

# Manthan

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF DEENDAYAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, NEW DELHI  
Vol. VI No. 1 April, 1985

निर्गन्धध्वसतमिश्रितः (श्रीमद्भागवत 8-6-23)

Churn on diligently

**Chairman**  
Nanaji Deshmukh

**Editor**  
K.R. Malkani

**Publisher**  
K. Sagar Sharma

Deendayal Research Institute  
7-E, Swami Ramtirth Nagar  
Rani Jhansi Road,  
NEW DELHI-110055  
Phones : 526735, 526792

## Subscription

Single Copy Rs. 8.00

Annual  
For India, Pakistan,  
Shri Lanka, Bangladesh  
& Burma Rs. 30.00

For Asia, Africa & Europe  
By Air Mail £ 9.00

For USA, Canada & Latin  
America  
By Air Mail \$15.00

*Workshop  
On  
Strengthening  
The Movement  
For  
Constructive  
Work In India*

*With Best Compliments  
from*



**K. K. RAJDA & CO.**

902, ANSAL BHAVAN,  
16, K. G. MARG,  
NEW DELHI - 110 001.

Tel No. 3314134

3314542

DISTRIBUTORS  
OF

**EXCEL INDUSTRIES LTD. BOMBAY**

CHEMICALS — AGRO, CHEMICALS

## CONTENTS

1. The Wave of the Future	—Editorial	5
2. Strengthening the Movement for Constructive Work in India and implications for Voluntary action and public policy and planning	—Tarlok Singh	9
3. Wanted : The Inner Growth of Spiritual Development of Constructive Workers	—Sushila Nayar	21
4. Enterprise of Innovation in Rural Development	—Kishore Sant	27
5. Involvement of Business Houses in Rural Development	—Joseph Thachil	33
6. Role of Voluntary Agencies in Constructive Work in Rural Areas	—A. N. Seth	35
7. The role of Voluntary Agencies in the implementation of anti-Poverty and minimum-needs Programme	—Bunker Roy	41
8. The challenging Task: A Note	—Nana Deshmukh	63
9. Workshop on strengthening the movement for Constructive work in India	(Summary Record)	65
10. Conclusions & Suggestions		85
11. Workshop Participants Meet the Planning Commission		93
12. Letters		97

*Deendayal Research Institute*

*invites you to become a*

*Life Member of D. R. I.*

*on payment of Rs 1000/-only.*

## Deendayal Research Institute Offers You Its Choicest English Publications :

1. **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya : A profile**  
(by Shri Guruji, Nanaji and others) Rs. 40
2. **Destination :** (being impressions of Deendayalji  
by JP, Morarjibhai, Balasaheb and others) Rs. 20
3. **Gandhi, Lohia & Deendayal : A Comparison** Rs. 20
4. **'Manthan Special' on Rural Reconstruction** Rs. 20

Friends ordering copies of ALL THE FOUR BOOKS can have them for a total price of... Rs. 50

All Prices are inclusive of postage charges. Order your copies today with payment by Draft or Money Order :

Deendayal Research Institute 7-E, Swami Ramtirth Nagar,  
Rani Jhansi Road, NEW DELHI-110055

### FORM IV

(See Rule 8)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Place of Publication   | New Delhi   |
| 2. Periodicity of its publication   | Quarterly   |
| 3. Printer's Name   | Krishnanand Sagar Sharma  |
| 4. (Whether citizen of India ?)<br>if foreigner, state the country of origin)<br>Address  | Yes<br><br>Deendayal Research Institute<br>7 E, Jhandewalan Extension,<br>New Delhi-110055.                             |
| 5. Publisher's Name<br>(Whether citizen of India ?)<br>(If foreigner, state the country of origin)<br>Address   | Krishnanand Sagar Sharma<br>Yes<br><br>Deendayal Research Institute<br>7 E, Jhandewalan Extension,<br>New Delhi-110055. |
| 6. Editor's Name<br>(Whether citizen of India)<br>(If foreigner, state the country of origin)<br>Address  | K. R. Malkani<br>Yes<br><br>Deendayal Research Institute,<br>7 E, Jhandewalan Extension,<br>New Delhi-110055.           |
| 7. Names and addresses of individuals<br>who own the newspaper and partners<br>shares holders holding more than one<br>per cent of the total capital. | Charitable Trust<br>Sh. Nanaji Deshmukh<br>Chairman   |

I, Krishnanand Sagar Sharma, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated : 23-4-85

(s/d)

Signature of Publisher

### EDITORIAL

## The wave of the Future

ON MARCH 1-2-3, representatives of several major voluntary organisations met in the Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi, to exchange notes and consider ways and means of strengthening the movement for constructive work in India.

At the end of their 3-day deliberations, they adopted a statement which noted that voluntary organisations had done much, but that very much more needed to be done; that the problems of the rural poor were increasing rather than decreasing; that voluntary organisations and governmental agencies could share their personnel training facilities; that government needed to solve the funding problems of voluntary organisations without compromising their independence, even while the latter made their special contribution in the sphere of orientation and motivation; and that voluntary organisations could share their experience and ideas on a continuing basis, by forming a National Forum for Cooperation in Constructive Work. To this end, all the participants constituted themselves into a Follow-up Group.

In the pages that follow, we carry the papers received for discussion, the Proceedings, the Conclusions and even the Letters received subsequently, making valuable suggestions. All these will be read with interest. We hope that the proposed Forum will materialise before long—and so make it possible for member organisations, to consult and cooperate among themselves and with various official agencies, in the common service of the rural poor.

FOR MORE THAN a century now, the pull of modern industry and commerce has increasingly impoverished the country-side and affected the quality of rural life. Thinking persons all over the world have woken up to the dangers of this situation. Fortunately the new technology—highlighted by the 'Third Wave'—and the new Thought—represented by 'Small is Beautiful'—have rendered the revival of rural communities at once eminently feasible and highly desirable, verily the wave of the future. The time is, therefore, ripe for a good long penetrating look at the task of rural development. It is a task that only the joint efforts of Government and Voluntary Agencies, and the active participation of the people themselves, can bring to fruition.

The problems so far have been many : government has been trying to do everything by itself. It assigns a very limited—and that, too, subversive, role to voluntary agencies—and those too only of its own political hue. On the other side, there have not been quite enough voluntary organisations and voluntary workers willing and able to serve the rural poor. And all the time they have had training and funding problems. All this has to change, if there is to be a transformation of the rural scene.

**LET'S TAKE** the funding problem first, Voluntary organisations have to depend on church funds or foreign funds or government funds—unless they can collect donations locally, which is not very easy. The country needs to think this problem through. Since Church-financed organisations are basically extensions of Church activity, whose core is proselytisation, they are not voluntary organisations in the true sense of the word. And of course the best thing would be to ban foreign donations: for one thing, the purse-strings would be in dubious foreign hands; and, for another, how can a voluntary organisation inspire people to self-dependence, when it itself is dependent on foreign funds for its own existence?

Simultaneously, arrangements must be made for proper funding of voluntary organisations on a regular, steady basis. Firstly, all *bonafide* donations to *bonafide* voluntary organisations by any Indian individual or company, must be fully tax-free. Secondly, government funds must be made available for government-approved projects of *bonafide* voluntary organisations—with audit checks, but with no harassing delays or inquiries. And any voluntary organisation which is registered, submits its audited accounts every year, and is open for inspection to its peers, should be accepted as a *bonafide* organisation. Indeed all these matters should be entrusted to an independent Council of Voluntary Organisations.

A question that would arise here is whether political workers should be allowed to associate with voluntary organisations receiving government funding. In this respect we can follow the lead given by Gandhiji, who viewed political work and constructive work as two sides of the same coin. We think political workers should be free to participate in constructive work, subject to the rules and norms applicable to all other voluntary workers.

**HOWEVER, MONEY** is not all. Training and motivation of all those engaged in rural uplift is, if anything, even more important. And the existing facilities, both official and non-official, don't add up to much. We think we have to give the whole thing a new and unconventional look. Today our Agriculture Graduates don't help agriculture; they adorn the chairs in the agriculture departments. Why not convert our Agriculture

Colleges into Rural Development Colleges—teaching not only agriculture and animal husbandry, but also studying the problems of rural industry and Irrigation, Land Laws and Anti-Poverty Programmes, Health and Education, Energy and Environment? Each such Rural Development College/University could also be assigned the task of fully developing the surrounding area.

Indeed Government—State or Central—could have a separate Rural Development Service. It is strange that we should have any number of Services—ranging from IAS, IFS and IPS, to Forest Service, Statistical Service and Information Service—but no Service Cadre for Rural Development, which alone can be the base for National Development.

Nor need this Rural Development education and orientation be confined to books; it will need to be infused with the humanist and holistic spirit of Vivekananda and Gandhi, Jaya Prakash and Deendayal. Let all those working for rural development—whether as officials or as non-officials—be products of such temples of Rural Development, and happy new winds of great change will begin to blow throughout the country.

Let the country consider these and any other suggestions, and evolve an integrated strategy for a healthy transformation of the rural scene. We cannot afford to wait. Not for long, in any case.

## A Satanic Civilization

**MODERN CIVILIZATION** is a civilization only in name. 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-mad. 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.

Gandhiji in 'Hind Swaraj' 1908



## List of Participants

1. DR. S. DASGUPTA, Vice-President, Seva Bharati, Kapargari, West Bengal & Director, People's Institute of Development & Training, C-74, Malaviya Nagar, New Delhi-17
2. MISS NIRMALA DESHPANDE, President, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Kingsway, Delhi-110009,
3. SHRI S.K. DEY, former Union Minister, 5, Mahatma Gandhi Road, New Delhi-24
4. SMT. DALJIT JAJEE, Director, Rural Development, Planning Commission, New Delhi.
5. SHRI D.N. KAPOOR, Deputy Director-General, National Institute of Rural Development, Rajendra Nagar, Hyderabad-500 030.
6. DR. K.K. MUKHERJEE, Director, Gram Niyojan Kendra, R-10/118 New Raj Nagar, Ghaziabad-201 002.
7. DR. SUSHILA NAYAR, President, Kasturba Health Society, N-1, Tara Apartment, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019,
8. SHRI R.K. PATIL, President, Acharya Kul, Civil Lines, Nagpur.
9. PROF. S.V. PATWARDHAN, Centre for Appropriate Technology and Rural Development, IIT, New Delhi.
10. SHRI BUNKER ROY Director, Social Work & Research Centre, Tilonia 305816, Madanganj, Dist. Ajmer.
11. SHRI KISHORE SANT, Executive Director, Ashoka Foundation, 11-A, Fatchpura, Udaipur-21 3001.
12. SHRI S. G. SANON, Specialist, National Institute of Public Cooperation & Child Development, New Delhi-110016.
13. SHRI TARLOK SINGH, former member, Planning Commission, 110, Sunder Nagar, New Delhi.
14. SHRI A.N. SETH, Director, Centre for Agrarian Research, Training and Education, KA-59, Kavi Nagar, Ghaziabad-201 002.
15. SHRI JOSEPH THACHIL, Assistant Secretary, FICCI, Federation House, Tansen Marg, New Delhi.
16. SHRI BRIJ MOHAN, Industrial Development Bank of India, Bombay.
17. NANA DESHMUKH, Chairman, Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi.
18. K. R. MALKANI, Vice-Chairman, DRI.
19. YADAV RAO DESHMUKH Director, DRI (91/16 Yadunath Sanyal Marg, Lucknow).
20. K. D. JOSHI, Secretary-General, DRI, 15, Anandbagh Housing Society, Pune-30.
21. Dr. R. L. PATNI, Director, (Administration) DRI.
22. Dr. K. V. SRIDHARAN, Director, Programmes, DRI.

## Strengthening the movement for constructive work in India and implications for voluntary action and public policy and planning

By : Shri Tarlok Singh

Former Member, Planning Commission.

THE ROLE of voluntary organisations in securing the participation of the people in development, in meeting the needs of the weaker sections of the population, specially in rural areas, and in developing and experimenting with new approaches and solutions to long standing problems, has been stressed since the First Five Year Plan. From time to time, some effort has been made by the Central and State Governments to provide material support and opportunities for voluntary organisations. Through People's Action for Development in India (PADI), resources received mainly from foreign sources have been made available to a number of voluntary organisations. On a few occasions, voluntary organisations have come together to consider their problems, specially in relation to Government policies. However, on the whole, each voluntary organisation has developed its activities on its own, depending on the means and leadership available to it, and has worked more or less in isolation from other voluntary agencies.

By its very nature, development within a framework of freedom and pluralist democracy, based on a system of non-political public cadres committed to the interest of the community as a whole, provides extensive scope for voluntary effort. It has long been realised that under conditions prevailing in India, there are unique opportunities for creative partnership between agencies set up by the Government (including Centre, States and local rural and urban authorities) and voluntary agencies, co-operatives and other organisations seeking to subserve the social interest. For a variety of reasons, these opportunities have been drawn upon so far only to a meagre extent. Despite much expressed interest on the part of the Central and State Governments and in Plan documents, voluntary effort has yet to become a fully accepted and supported and integral part of public, social and developmental activities undertaken within the framework of national development and planning at various levels.

### Scale of Voluntary Effort

The number of voluntary organisations, large and small, which exist in India runs into several thousands. As an example, the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi in its publication '*Constructive Institutions of India*, (1977)' listed as many as 1845 organisations. The *Directory of Voluntary Action* published in 1979 by the Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD) listed 935 organisations. The Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, in its mimeographed seven-volume *Directory of Voluntary and Other Organisations in Rural Development* published between 1979 and 1983 provided fairly detailed information for 511 organisations, the vast majority of them being located in West Bengal and the neighbouring states. The *All-India Directory of Voluntary Organisations in Rural Development* published in 1979 by PADI listed 586 organisations. Shorter lists and profiles of voluntary organisations have been compiled at different times by the Gandhi Peace Foundation and other organisations interested in promoting voluntary action and constructive work. A number of case studies of selected voluntary organisations and of rural development efforts, including those supported by progressive industrial houses, are also available.

It would be fair to say that, while the efforts of many voluntary institutions are modest in scope and may often be of quite limited local interest, in fact we do not have at present anything like an adequate measure of the magnitude of the existing voluntary effort in development and the extent to which voluntary agencies are effectively serving the needs of the people. It would also be fair to say that the present scale of voluntary effort in India represents only a small fraction of the total potential that exists and can be realised, if all concerned work together towards this objective. It is certainly not yet possible to speak of voluntary organisations as they are at present functioning as a nation-wide movement for constructive work. However, given (i) a clear perspective for the future on the part of the higher leadership of existing voluntary organisations, (ii) a measure of support and co-operation from the Central and State Governments and from public authorities generally, and (iii) in terms of national planning, an integrated understanding of the contribution to national development and well-being that can be obtained from voluntary effort, the steady development of a broad-based national movement for constructive work is a completely feasible idea.

### Gandhiji's Constructive Programme

This view of the future perspective for voluntary action is a logical sequence to the ideas set out by Gandhiji in his brochure *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place* (first edition 1941; revised edition 1945). In this famous document, Gandhiji summarised his life-long

## *Gandhiji's Constructive Programme included eighteen different areas of work*

thinking on constructive work. He related various forms of constructive work, including Khadi, to the total well-being of the community, to building up "a new India in which pauperism, starvation or idleness, will be unknown" and to the goal of "Swaraj based on Non-violence". Through precept and action, Gandhiji greatly enlarged the scope and significance of such constructive work as had been initiated in different parts of India by eminent social pioneers and leaders who had preceded him.

In his statement on the Constructive Programme, Gandhiji set out as many as eighteen different areas of work\*. During the freedom struggle, the authority and resources of the State, such as it was, stood apart from the stream of national life. Work in the village for relieving poverty and improving living conditions had to be done in spite of and, often, in opposition to, and suspicion from, the authorities. After freedom, there was no great divergence between social and economic objectives set out in the Five Year Plan and those which, according to their interests and capacities, constructive workers in the Gandhian tradition were able to pursue. Therefore, while the areas of constructive work indicated by Gandhiji continue to be as important as ever, in the light of economic, social and institutional developments which have since taken place, more than the specific details, attention should now be given to the principles, the insights and the fundamental goals which lay behind Gandhiji's constructive programme. In addition, it is necessary to relate the basic objectives set out by him to present conditions and needs, the social, economic and political institutions which have come into existence, and the programmes and policies which are embodied in national and state plans. In particular, the various anti-poverty programmes which have been instituted, and commitments relating to employment for all, education for all, health care for all, provision of minimum needs and modernisation of the national economy, provide a wide range of new opportunities to voluntary workers and voluntary organisations. Side by side with the many unsolved problems of the country, they also place new obligations and present new challenges to them. It is also necessary

\*The eighteen areas of work specified by Gandhiji were: Communal unity; Removal of untouchability; Prohibition; Khadi; Other village industries; Village sanitation; New or basic education; Adult education; Women (and their development as equal partners); Education in health and hygiene; Provincial (regional) languages; National language; Economic equality; Kisans and their organisation; Labour (and trade union development); Adivasis; Lepers; Students (and the system of education).

to stress that though invariably inspired by Gandhiji, a great variety of individuals and organizations outside the Gandhian tradition are now engaged in rural as well as urban areas. Equally with Gandhian workers and organizations, they form part of the present and the future movement for constructive work in India. Many of these workers and organisations have in fact taken up new and innovative activities, including technical, scientific and educational work, and thus enlarged the dimensions of constructive service in rural areas.

Several participants in the present Workshop will recall that during 1977, at the instance of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and its President, the late Shri Shriman Narayan, a considerable effort was made to give a new direction to constructive work in India. Constructive workers associated with Gandhian institutions reviewed the progress and problems of constructive work at a series of regional conferences. Finally, they met in an All-India Constructive Workers' Conference in New Delhi on 17-19 July 1977. There had been an expectation at the time of major policy initiatives in support of voluntary action. Following the Conference, a National Seminar on Constructive Work, in which a number of leading social workers participated, considered suggestions for intensifying the constructive work movement in the country. The Seminar also considered the suggestion that there should be arrangements for continuing study of constructive work with a view to assisting constructive organizations in reviewing and evaluating their activities, undertaking innovative experiments, achieving greater coordination in their work, improving the skills of constructive workers, and proposing more effective methods in field activities.

On account of the sudden demise in the beginning of 1973 of Shri Shriman Narayan, the recommendations of the Seminar could not be pursued further and the effort begun in earlier months remained incomplete.

#### Post-1977: An Expanded Policy Framework

Since 1977, there have been a number of highly significant developments which together provide a new and expanded framework of policy and objectives for constructive organizations as well as for public policy and planning at the national, state and local levels. The Planning Commission's Approach Paper on the Seventh Plan has placed decentralization of planning and full public participation high in the list of important features of the new Plan. Problems of district planning and decentralisation to the district and block levels have been studied by a Working Group headed by a Member of the Planning Commission. The Commission has stressed that voluntary organizations must be associated more closely and actively than hitherto in programmes for reducing rural poverty and meeting the minimum needs. The principal features of the wider policy framework and the challenges and opportunities which go with it are:

## *Banks and financial institutions can also help in rural development*

(i) Anti-poverty programmes, including programmes for expanding employment for meeting basic needs and for securing the well-being of weak and vulnerable groups, and the new 20-point programme, are now at the centre of the nation-wide effort in rural areas.

(ii) There exist at present a series of national commitments for which resources can be expected to flow on a steadily increasing scale. These include, for instance, provision of universal elementary education, including eradication of illiteracy among women; health care for all; work for all; reduction of regional disparities and accelerated development of backward areas, development of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes and other backward classes; intensive development of agriculture in low-rainfall areas and in the eastern states; development of flood-affected and drought-prone regions, rural industrialisation, development of services for women and children, etc.

(iii) The growth of the national economy and, in particular, its scientific, technological and industrial development, have created new possibilities of eliminating poverty and want and enabling those engaged in unorganised activities to benefit more directly from developments in the organised sector, including both the public and the private corporate sector.

(iv) The entire network of banks and financial institutions and their resources now form a vital part of the developmental system and of the potential for rural growth. In the implementation of rural development programmes, including alleviation of poverty, direct budgetary resources and credit flows are closely linked together. This is a new development of great significance in rural planning, which also holds inherent risk of large-scale misuse and corruption. Therefore, better management and greater popular vigilance and participation have become altogether essential.

(v) Developmental activities which are under way have now attained very large dimensions and will doubtless go on expanding continuously in scope and intensity. In these circumstances, by themselves the public services at the disposal of various authorities will be totally unable to deliver the goods. They can reach at best directly only a fraction of the people. Therefore, various forms of social institutions, people's organisations and groups, co-operatives, and voluntary agencies have become indispensable if the rural developmental system as a whole is to function with a high degree of honesty, efficiency and equity.

(vi) Within the scheme of development, the technical and administrative services of various agencies of Government, Panchayati Raj and civic institutions, co-operatives, and voluntary organisations working at the grassroots, have to be viewed and developed systematically as integral and complementary parts of a total system. Each of them has to be equipped to make its own distinctive contribution in partnership with the others. Alone, none of them can meet the needs of the people or harness their constructive potential for development on the basis of self-reliance and mobilization of local resources and manpower. A notable feature of all the programmes initiated in recent years for alleviating poverty and generating wider employment opportunities has been a growing measure of bureaucratization and hierarchical administration, increasing dependence on official machinery, and diminution in effective popular participation. Powerful as these trends have been, they need to be reversed urgently.

(vii) Along with the intensification and modernisation of agriculture, better land and water management, and greater attention to social forestry, the opening up of backward regions, expansion in rural electrification networks, and emphasis on rural industrialization, have made it technically possible to achieve more rapid progress in diversifying the occupational structure of rural regions, raising the levels of productivity of land as well as labour, and developing rural literate youth and women's work as vast reservoirs of human resource potentials for transforming the countryside.

(viii) In several parts of India, there is considerable evidence of growing tensions in the rural areas as between different groups within the social system divided in terms of caste and class. Being accompanied frequently by violence and brutality, these tensions cannot be met otherwise than through rapid and comprehensive development which secures at the same time the welfare of all (Sarvodaya) and the welfare of the least (Antyodaya), as indeed Gandhiji had himself envisaged.

#### Trained Personnel for Constructive Work

In view of the policy framework described above, constructive workers and organisations are now under obligation to equip themselves with scientific, technical and administrative skills related both to current national objectives, policies and programmes and to methods of extension, field work with groups and individuals, and mobilization of human resources and capacities at the level of the people. Social leadership in various forms will continue to be needed in even greater degree than before, but it will increasingly require support and underpinning by persons with the necessary technical training and skills in specific areas of development, such as integrated area development and planning, agriculture, land

## *The paramount importance of training facilities for rural workers*

and water management, social forestry, rural industry, health, education, work for women and children, environmental planning, and application of science and technology to everyday needs.

To a limited extent, constructive organisations can draw upon experienced persons who, having retired from positions of responsibility, are keen to devote their leisure to social work. However, intensive rural work under difficult conditions requires a continuous supply of young trained workers, both men and women, drawn mainly from within each rural region. Therefore, potential workers have to be picked out carefully, trained systematically, and given fair remuneration and acceptable employment opportunities. As their capabilities develop, they will invariably form good material for recruitment to public cadres or to larger voluntary organizations which can offer career opportunities. For this reason, even if their tenures with individual constructive organisations might be limited to periods of, say, three to five years, training programmes for volunteer workers have to be conceived on a continuing basis.

Within the existing system, for the greater part, facilities for training extension workers already exist. Thus, for agricultural personnel, there are programmes with agricultural universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras. The cooperative movement has extensive programmes of training for official and non-official workers. In fact, in all fields—rural development, adult education, health and family welfare, services for mothers and children, rural industry, etc.—the Central and State Governments and other public authorities already have sizeable training infrastructures. These can be utilised more effectively and, where necessary, they can be readily expanded, to meet larger demands or more specific requirements for the training of workers deputed by voluntary organizations. Expansion or adaptation of available training facilities to serve the requirements of voluntary organisations for better trained volunteer workers calls for joint planning initially at the Centre but, in greater detail and depth within each State, between the concerned Government agencies and competent representatives acting on behalf of voluntary organisations.

As mentioned earlier, the number of voluntary organisations which exist in India is very large. It is true that a great many among them can barely subsist or carry on some limited activity. However, with the knowledge available, it is possible to pick upon a fairly substantial number of voluntary organisations which have demonstrated high levels of leadership and performance for periods extending over several years and have a firm



institutional base of their own. The present Workshop has brought together a number of leading voluntary organisations. Along with a few others, which they could invite to make the group more broadly representative, these organizations could well begin functioning as a *Preparatory Committee for the Development of Constructive Work*. Following the Workshop, this Committee could consider the principal policy issues which are at present germane to the development of constructive work as a national movement. Two issues of prime importance from this angle are (a) *training of personnel*, and (b) *institution of facilities for continuing study and exchange of constructive work experience and innovations*. Beyond these two issues, as suggested later, the Preparatory Committee would constitute a few Study Groups to consider the development of constructive work in some major areas in depth and to engage in preliminary exchange of views with the concerned Central Ministries and the Planning Commission. These discussions would provide the framework for further consultations between State Governments and State-level Preparatory Committees drawn from among major constructive organisations operating in individual State conveners proposed by the Preparatory Committee at the national level.

While a group of constructive organisations may come together initially as a Preparatory Committee to study the problems and needs of the constructive work movement as a whole, it is obvious that any proposals which they formulate should be conceived broadly as a system of services and facilities open to every voluntary organisation in the country, according to its needs and areas of interest. In a real sense, all voluntary organisations must be reckoned in theory and practice as equal and autonomous.

It is probable that, with careful joint planning between the appropriate Government agencies and representatives of voluntary organisations, resources for training (including stipends) would become available from provisions made in the relevant sectors of the Five Year Plan at the national and State levels. In part these could take the form of financial allocations for agencies providing the training, and in part in the form of grants to eligible voluntary organisations proposing personnel for training with a view to subsequent employment.

#### Continuing Study of Constructive Work

Considerable thought was given during the discussions in 1977 referred to earlier, to the question of creating a facility for continuing study of constructive work.

In consultation with the late Shri J.P. Naik, who was then Member-Secretary of the Indian Council of Social Science Research, and was a person deeply committed to the expansion and development of genuine

## Needed : a Centre for the Study and Development of Constructive Work

constructive work, a proposal was drawn up in September 1977 for interested constructive organisations to come together and set up a *Centre for the Study and Development of Constructive Work*.

For reasons mentioned earlier, the proposal could not be carried further. It should now be examined afresh. In doing so, at this time, attention should be given to the fact that over the years many competent research and training institutions in the country have come to be involved in the study of rural development and voluntary organisations and even in training and experimentation. They include Departments of Rural Studies in several Universities and in Institutes of Technology, Schools of Social Work, Institutes of Management, Institutes of Public Administration, Rural Institutes etc. Therefore, there is a case now for considering one specially interested Centre (in a University or a research institute) for carrying out the first six functions listed in the extract in relation to the State in which it is situated or for a group of small neighbouring States or Union Territories. This might be the speediest way to move forward and gain time and also derive the maximum benefit from resources which are already available.

In this connection, it may be recalled that the Planning Commission's Expert Group on programmes for Alleviation of Poverty (1982), which had Professor M. S. Swaminathan as Chairman, had envisaged the National Institute of Rural Development as a kind of apex body in relation to voluntary organisations and rural innovations. The recommendation was made in the following terms :

"We recommend that the National Institute of Rural Development should be assisted in assuming a significant advisory and evaluative role in the systematic study of innovative activities being currently undertaken by voluntary organisations and field agencies generally and in proposing new areas for experimental and innovative action. In this aspect, the NIRD and PADI should work closely together".

The proposal of the Expert Group could usefully complement the earlier suggestion about a number of existing and well-established institutions serving as centres for the continuing study of a constructive work and exchange of experience in relation to States or regions. The two proposals together could go far to fulfil an essential need and would certainly strengthen the movement for constructive work.

#### National and State Planning

We have considered so far the initiatives required of voluntary organisations engaged in constructive work, specially of those who serve

as a Preparatory Committee on behalf of the movement as a whole. If constructive organisations have a collective goal before them and set out with determination to achieve it, there is reason to believe that the Central and State Governments will readily see a national gain in such an initiative and will respond positively. This, however, is only the first step. In turn, these Governments and the Planning Commission and Planning Boards and Departments in the States, have also to consider ways in which the National and State Plans will provide "space" and "resources" to enable constructive organisations which already exist and those which may come into existence in the future to make a significant and growing contribution to national development. (Similar propositions would be valid in relation to urban development for constructive organisations operating in urban areas.)

The passage from the Report of the Planning Commission's Expert Group on Programmes for alleviation of poverty contained the following recommendations :

1. In each : of development there are activities of which some aspects or components can be assigned with advantage for implementation through competent voluntary agencies which are already at work or whose formation and development can be encouraged. In designing each programme, therefore, the Planning Commission and the concerned Central Ministries and Departments in the States should make a special effort to mark out those components and areas of action which can be 'passed on' with the necessary administrative and technical guidance and financial support, for implementation mainly by appropriate voluntary organisations.
2. The programmes bearing on agricultural and rural development which are currently under operation under the Sixth Plan should be looked at afresh from this angle by a working group comprising representatives of the Planning Commission, Ministry of Rural Reconstruction, Ministry of Agriculture and, where necessary, other Ministries that may be concerned.

Although these recommendations were made three years ago, the action called for was not initiated. The omission can, and should, now be made good in the context of the Seventh Plan. All areas of development in which voluntary organisations can make a useful contribution at the grass-roots, should be covered. The proposed Preparatory Committee could meet the Planning Commission and discuss the general guidelines along which individual Central Ministries and Working Groups constituted for the Seventh Plan could proceed to examine different sectors in detail. Rural development and urban development in all their aspects would come within the purview of the broad proposition advanced above.

On its part, the Preparatory Committee need not merely wait for initiatives on behalf of the Government and the Planning Commission. It could invite individual members with the necessary background and experience of field work to study and make considered suggestions in

## *The pathetic dependence of many organisations on foreign funds*

relation to different sectors e.g. Agriculture, Rural Development, Co-operation, Rural Industry, Rural Housing, Urban Housing and Development and Slum Improvement and Slum Clearance, Education, Health, Social Welfare, Welfare of Scheduled Tribes and Castes and other Backward classes, Development of different categories of Backward Regions, etc. These suggestions should be considered together within a few weeks by the Preparatory Committee. They could be circulated to competent constructive organisations and their further views and suggestions obtained. The specific proposals which are formulated through this process of consultation, could then be forwarded a basis for further exchange and discussion with the planning Commission and the Central Ministries as well as State Governments. Within a few months and as a part of the Seventh Plan itself, a well-defined policy and programme framework favourable to the growth of the movement for constructive work and in the best national interest could be thus expected to emerge. The preparation of informed public opinion should be an important part of this scheme of work.

### Resources

Resources for the support of voluntary action are embedded in the national and state plans. However, because of the procedures followed and undue reliance on official and hierarchical channels of administration at all stages, the pipelines remain clogged and the resources do not flow or scarcely flow from where they exist to where they are needed and can be used with advantage. The pathetic dependence of a large number of successful voluntary organisations in India on foreign funds, howsoever channelled, is a direct consequence of this situation. The weakness lies at the level of higher policy and administration both at the Centre and in the States. This is a weakness that can be easily removed to a large extent before the Seventh Plan in its final version sees the light of the day.

The Expert Group of the Planning Commission referred to the role of PADI in channelling funds to voluntary organisations and to the need for rupee funds contributed by the Central and State Governments as well as by corporate organisations. According to available information, PADI has so far helped implement 905 projects with total assistance amounting to Rs. 9.84 crores. It is currently helping to implement 121 projects with assistance amounting to Rs. 15.67 crores. These funds were drawn from foreign sources. For the first time in 1984-85, a small sum of Rs. 40 lakhs was made available to PADI under a Plan scheme entitled 'Promotion of Voluntary Schemes and Social Action Programme'. Two brief observations are called for in this place. First, the current financial approach is far from

adequate in concept. Secondly, a project approach has serious limitations. More and more voluntary organisations should be enabled to work in their fields of competence at the area level as partners with other agencies like Panchayati Raj institutions, co-operatives, universities and academic institutions.

### Public Policy and Planning

The anti poverty and other programmes now under way have come to be planned and implemented as if they were mainly Central programmes being executed by the States and their district agencies. The entire outlook and method are of centralization and conformity rather than of decentralisation and innovation. This is a very serious limitation and constitutes a wholly inappropriate approach to the task of eradicating rural poverty. Next only to marking out areas suited to voluntary action within each sector of development, by far the most important contribution now required of the Central Government is a radical departure from the approach of the centralisation which has already become a serious limitation in the effective execution of major rural programmes. These programmes are indeed national in scope, but their planning and implementation should be from the ground upwards rather than from top to bottom, as under the existing system. Conditions have to be created for greater innovation in the States and at the district, block and village level and for harnessing effectively the resources of local communities and local areas. This is a task in which voluntary organizations, specially those rooted in the soil, and local constructive leadership, are in a position to render valuable service. Public policy and planning should be consciously designed to enable them to fulfil this role.

(110, Sunder Nagar, New Delhi-110003)

### "Daridra Devo Bhava!"

*THE GREAT national sin is the neglect of the masses. That is one of the causes of our downfall. Just as we have been repeating all these years, 'matru devo bhava, pitru devo bhava, atithi devo bhava,' so should we hereafter declare—'daridra devo bhava' and 'ajñani devo bhava' and devote ourselves to the task of removing their poverty and ignorance.*

—Swami Vivekananda

## WANTED : The Inner Growth & Spiritual Development of Constructive Workers

By : Dr. Sushila Nayar

President, Kasturba Health Society

(a) *Constructive work movement : its nature, limitations, need, direction and possibilities.*

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK movement is essentially connected with Gandhiji, although Swami Vivekananda was also deeply moved when he saw India's poverty and took up and encouraged social service. Gandhiji went all over India to see the conditions prevailing in India before he took to active politics. He realised that something had to be done to help the people to overcome hunger, even though no help could be expected from the government of the day. He expected people to make sacrifices in the independence struggle of India. Before he could ask them to go to jail, he felt he should help them to earn a little more and alleviate their grinding poverty. He presented the nation his famous 4-point programme to start with, which he called the Four Pillars of Swaraj. These were :

1. **KHADI**—The peasantry had no work for several months a year. They grew cotton. Gandhiji felt that if they could also spin, and weave the yarn into cloth, they could add to their income by saving expenditure on buying clothes and by selling cloth if they could produce more than what was required to meet their own needs. In this way they could put a little more money into their pockets.

Khadi work would enable them to utilise their spare time and it would add something to their meagre income. Khadi soon became one of the pillars of Swaraj. Jawaharlalji called it the "Livery of Freedom". Gandhiji said Swaraj hung by the thread on the spindle of the spinning wheel. He felt he could expect men and women whom he had helped to stand on their feet and overcome their grinding poverty, to be much more receptive and willing to join Satyagraha movement and make sacrifices for winning Swaraj.

2. **PROHIBITION**—Gandhiji saw the havoc wrought by liquor. The poor man, who earned hardly enough to make the two ends meet, spent a



(L to R) Sarva Shri S. K. Dey, Tarlok Singh, R. K. Patil, Dr. Sushila Nayar

substantial part of his earning on drinking at the cost of bread and other basic needs of his family and education and well being of his children. He saw the evil effects of liquor all round, the socio-economic decline and problems created by drinking resulting in broken homes, delinquent children, increasing road accidents and simple and serious problems of physical and mental health born of drink habit. He saw the deterioration of morals, weakening of will power and reduced productivity resulting from drinking, and he came to the conclusion that the poor people must be saved from the temptation of easy availability of liquor. The programme of prohibition too became an important plank in the movement for independence of India.

Prohibition was necessary, said Gandhiji, to ensure that extra money earned by the poor man from spinning and weaving or from other constructive work, would go to meet his and his family's basic needs, and not be wasted in drinking.

**3. REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY**—Gandhiji was deeply moved to see the plight of untouchables from his childhood. As he grew up, he rebelled against untouchability practised by the Hindus. He believed untouchability was a blot on the fair face of India and an ugly blot on Hinduism. It was the worst form of exploitation and unless India freed itself from it, she had no moral ground to tell the British not to exploit her and let her be independent of British rule. Thus removal of untouchability also became another important plank in the struggle for independence, the third pillar of Swaraj. This gave new hope to the down-trodden in the country.

**4. COMMUNAL HARMONY**—Hindu-Muslim differences had been encouraged and exploited by the British Government to deny independence to India. Gandhiji saw that unity of Indians was necessary to free-

## Four Pillars of Swaraj and 18 items of Gandhiji's constructive work

dom. Moreover he was convinced of the essential unity of the basic principles of all religions and had preached and practised equal respect for all religions for many years. Hindu-Muslim unity and communal harmony became the fourth pillar of Swaraj.

The four pillars of Swaraj constituted the constructive programme at the time of the Non-cooperation movement of the early twenties. Later on Gandhiji went on adding to the list other items such as cottage industries, basic education, sanitation, service of leprosy patients, organising labour along the lines of his own first labour union, the Majoor Mahajan of Ahmedabad and awakening of women power and so on. The total number of constructive work items became 18 and I have no doubt in my mind that it would have increased still further if he had lived longer.

### (a) Basic principles for the success of constructive work :

Constructive work movement is based on certain principles, at the core of which is, compassion, and a burning desire to help our fellow men lead better lives. Therefore constructive work has to be evolved in each area to meet the urgent felt needs and requirements of each community. The technique has to be adapted to suit the capacity and interest of people in any area who may already have certain skills or may be able and willing to learn certain new ones or improve upon the skills that they might already have acquired.

Therefore research and training are essential for the growth of constructive programme. Training should, as far as possible, be given within the village and on the job, to prevent disruption of family life.

Constructive programme has to be hundred per cent secular and it should give first priority to the needs of the poorest and the lowliest in society. It should not be exploited for election purposes or for party politics, although it can be, and I will say, should be, a means of awakening people to their rights and responsibilities and make them conscious of their own strength to resist injustice and exploitation.

Constructive work, to be successful, needs a cadre of selfless workers with ideas and ideals, respect for human dignity and belief in the dignity of labour. Their needs should be adequately taken care of so that they can devote all their energy to the work of service of humanity at the grass roots.



The limitation of constructive work is that although certain items of the programmes such as the original four pillars of Swaraj, namely Khadi, Prohibition, removal of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity or communal harmony, have universal application, constructive programme for improving the level of living and removing poverty is a group activity which has to serve the needs, and suit the capabilities, of each group. This needs constant innovation, adaptation and evaluation.

The need for constructive work is unlimited. Its direction should always be towards elevation of mankind and removal of the constraints that stand in the way, such as poverty and ignorance. The object is to make men and women better human beings and therefore all constructive activities must be based on moral and ethical values.

Possibilities of constructive programme are unlimited. In my opinion the sky is the limit.

*(b) Implications for voluntary agencies and people's participation :*

In my opinion constructive programme is essentially a people's programme and voluntary agencies should take it up with people's participation, on the largest possible scale.

The Governments should help voluntary agencies engaged in constructive work, financially and otherwise, irrespective of their religious or political affiliations, so long as they are secular, serve a real need and are democratic in their working and organisation.

In view of the experience of many voluntary agencies, of discrimination on political or personal grounds, and undue governmental interference in some cases, it is necessary for them to develop their own strength and not be over-dependent on government grants. They should be able to survive without government grants, although the area of their activities may have to be curtailed without such help.

*(c) Implications for public working and planning at national, state and local levels :*

Planning at national, state or local level should be done after careful study and experimentation.

Planners at National, State or local level can benefit from successful experiments of voluntary agencies. This has been done to a substantial extent in certain fields of health activity.

Constructive workers can work out models which can be adopted by the planners and official executive agencies for implementation on large scale. For instance the scheme of Auxiliary Nurse Midwife Training, evolved by Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, has been imple-

## *Kasturba Gandhi National Trust and Ramakrishna Mission...*

mented all over the country by official and non-official agencies. Moreover the planners have learnt from it and have evolved Multi-purpose Health Workers Training programmes. The latest in this line has been the training and use of village health guides to take the message of health, nutrition, sanitation, maternal and child health and small family norm to every village. Similarly the model of gram sevikas training and gram seva centres set up by the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust has also been taken up for implementation by the Central Social Welfare Board.

The Central, State and local planning authorities too can work out certain programmes on their own and ask the voluntary agencies to implement them, because the voluntary agencies are closer to the people and are, generally speaking, less expensive and more efficient. For instance the scheme for adult education and functional literacy worked out by Government of India, is being implemented by many voluntary agencies in many places. Similarly the message of science and technology is being taken to the villages by certain voluntary agencies who have been asked by the Government to run Krishi Vigyan Kendras. Kasturba Gandhi National Trust is one such agency; Ramakrishna Mission is another. Similarly Government has asked voluntary agencies to take up social forestry with great success in several places in the country.

Voluntary agencies can be the path-finders. They can experiment and work out certain models for welfare services or development to add to the family income and remove poverty and unemployment. But in order to implement such schemes on a large scale, financial help from Government or big trusts or industrial houses will be needed. These schemes can be implemented through Governmental agencies or through voluntary agencies. The Governmental agencies have generally proved more expensive and less efficient. But there may be exceptions.

The voluntary agencies can, and should, expand their activities only to the extent that they can mobilise funds and volunteers or paid workers with requisite dedication and ability. Such workers are not easy to find these days. The constructive work agencies must think of providing for such workers in such a way that they can devote themselves to the work without having to worry about their own or their families' needs such as old age, sickness, children's education etc. This has not been done by constructive work organisations in the past. If we wish the constructive workers to work with missionary zeal, the constructive work organisations must look after them as the missionaries do for their workers.

Above all there has to be an atmosphere which leads to the inner growth and spiritual development of the workers and those with whom they work for their betterment. There should be a sense of ever widening family circle which gives a sense of belonging. This is possible only in the voluntary sector.

There has also to be a realisation that constructive work as a means of development, aims at production by the masses as opposed to mass production. It aims at making use of spare time and meagre resources scattered all over the country, which can be used only at the local level. Scientists may be able to help in developing the know-how and social scientists may help in developing the organisational set-up suitable for this purpose. The family works as a unit, and in due course the village should begin to function as a family unit. Thus according to the constructive work concept the planning process for the removal of poverty and improvement of the level of living of our people begins from the grass roots. As it goes up, some of the modern concepts may be integrated into the constructive work concept of development and use of human and national resources at the local level.

(N-1, Tara Apis, Kalkaji, New Delhi-11001)

### Why our villages are cheerless

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.

—Rabindranath Tagore

# Enterprise & Innovation in Rural Development

By : Kishore Saint

Executive Director, Ashoka Foundation

I HAVE a straight-forward objective. It is to share with you my experience and knowledge of enterprising and innovative behaviour in rural development in our country. But before I do that let me tell you what I understand by 'enterprise'. In essence, an enterprise is the self-initiated effort of an individual to go forward and further in a context and direction of his or her own choice.

By nature and by necessity entrepreneurs-to-be are the odd ones, the misfits, the rebels, the mavericks in any system or situation. This is especially so when the situation-system, in a particular location or in general, is in a state of *impasse* or facing a crisis, when more of the same means worse, when change in quality is called for. These are the moments in which the human spirit is afflicted with a sense of disease. This is when a few bold ones begin to venture forth, to break away, to begin to take small yet decisive steps into the future. In the unfolding of human destiny the consciousness and conscience of such creative individuals is the generating ground for fresh ideas and innovative responses to the challenges of critical situations. Today we are in the midst of a manifold crisis when the modern civilizational process itself is headed for, quite literally, a dead end. An important aspect of this crisis is the institutional *impasse* whereby the creative urges of individuals are curbed or cooped by the existing frameworks of control and management in their own interest and for their own purposes. I wish to suggest that enterprising individual's involvement in rural development in India, is a creative response to the contemporary civilizational crisis on the one hand, and to the institutional *impasse*, on the other.

Let me give you a few examples of such individuals and their enterprise. I know them personally and I have had the opportunity to see and study the work they are doing. I have no hesitation in naming them, for they are not non-entities. On the contrary, they are not only recognizable in their own right, they are also prepared to stand up, and be counted.

First of all, I should like to tell you about Dr. Bhagvatula V. Parmeshwara Rao of Dimili village in the coastal lands of Visakh-

patnam district in Andhra Pradesh. After his school and college education in India he went to the U.S.A. for doctoral work. He performed with excellence and on completion received lucrative job offers in the States. However, the day after the award of his degree he left for India. He reached his village and began his involvement there by setting up a high school for children. After some time he turned to rural development. He started several experiments in a compact cluster of fifteen villages, taking up the most damaged resource base and the most poverty-stricken people. He had brought the two together in a productive and regenerative relationship. With judicious and appropriate inputs of funds, appropriate technologies and management support from a variety of government and non-government sources, with careful monitoring and guidance, with people's own organisations suited to the new tasks, he has been able to increase incomes, employment, production, skills, awareness and self-confidence.

I have personally seen a boulder-strewn hillside of 50 acres that has been converted into a wood lot with 120 different useful species of trees, nutritious grasses, a flourishing dairy-farm, a sheep-herd, a poultry farm, a fruit orchard, a pickling and preservation unit, a distillation plant for grass extract which is mosquito repellent. Over a hundred persons are employed in various kinds of work and, already, after five years, there is net income of over a lakh of rupees per year from the produce. After another five year's effort, the annual net income will be closer to Rs. 1 crore annually. There are other variations of this agro-forestry work with ownership and management belonging to informal groups or co-operatives or registered societies of beneficiaries.

In the coastal backwaters, inland fishing, prawn culture and salt manufacture have been started on 'waste' lands (according to Parmeshwara there are no wastelands, there are only wasted lands) leased from the state with local community involvement. Here too a combination of traditional know-how and practices and new decentralized appropriate technologies such as windmills and photovoltaic batteries for lifting water are being experimented with.

In the social sphere thrift unions, started and run by women, have been formed. Through these the women have started and supported small productive efforts of their own to supplement the family income and to ensure its better utilisation in the interest of the family. With this newly-gained self-confidence these women have successfully challenged the mal-practices and wasteful corruption indulged in by the dominant men in the community.

The impact of Parmeshwara Rao's work is not confined to the local area, even though the basic demonstration of what has been achieved is

## *From Parmeshwar Rao of Dimli, Orissa, to Vivek & Vidyutla in Thane*

in the change that has come about in the hitherto waste lands and in the lives of communities without hope. His work has influenced the political leadership, officials and social workers from the district to national levels. Some of his younger colleagues have selected areas in their own right. Parmeshwara has encouraged them and is setting up advisory and support arrangements for them.

Let me move across the peninsula to the Arabian Sea coastal district of Thane near Bombay. A young married couple, Vivek and Vidyutlata Pandit, after their education in Bombay decided to become involved in their ancestral village. In the course of their conventional relief and welfare activities they discovered the existence of bonded labour in this locality less than 80 km. away from jet-age Bombay. As they began to look into how the system worked, they antagonized the relatively better-off villagers they had been helping earlier. They were threatened and even beaten up. Undeterred, they moved closer to the bonded labourers and were able to make them understand and accept that they need not continue in bondage, that there was a law that could enable their release. After unrelenting efforts and intimate contact over several months they succeeded in instilling in one bonded labourer the desire to become free. The day he decided this he wanted it to happen immediately. Since it was a holiday the concerned officer was not available. Vivek and Vidyut, fearing that he may change his mind, enacted a small drama. They took the person to the house of an educated friend who solemnly announced that he was no more in bondage and declared that he had been released. Since the law abolishing bonded labour was already in force he could not be contradicted. Eventually, the formalities were taken care of with the district administration. This episode gave new heart to others and they came forward to seek release. As the movement grew, the problems of rehabilitation arose. Despite the laws and provisions, the district administration was reluctant to admit the existence of bonded labourers in the area. It also dragged its feet in rehabilitation measures. Vivek and his team took up this challenge. Through a strategic combination of judicial action, administrative redress, press publicity, mass mobilisation and constructive work, they were able to keep up the morale of the people and sustain the momentum of the release and rehabilitation efforts. The approach adopted by Vivek has been recognized at the highest level of the judiciary and administration and amongst social workers similarly engaged.

One last example: Drs. Satish Chander and Santhi Nair of Kerala. Both completed their academic careers in biological science with flying colours. They became alarmed by the environmental degradation that has occurred as a result of rapid dam and road construction in the Western Ghats. After active involvement in the 'Silent Valley Protection' campaign they decided to gain a first-hand knowledge of this state of affairs. They trekked the length and breadth of Kerala and documented with slides the situation in the whole area. At present they are spreading this knowledge amongst the people, especially school children, to inform them about the damage that has taken place, the dangers that lie ahead and what can be done to avert these. I have seen and heard Satish making his slide presentation. He not only has at his command a wide array of data and sound scientific analysis, but also combines with it a sensitive and passionate love for nature. Few people in the audience can resist his powerful plea to save what remains of our natural heritage and to regenerate that which has been damaged.

These cases can be multiplied thousand-fold all over the country in multifarious contexts of problem-solving related to issues of social justice, human and civil rights, environmental protection, consumer movement, cultural revival, peace movement, poverty alleviation, decentralisation, people's improvement principled politics, anti-corruption, relief and rehabilitation, health and education. They use various organisational models and draw upon different kinds of support arrangements. However, at the heart of each effort lies the drive and spirit of a single individual, a couple or, rarely, a coherent group who know what they wish to do, have the openness to learn and the boldness to experiment, and who will not relent until the goal is achieved.

Typically, their preoccupation is with a particular situation, special problem or issue which they are intent upon resolving. This is the concrete expression of their engagement with reality. This is what distinguishes them from the well-intentioned talkers, armchair theorists and pen-pushers. The entrepreneurs are doers. They may or may not be concerned with articulation, generalising and communication. They may or may not have an understanding of their particular involvement in the larger historical or ideological context. When they do grow into these aspects they become the foci around which movements emerge and take shape.

It is also important to distinguish between entrepreneurs with a motive of private and personal gain and those with a drive for social benefit, social good or a social cause. In both cases it is the same actor and similar skills are brought into play to achieve the task goals. However, in the former case the conscious purpose and outcome are the enhancement of self and its interests in various guises. Social good or benefit is incidental or even negative. In the case of a social entrepreneur

## *Today the rural life is managed by the state and the market economy*

it is the other way round. As a basically satiated, fulfilled being, he or she has a surplus in energy and concern available for others. This is brought into play out of sensitivity and sense of relationship and responsibility to others. Social entrepreneurs and activists are the 'vaishnavian' who feel the suffering of others. They are their brother's—and sister's—keepers.

Let me now turn to the relationship between social entrepreneurial and innovative behaviour, community participation and the management of rural development.

The matter is of interest because social entrepreneurs are involved on a significant scale in rural development. Perhaps this is the social arena with the largest proportion of independent individual activists. The beginnings of this involvement were in the social reform, constructive work, cultural renaissance and national freedom movements in the last one hundred years. It was a rich and many-hued flowering with concerns ranging from the local to the universal. The best of them were motivated by a sense of worth and value for the rural life and culture. They saw in it a potential for a different future, as an alternative to western modernity, whose dangers were becoming manifest. It was a vision which reflected the principles of decentralisation, de-statisation, social coherence, moral rectitude and strength, ecological viability and self-management at the local community level. It was not just community participation or community development oriented. It was community-based, with community planning and decision-making built into it. The role of the state and market arrangements was visualised as supportive and promotive to this. We saw its powerful expression in the Bhoodan-Panchayat movement and its caricature in the Community Development-Panchayat Raj institutions. Both of them lost out and were abandoned or allowed to languish in the face of the western-derived centralised, bureaucratic-technocratic management of agricultural and rural development pursued for the comforts, luxuries and interests of the state and corporate power elites and classes.

There is no doubt that much has been achieved in enhancing agricultural production and productive capacity and the development of infrastructure and services related to these. A whole new technology with skills and research capability has been introduced. However, it is also clear that a very heavy price has been paid in the degradation of the natural resource base, the dislocation, deprivation and destitution of communities based on these resources and the loss of the ecologically



sound life practices and know-how of these people. There are also signs that the on-going pattern of development is not sustainable in the long run as it is leading to irreparable damage to the soil, water and vegetation resources of life support systems. The management of this pattern has to be of necessity centralised and remotely controlled. This requires the conscious and planned destruction of the indigenous, self and locally-managed i.e. communication systems. This too has happened, perhaps, irreversibly. Today rural life and economy, for all intents and purposes, are managed by the centralised system of state and market forces.

In this scenario why has it become fashionable or necessary to talk about community or people's participation? There can be several explanations. The most charitable view is that the ruling elites or managers of the system have begun to recognize the crisis and the untenability of the present approach and are willing to give a trial top participative mode which can regenerate and bring into play the enterprise and genius of the people in direct and responsible relationship with their local resources and each other. The more cynical explanation in that participation is mere talk, a verbal smoke-screen to sustain credibility, to reassure the people that the system and its development strategy is viable and there is place in it for the people or the community. The real intention is to maintain the system and move further ahead in the chosen direction regardless of consequences.

Either way and always, the social entrepreneur, as the mediator between the system and the community (or what remains of it), has sensitive, often difficult, choices to make in terms of direction, strategy, linkages, resources mobilisation, technology and management. Experience shows that most social entrepreneurs, despite their radical and people-oriented intent and declarations, end up promoting the system, and people's participation in it, essentially on its terms. This has been the fate of the bulk of constructive and voluntary effort in the post-independence period. Quite rarely and episodically some extraordinary individual creates self-consciousness in the community and a sense of its own worth and possibility. Inevitably, struggles are involved within the community and between the community and the system. Sometimes there is success and at a particular moment in a specific issue, the balance of power is tilted towards the deprived in the community. However, the gain remains ephemeral and isolated. It is not sustained and generalised because the social entrepreneur is usually not part of a movement or network of such effort. This is where the support, management and coordination of social enterprise in the wider social context acquire significance.

The first need is for large-scale and widespread support of social entrepreneurs, with indigenous resources. There are still too few young

people in the field or attracted to it. A climate has to be created in which not only is this kind of initiative supported, but it is also recognized and respected. Second, the entrepreneurs have to be helped to see their effort in the larger historical, systemic and future perspective. Third, the need for networks and movements as alternatives, as counters and as initial steps into a better future, has to be recognized by the social entrepreneurs and their supporters. It is my earnest hope that management trainers will recognize this important domain of effort and give it the support it needs in a fulfilling rather than co-optive manner.

(Ashoka Foundation, 11-A, Fatehpura, UDAIPUR-313001 (Raj.))

## Involvement of Business Houses in Rural Development

By : Joseph Thachil

Asstt. Secretary, FICCI

**T**HERE ARE approximately 600 business houses which are directly or indirectly involved in rural development activities.

Direct involvement means business houses setting up a Cell on their own in rural development manned by an expert. These Cells undertake developmental activities in the identified rural areas.

Indirect intervention means contributing to voluntary organisations or trusts for undertaking rural development activities.

Programmes related to drinking water supply and sanitation were widely promoted by FICCI. FICCI had several rounds of discussion with the Government of India in the Ministry of Works and Housing and UNICEF to work out modalities for greater participation of business in drinking water supply and sanitation. Subsequently, we have organised a Workshop on Rural Development with Special Emphasis on Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation on 10th January, 1985 at Calcutta in collaboration with UNICEF to discuss about how business and various other organisations can participate. Several business houses have come forward with specific schemes for drinking water supply.

The other areas of business activities include agricultural development; setting up of cottage and village industries, social forestry, propagation of energy conserving devices, vocational training etc.

In the promotion of family planning also the involvement of business houses has got specific programmes for motivating their employees and others for adhering to small family norms. Special incentives are also given to those who undergo sterilisation operations.

FICCI proposes to launch an innovative programme on motivation-cum-education-cum-service programme in family planning for industrial workers in Faridabad in collaboration with the Government of India in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Haryana Government. Similar type of activities are being done by local chambers of commerce and industry and trade associations.

### Some Suggestions

In 1983, Government withdrew section 35CCA of the Income-tax Act which enabled a business house to contribute directly to a voluntary organisation for undertaking rural development activities on its behalf. Now, the contributions have to be routed through the National Fund for Rural Development.

Since the above procedure seems to be cumbersome and time-consuming, it is suggested that the section 35 CCA has to be restored and business houses should be allowed to contribute to voluntary organisations and also to national fund for rural development with adequate checks and balances.

Mention has also to be made here about the recent decision of the Government to compress the number of items of the programme which are eligible for tax concession under Section 35CCA of the Income-tax Act. From 15 items of programmes, it has been brought down to 8, thereby restricting the scope of involvement of business. Programmes like agricultural development, setting up of cottage and village industries, propagation of energy-saving equipment etc. have been excluded from the purview of the section.

In order to monitor and dovetail the activities of various agencies in rural development, FICCI has proposed to the Government of India in the Ministry of Rural Development to set up an Action Group under the modal Ministry of Rural Development, drawing representatives from the Ministry of Rural Development, Planning Commission, Voluntary sector, Financial Institutions etc. Government is not agreeable to this suggestion. It is urged that this Workshop strongly recommends the setting up of such an Action Group.

(Federation House, Tansen Marg, New Delhi-110001)

## Role of Voluntary Agencies in Constructive Work in Rural Areas

By : Shri A. N. Seth

Director, Centre for Agrarian Research, Training and Education

CONSTRUCTIVE work movement in India is basically an urban phenomenon arising from the stricken conscience of the affluent community and intellectuals in urban centres. It has taken, by and large, the form of "charity"—hospitals, schools and colleges, institutions for the destitute, work in slums, etc. And as the constructive workers mostly belong to urban areas, constructive work is concentrated in towns and cities. Infra-structural facilities available in urban centres also weigh the scales in favour of constructive work in urban areas despite the fact that the Government offers so many incentives for constructive work in rural areas and the Father of the Nation had also stressed the need and urgency of it. Thus despite the fact that 80 percent of India's population is in rural areas, over 10 percent of constructive work resources are used up in urban centres.

Constructive work in rural areas presents serious difficulties arising from the very conception of it and the structure of the rural communities. I have always assumed that constructive work should be aimed at alleviating the rigours of poverty; whether in urban centres or rural areas. And "Poverty" is born basically in rural areas. The urban poverty arises from the overflow of the rural poor into the urban centres in search of employment and relief. And, as the poorest in the rural areas migrate to towns and cities, the rigours of poverty are acuter in urban centres than in rural areas.

Poverty is man-made, and it becomes the responsibility of the society and, therefore, of its more affluent sections and the intellectuals, to work for its alleviation and removal. And this, to my mind, should also be the major role of the voluntary institutions undertaking constructive work in rural areas.

In fact, in a welfare state it is the responsibility of the State, and of the government wielding the state apparatus at any point of time, to initiate measures for the alleviation and removal of poverty; and it should

be the duty of every citizen of the state to extend fullest cooperation to the state agencies in the affective implementation of the measures. The cooperation of the citizens in the socio-economic transformation is much more important in a country which has adopted democratic institutions than in a police state. Even so, even in police states, wherever such a transformation has taken place, the state machinery is strongly backed by a well organised political party committed to socio-economic transformation.

Though India has adopted democratic institutions, it has, unfortunately, not yet evolved conventions whereby all political parties may join hands in the formulation and implementation of a minimum national programme such as alleviation of rural poverty. I remember Ashok Mehta once making a suggestion way back in 1955 in a Planning Commission meeting that land reform be made into a national programme, but the suggestion was discarded as merely "visionary". In a country where even national defence does not carry national commitment it is futile to expect the opposing parties to agree upon a minimum programme of national development, however urgent. This heightens the role of voluntary agencies engaged in constructive work to promote and cooperate in a national effort, on non-political basis, aimed at alleviation and eradication of rural poverty. They could generate pressure for the evolution and acceptance of a minimum national programme outside the pale of party politics.

In devising a programme of constructive work for the rural areas one must take note of the agrarian structure on the ground. In every village there are three major economic groups, namely—

- (1) *Rural elites* absentee land-owners, commercially oriented rich farmers-cum-traders, money lenders, etc. who get their lands cultivated by others, tenants or share-croppers or agricultural labourers
- (2) *Farmers* who cultivate their own lands, primarily with the help of family labour, using occasionally hired labour.
- (3) *Rural poor* who work for others. They are the landless or near landless, working mostly as agricultural labourers and some as share-croppers or tenants or as rural artisans,

Though the situation varies from village to village, on an average the elites generally constitute less than 10 percent of the population but own half the total land. The farmers constitute about 40 percent—and own about as much land. And the rural poor who number over 50 percent, own less than 10 per cent of the total land. Even though the percentage distribution may not have changed, it is evident that in absolute numbers the rural poor are rapidly increasing in numbers due to the population explosion since early 1940's. And, despite the large-scale migration to towns and cities, their number has been growing.

## A Ten-Point Programme for Voluntary Organisations

The major factors which add to poverty and poor living conditions are :

- (i) under-employment;
- (ii) low wages in case of labourers and high rents in case of share-croppers;
- (iii) lack of social security, or insecurity of tenure, and
- (iv) unhealthy housing conditions.

There has been a spate of legislation on tenancy reform, land ceilings, regulation of minimum wages etc. And governments have also initiated many programmes especially during the past two decades—the 20-Point Programme, small/marginal farmer and agricultural labour agencies, allotment of house-sites, the differential rate of interest scheme (DRI) etc which provide ample funds—loans and subsidies under schemes aimed at their alleviating poverty. And yet impact has at best been marginal. The reasons too are well known. Anything that helps to improve the bargaining power of the poor adversely affects the interests of the elites. And being well entrenched, they can, in collusion with the rural administration, which is generally sympathetic to them, defeat these programmes. And even where the intended beneficiaries manage to get access to the programmes, the rampant corruption of the field staff of rural administration and the banks, palm off the major share. The rural poor, an amorphous, disorganised mass, can do little about it without an organisation and outside help. Here is an ample field for the voluntary agencies for constructive work in—

- (1) organising the rural poor, and training leaders from among them for group action;
- (2) helping them to draw up employment generation programmes for financing under state schemes and DRI, securing allotment of land for housing or for cultivation (where available);
- (3) securing them financial support from banks and block agencies;
- (4) promoting family planning, which is a must if the problem of growing manpower is to be met in the long run;
- (5) creating social awareness among women and developing special programmes to generate employment among them;
- (6) organising youths and women in techniques of group action;

- (7) developing supporting institutions such as service centres to provide agricultural inputs, cattle-feed to farmers, foodgrains, kerosene oil etc. to the poor at fair prices;
- (8) helping the state agencies and the intended beneficiaries in the enforcement of minimum wages and other land reform measures effectively;
- (9) assisting in planning and enforcing employment guarantee schemes;
- (10) evaluation of on-going programmes and developing patterns of new programmes for alleviating poverty through action-based research.

These and such other programmes aimed at alleviating rural poverty can provide tremendous scope for voluntary action. It should be recognised, however, that voluntary agencies should act mainly as path finders, and as the supporting agencies for the weaker sections, and not as charity institutions. They should not run parallel programmes where such programmes are being initiated by the state. They should ensure, by doing liaison work between the intended beneficiaries and the state agencies, that the state agencies do deliver the goods and the benefits reach the intended beneficiaries.

The scope for constructive work is ample, and yet the task is difficult. Any voluntary agency taking up these tasks in the rural areas is apt to be treading on the toes of vested interests—block administration, banks and rural elites who will collude to defeat intervention by voluntary agencies. And unless some pre-requisites are met, the voluntary agencies can not afford to enter this difficult field of constructive work:

- (1) The voluntary agencies should develop a "commitment" to it;
- (2) They should develop a team of dedicated workers who are willing to provide leadership;
- (3) The beneficiaries of the programme are organised and the youths and women from among them are trained for peaceful, non-violent struggle;
- (4) The cooperation of the socially motivated people from among elites and farmers is mobilized.

In fact, as a first step, any voluntary agency undertaking such a programme would need to do a lot of preliminary work in some areas to gain experience. I do not propose to frighten voluntary agencies but only to warn them against entering this field unprepared. Once a voluntary agency has developed an effective organisation of the rural poor, its task of mobilising *Jan Shakti* for constructive work will become much easier.

## The happy example of Thanjavur farm labourers union

Many people are fearful, some genuinely so, that organising the rural poor is apt to lead to violence. This is not quite correct. On the contrary it should help to meet and mitigate the violence which obtains on a large scale in some areas against the poor, and is, thus, presently one-sided. This reminds me of a refreshing observation by a young collector of Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, in 1974 that in his district, which was once afire with violence, the development of organisation of *Pamials* (agricultural labourers) and of tripartite arrangements for settlement of disputes, had effectively ended the prevailing violence.

For planning programmes at village level with people's participation, the only agencies presently available to us are the *Panchayats* and co-operatives. And both of them are now dominated by the elites. Can such organisations be entrusted with the task of planning programmes for the benefit of the poor, even presuming we impart them the capability for planning through organising training programmes. I am afraid, not. We must, at this stage, concentrate on developing organisations of the rural poor and help them to develop leadership training in techniques of group action. This alone will enable them to participate effectively in planning at the village level. Once this task is done other things can follow. Otherwise it will be just putting the cart before the horse.

Before concluding I should like to stress that it is not intended that these tasks should be undertaken in the spirit of confrontation. It should be our endeavour to secure the cooperation of the state agencies, the banks and the elites in tasks of alleviating poverty. If we approach them in the *Gandhian* spirit I am sure they will respond in their own enlightened self-interest. The organised strength of the rural poor will make our task much easier. As Tulsi has said in his memorable verse—

"Bina bhaya NA Hove Priiti"

(There will be no affection unless there is also fear.)

(KA-59, Kavi Nagar, Ghaziabad-201002)



It's  
Lovely . . . The Nylon Yarn

It is really lovely.

But not freely available (it is an imported one).

You feel sorry

That you don't get it here easily. Why the Indian  
Dress material aren't this fine? Because they use  
Much coarser

Yarn compared to the one available abroad.

We really worked hard and are proud to say that  
We have made it. We brought in

Nylon and Polyester high filament (specially) yarn  
30, 40 and 50 deniers for saris and dress materials.  
The finest and decidedly the best  
In the country.

Very soon, the countries leading mills will bring  
you saris and Dress material with that 'Resham'  
Finish and look your demand

For a better product always enthuses us to  
Produce a better one.

## MODIPON LIMITED

Makes Better P.O Y., Polyester and

Nylon-6 filament yarn

MODINAGAR, U. P. (INDIA)

## The role of Voluntary Agencies in the implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programme

By : Bunker Roy

Director, Social Work & Research Centre (SWRC)

THERE IS AN urgent need for accepting the changing role of Voluntary Organisations in the implementation of anti-poverty and Minimum Needs Programmes. While the role of voluntary agencies has been accepted in supplementing government effort, there is still general confusion and lack of understanding how best to involve them directly. There is a great tradition of voluntary effort in India but we have ceased to identify new areas where their contribution has been substantial, especially in fields other than the accepted social welfare activities. In the effort to tackle the problems of poverty and unemployment and improve the way of life the programmes and activities of the Central Social Welfare Board designed to promote and encourage voluntary effort are indeed crucial and important for the physically and mentally handicapped, women and children and other disadvantaged groups of society. But we must recognise that times have changed and there are many other economically and socially vulnerable groups like small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, scheduled castes and tribes, bonded labourers, rural artisans and rural women who also need to be reached. Expertise of a different kind is required, strategies of a different nature need to be designed, personnel with different attitudes and orientation will need to be mobilised to reach these target groups. More grassroot voluntary agencies need to be identified to help perform this gigantic task.

### REVIEW

LITTLE EFFORT has been made in any of the Plans up to the Sixth Plan to define the role of a voluntary agency. The role has been welcomed, encouraged and supported but there has been great hesitancy in defining the role. The tendency has been to equate the work of voluntary agencies with only welfare activities and charity work. In times of disasters like floods, famines, droughts and cyclones, in short in rehabilitation work, there is sympathy and support for the work of voluntary organi-

sations. But in long term development work, in drinking water programmes for instance, the government calls them 'contractors' even though they are prepared to do the same work for 30% less than the approved government rates.

The reason why grassroot voluntary agencies have not yet managed to make their presence felt is because government, since the First Plan, has always been planning for voluntary agencies. Schemes have been designed by government officials with little or no experience of the problems of voluntary agencies. Thus to small groups working in villages they appear inflexible and impractical. The way the projects and schemes have been framed many voluntary agencies are not in a position to utilise the funds effectively and the blame is put on the voluntary agency for not being flexible enough. In the 7th Plan an operational arrangement for promotion of voluntary effort primarily in the field of rural development will be tried out which will allow voluntary agencies to plan and implement projects with Central and State Governments. This will lead to better utilisation of resources and more effective mobilisation of available manpower in the villages.

The task is so gigantic that it has been generally accepted the government cannot do this task alone. There is scope for trying alternatives where three decades of *peoples participation* has resulted in many village level groups in the non-governmental sector both formal and informal in nature but without becoming institutions. The growth of institutions has been detrimental to voluntary effort in villages where flexibility is required and where rules and bureaucracy should not destroy the ability to improvise or respond to the felt needs of the poor quickly, effectively and without intermediaries. Where small groups have been working for years in non-traditional areas of development work, in the 7th Plan period we will need to locate and identify them and see how best State Governments can use their expertise and experience in more effective implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programme.

It is an incorrect assumption that any activity outside government which is non-governmental is 'voluntary'. Planning for the government and the different delivery systems right down to the village level is one important exercise but planning for the people and to give tangible expression to their aspirations, indeed requires a different approach. In the non-governmental sector there is need to differentiate and distinguish between cooperatives, gram panchayats, farmers societies, religious, social and cultural organisations and voluntary agencies working in rural development in the implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes.

From the 1st Plan voluntary agencies have been identified as 'social service organisations. From this period the process of institutionalising

## *Older organisations have lost touch with the rural reality*

'public cooperation' began which culminated in the establishment of a National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development. This was ostensibly designed to train and promote voluntary workers and support their activities in the field, liaison with Government and generally bring government and voluntary agencies together. By the end of the 6th Plan the role of this Institute has changed beyond recognition and it is no longer performing the function it was supposed to. In August 1952 the National Advisory Committee for Public Cooperation representing different sections of opinion in the country expected to review and assess the programmes of public cooperation in relation to national development: advise the Planning Commission from time to time regarding the progress of public cooperation in relation to the fulfilment of National Plans. By the 3rd Five Year Plan the non-governmental organisations represented on the National Advisory Committee for Public Cooperation included All India Cooperative Union, All India Women's Conference, Bharat Sadhu Samaj, Bharat Scouts and Guides, Bharat Sevak Samaj, Bharatiya Adimjati Sangh, Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh, Central Social Welfare Board, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Harijan Sevak Sangh, Indian Conference of Social Work, Indian Council for Child Welfare, Red Cross Society, National Cadet Corps and Sarva Seva Sangh. While each perform a vital service in the development of the country as a whole, they hardly represent the cross section of voluntary effort in this country and some of them do not qualify to be voluntary agencies. Indeed whether most of them have the grass root base, the personnel or the expertise to implement anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes of the kind necessary and desirable, is an open question. In other words public cooperation as we have gradually institutionalised it, has lost credibility in the eyes of younger groups based in villages because they feel older organisations have lost touch with the rural problems of today.

Much has been written on village contribution towards the development process. From the 1st Plan one essential element was to collect contribution in cash or kind from the beneficiaries as a first step towards self-reliance. By the 3rd Five Year Plan 'voluntary contributions' in the Community Development Programme in cash, kind and service have been estimated at about Rs. 100 crores. But this effort at mobilising resources from the community was given little importance in subsequent Plans. In the 5th and 6th Plans there was hardly any mention of raising resources from the community for technical and socio-economic services rendered. In the 7th Plan, largely through efforts of voluntary agencies,

an attempt will be made to revive this idea of raising resources from the community to implement their own programmes.

### STRATEGIES

THE FACT THAT we are talking of voluntary agencies means the strategies we adopt will necessarily have to be considerably different from those accepted by Government. Like Government, voluntary agencies accept the need for food, work and productivity. Like Government, they believe in development with social justice and equality and the urgent need to raise the standard of living and the quality of life in the rural areas. From voluntary agencies Government expects the generation of, and experimentation with, new ideas, an attempt to try new approaches and development models. If this is a general expectation from voluntary agencies in the 7th Plan, we need to create an environment to allow voluntary agencies to do this with the least amount of institutional and bureaucratic hurdles.

In order to assist and support voluntary agencies in the implementation of anti-poverty and Minimum Needs Programme there is a *one window approach*. In social welfare and social services for conventional voluntary agencies there is already the Central Social Welfare Board with their State branches. For integrated rural development and allied services covered by the anti-poverty and minimum needs programme in the 7th Plan period the proposal is to enlarge the function and scope of People's Action for Development (India), PADI. Details of the operational arrangements for promotion of voluntary effort in the field of rural development through PADI is explained later. This one window approach to voluntary agencies through PADI is long overdue.

The accent in the 7th Plan period will be to professionalise volunteerism. Introduce simple professional and managerial expertise in keeping with the resources and capabilities of voluntary agencies so as to be in a position to meet with the basic requirements of government in terms of accountability. However this should not be done at the expense of locally available human and financial resources. The ideal combination would be to use the spirit of volunteerism still prevalent in villages and slums in the young men and women from different occupations—farmers, rural artisans, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, agricultural labourers, girijans, bonded labourers—upgrade their skills and give them tools to become better citizens. If as a result they are able to stand on their own two feet this could be claimed as an achievement by voluntary agencies. In the last National Development Council Meeting (April 1983), in a paper titled Public Participation, where the assistance of voluntary agencies in the implementation of anti-poverty programmes was sought, the paper says, "The participation of the beneficiaries is a must for the successful implementation of some of the programmes like IRD/NREP, Land al-

## *Charity won't do; the poor must be helped to help themselves*

lotment, minimum agricultural wages, rehabilitation of bonded labour among others ... The manner in which these are executed leave much to be desired. It is a low quality development process in which there is a relationship of 'giver' and 'passive receiver' and no dialogue between them. The task of rural development is not merely to assist so many poor families but to develop in them the ability to help themselves. The task of poverty removal is so gigantic that the poor themselves alone cannot tackle. This, means, therefore, development of leadership in the hamlets of the poor and promoting the organisation of the poor".

This involves an entirely different sort of approach to tackling the problems of the rural poor: a charity approach which in its own way is necessary in social welfare and social service agencies as against a development approach that deals with longer-term issues of self-dependence and developing an ability to help themselves. In this category fall the work of action and activist groups who see a different role for themselves. They believe in mobilising people and organising the poor and generating awareness and putting pressure on the system to make it respond to felt needs. This is one model which is fraught with dangers and by far the most easily misunderstood; but this alternative has been tried in any number of voluntary agencies all over India with encouraging results, so it cannot be ruled out.

It boils down to a basic fundamental difference in approaches and models. Within Government circles the development of infrastructures is a pre-requisite to rural development: to the voluntary agencies this is secondary. The development of people, of human beings and of citizens aware of their rights and duties, of schemes and programmes, of rules and regulations is infinitely more important. This is a radical improvement of the expectations of government from voluntary agencies between the 1st-3rd Plan period when construction works were carried out through voluntary agencies.

In the final analysis the processes of making people aware are many and all alternatives within the voluntary sector that are legal, democratic and non-violent, should be acceptable.

As has already been mentioned earlier the idea of mobilising financial and human resources from the community themselves, including the beneficiaries in some cases, need to be tried on a pilot basis. After all in three decades of planned development a sufficient percentage of families

must have risen above the poverty line quite apart from those who are already well off in the villages who can support services on a no-profit no-loss basis. The concept of mobilising resources from the community is not new but government for various reasons is not in a position to attempt this in any form or on any scale. But it should be feasible through voluntary agencies since accountability for voluntary agencies should be people-oriented and not procedure-oriented. Where it is people-oriented like in smaller groups based in villages and institution-building has been deliberately sacrificed with a view to using relatively small percentage of funds to reach the maximum benefits, it has been noticed that government services in that area have improved. Where monopolistic delivery system of the government continue to prevail and alternatives are not allowed to grow or people's initiatives are not allowed to yield results because of the work of vested interests, the ultimate casualty has always been the rural poor.

To achieve better results and reach maximum benefits to the rural poor there is no denying that voluntary agencies have to upgrade their professional skills and develop some managerial expertise. While the tendency is to depend on people with more theoretical knowledge than practical experience in training and skill development where institutions regrettably have become a necessity, there is an obvious need to tap the resources from: (i) within the voluntary sector, (ii) from the people themselves, and (iii) from the small percentage of the bureaucracy from All India Central and State Services who could take study leave as per rules and work in recognised voluntary organisations without jeopardising their careers. The use of these human resources could be non-institutional without unnecessary overhead costs.

The underlying message that voluntary agencies are emphasising repeatedly and which has been recognised right from the 1st Plan to the 6th Plan is that the communication and credibility gap between the planner and the implementer (in fact between theory and action) should be reduced. Development models especially in the area of block level planning through voluntary agencies have shown this to be possible and alternatives need to be tried out on a much larger and organised scale. Expertise and resources from the immediate area are available provided we have imagination and the will to try out this strategy. The demystification of the planning process where the implementer is also a party to the design, is long overdue.

The strategy to involve voluntary agencies in the implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programme definitely presumes the presence of a healthy atmosphere and goodwill between government and voluntary agencies. Regrettably enough the current relationship is far from happy. Instead we find mutual suspicion and lack of trust in each

## *Bonafide organisations must fulfil certain criteria*

other. If there is general indifference to utilise the voluntary agencies more at the higher levels, there is open hostility, especially towards non-institutional and smaller groups at the village level, for reasons only too well-known. For want of an established forum where voluntary agencies could be given an opportunity to explain their position the situation now is tilted against the interests of voluntary agencies. The need to establish a regular forum was felt almost at the end of the 6th Plan period and the Prime Minister in October 1982 wrote to all the Chief Ministers that Consultative Groups of voluntary agencies must be established at the State level.

"Widening the role of voluntary agencies in the implementation of the schemes under the 20-Point Programme has been emphasised a number of times. The State Government should consider setting up a Consultative Group under a senior officer like the Development Commissioner or the Chief Secretary. This group should have as its members representatives of voluntary agencies which are already working for rural development and have an actual presence in a village. Periodic meetings of such groups will be valuable feedback on the implementation of schemes to the Government and will help sort out problems affecting the work of voluntary agencies".

It is hoped in the 7th Plan period such Consultative Groups are established and given operational responsibilities.

### IDENTIFICATION AND ROLE

UPON THE BEGINNING of the 6th Plan no attempt was made to draw up terms of reference on how to identify voluntary agencies. There are voluntary agencies and voluntary agencies many of them, in spite of calling themselves social welfare organisations, do not really qualify to call themselves voluntary agencies in the strict sense of the word. The fact that it is the non-governmental sector, does not necessarily mean it is voluntary. The fact that it falls in the loose category of 'public cooperation' bodies does not follow that these are all voluntary agencies. The confusion has been allowed to continue and it will be better to clarify that the term 'Voluntary Agencies' working in the field of rural development is applicable to those agencies which satisfy the following criteria :—

1. It is registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 or its equivalent in different States;



2. It is based in a rural area and has been working there for 4 to 5 years;

3. It has professional and managerial skills to produce regular audit statements and reports for funds received from government;

4. It is not linked, directly or indirectly, to any political party; and anyone holding public office through a process of election is not qualified to represent voluntary agencies on forums exclusively meant for them;

5. It is explicitly committed to secularism, socialism and democracy and it declares that it will only adopt legal and non-violent means for rural development purposes.

6. It has been implementing anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes and other related activities designed to raise awareness levels of families living below the poverty line and leading to an improvement in the quality of their lives.

#### ROLE

MUCH HAS BEEN written on the role of voluntary agencies in the implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes and it is necessary to define it. The role is:—

1. To supplement government effort. It is not to compete. The effort is to offer the rural poor, choices and alternatives. Where possible, and where people's initiatives have given rise to voluntary agencies at the village level, there is room and space for both to work and it should not be considered duplication.

2. To be the eyes and ears of the people at the village level. There is need for an independent agency to act as a reliable feed-back so that government policies and programmes could be designed, taking real community problems into account.

3. To set an example. It should be possible for the voluntary agency with the limited resources available, to reach a larger number with less overheads and with greater community participation. Any number of examples are readily available all over the country which Central and State Governments concerned have learnt from, and adopted, on a large scale: Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi on intensive paddy cultivation by engaging 'barefoot' technicians, which the State Government adopted in the 4th Plan period; Comprehensive Rural Health Programme in Jamkhed, using illiterate and semi-literate women for implementing preventive health programmes in Maharashtra; Self-Employment Women's Association mobilising and organising petty female entrepreneurs in Gujarat and four other States; Ahmedabad Study Action Group with low-cost housing

## *We must de-mystify processes, technologies and skills*

designs in Ahmedabad; Social Work and Research Centre with 1-Tier system on repair and maintenance of hand-pumps with community participation; Action for Food Production (AFPRO) in the promotion of low-cost bio-gas technology; Eklavya in training teachers in science education through government schools in Madhya Pradesh; Centre for Science for Villages in experimentation and dissemination of appropriate technology in Maharashtra. In their own way they have set an example for Government to perhaps study and adopt on a larger scale.

4. To activate the system and make it move at the village level to respond to felt needs of the poorest of the poor. There are Acts of the Government for instance which, for many reasons, are not being observed e.g. the Minimum Wages Act, the Abolition of Bonded Labour Act, the Protection of Civil Rights Act etc. and where such instances are being reported the voluntary agencies must bring it to the notice of the government for suitable follow-up action.

5. To disseminate information. Very often schemes, programmes and projects of the Government with many policy changes, orders, circulars do not percolate fast enough to the village level. More often the interpretation of these schemes is left to the mercy of lower level government functionaries not entirely sympathetic to the problems of the rural poor. If information could be widely known through all the channels, both institutional and non-institutional, this would lead to generating awareness where the poor could decide for themselves.

6. To show how local, village and indigenous resources could be used for their own development. Human resources, rural skills and local knowledge are grossly under-utilised in the villages by government and it is for voluntary agencies to set an example and show what is possible. The de-mystification of processes, of technologies, of knowledge and skills—and the recognition it deserves—is long overdue and it is one of the decisive roles of voluntary agencies to prove the credibility of such ideas.

7. To make communities as self-reliant as possible. Unfortunately the development and delivery system as it exists today is designed to make communities more dependent than independent. The system of accountability within Government is so severe and inflexible that subsidies, loans, inputs, services and support mechanisms ostensibly designed to serve families living below the poverty line, actually tend to ensnare them rather than keep them free.

8. To train a cadre of grass-root workers who believe in professionalising volunteerism. The technology base that we think exists at the village level is too weak to respond effectively and adequately to the felt needs of the poor. The need is to bring professional expertise to the poor without intermediaries.

9. To mobilise financial resources from the community. If the purpose is to make them stand on their own two feet, if the idea is to promote self-reliance, if the ultimate effect is to generate awareness and develop human beings then much depends on how much value we give to self-respect and dignity. Anything free is not appreciated.

10. To mobilise and organise the poor to demand quality services and impose a system of accountability on the performance of village-level government functionaries.

### TYPES

IT SHOULD NOT BE difficult to classify types of voluntary agencies to be found in India today. But there is no denying the need to do so since, over the last three decades, the types of organisations have varied and their functions and approaches have changed. Broadly speaking the types may be classified as follows:

(i) Those primarily engaged in relief/rehabilitation/post-natural disaster management work. These could be called the traditional types of agencies everyone is more than aware of for the selfless work they have done. It is the type which believes in free voluntary work, does not believe in taking funds from government, does not pay its workers even a living wage.

(ii) Those engaged in welfare type of work. This covers social welfare and social service organisations involved in taking grants from Central Social Welfare Board and State Boards for on-going programmes dealing with women and children, training, income generation, mentally and physically handicapped people. This work is also largely considered traditional and bureaucracy have got used to identifying voluntary effort only with this sort of work of a non-controversial and less conflicting nature.

(iii) Those agencies that believe in using professional and managerial expertise and actually engage in 'professionalising volunteerism' at the village level. People belonging to such agencies have a different definition of professionalism which they consider to be a combination of competence and belief. These agencies believe in providing technical and socio-economic services but using village resources, local skills and knowledge and utilising them for constructive development purposes. They believe that such technical services like installation of handpumps, social

APRIL 1985

## *Some entry-points for the development of the poorest of the poor*

forestry, environment protection, construction of bio-gas and smokeless chulas, use of solar and wind energy could be used as entry points for the development of the poorest of the poor but they could also lead to ideological and attitudinal conflicts within the village and the positive use of such conflicts could bring about change.

(iv) Those engaged in conscientisation and organisational work. Their belief primarily hinges around the need to make beneficiaries aware of their rights, unite them to make them strong enough to pressurise the system to be more responsive to the felt needs of the poor. The emphasis is on non-formal and informal education and learning by doing methods.

(v) Those directly in action for development.

### PREPARATION

SINCE THE MIDDLE of the 6th Plan period, for the first time, the Government of India took the initiative to involve voluntary agencies on massive scale in the implementation of anti-poverty and Minimum Needs Programme. So far apart from a few pious announcements under the heading of Social Welfare or Public Participation where the need to involve voluntary agencies were indeed mentioned, little was suggested to operationalise some of the ideas. In the 7th Plan period a more systematic and understanding attempt will be made to mobilise genuine voluntary agencies in the non-traditional areas of rural development.

In the last meeting of the National Development Council (April 1983) a paper titled Public Participation, in which an attempt was made to define voluntary agencies, was approved by all the Chief Ministers. The rationale of seeking the assistance of voluntary agencies for rural development as explained in the paper were:—

(i) The government functionary last in the link of development action is not always motivated or capable enough for welfare or extension tasks. Voluntary agencies can make persons of superior capability and motivation available for work in the villages.

(ii) Welfare and extension programmes are much more difficult to implement than hardware programmes like irrigation projects, roads, power houses etc. because in the latter there is no requirement of persuading the people to change their life-styles. In the case of IRD beneficiaries primary education, family planning, SC/ST welfare new

values have to be adopted by the people and important personal decisions have to be taken. The basic requirement here is of establishing a dialogue. This requires winning the trust of the people which requires long term presence in the villages. Enlightened persons who motivate the poor should be available after the decision is taken to cope with post-decision problems.

With the urgent need to establish forums where an institutional dialogue between government and voluntary agencies could begin at the State Government level in April 1983, in pursuance of the directives of the Prime Minister a process of identifying genuine voluntary agencies was initiated in consultation with the State Government concerned. The need for a Consultative Group was expressed by almost all the voluntary agencies. The communication gap between government and voluntary agencies was growing and because State Government had to depend on second and third hand sources the information on the work done on release of bonded labour, minimum wages, women's development etc. reaching the State Capitals was occasionally biased, incorrect and leading to further misunderstandings. The need for a forum to explain the point of view of voluntary agencies and their problems was long overdue.

From the middle of the 6th Plan period a number of initiatives to re-establish a dialogue between government and voluntary agencies at the level of the Government of India have yielded encouraging tangible results.

By far the most encouraging development has been the healthy revival of the Freedom from Hunger Campaign Committee now called Peoples Action for Development India (PADI). After initial uncertainties of composition and membership, PADI has a General Body where voluntary agencies of national stature and known for the work they have done in rural development are members and voluntary agencies are members of the Governing Council. The President of the Governing Council is the Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development. PADI has become a forum through which the views of voluntary agencies from the field reach the Government; it promotes voluntary effort in the country; it channels foreign and indigenous funds for the implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes; it protects the interests of voluntary agencies working all over the country.

As a necessary pressure group, and to act as a watchdog, the Committee for the Implementation of Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS) under the Chairmanship of Justice P. N. Bhagwati has constituted a group primarily designed to support and assist the work of social action groups at the village level. The Group only consists of senior officials of the Government of India who will be called upon to assist village level activist groups working in the field of rural development.

## *Wanted : appropriate institutional frame-work for removal of bottlenecks*

Such forums as the State level Consultative Groups, PADI and CILAS are some of the many attempts at assisting voluntary agencies involved in anti-poverty programmes at the village level. What the Central Social Welfare Board and its State Branches are for social service and social welfare agencies, what the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) is for institutionalised non-governmental organisations based in urban and semi-urban areas, the Consultative Groups, PADI and CILAS are forums for village level grass root small activist social action groups in rural development. In short a single window approach to service voluntary agencies working in the field of forestry, agricultural research and education, rural development, alternative sources of energy, non-formal education, housing, urban development, water supply and sanitation, women's development, development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, science and technology, environment and ecology.

In the 7th Plan period the preparation has begun to make some of the State level Consultative Groups operational to function as State level PADIs with some funds to support voluntary effort.

### OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS :

#### *Institutional*

**T**HE UNANIMOUS OPINION of all village level voluntary agencies has been the need for an appropriate institutional arrangement to remove bottlenecks that inhibit voluntary effort. These bottlenecks arise from the following factors;

- (i) shortage of funds;
- (ii) delay in processing of cases;
- (iii) lack of sympathy for the work being done at lower bureaucratic levels for the rural poor;
- (iv) lack of institutional support for innovative work which requires flexibility, understanding and funds from government.

It should be possible to minimise these bottlenecks considerably through administrative decentralisation in monitoring support and funds at the State level.

In order to encourage and sustain the spirit of volunteerism it is necessary to tap the human resources available within government in All India Central and State services and who are keen to offer their services and experience to upgrade professionalism in the voluntary sector. This also includes retired personnel, ex-servicemen etc.

The institutional arrangement for a single window approach should ensure that voluntary agencies do not have to run from pillar to post to avail of assistance from government. The present arrangement for voluntary agencies is unsatisfactory. They have to approach various departments and agencies and quite often the bureaucratic and unsympathetic attitude acts as a disincentive to voluntary effort, causing frustration and hardship to many small village groups.

It is proposed that at the Central level voluntary effort in the rural development sector with its allied services is promoted on a much larger scale with greater responsibilities through People's Action for Development India (PADI). It is a registered society under the administrative control of the Ministry of Rural Development with greater representation of voluntary agencies all over the country on its Governing Council. The expenses on administrative costs of PADI in the 7th plan period are likely to be borne by the Government in the same manner as the expenses of Central Social Welfare Board and other societies under the administrative control of various Ministries, are borne by the Government.

It is suggested that the State Level Consultative Groups recommended by the Prime Minister, headed by either the Chief Secretary or the Development Commissioner be registered under the Societies Registration Act as People's Action for Development. The selection and approval of the State Government of voluntary agencies to be members of the Consultative Group with the assistance of the State Government is already in progress and where finalised they could be given a legal status.

#### Financial

**KEEPING IN VIEW** the single window approach, and understanding the need for voluntary agencies to be free from the institutional bottlenecks, the time has come to introduce a system by which a major channel of government funds for implementing anti-poverty and minimum needs programme is through one source, in this case PADI in the Centre and Consultative Group/PADI through the States.

It is proposed that 5% of funds earmarked for voluntary agencies in the Budgets of each Ministry/Department is channelled through PADI. Where 100% funding for a programme is by Central Government this earmarked allocation may be routed through PADI. Where the funding is shared by the Central and State Governments the allocation may be given to PADI of the State Government concerned.

## *PADI (People's Action for Development India) must be strengthened*

The voluntary agencies should prepare projects in accordance with the programme guidelines and submit the same for approval to PADI/PAD. After these projects are examined and approved by PADI/PAD the assistance may be given to the voluntary agencies out of the earmarked allocation placed at the disposal of PADI/PAD for the programme from different Ministries. This is necessary when integrated projects are submitted involving many disciplines where water-tight compartmentalised projects would defeat the idea of flexibility, the need to improvise and minimise bureaucratic delays.

The special strength of voluntary agencies is in trying out new ideas, in innovation and implementing Pilot Projects. Funds for this purpose may be provided under the existing Plan Scheme of Public Cooperation operated by the Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development. These funds may be operated through PADI.

#### Guidelines

**THE REASON WHY** voluntary agencies have acquired such a dubious name in some circles is because we have not been able to divorce it from petty considerations of profit for office and power. Where voluntary agencies have not been able to keep their identity and non-aligned character of the agency, the spirit of volunteerism has suffered.

If the promotion of voluntary effort is to succeed guidelines to minimise delays and harsasment by frequent reference of project proposals to various government departments/agencies will have to be formulated. In this connection after three decades of voluntary effort in the country there is enough technical and human resources available within the voluntary sector to study and evaluate projects and assess their feasibility.

It is with this objective that separate institutional arrangements of PADI and PAD have been suggested.

PADI/PAD should prepare a panel of experts available in different districts/states who are prepared to assist on a voluntary and honorary basis in the implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes through voluntary agencies. The services of these experts should be utilised for examination, monitoring and evaluation of projects. Where projects are multi-sectorial, a team of experts from the voluntary sector could be constituted. This channel will eliminate the present proce-



ture of asking comments of government departments/agencies/functionaries regarding viability, progress and quality of implementation of projects.

These experts can also be utilised to assist voluntary agencies to prepare proper projects, produce audit statements in time as well as annual reports on the work done. This is with a view to upgrade professionalism in the voluntary sector.

Where clearance of State Government in respect of a proposal from a voluntary agency is considered necessary by PADI, the clearance of PAD of that State should be considered adequate.

The forms to be prescribed by PADI/PAD should be simple so that the voluntary agencies are not burdened with avoidable and unnecessary paperwork.

The need for a training infrastructure at the village level staffed more by people with practical experience than theoretical knowledge and located as close to actual rural conditions as possible seems to be a universal demand of voluntary agencies all over India. The heavily institutionalised structure that is ostensibly designed to train voluntary workers can be made available for other purposes.

#### PROGRAMMES FOR IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES :

**T**HE LOWER BUREAUCRACY at the district and sub-divisional level have yet to accept that voluntary agencies have any role to play in the implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes. Notwithstanding the overtures made by government to woo voluntary agencies evidently in very few areas there seems to be an understanding and acceptance of the role of voluntary agencies. Generally in programmes dealing with family planning, education, social welfare and in periods of natural disasters, voluntary agencies are invited; but government sees their role or being extremely limited in purely rehabilitation work and not development. This attitude needs changing and in the 7th Plan period this process will need to begin.

The Programmes and areas in which the participation of voluntary agencies is essential for better implementation of anti-poverty and Minimum Needs Programmes are:

(i) Integrated Rural Development/National Rural Employment Programme; watchdog functions and being the eyes and ears of the people; identification and selection of genuine beneficiaries strictly according to guidelines; proper disbursement of subsidies; correct identification of assets according to felt needs of the people; pilot projects for making the beneficiaries conscious; improve their education and capa-



(L to R) Nirmala Deshpande, Nana Deshmukh, Bunker Roy, K. D. Joshi.

bilities and become organised and assert themselves: upgrade skills through TRYSEM : attempt to locate community assets in socially vulnerable areas in villages : development of allotted land.

(ii) Implementation of Land Ceiling and distribution of surplus land : survey covering actual possession of land, percentage under litigation and reasons why : land allotted to SC/STs : preparation of individual cases for government follow up and action : support for recovering of illegal possession of land.

(iii) Enforcement of Minimum Wages to agricultural labourers : dissemination of information on minimum wages through informal channels to beneficiaries : legal information on laws and rights and how to approach government : feedback to government where it is not being paid : preparation of low cost aids—wall posters, books for neoliterates containing relevant information: educating the lower bureaucracy by focussing issues of minimum wages and setting an example.

(iv) Rehabilitation of bonded labour : identification : preparation of cases for processing through government : release and rehabilitation : follow up support : preparation of socio-economic schemes on a collective basis.

(v) Development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes : pilot projects for the provision of drinking water, education, health facilities, employment generation, upgrading of traditional skills, marketing outlets,

legal protection and education through social action groups at village level : protection of forests for tribals : training in confidence building and group action for the proper implementation of schemes for their own welfare.

(vi) Supply of drinking water : provision of drinking water through installation of handpumps to backward communities, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other socially vulnerable groups on no-profit no-loss basis and on less than approved government rates : site selection and identification of communities : community contribution : repair and maintenance of handpumps with maximum community participation to be supported by beneficiaries themselves.

(vii) Afforestation, social forestry, development of bio-gas and alternative energy sources: pilot projects with emphasis on community participation : research and development in low cost designs in bio-gas : promotion and dissemination of simple information through simple aids : innovative projects after identifying suitable locations for application and replication of appropriate technologies using village resources, knowledge and skills : experimenting in social fencing in social forestry.

(viii) Promotion of family planning.

(ix) Primary health care, control of leprosy, TB, blindness : pilot projects promoting preventive health ideas 'Where there is No Doctor' and where there are hospitals without walls and buildings : de-mystification of health services through trained professionals : more emphasis on training and use of *dais*, village level health workers, *vaid*s, *hakims*, indigenous medical practitioners : expensive use of homeopathy, *unani* and *ayurveda* : holding camps : dissemination of information through traditional media on leprosy, TB and blindness.

(x) Programmes for women & children : implementation of DWCR with government funds : integrating DWCR with socio-economic programmes of rural development.

(xi) Elementary education for children, adult education : innovative projects on low cost alternatives and societal involvement aimed towards linking education effectively to the needs of the people, to employment and to development : experiments carefully and competently documented on the content, methods and timing of education to be related to local needs : provide documentary and tangible evidence to impart formal respectability to all types of learning, especially of informal learning and learning by doing : institutionalise the resources of mechanics, artisans and craftsmen of all kinds and utilise them in the total educational process.

(xii) Consumer protection: disseminating information on rights of consumers : registering cases in court : educating the lower judiciary through actual cases : checking irresponsible publicity of poor quality

## *What voluntary organisations can do— and do it better than Government*

products : regular checks on weights and measures in small towns and villages : producing simple literature for guidance and what to look for.

(xiii) Promotion of handicrafts, small and village industries : compile and disseminate schemes, programmes and projects designed for rural artisans and families below the poverty line : use existing government schemes for assisting artisans in design, quality control, marketing outlets and training in new supplementary skills : conduct studies and highlight problems in suitable forums of misguided official policy to promote handicrafts and village industries.

(xiv) Promotion of science & technology : all promotional activities that contribute to the spreading of the scientific temper in rural areas among the rural people : the transfer of technology and introduction of simple appliances with the widest application and acceptability : give respectability and credibility to the de-mystification of rural knowledge and skills that have yielded results.

(xv) Legal education : publicise the rights and duties of citizens : the rights of the socially vulnerable groups living in villages/slums/cities and whom to approach in government for what purpose : distribute copies of judgements on various issues relating to the socio-economic upliftment of depressed groups for action groups to follow up on the field : training in para-legal work and knowledge on a few basic Acts crucial for rural development work.

(xvi) Rural housing : experiments with a view to replication with low cost materials, functional designs and viable costs with the participation of the community and the beneficiaries : study, monitor and draw lessons from actual projects in the voluntary sector that could be tried on a massive scale all over the country : try out ideas at the slum and village level on problems relating to rural housing directly or indirectly.

(xvii) Slum improvement : legitimise the role of voluntary agencies in slum improvement efforts : designing, planning and implementing slums with the direct participation of the beneficiaries : organise slum dwellers to act as pressure groups.

(xviii) Environment & ecology : study, report, evaluate the state of the environment from the village level : take steps to follow up recommendations with action programmes in a phased manner : highlight issues hazardous to the health, well-being and growth and development of families living in rural areas/slums/small towns/cities due to man made factors.

## TRAINING

THERE IS a general consensus of opinion on the need for training institutions with a difference. The topic of integrated rural development, anti-poverty and minimum needs programme has invariably included the importance of relevant training programmes to make existing delivery system more effective and more responsive to changing felt needs of the rural community. Regrettably these training programmes have been designed to serve a colossal infrastructure that is gradually getting more and more isolated from the rural communities, the actual users and the ultimate beneficiaries, their life pattern and value systems, with the result that it is not only serving a very limited purpose it is proving more counterproductive than ever.

The existing training institutions ostensibly geared to further rural development effort have the following institutional obstacles:

- \* Over 90% are located in State Capitals or district headquarters;
- \* The training staff have more book knowledge than practical experience;
- \* The content of the course is theoretical and therefore lecture-oriented;
- \* A very low percentage of the trainees are front line village level workers or are very unrepresentative of the community they are committed to serve;
- \* The follow up—not to mention the in-service training and back up support—is almost non-existent.
- \* None of the training centres have multi-purpose orientation i. e. training, research, demonstration, providing simple services, developing aids etc;
- \* Physical amenities seem to be the over-riding consideration of the location and establishment of training centres;
- \* They seem to cater to only government officials, the only ones considered appropriate to be called change agents;
- \* The possibility of training human resources from the villages, who are not a part of the delivery system, has not been seriously considered;
- \* Most of the training centres do not convey a feeling of confidence and credibility among the rural trainees simply because they are not designed to provide institutional support needed for the implementation of the programmes in the rural areas

If the category of the target group to be trained include small and marginal farmers, rural artisans, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, Harijan, agricultural labourers and bonded labourers then there is a need

## *IAS probationers should be placed for a while in voluntary organisations*

for changing the pattern and style of training programmes and most definitely the location of training institutions: Training programmes so far have been conducted in isolation to the demands of the rural people and the tendency has been in setting up a top heavy infrastructure in a centralised place away from the rural environment.

Training programmes require to be conducted in informal atmosphere and it should be a place for discussion and an inter-exchange of ideas, thoughts, feelings and approaches. Ideally a place needs to be developed where the atmosphere allows a process of learning from each other. There are many voluntary agencies running training programmes that have managed to develop an informal learning atmosphere and they need to be given more responsibilities for training in the 7th Plan period.

Training in the Rural areas must inevitably be cheap, simple and effective and only then can it be accessible. The purpose is not just to get a certificate and remain unemployable.

The strength of training institutions in the voluntary sector lies in upgrading skills and professionalism at the village level. They have the experience to train illiterate and semi-literate peasants from the target groups the government is trying to reach, and provide assistance. It is time we recognised their contribution and used them more effectively. It would be a constructive step if we could involve voluntary agencies in training in programmes already enumerated in para 6.

Already voluntary agencies are being mobilised to informally train bureaucrats and technologists in government. The Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) under their Rural Orientation Training Programme places agricultural scientists in voluntary agencies for a period of 4 months. In some cases the training of IAS probationers is considered more realistic if they are placed for a short period in voluntary agencies at the village level.

The training institutions especially in the voluntary sector are considerably under-utilised. In the area of disseminating information to families living below the poverty line these training institutions could make significant progress. Since knowledge is power and the idea of training is to impart knowledge and skills, it is necessary that every attempt is made to see such crucial transfers of inputs taking place and then leave it to the beneficiaries to decide how and when to use that power.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

ONE OF THE CRUCIAL roles of voluntary agencies is to be the eyes and ears of the people in the field. Sadly there is very little scope for a reliable channel of information on what is going on in the field to reach higher levels of bureaucracy; and because this is lacking, the effect is being felt in the planning process. What we have planned for, and what we actually see finally on the field, is a result of the feedback process being blocked. Not enough information is being allowed to reach the policy and decision-making levels, for them to make the necessary changes in strategies and mid-term corrections. It does not require a great deal of professionalism and training to pinpoint the weakness and flaws of schemes being implemented at the village level. Where identification of beneficiaries has been incorrect, where problem villages have been left out, where minimum wages are not being paid, where bonded labourers have not been rehabilitated, this only requires unblinded vigilance. Everyone in the village knows, but the tragedy is that they do not know where to report such lapses. The people are even more unsure whether to report such lapses, for they are not confident that the Government will take any action.

When an individual reports to the lowest government official on these lapses, he has vested interest in concealing such information from reaching higher authorities. There is a need to bypass intermediaries and reach the information to the highest quarters so that monitoring and evaluation is possible and it is effective.

The State level Consultative Group of Voluntary agencies is to ensure communication with policy making levels on a consistent basis. Consistent monitoring of programmes and immediate correction are some of the intangible services that voluntary agencies can provide to the Government. In other words:—

(i) the voluntary agencies can provide information on the qualitative aspects of the anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes;

(ii) the voluntary agencies can experiment with effective monitoring system based on community involvement.

There is expertise available in the voluntary sector to conduct evaluation studies on programmes run by grass-root agencies, social action groups and activists because it is presumed they have a more sympathetic orientation and a more realistic terms of reference of assessing people and programmes.

(Tilonia, PIN : 305816, Madanganj, District Ajmer, Rajasthan)



Nanaji chatting with Shri A. N. Seth

## The Challenging Task : A Note

By : Nana Deshmukh

Chairman, Deendayal Research Institute

1. Even billions of Rupees, spent during thirty-two years of planned development, have failed to provide primary education to more than 50% even of the new generation in the age group of 6-14 years. The target of course was to achieve hundred percent literacy in this age-group by the year 1960.
2. Transformation of uneconomic agricultural holdings into economic ones—through consolidation, irrigation, rural side-industry—is the crucial factor in our national economy. But our planned development strategy has failed in this respect. The number of uneconomic holdings is increasing all the time.
3. Every year countless marginal farmers are turned into landless labourers. Their number has increased from 17% thirty years ago, to 38% today.
4. Almost all traditional artisans have lost their livelihood. No effective strategy is in sight to re-train and rehabilitate them. This huge chunk of our rural population is also being reduced to landless labour. A huge mass of ruralites is continually moving into the cities and complicating matters there.



5. A basic facility like drinking water is still unavailable in more than one lakh villages.

6. Millions of children continue to die of dehydration, and, millions of other people, of malnutrition, every year.

7. Even the educated youth find themselves unable to stand on their own legs in town or country, and they cannot be of any help to the uneducated and the unemployed mass of our country.

8. Our strategy of planned development and the political atmosphere here, have created the climate in the country that Government is the only agency to look after all development of society. The influential and intellectual class of society have been given no role in national development. Everybody depends on the Government for everything.

Government, in turn, depends upon the bureaucracy, but this bureaucracy is too wooden to create the right urges and initiatives in the dumb millions. Those who are well off, are not interested in the problems of the poor.

The need of the hour is to change this climate. The educated and the well-off should be encouraged to interest themselves in the problems of their less fortunate brethren. This can be achieved through charitable and voluntary organisations with a commitment to rural development. Government sponsored "voluntary" organisations are a contradiction in terms; they will never be useful in this direction. A big experiment in this respect, Bharat Sewak Samaj, was a total failure.

Rural development organisations cannot be nation-wide or even province-wide. They should be local organisations, working at grass-root level, to be really effective.

They should be encouraged to maintain their independent identity, and have their own strategy and methodology to achieve the target of socio-economic transformation of a given area, and set up a model of community development.

Such voluntary organisations should be encouraged and helped by the Planning Commission, and by the central and the State governments, in every respect, to carry on time-bound experimentation in community development activities.

Varied experiments of this kind at grass-root levels, alone can evolve suitable strategies of development with people's initiative and participation for community development.

Such experiments by different persons and voluntary organisations at grass-root level will involve people in general, and the youth in particular, in development in activities. This, in turn, will create in the country a climate of self-reliance with self-respect, rather than begging for development.

(DRI, 7-E Swami Ramtirth Nagar, New Delhi-110055)

## Workshop on strengthening the movement for constructive work in India

(New Delhi 1-3 March 1985)

### SUMMARY RECORD

THE THREE-DAY WORKSHOP (1-3 March 1985) on "Strengthening the Movement for Constructive Work in India" commenced in the Deendayal Research Institute at 10 AM on March 1. Shri Tarlok Singh, former member of the Planning Commission, was requested to take the chair.

The following attended : Shri R. K. Patil (Acharya Kul, Nagpur), Dr. Sushila Nayar (Kasturba Health Society), Shri Nana Deshmukh (DRI), Shri S. K. Dey (former Minister for Community Development), Kumari Nirmala Deshpande (Harijan Sevak Sangh), Shri Bunker Roy (Social Work & Research Centre), Shri Kishore Sant (Ashoka Foundation), Dr. S. Dasgupta (Seva Bharati), Shri A. N. Seth (Centre for Agrarian Research, Training & Education), Dr. K. K. Mukherjee (Gram Niyojan Kendra), Shri S. G. Sanon (National Institute of Public Co-operation & Child Development), Shri Joseph Thachil (FICCI), Shri D. N. Kapoor (National Institute of Rural Development), Shri K. R. Malkani (DRI), Dr. S. V. Patwardhan (RRRTF) and Dr. Sreedharan (convener).

#### *The following attended as observers :*

1. Mrs. Daljit Jaijee (Planning Commission);
2. Shri Brij Mohan (Industrial Development Bank of India);
3. Shri Kaul (formerly of SC & ST Commission);
4. Shri Anil Batra (Vivekananda Kendra);
5. Shri Yadav Rao Deshmukh (DRI-Gonda);
6. Shri K. D. Joshi (DRI-Beed);
7. Dr. R. L. Patni (DRI-Delhi);

WELCOMING the participants, Shri Nanaji Deshmukh, Chairman, DRI, said : "It gives me the greatest pleasure to welcome you all to this Workshop. You are all persons of great experience and commit-



(L. to R) S.K. Dey, Tarlok Singh, R.K. Patil, Nirmalaji, Nanaji, Bunker, K.D. Joshi.  
ment to the cause of the poor and the down-trodden. I have no doubt that our deliberations over the next three days will strengthen voluntary action in the service of the rural poor."

*Here is a summary record of the deliberations :*

SHRI TARLOK SINGH referred to his discussion with Shri Nanaji Deshmukh a few weeks earlier on how constructive work for rural development could grow into a national movement. The present Workshop had been envisaged as a way of exchanging experience and thinking out a course of action. Shri Tarlok Singh recalled the National Seminar on Constructive Work held in August 1977 at the instance of the late Shri Shriraman Narayan, who was then President of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. This had come as a culmination of a series of conferences on constructive work in which large numbers of workers, specially Gandhian workers, had participated. Some of the participants in the present workshop had also taken part in the 1977 seminar. That seminar had drawn up a Consensus Statement which could serve as a useful starting point for the present discussion. In 1977, a Follow-up Committee on Constructive work was also constituted but, unfortunately, after the sudden demise of Shri Shriraman Narayan, no further action could be taken. While the present Workshop could be looked upon as a continuation of the earlier effort, what made it particularly timely was the formulation of the Seventh Five Year Plan and the role which had been visualised for voluntary organisations in the Approach Paper.



(Clockwise) Patwardhan, Dasgupta, Kaul, Mrs. Daljit, Yadav Rav, Sreedharan, Kishre Sant, Malkani.

SHRI D. N. KAPOOR (National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad) stressed the need for creating a climate favourable for the growth of voluntary work. It was necessary to identify areas within different programmes (e.g. IRDP) in which voluntary organisations could play a distinctive part. Snags which impeded voluntary work should be identified. There was considerable ignorance about plan procedures. Shri Kapoor said that considerable training facilities existed with the NIRD and 22 State-level Institutes of Rural Development. The NIRD had been carrying out special training programmes for voluntary organisations. The available facilities could be used for training voluntary workers. Shri Kapoor referred to a paper prepared by the NIRD on Training of Rural Development functionaries, including non-officials. There should be different types of courses for different categories of workers. Finally Shri Kapoor recalled a story which Swami Ranganathananda had narrated at the NIRD's Silver Jubilee celebrations. He had said that there were more *asuras* (demons) than *suras* (angels) in India today. Only co-operation among the virtuous could redeem the country. "Swamiji told us of the Puranic tale that God once prepared a delicious meal, tied the hands of both *suras* and *asuras* with long wooden sticks, and then invited them to partake of the food. The *asuras*, who took the first chance, kept trying to pick food and put it into their mouths, but they couldn't. When it was the turn of the *suras*, each of them picked food with the wooden stick and put it into the mouth of another *sura*. That is how

they fed themselves—by mutual help. And that is what we need to do in India today."

SHRI R. K. PATIL (Acharya Kul) said that he was trying to search how we could serve the common man. Without that we could not go far. Shri Patil recalled that Vinobaji used to emphasise—"Panch-Shakti" (Five Strengths) for the upliftment of the people. These five strengths are: Jana Shakti (People's Power), Sajana Shakti (Social Workers Power), Vishishta Jana Shakti (Expert Power), Mahajan Shakti (Money Power) and Sashan Shakti (State Power).

Ours was a democratic set-up, in which Governments come and go, political parties come and go. We needed the steel frame of the people who were committed to the service of the community. They were the foundation stones of all development, although naturally, foundation stones were not seen. The true strength of democracy lay in its voluntarism. If development is too slow, people would lose faith in it. Governments should endeavour to serve all groups.

He said he was appointed Food Commissioner of India in 1949. He found that we were importing two million tonnes of grain a year. The Upanishad says '*Annam Bahu Kurvet*' (produce more food). He suggested to Panditji that we might seek RSS assistance in Grow More Food Campaign. But the latter did not respond.

He thought we must all unite in the service of the country. Gen. Wavell once rightly remarked that the strength of a democracy is the strength of its voluntary organisations. We have to raise our democracy to a high level. "If National Governments can work in other countries, why can't they work here? I am afraid if we do not develop fast enough with united efforts, the whole system may collapse."

We need a new climate in the country—a climate that will be free from *paksh* (groupism), *vair* (animosity) and *bhaya* (fear).

Shri Patil was glad that Nanaji had taken to constructive work. He was sure he would make a success of it. As the Sanskrit saying goes: "Small-minded people do not begin a good work for fear of obstacles in the way; the mediocre group stop the good work already undertaken, after experiencing some difficulties; but good people never give up good work, once started, in spite of repeated obstacles (*Prarabhyacha uttam Janah; na parityajante*)".

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR said everybody considers himself nationalist, and another person, partisan. "We fix labels the way they suit us."

Voluntary organisations had been used, misused, abused.

## When Governments change even good programmes are changed

In the Kasturba Trust, they had decided to run a literacy campaign. But every six months Government would ask them to seek a fresh sanction. They got so sick of it, they closed down the whole project. "The official attitude is patronising, when it is not downright hostile. The point is: do they really want us? If Rs. 5 are misplaced by a voluntary agency, there are audit objections. But nobody bothers about the public sector losing hundreds of crores of rupees, year after year. Loans are given, not to deserving cases but to favoured persons. They are slow to give money, quick to institute inquiries, and then every inquiry commission becomes a vested interest."

SHRI S.G. SANON (National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development) urged the need for voluntary organisations to decide on areas of activity on which they would concentrate and not merely be substitutes for Government. It was important that voluntary organisations should help people to become self-reliant. There were instances when voluntary organisations seemed to encourage an attitude of continued dependence on them rather than of self-reliance on the part of the people. People should be helped to stand on their own legs and voluntary organisations should never become any kind of vested interest.

SHRI KISHORE SANT (Ashoka Foundation) said that, in thinking about voluntary work, there was a tendency to visualise institutionalised structures. It also existed among many government officials. Ultimately, it was the individual who was the source of voluntarism. "*Vyakti se yeh shakti nikalti hai*". Voluntarism was closely connected with rural development because of the hope that thereby a newer level of rural civilization might emerge. Already, there is a movement in progress and thousands of persons as individuals and on behalf of voluntary organisations and in institutes of technology and management, are participating in this movement. While such new beginnings have been made, there were also obstacles, as represented by the Kudal Enquiry and withdrawal of income tax concessions under Section 35 CC (A) of the Income tax Act. It would be wrong to think of voluntary organisations as a sub-system of modern industry or of the establishment. There had been instances of good programmes being given up on change of Government, as had happened in respect of Antyodaya and adult education.

DR. S. DAS GUPTA (Seva Bharati) said that total numbers below the poverty line had been increasing. In the culture of the past three decades,

the people had been left behind. There was need to re-examine the work done by the Planning Commission, as this was not merely a question of implementation. "Poverty is growing inspite of planning and, at times, because of it."

SHRI A.N. SETH (CARTE, Ghaziabad) first raised a series of questions which needed to be answered. What was constructive work? For whom was it intended? Obviously, it was for the benefit of those who had been left behind. The next question was not what we were doing for them, but how we could help them to be on their own. Helping tenants and share-croppers to be on their own, and to realise their rights under the law, was also constructive work. Similarly, creating the right kind of public opinioa was also constructive work. Further, though we concentrated on rural areas, the rural-urban problem was linked. Programmes and resources did not flow to those in need, and the essential question was how the weaker sections should be enabled to benefit from the programmes. As individuals, the weaker sections could not be on their own. Therefore, the basic role of voluntary organisations would be to help create conditions under which the weaker sections could be on their own and benefit fully from various programmes and activities.

DR. K.K. MUKHERJEE (Gram Niyojan Kendra), speaking with a background of ten years' work in Gandhian organisations, referred to the problems of small grassroots organisations with just one or two multi-purpose workers which worked at the village level. They operate far away from the Planning Commission and the plans. We have little idea of their numbers and activities. Dr. Mukherjee cited examples of the kind of problems which such organisations had to face from time to time. Regional and national-level voluntary organisations did not always function in an open way and might even become spokesmen for Government.

SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH (Deendayal Research Institute) said that after independence the feeling had grown that social and economic development was Government's responsibility and we had to get everything from the Government. The Government had done nothing to discourage this feeling. Political parties gave the impression that if only the people voted them to power, the Government would do everything in return. Such was the public education that we have had since 1952. The fact was that neither political parties nor Government could do much for the people, unless the latter bestirred themselves.

If the people could win national independence with their efforts, could they not achieve development with those same efforts? Voluntary organisations had neither power nor resources. Their important task was to create the motivation among the people to advance themselves and to



(L to R) Daljit Jaljee, Kapur, Thachil, Sanon.

advance their neighbours. Government and political parties could not create this climate. Without such citizen self-reliance and self-respect, we could not progress. Otherwise, only those individuals and groups would benefit who were already ahead. This situation had to be changed. A strong sentiment in favour of a People's Movement had to be created. This could not be done by the bureaucracy or through the use of Government's resources. Only voluntary organisations could create the necessary urge. There was no need to depend excessively on Government. In turn, such a self-reliant approach could lead to progress in all directions. To create and strengthen the will of the people, is the special function of voluntary organisations. Each voluntary organisation had to do its own work and to work together with others. Such a people's movement is an absolute necessity. It is a condition for achieving Gandhiji's objectives in rebuilding villages.

Shri Nanaji emphasised the need for voluntary organisations to keep out of politics and also to keep out of confrontation. In his own work in Gonda district, there had been disappointments and difficulties, but he had made it a principle never to 'quarrel' with anybody. The objective in view was 'total transformation for total development with people's co-operation'. In Gonda district, over 30,000 tubewells had been sunk. This was the work of the people. As a voluntary organisation, they sought no credit for it. It was important for a voluntary organisation to establish its



credibility. The people had tended to become cynical. They generally thought that nobody worked unless he had a selfish interest.

Shri Nanaji referred to the limitations in Government's action. Government could make laws, as in the case of untouchability or dowry, but other conditions were necessary for their fulfilment. Government should help voluntary organisations. Voluntary organisations should not become, or consider themselves, as agents of Government.

Concluding, Shri Nanaji, again stressed the need for a people's movement, and said that the fuel was there, and the question was how to burn it, how to build up the spirit of self-reliance and self-respect among the people. Without these, what happened was not development. Shri Nanaji also said that, helpful as the Planning Commission might be, voluntary organisations should not depend too much on it.

SHRI S.K.DEY (former Minister of Community Development), describing himself as an explorer, said that he belonged to no organisation and represented nobody. He recalled that he was appointed Administrator in charge of Community Development Administration on 1-3 May 1952. The first Development Commissioners' Conference met on 1-3 May 1952. Funds were to flow in from October 1952. Work started well before this date and a great deal was done in this period, even more than in subsequent years, when resources were plenty. It was not money that did the work, but total sincerity and total identification by the Government headed by Jawaharlal Nehru. Development meant—and meant almost exclusively—development of man. No wonder Vivekananda spoke of 'man-making'. Jawaharlal Nehru also often said that it was the quality of the human being that made a country great. Government could only be a catalyst. The people had to grow in competence and in organisation. That is why we called our programme 'community development.' Development of the people was the first aim.

Shri Dey stressed several propositions :

1. We should define what we meant by constructive work. Was it for material development? Was it for freedom? The battle for people's freedom had scarcely begun. The sense of freedom of the people and self-reliance were essential.
2. There was need for a fifth estate of voluntary, non-political work, independent of the Government.
3. There was need to train voluntary workers and leaders.
4. It was essential to have institutions for research, extension and

## *Will the 21 st. century be humanist or horrible ?*

experimentation Time had moved forward, 1985 was not 1952. Gandhiji's experiments did not give us the answers we needed today. We had gone ahead with material development, but poverty had increased. Over a vast country like India, many different patterns would emerge.

5. Voluntary organisations should equip and organise themselves for thinking in terms of planning.

6. There should be independent evaluation of work done by voluntary organisations at all levels. Ideas were stronger than anything else. The biggest weapon in social advance was ideas.

7. Resources. Where do we find them?

8. Decentralisation was essential. There was hardly any political democracy functioning below the State level. We could not have democracy, without democracy going to the village level. Decentralised economic institutions were essential. Twenty-five nation-wide co-operative organisations had been built up. They had all been affected by corruption and search for power. Social democracy had to be combined with political and economic democracy.

9. There was a strong trait of feudalism and of double-speak and double-think in the Indian character. What was the way out?

10. There was need for cross-fertilization in thinking based on experiences of grassroot groups scattered all over the country. How was this to be achieved?

The UN once asked him to do a report on development in the Third World. He went round the Third World and produced the Report titled "But For Whom?" For he found that this so-called development was not helping the poor. "Everywhere I found the rich getting richer, and the poor sunk in poverty. I have no solution to this problem. But we have to find solutions. For it is a very immoral situation. There must be humanistic leadership to handle this situation.

"They talk of taking us into the twenty-first century. But what is their conception of the 'twenty-first century'? Will it be humanistic? Or will it be a horror? That is the question"

MRS. DALJIT JAJEE (Planning Commission) suggested that voluntary organisations should fill a gap which existed in Government's programmes and organisation. She thought that if voluntary organisations wanted help from the Government, some compromises were inevitable. She suggested also that voluntary organisations should give special attention to the education of the people.

SHRI JOSEPH THACHIL (FICCI) stated that six hundred business houses had involved themselves in rural reconstruction works. In a seminar held last year, the proposal had been made that an Action Group comprising Government, voluntary organisations and business houses should monitor voluntary work for rural development. Shri Thachil favoured the use of the expression 'non-Government organisations' for 'voluntary organisations'.

SHRI KAUL mentioned that he had retired only the day before from the position of Deputy Director in the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission. The problem of scheduled castes and tribes differed not only from area to area but also from one caste or tribe to another. The role of local action groups was specially important. Local organisations and small groups which were coming up should be given support. There should be decentralisation and State Governments and district authorities should assist local civil agencies and voluntary organisations. Also, maintenance support should be provided to local-level workers. Grants from above tended to get bogged down and did not reach local levels effectively. Unless we are willing to stand up, and if need be fight, for the just rights of Harijans and tribals, nothing will happen.

DR. S.V. PATWARDHAN (Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi) felt that voluntary organisations should be able to put forward new ideas. He urged that there should be close rapport between voluntary organisations' and educational institutions and centres and also with associations such as those of lawyers, doctors, teachers, ex-servicemen, etc.

SHRI YADAV RAO DESHMUKH (Gonda Project) referred to the phenomenon of mushrooming of voluntary organisations. There were instances of voluntary organisations on paper which misused development funds received through political support. At the same time, there were examples of voluntary organisations which become dependent on the Government on account of the help taken by them. To begin with, they thought they would have money without strings; before long, it was all strings and little or no money.

## SECOND SESSION (1 MARCH 1985-AFTERNOON)

SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH suggested that a voluntary organisa-



(L to R) Patwardhan, Malkani, Mukherjee, Kishore Sant, Sreedharan.

tion has to work in a given area of its choice, its essential focus being on the transformation of society as a whole. Voluntary organisations were experiments in development. Lessons from successful experiments should be applied in other areas. Shri Nanaji felt that when a voluntary organisation became too big, like the Government it also tended to become bureaucratic.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR said that the vision must be national, the action, local. Certain tasks had to be pursued on an all-India basis e.g. national integration, eradication of social evils relating to dowry, etc. Further, the role of women as agents of social change should be emphasised. Eradication of illiteracy among women should receive primary attention. Writers, poets, dramatists and singers should be mobilised. Significant areas of action should be picked out of the 20-point programme. There were a number of urgent objectives beyond caste and religion, which had to be attained through the initiative and support of voluntary organisations.

SHRI KISHORE SANT urged that the earlier policy framework for anti-poverty programmes was no longer adequate. Also, the present mix of anti-poverty programmes was by no means sufficient. This was because of the massive degradation of natural resources which had been in progress over the past 30 years e.g. deterioration of pasture lands, forest lands, water resources, etc. The Aravali hills had been denuded

of 2000 square miles of forest cover. There was need for new emphasis and thinking on forestry and bio-gas and other measures to counter the depletion of the resource base of rural communities. The people had to be protected from the destruction of their natural environment and voluntary agencies had now to equip themselves for the tasks involved in the effort.

SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH said that two categories of effort had to be organised. In areas in which voluntary organisations were already working, their efforts had to be facilitated. At the same time, they had to be prepared and equipped for new tasks as part of the total planning effort.

DR. SUHILA NAYAR drew attention to new problems which were being created partly as a consequence of development.

DR. K.K. MUKHERJEE urged that there was need for effective linkages between organisations working at national, regional and local levels. He also suggested that voluntary activist groups working at local levels should be strengthened.

SHRI KISHORE SANT said that there was a new situational framework to be taken into consideration in many parts of the country. The Narmada project threatened the life and future of one million people. In the Aravali region, the future of Adivasis was already bleak. There was scarcely any future for Aravalis as a resource. In the poorer regions the ecological balance had been already seriously disturbed. Shri Sant referred in this connection to the 1982 and 1983 Reports on the state of Environment brought out by the Centre for Science and Environment.

SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH referred to the unique pioneering work in water management which Shri Prembhai had developed through people's action in Mirzapur district. This was a model for the country. Shri Nanaji referred to the damage being caused to the environment by a new thermal station located in the area.

He said that in Gonda they were digging a canal which nobody needed, and which could only raise the water table to a dangerous level.

Shri Nanaji said that if development were undertaken on the basis of local materials and local resources and their effective use and preservation, the environment would not be degraded. The emphasis should be on the development of local technology and local raw materials.

Summing up the discussion thus far, Shri Nanaji said that there had to be coordination and sharing of knowledge among voluntary

## *Dubious projects started against people's wishes*

organisations. Voluntary work had to become a people's movement. Then we had to consider how the Planning Commission and the Government could help by bringing resources and training facilities in support of voluntary work.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR observed that in many areas, in the name of development, the environment was being damaged. In Jhansi they have picked a fertile tract to put up a huge Thermal Plant, when non-agricultural land was available close by.

In the course of discussion a number of suggestions were offered. These were:

1. Need to increase irrigation efficiency;
2. Need always to plan in consultation with people at the local level;
3. The fuel needs of the population were a matter of paramount concern. There should be greatly enlarged programmes for fuel plantations and fuel-saving. Planting of trees should be a means for providing better livelihood. There should be much greater emphasis on social forestry and fuel supply;
4. Forest labour co-operatives should be promoted and given a much larger role;
5. The problem of rural artisans, marketing of their products and supply of raw materials and technical advice should receive special attention.

SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH said that the problem of uneconomic holdings should be dealt with in a serious manner, so that the economy of small farmers could become more viable. Voluntary organisations had an important role in providing supplementary work and in tackling the problem of uneconomic holdings.

Shri Nanaji referred to difficulties faced by voluntary organisations at the field level on account of political factors. In this context, national and regional voluntary organisations had a role to play.

KISHORE SANT said trees were being cut for fuel. Magan Chula must be introduced by the million; it saves 40-50 percent fuel and, besides,

it emits no smoke. Udaipur alone wants 1000 solar cookers. Men must be paid to plant trees.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR said she knew of several cases where we started something in the realm of health and the government came and set up a similar institution—just to take over ready-made clientele.

Kasturba Trust started Balvadis and Government set up parallel Balvadis. "Why can't they break new ground? Why do they have to indulge this deliberate duplication and unhealthy competition? You come across cases where a BDO wants a job for his daughter—and so he starts a Balvadi."

SHRI SETH said we have to organise the poor separately. And this need not lead to conflict.

A few years back we used to hear a lot of agrarian violence in Tanjore. But then the agricultural labourers came together. He asked the Collector of Tanjore if this had led to trouble. The latter said 'no' and explained. "Now we have tripartite negotiations. The landlords have the power of wealth. The Panyals have the strength of numbers. This makes for reasonable and balanced agreements."

KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE (Harijan Sevak Sangh) raised the question of how voluntary organisations could join hands both in moulding man and reconstructing the country (*insan ko banana aur desh ko banana*). Coordination among voluntary organisations was essential. We had not given enough attention to combining *insan vigyan* (science) and *atmic vigyan* (spirituality), on which Vinobaji had laid so much stress. Our way of work should strengthen the people and reduce their reliance on voluntary workers. The objective should be that people should become self-reliant and shoulder their own responsibility (*Janta apna kam uthae*). Vinobaji used to say that that work was successful which did not need outside workers after some time. Kumari Nirmalaji likened the mission of voluntary organisations to Bhagirath who caused the waters of the Ganga to flow down to enrich the land. The work of voluntary organisations should be non-violent, non-partisan and non-political. The people should truly benefit from all the schemes. Can we have only such schemes as will benefit the people?

Kumari Nirmalaji referred to some of her experiences in rural work. So much money is poured into development. Where does it get lost? To be able to buy a goat, a person has to make ten trips for a loan. He signs for Rs 500 but receives only Rs 300. By the time he has to repay the loan the goat may be already dead. At the Ganga-Kosi *sangam*, 4000 landless labourers were given *pattas* for 1000 acres of Bhoodan land. But powerful

## How Administration sides with local strong-men

men did not let them take possession. "Finally, we advised the people to occupy the lands forcibly. District officers said it was illegal to cut crops sown by others. We said that it was illegal to plough and sow other people's lands." Speaking of the work of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Kumari Nirmalaji referred to attempts often made to divide Harijans from others. This was a sinister conspiracy.

### THIRD SESSION (MARCH 2 1985 FORENOON)

SHRI TARLOK SINGH recalled briefly the main points made in the discussion on 1st of March 1985.

SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH raised the question as to what different agencies (Ministries, Planning Commission etc.) could do for voluntary organisations.

SHRI YADAV RAO DESHMUKH asked what voluntary organisations had themselves to do to make voluntary work a mass movement.

SHRI K. R. MALKANI (Deendayal Research Institute) pointed to the bottlenecks which voluntary organisations had to face and offered several suggestions, such as exchange of information and experience, re-examination of land reform legislation and of legislation on co-operatives and panchayats, and proposals for possible amendments; setting up of a coordination committee, restoration of income tax concession under S. 35, CC (A) and better implementation of minimum wage legislation and laws regarding bonded labour.

SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH thought that if constructive work activities could be projected through newspapers, journals and the mass media, this would encourage people to undertake voluntary work.

SHRI S. K. DEY mooted the idea of a Consultative Group on Voluntary Action.

DR. S. DASGUPTA suggested that people below 40 should have a large role in whatever arrangements were made for future coordination and development of constructive work. Any committee that might be set up should have large numbers of young people who didn't care. For many young men our papers would not be relevant.



SHR S. K. DEY said that we needed both the younger group, and elderly people of experience who had no interests of their own to pursue.

SHRI KISHORE SANT said that there were now many new dimensions in constructive work.

SHRI S. K. DEY referred to the Consensus statement on Constructive work drawn up in 1977 and said that between 1977 and 1985 the country had changed in character in ways of which we were not quite aware.

SHRI R. K. PATIL said that the total democratic and developmental picture of the country today had to be taken into account. The context in 1977 had been the end of the emergency and the coming of the Janata Government with its expressed sympathy for rural reconstruction.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR emphasised certain fundamentals which continued to remain valid e.g. the stress in the Gandhian approach on peaceful change, the need to mobilise the people and make them conscious of their own strength, the need to mobilise workers from amongst the people and to train workers, the need for support for voluntary organisations from the Government, etc.

On the subject of training, SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH stressed the importance of practical training, of field training.

DR. S. V. PATWARDHAN suggested specially designed courses for voluntary workers with emphasis on practical work. He thought that full advantage should be taken of various Government organisations and programmes to secure training for voluntary workers.

SHRI NANAJI DESHMUKH emphasised the role of motivation and orientation in the training of voluntary workers. The nature of requirements of training for workers of voluntary organisations should be considered carefully.

SHRI S. K. DEY referred to training in horticulture and in new crops and the training of *Dais*, midwives. He agreed that training on the job was most essential. There could also be short-term courses for various categories of workers.

It was agreed that information should be collected on various types of training which were available or which needed to be developed.

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR said that local skills and know-how were being utilised, but needed greater support as well as wider transmission of new accretions of knowledge.

In respect of TRYSEM, a suggestion was made that voluntary organisations—and not BDOs etc.—should help select genuine trainees.

Turning to Resources and Technology, SHRI S.K. DEY referred

## *Voluntary Organisations can expect a New Deal*

to the need for equitable distribution of resources and how this might not occur because of political interventions. He thought that technology in the country had undergone big changes and there was need for programmes for improving standards of craftsmanship at the village level.

SHRI BUNKER ROY (Social Work and Research Centre, Tilonia) mentioned that for the past two years he had been associated with the Planning Commission as Honorary Consultant. In January 1985, at a meeting of 30 voluntary organisations, called together by the Planning Commission, certain important recommendations had been made. Among these were :

- (i) There should be a code of conduct for voluntary organisations drawn up by themselves and acceptable to the Central and State Governments;
- (ii) There should be simple procedures for making funds available to voluntary organisations;
- (iii) Appropriate criteria should be established for voluntary organisations. Among the suggestions were that a voluntary organisation must be a registered society and must have worked in a rural area for 4 to 5 years. It should be a non-profit organisation. Also voluntary organisations must be non-political;
- (iv) There should be wide dissemination of information to voluntary organisations;
- (v) Foreign funds and Government funds should be channelled to voluntary organisations through People's Action for Development (India), PADL. Appropriate procedures for avoiding delay should be laid down;
- (vi) There should be adequate institutional arrangements for voluntary organisations at the State level. Five States had already agreed to constitute PAD(S);
- (vii) It was proposed to have a Chapter in the Seventh Plan on Voluntary Organisations;
- (viii) There was a proposal to set up a Council of Voluntary Organisations for identifying genuine organisations;

(ix) It was felt that success stories of voluntary work should be fully documented and disseminated.

In the course of discussion on the background information provided by Shri Bunker Roy, it was stated that the Council of Voluntary Organisations was being thought of on lines similar to the Bar Council, the Press Council, the Medical Council etc. It was pointed out that though these bodies bore the name 'Council', in fact each of these was constituted along different lines. Thus, the Bar Council was a body of lawyers and the Government had no say in its composition; the Press Council was a creation of the Government. PADI was a committee established by the Government and, when the Government changed, the membership of PADI changed. A suggestion was made that when voluntary organisations had to be accredited, this should be done by their peers and not by the Government. The meeting also discussed whether political parties undertaking rural development should be excluded from the scope of constructive activities. A fear was expressed that under the arrangements which were being contemplated, funds for rural development might mainly reach pro-establishment voluntary organisations. On the other hand, it was stated that voluntary organisations could not be both, voluntary and constructive, and also interested in elections or political activity. A suggestion was made that office-bearers of political parties should not hold office in voluntary organisations.

In the course of discussion on concessions under S. 35 CC (A) of the Income Tax Act, a suggestion was made that, except in Gujarat, the concessions had tended to be abused. Shri Nanaji Deshmukh suggested that, while a code of conduct had to be observed, once a voluntary project had been accepted by the Government, interested business undertakings should be allowed to donate money for the project to the concerned voluntary organisation. This proposal was generally accepted.

A suggestion was made that, apart from the Ministry of Rural Development, there were a number of other Ministries which supported, and were involved in, activities undertaken through voluntary organisations e.g. Social Welfare, Health and Family Welfare, Education, Housing etc. Each of these Ministries would need to have its own arrangements in relation to voluntary organisations operating in its sector.

The meeting next elicited suggestions for strengthening the movement for constructive work and the activities that might be undertaken in this context. Among the suggestions made were:

- (i) There should be a Newsletter which should specially publish success stories of voluntary action;
- (ii) There should be periodic Sammelans, Conferences, workshops etc.

(iii) There should be systematic exchange of documents, reports and other materials between voluntary organisations;

(iv) There should be a Follow-up Group.

• The workshop agreed on the proposal to set up a Follow-up Group on constructive work with all the participants as members.

It was also agreed that Shri Tarlok Singh should serve as Chairman and Shri K. R. Malkani as Secretary of the Follow-up Group.

Shri Tarlok Singh was requested to prepare a Draft Statement of the Conclusions and Suggestions of the workshop to be considered on 3 March 1985.

#### FOURTH SESSION (3 MARCH 1985, MORNING)

The Workshop considered a Draft Statement of Conclusions and Suggestions based on the discussions held on March 1 and 2, 1985. The suggestions made in the Draft were incorporated in a revised Draft. It was agreed that this revised Draft Statement should form the basis of discussion to be held on the afternoon of March 3, 1985 with the Planning Minister, Deputy Chairman and Members of the Planning Commission. □

### —Foreign Money Won't Do!—

IF WE ACCEPT foreign capital, we may have to accept foreign technology too.

Foreign experts and industrialists will initiate production, based on their own technology and machinery.

This may take our economy a few steps forward.

But lacking in deep roots in our own soil, it will not result in development-oriented industrialisation.

*Deendayal Upadhyaya*

## SHROFFS TECHNICAL SERVICES PVT. LTD.

Manufacturers, Exporters, Chemical Process &  
Engineering Consultants.

*We offer :*

Phosphoric Acid Tech., AR & IP/BP Grades  
Phosphorous Pentoxide  
Phosphorous Acid Crystal & Solution  
Phosphorous Trichloride  
Tungsten Salts  
Molybdenum Salts  
Selenium Salts

*For Export :*

Ferric Chloride Anhydrous 98%

*and introducing*

Guanidine Nitrate for Pharmaceuticals.

*Registered Office :*

Excel Estate, S. V. Road, Goregaon West, Bombay 400 062

**Tel : 681369, 685530, 691921 & 692797**

**Cable : ESTYES,**

**Telex : 11 3329 STS IN.**

Unit No. 1

Plot No. 51/1, MIDC Indl. Area

Tarapur, Boisar

Dist : THANA 401 501

**Tel : 590**

Unit No. 2

Excel Phospho-Chem

HAL Compound, Pimpri

POONA 411 018

**Tel : 85116, 84171**

**Gram : EXCEL.**

## Conclusions & Suggestions

REPRESENTATIVES of several voluntary organisations and individuals interested in the development of voluntary work met at a Workshop at the Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi, on 1-3 March, 1985, to consider the lines on which constructive work could be developed in India as a broad-based people's movement for social and economic development and eradication of poverty, specially in the rural areas. The main conclusions and suggestions of the Workshop are set below.

### URGENT AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

2. Notwithstanding material advance in several directions, India faces today many serious and urgent unsolved problems. These include, for instance, widespread and deep-rooted poverty, under-employment and unemployment; women's illiteracy and burdens and handicaps suffered by women; malnutrition and ill-health among young children; increase in the rural proletariat and in the numbers of those below the poverty line, including landless workers, tenants and share-croppers, marginal farmers and rural artisans; waste of human resources and under-utilisation of manpower; inability to meet the basic needs, including drinking water and fuel, of a large sector of the people; one-way movement of rural youth towards urban centres; and marked degradation of the environment in several parts of the country. Under these conditions, in addition to the agencies of the Central and State Governments and local authorities, it has become essential to strengthen and develop all the sources of voluntary action and community mobilisation available in the country. In particular, it is necessary to create the environment in which, instead of depending unduly on the Government, the people in each area, at the community level and through voluntary action, will develop the will and the capacity increasingly to solve their own problems as self-reliant citizens and build up their resources and potential.

### NEED FOR A NATION-WIDE MOVEMENT FOR CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

3. Voluntary organisations, working without distinction in the service of all members of the community, have demonstrated all over the country their inherent capacity to organise the weaker sections of the people, defend just rights and counter exploitation, ensure improved delivery of services to beneficiaries, and enlarge local effort. There are also numerous examples of successful innovation and application of science and technology in the use of local resources and in serving the rural poor. Given due

support, voluntary work can take root everywhere, thereby drawing on vast and currently untapped or under-utilised resources of initiative and leadership. Voluntary organisations working in the long established tradition of Gandhian values, and many others which have come into existence since independence and have often opened up new avenues of social service, together provide a strong base for the steady growth of a broad-based nation-wide movement for voluntary work. It should be the common and agreed endeavour of all to strengthen this movement as a necessary foundation for an equal, classless and casteless democratic and secular society.

## ROLE OF VOLUNTARY ACTION

**4. Poverty eradication and rural development:** Over the past decade, major programmes have been initiated by the Central and State Governments for alleviating mass poverty, expanding employment opportunities, assuring minimum needs to increasing numbers, strengthening the rural economy, raising the levels of productivity and welfare of scheduled tribes and scheduled castes and other backward classes, extending community services, and combating a variety of social and economic failures. These and similar activities will doubtless be further expanded as part of the Seventh Plan. In many areas budgetary resources will be substantially supported by credit from banks and financial institutions. Whatever the scale on which they are undertaken, the practical impact of all these programmes on the life of the people will naturally depend on the quality of management, on ensuring that benefits reach out fully to those for whom they are intended, on avoidance of waste and corruption, and on open and equitable distribution of assets and resources. As watchdogs of the public interest close to the community, alongside government agencies, voluntary organisations can make a positive contribution. They can also play a significant role in organising the rural poor for their benefit. Therefore, the community will gain if they are given a fully accepted role of partnership in planning and implementation at appropriate levels.

**5. Protecting the environment:** In hilly and mountainous regions and in tribal areas, under pressure of increasing numbers, deforestation, soil erosion and environmental degradation generally have assumed serious proportions and further accentuated the earlier problems of poverty and deprivation. There is urgent need in such areas to save and regenerate the environment through effective conservation of soil and water, social forestry and development of alternative energy resources. These are essential areas of activity in which grassroot voluntary organisations can do much to make the people aware of the dangers ahead, enlist their co-operation and participation and help achieve a combination of physical with socio-economic

planning within each area or sub-area. Voluntary agencies have also to play a key role in monitoring and vigilance and help ensure that no damage is done to primary resources as a consequence of uncontrolled and unregulated industrial development.

**6. National commitments:** There are a number of critical national goals to which the country has committed itself without, however, being yet assured that they will indeed be fulfilled. They include, for instance, provision of universal elementary education, including eradication of illiteracy among women; control over population growth; health care for all; provision of minimum needs for all; work for all; unquestioned security of tenure and rights of ownership for cultivators; assured minimum wages in accordance with the law; reduction of regional disparities and accelerated development of backward areas; rapid progress towards a just and equal society and ending of all social and economic exploitation; bringing scheduled tribes and scheduled castes and other backward classes to the level of the rest of the nation; and adequate services for women and children. Besides these, there are other commitments which must soon follow, for instance, planned development of literate rural youth as a major human resource, with its far-reaching implication for the future design of rural transformation and regional and area planning. All these major national goals leave no choice but to harness the entire energy and resources of the people of India, to bring the nation as a whole into action to achieve a new social order which will assure the welfare of the least. For an undertaking of such magnitude, side by side with Government at the Centre and in the States and the institutions of local democracy and Panchayati Raj, voluntary organisations are also under obligation to prepare and equip themselves in a more basic sense than before.

**7. Models of development and innovation experimentation:** Voluntary agencies have unique opportunities of innovative experiments and creating models of development which will be of the greatest value for further development and for national and state planning. Already, in the work being carried out by voluntary agencies all over the country, there are important examples and directions in which other voluntary agencies and Central and State planners and others have considerable interest. Such pioneering and pilot efforts need to be carefully assessed and widely known, and experience exchanged. In this way, better designed action projects at the grassroots can be developed by voluntary agencies in their respective areas and fields of interest. These latter will include, for instance, rural development, generation of employment, action against poverty, intensification of agriculture, dry farming and soil and water conservation, social forestry, development and rehabilitation of rural artisans, education and eradication of illiteracy, health care and nutrition, development of rural youth, social welfare services for women and children, and



many other activities essential for raising the level of productivity, developing human resources and rebuilding the life of the rural community.

### WOMEN AND YOUTH

8. Women and youth hold the key to the future, equally in the movement for constructive work, as in other fields of endeavour. The task in view can only be accomplished as women come to participate as equal partners in every facet of development and become major agents of change. Likewise, the greater responsibilities, opportunities and challenges in voluntary work, as elsewhere, most belong to youth. Larger representation of women and youth in all community institutions follows necessarily from their role in building the future.

### CADRES IN VOLUNTARY WORK

9. In comparison with the past, recent developments have opened up a new range of promising fields of activity for voluntary organisations. In addition to the qualities of social leadership and sense of identity with the interests and needs of the people, there is need now for new skills, for more specialised and technical knowledge, and for capacity to motivate sustained efforts on the part of groups and individuals. Therefore, the most critical task for the movement of constructive voluntary work as a whole is to begin to plan for its own cadres, including their training and development.

10. These matters will receive full study as the scope for voluntary action in the context of national planning emerges more clearly. In the view of the Workshop the better equipped voluntary organisations may well be in a position to institute training arrangements on their own or in co-operation with other organisations. These may be mainly at the field level or in practical work. They may also be able to assist in training personnel from smaller organisations. There should be scope for voluntary organisations to draw upon training resources and facilities available in agricultural and other universities, in institutes of technology and management, in regional institutions, in the National and State Institutes of Rural Development, in co-operative training institutions and other centres. As an integral part of manpower planning, for certain categories of personnel, the requirements of Government agencies and of voluntary organisations would increasingly need to be viewed together. Over a long view, a measure of interchangeability should also be envisaged among personnel working in Government agencies and in constructive work organisations.

### CO-OPERATION IN CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

11. By the nature of their evolution, voluntary organisations have tended to function as distinct entities, each concerned mainly with its own problems and opportunities. There has thus been too little contact

even between organisations in similar areas of work and too little opportunity to learn from one another. There is obvious need now to develop greater interchange of information and experience between organisations engaged in constructive work in different states and across the country as a whole. In turn, such information and experience have to be shared and disseminated widely and followed up through direct contacts between workers and communities.

12. As a first step in building up a system of co-operation among voluntary organisations and for co-operative study of their common problems and needs, participants in the New Delhi Workshop have agreed to continue to serve as a *Follow-up Group on Constructive Work*. A number of voluntary organisations in different parts of the country will be requested to become members of the Follow-up Group. Through mutual consultation, a *National Forum for Co-operation in Constructive Work* might be expected to emerge before long. The National Forum could hope, in due course, to project the needs and possibilities of constructive work organisations at the level of national policy and planning. While voluntary organisations, irrespective of their size or activity, necessarily continue their work in their own way, they would, at the same time, endeavour to build up their collective strength and resources and give mutual support to one another.

### CO-OPERATION WITH UNIVERSITIES AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

13. In its universities with their social science and other faculties (including many Departments devoted to Rural Studies), agricultural universities, institutes of technology, institutes of management and other academic institutions and centres, India is uniquely rich in possessing knowledge and talent directly significant for the grassroots activities of voluntary organisations. Growing numbers of scholars in these institutions are already turning to the study of problems which lie close to the people and their well-being. The concept of research is being steadily broadened to include action-research. Therefore, development of close working links between higher academic institutions and voluntary organisations in different regions becomes a highly promising area of co-operation which will benefit both. These links may be expected to facilitate objective assessment as well as innovative experimentation and will doubtless stimulate the interchange of information and experience on a wider scale.

### RESOURCES AND PLANNING

14. It is believed that, in the context of the Seventh Plan, consideration is being currently given to the question on resources to enable voluntary organisations to take their due share in national development. In the past there has been a high degree of dependence on the part of many voluntary organisations on foreign funds. It is indeed essential that funds from foreign resources, to the extent they are drawn upon, should be chan-

nelled to voluntary organisations only through appropriate Government channels. Lack of funds from national sources has proved to be a severe constraint on the growth of voluntary action in India. Moreover, a limited 'project' approach, commonly adopted in funding, has impeded long-term development by voluntary agencies in terms of local needs and potentials and the efforts of local communities.

15. The main strength of voluntary organisations lies in their capacity to mobilise local resources, manpower and leadership, and to improvise and experiment in given environments. Voluntary organisations need technical help. Therefore, it is necessary that all Government institutions and agencies, at the Centre or in the States, should look upon the needs of voluntary organisations as falling within their area of technical concern and guidance.

16. Equally, with technical support, voluntary organisations require financial support, directly for undertaking activities assigned to them, and indirectly for equipping themselves with the requisite competence to build up local long-term potentials. The desired approach was clearly indicated in the Report of the Planning Commission's own *Expert Group on Programmes for Alleviation of Poverty*, which had Professor M.S. Swaminathan as Chairman. To quote from the Report submitted by the Group in February 1982:

"The Plan provides extensive resources for all aspects of development. These are currently utilised almost entirely through government departments and their agencies. Only a negligible fraction of these resources becomes available to voluntary agencies. Yet, the resources which could go a long way to sustain and expand voluntary effort for rural development in fact subsist within the existing Central and State Plans. One of the main reasons why they do not become available to any extent even to well-established voluntary agencies is that the schemes in different areas of development are designed for implementation entirely or almost entirely by government organisations and personnel. It should be emphasised that, in the very nature of rural development, in each field, there are activities of which some aspects or components could be assigned with advantage for implementation through competent voluntary agencies which might be already at work or whose formation and development could be encouraged. In designing each programme, therefore, the Planning Commission and the concerned Central Ministries and Departments in the States should make special efforts to make out those components and areas of action which can be 'passed on' with the necessary administrative and technical guidance and financial support, for implementation mainly by appropriate voluntary organisations. We recommend that the programmes bearing on agricultural and rural development which are currently under the Sixth Plan should be looked at afresh from this angle by a working group comprising representatives of the Planning Commission, Ministry of Rural Reconstruction, Ministry of Agriculture and, where necessary, other Ministries that may be concerned."

17. It is to be hoped that the Planning Commission will find it possi-

ble to take early steps to constitute a Working Group on the basis envisaged by its expert group. Similar action would be helpful in other sectors, such as agriculture, education, health, social welfare, housing, rural water supply and rural industrialisation. The Follow-up Committee and the organisation which may eventually emerge for strengthening the movement for voluntary work will naturally wish to extend their fullest assistance in studies that may be instituted in relation to development in the Seventh Plan.

18. The better-off sections of society, including those engaged in industry, Commerce and the Professions are in a position to contribute significant resources for voluntary work. It is possible that the concessions under section 35 CC (A) of the Income Tax Act, had in view the larger enterprises in society rather than all those, including medium and small businesses and professional persons, who are in a position to contribute financially, in building up resources for the voluntary sector. In the light of experience, a fresh study should now be made of effective ways of meeting any deficiencies that might have been encountered, and more satisfactory rules and procedures evolved by the prescribed authority. As an example, where a project has been specifically approved by the prescribed authority, the concerned voluntary agency could apply for the allotment of funds contributed by a donor. The main consideration now should be that resources which might otherwise remain blocked should flow more freely and in longer amount for the development of the more backward regions and for programmes and activities in the interest of the poorer sections of the population. Such resources are a necessary supplement both to local resources and to those which can be provided from the Plan budget or by way of credit. If they are utilised according to well-defined priorities and as part of planned effort, the tax reliefs needed will have justified themselves.

19. Participants in the Workshop fully appreciate that in seeking a positive role in planned development, voluntary agencies also accept many obligations in relation to their own functioning. This is an aspect to which further study is proposed to be given.

*For Quality & Quantity*

MONO CHLORO BENZENE  
PARA DI-CHLORO BENZENE  
ORTHO DI-CHLORO BENZENE  
TRI CHLORO BENZENE

*Please Contact :*

*Office :*

## Nascent Chemical Industries Pvt. Ltd.

909, Raheja Centre  
Nariman Point  
BOMBAY 400 021

*Works :*

## Nascent Chemical Industries Pvt. Ltd.

Plot No. 24, GIDC  
Industrial Estate  
Vapi, Dist : Valsad  
Gujarat State  
Pin Code : 396 195



Nanaji with Shri Manmohan Singh and Shri K. R. Narayanan

## Workshop Participants Meet the Planning Commission

NEW Delhi, March 3 — Participants in the three-day Workshop on "Strengthening the Movement for Constructive Work in India", met the Planning Commission and the Planning Minister Shri K.R. Narayanan in Yojana Bhavan here today.

They included Sarvashri Tarlok Singh, Nanaji Deshmukh, R.K. Patil, Dr. Sushila Nayyar, Nirmala Deshpande, K.K. Mukherji, A.N. Seth and K.R. Malkani.

The Planning Commission members present were: Sarvashri Manmohan Singh (Deputy Chairman), Dr. R.J. Chellaiah, Dr. C.H. Hanumantha Rao, Prof. M.G.K. Menon, Dr. Hiten Bhaya, Shri Abid Hussain and Shri K.V. Ramanathan (Member-Secretary).

Dr. Manmohan Singh, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, welcomed the participants of the Workshop and appreciated the path-finding work of voluntary organisations and of individuals like Shri Nana Deshmukh. He said we must all cooperate to improve upon past performance.



(L to R) Sarva Shri K.R. Narayanan, Planning Minister, and Members Planning Commission Manmohan Singh, Prof. M.G.K. Menon, Hiten Bhaya, Abid Hussain and K. V. Ramanathan.

Dr C.H. Hanumantha Rao said that there was consensus that collaboration between official and voluntary agencies must increase. The Planning Commission, he said, was contemplating a chapter on the role of voluntary organisations in the Seventh Plan Document.

Shri Nana Deshmukh suggested that voluntary agencies should be allowed and encouraged to experiment and evolve different models of development. He said that the main job was to make the rural community self-confident and self-reliant. Foreign funds would defeat that objective; and yet there were at present no satisfactory arrangements for national funding of the activities of voluntary organisations. He suggested another look at the Income Tax Act to incorporate an improved version of section 35 CC (A) for 100% tax exemption for bonafide donations to bonafide voluntary organisations.

Shri Tarlok Singh referred to the Planning Commission's Expert Group on Programmes for Alleviation of Poverty which had urged the Commission to set up a Working Group to work out areas of activity within each sector which should be specially passed on to the Voluntary sector. For such areas, resources and technical help should be provided and Voluntary Organisations specially encouraged. This would assist the spread of voluntary work.



(R to L) Dr. Sushila Nayyar, Tarlok Singh, Nana Deshmukh, R. K. Patil, Nirmala Deshpande, A. N. Seth, Malkani, Sreedharan, Mrs. Daljit.

Dr. Sushila Nayyar said that some so-called development work was proving quite disastrous. Right now they were digging a canal in Gonda district that the people did not need, and which could only increase water-logging and salinity. Likewise forests were being cut, doing untold damage to the ecology of tribal areas and hill regions. There were no proper arrangements for drinking water and fuel for the millions.

Dr. Hanumantha Rao said that there was need to institutionalise the funding mechanism for voluntary organisations.

Dr. Sushila Nayyar said that women had played a prominent role in the national movement. But they were not being given an effective role in national development. There should be proper representation for women at various levels.

Dr. Manmohan Singh hoped that a separate and detailed discussion on the role of women development could be arranged in the Planning Commission.

Nanaji Deshmukh said that there was such discrimination against many voluntary organisations on extraneous grounds. He said that the present was an opportune time to do something about it.



Shri Manmohan Singh said the Planning Commission fully agreed that there must be no partisan funding.

Shri Nana Deshmukh said that local voluntary organisations must be consulted on development work.

Shri Tarlok Singh said that, partly because of anti-poverty programmes, excessive centralisation in planning had taken place. It was important that all development activities should be adapted to the precise needs and conditions of different areas and national programmes should be looked upon as guidelines and resources packages rather than implemented mechanically without being carefully related to local needs and possibilities.

Dr. Mukherji said that activities like smokeless chulahs and solar cookers could be specially developed through the voluntary sector.

Professor M.G.K. Menon said the human factor was the most important in development. Voluntary organisations had many dedicated workers. They could carry the message of development far and wide. He said that some sort of accreditation process could be there for voluntary organisations. Once that is done, funding should be done in such a way as to avoid red-tape.

Kumari Nirmala Deshpande said that enormous sums were sanctioned for rural development, but one saw too little by way of results on the ground.

Shri K. R. Narayanan, Minister of State for Planning said that, like MLAs and MPs, representatives of voluntary organisations could also be associated in consultations relating to planning and development at different levels.

Shri K. R. Malkani asked whether any criteria had been laid down for accreditation of voluntary organisations.

Professor Menon said that this had not been done so far, but that is needed to be done.

Shri R. K. Patil said the administration was not flexible enough and that the development process did not percolate. The administrative process needed to be democratised and freed from partisanship.

Shri Nana Deshmukh requested the members of the Planning Commission to find time to visit voluntary projects and see the problems first-hand on the ground.

□

# LETTERS

## Let's have a Forum for Cooperation in Nation-Building Activities

*Shrinmati Lakshmi N. Menon, Plain View, Trivandrum, 695001, Chairman, National Committee for the Eradication of Women's Illiteracy, writes :*

I THANK YOU for sending me the deliberations and conclusions of the March Seminar which I was not able to attend.

( ) I do not like the word "constructive work". Why can't we call the Follow-up Group "Forum for co-operation in nation-building activities", or *Action Group*?

(2) I am in favour of restoring 33 (CC)A of the income tax act which gives 100% tax relief to the donors.

(3) I am not in favour of seeking or using foreign assistance to solve our problems. In fact, the flow of even regulated external assistance for voluntary organisations has had a demoralising effect. We have enough manpower and financial resources to undertake nation-building activities if we decide to mobilise them.

(4) We have had any number of studies conducted by voluntary organisations, universities, Centres for various studies. They decorate our archives. What we want now is *urgent action*.

Therefore,

(5) Let us fix targets for *achievement* (not of expectations) during the Plan period, and allocate funds accordingly. The procedure for releasing grants should be simplified to avoid delays.

(6) Instead of National Sample Surveys, there should be area-wise Studies and Surveys. Periodical assessment and monitoring is a *must*. The various Rural Development departments should be abolished and there

should be only one department dealing with all aspects of Rural Development. Administrative expenses should be brought down to the minimum by doing away with superfluous departments.

(7) Transport facilities should be provided to enable Supervisors to do their work satisfactorily.

(8) The most important thing to do immediately is to fix priorities in development programmes. Minimum needs for human living (living like human beings) should get top priority—to the exclusion of all other things. Food, shelter and hygiene should get top priority. Eradication of poverty is closely linked with eradication of illiteracy.

The Follow-up Group should be regarded not as a forum (a place of public discussion according to C.O.D.) but a national *movement* involving all sections of the people committed to do their share, as citizens, in the nation-building activities.

These points given above, have nothing original or innovative in them, but I feel they are deserving of our consideration.

Apologies for dwelling at length on what is common-place and thanks for sending the papers.

## **'World Food Programme' Offers Cooperation**

*Gaston Eyben, Senior Adviser, World Food Programme, 53 Jor Bagh, New Delhi-110003, writes to Shri Tarlok Singh :*

I have read in the newspapers about your recent initiative in re-inforcing the cooperation amongst the voluntary organisations.

May I offer you my congratulations and best wishes of full success in your efforts.

We all know that the Voluntary Organizations can play a significant role in developing grassroot productive capacity. It should be properly recognized that such a potential could be considerably enhanced by proper funding, coordination and the integration of their action in the development strategy.

I can only hope that the obvious complementarity between WFP approach and means of action, and the ones of the Voluntary Organizations, could be fully exploited.

## **Let's have the Forum as early as possible**

*Prof. K. R. Gangrade, Head, Department of Social Work (Delhi School of Social Work) University of Delhi, 3 University Road, Delhi-110007, writes :*

**M**ANY THANKS for sending me the reports on Workshop and the discussions held with the members of the Planning Commission.

I was not able to attend the Workshop as some of the agencies working in Bhopal wanted me to participate in the discussions they had organised at Bhopal from 28th February to 3rd March, 1985.

I am extremely happy to note that the Workshop has made some specific suggestions to make voluntary organisations and voluntary action effective at the national and other levels.

I do hope that the discussions held with the members will be translated in practice to get the role of voluntary organisations recognised to involve them and get their positive participation in policy formulation and planning. The suggestion of Prof. M.G.K. Menon deserves to be given serious consideration to evolve some criteria for accreditation of V.Os. This may help in getting smooth flow of funds. His emphasis on development of human factor should be the key of voluntary effort in eradication of poverty.

The suggestion of the Workshop to create a National Forum for Cooperation in Constructive Work should be given practical shape as early as possible. The function of the Forum may be (1) Mutual Consultation (2) Action Research (3) Seminars, conferences, meetings and discussion groups (4) Staff Development by organising orientation training programmes (5) Publications and (6) Developing a clearing house. This will help in coordinated and concerted effort to learn from each other and develop competency for work.

## Cadres and Careerism will ruin voluntarism

*Shri V. Padmanabhan, Managing Trustee, Gandhigram Trust, Gandhigram-624 302, Madurai Dist., Tamil Nadu, writes:*

Thank you indeed for sending me the text of the statement adopted by the Workshop as also the report of the discussion with the Planning Commission. I should say that the test has been prepared covering important aspects of constructive work. I am a little concerned about building a cadre in voluntary work. This may develop a careerism rather than voluntarism. Further, the suggestion to use the training facilities of the National Institute or the State Institutes of rural development as also Co-operative Training Institutes, will make the cadres imitate the government servants and lose the fervour for service. It would be good if constructive work does not develop bureaucracy and structured administration.

□

## DRI Serves Bhopal



In the wake of the Bhopal gas tragedy, Dr. Nand Kishore and Dr. Pathak of DRI, Gonda, went there and served over ten thousand victims with great devotion. The DRI Medical Van became a symbol of great hope.