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Panchayati Raj

MAY 1964



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THE CHANGING HUMAN RESOURCES



A Bhil woman in her typical old fashioned dress and ornaments.



Smt. Rajju Behn wife of Shri Dolabhai Iwalabhai Sarpanch of village Nawa Mota received one year's training in the tailoring classes run by the Multipurpose Project. She has given up the traditional ornaments and now puts on sari.



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LETTERS

THE CARAVAN MOVES ON

Sir,

WHILE PERUSING the October issue of *Panchayati Raj*, I came across the letter entitled, "Too many reports and returns". I must confess that I was rather astonished at this belated realisation on the part of the authorities that the poor Gram Sevak is burdened with too many reports and returns. "But what is the net result?" may I ask. The caravan moves on as usual and the proverbial last straw on the camel's back has not been removed so far.

In my State, the Gram Sevaks are expected to maintain the village register and diary register besides 14 registers on P.A.P.P. suggested by the Agricultural Department. He is also required to send separate progress reports on agriculture, V.V.F. and irrigation wells. He is also expected to issue notices to loanees, invitations for meetings to Sarpanches and Panchayat Samiti members and also to act as a messenger to deliver these on certain occasions. He has also to collect relevant informations for the monthly staff meetings held at the Block Headquarters. All this leaves him very little time to attend to his main work in the field of agriculture. He cannot spare any time for studying the large quantity of literature on community development, agriculture and extension techniques available to him at the Information Centre at the Block Headquarters. He cannot keep abreast of the latest researches in the field of agricultural development and extension techniques and to that extent, his capacity for bringing about improvement in the farming practices of the people remains limited.

Under these circumstances, it is very necessary to reduce his load of unnecessary paper work. In my opinion, he should not be asked to keep more than three registers *viz.*: (i) Village Register, (ii) P.A.P.P. Register, and (iii) Diary Register. As regards reports and returns, he should be called upon to submit only the most essential reports such as the monthly progress report on development activities in his circle and this, too, may be sent quarterly rather than monthly. The practice of issuing notices and invitations through V.L.W.s should be discouraged.

Yours etc.,

3-3-64
Harohalli,
MYSORE.

HULIYARAPPA

NATIONAL FORUM ON PANCHAYATI RAJ

Sir,

ONE IMPORTANT fact brought out by the National Seminar on Panchayati Raj held at Udaipur is that there exists wide divergence amongst eminent public men on various fundamental aspects of Panchayati Raj. There is perhaps far too much variety in the Constitution, methods of elections and the powers and functions of Panchayati Raj bodies from State to State. While a certain amount of variety is understandable and even desirable in the context of differing socio-cultural conditions prevailing in various parts of the country, yet there is need for a clear-cut and well-defined policy on certain basic issues. In a democracy this unanimity of approach cannot be superimposed from above. This can only be brought about through a process of thinking and discussions on a common platform. There is a pressing necessity for such a National Forum on the lines of the National Council on Study and Research in Community Development. This new body can have as its members eminent public men who have done outstanding work in the field of Panchayati Raj. All India organisations like the All India Panchayat Parishad, AVARD and Bharat Sevak Samaj can also be represented on this National Council on Panchayati Raj. The recommendations of such a body will have far-reaching effect on the formulation of policies on Panchayati Raj and their implementation. It will go a long way to build up a strong public opinion in favour of the Panchayati Raj set-up being properly enshrined in the Constitution.

13-3-64

Mehalpur,
DELHI.

Yours etc.,
ROSHAN LAL

R.A.S. AND VIKAS ADHIKARI

Sir,

IN RAJASTHAN, the post of Vikas Adhikari is included in the R.A.S. cadre. At present the trend of postings is that the State Government after selecting the R.A.S. officers, first sends them to complete the revenue training and these officers exercise the powers of second and first class Magistrates holding courts for six to nine months. Then they are posted to Panchayat Samitis in the capacity of Vikas Adhikaris to gain two years' rural experience. Thus after

every two years, there is a new R.A.S. officer, posted as Vikas Adhikari, in Panchayat Samitis. One wonders whether the post of Vikas Adhikari is filled in in order to perform duties for the better functioning of Panchayati Raj or the idea is just to help them gain rural experience for 2 years. If the latter is the objective, the sooner it is given up the better. The rural areas should not be viewed as a sort of a laboratory or a training ground. An officer would not put his heart and soul into the work since he knows that he has to stay only for two years. An R.A.S. officer should be liable to be posted as Vikas Adhikari at any time and for any period. Only then would the post carry some status.

If an R.A.S. officer has to be posted in the rural areas as part of his training it would be far better if he is posted as Vikas Adhikari straightway after his selection in the R.A.S. cadre. As a fresher in Government Service he can also adjust his behaviour and habits accordingly. But a stiff aristocratic attitude developed after two years of magistracy, may render him incapable of adjusting himself as an extension officer later on. I, therefore, urge that the present mode of training and posting of the R.A.S. officers be suitably amended.

28-3-64

Ladnun,
RAJASTHAN.

Yours etc.,

ANAND PRAKASH ARYA



Bhils of Khed Brahma

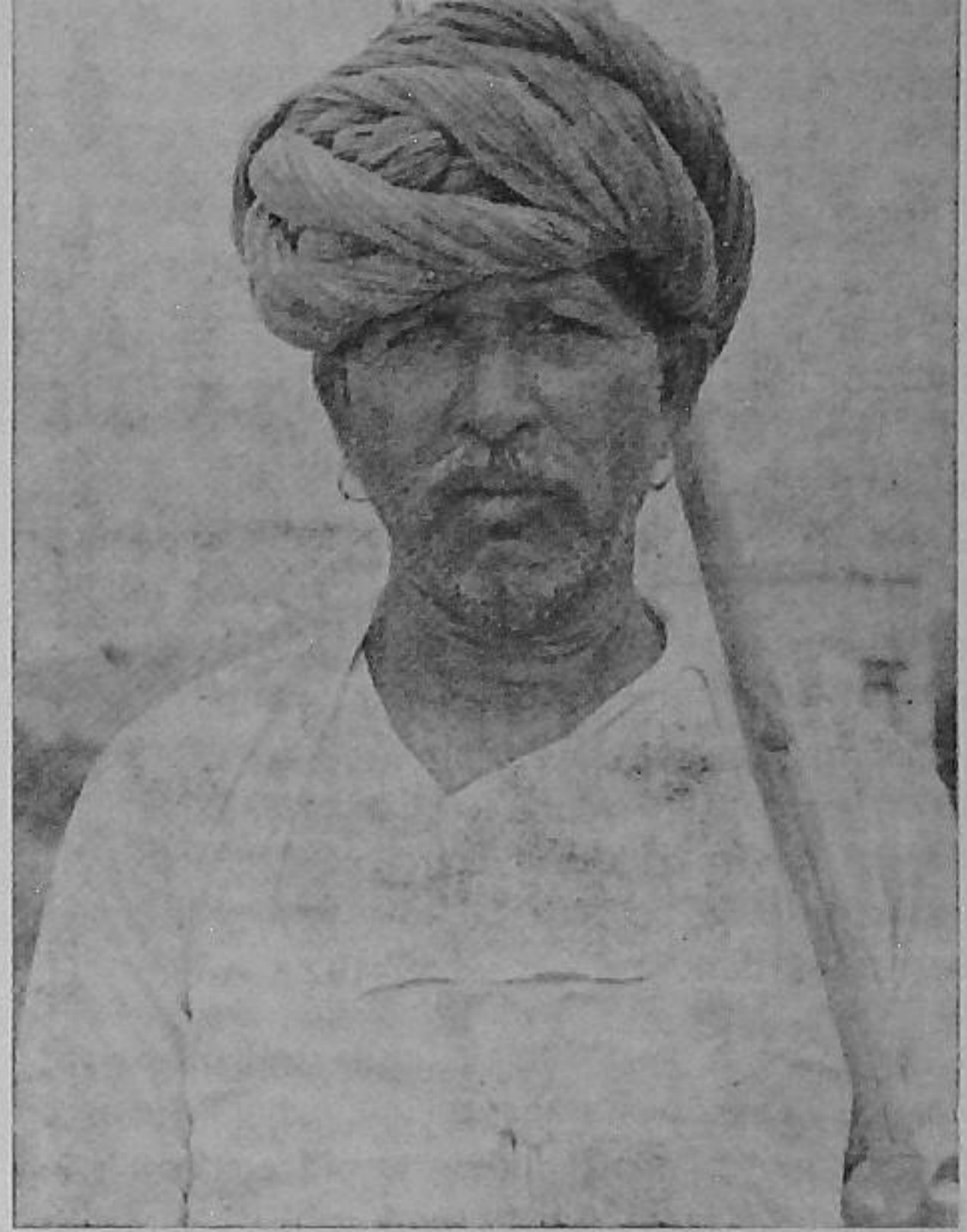
EXCHANGE

BOWS AND ARROWS

FOR THE PLOUGH

IN THE FASTNESSES of the Aravali ranges dividing Rajasthan from Gujarat, more than a hundred miles from Ahmedabad in the North, have been living over the centuries about 40,000 Bhils locked up in their pristine tribal civilisation. Being unconnected by road or rail, they have undergone but little change in their primitive ways of living. Independence came but affected them little. It was the ushering in of the C.D. Programme and the consequent setting up of the Khed Brahma Multipurpose Tribal Block in 1956 that brought them into the warmth of the fold of advanced human civilisation for the first time. The Block comprises of 97 villages covering an area of 205 square miles.

It is an exciting experience to see for oneself the vast changes—social, economic and political—that have overtaken them within a short period of eight years only. One would hardly believe that these carefree sons and daughters of Nature whose main occupation has been hunting with the help of bows and arrows are now taking to agriculture with verve and are marching shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the people in India. Whereas, previously, a few of them grew only maize here and there, they have now learnt to cultivate cotton and wheat as well. By taking to improved seeds and fertilisers, they have increased their agricultural yield four to five



Sixtyfive-year old Natha who killed a tiger after twisting its tail and challenging it to a duel

times. Their per capita income has gone up at least three times. The traditional tribal leaders whose word was law in the past are now losing their importance before the democratically elected young leaders of the Panchayati Raj bodies. In matters of dress, habits and social customs they are fast becoming modernised. Polygamy which was widely prevalent amongst the older generation is being given up by the younger people. Whereas previously it was common for a person to have at least a score of progeny, some having as many as forty or fifty, the younger generation has reacted favourably to the message of Family Planning and they are making conscious efforts to limit their families.

Fascinating as this drama of vast social changes is, no less interesting are their old habits and social customs which though mostly outdated yet have some of lasting utility. The social as well as the development workers in charge of the work there would do well to ensure that these good and useful traditions are not indiscriminately changed to suit the needs of the new civilisation that is being opened up before them.

HABITS AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS

The Bhils love out-door life and are fond of hunting with bows and arrows. Some

of them would still kill the fish in water by shooting an arrow at it rather than catch it by angling or netting. Their fearlessness and courage inspires awe. I met 65-year old Natha who narrated to me without any emotion how he caught hold of the tail of a sleeping tiger because it used to kill his sheep and then killed it after a duel. He showed me the scars on his body—results of injuries sustained during the encounter. And surprisingly, the wounds were healed as a result of the application of some herbs because he would not be admitted in the hospital. This splendid courage and physical prowess would perhaps be the first casualty of the new civilisation.

They are a very simple and straightforward people. They would never tell a lie. Even if they commit a murder, they would confess it in the court of law. Thefts and robberies are as yet unknown. What the advancing new civilisation would bring is anybody's guess.

It would be wrong to say that they had little community spirit before the Community Development Programme came in. Whenever someone from amongst them is in distress all would join hands and help him out of the difficulty. If someone loses his flock of cattle or poultry, others would contribute and make good his loss. Similar community spirit is in evidence in agricultural operations as well. Though cultivation of the Kharif crop is individual, Rabi crop is cultivated on a community basis irrespective of the ownership rights of land or of wells or other resources. Here is Co-operative Farming at its best.

The tribals have great respect for women. They would never beat them. The boys and girls mix freely and they have freedom to select their partners. They are fond of community singing and dancing during Holi festival. Whenever a young boy selects his partner, they elope for a day in the forests and it is concluded that they have become engaged. They resort to formal marriage only when their economic condition permits, otherwise they just start leading a married life. They immediately separate from their parents and begin to live in a new house. Formal marriage may be celebrated at any later period whenever convenient. It is not uncommon to see aged couples celebrating their

marriage in the presence of their sons and grandsons. Although before marriage there is free mixing amongst boys and girls, they follow a strict code of morality after marriage. The husbands would jealously guard the chastity of their wives so much so that they would work in the fields and move out of the village together. If a person has more than one wife as they usually have, they all live together in the same room each having her perch behind a grain *kothi* and a separate chulha. They would seldom quarrel with each other.

Their social and economic conditions underwent but little change over the course of years. If at all, these became worse with the lapse of time. Before Independence, Khed Brahma formed part of the Ider State. During those days the simple tribal people were victims of cruel indifference and rapacity of the rulers and their *Ahalkars*. It was this unwarranted repression that made Moti Lal Tejawat, dewan of a local Chieftain turn a rebel to the Ider ruler and the British Government. He rallied round him a force of 5,000 tribals with 500 guns and 500 horses. He became so popular with the Adivasis that he was worshipped almost as a god. On his bidding, many gave up drinking, cow-slaughter and polygamy,—the three taboos he preached. Finally, it was on Gandhiji's advice that he gave up the creed of violence. But the persecution of the British rulers would not let him settle down

SARAN—a typical irrigation channel dug by the Adivasis by constructing earthen dams across hilly rivulets

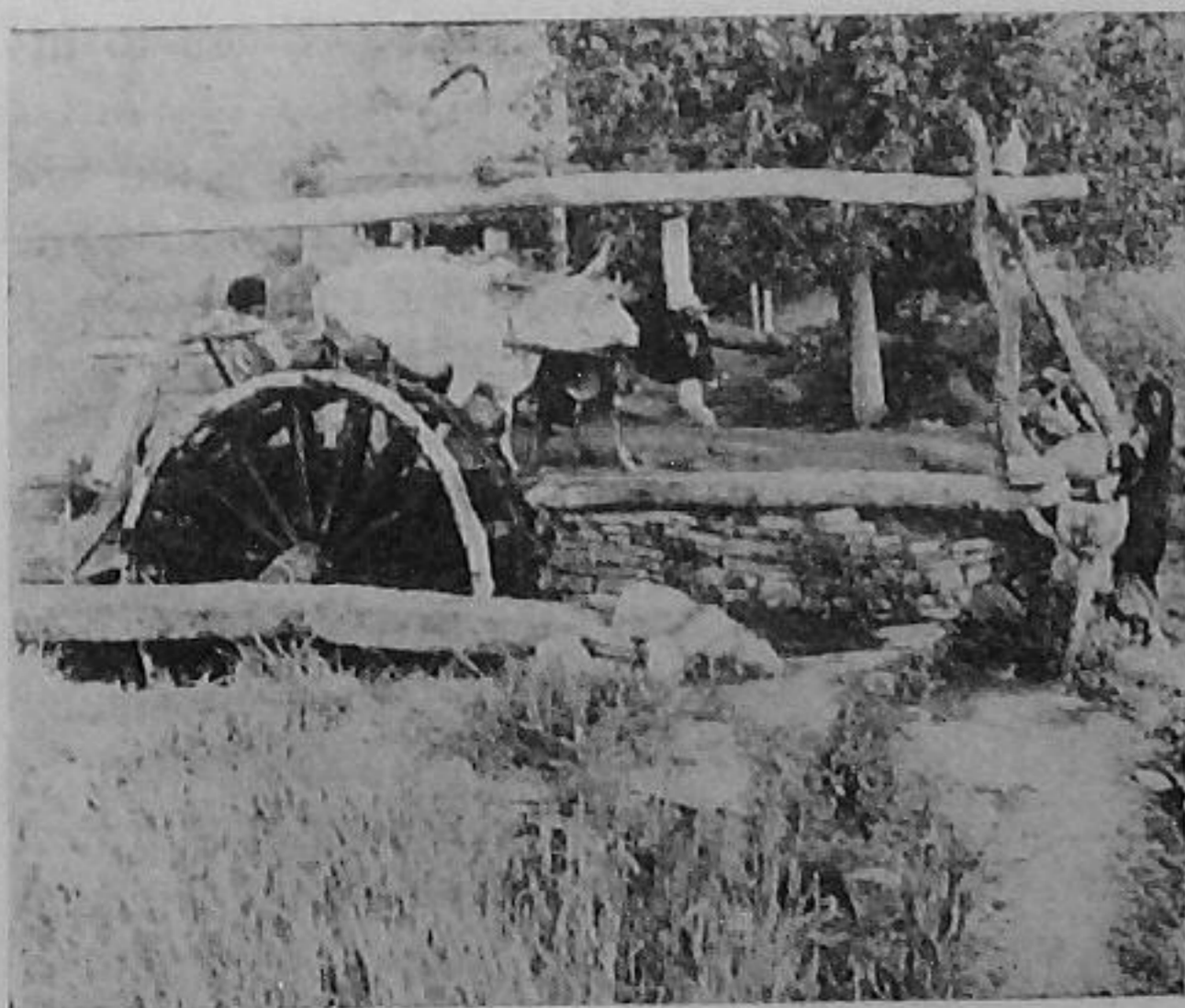


as a constructive worker. He courted imprisonment and was freed only after India attained independence. It is sad to learn that this true friend and guide of the Bhils died only a few months ago at the ripe old age of 85.

CONFIDENCE WON

When the Multipurpose Project was started in 1956, the Adivasis dreaded the project staff and would not come near them. They had a bitter experience of the past when the so-called civilised human beings coming from outside knew only to exploit and harass them. But luckily in Shri Chandu Bhai Patel the first Project Officer, the State Government had a very sympathetic and sensible person who was a tried social worker of Gujarat. He was given a free hand in the selection of the best team of the extension staff to work with him. From the very beginning he and his staff adopted a very cautious and humane attitude towards the Adivasis. For the first six months they never talked about any item of social welfare or development work. They tried to pick up their dialect—an admixture of Gujarati and Rajasthani. They would sit, move and work with them in the fields and at the home. Their plan of operation was that they selected 50 out of the 97 villages and established personal contacts with three or four persons in each village. In course of time the Adivasis realised that these people were somewhat different from those they had met in the past. The project staff thus succeeded in coming closer to them and in winning their confidence.

An indigenous Persian wheel with wooden parts and earthen buckets used by the Adivasis.



A bumper crop of wheat raised through improved farming practices.

The Project Officer's first task was to fire their imagination and inspire them to development efforts through self-help. This could be easily achieved if they saw for themselves how the people in other parts of the State lived. But they were too shy to move out of their little territory. It was with great difficulty that fifty people could be persuaded to go on a trip. It was a sight to see them leave their villages. Their wives, relatives and children, all turned up to bid them good-bye. They thought that the tourists were undertaking such a hazardous job that they might perhaps never return. Most of them had never seen a train. As they reached the railway station, three of them were so scared that they ran away for their very lives. On reaching Ahmedabad, the glare of electricity and the din and bustle of the city worked on their nerves so much that one of them turned mad and had to be brought back. Countless difficulties had to be faced particularly at the time of meals, and their moving out on the roads in the city for they found it hard to adjust themselves to the new conditions. The self-locking doors of the lavatories had to be broken open thrice because the person inside did not know how to open it.

With all these hazards and difficulties in the tour, the group had a novel experience of their life-time when they saw vast fields full of rich crops of wheat and cotton in Kaira district, huge machines producing the white crystals of sugar at Surat, the rolling waters of the sea at Bombay,

the cows with a milk yield of 20 lbs. in the Aery colony and bullocks three to four times bigger in size they had ever seen. When they returned home, they talked of all these 'wonderful things' and the entire tribal area was astir with the tales of their experience. It was in such an atmosphere of mass excitement that the seeds of development activities found a fertile soil to germinate and grow.

CANALISING INCREASED INCOME

Agricultural development was given top priority. The Adivasis had very few irrigation wells. But they depended a lot on natural channels called 'Sarans' dug out of hill rivulets. They have acquired considerable skill in this method and can manage to irrigate undulating fields at varying heights by changing the water level of the rivulets by putting small earthen dams across them. A number of 'Sarans' were dug and the area under this system of irrigation rose by 3,000 acres. Uptil now they largely grew maize only by broadcasting the seeds and leaving the rest to Nature. But it was not felt that the black cotton soil was ideal for cotton cultivation. Therefore, some cotton seeds were distributed amongst the willing cultivators to grow the new crop. Cotton cultivation was of course not entirely unknown in the area. Jekabhai, a farmer who had come from outside and settled in village Patadia several years ago had made some pioneering efforts at cotton cultivation. But obviously it had not caught on. It was for the first time now that the Adivasis gave the new crop a trial on having been assured by the Project staff that they might pay the cost of the seeds only if they gained something from the crop. Luckily, it proved to be a very good crop. But before it could mature, a good portion of it was consumed raw by the Adivasis to whom the pod was so tasteful that they called it "Kairi" *i.e.* mango and ate it raw. The sale of the cotton brought some money. To most of them it was the largest amount of cash they had handled in their lives so far. As cotton cultivation increased year by year, their income also went up. Within two years, cotton cultivation was pursued practically by every family. Mixed crop of cotton and maize was also introduced. This resulted in increased output of the maize crop as well. In course of time cultivation of wheat was also considerably stepped up.



A view of a group of twelve houses and a Community Centre built at Limbada to encourage community living.

Before the Project started, the Adivasis had been following the primitive methods of cultivation. They used to sow seeds by broadcasting and used bullocks only for drawing water from the wells. The wells had indigenous Persian wheels made of wood with earthen buckets. They now learnt cultivation by bullock power. Improved farming practices such as line-sowing, use of improved seeds and fertilisers were also introduced. It is interesting to note how in their simplicity more than 150 persons from three villages applied for taccavi to purchase new bullocks for they thought that their old bullocks were used to move only in circles to draw water from the Persian wheels and were not suited for line-sowing cultivation.

Their agricultural income now began to increase rapidly. As they were used to barter system and their wants were few they did not know what to do with their extra income. The children with their pocketfuls and the elders with bagfuls of cotton would rush to the only stall of a tea vendor on the bus route to Posina to avail of the refreshments offered by him. The latter who hardly earned Rs. 2 a day has now had a roaring business up to Rs. 200 a day. Many outsiders were tempted to set up similar canteens. Sensing a danger of exploitation of the simple tribal folk in this move, the Project authorities succeeded in restricting indiscriminate opening up of such shops.

However, one thing became clear. There was now plenty of money to go round amongst the Adivasis. Either they would come to Khed Brahma to sell cotton and other produce or the *Vohras* would themselves go to the interior villages and purchase their produce. Money did come into wide circulation amongst them. Their age-old barter system received a deadly blow. It became clear as daylight to the Project authorities that unless their surplus money was canalised into constructive activities there was danger of its being misused in drinking and such other vices. The Project Officer wisely decided to launch two schemes, one of digging wells and the other of building model houses to mop up the surplus money. And both were needs of the hour. A new slogan became widely current amongst the Adivasis: "*Khado Nahin Taine Ladi Nahin*", i.e. "A man without a well should not be given a girl in marriage". Digging of wells in a rocky area like Khed Brahma project is extremely difficult. Provision for adequate supplies of explosives was made available to three co-operative societies to facilitate rock blasting. Taccavi was given in kind rather than in cash. All this had a miraculous effect on the progress of digging wells. By now about 1,000 wells have been sunk in the Project area.

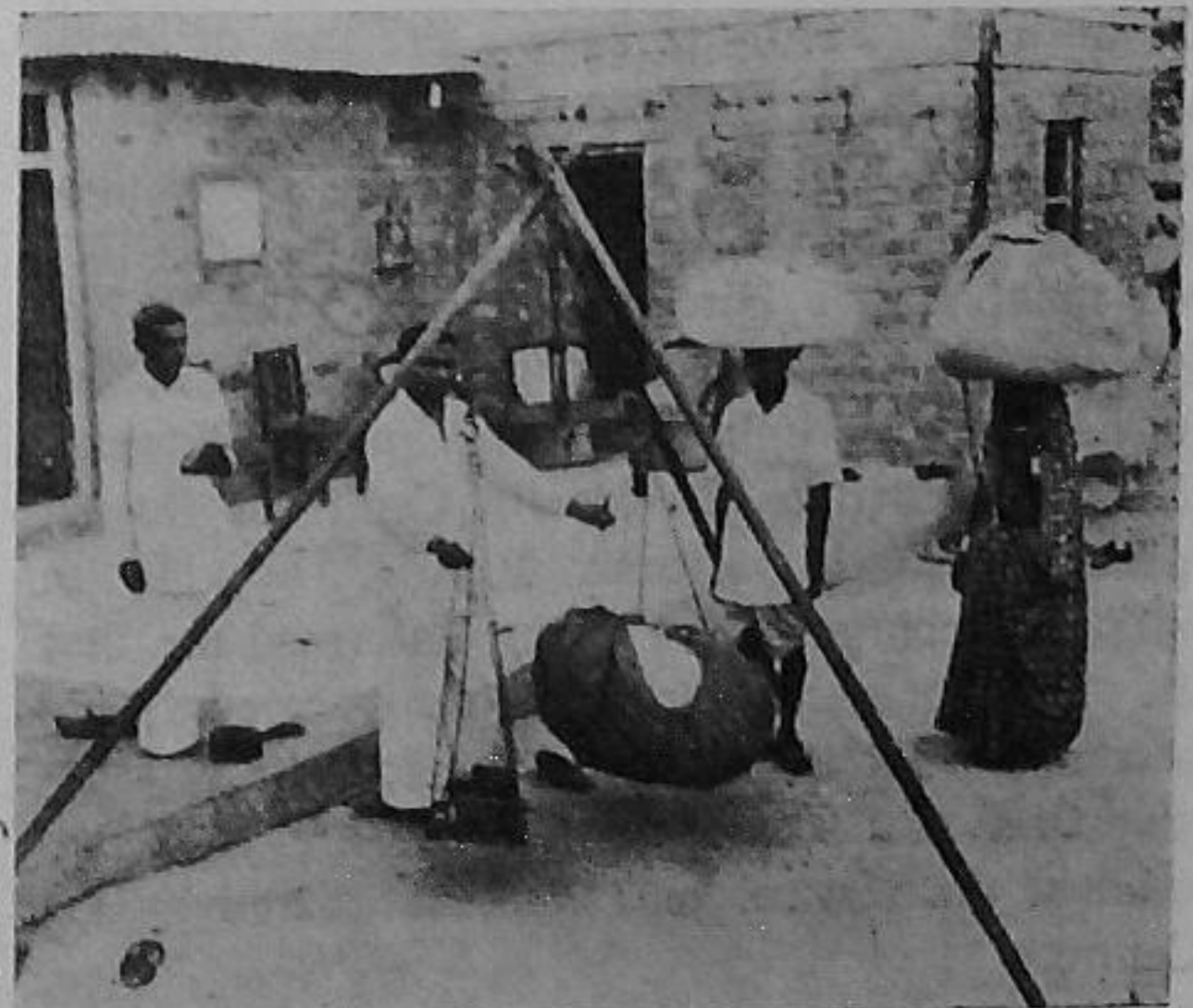
The Adivasis are habituated to live in a dark, one-roomed tenement. Their houses are scattered. A village of 50 houses would be scattered over an area of 4 to 5 square miles. An offer from the Project authorities to give them 50% subsidy to help build model houses did not induce them to come forward. However, an unforeseen natural factor forced them to reconsider the offer. As they began to store cotton in their thatched houses, cases of outbreak of fire became very common. A few of them ultimately reconciled themselves to the idea of building new houses. Under the Housing Scheme, plans of three types of model houses costing Rs. 700, Rs. 900 and Rs. 1,800 respectively were prepared and the Adivasis were offered 50% subsidy in the form of the services of the mason, cement and wood; the labour and the collection of stones being the responsibility of the owner. After the scheme had caught their imagination, the subsidy was withdrawn and they began to build new houses entirely on their own. In this way, more than a thousand houses were

built in the Project area. In order to encourage them to live in a group, twelve houses and a Community Centre have been built at one place in village Limbada.

As the prosperity of the Bhils increased, the *Vohras* who used to do trade with them combined and would not pay for cotton more than Rs. 34 per md. although its price in the market was about Rs. 55. To put a stop to this exploitation of the tribals, co-operative societies were started for purchase of cotton. In Khed Brahma, a co-operative ginning factory was also set up. The co-operative movement faced a stiff opposition from the *Vohras*. But the greatest difficulty was the lack of literate and trained local persons to manage the co-operatives. Competent hands had to be imported from outside.

As a result of all these efforts, their economic condition has improved considerably. Their per capita income has almost trebled since the Project was taken in hand. For instance, in Patadia village, seven Adivasis have purchased land worth Rs. one lakh sixty thousand from Jekabhaj who was the first person to have come from outside and settled down as an agriculturist in the village. Galabhaj Andabhaj is a progressive farmer whose yearly income from agriculture has gone up from Rs. 500 to Rs. 14,000 within four to five years. He has increased his land holding from 24 acres to 54 acres and installed a pumping set for irrigation. Land cultivation is

Adivasis selling cotton to a Cooperative Society.





Kalaji Hiraji who has a progeny of 40 children and grand children.

a craze with all the young people who have got their education in the Ashram Schools.

The Bhils living in the lap of nature and used to a vigorous outdoor life are generally sturdy and well-built. Even when they fall ill they would prefer to use their local herbs and medicines rather than take advantage of the medical facilities made available at the Health Centre at Posina. Mostly they suffer from malnutrition, skin diseases and V.D. As education is spreading to the younger generation they are taking to the modern system of medicines in preference to their old traditional curative measures. The main cause of their malnutrition and low standard of living is overpopulation. Since polygamy is widespread, it is normal for the head of a family to have a progeny of about a score during his life time. One Bikha Ranchhor who is aged 90 years married four times and has got 65 direct descendants still alive. Another old man, Kalaji Hiraji in village Demti has 40 sons, grand children and great-grand children. In view of this background, the Family Planning Centre attached to the Health Centre at Posina has a hard job to perform. But the Lady Health Visitor in charge of the Centre informed me that the Adivasis, particularly the younger people are becoming conscious of the need for family planning and that about 70 families are trying to avail of the services and facilities offered by the Centre.

EDUCATION : THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

The secret of the rapid progress achieved by the Tribal Project lies in the fact that systematic efforts have been made to educate through various media the young as well as the old. The film has come in handy both for educational and recreational purposes. There has been such a pressing demand for what the tribals describe it as 'Cine' that they have cheerfully constructed over 200 miles of Kacha roads in order that the cinema van could reach their village and give them a show.

Their exploitation at the hands of *Vohras* made them realise that unless they learnt arithmetic they would never get out of their clutches. Therefore, they joined in large number the 200 literacy classes started by the Project with the help of teachers during the vacation. About 260 people became literate at these centres.

Shivirs for menfolk were held under a mango tree or near a well where the village leaders would stay in an improvised enclosure. Each one of them would bring along a wooden cot and 5 lbs. of maize flour for his use during the stay in the camp. Discussions on various subjects like agriculture, Panchayati Raj and Co-operatives took place and they left the camp more enlightened.

A lady Social Worker of the Health Centre, Posina giving advice on family planning to Bhil women.



It was the *Griha Sushobhan Shivirs* meant for practical education of the womenfolk that brought about a transformation in the village. The Gram Sevika collected all the tribal ladies under a tree and taught them how to prepare good meals, comb hair, take bath, mend clothes and do other household jobs. The meals prepared by them were then served in a community lunch to all the participants. The camp lasted for 3 to 4 days at the end of which the look of the village was considerably changed. Ladies attending such camps carried lasting impressions with them and they have changed their mode of dress and ways of living for good.

Ashram type schools exist at Khed Brahma, Posina and Demti. Several primary schools have now been started in other villages also. The percentage of school-going children has gone up to 25% from 1% in 1956. A batch of 15 tribal boys who had passed the Matriculation Examination received Higher Education in Ahmedabad University on special scholarships arranged for them through the efforts of Chandubhai then Project Officer. Four of them are today post graduates serving on responsible positions.

It will be of interest to point out that those boys and girls who have been at school show a marked change in their outlook, dress and behaviour. They are assuming leadership in all walks of life and the traditional tribal leaders who used to wield supreme powers in the days

Shri Dolabhai Jwalabhai, the young Sarpanch of Nawa Mota and his wife.



An Adivasi belle who has learnt combing the hair after attending a Griha Sushobhan Shivir.

gone by, are now in an eclipse. The elections to Panchayati Raj bodies have precipitated this issue still further. A case in point is that of Shri Dolabhai Jwalabhai aged twenty-five, a young Sarpanch of village Nawa Mota and his wife. The young couple symbolises the rising spirit of the Bhil community. Both Dolabhai and his wife have been at the Ashram school. Dolabhai became Sarpanch after defeating a candidate of the old school of thought. He is actively interested in all development and social welfare schemes. His wife has received one year's training at a Tailoring Class started by the Project for training women. She has given up the old fashioned ornaments and now puts on *Saris*. Utensils, clothes and other sundry things in her house are kept in a new and orderly way. There is Navajibhai Dawda, aged 26 years who has received his education at the Ashram school. He is today the Sarpanch of village Patadia and is a progressive farmer. All his children including the girls are at school. Maljibhai who belongs to an ordinary Bhil family is an M.L.A. He has read up to 7th standard at the Ashram School and had been serving as a teacher and Pracharak on behalf of the Bhil Seva Mandal. There are many more rising stars like them. The message of the C.D. programme has reached every hamlet of the Project and there is little doubt that in the not too distant future, the Bhil community would be in the vanguard of the nation's progress.

Palod Sets An Inspiring Example

AN INSPIRING example of self-help has been set up by the villagers of Palod of Aarang Development Block in Madhya Pradesh. The villagers by contributing money and 'shramdan' have been able to build a number of social institutions such as Panchayat, school, mahila mandal, better farming society etc. Their achievement has instilled a new hope and self-confidence amongst the neighbouring villagers who are equally anxious to march forward.

PACKAGE PROGRAMME

Palod village, situated about 15 miles from Raipur is inhabited by 222 families. Under the auspices of the Intensive Agricultural District Programme, popularly known as Package Programme, the village has made rapid strides, particularly in the fields of Agriculture and Co-operation. Farm plans for 113 families were prepared during the year 1963-64 and 581 bags of Nitrogenous fertilizers and 300 bags of Phosphatic fertilizers were purchased by the cultivators. The villagers increased the area of improved paddy cultivation from 200 acres to 400 acres in 1963-64. Plant protection measures were extended to over 300 acres. With the increasing use of improved methods the production of Paddy has increased by 17% and 23% during the years 1962-63 and 1963-64, respectively. Encouraged by the results obtained during the last three seasons, the cultivators have decided to bring every inch of paddy land under the 'Package Practices' particularly the use of fertilizers, insecticides and green manures.



Members of the Youth Club holding discussions about the Village Development Plans.

When the scheme of contour bunding in Raipur district was started, village Palod was the first to offer its Bharri Lands for being bunded. An area of 473 acres was brought under this scheme. In these fields the cultivators have started growing paddy, wheat and pulses with increasing output.

BETTER FARMING SOCIETY

Palod has its own better farming society. Its membership has increased from 39 in the year 1959-60 to 106 in the year 1963-64. Similarly the credit facilities provided by the Society to its members have been of the order of Rs. 61,989 in the year 1962-63 as against Rs. 3,380 in the year 1959-60. The Society also handles storage and distribution of fertilizers for its own members as well as members of the neighbouring

societies. This institution has also been serving its members by undertaking marketing of their produce. The value of produce and the linking of credit effected during the year 1962-63 has been Rs. 22,210 and Rs. 6,310 respectively.

YOUTH ORGANISATION

The village has an active Youth Club of which the Village Volunteer Force forms the spear-head. The total membership is 35. It has concentrated its activity mainly on the economic development of the village particularly agricultural. The Youth Club with the help of the Gram Panchayat planted fuel trees on about 15 acres. Members of the Club have taken upon themselves to maintain a compost pit each. They have also ensured that every house plants



Pisciculture is a source of income to the village Panchayat.

Poultry farming unit managed by the Yuvak Mandal.



a fruit tree. The Club has been taking keen interest in the development of fisheries. Last year, 20,000 fries were stocked by them in one of the village tanks and this year stocking of 2,000 fingerlings has been done. Presently the Youth Club with the assistance of the Social Welfare Department is setting up a Poultry Unit for which it has received an aid of Rs. 650, partly as loan and partly as subsidy.

A Fishermen's Co-operative Society organised in the village has also stocked 90,000 fries this year. With these efforts it is expected that the village will have both fish and money to be utilized for nutrition programme as well as other development schemes.

SPOTLIGHT ON GUJARAT

Gujarat State, covering an area of 72,140 square miles, had a population of 20.6 million in 1961. The density of population per square mile works out at 286 compared to 373 in the country. The eastern half of the State is more densely populated than Saurashtra, partly on account of relatively favourable agricultural conditions and partly because of a higher level of industrial development. The most populous districts in this region are Kaira, Ahmedabad, Surat and Baroda.

Agriculture and allied activities provide the main source of livelihood to about 58 per cent of the population calculated according to the 1951 Census data. The contribution of this section of the population to the State income amounted to Rs. 225 crores in 1955-56 or about 44 per cent of the total. The gross value of output per acre is about two-thirds of the national average. The exceptionally low productivity is due to an inferior crop pattern and poor yields of most of the major crops which, in turn, are attributable to unfavourable climatic conditions over the major portions of the State.

Increasing Financial Resources

RECENTLY THERE was a Press report that the annual income of a certain Gram Sabha was only Rs. 29. Its sad plight was poignantly brought out by the fact that due to its limited financial resources it could not even make use of the offer of the State Government to supply a Community Radio Set at 50 per cent concessional rate. It has been observed that there are some village Panchayats whose income is so low that they can hardly discharge the onerous functions of welfare and development cast upon them. It is their primary duty to increase their income through taxation, voluntary contributions in cash, kind or labour or by developing remunerative assets.

It will be recalled that sometime back the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation had set up a Study Team under the Chairmanship of Shri K. Santhanam to go into the question of the Financial resources of the Panchayati Raj institutions. Below we give a gist of some of the important recommendations made by the Committee.—Editor.

PANCHAYATS

1. House tax, profession tax and vehicle tax (including tax on cycles) should be compulsory taxes. Minimum and maximum rates of these taxes may be prescribed.
2. Octroi may be replaced by other progressive taxes.
3. Kollagarum, a tax on produce sold in village by weight, measurement or number, may be an optional tax.
4. Pilgrim tax should be levied by Panchayat Samitis or Zila Parishad and a part of the proceeds given to Panchayats.
5. Panchayats may levy tax on animals.
6. A reasonable share of net income from Samiti and Zila Parishad markets may be given to Panchayats.
7. Surcharge on stamp duty not exceeding 5% of the value of property should be levied and proceeds distributed among Samitis and its Panchayats.
8. The whole or a part of entertainment tax collected by the State Govt. in rural areas should be shared with Panchayats and Samitis. Panchayats and Samitis may levy show tax in addition.
9. The income from sale of Kendu leaf may be shared with Panchayats or Samitis.
10. An amount equal to 15% of the collection, if the collection is 75% of total amount of annual tax, may be paid to the Panchayats. For every additional collection of 5% the amount of grant should be increased by 1%.
11. A basic minimum maintenance grant of Re. 1 per capita should be given to every Panchayat to be shared equally by State and Central Governments.
12. For executing specific development projects, Panchayats should have powers to levy special tax on land revenue, house tax or some other taxes.
13. Labour tax may be levied when voluntary contribution in cash or labour is insufficient to execute a development project.
14. All public land, ponds, trees, tanks with fisheries rights including their management, cattle pounds, etc. situated in its area should be transferred to the Panchayats.
15. Wherever enough land is not available, State Government should acquire and give at least 5 acres of land to the Panchayat for house sites, compost making, etc.
16. A minimum of one per cent of land per capita should be given as non-alienable community projects to a Panchayat having large unassigned areas of cultivable land.
17. Alienation of immovable property by Panchayats should be subject to permission or approval of a prescribed authority.
18. Persistent attempts should be made to help Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis to

start remunerative undertakings and thereby increase the scope for non-tax income.

19. Panchayats should endeavour to attract gifts and donations.
20. The expenditure on Nyaya Panchayats should be met by Government on the net cost basis, preferably at the Samiti level.
21. The expenditure on administration should not ordinarily exceed 25% of the total income of a Panchayat.
22. There should be a Panchayat Secretary for each Panchayat. He should also collect land revenue and Panchayat taxes.

PANCHAYAT SAMITIS

23. An annual grant of Re. 1 per capita may be made to Samiti to be equally shared by the State and Central Governments for maintenance of staff within this amount.
24. An amount of Rs. 400 crores @ Rs. 10 per capita of rural population may be allotted in the Fourth Plan for unspecified local development works to be given on matching basis.
25. Elementary education should be transferred to Samiti or Zila Parishad. Expenditure involved would be met out of grants and resources transferred specially for the purpose by the State Government. Every Samiti should have some additional funds at its disposal for initiative in effecting improvements in education.
26. Not more than half of the proceeds of resources transferred to Samitis should be earmarked for committed expenditure and the balance should be borne by the State Government.
27. The process of pooling all grants under a development schematic budget may be encouraged.
28. It should have freedom to readjust plan according to local needs within the broad categories.
29. A suitable penalty, say of 10 per cent, may be levied on all arrears of taxes and penalty utilised by the revenue authorities or Samitis for appointing special staff for collection of arrears.

ZILA PARISHAD

30. The matters on which it should be consulted should be listed with imagination and precision and a convention established for modification or projection of its recommendation only by the State Cabinet.

LOANS

31. Every State Government should establish a Panchayati Raj Corporation with a capital ranging from rupee one crore to five crores for giving loans to Panchayati Raj bodies.

BUDGET, ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

32. Proper commercial accounts should be maintained for public utility or remunerative undertakings financed by loans.
33. A weekly statement of receipts and expenditure should be sent by each Panchayat to its Samiti office where it should be scrutinised and filed.
34. A special branch in the office of the Examiner of Local Fund Audit should be organised in each State to carry out regularly the audit of the accounts of Panchayati Raj institutions.

GENERAL

35. The rights, duties and powers of Zila Parishad, Samiti and Panchayat should be clearly and precisely defined leaving no scope for disputes or overlapping.
36. Zila Parishad or Samiti should not be empowered to levy contributions from the lower tier except for executing development projects.
37. A high level officer should at least in bigger States be exclusively in charge of financial matters concerning Panchayati Raj bodies.
38. In backward areas, etc. where three-tier system is not suitable, special institutions and procedures may be devised for them.
39. Donations for National Defence Fund, etc. and expenditure on receptions and ceremonial occasions, in excess of small minimum, should be prohibited.

Community on the Move

VILLAGERS CONSTRUCT TWO-MILE ROAD

THE VILLAGERS of Karamada in Bhatapara Development Block of Raipur district in Madhya Pradesh have done commendable work by constructing a two-mile long road in three days by shramdan. About 700 men, women and children of the village performed shramdan worth Rs. 3,500. The road joins their village with Bhatapara-Balodabazar main road.

* * *

V.V.F. DIGS UP DRAINAGE CHANNEL

MORE THAN 500 villagers and members of the Village Volunteer Force of Asannagar Union of Naikuri village in Krishnanagar Block in West Bengal have undertaken the digging of 10,000 ft. long drainage channel from the Beel in order to reclaim the water-logged area. Earth-work measuring four lakh cubic feet, involving an expenditure of Rs. 10,000, will be carried out by the Village Volunteer Force members and the amount thus saved will be contributed towards the betterment of the village school. One thousand and five hundred bighas of land will be benefited by the scheme and above 500 bighas will have the facilities of double cropping.

* * *

AVADA VILLAGERS SET UP INSPIRING EXAMPLE OF SELF-HELP

THE PEOPLE of Avada village in the Seopur Tribal Block of Morena district in Madhya Pradesh have set up an inspiring example of self-help by digging a 3,500 feet long canal through 'shramdan' to carry water to their thirsty fields.

The Avada village has a population of 870 consisting of 593 Adivasis. This village was included in the Block area only about a year back. At that time, the national emergency was declared due to the Chinese attack and the village peo-

ple were called upon to discharge their responsibility towards the nation. Immediately, a scheme for increasing agricultural production was prepared with the help of the Block authorities. But dry farming was no answer to their scheme. Their fields required water. Preparation of water channel was the first requisite to carry water to the fields. The villagers resolved to prepare the required water courses through their voluntary efforts. They collected Rs. 500 and took up the strenuous job of digging the channels. They cut 2600 feet rocks coming in the way of the 3500 ft. long water course. Now, the canal is ready and it will irrigate 500 acres. The 'shramdan' put in is valued at Rs. 1,500. The effort of self-help by the villagers of Avada has infused a new awakening in the neighbouring villages.

* * *

EVERY PANCHAYAT HAS A RADIO

DISTRICT MAHENDRAGARH in the Punjab has been totally covered by the Community Listening Scheme. All the 401 Panchayats in the district have got a community listening set. This has been done with a view to give an impetus to the Rural Radio Forum programme.

* * *

AGRICULTURAL FARMING SOCIETY IN NAGOUR

ABOUT 20 MILES from Parbatsar Panchayat Samiti in Rajasthan, 18 men and 3 women have formed an agricultural farming society. The women members are those who have lost their husbands during Chinese aggression. The State Government has allotted 565 Bighas of agricultural land to the society, and a sum of about Rs. 4,000 was spent to make it cultivable. In spite of the vagaries of nature, the society was able to produce in the very first year 200 mds. of Bajra, 125 mds. of Jawar, 25 mds. of Til and fodder worth Rs. 1,200. Considering the laudable efforts of the society, the State

Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 6,000 for the construction of a godown and Rs. 3,000 as capital investment. The Panchayat Samiti has also sanctioned a sum of Rs. 9,000 for the construction of a well.

* * *

TWO PANCHAYATS IN PUNJAB MAKE HEADWAY

ENCOURAGING REPORTS of good work having been done by the Panchayats of Athola and Singhpura have been received from the Punjab. The Singhpura Panchayat is providing amenities like drinking water, library facilities, veterinary and hospital facilities. It is also looking after village ponds, wells and roads. Under the guidance of the Panchayat, a mile-and-a-half stretch of road has been constructed by the villagers. Village Athola is proud of its co-operative credit society which has succeeded in replacing the money lenders.

* * *

GRAPE CULTIVATION CATCHES ON IN SAHARANPUR

THREE YEARS ago grape cultivation was not known in the Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. But the efforts of the 55-year old Thakur Sumer Singh, a progressive farmer of Daryapur village, have now made Saharanpur famous for grapes. The news of his success has spread to the villages nearby, and many other farmers have now taken to grape cultivation.

* * *

ADIVASIS SET EXAMPLE IN SELF-HELP

THE ADIVASI inhabitants of Karidongari, Panjanwada, Pajanwadi, Harahet and Kikhari villages in the Parasia Block of the Chhindwara district in Madhya Pradesh have set an example in self-help and co-operation by constructing a school building without any outside help. The villagers felt the acute want of a school building. They, therefore, decided to construct one through their own efforts. A village Sarpanch, Shri C. L. Choubey donated Rs. 1,500 and over one acre of land for the purpose. The villagers collected a further amount of Rs. 500. Then they drew up the plan of the building and set about constructing it. It was finished in fifteen days. It includes two rooms, one office room, a verandah and a courtyard.

Encouraged by this achievement, the villagers are now planning to construct a well and a house for the village teacher.

* * *

A NOVEL SCHOOL PANCHAYAT

"Shri-Kishanlal is found guilty of using filthy words against Shri Mohanlal and hence his dirty tongue is to be washed with soap before all the school boys."

This simple yet peculiar judgment was passed by the Sarpanch to the satisfaction of all present in Sudmahadev School Panchayat. The setting up of a Students' Panchayat in the school was entirely a novel feature. The school is located in Chenani Block about 1½ miles from the main Jammu-Srinagar Road. It was a girl student, Kumari Pushpa Devi of VIII class who had been elected as Sarpanch of the School Panchayat. Besides her, there were ten other members of this Panchayat. The Adalti Committee of the Panchayat faced a difficult situation when Sh. Kishanlal of V class filed a case against Sh. Mohanlal of the same class stating that he had damaged his exercise book. The Committee after carefully studying the evidences, came to the conclusion that both were guilty and therefore both were to be punished. It was decided that both students should apologise before the school boys at the time of prayer. In addition to that Sh. Kishanlal had to undergo another punishment. His tongue was to be washed with soap because it had become dirty due to his having abused Shri Mohanlal.

This experimental school-panchayat proved a success not only in solving students' quarrels and conflicts without their teachers' intervention, but also establishing a co-operative society with a share capital of Rs. 20.50 nP. in 205 shares of worth 10 nP. each. The co-operative society purchased stationary articles and sold these to needy students on cash payment at cheaper rates. The sarpanch, with the help of other members, raised an income of Rs. 60.00 through sale of fruits and vegetables obtained from the small collective farm in the school premises. With these new features, Sudmahadev school has become an institution for educating 'would-be-citizens' of India, in the values of Sahakari Samaj and Panchayati Raj.

VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE MARCHES ON

THE VILLAGE Volunteer Force has been making steady progress ever since it was set up in the wake of the Chinese invasion. So far 146.19 lakhs have joined the Force. In Andhra Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Orissa and Punjab, the enrolment figures have gone up considerably. Gujarat, Madras and Uttar Pradesh are the other States in which there has been a sizeable increase in enrolment. There has been marked improvement in the labour and cash donations to the Defence Labour Bank and in their utilisation. So far 1070.10 lakh man-days have been donated to the Defence Labour Bank and 219.65 lakh man-days have been utilised for implementing various development programmes. The total cash donations in lieu of labour amount to Rs. 18.19 lakhs.

Following a suggestion made last year by the Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation, ten States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Maharashtra, Mysore, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal have made the minimum donation of 12 days labour a precondition for the enrolment in the Village Volunteer Force. In three States, viz., Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, teams of officers have been constituted to visit selected areas where the pace of utilisation has been slow to identify the problems and devise correctives.

UTILISATION OF LABOUR DONATIONS

Desilting of irrigation tanks, construction of field channels, repairs to irrigation wells, soil conservation, deepening of tanks for stocking fingerlings are some of the work programmes in which labour donations have been utilised in Andhra Pradesh. In Gujarat, repairs to village approach roads and construction of soil conservation bunds have been undertaken on a large-

scale. The programme in Madhya Pradesh included digging of field channels for irrigation purposes and contour bunding on a large-scale. Labour donations in Madras State were utilised in effecting improvements in agricultural practices, animal husbandry and fisheries, health and sanitation, adult literacy and village industries. In Rajasthan, the labour donations were utilised on land reclamation, development of village pastures, plantation of fodder and fuel trees, contour bunding, drainage and flood protection measures, construction and maintenance of minor irrigation works and intensive development of poultry and fishery.

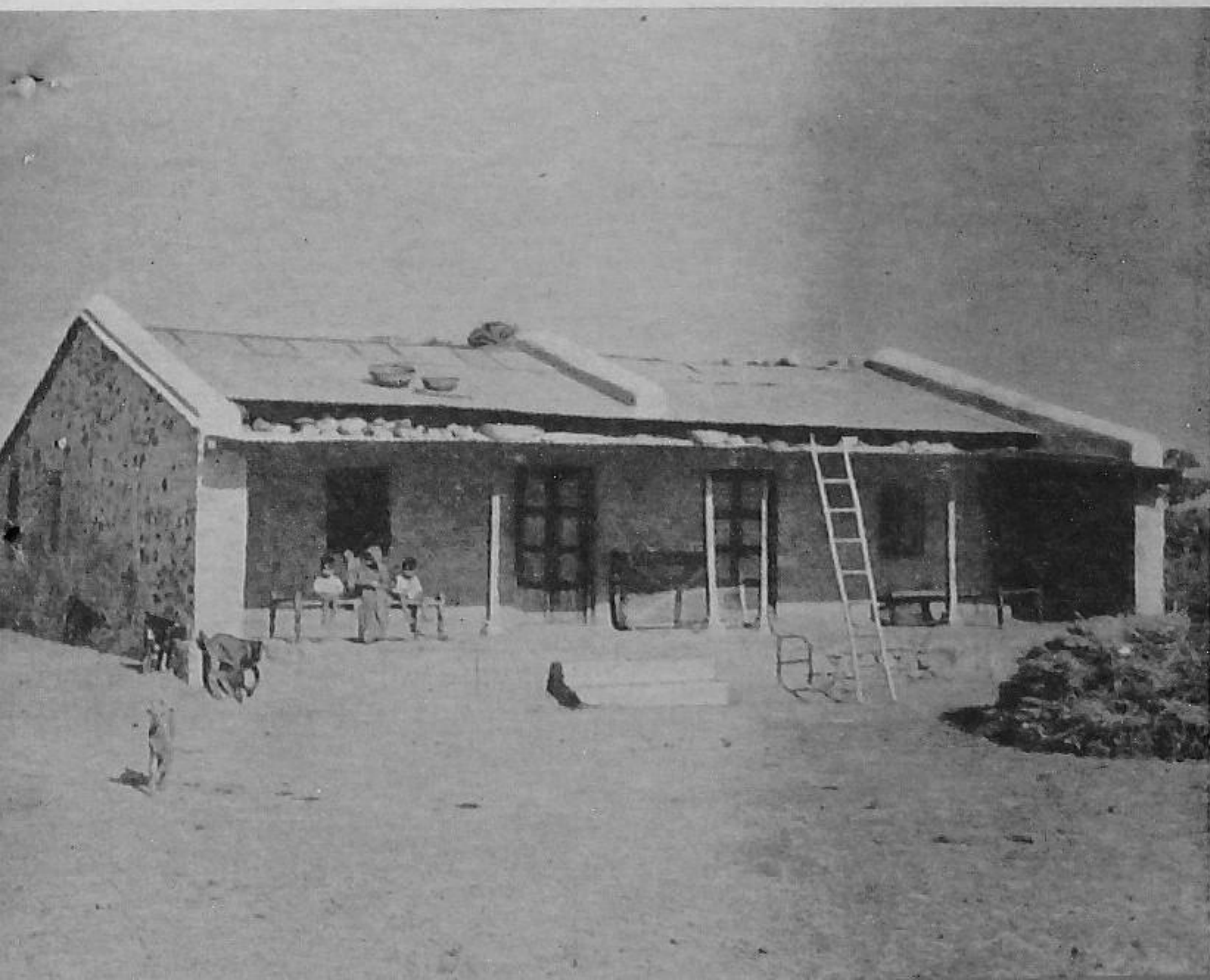
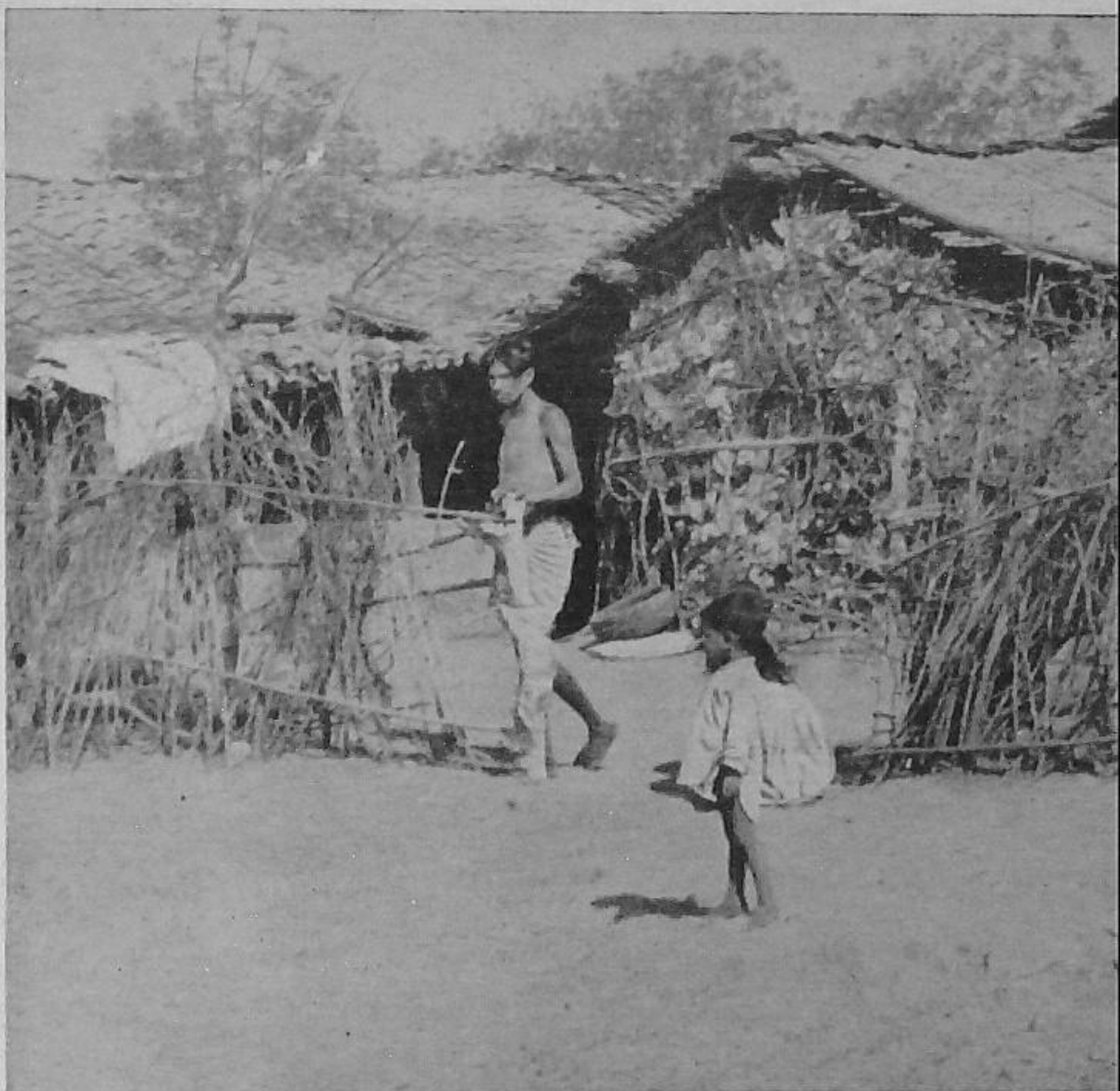
RURAL WORKS PROGRAMME

The recommendation of Dr. Ram Subhag Singh Committee for providing matching grant to the panchayats where at least 25 per cent of the able-bodied adults in the villages join the Village Volunteer Force has been examined by the Union Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation. The Ministry is of the view that instead of a matching grant, matching assistance may be given in terms of various programmes, keeping in view the level of local effort. In this integrated approach, Panchayat Samitis which mobilise the minimum amount of donations to the Village Volunteer Force from the local population and which assure employment to the needy during the slack season would be allocated the rural works programme from among the pool of eligible blocks. This approach, it is felt, will make the Samitis squarely responsible for ensuring the optimum utilisation of rural man-power, make the local community conscious of its social responsibilities in providing employment to the needy and impart an employment orientation to all the existing programmes.



The Changing Material Resources

An old-type house owned by an Adivasi.



A model house built under the Housing Scheme of the Project.



An Adivasi potter of the Tribal Multipurpose Project, Khed Brahma, in Gujarat at work. The potters are excellent craftsmen. The toy horse seen in the picture, is their typical creation.

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