

Improving the Educational Status and Human Resource Development among the Socially Excluded Groups

The Charitable Association for Rural Education and Development (READ), Bettiah, is implementing an innovative community based educational programme to address the crucial capability deprivations among the most excluded communities. We have identified children and women as the most important agents of empowerment action in the excluded communities. Based on the long years of experience of empowerment action, we have identified a number of capability deficiencies, such as lack of human capital, organisational capacity, positive self-image, disciplined life style etc. as the major obstacles faced by the target communities in their journey towards freedom, wholeness and dignified existence. Hence, our endeavour is to address these deprivations and to create a pool of diversified human capital resource by focussing on children's quality education.

We have come to believe that liberative education is the single most powerful tool of empowerment and social transformation. Since education invariably generates human capital in any community or society, it is also the most self-sustaining mode of empowerment. Hence, the chief focus of our activities has been the educational mainstreaming & ensuring quality education to the children from *mahadalit* communities through community specific, innovative educational interventions that facilitate accelerated learning and holistic development. Through this community based, creative intervention, we are able to contain child labour, migration and child marriage to a great extent in the focus groups in our operational area.

Though our main focus is on children, adequate attention is also made to interlink and empower the various sections of the community, namely, youth, adolescent girls and women to ensure total participation and involvement of the entire community in the education of their children and to provide a self-sustaining momentum of socio-economic and politico—cultural empowerment of the community.

Our educational intervention addresses three aspects of crucial importance:

- Firstly, the educational mainstreaming of the non-school going children as a preventive and alternative measure to child labour, migration, high rate of drop out, child marriage & trafficking;
- Secondly, to provide complementary support to the children to ensure that they have access to quality education;

- Thirdly, to address the crucial issue of creating a pool of human resource among the most excluded communities.

These goals are achieved through:

- ❖ Effective community mobilization: mobilizing the community, especially women for the education of their children and for their entitlements and rights.
- ❖ Establishment of Supplementary Education Centers in respective tolas(SECs) for all-round assistance from enrolment in schools, mobilizing the community to providing a good educational foundation to children up to 5thstd.
- ❖ Children's Resource Centres (CRCs)for children above 6thstdat the cluster levelto provide adequate academic support, to facilitate group learning, and to prevent migration, child labour , child marriage etc. .
- ❖ Conductingshort and long duration holistic residential trainings for all-round development of their personality, social consciousness, and human values.

Around 2000 Mahadalit children, mostly Musahar children benefit from this intervention. We accompany them from class 1 to 10 through various structures and innovative methods as mentioned above. Our children today stand out in all respects in their respective government schools. The future of the nation and the quality of our civil life depend on the quality of education and the socio-cultural atmosphere that we provide to the children of today. By focusing exclusively on children from the dalit and tribal communities, especially, *Musahar, Dom, Dhankad, Tharus, Uraons who are deprived of equitable access to resources and services, we strive to provide* quality education, and ensure greater social integration and holistic growth for them. In this manner READ is contributing all its might in a silent yet revolutionary act of nation building.