



*Youth Training Camp*

of these families had no idea about sanitation and personal hygiene; hardly did they know the serious consequences of open defecation. Nor did they have the means to set up household toilets.

The volunteers of the National Youth Project came to their help. They knew that the Total Sanitation Campaign was being implemented in Puri district since 2003. They planned to construct toilets for those poor families of the village. But their plan was a plan with a difference. They organized a work camp, which they called Shrama Sanskar Abhiyan. The main objective of the camp was to install latrines for the target families by motivating the local youth to contribute labour. This would also create a congenial atmosphere in the village. Sri Aurobindo Behera, Secretary, Rural Development Department, encouraged them to go ahead with their plan.



*Pit Digging*

NYP organized meetings in the village, in which the representatives of PRIs, the members of local youth clubs, village elders and those who had no household toilets participated. They discussed how open defecation exposed them to health hazards. They also discussed their plan to set up toilets for the families living below the poverty line. Everyone present there assured them of their cooperation and agreed to contribute labour. The Orissa State Water and Sanitation Mission provided them posters, booklets and other IEC material for the purpose. The stage was thus set. The camp started. About 150 volunteers, who participated in the Abhiyan, were divided into three groups, each group guided by a technical expert. Pits were dug, rings were set and pans were fixed. About thirty latrines were set up a day. The whole operation took five days.



*Shrama Sanskar*

NYP achieved the objective of setting up sanitary toilets in the shortest possible time. What was still more important was the fact that the camp could bring about an attitudinal change in the people, who now felt the necessity of using toilets. The camp also instilled in the villagers a sense of togetherness and fellow feeling. They felt that caste distinctions did not really matter. Young men belonging to upper castes did not hesitate to contribute labour by way of digging pits in the backyards of the so-called low-caste families. Even the Sarpanch of the gram panchayat, students of the local school and others participated in the work camp.

The village youth attempted to do the work, which just the other day appeared almost impossible. By dint of their strong will and hard work, they achieved success.

