

The Charitable Association for Rural Education and Development (READ), Bettiah, is a 37 year old nongovernment, non-profit organization, working for the empowerment, development and realization of the entitlements and rights of the socially excluded and marginalized people in the remote areas of Bihar, especially, WestChamparan district.

Our vision

To build an egalitarian and self-reliant society founded on human values by developing self-confidence and leadership among the underprivileged sections of our society

Our mission

Empower and capacitate the poor to enable them to realize their human and constitutional rights.

Our focus:

- Educational Mainstreaming of the Deprived Section through innovative educational programmes
- Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institution by Promoting Participatory Self-Governance
- Empowerment of Women and Sustainable Livelihood
- Capacity Building, Legal aid

Our approach

Participatory, Right Based, Collaborative

Community participation, right based approach and collaboration other organisations who share similar values and visions are hall marks of our involvement. The poor are not just the passive beneficiaries but they are the active participants who own up the responsibility to shape their own future. Similarly poverty must be viewed in the larger context of social exclusion and multiple deprivations. People should have equitable access to resources and services as well as rights and entitlements. To achieve this noble aim READ is committed to meaningful and long term collaboration with local organizations, government agencies, networks and alliances on principles of equality, transparency, accountability and mutual trust and respect.

Historical overview of READ

The genesis

The genesis and existence of READ to be part of the struggles of the marginalized people of the area is directly associated with the option made by the Patna Jesuit Province in particular and the Society of Jesus in General. This attempt to be part of the poor in their lives and struggles has come to be known as social apostolate. Translating this option for the poor in the Indian Context, the Jesuits came to identify the Dalits, the Tribals, women, children and unorganized sector workers as the poor. Keeping this in mind, social action centres as well as social institutions were founded to address the issues of these segments of Indian Population to work for structural change, structures that bound the marginalized communities to exclusion, exploitation.

Champanan of the 1970s was infected with low level of grass root organization, illiteracy, discrimination and exploitation of women. The Jesuit Community of Champanan responded to the signs of the times and Rural Development Programme was established by Khrist Raja Educational Association (KREA) in KR premises. Since 1987 the Jesuits in social action moved from KR school into separate centre and The Charitable association for Rural Education and Development (READ) was born.

The founding of READ (then RDP) was an outgrowth of this social and historical process. Thus there is an ideological and operational basis in the demands of the poor as well as the traditions of the Society of Jesus.

Journey down the years.....

READ or Rural Education and Development, Bettiah has come to be known as one of the pioneering social organizations in north Bihar. Since 1975/76 READ Bettiah, then RDP (Rural Development Programme) has been engaged in grass-root organization of the common people in West Champanan district. The people of Champanan who have been in the forefront of many struggles were the main actors in the various attempts made by READ to be part of the welfare, developmental, awareness creation, mobilization and organizational activities of people.

Our first initiative (1976-1990) was to educate and organize the poor through the Adult Education Centres with the Central government assistance.

From 1990 our focus was shifted to non-formal education programme for non- school going poor children. With the help of BEP, Patna and later from MHRD, New Delhi, and GTZ New Delhi, we ran about 900 NFE centres till 2002. This programme helped to educate thousands of non-school going poor children, particularly girls.

From 1990/91 READ was recognized as DRU by the central government. District administration W. Champanan and UNICEF, Patna selected READ to be the nodal agency for the Convergent Community Action (CCA), a central government programme for the district. The aim was to organize the landless poor women and channelize the Govt. welfare programmes through them for their development.

From 1993/94 READ was recognized by the Bihar State legal aid board for legal aid. Since then we have been providing legal assistance to the poor.

During the period 2003-2006, we were part of the ATSEC (Action against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Women) Bihar chapter. We have done a commendable work in the issues related to women trafficking and exploitation in the border areas of Nepal.

From 2008 onwards we are running a special programme for the Mahadalit (**Musahar community**) in the 28 hamlets of Bairia and Jogapatti block of West Champaran Dt. This is a comprehensive programme that is aimed at educational mainstreaming and vocational training of Musahar children through supportive education centers and residential programmes and community mobilization through women empowerment and advocacy programmes.

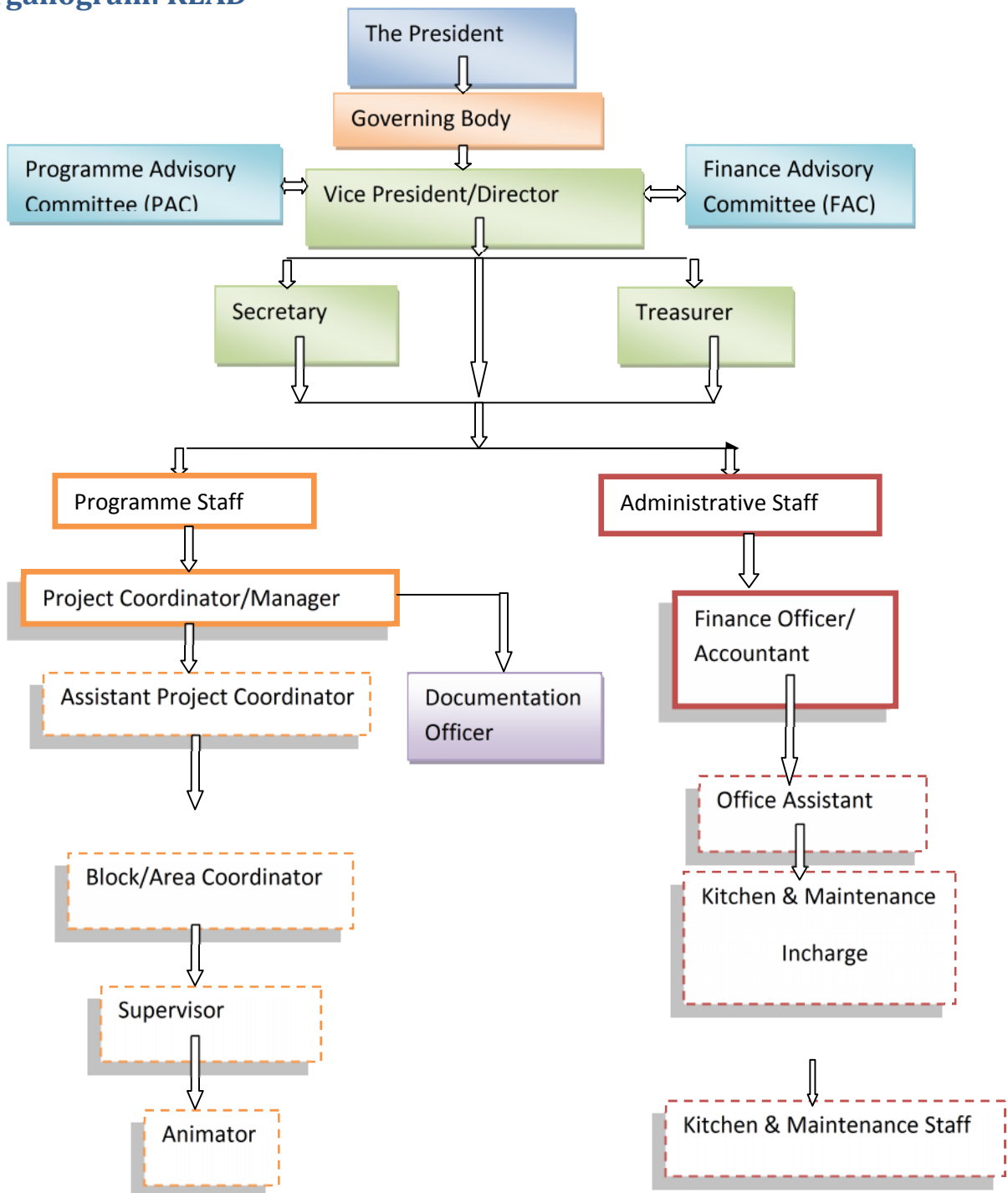
We also possess 20 years of experience in working with the '**Tharu Tribe**' in Gaunaha and Baghaha blocks.

A brief description of the strategy followed by different programmes since 1978

Year	Programme	Methodology
1978-85, 1991-92	National adult Education Programme	Freirian methodology of conscientisation; more specifically the problem posing education was used
1980-85, 1992	Follow-up programme	Distribution of books and establishment of village libraries to facilitate thinking and discussion; books and the happenings of the village were themes for discussion
1980s	Cultural revival	Use of cultural/visual media; Re-interpretation of traditions and social customs through visual media
1979-2003	Training on various themes; awareness, social analysis, herbal medicine, health and hygiene, legal education, leadership, Panchayati Raj, Social Justice, Innovative Education, etc.	Methodology of conscientisation and participation; Ambedkar's ideal of organization and agitation; besides the Marxian methodology of social analysis
1987	Village VikasSamiti	Savings was symbolically used as a starting point of dreaming future and to be self-reliant; Creation and strengthening of CBOs
1991	District Resource Unit (DRU)	Developing Resources through local research and social analysis; permeation of resources through contextualized trainings
1993-2003	GraminMahilaVikasSamiti	This improved version of Village VikasSamiti was a spring board of women empowerment through participatory social living, CBOs (intensive direct action and extensive capacity building)
1991-2002	Non-formal education from BEP and Central Government; NFE from GTZ	Education and mobilization of people in a sustained manner through a multi-pronged approach; An integrated text book ' <i>Chirag</i> ' for classroom teaching was based on the Paulo Freirian paradigm.

		Community involvement was a constitutive element of NFE promoted by READ
1996-2004	Convergent Community Action (CCA), sponsored by UNICEF	Convergent Community Action, a methodology proposed by UNICEF
2003-2006	Action Against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children (ATSEC)	Networking with multi stakeholders, counseling, rescuing and rehabilitating, advocacy(Programme based networking)
2005-2009	Bihar PanchayatNavNirmanAbhiyan	Establishing a successful network of 15 CSOs in East and West Champaran districts to strengthen local self governance system; NREGA, RTI, have been special focus areas; Campaign, dharna, rally, etc. Advocacy
2008-2011	Prevention and Alternatives for Child Labour, supported by Tdh, Pune. A comprehensive programme to tackle issues of child labour and dropouts among the Musahar community	Supplementary Education Centres (SECs), Community Mobilization, Residential Training (insertion-withdrawal strategy), vocational trainings for boys and girls, women empowerment, Public advocacy etc.

Organogram: READ



Further Organizational Details

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