

Integrated Action for Out-of-School Children and their Families

(Published in September, 1985)

a) Researcher's Identity

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b) Objectives

The major objectives of the project can be stated as follows:

- i. To provide basic education to the children between 5-10 years who are still out of school;
- ii. To improve the health status of the rural children and their families by providing primary health care services for both preventive and curative;
- iii. To improve environmental sanitation through promotional activities and by providing water sealed latrines and hand tube wells for pure drinking water;
- iv. To motivate and train the children and their mothers to grow vegetables and fruit trees to supplement their family income and to meet some of their nutritional requirements;
- v. To motivate the parents to limit their family size through the adoption of family planning;
- vi. To organize the parents into male and female groups to promote group cohesion and to form capital through regular thrift savings; and
- vii. To provide credit to the group members through the commercial bank against the production plan and to arrange other possible services and supports to take up income generating activities.

c) Executive summary

The project has touched on one of the most complicated areas. The rural poor children are victims of so many problems of life which have accumulated over a period of time. These problems are not isolated from the overall socio-economic situation prevailing in the whole country. The problem is gigantic and it needs concerted and sustained effort. Some of the observations which can be given on the experience gained during the first year of the project are as follows:

1. The children are not isolated from the rest of the community; therefore, anything that happens to the community affects the children as well. Thus any programme aiming at the welfare of the community.
2. The problems of children in food, nutrition, health, housing and education are inter-related and as such are to be handled simultaneously and in an integrated way. Isolated and sectoral efforts can not prove very meaningful.
3. All the parents are very eager for the education and well-being of their children. If the socio-economic constraints which prevent them from sending their children to school can be minimized they would definitely take interest in the education of their children as other parents do. Of course, literacy of children alone does not carry much meaning to these parents unless it helps them in their socio-economic emancipation.
4. The services which are already available with various government departments and agencies can be made available to the people and better utilized if the people are organized, motivated and trained.
5. For proper planning and implementation of this kind of programmes, participation and concerted efforts of the inter-related agencies and village people at different levels could produce better results.
6. Any programme for the welfare of poor children should be supported by a programme for the development of the economic conditions of their parents.
7. Mothers are more concerned about the welfare of their children than the fathers. When a mother can earn she gives more attention for the well-being of her children.
8. Women are more loyal to group disciplines than men and more willing to save for the future.

However, it is too early to make any generalization on the basis of the above observations. The project has created great enthusiasm among the villagers who have demonstrated some of their potentialities. To examine the viability of the project it has to be continued and carefully studied for some more years. The CIRDAP, the funding agency for the project should be requested to arrange necessary fund to continue the project to see the end results.

