

संस्थापक : नाना देशमुख
अध्यक्ष : वीरेन्द्रजीत सिंह

दीनदयाल
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७-ई, स्वामी रामतीर्थ नगर, रानी झांसी रोड, नई दिल्ली-११००५५
दूरभाष : २३५२६७३५, २३५२६७६२, २३५२४५५५. फ़ैक्स : २३५५२८१२

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Nehru, Dr Rajendra Prasad and other lawyers led the freedom struggle. Post-independence, this class continues to occupy a prominent place in politics.

Rural denizens drive themselves into ruin through futile legal battles, but lawyers never advise them to desist from spoiling their lives. Instead, they encourage litigious behaviour. Although well aware that their rural clients are often very poor, lawyers don't hesitate to charge them exorbitant fees. They lead extravagant lives, on the backs of these debt-ridden villagers. Lawyers have been exploiting the rural populace since 1828. Yet, this serious problem has never attracted the attention of our leaders. If matters continue in this fashion, not even the entire gamut of rural development schemes instituted by successive governments can ameliorate the lives of 70 per cent of India's population.

I could not stomach a brand of politics that had no time for three-quarters of India's people and to focus my energies towards rural upliftment, I left it. I had little knowledge of rural development, never having worked in that area. It was essential, therefore, to live among the villagers, experience their problems and understand their needs. The village became the center of my activities.

I went from village to village, engaging in conversations with the rural folk. Farming is the main occupation in villages. During the day, the farmers are busy tilling their fields. Only in the evening do they have time for conversation. Observing my repeated trips to his village, an elderly farmer said: "You are exerting unnecessarily. Don't you realize that people who have been condemned to poverty by God cannot be redeemed by anybody? So don't waste your time on this task". This fatalistic attitude of the rural folk, who sat miserably cursing their fate, saddened me. But it did not discourage me. I continued on the path of rural upliftment with undiminished enthusiasm.

It was the month of May. Drought had struck. About 17 km from Gonda, I chanced upon a lush green garden. I went there. The garden belonged to a gardener. On his one acre of land, the gardener grew a variety of vegetables