

Sanitation - The Medinipur Story

Intensive Sanitation Project, West Bengal, India



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গাড়ু নিয়ে সকাল সাঁঝে

মাঠে ঘাটে যাব না আর

"Out in the field with a can of water

No more will I be seen

My very own latrine I must now

Build by any means"

— Wall writing in a Medinipur village

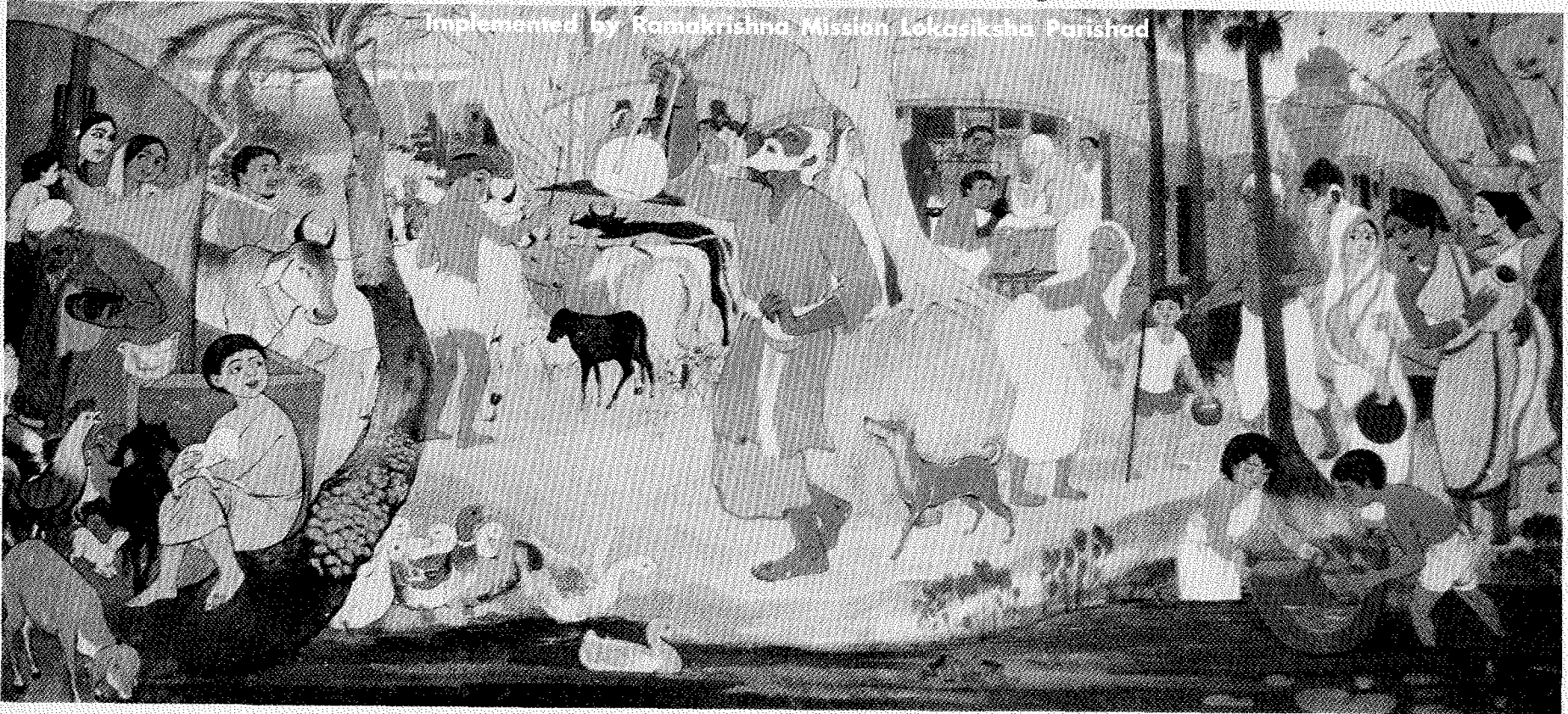


করবো নিজের হোঁচাগার

Sanitation - The Medinipur Story

Intensive Sanitation Project, West Bengal, India

Implemented by Ramakrishna Mission Lokasiksha Parishad



unicef

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

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625 million Indians defecate in the open of whom 550 million are in rural areas.¹



In India, diarrhoea claims the lives of some 1 million children every year²



316 million Indians have no access to safe water of whom 280 million are in rural areas.³



89 of every thousand infants in India die soon after birth⁴

Sanitation : The need for an integrated approach

More than poverty, more than starvation, more than natural calamities, it is improper sanitation facilities or their absence which have contributed to the high degree of infant mortality and poor health in India.

The prevailing ignorance regarding the link between hygiene and environmental sanitation has compelled governmental and other organisations to view sanitation in a new light altogether - not merely as something to do with the construction and maintenance of latrines, but as a fully integrated support system to sustain practices related to hygiene, home and environmental sanitation.

This integrated approach to sanitation can only result from amalgamating hardware and software components; by helping to produce the physical components of sanitation, assembling them, facilitating their distribution and finally assuring their sustenance through individual awareness and community participation.

The Intensive Sanitation Project being implemented in Medinipur, West Bengal, is based on this integrated approach and has, as a result, become a self-reliant and self-sustaining project with social mobilisation as an integral component of the approach.

Source: 1 & 3 census data 1991 (excluding J&K).

2. 1992 figures, Human Development Report 1994

4. 1992 figures, Human Development Report 1994



Sanitation in India

Hygiene, for most Indians, is confined to the boundaries of their homes. It has very often little relevance to their surroundings.

In-house latrines are uncommon in most rural households and open-air defecation an accepted practice handed down through generations. In West Bengal, for instance, nearly 88% of the rural population still defecate in the open*. But this problem is not unique to this State alone. Everywhere in the country, defecation is considered unhygienic, and hence, and activity best conducted far away from home.

Under the circumstances, the task of implementing a sanitation programme is not an easy one. Because more than changing habits, the challenge lies in changing mindsets.

(* Census data 1991)

Is exposed excreta harmful?
What Indians think



INDIA

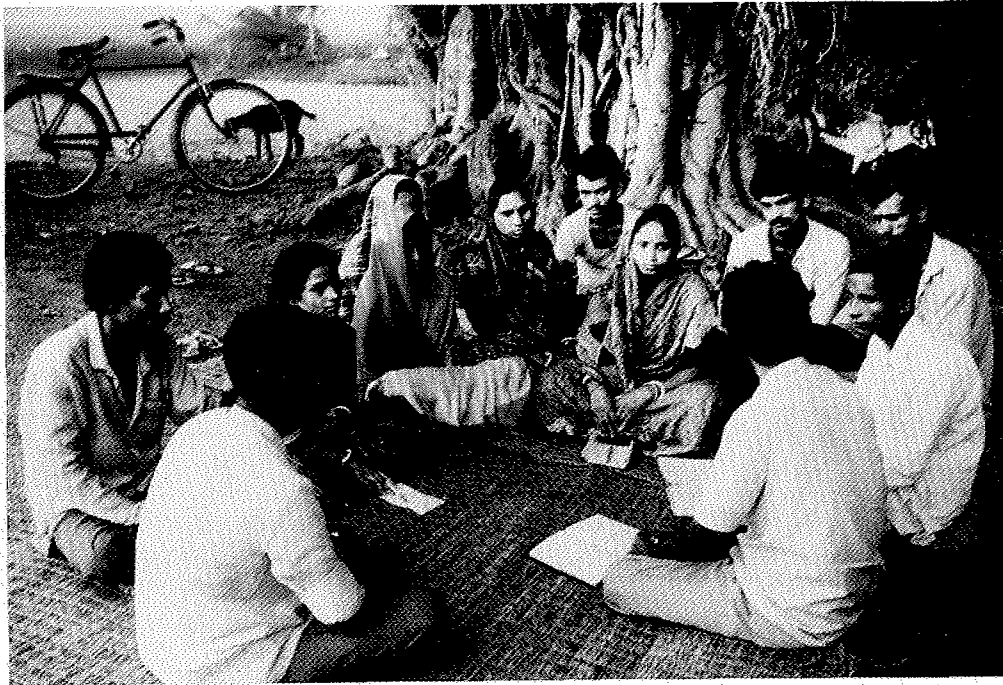


WEST BENGAL

■ HARMFUL ■ NOT HARMFUL ■ DONT KNOW

Source: People, Water & Sanitation
National Drinking Water Mission, 1990.





Planning for sanitation in rural India

A late starter, Rural Sanitation Programme (RSP) in India has been slow in developing as compared to the Water Supply Programme. The RSP was transferred to the Department of Rural Development in 1985 and has made significant progress since 1986, when the Centrally Sponsored Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) was launched to supplement the effort of the states.

The CRSP guidelines of 1993 envisage sanitation as a 'total package' rather than a

programme merely meant for the construction and maintenance of latrines and disposal of excreta. The concept has been endorsed by the Planning Commission for the 8th Five Year Plan.

Considering the dismal state of rural sanitation at the end of the 7th Plan, the endorsement has been timely, especially in view of India's commitment as a signatory to the World Summit for Children Declaration: Sanitation for all by 2000 AD.

Land marks in the Rural Sanitation Programme

1985

Rural water supply and sanitation transferred to Department of Rural Development.

1986

Decision to utilise a part of Rural Employment Programme and the Indira Awas Yojna for rural sanitation.

Centrally Sponsored Rural Sanitation Programme launched.

1987

RSP came under state sector Minimum Needs Programme.

1991

Beneficiary contribution made compulsory.

1992

Concept of 'Total Sanitation' adopted by the 8th five year plan.

First ever National Seminar on Rural Sanitation organised.

1993

CRSP guidelines revised.

Separate budget provision for Information, Education, Communication (IEC) in CRSP guidelines.

1994

Alternate delivery systems for sanitation introduced in a number of districts.

1995

A mission approach to sanitation and hygiene mooted.

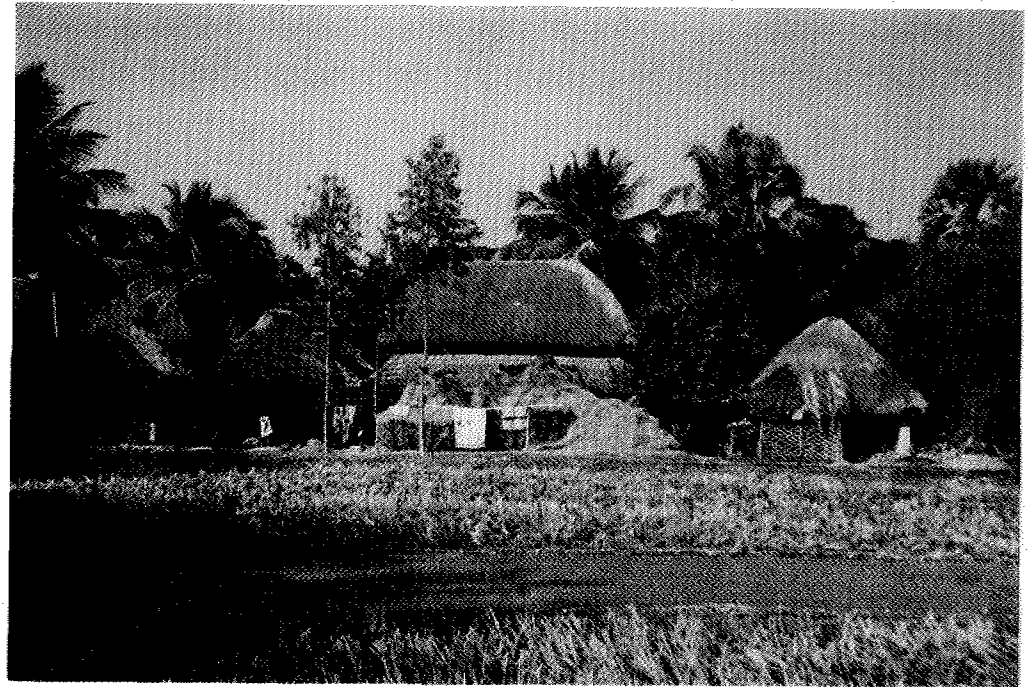
ISP Medinipur : Spearheading a movement for rural sanitation

On the face of it, Pasang is just another Indian village. The clusters of thatched houses, the leisurely pace of life, the people reared on generations of poverty, earning little or nothing as small or marginal farmers, share croppers and daily wage earners are all typical of the rural scenario in India. But enter the village and you notice a difference: the conspicuous absence of human excreta resulting from open air defecation so commonly prevalent in most of India's rural regions.

This is the picture of a typical village in West Bengal's Medinipur district under the Intensive Sanitation Project (ISP). A project facilitated by UNICEF, in co-operation with the Central and State Governments and implemented by Ramakrishna Mission Lokasiksha Parishad (RKMLP) - one of the country's leading NGOs.

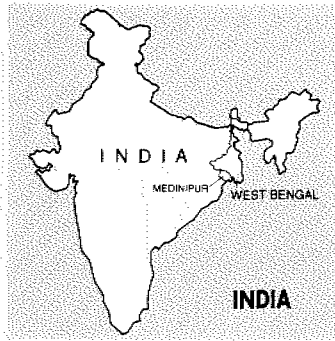
ISP Medinipur, launched in March 1990, has so far been extended to 4,686 villages of the district.*

*Data: RKMLP, April 1995



ISP Medinipur has left its distinctive mark on these two villages. Note the clean surroundings





Medinipur : The land and its people

Once the home of some of India's illustrious personalities, Medinipur is the most populous district of the country, with one in every hundred Indians belonging to this district.

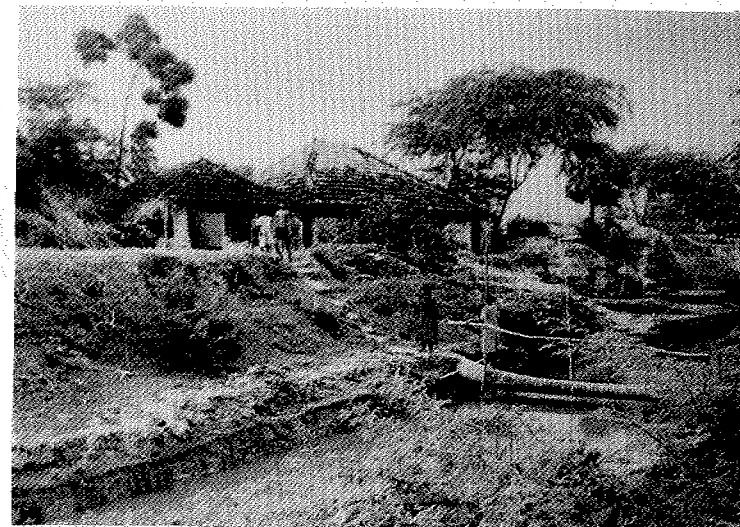
While 63.85% of Medinipur's total area is under cultivation, making agriculture the chief occupation and source of income, the presence of a coastline also helps in providing a living for many people.

However, one of the main hinderances to Medinipur's progress down the years has been the fact that it is a low-lying area, especially prone to floods during the monsoons. The resulting epidemics of cholera, typhoid and other related diseases have, in turn, severely affected the lives of the people and the economy of the land.

Medinipur also enjoys the distinction of being a totally literate district.

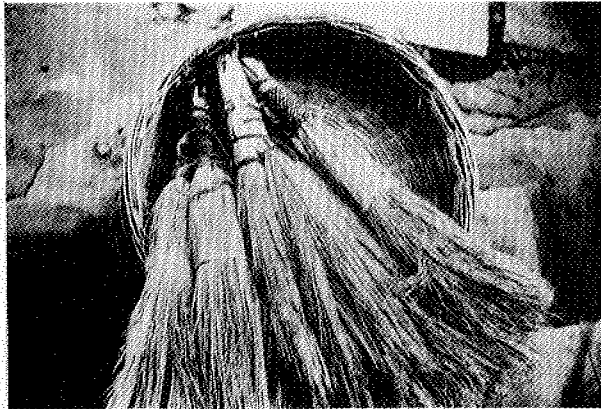


*Literacy movement in
Medinipur district
worked hand in hand
with ISP*



**The majority of
Medinipur's popula-
tion earn their living
from farming and
fishing**





Why is ISP Medinipur truly unique ?

Drawing from the experiences of other similar programmes, ISP Medinipur has adopted an integrated approach towards sanitation, centered around the following objectives :

- ❑ Making ISP Medinipur a fully self-sustaining project by aiming at 'Zero Subsidy' towards construction of sanitary facilities.
- ❑ Reducing Infant Mortality Rate and Water-Borne Diseases by providing sanitation education and low-cost sanitation facilities.
- ❑ Making people aware of personal and food hygiene; safe handling of drinking water; excreta disposal ; solid and liquid waste disposal; disease transmission and the relationship between safe water, sanitation and health.
- ❑ Creating a better, safer living environment with the help of a total sanitation package.
- ❑ Introducing appropriate low-cost technology that is affordable by and acceptable to the people in rural areas.
- ❑ Developing devices to test methodology and operational strategy so as to make the programme self-sustaining and self-expanding.
- ❑ Involving the community, especially local youth clubs and women's groups, during the planning and implementation stages of the sanitation programme.
- ❑ Establishing intersectoral linkages to help promote immunization, ORT, nutrition, education and income generation activities among women.
- Handling of drinking water
- Disposal of waste water
- Disposal of human excreta
- Disposal of garbage and animal excreta
- Home sanitation and food hygiene
- Personal hygiene
- Environmental cleanliness

Taking a significant step forward

Setting about to meet its objectives, ISP Medinipur has covered a good deal of ground since its inception. Already some 4,686 villages have been covered under the programme, involving the mobilisation of 11 Cluster Organisations and 1,027 Youth Clubs among others.

By the year 2000 the programme expects to cover at least 80% of the population in Medinipur with access to sanitary means of excreta disposal.

Coverage under ISP Medinipur

SANITATION VILLAGES*	82
**CD BLOCKS TOUCHED	54
CLUSTER ORGANISATIONS WORKING	11
YOUTH CLUBS INVOLVED	1,027
VILLAGES UNDER OPERATION	4,686

* Sanitation Village : village having a latrine in every household

**CD Blocks : Community Development Blocks

Data : RKMLP, April 1995

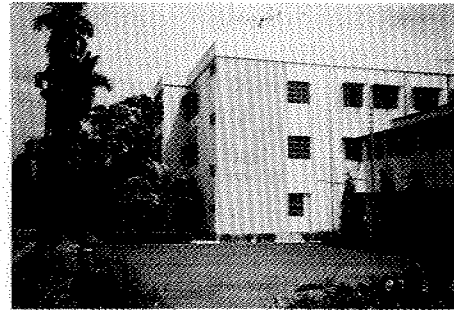
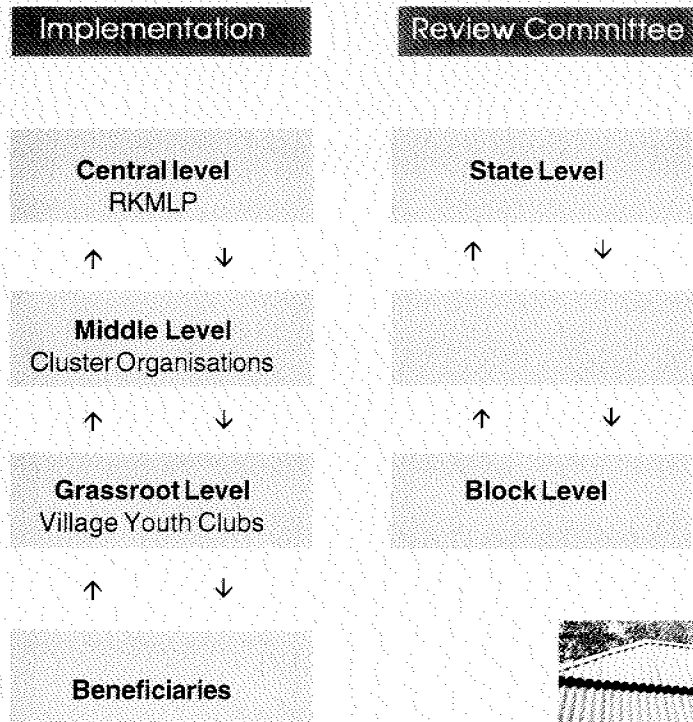
Latrine construction is just part of the sanitation package being offered under ISP Medinipur



The organisational structure

A unique three-tier organisational structure has been set up to help meet Project goals. It comprises of RKMLP, Cluster Organisations (consortiums of voluntary Youth Clubs) and Youth Clubs.

Cluster Organisations have been set up within Community Development (CD) Blocks. Each CD block has a population of around 1,50,000. Eleven such organisations have been identified and developed for implementing the programme in Medinipur, which, till now, has covered 54 blocks through 1,027 Youth Clubs.



Ramakrishna Mission Lokasiksha Parishad is the main implementing agency

A village Youth Club

A Cluster Organisation



Working as a team

In Medinipur, the dream of attaining 100% coverage with regard to access to safe water and sanitation is slowly being realised through the dedicated efforts of various groups of people.

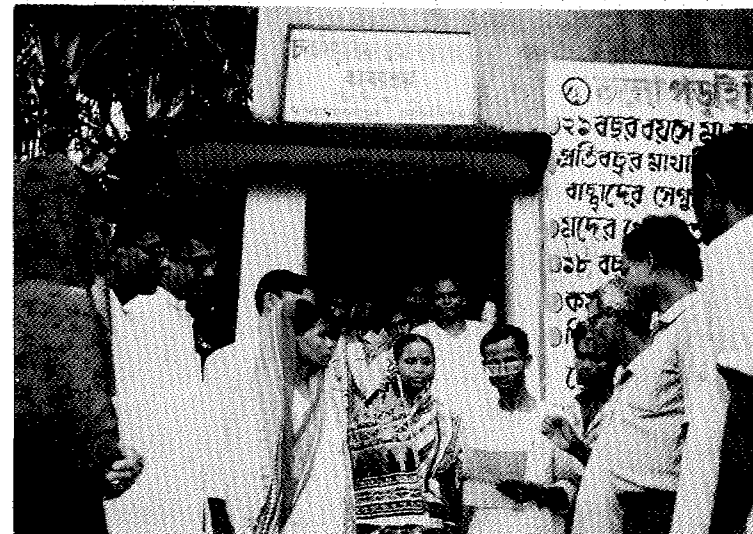
RKMLP interacts with the State Government and District Administration for proper implementation of the programme through Cluster Organisations in the CD Blocks.

Cluster Organisations plan, implement and monitor all ISP activities, including advocacy and training, as well as production, procurement and installation of hardware components. They chalk out activities in consultation with associated Youth Clubs and provide a link between RKMLP and the village units.

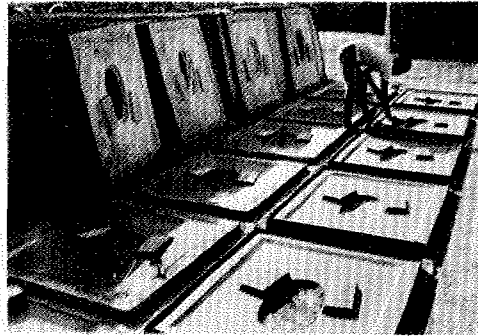
Village Youth Clubs render their services voluntarily and have the same responsibilities as the Cluster Organisations.

Village 'Panchayats', with locally elected representatives of the villagers, play a major role in this infrastructure, providing valuable support to the implementing agency.

UNICEF facilitates the Government of West Bengal and the Government of India in the implementation of the programme by providing necessary support and guidance with regard to advocacy, training, administration and establishment of an effective delivery system.



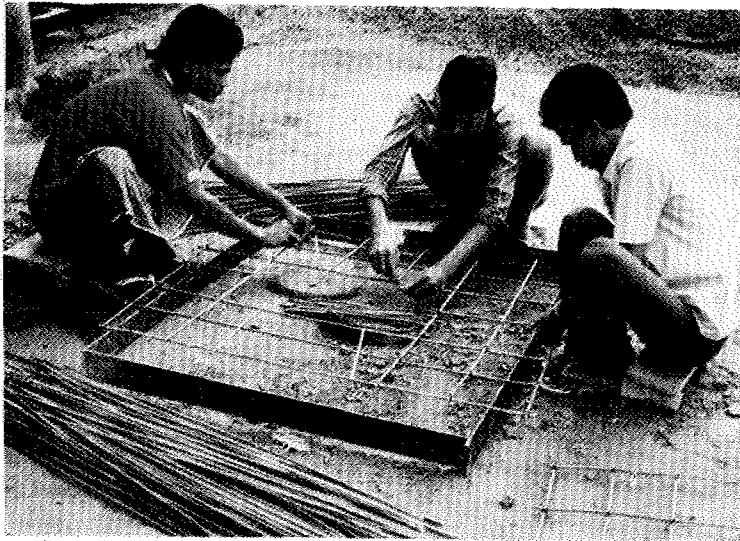
Teamwork between village 'panchayats' and various cluster organisations has helped in smooth implementation of the programme.



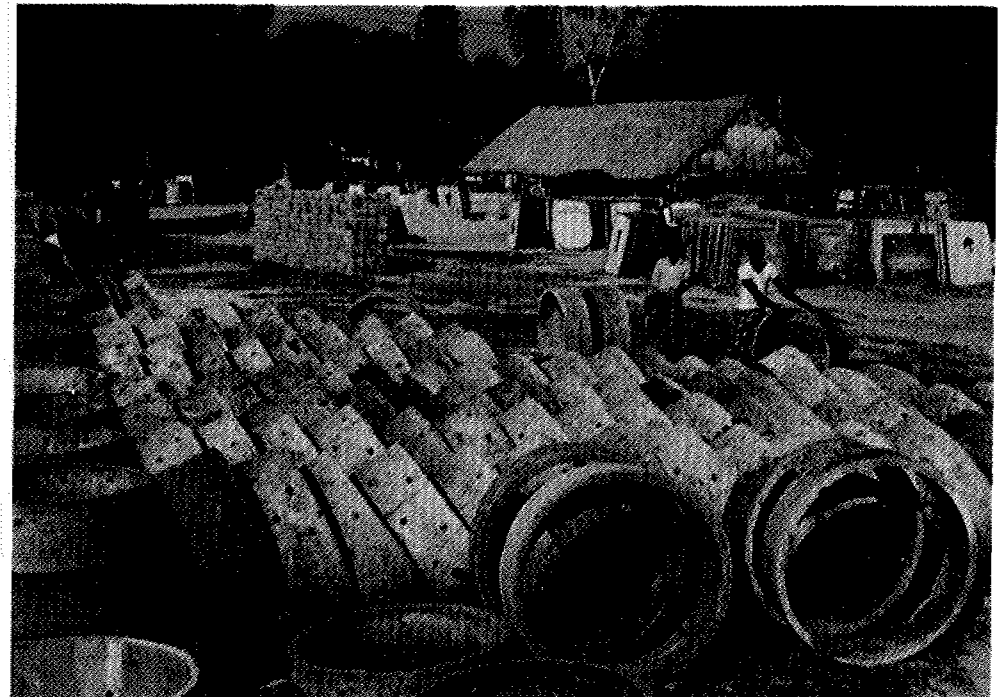
Production of sanitary hardware

Hardware is one of the major components in the construction of low-cost latrines. It consists of concrete rings for the pit lining, square and round squatting plates for water seal latrines, pit covers, mosaic pans and traps made of white cement.

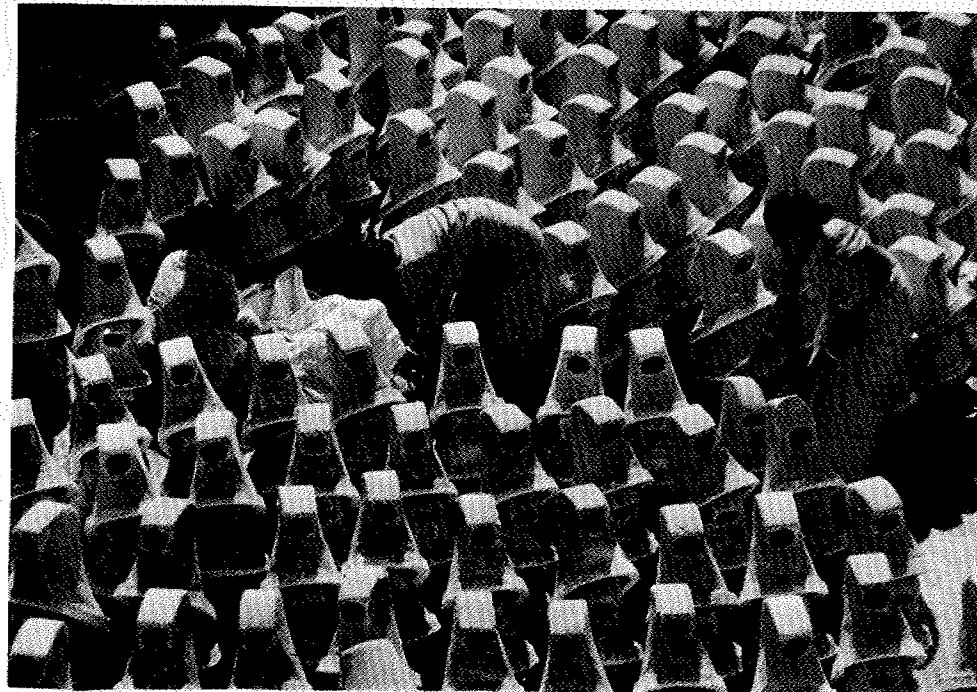
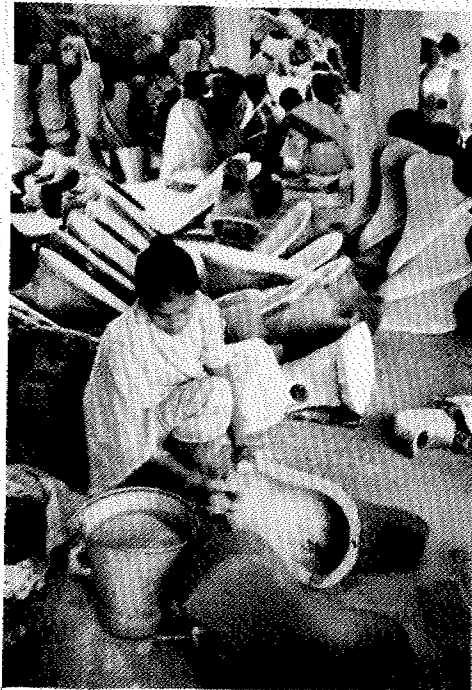
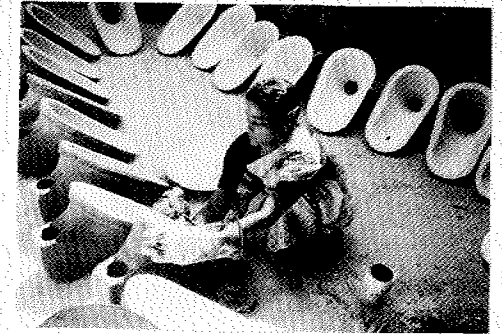
The pans and traps for ISP Medinipur are manufactured at the central production centre set up at RKMLP, Narendrapur, as well as in 20 other smaller production centres operational in the 54 CD blocks. Village women are engaged for this purpose and work under the direct supervision of RKMLP.



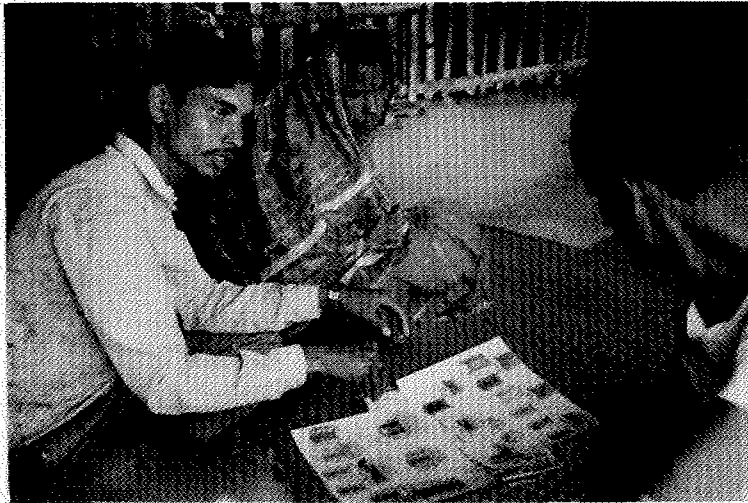
Local manpower is extensively used to construct the various latrine components.



With the help of trained village masons these centres manufacture pre-fabricated components necessary for latrine construction, under the supervision of the Cluster Organisations.



Women are almost always employed at RKMLP's Central Production Centre.



The programme reaches out to people by demonstrating the affordability of the 'low-cost latrine'.

Sanitation within easy reach

ISP Medinipur has ensured that latrines are affordable by most villagers. No longer is the sanitary latrine considered a luxury; it is a necessity. Thanks to the various low-cost latrines available under the programme, the villager can now choose a model to suit his pocket - anything ranging from Rs. 230 to Rs. 2,700.

So far, the most popular model has been the single-pit latrine - a mosaic pan and trap embedded in a concrete plate that covers a pit four-feet deep. The pan and trap produce a water seal, thereby providing the convenience and benefits of higher-priced pans and traps available in the market.

The enclosures are often improvised with the ingenious use of ordinary recycled materials like gunny bags and cement bags. Plastic sheets, thatch and bamboo are also frequently used, keeping construction costs down to a bare minimum.

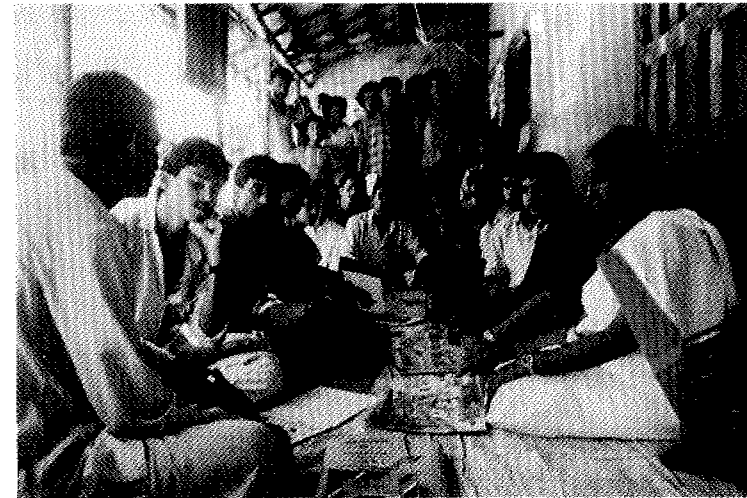


People construct latrines to suit their individual pockets.

Advocacy Programme at a Glance

Activities	No.*
Motivation camps	1,898
Exhibitions	287
Wall writing	6,108
Video & Slide Shows	1,152
Home visits	3,03,004
Song squad programmes	1,076
Group meetings	3,393

*Data: RKMLP, April, 1995



Spreading the word around

Community mobilisation is one of the most important activities of ISP Medinipur as it promotes awareness regarding health and hygiene among the rural populace. It is carried out through trained motivators drawn from among the target community. The key strategies being implemented for mobilizing people are :

Home Visits : Motivators, field staff and village-level Youth Club functionaries regularly visit the villagers, to convince them of the need to avail sanitation facilities offered under ISP Medinipur. These interpersonal contacts have proved to be very effective. Till date 3.03,004* home visits have been made.

Motivation Camps : Around 11,38,800* villagers, including a large number of women, have attended these camps organised by local Youth Clubs. As many as 1.898* such camps have been organised so far.

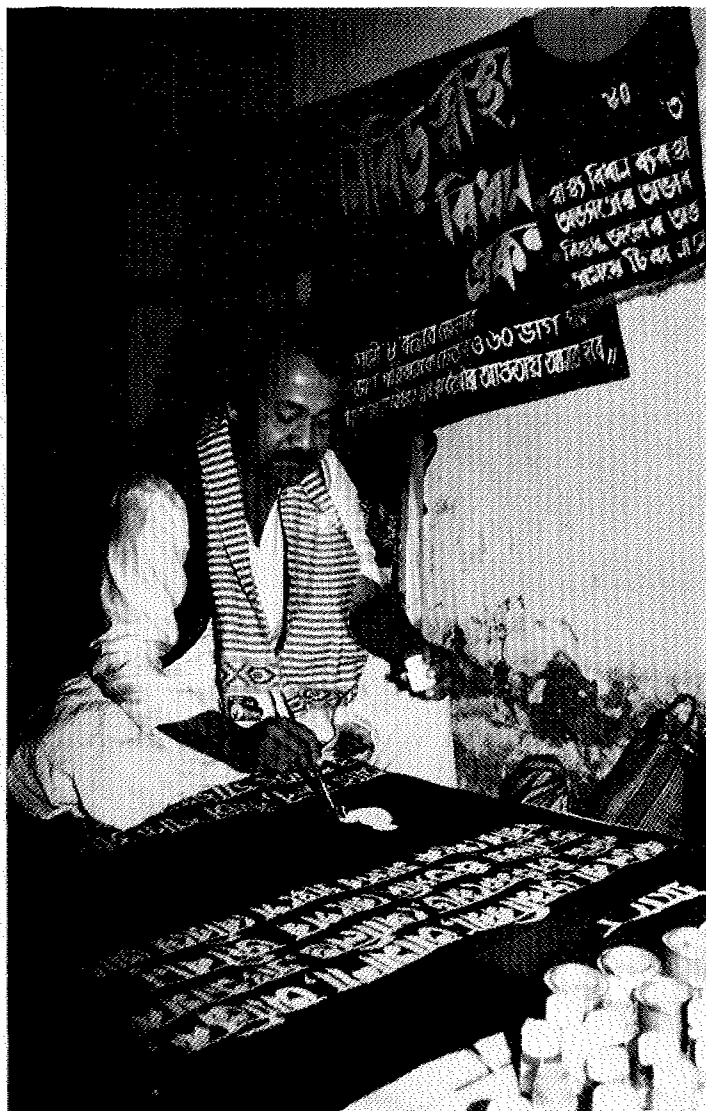
Exhibitions : Seasonal fairs and festivals are used by the Project motivators as occasions to promote and disseminate information about what ISP Medinipur has to offer including the display of different sanitation facilities in sanitation camps and exhibitions. So far 287* exhibitions have been organised for the purpose.

* Data : RKMLA, April 1995

Communication materials

Materials have been prepared to help communicate various aspects of the programme to differ target groups.

- Flash cards for motivators.
- Calendars depicting the many facets of ISP, for distribution among target families.
- A comprehensive package of IEC materials that includes Guide Books on standard production and installation of sanitation facilities for technical, field personnel and masons.
- A Motivator's kit comprising of a comprehensive package of communication materials.
- Audio-visual materials.



Banners, wall writings and popular entertainment are some of the many ways by which sanitation messages are propagated.

The medium is the message

Sanitation messages are spread across the district using different media. Some are innovative, but all have proved to be highly effective tools in the communication process.

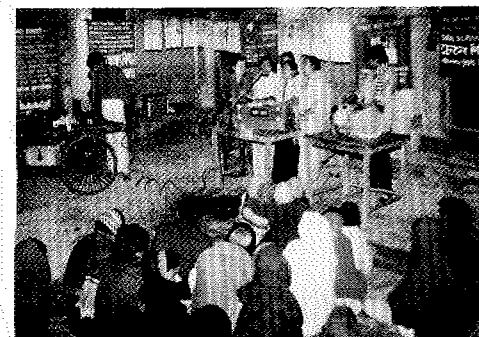
Wall Writings : Messages and slogans related to the Project and its facilities, and to the problems arising from insanitary conditions, have been painted on walls of houses and schools.

Video & Slide Shows : To reach out to all sections of people, slide shows and video programmes have been developed, based on various aspects of ISP Medinipur. 1,152 such shows have been organised so far.

Song Squads : Both professionals and villagers have written songs on sanitation

and the ISP. Folk troupes have been guided to prepare and present items based on sanitation themes. This approach has proven fairly effective in mobilising the masses.

**Data : RKMLP, April, 1995*



Training programmes organised

No.	Course	No. of participants
1.	Motivators' Training	3752
2.	Village Masons Training	1038
3.	Seed Masons Training	32
4.	Youth Club Leaders Orientation	2150
5.	Orientation on Accounts Keeping	324
6.	Training on Smokeless Chullah	766
7.	Training on Tara Handpump Installation (Drilling mistries)	41
8.	Tara Handpump Caretaker Training	669
9.	Project Personnel Orientation	88
10.	Orientation of Panchayat Members	8792
11.	Training Workshop on songs on ISP	55
12.	Refresher Course on ISP Accounts Keeping	108
13.	Tara Handpump Water Committee's Orientation	925
14.	Training for Task Force (Motivators)	31
15.	Training for ORS Depot Holders	1669
16.	Masons' Training on Biogas Plant Construction	24
17.	Orientation on Biogas for Project Personnel	17

Data: RKMLP, April, 1995

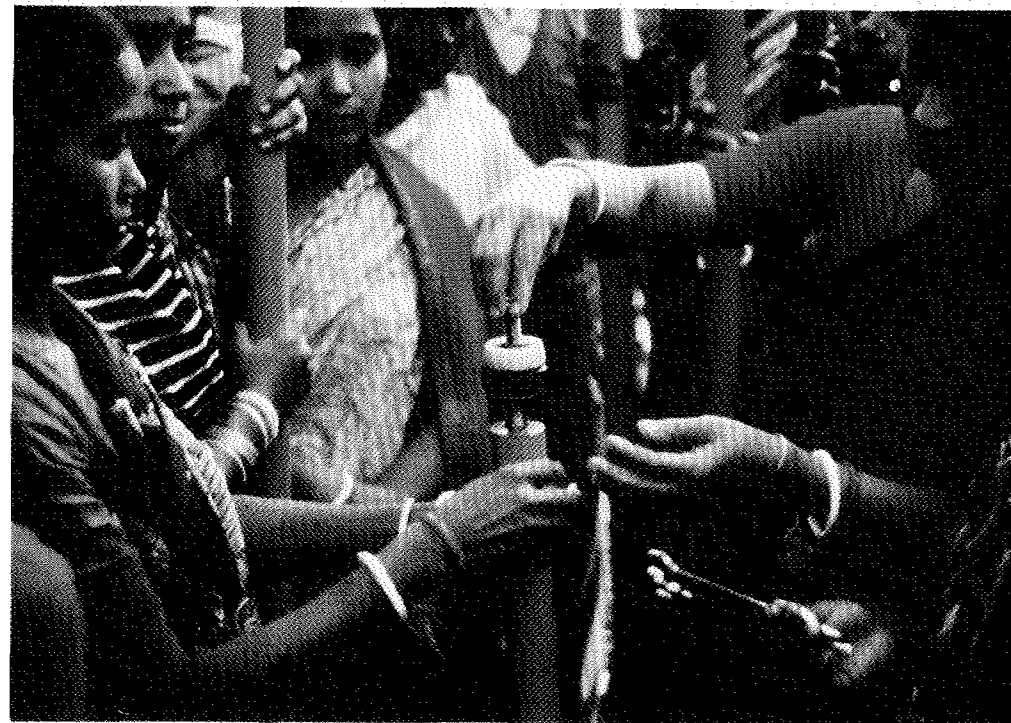
Developing human resources

No development programme, however well-formulated, can ever hope to succeed without the co-operation of local people. Be it for advocacy, implementation or sustenance, ISP Medinipur ultimately relies on people for its success.

Today, ISP Medinipur is very much a people's movement. And if the project is to be ultimately self-sustaining, those involved must be trained on different aspects of sanitation.

Recognising this need, several training packages have been developed under ISP Medinipur :

- to train people in various aspects of programme communication and motivation.
- to help them in programme implementation and sustenance.



Building the base : Training of motivators

Through regular organisational and motivational training, ISP Medinipur has helped strengthen its base. Orientation and training programmes are organised for project personnel, motivators, Cluster and Youth Club leaders, and 'Panchayat' and WATSAN Committee members. Participants are familiarised with various 'software' aspects of the Project. Steps are taken to develop efficient rural managers for smooth implementation of the programme.

Approaching implementation through communication

Generate awareness by providing information



Create interest in the new facilities



Alter perceptions



Develop conviction in the product offered



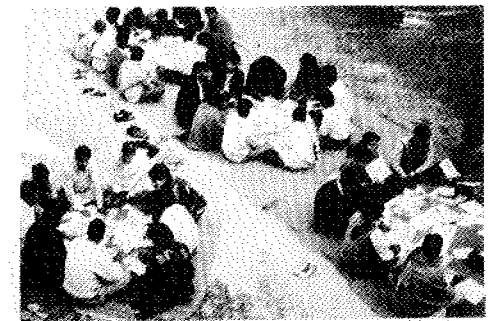
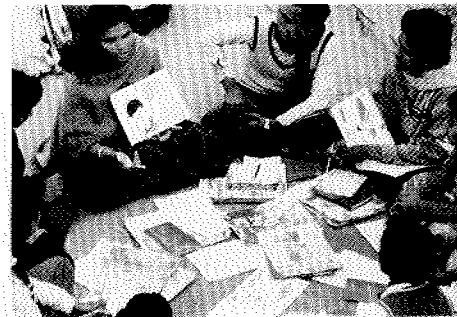
Motivate direct action to install the facility



Provide support & reassurance

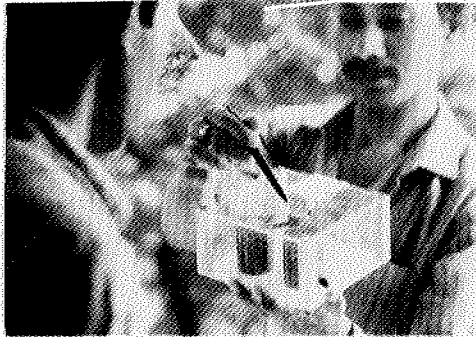


*Training of Project
workers is essential
to the success of
the programme*



Training of masons

Keeping in tune with the Project's integrated approach to sanitation, technical training is provided in addition to training on organisational and motivational aspects. Courses are held to train village masons in the construction of latrines, smokeless chulahs, drilling of tube wells and the installation and maintenance of Tara handpumps.



Type of hardware training offered :

- Training of village masons
- Construction of smokeless chulahs
- Installation of Tara handpump
- Manufacture of latrine components



Women being trained to construct smokeless chulahs



Masons' training in progress

Setting the pace for progress

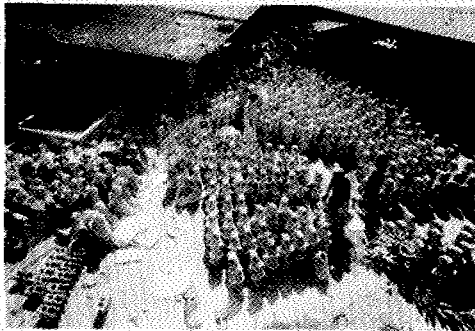
If the different hardware and software training programmes have succeeded in giving the Project a strong base, it is the village Youth Clubs, Women's Organisations and Village Motivators who have actually set the pace for ISP Medinipur.

Village Youth Clubs, Women's Organisations, Leaders and Motivators, with the active support of Panchayat institutions, play a major role in motivating the community. Being local community institutions, they have the support of the people of the area.



Helping people select a latrine of their choice





Pans and traps are distributed from the production centre



Pans as well as other components are transported to the Village Clubs

Promoting sanitation through social marketing

How successful has ISP Medinipur been in the process of social marketing ?

That the Project has brought sanitation to the doorsteps of thousands is a fact which

speaks volumes for its efficacy. It is social marketing that has made the programme so successful and sustainable.



From the Clubs the components are sent to various houses where they are finally installed.



Local transportation is vital for the delivery system.



Making use of local expertise

Community participation has always been the hallmark of ISP Medinipur. It is also, perhaps, the strongest driving force behind the Project.

This unique self-help approach to sanitation is strongly evident in areas such as latrine construction. Masons are chosen from among the local population and trained for the specific purpose of putting together the various hardware components necessary to build a latrine. Even the components themselves are locally manufactured utilising workforce from the villages.

Under ISP Medinipur, every latrine is the result of the efforts of an entire community



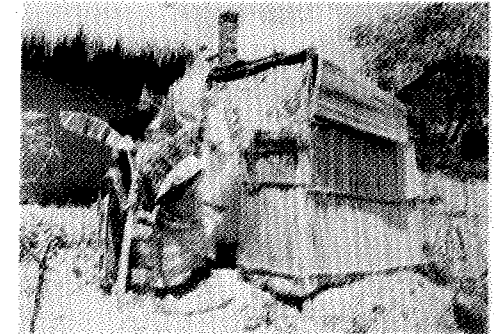
Creating a sense of belonging

By encouraging participation of the villagers at every stage of the development process, ISP Medinipur has proved to be a successful people's movement. It has helped develop a sense of pride and belonging among the villagers. Since the villagers themselves bear the entire cost of installation, the facilities installed in their houses are fully used and maintained well.



An attached latrine in this house is indicative of a changing attitude towards sanitation

Every latrine is built according to what its owner can afford





The smokeless chullah ensures a pollution-free kitchen in the home.

The availability of 'safe' drinking water is essential for a total sanitation programme.

Sanitation facilities constructed

No.	Facilities	No. of Units
1.	Household low cost latrine	73,460
2.	Soakage pit	224
3.	Garbage pit	3,052
4.	Bathing platform	291
5.	Washing platform	63
6.	Improved chulahl	6,478
7.	Tara handpump	385

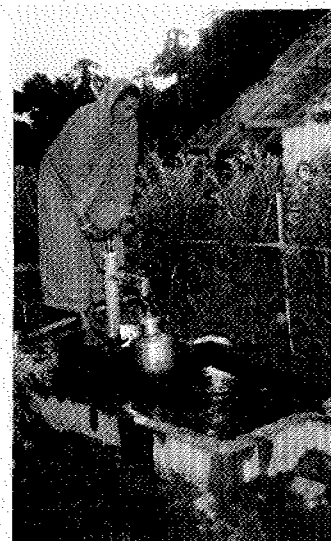
*Data: RKMLP, April, 1995

Promoting the sanitation package

Low-cost latrines are just a part of the total sanitation package being offered under ISP Medinipur.

In its efforts to promote an integrated approach towards sanitation, the Project has helped develop a complete range of other sanitation-related facilities. These include soakage pits, smokeless chulahl, garbage pits, washing platforms, bathing platforms, etc. The success of the Project lies in the fact that all items are promoted together and not in isolation.

At the same time people are also made aware of the importance of safe handling of drinking water, maintaining personal hygiene, home sanitation and food hygiene.



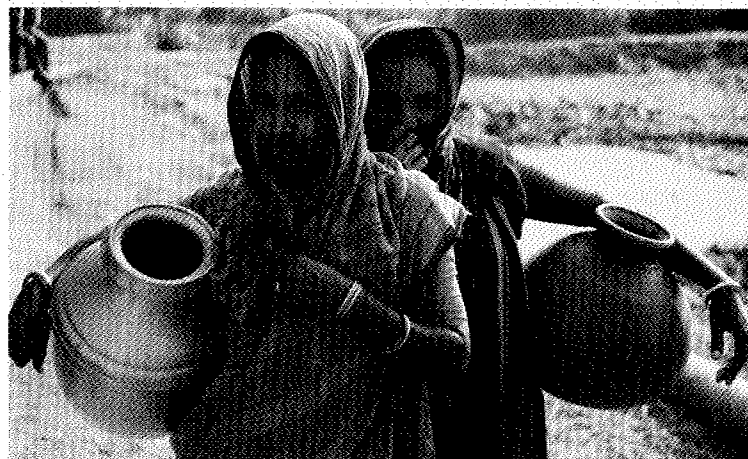
The Tara pump

Potable water is a key component of the intensive Sanitation Project of Medinipur.

To make it readily and easily available, the direct action handpump, popularly known as the 'Tara Pump' which has been specially designed for easy operation and maintenance, has been installed on a large scale. With the installation of the Tara pump, a community-based water maintenance system was introduced as an experiment in villages under ISP Medinipur to promote proper handling of safe water as part of the sanitation package. Easily repairable by the villagers themselves, the downtime of the Tara pump is almost negligible.

Even after five years of installation in some villages, every Tara pump is in perfect working condition due to the collective and sustained efforts of the people. Every Tara pump is monitored by a WATSAN Committee comprising of seven members from the community. The community also jointly contributes Rs. 500 as an initial fund, following which, every family pays 50 paise per month towards maintenance of the pump. Maintenance and repair of each of the Tara pumps is undertaken by two women caretakers identified from the users and trained for the purpose before installation of the pump.

Training women to repair the Tara handpump



Earlier women from the village had to travel long distances to fetch potable water.



The easy-to-operate Tara pump has now made life easier for many women of Medinipur.

The Tara pump can be easily maintained, thus eliminating inconvenience to users.

Review and monitoring

Through a regular, intensive system of monitoring and reviewing at all levels of the Project, ISP Medinipur is able to successfully assess its own progress, achievements and drawbacks.

The various activities performed by the Youth Clubs are monitored by the Cluster Organisations regularly, while the performance of the Cluster Organisations is reviewed by the RKMLP every month.

The District Level Committee is represented by RKMLP, UNICEF and district officials who meet once in every

three months under the Chairman of the District Council to facilitate smooth implementation of the Project.

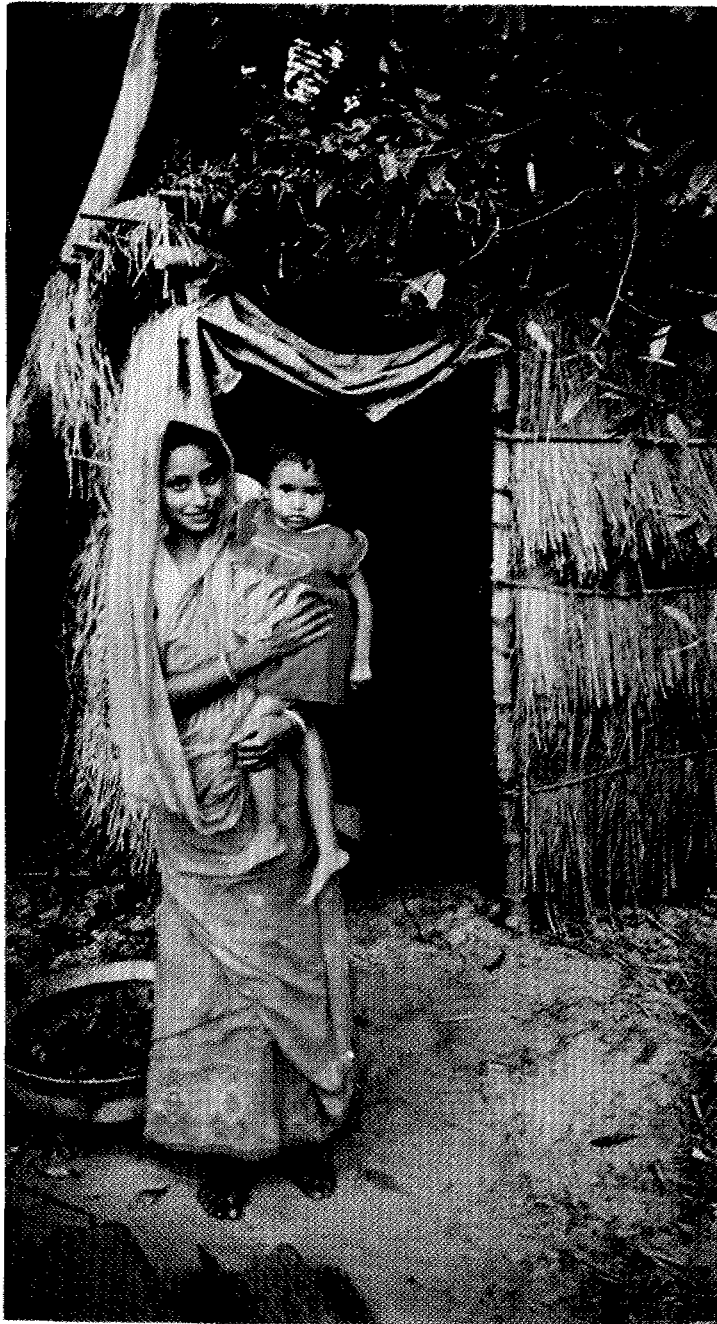
The State Level Committee meets twice a year to discuss objectives and strategies. It also reviews progress and problems pertaining to the Project. The Committee comprises of representatives of UNICEF, RKMLP, the departments of Rural Development and Public Health Engineering of the Government of West Bengal, District Council and other government functionaries.



Regular meetings at village Youth Clubs.



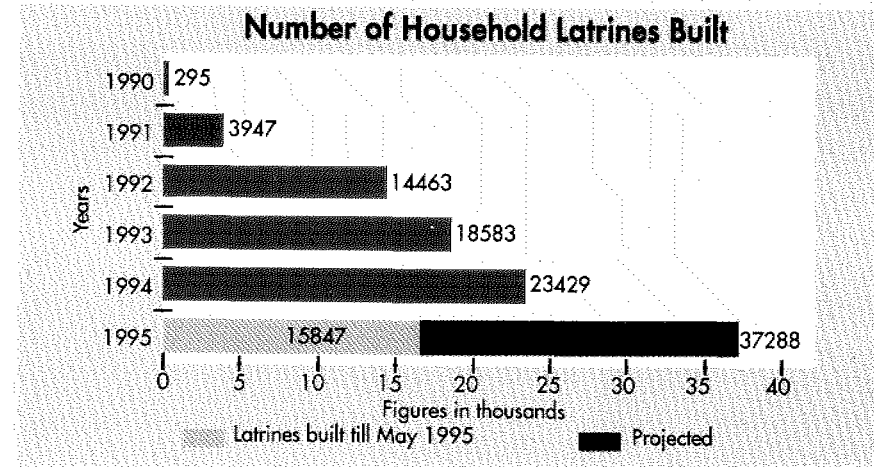
Cluster Organisations help in local review and monitoring.



A spreading enthusiasm

Following the success of ISP Medinipur, youth organisations in the district are coming forward to participate in the Project. Many families too, including those in low-income groups, are eager to install latrines and are even making advance payments for them. Particularly keen are the womenfolk who are proving to be a vital factor in influencing their family heads to opt for sanitation facilities. The project has also provided opportunities for entrepreneurs to enter the field to produce and market sanitary items.

Significantly, the use of latrines has also helped inculcate in the hitherto indifferent villagers, a sense of hygiene. In villages under ISP Medinipur this has resulted in an appreciable reduction of diarrhoeal diseases and brought about desired behavioural changes.



Source: RKMLP, May, 1995

The results of ISP Medinipur are clearly visible in these smiling faces.

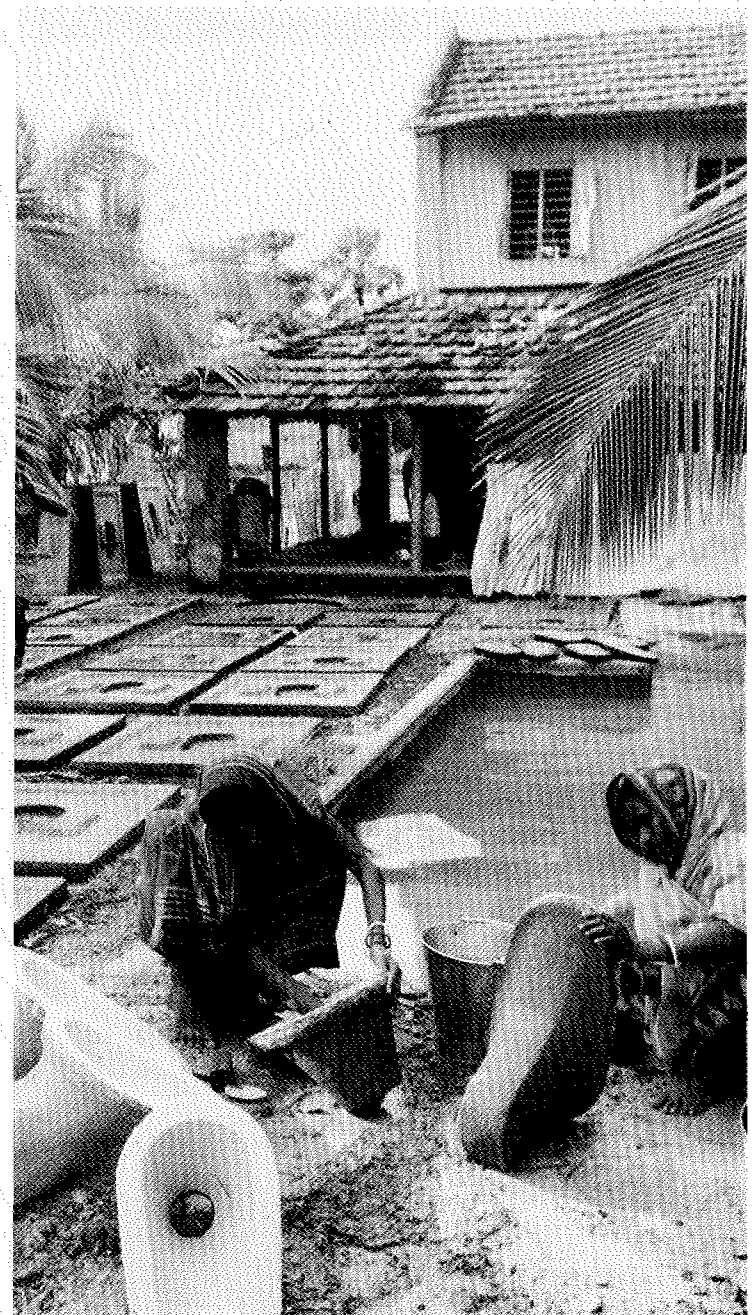
Strengthening the socio-economic fabric

Apart from providing a healthier living environment in the project area, ISP Medinipur has also had far-reaching effects on the socio-economic condition of the community. It has helped generate resources and employment within these villages. Local skill is used to fabricate and install the various hardware components. Thus a major part of the investment made by the villagers under the Project is recirculated within the community itself, for overall development of the Project area.

In ISP Medinipur wage component is 19.53% of the total turnover



Data : RKMLP, April, 1995

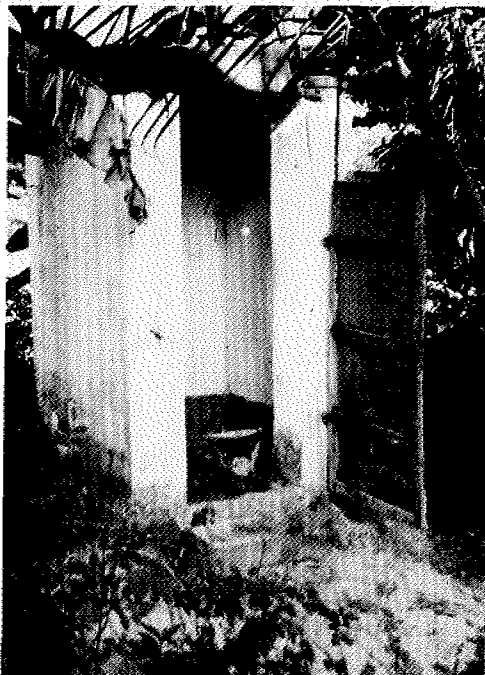


A changing attitude towards sanitation

Owing to the efforts of all concerned there is now a perceptible change in the attitudes of the people towards sanitation facilities. Till now it has been possible to provide a latrine in each household of 82 villages of the district. Age old practices have given way to a new thinking, resulting in more household latrines being built.

For the womenfolk, too, it has proved to be a blessing, by providing them with privacy.

A positive outcome of the Project is the motivation among the people of Medinipur to build their own latrines. Even if some are unable to afford one at present, they hope to do so in the near future.



Preparing for the future, growing by example

Ultimately, the success of ISP Medinipur will be determined by its ability to sustain itself. Youth Clubs, Motivators and Cluster Organisations are gradually involving themselves in other community-based activities related directly or indirectly to sanitation such as social marketing of ORS, income-generation activities, post-literacy programmes and qualitative testing of available drinking water. In fact, a significant beginning has already been made by opening up depots to make ORS available round-the-clock in all villages in the Project area. Driven by the Youth Clubs, the

Panchayats and other participating forces, the Project has successfully demonstrated the viability of a community-based sanitation programme, greatly influencing the national policy on rural sanitation.

More than a pointer, ISP Medinipur serves as a role-model. Its trend-setting 'zero subsidy' strategy is being considered by the Government of West Bengal for initiating similar projects in other districts in the State. Through the three-tier Panchayat system, a similar project has already been launched in the Hooghly district of West Bengal.

Attempts have also been made to initiate the concept of a 'self-help' sanitation programme in other districts of the state.

Today, ISP Medinipur is much more than a sanitation programme. It is a shining example of community participation at its best; a flagship Project that is being replicated in many parts of the country, which could finally make all the difference to the quality of life in India.

