

THE VEDCHHI MOVEMENT
(A Sociological Essay)

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PREFACE

I thank the Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi for entrusting me the study of the 'Vedchhi Movement'. I also thank them for their indulgence towards me for the delay in submission of the report.

All the workers in the Vedchhi Movement who were interviewed and also those who were not interviewed were extremely cooperative and helpful. Every one was frank in his talk. I thank all of them.

Interview was done by Shri Bharat Pathak and he also made the first draft in Gujarati under guidance. I thank him.

Lastly, I thank the friends who went through the Gujarati and English drafts. But the responsibility for the faults and defects is my own.

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December 17, 1969

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INTRODUCTION

This study is a part of the scheme of studies envisaged by the Gandhian Institute of Studies, Varanasi. The scheme was to study the institutions engaged in the work of village or rural reconstruction. According to the scheme, the studies should concern, with the aims and objects of such institutions, their programmes, their method of work, the ideals and other forces that inspired the workers to take to such work, the financial support and other organizational arrangements. The studies also expected to observe the work of these institutions and the effects of their work.

The scheme envisaged a sort of history of the rural reconstruction work in the different parts of India. It had also a practical end in view, namely, to use such knowledge and experience for the work of rural reconstruction in the contemporary India.

The study of the work done at Vedchhi, in Surat District (Gujarat State) was entrusted to the “Centre for Regional Development Studies” at Surat.

The Gandhian Institute of Studies left it to each of the directors of individual study to design the study in his own way. Therefore, the responsibility of what has been done in the present study is the director’s own responsibility.

The Present Study

Vedchhi is the name of a village in the Valod Mahal of Surat District. It is known for the “Swaraj Ashrama” which is working under the guidance of Shri Jugatram Dave for the last 40 years. Quite justifiably, therefore, it has become the symbol of the work done in that area.

However, in order to understand and appreciate the work done by the Vedchhi Ashrama, it is necessary to consider certain situational factors. The significance of work done at Vedchhi has to be seen in several contexts. Firstly, the work spreads over a geographical area of about 30 miles and the area is a forest area. This would require a large number of workers and the centres of work and there were also such workers and centres, as branches of Vedchhi or closely associated with it. Though the guiding spirit of these centres and the workers remained Vedchhi Ashrama and Jugatram Dave, the growth in the name of centres and workers would raise the problems associated with the

size and the number of organisations and the number of workers. These problems would affect the work of these workers.

Secondly, the context affecting the character of work was the population in which the work was done. This area is inhabited by the Adivasis. This fact affects the programme of work and the type of workers needed. Thirdly, the origin of the work at Vedchhi was in the wider movement for the political independence of India led by Mahatma Gandhi. This is its political context. The ebbs and tides in the work in the Vedchhi area i.e. the Adivasi area were closely related to the course of the political movement. Not only that but also, the character of the work in the area was immensely affected by the character of the political movement.

The geographical area and the socio-graphic character of the population in which the work was done, help delimiting the physical area of observation of that work. The political context helps observing the work of Vedchhi workers and changes in it between two points of time, the beginning of the political movement and the end of it. The period has been divided into two: (i) the period before independence and (ii) the period after independence. Here is the suggestion that what is generally referred to as Vedchhi work could be justifiably abstracted from Vedchhi Ashrama and other centres and could be understood as the conscious efforts to bring about change among the Adivasis. It could be a study of the movement for change among the Adivasis within an area of about 30 square miles say between 1922 and 1967.

What is a Movement?

Formulating the study in this way one might be tempted to call it the sociological study of a movement. The present study has no such pretensions. This formulation helps demarcating the points for observation. These could be derived from the requirements of any movement worth the name.

(1) A movement has a direction. It aims at achieving a desired state in future. This state may be vague, vaguely clear or clear. It is vague when for example it aims at Communism or Ram Rajya. It may be vaguely clear when it aims at a Republican form of Government. It may be clear as when once in India some people asked for dominion status within the British Empire.

The idea about the future desired state is the ideological element in a movement. In this case, it is observable in the writing and the speeches of its leaders and the resolution of the organization conducting the movement. The ideology permeates all other elements of the movement which are as much necessary for it as ideology. The means or methods of implementing the programme are closely related to the ideology and it could be discerned from these elements.

(2) The social important element of a movement is its programme. It might have a programme of activities to achieve the desired state. It is expected that the programme must be consistent with the desired state to be achieved through it. Differences could arise among the leaders and workers as to what is the appropriate programme. But one important consideration in the programme is that it should be acceptable to the people before whom it is placed. This is very important if the movement is to move towards its aim. Its acceptance implies that it relates to the ideological, psychological, social and material needs of the people whom it is placed. The needs may be short term or long term felt or induced. It is also true that the programme makes the people conscious of their needs.

(3) The third element or component of the movement is the workers in the movement. The programme if it is to be implemented requires the workers who take it to the people and make them carry it out. These workers could be distinguished as leaders or policy makers and the implementers. These workers must have conviction regarding the ideology and the programme of work and its practicability. They may be voluntary workers dedicated to the ideals of the movement and imbued with the spirit of self sacrifice and service. They may accept payment or may not. They may work part time or full time.

(4) Last but not least in importance is the organization. Whenever and wherever, a number of persons are working together, the question of relationship among them arises. The relationship may be of super-ordination, subordination or equality. These are generally defined by the position they hold with reference to authority, powers and functions. There is a hierarchy of status-roles which is formally defined and designated. Or, they may be accepted without any formal declaration. In either case, there

is a division of functions, accountability and responsibility. There are the methods and rules of recruitment to and release from employment and of payment and promotion.

When the workers are volunteers dedicated to a cause and imbued with the spirit of sacrifice and service, the formal element in an organization may be very weak even regarding the division and allocation of work or duties. Though the work may be specific, the workers may be generalist, the relationship among them may be governed more by the spirit of understanding and accommodation rather than rules. They may all submit to someone who is accepted as a leader.

With a view to use the shorthand language, the organization may be characterised according to the dominance of the element of formality and informality and they may be called formal and informal organization.

When the geographical extent of activities and their number and variety increase, the informality and relationship in an organization may not work very efficiently and that might affect the nature or character of the movement itself. The activities might become more routinised though more stable and enduring. The organization for change might become one of the voluntary or legal formal associations, maintaining what is achieved. It could also mean that the government has achieved what it wanted to achieve fully or partly and has been absorbed in the society.

Closely associated with the nature of organization is the process of decision making and leadership. Who decides or how is it decided as to what is to be done, how it is to be done and whether what has been done is what was to be done and done well or not.

These processes of decision making and of evaluation are as much a part of the organization as the other elements mentioned above.

Leadership is usually defined by the role positions. But there could also be leaders outside it who also influence the decisions. (The point is dealt with in the appendix for the reasons mentioned there).

Any one of these elements by itself would not constitute a movement. A movement is a combination of all these elements and a strength or weakness of any one of them might add to its strength or weakness.

The movement exists in a set of external conditions. Therefore, it is also necessary to observe the movement a whole or its elements in the context of its external conditions. The movement might affect these conditions as they are affected by it.

The Aim of the Present Study

It may be repeated here that the present study has no pretensions of a sociological study. Further it does not aim at arriving at a hypothesis. So it is also not an exploratory study in that sense. It has a very humble aim. It seeks to classify the information around the different element of the movement mentioned above. The study refers to the movement that took place in the Adivasi area of about 30 miles in the eastern part of Surat District during the years from 1922 to 1967. It is necessary to give the working definitions of these elements with reference to this specific situation.

Definitions

The ideology of the movement is understood as a Gandhian ideology and it is taken as a constant factor. Therefore, the information has been classified around the three elements namely, the programme, the workers and the organization with a view to observe what, if any, changes have occurred in them.

The programme of the movement is taken from the resolutions of the Indian National Congress and from what has been decided by the workers at their formal and informal meetings and discussions. These have been taken largely from the annual reports of work of different associations and from the books written by some of the workers in the movement.

The workers have been understood as all those who participated in the formulation and/or implementation of the programme including those who are working in the establishment as clerks, accountants, secretary etc.

Organizations has been the move difficult element for identifying than the other two which also have not been easy to identify as strictly as one would want it. However, the method of recruitment, qualifications of the workers, their remuneration, the distinctions of role-positions, definitions or lack of it regarding authority, powers and functions, and finances are some of the points which have been kept in mind while

collecting and presenting the data. The organizational element as a whole could be characterized in such terms as, informal and personal and formal and impersonal in a very broad and loose sense in the case of the present study.

A very important question in a movement is that of the means of achieving the end or the method of work. Both are implied in the ideology and aims of a movement. The means could be constitutional and non-constitutional. The non-constitutional means obviously may be violent or non-violent direct action means.

In relation to the method of work it is also common to refer to the means as reformist and revolutionary. The revolutionary is usually associated with violence. But they could also refer to the nature of the desired future state. The reformist is understood as bringing about changes within the boundaries of the present state. The boundaries may change but slowly. The revolutionary is understood as breaking the boundaries and defining the new ones.

The method of work refers to the means of approach and also the aim of approach of the movement i.e. whether the intention is to bring about the complete transformation or changes within the boundaries as quickly or speedily as possible or by a process of slow change and by constitutional means. The method of work also refers to how much the worker identifies with the individual and with the whole of him or part of him.

The Sources of Data and Data Collection

One source of data has been the written and published and unpublished material. The other source has been the long open-ended interviews or guided talks with 30 individuals who have been in the movement before 1947 and after 1947. The individuals have not been selected by any method of sampling. The individuals selected have been from both the Adivasi and the non-Adivasi workers. The addition to these sources, the observer, lived in these institutions and talked to many others informally, attended their meetings and conferences.

The Presentation of the Data

The movement among the Adivasi or what we have called the Vedchhi movement had its origin in the movement for political independence of India. It maintained very

close contact with it throughout its existence. The periods of the Vedchhi movement could therefore be divided profitably with reference to the course of the political movement and the data could be presented according to these periods. Though this presentation accommodates partly the history of the movement, this study is not the history of the movement.

The two main periods will be (1) the period before 1947 and (2) the period from 1947 to 1967.

The Period Before 1947

The period before 1947 could be further divided into (1) the period before 1922 say from 1885 to 1922 and (2) the period between 1922 and 1947.

The second period between 1922 and 1947 could be sub-divided according to the tides and ebbs in the political movement. The period between 1922 and 1929 was the period of ebbs in the political movement but of tide in the Vedchhi movement.

The period between 1929 and 1936 was the period of intense political activity and ebb in the Vedchhi work.

This period is followed by the period of stable work during 1937 to 1942. This was the period in which the Congress in some states accepted ministerships.

The short period between 1942 and 1945 is again the period of political activity. In the last short period between 1945 and 1947 the work done upto 1942 is carried further.

The Second Period Between 1947 and 1967

The period after 1947 is qualitatively a different period in the sense that there is a complete change in the political context between this period and the period before 1947. After 1947 the Government is the Indian Government. The spirit of opposition between the Government and movement is replaced by the spirit of responsiveness and cooperation. The Government from its side recognises the programme of the movement and includes it in its programme. The Vedchhi movement from its side participates in its implementation. This difference in the political context brings about a qualitative change

in the movement and raises different questions. One of them is whither Vedchhi movement?

The difficult but worth pursuing task of observing the inner connections between the different elements of the movement and their relation with the external context of the movement has not been attempted. This was necessary if the question whither Vedchhi movement was to be confidently answered and if the study was to be called the sociology of movement. The attempt has been to clear the ground for attempting the question in a more systematic and also comprehensive way. The study is likely to irk both, those who wish a comprehensive study and those who wish an intensive study. Instead of craving their indulgence, their constructive criticism is craved for.

Section – 1

THE PERIOD BEFORE 1922

The Social Reform Movement Among the Adivasis, by the Adivasis Themselves South Gujarat and the Surat District Region

Surat district is the middle of the three administrative districts of South Gujarat. To the south of it is the Bulsar district and to the north of it is the Broach district.

The whole of the South i.e. all the three districts could be divided geographically into three belts. The western or the coastal belt. The central or the plains belt, and the eastern or the forest belt. The eastern belt is demarcated from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh by the tapering off of the Sahyadri and Satpuda mountain ranges. All the rivers flowing from these ranges flow from the east to the west into the sea.

The Western Railway line between Bombay and Delhi passes through the central plains belt. There is broad gauge railway line, the Tapti Valley Railway passing through the eastern forest belt from Surat to Bhusaval and connecting Surat with the Central Railway which goes up to Calcutta in the east and up to Delhi further in the north. There are three narrow-gauge railway line joining the central belt with the forest belt. One line starts from Billimora on the main line up to Weghai in the forest belt in Bulsar district. Another line in Surat district starts from Kosamba to Umarpada in the forest belt. The third line starts from Ankleswar in the Broach District up to Rajpipla in the forest belt. Recently, there have also been motorable roads in the forest belt.

The distance between the coast and the railway line is the narrowest at the southern most end of the region. In Surat district the maximum distance from the railway line to the coast may be 20 miles. But the distance widens as one moves from the Southern end to the Northern end of South Gujarat region in the Broach district. There are two more narrow-gauge lines from Broach which join Broach to the coast at Dehej and Kavi.

Whenever there is reference to South Gujarat or Surat district the reference is to the central belt. It is agriculturally and industrially a developed belt and very largely on the eastern side of the main Bombay-Delhi Western Railway. In terms of caste

composition, educational level, occupations and occupational differentiation, customs, manners and beliefs and values, the people in the central belt could be distinguished from the other coastal and the forest belts.

However, the people in the coastal belt have been exposed to the outside influence through the sea faring sections of the population. They visit most of the parts on the western coast up to Kerala and Saurashtra and Kutch in the north west. Number of them visit even foreign countries as laskers and Khalasis on the steamers. Within India they go to any part of India as skilled workers in any eractional type of work, may be electric installations, dam or bridge building or steel plant installations today, such as, at Bhillai, Rourkela or Durgapur. These people in the coastal belt are fast integrating with the people in the central belt. The people in these two belts constitute fifty per cent of the population of South Gujarat in all the three districts. The remaining 50 per cent of the population of any district of South Gujarat is in the forest belt. The total population of Surat district is 24,51,624 (1961 Census).

The people in the forest belt are referred to as Adivasis, Adimjatis or the tribal people. One thing common to them all is that they live in forest area. But there are different caste like endogamous groups or tribes among them. There are also differences in their means and methods of earning the livelihood. Some of them were owners and owner tillers of land, some were tenants or share croppers and so on. Some were better off than the rest. But illiteracy, ill-health and poverty, and to a very large extent isolation was common to them all. Thus in terms of their geographical environments, in their social structure, styles of living, customs, manners, beliefs and values, they were different from the rest of the people in the district.

During the British period their contact with the outside people was also regulated. The only outsiders whom they could see and know were the police personnel, the forest department personnel, the forest contractors, the liquor shop owners, the money lender and the beg landowners.

The Vedchhi Area

The forest area of Surat district is 1,150 square miles or about one fourth of the total area of the district and it accommodates nearly half of the population of the district.

The administrative units of these areas are the six Talukas of the district – Songadh, Uchchhal, Nizar, Vyara, Mahuva, Mandvi and Mangrol, Valod and partly Bardoli.

Vedchhi village is one of the border of jungle area at a short distance from Valod town which is the border town of non-Adivasi area. Vedchhi is about 35 miles east of Surat city. It can be reached by a pucca, all weather motorable road or by the Madhi station on the Madhi station on the Tapti Valley Railway.

The areas of concentration of the Vedchhi movement are Mahuva, Vyara, Songadh, Mandvi and Uchchhal and Nizar Talukas. The last two Talukas came into Surat district and Gujarat State after independence. Shops than the schools were also opened. The teacher drank and every one drank. People lived in jungli (animal) conditions. They put on only langoti (piece of cloth to cover the private part only) and meat, liquor and toddy was their food.

“In those days there were many superstitions. Goats and hens were offered to Gods and Goddesses. On the court-yard of every house there were Gods and Goddesses. There was one in my house. Once in every year the ‘Hom’ (sacrifice) was to be performed. If a man fell ill Bhagat-Bhuvra were called. Every time there would be sacrifice, liquor and toddy were a must.

“People earned during 1914 war. Cotton price were Rs. 300/- to Rs. 350/- (Per nearly quintals). They built houses and purchased land. Spent after marriage. Cotton prices went down subsequently. Standard of expenditure (living) had gone up. People had to incur debt. Land went into the hands of Banias and Parsis. Our people had land at that time. This Butwada, Karchelia and such other villages came into existence after the Bania and Parsis came. Land was lost because of buying liquor and toddy on credit. Illiterate people did not understand accounts.

“Gaekwad made laws and his intentions were good. But his officers did not implement laws. Banias and Parsis were the rulers. The officers were in their hands. A Parsi came here as a cook of a Desai of Valvada. He purchased land in partnership with an Adivasi and he also bought a liquor shop. Then he drove away the Adivasi and by 1921 he owned nearly 2,000 acres of land. After the failure of the reform movement (mentioned below) the Adivasis also joined the liquor business.

“Our whole society was backward. Economically, socially and morally. He (Adivasi) could not be called a human being. The man of this society was to be brought up and had to be accommodated in the rest of the (outside) society”.

A non-Adivasi woman worker who is brought up in the Adivasi area with her father, the founder of Vedchhi Centre said that about 20-25 years ago they carried out a sort of survey of nearly 100 houses and they found that 85 households had nothing to eat in the monsoon. She gives an illustration. They were then running a home for girls when the girls ate at their houses but lived at night in the Ashrama. A girl stopped coming. When she came they asked her why she was absent. She said that there was nothing to eat in the house. So they went to her house. On that day they had borrowed a bowl of flour (nearly half a pound) and mixed it with about 12 pounds of water everybody partook of it.

An Adivasi worker who started a work centre in a village speaks of his villages thus: “There were 60-70 houses (about 400 persons). Out of them only five households had land. The rest were agricultural labourers. Every one was sunk in debt and drinking”.

A graduate non-Adivasi worker in another place carried out a survey of 10-15 villages in his area about 20 years ago for his purposes. He reported that there were only 8 persons who had passed the vernacular final examination. An Adivasi worker (38 years) describes the situation in this own way. “Twenty years ago if there was a vernacular final pass man, he would be known in 10-12 villages around him. If there was a graduate he would be known in the whole Taluka”.

Change in the Excise Policy and its Effective on Adivasis

How the Adivasi lost his land, how the Forest Contractors, the Liquor Shop Owners and the Officers were one vested interest can be seen from what happened as a result of one administrative measure of the excise department.

The Adivasi tapped their own trees for toddy and distilled liquor for themselves. But just in the beginning of the 25th century, the British Administration and following it the other native States such as Baroda, Rajpipla (than Nandod), Vansada, Sachin and Dharampur introduced a new excise policy known as the “Madras System”. According to this system the Government sold by auction the right to sell liquor and toddy in particular

places. This system was in vogue before prohibition was introduced in Gujarat area. Every one else except the Government was prohibited from producing liquor and toddy. He who did was punished.

The Adivasis lost their right to prepare their own liquor and toddy but not their habit of drinking. They had to buy their drinks from the shops which were opened even in the villages in the interior. The Adivasis had no money and they were not accustomed to handle 'money'. The exchange and money economic was not known to them. They were given some money and drinks in lieu of their labour. They even did not know how to count. The result was the growing indebtedness of the Adivasis. And, slowly they began to lose their land. They became either tenants or labourer.

The important question that arises here is, was it their habit of drinking which was responsible for the loss of their land or the change in the economy and polity that was responsible for it? They were drinking before without losing their land. The new economy and the polity exploited their habit. The Government officers and the liquor and Forest Contractors were not teetotalers, but they acquired land and did not lose it.

The Government Officers, the liquor and Forest Contractors and the land owners were interested in their continuing the drinking habit and their drunkenness also. The reform movement was started by the Adivasis themselves between 1915-20 and they preached prohibition. Consequently the government suffered losses in revenue, the liquor contractors suffered in their sales and the Adivasis refused to do the agricultural work on low wages.

How successful this movement was can be guessed from the following communication of the Director of Information of Bombay published in the "Gujaratmitra and Gujarat Darpan" of Surat of 11-3-1923.

"Seven months ago a sort of religious movement had begun among the Kaliparaj (Adivasi). A goddess was moving about and was preaching people not to drink liquor and toddy. In some districts of Gujarat this movement broke down. But the Chaudharis who live in the eastern talukas of Mandvi and Valod stick to the orders of the Goddess. In that whole area liquor and toddy are not sold at all. The Collector has drawn the attention of the Government to this wonderful change and it was decided that encouragement should

be given to stick to this new type of life. It was therefore, ordered that 13 shops in Mandvi and 3 in Valod be immediately closed”.

While this communiqué tells how successful the prohibition was in the two talukas, it also tells us the attitude of the alien rulers towards prohibition.

The reaction to this change in the Baroda state territory was different. The land owners, the liquor shop owners and the government continued to force drinking on the Adivasis. Dr. Sumant Mehta writes that it was common to hold an Adivasi by two or three persons and pour liquor or toddy in his mouth as they pored castor oil in the mouth of a buffalo or a bullock (Gujarat Darpan p. 339-40 p. 341-3- ‘Gujarati). This enforcement of civilization became so abhorrent that social workers in Navasari started an association for removing the calamity of the Adivasis. The reaction of the Baroda State Government was noteworthy for its contrast to the above mentioned reaction of foreign rulers. The order was given to the leaders of the association that they should not enter the Talukas of Mahuva, Vyara and Songadh. They should not attend any meetings; they should give up all contact with the association for removing the calamity of the Adivasis and so on. At the end of the order it was stated, “These orders have been issued to the persons concerned because it is believed that these persons intend to carry on the movement among the Adivasis to stop drinking liquor and toddy and to attempt to create conflict between communities and to ruin the Parsis” (Gujarat Mitra and Gujarat Darpan” 25-11-1923).

The Reform Movement by the Adivasis Themselves

What was responsible for the awakening among the Adivasis? What was the movement and how it gathered strength?

The Gaekwad of Baroda acquiesced in continuing the excise policy. But the same ruler started in 1885, the year in which the Indian National Congress was established, a residential school for the Adivasis at Songadh. The ruler was Sayaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda. Before this institution was started there were, at places, primary schools in the area. But the teachers who were non- Adivasis were not willing to live in the forest area. Even today bad climate allowance is given to the non- Adivasis teachers in this area. These teachers took the salary but did not attend the schools and if attended they did not

teach. Nor were the Adivasis interested in sending the children to school. Children of school going age were either sent to graze the cattle so that they got some food from the owners of cattle, Or, they were kept at home to look after the younger ones when the parents went out for work, depending on how young the younger ones were.

The residential school at Songadh known as the “Dhanka Vasati Grih” was started as an answer to this situation. The boys were given free boarding, lodging, clothing and tuition. They were also given hair oil and soap. There were other three such institutions in different Talukas for boys and in 1898 one similar institution was started for the Adivasi girls at Songadh.

In the British territory one such institution at Godsamba in Mandvi Taluka was established in 1904.

The direct result of this spread of education was that a number of Adivasis took education up to Gujarati sixth standard and became teachers and started the work of social reform among the Adivasis. They also raised protect against the tyranny of the Government officers and land owners. An idea of their work can be had from what one of our interviewees said.

Shri Mansukh K. Patel a 67 year old Dhodia said the following about Amarsingh Devji Gamit of Ghanta village, Taluka Vyara. “He held meetings. I also attended the meeting he held in the village Bamania. His outlook was religious. He said that a man is ruined by liquor and toddy. He becomes an animal. If man wants to observe religion he should give up liquor and toddy. Those who gave up these were said to have made ‘Ekda’ (or a group). Amarsingh made people form such ‘Ekdas’. Half a per cent people accepted what he said”. That was before 1920.

Another instance of an Adivasi social reformer and his activity is told by his grand son Amritbhai Patel (age 40 years) of the village Khadiya in Mahuva Taluka. His grandfather Ramanbhai Dhodia made the women of his family take out the ornaments off their hands. He believed that they were obstruction to the women and that they came in the way of cleanliness. Ramanbhai was excommunicated for this reform.

The social reform movement among the Adivasis received support and strength by a sort of religious movement or rather an episode, in the years 1920 and 1921. That was what is known as the Devi movement. This movement came from Khandesh and

Dang sides. Shri Dhanabhai Pithibhai of Doswada (Taluka Songadh) gave the following account. He was born in 1904, studied up to Gujarati School final examination in the Raniparaj Boarding at Songadh and passed it in 1919. He served for a year in the Treasury at Songadh and then served as a Talati (Village Accountant) for 20 years. He is now farmer and a leading man.

A man and woman came from Khandesh side. The woman was seated near a pit. She was called Korali and the man was called Gavali. People visited them and those who crossed the place where they were seated were required to give up non-vegetarian food and liquor and toddy. The Gavali had a piece of red clothe. He would look into it and say who was not pure or 'sacred' (Pavitra) i.e. who had eaten meat. Then a man or men from that village would become a Gavali or Gavalis and would go to the next village. Then there would be a feast (Bhandara) in that village. The informant mentioned that the Bhandara took place in survey No. 388 in Doswada and on a full moon day, sometime in the winter of 1921-22.

Another informant is Shri Kalubhai Dhanibhai Gamit of the village Khanjar, Taluka Songadh (age 65 years). He had studied at Songadh in Raniparaj Kumar Boarding. He worked as a teacher at Kakadkuva for a year and then resigned. He has been doing agriculture since then. He gave up liquor then and does not drink even today. He says that another "Bhandara" had taken place at Khanjar, his own village. Four-five people from his village went to Dang jungle and brought a Gavali from there. He was 18 years old then.

The benefits of prohibition that Dhanabhai (mentioned above) counted were as follows:

- “(1) Cleanliness in the house.
- (2) Taking bath every day.
- (3) Gave up liquor.
- (4) Came to know the leaders around them and became acquainted with the country and the world. Our own understanding increased.
- (5) Educated the sons.
- (6) Gave up liquor and agriculture improved.
- (7) Could keep accounts and could not be cheated by the Bania.

(8) Income increased, built a good house and educated children”.

Why did the prohibition activity stop? According to him the reasons as follows:

- “(1) The liquor shops closed and the State Government was not prepared to lose the revenue. The police threatened the people. They did not permit them to hold the meetings and sometimes beat up the people who had gathered for the meeting. The administration thus opposed prohibition along with other interests.¹
- (2) The high caste people were against prohibition. The Adivasis did not go to do the domestic work in their houses. They told the Baroda State Government that there would be revolt of Adivasis if the prohibition movement continued.
- (3) The movement required constant and continuous leadership. That was not forthcoming. The subsequent Gavalis were not sufficiently spirited.

The importance of Devi movement and of reform movement and education among the Adivasis for the Vedchhi movement is that Vedchhi movement came at the point when the ground for a movement was prepared. The educated (i.e. up to 6th standard Gujarati) Adivasis had heard about Gandhi between 1915-20. e.g. Mandhiabhai Dulabhai Dhodia of Shekhpur, Taluka Mahuva. He is 70 years old today. Gomji Lala Chaudhari of Vedchhi, who is today 75 said that he had heard about Gandhi between 1915-20.

The Gandhian Workers Enter the Scene

How these educated Adivasis came into contact with Gandhian workers has been described by Shri Ishverlal Ichchharam Desai in his unpublished work on the “History of Freedom Movement” in the district. The educated Adivasi youths organized an association. They met on every Saturday at different villages and arranged Bhajans. Thus the Bhajans preached giving up liquor and meat and expressed sentiments for reforming and bettering the life of the Adivasis. Thousands of people gathered at such Bhajan meetings and there were also lectures by the Adivasis themselves.

¹ Shri I.I. Desai in his unpublished “History of the Raniparaj” notes the reaction to the failure of the movement. Those who had given up drinking were known as “Varjela”. After the failure of the movement there was boycott of these people. So much so that they were isolated on such occasions as marriage and death. In this anti-prohibition movement, the government, the liquor shop owners and the Adivasis who kept contract for selling toddy were all united.

The Adivasis knew the non- Adivasis through the exploiters only e.g. the money lender, the police and other government officers and the liquor shops owners. They therefore distrusted all non- Adivasis. They did not want any 'outsider' to be present at their meetings and they made a rule that if any 'outsider' came at the meeting the proceedings should stop. So all non- Adivasi contact was avoided.

But a group of Gandhian workers which included Kunverji Vithalbhai Mehta and Keshavji Ganeshji Patel arrived at one of their meetings. According to the rule the meeting should have stopped. But the leaders of the meeting took the decision that they be allowed to address them because they were the followers of Gandhi. They had heard about Gandhi and they were convinced that Gandhi was their genuine benefactor.

The Gandhian worker saw the possibilities of reform among them and discussed with them the reforms. The Adivasis were giving up meat and non-vegetarian food. So they left their goats into the jungle. The Gandhian workers argued that they need not give up the goat. They could use the goat's milk and should keep them. But the Adivasi leaders argued that if they kept the goats they would be tempted to eat the meat. So, they would not keep them. In the end they agreed to keep the goats but released all the hens.

After that the contact with the Gandhians increased. And after the faith of Adivasis in the Gandhian workers increased, they put before the Adivasis the idea of holding a conference of Adivasis and they suggested that Vallabhbhai (Sardar) and Kasturba should be invited at the conference. This idea was very enthusiastically taken up and the first conference of Adivasis was held in 1923 at Shekhpur.

The reports of these activities and meetings could be seen in a Gujarati Weekly of Surat, "Gujarat Mitra and Gujarat Darpan" in the January-February issue of 1923.

The issue of this weekly dated 7-1-1923 published the following: "The Devi is on visit to the village of Bardoli Taluka and she is preaching the people to follow Gandhi. The Adivasi community of that area has decided to give up liquor, toddy and meat. The males are to take bath twice in a day and women thrice. For three months they were to observe abstinence and not to use fats such as oil and ghee and also green vegetables. They were to avoid stealing and thieving and debauchery".

The issue of the journal dated 28-1-1923 publishes the following: "The Adivasi conference at Shekhpur, Taluka Mahuva passed some resolutions. One of them was to

start a “Seva Sangh” for the service of the Adivasis, with a view to achieving their economic, social, religious and political betterment. A committee consisting of Kunverji Vithalbhai Mehta and four others was appointed to start two Ashramas – one at Madhi and one at Shekhpur.

“The programme of work was prohibition, boycott of foreign goods, propagation of spinning wheel and membership of Indian National Congress”.

How the programme was implemented can also be seen from the report in “Gujarat Mitra” of 17-10-1920. “A meeting of Chaudharis and Gamits of about 10 villages round about Ranveri was held at Ranveri. After the speeches by Dr. Dalpatram, Bhavanishankar Ghelabhai, Ambelal and Dahyabhai, the Patels of their Panchayats passed a resolution prohibiting liquor and toddy. Any one who drank would be fined Rs. 5/- and any one who caught the breaker of the resolution was to be given (a prize of) one rupee and quarter”.

The following points significant for the Vedchhi movement could be made from the preceding account of what happened among the Adivasis before the beginning of work among them by the Gandhian workers.

The movement for social and economic reform was started by the Adivasis themselves. Their first programme was to make the Adivasis give up liquor and toddy and meat. They protested against low wages and the oppression of their people. They refused to do the domestic work for the non- Adivasis. This might appear to some as a revivalist religious high caste Hindu programme. The fact is that movement had its origin in their contact with the non- Adivasis world and whether explicitly said or not, their experience of that contact did give content and direction to the movement. By no consideration could their experience with non- Adivasis can be described as happy. They wanted to be free from the exploitation of the land owners, liquor and toddy shop owners, money lenders and from the oppression of the administration. Giving up liquor and non-vegetarian food and adopting habits of cleanliness were the efforts at establishing the equality with the higher caste people around them. The so called reactionary or religious programme was enabling them to find themselves and their position with reference to the outside world. They became sensitive to their conditions and a sort of confidence and desire for change among them grew.

The factor that was responsible for the awakening among them was primary education by the enlightened political ruler, Sayaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda. As education opened their minds to a different world it also made it possible for them to follow new occupations in which they felt free. The ruler who introduced education could not follow the policy of prohibition, though the demand for prohibition was the result of his educational policy. He was an enlightened man and he had all the powers a monarch could have. But as the interests around him could not resist his policy of education, he could not resist their opposition to prohibition. Whatever it may be the movement and its programme which led to the self awareness and to the growth of desire for change among the Adivasis could not be called reactionary. It was a progressive movement.

The movement started and led by the first generation of literates among the Adivasis was supported by the religious movement, the Devi movement. It gave momentum to it. The Devi movement soon exhausted itself, and the movement for social reform by the Adivasis also suffered a set back. It was at this juncture that the movement among the Adivasis came into contact with a wider movement, the political movement under the leadership of Gandhi. Through this movement they came into contact with Gandhian workers. The Adivasis who distrusted the non- Adivasis could see that the programme of the political movement and their own programme had good deal in common. The new movement therefore was acceptable to them. The movement helped in blunting the edge of the Adivasis distrust of the non- Adivasis. It yoked the Adivasis and the non- Adivasis to a common goal, programme and ideology enunciated in the wider society by the non- Adivasis. It could be said that the movement of the Gandhians was satisfying their felt need for social change. The movement ushered in the Adivasi area by the Gandhians was a nation wide political movement. It was a little distant and vague for the Adivasis, but not irrelevant to their experience. If, therefore, such a movement was accepted by the Adivasis, it is necessary to see the character of that movement.

SECTION – II

THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1922 AND 1936

(A) Between 1922 and 1928: The Political Movement for National Independence Goes to the Adivasis

- A Prelude to Vedchhi Movement -

The National Movement

In 1922 Maganlal Gandhi established the Swaraj Ashram at Bardoli. The work this Ashram was closely related to the preparation for non-cooperation and the civil disobedience movement by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi.

Gandhi put before the people the idea of non-cooperation in 1920. The resolution for non-cooperation was passed in September 1920 at the Calcutta Congress under the Presidentship of Lala Lajpatrai. The boycott of foreign goods and propagation of Khadi were included in it. At Nagpur Congress in 1921, Gandhi put forth the slogan of ‘Swaraj’ in one year if his programme was accepted. At the meeting of the AICC it was decided that rupees one crore be collected for Tilak Swaraj Fund, one crore four anna members of Congress be enlisted and that twenty lakhs spinning wheels be started working in the Country.

Pressures began to increase on Gandhi for starting the movement for Swaraj. In the subsequent meetings of the AICC on November 3rd and 4th the provincial Congress Committee were also permitted to do Satyagraha if certain conditions were not fulfilled. Gandhi informed the members of the AICC while passing the resolution that the Satyagraha would be started in a Taluka in Gujarat selected by him and that the others could do that in their own provinces or States. Bardoli and Anand were the two Talukas in Gujarat competing for selection for Satyagraha and Bardoli was selected.

Narhari Parikh² writes, that the people of Bardoli had boycotted the Government schools to a very great extent. Out of 80 villages in the Taluka, 51 had Rashtriya (National) schools. They had spinning wheels in nearly every house and they were spinning also.

² “Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel” (Gujarati)

The Bardoli Taluka Conference was called on 30th January, 1922 to pass the resolution for Satyagraha. The resolution is very instructive from point of understanding the character of the movement as envisaged by Gandhi. The resolution was as under:

- “(1) This taluka is prepared for Satyagraha
- (2) This conference believes that
 - (a) For the removal of the miseries of India, the friendship among the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians and others is necessary.
 - (b) Peace, restraint and tolerance are the remedies for the miseries of India.
 - (c) For the independence of India, every one must spin on the wheel and it is necessary that every one should use the clothes made of hand spun thread.
 - (d) Swaraj is impossible so long as the Hindus do not give up untouchability.
 - (e) For the betterment of people, and for the release from bondage it is imperative that without anger, people should be prepared to lose property, to go to jail and to give up life, if need be.”

Within 12 days of the passing of this resolution, the Satyagraha was suspended because the people of Chauri Chora in Gorakhpur district in U.P. killed the police men and burnt the police chowki. The resolution passed by the working committee on 11th and 12th February, 1922 is equally instructive as the resolution above, particularly the part which gives the future programme for the people as given below:

- (1) One crore members of Congress should be enlisted and only those who accepted the creed of truth and non-violence for achieving independence must be enlisted.
- (2) The number of spinning wheels and the production of Khadi must be increased. Every worker should use pure Khadi and must also learn spinning.
- (3) National Schools must be started. But the Government schools should not be picketed.

- (4) The conditions of untouchables must be improved. They should be persuaded to send their children to schools. Wherever, the attitude of the people is against them, there could be separate schools and wells.
- (5) There should be prohibition movement in every household among the people addicted to drink.
- (6) Arbitration boards be established in every village and in cities. But social boycott should not be practiced to enforce the decisions.
- (7) A service centre should be started which serves the people in times of sickness, fire etc.
- (8) The member and sympathiser of Congress should contribute one hundredth of his income from 1921 to the Congress fund.”

It could be noted that Gandhi's programme of the movement for independence was not very much different from the programme of social change. It was different only in one respect, namely, the direct action against the government in the form of civil disobedience. For him political independence meant religious tolerance and unity between different religious groups, a Hindu community minus untouchability, teetotalitarianism, settling of disputes by arbitration and social services.

Gandhi's economic programme of boycott of foreign goods in general and British goods in particular had also a positive side, namely, the use of hand spun and hand-woven cloth. This might have or might not have economic consequences for the British trade. But Gandhi meant spinning and weaving as instrumentals for training the qualities of self-reliance and self confidence as distinguished from the occupation of spinning and weaving. These were the qualities so much necessary for the nation even after independence and whether Khadi was used or not. Independence for him, in the final analysis meant a self-reliant individual.

Gandhi did make the distinction between self government and good government and he said that self government was desirable in itself. He would say that a good government by a foreign power was no ground for giving up the demand for independence. But he knew that self government must be a good government. His constructive programme meant to train people in the practice of good government.

The enmeshing of political programme and constructive programme created possibilities of support from all sections of the people such as Harijans, women, poor people industrialists, traders and agriculturists, Muslims and other religious groups. Mobilising the different interest in the political struggle at that stage was the key to the mass awakening and to his success in putting the movement on a mass basis and scale.

The Bardoli Ashram

Gandhi was arrested in March, 1922 for his three articles in “Young India” and was sentenced for six years imprisonment. While going to jail he entrusted Maganlal Gandhi with the task of helping the people of Bardoli to fulfil their vow of self dependence in clothing which they had taken while passing the resolution of Satyagraha in January, 1922. So he came to Bardoli from Sabarmati Ashram and started Swaraj Ashram.

The programme of this Ashram was to propagate Khadi, spinning, cording and other process in preparing Khadi. The work caught fire as many centres were established for Khadi work in the Taluka. The work also reached the Adivasi area.

When the weaving class was started in Bardoli nearly 50 Adivasi youths had joined it.³ Adivasi people came from 20-25 miles to buy the wheels and to get their yarn woven at Bardoli. But as this work spread people asked for opening the centres in their areas or villages. Jugatram writes that the Adivasi people liked the spinning wheel. They could get the cloths and be saved from the clutches of money lender. They had to incur debts for buying clothes. They lost their land and houses in this debt. Also because of poverty all the members of the family could not get enough clothing. So the demand for spinning wheel and for learning the process of making Khadi increased.

In this way Jivan Babar and Gomji Lala from Vedchhi went to Bardoli and said that, if some one was to go to their village to teach the people, they would give him the lodging and other facilities. In response to this request Shri Chunibhai Mehta was sent to Vedchhi to run a Khadi Centre (924). Shri Keshavji Ganesh Patel was sent to Algat in Valod taluka. Two other Ashrams were already established before this, one at Varad (1921) and the other at Sarbhon (1923).

³ Jugatram Dave, “Khadi Bhakta Chunibhai” (Gujarati).

Vedchhi

The Vedchhi Centre thus came into existence in 1924 as a Khadi Centre. The two persons who went to request to open the centre at Vedchhi had created interest in spinning and there were about 20 wheels each in the village of Vedchhi, Ambia, Gadat and Bedkuva. Gomji Master was running a grain shop in the village. He would be spinning in the shop and teach it to those interested.

When Chunibhai Mehta went to Vedchhi, he took with him Janabhai, Vanmali and Bhavsinh from Bardoli. They were Adivasis. He took his wife and children after a month or so.

Khadi work spread very rapidly during the two years from 1925-27. Shri Mehta went to different villages in a bullock cart and created spinners and weavers in those villages. He went round 35 villages in this way. In all there were about 770 spinners and 14 weavers in 65 villages (Banker).

Gandhi's idea was that Khadi work should not remain an economic programme. It was to be the centre of social reform and of all sided development of the people. Gandhi was released in 1925 from jail before the expiry of his term of imprisonment. He addressed the Third Adivasi Conference in 1925. In this address he exhorted the people to give up liquor and toddy and to adopt Khadi. But he also emphasized that people should take education, understand what he says and then if on their own thinking they were convinced of what he said, they should follow him. They should not accept Gandhi or Khadi in the name of Devi or other superstition.

Young children from the village would go to the house of Chunibhai. They were well received by his wife and daughter. They would tell him stories and teach them how to sing songs. They would comb their hair and give medicine if they had boils. As Jugatram says his house was a small Balwadi. Khadi programme at Vedchhi thus became a social reform programme.

Jugatram had not joined Vedchhi yet and he was working in Bardoli Ashram. While at Sarbhon he had taken the decision to work among the Adivasis and to do the educational work. In 1926 when the workers from Bardoli taluka had gone for flood relief work in Central Gujarat, they conceived there of a Raniparaj Vidyalaya at Bardoli

and also started it there subsequently. It was removed from there to Vedchhi i.e. in Adivasi area in 1929. This point will be dealt with in the account of the next period. In the meanwhile, this period may be briefly viewed with reference to the components of the movement.

The Meaning of Political Movement

Bardoli Ashram came into existence as a consequence of the political struggle which was not started. Vedchhi Centre came into existence as a centre of Bardoli Ashram. As it is seen above, in Gandhi's conception and even in the Congress resolution, the political and non-political aspects of the fight against the foreign rule were not separated. In fact Gandhi never conceived them separately. For him political independence meant creation of a new self-reliant individual and the reconstruction of the total society.

The Programme

The economic or Khadi programme was accepted by the non-Adivasis and the Adivasis both. But among the Adivasis the social reform part was equally enthusiastically accepted. They on their own had started it, and Vedchhi programme was a continuation of it, so far as they were concerned. The Vedchhi programme in a sense satisfied the felt need of the Adivasis and so it got good response.

But there was also a difference. The social reform movement now was an aspect of the wider movement which had national and political content. The Adivasis were brought into the vortex of that movement, and their contact with the non-Adivasis had a new meaning. It was different from what they understood from their experience of the earlier contact with them, which meant exploitation and oppression. The movement helped change their perception of the non-Adivasis.

The Worker

The workers were the volunteers in the struggle for independence imbued with the Gandhian ideals and ideas. They had disciplined their life and routine in tune with them. The desire to achieve the goal of national reconstruction and the necessary spirit of

service and self-sacrifice were the characteristics of those workers of this period. They were both Adivasis and the non-Adivasis. Their number compared to the next period was yet small, and their main activity was propagation of Khadi and increase of Khadi production. There was no strict division of work or assignment of duties. It could not be because the Khadi work was the centre of 'social reform and of reform of total and all sides of life'.

The Organization

The organizational aspect of the movement, though characterized by the spirit of accommodation and informality of personal relations was in a way taking more definite shape than the organization of the activities of the inmates of any Ashram and of the workers in the movement. In 1929 the "Bardoli Swaraj Ashram Sang" came into existence. Sardar Patel was the chairman and Laxmidas Ashar was the Secretary. There was also a 'Khadi Pracharak Mandal' of which also Sardar Patel and Laxmidas Ashar were the President and Secretary respectively.

In 1924, Shri Chunibhai was getting Rs. 50/- per month and the three Adivasi workers earned their income from the weaving they did. In addition they were getting Rs. 5/- per month. This sum was increased to Rs. 15/- in 1925-26. The finances were brought by Sardar Patel.

With the next period 1928-36 the story of Vedchhi Ashram proper becomes more prominent. This was because a new programme, the programme of formal education was introduced.

(B) THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1928 AND 1936

Addition of Educational Programme to Khadi Programme and the Development of Vedchhi Ashram

In 1924 when Chunibhai went to Vedchhi, Jugatram Dave went to join Sarbhon Ashram which was already there (1923).

Sarbhon is not in Adivasi area. The population of the village consists of the Adivasis, Patidars and the Halpatis (formerly known as the Halis or Dublas). While at

Sarbhon, Narhari Parikh came into contact with the Halpatis and he thought of giving them literary education. So he started night classes for them. But their landowner masters objected and they had to give up that work.

Though their work among the Halis stopped, they did not give up the idea of educational work. They thought of an institution for national education with the children of friends to begin with. Keshavbhai of Bardoli Ashram sent two boys of his family. Another gentleman from the village Sankli sent the boys. Laxmidas Ashar brought five boys from Panchmahals. Thus the work of national education started. This institution was then shifted to Bardoli and was called 'Raniparaj Vidyalaya'. When they started the 'Raniparaj (Adivasi) Vidyalaya', Jugatram had no clear idea of what was to be done except getting up early and doing prayers, prepare their own food and clothes, Khadi production work and then give literary education according to the types of students. Thus the conception was a mixture of Ashram life and literary education.

There were many facilities in Bardoli. But as Jugatram says, the Raniparaj or Adivasi environment or the lively contact with Adivasi life was not there in Bardoli. So they shifted the institution to Vedchhi.

Jugatram had observed the conditions of the Adivasis during the course of his work and had decided that if educational work was to be done in Surat district, it had to be done keeping the Adivasis in the centre. It was also decided that the aim of education should be to train Adivasi workers for work among the Adivasis. The Adivasi children were to be given training in Khadi work, and they should be trained into the discipline of Ashram life which was based on self-reliance and self-restraint.

With these ends in view the educational work began at Vedchhi. But not much work could be done as the political movement began in full swing.

In 1928 there was 'no tax campaign' in Bardoli and it ended with certain achievements in 1929 under the leadership of Vallabhbhai Patel who since then was known as Sardar. All the Ashrams were turned into the war camps and all the inmates were participating in the Satyagraha struggle. Every one returned to his work in 1929 after the struggle was over and the Raniparaj Vidyalaya also came to Vedchhi. But again in 1930 Gandhi started the civil disobedience movement on the national scale and they all joined the political movement. But this time Sardar Patel instructed that Khadi work and

other constructive activities should not stop. However, this arrangement did not work., The British government arrested them all in 1930. But Chunibhai was released on the ground of his plea that he was a Khadi worker and was not participating in civil disobedience. A little later when the people in some villages in Bardoli taluka started the no tax struggle, the government confiscated Bardoli and other Ashrams. They were returned in 1931 and Chunibhai started Khadi work again but again it was confiscated in 1932, and it remained in the government possession from 1932 to 1936. Chunibhai went underground this time also but when he saw that his workers were fighting he also openly participated in the civil disobedience. He was arrested and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment.

It may be mentioned here that the Ashram had developed physically very much by 1928-29. An Adivasi farmer named Rupla Aghala gave 30 acres of land and Sardar Patel gave Rs. 30/- thousand for building from the money that he got from the people for the 1928 struggle.

Jugatram and others could not see better opportunity for national education or training than the participation of the Adivasis in the political struggle for independence. He and a number of Adivasi workers and non-worker Adivasi youths participated in the struggle and suffered beating and imprisonment.

The Adivasi participants worked shoulder to shoulder with non-Adivasi workers as equals in the fight, and it gave them a new outlook. They came from nearly two hundred villages in the Adivasi area. Participation in the political struggle infused new awakening and spirit in them and it was very widely spread. In sense the struggle gave them the opportunity for active participation in national life.

Some salient features of the movement between 1922 and 1936 can be summarised as below.

By now it becomes clear that the workers in the Vedchhi movement were workers in the wider movement for political independence. They were all, the Adivasis and non-Adivasis dedicated to that cause. In the interval between two civil disobedience movements they would participate in the constructive programme.

Organizationally the attempt was made to separate the two programme and also there were separate personnel for it. Yet, they could not be separated in practice. The two

programmes went hand in hand together. All programmes were the programmes of national reconstruction.

The Vedchhi Ashram was from the beginning a member of the Swaraj Ashram Sangh at Bardoli. That Sangh (i.e. Sardar Patel) brought and managed the finances. The amounts of payment were revised in 1929 and the Adivasis were given Rs. 20/-. The non-Adivasis were given more and that was not appreciated by the Adivasis as it was mentioned by an Adivasi worker in the interview with him.

With the starting of the separate Ashram at Vedchhi it became an Adivasi centre. Its Khadi activity attracted a large number of Adivasis and from the large number of villages. The spread of the movement widened. With this widening of the area of activity both the number of workers and followers increased. Among the Khadi workers till then the differentiation on functional basis had not taken place. But the beginnings were made for the differentiation on the lines of volunteers and employees.

The educational activity that was different in nature from Khadi activity was also started. But before it could stabilise, the political struggle disturbed and disrupted the work at Vedchhi. This state of disturbance and disruption continued upto the end of 1937 when the government returned the possession of the Ashram. Then follows a long period of stable work from 1937 to 1947.

It could be observed that for eight long years the constructive work was practically nil. The Ashram buildings were under government possession and the efforts at continuing work from outside were not successful. That was just when the educational programme was introduced at Vedchhi. But the political awakening among the Adivasis by 1930 had assumed proportions which were manifested in the political struggle. They were no longer dumb and oppressed. Their participation in the political struggle infused in them the spirit which could be seen in the next period of constructive work.

It could also be seen that the constructive workers were not lacking as political fighters. They valued the political freedom as much as the constructive work. The political struggle ended in a draw but the zest it created both among the workers in the movement and among the Adivasis enabled them to get rich results in the constructive work in the next period.

Section – III

THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1937 AND 1947

The Period of Qualitative Change in the Movement

The period of ten years between 1937 and 1947 is marked by two short periods of change in the political context. For a short while the Congress was in the government of Bombay province. For an equally short period it went into the final struggle for independence. As in the past during the period of fight the work was disorganized. But it is significant that during the equally short period of the Congress being in government the constructive work of the Vedchhi movement grew in variety, intensity and extensity. This period indicates the potentialities of the movement in the national reconstruction under the changed political context. At the same time it indicates the problem it might have to face.

The important changes in the movement along with the change in the political context were in the types of the programme and in the contents of the programme with their implications for the organizational and personnel elements of the movement.

(1) Programmes

(a) Khadi

Khadi programme was developing a programme of self dependence in clothing. But a new elements was added to it now. That was Khadi as an occupation. Gandhi wanted Khadi to be a means of earning the livelihood and that a person who worked eight hours should get minimum eight annas. This could be the living wage then. However, it was not possible to pay that rate because the cost of production would go up and Khadi won't be sold. In Gujarat and Vedchhi the rate of six annas per day for the spinner was fixed. This gave a Phillip to Khadi production in Gujarat. In Vedchhi also it flourished. In 1936 only 120 yards of Khadi was produced on occupational basis but in 1942 it was 42,609 yards. During the same period the figures of Khadi on self-dependence basis was 3657 yards in 1936, and, 36,650 yards in 1942. Obviously, the increase in the production of occupational Khadi was very much (Annual Report of Vedchhi Ashram, 1941-42).

It should be recognized that this production compared to the need for clothing was not much. But so far as the movement was concerned it had a different meaning. In 1937 there were only 9 villages and 185 spinners in them working for wages. But in 1941-42 there were spinners working for wages in 75 villages. Between 1942 and 1945 the activities stopped because of the Quit India Movement and the figures are not available after 1945. Any how the programme was given up by Vedchhi in 1946. The increase in the number of villages in which the spinners for wages were working indicates the spread of Vedchhi movement. At the same time it was noted that because of the increase industrial production of Khadi, the workers had to be engaged in administrative work in the office and they were not able to move out. It was felt that Khadi work which was an instrument for the all sided development of the life of the people was moving away from that aim. (Annual Report 1945-46) Thus though quantitatively the Khadi work increased qualitatively it was not valued as much as the Khadi for self-dependence. Those who were engaged in Khadi production for wage earning need not look upon Khadi as a symbol of way of life.

Several workers felt that business element in Khadi also made a change in their relationship with the persons whom they approached. The relationship also became more businesslike. Formerly when they approached a man to accept Khadi and spinning, they were touching the man as a whole and his whole life. He also represented a different outlook on life and style of living. They felt that the approach to the people was undergoing change by the introduction of business element in Khadi programme. Thus, while the production of Khadi increased its usefulness as the instrument of social change decreased because of the introduction of the occupational element in it.

(b) Education

The Raniparaj Vidyalaya was shifted to Vedchhi in 1929 and with the view to relate its programme with Khadi work, it was called “Ashram Udyogshala” (Industrial school). There was a two year course for teaching spinning, weaving etc. Also arithmetic and language teaching was there but it had a secondary importance. The idea behind the course was to prepare workers for village work through Khadi.

After the Ashram was returned by the Government in 1936, there was a change in the duration of the course and also in the curricula. Two years were not thought enough for imbuing the student with the ideals and competence for village work. The course therefore was made into a four year course. In addition to spinning and weaving, agriculture, carpentry, cattle care, accounts etc. were also taught. Another set of subjects such as languages – Hindi, Gujarat, and Sanskrit – arithmetic and knowledge regarding the technical subjects and general knowledge were also introduced.

These changes in the curricula were made because it was thought that while the students were gaining in proficiency regarding their work and were also imbibing the spirit of service, there was deficiency in their intellectual equipment. It was in view of this evaluation of their educational system that the above changes were made. In making these changes they were guided by the Vardha Scheme of education. The Annual Report of the Vedchhi Ashram for the 1941-42 says, “The crafts which the students were learning should also be used to develop their intellect. It is no gratification that they gain proficiency in the use of their hands. It is only if they went deep into all the sides of the sciences and philosophy of those crafts, that their intellect would be sharpened, their thinking would be scientific, they will have the command over their speech to express their thoughts and they would develop the qualities of research workers. In this way they would not stop at becoming good craftsmen but they would be experts of these crafts”. This quotation in addition to indicating what type of village worker, the education at Vedchhi was aiming at also indicates the general aim of education.

Number of short termers were going to Vedchhi for learning “The Direction of Khadi Kendra”. Number of others were going there to observe the new education or to experience the Ashram life. Those were not Adivasis only. Majority of them were non-Adivasis from Gujarat and also some from outside Gujarat. In this way their educational programme did not remain confined to the Adivasi area and the people. In 1939 the Bombay Government which was Congress Government under the provincial autonomy according to the Government of India Act of 1935, selected Bardoli and Valod talukas of Surat district for experimentation and opened 19 schools in these two talukas. Also classes were held for the heads of schools to get an idea of what the scheme was. The

educational programme of Vedchhi movement was thus being accepted outside Adivasi area.

In addition to the four year course mentioned above if some one wanted to specialise for some service there were following alternatives from which any one could be selected for a year's study.

- i) Running a school according to Vardha Scheme;
- ii) Running a Balwadi;
- iii) Running a Khadi Centre;
- iv) Running a Centre for village work;
- v) Running a class for Agriculture and cattle care or to look after the institution doing this work.

Another significant aim of the course was that if some one did not want to become a social worker, he would be able to earn his living and also live according to the ideals of service to the people. It meant to prepare a new citizen in the rural area with new outlook and attitudes. The new education aim at training the head, heart and minds of the students instead of only the hand as previously it did.

The expenses of the Adivasi students were paid by the Ashram and anything he earned by way of wage of the work during training were taken by the Ashram.

The Balwadi programme aimed at the early socialisation of child into the new ways of living and outlook on life.

The educational programme in the period between 1937-1947 was a path breaking step in the constructive programme of the movement. It attracted the attention of the people outside the Adivasi area and it was accepted by the Government as an experiment. What is important is that a change in the relationship with the political system for a short while made this programme possible.

The implications of this programme for the other components of the movement could also be important. The education programme would now require the personnel which may not be available within the movement and might not be recruited on voluntary service basis. It might be that for teaching the literary or science subject's persons from outside might have to be brought on employment basis. These persons would also be a sort of specialists in work rather than the generalists as it was till then. All this would

mean that the formal organisational element would be introduced in the movement which was characterised till then by informal and personal elements.

Apart from the need that changes in the contents of the educational programme itself would require teachers from outside the movement, these changes were also such that they would reduce the supply of teachers from those trained under it. The addition of the intellectual element would create the desire for further knowledge and study and they would not take the employment immediately. The policy of the movement was to encourage such students and not to discourage them. In fact, in the subsequent period this happened also.

The other change in the educational programme was in its aim. The student was trained not merely to become a teacher or some other employee. He was to be trained to become a citizen settling in rural area to earn his living and set example to others of a new way and style of living. The importance of this aim was that it recognised the citizenship element in education, though the aim of students settling in rural area was not fulfilled. But the intellectual element did create the desire for further education and that also led to the exodus of Adivasi students from the Adivasi area.

(c) The Economic Programme

The Congress Government after assuming power at the provincial level passed certain legislation for the economic benefits of the agriculturists. There were two such measures. One was the tenancy legislation and the other was the agriculturists' debt relief measure. In addition to the work pertaining to these two measures, they also took up the question of the Halpatis or Halis and they also began organising the cooperatives.

In regard to the two legislations they had to make the Adivasis aware of the legislation and help them applying in time and plead their case before the appropriate authorities. The Adivasi tenants and debtors would not know that legislations were passed and when they knew about them they won't know the necessary legal procedures. When they knew that, it was outside their experience.

In accordance with the instructions from Gandhi the workers in the movement organised "Gram Khedut Samaj" at the village level and also at the taluka level. Shri

Jesingbhai Chaudhari, an Adivasi was the President. Jugatram Dave was Vice-President and Veljibhai Chaudhari, also an Adivasi, was the Secretary.

If the agriculturists would not get money from the money lenders, it was necessary to organise credit for them. So Cooperative Credit Societies were started. In addition they also organised the labour cooperatives for Adivasis and the Halpatis. They also organised societies for cooperative agriculture but those societies failed.

The workers trained in the Ashram took up the organisational and secretarial work of different cooperative societies.

Apart from the economic contents of these activities a new dimension was added to the movement. In 1924-27 period they tried to tackle the problems of the Halpatis. But they came into clash with the masters of the Halis, even in regard to their literacy programme for the Halis. They considered it advisable to avoid the clash then. Now, their work in regard to the tenancy legislation and debt relief legislation would involve them into the relationships with the land owners and money lenders who would be both Adivasis and non-Adivasis but largely the latter. In regard to their work among the Halpatis, they would come into conflict with the masters who were all non-Adivasis and also land owners.

While fighting against the foreign Government they would keep these internal problems in abeyance. But once they had the backing of the political power, they would take up those problems. In fact, the reformation of these social relationships was an equally constructive work as Khadi or education was. But it was a very delicate problem and to be handled with care. While working these programmes, they would meet with resistance from the land owning class and alienate their sympathy and help in their other constructive programmes and in their political fight with the foreign power. In fact that did happen in spite of their method of work and the care to avoid clashes between different classes of the people. It is also true that they worked these programmes fairly successfully but not without losing support from the owner agriculturists. All this would not have happened if the political context of the movement had not changed. It appears that such a change in the political context was necessary for the new programme. Take for illustration the Halpati problems.

Sardar Patel called the meeting of the land owner masters and the Halpatis and arrived at certain agreements and appointed a board to arbitrate in case of disputes. The Halpati was freed of his debt if he had worked for 12 years. He was free to work anywhere he liked. The wages were to be paid in cash.

The Halpatis lived in most cases on the land of their masters. If they were freed they had to be given land for building their huts. This was not possible if the Government did not help them. Also they had to be given education and alternative employment. That also won't be possible if the Government did not come forward to take that responsibility.

While allowing the need for change in the political context it is also necessary to point out that even if the Government was sympathetic, there was need for someone to help the Adivasis to exercise their rights.

There was an Adivasi school teacher named Kotala Mehta of Dolvan, Taluka Vyara of Baroda State. He took up the problem of rent relief. He agitated and took a procession of Adivasis to Sayaji Rao Gaekwad and represented their case. Obviously that could not be done without agitation. He composed songs and was also running a monthly named 'Chingar' (Spark). The Gaekwad issued orders that in the Talukas of Mangrol, Mahuva, Vyara and Songadh of Baroda State, the rent for the land tilled by a tenant could not be more than four times the land revenue. But this order was not enforced or obeyed. This was in the thirties before the Congress Government passed its legislation. It was not successful because there was no movement among the people to help them.

There was also an agitation led by Dattu Pangarkar during the same period. He was associated with the left political parties and the Kisan Sabha. The remnants of the movement are still in the Mangrol Taluka. Their ideology is based on class conflict. The ideology of the Vedchhi movement does not subscribe to that ideology. It is based on the ideology of class collaboration or Sarvodaya.

Thus a change in the political context of the movement was necessary if it wanted to take up the problems of bringing about the reconstruction of relationship between different classes of population. These problems were not the same as the problems of education or Khadi work. This necessity of change in the political context is

amply proved by the programme of activities during the short period of Congress Government at the provincial level.

2 The Workers

As seen above the activities of the movement increased in terms of the varieties and in terms of geographical and social extent. This would necessitate the increase in the number and types of workers. Differentiations on the basis of type of work would take place and differences in their relationship between these types would also arise. These would affect the organizational element of the movement as well be seen later. They would also affect the efficiency of work and the workers of the movement. A person doing a specific work on a specific job was likely to be more productive.

Recruitment to the movement in the period earlier to this period was on the basis of his acceptance of the cause and devotion to it and the underlying ideology and his spirit of service and self-sacrifice.

In this period though the number of spinners and weavers increased, the recruitment was largely from the Adivasi workers trained in the Ashram and Ashram life. Some of these workers went out and established centres of work for themselves in the Adivasi area in places such as Madhi, Titwa, Beda, Amba, Pardi and Khoj under the guidance of Vedchhi. Some went out of the District also.

As against this some persons came from outside as weavers and teachers in schools. All of them particularly the weavers were lacking in the spirit and discipline of the movement. Chunibhai Mehta made efforts to see that children took education in Ashram institutions and that they took bath every day and would do prayers etc.

However, as yet the problem did not seem to have been serious though a distinction among the workers as employees and voluntary workers appeared in the movement. But the number and varieties of activities and the workers engaged in them did have consequences for the organizational element in the movement.

3 Organization

With the increase in the number and varieties of workers, it becomes necessary to specify the work of each individual under his designation and responsibility and

accountability. This is indicated in the yearly report of Swaraj Ashram Vedchhi for the year 1941-42. In the report for the 1945-46 it is very clear. The manager of the Ashram and the manager of Khadi workshop are distinguished. The hostel superintendent, weaving teacher, carpentry teacher and other teachers are distinguished. There were accountants and others.

The organization of the Ashram, the centre of the movement, was now taking a definite form. Now all the property of Swaraj Ashram Vedchhi was the property of the Bardoli Trust. In addition to this there was the Gram Seva Samiti of Gujarat Vidyapith. The Vedchhi Ashram was conducted according to its policy and guidance. The Samiti consisted of Sardar Patel, Mahadev Desai and Narhari Parikh. They also helped Vedchhi financially.

The movement got connected with District School Board, All India Spinners' Association, Nutan Shikshan Sangh and such bodies outside Vedchhi. In this way the movement associated itself with outside bodies or organizations. It got monetary assistance from them. But the meaning of such connections for the movement is that it became bound by a number of relationships and began to be affected by them. For example, the Gram Seva Samiti of Gujarat Vidyapith paid more than 50 per cent of the finance. But it was necessary to take its permission to increase the number of students or teachers. In spite of this complexity of relationship there was intimacy and informality in the personal relationships among the workers and the movement had not become bound by the formal rules and regulations. They had a common ideological background. Every one considered every as equal. Common scales of pay were not introduced.

The Resume of Movement from 1922 to 1947

Before proceeding to the next phase or the post-independence phase of movement, a review be taken of the movement during the 25 years of its existence in the pre-independence phase.

There was already a sort of social reform movement among the Adivasis by the Adivasis themselves. The Adivasis who started it was those from the first generation of literates among the Adivasis. The momentum was given to it by a sort of religious movement, the Devi movement.

The programme of the movement included giving up non-vegetarian food habits and habits of drinking liquor and toddy. The social consequences of this programme would be that the Adivasis could claim equality of status with the higher caste groups of the non-Adivasi society. It was a sort of sanskritization process which would bring the Adivasis in the pale of the surrounding non-Adivasi society.

Along with the programme they also preached habits of cleanliness, such as, taking bath every day and the removal of ornaments from the hands of women. Cleanliness was a value that would also enable them to clean equality with the surrounding society.

In terms of economic consequences, the tee-totalitarian habits would enable them to save money and pay more attention to agriculture and earn more and thus save them from the clutches of the money lender. They would be able to spend money thus saved on more beneficial items such as housing and the education of children. This would again help them raising up their status.

It should be noted that no outsiders had given them this programme. Their contact with the outsiders continued to be with the police and forest departments, the liquor shop owners, land owners and money lenders and forest contractors. Their experience with these people was not happy and it is also known that at that time these non-Adivasis would not like a change for the better in the life of the Adivasis. Yet, it could be that the Adivasis became aware of different styles of living through this contact and probably they also admired these. It may be because it was associated with economic and political power of the non-Adivasis. This is however, at this stage a speculation.

What could be observed was that a new dimension to the relationship between the surrounding society and the Adivasis was the introduction of primary education among them. A number of Adivasis took education and became teachers, clerks and village accountants. This opened up a new direction of earning the livelihood and also gave rise to a type of persons who might, in the course of time, form a stratum. Thus the seeds for the process of social differentiation were sown. This development within the Adivasi society would continue and grow, if education among the Adivasis grew.

The Devi movement did not last long. But its effects lasted longer. A new view of life and living more in consonance with the surrounding society made a strong imprint

on a wide section of Adivasi society. The vested interests opposed it. The Adivasis developed an attitude of distrust towards the non-Adivasis. But at the same moment a similar movement from the surrounding non-Adivasis came to the Adivasis. The Adivasis could see the similarity between their programme and the programme of the new movement, and they accepted it. The acceptance of the programme was facilitated by the ideology and the methods of approach of the Gandhian workers.

The Gandhian workers began their work with Khadi as the programme of self-dependence in clothing. They had to meet individuals for this purpose as they had to teach them spinning, carding etc. But a Khadi worker was not teaching them spinning and weaving only. He worked for the all round development of the Adivasi affecting his daily routine life and the life cycle. They lived among the Adivasis and they also preached prohibition, vegetarianism, cleanliness etc. They lived a much simpler life than the other non-Adivasis whom the Adivasis had seen. That probably helped establishing the rapport between the workers in the movement and their clients.

Along with the economic, social and cultural programme Gandhian movement also introduced the political element in their programme. Some of the Adivasis lived in the Baroda State territory. But so far as their experience of political authority was concerned, there was nothing much to distinguish between the British power and the native State power and the political programme was also accepted by all Adivasis easily. In fact, the Indian National Congress soft-paddled its political programme *vis-à-vis* the native States in general and the Baroda State in particular at that time. The political programme supplied the emotional charge to the movement among the Adivasis and it also gave them the opportunity to work with non-Adivasis on terms of equality and to come in contact with different view of life.

The political movement in the rest of India drew large number of persons with idealism, fervour and the spirit of service and self-sacrifice. Many of them had dedicated their lives to the course of national independence and reconstruction. The fight with the Government was suspended in 1922 and a large number of such workers was available for what was called the constructive work by Gandhi. That programme was not distinguished in theory and practice from political programme of civil disobedience and non-cooperation or the direct action programme.

The movement among the Adivasis made a good headway during the period from 1922 to 1929. It was largely the Khadi programme then. The allegiance of the Adivasis to other programmes including the political programme was drawn through it. From 1930 to 1937 the work was disorganized. In 1929, the Salt Satyagraha, non-payment of land revenue and such other direct political action were taken. In 1930 Gandhi Irwin Pact was made and Congress took part in the Round Table Conference in London. But nothing came out of it and again the direct political action was taken by the Congress. All the work centres were confiscated by the Government and the workers were arrested and sent to jail. The work among the Adivasis experienced lull. The Centres were returned and the workers were released by 1937 and the Congress in some provinces including Bombay accepted ministerships under the Government of India Act of 1935. They tried what was known as the provincial autonomy. But the Congress under the leadership of Gandhi launched the 'Quit India Movement' in 1942 during the second World War, and from 1942 to 1945 again the work was disorganised. It was resumed in 1945 and continued upto 1947.

The period of truce with the Government released a large number of workers both Adivasis and the non-Adivasis and they took to the constructive work.

The ideology of the movement before the period of independence remained completely Gandhian. The persons who were recruited to the movement as workers were largely imbued with this ideology and the spirit of service and self-sacrifice. However, the activities of the economic and the educational programme grew both in number and variety and their geographical coverage expanded to such an extent that it required large number of persons and with different types of equipment at the implementation level. It was not possible to get all the recruits from those trained and disciplined in the movement itself. When the experiment of producing Khadi on occupational basis was made, a number of Harijan weavers were brought from outside. They came as wage earners and the spinners also were paid wages. Wage earning became the motive for weaving and spinning among these people. This experiment was given up and the Khadi programme again became the programme of self-dependence for clothing.

Similarly in the educational programme, a number of specialised courses in crafts were introduced. Also the science and language courses were introduced. This was done

in pursuance of Wardha Scheme of Education, and with a view to relate knowledge to life. It was also thought that the courses prior to this were emphasizing the use of hands only and they were lacking in the development of intellect. The new course aimed at balancing the use of hands, head and heart. How effectively these courses were taught is a different question but they would require persons with educational equipment which it was not possible to recruit hundred per cent from those in the movement. Some people from outside the area of operation of the movement did come.

A new dimension to the programme was added in this period. The implementation of tenancy legislation, the agriculturist's debt relief and the work among the agricultural labourers brought the movement indirect relation with the existing social relationship, between the owner of land and the tenant, between the money lender and the agriculturist and between the land owner and the Hali who was nearly a serf. This was a qualitative difference in the programme of work. The land owning class took part in the civil disobedience programme particularly, the non-payment of revenue. The money lenders were sympathetic to it and many of them were also land owners. They were all masters of the Halis.

Their earlier experience of work among the Halis who do not live in the forest area had raised protests from the land owning non-Adivasi people and the Vedchhi movement suspended that work in 1927. But not this time during the period between 1937 and 1947.

The Adivasis were prepared by Khadi and education work among them to sustain certain changes in the social relationship between them and the non-Adivasis. There were also tenants and debtors among the non-Adivasis and the same laws applied to them. But this tenancy legislation was resented by them, particularly the small owners who were supplementing their income from other employment with the income from land. It was against these odds that the movement took up this programme and carried it out quite successfully though they lost the support of the upper section of the non-Adivasis. Politically the non-Adivasi land owners became the supporters of Swatantra Party.

Another positive programme consistent with the other programme was to start the cooperative credit societies to counter the effect of the loss of credit facilities and the

Labour Cooperatives also reduced the dependence of the Adivasis on the contractors for employment.

Thus there was significant shift in the programme of the Vedchhi movement. It drew the larger and unprivileged masses into its orbit. The number of Adivasis participating in the political struggle had also increased and the political consciousness among them grew and spread. The Adivasis became a group to reckon with in the political movement by 1947. The feeling of self identity could grow from this development.

The workers in the movement both at the policy making and implementation level still continued to come from the non-Adivasis and with the same ideology and spirit as in the past. But the flow became thinner. In the meanwhile the Adivasis were also trained in the movement and their number also increased particularly at the implementation level.

With the growth of variety in the activities and with the growth of number and varieties of workers, the personal and informal element would also become less and the problems of managing the human relations on formal and impersonal basis would also arise. However, the regard and respect for some persons at the policy making level and at the level of authority, it was not necessary to make rules and regulations of rigid nature. As yet, mutual understanding and the spirit of accommodation worked. But for the purpose of finances, the legal formalities were carried out to make some associations as registered bodies.

Finances came largely through Sardar Patel and the workers had not to bother about them during the period before independence.

It should be noted that the change in the movement was accompanied with the change in the political context. Even a short period of three years during which the Government was the 'Indian', the Vedchhi movement grew fast both in intensity and extensity. It also touched the property relations. But the change in the political context does raise a question in regard to the movement. If, change in the political power even for a short while can be so effective, why not strive for it single mindedly and then do the constructive work? Fortunately, within no time the political power was acquired and this question ceased to be significant with reference to the foreign versus Indian Government. But its significance in another sense increased. The Government of India after 1947 has

been the Indian Government. Political power now could be desired as an instrument for change. Could such a perception of political power have any effect on the movement? Also, changes have come about in the Adivasi society itself. Social differentiations based on education, occupation and wealth among the Adivasis was taking place. They would also have their consequences for the movement.

In the next period, the perception of political power and the attitude towards it and the changed conditions in the Adivasi society become additional factors affecting the movement.

Section - IV

THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1947 AND 1967

Vedchhi Movement During the Twenty Years Of Independence

The Changes Outside the Adivasi Area

The political context of Vedchhi movement changed in 1947. But along with it there were also social and economic changes both within and outside the Adivasi society. These changes were taking place before 1947. During the period of II World war, say from 1940 to 1945, the changes took place very rapidly and they continued with greater rapidity after independence at least in comparison with pre-second World War period. These political and social changes as the change in the external of the movement are important and they will be briefly mentioned here.

The Welfare State

The National Sovereign State of India came into existence in 1947. The Government was based on the adult franchise and in law every individual became equal irrespective of his religion, sex, caste or class. One of the objectives of the Vedchhi movement was thus released. But the need to give concrete content to this quality in law still continued.

It was necessary that every individual in order to enjoy the equality in law be given the equal opportunity to equip himself economically, and educationally so as to enjoy the equality in law. The Indian State was announced to be a welfare state and it would launch programmes which would create conditions for the equality of opportunity. It also launched such economic, social and educational programmes.

Industrialization and Urbanization

The programme for the industrial production on large scale were launched. The technologization of industrial production increased and the programmes for introducing technology and science in agricultural production also went apace. The industrial

programme increased the size of the existing urban areas and also added to their number. The flow of educated people and also of illiterate and literate manual unskilled and skilled workers towards the city from the rural areas, increased. The facilities for education and also the demand for them in rural and urban areas increased. This process of urbanization was growing at a more rapid pace than before. There has also been a change in favour of the urban in the rural-urban relations.

At large mass swims with the current, there has also been attitudinal change in favour of urbanization with all its social and cultural implications. The change may be halting and accompanied by grumblings and protests. But it is there. This process of urbanization has been helped by the growth of transport facilities and the facilities for other communications.

This urbanization is one trend leading towards the integration of the Indian society in certain respects. The Adivasis of Surat District and of Vedchhi area were bit immune to this process and to the trend. The forest area did not remain now an unapproachable and unfrequented area. The Adivasis began to go in for occupational opportunities created by the new developments. As it would happen in the non-Adivasi population, among the Adivasis also those who were employed outside would take the ideas, opinions, fashions and styles of living from the non-Adivasis might disapprove of these things. But the younger ones may be attracted by them. Probably those who have received some education might feel more attracted than others. They might see more opportunities in the non-Adivasi areas.

The programme of free and compulsory primary education in most of the States in India is an important effort of the State in making the ideas of equality of opportunity more real. Also the Governments increased the number of institutions for technical education. In Gujarat State and in Surat district practically every village is covered by the programme of increasing the educational facilities. The creation of the educational facilities created conditions which if the Adivasi availed of would enable them to participate in the process of change outside the Adivasi area. This would involve them in the wider society.

In this way the change taking place in the society outside the Adivasi area would affect the Adivasi society by setting into motion the forces of change. What consequences would they have for the movement?

The Changing Conditions Outside the Adivasi Area and the Movement

The Vedchhi movement originated in the anti-Government atmosphere and grew in that atmosphere except for a short period. The Government was perceived by the Adivasis as an instrument of oppression. After 1947, the Government policy was that of welfare and progress of the Adivasis. The movement therefore had to reconsider its relations with and attitude towards the Government.

The Vedchhi movement would not differ from the state in regard to its aims. The difference might arise as to how to achieve them and as to what should be the contents of education and welfare of the Adivasi. Before 1947 this question did not come up for discussion with the Government except during a short period. Now, in the period after 1947, the question comes up constantly. What constitutes good education and welfare of the Adivasi was implied in the constructive programme of Gandhi. So far as education was concerned 'Nai Talim' was accepted by the Vedchhi movement. Would these views tally with the views implied in the Government programmes? Thinking this way the differences would be more at the philosophical level. Is the society implied in the Government programme and in the Vedchhi programme the same? If not, then?

According to Gandhian theory and practice political power could be used as an instrument of change or social reconstruction. But given the idea of society one would like to create, the Gandhian thinking was that it was not necessary to wait for it till the political power was acquired. They should start working for it. Those who worked for social reconstruction would also be participating in the struggle for acquiring political power. The state then would be of such nature as would help reconstructing the society according to the ideals of those who worked for political power. Can it be said that the national state that has come into existence and for which the Gandhians fought is of such nature as would subscribe to the ideas of Vedchhi movement or the Gandhian ideals? If yes, the relations of Vedchhi movement with the Government would be very easy. But

that needs to be verified. If not, where does the Vedchhi movement stand in relation to the Government?

Thus the socio-economic changes outside the Adivasi society and the rise of the national state were the two phenomena which could have its effects on the Vedchhi movement. They may be functional or dysfunctional to it.

In order to investigate the effects fully it will be necessary to investigate the socio-economic changes and the politics in the Adivasi society. Such an investigation could not be undertaken in this enquiry. We have contented ourselves by asking the workers what are the changes in the Adivasi society and what is their attitude towards political power in relation to the movement. Partly these changes are expected to be reflected in the three components of the movement i.e. the programme of work, the organization and the worker. Partly they are likely to be reflected in what they think about the future programme of work and type of workers they think would be required to implement the programme. The ideas about the future programme of work and about the future worker are also likely to be affected by the change within the Adivasi society. The data on these matters will be presented in the next section.

This section deals with the movement during the twenty years of independence.

The programmes

The programmes of Vedchhi movement did not change much from what they were in the previous period i.e. 1937-1947. the programme were (1) Khadi (2) The tendency Legislation and Debt Relief, (3) Cooperation, (4) Education, (5) Work among the Halpatis and Kotwalias, (6) Occasional work regarding floods and such other calamities whenever they occurred.

Khadi and Other Economic programme (4) Education, (5) Work among the Halpatis and Kotwalias, (6) Occasional work regarding floods and such other calamities whenever they occurred.

Khadi and Other Economic programmes

The industrial production of Khadi stopped in the previous period. The work regarding Khadi as the programme of self-dependence in clothing continued. The idea behind it was to develop the qualities of self-help and self-reliance.

The Bombay State Government in 1947 appointed a Committee for the development of Khadi and Village Industries. The Committee accepted the scheme submitted by Vedchhi regarding the self-dependence in clothing and the work continued according to that scheme. The scheme was that a worker knowing the Khadi production processes was to be appointed wherever there were 200 persons who would wear the Khadi produced by themselves. There were 13 such centres covering 42 villages and 2101 individuals (The report of Swaraj Ashram Vedchhi, 1948).

The workers in these centres were trained at Vedchhi. But the Khadi work was decentralized and independent Khadi Mandals and Cooperative Societies did that work. The Khadi work at Vedchhi proper and in the institutions connected with it decreased as the time went by. From 1967, Khadi work in Vedchhi area is done by the different institutions under the Khadi Gramodyog Commission. So far the Khadi activities of Vedchhi movement itself were concerned they could be said to have been accepted by the State and it could relieve itself of that work. In this sense Vedchhi movement had attained one of its objectives. At the present moment, there are four Ambar Charkha Centres and three Khadi producing Centres under the Raniparaj Seva Sabha – a new Central Organization of Vedchhi Movement (1951). It should be remembered here that Khadi production on industrial basis was given up in the last period. The Khadi programme thus receded from the Vedchhi movement in the period after independence. While Khadi programme receded other activities grew.

Work Regarding Tenancy Legislation and Debt Relief

The tenancy legislation and the legislation regarding the debt-relief were the consequences of the transfer of political power to Indians. These legislations were beneficial to the Adivasis as much as to others. But the Adivasis were less accustomed to resort to them than others. It was therefore, necessary that such work should be continued by Vedchhi movement.

Several centres of Vedchhi developed when the Vedchhi Ashrama was under Government possession. They took up this work in addition to education, prohibition etc. The debt relief work does not seem to have developed much. There is no mention of this work in the annual reports of these centres after 1949.

The work regarding tenancy legislation continued all throughout the 20 years from 1947-1967. This work spread as the centres working under the guidance of Vedchhi increased. Also others who were working independently of Vedchhi movement joined it, for example, Shri Jinabhai Darji and his co-workers.

These workers first tried to arrive at compromise within the limits of law. If that was not possible then they resorted to legal proceedings.

There were various types of problems. The names of the tenants who have become owners are not entered into the register yet. The tenants who got the land are not able to pay the instalments regularly. Sometimes, such tenants also mortgage their land because they are not able to pay the price fixed according to law.

Beginning of the Landowning Stratum Among the Adivasis

In connection with this work, a stratificatory change noticed by some workers in the movement who have been in it before 1947 needs mention. Before independence the land owners were the non-Adivasi high caste individuals. There was the scope for the problem being looked upon as that between Adivasi and non-Adivasi and there was the Adivasi non-Adivasi feeling. Today, there is a difference in the conditions, but not necessarily in the feeling. A number of Adivasi tenants who got small quantity of land were not in the position of maintaining it. Such persons mortgaged their land in private manner with the Adivasi land owners and others. Even the Adivasi Primary School Teachers are included by some among these others. Such mortgages are known as 'Boni'.

Those benefited by legislation are likely to be the new economic and social elites among the Adivasis. They might take the advantage of the concessions given to the Adivasis, acquire status and create a following among them and might become the influentials among the Adivasis. At the same time, they might also try to become the members of non-Adivasi elite and try to remain at a distance from the Adivasis. A dimension is added to the relationship between Adivasis and non-Adivasis which has the

potentialities of both attenuating and extenuating the feeling of integration with and separation from the wider society. Much would depend on how these potentialities are tapped. Whatever may happen in future, at the moment the Vedchhi movement is engaged in activities which affect the existing socio-economic relationships. It has to face the vested interests. Whether to face them or not or how to face them will be an important point leading to the departures regarding the policy and its implementation. At the moment they are keeping strictly to the legal and economic aspects.

Cooperatives

The cooperative organizations were more less implied in the Gandhian ideology, both as the form of economic organization and as the form of social relationships or social organization of the new society. The Vedchhi movement therefore very legitimately participated in the formation and working of the cooperatives. The Cooperative Societies Act existed even before independence but the state policy after independence was to encourage the cooperative movement and several changes were made in the legislation with that end in view.

Among the Adivasis some cooperatives were formed even before independence. But the political independence created conditions for the furtherance of the cooperative movement among the Adivasis.

The Adivasis more than the non-Adivasis lacked the capital organizing ability. The Vedchhi movement worked in these directions of removing these disabilities and for promoting the spirit of cooperation. Promotion of cooperative movement became the important programme of Vedchhi movement.

The Adivasis got land under the tenancy legislation and an experiment of cooperative farming was made. Three cooperative farming societies were organized in 1948 in Valod Mahal. These were the Shedi Falia Mandli, the Amback Mandli and the Konkanwad Mandli. Subsequently, other societies were also formed but today none exists and it is no longer an activity of Vedchhi movement.

The annual report for 1957-58 of the Raniparaj Seva Sabha mentions three obstacles in the continuance of the cooperative farming societies.

- (1) In the beginning the cooperative societies were organized by the tenant farmers. The land owners smelt rat in the activity and they began to take possession of their land. The members could not take the protection which they could under the law. They did not know and understand the law and were not accustomed to take resort to law.
- (2) Two or three years after 1950 were bad years for agriculture and the crops failed. The debt of the societies increased and were on the verge of breaking down.
- (3) Some societies had not enough land and the holdings were not economic units.

In the report it was mentioned that the plans are thought out for rehabilitating these societies. But it seems they did not succeed and today there are no activities in that direction. However, the cooperative activities in other fields increased in number and variety. Service Cooperatives, Savings Societies were started and they flourished also.

Forest Cooperative

The Cooperative which have flourished the most and which have both social and economic significance are the Forest Labour Cooperatives. In 1967, there were 60 Forest Labour Cooperative Societies – all organized by the Raniparaj Seva Sabha.

These cooperative s take the contract for cutting the forests. They are not doing business in wood. It is not that they did not want to. A worker of the Raniparaj Seva Sabha said that they had placed the idea before Jugatram that business should also be developed. They contacted a firm manufacturing furniture in Bombay and thought of selling the wood indifferent sizes. But they could no get a person with the ability to manage that business. So still they have not developed the business aspect of the Forest Cooperatives.

The workers of the Vedchhi movement help organizing the societies, help appointing the office bearers, and advise the Government regarding the daily working of the societies and regarding the general policy.

The social significance of these Labour Cooperatives can be understood from their other activities which they have included in their constitution and objectives. The

Forest Labour Cooperatives donated Rs. 70/- thousand to the newly formed Gandhi Vidyapith at Vedchhi. In 1958-59, 10 societies from Songadh and Vyara Talukas organized 17 classes for cultural training of women.

Similarly then ran classes for training workers for Labour Cooperatives. In addition to these programmes, they have made provisions for the residence of the forest labourers during the working season, for sports, and for medical aid etc.

In addition to these Forest Labour Cooperatives, Raniparaj Seva Sabha has helped organizing cooperative s for the housing of Halpatis, Cooperatives for bamboo workers and Neera-Tadgol societies.

Apart from organizing the new occupational opportunities and doing social service and improving the economic conditions of the Adivasis, the Adivasis freed themselves from the oppression of the officers and forest contractors. These societies have created concrete conditions for Adivasis to develop self-confidence and self-respect.

It should be noted here that the Vedchhi movement did not lessen its interest in Khadi work because they thought it less important or changed their conviction. Other organizations have taken up the work and they still look upon Khadi as the means to encourage self-help and self-reliance. But the interest of the movement in tenancy legislation and cooperatives is the indication of its flexibility, sensitivity to change and pragmatism.

The important consequence of the economic programme of Vedchhi movement was that it gave substance to the formal legal integration of the tribal society with the Indian society. The Adivasis came to know of the new facilities and opportunities. Vedchhi came to know of the new facilities and opportunities. Vedchhi movement helped them knowing these facilities and also created conditions to enable them to utilize those opportunities and facilities. The work of the movement had certain social consequences which were either intended or not intended. The work resulted into the emergence of the new economic interests and groups among the Adivasis themselves and into a change in the relationship between the Adivasis and the non-Adivasis.

The Educational Programme

The educational activities during the twenty years between 1947-1967 were largely on the lines of Wardha Scheme as laid down in the closing years of the previous period so far as the pedagogic aspect was concerned. The additional activity was the short term training courses for village workers. Panchayat Raj workers and Balwadi teachers. The educational activities can be classified mainly into three.

Institutional	Hostel for Backward Classes.	Short-term Courses.
1. Balwadi	1. Boys Hostel	1. For Village workers
2. Primary Schools	2. Girls Hostel	2. Occasional courses e.g. Panchayati Raj
3. Uttar Buniyadi e.g. Secondary Schools		3. Balwadi Training courses.
4. University education		
5. Teachers Training Institutions.		
The growth of the educational activities in this period can be observed from the following tables:		
	1947 (Number)	1967 (Number)
1. Balwadi (1940)	2	27
2. Primary Schools (1947)	1	97
3. Uttar Buniyadi or Secondary Schools (1949)		
	Boys	-
	Girs	11 = 19 8
4. College (1967)	-	1
5. Hostel for Boys (1947)	-	17
6. Hostel for Girls (1947)	-	11
7. Primary Teachers Training College (1950)	-	2
Total	3	174

It is obvious that while a lot of conceptual and spade work for the educational activities was done in the period between 1937 and 1947, the actual spread of the educational activities took place in the period of independence between 1947 and 1967.

Balwadi

The Balwadi activity has become stable. It has grown largely from the experiments at Madhi and Vedchhi. These Balwadis are running in small villages in the Adivasi area and the girls who have taken training in the Nai Talim institutions are conducting them. This is the basic work for change. The socialization in these institutions may not be for what is called modernization. But it does help the Adivasi child in adjusting to its environments in a different way. While the adjustment is to a better way of living it does not uproot the child completely.

Primary Education

Compulsory primary education was introduced in Surat District in 1946 by the District School Board. But it had not opened schools in the villages with a population of less than 700. The policy was that, if private institutions opened schools at such places and, if there was a given number of attendance, the institutions would get recognition and grant. These were called Lok Shalas. The Raniparaj Seva Sabha conducted such 82 schools in 1953-55. These schools in course of time went over to the District School Board and now to the District Panchayat.

In 1952, the Surat District School Board passed the resolution to introduce education according to Wardha Scheme in all the schools by 1963. But in 1953, under the advice of the Education Minister of Bombay State it was decided that wherever there were Sarvodaya Centres and the areas of concentration of such work, Wardha education may be introduced. Consequently, 65 schools were turned into Basic or Buniyadi Schools in different Talukas such as Bardoli, Mandvi, Navsari, Mahuva, Songadh, Valod, Choryasi and Olpad. It should be noted that out of these Talukas four Talukas were not Adivasi Talukas. In 1963 there were 614 (nearly 30 per cent) Basis Schools out of the total of 2,103 Schools in the district. In 1967 the Vedchhi workers were running 97 Schools.

Ashramshala

In 1953 the Bombay State Government introduced a type of school for the backward and Adivasi classes known as Ashramshala.

In principle it was not different from the 'Dhanka Vastigrih' started by Gaekwad of Baroda at Songadh in 1885. The Ashramshala is a residential School up to 7th standard vernacular. Ten acres of land are attached to it for agriculture. It is given a pair of bullocks and two cows per 30 students. Not more than 120 students are to be admitted to a school and the proportion of boys and girls must be half and half. There are also basic education Schools.

One such school was started by an organization not within Vedchhi movement in 1953 in Surat district. The Raniparaj Seva Sabha started the first such School in 1954 at Borisavar in Songadh Taluka and there were 18 such schools in 1967. As the head of school was started sufficient number of students were not available from the area. But now the students are all from the area".

Secondary Education

The first secondary school class on basic education principle was started in 1948 and it was started for 10 students of Vedchhi Ashrama who passed their final examination of the primary stages. The Annual Report of Swaraj Ashram, Vedchhi (1948-49) notes that the basic problem was to supply teachers for 'Nai Talim' and for village work. It was thought that those who passed their final examination of primary schools were not ripe in age for such work. It was necessary to give them further training.

The Hindustani Talim Sangh had eight years of primary education. The education department of Bombay State was thinking of two years after the primary stage. According to the workers in the Vedchhi movement, it would be proper if a student took two years training in Uttar Buniyadi and then he took either Gram Sevak Training or Teacher's Training. By 1953-1954 they arrived at a course for three years in Uttar Buniyadi Schools. Their aim was to give education to the boys and girls through basic crafts and social service.

Changed Motivation of the Students

They had envisaged that these students would go in for either village work or for teaching. However, it also happened that the students trained in this institution went out for further education. They went to Lok Bharati at Sanosara in Saurashtra. At the time went by, this flow of students for further education increased so much so that the Vedchhi courses were required to be adjust there. According to the Vedchhi workers one of the reasons for the students joining Lok Bharati was that it was recognized as a rural university and its graduates were recognized for government jobs.

The Annual Report of Swaraj Ashram, Vedchhi (1952-53) notes that the students came to their educational institutions with the fear and suspicion about their future. They might like the Ashrama life but if they were not certified for job after completing education they would be at sea. Therefore, Vedchhi decided to run the educational institutions with Government recognition. Consequently, the courses were so adjusted as to get recognition from the Secondary School Board Certificate Examination and from 1963 Uttar Buniyadi students were considered equal to S.S.C. students.

In 1964, a little more than half of the students went in for further education. One or two of them who had passed also with subjects for university entrance joined the Chartered Universities and others went to Gujarat Vidyapith at Ahmedabad and Lok Bharati at Sonasara.

The change in the educational programme of Vedchhi movement related the Vedchhi movement with wider society particularly its educational system. In theory the S.S.C.E. Board recognized the Vedchhi courses for all students. But in practice only the Vedchhi students took them. In theory the Government courses were affected by Vedchhi was adjusting to the wider society rather than the wider society to Vedchhi. It is obvious that the Adivasi student was as much motivated by his desire to get job as by his desire to get knowledge and training given at Vedchhi. He was also desiring to study further. His motivations for taking education were the same as those of the non-Adivasi students. In this sense, the Adivasi society was being integrated with the society outside its area. But that must also set the Vedchhi educationists thinking.

Primary Teachers Training College

There are two colleges for training of teachers, one at Vedchhi for men and the other at Boarkhadi for women. 40 percent of men students are non-teachers and of these 40 per cent the non-Adivasis are 40 percent. In women's college, the women coming from Buniyadi students are 50 per cent and of them 25 per cent are non-Adivasis.

The courses of study are the same as decided by the Government and the examination is also taken by the Education Department of the Gujarat State.

Gandhi Vidyapith

In 1962 the Raniparaj Seva Sabha appointed a Committee to start an institution for higher education. The Committee recommended that a Vidyapith be started and in 1967 Gandhi Vidyapith is established. They have begun with a Social Science college. It is a four year course after S.S.C.E.

There were 48 students in the first year. It should be noted that the number of students to be admitted is restricted. Of the 48, there were 34 men and 14 women students. Of these 48 students, 25 were Buniyadi S.S.C. and 23 were non-Buniyadi S.S.C. If this trend continues it means that the non-Buniyadi students also recognize the Gandhi Vidyapith. Of the 48 students 11 were non-Adivasis.

The idea is to start college at other places also. The subjects of study are (i) Social Sciences (ii) Education (iii) Technology (iv) Anthropology and Forestry (v) Short term courses in Agriculture and Industries (vi) Training for specific departments and institutions.

It is too early to evaluate the work of the Vidyapith. But the fact that non-Buniyadi S.S.C. students are joining the Vidyapith and that the courses of study aim at usefulness in various types of jobs and in agriculture indicates that is not traditional in conception and that it is grappling with reality. It also needs to be noted that they think of keeping a very high level of scientific atmosphere. (See "Gandhi Vidyapith and its Background" a statement, 19-10-1967).

Review of the Educational Programme

The question before Vidyapith people are: If the motivations of Adivasi students are not different from those of the non-Adivasi students what could be the justification for a different content of courses for the Adivasi students?

The question has to be attempted with reference to the intentions behind the Vedchhi educational system. As we saw in the account of 1937-1947 period the aim of the system were to produce seekers after knowledge, to produce social workers, to produce citizen for rural life with new orientations.

The Government or the Indian Education system also aims at producing seeker after knowledge and also job seekers. The goal of seeking after jobs is not understandable. The protagonists of the system and the reports of numerous Commissions also emphasize social service. And, of course rural reconstruction and now family planning could be the concern of the educational system. What is the difference?

The Vedchhi system has more specific and limited goals. Its ultimate referent is the rural society. It might become its own stranglehold if it ignores the urban context of the rural area. Rural and urban both are meaningless without each other's contexts. It is widely accepted that the current All India Educational system has failed in all respects except producing job seekers. While the educational system can be blamed for many things it cannot be blamed for not creating jobs. That failure is the failure of other systems.

Will the Vedchhi system deliver the goods when the systems other than the educational system are failing? The comparison between Vedchhi and the current system is to be then at the educational level only. As is mentioned above it is too early to evaluate the Gandhi Vidyapith. The question is being asked, what is the justification for the Vidyapith if it is to be like other institutions started by the Gandhians and which have become similar to the institutions of the current education system.

Beginning with the programme of literacy and social education, the Vedchhi programme of education became a full-fledged system of educational covering all the stages of instruction from pre-primary to the university. The emphasis in the content of the courses changed from that on the hands to the balancing of hand, heart and head. In the early beginning the courses were meant for producing the social worker who would

be self-dependent economically. But the emphasis was on the ideology of service, sacrifices or renunciation for the good of others. The students might either become village workers or teachers for training such workers. But in the post independence period the number of students and the institutions increased. The desire to get a white collar job after study became an additional motivation to take education. The contents of education were adjusted to this desire and organizationally the system of education upto the secondary stage was integrated with the state system of education. Yet, in the movement controlled schools the emphasis was Buniyadi courses which were also recognized by the Government system of education. Their system still remains oriented to rural life.

A section of the Adivasis who are not with the movement today feels that the 'Nai Talim' education only results into the Adivasis being in the inferior positions. It is not important how small or big this section is. What is important is how far the criticism has the basis in fact and in feeling.

Changes in the Organization of the Movement

The Raniparaj Seva Sabha

The economic and the educational programmes that the Vedchi movement carried out during the period of twenty years from 19⁴⁷-1967 show that the movement did not remain confined to a small area among: the Adivasis but it spread to the wider area within and also outside the Adivasi area. The number of institutions, their varieties and the number of persons working in them increased to such an extent that the organizational component of the movement would require change. In fact each activity at each place needed an institution. The work according to the informal and personal method was not possible now. The problems of conceiving and executing the programmes, of recruitment and management, of the personnel and of finances needed both centralization and decentralization and needed some sort of definiteness and order regarding powers and functions, positions, rights and duties, emoluments etc.

The workers in the movement realised this and they were meeting together once in three-four months for deliberations on all problems. From these meetings was born the "Raniparaj Seva Sabha" — the association for the service/ of the Adivasis in 1951. It was

registered as a Trust. All other Ashramas and centres which were working under Vedchhi were not registered bodies. Yet they were getting financial help from the Government, from Gandhi Nidhi, Kasturba Smarak Nidhi, etc. It was necessary that a legal registered body should approach for help on their behalf and also be responsible for the accounts.

The Raniparaj Seva Sabha was mainly doing three things organizationally. (i) It established new institutions, (ii) It disbursed the funds to the associated institutions. (3) It provides opportunities for exchange of views and discussions to these institutions and gives them guidance. There were 31 such institutions affiliated to the Raniparaj Seva Sabha in 1963.

The Ashramas such as Bardoli, Sarbhon, Kathor and others which were already registered Trusts are not members of the Seva Sabha. But they were a party to the decision to form Raniparaj Seva Sabha and they work in cooperation with one another.

While the Seva Sabha is a legal body and has all the responsibilities that legality implies, its policy has been to decentralise the administration and working of the institutions. It is a sponsoring body. But more important than that is its role as a common unifying platform, ideologically, programmatically and organizationally. It excludes any type of exclusiveness among those working in the movement This is so far so good.

Government Support and its Effects on Organization

The most important element from the point of view of organization has been the fact that the Government aids these institutions financially wholly or partly. The Seva Sabha has cooperated with the Government in their primary education programme, cooperative movement programme, the programmes for the development of forest village. It is not necessary to describe what positions and posts are created or what salaries, rights, and privileges exist. What is important is to know what this organizational development does to the movement. This point was raised during the course of the interviews with the workers in the movement at the policy making and managerial levels.

Specificity of Jobs

Formerly, there were separate institutions as they are today. But the workers in different institutions would meet together, discuss and decide the programme of work and its implementation. The workers would take up the work according to their liking and choice and competence. No formal qualifications were necessary and there were no specific posts with fixed salaries, rights and duties formally laid down. After 19⁴⁷ there is division and specificity of work, with formal position, fixed salaries, rights and duties. Every worker is the employee of an institution. This need not necessarily affect his spirit of service and devotion, particularly in the case of the worker who is already there in the movement before 1947.

In the words of a worker, “Formerly all workers were considered constructive workers. They were doing social service. It was not that they did the work of the post for which they drew the salary and that they did no other work. Now it has happened like that”.

A worker who joined in 1941 describes his work as follows: “After completing the course in weaving at Vedchhi, I was posted at Kokanwade It is a mohalla of the village Degama two miles away from Vedchhi. Activities connected with the spinning wheel were to be carried out. I prepared a hut there and stayed in it. I called the children to sleep there, taught them prayers and gave them breakfast in the morning. In this way I conducted a night hostel. The expenses were met by the Ashrama. Spinning wheels were given on loan. The spinning wheel cost Rs. 2.50 to Rs. 3.00 then. The spinners were given three annas a day. From these wages the money loaned for the wheel or other requirements of spinning were recovered. This was our work.

“In 1941 at the time of floods in Gujarat, Gujarat Congress asked for workers and I worked for two-three months in Maroli Dhrampur area. The Halpatis were employed on road repair work and they were given Jowar from 2 ¹/₂ to 5 sheers. New huts were also made for them. But I was getting ray salary from the Ashrama.

“When I returned from flood relief work, Gandhiji was in Bardoli for rest for a month, Sardar Patel was also there. I was sent there from Vedchhi. I had to go there as a

‘volunteer’. I was given the kitchen department. All this time my salary was drawn from Ashrama”.

This illustration shows that a man trained for weaving worked as a village worker, taught spinning and organized night hostel, did the flood relief work and also looked after the kitchen. All this he did at different places.

Recruitment Procedures and Qualifications of Personnel.

Now the change came and it first came to the educational institutions. Teachers in primary and secondary schools must have certain educational qualifications. Such rules were now applied to the ‘Nai Talim’ schools also as in other schools. In Gandhi Vidyapith, in prohibition and in Halpati work, same thing is happening and formal qualifications, fixed scales of pay etc. are now in vogue everywhere and they have been consciously accepted.

A person was to be taken in Gandhi Vidyapith College in 1967 on the teaching staff. But the choice had to be given up as he was only a graduate. The other person had a post-graduate degree. But he wanted his choice to be made on the ground of his ability and wanted his price to be measured as a worker. He said that he would not apply because he was a M.A. The question was discussed in the executive of the Gandhi Vidyapith and it was decided that he be appointed. But the point was raised that if he does not mention his degree, what shall be the basis of his salary? With this administrative issue the majority of the members of the executive veered round the opinion that henceforth in the Vidyapith degree will have to be the consideration and that it must have to be so, may be as a matter of administrative convenience. They do not give advertisements yet.

But the prohibition committee which gets money for the salary of the propaganda worker from the Government had to give advertisement for the post. Similarly, they had to advertise for the post of worker to be employed by the Halpati Seva Sangh. These advertisements appeared in the Gujaratmitra of 4-12-1968, a Gujarati daily of Surat. The advertisements laid down the qualifications and mentioned the type of work to be done. Salary was not mentioned. Probably in the history of the Movement advertisement has been given for the first time. It could also be that the number of persons who have been

trained in their institutions is now large and it is only fair that appointments be made by competition and not as a matter of somebody's personal opinion and liking.

Scales of Pay

A worker of the executive level working from 1928 in the movement said, "Yes, there are scales of pay. Every department gets Government grant. Therefore, here also the scales of pay are the same as elsewhere. The teacher in the Gram Shala get the salary according to the scales fixed by the District Panchayat and the teachers in Uttar Buniyadi Schools get salary as other secondary school teachers. Formerly, when we did not take the grants such questions were not significant. All the workers joined because of the spirit of service. It was not much of employment or job and privileges or rights and such things, Fortunately, it is still not much here. Even then, now the number of workers increased. Formerly the amount to be paid was fixed according to the need of a person. It will be difficult if we try to do that now. Therefore, it is desirable that there be some fixed order. That is why we have accepted these scales".

The Change and its Meaning for the Movement

It is obvious that in place of informal and personal considerations the considerations are now formal and impersonal. This has come with the government grants. The increase in number is an equally important factor in this change and now even in some institutions which are not getting government grants, the same impersonal and informal considerations, rules and regulations have been introduced and they are under consideration for the remaining ones.

More important and significant is the change in the financial resources. A top level worker said, "The finances came from the District Panchayat, from the Government and from Trusts and other organizations such as Kasturba Seva Sangh. They are all funds for specific purposes. Then there are donors. Regarding the donations he said, "It is to be noted with surprise that this institution exists now for several years. It is doing work, Gandhiji and others have written about its work and the need for work among the Raniparaj. But now nobody comes forward for help — barring few friends. On the other hand, the people from foreign countries like the institutions and send much help.

The Australian lady who came here, when went back to Australia offered a help of Rs.80,000/- Such help comes. But every institution is hard pressed financially . . . Some suffer for want of maintenance funds, others suffer for want of development funds”.

With the development and growth of the movement the number and types of workers and the need for finances also increased. The increase in each of these two elements has its consequences for the organization element. The organization becomes more complex and formal and impersonal elements come to characterize it. But they might also affect the character of the programme. Those programmes for which funds are available grow. The others may starve. The worker who has now become an employee may be as conscientious and devoted as before. But he cannot take liberty with the activities and with himself. It is difficult for him to deviate and experiment. This limits development and encourages routinization. Routinization is functional to an organization. The organization may or may not be functional to the social development. But it may be dysfunctional to the movement.

Routinization means discipline. Gandhian workers are discipline minded therefore discipline does not pinch them. There might be a little difficulty in changing over from one type of discipline to another type. What every one is feeling is that they are falling into a sort of rut and that the initiative and the desire and the opportunity to experiment are being lost. As one worker put it, “Our programmes have become grants oriented”.

The programmes have become largely the Government programmes and they are left with the task of implementing them. While implementing them they have to submit to the bureaucratic procedures and as some workers complained most of their time they are spending in overcoming the obstacles created by the procedures and attitudes. That is what would happen whenever a formal type of organization grows. The problems that it creates cannot be tackled with the beliefs and attitudes of a loosely organized association characterised by the elements of informality, diffuseness and personal relationships. What is important to note is that these characteristics would have come to the organizational element of the movement as a matter of course though in its own way. Instead of that process, what has happened is that it came because of its changed relationship with external conditions and from the political administration soaked in paternalistic traditions. This added to the difficulties of adjustment to the new situation.

How the Workers Take the Change

The workers are very much aware that their programmes are dependent on grants and that the grants are dependent on the attitude of the Government. If the attitude of the same government becomes unfavourable or if another Government with unfavourable attitude comes into power either they have to submit to their will or to lose support. Two questions are agitating the minds of the workers (i) Given that it will not be possible to do without Government grants what are the alternatives to reduce the 'dependence' and all that it implies (ii) The other question is what should be the attitude towards political power and whether they should actively and directly participate in political process or not.

The workers in the movement are not blind to these developments. The thinking is in three directions, (i) Making the institutions self-supporting, (ii) Making the institutions solely dependent on the people and (iii) Changing the attitude towards political power.

A worker of the executive level said, "The institutions should work on their own strength without Government help. Today these institutions stand on Government support. We are trying that direction (self support). We are trying to develop agriculture. If we can get one thousand rupees from one acre and if every institution has twenty acres then we would not have to look elsewhere for finances. Then these jungle mandalis (Cooperatives) and others give and the two ends could be met".

A worker who is working in the Uttar Buniyadi School (Secondary School) said that there is Jugatram's idea of "dependence on people". But it is not practicable. According to that idea a worker would live in a place. He does the social service work there and the people maintain him. Who would come for such work? Who would go to learn or to stay with him? Who would pay him? For such reasons the idea has remained in air. It has not become practical".

Another worker who is there from 1945 and who is managing an institution said, "Vinobaji says that we should learn to be independent of Government and be dependent on people. But then if we do not take a S.S.C. man, will there be students to learn under him? The idea of dependence on people is worth trying. But who has the courage? One

man cannot do it⁰ There should be a group. I would be glad if there arises such a group. But such a group is not within sight. I would join such a group if there was one”.

In view of the difficulties of putting into practice the idea of “dependence on people”, there is another suggestion. The Government should pay but leave the institutions to go their own way. But a worker said, “This suggestion implies that there will be unanimity between the institutions and the Government in regard to the aims, objects and the methods of work of the institutions”. The worker added, “Today all institutions stand on Government support. If the Government changes, there will 50 to 60 per cent cut in the grants. Therefore, the institutions should seek support from the people”.

This is the crux of the problem before them. The important point is not whether the majority is of one view or the other. The actual situation is that the institutions stand on Government support and that the workers are very much aware of what it means. To give up that support would mean giving up the institutions to some one else because they can't maintain them. This would mean throwing away the work of nearly 50 years into the hands of someone else. Is that desirable? Will that happen? The only alternative left to the movement seems to be to define its attitudes and relations in regard to its external relations i.e. the attitude towards political power and the relations with the political authority. The workers were asked a question on this point and the answers will be dealt with in the next section.

Adjustment to the internal developments in organisation is being taken as a matter of course and in the stride, with the wisdom, foresight, tolerance and tact of the workers at all levels. In regard to the adjustment to the internal development it should be noted that among the workers themselves there is the conscious recognition of the need for order and organization. They think that the adjustment is in the right direction. At the annual meeting of the Raniparaj Seva Sabha at which our observer was present, the proposal for taking up ‘Gram Dan’ work was being discussed. The climate of opinion was that such activities should not be undertaken without proper organization. As a worker said at the meeting, “Our activities are generally *ad hoc* and then we repent afterwards. The activities should be taken on hand only, if, there is organised and definite plan”.

Another top level worker who is in the movement from 19⁴⁷ and who believes that his activities are of national reconstruction said in the interview, “I believe that scientific methods are necessary for this work of national reconstruction. Nothing can be done without science. Spirit can do things. But it is incomplete without science. Results would not be there. Bhudan people say that you can do things with ‘Mantra’. I say nothing can happen without ‘Tantra’ (Organization). We are ‘Tantrawala’”.

The Workers

The organizational component has qualitatively changed during the last period 1947-1967. The worker in the preceding period was a generalist social service oriented person with or without formal educational qualifications. His desire to do social service was enough. But he was expected to observe certain discipline of life and he was expected to accept the principles underlying the discipline. The change in the organizational component meant change in the qualities of the worker also. He becomes an employee. He may or may not have the spirit of social service. But he must have educational qualifications. What is needed of him is competence in specific field and that competence must have been certified. This is the change in the definition of worker.

In 1945 ‘Swaraj Ashram, Vedchhi’ was restored to the workers by the Government. At that time, there were in all about 30 workers engaged in Khadi, Cooperative movement, Teaching and other work. In 1967 the number of workers in different fields such as cooperative, education and other activities must be about 1000.

With the change in organization, certification became important and that also spurred some people to take higher education so that they could get high positions and salaries.

An Adivasi worker who is the head of Ashram Shala said that he was a graduate and from 1968 he was to go to take the course in the basic training college. The reason was that Jugatram wanted to start an Uttar Buniyadi Vidyalaya and he would get a position in it.

Another Adivasi worker had joined in 1949 as a primary school teacher. After that he passed the examination for primary teachers and then he passed his S.S.C. and worked on a salary of Rs. 80/- up to 1953-54. He said that still he wanted to study further because

he was calculating that that only such study (SSC) would not do in future. So he went to Sanosara (Lok Bharati) and became a graduate and joined the Uttar Buniyadi School as a secondary school teacher and he was given Rs.150/-. He then passed his B.Ed. examination and he got fls.225/- per month. He gets now Rs.285/-. He has kept the terms for M.A. at Surat. He has still to appear at the examination.

Thus the expansion of educational programme created the want for higher qualified men and spurred some to take higher education. But as it was seen this need is also felt in other fields and that was largely due to organizational change. That is how the number of workers with educational qualification must have increased.

The Attitudes of the Educated and not Educated Towards one Another

There were persons with educational qualifications even before this development and the less educated persons were working together with them. But now the number increased and those with higher education get both higher positions and more pay. It is likely that individuals might be perceived as 'educated' and 'not educated'. This may or may not lead to formation of groups. But there could be differences in attitudes towards individuals on the basis of 'educated' and 'not educated'. These perceptions enter into the interactions between different members and affect the working of the organization.

A graduate teacher of about 36 years of age speaks about his colleagues who is not educated as follows: "He does the work. He has only what he learnt from Gandhi and Jugatram. Education, reading, thinking, he has none. That way we are complementary to one another". That is one attitude but he can also begin looking down upon his colleague.

Two Adivasi workers working from 1920-22 feel that the new 'educated' workers look to the job, salary, enjoyment etc. only. They do not have the spirit of service. It is not that only the Adivasis or the less educated believe this way. While agreeing with the need for educated persons, almost every one emphasized the need for "the spirit of service", "zest for work", "spirit of sacrifice" etc.

It could be that some persons might not have been able to get certain types of work because of want of educational qualifications. A worker in the movement from 1947 said, "After 1947 new workers came. There were educated among1 them. They

would *get* higher salaries and the other workers had some dissatisfaction. Shri 'X' had that dissatisfaction. That is why he left the work".

The less educated might come to be equated with persons with the spirit of service and sacrifice and more educated may be equated with persons without that spirit. Apart from such evaluation entering into the interactions between individuals, those concerned with recruitment might have to face the situation such as this. A candidate may be qualified but does not have the spirit of service. He has the spirit of service but not the requisite qualifications. What is to be done?

A worker who is in the movement for 13 years and who is working in one of the institutions of Raniparaj Seva Sabha said, "In our institution the choice is made for specific work only. There are many who are willing to join us as workers. But we cannot take them 'without their field' (of work)". Continuing further he said, "The worker is selected for a specific work and he must develop his own field — the work that he takes up, otherwise he must be driven out".

The old Expectations and the Ganged Definition of Worker

This is different from the former method of recruitment. Previously a man would show his desire for service and offer himself for work and some work would be found for him. A worker who is there for 38 years and is at the level of policy making said, "Most of the workers are trained here. They have studied here, grown up here and then they joined the institution. Yes, sometimes some one would come from outside also. But outside means 'another institution similar to this and so known to us! So, what is to be seen is whether he would fit in the Ashrama. Any one who wants to stay here as a worker must get assimilated in the Ashrama. He must be wearing Khaddar, he must be believing in it. He must have faith in 'labour' and in constructive work. Such things he must have. This is basic. There are certain basic things such as Khadi, faith in God, joining the morning and evening prayers, etc. If a man believes in all these things he is welcome even if he is not educated. But if a man is very learned and highly educated but differs in these basic matters, it is difficult to keep him here".

This is what is expected of a worker on one side. On the other side, the definition of the worker has changed and he is an employee expected to perform a specific job and

employed on specific qualifications, terms and conditions of work. The conflict between the two points of view is obvious. It is not resolved and the compromises are made. Consequently, the rules may be obeyed without being internalized. This is likely to affect the morale of the workers. What is happening is that the consideration for employment are being separated from the Ashrama way and view of life.

A worker, who is there for nearly 15 years compares himself with older workers and says, “These people spin and wear only the clothes made of that yarn, we have given it up. Here in our institution everyone is new except our Chairman. He has clung to everything. But he has accepted our weakness. Our weakness is that we do not wear the clothes of the yarn spun by ourselves. To aid the small village khadi is a must. We believe that way. So, we use Khadi. But it is not compulsory for all. It is not that wife must use Khadi. Sometimes the question does arise, why should cloth other than Khadi be used in the house of the worker? But the institution maintains a liberal attitude towards it”.

The Chairman whom the above worker refers says, “Problems of dissatisfaction about the salaries have come up before our institution. But everything is according to the Government standards. Therefore, there are no questions. But the attitude to accept less and to do with less is not much evinced. In the old times simplicity was a pleasure. It is not so today. But it is also true that they did not give much in those days. It is the policy of our institution that one must keep Government grades whether the institution is getting the Government grant or not”. He continued, “One view is that one should not invite inconvenience and work as, much as one can. The other view is that we should remain as simple as we can and live with the idea of sacrifice. That makes a good effect on the people, I like the second view. But we do not live accordingly. We live according to the first view”.

As one top level worker puts it, the dilemma is, “the work has to be expanded. Workers from outside have also to be invited and then there is no other go but to be permissive”. The permissiveness is not opportunistic, though it deviates from the ideology of the movement. The permissiveness has its roots in the goal of the movement. The goal was to change the Adivasis. Expansion of work was necessary to achieve the goal. Workers were necessary for the expansion. If some concessions and compromises

are made regarding the workers, that was in view of the goal. The concessions may be small and may not be guided by opportunism. Yet they have h significance for the movement. That need not be missed.

Today the situation is that the teachers in Balwadis, i.e. pre-primary school teachers, secretaries and accountants of cooperative societies and such others, which require educational qualifications upto secondary stage are all Adivasis. In 1965-66 there were 18 Ashram Shalas and hundred per cent teachers in these schools were Adivasis. The works for the Ukai Sarvodaya Yojana needed a number of workers to work in the interior. And they have been available from the Adivasis. 18 teachers for Balwadi and all the 87 teachers for primary schools and 17 workers out of 18 other workers have been Adivasis.

Apart from this particular scheme it is a fact that nearly 50 per cent of the teachers in the primary schools of the Surat district are Adivasis. All this has been possible due to the spread of education among the Adivasis. The contribution of Vedchhi movement in this regard cannot be denied even by its enemies. For this spread of education it has also been possible for the movement to get persons from the institutions sponsored and maintained by them. But some workers had to be taken from outside. On a rough estimate 40 to 50 per cent teachers in the secondary schools are non-Adivasis who have not taken their education in the 'Nai Talim' institutions.

Thus, if Adivasis had to be trained, the non-Adivasis and those from outside the movement had to be brought in. This meant that outside influence had to be brought in. This outside influence has not come in through non-Adivasis only. There are Adivasis trained in similar but other institutions outside Vedchhi, from Ahmedabad, Sanosara and Amala. They breathed different air there and they brought it with them to Vedchhi also. Inbred workers would not be available in sufficient numbers and so the external influence was inevitable. The deviation from the ideology and compromises were inevitable if the goals of movement were to be achieved. But the homogeneity of the workers in ideas and attitudes no longer exists.

The developments in the movement after independence has drawn a large number of workers and they do not have the same idealism, attitudes and the behaviour as the workers at the time of the beginning of the movement.

The foregoing account of the three components of the movement — the programme, the organization and the worker — is a sufficient evidence for the fact that there is a difference in each of them between what it was in the pre-independence period and what it is in the post-independence period. The difference reflects its relation with the surrounding wider society -- Gujarat and India and the changes within the Adivasi society itself. It is premature to attempt the sequential questions such as, whether the changes in the wider society caused these changes in the movement and whether the changes are functional or dysfunctional to each other. The relation between the differences in the movement and the changes in the wider society can be traced directly between the two and indirectly via the changes in the Adivasi society. A programme which could be received by the pre-independence Adivasi society might not be received by the post-independence Adivasi society. We do not have any data for such analysis. We might at the moment rest content with the few observations regarding the components of the movement.

The Programme

Economic

The economic programme is marked by the receding of Khadi in the background and the emphasis on the forest cooperatives and improvement of agriculture. The agricultural programme was a logical sequence to the Adivasis owning the land. The ownership of land *was* made possible by the legislation of the State Government. The change in the nature of the Government made this possible. The state is also wedded to the programme of increased agricultural production. The movement cooperated with the Government agency in the implementation of the programme.

The formation of different types of cooperatives was also a sequel to the changed relationship between the Adivasi agriculturists and the labourers on the one hand and the money lender and the forest contractor and the Government on the other hand. Money had to be provided to the agriculturists and the agency for taking- the contract for cutting¹ the forests had to be created if the intermediary contractor was to be eliminated. This was done by organizing¹ the cooperatives. It is true that the Government provided the facilities but the actual organising- was done by the workers of the Vedchi movement.

And that was not an easy job which they performed. It is all the more creditable that they are being managed by the Adivasis themselves.

Education

The education programme now ranged from the pre-primary to the university. The programme which began with producing the village worker for the movement now envisages an agriculturist, a rural technician and a white collar employee. He might become a paid social worker or a rural citizen. Their education aims at the balanced development of head, heart and hand. It is also to be noted that the referent of the system is the rural agricultural society. While this fact has a meaning in view of the environments in which the movement is operating, it might also become a limitation in view of its relation with the wider society. It will have to take cognisance of the thrust both of urbanization and urbanism in the rural area. It has to face the changes in the economic and social relationships, in the values, attitudes and aspirations in the Adivasi and non-Adivasi rural areas. These may not be palatable to the policy makers in the movement. The education system may try to change them or be prepared to change itself and adjust to the changes in the environment. As it is, it needs closer and sympathetic observations. It would be a mistake to ignore the experiment.

Organisation

Raniparaj Seva Sabha and the Halpati Seva Sangh are registered bodies. They are a sort of central bodies. However, in fact most of the institutions are independent in so far as the chalking out of the programmes and its implementation are concerned. The management is for all practical purposes in the hands of these institutions. They make their own appointments. Even those institutions which are called Ashramas the routine is not the same as at Vedchhi. Thus there is complete decentralization. Only thing that links them together is still some parts of common ideology and personality of the person who built up the movement. These institutions have now become associations with specific aims and objects. Their revolutionary role as the messenger and active propagandist seems to have come to an end.

But more important than this decentralization and their becoming- associations are their external relations. They do not get money from the people and they do not have their own sources of income and they have become dependent on specific grants for specific purposes from the Government. This has necessitated a change in the nature of organization. They are well on the way of being formal impersonal establishments instead of a sort of brotherhood characterised by informality and personal considerations.

Now they are associations with fixed, specific and limited goals and routinizations of functions and activities. This development is the result of the change in one of the external relations of the movement, namely, the relations with the political authority,,

The Workers

The workers in the post-independence period come from those who have been trained in their own or other but similar institutions. But some also come from outside. Among those who come from their own institution, there could be some who do not agree with the view and the way of life of the pre-independence movement — the Ashrama way and view. All the workers are not the volunteers dedicated to a cause. They look upon the work as employment though they might be committed to their work. But they are equally committed to their self, family, kin and caste. They want to carve out a position in the changing society. All those who are employed in Government financed schemes have to have educational qualifications. This is becoming also characteristic of the workers who are not employed in such schemes. It is becoming general. Part of this difference from the pre-independence period is due to the change in the external society which is having its impact on the Adivasi society.

The question that arise from the above observations are (i) What do the workers in the movement think about its relations with the Government ? What do they think are the changes in the Mivasi society ? What do they think about the future programme ? What will be the type of workers they think will be required in future? These questions are dealt with in the next section.

Before proceeding to the next section, the case of the extension of Vedchhi movement in the non-Adivasi area will be presented.

The Work Among the Halpatis - The Case of the Extension of the Movement with a difference in non-Adivasi area

The case of the work among the Halpatis has the following significance: (i) It is the work among the people living in the central belt who are bound by the master servant relationship with the non-tribal land owning groups of caste society, (2) It is the work during the post-independence period largely. Efforts were made in 1922-36 period but given up. Some headway was made in 1937-46 period, the time when there was Congress Government for a short period. (3) The problems are also different.

The Halpatis are the agricultural landless labourers living in the non-Adivasi areas. Their number is nearly one lakh and three quarter. They borrowed money from the land owners. The money was borrowed by almost all of them for marriage. One condition of this lending was that the man worked with the land owner until he returned the money. This condition had a customary sanction. The masters did not go to the court of Law though they took the help of the police sometimes when their physical force was not found effective. The Halpati was paid in kind for the work he did and he was never able to return the money. He worked practically for the whole of his life with the man from whom he borrowed the money. His son who married in the similar manner was again attached to the man who paid him the money. Mostly this went on in the hereditary manner. Legally and in theory a Halpati could repay the money and be free. But this never happened. What happened was that some other landowners would repay his money and the Halpati would work with the new master. The masters could be changed but the Halpati never became free.

The important difference between the Halpati and the Adivasi was that the former always lived in the non-Adivasi area, mostly on the central plains belt with the high caste people in the settled nucleated villages. But none of them had any land as many Adivasis had. They had their huts on the land of someone else. There were schools in many of the villages they lived. But illiteracy was nearly hundred per cent among the Halpatis before 1947. Even today literacy among them is less than among the Harijans and among certain groups of Adivasis. The relationship between the Halpati and the rest of the village was very limited. He worked for the master in the field, in the house and even on occasions

such as marriage and death. But this contact made no impression on him and the Halpati did not even imitate the higher caste master living in the nucleated village community. He did not become a part of the community. Largely he lived his own life.

Though living in the non-Adivasi area the condition of the Halpatis was as bad as that of the Adivasis if not worse in every respect. The Gandhian workers tried to work with them in their first flush of their work during the period 1922-1929. This point is discussed in the account of the movement during that period. But they had to suspend the work among them as they met with resistant from the higher caste landowning masters.

The “Gujarat Mitra and Gujarat Darpan”, a Gujarat newspaper of 17-2-1924 writes, “The people of the village have boycotted the Bhuvasan Ashrama because Shri Narhari Parikh of that Ashrama has opened a school in the Ashrama and education is given to the Dublas (Halpatis) and the Kaliparaj (Adivasis). Amritlal Thakkar wrote in an article that education should be given to the Dublas and they should be reformed. The agriculturists harass them very much therefore they should be told not to work for them. This writing instigated the feeling of the people and they boycotted the Ashrama. Parikh went on a fast for seven days, Mahadev Desai went to Poona to take Gandhi’s advise and brought two letters from him, one for the people of the village and one for Parikh’s wife. Vallabhbhai Patel went from Ahmedabad to Bhuvasan for compromise. He brought about the compromise and returned on Thursday”.

During the short period of Congress Government under the Government of India Act of 1935, the problem was again taken up. In 1938 under the leadership of Sardar Patel, at a joint conference of the Halpatis and their masters the freedom of the Halpatis was accepted in principle. Also resolutions were passed regarding the mode of payment and the amount of payment. It was also decided to organise joint committees of the Halpatis and the landowners in every village. But as Jugatram says, they did not get response from a single village (“Halpati Mukti”, Gujarati). It was only after the Halpati women stopped doing domestic work with their masters and after the strike by the Halpatis that the payment in cash began. Though it is not common, such strikes take place even today, in 1969.

During the war and the post-war period the Halpatis found it more beneficial to get meals and/or grains rather than cash, because of the difficulty of getting them. The

workers in Vedchhi movement again began to attend to the work among the Halpatis after 1945-46.

In 1946, a Mahajan of the Halpatis was formed with a view to solve the problems of Halpatis on the basis of truth, non-violence and arbitration. Thus the Mahajan was on the lines of the textile labour association of Ahmedabad. It began with giving legal aid to the Halpatis.

During the period between 1951 and 1961 the service activities continued. A housing society was formed to enable the Halpatis to take advantage of the housing scheme for the backward classes of the State Social Welfare Department.

One Ashrania Shala and two hostels for the Halpatis were started in addition to the night schools and the adult literacy classes conducted among them.

Khadi work slackened. But the workers of the movement looked after a number of programmes for helping them to take advantage of Government schemes. They also had to bring about the conciliation in cases of disputes between the Halpatis and their landowning masters.

In the period between 1961-1967. Chhotubhai Desai, Jugatram Dave, Jhaverbhai Patel and others formed "Surat District Halpati Seva Sangh". There were also some Halpati leaders with them (1961). The Sangh was similar to the "Raniparaj Seva Sangh". Its objects were:

- i) To work for the all round development of the Halpatis. To help them to get justice in life and in their work.
- ii) To take up activities regarding education, crafts, health, and social reform and to start and run institutions for such purposes.
- iii) To prepare leaders from among the Halpatis themselves.
- iv) To suggest schemes for the development of Halpatis to the Government and to help executing the schemes approved by the Government.
- v) To make efforts to draw the educated Halpati men and women for work among the Halpatis.
- vi) To do all activities for the development of Halpatis by the means of truth and non-violence.

At present the words "Surat District" are dropped and the Sangh works as the 'Halpati Seva Sangh' so as to enable them to work among the Halpatis in the adjoining districts of Bulsar and Broach also.

The Educational Activity

There are six Balwadis for pre-school age children distributed in five Talukas and 190 children are attending them. Additional four Balwadis were working under Sarvodaya Vikas Scheme and 320 children were attending them. There are three primary schools of Ashram Shala type in which 260 students are enrolled (130 boys and 130 girls). These are residential schools and all expenses are met by the Government. There are also 45 boys and 45 girls living in two hostels -- one in Kamrej Taluka and one in Bardoli Taluka. They study in secondary schools. A secondary school in Palsana Taluka from 8th standard has been recently started.

The Sangh has also made arrangements for getting technological knowledge. Scholarships are given to the Halpati boys. A printing press at Bardoli is exclusively for the Halpati and Adivasi boys. In 1964 the Sangh could persuade the Government to give Rs.35/- per month to each student taking technical training and Rs.10/- per month as fees to the institution which teaches them. In 1967, 175 students are taking technical training for different occupational activities in this way.

Housing

Under the scheme of housing which the government stopped in 1965f 33 cooperative housing societies were working and they built 2,000 houses for the Halpatis.

The Sangh carried out a survey of housing need for Halpatis in Surat and Bulsar districts and found that there were 35,333 families needing 1,772 acres of land for housing. The Government agreed to pay the full price of the land. The Sangh is actively engaged in helping the Halpatis in applying for the land and by 1967 they have helped 15,000 families to get the land. Thus a little less than 50 per cent of the Halpati families have got land for housing.

The Halpatis in places have also organised labour cooperatives.

The Workers

In 1964, the Sangh recommended to the Government that they fixed the minimum wages for agricultural labour. The Government appointed a Committee in 1965. The Sangh recommended to the Committee a wage of 9s. 3.50 per day or Rs.750/- per year. (Report 4th Sammelan, 1965).

The Sangh has been carrying on numerous activities in the educational and cooperative fields for the benefit of the Halpatis. In addition, they are also working for the prohibition and for marriage reform among them. The Halpati had to become a bonded labourer because he had to marry. Now they would not get money for marriage expenses under that system because it is abolished. But the expenses are still there and unless they are reduced the Halpatis will find it difficult to marry. In fact, it is a problem with them. Therefore, the Seva Sangh is spreading the idea of “flower and garland” type of marriage. They also preach many marriages on the same day to reduce the expenses. This reform is receiving acceptance.

It is necessary to observe that the workers in the movement for Halpatis are starting institutions such as schools and cooperatives of various types. But they do not have the Ashramas now. They have an office of the Seva Sangh. Also the activities aim at enabling the Halpatis to take advantage of the schemes of the Government. The responsibilities for these institutions is not of the Sangh. Probably this is the difference in the programme and method of work under the conditions of political freedom and economic and social development. The movement has adjusted to this change in the conditions.

But it is also worth noting- that the movement has to face the various vested interests while helping the Halpatis and also the Adivasis. The opposition is from interests, economic, political, social and cultural in the non-Adivasi society. It is essentially the problem of relations between two classes. The Vedchhi workers do not believe in the philosophy of class war and they are tackling the problem in their own way as welfare workers. The Halpati Seva Sangh is an agency for welfare work and not a trade union.

The case of work among the Halpatis illustrates how the programme of work, the workers, the organization and the style of work have changed in the period after political independence and among the people living in the plains villages.

The Khadi programme is practically absent. On the contrary they have to tackle the problem of wages between the employer and employee. This they do through Government Committees and by legal arrangements. The education that they encourage does not merely aim at being agriculturist. The Halpati has no land. But it encourages them to avail of other employments in printing presses or in other industrial occupations as trained skilled worker. The housing programme is also important for them because they do not have land of theirs to build the houses nor have they the money to build the houses.

Though the organization that they have for work is similar to Raniparaj Seva Sabha, they do not have Ashram like centres. They have voluntary workers but also paid workers employed through advertisement because the money is paid by the Government. It may be that they have their own workers employed that way. But the mode of recruitment differs from the past and that is expected to make the difference in the work and in the relation between voluntary worker paid by the organization and the recruited worker.

The work among the Halpatis is only an extension of the work of the Vedchhi movement, but at a different stage in the movement and at a different period of development of wider society. The work among the Halpati after independence begins with an organization and works in the style different from the Ashrama style. Moreover the work among the Halpatis is not being looked at kindly by the landowning groups. This activity needs to be observed more closely before pronouncing any judgement on it. Looking to the number of years and the amount of effort put, in the Adivasi movement and in the Halpati movement, the achievement of the latter are no less creditable. The problems and the organization of work are different from those of the Adivasis. But the worker in charge of the movement though not trained in Vedchhi has the Vedchhi spirit and zest of the pre-independence period.

Section – V

Glimpses Of the Future Development

A. The Change Within the Adivasi Society

The socio-economic changes in the external conditions or the wider society outside the Adivasi area, mentioned at the beginning of the previous section could be expected to bring about the changes in the socio-economic conditions among the Adivasis. Also changes could be expected to have resulted from and due to the Vedchhi movement. In order to observe what changes have occurred a full scale inquiry is necessary. But what is also likely to affect the movement more is probably the perception of these changes by the workers. We present below what some workers had to say regarding the changes.

A 45 year old Adivasi worker says, “In our Taluka two oil mills and two rice mills are established on business basis but not on cooperative basis. That is, we do not find the Gandhian outlook of self-dependent village. The cooperative society in the village has also become a business society”.

He also mentioned that because of the spread of education the number of people who go in for ‘service’ and for non-agricultural occupations has also increased. There is also a change in the view of life of the people. For example, they would not like to have addictions to drinks and they would like to live cleanly. Economic benefits have also played their part in the changing of the style of life.

A nearly sixty year old Adivasi worker said that from the workers who stayed here people learnt that, simple but good life should be lived. Good according to him meant, cleanliness, health and general orderliness or discipline.

A forty year old Adivasi worker in the field of female education said, “Education affects men’s thought and behaviour. Female education affects the whole household. We can see the effects in our own village. People keep the house clean, smear the ground floor well and make the chula. There are now utensils in our houses. Because of Balwadi every one has caught the habit of bath everyday”.

A thirty five year old Adivasi Superintendent of Ashram Shala said, “Leadership is coming up in the village. In the forest cooperatives and in other social service institutions, secretaries, accountants, chairman are all local Adivasis. Because of employment in Ukai Dam they earned money and are educating their children from that money. Along with this pleasure, extravagance has also increased and also drinking.

“They learnt about agriculture in our institutions and their methods of agriculture have also changed. Their agriculture is more systematic today. Education has increased. Some have gone upto M.A. People on their own desire education”.

A non-Adivasi but backward caste worker of about 35 years of age said, “The Adivasis have come up economically, culturally, in customs, and in everything. There was no sign of education here. In the nearby village today there is hardly any one without education. There are two or three teachers in every house. There was hardly any one without education. There are two or three teachers in every house. There was hardly one in the whole village when I joined here.

“Their style of living has changed, standard of life has gone up. Social customs and manner have changed. Standard of agriculture improved and they became more aware about Government help”.

A non-Adivasi graduate worker comparing the conditions today with that in 1959 says, “Agriculture has improved, wells and engines have increased. They have learnt the use of manures, superstitions have also decreased. Formerly the preference for doctor was fifty-fifty. Now it is 70-80 per cent for doctor. These are all changed social forces”.

A non-Adivasi worker nearly 50 years old and who began the career in the Vedchhi movement in the field of education said, “Economic and political conditions and religious beliefs, all these have changed during these years. These people have advanced though it is not that the whole of their advances is due to our programmes. The developing conditions in the country have also played a part”.

A nearly 50 year old non-Adivasi who left the movement because of differences said, that people took education and the Government provided opportunities for jobs. Thus there was a sort of economic stability in their life. He added, “Another thing also happened. All those who study in boys schools and in girls schools meet together in Khadimela and camps. There they get acquainted with one another and fix up marriages.

As it is, there is a custom among them to arrange marriages in the melas. This is similar to that. Marriages between reformists, believer and believer and educated and educated take place. Both of them take up employment and earn. Formerly a person who would not see even 50 rupees now gets together with his wife Rs. 250/- to Rs. 300/- per month. Further, there has been a sort of separate castes of educated and non-educated. It should also be considered a change that exploitation stopped because of tenancy legislation and debt relief measures. But it is also happening that some Adivasis themselves are becoming exploiters”.

Another nearly 40 year old non-Adivasi said, that they sit together and mix with Adivasis with affection. But the educated Adivasi does that out of duty. This is to be observed amongst all whether educated in Ashram institutions or elsewhere.

As against this another non-Adivasi worker said that the educated Adivasi looks with respect to his society and he has seen very little of dislike towards it. “Looking to my colleagues, the educated Adivasi is looking with respect towards his society. He is anxious to see how his society becomes ‘competent’”.

According to the same worker the belief of the non-Adivasi has considerably changed. “Formerly it was believed that these Adivasis won’t improve. That was taken as an established truth. The Adivasi also believed that way. But these thoughts are changed today. They have confidence and then believe that they are also citizens. The illustration of this courage and confidence is that Adivasis also stand against Congress and are also elected. They are managing lakhs of rupees worth Forest Cooperatives. In the State Transport bus the Adivasi takes a regular seat. Formerly he sat on the floor. He complains to the social worker against the Talati and such other Government officials”.

According to nearly 39 years old another non-Adivasi worker specialised in agriculture, the style of living has changed. “Formerly they would eat anywhere. Now they sit down in the kitchen to eat and put on clean clothes. Now they have attachment towards property. Formerly they believed what does it matter if you have money or if you do not have”. This is changed. He also thinks that this change is still to come over the large masses.

About the attitude of the educated Adivasis towards his own people his view is that all those who take education do not come to serve their people. They will go after the

pleasure and life of the outside world. He also does not wish that they should come with them and work. Let them go in the 'modern world'.

All these different views of the workers noted above agree in one thing that the Adivasi society itself is changing and that the movement did play an important role in this change. The importance of this point is that the conditions under which the movement began have changed today.

The question that arises is will this change in the conditions not affect the programmes, the type of workers and the method in future?

B. Workers' Idea of Future Programme and the Types of Worker

What would be the future programme? What type of workers would be required? The answers to these questions could vary according to the age of workers, their education and personality. There could be differences between the Adivasis and the non-Adivasis.

A worker who is not nearly 40 comes from a family which has the tradition of social service. His father was in Vedchhi movement and his uncle was in freedom struggle. His brother is also in movement. His father felt belittled when he accepted a Government job. He does not have much formal education. To the question, "What should be the future programme" his answer was more idealistic. He said, "The basic work is to awaken them to discretion and nationalism. The programme will remain there permanently. But till today, the exploiters of the Adivasi, the Government and even this institution has been in one way or the other paternalistic. All the programmes henceforth should be by then and for them so that they may be soon placed on the basis of 'automatic' development.

"Today's method is based on kindness. Henceforth the basis should be that people are to be made to sit up".

"All these are relief work. It is like patchwork. It cannot be called revolutionary work. It is work for awakening. But I have no courage to call it revolutionary.

"Revolutionary work is that which Vinoba says, there is the idea of reconstructing the society - its basic transformation. From this work we shall get relief. From that (revolutionary) work there will be the self-reliant, loving and affectionate and self-

respecting national society. We want Halpati to remain Halpati and do injustice to them. Society is changing. There are some scratches due to the normal change. We apply ointment to them”.

An Adivasi worker aged nearly 67 said, “Not new programmes but old ones should be revived such as prohibition, social reform and agricultural development”. To the question what type of workers are needed he replied, “Those with the idea to bring up the society. Five such workers must come out of every village. They should be ‘unpaid’”.

An Adivasi worker who is nearly 45 today considers Khadi and prohibition as important for future programme. He would add agricultural development to these.

“The workers should be of new type who can understand the contemporary (modern) times and can become social reformers. They must be extremely able. In the villages also now there are educated and intelligent men. They must be able to face them and also change them”.

An young worker in educational field and who is 35 years old said that the Adivasis need to be taught preparation of food. He says that they do not prepare properly baked ‘rotla’. They do not know many varieties. Classes for women should be organised for this purpose. In such classes there could be also talks about child rearing.

He believes that there should be electrification in Amber Charkha, in handlooms and in many other matters. “What harm is there? Let there be decentralised industries. But there should be electrification in grinding wheel and oil mill also. There are no artisans among the Adivasis. There are labourers. He could learn the crafts such as carpentry, smithy, motor driving, fitter etc. If different occupations develop, business may develop and he may even learn that”. Today very few live the life according to Gandhian thinking. Living of all of us is full of facilities. It (Gandhian thinking) is not very effective. So the same (old) programme with the same (old) values won’t work”.

“The new worker will require a broad outlook i.e. the worker will have the whole country and the whole world before his eyes. Further such worker must be highly qualified. He must be at the minimum a graduate. Because in this work it is very much necessary that he knows the economic, political and sociological currents. He must be believing in Gandhian thoughts”.

An Adivasi worker of the age of about 40 years thinks that today Khadi work is necessary. “But formerly it was done because the worker believed in it. Today the workers do it because they are appointed to do it. People need to be taught new methods of agriculture”.

“The workers that are needed today must have the conviction that the village is to be resurrected. Not those (are required) who do the work as a matter of employment. They must have experience of the village. They must have the study of the society. They must be able to understand the society and they must be prepared to do hard work”.

A nearly 50 year old Adivasi who is now not a worker in the movement believes that the old programmes must be in new forms e.g. what was done through Bhajan Mandali could be done through students’ association. According to him the Adivasi still does not have public courage. Constant contact (with non-Adivasi), Gujarati language and general knowledge must be developed. There must be attempts at economic self-reliance.

He thinks that the programmes for agriculture, Khadi and village industries and also small technical industries need to be made. There should many more Ashram Shalas.

Regarding the type of workers he said, “Now the institutions have also changed their forms according to the current times. We were not all qualified. We worked on the strength of feeling and faith. Now it is compulsory to get a qualified man. Now the only qualified men do not do as much work as the old workers did”. He recognises the need for institutions run by qualified persons. But he would prefer persons with faith and feeling.

A nearly 40 year old scheduled caste worker said, “It is necessary to do things. Their intellectual knowledge must develop and they should be able to do agriculture and forest work with technical skill”. Either the Government or the private institutions may do it.

A backward caste worker of about 30 years of age thinks that now in addition to literary education, technical education is also necessary. Regarding the type of workers he said, “Now, because we are working with the Government, it is necessary to have degree holders. Even if that was not so, now there is the need for educated persons with understanding. They must be service oriented. They must understand Gandhian thinking.

Though they must be able to adjust it to the changing thoughts in the society. They must be able to adjust in recognition of the changing social forces”.

A non-Adivasi worker of about 45 years holding a responsible position in the organisation thinks that the programmes which increase the contact with the people are necessary, such as programme of Gramdan village unity etc. But such programmes are not being received by the people.

Regarding the workers he mentioned first the purity of character and purity in dealings with people. He must believe in hard work. It is also necessary to have higher level of education than before.

A graduate worker about 53 thinks that the workers must have sympathy for the poor, must have good health and must be willing to live simple life. It is good if they have educational qualifications. They should not be only those who believe in Gandhi or Vinoba. Because that philosophy is true which arises from work and not the one which one adopts from books.

A very responsible worker of about 50 thinks that improved agriculture is a very important programme. He thinks that the ability of the youths is diverted into harmful channels such as violent disturbances, bad addictions and more than necessary pleasures. To divert the abilities to proper channels it is necessary to organise gymnastic activities, tours, discussions, celebrations, village protection units, etc. The workers according to him should be honest, having regard for the people and of good character.

A nearly 50 year old worker in female education says that, “Education oriented to craft or industry and production is necessary. The workers who can give such education will be necessary”.

A nearly 38 year old worker in education says that now among the Adivasis there is need for doctors and village engineers and technicians. The workers will have to be trained for such programmes. They must have regard and affection for the Adivasis. They must not break the discipline developed by Jugatram. They can discuss and change.

A non-Adivasi graduate worker nearly 39 years old says, “Old is not gold so it should be soon sold”. Big people say that there is prosperity in Khadi only. We do not believe in that. If that programme works let it work. But we do not believe that everything can be achieved by that. Now there is wide scope without Khadi”.

The new programme should aim at “getting all the opportunities for the Adivasis which the non-Adivasis have”. He is for developing agro-industries and introducing courses for that.

“The workers must be well trained in their own lines and of course they must be prepared for sacrifice”.

When the workers were asked to say that their ideas about the future programmes and the workers were, a blue print was not expected of them. All that we wanted to know was the direction in which they were thinking.

They are thinking about the future programmes in three fields – economic, educational and social.

In the economic field, it is important to note that Khadi is not given that prominence. As observed while examining the programmes of the movement Khadi is receding from the movement. It is not given that prominence in future programme as in the twenties and thirties of the movement. It is just tolerated because it has been there with them for such a long time and because it supplements the income.

Prominence is now given to agriculture. In agriculture the emphasis is on the use of fertilizers, insecticides and the methods of tilling and land and the use of pumps and electrification etc.

Side by side with the emphasis on agriculture there is also the awareness of the need for developing non-agricultural occupations, some of them based on agriculture and some others independent of agriculture.

These are also the programmes which the Government encourages in non-Adivasi rural areas. In this way the Adivasis will be further integrated with the rest of the society.

The educational programme now requires the spread of facilities for education. The content of courses are recommended for change in the direction of the economic change, namely, addition of job-oriented and production-oriented courses. These have been already accepted and included in the educational system of the movement. One person mentioned short-term social education courses for food and health.

Some mentioned social reform also as the work to be done.

What is important to note are the general remarks made by some respondents. As one person said that the programmes are not revolutionary. Another person said that the

old programmes with the old values won't work. A third person said that "old is not gold and so it must be sold (off)". There is the vague but general ideal that the Adivasis are to be given the equality of opportunities and the conditions be created for that by economic, social and educational programmes. It is also to be noted that this is more common among the younger workers.

The type of worker that will be required in future also reflects the programme. There is the general recognition of the need of the worker who is 'educated' or formally qualified and trained for specific job. Along with this equally generally mentioned is the need of the worker who has sympathy for the Adivasi who is prepared to undergo willingly the hardships and inconveniences of rural life. The qualities of hard work, honesty and general purity of character are equally emphasised.

The respondents while admitting the general scarcity were hopeful of availability of such workers.

The views of the workers regarding the future programme of work and the type of worker were presented with a view to see if they reflected the changes within the Adivasi society. We also get to know what they want it to be explicitly or implicitly. The views generally have two referents, the ideal and the actual. On their expression they could be epigrammatic and analytical or explanatory according to the referent.

Jugatram aims at a state in which the Adivasis cease to think that they are different. Education is the road for that state.

Another young worker wishes for basic transformation and an egalitarian society and thinks that many of action are necessary for achieving that.

A third view is that which emphasises agriculture and agriculture based industries and the spread of technology. The worker would not set store by any one item such as Khadi. He is pragmatic and production and technology minded.

The fourth view is very near to the third except that it is not so worded. Improvement of agriculture, village industries, electrification, mechanisation etc. are emphasised.

Programmes for social and cultural change are mentioned explicitly by many. While they were implicit in others. A very significant statement was that new programmes won't fit in with old values.

Regarding the type of workers, while the character, hard work, simplicity, sympathy for the Adivasis and such personal qualities were mentioned, educational or formal qualifications were equally emphasised. Knowledge of social science was also specifically mentioned. There was also the view which emphasised only personal qualities and willingness to work without salary.

The inclusion of agriculture, industry, technology and knowledge of social sciences is neither new nor inconsistent with their scheme of secondary and higher education.

While material progress was specifically mentioned, except in a general and implicit manner, social relations and social justice etc. were not specifically mentioned except by one person.

C. Perception by Workers of the Political Context

The other context which has persistently affected the movement is the political context. How do the workers perceive the problem?

During the course of enquiry the observer had asked the question to every one, whether those in the movement should take part in politics or not. There are two clear opinion, 'Yes' and 'No'.

The constitutions of Raniparaj Seva Sabha and of other institutions also clearly say that they are non-political. But some of the workers do take interest in politics and some others participate also as individuals. It will be relevant to know how this happened. A worker narrates that as follows:

“Until today, 90 per cent of the workers did not take part in politics. The political rulers got the impression that these constructive workers were not important. They did not take interest here and did not look at the work here. All the constructive workers had separated from Congress. But then every one was motivated by the spirit of sacrifice and they did not bother much whether the politicians looked at them or not. Yet, the newcomers to the movement felt that they were being ignored. Their feeling is, “we are at the base and their supporters and the politically biased workers are taking advantage of us”. This is how the workers at the base feel. If the political leaders had told these people that we are because of you and had not ignored them, none of these constructive workers

had interest in politics. This reaction came at the time of 1957 elections. At that time a person who was something in the District Congress came to select candidates for the District Local Board and we felt that the person wanted us only to say 'Yes' to his selection and ignored us, used us. So the workers began to take interest in politics.

“If the constructive workers had not taken to politics their weight among the people would not have become less. By going into politics one agency of presenting people's opinion is lost. The member of the legislature is not such an agency. He is a party man. Legislature is not people's agency. It is true that economically the institutions have got relief. Difficulties got solved sooner. But that has meant loss of support from the people and loss of quality of work”.

Another work who is also politically active said as follows: “At Kachholi at the time of Gandhi Mela in the discussion whether we should take part in politics or not, I veered to the opinion that we should participate in politics. Jugatram and another important worker and otherwise were of the opinion that we should not take part in politics. But slowly many are coming round to my opinion”.

Another worker who is conducting an institution in a village said, “At that time I was under the influence of Sarvodaya and believed that we should be away from politics. Now I am ready”.

Another worker who holds a position in a public body and is also in politics said, “Today in democracy there is the need for such voluntary agencies which can have the power to say good to a good thing and bad to a bad thing. In order that moral courage may be cultivated to criticise the Government and point out its mistakes, institutions like ours must remain away from politics. We are in politics because we are trying to do constructive work through politics. The institutions should not be dragged into politics. They would be ruined.

“Some of us claim that we are not in politics. But that is not so. Nobody is immune from it. Shri X talks tall things. But he every day asks me who is fixed where and what happened. Why do you take interest? This is politics. I believe that politics is an instrument. Constructive workers should not remain away from it”.

There are others who believe in making politics above parties. Some of the workers of Sarvodaya bent of mind are of this view.

As a point of fact, leading and full time workers of Raniparaj Seva Sabha are active in politics. The President and the Chairman of the Education Committee of Surat District Panchayat have been members of institutions affiliated to it have fought elections in village and Taluka Panchayat and have held offices. One worker is a member of the State Legislature.

The question of the external relationships of the movement is agitating the minds of workers. The attitude of the workers towards political power is still not definitised. Political power is still being looked upon by some as something undesirable in itself. However, there are informal discussions. There are no formal decisions and probably there will be none. A situation will arise in which they will have to act. That will decide the question of the external relations of the movement. But there is no scope from answering the question and taking the decision either way.

Section - VI

Concluding Observations

A socio-economic reform movement among the Adivasis initiated by the Adivasis themselves had taken place before the Gandhian workers went to the area. The movement was led by the first generation of the literates among the Adivasis. Looking to the social reforms, vegetarianism and teetotalism – it could be said that their referent was the high caste society surrounding them. In order to claim acceptance and equality from them, they had to be like them. The Gavali or the Devi was the effective instrument for the spread of the reform movement. The persons who could see the effectiveness were the early literates among the Adivasis. This was the role of formal literary type of education among the people living under primitive conditions. It could be that the teachers in the school and even some kind and considerate officers and contractors or landowners might have been effective by their behaviour in influencing their views of life and the ways of living. They were in those days high caste persons. Their role cannot be denied. It is very common to/ ask, what can those educated upto 6th standard vernacular can think and do? But the fact remains that they were the people who initiated and led the social reform movement. However, in order to appreciate the role of literacy one way will be to look into the content of these times.

The wish for social and economic reform existed among the Adivasis before the Gandhian movement reached them. The Gandhian programme was well received by the Adivasi leaders and the people because it fitted well with their wishes. There was nothing in the Gandhian programme which would be objected to by the Adivasis, everything was acceptable.

The Gandhians worked in those days through a single item programme namely Khadi. Spinning wheel and Khadi had their economic appeal for the Adivasis. Once they had the access in this way, they lived and behaved unlike the other non-Adivasis with whom the Adivasis had previous contact. They tried to live like one of them and took interest in their life. The Gandhian workers, along with Khadi, by example and by precept created among the Adivasis individuals who would be putting on Khadi, spinning, taking vegetarian food and avoiding liquor and toddy, taking bath every day and

keeping the house clean. They in their turn became the carriers of the Gandhian message. In fact a Khadi wearer became the symbol of change.

By the fire side or Verandah talks, by meetings and by conferences the Gandhian workers created the general climate of change. This was sustained by the emotional appeal of a little vague and distant aim of self-rule or political independence. In fact, all opportunities of work outside the Adivasi society and along with non-Adivasi workers involving the Adivasis in non-local, wider and distant issues were taken by the Gandhian workers. This helped changing their outlook and creating confidence among the Adivasis. This must have affected their perception of their own society and of the non-Adivasi society also.

Practically from 1928 to 1937 the political activity was the main activity of the Gandhian workers. The constructive work was not at a stand still but was not going apace with the spread and intensity of general awakening brought about by the political programme.

In the meanwhile the programme of formal education was added to the constructive programme by Jugatram Dave and that became a parallel programme along with Khadi. This educational programme in addition to the spread of literacy aimed at creating social workers from among the Adivasis who would not only spread the message of change but help furthering and establishing it.

During the short period in which the Congress was in the saddle of political authority the Vedchhi educational programme was strengthened by adopting the Vardha Scheme of education. Also during the same period the tenancy legislation and the debt relief legislation created work for the Gandhian workers which brought economic benefits to the Adivasis. This programme strengthened the property owning strata among the Adivasis and also provided support base to the Vedchhi movement.

The Congress went out of power during the 2nd World War. The Gandhian workers whose first love was political independence again went into the vortex of political movement and the Adivasis also went into it along with theme. All constructive work was again slowed down. Even-though as a matter of policy the constructive workers were to remain aloof from political movement and they also remained aloof in practice. The British Government did not accept such distinction and they/ were all arrested,

imprisoned and demobilised. The Ashramas were confiscated. The Khadi work was continued under difficult conditions from; other places. But during the first half of the forties the occupational element was added to Khadi. Though Khadi production increased, the new element was not much relished by the Vedchhi workers because it created a good deal of 'office work' and also narrowed down the channel of contact with the people. From the ideal of Khadi as a means of self-help, self-reliance and self-confidence Khadi production became a mundane activity of wage earning. For the users also it became an economic matter or a commodity instead of the symbol of political and social change. Khadi as a business proposition was dropped from Vedchhi programme by 1946.

On the eve of independence i.e. by 1947 the Vedchhi movement had created two special bases (1) Stratum of land owning Adivasis and (2) a small committed and dedicated stratum educated and education oriented Adivasis with new outlook and aspirations. The latter base served as an agent of change and the first base as the recipient of change. Probably those who 'took education came from better off Adivasi family. This also gave the change necessary respectability. The large Adivasi mass was surrounded by an atmosphere which would make it a willing recipient of change.

It may be noted here that the first generation of literate Adivasis sown the seeds of social and economic reform in the form of retrieving the lost land. The economic reform was put on the official agenda and in the active programme of the political authority and was well on its way of legal realisation - legitimisation. The social reform movement was also on the agenda of the Vedchhi movement and its reception and propagation was a sort of concomitant of the two elements of new stratification, landed property and education. The participation of the Adivasis in the political struggle added to the speed and spread of change. The active or passive political participant was also a similar participant of social reform. Thus the political factor was an important factor in change. The political programme, the economic programme and the social reform programme were all rolled into one and in the same role performer before independence.

What is happening after independence (1947) is the separation of these programmes and the roles in the Vedchhi movement as also probably in the wider society. That has its consequences for the movement.

With the achievement of political freedom the political role of the Vedchhi workers changed from that of the opponent to the political authority to that of the co-operator with it. The adjustment to the new role and the new situation must have its difficulties. It might also affect the elan of the movement. But achievements could be expected to be much more than in the previous period.

The achievements in the educational and economic fields have been quite massive and in both the educational and the economic systems the Adivasi society is getting more and more involved with the wider society. The changes in the opinion of the workers of the movement are basic.

A landowning peasantry, also with a small number of large holders has come into existence as in the rest of Gujarat. It is also becoming production oriented and getting accustomed to the use of fertilizers, irrigation methods, better seeds and insecticides.

The Forest Labour Cooperatives and other Cooperatives managed by the Adivasis are becoming important forms *of* economic organizations.

A stratum of educated white collar employees such as primary school teachers and clerks etc. is also growing. Some of the more educated are working in good positions outside the Adivasi area. Education is spreading so fast among them that there is the danger of unemployment of those studied upto vernacular final as also in the rest of Gujarat.

There are also skilled and unskilled Adivasi manual workers working in the urban areas in Gujarat.

Thus a stratificatory change is coming over to the Adivasi society based on wealth (land), occupation and education.

Equally-important are the changes in his values, beliefs and the change in the personality. The Adivasi is becoming more self-confident and self-respecting. Education cleanliness, physical health and money are becoming values with them. In these matters also he is not different from the rest of the Gujarat peasantry.

It is not that all those who have changed have become Gandhians. There is a section oriented to Gandhian ideology. But there is also a section which is oriented to the contemporary urban styles of living and behaviour. Any future programme will have to take cognition of these social differentiations.

What are the implications *of* these changes for the movement?

The programme of the movement, the organization and the workers are influenced organically by the change in the political context. The programmes have become to a great extent the Government programmes, particularly the educational programmes which is the biggest field of their activity. The prohibition programme, the programme for the housing of Halpatis are all largely Government approved and Government financed. In many cases the job occupants have become Government or Panchayat employees. In some cases they might remain the employees of one of the organizations of the Vedchhi. But in all cases their recruitment is according to the Government rules and they are governed by the Government rules of conduct. It may be that they recruit those under the influence of their movement. But the recruit is no longer that 'volunteer' with idealism and motivations of the pre-independence period. He is an employee as in any modern organization.

Vedchhi movement itself has a central organization called the 'Raniparaj Seva Sabha' - a registered association. There are many other institutions affiliated to it. But the policy of the Sabha is that of decentralization of organization of work and institutions. Each is having its own identity and the field of work. The institutional life is becoming less Ashramalike, if not moving away from it. Each of them is dependent on Government finances and is becoming a modern formal association with all the limitations that it implies.

The workers required are now the workers for specific jobs and qualified educationally for that job. All of them may not be available from those trained in the institutions of the movement and imbued with their ideology and discipline. Among those trained in their institutions have also the trend to go out in the wider society for employment. Socially this may be desirable in as much as it establishes a two way traffic between the wider society and the Adivasi area. But for the movement it means loss of homogeneity of outlook and motivation among its worker which it had in the pre-independence period.

All those developments in the components of the movement indicate the stabilisation and routinization of the activities which rob the movement of its elan and the original character. The movement lost itself while achieving its goals. The activities

continue but the movement seems to be dying. There is at least a lurking awareness among the workers of what is happening. Though there is no clear diagnosis, the thinking is cantering round their relation with the Government. As it appears there is no other source of finance. If therefore, they have to depend on the Government, the Government must be at least sympathetic to them and they must be sympathetic to it. But this cannot be assured. Should they therefore, participate in the political process or not? There is no unanimity on the answers to this question. One attitude is that political power is not the right instrument of change. The other view is that it can be used as an instrument of change. A variation of this view is that the associations must be kept out of politics, while power may be used for change.

There are no divisions among the workers on these lines yet. Even when there will be divisions they are not likely to be at war with one another. Firstly because, there is still a commonness of outlook and secondly because an opposition to the movement is appearing from the extremists and from the liberals. They will have either to stand together against them or perish. Among the workers of the movement themselves, there are three possible points of departure for fresh vitality to the movement. There are the Gandhian purists, Gandhian liberals and non-Gandhian liberals.

The Vedchhi movement today is facing the similar but not the same situation when it began. The thrust to the movement came from outside the Adivasi area and from the political movement which did not aim merely at capturing the power only but capturing it for the reconstruction of the society on Gandhian lines. This suited the Adivasi society as it was then. Also there were no rival views of reconstruction. Today there are such rival views and also the Adivasi society is not socially and culturally homogenous as it was then. Today there are social differentiations and corresponding interests and aspirations and attitudes which will react differently to different ideologies, ideas of social reconstruction and programmes. The method of work and work organization will also have to be in consonance with this IBW situation.

The Vedchhi movement appears to have come to a stand still. Actually it has come to the crossing of roads. It appears to have come to a stand still not because of its failure but because of its success. What it has achieved in terms of educational, economic, social and cultural progress among the Adivasis, in its association with the

political movement and in cooperation with the Government during the last twenty years speaks volumes for its success. It gave substance to the formal and legal integration of Adivasi society with the wider society, smoothed the path of integration and also speeded up the process. What needs to be realised is that such integration creates more problems than it solves and that these problems are not the same as before integration. It is in terms of thinking about these problems that the movement appears to be at a stand still and not in terms of being inactive. Even in terms of thinking it could not be said that there is no activity. There is active thinking. Only the decision is not taken.

The new problems have two sources (i) the changing Gujarat and all India society and (ii) the changing Adivasi society. The wider society is making more forceful impact on the Adivasi society than in the past. The Adivasi society is also more prepared to receive it today, than in the past, thanks to the Vedchhi movement. What needs to be realised is that the Adivasi society is entering a second and new phase of change. If the Vedchhi movement is to remain a movement and also be effective in the second phase of change and carry forward its success in the first phase of change, it must recognise the fact that they are not dealing with the Adivasi society of 50 years ago. It is a new society in the creation of which the movement performed a very constructive role. It is now a more differentiated society socially, culturally and also psychologically.

The Vedchhi movement needs to reorient its ideology to this new phenomenon. It must also recognise that unlike the situation in the past, today there are rival ideologies to which Adivasi ears are lent, though they are not yet accepted by the Adivasis of the district. This is not due to the devilish nature of these ideologies but because of the change in the Adivasi society. They are offering their social content through the political parties. This is an all India phenomenon which is engulfing the Adivasi society also. This can be prevented only if the sun can be prevented from shining over the Adivasi society. If the Vedchhi movement abjures politics it abjures its existence and its own development. The association of the movement with the political process before and after independence contributed to its success along with the band of its selfless workers to no mean degree. Gandhi related his idea of the future Indian society to a more concrete and definite idea of the future Indian polity. The workers of the movement put aside everything whenever there was the fight for self rule. The involvement of the Adivasis in

that struggle did as much for their integration as subsequent legislation and education. How is it immoral *of* undesirable to relate the efforts for achieving an efficient and good society to political movement? That is the question before the Vedchhi movement.

A NOTE ON THE METHOD OF WORK

Method of work is the expression which includes the method of approach to the people and the method of handling an individual or a group. One can get along with the people by being one of them. But, if being one of them means being what they are, obviously, the worker is changed and not the people. Being one of them therefore should be understood as consistently with the goals and aims the worker has. He wants to get along with the people because he has some purpose. Getting along would therefore mean getting along consistently with the purpose in hand. A political agitator or a trade unionist won't bother how many children a particular person has or how clean he keeps his house. A professional social worker might deal with these matters but he may not bother much to which political party or the trade union he belongs.

A revolutionary social worker motivated by the retributive kindly emotions or a Catholic priest are more inclusive in the aspects of life of an individual they would handle. The professional social worker and the organizer of political party or of a trade union are likely to be more exclusive in the fields of their activity.

The method of approach and the method of being one with the people (clients) will also differ with the level of development of the people. The specific problems would differ and therefore also the method of work. It will therefore not be possible just to transplant the method of work from one place to another. Along with the ideals, goals and purpose, that a worker has, the conditions of the people and specific situations are also equally important factors in determining the method of work.

Among the Adivasis covered by the Vedchhi movement the method of work which paid dividends from 1920 to 1946 might not pay the same dividends in 1970 in the case of those sections of the Adivasis who have changed. It might give dividends in the case of those sections which are not much changed even in 1970.

The case of the work among the Halpatis illustrates how the different method is being followed by the workers of the Vedchhi movement. The following two illustrations will show how the methods tried in the early stages of the movement among the Adivasis

and the method a worker is following today among the section of Adivasis who are coming under the influence of the movement for the first time.

A nearly 60 year old Adivasi worker describes how the workers in nineteen twenties and thirties worked.

The workers came into contact with the people through Khadi work. They began to take interest in their life. They would ask the person to whose house they would go, how much does he produce in his fields? How many members are there in the household? How much debt he has? He would then advise, "You be free from your debt even if you have to give up your land. Then he would advise JEB* to save and buy the land again. Sometimes there may be so many cattle heads that one can't feed them. He would advise to dispose off the useless cattle. Some people accepted his advise. Many gave up liquor fend toddy. They began to educate the children. He could advise that at least one child should be educated. One for agriculture, one for cattle and one for education that is how they would say".

A non-Adivasi worker who is nearly 40 years old and who joined the work after nineteen forty-seven works among the Adivasis who came under the influence of the movement very recently for the first time.

"Affectionate (loving) relationship is built up with the people if you help them in their woes and weals, that is if you help them say in the case of illness. The worker always has before his mind the miseries of the people. He maintains the self-respect of the people while talking to them. He behaves with affection with their children even if they are dirty looking. He behaves with respect with their women. Thus people trust him. That is how they placed money in my hands without receipt, for fighting a case against the Government. They drove away an Adivasi Christian missionary leader who told them that I would swallow the money. In another instance people replied that it does not matter if he (worker) swallowed the money".

In both the instances the worker was approaching the individuals as wholes and not the specific aspects of their life. He dealt with the problems which had immediate and direct concern with the individuals.

We have however seen how the same methods are not possible for the changed activities after 1947 among the people who have been benefitted by the movement and

also by other changes. The workers generally complained about the loss of contact with the people. This feeling is there largely because of the change in the nature of contact due to the change in the nature of activity. The contact becomes more specific and limited. A doctor or patient need not believe in the same God or need not belong to the same political party.

It is interesting to note how even the old workers adjusted to the changing situation and emphasised the specificity of their work. An Adivasi worker (nearly 65) narrated the following two situations while he was doing the tenancy work.

A shepherd was tilling the land of a disabled Harijan. He wanted to take that land on the strength of his right as a tiller. On one side there was a Harijan and also disabled. On the other side there was a tenant. If the Harijan was helped the owner would be helped. His work was to help the tenant so he helped the shepherd,

A Harijan earned money in Bombay and bought the land. He gave it to a friend (non-Harijan) to till on rent. When the legislation came the tenant claimed the land. The worker helped him. The Harijan Sevak Sangh people said that he should have helped the Harijan. He replied that "We have to look to the tenant". Similar situations arose when the tenants and the landowners were both Adivasis. The rule was clear. He was helping the tenant and not the Adivasi.

If we look to the expectations of the future worker, while every one mentioned the honesty and character of the worker and his sympathy for the Adivasis, his intellectual and technical equipment for performing the specific job was equally emphasised. They were working in the areas which have changed during the last forty years.

The method of work thus can't be transplanted from one place to another or from one group of people to another who are not at the same level of development. What can be seen from the study of the movement is that a more inclusive approach is likely to be more successful among the people who have not come into the vortex of modern life, and who have linguistic and occupational and cultural homogeneity. Even in the same group, the inclusive method is not likely to work with the section which has changed. A more differentiated a group a more exclusive method is likely to be fruitful.

The problem is not whether the Vedchhi method could be tried elsewhere. The problem is what method should Vedchhi follow under the changed conditions.

HOW THE DECISIONS ARE MADE

This matter regarding the decision making should have been in the body of the essay. But while processing the data it was noticed that the respondents have different referents while they were talking about the decisions. They are referring to the Raniparaj Seva Sabha, the taluka organization which is affiliated yet an autonomous organization, and the particular institution of that organization in which the respondent is working at the time of the interview. Also the difference between the decisions regarding the wider policy and regarding the day to day I administration have not been distinguished. In some cases the respondents did not have the experience and understanding regarding the policy decisions. The net result is that the information has been lacking in necessary specificity and evenness. Also the responses have been affected by; the personality, experience and the relationship of the respondents with others. A larger number and variety of persons should have been interviewed than the present number and variety.

It could also be seen that the decision-making is closely related to the organization, leadership and the method of work and the philosophy of life of the workers. For example, the workers in the early stages kept diary. Now it is necessary to know what these diaries were like. The Government officers keep the diary. But it is largely a record of adjustments of their tour programme. For Gandhi diary was a part of the experiments with truth and reflection of self. Even if a worker did not keep the diary in the manner that Gandhi or Mahadev Desai did, and even if the diaries were not discussed in the meetings, the introspection and reflection implied in that form of diary keeping would enter into the communication and criticism of the workers experience. Now this method of discussion worked when the number of workers were few, when the programmes did not have much variety and when Gandhi and accredited Gandhians were the models before the workers. The authority of the 'leader'¹ did not flow from the appointment of a person to a post and his designation but from his personal qualities and competence, without formal certification.

In view of these defects and complications which the writer could not get over, the matter could not be put in the body of the essay. However, it was thought that the

data could be useful if published. It is therefore presented in the appendix. The arrangement of the information is according to the age groups of the workers. Two groups have been made (i) those 40 and below and (ii) those 41 and above. Those 40 and below have joined the movement in the forties and after independence. Those above 40 joined the movement in the twenties and thirties of the present century.

An Adivasi worker aged 34 who is the head of an educational institution says, that Jugatram's style is such that he gives freedom to the workers to take decisions and to do his work, even if he makes mistakes. When the work was under the Raniparaj Seva Sabha there was such freedom,, After decentralization the work at different places must be according to different persons.

There are discussions among- the workers of the Raniparaj Seva Sabha. In the meetings it is discussed how the work is going- on. The discussions which he saw 12 years ago (1957) had a consensus. Every one discussed as the members of the same organization. Today institutional and political complications have entered. Consequently the discussions are hot. Those who are working in different institutions at different places have developed their fields, are more experienced and mature. They present their independent points of view. Thus the differences in opinions and views have increased.

A non-Adivasi worker (38) referring to the educational institutions where he is working says that the decisions are taken democratically. But the democracy is only a show. Actually the decisions are the decisions of the executive head. But that has to be so« If a person has created an institution he would *run* according to his wishes. Why should he listen to any one else? How would it run according to his conception if that was not so?

Another Adivasi worker aged about 39, working in an educational institution says that the "decisions are taken by the managing committee which meets every two months. It largely thinks about the financial matters though it also thinks of other matters.

"There is also the meeting of the Taluka organization and the workers get good opportunities to discuss. Such meetings are also held every two months".

A non-Adivasi worker (30) who is in the separate district organization says that "the decisions take place in the central executive and it also takes the decisions. Even

those leaders who are not the members of the executive sit in the meeting. Any suggestion, even if it is coming from a smallest person is welcome.

A non-Adivasi but non-high caste Hindu worker (40) who is working in an institution run by the Raniparaj Seva Sabha says that "the decisions are taken by Jugatram and by another person, though the experience of a person like himself is also considered. He said that formerly there used to be a good deal of discussion in the Raniparaj Seva Sabha about the idea behind a particular work and about policy. Now the spread of work and also the programmes have increased. So, the workers do not meet frequently. On the other hand there are not many points to be discussed as the policy is decided and is also more definite.

A non-Adivasi worker (40) working in the autonomous Taluka organization says that the meetings take place every month or two months. Every one attends such meetings. These meetings are separate for separate institutions such as schools, hostels, cooperatives etc. Every one takes part in the discussion. The policy of the President is such that every one participates without any constraint. The decision is also a free decision. If they are not able to arrive at a decision at the meeting, next meeting is held. Every one's opinion is heard. But every one ultimately agrees with the President. His thinking is according to him more 'forward'¹ than that of others. They oppose but in the end they agree. Even if some one has not liked the decision he obeys it. (our observer attended such meeting and his observation is that every one expressed his opinion freely).

Another non-Adivasi worker (40) working in an educational institution but not as a teacher said that the suggestions come from the Raniparaj Seva Sabha. But the decisions regarding local matters are taken by the executive head. Workers have no share in the decisions. Formerly that was not so. (The head also said that he decides).

A non-Adivasi worker (36) working in an autonomous Taluka organization says that their President is considered by them as the adopted boss. Everything goes on according to as he says« But now there is a difference. Upto 1964 the decisions were all his. But now the decisions are the decisions of every one. The decisions are taken after discussion.

The reason that he gives is that during the last five years new workers have come who can tell the President that he is wrong. Now the President abides by the decisions even if they are harmful. The worker said that he did not speak when he was at Vedchhi, because he thought that he was immature.

Workers above 41

A non-Adivasi worker (44) says that for the decision of Raniparaj Seva Sabha there is an executive of the Raniparaj Seva Sabha. A committee consists of 16 members from among the life members of the Sabha and some others. In addition, other workers and the coordinators of different divisions of the Sabha such as Ukai Project and Halpati Sangh also attend the meeting. Anyone else who has to make a suggestion can write and or can attend the meeting. Always the method of taking decisions has been that all decide collectively. Now the difference is that the meetings are held and the records are kept. The meetings of all workers are held twice a year and the new programmes emerge from them.

Other non-Adivasi worker (53) who is the executive head of an associated institution says that in the beginning behind all the programmes there was the wish, guidance and inspiration of Jugatram. He was the key point. In the institution in which he is working the executive committee decides what programmes are to be taken up. But he added that mostly it depended on his wish. The non-Adivasi President (51) of a taluka level autonomous organization says that their method has changed very much. Formerly it was very harsh. Now it has become affectionate. Formerly they worked according to military methods. Order is order. Now with their contact with Jugatram they have learnt tolerance.

After the new workers came the method of work has changed. Today everyone is free to do his work and develop his own pattern.

In the Raniparaj Seva Sabha there are some who mainly participate in the discussions but the decisive effect is Jugatram's. Others do make an effect but final authority is Jugatram's. His opinion is always impartial. From the time he has known Jugatram he sees that he puts to severe test the persons close to him i.e. he has high expectations of them, both regarding the principles and the practice. He does not suppress

anyone who thinks differently from him. He allows him to develop. He said that he has heard that formerly there used to be a good deal of discussion in the Raniparaj Seva Sabha. But he said that he had no experience. His observation for the last ten years is that the formal discussion at the meeting: was always unsystematic and hurried. In small informal groups there is lot of discussion. In the meeting there is discussion only if there is a policy matter. Seva Sabha now only gives guidance and the responsibilities are distributed.

Another non-Adivasi head of an institution (50.) said that as he has heard from others in the past that inspiration came mainly from Jugatram. In that particular institution they think about the programme together with the colleagues who have put in five years of work. The programmes are executed only after they are placed before the teachers.

Formerly they would talk informally while taking stroll but now they meet in the managing committee and there are differences in thought. But there are no differences of heart. This managing committee consists of the local teachers. The registered and formal committee rarely meets.

A nearly 50 year old non-Adivasi worker who has left the movement said that the workers exchanged thoughts and experience when they met but everyone went and opened his heart and mind before late Chunibhai, The man was such that the workers would always open up before him. (Chunlbhai was the person who first went to Vedchhi in the twenties and began Khadi work).

A non-Hindu worker (53) said that the jungle mandlies (Forest Cooperatives) have been taken over from the Government. In other fields the work was developed by the workers of Seva Sabha. But now the forest cooperatives have developed to the stage when they manage their own affairs. Also the work has so expanded that the Sangh could not cope with it. The ideology of Sarvodaya is always there in the background. Kaka Kalekar is frequently visiting them and there are many discussions with the workers. Such discussions have their impact on Seva Sabha.

A non-Adivasi worker (50) who influences the thought of others said that the method of work has been individual oriented and dominated by an individual. It is not 'a

democratic. If an individual did not like a man or a place or a programme that won't be accepted,, The central theme that Seva Sabha is because of the service and 'tapshcharya', If he said that a thing had to be done or not to be done others accept it% If one wants to call it a weakness one may say so. *But* if one looks at it in another way the work of Seva Sabha is not thought dominated. It does not need philosophy. The work among the Raniparaj is not thought dominated. It is based on sacrifice and renunciation. Therefore they do not want to shunt off those who have made sacrifice.

The Raniparaj Seva Sabha was a disbursing agency. Therefore, at the time of inspection of annual reports they had to be present. It was not possible for one man to cop« with that and the number of institutions was becoming larger. At the time of annual reports everything was disturbed because they had to wait for reports from every one. On the other hand, the workers in those institutions felt that they should be independent. So it was decided that the work should be handed over to taluka organizations. Wherever such organization did not exist it was created. This has been the policy. Now the Seva Sabha is direct running the institution only at one place.

A perusal of these impressions of the workers would show that there are discussions before the decisions are taken. The discussions are free and the decisions are collective. As it would happen anywhere the views of some individuals would have greater impact on the decisions ' than of some others. Their views therefore would be more important in so far as the content of the decisions was concerned. But the procedure would remain democratic. However, in the case of individual organization and inst tuition it could happen that either the procedure may be only followed in name and the decisions could be said to have been imposed. But taking the movement as a whole it has not degenerated into an oligarchy and closed to all thinking.