

SEVA DHAM - A PLEDGE TO THE SOIL



In an attempt to bring about Integrated Rural Development, a project called the 'Sai Baba Seva Dham' has been undertaken by the Radha Kaliandas Daryanani Charitable Trust. It is unique in that for the first time in India eight reported institutes have come together with the aim of uplifting the rural poor. The KEM hospital, Pune, the National Association for the Blind, India, the SOS Balgram the Dyaneshwar Vidyapeeth, Pune; the Industrial Training Institute-Pune; Society for the Education of the Crippled, Bombay; the Society for the Mentally Retarded, Bombay and the Khadi Village and Industries Board have been chosen for this scheme. In turn these eight associations will provide rural oriented

industrial training to the poor and handicapped-- something they can use back home in their villages."The accent is on self sufficiency" underlines Mr. Daryanani where after a six months training the poor and the handicapped can return to their own homes in their villages and earn a livelihood so that they can become an asset to their village.

A temple of Shr Sai Baba has been built and an idol of Sai Baba has been installed in the shrine. When asked why, Mr. Daryanani said "I am a devotee of Sai Baba because he stood for the integration of mankind. I cannot think of any other saint like him. Although he was a hindu, he lived in a masjid, discussed the Koran and wor-

shipped fire." So although the brochure of the plan has the words "All religions are one" written large across it at the project, there is only one shrine -- that of Sai Baba.

The project lays emphasis on the "Gandhian philosophy" of rural development by encouraging and developing the "cottage Industry". Importance is also given to industrial training which is rural oriented. The above scheme will not only cater to the Mawal Taluka in Pune but to the entire state of Maharashtra as well as the Western Sector of India. For further information you could contact the Radha Kaliandas Daryanani Charitable Trust; 521, Commerce House, 140 NM Road, Fort, Bombay -23.