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[Tamil Nadu](#) - Tiruchi

An affordable solution to sanitation problems

By Prathibha Parameswaran



Jan Olof Drangert, Professor from the Stockholm Environmental Institute, inspecting the 'ecosan' toilet at Thaneerpandal in Tiruchi district.

TIRUCHI, NOV. 22. A two-member team from the Stockholm Environmental Institute, Sweden, visited Thanneerpandal near here on Thursday, to gain first hand knowledge of the ecological sanitation (Ecosan) programme being implemented by a City-based voluntary organisation, the Society for Community Organisation and People's Education (SCOPE).

The project seeks to promote cost-effective model toilets among rural masses and check open defecation. The model developed by SCOPE prevents pollution and significantly reduces usage of water. It has provisions to separate and dump the waste in a pit for decomposition.

The managing trustee, M. Subburaman, said the compost toilet in the village was constructed by the SCOPE, with assistance from the United

Nations Children's Fund and the District Rural Development Agency. It was sealed in 2003 after more than four years of use.

The compost pit was opened in the presence of the team, Prof. Jan Olof Drangert, and Arno Rosmarin, communication director of the institute. The compost, which can be utilised for agriculture, would be subjected to several tests at IIT (Chennai) and Linkoping University, Sweden.

Mr. Rosmarin said Ecosan was a viable sanitary alternative for people in urban slums and rural areas. Implementing this concept could benefit over 50 per cent of those defecating in the open, he said. Over the next 25 years, most of the world population would be concentrated in urban areas of which nearly 40 per cent would have no access to proper sanitation facilities. Water scarcity would render the present sewage system ineffective and hence it was necessary to resort to a toilet system that would be environment-friendly. The institute is implementing pilot projects in China, the Middle East, Africa and Sweden through the Swedish International Development Agency.

The team later visited Kaliyapalayam, where 18 houses had constructed Ecosan toilets and utilised the compost for kitchen gardens.

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