

◆ VILLAGE SANITATION ◆

January 7, 1988

One of the issues raised by Shri Meenakshisundaram, Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj at our last Board meeting was that of Village Sanitation.

There are two areas of concern here - both are interlinked :-

I. PUBLIC SANITATION which includes -

1. roadside drains to carry away rain and kitchen/ washing/bathing water;
2. proper drainage around handpumps and wells;
3. soak pits to hold kitchen/washing/bathing water which usually flows on to roads and where it is not possible to lead this water into roadside drains;
4. management of cattle sheds and areas where cattle are tied during parts of the day.

As regards the management of cattle this can easily be linked upto the management of Biogas plants. For example, often we find cattle stabled at night in a shed next to the house; the floor of the shed is of mud and is sloped towards the front; this results in absorption of matter and runoff towards the front where it causes sanitation problem. If the floor of the shed could be improved (when biogas is constructed usually at the back of the house) by granite slabs and sloped towards the back, all the matter deposited could be channelled to the biogas plant. Further the cattle are often tied in front of the house, on the road or nearby for long periods; here again matter collects which is lost or mixed with mud which then goes with the dung into the biogas digester; could this area also be properly floored and waste collected, channelled to the plant? We should remember that cow-dung is a scarce resource and therefore every effort should be made to ensure that it is properly collected and utilised.

As regards the management of waste water around wells and handpumps, this could be channelled into troughs for drinking water for cattle, or to a kitchen garden or a community fuel plot.

Public sanitation to my mind has been neglected even in our project areas. We think of desilting tanks, deepening wells making roads in our community action programmes; why not include village drains, soak pits and proper management of waste from cattle/sheep?

Public sanitation will be given top priority in MYRADA in the future.

II. The second area under village sanitation is **HUMAN DEFECATION**. This is a major health hazard and is becoming a major problem since the areas of privacy are shrinking. Efforts to motivate people to use latrines both private and common have failed. To begin with why should people bother if the village itself is a cess-pool? Therefore public sanitation has to come first; the village must be clean for people to be motivated to keep it so.

How do we tackle this problem of human defecation? The answers depend on each area and often on each situation; but there are answers - look for them, and let us know.

FOLLOW UP OF THE NOTE ON SANITATION :

Channagundi Village, situated about 40 kms. from H.D.Kote has 102 families of which, 50 families belong to the target group. The chief occupation of the villagers is agriculture; the crops grown are mainly cotton and ragi with patches of tobacco and chillies. Two families are engaged in Sericulture. Animal Husbandry is an important income generating activity. On an average each family has about 15 animals.

MYRADA/PLAN started work in this village in the year 1982. Drinking water has been provided with a pump and an overhead tank. 16 taps are providing water to the villagers at different points. The cost of the drinking water supplies scheme was shared by the project and the village. The project spent Rs.57,850/, while the peoples' cash contribution was Rs.13,000/, in addition to providing free unskilled labour which could be computed to the extent of Rs.10,000/-. Seven families have taken loans for petty business. One has received a loan for a bicycle shop; one for a fair price shop and one for opening a barber shop.

Although the village houses had tiled roof houses, the sanitation was poor. The houses were built in four rows. The space in between the rows of houses was covered with big boulders and the water from bathrooms and kitchens was flowing freely on to the roads. As mentioned earlier there is a large number of cattle maintained by the villagers. This resulted in production of large quantity of cow-dung which was heaped at various places at the entrance of the village.

The sanitation problem was discussed with the villagers and they agreed to do something about it.

Mr.M.K.Ali, Project Coordinator and Mr.Bhide, Training Coordinator also contacted the JSS College, Nanjangud and invited the students of the college under the National Service Scheme (NSS) to work along with the people in the village to improve the public sanitation. Before the students came, the project staff and the villagers planned out the various activities to be undertaken in the village. 60 students with three programme officers of the college came to the village on 24.12.1987 and stayed upto 02.01.1988. During this period, the villagers and the students installed 35 soakpits, constructed three roads within the village and repaired the Bus route passing by the side of the village. The total length of the road constructed and repaired was about 1 km. On either side of the roads they dug up drainage channels approximately 2 kms long. All the boulders which were lying around were shifted out of the village premises and the shallow pits were filled. They constructed 40 Astra Ole's (smokeless chulas) with the help of the BDO Staff. Another 40 Astra Oles were expected to be installed shortly. 60 saplings of mixed varieties have been planted on the road side. All these activities were carried out within a period of 10 days. The villagers joined the students and provided all the unskilled labour required for the above activities. The help of various Government Departments like the Forest Department, Adult Education Department, Horticulture Department, Revenue Department, Sericulture Department, Animal Husbandry Department and Regional Publicity Department and the BDO was mobilised in carrying out the above activities and educating the villagers regarding the need for proper sanitation.

The last day of the function was attended by Jagadguru Shri Shri Shivarathri Deshi Kendra Mahaswamy, who is the Head of Suttur Mutt, who are running the JSS college from where the students came to work in the village. The Zilla Parishad President, who attended the concluding function said that the Channagundi village which was looking like Kallugundi, now looked like Honnagundi.

The important aspect of the above programme is not so much the provision of roads and sanitation in the village, but creating an awareness among the people of the need to keep their surroundings clean. When asked why they had not undertaken this work earlier on their own, the people answered that they had not realised that there was anything wrong with their surroundings till they were shown the change which resulted from clearing the area and stopping the dirty water flowing in front of their houses. Besides they said that there was nobody to take the initiative to do the work and guide them as to what has to be done to improve the sanitation in the village. The huge heaps of cow dung still remain as they did not find a place to dig compost pits. This could be remedied by providing Gobar Gas plants in the villages. For the present, the H.D.Kote staff is busy constructing only one cubic meter plants under a separate project financed through PLAN International. Since the villagers have an average of 15 head of cattle, they could be given two and three cubic meter capacity Biogas plants. The construction of these plants would be taken up in the next year. This would solve the problem of storing the dung. Besides, the people are

desirous of having lavatories, a central road drainage to connect the waste water from their houses and an addition to their school building. These activities would be taken up and completed before June 30, 1988. So far the expenditure has been minimal. Accommodation etc., was provided by the people. The construction of lavatories and one kilometre of drainage lined with stones will be the only items on which expenditure will be incurred.



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