

education. But we should get as able a man as possible to do the training. And there should be as much continuity as possible about this training so that the acting, singing and the music do improve all the time. The actors could be illiterate, but still education is there. The audience of the night and those many more who are not there but who will be singing the songs of that play for years, none of these need be literate.

Co-operative Society. Although this is of very recent introduction into the village, the principles on which it is based are not new to India. That the working of a co-operative credit Society is in itself a very rich means of education, need not be doubted by any one.

(a) The co-operative society often answers to an utterly desperate need of the villager and therefore when wisely handled, it becomes a powerfully-effective lever for his uplift along many lines.

(b) The co-operative society is a specific social organisation. It trains people in combined action, it disciplines them in following the leaders chosen by themselves, and it chastens the leaders in having their policies and actions guided in a democratic way, thus furnishing a model for corporate activity along many lines and drawing out workers from the community and training them as it gathers strength. There are indeed other direct values, ethical and economic, which need no recounting here. To any one who is willing to take advantage of a co-operative society as a means of adult education, it is full of wonderful possibilities.

Enough has been said to show that the means for adult education are already existent in the rural areas themselves. Extension lectures, university settlements, community centres and such like are not necessary excepting for training workers and for administrative convenience. For the education itself, it is far better to utilise existing institutions and opportunities, with a curriculum which is as comprehensive as are the actual practical needs of the villagers.

SOME ASPECTS OF RURAL RECONSTRUCTION

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The subject in which I am interested is village industries, and my contribution to this conference will be to give you a brief survey of the work we are doing in Ikkadu, a small village in the Chingleput district, thirty miles from the city of Madras, and in the light of this experience see how it can be applied in other places.

To you who know India so well it is hardly necessary to dwell on the appalling poverty of the majority of the village people. It is one of the most urgent problems with which India is faced today. It was

in an endeavour to ameliorate these conditions in the surrounding villages that industrial work consisting of weaving, lacquer work, embroidery, lace, machine work etc., was started.

To-day much is written of "Rural uplift" and the development of village industries, but the urgency was realised, and the work organised in Ikkadu many years ago, and now we are well established. Our aim was first to establish our head quarters in Ikkadu for teaching and training in weaving and other subjects, and afterwards to open smaller branch institutions to serve a chain of villages too far away to be in daily contact with the head quarters in Ikkadu, and to organise cottage industries in the surrounding villages.

A start was made in a mud and thatch hut with very little capital as Mission funds were not available for this purpose. A further expenditure was necessary for looms, yarn etc., all this meant considerable organising, and financial anxiety, but in spite of unspeakable and at times almost insurmountable difficulties the work expanded. Workers crowded in and the time soon arrived when the limited and unsuitable accommodation was seriously handicapping the development of the industry and suitable and adequate buildings were erected. The new building is square, all the weaving sheds are built round a central garden and the workers now number over two hundred. Christians and non-Christians of all castes and creeds are working together under healthy and pleasant conditions and are under medical supervision. If only that could be said of all hand looms in India, one is struck by the difference between our weavers and the ordinary village weaver. There is no more depressing sight than to see the emaciated form of a village weaver standing in the pit of his loom working in a small room with a window about 18" square. A tiny lamp hangs over the loom as they often work far into the night and start the same monotonous grind early the next morning.

Our Aims. The aims we have in view are the following:

1. Training boys to become weavers as full time workers.
2. To train agricultural workers for part time weaving and afterwards to hire simple looms to them so that the workers can weave at home and put to good use the many days during the year when they are unable to work on the land. These workers receive yarn from our head quarters and return the finished cloth for which payment is made without delay.
3. To train women and girls in embroidery, lace, etc. After a time our goods found a ready market and the work expanded and to-day "Ikkadu goods" are known throughout India. Those who do not work at home, come in daily from the surrounding villages. There are sixty-four women workers residing in the women's hostel

attached to the institute. These women come for training from all over the presidency. There is a small hostel for men where there are at present eighteen in residence.

The women do the winding for the weaving, and embroidery, lace, machine work, etc., and the men the weaving. The latter earn on an average Rs. 20 per month. Today there are boys doing attractive and difficult designs, who knew nothing about weaving two years ago. Every month close on Rs. 3000 is paid to the workers and Rs. 500 to the staff. This money is all raised from sale of goods; we have no other source of income apart from a very small grant from the Department of Industries.

Markets. As you know the success of an enterprise like this depends largely on the market. A market does exist for the right articles. Much yet has to be done in organising and in the developing of markets in connection with village industries, and much can be learned from Japan and China and the survival of small industries in Japan would repay careful study. When visiting wholesale houses in London I found that China and Japan are in much closer touch than India. We must not be afraid of producing goods for export; many countries thrive on exports and there are hand-woven fabrics being sold in London to-day at fabulous prices which could be made in India on a much cheaper scale. That means that hand-woven fabrics from India would find a ready market in London and other places if the organisation existed.

Organisation needed. Why cannot, what has been done in Ikkadu in a small way, be repeated in other places in South India? It is important to keep the people contented in the village instead of crowding into the cities and this is the only way. There is on the one side a vast army of idle people with natural skill of craftsmanship and there are so few ready and willing to organise this vast store of labour. Why aren't there more people ready to study village problems and help to alleviate the distress? Village Industries on Ikkadu lines in important places throughout the Presidency would be a great help to village people.

THE SILK INDUSTRY AND RURAL PROSPERITY IN KOLLEGAL TALUK

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Sericulture as a Home Industry. In a programme of rural reconstruction, the problem of a suitable home industry finds a prominent place. Many of the cottage and village industries in India, have declined, having succumbed mainly to large scale industrial organisations. But sericulture, as a cottage industry, has right through