

## FIRST TOILET BEAUTY CONTEST

Dt.14.7.07 Time 11.00AM

***On the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2007, the village of Kameshwaram (Nagapattinam District – Tamil Nadu) will witness a very unique Beauty Contest. The stars of the day will not be good looking young people but toilets – EcoSan toilets. It is to reward the pioneering users of EcoSan toilets most ideally suited for Tsunami hit sandy coastal area. The contest is organized by Friends In Need(FIN France) & SCOPE(Society for Community organization and People's Education)Trichy – Pioneers in the Field of Ecological Sanitation in India.***

Eligibility for participating in the contest is restricted to the first batch of 100 EcoSan toilet families in the village who are using the toilets properly, and maintain well the Kitchen Garden watered by the urine from the toilet and keep the toilet and its environment neat, clean and hygienic.

For each of the three categories the cash award at stake is Rs.5,000, Rs.2,500 and Rs.1,000. In addition all the participants will be given a Prize. The Selection and the Prize distribution will take place on July 14<sup>th</sup> according to Mr.M.Subburaman, Director SCOPE.

The toilet beauty contest is a part of the three day Millennium Development Goals Conference being organized by INRA(Institut National de la Recherche) France, UN-AMI(Friends in Need) France, the Bharathidasan University and SCOPE. The theme of the conference- the First of its kind in India is the role of Technology and Innovation in the attainment of the MDG - food security, socio-economic security, environmental security and health, - in

marginalized zones in India' on July 12, 13 and 14 in Trichy. According to Dr. Shyama V. Ramani of INRA France & Coordinator of the Conference Ecological Sanitation would solve the three major constraints of achieving the MDG namely save precious water, ensure sustainable environment and provide a toilet model which will help reuse the Ecosan byproducts for ensuring food security. The beauty contest will remove the general feeling that toilets are an unfancied necessity and promote the feeling of peace and comfort.

FIN & SCOPE had envisaged the toilet beauty contest to ensure 100% utilization of the record number of 250 EcoSan toilets in the tiny coastal village. According to a study made by B. Antonin and D. Annabelle, of France under the guidance of Dr. R. Shyama, FIN trust founder, about 75% in December 2006 of the people in the village are using the toilets.

The beauty contest in Kameshwaram will help the public understand the key role of Ecological Sanitation in promoting a sustainable and clean Environment. This model will become the benchmark in future when the world will be facing an acute shortage of clean water and organic manure. It model will ensure Food Security and Sustainable Environment observed Mr. V. Ganapathy of Exnora International.

Since 2005, the residents, NGOs and local Panchayat have joined hands to transform Kameshwaram into a fully Ecological village with financial support from UNICEF, FIN, DRDA. The residents have advanced as their contribution about Rs.2,000 for the EcoSan toilets costing about Rs.7,500. An Ecosan festival took place during the first week of June 2007 to increase the awareness of villagers. The First Ecosan Urine Diversion toilet was constructed in St. Sebastian school of Kameshwaram at a cost of Rs.2.5 lakhs thanks to the munificent donation of Rs.2.25 lakhs from SOS a French student organization.

According to Dr.Manimekalai Director, Centre for Women's studies Bharathidasan University and Coordinator of the Conference , Science and technology is revolutionizing the lives of people. But the vast career opportunities are denied to those who fall behind in the technology divide. The technology gender gap is also emerging, altering the power and career prospects of women. The Kameshwaram experiment will definitely lead to replication of the Ecosan technology to promote a sustainable model village where women play an important role.