



SHOWING THE WAY

The idea of living in a pollution-free environment has caught the imagination of the people living in rural Orissa. Many gram panchayats have responded positively to the call for promoting Nirmal Gram Panchayats and have initiated concerted efforts. Singhpur in Jajpur district is one such panchayat, which has taken up the task of converting itself into a Nirmal Gram under the Total Sanitation Campaign.

Apart from constructing individual and institutional toilets, comprehensive hygiene promotion and education activities were also undertaken in the villages. Meetings and discussions were held at Panchayat level, in which Sarapanchs, ward members, Anganwadi workers, Samiti members, teachers, members of VEC and representatives of local NGOs participated. The VWSC members, carefully chosen and trained by the District Water and Sanitation Mission generated community awareness by organising meetings, campaigns and personal motivation exercises. People came to realize that household latrines were a necessity, not a luxury. No longer did they hesitate to invest time, money and labour in matters relating to their health and hygiene. Out of a total of 1125 families, 896 have already constructed household toilets.

Keeping in mind the need of the school children, latrine and urinal blocks have been constructed for the use of students in three primary schools and one high school located in the area. Students are given regular lessons on personal hygiene, use of latrine, environment protection and

clean village environment. As a result, the practice of open defecation and open urination has reduced.

The inhabitants of this panchayat are now very much conscious of good sanitation practices. They are using common garbage disposal pits for safe disposal of solid and liquid waste. They burn these garbage dumps at regular intervals. Efforts are taken to keep the village pond and drinking water sources clean. Apart from the sanitary practice, the villagers also have started involving themselves in other developmental works.

Singhpur Gram Panchayat has set a standard for other villages and panchayats in the districts, where TSC is being implemented. This is the outcome of the wholehearted efforts of the community and the officials associated with this programme. To encourage the villagers to continue the good sanitation habit, the officers



The Village Road

of the District Mission visit the village at regular intervals. An audio-visual documentation of the sanitary practices is used to motivate people in other villages to undertake such activities.

THE FIRST FULLY SANITIZED BLOCK OF INDIA: NANDIGRAM II

Nandigram II block (East Medinipur district, West Bengal) has achieved the distinction of being the first block in the country, where all the households have set up sanitary toilets. The close coordination of District and Block Panchayats and the Ram Krishna Mission Lok Siksha Parishad, led to this unique achievement. UNICEF acted as a facilitator by providing them with technical inputs and IEC material for capacity development. This was supported by State policies, timely fund allocation, and close monitoring and coordination by the State Sanitation Cell. The strong will and active participation of the local community held the key to their success. Rural Sanitary Marts (RSMs) were set up at the block level to produce and supply low cost sanitary materials. With the help of youth clubs and motivators, the concept of hygiene and sanitation was successfully promoted at Nandigram. As a result, the use of household toilets substantially increased. With this pioneering effort in sanitation, Nandigram II block has set an example which others should emulate.

Edited version of the success story published in the Quarterly E-Newsletter on Water and Sanitation, Department of Drinking Water Supply, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India

