PART I SOCIAL

CHAPTER I

RESPONSE AND REACTION

(a) Introduction

A democracy working for social ends has to be based on the willing consent of the people. This emphasizes the need for co-operation in all spheres of social activity, and in all those functions, which bring together individuals for the pursuit of common objectives. Not only should the people co-operate among themselves but they must also co-operate with the various agencies, whose task it is to formulate and execute schemes for the all-round development of society. It is only where the people and the administration feel and act together that development programmes are utilized and become operatively effective in vitality and significance.

In a democracy, public co-operation constitutes the principal force and sanction for the successful working of the government. In the case of a developing country, participation of the people in the implementation of the schemes of development formulated by the Government is of primary importance. The concept of public participation is related in its wider aspect to a much larger sphere of voluntary action in which the responsibility for initiative and organization rests completely with the people and their
leaders. It does not rely on legal sanctions or the powers of the state for achieving its objectives. Organized voluntary efforts have the potentialities to augment the facilities already available to the community. Social security is achieved smoothly if the co-operation between the state and the individual is harmonious and co-ordinated.

"The state should offer security for service and contribution. The state in organizing security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family."

In the wake of freedom, India had numerous and varied problems of a social economic and political nature which needed, apart from government efforts, a great degree of individual effort, because even to this day, the gap which exists between the actual needs of the country and the available resources continue to be very wide. This makes a system of priorities for tackling these problems inevitable. If the provision made for social services in the Plans is not commensurate with the requirements, it is not due to the fact that these services are considered to be of lesser importance, but because the country's resources are limited and great care has to be exercised in the matter of the utilization of these resources.

so that they produce the maximum good for the community.

The transition from a state of economic and social backwardness (and the time needed for the development) is normally attended with social and political difficulties especially in the case of a country where political freedom is of recent occurrence as in India. The emergence of political freedom revealed the simple but important fact that the people expected amelioration of their economic and social conditions, under which they had been suffering for long, prior to India's emerging as a free political society, but simultaneously they were not adequately conscious of their new responsibilities in a free society. And here the role of voluntary groups became important for enlightening the public mind, because apart from contributing to welfare services, voluntary organizations had an equally important role to play in promoting the unity of the state by helping people to realize their new obligations.

The history of India makes it amply evident that sharp conflicts which stem from narrow, sectional, religious and regional interests have always posed a serious threat to the territorial integrity and security of the country. While action is called for at the political and administrative levels to curb these tendencies, it is for the community itself to combat these dangers and the most effective means are to strengthen its own defences and repel from within the attacks
of casteism, regionalism, linguisim and communalism on the integrity of the nation.

Thus protective strength can come primarily from voluntary service and socially productive activities organized by the people themselves. Explosive situations do not develop suddenly and when crisis occur they are only symptoms of a malaise which has existed and grown over a period of time. Remedies applied for the purpose of expediency can be effective only for a limited period because wrong influences and destructive trends are to be neutralised constantly by positive forces which are to be generated within the community. This is a task of widespread social enlightenment through the efforts and influence of voluntary agencies and workers, steadily engaged in the selfless service of the community.

(b) Incentive to the people and their co-operation, voluntary organisations and their role in promoting the unity of the nation and welfare of the people.

In the first Five Year Plan it was recognised that any plan which is to be formulated by the Government for the social and economic regeneration of the country should take into account the services rendered by the private agencies and the state should give them the maximum co-operation in strengthening

2. First Five Year Plan, Govt. of India, Planning Commission 1952, p. 617.
their efforts.

It was further recognised that these private agencies have for long been working with their own resources without receiving adequate state aid, therefore, the Planning Commission laid down that one of the most important tasks of the state is to conduct a survey for assessing the nature, quality and extent of financial and technical aid that they are in need of for implementing their development schemes and co-ordinating their developmental activities. It was only in pursuance of the recommendations of the Planning Commission that the Government of India had set up the Central Social Welfare Board in the Ministry of Education to give financial and technical assistance and to promote welfare organisations on a planned basis. The idea of encouraging the efforts of voluntary organisations was based on the consideration that private agencies with some financial assistance from the state and with constructive guidance could work very usefully for society and the state, as autonomous guilds.

The programmes of the Central Social Welfare Board and those relating to the Welfare of Backward Classes and schemes of Emergency Relief were to be implemented largely through their voluntary organisations.

The basic programmes of the Central Social Welfare Board were to give financial assistance to voluntary

3. First Five Year Plan, p. 667.
organizations engaged in social work, and also to make them realize their new responsibilities and the significance of their contribution which they could make towards national development by developing their own activities, drawing an increasing number of enlightened men and women with a desire for constructive work and dealing with social problems for which the state could not make sufficient provisions directly.

The framers of the Plan realized that for the execution of various plan programmes, small organizations would be able to ( duly assisted by the Central Social Welfare Board ) extend their help and co-operation in a very methodical way, because disciplined service on the part of individuals and groups foster the growth of leadership at all levels and strengthen the community though large voluntary organizations are desirable for the development and functioning of developing society. They have most often been the organizations, which have pleaded the causes of women and children, the aged and infirm, socially and mentally disabled groups and primary and adult education. Their field of working is much larger and they normally are not in position to divert their energies on the other side.

The Intensive Area Schemes of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, based to a considerable extent, on the

4. Ibid. p. 619.
people's own efforts and local resources for creating additional employment opportunities through village industries, and the 'Shrodan' and 'Gramian' movements in which the Sarva Dharma workers are actively engaged, are good examples of the potentialities inherent in voluntary action stimulated by high idealism and missionary zeal.

The planning forums in the universities have tried to promote voluntary service among a large number of teachers and students for implementing diverse constructive socio-economic programmes, such as the Small Savings schemes, literacy drive, slum clearance and so on.

The National Cadet Corps, the Auxiliary Cadet Corps, the Bharat Scouts & Guides and the Bharat Sewak Samaj have also made efforts to contribute to the propagation of welfare services for the community.

The Bharat Sewak Samaj, which was set up in pursuance of the policy underlying the First Five Year Plan as a non-political and non-governmental organization, was meant to serve as a national platform for constructive work. It aimed at drawing out the available unused time and energy of the people

6. The Shrodan Movement was started by Acharya Vinoba Bhave with a view to giving land to those peasants in the villages who are landless after getting it from those persons, who have enough for themselves and can spare some, as he himself puts it: "It is why, I demand such land. There are some 5 crores of landless people in our country, for them we require five crores of acres. About one sixth of good land available in India". Bhave, Acharya Vinoba, Principles and Philosophy of Shrodan Yajna, Navjeevan Publishers, Ahmedabad, 1955, pp.1-5,15-16
7. First Five Year Plan, p.151.
and directing them into various fields of social and economic activity. In the earlier stages the Bharat Sewak Samaj had adopted a comprehensive programme and had set up branches all over the country. It had a large cadre of trained workers. Its association with the Kosi Project during the years 1955-59 had brought forth evidence of the great possibilities of reducing cost, improving quality of performance and speeding up the completion of other projects through public participation. The organization of work-camps for students and youths of the country in connection with the labour and social service camps scheme of the Ministry of Education had become a major activity of the Samaj in which the contribution of the people could be available in an increasing measure.

To create social awakening and disseminate information about the problems of the country and the various plan programmes, the Samaj had set up 'Jan Jagran' Centres. This is an assisted activity, which has now become an integral part of the Lok Karya Kshetra Programme of the Samaj.

In the urban areas, the Samaj had given special attention to the problems of slum dwellers and had been running a number of night shelters for the homeless. But very soon the earlier tempo started declining and it could no longer maintain the same progress.10

8. 'Jan Jagran' means mass awakening.
9. 'Lok Karya Kshetra' stands for Field of Public Service.
There are many other organisations which are functioning at the state and national levels and have done useful work in attending to the needs of the different sections of the community. Both in the Second and the Third Five Year Plans, the government had given due recognition to the ever-increasing need of public co-operation and voluntary organizations.

In the second Five Year Plan, a sum of Rs. 14 crores was provided for the various schemes of the Central Social Welfare Board, out of which financial assistance to voluntary organisations was the major contribution.

As a part of the First Five Year Plan, the Central Social Welfare had assisted 2128 institutions. The financial assistance given by the Board was intended to assist existing voluntary organisations for consolidating their activities. In the case of newly established voluntary organisations, the assistance was to enable them to start their work on sound lines.

In the third Five Year Plan, a sum of Rs. 12 crores was earmarked for the programmes of the Central Social Welfare Board, which included the assistance to be given to voluntary

welfare organizations and other programmes of the Board.

During the Third Plan, the Central Social Welfare Board planned to give grants to about 6,000 voluntary organizations while in the course of the Second Plan assistance amounting to about Rs. 2.6 crores was given to more than 3700 voluntary welfare organizations. Thus from Plan to Plan, the programmes of assistance to voluntary organisations kept on expanding.

The National Advisory Committee on Public Co-operation makes a periodical review of the progress in the field of public co-operation and lays down lines of guidance. There are numerous organizations, which are members of this Committee.

The Social Welfare programmes which have been implemented by voluntary organizations with the assistance of the Central and State Governments include, amongst others, welfare extension projects undertaken by the Central and State Social Welfare Advisory Boards; programmes relating to Social and Moral Hygiene and After-Care services. Other Welfare Services have been directed towards such sections of the community in particular, as the aged and the infirm, juvenile delinquents, fallen and destitute women, and the physically handicapped, who need special care and protection. In developing

15. Ibid. p. 77.
these services, the aim had been to replace individual and haphazard relief and charity by organized and sustained activity for education, welfare and rehabilitation with the general support of the community. Mental hygiene services like student and youth counselling, child guidance and marriage consultations are being provided by voluntary organizations in big places like Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi.

Over the past decade and a half, development of social welfare activities as an integral part of the First, Second and Third Five Year Plans has a significance which extends beyond the range of services established or the extent of resources utilized. They express the concern of the community for the welfare of its many vulnerable sections and emphasize an essential value in national development. In drawing large numbers of voluntary workers, especially women, into the field of creative social service, the community is itself enriched and strengthened.

CONCLUSIONS

The service of the needy by voluntary effort is a part of a very long tradition in India. The care of the needy was built into the structure of social institutions. Religion emphasized the values of charity, philanthropy and mutual help. The giving of alms, the feeding and care of destitutes were considered acts of religious merit. The
temples gave shelter to the homeless and various other social institutions provided means to meet the needs of the old, the sick, and other helpless sections of the community. The joint family provided for the care of the aged members and for the physically handicapped, and chronically ailing and the mentally deficient. Caste and community councils were often responsible for individuals in need of help. The economic system itself was governed by social customs and the feudal employers did care for their employees though in a paternalistic way. However, these social mechanisms and their customary sanctions could only be effective within a small rural community with intimate face-to-face contacts. In the modern times new situations present themselves because though there are large numbers of organizations devoted to social reforms or the cultural or moral uplift of the people, they are invariably in urban areas and the rural areas are scarcely benefitted by their services.

In a country-wide programme of social work and welfare service, with numerous governmental and welfare agencies operating at various levels from the village to the capital city, planning should provide for the co-ordination of the services and agencies and the administration should see to it that it is effected at every stage. Secondly, the needs of the community should also be considered on the basis of well defined priorities.
This co-ordination of welfare services should be between various governmental departments and agencies as well as between the statutory and voluntary organizations.

At the village level and as between villages, it may be effected either through the voluntary village welfare organizations, elected village panchayats or the multi-purpose village level workers or all the three agencies working together.

In the townships, the work of the social workers and social service agencies could be co-ordinated at the official level by either welfare officers or administrative officers.

There are three important points which can be of help to avoid the duplication of work and the wastage of efforts:

(i) Voluntary organisations should not have water-tight compartmental functioning, they should be inter-related and they should try to co-operate and help each other.

(ii) In order to effect economy, to prevent wastage and overlapping, to ensure efficiency and avoid confusion, co-ordination of social work and services-statutory and voluntary is absolutely necessary.

(iii) Co-ordination between various agencies is a conscious and deliberate process and has to be devised, organized and worked by the respective persons concerned by locating responsibility for co-ordination among specialized
personnel, both official and voluntary.

It has been observed that the work of co-ordination is normally hampered by a lack of trained personnel and finance. They also suffer from the same inherent difficulties that hamper the growth of similar organizations in other countries. The difficulty is that as long as the work of co-ordination is restricted to an exchange of information and ideas, it does not meet with any opposition, but the moment a member organization is required to surrender a part of its autonomy, so that co-ordination can be effected in terms of the areas of work to be divided among member organizations and a more rational utilization of scarce resources such as personnel, equipment and finance, reluctance on its part becomes obvious, and to achieve success this reluctance is to be obviated.