

**A STUDY OF THE LOK KARYA KSHETRAS '
OF THE BHARAT SEVAK SAMAJ, 1960**

1. The Study

Govt. of India had been giving grants to Bharat Sevak Samaj, a non-political Voluntary Organisation for running 50 Lok Karya Kshetras, mostly located in rural areas. The scheme was intended to secure public participation in various development programmes in rural Sector, both in areas covered by the Community Development Programme and outside. The evaluation study of some Lok Karya Kshetras was undertaken by the Programme Evaluation Organisation at the instance of Public Cooperation Division of Planning Commission to assess the role and work of Kshetras so that the suitable modifications could be introduced in the programme on the basis of the results of the evaluation.

2. Objectives

The extent to which the objectives of the Lok Karya Kshetra Programme as mentioned in the Scheme of Bharat Sevak Samaj are understood, accepted and put into practice.

- ii) The manner in which the programmes are planned and decisions regarding priorities and targets taken.
- iii) The achievements, in particular the measure in which the Lok Karya Kshetra workers have been helpful in achieving the larger targets in Community Development.
- iv) Cooperation and coordination with the Block staff and with officials of development departments in Planning & Implementation of specific projects, in particular, (a) whether the Gram Sahayaks accept the Lok Karya Kshetra workers and how far they work with them? (b) whether the setting up of Lok Karya Kshetras does not give rise to rivalries between the workers of C.D.Ministry and those of Bharat Sevak Samaj? (c) Which activities can the Bharat Sevak Samaj workers perform better than the Village Level Worker and vice-versa?

- v) The qualities, -the attitudes and the abilities of Lok Karya Kshetra workers and the type of workers most suitable for the programme.
- vi) The adequacy of the training imparted to the workers.
- vii) The Development of local resources achieved through the programme.
- viii) The extent and method of cooperation with Local institutions like Panchayats and cooperatives and the members of the local community.
- ix) The extent of cooperation with other voluntary organisations working in the same field,
- x) The degree of acceptance of the Lok Karya Kshetra workers by the people and their impact on the village;
- xi) The attitude of the people towards their village, their nation and the Lok Karya Kshetra/Bharat Sevak Samaj.

Sample Size

A stratified sample of 11 kshetras which started work in October, 1958 was selected. The best projects in each selected Lok Karya Kshetra were also studied in some detail with a view to draw lessons from their working.

4. Reference Period

The data collected were related to the period from October, 1958 and onwards.

5. Main Findings

1. The Lok Kerya Kshetras worker had broad understanding of the objectives of the programme but they put emphasis between the various purposes some what differently than the national planners. At the national level, stress was laid on family production plan, resource development and food production. The workers put the emphasis on construction, health, education and local institutions in addition to agriculture.

2. While national planning put great emphasis on irrigation, that seemed to be the view of the Lok Kerya Kshetra workers too, the villagers placed roads as the first item in rural planning. Again, while villagers attached great importance to the supply of seeds, fertilizers and other aids to agricultural production, these items seemed to occupy quite a low position in the workers scale.

3. There was further divergence between the workers understanding of the programme and the plan of work drawn up by them. A good proportion of Kshetras had no settled plans and where some sort of planning had been done, propaganda and publicity, sanitation, construction and repair of roads figured more prominently than promotion of irrigation or food production. This was also reflected in the activities actually undertaken by the Lok Karya Kshetras in the areas studied. The Lok Karya Kshetras had been interested chiefly in the **construction** and repair of roads, digging of tanks and wells, sanitation work, digging of compost pits, strengthening of cooperatives and schools and distribution of milk.

4. While the working relations between the Lok Karya Kshetras and the C.D.. workers were satisfactory and they helped each other, when approached, the programmes of the two organisations were not coordinated and also the consultation-between them had not been put on a firm basis.

5. The link of the Karya Kshetras with intermediate units at the district and state level was weak.

6. In most Karyatshetras , the accounts were not properly kept and the monthly statements were not submitted regularly to the Central office.

7. Most centres suffered from time-lag between their creation and the selection and appointment of workers. No adequate arrangements were made for screening the candidates for the position of Sahyogies and up-sahyogies in all the centres studied except those Kendras where a regular

Board was constituted, posts were advertised and applications screened and the selected names sent to the Central Bharat Sevak Samaj for final approval.

8. In most cases, the Lok Karya Kshetra workers adopted the group approach which was considered to be a proper method of work for solving the problems of the Village Community.

9. Some Bharat Sevak Samaj Centres had taken up commencial activities such as running fair price shops **with a view to curb** profiteering and corrupt practices of intermediaries.

10. The data collected to assess the people's attitude revealed that a large majority of the respondents expressed their willingness to contribute their best, if Govt. helped them.

11. A little more than half the respondents reported that the work of the Bharat Sevak Samaj in their areas was successful. only about 17 per cent considered it very successful. 11 per cent were ignorant of it and about 19 per cent thought that it had failed. The villagers were more familier with the Lok Karya Kshetra workers than with the block staff, even though the block staff were regular government employees and were expected to work regularly in the villges.

6. Major Suggestions

1. More funds should be placed at the disposal of the workers of the Bharat Sevak Samaj in order to enable them to extend their cultural, recreational and publicity activities. More equipments e.g. cycles, first aid boxes etc should be provided to them. There should be better coordination between the Lok Karya Kshetras and official bodies, besides better selection and more intensive training of the workers and better remuneration for them. The Government should issue instructions to the officers and the workers of Community Development and other development departments to cooperate with them and keep them informed of their plans and programmes.

2. The Bharat Sevak Samaj was trying to undertake all programmes of benefit to the rural people. But the samaj had neither the personnel nor other resources for such a comprehensive undertaking. The workers also did not possess the technical know how required in various fields e.g. agriculture, sanitation etc. In view of the above limitations the Lok Karya Kshetra should concentrate on programmes of rural welfare which could be undertaken successfully through public participation.

3. There should be close coordination between the activities of the Block organisation and the Lok Karya Kshetras. Lok Karya Kshetras after preparing their yearly programme of action should discuss it with the Block,Development Committee.

4. The Bharat Sevak Samaj workers suggested more publicity, propoganda, more cultural shows and greater association of village leaders.

5. The links **at the state and the district level between** the Central Bharat Sevak Samaj in New Delhi and the Lok Karya Kshetra in the villages should be created, strengthened to provide the Lok Karya Kshetras with some guidance at close quarters and some supervision of the working of the committees.

6. The Lok Karya Kshetra should explore local sources of income to meet their needs and rely on the Government for marginal aid only.

7. While the Lok Karya Kshetras must enjoy a certain amount of latitude in respect of the use of their resources, they should keep their account properly in order to prevent misuse of funds, and avoid raising suspicion.

8. Lok Karya Kshetra should not undertake commercial enterprises like running of fair price shops.

9. Lok Karya Kshetras should enjoy the freedom to adopt the technique and the approach best suited to the area where it was located. only some broad principles should be recommended for general guidance.