



SHANTHA SINHA
Chairperson

भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
राष्ट्रीय बालक अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS

D.O.No.21016/05/2009-NCPCR (PD)

24th July 2009

Subject: Protection of Child Rights in Andhra Pradesh

Dear *Shri Ramahant Reddy,*

As you may be aware, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has been monitoring the status of displaced children in Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh, especially in the areas affected by conflict. In this regard, a fact finding visit was conducted by the NCPCR in December 2007, to Dantewada (Chhattisgarh) and Khammam (Andhra Pradesh), in order to assess the status of children's health and education in the situation of civil unrest. Thereafter a number of local field teams have been deployed by NCPCR to analyze the ground realities.

2. In this context, on behalf of the national team which included Ms. Dipa Dixit, Mr. R. Venkat Reddy and Ms. Swati Narayan, I wish to thank the Andhra Pradesh administration for all the arrangements made during their visit to the State from 9th to 10th July 2009. We would like to thank the district collector, Ms. Usha Rani for organizing a meeting with government officials and civil society on 9th July, 2009 in Khammam. We would also extend our appreciation to Andhra Pradesh Labour, Employment and Training Secretary Mr. Banwar Lal for coordinating and all the officials for their presentation at the joint meeting from across the Districts of Kurnool, Mahabubnagar, Khammam and Adilabad on 10th July, 2009 at the culmination of our visit to determine concrete follow-up actions in coming months.

3. Based on our interactions, it gave us much hope to see the positive attitude of the government officials to address the needs of children. We are encouraged by their continued efforts and present the following issues which require further intervention to enable immediate priority action for our children in need. Based on the detailed discussions held on July 10th with the State Government officials, the following action is desired:

I. Khammam District

While we understand that there is a context-specific situation of migration of tribals into Andhra Pradesh and that all interventions are at best temporary solutions till they are able to return to their villages of origin, development initiatives for migrant children must be extended by the Government of Andhra Pradesh, to ensure the health, safety, education and protection of these children.

*PL. put a copy
in the website
also.*

CL(SJ)

3-9-09

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While we understand the State's predicament regarding the issue of deforestation due to the presence of migrant Guthi Koya tribals and their dependence on the non-timber forest produce (NTFP) and subsistence agriculture, you would agree that irrespective of inter-state borders of origin, every child in a humanitarian crisis needs our attention without discrimination. Our reports have indicated these people have undisputedly severe levels of malnutrition, without the provision of any other livelihood and nutrition alternatives (including access to and payment for NREGS work, food rations from the PDS, etc.) The pre-condition that these migrant tribals must re-settle only within the precincts of existing habitations near the roads to ensure that their children can avail of the most essential of services like basic nutrition, education, healthcare and safe drinking water, may therefore, not be practicable. It is important for the District Administration and the NGO network to coordinate the effort to bring these people out of the forest areas and into the existing or new habitations.

Since 2007, the initiatives undertaken at a district level to address the needs of the migrants are largely in the right direction, but they need to be expanded manifold and regularly monitored as the situation apparently remains that of a humanitarian and nutritional emergency requiring committed and urgent action.

Elementary Education - Residential Bridge Course

- a) Given that there are an estimated 1000-1500 children out of school, especially in the Palvoncha division, there is an urgent need to increase the number of RBCs from the present 4 (which can at best cater to only 400 children) and ensure the smooth transition of children to formal schools.
- b) While the 4 Residential Bridge Courses (RBCs) managed by NGOs are important initiatives to address the needs of migrant children, apparently the fund flow from the government has been acutely irregular for several months. However, the State Project Director of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mr. Mohd. Ali Rafath assured us that he will monitor the streamlining of the fund flow soon and we await his action taken report
- c) We appreciate the extension of all RBCs beyond the stipulated duration of 10 months to ensure care and protection of migrant children many of whom undoubtedly would prove to be slow learners given the difficulties of language
- d) Despite the inherent difficulties of mapping a mobile population, we suggest the need for a habitation-wise mapping of out-of-school/anganwadi children in the appropriate age groups and their nutritional status to enable the planning and provision of necessary education and nutritional interventions

Pre-primary education and nutrition

- e) The only Nutritional Rehabilitation Centre in Khammam district is located in Bhadrachalam with a 70-bed capacity since inception a decade ago and apparently has large unreleased funds. There is undoubtedly a need for the expansion of NRC facilities and to ensure their smooth functioning with quality resources
- f) We wholly endorse the initiative of the District Administration to relax the SSA norms in the appointment of education volunteers in the interior forest areas, but it was alarming to note the statement of a district level official that the Anganwadi vacancies are even filled by illiterates! This matter needs to be examined and addressed immediately.
- g) The provision of ICDS especially regular provision of supplementary nutrition and take-home rations (including double rations for malnourished children, pregnant women and lactating mothers) is essential. The information received by the District Collector in Khammam in 2008 indicated on p. 6 (letter attached), that a detailed plan would be submitted to the state government to ensure coverage of every habitation, especially those identified without an Anganwadi. The Collector, Khammam District, did acknowledge that situation of malnourished children (in grade III and IV), is alarming and needs to be addressed on an emergency basis. We await the action taken report on this matter at the earliest.

Healthcare

- h) We request a status report of the habitation-wise training of health volunteers from among the community (ASHA workers) to establish a system of basic health care by linking the volunteers to the nearest sub-centre/PHC.

Coordination Committee & Child Rights Cell*

- i) We strongly recommend the creation of a multi-stakeholder Coordination Committee (comprising of District level officers, NGOs and the community) and a Child Rights Cell (with the participation of Panchayats and civil society) at the Panchayat/ Mandal/ District level to monitor and coordinate the situation and update the State administration regularly

II. Kurnool and Mahbubnagar District

- a) We appreciate the initiatives being undertaken by the labour department to eliminate the employment of children in cotton farms. To further this effort we recommend the creation of Multi-Stakeholder Vigilance Committees at the Panchayat, Mandal and District levels who undertake social audits and unannounced inspections and report their findings to the State Government regularly.

- b) We would appreciate an update on the meeting held between the seed companies and the State Administration in mid-July and proposed action to be taken against defaulting companies.

III. Adilabad District

- a) While a Nutritional Rehabilitation Centre has been opened in Utnoor, its efficacy needs to be checked in terms of ensuring that a child is medically 'fit for discharge' and fulfils norms for quantum of minimum weight gain. The nutritional status of the children and pregnant and lactating women in the months after discharge also need to be monitored and supported.
- b) The Giripragahi scheme for pregnant and lactating women to get nutritious hot cooked food for 62 health and nutrition centres seem to be promising initiatives but the inclusion of malnourished children is crucial. Its integration with the ICDS scheme could also be beneficial and the provision of double rations, as mandated, for all identified malnourished children needs to be verified.
- c) While information was provided on a 'Food Basket' scheme initiated for vulnerable families, there was uncertainty of the extent and duration of its coverage and we request that the potentially comprehensive initiative be continued and expanded
- d) The control of epidemics action plan is a step in the positive direction especially for the prevention of malaria, but the planned spraying of insecticide in every habitation and the distribution of sanctioned mosquito nets at the village level needs to be monitored. The results of the 75 teams to conduct the rapid fever survey in high-risk habitation need to be shared and their recommendations followed up.
4. We would be grateful if you could send us a report on the steps taken regarding the aforesaid, within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of the letter.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Shantha Sinha
o/c (Shantha Sinha)

Shri Ramakanth Reddy,
Chief Secretary,
Government of Andhra Pradesh,
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Andhra Pradesh.

Copy to:

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The Pr. Secretary, Women and Child Development Department, J Block 3rd Floor Andhra Pradesh, Secretariat, Hyderabad - 500022

The Pr. Secretary (Labour), Department, J Block 3rd Floor Andhra Pradesh Secretariat, Hyderabad - 500022

The Pr. Secretary Education Department, J Block 3rd Floor Andhra Pradesh Secretariat, Hyderabad - 500022

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o/c (Shantha Sinha)
Chairperson, NCPDR