

VLIP – BASIC FACILITIES PACKAGE

The lack of basic infrastructure facilities in the villages and crises laden public health system demand a creative solution to efficiently and effectively tackle this problem in a timely fashion. The development processes must be designed to meet the basic needs of the people – Clean Drinking Water (for sustaining life), Modernized Sanitation (for healthy life), Computer Education (for productive life) and Clean Environment (for enhanced life).

CLEAN DRINKING WATER

The availability of clean drinking water is a basic survival need for human beings. Its availability, however, needs to be accompanied by underground drainage systems for its disposal. Otherwise the free standing surface in street puddle and ponds become a health hazard.

MODERNISED SANITATION

Lack of infrastructure for providing safe drinking water and managing human waste is primarily responsible for most health related problems. It is important, therefore, that surface street sewerage be eliminated and channeled through an underground sewerage system: The following is needed:

- a. **Underground Sewerage:** A well designed quality underground sewerage system that removes the dirty slush and unsanitary street pools of water and waste is a must. **Waste Water Treatment:** Studies reveals that a large amount of wastewater re-enters the hydrological system untreated and contributes to pollution. Untreated waste water has thus become a serious health and environmental concern. Hence, the need for a waste water treatment system.
- b. **Polluted Ponds:** Village ponds have become highly polluted. It is recommended that the following options be considered:
 - i. Install clean-flow pond aeration system and raise fish for income.
 - ii. Plant Duck Weed system and raise fish for income.
 - iii. Plant Vetiver Grass system for moisture conservation and for bio remediation.
 - iv. Fill the polluted pond and make playgrounds and parks, especially for children and old people. Shrubs and flowers are not only pleasing to the eye, but also invigorating to the spirit.

COMPUTER EDUCATION

Rural education systems are generally behind the times. The least expensive way to bring village children into the 21st century is to make them computer literate. With computer literacy and a reasonable mastery of the English language, they will be able to overcome their handicaps and access the world.

CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

- a. Solar Lighting: Though power is supplied in many villages of India now, yet its availability is sporadic. In order to promote awareness of alternative sources of energy and for night time lighting and safety, solar/ wind powered street lights are recommended.
- b. Bio-gas Management: The emission of methane from humane and animal waste as well as other sources is a serious problem in Rural Areas worldwide. We need to put in place waste management systems which turn methane into usable energy or at the least burn it.

COST AND LEADERSHIP

Our experience is that the above basic facilities package in India cost about \$200 per capita. With leadership by villagers, including Diaspora, along with monetary contributions by them and financial support from governments and others, it is affordable. And every village household contributing the equivalent of about one days labour wages per month for maintenances, it is sustainable.

FOLLOW UP

- Sustainability
- Personal hygiene
- General cleanliness
- Self reliant responsibility
- Empowerment programs for women and children
- Panchayat Empowerment in terms of local Governance, Justice, Law and Order

Disparate approaches to improving conditions in rural communities have not been successful so far because they have not created enough synergy to overcome the homeostatic forces which keep the system from changing. In order to make a lasting impact an integrated approach is needed to move the system to a higher level of equilibrium. Hence the necessity to accomplish quantum jumps to produce a dynamic equilibrium at a higher level. And it needs to be done for the whole village.