

**An Article by Dr. Bhai Mahavir, Hon'ble Governer - Madhya Pradesh,
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Selfless in Pune

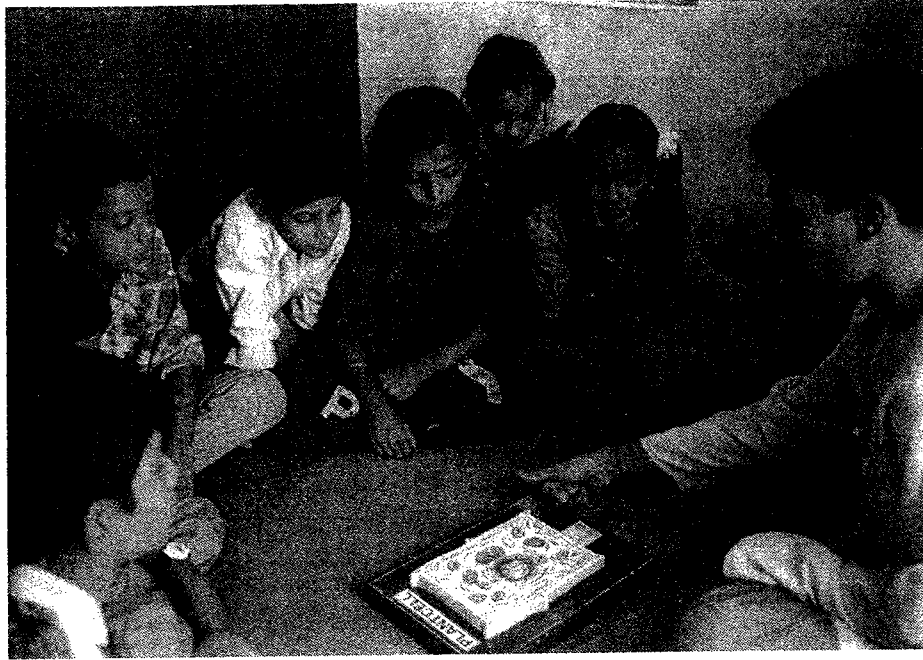
Social revolution with a vision

It is not only a swami who can set an example of selfless service. Many years ago a young friend of mine Appa Pendse, chose a new path. He started in Pune classes to provide extra coaching to bright boys to enable them to attain distinction and enter administrative service or high-level professions. He started Dnyanaprabodhini in a couple of rented rooms with missionary zeal. Today it has a large multistoreyed building for its wide-ranging coaching classes and lots of its former students adorn administrative, judicial or industrial jobs and are repaying the debt they owe to the centre in cash or kind.

This year, I learnt of a similar campaign targeting the other end of the SOCIAL ladder, i.e., the deficient boys - with the same vision. It was commenced in 1979 by Kishabhau Patwardhan a retired secondary school headmaster who had earlier worked for fourteen years in Dnyanaprabodhini. It started in a factory shed in Pune's Mangalwar Peth with 12 students. Shortly after that he took up the task of physical, mental and educational development, in the Municipal corporation **Tagore Vidya Niketan**. Six months later, he was joined by Desai and together the two went round the schools of the area to select students. Contact was established and maintained with their families.

Subsequently, special Sunday morning classes were commenced. During long vacation, training courses were given in screen printing. Camps and visits to social institutions too were organised. Students were taken on a visit to Mumbai Doordarshan which brought in two new activists - Majumdar and Datey, who set up Swarupvardhini, the 1 second centre in Chavannagar. Today it has five other centres also,

The movement had to go for the purchase of a 5500 sq. ft. plot when the Corporation withdrew permission to use its premises. A two storey building was raised and a decision was taken to run day-long programmes. A survey disclosed that in a slum colony facing the building, half the children were not going to any school. A Balwadi was started for them which established links with common folk for whom classes in tailoring, home-nursing, and adult literacy were commenced to make them self-reliant. Four hundred womenfolk have learnt tailoring or home-nursing till date. Family consultancy and legal aid centre was set up to help women harassed by drunkard and jobless husbands and crafty in-laws. It has been organising blood donation camps and street plays depicting evils of Superstition, dowry, unemployment, illiteracy and multinational exploitation. The result? Manisha, a qualified doctor,



Pranjali, B.Sc., with computer diploma, and Rohini, B.Sc. have gone to serve tribals of Arunachal, of course, duly permitted by their families.

Inculcation of the spirit of service for the victims of disasters is attempted by 'Vardhini'. Collection of cloths, foodgrains and cash amount of Rs 65,000 were made for victims of Latur and 18 volunteers were set to serve them.

Today, 'Vardhini' can boast of the example of Deepak, a university first position holder in B.E. who was on its roll

since fifth primary and was holding a job; Sanjay, on its roll from beginning and now a B.Sc. (Electronics), M.A. (defence) and Journalism who served it as a wholetimer for four years; Sanjay S, elected for M.P.S.C, Girish, selected by I.I.T. for special training in maths all belonging to economically and socially backward classes.

Hearing of the pilgrim's progress tales on successive visits to Pune. I kept wondering why we lacked such examples near home and how the seed of this selfless, silent service had been sown.