

THE BANWASI SEVA ASHRAM

Banwasi Seva Ashram was established by the freedom fighters and reputed Gandhian workers of Uttar Pradesh in 1956, for the amelioration of the tribals and other backward communities in the Southern tribal area of Mirzapur now known as Sondhadra District. Shri Vichitra Narayan Sharma 92 years old veteran Gandhian who spear headed the Khadi movement in Northern India, is its Chairman from the very beginning. Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, Baba Raghavadas, Pandit Kamlapati Tripathi, Shri Karanbhai, Shri Brajbhushan 'Gramwasi', Shri Kismetram are other founder members.

Its Project area comprises of about 400 tribal villages scattered in between the Vindhyan hills and valleys, covered with fast disappearing deciduous forests. The area has recurring history of drought and famine. The agriculture entirely depends on rainfall, which is untimely and inadequate resulting in crop failure or drought once in three years. When two consecutive crops fail, it amounts to famine, which comes once in ten years. Among the early activities of this Ashram were a school for tribal children, training in spinning and weaving, Bhoodan & Gramdan spreading the Gandhian message of love and friendship, trying to organize village communities to evolve consensus and joint action for whole village development starting with antyodaya.

Prembhai joined the Ashram with his wife Dr. Ragini Prem (M.D.), during 1966-67, known as the year of the Bihar famine, when the Ashram was organizing fifty gruel kitchens and food-for-work by way of famine relief. Prembhai started planning for more enduring work towards self sufficiency and self reliance of these villages. The AGRINDUS project was initiated for the Agro-Industrial development of the area. First attention was given to agricultural development land shaping, ravine reclamation, rain water, harvesting and its management for irrigation, introducing a variety of

new crops of paddy, wheat, vegetables, fodder and fruit orchards, to eliminate drought and food deficit.

Dr. Ragini simultaneously planned for a community health and family welfare programme, in this area where population was controlled by epidemics and natural calamities and treatment of ailments was done by Baigas (village Magicians) through charms, amulets, offerings and sacrifice. The government had opened Primary health and family planning centres in the area, but they remained mostly closed without doctors or medicines. The people were neither aware about the modern medical services nor had the purchasing power to buy them. The Agrindus health project started with a small clinic and health and family education programme. Over the years, a three tier structure of community health services has been developed. Community health friends at the village level organising health seminars, promotion and preventive campaigning, 10 health centres manned by an agrindus trained village doctor servicing a pocket of 20/30 villages, and the Ashram clinic with indoor facilities for patients, training planning and on-going consultations for the health friends and the village doctors, who treat the common ailments in the villages and at the health centre and bring the more difficult cases to Agrindus clinic from far villages.

The patients, who need surgery, X-Ray or laboratory facilities are referred to HINDAICO Hospital at Renukoot or University Hospital at Varanasi. The emphasis is on education for promotion of health, to pool develop and standardise the local knowledge regarding herbs and locally available remedies, for the treatment of ailments. The efforts have been made to develop a self sustained system of health services and family planning, the use of costly modern medicines has been reduced to a great extent. Special attention has been given to the prevention and treatment of Malaria, T.B. digestive disorders, skin diseases and

blindness. 25 to 30 thousand patients from about 300 villages and some from far off villages of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar take advantage of these health services. Besides the local youths the Health training facilities at Ashram are used by volunteers coming from voluntary agencies operation in different parts of the country.

During 1967 literacy was only 7 to 9% in these villages. With the help of literacy House, Lucknow, 100 literacy centres and circulating libraries were introduced in 1968. Educational activities of Ashram have since grown to include 8 primary schools, 6 middle schools, one residential High School, 160 non-formal education centres for working children, 100 adult education centres and training facilities in 22 vocations. But the core of our educational activities remains awareness building, walk and talk series (Padyatras) camps and seminars, campaigns for the conservation ban on slaughter of cows and sacrifice of other animals, removal of superstitions and unhealthy traditions like untouchability, child marriage dowry, treatment by magic charms and amulets etc. Emphasis has been placed for the promotion of values of truth, non-violence, friendship and regard towards other religious caste and cultural groups.

In 1975 a WHOLE-VILLAGE-DEVELOPMENT Programme covering 5 tribal villages, and nucleus demonstrations of Agricultural development covering 10 to 15% families each in another 10 tribal villages, was initiated as a pilot experiment included in the 5th five year plan of the country. It was implemented with the financial assistance from two German charities. The outcome of the experiment was later evaluated by the Agricultural Finance Corporation (Bombay) in 1979. Its findings revealed that cropping intensity increased by 81%, gross cultivated area by 21%, literacy increased from 14 to 27%, the health services reached to 98% of the families, indebtedness to money lenders declined

from 43 to 23% and per capita incomes increased from Rs. 160 to 278 over a period of 5 years.

In 1978-79 the Ashram took a determined initiative to introduce khadi and village industries programme with the help of Khadi and Village Industry Commission, Bombay. A door to door survey of working conditions, implements, productivity and incomes of all types of artisans existing in two blocks Dudhi and Babhani was conducted. Based on an indepth study and comprehensive survey a problems and resources inventory was prepared and block plans for Dudhi and Babhani were made to promote was prepared and block plans for self sufficiency in basic consumption goods and to eliminate or substantially reduce unemployment. Training and production activities were initiated in cotton, Khadi, Silk and Woolen Blankets, oil Ghani, washing soap, shoe and leather goods, collection of hides and bones, training of leather, collection processing and marketing of medicinal plants and herbs, rope (Ban) making from Sagai grass grown in the local forest, carpentry and blacksmithy etc. Annual production and sales of Rs. 12 to 15 lakhs, besides training 200/ 300 artisans per year, is now being done by these village industries.

In 1980 an innovative agricultural credit branch of the State Bank of India was opened at the Ashram. A number of Grameen Bank branches have been since opened in this tribal area. The ashram made a concerted move to make the people aware about the various bankable plans and help them to fulfill the formalities of the bank and the block agency to secure their credit entitlements. At the instance of the Ashram NABARD secure their credit entitlements. At the instance of the Ashram NABARD has made a special refinance plan of about 3.25 crores for the scheme of ravine reclamation minor irrigation, forestry small dairy units etc. to be implemented through the local bank branches with the technical assistance from the Banwasi Seva Ashram. A Kamdhenu Gokul Yojana was simulataneously started with the help of HINDALCO,

Renukoot with a small capital of Rs. 1.25 lakhs, the scheme has been since extended, about 2500 milch animals have been given to poor families in the project villages during the last five years, with bank assistance.

In 1982, a project known as Rural Entitlement & Legal Support Services (REALS) was initiated with the assistance of Central Committee For Implementing Legal Aid Schemes (CILAS). Entitlement surveys were conducted to locate the gaps in the implementation of the decreed entitlements and poverty laws and plans of the Government, specially with respect to delivery of Rations from the fair price shops, educational facilities and the condition of the local schools, status of bonded labourers, overlap and confusion in the land records land alienation and eviction of the tribals from their old land occupancies. The results of these surveys were heart breaking, petitions were made to the prescribed authorities followed by protracted negotiations to secure relief. Petitions were also sent to higher officials of the State, to the Chief Minister and the Prime Minister. Regional and National Workshops were organised and the findings of the survey published in the Press by way of a call attention motion. As a result the situation of Ration supply improved in the area, and the defunct primary schools now function more regularly. Two writs were admitted in the Supreme Court by way of public interest litigation, one was related to release and rehabilitation of about three thousand bonded labourers, and the other was related to settle the land tenure, forest boundaries and the land entitlements of the forest dwellers. In both cases the Supreme Court has passed radical and historical orders to secure the entitlements of the poor. Vigilance Committees with representatives of the Ashram have been appointed for the identification, release and rehabilitation of the bonded labourers. A special survey agency has been established under the charge of a special Secretary, assisted with 10 Assistant Record Officers-cum-forest settlement officers, five Assistant Forest

Conservators and supportive survey staff for Record Operations and Forest settlement. Five Additional District Judges have been also appointed to hear the appeals on the spot and reach the forest settlement to a stage of finality in a short time. Supreme Court has also appointed a three member board of Commissioners including a nominee of the Ashram to supervise these operations and the implementation of the directions given. The Ashram is now organizing a united social action and a comprehensive legal aid programme to secure the implementation of the directions given for conferring the land entitlements to the Advasis. About 50 thousand claims of the Advasis are now under consideration. 5 full time Advocates and 50 para-legals have been appointed with the help of the District legal Aid Committee for assisting the tribals to process the claims in the lower courts and appeal courts.

During 1984-85 the Ashram made a comprehensive investigation into the working conditions of the child labour engaged in the carpet industry operating in Mirzapur, Varanasi region when Frembhai was appointed as a Commissioner by the Supreme Court in the case filed by the Banwasi Sakti Morcha. The report was filed in the Supreme Court. This was followed by a National Workshop at Varanasi and number of regional workshops leading into a national debate and drafting of a comprehensive legislation to protect the interest of the child labour and ensure their development in 1985-86 specific studies were made regarding the depletion of forests degradation of environment from industrial emissions and the multiple displacement of the tribals from the Behand Dam followed by Thermal Power Projects, Motor-ways Railways, High Tention Electric Lines and Coal Mines. Specific plans and measures have been suggested for the training of the local youths in industry related skills employment and rehabilitation of the land oustees, conservation and development of the environment to the government and the International Organisations Funding these projects. with the help of the

national wasteland Development Board the Ashram has planted about 15 lakhs plants of fruits, fodder and timber on the marginally cultivated wastelands of the farmers.

During 1988-89 the Ashram has implemented a drinking water mission which involves deepening and construction of 250 old wells and 192 new wells, construction of 25 earthen Dams to impound rain water. The Ashram has also made a five year plan of drought proofing of this tribal area and forward the same to the Government. A synopsis of this plan is enclosed as an Annexure. One nursery sta the Asharam and 50 farmers on their wasteland, three model Anganwadis were constructed for women and children. A scheme to build 150 Anganwadis on the same pattern and the management of 100 Anganwadis in one block for the integrated development of women and children by the Ashram is under the active consideration of Glvt. of India. 160 N.F.E. Centres were teaching about 4,000 working children and school drop outs, about 700 informal family literacy centres were teaching a total of 2500 women. In addition 100 literacy centres and 50 mobile rural literacy campaign to achieve 100% literacy in the four blocks of Sonbhadra has been initiated with the help of the literacy mission, Government of India. The proposed demolition of the Chilkadand rehabilitation village by N.F.P.C./N.C.L. has been stopped at the instance of the Ashram. A plan for the environmental rehabilitation, employment related training of the local youths and proper rehabilitation and the improvement of the lives of the land oustees is now being negotiated with the Government of India and the World Bank. A scheme of labour bank was implemented to capitalize the ideal labour during slack season of agriculture for the construction of irrigation reservoirs, terraced spaddy fields, forestation and other community assests with a total value of about 30 lakhs rupees. The labour contribution by the poor farmers in terms of their family labour was of the order of Rs. 15 lakhs in this year. A detailed note on the labour bank has been enclosed as annexure-II.

The Ashram is trying to build three continuous to make a break through in the rural stagnation and to eliminate the mismatch between the resources available in the area and the development of the local poor. (1) A continuous of the peoples organisation with a gram Swarajya Sabha at the village level composed of all adults at least one member from each family with its executive and subject matter committees a Kshetriya Gram Swarajya Sabha each constituted by drawing representation of 20/30 villages at a cluster level, and one Kendriya Gram Swarajya Sabha constituted by taking representatives of the Kshetriya Sabhas, and the social workers from the Ashram. These Sabhas meet regularly to discuss plan and make consensual decisions for development and Justice. (2) The second continuous is of social animators change agents village level technicians and rural development functionaries trained to take up an issue or a development function and carry it forward on a continuing basis, and (3) The third is a continuous of development functions, intervention and initiatives for the promotion of all-round sustainable development and social Justice. The Ashram workers are trying to promote a united peoples action in the same direction.

गांव के तन्द्भ में तुचनारु

तुरनातली - अनुसुधी

1. गांव का नाम
2. गांव में निवास करने वाले कुल परिवारों की संख्या
3. जनजातियों की संख्या
4. दुली विकास खण्ड के गांव की दूरी
5. गांव में सिंचाई के साधन
6. गांव के भूमि की प्रकृति
7. गांव का संधिप्त इतिहास
8. गांव की भौगोलिक संरचना
9. गांव में विकास के साधन
10. स्वास्थ्य एवं मनोरंजन के साधन

साक्षात्कार अनुसूची

जनजातीय किसानों की निर्धनता मिर्जापुर जनपद के दुद्वी तहसील पर आधारित
एक समाजशास्त्रीय अध्ययन।

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परिचयात्मक विवरण

- 1- नाम
- 2- गाँव
- 3- जाति
- 4- धर्म
- 5- परिवारिक पृष्ठभूमि -

।अ। परिवार के सदस्यों की संख्या, आयुर्लिंग

।ब। परिवार के सदस्यों का व्यवसाय शैक्षणिक स्तर एवं आय

आर्थिक विवरण -

- 6- आप के पास कुल भूमि कितनी है -- कुल भूमि --- कृषि योग्य भूमि ---
एक वर्ष में एक से अधिक बार कृषि उत्पादन में प्रयुक्त भूमि -- एकड़ में ।
- 7- क्या आप के पास सिंचाई के साधन उपलब्ध है ?
यदि हाँ तो कौन कौन से -----
- 8- आप के पास जुताई के क्या साधन है ?
- 9- क्या आप उच्च उत्पादकतावाले बीजों का प्रयोग करते हैं ?

- 10- क्या आप खाद का प्रयोग करते हैं ? रासायनिक/हरीखाद ।
- 11- क्या आपके पास सिंचाई के नीजी साधन है ? यदि हां तो कौन-कौन ?
- 12- आप के पास कृषि कार्य हेतु कौन से पशु हैं ?
- 13- क्या आप कृषि में उत्पादकता बढ़ाने के लिए अन्य विकास के माध्यमों का सहारा लेते हैं ?
- 14- क्या आपने कृषि हेतु ऋण लिया है ? यदि हां तो किससे ?
- 15- आप की प्रतिवर्ष कुल पैदावार कितनी है ?
- अनाज का नाम -----
- 16- क्या आप अनाज को बाजार में बेचते हैं ?
- 17- क्या आप नगद फसलों का भी उत्पादन करते हैं ? यदि हां तो उनका नाम प्रतिवर्ष उत्पादन और उपयोग की प्रकृति में पूर्णतः लगे हुए हैं ?
- 18- आप के परिवार के कुल कितने सदस्य कृषि में पूर्णतः लगे हुए हैं ?
- 19- क्या आप कटाई पर भी कृषि कार्य करते हैं ?
- 20- पिछले पांच वर्षों में क्या आपने भूमि का क्रय-विक्रय किया है यदि हां तो क्या और कितना ?
- 21- क्या आप कृषि कार्यों में मजदूरी का सहयोग लेते हैं यदि हां तो कब और कितनी मजदूरी पर कार्य करते हैं ?
- 22- क्या आप स्वयं दूसरों के खेतों पर कार्य करने जाते हैं यदि हां तो कब और कितनी मजदूरी पर कार्य करते हैं ?
23. क्या आपने बाजार के अनुस्यू उत्पादन का प्रयास किया है ?
- 24- गांव के साधन सम्पन्न लोगों से कृषिकार्य हेतु सहयोग लेते हैं ?
25. वनरक्षकों एवं सरकारी कर्मचारियों से क्या आप को सहयोग मिलता है ? तो सहयोग के प्रकृति का उल्लेख करें ।
- 26- क्या सरकारी योजनाओं को आप को कोई लाभ हुआ है यदि हां तो योजना का नाम और लाभ की प्रकृति का उल्लेख करें ?
- 27- क्या आप का शोषण किया जाता है ? यदि हां तो माध्यम एवं प्रकृति का उल्लेख करें ?

सामाजिक सांस्कृतिक जीवन :

- 28- क्या आप के यहां जातीय संगठन है ?
- 29- क्या आप देवी-देवताओं की पूजा करते हैं ?
- 30- आप के यहां कौन कौन से उत्सव एवं त्यौहार मनाये जाते हैं ।
- 31- क्या पुनर्विवाह का प्रचलन है ?
- 32- आप के आवास का स्वस्व क्या है ?
- 33- क्या आपके आस-पास शिक्षा साधन सुलभ है ?
- 34- क्या आप आस-पास के शहरों में गये हैं यदि हां तो कहां-कहां और कब ?
- 35- क्या आपको जीवन-निर्वाह हेतु कृषि आय प्राप्त होती है ?
- 36- आप की जातीय स्थिति क्या है ?
- 37- क्या आप के यहां कृषि के अतिरिक्त अन्य लाभ के साधन उपलब्ध है ?
यदि हां तो कौन-कौन ।
- 38- जंगल के उत्पादों से आप को कुछ आय होती है ।