

REVIEW OF THE SOCIETY FOR INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE HIMALYAS [SIDH], Musoorie.

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Date :

1.0. Introduction

A team consisting of Dr. [Ms] A. S. Desai, Consultant for the review and Mr. Mukund Gorakshkar, Program Officer, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, visited the Society for Integrated Development of the Himalayas [SIDH] from October 30th to November 2nd. Although the team reached only in the afternoon of October 30, a few hours were usefully spent in presentations by the Director of SIDH and some members of his team. On the following two full days and one half day, the programme included.

1. Further presentations by members of the team at Kempty, the campus location which is about 40 minutes from Mussoorie.
2. Interaction with participants of Sanmati.
3. Interaction with participants of Sanjeevani.
4. Visit to a primary school at Gharkhet.
5. Discussion at Kempty with school teachers and Balwadi teachers.
6. Final meeting with Director and Secretary.

2.0 About the programme

Briefly, Pawan Gupta, the Director, explained the circumstances and philosophy in the establishment of SIDH. Both he and his wife, Ms. Anuradha Joshi, Secretary, SIDH, came to Mussorie to pursue research in Vipassana. Early during their stay, they met a village Pradhan who persuaded them to start a school for their children. He also brought four local boys who had studied till Standard X and could teach Primary schools. Then they met Bunker Roy of Tilonia, Rajasthan, who suggested to them to apply to the Save the Children Fund. This was the beginning of a 10 year partnership in which 5 Schools, 3 balshalas and 13 balwadis were established. The organization established the schools in those locations where the government did not have primary schools. People in the hills live in villages of small size with anywhere from 15 to 60 families. Children have to cross long distances to access the schools which is particularly difficult for the younger primary school children. Not only did they start 5 schools in such locations, some in very inaccessible areas away from the road, but they also upgraded some balwadis to include classes 1 and 2 where there was particular hardship in accessing government primary schools for children of that age. These are known as balshalas. The basic philosophy of Vipassana is also applied in these schools, balshalas and balwadis to enhance children's sensitivity and concentration.

They also undertook programmes of Mahila Samakhya. Later on, they took up other programmes including the introduction of biogas. In 1995-96, they were offered a water project of the World Bank. However, they felt impelled to reject the offer, after considerable examination, as it would have been very inequitable for smaller villages, located higher up in the mountains, as it would have involved lifting water greater distances with fewer users who would have had to bear the same percentage of costs as those in larger villages. They suggested that the full costs could be shared by all the villages together on the basis of average costs which was not negotiable by the World Bank. This led them to review what they were doing and to rethink their areas of thrust.

Their discussions led them to think that they had spread out in too many activities and they were, therefore, lacking in focus. After a period of reflection with the entire team of SIDH, it was decided that they should retain their focus on education and training and should select all activities which related to these twin areas.

They kept hearing that children who went to school did not want to be involved in traditional jobs. Hence, they decided to focus on adolescents and youth to help reflect on the local situation, their own attitudes, their perception of the desirable and the need to correct these

perceptions in the light of facts. They worked with both male and female youth groups as also with their own school and balwadi workers. On the issue of gender, they felt that unless they could influence the men, sensitizing women alone would be insufficient. Hence, they started a training programme on gender issues for men which was based on a research carried out by them on gender and reproductive health. Concepts of justice were also brought into the programmes with the adolescents and youth. Based on the work they did with youth, the idea of the programme of Sanmati took shape and then a larger programme of Sanjeevani.

All the programmes are conceived on their underpinning philosophies of Vipassana and Mahatma Gandhi. None of their programmes are project driven. They are first conceived by the team and then funding is sought by them.

3.0 Terms of Reference

3.1 Governance and Leadership

The SIDH has an Executive Board as the apex body. The persons are selected on the basis of their ability to make specific contribution to the activities. One of them is the past Director of Education of U. P. Others are

Chartered Accountants, one is from IPS (ex Chief of Intelligence Bureau) and the other is a Journalist, and those in business. They are persons known to the Director and Secretary. Although the Chartered Accountant's father's firm audits the accounts, he himself has a separate firm. In any case, now they have appointed new auditors after NOVIB'S comments on such separation. They also plan to appoint new members of the Board who could give policy directions to their work.

The institution has its head office in Mussoorie but its campus is located in Kempty where it has a centre. It houses one elementary [middle] school [of classes VI – VIII] to be upgraded till Class VIII next year [the only one of its kind in their setup as all others are up to class V]. Originally, they had intended to start another centre at Dehradun. They found a good piece of land of 11 acres for Rs. 18.00 lakhs and had planned to house Sajeevani programme there. They had also recruited an ex-vice chancellor of a university in Kumaon to run it. However the arrangement with him did not work out. Hence, they decided not to buy the land. Instead, they bought a plot of land adjacent to the Kempty campus for Rs. 6.00 lakhs. They are using what is remaining from the Rs.16.50 lakhs remaining donation, for construction. This work is now going on in their present campus. Sanjeevani and the elementary school will be housed in that building for the present. The dormitory will have to be in rented premises till the new campus is constructed. They will develop the campus on the newly developed land when they can obtain adequate funds for construction of this campus.

They regularly publish their annual report and accounts and hold meetings of the Society at which the progress of activities are reported by their senior staff. They hold very regular staff meetings. There is a Core Committee of the Director, the Secretary and the senior research staff, Sanjeevani teachers training staff, accounts person – in all 10 people. They review what has happened between the two meetings, plan for the period ahead and make policy decisions.

The organisers have a clear perception of the vision of the organisation and this is a shared perception since it has evolved through dialogue and discussion among the project staff. The aim is to come up with an alternate paradigm for development. The method used is to develop open dialogue with various thinkers and activists as also the local community. Activities are of long and short duration to that end. They want to create a place and a space for a forum to open up such dialogue through Sanjeevani and Sanmati, seminars for research scholars, and seminars for various groups on themes related to education, gender and issues in development. They would like to take the essence of Gandhian thought to the universities. They undertake research which bring out the confusions and contradictions in people's thinking such as through a project they undertook in education. They are very clear that their work should not only deal with access but also with quality, which they are doing through the schools and the balwadis. Through Raibar, a magazine, a forum is provided to project their ideas and to give space for dialogue.

3.2 Human Resource

The organisation has developed a local based team for all their programmes, but for Sanjeevani the recruitment of two staff members was through advertisement. The local team is large as it has recruited all the balwadi and school teachers from the villages. The school teachers are usually recruited from a neighboring village as the local youth do not carry adequate authority. However, balwadi teachers are from the same village. They take both men and women as school teachers. Many of the women are unmarried but continue to work because of their involvement but more so because of their changed perceptions of themselves which makes it difficult to select local life partners. The staff is encouraged to enrol in open schools and in open university so as to upgrade their qualifications. This has been a great success as was evident in our discussion with them.

There is no formal letter of contract issued to the staff. The teachers are given periodic training to equip them for their position. The balwadi teachers are given pre-job training. In the case of teachers, pre-job training has been difficult as they suddenly have to fill a vacancy. However, the supervisor and colleagues help them in the first instance.

There is one male supervisor for the schools. He was earlier a teacher in one of their schools. He is not local but is from Tehri. The

supervisor for the balwadis is a woman. She too was a teacher in one of their balwadis and was later identified to become a supervisor. The organisation has developed a practice of identifying experienced staff from the organisation, who have the necessary potential to become supervisors. Both made presentations and were found to have a good grasp of their roles and the perception of the programme.

All the staff has medical leave which is salary reimbursement for actual days of leave up to 15 days in a year. They get all the statutory holidays, Sundays, two Saturdays in a month and 30 days paid leave. For the supervisory staff, the leave is for 45 days as the nature of their work requires them to work even on several Sundays in the year.

The positions and salaries are given in the Appendix –1. They have a salary structure in which there is no separate DA component. There are no fixed salary increases, which are given based on assessment of performance. There is HRA which varies with salary. They have their systems for retirement benefits. One group is on a system of insurance by which payment is done both by SIDH and the concerned person. The others are on provident fund at 13.61 per cent. This is a good practice because NGOs generally tend to neglect this matter for their staff.

For Sanjeevani, the project staff includes one person who is already with them and two new persons, one of whom is a college principal and the other has a specialisation in yoga. All of them have a Master's degree.

In fact, the uniqueness of this NGO is that it promotes education among its staff besides having it as their focus for work. Several whom we talked to were either doing their graduation or their master's degree. This was very much appreciated by the visiting team. Almost all have upgraded their qualification after joining SIDH.

3.3 Finances

Books of accounts are the same for all sponsors but if a sponsor requires a separate account, the items can be lifted from the ledger entry. They have Balance Sheet and Income/Expenditure Accounts but they also intend to have Receipts / Payments as per NOVIB's suggestion. The loans given for the purchase of the land have been subsequently made into donations.

The corpus at present is around Rs. 3.50 lakhs. They intend to put it in proper securities. They received a low interest rate because their investment went down during the slump. I suggested that they get the list

of companies from the Charity Commissioner, where investments are permitted so that, they can earn better interest. They have put some funds now in HUDCO. As for donations to the corpus, I suggested that they have a printed letter which would only require signature, date and address of donor so as to facilitate record of such corpus donations for purpose of income tax.

Administrative costs which include administrative staff salaries, and those of supervisors, is 20% - 22% atmost. In case of Dorabji Tata Trust supported projects it is only 20%.

There is a stock register but reconciliation has not been done periodically which they plan to do. However, they do have a separate ledger for their assets / items of capital expenditure.

There is a three page manual for accounting procedures and a table fixing budget and persons empowered to approve. [see Appendix 2] I suggested that this may be discussed with Mr. Batliwalla, Secretary and Chief Accountant of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, when he visits them. They could profitably use his experience in organising their accounting procedures. This could include method of approval and sanction for expenditure by various persons, who have to spend on various programmes, such as supervisors.

Their major problem is to sustain their activities through assured income. They intend to bring up their income to around Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 lakhs to give them a minimum income of around Rs. 50,000/-. From their additional land, they also hope to earn by raising some crops, or at least be able to use them for about two months of the year in their own mess. Their programme staff are also now in demand as consultants to other organisations. They want to work out a system, by which they would get some percentage of the fee for their corpus. **Corpus is an area which requires attention if their work is to be sustained.** It is a general problem of the NGO sector.

3.4. **Programme Management**

3.4.1 **Programme Planning**

Programme planing normally commences from the ideas which develop in the Core Committee. Generally, one of the team members works at the proposal.

3.4.2. **Preparation of the Budget**

Budget is prepared as per previous experience and allocations in discussion with the Director. However, their budget preparation is only for the current year, so that, one cannot take a view of the liabilities for the

following year as per standard practice. Hence, they have been requested to do so even if they do not know the source of income for certain programmes, as, then, their deficit areas would become clearer and the full budget understood. The columns suggested are :

1. Actual Accounts of Previous Year. [Expenditure]
2. Budget allocation for current year. [Expenditure]
3. a] Progress: Amount spent till date [Expenditure]
b] Progress : Amount remaining. [Expenditure]
4. Budget for next year. [Expenditure and possible sources of income]

3.4.3. Programme Implementation

For each activity, there is one programme head who is responsible for the activity including its expenditure, supervision, training activity and monitoring – as also feedback to the Core Committee. Each of them appears to be well in command of the situation and knows his / her job. The head of Sanjeevani is new and will need time to fully take the responsibility but he is an experienced Principle of a College and should not have any difficulty. The general feeling I get is that they have a well

organised set up and each person has his / her defined duties. Besides the programme personnel, there is one lady in charge of the kitchen and the hostels.

The chart is enclosed in the appendix showing the organisation setup.

3.4.4. Programme Monitoring

The Core Committee meets every month to review the progress. Prior to it, cluster meetings are held by the Supervisors at the field level with the concerned staff. The supervisor for schools also attends the Village Education Committee Meeting. Feedback is also received from the various Dals. Thus, the routine activities are regularly monitored. The balwadi teachers have a work book in which they write about the progress of their work and also observations on each child. These are reviewed by the supervisor. The Save the Children fund has also conducted an independent review of activities funded by them which is very positive.

For Sanjeevani programme, weekly meetings are held to discuss programme, resource persons, changes required, and also discuss each participant's progress. It was suggested by me that they could do a before / after study to see the changes that have been effected. Also, at the

outset, the participants could write an essay on what they had heard about the course, why they wanted to join it, what they think they will be learning from it [their perceptions] and what they expect as outcome from the course. It could be done twice again – once before they leave for vacation and then at the end to see the change as also to get the feedback. Lastly, a simple evaluation form for the course could be created with mostly the yes / no type of responses. It could be anonymous.

The question of sending a monitoring team from the Trust for the courses, Sanjeevani and Sanmati, was discussed. They felt that it would very much depend on the type of persons selected. I believe that a team of three persons could be set up by the Trust, in consultation with SIDH, so that the persons selected are mutually acceptable.

3.5 Proess Management

There is excellent communication in the entire team on the goals to be achieved and the values to be communicated to the participants of all their programmes from balwadi children to adults. The philosophy of the institution is the focus of all its activities. All the staff have participated once at least in the Vipasana course outside. Some go of their free will again on their own. The ideology of Gandhi is not in externals, such as

wearing khadi, but more on his emphasis on the deprived sections of society and on the type of development model to be nurtured.

Decision making is team based with the Core Committee playing a major role but feedback coming from below which provides the basis for decision making. In the foregoing section, under monitoring, the feedback mechanism has already been explained. Management seems to be very much by team approach.

3.6.1 Inter-Institutional Linkage

Some reciprocal activities with other organisations have taken place. SIDH is also playing a consultation role in the U.P. State Government in DPEP as they are represented on their committee. They are also in demand as teachers at various fora. They have provided inputs in the training of forest officers on watershed development, trained ICDS workers and trained ICDS trainers. However, the Government of U.P. expected them to train without adequate reimbursement of actual costs so they could not continue. They are not a part of any formal NGO network nor do they presently work with the government system directly to impact on it such as in the area of education. Their emphasis is on quality in the development of their programmes. Hence, while they do excellent work and also have high creditability, it does not impact on a larger frame.

Two areas were suggested to them :

- 1.a) Undertake work in the block (Jaunpur) government schools after working out a MOU with the Government. The experience of working with Municipal Corporation Schools in Mumbai was cited.

OR

- b) Take up some government schools on a grant – in – aid basis.

With the tremendous expertise developed, as also materials, they could undertake a wider impact on the system itself.

2. After some experience with Sanjeevani, run courses for NGOs, who would like to run similar programmes by training their trainers. Thus, some replication of their experience could take place across the country.
3. Undertake periodic programmes for ex-Sanmati participants to develop a network of youth who could initiate various activities in their areas.

4.0 Approach to Education and Training

[This section will only deal with schools and balwadis. The content is based on the briefing session with the Supervisor, the on-site visit of a school, followed by a meeting with the teachers]

4.1 The Location

The area is very deprived. Migration is low because the organisation claims that migration occurs more in middle class families. Recently, there were 22 cholera induced deaths. Generally, the villages have 15 to 17 families. The families are, generally, joint and large. There may be 9 to 10 members, but others may be larger. It was observed by us that there were five to seven children per family. Men and Women work equally on the same job.

4.2 Schools

Each village panchayat has at least one primary school and bigger panchayats may have two. However, since the families are scattered in several villages forming a panchayat, the children do not have immediate access necessarily. There are Village Education Committees under the Panchayat Act but they are not effective.

SIDH started its schools in villages where there is no primary school and children have difficulty accessing one. The work started in 1989 and the emphasis has been on quality. They have 5 such schools. They started the balwadis as younger children caused disturbance to older children. They have 13 balwadis. Additionally, three balwadis are upgraded to balshalas by adding classes 1 and 2 after which the children are old enough to access the government primary school.

The basic syllabus is Hindi, English, and maths. They integrate teaching of history, geography, and science with language and maths. In class 3 and 4, they use the project method. For instance, the children find out about their village from the elders – history, crops, important trees, number of families, etc. They learn through it – history, geography and language. The subject for the project is finalized in the Core Committee. Teaching is multigrade but effective. They do not follow the government syllabus except in class 5 since they have to appear for Board examinations. They take from the syllabus classes I to IV what is pertinent. The stress is on relating learning to the child's environment, family, etc. It is also on creativity. When we visited, the children in classes 3 and 4 were writing poetry on food [bhojan], which they _____ to us. We were incredulous how they wrote such excellent poems on the spot. They also read a couple of essays. The children also gave a programme of dances and songs. One child from class 3 /4 played the

drum and one a tamborine [Khanjiri] with ease. Lastly all the children sang a song and the balwadi children, who were eager to be included, danced [freely as in the folk dance of the area]. The atmosphere of the school showed a lot of freedom for expression and school seemed to be a truly joyous experience.

The children are also given experience to develop initiative by organising their school activities such as morning assembly, cultural programmes, and keeping the school clean. In the morning assembly the children can put up items. The teachers take the role of being students, that is, equals with the children. In one instance, a teacher was not allowed to enter for being late! They were very independent and their faces showed freshness and relaxed expressions. The children's parents have been persuaded by the Head Teacher to buy school uniforms which they can wear in and out of school as the common dress.

The Supervisor, Mr. Shobhan, explained that, generally, the parents felt that the government syllabus was not relevant. As it does not reflect the local environment, the general message is to depreciate it as being of no importance. This is sought to be remedied by their syllabus. Secondly, they often heard from parents that educated children do not respect their parents. That is why they structure the projects in such a way that they have to get information from their parents and village elders

which gives the message that they are also sources of knowledge even if illiterate.

Education is not rote learning. Therefore, the syllabus aims at helping understanding. A class 5 teacher described how he explained some problem in maths by using a stick and measuring on the ground. They believe that children should get ethics and value based learning. Vipasana is introduced to them in shorter periods of mediation.

During the season when maize achieves its fullness [main crop], the monkeys raid it and destroy the crops. That is when the children are pulled out of school to watch in the fields and, therefore, their attendance goes down. Therefore, during this period the school has introduced flexi-time. Attendance of children is above 80 per cent.

The test is 30% oral and 70% written. In the oral test, expression and the degree of confidence shown by the child are the focus. Open book written tests are permitted which allow them to think and write their answers instead of providing standard answers. Even the members of the School Committee participate in the tests.

In an annual medical examination, protein deficiency was identified because the families sell all the milk they produce. To ensure that they

drink milk, I suggested that each family be asked to send a glass of milk in a bottle, to drink during the mid-morning break. There is a School Education Committee of parents and others. We met the local doctor and a village elder who were members. Others were away at work. The Committee tries to resolve problems such as of space, manages the school, assesses the items required, monitors the school teachers' presence. The school runs for 6 hours a day and holiday is only one month in contrast to government schools. If the teacher is absent, the salary is cut and placed in the school's account which is with the Committee. The teachers' salaries are also transferred to the bank account of the School Committee which pays the teachers. Periodic meetings are held with parents and decisions jointly taken. Fees charged are Rs. 6 for Class I and they progressively increase till Class 5. They do not have any fees for balwadis which run three hours a day.

To sustain the schools, there has arisen the need for a corpus. They are promised Rs. 36.00 lakhs by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, of which, Rs. 18.00 lakhs has already been released and the rest will be released on their raising 25 per cent of the amount. However, the major problem is that the Trust wants to deposit the amount with each village committee while the needs of the schools keep changing with, at times, population of children increasing in one place and decreasing in another. Therefore, the schools need funds as per their requirements from year to year. Hence, a

common corpus needs to be established at SIDH. This matter needs to be discussed with the Trust.

They give the best teacher award on March 29th, which is the Foundation Day of SIDH. It includes teachers from government schools. There is a problem with these teachers because they have recognised qualifications for teaching while SIDH teachers, though not formally trained, have their in-house training. Hence, the government teachers think they are better qualified. However, they acknowledge that the children from SIDH schools come better prepared and do much better in their middle schools than those from government primary schools, at least at the entry point. However, it is SIDH's observation that the children are so much better prepared that they find no challenge, and exert less and, ultimately, lose their initial edge over the other children in the higher classes. They also do not like the unstimulating atmosphere of the government schools. There is much pressure from the villages to increase the classes to middle / high school. The village visited by us was building a school as they were located in the panchayat premises and there was pressure to move. One class was in the open under a plastic sheeting roof. The building had come up to the walls but they needed Rs. 1.00 lakh more to complete it, especially to raise the roof. The Trust may consider it, if within its scope, or give funds through the J.R.D. and Thelma Tata Trust. The village is in the hills and for several months, the kachcha road,

utilisable only by hardy Jeeps, was blocked by a landslide. It has few means of raising funds of its own.

As teachers are local, most of them had worked for 7 to 8 years and appeared to have learnt the method SIDH was espousing. They were young and enthusiastic. It was suggested to them that the charts they make could be less complicated, with more pictures and less writing. Children's art work could be displayed on the walls, and teaching materials, developed by teachers could be displayed on shelves, and reachable by the children.

4.3 Balwadis [feedback from the meeting with balwadi teachers]

The balwadi programme is for three hours and a detailed content has been developed for the teachers. The areas covered are general knowledge / awareness, numeracy and language, environment education and involvement in cleanliness of self and the balwadi. The children are taught through dialogue and play-way. For example, language learning can be through a topic on environment such as water – from where do we get water? What are the uses of water? How should drinking water appear? What happens if we drink dirty water or water which has not been covered? Thus, children develop awareness of environment, good habits, and also learn language.

Teachers use songs and poetry. Often they make up their own songs and poems to convey the knowledge related to child's life. They use painting, drawing, and handicrafts, not only for self-expression but also to reinforce the concept taught e.g. if it is water, the drawing can be on rain or handicraft can be to make paper boats.

The Montessori sensorial method is used. Instead of ready-made apparatus, locally available materials are utilised e.g. sticks, stones, tins etc. to teach size, shape, colours, threading, tying, etc. Children are taught to pick up and put back what they use to reinforce habit formation.

The day starts with prayers. Vipasana is practiced through teaching children to be silent and then asking them to say what sounds they heard. Sometimes, the teacher uses hand clapping or finger clicking, loud and soft. They also provide a slot for free play. There is a doll's corner. I suggested they have a corner with either picture books made by the teacher as a scrap book or as cards to encourage, as the first step, in reading. Out-door play is also encouraged, including making things with mud.

The total approach, like the school, is to relate the child's learning to the environment, to develop creativity and initiative in the children, and to learn through play.

5.0 Yuvak, Yuvati and Mahila Dals

These could not be discussed at length due to shortage of time. The discussion revealed that these activities were also focused on conveying values and discussing issues. Earlier activities such as smokeless chulahs and bio-gas had been implemented. With male youth, a programme on gender and reproductive health was held preceded by a research on it. Totally, 250-300 youth benefited from it.

A Jyoti Manch of women balwadi teachers and school teachers of SIDH has also been formed. In discussions, many of their own problems as women in the traditional family structure, have come to the fore.

In their annual report for 1997-98, page 19, they bring out the issues taken up with the Jyoti Manch and, in turn, with the Mahila Dals such as self-esteem, leadership, intra-gender sensitivity, self identity, etc. and it was done using songs and dances, role play around themes such as gender discrimination e.g. birth of a daughter. They also had group interaction of mothers-in-law with daughters-in-law which led to much introspection.

Workshops have been held for women which included local issues such as developing revenue land for forests, legal literacy, government schemes for women. March 8th is celebrated with a Mahila Mela which is gaining in

popularity. SIDH's work with women and girls is based on providing a means for sensitising them on gender issues and on developing skills to deal with their situation. Support to SIDH in this sphere can be crucial for this isolated region of the country.

SIDH has been trying to articulate its own perceptions on the women's issues. They may still need to work on it especially to understand the issue of patriarchy and its relationship to the nature of women's status and exploitation. I suggested to them that they may have some interaction with one of the leading persons among feminist thinkers who could help them to develop a perspective relating it to the specific local situation. SIDH has potential to do considerable work among women and adolescent girls. They have no separate funds for it. If they develop an appropriate project proposal, JRD and Thelma J. Tata Trust could consider funding it.

6.0 Sanjeevani and Sanmati : Education for Youth

6.1 Tracing the Development of the concept of Sanjeevani and Sanmati

The SIDH team had been observing the behaviour of youth. They found that the youth do not want to help in the home or in family occupation, they behave rudely, spend money. They felt that if so much change could come in their own young staff, it should be possible to do so in the youth. They were youth alienated from their rural environment but also could not find a niche for

themselves in urban life. In 1996, the SIDH staff undertook a strategic planning workshop (referred to earlier) at which they concluded that they should focus on education. They were already working with children and they should, therefore, move to work with youth.

A paper on Rural Management School was produced and used as a basis for consultation with others. A workshop was also held in Kasauni on "Rethinking the New Order - Gandhi and Beyond".

The concern was with the compartmentalised method of education while, in life, knowledge cannot be compartmentalised. Issues in science were also not questioned such as the effects of the use of fertilizers. Hence, they felt that education of youth needed to help them to question what was happening and to develop their analytical and decision making skills. They should also take active role in community development and preservation of their environment for which they needed to be politically aware in the context of their area. They needed to develop self-confidence and consider their options for the future.

They began to work with the local youth initially, once in 15 days or a month, and discussed local issues. They developed youth groups and held some cluster level meetings. They found that when they invited a larger number of youth for a few consecutive days, they were more effective. They began to hold camps for three days for the youth. The module on men's participation in

women's reproductive health was tried out. It was a four day programme with one day on reproductive health and three days on other issues. This was tried out on 350 youth using unconventional methods such as using an advertisement to obtain their perceptions. They found that "modern" was equated to being "civilized" and, consequentially, "urban".

They also undertook a detailed study of youth in Mussoorie and the villages and concluded that their target group was middle class rural youth who were prone to migration to cities but, generally, found themselves at the bottom of the ladder there. Youth from villages, working and studying in Mussoorie, yielded useful data on such youth.

From these experiences, the SIDH team decided on two programmes one of one week and one of a longer duration covering the 16 to 24 age group. Sanmati had older persons also as it included employed persons who could not have come for a longer course. They tested out some of their ideas by running short courses (Sanmati). They decided that the longer course would not be like the one at ITIs. It would not be specifically employment oriented but rather courses which would give youth opportunity to rethink about themselves, society and through a process of reflection and analysis, decide their own future. However, they would be given some management skills which would be common to various opportunities for self-employment.

So far, they have undertaken 4 courses of Sanmati with 106 participants. They are in touch with 25 participants who are returning for further courses of Sanmati since each time they take up very different issues. Change in self and the community are their focus. Some of the Sanmati ex-participants have set up a group called Astha to work on the victims of a local landslide to enable their rehabilitation.

They decided that Sanmati, as a short course, was useful for the working youth and Sanjeevani, a longer course for youth who were either studying but could do so along with the course and for those neither studying nor employed. They believe that their research data showed that those engaged at marginal levels of subsistence fully involved their children and youth in the family occupation and, therefore, they would not be free to attend the course. However, the "middle class" youth in families owning sufficient land and cattle, released their youth for education who, later, did not return to their villages. SIDH team felt that if some of these youth could return to their villages, after their course, they could become role models.

They decided against having coeducational courses as they wanted to put all their energies into the development of the course and not deflect them on problems which may arise in handling relationships between the two sexes present on the campus. However, women are admitted to the Sanmati courses.

6.2 Curriculum of Sanjeevani

6.2.1 Objectives of the Course

- (1) Overall objective is to prepare responsible citizens capable of understanding the major trends in the world which affect the country.
- (2) Develop capacity for decision making to play a leadership role in society, to develop a person capable of thinking and arriving at a decision based on analysis of the situation.
- (3) Develop a sensitive human being who respects others and the environment.
- (4) Develop willingness to work with the hands and develop appropriate skills.
- (5) Develop self-confidence in their physical and mental activities.

6.2.2 Approach

As explained to us, the approach is from self to village to Uttarkand, and further on to society and the nation. Analysis should be of positives and negatives. They believe that the negatives tend to be more stressed which, then, by-pass the positives. Decision-making develops self-confidence. The belief is in "vivek jagrata", that is, develop intellect, wisdom, ethics. As tools for analysis, language, maths and logic are needed, but it is ideology

which underlines that analysis. Hence, the individual must develop a philosophy of life.

Another concept underpinning the curriculum is of "atmanirbharta", self-reliance, which is a group concept as the individual cannot be truly self-reliant. Part of self reliance is being economically self-reliant. Hence, they teach management principles as a means to develop projects, which would permit self-employment.

Relationships should be healthy with others e.g. of trust. There should be gratitude shown for what one receives by responding with one's actions e.g. protection of the environment because environment gives so much.

The ability to analyse socio-political-economic realities is through such social thinkers as Gandhi, Marx, Lohia, Plato.

It is also essential to promote creativity through creative literature and the arts. Hence, a magazine is one way to provide this outlet besides cultural activities on Sundays.

6.2.3. Time-Table

The time-table for weekdays, from Monday to Friday, is the same.

Saturday and Sunday it is different. On Saturday, they have a music session, guest lectures, village visit, to make relationship, do mapping,

obtain demographic data, details on customs and traditions. These visits are after lunch. On Sundays, the programme is cultural and games mostly in the evenings.

The weekly schedule, from Monday to Friday, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m., is as follows :

6.00 Wake up and get ready.

6.30 Shramadaan – cleaning the campus and brick making (cement bricks), agriculture (they have started on a small plot where their rental hostel is situated, road maintenance, etc.

7.30 Classes : dhyan, sanskrit mantras, slokas, yoga.

9.00 Breakfast

9.30 Class : Language

10.30 Class : Maths

11.30 Class : Business Management

12.30 Library

1.30 Lunch

2.30 Class : written work

3.00 Free time, games, etc.

4.00 Tea

4.15 Discussion on socio-political thought.

5.15 Own school/college studies.*

7.00 Review of the day. (This is done by the students who appoint their own convener and two speakers).

8.00 Dinner

8.30 Write their diary, watch television, read newspaper, etc.

10.00 Bed-time

* (Large number are currently "private" students in school, at plus 12 level, and in colleges. The time slot is given to them to be able to keep up with their studies.)

6.2.4 Course Structure and Methodology

a) Language – Hindi

Jitendra, the language teacher, believes that his first task is to untie them from the past as, at an unconscious level, Hindi language is depreciated in relation to English. Partly, also, because it is the mother-tongue, they do not think that they have to learn it. Therefore, they do not write it correctly and make mistakes, sometimes because of the carelessness in treating what is familiar. To help them become conscious of it, he take a story and deliberately introduces mistakes which are common. He finds that the exercise given to them to correct it is very useful in bringing home to them their own perception of the language at an unconscious level. Generally, he has to give it back to them several times before they have an adequate feedback of what they can do with the language.

He helps them develop a connection between language and thought. He has to change their mindsets, to give them information which breaks myths and stereotypes for which he uses simulation exercises such as

nine dots. He also makes it clear that the teacher is not all-knowing. He is willing to find out the answers to the questions raised by the students to which he does not have ready answers. This gives the message that one has to go to various sources of information to find it.

Education is a seeking for knowledge. The subject must arouse interest. To do so, the teacher gives exercises to write freely and bring to the class. He asks them to go and observe what is in the kitchen and write it down to increase their power of observation and ability to retain the images. They must learn to question and do their own thinking instead of expecting ready answers as they are used to getting in formal education. He uses stories and feels role models are necessary for reinforcement. They must understand the different meanings invested in words by various cultures. For example, the cow does not connote the same meaning in India as it does in the West such as in the Netherlands, a dairy and meat country. They must also understand that sourcing knowledge can be in different ways. They are also trying to make the courses interdisciplinary by all the course teachers attending one another's subjects.

The students are expected to write a diary. It is also used for improving their language. Group discussion, and presentations in the group, are other means. These are video taped and they, thus, get the feedback.

They are also making an audio-video library. As language is the key to talking, communication and new ideas, they want to emphasise language.

b) Mathematics and Logic

Jagmohan, who teaches the subject, made the presentation. As in the problem of Hindi as a language, the teacher felt that he had to break their negative perception as these subjects, generally, were not favoured by students. He had to arouse their interest in addition, multiplication, division, subtraction, fraction, ratio, volume, weights, area, angles, percentage, average, interest, estimation. He also teaches a few elementary things in geometry. The teaching is through practical demonstration and even stories. He teaches them problem-solving and logic.

c) Personality and Society

The social issues covered by the teacher, Jagmohan, are gender, caste, class, age and disability. (I suggested that he may add ethnicity). He discusses how people make their boundaries and uses a simulation game to highlight it (Johari Widows). He tries to help them to stretch their capacities as individuals, to increase positive thinking, increase observation, expression and awareness. He measures their individual

sensitivity by breaking them in pairs and asking each to express his/her thinking about the other person. He lays down the ground rule that whatever is said will not be carried outside the classroom. Each one is asked to give his positives and negatives. They tend more to highlight their negatives. He uses several exercises to develop self-awareness.

d) **Yoga, Meditation, Dhyan and Business Management**

Dr. Dubral teaches this subject. He has been newly recruited for the same. He believes that he has to develop in students self-confidence and self-esteem. They do shramdaan so that they understand that no job is small or big. All are the same. While they may have done it at home for the family, in the institution they do so for others. The work has to be done with attention and observation to details like any other work.

Vipassana is used as a tool to change old patterns. Yoga is taught, both for personality development and mental health, as much as for physical health. He teaches them to maintain bodily cleanliness through bathing, nose cleaning by passing water from one nostril to the other, drinking water and emitting it, etc. he also teaches stretching exercises and those for the nervous system for relaxation. Various asanas are taught.

e) **Business Management**

There is no attempt to give skills related to a specific business. They are taught the generic skills of management such as understanding the socio-economic environment, developing a proposal for funding, keeping accounts, etc. Brick making and the on-going construction on the campus are utilised as example.

6.3 Fees :

The fees charged are from Rs.2500/- for those sponsored by NGOs to Rs.5000/-. A few are accepted free.

6.4 Discussion with the Participants

The students were asked what their expectations were for the course and how they actually found it. The students were very enthusiastic about the course. They feel that they were gaining a great deal of knowledge. They felt that, as students in the traditional school/college system, they got education (shiksha) but not knowledge [vidya]. It was narrowly constructed and, at times, only for a job. There is neither creativity released in them nor actual sympathy for students needs is shown by the system. Tuition has become a racket and the teachers penalise them if tuitions are not taken from the subject teacher. They know nothing about their roots through such education.

Several students thought they would be learning computers as a skill but were not disappointed that there is very little focus on it. Because their teachers work with them, shoulder to shoulder, they do not feel embarrassed to do manual labour. In fact, their teachers live on the same campus and they have developed a very close relationship with them. There is a great deal of equality between students of all ages and the teachers. This is very different from the atmosphere in their formal educational institutions. One of them said that, at the beginning, he did not like the course. Later he found the atmosphere on the campus better than in his school. He enjoys it now.

The students were asked why they came and what they expected to do when they left. Several of them spoke about their aimlessness, tension at times with the family, and lack of interest in what they were doing. One of them said that he felt he had "lived like an animal and now he feels human". He used to spend his time wandering around much to the displeasure of his family.

Regarding their future, most of them did not have a clear idea what they would like to do with their lives or what they could pursue. Most of them felt very idealistic and expressed a change in their personalities. They felt they had become different persons and would not be recognised by their

friends and members of the family. They also wanted to do some work to better the society in which they lived. Probing showed that they did not know what or how but had understood why they should do it. Some of them showed a keeness to do something with youth especially those on the margins of society.

Dr. Mittal expressed a need to continue longer into a 2 year course. I suggested that they should return, after feeling the field realities, for 2 or 3 months programmes. Hence, it would be a sandwich type programme.

6.5 My Observations on the Sanjeevani Programme

There is a great deal of thought and effort that has gone into the programme. They have been discussing it for a long time but took the plunge only when Ms. Tara Sabavala, Program Executive, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, encouraged them to begin. They were very appreciative of it and felt that they were learning much more through the feedback. The students' responses were also very encouraging and showed considerable satisfaction. The participants could not suggest changes or modifications in the course.

To further increase the capacity of the course to meet the needs of youth, and particularly rural youth, the following points were discussed by me :

- 1) A major objective of the course is to keep the youth to their rural roots and, at the same time, to develop them and their perceptions of self and the wider society to become contributors to society, and to develop self-esteem as persons who belonged to the agricultural and rural sector of our society. However, there was no context in the syllabus which would give them a sense of pride that this sector also had a very significant knowledge base which they could usefully take back to their families and help improve the quality of their life, particularly, through better management of agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as gain information on soil and water management, forestry and wild life management, agro-services, etc. As they were from farming families, they did not need so much hands-on-experience as much as exposure to ideas and environment – friendly techniques. They could also visit the laboratories at the Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar. It would kindle their desire to acquire more knowledge as also to improve their traditional occupation. They would understand that "modern" does not mean urbanisation and a great deal of modernisation was possible in the rural sector. This would enhance their knowledge with greater potential for livelihood as they already had the basic capital of land and animals.

SIDH had invited Pant University team and they are to come, but the idea of a continuing lecture series had not occurred to them. The Director showed a keen desire to implement it right away. They were also suggested to bring audio-visual films on these issues from a variety of available sources.

- 2) To make the business management course more application oriented, they were suggested to take up, as a symbolic exercise, any rural oriented project, such as a cooperative dairy or setting up an agro-service, and help the students work out a proposal for funding and how it would be implemented. They could go to outside sources to collect information. They should also be exposed to the organisations which could finance their proposals, how to fill out their forms, etc. As majority of the participants were young, they were not likely to utilise this information immediately as running an enterprise required some experience. Hence, some exposure at this stage was adequate for arousing their interest rather than fully acquiring skills. They are teaching them to develop proposals and inviting the bank manager to speak to them. They have plans to run a bakery which, they think, will give practical experience and also a way to earn their living for those who live on the fringes of Mussoorie, as revealed by their market survey.

- 3) The youth were raring for action in their local communities, and especially with youth. However, there is very little input on the what and how, while the emphasis is on why in analysing the socio-political realities, which provokes their thinking. This fires the imagination of the youth to take action. Frustration would set in with endless analysis and no action to follow. They need to channelise this awakened energy into realistic activity which they could undertake along with the youth and the village community. They need training in leadership and skills in working with groups [group formation, group dynamics, group work skills] and the community. This could be a very useful input in their course as, at least some of the older youth could either start work on their own in their villages or attach themselves to a NGO. The participants' responses showed a keenness to bring about social change. Hence, working with youth groups and through these with the community, and leadership skills, need to be introduced.
- 4) The course could be enriched with some of these additional elements. Some reorganisation of time and content would be necessary. Developing a "sandwich" course could be of help as, after the full one year course, they could go out to gain field experience and, then, those who want further skills could return for two-three month courses, one after one year and the second after

six months. This would enable them to share their experiences in the field and to reflect and gain new understanding besides new knowledge inputs.

- 5) This programme has tremendous potential as it has very skilfully integrated personal development, societal perspectives with also helping the participants to appreciate and retain their roots. If the inputs, as suggested above, are integrated, they will be developing a very interesting and a model programme. In fact, its uniqueness lies in the fact that it has focus on attitude development undergirded by a philosophical base.
- 6) This programme and Sanmati essentially deal with literate youth from class VIII upwards and including college going youth. Hence, SIDH may think in the future how the youth, who never went to school, or dropped out early in their school years, can be reached. The organisers feel that they are too tied down to their life circumstances to spare the time. It was suggested that shorter programmes, during periods when they were less likely to be busy with the family work, could be considered. As their own philosophy was to reach "the least" among them, it was necessary to undertake this work, so that, they reach not only the middle class

rural youth, who would constitute the elite among them, but also the more disadvantaged.

- 7) It is possible to make this programme replicable if SIDH takes up the training of trainers from selected NGOs around the country. Such trainers may not require as long a period and the focus could be on the content and methodology of training. This may be done after three or four years when they have developed sufficient experience and stabilised the parameters of the activity.

7.0 Sanmati

7.1 Content

This is a short programme of seven days. There is a theme for each programme and it changes with each programme. This was the fifth programme SIDH was holding. As it was simultaneous with the Sajeevani programme, the two were integrated for three days so that resource persons and activities were the same. Several resource persons are invited to speak on the theme. When we were present, the son of the environmentalist, Sunderlal Bahuguna of the Chipko movement, was speaking. He is a specialist in the environment of the Himalayas and the North-East. He encouraged questions and the students raised some

queries. He spoke about forests and the need to retain indigenous species. He gave the example of the pine trees as foreign. He explained that it has no particular useful value as fodder or fruit and nothing grows under it. Such issues on environment and their relationship to rural needs are discussed.

The students also participate in the manual work, brick making, etc and have time for reviews as in the time-table of Sanjeevani. The major courses, offered in Sanjeevani, are not covered as these are short theme based programmes.

7.2 Discussion with Sanmati Participants

The programme had a fair number of those who had attended one or more earlier programmes of Sanmati. Hence, the discussion, held with them, was regarding the changes in them as they attended different programmes. Here again, one could see considerable enthusiasm, the need to return periodically, and the need to form a group of those who had attended such programmes to take forward their knowledge into practice.

To the query why they attended the course, there were various responses. One of them felt depressed as he did not feel he was achieving any purpose in life. A young girl participant felt she was never noticed at home

and felt marginalised. She never spoke out. Her sister encouraged her to attend. In another case, the father encouraged his son as he seemed to be at odds with himself. Some others felt that they had no focus in life. They were just drifting.

They appreciated the culture on the campus and the equality between students and organisers. They felt that the impact in the first course was to make them believe that everything outside in the world was wrong. Later they begin to sort out and relate the new information to the real world. They enhance their understanding of self and the family, developing much better relationships at home. It also has an impact on their dress as some of them begin to leave their pants and jeans and wear Indian and khadi style kurta/pyjamas.

There was a great desire to continue coming for the courses as they felt refreshed. They had expressed a need to form a special group and Astha was formed as an action group. Since they also want to come back to the campus, courses were suggested by me which could be more focused on practice of working with groups and the community as in the case of Sanjeevani, and tailored to those with previous exposure to Sanmati.

7.3 Observations on Sanmati Programme

1. This programme has also been received very enthusiastically. Its main aim is to impact on their attitudes. It is amazing that within a 7-day programme this is possible. How much the change is taking place at the thinking and feeling levels would be based on the feedback SIDH receives over a period of time.
2. In the first course, their imagination is fired as they are coming into contact with new knowledge which shakes up their past thinking. However, it could give rise to a sense of over-confidence that they could impact on society and family with such a short preparation. How this is to be handled may be examined by the organizers.
3. The fact that at least a fourth of them return for more courses may be examined to see whether specific short-term programmes could be started for them to give them leadership and social action skills.
4. Both in this course, and in Sanjeevani, students are given a specific point of view. While this is valid and can be openly stated as the institutional perspective, it is necessary to expose the students to several other points of view. This could be possible, for instance, through panel discussions in which persons represent different views so that the participants are

exposed to a wider range and can make up finally their own point of view since the institution's avowed aim is to make them independent thinkers.

4. Sanmati programmes are short. The team could hold these in other locations also utilising an existing NGO base. This would spread their message wider while remaining focused on their own area of work. One of the participants from the south felt this need. (He was a Tibetan so he was included in the Programme as the focus is on the Himalayan region).

7.4 Finance from the Trust for the Sanmati and Sanjeevani Programmes. **(See Appendix 4 and 5).**

The budget for these two programmes is to be funded by the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. The budget has been submitted for four years, 1999 to 2003. I have discussed it in detail with the Director, Mr. Pawan Kumar. The following points were discussed.

A. Sanmati.

1. The coordinator for Sanmati is yet to be appointed. Hence, no costs will be incurred in the year 1999-2000. Thereafter, 10 percent increase each year is provided from 2001 to 2003. The Trust may calculate the general practice followed for such salary increases. In the government, generally, 3 per cent is kept for increments and the announcement for the DA is separate which is around 5 per cent. However,

this is from my memory and needs to be checked. They do not follow any system in terms of DA or DA increases of government or any other. In fact, there is no DA component at all. Only HRA and PF. The Trust may take its own view in the matter. Generally, the salaries are very low compared to the government for persons with equivalent qualifications but closer to the NGO sector.

2. Board and lodging has been calculated at Rs.65 per day per person this year. This will increase to Rs.75 next year and 10% increase thereafter. There is no separate rent shown for Sanmati but Rs.48,000 are shown for this year for Sanjeevani. It is not clear how they will be accommodated since the amount budgeted under Sanjeevani is only for its participants. As stated earlier, from the third year there is a ten percent increase. I think that whatever be the rent, it should remain contractual at a flat rate for the period. Only the food costs should be enhanced. This matter may be dialogued with SIDH.
3. Travel expenses – these are in the nature of a subsidy for a few participants who may ill-afford to pay their own way. Almost all participants pay for themselves for travel, and contribute a fee.

4. The resource persons fees vary from Rs.1,000/- to Rs.2,500/-. A few do not change at all in Sanmati.
5. The travel of trainee persons is shown as average of Rs.2,500/-. It could be more or less depending on the distance. Here, again, 10 percent increase has been shown. The railway and bus fares, generally, do not increase as much as 10 percent per year, but this observation is from memory. Hence, I cannot say. The Trust may take a view of how much overall increase can be provided in the budget on each item, or on the whole.

6 and 7 Increase on account of stationery may be given as shown and on documentation which will be 4 videos plus a hard copy of the report of the four, per year, Sanmati programmes (Three is stated erroneously).

B. Sanjeevani.

1. Stipend to Project Director is Rs.11,000/- (Pawan Gupta). The amount appears small if one compares to University salaries today. However, in the detailed statement, his total for 1999-2000 is Rs.10,081/-, which is even less and may be checked. The amount of basic salary is shown as Rs.7,500/- which is lower than a beginning Lecturer's salary of Rs.8,000/-. There is no DA component but there is HRA of Rs.2,000/- plus Provident Fund of Rs.6,81/-.

2. The basic salary for the permanent faculty of Sanjeevani varies from Rs.5,500 to Rs.3,500. Two will receive HRA of Rs.500/-. They have been with the organisation for many years. Their PF is 13.61% of the basic salary with a maximum of Rs.681/- (being 13.61% of Rs.5,000). A fourth person is being paid higher, as the person in charge of the cause at Rs.7,000/-. He and one other person, specially recruited will be paid Rs.1,000/- for food. They stay at the Centre. There is no PF for either of them. The enrolment for 1999-2000 is 18 students. It is expected to increase to 30 next year and to 50 thereafter. Therefore, they have budgeted for the more faculty either from next year or the year thereafter.
3. There is a line item of salary (called stipend by them) for support staff (one person) and for income generation Programme (one person) which will be utilised as demonstration for their Business Management Course. It is costed at Rs.6,000/- per month per person. None are hired this year but from 2000 to 2001, it is costed at Rs.14,400 which, obviously, would mean a much higher starting salary for two new persons at Rs.7,200/-. If they were meant to

start at Rs.6,000/-, then that should be the amount to be paid when recruited next year.

4. The line item for Board and Lodging is costed at Rs.65/- per day this year. There are 18 students. Hence, the amount on one student will need to be deducted as the calculation is for 19 students. In addition, food is calculated for four members of the faculty who will later increase to 5. It is not clear how this item on faculty appears here as for two persons, Rs.1,000/- is already added to the salary item for food if they eat at the centre. Generally, food for permanent faculty should not be included here. The food for Reserve persons could be permitted.
5. The 10 visiting faculty will be paid Rs.3,500/- but they will stay on campus for a longer period than those invited to Sanmati which is a short programme of one week only. Ten percent is added eachs year and may be examined by the Trust.
6. Travel is Rs.2,500 as arranged for 10 persons. However, it will vary according to the distance. Ten per cent is added each year.
- 7,8 & 9. Library, stationery/Teaching materials/Extra-curricular activities may be funded as shown with 10 percent increase

each year for library and stationery and, perhaps, 5 percent for extra-curricular activities.

- 10 & 11 Rent and maintenance increase substantially from the year 2000 to 2002 because of increase in the number of students to 30 and 50 respectively. In the final year, they hope to have their own premises for which they will charge the Trust Rs.6,000/- per year and, additionally, Rs.23,958/- for maintenance. The Trust may consider a consolidated amount when they move to their own premises mainly for maintenance, or for rent, but not separately as rent includes.

C. Overloads.

These are calculated at 20 percent of the total. A total break-down of these costs are given separately for the year 1999-2000. These may be examined by the Trust. They should not be titled overheads but specifically as Administrative expenditure. Some items appear large. For example, Rs.15,000 are given as back charges. Some method could be worked out if it is permissible to reduce these by using the same bank at both ends. Telephone/fax/e-mail expenses at Rs.30,000 mean Rs.2,500 per month. These may appear steep, although, getting trainee persons from outside may entail some expenditure. Such costs should be based on actuals but it may be difficult to do as they run other programmes. The stipend to office staff is Rs.55,000/-. It is not

clear how many persons would be involved. They clearly need one full-time Accountant and one full-time Typist.

D. Recommendations.

1. On the whole, the budget is very reasonable and the final expenditure should depend on actuals e.g. the number of participants may be less than anticipated.
2. The PF calculation may be looked into.
3. The increase of 10 percent per year is uniform on each item. The Trust should be able to arrive at a decision whether to give a certain percentage increase on specific items or give a consolidated amount as "miscellaneous" to absorb such increases.

Conclusion (for 7.0 and 8.0)

Both Sanjeevani and Sanmati programmes deserve the support of the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust. Their focus is on the districts in the Himalayan region. They are reaching out to a neglected and remoter area of the country.

8.0 Research and Advocacy – Sanshodhan.

8.1. Research

The presentation was made by Ms. Anuradha Joshi and Dr. Mittal. The research they have undertaken is of two types.

1. Research on the existing systems in relation to people's perceptions such as the education system.
2. Research on traditional systems of knowledge such as traditional system of measurements and their application in construction; festivals of the areas; myths, legends and folk songs. They were also suggested to include a research on home remedies as, with allopathic medicine, such knowledge, which is now oral, may wholly disappear. They could also develop an association with NCPA and SPARROW regarding the documentation of traditional folk music.

The focus in both types of research is to feed into the development of the various projects and activities of SIDH. This is very strong point in favour of SIDH as they have always proceeded with a research into the problem before undertaking action. Hence, the academic and practice areas are well integrated.

The organisation is also involved in a collaborative project with the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore, on "Promoting Primary Education in India". Several other NGOs are also involved.

8.2 Designing the Curriculum

Redesigning the primary school curriculum is another activity of the research wing. The research on rural youth was a baseline survey for Sanjeevani which helped in designing the curriculum. The wing also documents and publishes the content of the courses conducted by Sanmati. They are published as monographs.

8.3 Workshops and Seminars

Another activity of the Research and Advocacy wing is to conduct workshops and seminars under the rubric of "Samvad". These are of two types :

[a] Community based workshops to know the beliefs and customs and to understand whether they have a positive or negative implication. For instance, the practice of Juad is the ownership of goats by women considered to be their wealth. Men have not only no control but cannot even question the money held by the woman in her trade in the goats. Others have been on subjects such as mental health [beliefs and practices] and on birth attendants.

[b] Workshops with academicians and intellectuals are held such as on Assumptions Underlying Women's Issues; Education and Sustainability;

Politics and Philosophy of Science and Technology. Establishment of Bodhigram.

8.4 Advocacy

Advocacy is the third area under this wing. Advocacy is defined as building a "bridge between the micro and the macro, the needs of the last man/ woman and those in power". The attempt is to help people articulate their real felt needs through evening meetings, workshops, youth groups, mahila dals, parent-teacher meetings, focus group discussions etc. The means used for advocacy are magazines they publish, Samvaad, training under Sanmati, articles, papers, publications, presentations at national fora and in institutions such as the Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy for the IAS.

8.5 Funding

They began the research wing in 1995. They have no assured funds for their research. So far, they have utilised the money provided by the Save the Children Fund but they have been funding now for 10 years and may need to terminate as per their policy. The research undertaken is very meaningful and needs to be supported.

9.0 Over-view and Comments

9.1 Objectives and Relevance

The Mission Statement of SIDH is as follows :

SIDH will enable people who have been deprived of **appropriate** education to increase their **happiness** by providing **holistic** education and bring about a change in **attitudes**. [Annual Report 1997-98, back inside cover]

SIDH is fulfilling this mission statement through its overarching focus on education which encompasses activities from the balwadi to primary school, training of teachers, group activity with adolescents [male and female], women's group, staff enrichment group, and newly started courses of Sanmati and Sanjeevani. It has an active research and publication programme as also advocacy. Hence, their approach is holistic.

The emphasis on holistic implies that their focus on the training of youth is not only on skills for employment but also on development of knowledge on self, society and change in attitudes. However, the area of upgrading their knowledge of the occupation in which their families are

rooted could be of considerable importance since SIDH's emphasis is on local relevance and prevention of migration.

Moreover, their emphasis on appropriateness has led them into very relevant education for the balwadi and school children, relevant research to understand the current systems as they are perceived by people, especially educational system, as much as on the traditional systems, such as folk songs, myths, etc. and their contribution to the life of the community. Research feeds into their practice. The total approach has strong academic underpinning. It is thorough and based on collection of information, analysis, interpretation and drawing the necessary conclusions for application to their work situation. In this approach, local people's knowledge and wisdom has played a key role. Therefore, their work has been very relevant to the needs of the region especially the Western Himalayas in Uttarkhand, in which they are located. Their programme, Sanmati and Sanjeevani, are new. While they also focus on attitude development, their relevance to the needs of the youth of the area will develop further with experience. In my interaction, I found them positive to the suggestions to give more weightage to the rural economy if they wished to give the message that SIDH considered it important and that it also had a knowledge base like urban occupations.

With respect to research it is innovative and has great relevance to the needs of the area. It needs support. Some funding needs to be made available for a sufficient period for its research and publication activity.

In respect of gender based activities, a great deal of work can be undertaken by them. At present, it is not a funded activity but work has been initiated which can be supported.

9.2 Areas needing strengthening in Education

The areas that could develop further are :

1. Non-formal education for children in villages other than those where they have primary schools. They are developing a syllabus. This programme should be supported so that children who never enrolled, or dropped out of school, can be reached. The Government of India has funding for the 9 to 15 age group for NFE which they could explore. Some of these children could have a bridge course to re-enter school. The organisation is working on it.
2. They could increase their focus on women – with some funding made available, they could give more emphasis. They could be asked to put up a proposal to the J.R.D. and Thelma Tata Trust.

3. **Training for trainers** for spreading courses like Sanjeevani could be undertaken after three or four years when they have evolved the parameters of the programme.
4. **Ex-participants of Sanmati** could be helped with more specific skills in group and community action for those who are eager to undertake action. Such causes should be supported.
5. With the high credibility SIDH now enjoys with its experiments in primary education, its attempts to scale or replicate should be by **working on the government schools**. It is possible to work in the ambit that a NGO creates which is small in its reach and, therefore, it can assure quality. Hence, the criticism of the government is inherent in this fact of scope and size of NGO operations. The Government, therefore, escapes by offering a poor quality service. Hence, it is very necessary that NGOs like SIDH, with the expertise and human resource available to it, moves into working with the existing system to make an impact on it.

9.3 **Other Possible Areas**

Without abdicating their focus on education, in the not too distant future SIDH could take up other projects which will promote integrated development of the region.

A] Water harvesting in the villages of Jaunpur. This would be a method of training men and women to be able to do their own water harvesting through contouring, small check dams, and weirs, and village ponds. The topography is, possibly, very suitable for it. At present, the run-off of water is tremendous and only one crop is possible per year. Multiple cropping and other practices could be developed. These programmes would be a continuing education programme for the adults in the village aimed at increasing their livelihood and thus the quality of their life.

B] Similarly, with the engineering background of the Director of SIDH, Pawan Gupta, leadership could be provided to develop a whole wing in appropriate technology for the hills to make a women's agricultural work lighter, to provide methods of hauling luggage by coolies who now carry half a dozen suitcases by strapping them together and putting the weight of the strap on their heads., and to develop useful implements for farmers. This is an area of research and transfer through training and demonstration.

C] The campus of SIDH is being named Bodhigram. It promises to be a unique academic campus and needs to be supported by the Tata Trust and other NGOs. Both Pawan Gupta, the Director, and Dr. Anuradha Joshi, Secretary, have intellectual qualities that can provide the necessary thought leadership. Dr. Joshi has taught in school and College. She has

excellent capacities for conceptualizing a syllabus and for training of teachers., besides high sensitivity to the local issues needing to be researched. As Director, Pawan Gupta provides a democratic leadership.

They do need to stretch out and take more bolder risks in utilising well established NGOs, researchers and academicians and academic institutions, to meet specific requirements of their programmes.

D] As the organisation is growing, they need to set up more formal institutional management and financial management systems.