



## St. Thomas' Collegiate School 1982 Magazine

### **The Village Re-Awakeing Movement Of Sri Lanka**

An ideal which was conceived in the mind of our honorable prime Minister R. Premadasa has blossomed into a concentrated effort to give us much as many Sri Lankans as possible a roof above their heads. This noble ideal can be identified as the village Re-awakeing Movement of Sri Lanka. What does this movement signify? What are its aims? To find a solution to these questions the whole movement has to be placed under close scrutiny. It can be defined as a project where by a self sufficient and secure rural society can be created by initiating a programme having its root at the very backward rural areas of our country. It calls not only for an economic revival. The Sinhala term 'Gammudava' which clearly expresses the ideal behind the movement the re-awakening of villages.

The concept of village re-awakening was born as a result of other projects. The upliftment of the rural folk is the aim for the 'Sarwodaya Movement'. The Village re-awakening movement is distinctly more and stands out. It is the first national undertaking by which taking the village as a unit works towards the ultimate Upliftment and development of our country. The 24th of June 1978 was a unique day in the annals of Sri Lankan history as Sri Lanka witnessed the birth of this movement, the brain child of the Prime Minister. The first village is situated in the village named Badalgama in the Yapahuwa district. It was named 'Udagama.'

The following aspects are taken into consideration when a model village is in its blue print stage. Firstly racial barriers are not taken into account and secondly the area that is to be selected should be a very backward area with the villages facing tremendous problems. Accordingly some of the model villages have been named as 'Senasiligama, Diwurugama, Kanthalai Gramman and etc.

The village re-awakening movement is based on many aims which can be realized when it is implemented throughout the country. The economic welfare of the rural villages is by far the most important aim. Model villages are built with the aim of reducing poverty, ignorance and unemployment. It is also hoped to safeguard the rural producer from exploitation by the middle man. This can easily be done by buying their own produce directly from their villages. This programme will also help in addition to opening new avenues of employment, by the enhanced use of local raw materials.

The social and cultural welfare is the second most important aim of the programme. The unity of all people living in Sri Lanka irrespective of barriers of caste, colour or creed is stressed. The development of our Fair Isle can undoubtedly be expedited if all citizens join hands and work towards a common goal - a prosperous and self sufficient Sri Lanka.

By starting projects by which the rural folk can get together, a sense of patriotism, service and confidence can be installed in the younger generation of our country. This will help co-ordination in development activities and also pave the way for a progressive society as a whole.

This unique and brave undertaking is bound to be a success, as at the helm of it is our dynamic Prime Minister, R. Premadasa who has made this his prime concern. The sevana lottery is a recent addition to this programme. Philanthropists are given an opportunity of contributing towards this worthy cause with the setting up of the sevana fund.

But the village re-awakening movement is not perfect. If this programme is to bear fruit the general public the leaders and the bureau crafts should work with a single minded dedication and honestly without any doubt. I am sure that this unique undertaking is one of the main aspects in Sri Lanka's surge towards development. The economic, social and cultural benefits are immense once the entire programme is completed.

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