



Spreading the Message on Health and Sanitation



Promoting Healthy Houses

Houses sans Health!

A striking reality of health status in the housing projects in 3 villages of Nagapattinam District

Only 2 out of the 351 families in 3 villages of Kuttiyandiyur, Kuttiyandiyur manikabandhu, and vellakoil (Nagapattinam Coastal Villages) use toilets.

Introduction

It is a fact that 2 billion people in India do not have access to toilets! This could be related to the fact that housing policies are incomprehensive and the aspects of health and hygiene are ignored in the process of strategic planning. In the tsunami response programme in Tamil Nadu many houses were constructed with toilets. However the higher truth is that sanitation projects are not simply a matter of building toilets. One could build ultra modern toilets, using the best of technology but they still could lay around useless.

A Muppet Health Sensitization programme that was conducted in 5 Coastal villages of Nagapattinam District namely Kuttiyandiyur, Kuttiyandiyur manikabandhu, Chinna manikabanthu, Vellakoil and Pudupettai from 15th October to 19th October 2007. The muppet shows provoked the interest of the people on health related issues and the people revealed the fact that only 2 families out of 351 families from Kuttiyandiyur (186 families); Kuttiyandiyur Manikabandhu (77 families) and Vellakoil (88 families) in Nagapattinam District use toilets

The Reasons for Non Usage of Toilets

Toilet is a dark and scary place. I may fall inside the toilet hole

- The people do not know the means and advantage of using toilets
- There is no proper water facility in these villages
- The people fear that foul smell will fill the house as the toilet is built inside the house
- People fear that the Septic tank will become full and will seep out and emit a foul smell.
- The means for emptying the septic tank is not made known to the people and hence they fear using the toilets
- The common misconception is that the toilets will facilitate in the breeding of rats inside the house
- In the two villages of Chinna manikabandhu and Pudupettai toilets are still in the process of completion and the people are not happy about construction of toilets.
- Most of the toilets people are using as store room, keeping food grains, dry fish etc.,



EFICOR and MYRTLE makes a difference!

EFICOR had constructed the houses with toilets in these villages and they had realized that the people were not using the toilets. They were also disturbed by the status of health and sanitation that prevailed in these villages. In order to make a difference an Awareness campaign on Eco-sanitation, health & hygiene, environment and behaviour was conducted by MYRTLE in Kuttiyandiyur, Kuttiyandiyur manikabandhu, Chinna manikabanthu, Vellakoil and Pudupettai in Nagapattinam district.

Campaign strategy

Myrtle and EFICOR realized that there needs to be a multi pronged approach for inducing behaviour change. A four-tier strategy was adopted.

- **Muppet Shows** for the entire village in the evening time when the entire population of the village was present. The muppet shows were able to convey the importance of health and hygiene issues through a humour filled channel of communication. These shows had a great impact on the children in the community. The highlight of the show was a special song that was sung to create awareness about the diseases that spreads due to the neglect of health.
- **Awareness generated among Women self help groups** – The women in the self help groups were met and through group discussions and other participatory tools awareness was generated. The women raised their concerns and one of the important issues was that women had difficulties as they had to use the fields during early mornings and late nights because of lack of toilets prior to the tsunami. They vouched to use the toilets that were constructed for them
- **Professional Inspectors** - Professional lady health Inspectors of Myrtle had a direct interaction with the community. Awareness was provided by using flip charts. One to one interaction was carried out and



the inputs were provided on the impacts of Defecating in open, diseases that can spread if health is ignored, maintenance of septic tanks, disposing sanitary napkins and ways for maintenance of toilets especially when they are inside the house.

- **School Intervention** -On 19-10-07 session was held for the 150 children of these 3 villages who were studying in Kuttiyandyur Panchayat school, It was a feed back session held especially for the children of these villages about the impacts of the muppet show and the one to one interaction. The children proudly pointed out 14 children have now started using there toilets in Kuttiyandyur, Kuttiyandyur manikabandhu and vellakoil. They also remarked that all of them will also use the toilets



Making a Difference

One and half year old Priya was found eating a sweet and she had soiled her entire body. There were flies hovering around her. After relentless efforts of the MYRTLE team, Priya's grandmother was convinced. Priya's grandmother gave her a bath and her grandmother also promised to take good care of Priya. Priya is now a healthy child!

Recommendation

- There needs to be Continuous Follow-up to encourage usage of toilets.
- One to one interaction should be adopted as each of the family has varied reasons for not using toilets
- The myths that prevent the people from using toilets needs to be addressed.
- Women and Children need to be specifically targeted by hygiene promotion programmes designed specifically for them.
- IEC materials should be produced for this purpose.
- An ideal approach is to implement hygiene and sanitation programmes in schools in which the children from these communities study.
- The community should be made aware of the problems that they can face if they ignore the health aspects.
- The housing training programmes should also incorporate means and methods of maintaining the septic tank.
- Reproductive health information should be addressed for women to reduce RTI related information.
- Adolescent and young women should be sensitized about the reproductive health and menstrual to avoid abuse and unhygienic health situation.
- Most of the concerns of the people is that the toilet is inside the houses. Hence the design of the houses should have had community consultation. The houses could have been constructed with adjoining toilets that has an entrance from the outside of the house

Let's believe that we can make it if we try....

MYRTLE-EFICOR (Programme Schedule)

Sanitation awareness campaign Programme Schedule

S.no	Date	Target Area	Number of families met-one to one	Number of people benefited through Puppet show	
				Children	Adult
1.	15-10-07	Kuttiyandiyur	186	80	40
2.	16-10-07	Kuttiyandiyur manikabandhu	77	75	50
3.	17-10-07	Chinna manikabandhu	21	25	20
4.	18-10-07	Vellakoil	88	110	80
5.	19-10-07	Pudupettai	284	135	70
		Total	656	425	260

Awareness Campaign on Sanitation, Personal hygiene and Environmental health

Date: 15th to 19th Oct'07

Place: Nagai district

Time	Particulars
10.30 am to 1.30 noon	One to one interaction-distributing pamphlets on sanitation and personal hygiene
1.30 noon to 2.30pm	Lunch Break
2.30pm to 3.30pm	One to one interaction-distributing pamphlets on sanitation and personal hygiene (Announcement for community meeting)
3.30pm to 4.30pm	Community gathering - Women Inaugural session / Ice breakers Addressing on Sanitation & Environmental health
5.00pm to 6.30pm	Children meeting, Inaugural session / Ice breakers / dividing into groups / group activity and games, Addressing on Sanitation & Environmental health, Muppet show presentation on sanitation and health & hygiene, Vote of thanks / Feedback

Promoting Sanitation in Tsunami Housing Projects of Efficor

PHASE - II

It is a fact that 2 billion people in India do not have access to toilets! This could be related to the fact that housing policies are incomprehensive and the aspects of health and hygiene are ignored in the process of strategic planning. In the tsunami response programme in Tamil Nadu many houses were constructed with toilets. However the higher truth is that sanitation projects are not simply a matter of building toilets. One could build ultra modern toilets, using the best of technology but they still could lay around useless.

A striking reality of health status in the housing projects in 3 villages of Nagapattinam District

Only 2 out of the 351 families in 5 villages of Kuttiyandiyur, Kuttiyandiyur manikabandhu, and Vellakoil (Nagapattinam Coastal Villages) use toilets.

The above mentioned alarming fact was identified by Myrtle Social Welfare Network in the initial process of conducting Muppet shows in 5 tsunami affected coastal villages of Nagapattinam along with EFICOR. After intensive discussion with the community it was revealed that the people refused to use toilets because of the following reasons...

Toilet is a dark and scary place. I may fall inside the toilet hole

- The people did not know the means and advantage of using toilets
- There was no proper water facility in these villages
- The people feared that foul smell will fill the house as the toilet is built inside the house



- People feared that the Septic tank will become full and will seep out and emit a foul smell.
- The means for emptying the septic tank was not made known to the people and hence they fear using the toilets
- The common misconception was that the toilets will facilitate in the breeding of rats inside the house

The people were therefore unhappy with the space that was allotted for the toilets and therefore they used the toilets as store room, keeping food grains, dry fish etc.

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Campaign strategy

Myrtle and EFICOR realized that there needs to be a multi pronged approach for inducing behavior change. In the initial phase of sensitization on issues of sanitation a four-tier strategy was adopted.

- Muppet Shows for the entire village in the evenings
- Awareness generated among Women self help groups
- Professional Health Inspectors facilitating one to one interaction with the people
- Sensitization programme at school

Despite these efforts the progress was very minimal and hence Myrtle decided to adopt shift in the campaign strategy. These strategies aimed to generate mass awareness about sanitation in these villages about usage of toilets.

- **Community Mobilization Process-** Various tools were used to ensure mobilization of people. Ever since tsunami there were many agencies of change who adopted various tools to mobilize people. To spread the news on sanitation issues Myrtle therefore had to adopt different strategies. One of such strategies was to use mascots. The men, women and children were enthralled to see their favorite comic characters call out to them. Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck was the most famous of them all.



Film and Muppet Shows –

After the mascots bring in people a documentary that was produced by UNICEF on health and sanitation was played for the community. The people were able to understand the importance of sanitation in the villages and its impact on the health condition of the people





- **School Intervention-** Though the children are addressed at various points of time in the villages the children found it easier to accept the ideas that were communicated in school. Therefore the Myrtle team had started conducting

programmes in schools where they were provided inputs on importance of sanitation. The two focus areas of these intervention were -

- Promoting usage of toilets
- Promoting usage of chappals (Sandals)

- **Street Theatre** – The Myrtle team used this also as a strategy to cover the older audience who expected humour and wit in the programme. The humour filled sensitization messages were able to make differences in the lives of the people. The trained team was able to convey the messages on the importance of usage of toilets through the street theatre. The street theatre was culturally appropriate and hence the people were able to relate with it.



- **Folk Songs** – This was adopted so that the people who had missed out the messages in the other tools would be able to retain it through this. Special singers were identified and they were provided with the objective

of the trainings. These singers then composed exclusive songs for this purpose.

- **Initiation of One to One Communication and Distribution of IEC Materials** –

Myrtle team was determined that every person in these 5 villages should be reached out to. As a result they decided to create and circulate an IEC material that pictorially explained the means and ways to use the toilet. This strategy was aimed to ensure that all people were reached out to. The volunteers were engaged in house to house visit where they interacted with the people, circulated the IEC materials and finally took record of the usage of the toilets in each house.

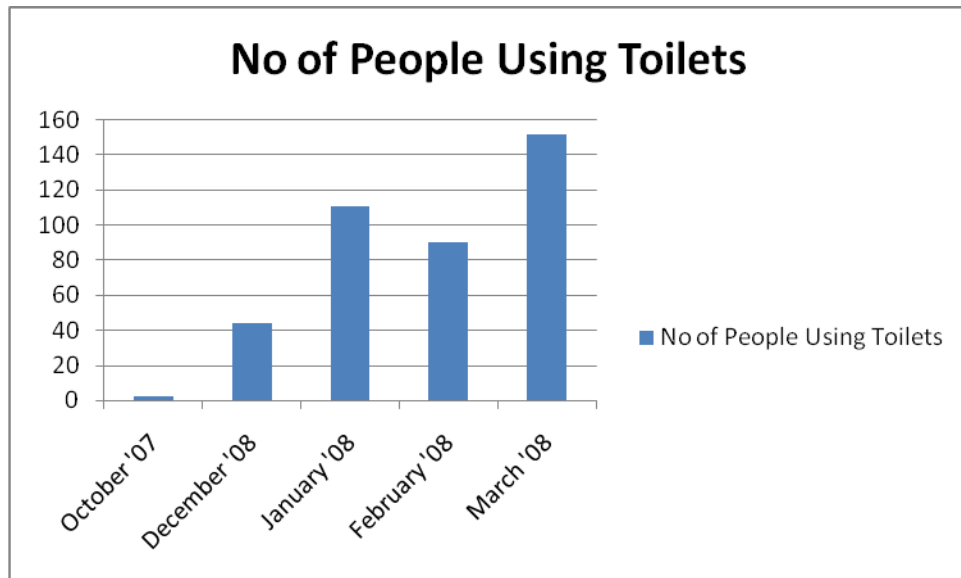


- **Self Help Group – Women’s Meet** – The women groups in the villages were called for a meeting. Doctors were also made to attend this meeting where women openly discussed about their health related issues. Inputs were provided on the importance of using toilets. The women had promised that they would use the toilets and would promote this habit with their children.



- **Survey** – This was the most crucial intervention as it recorded the quantitative progress of the usage of toilets. A questionnaire was framed and the volunteers were engaged in house to house data collection.

Making Difference- Achievements!!!



1. Initially there were just 2 toilet users in the month of October 2007 but with the follow up programme the number increased to 152
2. 120 children have undergone behavior change now they have inculcated the habit of wearing sandals
3. 171 women were provided inputs on reproductive health

Recommendation

- Reproductive health information should be addressed for women to reduce various other health complaints, the women have shared their concerns during the trainings and hence these issues has to be followed up
- They still need inputs on RTI/HIV/AIDS, Maternal health and child care etc
- Adolescent and young women should be sensitized about the reproductive health and menstrual to avoid abuse and unhygienic health situation.

The programme has been successful in terms of encouraging the people to make use of their toilets and also to promote awareness on various other health issues however there are still other issues prevailing in the communities that has to be addressed.

Myrtle believes that we can make it, if we but try....

ANNEXURES

EFICOR - MYRTLE

Entire Sanitation Awareness Campaign at Nagapattinam District – 5 months summariaized Report

Target Area	Total no of houses	Total no of houses not occupie d	Total no of toilet-not completed	Number of families using toilets- Follow-up results					behaviour change-children wearing sandals	Reproductiv e Health Addressed in women's meet
				Oct'07	Dec'07	Jan'08	Feb'08	Mar'08		
Chinna manikabangu	21	1	2	Not ready	Not ready	Not ready	Not ready	1	12	12
Kuttiyandiur manikabanku	77	4	Nil	Nil	7	24	21	22	33	35
Sathankudi Kuttiyandiur	186	9	94	Nil	6	6	11	17	40	62
Pudupettai	284	60	12	Nil	13	42	30	74	22	39
Vellakoil	88	7	3	2	18	39	28	38	13	23
Total	656	81	111	2	44	111	90	152	120	171