

Social Mobilisation for Sanitation by NGO Forum
A Torch in the Dark Tunnel

by Qazi Mahbubul Hasan

THE national target of Health for All by the year 2000 has incited a new dynamism in the development matrix of the country. In this process water and sanitation have been included in the mainstream development agenda.

mobilisations are the fundamental bases of this approach.

The government with assistance from the UNICEF in 1992 launched a national programme called 'Social Mobilisation for Sanitation'. The idea of the programme is to utilise the dynamism of social mobilisation by involving people from various social strata in order to promoting sanitation coverage.

The Action on the Way

The NGO Forum in April 1993 started its activities in collaboration with its partner organisation with the primary objectives of improving excreta disposal, personal hygiene practice and safe-water use in order to reduce diarrhoeal diseases and improve the quality of life.

The Road Taken for Development

It is not a new phenomenon that development is a continuous process. But the realisation obviously is relatively new that the concept, approach, strategy and method of development change with time, place, space and socio-politico-cultural context.

Sometimes, social mobilisation is mistakenly used in place of social marketing since there are some similarities between their conceptual parameters. Social mobilisation splits from the concept of social marketing at the point when it says about mustering national and local support for a general goal or programme through a much more open and uncontrolled process, giving ownership to community as a whole.

As a development-seeker in the WATSAN sector the Forum took social mobilisation as a self-sustaining process. It took the opportunity for trying the multi-level development approach under the framework of social mobilisation. Before starting the activities the organisation conducted an in-depth study for a comprehensive understanding about the socio-cultural and economic context of the projected areas.

The activities include national workshop, village level discussions, thana level workshop/seminar, hygiene education programme, film shows, development communication, courtyard meetings, imam mobilisations, rallies, miking and many other campaign activities.

ing of local leaders, school teachers, imams, community people, government and NGO representatives, etc., to lead the activities from the root level. Regular and effective coordination, participation of the people, mobilisation of local resources and recognition of people's creativity and productivity were the important features of the programme.

The programme was basically motivational. At the initial stage, it was quite difficult to build rapport with people at the community level and motivate them about sanitation and hygiene behaviour as they did not relate this with their priority issues and the importance of good sanitation and their long practised behaviour.

Major Achievements of the Programme

Five messages of water and sanitation such as: increased use of safe water, use of hygienic latrines, washing hand properly after defecation, keeping the latrines clean and usage of latrines by 100 per cent of the population of the target areas, were focussed under the programme.

By the end of the programme these motivated and educated people constructed their own latrines. The average number of the latrines thus constructed stood at about 91.7 per cent which was only 20.6 before intervention.

About 91.8 per cent population of the total washed hands after defecation using soap, ash or soil while it was 69.9 per cent a year ago.

Regarding cleaning and maintenance of the latrines, it was observed that 51.8 per cent of the households who constructed own latrines cleaned and maintained their latrines properly and regularly. This figure was only 9.3 per cent before a year ago.

In case of usage of latrines by all members of the family, it was noticed that latrines

were used by all members of the family in 88.4 per cent households which was 63.7 per cent a year ago.

Regarding usage of tubewell water for drinking and other domestic purposes, it was found that a vast majority of the households (95.3 per cent) used tubewell water for drinking purpose, while 41.1 per cent of the households were using tubewell water for all domestic purposes. But before intervention the figures were 84.8 and 23.4 per cent respectively.

Main Observations

There has been marked increased demand for tubewell latrines in the SOCMOB intervention areas.

It was easier to motivate and educate people in the NGO intervention areas rather than in the NGO non-intervention areas.

There has been increased

demand for tubewells in the non-intervention areas.

There has been marked improvement in hygienic latrines construction, usage of tubewell water for all domestic purposes and hand-washing and other hygiene practices as well.

There has been substantial improvement in the general health awareness of people at the community level.

Construction and use of a hygienic latrine in each household are possible.

Regular follow-up and monitoring are needed to sustain the achievements.

Conclusion

So far, social mobilisation has proven to be an effective concept although it has some problems at the conceptual level, but it is also true that any concept should or could be moulded as per the characteristic features of any area



Safe water: Step ahead for sanitation

People Worldwide Forced to Keep on Changing Homes

Depthnews reports from Washington DC

WAR, persecution, famine, and environmental and social disintegration have been identified as the causes of the recent wave of involuntary migration throughout the world.

The Worldwatch Institute, in a recent report, noted that around the world, unprecedented numbers of people are moving away from their homes and countries.

"Changing conditions are likely to drive the numbers even higher," said Hal Kane, a research associate of the Institute and author of the report. "Involuntary migration has become an ordinary activity, which occurs every day and in almost every part of the world."

In the past, migration was voluntary. It was not dictated by a simple struggle to survive.

The author explained: "Migration was a collective movement — the movement of large groups of people or whole peoples, not a mass movement of individuals, as it is today."

From 1500 until the early 1800, only two to three million people crossed national borders voluntarily. In the early 1800s, about 12 million Chinese and six million Japanese left their homelands for other parts of southern and eastern Asia while a million and a half left India for Southeast Asia and Africa.

Today, every region either sends or receives migrants," their report observed.

Although a small fraction of overall migration, refugees cause concern as they are displaced by war.

At the beginning of the decade, only 15 million refugees have been counted. Today, it has risen to 23 million.

The 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees, which remains in force today, defines refugee as any person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable to return to it."

This official definition, Kane argued, does not explain why people decide to leave home today.

Some flee because of

famine. Others are pushed out by natural disasters, like the frequent floods in Bangladesh. There are also those "internally displaced" migrants who may be unable to return home.

Yet all of these people find themselves in the same conditions as official refugees," Kane wrote in his report. "They may become internally displaced, if they can't gain admission to other countries, or they may join the growing steam of illegal immigrants."

Some people leave their homes because of disasters. When a nuclear reactor at Chernobyl exploded on April 26, 1986, some 116,000 residents eventually left the "Zone of Exclusion," as the Ukrainians call it.

Government, in some cases may lure people away from their homes, or even force them out.

China practises a form of "population transfer" as part of its strategy for quashing Tibetan nationalism.

Fearing Kurdish dissent, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein chased a million and a half Kurds out of Iraq into neighboring Turkey in 1991. For the same reasons, he also forced Shiite Muslims from southern Iraq into Iran.

Disease is also a major factor in migration. In the former Czechoslovakia, pollution and industrial hazards have dramatically raised rates of heart disease, cancer, respiratory failures, and birth defects.

Many people are also forced from their homelands by environmental degradation. Millions have left lands where soils have become too eroded to support food production.

If global warming becomes a reality and the sea level rises by 30 centimeters by year 2050, ecologist Norman Myers said about 150 million people will become refugees by the middle of the next century.

In his report, Mr Kane said that the problems which drive people away from their homes and countries are often treated as inevitable "givens."

War is often seen as the natural result of national or ethnic hatreds. Persecution is dismissed as an unavoidable effect of boundaries that don't reflect demographic realities.

ABC of Mental Health

by Dr MSI Mullick

HERE is a popular saying: Health is Wealth. However, the absence of illness is not health. Health means physical, social, mental and spiritual well-being of an individual. Therefore, the term is far more than the absence of mental illness.

Mental health is something that all of us want for ourselves. When we speak of happiness, peace of mind, enjoyment or satisfaction, we usually talk of mental health.

Mental health is related to everybody's everyday life. It involves the way each person harmonises his or her desires, needs, ambition abilities, ideals, feelings and conscience in order to meet the demands of life.

There is no sharp demarcation between mentally healthy and sick. There are many different degrees of mental health. No single characteristic by itself can be taken as evidence of good mental health, nor the lack of any one as evidence of a

mental illness. It is also true that nobody has all the traits of a good mental health all the time.

The easy way to understand it is to know the characteristics of mentally healthy people. These can be categorised as:

- a) They feel good about themselves.
They are not overwhelmed by their own emotions — fears, anger, love, jealousy, guilt or worries.
They can take life's disappointments in stride.
They have a tolerant, easy-going attitude toward themselves as well as others, and they can laugh at themselves.
They neither underestimate nor overestimate their abilities.
They can accept their own shortcomings.
They have self-respect.
They feel able to deal with

- most situations.
They take pleasure in simple, everyday things.
b) They feel comfortable with other people.
They are able to express love and to consider the interest of others.
They have personal relationships that are satisfying and lasting.
They like and trust others, and feel that others will like and trust them as well.
They respect the many differences they find in people.
They do not take advantage of others nor do they allow others to take advantage of them.
They feel a sense of responsibility for fellow human beings.
c) They are able to meet the demands of life.
They do something about

their problems as they arise.
They accept their responsibilities.
They shape their environment whenever possible, they adjust to it whenever necessary.
They plan ahead and do not fear the future.
They welcome new experiences and ideas.
They make use of their talents.
They set realistic goals for themselves.
They are able to make their own decisions.
They are satisfied with putting their best effort into what they do.
Knowing the criteria of mentally healthy, people can help us understand it and make us to achieve it. Thus, we can be able to functioning physically, emotionally and intellectually.
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Court Moves to Curb New Delhi's Pollution

by Daman J Singh

India's Supreme Court has ordered 9,000 industrial units out of the capital, New Delhi, to reduce the city's horrendous air pollution. But the mostly illegal and unregulated enterprises provide employment to tens of thousands, and the move has major political, social, and economic implications.

NOT long ago, India's capital, with its shady tree-lined avenues and imposing residences, could lay claim to being a garden city. Especially the colonial area, which was designed by the celebrated British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Lutyens' original layout hasn't been tampered with, but as the city has grown, surrounding areas have become an eyesore. And the attendant proliferation of vehicles and small-scale industries has led to increasing pollution.

Today, as the city of 10 million struggles with constant power and water shortages, thousands of makeshift factories in the most crowded areas release poisonous fumes into the atmosphere. Things are so bad that the Indian Supreme Court has now decided to take matters into its own hands.

Following a writ petition by MC Mehta, a well-known environmental crusader and lawyer, the court ordered the immediate closure and relocation of about 9,000 businesses. These primarily include hazardous and noxious operations which, according to the city's 35-year-old Master Plan, are prohibited in the capital. Others include those that violate the air and water standards of the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).

"We are heading for an urban catastrophe," observes Bharati Chaturvedi of Srishti, an NGO set up to address the city's civic problems. "Closing a few factories is at best a stopgap solution for the capital's mounting pollution problems." But even that is easier said than done. The court's directives hold little water when the enforcement machinery is apathetic," she adds.

Delhi has seen a mind-boggling 500 per cent increase in industries in the last 30 years — from 18,500 units in 1961 to around 93,000 today. Most of these are small-scale industries which manufacture polyethy-

lene, nylon, chloroform, lead, rubber, and insecticides.

The small industries were deliberately promoted to cater to the city's jobless and unemployed," explains Professor J H Ansari of New Delhi's School of Planning and Architecture. "With a populist state government supporting indiscriminate industrialisation, violations of the master plan and environmental laws will increase. After all, the authorities allowed the proliferation of many hazardous units even after they had been banned way back in 1962."

In the country's liberalised economic climate, things are likely to get worse. Some of the worst offenders are located in villages outside the city, where there are virtually no environmental regulations. Others conceal themselves in crowded shanty towns where the authorities never penetrate.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) estimates that 2,000 metric tonnes of poisonous gases and 300 million litres of waste water and corrosive liquid by-products, are pumped into New Delhi's environment each day. Some industrial processes result in new, little-known compounds, which endanger workers' safety and health and persist in the environment long after use.

Dioxin, a common chemical produced while burning organochlorines, is known to cause cancer and reproductive problems in humans, and tumours in fish and marine mammals. Vinyl chloride used in the extensive PVC trade causes brain cancer and reduces body immunity. Other toxic chemicals widely peddled by the city's industries lead to such serious

ailments as liver and heart disorders, and permanent impairment of the central nervous system.

New Delhi's top environmental official, DS Negi, complains, "Most of the city's units are run by shoestring-budget entrepreneurs who neither have sufficient capital nor the will to control pollution."

But the principal culprit is local government. A regressive urban land policy which discouraged private-sector participation has failed to provide adequate living accommodation at affordable prices, never mind land for industries. As a result, burgeoning entrepreneurs gradually spilled over and soon flooded crowded, low-income resettlement and labour colonies. Today, the entrepreneurs are out of control.

Admits TVenugopal, a senior environmental engineer at the CPCB, "It is impossible for the authorities to track down the violators. Even powerful bodies like ours do not have the manpower or the resources to prosecute the polluters."

For most of the unregulated, small-scale industries without safe sewerage, wastewater disposal, and modern technology, pollution problems are getting worse. Their haphazard growth makes it difficult to install remedies such as common effluent treatment plants, which are relatively cheap. Failure to do so is causing problems that will be much more expensive to deal with.

But closing down the city's industries appears to be a keen-jerk reaction. In the absence of effective pollution tests, the court's ruling is based on the outmoded Master Plan's stipulations. The

industries have been indiscriminately punished to enforce a document which has long lost its sanctity," remarks R Raghuraman, Delhi's Deputy Development Commissioner. Critics also allege that the exile list was drawn up too hastily and based on inaccurate and incomplete surveys.

"Closing down a few industries is only touching the tip of the iceberg," adds Venu-gopal. "The number violating the air and water standards in Delhi would be much larger if these were rigorously monitored by the DPCC. Add to this the 82,000 units operating in Delhi's non-conforming areas, all of which would also need to be closed and shifted."

Experts believe that the court decision may further impair pollution control measures in the city. "The blanket policy on relocation may militate against industries putting their house in order," says Sanjay Srivastava of WWF-India. "It would be better to link pollution penalties to production efficiency by evolving mass-based standards."

Meanwhile, shifting the industries seems an impossible task. Land prices have soared, thanks to an influx of multinational corporations. Most private land is directly sold to real estate companies developing industrial estates and technology parks for the rich incomes.

"Many of Delhi's small industries may decide to shut down permanently or employ new hands after relocation, leaving the workers high and dry," fears DL Sachdev of the All India Trades Union Congress. The Union has appealed to the Supreme Court to protect the workers' interests when industries move.

There is no easy solution. Many environmentalists hope, however, that growing public opinion against environmental pollution will gradually force industries to clean up their acts and save the day.

— WWF Features
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