

is to advocate such a course, I am afraid, there will be a revolution among people, as it is not possible to change their habits all on a sudden. But a real attempt may be made to give up unnecessary cooking and treating of food. As an example, lime fruits when consumed fresh are a source of vitamin C, but when pickled that valuable property is lost. All the refined articles of food, have less dietetic value than their crude forms from which refined products are made. Every diet should include fresh milk, fruits and vegetables and it is worthwhile for a man to expose himself to bright sun for some time daily.

In future it is quite likely that some more vitamins are discovered and a host of diseases traced to their absence. Doctors will very rightly attribute every disease to the lack of one vitamin or another and it is up to you to satisfy the vitamin requirements of your system and lead a happy and healthy life.

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Work in the Tamil Villages Some Experiences. (CONTRIBUTED).

“India is the land of Agriculture and 80 per cent of its population live by tilling the land—” How often has this been said, often with great emphasis, when anybody pretending to be interested in India’s development, pleads for improvement in agriculture—as the first item for consideration. There it begins and there it ends. Few try to go deeper than this and obtain at first hand a knowledge of the actual conditions and behaviour of the average ryot in the different parts of country, to see how he yields and co-operates with us for any improvement we may endeavour to achieve. It is easy to say that we should improve the agriculture of the land, ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the ryot population and so on and so-forth, but it is only those who actually work in the field that can know the manifold but peculiar difficulties one has to experience before any thing can be achieved. The experiences narrated here though not too many are quite significant and may seem important as well in connection with our efforts to improve the village and its agriculture. How much of an uphill task, this introduction of improved methods of agriculture is, for a prosperous rural population, will be well evident from these seemingly trivial observations.

To begin with, the typical ryot is reserved, takes every-thing as it comes, and is influenced by the immediate surroundings and happenings. He has at the present day lost all self-reliance, deep thinking and most important of all a desire to improve his condition at any cost. He is simply plodding on from year to year, sinking or falling according to the vagaries of the season and the market and also his domestic circumstances,—thus never spends a continuous period of peace and prosperity. The time honoured boasting that our ryots know much in agriculture and that most of their methods are perfect, can hold good no longer. The present day agriculturist is an automaton, is not a simpleton, going on in his endless routine on the soil, often, simply copying what his neighbour does and with no thought for the future or the past. When the season favours a good harvest he enjoys and spends away on the impulse, but lo! When the wheel turns the other way he is the worst sufferer. We are not however in a position to exactly point out why such a state of affairs exist, except that it is so on account of long neglect of them by the enlightened classes or perhaps due to their conservative tendencies. Neither we can clearly point out the way to improve matters in a short time,—I mean their regeneration into a prosperous rural community.

In every village there is a preponderance of the average cultivating class i. e., 70% of the agricultural population will be of average means—not free from want completely. About 3 % will be fairly well—todo and the rest poor owning bits of land or tilling on lease or eking out as labourers. I can say with confidence from my experience that this average class is the great stumbling block, the most indifferent set, but it is this class that requires the helping hand sorely by virtue of the number and situation. The life of a ryot of such an average means is of the same kind—monotonous, uninteresting and far from smooth. It is this class that suffers and makes matters look serious. What is true of the town is also true of the villages. As said above, by virtue of his position and the circumstances in which he is placed, the average ryot is at a loss to know how to improve his conditions, and much worse he has ceased to bother about making attempts to better his conditions.

The great majority of them have fallen into the valley of darkness, and they have to be injected with knowledge, supplied

with the tonic of money and are then to be infused with hopes about the possibility of attaining a state of equilibrium and prosperity in their lives. And this is the TASK. Experiences are disappointing though not entirely. Preaching and proving, begging and entreating are all equally ineffective. The ryot listens at best and leaves it at that. He may be deep, may also think but is never prone to act. The man from the Agricultural Department is still a queer person. With all previous arrangement with the village officers, tom-toming and personal requests, we may find a 'huge' gathering of a dozen people at the village Chavady to have a serious talk with the man who may be bent upon changing the agriculture of the village. Out of the dozen one is the village munsiff, another the karnam and the third may be the President of the Village Panchayat or that of the obscure Co-operative society. One or two others may be well-to-do ryots, a few more of the average type and the rest are mere onlookers with nothing at stake in their lives. All of them listen, a few crossquestion, but all of them uniformly express great surprise and wonder when told about the small and big iron ploughs and other labour saving machinery for improved agriculture. If one such plough is actually shown and its working demonstrated they evince great eagerness in looking and examining it, appreciating it in no mean terms. But when the question of purchasing and using comes, i. e., when any of them is asked to go in for a few for his use the answer is invariably of this nature,—that he does not require the ploughs now and that he would think over it and have it some time later. When the show is over and things go on as usual in the village this is forgotten and none of them think seriously about purchasing and using iron ploughs. Some time later he is again approached the man of the agricultural department is hastily shaken off and the response is often disappointing. Soon after the show the ryots of the village may discuss in a light hearted way the use of iron ploughs and come to the unanimous conclusion that iron ploughs are heavy, their animals are unsuited and even if they use them their animals are sure to go weaker and weaker and may even die a premature death. As if they care for their working animals so much and feed them with enough systematically. The animals live merely upon straw, stalks of grass only as the case may be, and generally the average ryot never feeds his animals with any other thing except this. He extracts heavy work, but gives only very light food. It is true however

that poor feeding and good work never go together. It is a pity anyway that the ryot is now in a state of utter ignorance and forgetfulness as to the necessity for improving the working capacity of his cattle by selection of breed and good feeding. It is such a common affair to see him purchasing an old pair for such a small amount as Rs. 10 work them for a year or so and then sell them away at any price they may fetch again going in for such old animals for him. This state of things is most deplorable but this gives the clue as it were for the hopeless condition of the cattle at the present day.

With the South Indian ryot I mean the average one agriculture is only a question of sowing and reaping. Other operations are by the way and never receive his serious attention. Why it is so we cannot exactly point out, but it is the fact and it may be due to so many circumstances. It is no use blinking the fact for over the greatest part of the area under cultivation agriculture is at its minimum practically. The same sort of manure is applied to the same land year after year for all crops. In fact all other operations are the same. I have observed ryots carting village rubbish from a distance of ten miles paying Rs. 3 a cart load and applying at the rate of 30 to 40 cart loads per acre. How much money and energy wasted on this rubbish. And they think this the only sort of manure available in the world besides of course the small quantity of cattle dung obtained. If one ryot ventures upon this sort of manure purchase, others quickly followsuit. The aping tendency seems to have a strong hold upon him. The oft repeated view that the ryot when once he finds any new thing very advantageous would take to it at once tenaciously does not hold good in nine cases out of ten. For look at the way he behaves with the use of the iron ploughs and other improved implements about which he waxes eloquent in appreciation. There is some other cause or causes working in and the impression is formed that the generality of the ryot population is labouring under some complex difficulties which make them unable to act upon impulse or after deliberation. They are helpless, the majority of them.

The Cotton Diseases and Pests Act insisting upon the uprooting of Cambodia cotton plants before a particular time in the year has been in force for the last seven years and more.

Even the ryot who has understood the advantages of such an Act acts up to it with very great reluctance. I mean often he abides only upon pressure or fear. Many are still quite ignorant as to why a particular variety of cotton should be uprooted completely at a particular time, and a good many would find it hard to eradicate the belief that the plants are removed to check certain kinds of plague as among men. The ryot does things and believes by virtue of his hereditary notions, environments and outside pressure, but rarely thinks for himself and attempts at new and successful innovations for his betterment in life. It is therefore natural that we find it a herculean task to enforce any regulations for the general benefit of the ryot population.

There are again the ryots' superstitious beliefs which are the greater stumbling blocks. Every kind of mishap, insect attack or fungus disease, is attributed to the wrath of some deity, or sin committed by the community. Sometimes he accuses the changing weather conditions, but he again believes that the mishap will pass away when favourable conditions turn up. This is of course true to some extent. The folly lies in the passive attitude assumed by the ryot when his crop is attacked by unseen enemies. All of them are not able to sow a particular crop at the same time. The man harvesting early gets a good crop but sometimes when the late sown crop is found to be infested with some insect or fungoid pests, he at once concludes that the "Harvest wind" (Aruppu-kathu-Tamil) from the early crop has been the cause of the pests. He clings to this theory ignoring other environmental and weather conditions and the lateness of the crop. When the Steam-borer attacks paddy, he believes that it is a particular disease of the shoot tip, and that it would not spread when there are good rains during the growth of the crop. Unless actually shown he would not believe that the disease is due to an insect boring into the stem below. Anything that is not seen outwardly and solidly he attributes to the work of supernatural agencies and has the ingrained belief that he is powerless in such matters.

Again some half educated ryots, happening to know of the existence of the Department of Agriculture, apply to it for help. They of course usually seek its help only long after they have found their usual methods unsuccessful and with the impression that the Department will be able at once to suggest profitable crops

suitcd to the soil-which may be of the worst type on which any crop would not grow. When we tell him that it is not possible to suggest crops suited to soils as such, but that we should make the soil suited to all crops by improving it in the course of time, we can see him look disappointed and afterwards taking no interest in us. Leaving alone ordinary ryots, even fairly literate ryots expect improvements and changes taking place immediately, something like magic, as a result of the efforts of the Department. Otherwise they think it is not worthwhile seeking its help. With all that, he would nextday commence to cart to his lands hundreds of cartloads of tank-silt or town-rubbish at great expense, but is really very suspicious to spend upon small iron ploughs or improved manures. Even after actually demonstrating the superiority of certain methods, he doesn't take to it with such avidity as we may expect, the excuse given is that his servants are quite averse to it.

As a writer in the Poona Agricultural College Magazine says, "The cultivator must feel that the propagandist is not there merely to teach him how to improve, but that he is a man who has the power to redress his grievances if there are any real ones". Further he adds,—“At present the District propagandist knows full well that he has no power over the Irrigation or the Forest Departments. He knows that the sanctioning or granting of Takavi loans does not rest with him and that he has only partial control of the Agricultural and Co-operative Societies. The cultivators therefore, ignorant as they are know that they need not mind what the propagandist says and they manage to send back the propagandist with his improvement, with a kind word of thanks as they would do a man who goes to preach them lessons on morality.” This is only too true. It is however easily gleaned that the main causes for such queer behaviour and disappointing results are often the extremely poor financial circumstances and the ignorance and illiteracy of the average ryot. It is needless to urge the necessity for a thorough study of the conditions obtaining in different places separately and then working out suitable schemes for a radical alteration in the mentality, outlook and circumstances of the average cultivating class and thus make the present day ryot march with the times with ease and willingness.