

## **Socio Economic Development Trust, Kerwadi, Tq. Palam, Dist. Parbhani**

### **Education Key Project**

Quarterly Report (April-June 2009)

#### **Planning:**

1. Enrollment drive
2. Village Education Committee (VEC) meetings
3. Kitchen Gardens
4. Bal Panchayat meetings
5. Health awareness
6. Gender equality
7. Visit of Mr. Venugopal

#### **Enrollment drive:**

As planned, the enrollment drive was initiated on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2009 coinciding with the beginning of the new academic year. 81 villages were covered. The VEC, parents groups, youth groups, school teachers and students, and Bal Panchayat participated in the rallies conducted in every village. Similarly, as part of the campaign we undertook meetings of parents in every ward to list out the names of children old enough to be enrolled. 100 percent enrollment was achieved where all six years old children were enrolled in std I.

In this process several parents of children who were in age group 4-5 were insistent that their children be enrolled in std I. However, they were refused admission and instead encouraged to enroll their children in Balwadis/Anganwadis.

#### **VEC meetings:**

In the month of June a total of 55 VEC meetings were held. To ensure that all children of the village go to school, the VEC participated in the enrollment drive and campaign for 100 per cent enrollment. Teachers, VEC, parents- all participated in crucial ways.

In the project area in several villages, the construction of hexagonal classrooms is going on. The construction work must be strong and of good quality. Hence, we are taking meetings to discuss this matter in the villages. The construction work was stalled due to unavailability of water during summer vacations. Similarly, we came to know that some schools had shortage of teachers. So the VEC was asked in the meetings to ensure that vacant posts for teachers be filled. The VEC passed resolutions to the effect. In Shippegaon, Vadi Budruk, Sirpurand Banwas villages, the people contributed to give school uniforms to children.

### **Kitchen Gardens:**

In the project area, the families and children must get nutritious food. They must get vegetables to eat every day. Hence, we have promoted kitchen gardens. But during past months there was acute shortage of water. Hence, the number of kitchen gardens decreased. In the monsoon of June-July, we hope to increase the number of gardens. So we took meetings with women, parents, children, Bal Panchayat, and schools to inform them about how to maintain and protect their gardens; also how to rejuvenate the dried up gardens and start new ones. Since monsoons are approaching the families have demanded that the seeds for vegetable plants be distributed so that gardens can be revived once again. The families who are going to start gardens for the first time have been helped in selection of space, water management, fencing, etc. People are now only waiting for the monsoons. As soon as there is water, the gardens will be green again.

### **Bal Panchayat Meetings:**

In the month of June all schools reopened after summer vacations. All children who had gone out of the village during the vacations returned. In this month we took 50 Bal Panchayat meetings. The following topics were discussed and work has progressed;

- 100% enrolment
- Preparation of a list of children old enough to go to school
- Door to door visits to homes of above children
- Leadership role in enrolment rallies
- Cleaning school premises
- Tree plantation in school during monsoon
- Visit students who are not regular to school
- The replacement of Bal Panchayat members who have migrated to other places for higher education

In Sirsam village, in the Bal Panchayat meeting there were 14 girls and boys. Their school has electrical fittings but there is no electricity. So the children are not able to use fans. It was decided in their meeting that they would do a demonstration at the Chief Engineers office and refuse to budge till the electricity supply is resumed.

### **Health awareness:**

Regular hygiene, sanitation and balanced diet are the three basic requirements for a healthy life. Sound health is required for optimum performance at work. To create this

awareness and inform people about how to do all these things, to make available the services of good doctors at affordable charges, and to make medicine available at cheap prices, we are initiating a Health Project. To ensure that maximum number of people get the benefits of this project we informed the community about the project through 11 of our staff, who in turn informed 640 people. We invited specialist doctors to inform school students about personal hygiene, cleanliness of nails, daily bath, using soap to wash hands after going to toilet, etc.

### **Gender Equality:**

Our staff is regularly discussing the issue of gender equality in the villages. There should be no discrimination in the food distribution, work load, general behavior, educational facilities, etc. between girls and boys in families. This has been our insistence in all meetings. We have even discussed with the teachers about how to increase the participation of girls in school activities.

### **Visit of Mr. Venugopal:**

Mr. Venugopal (from Bangalore) is making a documentary on the concept and implementation of Bal Panchayat. This was his first visit at SEDT to understand the process. He discussed several things with Mr. Suryakant Kulkarni, Mr. Sheikh Musa and other staff. He also got some written material to take along. He visited Arkhed, Tandulwadi and Sirsam villages. He held discussions with Bal Panchayat members and tried to understand their work, management. He was very impressed with the work children had done for village and school development. He was particularly happy that children can bring fundamental changes to their school at such a young age, the village youth is contributing through voluntary labour, and the villagers have contributed monetarily.