

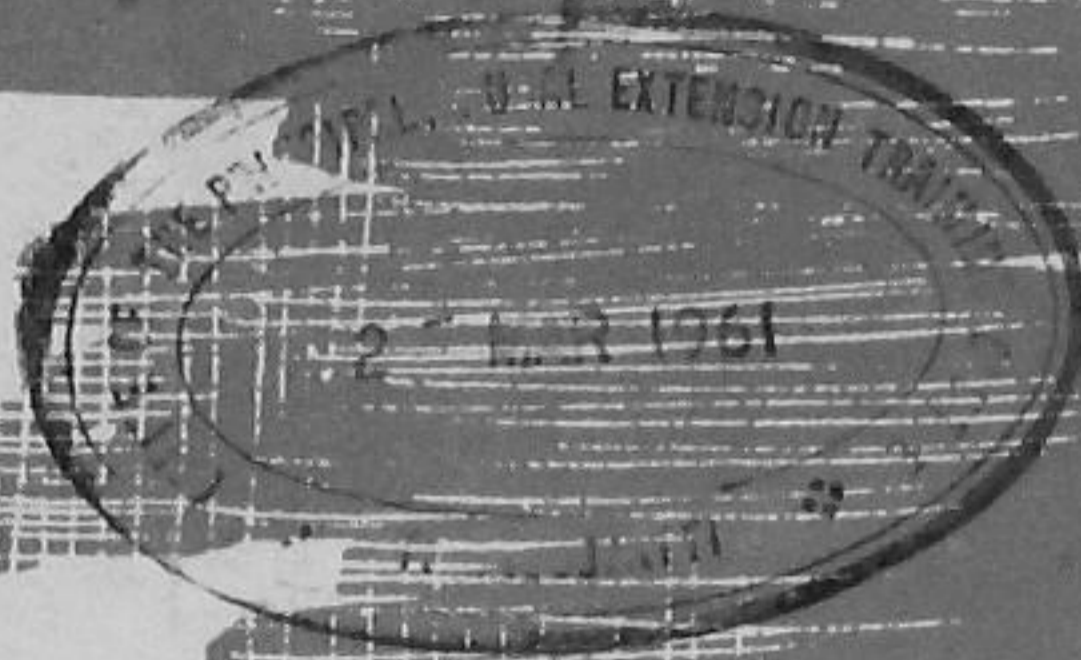
Panchayati Raj

JANUARY 1961

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PANCHAYATI RAJ

(Incorporating Gram Sevak)

Vol. 1

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A WAY OF LIFE

S. K. Dey

WE CANNOT talk about Panchayati Raj of tomorrow without talking about Panchayats as they have been till recent times. Panchayats, people complain, have been faction-ridden; Panchayats have been reactionary and superstitious. Before I blamed the Panchayats, I wished to ask myself what we really did from the top to entrust new responsibilities to the Panchayats and the means to discharge these responsibilities. A little probe within my own mind revealed that our Panchayats were primarily looking after the lamp-posts and the reception to "Important" and "Very Important" visitors to the village. They had very little resources given to them. Most functions were being discharged by Government direct. It was happening so even in the Community Development Blocks. How could we, in these circumstances, expect the Panchayats to levy substantial taxes on the people? Taxes and functions go together. If the Panchayats do not have functions, they cannot levy taxes either. Is it any wonder then that the Panchayats by and large functioned in India as institutions for pomp and grandeur associated with high dignitaries in and outside Government?

SHARING POWER

Next comes the question of our newly-born freedom. Freedom, as our leaders have declared time and again, meant the freedom of choice and the freedom to govern ourselves as we chose from the Centre to the village. This meant that the Parliament had to share power with the State legislature and the State legislature with other institutions along the line. When we talk of power we may look at it either from the top downwards or from the ground upwards. Let us, for a change, look at things from the ground. The

ground means the individual family which is the primary unit of self-government. What the family can do without interfering with other families, should be its birth-right. No government in the world should have any right to interfere in it. What the family cannot do individually, but several families can do collectively, should be left to the village Panchayat. Higher institutions might help but they should not order the Panchayat about. There are many activities which an individual panchayat cannot do on its own, for instance, setting up a hospital, middle or high school, a veterinary dispensary or a marketing centre and such like items. These can be looked after if several Panchayats federate together. Such a federation, in the new context of Panchayati Raj, we call the Panchayat Samiti.

While Panchayat Samiti is carrying out its responsibility, it should receive higher guidance in technical and administrative matters from above. There are also many items of development which only a district organisation can discharge adequately. This will mean that above the Block Panchayat Samiti there should be a Zilla Parishad. Zilla Parishad will advise and guide the Block Panchayat Samitis and will secure adequate technical assistance and other resources to help the Block Panchayat Samitis in their activities. It is quite obvious that to do all these, it will be necessary to have adequate financial resources and also the services of a properly trained staff. Panchayati Raj, as we now conceive, visualises that the district technical officers will at the earliest opportunity be working under the directions of the Zilla Parishad; the officers at the Block level will be working under the Block Panchayat

Samiti and the staff at the village level under the village panchayat. The Collector or the Deputy Commissioner will act as a liaison officer between the State Government and the newly created local government institutions under Panchayati Raj which will be set up in the district.

GRAM SABHA TO LOK SABHA

Panchayati Raj as we now visualise will, therefore, mean progressive increase in competence from the ground upwards and corresponding transfer of responsibilities from the Centre to the ground. It is elementary that if one wishes to climb higher, one must reduce the burden of avoidable weight on his shoulders. People who climb the mountains know it at their cost. Our Central Government must function at a very high level appropriate to the size, culture and the rich tradition of India. If this is to be so, the Centre must be relieved of responsibilities which the State Governments should be able to discharge. State Government cannot rise to a very high level of performance unless the State Government is relieved likewise of its responsibilities which can be discharged adequately by the institution next to it namely the Zilla Parishad and so on up to the lowest unit.

Panchayati Raj thus grows to be a way of life and a new approach to government. Panchayati Raj on this pattern brings about a complete link-up of our people from the Gram Sabha to the Lok Sabha. The basic unit of our democracy will be the individual family. Panchayati Raj will make available to the individual family the highest guidance that is available up to the Parliament and will not impose the weight of other people's control in matters which people can handle themselves at a particular tier. (From a message delivered on the eve of the mass swearing-in of the newly elected members of the Panchayats in Punjab.)

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Glimpses of Panchayati Raj In Rajasthan (2)

Vidur

FRUIT GARDENING and vegetable growing is fast spreading in the wake of assured irrigation facilities. The newly laid out orchards amidst sand dunes present a very comforting and welcome sight. The soil is extraordinarily rich. I saw one orchard near Jaipur where Papita and Guava plants planted only 2 years ago looked as though five years old and had started bearing fruit. In Srinagar Block, Rasulphur, appeared to be a village of orchards and vegetables. Here 80% of the families have taken to horticulture. The villagers largely grow tomatoes which find a ready market in the nearby city of Ajmer. An old man told me that till a few years ago, very few people grew vegetables. Due to abundance of fruit and vegetables in this area, some people have started a Fruit Preservation Society. The society undertakes canning and preparation of squash, jelly, jam and toffee of tomatoes, mangoes, guavas and other fruits prepared according to modern techniques.

I found that the cultivators are steadily becoming manure-minded and are even trying to make their own compost pits. The practice of compost-making is fast spreading in villages where fruit and vegetable gardening has been taken up. The

Panchayats are taking keen interest in the digging of compost pits. Shri Nahar Khan, Sarpanch of village Untra told me that his Panchayat had passed a resolution to the effect that any cultivator who did not have at least one pit shall have to pay fine of rupee one and 10 seers of wheat instead of the usual 7½ seers per md. of wheat seed advanced to him on loan. I understand several Panchayats have passed similar resolutions and these are having the desired effect.

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

Industry continues to be the weakest link in the production programme. The Panchayati Raj does not seem to have made much impact in this connection. But for the traditional Khadi and Ambar Khadi, no other industry seems to have taken roots in the villages. But a beginning is being made. The Srinagar Panchayat Samiti has four mobile Training Centres for teaching improved techniques of weaving, tanning, fruit canning and masonry to the village artisans. The training centre is opened in a village where a sufficient number of artisans are willing to learn the improved methods and the village Panchayat offers a suitable site and a matching contribution for the construction of a work-shed. After

the artisans have picked up the improved methods, the training centre is shifted to another village to train other artisans. Distinct improvement in the earning capacity of the trained artisans is visible. In village Babai-cha, a tannery is being run on cooperative basis. The members are all workers who have received training in improved methods. Everything is neat and clean and no bad odour fouls the atmosphere. Different types of hides, from that of a snake to the buffalo, are being treated according to the new techniques. The wages of the workers average Rs. 2 per day. There is no shortage of raw material. In addition to the carcasses available locally in the village, the society arranges to procure more hides from distant places like Kanpur. It will be better perhaps if flaying centres are also established in the vicinity so that the tanning centre is able to rely fully on local supplies.

Lot of building activity is going on throughout the Block. I was told that there is a shortage of good masons. The Masonry Training scheme initiated by the Block is doing a great service by providing the much-needed masons. No sooner do the trainees complete the course than they find jobs on suitable terms. In Babaicha there is a handloom weavers' cooperative whose members have been trained to work with improved equipments. I saw a few specimen of bed-sheets, towels and cloth prepared by them. These were

in attractive designs and certainly marked a great improvement on their past performance in the traditional style. The workers earn about Rs. 2 per day. They get sufficient quota of mill yarn and have no complaint about clearance of their products. But the nicely packed and labelled bottles of jams, squash, jelly, sauce, and marmalade of different fruits and vegetables like mango, guava, tomato gave me a jolt out of the rural atmosphere and I thought I was in a grocery shop of a big city. This was in village Madarpura where a Fruit Preservation Society has been recently organised and the members have been trained in the techniques of canning and preservation by an expert trainer with the help of most modern equipment. In this and surrounding villages, fruit and vegetable cultivation is being carried on an extensive scale. The Centre has in fact been started at a suitable place and promises to be a great success. The Panchayat Samiti in its own limited way is no doubt pulling its weight in favour of the industrial programme. Though the Fruit Preservation Society had been registered seven months back yet the needed loans could not be sanctioned due to procedural difficulties. The enthusiasm of the members began to cool off but the Panchayat Samiti took the courageous and wise step of advancing the requisite loan to the society on the understanding that when the Reserve Bank sanctioned its

loan to the society, the same would be repaid to the Samiti. In that way, the Samiti has been utilising its own funds on projects which threaten to get stuck up due to procedural delays. The Samiti, thus has kept the wheels of development moving smoothly by utilising its own resources as suited to the occasion.

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

What has been the impact on People's Participation? The new pattern has given it an unprecedented impetus. In Jhotwara Block, the people's contribution during the year has amounted to Rs. 65,000 as against similar amount spent by the Government on various works. In Srinagar Block where people's interest in the programme has been aroused appreciably, the voluntary contribution in cash, kind and labour is of the order of Rs. 1,25,000 as against Rs. 1,40,000, grant-in-aid by the Government. The Panchayats have succeeded in mobilising the people's available resources in a manner that the Block agency alone under the previous set-up could not dream. There is an evidence of healthy rivalry amongst neighbouring villages to outbid each other in obtaining the Government grant which is offered on a matching basis for various purposes. The Government has thought it fit to encourage digging of wells for purposes of drinking as well as irrigation and offers aid up to 75%. In other cases of construction works like the Panchayat

Bhavans and Children's Parks etc., the aid is up to 50%. The demand for pucca primary school buildings is quite widespread so that grant-in aid up to 25% is considered enough.

HOUSE-BUILDING

If house-building activity could be taken to be a sign of prosperity, it was in evidence wherever I went. A number of new buildings for residential as well as community purposes are coming up in almost every village, so much so that there is an acute shortage of masons. Panchayat Ghars, Cooperative store godowns, school buildings, dispensaries, Vocational Training Sheds and residential quarters for teachers are being constructed. The Rural Housing scheme is making considerable headway. In Jhotwara Block, a beautiful colony of 45 model houses has sprung up in village Ranpura Reopa. Each person was given a grant of Rs. 500 and a loan of Rs. 1,000 only, a similar amount being contributed by the house-owner. In Srinagar Panchayat Samiti area, I was able to have a look at 24 new model houses of Harijans already built in village Kotda. These stand proudly beside the old thatched mud houses in which the owners have lived so far. The houses, though simple in design have all the necessary facilities of a kitchen, a bathroom, a store and 2 rooms.

YOUTH CLUBS

Youth movement seems to have made good progress in
(Continued on page 5)

LETTERS

The Voice of the Panches

Sir,

In all the States steps are now being taken to pass on some real sovereignty to the Panchayats. As such Shri S. K. Dey's inspiring message to the Panches to make the "Panchayati Raj" their true mouthpiece should normally find a ready response. Panches would feel interested in this journal if it can collect and publish material which reflects their aspirations and helps in solving their day-to-day problems. It will take some time for the village leaders to develop journalistic talents to make useful contributions. In the first instance, it would be necessary to encourage official field correspondents who are in direct contact with the village people and are in a position to gauge their difficulties and express them properly. It may be worthwhile to utilise the services of field officials with journalistic abilities as field sub-editors.

The English "Panchayati Raj" can serve only a few Panches. The Hindi journal which continues to be published under the old name 'Gram Sevak' should also be renamed as "Panchayati Raj" so that the Hindi-knowing Panches may be able to own it and subscribe to it. The proposed state-level counterparts of the 'Panchayati Raj' in regional languages should also be published early. There should be coordination

and exchange of ideas between them and the Central publications.

Like other popular periodicals, questions should be invited from the readers about their every day problems and informative and otherwise useful answers should be published. Photographs having a bearing on the village life and rural development will add to its popularity.

Every contribution, even a question or a letter, which is published, should be paid for so that labour spent in writing it is duly rewarded. Provision already made for paying for photographs published, is a step in the right direction. This is the only effective way to obtain original and really suitable contributions and avoid publication of trite reports and textbook type articles.

2-10-60 Yours etc.,
Lar (Dist. Deoria)

P. L. Vacher
B.D.O.

[It has been decided to pay for letters and articles published in this journal. (Please see Announcement published elsewhere in the journal). It has not been found possible to change the name of 'Gram Sevak' into 'Panchayati Raj' in Hindi as another weekly from Meerut is published under the same name.—
EDITOR.]

Documentary Film

Sir,

The October issue has at pages 4, 10 and 14 very interesting and encouraging news of the zeal displayed by the

people in developing self-sufficiency under the C.D. programme.

I suggest, that the facts published as above, about the work in village (i) MADANGIR, (2) KINNAR KHEDA, (3) GAWASEN, may be recorded by a documentary film; and copies distributed to all show houses with direction to screen them during the interval. This will be the best way to create and stimulate emulation contests by the other C.D. Blocks. Money spent on this will be repaid a thousand fold by the tempestuous development of enthusiasm in the people to make C.D. a great success.

21-11-60 Yours etc.
Coimbatore-2 R. S. Sankariar
SOUTH INDIA

Shri S. K. Dey's Monthly Letters

Sir,

In the August, 1960 issue of 'Panchayati Raj', on the very first page there is a letter from Shri S. K. Dey suggesting that there is something wrong somewhere because there does not seem to be any response to his letters. The letter is in English, a language to which the rural population is not so well accustomed. As such the readers are mostly the official class. It is not easy for this class to reply to a letter written by a person who is high in authority. The official has to take great risks in showing faults or pointing where the wrong lies. That may be a reason for the lack of response.

There may be some flaws elsewhere. Our present recruiting system is the same as used to be in the British days and the type of persons chosen is still the same. The qualities that are looked for in a candidate are also the same. Hence the results are not so very happy. After having selected a candidate as per the old system, he is given a training to fit himself into the new role. Some get moulded, some don't. The training is like water on a duck's back in some cases. So why not choose the proper clay to mould your idol to get better results? Here I would like to give one example to show what I mean.

Recently a batch of newly selected candidates was undergoing training. As part of the training the trainees had to go to a selected village and draw up a programme for that village after contacting the villagers and taking their needs and resources into consideration. They selected a village in Madras. On their return they read their report in a symposium. It said that they contacted only three persons in the village. When asked, the names of the three persons were read out and it came out that all the three persons belonged to the same family. I do not know what to say about this. The batch went all the way down to some village in Madras at so much expense to the taxpayer and having gone there specially to contact the villagers, what all they did was to contact only three of them

and based their programme for the entire village on that. When this is the state of affairs even at the stage of training it can only be imagined what service they will render when they go as B.D.Os to their respective posts!

Many such instances of mechanical mindedness of officials can be given. The other day I went to the Tahsil office as I wanted to know the prescribed number of members of the Panchayat sub-committees. The Tahsildar was not there, so I went to the person in-charge, and requested him to allow me to refer to the Rule book which was on the Tahsildar's table. As it happened the Rule book was the only thing on the Tahsildar's table, and there were no other papers on the table. The rules are contained

in a printed book and there is nothing secret or confidential about it. In fact the officials are supposed to give information about panchayat matters voluntarily. But this gentleman coolly told me to get permission from the Tahsildar and then only he would allow me to refer to the Rule book. I had gone there after covering a distance of about 6 miles, and had to return disappointed because of the indifferent attitude of the officials. This is not a stray instance. I can quote a number of similar incidents from my personal experience. It does not cost much to render small services, but by their mechanical behaviour the officials get alienated from the people.

7-10-60

Yours etc.,

P.O. Jaglbet,

V. D. Malgavkar

GLIMPSES OF PANCHAYATI RAJ IN RAJASTHAN (2)

(Continued from page 3)

Srinagar Panchayat Samiti area where almost every village has got a Youth Club. I met a few members of the Youth Club and they seemed to be quite enthusiastic about improved farming methods and cultural programmes. The services of members of the Youth Club who got training in grafting are now in great demand in the neighbouring area. He is making good bit of money out of this occupation. How effective the role of the youth clubs is proving may be inferred from the fact that the

present Pradhan of the Samiti, Shri Shanker Singh was himself a leader of a youth club of his village, before he was elected Pradhan. The younger generation, having a progressive and more liberal outlook is generation brought up in the feudal past. Of the existing members of the Panchayat Samitis in both the Blocks I visited, majority of young people are above caste and other feudal inhibitions and it appears they have taken up their new role quite seriously.

THE VOICE OF GRASS ROOTS

Anil C. Shah

Time : Sunny morning on a winter day.

Scene : An open ground in a Gram Sevaks' Training Centre. A meeting between the writer of this report and about a dozen Gram Sevaks, who had gone to the Training Centre for a special course after working in the field as Gram Sevaks for 6-7 years. The following conversation took place after some casual chatting to put the Gram Sevaks at ease and establishing a relationship of confidence.

A.C.S. For some years it has been decided that the Gram Sevaks should devote at least 80 per cent of their time to agriculture. You must have also received such instructions. What has been your experience in this connection?

All G.Ss. We devote 40 to 50 per cent of our time to agriculture. We must attend to other programmes also. We are multi-purpose workers. We receive instructions not only from Extension Officer (Agriculture) but other E.Os. also.

A.C.S. That means the arrangement to devote 80 per cent of your time to agriculture will not work so long as you are members of the block organisation. Suppose, you are put under the Agriculture department?

All G.Ss. That will not be good. We should be with the block otherwise our condition would be like that of field workers of Agriculture Department, who were ineffective even though they had to work only for agriculture.

A.C.S. Suppose, besides yourself working for agricul-

ture, one more Gram Sevak was placed in your circle to attend to other programmes?

All G.Ss. Even that would not be good for us. To be effective in agriculture, we must be multi-purpose workers. Only then we can become popular with the villagers and create interest in them in agricultural improvement, etc. First thing is to change the attitude of the people.

One G.S. Gram Sevaks should be made Panchayat Secretaries. That will make them more effective particularly now when all work is to be done through panchayats.

A.C.S. Will that not lower your position? Now you are independent, but as a Secretary of Panchayat you would be under the control of the Sarpanch!

Most G.S. It will raise our prestige and make our work easy. Even now we have to work so much for the Panchayats without having a definite position in the panchayat. Of course, the present Secretary of Panchayat would continue for routine office work.

A.C.S. That means you want the arrangement recommended by C.O.P.P. Team, wherein Gram Sevak becomes the Development Secretary of the Panchayat.

All G.Ss. Yes, That is what we want.

A.C.S. I wanted to know from you about the activities, which are popular with the villagers. Please mention them in order of importance.

One G.S. Agriculture, industries, education.

Another G.S. Agriculture, education, health.

Another G.S. Minor irrigation works, agriculture, education.

Another G.S. Education, agriculture, panchayats, communication.

A.C.S. This shows agriculture and education are popular items in all kinds of blocks.

One G.S. I wanted to say something about cooperation.

A.C.S. Let me finish some points about which I wanted to know. I will then listen about cooperatives. Well,

what about the tempo and contributions ?

Most G.Ss. That was there up to 1956. After that it is gone.

A.C.S. Why?

Most G.Ss. In a number of blocks most of the felt-needs of the people have been met. On the other hand too many campaigns have exasperated the people and exhausted us. People are now not as willing to give contributions as they were up to '55-'56.

A.C.S. But would you like to do away with all the campaigns or retain some ?

All G.Ss. The Agricultural campaigns should be there. There may also be campaigns for admitting school children in the schools. There may be a few campaigns more but not many more.

One G.S. I have something to say about cooperatives.

A.C.S. Two or three more questions and I have finished. I will then ask you about cooperatives. Somebody said about change in attitudes for which multi-purpose approach was required. We had a multi-purpose approach so far. Has there been any change in the attitude of people ?

All G.Ss. Yes ! Yes !

A.C.S. How do you know it ?

One G.S. Formerly for every small thing we had to ap-

proach the people. Now they themselves want every thing and come to us whenever help is required.

One G.S. If we or our B.D.O. is not able to help, they go even to the State headquarters and meet the Development Commissioner and, if necessary, even the Chief Minister.

One G.S. How bold they have become during these 6-7 years ! If they are not satisfied with us, they will tell us directly—"Gram Sevak Ji, you are not working very hard now."

Another G.S. Formerly, I used to form a Youth Club or a Mahila Mandal in five minutes. People would agree and sign wherever I wanted. But now they ask every thing and make sure about every detail and then sign, after required modifications.

A.C.S. This is very good. Don't you think Panchayati Raj would help in this process ?

One G.S. Panchayati Raj has to come because people demand it.

A.C.S. Has it not come from above, because C.O.P.P. Team report was accepted by the top leaders of the country ?

One G.S. The C.O.P.P. Team made this recommendation on the basis of their experience in the country which they gained during their tour in the block areas. They came to my area also where people asked them for more power and control on the development work.

A.C.S. Are the people very happy about it ?

Some G.Ss. Yes. The leaders who are in power. They will use this power for their selfish ends also. But the public is now watching every thing and they would throw away such leaders in the succeeding elections.

One G.S. With the Panchayati Raj politics has reached the smallest village.

A.C.S. What about the assistance to you from the block team ? Who gives it the most ?

Some G.Ss. S.E.O.

A.C.S. What ? S.E.O. !

Some G.Ss. Yes. All others are busy in something or the other. This man is free. He comes to our assistance whenever anything is to be organised in our villages.

Some G.Ss. S.E.O. is so free that he is waiting for somebody to call him for work.

A.C.S. Fun apart, what about the B.D.O. ?

Some G.Ss. Oh, B.D.O. ! He is the most useful man. Whenever his support is required, it is readily available.

One G.S. Actually in the block team two functionaries have proved very effective—B.D.O. and Gram Sevak. The Extension Officers are just goody, goody.

A.C.S. What has been your experience about training of B.D.Os. ? Does it make any difference in them ?

All G.Ss. Training changes them very much.

A.C.S. How? Tell me very frankly. I am very much interested in the training of B.D.Os.

Some G.Ss. Their behaviour is changed. They understand our point of view much better and more sympathetically. We no longer need to seek interview with them. We meet them wherever they are, whether in the office or at their residence. Even if they are talking to their wives we can approach them.

A.C.S. This is good. Any way, do they really improve permanently?

All G.Ss. They certainly improve after training but the same effect does not last permanently. Of course, they never relapse into their original self of pre-training days.

One G.S. Please, let me say something about cooperatives.

A.C.S. Last question and I will hear you. What about targets?

All G.Ss. Don't ask about targets—that has been our enemy No. 1. Too high targets were given to us and we learned to report equally high achievements.

One G.S. Twice I earned advanced increments by falsely reporting high achievements according to false targets thrust upon me.

One G.S. But the situation has improved now because every thing is not decided at the top. Now what we receive is kutchha targets. They are made pucca only after modifying them in the light of views and suggestions that

are obtained from all levels. Now we have also become bold to tell the B.D.O., "This cannot be done."

A.C.S. Though I had said, it was my last question, excuse me, I have one more to ask. Are you all happy in your work?

One G.S. We are happy but not our wives. We are away from home all the time and our family has to be left alone in our quarters away from the village. Education of our children suffers. Our pay scales, even after long training without pay, are no better than those of L.D.Cs. who work under the fans. Promotions are few and far between.

A.C.S. Would you like to leave this job if you get an alternative?

All G.Ss. Yes, we would like to leave.

A.C.S. But suppose there is improvement in the situation—your pay scales, your promotion, etc.

Some G.Ss. It is then alright. The work is good.

A.C.S. Wife's trouble might always remain at whatever level you are working. Have sympathy for her and try to be helpful as far as possible. But if the work is good, then do it with all your abilities.

All G.Ss. The work is good.

A.C.S. The work of Community Development is so good and noble that you can hardly think of a better or more interesting work. You

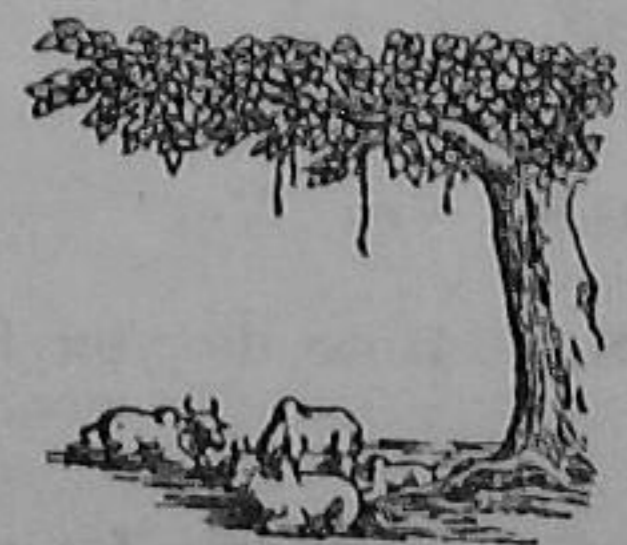
are an actor in this mighty and fascinating drama of rebuilding the country and the countryside. There are difficulties and complications and there would be perhaps more of them in Panchayati Raj. If you can, however, develop an art of being an actor as well as a spectator at the same time or at least sometimes, you would enjoy your work more. I wish you not only do this work but enjoy it also. Now you wanted to say something about co-operatives.

One G.S. Yes, Sir, I wanted to say and say this because I have actual experience of this and I have very much tried to do it also. Actually I believe in cooperatives.

A.C.S. What have you exactly in mind?

Some G.S. I have in mind that we persuade villagers to form cooperatives or join the existing ones but it takes very long time to get loans. It takes so long that people have now got tired.

A.C.S. Unfortunately this is true in most of the places. Thank you very much—all of you, for this frank and interesting conversation, which I have very much enjoyed.



MADHOPUR SOCIETY'S SUCCESS

THE INHABITANTS of Madhopur village, on the banks of the Ravi, proudly point to their cooperative society which constructed 8,000 ft. long "bund" across the Beas in June 1959, when faced with the onset of the Monsoon and no contractors would tender for the work. Unskilled members of the society earned three times the prevalent wages.

The Madhopur Cooperative Labour and Construction Society, as it is known, has so far executed over 500 major contracts. It has its own truck for speedy transport of material and some 18 supervisors, from among its members, who inspect sites, supervise work and get it assessed by the P.W.D.

The society, which is seven years old, has a working capital of Rs. 1 lakh—54% of which is represented by the shares of its 250 and odd members—and handles work worth Rs. 8 lakhs in a year. It is financially so sound that it makes advances against wages, to be adjusted at the time of final payment. It is a measure of its success that it has distributed Rs. 20,000 as a special bonus to its members on the eve of the third State Cooperative Labour Conference held in the month of November. It also sponsored the second Conference and contributed towards its expenses.

THE BEGINNINGS

The beginnings of this cooperative society go back to April 1953, when some enterprising labourers of Madhopur got together to organise a labour cooperative to end the exploitation by contractors who took advantage of cheap refugee labour in plenty. The labourers desired to improve their lot by securing contracts direct from Government Departments.

At its inception, the society had 53 members, and an initial share capital of Rs. 1,475 only. The members, who faced opposition from contractors, had few financial resources, and the local cooperative banks too were shy of offering credit facilities to them. In fact, it had to struggle hard for its existence for two years. But members of the society did not lose heart. They were determined to make their cooperative experiment a success. When they executed the work of an important embankment, it was hailed as a feat of consummate skill and efficient organisational ability. The society won the sympathy and goodwill of the Public Works Department of the Punjab Government. This, in fact, marked the turning point in their fortune.

TURNING POINT

Ever since that "turning point", the cooperative has had several successes. It has

set an excellent record for timely and efficient execution of works and has also been expanding its activities in diversified spheres of constructional works. Not only unskilled but skilled technical works, involving masonry and engineering skill, are also being executed now. In June 1959, the society mobilised all the labour force at its command and, braving the inclemencies of weather, completed the work of construction of a "bund" across the Beas with great courage and perseverance. This resulted in saving the area from the recrudescence of floods and inundation, and earned the goodwill of the public.

The successful working of the society inspired the labourers in the neighbouring areas and led to the promotion of about 80 more labour cooperatives in the neighbouring areas. The society then took the initiative in organising a District Cooperative Labour and Construction Union, in order to facilitate and coordinate the working of these labour cooperatives. It is now for the District Union to send tenders for works to Public Works Departments and other agencies, and allot them to constituent societies. The Madhopur Labour and Construction Cooperative Society, which organised the Union, gets its allocation of contract work through the main body.

The society is represented on the Board constituted by the State Government of Punjab to review the position
(Continued on page 16)

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

Real Community Under Panchayati Raj

BABAICHA is a small village in the interior of Rajasthan, with vast stretches of sand sprawling on all sides. Reaching this village, after a ten mile fatiguing journey, no one would ever imagine that this excels in all the desirable activities that one would like to witness in a progressive community. Here, he will find an active Panchayat working under the inspiring guidance of an honest and tireless Sarpanch. Fortunately, he has got an equally active team of other Panches and co-workers. As one enters the imposing building of the Panchayat Bhavan recently constructed by the villagers, one would find a big board hanging on the wall which speaks eloquently of their manifold voluntary activities. They have spent more than Rs. 41,000 on various works during the past few years. There is the Primary School building on which they have spent Rs. 12,500. Recently, they added three rooms to the school building at a cost of Rs. 3,000 so that it now suits the purposes of a middle school. The villagers are now keen to construct a few more rooms provided it is raised to a High School. They have donated a 30 acre plot to the school to serve as an agricultural farm. The Panchayat holds its regular sittings in the Panchayat Bhavan on the construction of which they contributed Rs. 3,500. The

Village Panchayat has given top priority to agricultural production. It spent Rs. 4,000 on construction of three Rapats (anicut), and Rs. 6,000 on 3 tanks for extending irrigation facilities. It has also built a seed storage godown for which their share of cost is Rs. 3,000. The promotion of village industries is receiving due attention. The Panchayat arranged for the establishment of two training centres, one for tanning and the other for weaving. It spent above Rs. 3,000 on the construction of sheds for the training centres. After the workers were suitably trained, they formed themselves into cooperatives which are now doing well. The village Panchayat has not failed to provide medical aid to the villagers, in the form of an Ayurvedic dispensary. It has incurred an expenditure of Rs. 6,000 on its building. The village has got an active Youth Club and a Mahila Mandal. A strong sense of unity prevails amongst various sections of the villagers. Community Bhajans and dinners are held off and on in which people of all caste and religion participate, thus building up the real Community under Panchayati Raj.

* * *

C.D. Programme Benefits Bhils in Gujarat

A NON-OFFICIAL survey of the impact of the Community development programme conducted in a Gujarat tribal area has shown a rise of

nearly 44% in the per capita income of the people in two years and an improvement in their social conditions.

The area surveyed comprised 97 villages of the Khedbrahma taluk inhabited by Bhils. The survey was made by a team of undergraduates of the Mahadev Desai College of Social Service of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad. The object of the survey was to assess to what extent the tribal people had been benefited by the community development schemes implemented in the area at a cost of about Rs. 13,38,000.

The main findings of the survey are that the per capita income of the Bhils rose from Rs. 70 in 1956 to Rs. 101 in 1959. It also shows that cooperative organisations in the area increased by 90% during a period of two years and a substantial reduction in the "ramifications" of moneylenders. Literacy among the tribals rose from 1% in 1954 to 7.9% in 1959. Adult literacy also showed progress during the period. The team found that heads of tribal families were keen on educating their sons and daughters. The report of the team pointed out that in spite of recent improvement in their conditions the tribal people were still lagging behind people in other areas in regard to their income and urged further improvement of their economic life by encouraging tribal handicrafts,

starting khadi and village industries and abolition of private ownership of forests.

The Committee further recommended that steps should be taken to train tribal youths in leadership to enable them to administer the responsibilities of the panchayati raj scheme. It also suggested the establishment of a tribal research centre in Gujerat.

* * *

They Learnt by Experience

IT REQUIRED a cattle epidemic to convince the inhabitants of the village of Sadhrana in Gurgaon District in the Punjab that it does not pay to follow the advice of village soothsayers in this age of science.

An infectious disease broke out recently among the cattle, as a result of which several of them died. The village wiseacre diagnosed the disease as the wrath of some deity to propitiate whom the villagers were forbidden from drawing water from wells, milking cows, cooking meals and entertaining guests. His directions were strictly followed but proved of no avail. Meanwhile, a community development guide took some of the villagers to the veterinary doctor, who diagnosed the disease and brought the epidemic under control.

* * *

Madras School Improvement Programme Campaign

KADAMBATHUR is a hamlet in Madras State of a small area but a big name. It was in this village that the first

“School Improvement Conference” was held over two years ago. These three words, which have become a slogan in every household in Madras, conjure new vistas and hopes to the parents and school children of that State. The basic aim underlying the movement for school improvement is to see that villagers provide the needs in their schools according to their capacity. Considerable caution is exercised by the organisers not to lay too heavy an economic burden on the villagers, their primary objective being to instil in them principles of self-help and self-reliance. At the 130 conferences so far held, the schemes undertaken have been of the value of over Rs. 6 crores of which projects worth nearly Rs. 4 crores have already been executed. This is a stupendous feat especially if one considers that thousands of these elementary schools had been set up in sheds fit more for cattle than human beings. There were no sanitary arrangements, no black boards, no maps, not even elementary teaching aids. Today, two years after this campaign, these schools have put on a new look equipped with clocks, radios, globes, furniture, first-aid boxes, mathematical instruments, books, slates, pictures and cooking utensils for free meals. School children are clad in uniforms—all of them supplied at these conferences. In several cases, school buildings have been electrified and residential quarters also built for the teachers.

The School Improvement Campaign has certainly resulted in schools being better built and adequately equipped with furniture and essential teaching aids. But this is not all. Its greater contribution has been to the inhabitants of the village who display initiative, confidence, zest and intense interest in the educational programme of this country. What is more commendable is the spirit with which the poor villager comes forward to give his donations. There is a purity in these donations as the poor rustic has nothing to obtain from the Government official and contributes his mite without any strings.

There can be no two opinions about the solidarity of this scheme which has caught the imagination of almost every villager in Madras State. Both parents as well as the public are convinced that this scheme will expedite the implementation of the compulsory education programme without having to wait for Government aid.

Schools As Gifts on Children's Day

PEOPLE IN C.D. BLOCKS all over the country have offered 4,594 schools as a birthday present to the Prime Minister on the occasion of his birthday which was celebrated as Children's Day throughout the country. Mysore with 1,900 schools headed the list followed by Bihar with 1,707 schools. Rajasthan with 450 schools came third. The number of schools presented is nearly sevenfold the previous year's figure of 638

schools. Cash contributions and miscellaneous gifts made totalled over Rs. 164 lakhs, as against Rs. 25 lakhs of the previous year.

* * *

Education Drive Yields Results

THE TOTAL NUMBER of boys and girls attending schools in the Dumri, Barhi and Chauparan Blocks in Hazaribagh district in Bihar has gone up by 19 and 17 per cent respectively during the last two months, after the compulsory primary education drive was introduced. In the Dumri Block, 3,708 boys and 1,349 girls of the age group 6-11 years, out of the total of 4,551 and 3,598 boys and girls respectively, have begun attending schools, the number of schools going up from 45 to 65 for boys. The number of girls schools is 17. The number of boys and girls in the Barhi Block attending schools are 1,769 and 314 respectively, and the number of schools for boys has gone up from 40 to 47 and those for girls from 5 to 7. In the Chauparan Block, 3,371 boys and 647 girls out of the total of 6,405 boys and 3,594 girls are reading in the various schools in the Block. The number of teachers has gone up by 15 per cent. More appointments will be made soon. The 'contact the guardian' scheme launched by the District Education Officer in those areas, predominantly inhabited by Adivasis and Harijans, has also borne fruits and it is expected that the number of school-going children will go

up considerably in these areas.

* * *

Free Mid-day Meals in Schools

IT IS MISERY that sometimes brings good omen. The spectacle of two school boys swooning from hunger at Perinthalmanna in Malabar district in November, 1955, sowed the seeds of the Free Meal scheme. An enquiry by the Director of Public Instruction disclosed that several students of that school went without a mid-day meal and consequently fainting in the class room was a normal feature. This incident gave food for thought to the official authorities but the solution came from simple village folk. The Director of Public Instruction narrated this incident and posed a solution to the problem at a meeting of Elementary School Teachers in Tuticorin. It was, however, left to the villagers of Nagalapuram to steal a march over their confreres after casually listening to a taperecording of the DPI's

speech in Tuticorin. The villagers confabulated among themselves and came to a quick decision, viz., to donate grains for enabling mid-day meals to be given to poor children in their school. Thus began in July 1956, a scheme which 4 years later, was to cover nearly a million school children in Madras State. The lead given by the village folk of Nagalapuram was soon taken up by others who used different methods. In some cases, housewives set apart a handful of rice each day; in others, pupils brought a match-box full of rice for a few days. The more prosperous villagers came forward with cash donations and gifts of cooking utensils. Later on, the Government decided to subsidize 60 per cent of the recurring expenditure, 40 per cent being provided by the local inhabitants. The Government subsidy does not exceed 6 naya paise per meal, and the non-recurring expenditure like cooking utensils, plates, etc., being borne by the inhabitants of the particular range.



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BUSINESS MANAGER

KARAM SINGH INVENTS A WATER PUMP

NECESSITY need not always be the stimulant for invention. Some inventions owe their origin to the inner urge which impels imaginative people to contrive newer, better and more useful things. Some timely encouragement and help is all they need. This is illustrated by the story of Karam Singh, a simple unassuming factory worker, who, however, has an imaginative and inventive bent of mind. Karam Singh is the author of a new type of water pump called "washer pump".

This new device is capable of lifting more water than the traditional *rahat* (Persian wheel). It costs less and is more economical to operate and maintain.

INSPIRING EXHIBITS

The imaginative mind of Karam Singh was fired by what he saw in one of the huge exhibitions which are put up in Delhi during the winter. He saw some agricultural implements on display in one of the pavillions and felt the urge within himself to devise implements suited to Indian conditions which would reduce the labour of the farmer and help him produce more. He also noticed that some of these implements were semi-mechanical and with a judicious combination of mechanical and animal or human power, useful results could be achieved.

Karam Singh gave up his employment in one of the factories in the capital so that he could devote more time to the study of the exhibits. Spending long hours in the exhibition he made sketches and took photographs of the implements on display. By the time the exhibition was over Karam Singh had taught himself how to design newer and better implements. He was now ready to put his newly acquired knowledge and his inventive faculty to some creative use. It was then that he encountered serious financial difficulties.

The answer to his difficulties was co-operative effort. Fellow workers came forward to form an industrial co-operative society devoted to engineering and manufacturing work. Working overtime Karam Singh and his band of enthusiastic workers completed the new washer pump device in the course of a few months.

SPECIAL FEATURES

The pump has a pipe of 4 in. diameter through which water is lifted from a well. A chain is operated by a wheel at the top of the well which in turn is set in motion by a free-wheel which can be operated by a bullock or a man (and with proper attachments even by an electric motor). The chain, to which are fitted washers at

every five feet, is passed through the pipe.

When the chain is set in motion the washers push water up through the pipe. As the washers come up, water flows into a container placed near the top of the well from where the water can be diverted for irrigation or taken for other uses. As the chain keeps on moving the water is continuously lifted by the washers and a constant water lift is thus maintained.

The experiments conducted on the washer pump so far show that 5,000 gallons of water can be lifted per hour as compared to the capacity of the *rahat* of 3,000 gallons an hour. It is stated that the washer pump can be manufactured using only one-third of the quantity of iron required for making the traditional *rahat*. The cost of the washer pump is estimated to be Rs. 375, besides another Rs. 110 to meet the cost of the pipe. This, it is explained, is 40 per cent less than what a *rahat* would cost. Production on a large scale is expected to result in further reduction of the cost.

The inventor Karam Singh is a displaced person from West Pakistan. Making tools has been his occupation, first in Kapurthala and then in New Delhi. He lives in one of the new colonies built by Government for displaced persons, with his wife, five children and his parents.



FROM THE CENTRE

FARMING ADVISORY BOARD

THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA have constituted a National Cooperative Farming Advisory Board of 24 members with Shri S. K. Dey, Union Minister of Community Development and Cooperation, as Chairman.

The Board has been entrusted with the task of planning and promoting the programme of cooperative farming on a voluntary basis. It will review the progress and suggest modifications, if necessary. It will examine the question of obtaining the people's participation in the programme and suggest arrangements for education and training of personnel required for implementing the scheme. The terms of reference include: organisation of studies and schemes of research relating to cooperative farming, technical supervision and guidance and recommendations regarding financial assistance. The Board will also coordinate inter-State activities and assist the State Governments and State Boards in formulating their schemes.

The Board, which has been constituted by a resolution of the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation, provides for an Executive Committee to review the programme of cooperative farming and ensure effective

supervision and guidance. It has been authorised to appoint sub-committees to deal with different aspects of the programme of cooperative farming. These sub-committees can also co-opt experts for specific purposes.

The Board has been set up in consequence of one of the recommendations of the Working Group on Cooperative Farming under the chairmanship of Shri S. Nijalingappa, which submitted its report in January, 1960. The recommendations of this Group were endorsed by the National Development Council on September 13, 1960 and the decisions of the Government of India were recently communicated to the State Governments.

* * *

SMALL SAVINGS & C.D. PROGRAMME

The Union Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation has in a circular letter issued to all State Governments stressed the importance of the Small Savings Scheme and urged that the block organisation,—official and non-official must play an active part in encouraging every villager to save and to invest his savings in National Savings.

The circular points out that since the Community Development works through extension methods and the

Small Savings programme should also be worked accordingly. The elected members of the Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis should be requested to take a leading part in educating the villagers in the virtues of thrift and in the advantages of Small Savings. The Block Development Officers and the Block staff will impress upon the members of these bodies the importance of their obligations in this respect and assist them in the discharge of these obligations. In particular, the Block Development Officer, the Social Education Officer and the Village Level Worker, should familiarise themselves with the various technical aspects of National Savings, namely, details of the schemes offered, the procedure for investment and places where investments can be made, etc. They should also act as technical advisers to the non-official members in devising special Extension programmes for developing Small Savings. This may be by organisation of saving groups, "Bachat" grams or as a special drive for small savings on special occasions, namely, Dussehra, Diwali, marriages, birth-days, etc.



Service-cum-Common Facility Workshops— their Importance

The recent decision of the Government to establish Service-cum-Common Facility Workshops in the rural areas has been necessitated by two considerations—one of providing service facilities for various types of new machinery being introduced there and two for making available the common use of improved tools and equipment to the local artisans. The present article throws light on the importance of these Workshops—Editor.

IN RURAL AREAS, by and large, the artisans are very widely spread and the practices followed and the tools utilized by them are traditional and obsolete. Their poverty is proverbial. The goods produced by them are marketed to the local village folk or to the few adjoining villages. During the busy agricultural season, the artisans also work as labourers on the agricultural fields. They have been faced with far too many difficulties. These include lack of sufficient initiative, shortage of finance, inadequate supply of raw material, paucity of trained and experienced technical hands and shortage of supply of improved tools, equipment and machinery.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

The various schemes under the community development programme have resulted in technological advancement of rural areas through the introduction of machinery and equipment like public address sets, audio-visual equipment, radios, trailers, tractors, diesel engines, electric motors, water pumps, artificial insemination sets, sprayers, sprinklers, road rollers, motor graders, weeders, cultivators, harvesters etc. in the

rural areas. The people also are gradually taking to the use of sewing machines, bicycle, wick lamps, smokeless chulhas, carts with pneumatic tyres, cane crushers, chaff cutters, seed drills, earth scrappers, winnowers, improved ploughs, and dairy equipment etc.)

SEVICE-CUM-COMMON FACILITY

It is evident, that for the maintenance and repairs of all these kinds of goods and machinery, suitable facilities have to be developed in the rural areas. The rural artisans as situated at present with lack of finances, enterprise and skill are not in a position to remodel and equip their shops with the requisite kind of machinery and equipment. Attempts will have to be made to ensure that as many of the requirements of the villagers as possible are produced in the village itself. For quite some time to come the small village shops will not have adequate equipment for undertaking the complete manufacture of certain items. For this purpose common facilities, therefore, would need to be provided by the Government for such operations as may not be possible for the

individual artisan to undertake in his own workshop.

These two basic requirements, one of the service and the other of common facility, provided in a workshop of this nature would not only increase the tempo of the activities of the village artisans but would also provide nucleus around which small industries could develop.

EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY

Tools and equipment for blacksmithy, tin smithy and sheet metal working, fitting-cum-machine shop and general equipment as are considered essential requirements for any workshop, would be provided. In industrially advanced areas, a general purpose lathe and a vertical drill machine may be provided. In locations where wood work is in plenty, machines like band saw, circular saw, spray painting equipment etc., may be incorporated. Whereas in places having electricity and scope of advanced work, power operated machines may be installed. In areas where there is scope for advanced work but electric power is not available, resort may be made to use of oil engines for running the machines.

LAND AND BUILDING

The space required on an average would be about 600 sq. yds. (actual area depending upon the needs of a particular place). The area is to be enclosed by a compound wall and would have a single structure to house the workshop. Bricks, wood, tiles or asbestos or K.I. sheets would form the essential material for construction. Emphasis will be on use of local material and labour. The design will be in harmony with rural setting. The entire building inclusive of the compound wall etc. would not cost more than Rs. 10,000. Wherever possible, such buildings would be constructed through the active participation and cooperation of the local institutions and villagers.

STAFF REQUIREMENT

The basic staff required for the workshop would be a Supervisor In-charge, a General Mechanic, a Blacksmith, a Carpenter and two semi-skilled Assistants.

CAPITAL OUTLAY

The capital required for establishing a workshop in a particular place will depend largely upon the machinery and equipment proposed to be provided in the shop and the quantum and type of work expected to be handled by it. However, on an average the finances required towards non-recurring as well as recurring expenses are estimated at Rs. 19,000 & Rs. 11,000 respectively.

ORGANIZATION

The scheme will normally be implemented through co-

operatives. The Cooperatives will be given liberal grants for undertaking the scheme and also for employing managerial and technical personnel. It is proposed that in

10% of the Blocks such workshops are opened as far as possible during the current plan period. A review of the programme will be made after one year.

MADHOPUR SOCIETY'S SUCCESS

(Continued from page 9)

of constructional works, and like the other labour co-operatives, it has been exempted from depositing earnest money for the contracts obtained. The society and its allied organisations are now financed by the Central Cooperative Bank up to three times the paid-up share capital plus Reserve Fund.

AMENITIES PROVIDED

The society is now in a position to provide medical, educational, recreational and other facilities to its members. It has engaged a doctor, donated a building for running a school for the education of the children of its members and their neighbours and installed a radio

set in the office of the society. It also arranges for folk dances and other amusement for the recreation of the members.

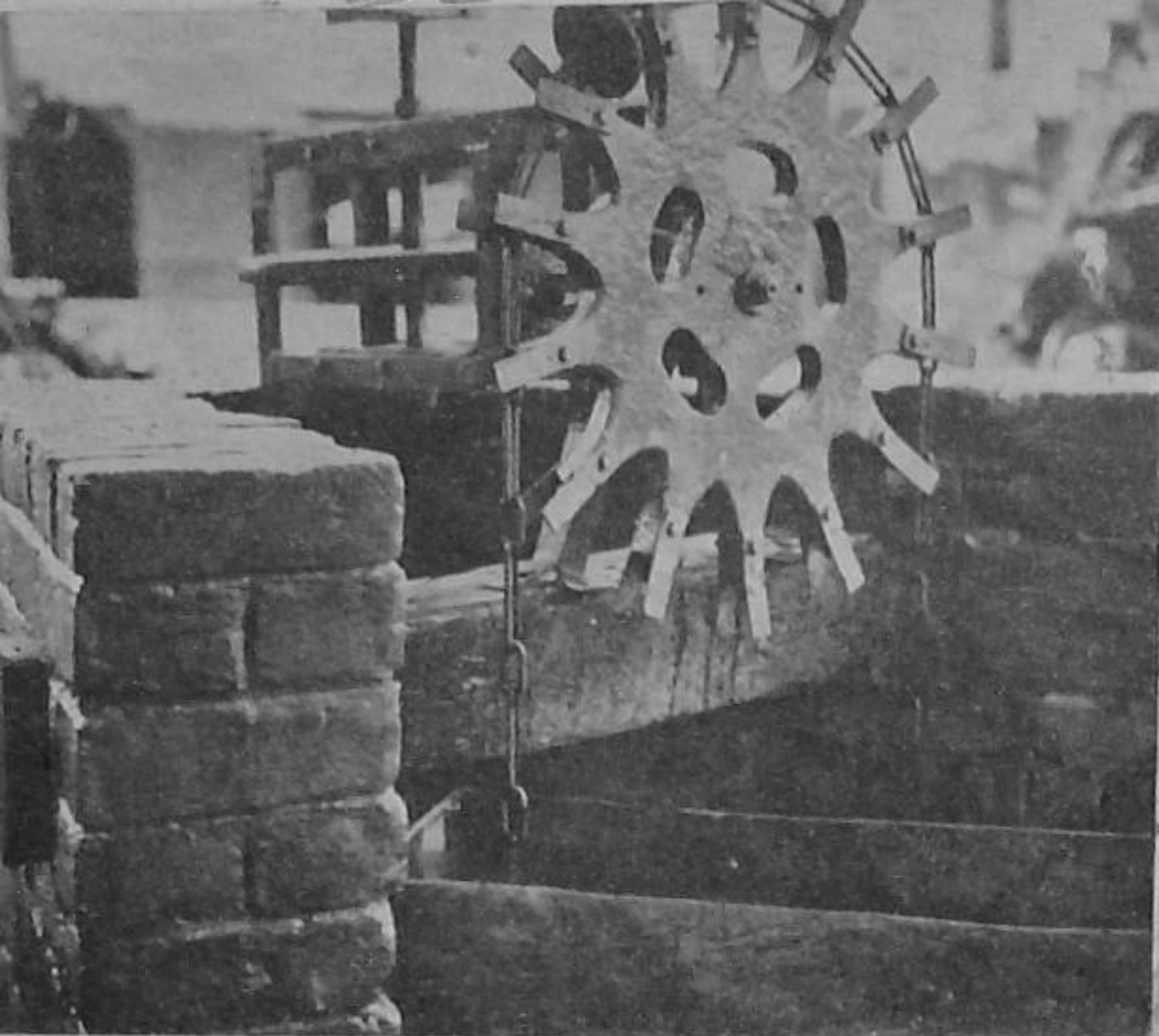
Important amenities, such as supply of kit and equipment free of charge, cheap meals to the members at work sites, are also provided. The society has also constructed a guest house at the headquarters for the convenience of its members and guests. It has helped in the construction of a cooperative labour colony for some of its members at Madhopur village. Ten houses have already been completed at a cost of about Rs. 1 lakh, and others are under construction.



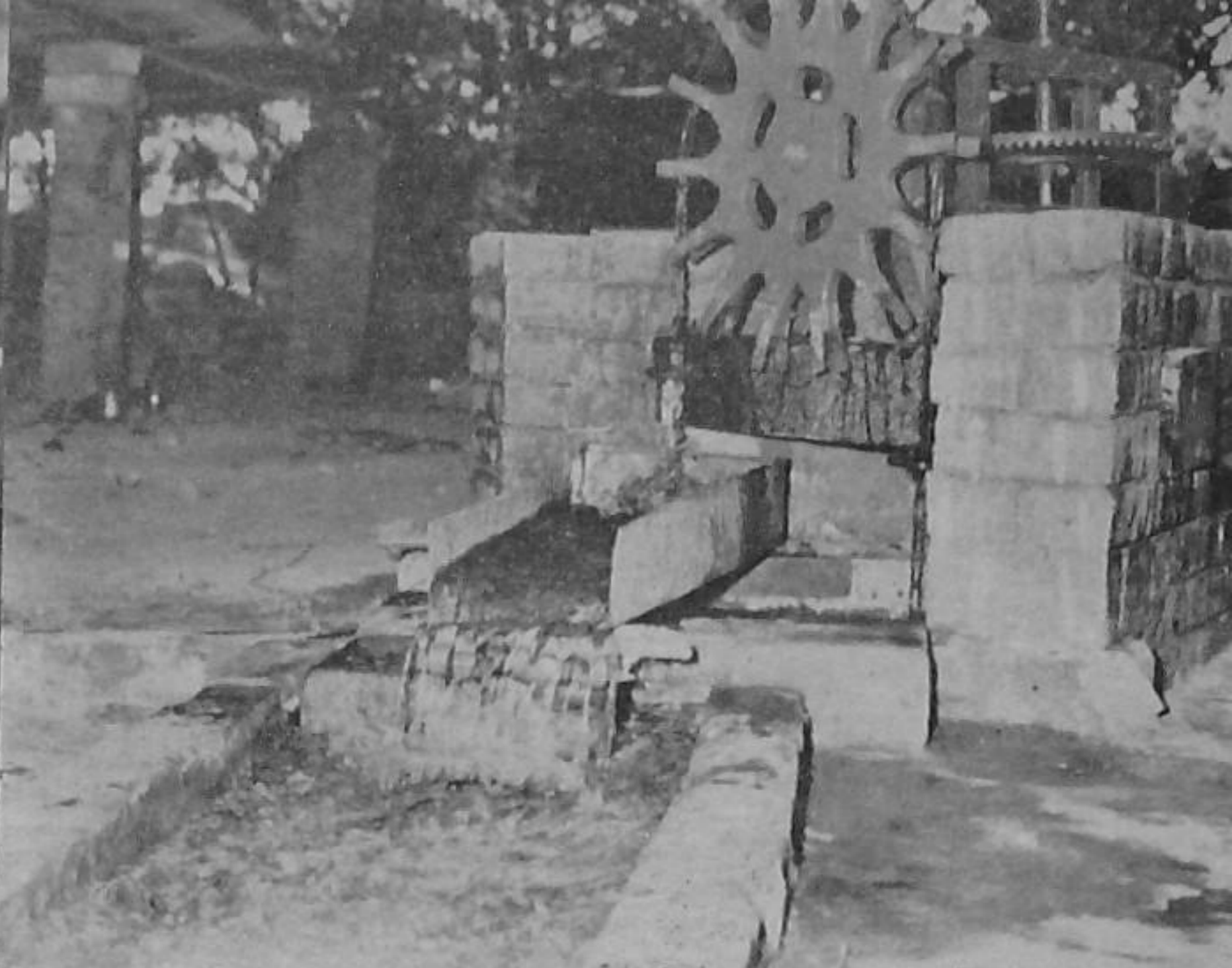
PAYMENT TO CONTRIBUTORS

To encourage readers of Panchayati Raj to share with their friends, their thoughts, experiences and achievements in the field of Community Development, Cooperatives and Panchayats, it has been decided to pay for letters and contributions appearing in this journal with effect from March, 1961. The payment will be made at the rate of Rs. 5 for each letter and about Rs. 10 for each accepted article. Readers are requested to write articles and letters on subjects of common interest and to address them to:

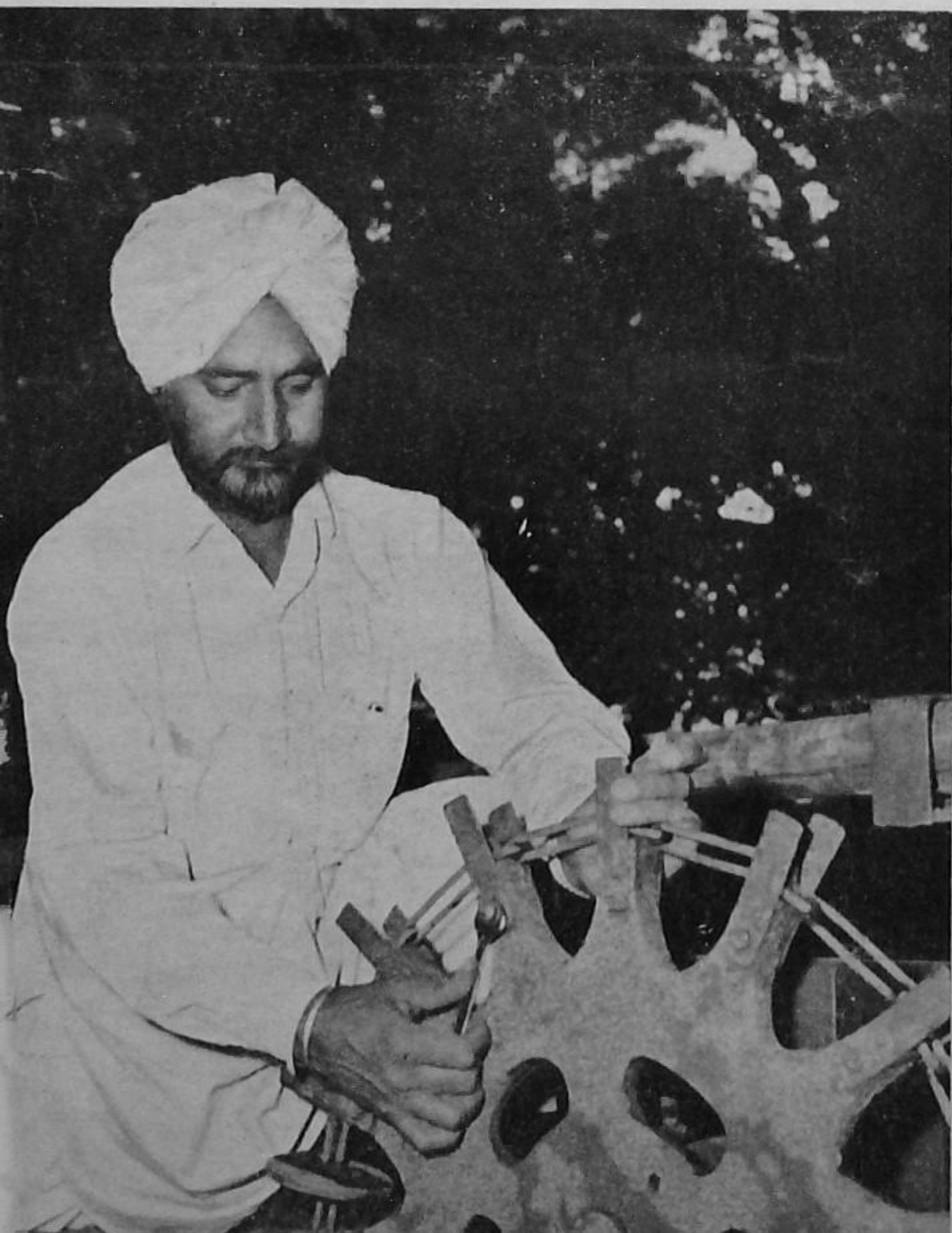
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The new pump in action

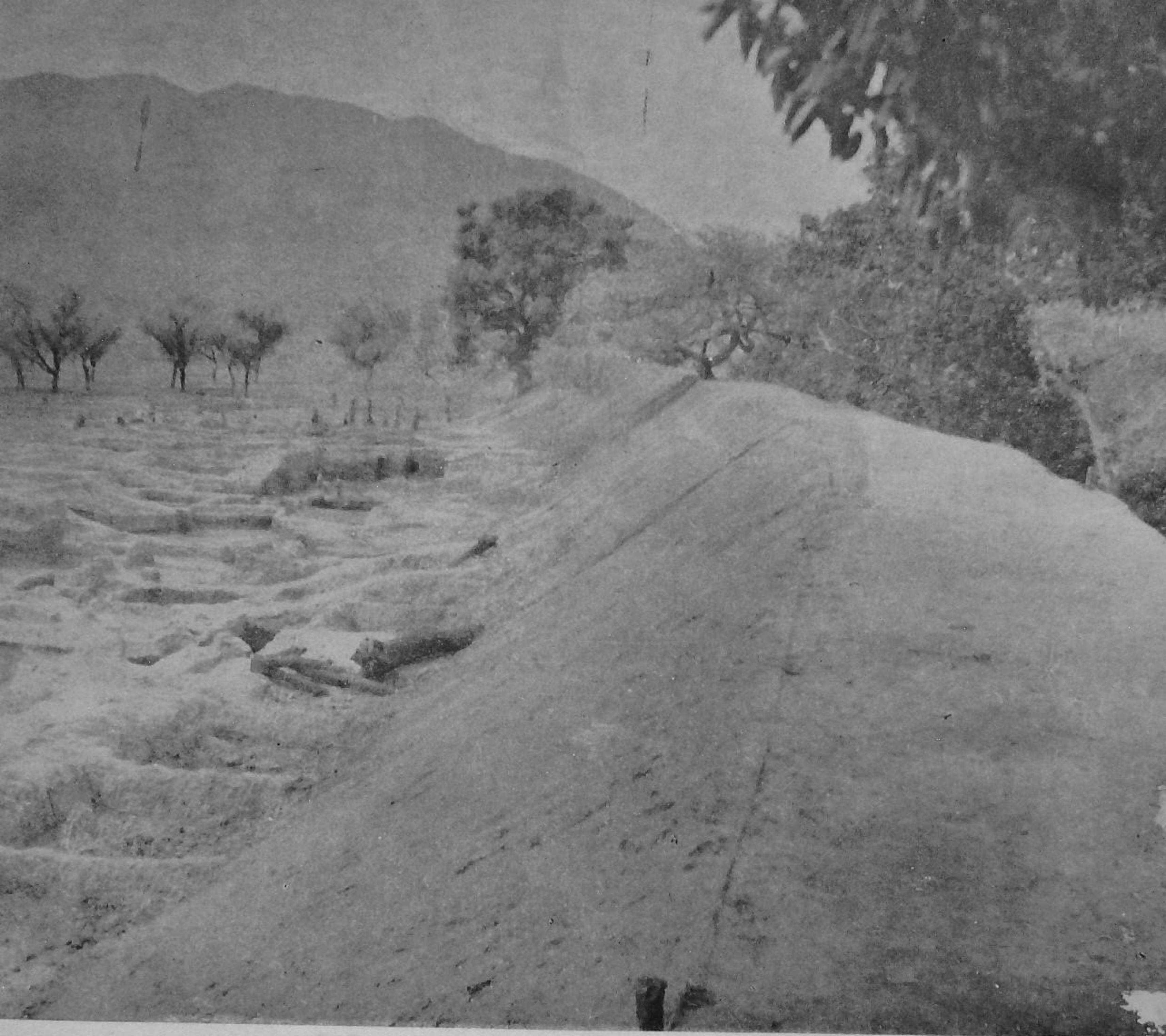


The new pump. The washer, which pushes water up, can be seen at the top of the wheel.



Karam Singh, the inventor of the new pump is seen alongside, tightening a bolt of the pump for a trial run.





A Rapat-cum-tank under construction at village Chorsiawas in Rajasthan. During the monsoons it will form into a huge water reservoir which will not only provide the facility of flow irrigation but will help raise the subsoil level of water in the surrounding wells thus facilitating lift irrigation as well.