SHANTHA SINHA
Chairperson

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

D.O.No.90/Chhattisgarh /CP/NCPCR/2009/PD 27 February, 2009

Dear Shri G B Mukherjee,

Subject: **Funding from the Government of India for residential Ashram Schools in 7 conflict-affected districts of Chhattisgarh**

As you may be aware, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights has been monitoring the status of children in Chhattisgarh, especially in the districts affected by conflict. The latest visit of the NCPCR team between 15th to 19th January 2009 to Sukma block of Dantewada district found that the situation of education and other issues related to child rights seem to have certainly improved.

However, based on their interaction with State, District and Block level officials, children, teachers, villagers and residents of camps, it was found that one of the most important issues for immediate, priority action which would be equally applicable across the 7 conflict-affected districts relate to the need for residential ashram schools.

There appears to be a ground swell of support from the community to send their children to residential schools in order to complete their formal elementary education. In Dantewada and other Naxal affected districts, families prefer residential schools as:

- They cater to all the basic needs of a child including food, clothing and shelter which is often difficult for the families to provide due to extreme poverty in the tribal areas which is exacerbated by the vagaries of conflict.
- Due to the overall sense of insecurity, several schools in villages remain closed or abandoned as the teachers are reluctant to resume their duties in the wake of the continued Naxal bombing of village school buildings and the occupation of school premises by the CRPF personnel. Parents/guardians therefore struggle to provide for the education and safety of their children as they return to their villages.
- They are safer as the residential ashram schools are mostly located nearer the roads away from the thick of the conflict-affected areas
- They have more regular attendance of teachers and pupils who do not need to commute daily from unsafe areas.

There is undoubtedly an urgent need to increase multifold the number of ashram schools in safe zones rather than formal day schools. The Ashram School model seems to be effective not only for the universalisation of enrolment but also to ensure regular attendance and improve retention rates in the sparsely populated tribal

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areas. It is also an effective means to cater to other issues like malnutrition, health, remedial tuition and holistic child development.

The opening of ashram schools and day schools in adjoining areas is, however likely to dilute the impact of either of these, and we are convinced of the need for all new schools which are opened in the conflict affected-areas to be ashram schools, in the best interest and safety of the children.

Especially in the Naxal-affected areas of Chhattisgarh, estimates indicate that there are approximately 40,000 children who are currently out-of school which would indicate that there is a requirement for **the construction of 400 new ashram schools with the capacity of 100 children each**. This would require substantial contribution of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Ministry for Tribal Affairs of the Central Government to fund this initiative.

In this regard, we greatly appreciate the initiative of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in its letter no. 1/4/8Chhattisgarh/2007-CA.IV. dt.15.09.08 which has approved of the revised scheme for funding of the ashram schools in TSP areas. In addition to the existing funding pattern of 50 percent under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme, it provides for:

- ☐ 100 percent funding for ashram schools for girls in TSP areas
- ☐ 100 percent funding for ashram schools for boys in Naxal affected areas

The State Government has submitted a moderated proposal to the Government of India vide its letter No. F-17-62/08/25-2, dt.29.07.08 for additional funding for the construction of another 218 Ashram schools in 7 Naxal affected Districts. However, we believe, that this proposal awaits approval and sanction of funds. Attached for your consideration in this regard is a copy of the letter no 327/F-17-23/08/25-2/ dt. 16-01-2009 by the Chief Secretary, Shri. P. Joy Oommen.

The NCPCR fully endorses the requirement for the construction of residential ashram schools as put forth by the State Government and requests that the matter be urgently approved and the required funds immediately sanctioned.

We would be grateful if you could intimate us on the steps taken, within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of this letter.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Shantha

(Shantha Sinha)

Shri G.B. Mukherjee,
Secretary,
Ministry of Tribal Affairs,
Government of India,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

Encl. As above.

Cc:

Government of India

Mr. Ajit Kumar Seth, Secretary (Coord. And PG), Government of India, Cabinet Secretary

Ms. Ashu Vaish, Secretary (Elementary Education), Ministry of HRD, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

Shri Anil Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

Government of Chhattisgarh

Mr. P. Joy Ommen, Chief Secretary,Mantralaya D.K. S. Bhawan, Raipur Chhatisgarh - 492001

Mr. Nand Kumar, Secretary, Education Mantralaya D.K.S. Bhawan, Raipur Chhatisgarh - 492001

Mr. M.K. Raut, Principal Secretary, Tribal Welfare Mantralaya D.K. S. Bhawan, Raipur Chhatisgarh - 492001

Mr. Maninder Dwivedi, Mission Director,) Rajiv Gandhi Shiksha Mission (Education) Mantralaya D.K. S. Bhawan, Raipur Chhatisgarh - 492001

Mr. Srikant Dubey, Assistant Commissioner Tribal Welfare Office of the Collector District Dantewada

Mr. Manoj Pingua, Director, Tribal Welfare Office of the Collector District Dantewada

Mr. Rajat Kumar, CEO Zilla Parishad, Dantewada Dakshin Baster

Mr. S.P.Shori, Collector, Dantewada.Collector office Dakshin Baster

Sincerely

(Shantha Sinha)
Chairperson NCPCR