

Speech of Shri A. Narendra
Hon'ble Minister of State for Rural Development, Government of India
Nirmal Gram Puraskar Function
Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi
24th February 2005

His Excellency, President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singhji, Hon'ble Minister of State for Rural Development, Smt. Suryakanta Patilji. Hon'ble Ministers from States, Shri.V.K. Duggal, Secretary, Department of Drinking Water Supply, Shri. M. Shankar, Secretary, Rural Development, Officials of Government of India and State Governments, Officials of external agencies, NGOs, experts. Press Members, and award winners of Nirmal Gram Puraskar, Friends'

I feel privileged to be a part of the first national award ceremony of Nirmal Gram Puraskar. It is a great moment for those who have been involved in the sanitation sector for so long with complete dedication and enthusiasm towards enhancing sanitation coverage especially in rural areas.

It's a matter of great honour that His Excellency. President of India, **Dr, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam** is here with us at this inaugural award ceremony. Your presence here is indicative of the high priority you place on accelerated sanitation coverage to promote quality of life in rural India, and this, will certainly boost the moral of Panchayati Raj Institutions engaged in this endeavour. I want to convey my deep appreciation to all the award winners of Nirmal Gram Puraskar for their exemplary work in promotion of rural sanitation in their respective areas.

Sanitation is one of the important indicators that reflect the quality of life. If we have to achieve the status of developed nations, we certainly need to address the issue of sanitation more seriously, which is quite low at present in our country. Considering the importance of sanitation, Government of India, over the past two decades, had taken various steps for promoting rural sanitation. **Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP)** launched in 1986. This programme was restructured in 1999 as **Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)** that advocated the principle of

demand driven and community led approach with ample use of Information, Education and Communication component and emphasis on Capacity Development.

Government of India has decided that sanitation programme should reach every village of the country and be implemented in every district of the country. We have already sanctioned 452 projects with an outlay of Rs. 4412 cores to provide various sanitation facilities which include Individual Household Latrine, School and Anganwadi Sanitation, Community Sanitary Complex, Alternate Delivery Mechanism of sanitary goods and services through Rural Sanitary Mart / Production Centers in partnership with States and Beneficiaries.

So far, we have constructed more than 1.09 crore household toilets in which 88 lakh toilets have been constructed for Below Poverty line families alone under TSC since 2001. It is estimated that sanitation coverage has increased significantly from 22% in 2001 to 30% in 2005. Since, Government of India has given deep focus to School Sanitation and Hygiene Education, 1.21 lakh school toilets have been already constructed under TSC, which has played a big role in increasing the school sanitation coverage from 9.15% in 1993 to 45% in 2004-05.

In addition, 18,622 Anganwadis, and 4,367 Community Sanitary Complexes have been constructed supported by 3,174 Rural Sanitary Mart / Production Centers under TSC.

The most striking feature of implementation of TSC has been the sizable contribution from community i.e. Rs. 214 crore since the inception of the programme. This clearly indicates that the demand driven and community based approach has been widely accepted by the community.

To give further fillip to promotion of sanitation and community participation, we have instituted **Nirmal Gram Puraskar**, which is an incentive scheme for those Gram Panchayats, blocks and districts, which has attained full sanitation coverage in their respective geographical areas. Full sanitation includes eradicating the menace of open defecation, provisions of latrines in all households and educational institutions, promoting hygiene education at school level and maintaining general cleanliness in the village. It is hoped that this incentive will go a long way in promoting sanitation coverage in rural India. A very handsome amount is being given to the PRIs as incentive ranging from Rs.2 lakh to Rs. 50 lakh based on the population criteria which can be

used by them for creating other sanitation infrastructure and maintenance of the same or any other step for solid and liquid waste disposal.

This is the first award ceremony of this kind, as Secretary, Drinking Water Supply mentioned in his welcome address mentioned, on **Nirmal Gram Puraskar** and today 39 such PRIs are being awarded. In addition, a special Award has also been announced for Nandigram block II of East Midnapur district of West Bengal for pioneering contribution in promotion of community participation in rural sanitation sector.

I firmly believe that an incentive scheme like Nirmal Gram Puraskar will enhance the acceptance of sanitation as a need, and subsequently increase the coverage in rural areas. I would again like to congratulate the recipients of Nirmal Gram Puraskar who have played remarkable role in the promotion of rural sanitation in their Gram Panchayats.

I hope it will be a memorable experience for them and I urge them to motivate their fellow member from PRIs to actively promote rural sanitation in their respective areas once they go back to their districts.

I hope it would be an enjoyable evening for you all.

With all the best wishes.

JAI HIND