. At the same time, Prof. D.T. Lakdawala, the then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission appreciated the efforts and offered full cooperation.

The National Workshop for 'Students for Rural Reconstruction' was held in Jaipur on June 4th 5th 6th and 7th 1978. Except Tamilnadu, about 145 representatives from all the states participated. The Union State Minister for finance Sri Satish Chandra Aggarwal, Sarvodaya leaders Sri Gokul Bhai Bhatt and Jawaharlal Jain, Chief of Banbasi Kalyan Ashram Shri

Rambhau Godbole, the NSS Programme Adviser to the Ministry of Education, Prof. L.R. Shah were among those who addressed the workers. The workshop thrashed out the practical details on the basis of experiences and to speed up the implementation of the project. In the same year (1978) it was decided to celebrate the 'Week for Students' for Rural Reconstruction from September, to October. As a follow up the week was organised at more than 600 places in the country. In Delhi the week was inaugurated by the known educationist Dr D.S. Kothari. In Bangalore, Sri Nanaji Deshmukh was the Chief Guest. A special feature was beginning of the project at the birthplace of Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya at the Nangla Chander Bhan village in Mathura. In Bihar only, 1,200 students from 25 districts went to 250 villages. 23 Shramdan Shivirs (manual labour camps) of 3 days each were organised, about 500 students participated. The regional training camp of U.P. was held on October 7 and 8 at Banaras Hindu University premises. 75 workers representing 25 different places were present. Last year, the project received a fillip in virtually all the states. But Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh took lead by doing some commendable work. The number of backward areas adopted by ABVP workers is 13 in Karnataka, 18 in Maharashtra 9 in Andhra and 9 in Madhya Pradesh under this project. The workers at these centres concentrate on the problems of the areas in general and emphasis in particular, has been laid at the 'Bal Sanskar Kendra' and health and education. ABVP workers are also running a number of adult education camps in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

In Madras, the workers go regularly to a nearby village—"Ari Athil Vayik" to teach the Harijan children. In February, 1979 they also associated themselves with the development of a local pond in this village.

In Bihar during the rural reconstruction programme workers undertook the survey in 50 villages of the Champaran district to understand the problems of *Thas Vanvasies*. Survey and programmes were also held in other 15 villages in the state. In Darbhanga a centre of free medical aid has been established permanently.

In Vidarbha workers to Dhanora village of Yavatmal district and bridged the "Nullah". Labour force was provided in Baroda village of Chanderpur to build an approach road that was one and a half furlong long.

In Gujarat, Matan unit held a camp for the eye-cure and dental treatment. 5 doctors and 75 workers were engaged. 135 eye operations were held and 700 patients benefited. Amreli unit in Hartah also did appreciable work. In Rohtak Medical College, ABVP unit organised a seminar on the treatment of 'ENCEPTUTIS,' a dangerous eye-disease.

In Orissa, shramdan camps were held in Sakshi Gopal and Dhenkanal. Shramdan were also experienced by the workers of Bombay and Thana districts in Maharashtra by working in camps at Malwara and Talasari.

A provincial camp was held at Sirsa in Haryana in which Shri Nanaji Deshmukh also participated. In Delhi, ABVP is running a centre in the resettlement

colony at Jahangir Puri. The week for rural reconstruction was organised at 25 villages. In Pune and Kolhapur village contact programmes were held. The 'Vivekanand Sanskar Sanstha' in a project at 'LATUR' has started a hotel of its own since October 2nd, 1971. 25 Banbasi students are living there. In Karnataka, the Provincial Rural Reconstruction Project Camps were organised on June 25, 26 and 27 in which 32 workers participated. In Hubly, the ABVP unit worked in Agahar Timmasagar village in association with 6 college units. About 100 students took part in shramdan. Bangalore unit organised a eye-camp at village "Kampapura" with the help of known eye-physical Dr M.C. Modi. 60 power glasses were given. A two-day seminar on 'Rural Orientation in Education' was organised in Bhopal on February 23rd and 24, 1980. A number of eminent educationists deliberated on this problem. In a nutshell, under the auspicious of this project, a large number of students acquainted themselves with the problems of the villagefolk by regular visits, through Shramdan Shivirs and various other activities. Commendable contribution of their energies have been made towards the solution of the rural problems.

In words of the ABVP General Secretary, "ABVP does not aim at creating a model of rural reconstruction. The basic objective of the country-wide project is to arise and awake the students and teaching community to raise their consciousness and understanding of the rural problems and entuse them to work for the weaker sections of the society, particularly those living in villages, tribal areas, urban slums and Harijan localities."

□

Freedom was won long before 1947. By people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence; by men of foresight and determination, like Ardeshir and Pirojsha Godrej, who had confidence in the country's capabilities and shared the same ideals with Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi, Nehru.

In Godrej, self-reliance has been considered indispensable to progress, the aim being not just self-sufficiency for the organisation but for the whole country. Progress can only be achieved in a milieu of progress.

Based on our country's needs, and exploiting the country's own resources, Godrej have diversified.

Self-Reliance: the ~~Key~~note of our Independence

Made to international standards, their products range from security equipment, machine tools and forklift trucks to steel furniture, typewriters and refrigerators—besides soaps, toiletries, chemicals and animal feeds.

The Godrej industrial garden township at Vikhroli-Pirojshanagar, is a superb example of self-reliance and progress. For their workers Godrej have provided—in a unique environment—many social benefits: extensive housing schemes, schools and adult education, recreation, medical and family planning benefits.

Self-reliance is both a means and an end. For Godrej it is the essence of independence.

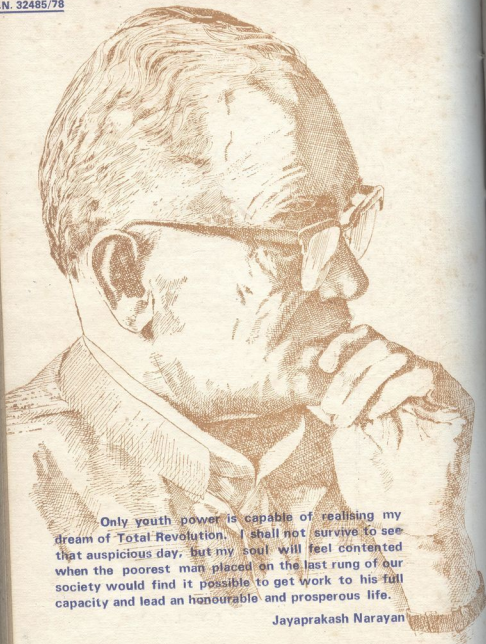




My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, all the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves. Who will bring the light to them? Who will travel from door to door bringing light to them? Let the people be your God. Think of them. Work for them. Pray for them incessantly. The Lord will show you the way. Him I call a *mahatman* whose heart bleeds for the poor, otherwise he is a *duratman*. Let us unite our wills in continued prayer for their good. We may die unknown, unpitied, unbewailed, without accomplishing anything—but not one thought will be lost. It will take effect sooner or later. My heart is too full to express my feeling; you know it, you can imagine it. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery, having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long as they do not do anything for those millions who are now no better than hungry savages! Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart even secular knowledge through religion.

Swami Vivekanand

SPACE DONATED BY A WELL WISHER.



Only youth power is capable of realising my dream of Total Revolution. I shall not survive to see that auspicious day, but my soul will feel contented when the poorest man placed on the last rung of our society would find it possible to get work to his full capacity and lead an honourable and prosperous life.

Jayaprakash Narayan

itself. The dimensions such of a transformation into a "post-industrial" society are apt to be as unforeseeable from our contemporary vantage point as present-day society would have been unimaginable to a speculative observer a thousand years ago.

Yet I think a few elements of the post-industrial society can be discerned. The societal view of production and consumption must stress parsimonious, not prodigal, attitudes. Resource-consuming and heat-generating processes must be regarded as necessary evils, not as social triumphs, to be relegated to as small a portion of economic life as possible. This implies a sweeping reorganization of the mode of production in ways that cannot be foretold, but that would seem to imply the end of the giant factory, the huge office, perhaps of the urban complex.

What values and ways of thought would be congenial with such a radical reordering of things we also cannot know, but it is likely that the ethos of "science" so intimately linked with industrial application, would play a much reduced role. In the same way, it seems probable that a true "post industrial" society would witness the waning of much of the "work-ethic" that is also intimately entwined with our industrial society.

Turning inward

It is, therefore, possible that a post-industrial society would also turn in the direction of many pre-industrial societies toward the exploration of inner states of experiences rather than the outer world of fact and material accomplishment. Tradition and ritual, the pillars of life in virtually non-industrial societies, would probably once again assert their ancient claims as the guide to and solace for life. The struggle for individual achievement, especially for material ends, is likely to give way to the acceptance of communally organized and ordained roles.

There are all necessarily prophetic speculations, rather than predictions to be "rigorously" examined. In these half-blind gropings there is however, one element in which we can place credence, although it offers uncertainty as well as hope. This is our knowledge that some human societies have existed for millennia, and that others can probably exist for future millennia, in a continuous rhythm of birth and coming of age and death, without pressing toward those dangerous ecological limits, or engendering those social tensions that threaten present day "advanced" societies. In our discovery of "primitive" cultures, we may have found the single most important object lesson for future man. □

Wisdom demands a new orientation of science and technology towards the organic, the gentle, the nonviolent, the elegant and beautiful.

E. F. Schumacher

TECHNOLOGICAL CRISIS AND BHARAT

By D. B. Thengadi*

THE so-called progressives in our country are very much carried away and impressed by the glamour of the western civilization. The scientific and technological advance of the West is certainly impressive. As a developing nation, it is our duty to study all the various aspects of their material advance and scrutinise them for the purpose of imitation, modification, adaptation or rejection.

But we cannot be oblivious of the fact that it is not possible to import or imitate foreign technology without imitating or importing simultaneously a part of the culture of the country or countries in which it was evolved. While accepting foreign techniques, methodology or technology, we will have to be careful to adapt them to our indigenous culture. Conscious efforts must be made to modify everything foreign so as to make it part and parcel of the native culture.

Homo-centricism of the West

Unlike Bharatiyas, the Westerners have come to cultivate the attitude of homo-centricism. Not merely that, while it goes to the credit of the West that it has produced a number of scientists and religious teachers who have risked their lives for the promotion of human welfare, it cannot be denied that an average Westerner has no time or mind to think of the welfare of distant posterity. He is incapable of long-range view of things. Whatever is immediately benefi-

cial to him or his generation is accepted and implemented by him without caring for its long-range effects on the future of mankind.

For example, he has been continuously abusing his natural environment. He is ravagingly exploiting natural resources. This has given the West an edge over the East. But it is also true that within less than a century and a half, we will have completely exhausted stocks of different fuels furnished by nature. Scientists today are leaning heavily upon the use of nuclear energy. But the world stock of uranium and thorium is not unlimited. How will this affect the welfare of future generation?

Mother Nature

The Hindus have always considered Nature as Mother. Even if they worship cow as mother and milk it, taking full precaution that sufficient quantity of milk should be left for the use of its calf and that it should not be bled to death in the process. They have also been particular to exploit natural resources for their own benefit, ensuring simultaneously that sufficient quantities would be left for the consumption of the posterity and that Mother Nature should not be wanted put to destruction. This deprived them of many immediate benefits, but the balance of Nature had been maintained.

Land, water and air are the free yet invaluable gifts of Nature. But the Wes-

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tern industrialisation has been tampering with all the three divine treasures.

Destruction of Land

The scientists have now come to realise that the reckless use of chemical pesticides has upset the balance of life in Nature, that the use of chemicals and other artificial substances has rendered the natural process of reproduction of oxygen and nitrogen, so essential for animal and plant life, defective and fitful, that excessive use of artificial fertilizers over a long period has denuded fertile lands of their capacity to produce any crop whatsoever, that excessive irrigation has resulted in salination of lands, and that progressive introduction of the process of deforestation, though immediately helpful, has in the long run, given rise to the problems of the advance of sandy deserts on a large scale.

Water pollution

Waters are also tampered with. Nearer home, the rivers and coastal waters of Japan are clogged to a dangerous extent with the industrial waste. The pure waters of Siberian region are polluted by the Soviet paper and other industries. The waters of the Rhine river are contaminated to such an extent that neither fish nor any other species of life can survive therein over the length of hundreds of miles. A six-inch thick layer of oily discharges from factories has spread over the Rhine's waters for not less than 200 miles from its mouth. In the United States, it is almost impossible to find a river or a lake which is not polluted by industrial waste or solid refuse, such as paper tin cans, cardboard wrappers, and other discarded items. The rivers of the

U.S. are daily carrying away at least 2,000 tonnes of solid refuse.

Industrialisation has created a colossal problem of industrial waste. Such as, discarded automobile bodies, millions of tonnes of scrap iron used and discarded glass bottles, tin-cans etc. Several methods, such as, incineration, conversion at the sources, recycling, etc. have not proved adequate to deal with the problem.

Air pollution

Air pollution constitutes a still more difficult and dangerous problem. In the air surrounding industrial centres more than 3,000 foreign chemicals have been identified, and the whole atmosphere is thick with such solid substances as lead-soot, ash, rubber-particles, asbestos, gases such as carbon monoxide and dioxide, sulphur dioxide and different varieties of nitrogen oxides—all of them detrimental to human health, causing asthma, bronchitis, lung cancer and emphysema.

Tonnes of such pollutants in the air of industrial centres affect adversely the plant and the animal life, and even corrode buildings, machinery and roads. The 'smog' i.e., smoke plus fog, is becoming a nightmare to the motorised West. Even Japan, which is so cautious in imitating the West, has not escaped these evil effects of industrialisation. In certain areas of Tokyo, people are forced to use gas masks for protection from air pollution.

Must we imitate?

In fact, Mr. Maurice Strong, who was assigned the task of organising the

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uch pollutants in the air centres affect adversely the animal life, and buildings, machinery and 'g', i.e., smoke plus fog, nightmare to the motor in Japan, which is so causing the West, has not vil effects of industrial areas of Tokyo, people use gas masks for pollution.

Maurice Strong, who task of organising the

UN Conference on Human Environment at Stockholm, had said that a tendency to link environment with the problems of the affluent countries only is wrong and that environment is equally a concern of the developing or rather the poor countries. It is a human problem affecting all the world, he observes.

Must we tread the same path, follow the same routine, of committing mistakes first and then trying to rectify them? In their indecent haste for speedy material advance, the Westerners totally ignored ecology, and now the wiser amongst them are repenting at leisure for this lapse. Must we, in the name of progressivism, become equally oblivious of the ecological factors? This question becomes all the more pertinent in view of the fact that the Hindus have their own distinct attitude towards the problem of milking Mother Nature.

This should serve as a warning against the indiscreet imitation of the West.

Measures

Even under the present stage of industrialisation, there should be enacted a law prescribing measures for control of the water and air pollution of different industrial cities and water pollution of major rivers, the extent of responsibility of every industrial establishment for such pollution, and the procedure to recover social costs of pollution from different industrial establishments.

Another subject deserving careful scrutiny in this context is that of appropriate technology.

Mass production techniques

The West has evolved and has a preference for the techniques of mass production. Communism as well as capitalism stand for these techniques. They give rise to capital-intensive, largescale industries. Maximum production with minimum number of working hands is the strategy of the West. Is it suited to Indian traditions, conditions and requirements?

True, our approach to this problem must be pragmatic. We cannot dismantle the large scale industries that are already set up. Even in future planning, the technique of mass production will have to be adopted wherever the logic of economics makes it inevitable. And mechanisation must be accorded the place it rightly deserves in the new scheme of things.

Why small-scale industries

But it must be simultaneously realised that the expansion of a largescale industry is not necessarily the only form of industrialisation; that it is 'Large' production, and not merely 'Largescale' production, which gives both—increasing and a progressive downward shift in the cost curves; that these techniques are incompatible with the expansion of employment opportunities, which is the supreme need of our national economy; that 'mechanisation' can assume variety of forms—some of them being drastically different from the current Western pattern; and that "a strong case for small industries has been made out by the fact that new technological developments like automatic machinery, synthetic alloys, die-casting, small-scale precision instru-

ments and the developments in power-distribution have reduced the technological disadvantages of a small-scale production".

Lopsided planning

Heavy plants imposed upon, but not integrated with the rest of the economy, production of capital goods not correlated with that of consumer goods, industrial sector running parallel to, but not coordinated with agricultural sector, processes of decapitalisation, disemployment, etc. initiated because of the lack of full and comprehensive consideration of the seven M's i.e. men, material, money, machinery, management, motive power and market; introduction of foreign technology which, under Indian conditions, aggravates the problems of unemployment and simultaneously, creates the problem of idle capacity, all these present a picture of the lopsided industrial planning, not suited to the optimum utilisation of available resources and fulfilment of national requirements.

Bharatiya technology

In future planning it is necessary to lay greater stress upon the evolution of characteristically Bharatiya technology which would facilitate decentralisation of the processes of production with the help of power converting home, instead of factory into centre of production. The new techniques should cause minimum possible decapitalisation of our means of production. Our artisans should not find it too difficult to switch over from the traditional to the new techniques. The available skill competent to manage small-scale industries should not

be rendered useless under the new system. Small investors should not be denied opportunities of investment.

The new technology should make us self-reliant and put an end to our dependence on foreign countries for machinery, spare parts, capital, technicians, etc. Wherever inevitable, largescale industries will have to be set up. But priority should be given to the decentralised processes of production that can bridge the gulf between the rural and the urban India, bring about greater coordination between agriculture and industry, and make the largescale and the small-scale industries mutually complementary.

Role of our Technologists

For this purpose, our technologists, must study thoroughly and assimilate industrial technology all over the world, locate and introduce such parts of foreign technology as are suited to Indian conditions and devise for the benefit of artisans, reasonably adaptable changes in the traditional techniques of production, without incurring the risk of increase in unemployment, wastage of the available managerial and technical skill, and complete decapitalisation of the existing means of production.

The main hurdle in this respect is the mental slavery of our leaders. We do not appreciate any technology which is not imported. That is why even the idea of an intermediate technology initiated by Dr. Schumacher was not received with the seriousness it deserved. The technology that should reconcile optimum utilisation of available capital and labour with the economic facts of capital scarcity and huge unemployment, the

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industrial investment by one hundred
times without increasing cost per unit of
output, that was what the British econo-
mist pleaded for.

Intermediate Technology

The intermediate technology, accord-
ing to him, should be capable of recon-
ciling growth in employment with indus-
trial efficiency. For this purpose, it was
necessary to conduct research in certain
aspects of the problem. For example, in
how many cases it would be feasible to
scale down the size of plants without
reducing their efficiency? How far it is
practicable, on the strength of such tech-
nology, to reduce the number of mig-
rants from villages to cities? Will it be
possible, on this basis, to locate new in-
dustries in small towns and villages, uti-
lising local capital, local labour, local
raw materials, local managerial skills,
and local entrepreneurial talent? Can
such industries become self-supporting
with the help of efficient marketing or-
ganisation, provision of appropriate infra-
structure and revival of the spirit of
Swadeshi? Is it practicable and advisa-
ble to have fresh spatial planning?

It is advisable to select, in the first
place a few specific industries, such as
leather, ceramics etc., for this purpose
and assess probable impact of interme-
diate technology upon their future. This
study can open new avenues, offer fresh
stimuli, and pave the way for the devel-
opment of characteristically indigenous
technology appropriate to particular
factor endowment of our economy,
though it is true that the quantum of
capital per employed worker cannot be
the same in all branches of production

and even within the same industry no
single technology in the sense of one single
capital-labour ration may rule profitably.
Different levels of technology may
rule side by side. But the emphasis must
be on the development and progressive
utilisation of Bharatiya technology, with
the object of securing an increase in em-
ployment at rising levels of incomes.

Base of urbanisation

The development of indigenous tech-
nology is important not only from the
economic point of view but the survival
and growth of our culture is also inte-
grally connected with this problem. It is
not as if any culture can thrive in
vacuum, with no reference to the existing
socio-economic structure which, in its
turn, is largely conditioned by the tech-
niques of production. Foreign techno-
logy can never come alone; it comes
along with culture patterns of the coun-
try of its origin. We have experienced
this in case of the techniques of mass
production imported from the West.

These techniques have resulted in the
concentration of capital and labour force
in the urban areas, disturbing thereby
the traditional joint-family system and
autonomous village life. The rapid urba-
nisation has created problems which are
cultural as well as social and economic
in character.

Preservation and promotion of Bha-
ratiya cultural values could be possible
in the past because of the preservation
and promotion of family atmosphere on
three different levels of hereditary family,
industrial or occupational family and
regional family.

Once the process of urbanisation is
set afoot, hereditary families in rural

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areas are disrupted and organisation of healthy family unit in the industrial areas becomes extremely difficult. Consequently, the samskaras that could be imparted in normal course through family life are no longer being transmitted from generation to generation in the new industrial environment. The old system is discontinued and no new system has yet been evolved which could fulfil the same purpose. Traditional, occupational or industrial families have already lost the essence of their existence.

Traditional Industrial Families

There is no industrial or occupational family today either in the rural or the urban areas. But it is, nevertheless, true that the survival of our culture depended to a very great extent upon the socio-economic structure of which occupational or industrial families constituted an integral part. Here again, we are confronted with the situation of 'unborn tomorrow and dead yesterday.' Our regional units constituted regional families comprising all hereditary families within the same area. All the three organisms enjoyed autonomy at their respective levels. The hereditary joint family was completely free to determine the rules and regulations for its internal administration. Every industrial family

consisted of all the individuals connected with production, distribution or exchange of any commodity or service. For the purpose of internal management, the industrial family had complete autonomy. The family life on village or pargana level was also autonomous.

To be sure, all these three organisms had their own discipline not contradictory with one another within the framework of national discipline. Every organism enjoyed full autonomy regarding its own internal administration but was subservient to the discipline of higher organism in matters within the jurisdiction of the latter. These three units constituted the basis of Bharatiya socio-economic structure. The mass production technology, as our experience so far shows, is not all conducive to the survival of all the three.

Needed : New Techniques

It is, therefore, imperative that, in the first place, new techniques of production should be devised which would help maintaining these social organisms intact and secondly, new measures should be devised to revitalise these organisms in the industrial areas which have adopted the mass production techniques.

□

You cannot build nonviolence on a factory civilization,
but it can be built on self-contained villages.

Mahatma Gandhi
