

Presenting



## Tamil Nadu

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### **Ecosan toilet beauty contest conducted**

K. Subramanian

NAGAPATTINAM: Nearly hundred ecosan toilet owners in the tsunami-hit Kameshwaram village in Nagapattinam district on Saturday took part actively in the first unique toilet beauty contest organised by the Society for Community Organisation and Peoples Education (SCOPE), Friends-in-Need (FIN), a French non-governmental organisation and the Nagapattinam District Rural Development Agency (DRDA).

Promoter of FIN and economics professor in France, Shayama V. Ramani outlined the background of the unique contest and said that toilets should not be considered as something which had to be tolerated but the most essential one for a healthy, happy and hygienic life.

She said that the tsunami-hit residents of the village had boldly accepted this revolutionary toilet model and Kameshwaram had emerged as the village with maximum number of ecosan toilets in the Indian coast. The beauty contest was organised to highlight the importance of the model.

The Director of SCOPE, M. Subburaman, explained the salient features of ecosan toilet that it was the most ideal model for tsunami-affected coastal sandy and high water table areas as well as desert and rocky regions.

Mr. Subburaman congratulated the residents of the Kameshwaram village for their pioneering effort. He also released a CD on 'Santhi Century Not Out' produced by Centre for Education and Documentation, Bangalore.

All the participants who had constructed the ecosan toilets in the first phase were given prizes and stainless steel pots. The President of Kameshwaram Panchayat, C. G. Kanagasundaram, said that the village had 250 ecosan toilets and FIN had assured Rs. 3 lakh for construction of more toilets. He thanked the UNICEF and DRDA for providing financial support for the programme.

Three residents, Mrs. Saroja Paulraj, R. Nagappan and Vedavalli, won the first prize of Rs.5,000 each.

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[Tamil Nadu - Tiruchi](#)

### University to act as village knowledge centre

Staff Reporter

*PURA will play a major role in enhancing women's education, says Vice-Chancellor*

— Photo: M. Moorthy



**Informative talk: M. Ponnaivaiko, Vice-Chancellor, Bharathidasan University, centre, having a word with the founder of Indo-Franco Reconstruction Project Shyama V. Ramani, at a conference in Tiruchi. Mayor Sarubala R. Tondaiman looks on.**

TIRUCHI: The Bharathidasan University will act as a village knowledge centre and implement the 'Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas' (PURA) project, the Vice-Chancellor, M. Ponnaivaiko has said.

PURA would be realised in a big way with objectives of equipping different sections of the rural society with information technology tools.

The project would reach out the commonest people in inaccessible villages and pave way for innovative technological applications.

The project would improve the livelihood of people, enhance the rural education and identify the school dropouts and equip them with vocational training, Dr. Ponnaivaiko said, inaugurating the international conference on 'Millennium development goals, targets and indicators' on Thursday.

Stressing the importance of women empowerment, he said that proper health facilities and education must reach women to improve the society as a whole. Information technology would be of no good if it did not reach the rural masses.

Incidentally, the PURA would play a major role in enhancing women's education through IT.

#### E-governance

E-governance in regional language would be a major step towards making technology accessible for all.

The project, with University as its resource centre, would also aim to introduce telemedicine, adult education and vocational training for the villagers, the Vice-Chancellor said.

Mayor Sarubala R. Tondaiman spoke on varied projects in the corporation. Implementing waste water management, solid waste management and underground drainage system would be the top priority of the urban body. It has spent over Rs.99 crore to meet the water needs and Rs.30 crore to improve the roads in the city. Many non-governmental organisations had joined hands with the Corporation in improving the sanitation in the outskirts of the city, she noted.

The seminar was jointly organised by the Centre for Women Studies (CWS) of the University, Institute National de la Recherche Agronomique France and the non-governmental organisation SCOPE.

The Director of CWS N. Manimekalai, founder of Indo-Franco Reconstruction Project and professor at the Institute National de la Recherche Agronomique France Shyama V. Ramani and the Director of SCOPE M. Subburaman coordinated the programme.

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[Tamil Nadu - Nagapattinam](#)

### Ecological sanitation' festival under way

K. Subramanian

*To mark construction of 250 ecosan toilets in a village*

Nagapattinam: Thousands of residents took part in a weeklong ecological sanitation festival on Friday in tsunami-hit Kameshwaram in Nagapattinam district to mark construction of the 250 'ecosan' toilets in the village.

The festival is being organised by the Society for Community Organisation and Peoples Education (SCOPE), Tiruchi, that took up the task of constructing the ecosan toilets in the tsunami-hit villages.

K. Vijayanthi, Project Officer, Tsunami Relief Works of UNICEF, Chennai, who was the chief guest, said that it was indeed gratifying that thousands of residents of the village participated in mass cleaning, removal of garbage, dissemination of sanitation concepts through dance, drama and skits and drawing of several hundreds of rangolis and kolams in all the streets in the six wards of the village.

She said that the UNICEF had advanced Rs.4,000 for construction of each 'ecosan' toilet and pointed out that the residents of tsunami-hit villages were showing great interest in constructing the 'ecosan' toilets after coming to know about the benefits.

M. Subburaman, Director of SCOPE outlined how 'ecosan' toilet was becoming increasingly popular form of toilet in high water table areas and coastal areas and pointed out that it also helped the farmers to use urine and compost for improving agriculture. He said that 50 'ecosan' toilets were constructed in the last few days at Kameshwaram bringing the total number to 250 in the village.

V. Ganapathy, Liaison Officer of SCOPE and Advisor to Exnora,

said that the District Rural Development Agency, Nagapattinam, had advanced Rs.1,200 for each 'ecosan' compost toilet. Besides, the FIN-SOS Organization of France gave an assistance of Rs.1.5 lakh for this project.

P. Ramaraj, Panchayat Union Commissioner, Keezhaiyur, who gave away the prizes and opened the new toilets, said that a constant awareness creation of the concept and usage was the reason for the people accepting this new and revolutionary system of toilet.

C.G. Kanagasundaram, president of Kameshwaram Panchayat, said that the village had received the Nirmal Gram Puraskar Award this year from the Centre, thanks to the increased awareness among public of the importance of sanitation after the tsunami. Annabelle, SOS of France, A. Elangovan, Field Publicity Officer, Government of India, Thanjavur, K.Y.Babu, Water and Sanitation Officer, UNICEF, Nagapattinam, and others spoke.

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### Village school gets 'ecosan' toilet

Special Correspondent

*It includes a sanitary napkin incinerator*



**HYGIENIC: The toilet block at Kameshwaram in Nagapattinam district.**

**NAGAPATTINAM:** A school in a tsunami-affected village in the district has been provided with 'ecosan' toilet, a first of its kind in the State.

N. Thiruvengadam, Assistant District Project Officer of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, inaugurated the environment-friendly toilet constructed at the St. Sebastian School in Kameshwaram. He said that true education should aim at inculcating in the minds of children the need for promoting health and hygienic practices that were also environmentally friendly.

He praised the volunteers of Savior Oser La Solidarite (SOS) of France who took up part-time work in the past three months, besides raising Rs.2 lakh, to construct the toilet, which would benefit 600 students.

G. Kanagasundaram, president of Kameshwaram panchayat, said that the village already had 159 'ecosan' toilets. He thanked the Society for Community Organisation and Peoples Education (SCOPE) for designing the Ecosan Urine Diversion Toilet (EUDT) that would be a model for the whole State.

"Very effective"

M. Subburaman, Director of SCOPE, said that EUDT was very environment-friendly since the faeces got composted in the toilet within six months and the urine was used for watering the cashew plants in the adjacent plot. The EUDT in the school had two blocks — one for boys and the other for girls.

A sanitary napkin incinerator was also installed at the toilet campus.

It was constructed at a cost of Rs.2.5 lakh and the management of the school had donated Rs.20,000.

Antonin Benyacar and Annabelle Didier, two French students who have been studying livelihood alternatives for fisherman at Kameshwaram and nearby villages, appreciated the readiness of the villagers and school management to have the revolutionary model of toilet.

Celine Ben of SOS & Coordinator of the project in France and now on a visit to India thanked the school management for giving them a chance to help students in far-away India.

P. Mary Emily Pushpam, correspondent of the school, S. Rajamanickam, president, Parent-Teacher Association and Shanti Mathikumar and V. Balakrishnan, Headmaster, spoke.

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[Tamil Nadu - Nagapattinam](#)

### Maximum `ECOSAN' toilets for fishing village

Special Correspondent

*They are considered good models for sandy coastal areas*

NAGAPATTINAM: Kameshwaram, a tsunami-hit fishing village, has the distinction of getting the maximum number of `ECOSAN' compost toilets in the country with the opening of 100th Household Centered Environment Sanitation Toilete (HCEST) here on Saturday.

As many as 100 toilets were constructed by Society for Community Organisation and Peoples Education (SCOPE) of Tiruchi, a pioneer in the field of ECOSAN compost toilet in the country.

M. Subburaman, Director of SCOPE, said that toilets each costing of Rs. 7,000 were built with financial assistance from Nagapattinam District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), UNICEF, and Friends-in-Need, an NGO from France.

The toilets were considered a good model for high water table sandy coastal areas where conventional ones could not function well.

G. Radha, DRDA Project Officer, congratulated the residents for taking up the new model.

He wanted them to reap the benefit of recycling waste in the most environment friendly manner. The DRDA has advanced Rs. 1,200 per toilet under the total sanitation programme.

K.N. Vijayanthi, UNICEF Project Officer, said that for holistic development of the area, UNICEF was promoting solid waste management and health hygiene education programmes.

Antonin, research scholar from France, said that the NGO was headed by Shyama Ramani in French economic research wing, who hailed from Tiruchi. C.G. Kanagasundaram, panchayat president, praised the house owners who had contributed Rs. 2,100 and said that the village would soon become an ECOSAN village.

G. Krishnaveni, president, Garland Service Society, Tiruchi, said that the DRDA had agreed to set up a eco-friendly paper unit and fibre paper unit at Kameshwaram.

K.Y. Babu of UNICEF, P.G. Jacob George of NGOs Coordination Resource Centre, Nagapattinam, spoke.

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Tamil Nadu - Nagapattinam

## Tsunami-hit village gets 50 Ecosan toilets

Staff Reporter

*They are said to be suitable for high water-table areas*



**HYGIENIC: One of the 'ecosan' toilets being inaugurated at Kameshwaram in Nagapattinam district.**

NAGAPATTINAM: Kameshwaram near here has become the first village in tsunami-affected Tamil Nadu coast to have 50 eco-friendly 'ecosan' toilets. The toilets have been constructed by Society for Community Organisation and Peoples Education (SCOPE) of Tiruchi with financial support from the UNICEF, District Rural Development Agency and Friends in Need, a non-governmental organisation based in France, and handed over on Monday.

M. Subburaman, Director of SCOPE, told *The Hindu* that the 'ecosan' toilet was highly suitable for high water-table areas such as sandy coastal belts and riverbanks. He said that the pit latrines were not suitable in coastal areas, as they would cave in high water table areas. The conventional septic tank also would not work satisfactorily in the coastal areas.

He pointed out that 'ecosan' was a new technology where the urine and faeces were collected separately and water needed for usage of toilet was about three litres only compared to 10 to 12 litres per use in other toilets. The urine and wash water are used for watering the plants in the kitchen garden and faeces will get composted within six months when it too could be used for agricultural purposes.

The NGOs had constructed hundreds of permanent houses in tsunami-hit areas have put up pit latrines in many places that are not suitable to the high water table coastal areas.

Hence, the UNICEF and the district administration has funded the Ecosan project to study the suitability of the model to tsunami-hit coastal areas. SCOPE had built over 200 'ecosan' toilets in the Cauvery riverbank villages of Musiri and Sevanthilingapuram,

which are functioning successfully for the past three years and helping farmers to use the urine and the compost.

[Also in two other districts](#)

V. Ganapathy, Liaison Officer of SCOPE and Advisor of Tiruchi District Exnora, said that 'ecosan' toilets were being constructed in Cuddalore and Villupuram districts also with UNICEF and DRDA assistance. The cost of each toilet was Rs.7,000, of which the UNICEF was giving Rs.2,500, the DRDA Rs.1,200 and the FIN Rs.1,200 and the balance by the house owner. One hundred more 'ecosan' toilets will be built in Kameshwaram, he added.

Since this is the most eco-friendly and feasible model of toilets in coastal areas, there has been a great response from all sections of society from rich and the poor in the coastal areas to 'ecosan' toilets, said Kanagasundaram, village president of Kameshwaram. K.Y. Babu, consultant, water and sanitation, UNICEF, and others spoke. Mrs. Shanthi, leader of the women self-help groups in Kameshwaram declared open the toilets.

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### **She trudged through tsunami-hit villages to help rebuild them**

Deepa H Ramakrishnan

*Shyama V. Ramani sees the tsunami as a good opportunity to build afresh*



**MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Taking away the Ts from  
Tsunami, Shyama V. Ramani. — Photo: T. Singaravelou**

PONDICHERRY: "If I become Prime Minister of India I will build toilets for the people." This was Shyama V. Ramani's dream, as a student in a school in Delhi, some 30 years ago. Although she has not yet achieved her first dream, she has made the second part come true. Shyama, who is in the French Research Service and has specialised in the economics of innovation, says she has always wanted to do developmental work.

Every few months, for the past one-and-a-half years, Shyama has trudged through three tsunami-battered villages near Pondicherry and Nagapattinam, building toilets, fishing auction yards and persuading people to pitch in.

With the help of Un-Ami, or, Friends of the Needy, a volunteer body she founded after the killer waves roared through the region, she has visited the villages of Chinna Mudaliarchavady and Periya Mudaliarchavady (PMC) and Kameshwaram in Nagapattinam, selling her model for rehabilitation. Unlike rehabilitation packages of many other groups, the one touted by Shyama has a catch: the beneficiaries have to repay in some way.

Shyama was on a visit to the villages recently and *The Hindu* spoke to her.

"In PMC, though the project started in January 2005, it took a year for the people and the NGOs (FEED and SCOPE) to get a moral understanding of reciprocity," says Shyama, who earned a doctorate in economics. "But, in the end we did. We got a written agreement from the headmaster. We are repairing the toilets in the school, at a cost of Rs.2 lakh. The toilets had been shut down after being used for five years because nobody would clean them.

"We will also open new toilets that will be quasi eco-sanitary (the solid and liquid wastes are separated). The water will be recycled and used for the school garden. Under the deal, the staff and students have to clean and maintain the toilets for five years. We will provide the gloves and boots and brooms for the first two years. Then they will have to find an auto mechanism to fund the gloves and boots."

In Kameshwaram, near Nagapattinam, a fish auction yard has been built, which has boosted the income of fishermen. In return, they have built a roof over the yard and provided employment to a widow. "Earlier, they used to lose out on 10 to 15 percent of the price because the fish would fall on the sand. We have also taken young girls, who are normally not let out of their homes, on day trips. Two French students will stay among them to see what kind of activities they can be involved in," she says.

Shyama sees the tsunami — she calls it creative destruction in line with Shaivaite philosophy — as an opportunity to build anew. "It was an opportunity for me to do academic work, extra professional work and link the two and do something for India in the process. We plan to do a study using French students as to what kind of garbage is generated, how it can be managed and the study will be given to the Tamil Nadu Government."

As an economist, Shyama has looked at the evolution of the biotechnology sector in various countries, and especially in India. She, along with her students, has created a firm, Technometrix, at the suggestion of the European Union to give indicators that help decide where and with whom to invest in emerging sectors like biotechnology or nanotechnology.

Shyama's family has been a great support during the past 18 months, spending every evening and weekend connecting with contributors and NGOs. She says it would not have happened without the support of her family in France and India. "My children Divya (16) and Vivek (13), my husband Jean Francois-Claver, who is responsible for the operations of three units of a Franco-Canadian MNC in France, my mother-in-law Odette Claver, my mother and even my maid at home helped during the project."

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