

For CNS

Report of alternate follow-up of
Padayatra in Mehsana District of
30 June 1976

PRAOAS By

From
Subodh
Mehra

Com. Arun Bhatt alongwith Com. Chatur Rathod and Com. Anantrai Dave visited Deria, Dhanpura villages (5-7-76) of Vijapur Taluka, Maguna of Mehsana Taluka on 30-6-76 and Nandasan of Kadi Taluka (4-7-76).

The problems were placed before us by these villagers particularly in implementing 20 point programme are as under :-

Bonded Labour :- is in practice in all the villages visited. The noted examples are as under :-

Deria (Ta. Vijapur) :

One Ramaji Varsangji has worked as 'BHAGIYA' against debt of Rs.700/- and worked for 2 years for the 24 hours job. At the end of 2 years the owner Patel Hargovandas Sankaldas further told them to work under compulsion of debt. So, he refused to work and tried to work with another Patel Jivan Mathur of Deria but Patel Hargovan met Patel Jivan Mathur and told him not to employ Ramaji and under threat and coercion nobody gave work to Ramaji. Patel Hargovan had threatened Ramaji that he should clear off the huge sum of Rs.1600/- or he should work further as bonded labour. So Ramaji had no alternative but to leave the village. His wife and children are in starvation. Immediate action needed.

Vadasan/Kukarwada/Dhanpura (Vijapur Taluka) :

Patel Sendhabhai Maganbhai of Kukarwada had employed Thakore Punjaji Hariji of Vadasan against a small sum for 4 years he had worked and could not leave him as Patel Sendhabhai did not allow him to go and was all the time demanding fant astic sum. Thakore Punjaji had no alternative but to run away while his wife and child had to go to their father's house at Dhanpura (Tal. Vijapur).

Immediate action is needed.

Maguna :

One Talsang Sujaji Chauhan had remained in debt for 10 years of his owner Joitaram Shankerdas Patel, Shedi Vas, Maguna eventhough worked for his owner for 24 hours and put in hard labour, owner was charging heavy rate of interest i.e. 10% per month. At the end of 10 years hard work he was in debt of Rs.500/-.

MINIMUM WAGES FOR AGRICULTURAL LABOUR :

At no village Minimum Wage of Rs.5.50 is paid. The prevailing rates are as under :-

* Deria Rs.2.50 to 3.00

Dhanpura Rs.3.00 to 4.00

Maguna Rs. 3.00 to 4.00

Nandasan Rs. 4.00 to 5.00

* At Deria the landlord are not employing the local Khet Majur and bringing from the nearby villages.

House Sites :

House sites is a burning problem. Where the 'village-site' land is not available the land has not been acquired and poor people are without house-sites.

	<u>Applicant</u>	<u>House-site given</u>
Dhanpura	200	45
Maguna	52	-
Nandasan	200	35*

*'Smashan' land is offered.

Debt :

Particularly all are in heavy debt and paying heavy rate of interest @ 5 to 10% per month.

Nandasan (Harijan Agri. Labour)

Maguna (Thakore Agri. Labour)

Deria (Thakores Agri. Labour)

& Dhanpura (Thakores Agri. Labour)

Waste-land or surplus land :

No landless labourer got waste or surplus land at all in these villages.

In Deria (Ta. Vijapur) Grazing land 'Gauchar' is much more in excess than it required for cattle grazing even then the land is not given to landless labourers.

In Nandasan (Tal. Kadi) Govt. Land Survey Nos.277, 272, 280, 273 & 274 are available but still not given to landless labourers. Where about 500 agricultural landless labourers are in badly need of Land.

In all the above villages, people more enthusiastically, welcomed greeted with Lal Salam.

Sub. M. Bhatt
Arun Bhatt, **CPI**
Secretary, Mehsana Dist. **Com. Party.**
Organizing Sect

Surat
BKMY
Near Vasant Talkies
Gujarat
21-10-'26
20 Oct 1926

Dear Com. Godian..

You must have received my inland letter written three days back.

Afterwards, I came to Surat to organise affiliation and delegation for the conference.

Now it has been decided that Com. Nander Shenmare secretary of Gujarat unit BKMY will lead a delegation of about 10 workers and reach at Ashok Nagar in time for the conference. Due to other occupations I will not be able to attend it this time.

Com. Nander will pay you affiliation fee for 7000 members to start with. For the present I am the president of Gujarat unit.

He will also present there full factual report of the situation prevailing here in aphi. labour front. Please acknowledge this at my Bhavnagar address.

Thanks.
Yours truly
~~Bature~~
Bature

4. 12. 11. 76.

GUJARAT KHEET MAZDOOR UNION

12 Nov 1976

Gujrat Agrarian Labour Conditions

There has been ~~26~~ 26-16 percent increase in the agrarian population in Gujarat between 1961 to 1971. It is rather much ahead in this race comparing to only 19-42 percent in neighbouring Madhyapradesh or only 14-06 percent in Maharashtra. The deterioration in the conditions of the small peasants increasingly lead them to join the ranks of agrarian labour and to that extent the growth of capitalist class in agriculture is speedier in Gujarat. In terms of numbers the agricultural labour population here stands to about 4 million. As much as one-third of this is cocentraded in five districts namely- ~~Baroda~~ Baroda-Broach, Surat, Bulsar and Dangs in South Gujarat, and partially in Palitana and Savarkundla areas of Bhavnagar District and Mahesana District. The problems of agricultural labour too find acuteness in these districts more than the other regions of the Gujarat State.

ORGANISATIONAL POSITION

Our unit in Gujarat is yet in its pioneering stage. Its branches are functioning in the districts of Surat, Bulsar Dangs, Baroda, Mehsana and Bhavnagar. So far 7000 members have been enrolled. We expect to enrol totally 10,000 members by the end of this year. This is our modest objective. After the winter crop season the work of enrolment will get momentum. There has been tremendous wave of new consciousness among landless poor and more we are able to attend to their work more they rally around Red-Flag.

The sharpest struggle for securing the implementation of Minimum Wage and other reliefs is going on in South Gujarat. Attacks and counter attacks between landless poor and rich farmers' hired gangs of goondas are order of the day. We have been actively pursuing their problems at Taluka as well as District levels.

Com. Batuk Vora is taken up in the State level committee for minimum wage. Similarly our party's district leaders have been taken up in Taluka-level committess for the minimum wage implementation.

Home-stead plots-

It was during the first Congress Ministry after 1972 elections the distribution of 100 sq.yards plots to agrarian labour in villages was carried with great vigour. It was further implemented during emergency. The problem on this issue is not the actual distribution- which is quite good- but non-utility of these plots. Agricultural labour can hardly build a hut or house over this plot and neither district panchayats nor any commercial bank has come forward to advance any subsidy or loan for houses. So the plots are where they were without any stone moved. The Rural Housing Board that had been formed to solve this problem has not so far come forward with any concrete scheme.

Land-Ceiling.

The Gujarat Land Ceiling Amendment Act that was passed in 1973 was blocked in High Court till this year. It was estimated by the then Government that about 50,000 Acres of land would become surplus but now after the beginning of the

implementation of this Act, which is very tardy and slow of course, it has been announced that much more land would become surplus. If other waste lands are also added the surplus would be still more. But it may be noted that the distribution of the same so far has been done to a very few numbers.

Rural Indebtedness.

The Law for abolition of Rural Indebtedness has come in force from 15th August 1876. It will give debt relief to landless labour, marginal and small farmer and rural artisans. However the necessary rules framed after the lapse of two months. Where our party and Khet Mazdoor union are strong enough some landless people could get back their household utensils or only silver ornaments which were mortgaged with the rural usurpers. Statutory implementation will take a lot of time. Even according to Government claims only 2,45,000 persons will get this benefit only. This will be from moneylenders who are license-holders. However the number of unlicensed moneylenders is quite large. The present law does not provide any relief or protection from such people.

Serfdom

In the villages and especially adivasi populated areas and areas populated by scheduled castes in one or the other form landless people are living ~~under serfdom~~ under serfdom.

Thus there is ~~no~~ implementation of 20-point programme in our State, of course not satisfactory or in full swing, but strong Khet Mazdoor unions and their involvement would only give a guarantee for fruitful implementation of 20-point programme.

12-11-76

Handwritten signature

Leader of Gujarat Delegation

Gujarat State Khet Mazdoor Union