

# **CHARWAHA SCHOOLS IN BIHAR - A PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION**

## **1. The Study**

The scheme of Charwaha Schools in Bihar was launched in December, 1991 for providing services under one roof for an integrated development of the rural poor. The programme is implemented by the Education Department in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, Welfare and Forestry. While the Department of Agriculture has to provide the unutilised seed farm, the Forestry Department has to plant trees, the Fisheries Department has to develop pisciculture and the Welfare Department has to provide Mid-Day Meals to children.

With a view to provide a feed back to the planning process the Programme Evaluation Organisation was assigned to the task of making preliminary observation of the working of the scheme of Charwaha Schools in Bihar.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The two main objectives of the study were the following :

- i) to examine whether the required facilities have been provided by the line departments to Charwaha Schools, and
- ii) to comprehend the benefits being derived by the Charwahas and other poorer sections of the society from the Scheme.

## **3. Sample Size/Criteria for Sample Selection**

A total of 40 beneficiaries under 5 Charwaha Schools in 4 districts of Bihar were selected for the study.

## **4. Reference Period**

Reference period for the study was December, 1991 to September, 1992. The field work was conducted in October, 1992.

## **5. Main Findings**

1. No separate funds were made available and the concerned line departments incurred the expenditure on the Scheme from their own budgetary allocations. Besides infrastructural facilities, the activities undertaken in these Charwaha Schools included: formal and non-formal education, women's education, women's development programmes, facilities for learning need based trades, setting up of cooperative centres, advance farming, veterinary care and bio-gas plant.
2. In the Charwaha Schools visited, participation in formal education was highest, although facilities for the same were only in two of the five schools. This was followed by participation in non-formal education and vocational training.
3. For formal and non-formal education teachers were appointed either on deputation or part-time basis. Wherever training in any trade was being imparted, instructors were made available by the concerned line department.
4. Of the total beneficiaries canvassed, 82.5 percent were of school-going age, 37.5 per cent were female, 62.5 percent belonged to Backward Classes, and 27.5 percent were Scheduled Castes.
5. Majority of the beneficiaries receiving both formal and non-formal education, were satisfied with the facilities provided. However, in case of vocational training, majority of the beneficiaries were not satisfied with the facilities provided.
6. Non-availability of mid-day meals, stipend, and reading/writing material were the major problems reported by the beneficiaries under formal and non-formal education. Majority of those attending vocational training reported inadequate supply of raw material.

## **6. Major Suggestions**

1. The development of infrastructural facilities and activities of the charwaha Schools called for coordinated effort of a number of sectoral departments. It is, therefore, imperative to develop a built in operational mechanism to achieve desired coordination. Simultaneously, a system of monitoring may also be evolved. These would ensure the effective implementation of the Scheme.

2. The funds earmarked by each line department for Charwaha schools may be pooled at the State level for allocation among the districts. A nodal officer, both at the state and district levels may be made responsible for allocating the funds rationally and overseeing /monitoring the implementation of the Scheme.
3. As the Scheme also aims at generating self-employment among the rural poor (both male and female), it is necessary that the facilities for training in need-based trades be developed. Further, back up services, like; bank loan and marketing be also ensured.
4. In order to ensure the continuance and sustenance of the Scheme, it may be worthwhile to consider involving local village institutions. This would not only ensure greater participation of the people, but would also go a long way in achieving goal of operation by the people with cooperation of the government.
5. The name Charwaha School is a little misleading. These do not appear to be schools in the strict sense of the term, wherein students are enrolled in different classes to be given education, mainly based on the 3R's. In fact , the scope of Charwaha Schools , as outlined, encompasses a much broader meaning of the word `School`, wherein services for all round development of the target group have been envisaged, keeping in view their socio-economic and cultural milieu.