



सिकरौड



Sikror Human  
Development Project



**The Institute of Cultural Affairs: India** is a research, training and demonstration organisation concerned with the human factor in world development. The Institute devises and demonstrates practical methods which enable local residents to plan and to implement socio-economic change in their own communities.

The Institute is a registered non-commercial voluntary organisation with area offices in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Hyderabad. It is associated with similar Institutes working in 35 other countries.

"We have chosen the peacock as our symbol because it depicts the great pride we now feel in our village."

*Sikror village leader*

"हमने मोर को अपना प्रतीक इसलिए चुना है कि वह गांवों के प्रति हमारे गर्व का द्योतक है।"  
सिकरौड़ ग्राम नेता



## Human Development

Sikror Village in Uttar Pradesh has been the site of an innovative experiment in rural development. The need to build self-reliant villages in India is widely acknowledged and an increasing proportion of financial and technical resources is being directed towards achieving this end. Numerous projects and schemes have been launched by the government, business houses and voluntary agencies. One of the major challenges to these efforts has been finding ways to equip the village residents with the methods to release their own initiative and creativity. Only then can they begin to assume responsibility for their community's future, so that development can be effective and long-lasting.

## The Village

Sikror Village lies about 5 kms from Ghaziabad along the Meerut Road, in the Razapur Block of District Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. Sikror was founded by a landlord family which took up farming in the area about 500 years ago, and brought with them the necessary artisan retainers to sustain the community. About 100 years ago, the temple was constructed, and it became the symbolic centre around which the village grew. The total population is 1,645. 15% of the families are *Brahmin*, 45% are *Jat*, and 40% are *Harijan*.

Sikror is primarily agricultural. The main crops are wheat, jawar, sugar cane, mustard and pulses. In 1978, there were 439 acres of farmland. There were three tractors in the village, the first having been introduced in the 1930's. Some families owned buffaloes, and many families had one or more members employed in the nearby factories. The one primary school had three teachers and a headmaster. Electricity was available only for tube wells. There was one private medical practitioner, and a few tradesmen such as potters, cobblers, a tailor and two blacksmiths.

## Project Initiation

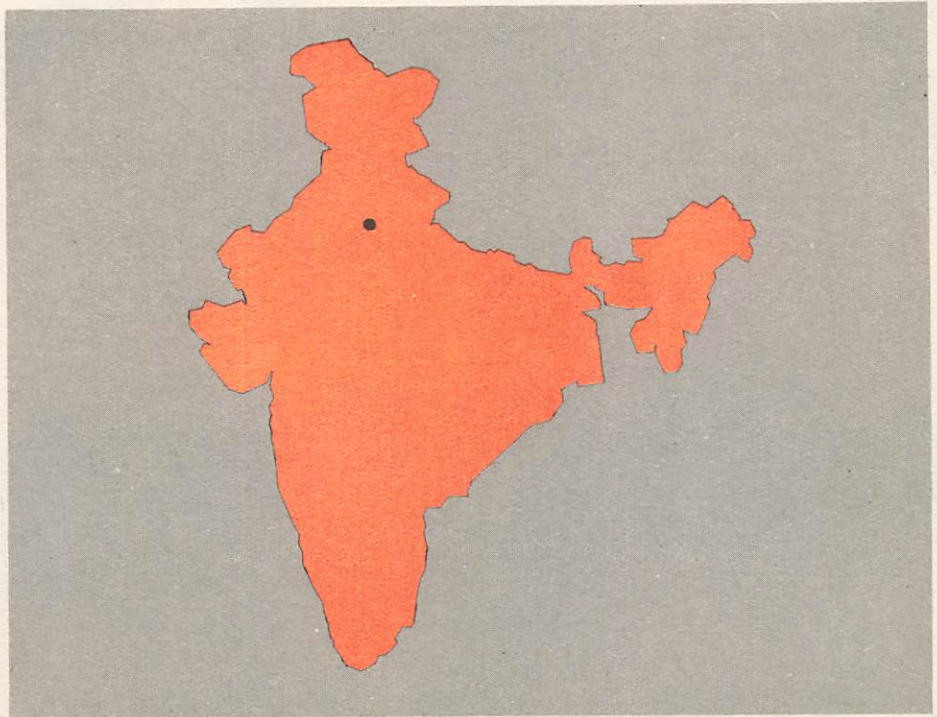
Sikror Human Development Project was launched in December, 1978, to test methods of grassroots development, that is, social and economic improvements planned and executed by the villagers themselves. It began with a ten-day consultation in which people with expertise in agriculture, commerce, industry, environmental planning and health, assisted villagers to build a four-year development programme. The Project has been seen through with the assistance of the Institute of Cultural Affairs:India. The Institute's staff have lived in Sikror and worked side-by-side with the villagers in *shramdans*, visits, and planning meetings. This teamwork in partnership with the Ghaziabad District and Razapur Block Development offices, business houses and other institutions in the region has allowed the Project to meet and overcome many obstacles and realise a large part of the residents' practical vision for their village.

## Development Process

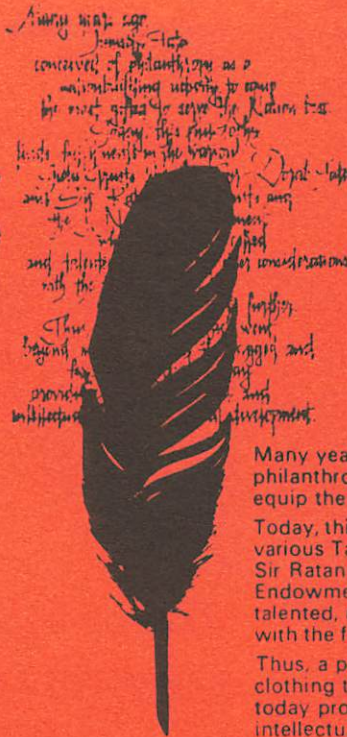
Development is a process, rather than an accomplishment. This document describes how that process was begun in Sikror and how it has become self-generating. Significant changes have occurred in the human, economic and social dimensions. It points to the human element, the change in self-understanding and awareness, confidence and capabilities of the people, both individually and as a community.

## Ripple Effect

The effort in Sikror has had a powerful impact on surrounding villages. Leaders in Shahapur village claim that they have undertaken road and school building *shramdans* because of what they have seen happen in Sikror. Bhivapur farmers began taking loans from the bank only after watching their neighbours. These villages have learned the importance of working together as one community, and of co-operating with other agencies.



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Thus, a philosophy, which went beyond merely clothing the ragged and feeding the poor, is today providing a strong technical and intellectual base for national development.

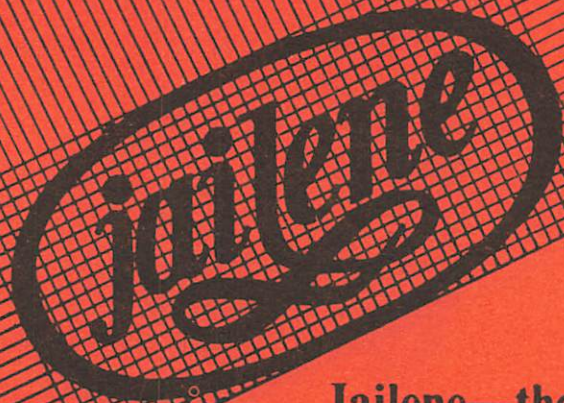
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## Economic Growth in Sikror

Sikror and its neighbouring villages have experienced a series of major changes in their economic base. An irrigation canal network, built by the Government in the late 19th century, enabled irrigation of most land in the Ghaziabad area. In the 1960's many new factories were opened in and around Ghaziabad, providing greater employment opportunities.

Nevertheless, in 1978 there were still major blocks to the economic development of Sikror. Investment capital was limited, partly because no residents had ever applied for bank loans. The small-scale orders of the provision shops prevented access to wholesale-priced supplies. Village products were made under family operations and sold or traded within the village. The farmers themselves felt that agricultural practices were inadequate, resulting in poor crop yields. There was little agricultural equipment in use, and time-consuming work with primitive tools was a block to economic diversification. There were few people with economic management skills.

During the Project period, the residents of Sikror have addressed these issues. As a result of their efforts, a significant expansion of the economy has taken place. From 1978 to 1981, the gross village product increased by 95%. (See Table 1). The growth is particularly evident in three arenas:

- access to bank loans;
- increase of agricultural income;
- expansion of supplementary income.

### Access to Bank Loans

One of the guidelines of human development is that the largest investors in the community's future should be the residents themselves, through their own savings and labour, and through taking loans for new income-producing assets. Visits to the local bank branch were arranged for the villagers, where they received explanations of the loan process. Assistance was given in making applications. The first loans were for milch buffaloes, and now most families own one or more. Forty loans have been taken for buffaloes, five for tractors, one for an irrigation tube-well, one to set up a piggery unit, three for horse carts, seven for bullocks, one for a buffalo cart, and 20 for agricultural inputs. People from all sections of the village have participated, and the total value of 78 loans taken reached Rs. 4,62,000 by July, 1981. (See Table 2).

### Increase of Agricultural Income

A number of training events were organised to increase farmers' awareness of new crops and agricultural methods, and of the value of farm machinery. There were several discussion seminars, including one on sugar cane production, led by voluntary consultants from agricultural businesses. A large Agricultural Fair was organised in Sikror at the end of 1979, where farmers could examine exhibitions of agricultural technology and ask questions of experts. The result of these efforts has been an 80% increase in gross agricultural income from 1978-79 to 1980-81.

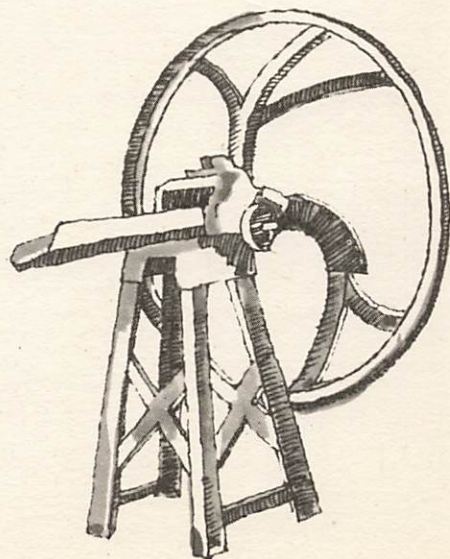
Two main factors have contributed to this success:

#### 1. Purchase of farm equipment.

By the end of 1981, 68 items of farm equipment had been purchased during the Project period. Included in this total are seven new tractors, which are used by their owners and hired out to other farmers. The rate for tractor hire is Rs. 25 per hour; during 1980-81 the ten tractors in Sikror earned Rs. 2,85,000 gross income. The powered threshing machines have greatly speeded up that operation, and the mechanised grass cutters reduce the time spent on shredding fodder for the buffaloes.

#### 2. Expansion of Cultivated acreage and irrigation.

Two farmers invested in new land, whilst many began to use land near their houses for vegetable growing. Cropping pattern experiments were undertaken. Twelve plots of hybrid rice were introduced in 1979. Ten more acres of sugar cane and a sixty-four acre summer vegetable crop were added in 1981. These two crop expansions alone yielded a gross value of Rs. 1,76,000. Four new tube wells have been added, bringing the total number to twelve. This has considerably increased the amount of land irrigated during the summer months.





## Expansion of Supplementary Income

In 1978 there were three bullock-powered jaggery production factories. They operate during the sugar harvesting season. All three have now been converted to electric or diesel power, and consequently are able to process much more cane. The largest is well-known in the area, and now converts sugar cane to jaggery for farmers from as far away as twelve miles. In addition, this factory has a new *khandsari* sugar-refining machine, which produces powdered white sugar, and allows more of the profit to accrue to the farmers. The gross value of powdered sugar produced during 1980-81 was Rs. 62,000; the gross value of jaggery produced was about Rs. 8,85,000, an increase of about one-third over 1978-79.



There has been an increase in the milch animal population of about one-third due to purchase through loans and direct cash. As a result of improved relationships with local government offices, farmers began to upgrade the animal stock through artificial insemination. The increased milk production has made a significant contribution towards increased village income. Moreover, many more families now have access to milk as an important nutritious food.

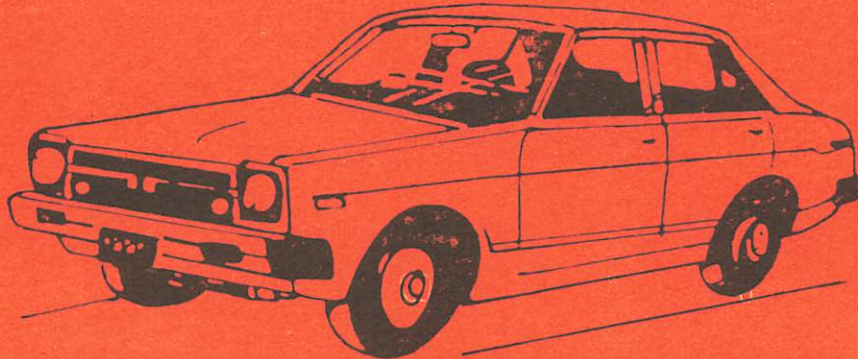
More than twenty new jobs have been secured outside the village, and approximately fifty new full- or part-time jobs were created within the village. These include about a dozen part-time tailors, two new *kirana* shops, three horse cart drivers, a private school teacher, a nurse and a mason.

Several *Harijan* families sent sons to a training course in animal husbandry run by the Block Development Office. On their return, one boy took out a loan to buy piglets. His family has re-invested the profit they made on selling the adult pigs. They have built a large pigpen and two nursing pens, and are running a well-organised business. Part of the return has been used to rebuild the family house. This family has now branched out into breeding rabbits as well.

1977-78	SOURCE	1980-81
6,65,420	AGRICULTURE (Field labour as expense)	11,99,730
10,10,400	ANIMAL PRODUCTS (Dairy, Pigs)	17,67,200
3,34,906	LOCAL BUSINESS	9,62,299
3,76,000	OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT	7,76,600
Rs. 23,86,726	TOTAL	Rs. 47,05,829

Purpose	No. of Loans	Average Amount	Total
BUFFALOS	40	2500	1,00,000
BOGIES	1	3,000	3,000
TONGAS	3	2,500	7,500
BULLOCKS	7	2,000	14,000
CROPS	20	625	12,500
TRACTORS	5	60,000	3,00,000
TUBE WELLS	1	25,000	25,000
TOTAL	77	—	4,62,000

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## Human Change in Sikror

At the Consultation in December 1978, village people articulated a number of blocks to local initiative and human development. The community's relations with outside agencies and services were based on only a few personal contacts. People felt that the procedures involved in making applications for assistance were too complex. Almost all activities were carried out on a family basis and there had been no community meetings or efforts in recent memory. Many doubted that the three social groups in the village could work together. However, during the course of the project, the attitudes began to change and the villagers experienced the effectiveness of working corporately.

## Community Centre

The village decided to build a Community Centre for village, youth and *panchayat* meetings, as a training centre for women, and in general to be open to all ages and castes. *Panchayat* land was donated and a construction engineer hired to build the Centre. Villagers participated in digging foundations, levelling the floors and grounds, and painting the building. The Centre comprises one large hall and two small rooms, one of which now permanently houses the Health Clinic.

## Electricity

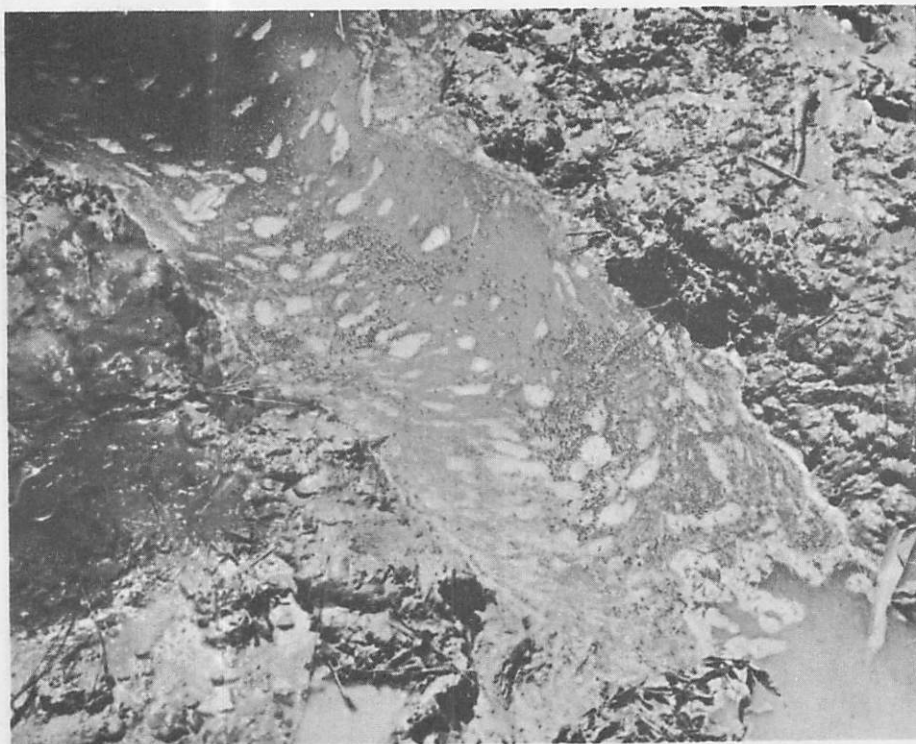
By 1978, electricity was available only for powering tube wells. After considerable debate, villagers decided to request the Electricity Board to give power to the whole village. Residents assisted with the transport of the poles and other materials, and a ready band of youth was always available to help the Board engineers. The wiring has been completed and a transformer is in position. Currently, residents are installing domestic fittings and placing deposits for individual connections. At least sixty families from all parts of the village will avail themselves of the facility. One family has already purchased an electric grinding machine in order to open a mill.



## Roads and Streets

The key to a new spirit in Sikror was the work on the roads. Before the project began, there was no paved road, either leading to, or within the village. Apart from making passage difficult, the resulting lack of drainage constituted a serious health problem. The most important step was to secure adequate access to the village. Two stages were required. First, the Public Works Department was approached, and they agreed to level and brick the access road from the main Meerut Road. Second, the villagers united to persuade a farmer to step down, who had incorporated the village link road into his own farm. Once this was achieved, a week-long *shramdan* was held to level the road and build it up with buffalo cart loads of mud from the village pond. Every family participated. After the monsoon had settled the road, a second *shramdan* re-levelled it, and a brick surface was added.

During the first year, four of the main streets in the village were levelled and bricked, to demonstrate the benefits of a properly constructed drainage system. During the next two years, groups of residents in each community got together and built their local streets through *shramdan* effort. Nearly two kilometres of streets have been bricked in this way. The levels of some surfaces had to be raised as much as four feet, using mud from the fields transported by buffalo cart. One man in the village claims to have been present to help on every new street, and he says: "Three years ago the village was very dirty, but now it is much cleaner and you can pass easily on foot, on bicycle, by bullock cart, or by tractor." For the first time, buses were able to enter the village to transport marriage parties.



## Social Patterns

The common task began to break down the caste barriers among the villagers. The change depended on one or two village leaders making bold moves. One *Jat* leader invited anyone to his house to discuss project plans. The *Pradhan* (elected village leader) visited *Harijan* families. People from the different groups began to plan and drink tea together, particularly the youth. Even the women began to join in planning sessions. In organising the various programmes, a wider leadership base than before emerged, including members of the *Youth Mandil*. Ladies of all castes have participated together in knitting and sewing training classes. In April 1981, a large assembly of 60 village leaders and concerned people from Delhi and Ghaziabad met for a day and a half in the Community Centre, and shared a common meal.



## Housing

The improvement in the general village environment encouraged many families to improve their housing. Before the Project, many houses had no separation between the living quarters and the animal shed. The kitchens were often in the same area as the animals, and there were few bathrooms. It is a measure of health consciousness as well as rising prosperity that there have been 25 new houses built and 48 major house renovations.

Almost all of these house improvements allow for separated animal quarters, hand pumps for drinking water and bathrooms. In addition, many houses have been brightly painted.



## Sikror Open Day

On January 15, 1981, an Open Day was held to celebrate the completion of four project "keystones". These were electrification, completion of the Community Centre building, construction of the link road, and training in machine knitting for women.

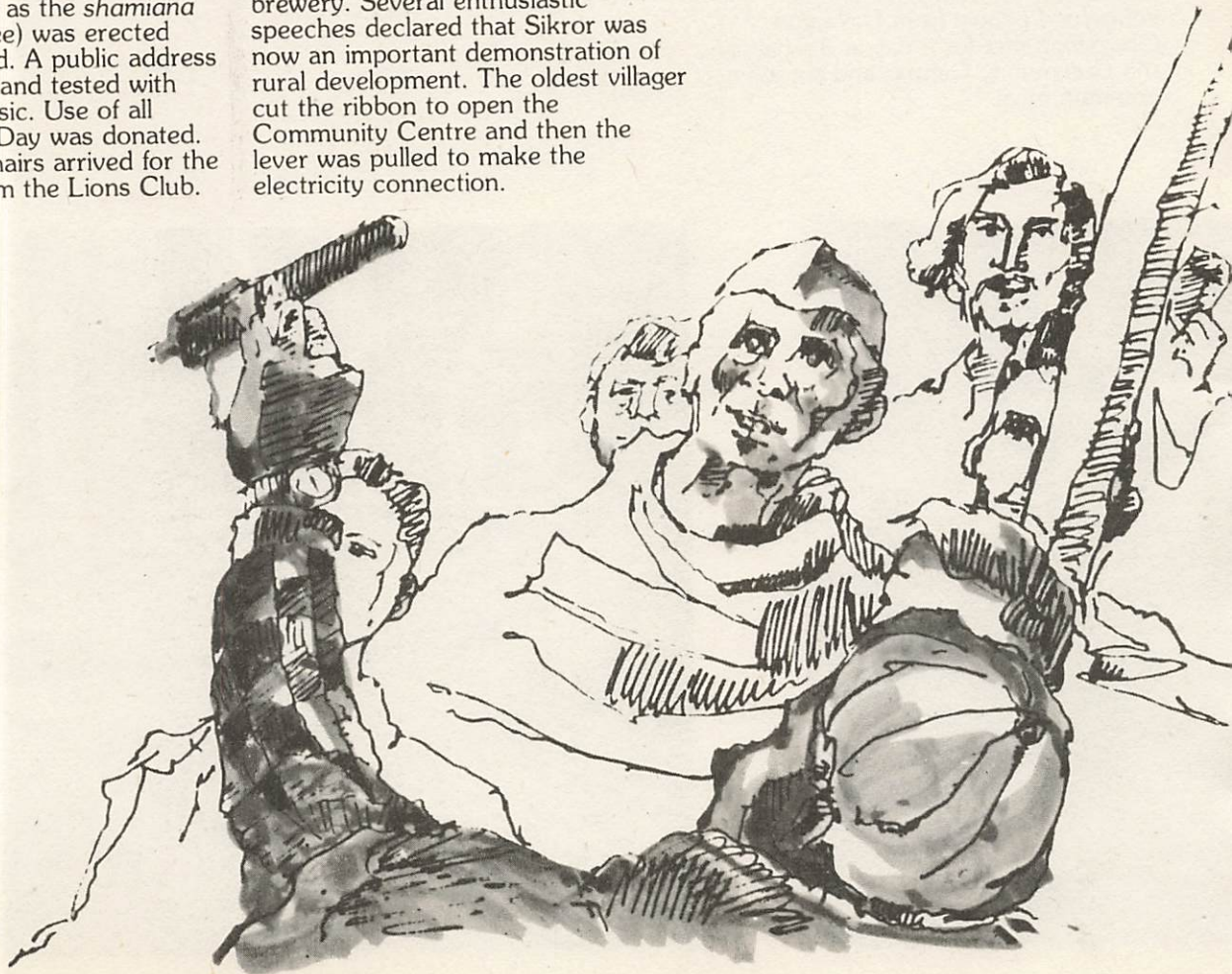
Hectic preparations preceded the event. Electricity Board workers made final adjustments and connections, masons laid bricks to finish the road as fast as they could be delivered, the electrician wired the community centre as it was being whitewashed, and bullock carts were used to clear and level the grounds. On the morning of the 15th, work on the road continued as the *shamiana* (decorative marquee) was erected and chairs arranged. A public address system was set up and tested with full-volume film music. Use of all equipment for the Day was donated. A desk and four chairs arrived for the centre as a gift from the Lions Club.

The villagers turned out in force to greet the guests and take them around the village. By 3 p.m., some 500 people filled the marquee. Visitors included the High Commissioner and Deputy High Commissioner of Australia with their wives, the Counsellor for Development and Norad representative from the Royal Norwegian Embassy, who in turn brought a visiting Norwegian M.P. There were several Ghaziabad and Delhi businessmen, representatives of Lions and other service clubs, several Local Government and Electricity Board officials, and people from villages nearby. The Chief Guest was the District Magistrate, whose arrival was heralded by a fine pipe and drum band in full uniform, lent by the local brewery. Several enthusiastic speeches declared that Sikror was now an important demonstration of rural development. The oldest villager cut the ribbon to open the Community Centre and then the lever was pulled to make the electricity connection.

Guests inspected the exhibition of local crafts and the products of the women's training inside the Centre, and were served tea out of earthenware, village-made cups by the village youth.

The event of the Open Day had three main effects:

- it brought villagers, local government officials, businessmen and other supporters together to celebrate human development;
- it marked the beginning of the transition to local village responsibility for the Project;
- it launched the ripple effect of catalysing self-development in nearby villages.



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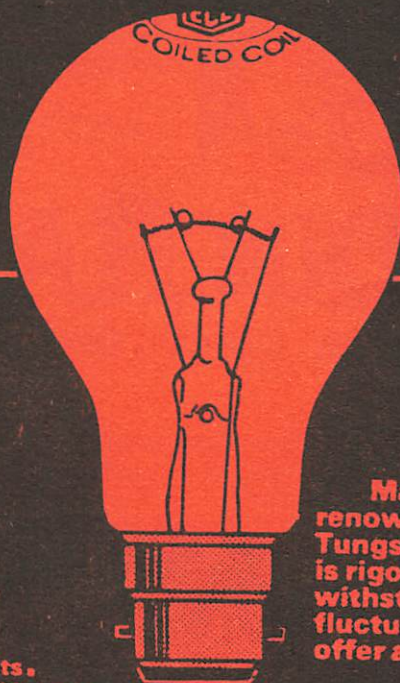
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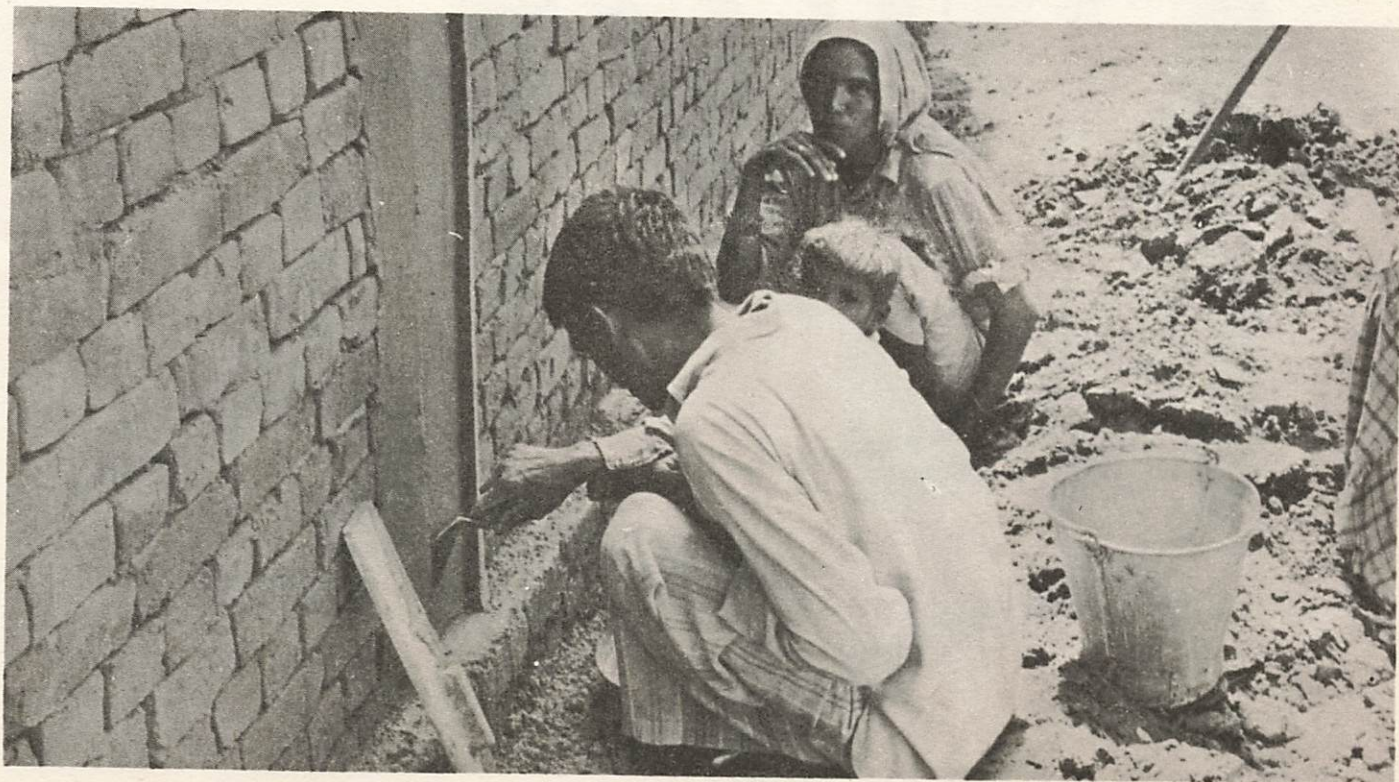
## Social Improvements in Sikror

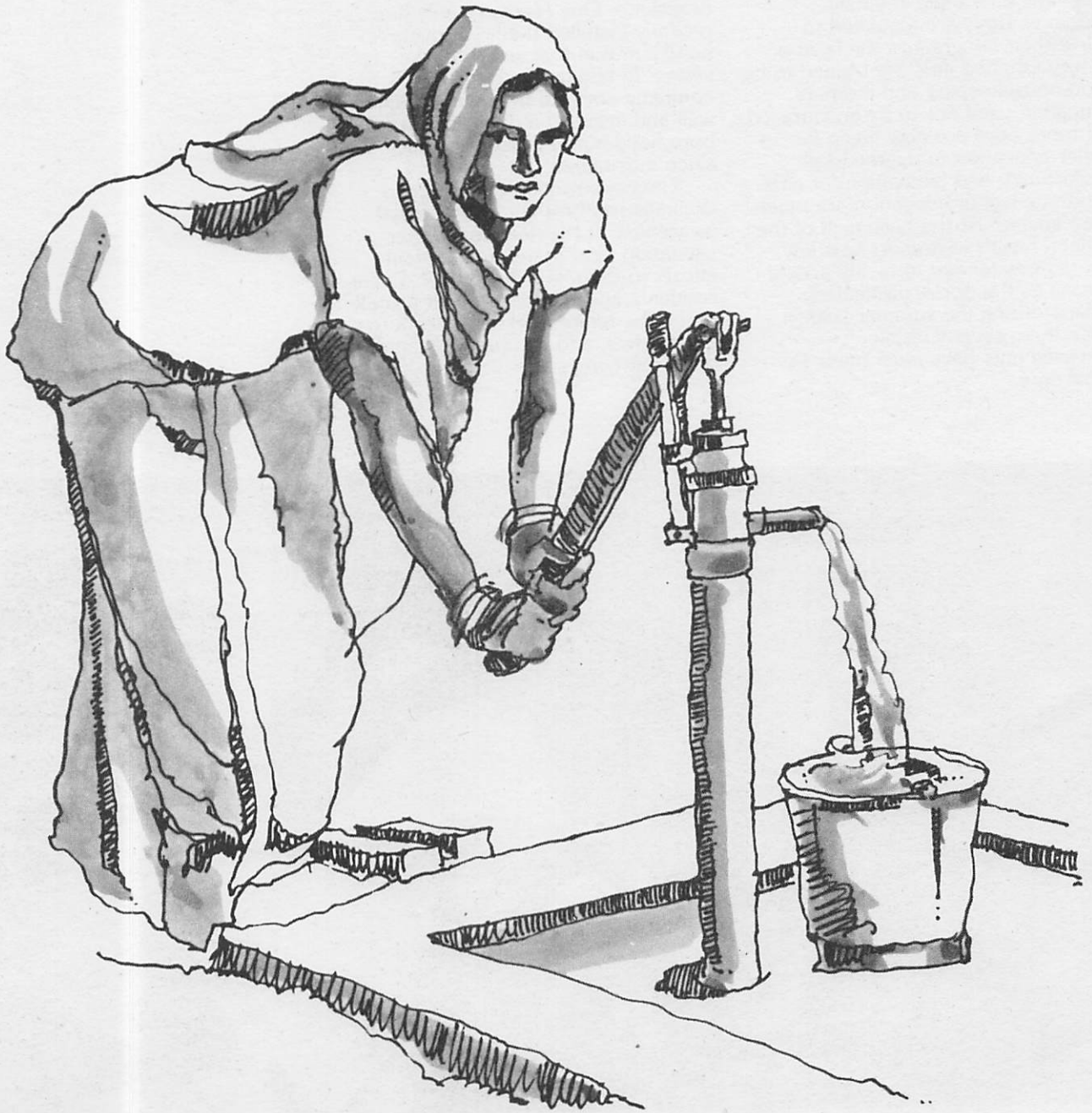
The social system of Sikror is based on the extended family living in one household. Women and youth have little direct say in family decisions. Boys are expected to follow their fathers into the farm or factory job, and girls are trained to be good housekeepers and mothers. Education used not to be encouraged, but more boys are now going for higher education to degree level. Opportunity and motivation for girls to pursue higher education are much more limited. At the beginning of the Project, health awareness was low, and families tended to tacitly accept disease as the norm, particularly malaria during the summer season. Since then, several visible improvements have been made in social care.

## Water and Sanitation

In 1978, many families still drew their drinking water from open wells: only thirty families possessed a hand-pump. Now there are 125 private hand-pumps, which houseowners promptly repair or replace when necessary. One *Harijan* family has recently installed the first private hand-pump in that sector of the village. In addition, a Delhi-based company covered the main *Harijan* well and installed a deep-well, large-bore hand-pump which they have since maintained.

The construction of roads and drainage has brought an increased awareness of the need for proper sanitation, and there are constant efforts to drain standing water. Local residents and the mason built a soak-pit by the temple well: it appears to be effective, and can be duplicated in other low-lying spots.



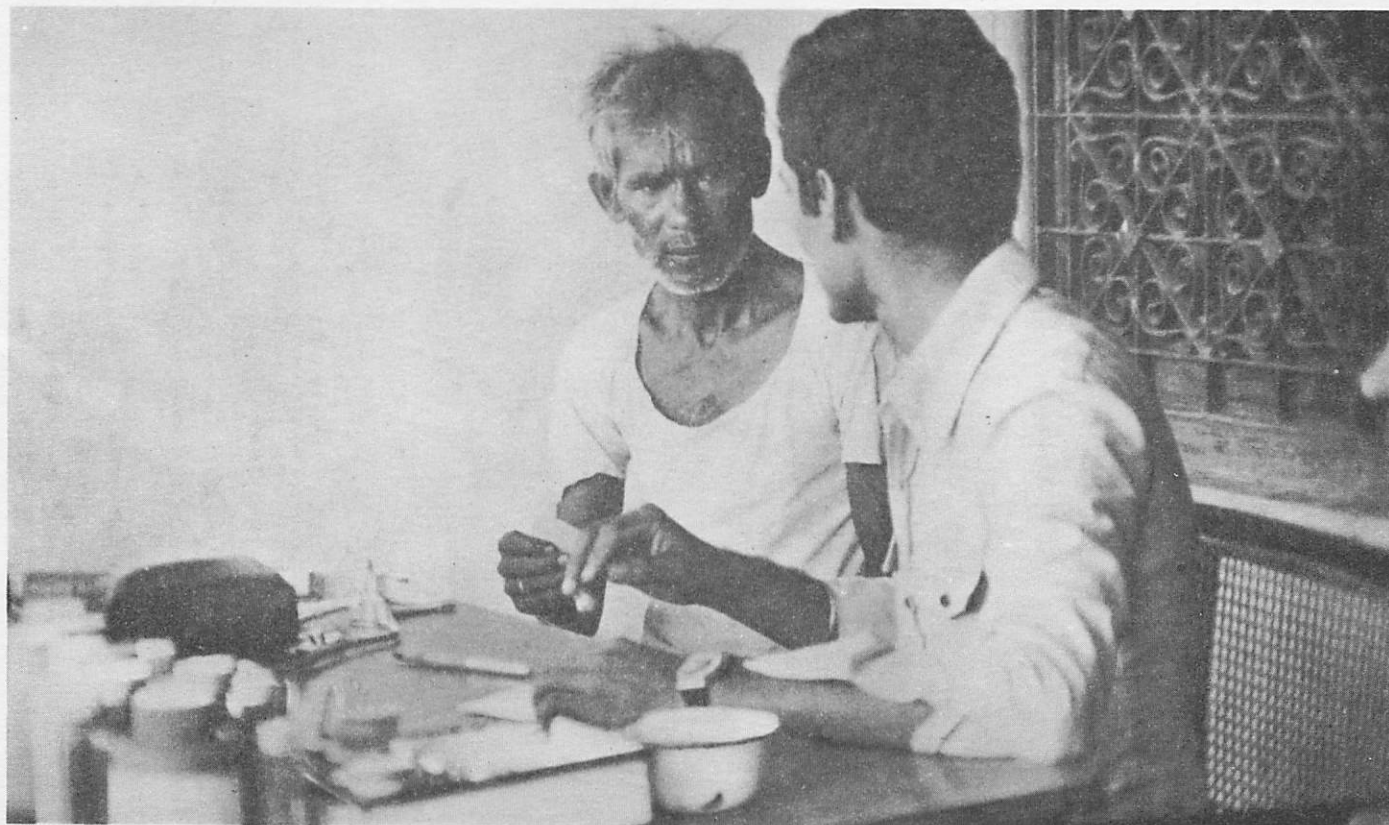


## Health Care Practices

Local service clubs have joined with the Project in organising a number of Health Camps. An immunisation programme has given all children the opportunity of receiving triple antigen and polio vaccines. A daily nurse has been appointed by the District Medical Officer, and she works from a health clinic set up in the Community Centre. One of the village women is being trained in Ghaziabad to be a voluntary health worker to assist the nurse. Three more doctors have set up practice in the village, rather than move to the city. The drastic reduction in the amount of standing water in the streets, together with a mosquito-spraying scheme has reduced the incidence of malaria. More than 40% of the families are aware of, and say they practice, some method of family planning.

## Education

There is a three-room government primary school in Sikror, run by a headmaster and three teachers. It offers first-to-fifth standard. The school building has recently been redecorated, and the staff are anxious to improve the quality of education they can offer. A private primary school also opened recently, to help relieve the load on the classes in the government school. The majority of families now place a higher value on education than before, and school attendance is much improved. In addition to child education, specific training courses have been arranged for different groups in the village, and are described elsewhere in this report.



## Women's Advancement

In this part of the country, women have traditionally been in *purdah*. They generally do not attend village meetings. Their role has been one of hard work in house keeping, childbearing and labouring in the fields.

In Sikror, meetings were held regularly to allow the women to come out of their houses and share common concerns. There was opportunity for discussion of health, family planning, childbirth and nutrition. One lady was assisted in buying a knitting machine, and initially six ladies from different families took intensive training from a professional Ghaziabad lady who came daily to the village.

Shortly afterwards, a sewing training class was organised. A tailor came from Ghaziabad, and two extra machines were supplied to the village. Using their own and borrowed machines, the class of twenty-five was in session for two months. All of the women present contributed towards the tailor's fee and expenses. These women have gained a lot of confidence in their skill, and now wish to start their own cottage industry.



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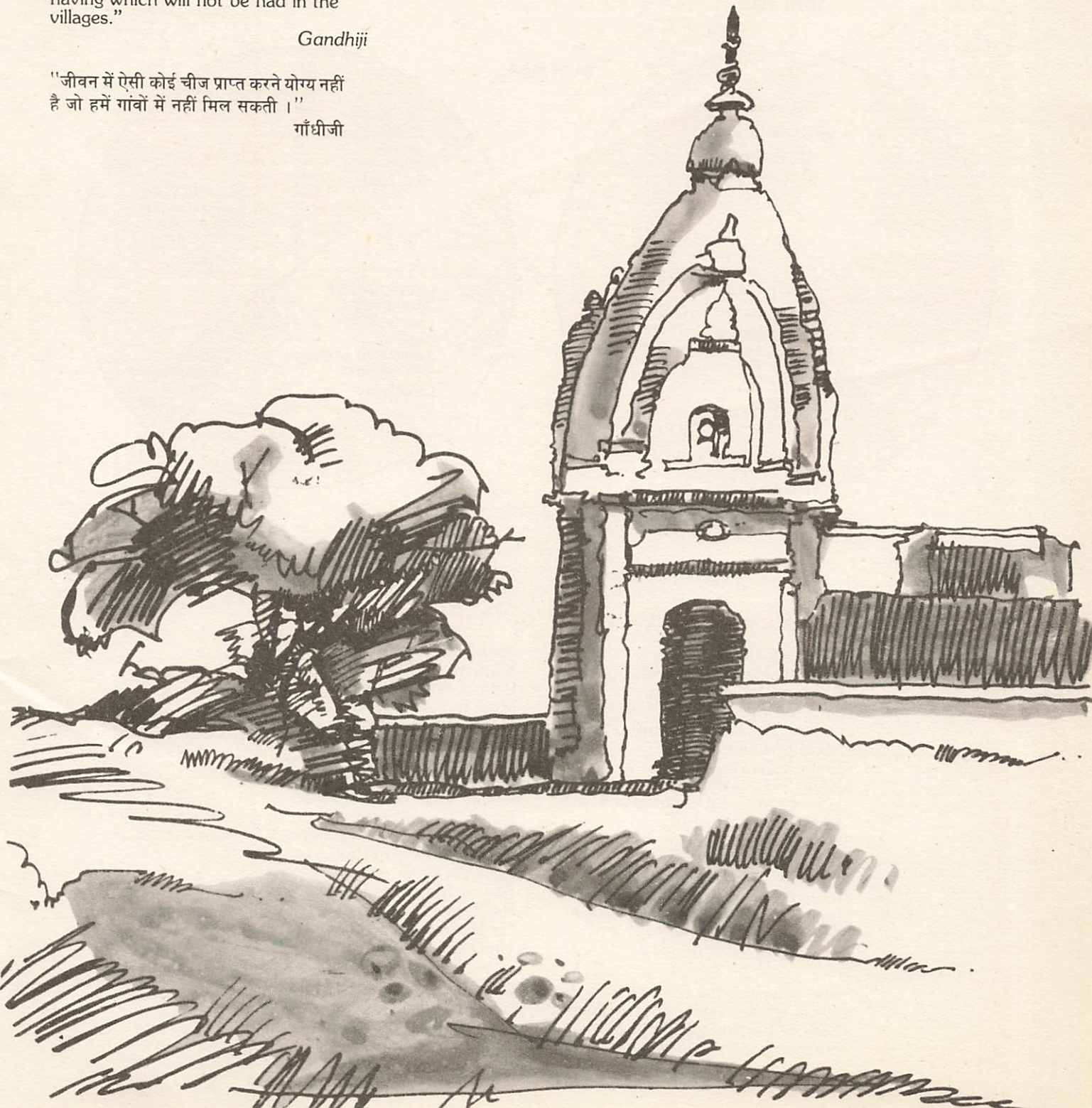
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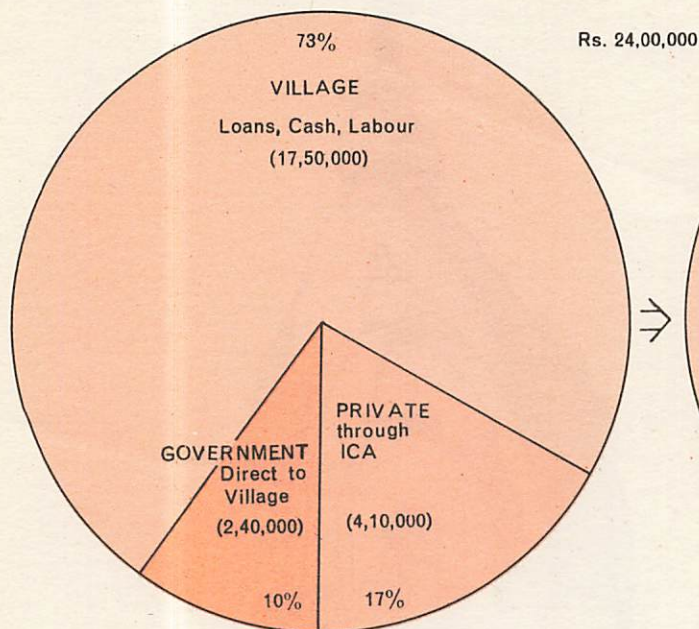
Gandhiji

"जीवन में ऐसी कोई चीज प्राप्त करने योग्य नहीं  
है जो हमें गांवों में नहीं मिल सकती।"

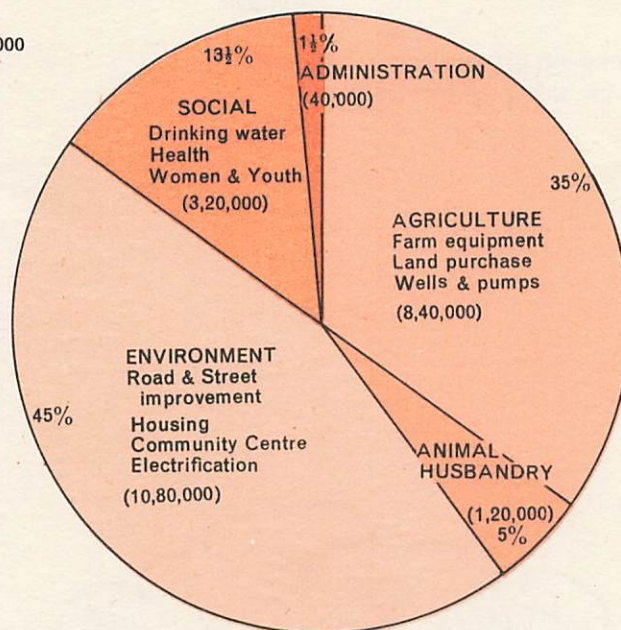
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## INVESTMENT IN SIKROR 1978-1982



## EXPENDITURE IN SIKROR 1978-82



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 Pulling & Lifting Machines (P) Ltd.  
 Rev. Hirata, Sapporo, Japan  
 Rotaract Club of Ghaziabad  
 Rotary Club of Ghaziabad  
 Royal Danish Embassy  
 Royal Netherlands Embassy  
 Royal Norwegian Embassy  
 Sain Verma & Associates  
 Sansar Machines Ltd.  
 Sir Ratan Tata Trust  
 Sir Dorabji Tata Trust  
 Unichem Laboratories Ltd.

The offices of the District Magistrate, Ghaziabad, the District Rural Development Agency, The Block Development Officer, Razapur, Ghaziabad District Electricity Board, and the Public Works Department gave much encouragement and assistance to this Project.

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