

Developing an eco-city through Green Productivity

The APO commissioned a Green Productivity demonstration project (GPDP) on the development of an eco-city through GP in Namakkal, a small but economically dynamic city of some 100,000 in Tamil Nadu, India, overseen by the National Productivity Council (NPC), India. Started in May 2004, the project is being implemented by Namakkal municipality, the environmentally committed local authority in the southern state. The project has already achieved results that benefit residents in terms of improved quality of life. For example, solid waste management (SWM) has been improved through a doorstep collection service with 100% coverage and ensuring the recycling and reuse of waste by segregation at source. Namakkal is upgrading its existing waste dump site and will develop a sanitary landfill facility as called for in the GPDP plan prepared by the NPC. The Committee on Solid Waste Management under the Supreme Court of India has recently recognized the SWM compliance of Namakkal.

Another important area in which improvements have been made is the conservation of groundwater resources by rainwater harvesting (RWH). Almost all wards of Namakkal have been equipped with RWH structures to collect rainwater from the rooftops and convey it to recharge wells after filtration. It is expected that the RWH structures will help resolve the chronic problem of water scarcity in the city. The NPC also carried out an energy audit of major municipal facilities like water-pumping stations, street lighting, municipal offices, etc. and made recommendations for energy conservation measures.

The NPC organized a training course on GP in Namakkal at the initiation of the GPDP which was attended by numerous community stakeholders, municipality officials, elected members of the city council, and NGO staff. Following the GP approach, various options for improving city environs were identified by the participants and implementation plans were devised for different activities. Based on the same plan, Namakkal is now set to receive certification for the ISO14001 Environmental Management System. It will be the first Indian municipality to receive such certification. Then, nearly two and one-half years after the start of the



Mr. M.J. Pervez, Director, Environment Group, NPC (L), speaking at the workshop

GPDP, the NPC held a workshop on 30 December 2005 attended by more than 70 government officials and others in the environmental field to disseminate the results Namakkal has achieved in health and sanitation, environmental conservation, and aesthetics.

With assistance from the NPC, Namakkal is in the process of developing a model eco-park using various waste materials produced in the city. The NPC has engaged a local expert to advise on park design and construction. To empower women in the city, approximately 30 self-help groups have been formed and received small amounts of credit to start up businesses in the areas of waste recycling, mushroom cultivation, toy making, etc. Such groups remain active and organize bazaars with the help of Namakkal municipality.

With a dedicated GPDP team in place under the leadership of Namakkal's Municipal Chairman S. Gandhiselvan and Commissioner P. Kanthaswamy, the city plans to continue the GPDP process for further improvements and achieve its goal of becoming an eco-city.