



December 2005

Project Update: Ayinapatti, India

Project Location:

Northwestern region of Tiruchirapalli District in the Thottiam Block

Beneficiary Information:

Number of Households: 117

Number of Beneficiaries: 599

Project Status:

Ongoing

Project Budget: \$12,500

Cost per Beneficiary: \$20.45



Background

With more than 1 billion people, accounting for 15% of the world's total population, India's population size is second only to China. Yet, it has only 4% of the world's water availability. With a population size that is continuing to increase and strain its natural resources, India faces a severe water crisis. While the Indian government has made progress in the supply of safe water to its people, gross disparity in coverage still exists across the country.

In rural India, the preventable contamination of existing water sources is of increasing concern. With only 14% of the rural population having access to latrines, the current sources continue to be contaminated leading to an increase in water-related diseases. Further, poor access to safe water and latrines contributes to India's high infant morbidity and mortality rate, accounting for the bulk of the two million deaths of children each year.

Community Description

Ayinapatti is a small village located in Thottiyam in the northwest section of the Tiruchirapalli District. Although there are a few concrete houses in Ayinapatti, an overwhelming majority of the houses are thatched or tiled. The village economy relies heavily on the rice paddies that surround it.

The community has three government-installed hand pumps that are not working properly because a maintenance system was not initiated when the pumps were installed. There is also an overhead tank, but the water supply is undependable and insufficient. Stagnant gray water lies around each of the hand pumps because the pumps were installed without adequate drainage. This stagnant water has created a breeding ground for disease-carrying mosquitoes. Unfortunately, the community was not trained how to maintain or to fix the system. Today, the system does not work.

Unlike many other rural villages, Ayinapatti has an excellent latrine coverage. More than 80% of the households have a latrine built under the India's *Total Sanitation Campaign Programme*. Unfortunately, the contractor who was entrusted to construct the latrines was primarily concerned with the construction

of the physical latrines rather than with their usage. Moreover, they were poorly designed and are hazardous. More than 88% of the population actively practices open defecation often near the rice paddies. However, during the time that the rice paddies are cultivated, there is no place for open defecation. Instead, men, women, and children must use the roadside or the bushes for open defecation. Because of cultural norms and lack of privacy, women are often not able to defecate after sunrise, or before sunset.

Activities Completed

Participatory Rural Appraisal

During the first stage of this project, our Partner Organization performed a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to help community members understand the benefits of a sanitation program and the importance of having 100% community participation. This unique approach to community organization has been effective in maintaining community excitement and support for the project. The community owns the decision to improve their village, and therefore owns the improvements. They are committed to seeing the project to its full completion and to maintaining the changes made.

As part of the PRA, a baseline study was conducted. The study indicated that considerable attention was needed to educate the community on hygiene and sanitation practices. For example, only 15% of the community was aware that hands should be washed after defecating. Most of the population did not realize that solid and animal wastes should not be dumped near the water sources or that wastewater could be used to water a kitchen garden. The lack of hygiene and sanitation awareness has had far-reaching effects—more than 50% of the population has suffered from acute diarrhea or other diseases in the past six months.

Formation of Village Water & Sanitation Committees

In conjunction with a neighboring village, one of the first activities of the project was to create Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSC). The VWSCs will play a critical role in the project. In the beginning, their primary purpose is to motivate other community members to fully participate and, later, their roles in the project will continue to increase and eventually they will assume full responsibility for the new water system. Trainings are fundamental in this maturing process. In the beginning, the trainings are primarily educational. During this quarter, members of the VWSC were shown how to use kitchen waste water to grow “kitchen gardens” and basic hygiene education.

This quarter, members of the VSWCs and local Self Help Groups (SHGs) toured two model villages. Each of these villages has a successful water and sanitation project. The tour allowed the VSWCs and SHGs members to see the difference a project makes in a village. They are able to see the quality of the project and the results. The project moves from being just an idea to something they can see and touch. Further, they are asked to notice the difference in the cleanliness of the model village as compared to their own village. At the end of the tour, they are given ways to help motivate their neighbors to participate in the project.

Sanitation Program

Since the start of the project, there have been remarkable changes in Ayinapatti. On August 15, 2005, Ayinapatti was declared “100% sanitized”. Because of the condition of the existing household latrines, each household constructed its own low-cost latrine. Families were able to chose the type of latrine they preferred and to obtain loan funds from their local Women’s Self-Help Group. As a result, all houses have a toilet, and a sanitation block has been built at the local primary school. This, in turn, has been a great community motivator. In fact, Ayinapatti has instituted a policy that will fine anyone caught practicing open defecation in their villages. Human waste no longer threatens the water supply, thereby reducing the incidence of water and food contamination.

Problems Encountered

None reported.

Continuing Activities

Over the next couple of months, Ayinapatti and our partner organization will begin to renovate the existing water systems and construct new ones. As the construction gets underway, the members of VWSCs will learn how to appropriately maintain the water system to reduce breakage and how to fix it should the system breakdown.

Our partner organization in collaboration with the local primary school will continue to work with the School Health Clubs. These clubs focus on spreading education about hygiene methods and on practicing hygienic behaviors in their every day life.