

Dear

During my visit to Surat on Sunday, the 18th January 2009, I visited the dwellings of the migrant laborers working for sugar cane cutting, loading and transporting sugar cane, in Bardoli and Madhi, District Surat. The Collector and officials from Education and other related Departments, District Surat accompanied me.

2. I am given to understand that each year over 16000 families migrate to Bardoli and 12000 to Madhi from Maharashtra. There are thousands of children in the age group of 0-14 who accompany them.

3. I was shocked to see the plight of the workers and especially their children. They have little or no access to nutrition, health and education institutions. They have problems of water and toilet facilities. Young infants and children below six years were found largely undernourished and unkempt. There were many girls carrying siblings when they should actually be in a school. I found a couple of education centers for these children run by NGOs and the SSA, which were also in a poor condition.

4. Since it is anticipated that there is migration of families from Maharashtra who stay there for four to five months, there is a need to provide services to children giving them dignity and a decent environment. In this regard, the following action may be taken up:

- In my discussions with the office bearers of sugar factory in Bardoli, I was told that they had submitted a proposal for building structures to the State Government. They mentioned that they were awaiting response from the Government and had offered to share some of the expenses. The status of this proposal may be reported.
- A rapid health and nutritional assessment of all children is a must. I was given to understand that the Madhi sugar factory spends an amount of 39 lakhs towards the health of these workers. Indeed with such an amount I am sure that the Primary Health Care center at Bardoli and around can offer a more comprehensive health care. The District Collector to study the health support of the sugar factories to the migrant workers with reference to children's health and develop a plan for health of all these children in collaboration with the Health Department.
- There were education centers in all these areas set up by SSA directly or through NGOs. However it did not cover all children. It seems that there could be a couple of RBCs for older children. At least by next season a plan in this direction must be made.

5. An action taken report is submitted to the Commission within a month from the date of receipt of this letter.

With

Yours sincerely,

(Shantha Sinha)

Shri D. Rajgopalan,
Chief Secretary,
Government of Gujarat,
Sachivalaya,
Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

C.c.:

The Secretary (Education), Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat

The Secretary (Tribal Welfare), Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat

The Secretary (Health), Government of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Gujarat

The District Collector, Office of the Collector, Surat, Gujarat.

(Shantha Sinha)

Chairperson, NCPCR