

## Tribal Education – Special Drive in a Forest :

The Tribal Alternate Education Programme was initiated as a pilot project by an NGO called DEED (Development through Education) in collaboration with A-e-A (*Aide-et-Action*), a Chennai based support group, in the Kakanakote forest area of Nagarahole national park in Mysore district in 6 tribal *hadis* (settlements) to assist 443 tribal (*Adivasi*) children out of whom 234 were girl children. Three government schools that were virtually dysfunctional in the area were adopted. 88 out-of-school children were also brought back to the educational system through these schools. This is a major component of a larger programme for the upliftment of the primitive tribal population of *Jenu Kurubas* that lives under extremely difficult and dangerous conditions. After the results of the pilot project were found encouraging the programme was implemented under the Community Owned and Managed Education (COME) concept. The Education Department of the Government of Karnataka is now supporting this programme on a long-term basis.

A 4-year plan is now under implementation focusing on pre-primary education, primary education, life oriented education and mainstreaming the dropouts below 14 years in 32 *hadis*. A total of about 3000 *adivasi* children, including over 1600 girls, are being targeted. 386 dropout children have been brought back to the mainstream school system through 18 special *Chinnara Angala* coaching centres. These children joined regular government schools in June 2003.

Under the programme certain innovative components have been included. For pre-primary children play-way methods, habit formation, games, plays and songs have been introduced. For primary education DPEP methods (*Nali-Kali, Kali-Nali*), cultural story telling, teaching songs, playing games, watching nature, promotion of eco-friendly practices, analyzing and understanding real-life situations, etc., have been adopted.



**An *Adivasi* open air class for drop-out children in Kakankote forest area**

The tribal dialect has been given importance. Special pedagogy education material (*Jenuudi Kaliyaku*) has been published and popularized in the schools. Science, mathematics and social studies have been taught through songs and games also.

To combat the children's malnutrition noon meal and nutritious supplementary food is being given in the schools. This has helped to reduce the dropouts and increase attendance in the schools. There is a strong community commitment to the programme. Education has been accepted by parents as well as children in the broader sense of an empowerment process in day-today affairs on a continuous basis.