

THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS - 1

Produced by Shelter Associates, Pune, October 2002



Preparation for the inauguration of the two toilet blocks in Sangli have begun. The toilets will be officially inaugurated by the local MLA on the 2nd of October 2002. This date was a deliberate choice, for Mahatma Gandhi's relentless work for the emancipation of night soil carriers and insisting that one must clean "your own mess in your toilets". These toilet blocks live out these concepts, as they are essentially community-managed, are "pour-flush" latrines, there is a small section for little children which will be kept clean by their mothers. In addition, a general caretaker is to be appointed by the community to keep the entire toilet complex clean.

As the time comes closer, for the people to take over, the women are getting a little nervous.

Will we really be able to keep the toilets working?
How does one ensure that the caretaker really does his job?
Will all the people contribute towards its upkeep?

The communities have been very involved in the construction process.

They have hugely enjoyed seeing hi-tech cranes assembling large prefab elements on site.

Sangalwadi is just off the highway, many people have stopped to see what was coming up.

When the piles were to be cured, the blazing sun dried out the fresh concrete very rapidly. To retard this drying process, SA suggested keeping the piles covered with damp hessian sacks. The women not only provided the sacks but also made sure that they were kept as wet as possible.

There were people appointed within the communities to take care of all the material, so there were no thefts.

They cleaned the site and made sure that they contributed to as much of the labour that they could.

Suggestions Have Come Flowing In.....

Shivsadan's Mr. Joglekar suggestion was a caretaker on a contractual basis.

The women wanted a person from outside the community, as that allowed them to have given them more control.



The people discussing how to deal with the toilet maintenance with various people from SA, Shivsadan and the SMKMC.



Based on two-years experience of maintaining the 13 toilet blocks in Pune, SA/Baandhani emphasized on the community saving as much as possible, as with time, a chunk of money would be needed for maintenance. The collections would also contribute to the caretakers salary, but since the facilities provided to the caretaker for the job were rather good, (a large room, free electricity, water and toilet and cooking gas in Sangliwadi), the wages should be taken as an incentive, for the toilet upkeep rather than as means of livelihood.

THE COUNTDOWN BEGINS - II

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The end product is a neat well constructed toilet complex, with facilities for women, men, children, a caretaker and in Sangalwadi, a bio-gas plant. But the real success of the project lies in the congenial atmosphere which prevailed throughout. All the forum members worked to make the project happen and totally supported the other's role.

The Toilet at Sangalwadi



This toilet is right off the Islampur Highway. Because of its strategic location, it was decided that the toilet would also be used as a pay-and-use for passer-bys.

The Toilet has four stalls of the men, four for the women and four tiny toilet bowls for the children. The caretaker has a large room with free electricity, water, and cooking gas generated from the bio-gas plant.



The Tasgaon Ves toilet was accepted as residential bungalow. The cramped site allowed for only a two storey structure, with the caretakers room on the upper storey. The best part is that the room faces a lovely terrace and the women have already decided that they will have a few meetings up there.

This is the children's toilet at Sangliwadi. Tasgaon Ves has similar detailing. the toilet bowls are specially sized for toddlers and tiny people below five. The colourful tile backdrop is another example of planning for the user.

The toilet has 4 stalls for the men, 5 for the women and a similar facility for the kids.



The Toilet at Tasgaon Ves, Miraj