

## **Baa Baale Shaalege (Bringing the girl child to School) Campaign :**

– A Voluntary Effort by Women Teachers

Under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan* (SSA) programme all out-of-school children in the age group 6-14 are to be enrolled by the end of 2003. Towards this end, *Chinnara Angala*, *Baa Marali Shaalege* (Come Back to School), *Cooliyinda Shaalege* (from labour to school) and the Enrollment Campaign have helped draw lakhs of children to school. Through programmes such as *Akshara Daasoha* (Free hot mid-day meals scheme), supply of free textbooks, free school uniforms, etc., efforts have been made to see that these children don't leave the school. In spite of these efforts about 300,000 children are still outside the school system. About 50% of these are girls. There is a gender gap of about 19% between male and female literacy in the state. *Baa Baale Shaalege* is yet another special drive to bridge this gender gap.

### **The main strategies being adopted under this campaign are:**

- To make women officials of the education department motivate themselves to adopt an educational block each and evince special interest in the education of girls in that block
- To make the women officials adopting a block to meet women teachers in the particular block and motivate them to achieve the aims of this programme voluntarily
- To make all voluntary organizations such as *stree-shakti* /self-help groups, *mahila/yuvathi mandals* and women representatives to evince interest and take responsibility for the tasks
- To ensure that girls participate effectively in the 20-point programme under the Learning Achievement Year
- To persuade NGOs to take active part in the campaign

To open two residential schools with the help of *Mahila Samakhya* for dropout girls in the backward districts of North-eastern Karnataka.

## **Beediyind Shaalege (From Street to School) - A New Initiative**

Eight years of education is now a fundamental right of all children in the age group 6-14. To make this a reality the government has initiated several campaigns to enroll all children in schools through various new initiatives. Towards this end the Enrolment Drive, *Baa Marali Shaalege* (come back to school), *Cooliyinda Shaalege* (from labour to school), *Chinnara Angala* (a bridge course), *Samudayadatta Shaale* (school towards the community) and *Baa Baale Shaalege* (calling the girl child to school) are prominent ones. An effort is made to see that the children don't leave the school though incentive schemes like free supply of textbooks and uniforms, *Akshara Dasoha* (free hot mid-day meals scheme). Learning is being made joyful to the student through activities such as *Chaitanya*, *Nali-Kali*, etc

Teachers are striving to provide enhanced opportunities to children who lag behind others in learning and to make them reach a prescribed level of learning by observing 2003-04 as Learning Achievement Year. In spite of these efforts thousands of children are still deprived of education. Street children constitute one such deprived category. In urban areas they are struggling to live in the hardest and most degrading circumstances. Separated from their parents because of a variety of social and economic problems many of them have been orphaned and driven to the streets. Others have been driven to begging or scouring dustbins for a living. Under the objectives of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan* all children, including these deprived street children have to be brought into the school system by the end of 2003. This *Beediyinda Shaalege* programme has been conceived against this background and is the department's latest initiative towards providing education to the deprived.

It is no easy task to contact children in the streets, understand their situation and problems and

persuade them to join school. There is a need for institutions and individuals who have a deep understanding of the sociological aspects of the problem, experience in social service, a service minded attitude as well as a concern and commitment for such issues. Both time and effort are needed in good measure. For this reason it is best to implement this programme through voluntary agencies. It has therefore been decided to entrust the responsibility of implementing this programme to voluntary agencies and organizations that are active in the social and educational sectors.

It is expected that departmental officials and teachers working under the SSA programme will be able to identify competent voluntary agencies and organizations and persuade them to come forward to accept responsibility for implementing this programme. About a dozen such organizations have already been identified. A survey of street children in major cities will be taken up in the next few months.