

Inside this issue

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Appropriate technologies | 1 |
| Teeming with talent | 2 |
| NGO Profile - Alternative for India Development | 3 |
| ECOSAN | 4 |
| Fulfilling a key promise | 6 |
| Shelter construction status | 7 |
| Events roundup - January | 7 |

Appropriate technologies

Shelter reconstruction is inching towards the halfway mark, with 48% of the allotted houses having been constructed. As large numbers of houses had to be constructed from scratch, there has been an opportunity to test new approaches, innovative methodologies and technology.

Within the shelter sector sanitation is one area of such focus. Sanitation has always been a challenge in the coastal areas of Nagapattinam, given the high water table. Decentralized Waste Water Treatment Systems (DEWATS) and Ecosan are some of the technologies that are being tried out to address this problem.

Many argue that such efforts are coming in too late and should have been a part of the reconstruction process from its conception. However, given the scale of the reconstruction needs, the large gap between demand and supply of technical personnel, and the immediacy in getting shelter construction up and running, such endeavours were bound to get delayed. Now, with the shelter support and monitoring mechanisms in place (the shelter advisory committee and shelter support group) the environment has been created to allow focus on such opportunities.

These new technologies are appropriate in terms of management aspects – they are easy to construct, are cost effective, easy to maintain, and do not take too much space. In addition, they are also ecologically friendly. There is little doubt then that these are amongst the best solutions for water and sanitation in Nagapattinam.

However, when we promote these technologies are we focusing too much on their management aspects? Is the best solution necessarily the most acceptable one? Have we adequately factored socio-cultural dimensions and acceptability in our plans? Are we considering the needs of the people of Nagapattinam, or looking at our own operational requirements? We need to take care that acceptability issues are addressed so that the community employs the new technology for their benefit. ■

Teeming with Talent

NGOs working in Sembanarcoil block joined hands to bring smiles and provide a platform for the young talents.

The Sembanarkovil cluster of NCRC has been organizing coordination meetings, in which all the NGO working in that cluster meet to share their experiences and learnings. '**Talent Encouragement day**' was a brain child of one such meeting. The event was scheduled for January 28th 2007 and held at TBML College Poriyar. Six hundred children aged 10–14 years participated in the program.

The event was inaugurated by Mr. Nivedha K.Murugan the Chairman of Sembanarcoil block and Dr.Jonae Gunasekar, Principal of the TBML College; the National Service Scheme (NSS) Programme Officer Dr. Sugumaran was also present along with the other NGO representatives.

The event structure ensured that all children got equal opportunity to participate and showcase their talents. The children were divided into two groups based on their age, 10–12 and 13-14 years. Each group had 3 games event. For the age group of 10–12, games like passing the ball, bursting balloons



and 'Identify your leader' jigsaw puzzle was organised. 'Identify your leader' was a hit amongst these children, who were split and each group

was given 2 sets of puzzle which when put together would reveal a leader whom the children would then have to identify. Interestingly the children were able to identify Indian leaders and were not able to identify leaders like Stalin, Lenin and others. They felt happy that through this game they got to know who those leaders were. There were three games for children between the age group of 13–14. In this group, clay modeling was the most interesting as



Mrs. Latha of SCORD said "through this event, our relation with the other NGOs have also been strengthened, earlier whenever we used to see them we used to just exchange a hello, but now we feel more close and we share a sense of ownership which would help us in working for the betterment of the people".

children made models of Ganesha, snakes etc. These games were followed with a cultural event. A skit was performed by the children with the theme "Importance of organic farming practice for sustainable agriculture". Each child who participated in the event was given a book.

Seeing the enthusiasm the organizers felt that events like this has to be organised often so that the children not only will be given a platform to exhibit their talents but also to enhance their participation and spirit. Events like this are definitely a promising effort in bringing children's talent and such collective efforts of all the NGOs working in the same geographic area adds a holistic value to such community welfare programme. ■



NGO Profile - Alternative for India Development

Alternative for India Development (AID) is a National level NGO that has emerged as an umbrella organization of several small community forums. Initially AID was involved in grass-root work in Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Madhyapradesh.

AID played a very active role in the Tsunami Response Program in Nagapattinam with an operational area spreading across 12 villages in the district. Apart from the initial relief operations, AID is involved in sectoral interventions some of which are mentioned below:

Agriculture – Desalination, Crop diversification etc.

Livelihood - Micro Credit and Micro Enterprises for small business, skills training and other income generation activities.

Fisheries – Fiber Glass Reinforced Plastic Boat and fishing equipments replacement.

Water and Sanitation – Awareness mobile campaigns on water and sanitation along with NGO's namely PHOENIX & AWAKES in order to collect data on the present water and sanitary condition at the Pandagasalai temporary shelter. In June 2005 an awareness campaign was conducted in villages namely Manelmadu, Nalliyanthottam, Ariyanattu street, Nambiyar Nagar, Nagathoppu, Vairamalagai etc.

Health – Psychosocial support, health awareness programs and medical camps.

Women – formation of SHGs for income generation initiatives and conducted exclusive health camps for women.



Medical camp at a temporary shelter

Children – AID set up 6 Supplementary Education Centers and is conducting regular sports and games for children.

Ambulance Services – AID has an ambulance which could be used by other NGOs and the district administration on prior notification for purposes such as conducting mobile medical camps during awareness campaigns etc. the ambulance is used for transporting women patients from the temporary shelter to the government hospital. The Ambulance is also used for brining women patients from the temporary shelter to health camps at the municipal health unit.

AID has also undertaken initiatives to promote advocacy and linkages between communities and other agencies involved in the tsunami response program. ■

ECOSAN

According to a recent **Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)** report, 95,000 toilet systems must be installed everyday between 2003 and 2015, if we are to meet the **Millennium Development Goals (MDG)** related to sanitation. Moreover, the simplistic premise that a toilet built is a toilet used is not necessarily true. If all these factors are accounted for, we might require about 200,000 installations per day.

During the past 20 years a promising approach has emerged: ecological sanitation, or Ecosan. Its guiding principle is that excreta should be sanitised and turned into hygienic and fertile soil — rather than hiding or diluting it.

Ecosan places a premium on preventing disease and water pollution, it lays great store on recycling nutrients and also emphasises water conservation. The approach is based on a simple principle: one should not mix water, faeces, urine, greywater, street run-off, and industrial wastewater. The approach is not new to the country. Mahatma Gandhi advocated a similar approach during the 1940s and 1950s. Now we identify it as Ecosan.

Ecosan is quite relevant for India; Wastelands can be turned productive by soil conditioners produced from excreta. Ecosan-based community toilets are quite apt for slums in India. Slum dwellers can install such toilets without having to worry about redesigning their houses. Over the past 10 years, Ecosan has

been tried out, with some success in densely built-up, high water-table coastal areas of Kerala.

Tamil Nadu also has its share of experience in ECOSAN, The introduction of Ecosan in Tamil Nadu by SCOPE, a Trichy based NGO predominately involved in Water and Sanitation development activities in Trichy over a decade. Initially SCOPE had constructed a model Ecosan toilet in its training centre in Thaneerpanthal village near Trichy in 2003. In the year 2004 a pilot project was implemented having 18 dry composed toilets constructed in Kaliyampalyam village. The financial aid for this project came from Government through District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and technical support in design from UNICEF. The project was then scaled up to more districts including Erode, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam and Namakkal etc.,



Posters on ECOSAN at the workshop



District Collector, Tenkasi S. Jawahar presents shields to the panchayat members of Kameshwaram village

Nagapattinam

To lay more emphasis on the ECOSAN, District Rural Development Agency, Nagapattinam and UNICEF jointly organised a workshop “Ecological Sanitation in Nagapattinam district”, on the 23rd January 2007 at Collectorate conference hall. The District Collector Tenkasi S Jawahar in his inaugural address said that the Government was providing sustainable sanitation facilities at the permanent shelters in the tsunami hit areas. He presented shields to M.Kanagasundaram, president and Shanthi, vice-

president of the Kameshwaram Panchayat, for making Kameshwaram a model 'Ecosan' village. M.Subburaman, Director of SCOPE and technical consultant for the seminar stressed that ecological sanitation was an integrated approach to sustainable management of human waste.



Exposure visit to Kameshwaram

Kameshwaram- Ecosan Village has become the first tsunami-hit fishing village which has the distinction of getting the maximum number of "ECOSAN" compost toilets in the country with the usage of 100 Household centered Environmental Sanitation Toilets (HCRST).UNICEF/DRDA are planning to support another 100 toilet in the same village.

The workshop participants also went on an exposure visit to Kameshwaram.

Interestingly in Cuddalore, Periya Kattupalayam Village, Bless and its partners the European Commission Humanitarian Aid department (ECHO) and ACTED, formed a Sanitation Parliament in a lower primary school. In which Children are the leaders as torchbearers of village health and sanitation. The parliament has five ministers in charge of Water, Sanitation, Garden, Food, and Waste Management. Their duties include:

- Weekly meetings with school authorities
- Monitoring water availability, toilet cleanliness, mid-day meal preparation and proper waste disposal
- Educating about personal hygiene
- Maintaining a kitchen garden to prevent water wastage

Bless has also built ECOSAN toilets in selected villages. The best part of these toilets are that they are child friendly. The toilets are raised above ground with two sealed receptacles that are alternately filled and emptied. This prevents effluent from human waste from seeping into the ground water, a burning issue in Tamil Nadu given the proximity of the water table from the soil. Once decomposed by bacteria, solid waste will provide organic manure for the soil. The liquid/urine flows to a small kitchen garden. These toilets have met with a high level of community interest, especially from women.

A house with basic amenities of water and sanitation is the right of every individual in this democratic society. In coastal area's the water table is quite high thus traditional sanitation models are neither suitable nor affordable for the community to bear its operational and maintenance cost of the highly sophisticated sewerage treatment plants. The ecological sanitation is an integrated approach to sustainable management of human waste. ■

Fulfilling a key promise



Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi and Mata Amritanandamayi with the key to the shelter

On 31st January 2007, Mata Amritanandamayi Math handed over 400 permanent shelters built for tsunami affected near Nagore (Sambhathotam). To mark this event a grand function was organised in Valivalam Desikar Polytechnic. Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi was the Chief Guest and received the key on behalf of the beneficiary.

He announced that 22000 more houses would be constructed for the affected families under the Rajiv Gandhi Tsunami Rehabilitation Project at a cost of Rs.550 crore, he also said that the government would construct 3000 houses that are left unconstructed at a cost of 69 crore. On behalf of the Math, he launched a Scheme under which a monthly assistance of Rs.150 would be provided to widows and physically challenged persons, one lakh individuals across the country would benefit from this scheme. He praised the math for spending Rs.80 crore in Tamil Nadu for tsunami relief, rehabilitation work and building of permanent shelters

and said that Government alone cannot fulfill the requirements of the public. He mentioned that the Government which collects money from people by way of taxes returns it to the public by way of assistance. Similarly those who collect donations from the public should return them to the public for their welfare.

The Math presented a letter of consent to the Chief Minister expressing readiness to construct 500 houses if the government provided the land. the Chief Minister immediately expressed his consent for the same. Thus a total of 500 houses on the lines of those built at Amirthapuri will be constructed in the state by the Math.



Permanent shelters at Sambhathotam

Union Minister of State for finance SS Palani Manickam; Tamil Nadu Ministers Arcot Veerasamy, Duraimurugan, K.Ponmudi, K N Nehru, A V Velu, M R K Paneerselvam, Periyakaruppan, KRP Sami, Mathivanan, Suba Thangavel,

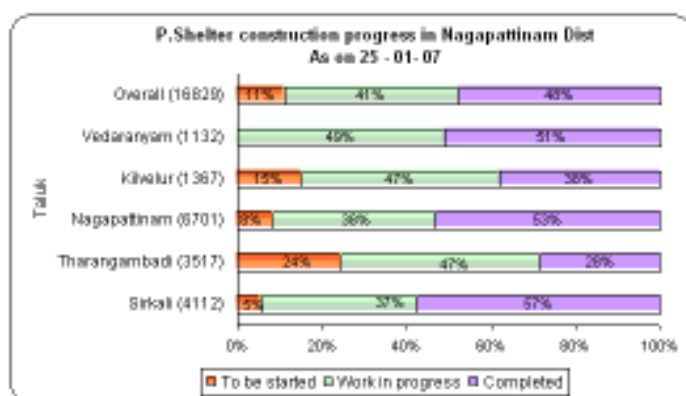
and N Selveraj participated in the event. Collector Tenkasi S Jawahar, MP AKS Vijayan were among the others who attended the function.

Mata Amritanandamayi Math has so far constructed and handed-over 340 permanent shelters in Samantham Pettai, 225 in Mellapattinachery, 120 in Pandagasalai Street, Manalmedu, 164 in Theedir Kuppam and 400 out of 640 in Sambhathotam. ■

Shelter construction status

In an attempt to track the progress of the permanent shelter construction, the district administration conducts weekly review meetings and discusses the issues therein, related to the completion of the project. The figure shows the progress of the construction process in the five taluks.

Shelter completion is inching towards the 50% mark. 41% of allotted houses are in process of construction and only 11% have to yet start. The shelter advisory group and shelter support group have been working earnestly to support and monitor construction activity. They are looking into issues related to water and sanitation and quality of the construction. Now that these groups are working fervently on the ground the construction is likely to be better and quicker. ■



Figures in brackets are the number of units allotted

Events Roundup - January

Meetings related to the study on water bodies

Farmers Meeting

6 January 2007

The Agriculture Sector of the NCRC organised a meeting with farmers to share their experience and problems in NCRC. This meeting was mainly organised to understand the various problems that they face. Issues on ponds, irrigation channels, ooranis drainages and on allam's were raised. The learning's from this experience sharing will be incorporated into the studies conducted on water bodies.

Meeting with Technical Officers on agriculture

13 January 2007

Mr. Ramesh Pandian from the Agriculture Sector and the Chief Consultant Dr. Sivanappan met the Chief Engineers, Executive Engineer, Superintendent, and Assistants Executive Engineers at PWD, Thanjavur to clarify few learning's from the water body study. The main agenda included discussing practical problems and solutions that can be suggested and also the recommendations that can be made from the government side.

Focused Group discussion in Keelaiyur

23 January 2007,

A focused group discussion was conducted in Karunganni village, Keelaiyur Block to discuss with the farmers of Water Resource organization on the traditional methods that are used to maintain canals, bund damage, like wise during heavy rain or flood times. They further discussed on the irrigation methods and yields. The focused group discussion was facilitated by the Agriculture sector representatives and a representative from the study team of the Water Body study.

Household Survey - Orientation Program for Field Investigators

10 & 11 January 2007; 17 & 18 January 2007; 19 & 20 January 2007

Three, two-day orientation program for the field investigators involved in the Household Survey which commenced during the 3rd week of January 2007, was conducted by Mr. Kennedy from Catalyst Management Services Bangalore

On the first day the team was introduced to the questionnaire and data collection for the Household Survey and on the second day there was a field visit to use the tool in the field.

Children Core Group Meeting

20 January 2007

The Children Core group met to discuss various issues relating to children including developing the concept of Child Secretariat and future of the Children Core Group. The members also brought out the importance of covering of insurance for Children, and they further planned to have an orientation on children insurance. Around 8 NGOs participated in this meeting and the next meeting was slated for the 10th February 2007 in REAL Plan office, Nagapattinam

District level Information and Communication Technology coordination meeting

23 January 2007

The Village Facilitation Unit (VFU) organised a district level Information Communication and Technology (ICT) coordination meeting. The Representatives of the Village Information Center of NGO Coordination and Resource Centre (NCRC); Village Knowledge Centers of MS Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF); and Village Information Kiosk of DHAN Foundation were part of this meeting. The main focus of the meeting was to provide a platform to discuss and share their

experiences and learning. They also presented a revenue generation model and cheap labour cost model.

Eco Sanitation Workshop

23 January 2007

The District Rural Development Agency and UNICEF, Nagapattinam jointly organized a one day seminar on 'Ecological Sanitation' at collectorate Conference hall. The district collector Thiru Tenkasi S. Jawahar inaugurated the seminar. There was a presentation on Ecological Sanitation by SCOPE an NGO from Tiruchi, which was followed by a field visit to Kameshwaram village and experience sharing. The Shelter Sector representatives of NCRC attended this workshop.

Inauguration of Study Centre in Puliyanthurai

25th January 2007

The Pudhupattinam Cluster along with the community's initiative has opened a Study Centre in Puliyanthurai. The centre was inaugurated by Mr. Rajendran District Panchayat Member and District Councilor. The building was sponsored by the South Asia People's Initiative (SAPI) and the books were provided by NGO Coordination and Resource Centre (NCRC). The community leader in his speech during the inauguration function stated that they are planning to further develop this as a resource centre and also wished to expand it as a vocational training centre.

Shelter construction review meetings

2, 8, 22, 29 January 2007

Review meetings to take stock of the progress of construction of permanent shelters in the district was held at the mini Conference Hall, Collectorate. The meetings stressed on speeding up the process of construction while taking in to account quality aspects and basic amenities. The NGOs were asked to speed up the construction of the permanent shelters. ■

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