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THE STORY OF TWELVE VILLAGES IN THE  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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MINISTRY OF  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI



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*“—— You can sum up and write down on paper the material achievements of a community project—all the additional food grown, the houses built, schools and dispensaries, better roads, tanks, wells and so on..... It is pleasing to see that list, but somehow my mind gropes beyond that list to the woman or child behind it. The house may be good but it is the builder of the house that counts ultimately. It is to the builder my mind goes and we want to make the people of India all builders. So, this scheme of Community Projects, appears to me to be something of vital importance not only in the material achievements that they can bring about, but much more so because they seek to build up the community and the individual and to make the latter a builder not only of his own village centre, but in the larger sense of India.”*

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU,  
*Inaugurating the Development  
Commissioners' Conference,  
May 7, 1952.*



## FOREWORD

The Community Development programme, which now covers more than 3,00,000 villages bringing in about 165 million people within its orbit, is essentially a scheme for human development. It aims at all-round development of India's half a million and odd villages through the initiative and effort of the villagers themselves, Government offering only some technical and financial assistance.

Improvement of agriculture, better housing, wider education, development of cottage industries, improved health, easier communications, promotion of cultural activities and welfare of women and children naturally receive pointed attention under the programme. The emphasis, however, is primarily on the development of self-help, community thinking and cooperative action so that the people, combined in institutions, are able to manage and run their affairs on their own, making ultimately the villages self-governing units of the larger Indian democracy. Physical achievements, impressive though they are, can only be a partial measure of the success of the programme. Indeed, a more correct assessment lies in the extent of change in attitude in the individual as well as the depth of solidarity and self-reliance in the community which the programme succeeds to generate.

Miss Jean Joyce, Consultant in Cultural Affairs in the Ford Foundation, New Delhi, has had the opportunity of seeing the implementation of the programme in the field. In the following pages, she has sought to relate from her personal experience some significant episodes in the life of a few community development areas in Andhra Pradesh. This objective, but nevertheless interesting, narration will, it is hoped, give the readers at least an inkling of the impact the Community Development movement has made on the outlook of the people in some otherwise obscure villages.

The Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation owe a debt of gratitude to her for the pains she has taken to record these glimpses of the human import of the fascinating endeavour in rebuilding rural India.

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT & COOPERATION,  
NEW DELHI.

*Director of  
Information and Public Relations.*  
(v)



## INTRODUCTION

Bidar City, some 80 miles west of Hyderabad, was, for a few decades in the 15th century the home of the Bahmani kings. Their choice was a good one, if brief. At 2,000 ft. above sea level, the nights are cool, even in summer. The dense shade trees which cluster even now around the villages, give the pleasantly rolling landscape a grace and charm rare in that austere arid region. Cool green grapes grow on the hillsides. The "black cotton" soil is fertile. In a good season with good rains, jowar and sugarcane—the area's two chief crops—must have given high yields and revenue to the Bahmani treasury.

But like the now crumbling Bahmani Palace in Bidar City, much of the area had in the intervening 700 years since its royal heyday, fallen into ruin, a victim first of the bloody wars of a waning dynasty, then of neglect, then of the disastrous taxes and absentee rule of jagir administration.

The area that in 1953 was put under the community development programme was typical of a region for its backwardness, its apathy and its decay. Not many villages now, after 6 years and more of development work, show what the area was like before the programme began. But there are some, and in one recently searched out, the evidence of the past is there—in the debris, the rubble, the appearance and very odour of decay. The houses—even those made of the fine laterite stone of the area, crumble without repair. Heaps of fallen stone, rotting doorways, molding thatch, domestic filth block the village lanes. There is no school, or perhaps some few pupils sit with an unlettered master. Bullock trails, rutted and wavering, are the sole approach; in the heavy monsoon rains of June and July, the village is cut off to mold, to decay a little more, in isolation.

In 1953, such was not one but some 300 villages in the area. But there were, under the rubble so to speak, both assets and some promise. With the end of the jagir system, most of the lands became owner-cultivated. There was the good soil which, if properly manured and watered, could again become rich and fertile. The rainfall—when the monsoon came on time—was fair, 30 inches annually. Although there was little irrigation (about 6% of the cultivated land was irrigated), plenty of ground water was available if wells could be sunk.

Compared with other areas in the state, the population was not dense; there was room to grow. The two traditional local industries—tanning and weaving—could, if aided, provide fuller employment. There were plentiful supplies of that useful and handsome building material, red laterite rock, available for new schools and houses. And, as events proved, there were beneath the apathy of the villages, a desire and potentiality for change, a spark that could be kindled.

On the whole, it was felt that the end of jagir administration, so long repressive, had had the effect of a release upon the people, readying them to expect, hope for, and to welcome the advances and benefits long withheld.



It was in this setting that, beginning 1953, a group of 300 of the most backward villages were brought under the India-wide community development programme, first as the less intensive National Extension Service (NES) blocks, later as intensive "CD" (Community Development) blocks to continue for the next three years.

The aim of community development here, as in India as a whole, was to "transform the social and economic life of the villages"; to create in the rural people "a burning desire for a higher standard of living and the will to live better", and to lift the rural community to "higher levels of organization."

The "essence of the programme" was self help, the participation of the people in their own advancement. The method of the programme was extension education—to persuade, to encourage, to educate the people to help themselves. The "agent" of education was the extension worker—the technical extension officers in each block of 100 villages, the village extension workers, the gram sevak, living and working in each small circle of villages.

While some of the area's problems were specialized, the block's specific programme followed that laid down for all village development work throughout India. In substance, the programme was :

- to help villagers produce larger and better crops
- to develop more schools and bigger school attendance
- to improve rural housing and village planning
- to improve health and sanitation
- to develop roads and other communications
- to stimulate village industries and local crafts
- to develop cooperative societies—for purchasing, for marketing, for rural credit
- to stimulate by social education, a sense of community consciousness and responsibility, strong village leadership and democratic institutions, joint community action toward solving village problems.

To achieve these aims, the development area had in every block an organization, a designated amount of funds and, on paper at least, a specified staff. It also had at its beginning an exceptionally fortunate share of outstanding leadership, imagination and insight from its chief officers, its gram sevaks and its village people.

Since it first began, the programme has gone through many phases. There was the early ardour, the eagerness to bring about changes, to awaken, to pioneer, to try out many approaches in this extraordinary experiment of transforming the lives and the outlook of a vast and backward rural people. As in other development blocks throughout India, there was emphasis in the early days on building roads, *panchayat ghars*, housing, schools—the physical symbols of progress. There have been periods of timidity, of less intensive efforts, of red tape rigidity.



The reorganization of the States which divided part of the area between Mysore and Andhra Pradesh brought other changes—shifts of personnel, new accounting procedures, in some cases shortages of funds. Here too, as elsewhere, there have been re-evaluations of targets, of methods, of the programme itself.

The story of the development programme in these six and a half years, of what it has accomplished and how in these ancient villages, can be told in many ways. There is the story of targets won—the number of schools built, roads constructed, children in school, Panchayats and cooperatives registered, funds expended. But another, perhaps more illuminating, story is of what leaders it has found and encouraged, of what lessons it has taught, what changes and improvements it made that have endured; and perhaps most important of all—of what hopes and new problems it presents today. Such a story can best be told through the villages, through the village people, and those who live and work among them.



## I. GANGWAR—A DAY WITH GHANI, GRAM SEVAK

There are 12 village workers in Mirzapur block and, rank aside, they are the most important workers there. Ghani, the *gram sevak* for Gangwar, a soft-spoken, quick and earnest young man of 25 who is one of the block's best village workers, would modestly deny this, as would his fellow *sevaks*. But to spend a day with Ghani in Gangwar is to see how and why change has come to the villages.

Gangwar is one in Ghani's "circle" of eight villages, each of which he visits at least every fortnight. It is small—some 500 people in all. Compared to some of his other villages, it is rather backward, chiefly because it had long been torn by factions, and until recently, had no accepted leader.

This morning, on a day in late June when the monsoon clouds loom heavily and rain alternates with quick flashes of sun, Ghani reaches Gangwar before seven. He has come by cycle from his home in Mirzapur,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away, and come early, to see the farmers before they leave for their fields.

Parking his cycle at the *panchayat ghar*, his first stop is the house of Gangwar's sarpanch, Shri Linga Reddy. Like every well-trained gram sevak he will approach a village only through its leader, and Ghani has been particularly concerned, in Gangwar, to build up local leadership, and develop some experience and interest in community action so that development may go more swiftly.

Shri Reddy is a mild-mannered man, of perhaps 45, his close cropped head partly grey. As sarpanch, he is rather too hesitant and unsure of himself, but since he has been accepted by the village's several factions, Ghani has concentrated on helping him become a stronger and more effective leader. In the two years Ghani has worked here, he and Shri Linga Reddy are by now good friends.

Accepting a proffered glass of tea, Ghani sits for a moment to talk with the sarpanch in the small *diwan khana* reception entrance of his home. Have any problems come up since his last visit ten days ago? Is there any particular thing the sarpanch needs help with? One problem, replied Shri Reddy, is the panchayat's compost pit which is now full and ready to be topped. On a visit some weeks before, Ghani had shown the panchayat how to make compost which they are planning to sell to earn some income. Will Ghani show them how to top the pit properly?

Shri Reddy names other problems, gives other news. The sowing has started, now that the first rains have come. One of the Harijans who is building a house with a block loan needs Ghani's certification of the work so far done, to get his next loan instalment. Some other farmers want help in filling out applications for fertilizer loans. The *chitkal* group is very enthusiastic. About twenty men and boys will



be ready for the *chitkal* teacher in the evening. Rains have stopped up some of the village soakage pits—can they be fixed? Together Ghani and Shri Reddy plan a programme of work for the day.

Almost every part of Ghani's training as a multi-purpose village level worker will be called upon. As the community development programme foresaw, from its beginning, "the peasant's life is not cut into segments in the way the Government's activities are act to be; the approach to the villager has therefore to comprehend his whole life, and must be made through a common agent, a multi-purpose village level worker".

Ghani may at any time he needs call on the agricultural or co-operatives officer in the block headquarters, on the veterinary surgeon, the doctor—to help handle or solve some village problem needing more technical skill or knowledge. But today in Gangwar, or any day as he goes to his village, he is the "common agent" who is in touch with and must comprehend the village's life as a whole.

Word about the compost pit has been sent ahead to the panchayat members and they have now gathered at the sarpanch's house, with a small group of cultivators—perhaps ten men in all and as many curious youngsters. Many wear, slung over their shoulders, the black coarse cloak used in the area as protection against a sudden monsoon down-pour. All of them know Ghani and have long since accepted him as a guide and helper and "as a son". They are especially at ease with him because he comes from their own district, and knows their ways and their problems.

As greetings are exchanged, Ghani takes a moment to ask what they are sowing now that the first rains have come. Jowar, pulses and grams. Are they treating the jowar seed with sulphur before sowing to protect it from jowar smut? Only a few say yes. Ghani says, if you wish, later we will go along to the fields and I will show you. The sarpanch, one of the few who said yes, suggests they do it now before it begins to rain, and at Ghani's request, sends in to his house for sulphur and other supplies needed for the demonstration.

The group, with the youngsters, make their way to a nearby field owned by one of the group. His labourers are already there with bullock team and the seeder; a few men from adjoining fields gradually drift over to watch. Ghani squats down on the dark wet earth, holding the black earthen pot which has been brought with the jowar seeds. He sprinkles into it a half handful of the sulphur, which falls, a brilliant yellow, against the black earthenware. One farmer asks how he measures the amount. It does not matter, Ghani says. If you take too much to coat the seeds, any excess will fall to the bottom and can be used again.

He picks up a coarse white cloth which has been brought, deftly stretches it over the mouth of the pot, asks one of the men to tie it with a string. Holding the pot carefully, he begins to shake it slowly round and round, up and down. This he says, will coat the seeds inside.



He hands the pot to each man in turn, letting each shake and learn. Ghani unties the cloth, lifts out a handful of seeds now coated yellow. You see how easy it is, he says; you can use just things you have at hand—a cloth, a pot, a string—and your seeds are protected from the moment of sowing.

Ghani rises lightly, wipes his hand on a red handkerchief, and with a last word of advice to the man with the seeder, goes along with the group back toward the village.

The panchayat's compost pit is just outside the village. It is a 5 × 3 (ft.) trench and full to the brim—of straw, weeds, village refuse and sweepings. Ghani begins another quick, clear demonstration on how to top the pit.

Working quickly, and carefully explaining each step as he goes, Ghani shows how the filled pit should first be wet with a mixture of water and dung, then covered with a thin layer of soil, wet a second time, then covered with a final heavy topping of soil. As before, he uses the best extension methods—doing the work himself with his own hands first, then handing the pot or shovel to one man after another to let each share and learn the process by doing it themselves.

Now he says, stepping on the earth cover, the soil must be stamped down. If this is not done cracks will form, and the heat which is “cooking” the compost below into good manure, will escape. Ghani stamps the earth as he speaks, joined by the others. The earth is now packed solid. Pulling his red handkerchief from his pocket, Ghani fastidiously wipes his hands and flicks specks of mud from his neatly clean and pressed khaki trousers, talking the while. In a few days, he says, sow some sunhemp on the top, and nitrogen will be added to the compost, excellent for crops. In two months the compost will be ready for use as fertilizer.

The group leads the way back in the village, and before they break up Ghani squats down with them under the tree by the *panchayat ghar*. Rapidly, deftly, he reviews the methods he has shown in the field and at the compost pit, answering questions, clinching his points and the lesson. He speaks clearly, and with enthusiasm, at once business-like and persuasive. His hearers are absorbed, attentive, respectful of Ghani's own background as a villager, of his training in extension work, of his three years of skill and experience as a village worker—and his faith and enthusiasm in rural work. Watching him, one remembers that even as a young student, Ghani has been a leader—of scouts, of student unions, and that it was his voluntary experience in and enthusiasm for constructive work that led him to become a gram sevak.

After a moment, prompted by one of the villagers, the sarpanch tells him that the rains have turned some of the streets and lanes of the village into a mire of mud. What can be done? Build drains, Ghani replies without hesitation. Plenty of stone is available in Gangwar;



the only cost will be their own labour. If they wish he will help them lay out the drains, but the many stone masons in Gangwar know well how to do this work. The sarpanch agrees this should be done. One or two others also agree, saying that cutting the drains will be easy, now that the hard soil has been softened by the rains.

The group rises and breaks up. As the sarpanch and Ghani stand talking for a minute, a Harijan comes up. One of the ten Harijans in Gangwar who are to receive home building loans, he has been promised a loan of Rs. 300 for the roof when he finished the walls with his own materials and labour. The walls are now raised and he asks Ghani to inspect his work, and give him the certificate necessary. Ghani and the sarpanch go off to the site, and in a few moments return to the *panchayat ghar* where Ghani makes out the necessary papers.

A villager and his son have been waiting, and when Ghani is finished, they ask if he can come now to help them repair their soakage pit. They lead the way to their house, Ghani walking with him arm around the boy's shoulders. Squatting down with the householder, Ghani helps clear out the clogged pit. He explains each step to the sarpanch, who has come along, as well as to the householder, so they can help others who in the monsoon may have the same trouble. Ghani speaks to the boy, and the lad fetches a *lota* of water; and Ghani washes his hands and smoothes back his wavy black hair.

How is the school?, Ghani asks the sarpanch on the way back. Perhaps they might go there together. One of Ghani's jobs is to check school attendance—and he hopes to teach the sarpanch to consider this as one of his own duties as village leader. Gangwar does not have a new school; but each day a class of 20 children meet on the long verandah of a private house donated for the purpose. It is a sort of school familiar to Ghani, since he went to one very like it in his own village before ambition carried him—at considerable sacrifice to his family and privation to himself—to Bidar City and Hyderabad for his secondary and intermediate studies, and later his extension training.

As Shri Reddy and Ghani go up to speak to the teacher, whose desk is at one end of the verandah, the children stand up from where they have been sitting in neat rows on the verandah floor. Ghani is well known to them. Here and there, amid the faces trying so hard to be serious and correct, big sweet smiles flash out. Ghani asks if all the children have come today, and the teacher calls the roll. Each child answers present—attendance is cent per cent.

Ghani goes down the rows : "Show me your hands—are they clean? Did you wash them before school? Let me see your nails. So clean? *Shabash*; How about your teeth?". A big smile flashes in a dark face, "Clean too? *Shabash, shabash!*". And for those whose hands are dirty, there is a friendly scolding, an admonishing pat on the back, a warning to do better next time.



Back with the teacher, Ghani suggests he too make a health inspection like this each day, so that the children learn daily habits of cleanliness. Now, he asks, has every child been vaccinated for small pox? Row by row every child says yes. Shri Reddy confirms this, adding, in a serious little lecture to the children, that when he was a boy there was no protection against this disease. They should be happy that now, with the block's health programme, they are safe from such suffering and danger.

As Ghani and the sarpanch take leave, the teacher brings up a problem. One boy is ready for the fifth standard, but the school is not equipped to teach him. What should be done? Ghani's answer is ready, and addressed to the sarpanch as well as the teacher. Make arrangements to send the boy to Mirzapur,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away; that is the nearest fifth standard school, and already it has taken several children from small nearby villages like Gangwar.

It is now well past noon, and today, although Shri Linga Reddy presses him to stay for food at his house as he often does, Ghani says he must return to his own home. His father and sister have just come to visit him, and he must see that they are provided for. He will return, he says, about four. The *chitkal* teacher is coming at four as well, and Ghani asks Shri Reddy to assemble the group who are learning the dance. The farmers who wish to apply for fertilizer loans can also come at that time; Ghani will check the applications.

When Ghani returns, the *chitkal* teacher has already come and his group of 25 young men and adults have gathered by the *panchayat ghar*. The rain has still held off, as it has all day except for a stray drop or two, and with the help and encouragement of Shri Reddy and Ghani, the teacher, a youngish seriously intent chap, gets them started at their practice under the spreading tree by the *chawdi*.

*Chitkal* is a type of stick dance once popular in Bidar and now being encouraged and revived by the block staff, for both recreation and social education. The sticks are double—two flat strips held together with a chain and fitted between with metal discs. When the two halves are clacked together, the discs give a tambourine-like sound, pleasantly jangling. The dance itself has a rhythmic intricate step accompanied by the clacking of the sticks, the flourish of red handkerchief, and the chanting of a song—a prayer for good harvest.

Ghani has suggested that Gangwar learn *chitkal* for a special reason. He has been concerned that the village has no youth club and is not developing young or adult leadership. He hopes that by learning *chitkal* together—it takes three months' instruction to learn it well—Gangwar will become more familiar with group and community action, and from learning to join in a common recreation, be more ready to share in constructive work. He is already encouraged that *chitkal* immediately became popular, and the group of twenty-five dancers readily pays the teacher his Rs. 15 a month.



The group has already been practising several weeks and, knowing how to begin, at once forms into a circle. In the centre sits the harmonium player and the *tabla* player. Their instruments have been supplied by the block to Gangwar, as to most villages in the block, for the village's *Bhajan Mandal*. Each of the dancers holds a pair of sticks and a long red handkerchief. As the dance begins and picks up pace and rhythm, the group weaves round and round and in and out of the circle, each movement faster and more intricate than the last. Now and then the teacher, with a shrill whistle, stops the group to correct, or to explain the next step.

Ghani watches a few minutes with Shri Reddy, and other villagers who stop by as the late afternoon brings them home from the fields. A dozen or more children stand with intent fascination, watching every move of the dance.

Several men come up to speak to the sarpanch. They are the cultivators who want short-term loans to buy ammonium sulphate fertilizer. Ghani is pleased to see them and jokes and talks with them—for the last several visits he has been demonstrating and urging the use of this fertilizer for better crops. They ask him for his recommendation for their loan. This is essential and must be based on a check of the acreage to see if the amount of fertilizer requested is correct. With the sarpanch, Ghani and the men set off for the fields. Before dark, Ghani has approved the amounts asked, made out the applications. These he packs in his cloth shoulder bag to take to the block development officer, for approval. From the BDO the applications will go to the tehsildar, and when sanctioned, the farmer will be notified to get the fertilizer from the taluka godown.

As the men sit together in the *panchayat ghar*, a glass of tea comes for Ghani from the sarpanch's home, and there is a moment of quiet talk—of the rains, of crops. Some of the *chitkal* dancers, their practice finished, stop to join the talk for a moment, along with villagers driving in their cattle for the night. At last Ghani pulls away his cycle and starts home, with the *chitkal* teacher on the seat behind him.

Usually, as Ghani goes to each of his circle of villages he "makes camp" for the night, as his schedule requires him to do 12 nights a month. When he does, he stays with the sarpanch or other village leader, the school teacher or a friend. Often it is friend and young village leader both. Ghani, as an active young worker, educated and keenly absorbed in rural work, has many friends among the rising young matriculates like himself who, like him, could not go to higher studies because their families could not afford it. In the block's young village level workers like Ghani, they find companionship, guidance and enthusiasm for improving their villages, and a new sense of purpose and hope.

Usually when Ghani makes camp in a village, he has a full programme for the night. In the early twilight hours he gets the farmers together to hear and discuss the farm broadcast from Hyderabad, to



talk over events in the newspapers which either he, or the village teacher may read aloud. Later, after the evening meal, he usually takes the adult literary class. Frequently he asks the sarpanch to call a village meeting or a meeting of village leaders. He will talk to them about starting a co-operative, about the use of fertilizers, the need for a school. He tells them what the services are that the block has available for the village, how its extension officers differ from officers of the old jagir administration which, as he says "cared for nothing but to collect revenue". Or, the *Bhajan Mandal* will meet, using the harmonium and *tabla* supplied by the block, and Ghani will sit late with the villagers in the glare of the petromax lantern, listening to the singers.

But tonight he must go back home, to care for his father and sister.

As he comes to it in the near darkness, Ghani's home in Mirzapur is trim and welcoming. It is a neat two-room quarter, like those of his eleven fellow village level workers. Waiting shyly in the doorway, keeping in the shadow so that she may not seem too bold, is Ghani's young wife of three months. Even the shadow cannot conceal that she is pretty. Ghani greets her, but, as in the custom among his Muslim people of the area, does not look at her directly.

After going in to greet his father and sister, he sets down his cloth sack in the second room of the house, which serves both as sleeping quarters and Ghani's office. A first-aid medicine chest is there which commonly he takes with him on his tours of the village, some agricultural implements and supplies. There are some papers, some files, a few booklets.

Some of these booklets have come from the extension training centre at Rajendranagar, near Hyderabad, where Ghani received 6-month's training as a multi-purpose extension worker. It was there that Ghani, like his colleagues, learned, in classroom and in "practicals", how to be a multi-purpose worker—to make a compost pit, to sulphur seeds, to build drains and smokeless chulas, to give elementary medical and first-aid care to villagers and their cattle, to improve village sanitation, to understand group action, to learn ways to help villagers develop leadership, "to help them help themselves".

Later tonight, as every night, after he has his food, Ghani must take up again the papers he is now putting aside, to write out the required diary of his day's work. This diary, every village worker must prepare for his record. Setting down what he has seen and done, what targets he has met, where failed, where succeeded, is also a valuable exercise in self-evaluation for him. It is useful too when Ghani, with the other village level workers of the block, have their monthly meetings, at block headquarters with the block extension officers, to discuss new problems, new programmes, new approaches.

Just now, while his wife and sister prepare the food, Ghani goes to sit with his father. They speak of the family and of Niyalkal where Ghani spent his childhood and where two of his aunts still live. They speak of Ghani's work. But his father is puzzled by Ghani, and what



he does. A clerk under the old jagir administration, at the jagir court near Niyalkal, he remembers only the ways and authority of the jagirs. He cannot understand why Ghani, a government worker of rank equal to that of revenue inspector, goes every day, in dry and rainy season, to the villages.

He asks, "Why do you go out to them? Make them come to you". Ghani smiles. The old man persists, his voice sharp with the echoes of his old authority. "At least when they come, make them stand before you. Why do they sit when they are here?" And Ghani smiles again. He thinks of his day he has just spent at Gangwar, in the fields, at the compost pit, the school, at the *chitkal* game, of his efforts to build leadership. He is too modest, and now too loving a son, to say that, if the villages are today rising out of the decay and isolation of the past, it is precisely because he and the other gram sevaks, do go out and do sit down with the village people.



## II. GUNALLI—THE RISE OF A LEADER

When the mobile health van drives into Gunalli and stops at the *panchayat ghar*, Shri Mahantaiahswami, the sarpanch and a man of action, has everything ready. The table for the doctor is set up in the *chawdi*. The patients—men, women, children, have been assembled and queued up. A table is arranged in the courtyard under the big tree, for the compounder to set out his medicines and dispense them according to the doctor's prescriptions. The trained *dai* who lives at Gunalli to serve a circle of five villages, is on hand to help the women and children.

The village looks as if it had been swept spotless just for the doctor's coming, but that is not true. Gunalli has been blessed with a sarpanch who, under the stimulus of the development programme, has emerged as a real and vigorous leader. Each opportunity offered by the block—of which the health and sanitation programme was one—he has seized for his people, enlisted their enthusiasm, to work for and support it. Gunalli's clean streets are a matter of community effort and leadership.

Today there are about 50 patients waiting. Only a few have really serious ailments; between the doctor's monthly visits, Gunalli's village level worker and the energetic sarpanch have seen to it that any emergency and serious cases have gone to the clinic held daily at the project hospital at Mirzapur.

There is a baby with fever, a boy with scabies, an old woman with arthritis, a farmer who complains of a persistent cough and pains in the chest, a baby with a sore and swollen stomach, a young mother who like her baby has infected eyes, dysentery cases, malaria cases, a labourer with a deep cut on his arm, which needs re-bandaging since his visit to the hospital the week before.

The doctor is a young man, only five years out of medical college. He has had two months' training in rural public health work but he is not yet, perhaps, at ease with village people. Business-like, stiff, over-serious, he does not smile.

But the patients will not be critical of this good doctor—the first ever to come to their village. And Shri Mahantaiahswami and other panchayat members, are there to put them at ease. Swamiji, turbaned in the checked blue cloth popular in his area, authoritative, agile, humourous, is clearly in charge—shepherding the group, encouraging the hesitant, clarifying and expanding the patients' stories, explaining the doctor's questions and instructions. Both deftly and respectfully, he reassures some of the old women who are especially shy; in the old days, no woman dared enter the *chawdi*.

For each patient, the doctor either writes out a prescription, or a request to come to the hospital. Patients with prescriptions go out to stand at the compounder's table—to get the eye drops and ointment



for the infected eyes; the sulpha quinadine or bismuth carbonate for dysentery, the quinacrine for malaria, the iodine and antiseptic swab for their cuts and bruises, the sulphur ointment for scabies, the multiple vitamin pills, the cough medicines. Each has brought some container for the medicines—an old bottle, a jar, a flask, a cup. Most of these are not clean, some are even filthy, and the compounder asks that they be first washed at the water tap in the courtyard.

In a little under two hours, the line of patients has reached an end. The doctor then confers with Shri Mahantaiahswami about the special cases. There are three patients who must come to the Mirzapur hospital for detailed examination. The sarpanch says he will see to it that they come. Are any patients sick at home who should be visited? Today there are none.

Turning to the *dai*, the doctor asks about the delivery cases in Gunalli and in the four other villages she serves. The *dai* speaks up boldly even to the awesome young doctor. She is a plain woman in her white plain cotton *sari*, with both kindness and vigour in her face. A widow, and once a village mid-wife, she has now had a year's training at the civil hospital in Bidar City. She is proud and keen about her work which has meant a new hope to her own life, as to her patients'.

She reports that at her maternity clinic, which has just opened in one room of the Gunalli school, there are now 7 women who have come for prenatal care and they are doing well; no complications expected. Ten other women are pregnant in her circle of villages; she is encouraging them as well as the mothers of new babies to come to her clinic. It is slow, this education of women to ante and post natal care, but it is coming. She talks a little about the local mid-wives she is training, so that they will use cleanly improved techniques of delivery and bring in village women for before and after care.

As the doctor turns to go, Shri Mahantaiahswami, lightly, deferentially, mentions again something that is close to his heart, and that he asks for every time he sees an official of the block—a maternity centre for Gunalli.

The maternity "centre" which the *dai* is conducting in the Gunalli school-house is but a symbol and a hope. What Shri Mahantaiahswami has set his heart on is a *pucca* maternity and child care centre, such as the community development programme has helped build in another block nearby—a centre with a building of its own, a fully equipped clinic and beds for delivery cases. The village is already prepared to do its share—that is, to put up at least half the cost in cash, labour and materials if the government will help with the balance. There must be some place for the women, Swamiji says, for them it is too far to go to Mirzapur. How about the District hospital which is only eight miles distant? He attempts a discreet silence, then when pressed says significantly: "That is for the people of the town, not the village."



Swamiji's interest in health—and in the development of his village—dates, in effect, from the beginning of the block's programme. He had been sarpanch for some eight years when the area came under community development. A quiet man, quick, literate, but too shy then to make a speech, he had the respect of his village. Gunalli was too small—under 1,000 people—to have a statutory panchayat, but the informal panchayat under Swamiji's care had managed the small simple affairs of the village and acted as the accepted arbiter of many disputes. But aside from this, Gunalli was a backward village like its fellows in the area, and if its sarpanch was not content for it to be so, he knew then no way of change. Like his villagers, he was sceptical, perhaps even afraid of change.

In their early visits to see villages throughout the new block, and to discover and develop village leaders, the block officials had quickly and wisely recognized Swamiji as a man of considerable potential ability, and his village as one of the happy few in the area with a stable and respected leader. Apart from the programme of the block itself, an opportunity soon presented itself that was to affect Gunalli's and its leader's development.

It was about that time that the District police training school nearby, in a unique and enlightened effort, was looking for a village they could "adopt" for an intensive programme of constructive work. Their purpose was to teach their trainees a closer relationship and understanding with the villagers. The block officials suggested Gunalli, where they thought the sarpanch would, if rightly approached, give the needed co-operation.

Swamiji for a long time hung back, his panchayat members with him. To bring police to a village was a dangerous matter, stirring many old fears and unpleasant memories. They might, as police had so often done in the past, abuse their knowledge and familiarity with the village to extract bribes, threaten punishment.

But gradually Swamiji saw that the police and their programme were sincerely and only concerned to help. The block officers, and the District Superintendent of Police carefully described the programme they had worked out together—the trainees would work with the villagers to build a school and approach roads, parapet wells and drains, put up street lamps; they would provide an oil engine to electrify the village, and start a recreation and physical education club for village boys.

The prospect of helping secure these benefits for his village at last overcame Swamiji's fears, and with his encouragement and endorsement of the programme most of the other villagers gave their support as well. If there were some voices still raised against the programme and against the sarpanch himself, Swamiji's prestige and leadership made them ineffectual. When each day thereafter the trainees came, not in police uniform, but in plain village dress, and worked each step of the way with the panchayat and, using shovel and pickax, dug and built side by side with the villagers and with the village extension worker, fear vanished.



With every new improvement in Gunalli—the school, the streets, the wells—new hopes for the future rose swiftly in Mahantaiahswami's breast. The experience of getting villagers to join in constructive *shramdan*, of helping plan and carry out the work with the police trainees and block officers, revealed and developed the sarpanch's latent talents for aggressive leadership and organization. In him, as in the villagers he led, arose new confidence and self-reliance. Under his direction, and encouraged and guided by the block leaders, Gunalli's panchayat began to take shape as an active development agency of the village.

Through the police constructive programme, Gunalli's streets had been widened from the former narrow and rutted lanes, and given a semi-hard *moram* surface. *Pucca* drains lined the streets on either side to prevent, even in the monsoon, any return to the mud of former days. On those streets which did not have drains, many of the houses installed soakage pits to catch the house waste water. Compost pits were dug on the outskirts of the village to receive the village sweepings and *kachra*. Who would keep the streets and drains clean, and supervise the compost making?

Under Swamiji's leadership, the panchayat appointed a health and sanitation sub-committee, composed of five members of the panchayat, the village level worker, a Harijan, and the block's social education officer. This committee's job was to be responsible for the cleanliness of the streets and the village as a whole. Four sweepers were employed, at an expense approved and paid for by the whole village, to sweep the streets regularly.

Further, the committee began to act as a sanitary squad itself and help plan the voluntary sanitation duty of the village youth club and the *shramdan* workers. Each householder was asked to clean the street in front of his house. If a villager failed, as he sometimes did, a member of the committee went to the house and began cleaning the street in front of it himself, saying to the ashamed householder, "I am doing this work, you must do it also". Since the panchayat members are respected, this persuasion by example was usually effective.

It was about this time that Gunalli was included in the circle of thirty villages chosen to receive intensive medical care under the block's health programme. Health personnel and health funds were too scant to cover all the block's 100 villages, and the District Health Department, which gives financial and technical support to the block's health work, recommended concentration on a small area, so that a greater impact could be made.

Gunalli, as one of the 30 villages, was to get a monthly visit from the block's medical officer and mobile dispensary, and from its health inspector-*cum*-health educator. A lady health visitor was also to come monthly, but in actual fact, since none was available for over four years, a midwife was sent instead to live in the village.



The panchayat's health and sanitation sub-committee's special duty was to assist the health inspector on his monthly visit. Each time they took him on a round of the village, accompanied by the village level worker. Where the panchayat members wanted help, he fixed bulky drains and soakage pits and chlorinated the wells. On his early visits, he gave magic lantern health talks—to educate both the committee and the village on some aspect of health or sanitation—nutrition, malaria, smallpox, the need for ventilation in the houses. Frequently, he was assisted by the block's social education officer. He, or the social education officer, saw to it that health talks to the women were given throughout the month by the resident *dai*.

If any inoculations or vaccination were needed he gave these, although, under Swamiji's vigorous leadership, Gunalli had since very early in the programme a virtually cent per cent smallpox vaccination record among the village children. One panch member whose own face is deeply pock-scarred says with particular pride and satisfaction, that his children and all those of the village will never now suffer the same grim and disfiguring disease.

Gunalli was not chosen as one of the 30 villages for an intensive medical programme because it had any special health problems. It is, Swamiji will tell you, a "healthy village" as are most of the villages in the area. But as elsewhere, smallpox was a recurrent scourge, and some cholera outbreaks could be expected every monsoon season. Aside from these, dysentery, scabies, eye infections, malnutrition, were the principal health hazards which Gunalli shared with neighbouring villages. Malaria, though it occurs, is not a pressing problem in the well-drained terrain of the area.

The most urgent health problem for Gunalli as elsewhere round about, was to have some dispensary and medical facilities available. Before the development programme, there was no dispensary in the whole area, and the nearest hospital was in District Headquarters.

With the coming of the first village level worker, Gunalli got its first simple "dispensary" via the village level worker's first-aid kit. When Gunalli was included in the 30-village medical circle, the mobile dispensary van came monthly. Meanwhile, as soon as it was built, the block's new primary health centre at block headquarters at Mirzapur, 18 miles away, offered both dispensary and hospital services.

While medical care is high on almost every village's list of wants, there is no doubt that Swamiji's—and Gunalli's—interest in health and sanitation was heightened by the constructive work programme of the police trainees, who helped Gunalli install *pucca* streets and drains and wells, as well as by the then vigorous sanitation and health programme of the block.

Ironically enough, the *pucca* parapet wells, installed by police-cum-village shramdan, are no longer used. For Gunalli now has what every village in the area wants—a water supply system. On the rise of ground



almost on the entrance of the village, stands a 5,000-gallon water storage tank. It is a gift made under a special state grant, sanctioned by a visiting minister who was impressed by Gunalli's achievements. It is filled regularly by an oil engine pump presented to Gunalli by the police trainees.

This storage tank feeds 15 water taps throughout the village. Of these taps, the villagers—especially the women who once had to pull water at the well—are immensely proud. Gunalli's only water problem today is educating the villagers to turn off the taps. And occasionally, as Swamiji is deep in work and talk at the *panchayat ghar* he is suddenly called out to deal with a group of mischievous village lads who have started taking a tap apart.

This has been but one of many human problems with which Swamiji and his co-workers have had to deal in its sanitation effort. The two public latrines built under the police programme are rarely used—the villagers could not be persuaded that public latrines were cleanly.

And for a time it looked as if the same fate might befall Gunalli's community cattle shed.

The shed was a relatively new experiment in the village development programme. It was proposed by block officials as a way to improve and keep village streets and the compounds of village houses clean, and Swamiji eagerly endorsed it. The idea was that every villager would tie up his animals there, and the urine and other waste would be kept from village compounds, and, moreover, collected and saved for compost. The panchayat would maintain the shed, at a nominal charge per animal, and see to the making of compost which could be sold for panchayat income.

The shed was built by the village in co-operation with the police shramdan workers. Set on the edge of the village, it is an open laterite-and-concrete structure; its low walls run up only about a fourth of the height of the building, and pillars rise from these to support a corrugated zinc roof. The stalls, for 100 head of cattle, face outward. In side, the concrete floor slopes away to drains which channel the urine into collection basins.

Although the shed was built with enthusiasm by the villagers, once built it ran immediately into practical human problems. The villagers were, when the actual moment came, afraid to stable the animals out of their sight and compounds. Someone, they were sure, would steal them. The women were particularly worried lest the dung be stolen—the dung they needed for fuel. Through Mahantaiahswami and other village leaders, and block officials posed the question—"Is it true you cannot trust each other? Why then have you worked together to build your school and clean your streets? If you do not have trust, how can your village develop?" Swamiji spoke and urged in similar words.

Their arguments were finally persuasive. Some villagers, about 20, said they would use the shed. But, they said, they would milk and feed the animals at home. Perhaps even if the animals would not be



stolen, someone might take the cows' milk or the fodder. Swamiji consulted with the block officers, and all agreed that this compromise was probably the necessary first step, the natural gradual acceptance when an old custom is abandoned.

What they expected soon happened—the villagers began to tire of going back and forth to the shed to milk and feed the animals. Gradually, as distrust wore off, the animals were not only left in the shed, but both milked and fed there.

There are now about 95 head stabled there at night and the compounds of over a hundred Gunalli houses look clean. The milk, the feed, the dung of each animal is safe, not stolen. The urine and other waste, now collected and saved, is sold by the panchayat as compost for enriching the fields. The shed is not completely filled, it is true, and, although the sale of compost earns the panchayat nearly Rs. 100 a year, maintenance expenses usually absorb all this income. Recently a cart backed into and damaged the doorway of the shed, for instance, and repairs will be costly.

Today, it is indeed maintenance problems which are the panchayat's—and especially Mahantiahswami's—particular worry. As the early intensive activity of the block has passed, and liberal block funds are no longer available, Swamiji has damped down his hopes for many a new improvement he had hoped for—the maternity centre, for example; although, now and again when the block development officer comes, Swamiji will again ask, discreetly, politely, if it is still true that no funds are available.

Gunalli's real concern today is to hold on to and maintain what it already has. The village water supply system, the village electricity, these are the pride of Gunalli—and the envy of neighbouring villages. The story is told, and it is true, that one nearby panchayat leader has vowed to go bareheaded and barefooted until he too can, somehow, get electricity for his village.

But the cost of running the oil engine comes high. Swamiji estimates that for the lighting alone, it costs Rs. 2,000 a year—and the panchayat's total income is only Rs. 750. In the beginning the electricity was made available free to the poorer people, and only the more well-to-do were charged. But harvests in the area have been bad for the last two years because of over-heavy rains; Swamiji and the panchayat felt some other way must be found to maintain and operate the engine.

The solution they have reached is one of both vigor and initiative an example of what awakened and able leadership can do. Their first step was to take a Rs. 1,500 taccavi loan from the block to dig a deep and *pucca* well. To obtain this loan, one of the largest landholders on the panchayat gave his land as security. Second, they have secured from the Government six acres of fallow Government-owned land just outside the village.



Using this well, their plan is to irrigate the land to grow a substantial cash crop of bananas and other fruits. In short, they are setting up a co-operative business, and will use the profits—Swamiji has carefully calculated they will earn Rs. 1,000-1,500 clear profit—to run and maintain the oil engine, and Gunalli's water supply and electric lighting system.

The well is under construction now, and Mahantiahswami's days are busy supervising it, making arrangements for the plowing and planting of the fruit crop, as well as serving as leader and guide for his village. Swamiji's one-time shyness has left him. At a recent village celebration where many outside guests were invited, he gave an impassioned and persuasive speech, on the need for the villagers of Gunalli and round about to work for their own advancement. He laughed a little afterwards at his own unsuspected eloquence—but what was clear to all the villagers, to the block officers and guests was that here indeed was a leader. Had the development programme done nothing else for Gunalli than find and develop his leadership, it could have left the village no greater promise for its future.



### III. RAMTIRTH—THE MODEL VILLAGE

Ramtirth is really two villages—the old and the new. The visitor comes first, and along a new road to the new Ramtirth. Compared to the centuries-old villages in the area, it is very new, barely over three years old. That was the time, in the early days of the development programme, when Ramtirth was designed and erected as a model village. Every house, every chula (all smokeless chulas here), every compound, the wide streets, the neatly laid-out little park, the *pucca* cattleshed for 100 head, the community hall—all were built new, on this flat and spacious hilltop, as a new kind of township for the rural people.

The tale of new Ramtirth, of its struggles to birth and rebirth, is a story that illustrates, in its way, a bit of the history of the village development programme, an insight into its methods, and its human problems.

The story begins at old Ramtirth which clusters just at the foot of the new, down below the slope of the hill now crowned by model houses. Old Ramtirth was a squalid, unwholesome place even in the dry season. In the monsoon, when the rains collect and stagnate there, it was a mire of filth and wretchedness. Its lanes bogged down the bullock carts, its wells filled with polluted run-off water, its mud huts crumbled. Malaria took a heavy toll; the polluted wells spread cholera.

Old Ramtirth was poor, and this indeed was why the village had originally settled where it did. For there was not money among its poor inhabitants to build the deep well needed on the hilltop. Many of its 338 people are landless labourers. There was no school nor community hall. Illiteracy was virtually 100 per cent. And, because of its poverty, its caste problems, its illiteracy, Ramtirth had no leaders, not even an acknowledged spokesman.

But Ramtirth had some men of enterprise. One morning, two men from the village came to the block headquarters at Mirzapur. They had heard that the development programme gave housing loans, and was pressing a rural housing programme. They had seen new houses going up in many of the villages round about. They asked for loans to build themselves new houses on the hill.

The project and block officers went again to look at old Ramtirth, at its mud, its crumbling thatched roofed huts, its contaminated wells. They felt that not only for the two families but for all of Ramtirth, the only solution and salvation was to shift the whole village up to the small hill above, to clean and wholesome ground.

As they pondered this problem of shifting the whole village, a new thought occurred. Would this not be a chance to build a model village? Rural housing was an important part of the block programme, and in those early days of the community development effort, little was yet known of the techniques of arousing villagers out of their ancient apathy, their backward ways. Would not a model village, well



laid out, show how they might create for themselves a new life, and what the future of rural India could be? Would this not be worth the cost?

The hillcrest was surveyed; with the help of the State's P.W.D. supervisor, a model village was laid out. Seventy-five houses would be built of the local laterite rock, and roofed in country tile to be made by local potters; there would be the community hall, the cattle-shed, the park, wide streets with drainage ditches. The old temple—the only building on the hill—would serve the village.

Every village family would build its own house with their own labour, using loans from the block of up to Rs. 750 per house, given largely in the form of materials and skilled labour. The block itself would put in an equal amount, and provide the amenities, with the help of such labour and materials as so poor a village could contribute. The deeper and costlier well required on the hill could also be built largely from block funds.

The plan, on paper, was indeed a model one, if costly. But moving a village is a human as well as an engineering problem. Community development is a voluntary programme; it does not command. Its methods, its purpose is to improve rural life by helping the village people themselves to want and make improvements. Would the villagers from old Ramtirth co-operate? Two families were eager to build—what about the others?

The two enterprising men who had first asked for building loans were not leaders in Ramtirth. Indeed, because Ramtirth had no leaders, there was no one the block staff could approach who, as in most other villages, might help persuade the people by example and leadership. The whole village had to be educated, family by family, by the block staff itself.

For six months or more the project officer, the block development officer, the social education officer and the village level worker visited old Ramtirth, to persuade, to enthuse, to reason. Deputations of Ramtirth villagers were taken to see new housing and improved villages throughout the block. There were community meetings, individual talks, visits to every family.

By this time the monsoon had come round again. The low-lying village was again flooded bringing a fresh outburst of cholera and malaria. The villagers remembered then the block workers' words, and thought again how a new village on high ground would be free from such squalor and suffering. A sizeable number—nearly two-thirds the families in the village—told the block people they were ready to build new houses on the hill.

But their boldness was limited. They were willing to move, to build, but they wanted to build the new houses exactly like their old. For a long time, and in vain they were urged: this time make a better house, with a smokeless chula, with ventilation, with roofing of country tile to replace the *desi* thatch.



Finally there was agreement to all improvements—except the country tile roof. A tile roof, they insisted, would blow off in the monsoon winds; monkeys would loosen and steal the tiles. Asked what roofing they would prefer, at first they were not sure. Then one villager, a vendor who went frequently into Bidar City, told them that city houses had roofs of corrugated zinc. Zinc became their choice.

To the block officers zinc roofs were not only unnecessary but too costly; the block's rural housing funds could not be used for such a luxury. Country tile was, they believed, excellent, cheap; moreover local potters would get employment making it. Ramtirth had too few potters for this to be a persuasive argument. The villagers were adamant.

The zinc-versus-tile issue held up the buildings of new Ramtirth for more than another month. Lacking their own leader, they despatched a deputation 25 miles into Bidar City, to consult a "big man" there whose judgment and impartiality they trusted. They asked him to advise them and if need be to come to "persuade" the block officials. The man came, doubtful as to the merits of zinc against tile, or tile against zinc. He saw both, and left the villagers and block staff with an apparently diplomatic but equivocal judgment.

At last, the two villagers who had first asked for loans began building on the hill. A few others followed. One family finished their house and moved in—and then almost all the others began to build. Conviction and enthusiasm began to mount. When one resident of old Ramtirth, a widow with no family to help her, said she could not build and had no possessions to offer against a loan, some ten families went surety for her, quarried the stone, and built her house.

Some families, to be sure, were still reluctant about the tile. Hoping that the block would finally agree to zinc or at least permit them to use country style thatch and mud roofing, they left the roof unfinished for months. But then, as many houses went up around them with tile roofs, and the block resolutely refused loans for zinc, eventually all roofs became tile.

Each house was built with one large and two smaller rooms, with ventilation. There was a separate kitchen with a smokeless chula, sinks, and racks for keeping fuel; there was a verandah, two entrances, and a good sized yard. The hilltop was spacious and the Town Planning Organization at Hyderabad which laid out the village, set the houses well apart. The large yards surrounding each gave space somewhat away from the house for a shed for farm implements and animals.

Trees were planted down the wide streets. In one of the spacious open *maidans*, a small model poultry farm was set up. The cattle shed, and then the community hall with a children's playground, were erected near the entrance of the village, along the newly built road.



No school was built, since the new school in a village only a mile away could accommodate Ramtirth children. The well was begun, near the old temple.

The villagers themselves provided most of the stone, cutting it from local laterite quarries, and whole families worked as unskilled labourers building their own houses. Doors and window frames and roofing rafters were provided by the block, as part of its loan. Some skilled masons were provided too, though there were not enough, nor skilled enough.

The building, once it got underway went along fast. Too fast to wait for inspection at each stage. That was a period of intense building activity in the block and in all community development areas roundabout—schools, roads, *panchayat ghars* and houses were going up in almost every village. Sometimes the supervisor could come only once in twenty to thirty days, and the District then had no assistant engineer to help out. But the building went ahead, and at last the model village became not a vision, or a plan, but a reality.

Completing Ramtirth, from the day the idea for the village was born, through the long months of persuasion, to the day the last house was finished, took well over a year. Many families moved in at once that their homes were ready. Others, still half-reluctant, half-convinced, for many months stayed on in their old houses down the hill. When asked, they would say politely that they were waiting for the "auspicious" day to shift.

But eventually most of these came up the hill, on the new high ground, to live in the model village. At last even the most hesitant last few who had been waiting, they said, for a still more "auspicious" day, finally shifted too. Only two families, who had never built and had been unmoved by persuasion or the example of their fellows, remained behind in the mire of old Ramtirth.

For a year or more, the village was, in a way, a show place in the development blocks of the area and in the State. Distinguished guests of the State, Ministers, foreign observers, development workers from other states came to see the model village. It was costly, to be sure, too costly to be a solution to the rebuilding of rural India. Yet for most of these visitors, this new and tidy village, raised up above the wretched hovels of the past, symbolized the goals, the future of rural development; it lifted many hearts with its vision of the prosperous and pleasant villages of rural India. The young graduate who, as he saw it, wept with joy for the future of his country and his people, was not alone.

It was about a year later that the test came—a test of the villagers' convictions and of the block workers' long months of education; a test of the skill of the builders and their technical supervision; a test too of the very concept of the village itself.



The monsoon came with storms, rains and winds more violent than in a score of years. Old Ramtirth was flooded, its lanes impassable, many of its houses reduced to ruins. Up on the hill, the clay tiles rattled against the rafters of the new houses, and here and there gale-like gusts carried off whole sections of them to crash in earthen splinters on the rocky ground. The new village streets drained rapidly, but the torrential rains, slashing against the houses, sought out and found the faults, the crevices, where the masonry had been built too quickly and with too little skill. One wall fell, and then another, until, by the end of the monsoon, ten houses lay open to the weather.

As the dry season came, the dwellers of new Ramtirth knew what they would do. Slowly, this time more carefully, they rebuilt their homes on the hill, with stouter walls, surer masonry. Most of them built a roof of thatch and mud; the clay tile had justified their fears, yet zinc was now as before, far beyond their means. Some of the villagers whose houses had collapsed beyond repair, started afresh on the same plot, and, as villagers have always done, left the ruin of the first remain beside it.

In the *maidan* they built a shrine. It is small, crude, hardly more than a stone box; humble, even ugly. Its open side reveals within some faceless and formless image. The image is touched with red kum-kum; there are some scattered flowers. It has been brought from the old village below, and it has come to stay. As proof, perhaps, it has been given a roof of corrugated zinc.

Ramtirth is not a "model" village today. But it is a good village, liveable and lived in—an infinite improvement on the old.

Today as one comes unexpectedly upon it, one is not even aware for the moment that this is the once too clean, too perfect model village. The few crumbled walls, so familiar in all the other centuries-old villages of the area, give it for a moment the deceptive look of age.

Perhaps to the villagers, these crumbled walls out of which new houses rise, stand as a symbol of the destruction from whence comes rebirth, a reminder that change comes most surely as it comes slowly, conserving the wisdom of the past. The months which so wisely were spent in educating the people of Ramtirth to leave the old and stagnant village, the effort they with their own hands put into buildings their own homes, the still high promise of a new life for themselves up there on the hill—these have endured, if here and there a wall, a roof has not.



#### IV. MIRZAPUR—A BLOCK HEADQUARTERS

Mirzapur at first sight might have seemed a rather unlikely village to choose for a block headquarters, yet the decision was a good one. It was true that the hillock itself, where the headquarters buildings are now laid out, had been used as donkey pasturage by the old village alongside and was believed to be inhabited by evil spirits. But these spirits, like the spirit of decay in the surrounding villages, have long since fled.

Situated on the main metalled road between Hyderabad and Bidar City, and fairly central to the block of some 100 villages it is to serve, Mirzapur stands on a small rise of ground overlooking a pleasing pastorate of tree-dotted plains and rolling hills.

As one comes to it along the highway, Mirzapur looks like a trim, if tiny, moffussil. Its buildings have been planned with care, and an eye to attractiveness as well as utility. The attractive red laterite stone of the area, pointed between with white mortar, gives each building not only a *pucca*, but a handsome appearance.

With the future in mind, and the desire to bring to the villagers some inspiration for planning their own villages, the headquarters was designed as a "nuclear township". Its many buildings are set well apart in the spacious rectangle of the hilltop, grouped around a small park with flower gardens. At the far right is the chief staff building whose wide rear verandah pleasantly overlooks fields and hills. Balancing it, at the opposite end of the park, is the rural craft institute with a show window fronting on the highway.

Between them, there is the hospital, the primary health centre of the block. On the grassy plot surrounding it, on any day, are little groups of villagers—patients for the dispensary or the families of someone hospitalized within. The veterinary centre and its attached model poultry farm, and its pen for its two stud breeding bulls and the stud buffalo, come next, and a small information room and library with a wide shady verandah. Nearby are the staff quarters, pleasing small bungalows with small compounds, to house the block extension officers and their wives and children; and smaller quarters for other staff. Just beyond, there is even an open-air "theatre"—a curtained stage with shallow dressing rooms behind. The sloping grassy plot in front seats an audience of 500.

The old parts of Mirzapur village, down the slopes of the hill on either side, have been incorporated into the new. To them too were brought the electric lights and water supply and the inspiration to clean and widen their streets, install street lamps, and build a community centre, a new five-room school. There are 16 new houses in the Harijan colony. Next to this colony lies the block's 12-acre model farm and nursery.



Like every block headquarters, Mirzapur is designed as the "nerve centre" of its block of 100 or more villages, and is the point of contact for the villages with the block staff, and for the staff with taluk, District and State.

It is to Mirzapur that the block's villagers come to get treatment for their sick children at the hospital, for their sick cattle at the veterinary centre. It is here they come to get a new plow, an oil engine, or fruit tree seedlings, a taccavi loan to build a well. Here the block's *gram sevaks* gather to discuss with the block staff the particular problems of their villages; here the staff itself meets, and the Block Planning and Development Committee made up of village leaders as well as officials.

Mirzapur has, perhaps like other block headquarters elsewhere, seen many changes in vitality and so to speak in character, as the staff, the tempo, the emphasis of the development programme and the administrative lines of command have changed.

During the times when Mirzapur has had a vigorous block development officer and staff whose warmth and efforts to help the people are assured, it is to Mirzapur that the villagers also come with their problems, their plans, their requests for help or simply for encouragement.

In such times the verandah of the staff building, and the yard outside of it, and the little shaded portico of the nearby information building are likely, any day, to be full of villagers waiting in turn to talk, to meet, to plan with the sympathetic officers.

At other times when the block development officer or his staff have been timid or without warm interest or sympathy for the villagers as people, the few villagers to come are those with a patient for the hospital or veterinary centre, or those seeking or paying a taccavi loan.

In immediate charge of the block and of the development activities in its villages, is the "BDO"—the block development officer. Of the three BDOs who have worked in Mirzapur so far, all have come from the State Agricultural Department and have, as all BDOs must, taken the two-month block development officer's training course given at Rajendranagar near Hyderabad, one of the three such executive level training centres in India.

Working with the BDO are the technical extension officers and other staff designated for an intensive block. Normally these include an agricultural officer, a veterinary surgeon, a co-operative officer, a P.W.D. overseer, a medical officer, two social education officers, a director of rural industries training, and an industries officer. There are 12 village level workers, each living in one village of his "circle" of 8 villages; a lady health visitor and four midwives.



It has been rare, in Mirzapur's brief history as a development block, that all the expected officers have actually been posted there at any one time. Shortages of staff, the need for preparatory training, difficulties of recruitment, the re-organization of the States, have left many posts unfilled for greater or less periods of time. During the block's 4½ years, for example, an agricultural officer has been at Mirzapur only a year and a half, and that too not one man, and not consecutively but for a few months at a time. Only recently has the lady health visitor arrived who is assigned to every block. For several years there was only one midwife not four. There is now only one social education officer; the lady SEO was there only a year. In the last two years since the *first gram sevikas* have been trained and available, Mirzapur has had only intermittently its promised complement of two.

In the early days of the development programme, the block which Mirzapur serves was a part of what was called a "project" group of three adjoining intensive development blocks. At that time, Mirzapur's block staff was reinforced by certain "project" level staff, who served all the three blocks, and Mirzapur was in effect not only a block but a project headquarters. Mirzapur's BDO then had the constant vigorous help and enlightened guidance of the project executive officer of the 3-block area, who was also Deputy Collector for the District. The medical officer in charge of the block's hospital and health programme then worked equally in the other three blocks, as did the veterinary surgeon and the director of the rural industries institute.

For many of the block staff, and their families, living in Mirzapur and serving in a rural area is a new experience. The colony of officers is small, and diversions few. Some families with children of school age are concerned whether to send them to the village school, where, as children of educated families, they will be few among the many children born to a village background, village ways. Yet, those officers absorbed in their work are content, if others are restive to return to the more urban, more socialized life they once knew.

Most of the officers—it is not all—are out on tour part of the time, as the regulations require 20 days in the villages every month. For the medical officer this is easy—he must go with the mobile dispensary to each of 20 villages every month. The social education officer too makes camp frequently, as do all the village workers. Yet now and again there is an "old line" officer who comes to Mirzapur from years of service at a desk in departmental headquarters and for him, going out to villages and keeping in direct touch with village people, is new and does not come easily.

All the block's officers are departmental men who, administratively under the BDO, are allied with and technically responsible to the various state departments in their fields—health, agriculture, animal husbandry, co-operation, industries, and the like.



As such they go frequently to the taluk and District headquarters, and to their home department at the State capital to discuss techniques, policies, equipment. The BDO goes often also by jeep to his District headquarters or to Hyderabad, to consult on programme, expenditures, policies.

To Mirzapur by bus, by car, come a constant trickle of officials and non-officials to consult, to study, to observe. In any week in Mirzapur there may be an officer of the state department of development, or of health, of co-operation or of small industries; a government specialist in social education; a statistician estimating crop yield. From time to time, as in any development block, there are visitors and serious students from outside—a professor of social work from Bombay, a British specialist in literacy education, an American journalist or sociologist, a block officer from Madras, an agriculture student from Burma.

Once a month the block's 12 village workers, coming in by cycle from their village circles, gather at Mirzapur for their regular meeting with the BDO and other extension officers to discuss their problems, to hear of new programmes and policies, to review targets of achievement.

Muslim and Hindu, bearded and clean shaven, neatly dressed in *khaki* shirt and trousers or shorts; they are all young—only one is over 30. All have had at least a secondary education, and at least 6 months', some of them 18 months', training in Rajendranagar, near Hyderabad, in multi-purpose rural extension work.

Living in their villages, drawing on the technical guidance of the block staff, it is these gram sevaks who are ultimately responsible for bringing information and help to the villagers, on every aspect of village life. It is they who know, live and work with the village leaders and village problems, who educate, persuade, encourage—in the fields, in the *panchayat ghars* in village homes and compounds.

Today, the 18th of the month, is the day of the Block Planning and Development Committee meeting at Mirzapur. The District Collector is here, and his Development Deputy, all the block officers and the village level workers. Sometimes, though not today there is one of the local M.L.A.'s who has particularly interested himself in the development of his block; very occasionally there is the local Member of Parliament.

The village leaders have come early—Shri Vithal Reddy Patel of Rajental; Narayan Siddram Reddy of Chintalghat; Ram Reddi of Machareddypalli, and others. Before the States re-organization took his village into Mysore, there was always *Mahantiahswami* of Gunalli. Surprisingly enough, the five here this evening are young men. Two are 30, one is 39, two about 45, although their serious faces and thickly-wound turbans of the blue checked cloth favoured in the district, give them, at a quick glance, the appearance of village elders.



All of them are leaders trained in the village-leader training camps that have been held throughout the block over the past year, the first camp at Mirzapur itself. All of them are men who in the brief period of the development programme have accomplished something substantial for their village and are eager to do more.

They have been to Mirzapur many times, and perhaps as often to the taluk and District headquarters—even occasionally to the State capital—to see what technical or financial help they can get to start a co-operative, to find a teacher for their schools, a *taccavi* loan, to get funds for a maternity centre. They are impatient, sometimes scornful when Mirzapur goes through a phase of re-evaluation, of inaction, of timidity, or shows signs of becoming merely another set of government offices and officers set down at a block level, instead of a vigorous effort to help the villagers.

Sitting there at the long table, they are intent, respectful, as the District Collector discusses with them and other members of the Committee some of the problems of the block: the renovation of the 5 ancient tanks in the block area, one of them in Chintalghat, which if repaired can irrigate many hundreds of new acres; the problems of *taccavi* and home building loans and their repayment, the building of an approach road and culvert; the completion of the schools begun early in the programme. The village leaders speak up readily, and they speak well, with confidence and conviction, when a subject touches on their knowledge, their village, their special interests.

But the thing foremost in their minds today is to report on their just completed tour on the Andhra side of the State. Twenty leaders of the block have just returned from this tour, which was organized by Vithal Reddy Patel, of Rajental, and paid for in part with some block funds sanctioned by the Committee. Vithal Reddy had conceived the idea after discovering that two Andhra farmers, recently settled near his village, used considerably better cultivation methods. Now, as tour leader and spokesman, Vithal Reddy tells about it with force and enthusiasm, supplemented now and again by the other leaders.

What struck him first, he says, was the improved ways he saw on the Andhra side of growing sugar cane. Over there they use 3-foot rather than 2½-foot ridges, which make interculture easier; and the yields are higher than in this block. He is already adopting this method on his own sugar cane fields, and says other farmers here should know about it. He speaks enthusiastically of the co-operative sugar factory his tour group saw and, with the warm support of the others, he asks if the District Collector will look into how a similar factory can be set up here.

He reports that in general block funds here have been used better, and that over there, there are fewer *panchayat ghars*, schools and roads. But he tells how in a village only the size of his own, he saw a secondary school. Vithal Reddy is the very active chairman of the



education sub-committee of Rajenthal's panchayat and he wonders if a secondary school can be obtained here for his own and other large villages.

He speaks of the better fruit culture on "that side". He visited an experimental farm where one tree was grafted to give five varieties of fruit. His own land is not suitable for fruit growing but in many parts of Mirzapur block, fruit is the major crop. It is true that in Andhra, the land is more fertile, and has more irrigation; but can we not know some of these new methods here?

Two other members of the tour speak up. Shri Siddram Reddy, the "mad man" for co-operatives, tells of a milk co-operative he saw, which could be copied here. Ram Reddi reports that many more of the villages on that Godavari side have electricity. This block too must work out some way, even if, it is true, there is no power project here. He too mentions the far better fruit growing, especially of citrus, he has seen in Andhra, and says he himself intends to put 6 acres, half his land, into citrus. He speaks vigorously for a co-operative sugar mill in which all the large cane growers will be interested here. He already has discovered that he can collect very substantial share capital for it here—even as much as five lakhs.

The Committee, the block officers *ask* many questions. They are even impressed with the leaders, and the success and stimulus of the tour. It is decided that a meeting will be called of cultivators from the whole taluk (later, Vithal Reddy estimates that 500 cultivators actually came) so that the tour members can tell what they have seen and learned on "the other side"—of the cane cultivation, the fruits, the crops, the high school, the electricity.

The District Collector is a quiet and wise man, as he listens there at the head of the Committee table. He muses on the Government's plans to create in each block an elected panchayat *samiti* of just such leaders as Vithal Reddy, to plan and direct the development work of the block with block and District officers. His long experience in District work tells him that at first, with such *samitis*, development will go slower perhaps as these leaders, even the best of them, learn the many technical and administrative problems of development. But looking at the village leaders, at the block officers, he concludes thoughtfully that in time, with such a *samiti*, the planning and carrying out of development will work better, and most surely for the village people it is to serve.



## V. NIYALKAL—THE DEONI AND THE SARPANCH

The pedigreed and handsome Deoni bull, now stabled in the shade of the sarpanch's high-walled compound, first came to Niyalkal three years ago, escorted by a stockman. With the bull's arrival, Niyalkal became a "key village" in the block's veterinary programme.

Niyalkal had been chosen in part because it is located handily to a circle of villages all of which, like Niyalkal, were too far from the Mirzapur block headquarters to use the veterinary centre there. But Niyalkal had also asked for veterinary help, and that, in community development philosophy, was the important point. The young soft-spoken sarpanch who presented the village's request had made clear that Niyalkal was particularly ready, among the many cattle-proud villages of the area, to take help to improve their herds.

Niyalkal's interest in veterinary care was not surprising—nor the block's quick decision to make it a key village. In the monsoon season that year, an epidemic of a disease called black quarter had swept Niyalkal's cattle. Black quarter, carried on the young blades of grass springing up after the first rains, is one of the most dreaded of all cattle diseases in the area. Of the village's 2,500 head, 250 died. The sarpanch himself lost 12 of his 100, and the circle of five villages lost some 800 altogether. Even at that, the epidemic might have been worse had it not been stopped through Niyalkal's village level worker. He reported it at once to block headquarters and brought the veterinary surgeon and his staff to inoculate all the cattle in the area.

There were other good practical reasons for Niyalkal's interest in veterinary service. Niyalkal lies just next to Hadnur, one of the important cattle markets of the area, and many Niyalkal villagers did a brisk trade there on market days. Better cattle would fetch better prices.

Moreover, the block's veterinary programme was sponsoring the Deoni breed. The Deoni is native to the area and highly valued; its reputation for winning prizes at the All-India Cattle Show was a matter of local pride. Yet ordinarily, Deoni cattle can be purchased only at a market 70 miles away. Niyalkal leaders were eager for the chance to get improved Deoni-bred cattle both for their own use and for sale.

The choice of Niyalkal as a key village was therefore an event of enormous importance, and the panchayat listened with considerable care as the programme was outlined to them. The village was to be given, on loan, a pedigreed Deoni breeding bull to be used for service in Niyalkal and the key circle of 5 villages roundabout. Careful records were to be kept of all services and progeny. Cattle owners were to be encouraged to castrate all scrub bulls so that more and more of the next generation of cattle would be sired by pure-bred stock.



Further, Niyalkal itself was to have a veterinary dispensary, with a stockman in attendance, which would serve as sub-station, in effect, to the veterinary centre at Mirzapur. The stockman, under the supervision of the block veterinary surgeon, would treat cattle of all the circle of villages, do inoculations against cattle diseases, and keep the breeding record of the Deoni bull.

It was then an important day when the stockman brought the bull to Niyalkal and led him to the *panchayat ghar* in the heart of the village.

Niyalkal, with a population of 1,500 is one of the area's oldest villages, dating perhaps to the days of the Bahmani kingdom. The houses, and the great round feudal tower in the centre of the village, are built with fortress-like solidity, their stone walls sometimes three or more feet thick.

The *panchayat ghar*, though also built of stone, is newer, and small and unpretentious compared to the great walls about. But it was an honoured place of the village, and the one Niyalkal's panchayat had assigned for the veterinary dispensary. It was here that the stockman, taking out his box of medicines and his instruments, set up shop. The small *verandah*, opening directly into the street, became his consulting room, and every day sick or injured cattle led by their anxious owners from Niyalkal or the villages of the circle, jostled one another in the stony street below awaiting treatment.

One part of his work was especially easy—inoculating cattle against black quarter and hemorrhagic septicemia.

The memory of the loss—over 10 per cent of the total cattle population—from the black quarter epidemic only a few months before, was still sharp. That year, well before the monsoon, and almost as soon as the dispensary opened, a cent per cent inoculation was done in Niyalkal and the five villages in the circle. When the rains came, not one animal was lost. Today that record continues. Inoculations against hemorrhagic septicemia, the other dread cattle killer of the area, is also virtually cent per cent, and the record of loss is scant.

Somewhat to everybody's surprise, educating villagers on how to up-grade their cattle with the pedigreed bull proved a far harder job. To be sure, Niyalkal's sarpanch and a few other village leaders understood. But most of the villagers doubted that this fine Deoni animal could improve their own nondescript and starveling animals. The sarpanch, the village level worker, and the block's veterinary surgeon on his visits to the village, undertook an education campaign. The male offspring sired by this pure breed Deoni bull, they told the villagers, would be bigger, stronger for ploughing and draft work, and the heifers would be much better milk producers.



The villagers agreed that a big father would produce larger calves. And they knew and prized the Deoni breed. But could their small cows safely deliver larger calves or even stand to so big a bull? They were doubtful.

The sarpanch, owner of 100 head of cattle, and a man of some education, was anxious to put the block's recommendations to the test. With the encouragement of the block staff, he chose five of his smallest and most nondescript cows. The five calves born became the talk of the village—for they not only were delivered safely but in a few months were clearly far bigger and stronger than any seen in the village. Each stood almost half again as high as calves sired by ordinary bulls and was far more heavily and sturdily built.

The sarpanch's demonstration giving clear proof (a proof made even more persuasive when the new calves brought double price at the Hadnur market), other villagers began to follow suit. In Niyalkal alone, the sarpanch estimates today, there are about 100 calves which have been fathered by the Deoni bull in the three years since it has been stationed there, and some 300 in the circle of five villages. Many more have been born—and sold, for the double, sometimes triple, price at the Hadnur and other markets.

Surprisingly enough, however, perhaps only a fifth, certainly not more than a third of the cows of Niyalkal are today bred to the Deoni bull. The veterinary surgeon and the stockman have been disappointed, but they at least now know why. Cattle breeding in a village is not, as in Government or college dairy farms, merely a scientific problem. It is a human problem. The young sarpanch, with many of the villagers clustering round, recently explored and illuminated some of these human problems. The great stone walls of the sarpanch's house made it cool inside the *diwan khana*, as the young sarpanch spoke. He is a stout man, for one of only 36 years, and he speaks slowly to ease his heavy breathing.

Yes, it is true, the sarpanch says, that the villagers want better cattle, and some of us like myself and some others, breed all our cows to the Deoni, and castrate all our scrub animals. But many people—especially the poorer farmers—have not yet thought of breeding in a controlled scientific way.

In a village, where cattle are grazed together in the fields, watched over by children and cowherds, the cattle owners themselves often do not know and traditionally do not even trouble to find out, when their cows are ready for service. Or, when the owner learns, it may already be too late.

Moreover, in spite of "education" and persuasion, the villagers have on the whole resisted efforts to encourage castration of scrub bulls. By tradition—and a strong tradition—in the area, castration is not done until an animal is 5 years old. By then it has fathered many calves on the village grazing grounds. The most that the block programme has been able to do is to introduce modern and humane methods of



castration to replace the former crude and cruel techniques. Almost all the castrations done in Niyalkal and the surrounding villages (as in the block generally) are done by the new methods.

No, it will take time, says the sarpanch, for all the villagers to understand cattle breeding. Perhaps as they see more and more of the big bull calves produced by the pure-bred Deoni actually working on the plow, that will help. Most of the calves are as yet too young, although the sarpanch has one of his first experimental lot of five already castrated and working in the fields. It is very strong and much admired—"a true copy of the father".

As for better cows, the villagers were and remain completely sceptical and indifferent about improving milk production of the offspring. In their traditional village logic, the quantity of milk produced is a characteristic that comes through the mother of the animal, not its father. Besides, in any case, says the sarpanch, himself, only buffaloes should be milked. To milk a cow of the draft breeds can only deprive the calf of its food. The veterinary surgeon tries to persuade him differently, but the sarpanch and the other villagers gathered round listen in polite disbelief.

The talk turns to fodder and the feeding of cattle. It is true too, the sarpanch smiles, that although the new calves sired by the bull are bigger and heavier, not many are well fed. The ribs show through, and the coat, even when brushed, has no gloss. The villagers for whom grazing has long been the chief method of feeding, do not yet know how animals should best be fed. Nor do many of them know how to grow enough fodder, or the right kinds, on a small bit of land they need for their own food crops. Larger landholders, like the sarpanch, can sow an acre of baller (a pulse) or pearl millets for every 10 head of cattle; poorer men do not. Perhaps this too will come in time, he says. It was only a year ago that the Veterinary Department began to emphasize fodder as part of its village programme.

None of these traditional practices or old beliefs have affected the pride of Niyalkal in their fine Deoni bull. Although it was first kept in the custody of the stockman, it was soon given over to the Niyalkal panchayat for complete charge. It is now stabled in the sarpanch's compound and the sarpanch himself sees to the keeping of the required service records.

It is fed well—as well as the village can manage. By a schedule arranged by the panchayat, each day one cultivator takes the bull to his fields to graze, and gives it fodder. The cost is estimated by the sarpanch at as much as Rs. 2 daily, but the village willingly takes turns in the feeding.

The bull's services are free to all cattle owners of Niyalkal. People from the circle of villages pay only in grain or fodder—a fee readily understood, since by local custom, *dashina* of food is always offered to an animal after service.





“How about your teeth? Clean too? Shabash!”—School inspection by the village level worker in Gangwar as part of his duties.





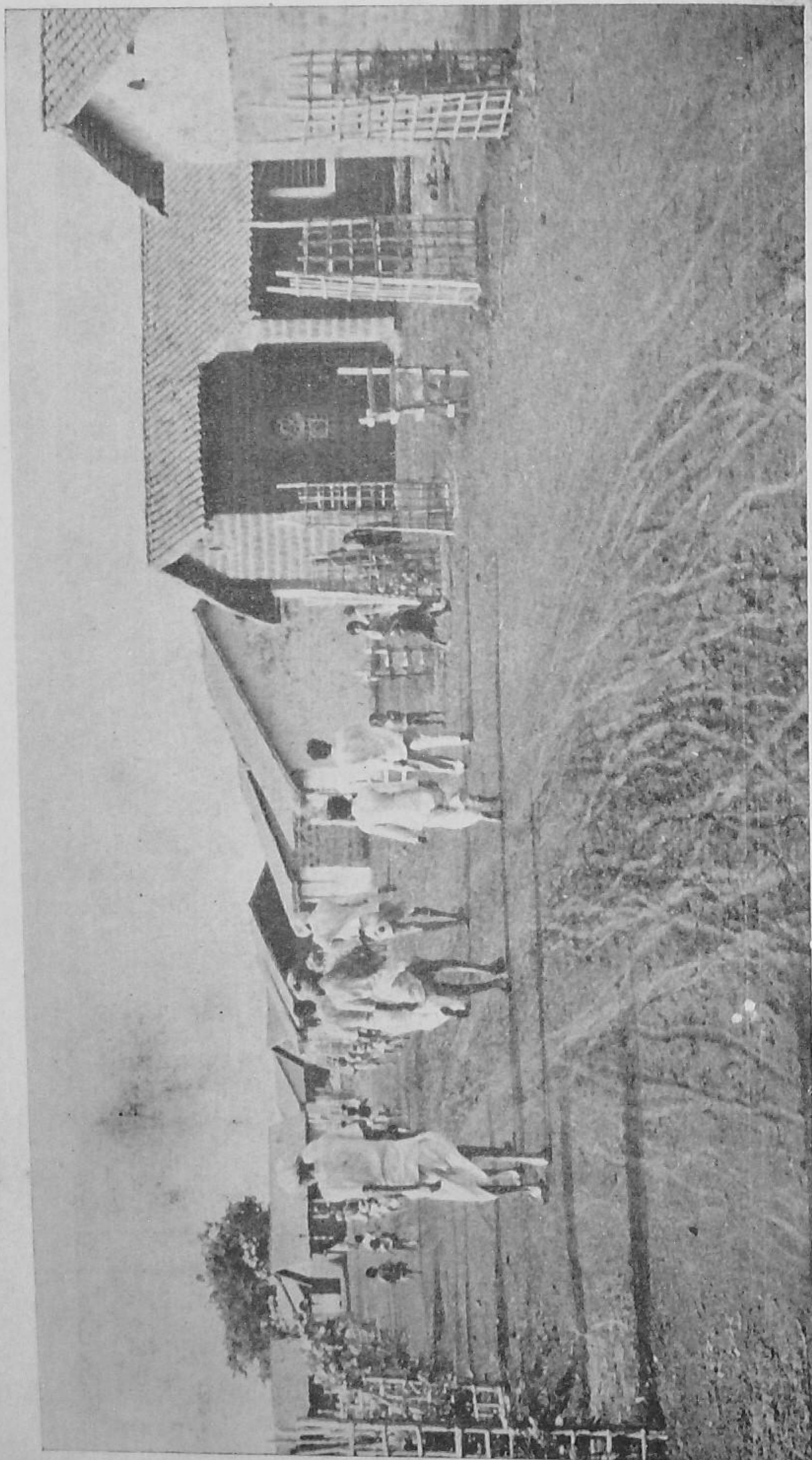
Village level worker in Gangwar demonstrating to the farmer the use of fertilizers on his fields





Ramtirth—Before Development.





Ramtirth—After Development.





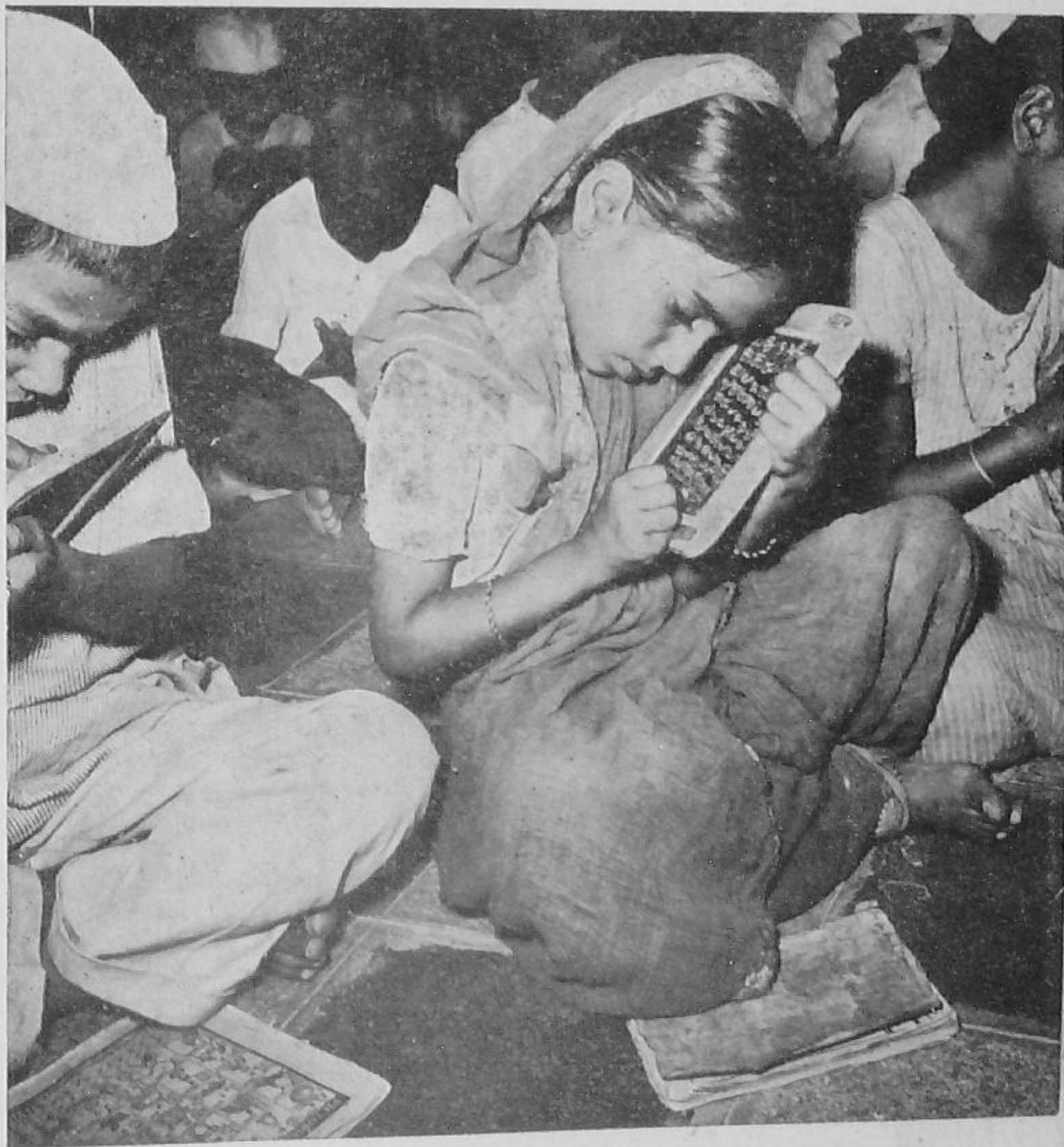
On any day Mirzapur's primary health centre and dispensary is surrounded with little groups of villagers.





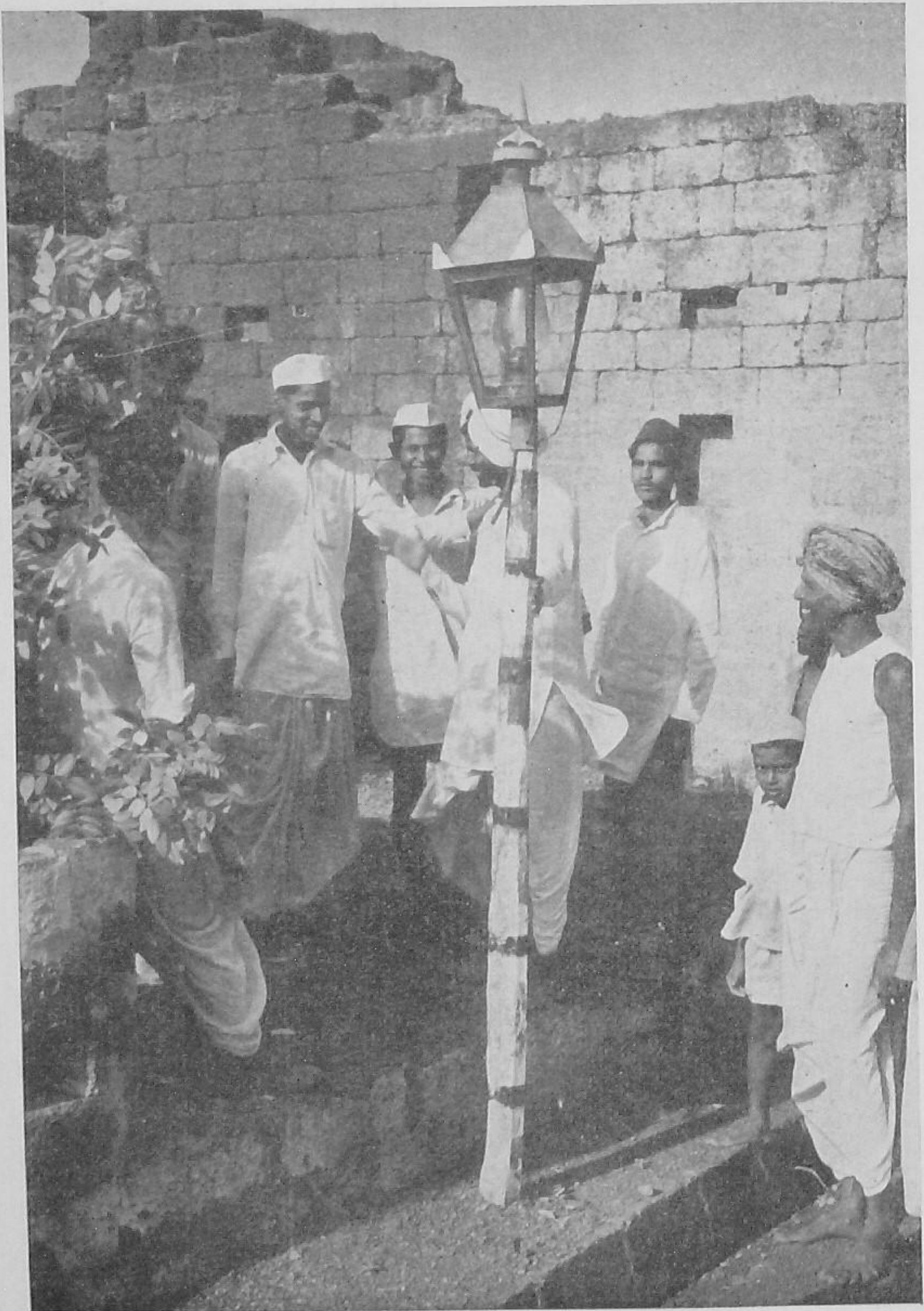
Stockman treating the cattle at Niyalkal dispensary.





Eighteen of the pupils are girls—first school admitting girls in Rajental.





In Rajental street lighting was one of the services the younger and progressive members wanted for their village.



Interest in breeding better animals has to some extent included buffaloes as well. A breeding buffalo is kept at the veterinary centre at block headquarters and the centre has been encouraging the upgrading of buffalo by artificial insemination performed in the villages by the stockman or veterinary surgeon when on tour. Niyalkal is like most of the villages in the area—tradition and superstition are too strong for artificial insemination to be widely accepted for cows; but for buffaloes, it is twice as widely used.

On the whole, the sarpanch says, and the cluster of villagers agrees, the breeding programme has been good. At least, the people have seen now some pedigreed stock, and know something of how scientific breeding is done. Some are anxious to buy pure bred cows if loans can be obtained, so that the village can get the full benefit of the heavier draft power of a pure Deoni—and the higher price at the market.

They are very pleased now that, as the block ends its intensive phase, the bull will be given free to the village, on Niyalkal's agreement that the maximum fee it charges for service will be no more than Rs. 2. The villagers will pay this fee readily, they say. The village through its panchayat has also agreed to pay the Rs. 500-600 needed yearly for veterinary medicines by the Niyalkal dispensary, a charge which villages must meet, now that block funds are being reduced. Inoculations are still to be given free, and supporting the dispensary is a widely agreed on service for the village.

There was a time indeed, early in the development programme, that a deputation from Niyalkal went to block headquarters to say that the village wanted a *pucca* veterinary hospital, and was prepared to pay for it. It offered Rs. 1,000 in cash, plus the stones for the building, and had canvassed the surrounding five villages to get promise of Rs. 2,000 more in cash, in addition to materials and labour. But even then, when block funds were more plentiful, there was not enough to help Niyalkal get its wish. Now, when block funds are reduced, hope for a *pucca* hospital has been laid aside, and the village dispensary will have to serve.

The sarpanch hopes however that the Government will continue to meet the cost of the bullman's salary of Rs. 200 a year as it has so far done. If the village needs the help, provision is made to meet that cost under the so-called "premium scheme" through which the bull is being made available to the village. Yes, it is true the sarpanch admits, that Niyalkal cattle owners could more than pay this cost—pay it 5 even 6 times over—out of the profits they will get on selling the better quality cattle at double or even triple the ordinary price. But his cattle trader's eye glistens as he reckons costs, and profits to the cattle owners of Niyalkal. "It is for the government to help", he says carefully.

"Even when you and the people of your village can help yourselves?" He laughs a little. He is a business man. One makes a rupee where one can.



## VI. THE DIARY OF A SOCIAL EDUCATION ORGANIZER

Last month, the social education organizer of Mirzapur block presented to his block officer this required diary of his activities over the past month. The job of "social education" in a block is, in very general terms, to stimulate village initiative and leadership, and to help villagers form and work together in community action groups to solve the problems of their village. It also includes encouraging literacy and adult education classes. His diary—perhaps rather too optimistic about having "organized" or "activised" clubs and co-operatives in a single day—records that last month, this work took him by bus, jeep and cycle to 12 villages, often for overnight camp. This is fewer villages than he visits in a usual month, but this time for a full week, he was himself in training, at the Rajendranagar extension training centre, learning the techniques of conducting the village-leader training camps which were to be the new and important part of his job.

Date	From	To	Convey- ance	Miles	Activities
1	Mirzapur	Mamadigi Ganeshpur (camp)	Bus	8	Activised the youth club. Studied rehearsals of natakam. Persuaded to send more numbers of boys and girls to the school. Got adult education (AE) class organized.
2	Ganeshpur	Mirzapur	"	8	Back to HQ.
3-4		Mirzapur			Staff meeting.
5	Mirzapur	Ramtirth Gunjoti (camp)	"	10	Discussed about the use of community cattle shed and they agreed to use it after getting it fenced.  Mahila Mandali activities and village leaders training camp. Tanners society organized and persuaded them to collect share amounts.
6	Gunjoti	Mirzapur	"	9	Back to HQ.
7	Mirzapur	Sangareddy (camp)	Jeep	45	As per BDO instructions followed the BDO to District HQ.
8-14	Sangareddy	Himayat- sagar (camp)	Bus	43	Proceeded to Himayatsagar ETC (extension training centre) and attended training classes for village leaders training camp.
15	Himayat- sagar	Mirzapur	"	82	Relieved from ETC and proceeded back to HQ.
17	Mirzapur	Rajental and back to Mirzapur	Road "	2 2	Met the youth club members and persuaded and got contributions for white washing, battery, etc. for the community hall.
18	Mirzapur				Arranged and attended Block Planning & Development Committee Meeting.
19	Mirzapur	Magdi (camp)	Jeep	19	Attended staff meeting—proceeded Magdi, Didgi, Asadganj, Chirripalli. Discussed about the breeding bull and they agreed to take the breeding bull. Went through the accounts of school building. Persuaded to complete it, and also restore land for re-establishment compost pits.



1	2	3	4	5	6
20	Magdi (via Mirzapur)	Dappoor (camp)	Jeep	31	Took the AHO (Assistant Health Officer) to Dappoor and got people inoculated for cholera and disinfected wells. Asked headmaster to close the school. Explained how to root out epidemics.
21	Dappoor	Garjwada (camp)	Road Bus Road	25	Discussed about tanners society, Bhajan Mandal, AE Class, etc. Got a cooperative society formed. Youth's club was activated and organized. Participated in Bhajan.
22	Garjwada	Mirzapur	Road	16	Back to HQ.
23	Mirzapur	Hoti (camp)	Jeep	12	Contact and problem study. Formed a youth club, arranged for playground, explained ways for better crops and yields out of farmyard and compost manures. Bhajan.
24	Hoti	Alipur (camp)	Road	5	Contact and problem study. Saw follow-up activity of village leaders. Discussed about approach road and the land for it. Could not make them reach an agreement Organized Adult Education class.
25	Alipur	Mirzapur	Bus	10	Back to HQ.
28	Mirzapur	Sangareddy and back to Mirzapur	Jeep ,,	45 46	Discussed matters connected with cholera. Got medicines etc., for Primary Health Centre. Got instructions from the DPO (Deputy Planning Officer) and fixed data for Block Planning & Development Committee meeting as per DPO's advice.
29	Mirzapur				Staff meeting. Gave targets to the VLWs and suggested their methods for achieving better results in general and Social Education activities in particular.
30	Mirzapur	Zahirabad and back to Mirzapur	Jeep ,,	8 9	Encashed the paybills. Discussed with the Tehsildar regarding Magdi school building and Metalkunta road, and got the salaries disbursed.



## VII. CHINTALGHAT—THE LONELY MAN

Along the main highway just east of Zahirabad is a signboard marked "Chintalghat", and a small building. The village of Chintalghat, with its 900 or so people, is a quarter mile in, off the road, hidden by a roll of hill.

But in a sense the little building itself is Chintalghat, at least when Shri Narayan Siddram Reddy is there.

Siddram Reddy is Chintalghat's very young sarpanch; the building—an unused property of the State P.W.D. which he "bought" for his village for Rs. 40—is Chintalghat's community hall, youth club headquarters, *panchayat ghar*, farmer's club, and the office of the village's half-dozen co-operative societies which are either now functioning, being registered, or being planned in the fertile and impatient mind of Siddram Reddy.

None of these activities, nor the twelve young members of the boys' club who now surround him in the building's single room, bear out Siddram Reddy's claim that he is a lonely man.

Yet it was loneliness after his parents died, he says, that taught him the passion that now governs his life—co-operation. Other things taught him too, in his student days in Chintalghat, in Hyderabad where he passed matric and learned his serviceable English and fluent literacy in Telegu. There were many books—he remembers especially those of Vivekananda—which taught him that "co-operation is for the world—the only way we can live and end our lives in peace".

When his parents died he was recalled from his studies to Chintalghat, to look after his sisters and his family lands. A short time after, in 1950, when he was 22, he tried his first co-operative—a one-dub bank, or more formally, the Paisa Bank. He began it on Independence Day, "in memory of Independence". The 15th of every month he made the collections of one dub from the bank's 40 members. It was a small affair, a small start; the loans that could be made were only 4 or 5 rupees. But it taught him many lessons. Small as the loans were, many were not paid back. The people, he said, did not have faith in each other—they lacked education. "If we are selfish, co-operation is impossible".

But it did not discourage him. Indeed, he says that the Paisa Bank gave him as well as the people in his village their first education and experience in co-operation, and have made possible all that has been done since in Chintalghat.

Only a few months later, he began another private co-operative—a Sun Hemp Society. About sun hemp, Siddram Reddy has almost as strong convictions as about co-operatives. This "green manure" which pulls nitrogen into the soil will, he says, double, even triple crop yields by the third year. He has proved it on his own land, and, with his encouragement, other farmers have added to the proof. Sun hemp, a



species of jute, has important supplementary uses which he names with enthusiasm: The dry branches of the plants are good fuel; they can be processed and woven into farm rope, sacking, and even mats. Making these by-products gives extra income to the farmer, and more employment in the village.

Sun hemp had been sown in small amounts in Chintalghat and other villages of the area for many years, but farmers did not know, or use systematically its properties as a fertilizer. They might have used it more if the seed had been grown or available locally, but good sun hemp seed comes only from Madhya Pradesh and other States. Only rarely did the local market have enough seed, or seed of good enough quality, or at a reasonable price.

To procure enough good seed at a lower cost, was precisely the reason that Shri Siddram Reddy formed the Sun Hemp Society, and got together 22 members. Using their contributed capital, the Society in its first year procured from Madhya Pradesh enough seed for them all. As they saw their bigger crops at harvest time, all 22 became ardent propagandists for sun hemp, and the Society's business rapidly increased. Last year, Siddram Reddy had to buy a full wagon load of seed, enough for 200 farmers in some 45 villages throughout the block. In eight years the Society has served 1,200 people.

The seed has been sold to the farmers on a loan basis. Because the Society is not a formally registered co-operative, many of the loans were made on the personal security of the purchasers, payable out of the harvest. This policy was a tribute to Siddram Reddy's faith in sun hemp as a means of doubling the crop, and his faith too of the educational work he has done on the values of co-operative action.

For some time, the Society's own capital was sufficient to finance the purchase of seed. Later, however so large an amount of seed had to be purchased that very substantial capital—over Rs. 6,000 was needed. The Society took out a taccavi loan for the amount from the block, four of the Society's members giving their land as security. For a time all was well. The farmers who got seed on loan against their crops paid back promptly at harvest time, as the sun hemp did, as prophesied, greatly increase crop yields. But in the past two years, the harvest has been bad, as the whole area was subjected to heavy, violent monsoons. Only two-thirds of the borrowers could pay back.

The Society now needs a second loan of Rs. 6,000 and Siddram Reddy is seeking and searching for a way to get one. He has learned it is possible now to get a loan only through the new co-operative marketing Society at Zahirabad, and he is impatient at the thought of the red tape, the wasted time and energy, the delays that he believes will result. Moreover, such a formal co-operative loan, would require the Sun Hemp Society to comply with strict co-operative lending procedures. It could no longer, as it has done for 8 years, sell its seed on loan basis on personal security, or against future crops as security. Many farmers who have learned to use sun hemp could no longer benefit.



All this makes Shri Siddram Reddy impatient, the more so because he is ready to give his own land as security for the loan in order to get the next wagon load of seed. Moreover, as a born reformer, he sees a cause—the propagandizing of sun hemp for bigger harvests—being lost if there are delays. “If the Government will help, we will serve”, he says, adding impatiently, “Let them know the value of time”.

Siddram Reddy knows the formal co-operative laws and facilities of his State well. Full of the experience and success of the Sun Hemp Society, and convinced that education on co-operation had paved the way, in 1955, he started a Rural Co-operative Bank for Chintalghat. He is now the Bank’s secretary. It is a far cry from the one-dub bank of earlier days. It has a capital of some Rs. 8,500 (Rs. 1,200 from its members and the rest from the Government)—a fair sum for a small village. This year loans of Rs. 7,000 were made to 16 members, mostly for seed and for intercultural labour. Next year he expects the Bank to do far more. New state rules now make it possible for Government to double its contribution to co-operatives. Looking at the Bank’s 24 new members, and seeing two-thirds of its present loans already repaid, Shri Siddram Reddy is a happy man, his faith in co-operation vindicated.

But it does not rest. Those who are uneducated, he says, cannot understand the meaning and use of co-operation and “will turn their minds away”, and he is ardently continuing his own education and that of his villagers.

Returning last year from the village leaders training camp at nearby Kavelli, he is even more enthusiastic, and has become a one-man adult education department for his village and its young people.

The little building by the side of the highway is the headquarters for this adult education campaign. It is there the members of the Rural Bank meet every Sunday. It is there they stay afterwards for the literacy and reading class Siddram Reddy conducts. It is there they read the newspapers, the booklets, the journals (18 in all) to which he had subscribed on their behalf—the monthly magazine of the state co-operative bank, the journal “Bhoodan”, “Immortal Words of Great Americans”, books and booklets from the State education, co-operative and community development departments. It is there he conducts his agency for a Telegu newspaper; he is proud that in his village he has sold nearly a dozen subscriptions, although it is true he charges only one-fourth the usual rate to encourage readership.

All these subscriptions and purchases cost money—about Rs. 50. Siddram Reddy’s method of paying for them is ingenious. He is the village postmaster and gives all of his Rs. 30 monthly salary to pay for the journals. He gets well-to-do villagers to contribute the remaining Rs. 20.



Siddram Reddy himself bought and pays to maintain the radio for this small community hall by the highway. He has had no help in funds from the block—he “does not want to beg”. The 20 members of the youth club he organized, and for whom he has a programme of both games and education, help him look after the “library” and distribute the subscriptions.

Shri Siddram Reddy has a new co-operative dream now—a milk society. When he toured the Andhra side with other village leaders from his block, he saw a government dairy farm; its cleanliness, the fine cattle, the high quality milk, filled him with instant enthusiasm to start one for Chintalghat and the surrounding villages. On his return he wasted no time. On a swift “education” campaign, he gathered 25 members, with total promises of Rs. 2,600 in capital. He went to the District Headquarters to talk to the District Veterinary Officer on what kind of cattle, fodder, milk equipment and sanitary practices would be recommended.

He has drawn up a plan of action: the Society will buy 10-12 buffaloes of its own, maintain and milk them and sell the milk in the Zahirabad, the big marketing centre and taluka headquarters only a few miles away. Siddram Reddy sees the scheme as a way to help the poorer farmers who have buffaloes to earn a better living. The Society will invite buffalo owners from Chintalghat and nearby villages to bring their animals for milking to the Society dairy, where the milk can be protected from adulteration and health hazards. The income from selling the milk will be distributed to the buffalo owners and to the Society. For additional income the Society will sell the manure from the dairy farm. Adding up all these possibilities, Siddram Reddy is sure the Society can “stand on its own legs” as an economic proposition.

The success of this dream depends on many practical things—for one, on the possibility of a loan from the District as additional capital to buy cattle and equipment, and the technical help the veterinary department can or may give. But most of all it depends on the continued enthusiasm and leadership of Shri Siddram Reddy.

Some say, listening to his many ventures, his schemes at once shrewd and idealistic, his ceaseless propaganda for co-operatives, that Siddram Reddy is a “mad man” for co-operation. He laughs, amused, impatient, and putting his arm on the shoulders of one of his club youngsters, says “Cooperation without education is a house without a window. We must learn to rely on one another”.



## VIII. NAMATABAD—THE RELUCTANT VILLAGE

There are some villages in the block—perhaps a dozen in all—which have either refused to join or failed to join the development programme. Namatabad is one of these—or was, until one morning last summer when it was struck by a lightning bolt of revolution.

For time past remembrance, Namatabad and its 300 people has been ruled by a single family, the only family in the village which was literate. They were of Brahmin caste, and held the important hereditary posts of Patwari and Mali Patel. The two officials, and especially the old father, the Mali Patel, had bitterly and successfully opposed the project development programme for 2½ years. They saw it—correctly—as a threat to their absolute power.

So tight and time-sanctioned was their old, so fearful were the villagers of their power, that no single development activity had been possible—not even the building of a school, which the villagers keenly wanted. Visits and persuasion by the project officers, the social education officers, or village level workers, had been to no avail. As one after another of the surrounding villages—many with the blessings and leadership of their Patwaris—built schools, new houses, roads and wells, and planted and reaped better crops, Namatabad had remained an island of backwardness.

One hot summer morning just before the rains, a party of project workers—the project executive officer, two *gram sevaks*, the agricultural extension officer, and a professional visitor, went to make another call.

Namatabad's isolation was quickly apparent. Although good roads, newly built by other nearby villagers for their own use, led most of the way, the last half mile up to Namatabad was a rough, just-jeepable track. The village itself was a shocking contrast to those in the rest of the project. Homes fell away into rubble or disrepair; rutted village lands and any open space were heaped with compost, filth and debris. No one, not even a child, was about. Over all was an air of decay, silence, and apparent desertion. Although crowds always surrounded visiting project workers in other Bidar villages, here no villager came to greet or even to stare at the project party. A few heads appeared in doorways and quickly withdrew. While the village level workers went in search of the Patwari, the party stood about as in an abandoned village.

The village level workers returned to report that the Patwari himself was absent, but his old father, the Mali Patel—and the mainspring of the family's opposition—was at home and would come out.

He did. Standing on the bank above the road, he was for a moment silhouetted like an apparition against the tumbled-down houses. He wore the small round hat, the close fitting coat, the full *dhoti* that bespoke rank and wealth in a poor village, and looked down, proud but



suspicious. He was, however, anxious and uneasy. The project officer as Deputy Collector is a Mali Patel's superior. He came forward with effusive deference.

The project officer wasted no time. Indicating the visitor, he said he had asked to see an unimproved village in the project, so he had brought him here. This affront to the village, said before a visitor and unsoftened by the customary amenities, shamed the old man deeply. He began some effusive protests and explanations, alternatively to the visitor and project officer, saying how his villagers were poor people, humble folk, and so on.

The project officer asked why, then, did he not let the project help the village? Why, for instance, couldn't there be a school for the children? The old man flared up in shrill defense. There was no need for the village children to be educated. Learning was the right and privilege of the Brahmins. He and his family did the reading and writing for the village, that was enough. It had always been so. Besides, if all the children were in school, who would tend the cattle?

Seeing the project officer's impatience, the old man tried to make amends, asked him to take tea. The project officer refused. The old man grasped him by both hands and bowed his head before him, pleading with him not to dishonour him by refusing his hospitality. The project officer was adamant.

The visitor asked if he could walk through the village. The party set out, slipping and stumbling on the heaped and filthy lane. The project officer kept pressing the old man to let the villagers make a new road, to make changes, to let the project help. He received in return only more excited high-pitched defense.

As the party went on, villagers began to join it. Very shortly—may be 10 minutes—there were nearly 100. As it reached a bit of high ground under a great tree, a well set-up, responsible looking man, a shepherd, asked in front of the crowd, if the party would care to see his house. It was a daring invitation, a clear defiance of the old man and his power. It may well have been the turning point in Namatabad's history.

The party went in at once. The old Mali Patel retired to sit alone and distraught, under the tree. Inside the house, which was very neat and clean and showed better-than-average income, the shepherd said he had been to see all the improved project villages round about and wished his village could do like-wise. The project officer, plying him with questions, sounding him out, turned to say that the fellow was clearly a natural leader. The party went back to join the crowd, which was swelling constantly.

Almost at once, a cleanly-dressed young man came up to the project officer. He said, he was a Harijan, educated in Hyderabad City. He asked deferentially if he could teach school for the Harijan children in the village. The project officer pulled him from the crowd, and satisfied in a few moments of the lad's education and sincerity, decided



and announced at once in a clear voice that this man would be the teacher, that he was to come now in the jeep to project headquarters to get books, slates, pencils, and that a school would start the next day. A literacy class for the adults could start that very night. He asked the shepherd : 'How can you help? Can you give some time to start the school?' The shepherd said he would round up the children next morning, and get adults for the evening classes and would give at least an hour each day to the village. 'Good, then the thing is settled'. The project officer rejoined the party, beaming with satisfaction.

Just then an older man, who, on the walk through the village had sided with the Mali Patel, came up to protest.

'Our children cannot go to school with Harijan children. I have a son who has had some education. Let him be the teacher'. The project officer hesitated, suspecting a move to delay the school. 'Let me see him. If he is educated, both will teach'. The boy was sent for. The two village level workers, who had been moving swiftly to sound out the crowd, reported their fear of the old Mali Patel and his family, and the keen interest in a school.

The project officer went to the Mali Patel, sitting under the tree. The old man had seen and heard the tide against him. He made an offer. He would give a lantern for the night school and the kerosene. It was agreed.

As the party walked back to the project jeep, the old man again pressed the project officer to take tea. This time his offer was accepted, and with shrill shower of orders from the Mali Patel some villagers scattered to his house to fetch it.

The party sat drinking the tea in the shade by the jeep, surrounded by the villagers. The old man, gratified at the final acceptance of his hospitality as proof of his goodwill, brought out the lantern he would lend the school. The second boy, the teacher candidate, was brought up. Though he had barely 8th-grade education, it was decided that he and the Harijan should both teach, so that caste feeling would not hold up the school. 'Good, then it is all settled. The school will start tomorrow', the project officer said delightedly.

At that moment his eye lit on what appeared to be an abandoned shed just beyond the jeep. The building was walled on three sides and had a crumbling thatch roof. In it were stacked great logs, almost tree trunk size. Rising quickly to examine the shed, and finding that it belonged to no one and in fact had been a crude mosque long since unused, the project officer said it should serve as the school until a better one could be built.

The old man ran forward in alarm, shrilly protesting. The building was a mosque—Harijan children could not enter. The project officer, a Muslim, retorted sharply 'What better way to serve Allah than to educate children?', and calling the two village level workers and some villagers to help, began to pull out the heavy logs from the shed.



The Brahmin watched in speechless, helpless rage or anguish. Finally so overcome that he forgot he should not leave the presence of his superior, he turned and almost ran to his home.

The villagers soon explained: those logs belonged to the Mali Patel, and the unused mosque was his storage place pre-empted years ago after the only Muslims had left the village. Now, to see the logs dragged out before the eyes of the whole village symbolized for him—as it clearly did to the villagers—the final destruction of his power.

The mosque was swept by willing villagers. Clearly it would serve for a school. The party got into the jeep. Only as it started up did the old man return. Clinging to the project officer's hand, he said over and over: 'This day our (the Brahmin) class is dead. I have seen our funeral. We shall all die'. The project officer tried to comfort him. 'Remember', he said, 'that it will be known to every generation that in your life-time this village got its first school'.

With the Harijan sitting beside the project officer, the party drove off, and the villagers shouted 'Gandhiji ki Jai'. The project officer turned and said, 'Never before have I heard that in this village'.

That night 20 adults came to a literacy class, sitting in the cleared out mosque, studying by the light of the old man's lantern. Next day, 20 children, gathered with the help of the shepherd, came to school—the first school children in Namatabad's history.

When the project officer visited Namatabad a few days later, the Mali Patel asked to resign his office, saying he wished now to give his few remaining years to work for the village.

That was eighteen months ago. Today, one finds him dressed as a humble villager. In loin cloth, his head bare, he sits humbly with the village workers who come, offering them tea and betel. Their arms across his knees, they address him as a son.

His own son, a vigorous 32, is there who has become a progressive farmer, working for the village. 'I have told him,' he says, indicating his father, 'Have not the old jagirs gone? Even the Nizam himself? We too will not survive, if we do not change'. The old man's protests—for he still protests—against change, against the "interfering" improvements brought by government—are mild; the shrillness, the sting are gone. In his own house, as in the village, these are new times, the times of the new generation.

His son, and two other young men of the village—one of them the teacher who taught school with the Harijan—went last year to the village leaders' training camp at Mirzapur. On his return he started a credit co-operative, which paid out Rs. 1,000 in loans over the last sowing season. For the first time, some of the few landholders of Namatabad are using improved sugar cane varieties, fertilizers; building wells on taccavi loans.



The school? With its 20 pupils it ran for a year. Then the Harijan teacher, hard-pressed on his salary of Rs. 15 a month, left for a better-paying job in Bidar City. The reorganization of the States has brought a shortage of Telegu teachers; some of the smaller schools like that in Namatabad have had to close. But today the Mali Patel's son with the help of Namatabad's newly trained young leaders and progressive farmers is working hard to reopen it. 'I have three daughters', he says, 'if they cannot read and write, today how will we find a good bridegroom?'

The village worker leans across the knees of the old man and asks if he will give land for the school, but the old man still shakes his head in distress.

'You are a big man', the village worker says, 'a father to us. Put your hand on our head, it will give us courage'.



## IX. HUSSAILLI: WHAT HAVE YOU BROUGHT FOR US, THE LANDLESS?

One evening as dusk was deepening, a man with a torn sack slung over his shoulders trudged home along the main highway toward Hussailli.

He was a coarse man, his greasy coat so patched it was impossible to tell the original cloth, and smelled strong of sweat. He was a pedlar—or rather a landless labourer who peddled to eke out a living.

The project officer, coming by jeep on the way back to Mirzapur, recognized Moh'd Hussain even in the failing light. He pulled up and offered him a lift the few miles to Hussailli. The peddler jumped on, somehow finding room between the two village level workers, the three villagers, the first aid medicine chest, and a sack of seed. The wind was high, and with the rumble of the jeep speeding homeward, it was impossible to talk until the jeep stopped at the turn off to Hussailli.

"So, where have you been today?" said the project officer; Moh'd Hussain named the villages—eight in all and none less than two or three miles apart.

"Was business good?" For answer, Moh'd Hussain took out a coin purse and handed it over, a wry smile on his face. The greasy and blackened purse held 4 annas and three pice.

"What have you been selling?" This time the burlap sack was produced and opened out. There were a dozen small packages wrapped loosely in coarse brown paper. One contained a handful of ground-nuts; another, cheap plastic hair barrettes, bright blue, bright pink; another a few parched grams; another hair-pins, another a sweet or two; another a few strings of small cheap glass beads in varied colours; others held varied spices and *massalas*—ginger root, garlic, coriander, turmeric. In all it represented an investment of perhaps two or three rupees. He spread them out with the guile of a peddler, watching warily in the faint light of the dashboard to see the gleam of a customer.

"Is 4 annas all you have made today? What are you going to eat tonight?" He smiles again; it is an odd smile, at once wry and deferential, unctious and shrewd. His wife has been working in the government forests, he says, and will have some wages. Three of his children—he has six—have been tending cattle and earned a little also. He can spend some of his 4 annas for *bajra*. All this is said matter-of-factly, but his shrewd eyes watch for its effect. The project officer claps him companionably on the greasy shoulder.

As Moh'd Hussain gathers up his pack and turns to go, he slaps the seed bag on the rear seat of the jeep and laughs; only two teeth show. "What have you brought for us?" It is an old exchange between him and the project officer. "What have you brought for us, the landless?"



The project officer was silent for a moment. Moh'd Hussain's persistent "What have you brought for us, the landless?" has greeted him, troubled him each time he has gone to Hussailli, or to the many of the development area's villages where a fifth, even a fourth of all families are landless labourers.

What have you brought for us, the landless? That is the hard question in this effort to transform the lives and outlook of the rural people. It is true that the community development programme has built schools for all—but like the children of Moh'd Hussain, the children of the landless can rarely be spared to go. It is true that with more wells now being sunk by landowners who have secured taccavi loans from the block, there is more work for landless labourers on the newly irrigated fields. It is true that, even besides the ending of the old jagir system, further land reforms are underway that may eventually put a few acres into the hands of a now landless family.

But none of these things had earned Moh'd Hussain more than 4 annas today, nor very much more—or as much—for each of the ten other landless families like his in the tiny village of Hussailli. And it is this that has made the block officers ponder and puzzle to find some present answer.

The project officer began to speak quickly. "It will be a buffalo for you, and for some of the others, if I can manage it. I don't know yet. I am trying. A buffalo—you can sell the milk. How is that?"

Moh'd Hussain is incredulous, yet unctuous polite. The possibility of owning a buffalo is beyond him, and his mind cannot dwell seriously on what he would do with it. But the project officer is a kind man, and a District official. With polite smiles, Moh'd Hussain slides into the darkness toward home.

That was two years ago. The scheme that the project officer finally proposed and put into effect had, to be sure, no place in the formal block programme, nor, indeed were funds formally provided for it, except as the project officer made the discretionary assignment of funds from other parts of the development programme.

But the scheme was imaginative and it worked. For the block as a whole, Rs. 36,000 in all was set aside for what were called "mixed farming loans" for those who were landless or virtually so. With these loans, cattle and other livestock were to be brought—a source of wealth for the landless, for the non-credit worthy owners of a few acres, a few guntas of land. Some, like Moh'd Hussain got a buffalo to give milk for sale; others got a bullock to help work the few bits of land they owned, or to earn money on hire. Others got a heifer to breed, so they could sell the progeny. A few got sets of pure-bred poultry, which they could raise to give eggs and food for themselves and for sale; some got sheep, some goats.



The discretion for selecting men for the loans in each of the block's villages was placed in the hands of the village level worker and the village sarpanch, subject to the final sanction of the BDO. Each village level worker, in the 12 VLW circles in the block, had Rs. 3,000 for his eight villages, and took applications as he visited each village.

Moh'd Hussain got a loan of Rs. 150 to buy a buffalo. But he is shrewd, and, with the money given for one mature animal, he bought two small young she-buffaloes instead. His wife has the privilege of taking part of her pay in fodder as she works in the Government forest, as does Moh'd Hussain himself when he has worked as a labourer. With this fodder, they fed and fattened—and bred—the pair of young buffaloes.

Today when you meet him, he is clearly more prosperous. His coat is still greasy and torn, but the peddler's sack is new. He is a man of property. Each of his buffaloes has borne a calf; in exchange for one he has bought a cow. With three buffaloes and a cow he has become a *dood walla*. Just now, he says, he is peddling only because it is the calving season, and there is no milk to sell. In a few months, he will have five animals. He smiles in shrewd delight. It is true that he paid nothing back on his loan of Rs. 150 as yet, but he faces the prospect with composure. With five animals, a man is confident.

What is in his purse? He opens it. It is a new purse, clean still and its metal clasp still shiny. Rs. 4 and annas  $\frac{1}{2}$ .



## X. BARUR—THE ANVIL AND THE LOOM

Bakappa is slender and rather small for his 14 years, gentle in speech and manner. Were he not working at the anvil, amid showers of sparks and clang of metal, one could easily doubt that he, like his father and forefathers, was a village blacksmith at all.

In Barur, whose ancient and crumbling fortified walls speak of a history no longer even remembered by the elders, Bakappa is, however, a subject of pride and value. So he is, too, to his father. His father indeed says that Bakappa is now the better blacksmith, able to do the finer work he never learned to do and which brings far better prices. Shri Linga Reddy, Barur's sarpanch, explains with practical satisfaction: Formerly, the people of Barur had to go all the 12 miles to Bidar City to buy locks, for Bakappa's father could not, with his crude implements and methods, make so delicate a mechanism. Bakappa has learned how, and has the right tools to use. He can also make buckets as his father could not, and for these too the villagers need no longer go to Bidar.

All Bakappa's skills are relatively new, for it is only three years ago that Bakappa returned from the Rural Arts and Crafts Institute at Mirzapur, where he learned the finer craftsmanship in which his father and his village now take such pride.

It was the village level worker who told Bakappa about the Institute, saying he had the necessary education and urging him to go. Bakappa had been educated through the 4th standard at the old government school in Barur. This was unusual for a blacksmith's son, but his father, the only smith in a circle of many villages, was well-off and ambitious for his two boys. More than his elder brother, Bakappa was ambitious too.

His father, when the village level worker spoke to him, was eager for the chance. His only hesitation was that Bakappa would have to live in a hostel with other boys of all castes and callings—tanners, weavers, smiths, carpenters. But finally he gave his consent.

The Institute which opened in Mirzapur in 1955 filled a real need among the awakening villages. The area once, perhaps a century before, had many small and thriving cottage industries. It had been noted for its leather work and particularly for its soft *chadav*, the pointed soft-soled slipper so prized by Hyderabadis. Its weavers, although they wove no famed or noted cloth, had once too been kept busy producing the magenta and purple *saris* and white *dhotis*, and the blue and green checked headcloths that met the local demand and taste.

But, gradually for lack of purchasing power at home, for lack of markets elsewhere, the industries had begun to die out. When the development programme began, there were few sons of shoe makers who



made shoes, few weaver's sons who wove cloth. They had turned to farming, to shepherding, to other trades, even to agricultural labour to earn what living they could. The few who continued the old crafts had no knowledge of or access to good quality raw materials, or new methods or designs. Quality and creativeness suffered alike.

The new crafts institute, which drew upon block funds, and funds from the State's department of commerce and industries, offered instruction in many trades. There was blacksmithy, carpentry, and tanning and leather goods. There was weaving, printing and dyeing. While today applications from young village artisans exceed the Institute's seats, for only 20 are taken for each 3-month course, in the beginning, the village level workers, the social education officers, the block development officers and the institute's own instructor had to go from village to village to describe the training course and search applicants from the families of traditional craftsmen.

Bakappa was one of these. When his application was filled out and approved by the village level worker, it was sent on for final selection by a special committee of the block development officer and the District superintendent of commerce and industries. Bakappa measured up well to the requirements of education, aptitude, experience, membership in an artisan's family, physical fitness, that are the chief criteria for selection. Ordinarily, young artisans had to show an interest in joining in a co-operative society upon their "graduation", but the nature of Bakappa's profession is a lonely one and this question of co-operatives was not pressed. It was easy, however, for him to make the expected pledge that he would not only complete his training but follow his craft afterwards.

Another Barur boy joined the Institute at the same time. This was Anjiah, 15-year old son of a weaver. Weaving in Barur had been a dying trade, and even those that knew how were unemployed. Anjiah's father had not even taught him how. But the village level worker persuaded him to go to the Institute and learn, for the family was very poor. His uncle, a weaver and unemployed, was persuaded to come too, to get both training and employment at the Institute, with the possibility that he and Anjiah might work together in Barur when the training was completed.

Their training was directed by the Institute manager, and 6 instructors assisted by skilled local artisans in each trade. The artisans helped bridge for the trainees the gap between their traditional craftsmanship and the new methods that would turn out products better in quality and design. It was thus that Bakappa learned to make locks and buckets and the great shallow pans used for boiling down sugar cane juice into *gur*. It was thus that Anjiah and his uncle learned to make not the coarse cloths of Barur weavers, but fine cloth of high



count, with more intricate designs. It was here they learned to use an improved loom with four pedals, not two, that turned out more and better cloth.

The products made by the trainees, even in the process of learning had a lively sale in the Institute. In its show window fronting on the main highway there were shoes, *chappals* and *chadev*, suitcases, handbags and leather tags, from the trainees in tanning and leather work. From the smiths came buckets, *chulas*, door bolts and latches, *gur* pans, grain tins, a few simple agricultural implements like hoes, buckets and plough tips. From the weavers, *saris*, *dhotis*, bedspreads and sheets; from the carpenters, tables, stools, cots and looms.

All the trainees lived at the hostel, on a Rs. 20 monthly stipend paid by the Institute. Although Bakappa's father had been fearful of it, it was just the community living which—besides learning new skills for their trades—that he and Anjiah immensely enjoyed. The prayer service and physical training before morning classes, the sports and games in the afternoon, even the work in the fields of the model farm and the "constructive work" in nearby villages (a deliberate part of the programme)—in all these, the two Barur lads found new pleasures, new friendship and understanding, and new horizons.

When the two young trainees "graduated" with their group, they, like each of the boys, were given a kit of improved tools or raw materials of their trade, to the value of Rs. 100, as a loan repayable over 5 years. Anjiah got an improved loom, shuttle and keel, and yarns of the better quality that would enable him to weave and sell at a good price. Shoemakers got sides of good leather; carpenters a set of tools of improved design. Bakappa's new tools included a smaller far more efficient bellows than the vast unwieldy one his father and forefathers had always used.

Back in Barur, Anjiah and his uncle set up their new loom, threaded it with the new good yarn, and set to work with the new shuttle and keel. Their finer woven *saris* and cloths were a surprise to the men and women of the village and so many orders came that there were times they could accept no more work, and the clack of the loom and shuttle sounded outside in the street until darkness stilled the village.

When the states were reorganized Anjiah went to Manhalli, just three miles away, leaving his uncle with a full loom, and a steadily widening circle of customers, and an income at least double what he had ever earned before.

Anjiah is the only weaver in the big village of Manhalli, and the block officers asked him to come there to teach some other young weavers what he has learned so well. They hope to set up four or five looms with good yarn, bought on loan by the block, and under Anjiah's care, have in effect, a "sub-centre" institute for weavers. Anjiah is a confident young "instructor". With the designs he now knows, and good quality yarn bought in quantity at a low price, he can easily compete, he says, with mill-made cloth in Manhalli's bazars.



In Barur, Bakappa's new tools and techniques have also wrought a change. His father shifted his smithy out of its old site, to a new smaller and compact shop. Father and elder brother watching Bakappa, began to use the new tools, and learn the new methods, the improved designs for farm implements that Bakappa had been taught. The family income has doubled. "I am learning from my son" his father says laughing. But he is also proud.



## XI. MANHALLI, THE PEOPLE'S PANCHAYAT

Manhalli is an old settlement. As you enter and go through the town, its thick fortress-like walls crenellated at the top, and crumbling here and there, tell you, even if the elders of the place cannot, that Manhalli dates from the days of the Bahmani kingdom.

With 3,500 population, Manhalli is rather more a town than a village, serving a large area as marketing and wholesale centre. Shops of commission agents, of dealers in cloth, grains and other produce, line each side of the wide central square.

Commanding a view of the spacious village square and of the long wide main street leading into it, is Manhalli's *panchayat ghar*. Built of stucco in the early days of the development programme, it partakes of some of the solid respectability of the town. As you come to it up the gentle slope of that end of the square, its long verandah, its flight of steps running across the whole front of the building, indicate clearly that it is a public building, open to and used by the people of the square and town.

Inside it is not pretentious. There is a single large room which houses the village library and serves as a meeting room. There is also at the left a second small room, just big enough for a long table and chairs, where the paid secretary of the panchayat often works, and where any visiting officials and guests of the village are given an hospitable meal with due ceremony.

This morning, about 9 o'clock, the panchayat is meeting for its regular fortnightly session in the main library room. Manhalli's stout and grizzle-bearded sarpanch, Veer Shettappa, settles himself fussily behind the big table under an enlarged photograph of Mahatma Gandhi, peers over his glasses to see that the executive secretary is there with the records and minutes, notes that the other panchayat members have taken seats on the stiff-backed benches round the table, and the panchayat goes into session.

The panchayat normally consists of eight, of whom six are popularly elected and two appointed by the Deputy Collector of the District. This morning only seven are in attendance. They are a serious group, aware of their responsibilities and the considerable respect they enjoy and have earned in the village. Most of them are men of substance and status. Veer Shettappa, sarpanch, is a landlord and businessman. The executive officer, a Muslim and the only paid member, is a landlord and Manhalli's postmaster. The others include a grain merchant, a dealer in ransa grass, a cloth merchant and a pleader. Two others, one a Harijan, are cultivators. Today it is the Harijan who is absent.

Manhalli's panchayat is a statutory body registered under the State's Panchayat Act, and was formed with the encouragement and help of the block's officers in the early days of the development programme.



Manhalli had had a panchayat of sorts before, but it was only a loose collection of the village's leaders. These leaders were well respected, but the village *Patwari* was the only official functionary and the only person, except in a ceremonial way, whom the District officers ever contacted on village business.

When the area came under the development programme, however, the first block officers urged Manhalli, as they did other eligible villages, to form a statutory panchayat. With a population of over 1,000, Manhalli could do so under state law, and create a body which would be the development agency for the village, as well as one empowered to handle village disputes and minor non-criminal cases.

Today, Manhalli's panchayat has been functioning as a statutory body for not quite five years. Its reputation for fairness and wisdom, and prompt action has made it a trusted court of appeal as well as the respected governing and development body for the village. In fact, Manhalli's panchayat is one of the most business-like and effective in the whole area.

This morning, as the panchayat goes into session, there are some village disputes as well as village business to settle. The first case is a property dispute which the local Village Level Worker has urged the parties to bring to the panchayat for settlement. The defendant is a tense and indignant young agricultural labourer who had received a Rs. 500 loan from the block to build a new house on his small bit of property. The house foundations were completed and the walls begun, when another villager appeared to claim the land.

Both parties are now present, the indignant labourer and his accuser. The accuser is a very old man who, after obsequiously salaaming the sarpanch in an old-fashioned way, begins a vociferous defence.

Both parties assert they have papers showing their rights to the property. The young man has brought his, and the panchayat asks that the old man's papers be sent for. The papers are passed to the sarpanch, the executive secretary and the members, and closely examined. It turns out that both sets of papers are genuine; and each shows the property to belong to each of the rival claimants. The old man's papers, however, give exact dimensions of the plot, and young man's do not. The panchayat takes a decision. On Thursday, its members will go to the site, measure it, compare it with papers, and then make a settlement.

Throughout the hearing, the village worker who urged the parties to bring their dispute to the panchayat, is present, sitting against the wall. He takes no part in the testimony, since his role as extension worker requires him to keep out of and above village disputes.

The second case is called. A merchant reports that a woman with leprosy has, without his permission, come to live in his compound. She will not go away, and cannot be persuaded to go to the nearby leprosy



colony. The merchant says he is afraid that his children and family will catch the disease. He asks that the panchayat order the woman to leave his property. The panchayat agrees to do so.

The next is not a new case but a happy ending to an old one. The witnesses are father and son, who over a month ago had disputed how the land should be divided when the son wished to live separately from the joint family. They are here to report that the panchayat's earlier settlement of the affair was completely acceptable, and that the deed of transfer has now been registered at court. Father, son, sarpanch, and panchayat share in the general satisfaction.

A woman, not moving forward to the table as the male disputants have done, begins speaking from where she stands at the side of the room against the wall. A child is in her arms, and two are around her feet. She says that a few years ago when her husband, a landless labourer, died, she had been given some Government land. She had leased it to a tenant who, in return for 2/3rds the harvest, has farmed it for her.

Now she says, speaking fervently, and pointing to an unshaven fellow who had sat down on one of the front benches, the tenant is claiming the land is his own. He is even taking the mangoes from the trees she herself had planted.

The executive secretary asks the tenant to produce any papers showing his title to the land. He has none; he simply asserts sullenly that since he tilled the soil he should be its owner. The sarpanch tells him that he has farmed it for only a year and the land clearly belongs to the woman. The tenant accepts the decision without protest. The widow who has followed the discussion anxiously, makes obeisance to the sarpanch and leaves, the children clinging to her.

There are no more cases. The executive secretary picks up another record book, and the panchayat begins its business meeting.

The business is handled swiftly. A request has been made for an additional street light in one of the narrow high-walled lanes of the village. The panchayat agrees and sanctions expenditure for it.

It is suggested, and agreed that all the street lamps should have mirror fittings to increase the amount of light. This has been done in Gunalli, and Manhalli is anxious to do as well. The panchayat also decides that a reserve store of kerosene must be bought for the street lamps. Last week for two days two lamps were not lighted, while kerosene was being obtained. The executive secretary is instructed to have a small reserve supply. The people have asked that a newspaper in Kannada be provided for the community library, as well as the present Urdu. The panchayat agrees, and instructs the executive secretary to order and pay for it from panchayat funds.

This morning, there is a report on the year's receipt of revenues to finance the panchayat's activities. The list, which the executive secretary reads in an important voice, indicates that Manhalli has taken seriously its obligations and privilege to support most of its activities out



of taxes it levies on the town's people. He cites these receipts : Rs. 346 given by the State as the panchayat's share of Manhalli's annual land revenue; Rs. 1,590 collected in property, or so-called "house taxes" assessed by the panchayat; Rs. 366 from taxes, similarly assessed, on businessmen in Manhalli (a so-called "professional" tax); Rs. 50 earned from sale of the compost collected and prepared by the panchayat; Rs. 10 from the construction fees; Rs. 440 from various levies on vehicles, vendors, etc.—in all a total of Rs. 3,764.

The panchayat members receive this review in quiet satisfaction—as well they might. It is about 3 times as much as their revenues of three years ago, and this too despite two years of bad harvests which meant lowered land revenues and consequently less share to local panchayats.

The executive secretary goes on reading, this time giving the year's expenditures. From its income, the panchayat has done the following: it has hired and paid 6 sweepers to clean the streets on alternate days; constructed and repaired some drains and internal roads, built two latrines—all under its total "sanitation" budget of Rs. 300. It has maintained street lighting (Rs. 283); bought books (the cost of these books was shared with the block) and subscribed to two newspapers for its community library, maintained the battery of the community radio set (Rs. 300); refilled the medical supplies in the village medicine chest (Rs. 100); paid for the furniture and repairs of the *panchayat ghar* (Rs. 400); met the cost of repairing and building culverts for some village streets; paid for some community cultural and festival programmes and contributed toward a farmers' club building (total : Rs. 800).

The panchayat has spent Rs. 100 on travel allowances for panchayat members who went to District Headquarters and the State capital on business for the village. This item is elaborated: most of the travel had to do with the supervision and running of Manhalli's schools. The Manhalli panchayat has an education sub-committee, of which the sarpanch is chairman, and the school's headmaster the secretary. One other panchayat member and two members from outside the panchayat make up the rest of the committee. The committee is in charge, on the people's behalf, of Manhalli's school. This has been a big job, for Manhalli now had a middle as well as primary school, with a total of 350 pupils and 16 teachers. This compared with 125 children and two teachers in pre-development years. Over the past year, the committee has decided on the school's need for new equipment and repairs, and for additional or better teachers. The sarpanch or other committee members have gone "scores of times" to the District Inspector of Schools and even to the State capital for information, help or discussion, and the panchayat has met their expenses.

As the panchayat discusses the expenditures for construction of internal roads, it is recalled that in the early days of the development programme, when there was a great deal of building under way, the panchayat used to have a special construction sub-committee. This committee supervised construction of the enlarged school, of the *panchayat ghar* and village roads, and collected from the villagers the



necessary contribution in cash and labour. In effect, the committee acted as a contractor for the village, organizing village shramdan and labour for construction.

For a time the committee also had the job of settling disputes arising out of new construction activity. For example, when Manhalli house-holders began, at the urging of the block workers, to install ventilation windows in their hitherto solid house walls, some disputes had to be arbitrated on whether a neighbour's privacy was thus invaded.

Now that the period of heavy building is over, the committee is no longer a formal one as such. One or another panchayat member, conferring with the sarpanch, handles easily the few construction activities being undertaken. The panchayat now handles in a similar way its health and sanitation duties—supervision of the regular street cleaning service, maintaining the village lights and internal roads, preparation of compost from village sweepings and refuse (the compost is then sold at auction), upkeep of the drinking water wells, building latrines for public use.

In the early days of the area's development programme, before health and sanitation services got established, the Manhalli panchayat also had what is called a "plague unit". This was a group of nine persons who helped the sanitary inspector from the District Health Department to disinfect houses when an epidemic threatened. A few years back it functioned very effectively when an epidemic of cholera hit Manhalli. The plague unit, through the sarpanch, quickly reported the epidemic to the District, arranged for mass inoculations of the village and for separating cholera cases.

Since then, what with Manhalli's cleaner wells and better medical service, no epidemic have occurred, and the plague unit is happily disbanded. Not long ago, though, when the end of the monsoon season brought a rather more serious outbreak of malaria than usual, the panchayat arranged to get the malaria control unit from the District headquarters to give Manhalli a DDT spraying. And the panchayat, as it notes this morning in approving the Rs. 100 expenditure for medicines, regularly keeps its own village medicine box supplied with first aid equipment and simple remedies. These are dispensed by one of the panchayat members himself, who comes from a *vaidya* family has some elementary medical training.

It comes out in this morning's discussion that Manhalli's panchayat has lately begun, in a very modest way, to take on aspects of agricultural development for the village. Some of the sanctioned travelling expenses were incurred at the last sowing season when the panchayat had sent to District headquarters to bring the fertilizers needed for demonstration plantings, and some insecticides to have available for sale to local farmers.

If Manhalli's panchayat has taken its responsibilities, and its importance seriously, the people of Manhalli have in return given it respect, responsibility, and support.



One indication is that tax collections have been good—and improving. When the panchayat began, it was hard to persuade people to pay for a service they did not understand. Now the panchayat is able to collect 6 times as much through its main public levy—its house and property tax—as it could only three years ago. People are not only now used to contributing, but they are more willing to do so as they see how the panchayat gives them something valuable in return. The cleaning and lighting of the village, the watchfulness of the school committee are now clearly understood and valued services.

Having a place to take disputes is particularly appreciated. Before the statutory panchayat was established, the only solution for disputes was to take them to the tehsil or district courts, at a high cost in time, and money and protracted litigation, and often a bitter legacy of ill feeling and factions in the village. So far, every case brought before the panchayat has been settled satisfactorily; none has been taken to court.

The number of cases has even lessened over the years of the Manhalli panchayat's work. When it first became empowered to handle cases, there were many disputes to be heard, and the panchayat met almost every morning. Now, as community feeling has grown with the development programme, and as the panchayat proved its reputation for quick fair settlements, village quarrels are notably fewer.

There is another small but significant indication of the panchayat's heightened acceptance and of its role *vis-a-vis* the people and the State. When District and other officials come to the village on their regular tours, they now first get in touch with the sarpanch and panchayat, not, as in former times, with the *Patwari*. And it is the panchayat not the *Patwari* who now arranges for an official overnight accommodation and food, and his contacts in the village. The balance of power and responsibility, the initiative, the prestige are, as the community development hoped, shifting to the people.

Veer Shettappa, the respected Sarpanch is getting old and none too well these days, and the quiet sober and younger Shantappa, the grain merchant, will probably be elected in his place. Although he has already had five years as a panchayat member, he is looking forward, in a few weeks to going to a village leader's training camp. "I will learn something there" he says earnestly, "I must know all those things".



## XII. RAJENTAL—THE YOUNG MEN

The new school is the first building you come to in Rajental—but Shri Vithal Reddy, secretary of the panchayat, and a progressive farmer, doesn't show it to you just now. Instead, he and a proud and smiling crowd lead you to a virtual ruin. This, they say, for years had been their only school. It is a cramped, dark and wretched place; the walls are crumbling, parts of the roof have caved in with a shower of debris. Falling stones, unwholesome weeds fill the ill-lit courtyard. The sarpanch says it was a private school; with its 30 pupils, the few who could pay a rupee a month, in constant danger lest the walls collapse.

The tale of how Rajental got and built its school, and how it tripled school attendance, of its youth club and farmers' club, of its panchayat's and the struggle to get new progressive leadership, of its women and the work of the gram sevikas, is a story of social ferment. For Rajental, a village of 1,500 people, is one of the most awakened, in the area; one finds here the ferment of change, of the rising pressures from youth and from vigorous leadership toward progress and development. The "silent revolution" that can be set in motion by the community development programme is here a visible, even audible reality.

The story begins with the school, for the school was, in a real sense, the beginning.

Each year for many years, before Independence, before the community development programme, some of Rajental's elders had gone to the District Inspector of Schools to ask for a new building. They had offered some of their own money—as much as Rs. 2,300, contributed by 80 families of the village—if they could get some additional help from the District to build a new school. But in those days, the District had no funds for village education and could do nothing.

Then the area was placed under the community development programme, and word went round that now funds would be available for schools, roads and every kind of improvement. There were a few enthusiastic villagers including Vithal Reddy Patel, then 28 years old and one of Rajental's largest landholders, eager to seek and seize opportunity for a school. These men, altogether a group of four or five with Vithal Reddy, left at once for Mirzapur, to place their plea and their offer before these new block officers. They were the first villagers to come to the block for help.

The Project Executive Officer told them that it was true that under the new programme, help for building many schools was available. But the community development programme was a self-help programme. Half the cost must come from the village. The 5-room school Rajental wanted would cost Rs. 8,000. In addition to the Rs. 2,300 already collected, could the village raise another Rs. 1,700 in labour and materials?



Rajental was a large village—some 1,500 people; such a contribution should be possible. Further, could the village elect a construction committee—a *vikas mandal*—to supervise the work? The village, not the block, must take the responsibility of supervising labour and construction.

The group went home and called a village meeting. They told of the new programme, of the proposals that had been made and the need for more funds. In the end, they collected, not Rs. 1,700 but Rs. 2,000 more. Flushed with success, they went next day to the block officers with the news. Another village-wide meeting to which the block officers were invited, was called to celebrate and to elect five leaders for the *vikas mandal*. Vithal Reddy was named its chairman, and for the first time, Rajental had an active leader.

The block officials secured a design for the 5-room school from the Town Planning Department of the local self-government secretariat in Hyderabad. The design was shown to and approved by Rajental's *vikas mandal*. Vithal Reddy himself gave an 18 acre plot of land. But, the committee decided, his lands were too far from the village. Happily, the Government owned some non-cultivable land just at the entrance to the village, from which it could give a 3-acre tract for the school. Vithal Reddy's land, however, would be leased to a tenant farmer, and the net income from it, Rs. 100 per year, was to go to the school fund.

The block's P.W.D. overseer gave the "mark-out" and construction began. Almost every one in the village helped. Even those who already contributed cash, gave some shramdan or paid some labourers to help. Owners of carts brought the stones the four miles from the nearest laterite quarry. One villager, who had promised to contribute a considerable sum of cash, got into financial difficulties and could not meet his promise. Another village leader paid his share for him, so that the work could proceed. (He was later paid back with thanks and in full.)

According to the construction policy of the block, the funds contributed by the village were to be used to start the construction, and to be expended virtually in full before the block would give its contribution. The only exception was that block funds were provided to pay the skilled masons required. The money, however, was given to the *vikas mandal* to disburse so that full responsibility rested on the people. For Vithal Reddy, this was a vivid and educational experience, calling out and developing in him qualities of leadership, of administrative competence that neither he nor his village knew he had as so young a man.

At each stage, the block's overseer came to inspect and supervise the construction. Rajental's own contribution carried the building about half-way—a little above the door frames. The block then gave its promised share to complete the building. Again, however, the block gave the money to the *vikas mandal*, to pay for materials and labour themselves. The block itself paid directly only for the door and window frames and the flooring and zinc roofing material.



In all, the school, a simple, pleasant double-L of a stone structure, took 4 months to build. In the last month of construction, the possibility arose that the administrator of the community development programme could—if the school were finished—open it when he toured the project in 4 weeks' time. Using petromax lanterns, the village began to work by night as well as by day, and completed the school in time for the auspicious opening. The planting of fruit trees and flowers (paid for entirely by the village) was done while construction went on. The necessary well, the playground with swing, slide and see-saws, one-third of whose cost was met by the village, were readied not long after.

The enthusiasm generated in the village for the new school brought in some 60 pupils—double the number of the old school—the day it opened. But there are 200 children of school age in Rajental, and the men who had worked, planned, and contributed to the school did so with a strong desire to bring education to all the village children. Acting on the suggestion of the block officers, an education sub-committee was formed—a sub-committee to the *vikas mandal*. Vithal Reddy was its chairman. This education committee was—it certainly in effect became—a citizens school board, with responsibility for supervising all the work and aspects of the school. They took as their first duty, the problem of bringing more children into school. With the headmaster or one of the teachers and often the VLW, the committee went from house to house, talking to parents.

They used persuasive arguments. To the father they would say: "True, you did not have a chance to go to school, and now you cannot read. If the money lender writes in his bond that you have taken Rs. 1,000, instead of Rs. 100, you do not know. Must your son be also at the money lender's mercy?" Or they would say, "If you get a letter from your brother in the city, you must have some one read it for you, and he may not read the truth. Must your son be the same?"

To both mother and father, they would say: "Look at the children who went to the old school—were they not cleaner and better behaved than the others? Did they not keep their parents' homes more properly? Now education is free. Your children, and girls as well as boys, can learn to conduct themselves like educated children."

As the committee went to Harijan homes they said the same things, but added: "It is true that if your children tend cattle they can earn as much as Rs. 5 each month. But if they go to school they will be given Rs. 2 a month, as well as slates, books and pencils, from State scholarships for Harijans. Should not some among the Harijans also be able to read and write?"

In addition to the Committee's own efforts, the block's social education organiser would come, and in his evening meetings of the village, would speak about literacy and the benefits of education.



Gradually, after a year or more, Rajental's school attendance rose to 94—over three times as many as went to the old school. Eighteen are girls, the first school girls in the village. Two are Harijans, each holding the Rs. 2 monthly scholarships. They are the first Harijans ever to go to school in Rajental.

Even with 94 pupils, it is true that slightly less than half the eligible children are in school. The committee agrees that to bring school attendance to cent per cent will be difficult and a long time in coming. Nearly a fourth of Rajental's families are landless labourers. Only as agricultural income goes up, only as children of the landless and other poor folk are no longer needed to add their small bit to family earnings, will all children come. Even now in the harvest season, some of the pupils temporarily drop out.

To prevent this as much as possible, the committee has a kind of "truancy patrol". The village is divided into 6 sections and the members of the committee with the village level worker, makes the rounds in each. The village level worker takes along his medicine box to give simple remedies if the child is ill. If illness is a false excuse, and the child has merely been withdrawn to help in the fields, the committee again presses its arguments on the value of education.

But truancy is only one of the education committee's many duties, under Vithal Reddy's energetic guidance. As the village "school board", it is wholly responsible for discussing with the District education officials the need for new teachers, for the approval of teachers selected by the District, for the teachers' conduct in the village, for finding them proper quarters, for authorizing and requesting new equipment and supplies for the school. It is active in arranging adult education classes, in co-operation with the young club of which Dathathri Rao Kulkarni, the active 21 year old leader of Rajental is secretary.

It was the committee's active campaign with District Education Officers that helped Rajental start still another class—the 4th standard—in the school within two years of its opening. Some 15 children from villages round about come to the Rajental school for this 4th standard since their schools—like the old one in Rajental—go only through the 2nd standard. The committee is even more ambitious. They hope to convert slowly to a middle school even if it means adding another room. Until this school is available, the children wanting further education must go 10 miles to Zahirabad or 20 miles to Bidar City. It is testament to Rajental's faith in education that there are now 12 children doing just that; and 4 are now in college, in Hyderabad. One, it is said with pride, has gone for his Ph.D.



Rajental is multi-lingual. One of the prides of the new school is that now education can be given in two languages and not one, as before. Children are divided into two groups, one for Urdu, one for Telugu. Some Hindi is taught; and in the 4th standard, even some English as well.

These large and multi-lingual classes require two teachers and a headmaster. All, unlike the old untrained "masterji" who taught at the old school, are young men, fully qualified, chosen by the District Education Officers and approved by Rajental committee. From time to time, a Telugu teacher has been missing, since the reorganization of the States brought a shortage of Telugu teachers.

The headmaster now in Rajental was trained in basic education, and when he came a year ago, the school was converted to a basic school. A man born in the area, he was able not only by training but by experience to know how to set out and encourage the school children to cultivate the small farm plots, as part of his new basic education course. Vithal Reddy was so pleased that the children would learn to become better farmers that he gave 3 acres of his land for the plots. With the encouragement of the block officers, Rajental decided to make the *vikas mandal* a statutory panchayat and formally elected the panchayat officers.

Vithal Reddy was named secretary, for the village had seen his competence, and his leadership in the matter of the school. So it happened that it was 30-year old Vithal Reddy, not the sarpanch, who with some of the progressive members of the panchayat and the eager young men of the village, as well as the young village teachers, took the lead in all Rajental's affairs. But more and more frequently, this began to raise difficulties. Formal panchayat sanction was necessary to get certain things done.

In early 1957, nearly three years after the school was built, several things happened which stirred and showed the ferment long at work. Vithal Reddy and a few other progressive Rajental farmers went to the village leaders training camp, held in Mirzapur. Vithal Reddy had been to some training sessions and seminars put on by the block in its early active days, but this was the first of the camps given by the block under the national village leaders training effort of the community development programme. Vithal Reddy in the first batch was, like the others, chosen for training by the block development officer and block officers at Mirzapur, together with Rajental's village level worker—and its panchayat.

The aim of the camp at Mirzapur, as of all camps in the national scheme, is to "aim at a real awakening among the villagers and help them to draft developmental plans for themselves, which they can execute."



Vithal Reddy and forty more trainees at Mirzapur, heard things which opened still further horizons to them as leaders of their community. In talks by District and block officers, in vigorous discussion groups, in practical demonstrations, they heard about improved methods of farming, of irrigation, of health care and sanitation, of veterinary practice, even of fire fighting. They learned more of the community development programmes, the Second Five Year Plan, and what their independent nation proposed to do for the villages. They talked and heard about the forming and running of co-operatives, extension work with village women; about the functions of a panchayat, its responsibilities, and techniques of budgeting and fund raising for village self-government. They studied and tried out the making of development plans for the village as a whole, and for individual families.

As the camp closed on the sixth day with shouts of "Gandhi ki jai", a latent feeling had become a conviction—"the Government must show the way, but the responsibility is for the people". Vithal Reddy, who had taken a very active role and impressive part in the camp discussions was a short time later put on the Block Planning & Development Committee.

It was about the same time that one of the most active young men of Rajental, Dathathri Rao Kulkarni, who had passed his matric at Bidar, but had returned to his village for want of funds for college, started a youth club of some 20 young people like himself, including the two teachers and the headmaster of the school.

The group began, with enthusiasm, a score of activities. With the teachers and headmaster, it started a games committee, and soon had set up two volley ball teams and a carom board team. One volley ball was obtained from the block's social education funds, the club paid for the other. The teams met for test matches with teams from nearby villages arranged with the help of the block's social education officer.

The club's next move was to start a health and sanitation committee to help keep the village clean. And it was the youth club which, when the medical officer came on monthly visits, took responsibility to gather the children, and some adults for inoculation.

The club began taking over the organizing and conducting, with the help of the teachers, of the adult education classes of the village—over the protest of the sarpanch and some of the other elders. It also formed a "listening society", using the radio provided a few years before with block funds to meet in the evenings for the farmers and news broadcasts. Sometimes as many as 20 people come, sometimes only two or three; in the harvest season none at all. The radio too raised a sore point with the youth club—some of the less progressive villagers were reluctant to provide funds to maintain the battery. The youth club



has had to pay for it on their own. There was also a touchy point about the village library maintained by the club. Funds were not made available to subscribe to a newspaper for it—although this is commonly done by other panchayats in the area.

Denied funds and encouragement by the sarpanch and his old supporters, Dathathri Rao and his colleagues have shown considerable ingenuity in fund raising for their own and other purposes. They collected Rs. 280 for the National Small Savings Scheme last year; and are now negotiating with the block to get some sets of pure bred poultry at concession rates, to use as regular source of club income. Not long ago, they put on a drama, inviting the neighbouring villages. The play—an episode on Kurukshetra from the Mahabharata, was provided through the block's social education officer, who had arranged its translation into common Telugu by a villager of the area. The drama, shown three evenings to hundreds of visiting villagers earned Rs. 100 for the club treasury.

But there is one issue that has rankled, not only with the youth club which uses the *panchayat ghar* as its clubroom, but with Vithal Reddy and the progressive group of the village. In the violent and heavy monsoon rains last year, the *panchayat ghar* walls had suffered considerable damage, and a new coat of white-wash was essential. There was opposition to using panchayat funds to pay for it, in spite of the persuasion of Vithal Reddy and the progressive panchayat members. The social education organizer was asked to come from the block headquarters, but his persuasion too fell on deaf ears. Finally, Vithal Reddy and Dathathri Rao decided the only way to get the job done was for the youth club to do it on their own—which they did. But if the job was done, the feeling of frustration remained.

Vithal Reddy perhaps felt it less than Dathathri Rao, for as a leading farmer of the District, and secretary of the panchayat, he had many and considerable duties. For one thing, his interest, awakened at the camp, in helping individual families make plans for their own progress had made him more aware of the role of women's education. "Men and women are the two wheels of the cart, and the cart cannot go without both."

It was with his encouragement that the two gram sevikas, who were at last posted in the block, were able to form ten women of Rajental into a Mahila Mandal. What was taught the women was simple—the cutting and stitching of children's clothes, the making of *nawar* (the woven webbing for *charpois*, the knitting of sweaters, the making of cotton dolls, and the usual indifferent embroideries.) But the women were interested, and at least four or five came for a class each time—although the Muslim women, who observed purdah and the women of the labouring groups had to be visited in their own homes. Some of the Mandal women were wives of members of the youth club,



but it is slow, this work with women. None has or can afford a scissors to cut clothes, and even dues of 4 annas a piece cannot be collected. But the secretary Kamalabhai, the pretty and very intelligent young Brahmin wife, who has been educated to the 4th standard, is a grave and serious learner. Perhaps as Rajental and she develop, and as *gram sevikas* are trained to offer a more meaningful programme, the village women may find in her a leader.

That same year too two farmers from Guntur came to settle near Rajental, where they could lease land, even irrigated land, more cheaply than in Guntur. They planted sugar cane, and Vithal Reddy, astonished to see their improved methods, learned that many ways of farming are different and better on the Andhra side.

Vithal Reddy decided to organize a tour to "that side" so that he and other farmers could see and learn for themselves. Village leaders were chosen for the tour with the help of the MLA and the block officers; the Block Planning and Development Committee to whom Vithal Reddy broached the plan, sanctioned Rs. 400 toward tour expenses. Twenty selected leaders went, and each one, like the tour's leader Vithal Reddy, came back zealous and jealous for change in his own fields and village. Vithal Reddy began experimenting on a few guntas of land with the 3-ft. ridge method of sugar cultivation, and made a strong representation to the Block Committee to help get a co-operative sugar factory started in the block. He and the other leaders from the tour met with some 500 cultivators of the District to tell of what they had seen on the "Andhra side".

Out of his training camp session, out of the tour, and his own four years of experience as an active village leader, Vithal Reddy has formulated a plan for achieving the Second Plan's food production goals in his village, and in the block. The plan is clearly defined: there must be electricity to pump enough irrigation water; there must be water conservation through tanks and *ayacuts*; there must be proper distribution, on time, of fertilizers and seeds; there must be technical help to show each farmer how best to use fertilizers; there must be co-operatives to distribute sun-hemp seeds and improved farm implements.

It is a good programme. All of it, except the electricity, is capable of achievement in his area, if block officers and the District and state departments of agriculture, co-operation, and public works, apply themselves to the task.

Even with such help, if it is forthcoming, Vithal Reddy and the progressive farmers of Rajental must have a panchayat able and willing to take a vigorous constructive part, and alive to the potential of the village, to the needs, the awakened aspirations of the new generation.



A few weeks ago, Dathathri Rao and almost all the members of the youth club, with Vithal Reddy and some of the other progressive panchayat members went to Mirzapur, hearing that the District Planning Officer, Deputy to the Collector had come. They asked earnestly, respectfully, what to them is a crucial question: is it possible to have new elections, now, before the 3-year term of the old sarpanch is up?

Whether such a request can—or should—be granted is not yet determined. But what is clear beyond doubt is that Rajental has been caught up past recall in a great irreversible ferment of change.



# *Glossary of Indian Words*

Ayacut . . . . .	Minor irrigation channel.
Bhajan Mandal . . . . .	Religious song-and-music society.
Chadev . . . . .	Pointed soft-soled slipper.
Chappals . . . . .	Open sandals.
Charpoi . . . . .	Light wooden frame cot laced with rope or webbing.
Chawdi . . . . .	Meeting room of the village leaders and elders.
Chitkal . . . . .	A type of semi-religious folk dance.
Chula . . . . .	Stove.
Dai . . . . .	Midwife.
Dashina . . . . .	Gift.
Desi . . . . .	Local, native.
Dhoti . . . . .	Length of cloth draped as loose-fitting trousers.
Diwan khana . . . . .	Vestibule in entrance to courtyard.
Dood walla . . . . .	Milk seller.
Gandhiji ki Jai . . . . .	Hail to or long live Gandhi—a slogan commonly shouted in India's Independence struggle and in the years since Independence.
Gram Sevak . . . . .	Literally, "friend of the village"—a village level extension worker.
Gram Sevika . . . . .	A woman village extension worker.
Gunta . . . . .	About one-fifth of an acre.
Gur . . . . .	Grude raw sugar.
Harijan . . . . .	Literally, 'child of God'—Mahatma Gandhi's name for the outcaste untouchable.
Jagir Administration . . . . .	A feudal system of land-tenure in which a privileged few, called "jagirs", were given tracts of lands and villages from which they were entitled to collect revenue. The revenues required were usually oppressive.
Jowar . . . . .	A grain, a kind of millets.
Kachra . . . . .	Refuse, sweepings.
Kucha . . . . .	Unfinished.
Mahila Mandal . . . . .	Women's society.



Mali Patel . . .	Justice of the peace, an hereditary village functionary.
Massala . . .	Spices.
Nawar . . .	Woven webbing strips, used in making furniture.
Nizam . . .	The former ruler of the once Princely State of Hyderabad, before the State's incorporation into united independent India.
Panchayat . . .	Village council, usually an elected body.
Panchayat ghar . . .	Town hall, meeting place for the panchayat.
Panchayat Samithi . . .	Assembly of panchayat leaders from various villages.
Patwari . . .	Village revenue officer, an hereditary village functionary.
Pucca . . .	First-class, well built.
Rupee . . .	The unit of Indian currency, equal to about 21 U. S. cents, or $1\frac{1}{2}$ shillings.
Sari . . .	The draped garment traditional with Indian women.
Sarpanch . . .	Head of panchayat.
Shabash . . .	Bravo! Good work! well done!
Shramdan . . .	Literally, 'gift of labour'—voluntary unpaid labour.
Tabla . . .	An Indian drum.
Taccavi . . .	A farm improvement loan.
Taluka . . .	An administrative and revenue unit of the District.
Tehsil . . .	An administrative and revenue unit of the District—a small country.
Tehsildar . . .	Tehsil revenue officer.
Vaidya . . .	Practitioner of a local system of medicine.
Vikas Mandal . . .	Village council.



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