

## Improving hygiene and sanitation in Jyotisar, Kurukshetra – a novel experiment

### Background

Jyotisar, a small village in Kurukshetra district of Haryana is non-descript, unless one takes into account its historical significance - the birthplace of 'Gita'. Jyotisar scores low on account of poor hygiene and sanitation.

Sehgal foundation has been handed over the responsibility of developing it into a tourist's delight spiritually and economically under the aegis of the UNDP – Gol Endogenous Rural Tourism Project.

We decided to start work on health - especially hygiene & sanitation, with our Community Health Volunteers who would regularly interact with the community especially women. However, when we found that the going was slow we decided to change our strategy and use a well-established and highly effective method of rural communication – that of 'Nukkad Nataks' or 'Street Plays'.

### Methodology

A detailed household survey was conducted from January-April 2005. We then decided to adopt our strategy of Integrated Sustainable Village Development (ISVD – to know more, visit [www.smsfoundation.org](http://www.smsfoundation.org)) work to help develop Jyotisar into a model village. This was in addition to our commitment to promote new and innovative approaches to build livelihood opportunities in rural areas through community action.

Work on Health started with our team of 4 Community Health Volunteers - women from the village who were chosen and after thorough training asked to help generate awareness on health & hygiene.

**“Abhinaya Samooh Group”**, developed by Deepalaya was invited to conduct few street plays in December 2006. A team from the foundation met them beforehand and explained the present situation in Jyotisar. Finally a draft was approved by the foundation and play was rehearsed by the group. It was also envisaged that this group would encourage local youth to form a similar dramatics group who could perform stage plays on social and other such relevant issues/subjects and earn a livelihood.



Community mobilization started almost a week prior to staging of the street plays. Health volunteers of Jyotisar were asked to provide door to door information regarding the campaign. Also a drawing competition in the local government school was held prior to the plays. Almost 70 children participated and came up with beautiful depictions of “Hamara gaon, saaf gaon”.

The group conducted five street shows in the school and different places in the village. The script was apt and the villagers identified with it immediately. The play also referred to the different sanitation schemes of the government as well as the Sehgal Foundation.

People were informed about the economic assistance of Rs. 1000 to each family who constructs a toilet in their household, which is provided by the Foundation.

A pre- and post-test comprising of 5 questions on hygiene & sanitation was also conducted among 55 students of class 4&5 of the local government primary school.

## IMPACT

BEFORE	AFTER
<p><b>1. Response in school</b>  <b>Pre-Test:</b>            60% (<math>\leq 3</math> questions correctly answered) prior to staging the play</p>	<p><b>Post-Test:</b>            80% correct responses (<math>\geq</math> than 4 questions correctly answered)</p>
<p><b>2. Total latrines =</b>            300 (out of a total of 978 households) in Jyotisar as of December 2006</p> <p>Trickle down effect in neighboring village of <b>Bhore</b> (village adopted in January 2007)</p>	<p>As of September 2007, it has increased to 440; with the DRDA now ready to provide funds for BPL latrines, we hope to add 40 more soon to this ever growing list.</p> <p>70 latrines (till date) constructed so far</p>
<p><b>3. Street cleaning &amp; garbage disposal irregular</b></p>	<p>The local panchayat at Jyotisar took an initiative and started street cleaning and garbage collection on a regular basis</p>
<p><b>4. Dramatics group</b></p>	<p>It started with <b>6</b> young boys. Today we have about <b>20</b> enthusiastic members trained by experts from NSD. They will now conduct more such plays to create awareness as well as earn a livelihood.</p>

## Future Plans

- Total Sanitation Campaign in Jyotisar – using more such methods of mass communication
- Solid Waste Management – collection, sorting, recycling based on the ‘zero waste’ approach. As sustainability of such a process would be in question –
  - We hope that revenue generation will solve our problem – by raising nominal amount from households and rest from waste recycling