

Guidelines for village adoption

A. Criteria for selecting villages for adoption:

1) Accessibility:

- i) should be connected by public transport.
- ii) the timings of the transport should be such that students could visit the village during working days.
- iii) the time taken for travel should leave enough hours for work during term time.
- iv) the village could also be at a walkable distance.

2) Need:

- i) The village should be relatively backward economically.
- ii) the village should not be relatively well provided with government facilities.
- iii) the village populace should be primarily engaged in agriculture.
- iv) no other agency should have adopted the village for development purposes.

3) Co-operation:

- i) the village populace and authorities should be willing to help with the work.
- ii) the district/government authorities should be willing to help with the work in the particular village.
- iii) the village youth must be willing to associate with the work.

Having selected a village, the following things could be done:

Step I Contact the head-man/village elder and put the proposal to him. Only if he is enthusiastic and willing to help would the effort be worthwhile.

Step II - If the headman is agreeable then a preliminary survey should be carried out to gauge the needs of the village as also to record some fundamental information about the area. The questionnaire circulated for the purpose could form a part of any such survey.

Step III After collecting the requisite data, the members of the unit should get together with the village authorities and villagers and discuss the problems. As a result of such a discussion the Programme Officer should draw up a list of needs, in order of priority, of the village.

NOTE: Perhaps one effective way of getting the village folk together is to organise, in an evening, a cultural function where students from the unit and local youth could entertain the village folk. Before or after the show the Programme Officer and the students could address the gathering.

Step IV Having got a list of priorities, the Programme Officer, some members of the unit and some villagers should discuss these with the district authorities. They should, accordingly, work out some projects in which, as far as possible, the district authorities and other agencies could co-operate. A list of some of the possible projects is given below:

(1) Land Reforms

- (a) Identification and demarcation of village common and forest lands.
- (b) Explaining and teaching improved agricultural practice to those who have recently been allotted land.
- (c) Legal aid to the rural poor.

(2) Non- Formal Education and Recreation

- (a) Educational survey for literacy and education in the adopted villages.
- (b) Initiating literacy programme - to be continued with indigenous resources.

- (c) Use of mass media for instruction and recreation,
- (d) Rural libraries.
- (e) Rural and indigenous sports.
- (f) Organisation of Youth Clubs.

(3) Better Environment

- (a) Planning better environment in the villages.
- (b) Environmental sanitation and disposal of garbage - composting.
- (c) Construction of roads, village streets and drains.
- (d) Provision of safe drinking water-supply.
- (e) Rodent control and pest management.
- (f) Construction of houses in a planned manner - use of local material to keep costs low.

(4) Afferestation and Tree Plantation

- (a) Prevention of soil erosion.
- (b) Soil conservation works.
- (c) Creation of tree consciousness among the community.
- (d) Establishment and nurturing of nurseries.
- (e) Plantation of trees.
- (f) Weed control
- (g) Preservation and upkeep of trees.

(5) Economic Development

- (a) Work with Cooperative Societies in villages so as to streamline their functioning and make them effective for the rural peer.
- (b) Assistance to the Cooperative Societies in processing their proposals for obtaining bank loans.

(c) Soil testing and soil health-care.

(d) Assistance in the repair of agricultural machinery.

(6) Family and Child-care

(a) Integrated Child Development Programme.

(b) Nutrition and child-care.

(c) Mass immunisation.

(d) Primary health care work.

As soon as the projects are decided upon, please inform the University so that it could offer all possible help.

Step VI Having selected the projects, the details should be worked out and responsibilities designated. Three or four days a week should be earmarked for members of the unit to visit the village. As the members can be sent on rotation, each member might not have to visit the village more than twice a week. The work should be started at once and efforts should be made to solicit all possible help and co-operation.