

# The Indian Girl Guide Movement



*Patrol drill of Guides.*

RELAXING at home after a rather more than usually frustrating day, I thought, "How nice it would be if more of the people we have to deal with in daily life were imbued with the Guide Spirit" — the willingness to meet the other person half way; to give a little rather than to take a lot; to attempt to try and see things from the other man's point of view rather than forcing one's own views and opinions down another's throat.

How is this spirit engendered in the Guide Movement? By getting the girls to conform to a code of honour and behaviour on which good

citizenship is founded. When we realise that in this world-wide movement there are over 5 million Guides in 44 countries — all wearing the same world badge; corresponding with sister guides throughout the world; exchanging visits and joining in international camps — the opportunities that the Indian Guides in this country have of imbibing this 'Guide Spirit' need little emphasis.

Lord Baden Powell of Gilwell, who founded the Scout movement for boys in 1907, was struck by the fact that more and more girls were reading "Scouting for Boys" and wanted



*Learning knots at camp to make gadgets.*

to become Scouts, so he started a parallel movement for the girls after organising a rally for them at Crystal Palace in 1910. Soon after this he married and his wife, Lady Baden Powell, took charge of the movement and is to-day still the Chief Guide of the World.

Just as in England where guiding was closely allied with scouting, so it was with Indian guiding in this Country. When the late Mr. H. S. Done started scouting for Indians here he had the vision to cater for the girls also, so that in 1934 he founded the Suburban Indian Boy Scouts and Girl Guides Association. He was assisted in this by the late Mrs. Eleanor Thomas, then Principal of the Clairwood Girls' School. In 1937 the guides formed their own association with Mrs. Cecile C. Banks, wife of the former Director of Educa-

tion in Natal, Dr. R. A. Banks, as President. From this time onwards the Indian guides came under the direct jurisdiction of the Girl Guides Association of South Africa (European). Europeans held the position of Divisional Commissioner of the Indian section until 1963 when Mrs. M. Naidoo was warranted as the first Indian Divisional Commissioner. The notable part played by the European Commissioners, Miss A. Howard, Mrs. M. Dorey, and Mrs. Bongers in the furtherance of the noble ideals of this movement among Indians is gratefully acknowledged by the Indian community.

Highlights of the association's early activities were the combined annual rallies of Scouts and Guides held at Albert Park. These were picturesque events that were eagerly looked forward to by the community. Competitions in

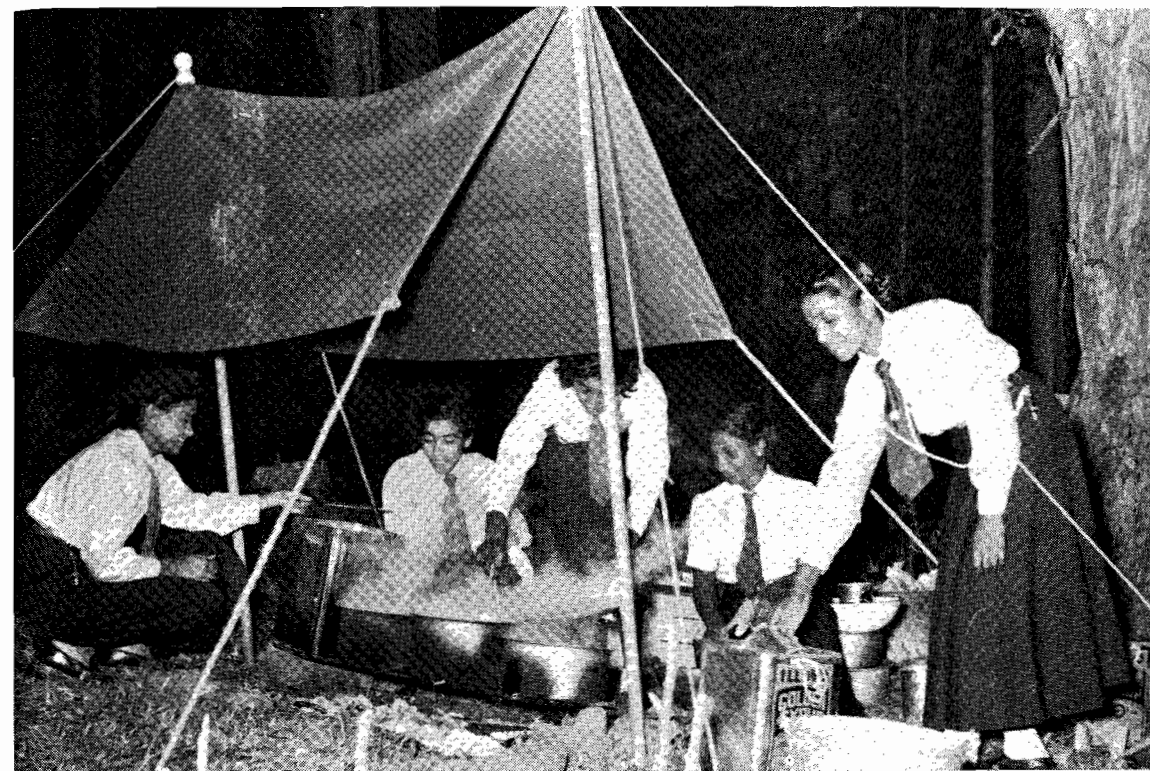
First Aid, Physical Training (Gymnastics) and General Proficiency were the chief attractions at these rallies.

The Indian guides have not been unmindful of their duty to the community both in helping those less fortunate and also during times of disaster. During the 1949 riots in Durban the guides assisted the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the South African Red Cross Society in attending to the injured and offering relief to the victims. This type of service is typical of the guides during times of floods, fires and accidents like the Effingham train disaster. The less fortunate and underprivileged children have always been helped by the guides, by the provision of food hampers, clothing, toys, etc. The Aryan Benevolent Home, Fosa, Child Welfare and the Blind Society are

some of the organisations that have been assisted by the guides. An important aspect of welfare work carried out by guides is offering companionship to lonely, elderly patients, who are bedridden, by reading to them and offering them succour and comfort.

Great emphasis has always been placed on the training of leaders as no youth organisation could flourish without trained leaders of the right calibre. A great step forward in this direction was the formation of the first Cadet Company in 1953 under the leadership of Miss Dorey. Regular training camps were held where guiders received the necessary training to run their companies efficiently. Whilst all these camps had previously been run by Europeans, history was made this year when the first camp run entirely by Indian personnel was held at

*A singing game in progress.*



*Guides prepare their meals at camp.*

Park Rynie with Mrs. M. Naidoo as Commandant.

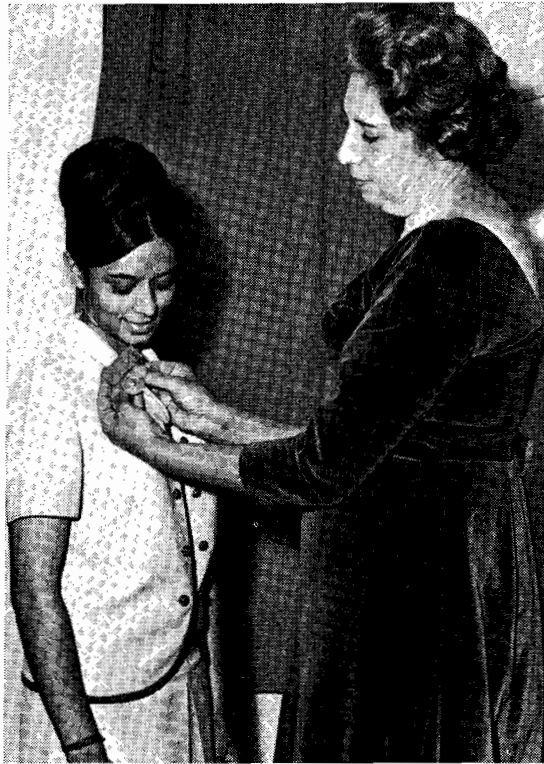
The International aspect of guiding had not been lost sight of by the Indian guides as is indicated by their participation in the following:

- (i) All African Conference in Johannesburg in 1947.
- (ii) First international camp held in East London in 1954.
- (iii) Mrs. Shirley Appanna represented the South African Indian guides at the World Rally held in Great Britain in 1957.
- (iv) Represented by Mrs. Sashamma Moodley at the African Guiders Conference in Rhodesia.
- (v) Sunthoshum Camp held at Mariannahill in 1957 to celebrate Golden Jubilee of

Scouting. Attended by Indian Guides from all over South Africa.

- (vi) Participated and gave demonstrations at the Republic Celebrations held at Kingsmead last year.
- (viii) Brownies celebrated Golden Jubilee in 1967.

The membership of the Indian Guide Movement in South Africa at present stands at 750 Guides; 80 Brownies; 12 Cadets; 50 Warranted Captains and 6 Commissioners. These figures do little credit to the Indian community and we look forward to principals and teachers in particular to give encouragement and foster this movement that has such noble aims as its objective.



ABOVE: Nurse Patel receiving the Delicia Judson Gold Medal from Mrs. S. C. Dolkens.

BELOW: Professor W. E. Phillips presenting the Nursing Diploma to Sister I. R. T. Poodhum.



# INDIAN NURSE AWARD AND CERTIFICATES

THREE ceremonies of particular interest to the Indian Community took place recently at which Indian nurses were presented with certificates and awards for their achievements in their chosen career as nurses.

Miss Aminabibi Patel, who is doing a mid-wifery course at Durban's King Edward VIII Hospital was awarded the coveted Delicia Judson Gold Medal for her outstanding performance in the nursing examinations. Miss Patel obtained the highest marks in the final examination for general nurses conducted last year by the South African Nursing Council. The medal was presented by Mrs. S. C. Dolkens, a member of the Board of the South African Nursing Association.

The first Indian nurse to obtain a nursing diploma, Sister I. R. T. Poodhum, was presented with her diploma by Professor W. E. Phillips, Vice-Principal of the University of Natal.

At the graduation ceremony held at the King Edward VIII Hospital a number of Indian nurses received their certificates from Major Leonard Arthur, M.E.C.

During the course of his address Major Arthur said that the nurses had accented life's challenge and stood on the threshold of their future career. He assured them that nothing in the careers that lay ahead of them would give them greater happiness and that deeply satisfying feeling of well-being than hard unselfish work and the continued determination to do their best at all times and under all circumstances.

Some interesting facts concerning the provision of medical services for the non-White groups were revealed by Major Arthur. In 1964, the Provincial Council of Natal voted R18,400,000 for hospital, medical and health services — the figure for the current year is over R29 million — an increase of some R10,000,000 in four years. Seventy to seventy five per cent of this amount will be available for non-White services as against twenty to twenty five for the White community. Almost 90% of the amount required for hospital services is contributed by the White population of the province.



ABOVE AND BELOW: Some of the nurses who received their graduation certificates from Major Leonard Arthur M.E.C.



ABOVE: The symbolic "lighting of the lamp" at the graduation ceremony.



# CHILD WELFARE WORK AMONG INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA:

## A Historical Review

THE emergence of welfare organisations in the field of social welfare service in all communities in South Africa is essentially a development of the Twentieth Century. The Children's Protection Act No. 25 of 1913, which was the first national legislation to deal with the care of children was based upon the English Children's Act of 1908. The first child welfare society in the country was established in Cape Town in 1908 as a Society for the Protection of Child Life, and was the forerunner of the child welfare societies which were established throughout the country. Concerned by the high incidence of infant mortality in the country, the Child Life Protection Society opened clinics with the object of saving the lives of sick children, to advise mothers on health matters and render necessary services to sick children.

As in the other fields of welfare work the churches made a great contribution to the care and welfare of children prior to the development of welfare bodies. Christian missionary activity initially concentrated on formal education for children, medical services and care of the destitute and needy. These activities were also extended to Indians. The origin and development of welfare work among the Indian people therefore, follow the same pattern as other welfare work in South Africa, i.e. from

one of mutual and self-help to a service organised mainly by religious bodies followed by the emergence of voluntary societies which have provided the link between the community and the various state welfare services.

Some twenty years after the first Child Welfare Society in South Africa had been established in Cape Town, the need for a similar organisation to cater for the needs of the less privileged members of the Indian community became increasingly apparent. The overcrowded and unsatisfactory conditions under which many of the poorer Indians were then living contributed to a lowering of their standard of health with a consequent high increase in the infant mortality rate.

At a meeting held in July, 1927, convened by the then existing Durban Indian Women's Association which was addressed by Mrs. Stanford, an Honorary Magistrate in the Presidency of Madras, an appeal was made for the establishment of a Child Welfare Society. This led to the framing of a constitution and the establishment of the Durban Indian Welfare Society, the first Indian Child Welfare Society in the country. The objects of this society were:-

(a) to protect the interests and promote the well-being of Indian children in Durban and its district;



*A group photograph of some of the leading personalities who were present at the meeting convened by the Durban Indian Women's Association in July 1927 to discuss the formation of an Indian Child Welfare Society.*

- (b) to see that the provisions of the Children's Protection Act were implemented;
- (c) to promote the physical and moral welfare of the children;
- (d) to investigate and deal with cases of poverty, neglect, crime and mental deficiency among or affecting Indian children, and
- (e) to co-operate with other bodies or institutions with similar aims.

Any Indian man or woman interested in this work could become a member of the Society.

Within the first three years after its establishment the Society dealt mainly with problems connected with child welfare work, and undertook the investigation of health, housing, sanitation and other incidental problems.

In addition mothers were visited at their homes and advice on health and hygiene was given to them.

A great deal of the Society's work was concerned with its Brook Street Clinic, where the number of attendances grew daily. This clinic was later taken over by the Durban Corporation, together with its attendant maternity, child health and hygiene work, and was the forerunner of the many Indian health clinics

which are today being operated by the Durban Corporation.

By 1940 the health work of the Society had been taken over by the municipal clinics, the R. K. Khan Hospital and Dispensary Trust, and the King Edward VIII Hospital, and the Society was able to pay more attention to the other aspects of child welfare work, such as e.g. the adoption of children, desertion of families, destitution, illegitimacy and marital discord. The creation of the Department of Social Welfare, the enactment of the Children's Act No. 30 of 1937, which contained enlightened provisions designed to promote child welfare work, the inauguration of the Public Assistance Scheme, and the granting of grants-in-aid to organisations registered in terms of Natal's Charitable Institutions Control Ordinance 1932, gave added impetus and wider scope to the activities of the Child Welfare Societies.

The Pietermaritzburg Indian Child Welfare Society, which since 1932 had been functioning under the control of the White Child Welfare Society of that city, launched out as an independent body in 1937.

As a result of representations which were made by the Durban Indian Child Welfare Society for representation on the South African National Council for Child Welfare, the representatives of existing non-White Child Welfare Societies were invited to attend a meeting in 1940. This led to the formation of a Standing Committee for non-White Child Welfare. The non-White Societies initially expected that there would ultimately be four independent autonomous bodies, i.e. National Councils for European, Coloured, Indian and Bantu Child Welfare, from which a joint committee could be appointed for consultative purposes. To this end the Durban Child Welfare Society had in

1939 already taken the initiative by assisting in the foundation of Indian Child Welfare Societies in Stanger, Verulam, Tongaat, Dannhauser and Dundee.

A further milestone in the history of the Indian Child Welfare movement was reached in 1941, with the holding of a conference on the 24th and 25th May of that year at which the Welfare Societies in Natal decided to establish a Natal Indian Council for Child Welfare. Indian Child Welfare work had now been raised to the provincial level for the first time.

The formation of the Natal Council was followed by the establishment of Child Welfare Societies at Umzinto, Newcastle and Port Shepstone, with the Council co-ordinating the activities of all the branches and acting as the official channel of communication in matters of policy and of national and provincial character.

While the Natal Indian Council for Child Welfare co-ordinated child welfare work in Natal, the Johannesburg Indian Child Welfare Association extended its activities to Pretoria. In the smaller centres of the Transvaal, however, Coloured and Indian organisations existed.

After the Second World War, when big changes occurred in the social structure as a result of the urbanisation of the community, the rise in dependency, the change over from agricultural to industrial employment, and the break-up of the joint family system, the Child Welfare Societies were called upon to undertake increased responsibilities. The introduction of the Maintenance Grant Scheme for example which enabled families whose male head had fallen away to receive financial assistance from the State involved the Child Welfare Societies in considerable supervisory duties.

Another factor which increased the work of Indian child welfare societies was the passing

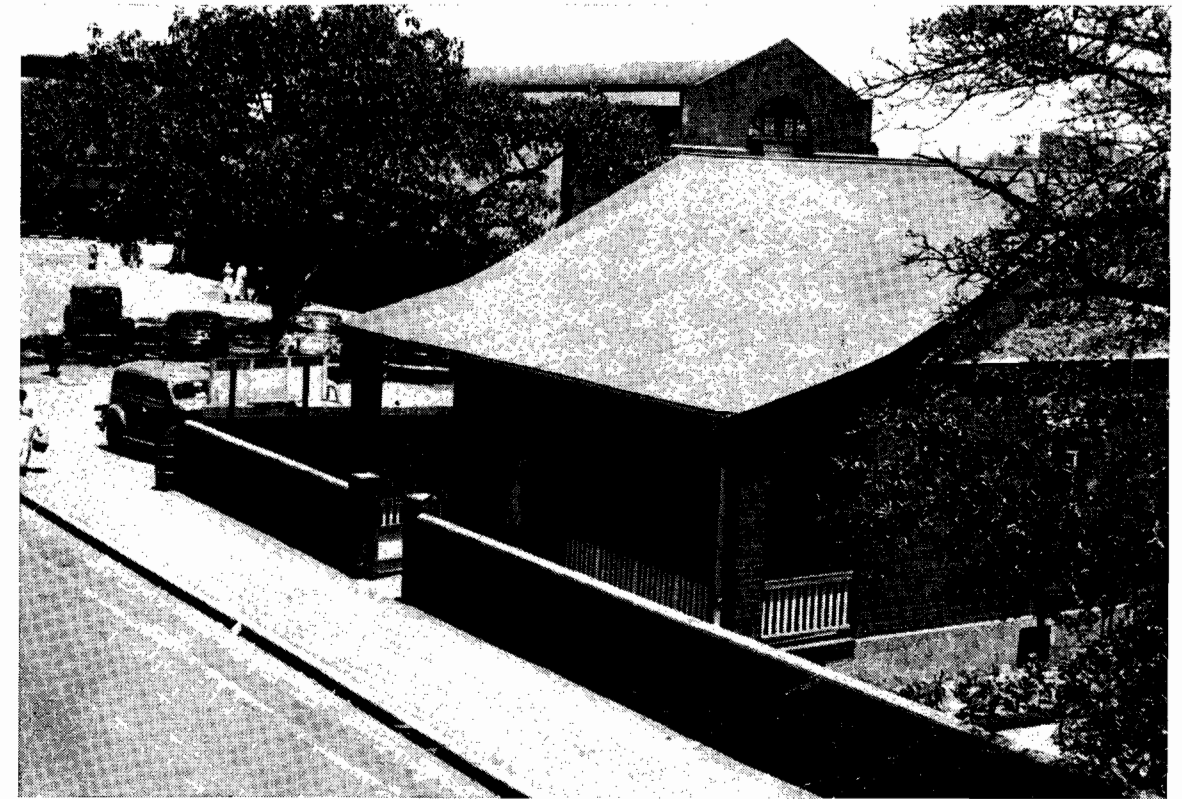
of the social aid schemes to Indians by making them eligible for old age pensions, disability grants, etc. The Maintenance Grant Scheme was also extended to allow family allowances to be paid.

Apart from these responsibilities, problems caused by desertion, non-support, neglect and alcoholism had to be attended to. In Pietermaritzburg several pre-school milk centres were developed and attempts were made to inaugurate sewing clubs. A "Child Welfare Week" was held in Stanger to focus attention on the needs and care of children. In Umzinto a clinic was run in conjunction with the White society.

Institutional care for Indian children has been provided by the Aryan Benevolent Home in Durban since 1926. In 1959 the Durban

Indian Child Welfare Society also inaugurated a scheme which provides for the institutional care on the cottage system for abandoned, neglected, orphaned and other children in need of care, on its 65 acre site at Sea Cow Lake. An organisation in the Muslim Community called the Muslim Darul Yatama Wal Masakeen also runs a similar home at Westhaven for Muslim children.

Indian child welfare work has indeed progressed considerably since those early days of missionary endeavour and the work of religious groups. Today the larger child welfare societies are well organised bodies with proper professional and administrative staff, and are equipped to deal with a great variety of problems in their case-work services to individuals and



*The Brook Street Clinic which was opened and operated by the Durban Indian Child Welfare Society until its take-over by the Durban Corporation.*



*A scene at one of the early clinics where much of the Society's work was centred.*

families. In close co-operation with State Departments and local authorities they investigate cases of neglect, cruelty, and need in so far as it affects the child. As far as general family work is concerned they encourage the raising of standards in the home, help families to become adjusted in the community, counsel and guide families in their problems and strive to prevent the break-up of homes in cases of domestic discord.

In terms of the Children's Act, Child Welfare Societies also undertake investigations involving the placement, supervision and the adoption of children.

There are at present 14 independent Indian child welfare societies in Natal operating in Durban, Verulam, Inanda, Tongaat, Stanger, Umzinto, Port Shepstone, Pietermaritzburg, Greytown, Glencoe, Estcourt, Dundee, Dannhauser and Newcastle. In the Transvaal Societies have been established at Johannesburg (including Lenasia), Pretoria and Benoni.

The Indian Community indeed every reason to be proud of the role which these Societies are playing in the life of the community today in their endeavour to promote child welfare work among the Indian people, and in the service which they are rendering to the community.