

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF
THE SLUM WORK COMMITTEE OF
THE NAGARIK SANGHATANA SAMITI.

2nd Annual report
of
The Slum Work Committee
of
The Nagarik Sanghatana Samiti

We have great pleasure in presenting this—the second annual report of our work. Normally this report was due in November for the last report was for the period ending November '49 but as it was decided to postpone the annual meeting of the Slum Work Committee to April in order that it may coincide with the official financial year, this is really a report of the last 16 months November '49 to April '51.

During the course of these 16 months, we have progressed, if somewhat slowly, surely and steadily. Since the beginnings we made, our work has been taking root among the slum dwellers, which is the true measure of our success, considering the cynical, apathetic and insensitive mental make-up of a people devoid of any sort of discipline in their mental habits oblivious and resentful, however justifiably, of the necessity of social or civic organisation. Thus to-day, it would be no exaggeration to say that we have become an integral part of their daily lives. For instance, the adult in the family looks up to us for advice and help to solve his difficulties vocational or domestic, and thus acquires a new perspective with which to face the problems facing him. He further learns in our adult education and recreation centres his three Rs and healthier ways of recreating himself. His older boys attend our play centre where in they acquire the habits of teamspirit and cooperative effort. His children below the school-going age, perhaps, attend our balvadi a kindergarten school. His older girls attend the classes for learning needle-work etc. we run for them. When faced with the need for medical advice he does not hesitate to avail

himself of the dispensary service that is being run by us. Thus it will be noticed that our activities are so organised as to serve the needs of every individual in the family for his development, for otherwise the task of raising them to the level of better placed sections of the society would never be complete in so short a time as 10 years by which time the safeguards they have given under the constitution would cease. And unless they are brought up to that mark they would continue to be the victims of social and economic oppression and their welfare merely a carrot in the hands of political parties, for their electoral programmes. It is with this perspective that we have been shaping our activities.

At the outset we realised that a cleaner and healthier environment was absolutely essential if any radical change in their habits was desired. The Municipal Corporation on whom devolves this primary responsibility appeared preoccupied with other plans and indicated no inclination to pursue a vigorous policy or take quick action towards this vital problem. On our initiative therefore, we decided, with whatever aid that was forthcoming from the Govern-

Housing Cooperative Society
and
Our Colonisation Scheme

ment, to chalk out a plan for providing them with proper living conditions. Thus, as was pointed out in the last

report we approached the Government for the grant of land for housing them. The Government promised us 5 acres of land which duly approved. But in spite of all our frantic efforts to acquire the land even before the last financial year ended, we were unable to do so. In the meanwhile, however notwithstanding the demoralising repercussions of such dilatory and easy-going ways of Government machinery, we have progressed with the work of the Housing Society. We have now 31 share holders and the plans for the construction of the first bloc of 24 tenements are complete. As soon as the land-grant

materialises, we intend to apply to the Government for the grant of the loan and proceed ahead with the construction of the tenements. But as this does not solve the problem of slum clearance as such, we are trying to develop a system of tenancy purchase to finance the construction of a self-contained colony. In this connection we would like to commend to our Corporation, the plans of the Bombay and the Madras Corporations to solve the problem of slums

Besides this larger question of slum clearance, our ameliorative and educational efforts continue to draw from the people increasing appreciation and support. The Panchayat commands a prestige of its own. Its meetings, over 20 held during the year, have been very well attended and its decisions acted upon. The collective celebration of many festivals like the Padva, Ganesh Utsav, Independence day were very enthusiastically observed and well responded. The Panchayat takes up from time to time the difficulties brought before it by the slum dwellers and it helps them to solve those. There are more than 75 regular contributors to the Panchayat fund. Under its auspices we are trying to establish a multi-purposes society to help the many small scale producers in the slum to market their goods.

Among the major problems facing the slum-dwellers, the problem of unemployment is assuming grave proportions. We set up a register of about 150 unemployed men and women to alleviate their problem by finding them suitable employment by approaching the employers of big labour. The Employment Exchange brought in their mobile staff and had them registered. But we regret that we have not been successful in our aims. To meet to some extent atleast the expectations of finding employment, specially among the women folk we are considering a scheme of

cottage industries where by without having ourselves to invest on raw materials, producers could be induced to avail themselves of the labour available on the spot and work through their own agencies small enterprises like beedi-making, chalk-stick manufacture, card-board manufacture etc. and permit idle men and women to earn to some extent at least while marking time for securing jobs. In this connection we are looking forward to the Dept. of Cottage Industries for their support and patronage.

Our efforts to bring the teen agers to some discipline in the slum appear to be bearing fruit. After a rather spasmodic beginning, we have now a regular play-centre of about 50 boys. We are trying to convert them into a scout troop with the help of a scout. At present they attend regularly the games conducted for them in a specially made play-ground whose pitch was laid by the boys themselves. The boys' Boys' Play-centre also attend classes conducted for them and in the slum. As soon as a measure of Girls classes. regularity is attained, we propose to launch our long deferred scheme of evening part-time classes of trades and crafts for the teen agers, as a precursor to the Preparatory Technical Training School we have in view and towards which Rani Maharaj Singh has already extended her blessings by her donation last year. But this cannot be taken up on hand unless and until we secure a work-room shed of decent dimensions towards which we look forward to the Government aid in securing us one such in the vicinity of the slum or giving us a place or its construction. The teen-age girls attend regularly our classes held for them in the afternoon. At present about 20 of them attend regularly and learn needle-work etc.

The Balvadi for the younger children is very successful in its working. We have a regular attendance of nearly 50 children.

The teacher in charge of the Balvadi is undergoing training in kindergarten methods after which we intend to run it on a whole time basis instead of merely for two hours as it runs at present. The attached congee feeding scheme inaugurated by Rani

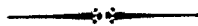
Maharaj Singh last August is working very successfully. Every child is fed on congee made on the spot every working day. The basis on which this Balvadi is run cannot last long unless due recognition is secured for it from the authorities and the principle of encouraging school-mindedness among the backward class slum dwellers worked on more practical methods than those prevailing at the moment. Our objective is to introduce during the kindergarten stage sufficient attraction that should help to induce the parents to see the benefits of sending their children to school. This should at the same time make the task of attendance officers easier and the transfer of children from the kindergarten classes to the first primary class, which should also be attached to the Balvadi, will become a normal routine so that at the end of two years the child and the parent will both be mentally prepared not to look upon the enforcement of compulsory education as a nuisance. Thus a composite unit of a Balvadi and primary class will act as a feeder institution to the nearest Corporation Primary School. To work this idea with this perspective we have set forth we require the vision and support of both the Municipal Commissioner and the Director of Public Instruction.

The Dispensary has treated about 200 cases of minor ailments during the period under review. Among them, the most common of diseases are V. D. Malaria, Diarrhoea Malnutrition, Dysentary etc. A plan for a maternity-cum-baby welcome-cum-child welfare unit has been suggested to the local branch of the Indian Red Cross which we believe is under consideration. If it fructifies it will be a great need fulfilled. In the meantime there is a standing promise from the Seva Sadan for the supply of small equipment necessary for a maternity ward. If even a room as small as 10' X 10' is made available, the scheme can be started off on an improvised basis.

Finally the finances. This has been, ever since the start a

a great stumbling block in the progress of our work. The results that have been achieved have been mainly possibly because of the handsome donation of Rani Maharaj Singh, the monthly contributions of Mrs Moti Bai Irani and Dr. Bandorwala. Shrimati Hirabai Barodeker gave us a free benefit performance, which yielded us about Rs,

Finances 1,500-0. The Poona Municipal Corporation gave us a grant of about a Thousand Rupees. The grant of Rs. 611- which we received from the Backward Dept. has been disappointing beyond expectations. They are inadequate being only about 50% of the expenses incurred on the items they admit. And further, the items of expenditure declared as admissible do not cover the whole field of our activity. The Backward Class Dept. does not permit expenditure on such items as postage and stationery, forgetting that the long tedious correspondence they themselves involved us in necessitated expenditure which as our experience has shown can be quite considerable what with all the queries to be answered doubts cleared endlessly accounts and reports submitted times over again! Further the Dept. permits the salary of only one social worker ignoring the fact that the various activities carried on by an agency like ours each in its own way requires a specialised personell. The assessment for each item of expenditure is also inadequate. The salary admissible for a social worker is fixed at Rs 80- of which only Rs. 40 is granted by the Dept. which is ridiculously low. It is unfair to expect a whole time worker with a fair education to serve on that salary particularly for one with training in that field. In this connection, paranthetically, it may be added that the notion of a social worker in sack-cloth and ashes or in the official imagination a busybody must yield place to that of a professionally trained worker working towards definite ends much the way a doctor or any other professional works. The grant to be effective must be liberalised and the range of its applicability widened. They must be forthcoming as quickly as possible. The delays which we have encountered have been exasperating. Aid delayed is aid denied ; as true as the dictum justice delayed is justice denied.



Appendix I

Office bearers and the staff on the Slum Work Committee of the Nagarik Sanghatana Samiti :

Secretaries of the Committee :

1. Dr Mrs Krishna Bai Nimbkar,
2. Dr M. N. Natu.

Social worker in charge of the welfare centre :

1. Shri U. N. Phadnis, M. A.

Social workers in charge of the Balvadi :

1. Miss Anjani Bhosle and Miss Vatsala Dharmadhikari, and Mrs Chowdhule. 2. Mrs Kamala Bhosle.

President of the Panchayat :

Shri V. K. Kandle.

Secretary of the Panchayat :

Shri M. K. Mane.

Treasurer :

Shri V. M. Godbole.

Social workers in charge of the boys play centre.

Shri Abhyankar and Shri Godbolc.

Doctor in charge of the Dispensary :

Dr Mrs Krishna Bai Nimbkar, B. A.; M. B. B. S.

Appendix II

Prominent Visitors to the Slum:Rani Maharaj Singh The Hon'ble Shri G. D. Tapase, Minister for BC. Mr. M. R. Yardi, Mr. S. G. Barve, Mr. Sanas, President Poona Municipality, Mr. Vasant Rao Deshmukh, Mr. Heble, Mr. H. V. Sabnis, Asst. B. C. Officer The President and some of the members of the Community Service Committee of the Rotary Club Poona, Dr. Mhaskar, Dr. Adrainwala. Sir R. P. Paranjype and Mr. G. R. Raddi the Backward-Class Officer Bombay State.

Important Social functions organised by the Samiti in the Slum:-Makar Sankrant, Ganesh Utsav, Dasara, Divali, and Chaitra Gouri. Besides these, important national days were observed like the Republic Day, the Independence Day, 15th August, Gandhiji's birthday, and Pandit Nehru's birthday. The Publicity Department screened educational pictures on various occasions. .

Our Thanks are due to:—Rani Maharaj Singh for her keen interest and her donations, Mr. Moti Bai Irani, for her donations and her zealous interest, Dr. Bandorwala for donation and sustained help in other ways, the Rotary Club for their donations, Mr. Pocha, for his donations, Mrs. Mangala Bai Karandikar, Mr. Godbole for all owing us the use of his place and the very enthusiastic part he plays in the Welfare Centre, Mrs. Ganga Ben Bhate, the Agriculture College for their offer of buttermilk for our Balvadi, the Publicity Dept, for their Screening shows on various occasions, and the Government, Depts for their help in various ways and the Congress Committee for allowing us the use of a room for our office.

Appendix III

Receipts	
	Donations from
1,300-0-0	Rani Maharaj Singh for Balvadi, Preparatory Tech. Tr. School Boys' Play-Centre and Dispensary :
375-0-0	Mrs. Moti Bai Irani,
90-0-0	Dr. N. J. Bandorwala for Balvadi,
250-0-0	Rotary Club,
349-0-0	Shri V. K. Sathe,
186-3-0	Mr. Pocha,
50-0-0	Raja Saheb of Phaltan.
	Miscellaneous donations through
69-9-0	Dr. Bandorwala,
2162-0-0	Benefit Performance and incidental donations
132-1-0	Ashanagar Panchayat and Samiti members for Social functions,
54-6-0	Dispensary Collections.
	Grants from
945-0-0	The Poona Municipal Corporation,
611-3-9	The Backward class Dept.
	Expenditure on
	Adult Education Centre :
	Boys' Play-Centre; 84-10-0
	Balvadi : 126-6-0
	Conveyance : 204-8-0
	Dispensary : 70-9-3
	Dead-stock : 109-14-6
	Benefit Performance; 187-8-0
	Miscellaneous : 450-4-0
	Office : 91-8-0
	Printing : 488-1-0
	Postage : 97-6-0
	Pay to social workers : 104-12-0
	Stationery : 1,797-10-6
	Social Functions : 96-6-0
	Totals : 104-10-0
6676-6-0	Totals : 2,013-4-6