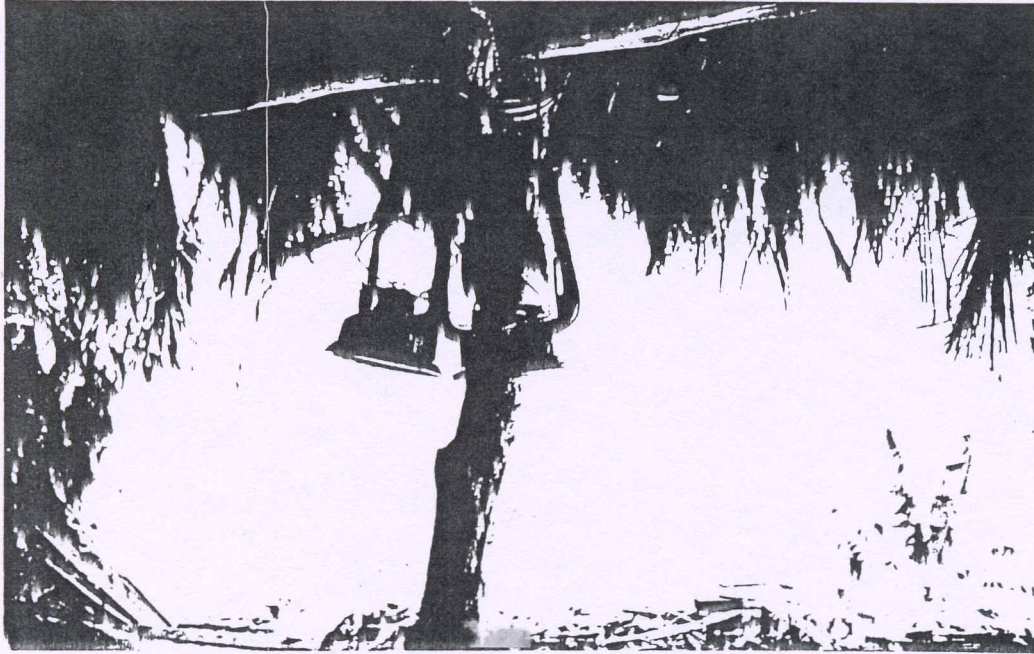




RURAL SANITATION

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Indians have a tradition of being extremely careful about cleanliness. There are dozens of religiously enjoined rules and regulations governing personal and public hygiene. But what were the sanitary organisations and techniques that made this stress on cleanliness possible? When did these techniques start falling into disuse? When did the sanitary organisation start disintegrating? All these questions are yet to be investigated.

This study attempts to answer these questions.

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INTRODUCTION

The deteriorating condition of hygiene and sanitation in India had started attracting attention in the early days of the national movement itself. During the first Congress Session that Mahatma Gandhi attended, he made pointed reference to the filth-filled wells and dirty toilets there. After that, throughout his life, he kept on trying to improve sanitation both in the cities and the villages. In the Congress programmes he gave special importance to cleanliness campaigns. In his Constructive Programmes also, this campaign had an important place. Correlating sanitation and social justice, he started the movement for the liberation of sweepers. Harijan Sevak Sangh was also established for the twin purposes of ensuring sanitation and liberating the sanitation workers.

Symbols are important for any major movement. Gandhiji, too, adopted the symbol of sweeper-free toilets to tackle the widespread problem of sanitation. But he laid no less stress on other aspects of cleanliness. In the matter of toilets, as in all other matters of public importance, he always thought in a practical manner. During his travels through the villages, he used to be irritated by the filth thrown around in the public places and by the villagers habit of relieving themselves in the open anywhere they liked. In his speeches and articles he continuously talked about these things. In this context, in his Harijan article of February 15, 1935, he wrote:

"Excreta will serve the purpose of golden manure for the fields. To convert solid and liquid excreta into useful manure, it should be mixed with soil and buried one foot deep into earth. The upper layer of earth is full of microbes. These microbes with the help of air and light, that easily reach there, convert the buried excrement into fragrant and soft soil within a week. Every village can test the truth of this.

"This task can be performed in two ways. Either keep earthenware pots or iron buckets in the toilet and empty these out into prepared pits every day and then cover the excrement with soil. Or excreta may be relieved directly into square pits and then covered with soil. This excrement can be buried in the communal fields of village or in the private fields. But it is possible only if villagers cooperate. Any enterprising villager can at least do this much himself that he collects excrement and converts it into an asset for himself. These days all this useful manure valued at lakhs of rupees goes waste every day, and at the same time, pollutes the air and spreads disease".

In 1947 the country obtained freedom and all these problems started receiving attention afresh. Village sanitation is a state subject. Consequently, different states took up the issue at different times and in different ways. Later, when Community Development Programmes were started, village sanitation all over the country was attended to at the national level also. All these efforts proceeded apace during the time of Jawaharlal Nehru. Initially, there used to be no separate provision for village sanitation in the Government budgets. However, during the last few years, budgetary provisions are being made in many States for sanitation projects ranging from the preparation of appropriate designs for public toilets to the construction of private and public toilets, both in the villages and the cities.

A number of non-governmental organisations have also been running sanitation programmes in many parts of the country, specially those organisations that have emerged from the National Movement and are imbued with the ideas of Harijan liberation and Gram Swarajya have been active in this field. These organisations started the construction of sweeper-free toilets in villages much before the Government started doing anything in this direction. Given the limited resources that these organisations could command, it is understandable that their achievements have not been too substantial. However, these organisations have at least made a beginning in the remote villages.

Organisations that emerged from the national movement and are active in this field are mainly the following: Harijan Sevak Sangh, Maharashtra Branch of Gandhi Smarak Nidhi (Gandhi Memorial Trust), Safai Vidyalaya (sanitation school) of Ahmedabad, Magan Sangrahalaya of Wardha, Friends Rural Centre, Hoshangabad (M.P.), Kasturba Smarak Nidhi (Kasturba Gandhi Trust), Indore etc.

During the Gandhi Centenary Year, 1969, the Government and the Gandhian organisations once again started taking active interest in this subject. Many State Governments announced a number of Gandhian organisations with their limited resources, further activated their sanitation programmes in the villages. Around the same time an organisation named the 'Sulabh International' came up with its project of Sulabh Shouchalayas. The programme of this organisation is highly practical. Wherever resources have been made available toilets of the Sulabh Shouchalaya design have proved to be successful. (See appendix)

During the United Nations Decade beginning in 1980, a movement to supply water and sanitation all over the world was started. India agreed to be a participant in this movement. The Government of India announced that in the ten years, between 1980 and 1990, 80% of the urban population shall be provided access to modern facilities of water supply and sanitation. 25% of the rural population was also to be covered under this scheme. In view of the state of the administrative machinery, and the availability of water etc. in the seven lakh villages of the country, it would have been perhaps too ambitious to undertake to cover any larger proportions of the village population. Six years of this decade have already passed. Looking at the achievements of these six years even the target of providing 25% of the village population with sanitation and drinking water facilities seems out of reach.

Surveys have been conducted to evaluate the achievements of the sanitation and toilet programmes that have been undertaken from time to time. These

surveys indicate that whatever toilet facilities were created in the villages through governmental and non-governmental agencies have not been fully utilised by the village people, specially the women. There were many reasons for this lack of enthusiasm. However, the major reason perhaps was the fact that these facilities were created without consulting the local people at all. Enthusiastic officials and committed workers kept on constructing toilets without paying any attention to the local needs, preferences and inhibitions, and the local supply of water etc. Consequently, village people took on notice of these facilities and kept on using the open spaces for their daily routines. That is why there was no visible improvement in the sanitation environment.

SOCIAL FEASIBILITY

In 1984 Technology Advisory Group of the World Bank executed a rural sanitation project. It was supported by UNDP and UNICEF. The aim of this project was to study social feasibility of sanitary latrines in rural area based on demonstration schemes. Covering 3,600 villages spread over 13 states (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal). The project was to assist the Government of India in improving rural sanitation through the construction of low cost sanitary latrines, mainly in the households. But the toilets in some of these villages had no impact on the sanitation environment because of the non-involvement of the local people, especially the women.

It is important that village conditions should first of all be understood. After talking to the villagers efforts should be made to comprehend their concepts of sanitation and hygiene. The present condition of sanitation facilities in the village should be taken into account and the attempt should be to provide necessary repair and adjustment for the existing facilities. In the villages it is the women who need the toilet facilities the most. Therefore their preferences in this regard are most important. Only after determining these preferences and other conditions in the village can any successful programme of village sanitation be launched. It should also be seen as to what type of organisation can do this work efficiently and what type of resources can be provided to these organisations. Conditions in different regions of this country greatly vary from each other. Cultural and economic life in these regions is also widely different. Even in the same region different villages present different set of problems. In fact in the same village one can find people whose cultural and economic conditions are quite different from each other and hence their toilet preferences and needs are also fairly varied.

People involved in the sanitation programmes have, for sometime past, started asking these questions, which are in any case intimately connected

with the success of these programmes. UNDP itself made an attempt to determine the preferences of women in matters of sanitation and toilets through the medium of some selected women's organisations.

ISST, a voluntary non-profit organisation with a focus on studies on women and development started its appropriate technology cell in 1980 by bringing out status papers on rural sanitation, bio-gas and smokeless chulahs. Its interest in appropriate technology from the point of view of technology transfer was to see how these technologies can be brought to the service of the rural poor, especially the women.

As a first step ISST participated in a workshop convened in May 1981 by the Consortium on Rural Technology (CORT) to identify technology options in the three selected fields. Through this workshop useful links and interaction were set up between research and field organisations and concerned government agencies. The proceeding of this workshop were published in a hand book called "Rural Sanitation Technology Options".

PREPARATION FOR THE SURVEY

Before starting regular work on this survey in September '85, ISST contacted a few locally active workers in different regions. Social workers coming to the ISST from villages and cities for various purposes were consulted in this matter. Whenever women workers of the ISST went out on any of their journeys they tried to get the response of women on these questions.

Essentially what came to the forefront from these pre-survey consultations was that to get any relevant information on this question, one will have to select a few villages with differing geographical, social and economic conditions.

Selection of States

While chalking out a preliminary structure for this survey, three States were kept in mind : Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. These three States fall in the Southern, Central and Western parts of the country respectively. All three differ widely in their geographic location and social and economic environment.

Selection of Regions in the States

In Karnataka, North Canara district was chosen. This is a large district located in the low hills of Western Ghats. The district remains more humid than the rest of the State, throughout the year. The farmers in this district generally grow cash crops like Supari (Betelnut), black pepper, ilaichi (cardamom) etc. Consequently, in economic terms, the district is well off and social inequality is much less compared to that in the rest of the States.

In Madhya Pradesh, the districts of Ratlam, Indore and Hoshangabad were chosen. These districts were selected to represent the temperate climate plains of India. Tribal areas were also included in these districts.

In Rajasthan Bikaner district was chosen. While selecting villages within the district, attempt was made to keep only those villages which were typical of the desert and had low availability of water.

Selection of sample villages

Out of the districts chosen a sample of villages was carefully selected for survey. A number of considerations went into this selection. Social life in the larger villages was likely to be different from that in the smaller villages. Villages near a pucca road remain in closer contact with urban life, therefore the attitudes of women in these villages were likely to be different from those of the women in remoter villages. Sanitary preferences in villages largely dependent upon agriculture were likely to be different from those in which the major occupation happens to be animal husbandry. On the question of toilet habits, the literacy ratio in the village was likely to have significant impact. Caste differences also matter in this regard. Peasants who cultivate their own land and the landless labourers are also likely to perceive the sanitation problem from different angles. While selecting the villages to be surveyed and the families in the villages to be included in the sample, all these considerations were kept in mind.

SURVEY AT A GLANCE

STATE	DISTRICT	VILLAGE	POPULATION
KARNATAKA	North Canara	Allihadda	12
		Balekoppa	8
		Balesar	12
		Barehadad	35
		Chavatti	70
		Chitmanch	7
		Harteballu	6

Selection of Regional Coordinators

The question of sanitation and toilet habits is a rather sensitive matter. On this question, one cannot expect to get any reasonable answers unless there is some familiarity between the surveyor and the respondent. This becomes specially important when the respondents happen to be women.

Therefore selecting such regional coordinators and surveyors, who were familiar with their areas and who were also recognised by the people in the villages, was a major problem before us. It is obvious that even the most discerning and diligent workers would have failed to get any response on these sensitive matters unless they had some rapport with the villagers concerned. We felt that for this survey the real need was not of social science experts but of people who had an intimate knowledge of their society. Only those who had been regularly visiting the villages in the area for some of other activities could be considered for undertaking this sensitive survey.

From amongst our contacts in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, we started looking for people who understood the problems of the area, who had been involved in some social activity in the region for sometime past, and who were capable of presenting the information collected during the survey in a systematic manner and analysing it appropriately.

All the three regions were contacted in October - November and initially three names were decided upon. Shri Pandurang Hegde took up the responsibility of conducting survey in Karnataka, Shri Mahendra Bhai in Madhya Pradesh, and Shri Shubu Patwa in Rajasthan.

Shri Hegde belongs to the Sirsi region of Karnataka. He was born there. He also had his primary schooling in this region. Later he obtained a Master's Degree in Social Work from the 'Delhi School of Social Work'. After completing his studies, he roamed around as a volunteer in these areas of Himalayas where social forestry movements were going on. After returning in the

'Damoh' district of Madhya Pradesh. After he returned from there, he worked for some time amongst landless labourers in the 'Damoh' district of Madhya Pradesh. Later he returned to his own area, 'Sirsi'. There he went around the villages trying to raise awareness about the problems connected with the deterioration of forests. He became the moving spirit behind the 'Appiko' movement, patterned on the Chipko movement of Himalayas, that began in this area sometime later. In Kannada, 'Appiko' means 'to embrace'. During the last two years, the Appiko people have not only tried to save the forest but also have started movements to plant trees in the lands lying fallow in the villages and the defoliated forests. Young Pandurang is known in most of the villages in this area and the people of these villages look upon him and his work with respect.

Shri Pandurang Hegde chose two surveyors to help him in this survey. One of them Smt. Premlata Bhatt has been a primary school teacher in village 'Sugawi' for the last twenty years. The other Ms. Sudha Sharma belongs to an ordinary peasant family of village 'Chavatti'. Sudha's family has been very active in the 'Appiko' movement.

The Madhya Pradesh coordinator, Shri Mahendra Bhai, is a well-known Sarvodaya worker. He has been connected with Village Development work for the last thirty five years. He has also been running the most regular and the biggest news-service in India providing news about constructive work activities and ideas evolving in the country. Today, Sarvodaya Press Service releases articles, news and features to some 500 small and big newspapers and magazines. For the last two years Sarvodaya Press Service has been bringing out special fortnightly features on environment and development in collaboration with 'Earthscan' of London.

Sarvodaya Press Service Bulletins are also sent to village organisations and village workers regularly. In this way Shri Mahendra Bhai remains in touch with village development work not only in Madhya Pradesh but all over the country. Mahendra Bhai is also an office-bearer of a number of

organisations active in this field.

For his helpers Mahendra Bhai chose Veenita and Siddhartha, his daughter and son respectively. They have been going to the villages with their father since childhood. Since in Madhya Pradesh the five villages were spread over three districts, it was thought that a brother-sister team will be able to function more effectively over these long distances.

For Rajasthan, Shubhu Patwa was chosen to be the coordinator. Shri Patwa used to bring out a small newspaper from Bikaner. Later he worked as the Correspondent of a major Hindi daily of Delhi. In addition to his journalism, Shubhu Patwa has been active in Adult Education activities in Bikaner for a long time. A little before he was selected for this survey, a successful social forestry campaign centred around the pasture lands of Bhinasar in Bikaner was launched under his leadership. Today a major mass movement for spreading greenery is gathering strength in the village of Bhinasar located in the dry deserts of Rajasthan.

Shri Shubhu Patwa in Bikaner was helped by Shri Sampat Jain, a lecturer in village Jasrasar, and his wife, Smt. Chandrika Jain, Ms. Champa Jain also joined them in this task. The whole team is well-versed in the local language and traditions.

The three regional coordinators were kept in regular contact through correspondence. After they completed the selection of their teams, the Central Coordinator from ISST visited all the three regions. The Central Coordinator had detailed discussions with the three regional coordinators separately, and the structure for the survey was worked out in detail. During the same trip, photographic details of the three regions were also documented.

In Madhya Pradesh some areas outside the districts selected for survey were also visited. After talking to the elders in some of these villages, a brief note on the traditional sanitation and toilet organisation in the villages was prepared. This note presents a rather vague and unfinished picture of the sanitation procedures that had continued in the villages till recently.

However, in spite of its vagueness, the note brings out rather surprising information. In this note, etymology of commonly used phrases in connection with toilets procedures has been collected. The note also gives some idea of the elaborate and hygienic sanitation organisation cannoted by these phrases. This note was sent to all the three regional coordinators before they started their work. In addition, a number of selected village volunteers and well-known social workers were also provided with this note. The note gives only a rough sketch of the traditional sanitation organisation of the Indian villages. In most of the villages, even the social memory of this organisation is now lost. Even so, we felt that it is important that the surveyors should be aware of this traditional organisation. We thought that with this knowledge they will be better able to understand the village conditions and traditions and they will be in a position to correctly interpret the responses that they receive from the villagers, especially the women.

THE TRADITIONAL SANITATION

What were the sanitation and toilet facilities prevalent in the villages? When did they break down? Why did they break down? No final answers to these questions can be easily obtained. Nevertheless, without finding some answers to these questions it seems impossible to complete the task of building sanitary and toilet organisation in today's villages. Searching for answers to these questions is in itself an important task. The picture of the traditional organisation that has emerged from our talk with the elders in some areas of Madhya Pradesh may be of some help in providing answers. Therefore, we are presenting this sketchy picture in brief. Conditions in different areas must have been quite different from each other. Therefore, the more we know about the various areas, the better it will be for our understanding.



In most of the villages of Madhya Pradesh, there used to be an enclosure, called 'Bada' in almost every peasant household. Crops are grown in the field, but vegetables for the kitchen were produced in the Bada itself. Those days, disposing of the waste was no problem. All the domestic waste was collected in the Bada and converted into compost manure. In these

Badas, a drain called 'khanti' was dug. This served the purpose of the family latrine. The excrement was covered with soil and thereby converted into manure. This manure was used both for growing vegetables in the Bada and crops in the fields. In every peasant household, small or big, there used to be a Bada covering one-fourth of an acre to about three-fourth of an acre. On the toilet drains in the Bada, bricks were kept to facilitate sitting on foot, the usual Indian toilet habit. Perhaps the phrase 'pakhana' has evolved from the idea of a place where you keep your feet (Paon).

In the Badas, it was usual to put sticks of 'Aak' and Arhar (pulses) etc., on three sides to cover the latrine drains. Because this provided a sort of straw-tent, a tatti, (mat) on three sides of the drain, perhaps that is the reason why the phrase 'tatti' became common for the latrine.

For the activity of relieving oneself, three more terms are prevalent in various parts of the country : disha, maidan and jungle. Some families or some members of a family preferred to relieve themselves in the open outside the village, instead of going into the Bada. For going out of the village for this purpose, there were different directions - dishas - fixed for men



and women, separately. Perhaps from this idea of going into a particular direction, the term 'disha' for the latrine evolved. For the women, there was a separate disha, not very far from the village. For the men, the disha used to be different and usually far away from the village.

From the habit of going into the nearby forest, the jungle, for the purpose of relieving oneself, the phrase 'jungle' for this activity must have evolved. In every village, a small piece of common land, separate from the pastures and the cultivated fields, was kept aside for this purpose. This piece of land was called the 'Choutha Khana', the fourth portion. No construction or other activity was allowed on the Choutha Khana. In the British period the Choutha Khana was also sometimes termed 'Riyaya' (public) or 'Nistar' (relieving) land. Choutha Khana used to be small or big in proportion to the population of the village.

Let us return to the Bada. In the Bada, in addition to the tattti, or the latrine, there also used to be a 'nahani', a place to bathe in. Those members of the family, men or women, who could not go to the public tank or the river for bathing used the 'nahani' in the Bada for this purpose. In the Bada there were also often placed two 'Ghinochis'. Two sticks each were placed cross-wise on two sides and on top of these a wooden board was kept. This was Ghinochi, used for keeping water vessels etc. Often there used to be separate Ghinochis for drinking water and for bathing water. In some places, this was called 'dasa'. In the village houses, there was nothing like a drain that would carry dirty waters out of the household and pollute the river or the tank. Instead there used to be the 'narda'. The toilet water used to flow through the 'narda' into the plot reserved for growing vegetables. In the 'Bada' in addition to vegetables, there used to be fruit-bearing trees like the Lemon, Papaya and Guava etc. There also used to be separate beds for egg-plant, tomato, green chillies, mint etc.

This picture of the village sanitation organisation is of course incomplete,

but it does provide some idea of what used to prevail in not too remote past. What were the corresponding organisations in other parts of the country. Efforts should be made to know about these organisations in their diversity throughout the country. Gandhiji had once said that the villages in India did not use to be as unclean as they look today. How clean they were? What were the manners of their sanitary organisation that kept them clean? How did these organisations break down? Without understanding all this it will not be possible to make our present village sanitation programmes a success.

PREPARING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Around this time, work was started on preparing a detailed questionnaire for the survey. The questionnaire is in two parts. There were 125 questions in both parts but together (See Appendix).

The first part of the questionnaire was meant for those regions and villages which do not have toilet facilities. The second part of the questionnaire was for those areas where some sort of toilet and sanitation facilities have been provided. The regional coordinators and the surveyors working with them were given the freedom to add any questions that they felt were important and were missing in the questionnaire. They were also advised that they need not fill the questionnaires in the presence of the respondents. The questionnaire being rather long, it would have been inconvenient and impractical to fill the whole of it while talking to the villagers, especially the women. The surveyors were advised that they should talk to the villagers keeping the questions in the questionnaire in mind, but without actually keeping the questionnaire in front of them all the time. The questionnaire could later be filled by the surveyor on the basis of the talks held with the respondents. The surveyors were also told to append, in the form of a separate note, any special information lying outside the scope of the questionnaire, that they may gather while talking to any particular respondent.

The first twelve questions in the questionnaire were related to general information about the villages. What is the population? How much is the cultivated area in the village? What is the situation regarding crops, the industries, and employment? How far is the village from the road? Are there any rivers, streams, lakes or tanks in the vicinity of the village? How far are these water sources from the village? These are some of the questions in this part of the questionnaire. The next ten questions relate to the latrines and other places meant for toilet and relieving. How many households in the village have latrines? How many do not have any such facility? What are the reasons for such facilities not being

there in the house? Is the presence or absence of toilet facilities related to the caste differences in any way? Where do the men go for relieving themselves? When do they go for the purpose? What is done in case of disease etc? From women such questions were asked in even greater detail. Amongst the 26 questions relating to women, 12 referred to the facilities available to them during and after delivery and the problem faced by them in this period.

Women were also asked whether they go in a different direction from that of the men for relieving themselves? How far do they have to go? Generally at what time do they go for this purpose? Do they go alone, or are they accompanied by someone else? Do they face any problems when they go alone? If the village is located on a busy thoroughfare, then how do they react to the traffic and the people passing on the road? What are the facilities available for obtaining water for sanitation? For the period immediately before and after delivery it was necessary to ask the women whether they get any special facilities during these days? If special arrangements are made in this period, then for how long do these temporary arrangements last? Who decides about these arrangements? What are the details of this temporary arrangement? In what part of the household are these temporary toilet facilities put up? After these facilities are no more required, how are they disposed off? Are these temporary toilet facilities used by any other member of the family also?

In the next twenty questions, an attempt was made to elicit the reasons why toilet facilities have not been so far generated in the village or in the household concerned? Has there ever been any schemes proposed by the government in this connection? Has there been any implementation of such schemes? If these schemes have not been implemented, what are the reasons? Has any non-governmental organisation put forward any proposals for generating sanitation facilities in the village? How successful

or un-successful have these projects been? If the non-governmental projects have not been successful, what are the reasons? Were the women consulted while formulating these projects? Were financial resources the main constraints? Or, were there any problems with the design? After being once unsuccessful, were any fresh attempts ever made? These were the type of questions put in this part of the questionnaire. In the absence of latrine and toilet facilities in the household, it was important to find out the women's response to this deprivation. Do the women consider latrine facilities inside the household unnecessary.

If yes, why? Does this give them an excuse for going out of the house and they consider this to be a special facility? Or is it, that a latrine inside the house violates their sense of cleanliness? Do they know of the clean sanitary designs for latrines? Do they consider latrines and toilets to be expensive? Do they know anything about the inexpensive designs for these purposes? Have they ever been asked about such things? If they are asked, what type of toilet facilities will they prefer? About twelve questions of this type were put in this part of the questionnaire.

The second part of the questionnaire was meant for those families which had their own toilet facilities. In this part also, there were about 10 questions relating to general information about the village in the beginning. Next there were 31 questions about latrines and toilets. How many households have these facilities? When were these constructed? On whose initiative? What was the need felt for these? Who took part in deciding on this issue? Were the women consulted? Which design was accepted? What were the material used? What are the arrangements for the supply of water? How are these maintained? In what part of the house, are these facilities put up? How much is spent on these facilities? Who paid? Who were the first to start constructing toilets in their houses? Did this have any demonstration effect on the neighbourhood? In addition to the private toilets, are there any public toilets in the village? If yes, on whose initia-

tive were these built and how are these being maintained? The last five questions in this part of the questionnaire were designed to find out from the women in these households whether they have liked the toilet facilities or not? Have these facilities created any special problems for them?

The survey was begun in all the three regions almost simultaneously during February - March. To get answers on such a sensitive issue, it was important that there should be a proper dialogue between the questioner and the respondent. Therefore before starting the survey work in Karnataka, the whole questionnaire was first translated into Kannada. The answers were also put down in Kannada itself. In Madhya Pradesh and Bikaner the questionnaire was in Hindi. But in Bikaner, the dialogue was held in the local language, Marwari. Similarly, in Malwa region of M.P. the conversation was done in Malwi even though the questionnaire was in Hindi.

During the survey, constant contact was kept with the regional coordinators. The survey was completed between mid-April and May. The questionnaires from all the three regions along with the reports of the regional coordinators, were received by the end of May. The Kannada questionnaire from Karnataka was translated back into Hindi. On the basis of the reports of these three regions, a picture of the toilet facilities in the villages began to emerge.

REGIONAL PICTURE OF TOILETS

Karnataka

North Canara District consists of hilly terrain and is fairly humid. The major crops cultivated in this district are paddy and supari (Betelnut). Habitations in the district are generally spread out far away from each other. People make their homesteads near their often small fields. For four to six months a year, people from the coastal plains come into this district to perform wage labour. At many places the Government has got kuccha houses constructed for these migratory labourers. Villages of North Canara are relatively affluent. Consequently toilets and other sanitation facilities are much more common in the villages of this district compared to those in other districts. The three villages in this district that was surveyed did not have too much of variation amongst themselves, though the percentage of different castes happened to be different in these villages.

Madhya Pradesh

Village Roopa Kheda located at a distance of 11 kms. from the district headquarter of Ratlam consists of mixed population. There are forty to forty-five families of plains peasants and about 30 families of tribal Bhils. In the village Gajinda, 30 kms. away from Indore, the inhabitants are largely tribal. The third village, Machhla, has the peculiarity of having a number of sweeper-free toilets which have been constructed in the campus of Sarvodaya Shikshan Samiti. In fact, a campaign to build similar toilets in all the villages of this area was started by the Sarvodaya Centre of the region about thirty years ago. Today one can see the broken down remnants of the toilets constructed during that period. Another peculiarity of these three villages of Madhya Pradesh is that all of them are in the vicinity of major urban centres like Ratlam and Indore.

Literacy percentage varies from village to village. Maharasar and Ranadhisar of Rajasthan are almost illiterate. In this matter, the North Canara

District of Karnataka seems to be much better off. In the Madhya Pradesh villages, schooling facilities do exist, but not many people seem to be making use of these. In Roopakheda, near Ratlam, literacy is fairly widespread amongst the plains peasants families but there seems almost total lack of literacy among the Bhils. In all these villages the number of literate Bhils is negligible. Amongst the families that have become literate, one does not see much differentiation being made amongst boys and girls in the matter of schooling. Generally in all the villages, the social status of women is fairly high and they do not have to face any major causes of insecurity.

Rajasthan

Village Jasarasar is located on the Bikaner-Churu road. According to the 1981 census the population of the village is 8,000 heads. Though this village lies in a desert belt, yet it is typical of the developing villages of India. A school, a bank, a veterinary hospital and the government offices for water and electricity supply are available in the village. With all these facilities, this village can easily be taken to be a small urban town. However, it is a peculiarity of this village that inspite of all this governmental machinery around, there is not a single sweeper family in the village. In order to reach the other village of this district - Maharasar - one has to walk ten kilometers through a sandy stretch. There is only one literate person in this small village, and he is 75 years old. Nobody in the village has any idea of what is meant by a toilet or a latrine. The third village Ranadhisar is even more remote. To reach this village, one has to walk fifteen to eighteen kilometers over mounds of sand. There is no question of there being any supply of water or electricity in this remote area.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

KARNATAKA

North Canara

District North Canara of Karnataka lies in the hills of the Western ghats. These hills of the Sahayadri range are called Malenadu. In Kannada this means the hilly tract. 80% of the area in this district is under forest. This is the only district in Karnataka that can boast of having more than 3/4ths of its area under forest cover. The population of the district is 11 lakhs. A part of the district lies in the coastal belt and this part has neither hills nor forests. The other part is in the hills of Western ghats. There are a total of 11 talukas in this district, five of these talukas are coastal and other six are in the hilly tract. Our survey was limited to the hilly talukas.

Social & Economic conditions

The three talukas, Sirsi, Siddapur and Yellapore, that were covered under the survey are all dependent on cultivation alone. The major crops are paddy and supari. In some areas, there are also some plantain plantations. Black pepper and cardamum are often inter grown in the supari plantations. The supari plantations are generally in the valleys inside the hills. These valleys remain humid throughout the year. The peasants often make their homes inside or near the supari plantations so that they can easily look after the trees. Therefore one cannot find any big villages in this area. Generally, the villages of Malenadu consist of just three to four families each.

Labourers from the coastal areas come into this region in search for work in the supari plantations and the paddy fields. These labourers work here for four to six months in a year. Generally they come to the same



village every year and their employment in these villages is more or less assured. Men labourers are paid around fifteen rupees per day, women get about 10 rupees. The migratory labourers live in kuccha houses. For their daily needs of water and fuel, they depend upon the communal katta and the forest. There is no major factory in this area.

There are almost no very big landlords or highly affluent families in this area. On the other hand, one also does not come across dire poverty or starvation. Most of the families belong to the middle-income group. They have their own supari plantations and paddy fields. There are almost no wage labourers amongst the local people. There are some landless families in the area, but none of them seems to be in too bad a state, economically speaking. The peasants in the village live in pucca houses. These houses are fairly big and well constructed. Most of them have a cow-shed (goshala) attached. Almost every house has a well of its own.

The women generally take care of the household duties and look after the cow-shed. At some places they also help in the paddy fields. Dehusking the supari is in any way considered a household chore.

Sanitation

Toilets are generally built at the back of the house. Waste water from the toilet and the kitchen is used for irrigating the coconut trees in the court-

yard. There is also often a kitchen garden where vegetables for the family are grown. Consequently, no waste water goes unused and the surroundings of the house remain dry and clean. The habitations of the migratory labourers are temporary. These consist of mud walls on which a roof made of supari leaves is supported. These habitations are generally located at a place away from the permanent village. They use the public well for their water needs. At some places, the government has got janata type houses constructed. These are in the nature of labour colonies and often not much space is left around the houses for general use.

Social Status of Women

There is no tradition of purdah in this area. Girls are sent to school almost as often as boys. Girls from the relatively well-off families even go to colleges. In this area, the rural women seem to get much more opportunity of meeting others, and holding their personal views on important matters than what is generally available to the women in other parts of the country. Perhaps the reason for this relative freedom of women in this area is that there is no pressure of a dense population in any part of Malenadu. In the tiny villages inhabited away from each other women feel secure and are looked upon with respect in their society.

Deterioration of the Environment

Sirsi, Siddapur and Yellapore talukas have been well-known for their dense forests. There are rivers, streams and springs in these forests. People obtain fuel-wood, green vegetable and herbs for their needs from these forests. For relieving themselves also, often they use the forest. In this area, this activity is called 'bahirdisha' instead of the 'disha' of the northern India. 'Bahirdisha' means 'to go out towards (the jungle)'.

Since 1960 many developmental projects have been launched in this area. In these projects, the forests there have been assumed to be the major cause of backwardness in this area. Consequently, clearing of the forests to usher in development has begun. In place of these dense forests, commercial plantations of Eucalyptus and Teak are being grown. Slowly, the forests in the vicinity of the villages are also disappearing and streams and springs are drying up.

Encroachment on Privacy

With the destruction of the forests, there is no cover left in the vicinity of the village to go for bahirdisha. Even the shrubs have been cut, and there is no privacy to be found. This has happened during the last eight to ten years only. Meanwhile, the population of this areas has also grown. Therefore toilet and latrine facilities have become a problem. Men even now manage to go into the far off forests, fields, or the supari plantations. But women have neither so much time at their disposal nor the freedom to go that far. They have to limit themselves to performing their toilet activities either early in the morning before sunrise or later in the evening after sunset. This has created physical problems for them. Rains are heavy in these areas. Many a time rains continue for weeks on end. During this period women find it difficult even to stir out. With the destruction of the forests, a new menace has appeared in this area. A weed named 'Eptoryum' has spread all round. The leaves of this weed irritate the skin on contact. Local people call it the 'Congress Grass'.

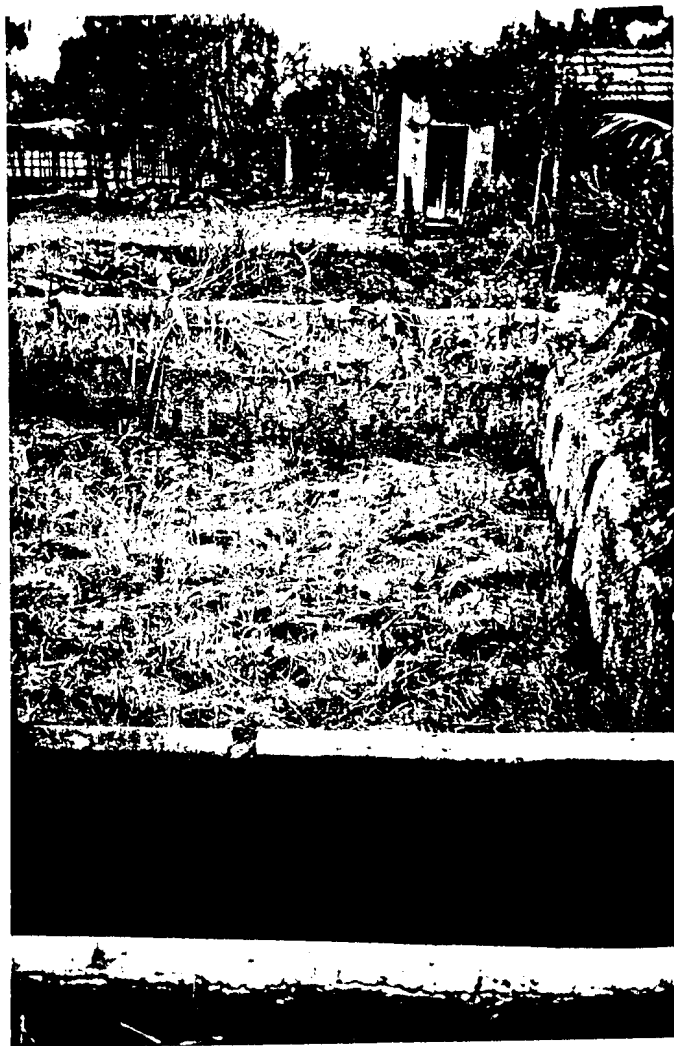
Because of all these problems the affluent families in the region have started having private toilets and latrines. This has had its demonstration effect on every village. Also the young people who go to the cities and towns in search of education get used to the latrines and toilets there

and on return they insist on similar facilities. Because of these reasons, the villages in these three talukas have started having private toilets, though no organisation either encouraged or helped the villagers in this activity.

In addition to the general survey of these three talukas, two villages in this area were taken up for detailed survey. The first village Sugavi is on the far end of the Western Ghat hills. From this village onwards, the Southern plains begin. In the region around Sugavi, there has been large scale felling of tress during the last three decades. In their place Eucalyptus trees have been grown. In the second

village, Chavatti, the destruction of forests has proceeded at a relatively slower pace. Therefore, some forest cover is still left around this village. Population pressure also is not too high around this village and migratory labour is rarer.

In Sugavi and the village around it, a number of families have now got their private toilets. In some of the villages the percentage of families having a private toilet is about 20%, in others like Srenikeri, this percentage can be as high as 50%. Most of the toilets have been constructed



in the middle income houses. Caste of a family does not seem to have much influence on this question. The wage labour families generally do not have private toilets but this is because of economic deficiency and perhaps not because of any caste considerations. In and around Chavatti the number of toilets is rather small. Women belonging to labour families do not even perceive any need for these.

Sanitation and Environment

It is clear from the survey that the need or otherwise for private toilets is intimately connected with the availability or non-availability of forest cover around the villages. This is the prime consideration. After the need for having private toilets is felt because of the destruction of forests in the region, the decision to build one or not then depends upon the economic status, education level and urban contacts of the family. Towns like Sirsi have the facility of an underground sewer system. In this region, there is no separate class of families doing sanitation work. Therefore septic toilets are popular in this area. The pressure of population has also had a role in the spread of toilets. Unless there is the possibility of finding a quiet place nearby, it is not pleasant to go out into the open for relieving oneself. Pregnant women and sick people in the family anyway need some sort of private toilet facilities. One may wonder how thirty to forty per cent of the families in this region have got their own toilet facilities constructed without any inducement or help from some governmental or voluntary organisations. In fact whenever there is a perceived need, and there are resources to fulfil the need, people do not require external inducements or help.

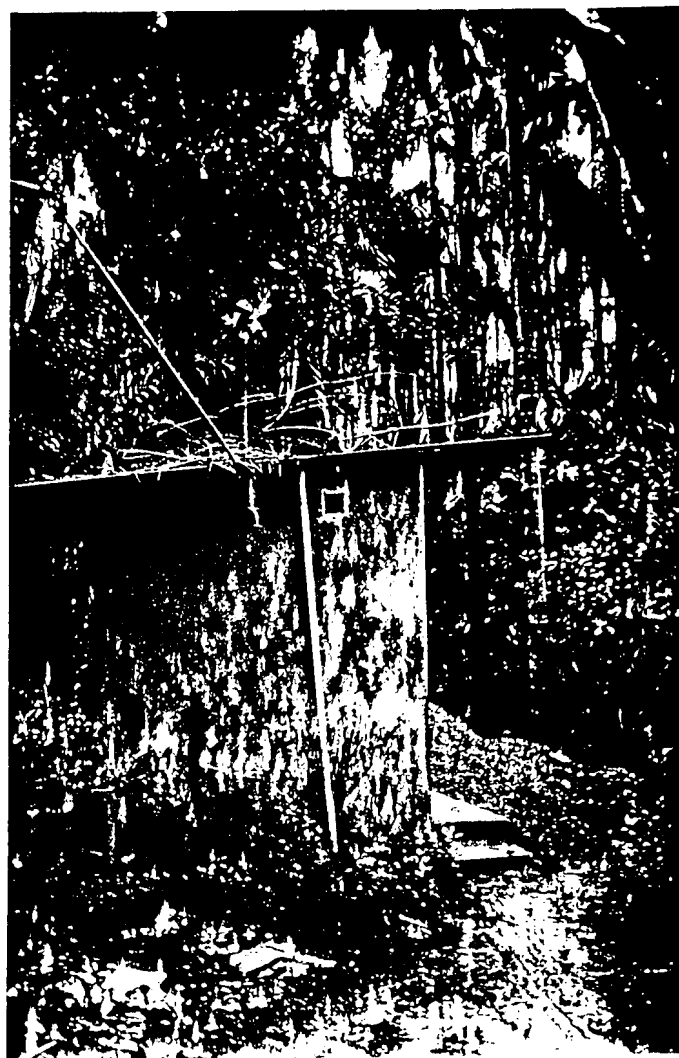
Women's Attitudes Towards Toilets

Women in different areas have different attitudes towards their need

for toilet facilities. In the areas, that have a substantial forest cover and where there are facilities for going out in the open for toilet purposes, women do not perceive the need for a private toilet inside the house. They still prefer to go out for this purpose. They find it to be cleaner, healthier and more hygienic. However, wherever facilities for relieving in the open are getting destroyed, attitudes of women have started changing. In these areas, women have started feeling that it will be convenient to have a toilet inside the house. But the final decision is dependent upon the resources available. Women will not insist on having a toilet if for this purpose they have to forego their other needs with higher priority.

In this area, finding a place for constructing a toilet is no problem. Every family has sufficient land for the house and the Bada. Around the kutcha houses of the wage labourers also, there is often enough space for the toilet to be built. However, the Janata houses built for the labourers under the welfare schemes of the government, do not have any open space around them. Finding a space for a toilet there may be a problem. Nevertheless, the houses of these labourers are generally near supari plantations and there is always the possibility of finding a quiet safe place for relieving oneself.

Many women felt that if a private toilet is constructed inside the house, the responsi-



bility for keeping it clean will fall on them and the load of their household work will consequently increase. However, they did not expect the toilet to create any fresh problems like providing places for the mosquitoes to breed or spreading bad odour in the house. The elders of the family do feel that a toilet in the house is likely to violate the sanctity of the house. However, the young people of the new generation do not seem to care much for such opinions. Women in this area are aware of the design for the septic toilet. These days such toilets cost about Rs. 3,000 and more. They do not know about other cheaper design and options like 'Sulabh'.

There are special temporary facilities created for pregnant women and sick people in some families, others do not have these. Where temporary facilities of this type are provided, there this task is performed under the supervision of some old women of the family. A pit is dug and some sort of cover is provided all-around it. This temporary arrangement is always made outside the house and except for the pregnant women and sick members of the family, no one else is supposed to make use of this facility.

Whether caste considerations play any role in a family deciding to have a toilet or not, on this question opinions differ. People around Sugavi feel that caste plays no role. Of the 26 women surveyed here, 22 expressed this opinion. But the 36 women of Chavatti insisted that caste is significant in this context. The reason for this difference of opinion seems to be the fact that villages around Sugavi which have fairly widespread toilet facilities are inhabited by people from all castes. On the other hand the villages near Chavatti are inhabited by only one caste - Havyak Brahmin. Women in this area therefore seem to have assumed that people of other castes do not have toilet facilities.

Most of the women said that before deciding upon the construction of

a toilet, they are consulted. At many places toilets have been built largely on their bidding. These are the problems faced by the women during the rainy season or in the densely populated areas and the need for providing the women and sick people with a relatively private place to relieve themselves that have induced most families to construct toilets. The preferences of the new generation exposed to urban habits has also played a significant role in these decisions. Generally, the lack of resources for building toilets is rather acutely felt. Over the last few years building a toilet has become an extremely expensive proposition. Some people in this area have now started feeling that if the government offers some help for this purpose, it would not be un-welcome.

MADHYA PRADESH

Ratlam

Eleven kilometers away from Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh, there is the village of Roopakhedra. It consists of 80-85 households, 40 to 45 of these are land-holding cultivators, about 30 are tribal Bhils. There are three families of leather workers, two of masons, and a few belonging to other professions. Most of the houses in the village are pucca constructions. The population of the village is about 500. Out of these 48% are literate. However, only 6% of the women in the village happen to be literate. The major crops of the village are wheat and cotton. In addition black gram, peas, jowar and paddy are also grown. There is also a primary school in the village. In the houses of all the land holding cultivators there are fairly good pucca toilet structures. Bhil families generally lack resources for building toilets. However, once the landholding cultivators got their toilets built, Bhils also started perceiving the need for these facilities. Bhil women have always been in the habit of going out into the open for relieving themselves and they like it this way. However, secure private places for this activity are becoming rarer. Population is increasing. These

days the Bhil women have to get up very early in the morning if they want to perform their morning toilet in relative privacy. Special arrangements for water for cleaning, after the toilet have also to be made. In case of contingencies, temporary toilet arrangements are made with the help of 'tagari'. 'Tagari' is a kind of iron pot, quite similar to a basket. In case the need for relieving arises in the night the custom is to go in the cotton fields at the back of the house.

Increasing cost of toilets

In this village, young people have played a major role in popularising flushing toilets. In 1960 such toilets used to cost around Rs. 150/-. These days the cost touches Rs. 1,500/-. That's why people have now to think a lot before deciding upon building a private toilet. Arrangements for water supply in the village are fairly good. There is one big tank and there are four smaller ones in the village. Toilets are cleaned by the family members themselves. These toilets are generally built in the rear portion of the house. In this village there are also 15 gobar gas units. All of these seem to be in good working condition. The gobar gas units are all installed



in the households of the land holding cultivators. These units have been connected with the toilets. Initially women felt some hesitation about using the toilet waste in the gobar gas unit, the gas from which was to

be used in the kitchen. However, their doubts now seems to have disappeared.

For the families that do not have private toilet facilities, there is a public toilet near the Social Welfare building of the village. This building has been constructed with funds collected from the people of the village. However, it is used only by a few people of the village. Around 1959-60, Ratlam Sarva Seva Sangh had started a campaign for constructing toilets in this village. According to their economic conditions, people agreed to participate in this campaign, and slowly pucca toilets started appearing in this village.

Tribal areas of Indore

Gajinda village that was chosen for survey in this area is at a distance of thirty kilometres from Indore. The population of this village is around 570. Most of the villagers are tribal. The main crops grown in the village are wheat, maize, jowar, cotton, soyabean and peanuts. Thirty-two per cent of men in the village are literate. Literary percentage of women is 17. About 47 families have no land of their own. These families have difficulties in making their both ends meet. There is no toilet in this village.

A stream flows near the village and in the vicinity of this stream, there is still some place left where people can relieve themselves in privacy. That is why people in this village do not perceive any serious lack of toilet facilities. The impact that urbanisation has on the areas around the cities has been felt here also. It is not that people do not think of having their own toilets at all. However, their economic conditions do not permit such 'luxury'. Women do feel some difficulties when they have to go for toilet at odd hours. Therefore, women in some relatively better off families keep on insisting on having their own toilets. However, generally no attention is paid to such demands. The normal response to this

type of insistence on the part of a woman in the family is that if she wants such 'luxuries' she should have married in some rich family!

There have been no government projects for the construction of toilets in this village. A non-governmental organisation, Adivasi Seva Trust, has been active in this direction for the last few years. This organisation is getting a public toilet constructed, largely for demonstration. So far there are eleven gobar gas units installed in this village, out of which nine are in fair working condition. All these units are obtained with government subsidy. Women do feel the need for toilets, but when there is not enough to eat in the family, who will care for such demands?

The third village included in the survey is Machla, at a distance of 17 kilometres from Indore. Out of the 844 people residing in this village, hardly three to four per cent are literate. Agriculture is the main occupation. Near the village, there is a seasonal stream. This stream remains generally dry during the summer. For relieving themselves, people go into the forest which is not yet scarce. They have no problem of toilet facilities. The villagers do not consider a toilet inside the home to be proper from the point of view of either sanitation or sanctity of the home. Such toilets 'make the home filthy and spread bad odour'. Generally, people go out and relieve themselves much before sunrise. Men and women often go in different directions for this purpose.

There are of course some problems encountered by the women during delivery and the period immediately following it. We met some women who had avoided eating anything at all for a couple of days after delivery to circumvent the need of going for toilet during those days. However, generally, on such occasions an iron pan is used for relieving inside the house.

In the whole village, there was not a single private or public toilet. Only in the campus of Sarvodaya Shikshan Samiti, could one find a few sweepers-free toilets. These were used by the students of the school and by the

householders inside the campus. This voluntary organisation has got some water-sealed toilets constructed in the village. However, in the absence of any availability of water and there being no tradition in the village of cleaning this type of toilets, these are lying unused and are in an advanced state of disrepair. Women do know about modern toilet facilities. However, they could think about these things only if they had any resources to spare. Some women also felt that in the absence of other sanitation facilities, a toilet inside the house will be unhygienic and hazardous for health. They prefer to have a flushing toilet. However, considering the high expenses involved in such a toilet, they cannot even dare to entertain any thoughts of having these.

The fourth village in Madhya Pradesh brought under the survey was Nitaya of Hoshangabad district. In this village the surveyors also took the help of a local contact, Shri Amritlal Bardia. On the Hoshangabad-Itarasi road, at a distance of 12 kms. from Hoshangabad, there is the village of Byavara. Village Nitaya lies 3 kms. away from Byavara in the interior. This small village is inhabited by 51 families consisting of 380 persons. Out of these 51 families, 12 are of the Harijans. Others happen to be Kurmis, Patels etc. The literacy ratio in the village is 46%. Out of the 46 people in a hundred that are literate, 25 are women and 21 men.

Major crops of the village are wheat, jowar, paddy, soyabean, peas, tur and rapeseed. Near the village beyond the stream in a place called Taronda, there is a secondary school run by the Harijan Sevak Sangh. This stream runs at a distance of five kms. from the village. The total cultivable area of the village amounts to 142.923 hectares.

There are eight sealed toilets in the village. The other forty-three families in the village do perceive the need of a toilet. However, given the lack of resources, they are not in a position to get toilets constructed. For the villagers, the forest around the village is a special facility in this context. It is because of the presence of this forest that the villagers

need of private toilet facilities has not become acute so far. Men and women of the village go out every morning between 6 to 8 a.m. for this purpose. They have to walk perhaps half a kilometre from their homes. Women normally go in the westward direction, for men there is no fixed direction. For cleaning after relieving, people carry water along with them from their homes.

In case of disease or other contingencies make-shift bed pans are used. During pregnancy no separate arrangements are made. In fact, women in this village keep on performing their normal chores even during pregnancy. There is no governmental scheme for constructing toilets in the village. However, about 25 to 30 years ago, a non-governmental organisation, Gram Sewa Samiti of Taronda-Nitaya, had got a few toilets constructed. Shri Banwarilal Choudhary, a veteran Gandhian worker, is the Secretary of this organisation. This organisation is still trying to distribute free toilet seats in the villages around Hoshangabad. Nitaya village has also got three-four of such seats from the Samiti.

The women of the village felt that a private toilet is indeed a convenient facility. However, such 'luxuries' could be afforded only if one had some spare monetary resources.

The first toilet in the village was built in a Patel household in 1961. At that time, this cost only Rs. 50/-. Today constructing a similar toilet costs about Rs. 200/-. All the toilets are of water-seal type. All the eight families in the village that have now got private toilet facilities insist that these have been created specially for the convenience of the women. For providing a cover around the toilet seat often a bamboo tatti is used in this area. This tatti is generally plastered with a mixture of clay and cattle-dung.

Those who have toilets in their homes have so far felt no difficulty in keeping them clean and properly maintained. The eight toilets in the village do not need a sweeper for cleaning them. As these toilets are of water-seal

type, the soak-pit dug for the toilet, gets filled in two to three years. Then these pits are often cleaned with the help of sweepers. Most of the toilets are located at the rear of the house. The design for all toilets happens to be the same throughout the village. Some families have also got toilets built in the vacant plots in the vicinity of their houses. During 1964-85 three toilets were built in the village. Now in 1984-85 four more have been added. For these four, seats have been obtained free from the Gram Sewa Samiti.

Realising the convenience afforded by a private toilet, the other families in the village have also started asking for free seats from the Gram Sewa Samiti. Some people have also got toilets built entirely on their own expense.

In this small village, there are only two gohar gas units in regular use. These are twenty-two wells out of which 5 seem to have sufficient water in them.

Women in the families that have got their own toilets, now feel that before they had their own toilet, walking in the mud and slush during the rainy season was a major problem. A lot of time was wasted in walking over long distances for toilet purposes. With the new toilets all these problems have been removed. These toilets have proved to be specially convenient for the old people and the children.

The fifth village surveyed in Madhya Pradesh is Byavara of the same district. This village is located at a distance of 12 kms. from Hoshangabad on the Hoshangabad-Itarasi highway. Population of the village is around one thousand. About 170 families live in the village, of which 45 belong to the Dhonsi caste (Thakur), and 90 are kurmis (backward caste). Others are Chamars, (leather workers), Brahmins, Daris (tailors) etc. 25% of the people in the village are landless. The main crops of the village are wheat, soyabean, paddy, jowar, black-gram etc. A stream runs near the

village at a distance of about a furlong from the main habitation.

In this village 75 of the families have some sort of kutchra/pucca toilet facilities available in the house. The remaining 95 families have no toilets whatsoever. As a result of poor economic conditions of most of the families in the village reasonable toilet facilities are rare. Besides the economic constraints, lack of sufficient supply of water is also a major problem in this context.

The menfolk in the village go about half a kilometre away from the village into the forest for relieving themselves. This forest in the local parlance is called 'Gimra'. Men normally go into the westward direction. For this purpose they have to get up rather early in the morning. They take the necessary amount of water along with them. In case of disease and other contingencies they use the Bada at the rear of the house.

Women also go to the forest for relieving themselves, through in a direction opposite to that of the men. Women generally have to walk only about a quarter kilometre for this purpose. They often go together in a group.

During pregnancy, women in this area keep on performing their normal functions and also keep on going to the jungle for toilet activities. However, for a few days before and after the delivery, they use the rear portion of the house for this purpose. Generally, in such cases, a pit is dug in the Bada behind the house and used as a toilet.

No government schemes for construction of toilet has so far been initiated in this village. However, in Byavara also, the Gram Sewa Samiti has been trying to spread awareness about the need for toilet facilities and has been encouraging villagers to go in for these. The Samiti provides free toilet seats as an inducement. Under this scheme of the Samiti, 50 seats have been distributed in the village.

But even the families that have now got access to a private toilet do

not put such toilets to much use. People in this village have not yet got the habit of relieving themselves in closed toilets. They still prefer to go out in the jungle for this purpose.

Under the Samiti scheme, the water-seal type of toilet design has been approved as the appropriate design for this village. Some families in the village have got this type of toilets constructed. Some of the families have got the seats but are unable to make the additional expenses necessary for constructing a proper toilet.

Women of the village are aware of the flush toilets. They have seen this type of toilets in some of the houses in the village. In case they are in a position to get a private toilet constructed, they will prefer to locate it at the back of the house. The women are of the opinion that the toilet should be atleast 10 to 15 paces away from the kitchen and the main living rooms of the family.

The villagers state that they have got private toilets constructed to avoid walking into mud and slush and thorny paths during the rainy days. The forest cover is also becoming rather thin. In this village men have taken the initiative in the matter of toilets. However, about their location and design etc., women have also been consulted. The water-seal toilet of the approved design costs about Rs. 250/- these days. The toilet seats are made locally. Other materials like bricks, cement etc., are brought from the city. Some people also use bamboo and jute rags etc. for making the walls of the toilet. Toilets generally have no roofs. Water is obtained from the well.

In 1981, during the first phase of the Gram Seva Samiti schemes, five to seven toilets were built. For these toilets, free seats were provided. The seats cost around Rs. 110/- each. Besides this, the toilet involves an expense of another hundred rupees or so, which is borne by the concerned family. Thus the toilet costs are split half and half between the samiti

and the user. Within 15-20 days of the completion of the first phase of the project, many other families also started construction of the toilets. Today 75 families in the village have toilets. Out of these 25 have bought even the seats with their own resources. These 25 are maintaining their toilets in a good condition. Among the remaining 50, some of the seats have started sinking because of rather weak walls of the soak pits. Some others have just kept the seats and have not actually fitted them in a proper toilet.

The toilets in this village are not yet connected with gobar gas units. There are about 10 such units out of which eight are in working condition.

Role of Voluntary Organisations

In the five villages of Madhya Pradesh covered under the survey, the impact of urbanisation is clearly visible. The traditions of sanitation and hygiene in these villages are similar to those in the rest of the country. However, in this region of Madhya Pradesh, voluntary organisations have played a major role in making modern toilet facilities acceptable to the villagers. Shrinking open spaces around the village have also to some extent forced the villagers to think in terms of private closed toilets.

In the regions away from the urban concentrations, these toilets have not yet become very acceptable or very attractive. In these areas one can also see some public toilets, and wherever there is a public organisation for maintaining these toilets, they are being kept in fairly good working conditions. In places, where public arrangements for the maintenance of the toilets have not been made, the toilets built by the voluntary organisations are falling into disuse.

The Question of Priorities

In the matter of toilets, the women in this region face the same difficulties as are faced by women everywhere else in the country. In this area they

are more familiar with modern toilet facilities and hence feel the need for such facilities more acutely. However, household priorities force them to avoid thinking about such 'luxuries'. During pregnancy and delivery etc., their toilet problems become more difficult and sometimes temporary solutions are found. In spite of all these difficulties and awareness about modern toilets they can do nothing much about constructing permanent toilet facilities, because of the poor economic conditions of their families. In villages like Byavra, the economic situation of most of the families is so bad that even when free toilet seats are provided to them, they do not have the money to make arrangements for putting these seats on a proper toilet pit; and a cover around it.

RAJASTHAN

Bikaner

District Bikaner of Rajasthan falls in the Thar desert region of India. In this entire area rains are rather scanty. Water supply remains a problem throughout the year. Often there are droughts and famines. Given all these difficulties it is not surprising that population in this region is not very dense. In Rajasthan there are 100 inhabitants per sq. kilometer of area at an average. In the Bikaner district, there happen to be only 31 inhabitants per sq. km. In this district, there are 104 villages with population between 500 to 1000, 75 with population of 1000 to 2000 and 26 villages having a population between 2000 to 5000. The total literacy percentage in the district is 27.11. 36.3 per cent of the men are literate, while only 16.85 per cent of the women can read and write.

Village Jasarasar of Nokha tehsil was chosen for survey because this village happens to be on the road, and it is the biggest village in the area. It has a population of about 8,000. Being on the Bikaner-Churu highway, this village could not have remained untouched by urban influence. Inhabi-

tants of the village are fairly affluent farmers. The village consists of kutchha and pucca houses built on sandy hills. In fact, with its large population and widely spread out houses the village looks like a small town. There is a higher secondary school in the village. There are also two primary school, a veterinary hospital, a cooperative bank, and a nationalised bank. The Government departments responsible for supply of water and electricity also have their offices in the village. The government buildings in the village and those belonging to the affluent families are all pucca constructions and are often tastefully built. Number of such buildings is around 15 to 20. All such buildings have modern flush toilets. Main occupation of the villagers of Jasarasar is animal husbandry. In the years when there is reasonable rainfall some agricultural crops are also grown. The milk produced in the village is often picked up by the dairies in Nagor and Bikaner. In fact, this village is typical of the developing villages of north India.

Dependence on the Government

The villagers here are of the opinion that it is unwise to spend money on those activities for which resources can possibly be obtained from the Government! There is widespread political awareness among the villagers. Regarding the toilet facilities, they feel the need of having their own private toilets, but they also hold the opinion that such facilities should be constructed by the government. Women also have a similar opinion. The women do face problems during contingencies like pregnancy and delivery etc. However, they have got used to these inconveniences. In special situations, a temporary toilet is built outside the house by simply enclosing a small area with make shift walls of some waste material.

Forests and Toilets

Generally the inhabitants go into the jungle or to the sand mounds in

the vicinity of the village for relieving themselves. The problems regarding toilets have started arising only after the jungle around the village has started disappearing because of commercial felling of trees. This has started happening during the last ten and twenty years only. Earlier there used to be a lot of trees and shrubbery near the village so finding a quiet place for one's daily toilet activities was never a problem. With the disappearing vegetation cover, finding quiet covered places has started becoming difficult. Women have particularly started feeling this absence of a proper cover. Even so, almost everyone is of the opinion that a private toilet is not his/her immediate need. They cannot give first priority to this 'luxury'. The people because of their tradition about sanitation and hygiene still insist that relieving in the open is the clean, hygienic and healthy way of performing this activity. Some women also felt that in case a toilet is built inside the house, keeping it clean will become a major problem. There is no caste of sweepers in these villages. Consequently, the chore of cleaning the private toilets will necessarily fall on the women.

No Toilets, No Harijans!

Village Maharasar of Bikaner tehsil is not connected with any pucca road. The villages here are still seeped in their rural traditions. Water and electricity in this village is scarce. There is no hospital, nor are there any transportation facilities. There is a primary school in the village. The school building is the only pucca building. Though the houses in the village are all made of mud, yet they seem fairly clean and well-plastered. There is no toilet in the whole village. There is of course no question of their being a family of sweepers in Maharasar. People in the village are not even conversant with the idea of a closed toilet. There is only one person in the village who has some elementary knowledge of reading and writing, and this person is 75 years old. People go to the jungle for relieving themselves. Women are not afraid of going out unaccompanied into the open.

Generally, women prefer to go in groups of three to four for their toilet ritual. In case of contingencies or in case of need at odd hours, the rear portion of the house is used for toilet purposes. After relieving, the excrement is covered with sand. Later, some member of the family picks up the excrement and throws it away.

Village Ranadhisar of Kolayat tehsil has a larger population than Maharasar. However, this village is even more remote and even farther from the pucca road. People here form a rather close brotherhood among themselves. Such relations are much more intimate in this village than elsewhere in the district. The families in the village consist of Rajputs, Medhwals, Musalmans, Nais, Kumars and Dholis etc. There are 125 houses in this village. The main occupation of the village is animal husbandry. Some people depend on cutting the phog-wood from the jungle is now left intact. Women contribute to the economy of the village through spinning of wool. Electric supply has not yet reached the village. However, the villagers do get water from the canal.

In this village so far nobody has ever perceived the need for a toilet. For toilet purposes the villagers go to the



nearby jungle. During disease or pregnancy etc. temporary toilet arrangements are made at the back of the house. However, for some time now people have started facing some problems in performing their toilet in the open. Jungles around the village are being destroyed through commercial felling. If this situation continues, soon there will be no jungle left within a kilometer to two of the village. In that case where will the people of this village go for relieving themselves? The villagers feel that in every village, atleast five hundred bighas of land should be reserved as pasture land. This will provide grazing facilities for the cattle and also fulfill other needs of the villagers. This will also eliminate the necessity of having private closed toilets. The Rajput women of the village did indeed show some interest in having their own private toilets. They felt that it is below their dignity to go out for this toilet into the jungle along with women of other caste. If they could get a private toilet inside the house for themselves, they could maintain a higher level of caste prestige.

Scarcity of Water and Toilet

Considering the acute scarcity of water in these desert villages it seems odd to think of providing them with such private toilets which need a lot of water for cleaning. If sufficient open spaces could be provided around the villages with some reasonable amount of vegetative cover the people of these villages perhaps will not ever think of modern enclosed toilet facilities. Even otherwise they are used to relieving themselves in the open. This habit is engrained in them through their traditions and ideas about sanitation and hygiene.

In these villages, women have considerable say in domestic matters. However, wherever there is caste-based and/or economic inequality, there the modern private toilets are becoming another means of perpetuating class differentiation. In villages like Jasarasar, such toilets have already become status symbols. People have by now got used to obtaining govern-

ment help and subsidy for all sorts of activities. Now they not only expect government grants for building toilets, they also feel that if the government is interested in popularising modern toilet facilities these should be constructed by government efforts. At the same time one does not find the villagers to be very keen about public toilet facilities. They know that in the absence of sweepers it will be impossible to keep the public toilets in reasonably clean conditions, and consequently such toilets will be of no use. Even otherwise the general feeling is that if one has to go out of one's home for performing toilet, it is much better to go out into the open than to use a toilet that is used by many other people.

GENERAL INDICATIONS

Before looking at the results of the survey from the three regions of the country separately, it is appropriate to record some of the general features observed in all these areas.

Destruction of Forest

It seems that between 1965-70, large scale clearing of the forest started in all these areas. Till there was some vegetation cover left around the village, toilet facilities were not a major problem for the villagers, not even for women. However, once reasonably covered spaces around the village started shrinking, going out for toilet became a problem for the women. At this time, the habit of going for toilet in the dark either before sunrise or after sunset started getting established. Incidentally, this is the period when felling of trees to meet urban needs started in a big way. Also as a result of land reforms that were implemented without paying any attention to the communal needs of the villages, and because of the initial success of the green revolution, larger and larger areas of land started coming under the plough. Consequently, pastures and other

community lands started shrinking.

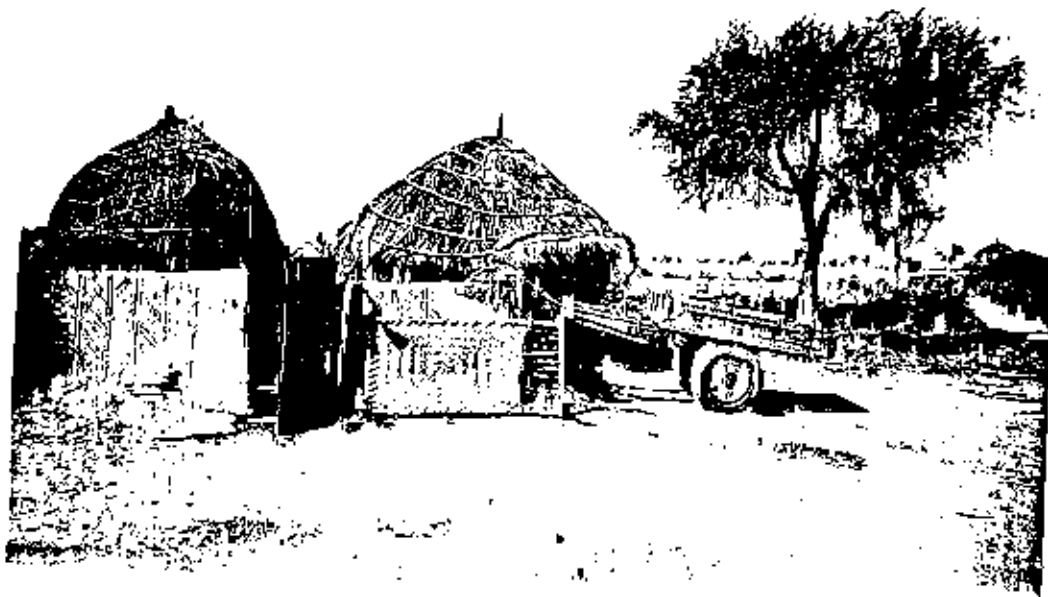
Women, in general, prefer to go out into the jungle for relieving themselves instead of performing this activity within the house in a closed toilet. Of course, compared to men, women have greater difficulty in going too far out of the village. They are also more prone to suffer disabilities which necessitate their confinement within the house, like pregnancy, delivery and even other ordinary diseases, that women are more likely to get. On such occasions the general practice is to dig a pit at the back of house and make a cover around it with some rags. This makeshift arrangement is used as a temporary toilet. In the houses that are big enough for a room to be spared for the sick person a bed pan type of arrangement is also used. In general, for the villagers, there is very little gain to be had from a permanent private toilet. They can take care of their contingencies through the temporary toilet arrangement described above and on normal occasions they prefer to go out into the open for this purpose, because they consider this to be more hygienic and healthier way of per-



forming their toilet.

Decrease of Communal Land and the Construction of Roads

The traditional mode of going out into the open for toilet is becoming more and more difficult because of the increasing destruction of the forest cover in the vicinity of the villages and a continuous decrease in the village areas that are reserved for communal use. In addition, with increasing modernisation and urbanisation, a large network of roads is spreading in the country-side. This has increased movement around the villages, and therefore in those villages that happen to lie near a road, going for toilet into the open has become a difficult problem, specially for the women. In these villages these days it is becoming almost impossible to find a quiet and covered place where one could relieve oneself.



Impact of New Weeds

With the popularisation of new techniques of agriculture the nature of vegetation and microbial and other life has started changing. In the villages

of North Canara, with the spread of new agriculture, a new weed named 'Congress grass' has also spread in a big way. The leaves of this weed are irritating for the skin on contact. This weed keeps flourishing from rainy season onwards upto the summer months. These days this weed can be found in all those areas where Green Revolution techniques of agriculture are being used. With the spread of this weed it has become literally painful for the villagers of this area to go out into the open for relieving themselves.

Increasing Feeling of Insecurity

In the areas that we have surveyed no women reported feeling insecure in the vicinity of their village. However, conditions in other areas of the country do not seem to be very good. The social fabric in many a village of the country is becoming ragged because of the evolving political and economic pressures. New tensions are appearing in the countryside. Specially in those villages where mutual confidence between the cultivating landowners and landless labourers has broken down, the tensions have become rather acute. In such villages it is not surprising that a feeling of insecurity is spreading among the women. In these villages, the periods of the day during which women can go out of the village for relieving themselves have become even more limited. If in the absence of a decent forest cover in the vicinity of the village, women have necessarily to go out before sunrise, or after sunset, then they must suffer a number of mental and physical hardships, especially when the social life in the village happens to be tense. In all such areas, the need of modern toilets is being perceived not as a sanitation measure, but rather as a 'necessary evil'.

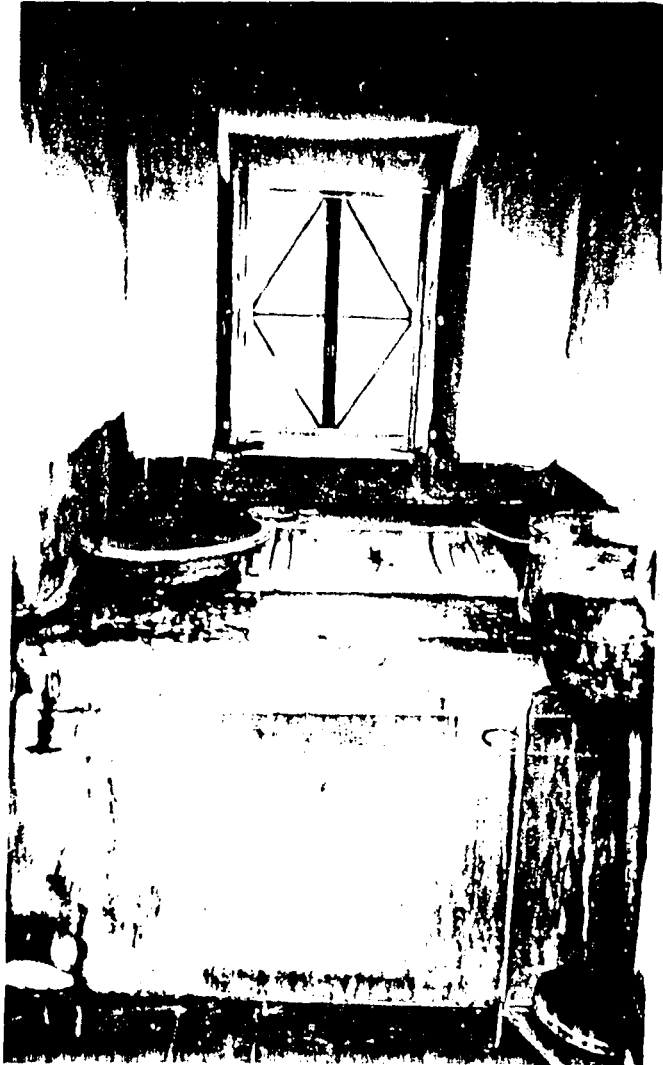
Social Prestige

In the villages that have come under urban influences a private toilet is fast becoming a status symbol, especially for those families that are

relatively well off. In such villages modern private toilets are being constructed. These must be providing some convenience to the women also. However, in such situations, toilets are hardly likely to change the social and sanitary environment of the village. In fact, in most of these villages private toilets are becoming a new symbol of class differentiation.

CONCLUSIONS

What this survey seems to clearly indicate is that till a few years ago private toilet facilities were not a necessity in our villages. However, with the changing situations, their need is now being felt. Villagers of village Chavatti in North Canara district do not perceive any need of toilet facility. Villagers of Machhla and Gajinda in Madhya Pradesh are also not much bothered about the lack of toilet facilities in their homes. In all these villages, there are sufficient open spaces and vegetation around the village to provide for relieving themselves in the open. Villages Maharashtra and Ranadhisar of district Bikaner in Rajasthan are still in their old natural environment. The villages here neither know of the modern toilet facilities, nor do they feel any need for such things inspite of the fact that these villages are fairly clean and the villagers there seems to have deeply ingrained habits of sanitation and hygiene. In fact, the villagers in these remote areas, are still able to maintain their homes and their environment in a much more clean and hygienic condition than what is possible for the residents of, say, the city of Delhi, who enjoy a higher economic status than that of the Rajasthan villagers.



On the other hand is the village Jasarasar of Bikaner. 15 to 20 houses have good flush toilets constructed. The reasons for this can be found in the lack of open spaces around the village with insufficient vegetation cover and urbanisation of the lifestyles of the villagers. Amongst the young people of this village one finds a distinct preference for urban sanitary habits as against their own rural traditions of sanitation and hygiene. These changing preferences have nothing to do with the basic problem of sanitation.

In fact, there is nothing to indicate that the young men of Jasarasar are better off in terms of hygiene or cleanliness in comparison to the young people of Mehrasar. If anything Mehrasar people may be more careful about their sanitary routines. However, for the people of Jasarasar, a private toilet has become the symbol of the new urban life that they are aspiring for. Amongst the people of village Sugavi in District North Canara, one finds enthusiasm for new toilet facilities. Reasons here are also similar. With the clearing of the forest cover around the village, the villagers here find it difficult to go out into the open for relieving themselves. The affluence that has come from the selling of cash crops has also induced the young people of these villages to adopt urban lifestyles. Village Roopa Kheda in M.P. is also in a similar situation.

In the villages they have always faced difficulties in going out for toilet purposes during times of disease, pregnancy, delivery etc. In most of the families some temporary arrangements are made for these occasions. However, there are some families where even such temporary arrangements are not common. But from this it does not follow that women in these families are being subjected to some unnatural torturous conditions. In fact, even during the days immediately preceding and following delivery, healthy women normally remain fit enough to go out in the vicinity of their homes for the purposes of relieving themselves. Some tribal women were actually surprised when asked the question whether any temporary

arrangements are made for their toilet during periods of delivery. Some of them said that they often have to keep working in the fields until a few hours (not days) before delivery. Many a time, they deliver in the field itself in the open under some tree. To ask questions regarding temporary toilet facilities from these women was indeed a matter of shame for the questioners who get three months of paid holiday for the purpose of maternity.

It is not surprising that in those families in which even temporary toilet facilities are not thought of, women show interest in having permanent toilets inside their homes. On the other hand, in the families that have become relatively affluent and have started acquiring urban facilities and luxuries, women have also started asking for modern toilet facilities. The daily routine of women of these affluent families has changed. They now go out of the home on much fewer occasions. Therefore, they see some convenience in having their toilets inside the house. It should be noted that in many families though the women have started asking for private facilities, yet the elders of these houses still feel that a toilet inside the house will destroy the sanctity of the home. Amongst the families surveyed, there were also a few in which the women felt that private toilets constructed inside the house, will spread filth and odour, and their maintenance and cleanliness will become an additional burden on them.

In this survey we noticed that in many cases villagers are unable to have their own toilet facilities even when they perceive the need, because of the rising cost of constructing a modern toilet. Wherever some government schemes for popularising modern toilet facilities have been launched people have stated the feeling that construction of toilet is after all the responsibility of the government. They are now not willing to spend their own money for this purpose. This feeling was found to be prevalent amongst the villagers of Jasarasar in Rajasthan. While Jasarasar villagers seem to be waiting for the government to provide them with the resources

to build a toilet, in the three villages of Madhya Pradesh, people seem to be otherwise attracted towards somehow acquiring toilet facilities. There the question of the actual need or otherwise of modern toilet facilities has become unimportant. The fact that toilets are now being built in villages around them has itself become a sufficient reason for wanting similar toilets. They now feel that if they could raise the resources, they would rather have private modern toilets. Only in North Canara district could one find the villagers deciding upon having their own private toilet facilities because of a clearly perceived need generated by the changing environment of the village.

Increasing Filth and Related Problems

If the villagers go in for modern toilet facilities only because those in their neighbourhood have already acquired such facilities, then it will be difficult to popularise any cheap and convenient designs of toilets. People will insist on only those type of toilets that have been constructed in the more affluent areas around them. In that case providing toilets in every house and in all the villages will turn out to be a rather expensive proposition. If the toilets emerge as symbols of the newly emerging urban industrial lifestyle, then also they are unlikely to become a regular part of the routine life of the villager. Instead, such toilets then will become the source of a new class differentiation in the villages. In the villages in which, because of the deteriorating environment in the vicinity of the village, going out for toilet in the open is becoming difficult, the sanitation problem is becoming acute in other ways too.

Rural Attitude Towards Sanitation

It is not that sanitation is not a problem in the villages of today. Looking at the filth spread all around in the villages Gandhiji had said about 50-60 years ago, "All around the country, instead of finding clean, pleasant little villages, one finds only dirty heaps of filth". However, before the

problems of village sanitation can be solved, we must understand the attitude of the villagers themselves towards this problem. How do they organise their sanitation and hygiene? What sort of sanitary organisation is today existing in the villages, and to what extent can this organisation be revived?

We must remember that sanitation and hygiene are not something that can be bought from the 'development market' and delivered to the villages. Sanitation after all is a question of mental attitude and every society has its own attitude and traditions. Only those modes of organising sanitary facilities can be acceptable in the village society that in some way fit in with their own traditions of cleanliness. Other modes of sanitation can of course be imposed upon the villagers, but they are unlikely to spread in the rural society on their own, and if provided, they are unlikely to be fully utilised.

Sanitation and Sanctity

Our ideas about sanitation and hygiene are closely intertwined with our ideas about sanctity and piety. Personal and private hygiene for us is basically a question of personal piety, and therefore there are detailed ritualistic procedures concerning sanitation and hygiene in the daily life. From washing one's face and hands on getting up in the morning to repeating this exercise before sleeping in the night, there are innumerable hygienic procedures to be performed throughout the day, which in India often become part of the regular habits of the people. Details about keeping oneself, one's belonging, and one's environment clean and well kept are taught constantly to the members of the family through the oral tradition. In the matter of personal hygiene, the poorest of the Indian person fairs better perhaps than the economically better-off people in other parts of the world. In fact rules and traditions regarding personal hygiene, sanitation and toilet habits in India are extremely detailed and rigid, and

most of the Indians consider it a natural duty to strictly follow these rules and regulations.

Rules Regarding Sanitation

Rules regarding cleanliness of the environment are also equally detailed and rigid. For every part of the house, from the dining area in the home to the granary of the house, there are detailed prescriptions for cleanliness. Families have been always consciously careful about choosing the place for keeping drinking water, the place for tying up the cattle and the direction for going to the toilet in the open around of the village. Generally on one side of the village there is a small temple called the pathiari. This is where the villagers perform their worship. It is expected that the area around the pathiari should be kept very clean and no filth should be spread around it. Again a bargad (Banian tree) or a pipal tree is an essential part of the organisation of the village space. Once again it is expected that the area under these trees will be kept perfectly clean, because these trees are also included in the worship. Where such trees are not found, some other tree,



becomes the object of worship. In the same way the village tank and the stream near the village are supposed to be kept clean. The question of relieving oneself near or in the tank of the river does not arise.

Control of the Village on the Natural Resources

In order to understand all these rules and regulations regarding sanitation we should keep in mind that in India water and sunshine are available in abundant supply. Sanitary rules have been thought of with a clear realisation of this aspect of the Indian environment. Because of abundant sunshine taking care of the filth and refuse of the village is not as big a problem in India as it is in the cold countries of Europe. The bright sun, shining almost through-out the year, quickly decomposes the excrement and the refuse. That is why till the social organisation remained intact and the village retained its control over its natural resources and environment, the need for enclosed toilets was never felt, nor was there any difficulty in disposing of other refuse of the village. When the British came to India during the 17th and 18th centuries, one of the major complaints of the Indians against the British was that the latter had no sense of sanitation and hygiene. From the Indian point of view, on hygiene, the British seemed almost 'uncivilised'. Once the British won India and became the rulers, the idiom changed. Now it were the Indians who were thought to be 'uncivilised' and 'dirty' in their habits. This of course was a purely political judgement.

Cycle of Health

Even today the villagers may have no problem about maintaining sanitary and hygienic conditions within the village if they could have full control over their natural environment. When there is sufficient pasture and other communal land in the village, many of the daily needs of the villages are easily satisfied from their communal lands. The jungle around the

village provides all the toilet facilities that the villagers need. Villagers can relieve themselves in the open in the jungles and this does not spread any filth. All the excrement and the refuse is any way dried up by the sun; and the microbial life on the surface of the earth decomposes the filth into soil. Soil consisting of such decomposed refuse and excreta also acts as excellent manure for the fields and becomes the basic nutrient for the growth of vegetation. Whenever the villagers have felt any need for private toilet facilities, they have constructed these in the badas attached to their homes. Incidentally, in these badas, where the family members go for relieving themselves, generally only such crops are grown which are not consumed immediately after the harvest. For example, pulses and oilseeds are grown in the bada, but not vegetables or sugarcane. Where people do not feel too put-off by human excrement, there vegetables are also grown in the badas. The technique for toilets built in the badas is rather simple, and no external experts are required for helping in this matter. Generally, under the seat two pits are dug. When one of the pits is filled up, it is closed till the water content in the pit seeps away and the solids are fully decomposed and deodorised. Until then the other pit is used. The dried-up and deodorised excreta is then dug out and used as manure.

Will Villages Remain Villages?

Therefore the question is not whether the villages can be kept clean and hygienic as villages, the problem in fact is whether the villages will be allowed to remain villages. For a habitation to be called a village, it is necessary that the inhabitants of the areas should have close economic and social ties with each other. This is possible only when the political structure of the village is not based on competition and its economic structure is not based on their producing exclusively for the external market. A village in which all the land is divided up into private plots leaving nothing for fulfilling the social and community needs of the vil-

lage, in fact, cannot remain a village. The peasants of village Randhisar in Bikaner said that if they can retain their pasture lands, they have no need for private toilets.

Villages are not Backyards of the City

If villages are going to be treated as the neglected backyards of the city and agriculture is to be looked upon as a colonial activity of the industrial organisation, then of course it is impossible to keep the villages clean and hygienic in their natural environment. Their traditions of sanitation and hygiene are going to be ignored. In that situation all that can be done is to provide commercial sanitation facilities for the villagers as is being already done for the cities. Then rules and regulations regarding sanitation will not be an essential part of their daily routine as has been till now. Instead of local standards of hygiene and sanitation, it will be the international commercial standards by which the cleanliness of the villages and the villagers will then be measured. Service and charity organisations will then decide as to how much of sanitation should be delivered to which village in which part of the country.

The Right Direction

We have these two alternatives before us today. In case we cannot let villages remain villages and provide them the necessary control on their natural environment, then we will have to worry about their sanitation. We will then have to seriously think about appropriate designs for their toilets which must be built in the villages in order to relieve women of their increasing difficulties regards toilets. We shall also have to find out from where will we get the resources necessary for building toilets on such a large scale and from where we can create enthusiasm for under-

taking such a gigantic task? In any case no miracles should be expected to happen in this field.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Before undertaking any concrete steps in the field of village sanitation, the following points should be kept in view:

- All agencies - governments, voluntary social organisations, women's groups and funding bodies - interested in the problem should attempt to understand the traditional sanitary organisation of the concerned village, the resources the villagers have been using for this purpose and the traditions and customs they have been following in this regard. Efforts made in this regard, with a zeal to serve the people, but without an understanding of their customs and traditions and there other sanitary organisation, often turn out to be practically futile.
- Before implementing a village sanitation project the beneficiary villages, especially the women, should be talked to in detail regarding the expenses involved and the material to be used in the project.
- It should be kept in mind that sanitation projects cannot be effectively implemented in isolation. No organisation that merely talks of toilet facilities can exist for long when thousands of villages are being continuously drained of their natural resources, labour and intellect because of the urban rush.
- The different experiences of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh recorded during this survey clearly show that in the context of providing toilet facilities to the village liberal grants of money prove to be less effective than systematic work carried out amongst the men and women of the village.
- Expensive designs (like the septic toilet) that require large amounts of purchases from cities do not turn out to be very popular. Even if such designs get accepted, they remain limited to a few well-off families that have some spare resources to spend on such things.

In Sugavi and other nearby villages of the Sirsi area of Karnataka during the last 15-25 years, 40% of the families have got toilet facilities constructed on their own initiative without any encouragement from any voluntary or governmental organisations. The Sirsi people have been successful in this task because they learnt from each other and their neighbours. A Gandhian organisation had some problems in the construction of toilets in Roopakheda village of Madhya Pradesh. However, the help rendered by this organisation was more in the nature of providing encouragement rather than offering financial grants.

Organisations concerned with village sanitation should try to comprehend the priorities of the people while working on this issue, especially when they deal with families that are not well-off financially. In the course of the survey in Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan such families everywhere seemed to be facing the same choice: food or sanitation! Therefore, the organisations and workers concerned with the problem of village sanitation should also worry about finding resources for the sustenance of the villagers while they go about providing toilet facilities for them.

Construction of toilets in a village by itself does not guarantee village sanitation, nor does it assure that women will find it easier to deal with the problems of relieving themselves in privacy and maintaining a clean environment. More than the construction of toilets it is important that the village should retain its integrated character. Unity of the village community and continuing control of the natural resources of the village by the community are essential for maintaining village sanitation. The relative status of the woman of Sirsi (Karnataka) who can fearlessly go into the jungle around the village all alone for relieving themselves, and oft h e

women in more prosperous villages that have individual private toilets but where women are afraid of stepping out of the security of the home, should always be kept in mind.

The organisations who have worked in this field earlier phase and by whose efforts designs of inexpensive sanitary toilets have emerged should be given as much publicity as possible. During the survey it was found that a number of families have avoided getting a toilet constructed in the house for the fear of filth and stink spreading inside the house. How did they come to have such fears? Perhaps they have experienced visiting the filthy toilets in the cities and towns around them. The public toilets built in Sirsi, Indore, Hoshangabad, Ratlam and Bikaner are no exceptions in this matter. But then public toilets even in the most affluent markets in the capital city of Delhi are no exception.

TABLE NO. 2
KARNATAKA

VILLAGE	POPULATION	HOUSEHOLDS WITH LATRINE FACILITIES	HOUSEHOLDS WITHOUT LATRINE FACILITIES	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS
1	2	3	4	5
Allihadda	12	1	0	1
Balekoppa	8	0	1	1
Balesar	12	1	0	1
Barihaddai	35	5	5	10
Chavatti	70	5	9	14
Chitmanch	7	1	0	1
Harteballu	6	0	1	1
Harigur	10	0	1	1
Hegguru	9	0	1	1
Honegadai	105	-	-	-
Honnooru	80	-	-	-
Kangoddu	85	5	8	13
Kggankodlu	30	1	3	4
Kallukodlu	18	1	3	4
Kugtemane	50	1	7	8
Nerulmane	14	0	1	1
Sannkari	40	4	4	8
Shirsimukki	8	0	1	1
Taddalase	28	-	-	-
Tattipai	6	1	0	1
Vajarhalli	80	2	1	1
Yarnmanne	6	0	1	1
Total 22	719	28	46	73

MADHYA PRADESH

1	2	3	4	5
Machla	844	-	120	120
Gajinda	570	-	80	80
Roopakhedā	500	45	30	75
Nitaya	380	8	43	51
Byavara	1000	75	95	170

RAJASTHAN

Jārsasar	12,000	18	1300	1318
Mehrsasar	439	-	88	88
Randhisar	736	-	125	125

TABLE NO. 3

REASONS FOR NOT HAVING TOILETS

	KARNATAKA	MADHYA PRADESH	RAJASTHAN
Existence of Forest	36	29	50
Not a Priority	15	22	27
Temporary Arrangements	-	18	50
Lack of Resources	15	33	20
Lack of Space	3	20	-

Latrines in the village

Questionnaire

This questionnaire has been framed with a view to assess the facilities and convenience of latrines and related sanitation in the village. Considering the difference in situation and customs in different parts of India, this questionnaire cannot be complete in itself. Still an effort has been made to provide a direction in the collection of information. This questionnaire has two parts - the first part pertains to those areas and villages where the families have no latrine facilities. What has been tried is to understand how, in a situation like this, do these families - particularly their womenfolk and children - cope with the problem. The second part pertains to those rural areas where some form of latrine facilities have been provided for.

Should the regional coordinators and their investigators find this questionnaire insufficient, they are welcome to add whatever questions they find useful and necessary. It is also likely that this incomplete, yet seemingly long questionnaire might turn out to be a little too indiscreet and rambling to fill in while talking in the village, particularly while talking to the womenfolk. In such a situation the questionnaire need not always be kept spread out at the time of talking. One can steer the talk around the points mentioned in the questionnaire and fill it in on the basis of the talk after returning from work. Such information found to be outside the ambit of the questionnaire may also be collected in an addendum.

PART - I

Villages/Homes which have no latrines

Province

District

Village

The population of the village

Acreage of agriculture

Main Crops

Industries and Business

Other modes of employment

The distance of the village
from the concrete road

The distance of the village
from the kutchha road.

The presence of natural water
source like river, canal, lake or
pond in or near the village.

Their distance from the area
cluster where the population
is concentrated?

How many homes have latrines?

How many homes do not have latrines?

Main reasons behind the lack
of latrine facilities.

Is the availability of latrine related
to some specific conditions of
a caste or class?

In the absence of latrine where do
the male members of the house go
to attend nature's call?

How far do they often go?

Do they go in a specific direction?

What time of the day do they go?

Do they carry water with them
or is there some arrangement
of water in the direction they go.

What do they do in a sudden
requirement for this need, as in
sickness or any emergency situation?

Women

Where do they go outside?

Do they go in a direction
different from men?

Which side do they go?

How far do they go?

What time of the day do they go?

Do the women of the family or
neighbourhood go together or alone?

When going alone, are they
conscious of security?

In the case of villages situated near a
busy road, what kind of situation arises when
one faces pedestrians, cyclists,
bullock-carts or traffic using the road?

Do they carry water with them
or do they get from outside?

What kind of water facility is it?
(for example, pond, lake, river,
canal, well - which one of them?)

Is this facility public or private?

Do they face any difficulty or resistance
using this water source?

In time of pregnancies do the women stick to the facilities of the normal days or do their families make some other kind of temporary arrangement for them?

How long after conception are these special temporary facilities provided for?

Who in the family takes the initiative in providing special facilities for pregnant women?

1. Mother, mother-in-law or some other old woman takes the initiative.
2. Relatives of the same age like sister-in-law, sister etc.
3. Male relatives like husband, brother takes the initiative.
4. How long does this temporary arrangement last after the delivery?
5. What kind of temporary arrangement is made?
6. What corner of the household is chosen for this facility?
7. At the time of dismantling this arrangement after the delivery, does anyone from the family feel like converting this facility into a permanent one?

Is there a discussion in family members on the issue of retaining the facility dismantling it?

Who from the family participates in such a discussion?

Do the women of the family other than the pregnant women avail of this facility?

The reasons why until now no latrine was constructed in the village/home.

1. Was the necessity of latrine never discussed in the village or homes?
2. Was a plan to construct latrines ever mooted by the government?
3. The plan was mooted by the government but it was not worked upon?
4. Was it the inertia of the government or the inertia of the leadership of the village that was responsible for the non-implementation of the plan.
5. Were the women taken into confidence about this plan?
6. Was a latrine scheme ever put forward in the village from a non-governmental organisation?
7. If the scheme was put forward, why could it not materialise?
8. Did it get cooperation from the leadership of the village?
9. Did the organisation take women into confidence at the time of formulating the schemes?
10. Did the non-availability of money prove a hindrance for its implementation?
11. If so, was the design of the latrine such that a family of the village could not construct it or found it inconvenient?
12. What was the proposed design?
13. What was its name?
14. Type?
15. Stipulated investment?
16. How much space was needed and the problems of installation?

17. Did any other scheme come to the village after such unsuccessful non-governmental schemes for latrines?

Initiative came from who?

- a) From the side of women.
- b) From the side of men.
- c) From any other side.

The opinion of the women on the non-availability of latrines in the house :

1. Do the women consider latrine a non-essential item in the house?
2. What are the reasons for not considering it an essential convenience?
3. Do they feel that the lack of latrine facility in the house is a good pretext to go out of the house?
4. Do the women object to latrines in the house due to puritanism?
5. Have they ever been provided information on the neat & clean and sanitary designs of latrine?
6. Is the construction of latrine a non-essential expenditure in the opinion of the women? If so, have they been provided with information on the different expenditure and investment on latrines? Or have they never given a thought either way on the installation of latrine?
7. Do they feel that whatever reason might have been in the past, it will be better if a latrine is constructed in the house now?

8. What according to them should be the type of the latrine?
9. Should the latrine be outside the house, in the backyard, or within the house?
10. How far away should it be from the kitchen and living rooms?

PART - II

The Village/Homes where latrines exists

Province

District

Village

Population of village

Area under agriculture

Main Crops

Industries and other sources
of employment

The distance of the village
from kutchra road.

Number of homes belonging
to each caste.

How many homes have latrines?

When were the latrines first
constructed in the village?

Who took the initiative?

At the initiative of the government?

At the initiative of a non-
governmental organisation?

If so, information on that organisation.

In what way did the necessity of a latrine in
the house crop up first in the conversation?

Which group of people had taken the
leadership role in the conversation?

In what stages of these conversations
were the women taken into confidence?

What kind of latrine design was finally approved?

Its investment?

Are the materials of the latrine construction like sitting platform and walls, screen, roof etc. kutchra or pucca, and are they locally available?

If so, give a detailed descriptions.
For example - whether the screen is made of the dry arhar stems or some other thing?

What is the arrangement for water and flushing?

Maintenance

What place was selected for the installation of the latrine?

Whether a uniformity was maintained for the entire village in the selection of design and the place or whether these things were left to the individual requirements and choice of the families?

Whether the entire amount was paid by the funding agency?

Whether it was paid by the family?

Whether it was paid jointly by the family and the organisation?

If it was a joint payment what was the ratio of payment?

How many latrines were constructed in the first phase of work?

Whether all the latrines were constructed in a single phase?

If not, how long after, was the next lot of latrines constructed?

Was the construction of latrines in some families imitated by other families later?

Did the construction of latrines in one village have its effect on neighbouring villages?

Are there public latrines in the village other than personal latrines in homes?

How many?

What is their seating capacity?

When were they installed?

At whose initiative?

Where are they located?

Have they been installed in a particular mohalla or section of the village in order to serve a particular caste?

Who shouldered the responsibility of its maintenance and sanitation?

What is the arrangement for water?

Conversation with the ladies who have latrines in their homes

Do they feel it is a special facility?

What difference do they feel in the situation when there were no latrines and now, when they have them?

Do they find any difficulty in the maintenance of the latrines?

The design of the latrines.

Their opinion on the choice of the place for the installation of the latrine.

Sulabh : Cheap Toilets for Better Hygiene

Sulabh Shauchalaya or waterseal latrines have relieved many scavengers of the unpleasant task of carrying night soil on their heads for disposal. Not only scavengers but many people are discovering that Sulabh Shauchalaya is the cheapest and fastest way of getting rid of night soil.

According to the National Sample Survey, only 20% of urban households in the country use toilets connected with the sewerage system, out of which only 7% have exclusive use of toilets. The rest either share with other households or make use of public toilets. 14 per cent of the households have water-borne latrines connected with septic tanks. Nearly one-third of the urban population is served with bucket privies. Households having no toilets account for the remaining one-third.

Although more than 19 designs such as sewerage, septic tank, hand flush waterseal pit privy, aqua privy, chemical toilet, borehold, dug well, trench latrine, etc. are prevalent all over the world for the disposal of night soil, only three systems have been found technically fit for adoption on a mass scale in India. These are Sewerage System; Septic Tank and Sulabh Shauchalaya.

Sulabh Shauchalaya requires little water to flush and can function where not much water is available. It is free from air pollution, provides manure on the spot, can be cleaned by the house-owners themselves and alternately the two pits can work for 100 years.

Origin

The system first started in Patna, then spread to other districts in Bihar and has now been adopted by many other states such as Haryana, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. It all started in 1967-70 during the Gandhi Centenary Period, as a tribute

to Gandhiji. At the instance of the Government of India, the Government of Bihar, through its Local-Self Government Department, directed local bodies to get all the existing bucket privies converted into hand flush latrines and to connect them either with sewer lines or leaching pits.

The Government of Bihar gave grants to the Bihar State Gandhi Centenary Committee and the programme continued, but had no real impact. People wanted result-oriented work and not just preaching.

Mr. Bindeshwar Pathak, then a 'Pracharak' devised a latrine known as Sulabh Shauchalaya which functions as a flush latrine with or without being connected to a sewerage system. The movement received a shot in the arm when the Bihar Government promulgated an ordinance in 1970 amending the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act whereby a blanket ban was imposed on construction of new dry latrines. The new law made continuance of dry latrines a cognizable offence.

To help people convert their latrines into Sulabh Shauchalayas, the local bodies aided by the State Government gave grants of Rs. 350/- each and a loan of the same amount to those interested. A similar procedure was adopted in West Bengal also.

The Sulabh Shauchalaya Sansthan intervened between householders and municipalities to process each loan application. Volunteers went from door to door; persuaded people, had forms filled up and processed and after the grant was sanctioned, conversion work started.

The Sulabh Shauchalaya can be constructed within a small scale of seven feet long and four feet wide and two litres of water is enough to flush out excreta from the pan to the tank. The water seal prevents gases from leaking out of the pit and all the gases produced in the tank are

absorbed by the soil. It can be constructed in a corridor or on the upper floor of a building or in a small bedroom also.

It is a permanent installation which is economical and durable. It can be adopted by both the rich and poor. In Bihar the minimum cost of installation is Rs. 700/- with a mosaic pan and Rs. 742/- with a China clay pan. In West Bengal it is Rs. 1,075/-.

Perhaps the biggest advantage is that night soil is always underground, inaccessible to flies and insects. As tanks are covered with air-tight and water-tight RCC slabs the place can be utilised for other purposes too. All it requires is an ordinary mason working under the supervision of a trained worker.

Another plus point is that Sulabh Shauchalaya can work in any soil condition whether it be rocky or sandy. Although the distance between the water source and Sulabh Shauchalaya largely depends on the soil, the safe distance between the source of water and the Sulabh Shauchalaya in homogenous soil, black cotton soil and sandy soil should be 20 feet.

The metropolitan city of Calcutta with a population of nine million has poor sanitation and the sub-human and un-hygienic system of carrying night-soil on the head continues in some parts of the city.

To provide proper facilities for defecation, two programmes have been launched within the Calcutta Metropolitan District by the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority and the Sulabh International.

The system of public conveniences by Sulabh Shauchalaya started in India in 1974 when public baths and urinals were constructed in Patna and Ranchi.

The land and finances were made available by these two local bodies.

They are now being maintained in a big way by the Sulabh Shauchalaya Sansthan and the scheme has since been extended to other towns also.

A 24-seat public latrine was first constructed in Patna near the Gandhi Maidan which was the filthiest part of the town. At present there is a 48-seat public lavatory at this place maintained by the Sulabh International whose head office is also in the same campus. This is unique because the surroundings are clean and well-maintained.

Such public latrines are now maintained by the Sulabh International in Patna at 35 places with a total number of 551 seats. There are 52 urinals and 313 baths. The conveniences are located near railway stations, bus stops, markets, hospitals, offices and other busy areas. Scavengers relieved from their daily chores have been given jobs as sweepers and there are programmes to give employment to their sons and daughters. A critical review of Sulabh Shauchalayas already constructed by the Sulabh International has started which will help further development of the activities in different areas. The Sulabh idea has spread to other countries and the designs of Sulabh Shauchalayas with certain modifications have been adopted by the United Nations Development Programme for 19 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

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