

THE TOILET INAUGURATIONS - I

Produced by Shelter Associates, Pune, October 2002.



Two spanking new toilets were inaugurated on the 2nd of October, 2002 in Sambhajinagar, Sangliwadi, and Tasgaon Ves, Miraj. Two inauguration functions took place, one at each toilet location.

The inaugurations, like most of the activities of the forum, was a joint affair, with the SMKMC, SA, Baandhani, and the Sangli Press all contributing to the event. Invitations to all the local dignitaries were given out by the Corporation. The Local MLA and the Mayor were the chief guests.

THE PRESS CONFERENCE

Prior to the inauguration, the Sangli Press Representative, **Chintamani Sahasrabudhe, Sakal Papers, Sangli**, organized a press conference attended by reporters from local newspapers like **Pudhari, Tarun Bharat, Kesri, Lokmat** and television channels, ETV and the local cable network. **Additional Commissioner Gajanan Ghate**, introduced the background of the project stressing on the initiation of the MAGNET forum in Sangli. **Pratima Joshi, Director, SA** added that this was an unique venture as often NGOs and the local government always interact in a situation of confrontation rather than collaboration, and the media reports both sides independently. This time all three actors have worked in collaboration and proved that such collaborations are extremely successful for projects dealing with the urban poor. Hopefully, more such projects would be identified by the forum, even though financial support from IOG has ended.



Press Conference at the SMK-MC. Seen in this picture are the press representatives, Dr. Pandit (LAR), Srinanda Sen (SA), Joglekar (Shivsadan), Mr. Sonawane (SMKMC) Pratima Joshi (SA) Mr. Kamble and Mr. Ghate of the SMKMC.

The Local Action Researcher, Dr. Nirmala Pandit added that the project created a feeling of ownership among all the actors. Each person felt they owned part of the process and so went ahead to add as much as possible to the success of the project.

For, veteran toilet-cum-bio-gas plant builder, **Mr. V. Joglekar of Shivsadan**, (who has built both the toilet blocks), the project was special because of the congeniality in the atmosphere. He has faced hostility from both communities and local governments in previous projects, but in these two buildings, the communities helped out with the construction and supervision of the materials and welcomed him with a lot of pleasure. As for the SMKMC, everybody seems to be calling him 'kaka', which made it obvious that they liked working with him. He added that of course, the prompt payments by SA played a big role in the timely completion of the project.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE PUNE MEDIA



Press visits the Sangliwadi toilet site before inauguration

The Pune media continues to report Sangli activities. SA's work on the slum Survey was also reported in the Pune papers. Plus, when the forum moved to Sangli, Sakal's Santosh Shenai came down to Sangli to talk to the Sangli media about their role in the forum.

Anuradha Mascarenhas of 'The Indian Express' reported the surveys that preceded the IOG project and **Manjiri Damle, Times of India**, reported the inauguration of the Sangli toilets in a special report for events in Maharashtra. She also contacted Maharashtra Times in Sangli, who made a special visit to Sangliwadi, in order to cover the event in his paper. So the Pune media has continued to take interest in the MAGNET project.

THE TOILET INAUGURATIONS - II

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At Tasgaon Ves

The Tasgaon Ves people were in for a bit of disappointment. The SMKMC had decided that the main function should take place at Sangliwadi, as 2nd October was a busy day, and to have two similar functions in two venues was too much to accommodate in one morning. The invitees would come to Tasgaon Ves, officially go through the ribbon-cutting and then leave.

The Bhoomi-Pujan festivities had also taken place at Sangliwadi and the women of Tasgaon Ves were really disappointed. All the arrangements for the shamiana, the chairs, the dais and sound system were to be cancelled, when the women decided - NO! They were going to have a festive inauguration. For them having Shelter Associates inaugurate the show was just as good. SA readily agreed and it was decided to have the function before the Sangliwadi one, slated at 11:00 a.m.

The shamiana was set up. The sound system was in place and the chairs were rapidly filled up. SMKMC officials, people from Shivsadan and Shelter Associates took up the front seats. **Mrs Lata Shrikhande, trustee (SA) and vermiculture expert was the guest of honour.** She set off the right note when she started off by saying that toilets give people the dignity to be human beings. Food, clothing and housing were basic necessities, but toilets give people the necessary privacy and dignity needed. She also said that since the toilets were being inaugurated on Gandhiji's birthday, it gave the people added responsibility to look after the toilets in order to uphold his work on cleanliness and sanitation.

Mr. Joglekar of Shivsadan and Mr. Kamble, Deputy Commissioner, Miraj and Kupwad, also spoke about the importance of keeping the toilets clean. Soon the Local MLA and the Mayor arrived and after the ribbon cutting formalities decided to spend more time. There were speeches made by the community women as well as the MLA much to the communities happiness.



At Sangliwadi



Sangliwadi was buzzing with activity since early morning. There was a puja performed in the caretaker's room performed by the land owner Mr. Joshi. The local Corporator had also put up a colourful shamiana with a raised dais. A bus load of Pune Baandhani members had also arrived for the function.

The local MLA, The Mayor, Municipal Commissioner Madhav Sangle, Standing Committee members, local councillors, and other forum members spoke at the occasion. The underlying theme was that this was a good model for carrying out future projects in the city and all the speakers emphasised the need to get communities involved right from the start.

ALL BASED ON SURVEY INFORMATION

Pratima Joshi (SA) explained that a detailed slum level survey had been carried out in the city by SA/Baandhani teams from Pune. These findings had been compiled in a report which had been submitted to the local government. The survey results gave a comprehensive idea of where the poor lived and what facilities they lacked. This information would help prioritise projects and ensure inclusion of slums within city plans. In fact these two settlements had been selected by the forum based on the survey results and the willingness expressed by the communities to become part of the federation. The **ex-Mayor Mr. Suresh Patil** stressed the need to come out with a 3 year development plan for the poor based on the survey findings of SA/Baandhani.

Both the communities have already started taking charge by appointing a 9 member toilet committee in their respective slums. A caretaker has been appointed and bank accounts have been opened to put aside some of the funds for future maintenance.