



sanitary block was to be constructed in our school. The task was entrusted to Jana Kalyan Yubak Sangha (JKYS), a non-governmental organization of Balangir, which has undertaken similar work elsewhere. We assured them all possible help in this task. A committee was formed to facilitate the work.

The officials of the District Water and Sanitation Mission visited our school and explained the process to us. Materials were procured and construction work started. The entire work was carried out under our supervision. All the teachers and the Coordinator of the CRC extended all possible help to the volunteers of JKYS, who paid regular visits to our school for this purpose. We are happy that

they took all possible care to maintain quality. Glazed tiles have been provided in the toilet. The RWS&S organisation provided water connection to the tank. The toilet was now ready for use.

With the completion of the construction work the responsibility of JKYS came to an end; but with this our responsibility began. We formed the School Water and Sanitation Committee with students and teachers as members. The committee looks after the maintenance of the toilet. Children clean it by turn. Answering a call of nature is no longer a matter of embarrassment for us.

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SO MUCH, YET SO LITTLE

Once we paid a visit to Routsahi, a village in Jajpur district, where Total Sanitation Campaign was being implemented. The Assistant Engineer, Junior Engineers, the District Project Coordinator and I formed the team. We were shocked when we came across an elderly man heading towards the village pond after defecating in a nearby place. We called him and asked him why he was doing so. He wondered what was the harm in doing so and told us that he was going to take bath in the same pond after that. Hardly did he realize that this very act would be enough to contaminate the water source. We tried to explain the harmful effect of this practice to him and to the people who had gathered there by then. Though the old man was not very much convinced, others present there decided that they would not allow people to use the place around the village pond for open defecation and that they would prevail upon others in this regard.

In another village we came across a problem, which was slightly different from the earlier one. We met a few women and wanted to know if they were using the latrines. One of them came forward with an argument that the pit of the latrine was so small that it would be filled up in six months or so. Others said that open fields were good enough for them and they never felt the need for a latrine. As

they were not convinced about the use of a latrine, they did not bother to persuade their children to form this habit. We wanted to show the harmful consequences of open defecation to them. Samples of stool of a number of children of the village were collected. An NGO, which was working in the area, facilitated the examination of these stool samples. It was found that almost all the children suffered from infections, which was the direct outcome of their unhygienic practice.

These are not cases in isolation. True, a general awareness has been created among the people under the Total Sanitation Campaign. Latrines have been set up in a number of houses. More and more household latrines are being set up. But people are yet to give up their age-old practice. They are yet to be convinced of the harmful effects of open defecation. They must realize that by doing so they expose themselves to sickness and diseases. They must understand that it is a question of dignity of women, who need privacy to finish their daily chores. Women, particularly mothers, play a crucial role in the formation of their children's habits. They need to be persuaded first.

In Jajpur district, Ratnagiri is place of tourist attraction. Thousands of tourists from all over the world pay a visit to this place



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