



**THE REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**TWO-MAN COMMITTEE**  
**ON**  
**RURAL WELFARE WORK**  
**IN MADRAS**

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# REPORT OF THE TWO-MAN COMMITTEE ON RURAL WELFARE WORK.

## I. INTRODUCTION.

It was four years ago that the Government first asked one of us to visit the selected firkas and to study the Rural Welfare work in them and to report to Government on the same. That report was printed and made available to all those concerned. It contained the detailed study then made in seven districts and at 71 village centres. In the present report we do not propose to put down our detailed studies of the various centres visited. This time we saw the work in 8 districts and at 90 centres. Instead of giving detailed impressions and criticisms of all the centres visited, we shall in this report give impressions and views classified broadly under certain important general headings. The general features of the work are now fairly well known and it is not necessary to cover familiar ground over again.

We have made our study strictly objective. We did not import into it any set pre-conceived ideas. We kept an open mind throughout. As we carefully scrutinized the details of the work, discussed problems and difficulties with the Grama Sevaks and the Rural Welfare Officers and got into touch with the mind of crowds of village people everywhere, we kept before ourselves three major questions to be answered, i.e., (1) how far had the original objectives of the Rural Welfare Scheme been fulfilled; (2) how far had the people responded unreservedly and (3) what must now be done to carry on the work more fully and effectively. In fact almost the whole of our report will be our answers to these questions. We have kept in mind a full and authentic picture of the work, as it stands to-day, with its achievements, its present difficulties and gaps and the urgent needs of a dynamic situation created in the villages through Rural Welfare work. It was not difficult to find out the flaws and the gaps. It took some time however to discover that the work itself has created a new situation in the villages which the Government can only handle with true wisdom and courage. Forces have been generated and they are healthy forces in every way which must now be reckoned with. Otherwise, there will not merely be frustration but active and even aggressive discontent. The work has created healthy discontent in the minds of the villagers and it must now be met with better and more comprehensive work. Otherwise the restlessness of the people might flow into difficult channels.

In answering the three major questions mentioned above, we have kept before us not only the impressions of the work on the spot but the innumerable discussions we have had with officials and

non-officials including Collectors, Members of the Legislatures and numerous village people. No proper judgment of our report will be easy unless it is understood that nothing we have stated in it is subjective opinion. On the contrary, our analysis and conclusions have pressed themselves upon us by the weight of the objective realities of the situation we studied.

We have no hesitation in saying that there was hardly any attempt at window-dressing on the part of those work we examined. In a few instances at least our visits were without notice. All our questions were answered frankly by those concerned. Quite a number of our views and conclusions are those already arrived at in the minds of those engaged in the work. We thus partly reflect in our report the experiences of the workers themselves and the conclusions to which they have been driven by the exigencies of the very work they are doing.

## II. DETAILED ITINERARY.

<i>Number and district.</i>	<i>Firka.</i>	<i>Village.</i>	<i>Date.</i>
1 Malabar .. ..	Tellicherry ..	Nedumpuram ..	23rd February 1953.
2 Do. ....	Do. ..	Chokli .. ..	Do.
3 Do. ....	Do. ..	Aniyaram ..	Do.
4 Do. ....	Do. ..	Perungathur ..	Do.
5 Do. ....	Do. ..	Dharmadam ..	Do.
6 Do. .. ..	Do. ..	Chambat ..	24th February 1953.
7 Do. ....	Do. ..	Kolavallur ..	Do.
8 Do. ....	Do. ..	Poiloor ..	Do.
9 Do. ....	Do. ..	Valakkode ..	Do.
10 Do. ....	Do. ..	Thripprangothur.	Do.
11 Do. ....	Do. ..	Kodavathur ..	Do.
12 Do. ....	Do. ..	Tellicherry ..	Do.
13 Do. ....	Payyanur ..	Karmel desam ..	25th February 1953
14 Do. ....	Do. ..	Payyanur ..	Do.
15 South Kanara ..	Sullia .. ..	Bellare .. ..	26th February 1951.
16 Do. ....	Do. ..	Kalanja .. ..	Do.
17 Do. ....	Do. ..	Amara Padanur.	Do.
18 Do. ....	Do. ..	Amara Muduru.	Do.
19 Do. ....	Do. ..	Gurthigar ..	Do.
20 Do. ....	Mulki .. ..	Kondemule ..	27th February 1953.
21 Do. ....	Do. ..	Kinnigoli (Tali- pedi and Mannapeta).	Do.
22 Do. ....	Do. ..	Kilpadi .. ..	Do.
23 Do. ....	Do. ..	Hejmadi .. ..	Do.
24 Do. ....	Do. ..	Padupanambur.	Do.
25 Do. ....	Do. ..	Kemal .. ..	Do.
26 Do. ....	Do. ..	Tokur .. ..	Do.
27 Cuddapah .. ..	Proddatur ..	Chowdur .. ..	7th March 1953.
28 Do. ....	Do. ..	Vaddirala ..	Do.

<i>Number and district.</i>	<i>Firka.</i>	<i>Village.</i>	<i>Date.</i>
29 Cuddapah ..	Proddatur ..	Talamanchipatnam.	7th March 1953.
30 Do. ..	Do. ..	Chinnakomirala.	Do.
31 Do. ..	Do. ..	Dorsanapalle ..	Do.
32 Do. ..	Do. ..	Rajupalem ..	Do.
33 Do. ..	Do. ..	Gadegudur ..	Do.
34 Do. ..	Do. ..	Tangatur ..	Do.
35 Do. ..	Do. ..	Tallamapuram ..	8th March 1953.
36 Do. ..	Do. ..	Pollavolu ..	Do.
37 Do. ..	Do. ..	Lazmpeta ..	Do.
38 Do. ..	Do. ..	Anandashram ..	Do.
39 Do. ..	Do. ..	Kotta Alladapalli.	Do.
40 Do. ..	Do. ..	Obulreddipeta ..	Do.
41 Do. ..	Do. ..	Chinnagoruvalur.	Do.
42 Do. ..	Do. ..	Gandhinagar ..	Do.
43 Do. ..	Do. ..	Viswanadhapuram	Do.
44 Do. ..	Do. ..	Chapad ..	Do.
45 Kurnool ..	Yerragondapalem.	Yerragondapalem.	10th March 1953.
46 Do. ..	Do.	Nayudupalem ..	Do.
47 Do. ..	Do.	Enduruvaripalem.	Do.
48 Do. ..	Do.	Annasamudram ..	Do.
49 Do. ..	Do.	Veerabhadrapuram.	Do.
50 Do. ..	Do.	Pullalacheruvu ..	Do.
51 Do. ..	Do.	Amanigudipadu.	Do.
52 West Godavari ..	Denduluru ..	Gopannapalem ..	12th March 1953.
53 Do. ..	Do. ..	Janampeta ..	Do.
54 Do. ..	Do. ..	Dharmajigudem.	Do.
55 Do. ..	Do. ..	Jogannapalem ..	13th March 1953.
56 Do. ..	Do. ..	Naguladevuni-padu.	Do.
57 Do. ..	Do. ..	Satyanarayana-puram.	Do.
58 Do. ..	Do. ..	Denduluru ..	Do.
59 Tanjore ..	Thiruthurai-poondi.	Muciaheri ..	7th April 1953.
60 Do. ..	Do.	Vadugur ..	Do.
61 Do. ..	Do.	Talanayar ..	Do.
62 Do. ..	Do.	Manakudi ..	Do.
63 Do. ..	Do.	Vedaranyam ..	8th April 1953.
64 Do. ..	Do.	Karuppanpalem.	Do.
65 Do. ..	Do.	Ayakaranpalem.	Do.
66 Do. ..	Do.	Palayankudi ..	Do.
67 Do. ..	Do.	Kothangudi ..	Do.
68 North Arcot ..	Kalasapakkam.	Kalasapakkam ..	9th April 1953.
69 Do. ..	Do.	Poondi ..	Do.
70 Do. ..	Do.	Vilvarani ..	Do.
71 Do. ..	Do.	Melapalur ..	Do.

<i>Number and district.</i>	<i>Firka.</i>	<i>Village.</i>	<i>Date.</i>
72 North Arcot ..	Kalasapakkam.	Pillur ..	9th March 1953.
73 Do. ..	Do.	Porkunam ..	Do.
74 Do. ..	Do.	Māruthuvambadi.	10th April 1953.
75 Do. ..	Do.	Karunkalikuppam	Do.
76 Do. ..	Do.	Mekkalur ..	Do.
77 Do. ..	Do.	Thenpallipat ..	Do.
78 Coimbatore ..	Avinashi ..	Avinashi ..	5th May 1953.
79 Do. ..	Do. ..	Permanallur ..	Do.
80 Do. ..	Do. ..	Muthiankinaru ..	Do.
81 Do. ..	Do. ..	Ayagoundenpalem	Do.
82 Do. ..	Do. ..	Puduvānjipala- yam.	Do.
83 Do. ..	Do. ..	Vadugupalayam.	Do.
84 Do. ..	Do. ..	Velayuthanpala- yam.	Do.
85 Do. ..	Do. ..	Sundakanpalayam.	Do.
86 Do. ..	Do. ..	Karuvallur ..	Do.
87 Do. ..	Do. ..	Sokkampalayam ..	Do.
88 Do. ..	Do. ..	Andipalayam ..	6th May 1953.
89 Do. ..	Do. ..	Ganapathypala- yam.	Do.
90 Do. ..	Do. ..	Malayanpalayam.	Do.

### III. GENERAL PRE-VIEW.

This general pre-view is furnished to help in studying the following report in proper perspective. It is intended merely as a guide-card to indicate the general directions in which our survey of the work was made and our views formulated.

1. We have no doubt that it was worthwhile to have started this work and to have conducted it up to the present point.

2. This is the one work which village people in the selected firkas have made their own. To them rural welfare work has come as the only palpable thing in an India which they vaguely understand has become free.

3. The awakening among the villagers in the selected firkas is real. They are looking up and looking forward. They are at last feeling free from many of the inhibitions of the past like fear of officials, suspicion of all new schemes and the mental complex of passivity and fatalism in the face of all troubles and difficulties.

4. After a long gap in their history they have had their first re-training in self-help. Everywhere in the selected firkas they have learnt the lesson that if they help themselves the Government would also help them. The need to put in their own contribution in the shape of voluntary labour, gifts of land and money, is no longer operating as a burden on them. On the contrary they have now discovered the new technique of making new demands on the

basis of their own contributions. The change from the past in regard to this matter is a remarkable psychological one. We have stressed this fully in the subsequent pages and shown what the consequences are as they affect Government.

5. In regard to agricultural improvements, the results are not wholly satisfactory, though a good deal of second-line action has been taken to create better conditions. The weakest point is in regard to village industries and almost nothing has been done under this item. But in regard to such items as village communications and water-supply, village sanitation, spread of village education, general organisation of the village community and training of village workers, the record is excellent.

6. Shortcomings are those of omission rather than of commission and that largely due to lack of adequate funds and to more and better trained personnel.

7. Rural welfare work has specialized in what might be called "tremendous trifles" in the village situation. Items of work done when considered separately might appear insignificant and no one else would ever have thought of them. The cumulative effect is however astonishing. To put up a community latrine in a village, to train people to use it properly and make profit out of it through the composting of manure is a genuine item of such tremendous trifles. Common latrines, little village drainages, tiny libraries and reading rooms, radio-sets worked by battery in villages, small village roads and culverts and even the presentation of a few pictures of Gandhiji or Nehru or Rajendra Prasad are the trifles of work done which to-day in their cumulative effect has created a big situation.

8. But for lack of new programmes and schemes to meet the new situation, and due to a general feeling that financial aid is dwindling, there is a general sense of frustration and lack of initiative. The original enthusiasm has not been kept up.

9. The urgent need is to extend and improve the work. New and appropriate programmes suited to the present situation must be taken up without delay.

#### IV. HOW FAR ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES FULFILLED?

The objectives of the "General Plan for Firka Development Work" as originally laid down may be briefly put down as follows:—

- (1) Improved agriculture. — 7
- (2) Organization of village industries. — 2
- (3) Better sanitation, health and housing, including communications and water-supply.
- (4) Spread of village education. — 1
- (5) Organization of the village community.
- (6) Development of village culture. —
- (7) Proper training of village workers.

It will be worthwhile to take each one of these items and study the present position at the end of six years of work.

(1) *Improved agriculture*.—This is a very big item involving the work of other departments also and it is difficult to assess exactly the results obtained. We found even agricultural officers thought it difficult to assess increased agricultural production in most of the areas visited. But the following achievements stand out clearly :—

(i) The phenomenon of compost-manure pits in ever increasing numbers in most of the villages in the selected firkas. Compared with areas outside these firkas, the phenomenon is very striking. Gramasevakas everywhere, as also Rural Welfare Officers, have put their shoulders to this work vigorously.

(ii) Numerous irrigation tanks and wells have been improved, or constructed almost everywhere.

(iii) A considerable number of pump-sets have been made available and are at work in several firkas.

(iv) Several farms owned by hard-working peasants were improved as models with the help of the department.

(v) Distribution was made of a considerable quantity of improved agricultural implements to poorer farmers on the basis of a 50 per cent subsidy.

N.B.—The figures for the above items obtainable more or less accurately up-to-date are (1) about fifty thousand compost-manure pits, (2) about two thousand wells either newly dug or repaired, and more than two hundred tanks deepened and repaired, (3) nearly six hundred pump-sets set up, (4) more than one thousand five hundred demonstration plots and more than hundred improved agricultural farms started and (5) about rupees one lakh worth of better agricultural implements distributed.

Along with the above cheerful items must be mentioned a few depressing facts. There has been lack of co-operation between the Demonstrators of the Agricultural Department and the special agricultural staff given to the selected firkas, specially in the Andhra area. Moreover, the agricultural staff given to the selected firkas were not qualified enough to undertake real agricultural improvements. The staff supplied also lacked adequate equipment, like sprayers and dusters, improved seeds and adequate number of pump-sets. What is urgently required is that there should be made available in each district and for the selected firkas as Agricultural Demonstrators who will give his full-time to this work. He should also be given adequate equipment. In many places we found that the local Agricultural Demonstrators took little or no interest in the work of the agricultural staff given to the selected firkas. This is a typical instance of lack of co-ordination at the village level. We should state in fairness that we did find in certain districts like North Arcot, Coimbatore, West Godavari, etc., co-operation between the Agricultural Department and the Agricultural staff in the selected firkas.

Therefore in regard to agricultural improvement, while on the one hand adequate results have not been obtained, it is true on the



other that conditions had been created conducive to a general improvement in agriculture in the areas concerned. Surely compost-manure making on a large and systematic scale, improvement of irrigational facilities, installing of a large number of pump-sets, direct incentives given to farmers to improve their cultivation and distribution of better agricultural implements are all royal roads to general agricultural improvement. It would be worthwhile to attempt to assess the proportion of agricultural improvement in one or two selected areas. A major item of work which can now be undertaken will be to ask the Agricultural Department to take advantage of the situation created in the selected firkas for an intensive drive in agricultural improvement. Such a drive would certainly yield remarkable results which may not be easily available in areas untouched by the Rural Welfare Department. We earnestly trust that this will be done immediately.

(2) *Organization of village industries.*—This is the weakest link in the whole chain. More than one scheme for the organization of village industries have been put up including one drawn up by the Secretary of the All-India Village Industries Association. A mountain of labour, however, produced only by a mouse in the shape of a decision to distribute some raw materials and tools to village artisans, the tools free of cost and raw materials at cost price. This has hardly touched the problem of organizing village industries. The immediate and inescapable need is to draw up a co-ordinated plan for the development of village industries and to implement the same directly within the framework of the Rural Welfare Department. To expect the Industries Department as now functioning to organize village industries on an adequate scale is an idle dream. It was one of the important recommendations in "The General Plan for Firka Development Work" drawn up in 1947, that the actual organization of village industries should be entrusted to the Rural Welfare Department and that it should not be left as now to the Industries Department. This was re-emphasized in the report one of us submitted in 1949. And yet after six years the organization of village industries in a proper, systematic and State-wide scale has not even begun. At the two Grama Sevak Vidyalayams under the Rural Welfare Department in Kallupatti and Gopannapalem, two rounds of training of village artisans and others in a number of village industries have been completed. About a hundred people have thus been trained. But no attempt has been made to follow up the training by making it possible for the trained artisans and others to employ themselves profitably in the various village industries. What is necessary is not only training but specific schemes of village industries aided by the department in which the trained worker can be absorbed. Hardly 10 per cent of those trained are working at the village industries in which they obtained training for lack of financial aid and equally for lack of proper schemes of work. This big gap must be filled in as the first step in the organization of village industries.

Let there be no mistake; village reconstruction will continue to be unreal unless we can give the villagers an economic programme through which village artisans can earn a little more than they do to-day. While more and more attention is now being given to agriculture, practically no attention is being given to village industries. At the same time every one admits that without organizing village industries even agricultural improvement will remain unreal. So here is an item of work which is of the utmost importance and which is utterly neglected. In the original "General Plan" suggestions have been made in regard to the organization of village industries. These must now be taken up and implemented. We make the following concrete suggestions in this regard:—

(i) A small high level committee should be set up and charged with the task of drawing up a concrete scheme for the organization of village industries without delay.

(ii) The present Deputy Director for Village Industries working under the control of the Director of Industries and Commerce, should be brought into the Rural Welfare Department to function as Deputy Director for Village Industries under the Director of the Rural Welfare Department, like the Khadi Special Officer.

(iii) A suitable skeleton staff should be created for village industries within the framework of the Rural Welfare Department.

(iv) Funds should be made available for this work.

(v) Targets of production in village industries should be set up.

(vi) As far as possible village industries should be organized through various multi-purpose co-operative societies.

This brings us to the question of multi-purpose co-operative societies which have been formed in the selected firkas and the number of which is more than 2,500. We are confronted with the astonishing spectacle of such a large number of multi-purpose co-operative societies doing practically nothing to increase production of consumer goods through village industries. One of the main objectives in the formation of multi-purpose co-operative societies was certainly increased production through village industries. To begin with, the Co-operative department was dead set against the formation of multi-purpose co-operative societies. But under direction from Government, the Co-operative department registered the above multi-purpose co-operative societies. Having done this, it looks as though the Co-operative department has washed its hands clean of any further effort to make the multi-purpose co-operative societies function really as such. It is for the Government to call for accurate information in this regard and to see to it that the Co-operative department puts life into these societies and link them directly and actively to increased production through village industries and to help in marketing such

produce. If this is not done, the multi-purpose societies, more than 2,500 in number, will continue to remain useless and ineffective as now. In fact the Deputy Director for Village Industries, who under our proposal will become a Deputy Director under the Rural Welfare Department, should be one who has also full training and experience in co-operation.

*Khadi as number one village industry.*—One redeeming feature in this most depressing situation regarding village industry is that the Rural Welfare Department is to-day giving employment and therefore food and life to about 50,000 families through their scheme of Khadi production. That these 50,000 families are thus sustained in these days of famine and scarcity is noteworthy. We saw once again as often before what Khadi production means in villages in and around Yerragondapalem (Kurnool district), Payyanur (Malabar district) and Avanashi (Coimbatore district). It was in Avanashi that we saw one of the huge M.B. sheds stocked with Khadi from floor to ceiling. There must have been Khadi worth more than Rs. 3 lakhs in this one godown. We examined the Khadi pieces, sarees, etc. The quality is excellent and weaving particularly first-class. Outside, there was a long queue of village women waiting with their bundles of yarn to be purchased by the local Khadi Officer and his staff. We talked to them. There was a bitter uproar about the recent reduction in the price of yarn hanks. The price has been reduced from annas three and pies three to annas two and pies eight. What a small reduction this would appear to the city dweller! But to every spinner, and there are 50,000 of them working for the Rural Welfare Department, it has been something like a mortal blow. This has been done to reduce the price of Khadi for the consumer and to clear stocks. Instead of Government furnishing a subsidy to cover the loss due to reduction of prices for clearing stocks, the loss is made good by taking it out of 50,000 spinners who get the least paid as among the various artisans engaged in Khadi production. Ginning, carding and weaving are always better paid than spinning and yet it is out of the spinners that the loss is made good. We consider this totally wrong. But to understand the extent of the poverty in the villages and the urgent need for relief which Khadi production is meeting, it should be mentioned that the one cry from the spinners we met was that even at the reduced wages production should not be curtailed. City economists and officials at high level sitting at Secretarial desks can hardly understand on the one hand the significance of such an economic situation, or on the other the importance of Khadi at this point. Wherever we saw Khadi production work, there we saw something tangible and concrete being done at the village level to relieve extreme distress and poverty. The tragedy of the situation however is that large stocks of excellent Khadi are lying unsold. It was Gandhiji's declared view, and we wholly agree with it, that in such a situation it is for Government

to buy all their cloth needs in every department without exception exclusively in Khadi. For the Government themselves to encourage hand-spinning and put some Rs. 40 lakhs into the work and then let their departments buy cloth elsewhere appears to us to be a hopeless contradiction of policy and practice. We beg of the Government with all the emphasis we can that no relaxation whatsoever should be permitted in the rules asking that Khadi alone should be purchased by the various departments and that if necessary further rules should be made to make such purchase more complete and without any loophole.

We conclude by saying that in face of hard realities of famine, scarcity and growing poverty in the rural areas there is nothing more important in the whole programme of rural welfare than the organization of village industries and the further development and expansion of Khadi.

(3) *Better sanitation, health and housing, including communications and water-supply.*—In regard to this item we wish to clear the ground by saying that so far as communications and water-supply are concerned everything has been done within the limits of funds made available. It is also in regard to these two items that contributions and co-operation from the villagers were forthcoming from the very start in abundant measure. It was with these two items that the department really unlocked the whole programme of their work in the villages. These two have thus been the keys to Rural Welfare work.

It is in the sphere of sanitation and therefore naturally in that of health that the Rural Welfare programme has the best record to show. From the very beginning stress was laid on sanitation and detailed circulars were issued giving instructions and guidance. Some of these circulars are models in their line and are well worth a perusal. Sanitation work became the test for Gramasevaks and Rural Welfare Officers on the one hand and for the co-operativeness of the people on the other. Both have stood this test very well indeed. Being old and experienced village workers ourselves, we both refused to be taken in by mere appearances or frontage cleanliness. We checked up the backyards, the village lanes, round about the wells and peeped everywhere into the community latrines which have now sprung up in many villages. As some one put it jokingly, it looked as though we went into remote villages for a peep into their latrines. Sanitation work stood the test of our close scrutiny. It should be remembered that houses in villages are built without plans and somehow. It is not easy to level up village lanes and streets, dig soak-pits all over the place, build cement drainage systems in many places and more than all to train the people in clean habits. All this has been attempted with a good measure of success. It is not so much the external change in sanitary conditions but even more the change of attitude in village

people which struck us. In the previous report of 1949 it was stated that the Harijan villages in the Andhra area were much behind similar villages in the Tamil districts. But after four years some of the sanitation work we saw in Harijan villages in Andhra exceeded anything we have seen in the Tamil area.

Gandhiji had always insisted that sanitation was the first step in village reconstruction. It would have delighted his heart to see this good work. The sad thing is that outside the Rural Welfare areas sanitation is as bad as ever before.

Housing is a much talked of business. But all talk is about urban housing only. No one talks of housing in villages except giving house-sites to Harijans. In the rural welfare areas some good housing schemes have gone through very well. The technique is simple. A little tempting grant is offered, this brings forth local help from well-to-do upper-caste Hindus; the Harijans eagerly come forward to contribute free manual labour and bright little houses spring up here and there. We saw this in South Kanara, Cuddapah and Coimbatore districts. It is not much as yet, but the technique is a good one and must be adopted and encouraged. We must have seen some fifteen such little colonies. In most cases free gift of land has come from well-to-do Hindus. Evidently Bhoomi-Dan work has gone on unnoticed in a humble way in these places. It is remarkable that this housing work has gone on without special funds or staff. It is the new spirit of co-operative enterprise coming up in a small but significant way. It would be worthwhile if one of the Rural Welfare Officers with experience in this line or some other suitable person is sent round to study all such work and then to make a scheme under which with very little money and no technical staff similar housing could be promoted from district to district. All housing is a baffling problem. Village housing is even worse and yet a way is being shown which must be studied.

(4) *Spread of village education.*—There is no doubt that one of the early spurts of activity in Rural Welfare work was village education. In almost every firka we visited new schools have sprung up with good little buildings put up by villagers with only small tilting grants from the departments. This enthusiasm is still available and the demand for village schools is steadily mounting. Rural Welfare work has certainly stimulated village education. Much more can be done if the flow of small tilting grants is kept up. There is the question of making schools more efficient and it would be a good thing if the Education department will look into this matter with special care in the selected firkas. In how many schools did we not see four and five classes in charge of one solitary teacher? This is the rule and not the exception inside and outside the selected firkas. It is the Government which now find it difficult to keep pace with the growing demand for more and more schools even when such demands are backed up with

adequate local contributions. The number of elementary schools started in the selected firkas is more than 400, night schools, more than 500 and adult schools 656. Among the new schools started 36 were basic schools and 190 old type schools were converted into basic schools. Three hundred and seventy-six reading rooms and 628 village libraries have been opened. The number of books circulated was more than one lakh. Three hundred and thirty-five radio sets have been installed. These are all not inconsiderable achievements. There is one thing, however, which must be mentioned. One of the major decisions in 1948 was that all schools within the selected firkas should be converted into basic schools, that any new school opened must be a basic school and that new teachers' training schools should go to the selected firkas as basic training schools. But so far only ten basic training schools have come into the selected firkas and hundreds of elementary schools still remain unconverted. The blame for this cannot very well be put at the door of the Rural Welfare Department. While therefore village education has certainly been stimulated, the results are not wholly satisfactory.

(5) *Organization of the village community.*—This refers specially to Grama Seva Sanghams and village panchayats. The Grama Seva Sanghams started well almost everywhere and are still active in a majority of cases. There are more than 200 Grama Seva Sanghams with a membership of nearly 50,000. The membership consists mainly of young and enthusiastic villagers. In sanitation work, in the organization of reading rooms libraries, in putting up village entertainments and recreations and in taking charge of special occasions like village festivals, these Sanghams have played a considerable part. In the Panchayat elections held recently it is these Sanghams which supplied a majority of the elected membership. Till now the Grama Seva Sanghams have done the work of village panchayats without the name and from now on they will represent non-official groups in villages co-operating with the elected panchayats. It appeared to us that these Grama Seva Sanghams have become something like a chain of youth leagues of service in the villages. In the coming days it is of the utmost importance that these Grama Seva Sanghams should be further strengthened and nurtured in all ways. If the Panchayats in the selected firkas do better generally than panchayats elsewhere, as they are bound to do, it is due to the fact that many people in villages have received useful training in community work as members of these Sanghams.

(6) *Development of village culture.*—Hopes entertained at the beginning that Rural Welfare work lead to a renaissance of village culture have not been fulfilled. Here and there and specially in the Andhra area we saw cultural activities organized by the Gramasevakas. But this is more the exception than the rule. We wish to make a specific suggestion in this connexion. A small committee of artists, educationists and organizers should be set up

to produce a flexible plan to give a lead in this matter. There is already an awakening in the village mind in many directions and this should be utilized for a programme of cultural revival and development. There is enough talent for music, drama, kathas, games, etc., in the villages. These must be harnessed without delay if the rural welfare programme is to find an abiding place in the hearts of the people. A chain of open-air theatres in villages for *Katha Kalakshepams* and *Burrah Kathas*, village dramas and musical entertainments and a big drive for rural games and tournaments can transform the village situation more quickly than anything else.

It might be a good thing to appoint a suitable person as a provincial organizer for this item of work. What we need is a movement in the South like the *Brathachari* movement in Bengal.

(7) *Training of village workers.*—This item of work has gone through according to plan. Three rounds of training of three weeks each were given to all the Rural Welfare Officers and all the Gramasevakas have been given two rounds of training of three months each. It can, therefore, be said that almost the whole of the staff have received training. The two Gramasevak Vidyalayams at Kallupatti and Gopannapalem have thus played their part in the whole work.

From the light of experience gathered so far, it is a matter for careful consideration how the training programmes in these two institutions can now be gathered for the more difficult and comprehensive work which lies ahead. Rural welfare work is no longer what it was six years ago. There is a new situation and fresh challenges in it. More workers, better trained and equipped have become necessary. We trust careful and immediate attention would be bestowed on this matter. It is a good thing that training in village industries has been added to both these institutions. This will enable theoretical and practical training to go hand in hand. The period of training originally fixed must now be extended to make it more thorough and comprehensive.

*General Remarks.*—It will thus be seen that in answering the question "How far have the original objectives been fulfilled?", we have to state generally that in regard to agriculture the results are only partly satisfactory, in regard to village industries the results are wholly unsatisfactory and that in regard to the remaining items a substantial measure of success has been achieved.

## V. HOW FAR HAVE PEOPLE RESPONDED?

This is a question we studied with much interest in every place we visited. When the Rural Welfare Scheme was started there were misgivings and suspicions. People in the villages asked why they should contribute anything when various Departments concerned were doing their work in the villages with Government funds till then and no one asked for free labour or gifts of land for

a road or well. It took time for the Gramasevaks and the Rural Welfare Officers to carry conviction to the people that it was just because people depended wholly on the Government that various amenities were not reaching the villages as needed by them and that the secret of getting them was for the villagers to share in the burden of contribution and co-operation. When the initial suspicion gave way, the people found out the trick, so to say, of getting demands met by offering their quota of contributions and co-operation. Once this tide got started it steadily grew. The question now is not whether village people are willing to come forward with voluntary labour and other contributions but if Government can make their contributions at all points in sufficient volume to meet the people half-way. As we went from place to place it appeared to us that it is the Government which is now finding it difficult to go half-way. Rural Welfare work has created a new understanding and a new outlook. The people are awake and on the march with their demands. They want a better life in free India. They are prepared to work and put in their quota of contributions. Our impression is clear that having created this dynamic situation, the Government are showing an inclination to turn away from it. But that is impossible. The Government will have to find the resources to meet the people half-way. There is no other choice. The people have responded very well. What the Community Projects and the National Extension Service Scheme are asking from the people elsewhere, the people here are pressing forward with because of the State's Rural Welfare work. The Government must grasp the situation and widen and strengthen further the work so far done. If the Government hesitate to do now, they will be compelled to do so tomorrow by the pressure of the people.

In answering therefore the question "How far have the people responded?" we have no hesitation in saying that they have responded well and eagerly. This is so almost everywhere.

## VI. WHAT MUST NOW BE DONE?

This is the crux of the question. We have to keep in mind many factors which may not be put down in detail for lack of time and space. We can only put down our suggestions without hesitation. But every suggestion can be discussed in detail, if necessary, with those concerned. In the previous pages we have cleared the ground for a proper appreciation of the suggestions we shall now make. There is nothing final or sacrosanct about our suggestions. But we claim that no one can run away from them if the intention is to undertake the reality of village reconstruction work in the situation now obtaining in the country-side. After all, the test for every proposal and suggestion is whether, it can be implemented in the village situation and if it would serve the purpose we have in view, namely, prosperous, happy and fairly self-sufficient villages from where people will not continually migrate to congested towns in search of labour, food and happiness.



We, therefore, make the following proposals:—

1. No one will dispute that the major problems in the village to-day are economic. No village reconstruction work can become real unless it gives the farmer and the craftsman in the village a chance to meet the needs of his daily life. The whole of the Rural Welfare programme must now give more attention and care to devise ways and means of giving the village people at the village level a chance to earn something more and not merely attend to minor amenities required in the village. This means more help to the farmer and the organization of village industries on a systematic, long-range and as far as possible co-operative basis. So far as agriculture is concerned something is being done. But that is not enough. In many places we heard the complaint that improved seeds were not available, or that improved seeds were only that in name. Adequate distribution of better agricultural implements is another bitter need. Co-operative of village blacksmiths, carpenters, etc., should be established for groups of villages and trained to produce better agricultural implements, rather than import from long distances factory-made implements. That will partly solve two problems, i.e., need for easily available local supply and more employment. Much more funds will have to be provided for minor irrigation works than even now. Give the farmer better irrigation facilities, better instruments, better seeds and he will take care of himself thoroughly. Special marketing agencies must be set up wherever necessary.

We have already stressed that no economic programme in the village can do without organization of village industries. While this is a most important item, it is at the same time the most neglected item. Wherever any little attempt has been made to help any village industry like oil-pressing, bee-keeping, poultry, pottery, etc., good results have been obtained as in Kallupatty, Gopannapalem, Gandhigram, etc. In this connexion we can only refer back to the concrete suggestions as we have made in regard to the organization of village industries in Chapter IV of this Report.

2. Right from the date "The General Plan for Firka Development" was drawn up and in the Report made in May 1949 it has been stressed over and over again that the one condition for the success of the work of a Department like that of Rural Welfare is effective co-ordination and co-operation among the various departments working at the village level. Here is the relevant quotation from the report made to Government in May 1949:—

"The present state of things within the firkas shows a lack of co-ordination between the various departments concerned with village uplift work. These departments are those of Agriculture, Public Works, Education, Cottage Industries, Harijan Uplift, Public Health, the ameliorative section under Prohibition and Women's Welfare."

The time has come to co-ordinate effectively the activities of the above departments inside the selected firkas. As per "The General Plan for Firka Development work", it is through the District Collector through whom such co-ordination was sought to be effected. But the District Collectors are very busy persons and they cannot, perhaps, be expected to take the initiative in creating such co-ordination. At present it is only when the Firka Development Officer asks for some such co-ordination at some point of the work that the Collector sanctions it. The responsibility for initiating co-ordination thus falls on the shoulders of the Firka Development Officer. But he is not a big enough officer in the district to obtain, on his own initiative, all the co-ordination required for the work in the firka. At present, this state of affairs has not created big gaps but later on as the work grows in extent and volume, something will have to be done to correct the position. Later on, there might be the need in each district for a District Development Officer with status and powers for effecting real co-ordination. What is necessary at the present time however is that the Collector and the Firka Development Officer should work together in closer association, so that the measure of co-ordination now needed may be had without difficulty. If the District Collector treats the Firka Development Officer as a small fry, then no real work will be possible. It is at this point that the two Regional Firka Development Officers should make their full contribution by being in close touch with the District Collectors. The two Regional Firka Development Officers have therefore to be far more active than they are now.

Government should at the earliest date take the necessary steps for making available the effective co-ordination of the departments concerned in the work of Rural Development.

Since the above was written four years ago, some little improvement in the situation has been effected in regard to co-ordination. But this is not enough. Rural Welfare work has grown in volume and quality. More effective co-ordination has become necessary. We have discussed this matter with the Director of Rural Welfare, the Deputy Directors and several Rural Welfare Officers and we make the following concrete suggestions, as the minimum required, to meet the needs of the situation:—

(1) All special staff drawn from the various Departments and working out various schemes in the selected firkas should be placed under the control of the Rural Welfare Officer, subject only to general supervision by the District Collector.

(2) In the case of Agriculture, one Agricultural Demonstrator should be made available to give whole-time work within the firka. There will of course be adequate number of fieldmen and maistris.

(3) Special staff thus given to the selected firkas controlled by the Rural Welfare Officer will of course in technical matters

take the advice of superior officers in the various departments concerned. But once any scheme or programme of work is agreed to, the implementation of the same would be under the control of the Rural Welfare Officer.

Once this is done we are sure work will go on more smoothly and efficiently:

3. When the Firka Development Scheme was originally started, only one firka was selected in each district and each such firka was given in 1947 the following budgetary provisions:—

	RS.
Communications ... ..	50,000
Water-supply ... ..	50,000
Miscellaneous ... ..	10,000
	<hr/>
Total ...	1,10,000
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In 1950, two more firkas were added to the one already selected in each of the districts thus making three firkas in each district and the budgetary provisions then made were:—

	RS.
Communications ... ..	25,000
Water-supply ... ..	25,000
Miscellaneous ... ..	10,000
	<hr/>
Total ...	60,000
	<hr/>

Thus when one firka became three firkas, the financial provision was reduced to half! In 1952, one more firka was added thus giving four firkas to each district and the budgetary provisions were as follows:—

	RS.
Communications ... ..	10,000
Water-supply ... ..	10,000
Miscellaneous ... ..	10,000
	<hr/>
Total ...	30,000
	<hr/>

Thus, when the number of selected firkas in each district became four, financial provision made for the same became less than one-third of the original provision. As the area for work was

increased; finance made available was steadily decreased. It is impossible to understand the mathematics of this procedure. Here is a clear indication of Government trying to turn away from a situation created by themselves through Rural Welfare work. The next inevitable step appears to be to add one or two more firkas in each district and then throw the whole burden on the people without Government contributing any financial aid except a skeleton staff. In fact, this position has almost been reached.

That brings us to the question of staff. We feel that the general tendency is to provide too much staff for too little work. But the present case appears to be an exception. One Rural Welfare Officer with a lower division clerk and one peon who originally managed one firka has now four firkas. We are convinced that the Rural Welfare Officer requires more office and field staff and certainly more travelling facilities. The four firkas in each district is almost as big as a taluk.

The urgent need, therefore, is to provide more funds and more trained workers on the condition that the people contribute their full share in every way to whatever schemes and programmes are undertaken.

## VII. THE WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUSION.

The position is fairly clear and we do not wish to beat about the bush. A very useful programme of work, i.e., Rural Welfare, has grown and demands more money and trained men. We see no possibility of the State Government being able under the present financial strain to furnish either in adequate strength. We, therefore, consider it a piece of good fortune that at this crisis there has come the National Extension Service. One has only to read Chapter XV, Part 21, entitled "National Extension Service" of "The First Five-Year Plan" to see that what is called the National Extension Service is almost completely what the Madras State has so far done under its Rural Welfare Department. The only difference seems to be more funds and larger number of trained personnel under the National Extension Service. The genesis of the National Extension Service is to be found in the recommendations contained in the report of the Grow More Food Enquiry Committee set up by the Government of India under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. In fact, the above Report itself refers to the work of the Firka Development Scheme in Madras in the following words:—

"The lesson to be derived from the working of the Grow More Food programmes thus confirms the experience of States and private agencies engaged in village development like the Bombay Sarvodaya, and the Madras Firka Development Schemes. It

is that all aspects of rural life are inter-related and that no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt with in isolation."

It is just this co-ordinated and integrated plan of village development which the Rural Welfare Department has worked out to the best of its ability during the last six years, consistent with the finance and trained personnel made available, in 108 firkas containing about 4,000 villages. In fact, every one who has studied this work, including persons like Shri R. K. Patil, Shri S. K. Dey and the United Nations Expert Mission has admitted that the Rural Welfare work in the Madras State legitimately become the forerunner of the National Extension Service. Whatever else may be the position in other States, so far as this State is concerned, the National Extension Service can come in only in the foot-steps of the Rural Welfare work done so far. The State should, therefore, insist that the National Extension Service should go primarily into the areas where Rural Welfare work has gone on till now. In other words, National Extension Service can in this State commence straightaway at a higher level than elsewhere in India by absorbing the work so far done and the trained and experienced personnel in the Rural Welfare Department. This will further enable the National Extension Service to be extended to other areas in the State more quickly than will be possible in other parts of India. Keeping this in mind, we make the following concrete suggestions :—

(1) Since it is already decided that the National Extension Service would be linked with the Community Projects, immediate steps should be taken to merge the Rural Welfare Department in the National Extension Service.

(2) The staff of the Rural Welfare Department should thus be absorbed in the National Extension Service. It should be considered a piece of good luck for the National Extension Service to get straightaway nearly 500 trained and experienced Rural Welfare workers.

(3) The two Gramasevak Vidyalayams, one each at Kallupatty and Gopannapalem, may be strengthened to train large numbers of village-level workers and should be put on a par with the present training centres for village-level workers in Gandhigram and Peddapuram.

In the arrangements suggested above, there will be the double advantage of the Rural Welfare Scheme continuing to develop and to extend though under a different name and at the same time the National Extension Service would be able to start with the good results already achieved and a large number of trained and experienced personnel. But this presupposes more than a superficial identity of programmes and schemes of work under the Rural Welfare Scheme and those under the National Extension Service.

REPORT OF THE TWO-MAN COMMITTEE  
ON RURAL WELFARE WORK

We would specially stress the need for Khadi and village industries to be given conspicuous place in the new scheme. Merger should not mean any weakening of the special types of work now going on under the Rural Welfare Department. On the contrary, it should mean the strengthening of such items. If Khadi is neglected and the village industries are not taken up seriously and even so the Rural Welfare Department is absorbed into the National Extension Service, then the net result would be harmful. We cannot too much emphasize this aspect of the matter. If Khadi and village industries will find their due place in the new scheme and to these are added fresh items of work, then indeed the new arrangement will be of great advantage to the people in every way. We earnestly trust that this is what would happen.

MADRAS,  
26th May 1953.

G. RAMACHANDRAN.  
R. R. KEITHAHN.