

REPORT (1-4-1989—31-3-1990)

SOCIETY FOR EQUITABLE VOLUNTARY ACTIONS

[SEVA]

VIKAS KENDRA

(a project of Society for Equitable
Voluntary Actions. Regd. under W. B.
Societies Registration Act. XXVI 1961)



Post & Vill : ATGHARA, via KOLSUR

North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, Pin 743 438

Regd. Office : 52/3 Vidyayatan Sarani, Calcutta 700 035

Phone : 52-6365

Concept and Introduction :

The project Vikas Kendra is just now five years old. Started on 1. 4. 1985 in a century-old mud hut, the Kendra continued to operate there for two early years of its existence the local Imam kindly allowed us to use it. But the age has taken its toll and the hut exists no more.

The Vikas Kendra, now a nerve centre of many short and long term activities of rural development, is housed at present in two modest tile sheds of its own.

We work around the village of Atghara in Baduria Block, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal. It is a typical backward village with a Muslim majority with unfavourable land-man ratio. Jute is one of the main agricultural products of the area, where landless labourers are in abundance, thrown to uncertain livelihood.

Rooted in Atghara slowly as we gathered strength, we marched out in different villages of the adjoining four blocks, Baduria, Deganga, Habra & Sarupnagar. The youth of those villages, where we could reach, responded adequately to be the co-fighters to defeat the dragons of poverty, ignorance, apathy—our common enemies. The story of Vikas Kendra is a story of constant shedding of sweat and blood to bring about if not a permanent, yet a transient transformation of the rural society. It is a saga of trials and tribulations both sweat and bitter at times.

Our Father of the Nation asserted "Defeat cannot dishearten me. It can only chasten me ..". He had faith enough to believe "He who strives never perishes".

We have profound reasons to recall Gandhiji because long ago, in 1934, when the so-called village developmental work did not become a fetish, he established his Gram Udyog Sangh. We can never forget his pioneering role in this

chosen field of ours and having implicit faith in that promise we got courage to continue our work.

Let us now half mast our flag to pay our deep respects to the departed souls of Mannanbhai, a village elder, Hazarilal Mondal, who was our staff and Gurudas Bardhan, another village elder. They all had a deep sympathy for the cause of Vikas Kendra. We also half mast our flag in memory of all those, who left us during the period for their heavenly abode. May their souls rest in peace.

Issues at stake and our quest :

Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress leader is not only a black leader in just South Africa, but also has aroused a sense of pride in the hearts of millions of down trodden men and women throughout the world and strengthened their determination to fight for full equality and end the bane of apartheid once for all.

As recently as August 1, 1988 we too observed Mandela Day in our village demanding his immediate release. We felt the importance of his fight for the cause of democracy, freedom, racial equality and the rule of law world over.

With the same spirit we observe Titumeer Day every year on November 19. Nisar Ali Titumeer, the first martyr of India's quest for freedom, gave his life in 1831. He was a native of this area. On the last Titumeer Day, we went in a procession to Narkelberia, a nearby village to pay our homage to him. That was the spot where he built Bamboo Stockade to fight the hirelings of the British East India Co.

We organise a fair every year dedicated to his memory. When we fight against the disparity in income between super rich and the nether poor, which remains unbridgeable chasm, the names like Titumeer, Gandhi, Mandela create an unvanquishable zeal in our hearts to change the society and achieve our objectives.

As we work in a Muslim dominated area, we can feel the sensitiveness of this community. It is a misfortune that

they still suffer from an uncertainty of their future and a minority complex.

We are against any sort of fissiparous tendencies and we feel that one of the pillars of the Indian Constitution is its secularity. The struggle for maintaining this pristine glory of our sacred Constitution cannot be divided. This idea has acted as a impetus to us for working closely with the Calcutta University National Integration Council. We attended the workshop on "Nation Building : A Challenge of our time"—jointly sponsored by the CUNIC and the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh (CRRID) for three days in June, 1989 at Calcutta University. Then we participated in a National workshop on the same subject at the Rastrapati Niwas, Simla. In both these places we joined the voice of sanity and communal amity. With the assistance of these two organisations, we arranged a three-day Workshop on the same subject in our village in the month of January this year. Eminent persons like Hon'ble Mr. Justice S. A. Masood, Prof. Santimoy Roy, Dr. Mumtaj Shanghamitra, Dr. Ila Choudhury, Dr. Rajat Chowdhury, Prof. (Mrs.) Santi Roy, Dr. Raisuddin, Prof. Saugata Roy, Sri Baharuddin, Sri Souren Basu and Qazi Abdul Guffer representing the dominant hue of thought of the present Bengal, participated in the discussions. The local youth in large numbers made the discussions lively.

Our Project Director had been to Ayodhya, the present storm centre of Hindu-Muslim discord, on the fateful day of November 9, 1989, when the foundation stone of the "Ram Janambhumi Temple" was laid. On that day, the "progressive" India saw helplessly an unabated march of the dark forces on her soil. His timely visit there scotched the unfounded rumour in the village going round of loss of several hundred lives of the minority community at Ayodhya. Narration of his personal experience at Ayodhya made in depth discussions in the Workshop at Vikas Kendra clinching and convincing.

We are perfectly aware of our very poor efforts to fight the evils of pollution, nevertheless we are not mere spectators. A fishermen's village in our area has turned into a smugglers den just because fish is no more available in the nearby river due to the residual effects of the excessive use of chemical fertilisers in the adjoining agricultural fields. That apart, dozens of brick kilns are constantly polluting the atmosphere of the same locality. Thousands of smokeless chullahs were constructed by us in previous years to save precious fuel and to minimise atmospheric pollution. We shall later tell more about our uneven but courageous fight against the use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides under the Agricultural Report.

As in previous years, we raised 100,000 saplings in our own nursery and made arrangements for planting the same in our project area during the period.

We ourselves at Vikas Kendra use solar cooker, but some administrative lacuna is preventing us from doing extension work in popularising this useful energy saving device.

We organise very often youth and village meetings to discuss the problems of pollution. In these meetings we always refer to the report of "The World Commission on Environment and Development"—"Our Common Future".

On 5th June, 1989, we responded to the call of "No More Bhopal Committee" in Calcutta and participated in a peaceful demonstration in front of the office of the Union Carbide demanding immediate settlement of compensation to the victims of the world's worst industrial disaster that happened at the Union Carbide's plant in Bhopal.

During the period under review, we started the ground work for observance of the "Earth Day 1990".

Recognition of the dignity of the womenhood is still a far cry in our society. Early marriage, beating of wives, desertion and dowry victims are regular occurrences. Victims

not only need legal defence, but also financial and essential social support and security and these are not forthcoming easily. Our Mahila Mondalis have taken steps in this direction and on a selective basis we are moving towards organising protest demonstrations. Legal literacy drive has been started by our Project Director, who has undergone a full month's training at ISI on Legal Aid. In addition, the Women's Co-ordinating Council imparted a training on Legal Aid to some hundred women at Vikas Kendra in February this year. Besides, we are deputing Mahila Mondali members in a big way to different seminars and workshops to make them knowledgeable and self-confident. Although these different trainings are making them more and more self-reliant and turning them into useful members of society, restoration of full dignity of womenhood still a far cry.

However it is a good augury that women members are in majority in our Cooperative and Small Saving Scheme. One of our thrusts is the peace campaign on a local scale as well as global. We use all our available platforms to speak on the importance of world peace and the danger of creating a nauseating war hysteria in this sub-continent. We put it logically to our attentive audience that a pot-bellied defence budget will definitely be in contradiction with the policy of peace and will eat away all the money we badly need for the development of our motherland. Burgeoning expenditure on missile tests is not essentially a bulwark of the country.

In this section we have raised several issues like—abolition of poverty and inequality ; rights of the minorities and problems of national integration ; the urgent need of maintenance of already fragile balance of ecology, environment and energy, restoration of dignity of the womenhood and the question of struggle for the world peace.

The issues individually and in combination push the existence of man to a point of criticality. We, like all right thinking people, are in quest of sustainable solutions and

whatever right answers we have found, we have tried earnestly to make them meaningful through our various activities. The project Vikas Kendra is an experiment itself—it is a participatory research.

Now, we shall proceed to state our major activities under different acceptable heads.

Agriculture Our Ongoing Adventure :

The Green Revolution, which at one time was supposed to be the panacea for the millions of hungry Indian agriculturists, has already crossed the zenith. Spokesmen of high-tech agriculture now openly admit its limitations.

We are also in search of a sustainable agricultural method, which is ethically sound and ecologically balanced. Different methods, which are opening new vistas, under different broad names, such as, natural farming, organic farming, parmaculture, bio-dynamic farming etc, deserve serious attention to solve our age-old problems of agriculture.

In our previous reports we have expressed our loyalty to the philosophy of famous Japanese thinker Dr. Masanobu Fukuoka. He speaks not only on natural farming, which irrevocably against the use of heavy machinery, chemical fertilisers and pesticides—the hard core of modern agriculture. While doing so, he also voices the importance of simple living. His cudgel has now been taken over by Sri Pannalal Dasgupta, the well versed Gandhian philosopher. Both the savants have during the past years come closer.

Sri Dasgupta's repeated visits to our project area are illuminating our way of life and also the path of agriculture. At his instance we have taken up cotton plantation. We have supplied seeds to some 20 poor families. Cotton that will be produced thus, will be the precursor of our Charkha programme, about which we will speak more under the head Rural Technology.

At the Vikas Kendra also we have ourselves planted 50 cotton saplings and these have yielded good cotton.

When there is a world-wide rage to enter into the market economy, we have started thinking on the lines of village self-sufficiency. Our agricultural programme takes into account this thought,

We could feel very slow, but perceptible changes in the attitude of the farmers. Every year more and more farmers are growing Boro paddy without chemical pesticides. This year 1100 farmers in 11 villages have produced paddy in 1400 acres of land. The year before, there were 1050 farmers in 1300 acres. Nonetheless it has to be admitted that our efforts to produce Boro paddy without any chemical fertiliser have not yet seen tangible success. There is only marginal increase in the acreage.

Under our guidance some of the farmers have started using natural pesticides, which are effectively fighting the prevailing pests and also increasing the yield.

Our Nursery draws a regular stream of important visitors. Very recently the Conservator of forests paid a kind visit and appreciated our technology.

As in the previous years, this time also we have raised 100,000 saplings including 40,000 papaya plants. This variety has proved to be a boon to our women folk. The produce not only gives nutrition to their undernourished system, but also by marketing a part, raise their purchasing power.

We have supplied some plants to two panchayats too.

Under our careful guidance and control, all the plants have been distributed among different groups, as well as our non-formal students, guaranteeing proper plantation.

We keep a close contact with Forest Deptt., Govt. of West Bengal and their positive attitude helped us in our social

forestry work. In many of our seminars their high officials participated. The Forest Deptt. also took an Exhibition Stall in our Titumet Fair. Our relation with the Coconut Development Board, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Govt. of India continues to remain warm and appreciative. In addition to last year's 226 farmers, we brought another 119 under the Scheme of the Coconut Development Board. The new farmers have planted 4,193 coconut saplings. Previous year's 409 farmers have also got the Board's subsidy for nurturing their saplings.

International Potato Research Centre, for the last five years has been kindly co-operating with us. Under its active guidance we are successfully propagating True Potato Seeds (TPS) and High Breed Potato Seeds (HPS) tuberlets. We are continuing our experiments in farmers' fields as well as at Vikas Kendra. 12 farmers have come under TPS Scheme and 21 under the HPS tuberlets demonstration plots scheme.

The local agriculture department of the Govt. of West Bengal entrusted us with organising a demonstration plot of Boro rice cultivation on one hectare of land. Seeds and fertiliser were given at a subsidised rate. The experiment was successful. 10 farmers were directly benefitted. With the assistance of the same department, we organised three more demonstration plots of special type of cabbage. This variety is disease-resistant and has better productivity. Further, wastage is less and can be kept for a longer duration. As a result of all these qualities, it has become popular.

Then again we organised two further demonstration plots for special type of cauliflower cultivation. This variety of cauliflower grows quickly and as it arrives early in the market, it fetches better price for the farmers.

We have constructed six composted pits with the assistance of the Agriculture Deptt. The department gave a 50% grant to the farmers.

In our previous report we mentioned that we had received seeds of a specially scented variety of Basmati paddy from the Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttack. In the year under review, we organised 11 demonstration plots with these seeds.

We are trying to be in closer rapport with the Department of Botany, Calcutta University to procure further varieties of medicinal plants. We are at present multiplying the 15 saplings of two varieties received last year.

Our relation with the Sericulture Department of the State Govt. has been beneficial. In addition to the 22 farmers in 11 villages, 6 more farmers have been brought under the Sericulture Propagation Scheme. They have begun mulberry cultivation. After undergoing proper training, each of them has received a subsidy of Rs. 4,000/- and a bank loan of Rs. 2,000/-.

From the foregoing activities, it will be apparent that we are closely co-operating with the Agricultural Department and other statutory organisations and have become a useful vehicle to bring about benefit and innovations to these small and marginal farmers in our area.

As a part of our routine activities, we propagate the idea of laying kitchen gardens. In the period under review, 219 kitchen gardens were organised, where papaya and "kolmi saak" were the main produce.

In most of these gardens, fruit-bearing trees were added to provide the families with better, cheap and nutritious food. Last year we talked about "Gooti" making. We continued our efforts to upgrade the fruits of jujube trees and were able to upgrade 248 trees. Under this project 153 families have derived benefits.

To popularise natural farming, we have laid 11 mulching demonstration plots in different villages.

On our own we took the initiative to put emphasis on oil-seeds production and have laid 21 demonstration plots covering 9 acres of land.

We have already introduced a high yielding variety of banana in our area and in the period under review, as an extension work, have given a suitable number of plants to three more farmers.

For organising all the types of different demonstration plots in order to popularise "Gooti" making process and to encourage the farmers to grow their own seeds as well as for implementing new ideas, we took up the following training programme for the farmers of our project area :—

<i>Agriculture :</i>	<i>Training days</i>
a) Bio-farming	71
b) Basmati paddy	14
c) Sericulture	272
d) Upgradation	85
e) Horticulture	437
f) TPS	27
	<hr/>
	906
	<hr/>

We firmly believe that the rural India lives in villages and therefore agriculture must give the ultimate fight against the ever increasing pauperisation of her children. The present national economic growth process unfortunately is blind to the dimension of serious and haunting issues we are facing. Agriculture must not fall a victim to the insatiable appetite of the urban and industrial tycoons.

We must protect the genetic erosion. We must ensure sustained soil fertility. We have to look back to the virtues of traditional organic agriculture yielding high productivity.

We have to re-establish the vital link between life and agriculture. Man and Agriculture, the twin has always been and will ever be an on-going adventure.

Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services—Our animated activities :

A goodly chunk of our limited resources is utilised for the animal husbandry work. The lexicon tells us : "Animal husbandry is a branch of agriculture concerned with the production and care of domestic animals." We take this definition sincerely and seriously.

We maintain the closest possible liaison between our Agriculture Deptt. and Animal Husbandry Deptt. Very often from both of the departments we derive benefits due to this close co-operation.

We have taken up the work of upgrading the cattle through artificial insemination with superior germ plasm. The genetic level of cattle-wealth has in this way been considerably improved. Introduction of cross-breeding has enhanced milk production. It has given economic security and self-reliance to the milk producers. However, our efforts to organise two milk co-operatives are yet to bear fruit. To provide better fodder for the upgraded cattle, we organised ten demonstration plots of green grass in two villages with the assistance of the related Govt. Deptt.

Even in the face of heavy odds and difficulties, we are implementing a heifer rearing programme. 12 cases under this programme have been approved by the Govt. Deptt. and the Bank concerned. Last year we decided to open Pathological Laboratory. It has now been established and is being utilised for easy and clear diagnosis of the ailments, specially of worm infestations. So far in 8 batches we have imparted training to 144 poultry farmers, among whom 89 came out successfully. Out of these successful trainees, 62 have started their own farms. Some of them are earning more than Rs. 3,000/- per month. We have had 4 successful women trainees as well and they all now own farms.

In 1988-89 we brought hundred khaki cambell sexed ducklings from a Central Govt. farm in Bangalore. We gave

away two farmers half of these ducklings for extension work and the balance is being reared by us in our model duck farm, started this year.

During the period under review, we gathered a further stock of 300 ducklings from the same source for extension work. When they started laying, we distributed 200 eggs, for hatching, the result of which is presently under observation. Our efforts to create a team of bare-footed veterinarians are continuing with a zeal. Some of them, previously trained, are rendering yeoman service and earning at the same time handsome amounts by their skill. During the period under review training in this regard was imparted as under :

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Training days</i>
a) Animal Husbandry	... 195
b) Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services	... 402
c) Duck Farming	... 8
d) Poultry Training / Farming	... 913
e) Silvo-pasture Cultivation	... 25
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"/> <u>1,543</u>

Our all out emphasis on training programmes, on treatment and upgradation of livestock, on artificial insemination and fertility, on promotion programmes, use of diagnostic laboratory, extension work of khaki cambell sexed ducklings, heifer rearing programme, distribution of fodder seeds in khariff and Rabi seasons, together with our efforts to organise Dairy Co-operatives in the villages are slowly but steadily changing the village horizon for a better tomorrow.

We can quantify modestly the performance of our economic re-generation and welfare schemes from a look at the following figures :—

1. No. of cases treated	: 384
2. No. of Artificial Insemination done	: 131

3.	No. of calves born	:	26
4.	No. of persons trained in Animal Husbandry and Veterinary	:	23
5.	No. of persons trained in Poultry Farming	:	28
6.	No. of persons benefited under Heifer Rearing Programme	:	12
7.	No. of persons sent to Haringhata Farm for Dairy Husbandry Training	:	1
8.	Distribution of Cattle fodder (Para grass) No. of persons	:	2
9.	No. of Khaki Cambell sexed ducklings distributed in the villages	:	300
10.	No. of persons trained under duck keeping programme	:	6
11.	No. of Hatching eggs (duck) distributed	:	200
12.	Study tours organised	:	Gorbeta, Narendrapur & Gobardanga.

Community Health :

Our Community Health Work covers Health education, training for mother and child care, first aid, homœopathic treatment, health camp, awareness building for blood donation and eye pledging and general assistance.

In previous years we have built 217 Low Cost Toilets (LCT) with the assistance of NRDC, CBRI and CAPART. Our application to get support for a further 300 LCTs was not cleared by the CAPART during the year. However, we hope we will soon get a green signal to go ahead.

Our two trained lady health workers covered all the families of Atghara. During their visits they advised the inmates about nutritive diet, family planning, environment, sanitation,

pre-natal and post-natal care, immunisation, etc. This year we organised 14 health camps benefiting 311 mothers. Further in 9 immunisation camps 811 children were properly immunised.

We take every opportunity to talk in a low profile about family planning under Family Welfare Scheme and during this period 33 men and women came under family planning.

Beside our activities at the immunisation camps, we have also given anti-tetanus injections to 166 persons, among whom 101 were women.

We keep a very close and warm contact with the Primary Health Centre. Our assistance is mutual and reciprocal and often we get support with materials from them.

We have distributed Vitamin tablets and "A" oil to 120 children. 1,403 cases have been treated in our Homœopathic Clinic. Our First-Aid Centre at Vikas Kendra, which remains open round the clock and other village based First-Aid Groups, trained by us, are continuously rendering yeoman service in emergent cases.

Many a time we had to give general assistance to the needy patients to get a bed in a city hospital or to secure a surgeon's service or to get a consultancy in chronic cases.

We have our limitations in securing services of this kind, but nevertheless we did our best in the circumstances.

We have rendered the following training on Community Health :

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Training days</i>
a) Basic Health needs & Family Planning	: 45
b) Health Camp	: 178
c) Population Education	: 39
	<hr/>
	262
	<hr/>

Non-formal Education—Literacy is liberation :

The so-called formal education has failed miserably to meet the demands of the changing village-face. It is universally agreed that there is no point in educating millions through formal and expensive systems only to add to the vast army of the unemployed. On the other hand, no basic corrective steps have yet been taken by the establishment.

To liberate the people from the yoke of ignorance and age-old superstitions, the issue of non-formal education has to be taken up very seriously. The three components of non-formal education—literacy, awareness building and functionality—provide right answers in our situation.

The picture presented below gives a bird's eye view of our non-formal schooling efforts :—

	<u>1988-89</u>	<u>1989-90</u>
Non-formal schools	19	19
Villages	12	13
Teachers	22	23
Students	356	330

Though there is some marginal fall in the number of students, in the percentage of passing the examinations and in other respects we are in a happier position,

A notable addition during this period has been a teaching centre in a tribal village. Fortunately, we have been able to train up a tribal teacher for the centre.

These teaching centres, run by the youth organisations of the different villages are gradually gaining approbation. A Committee of Management has been organised in every school composed of the people of all the strata. It may be noted that in this way a dual dimension has been added in the management of our teaching centres.

Attention has been paid to the correct application of teaching methods. The teachers and the taughts both fruitfully join

hands in implementing our programmes. Our supervisory functionaries made 287 visits to our centres. These visits create a strong bridge between the villages and Vikas Kendra.

We are experimenting with a method of dramatised teaching. This method of imparting lessons has been evolved after a careful study of the characteristics of some of our schools and is still under constant review and tests. We shelved off all the text books, devised a technique of dramatising the subject matters of the lessons and made the learners play different parts as actors and we immediately observed a marked improvement.

In this way subjects are dealt with more thoroughly while the attendance and interests of the pupils are maintained.

Our non-formal centres have come out of their shells. They have arranged various cultural functions, keeping in view the social problems of the day.

We have only 19 teaching centres. We need hundreds of such. We have only begun to see the beginning of the end to eradicate the evils of illiteracy. The dream of universal literacy and liberation from ignorance is yet a thousand leagues away. We have to march towards that goal.

We felt the need of a library for reference books, journals and children's books—both for non-formal education and for post-literacy campaign. To fulfill this need, we started a small library in our mud-hut on 15 August, 1985 with a high hope. Even we started to support a satellite library.

Two groups managed to have some infra-structure for their own libraries. Unfortunately, all these efforts met with dismal failure. In our last report we called it "an unmitigated failure".

A full day Core Team meeting delved deep into the causes for failure of the library project. The team detected the reasons and decided to resurrect it on Independence Day

this year. We have allotted a room in our new shed for the library with a reading corner. We intend to get it recognised as a public library. The Minister-in-Charge of Library, when he visited the Vikas Kendra during the Titumeer Fair, assured us of his co-operation in this respect.

We have imparted the following training to equip our teachers :

<i>Subjects</i>	<i>Training days</i>
a) Spoken English Class	9
b) Study Class	9
c) Teaching method	
Adult/Non-formal education	250
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/>
	267
	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/>

Development—Cynosure of Organisation :

Leadership haunt : Correct and courageous leadership is a very important part of development efforts and this leadership has also to be developed. One important way to develop leadership is through participation in youth organisations. Leaders must know how to do things rightly and also how to right the wrong things. There is no simple solution in building a new kind of leadership for a new kind of task. We have proceeded through questioning, exploration and experimentation.

Top-to-below approaches have so far failed to deal with the problems that face the rural youth and farmers in general. Unless they are involved in problem identification, programme planning and implementation activities, which of course include training and building up of their own organisations, instilling the hardrock experience by burning their own fingers in income generating projects, the problems will not be properly addressed.

Combining village youth groups we are building Cluster Committees, and above these an Apex Committee. At the

top is the Core Team, though informally organised, very lively and active to oversee all the activities.

During this period, the village groups organised 56 meetings in their respective areas attended by 1,712 participants. The Cluster Committee met 15 times participated by 34 organisations, Apex Committee 4 times participated by 140 readers representing 50 organisations and the Core Team 20 times.

Six youth groups organised their own annual functions enjoyed by more than 3,000 villagers. 2 groups organised blood donation sessions, at which 77 persons voluntarily donated their blood, 13 being women. The Association of Voluntary Blood Donors, West Bengal assisted us in the blood collection.

We are intimately linked with the International Eye Bank, Calcutta. Every year this Eye Bank organises a colourful walk under the banner "Aloke Yatra" after laborious preparations stretching over many a month to popularise eye pledging. In India blind population numbers 10 million. This figure itself highlights the importance of eye donation to restore eye-sight of those millions, who are eligible to get cornea grafting. With our full strength we joined the last "Aloke Yatra"

In April, 1989, we started a novel project in a small way, but with a big portent a small Saving Scheme, which we call "Loke Sanchay Prakalpa", has already enrolled 147 members within one year and of which we are proud to say 124 are women. The total deposit amounts to Rs. 8,573/-. This Small Saving Project helped 4 indigent persons with loans to meet the dire needs of one and to augment the earnings of the rest of them.

It has been said that the best means of growth comes from within. This scheme shows the way and will go a long way to make the poor self-reliant. A committee, elected by the depositors, manages the affairs of the project.

Vikas Samavayika, the largest of the three co-operatives, which we are trying to organise and get them registered under the Co-operative Societies Act has 124 members. The majority of them are women. This co-operative has a turnover of nearly Rs. 37,000/-. It sold a variety of goods including approximately 30,000 eggs, 42 kgs. of powdered spices and 335 kgs. of honey. The Bee Keepers' Society is yet to stand on its own feet. Sevak, our group at Andharmanik has been able to stabilise their co-operative to market spices.

The sales counter of the Vikas Samavayika at the local bi-weekly market (Haat) is operating regularly and does brisk business there. We have major plans like building a "Dharmagola" (Community Granery) under the wing of this co-operative.

Titumeer Fair held on April 1, 2 & 3, 1989 was different in many respects from the previous fairs organised by us.

Sri Saral Deb, Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, Library, Govt. of West Bengal inaugurated the sales counter of our Co-operative at the local market.

Dr. R. H. Richharis, Ex-Director, Central Rice Research Institute, talked on agriculture and rice clone. The fair was laid under a sprawling mango grove. There were 15 stalls in all. The State Govt. Deptts.—Health and Sericulture had their own stalls. The fair drew a large number of villagers on all the days.

Vikas Kendra observed Tagore's Birthday, World Environment Day, Republic Day and Independence Day with due importance and solemnity.

The Mahila Mandali of Atghara is gaining strength year by year. It is the driving force in organising women folk behind the Small Saving Scheme and the Vikas Samavayika. It organised local meetings on "Para basis" on different subjects, such as women's liberation, kitchen gardening, tailoring, charkha, spinning, health problems etc. It also

organised an excursion to Hooghly District with 27 of its members.

It took up the cause of a beaten up woman to protect her dignity. A silent demonstration successfully registered its protest at the door-step of an indiscreet husband. The wayward husband had to make a promise to take back his wife and never to torture her.

Unless we have an ably led organisation, seasoned to brave stormy weather, we can not ensure success. Development is indeed the cynosure of leadership. Development is the need of the hour for leadership, befitting the organisation.

The year round colourful, varied and challenging activities are creating a new kind of leadership and a new kind of organisation to lead the rural downtrodden for a better tomorrow.

We have imparted the following trainings to develop our youth leadership :

<i>Subjects</i>	<i>Training days</i>
a) Development Workshop/ Organisation ZOPP	: 647
b) Legal Literacy Programme	: 260
c) Organisation Management/ Development	: 219
d) Resource Planning	: 60
e) Vision	: 35
	<hr/>
	1,221
	<hr/>

Rural Appropriate Technology—Innovations for Development :

“With depletion in the stocks of natural resources of energy, a need for inexpensive, alternative and renewable source of energy has been felt for a long time.” With these words

an editorial opens in the journal "Moving Technology" published by the CAPART. Keeping this view, we made our efforts to popularise bio-gas technology. But we admit with regret that despite imparting training to the farmers, we did not succeed. One of the reasons is that the farmers, in our area do not have the minimum number of cows to build up the dung-pits. Their cattle is mainly from Zebu breed producing only a small quantity of cow-dung.

To make the bio-gas technology acceptable to the farmers, we have linked our programme with other developmental activities like fodder development and animal husbandry. Techniques and design approaches also need to be adapted to the local situation. We have introduced bamboo-made Charkhas (Spinning Wheels) preceded by cotton cultivation as advised by Sri Pannalal Dasgupta, the pioneer of low cost village development process in West Bengal. We have already got some cotton cloth woven locally, out of threads spun with these simple charkhas. This is doubtless one step forward towards self reliance in regard to one of the most essential necessities of life—clothing.

We have already introduced an improved type of plough widely used in the Midnapore District. Our efforts to popularise solar cookers in the area have been throttled by the bureaucratic bungle.

Within 18 kms. of our area, there is no cold storage. This is creating a problem for potato storage. For the last two years, we are experimenting with a defused-light storing system, which does not require electricity nor any kind of energy. The modest mud house, we have built, keeps down the temperature and has the capacity to store about 1,000 kgs. of potatoes. The near success of this project has already made a stir among the farmers.

We have imparted the following training in the related subjects.

<i>Subjects</i>	<i>Training days</i>
a) Charkha	456
b) Sanitation	40
c) Tailoring	953
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"/>
	1,449
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"/>

In Conclusion :

We have tried to follow a special pattern in submitting the Annual Report for the year 1989-90.

Without any dogma and pre-conceived ideas we came to the village side. Why and where we came we have said in the initial chapter "Concept and introduction".

In the second chapter, under "Issues at stake and our quest", we have raised five sensitive issues and our response to them.

Then we narrated our modest activities, under the heads of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Education, Health, Organisation and Rural Technology. There are sobriquets to some headings—to highlight our points of view.

Luxurious consumerism and rat-race after riches are now having a field-day in a soulless civilisation. We are not alone in our crusade against the sky piercing inflationary tumescent forces of the free market.

Rabindranath Tagore endeavoured to make Visva-Bharati a world within this world, where heads are held high and minds mingled freely. This is a lofty ideal indeed! We aspire after the same too. Friends from distant shores are visiting us regularly.

Recently a student from Berlin stayed with us for research work for six months. Two more young persons are likely to come from the same area this year under ASA programme. We are extending our co-operation to some small groups

also in whatever way possible, particularly to a group at Mirzapur, Birbhum District.

We have had many litmus-tests during the period. To give a few examples: Once one of our young girls married a subaltern youth. We supported this marriage even at the cost of facing some cheap snaps. Another time, one evening a helpful young wood-cutter was bleeding profusely as a result of an operation by a village quack. One of our Core Team members made a bitter night-long hunt for this unfortunate worker to get a hospital bed. A bed was finally secured and our Core Team member donated his blood for this wood-cutter.

The donor and the donee belonged to different religions, but the two-fold bond of blood and fraternity proved much stronger. The man was saved. The quack had to leave the village and pay some compensation too, as decided by the village community. These litmus tests and their consequences made Vikas Kendra even more popular. We get a good deal of satisfaction out of our work and we sing our humble hymn for Humanity.

Communalism at times tries to raise its ugly head in our area too. We see the danger of degeneration of social values. We have got to jugulate this vile enemy once for all and we have demonstrated our determination in this regard.

About our faults and failures too, we are aware. We fathom them regularly in our Core Team meetings and take corrective measures. We admit we have no monopoly of moral authority.

We can hear the distant foot-step of real change. We know we are at cross roads and we know too that heavy responsibility demands a heavy price. Those, who driven by such a sense of heavy responsibility, take an uncomfortable path, may be a minority for some time but time again will give them strength and friends.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to our friends of Indienhilfe. They stood with us in fair and foul weather. We, both are trying to make lives of men in a dreary corner cheery.

Our sincere thanks are also due to those large number of individuals, organisations, local bodies, Govt. Deptts. etc., who have extended their hands to us.

In the face of decline, degeneration and decadence all over —ours is a search together for the pathways leading to reconstruction, renewal and renaissance.

We need consociates. We urge labour of love.

Some of our Visitors

Friends !

- Shri Ajit Banerjee
" Ajit Biswas
" Ajit Kr. Dam
" Ajit Mondal
" A. K. Chaudhury
" Akhil Chakraborty
" Anish Gupta
" Anup Biswas
" Anup Thakur
Ms. Aparna Bhattacharya
Shri Arun Gimesh
Ms. Asha Halder
Shri Asish Chadda
" A. Mitra
Baharuddin
Ms. Bernadette Borgert
" Banani Halder
Basir Ahmed
Shri Bhabatosh Sinha Roy
" Bidyut Debnath
" Bikash Majumder
Ms. Birgit Weeland
" Cheri Ho
Shri Chitrabhanu Giri
" Chinmoy Ghosh
Ms. Claudia Polzer
C. Sayrrcating
Dr. Daniela Kasperlik
Detlef Stuber
Ms. Diane Welsh
" Dipali Sen
Shri Dipankar Halder
Dr. Elisabeth Kreuz
Shri Golokendu Ghosh
Hilry Jarwant
Dr. Ms. Ila Roy Chowdhury
Immanual
Shri Indra Das Roy
Ms. Iris Paulus
Shri Jnaesh Bhattacharya
John Beljaars
Jurgen Kayser
Shri Jyoti Samajder
" Kartik Mirday
" Kumar Gupta
Ms. Leila Janssen
" Malabi Gupta
Dr. Ms. Mumtaj Sanghamitra
Ms. Mina Banerjee
Shri Moni Dasgupta
" Mrinmoy Das
" Murari Das
Mustak Yukunin
Shri Nabakishor Mondal
" Nani Halder
Niyamat Ali
Nurul Amin
Shri Pannalal Dasgupta
" Paritosh Bardhan
" Partha Dutta
" Partha Sikdar
" Prakash Mondal
" Pratul Saha
" P. Papayya
Qazi Abdul Gaffar
Dr. Raisuddin
Dr. Rajat Roy Choudhury
Prof. Ranabir Samaddar
Prof. Ranatosh Chakraborty
Ms. Ranjana Bhattacharya

Shri Ranjit Roy Choudhury
.. Ratipati Dasgupta
Ms. Rejina Faass
Shri Rishibar Mondal
Dr. R.H. Richharia
Dr. R.K. Choudhury
Dr. Samar Sen
Shri Samir Roy
.. Sankar Ghosh
.. Sandipan Banerjee
Prof. Ms. Santi Roy
Prof. Santimoy Roy
Prof. Saradindu Sekhar Roy
Dr. Shirin Gadhia
Shri Shyamal Chakraborty
Prof. Sougata Roy
Shri Souren Bose

Students & Teachers :
Shreemati Jahar Nandi
Vidyapith
Ms. Stefanie Ackermann
.. Sudeshna Sinha
Dr. Sudhendu Mukherjee
Shri Sukanta Dasgupta
.. Sumit Bakashi
.. Sumit Roy
Ms. Sushmita Chakraborty
.. Sutapa Dewanji
.. Swapan Ghosh
Justice Mr. S. A. Masud
Taher Ali
Shri Uday Neogi
Ms. Ulrike Moorees
Waltgang Gapp
Ms. Waltraud Haub

Officials :

Shri Amar Jyoti Ghosh
.. Amitava Roy
Dr. A. K .Kundu
Dr. A. K. Pyne
Shri Debashis Chakraborty
.. Dilip K. Roy
.. Ganesh Mazumder
.. H.N. Samaddar
.. Jagannath Saha
Ms. Jaya Mondal
.. Jogmaya Gaine
Shri Joy Narayan Kuila
.. Jyoti Bose
.. J.B. Chatterjee
.. K. Muralidharan

Nurul Islam
Shri R. Deb Roy
.. R.P. Sharma
.. Saral Deb,
Hon'ble,
Minister-in-Charge,
Library,
Govt. of West Bengal
Shri Swapan Das
.. S.B. Rai
.. S.K. Mehra
.. S. Roy
S.Z.M. Zafri
Shri Vinoy Kr. Mishra
.. V.S. Khatana

The Working Committee of SEVA

<i>Name and Address</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
a Shri HN Sinha Deloitte Haskins & Sells MCS Division 2/2A Ho Chi Minh Sarani Calcutta-700 071	President	Consultant
b Shri Chandan Mukherjee 24/1B Biswas Nursery Lane Calcutta-700 085	Vice- President	Engineer
c Shri Asok Ghosh Vikas Kendra PO + Vill. Atghara via—Kolsur 743438 North 24 Parganas	General Secretary	Social Service
d Shri Sekhar Ghosh 8/35 CIT Buildings Calcutia-700 010	Asst. Secretary	Service
e Alauddin Ahmed PO + Vill. Atghara via—Kolsur 743438 North 24 Parganas	Asst. Secretary	Farmer
f Shri Mrinal K Chowdhury Manager Oriental Bank of Commerce Ballygunj Branch P-22 Bondel Road Calcutta-700 019	Treasurer	Bank Officer
g Sm. Sandhya Ghosh Dakshineswar Sri Sri Sarada Devi Balika Vidyamandir Calcutta.700 076	Member	Head Mistress

	<i>Name and Address</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
h	Shri Srikanta Mondal PO + Vill. Atghara via—Kolsur 743438 North 24 Parganas	Member	Agricultural Worker
i	Sm. Arati Ray PO + Vill. Atghara via—Kolsur 743438 North 24 Parganas	Member	Health- Worker