

Education and Health

Most of our primary schools being what they are, most children could do with some complementing at home of what they learn at school. This facility is not available for children who are going to be first generation literates and thus they are beginning their academic career with a handicap. We have started a coaching centre for specifically such children, who are invariably from very poor families, at Paruipara of Uttar Kolsur village. Of the 22 students at that centre in March, three were in class I, nine in class II, five in class III, one in class IV, and two each in classes V and VI. A family in the area has very kindly allowed us to use its verandah in the afternoon for the work of the centre. The teacher there has built up an excellent rapport with the students and we hope to exploit this by starting other projects along with the plain teaching now going on.

Almost all children now attend primary school, but among slightly older children there are many who never went to school, were grossly irregular, in attendance, or had to give up studies because of various reasons mainly economic. We started a non-formal school for such people at Durgapur village on 1.1.91. There are altogether nine students, between the ages eight and 17, seven of them male. Of these nine, six are dropouts but they remember little of what they learnt. In the three months that are covered by the scope, of this report, they learnt to write their name, address, simple words, and achieved rudimentary numerical skills.

Right now, we have no centre to impart education to adult women who missed going to school altogether but this is because we want these centres, when they do start working, to be really effective. We have decided to follow the course set by the Bengal Social Service League as this, more than any other comparable course, lays the right emphasis, along with imparting literacy and numerical skills, on a general critical awareness of health, hygiene, income generation, organization, the debt trap and other such day-to-day socio-economic problems. We held two training sessions with our prospective teachers, but since, as said earlier, we wish this to start with a bang, it would take some more time to open a centre.

Our blood banks are almost always short of blood and it is imperative to motivate people to donate blood voluntarily. We have carried out awareness campaigns to explain the problem to the people. On 25 October 1990 we held a blood donation camp at Kolsur and with 51 people, including women, donating blood it was a success.