

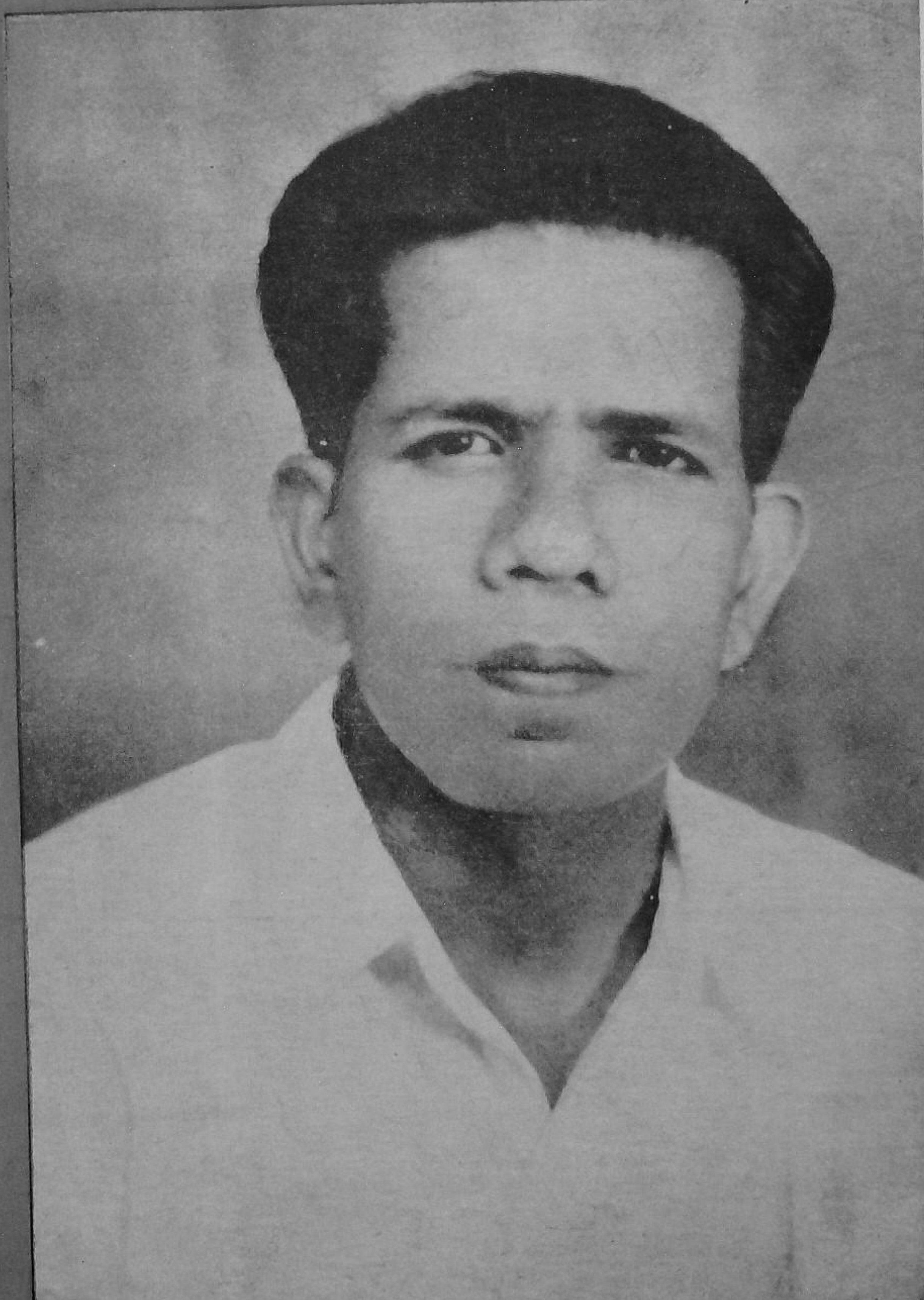
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Panchayati Raj

AUGUST 1962

KURU—A giant amongst Kerala farmers who produces every year nearly twenty times what an average farmer does. He produces 7,200 pounds of paddy per acre in one crop, as against an average of 1,200 pounds per acre and raises three to four crops in a year.



THE YOUNG BOSS

ARE WE TO TAKE
ORDERS FROM
THIS CHILD OF
YESTERDAY?

PANCHAYAT





Vol. III AUGUST 1962 No. 5
SRAVANA-1884

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LETTERS

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Sir,

MANY OF US in this country have a weakness for blindly imitating foreign ideas even though they may not suit our conditions at all. This is so in almost all spheres of life whether education, sports or fashion. To some extent that may be a hang-over of our past slavery under foreign rules. But unless we are able outgrow this incapacity to think and act for ourselves we cannot expect to make any progress.

Pre-school education is a case in instance. We are greatly enamoured of the Western systems of Montessori and Kindergarten which are very costly. The tuition fees range from Rs. 20 to 30 per month per child. They are becoming a craze amongst the educated and the elite of the towns and big cities. But can a poor villager afford such a costly education? The educational equipment required under this system is also very expensive. Another big problem is that of lack of trained staff. What to talk of graduates even matriculates are not available in adequate numbers to serve as teachers. Obviously, such costly schemes cannot take root in our villages. We will have to evolve our own pattern of 'Pre-School' education which is much cheaper and is suited to our local environments. The costly buildings and equipment will have to give place to more modest huts and equipment which could be easily made from local resources. Besides, if pre-school facilities have to be extended so as to cover all our children in the near future, we shall have to carry on with teachers who may not have gone beyond the Middle standard. Already some beginning has been made in different parts of the country. The Madras Government is reported to have evolved a practical scheme which is proving very popular. Similarly, in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, isolated attempts have been made to develop 'Balwadi' schemes suited to our culture and tradition. It is high time that the Government pooled all these experiences and standardised a model scheme of Balwadis. Such Balwadis and not the highly expensive ones relying on costly equipment, should be started in all our Gram Sevika Training Centres. It will serve no useful purpose if our women workers are trained in Balwadis having costly equipments. On return to the villages, they will find themselves at a loss in the absence of the costly equipment which they had become used to while in the Training Centres. Therefore, the tendency to provide costly equipments in Balwadis in the name of 'model' schemes should be

discouraged. For model is one which can be easily repeated and not one which is unattainable.

30-6-62

Yours etc.

Jhajjar,
Punjab.

Sarla Devi

* * * *

EXAMPLE IS BETTER THAN PRECEPT

Sir,

EXAMPLE is better than precept. Some of the Gram Sevikas appointed in the C.D. Blocks are keen to mould through personal example the life-pattern of the village women they come across. But in this, they are greatly handicapped. They would very much like to demonstrate to the village women how a model house should be kept. But where is the home? They find difficulty in getting a residential house even on rent. The only solution seems to be that the Government should construct a modest house not costing more than Rs. 2,000 to serve as her residence. It may be pointed out that lack of housing facility is one of the main reasons why women workers are not prepared to serve in the villages. If the housing facility is provided, more women workers will be attracted for service in the villages. However, the greatest advantage will be that the Gram Sevika would be in a position to demonstrate this house as a model one, showing the proper use of ventilators, the bathroom, kitchen, kitchen-garden and the latrine. Everything in the house will be kept in a

neat and orderly manner. The demonstrative value of the house would further increase if household appliances and gadgets like the smokeless chullah, hay-box for keeping boiled milk warm, a wire-gauze almirah or a *Chhinka* for keeping eatables, a chakki with ball-bearing etc. are also provided to her as part of her working kit. Her home furnished with all these demonstrative equipments and appliances would serve as a community centre for women's welfare activities. A Balwadi, a midwifery centre and a women's work centre could also be located there with advantage.

18-6-62

Yours etc.

Indore.

Mrs. V. Joshi

* * * *

BEST VILLAGES AS NATIONAL MONUMENTS

Sir,

EVERY YEAR, under the Best Village Competition Scheme, one village is declared best throughout the country. These best villages should be considered as national monuments and as much, if not more, attention should be bestowed on their upkeep as on other places of historical and cultural importance. They stand unrivalled in so far as their educative value is concerned because they serve as instruments of spreading healthy influence in the neighbourhood. Groups of villagers going on Bharat Darshan or Pradesh Darshan tours must see these best villages along with other important historical and modern places of interest.

It is suggested that the panchayats and panchayat samitis might be entrusted with the task of maintaining the alround high standard of these model villages. If needed, some special maintenance grant should be sanctioned for the purpose—the Centre sharing part of the cost. This extra help is essential in order to keep in good form the work done by the village. The villagers, in their first flush of enthusiasm to bag the prize might overstretch their means and capacity. Once the prize is won, their enthusiasm cools off and there is every possibility of the good work being undone and the village reverting to its previous position. To let the excellent work done by the people go waste, will be a great national loss. Besides, it will spread an infection of carelessness and despair alround. This can be countered only if the initial good work done by the people is institutionalised, that is looked after by the Panchayati Raj bodies.

10-5-62

Yours etc.

Bangalore.

H. Huliyaappa
Gram Sevak.

* * *



PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS AND PARTY POLITICS

THE ULTIMATE object of all rural development work is to develop homogenous and well-knit communities. The utility of Panchayati Raj is also to be viewed in that light.

It should not be forgotten that prior to the introduction of the C.D. Programme or the Panchayati Raj, the village communities had begun to show signs of disintegration both under the impact of the inevitable march of the technological and industrial forces as well as the growing centralisation of law and order and civil administration. Traditional loyalties based on caste, creed and clan have also been consistently eating into the vitals of the rural society. The latest to strengthen this formidable array of disruptive forces are the Panchayati Raj elections based on the parliamentary system of democracy. The recent elections held in various States have proved beyond a shadow of doubt that these have served as grist to the mill of groupism and factionalism already prevalent in the villages. There has been unabashed exploitation of parochial feelings of caste, creed and clan by the contending participants in order to win the elections. The peaceful atmosphere of the

villages has received a rude shock as a result of the anti-social and immoral activities of a few unscrupulous persons interested in the elections. Instances have come to light of voters' support being enlisted by wrongful methods. Heinous crimes like kidnapping and murders have been committed. It is understood that truck loads of voters have been kidnapped and wrongfully confined to deny them the scope of exercising their franchise. In one of the districts in U.P. about 40 murders have taken place in consequence of old feuds fanned by the Panchayati Raj elections.

TWO VIEWS

This is a gloomy picture indeed and does not augur well for the future of Panchayati Raj. Those who are in charge of the affairs, the political leaders and the statesmen of the country are, therefore, rightly seized of the subject and are keen to find a solution.

Those subscribing to the Sarvodaya school of thought have criticised the parliamentary system of democracy itself which according to them is not suited to our genius and past traditions. Elections by arithmetical majority is not a very satisfactory procedure, they argue.

Working on this hypothesis, they recommend elections by unanimous or near unanimous choice. The body politic of India, from Gram Sabha to Lok Sabha is visualised to be an organic pyramidal structure, the next higher body being elected by the lower body. This is an idealist conception and involves radical changes in the Constitution. The public opinion has first to be built up before such far-reaching changes can be effected.

What should be done at the moment to eradicate the evil effects of Panchayati Raj elections carried out in the context of the existing Constitution which recognises the parliamentary system of elections? A large section of the public seems to favour the view that under the existing circumstances, party politics cannot be eschewed from Panchayati Raj elections. If it is good for Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha, it should be good for elections at lower levels too. This was the view expressed by about 112 M.Ps. who had participated in a two-day study camp recently organised by the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayati Raj & Co-operation. It is pointed out that the malpractices perpetrated during the Panchayati Raj elections are not peculiar to those elections alone but have occurred even during the General Elections. Moreover, it is suggested that it is only during the initial stages when the general standard of education and

political consciousness of the rural people is not fully developed that such mistakes are committed. Some hold the opinion that unless the rural people are subjected to a full and free interplay of the different political ideologies, they would not be able to come into their own and take their legitimate share in the shaping of political affairs of the country.

We have thus before us these two diametrically opposed views expressed on a vital subject. There is considerable weight of experience, wisdom and statesmanship on either side. We cannot dismiss them by taking cover under the hackneyed phrase, "much can be said on both sides". Here is a practical problem the solution of which brooks no delay. We have to take a definite decision.

Obviously, the solutions suggested should be based on practical considerations and not idealistic conceptions. Our choice, therefore, is limited to finding out ways and means which recognise the present parliamentary system of democracy. We must devise methods by which we can reap its benefits and keep its evil effects in check as far as possible.

The first and foremost issue to be considered is whether or not political parties should participate in the elections. It is often argued that since the Panchayati Raj bodies at various levels are expected to execute welfare and develop-

ment activities and not to formulate any basic social policies as is done in the Vidhan Sabha or Lok Sabha, political parties on organised basis need not interfere in the Panchayati Raj elections. There are equally weighty arguments on the other side also. For more than one reason, the various political parties would like to have men under their influence to capture seats in the various Panchayati Raj bodies. They would do so in the interests of their respective parties. The candidates themselves would like to become the camp-followers of this or that party in order to utilise the party's resources to gain success. It is only a matter of time before the various political parties are able to reach the villages and set up their own units disseminating their programmes and policies. In course of time the villagers will become more and more enlightened and politically conscious. The Party-God will obliterate all other narrow considerations based on casteism and the like. The political parties having a definite political and economic programme will provide the necessary outlets for healthy difference of opinion amongst various groups in the village. The danger of the party leviathan suppressing the emergence of sincere and popular leadership does not exist more than in the case of General Elections because the Panchayati Raj elections are much nearer the ground and the popular opinion can only be flouted by the parties

at their own peril. Even during the General Elections, the masses have given ample proof of their robust commonsense by rejecting outright candidates of doubtful integrity no matter whatever the party label. In the case of Panchayati Raj elections, it is the personal character of the candidate rather than his party affiliation that matters more to the electorate.

SAFETY MEASURES

However, all said and done, there is little doubt that with the coming in of the political parties into the Panchayati Raj election arena, much avoidable heat and controversy is generated. During the early stages when our village people are still uneducated and politically immature, there is likelihood of some untoward incidents taking place. To play safe, the political parties will be well-advised to keep themselves away from the Panchayati Raj elections. Congress, the ruling majority party has set a good example by making a unilateral declaration that it would not take part in the Panchayati Raj elections. The success of the experiment will depend on the extent to which the party is able to implement this self-imposed restriction.

In addition to the above, we may consider the following other measures for minimising the risks involved:

1. The elections should be held by a secret ballot and not by a mere show of hands.

(Continued on page 9)

KURU—A giant amongst Kerala Farmers

KURU is a giant amongst Kerala Farmers. He has achieved what others consider impossible. He produces nearly twenty times what an average farmer does. He gets three and even four crops instead of one in a year. The yield per acre of his crops, too, is five to six times more than the average. He has produced 7,200 pounds of paddy per acre for one crop when the average yield has ranged from 1,200 to 1,300 pounds. This has given him so much self-confidence that he looks upon crop-failure as a myth born out of human ignorance.

The secret of success did not come to him all of a sudden. He acquired it over a long period of experimentation and through knowledge gained from experts. Kuru conducted experiments on his own with different types of manures and evolved the best method of cultivation suited for his purposes.

Hailing from the village of Mulanthuruthy, near Ernakulam, he is now a member of the Block Development Committee representing progressive farmers. He is the leading cultivator in his area, proud of his profession.

Kuru's lot was a hard one. He was a youth of 20 when he inherited as his share nine acres of the ancestral property and along with it some

family debt. He worked hard on his fields. The yield was average, being 1,200 pounds of paddy per acre. Within a few years, he was able to clear the family debt. He then got himself married. For 25 years he laboured hard day and night but like most of his peasant brethren, he lived from hand to mouth and could not effect any appreciable saving. His liabilities had also grown. He was now the father of seven children. Life seemed to him an unending struggle for survival.

TURNING POINT

The turning point came in 1955 when he was able to avail of an offer by the agriculture department of 200 lbs. of chemical manure for free trial. The next crop was a bumper one. The yield shot up to 3,000 pounds of paddy. Kuru decided to further improve upon this result. He became a frequent visitor to the Agricultural farm at Vytilla. He came to know of better strains of seeds, of the Japanese method of cultivation, of better implements, of the necessity for regulated irrigation and of the use of insecticides. He was the first farmer in that area to try the Bose plough. The spirited bulls he possessed ploughed his fields deeper with the new plough.

Through trial and error, he learned that, using the right

type of seeds, one can reap a good harvest early even if the monsoon fails in the September-October period. For the next crop, he chose the right seed. Nursery sowing was done on the 13th September 1958 with seed No. P.T.B. 21. Transplanting was effected on the 14th October and he harvested the fields on the 19th January, just three months after transplanting. The success of his experiments helped to enhance his enthusiasm and he got deeply interested in the problem. His next effort was to grow three crops in a year. In this he came out victorious in 1959. On April 5, he sowed P.T.B. 7 seeds in his fields and the crop was harvested on August 5. By the middle of July, he had started a nursery for seedlings and these seedlings were fully grown for transplanting when the first harvest was over. Immediately, he ploughed the fields and added manure. Transplanting was effected on August 18 for the second crop, the seeds used being P.T.B. 10 which would ripen in 90 days. For the third crop he used the P.T.B. 20 variety of seeds. The seedlings were ready for transplanting by the time he finished cutting the crop and prepared the fields. Transplanting was done a week after the harvest, i.e. on the 25th of October. Harvesting was done
(Continued on page 11)

WOMEN'S ADVISORY

VIGYAN BHAVAN in New Delhi was the venue of a one day meeting of the Women's Advisory Committee held on 27th June. The meeting was attended by representatives of State Governments and national women's organisations like the All India Council of Child Welfare, Social Welfare Board, All India Women's Conference etc.

INAUGURATION

Shri S. K. Dey, Minister for Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation, while inaugurating the meeting laid great stress on women's and children's programmes in order to ensure rapid national progress.

Speaking of the importance which was being increasingly attached to the role of women in the expansion of rural democracy, he said that it had been made very clear that every Panchayati Raj institution should have women members. He cited the instance of Punjab where 18,000 women now sat in some 9,000 Panchayats. It had been stipulated that where it had not been possible to elect women they should be co-opted. "I however dislike the idea of women being co-opted", Shri Dey went on to say, "Women should come in by their own right and not depend on courtesy or special legislative or administrative measures".

Shri Dey said that women's programmes and youth movements made the Panchayati Raj institutions healthy and purposive. If their influence was not felt there was the danger of the democratic bodies "going off the rails".

The Minister recalled that so far women's programmes had not come to the fore because of the stress of competing priorities like agriculture, health etc. in the C.D. Programme. But the situation has been changing lately. Not only the official machinery but women themselves were taking greater interest in the evolution and expansion of women's programmes. Considerable credit for this went to the Central Social Welfare Board.

Shri Dey said that a great handicap was the paucity of women workers in the field. The situation was easing to some extent with the increase in the number of rural schools and the growing enrolment of girls. Today more and more girls were coming forward to work as Gram Sevikas and teachers. Educated women were also getting over their dislike of settling down in villages.

Shri Dey spoke of the greater co-ordination that was being achieved between the various wings of the administration concerned with im-

portant aspects of women's welfare work in rural areas. State Governments had also been setting up women's departments.

The Minister pointed out that any effective women's programme must be broad-based on child welfare activities. He asked the Women's Advisory Committee to provide Government with directions as to how to develop an effective children's programme as an important nucleus of the women's movement in Community Development Blocks.

It was also essential, Shri Dey continued, that women workers in villages should have a wider outlook. He asked the Committee to consider the subject. Women members of Panchayati Raj bodies and women field workers should be enabled to have a broad picture of developmental activities from the Zila to the national level. They had to devise some method for securing this inter-change of knowledge and experience on the lines of Zila Darshan, Pradesh Darshan and Bharat Darshan trips already being organised for the farmers. Shri Dey also underlined the role of women's and children's movements in countering the disruptive influence of separatist tendencies in the country.

COMMITTEE MEETS

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED

The meeting discussed several important issues relating to the Women's and Children's Welfare Programme. Various members gave an account of the progress so far made by the respective States in the field. The integrated pattern of administration adopted by Madras, whereby the three agencies working for women's welfare viz: Women's Welfare Department, State Social Welfare Board, and the Community Development personnel have been merged into one single administrative agency, was appreciated by all the members present and was recommended for adoption by other States, too.

Another subject that claimed the attention of the members was the selection of one or more activities round which the women's programmes should revolve in the rural areas. It was felt that it should be child welfare in all its aspects. A child is as much the centre of interest for a man as for a woman and thus even the menfolk will get interested in the programme of child welfare. It was agreed that the running of Balwadis should be one of the foremost activities. It was again Madras that held the field and the scheme as followed there was recommended for adoption by other

States after effecting necessary modifications suited to the local conditions. It was strongly felt by the members of the Committee that the existing C.D. Staff for women's programme was very inadequate and, therefore, it should be supplemented by a large number of associate women workers known as Gramlaxmis or Gram Kakis in different States. It was agreed that suitable arrangements should be made to train at least 25,000 workers during the Third Plan period.

The representative from Orissa gave an account of how the Expanded Nutrition

Programme was being implemented with success in that State. All the members welcomed the scheme. It was pointed out that in order to draw maximum results, the Blocks selected for integrated child welfare should be the same, as far as possible, as those selected for applied nutrition programme.

While discussing the issue as to how women should play a more effective role in the Panchayati Raj, it was agreed that women members of Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis should be trained along with men but they should be
(Continued on page 11)

Members of the Mahila Mandal are being taught crafts like embroidery and tailoring etc. by a social worker.



Maharashtra Sets Record

MAHARASHTRA is one of the foremost States in India that has set up a splendid record in contour bunding. By the end of the Second Five Year Plan it had contour banded 22 lakh acres as against the laid down target of 13 lakh acres. The target for the Third Plan has been fixed at 35 lakh acres. There is no doubt that with the willing and active co-operation of the large number of cultivators, this too would be fulfilled.

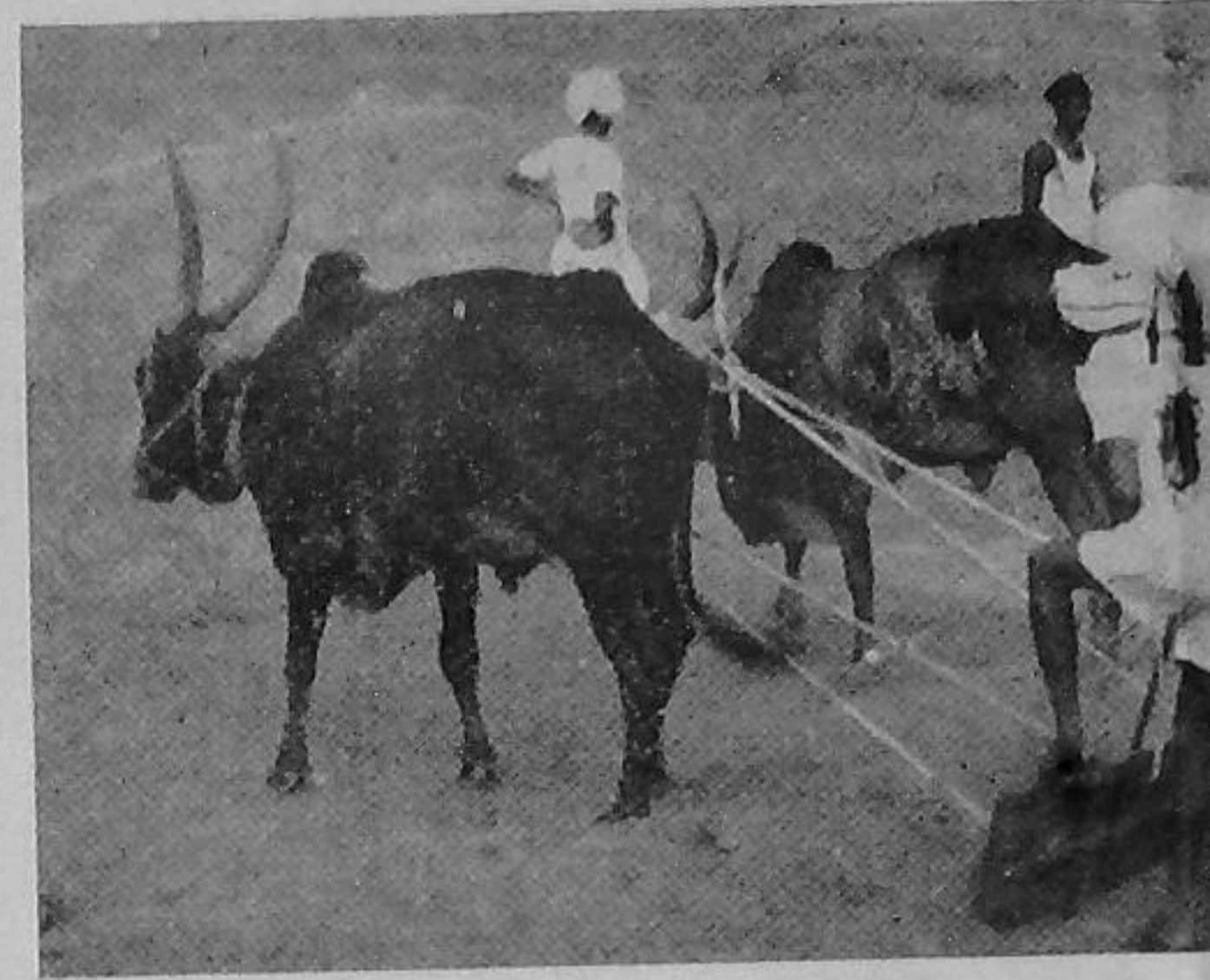
ONLY HOPE

The story of Maharashtra's resounding success in contour bunding is the story of the mobilisation of peasants, and the hard and sincere efforts put in by them in the furtherance of the campaign. Maharashtra's agriculture is almost wholly dependent on the monsoons. The rainfall is very low in large parts of the State, being 15" to 25". The rivers, too, are fast-flowing and they remain dried up for most parts of the year. The irrigation potentialities thus being very limited, attention has been focussed, on dry-farming which provides the only hope for increasing agricultural production. Contour bunding of lands has been found to be a very effective method for conservation of both the soil and its moisture content particularly in the dry and arid areas.

NEW DYNAMISM

In 1951, a team of officers was deputed to the Punjab to study anti-erosion measures being carried out on a large scale in the foot-hills of the Himalayas at that time. On the report made by this study team, the Government adopted certain land improvement schemes which were supported by an appropriate legal measure. These schemes, however, failed to show any appreciable results, for they lacked vitality which can come only through active participation of the cultivators themselves. In 1955, the whole scheme was, therefore re-oriented with this new dynamism and a programme of intensive contour bunding was launched in Parner and Karjat talukas of Ahmednagar district. The main feature of the programme was to organise farmers' unions for every village in the taluka to take up contour bunding work under the technical guidance of the State officials. To meet the cost of the work, the cultivators were given loans by the State Government.

And then something of a miracle happened. The new idea caught the imagination of the cultivators, and their Unions took up contour bunding in thousands of acres of land, deploying continuous flow of human and bullock



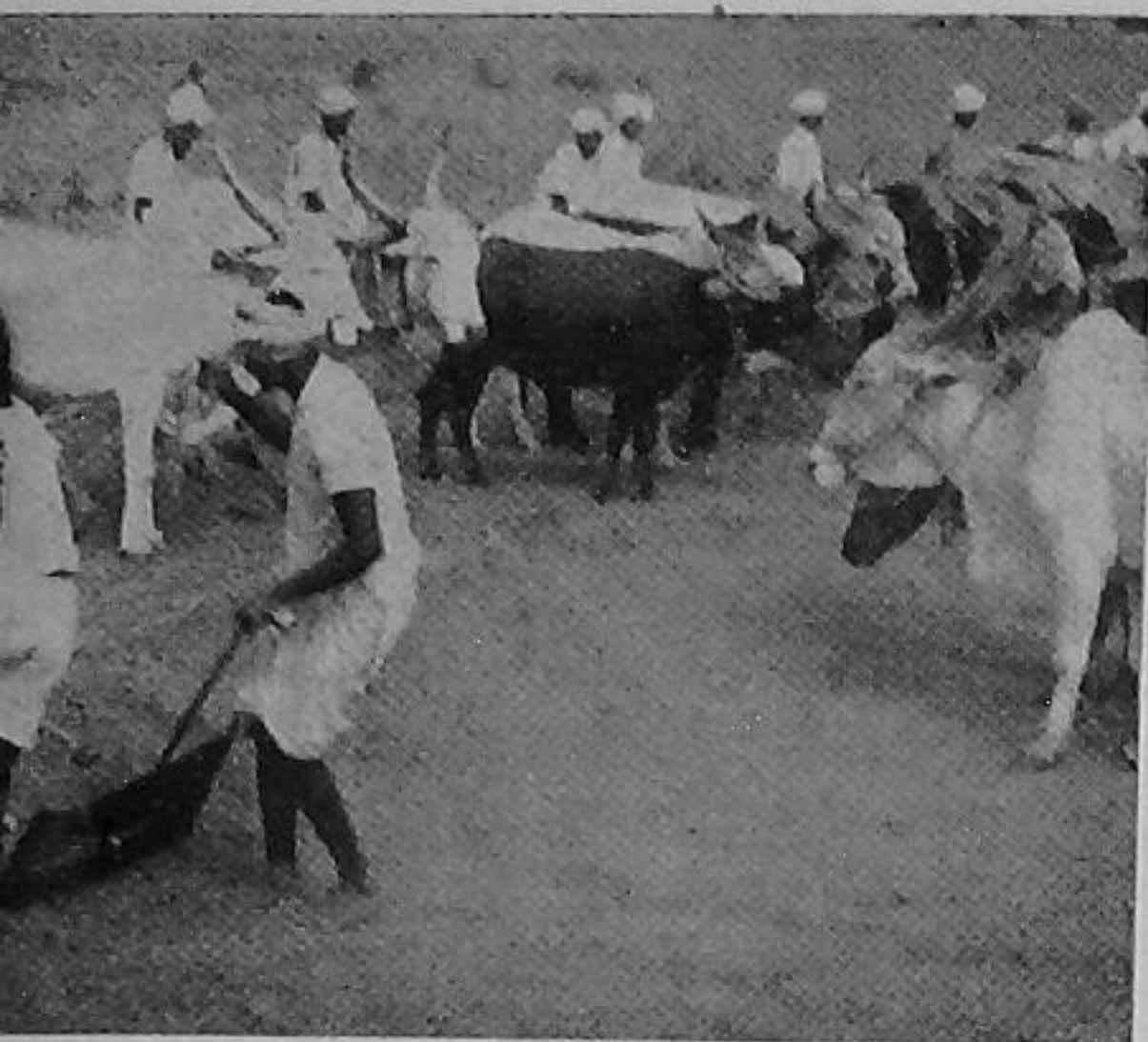
Farmers in the scarcity areas of Maharashtra with spirit and covered several t

power. In one month, they contour banded 8,662 acres of land, which under the previous scheme would have taken not less than a year to complete. The two talukas fulfilled their target of one and a half lakh acres in one year.

HEALTHY COMPETITION

This outstanding and pioneering work in Parner and Karjat caused a stir in the neighbouring districts and the farmers in this whole tract were inspired to undertake soil conservation work with the same community spirit and sense of responsibility. Parner-Karjat thus started the ball rolling and the farmers in these districts were animated with a spirit of healthy competition to set up records in contour bunding. North Sholapur taluka in

In Contour Bunding



undertook the work of bunding in a community thousand acres of land.

Sholapur district outdid the achievement of Parner-Karjat by bunding 11,000 acres in one month, only to be surpassed two months later by Jath taluka of Sangli district which covered an area of 15,000 acres in a month. Sinkhed in Dhulia district, Sirur in Poona district, North and South Sholapur in Sholapur district, Sillod in Aurangabad district, Pathardi in Ahmednagar district and Purandar in Poona district, thus scored points one over the other. The last named taluka contour banded 26,000 acres of land in one month.

For contour bunding, a special implement called 'Keni' is used which is hauled by a pair of bullocks. The cost of bunding one acre of land comes to about Rs. 40 which the farmers can get from

Government in the form of loans to be repaid in 15 annual instalments. Contour bunding raises the yield of the land by 20 to 25 per cent and this improvement is of a lasting nature. Another advantage of contour bunding is that it raises the sub-soil water table, which thus furnishes an additional source of irrigation if wells are dug up in the banded areas. A special

scheme for constructing such wells, known as, "Operation Wells Scheme" as these wells are the result of the bunding operations, was launched in this area in 1959 with a provision of Rs. 2 crores for loans to cultivators for digging up wells or repairing the old ones. The target of 20,000 wells to be constructed in the banded areas has been nearly fulfilled.

PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS AND PARTY POLITICS

(Continued from page 4)

2. Direct elections should be favoured at all levels as far as possible. Since the number of electorate involved in indirect elections is very small, it is easy to influence them by resorting to illegal practices.

3. Gram Sabha should be recognised as a statutory body. It should exercise some effective control on the village Panchayat, so that it provides a forum for the opposition members to give expression to their criticism of the Panchayat.

4. In the case of elections to Gram Panchayats, ward-wise constituencies in the village are likely to help the minorities to be represented in the Panchayat. In the case of Panchayat Samiti and Zila

Parishad elections, the constituencies should be fairly large say consisting of 20,000 people or even more. This will help counteract the effect of casteism and other local parochial outlook.

LASTING SOLUTION

It should not be forgotten that these are only safety measures. The lasting solution of the problem lies in educating the rural masses so as to develop their civic consciousness. They should learn to cherish a living faith in democracy. To achieve this, an elaborate programme of mass social education will have to be undertaken with the active collaboration of various non-official and non-political parties of the country.

Nigaree—A Model Village

R. C. CHAUBEY

THIS is the story of an unknown village which came into limelight two years ago. NIGAREE was selected as a model village of Jabalpur district in Madhya Pradesh and was awarded a prize of Rs. 1,000.

It has a population of 1,100 people and a cultivated area of 700 acres. In not very distant past, the village was a hot bed of rivalries, disputes and party politics. When the message of Community Development and Panchayats reached the village, a miracle happened. Thakur Lochan Singh was unanimously elected Sarpanch. Under his leadership, the village began to make rapid progress.

In 1957 when the Collector of Jabalpur visited the village, he asked the people if they wanted a pucca school building to be built in their village on the condition that they would meet half its cost. The response was immediate. The Sarpanch accepted the proposal on behalf of the village. It was a sight to see what united and concerted action of the people could achieve. To the surprise and acclaim of all, the building was completed in a record time of 6 days.

THE PANCHAYAT

The Panchayat has been playing a dynamic role in the

development of the village. It meets regularly and maintains proper accounts of its income and expenditure. It maintains a middle school for boys and a separate school for the girls. The Panchayat has constructed 6 pucca wells for the use of the village people. It now proposes to instal an automatic pumping set and to provide tap water facilities throughout the village. It has a radio set and the people regularly hear the programmes of the AIR stations concerning the problems of the countryside.

AGRICULTURE

The village lies in the wheat producing belt of Madhya Pradesh. Under the guidance of the extension officers, the farmers have been quick to adopt improved methods of agriculture. There is a Service Co-operative Society, which supplies fertilizers and improved seeds to the agriculturists. The society also advances loans to the needy. There is no money-lender left in the village now. The net result of all these facilities is reflected in the increased agricultural output of the village.

AKHADA AND YOUTH CLUB

The Panchayat runs an Akhada (Wrestling ground)

in the village. The young men of the locality regularly go to the akhada for exercise. Regular bouts are arranged under the personal supervision of the Sarpanch. There is also a Youth Club and a small library where local language newspapers and books are available for reading.

MAHILA MANDAL

The womenfolk of the village have given up Pardah altogether. There is a general awareness in them of their duties and responsibilities. They meet once a week in the community hall and discuss the plans for improvement of their village. They co-operate with the menfolk in all the schemes for the betterment of the village.

OPEN AIR THEATRE

Being a village situated near the city of Jabalpur (16 miles) there is a regular traffic of persons going to the city daily. Most of them carry milk and vegetables to the city. They also visit the city cinemas regularly. In order to wean them away from their habit of seeing cinema, the Panchayat has constructed an open air theatre, where the village natak mandali stages plays based on local themes. A grant of Rs. 1,200 was given to this

theatre by the Social Welfare department to purchase curtains and other equipment.

PUBLIC HEALTH

The Panchayat got constructed pucca latrines and urinals which are regularly cleaned. There is an Ayurvedic Aushadhalaya (dispensary) which caters to the medical needs of the people. The houses are regularly sprayed with DDT and the anti-malaria squad also visits the village for destroying the breeding places of the mosquitos.

THE FUTURE

The village as a whole, pre-

sents a picture of progress and prosperity. The village roads and lanes are all paved. The houses are neat and tidy. The people clean the village with their own brooms regularly. They have imbibed the spirit of co-operation and disciplined work. The incidence of crime has fallen very low. The disputes are settled amicably by the Panchayat. The people are united as one man under their Sarpanch who enjoys their trust and devotion. The village may thus look forward to a still brighter and happier future.

* * *

WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETS

(Continued from page 7)

given a special course of one week to enable them to promote women's programme.

The Ministry's proposal to introduce Gram Sevikas' prize Competition scheme attracted considerable interest and was welcomed by all sections of the House. It was, however, felt that there must be a Second Prize at the National level. It was also suggested by some that competitions should be held at the district level or between 30 Gram Sevikas rather than at the regional level as that would inspire more enthusiasm amongst the participants.

It was next discussed how women could take an increasing part in the co-operatives. Various suggestions were

mooted. Several members reacted strongly to the suggestion that women should get a chance to become associate members of the society along with their husbands. The consensus of opinion was that they should be members in their own right paying share capital. It was felt that women could play an important role in the furtherance of Consumers' Co-operatives but in the initial stages, this had to be confined to the urban areas only. An important recommendation made by the Committee was the necessity to provide Gram Sevikas with demonstration equipments and residential quarters so that her home will itself be like a community centre for women and children.

KURU—A GIANT AMONGST KERALA FARMERS

(Continued from page 5)

on the 28th of January. If this cycle is followed, according to Kuru, it would be possible to grow four crops a year.

OTHER EXPERIMENTS

Kuru also conducted experiments in paddy cultivation on dry land. In his view, with moisture in the soil, the *Parambuvattan* (seed No. 7) can be grown on dry lands. Kuru is convinced that the most suitable seed for local conditions for the *mundakan* crop is C.O. 25 whereas P.T.B. No. 2 is the best for *Virruppu*.

Kuru's experiments with manures have also been extensive. He has tried all kinds of manures in varying proportions and in his view, a mixture of bone-meal, cowdung and green manure is the best for the fields in Kerala.

Kuru has set an example of how an ordinary Indian peasant, by coming out of his shell of conservatism and by taking to scientific experimentation, can get the maximum out of the mother earth. If our farmers followed his example, not only will their economic standards go up, but the country will also become self-sufficient in food-grains.

FROM THE CENTRE

STUDY TEAM ON THE GRAM SABHA

A STUDY Team has been set up by the Ministry of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation, with Shri R. R. Diwakar as Chairman, for examining the problems connected with the effective functioning of the Gram Sabha. The Team is to submit its report within six months.

The Team will study the working of the Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat and the Panchayat Samiti with special reference to the extent to which the Gram Panchayat is influenced in its policies and decisions by the views and mandate of the Gram Sabha and the extent to which the Gram Sabha is involved in the implementation of programmes. It will also examine the extent to which the existing powers and functions of Sarpanches of village Panchayats and Pradhans of Panchayat Samitis are consistent with the institutional functioning of the Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis. The Team will suggest measures for ensuring that the Gram Sabha is built up as the base for Panchayati Raj and Sarpanches and Pradhans function institutionally.

* * *

ROLE OF NATIONAL COUNCIL OUTLINED

SHRI S. K. DEY, Minister for Community Develop-

ment, Panchayati Raj & Co-operation, while addressing the first meeting of the National Council of Study and Research in Community Development and Panchayati Raj remarked that the main function of the Council was to help Government in the smooth transition of the training and education programme from a purely governmental responsibility to one of non-official institutions.

Shri Dey said that it was inevitable that the character and training and education programme of Panchayati Raj would undergo rapid, progressive change. The initiative would flow more and more to the people themselves. In the mean time, they had to pass through an intermediary stage when responsibility would be shared by Government and the people. The setting up of the National Council had to be viewed against this background.

The Minister said that the National Council would be responsible for guiding the Ministry on the training programme, for ensuring by intimate personal contact that the programmes were being implemented in the field and for making it possible for Government to progressively delegate the responsibility for training to institutions further below.

* * *

COMMITTEE FOR CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING

INAUGURATING the first meeting of the Committee for Co-operative Training of the National Co-operative Union of India, Shri S. K. Dey, Minister for Community Development, Panchayati Raj & Co-operation, said that following the decision taken by the Government on the recommendations of the Study Team on Co-operative Training, the entire responsibility for training both non-official and official workers in the co-operative movement all over India had now been passed on to the people's organisation itself. He expressed the hope that the co-operative movement will make rapid progress so that it becomes a balancing middle force between the private and the public sector. The Co-operative ideal had to saturate the consciousness of the people exactly in the manner political democracy had done. Therefore, a re-orientation of the whole training was necessary. Till now the emphasis was on credit operations and their careful auditing and accounting. The movement would now have to expand as a way of life instead of merely being a feature of the nation's economy.

* * *

FINANCE FOR FARMING CO-OPERATIVES

THE GOVERNMENT has, decided to increase its con-

tribution to the banks' special bad debt reserves from 1% to 2% on the additional loans given by them to co-operative farming societies over the loans given in the previous year.

It may be recalled that earlier in order to encourage Co-operatives to lend adequate funds for production to all cultivators, including marginal and sub-marginal farmers, Government had decided on the recommendation of the Committee on Co-operative Credit that service co-operatives and central co-operative banks will be given outright grants by Government at the rate of 3% and 1% respectively in respect of additional advances made by them over the preceding year. It was decided that the advances given to co-operative farming societies by central co-operative banks will be taken into consideration for the purpose of proposed Government contribution at 1 per cent to their special bad debt reserves.

It has, however, been noticed that central co-operative banks have been somewhat reluctant in providing adequate finance to co-operative farming societies.

It is hoped that as a result of this decision, the central co-operative banks will come forward to finance co-operative farming societies on a larger scale than hitherto.

* * *

CO-OPERATIVES IN GRAMDAN AREAS

FINANCIAL assistance on a substantial scale is now available for developing agricultural production in Gramdan areas through co-operatives. The immediate steps to be taken for the full utilisation of this provision were discussed at the meeting of the National Advisory Committee for collaboration with the Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh. As the ownership of the land in Gramdan areas vests with the Gram Sabha which has no power to alienate or transfer the land, co-operative financing agencies were not able to provide the necessary finance for increasing agricultural production.

As a result of discussions between the Ministries of Community Development, Panchayati Raj and Co-operation and of Food and Agriculture and the Planning Commission, it has been agreed to set apart an amount of Rs. 1 crore, out of Rs. 8 crores allotted for schemes relating to resettlement of landless labourers for assisting co-operative societies in Gramdan areas. The assistance will take the form of short, medium and long-term loans and subsidies where necessary. Financial assistance under this scheme will also be available for Bhoodan lands contiguous to Gramdan areas if co-operatives are formed there for increasing agricultural production. There are about 4,640 Gramdan villages all over India.

The Akhil Bharat Sarva Seva Sangh has agreed to assist in the propagation of the concept of Panchayati Raj, since the Sarvodaya concept embraces the philosophy of Panchayati Raj and co-operation. It was agreed that workers nominated by the Sangh for this purpose will be given facilities to attend the training camps conducted from time to time all over the country under the aegis of the Community Development Programme.

* * *

FINANCING OF INDUSTRIAL ESTATES BY L.I.C.

THE LIFE Insurance Corporation, have subject to certain terms and conditions, agreed to advance loans upto 60 per cent of the total cost of the Estates to Industrial Co-operatives and Joint Stock Companies formed for setting up of Industrial Estates.

* * *

RURAL INDUSTRIES PLANNING COMMITTEE

THE GOVERNMENT has decided to constitute a rural industries planning committee. The committee will review the progress of such industries, advise on policy and planning relating to them and make detailed recommendations for the intensive development of village and small industries, including co-ordinated area and regional plans of development and pilot projects.

AROUND THE STATES

MYSORE

Training Camps for Youth

In Mysore, regional training camps for Yuvaks (Youth) were held at three Gram Sevaks' Training Centres.

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Committee for Gram Sevaks' Training

THE MYSORE Government have constituted a four-man official committee, in addition to the existing State Level Co-ordination Committee on Training, to review the technical aspects of the training given in the Gram Sevaks' Training Centres. The Committee is expected to make recommendations, among others, on the areas of specialisation for each of the Training Centres and the possible lines of further development of these Centres.

* * * *

ORISSA

Orissa Consolidated Cess Bill

THE ORISSA State Legislature has passed the Orissa Consolidated Cess Bill which provides for the levy of consolidated cess of Rs. 0.25 nP. per rupee of land revenue. The cess is to be allocated among the Gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads in the ratio of 12 : 8 : 5.

* * * *

ZILA PARISHAD SERVICE

THE ORISSA Government have finalised the rules for the constitution of a Zila Parishad Service, for draft publication. The proposed Service is to consist of the ministerial establishment of Zila Parishads and the Panchayat Samitis, to be designated as "(District) Panchayati Raj (Ministerial) Service" and the establishment of the Primary School teachers transferred to the Samitis to be designated as "(District) Panchayati Raj (Educational) Service". For each Samiti and Parishad, there will be a separate cadre for Class IV servants. Selection to the Service will be made by a selection board at the district level. In the rules, provision is being made for the appointment or promotion of members of the Zila Parishad Service to the next higher post in the State Service.

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RURAL ENGINEERING ORGANISATION

THE ORISSA Government have set up a Rural Engineering organisation to provide adequate technical guidance and assistance to the Panchayati Raj institutions. The organisation consists of an overseer for each Block, an Assistant Engineer for each Sub-Division and

supervisory staff at the district and State levels.

* * * *

ANNUAL DISTRICT LEVEL CONFERENCES

ANNUAL Conferences on Community Development were held in 8 districts of Orissa during April. State level officers from the Development departments, the District Development Officers and the extension staff in the blocks as well as the Chairmen of the Zila Parishads and Panchayat Samitis attended these conferences. The experiences gained during the first year of the working of the Panchayati Raj bodies were discussed with special reference to the difficulties that were encountered in the execution and co-ordination of development programmes. The Conference also considered the follow-up action to be taken for implementing the resolutions adopted by the State Level Panchayati Raj Sammelan held in March, 1962.

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AMENDED ORISSA PANCHAYATI RAJ ACT

ACCORDING to the provisions of the Amended Orissa Panchayati Raj Act, the Collector of the District, the Sub-Divisional Officer and the District Level Officers of different Development Departments of Government,

continue to be members of the Zila Parishad without any right to vote. Similarly the Officers of Development Department at the Samiti level also continue to be official members of the Samiti without any right to vote. The Sub-Divisional Officer, who was previously a member of the Samiti, has however, ceased to be such member. He will, have right to speak and otherwise take part in the proceedings at a meeting of any Panchayat Samiti or any Standing Committee thereof.

* * *

RAJASTHAN

PROBLEMS THROWN UP FROM THE FIELD

THE PANCHAYAT Samitis in Rajasthan while passing their budgets for 1962-63 took the opportunity of critically reviewing the progress made by them during the last year. The village panchayats also carried out such a review and such of the problems which were of a general nature and which have to be solved at higher levels, were referred to the Samitis. The Samitis after considering these matters, in their turn, submitted some special aspects which deserve the attention at higher levels, to the Zila Parishads. The State Government intends to propose some subjects for discussion during the next annual conference on Community Development, based on the problems which have been thrown up from the field.

* * *

SMALL SAVINGS CAMPAIGN

THE RAJASTHAN Government launched a three-week special savings drive in May-June, 1962. During this period, efforts were made to personally contact as many people as possible. The Sarpanches who have been appointed agents, enrolled volunteers for the purpose and imparted the necessary training to them for taking up the savings campaign.

* * *

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION PLANS

THE RAJASTHAN Government have set up Advisory Committees at the district level, in 13 districts in which power facilities are available, for drawing out plans regarding rural electrification and for advising the State Government. It is expected that these committees would help in speeding up the programme of rural electrification.

* * *

UTTAR PRADESH

REVENUE YIELDING ASSETS

IN U.P. during the current financial year, loans amounting to Rs. 7.11 lakhs will be distributed among the Gram Sabhas under a scheme for creating revenue yielding assets. Based on the recommendations of the district authorities, loans for individual Gram Sabhas will be sanctioned by the State Government. During 1961-62, loans amounting to Rs. 2.86 lakhs were granted to 71

Gram Sabhas in 29 districts, which utilised the amounts in implementing as many as 72 projects. These included construction of 17 shops and houses, raising of 4 community forests, installation of 7 pumping sets, 7 cane crushers and pans, and 11 flour, rice, oil and saw mills.

* * *

MUKHYAS AS SMALL SAVINGS AGENTS

IN U.P., it is reported that the Mukhyas of 400 Gram Panchayats in the Trihur division will be appointed Small savings Agents for launching an intensive savings campaign.

* * *

RECORD TAX COLLECTION

VILLAGE PANCHAYATS in Meerut district are reported to have set a record in the collection of taxes during the last financial year. Though a sum of Rs. 6,48,000 was lying in arrears as Panchayat taxes on 1-4-61, about 700 Panchayats made cent per cent collections by the end of March, 1962.

* * *

WEST BENGAL PROGRESS OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

THE WEST Bengal Government have drawn up a phased programme for covering the entire State with 20,000 Gram Panchayats and 3,500 Anchal Panchayats by October, 1963.

* * *

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

GAON SABHAS CONSTRUCT BUNDIES OVER NALAS

THE PROGRAMME of constructing bundies over Nalas by the Gaon Sabhas is making commendable progress in the Mirzapur District in Uttar Pradesh. Nine such projects were completed during January 1962 and a number of others are being examined by the specialists. Six projects which were completed earlier provided irrigation during the last Kharif season. A remarkable feature of these projects is that the cost of irrigation through them is as low as Re. 1 to Rs. 40 per acre.

* * *

GRAM SABHAS BUILD SCHOOLS

IN THE MEERUT district of Uttar Pradesh, commendable work in the form of construction of schools through Panchayats is in progress. Two schools for boys and one for girls have been constructed in the Chhaprauli Block and five primary schools are under construction. Primary school buildings are also being constructed in the Gram Sabhas of Kudi, Adarsh, Nagla, Nuhara, Tanda, Ramala, Lamboo and Asara, through shramdan and public contribution. These works are likely to cost Rs. 90,000, out of which a sum of only Rs. 6,000 is being provided by the Government and the rest is being raised by public contribution and shramdan.

* * *

COMPOST WEEK IN GAURIHAR BLOCK

THE PEOPLE of Gaurihar Pre-Extension Development Block in the Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh observed a compost week in January. During the week, they dug 336 compost pits and filled 145 existing pits.

* * *

SHRAMDAN FORTNIGHT

THE PEOPLE of village Kumeri in Datia Development Block, in Madhya Pradesh have set an inspiring example of self-help by contributing Rs. 3,000 for the construction of a road during the shramdan fortnight recently concluded. Likewise the people of other villages in the Block made voluntary contribution towards the construction of village roads, wells and a school building and pledged to contribute Rs. 6,000 in cash and 'shramdan'. During the fortnight, the villagers also dug 355 compost pits and filled 348 other compost pits.

* * *

A SUCCESSFUL CO-OPERATIVE FARM

THE JOINT Farming Society at Rasulabad in Baroda District of Gujarat which has been in existence for the last 11 years provides an example of a successful Co-operative effort in the field of farming. The society having assets valued over Rs. 1,25,000 owns 390 acres of land and consists of 27 members. It is largely controlled and guided by the



The tractor owned by the co-operative farming society at Rasulabad

Rao family which has about one-third share in the pooled land. Under the enlightened guidance of the Rao brothers, the society has made considerable progress. It has adopted improved techniques of farming such as use of a tractor, improved seeds, fertilisers and Japanese method of paddy cultivation. It achieved a record production of paddy, i.e., 76.5 maunds as against 16 maunds per acre on the average. The land is now largely irrigated and is under double crops. The crops grown on the farm include wheat, sugarcane, fruits and green fodder. Processing industries like gur-making and paddy-husking have also been taken up by the society to provide full employment to its members. Their income has now gone up considerably. In order to safeguard the entry of absentee landlords in the society, it has provided for compulsory work at the farm by at least one member of the family.

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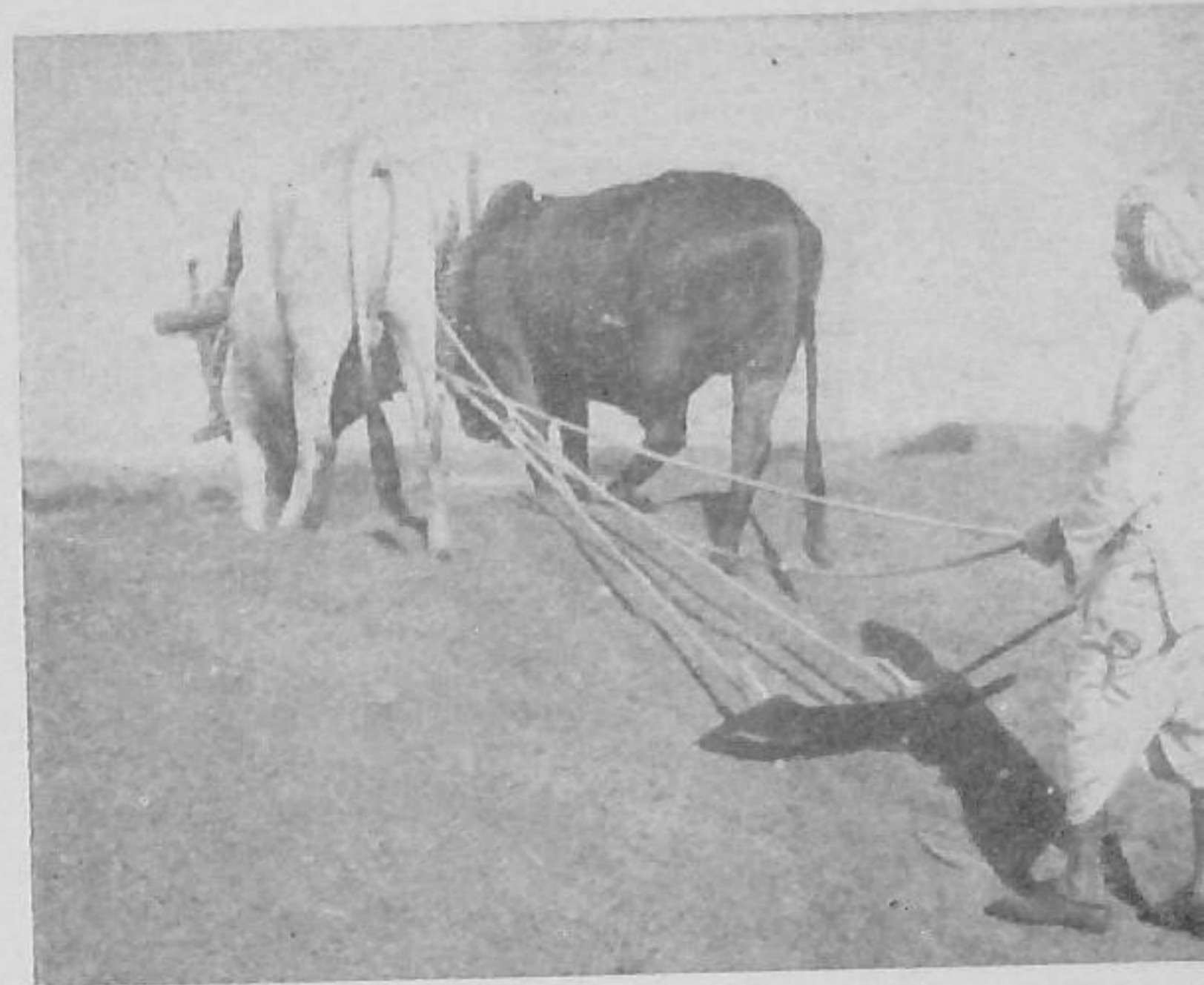
CONTOUR BUNDING



For conservation of moisture in dry and arid areas like this one, contour bunding offers an effective solution.



This is how bunds are raised.



For contour bunding, a simple implement, Keni, hauled by a pair of bullocks is most suitable.



A contour banded area in Parner Taluka.

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MONSOONS : With the onset of monsoons, agricultural operations become brisk. The picture shows improved paddy seedlings being collected for transplantation in a village in Bihar.

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