

centre for 75 to 100 freed bonded children and child weavers. The exporters also pay a fee of 0.25% from the FOB value of the carpet export- which goes towards financing inspections and infrastructure cost.

Rehabilitaion of Children :

Rugmark launched its first rehabilitation project on October 31, 1996 for freed child weavers at Gopiganj in the principal carpet belt of Uttar Pradesh, called Balashrya meaning of ' shelter for children '. Geared initially to accommodate between 75 and 100 children, it facilitates their effective reintegration into the mainstream.

In Balshraya, the children are grouped under class II and IIIrd, according to their age. The younger group has children below ten years of age, while the other group includes children between ten and fourteen years. The juniors receive basic literacy inputs, to acquire skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Informal discussion on health, hygiene, and social issues, namely on socio-political structure, the legal system, communal harmony, superstition, social evils are also conducted. Children are also trained in various vocations as well as help them build qualities of leadership, discipline and concern for the oppressed and exploited, through intensive counselling and orientation.

Rugmark had identified 942 child weavers and bonded children in 555 looms through its 15 inspectors. Then, it puts up pressures on the manufacturers and loom owners to free the child labour from looms or company premises. After the children is withdrawn from the looms or premises of a company. Rugmark intervenes and ask parents of the freed children to admit their wards in the Balshraya. A letter of consent from the parents are sought before inducting any child to the rehabilitation centre, " says Captain Nautiyal, Administrative Manager, Balashraya.

Rugmark opened its first primary school in August 1996 in village Japur, Bairibisa, Bhadohi. About 250 children of carpet weavers from Jagpur and other nearby villages have been enrolled in the school. Children between six and thirteen years of age spend major part of their day in the school learning and playing. Thus it limits the risk of falling in the trap of the loom owners or their touts. Schooling benefit the children so that they do not end up weaving carpets in the looms. As an incentive for ensuring full attendance in the school Rugmark has introduced free and nutritious mid-day meals. The school also provides them uniforms, free books and stationery. Sudhagusu Shankar Mishra, principal of Rugmark primary school says, " There are three classes in the school. Enrolment