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***RURAL
RECONSTRUCTION***

RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

BY
KURYENSON

FOREWORD BY
M. RUTHNASWAMY,
*former Vice-Chancellor,
Annamalai University*

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PREFACE

There is no need for being apologetic in writing a book on Rural Reconstruction. In an age when Rural Reconstruction is something like an universal passion, there cannot be any redundancy of literature on the subject. The subject of rural reconstruction is a vast and complicated one and any light that is sought to be thrown on it must be considered as welcome assistance in a task of staggering magnitude.

The present publication does not, however, pretend to make an original contribution to the considerable amount of literature already available on the subject. Its fundamental purpose is to present a composite picture of a many-sided problem in simple, non-technical language for the benefit of the average reader. The ultimate intention is to focus public interest in a matter vital to national well-being in order that the process of reconstruction may be rendered less difficult. The author has endeavoured to bring together all the relevant facts bearing on the different aspects of the rural problem and thus present an overall picture. If the facts set out in the book help to stimulate the interest of all—the general reader, the rural worker and the student—in the various facets of a stupendous problem or provide a measure of inspiration or guidance to those interested in rural welfare, the author may well feel amply compensated for his labours.

The foreword has been written by Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy, former Vice-Chancellor of the Annamalai University and a great scholar, educationalist and administrator. The author is grateful to him. His thanks are also due to Rev. Fr. Narsilio, Manager of the Good Pastor Press, for generously undertaking to print the book despite inconvenience and pressure of work. He typifies the traditional interest which Christian Missionaries have in Social welfare activities in this

country. The author is also indebted to Mr. T. K. Alexander, Planter, Coimbatore, for the encouragement he has received from him. Mr. Alexander is actively interested in the cause of the backward classes near Coimbatore, and is associated with an organisation devoted to their uplift.

The book has been brought out under heavy strain and this fact will partly account for its numerous shortcomings. These may kindly be overlooked by the indulgent readers. An errata list has become inevitable and it is attached. A more or less comprehensive bibliography is also made available in the book in order that those who wish can resort to it for pleasure or profit.

K.

P. S.—

Since going to the press, the Union Government have appointed a Planning Commission. Though the scope and functions of this body have not so far crystallised into definite shape, there is no doubt that the Commission can play a useful part in accelerating the tempo of rural welfare activities in the provinces. The suggestion is made in the course of this book that it is desirable to have central control or guidance especially in regard to certain aspects of rural work. The Planning Commission can be vested with responsibility for this Central direction and guidance. Such overseeing from the Centre will indubitably conduce to increase efficiency and quicken progress. It will also lead to economies at a time when the need for them cannot be exaggerated.

It is hoped that the Planning Commission would examine the vital question as to how best rural reconstruction activities could be helped. It need hardly be said that India means villages and the latter must be the first concern of the Commission.

FOREWORD

*By Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy, M.A. (Cantab), Bar-at-Law,
former Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University.*

It gives me pleasure to comply with the author's request to write a foreword to this book on Rural Reconstruction. India has an up-to-date constitution, but Indian society has to be rebuilt in accordance with the ideas of progress and freedom that have been incorporated in the constitution. The reconstruction must begin with the fundamental unit of Indian Polity—the village. Primary education, better housing, sanitation and hygiene, economic holdings, roads connecting the village with district roads and with markets, medical relief, are reforms which the village urgently needs and which the author urges with facts and figures and other authoritative statements seconded and supported by his own opinions. If his suggestions are accepted by the powers that be, it will be well with villages and therefore with India.

M. RUTHNASWAMY.

Madras,
18th June 1950.

CORRIGENDA

Readers are requested to notice the following errors. Their occurrence which was due to the haste with which the work was got through is very much regretted.

PAGE	LINE	CORRECT	WRONG
8	11	degree	decree
9	18	cultivations	cultivation's
12	10	also	aslo
16	28	Quotation ends after rights.	
37	20	Brake	Break
41	8	are	is
52	25	exhibitions	exhibition
64	8	trail	trial
72	18	seed	creed
83	10	youths	youth
84	17	doing	DOING
86	24	there	these
92	19	organisation	organisations
93	35	Ameliorative	Amehorative
96	16	problems	problem
100	20	considered	condered
105	Last line	delete ' will '	
114	5	had	has
129	Tables	COUNTRY	INCOME PER CAPITA

Industries. Agriculture.

America	963	175
Canada	545	344
Great Britain	465	62
Sweden	384	129
Japan	185	85
India	12	48

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| Brayne | Remaking of Village India. |
| Brayne | Village Uplift in India. |
| Brayne | Socrates in an Indian Village. |
| Blunt | Social Services in India. |
| Bannerjee | Economic Planning in India. |
| Clouston | From Arcades to Ind. |
| Cowley | A Plan for Youth. |
| Darling M. L. | At Freedom's Door, The Punjab
Peasant in Prosperity and Debt,
The old light and the new in the
Punjab Village. |
| Gangulee N. | The Indian Peasant and His En-
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| Guy Wint and Schuster | India and Democracy. |
| Garret | An Indian Commentary. |
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Khan M. K.	Co-operation and Rural Reconstruction.
Matthai	Village Government in Ancient India.
Mukhtar Singh	Rural Reconstruction.
Mukherjee R. K.	Rural Reconstruction.
Moorman	Education and Village Improvement.
Neill S.	Out of Bondage.
Nanavati and Anjaria	Rural Problem.
Narayana Rao	Report on the Survey of Cottage Industries.
Narayanaswami B. V.	Economics of Indian Agriculture.
Premchand Lal	Reconstruction and Education in Rural India.
Ruthnaswamy	India from the Dawn.
Ranadive	The Problem of Population.
Rao V. K. R. V.	What is Wrong with Our National Economy.
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Equally important is the service of the common man in India who has suffered so much in the past. His claims must be paramount and everything that comes in the way of his betterment must have only second place. Not merely from moral and humanitarian grounds, but also from the view-point of political commonsense, it has become essential to raise the standard of the common man and give him full opportunity to progress.

PANDIT NEHRU.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One of the most remarkable phenomena in post-war India is the mighty wave of interest in Rural Reconstruction that is sweeping over the country. This interest is the natural corollary to India's achievement of independence. It is needless to point out that India is primarily a rural country and her prosperity means the prosperity of the rural areas. Hence it is that the first thought of independent India has been directed to the improvement of the lot of the rural folk. Apart from this, the present has often been described as the age of the common man. Throughout the world there is a widespread desire to improve the lot of the rural folk. It is one of the main objectives of the Food and Agricultural organisation generally known as F.A.O. Most countries have programmes designed to improve the condition of the rural population and many private or semi-private organisations are devoted to this task.

The predominantly rural character of India will appear in its true perspective when compared with the position in similar other countries. India lives in villages is a familiar saying. More than eighty per cent of her population are rural. The number of towns with a population of 5000 and above is 4000 or thereabout. While in England 4 out of every 5 persons live in towns in India 8 out of every 10 persons live in villages. The proportion of rural to urban population in Canada is 46 per cent, in Northern Ireland 49 per cent and in France 51 per cent. Sir Frederick Sykes, an ex-Governor of Bombay, describing the village problems of India, says, 'in

England some four-fifths of the population are town dwellers; in India, on the other hand, some six-sevenths live in villages. In England almost 58 per cent make their living by industry and only 8 per cent by agriculture. In India over 80 per cent of her population are agriculturists while less than 10 per cent are employed in Industry.' The contrast between India and the other countries is striking and gives an idea of the immense importance of rural reconstruction in the scheme of national prosperity.

The magnitude of the task is almost staggering. To import life into more than 700,000 moribund villages which are no better than rural slums is a truly Herculean task and it has become doubly difficult by reason of the fact that little was done in this direction during the nearly two centuries of foreign rule. The Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture says: "if the inertia of centuries is to be overcome, it is essential that all the resources at the disposal of the state should be brought to bear on the problem of rural uplift. What is required is an organised and sustained effort by all those departments whose activities touch the lives and surroundings of the rural population." Prem Chand Lal puts the idea in a different way. He says: "The high caste and the man from the low caste, the intellectual and the illiterate, the wealthy and the poor, the religious as well as the secular agencies, the official and the non-official—all have their duty in the programme of the reconstruction of the rural areas." Again he says: "The problem of Rural Reconstruction is manifold. It is economic, social, religious, educational and of health and sanitation. In order that it may be adequately and effectively attacked, all forces are required. . . ."

Very often however there is a tendency to under-rate the complexities of the task. A modern writer has observed that people talk of Rural Reconstruction as they talk of patent medicines, just something which on mere application would produce the desired result. Rural Reconstruction is not so simple or easy as all that. Nor is it a mechanical process amenable to rigid principles as scientific processes are. Village uplift is certainly an art and not a science; so observes J. R. Andrus. "Human relationships" he says "are central and few if any hard and fast rules can be applied generally. One will hardly ever find two villages with precisely the same problem or best helped by the same technique. Preparation and previous planning are helpful but ability to adapt oneself on the spot is probably the greatest essential along with common sense and a sympathetic understanding of the villagers. The psychological problem cannot be exaggerated. Those with an unselfish attitude and personalities which enable them to win the confidence of the villagers will accomplish more uplift than experts who lack these personal qualities." "The purpose of Rural Reconstruction," observes Dr. Spencer Hatch "is to bring about a complete upward development towards a more abundant life for rural people—spiritual, mental, physical, social and economic." To quote from another author, "The object of Rural Reconstruction is the villager and the primary aim of the movement is not only to make himself self-sufficient, but also a self-reliant and self respecting citizen." Thus the objectives are manifold and the task is not easy without patient, systematic and co-ordinated effort. On this account some characterize Rural Reconstruction as a struggle, meaning to indicate thereby its difficult nature.

Of all problems confronting free India, that of Rural Reconstruction is manifestly the most urgent one. 'Peasants first,' was the motto of Atatürk. The problem of vivifying rural areas has faced almost all countries in the world at one stage or another in their history. The country life movement associated with the name of Theodore Roosevelt is a typical instance. Rural areas are the nursing grounds in so many respects in any country and more so in India. The Poet Tagore says, "Villages are like women. In their keeping is the cradle of the race. It is the function of the village like that of woman to provide people with their elemental needs, with food and joy, with the simple poetry of life, and with those ceremonies of beauty which the village spontaneously produces and in which she finds delight. But when constant strain is put upon her through the extortionate claims of ambition; when her resources are exploited through the excessive stimulus of temptation, then she becomes poor in life and her mind becomes dull and uncreative. From the time-honoured position of the wedded partner of the city she is degraded to that of the maidservant while in its turn, the city in its intense egotism and pride remains unconscious of the devastation constantly worked upon the very source of its life, health and joy."

In this small book an attempt is made to indicate some of the broad facts about Rural Reconstruction. What is aimed at is only the mention of a few basic considerations that may prove helpful to those engaged in rural uplift and nothing more.

CHAPTER II

VILLAGES IN ANCIENT INDIA

The field of Rural Reconstruction is the village and in a book dealing with the subject it is only pertinent to include a picture, however superficial, of the villages in ancient India. Such a picture is especially relevant in view of the fact that villages of old differed fundamentally from those of the present day.

“The villages of old were not merely economic or administrative units; they were centres of corporate life and culture. They had their festivals and festivities, folk songs and folk dances, sports and melas, which gave life to the people and sustained their enthusiasm.” The village constituted the main element of stability in ancient India. It proved the ballast which prevented the country from capsizing. The Committee of Secrecy of the East India Company reported in 1812 “Under the simple forms of municipal government the inhabitants of the country have lived from times immemorial.....the inhabitants give themselves no trouble about the breaking up and division of kingdoms. While the villages remain entire they care not to what power it is transferred or to what sovereign it devolves. Its internal autonomy remains unchanged.” Similar testimonies are available from other sources also. To quote Sir Charles Trevelyan, “One foreign conqueror after another has swept over India, but the village municipalities have stuck to the soil like their own kusha grass.” Sir Charles Metcalfe similarly observes, “Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down, revolution succeeds revolution, Hindu. Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh, English all

are masters in turn, but the village communities remain the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves. A hostile army passes through the country, the village community collect their cattle within their walls and let the army pass unprovoked." Again he says, "This union of village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself as I conceive contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the peoples of India through all revolutions and changes which they have suffered and it is in a high decree conducive to their happiness and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence."

Thus there is a consensus of opinion on the unique position which villagers occupied in the scheme of things in ancient India. To the modern man who is accustomed to see in the present day village nothing but a collection of dwelling houses ill-built and ill-ventilated and the den of poverty and ignorance it may perhaps need an effort to visualise for himself the glorious position which villages of old held. These villages resembled in a greater or lesser degree the city states of ancient Greece. Some authors have designated them village republics. They were self-contained and self-sufficient in every respect and proved solid ground in a slippery world.

According to the "Imperial Gazetteer" as quoted by Dr. John Mathai, "The typical Indian village has its central residential site with an open space for corn and cattle shed. Stretching around this nucleus lie the village land consisting of a cultivated area and (very often) grounds for grazing and wood-cutting. The arable lands have their several boundary marks and their little sub-divisions of earth ridges made for retaining rain or irrigation water. The inhabitants

of such a village pass their life in the midst of these simple surroundings welded together in a little community with its own organisation and government which differ in character in the various types of villages, its body of detailed customary rules and its little staff of functionaries and traders." These consisted of (i) The headman (ii) The accountant (iii) The watchman (iv) The boundaryman (v) The superintendent of tank and water courses (vi) The priest (vii) The schoolmaster (viii) The astrologer (ix) The smith and the carpenter (x) The potter (xi) The washerman (xii) The barber (xiii) The cowkeeper (xiv) The doctor (xv) The dancing girl (xvi) The musician and the poet. The Headman had the general superintendence of the affairs of the village and amongst other things was responsible for the collection of revenue in the village. The accountant kept accounts of the cultivation's and records connected with it. The watchman's duty included the obtaining of information about crime and offences and the protection of persons travelling from one village to another. He also guarded crops and assisted in measuring them. The boundaryman preserved the limits of the village and gave evidence in cases of boundary disputes. The superintendent of tanks and water courses distributed water from there for the purpose of agriculture. The priest performed the duties in the village temple while the astrologer proclaimed the lucky and unpropitious periods for sowing and threshing. The smith and the carpenter manufactured the implements of agriculture and built the dwellings of the people. The headman, the accountant and the watchman were the most important and they were public servants in the real sense of the word. The Headman's post was one of distinction and was given by the village community to one whom all

people respected. He did not receive any emoluments. He was selected by the village community and whenever he lost the confidence of the community, he was replaced. It was by common consent and not by a majority of votes that this functionary was selected. His duties were wide. Trivial matters he could decide by his own authority, but matters of importance were referred to the Panchayats. The village functionaries were generally paid in kind. Their duties covered the entire range of village life.

The village economy was unique in many respects and both eastern and western writers have praised it. Karl Marx in his *Das Kapital* observes "The small and extremely ancient Indian communities which still exist to some extent are based upon the communal ownership of the land, upon a direct linking of manual agriculture and handicraft and upon a fixed form of division of labour, which is adopted as a cut and dried scheme wherever new communities are found. They constitute self-sufficient productive entities, the area of land upon which production is carried on ranging from a hundred to several thousand acres. The greater part of the products is produced for the satisfaction of the immediate needs of the community, not as commodities and production itself is therefore independent of the division of labour, which the exchange of commodities has brought about in Indian society as well.....in different regions of India we find different forms of such communities. In the simplest form the land is commonly tilled and its produce is divided among the members of the community while every family carries on spinning, weaving, etc., as an accessory occupation. The simplicity of the productive organism in these self-sufficient communities.....unlocks for us the mystery

of the unchangeableness of the Asiatic Society which contrasts so strongly with the perpetual dissolutions and reconstructions of the Asiatic states, and the unceasing changes of dynasties. The structure of the elements of the society remains unaffected by the storms of the political weather." Sleeman also makes similar observations, "There is perhaps no part in the world where the communities of which the society is composed have been left so much to self-government, as in India. The village communities were everywhere left almost entirely to self-Government and the virtues of truth and honesty were indispensable to enable them to govern themselves."

The social life of the community provides an equally interesting picture. The village temple played more or less a central role in the day to day transactions of village life. Around it was organised fairs and festivals; melas were recurring annual events in which people of different castes mixed freely, thereby assisting what is now termed 'socialization.' These melas corresponded to the rural and agricultural exhibitions of European countries. Wandering minstrels also provided good entertainment. Tramping through the districts of Bengal, says a writer, one often meets the village minstrel who resembles the rhapsodists of ancient Greece, chanting from the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharatha* before an assembly of villagers. It is wonderful to contemplate how much the characters of the legendary tales have contributed to the moulding of the domestic life of the masses in those days.

The most characteristic feature of village life was the Panchayat or the Village Council. Literally the word 'Panchayat' means a council of five, but actually its numerical connotation had no universal applicability to Panchayats of old, which more often than

not consisted of more than five persons. The Panchayats administered the village in all its aspects. It is said that these were in existence when the Aryans invaded India. There are references to Panchayats in Hindu sacred literature. In *Valmiki's Ramayana* mention is made of Janapada which was apparently a sort of federation of the numerous village republics. Panchayats had been actively functioning at the time of Alexander's invasion. Kautilya refers to them in his *Artha sastra*. Also Megasthenes. There are abundant evidences testifying to the efficient functioning and the popularity of the Panchayats. In some parts of the country, they were entrusted with the collection of taxes of the Central and Provincial Governments. Adjudication of civil cases and petty criminal cases were also done by the Panchayats. They built dams, constructed tanks, maintained rest houses and supervised temples and schools. They ran grain stores and *nidis*. These stores stored grains (i) for better prices (ii) for seed purposes and (iii) for emergencies. *Nidis* were societies for mutual aid by common contribution. Incidentally, the grain stores and *nidis* embodied the modern cooperative principle. The periodical distribution of agricultural holdings, control of common lands and irrigation channels were also vested in the Panchayats. It was the policy of the Government to encourage these Panchayats and invest them with more and more powers. These Panchayats generally functioned through a number of committees. There were for example, garden committee, land committee, committee of justice, etc. Women were also eligible for inclusion in these committees. Qualifications for membership to these committees included. (1) The person must own more than a village quarter of tax-paying land. (2) He must live in a house built on his own site. (3) He must be

below 70 and above 35 years of age. (4) He must have knowledge of the Mantras and the Brahmanas. Knowledge of certain specially important sacred writings will make up for a defect in property qualifications. (5) He must be conversant with business. (6) He must be virtuous and his earnings must be honest. (7) He must not have been on any of the committees for 3 previous years. (8) One who has been a member but failed to render proper accounts and all his relations were excluded. (9) Those who were guilty of certain grave sins were also ineligible.

These various committees dealt with all the activities connected with the public life of the village. All the decisions on different matters were either made through different committees or by a Panchayat called for the purpose. In cases involving points of special difficulty, qualified elders were called together for advice by the Headman and the advice so tendered was acted upon. Decisions were not based on the verdict of the majority. The procedure followed was that when a decision was necessary, the opinions of the more influential and wise gradually and perhaps unconsciously overbore that of others. The result was an unanimous decision. Sir Herbert Risley explained this point in the following words: "The people get together and they talk and eventually an opinion emerges from their talk which is the opinion of all of them. There is no majority for they are unanimous; there is no minority for the minority has been talked over and casts in their lot with the majority." There were no jails or a large staff to carry out the orders of the Panchayat. The highest punishment awarded was generally a universal disapprobation of the entire village. The culprit who would not obey the orders of the village community

was called Grama drohin. It was considered to be the greatest punishment and a person who would flout the opinion of the entire village was debarred from certain religious ceremonies and was in a way out-casted. Such extreme cases were however rare. The sense of public duty and regard for public opinion was so great that indiscipline was almost unknown. The members of the Panchayats were elected on the adult franchise of the whole village. There were cases of nominations also. In such cases a child of three years took lots in the premises of the village temple in the presence of the village inhabitants.

A few more details about the mode of elections to the Panchayats will be interesting as illustrative of the fact that the democratic principle was not unknown even in ancient India. "The village with its 12 streets was divided into thirty wards. Everyone who lived in these wards wrote a name on a ticket. The tickets were first arranged in separate bundles representing the thirty wards. Each bundle bore the name of the ward to which it belonged. The bundles were then collected and then put into a pot and placed before the general inhabitants of both young and old in meeting assembled. The oldest priest among those present then took the pot and "looking upwards so as to be seen by all the people" called one of the young boys standing close by "who does not know what is inside" to pick out one of the bundles. The tickets in this bundle was then removed to another pot. After it had been well shuffled, the boy took one ticket out of this bundle and handed it to an officer called the arbitrator who received it "on the palm of his hand with the five fingers open." "He reads out the name and it was then shouted out by the priests

present in the assembly. Thirty names were selected representing each of the wards."

The Panchayats constituted the key stone of the village arch. It was the custodian of Rural welfare. No aspect of village life escaped its attention. Village sanitation was a major concern of the Panchayat while works of public utility received an equal measure of its vigilant attention. Excavation of tanks for irrigation, construction of wells, maintenance of village roads and tracks, etc., were also among the important activities of the Panchayats. It is in the Madras Presidency, says the report on Indian Irrigation 1901—03 that Irrigation by small tanks and channels is most numerous where they have been estimated to irrigate collectively an area equal to that irrigated by all the larger works which have been constructed by the British Government in that Presidency. All those tanks were excavated and maintained by the village people. These public works were generally financed from contributions by wealthy individuals to whom such works appealed as an attractive form of charitable endowment. There has also been a considerable amount of communal effort by the village as a whole in raising capital and this fact is another evidence of the corporate life of the village, which tragically enough disappeared with the advent of British rule. The dominant position of the Panchayats is traceable to a number of factors. Firstly the absence of factions or quarrels, such as disfigure the village life of the present day. There were no party politics. Communalism was absent and competent leadership was available, there being no exodus of talents from villages to towns, such as which took place during later times. The standard of honesty was generally high and people were scrupulous to honour their words or pledges. Religion contributed

much to peace and harmony. The village temple was a source of perennial inspiration and important things were transacted in its premises. There is no doubt that it was these Panchayats that enabled the country to survive the various cataclysms of her political history and preserve the continuity of her cultural development.

Village life in ancient India was on the whole a simple one; all the same it was complete in itself and catered to the economic, social and cultural needs of the rural folk in an equal degree. Tavernier describing his journeys in the 17th century India remarks that even in the smallest villages, rice-flour, buttermilk, beans and other vegetables, sugar and sweet meats, and dry liquid can be procured in abundance. The sense of solidarity and the tradition for cooperative effort were remarkable among the villagers. The village constituted a little world by itself and the even tenor of rural life was hardly affected by outside events or influences. The villager pursued his peaceful avocation with heart within and God overhead. The village presented the appearance of a large family and each person recognised his duty towards the others. A prominent Indian author observes "The underlying principle which governed the administration in these village communities and which was the main cause of its success was the happy ideal that people cared more for their obligations than for their rights. It has been rightly observed that the Indian village like the early English manor emphasised obligations rather than rights; and far from confining itself to rights on which some particular persons could take action for his own benefit, devoted itself largely to the enforcement of obligations to the public.

CHAPTER III

VILLAGES NOW

If a villager in ancient India were to rise from his grave and visit a village of the twentieth century, he may be shocked by what he sees around him. He will no longer find the village to be the centre of political, economic or social activities but perceive that it has degenerated into a mere administrative unit, a small cog of a big machine. He will also miss the virile Panchayats of old and the sense of solidarity and cooperative effort that marked villages in ancient India. Agriculture will be found to have fallen on evil days and cottage industry under eclipse. Degeneracy, degradation and demoralisation—these may perhaps sum up his impressions.

Villages in modern India have been characterised as rural slums. "Poverty and need," observes Dr. Spencer Hatch, "make themselves evident when one goes among the village people of rural India." Poverty is the central fact of rural life—Poverty, economic, intellectual and physical. The villages no longer hum with vigorous economic or social activities, but are merely a "collection of insanitary dwellings situated on a dung hill." Here is a description of a typical Indian village. "The ill-clad villagers, men, women and children, thin and weakly and made old beyond their years by a life of under-feeding and over-work, have been astir before day break and have partaken of a scanty meal with bare and hardened feet they reach their fields and immediately begin to furrow the soil. A short rest at midday and a handful of dried corn and beans for

food is followed by a continuance till dusk of the same laborious scratching of the soil. Then the weary way homeward in the chilly evening, every member of the family shaking with malaria or fatigue; a drink of water probably contaminated; the munching of a piece of hard black or green chappathi; a little gossip round the pipal tree; and then the day ends with heavy unrefreshing sleep in dwellings so insanitary that no decent European farmer would house his cattle among them." Arnold Lupton has described in pathetic terms the condition of the rural folk. "His mansion is a mud-hut with a roof of stick and palm-leaves; his bedstead, if he has one, consists of twisted sticks which raise his mattress, if he has one, six inches from the ground. He has no doors or windows to his hut. He has a little fireplace and cooking place outside. The sofa upon which he can recline in leisure moments is made of mud outside his sleeping chamber. He has one garment round his loins and he has no other garment that he can wear whilst he is washing the one garment. He neither smokes nor drinks nor reads the newspaper; he goes to no entertainments. His religion teaches him humility and contentment and so he lives contentedly until starvation lays him on his back." Similarly M. L. Darling who visited some of the provinces in Central and Northern India about 1945-46 records his impressions in the following words: "Rarely in this area did we find a village with any but the most meagre facilities. In one about 2,000 inhabitants 4 miles from Agra there was no dispensary for man or beast, no Panchayat, Post Office, not even a recognised school. Its only amenity was a cooperative society. In another village in the same district there was no dispensary within 12 miles."

A more recent and comprehensive picture of a typical village in South India has been given in the course of an article by Dr. Virana Pillai (published in the *Women's Welfare Journal*, Madras, January 1950). Relevant extracts are given below as giving an insight into some of the major rural problems in this country :

“ *The people and their habitations.*—The population of this village is in the vicinity of four hundred. The people live mostly in dilapidated huts. These huts are absolutely unfit for human habitation, and they number about sixty. There are only five or six decent houses in the whole village from the villagers' point of view, and even these are, more or less, glorified dens. There are a few tiled houses. Although some of them have tin roofs, most of them have only thatched roofs, with holes here and there. These huts look very ancient. A good shower would make these wretched inhabitants homeless, as the roofs are leaky and the huts could be easily flooded by the street water. The floors are oftentimes below the ground level. The huts are incredibly small, on the average, about 75 square feet. These huts have sometimes the luxury of a veranda or two attached to them, and these are generally about 18 to 20 square feet. The huts are built in a row, and open into a small lane, too narrow even for a bullockcart to pass through. In front of these huts, one could see a few domestic animals as contented as their masters. As a rule, there are no windows to these huts, as they are believed to be dangerous. The most prominent building in the whole village is the one room—the Kasturba Trust building about 300 square feet, which accommodates the Kasturba worker, a Gandhigram worker, a small dispensary, a pre-basic school during the daytime, a recreation centre at night

and a place for public meetings. In this one-room building were accommodated all the trainees of the Women's Welfare Department. The veranda of this building serves as a bedroom for the needy, and young and old rush for a coveted little space for the night.

The social atmosphere.—There is not a single Christian, Muslim or Sikh in the whole village. All of them are Hindus, other than Brahmans. One would, therefore, expect a certain amount of social unity among the villagers. On the contrary, they live in water-tight compartments. The caste Hindus, mostly Kaundas, have nothing to do with the rest socially. There are the *Parias* who want to be exclusively recognized as the Harijans; but there are two varieties of Harijans (*Parias*) who more or less live in isolation. One would slowly understand that there are at least ten sections among the people, each one having a feeling of superiority. Fortunately for the village, there are only two kinds of *Parias*. There are also the *Matharies* commonly known as the *Chakkilias*, who have very little social intercourse with the rest, whether they be caste Hindus or Harijans. The name Harijan was originally given by Mahatma Gandhi to all the untouchables and outcastes. In this village, the *Parias* want to monopolize the denomination "Harijan," and they do not want to include the *Matharies* in that category. The huts of these people are, though packed together, built apart. No one can deny the fact that there is constant social tension among these primitive people. They are subject to many a taboo. The feeling of social importance among each of these groups is paramount, and they have lived in this fashion for many centuries. Their's is a most petty world. Change never seems to affect them.

Religious life.—At every turn, one finds a temple in ruins. There are village gods and goddesses as well as family ones. But not a single temple or shrine is kept decently. It seems that the gods and goddesses have been left severely alone except on rare occasions. Religious marks are absent on the foreheads of people, whether they belong to high castes or the low. The absence of priests—both Brahmans and non-Brahmans—confirms the impression that organized religion is on the decline and that these people are not religiously exploited by any religious parasites. Further, the people seem to be too busy for elaborate religious practices. In fact, there was nothing striking to show that the people had a religious turn of mind. On the other hand, it must be stated that religious beliefs have evidently a great grip on the people. They are slaves to many ancient religious rites, rituals, ceremonies and observances that weigh heavily on their body and soul. Religion has made no contribution to socially unite them, or enrich them, nor has it produced ethical standards and notions of a high order. The villager is still the victim of many a religious superstition, and looks to religion for solace in the next world.

Village sanitation and health.—Children seem to be underfed. The grown-ups bear the marks of starvation and fatigue on their bodies. On investigation, one is led to believe that the birth and death rates are alarmingly high. Polygamy is not absent among the high and low. It is, indeed, a great wonder that many have attained manhood and womanhood under the most trying ordeals of disease, starvation, and ignorance. The thought that passes a social worker's mind is that many of these underfed village children may

never see old age, although there are a number of old men and women amidst them.

Both the children and the grown-up people are most wretchedly clothed. Particularly, the children are practically naked. Most of the older people are half-naked, and they do not have a change of clothes. It is a problem to get their clothes washed, as they have not got another set. Their garments are dirty, and their bodies are exposed to the sun and the weather. There are, of course, exceptions.

The village people do not possess even a rudimentary knowledge of hygiene. You find the night-soil all over the village and especially on both sides of the footpaths and roads leading to this village. In front of the houses and behind, on the streets and lanes, the stench makes one literally sick. They do not know that there is an institution like the latrine, and have not been trained to use one until the Women's Welfare trainees tried to build one for the villages and demonstrated by building two of these for their personal use. Bath rooms are altogether unheard of in this part of the country. Dirty lanes and filthy streets are nobody's responsibility. The Women's Welfare trainees were the first to start on a village-wide cleaning process with broom, bucket and phenyle in their hands, and the whole village was respectable looking for the first time in its history, excepting the occasions when heaven-sent rain washed the dirt away.

Malaria is quite common among the people. Children are infected with sore eyes. These are the commonest village diseases. There are a couple of lepers in the village. By long suffering, the village people must be immune to many ills. There is no trained doctor in the village or in any nearby village.

Except for the first aid administered by the dispensary maintained by the Kasturba Trust, the people have no access to modern medicine. The village women have been delivering babies without the aid of a trained midwife for generations. Medical aid can be had from, situated a mile from the village but most villagers have to be coaxed before they would even set eyes on this newly founded hospital. Hospitals and doctors produce a sort of fear in the villagers. Some believe that diseases are sent by some angry god or goddess. The village people have long been used to smallpox, cholera, and fever.

Education and industry.—The village has no school. Just a few months ago, a pre-basic school was organized to engage the pre-school children of the village. The caste children want separate arrangements for themselves, as their parents do not want them to mix freely with the Harijan children. There must be a few literate persons among the males. For days, one does not see a daily newspaper. There is no provision for adult education. Some village children go to a nearby village for schooling. There is hardly a matriculate in the whole village. There is no impetus for learning.

Excepting agriculture, the village has no other industry. A bicycle can be seen once or twice in a whole week. No modern machinery of any description has so far found its way into this village. Some of the villagers export flowers and vegetables to outside towns. Although the village people are blessed with commonsense, ignorance is very appalling. You hardly find a man or woman reading. Machine civilization has made very little impression on these people. Education does not seem to be a primary concern of the people. Industrialism has not found its way into the village life.

Although the political consciousness of the Harijan has reached new heights, politics as such, except perhaps during the elections, has not yet captivated the imagination of these villagers. There is a Village Panchayat which has not been functioning owing to the new situation. It is made up of three caste Hindus and three Harijans. Owing to the better economic status of the caste Hindus, it is very evident that pressure of all kinds could be brought to bear on a number of Harijan families. Possibilities of intimidation are there. Independence has strengthened the cleavage between the Harijans and non-Harijans for the time being at least.

Enmity and party feeling among the villagers are expressed by stone-throwing after sunset. As there is no lighting arrangement, it is very difficult to locate the culprit. But it is generally understood that the caste Hindus, their party men among the Harijans, the Harijans other than those who obey the orders of the first group and the *Matharis*, who are not yet recognized as Harijans by the so-called Harijans, are the four parties to this crime. Sometimes, crops are destroyed by cattle feeding at night. At other times, the opposite party hurts and maims the cattle belonging to the other group. Street quarrels and constant gossip among the womenfolk force the village atmosphere to deteriorate.

"Recreational facilities are altogether absent in this village. In this respect, this village does not differ from other villages. Now and then, a man with a monkey or a juggler drops in on his annual tour. The village festivals come only once or twice a year. The children have the comfort of playing in the dust. The visit of an officer—or even of a policeman—causes the biggest excitement. The young ones,

who ought to enjoy play and fun, are badly neglected. The older ones—particularly, young fellows—frequent the cinema houses in nearby towns as often as their purses allow them.”

It is appropriate in this connection to enquire into the causes that brought about this degeneracy. To start with, the British established a centralised system of administration and this proved the deathknell to village autonomy. Of course a centralised administration was the only method of perpetuating the British hold on this country. The story of the decline and fall of the Mughal Empire might have told them of the necessity for a strong centralised administration with little or no initiative for the component parts. The Britishers believed obviously in the efficacy of direct rule and never wanted any agency between them and the masses. Village autonomy with the Panchayats as their symbol, therefore passed by the board and villages were henceforth made to look to the top for everything. R. C. Dutt observes, “One of the saddest results of the British rule in India is the effacement of that system of self-government which was developed earliest and preserved longest in India among all the countries of the earth.” Allied to this, is the fact that the motives behind British administration were mainly commercial and hence they were concerned chiefly with capitalizing their political position rather than promoting the welfare of the masses. “It is the Indian poor—the Indian peasant, the patient humble silent millions, the 80 per cent who subsist by agriculture, who know very little of politics but who profit or suffer by their results and whom men’s eyes or the eyes of their own countrymen forget—to whom I refer. We see him not in splendour or opulence, he reads no newspapers for as a rule he

cannot read at all, he has no politics but he is the bone and sinew of the country; by the sweat of his brow the soil is tilled; from his labour comes one-fourth of the national income—he should be the first and final object of every Viceroy's regard," thus observed Lord Curzon, one of the most brilliant Viceroys, but actually no serious attempt was made to translate this sympathy into practice. There is nothing strange in this because it is not in the tradition of any alien ruler to subordinate his interest to the interests of the country he happens to govern. Though now and then a Lord Maccaulay or a Col. Munro emphasised the need for the administration taking an altruistic view of their responsibilities, such gratuitous counsels proved of little avail before the strong phalanx of British interests.

To the two factors mentioned above can be traced much of the lack of constructive efforts in the field of rural welfare during the British period. A few economic facts may be noted in this connection.

Agriculture is the chief occupation of the rural folk in this country more than seventy per cent of the population being engaged in it. The predominance of agriculture is a remarkable fact. 'India is ryot and the ryot is India.' Agriculture is not only an occupation but a way of life, and this mainstay of the masses degenerated into a deficit economy during the British period. This is due to a number of causes which fall under two main heads, namely, (i) those imposed by nature and (ii) those for which man is responsible. Under the first category comes the uncertainty of rainfall. Indian agriculture has been described as a gamble in rain. It is said that the monsoon has the proverbial caprice of the eastern potentate. For successful agriculture rainfall has to be, not only sufficient, but also timely, and on both these counts,

it is faulty in this country. There are only two zones of heavy rainfall in India—one along the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea and the other commencing from the outer ranges of the Himalayas, widening out south of Sikkim to include Bengal and Assam. Outside these zones, scarcity of rainfall is bound to occur recurrently and upset agriculture. Judging from the past it can be mentioned as a general rule that out of a cycle of five years only one year was good for agriculture, one bad while the remaining three neither good nor bad.

Now to the handicaps of agriculture under the second category: These include sub-division and fragmentation of holdings, primitive methods of cultivation, illiteracy and conservatism of ryots, lack of marketing facilities, etc. Sub-division means excessive splitting of lands into tiny bits. Mr. Keatinge speaks of a farmer holding 48 acres of land divided into 53 plots. Fragmentation, on the other hand, consists in the scattered nature of the holdings of the same individual. In one village, for example, 170 ryots had 1027 separate plots in different places. In some parts of the country, wrote the Royal Commission of Indian Agriculture, agricultural holdings have been reduced to a condition in which their effective cultivation is impossible. Economic holdings have been fixed in many countries. There is the Homestead laws in U.S.A., the Heimstätten laws in central Europe, and the five-Feddan law in Egypt. Sub-division and fragmentation are due to (i) inheritance laws, (ii) the growing spirit of individualism, (iii) jealousy and suspicion, (iv) increase of population and (v) decline of handicrafts. Their evils are: (1) they are wasteful, much time and energy being wasted in going from one place to another. (2) Cultivation is costly, supervision generally difficult and improve-

ment in yield not easy. (3) No adequate live-stock can be maintained on the land. (4) Maintenance of records and field boundaries become costly, and (5) improved methods of cultivation are handicapped and litigation resulting from boundary disputes is inevitable. The need for legislation to check the evil of sub-division and fragmentation was stressed recently among others by Justice E.E. Mack of the Madras High Court in the course of a judgment in a Civil case. He observed, "The necessity for the creation of minimum economic holdings which would not be permitted to be partitioned into fragments.....appeals to be one which requires the urgent and immediate consideration of the Legislature."

Again it is often forgotten that land is to agriculture as machinery is to industry. Machinery is subject to wear and tear and this contingency is recognised and provided for, whereas in the case of land recognition or no recognition, little effort is made to improve the fertility of the soil. 'Treat the soil well and the soil will treat you so' is a maxim which has not been followed by the villager. The fact that soil needs to be treated on the footing of a bank account is often ignored: the withdrawals have to be replaced. Staticians have proved the importance of manure. One has cited the case in which without manure an acre produced only 1,084 lbs. of paddy and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cwts. of straw, whereas with manure the yield amounted to 3,484 lbs. of paddy and 12 cwts. of straw. Cowdung which is a useful manure is used as fuel. Similarly oilcakes are sometimes exported. Cultivation without manure leads to the exhaustion of the soil. M. L. Darling observes: "In village life manure seems to be used for anything rather than for its proper purpose—to simmer the milk, plaster the walls, clean the floors and to keep the hookah alight. As early as the begin-

ning of this century the late G. K. Gokhale declared in the Imperial Legislative Assembly that Indian agriculture was a progressive deterioration of the soil. In U.S.A. it is said that 2 billion dollars worth of cattle manure is used annually. Supply of fuel through a planned system of afforestation has been suggested as a remedy. For yet another drawback, pest and diseases contribute their share of havoc to agriculture. It has been estimated that the total annual damage caused by insects and pests to Indian crops is 180 crores of rupees.

On the top of these factors adverse to agriculture is the increasing pressure on land which commenced during the British period. It may be recalled that after the Industrial revolution in England in the 18th century, this country became merely a field for producing raw materials and a market for British goods. The late Justice Ranade observed, "This dependency has come to be regarded as a plantation growing raw materials." Village crafts and industries languished and those who had been engaged in them were thrown upon the soil. This progressive concentration on agriculture will be clear from statistics. In 1881 58 per cent of the population depended on Agriculture, in 1891, 61, in 1901, 66, in 1921, 71, and in 1931, 72 per cent. Part of this concentration was however due to the increase of population. In the 19th century the population was 100 millions while in the 20th century the figure is 400 millions. Between 1921 and 1931 the population increased by 32 millions and between 1931 to 1941 by 51 millions. Between 1872-1941 the population increased by 54 per cent. Thus, with too many people on the soil and with the yield from agriculture decreasing, the inevitable result was that agriculture ceased to be a remunerative occupation. People kept to it simply because they had

no other alternative. Statisticians say that a square mile of agriculture cannot support more than 250 people. But in this country the corresponding figures are 608 in Bengal, 408 in U.P. and 300 in Madras. In the expressive language of Sanskrit scholars this is termed as the excessive milking of the agricultural cow. This state of affairs is in sharp contrast to what took place in other countries. In all countries, says an author, even the most agricultural rural population has in the last 50 years become a constantly smaller proportion of the whole population. In Denmark between 1880 and 1921, it fell from 71 to 57 per cent, in France between 1876 and 1921 from 67.6 to 53.6 per cent; in England and Wales between 1871 and 1921 from 38.2 to 20.7 per cent. It is also a remarkable fact that about 1881, the percentage of the population living on Agriculture in India and European countries like Denmark, France and Germany, was nearly the same.

Another fact to be noted in this connection is the underemployment inherent in agriculture. Calvert estimated that the work done by an average agriculturist in the Punjab did not represent more than 150 days of full work in twelve months. Dr. Rushbrook Williams observes, "The cultivator in many provinces in India is obliged to remain idle by climatic reasons for more than one-third of the total working days in the year. Another authority, J. C. Jacks of Bengal says, "the time-table of the cultivator, therefore, when the land is unfit for jute shows three months of hard work and nine months of idleness. If he grows jute as well as rice, he will have an additional six weeks' work in July and August. *A propos* of Madras, Dr. Slater observes, "As for the Madras Presidency, on one crop land, the agriculturists work only for about five months in the year." Roughly

speaking, says a writer, half the population of India always remain unemployed. Previously he had small scale industries to occupy his leisure. But these languished in the face of the machine-made goods which flooded the country after the Industrial revolution.

Yet another weak spot in the Indian agriculture is the inefficiency of live-stock. No doubt, India has one-third of the world's cattle population. The density is 67 for 100 acres of sown area as against 25 in Egypt, 15 in China and 6 in Japan. But the quality is very low. The economic minimum for a pair of bullocks working eight hours a day is three-fourths of an acre, but in India it is less than half. The yield from a cow is 600 lbs. an year as against 5,000 lbs. in the United Kingdom. The proportion of cows which yield little or no milk is 60 to 70 per cent. Milk production has to be increased considerably if every man is to get a minimum requirement of milk.

The cumulative effect of all these factors is that agriculture has become a totally deficit economy. In India, the tiller of the soil does not live but only exists, and he constitutes the bulk of the population. "In good years he has nothing to hope for except a bare subsistence; in bad years he falls on public charity." An English author describes his assets as follows: "An acre or two of impoverished land, a pair of lean cattle, an eight-anna plough, a dry cow, a two-rupee goat." Unlike in Western countries the number of people gainfully employed in other pursuits is negligible here. In the United Kingdom, for example, 56 per cent of the population are employed in commerce. The corresponding figure for Germany is 31, U.S.A. 36, France 30, Egypt 22 and India only 17. The main consequence of this position is that when

agriculture fails there will be no standby for the population and widespread distress results. The average income of the Indian is very low. The Bhore Committee estimated it at Rs. 62 as against Rs. 1,049 in Great Britain, and Rs. 1,371 in U.S.A. This low income is largely responsible for the numerous other disabilities of the villager. He is unable to make both ends meet and walks easily into the parlour of the money-lender. The latter constitutes for him the main source of credit in the village. The rate of interest varies from 25 to 75 per cent. One in every hundred persons in the Punjab has been estimated to be a money-lender while it is one in 351 in other provinces. In ancient India, local public opinion exercised a healthy check on the money-lenders' high-handedness. It was a regular business of the elders of the village to see that at the time of the harvest all money dealings were settled and no creditor was allowed to realise more than double the amount advanced by him. This restraining force now no longer exists and worse than that, the money-lender scored an advantage with the advent of law courts on the British model which laid emphasis on the sanctity of contracts. Rural indebtedness had been growing up steeply since 1890. In 1891 it was 100 crores but in 1935 it reached 900 crores. The position has not materially improved since then. It is a common saying that the Indian agriculturist is born in debt, lives in debt and dies in greater debt. The British Government spent only half anna per acre for agriculture as against 1 sh. 11d. in the United Kingdom.

The impecuniosity of the average villager has its repercussions in every sphere of life. He is unable to meet the cost of a balanced diet. A witness observed before the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture (1926) that more people died in this country of mal-

nutrition than by famine or epidemics. Only 39 per cent of the total population are well nourished, 41 per cent under-nourished, and 20 per cent ill-nourished. The daily energy requirements of an adult without manual labour is 2400 calories. Those with moderate work require 2500—2600 and those with heavy manual labour, 2800—3000. But the usual diet of an average Indian is only 1750 calories. It is an acknowledged fact that public health and economic conditions act and react on each other. Milk **which is an important** article of diet is not within the reach of the majority of the villagers. The *per capita* consumption per day is 5.8 ounces as against 56.8 ounces in Canada, 40.7 ounces in Great Britain, 35.6 ounces in U. S. A, 40.3 ounces in Denmark, and 44.4 ounces in Australia. The level of public health is also affected by this poor food. "National health depends upon the attainment of such a standard of economic life as may protect the energies of men against a perpetual exhaustion in a grim struggle for existence." The death rate in India is very high and the rate of infant mortality terrible. A very interesting picture of the public health in this country was given by Dr. Pattabi Sitaramayya in the course of his Presidential address at the 55th session of the Indian National Congress. He said, "For every thousand children born, 750 survive at the end of the first year and only 500 at the end of a decade. In other words we lose half the births in 10 years. Our death rate is 24.1 per mille as against 11.9, 11.2, 10.6 and 9.9 respectively in United Kingdom, Australia, U.S.A. and New Zealand. Corresponding figures for infantile death rate for 1,000 live births are 169, 46, 36, 40 and 30. We lose 20 mothers out of thousand confinements, or 200,000 mothers in all per annum against England's 4 per

thousand and U.S.A.'s two, while four million women suffer from the effects of child bearing every year out of ten million confinements—that is 40 per cent of women suffer. It is considered that at least 50 per cent of the existing mortality is preventable. Our doctors are but 1 to 6,300 and our nurses are but 1 to 43,000 whereas they must be 1 to 2,300 and 1 to 500 respectively. Our midwives are but 1 to 60,000 while in U.K. they are 1 to 618. About 75 per cent of the doctors practise in urban areas and only 25 per cent in rural, while the rural population is eight to ten times of the urban. The beds in India are 1 to 4,000 whereas in U.K. they are 1 to 125 and in U. S. A. 1 to 100."

"Malaria is the prime offender accounting as it does for a million deaths directly out of a total of eight million deaths while another million debilitated by malaria are finally returned under other heads, so that really one out every four deaths is due to this fell disease."

The ravages of tuberculosis are equally extensive. It is said that there is a death every minute on account of tuberculosis. The loss of man power in terms of money on account of the ravages of various kinds of diseases runs to crores of rupees every year. The average expectation of life is roughly 27 as against double that figure in many of the European countries. The causes of this low level of public health are many but a discussion of it is beside the present context. But a recent author, however, strikes a new chord when he says that 'India has a problem of ill-health on which nothing but a revolution in housing and in sanitary practice combined with the abandonment of many old customs will make an impression.'

In the sphere of literacy, the position is equally deplorable. In the early part of this century a British Administrator said, 'Four out of every five villages are without schools, 3 out of 4 children go without education and only 1 girl out of 40 attends any kind of school. The position has no doubt improved since then, nevertheless, the country has yet to cover a considerable distance in order to be on a par with the other countries of the world. It has been said that this backwardness in literacy has been the root cause for many other evils in this country. Speaking on this aspect of the matter, Gertrude Williams observes, "It is education, it is school, it is popular intelligence. All these superstitions and evils which we see in India have their root in the illiteracy—the want of education of the masses of the people. Wipe out the illiteracy, give the people schools and these jungle growths will be swept away. An educated India will not tolerate purdah, child marriage, the disabilities of widows and the rest. It is appalling to compare the influence of a body of 300,000,000 illiterate men and women with the potential power that education would give them for progress and advancement. Education would bring a new atmosphere of common sense and wholesome interests into Indian life, a release to women and a stimulus to men. Education would form an entering wedge for the emancipation of the millions of untouchables. It would be a levelling influence between the castes laying bare the artificialities of the system. It would weaken the superstitious credulity which makes the masses the easy prey of thousands of beggar priests. It would undermine Indian's blind fatalism and make her begin to take account of economics and bacteria. It is the want of schools and education that makes the Indian people ignorant of the rudiments of sanitation and of

hygiene, a prey to superstitious fears of Gods and evils. India's only protection from ruthless exploitation, her only hope for the future lies in free compulsory education—the 3 R's for the masses."

Now about village environments. The village has often been described as a dull spot so much so that, according to Brayne a dog fight or a riot is an interesting diversion there. There are no indigenous games or entertainments as obtained in villages of old. Day in and day out the villager is busy with the prospects of his crops, efforts to keep the wolf from the door and the vicissitudes of village politics. Garrett observes, "the smallness and inconvenience of his father's holding, the impossibility of getting more lands, lack of capital, debt, marketing difficulties, illiteracy, religious restrictions and the absence of secondary occupations—all combine with a fatalistic philosophy to kill incentive and keep down the standard of living." Similar observations had been made by the Simon Commission. They said 'the low standard of living to which the mass of India's population attain is one of the first things which strike a western visitor; wants are few, diet simple, the climate usually kind and a deep-rooted tradition tends to make the country content with things as they are, but the depth of poverty, the pervading presence of which cannot easily escape attention is not so easily recognised.' Reference has frequently been made in the past by writers on rural topics of the villagers' interest "in their crops, in evading taxation, in the rate of interest charged by the money-lenders, in debts, in factions, and village disputes—in marvels, holy men and innumerable powers of evil which must be appeased if calamity is to be averted." "From birth to death his one extravagance is a marriage, his relaxation a pilgrimage and his vice a little toddy or arrack."

Most of the villages have no good roads. This isolation has bred in the villager a degree of conservatism which has often operated as an impediment to progress. By the way, India's road mileage is less than what desert area need. Agriculture, Industry and social services are handicapped by the lack of roads. Roughly the mileage is 76 per 1,000,000 people as against 2,500 per 1,000,000 people in U.S.A., 934 in France and 392 in U.K. The length of road per square mile is .18 as against 20.02 in U.K., 1.84 in France and 1.01 in U.S.A. The importance of roads in rural economy cannot be overstressed. A pilot survey undertaken by the Transport Development Association in Bombay in 1943 revealed that for every 100 rupees spent on roads, the community's earnings increased by Rs. 277. It need hardly be said that roads are to villages as arteries are to the human body. Expenditure on them is a sound investment; good roads would tend to widen social contacts and operate as a break to the landslide towards towns. One author has observed that the road outclasses the school and the hospital in importance.

The role of road transport in the sphere of the economic progress of the country was stressed by Dalal speaking at the annual meeting of the Indian Roads and Transports Development Association, Bombay, (1949). He said, "We must produce more goods for export and we must expand our agriculture to attain self-sufficiency in food. Our energies must be concentrated on winning more of the nature's bounty from the soil and in exploiting to a fuller extent the sources of raw materials that we possess. Various factors contribute to a rise in our productive activity, but none more than an improvement in our inadequate Transport system. The primary means of

transport is the road and it is only when every acre of fallow and uncultivated land in the country has a road to serve it that we shall be able to induce our cultivators to put it under the plough. Let every acre of land have a road of some sort within at least half a mile and we shall have developed the economy of our country and succeeded in producing more than we need for our own requirements.

It is common knowledge that as soon as a road is built the lands on either side of the road register a steep rise in value. Why is it so? Because the owners can exploit the lands more fully—whether for cultivation or industrial purposes. The utility of the land for economic activities and incidentally the aid given to economic pursuits by social amenities has increased with the construction of the road.

The enhancement of value no more than reflects the increase in productive capacity brought about by the road.

It is indisputable that agriculture and industries—in fact all economic activities—are promoted by cheap and efficient transport and retarded by high transport costs.

Road development can help industries not only by facilitating production and transport but also by raising the tempo of several ancillary measures that create conditions favourable to expansion of industries.

Further the basis for any sort of enlightenment to reach our villages is through the roads that go through every tiny hamlet. The channels of knowledge are the roads. Whether it be knowledge aimed at the betterment of economic conditions or the advancement of learning or the spread of

hygienic habits, it is only through roads that they can travel. An India with a road mileage equal to that of any country in the world will also be an India whose *per capita* income will be comparable with that of advanced countries.

A country which wants to achieve a high percentage of literacy must have a sound system of rural transport as its base."

The position in regard to railways is equally bad. No doubt India has the fourth largest railway system in the world, the others being U.S.A., Russia and Canada. But in relation to the area of the country the figure is extremely low. India has only $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of railways for every 100 sq. miles as against 20 miles in U.K., 12 miles in France and 8 miles in U.S.A. The area not commanded by railways varies from 26 per cent in the Punjab to 59 per cent in Madras.

In this brief sketch may be included an enumeration of the more outstanding rural traits. Reference has been made to the villagers' conservatism. Other traits include politeness, hospitality, religiosity, credulity, generosity, family devotion, patience, fatalism, extravagance and a sense of contentment. The list is not exhaustive. Some of these traits need more than mere mention, because they have a vital bearing on his economic position. The sense of contentment of the villager is a notable fact. Give him a square meal and he will scorn the pomp of kings, says an author. The placid, pathetic contentment of the Indian masses has been a constant theme of Western writers. A typical Punjab villager is quoted as saying as follows:

'Let me have ten good oxen, ten maunds of mixed grain, the milk of a buffaloe and some sugar to stir into it and a fair assessment after harvest. Let God

give me so much and I won't say another word.' This statement applies to other villagers also. Another rural trait is extravagance or thriftlessness. It is born with him. Credit for him is a double-edged weapon. He uses it generally to borrow for unproductive purposes and continues to do so until he is irretrievable. The social worth of a man is judged not by his earnings or even by his earning capacity but from how he spends his earnings. According to Dr. P.J. Thomas the bulk of the agriculturists in U.S.A. borrow for productive purposes and only 3 per cent for family expenses. Here the proportion of unproductive borrowing is sixty per cent. Gide says: "Credit holds up the landowner as the rope holds the hangman." A number of causes are mentioned for his thriftlessness. The unsettled conditions which preceded the advent of the British and which deprived the people of a sense of security generated in them an indifference to saving. Fertility of the soil during early times was another factor and this discouraged initiative, enterprise and a desire to provide for tomorrow. Hindu joint family system was another contributory factor. Under this system little difference was made between the prudent and those who are otherwise. Hence the stimulus to saving was almost absent. The Hindu philosophy of life which tended to discourage accumulation of wealth proved another deterrent factor. "To the Hindu from his birth to his death, every event in his life is associated with and dominated or dictated by religion. This makes him even more fatalistic than other eastern nations. His form of marriage is dictated by religion; the suitability of parties, the date of marriage, etc., are decided by astrology. Karma or kismet causes or enters into every thing that befalls him. Death and

disease are all effects of karma or kismet. This is probably the worst enemy to the progress of our nation."

Many of the ills of rural life in this country, are due to lack of leadership. There is none corresponding to the parson or village square of an English village. It has been said by several writers that the maladies of the villager is mainly due to the fact that he does not know how to convert waste into wealth, waste through litigation, waste through jewellery, waste through ill-health and diseases, waste through short-sightedness as manifested in the use of cowdung as manure, etc. In the Punjab it was estimated that nearly eight lakhs of rupees were lost annually in one district through the improper use of cowdung. Each murder in the same province cost as much as an anglo-vernacular school working for an year and a wedding cost more than the annual expenditure on a rural dispensary. Jewellery accounted for five lakhs of rupees an year while the money spent on drink could metal all the roads in the province.

The above is a rough and ready picture of village life in modern India. The picture is depressing. The decay of old village communities, the extinction of the old corporate life of the village, dissensions, factions, the ruination of village industries, the over-crowding of agriculture, rural indebtedness, the deplorably low level of public health, illiteracy are some of the dark aspects of village life. Dr. N. N. Ganguli says more or less the same thing when he observes, "Poverty, low standard of living, bad sanitation, malnutrition, ill-health, inadequate means of communication and transport, a mediaeval social structure, these are some of the outstanding features of the Indian countryside." The village needs helping in almost every field of activity and this has to be

done at any cost. Their existence is a constant struggle with starvation ending too often in defeat. Their difficulty is not to live human lives, but to live at all; their poverty exposes them to the havoc of disease and pestilence, famine and plague and it makes advance at every step difficult. "What they (people) do desire, says an author, is protection of life and property, light, taxation, a minimum of interference from subordinate officials impartial and speedy justice, increasing facilities for medical relief, communication and elementary education, measures to secure and improve agriculture and avert scarcity and in general an honest and efficient administration." These have to be provided without counting the cost. "The most beneficent systems of Government in India" observes Sir Henry Maine, "have always been those which have recognised the peasant as the basis of administration."

CHAPTER IV

A HISTORICAL SURVEY

When it is remembered that the British Administration was primarily motivated by commercial considerations, there is hardly any need to search for reasons as to why they did not devote adequate attention to the improvement of the rural areas. If, however, now and then they attempted something in a sporadic manner, it was done either under the stress of particular situations or to sidetrack the political issue. "It was an administration fitted to deal with a static and contented population. Its weakness lay in its uniformity which discouraged all experiments and its lack of contact with Indian life which made it difficult to use such indigenous forces as were available." Apparently they did not realise that their responsibility was particularly great because the Village Panchayats which had hitherto looked after village welfare were liquidated with no other agency installed in their place. It has been said that the British Administrative system was negative in its outlook, its main business being to maintain Law and Order. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore said that his country's government had become something like patent food untouched by hand. The Victorian financial theory was that money should be spent only for productive purposes. The return in terms of interest on the capital outlay was calculated and the fate of schemes decided. Some British administrators have criticised this attitude. For example, Sir Frederick Sykes, an ex-Governor of Bombay, said that "in the discussions upon the Indian question, too little weight has been given to Rural Reconstruction and economic improve-

ment which are really the basis upon which everything else rests." More or less in the same strain Sir John-Malcolm observes, "our administration though just is cold and rigid. If it creates no alarm, it inspires little, if any emulation. The people are protected but not animated or attached." W. S. Blunt is equally outspoken. He observes, "we have given the ryot security from death by violence, but we have probably increased his danger of death by starvation." "On the other hand, W. H. Hailey, an ex-Governor of the Punjab, has attempted a defence. He observes, "it has sometimes been said that the Indian Government has at different times and in different ways and with varying degrees of success attacked almost every problem except the one which is the most important of them all, namely, the improvement of the condition of rural life. This is not entirely true for we have indirectly done much to improve the conditions by the general spread of irrigation, by the stimulus given to the cooperative movement and by the work of our Health and Agricultural departments, which, if now only at the beginning of their career have already done much for the welfare of the village. But the charge is to this extent true that we have never made a direct and concerted attack on the problem; we have never deliberately attempted to effect that change in the psychology of the peasant and in his social and personal habits without which it is impossible to improve his conditions of life. The reason did not lie entirely in the immensity of the task. It is obvious we should have to encounter an enormous dead-weight of conservatism and apathy; there were many who, not unreasonably, feared the result of preaching to the villager that discontent with his own conditions of life which was necessary to his improvement, and not many of us, to tell the final truth, have had the mis-

sionary spirit necessary for the enterprise...He (the villager) will not be persuaded by those whom he has not learned to trust and he will not trust those who do not seem prepared to put aside all other claims and considerations in order to live with him, to learn his troubles, and to support him through them."

It does not seem profitable to discuss the *pros and cons* of this statement. But one or two facts mentioned therein need emphasising. Hailey admits that the British Government was not animated by any missionary spirit and they feared preaching to the villager, discontent with his own condition. He also hints that the Government did not command the trust and confidence of the masses. In the result, therefore, the British Government never seriously attempted to put their shoulder to the wheel of village uplift. They woke up only under some compelling situations, such as famines or similar widespread economic distress. As regards famines these occurred more or less regularly. Between 1800 and 1825 it is reported that there were five famines; between 1825 and 1850 two famines; between 1850 and 1875 six famines; and between 1875 and 1900 eighteen famines in different parts of the country. Most of these famines were the result of crop failures and took a heavy toll of the population. R. K. Mukherjee speaks of eight widespread famines that devastated the country between 1876 and 1924. The picture of a typical famine which occurred during the 17th century will not be out of place in this context as giving an idea of the horrors of these visitations. "So little rain fell that the seed sown was lost and no grass grew. Cattle died in towns and villages; in fields and on roads; men lay in great numbers causing such a stench that it was terrible to use the ways. For want of grass cattle fed on corpses; men took the

carcasses of beasts to eat; some in desperation went about searching for bones which had been gnawed by dogs; as the famine increased men abandoned towns and villages and wandered helplessly; it was easy to recognise their condition; eyes sunk deep in the head; lips pale and covered with slime; the skin hard with the bones showing through; the belly nothing but a paunch hanging down, empty muscles and knee caps showing prominently; one would cry and howl for hunger while another lay stretched on the ground dying in misery. Wherever you went you saw nothing but corpses. Men deserted their wives and children; women sold themselves as slaves; children deserted by their parents sold themselves; some families took poison and so died together; others threw themselves into the rivers; mothers and their children went to the river-bank and drowned themselves hand in hand so that rivers flowed with corpses; some ate carrion flesh; others cut up the corpses of men—men lying on the streets not yet dead cut by others and men fed on living men so that even in the streets and on road journeys men ran great danger of being murdered and eaten up."

Famines of this kind jerked the Government into action. The Famine Commission of 1880, 1898, 1901, the Irrigation Committee of 1903, the Commission on Cooperation of 1915 and the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture of 1926 were among the efforts of the Government to improve the economic lot of the common man; but seldom were the reports of the Commissions translated into action in a thorough-going fashion. 'If you want to shelve a problem, said Disraeli, once, appoint a Royal Commission.' The various Commissions appointed during the British period only shelved the economic problem of the country.

The masses also were not responsive in their attitude. Apparently they had no faith in an alien Government which had failed to offer them elementary relief from the land-lord, or the money-lender, or take a sympathetic attitude as regards their fundamental disabilities. "No alien government," says an author, "however sympathetic nor even outside philanthropic agencies however rich in their resources or single minded in the pursuit of their ideals can achieve much without the genuine cooperation and help of the people." And this co-operation was more or less absent.

The personnel of the various services of the Government too did not prove a redeeming factor in the situation. They had no tradition of service to the masses. They, it is said, kicked down and looked up. Official advancement was awarded not on the basis of service to the people, but on the way in which the technicalities of the department were administered. Said M. L. Darling, "eyewash and whitewash, varnish and vincer,—these ruin half the beneficent activities of the country."

An important stage in the history of rural reconstruction was however registered with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi into the arena of Indian politics. To him belongs the distinction of being the first to shift the centre of gravity from the needs of the intelligentsia to the needs of the masses. His ideal was to restore the common man to his proper place. By example and precept he showed how vital was the interest of the villager to the general prosperity of the country and how imperative was the problem of vivifying the dark country side of this land. "Throughout his life, he thought of India in terms of the poor and the oppressed and down-trodden. To raise them and free them was the mission of his life.

He adopted their ways of life and dress so that none in the country may feel lowly. Victory to him was the growth of freedom of these people." In the nature of things he might not have been able to influence the Government, nevertheless he kindled a light which spread like wild fire, and acted like a dynamo. The entire country soon witnessed a wave of interest in the lot of the rural folk. National leaders began to preach their cause, social workers identified themselves with them and under the inspiration of Gandhiji new organisations wedded to the cause of the rural folk sprang into existence. Two such organisations are (1) the All-India Spinners' Association (1921) and (2) the All-India Village Industries Association. The designations of these associations are self-explanatory. The latter was more comprehensive in its objectives and concentrated on the promotion of Village Industries and the establishment of a new Economic Order. The Association was formed at the 48th session of the Indian National Congress and since then it has rendered yeoman service in the field of village reconstruction.

Even the Government could not remain unaffected for a long time from the forces released by Gandhiji. The first World War had ended and there was a general realisation that the common man had made great sacrifices in the winning of the war. These sacrifices could not be left unrewarded. The Government had to do something at least to save face. And they did something. There were spasmodic efforts at rural reconstruction here and there.

In one Province—the Punjab, the efforts proved impressive and withal exercised a salutary influence over the other parts of the country. Here under the lead of F. L. Brayne reconstruction work on a considerable scale was undertaken. This was a pioneer

enterprise and needs a close study. It is done in the next chapter. Mention may be made in this connection of the Indian Village Welfare Association which was founded in England in 1931. The Association aimed at bringing together those who were familiar with the condition of rural population in India and improving it by constructive means. It confined its work almost entirely to publicity and propaganda. The achievements of the Association consisted mainly in a number of educative pamphlets which it published. Some of the retired members of the Indian Civil Service were the brain behind this Association and though in the practical field of rural reconstruction its output was little or nothing, it served to focus attention on the urgency of the rural problem.

In Bombay a village improvement scheme was initiated in 1933. District committees were formed under the chairmanship of the District officers and there were Taluk and Village committees also. Non-officials were included in these committees. The committees supervised diverse kinds of work such as roads and trees, wells and tanks, removal of rubbish and construction of latrines, agricultural demonstrations, schools and playgrounds, dispensaries and first aid equipment, eradication of pricklypear and the limitation of expenditure on domestic ceremonies. In Central Provinces, a Village Uplift Board was formed in 1932. It appointed District Uplift committees. There was a model reconstruction circle comprising of a number of villages. The activities included agricultural propaganda directed to the conservation of manure, improvement of implements and crops, and better breeding of cattle. Also health instructions, cleaning-up campaigns, thrift societies, compulsory education, adult schools and voluntary consolidation of holdings. The United Provinces created a Rural

Development Board with subsidiary organisations in each district. They attended mainly to water-supply. The Bengal Development Bill was brought into force in 1936 and it was instrumental in some essays at reconstruction.

Earlier non-official efforts in the same province touched the fringe of the problem. The Bengal Central Co-operative Anti-Malarial Society founded in 1912 by Dr. Chatterjee and reorganised in 1919 initiated a widespread anti-malarial movement. Malaria was at that time a great menace to the province and it periodically accounted for a considerable loss of population. The anti-malarial movement aimed at bringing together parties of men and women who believe in self-help and discarded the fatalist view that malaria was unavoidable and an act of God. Dr. Chatterjee and his disciples impressed on the villagers that the teaching of officials and doctors concerning the mosquito was true and formed societies for filling up swampy depressions, oiled pools, and popularised quinine. All these had been preached by health experts for years; but it was not until an unofficial and unpaid propagandist came to him in his home that the illiterate apathetic peasant could be moved to action.

A word may be said about the Bengal Social Service League also in this connection. It was founded in 1915. It conducted an industrial school, a school for popular education and some adult schools to combat illiteracy. It promoted agricultural conferences, carried on co-operative propaganda and organised relief during flood and famine.

The Indian National Congress by and by took up the torch which Mahatmaji had kindled and embodied their reconstruction programme in two resolu-

tions, one passed at Karachi in 1931 and the other at Fazipur in 1936. Both these resolutions pledged the Congress to a bold, far-reaching and comprehensive programme of rural rehabilitation. Following this, the National Planning Committee was set up in 1938. Meanwhile the Congress ministers assumed office in the majority of provinces under the scheme of Provincial autonomy. Within their limitations they endeavoured to translate the Congress programme into action. But they remained in office only for a brief period. Nevertheless, they made a good beginning. Rural reconstruction organisations were set up in many provinces. Prohibition was introduced in some parts. The ministries also undertook an extensive programme of legislation for conciliation of debts, regulation of interest rates, reform in tenancy, rural education, and social reform, but little head way could be made partly because of the outbreak of the second World War and the resignation of the ministries, that followed it.

Some of the states also followed the lead given by Gandhiji. Mysore was one. Round about 1929, Mysore started giving effect to a programme of rural reconstruction. Nearly two hundred villages were selected for the experiment and this number was later increased to 264. The scheme proved a failure mainly because of the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the villagers who viewed with unconcern Government-sponsored schemes. In 1942 the state inaugurated a five-year development plan which provided for the appointment of able and energetic non-officials to each village as rural propagandists. Village, taluk and district advisory committees were constituted to assist the executive in carrying out the work. This scheme also met with failure. The

rural propagandists proved more a hindrance than a help. Advisory committees regarded their duties lightly and never functioned efficiently. This plan was therefore replaced by another which is reported to be under execution now.

Any survey of rural uplift work will not be complete without mention of the solid work done by non-official organisations like the Ramakrishna Mission, Arya Samaj, Deccan Education Society, Servants of India Society, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., etc. These organisations worked separately in their own way, and they had no substantial support from the Government. Together they were able only to scratch the surface and this is hardly surprising. It is an axiomatic fact that the apparatus of the state has to function effectively in collaboration with other agencies if some impression is to be made on the massive task of Rural Reconstruction. "Mere social efforts by a few non-official agencies or even by the official departments are not adequate for the purpose of uplifting the masses from their present state of existence." The Christian Missionary organisations were the first to turn the sod in the field of village uplift work. Their pioneering work compels a tribute from every champion of the common man. The Y.M.C.A. started Rural Reconstruction Centres in various places. Especially the one at Marthandam functioned like a beacon light and constituted a perennial source of inspiration to many provinces and states. Speaking about this centre, the late G. K. Devadhar of Bombay said, "It is a sort of place for pilgrimage for those interested in Rural Reconstruction." In many respects the centre was a model. Its activities are dealt with in greater detail in one of the following chapters:

A similar centre was worked by the Deccan Agricultural Association in alliance with the Poona Seva Sadan and the Servants of India Society at Khedshivapur in Poona district. They carried on propaganda for better agriculture, health and female education. A gymnasium and a demonstration farm, a midwife and a sewing class, a Marathi magazine and a free library are all parts of the picture. About such centres Strickland observes, "Appreciable results are obtained in centres of this kind if the propaganda is continued for many years and if a trained and intelligent organiser resides in the village. Otherwise the effect tends to be transient."

To resume the thread of our survey, by the time victory had been in sight towards the end of the second World War there was a crop of plans for the economic development of the country, fathered mainly by non-official organisations or individuals. Of course none of these plans was exclusively intended to promote the welfare of the rural masses, nevertheless they had a vital bearing on the rural folk who constitute the bulk of the population. These plans, however, have now only an academic interest; all the same a general study of them will be interesting as showing the different approaches to the same problem.

Planning, as far as India is concerned, has not been a familiar affair. It had been so for the rest of the world also before the first World War. Prior to it planning touched national life only at few points, like labour welfare, housing and unemployment. But in the period after the first War, planned economy became much more comprehensive, covering all aspects of national life. The five-year plan of Soviet Russia was the first in the field and it led to make the world plan-minded. Then there was President

Roosevelt's New Deal in America. Also Hitler's four-year plan to prepare Germany for the second World War. In India Sir M. Visvesvarayya was the first to address himself to the task of economic planning on western lines. His several books **not only** showed the way in planning but evoked widespread interest in the subject. In simple language, economic planning implies a greater amount of collective control by the state of the processes of production, distribution and consumption. In parenthesis, some of the merits of planning may be mentioned. Planning is necessary to secure the maximum economic welfare of the community. It avoids wastage and preserves the balance between production and the actual needs of society. An unplanned economic system leads to inefficiency in production, inequality of distribution and instability of economic life.

Of the various development plans there are three which need special mention. These are: I. The Bombay Plan, II. The People's Plan and III. The Gandhian Plan.

The Bombay Plan sponsored by eight leading industrialists in Bombay aimed at doubling the *per capita* income in fifteen years. This involved the doubling of the net output in agriculture and that of industry five times. It budgeted for a capital expenditure of 10,000 crores of rupees as follows:

(In crores of rupees)	
Industry	4,480
Agriculture	1,240
Communications	940
Education	490

(In crores of rupees)

Health	450
Housing	2,200
Miscellaneous	200
TOTAL	10,000

The plan was the pioneer of its kind and it helped to interest people in measures of economic improvement. It, however, had a mixed reception. Some said that it was capitalistic in outlook and a deliberate manoeuvre to find an outlet for private investments. Others considered it as a compromise between capitalism and socialism. It was also said that the plan was one of production and distribution was only an after-thought. The criticism was also made that it placed emphasis on industrial and not on agricultural production. It was also alleged that the political warp and woof of the plan showed little or no trace of any desire to raise the standard of living of the teeming millions. Notwithstanding the criticisms, it has to be admitted in fairness to the planners that the plan was calculated to focus serious public thought for the first time on the economic development of the country. A pioneer effort cannot always be perfect, but at the same time it is entitled to the commendation that is generally bestowed on an explorer or an inventor.

The next is People's Plan, and this is placed to the credit of M. N. Roy. The objective of the plan was to provide for the basic needs of the population in ten years. The rural *per capita* income was sought to be raised from Rs. 29 to Rs. 121 an year and the

urban *per capita* income from Rs. 57 to Rs. 172. It was calculated that the standard of living of the masses would rise by 300 per cent at a cost of Rs. 15,000 crores. The plan was described as anti-capitalistic and socialistic in outlook. It laid more emphasis on agricultural production.

Now the Gandhian Plan. The first point about this Plan is that it took cognizance of the cultural, spiritual and moral side of human life more than the mere materialistic side. The main features of the Plan were simplicity, non-violence, sanctity of labour and recognition of human values. It aimed at raising the cultural and material level of the Indian masses within a period of ten years. The twin prongs of the Plan were (1) the scientific development of agriculture and (2) the promotion of cottage industries. The basic standards, according to the Plan, included (1) balanced and health-giving food, (2) sufficient clothing, (3) housing accommodation of 100 sq. ft. for each individual, (4) free and compulsory education for every boy and girl, (5) a working knowledge of reading and writing for every adult, (6) medical facilities, (7) public utility services for all including banking, postal and insurance facilities, and (8) recreational facilities, especially in rural areas, such as playgrounds, folk dances, indigenous theatres and bhajana mandalams. The Plan also envisaged the formation of Village Panchayats with the following among other functions: (I) Allotment and collection of land revenue on behalf of the village. (II) Maintenance of peace and order in the village with the help of the local police. (III) Administration of justice including settlement of disputes by arbitration. (IV) Organisation of basic and adult education (the schools to be under the management of the Panchayats). (V) Provision of medical aid by the establishment of dispensaries, cottage hospitals.

and maternity centres. (VI) Village sanitation and maintenance of buildings, roads, tanks, wells, etc. (VII) The improvement of agriculture. (VIII) Regulation of village trade, industry and commerce by organisation of co-operative credit and non-credit societies under the supervision of the Panchayats. and (IX) Co-operative purchase of raw materials and consumption goods and the co-operative sale of farm produce and articles of village handicrafts.

A word may be said about the basic philosophy behind the Gandhian Plan. The Plan is anti-capitalistic because capitalism has been responsible for many of the economic ills in this country. The two chief characteristics of capitalism are private ownership of the means of production, such as capital, land, etc., and appropriation of profit. The combination of these two has been responsible for producing trade slumps, unemployment, poverty, greed, selfishness, narrow individualism, internal strife, class conflict and war. The essence of capitalism is that the only purpose of an economic system is the acquisition of wealth for oneself. Capitalism with its quest for cheap sources of raw materials and insatiable hunger for newer and newer markets has in the past led to war and the enslavement of weaker countries. Socialism is also defective in that it involves centralised production which in turn would necessitate regimentation. And regimentation means the curtailment of individual liberty. On the other hand Gandhism avoids all these pitfalls. Kumarappa calls it 'Villagism.' Its aim is 'each for all and all for each,' and it is attainable through decentralisation and non-violence. Its goal is mainly spiritual, the test of a sound system of production, according to Gandhiji being, not the amount of material wealth its operation

would bring, but the extent to which it would promote self-development. The Plan has been described as the synthesis of all that is best in capitalism and socialism.

Apart from these plans, the Government of India constituted the Post-war Reconstruction Committee to chalk out the line of economic development in this country. Their report is a valuable document.

To sum up, the picture that emerges from the foregoing pages has more shades than light and places little on the credit side of the British Government in the field of Rural Reconstruction. The Punjab is the solitary oasis in the whole desert and the experiment there was more due to individual efforts than to State initiative.

CHAPTER V

THE GURGAON EXPERIMENT

The Gurgaon experiment is a landmark in the history of Rural Reconstruction in this country. It was a pioneer effort in the field and was marked by several novel methods which had not been previously tried anywhere on such a considerable scale especially under Government auspices. The scene of the experiment was Gurgaon, a district of the old Punjab situated half way between Delhi and Muttra. Its total area was 1,419,132 acres. The soil was extremely poor, rainfall precarious and the inhabitants desperately needy and illiterate. The district was classified as insecure in official accounts. Malaria, plague and other epidemics added to the misery of the people.

F. L. Brayne took charge of this district as Deputy Commissioner towards the end of 1920. He was struck by the miserable condition of the people, by their lack of health, primitive methods of agriculture, ignorance and squalor, wastefulness of their social customs and the depressed state of their women and took more than an 'official view' of the situation. He had an altruistic bent of mind and was unable to trudge along the beaten official track in the face of what he saw around him. Speaking about the mission of the Britisher in India, a former Viceroy is reported to have said, "Remember the Almighty has placed your hands on one of the greatest of his ploughs in whose furrow the nations of the future are germinating and taking shape. . . to feel that somewhere among these many millions, you have left a little justice or happiness or

prosperity, a sense of manliness or moral dignity, a spirit of patriotism, a dawn of intellectual enlightenment or a stirring of duty where it did not exist before—that is enough, that is the Englishman's justification in India.” And Brayne was imbued with such ideals as set forth in this passage. He lost no time in initiating an uplift campaign and this is generally known as the Gurgaon experiment. The object of the campaign as defined by Brayne himself was “to jerk the villager out of his old groove, convince that improvement is possible and kill his fatalism by demonstrating that climate, disease and pest can be successfully fought; further to laugh him out of his unhealthy and uneconomic customs and teach him better ways of living and farming.” Brayne in the first place wanted to create in the villager a desire for improvement and then launch his innovations. The main planks of his programme included: (1) Increase in the yield from agriculture. (2) Stopping of waste. (3) Improvement in the standard of health and (4) Improvement of home—women. Nine-tenths of the diseases in villages are due to dirt, said Brayne and he therefore started his efforts with a clean-up campaign. Cleanliness is the beginning of uplift, he said; cleanliness of person, of home, and of village means a conscious desire to rise to better things. The machinery employed to carry out the programme was manned mainly by voluntary organisations and paid village guides. The real brunt of the work fell on the guides and they constituted the main spring of the uplift campaign. The central idea behind the appointment of guides was to provide a single agency to whom the villager could turn for advice. The official practice which obtained in the district was that each department sent out its own officers and the multiplicity of these agents confused the illiterate cultivator

who preferred avoiding them to seeking their help or advice. The need for a unified agency which could be resorted to easily by the villager at any time without hardship or waste of time or money was felt once in Western countries also. There county representatives were appointed in some countries whose role was that of "friend, philosopher and guide" to the villager. Denmark, for example, appointed *Konsulent* and Belgium *Consulenten*, whose functions included tendering advice to villagers and assisting them in all matters affecting their welfare. Brayne's village guides were designed to fill a similar role. These guides resided within their respective villages and propagated the whole gospel of village regeneration. They attended to a variety of jobs, such as agriculture, public health, education propaganda, etc. There were in all 65 guides and some of them maintained notebooks for each village separately in which a page was devoted to each family. Incidentally, the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture observed that guidance was far more called for than anything else in village improvement. Brayne also started a school for rural economics with the object of bringing teaching into line with village life. The main aims of the school were (1) to teach the dignity of labour, and (2) to instil the ideal of service. There was also school of domestic economy for women. The entire machinery manned by right men in right places worked smoothly and efficiently. Both honorary and paid personnel collaborated with a missionary spirit, Brayne providing the ultimate driving force. Of this experiment the authors of the *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* say, "A still more ambitious experiment was made in the Gurgaon district by Mr. Brayne, the district officer. The basis of all this work is a double attack first on the inefficiency of village life which is

partly due to religious and traditional inhibitions and then on the waste of time due to purely seasonal nature of the ryots' work. The Gurgaon experiment aimed at the more scientific collection and use of manure, the re-division of holdings into a larger and better shaped blocks, the more economical use of money (reducing, for example, expenditure on weddings, funerals and jewellery), improvements in methods of keeping village cattle and prevention of breeding by immature bulls and heifers. Such practical reforms were combined with lessons on the more rational treatment of women and children and the need for cleanliness and better sanitation."

Propaganda played an important part in the whole work. The entire district was taken as the field of operation and it was deluged with every form of propaganda and publicity that "we could devise, adopt or afford." In a word propaganda more propaganda and still more propaganda was the maxim. It was carried out through a variety of media and these included broadcasts, magic lanterns, cinemas, cartoons, dramas, songs and glees, gramophone records, newspapers, coloured pictures and posters, printed materials like books, leaflets, pamphlets, hand-bills, models and miniatures, exhibition, shows and melas, competitions, public meetings, demonstrations, weeks school propaganda and model villages. These various media were fully exploited with remarkable effect. Attention was mainly concentrated on the major industry in the district, namely, agriculture. Some of the methods tried for effecting improvement included (1) Improvement in the methods of cultivation. (2) A better system of dry-farming. (3) Increase of the area under canal and well irrigation. (4) Afforestation. (5) Erection of bunds. (6) Development of cattle. (7) Development of pasture. (8) Development

of communications and (9) Encouragement of co-operation.

Though substantial results were achieved, the criticism had been made that many of them proved short-lived. It was primarily a one-man show and when Brayne, the brain behind the show, left the district, the enthusiasm of his lieutenants evaporated quickly. Other defects also had been pointed out. The village guides were inexperienced and without adequate training. Their educational qualification was negligible. They were raw youths and were not taken seriously by the villagers. Nor had they any official authority vested in them to ensure the respect and obedience of the people. Their selection was made hastily and many of them proved square men in round holes. The propaganda carried on was crude and was handled by people who had had no special training. A major defect pointed out is the fact that there was no definite plan of work and no permanent organisation to keep work going. But all these defects are nothing when compared to the self-denying way in which many of those engaged in the work carried out their duties and the matchless spirit of enthusiasm and service with which Brayne piloted the whole work. A similar experiment was carried out in Ferozepore of the same province though on a lesser scale. The main outlines of the scheme were a central committee to co-ordinate the activities of the various departments and honorary inspectors under them as men on the spot. *These experiments do not seem to have achieved any permanent result. It was said that little only survived of the work of Brayne except the Persian wheel and the manure pits and these only where conditions proved favourable. Nevertheless, the experiments aroused public interest in reconstruction work

throughout the country and withal showed the ways and means of improving rural welfare. The experiments had both strong points which deserve to be followed and the pitfalls which need to be avoided. The Gurgaon experiment serves something like an object lesson to Rural Reconstruction workers. Its wholesome influence transcended the boundaries of the Province and blazed the trail for similar activities in other parts of India. It revealed further that an official imbued with a real spirit of service can do useful work despite administrative or official limitations. Brayne is still a household word especially in the Punjab and the example he set more than a quarter of century ago is still an inspiration to many engaged in uplifting the underdog.

CHAPTER VI

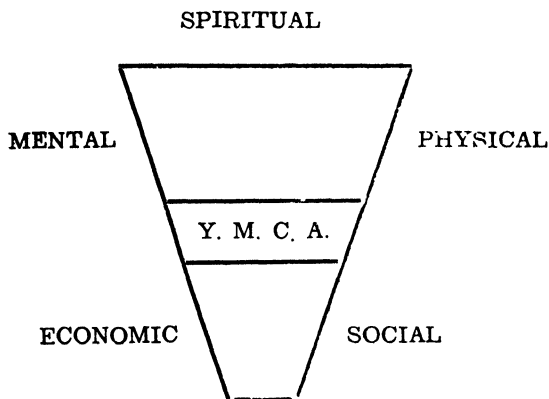
THE MARTANDAM EXAMPLE

An experiment in Rural Reconstruction carried out under Government auspices has been sketched in the preceding chapter. This chapter is concerned with a similar experiment under non-official guidance in another part of India. We may call it the Martandam example. A passing reference to it has been made in an earlier chapter. More details may be interesting to the reader.

Martandam is a rural area, 25 miles south of Trivandrum. It lies on the road between Trivandrum and Cape Comorin. This part of the country is different in physical features from the rest of the west coast, in that Martandam and its surroundings are arid in appearance with little of cultivation and more of palmyrah trees to relieve perhaps the monotony of the landscape. The area was inhabited by poor people who eked out a difficult livelihood. In the early decades of this century, the Y.M.C.A. under the guidance of Dr. Spencer Hatch selected Martandam as a centre for Rural Reconstruction work. A variety of considerations dictated this selection. The first was its accessibility. It was on the main road and was opened up on all sides by easy means of communication. It was also an outlet to many villages and thus occupied a central position. The backwardness of the area was another point. Work done in a prosperous area inhabited by rich people cannot appear impressive as work done in a backward area. Dr. Spencer Hatch who was the driving force behind the experiment, had had special training in Rural Reconstruction work in different parts of the

world and further possessed in an abundant measure those traits which made for successful selfless service. In parenthesis, it may be mentioned that much of the efficacy of Rural Reconstruction work as of many other things depends upon the example and inspiration provided by those at the top. The Punjab experiment corroborates this fact.

The main objectives of Rural Reconstruction in Martandam were five-fold, namely, mental, spiritual, physical, economic and social. A five-sided diagram as shown below was the emblem of the centre.



Obviously these objectives were not easy of attainment and if the Martandam centre was able to achieve phenomenal success, it was not a little due to the expert guidance of Dr. Spencer Hatch and the unremitting efforts of his lieutenants, who toiled on a mere pittance and sought joy only in the spending of themselves in the service of their poor brethren. This missionary spirit which animated the entire activities of Martandam was largely responsible for its success.

The key-note of the work was self-help and intimate expert counsel. These terms need explaining. Self-help has to be inculcated because spoon-feeding may actually do more harm than good by destroying the willingness of the villager to do things for himself. Intimate expert counsel is necessary because of the villagers' deep-rooted suspicion of strangers. Speaking generally, villagers as a class believe only those who have convinced them of their sincerity. To quote a recent author, "confidence is the secret of all success in the work of this nature. So many organisations fail in their mission, however noble or just their cause may be, because they never get close to the village people. Leaders and workers in these organisations assume an air of superiority with the village people and the simple village folk are afraid to near them. . . . Unless the welfare workers place themselves on a level with these simple village people, unless they sit down and discuss with them their problems in their humble cottages and accept their simple but genuine hospitality, they cannot expect to lift them to a higher level." Again, self-help will come into play only if the villagers are given a share of responsibility in the conduct of the various ameliorative activities. The Martandam centre took note of all these factors and planned the activities accordingly. Village associations were formed. Each Association had its Honorary Secretary who constituted its leading spirit. These associations assisted the implementation of the various innovations. Above these associations there was the Regional Development Association which concerned itself with the developmental activities of the entire region.

The chief power-house in the whole system was the demonstration centre at Martandam. It represented the nucleus of the various village developmental

activities and provided information, instruction and guidance. Fresh centres were opened as the area of operation extended. These latter centres were under the charge of rural secretaries. There were also hon. leaders from each village who assisted the rural secretaries. Thus the public had a large share in the day to day work while the paid personnel provided expert guidance.

The actual field work commenced with a rural survey of the particular locality selected for work. Materials gathered in these surveys were studied and findings framed. Action was then chalked out in the light of these findings. An illustration may perhaps clarify the point. Suppose in any particular locality, the survey disclosed the need for improved cattle. A plan of action was thereupon, drawn up. The first part of the plan consisted in a publicity campaign to educate the people on the necessity for improved cattle, how they would help agriculture, how they would lead to raising the standard of living, etc. All possible media of propaganda were utilised to this end, e.g., talks, lectures, demonstration, etc. The campaign generally resulted in mass enthusiasm being mobilised in the cause of cattle improvement. This psychological situation was then taken advantage of and immediately the next step launched. It consisted in showing how improvement could be effected. To this end, co-operative bull clubs and breeding associations were formed and these assisted the villagers financially and otherwise in securing an improvement in the breed. This is a rough picture of the *modus operandi*. The same process was repeated with or without variation in other fields of village welfare.

It is pertinent in this connection to discuss in some more detail the various media of propaganda

employed at Martandam, in view of the fact that propaganda proved a major contributory factor in the success of the campaign there. The chief media of propaganda used by the centre were (1) Rural dramas, (2) Rural exhibitions, (3) Inter-village competitions, and (4) Demonstrations.

Rural dramas.—The presentation of dramas is one of the oldest customs in India. The dramatic tendency is inherent in the Indian nature. Sanskrit dramas flourished during the first century of the Christian era. The drama was used as a means of entertainment, education and socialisation. By socialisation is meant the free mixing of the different communities. When different classes and communities of people meet together in an atmosphere of good spirit, social distinctions and cleavages are often forgotten and a sort of social solidarity tends to be established. The entertainment provided by dramas is particularly attractive against the sombre background of village life. From an instructional point of view, ideas presented through dramas make a deeper impression on the people. They can be easily pressed into service for popularising Rural Reconstruction programmes.

Rural exhibitions.—The village exhibition is another means of education. It gives an opportunity for the display of the achievements of the community and thereby conduces to increase pride and interest in local enterprise. Exhibition is a co-operative enterprise and the spirit of co-operation is also fostered. Observes, Dr. Spencer Hatch “the rural exhibition is one of the indispensable means by which a village or area may promote its social and economic life.”

Inter-village competitions.—Competition is calculated to promote efficiency. Competition among producers leads to articles of quality being produced. Wholesome competition between villages calls forth a spirit of emulation and this ultimately redounds to the betterment of the villages. In Martandam prizes were awarded to the villages which came out best.

Demonstrations.—Demonstrations are an effective method for effecting rural improvement. The bulk of the villagers are illiterate and suspicious. They are difficult to be convinced. But they cannot help being convinced when they actually see a demonstration. Demonstrations have an air of reality about them. It is the easiest and simplest method of carrying conviction.

Now about the main features of the uplift campaign.

1. *Spirituality.*—This does not mean that the promoters of the centre propagated the tenets of the Christian religion. What they sought to achieve was to create respect in each individual for his own religion. No propaganda in favour of any particular religion was carried on.

2. *Socialisation.*—One meaning of this has been given already. According to another meaning, socialisation consisted in the whole body of the villages standing as one man behind the uplift campaign. Rural Reconstruction cannot succeed where the undivided co-operation of the entire community is not forthcoming. Such co-operation must be from all irrespective of social or economic distinctions. The promoters of the Martandam centre spared no pains to win such co-operation.

3. *The comprehensiveness of the programme.* Rural life has many facets and its general improvement necessarily involves improvement in all the facets almost simultaneously. The programme implemented by the Centre covered all the aspects of rural life. It also reached down to the lowest strata of the village and never recognised any distinction between man and man, one caste or another or one community or another.

It was only to be expected that the work carried on in such a planned and thorough fashion yielded magnificent results. A desperately backward area was as it were resurrected into new life brimful with vigour and energy. Agriculture became remunerative, cottage industries developed and the principle of co-operation struck deep roots among the villagers. The co-operative sense engendered a team spirit among the people and made them methodical, businesslike and definite. Co-operative Panchayats were organised in some villages as a check on litigation. Nutritional surveys were conducted and cleaner living was encouraged.

Martandam thus gave a valuable lead in Rural Reconstruction work in this country and several parts of India were not slow to follow up the trail. Baroda, Cochin, Pudukottah, Hyderabad—to mention a few—received inspiration from the centre and launched rural uplift campaigns. The Centre also provided training for rural workers. They conducted summer classes and refresher courses and these proved extremely useful.

To recapitulate, the success of the Martandam Centre was due to (1) the special training and efficiency of the entire personnel, (2) their enthusiasm, zeal and earnestness, (3) a co-ordinated plan of action

and (4) the co-operation of the entire community mobilised through an active propaganda campaign.

Strickland has attempted a critical appreciation of the Martandam experiment. This may be extracted *in extenso* as showing the distinctive merits of the experiment. He observes: "Four points emerge from the plan of the Martandam Rural Development Association.

"The attack on the rural problem is made all along the line. It would be unjust to regard as valueless those partial treatments of rural poverty and backwardness which are adopted by some agricultural experts, credit co-operators, doctors, school masters or others. They are not valueless, but half their potential value is lost through the narrowness of their front. A small farmer cannot and will not accept new seed, improved implements or methods of cultivation, or buy creed and maintain better livestock so long as he is indebted, illiterate or sick through malaria or hookworm. He will not collaborate loyally with his fellows and impose on himself the discomforts of co-operative credit such as limitation of expenditure on ceremonies and publicity in respect of loans, so long as in addition to being illiterate and sick, he is unable to extract from his land through faulty agriculture more than the barest subsistence. Nor will he open his mind to adult education or send his children to school regularly for at least six years if he is sick, indebted and poor; on a low scale of living the ignorant man fares as well as the wise. Medical and hygienic precautions, again seem to him weird if not impious ideas in defiance of the will of heaven so long as he is dulled by the burden of debt, half-starved and ignorant. Consequently the remedy—not a simple remedy—for the social evils

of India is to combine an increase of income and relief from old debt with an opening of his mind in youth and in mature age and with a release from stomachaches, headaches and lassitude. All the evils which beset the poor man in India, and in lesser degree also the more prosperous man, must be dealt with at the same time, his friends uniting in a concerted effort to show him that his life as a whole even on the modest plane of an artisan, labourer or peasant-farmer might be something different from and better than that which it now is. Accounts of other countries may give him courage, successful experiments in communal improvement in India will convince him that a change is possible. Then he will believe, and begin to move his own hands and feet for himself. And the same is true of his wife.

Now one great virtue of the Martandam plan is that it proceeds on a broad front or to change the metaphor, pierces the vicious circle in which thousands of Indian peasants and labourers revolve at a number of different points on the circumference. While ploughs and poultry add to the villages' income, co-operative credit and marketing reduce his losses; literacy followed by libraries and craft schools fits him to seize new opportunities; bored hole latrines, ventilators, windows and quinine render him and his wife and children stronger to do their business.

The agents and propagandists of rural development are trained for their task. This has been a comparatively rare feature of social welfare work in India in the past; devoted men have plunged into a sea of difficulties without preparation and have learned only by painful experience how to surmount them. It should be remembered that in such cases, the pain of the experience is not confined to the welfare

worker, but is shared by those whom he is trying to help. Unfortunately a course of all-round training for such persons is not easily obtained in India. . . . Martandam and Ramnathapuram have now for some years conducted rural courses for five or six weeks. . . They are practical rather than theoretical and a considerably longer period of study is really required by those who are to carry responsibility in any social welfare scheme; but the principle of employing trained men and women for social welfare is recognised and applied in these Y.M.C.A. centres and is of fundamental importance.

In the third place, welfare work, in order to be worth doing should be not only broadly conceived, not only carried out by trained personnel who will avoid the blunders committed by untrained organisers all over the world, but should also aim at making its results permanent. Only too often enthusiastic individuals after attaining results which appeared splendid have lost their zeal or been removed from the scene, and it has then become plain that the whole achievement depended on their presence and collapses in their absence. Since therefore the Indian peasant or labourer cannot in a few years, probably cannot in a single generation, transform his outlook and his habits, social welfare work, must in the interval be promoted and sustained by an institution which is itself permanent. It must not depend on individuals who may very shortly disappear. The only permanent bodies which can fulfil this function are (1) Government and (2) Voluntary Associations having a stable existence and an adequate income to pay their staff, and a continuous policy. In the past the majority of the latter have been Christians, but there is no reason why non-Christian societies such as. . . .

or village industries associations should not be equally successful. The two types of agency—Government and voluntary societies—will effect most if they remain in touch with one another and work as allies. Government departments are permanent, but cannot always reach the people; voluntary societies reach the people but lack resources or knowledge which Governments can supply. The Y. M. C. A., moreover, in its “centres”, relies on local committees of the people in order to create and foster a real demand for social changes which will be permanent because the people make them their own. . . .the Martandam Plan stands out as an example of welfare work so steady and so well co-ordinated with official effort that it should be studied and imitated wherever possible in India.

“ Lastly the cost is low and while high grade experiments such as the Rockfeller Health Units may well be worth while on account of the special information derived from them, India cannot afford, nor is it intended to multiply them throughout the country. Martandam and the other centres avoid expensive buildings and plant—there is the income from handicrafts and some subscriptions; but the bulk of the work in the villages themselves is carried on by local honorary people, many of them modest in education and status. This is what India can afford; and provided that honorary welfare workers are themselves trained to a certain point and are guided by persons, official or non-official, of higher training, the plan is capable of indefinite extension at a relatively small cost.”

The ideas contained in the above extract have been stressed in the course of this book, but all the same the extract is relevant as showing the views of

one who has for years together made a special study of rural problems in this country and who did not spare any effort to mobilise public interest for the uplift of the inarticulate section of Indian humanity. Though British rule as a whole was not fruitful except in sporadic efforts now and then, it cannot be gainsaid that individual British officials here and there have interested themselves in the massive problem of rural uplift and have endeavoured to illumine the path with the light of their practical experience. Such experiences, no doubt, provide a considerable measure of guidance in a difficult and complicated field of work.

CHAPTER VII

SRINIKETAN

Notice has been taken in a previous chapter of the Rural Reconstruction experiment that was carried on in the Punjab under Government auspices. The Y.M.C.A. experiment in Martandam has also been briefly noticed. It is proposed to deal in this chapter with the experiment that was carried on in Sriniketan under the guidance of the Poet Rabindranath Tagore. It is needless to emphasise that the poet was one of the greatest champions of the rural folk and ranks along with Mahatmaji for his profound concern for the welfare of the rural masses. He realised more vividly than many of his contemporaries that the future of this land depended on the well-being of the rural folk and as the Government of the day could not be easily persuaded to devote adequate attention to this matter, he wanted to make a start as much to set an example as to provide the necessary leaven which in process of time would spread ultimately over the whole country. The outcome was the establishment of the rural centre at Sriniketan.

Sriniketan is situated in the Bengal Province. The locality was particularly inhospitable. The soil was extremely poor and cultivation sparse. Enough food-crops could not be grown in the area, the cultivable land being mere patches here and there. There was less of grazing ground and the cattle was thin and emaciated. Various trades and crafts which once flourished almost disappeared with the advent of machine-made goods from the West. In the wake of the decay of village industries and the barrenness of the soil came poverty and with poverty came the

physical deterioration of the people. Their power of resistance to disease became impaired and malaria, cholera and other diseases periodically took heavy toll. Village Panchayats had already gone out of existence and the complex system of law courts which replaced them was calculated to foment litigation. Litigation, by and by, proved a national sport as in the rest of India.

The ground was thus particularly suitable for village reconstruction experiment and the Institute of Rural Reconstruction was inaugurated about 1922. The poet had the support of many Europeans in this venture and their assistance in the shape of men and money contributed not a little to the exemplary work that was carried on there. The aims of the Institute were briefly as follows:

- (1) To take a real interest in village welfare.
- (2) To study rural problems and translate the conclusions to action.
- (3) To help the villagers to develop their resources by (a) teaching them better methods of cultivation, (b) improvement of live-stock, (c) encouragement of cottage industries and (d) inculcation of the benefits of co-operation.
- (4) To improve village sanitation and to make villagers sanitary-conscious.
- (5) To work out practically an all-round system of elementary education in the villages based on the scout ideal.
- (6) To encourage a spirit of service.
- and (7) To train students and leaders in rural matters.

“The primary condition of a successful rural development movement,” says Dr. Bhagat, “is to create a spirit of self-help among rural population itself. No permanent improvement will be possible without the creation of this spirit. We are apt to concentrate on one aspect or other of the problem and cultivate a

habit of thought which disables us from a broad and comprehensive view. The correct solution of the difficulties of the rural population is impossible without such a comprehensive view. The whole life of the villager is one complex inter-related fact and it will not be improved without an improvement in the whole of it. The central fact of village life is the villager himself. Our first aim has therefore to be to instil in him, the right spirit, the habit and ambition to live a better life and an assurance that such a better life is his birth right." And Sriniketan strove to translate these facts into practice.

The Institute generally started its work with rural surveys which resulted in the formulation of definite programmes for implementation according to schedule. In the economic field, attention was bestowed on the improvement of agriculture, encouragement of fruit and vegetable growing and the promotion of dairy industry. Cattle-breeding is the foundation of Indian agriculture and systematic efforts were made to improve live-stock. Similarly it was realised that co-operation was the key-note of rural progress and propaganda on a vigorous scale was conducted to popularise its principles. Cottage Industries also received attention. Such of those industries as had had once flourished in that area were given special attention. These included tannery, pottery, carpentry, lacquer industry, etc. There was a mechanical shop attached to the Institute and its purpose was to repair agricultural implements and in course of time to manufacture them.

On the social front, the Village Welfare Department did active work. The insanitary condition of the villages and the number of diseases they breed are matters of common knowledge. "Disease causes

poverty and poverty causes disease. More than 5 million of people suffer the death penalty every year from preventable diseases. Many days of work are lost yearly by each worker and the average efficiency of each worker is diminished by about 20 to 30 per cent from the combined effects of disease and malnutrition." The Village Welfare Department took cognisance of this fact and formulated a programme of health and sanitation in the surrounding villages. The Institute had a well-qualified medical staff as well as a dispensary attached to it. In addition to their medical work they organised co-operative health societies to promote village health and sanitation. Workers of the Institute went out periodically and gave lantern lectures on malaria and other preventable diseases.

The educational activities of the Institute formed the *piece de resistance* on the social front. A number of night schools were run and many of these were under the care of young volunteers interested in social work. Besides the 3 R's, the inmates were taught simple weaving, carpet and tape-making and similar other industries. The education of women and girls also formed an important part of the programme. The girls were given instructions in cooking, embroidery work, needle work in addition to the 3 R's. Outdoor games for girls were also provided. The circulating library of the Institute was also open to them. Incidentally, the library proved very useful and was extensively used by villagers. Branches of the library were opened in out-lying villages as the activities expanded. The Welfare Department conducted training camps periodically for village

leaders, volunteers and scouts. The general programme of the camps included instructions in handicrafts, agriculture, scouting, co-operation, sanitation, hygiene and First Aid. Recreation in the shape of dramas, games, songs and story-telling formed an important feature of the camp programmes.

The Village Welfare Department also acted as the extension department of the Institute carrying all the activities into the villages and co-ordinating the work of the different departments in the field. The department was the connecting link between the Institute and the villages and between the different departments of the Institute itself.

Vocational education was also given at the Institute and this proved very popular. Those who attended included teachers, workers from social service organisations and artisans from villages.

Thus, the activities of the Institute were many-sided and despite handicaps, it provided valuable guidance to those interested in rural uplift showing at the same time what private organisations destitute of the influence and resources of the Government could do in the field of village uplift.

In conclusion, two or three points of special interest about the Institute may be emphasised. It laid special stress on social and economic surveys in rural areas. Elsewhere in this book the vital role of such surveys in the field of village uplift is emphasised. In most parts of the world, says a writer, "village communities are homogeneous; religious beliefs make no difference in the friendship of the people. When there are differences they form no barrier to social intercourse or to welfare service. In India, on the other hand, almost every village presents a different problem in the matter of religion. One village may be purely

Hindu with nearly all the castes represented in it; another may be purely Muhammadan; another may be a Hindu village with the Brahmins predominating. In this way we can find all kinds of variations and accordingly different problems have to be attacked in different ways. These rural surveys therefore are very necessary to carry out the work in a systematic and scientific manner." The next point of importance about the Institute is that few other Rural Reconstruction centres have employed so successfully the services of scouts in village uplift work. It was felt that lasting work would be possible in villages if the village boys could be made to interest themselves in the welfare of their own village. This is the key to the introduction of the Scout movement by the Institute. The experiment proved an astonishing success and the scouts became an asset to welfare work in villages. They kept order during fairs and festivals and saw to it that the people observed the laws of sanitation. During times of epidemics, they assisted the health or medical staff in fighting the menace and on occasions of public calamity they spared no pains to prove their mettle. When one reads what the scouts did in villages in Bengal one is reminded of the admirable work which village guards did during war-time in Madras under what was known as the Village Security Scheme. Under this scheme there were 20 guards in each selected village and they had a Leader. Above him there was the Security Instructor who gave the guards physical training and was responsible for keeping the squad up to the mark. On the top there were Security supervisors who were in charge of definite regions. The village guards assisted the Government servants in the various departments in the discharge of their duties as well as played the role of "friend philosopher and guide" to the villagers as

a whole. The Police Officer sought their help in tracking down a criminal, the revenue people for peacefully collecting the revenue, the health official to enforce the rules of sanitation and hygiene and the villagers as a whole in the matter of getting specific grievances redressed. Thus they proved very popular though they functioned under an alien Government. The fact needs to be emphasised in this connection, that in the economic and social advancement of this country, the youth have a definite role to play and any agency which is primarily concerned with the welfare of the rural folk has to tap tactfully the vast reservoir of youthful energy.

The next remarkable point about Sriniketan is the accent they laid on women's education. On this point, one author says, "It is no exaggeration to say that the key-note to India's progress lies in the education of her women. The social evils, caste distinctions, early marriages, non-marriage of widows and numerous other customs are in the way of progress. The complete ignorance of Indian women in regard to hygiene, care of infants and birth-control is another factor which is not only responsible for the high infant mortality, but also for the loss of health of both adults and children. The conservatism of Indian women in matters of religion which borders on superstition is again responsible for tremendous economic waste."

"All these evils, insanitary living and religious superstitions are due to ignorance and the one and only way to progress lies in the education of women and girls and not until they are educated, can we hope for any effective change in the moral and material progress of the country."

Adult education was another major plank in the programme of Sriniketan. Says Clauston: "The type

of education given in village schools is too literary and tends to give the school boy a bias against manual labour in any shape or form. He is taught words, words, words; the education he gets exercises his memory but fails very largely to interest him in the many attractions of the countryside. Following the example of the west there is a garden attached to some of the schools; but this garden is maintained for ornamental rather than for educative and practical purposes. The boys of the higher castes are prejudiced against gardening as it involves what they regard as 'coolie' work. Their parents too discourage them from performing tasks which are not in keeping with the dignity:"

"Froebel, the mystic and disciple of Pestalozzi, held that a child should be a pupil of nature and learn by DOING things. In the school he should have his own plot and cultivate it with his own hands. A century or so later Spencer, another great educationist, stressed the importance of encouraging self-activity in the child and an interest in natural things. He should be allowed to do things, because by doing things he acquired manual skill and quickness of eye and became more practical and resourceful. . . ." The charge is a familiar one that education under British rule did not give due importance to the social side of life. It has been too much individualistic, too much for individual advancement and for competition of one person against the other and of one society against another. The purpose of education, it is pointed out, should be to treat the development of the individual as a means to the development of the society. The adult education scheme sponsored at Sriniketan sought to achieve this end. In ancient India, there were several sources for adult education and these included

village bards or minstrels, story-tellers, religious operas and dramas. Most of these agencies are no longer active and perhaps this is the reason why in modern India the lack of literacy is widespread. Sriniketan however made the best of a bad situation. It utilised weekly exhibitions, weekly markets and fairs for promoting adult education.

The stress laid by Sriniketan on Village Community Centres has to be taken note of though in the quite recent past there has been a widespread recognition of the need for a common centre in the village for social and religious purposes. It is an acknowledged fact that there is no club life in village though man is or has often been described as a social animal. For the low caste people, the only meeting place in the village is the toddy shop. The lack of a forum for people of all classes and castes to meet both in a serious and lighter vein is a fundamental drawback of rural life in this country. Hence the institute encouraged the formation of community centres in villages where both young and old could meet both for business and pleasure. It may be recalled in this connection that the Madras Government sought to establish similar centres as part of their rural uplift programme just after the close of the World War. These centres were called Hope Cultural centres after the then Governor of the Province, Arthur Hope. The purposes of these centres were comprehensive, but political changes intervening the matter was not pursued in the same shape.

The three experiments in rural uplift sketched in this book were carried out in three different parts of the country. They serve more or less as object lessons and provide helpful guidance in the complex task of rural rehabilitation.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME GENERAL POSTULATES

..“The cities are capable of taking care of themselves. It is the villages we have to turn to. We have to disabuse them of their prejudices, their superstitions, their narrow outlook and we can do so in no other manner than that of staying amongst them and sharing their joys and sorrows and spreading education and intelligent information amongst them.

My idea of village swaraj is that of a complete republic independent of its neighbours for its vital wants and yet inter-dependent in many others in which dependence is a necessity; thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for its adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it would grow useful money crops but excluding ganja, tobacco, opium and the like.

The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own water works ensuring clean water-supply. This can be done through controlled wells and tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. These will be no castes as we have today with their graded untouchability.

I hate privilege and monopoly. Whatever cannot be shared with the masses is taboo for me.

MAHATMAJI

From the picture given in Chapter III of the rural conditions in modern India, there is no disputing the necessity for a well-planned campaign in village uplift. With the villages as they are, there is no hope for the common man to enjoy the fruits of political independence which the country has achieved at such a heavy cost. It has been said that the primary task of the Government is to realise the content of political independence for the masses. One of the obvious ways of doing this is to improve the condition of the villages where the masses live. It is therefore a matter for satisfaction that the Governments both Central and Provincial have realised this fact and have already cut new grounds in the field of village reconstruction. It may not be out of place therefore to stress some broad points relevant in the process of Rural Reconstruction.

At the outset it may be stated that Rural Reconstruction is rather a slow process. It is not a field in which results can be obtained overnight. The point needs to be especially stressed because oftentimes the criticism has been made that the progress of uplift work now under way in the various parts of the country is slow. It has to be recognised that the task of transforming stagnant villages steeped in squalor and ignorance into prosperous autonomous little republics is not an easy one and cannot be achieved with spectacular quickness. The Simon Commission observed "Any quickening of the general political judgment, any widening of the rural horizons beyond the traditional and engrossing interest of the weather and water, crops and cattle with the round of festivals and fairs and family ceremonies and the dread of famine or flood—any change from these immemorial pre-occupations of the average villager is bound to come very slowly indeed." Our object must

not be quick results. That way lies disappointment. "Only by a long process of education can the mass of the middle and small peasantry be drawn into sympathetic and collective effort for improving conditions of life" is the view of a Communist Minister of Yugoslavia as quoted by Darling. He continues, "many chafe at the meagre results achieved in India during the last 30 years in terms of the money expended and some looking to what Russia has done would apply the stick. Not so the Communist Minister just quoted. The most important thing, he said, is that all improvements should be carried out with the will and common effort of the peasant." Strickland observes, "The experience of other countries, European and Oriental, indicates that little lasting effect can be produced in less than a generation." So one has to allow a fair margin of time before assessing the results of Rural Reconstruction in any area. This does not, however, mean that no efforts should be made to quicken the pace of progress. The work is truly a herculean one and needs herculean efforts to produce even the smallest perceptible results.

The next point is that reconstruction has to be carried out according to a plan with proper co-ordination. The needs and requirements in each area varies and it is important that a reconstruction programme suited to the actual needs of and circumstances of each area is prepared at the outset as a sort of ground-work. The experience of other countries also emphasises this point. In Denmark, Ireland and elsewhere, rural reforms were carried out haphazard and consequently the results were not commensurate with the labour expended. Nearer home, one of the factors that adversely affected reconstruction work in the Punjab was the absence of a well-thoughtout and comprehensive plan. The same defect marked the sporadic

reconstruction activities during the British period. Dr. Spencer Hatch may be quoted on this aspect of the matter. "We need to get away from the lamentable fragmentation of efforts which has resulted in regrettably small result from the expenditure of public funds, depriving the development movement of its effectiveness. The number of minor officials who deal with his problems, the villager cannot understand and often does not trust. They are more likely to exasperate than to awaken him from his present attitude of indifference to progress. Representing different departments with little co-operation between them and no connected plan of work, one visitor collects revenue, one advocates co-operative credit and another improved seed and new implements, another comes to inoculate cattle, another to vaccinate children, another deals with sanitation and another inspects the village school." It may be argued that there is no possibility of concentrating the work of all these departments in one. But it is possible to have a man on the spot to co-ordinate the activities of the various departments with the object of producing maximum results with minimum labour.

For another fact, reconstruction work should not be confined to one single sector of village life. As Dr. Spencer Hatch has said, the Indian villager needs being helped on all fronts if he is to be really benefited. Similarly the authors of the "Rural Problem" have emphasised that the rural problem should be attacked as a whole and at all points simultaneously. Brayne has repeatedly emphasised that village life should be taken as a whole for uplift work. Similarly Prem Chand Lal says, "The problem of the Indian village is not so much to rebuild the trumble-down houses and mud-huts as it is to revive and develop.

the village life as a whole in all its aspects—socially, culturally and economically, and from the point of view of sanitation and health.” A political writer observes, “Each village should grow into a small republic and people made aware of their civic duties and responsibilities. A long period of slavery has bred in us a tendency to lean on doubtful props. We have thus got into the habit of always looking to the Government for every little thing, the forces of self-help having become almost paralysed. This lethargy has to be overcome and replaced by the dynamics of self-generation. An all-round programme of activity of community reconstruction must be fostered, no detail being too small to be overlooked. Thus experiments in agricultural improvements must go hand in hand with prohibition and simpler marriages, fostering of cottage industries with running of schools and dispensaries, schemes in road construction and small Irrigation Projects to be initiated along with sport clubs and cultural squads. Village sanitation must be enforced together with libraries and museums. Each community must learn to govern itself, settle its disputes, keep its own law and order, regulate its social conventions, modes of human relationship and shoulder its public responsibilities through creation of elected Panchayats wielding power through democratic usages. It is through what Gandhi has called Samagra Grama Seva, that Ram Rajya can be evolved out of the genius and creative strength of the people made self-reliant, proud of their vitality and happy in their consciousness of constructive power exercised from day to day in their little lives. The constructive spirit must be one of revolutionary fervour, strength and drive to bring about the necessary

transformation in our entire national structure. Constructive work should not be a sectarian cult or a camouflage for power politics, but rather a weapon for bringing about the vast and sweeping changes, our society to-day calls for."

"The programme is not exhaustive, but illustrative of the possibilities and the pattern to be followed in the main. It will need amplification and adaptation to local conditions as also to objective situations. Unimaginative rigidity in regard to methods of work serves to destroy rather than to create and strengthen the content. While our principles remain our bed-rock, mode of achievement should be more fluid for, with a proper approach mass power can be generated through seemingly unimportant factors."

This quotation stresses a number of facts relevant to Rural Reconstruction. The need for the simultaneous tackling of the various problems of Rural Reconstruction has been stressed by others also. Says a writer on Rural Uplift, "Permanent results can be obtained only by concerted efforts at village uplift—economic, social, and intellectual. This would mean providing clean villages, clean drinking water, adequate medical relief, agencies to combat infectious diseases, improved methods of agriculture, cottage industries to improve the economic condition of the people by keeping them profitably occupied during the three or four months of their enforced idleness every year, compulsory primary education, lessons to the villagers regarding the dignity of labour, measures to kill their fatalism by demonstrating that diseases and pestilences can be successfully overcome, improvement in the status of women and measures to make villagers give up all their unhealthy, religion-ridden and uneconomic customs". Yet another writer also

speaks more or less to the same effect. "In fact" he says, "poverty, low standard of living, improvident expenditure, debt and disease—all these react upon one another and they are all inextricably intertwined. This large vicious circle must be broken at various points and a simultaneous advance in many directions must be attempted."

"The problems of Rural Reconstruction," says Prem Chanda Lal, "are manifold and closely related one arising from the other; therefore they have to be attacked together. In trying to solve the health problems, one runs into the economic problems; and in trying to solve the economic problems, one becomes involved in educational problems. Social and religious problems arise in every situation. All these problems are so closely related that it is not possible to deal with them separately and in isolation." To quote from a pamphlet issued by the United Nations Organisations, "... it is clear that the conditions affecting rural welfare are a complex of forces, some of them material, some non-material, which combine to influence states of mind that are themselves far from simple. The various factors do not impinge on happiness like separate bullets, but rather in the manner of notes combined into music the effect of which is not simply that of a number of separate sounds, but of a blending in sequences." Rural welfare, emphasises the pamphlet, is an integrated problem rather than a series of parallel phenomena. In the past, failure to recognise this fact constituted one of the major factors for the failure of reconstruction effort in this country. Of course the administrative set up was such that it was not easy to proceed simultaneously on all fronts. Dr. Spencer Hatch observes that the six sq. yards of the Indian

villager's hut are looked by six different departments at six different times of the year; one vaccinated his children, the other inoculated his cattle, the third offered to supply iron ploughs, manure and seeds, etc., while the primary needs, such as drinking water, wells, village road and village school, remained unattended to. Dr. P. Sitaramayya is equally explicit, in the course of his Presidential Address at the 55th session of the Indian National Congress. "Thus the Health Inspector told the villagers that manure heaps are deleterious to their health as manures breed flies and flies convey disease germs from filth to food. When the Agricultural Officer next visited the village he told them that manure is valuable to their lands and must be carefully preserved." The upshot is that the villager is left confused and prefers to take his own line. The excessive compartmentalisation of village life and the multiplicity of officers to look after each sector is one of the regrettable developments especially in the latter days of the British rule. The question of co-ordination never arose in ancient India when the village Panchayat as a body was in entire charge of all the aspects of village life. It also does not seem to have presented insuperable difficulties in the early days of British rule, when the collector, as the head of the district, was not merely the head of the revenue department but the supreme ruler of the entire district. He had considerable powers of interference with the other departments in the district. The machinery was more or less centralised in him and with the proper will, he was able to get through any kind of work without let or hindrance. When benevolent collectors presided over the destinies of a district, they were able to turn out considerable ameliorative work. Roads were formed, wells sunk, tanks improved, and a host of similar

other measures carried through on the spot supported by the co-operation of the people. There were no local parties with conflicting interests to put hurdles in the way. The spirit of communalism was not such a menace as it proved later on. The Collector was not hampered by any artificial obstacles and carried on his beneficent activities like the head of a joint Hindu family of old. He took only days to do things which later on took months mainly because there was vested in him enough authority which could withstand the encroachments of other departments. Times have changed since. In later times if any solid work had to be done in a village, the representatives of the various departments had to come together which did not prove an easy affair. Even if they came together each department was tempted to stand on its own prestige and proceeded on its own lines. Departmentalism was one of the greatest weakness of bureaucracy. "Departmentalism", Lord Curzon wrote, "is not a moral delinquency. It is an intellectual hiatus—the complete absence of thought or apprehension of anything outside the purely departmental aspects of the matter under consideration." In the Punjab, if in spite of this handicap some work was done, it was due to the centralising factor provided by Brayne.

Emphasis has next to be laid on the personnel selected for uplift work. The experiences in the Punjab and Martandam have shown that the right type of people counts for much in the success of reconstruction work. Nevertheless, the misconception is abroad that anybody can be drafted to Rural Reconstruction work and that one is as good as another. On this point, a recent writer observes, "It is a grave mistake to regard Rural Reconstruction work as something

which any man can do without any specialised knowledge or training. To treat it like this is to betray one's ignorance, for there is no subject which is not covered by it. It embraces agriculture and horticulture, animal husbandry, co-operation and education, engineering and medical science, social science, knowledge of the various industries and so forth. Village uplift work is a herculean task requiring the best of intellect and energy; the whole economic, cultural and social life of the village has to be evolved." Dr. Spencer Hatch has pointed out certain drawbacks as pertaining to uplift personnel. The first is a lack of scientific mind for the worker. The worker does not take pains to understand things in the true perspective. Another drawback is the lack of business attitude in work. There is a tendency for workers to take things leisurely. It is said that "tomorrow" is a very common word in the village meaning not the next day but some future day. The tendency to procrastination is common. The third drawback has been described as the toleration of the second rate. This means the employment of second rate or third rate persons for Rural Reconstruction work. These apart, another danger to be guarded against is the employment of people without rural background. Villagers want only a brother toiler to advise him. He has no faith in urban folk and may look on them with suspicion. He needs to be convinced that there is an identity of interest between him and the worker. The words of Hailey, an ex-Governor of the Punjab quoted already bears repetition. "He (the villager) will not be persuaded by those whom he has not learned to trust and he will not trust those who do not seem prepared to put aside all other claims and considerations in order to live with him learn his troubles and support him through them."

Rural workers have sometimes been described as rural missionaries. This description puts in a nutshell the type of people required for rural uplift work.

It is also necessary to enlist the services of non-official organisations and honorary workers. Says an author "We lay special emphasis on voluntary organisation, as spoon feeding never raises the standard of national character. It may not be out of place to mention that the entire educational and co-operative system in Denmark is the outcome of private efforts. The co-operative system in Germany similarly was started by a non-official and for a number of years developed by private enterprise." The Government cannot alone do much. The massive task need more than one agent to assist in the task. Where the problem of 700,000 villages are concerned, the Government may find it quite beyond their resources to provide the entire machinery and personnel required. "Village uplift means work for all. But one cannot do all. Those who cannot must help in whatever other ways they can. We want lecturers, magic lanterns and slides, cinema films and projectors. We want writers of books and stories, poems and plays, painters of pictures and singers of songs. We want all the arts of the teacher and the propagandist to spread the good news in the villages. We want people to help at fairs and melas both to teach the people and to see to their comforts and convenience. We want mechanics and inventors to devise and try out all sorts of new kinds of implements that will help the villager in his farming and his industries and help his wife in her domestic work. We want ladies to help with baby clinics and women's institutes to provide weekly lectures, to visit schools, where girls are reading and to assist in all the

many other ways of improving and brightening the lives of our village women. We want books written for boys and girls. We want literature, newspapers and periodicals and books to instruct the villager and brighten his leisure time. We want people to train boy scouts as the boy scout will always be our best friend and ally. Finally and most important of all we want wireless broadcasting to fill the long village evenings with news, instructions, and healthy amusement. There is no end of the work we can all of us do, if our hearts are set upon helping our fellow people to gladden their lives." One writer has listed some of the ways in which honorary or amateur workers can assist Rural Reconstruction work. These are: (1) Distribution of literature, (2) Organisation of meetings to listen to Government and other specialists, (3) Dispensing of medicine and simple other medical treatment, (4) Digging of borehole latrines, (5) Provision of masonry walls for wells, (6) Games for children and adults, (7) Evening classes and other activities for adults, (8) Donation of books and starting of village libraries, (9) Donation of old magazines or newspapers and encouragement of villagers to subscribe to one magazine or newspaper at least, (10) Scouting and girl guides work, (11) Encouragement of gardening by provision of seeds, expert advice and market for surplus produce, (12) Encouragement of livestock rearing, (13) Encouragement of co-operative enterprise and (14) Improvement of village roads. Speaking on this aspect of the subject, Sir George Schuster, an ex-Finance Member of the Government of India, observes, "It may require thousands of well-trained men. It must be costly. How is the burden of finance to be borne—it must be carried on as a crusade by men who will be satisfied to live simply and to get their reward mainly in the satisfaction of

doing service. . . of course if it were necessary to create a great administrative service of the regular Government pattern—then indeed the money cost may prove overwhelming. But I visualise something quite different—something like a wide national service with every man who passes through an Indian University bound as part of his university studies to acquire the knowledge necessary to impart suitable village education and an obligation after taking his degree to serve for two or perhaps three years as a rural teacher. In many other countries, a period of two years' compulsory military service has been accepted without question; let it be hoped that India may escape the need for such a universal burden and may adopt instead for all who do not join the armed forces national service in an army of a different kind, an army enlisted to fight ignorance, apathy, improvidence, disease and other evils." All the world over it is recognised that for the highest welfare of the community, there must be a fair percentage of people willing to sacrifice themselves for commonweal, and where the required number of people are not forthcoming, rural uplift is bound to remain a distant dream. The Government's role in the sphere of rural uplift is drastically circumscribed. Says Brayne, "The most Government can do is to create conditions in which the villager can utilise his money and labour to the best advantage." It has also to be stressed in this connection that in the recruitment of personnel, the least tinge of compulsion has to be avoided. The essence of social service according to Thiruvalluvar is in the mind, "Man is a social being; he alone lives who functions as a social co-operator; he who does not recognise this duty is counted as dead."

A grave omission in rural uplift work in the past has been the exclusion of women workers. Women

can undoubtedly play a very useful part in uplift work. By temperament and disposition they are particularly fitted to do social service. Village uplift also includes the interests of the womenfolk who constitute roughly half the population. It is a truism that no community can progress if its womenfolk are backward. Says Plato, "No nation can progress when half of its population is sunk in ignorance." Charles Fourier, the great French Idealist, observes, "We could judge the civilisation of a country by the social and political position of its women." In village uplift it has been said that there can never be any real improvement until the housewife knows what should be done to make home and village life happier. Says Strickland, "the men of the village cannot be reformed without the women who govern them. Another author lays stress not only on the participation of women in uplift work, but on the promotion of a sound system of primary education for girls as a long range measure in rural welfare. He says, "No more potent instrument lies to hand for promoting rural development than a bold, determined, persistent drive towards the goal of a sound primary education for the girlhood." It has been rightly said that the housewife is responsible for nine-tenths of village life. One of the strongest points of the Punjab experiment was the part played by women and the improvement that came to pass as a result in the field of women's welfare. It may be recalled that Brayne started a school for training women and one of the highlights of his achievements was that within a period of less than two years, 1,500 girls had been sent to school. According to Spencer Hatch at least 50 per cent of the rural workers must be women. Observes Darling, "Some countries have been saved by men, but India must be saved by her women."

Now about the machinery for carrying out rural uplift work. Opinion is divided on this matter. One school of opinion would want a separate department with district establishments to carry out uplift work. A variation of this suggestion is that rural uplift as well as ameliorative activities connected with prohibition may be made the responsibility of a department of social welfare. The chief criticism against a separate department is that it would involve a heavy outlay. Secondly, a separate department cannot by itself do the work independent of the co-operation of the other departments and this co-operation may not be easily forthcoming, the tendency being common for the personnel of the new department being looked upon as intruders by the members of the older departments. Again, departmental rivalries are not unknown in this country. On the top, there is the widespread feeling that there are too many departments and so any multiplication thereof may not be considered desirable.

In these circumstances, the alternative suggestion is that except at the Provincial level, there is no need for a separate department. In the past reconstruction work was the concern of the Revenue department. That department, with a numerous personnel reaching down to the smallest man in the village was fitted to do the work more efficiently than other departments. It also possessed authority which can be invoked when necessary. Reference has been made to the pre-eminent position held by Collectors and the supremacy of the Revenue department in the early days of British rule.

"Nowhere else in the world," observes M. Rutnaswamy, "has the Land Revenue Department filled such a large place not only in administration, but in

the life of the people. State and Government and even the people have been largely made in India by land revenue. It is through land revenue administration that the people have in varying degrees been introduced to the idea and institution of the State and business of the Government. . . . The easy accessibility of the district official to the people of the country was the sheet anchor of British Indian administration in the days of its making. It built up the fame of a Malcolm, a Munro, an Edwards, an Elphinstone, a Henry Lawrence and a John Lawrence."

"Seated in the village chabootra or in his durbar room at headquarters or the durbar tent in camp, we find him "surrounded by the most respectable of the inhabitants, readily communicating the knowledge they possess, while those who might be inclined to conceal the truth feel thwarted under the eyes of all whom they are accustomed to respect and whose good or bad opinion is a matter of considerable importance to them. They know that should a misstatement be made, it would be immediately checked and pointed out by the durbaris. So the district collector of the old school kept his hand on the pulse of his district and on the directing wheel of district administration. But that personal rule has been killed by the rule of forms. Reports and returns and precedents and routine and red tape and files and the records so appropriate to a Secretariat have invaded and overwhelmed the district officials. Impersonal rule at the Secretariat and personal rule in the districts have been proved by experience to be the ideal of Indian administration."

Even the non-official organisations which worked for rural uplift in the past counted upon the

good offices of the Revenue department. The success of the Punjab experiment was partly due to the official authority possessed by Brayne as Deputy Commissioner.

Thus the balance of advantage seems to be in favour of including reconstruction work in the orbit of the Revenue department. Few departments have such opportunities for mass contact as the Revenue department. The Collector or the District Officer can be made responsible for uplift work in his jurisdiction. During the second World War, it may be recalled, he was the head of the district propaganda machinery and this fact was, to a large extent, responsible for the success of the war effort in many provinces. No doubt, he was assisted on the propaganda side by a "District Organiser" who was ex-officio Personal Assistant (Publicity) to the Collector. If it is considered necessary a similar arrangement can be made in connection with uplift work also. The District Officer or the Collector may be arranged to be assisted by a personal assistant on an uplift side who will be responsible for the details of the administration. As regards the lower rungs in the official ladder, these are to be determined largely in the light of local conditions, but certain broad lines may be indicated. Villages may be grouped together and may be entrusted to the care of a resident worker similar to the village guides in the Punjab or rural propagandists in Mysore. He should be responsible for co-ordinating the activities in the various sectors of village life and for the general efficiency of the work. He should possess an intimate knowledge of village life, its background, its problems besides social service-mindedness, imagination, sympathy, resourcefulness and a capacity for taking pains. He may be given a good official status and may be assisted by a band

of volunteers trained in social work and to whom he should be as a commander to his army. "We shall work like one big army, says a champion of rural uplift, infantry in line in front, artillery firing from behind, cavalry going round the flanks and sappers blowing up the enemies, fortifications." Non-officials will also have to be associated with the work. Village development councils or associations and similar organisations for taluks and districts may be formed. The village organisation is particularly important. Experts in rural uplift work have suggested that there cannot be any spontaneous or permanent improvement in the village without some local authority or organisation undertaking to see to the implementation of plans and keeping the village people up to the mark. Local officers may be included in the village, taluk and district organisations. The organisation at the district headquarters may be more broadbased and may include district officials of the various departments, members of social service organisations and prominent social workers. It may be presided over by the district officer. A similar district organisation existed in many provinces during the period of the second War for assisting war effort. They were called district war committees. They discussed generally once in a month questions appertaining to war effort and took decisions. The proposed rural uplift organisation at the district headquarters can function on similar lines.

There is however need for a separate organisation at the Provincial level in order to ensure continuity of policy and activities. C. F. Strickland has enumerated the aims that should actuate Rural Welfare work. These are: (1) Permanence not depending solely on the enthusiasm of an individual who may not always be present nor relying on

a continuous supply of finance from an external source. (2) Co-ordination, neither leaving each department to carry out its own functions without any reference to other departments nor overlooking the alliance between the official and non-official workers. (3) The employment of trained personnel—not necessarily experts of high qualifications but men and women trained in rural ways and in the understanding of village folk and (4) Minimum cost. We have seen that in the past good work in the field of rural uplift depended on personalities and when they left the field, the work either slowed down or came to a dead stop. Darling refers to a conversation which he had with one of the villagers in the Punjab in the course of one of his tours. The villager said, "There was—sahib. His passion was roads. Much money was spent in collecting materials to make a big road, but he was transferred and the metal was auctioned for nothing and no one thought about the roads. When the Deputy Commissioner says a road must be opened we all throw ourselves—because we want to please him and not because it is in our hearts to do this. It will only last if it is in the people's heart." It is therefore necessary that the whole work is institutionalised. The entire uplift work whether in the field of Rural Reconstruction or Prohibition may be centralised in a single organisation at the provincial level. It may perhaps be called a board and it may administer the entire social welfare activities of the whole province. It may be presided over by the Minister for rural development and manned by heads of departments and representatives, non-officials, etc. Further details have to be decided in the light of local conditions. Strickland observes, "Expert directions at the top and trained personnel at the bottom are desirable elements in any Provincial Organisation."

“Machinery is no good without motive power and the motive power of village uplift is knowledge.”

The next point is about the actual field work. Obviously it is not feasible to start reconstruction work in all the villages simultaneously. Whenever uplift activities had been initiated in the past, they at first centred round a single village. This village was a central one and was called the model village. Reconstruction work was carried on a model scale there and naturally it was copied by other villages.

In course of time the influence of the model village would infiltrate to the entire area. By the way, one is reminded here of education by filtration which was in vogue in the early days of British rule. This system consisted in imparting education to a few in the first place, allowing it to filter down to the masses in course of time. In the circumstances obtaining in this country, the model system is the best that can be employed to bring about improvement in rural standards. Martandam followed it with remarkable success as we have seen. Dr. Hatch has laid down certain conditions for the selection of the model village. These include: (1) accessibility of the village, (2) its being an outlet to other villages, (3) poor condition of the people and (4) remoteness from towns in order that the locality may be completely rural. It must also be pointed out that areas where the needs are particularly acute may be taken up first. To start with, efforts may be directed towards the attainment of a narrower objective. The danger is that if a larger objective is taken up progress may be unduly delayed occasioning disappointment. Progress must be from the simple to the less simple and then to the complex. It is always advantageous to take up projects, the value of which would will be

readily appreciated by the public and at the same time which would yield quick results. It is always necessary to discover and work with the leaders of the community and examine the nature of the incentive that will prove effective with the people. The actual field work may commence with a rural survey of the area selected for improvement. Such a survey is intended to bring out the exact position of the area in the various sectors of rural welfare. Development work in any sphere can proceed only on the basis of statistics and the proposed rural survey is designed to get a statistical picture of the area under reference. The want of statistics has been a serious handicap to Rural Reconstruction work in the past. The Minister for Rural Development, Mysore, said sometime ago, "the absence of well-authenticated data has hampered our work hitherto to an extent which cannot be easily imagined." In the Punjab, this handicap was sought to be remedied in the early twenties of this century by the formation of a Board of Economic Enquiry and one of its functions was the collection of statistics. The statistics constitute in fact the foundation on which Rural Reconstruction work has to be built. The collection of statistics may proceed on the basis of a questionnaire covering exhaustively all the aspects of village life. A sample questionnaire is appended below as showing what ought to constitute its salient contents. This questionnaire can take different forms. An alternative suggestion is that the questionnaire may be divided into three parts, the first dealing with the elements of rural welfare, the second with what are called the determinants or factors and the third with the indicators or statistics. An illustration may be given. Public health is an element in rural welfare, the

determinants being the level of nutrition, water-supply, medical organisation, etc., while the indicators are the number of people who take balanced diet, the number of doctors, hospitals, etc. Whatever be the form, the point to be stressed is that full particulars have to be gathered so that an accurate picture may be obtained which is an essential pre-requisite for effective uplift work in any area.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Dt.

Total area

Name of Revenue Dn.. and Taluk

Name of village

Population

Revenue of the village

General description.—General features, physical, geographical, etc., accessibility, situation with reference to market centres and country towns.

ECONOMIC

(a) *Main occupations in the village*

Agriculture.—Population and its percentage to the total population of the village, area under wet cultivation, area under dry crops, area of cultivable waste, area under food crops, area under protective food, area under cash crops, etc.

System of land tenure.—Average size of the holdings, sub-division and fragmentation, methods of agriculture, implements, marketing facilities, etc.

Yield from agriculture.—Productivity per acre, income per head, etc.

Cattle wealth.—Total cattle population, number of cows, number of buffaloes, number of other animals, milking capacity of the cow and the buffalo, working capacity of the draught animals, extent of pasture, etc.

(b) *Other occupations*

Particulars.—Population in each case and income per head.

(c) *General*

Rural indebtedness, rate of interest, causes, etc.

SOCIAL

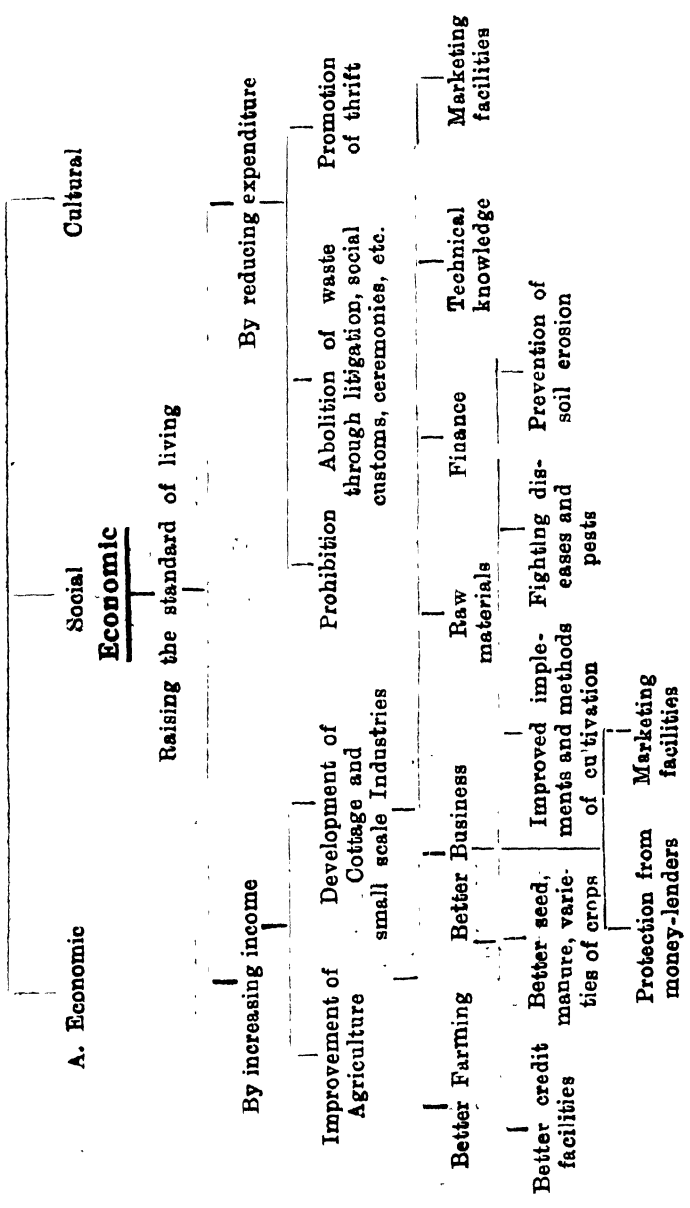
Number of families in the village, average number in each family, emigration and immigration, social customs, village faction, litigation, communal feeling, traits of the people, public health, birth rate, death rate, infant mortality, maternal mortality, chief diseases, epidemics, medical facilities, water supply, drainage system.

CULTURAL

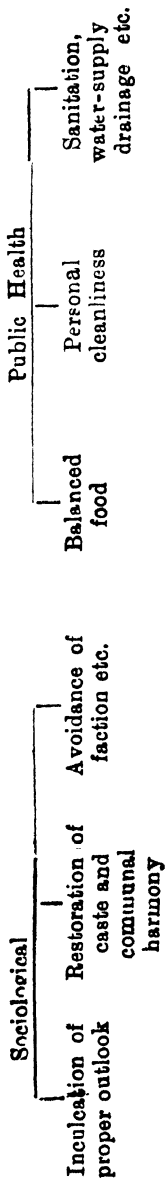
Statistics of literate men and women, etc.—Number of boys in the village, number of girls, number attending school in each case, number of schools in the village, rural games and activities.

The particulars sought to be collected through the questionnaire have to be carefully studied and a plan of action chalked out. The development plan may be divided into three parts as shown below:

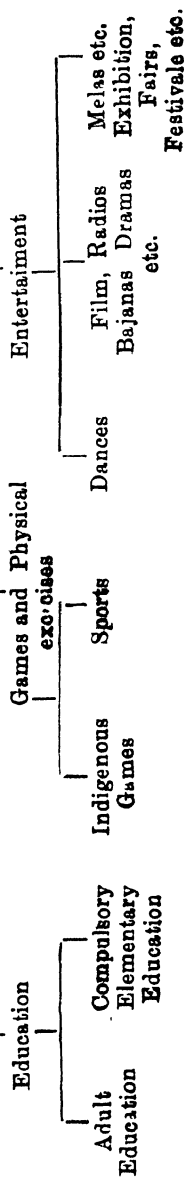
Rural Uplift



Social



Cultural



III

After the plan has been drawn up, the ground has to be prepared for actual operation. This consists in creating the necessary psychological conditions which would assist the execution of the plan. The villagers' conservative outlook is proverbial and this has to be radically modified in the first instance. A recent author on India observes, "until he (the villager) is given a healthier and stronger physique, a changed outlook in life and a broader education, the strength and urge to get out of the present rut of low standard will be wanting." The words changed outlook need underlining. It is an indispensable preliminary to uplift work. Unless the outlook is changed, and the villager made to realise that his own improvement rests on himself and not on an outside agency, then only will he be able to appreciate what Governments do and co-operate in the execution of their plans. Without this psychological transformation, any amount of good work done for the villager is bound to fall flat. Says Brayne, "the main problem of Rural Reconstruction is not so much to find out what is wrong and how to put it aright as to put a dynamo into the village so that the villager himself will not only try to find out what is wrong but will go on thinking and working in co-operation with his fellow villagers and with the Government to put it aright—in fact, until the desire to rise can be put into the villagers' heart, we are rolling stones up a hill like sisyphus of old and as soon as we stop our unnatural efforts, things will soon be as bad as ever or even worse." Dr. N. N. Ganguli observes in the same strain, "Awaken the intelligence of the villagers, teach the illiterate how to think and act and you lay the foundation of village uplift."

Thus, the preliminary efforts in Rural Reconstruction have to be directed towards changing the outlook of the villager, his outlook towards his work, his resources, his cattle, his farm, his neighbours and his Government. "The real problem"—observe the authors of the *Economics of Indian Agriculture* is not merely the provision of amenities, but the creation in the village of a psychology favourable to progress and corporate effort. If in the stagnant villages in India could be created a thirst for better life and improvement and a determination to achieve this by corporate effort, one of the major obstacles would have been overcome. In other words it has been said that village reconstruction should begin with the reconstruction of the mind of the villager. How to achieve this? It is here that propaganda comes in. It has a vital role to play in village uplift, and this is dealt with in the next chapter.

In actual field work much of the success depends on the rural workers, both paid and unpaid. There is a tendency here for honorary workers to treat their work lightly. The work is honorary and they think they can do as they like. This attitude is faulty. When once the honorary workers agree to share in a work, they stand on a par with paid workers and have to put out their best. The reward of all rural workers is in the joy of rendering service, and they should, above all, be animated by a missionary spirit. The only reward is the satisfaction of work well done in the service of mankind—the reward of the good scout who has fulfilled his duty of being useful and helpful to others. Lastly, one broad point may be mentioned in conclusion, namely, the simplification of office procedure in regard to Rural Welfare Work. No matter the efficiency of the personnel

employed for reconstruction work, no matter the willing and unstinted co-operation of the villagers, no matter the readiness of the Government to be liberal in the matter of expenditure, the work cannot proceed quickly unless rigidity in office Procedure is relaxed. It is usual in war time or in abnormal situations to by-pass the requirements of strict rules, forms or procedure in order to expediate matters. Rural uplift is also a war—a war against ignorance, poverty and squalor and hence action has to be treated as on a war footing. Protracted routine may be short-circuited, and authority may be decentralised consistent with efficiency in order that quickness may be ensured.

It is a widely-known fact that in the present day India, the general run of people are impatient of office routine, procedure, etc. Writing on this aspect of the matter in relation to Government Secretariats Ruthnaswamy says, "The daily round of files bound by the now familiar red tape, the regular procession of teakwood boxes from room to room, the voluminous noting from clerk upwards. . .this whole process partaking of the nature of some religious ritual has been noticed and satirised by unconventional viceroys and the watchdogs of the Press."

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROLE OF PROPAGANDA

The fact that propaganda has a vital part to play in the sphere of rural uplift has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. In the past however this role was not sufficiently appreciated and the failure of reconstruction efforts in many places has been traceable to this fact. We have seen that in the Punjab, unlike in many other places, success was in no small measure due to "propaganda, more propaganda and still more propaganda." To quote Brayne himself, "Things undreamt of before, things opposed to every custom and sentiment have come to pass easily and naturally all owing to continuous and intensive propaganda."

The word "propaganda" is a much abused one. The Politician, the Reformer, the Publicist, the demagogue—all speak of propaganda giving it their own meaning. In the mass-mind, the word is associated with any statement or utterance of doubtful authenticity. Originally, however, there was nothing unholy about the connotation of the word. Its early association was with religion and in the 17th century it meant groups of persons charged with the spread of a set of religious dogmas. Subsequently the word came to be applied to organisations set up for spreading particular doctrines and later it meant the doctrines themselves. With the efflux of time, the word got more and more unpopular in its connotation and after the two World Wars it emerged with its colour considerably blackened.

The question may therefore be asked as to why such an unpopular art as propaganda needs to be

employed to assist reconstruction work. But it may be pointed out that in the broader sense in which it is used in the context of village construction, there is nothing sinister about it. It is used to mean mass education or mass instruction, directed towards the attainment of a definite objective. Often times the words 'publicity' and 'propaganda' are used synonymously. But there is a subtle difference between the two. To express it in a simple way, all propaganda is publicity but not all publicity is propaganda. The element of information and instruction dominates publicity while in propaganda what is important is the attainment of the objective, information and instruction being only a means to that end. Obviously therefore propaganda is the more appropriate term to be used in relation to Rural Reconstruction, because whatever publicity is done in that field is dominated by a definite goal and it is the attainment of the goal that counts primarily.

In the past, however, propaganda has seldom been used on a mass scale for Rural Reconstruction work, the notable exceptions being the Punjab and Martandam.

Now to the actual role of propaganda in the sphere of village reconstruction. The post-war reconstruction committee of pre-independent India observed on this point, "The object of propaganda must be to prepare the ground for social and economic development, to educate the public in the broadest sense of the term and more especially to evoke a desire for better living. It should include everything that comes under the heading rural uplift or better living—hygiene, health, cleanliness, education of both boys and girls, improvement in agriculture, co-operation, avoidance of litigation and debt, thrift—in

fact, all public and private virtues." Briefly stated, the main objectives of propaganda are: (1) to radically change the outlook of the villager and to produce in him an urge for improvement, (2) to interest the villagers in the development plans of the Government and (3) to mobilise their enthusiasm and induce a spirit of self-help and corporate effort. The words changing the outlook need emphasising. Almost all writers on Rural Reconstruction have stressed the importance of this fact. Brayne says, that the two enemies which a rural worker has to overcome are apathy and ignorance which tend to distort the outlook of the average villager. Before anything definite is accomplished, says an author, the village folk will have to take a different attitude towards all phases of life—the body, the spirit and the mind; recreation, art, music, religion, festival, social amenities, better clothes, more hygienic dwellings and villages, the desire for more abundant life, for a higher standard of living, etc. Sir Visvesvaraya puts the matter with similar force. He says, "the task is of appalling difficulty and magnitude, but unless we believe that it is capable of accomplishment we shall be driven to accept the pessimistic conclusion of a western writer that India is dying. . . . a consciousness should be aroused in the Indian mind that a better state of things could be brought into existence in India itself if only the people willed and worked for the same."

A modern writer observes, "In the task of Rural Reconstructions which involves a deliberate and energetic overhaul of the dominant factors of our socio-economic life, there must be active co-operation between the state and the public opinion of the country." And it is one of the main functions of propaganda to enlist this co-operation. Speaking about the promotion of National health, the Bhore Committee

said, "we shall be building on unstable foundations if we hope to secure any rapid or lasting improvement in health conditions without arousing the living interest and practical co-operation of the people." What applies to health applies also to other spheres, of social welfare. Yet another writer observes, "The first and the most important step consists in awakening the people from their lethargy, in arousing in them the consciousness that it is their duty to cooperate with each other to improve their conditions and that they have in themselves enough latent resources which pooled together can solve most of the problems of the country side."

Thus the primary aim of propaganda is to raise what is termed the 'development morale' of the people, that is to say, to create the psychological climate in which the plans of the Government would go through easily.

It is necessary to point out in this connection that propaganda in the sphere of Rural Reconstruction must be a continual affair. It will not suffice if after creating the necessary psychological climate propaganda efforts are relaxed or stopped. The machinery must continue to operate in full blast educating the public then and there as newer and newer measures are initiated and keeping their enthusiasm at the proper level. The sub-committee of the Firka Development Committee appointed sometime ago by the Madras Government observed, "we are strongly of opinion that organised educative propaganda must be undertaken as an integral part of the work. The whole work cannot go on speedily and efficiently if we do not continually educate public opinion to appreciate what is being planned and done." More or less similar observations were made by Sir Sultan Ahamed, a former Information Member of the Government of

India, while addressing the Publicity Advisory Committee in 1945. He said, "we may go ahead and build our roads, electrify our country side, establish flourishing industries, produce more and better roads, build schools and train teachers, but we still delay our progress and lose much of the value of our efforts, if we do not also make a heroic effort to explain to as many people as we can reach what the ultimate purpose is, what the steps we propose to take are and what assistance we need from the public at large."

Propaganda has thus a fundamental role to play. It has to prepare the field, explain the Government plan, and measures proposed to be undertaken and then mobilise the resultant enthusiasm and finally keep up the enthusiasm to the very end. These various functions, propaganda seeks to fulfil through the numerous media at its disposal. Elsewhere mention has been made of some of them. A more comprehensive note on the media may not be out of place in this context.

The principal media of propaganda are: (1) Booklets, pamphlets, leaflets, etc., (2) radio, (3) stage, (4) folk art, (5) pictures, (6) posters, (7) cartoons, (8) demonstrations, (9) exhibitions, (10) magic lanterns, (11) publicity campaigns, (12) competitions, (13) weeks and days, etc. Booklets, pamphlets, leaflets etc are among the most familiar forms of propaganda. In the sphere of rural uplift it must however be pointed out that their value is limited by the fact that a large percentage of rural folk are illiterate and will be unable to make use of them; all the same these may exert their influence through the educated folk who are expected to read them. One point may be stressed in regard to the distribution of these pamphlets, etc. It is no good if they are distributed as hand bills are

distributed or as cinema notices are broadcast. If they are distributed like that, it is likely that rural folk may use them only as waste paper. In determining the methods of distribution it is therefore necessary to ensure that rural folk who are literate read the stuff given to them. To achieve this end, it is suggested that those who distribute may be instructed to explain the nature and importance of the topic dealt with in the pamphlets or leaflets as the case may be, create an interest in the minds of those for whom these are intended and then distribute them telling to see more details. This procedure was followed in some parts and it proved very successful. Radio is one of the most powerful instruments of mass education and entertainment. It can be placed within the reach of any rural area. In the modern world, it is a great civilising influence. It can influence the outlook of the landlord and the tenant, the factory operator and the employer, the town-dweller and the rural folk, the classes and the masses—in fact, every section of society if broadcasting is intelligently used, entertainment being mingled with instruction. Brayne wrote that village uplift in this country would really begin to tell only when rural broadcasting had been placed on its feet. Broadcasting is the only weapon he said, to defeat ignorance and the only counter-attraction which would divert time and money from litigation and other unprofitable ways of getting into debt and the only relief to monotony. There can be no more precious instrument of rural progress, says another writer about the radio, in the hands of a far-sighted Government or an intelligent rural community. The radio will tell the rural folk about the prices of agricultural commodities, warn them of pests and epidemics and tell them of "ploughing matches and cattle fairs." The U.S.S.R. gave a lead

in this matter long ago by establishing a network of radio stations through which adult education was popularised and illiterate peasants were given talks on hygiene, scientific agriculture, etc. The composition of the broadcasting programme is an important matter in this connection. The next media is the stage and its value has been noticed elsewhere. The next is folk art. These include bajanas, kalakshepams and similar other indigenous entertainments. In ancient times, folk art was used to impress upon the masses particular teachings—social, moral or religious. During the second World War, the resources of this art were fully laid under contribution for propaganda purposes in many parts of the country. In the Province of Madras, kathakalis in Malabar, kalakshepams in Tamilnad and burrakathas in Telugu parts constituted powerful media of war-time propaganda. There is every scope of these being used in peace time also to popularise village uplift themes. Pictures and posters are also effective. It is said that one picture is more effective than ten thousand words. Coloured posters are also good in their own way. The effectiveness of posters depend upon their artistic get up, the beauty and symmetry of the language employed and the places where they are exhibited, etc. Motor junctions, village headmen's offices, popular restaurants and public resorts are places where posters or hoardings can be exhibited. These have been used in most of the places effectively where rural campaigns had been launched. Picture posters formed an important media of educative propaganda in Russia especially during the period following the revolution. It was argued by the exponents of this device that in a country where the percentage of illiterates were considerable, pictorial posters had the effect of driving home ideas more sharp-

ly. Pictorial posters on common diseases and their evils, etc., it is pointed out, wrought remarkable effect on the masses in that country. Cartoons also serve a similar purpose. In the Punjab experiment, cartoons played a notable part. Cartoons, for example, of a man who keeps bad cattle or who keeps his house in insanitary condition or who neglects to send his children to school, make greater impression on people than pages of words. Similarly magic lantern slides can popularise any salutary innovation. Slides about insanitary condition of a village and the consequent outbreak of epidemic constitute, a typical propaganda effort. During the last War, the Government of Madras produced slides and distributed to private agencies who owned magic lanterns. Several missionary organisations who owned magic lanterns exhibited the slides before rural folk in the course of their itinerary. Gramophone records also can be produced and distributed. It is wellknown that ideas put through songs catch easily. Gramophone records can be distributed either free or at a nominal cost to all those who own gramophone machines especially owners of coffee hotels, etc. Exhibitions and demonstrations are calculated to whip up public enthusiasm. Exhibitions are both mobile and static. These were constantly pressed into service at Martandam with remarkable effect. Exhibition can contain not only models but pictures also. The propaganda value of these exhibitions has been referred to earlier. While on the topic of exhibitions, mention may be made of the propaganda value of museums. It is common knowledge that the peasants' museums in Russia contributed much to improve rural welfare in that country. Pandit Nehru refers to this point in the course of an article on his visit to Russia. He observes, "Among the sights we saw in Moscow, one

of the most impressive was the Central Peasants' Home. It was an enormous building containing museums, demonstration rooms, lecture rooms and residential accommodation for about 350 persons. Practically everything that might interest or instruct the peasant was there. There was a fine display of agricultural produce, all ticketed and compared. Several halls were full of the latest agricultural implements and machinery and models of up-to-date and sanitary houses and farms for the peasantry. Another part of the building was devoted to health propaganda. Pictures and posters and models explained how disease was to be avoided and homes kept clean and healthy.

A large hall was devoted solely to electricity and was full of working models showing its uses for lighting and agricultural purposes. Water pumps of various sizes worked by electric power were much in evidence. A big chart showed the rapid development of electric power stations all over Russia. The whole display was admirably designed to impress the peasant with the advantages of electricity from his own viewpoint.

Many peasants came to the Home and explanatory tours round the various show rooms were organised. Lectures took place daily on educational subjects of interest to the agriculturists and free legal and technical advice was given. Peasants were encouraged to stay in the Home for a maximum period of two months to go through a small course of agricultural training. The building had a restaurant attached where cheap meals were provided. We saw it crowded with rustics fresh from the country.

It was a remarkably fine institution and one felt that even one such centre must improve the lot of the peasantry. We were told, however, that such

peasants' homes were springing up all over the Union, though most of them were much smaller than the Central Home. There was another in Moscow City for the Moscow district and there were about 350 of them in Russia proper, excluding Ukraine and Asiatic Russia, where also there were many such homes. These hundreds of homes must transform the outlook of the peasantry to a remarkable extent within a short time."

About competitions also mention has been made. One is reminded of the competition in ploughing instituted in the Punjab under Brayne. Competition is perhaps the strongest incentive to development effort and therefore the competitive spirit should be fostered through such means as award of prizes, bonus, etc. Publicity campaign is a comparatively modern device. It may be defined as the boosting of a particular theme for a specified period with the aid of the different media of propaganda. The aim is to drive home to the people particular innovations which need for its success, the whole-hearted co-operation of the people. During the last War, the Madras Government, for example, set on foot a number of campaigns. These included the controls campaign to educate the people in the rationale of controls, the morale campaign to promote the morale of the people, and the security campaign to ensure the success of the security measures. Weeks and days are nowadays familiar to everybody. Few people have not heard of Health week, Baby week, Tree-planting weeks, or days, etc. This device is intended to focus public interest on particular innovations.

It is important to stress in this connection the need for co-ordination of the various media of propaganda, in order to ensure maximum effect. Brayne says,

“There are several essentials in the campaign. Every position must be assaulted from as many directions as possible. As every one knows, propaganda will move mountains. There is no habit or custom that cannot be undermined with propaganda and no new method that cannot be popularised with propaganda as long as the campaign is sufficiently intensive, continuous and sufficiently alive.”

Films also can be pressed into service to further the cause of rural reconstruction although there may be financial and other difficulties in making them available at all places to suit varying conditions. In the thirties of this century, Bengal Government organised touring cinema parties as part of their rural uplift work. First there were four parties, but later the number was raised to ten. These parties were supplied with films by the Government. There was a regular machinery for the production of films. Topics bearing on rural uplift were filmatised and got screened. These produced very healthy reactions. The Madras Government also attempted something of this nature about the end of the second World War. They produced a film entitled “The returning Soldier” in order to stimulate interest in post war reconstruction. It cannot be denied that films have a salutary effect on popular psychology but the cost of production and the difficulty of producing the right type with the proper appeal and emphasis are retarding factors.

It may not be out place to mention here another method of propaganda adopted by the U. P. Government about the same period. They fitted out rural uplift vans which toured the villages according to a pre-arranged programme. These vans carried exhibits relating to improved agriculture, cottage industries, public health, hygiene,

rural sanitation, child welfare, etc. The vans were fitted with cinema apparatus, loud speaker arrangements, etc., and provided good entertainment mingled with instruction to the rural folk. These vans remind us of the propaganda vans employed in the various provinces during the second World War. The good work done by these vans and how they assisted the war effort are beside the present context. But the inference is legitimate that such vans can provide both entertainment and education to the millions who live in our villages.

Administratively, propaganda may form a separate unit manned by persons well-versed in the art. There is a general impression that propaganda can be handled by anybody. But the history of countries where propaganda had succeeded does not support this impression. How far Lord Northcliff was responsible for the success of propaganda in Great Britain during the first World War, is a matter of common knowledge. Propaganda is as technical as any other technical subject. It is one thing to have a message and another to deliver it effectively. The latter needs an intimate knowledge of the technique of the art. Writers on publicity have laid down qualifications for a propagandist or a publicity worker. These include among other things, linguistic ability, an intimate knowledge of the subject in hand, a knowledge of the psychology of the people, robust common sense, imagination, resourcefulness, an impressive personality and amiable manners. Rural propagandists should have an intimate knowledge of rural conditions and an understanding sympathy for the problems of the masses.

The next point to be noted on relates to the preparation of publicity stuff. The suggestion has been

made in a previous chapter that all uplift work whether under Rural Reconstruction or Prohibition may be centralised in a single agency. The propaganda unit may be placed under the administrative control of this agency. The activities of the unit may be divided under three heads from an administrative point of view, namely, planning, production, and distribution. The main responsibility of those in charge of planning is to study situations and lay down plans. The work of the production branch is to implement the plans formulated by the planning section. The distribution branch may concern itself with the distribution of the publicity stuff produced by the unit. Promptness in distribution is a point to be particularly stressed. Delay may sometimes neutralise the effect of good propaganda. The distribution may be done through the Revenue department. Rural workers also can share in the distribution work.

The proper functioning of the publicity apparatus is an important matter. It provides the steam for uplift work, and its operations cannot be relaxed without retarding the progress of the work. Propaganda can never stop and the moment it is stopped the public may think that the work has stopped. The story is told of a well-known firm which had to wind up solely because it closed down its publicity activities under the presumption that it had established its name and needed no further publicity. The neglect of publicity has been characterised by more than one writer as short-sighted economy. Brayne has suggested that publicity should be as carefully organised as any other beneficent activities of the Government.

CHAPTER IX

VILLAGE INDUSTRIES

The importance of cottage industries in the national economy of the country is a fact which needs no argument to establish it. Cottage industries flourished in ancient India and the general prosperity that obtained then was due in part to the existence of these industries, which steadily supplemented the precarious income from agriculture, and provided, so to say, a standby when agriculture failed. Till the 18th century India was an exporting country and had achieved a reputation in European markets for the artistic skill of her craftsmen. But since then, the industries languished in the face of machine-made goods from the West and the lack of patronage from the Government. Patronage was easily available during the pre-British period when native princes liberally assisted these industries. It is a widely accepted fact that the economic degeneracy during the British period was partly due to the absence of cottage industries.

The Monograph on rural problems published sometime ago by the Government of Madras divides rural industries into three classes. "In the first class are industries which are a wholtime occupation; in the second class are industries which are subsidiary to agriculture; and in the third class are industries which may be suitably termed as cottage industries which enable the agriculturist and his family to be occupied in their spare time. The important industries in the first class have, by tradition, been carried on by persons belonging to certain communities. The handloom weaving industry, for example is generally carried on

by the weaving community. In certain places, however, the muslims are good weavers. The local crafts in the village like the smithy, and the goldsmiths trade are also industries of a communal character. Sheep rearing is also an example. What these industries require is rehabilitation with reference to modern conditions and reorganisation at all points. They should be taken up as affording relief from the pressure of population on the soil. In the second class of industry will fall, oil milling, groundnut decorticating, ricemilling, sugarcane crushing and the like. These industries afford employment to the agriculturists in the off season. What, however, is not often recognised is that except in regard to the industrial units like ricemills, in many of the occupations (like jaggery making), it is the agriculturist himself who is employed. This is relevant in assessing the extent to which these can be developed to afford fresh opportunities for the employment of the agriculturist in his spare time. These industries call for work only after the harvest of the respective crops. In the third category can be grouped together practically any industry which does not demand great skill or the assembling of a large mass of machinery. Even in respect of the latter, it may be possible to split up certain preliminary processes as near the sources of raw material as possible and then bring the half finished product to the factory for finishing. Grading of tobacco and the earlier processes with respect to ceramics are instances."

How are cottage industries important in the economy of the country. It has been mentioned that India is a land of villages and the prosperity of the country means the prosperity of the rural parts. And more than 70 per cent of the rural folk are agriculturists. Their prosperity is therefore dependent on

the yield from agriculture. It has already been shown that agriculture has not been a paying proposition. "The cultivator labours not for profit, not for return but for subsistence." Mahatmaji observes, "Bit by bit they are being confined to hand-to-mouth business of scratching the earth. Few know today that agriculture in the small and irregular holdings of India is not a paying proposition. The villagers live a lifeless life; their life is a process of starvation." The various causes that are responsible for the low productivity in agriculture have been noticed already. The following statistics will illustrate the backwardness of India as compared with other countries:

NAME OF THE COUNTRY	INCOME PER HEAD			
	<i>Agriculture</i>			
	<i>Industries</i>			
			Rs.	Rs.
America	...	...	963	175
Canada	...	...	545	344
U.K.	...	...	465	621
Sweden	...	...	384	129
Japan	...	...	185	857
India	...	...	127	48

It is needless to point out that the *per capita* income from agriculture is the lowest in India. Normally, in ancient India there were cottage industries to fill the gap left by agriculture. Now this standby does not exist in any perceptible manner. The ryot also has no means of capitalising the off-seasons inherent in the agricultural system. "According to western standards," observes S. N. Agarwal, "I think that 50 per cent of the population should be

regarded as unemployed." Thus the low productivity and unemployment or under-employment in agriculture are two vital factors that hold up the economic progress of this country. Further it has been pointed out that "a nation that depends on agriculture for its livelihood depends upon a broken reed which cannot in the very nature of the case ensure economic stability. History shows that no nation has achieved any remarkable degree of prosperity which solely depended on agriculture. Economists have pointed out that a unit of agricultural production fetches far less price than a unit of industrial production. To take an example, a farmer produces groundnuts worth Rs. 100/- in 5 months. The cost of production may come to Rs. 70/-, and his gain Rs. 30/-. On the other hand, an oil press owner who purchases Rs. 100/- worth of groundnuts gets oil worth Rs. 125/-, and oil-cakes worth Rs. 25/- in a month. His cost of production may come to Rs. 10/- and his gain may work out at Rs. 40/- a month. Obviously, therefore, countries which are devoted to the production of raw materials and which are backward in the field of industry, are bound to be poor. The observations of Sir William Petty are significant. "There is much more to be gained by manufacture than husbandry and by merchandise than manufacture." The Famine Commission of 1880 observed that "at the root of much of the poverty of the people of India and the risks to which they are exposed lies the unfortunate circumstance that agriculture forms the sole occupation of the masses of the population." Hence the Commission urged the development of industries other than agriculture and independent of the fluctuations of the season.

The case for the rehabilitation of industries is therefore unmistakable. From time to time, writers on rural uplift have emphasised this fact. No scheme for national resurrection, says B. B. Mukerji, will be complete which does not permit a place—a high, honourable, dignified and permanent place—to the cottage industries of the country. Another authority, Sir Viswesvaraya says, “under the present conditions in India, agriculture gives a bare living, sometimes less than a living to those who pursue that calling. Without industry and trade in addition however, it is impossible for India or any other country to keep money in circulation or credit easy and to maintain even an average level of prosperity.”

Mahatmaji championed the cause of cottage or small scale industries. Large scale industries involve the use of machines and centralised methods of production. The evils of mechanisation are numerous. “Owing to the extensive use of machinery and division of labour ‘wrote Karl Marx,’ the work of the proletariat has lost all individual character and all charm for the workmen. He becomes an appendage of the machine.” In his ‘Das Capital’ he asserts that modern manufacturing processes transform the worker into a cripple and a monster. Work in a modern factory points out, Mary Southerland, often stifles creative faculty and leaves them with enough energy in their leisure time to be passive consumers of mechanised entertainment. The manufacture of pins may be cited as an illustration. A single man, it is said, could turn out nearly 5,000 pins a day. Pins thus become plentiful and cheap. But the process turns capable men into mere machines doing their work without intelligence.

Centralised production is characterised by economists as parasitic. They are mainly based on profit motive and are responsible for a number of social evils. "Wealth accumulates and men decay." Bevin observed sometime ago that political freedom for India is not enough and the standard of living should be raised and equalised among all sections of the community. Large scale industries do not help to attain this end. On the question of large scale *versus* small scale industries, Mahatamji has observed, "mechanisation is good when hands are too few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than those required for work as in the case of India. I may not use a plough for digging a few square yards of a plot of land. The problem with us is not how to find leisure for the teeming millions inhabiting in our villages. The problem is how to utilise their idle hours which are equal to the working days of six months in the year. Strange as it may appear, every mill is generally a menace to the villagers. I have not worked out the figures, but I am quite safe in saying that every mill hand does the work of at least ten labourers..... In other words he earns more than he did in his village at the expense of ten fellow villagers."

Conditions in India are particularly suitable for cottage industries. To recapitulate some of these, (1) There is enough leisure for agriculturist which can be turned into good account through small scale industries. (2) There is plenty of labour but little capital. (3) There is a tradition for village handicrafts and industries in this country. (4) They solve unemployment and under-employment. (5) They do not raise the problem of distribution. Mahatmaji observes, "granting for the moment that the machinery may supply all the needs of humanity,

still it would concentrate production in particular areas so that you would have to go about in a round about way to regulate distribution, where as, if there is production and distribution both in their respective areas where things are required, it is automatically regulated and there is no chance for fraud and none for speculation. Distribution, says Mahatmaji, can be equalised when production is localised; in other words when distribution is simultaneous with production." The success of any plan, observes India's Prime Minister, must inevitably depend not merely on production but on proper and equitable distribution of national wealth created. Cottage or small scale industries assist towards this end. (6) These industries have, further, a cultural value. They tend to develop personality in all its aspects, namely, intelligence, character and artistic sense. Karl Marx says, "the independent worker or handicraftsman develops knowledge, insight and will" (7) Cottage industries are in tune with democratic principles. Political decentralisation is the essence of democracy and cottage industries mean economic decentralisation. Both these decentralisations must go hand in hand if there is to be uniform progress. Political decentralisation and economic centralisation will be just like a house divided against itself. "For enriching the life of rural India, economically, culturally and socially," says an author, "cottage industries have a great contribution to make. So long as the agricultural population has time but no money to spend, many of their needs must be supplied by cottage industries..... The civilisation most desirable for India then is the one which will arise out of improved agriculture and cottage industries."

Small scale industries are variously classified. According to one writer there are four classes, namely

(1) those requiring a high degree of skill like carving, (2) those requiring less skill like weaving, (3) home industries like soap-making, etc. and (4) industries subsidiary to agriculture, like gardening, poultry-farming, bee-keeping, etc. The Bombay Industrial and Economic Enquiry Report has divided village industries under two heads, namely, small scale and cottage industries. The latter are defined as those in which no power is employed and the centre of activity is the artisan's home.

The promotion of cottage industries is an integral part of Rural Reconstruction work. Their adoption has to be determined primarily by local conditions regarding the availability of raw materials, the availability of necessary manual or skilled labour, local traditions and other relevant factors. The suggestion has been made that the existing cottage industries should be developed in the different areas before introducing new ones. These industries differ from province to province and from district to district. Some areas are noted for their metal industry, others for pottery, yet others for their leather works and so on and so forth. According to the cottage industries survey conducted by the Madras Government in 1929, there were 20 cottage industries in the Province, and these included handspinning, weaving, dyeing, metal industry, soapmaking matmaking, woodworks, etc.

Sir Visveswaraya has given a list of rural cottage and home industries. He says, "Most of these industries are practised at present in an unorganised, haphazard form, their number is small and production extremely meagre. The old village system which fostered these industries has given way under the stress of western civilization and no modern or organized methods have as yet replaced it.

Agricultural tools and smithing, livestock raising and dairying, fruit culture, kitchen gardening, sugar manufacturing, fishing, carpentry, furniture, woodwork and cart manufacture, handspinning and weaving, silk rearing and reeling, ceramics, brick and tile-making, copper and bellmetal ware, cutlery, match manufacture, leatherwork, boots and shoes, ropes, baskets, etc., cellulose industries, such as plastics, embroidery, needle work and socks, glass bangle manufacture, pastry and sweets, hand made paper, toys and many others.

Again, he gives a list of typical handicrafts and minor and cottage industries which can be practised with profit by large sections of the rural population.

Metal works.—Smithing, agricultural tools and machinery, manufacture of metal vessels—copper, brass, aluminium, etc.

Handspinning and weaving, cotton ginning and silk reeling, carpets and blanket making. Flour milling, rice milling, oil mills.

Food products.—Fruit canning, drinks and aerated water.

Cigarattes and beedies. Brick and tile works. Furniture—chairs, tables, benches, boxes, combs. Pottery—Mat making, basket and rope making. Shoe making. Bee keeping. Vegetable dyes, paints, inks, etc. Pencil manufacture. Buttons. Soaps. Enamelled ware. Printing and book binding.

It may be relevant here to refer to cottage industrialism in some of the eastern countries. China and Japan are typical examples. In China cottage industries proved the bulwark against Japanese aggression. Under the stress of the War, thousands of small co-operative communities produced most of the necessities

of life with manual labour and small machines. Referring to the Chinese example, India's Prime Minister observes, "India like China has enormous man power, vast unemployment and under-employment. Any scheme which involves the wastage of our labour power or which throws people out of employment is bad. From the purely economical point of view, even apart from the human aspect, it may be profitable to use more labour and less specialised machinery. It is better to find employment for large numbers of people at low income level than to keep most of them unemployed. It is possible also that the total wealth produced by a large number of cottage industries, might be greater than factories producing the same kinds of goods." Japan is also the home of small scale industries, large scale industries constituting only 26 per cent of the total industries. It is a well known fact that much of the pre-war prosperity of Japan was due to her flourishing small scale industries.

"Small scale industries play an important part in the productive activities of countries like Germany and Japan. It is recorded that 90 per cent of the industrial establishments in Germany are connected with small scale industries and two-fifths of the entire population are employed on them."

Of all cottage industries, the one that can be pursued by everybody under any condition is hand-spinning and weaving. Mahatmaji observes, "at one time, our national economics was this; that just as we produced our own corn and consumed it so did we produce our own cotton, spin it in our homes and wear the clothes woven by our weavers. The charka is a useful and indispensable article for every home. It is a symbol of the nation's prosperity. It is the symbol not of commercial war but of com-

mercial peace. It bears not a message of ill-will towards the nations of the earth, but of good-will and self-help. It will not need a navy for threatening world's peace and exploiting its resources, but it needs a religious determination of millions to spin their yarn in their own home as today they cook their food in their own home." Mahatmaji has enumerated several special features which render handspinning eminently suitable. These include:—

1. It does not require much capital, costly implements or any high decree of skill or intelligence or physical exertion. There is also a tradition in favour of it. From time immemorial India has been the home of cotton manufacture.

2. It is a fundamental necessary of life and stands next only to food.

3. It is independent of the monsoons and can be carried on under any conditions. It also admits of interruptions in the middle.

4. It is not opposed to the religious or social susceptibilities of the people.

5. It provides a ready means of fighting famine.

6. It can be carried on in the very cottage of the peasant and prevents the disintegration of the family under economic stress.

7. It alone can restore some of the benefits which village communities enjoyed in ancient India.

8. It provides a stable and permanent basis for the handloom industry which employs 8 to 10 millions of people in this country.

9. Its revival would give a fillip to a host of allied village occupations.

10. It can ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among the millions of rural folk.

II. It solves unemployment and underemployment.

The need for concentrating on handspinning and weaving will be clear when it is remembered that the annual consumption of cloth in the country is only 16 yards as against 64 yards in U. S. A. 36 yards in Sweden, 34 yards in Germany, 30 yards each in Malaya and Denmark. The National Planning Committee has fixed 30 yards as the minimum requirement in this country.

There are a number of problems facing cottage industries. They need to be assisted by the state if they are to recover the position they held in ancient India. Provision of cheap raw materials, easy credit facilities, technical assistance to improve methods of production, the burden of disposing of the products manufactured—these are some of the directions in which the State can lend a helping hand in the rehabilitation of cottage industries. The question of marketing needs special stressing in this connection. One of the noteworthy features at Martandam was the publicity they organised in regard to the disposal of cottage industries products. Establishment of museums and exhibitions are among the ways in which this publicity can be furthered. It is a frequent complaint of cottage industrialists that they are not able to dispose of the products. The disposal can be successfully done only by organised publicity campaigns.

In conclusion, it may be said, that the restoration of cottage industries to its pristine position is a step of incalculable importance to the economy of this country. It is significant to recall Mahatmaji's words that the extinction of village industries would complete the ruin of 700,000 villages in India.

CHAPTER X

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

Swaraj for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen. I am not interested in freeing India from merely from the English Yoke. I am bent on freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange King Log for King Stork. Driving out the English will not by itself establish Swaraj in India; of course we must fight when our liberty is interfered with. But what next. Do we want the Swaraj of barbarism, freedom to live like pigs in the pigsty without let or hindrance by anybody or do we want the Swaraj of orderliness in which every man or everything will be in his or its proper place We shall be unfit for Swaraj if we are unconcerned about our neighbour's insanitation and are content merely to keep our own surroundings clean. An act of Parliament might give us constitutional Swaraj. But it will be a mere chimera that will profit us, but little, if we are unable to solve these internal problems, (village reconstruction, temperance, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability). In fact, ability to solve these problems is the alpha and omega of real Swaraj of the masses that we all want. . . . The Swaraj of my dream recognises no race or religious distinctions, nor is it the monopoly of lettered persons nor yet of monied men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving toiling millions. . . . The Swaraj of my dream is poor man's Swaraj. . . .

MAHATMAJI.

The position of villages in ancient and modern India has been depicted. R. K. Mukherjee says, "In India more than in any other country the great intellectual and social and religious movements originated in villages and nurtured by their thoughts and aspirations at last reached the cities." The importance of Rural Reconstruction has also been stressed and the broad lines along which it has to be carried on briefly indicated. It is irrelevant to point out that the rehabilitation of the millions of villages is the major task facing the country at present. The post-war period is described as the age of the common man and in this country the rural folk form the rank and file of the common men. The great poet Tagore said, "One is apt to forget them (rural folk) just as one does not think of the earth on which he walks, but these men compose the great mass of life which sustains all civilisations and bears their burdens. Similarly Clouston observes, "To know the simple unsophisticated tiller of the soil is to love him. He is wonderfully contented despite his illiteracy, poverty and low standard of living. He has not been accustomed to luxuries and does not miss them. The pity is that the educated sons of the village move to towns and there are so few left in the village who can by precept and example play the part which is played in rural areas in our own country by the gentleman farmer, parson and the teacher. The villagers stand much in need of men of light and leading who can gain their confidence and help them to ameliorate their lot. . . . The Indian cultivator, far from being a grumbler is one of the most long suffering of his kind in the world. No one who understands the difficulties which he has to face and the losses he sustains from draughts,

animal diseases and insect pests can help sympathising with him." It has been said that the State should "take charge of him who binds the sheaf, who reaps the corn, who wields the sickle and hammer as well as him who runs the plough or turns the wheel." Down the course of uncounted centuries, the prosperity of the tiller of the soil has been the basis of India's economic strength. Mahatmaji observes, "The moment you talk to them (the Indian peasant) and they begin to speak, you will find wisdom drop from their lips. Behind the crude exterior, you will find a deep reservoir of spirituality. I call this culture. You will not find such a thing in the West. You try to engage an European peasant in conversation and you will find that he is uninterested in things spiritual. In the case of the Indian villager an age-old culture is hidden under an encrustment of crudeness. Take away the encrustment, remove his chronic poverty and his illiteracy and you have the finest specimen of what a cultured cultivated, free citizen should be." But during the British period he was the forgotten man. He was looked upon as a milchcow which was bled white on all sides. The Indian peasant was considered by many writers as the most pathetic figure in the Empire. Like the desert camel he bore all burdens, believing in karma or kismet and thinking of his reward in the next world for his miseries in this. It was the fashion to treat poverty as self-induced; the poor are lazy shiftless and thriftless. Sir Thomas Munroe declared however in 1796 with reference to Madras, "they owe their poverty to their Government and neither to their idleness nor the sun."

The reason for the lack of ameliorative activities during the British period has been referred to. The com-

mercial origin and character of the British rule especially during the 17th and 18th centuries partly explain this phenomenon. Ruthnaswamy observes: "To found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers may at first sight appear a project fit only for a nation of shopkeepers" said the great exponent of English policy in the 18th century, Adam Smith and that is what the British did from the beginning of their entrance into India. Commercial were the origins of English rule in India and commercial it has been throughout the formative period of its history in the 17th and 18th centuries, alike in its character and in its influence. The Marquis of Wellesley, one of the greatest of the English rulers of India complained that 'India was ruled not from a palace but from a counting house; not with the ideas of a prince but with those of a retail dealer in muslin and indigo.' . . . The constitution and organisation of the administration, the devices and instruments of Government, the methods of work it favoured, the recruitment of officials, their nomenclature, employment and service were governed by rules and practices derived from commercial origins. . . . In policy also the company was commercial. The promotion of trade and the collection of revenue was the main object of its administration, until about the end. Its chief district officials were and have ever since been known as collectors. It had neither the inclination to acquire, nor did it acquire the revenues needed to promote the material or moral welfare of the people. Even such elementary duties performed in England in the 18th century like the building of roads and canals and the care of the poor were beyond its ken. . . . "

Since the Crown took over the administration some stray efforts were made now and then as we have seen to improve the condition of the masses. These have been noticed in the previous pages. They amounted only to a scratching of the surface though it must be said that in the nature of things an alien rule cannot be expected to achieve cent percent success.

It is gratifying that after the advent of Independence, signs are not wanting that there is a great realisation of the importance of rural welfare to the general prosperity of the country. We are more interested in the peasant than in any other group of human beings observed India's Prime Minister addressing the Associated Chamber of Commerce in December 1947. "A bold peasantry is its country's pride." We see a spate of reconstruction measures under way almost everywhere in this country. But a note of caution has to be sounded. These measures by themselves can do precious little unless care is taken to see that they really prove useful to the masses. It has to be remembered that during the British period there were salutary measures now and then, but actually they achieved little. Instances may be cited. The Land Improvement Loans Act and the Agriculturist Loans Act are two of the measures put on the statute book during the British period for the benefit of the ryot. But how little was the benefit from these acts and how indifferently were they administered, are matters of common knowledge. The simile has been mentioned that the mere purchase of a thermometer cannot bring down the fever of a patient and in the same way mere salutary measures cannot by themselves take us far. There must be in the first place a definite plan of action and an efficient machinery to carry it into execution, as

well as to mobilise all forces that would assist towards this end.

A propos of the reconstruction measures that are under way in different parts of India, it may be pointed out that there is no uniformity in the machinery employed to carry out village uplift work. In some provinces there are Rural Reconstruction boards; in other places, separate departments and yet in others, the concerned departments carry on the work. The bare outlines of a proper machinery have been indicated in an earlier chapter. One or two points connected with the execution of reconstruction work have to be reiterated. The importance of a large measure of non-official participation in rural uplift work cannot be minimised. Part of the success of both the Punjab and Martandam experiments had been due to the enthusiastic co-operation of non-officials. It was the absence of such co-operation that led to similar efforts in British period petering out. Non-officials will sometimes be able to do what may not be possible for departmental officers. Darling says, "in the village anything is possible if the right person leads," and the villagers' greatest need today is good leaders. Again, in any matter concerning the welfare of the masses, they have to be taken into confidence more or less as partners in the same enterprise. Lord Roseberry once said, "a state is in essence a great joint stock company with unlimited liability on the part of the shareholders." Speaking about the past, M. L. Darling observes, "One reason why the results have been so meagre is that the peasants' co-operation has not been secured. Many thought that they knew his needs better than he did himself and presented him schemes and nostrums in which he saw expenditure, but not advantage,—what is needed is a closer study of his mind and environment and the handling of his needs

and difficulties by men gifted with understanding and patience and imbued with respect for his worth."

Reference has been made to the need for a clear cut plan. Without such a plan, uplift work may not lead anywhere. Not only a plan, but a time-table with targets fixed. Fixation of targets is a great stimulus to work. The selection of personnel is also equally important. It is not unheard of in this country that often implementation of good policies has suffered on account of the absence of efficient or specially trained personnel. Persons with the required qualifications and talents have to be called in at any cost, for non-utilisation of such talents on any ground may lead to delaying the progress of the country and from that point of view may prove a crime against the nation. When a country is faced with war or internal or external trouble, the best men are put in key positions, irrespective of their background or affiliations; so also should be the case when tasks of national importance confront a nation or a country.

It is not feasible to lay down detailed lines of procedure in regard to field work; however, one or two facts of outstanding importance call for mention.

The primary problem in India is the raising the standard of the masses and to this end the income from the chief occupation in this country has to be increased in the first place. Hence the fact that improvement in agriculture should have the first place in any scheme of rural uplift. Both Brayne and Hatch recognised this fact and shaped their plans accordingly. It has been authoritatively said that a 5 per cent increase in the output of agriculture will add more to national wealth than a 50 per cent increase in

industrial output. This statement clinches the entire issue. Chenevix-Trench says (Social Service in India) "The most obvious and possibly the only way out of the impasse is to increase the productive capacity of the 200 million cultivators and raise their standards of living. That is a long row to hoe. First in competing with the farmer of the world's more temperate climates, the ryot is severely handicapped by sheer physical unhealthiness. Malaria, hookworm, guineaworm, cholera and other complaints slay and enfeeble him by the million. Vigour and enterprise are not to be expected in a rural population every member of which, on the average is sick for one month out of the twelve. Secondly the ryot works under the disadvantage of extreme insecurity of crop outturn. Thirdly owing to imperfect elementary education he falls an easy prey to every wind-bag agitator and every breath of false rumour. A strong medical service, improved agricultural methods and improved education are his most urgent needs." Indications have been given in Chapter VIII regarding the ways in which it is possible to improve agriculture. It is often forgotten that the prosperity of agriculture is the prosperity of persons and not of acres. There are a number of forces contributing to the welfare of the agricultural industry and one author has listed the more important of them as follows: (1) The system of land tenure. (2) The fiscal organisation of the country and in particular the assistance to agriculture by tariffs and subsidies. (3) The system of general education and the special provision for agricultural education and research. (4) The economic organisation of the industry and in particular the development among the farmers of co-operative methods of purchase and sale, co-operative credit and co-operative insurance. (5) The institution of

schemes for the improvement of livestock and crops, the standardisation of produce and the control of weeds and vermin. (6) The organisation of transport, the provision of power and wireless, the assistance to subsidiary rural industries and the development of afforestation. (7) The development of State or voluntary organisation to provide the necessary local and central machinery for carrying out the various measures of agricultural policy. It is also important that overcrowding in agriculture is reduced to a minimum. Addressing the Mysore University Convocation in 1948, Sir M. Visveswarayya said "all countries which have become civilised have done so by reducing the number of citizens employed on agriculture and putting them on other more profitable occupations." "In Russia, before the revolution, one in every 5 persons engaged in agriculture was superfluous. The total surplus agrarian population was estimated at 20 millions and one of the first steps which Russia took was to reduce this number. The same thing has to be done in India also. The first and foremost aim of every well-wisher of this country should be that the farmer who toils and works at the farm gets a sufficient return for his labour. The Nation which disregards this first principle of providing enough for those who produce food and clothing for the Nation can never hope to prosper." The organisation and activities of the United States department of Agriculture seems to be a model for India to follow. The department is described as a thoroughly business like institution and it has an army of over 20,000 workers of every kind. The functions of the American Board of agriculture are performed by 17 bureaus which act as an intelligence department by providing agriculturists with valuable information of every kind.

Speaking of the functions of the department of agriculture, a recent English writer states "The department of agriculture acts like a University. A University has a two fold purpose—research and tuition. The United States Board of Agriculture acts like a gigantic University. It carries out researches by thousands of experts of its own. In addition, research is carried on independently by thousands of experts employed by the richly endowed departments of agriculture belonging to individual states. The results of these investigations and of the experiments made by private societies and individuals are collected sifted and classified at Washington and are then communicated to the agriculturists by means of pamphlets, books, etc. . . . The United States department of agriculture teaches not only by means of its publication—it might be filthily, be described as the greatest correspondence school on the world. . . . but also by lecturing as does every University.

It is now widely recognised that co-operation is the only lever whereby the rural folk can be elevated. Long ago the Royal Commission on Indian Agriculture observed "if co-operation fails there will fail the best hope of rural India" So in almost all provinces there is a drive to start co-operative societies especially of a multipurpose nature, but the number of co-operative societies in any area may not be an infallible index that co-operation has struck roots there just as the number of churches, temples or mosques cannot be taken to indicate unmistakably the religiosity of the people in any area. Co-operative societies whether multipurpose or otherwise can succeed only if the co-operative principle has been fully assimilated by the masses. Speaking of co-operation in the past an author says, "So far co-operation has been tried as a

last desperate remedy by a doctor who has no enthusiasm on a patient who has no faith for an ill, it cannot cure." Another author speaks as follows: "the main difficulties lie in the fact that we have begun at the wrong end. Instead of increasing the income of the cultivator and making arrangements for the investment of his savings we have started with the credit side of it and that too with official control. If you can manage to put a small amount more in the pocket of the cultivator over and above his present earning, he would better realise the value of co-operation. By organising societies for providing improved methods of agriculture for selling his produce at a higher rate and for purchasing his requirements at cheap rates, etc., we can create confidence in the agriculturist and thereby impress upon him the real purpose of co-operation—In Denmark, co-operative societies advise the cultivator as to the best cow he should purchase and also the place where it can be had. Not only that, they negotiate the transaction for him and give him advice as to the best and cheapest food for the animal. The society disposes of his milk in the best market and supplies him with all his requirements. Such societies in this country are likely to succeed." Educational propaganda to strengthen the roots of co-operation in public minds must be undertaken assiduously by the department of co-operation. The various media of propaganda noticed in Chapter VIII have to be skillfully pressed into service to this end.

It is also necessary to caution against the temptation of placing undue or exclusive emphasis on the economic aspect of Rural Reconstruction work alone. Of course, man is an economic being, but he is equally a social and spiritual being, and the need for a simultaneous improvement in all these aspects cannot be unduly emphasised. The suggestion has been

made that it is desirable to have an organisation within the village to keep things ship-shape.

“Nothing can be done well” says Brayne, “and no improvement can be permanent in your villages or in any villages of the world unless there is some organisation to carry it on.” The creation of village councils or associations has been suggested. But such an organisation is only for a particular kind of work, namely, village uplift. It is necessary to have a more broadbased organisation to look after the entire interests of the village. It is here, that the question of re-organising village Panchayat comes in. Already the various Governments have begun to move in this direction. The talk about Panchayat Raj is heard everywhere. But much depends on the way in which the Panchayats are re-organised. Writing on this, in the course of an article under the caption, “How to make democracy work,” Ruthnaswamy observed, “As a sound political structure must be built from the foundations up, decentralisation must start with the village. . . . the village self-Government. . . must be thorough as far as it goes although it must not go further than the affairs of the village. All those matters that concern the life of the village must be within the competence of its governing body—including the settlement of its civil and criminal cases except serious complicated cases like murder or dacoity. Especially the village should have its own police for the maintenance of peace and order. . . no longer should the village depend for this, on the rare periodical visits of the constable or the head constable from a distant police station. Besides the preservation of their own peace and order, the village governing body must be entrusted with the care of roads to and from the village, the sanitation, drainage, health, housing, water-supply

through wells, elementary education, care of the poor and the development of village agriculture and industry. To enable villagers to do their work, they must have the necessary financial resources. It is no good Panchayat bills providing for additional cesses and the rates to be levied by them. Some portion of the land revenue should be earmarked for the village. If the villagers see some of their own money come back to them for their benefit, they may be encouraged to tax themselves still more by the levy of additional cesses and rates. And it is in villages that the fullest and the most direct form of democracy may be tried. Adult universal suffrage may be tried here without fear of evil consequences. The villagers know each other and know their business. They must be allowed to elect their president, their governing body or Panchayat. All things considered, the fullest self-Government must be provided for the villager." The rejuvenation of the Panchayats, in order that they may be a live-force in village welfare is an essential part of the village uplift scheme. It has been said that the Panchayat is the uneducated peasants' only way of making known his wishes effectively and also his best safeguard against his being exploited or ignored.

How similar organisations have proved useful in the West is clear from the following extract taken from "Today":

"A nation gets the Government it deserves" is an saying, and its truth has been borne out by history. Where people have been responsible, with a well-developed sense of their duty towards each other, they have had good Government. The British system, whereby the people, through the members who represent them in Parliament and on the local government bodies, have

their say in how their country shall be run is the result of centuries of effort and experience. But while the system of government has become increasingly more complex the basic values are still unchanged, that is, the working together of the people for their common good. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the smallest unit of government, the Parish Council. Every village in Britain which has more than three hundred people has its Parish Council of men and women who give their free time in service to the community.

It is the duty of the Parish Council, if the demand is great enough, to acquire land for use as allotments or playing-fields, and to make it ready for use by draining, fencing-in and equipping. Large scale water supplies to the village are not the concern of the Council, but they may dig new wells or pipe or pump supplies from streams within the parish if necessary. Stagnant ponds or ditches likely to carry disease can be compulsorily cleansed by the Council, and it is their duty to report to higher authority any sanitary defect in the parish. By exercising its right to appoint at least one of the managers of every primary school and one or more governors of any secondary school in their area, the Council has a voice in the education of the children and youth of their village. Extra educational facilities such as evening classes, nursery schools and libraries must be arranged for by the Council through the appropriate authority if there is a local demand. In a land as intensively farmed and cultivated as Britain, foot and bridle paths which have been declared permanent rights-of-way to the public are important, and the Parish Council ensures that these are kept clear so that the public may enjoy the country without damaging crops.

The activities of the Council are financed by the revenue from a special parish rate, rents from allotments, or by approved loans. The treasurer is usually the manager of the local bank with which the Council deposits its funds.....

This Council is concerned with the local government of two villages. Its members are men and women of diverse occupations, but all are striving to maintain the individual characteristics of their villages and to keep the communal spirit of their people flourishing."

Enough has been said in the preceding pages to show the importance of propaganda in rural uplift activities. The skilful handling of this subject is an important factor in the success of rural uplift. How it was done in the Punjab and Martandam, we have noticed. Propaganda when properly done will accelerate the tempo of uplift work. A recent author has observed on the role of propaganda as follows: "Fear of failure and want of self-confidence are the sins of our people. Pessimism and fatalism have killed hope in their breasts and benumbed their spirits. Let us infuse hope and courage into them, let us teach them the lesson of self-confidence, awaken hope in their future, let us ask them in the words of the poet" "to be up and doing with heart for any fate "and let us make them" learn to labour and wait."

In order to create the proper atmosphere a very determined and organised effort is needed. A strong organisation is necessary for the success of such country-wide propaganda and the workers will have to contend against enormous odds and spirit-killing disappointments.

At present most of the Provinces have their own propaganda apparatus and they function in isolation without any technical assistance from the centre. This was not however the case with wartime propaganda. The National War Front at the Centre had a planning, production, and distribution section which assisted the provinces with publicity stuff as well as technical guidance in all matters pertaining to propaganda. Apart from routine propaganda materials, they issued from time to time, talking points, guidance notes, directives, notes for speakers, etc., and these proved valuable to the provinces. The provinces also consulted the Central National War Front on matters in which they thought that guidance was necessary. Such an arrangement made for efficiency as well as economy. In the first place the Centre was able to employ first-rate men specially trained in propaganda and their services were thus available to all the provinces. The arrangement also saved the provinces from the necessity of employing similar technical personnel on an elaborate scale. A similar procedure can be adopted by the Department of Information and Broadcasting of the Union Government in regard to publicity bearing on Rural Reconstruction. A separate rural propaganda section in the Department of Information manned by experts may prove a step in the right direction. Such a section may keep itself in close touch with the activities in each Province, through official reports, attend to the general requirements in each province, tender technical guidance when necessary, and in fact, ensure in all possible ways that the propaganda carried on is efficient and effective. Such guidance from the Centre is sure to provide an added stimulus to reconstruction work in the provinces. Part of the vigour and drive which characterised the activities of the Provincial

National War Fronts was traceable to the close collaboration and guidance from the Centre.

The question of finance cannot stand in the way of improving rural welfare. The oft-quoted words of Lord Wavell merit reproduction in this context. "It has always seemed a curious fact that money is forthcoming in any quantity for a War, but that no nation has produced the money on the same scale to fight the enemies of peace—poverty, lack of education, unemployment and ill-health." Says Dr. N. N. Ganguli, "his (ryot's) welfare and the welfare of the country are so much linked with each other that it behoves everyone to interest himself in his cause."

"The rural uplift is not the politician's chess-board, although the politician gifted with vision can do much; rural uplift is not the amateur's pastime although the enthusiastic amateur borne on a series of brainwaves and psychological impulses can in his own way help to defeat the villager's apathy, etc. The rural uplift is not a field-day for the formalist, the departmentalist, the thumb rulist....." It is a jealous mistress.

Before concluding it is important to stress the vital role the youths in this country have to play in the sphere of rural uplift and other welfare activities. Youth movements, properly guided can be of considerable assistance in any constructive field. Reference has been made in an earlier chapter to the useful part which the scouts played in the rural uplift scheme sponsored by Sriniketan. In the past, little was done to enlist the services of the youths of this country in the cause of nation building. Cowley observes, "What appeal has been made for

improvement of rural conditions and agricultural production has been directed solely at adults. For them, changing of old ideas and the giving up of old prejudices are very difficult. With youth it is easy. The necessity of increasing agricultural production through new and improved methods of agriculture is universally accepted, but unless an appeal is made to the younger members of the agricultural community, the process will be slow. . . . "In most of the Western countries there are clubs in colleges devoted to social work. It is necessary to organise the youths in this country on constructive lines. The suggestion has been made that there must be a national youth service in the best sense of the word. In some parts of India efforts were made in the past to organise youths. The Punjab before partition appointed a provincial youth organiser and made grants for young farmers' clubs, students camps and physical training. But more systematic efforts are necessary now. To quote Cowley again, "For years the so-called beneficent departments have tried hard to improve the condition of village life. The usual method has been for some more or less eloquent speaker to go to a village and harangue adult members of the village on his particular subject—public health, use of improved seeds, co-operation, digging minature pits or the use of ventilators. The practical results of this kind of rural uplift have been on the whole disappointingly evanescent. No one seems to have thought of collecting the young people of a village together, teaching them a few games and then using the energy and enthusiasm of youth to effect the necessary improvement in the village. Yet this is the only way which offers much hope for success. The older people are too conditioned by custom and convention. They are not receptive to new ideas. Our only hope lies in

influencing the young. . . .” This has been the main principle behind the organisation of young Farmers clubs in the Punjab during the prepartition days.

Farmers clubs are common in some of the Western countries, such as England or Scandinavia. The 4—clubs in America also come under the same category. During the period before the second World War, the English countryside organised young farmers clubs to meet its needs. These clubs did a lot to assist the State to solve the problem of food production. It has been estimated that at present there are about 800 farmers clubs in England and Wales with a membership of more than 40,000 of whom over one-third are girls. These clubs are much more than groups of young people indulging in some form of farming activity as a hobby. In addition to producing food and rearing stock, the activities of these clubs include lectures and discussions on all kinds of topics, debates, visit to farms, instruction in rural crafts, such as sheep rearing, hedging, ploughing, milking, agricultural engineering, farm book keeping, etc. These clubs, above all, seeks to promote a sense of corporate responsibility and service to the community. Some clubs grow new crops and conduct field experiments and the benefit of their experience is made available to all others. Annual competitions and rallies are held. The club is a democratic body and manage its own affairs. It has a leader and an Advisory Committee of expert farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture considers the young farmers club movement to be a vital contributory factor in promoting agricultural production, rural standards of living and the framework of agricultural education.

Similar use is made of the 4H clubs in America. The 4Hs stand for head, heart, hand and health and the 4H clubs pledge themselves as follows :

I pledge
 My Head to clearer thinking,
 My Heart to greater loyalty,
 My Hands to larger service,
 My Health to better living for my club, my community and my country.

From all these facts one point that is very striking is the systematic efforts that Governments all over the country are taking to promote agriculture and to improve rural parts. This is as it should be. Writing about 300 years ago on the importance of agriculture to a country, Markam said, "The husbandman is the master of the earth turning barrenness into fruitfulness whereby all commonwealths are maintained and upheld. His labour giveth liberty to all vocations, arts and trades to follow their several functions with peace and industry. What can we say in this world is profitable where husbandry is wanting, it being the great nerve and sinew which holdeth together all the joints of a monarchy." If this is the case with all countries it is more so with India where agriculture is to the country what breath is to the body.

Independent India has a leading part to play not only in Asia but in the entire world. And this will not be possible if her villages are sunk in poverty, ignorance and squalor. She has to rehabilitate the country-side and place the rural folk on their feet. The ideal village has been defined as one in which a fuller living is possible for one and all; in which

one class is not exploited by another; in which the people live for the good of the whole community and where people are happy and prosperous in material things and rich in the spiritual and cultural side of life. All the resources have to be fully mobilised towards this end which has to be achieved at any cost. Then the world role of this ancient land will become easy and enduring.

EPILOGUE

“ THE GREAT CHALLENGE ”

Man does not live by bread alone, said a great Teacher of mankind nearly two thousand years ago and it is as true now as when these words were uttered. Mahatma Gandhi has also emphasised the same truth in the course of his speeches and writings. He has laid stress on the fact that man is not merely an economic being, but his cultural and spiritual sides are as important. This fact is one of the distinctive features of his philosophy. So, in the process of effecting all-round improvement it is also important to see that the rural folk are rendered immune to subversive ideologies of which there are many sponsors in the post-war world. When once the villager has been placed on his feet economically and culturally or efforts are being made to attain that end, it has to be ensured that he is not swept off his feet by the whirlwind of destructive ideologies which may find him an easy prey in the present context of world affairs, or which may undo the work which the Government have done or are doing.

Communism is one such dangerous ideology from which the rural folk has to be protected. It is proving to be one of the gravest menaces to which this country is exposed and has been described as a “negation of all that is sacrosanct and noble in the life of man.” But despite this fact, the possibility of its extending its tentacles in wider and wider areas cannot easily be discounted. Recently, an American writer said that poverty is the greatest fifth column for communism and that there is plenty of it in India. Betrand Russel expresses the same view when he says that a condition of widespread distress is a

necessary preliminary to the spread of communism. The possibilities of communist menace, increasing cannot therefore be ignored and every effort has to be made to tackle it successfully. Says Harold Laski, "Nothing is gained in any discussion of communism by treating it as a wicked doctrine which would never have arisen if a handful of criminal adventurers had not devoted themselves to its propagation. Like any other system of beliefs, it is the outcome of its environments and its acceptance by large bodies of men is no more natural than their acceptance of other creeds."

This fact pleads for a realistic approach to the communist menace. In the present day India, it cannot be denied that with the numerous problems left by a global war and the accumulation of troubles brought about by Partition, Communists may find a fertile ground for the propagation of their pernicious doctrines. Especially the rural folk in this country are gullible and they have a tradition of falling into the trap of their more cunning and self-seeking fellow countrymen. It is therefore incumbent on the Government to see that the unsophisticated masses in this country are not misled by communist propagandists. Incidentally, it has been said that propaganda is a science in the hands of communists. The art of persuasion is inculcated into their disciples as Geography or Arithmetic. They train agents whose business is to adapt their creed to their audience. A communist will never openly appear as a communist. He will not ask the Brahmin to abolish the Almighty or preach to the Kshatriya the dignity of labour. He will never unfold to the Zamindar or merchant his scheme for the abolition of private property. He will first seek to strike at the root of the state, he will instil into the poor hatred of the rich,

he will hinder the governments from doing any constructive work, he will sedulously foment discontent and by all such means strive to capture power.

When the enemy is thus dangerous, there should be concerted offensive against him. It cannot be forgotten that in spite of the questionable aims and *modus operandi* of the communists, communism has a fundamental appeal to the less fortunate section of humanity. "It is easy, for instance," says an author, "that the unemployed of Great Britain might easily give ear to a doctrine which promises to them with audacious certainty the prospect of ultimate reward the Arab, the chinaman and the African Negro excluded from citizenship by prejudice and fear will easily lend ear to theories, which insist upon the approaching end of the whiteman's exploitation. Wherever there exist suffering and injustice, there exists also a territory in which communism has reason to expect acceptance. Wherever a national minority feels outraged, there will be found a seed ground for communist propaganda. Wherever there is exploitation of race by race as in South Africa, for example, it is easy to see that the communist insistence on racial equality proves an impetus to accept its coincident hypotheses."

Nevertheless, communism bristles with impracticabilities. But it is too much to expect the common man to pause and ponder over them without being deflected by its apparently humanitarian objectives. He has neither the time nor the intellectual equipment for it. The masses are said to be generally sheepish in their attitude and they prefer to be guided. They may fail to note that communism seeks to attract by its idealism and not by its realism. Dreams of a classless society may be pleasant to contemplate and the

ideal that "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" may exercise an irresistible fascination over guileless folk. And they will never trouble themselves with thoughts of their feasibility.

In these circumstances it is the fundamental duty of the Government to expose the fallacies of communism, how it is a subversive ideology and how it is unsuited to conditions in this country. This has to be done side by side with administrative measures to put down lawlessness on the part of communists. Lloyd George once said that one cannot fight down an idea with steel and iron alone. Something more than that is needed if communism is to be successfully driven underground. So, the propaganda aspect in the offensive against communism cannot be over-emphasised. There should be a regular barrage of propaganda under the auspices of the Information departments both Central and Provincial. It has been said that the cure of propaganda is more propaganda. Students of Russian history will testify to the carefully organised propaganda of the communists in the early days of the revolution to strengthen their cause. It is possible to employ the same methods against them now in this country with equal effect. It has been suggested in some quarters that the Central Government should assume responsibility for the direction of propaganda in this matter. This does not however mean that the Provincial governments have little or nothing to do. Communist activities may vary from Province to Province and Provincial governments may well confine themselves to all the aspects of the local manifestations of the trouble. The more fundamental aspects may be handled by the Central Government. At present the criticism is heard that there is little co-ordination in the field of publicity or propaganda.

One or two points regarding the lines on which anti-communist propaganda is to be carried on may be mentioned here. It is not enough if the atrocities committed by communists are given wide publicity in the same way as war propagandists, broadcast atrocity stories both real and imaginary in order to provoke a feeling of revulsion against their enemies. Of course such atrocity stories have a role to play but they do not go the whole way. The essential fallacies underlying communism have to be pointed out through the various media of propaganda to which a brief reference has been made in an earlier part of this book. It is also advisable to filmatise topics on communism. By the way, in Russia in the post-revolutionary period, the stage and the screen were fully pressed into service by communists to depict the Czar regime in the blackest of colours and to boost up their own ideology. Educative lectures may also be organised by the governments for the edification of the masses. Talking points may be prepared by the Information departments and distributed to the lecturers. The personnel of the Education Department may be called in to make the lectures. They will also be helpful in protecting the school-going population from the virus of communism. During the last war in many provinces, the propaganda done by the personnel of the Education Department under the guidance of the National War Front proved very effective. Similarly, organisations of youths in this country can also be indented upon for the purpose. It is a significant fact that in Russia, an organisation of youths called the Pioneers as well as the Communist league of youths contributed much to strengthen the roots of communism in the country. Here also the same line can be adopted. Elsewhere in the book some indications have been given regarding the youth

movement and their possibilities. What we have been lacking in the past is a planned organisation to tap all the resources fully, co-ordinate the efforts, and produce maximum results.

It is irrelevant to point out here that the environment which assists the growth of communism has to be radically improved in the process of combating communism. Rural uplift is a move in this direction. Similar other measures have also been taken in order that the mass of people may not feel any attraction for communism. The governments, both Central and Provincial are moving further in the direction and considering the circumstances of the country after the attainment of Freedom barely four years ago, it must be said to the credit of the governments that their output in the field of social welfare is quantitatively and qualitatively not inconsiderable. Given time and the unstinted co-operation of the people, more solid results can be expected.

END

