

## BIHAR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

*9, Bailey Road, Patna*

**File No. BHRC/Comp. 3427/15**

**(Suo Motu Cognizance)**

**Subject: Students' outcry to take away scholarships and give them boats to go to school.**

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15.9.2015

Sr. Deputy Collector, Dr. Fateh Faiyaz present.

This is a matter which I wish I had not to deal with. More than 100 years before there was a person from a poor family from U.P. who used to travel to school by swimming the river with bag of books on his back. The boy was studying in Harish Chandra High School, Kashi. His hometown was 8 miles away from Kashi. He used to walk all the way to school. On the way he was required to cross the river Ganga. During that period the boatman had to be paid 2 paisa to cross the river by boat. That means he had to pay one anna for crossing the river both ways i.e. more than 2 rupees per month. In those days the amount of 2 rupees was quite substantial.

This story we have read in schools because this boy from U.P. became one of the Prime Ministers of India. His name was Lal Bahadur Shastri. People like Mr. Shastri and others did not fight for independence to see that for some people nothing will change even after 70 years of independence. If late Mr. Shastri was alive today I can't imagine how he would have reacted to the news that some students of Bihar including minor girls are going to school by swimming across the river. This was reported in press on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2015 and the Commission read the news item and saw photographs, with surprise, shock and disbelief.

When notice was issued by the Commission, the Commission was not sure that the reports could be true and thought that the district administration would come and say that the report was false. But to my disappointment the story was true. The children were going to school and came back from school by swimming the river everyday. This is a village about 225 Kms away from Patna and 30 Kms away from Bhabua which is the district headquarters of Kaimur.

The Commission is not aware whether there are other areas where students face such difficulties. The Chief Secretary, Bihar shall look into the matter and find out if there are any areas in Bihar where children face such difficulties. This is a constitutional obligation of State to provide roads, schools, health and education to the citizens and their children.

After the notice was issued an NGO Lion's Club has provided a boat to the school and the villagers have formed a committee and the village has taken over the management of the boat. Sr. Deputy Collector who is present submits that the school children in the school are now going to school by boat. The Commission directs that if anywhere in the state the school children are facing such difficulties the State Administration shall immediately provide boats.

In this village of Machkhian the State Government shall also take steps to make a road which connects the road to the school. With these observations, the matter is disposed of.

***(Justice Bilal Nazki)***  
***Chairperson***