

Ramanthapuram TSC Project

Tamil Nadu

Ramanathapuram District a land of Cleanliness

Ramanathapuram District, a land of 'Holy Theerthams' (places of worship), can now be renamed as 'land of Cleanliness'. Its success in TSC project itself tells the story. The Ramanathapuram TSC District project was sanctioned in June 2002. Within one year's time, it has managed to construct 15123 individual house hold toilets, 247 school toilets with functional water supply, and 391 Balwadi toilets. Ramanathapuram District has 7 talukas divided into two sub divisions and total population as per 2001 census is 1.18 lakh.

What does attribute to this remarkable success? 'The credit goes to the community especially children and teachers, Panchayats, NGOs and Project officials whose synergistic efforts made the achievements possible', says one of the Field Monitors of Ramanathapuram. Actually, everything began in perfect manner. The prompt funding support from GOI and State to the district project and subsequent recruitment of committed and hard working team with quality training and proper orientation inputs were the first step that laid the foundation of such achievements. This helped in building a strong and informed team with well defined roles and responsibility.

The extensive and creative use of IEC components such as street plays, songs, wall painting, flip charts, etc made the mobilizing drive more interesting and helped in establishing a dialogue with community, which further led to behavioral change and community empowerment. This resulted in demand generation for establishing sanitary hardware in their respective area especially in households, Balwadis and schools. Initially, some doubts were raised that cleaning the pan would be costly or having toilet inside the house is not considered good. But motivated IEC team has managed to clear their doubts by convincing community that purity of body is as equivalent to purity of soul.

Conducive Environment for TSC Project

Incorporation of PLA methods, various technological options in hardware components to end-users and strategic planning made the entire project efforts acceptable to community involved in the project. Capacity building and advocacy exercise have been done with relevant stakeholders such field workers, HH members, Panchayats, religious leaders, animators, Masons, AWWs, etc. on the issues of formation WATSAN Committee, and adoption of sanitation system and to promote the same further to others. Special efforts have been put in place with School Head Masters for arranging health education classes in the schools. Placement of dedicated MIS in terms of data

collection from field and regular reporting has, in fact, helped in identifying gaps in project implementation and subsequently improved it. All these activities created a conducive environment to meet the objectives of TSC project.

Convergence of efforts of different agencies working at district level such as District Administration, District Coordinating Agency, UNICEF, SHG Animators, Panchayats, NGOs, Jamath Leaders, AWW, etc also paved way for faster implementation of projects within the context of TSC guidelines.

Ramanathapuram District stands upfront in the making of rainwater harvesting a household reality. 'In Michealpattinam Village Panchayat, in all the 340 houses, rainwater harvesting system has been established', informs Tmt. J. Sesumary, President Village Panchayat and also a pioneer in establishing rainwater harvesting system in village. She was also instrumental in campaigning for generating sanitation awareness in her village. This village in return received great appreciation from Hon'ble CM, Tamil Nadu. The success in Michealpattinam village panchayat is now encouraging other Panchayats to follow the same path.

In addition, Ramanathapuram District is also making distinct progress in integrated solid waste management practice and mobilizing resources for 100 villages. The most glaring example is found in Sakkarakottai Panchayat where the annual cost incurred by Panchayat towards the solid waste management has been reduced as the income has now been generated from the village itself. This has encouraged Project District to privatize the six other Panchayats on solid waste management issue.

Today, in many parts of Ramanathapuram district, community is aware of water borne diseases resulting from insanitary conditions. They are empowered and make their own choice of toilet and actively participate in the implementation of TSC.

BOX: The extensive and creative use of IEC components such as street plays, songs, wall painting, flip charts, etc had helped in establishing a dialogue with community, which further led to behavioral change and community empowerment. This resulted in demand generation for establishing sanitary hardware in their respective area especially in households