

1

5. Economic activities

Our small savings scheme runs well in five villages. The table shows how things stood on 31.3.95.

Village	Balance (in Rs)	Total No. of Pass Books per person (in Rs)	Average deposit	Average of a/cs carrying out transaction per month
Andharmanik	9,647.75	64	150.74	62
Bajitpur	9,337.25	165	56.5845	
Chandalati	27,033.25	191	141.53	47
Fatullyapur	26,040.00	312	83.4626	
Kolsur	1,196.66	72	16.62	59

At Andharmanik, one loan of Rs 1, 000 was given this year. The respective figures in the other villages were: Bajitpur-six and Rs 4,000; Chandalati-21 and Rs 10, 010; Fatullyapur-17 and Rs 136, 550. There was no loan at Kolsur because the deposit continues to be low. Repayment is usually regular and timely.

The powdered spices unit at Chandalati, employing four women and a man, sold over Rs 95,000 of stuff in the year, including Halud (turmeric)850 kg, Jeera (cummin seed)805 kg, Dhania (coriander)-260 kg, Lanka (chilli)-245 kg, Methi (fenugreek)-42 kg, Golmarich (black pepper)-35 kg, Rai Sarse (white mustard)—52 kg.

The honey bottling and processing unit at Andharmanik, which employs three men, sold just a little less than 1, 000 kg of honey in the year.

We have a revolving fund for loans to be given to women for various income generating activities. This year too a number of loans were given in all the villages mainly to rear animals like cows, goats, pigs, and chicken, but also for trading in rice, date palm gur, mat making etc. This then is a brief account of what we did between 1 April 1994 and 31 March 1995. Brief, and also dry, with no reference to the myriad facets of the human factor that permeates all our work and experience. This does not have to be sentimental, nor must it offer cheap thrills to those seeking a change from their daily grind of selfish survival. Only those who work with compassion among the underprivileged know that their work can never be dry.

2

And it is to those who work for Swanirvar that the last word must be addressed. It is a cherished, though rather flimsily based, assumption that a group can remain permanently superior to the society it serves. Given the widespread corruption all around us, the decay in public morals, the mindset that accepts that only the strongest (read richest) have the right to survive, it would be foolish to expect that the workers of Swanirvar will remain untainted for ever. But let us at least put up a fight. Who knows the eddy might recede before we are sucked in, the destructive cyclone may calm down before we are blown away? It is for all of us individually to try and remain true to the ideals of Swanirvar: compassion; politeness, selflessness. We are not in the business of charity, our job is to give back dignity to people who surrendered it so long ago that they have forgotten they ever had it. We do not do them a favour; we improve ourselves by helping people reclaim what is theirs by right.